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G. William Domhoff: The Adventures and Regrets of a Professor of Dreams and Power

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*G. William Domhoff:*

*The Adventures and Regrets of a Professor of Dreams and Power*

**Interviewed by Sarah Rabkin**

**Edited by Irene Reti**

Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2014

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## Interview History

G. William (Bill) Domhoff is a research professor of psychology and sociology at UC Santa Cruz. He arrived at the campus in the fall of 1965 as an assistant professor in the psychology department, affiliated with Cowell College, and is one of UCSC's founding faculty members. Domhoff was born in 1936 near Cleveland, Ohio; he received his BA at Duke University, his MA at Kent State University, and his PhD in psychology at the University of Miami. He taught at California State University, Los Angeles for three years before arriving at UCSC.

Domhoff's reputation as a scholar extends far beyond UCSC; four of his books were among the top fifty best sellers in sociology for the years 1950 to 1995: *Who Rules America?* (1967, #12); *The Higher Circles* (1970, #39); *The Powers That Be* (1979, #47); and *Who Rules America Now?* (1983, #43). While he began his career as a psychologist; what is remarkable is that Domhoff has made significant contributions to two fields: sociology (in power structure research), and psychology (research on dreams). Domhoff's dual career was perhaps more possible at UC Santa Cruz, which, particularly in its early years, encouraged faculty to engage in cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research.

This oral history has two major foci. The first is Domhoff's recollections of UC Santa Cruz over the entire (nearly) fifty year history of the campus, including his memories of the early years playing baseball with students at Cowell College; his thoughts on the unique features of UC Santa Cruz such as the colleges, the Narrative Evaluation System, and the Banana Slug Mascot, as well as his administrative work on several key committees, as chair of the Academic Senate, and as dean of social sciences. Domhoff took early retirement from UCSC in 1994

and continued to be an active scholar in both of his fields.

The second focus of this narrative is to explore the trajectory of a prolific, eclectic, and accomplished scholar. As is evident in this oral history, Domhoff has never truly retired; he continues to research, write, and publish. In 2007 he received the University of California's Constantine Panunzio Distinguished Emeriti Award, which honors the postretirement contributions of UC faculty. Much of his work is now accessible on two web sites: [www.whorulesamerica.net](http://www.whorulesamerica.net) and [www.DreamResearch.net](http://www.DreamResearch.net).

The interview was conducted over six sessions in April and May of 2013, by Sarah Rabkin, for a total of about thirteen hours of interviewing time. Domhoff reviewed the transcript of the audio recordings, making corrections and clarifications, and engaging in editing with sharp eyes, dedication, and tireless energy. I thank him for his generosity and good spirits. Thank you also to Cameron Vanderscoff, who tenaciously dove into transcribing thirteen hours of recording in the midst of his graduate studies, and to Sarah Rabkin, interviewer extraordinaire.

Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Elisabeth Remak-Honnef, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and Interim University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

*—Irene Reti, Director, Regional History Project, University Library*

*University of California, Santa Cruz, February 14, 2014*

## **Early Life**

**Rabkin:** This is Sarah Rabkin. And I am with Bill Domhoff for our first interview in my kitchen in Soquel, California, on April 8th, 2013. So Bill, let's start with when and where you were born, and tell me a bit about your family background.

**Domhoff:** I was born in Youngstown, Ohio on August 6th, 1936. I lived there the first four or five years of my life, and basically never returned except to visit my grandparents, because we moved on to live in a town called Steubenville, down the river from Youngstown. Lived there, maybe from the first to the third grade, and then moved to the east side of Cleveland, to a small town called Lyndhurst. Lived there for a year or two. And then by the sixth grade I was at a school in Rocky River, Ohio. And that became, what to me, was my hometown. A great place. I really think I blossomed for kidhood, for childhood, there. But we would just visit to Youngstown. So I was born in Youngstown. My parents are of Youngstown. But I'm not in really quite, in any conscious sense, from Youngstown.

Now, as far as my family—my father was born in 1905. He had a father who was of German background, although born and raised in the United States, and bilingual. And my Grandfather Domhoff worked in the steel mill. He was a foreman in the steel mill by the time I knew of him. And from pictures you can tell that he started working out in the steel mill, worked his way up. His mother, my dad's mother, was actually an English immigrant. So she came to this country at age eleven or twelve. And her family had served in the military. I think her parents came as well. So right away, it's a mixed kind of family.

And what I didn't know about my father's upbringing until I was an adult—and it's an interesting commentary, I realized much later, on mobility in America—he had a huge cousinhood. I was stunned when I learned this in my thirties or forties: He had twenty-six or so cousins.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** Because my Grandpa Domhoff had a brother that married a sister of his wife. And then there were others. And she had other brothers and sisters. They all lived within a few miles of each other, so you never knew who was going to be at lunch. So you grew up in that huge kind of thing. He got encouragement; he went to college. I think he was the first, probably, one in that family, although others may have gone, out of that huge cousinhood. And he went to Ohio State. He had to drop out, turn money a couple of times. But he graduated from Ohio State in 1930, about when he was twenty-five years old.

And then basically that put him on a somewhat upward track. So I grew up in a very nuclear family that moved around. So it was kind of stunning that he came from that background—he never talked much about them, but they would talk about Uncle Harry or Cousin-this—but I had no sense of how many of them there were and what a huge collectivity it was.

My father—when he got out of college, he first worked in newspapers. He worked as a journalist up in Cleveland. But he got what then was called a goiter. There was not good iodine in the soil and he got this bad neck. He got sickly and then they had to take it out. So when he recovered from that, it was now the Depression. And he got into—he got a job, I think he was just mostly looking for a job, essentially in what's called generally the finance business. I think he

worked at one time for Dun & Bradstreet checking on credit of businesses. But he got into being just a worker in a small loan [company]. Small loan companies made loans of just, today we'd say ten to a thousand dollars.

He worked in that all of his life. He worked his way from being in this office in one company; then he joined the City Loan and Savings Company, I don't know when, somewhere probably by '36, '37. And then in 1940 they made him a manager in this town that I mentioned, of Steubenville. But it was World War II by then and they were short of guys. He was just a little too old for the Army, at thirty-five, thirty-six, so they also made him the manager of Martin's Ferry, which was another thirty, forty, fifty miles down the road. He managed two offices then for them during the war.

Then they moved him to their large office in the downtown of Cleveland, Ohio. And that's where I remember him from, always going off to work and running that office. [He] worked Monday nights—whatever the structure of things were then. I remember that well because that's when we had to eat all the stuff that he didn't like. So we had liver. Oh! Although I got to like it. And we had broccoli and asparagus and all these things that now have very negative connotations for me because of that. So we had to eat that good, healthful stuff while he was working on Monday nights.

So he worked in that job from probably 1945 to 1965. And then, with my sister and I both grown—I'll come back to that—he was tired of being in Cleveland. Cleveland was now headed downward. It was a very tense town. It was no longer growing. In fact, it was declining. And he was successful within this modest-sized company. It had a hundred offices around the state, but they're all small, mostly.

They offered him the district supervisorship of eight or ten offices in Northeastern Ohio, which is very rural, small-town, hunt and fish and so on. It made it possible for my dad and mom to move back down near Youngstown, where my mother's sister still lived with her husband. And they then spent their retirement years—he retired in 1970 and he lived to 2000—so they spent the next thirty years retired in this particular town, which he picked carefully, partly because it was located just near enough to Youngstown, but it was also right on an artificial lake, a really nice lake that was well stocked with fish. His passion in life was fishing.

We also always had a garden. Victory gardens during World War II. We would grow vegetables and flowers, but in very modest-sized plots. So they started out, my mother and father, once they moved to this little town called Cortland, Ohio, they had most of the backyard in flowers and maybe some vegetables. But gradually, and it was interesting to watch over the years, it would get smaller and smaller. But they still would have a little flower garden in his nineties and her nineties too, because she was just four years younger than he was. So that was pretty much my dad's story. I'll come back to him as a father. He was a very excellent and attentive father.

But my mother, on her side—her father was of longstanding American stock. I think they were mostly English and whatever varieties they had intermarried with. I have one cousin who traced out all of this family tree stuff. They were middle class, modest circumstances. My maternal grandfather was the most adventurous one. His three siblings stayed in this little town near Philadelphia. But he went westward. He was an electrician in the steel mills. So I don't think he was highly educated, but he was a skilled worker in the steel

mills. So you can see that, in a way, I grew up, not necessarily knowing it, but in this steel town of Youngstown, which was a booming steel town, the site of much history that I read about only later, and had no conception of at the time.

So that was my maternal grandfather. And then my mother's mother—the way I get the story was that she grew up in an orphanage at a certain point. And there was uncertainty about her full origins. However, she was a Catholic. What that meant was that my mother and her sister—my mother was a younger sister of two, by just a couple or three years—but they grew up and they went to the Catholic church *and* to a Protestant church. And they could decide [which] when they got older. So my mother had, in that sense, sort of an eclectic religious upbringing.

I should say here that my father was probably brought up Lutheran. But I don't think it was very strong. He never openly protested going to church—my mother would say, "It's Easter," or this or that, but it was clear that he was not into it. She would take us to Sunday school, or as teenagers to church, my sister and me (and I'll get back to her). And then I remember saying, "Well, how come Dad doesn't go?" And pretty soon I'd say, "Well, how come he doesn't have to go?" And he would say, "I commune with nature," was his phrase. We lived in a town called Rocky River, Ohio, about twelve miles from the public square in Cleveland. But it was right truly on a rocky river, not very deep and not very wide, but rocky, and the water was moving. And it was in a fairly big gorge, so he'd fish in there. He'd find a little fishing hole. His passion all his life was fishing, and work, and his kids, and enjoyment of sports, and of us being athletic.

So that was my mother's story. She had a high school education and one year of some kind of business school and typing. She was working at the same

finance company my dad did. I've later seen pictures of them in the early 1930s. It was obviously a company office picture.

So they started to go out—

**Rabkin:** What was her role at the company?

**Domhoff:** She was just in a clerical kind of role. You have people who are taking payments, that are at windows. They'd say, "We hired a new girl today and she'll be taking payments and then she'll be doing this." So maybe there were little variations on their jobs but they didn't go outside and "chase" slow accounts. I'm sure they didn't move to managerial positions. I don't remember any women managers. My dad had a few friends among managers of other company offices—I'd meet a few of the other managers in Cleveland that he liked. So it was just an accepted separation.

When I was born, then my mother didn't work anymore. And then when my sister came along three and a half years later, which I'll talk about, she certainly didn't work. So she took care of us with great care, carted us to our games, and to cheerleading, and all of those kinds of things.

But when my sister was then out of high school and in college, my mother took a job as a secretary-receptionist at the Catholic girls' school in Rocky River, called Magnificat. She was perfect because she had a comfort level and they knew she had some Catholic background—I think she had revealed that to them. So they liked having her. But she could also then be there when they went off to their prayers or whatever. There were times when she was holding the fort down at noonish. She also worked for a back doctor for a while, but again, just a receptionist kind of thing, which I didn't know much about because I was long

gone and far away. Once I left Ohio, I was either in Florida or California, and you didn't travel quite as much and as readily then. We'd write letters. And if I talked too long on the phone then my mother would always say, "Well, do you own stock in AT&T or something? Do you own stock in the telephone company?"

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** So it was clearly, you were out there; you were supposed to accomplish something. And nothing like, "You never come see us," Or, "Why do you live so far away?" Or anything like that. Now, they may have missed us, like parents do, but they did not so express. They were stoical. If there was any sadness there—

Incidentally, along that line, a story I only learned later—that relates to my parents driving me down to college. It was a long ride in those days from Cleveland, Ohio, down to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. You'd go across the Pennsylvania Turnpike and then these fairly modest highways, small highways down through Virginia, and then into North Carolina and then several hundred or so miles in North Carolina to arrive to Durham. I think it was seven or eight hours, nine hours. At any rate, my parents drove me down there, unpacked me and got me in my dorm and all that. I said goodbye and they left. Just good luck and all. My dad later told me that my mother cried all the way home.

**Rabkin:** Oh—

**Domhoff:** So, but I never knew that. They were not people who would show emotion or express emotion, or yell, or be very demonstrative or exuberant in any particular kind of direction.

Anyway, my parents met in this small loan company and they were married in 1933. And there was, I didn't know it at the time, but there was some tension over that on the part of my aunt, my mother's sister, and maybe her family, because they somehow saw my dad—which is laughable today—as a little wild. He hung around with a couple of guys that maybe went to speakeasies. He was a person that did not drink. If he ever drank, it was not when I was around. So my mother's family was nervous about him at first.

And my uncle, it turns out, had said, "The family really doesn't approve of your relationship with Helen," my mother. Which I didn't hear much of. I didn't have a good sense of it. They all got along fine, all my life I watched them. Anyway, my uncle, to give you a sense of what these people are like, my uncle died—his wife had died first, and then he died some years later after remarrying. He was pretty outrageous in his own way. For a low-key nothing he was just pretty imperious. Anyway, he died at about ninety-two.

And after the funeral, my dad and I were sitting in the living room, maybe waiting for my mom to be ready to go to somewhere. By that time my dad had had a stroke and basically recovered. But he talked a little slower. At any rate, he said to me, "You know, that guy, he had the nerve to come and tell me that I shouldn't marry your mother." And then he said to me, "I never liked the son of a bitch." (laughs) I was tickled, but it was just so matter of fact. He didn't yell or scream or go on. "I never liked the son of a bitch." And yet, you would never know that in terms of watching them interact. It was just all small talk, but they

seemed to get along fine, from what unperceptive me could tell. But the point is, they didn't throw those things out on the table. It was all very low key. I'm sure that both my dad and this guy, my Uncle Evan, didn't fight, for the sake of these two women who were very close, my mother and my aunt. They wrote to each other once a week at least. And, of course, they must have destroyed all these letters, but they wrote to each other very, very amazingly faithfully.

**Rabkin:** Your mother and your aunt.

**Domhoff:** Yeah, which I, at a certain point, figured out—but I didn't understand that when I was growing up. And it's not like my mother was not a saver, because if I ever write something more like a memoir of my life, it's an amazing thing. It was stunning. I must have been in my fifties, and for some reason she showed me that she had saved every letter I had written to her and my father—since I had left for Duke.

**Rabkin:** Do you still have them?

**Domhoff:** I still have them. I've never really looked through them. I expurgated them slightly in case I were to suddenly die. I looked through them, but there was nothing revealing in them. I know full well that they're useful for, maybe for dating things, or maybe some things that I said that expressed disappointment, or whatever. But I know that I carefully censored myself. I did not write true letters to my parents. That is, I didn't write, "I'm scared of this," or, "I'm worried," or, "Frankly, I'm—" whatever. I never wrote heavy things; I just wrote superficial things like, "Well, we'd play in this," "We're doing that," and, "School's going well. And somebody was—" It was all more, in that sense,

superficial. And that was calculatedly so. I had that same kind of guardedness. (laughs) I certainly didn't want to upset them in any way. I didn't want to say, "Well, I was drunk last night," or, "We did this. Yeah, I didn't go to class for a few days." I wasn't ever going to say anything like that to them.

But in any case, my parents did get married in 1933. And then I came along in 1936. And, as I already said, my mother was then very much our caretaker, and a very dutiful mother. Very organized, and she didn't dominate or anything like that. But she clearly had a sense of order and organization that I picked up from her. I'm sure those habits of being conscientious and so on came from her. I remember she would talk on the phone when I was a teenager, and she would be very nice to these neighbors. And so my dad would say, "Get off the phone. Come on—that's enough." And she would get off and say, "George, I had to explain this to them," or, "I feel sorry for them." So she'd do this very conscientious kind of thing. But as I say, she never—I don't remember her disciplining me, or in any way being harsh, or raising her voice. And at the same time, I'm sure that she was trying to keep me in line, and mostly succeeded.

I think maybe at my uncle's funeral many of their old friends were there, the people that I never had met. And there was this very exuberant, extroverted woman in the line who was just, I could tell, outgoing and fun, and clearly had had good times with my mother and probably my father. And anyways, she met me and we talked. "You were a handful," she said. "You gave your mother just all kinds of fits." And basically it fits with an image, at least, that I'm given. And fits—partly true, that I was probably pretty rambunctious and charging around, eager, and so on and so forth.

But my mother was a great mother. And when I once took a friend, a woman friend, to visit, when she was probably around ninety—my father had died. It was probably in 2001 or 2002. She died later in 2002. And we got there. “Hey mom, this is so-and-so,” and so on. That night, when I went to the motel to be with my friend, she said, “I cannot believe how natural and easy your relationship is with your mother.” She said, “It’s just unbelievable how relaxed it is.” And I know. It never felt uncomfortable. I didn’t tell her much, but then, she didn’t tell *me* much. But it was always just a very easy relationship.

For my sister it was very different. She saw my mother as tense and this and that. She got annoyed with my mother. When my mother was ninety-one-and-a-half, she was annoyed with our mother. So my relationship with her was so nice that I think it must have put a certain kind of patience under my temperament.

**Rabkin:** How do you explain the difference between your sister’s reaction to your mother’s parenting and your own?

**Domhoff:** I don’t know. I honestly don’t. It’s that kind of thing that always brings me back to psychology. I’ve studied a lot of aspects of psychology that relate to human motivation and relationships. I’ve taught social psych and personality psych and child psych. I taught once a child psych course that was focused on just the first five years—called *The Psychosocial Development of Preschool Children*. So the answer’s very abstract or academic, that there’s this temperament, interaction, there’s this or that.

But let’s just say a little bit about my dad, then turn to my sister, who does fine and is alive and well today. My dad was very, very involved in our

upbringing. And maybe particularly in mine, although when I went off to college I know from my mom and slightly from memory he was always on the bus with my sister, who was a cheerleader. He went to all kinds of events. He tried very hard to be supportive of her.

But with me—he pushed me. He always challenged me. He would pay for good grades. And he would say, “Do better. You haven’t worked out. Did you pitch today at your canvas?” When I was a pitcher, by about sixth, seventh grade, he put up this canvas backstop. And I could go across the street and throw for the strike zone—to work out today, in effect. And then he would want to catch. And he’d catch me. I’d be pitching. I’d be annoyed. He’d say, “Keep the ball down.” I was so annoyed sometimes I was trying to hit him in the shins. I was trying to throw it so hard that it would have slipped past him and hit him in the shins and we could quit and go in the house. And we’d play Ping-Pong in the basement. And he’d probably just keep it close enough that I’d think I was going to win. It was very competitive, and it was very frustrating for me always to lose. I’d accuse him of cheating, or I’d say, “That didn’t nick the table.” I would go upstairs and tell my Mom, “He was cheating. He was this or that.” So I had a different relationship with him than my mom. He was enormously supportive, and we never had any falling out or anything like that. But he did keep the pressure on me, and I’m sure he pushed the high achievement kind of thing.

Now the interesting thing, though, when I look back on him, and I remember specific events at the time; even though he was in this business world and doing all right, he would never try to encourage me to be a businessperson, to go to business school or to be the head of a even bigger office than he was, or

anything like that. He would say things about, "Teaching is pretty good. You get summers off."

Or, the owner of the Cleveland Indians baseball team at that time—in the forties—was quite an interesting guy. He was atypical. He was more of a showman, named Bill Veeck. And he didn't wear ties. And [my father] said, "You want a job like Bill Veeck, where you don't have to wear a tie and do this and that." He certainly liked journalism from the fact that he been in it, and really did have to leave it because of the goiter. I think there were a lot of things that he had wished he had been able to do. But once he got working and the offices were competing with each other to—you know, you get bonuses by having the lowest percentages of slow accounts, or putting out the most loans, or whatever it was. He was tremendously competitive about that kind of stuff.

So he did definitely involve himself. He was at all the games. He'd worry about them. And when I get to talking about my high school football days, where I was very, very successful and very much the center of the team as the running back—and any moment I could get open, if I got a little hole—I'm going to talk about that—my one lucky inheritance in this matter was I was the fastest runner there was, without question. And certainly, accelerating and starting: for the first five yards I could beat just about anybody. In any case, at any moment on a football field I could be all of sudden scoring a touchdown. But my mom said my dad would pace around; he'd be nervous; he'd get a headache. And the next day he'd have a headache. So he was obviously very, very involved. And extricating myself from that dynamic was very much part of my growing up, in my twenties.

I was a child and grew up, you could say, in the middle of the Great Depression and World War II. But I really have no formative memories about that. We moved to different houses, but I had no real exposure to poverty. I have no memory of low-income people. I have no memory of the black-white differences and tensions in town. Nor really of the tensions that there were between the various ethnic groups. Although I remember, as a teenager, that disparaging terms about people of Italian backgrounds, or Hungarian backgrounds, and so on, were just part of everyday conversation where I lived. So I have no real memories of those particular times. My parents, I don't think, talked about those things.

Basically—and this mostly I learned later—they were very mainstream, and didn't get in arguments. I always thought, when I was in my twenties, they were apolitical. But when I talked to about that to them later, it turned out that they had always voted. They voted. They discussed it. They voted independently. But they both basically voted for the people that became president. They were the median Ohio voter. So they voted for Roosevelt and liked Roosevelt. I don't know about Truman, what they thought, but I think they were Eisenhower fans. One of them voted for Kennedy; one of them voted for Nixon in '60. I forget which, if they ever told me. And then my dad really didn't like Goldwater in '64—and he might have been the one that voted for Nixon. They actually liked Reagan, by then, to my surprise and disappointment. And then in 2000, my dad really liked Gore, "Oh, that's guy's really good." By then, he watched a lot of TV. But my mother liked George Bush. My father died shortly before the election, but I took my mother, in her wheelchair, to vote. And she voted for Bush, George Bush. (laughs)

So there they were, these centrists, where one would go one way and one would go the other. Well, I want to use that as a way of saying it wasn't like it was an idyllic childhood, but it was certainly not riven by racial, religious, class, or even familial kinds of tensions.

But—and we're still working up mentioning about my sister—but there were some traumas for me that were scary. And they involve the deaths of my grandparents. The first one was that my mother's father, my maternal grandfather, up and died just with a heart attack, when my mother was seven-and-a-half months pregnant, in 1940. It was a total shock to her and to everybody else. I don't remember it at all, but what I know was then my sister was born prematurely. Three or four days after this death my mother went in the hospital and my sister was born. So she was born a little bit early, in a time of real tension.

My only memory of it is that my mother wasn't there. And I remember—this could be what psych has called a screen memory, where I've rearranged it, but I just remember going down to the kitchen—it was a one-story house—going in the kitchen and there's my dad standing there with an apron on, which is just anomalous, because he couldn't cook. He was worthless on all those kinds of things. I said, "Where's my mother?" I don't remember what he said. I think she had to stay in the hospital for several days. Partly it was the custom in those days, I think. But maybe there were complications. And I may have then gone by and waved at the window.

But at any rate, that was the context in which my sister was born. And that might have been a factor in her life. She had a more edgy temperament, in a way, than I did. And she was three, almost four years younger—three-and-a-half, we say—younger. I was very organized. I liked to line up my little soldiers, and

organize my other things. But when she'd come and play with them, then she would knock them down and mess them up. That would upset me, my mother said. So she had to be careful that she didn't let my sister do those little kinds of things. So I think that that was a tough start for her.

But she was totally a normal person, from all I knew, and didn't have grievances. We didn't talk about our parents. But when she was in her twenties, then she did. She had tensions and doubts. And we did then talk. She thought that our dad didn't like her, and our mother didn't care about her, and so on and so forth. Which was dumbfounding to me, but it also fit perfectly what I had by then learned. There are studies now that show if you ask siblings about their family and how it was, they have night and day perceptions a lot of the time about the family—unless they have talked a lot about it and sort of rearranged and shared memories in such way that they've got a common construction, as we would say today. But a lot of times there's a very different view of how a family is.

In about, probably when I was in the fifth grade, probably when I was nine or ten—I think it was fifth grade—another heavy trauma happened. I came home from school, and I knew my Grandma Cornett was going to be there because she was staying with us for a visit. I came in on my bike, and she wasn't in the house. I went in the backyard, and there was she was lying dead. Had turned kind of purplish. Flies were on her. She had had a heart attack while she was hanging up the clothes.

**Rabkin:** You found her.

**Domhoff:** I found her. I was freaked out. I was just really scared. There was nobody home, and I remember running, then, through the backyard, past the garage and towards the house of a friend of mine named Geezy Cook. One of the few names I remember, and I think it's tied with this event. I remember zipping across the street. I must have looked [for traffic], but sometimes I think, "There was a car not too far away." But I went to Geezy's house and said, "My grandma's dead, she's still, and flies all over her, in the backyard." And so they called to whatever, and kept me there until my mother came home. I don't remember what my mother was doing that day. I don't think she worked. I'm pretty sure she didn't work. But in any case, then my parents came and got me. And, of course, once again my mother's in shell shock over that particular death. That one was certainly scary to me, and still was in my mind. So sudden, and the whole aspect of it was really frightening.

Somewhere in the same time, and I don't know whether it was before or after, my sister and I then experienced a similar, another trauma. My Grandma Domhoff had hardening of the arteries, they called it those days. And there was nothing they could for her. So we went to their house. We went down to Youngstown, because apparently she was near death. The adults would take turns going in the bedroom and sitting with her and holding her hand. But she was really hurting, and you'd hear the "Ahh, oh," and the moans and painful outcries and so on. And there we are in the living room, wondering what's going on, scared to death ourselves.

**Rabkin:** How old were you?

**Domhoff:** I was under ten, I know that. I'd have to dig out exactly when she died, and then of course I could figure it out. Those three deaths were far more distinctive in my memory than anything about the society at large. I certainly remember I had little toy airplanes, and I had a Lockheed something or another that had these two wings in the back. And we'd dig in the dirt and make caves. I had army trucks. But I also had cars and all that. It was just all part of a childhood world. And there was nothing that really, from the outside, I would say, that I had any consciousness of—as I said, of anything to do with the major factors in the world of religious strife, or racial strife, or class conflict, or anything like that. It was part of this sort of 'middle American life,' as I came to think of it, using Nixon's term. This middle American life in middle America, in Ohio.

I didn't know, at the time, that I'd been living in this median state that was a very working-class state. Both Youngstown and Cleveland had these clearly separate, distinctive, neighborhoods of different people. I knew there was a Little Italy. I knew that black people tended to live almost all on the east side of Cleveland. I knew by my teen years most people of Jewish background lived on the east side of Cleveland. But I didn't know the full extent of the ethnic separateness until a little later when I actually spent a summer walking through all these neighborhoods doing a survey for a newspaper that had hired me. I'll come to that a little bit later. So I grew up, I think in that sense, in a pretty sheltered kind of world.

**Rabkin:** Were your schoolmates fairly homogenous, in terms of class and ethnicity?

**Domhoff:** As far as I know. I have no memories of any [pause] childhood friends. I know I had childhood friends. I had lots of them. When we get to [talking about] seventh grade, I can speak of those matters. My two best friends were Catholics: one an Italian American, as we'd say today, and the other a Mc-something. But they were both Catholic—which had no matter in our own personal lives, or discussed or anything, but they weren't allowed to do certain things. And in particular, the best dances for young teens were at the MYF: the Methodist Youth Fellowship. And they weren't allowed to go. The church, the Catholic Church, would not allow them to go. And then in high school, they both had Protestant girlfriends that they really liked. In both cases, the parents of the girls intervened and broke up the relationship, and just badgered about it in such a way that—

So both my buddies had faced that kind of religious discrimination. I was really conscious of it and really shocked by it and puzzled by it, and didn't like it at all, of course. It did really bother me. There was something about unfairness that always bothered me. But that was the first time that I ever, that I have any conscious experience of it, was in this suburban city of Rocky River, which is homogenous in the sense of being all white and being all middle class. All white collar and on up.

Cleveland was partly stratified in those days by who lived closest to Lake Erie. Years later, it was a joke, because it was so polluted. But the big, classy houses were along the lake. And the further inland you lived, which meant a mile or two, the more it got [to be more] modest circumstances. I could certainly list the status levels of my high school friends. One of the members of our basketball team, which I'm going to speak about in a minute, he lived in a real

nice house on the lake. It was clearly twice, three times the size of ours, or anybody else's. But my friends, my two Catholic friends, Dick and Frank, they lived in modest houses—more modest houses, like we did. And our house was certainly modest. It was middle class for its day.

But other friends I don't have memories of, because we'd leave for another town. We'd move on. But I do remember a wonderful friend, I mentioned earlier, Geezy Cook, who lived on the street behind us in Lyndhurst. They had a nice, rambling kind of house. But it wasn't elegant, or anything.

I had another really good friend named Dodie Harper in Steubenville. I remember just the tiniest about Dodie, and only his name. But we were friends, and I was always there at his house. One of the stories I was going to mention—when I realized how fast a runner I was—I used to think maybe I can run so fast, because I'd be at Dodie's and it was time to go home, and it was getting dark or already dark. Maybe I'd stay too long, and I start walking for home. And I'd get scared and I'd start running. You know, just run. I'd feel like I was flying to get home. You know, just had enough wariness about your surroundings and so on. This was in Steubenville.

Steubenville was a little bit tougher town, certainly. There was a man—poor guy, I don't know anything about him. But he would walk on the street, and he was very, very—I called him the purple man. He probably had Raynaud's Syndrome, which is something I happen to have now, so the end of my fingers will be purplish. And people will notice. But they're not cold. But with my toes, I do notice, and they're cold. So the poor guy probably had some fuller version of that. But he was scary. And there're alleys in the streets in Steubenville. It was a little tougher, and a little more frank. Like the older guys

swore. They did this and that. And I'd watch them play basketball, but there was a certain wariness of them, that they might jump you. So I remember Dodie really well, and we once went with my Dad while he was fishing. We played along the creek. So I had these friends, but they were not lasting friends.

I don't have memories of any teacher, anything like that, until the seventh grade. Now I have memories of my friends, Dick and Frank, from the sixth grade. We were friends from the sixth grade through high school and when we'd see each other in college, and if we were to see each other today it would be like we'd seen each other yesterday. But we all went our separate ways into different careers. And particularly me, going into the academic world and gradually becoming more and more different from them, and being very liberal, radical, left, very liberal, whatever. They're very conventional and very conservative. And they're Republicans.

The one guy, Dick, married a Southern woman, and she's very restrained. And they're retired in South Carolina. I would say they're racists and extreme right-wingers. You see these offensive joke kind of emails. When we've chatted a few times, I've said, "Dick, you were raised on Keynes." Because he took economics, went into the business world, was a manager and all. I said, "Dick, what you took as conventional wisdom is now thrown out, but it's right: we should be priming the economy." He won't have any of it.

And the other guy's father was a milkman—which was no big deal, or at least wasn't in my mind. But it was different than the other fathers. My friend Dick's father had some trucks. I don't know how many, but he owned a little trucking company. He was independent enough to move out of Little Italy. They had a very nice house. My friend Dick's older sister was very accomplished and

went to college. And was a very successful person. So they were upwardly mobile. But Frank's father was a milkman, which I mention because I learned later it really bothered him. I partly learned it indirectly from his wife; her father had a construction company.

But anyway, they both went to Miami of Ohio, and I went off, as I said, to Duke. Then I went to grad schools and they went to work for Union Carbide, a big company. And at one point then Dick went to work with his brother-in-law. But the other guy stayed with Union Carbide and worked his way up. And when Union Carbide spun off some parts of it, for stock options, whatever reasons—it made Glad bags and a few things like that—he bought that. So he was probably a millionaire several times over in his adulthood and sat on a hospital board. He's now very officious. But his wife told me once that he was really self-conscious about his background. The kids always had to have their shoes totally shined, and this and that. She was, I think, a little more relaxed about that.

And he was, I think, very patriarchal in this family setting, too. Which is something that I was just not used to at all. First of all, my mother—it wasn't like they were totally egalitarian, but there was no domination of my mother by my father. She was plenty independent and very competent—and not deferential, but not fighting. They were just interactively much more equal.

So you grow apart. And I think by my mid-twenties, when I was at Cal State LA in the early sixties (jumping ahead), I was already curious, "Why are some people leftists and some people rightists?" I actually did a study with a colleague in 1964 of leftists and rightists, which I will talk about later.

So, why some people are leftists and some rightists became a curiosity to me, and I think it was because by then I was so involved in politics. I was also

wondering why I became so liberal, from such a conventional background. It wasn't like I was rebelling. It's not like my parents were fanatical Republicans, or something. But they weren't rah-rah Democrats either, or anything.

And as I say, all my friends that I went to high school with, I don't think any of them—there was one other guy, who was actually from the year ahead of us, who later became, for a brief time, a professor. But there were only one or two others that I went to high school with who became an academic or liberal—with probably 80 to 90 percent of the people I went to high school with went to college. It was a very good suburban high school. But they all went into business and law, and most of them stayed in the Ohio area, although I have one high school friend who I just read an obit on, who left Ohio. He was a very nice, quiet, low-key, nonathletic kid. I just knew him. We were friends and all, but we didn't hang out much. But turns out he had gotten a master's degree and had a couple of inventions, and had done some interesting things. He died in Connecticut just recently. So he had moved a little bit outside the usual orbit. But most of them not. I doubt that that there were any other leftists in there, and only one or two professors. When I went to a reunion, now many years ago, I had come the furthest distance as far as geography. I came from California and I was actually visiting my parents when I went out. I maybe have one other classmate that I know of that moved to California at some point.

So I grew up in a suburb. It was much more provincial, parochial than some other Cleveland suburbs. Not cosmopolitan. The way I learned that was I tried to explain to people I was from near Cleveland. Then I'd say Rocky River, and they'd never heard of it. So I would just say, "Look, I'm from near Cleveland. I'm from just outside Cleveland." And just lots of people would say

to me, “Oh, you must be from Shaker Heights.” Which was a much more cosmopolitan suburb on the other side of town. And it and University Heights and a couple of others were really the elite suburbs of the wealthy. Then further out were some towns that I knew about, and I knew they had horses and all of this. They were rich people. But people wouldn’t have heard of those either because they weren’t big-time famous things. But Shaker Heights, people have heard of. People go around the world from Shaker Heights.

And a guy that I kind of knew a little bit as a young man, but not in high school, a guy—I can’t think of his first name now, but his name is Wolfe—he’s been running one of these Nader things on health for decades and decades. He was from Shaker Heights. Which has often happened—which is also part of my observation that makes me very wary of various theorists that’ll we’ll come to, who are always talking about, “The working class, the working class is rising up.” And yet again and again, these liberals are often from well-to-do kinds of backgrounds, often people who have been in some way mistreated because of their race, religion, or ethnicity, and have been “othered” in some way, as we’d say today.

But there’s got to be something else to it, too. Because I have never been othered. I was never anything but a standard issue white male in growing up. I didn’t realize that, but obviously that was the invisible kind of thing where *you just are*. You’re there. You take it for granted. I never felt excluded by anybody, or mistreated. I certainly knew we weren’t rich and there were these rich people. But they weren’t really part of my universe.

So anyway, that answers your question, in a long-winded way, but it gets me thinking. I think the moving around made it so, when you’re that young,

even though these were close friends and intimate friends, I just don't have any memories of them or any contact with them. But once we were settled—and maybe this was about the time you become aware, have a self-consciousness—that then I remember a lot of people from high school, a lot of events and so on.

But up until then it's mostly things that I remember about my family. My mother had one sister. My father also had a sister who was younger. That meant I had two cousins on my mother's side, my two cousins, a boy and a girl. Then I had a male cousin on my father's side, on my aunt's side. They lived in Pittsburgh, so we would see something of them. But I only had three cousins. Then to learn later my Dad had twenty-six or twenty-seven cousins. It was kind of funny, the contrast. So I lived in a very nuclear family—far from other relatives. Time-wise, it would take a couple or two and a half hours to drive through all these little towns, including these Amish towns where you had to be careful—you know, buggies come out—driving from Cleveland down to Youngstown. Pittsburgh was even further until all those turnpikes were built. And by that time I was much older.

**Rabkin:** Do you have other memories from your time before college that you want to talk about?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. Let me just turn, then, to school. I may have to go back and look at my grades. I've got my report cards from elementary school and all that. My mother saved them and then put them in a scrapbook. But from the time I was in the sixth grade in Rocky River, I was an excellent student, conscientious. But there was no way that I was an intellectual, or inquiring, or had, "an interest in ideas." It was something you did and did well. I'd always go home and do my

homework. And I wanted to do well. It was important to do well. So in that sense, I had a great grounding in a great education on the basics. Not the classics. We did take some Spanish. I don't remember any of it. We couldn't speak, but I could read it a little bit. But in no way was it intellectual.

What I got into in junior high school that I liked a lot was journalism. I think by the seventh grade I was writing for the newspaper. And I had a teacher, I do remember her name, Miss Newell. She would be critical of my writing. I realize now that she was pushing me to do even better. And she probably thought it was all right. But I would be annoyed and try harder and do better. So she probably molded me a lot on that. And so, I worked on it. From that day forward, I worked in journalism. There were a lot of ways in which I probably thought I was going to be a journalist. I liked writing term papers on the old-time journalists, on [John] Peter Zenger and the freedom of the press. It just seemed like a very honorable, exciting kind of profession.

Okay, I'm going to turn soon to the fact I was really only interested in sports. But the point is that I did work on these papers in junior high, and then the same way in high school. I was the sports editor of the high school paper, and we'd have to go and set up a page, which meant there would be blocks of type and ink things on little lead plates. I had to set it up and move stuff around. And the same way when I was in college: I went right into writing for the school newspaper, called *The Duke Chronicle*. I think my junior year I was the sports editor. My senior year I was a columnist, a crusading columnist, all about things on campus. (laughs) So the news things were there, but it wasn't about bigger politics, or the fact that there had been a Hungarian uprising. I go back and think, wow, I didn't even know about that, I don't think. I have a whole set of the

newspapers from my junior year and I can look at it and say, “Wow, I don’t remember any of that.” So all of that international and national news, most of it was just going right by me, and I didn’t care. But I was very much then in journalism.

Now, as part of that—this is something I want to come back and talk about, which may be today or another time where it fits—after my freshman year, I think, I had the opportunity to work as a copy boy, it was called, for *The Cleveland Press*, which was one of the biggest newspapers in Ohio. It was an afternoon paper. They called themselves a “the newspaper that serves its readers.” A copy boy was somebody who went around to each reporter’s desk and would pick up any copy, any piece of paper they’d thrown in a wire basket. You’d take it and either take it downstairs, or put it in a tube and send it down. Sometimes you’d run downstairs and get proofs. So I was kind of up and down two or three floors in this building. And I had other little jobs. Sometimes I’d have the four to twelve shift, where I’d have to pull stories off the machines and answer the phone.

And at least one summer, for long weeks and maybe a month or two, I worked the graveyard. I worked midnight to 7 a.m. sitting there. By 1 or 2 a.m. you were all alone. And you’re sitting at the main copy desk, and somebody calls and says, “What was the score of such and such a game two weeks ago?” And we had all our books there—meaning me and others who had that job. And you’d tell them these factoidals—they’d call them today—but we were the newspaper that served its readers. And oh, at 2 a.m. I’d had to go pull something off this wire, or something came in, or by 5 a.m. I had to crank up this or that. Six a.m., you know, or whatever it was, people started to come in and do this. So, I

had a whole, very specific job of just hanging around answering phones and tending print machines. There were things you did at certain hours to prepare for the day.

So I had a lot of ink in my blood from that. And during my senior year at Duke, while I was writing these columns for the newspaper, I also had a job. I was what I called a rewrite man for the afternoon newspaper downtown called *The Durham Sun*. *The Durham Morning Herald* and *The Durham Sun* were owned by the same company and basically what we would do at *The Durham Sun* is rewrite *The Durham Morning Herald*.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** So I would come in. I was a sports guy, and I'd look at the stories and look at the angles and what had happened. And then I'd say, "Okay, here's where we could do something." Or, "God, we've got to find out more about this superstar." So I'd call the coach, call a couple other people, get some background. Then I'd essentially rewrite the story, but I'd add, say, the coach's reflection on the game was such-and-such, or that people say this kid's headed for glory, a scholarship, or whatever. So I was working then very much as a newspaper guy. But all the time doing really well in school.

Once I got to high school, I was really a good student. I can't remember if I was a super-good student before that. But basically I got all A's in high school, except for one B plus, and it might have been in mechanical drawing or something. I was very competitive at that point, and I purposely did not take typing because I thought I wouldn't do well in it. I then had to teach myself to type. And I did type the right way, but I had to teach myself. But I didn't want to

risk a B in typing. So I took all the standard courses in physics and chemistry and everything like that. And then history and geography—whatever it was. I took ‘em all and I got A’s.

I ended up as co-valedictorian of my class. There was me and there were three young women. We were the valedictorians of this really good high school class. And we had to take a test—I think it was an achievement kind of test. I don’t think it was an IQ or that kind of stuff. But there was some test we took. There was a statewide test, and to my delight and surprise—and I kept the story—I was in the top 1 percent. My name appeared in the paper.

**Rabkin:** For the state?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, for the state. At that point I knew I was a pretty good student. But I was still—I want to say that when I went off to college I was so scared. I took nothing for granted. I just assumed I had done well because of hard work and I had to, had to, had to keep working hard.

**Rabkin:** You didn’t think of yourself as especially intellectually gifted?

**Domhoff:** No. I thought it was all motivation and hard work. Which is what I had really been taught, too. I never thought that I was in any way smart, or a genius, or had insights, or anything like that. I was not even close to thinking that kind of thing. Because I knew that I was working harder and more disciplined than these other people, that I would study. Even in college, I out-studied everybody. I mean, I would study so damn much for these exams. I’d go to bed at 2:00 a.m., and there would be three or four things I hadn’t remembered

that I was sure I wasn't sure of. And I got up in the morning and I'd review them.

Then what I'd do is get ready to walk to the exam site, and I'd have this piece of paper with those tough definitions, or the key four points about a certain thing. I would have those with me. I would look at them just before I'd walked into that classroom. Because it was small classes, we weren't into cheating that I know of. Anyhow, I was never going to cheat. But I'd look at those things and then I'd walk into that classroom. They'd either give us a blue book or we'd show them our blue book was empty. The first thing I'd do is what today we'd call downloading; I'd download that information from my head that I was shaky on, and I'd write down, "And X is Y. This formula is this. There're three reasons for this. This means that compared to this. The contrast is that—" I'd write it down before I even looked at the damn exam.

**Rabkin:** So you'd write yourself a little legal cheat sheet.

**Domhoff:** Yeah. So I was into it. And you know, it jumps ahead, but then I was in this class of six hundred guys. I don't know whether the women were included in class standing—there were two or three hundred women on another campus a mile and a half away at Duke. So I don't remember whether they counted in this. But at the end of the first year I was sixth in my class.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** So I was heavily into it.

**Rabkin:** How did you decide to go to Duke?

**Domhoff:** Okay, well I can go back to that. And the answer is two things: one is sports, which I want to talk about if I'm going to be at all balanced. And the second is I don't like winter. I hated winter, and I knew I didn't want to be in winter. No way, no how. But also, if you were going to play baseball in those days and get a chance to really play a lot, you had to go to the South. They didn't have these great big field houses where baseball players now play a lot indoors, I think, in the North. Or have batting cages and all that stuff. No, there was nothing like that. So I went to Duke basically because of baseball, is the answer.

But let me go back to my schooling and upbringing and memory of myself. I've said to you I was just a really good student, but not an intellectual. I was a journalist. I did like it. I did like writing. I did like the fun of organizing the newspaper. I did like that a lot. And there was a fair chance, I think, that I could have ended up in that. Although it wasn't like I sat there anguished, "Should I or shouldn't I?" It didn't happen that way. But it could have easily and naturally happened.

I'm pretty sure *The Cleveland Press* would have hired me or one other newspaper in Cleveland, if I had asked them, with the college record I had, the journalistic experience, the fact I had worked for *The Cleveland Press*. There were some people that worked for those newspapers that really liked me, including one guy who just a little bit older that I worked for the summer I did the survey for him, a guy named Seymour Raiz. Seymour ended up the managing editor of a Columbus newspaper. So I know I could have gone into that world and I could have liked it. I liked the excitement of it. I could have been either a sports reporter or I could have been maybe an investigative journalist, something like that.

### **A Passion for Sports**

But those weren't my goals. The truth is that my goals were around sports. I've already said to you how fast a runner I was. I was also well coordinated. I was stocky. By the six or seventh grade, I was the best athlete there was of all of them, on football, basketball, baseball. I was also the fastest runner. You couldn't play track and baseball, so I was never going to play track. But once in the eighth grade we went to a summer Olympics down in Cleveland. There was a wide range of kids there. I won the hundred-yard dash just like that, as an eighth grader in a pretty mixed crowd. I don't know what all parts of the city were there or whatever. I don't remember the number of other kids. But I had those abilities and I had those desires.

I wanted to be a baseball player, is what I wanted to be. The thing was that size-wise I was a normal size as a young teenager. In other words, I wasn't smaller until I was older, so to speak. So I never thought of myself as smaller back then. And I was certainly as strong, and could push and shove and so on. By about my junior year in high school everybody was outgrowing me.

But these sports were my desire and took up the most of my time. That's what I read about. When I read fiction, it was these sports books. There was a writer at that time, and I read all his books, John R. Tunis. He wrote books that I now see were just lightly fictionalized stories of some of the players that were around. There was one by him I read called *The Kid from Tomkinsville*. It was really a book about Ted Williams: string bean guy and all of this, being a famous baseball player.

So that's what I was doing, and doing all the time, and being encouraged to do—as well as to be a good student. I saw no contradiction, where I grew up, between being what today would be called a jock, what would then be called an athlete, and being a good student. There was just no tension or problem for me. Maybe it's because of the schools that I was going to.

The sport I loved best was basketball, and I'll start with that first. I played it all the time. I was really, really good. My freshman year on our team I had twice as many points as any other player on the team. Sophomore year on JV I scored more points than anybody. I was the best player. But by my junior year, when I'm on the varsity, I'm not a starter. Not that there were any starters, really, from our grade. But I thought I should have been. I'd go in the game off the bench; I'd often get a fair amount of points. But it was clear at that point that these guys were a lot bigger.

And in my senior year was one of those magic moments for me that then I carried away, that were a source of pleasant memories for decades, and still now. I often tell present-day teenagers that I know they will later cherish big moments. I say, "Your season was great. It was magical. It was a great team, a great bunch of guys. And you'll love it forever." We had that kind of team my senior year. It had my two best buddies and me, and a big guy that lived on the lake whose family was clearly well-to-do. They either owned a box company or a furniture company. And he later—because of where they went to get away from unions, I realized—they moved to North Carolina. His name was Chic Robinson. And he was about 6'4. The nicest guy. You know, just a big, amiable—executive, is what he turned out to be.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** But the other guy on the team was also 6'4. His father was a garage mechanic, maybe he had his own garage. And he was also our summer baseball coach in these amateur leagues. His son was sort of the opposite of Chic. But they're both big. And then my two buddies, Dick and Frank. We were the team. And we didn't have any substitutes that were that good. It was a big drop off, although a couple of them were really annoyed they didn't play more. But in any case, people called us the Iron Five, because we just played basically the whole game unless we were way ahead. And we started the season against a really good team and they beat us—maybe the second game. Then we won the next fifteen or sixteen games. Won our league and we were really looking good. We played together so well. I guess we maybe won the first game in the playoff, but we came up against the same team that had beaten us at the start of the season. We couldn't beat them. They had a couple of big guys, and one of our big guys fouled out. And then one of my buddies fouled out. I had to guard a guy who was a little bigger than me. And we lost.

**Rabkin:** Mm.

**Domhoff:** It ended up, I scored the most points in that game. I was the one that lasted that long. I didn't foul out. It was a wonderful time. But it was clear that I'm not going to go to college and play basketball. But as I say, I loved it the most and I played it into my fifties.

We had a great intramural team in college one year that was also a magic time, where we ended up with this great team in a fraternity that was made up

mostly of student athletes and people who were in student government and so on. And two of my buddies on the team ended up MDs. And the other guy got a law degree. And me. And one of my buddies, one of my two best buddies from college, who's got an MBA, worked for big companies, he was our sub. So we had this great team. We got up to the final game. We played the big jock fraternity. Great big guys, all on football scholarships. Some of them went on—one to be a Hall of Fame quarterback. So we had a great time.

And when I came to Santa Cruz, our first year—they wanted us to interact with students. The first thing you know, we got a basketball team. We're playing down at that church that's now called Vintage Faith Church, right at the corner of Highland and Mission.

**Rabkin:** That's The Abbey.

**Domhoff:** The Abbey, yeah. You know, we were playing in their gym. It's me and Marshall Sylvan, who stayed around, and Ron Ruby, who stayed around until his retirement and death of cancer, and a guy named Dick Morris who was on the team to have the exercise and ended up chair of statistics at Harvard. And Bill Doyle in biology, our big guy at 6'4." And we had a team ever after. I was usually running it, and organizing the teams. You know, getting them out there. We had a team into my early fifties. We played into the late eighties. Then my back was finally too bad. I'd still have a basketball in my car and would shoot around until a few years ago. So it meant a lot to me, which at my age seems embarrassing to say.

So basketball was a big, big part of my life, but so was football. And from the day I played football, which was originally just touch football—but from the

day I was on the freshman team I was the best player as far as running the ball. I was so fast a runner and I could catch the football if they threw it to me—and so I made three or four touchdowns one of the first games I played in. I was not big by any means. In my sophomore year I played enough to get a letter and make some big runs. My junior year I was the key ball carrier, but on a terrible team. We were 0-9. But again, I carried the ball practically every other time, made a lot of yards. They didn't give us the records. They didn't tell us. Only once the coach said—the guy called me 'son'—he said, "You did really well today, son. You made over two hundred and something yards." But it's not in the newspaper like it is today.

My senior year, we won four, lost four, and tied one, I think it was. But they did put in the paper the people that were the leading touchdown scorers. And from the start of the season in all of Cleveland County I was one of the top touchdown guys. I was always in the top three or four. I was in the running for the most touchdowns for that season, which seems so trivial now. But I was really trying hard, and one game I opened the game by returning a kickoff for a hundred yards, and I caught a pass from my buddy Dick in the end zone. I ran for sixty yards on another one. So my fast start and my speed, just carried me. In my senior year I was 5'6 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch and 155 pounds. So I was this quick back, and scored a lot of touchdowns. And I played on defense. I was the safety man. I had to catch runners when they got away from our other players and I'd pull them down. Or the other player got them stopped, so then I jump on and push.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** But I thought, I'm not really tackling. These other guys are tackling him. Well, here's an example of just how bigger things in the society affect you: I was ambivalent about football. I did like running for the football and catching it. You could have players in college that would just come in and out of the game for one or two plays, or just play on offense. Well, right at that time, the same old stuff that we always hear, they decided football had become too specialized and it had to go back to the day when men were really men and you could play both offense and defense, with few substitutions allowed. So they instituted a set of rules that lasted for, I think, four years. Just by coincidence that was my college career. (laughs) And those rules were that you had to play offense and defense basically. You couldn't do much substitution from '54 to '58—I don't know the exact time.

What that meant was I wasn't going to get asked to play football at a really good school, not at my size. And furthermore, I didn't want to play defense against those big guys. I liked running away from them, and I didn't mind being tackled. But I wasn't interested in playing defense too. So what happened was that a whole lot of schools that were small schools in Ohio—Ohio Wesleyan and John Carroll, Kenyon—all these little schools asked me to come and play football for them. If somebody had just come up to me and said, "We think you could make it in the Big Ten as a running back," then I might have taken it real seriously. But it wasn't going to happen that way.

Now, the other funny thing, getting to the fact I was a good student, the guys from Princeton wanted to me come. They invited me to a banquet. I'd be a student athlete and so on. I don't think I took the invitation to go to the banquet in Cleveland and go to this Princeton kind of thing. A guy from Colgate came to

see me. They were a pretty big deal. And it was a traumatic experience for me, because he said, "If you're going to be playing football. You're going to have to really work out. You're going to have to put on twenty pounds. You're going to work out all of this time." As he's talking, I'm thinking, "I don't have the slightest interest in doing this." And he's got this bully-boy, macho style I didn't like anyhow. So it's like he was testing me, right? "Are you up for this? Are you a man enough to do this?" The kind of thing you'd mock today. I thought, "Oh God, I'm not going to devote my life to trying to put on twenty pounds to play football at Colgate." That sounded like stupid to me.

**Rabkin:** Not to mention winter.

**Domhoff:** Yes. So it was out of the question. But see, winter, if you're going to play football—okay. That goes with the territory, so to speak. But it was just interesting that a guy from that big a school would ask me. I was flattered, but talking to him was just downright offensive. A similar kind of thing happened, I might say, in terms of how I ended up at Duke.

I also got invited to go to a reception for students in the Cleveland area that might want to go to Yale. And I don't know why, or whether my dad encouraged me, or wanted me to go to the dinner, or whatever, but I went to that. Now, I didn't know Yale from schmale, really. I had no idea of the status ladder of these schools. And it didn't interest me much. But what was so striking to me, that I never forgot—when I talked to the guy, some snotty kind of guy who was obviously an alumni. It wasn't like some big deal from the school. They weren't heavily recruiting. They were just looking over really good students. And that's all they saw of me, in terms of they weren't talking sports. So at any

rate, this guy says, "Well what would you like to do in college?" I said, "Well, I'd like to be on the school paper. And I'd like to play on the baseball team." And he said—and he kind of almost huffed: "Hah!" he said, "Look, you've got to take one or the other when you to college." He said, (snotty voice) "*The Yale Daily News* is every day." He went on and on.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** I feel almost [like] I'm making it up, but just his whole haughtiness. "You've got to take one or the other." And I wasn't really, as I say, because I disliked winter and had this real desire to go to Duke, going to go to Yale. But it was really off-putting to me, and I thought, "No," to myself. I remember at the time I thought, No, I'm going to do both. I'm going to do both of these things. I'm going to go to a college where I can do both of those things.

Anyway, I only applied to Duke, which I'd read about in a magazine. And they had a great tradition of baseball, and they had a famous coach, who wasn't there by the time I got there. (laughs) But we had another really nice coach. So I applied to Duke. They didn't give me a scholarship or anything, but they waived my tuition, and it was understood that I might be a pretty good baseball player. But it wasn't like they recruited me for baseball or anything. I chose Duke, and they chose me. Today people apply to lots of schools. But I sure didn't.

But at any rate, the other thing I want to say in terms of sports is that, of course, the sport I ended up playing was baseball. I was good at baseball. I did want to be a baseball player. And I did want to be an outfielder. I'm left-handed, and therefore I could not play shortstop, or second base, or any position where I would have had a real chance. Because you've got to be a lot bigger, it turns out,

to play baseball. That was already becoming apparent then. By that time, I was looking through *Who's Who in Baseball*, and I figured out the average size of these players at various positions. I thought, "Oh boy." There were still a few outfielders roughly my size, but I knew it was going to be uphill. But on the other hand, I was a good hitter. And I was a good outfielder.

I was also a good pitcher as a kid and teenager. I mentioned my dad—From the sixth grade on, it was just hilarious. My mom would take me and five, six guys in one car, and one other adult would take the rest of the team. And we'd go over and play, over the bridge into Lakewood, the nearby suburb, and play in these leagues that were the equivalent of Little League. But it was sort of a sixth grade league. I was the best player. And the same in the seventh and eighth. There was no stopping me as a pitcher—and left-handed. My dad had taught me a change-up pitch. And I'm crooked armed, and so my fastball would dart—it moved. So the batters would have a tough time. I'd throw them this change-up curve. So through my sophomore year I was quite a good pitcher, as well, and then I'd play in the outfield. I did end up, incidentally—the bragging part—I did end up all-Cleveland in football my senior year, and also in baseball. And then there was one newspaper that said I was all-Ohio in baseball. I hit—I had a high average, .620, .630. And I did a little pitching. But by my senior year, I was mostly an outfielder.

It was hard for me to make that adjustment. But by that point, there was an adjustment that had to be made. And so my junior year I played a fair amount in the outfield. I played all the time, but I didn't pitch as much. And then my senior year, there was a guy who was only a sophomore that did end up pitching in the minor leagues. He was a big guy, a big left-hander, and he was our best

pitcher. The coach didn't want to hurt my feelings, but when there was a key game he'd pitch. But a couple times I had to come in from center field to pitch the last two innings, or get him out of a jam to save the day. It was clearly—my role was changing.

When I went to Duke, I was trying to be both pitcher and outfielder. And they said, "You're going to have to choose." I looked at those other pitchers and how hard they threw it, and I said, "I'm an outfielder." So they put me out in left field, which is the easiest field for throwing, because I didn't have an arm that could throw it a mile. But that's where you put the little fast guy that's going to lead off, which was then what I did in college.

And I played left field in college and in summer leagues, and after college. One year my wife and I went back to Cleveland so my parents could see more of our children. I think it was the summer of '63 or '64. I'd been out of college since '58. And I said, "I'm not going to try to take enough batting practice to be able to hit a left-handed pitcher. They're tough for a left-handed guy." And I hadn't learned to be a switch-hitter, so I just played against right-handers. But I had a couple of great games.

And then, I had actually forgotten about my summer in Cleveland in '63 or '64. Geoff Dunn—you know, the local writer. By the eighties he was our grad student at UCSC in sociology. Geoff and I became pretty good buddies. And he's real close with one of my sons. So Geoff found this article from some newspaper and sent it to me. I'd completely forgotten I'd won the 'sandlot star of the week' that summer. So I was still out there playing at that time. But that was the last time I played hardball.

And then when I came to UCSC we had a softball team. We played slow pitch against the students. By then I could really hit a ball, compared to the other faculty, let us say. (laughter) So the image was—maybe [Michael] Cowan said this to you, I forget—“Well, he was really an athlete.”<sup>1</sup> From their point of view, I was a very good baseball player. But, in fact, by the time I was a senior in college, I was a below average baseball player.

One of the reasons I could hit the ball a long way—in Rocky River, the first house we lived in was at the end of the street. There was a slag pile there. And I used to go out with the bat and hit and pretend I was hitting it to left field and right field. I’d stand there. I wasn’t working out. I was just having fun and thinking, and “Yeah, wow, you could be great.” You know, I’m in the sixth grade, seventh grade. I didn’t realize it, but it was putting bigger forearms on myself. It was like I was working out. Now, in those days, it was bad to go lift weights and all. You’d be muscle-bound. You shouldn’t do that. So we didn’t do that. Even in college we just stretched. We didn’t lift. Sports leaders changed their mind about that later. But I had, in effect, done all these exercises, so I had this good forearm strength. And if somebody throws a softball to a guy that’s played against some really good players in college and he has big forearms—I could hit it anywhere I wanted to and way over their heads.

In a way, though, that was bad because it became my image on the campus: here’s this jock we have here that also teaches. It far overwhelmed any image of me as any kind of scholar. It was amazing.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Cowan provided some background research for this oral history. See Cowan’s oral history, Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *“It Became My Case Study”: Professor Michael Cowan’s Four Decades at UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/it-became-my-case-study-professor-michael-cowans-four-decades-at-uc-santa-cruz>

Do you know Marshall Sylvan at all? You've heard of him—Marshall is a very, very fine athlete. He'd actually, I think, played maybe freshman basketball at his college. He has a different build than I do. He's a little bigger than I am. He's a more wiry guy. But we essentially—he would pitch and I would play left field. Then they'd try to hit as far as they could and I'd catch it. If it was a left-handed batter we'd just switch and I'd go over to right field and Marshall would carefully pitch it—because he was a really cagey athlete. They had no choice but to hit it to right field. Then I'd catch it. So we had this team. But there were just two or three of us that could play. Turning back to intramural basketball, Marshall was a much better basketball player than I was. Then later came another guy who had been on Duke's basketball team. He didn't get much playing time at Duke, but he was an incredible player. So we had this really great fun in that. That was part of our intramural stuff. So the sports carried on for a long time.

I want to say one other thing about my growing up that carried on as an image, and I never fully understood it or assimilated it, or really meant it. I probably was a handful. I probably was rambunctious. But I was never a fighter. I never hit anybody. I was never in a fistfight. I could lose my temper and yell sometimes, especially at umpires and referees. I was very competitive. But in about the fifth grade I was apparently interrupting in class or disrupting by—I don't know whether it was talking to others, or they'd say, "What's the answer?" and turn to Susie and I'd say, "The answer's X!" Although I don't remember that subjectively, what I remember is I had to meet with the teacher and my parents because I was disruptive. The plan they made was that at the end of the week the teacher would send home a report on my behavior, and that determined whether

I got to go be taken to baseball games or whatever for that weekend. I didn't have that trouble before. I never was really disciplined. After that episode, I never had any trouble.

But there was something about my behavior and image that suggested that I was maybe more wild or volatile than I think I was. And one incident in high school really brought this home, and I'll never forget it. I was on the student council. I don't think I was ever president or anything, but I was always elected to something. So I was on the student council, and we would meet in the teacher's lounge. It was no big deal. It wasn't that big a room. It was probably as big as your kitchen. But one day I got called in by the dean of students or whatever—it wasn't the principal—Ms. McKay. And then she—and it might have been my buddy Dick that was with me—called us in and she asked us if we had done anything mischievous the last time we were in the faculty lounge, where they have coffee and stuff. And we said, "No." And we hadn't. We didn't know of anything. So she said, "Are you sure that you didn't put the salt into the sugar?" And we said no, no we hadn't. The thing was I don't think she believed us. I think that was a little annoying to me.

But the interesting thing was, from my point of view—and I think it had some effect on me in terms of my image and goody two-shoe types. There are a couple guys that I knew, and they were these namby-pambies that ended up bankers and accountants—you know, small-time bankers. They were wimpy. And I was certainly a much better student, too. Anyway, lo and behold, they confessed. They did it. Now, I didn't even talk to them about it. But anyway, we were absolved and they confessed. But it was interesting that Dick and I were the ones who were accused. And we hadn't even contemplated such a thing.

It was a thing that happened—so I'd be known in college, 'Wild Bill.' I had a classmate from Duke that later moved to Southern California. He was a very stolid kind of physicist guy. And he was funny, because he was so stolid. He came up to visit me once. Probably in the 1980s he was up this way. He always liked to call me something like 'Wild Bill' and all. "Well," he said, "I hear you're a great teacher. But you're just wild as ever, aren't you?" I said, "What are you talking about?" And he said that this student that he had known—because he had asked, the guy had said he was from Santa Cruz, and he said, "Do you know Bill Domhoff?" And this guy said, "Yeah, I was in his class." But anyway, he said what this student had told him was that I had walked into the classroom—and it was Nat Sci 2. That was the biggest classroom then and I taught a lot in there, because I was teaching big classes. And I'd walked into the classroom—you know how they at least used to have these tables. They're probably about this high, or maybe a tiny lower. [demonstrates]

**Rabkin:** Like hip high or so, down at the front of the room?

**Domhoff:** Yeah.

**Rabkin:** Yeah.

**Domhoff:** So anyway, he said that this student had told him that I'd walked in the room, thrown my notes on the table, jumped up on the table and said, "This is the way it's going to be!"

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** I swear to God I never, *never* did anything like that ever, *ever*. Unless I've like hallucinatory repressed it. What I do is very casual. I'd come in and say, "How you doing? I'll Bill Domhoff." And then maybe just a little hip hop—

**Rabkin:** Perched on the table.

**Domhoff:** Yeah, so your full rear end's on the table. I'd sit down and talk to them. My legs are dangling, and I'm visiting with them, and I'm dressed about like this. We didn't wear coat and ties. We were all Bill, Frank, Sam, Joe, Mary, at that time.

So this image, then, was that I was this wild man. I'll hear other stories like that, that I did this or did that. There was one recently, and I thought, "I just can't believe that I really did that." It hasn't really dogged me. If anything, it's an asset, in a strange way. But it does make me a little uncomfortable. It just doesn't fit with my sense of self, given what I told you about how my mother was, and that I was, except for that disciplining in fifth grade or so, I was a well-behaved student. I did not get in trouble. I was not in the principal's office for doing this or that, or anything like that. I certainly was exuberant in school and sports settings. And in the class I'm sure I would answer, all that. But not doing anything untoward or crazy. So that, to me, was something that was puzzling, but it would visit me every once in a while.

The other thing that I want to say about my high school days is that the third thing that was a great deal of my time and focus was a girlfriend. I was fairly shy, but pretty interested in girls, and pretty focused, and just looking and looking and looking and looking. And desiring and desiring. All the other people were taking dance classes— My dad said, "That's sissy stuff." So I was an

awkward dancer at first. But at any rate, this one attractive girl invited me on a hayride. And she was very nice. I thought, "Wow." So I got involved with her. And I was involved with her then—I think it was the last part of our sophomore year into my junior and senior year. We also then were a couple in my freshman and sophomore year. And during my junior year—

**Rabkin:** Of college?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. Then we broke up. She wanted to get married, and I wasn't prepared to do that. I didn't really, for sure, think I wanted to marry her. She was at a state college in Ohio. So we'd write and this and that. So if I really say, "What was I doing during my high school years?" I was playing sports virtually all the time. I was then doing my homework at night. And if I wasn't doing one of those two things, I was with her and we were making romance. So that was a pretty full schedule.

**Rabkin:** You and your buddies?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. But back then we would never talk about that or assume anything. It was all very private and focused. But we weren't dating around, or going to the other town, or going downtown, looking around, or anything like that. So you had a girlfriend. She was very proper, very nice and all that. But you were really spending a lot of time with her whenever you could. So that was an enormous amount of time.

I used to say that my life originally had been one of sports and books, and then it was sports, books, and a girlfriend. And then, by the time I was twenty-

five, twenty-six, it was sports, books, a wife, and children. And so, most of my life was those relatively few things.

And then gradually, the children grow up. I'm divorced. And I'm too old for sports. So back to one thing: just books. But a few years ago, I got married again. So my life is not just books. But those have been the few themes of my life. Not traveling, not looking at art, not learning about music, not reading the classics. But always sort of straight ahead: to try to discover something new, to write the story by the deadline, to have a good time Friday night at the dance and afterwards, to do well in sports, to be there for your kids. It's not been discursive. It's not been reading about the ancient past—although I now listen to tapes about history and all. I had no interest in those kinds of things. No interest in music, arts, humanities. I never, except for these kinds of sports books I grew up on—maybe teenage boy fiction, whatever that would mean—I hardly read any novels. Never have in decades. There are probably four or five I have read outside of high school and college courses.

So I think I have to be understood, or understand myself in a certain way, as not an intellectual. I'm a researcher. I'm a social scientist who does research on specific questions like about power or about dreams. But I wasn't this wide-ranging intellectual, and never quite was. I think much of this was perceived by a lot of my colleagues, and maybe made me somewhat different from many of them. (laughs)

That also came out when we were urged by the chancellor [Dean McHenry]<sup>2</sup> and provost to, “Interact with these students as much as you can,” in the first year or so. So at a certain point, three or four of us were coaches for student teams in basketball and rugby. As for me, I coached the baseball team one year. I think it was useful to me in that I’d get to know male students that might otherwise by then be standoffish about being intellectual. But if they knew me through basketball or baseball or softball, maybe they could take a seemingly “sissy” course like *Child Psychology*. Or a sissy subject, like dreams. So I think it broke some stereotypes of the kind they’d acquired (stupidly, sadly), for us to be playing sports with them or coaching them.

I’m not so sure how it affected my image with the faculty. (laughs) But it was fine. My colleagues were always good to me. I liked my role. I wasn’t expected to have these grand insights, to be able to reach for these grand levels of knowledge. I think they knew I just poked around and found stuff that was new and brought it back and wrote it up in a real straightforward fashion that people could understand. But I’m certainly not a learned person, just a well-educated one that liked to do research and discover stuff. The point is that that’s the way I was all through high school and into college, and for much of my career.

**Rabkin:** Bill, I wonder if that would be a good place to stop. We’re actually almost at two hours.

**Domhoff:** Okay. Well it’s fine with me, or—

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<sup>2</sup> See the three volume oral history: *Dean McHenry: Founding Chancellor of the University of California, Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/mchenry>

**Rabkin:** And next time we could pick up, talk a bit more about your time at Duke before we move on to graduate school?

**Domhoff:** Okay, good. Then I want to talk a little then about my intellectual stuff at Duke, how I finally got involved in some things that interested me, and a couple of professors that did have an influence on me.

**Rabkin:** Great. Well let's start with that next time. Thank you.

**Domhoff:** That'll be good. And I'll think more about Duke and then Kent State—and Kent State I've thought about. It's just a wonderful year, simple, straight ahead, great teachers. Molded me, made me know I knew the stuff and that I liked it.

**Rabkin:** This is Sarah Rabkin. It's April 15th, 2013. I'm with Bill Domhoff in my kitchen in Soquel, California for our second interview. Last time we finished up talking some about your time at Duke, mostly about the athletic aspects. And you wanted, I think, to pick up and talk some more about your experiences at Duke.

### **Duke University**

**Domhoff:** Yeah, let me give a more general picture now of my time at Duke. I'd say, generally the first two years were just in many ways very great, even though I was working very hard and very insecure that I would do well in my courses. But looking back, and even during that time, it was organized. It felt good. The last two years were more disorganized, felt more chaotic, although I think it was

during that time that I probably became more of an intellectual and more academically oriented.

But let me begin at the beginning of Duke in one important way for my life, and this is that people would ask, "Where are you from?" in kind of a mild accent: "Where are y'all from?" I'd say, "I'm from Ohio." And they'd say, "Oh, y'all is a Yankee." And down you'd go; the drawl would go up. It was really striking. I thought they were just putting me on. But I came to understand, out of that and other things, the depth of the tensions between the North and South in the minds of these Southerners. I think I understood it later, intellectually, that they are a conquered minority. They were conquered during the Civil War. They were the richest people by far. Their capital was huge. There was more capital in slaves than there was in railroads and everything else. And they had a fierce resentment. They did use terrorism to restore their power. And then, lo and behold, of course, later they were overtaken by the civil rights movement, which was after my time there. But I think, out of that experience at Duke, I did come to understand in a more emotional way what I learned intellectually, later, about Southerners.

The other thing that was a background kind of thing going to Duke, related to this Yankee stuff, was the black-white situation there. And it came to me in a very forceful way because probably my sophomore year my job I was assigned to be a player on the baseball team—a checker in the cafeteria. And that means the workers that came in, you'd check off that they were having lunch. I guess it would be deducted or whatever. All I knew is I checked if they were there. And if they came in they'd say, "Smith," or "Jones," or whatever. I was

assigned to the black cafeteria. And that was kind of a shock, that there was a black cafeteria. That was the first—

**Rabkin:** The cafeterias were racially segregated?

**Domhoff:** Totally racially divided. There were no black students at Duke. These were black employees at the Duke Hospital, which was at the other end of the campus. Duke is a Methodist school. It's in the shape of a cross. You come in the main entrance and you go straight down, and there's a big chapel. As you get close to the chapel, the two arms of the cross go off in either direction. To the left, is the quad. That's where all the dorms are. Some of the dorms are fraternities. And off to the right were the academic buildings. And at the very end, was the Duke Hospital. Now there're all kinds of buildings around it on the outside of that cross, and they grew gradually. I haven't seen it in a long time, so who knows now how big that is.

But in any case, I was a checker in the black cafeteria, in the basement of hospital. And so, these young men and women would come in and say their name—often difficult for me to understand. I think it was just probably the general language of keeping a distance from whites, but maybe especially in this situation where a white guy's sitting in their cafeteria, or right at the edge of it. There was one guy that I'll never forget. When I first heard him talking, I thought maybe he was a British guy. But he had really developed his elocution. He'd been outside of the small world of Durham. I forget where. But in any case, he sat with me a few times. That made me okay. We had a lot of conversation. But I certainly then, out of that, got a sensitivity for what the situation was like, the

degree of subjugation, at least in those predominantly white power kinds of settings.

After I worked in the cafeteria—I think I did that a year—the other thing that then happened to me was, it was very interesting, and maybe was a step along towards a career I didn't see coming, was that by my sophomore, junior year, the people that ran the Duke University Athletic Association, as it was called, knew that I was on the baseball team and I was on the track team. They also knew I was a good student. So they made me a tutor of the athletes that weren't doing so well. I was making double the minimum wage. The minimum wage was a buck or buck-thirty. They were paying me two-twenty an hour. So I thought, wow, this is great. And I tutored a range of guys. I tutored them in that Bible class, of all things, because the university, as a Methodist school, required two semesters on the Bible. I was taking Spanish and I couldn't speak, but I could read and write. So I tutored a guy or two in that. And several other courses.

And I tutored a guy who went on to be a Hall of Fame football player named Sonny Jurgensen, who was a very famous Washington Redskin and could hurl a football a million miles. Sonny was a wise guy, flippant, didn't try. Blew everything off. Had some real nasty streaks about him. He had failed out at one point—maybe his freshman or sophomore year. And they sent him immediately to Indiana, maybe at the end of a fall semester. But anyway, they sent him to Indiana because they were on a quarter system. He could get in these quarters. And somehow he got himself eligible again. So he never sat out for ineligibility. Of course, today we know it's always that they fix it. I didn't know that at the time.

But one of the things they'd fix it with then, was by having people like me tutoring athletes like Sonny. So I got to know him a little bit, but not personally. He was just visiting with some tutor like he would with a professor. So it wasn't like we developed a friendship. But I knew him a little bit. He had played a little baseball and then quit, because he didn't want to get into it. And I had played intramural basketball against him. Some of the other guys were much better guys. I got to know some of them. I think everybody I tutored was a football player. But that was, of course, a great way to earn money: flexible hours and more money than I could make in the cafeteria, or anywhere else.

I also, through the Southerners that I was with—and probably half the people in the fraternity I joined were Southerners, some of them quite well-to-do. And more generally, I would say, I gradually realized I was in a school for the Southern elite; that there were a lot of big-deal Southerners, especially of North and South Carolina, that went to Duke. The most famous from my class, it turns out, was a woman I knew as Libby Hanford, but is known to the world as Elizabeth Dole, who married Senator [Bob] Dole at some particular point. She was a student government type and a debutante type, from one of these typical North Carolina small towns, or relatively small towns, of that time. And there were a couple of sons of senators. These people often went on to be wheeler-dealers in business and politics. But their attitudes towards blacks, and their statements, were just kind of breathtaking. And their willingness to say that a person that got out of line would be killed was quite stunning to me.

**Rabkin:** Can you think of an example of the kinds of comments they would make?

**Domhoff:** Well, they would always use the N-word. And they would certainly talk about, “If this guy got out of line, you’d just kill him.” Or sometimes it was “have him beaten up,” or whatever.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** I went to Duke in the fall of '54, and it was as late as '57 or '58 that this young person— I think it might have after I left Duke, but right about the time I left Duke a young man, who’s name I’ve never forgotten, named Emmett Till, who was twelve or thirteen or fourteen years old, was killed in Mississippi for allegedly looking at or whistling at a white woman. So I definitely lived down there at a time—even though there had been King’s efforts in Montgomery—I didn’t really have a consciousness of that, and it really hadn’t generalized in any way. And there wasn’t talk on the part of these whites that they were under siege in any way. I think that I lived there when their way of life was pretty intact, at least in the minds of these younger people. I think those were formative influences on me in giving me a sensitivity and a real distance from that mentality. Even though I’d certainly grown up in all-white environments, you didn’t have that kind of a mentality towards things. And there were certainly lots of places where you did interact with African Americans, in bigger settings of baseball parks, and so on.

And here I should say something that I left out. When I was about thirteen or fourteen I wrote an essay on why I wanted to be batboy for the Cleveland Indians for the fourth or fifth time year in a row, to win this contest. And that particular year I won. Ten of us were interviewed. Then we all sat out there, all proper with suits and ties. Then they called me back in. And lo and behold, I

thought it was the second round of interviews, but I had won. So I got a thousand or two thousand dollars and I got to be the batboy for the visiting teams at Cleveland for year. Then I was the Cleveland Indians' batboy the next year.

Through that, I knew the guys that ran the clubhouse, as the locker rooms were called. And I was a water boy for the professional football teams on the visiting side. So I was up close to a lot of big time sports. I was still a young, small guy. But that certainly brought me into contact with African Americans in various ways, including what I didn't understand until later, that, in a word, the more marginal guys on the teams were the ones that would be nice to me: a guy named Bobby Avila, who was a Mexican guy, not a Mexican-American, a really good player from Mexico; a Jewish guy, named Al Rosen—which was rare on a baseball team in those days or any days since. He was always good to me; and also, several of the black players.

I took one, what's called a road trip, with the Indians. I went on the train, which I hated, to Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis and then home. I thought, "Boy, this is not the life for me." That's what they rode in those days. But in Detroit, after maybe the first or second game one of the black guys said, "What are you going to do with yourself tonight, Billy?" "I'm going back to the hotel," I said, or words to that effect. They said, "Want to come with us?" So they took me to these black-and-tan clubs. And it was amazing. Get a taxi or limo, and into the heart of the inner city of Detroit, into this music and dance hall, and sit and have dinner and a show. Women would come over, "Oh you're back," or "You're in town!" and all this, and talk to them. And they'd introduce me. So here I was, the only white person, this little white guy, in this club.

So these guys were all good guys, and I knew them as people and decent. One of them that had been the first African American in the American League, he was a little more their leader. He had to just keep the vigilance. He had been through it. So he was not aloof from me, but he was just a little more ready to stand up. And these other guys—by then baseball had been four or five years integrated in the American League. And they were a little loopy-goopy about it. They were a lot of fun and good to me.

So I didn't have this sense of separateness. I certainly knew about these class distinctions, these neighborhood distinctions. I knew that, but I didn't have any real sense of these things in any intellectual way, or a historical way—at least that I remember.

**Rabkin:** What an experience for a young boy.

**Domhoff:** Yeah, it was amazing. And it was interesting then to look back. I understood at the time that some of these big deal white guys never gave me the time of day. But it was only later that I had any, I think, conceptual sense of it—that they just didn't bother. So it was like meeting with the other out-groupers. I was part of the marginal, as a batboy—and rightly so, of course. But in any case, these were formative experiences for me on black-white kinds of issues.

Turning to why the first two years [at Duke] were good, I've already mentioned I did real well in school in terms of grades. But I should say that I really was introduced to a whole range of courses. I just mentioned Duke was a Methodist school. One of the requirements was you had to take a year of Bible. We had to first study the Old Testament and then the New Testament. I liked the course; it was really a course in history and anthropology and sociology. And

you're learning about the P writer and the J writer [of the Bible], and when various parts of the Bible were written at different times. And it was really eye-opening for me. It wasn't the Bible as this seamless book. I really liked that course, and did well in it.

I then took a third quarter in their religious series, where I learned about Augustine, Aquinas, and then, I think, Luther. And we went up to Wesley, which would be, of course, their man—the Methodists. So I took that course, too. So I had a certain sense then, of things that had a historical context for religion. I had been raised religiously, as I said. Indeed, had gone to this Methodist church from about sixth grade on, which my mother, in particular, liked. But I had no real sense of Methodism or where it stood. I didn't go to Duke because of that reason. I didn't even know it was a Methodist school. But at any case, I did have the Bible courses.

I took a course in Greek myth, a course in logic, that all turned out to be very useful in broadening me. And I had a course in economics that was interesting. Basically we were taught Keynesianism as second nature. But the way it happened was interesting for me, because there was this guy who—I cannot remember any names—but this obviously big-deal professor. And he would come in and just sit on the desk and talk to us about the things of the day, or big issues. And he was often not there, and there had to be a substitute. Well, he was off consulting. So finally at a certain point—and as I say, he might have been a big deal—he said, “Look, I'm going to be involved in all these things.” And basically one of the grad students took over the course. But the grad student then could teach us the basics, and he knew what we needed to know, so to

He wasn't off consulting yet and so on. And he was great. I felt like I really learned the stuff. And I liked it.

Then I took another course in economics, which was pretty deadly. It was a business course, and I can't remember much about it. But I didn't like it much at all. I was sort of getting this widening at that particular point. It truly was a liberal arts education.

Now, when I went down there I thought—going to back to sports—I thought we'd be playing baseball right from the start in the fall. Well, it turns out they didn't play until the spring. So I thought, I've always wanted to know just how fast a runner I am. And I want to get some exercise to get me in shape. Somebody said something about the track team. I went down and became a sprinter on the indoor track team. It was quite interesting because there were three or four guys that could beat me. One turned out to be the world's fastest human being, a guy name Dave Sime. Within a year or so he held the world records in the one hundred yard dash, as it was called then, and the 220 and 440-yard dashes. He was truly going places. But then he hurt himself about his junior year, somewhere around there. He got what was called a high groin pull. So it was a tough one. But he did come back enough that he just lost by an inch, literally less than maybe half an inch, in the 1960 Olympics to a German sprinter. So that's who I was running against in the 100 yard dash. He could beat me by ten yards, even though I could run the 100 in 10 seconds flat, which was pretty good back then, but not now. He ran it in 9.3 or 9.4, which was ridiculous. There were two other guys on the team that were really fast. We were a relay team. And gradually I got so I could beat the other two guys. So it was pretty much fun.

Then I had a little event that was fun that got me some visibility, and all my friends were pleased. Probably my sophomore year, to publicize the indoor track team, they had us run at halftime of this big Duke basketball game. Duke was as nutty about basketball then and as competitive for the big time as it is today, although it wasn't winning strings of NCAA championships at the time. But definitely the same rivalry with the University of North Carolina and so on. So at half-time, the four of us ran. I beat one of the secondary guys again, and so I ended up in the finals against this world's fastest human. It was just a fifty-yard dash. And I was the faster starter. So we started a little outside the gym, where people couldn't see us, and we ended up at the other end. And by the time we busted into visibility I was ahead of him.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** I thought, "This could be the day I beat him." I was just really rolling. I'm thinking he was pretty shocked—and he said so afterwards. But at any rate, he then turned on the jets and he beat me in the last twenty yards. But people were surprised. And my friends were all happy for me as the underdog. I did have a lot of fun running on that track team my freshman and sophomore years. And this relay team was fun.

But an interesting thing happened then in terms of—I told you I played baseball there. And that was that this world's fastest human guy was also a great baseball player. He was about 6'3, a much better thrower than I was. He was a powerful hitter. But because he was such a great track man, they said, "Look, you could go places, to the Olympics." So he decided to take his sophomore year off from baseball. Well, that was my good fortune; that meant I was no longer a

substitute. I was the starting left fielder. Because I was the fourth best in the outfield. So suddenly I'm the lead off man and left fielder.

And so I say, "Well, well." So I dropped track and really concentrated then fully on the baseball. We turned out to have a great team. We came on strong and we got into these playoffs. And we went to the playoffs that could lead to the college world series. I probably played the best I ever played in my life as a college student that sophomore year, which I'm going to say because of how badly it went from there on. I made some great plays in the outfield. I got one really good hit that might have brought us back in the game. Almost went out of the park, and got a ground rule double on one bounce. And then nobody could get me home to win the game, and they won with a run later.

But in the next series, after we won the first one, we then played a team from Mississippi, and they had a great big left-handed pitcher. I was batting against him and battling him and battling him. I was the only guy on the team that wore a little insert in my helmet. And accidentally, but he hit me in the head. Right square in the back of the head, the side to the back of the head. And I might have been a little dizzy, and I didn't quite go down, but I knew I'd been hit. And for a minute the umpire said he thought it sounded like a foul tip. My coaches were enraged. They took the helmet off and I already had a bump on my head. So there I went, to first base.

But we couldn't beat these guys. This pitcher was too good. He went on to be a pitcher for the San Francisco Giants. So he was a major league caliber pitcher. But the bigger point of the incident was that I didn't see that ball coming. And I don't think I could've gotten a hit off him in a million years. So it was the kind of thing that told me, even in the midst of having this really good season,

that there was no chance I was going to be among the better players. I was also a sports writer for the paper during that year. So everything was really quite exciting and good and new.

But things were less successful for me in my junior and senior years for a couple reasons, at least subjectively. The first was that my long-time girlfriend and I went our separate ways. She really did want to get married and I didn't. I was anguished. I was too young. It was too soon. I didn't really know—and honestly, in the heart of my heart of hearts—that I wanted to be married to her. So I said, "I just don't think this will work." But then, of course, you regret it. And I didn't have a girlfriend then. And it had been a long time with her. So it put me a low mood.

Within a few months, because of her eagerness, she had found another guy. Everything worked fine for her. I never saw her again, but through mutual friends I know that her marriage lasted. She had three kids. All went well. And I see in the older alumni stuff, she and her husband travel around in their big RV. They go these RV camps. The contrast was so great back then in what we had in mind for our lives.

But it made it a tough time. I was trying to decide what to do, what to major in. No longer did I have that focus or purpose. I had my Phi Beta Kappa key. During that time I started to smoke a little bit—and I just mean cigarettes. That's what we smoked in those days. But that didn't help any. And I was, in a way—I think I'd call it addicted. It was hard not to smoke a pack or two a day. And I finally stopped.

But that was my pattern all my life at different times. I would start smoking for six or eight months in new situations, usually meeting someone

new, a woman, someone new. But other times too. This happened to me off and on. I want to say five or six times, but maybe seven or eight. It would be very disconcerting. I'd have to have a quiet time where I was going to be alone for about a week or so, and I could finally break it. But it gave me a sympathy and empathy for people who are addicted to something worse. It always bothered me, then, when people would say, "Well, willpower and you can overcome it." All that kind of exhortations and all, because I knew they really didn't work for me. So I found that annoying in my fellow humans that I was around, and in all the policies that we have in our country.

Well, anyhow, back to baseball as usual. Dave Sime, the fast runner, came back to play baseball again in his junior year. That meant I sat on the bench. I only batted eleven or twelve times the whole season in my junior year, which wasn't much. We weren't much of a team. We'd lost some really good pitchers. I played again in my senior year, because now I was a senior and I was better than some of the sophomores. So I played in the outfield with Sime and one other guy that I've forgotten. I played every game. We were a mediocre team. But again, I didn't really play that well. I was decent in the outfield. I was the lead off hitter again. But my batting average at Duke over three years, I think my batting average was .211, which is a terrible batting average. I'd get on base through walks. They'd hit me in the arm. I'd bunt. So I was just called a scratch or banjo kind of hitter. So baseball was clearly over for me and that's why I laugh at myself about being able to hit a slow-pitch softball a long way during my active years at UCSC.

### Majoring in Psychology

But I was not sure what I wanted to do. I had gotten into psych, and that was the one subject that interested me the most. A lot of it made sense. I'd had a good course in personality and one or two other things. I can't even remember the courses. But my advisor—and I'll say more about my advisor in a minute, was a behaviorist. But I just didn't like behaviorism. I didn't like experimenting with animals. And generally, I wasn't much of what you call an experimentalist, where you're manipulating variables. And in social psych it means—did for a long time—it meant deceiving people, setting up a situation to get at some aspect of their behavior where they think one thing's going on, but it's really another. I later had a colleague here at Santa Cruz who used to say, in terms of social psychology, "Deception is our business." That changed totally in the 1970s, by the way.

Which led, then, to one of my friends—who was a grad student at the time at Santa Cruz, to write a paper in the context of the Vietnam War on the fact that psychology, in a way, was contributing to the whole atmosphere of deception. True, it wasn't the cause of it. But they'd just unthinkingly end up deceiving people. He wrote a paper calling for a moratorium, which finally appeared in a peace journal, but social psychologists wouldn't even publish it.

Going back to my Duke junior and senior years, there was one particular professor that had a big influence on me. His name was Weston La Barre. He had written a book called *The Human Animal*. He was an anthropologist, and well trained and fastidious, to hold onto his credentials. But he also was a Freudian. And that meant he was, to me, then a psychological kind of anthropologist. I

took both semesters of his course. I often didn't understand what he was talking about. But he really struck me as having something interesting to say. And indeed he later wrote a book, which he had talked about in class, called *The Ghost Dance*, which was about the origins of religion. One of things he said was that all religions had their origins in a vision, or a dream by a single individual, in a situation of real social tension and collapse for the particular society. They were under siege, like the Iroquois were under siege by the white settlers.

So the kinds of things he was talking about tied together psychology and anthropology and history. And so I really resonated with his work. I read the three-volume work on Freud by Ernest Jones. The way it's put together, it is this intellectual quest and self-discovery and discovery, whether it turns out to be a true or not—and I think more of it was than some of the critics have said, because Freud was trying hard to understand. Yeah, he wanted to be famous, but he also wanted to try to help human beings. He originally wanted to be a physician, and he ended up— Actually, take that back. He did want to be a scientist. He became a physician, a neurologist, and he was involved in trying to help human beings.

So La Barre had a big kind of impact upon me with his book. He also talked to us about what later became a book of his on serpent handling within the Southern religions, in communities where they would prove they weren't sinners by getting these rattlesnakes and other venomous snakes and handling them in church services. And he explained how that could be possible. In the heat of the thing snakes are kind of a little logy. But some people did get bit. And if they lived, it proved God loved them. If they died it proved they were sinners.

So this was all, as I say, really to me eye-opening and amazing. When I'd go back to Duke through Virginia from Ohio, we'd see all these little churches with little signs. But there was one sign that we loved. And it said, "Say no to sin." And the 'S' in sin was a serpent, and it had its tongue out. So one of the things that was fun in those days, late at night, was to stop and steal the sign. I said, "I want to steal that sign." And so for years I had a "Say no to sin" sign with the serpent. Which I think was very much related to his class, the course.

And I read all of Erich Fromm at that point, a Neo-Freudian. The laugh on me here is that I thought it was a really good, social psych kind of Freudianism. But later, I think in '60 or '62, he wrote a book that had the subtitle *My Encounter with Marx and Freud*. And he said he thought Marx was by far the more profound and important thinker. I didn't realize that he was as much a Marxist as he was a Freudian, although the Marxists didn't think so. He wasn't hardline enough, because he brought in this namby-pamby psych stuff. But he had a big influence in my thinking.

The other person that—I don't know how I got into him—was Bertrand Russell, the great philosopher. Somehow he resonated with me. I could understand what he was saying in his essays. I read his book on *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*. He had a wonderful phrase that was very liberating, where he said, "Knowing how we know is only a small part of what we know." In other words, we can learn about vision without understanding epistemology. So he was very freeing for me in not making the world, as he said, one big bowl of jelly like the Hegelians do. You can pull it apart.

And through Fromm and Bertrand Russell, and probably just being a person that was willing to be critical, out of liking journalism and doing critical

sports writing, by my senior year I thought of myself as a socialist of their type. I certainly wasn't interested in heavy Marxists, or the Soviet Union, or anything like that. But what Fromm and Russell were talking about made a lot of sense to me.

Now, I did have a great advisor, the behaviorist I mentioned. Indeed, he was from the hardcore schools. His research was on eye blinks, conditioning eye blinks. And in the introductory class, which I took with him, one of the things we had to do was participate in three experiments, allegedly to learn what they're doing, but of course, they needed to have subjects, as we were called then. Now psych is more sensitive and they try to say "participants." (laughs) But in any case, I remember sitting there with my head in this harness-like thing, with a chin-rest, like when you're getting your eyes examined. Only they would flash a light and then puff air at you. So I knew they were trying to condition me. And so I tried to hold my eyes open, but when you see that light, you start pretty soon to blink. I remember that, because I thought, this just doesn't do it for me. I mean, this is not what I want to know about. I want to know about motivation, and what is going on in religion, and why do people do the crazy things they do, basically—to each other and how they treat each other—were much greater interests for me.

Now, this advisor thought I was all right. And he wanted me to go to grad school. The heartland of many of these behaviorists at that time was the University of Iowa. He said, "You have to go to Iowa." I just remember thinking, God, I don't want to go to Iowa. And I certainly don't want to study behaviorism. So there I was, betwixt and between. I didn't know what I was going to do. I certainly wasn't applying to grad school my senior year. I wasn't

even sure that I'd go into psych. I probably was thinking I'd go into journalism eventually.

But at any rate, what happened that changed a lot of things—during my spring semester of my senior year when I was playing baseball and we were going on these legitimate trips—and I had legitimate excuses—I had to miss a number of the labs for the *Experimental Psych* course. It was the second semester of *Experimental Psych*. I had purposely waited to take it because the guy I'd taken the first semester from was so deadly. It was so awful, I hated it so much, that I decided I've got to wait and hope for a better professor.

So I was taking this course with this new guy. And he was a pigeon-conditioning guy. He studied the behavior of pigeons in cages. He was, in his way, even more obnoxious than the first experimental psychology instructor. But I liked the course all right, I think. But he had the view, which was kind of amazing—and this is why I think he was such a jerk—that I was just another typical jock that was trying to blow things off, as we say today. So for these labs that I missed, he gave me zero. Now, when you have two exams, that are graded one to a hundred, and I was only getting B's by then: eighty, eighty-five, eighty-nine that would not make up for low lab scores. Even the worst lab students would get a sixty or a seventy. He gave me zeros. And so I ended up, in his book, the second worst student in the class. He failed me. I still think that he was trying to, "teach me a lesson."

I was livid. I was really livid. And my father was upset that he wasn't going to get to see me graduate. Somehow that was a big deal in his mind. That didn't seem to be a big deal in mine. I'm just going to get this damn piece of

paper. I was not into ceremonies at all and never have been. If I was ever, I certainly had outgrown it by then.

**Rabkin:** So the zero in this class was preventing you with graduating with your classmates?

**Domhoff:** Right. I couldn't go through the graduation. It's not like today, where they let you go through if you're within hailing distance. So I had to call and tell my parents that. And supposedly it was a required course. So supposedly I'd have to maybe take the course the next year and all. It was really tense. I was really, at one hand, chagrined, but also really, really angry. But my adviser waived that requirement. I didn't know how it easy it is to waive things. They're all such arbitrary rules.

I took summer school. I took a summer school course with a visitor from UCLA, as I remember. I really liked him and I really liked the course. It was basically on child development. It might have been called *Exceptional Children*, but it really meant atypical. That meant we looked at a lot of disabilities and mental problems, as well as maybe 'very exceptional' in the current sense of high IQs or something like that.

So I liked that course, and I thought, well, this is the kind of psych that I could do if I could ever find a place to do it. So at that point I left Duke. It turned out, for different reasons, my two best friends, my roommates for the past three years, had had to take summer school too. The one guy, who went on to be in the business world, had not counted up what were called his quality points. And he didn't have enough to graduate.

**Rabkin:** Oops.

**Domhoff:** And the other guy, he was just a very marginal student at one time. He had some course to make up. He was a guy who wanted to be an MD, but he was a flat C student. At one point, they were going to kick him out. He begged his way back in. Anyhow the three of us lived together that summer and graduated. Then off we went. We left Duke with some feelings of anger and acrimony, which was good, because it helped get me some distance. So home I went. I don't even remember what I was thinking. But what I know was that there was a draft notice waiting for me. They wanted to draft me into the U.S. Army. This was in the summer of 1958. Nothing was happening.

**Rabkin:** But there was a draft on?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. If you weren't in school you'd be drafted. Everybody was drafted, unless you had a school exemption. If you're eighteen and you're not going to college they drafted you. Later we learned that at least part of the rationale was to goad good students into grad school. That's in the documents of the sixties, when they were defending the draft, and saying this makes sure we get a good quality of grad student and all.

Now I think I probably would have wanted to be in the army even less if they were going to fight. I'd never had a gun. My parents didn't have a gun. I had no interest in military culture. And I wasn't a rah-rah nationalist, by any means. In that sense, I can look back and say I know I was a liberal-to-leftist, because the usual things the rightists like are hierarchy, and they're very into religion, and they're nationalists, and all of that. None of those things appealed

to me at all. And some of them were quite repellent. Furthermore, my dad had not been in the army. He had been too young for World War I and a little too old for World War II. And I knew my grandfather had not been in the army. I doubt if they were pacifists or anything, but they certainly weren't crazy about fighting.

At any rate, I said, "I don't want to do this." The night before the physical, I got to admit, I went out drinking and smoking and everything. And I stayed up late. When I went to the routine physical, they said, "Is there any reason you shouldn't be in this line? Any problems?" I stepped forward. I said, "Yes sir. I have a heart murmur." I'd almost had the life scared out of me my sophomore year or junior year in high school. They'd examined us for football, and they said, "This guy's got a heart murmur. We've got to go look at him." Well, it was some kind of not-bad heart murmur. But it was a scary week or two until I saw the doc. And so far so good, obviously, on my heart. (laughs) But I stepped forward on a heart murmur. So they said, "Okay, you've got to go to see this special person, make an appointment." I made an appointment.

So before, that night before that appointment, I just did everything to be a wreck. And I arrived, and they sat me down. They were late, as usual. And I fell asleep. Of course when I woke up I was just humming. I was running smooth as glass. And they take me in there. And furthermore, the guy's a gynecologist. So here I'm going to be examined for a heart murmur by a non-specialist in hearts.

**Rabkin:** The guy who's supposed to be examining you for a heart murmur?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, he's an army doctor. But in other words, they can give you any doctor. I didn't get a heart specialist. I just couldn't believe it. Now maybe he was just in someone else's office, but that's what the diploma said. So he listened and

listened and listened, he said, "Your heart is fine." And I thought, great, but what am I going to do?

### **Graduate School at Kent State University**

That's when I went to Kent State, and why I went to Kent State. I looked around and said, oh, I've got to go to grad school. This forced the decision. I went down there and saw them. I think I might have looked at some catalogues for nearby schools. It was an MA school. And the applications were taken until August 31<sup>st</sup>. Now, at the time I didn't understand that they were probably really glad to have me, with my record, and from Duke and all the rest, that they weren't ordinarily getting students like that in their MA program.

The chair was a wonderful old gentleman. He taught us, I think, about tests. But he also just gave me a real conception of psychology. All my professors were great, and I was totally into it. It was a good bunch of fellow grad students. And it was all guys. I can't remember any of them except one, who was a little older, had been in the military, named Pietro Badia, Pete Badia. Pete went on to be a professor at Bowling Green State in Ohio, and then did some work on sleep, which gave us a little overlap. Such a good guy. In a way, he was a kind of a mentor to me.

But the two behaviorists, I really worked hard with them. They were both good, especially the one guy. We got into the concept of "generalization" in learning theory and all kinds of other stuff, and I became steeped in and socialized in the field, even though it wasn't, at that point, stuff I loved. But I said, "Okay, it's like drinking castor oil and eating spinach, you're going to take your medicine." And I knew that I had to do this to get where I wanted to go.

These behaviorists at Kent State were really good guys and useful to me, and gave me methodological rigor and respect for doing it right. And they taught me it wasn't easy to get answers in any field, including the ones that I wanted to study. But also there's even more—a guy named Ben Mehlman that had a big impact on me. He was a real nice guy. He was teaching, I think, a course on the ethics of psychologists, which he cared about. He was a very conscientious, caring kind of guy, a humanistic psychologist, more or less. He later ended up at San Fernando Valley State, and I ran into him once or twice. And just the way he talked, and the way his wife talked, I realized that they had already decided that I was going to go on to fine things. But I didn't have that sense at the time.

I'll never forget that I went up to him and said, "Now you mentioned Erich Fromm today. You think that research could be done on the kind of stuff that he talks about?" And he said, "Yeah, I think so." I remember leaving there elated, saying, wow, wow, this could work out. There are maybe these other pathways within academic psychology.

I ended up doing my MA with Ben, where I developed a paper and pencil test related to Erich Fromm's character orientations. So I learned to do the correlational studies, and how to make sure your test items are right; things that I could not right now or with months of training, ever repeat or understand. But I did it, gave this test to a lot of people, to students. It worked out all right. So I wrote that MA thesis.

I lived in a boarding house at Kent State. They were, most of them, these young guys. Two or three of them were gone within a semester or two. They were out of these small towns. Everybody in Ohio that graduated with a high

school degree could go to one of the schools and get a chance. But they dropped out and flunked out like flies. It was just amazing. So I was living with a set of guys, then, that were going nowhere.

**Rabkin:** These were undergraduate students, mostly?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. And it was right across the street from the main buildings. And my life was very organized. I'd go to classes. I'd go to this one particular little café. But they had these particular liverwurst sandwiches, and a couple of songs they'd play every time that I really liked. Oh, it was a guy named Little Willie John. And Little Willie John would say, "Let's rock while the rocking is good, 'cause once you're old and your blood runs cold, there'll be no more rocking n' rolling."

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** And at that point I had a consciousness of, "Yeah, you're going to get focused. You're going to do this. You're going to have that good time, but you got to rock while the rocking's good." That became my mantra for a long time. I had to remember the good times don't last forever, as I learned the hard way at Duke.

I'd go home on weekends, home to my room, my house. I can't remember what I did, or who I did it with, or anything. I never really had a girlfriend after I broke up with my long-time girlfriend my junior year. I was shy—I was very eager, but I was shy. And I didn't particularly meet anybody. So I didn't—whatever we were doing, I just don't remember. But it wasn't much, and it wasn't memorable.

But mostly then I was just studying and studying. At that point I knew I was going to go on to more grad school. But now I'm understanding the hierarchy more and where I'm likely to get into. Once I'd gone to Kent State, I was downwardly mobile, I didn't know how fully until I got into the academic world. About five, ten years ago one of my friends in sociology did a study called, "The Academic Caste System." He showed that Harvard hires other Ivies and so on, that there's really a tremendous caste system that's never spoken of, that while everybody's running around being egalitarians and going to change the world, they live in this caste system.

But there was another factor for me in trying to pick a school, and that was that I wanted a place where I was not going to be doing traditional stuff, in the sense of these behaviorists, and these stupid tests, and these social psychology manipulations. I really didn't want to do that. I also didn't want to go to the snow. West of the Mississippi did not exist in my mind. That was never anything I'd thought— "Go west, young person, go. California, here I come," never were thoughts of mine.

So I said, okay, if it's going to be that way, I'm going to be in the sunshine. I applied to the three Florida schools: Florida State, the University of Florida, and Miami. And I think I applied to what was then called Western Reserve University, as a backup in Cleveland. I think I got in all of them, or most of them.

The reason I went to Miami was that they gave me the best deal. Basically, I was going to have a fellowship. I'm going to have work for two years, which I thought would be as a TA or a research assistant, and then I had a dissertation year fellowship. I just didn't see how you could beat that. I was ready to go to

Miami for no particular reason other than the sun, and it had a good image. Of course, this all very pre-Castro. This in the spring of '59.

So at any rate, I then went to Miami. And that turned out to be tremendously lucky in a lot of ways. I was in clinical, supposedly. I wasn't even thinking then of being a teacher. I'd be more of a clinician, and help people and learn more through doing that by being like Freud and Fromm and psychotherapists and so on.

But I had a number of what I just have to call lucky breaks—just the way things tumbled. And one was they had a very new program. We may have been the first class or the second class with a PhD. They had had an MA program and they were building on it. At any rate, it was also a growing school—as all schools were then, as I didn't understand. There were a tremendous number of jobs in the late fifties and early sixties as these schools burgeoned, unlike only ten, fifteen years later. And it gets worse all the time. But in any case, they said, after I accepted and went there—a few weeks after I accepted I got this letter from them saying, “Your assignment the first year is: in the fall we want you to teach *Introductory Psychology*. In the spring we want you to teach *Introduction to Statistics*.” So here I was; in 1959 I was twenty-three years old, and I am going to be teaching this class. So that was kind of daunting, but also thrilling and a challenge.

**Rabkin:** This wasn't just a TAship. You were the teacher.

**Domhoff:** I was the instructor. I had no TAs, but I was the instructor. And there was nobody watching over me. So I prepared a course and I arrived there. And yeah, I'm taking classes. But I'm also teaching *Introduction to Psychology*. And I'm

teaching it my way and slipping in some atypical or nontraditional stuff. I really had a ball. It went well.

I think that started to tip me, then, towards being a professor. And then in the spring I taught the stat course, which was hilarious because I didn't know that much stat. But I knew stats through analysis of variance and regression analysis. But all I was teaching was the basics: mean, median, mode, and standard deviations. I think we touched, maybe just mentioned, analysis of variance. And certainly I taught them about basic correlation. So I did that in what was my second year of graduate school.

### **Calvin Hall**

Now, during the same time that's when I met the person that turned out to have the most influence on me intellectually in my life. And that was Calvin Hall, who was there as a visitor. I didn't know of Hall. I didn't go there because of Hall. But he had been a big-deal psychologist, which I hadn't quite yet fathomed. He had studied with Tolman of Tolman Hall at Berkeley, another famous psychologist of that day, and had done the first work on inheritance of emotionality in rats. He was a behavior geneticist originally. Did quite well. He was then made chair of Western Reserve University in Cleveland as a twenty-seven or twenty-eight year old, and stayed there then for a long time.

**Rabkin:** Chair of the psychology department?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. They brought him in to build the psych department. And then World War II had come, I might add, and the government had said, "We need clinical psychologists. Will you train them?" Most of the psychologists held up

their noses and said, “No, we’re scientists.” But a few said, “We’ll take your money and train psychologists.” And one of those was Hall, who by the late thirties and early forties had gotten into, it turns out, the neo-Freudians and then into Freudian stuff. But the point was that in the fifties he and one of his former students had written a book called *Theories of Personality*. So he was quite well known. And he’d got into dream research out of his interest in Freud. He said, “How can I do research?” And he started to collect dreams in the classroom. Then he started to read them. And then he started to develop categories to put elements of the dream in: characters, social interactions of various types: Are you in a house? Are you outside? And he just kept putting those names on paper: home, house, street, car. He started to clump them, and then to see how he could reliably categorize them and develop more general categories. The system was working pretty well. He had had a lot of graduate students in the fifties doing various dream studies that prepared the way for our later work.

**Rabkin:** Bill, when you say he collected dreams, how did that work? Did he have people write down their dreams?

**Domhoff:** Yes. Voluntarily what you could do is you’d write down your dreams every morning. Sometimes he collected them in the classroom. But mostly he’d have them write on a sheet he’d given them. They had other things they could do, too. I forget what they were, but they had to do something that got them thinking inside. They could write down diary stuff or whatever.

So, at first you don’t know what you have. But when you collect dreams for a long enough time from students—and I know this from doing it later—you notice how personal they are. They’re not about the events of the day. They’re

not about politics, economics. They're about your relation with your friends, your parents; you miss your dog, whatever it is. I mean, they're very personal. About, what I'd now say, 70, 75 percent of them are personal, but another 25, 30 percent are kind of adventure stories. They don't have familiar characters or settings, and you're off on a hill, or slogging through a jungle or something like this. And you say, "Where'd that come from?" We still don't know. But lots of dreams were about personal concerns: past regrets, present concerns, future worries. Like, "Will my wedding be okay?" "If I'm pregnant or when I get pregnant, what will it be like? And will the baby be okay?" Things that you worry about.

I went into dreams because they were considered at the time the royal road to the unconscious, which was Freud's famous phrase. But the point is, you were going to learn the mysteries of life. But they turn out to be, in a certain way, more mundane. They're these wonderful enactments of our concerns. So you're around the table and you're fighting with your mother. Ten dreams later you're in the living room and you're fighting with your mother. We start to figure out this person had a lot of conflict about their mother. You ask them, "Who is the person you've had the most conflict with?" They say, "My mother." So it's not like we've suddenly tapped the unconscious. But we've shown that dreams have meaning and they're very personalized and so on.

And you can get a sense of it, if 80 percent of the interactions with your mother are negative versus 50 percent for the average person, you can get a real quantitative sense of the nature of the relationship—far more negative than positive. Other people may have just the opposite.

And to add some other simple examples about this: we learned the frequency of dreaming about somebody tells you about the intensity of the concern. If you dream most about your mother, you're most concerned about her. Now we then have to go on and look at the interactions to see whether they are more negative or more positive; whether you see her as a helper, or whether you see as a prohibiter, whether you see her as an impossible role model. You can see that because dreamers dramatically enact their conceptions of their relationships.

So I met Hall and took his course on psychoanalysis. And I took his course on dreams. And I got into content analysis, which is what this categorization methodology is called. Calvin and I hit it off really well. This was the kind of psychology that I was interested in. I was a neo-Freudian. He was more of a Freudian at that point—very much a Freudian. But he loved Jung, and I hadn't read Jung. But there was enough overlap. And the dream work, in a certain way, was very separate from any theory. If I just go out and collect a hundred dreams and then count up the number of animals in the dream, or the number of aggressions, what's that got to do with any theory? It's very empirically driven, bottom-up kind of research.

So that was a big turning point. It turned out that the fact he'd been at Case Western—he had been there from the late thirties to '54, '55—meant that we overlapped our Cleveland backgrounds as well. Still, there was considerable difference, obviously, in age. He was born in 1910, I think it was. And I was born in '36. So twenty-six years difference in age.

At the time I still didn't realize that I was potentially a very promising student. I was a hard worker. But I didn't have a direction. But I think he could

see that I was strongly motivated and focused and disciplined. I understood that about myself at the time—that I could really stick to something. So he was a supporter of mine. We did research together. It was a big turning point. He became—we'll get to my wife in a minute. When I got married, she came to Miami with me. They got to be good friends, too.

Now, there was one other thing going on at this time that I think is very important to say—one of those conjunctions, when something new comes along, and you're new, so there's an intersection that happens. I'm interested in motivation, and what makes us tick, and fantasy life, and myths and so on. I met this guy Hall, who's done this content analysis; who's interested in Freud and Fromm and generally what was called psychodynamic psychology. Understanding human beings in terms of the conflicts of all our wishes and fears is the basic point of it.

### **The Beginnings of Dream Research**

But there was something else going on. And that was that it was really right at that point that it was dawning on psychologists what by physiologists had discovered in 1953. And that is that dreams seem to happen only during a phase of sleep called REM sleep, which stands for rapid eye movements. And what that did in a nutshell: it made dreams the first psychological phenomenon that seemed to have a one-to-one relationship with a physiological state, because brain wave patterns change and heart rate and much else.

**Rabkin:** Interesting.

**Domhoff:** So you go into a REM period, and you're going to dream. And we believed you dream every time. If you aren't, it's because you just aren't a good recaller. Non-REM, that is sleep without rapid eye movements, if you report something from that type of sleep, it's a memory from an earlier REM period, or you're just pleasing us by saying stuff. A Non-REM (NREM) report is kind of vague and rambley and shorter and so on. No longer do I believe much of this, but the point is what we believed at the time for research reasons. As I said, I don't believe it much anymore. But in any case, that's what it looked like at that time, with these two or three physiologists and MDs that had done this work.

So that made dream research pretty exciting. And furthermore, it looked like the eye movements were tracking the dream. And in 1960 a guy did a study in which he deprived people of REM sleep and they supposedly got all agitated. And then they made up the lost REM sleep when allowed to sleep undisturbed. So it looked like REM sleep very much fit in a certain way with Freud, that you have to have it, or you can become agitated or start hallucinating.

When we look at it now, we say, "Wait, it doesn't fit Freud at all. You dream four or five times a night. It's pretty regular. You dream outside REM." In 1999 I wrote a review of a new translation of [Freud's] *The Interpretations of Dreams*, and went through the book again, and looked at every claim he made, from the minor to more major, in the light of the research that then happened between '60 and '99. And there wasn't a single hypothesis that I felt had withstood the test of time.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** It meant further research was needed. We were confident too soon. I guess it's good I tell later developments now. Because at the time we were totally immersed in it. It was totally exciting. And the people that were doing it, it turned out, were all Freudians and closet Freudians. And I say "closet" because some of them didn't write until later, "Oh, I went to med school because I read *The Interpretation of Dreams* three times. I wanted to be a psychoanalyst, but I got into the sleep research. And then the dream stuff didn't turn out to be all what we expected. And I went on into sleep medicine." In fact, that's the really the story of a truly great person, the greatest scientist I ever knew, William Dement. Retired at Stanford. A great guy and great scientist, who empirically followed his nose and was open-minded. So he just quietly dropped the Freudian aspect and went on to even greater and important things for human beings in general. I admire him enormously.

So that year or two, meeting up with Hall, teaching, and this new REM stuff, got me really hooked on being intellectual and academic and a researcher, but also being a professor.

### **A European Adventure and Marriage**

In the summer of 1960 I earned enough money, after my first year of grad school I had a little money left over. And also my buddy and I, who I'll explain in a minute, wanted to go to Europe. And Calvin Hall joined us. I'd learned at Duke you could get free passage over there if you were the editor on the ship newspaper on this student boat. It was a Dutch student government thing. And it was called the SS Groote Beer. So I wrote and said, "Hey, I'm a journalist. I'll run your newspaper." And they hired me, in effect.

**Rabkin:** What a cool gig!

**Domhoff:** It was a great gig. So I floated over for free. And I had this money. Now, the person I lived with at that time was one of my old college roommates. He was from Fort Myers, Florida, on the other side of Florida from Miami. And he was the one that was not a super student. He didn't know what he was going to do. He was very independent. He's just really fine. But on school things he was a little lost. And then I kind of instructed him. I said, "Jim, come over and live with me and get a job at the medical school. And get into some research through that, then see what happens." So he did.

He got a job operating on dogs. He was very good with his hands. He could fix anything. He wanted to be a surgeon. So he lived with me and he got this job at the med school and worked with the doctors on some cancer research on dogs. And lo and behold, eventually they took him in the med school. He became president of his class. And he graduated and he went back to Duke for his residency. And then he ended up at a university up in Utah, where he followed this mentor from medical school. He was a physician there for years. (laughs)

So the three of us went to Europe, traveled around, and had a Volkswagen. But at a certain point, that was wearying. The three of us were staying in these cheap, twenty-five cent student hostels. So my buddy and I split off and Calvin went to Zurich. He was going to see Jung, and get a chance to meet with Jung. He said, "You got any questions for Jung?" Which I'll come to.

But in any case, my buddy Jim and I were staying in Copenhagen. We're in a youth hostel. It's a buck a day instead of twenty-five cents. And we're

playing volleyball. And I meet this California woman, a young woman who was going to San Jose State at the time. And we got along. She said, "Hey, you're hogging the ball." She was just feisty enough. So then the four of us—she had a girlfriend with her, and the four of us traveled for a while. We hit it off. We wrote back and forth. And then the next summer I came out to California on the bus from Ohio.

**Rabkin:** Was this your first trip to California?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, on a bus. All the way across the country, two or three or four days. It was something. I can't remember much of it. Just little pieces of it. I don't know when I slept, or where I slept, or anything. Then I got to Napa, California, and stayed there a while and then proposed. Later that summer we got married. So, of course, that was obviously a life-changing kind of event, too.

But we came back to Miami for my last year. That was my dissertation year. We got there and we had to find a place to stay. We were looking at this one place. And this old couple, we kind of talked. They said, "How would you like to manage this place?" My wife was very charming, outgoing, extroverted. And they thought, obviously, that she was going to do most of it. I was going to, supposedly, study. So we get this free rent.

Calvin Hall had spent a year in Nijmegen teaching in the Netherlands, and then he was in Zurich just hanging out with these Jungians. And he came back, I guess it was, then. We had this big apartment building. We had this perfect apartment: the third floor, perfect sun. And so he moved in there. So we're all buddies. He's hanging out in our apartment.

**Rabkin:** Had he, by the way, taken your questions for Jung to his meeting?

**Domhoff:** I'd asked Jung, if aggression was so important, how come the Swiss hadn't been in any wars for so long? Something like this. And Calvin wrote me a long letter about it, which I still have, about his visit with Jung. Because he wanted to get it on paper. And he told me about it, too. Jung became very animated. He said, "Not aggressive?" He said, "Geez, they hate you from canton to canton, from district to district; everybody's armed to the teeth. You got to be in the militia. Oh my God." He said all of this in psychodynamic terms, "sublimated aggression in Switzerland. We're poised at the borders. We've got all these Italian, French, German kinds of conflicts. Switzerland basically is a perfect example of how aggressive human beings are." But Hall really liked Jung, and had this good kind of visit with him.

But back to Miami. We weren't there very long. And my wife got pregnant. And then another thing happened, and that was I was going to do this study of dreams in a psych lab. EEG's were so rare that they said, "You can't get the EEG for six or eight months." So wow, this is really heavy. What am I going to do?

### **Moving to California**

Through a very small group of sleep and dream researchers that had just started to meet, Calvin had a connection to a guy in San Francisco named Joe Kamiya, who was also very important in my life. Joe was at Langley Porter Clinic, and he was doing sleep and dream research. He was mostly a dream researcher. It turned out he was getting into meditation. So he said, I could come

to his lab. And, of course, I was getting money from Miami. So we packed up our gear and drove off. We stopped in Ohio. And my wife's more and more pregnant, of course. (laughs) And we arrived in the Bay Area and rented an apartment in Berkeley, not far from her grandparents, who lived up the hill in Berkeley, that she really liked and was close to. And, of course, not far from Napa, where she was from.

I'd drive across the bridge to Langley Porter. But it was pretty clear that this lab was in transition, and he was really more interested in meditation. So I thought, "Oh boy." And so we talk and I realize that he has all of these dreams that he collected when he was at the University of Chicago, where he had actually collected dreams from people at home and in the lab. So he just said, "Would you like to do your work on comparing home and lab dreams?" as we called them.

Now, the thing is, he and others didn't really know what to do with them. They were going to use these scales that were very vague. But I was a content analyst. I could then look for aggression, sexuality, bizarreness, whatever. So I wrote back to my committee with bated breath, and I said, "Look, here's what I've got a really great chance to do. And I can do it faster and better." It was actually a very important issue at the time to us: Are the dreams that are collected at home everyday, or that people remember—is that in any way a representative sample of our dream life? Because in a way, we were expecting during REM sleep to wake people up and my God, catch them in on these huge, Freudian, repressed dreams, and archetypal Jungian dreams. I could exaggerate, but the point is you expected to see really juicy dreams, so to speak, because they

wouldn't have had time to forget or to repress them. Repression was still a very big concept.

So, are we going to delve into this whole, big new world? People really hadn't collected very many dreams at that point. This is the spring of '62. And only at the University of Chicago and at two or three other labs were they actually collecting dreams. And they hadn't done anything much with them yet because they were just in the process of publishing. There were some people at Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn who were also collecting dreams. Calvin and I had visited them when we went up for a little dream conference in New York, just before my wife and I left for Ohio and California. So we'd seen these couple of labs. We'd seen two labs, and then I saw Kamiya's.

But I then did this content analysis of these dreams. So I'm working in his lab. It's like March, April, May, whatever. But pressure is growing in two ways, because we're about to have our first child. And she was born on June 3rd, 1962. And my money was going to run out. I needed a job. Her grandfather said, "Why don't you sign up at the placement center at Cal, and see what happens." So I go over there. And there's these lists of jobs at all these state colleges, job after job in psychology. Totally different from later. As I say, I feel almost guilty, and then sad for people [now].

### **California State University, Los Angeles, and Dissertation Research**

So they were listed: you know, Fresno, a lot of places I didn't want to be. I knew enough, by then, about California. There was one at Sacramento State, and maybe in one of the other Northern [California] schools. But the interesting there is my wife didn't want to be *that* close to Napa, shall we say. So we ended up at

Cal State LA. They wanted me. It was a good enough job. So now I'm going to have a job where my salary maybe starts September 1st or something. The school year probably started in mid-September, something like that.

**Rabkin:** Is this a tenure track job?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, an assistant professor job. There were only about four or five available at the time. They'd hired a lot of new people. At that point, every year they were hiring thousands of new professors around the country. All of this coming off of the baby boom near the end of the war. I was just enough ahead of that. I was born in the year in which the least Americans were born—in 1936—in the twentieth century, I think it was. It was just amazing. I think it was a function of the Depression. So I had, in a ways, the least competition. Plus, it was a racist, sexist world. So it was a smaller pool of white males competing. Today you're competing with—you've got men and women; you've got people of all races and ethnicities. And there's not the discrimination that had existed. We know there was discrimination against Catholics. There were quotas on Jews to go to some colleges, to get tenure at schools. Stuff I didn't know at the time. There hadn't been anybody Jewish, I don't think, that had gotten tenure at Yale until the fifties—things like that, which I partly learned from [UCSC Professor of literature] Harry Berger when he came here and I came here in '65. But all of that I was pretty naïve on.

**Rabkin:** Had you finished your dissertation at this point?

**Domhoff:** No. That's the point—the point is pressure was really mounting. I was working night and day. And I can get into that kind of focus: night and day,

night and day, I'm working on that dissertation, doing these quantifications, doing the stats, typing it up. And then Judy's mother and Judy—that's my wife at the time—they're typing copies and checking it. And the baby's born. So all summer I'm working on that dissertation.

I send it off to them, and then they say, "Okay, come down and defend it." It was somewhere around early September, late August. So I flew to Miami, and on the way back, stopped in St. Louis to go to the American Psychological Association meetings for the first time, which were interesting. And then I flew to California. I forget the details of when we went down and got a place to stay in LA. We started in an apartment in Arcadia. And then we moved to Temple City, to a nice house. Basically we got this apartment in Arcadia—or I probably got it. Then Judy came down, because with a baby you're not always tripping around in airplanes and so on. And we were literally no sooner settled in Arcadia than school started.

And I had a letter from Miami saying, "He's completed his PhD." Because that made a little difference in my salary. Not like thousands of dollars, but it probably made a difference of maybe a thousand or two. I don't know. Also at that school everybody was "Mr." and "Dr." And during my visit there in spring, "Mr. Domhoff," and then "Dr. So-and-so" and this and this. I thought, Oh, I want to be done. I want to be done. I want to be 'Dr.' and 'professor, like everyone else.'

I had tremendous motivators. I had a child I felt very responsible towards. My father was a very responsible breadwinner, non-drinker, organized, hard worker. All of that I definitely picked up somewhere along the line. So that, plus I wanted to be done and start and do it right and so on. Now, my degree

officially says—I don't know, January of '63 or so. But I have this letter, and I felt like I finished in '62. I had just turned twenty-six. I had done it in four years. Now that was more standard in those days. Things changed shortly after that. People would take a year off and there were all the tensions over the draft and the war and everything else. Now people take longer times. I think partly they take a longer time because there are less jobs. There's one old study that said, "Hey, if the job market's tight, people finish faster." I certainly saw that in terms of, they not only hired me, with the promise of the PhD, at Cal State LA, but we hired here at Santa Cruz plenty of people that had just started their dissertation. I mean, people were very much needed.

**Rabkin:** So if the job market's good, people finish fast.

**Domhoff:** They hustle through, although it turned out for a lot of them to be a mistake to come here without their dissertation done, because then they didn't finish or took forever. It was really hard. I think it's role theory: once you're in that role of professor—and of course you've got all that work to do, and day-to-day obligations—it's really hard to go back into the mindset where, "I've really got to please these three people on the committee."

My three years at Cal State LA were, in many ways, very incredible, in terms of faculty and colleagues I met, in terms of teaching, and also in terms of family life. We had another child, another daughter, July 11th, 1963. So they were only thirteen months apart. And on June 11th, 1965, our third child and first son was born. Then three days later, when my wife got out of the hospital, she took the airplane to San Francisco with the baby and with our second born. And I started out from LA with my mother and our oldest daughter, who was really

annoyed that she was not with her mother. At one point, she turned to my mother and said, "I don't like you very much, Grandma." [laughter] She had to ride up to San Francisco, up to Napa, with us.

So it's a jam-packed, dynamite three years. The teaching load was four courses, I think it was. Not five—four a semester.

**Rabkin:** Four a semester?

**Domhoff:** Four a semester. I would teach two introductory psych's, and then a section of *Personality [Psychology]* and a section of *Child [Psychology]*. And then the next semester I might teach two Personalities, an Intro and a Social. So for three years I taught social psych, personality psych, child psych, and introductory psych. The introductory courses would have maybe a hundred, two hundred. The others would have forty or fifty usually. There weren't any really small classes. They were all big lecture classes. I was obviously into it. And this is when you really learn the stuff.

It reminds me of a small anecdote—but it's the kind of thing that's so freeing. While I was at Kent State with one of the experimentalists I admired, I said to him, "I'm so discouraged. I know I'm doing well and I get good grades in the classes." But I said, "God, I don't remember this stuff." He said, "That's okay. You won't remember it until you've taught it two or three times."

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** That turned out to be true. It was just fantastic. So I *was* teaching a lot, and learning a lot through the teaching.

I also want to say that I was doing a lot of research at that time. I don't know how it all happened, because I was also a very active father. But while I was at Cal State LA, Calvin and I finished up and published—one of them maybe came out in '62—these three content analysis papers where we looked at thousands and thousands of dreams collected outside the lab setting, usually a classroom. I hadn't done that much, but he was very kind to make them "Hall and Domhoff." He knew how to help his students. I've always tried to do that too.

We had a paper on gender difference in dreams, that concerned the fact that if you count all the characters who are named by gender—"the guy," "my father," "my mother," "that woman"—you find that for women, half of the characters in their dreams are men and half are women. But for men it's two-thirds other men, a sixty-seven:thirty-three split. Now, there're individual differences on that. But in all of our samples we usually find the same result, including cross-culturally. We call it a "ubiquitous" sex difference in dreams. Meaning—and Calvin was so pleased with the word—occurring everywhere. But it didn't say universal. But oh, did we get ragged for that. They'd find one society that didn't fit. We'd say, "We also found a society that didn't fit. It's in the paper."

We did one paper on aggression and hostility in dreams to show how high it is. And it only gradually drops off, if at all, when people get older. By then, he had a huge collection of dreams. And we did one on friendliness in dreams. And there's a lot less compared to hostility and aggression. But we talked about it. So it was taxonomy stuff. But it was kind of gearing up for the

laboratory dream reports that were being collected—and we knew more would be forthcoming.

Then I wrote three little short papers from my dissertation: comparing home and lab dreams in one; comparing dreams throughout the night from different REM periods in the other; and then one just looking at laboratory elements in dreams. At the time we noticed there were a fair number of dreams in which participants would be dreaming about the lab setting. And so, we were worried that this was influencing and suppressing. Today we'd say, because of other research, we'd say, "Hey, you dreamed about your concerns."

One of these dreams is hilarious. A guy had a dream that Joe Kamiya and his co-workers were testing the electricity on the machine—the EEG, it's called, the electroencephalogram. Anyway, the current started flowing the other way and he, "Ahh! I'm being electrocuted!" (laughs) This is in his dream. And Joe had another guy that had a dream in which the experimenter came in the room and said, or talked to him in the intercom, and said, "Were you dreaming?" And he reported, "No," in this dream. "No, I wasn't." "You're lying! The machine says you're dreaming." (laughter) So people had, it turns out, their concerns are right there in the lab.

So I published those things. And I published my master's thesis and I called it "A Paper and Pencil Study of Fromm's Character Orientations" in *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. I was also doing work on left and right—I've always been fascinated, as I said, with the difference between leftists and rightists. And, of course, the election of '64 was seen as a big one, a big watershed and so on: Johnson versus Goldwater. I had a buddy from University of Pennsylvania or Penn State, that came to Cal State LA the same year I did, a

wonderful guy. He knew more about personality than I did. So we gave lots of different tests plus a left-right test that I'd gotten hold of that was more general such as, "Are numbers discovered, or are they invented?" Well, if you think they were discovered, you're more likely to be a rightist. If you think they are invented—see, for the leftists, they come from humans. For rightists, things are from out there and external, and on high, and God, or they're built into the universe. And one question is, "Are human things basically good or are they basically bad?" That really predicted how participants were going to answer about a lot of other things. And it really did correlate, we found, with political orientation—very well. We studied the students in the liberal Democrat group, the ultraconservative Republican group, the young communists, and students in two psychology classes.

I never published it until much later because we both left Cal State LA; we went to other places. We had these basic stats. And they were good enough. One other colleague wanted to help us with the stats, another new guy at Cal State LA, but he never did the work. So finally, we just said, "Hey, to heck with it." But I kept the stuff.

I also was working on psychoanalytic tests they used at that time. And I wrote several essays on psychoanalysis that I then played with for a long time, and then published in the late sixties, that were then useful, it turns out—it was kind of inadvertent—for my tenure here [at UC Santa Cruz]. One of them was called, "But Why Did They Sit on the King's Right in the First Place?" It was a study of the symbolism of left and right. It partly used some research I'd also done at Cal State LA that was really wonderful, where I gave a test called the semantic differential. And all that means is you put a picture or a word or

anything at the top of the page, and then you have people rate them fast/slow, up/down, good/bad, curved/straight, male/female, wet/dry and so on. And it turns out there're three basic dimensions. One is evaluative: you like it or you don't like it. The other is a speed dimension: is it fast or slow. And then there's a strong/weak kind of dimension that parcels out of all this. I was able to show the left was down and curved and female and dangerous and so on, and the right was good and straight and true and so on.

So I had that for kids, from about the first or second grade on through high school. My wife's mother was an administrator in a school system of Napa. It was a fascinating two days. My research assistant and I, as we moved from first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, to high school, it was like one of these unfolding flowers in Disney movie, to watch these kids change. So that was a good study. And I built it into my "Why Do They Sit on the Right in the First Place?" Because all over the world, the left is bad and down and curved and dangerous, and the right is good and straight and true. Then I gave an analysis of that in terms of this and that and the other thing, that maybe I'll get to.

So it was great in all those ways: research and teaching. I shared an office with a political scientist who was also brand new to the campus—he was about ten years older—who was a great mentor to me. Helped get me to thinking about power. And the next year we had a third officemate. He was even older than my other officemate. He was an anthropologist who had been an expert in horse riding and all kinds of stuff. He was also great. So it was wonderful to be in this interdisciplinary place. And in fact the psychology chair said, "Well, we share offices here. You can share an office with a physiological psychologist, or you can share an office with a political scientist." I said, symbolic of me, and a turning

point, "I'll take the political scientist." Physiology was far removed from my interests, but politics are closer to personality. And, of course, I'd done all this left-right kind of stuff anyhow.

### **The Beginnings of Research in Sociology**

But at Cal State LA I also became more involved in an interest in politics, and in research in what eventually lead me into sociology. It really starts with the fact I was sort of—as my then-wife used to call me, "Kind of raunchy rebel. A little bit scruffy and a little bit oppositional." She herself was fairly apolitical, and very extroverted and nice. But her family was fascinating, in terms of the varied politics. She was certainly very liberal, but the point is she wasn't out there banging on gongs and stuff, at the time. Her mother was a socialist, basically, and her aunt was a communist, and had been in the Communist Party, I learned, and was a famous painter in the Bay Area, named Emmy Lou Packard. She definitely had a communist orientation. My wife's grandparents—the grandpa was a social democrat, a pretty strong New Dealer. He'd had some second-level positions that were quite significant in the New Deal. He'd gone to Puerto Rico to be the right-hand man to the commissioner of Puerto Rico—who was a very liberal guy named Rexford Tugwell, who'd been big in the New Deal. So they were certainly very active politically. And then the grandma, she was the most "conservative" of them. She was in the Americans for Democratic Action. She was an ADA liberal with these two radical daughters. And then my wife's stepfather, he was definitely a leftist and read Marxist magazines. I don't know, he'd probably been in some sort of leftist group, but I don't know what one. So I'm hearing all this. It's around me. I certainly like it all right, but I'm not going

to do anything about it. But I think through her grandfather I read C. Wright Mills and *The Power Elite*.

I naturally gravitated to the underdogs and the troublemakers. So when I arrived at Cal State LA, a few faculty had just decided to start a union, including my officemate, the political scientist. They said, "We're going to get twenty-five, thirty people to sign. Then we can have a chapter. But we don't want you or any other assistant professors that are just starting out to sign. We don't want to jeopardize your careers or anything like that." The point is, that's going to be the laugh on me, although it didn't jeopardize my career.

Pretty soon they came back and they said, "We weren't able get twenty-five signatures." This is on a campus, of course, with hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of professors. "Maybe we could get you and some others to sign anyhow." So I sign. And I'm now in this union. So we have a meeting. And as often happens, they say, "How about you be secretary?" Because that involves you going to the newspaper and all. So I become the secretary of the union. And it's not like this existential decision, or that I think it's some big deal, or anything like that. But I'd be quoted in the student paper, "The union da-da-da—"

I obtained my FBI file in the late seventies through a lawyer friend who was visiting on our campus, a wonderful guy who'd been a lawyer for all these different leftist groups. He was teaching with us. He's now a professor at Temple. A wonderful, wonderful, great law professor, and writer. And he said, "I've got to get your FBI file." I said, "I don't have an FBI file. What are you talking about?" He said, "Oh, I know they'll have one on you. I know they'll have one on you." I said, "Believe me, I've never done enough." And so he badgered me, and he said, "I'll do it, I'll do it." So he did it.

So I get this file. And to cut that story short, because it never had an impact on my life, obviously, there are all the clippings from my union days. Any time I was quoted in the student paper it was in a file that the FBI got, but it also involved that I had spoken at a free speech movement talk at Cal State LA. Some students spotted me and they said, "Come on. You got to speak at the free speech movement thing." Whatever it was, '63, '64. And I'm speaking on the campus. A couple of my friends that were there, colleagues—and I guess one of the students—they got nervous. They thought, "This guy's taking notes." And they decide this guy was a police guy, or a spy of some kind. Apparently they were a little agitated afterwards. I was only remembering this again just the other day. I remember thinking back then, Man, informants are not here. It's too trivial. I didn't think it was any kind of a big deal at all. But it turned out my colleagues were right.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** And the only other things I want to mention about my FBI file. First, every time I'd give a speech the FBI would send their guys and they'd look at me again. And they sent the file from LA to Santa Cruz, or to San Francisco. There was one in the nation's capital. But they'd all have slightly different stuff in them.

The second thing about my FBI file I want to mention here, that was so interesting to me intellectually when I got the file, was that in 1970 I was really involved on the campus in the rallies in the attempts to deal with the Cambodian incursion, as it was called. Nixon bombed in Laos, I guess it was. But in any case, students really were up in arms again, after a lot of die-down of the antiwar movements on campus. And my office became one place where the students—

one of my research assistants volunteered to deal with the phones, to deal with messages from all over the place. We were coordinating all of these things, mostly to do with teas that were being held, meetings with people in town, where two or three students would go and explain to the town people why they were against the war and so on. And my wife was very much coordinating this with all of her many friends and contacts, too.

And then over in Stevenson [College at UCSC], Bill Friedland's<sup>3</sup> office was the main place. They were the more leftist office. That's where Mike Rotkin<sup>4</sup> and [Nick] Rabkin and some others were operating out of. They would meet in the Stevenson College Library and decide what they were going to do. They decided they were going to block Highway One at one point. And they did get out there. They blocked it at River Street. You know, that big intersection. I think they lasted maybe one round or two rounds, I forget. But they got eased off the street, as these trucks inched forward.

I thought it was not very smart. These people weren't the cause of the war. They were truck drivers who were trying to make a living, people who were trying to feed their kids. You know, everyday life, which a student doesn't have a conception of. But I was a guy with, at that point, four kids. We'd had another child born in September of 1968. So you know, you've got to get these kids to various places. There're schools; there's food. You've got to have formulas,

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<sup>3</sup> See the oral history Bill Friedland, Interviewed by Sarah Rabkin, Edited by Irene Reti and Sarah Rabkin, *Community Studies and Research for Change: An Oral History with William Friedland* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/friedland>.

<sup>4</sup> See the oral history with Mike Rotkin, *Mike Rotkin and the Rise and Fall of Community Studies at UCSC, 1969-2010* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/rotkin>

diapers, whatever. So everyday life, they were blocking that. But we were doing something very different.

But one of the things was, one of the faculty—I think it maybe was a guy named Ben Clark who was in Russian lit—he said we’ve got to give our draft cards in solidarity to this group that’s coordinating all of this at Princeton, where we turned in our draft cards to show solidarity. Well, you had to have your draft card on you at that time. If you didn’t, you were subject to fine or jail or whatever. They certainly could arrest you. So I said, “Okay, man, I’ll give you this, but”—I was partly joking, but I said, “But this is going straight to the FBI, you know.” Because by then I had read all the stuff on all the spying and had just written a chapter for a book of mine called *The Higher Circles*. I had a chapter on all of the behind-the-scenes stuff that had been uncovered in the sixties and had put it in a more power-elite context.

“Oh, no,” he said, “Bill, that won’t happen.” But when I got my FBI file, there it was. Within thirty days, the FBI had written a letter to the attorney general saying, “We have reason to believe that Domhoff doesn’t have his draft card on him.” And then there was this photocopy of my draft card. (laughs) So they did have an in. They did have the Princeton radicals wired and it was going straight to the FBI. They did have a list. They did have files; it’s come out later, they did have lists of people that were considered dangerous. I don’t know whether I made that list or not.

But I sure didn’t feel dangerous. I never did anything that was unusual. Mike Rotkin’s blocking draft boards; I’m at home changing diapers. It’s just I wasn’t that active. I think it was just a place where I was in my life. Who knows

what I would have done if I was a single guy five years younger? I have no idea what I would have done. But I did give speeches at various places.

### **The Genesis of *Who Rules America?***

Well, I want to say that in the summer of '63 or '64, we took our family to Ohio to be closer to my parents, to have them experience our kids for the summer. I taught at Western Reserve University. I was teaching psych. There was a nice chair there that liked my work and was willing to have me. I was in the library, and I was looking at books. And I ran into a book on the upper class, by a sociologist. Then I realized, wow, that would let me try out some of these ideas that Mills and these Marxists are talking about. I could really use these social clubs and prep schools and resorts and all. I could use those as what we called social indicators, and I could do empirical research on whether they run big companies. So I began to think that way. How many of these people that Mills and the Marxists are talking about are part of this upper class, which you know is rich people; which you know is cohesive; which you know fits definitions of social class that I'd taught about in social psych, and that I read on. I'd had a couple of sociology courses at Duke.

So at any rate, that year when I came back to Cal State LA, I said to the students, "Okay, you're all saying you want relevant research. So how about we turn this social psych class into a project. I want to do a project in which everybody will take a different area of the society: foundations, corporations, university trustees. We're going to look at them. And you are going to study them."

These students that did this research are all named in *Who Rules America?* I compiled all their work. Essentially it was a research class. I was curious to see—and wow, it was more than I expected in terms of how cohesive it was. I was fascinated. There was an in-group telephone book at the time, an upper-class telephone book called *The Social Register*. I had copies of *The Social Register*. I think I found them in various libraries. One of them was called *The Social Register Locator*, and it had all the names from A to Z in all the twelve cities. That became my indicator of upper-class standing. And away I went.

### **Coming to the University of California, Santa Cruz**

We arrived in Santa Cruz in the summer of '65. I think we first went to Napa. Somewhere along the line I'd found a house. I forget whether my wife was in Napa or LA. But she couldn't come up there, financially, and lots of kids—she was very pregnant with our third child, at the time. So at any rate, I found a house, a big sprawling house on Alta Vista [Drive, in Santa Cruz]. 'Sprawling' in the sense that the family that owned it was fortunately big on children, and they'd added on two bedrooms and a playroom and a bath in the back. Just a very modest-looking house, but five bedrooms, two baths, and a playroom.

When we arrived there, there was enough room so that I could have a study. The kids were in the back rooms and Judy and I had a bedroom. And then there was my study. So I sat down and I wrote *Who Rules America?* that summer. It was called: *Is the American Upper Class, the Governing Class?* I talked about it all the time. It must have driven my colleagues nuts. I made many mimeographed copies of it.

And a sociologist who was on the campus—he was not part of Cowell, but he was part of the original contingent, as I think it was often said—he was going to be the provost and was the provost, then, of Stevenson—a guy named Charles Page. He had been a big-deal sociologist. He read it for me, and we sat down for lunch. And we had a nice chat. He had a very low-key style, maybe because he was older. But he said, “You got to rewrite it.” He said, “It’s too journalistic.” Which would be totally true, right, with my background. (laughs) So he didn’t think it was ready to go. So the next summer I wrote that book again. We can pick up there the next time.

But I want to say how I came to have a job here. First of all, as great as LA was for us in terms of family and my research and teaching and exciting and all that, it was LA. It was smoggy as all get-out. And I was learning this pecking order. My colleagues were obsessed with UCLA: “What’s UCLA doing?” I’d never heard of UCLA. But it was clear that we were such second-class citizens. They were so oppressed by that. It finally can get to you. They were comparing the teaching loads. I can’t remember the detail.

And my wife certainly wanted to, if she could, be closer to her family in Northern California. We had all these kids and it’s an onerous ride up there, and then for them to come down. Freeways weren’t quite as good and all that.

So we agreed that we were going to go on the job market and then also, if we don’t make it, then maybe we’d even consider moving outside the state. In other words, get to a better school. And she seemed to be willing to entertain it. Fortunately, it never came to whether she really meant it or not, because I lucked out.

Three [UC] campuses opened, as you know, in the fall of '65: San Diego, Irvine and Santa Cruz. Calvin Hall alerted me—this is how these networks work[ed]. I saw him at a meeting. And he said, "Hey, they're hiring at Santa Cruz. Write to Bert Kaplan, he's a friend of mine. Get in touch with him." I really lucked into that job. I didn't know at the time that Calvin had done things for Bert, like give him dreams for a project [he] was working on to collect all kinds of primary records.

I met Bert Kaplan in the airport at LA. He was on his way back to Rice University in Houston, where he taught at the time. He had a big book under his arm. He's an awkward kind of guy to talk to. He said to me, "What kind of psychologist are you?" I said, "I'm a people psychologist." And he said, "As opposed to persons?" Because he was a phenomenologist, it turned out. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about, and I was so flustered. I said, "No, no, no," I said, "as opposed to animals. I study all about humans, not rats and cats and pigeons."

He said that was satisfactory to him. And then he mentioned Hegel and had I read—it was *Phenomenology*—he had [Hegel's] *The Phenomenology [of Spirit]* under his arm. Had I read this? And "No, no, I sure haven't." So I think, this is not going well at all. But the thing was, what I realize now is—my assumption is that they hired me because they wanted "atypical people," in a word. And because he was a phenomenologist, and had really even given up on the personality, let alone behaviorism, the fact that I studied dreams, the fact that I studied power, and the fact that I was Calvin Hall's student was probably enough. And then I guess he figured I was outgoing enough. And, of course, I had three years experience. I had taught a hell of lot of courses. I could teach

introductory, child, personality, and social for him and then he could teach whatever he wanted. And then a guy named Bhuwan Joshi, a Nepalese guy who had to leave Nepal because he'd been involved in revolutionary stuff and the king would get him—he had gone to Berkeley. He was the experimental stats guy. So that was the three of us.

Well, I didn't hear anything more. And then I think Page Smith must have gotten in touch with me. He was the provost [of Cowell College]. And I went up there to be interviewed by Page and to meet people. And I was sitting there. I'm thinking I'm being interviewed. I'm still nervous as all get out—not sure I have this job nailed down, that's for sure. But I see on the blackboard he's got all these names. And it says, "Psychology: Joshi, Kaplan, Domhoff." I went, "Huh. Jesus, maybe I'm really close here."

Page and I, of course, hit it off really well. And he also was really out for people that weren't mainstream. I'm sure that he liked the fact that I studied dreams and power. It turns out he's really from a first family in Virginia. He's a very upper-class guy. Fits the definition of the word "insouciant" like nothing you've ever seen. He was just unflappable, and far more radical on campus things than any of his faculty, by far. He once said to me a wonderful thing—he was a great mentor to me—he said, "They're all radical about the chamber of commerce and what's going on elsewhere, but they're very conventional about the university." I wasn't so sure I totally agreed with that, but boy, I watched it unfold. He was totally right.

**Rabkin:** Who was he referring to? The faculty?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. Totally conventional. The legislature was making noises about, “We got to up teaching loads.” It’s a perennial thing: teaching loads always going down, but they’re always wanting to up the teaching requirements. I’ve seen that for fifty years. But in any case, Page said, “This is a wonderful opportunity. Because what we just have to do is redefine a course.” And he said, “I think sometimes you’ll teach eight, and sometimes you’ll teach two. It depends. Some courses might only meet once a month. Some of them might meet once every two months, and be spread over a year.”

That drove many faculty wild. I can remember my colleague—at that point my chair was a guy named David Marlowe, who in many ways was very straight, mainstream, upwardly mobile, totally into social psych. He was from Brooklyn or New York, and he’d gone to Brooklyn College, and then Ohio State for a PhD. But he had taught at both Harvard for five years and Berkeley for several years. And now he’s coming to our place. He was not polished. And he was very blunt, and all business, but very human and very decent. He related to you as a person. Marlowe was cynical, but he looked out for us. But he was really annoyed by Page Smith and all the kinds of things he said. He was the epitome of that kind of mainstream faculty. He didn’t want to radicalize the place. But he did like the idea of Santa Cruz. He taught art for fun. Within a few years he was teaching as much in art history as he was teaching in psychology, and certainly far more interested in the arts.

**Rabkin:** So Bill, you were hired into the board of study in psychology?

**Domhoff:** Oh yeah. Nothing to do with sociology.

Well, I know we're going to wrap up here, so let me just say that—I also later put it together that one of the reasons they also hired me, I'm pretty sure—because I learned this from Bhuwan Joshi, the guy from Berkeley—that Dean McHenry was checking informally with Brewster Smith about psychology and psychologists to hire. Brewster had a big national, international image. He'd taught at Berkeley and Chicago and everywhere else. He'd been part of big-deal things at Harvard in the forties, big-deal professors and so on. So he was really one of the most connected guys in psychology. But it turns out that Brewster had been a student once of Calvin Hall's. Calvin had taught in Oregon for a year or so. Brewster was the straightest-looking guy in the world. He had a butch haircut. Turns out he was a leftist. He later confessed he was communist for a short time in college. I do mean, 'confessed'—he put it in journal articles he wrote toward the end of his life. He wrote about testimony before the House [Committee] on Un-American Activities. So Brewster, I'd look at him and I'd think, "He's being awfully friendly, but he's a pretty straight guy." But he had a lot more sympathy for young leftists like me than I realized. He was a very young guy at the time. So between Calvin and Bert and Brewster, that's how I got my job.

I arrived here, then, as I've said, on that July 1st, in that context of having Bert and Page as my supporters, and this very new faculty that I had not met. Most of them weren't around yet, or we weren't doing things. So I did spend that summer, then, writing *Who Rules America?* and had that first draft.

And I'll pick up [next time] and say more about what happens at Santa Cruz.

**Rabkin:** This is Sarah Rabkin. It's April 17th, 2013, and I am in my kitchen again with Bill Domhoff for our third interview. So Bill, we were going to pick up from last time and talk some more about UC Santa Cruz.

**Domhoff:** Right And before I say anything more about *Who Rules America?* and how it was reacted to and my subsequent research and writing, and my attempts at activism and supporting social change, what I want to do today is talk about my involvement in the campus, in the colleges, in the senate, and then as acting dean in 1993-1994. And maybe in some other ways, too. But those were the primary activities that I had. I think I can give some insight on the saga of the colleges, from someone who was sort of a semi-outsider but tried to help. I can talk a little about the failures of the administration, from my perspective.

Where I think it might be useful is, on the one hand, telling it like I think it was, it might be a little more unvarnished than some other accounts. It might have some 'tell some tales out school' kind of thing.

And the other thing—there's a certain ridiculousness to it, or hilarity. Some of it's kind of fun and funny. So I think it can be useful to somebody who wants to know, "the truth" about Santa Cruz, but also somebody that might want to write something about the frolic, the fun side, or looking at it with a sardonic eye, or whatever it may be. (laughs)

So to get into that, of course arriving here to this campus, brand new, being in UC, being in a place that had virtually no buildings. Six hundred very fine students that were really selected—had selected themselves for liberal arts and adventure. It was tremendously exciting. It was all new. You could do

anything you wanted. Just say, “Well, it’s part of the Santa Cruz experiment. We got to try it. And we’re trying everything.”

So that was the spirit that really, especially, Page Smith conveyed. But really Dean McHenry was up for that. He was just a little bit stiffer. And at that time, when we arrived, we only had this Cook House at the base of the campus that we used, where we had some meetings. We had the Field House, which also served as a dining hall. And then a lot of trailers out in that field where the students lived. And we had what’s now Hahn Services, which was the library. And then you could walk up the hill to the one building we had, which was called Nat Sci I. I think it became Thimann Lecture Hall [later]. And maybe we had the Thimann Labs the first year. Maybe they were the second—the big lecture hall. So it was really very small. We didn’t have the Cowell College buildings. It was only the second year that we had the Cowell and the Stevenson buildings.

I was into it. I was supportive of all the things that the innovators wanted to do. In the back of my mind was that, of course that I would last here, or stay here, or get tenure. This was the perfect spot for me, as I said last time, because of the location. It was close enough to the relatives on my wife’s side. It was all idyllic. No freeways. I picked a house five minutes from the campus, so that my life as a commuter—which had been true in a lot of cities, in Cleveland, where I’d lived, and certainly in LA—was over. It was, in that sense, very idyllic and fun. And the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* wrote stories about the different faculty and their families, and the campus and the town was greeting us, and so on. All of that was in the background.

I want to say that, even though I had three years of experience, I arrived here as an assistant professor, step one, which was the lowest classification. That was because there was a restraint of trade agreement that was very formal at that time between the state colleges and the universities. It turned out that the head of this campus had to ask the head of Cal State LA if I could leave—could they, in effect, raid me?

Now, a few of us did get out of the state college system at that time, maybe in the next year or two. Some people I knew. I'd see on their vitae they'd been from a state college. But it's an example of what I mean by the academic caste system, because the state college system is entirely different. It's definitely—you're not allowed to say it, but it's the second-class citizen of the state. They teach more. They can't have grad programs. If they want PhD programs in certain things, they have to do it in conjunction with the University [of California], or have the permission of the UC system, or have a program in conjunction with the nearest UC campus. So definitely it was a kind of a pecking order. It was better for a professor to be in the UC system.

I don't remember much about our early meetings. I was not a heavy contributor. There were people that were senior, obviously. There were people that had been here, been planning about this for a year or so. As an assistant professor, step one, I was just along for the ride. It was all very fun for me.

I recall—and we'll weave this a little bit through the story—at the early meetings one of the people who was very charming and seemed like he would be great fun, a man named Jasper Rose, who was a British guy who had been brought here, I think, from maybe even Rice University. He was very British, and he was an artist, and fit the image of what they were looking for—to be Oxford

and Cambridge. Being from Oxford or Cambridge gave a real edge to anybody that had gone there from the USA, or was British and would come here, because they wanted to imbue UCSC with that kind of spirit. This Jasper Rose guy was impressive at first. But he really was an impossible person. And it was not very long before he would cause all kinds of troubles in all kinds of ways. We made him a provost at one point. I was actually on the committee when that transition was made. And I'll never forget saying, "Well, he'll either go crazy or drive us crazy. Either one or the other," I should say, "Within a year or two." And, of course, he did and he got in a huff about everything. I think he soon resigned on some question of what, in his mind, was principle. So I started to learn about that kind of person, and dealing with them, and just realizing it was hopeless, and learn to keep my distance.

And one of my first memories of this kind of thing that was typical of what happened in all this, when Page Smith<sup>5</sup> proposed that we abolish grades—which was one of the real major innovations and tensions and excitement. Well, certainly it was nothing that was a problem for me. I liked it just fine. Indeed, I thought it worked great. Because it took all this grade-grubbing out, and "I should have gotten a B plus, not a B," or, "The B plus should have been an A minus." It changed the atmosphere and student-faculty relations, the fact that we were going to write these evaluations.

Well, there were people that had genuine concerns, like for pre-med students. They said, "There ought to be this opportunity to take a grade in some cases," and so on and so forth. So there were compromises that were made, so

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<sup>5</sup> See Page Smith: *Founding Cowell College and UCSC, 1964-1973* (Regional History Project, UCSC, 1996). Available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/smith>

that there were some exceptions where there could be grades. I think it was mostly around pre-med, although I'm not sure. But the important point of the story is when we came down to a vote—there were thirty, thirty-five, forty of us, I would guess at that time—there was a man who absolutely opposed it because he was absolutely for grades. He was one of these people who thought this would be the end of Western civilization and standards and so on. He was a biologist, and probably a pretty rigid guy, at least on those kinds of things. Within a year he was gone.

But the other person that voted against it was from the other extreme, and it was Jasper Rose. He voted against it, "On principle, dear boy," because there were some grades being given and this would undermine the whole system. And, you know, pretty quickly you see both these guys are impossible and they're wrong and they're fanatics and so on.

[But not all the faculty that said they were big supporters of narrative evaluations turned out to be willing to write them in a timely fashion:] students would come and say, "I haven't gotten an evaluation for three or four of my courses. A couple of them I need because I'm going to apply to grad school in this or that." We were advisors to the students at that time. I was an advisor to twenty, thirty students. I don't know what it was. But I would see them once a month, or when they needed to see me. And they were from a variety of disciplines, although usually in the social sciences. And so you'd know what was going on in the campus, [that some faculty were not writing evaluations]. Professors [who said they were for evaluations] didn't want to do them. And then they'd act dumb and wouldn't learn the rules.

It was really very useful to have some sense of the students by being an advisor. You'd also really have a sense of the faculty. So I don't remember much more about those particular early meetings, except that I was always with them, in terms of all of the innovations.

### **Reflections on the College Core Courses**

They handed me a huge stack of books. It was two feet high at least, maybe three feet high. These were the books that were going to be used in the [Cowell] core course over the course of the year. And we all were expected to participate in this core course. Well, that was a shocker to me. I probably hadn't read most of those books ever. They were the great books of the Western world. And the others I didn't remember much about. So this was going to be an enormous amount of time, in order to be involved in this course. I thought, oh my goodness, this is trouble. What am I going to do? This is bad news. I really didn't want to do it.

And then, for me, a lucky thing happened. And that is because of the openness of the campus, some of the students said, "Why isn't there an introductory psych course?" And since there were only three of us [teaching psychology], a couple of them came to me and said, "We want to be taught some psych." And I said, "Well, you find the twenty, thirty people that want to take it, and you go tell the provost. And then I'll teach it." Which, of course, I'd rather teach, and which would get me out of this [core] course. And so, sure enough, these students campaigned a little bit for such a course. Page Smith came to me and said, "Well, we've got to have an intro to psych course. We'll get somebody else [to teach the core course], no problem."

So that's what happened. Various things would pull people out of this course, usually to their great joy. And they were replaced, then, with grad students, with secretaries on the campus that knew their stuff, Page Smith's assistant: all those people became involved in the core courses.

And my experience would be—and I think I had evidence for this, looking at numbers within five, ten years—and that is, within a year or two or three, most of these core courses were not staffed by the faculty at all, which had been the original idea, that the faculty would be working closely with these lower-division students on big ideas and a variety of books and liberal arts generally. We would be undergraduate, lower-division, liberal arts kind of teachers. In fact, the numbers of non-faculty in core courses were over 85 to 90 percent, I'm sure, within a very few years. And the only people that remained in the course were really those that were in the humanities, where a lot of these basic books were centered. They were historical. They were classics and so on. Or if their core course was more about social sciences, or maybe some of the sciences, then some of the scientists would stay with it.

But this leads me into, then, wanting to say why these college courses failed. It's something that I think I can speak of because of how I personally was so overjoyed to get out of the course, and can then generalize from that. But also because I sat through a lot of meetings where these guys fought and fought and fought in Cowell College about this core course, which, of course, didn't involve me, thankfully. I thought— (relieved sigh)

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** I didn't have to do it. So there were a couple of things that made it absolutely so these courses had to fail structurally. One was that the faculty, of course, was not trained for, or wanted to do, these kinds of courses. Everybody was more like me. They'd been out in the field in anthropology. They'd done this sociology dissertation. They were doing psych studies. They were doing natural science studies. Whatever it may be, they weren't trained for it. And they weren't going to be rewarded for anything but their expertise in their discipline. We were going to be judged for tenure by our colleagues in our discipline, although the college would have a say-so. But they'd also have an outside review committee, because we didn't have enough senior psychologists on the campus for review committees. So the ad hoc review committee, as it's called, was going to be made up of people from other UC campuses. We were going to be judged by UC standards, which Dean McHenry made clear. But they were also going to put us to work on a course that wasn't going to really count towards that except, "Oh, you're a fine teacher."

Now, in fact, there were some faculty that probably did get tenure because they contributed to what was called institution-building. By being drawn into it, it pulled them off their track. Some of these people were, I would comment, brand-new, fresh out of grad school. Some of them hadn't finished their dissertation. In a way, they didn't have a prayer. Because once you get drawn into the life of being a faculty member—you're interacting with students, you love the role, you have to do the role, whichever it is—or both—it's hard to then go home and suddenly work on your dissertation and get your mindset back that you're going to get ready for this: you've got to please these three people on your committee. That's your mindset even though they're probably just saying, "Do

anything and I'll give you your degree. Get out of here." But that's not how they saw it.

There were people that didn't finish. In a couple of places there people I knew that for five, six years, they were going to both kick them out of grad school and kick them out of here. Their friends helped them; helped them by taking their course, by doing the bibliography, by pulling them through.

Now, there's another aspect to that, and that is that most of these courses were developed by a senior faculty member who brought them here. In the case of Cowell College, we had a wonderful guy named Bill Hitchcock who was a historian from UCLA. He hadn't been a big publisher. But he taught this world history kind of course, which Page Smith loved, and brought him here. And it *was* a great course. He *was* a great instructor. He did know enough, certainly, to teach any college-level student, if not grad students, about Nietzsche or Freud or Marx or whatever. He had it down pat.

The faculty were originally eager to be part of the course but they wanted to have more say-so in the action. And, of course, the course was already formed. Basically, they were being asked to be TAs to Hitchcock. That's what created a lot of their tensions. So these big wheels did fight. And at a certain point, all of a sudden Hitchcock got quieter and quieter, and then he negotiated himself a withdrawal to Crown. One day he was gone. I had an office kitty corner to him, got along with him well. Liked him. We certainly had no clash. I wasn't in the course. And he knew I didn't know anything about history and was doing psych. So I had a sense of him, and liked him and admired him. But after he left and went to Crown and did their core course—they essentially thought, wow, this

would be great—he was even distant from me. So it created those kinds of enormous tensions among these faculty members.

### **College Courses**

Now, colleges also failed for another kind of a reason, and that is we were asked to teach specific courses for the colleges. And so, say I'd give a course on dreams, or a course on the upper class. Maybe there were only three or four or five students in the college that wanted to take it. But by the second year, there were people in Stevenson that wanted to take it, or the third year from Crown. So pretty quickly, college courses were essentially specialty courses that would be focused on some interesting topic. But students from all over the campus wanted to take them. So in what way were they college courses? The college would offer this course, but it wasn't knitting together the college. It wasn't leading to a conversation among the students in the college. It was just like a course on any other big campus: a really interesting course to a number of students. So the colleges didn't work at the student level, and they didn't work at the faculty level. So in that sense, the colleges had to become something else. And I'm going to tell you about my quixotic attempts to help on those things from a distance.

But before I say that, I want to say that these college courses were a personal godsend. And more generally I want to say—because I want to make these critical remarks about the colleges and the senate and this and that—but all of them were just great for me, because there was just enough distance that they gave me an opening, because the campus was so fresh and new that I could do whatever I wanted to try.

And here I go back to a fact I want to stress, that I meant to say just a second ago, and that was, I was an assistant professor, step one. But I had three years of teaching at a university. I'd taught a lot of courses. I had my courses down pat. And, of course, I had taught for year before that in grad school. And I had this manuscript for *Who Rules America?* and I had several publications. So I landed with both feet running, in effect, even though I was the most junior. And I liked that, because it gave me more time to get tenure if I needed it. Now, in the end I didn't. I asked to be put up for tenure during, I guess, my fourth year here, which was then seven years an assistant professor. But I had enough published, and it was easy and it flew through.

But more specifically then, as to why the college system was a godsend for me. It allowed me really to make a transition. It was the opening for a transition to sociology. Because I could teach a course on power, on the upper class. And at one point Page Smith, who as I already said was from the upper class, did history of some of this—and had written a wonderful book called *Daughters of the Promised Land* about the tensions between the fathers and daughters from these high levels of society, a wonderful book, and so psychological on some levels, but so historical on class. These upper-class men would have these daughters they were proud of and they wanted them to be independent like other Americans and go to college and all. So the daughters would take them at their word—and I'm making up the examples in a way—but they'd write home, "Oh father, I've found out I believe in free love." Or, "I believe in contraception." Or, "I think I'm going to be a physician." And then their father would say, "Hey, you can't do that!" Their letters would be full of all this tension. And they're battling. But Page looked at their upbringing, and they're encouraged to be independent.

And, of course, when you encourage independence you get it, and then you don't like seeing it.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** So he and I taught a course together. It was a great, wonderful experience for me. But basically then, with the strategic withdrawal from the core course, and with the fact that we owed the college two courses, I was all set. I think our teaching load was five. It later went down to four. I think we taught three for the board and two for the college. But however it was, it gave me openings and it was fun to do.

### **Culture Break**

But I did do a couple of things for the campus and the college. One of them was kind of fun and noteworthy and gives you a sense of the campus. Page Smith had decided that during the slog of a quarter—it was the first year—he thought we should have a Culture Break. We would take a space of two or three days right in the middle of the quarter and do whatever. It was kind of thematic. But it was just stop and enjoy the arts or whatever.

Well, this drove half the faculty just right out of their minds. The more scientific and organized their course, of course, the more it was upsetting to them. And so I thought, well—this is the story of my life on this campus. I think I can do something that Page Smith and his buddies will like, but the other people will find really acceptable. Because it will have a very substantive aspect. So I proposed that I do a Culture Break for the spring that I called the Fantasy Festival. Now, of course we know I was in dreams, so it would fit. At first I think

they were a little wary, and especially maybe Jasper—this uncultured soul (me) interloping on this.

But I put together a plan, and they went for it. It was a great event, (laughs) to put it modestly, but it was other people who made it great. I got a folklorist from Berkeley named Alan Dundes, who was a Freudian folklorist. He came down and he gave a talk on elephant jokes. He had us in stitches. Every time you'd just about recovered, he'd tell you an elephant joke. But then he'd slip in this Freudian explanation—in terms of the elephant's trunk, they're phallic symbols or this and that. So in a way that was almost—from the point of view of most the people there, it was a spoof of Freud. Except he was serious. And he was, as I say, a wonderful, wonderful person. They made him president of the American Folklore Association, even though he was a Freudian. And few other of the folklorists believed Freud. But they thought Dundes was wonderful.

I had experts on drugs, other experts on fantasy. Oh, I think I had a dream research guy from Stanford come over. And we had films, Bergman films. The students got into picking them. It was just generally really—it really went well. But that didn't really convert the antis to a regular Cultural Break. And I don't know how long that lasted. But it didn't, I don't think, last long, and didn't spread to the other colleges.

### **A UCSC Baseball Team**

The other thing I did in those early years during the second year, 1966-1967—a few of the students wanted to have a baseball team. They went to McHenry—because it was, again, such a small place. They could say, “We want a baseball team. Why can't we have that?” We had little sports clubs for other sports. So

McHenry said, "Go see Bill." I thought, "Well, yeah—" One of reasons that I think he was willing to hire me was, he thought, "Well, he must be sort of normal. He played baseball in college. And he's an athlete and so on." So I said, "Okay, okay, I'll coach this team." And I don't want to spend much time on it—just to say it was hilarious.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** Because we were horrible. Most of these people had not played any high school baseball. But I got to know some students that were wonderful. And I told them, I said, "I'm not even going to talk about it until you show me a catcher. Because otherwise your team looks foolish. Anyway, they bring a guy. And the guy shows up in his Santa Cruz High letterman jacket. He's a fairly small guy. Just the nicest guy in the whole world. He had caught for Santa Cruz High. I talked to him about it. I knew who the coach was at Santa Cruz High. And he was one hell of a great catcher. He was just polished and calm, and he kept that team calm. And then from there it was all characters who had never played much, except for one or two pitchers.

And we played high schools. We played Soquel High a couple, three times. Maybe one other. We never got close to beating them. Cabrillo agreed to play a game with us. The other coach and I decided we'd quit after maybe two innings, maybe three, because somebody on our team might get hurt. And they were ahead ten to nothing. They hit the ball so hard that I think they might have hit the ball back through the box and killed one of our pitchers. (laughter) We played one fairly decent game against one other community college. But we lost.

But in any case, the point is we did do that. We had no infield to practice on. We had to practice down at Harvey West [Park], and maybe one high school let us practice. I forget. But anyway, we'd stand out there on the greens by the East Field House and try to play baseball with no baseball diamond and no backstop. So it was all ridiculous on that score. It rained most of the spring. And we didn't do it again. I could have continued, but I'd have to ask for a baseball field. And it was antiwar times and there was tension, tensions with the chancellor. So it was just one of those things that went by the by.

### **More on the UCSC College System**

Now, I want to continue with colleges by saying that I didn't do much that I can remember of any significance within Cowell College after that. In the mid-seventies I was kind of transferred—but was glad to go over—to College Eight, where the sociologists were kind of agglomerating, and going to get together to have a grad program. And that will relate to when I talk about my work. By then I pretty much transitioned into sociology in terms of my own research, so I was glad to move over to College Eight with these sociologists and maybe a few political scientists. But I didn't do much in that college.

I was only there three or four years, and then there was a reorganization that was more general on the campus to bring the disciplines into somewhat more coherence, supposedly. And I took Stevenson College. I had a choice between Stevenson and Merrill, because that's where the sociologists were going to be located. Stevenson not only had some sociologists, but it also was going to have the social psychologists, to whom I was more connected historically, and in terms of my training. And they were good folks. So were the people that were

going to be in Stevenson from sociology. And as of my one political science buddies said at the time—it was a wonderful phrase—he said, “Stevenson’s the best piece of real estate on the campus.” I think that was true in terms of A, parking; but B, the wonderful plaza, the way the buildings are located. There’s a great lecture hall there that I used for years, Stevenson 150. You could walk right down the hill to the playing fields. There was just no better spot. And they had a good coffee shop and so on. So I went to Stevenson. My choice to avoid Merrill was no choice, because that was where all of the more difficult to deal with social scientists were located. I didn’t want to be with them. I knew that by then, because I had partly transitioned into sociology before the big reorganization of the faculty occurred.

So I was in Stevenson. That’s the point of the story. And I was also grad director in sociology at the time. And when I wasn’t grad director in sociology, I was the person that headed the committee on admissions and money. And I understood that the program was chaotic, and I wasn’t really teaching in it. And I didn’t have much belief in it or interest in it. And furthermore, it was all Marxism. The students they brought in were not interested in doing humble empirical research of the kind that I did. So I did my service for sociology by being in this position that could give out money, could bring in students. And that was a service I could do.

But part of that was I quickly saw how I could maybe help the colleges and help grad programs, too. And what I did was I went to the provost, a person who I obviously knew at that time, and I said, “Look, I’ll make you a deal. I will put a TA slot into your core course, if in turn you will hire one of our grad students into that slot and also one of our grad students into one of your slots.”

Because by then, of course, nobody was really teaching in the core course, as I've already said.

So it was a plus-plus situation. The college got a couple or three of my TA slots, but I got placements for maybe four or five of our students. And that went on for several years. It was really a boon for those students, because now they were teaching a section; they were kind of a little more than just a TA. And furthermore, it gave them experience that they could use, in saying they taught in a liberal arts program. I know that it helped one of my own grad students get a job at University of San Francisco, where he's now the right-hand person to the woman who runs University of San Francisco. Which is kind of ironic because he's from Wales and not Catholic, and the right-hand person is a woman at this University of San Francisco. But they definitely partly hired him because he had this wide range of Stevenson College teaching, as well as being a very fine sociologist.

But I did something else: I also joined the core course. I think it was partly penance for having ditched out on Cowell. I wanted to do my time. I also probably needed it as a fifth course. It was also an interesting and easy—I don't want to ever pretend otherwise—gig in a way, because you're running a section. You're mostly having these students react to these books and you're reading their essays. It was satisfying to try to help them with their writing and so on. And it put me kind of in touch with first-year students, which I hadn't been teaching that much of in the previous, probably five, six, or so years.

So I taught in the course, and I was the spring quarter of the course. It was a three-quarter course. And it was probably the only three-quarter core course left on the campus at the time. I think Cowell was down to two quarters. I'm not

sure. And it was more social science-oriented in the spring. It would be Marx and Freud and Nietzsche, which I was more attuned to, and could relate to and learn from.

So I taught in this particular course, and I gave the Freud lecture. I want to say that teaching the course confirmed all my worst suspicions. It was basically, according to my lights and seeing it—and also according to the student evaluations—it was a terrible, terrible course, deadly— We bring these students here, they're going to have this great liberal arts experience.

To my knowledge, most of these courses were pretty, pretty bad, with a couple of exceptions, such as Merrill, where John Isbister worked heroically to try to make the colleges work. And I mention that because he will weave into my story later today, in my quixotic quests on the colleges. Some of the lectures—we'd have these guest lectures for each one, that didn't always connect. One guy started his lecture on Nietzsche—and he was a faculty member here—and he started out, he'd just say, "Well, Nietzsche was this young, brilliant guy, and he died crazy." You know, basically that was the start of the lecture. Great, well how are these students ever going to take Nietzsche seriously? He doesn't talk about the fact he probably got syphilis and general paresis that blossomed into psychosis later on, that those were the most likely symptoms, that his brilliant ideas and scintillating writings had come much earlier. And some of the guest lecturers they had dragooned into doing it, and some of them were not very good.

So it was just generally bad news. And I know this not only from talking to students, but also from the evaluation forms—on one side they evaluated the course. On the other side they evaluated their section and their section leader. So

I could just read through my own evaluations, but I read through others. They'd say, "The course is terrible; my section leader was great. He was wonderful. He helped me." So I'd get very positive evaluations, which still mattered, I think. But at the same time, of course, it was terrible. I knew it and I saw it firsthand. So in that sense, again, you see this as such a failed experience.

Now, there were a couple of other faculty that came into the course with the reorganization. And with a couple of new hires we had two or three other faculty that were working in the core course. But we weren't allowed to shape it. We had some ideas: "Okay, here we could do this." And one new person who was a person of color, a diversity person, she had some ideas of what they could do. "Oh, no, no, no." But finally she got one book into the curriculum.

But the argument the old-guard would make was, "Look, we want this continuity with the past." It was "sacred past" kind of stuff. And they even said, can you imagine? "Well, when the Stevenson alumni gather, they can all talk about their Plato and Aristotle and all the rest of the gang that they've all studied together in the core course." Which struck me as kind of ludicrous and ridiculous. It was like being stuck in the past. There was a way in which all those core courses were stuck in the past, especially from a social science mentality, because they're teaching these people these great books. It can verge on holy writ. And either the books or the instructors were not always very interesting; they didn't quite engage the students. So it's been really hard to make those core courses work—at least when I was around.

Now I understand there're still core courses, at least in some colleges. I was recently invited to speak in one in Cowell. And it was interesting, because the people were in charge of it, I think, were instructors, and maybe only had

that as their job. They really tried to make it so it related to the students and I think they succeeded. We were talking, in this case, about inequality, but relating it to some early texts, and texts in ethics and so on, that they had read. And then they have this sociologist, me, come in and talk about the wealth and income distribution and power and so on. But you really have to work at it to make the core course successful. And it was an upper day for me, incidentally, because there were 350, 400 students out there in that big Classroom Unit I. It had been a long time since I'd done that. So I was up for it. And when I saw how big it was— It was just a rip-snorting good time, and good questions. And I really came at them. But unless the course is done that way, by people who are really specializing in it—which relates back to this Hitchcock guy—then they don't work.

Incidentally, with Hitchcock there's another thing to say. And that is—that shows you the contradiction between teaching and the personal advancement of faculty members. It's my understanding that he came here as an associate professor of history. Given his age, that was a surprise, because he was probably in his forties, at least. And he hadn't published much. Then he got here and he's doing this fantastic job. When they asked students ten years later, "What do you remember most?" "Oh, Hitchcock and his course." I mean, he was just by far and away the most notable thing in this one Cowell retrospective survey. And yet they had to fight to get him to full professor. Because they said, "Oh, what's he published?" So they created these contradictions.

So I want to say, too, in relation to my idea of putting sociology students into the grad course, which was useful for them and useful to the college, I tried to spread that to other colleges. There was one person who was working partly

in administration at the time that kind of liked it. He said, “Yeah, that makes sense. That could work.” But I tried to spread it. But I’m not sure that any other discipline ever figured out how to take advantage of that, if they do have core courses. I say that with laughter at myself, but also [in] frustration of trying to do any innovation on an allegedly innovative campus that would involve any changes in the sacred disciplines, or in any way bridging this college-board—now department—gap were always futile. Because these people really were, in that sense, very traditional, just like I said my wonderful mentor Page Smith said: they’re very conventional when it comes to their own business.

### **Other Early UCSC Activities**

Well, most of my involvement, then, was actually outside the colleges, aside from what I have mentioned. I was on the usual senate kind of committees, in a minor way. I served on the Committee on Research. It was wonderful fun, because we were evaluating proposals and giving out money. It was very positive. I’m sure I was on the Admissions Committee one year. But I really didn’t do much in the senate until a little later. And I’m going to come to that.

But first I wanted to say that I did help out a couple times with the whole issue of sports and intramurals on campus, the Office of Physical Education, Recreation—OPERS, I guess it’s now called. And it was Ron Ruby in physics, and I that were asked by the chancellor in the first year or the second year to write some rules, some guidelines about athletics on the campus. And this involved beyond intramural. How are we going to do that? I haven’t found these rules, what we wrote up. And I can’t remember most of them. But I know that the substance of them was to carry out McHenry’s wishes for the campus—

which were ones I heartily agreed with—not to have it become overwhelmed by big-time sports. And, in particular, it was written in such a way that it was basically impossible to have a football team. Because I certainly knew from my experience at Duke, which didn't ever rub any skin off my back, but I could sure see how it dominated the campus, the fanaticism. And, of course, it's only gotten worse and uglier since. The athletic department dominates. The coach makes more than the president, both of whom make way too much money. There's all kinds of garbage that goes on to get the athletes through. "They should be paid," and so on.

### **What's Different About UC Santa Cruz**

And I want to say what's different about Santa Cruz to this day. I think there are two things that survived that make a tremendous difference in shielding us from the usual pressures. One is the lack of big-time sports: that we're Division Three in most things and we do not have a football team. There're a couple other teams. Lots of teams we don't have, I'm sure. The basketball team is a minor kind of story.

The other important thing was we didn't have fraternities and sororities, or not many. And we wouldn't have had any, except that Rich Randolph and others that were anthropologists said, "You know, you grow these colleges beyond six hundred people, you're going to get divisions, alienation. It seems like what is natural is in that five to six hundred range." So they blew these colleges way bigger anyhow, and then, of course, they're not quite the same. And maybe there's more tendency to join these fraternities and sororities.

But incidentally, let me say, the way that sororities and fraternities first came was—it was coterminous with the fact I think it was particularly black students who wanted to be able to have their fraternity or sorority. And in the attempt to increase diversity on the campus, the administration was not going to get in an argument over frats and sororities. It was through that kind of door that these other frats and sororities came in.

But basically, it's a no sports and no fraternity-dominant culture that makes a difference on the campus. In my own case, I had lived on a sports/frat campus at Duke. At the time it seemed fine to me. I was in a fraternity in college. It made all the difference in the world. You weren't a GDI: a goddamn independent. You weren't in the dorm with the independents. You were with, in some way, your own kind—the comfort level. Fraternities and sports, of course, were big time at Duke University. So I had certainly seen that side, but I was also ready to entertain something that went the opposite direction. And those two innovations at UCSC did survive. Looking back, I prefer them to what I saw at Duke.

### **The Banana Slug Mascot**

The other way I helped with OPERS was that in the late seventies, the early eighties, for a year or two—and it was when [Chancellor Robert] Sinsheimer<sup>6</sup> had just come here—I was on the OPERS advisory committee. We were an advisory committee to the chancellor, but I don't think we ever met with

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<sup>6</sup> See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Robert Sinsheimer: Chancellor of UC Santa Cruz, 1977-1987* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1996). <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/sinsheimer>

him. I cannot remember who the other people were. I doubt if we did much. But I was involved, had a bird's-eye view on the banana slug story.

It's a hilarious story. And it's also a story about administrators and the lack of democracy, when you say you do have it. For some reason, Sinsheimer got it in his head—I don't know from where—maybe because he wanted to see us have a little more organized sports, still at Division Three level, that we needed a mascot name. Now, the students had informally often called their teams whatever they wanted. And usually they'd use "banana slug," as far as I can remember. But in any case, he put out a statement to all the colleges saying, "What should be the name of the team?"

So he got back unanimous, or at least nearly unanimous, advice to name the teams The Banana Slugs. But he didn't like that. He thought that that was kind of demeaning to sports, and made our teams look laughable. And he took what was either a distant second choice, or what people had maybe suggested to him, given where we're located, and he wanted to name us the sea lions. And he so did. And therein started his trouble. He'd asked for student opinion; they'd given this strong opinion that reflected the campus mentality; and he'd ignored it, and he'd made them the sea lions. And he's got himself a fight.

So I write him—and I think maybe somebody else approved it—but I write him a very carefully worded message that was partly a fib on my part. Because I said, "Well, I can certainly see why you think the banana slug might be not such a good idea." And that, in my mind, was a fib. But I was cajoling him. And I said, "On the other hand, if you name [the team] The Sea Lions, this could be a long conflict."

He had no sense of the student involvement in the campus and their willingness to rise up, so to speak. There was still that whole mentality here from the sixties and early seventies. We had a very liberal contingent of students still on the campus. We were still predominantly liberal and radical students at that time, we know from freshman surveys, especially compared to any other campus, indeed, compared to any other campus in the country. I know those numbers from co-authoring a book on Santa Cruz that we'll come to later. So I gave him this advice, on which I never heard back, and which he didn't follow. I said, "Why don't you just decide that you're going to leave things the way they are? Every team can name themselves what they want to, because that's the Santa Cruz way." I don't even know whether he received it, read it, but of course he named them The Sea Lions. And it was hilarious: from that point forward, the name Sea Lions *never* appeared in anything written by any student. There were the sea slugs, the banana lions; there was sea kelp; there were the sea cucumbers.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** On and on and on with the mockery. And the whole fight—then a wonderful student did a logo of "No grades, please," with Plato on it. And I think he had little glasses on the banana slug. He was holding Plato, this student banana slug. And it was wonderful. It reflected the campus. Students loved it. Sold them like crazy.

**Rabkin:** Do you remember the name of the student who did that logo?

**Domhoff:** No. He was, what was called a Berkeley redirect. He came here with the promise he could go to Berkeley after two years. But he liked it so much that he stayed. He was very political. He worked in the legislature for years.

**Rabkin:** Marc something?<sup>7</sup>

**Domhoff:** Not Marc, I don't think. If you said it, it might ring a bell. But it'll come back, or I'll have it in my files. He was a wonderful guy. I got to know him well. He had tremendous political savvy on stuff on this campus. He did a lot of other very astute things. He was truly always the left wing of the possible in his actions. He was very low key. He was not a charismatic, push-around kind of guy. I always liked him enormously and respected his judgment. I think I learned a lot from him.

At any case, the chancellor stood his ground. One of his statements was, "Well look, the basketball team would be embarrassed by this. I'm not going to embarrass them. They're NCAA Division III." And then *they* said, "Oh, we love it." So he now was kind of trapped. And he capitulated. The irony is, the students, oh, they loved him for it. "Oh, he's so great. He's such a good guy."

And then *Sports Illustrated* picked the banana slug as the mascot of the year, the most interesting mascot. It appeared in the newspapers, and, of course, got us publicity. And they interviewed [Sinsheimer] and so on. So, after resisting, he ended up a hero. Indeed, stories soon developed that he had resisted because he wanted to really build the whole thing up; in other words, a dumb,

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<sup>7</sup> The banana slug mascot designs were a co-creation of two Cowell College alum, Marc Ratner and Peter Blackshaw. See <http://www.slugweb.com/history.html>

conspiratorial kind of analysis was made of what had happened, when it was much more mundane.

[Sinsheimer] is a nice guy, well-meaning guy. At least one of his children had come here. They brought him in to have a science chancellor, and [there were] just a lot of things he was not very hip to, and [he] certainly didn't have a good feel of the campus at first.

### **Chairing the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP)**

Well, in the early eighties I was asked to serve on CAP. The Committee on Committees of the senate asked me to serve on CAP. And that's the kind of thing I liked to do. I really liked it when my peers wanted me to do something. I never liked running for office. I never wanted to be an administrator. I didn't like those kinds of situations. I had been chair of sociology for just one year in 1977-1978. I didn't like it at all. The kinds of things you deal with are the following: within a week I'm chair, and in comes this faculty member. And he's complaining that one of the new senior guys we brought in turns out to have two offices and he thinks that's wrong. So this is the kind of niggling thing you're dealing with.

Conversely, there was going to be a lot of tension in sociology that year over hiring someone. Not a particular person, but in what area? Would we hire somebody more in social psych and face-to-face stuff, or would we continue to build our strength in what's called macrosociology, which were political sociologists, political economists, people that looked at the world in general—who tended to be white males.

In any case, rather than get in a meeting to discuss this—I had learned something about power, and they all trusted me, because I had feet in all

camps—I said, “I would like each of you to write me what your thoughts are, and that will give me a sense of how to proceed.” And everyone on both sides wrote that they thought we should hire a micro person, a face-to-face; we needed a social psychologist of this or that kind.

But one person wrote and said, “We need to hire another political economist. And he should be so-and-so. He’s a genius. He’s the best. I’ve never had a person make more astute comments on my own manuscripts.” I think I talked to him about it. I said, “Most people feel the other way.” I was hoping he’d go in the meeting and just acquiesce and believe me. And so I said, “I’m happy to say we’re in more agreement than you may have thought: virtually all of you think we should be hiring in social psychology.” So he proceeded to make his pitch for this particular guy. Dealing with that, and having to either mollify him or somehow cast him aside because he caused endless trouble—he was endless grief for me. It spoiled my day and my night and my writing and everything else—and my mood.

So at the end of the year I quit as chair. I wrote a one-page resignation, in which I said, “I’d like to step down. I’m temperamentally unsuited for this position.” After I sent it, I had a copy, and I showed it to Carter Wilson, who was my counterpart, the chair in community studies. He said, “Bill, it’s a great resignation letter, except you spelled ‘temperamentally’ wrong.”

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** Which is one of those words that you learn in high school that you have to put an ‘A’ in. And I was pretty annoyed with myself that I spelled ‘temperamentally’ wrong in my resignation letter. It still rankles me.

So I say that because I just didn't like those kinds of positions. And in that sense, I didn't quite like being dean when I was dean, but I'll come to that [later] today.

In any case, I was asked to join CAP, and I felt honored. When my peers pick me, that's what I like. If I'm leader of the baseball team because they say, "Hey, you should be our leader," then that was great. And here, on this, it was great as well.

It went well for me on CAP and for others. The second year they made me chair. And I was chair the third year. Then they said, "Would you stay a fourth year?" So I was three years chair of CAP. You usually serve three, and I served four. And again, I felt very honored that I could do this for the campus, and felt good about it because there had been a lot of tensions in the previous CAP over some decisions over rules, over breaking of rules, making mistakes like putting out a second ad hoc committee, as it's called.

And so then I became the chair. And in that context, I read all the old cases that were mistakes, or where there were tensions, and where there were rules broken. And I really learned my job.

**Rabkin:** Can you explain what you meant about the second ad hoc committee?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, okay. The way a personnel process works is simply this: a board of studies is going to put somebody up for a raise or tenure, or a movement to associate or full professor. And they have to put together a file. It consists of the person's CV and their writings. And also, it includes letters from experts in the candidate's field that have been solicited by the board. Partly, the board picks

people it thinks make sense, and partly it picks people from lists suggested by the candidate.

The board then makes its recommendation, which goes to the dean. The dean then adds his or her recommendation. It comes to the Committee on Academic Personnel: CAP. We take a look at the file, and we strike what's called an ad hoc committee. We say, "Okay, for this case we're going to use so-and-so from the person's discipline, and so-and-so from the nearby discipline. And we're going to try to get somebody from Berkeley that's an expert on that, or UCLA that's an expert on that." Today, they no longer use these outsiders, but then we were still using them, although we were in transition out of that. So you put together a three-person ad hoc committee, which then looks at this whole file, which means the board and dean's letters, and the outside letters. And it makes a recommendation to CAP as well. Then CAP has all that information before it, as well as all the teaching evaluations, and then makes a decision on what it's going to do.

There had been a case or two where the CAP was unsure after it received its ad hoc report, and it decided it wasn't maybe as strong an ad hoc as they wanted. Because you can look at the people and say, "Oh, these are people that would never make a tough decision in the world." So they put out another ad hoc. That turned out to be illegal and got them in real trouble, in lawsuits, and so on.

So, clearly you put out the strongest ad hoc you can put out, in terms of what you know about the individuals. And you know your colleagues by then. CAP consisted, at the time, of two from science, two from social science, two from the arts, I think it was. Maybe we had six people. In any case, you know

enough about the people and who's fair, who's not fair, who's wishy-washy. You know that kind of stuff.

And by 'unfair,' there are people on the campus that are so ideological for their theory—that doesn't just mean political—or else they don't like to be in conflict. There are other people that say—one person on the CAP when I was on there that wasn't from the sciences, I'll put it that way—he would always complain, "What do they make more money? These economists, they're paying them more money. Why, we only make X. They're making a lot more." And I'd say to him, "X? Our job is to assess the quality of this file, and to recommend what position—should they be professor, step one, or professor, step two? That's all that's our job. It's not our job to make suggestions about salaries. They're partly determined by the outside world: namely, economists, and a lot of scientists can leave and go into industry, or work for a corporation, or whatever. It's a separate issue." I even explained it to him in terms of Weber, with class—you know, economics is one thing. Status"— I was simplifying a little, "is another." And we were really making status decisions: "What do they deserve in terms of the faculty ranking?" Not what they're worth money-wise. So you have all these kinds of different people, and you know these things about them.

So at any rate, I made sure that there would be no tensions, no mistakes, no lawsuits. And that was my prideful thing to say—although I'll say some unprideful things in a minute—of the fact that we didn't have any of those kinds of things happen to us. If I had the slightest doubt when I read a file, I went to the head of Privilege and Tenure, which is the committee that's sort of the court of justice for faculty, their place of resort. I'd say, "I have the following general situation, what do I need to do—" And they'd say, "You've got to go get better

letters." Or, "You've got to go tell that board to do X." Or, "That kind of a letter will never make it. That will be contested by the faculty member, for sure." We'd then send the file back to the board. So I was on the ball on that. And I took it dead serious.

But it was a great job, because people aren't calling you and lobbying you and hassling you. Most people respected the roles. And the amazing thing for me was one of the few people to not respect the role was somebody I knew in a discipline I'd been in. And he had the nerve to call me and lobby me. There were these kinds of people on the campus. And it's distasteful.

So we had a really successful time as CAP those four years. A good crew. And they'd ask me at the end of the year, "How'd it go?" I'd say, "Pretty good. But you know, so-and-so can be awfully discipline-centered." Or "So-and-so is not always up to date, and most of us don't think he's read the files." So I was able to reshape the committee a couple times. A new person came on at the end of my first year as chair, then another new person at the end of my second year. They weren't awful, because things went super well. But by the last year we had a great committee.

**Rabkin:** So would the Committee on Committees make a new set of selections each year for the CAP?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, you could change the committee around, and add new people and so on. So yeah, there were changes. Just a couple—but just enough. Now, Sinsheimer was chancellor. I've already told you my dealings with him on the banana slug from a distance. He was just as opaque when it came to personnel matters. And lo and behold, he came to us once and he wanted to talk about a

file. And he said, “Would it be possible to have another ad hoc committee?” Well, that was precisely what had got him in trouble before. And here it’s maybe two years later, and he’s saying, “Maybe we could have another ad hoc committee.” So we’re all kind of looking at each other in disbelief. I say something very politic to him about it. Somehow we just finessed it, and didn’t, of course, do it—and wouldn’t have done it. But I wasn’t about to say, “Hey, what are you talking about?” Didn’t do it that way at all.

Because with each case, we had to send a letter to the academic vice chancellor and the chancellor for their final decision. Then the administration sends a letter to the candidate telling him or her the decision, and why. But the academic vice chancellor was not satisfied with some of the letters the chancellor sent out, so he in effect asked CAP to write the letter as if it were go to go the candidate, and he was going to try to convince the chancellor to use our version of the letter. I don’t know if the chancellor ever went for it or not, but from then on I drafted the letters in a somewhat different way.

Now, turning back to the relationship between CAP and the administration more generally, most of the time they’re routinely going to do what we suggest. But on tenure decisions, or more conflicted decisions, if there’s division—half the board says this, half the board says that, the dean’s not sure, the ad hoc committee says, “Yes,”—CAP’s a little divided—it’s their decision, because there’s division. If it’s unanimity up and down the ladder when it gets to them, it’s very unlikely they’re going to mess with it. So in that sense, faculty do control personnel decisions, or did when I was on the faculty.

And I can tell you had I had this friend—who never hassled me—but he was a tough-talking radical. He just said, “Yeah, yeah, you guys—you’re just

toadies to the administration.” I said, “Look buddy, “ I said, “We run that committee. Do you hear me? And they mostly follow our decisions if we do a good job and it’s not a divided committee.” “Yeah, sure, you’ve sold out,” and stuff. Years later he was on CAP. I saw him one day. I happened to be up in Berkeley and he’d go to Berkeley often—he said, “Hey Domhoff—hey, you were right. We really have an impact.” And we did have an impact.

We did it really right, and I was really pleased. But, in retrospect, even though we did right, we made an enormous number of mistakes in terms of the quality of the faculty. Just going from a file isn’t enough. You can’t tell from letters what’s going on. And in that sense you understand about why there was an old boy—what’s now an old boy/old girl network, hopefully—because we had some people, I’m sure, dumped on us from big-deal schools, where in effect, they could say, “We’ve got to get rid of this person.” Or they would think, “Oh, they got a PhD but they’re not good enough for the big leagues. Santa Cruz is about right for them.” Because they’d get here, you’d meet them, or you’d interact with them, or you’d read their file two years after they got here, and it’s just like night and day. The file has no connection to them.

**Rabkin:** Could I ask you a question about the process, Bill?

**Domhoff:** Yeah.

**Rabkin:** I’m curious to what extent, if any, students’ teaching evaluations played into the analysis of the faculty members’ tenure?

**Domhoff:** It certainly played into it at that time. If a person did poorly in teaching it was definitely noted. We had one particular situation where pretty

noted people in one of the larger science departments, as they'd call them today, were put up for accelerations by their board, where they'd get an extra jump. They would go from step one to step three, or they'd make extra money. They were all big publishers. But their teaching evaluations were extraordinarily bad.

We were really incensed, as a committee, at how cavalier they were, and how bad it was. We wrote a letter saying, "We don't think they should get this advance. And they should be told about their teaching." Well, the then-executive vice chancellor [and I]—we took a little walk in the woods. We were walking along these paths, and he said, "We could lose these guys. And the board will go crazy. It's going to be tense. And these guys'll be mad," and so on. And I said, "Look, we're really not prepared—" So he wanted to cut a deal. I then said, "Okay, I'll take that back to CAP and we'll see." He wanted to give them just this half a step acceleration, and I could write a paragraph or two with considerable chastisement about their teaching and its shortcoming. So we did that.

In other cases, the candidates had great teaching records and they weren't publishing. So we moved them forward a step. Now, the way the system works is it's got a lot of jumps. Back then at least, when you reach step five of full professor you're reviewed as if it's going up for another professor level. And at that level, you're not going to make it with just good teaching. And that is definitely—if you look at a bar diagram, there will be all these people at step five, and then a huge drop off in the number of people at step six, seven, eight.

There's then another—yet another—evaluation that's major, with outside letters and full review, if you're going to be made what was then called 'above scale,' which is now called 'distinguished professor.' For that, you have to have people of their stature on the committee, supposedly. So we'd be looking around

for the world's greatest astronomer, or chemist, or political scientist, or whatever it may be, to put on that particular committee. When I was dean—when you know what rank everybody has and we had a hundred and twenty-some faculty, and I think there were three or four who were above scale. So it wasn't many. And we didn't have that many above step six.

So it's a system that I came to understand as having the same qualities as the private economy and market in terms of you really have to be, "productive." They're not moving people automatically along. And because they define themselves as a research university, at a certain point, teaching won't carry you any further.

Now, here I can say that I also tried to make innovations while I was the CAP chair. And I later tried it again as dean. But in any case, one of my innovations was to say, look, if we have somebody that's already an associate professor but hasn't been moved an inch because they've published zero, or we have a full professor that's a step one or a step two, and nobody has moved him, that person could come into their chair and say, "You know, I'm not doing much research these days and I realize it. And I'd like to teach an extra course." Because we needed courses, supposedly. "I'd like to teach an extra course. And I recognize," and the rules would say, "I have to be evaluated as really doing well." So the idea would be, then you'd teach an extra course each year for two years, in the case of an associate, three years in the case of a full. The point is that if you had good teaching evaluations you'd get a raise. And so it would reward good teaching, get us more courses, and for this person certainly move them along for retirement.

Well, that was evaluated then by the next CAP on campus. They didn't like it. They said this was lowering the standards.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** And these were people I knew. Some of them I'd been on the committee with. And they wouldn't do it. I thought I might be able to convince them because I had published a lot, and because I had been a rigorous CAP chair. I had also tried to put forth a plan to get more courses, that if a person came in and volunteered to teach an extra course—say we need an extra section of *American Sociology Today*, or something. The dean would automatically put five thousand dollars in their research fund. And it wouldn't be salary, but it could then maybe make them productive. And one guy actually said to me—because they did do it for a couple years in one discipline. And he came up to me and he said, "Bill, you've revived my career." Because he could teach these courses. But he needed a helper. And he was in a discipline where you weren't going to get grants. And anyhow, by that time he wasn't publishing so he was in a downward spiral on research. So I had plans that would help these people: either get them back researching, or get them a raise. They could do both. They could say, "I'll teach an extra one for advancement. I'll teach an extra one for five grand for research money." I could not convince the faculty to take this on. Once again, this very conventional kind of thinking.

**Rabkin:** Were there precedents for either of these innovations on other campuses?

**Domhoff:** Not that I knew of. Julia Armstrong<sup>8</sup> once said to me—I was once lamenting how all these ideas would be shot down. And she said, “Bill, what’s great is you keep throwing them up there. Some of them are going to get through some time.” It was the perfectly imagery. You send up flyers, and there’s eight million conservatives sitting there shooting them down. “No, we can’t do it because of this! No, we can’t do it because of that! It’s never been done before!”

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** You know, which was opposite of my mentality that, from my point of view, every organization I’ve been involved in is run chaotically. It’s got all these mistakes. There’re so many things you could do differently, and better. But they never are willing to try. I’m going to give more examples of this. It’s hilarious to me.

And yet, I want to say at the same, while I know the campus was run chaotically—and especially I saw that the year I was dean—but courses were taught, students were in them. Students learned a lot. While the faculty is yammering among itself, these students are going to individual classes with individuals who are, say, wonderful in their classroom but jerks outside it. And students are learning a great deal. Especially our early students—I knew a lot of them—they became professors; they were big-deal lawyers; they innovated nonprofits and they were great. We had all that good stuff going on while we are being hidebound, and wasting our time arguing with each other.

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<sup>8</sup> See the oral history with Julia Armstrong-Zwart conducted by the Regional History Project, forthcoming 2014.

### **Chair of the Statewide Committee on Preparatory Education**

Well, due to my service on CAP, John Isbister, who was on the Committee on Committees a year or so after I was on CAP—maybe right after—asked me to serve as chair of the Statewide Committee on Preparatory Education, which looks at what's called Subject A and remedial math. And there was real trouble at the time, which didn't involve Santa Cruz. Basically a few hardliners—and a couple of them were math guys—wanted to make it so you had to take remedial courses off campus. It was a waste of our elite, wonderful university's time to be teaching remedial writing, or to be teaching remedial math.

And, of course, this would mean that these students would have to go to the nearby junior college. It was a really awful and a totally bad idea for anyone, but especially for trying to diversify the campuses, labeling some students as second-class citizens. It was, to me, pluperfect stupid. We didn't have any problem, because we'd built Subject A into the core courses.<sup>9</sup> So we were neutral. So I was willing to try that committee job and help the overall UC system. And one of the ways I did that was to do nothing. I mean, I wouldn't let them in a room together. And once again, I talked to them individually, wrote with them, and saw what I could do.

Now, it was clear the math guys, the hardliners, were going to have to yield, because Berkeley was adamant. Berkeley Subject A had a long tradition. They were very prideful of their teaching there. They had a lot of people involved in teaching remedial writing. And the English department saw that as

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<sup>9</sup> For more detail on this battle over Subject A and remedial courses and a history of the UCSC Writing Program see Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Teaching Writing in the Company of Friends: An Oral History with Carol Freeman* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/freeman>

really important. They weren't going to give. Their guy on the committee was Fred Crews. He was a staunch stalwart. He's the one I remember. The others were the same way. I'd look at them, and say, that's a real professor. He or she fits the platonic ideal. The way they dressed, their whole style was totally elite professor.

Well, it took a couple, three years, but they compromised. I learned a lot about bilingual, about second languages. I learned that if you arrive here at twelve, you're not going to have an accent in English, but if you arrive at sixteen you will, depending on your original language. And once again, I had an innovation. And they wouldn't do it. It was the simplest thing in the world. At Duke University they had a basic English I. But if you had done really well you skipped right out of it and you were in the next English. I'd had that experience. I'd had really good high school training, as I've already said. And so I said, "Look, there's a very simple solution to this." I said, "All these students are capable. But some are more trained than others. We should have a basic English I that everybody is required to take unless you pass out of it and then you have the honor of being in English II. Same difference." They couldn't see it. It would bring us more course money. It would do this and that. I scouted it out with various people. And they said, "Yeah, yeah."

Now, I forget who—for some reason various people didn't like it, including, I think, Berkeley. I could be being unfair to them here. But I think the Berkeley faculty figured, "Well, then we don't have the Subject A writing instructor." In other words, they weren't prepared to make all these people real professors like they were. I'm not sure about that. Anyway, the point is, it was a solution that would have satisfied everybody, and most of all taken the stigma

off of that course. So I guess the basic thing—this is also about me—in an innovative environment, I could see new stuff we could do. And I was either totally bananas, or these people were hidebound.

### Chairing the Academic Senate

Well, a year or so passed after that was over, and they asked to me to be senate chair. Once again, I was very honored, because it was my peers. They had asked me a year or so before, and I had said, “No, I have to finish this particular book.” I had finished it, and it was a very successful book for me, which came out in 1990. My first full-length book on power—it was totally new—in some years, because I had written a dream book and revised my *Who Rules America?* as my only books in the 1980s. I’d written articles in between, but here was a book, and it was a lot of essays, and it was hard-hitting, and it had new stuff as well as answering all my critics. So it was a very gratifying book, and it was done. And this time when they asked to me to be senate chair I said, “Okay.”

The reason they asked me was that I had, once again, not been in any arguments with anybody or had any disagreements with the chancellor, who was a man named Robert Stevens.<sup>10</sup> He was up for evaluation, and he was not well liked on the campus. And certainly not by the people who had always attacked authority figures, who had a history of it by then—I knew it well. And then I thought, if they’re in on it, they’re mongooses, as far as they’re going to kill that authority figure, which they had done to others. He was in a fix. He didn’t fit. He was a British guy that didn’t know the system. Furthermore, he’d been the president of a small college, Haverford. So that’s quite a difference from UC.

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<sup>10</sup> See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Robert Stevens, UCSC Chancellorship, 1987-1991* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1999) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/stevens>

And he didn't understand that when some biologist in blue jeans and no tie walked into his office and said, "We ought to do X and Y," that he was talking to one of the most productive biologists in the country. He had no sense of what his faculty was really like.

But I was, as I say, at a distance from all this. So they wanted somebody neutral to be chair while he was going to be evaluated, and "It's going to be tough." The joy was he resigned. I didn't have to do it. It was as simple as pie. And they brought in this wonderful guy that I'll talk about, Karl Pister<sup>11</sup>, as the chancellor. I was able to work closely with him and give him a sense of the campus, which wasn't hard because he had worked his way through the senate in Berkeley; he had been chair of the statewide academic senate. He was from an engineering school. I later learned that [he was] a German Catholic by tradition and upbringing. He was still maybe a practitioner, but certainly it was part of him. I'd learned later from him, too, that he was raised in a rural area. He had picked apples in the Depression. He had a lot of heart in him, and a lot of judgment, although I'll come to where I think his judgment failed, in just a few minutes.

But in any case, he really made a difference on the campus. Pretty quickly people were coming to me, like Isbister, saying, "Bill, is he really good?" I'd say, "Yeah, he's great." Well, pretty soon you'd say, "Yeah, I think—yeah, John, I think you're right. If the faculty would want him to stay another year or two, I certainly think that's my judgment, too." So we asked for him as our chancellor,

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<sup>11</sup> See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Karl Pister, UCSC Chancellorship, 1991-1996* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2000). <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/pister>

and he stayed on, although I do think he probably stayed on a year or so too long. And that's being pretty frank.

But in any case, during my term as senate chair I tried to do a number of things, most of which didn't work. But particularly, I went back to this college stuff. I saw some ways that we might be able to do things for the colleges. By then, I had some ideas from watching and so on. And furthermore, I had a couple of great allies that were heads of committees. Carolyn Martin-Shaw as she's now known, and Carol Freeman, at the least. And there were a couple of others that were pretty helpful, among others—Kathy Foley, who became the provost of Porter College. She also seemed to be somebody I could work with. She was a little wary of me, because I wasn't a college type. But she was supportive. There were a number of others.

So I put out a committee to do some rethinking on the college. And they met with colleges. They met with students and so on. I think it was more general—just mostly college, but maybe it could be more general. One of the things we were looking at was having these two or three-unit courses. Now, at that point the campus said a course is a course is a course and they're all worth five units, which had driven the scientists wild from a very early time. And a lot of the college courses looked to people like goofus courses that shouldn't be getting five units credit, when physics is only five units for more work. We actually had the support of the people in the arts because of labs, and their art studios and all, and then, some of the scientists because they wanted to have labs.

One of the innovations we made—it was not an innovation for elsewhere, but a big deal for here—was to say we could have these courses of varying unit

size, two and three units, which could open things up for some unusual courses in the colleges. That was our point. For example, we could bring in guests to teach. Maybe some famous expert on something, or a person who had been a political person, could come teach a course for four weeks and you get two units credit. Once again, that Page Smith kind of flexibility.

**Rabkin:** What *had* the scientists been doing previously when they had courses with laboratories attached?

**Domhoff:** I don't remember. But they were kind of trapped with five units. If somebody really wants to study the campus, then [they should] look at oral histories by some of the scientists and see their perspective. I have a friend in physics, George Gaspari, that would know all of that, because he was here from '67, a really good guy, kept neutral in a lot of things, but also was a dean at key points. So he knew all of these issues, and he remembers lots of events really well. So if I wanted to understand the science division, I'd go to George Gaspari, because, frankly, he's a fair and balanced guy, and doesn't have axes to grind.

So I don't know the answer to that question in particular. But the change got us out of the straitjacket. We had another couple of things that we put forward that I can't quite remember. But one of the things the committee recommended, which I knew was wrong—and I didn't have the guts to say it—they said, "We should require all faculty to teach one of these two or three-unit courses every three years." I thought, oh, this is nothing but trouble. This is going to drive, especially the scientists wild, but everybody wild. But I did not have the nerve to say no to that committee after all the work they'd done.

I think that's why I'm not a good administrator, and wouldn't like it. But it's also an insight into the kind of things that go into being any kind of a boss or leader. You have to make these kinds of decisions that will make you not liked, and will make, maybe, enemies forever out of people. I didn't like that. I wanted to be one of the gang, and I was not prepared to do that kind of thing. In this case, it was a fatal mistake on my part. And it was a misjudgment by the committee, in the sense that they didn't have a scientist or two on there, or if they did, it wasn't somebody that would represent what most of these scientists would say.

So we had a big meeting and it passed the senate, but with a lot of tension. And sure enough a couple of these people, the scientists, would say, "This has to go to mail ballot [spelling out 'mail']?" (laughs) Mail ballot—which still meant mostly M-A-L-E ballot. But the point is, we just barely won that vote, like 52 to 53 percent voted yes for that requirement on themselves. But this was something that people resisted. It didn't happen. The change got us a lot of PR off the campus. It was very uncomfortable for me. It made me look like I was selling out the faculty, or that we were groveling for PR. But lots of people didn't do it, and it just fell by the wayside. I don't think it ever happened. It couldn't be enforced.

But once I decided I wanted to back the committee, I was out there working to pass the mail ballot. I was out there campaigning. So I was invited to the chemistry department and I talked about the whole thing to them. And one of the people that was really good for the campus, and a really good guy and had been there for a long time, he said, "Bill, I just want to know one thing?" "What's that?" He hadn't said a word. He's a quiet guy. He says, "Is this good for the campus?" And I said, "I really think it is. I think it can help us in a lot of ways."

Because we were still hurting on various things. We weren't automatically attracting enough students. All kinds of ways in which it could make sense. But I knew that the faculty was not prepared to do that. And I had wanted, of course, this to be the kind of course that you volunteered to teach and you receive money for your research. I had put that out there. The committee toughened it up. And in a way, for the scientists then, it felt like, "You're sticking it to us because you think we have lighter teaching loads. Which we do, but you're sticking it to us." So that tension between divisions then comes into the picture. I wanted to use carrots. But the whole outcome was my mistake by not being a persuasive enough leader with the committee or the general faculty.

We were also involved that year in all the tensions over how the campus should grow. Pister made a brilliant decision to bring a guy he knew from Berkeley, who was an architect prof, to develop a design for the campus. The guy walked around and he talked to everybody. And I don't know whether if it was within a year or the second year, he had made a huge presentation. We had a huge meeting.

I said to one of my assistants, "I want this taped. I want this taped for posterity. I want it on video, because I want students to be able to see it. I want new faculty to be able to see it. I want this on record." He had these magnificent designs which are now the art village over there. But other things—he essentially had a thing about fill-in the campus and preserve trees and open space as much as possible. God almighty, I've never seen such a love fest. I mean, people were thrilled. Everybody's patting each other on the back. Everybody's friends. The students are happy.

They didn't make the tape. And again, I should have said, "Has that tape been made? You have the tape ready?" You have to do that kind of thing to be sure. Maybe I didn't have it on paper. Maybe I didn't tell them. You know, it's all that vague stuff. But I remember just a sense of huge disappointment, and a feeling of stupidity, and why am I not better at this? Because that tape might have been useful later, or for historians.

I'll tell you one story that I got in trouble with. Things were going really well. And it was Black History Month. It was February. It was my second year as senate chair, and things were moving well: Pister, the campus plan, everything. Didn't have much business at point. I decided that to honor Black History Month that I'd have the African Gospel Chorus open up the senate meeting. I checked with people. I checked with Julia Armstrong. The choir said they'd be glad to appear. They were behind the curtain on the stage. I told them, "Just a couple songs, don't overdo it. And kind of play it low-key. Don't use the most religious songs you've got," or something vague like that.

So I say to the faculty that was assembled, "We are having a very good year. We have to celebrate this year." That was the signal when the curtains opened. And there, in these gorgeous, gorgeous gospel robes is the African Gospel Chorus. And they start in. And they sing two, and then they sing three, and maybe four. And it's just a whole lot of Jesus. I'm in trouble. (laughs) Never thought it through. Violating church and state! One guy that was really strong on that, he said to me, "Bill, you violated church and state." One of the biggest civil libertarians on the campus, he wrote me a scathing letter. Others said, "It was insensitivity to Jews." So I was really—I was, of course, totally taken aback. Totally apologetic.

At the reception afterwards I went up to one faculty member, who was one of the most impossible people on the campus, and he was totally impossible for a senate chair. And he's one of these people that's always bringing up the rules, and he just can't get along with authority. And he's a Jewish guy besides. So I walked up to him and I said, "So, I guess I'm probably in trouble with you too, over violation of separation of church and state." And he said, "No Bill, as I was listening to it, I decided it was just music." He didn't hassle me. I thought, "All right, he can see the greater whole. He's a better guy than I thought!" But other people—they wrote me letters. And it was chastening. Once again, I didn't think it through. And I could see why administrators are so cautious, when you are in trouble for things like that.

I want to close on the senate by saying that Pister was a really good guy. He was really good. But like everybody else, he's an example of what happens when you're powerful. Power distorts, and you think you have higher purposes. And he did two things that should have involved the senate, and he did not. One of them was that he decided to put together a position that would allow a person to administer both the colleges and be the head of admissions. Well, admissions is really a staff thing; the colleges are an academic thing. No academic wants to head admissions. And colleges are not going to want to be headed by some staff person that hasn't been a professor, that doesn't have a PhD and so on. So he didn't tell us about that. And I was at a general administration meeting. He had started a meeting forum that was not much because mostly he would talk to all those assembled—administration, heads of staff committees, the senate chair, and maybe a few others I've forgotten. It was maybe, in concept, a good idea, but

dumb, because he had all his administrators there and the staff committees and the senate chair and a couple other things.

So he announces this new position he had created, and I almost faint dead away. I said, "How was this developed?" or something like that. I tried to act dumb, but I think he could tell I was surprised by it. Then I said, "Well, do you have somebody in mind or anything?" He said, "No, Bill. Are you applying?" Which was really, I thought, nasty. And I didn't like it at all.

So I thought, "What is going on here?" So I started to snoop around a little bit. Then I talked to some of my friends "of color," as you'd say, or the diverse faculty, including a black guy that was important in EOP. And he said, "That's his Chicano position." Two or three Chicano administrators had left for higher things, or to go elsewhere for other reasons, and there were a lot of criticisms coming at the administration from the Latino faculty, and maybe some student groups. And they really had a position. The administration seemed to think this would be a position they could put a person of color in. They advertised it, and it failed. Nobody on campus would take that position. And they advertised statewide, and they couldn't find anybody. So it disappeared. But he did that, and it was kind of upsetting to me because the administration is supposed to confer with the senate on such changes. It has the ultimate decision-making power on such issues, but it is supposed to confer with the Committee on Planning and Budget, of which I was an ex-officio member.

He also did a thing where he made—I think he did this while I was senate chair—but over the summer he made the academic vice chancellor into the executive vice chancellor—he made that person, in effect, the head of the campus. It used to be that various vice chancellors (for business, academics, and

this and that) were kind of a collectivity under the chancellor. Well, the chancellor's position was becoming more of an outside thing, and a money-raising thing, and a symbolic thing. Maybe that was happening systemwide. But he did that without asking us. So he bypassed the senate twice when I was chair of the senate. So that was really disappointing. Yet he had great judgment. He was a calming influence and so on in doing that job.

### **Taking VERIP**

Well, after I was the senate chair, I had a one-quarter sabbatical. I probably put it up against the summer, so I had a summer and fall. I wrote. And I was working. I did the first draft of a book on dreams. Then I came back, and I think we were on four-course load by that time, and I think I then just had to teach one in each quarter for the next two quarters. But I knew that this was going to be something the next year, when I had to come back to four courses. Through the senate chairship, the statewide thing, and through the senate, I'd been teaching two less courses most of the time, and one less, maybe while I was statewide chair. You got two courses off for being senate chair, and two courses off for being CAP chair. That was a fair deal. A lot of times it's not a fair deal, in terms of you're doing these administrative or committee duties and it's really eating into your time. This was fair. It was fair. I could still do my own work. I didn't feel I was drowning in anything.

But then I faced the fact that next year I was going to teach four courses—and I didn't really have four. I probably had three. But I also said to myself, you'll never get this book done. If you get pulled back in any more service, if this and that—I was tired. I was fifty-seven. I'd been teaching since I was twenty-

three, and full time since I was twenty-six. And I had a lot of data backed up in two different fields.

So I was not looking forward to teaching. And all of a sudden they said there might be a third, a very early retirement incentive program, called VERIP. It was designed that basically if you had as much service as I did and you were fifty-seven or older, you were really crazy not to take it. You were given seven years to play with. You could put three of them towards your age, which made me sixty, which was the maximum percentage. That would leave me four to add to my service, which would take me from twenty-nine to thirty-three. And the truth of the matter is, when you looked at the table, I was going to receive 83 percent of my regular salary, and I was going to be allowed to teach two courses a year for six years. I thought, this is too good to be true. It won't happen. And it almost didn't happen because the chancellor of Berkeley said, "If you do that, you're going to wipe out a lot of my faculty, and I will quit."

Right down to the final minutes it looked like it wouldn't happen. In fact, I had kind of given up, and I was kind of in despair. And I thought, it won't happen because they're not going to cross Berkeley. They won't cross Berkeley." I knew who was *numero uno*. I'd been on too many committees statewide to think otherwise. And as CAP chair I went every month to a meeting of statewide CAP to discuss policy issues. And when I was senate chair, every month I went to a meeting—statewide senate chairs meeting with the big boss, the president, and a couple of others. So I was in these fairly small groups, which were either at UCLA or Berkeley. I understood the system by that point. So I thought they'd never go against Berkeley. But the way they solved it was genius. For eight of the campuses the original rules pertained; for Berkeley, not. For Berkeley you had to

be, to really be tempted, you had to be fifty-eight or fifty-nine. So I knew the minute that they said that, and I looked at that chart and confirmed that I was going to receive this high percentage of my salary—I made my decision in a nanosecond.

I often say it's the second greatest thing that ever happened to me in my career. The first greatest, truly, for my career—aside from the previous luck of going to Miami where I was free to do what I wanted—was coming to Santa Cruz. In terms of resources it was phenomenal, and I will talk about that next time. But then becoming a VERIP at fifty-seven—I turned fifty-eight later in that summer—but to become VERIP at that point, and with all the research I wanted to do, and I could teach two courses and I'd do it in the spring, it was total liberation. I used to think, it's like I received a two-quarter fellowship from some big deal foundation, which, of course, I was never going to get in a whole million years, with what I taught and with what I researched—which wasn't exactly what they like. (laughs) So it was the greatest thing that could have happened to me. And I'll talk some about that next time with my research.

### **Dean of Social Sciences**

But the point is, no sooner had I made that decision—although it was not official, but it was certainly in my mind, and I told people—than the executive vice chancellor wrote to me, he said, "Look, I'd like to have lunch. I've got something I want to talk to you about."

I knew that it had do with one of a couple things, and one would be likely to be the dean thing, because our dean, Gene Garcia, had been taken into the Clinton government as an assistant secretary of education for bilingual. It was a

great opportunity for Gene. He'd been a very fine dean. I felt sure he was going to be a vice chancellor somewhere, someday. He was clearly oriented to being that, a very articulate guy, studying the right things and so on. I figured he'd never be back. And he wasn't.

There was some other thing I thought he might be going to ask me to do, but I forgot it by now. In any case, we had lunch at O'mei. And he said, "Well, I suppose you know why we're having lunch." I said, "Well, it's one of these two things." And he said, "Well, it's the dean thing." I said, "I just want you to know I'm taking that VERIP before you say anything else." He said, "That's okay. I just need you for one year." So he started to talk. He said, "I'm asking you because I met with the chairs of social science, and you're their number one choice." So that did it for me again, right there.

[Executive Vice Chancellor Michael] Tanner and I didn't have a bad relationship, but it was tense. And I did not like him, and I do not respect him. But I decided I was going to do it, for the reasons that this would be a great way to close. I wouldn't have the struggle of teaching. It's reactive. I'll see what they're doing. It will be interesting. My friend, Dave Kliger<sup>12</sup>, who had been on CAP with me, and who had been preceding senate chair, was the acting dean in sciences. That will make it fun. There were a couple other things like that. I would get more money, which was minor to me. I didn't realize that it was a significant [amount], maybe ten, fifteen grand or something.

So I decided, well, it's well worth it. But I will teach my dreams course, because I have it on the schedule for fall. And you know, you can do both. The

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<sup>12</sup> See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Campus Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor David Kliger*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2011) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/ucsc/campus-provostexecutive-vice-chancellor-david-kliger>

joke there is that within two meetings of my dreams course and the schedule I had as a dean, I said, "I can't do this." Fortunately, a former student of mine, Veronica Tonay, was around the campus. She, I think, had just finished or was just about to finish her PhD at Berkeley. She had TA'd for me and worked for me as a research assistant in the past. So I said, "Veronica, would you take over this course?" And she did. Because the dean job was taxing, and wall-to-wall, and intense.

To start with Tanner, though, Tanner came to this campus in Cowell, where I was, three or four years after we started. He was a very young guy. I didn't know anything about him. I didn't know at that time he had taught at a black college in the South, for which I give him a lot of credit. But he was an uptight guy. What you have to understand about the campus in the early days is that very few people wanted to take administrative positions. So he was always the acting dean of this or that. He had served on the senate Committee on Educational Policy. I didn't see it at the time, but he really was headed towards administration.

What I mean, incidentally, when I say 'acting deans'—there were a lot of them. A lot of people were asked to be deans that didn't want to be—and certainly including me. I mean, that job can be a career killer as far as research. And people say, well, that meant you'd given up, or you were out for money or something. I know that when I was on CAP it was shocking the things CAP would say about the people that were chairs or deans. And you'd say, "He's making enough money as dean." We didn't give raises if they hadn't published. In the case of one board chair, who was a wonderful guy and in a wonderful, cohesive discipline, they wrote a letter saying, "He teaches our biggest courses.

He's a great chair. He makes us as a group more productive." And it was so interesting, because they were in the sciences, actually. They weren't sociologists, but they were talking like sociologists about how things work. And he was a very important guy to that department. And that CAP voted five to one against me on giving him a raise, for which I was forever ashamed, because I was chair and knew him, and he deserved it. But that's how administrators were treated on the campus. That's why you have to pay them—in a way, why they pay them a fortune, although it's too big a fortune. It's a thankless task. But Tanner liked it.

Anyway, we got Tanner. I don't think [he was] making very good judgments—and all totally aimed towards the sciences. So that's who I'm going to work for. But I got along with him all right. He was willing to ask me, and for the reasons I said, I said, "Yeah, I'll take that job."

So I take the job, and my secretary comes in and says to me, "It's the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* on the phone. They want to know if they can have permission to mention your age." I said, "Well, sure." What they didn't ask for—apparently they had the right, and it was public, all salaries at the UC, as we know now, are public—they didn't ask about my salary. So it appears in the *Sentinel* that I am fifty-seven, and I'm going to make 109,000 dollars a year. I was going to make over a hundred grand, which was a big deal in those days.

But, in fact, I was at that point an above-scale professor. And that meant that they were putting the dean's stipend on top of that high salary based on publication. That was a shock to a lot of people in town. It might have been a shock to a few people on campus, but they knew I'd published a lot. It was hilarious, because they would say, "Bill, you make 109,000 dollars?" People I'd

known, faculty wives would say, "109,000?" It was a little embarrassing to be outed on my salary. I didn't mind being outed on my age.

I'm going to say three or four things about being the dean that I think are revealing about the campus.

**Rabkin:** We have about ten minutes.

**Domhoff:** Okay. First of all, I spent the whole time fighting for dollars. It turns out that Kliger was totally narrow-minded towards just wanting more money for the sciences, which, of course, Tanner wanted too. And their bias—they had a formula that proved that they were under-rewarded and teaching too much. Their formula was based on going to other campuses and finding what biologists and chemists taught, compared to social scientists and humanists and the money they received. I said, "That's not right. This is all about power, because at Berkeley the sciences were long-time big bosses. Here we all started equal, and it's not right." And then Kliger would say, "Yeah, you know where you're getting the overhead money for Subject A? You're getting it from our grants." So they just kept lording it over us with this phony formula for lightening their teaching load, increasing ours, and taking our money. I had to do a big study in which I did a lot of research and wrote a great report. But also Carl Walsh and Dan Friedman in economics did a much better statistical analysis that really helped. And we held them off on that for the time being. I did not want to be remembered by my social sciences colleagues as the dean that let Tanner and Kliger destroy the social sciences. That became my whole mission as dean.

What I learned is there is no cooperation, no coordination. And yet, as I said earlier, classes would meet, students would learn. Meanwhile, it was me

and the humanities dean, a hothead named Gary Lease, versus the arts dean, who sided with Kliger, because the arts and sciences have some things in common. They both need labs or studios, and mostly small classes, at least back then. And furthermore, the science guys would say, "It's good to listen to opera and look at beautiful paintings after you do your hard day in the lab." So they really felt a closeness, the arts and the sciences. And that, essentially, was the alliance. And so that was a particularly big kind of mess for me because the humanities dean was a difficult person and an impossible ally.

The second thing I did was try to help the division. I could see how the division could do better, and how we could balance things, but also fight the sciences better. I put forth a big proposal and I gave it to the chairs. I said, "Work through this and see what you can use and not use of this. But it will make us stronger. We've got to be stronger, gang, because these scientists are really after your money."

They met. They didn't do a single thing of it, because power's really rooted in the tenured professor and then in the board and then up. They didn't care much about the division. They cared about their boards. And from the point of view of one board, my first proposal's no good for this reason; from the point of view of the second board, my second proposal's no good for another reason. One of my proposals was, "We've got to have it so we have our faculty here in the fall." But that's when everybody takes sabbaticals, because you put it against summer. It's the longest sabbatical you can have in terms of calendar months. So we're hiring temporaries in the fall. So they didn't do a single bit of it. But I made them cohesive. (laughs) So it was hilarious.

Third, I tried to help the colleges. I immediately saw, deans have all these resources, so put the colleges under the divisions. Write it in the job description of the dean that these colleges will have this, that, and the other thing. And the executive vice chancellor can then decide whether the dean receives a raise or keeps the job based in part on how well he or she does with the colleges. That's part of their job. You want to make the colleges work. And I wrote a big background paper. I put in there about all the past suggestions about small courses, and about how to reward extra teaching with research funds, and to give people extra raises for teaching extra and so on. I thought I had it perfect. And I went to Pister and Tanner and they were just scared to death to touch the colleges. But they would do it if I could convince others. They weren't certainly going to be out front, and I understood that.

So I sent this package of papers to the provosts. And I figured there were a lot of them that would trust me because I'd worked with them. Carol Freeman was now provost, I think, at Cowell. Carolyn Martin-Shaw was a provost. Kathy Foley was a provost. And Isbister liked it. Isbister had been my buddy. He was a sensible, great guy. Isbister had worked hard in the college to make it work. He was a pragmatist. He was willing to cut a deal and compromise, and he could see after all this effort he'd made, this was a possibility that could work in the face of the fact that the colleges were going downhill.

**Rabkin:** And was he Merrill provost at the time?

**Domhoff:** I think he was still Merrill provost at the time. So at least those four or five were supportive and I forgot who the others were. A couple of others were kind of in between. But two I remember well—and they were ones that really

forcefully opposed it—one was Carlos Noreña, from Stevenson. He'd been a Jesuit priest, and he was a philosopher. Beloved of students and that kind of thing, but you couldn't change anything at Stevenson. And you certainly couldn't change this. He really worked to undermine me in a lot of different ways. The other person who opposed it was a colleague in the social sciences division who was serving as a provost, who was not a fan of the colleges. And he was doing everything he could to protect the boards and divisions. Carlos Noreña used to call him the anti-provost. But those two voted together against the plan. So the two extremes, once again, stuck together against change. And Kathy Foley was wary. So the opposition had at least those three, and nothing happened.

A fourth thing I did that was interesting and fun but went nowhere: one of the first people who came to see me was Rita Walker, who's the sexual harassment officer. She said, "You going to have to work with these cases." I'm sitting there. My eyes are getting bigger. "And you've got this guy—if he even blows his nose he's off this campus. This is about the fifth time he's been in trouble. And then, you see, there's this person and that person." They've got this list of people and we generally have a bad record in sexual harassment in the division.

So once again, I want to do something about it. So I go to meet with all the boards. I was going to meet with them anyhow, but I brought Rita with me. And I say, "And now I want you to hear about sexual harassment." And one guy told me later, he said, "Bill, I felt like I was on the deck of a ship and there were machine gun bullets going over my head, and if I lifted my head I'd be dead." Because she fired it out there.

So I took Rita to each of these boards and basically said, "I'm behind this." And I also said, "I want you to know something that Gene Garcia told me." I said, "Gene Garcia told me when he was dean that he spent more time on sexual harassment cases than anything else and it just ate his time up." And I said, "I don't want to spend my time that way." I was looking right at various male colleagues, and I said, "I don't want to spend my time that way." I now knew who the harassers were and they knew that I knew.

So that created an atmosphere. But secondly, I drafted a letter, because the most frequent harassers are often grad students and visitors, because it's a fine line as to whether they are faculty. And so I worked with Julia Armstrong and I drafted a letter in which I essentially put all the negative consequences of a sexual harassment charge, like, "You'll have to pay your costs if you go to court. The university doesn't pay." There are a number of things that are hair-raising scary. I said, "I want this letter in their packet." So she said, "Oh, I'll have to check." And she was good, but they have to check. So finally they decided, "You can put it in the packet if it just says that they sign at the bottom, 'I have read this letter.'" That was all I could do—

**Rabkin:** They're not confessing to anything.

**Domhoff:** No, they don't have to say, "I agree I won't do—" But it said, "I have read this letter." So basically you read down this letter, and your eyes would get bigger, and your hair would stand on end. It was very flat in tone, but the stuff that could happen to you if you sexually harass was really heavy. So everybody that signed up for our division to teach part-time, whether a grad student or

whatever, had to read and sign that letter. What happened then was we didn't have a single sexual harassment case that year.

**Rabkin:** How interesting.

**Domhoff:** And so I thought, "Well, they'll spread it [across campus]." I asked Julia Armstrong a year or so later. She said, "No, they got rid of it."

**Rabkin:** What?

**Domhoff:** They got rid of our plan to end sexual harassment on this campus. They never did it again.

**Rabkin:** Social sciences never did it again?

**Domhoff:** No. Nor did Tanner use this model for these other divisions.

**Rabkin:** Do you know why?

**Domhoff:** Because they don't want to get into that hassle and detail. The dean has to go around and say, "I'm not going to permit any sexual harassment," and bring Rita.

I did do my plan about extra classes. I announced that anybody who taught an extra course would immediately have five thousand dollars in their research account. So I got some extra courses. And in one case, it saved the day because I had an experimental psychologist who fell ill. She could not teach her course. It was fall. And the chair came to me and said that "X can't teach the course, but Mary Sue Weldon will teach it for the 5K." I said, "Tell her it's a deal." And she immediately had a research assistant. It's the most sane thing in

the world. If I'm a dream researcher, I could teach that dreams class off the top of my head, and meanwhile, while I'm teaching that class there's a person doing coding. It's a twofer. The administration could never get that through their heads. They, of course, dropped that as well.

I took the time to have lunch with the staff, but also with the media staff, and all the board staff. I had this real cohesive kind of thing going. I know I could've done it a few more years. I wouldn't have kamikazed at it the way I had, because I'd charged at all these people— But I didn't want to do it.

When they failed to get a dean—because they had failed—I told Tanner, I said, "Michael, I'm just want to tell you—I'm sorry it's failed, but I want you to know I am not going to do it anymore." Didn't even wait for him to ask me. I just told him, "I won't do it." And then when I went to the board at the final meeting, I said, "Look, I tried to give it my best. And we haven't always agreed." Although we'd agreed on everything except this big report, and a couple of them hadn't done quite what I thought was right on hiring. I gave econ an extra position with the hope that I could get an affirmative action hire out of them. But I really didn't. They screwed me in various ways. But in any case, I said, "As you know, the search failed. But there's going to be a new dean, because I've told Tanner I'm not prepared to work for him." Which I had told him. So I left with some pride.

My assistant was a guy named Bob Jorgensen, who had also been in the humanities division. He was second in command. I'd known Bob. And I liked him. And he was one of the reasons I took the job: oh, it would be fun to work with Bob. He was once going to try to run for city council on the progressive kind of side, but a lot of the progressives didn't trust him. He was a very

straight-looking guy and so on. Although I liked him, and figured he'd support my efforts, he was trying to undercut the union, and I told him to stop that. Also, he was under higher orders to reduce the staff. So he'd cut these positions out, and then I'd hire them back as temporaries. The board secretary in psych came in and said, "We got three positions cut. We can't possibly function." Then I'd rehire them in a temporary kind of fashion.

The one good thing he did do was that he put together—he had this idea to save a couple [of jobs], to put a couple of guys that he was going to fire on temporary [hire] to do oral histories of the people that took VERIP. I really encourage the oral history program to obtain copies of these videotaped interviews that cover what fourteen pioneering faculty have to say about the early years. There were sixteen of us, I think it was, that it made sense to take VERIP. And fourteen of us took it. For the other two, it turned out not to make sense because of their tremendous commitment to teaching. One of them taught into his eighties. He hadn't researched in a long time, and he loved teaching, so didn't make sense for him to retire early. And one other pioneer colleague taught until he was seventy.

Oh, the other thing that happened while I was acting dean that I want to say and kind of brag about, is that I worked very closely with Julianne Burton-Carvajal in Latin American literature. We were really close. I really liked her. She was running Latin American/Latino studies at the time: LALS, but from the humanities divisions, even though this program was in social sciences. We were scheming on how to make this legitimate. I spent a lot of time with Julianne Burton-Carvajal! It was a great, fun working relationship. She was so great. She never got as much credit as she deserved from the campus. But in any case, we

did a lot of scheming. And I was able to help. And she said, "What about—we want it to be LALS. And should we wait?" No—I said no. And she was a leftist: "We want ideological hegemony on this," I said to Julianne, "We'll only talk of LALS. We speak of it everywhere." And then she did a little poster display about it—it was right square where you entered the library, in the old library. It was right square there, so that when you walk into all these meetings—because the meetings were often on the third floor of the library in those days. Every time the vice chancellor walked by he was seeing this display about LALS.

She had to write and rewrite the proposal to suit senate committees and the administration and statewide committees and I would help her—but I cleared the way in all kinds of ways and just spoke of it highly. And they had people in it that were lecturers that were really carrying it. This was one reason it was so wrong that Bob Jorgensen was undercutting the union.

So there's a lot of hatchet people running around the campus as staff people, I fear. They do the bidding, though, of who their bosses are, [such as] the deans. They took the campus from being egalitarian to being more and more non-egalitarian. All of their budget cuts they could, they took out of the staff. They downsized the staff and then overworked them. They held their salaries. They paid these high administrators even more to make tougher decisions. And of course, if you're making ninety grand and the staff's making forty grand, you feel this distance from them and pretty soon you *do* become this cutter and hammer and hatchet man.

Okay, you've got to go. I'm going to talk a little next time at the start—I want to talk about the Committee on Emeriti Relations.

**Rabkin:** This is Sarah Rabkin. It is Monday the 29th of April, 2013, and Bill Domhoff and I are here for our fourth interview. So Bill, why don't we start?

**Domhoff:** Okay. I was talking last time about administration and my involvement with the campus. So, when I retired in July of '94, I really never looked back. It was just the greatest thing. I was able to get into writing—and I had done two books that I'll talk about, by 1996. I was able to go back and forth between dreams and power. I thought maybe people would be asking me to do stuff. I was a little nervous. But they respected the role of retirement. So I felt part of things, but I didn't feel any obligation. So it's almost like, well, you're there but you're invisible. It was wonderful. I could spend more time on my teaching when I did teach. So we can talk more about that when I talk about my research in general on the campus.

### **Committee on Emeriti Relations**

But first, I want to say I did do two more things that I was asked to do by the senate as service. It felt good, and they both epitomized for me what happens when you get involved with administration. One was in the late 1990s; one was somewhere around 2009, 2010. And they both involved that I was asked to be chair of the Committee on Emeriti Relations. And that was fun. I would see what things were about. We did surveys. We helped individuals. We adjudicated. We gave advice. It was all very nice, except for two things. And they both showed what happens, too, I think, with administrators.

The first time I was chair of the Committee on Emeriti Relations I was able to liberate the title 'research professor.' When the VERIP offer was made in 1993,

the central administration—Office of the President—made clear that there was this title of ‘research professor.’ It could be used as the campuses wanted to use it. I always thought it should be given freely. It was an honorific. It could help people in their research. But [administrators here] said, “Oh no, we must use it as an incentive to get more money for the campus.” So you had to be applying for a grant or have a grant. And there was nothing you can do about that. And, of course, what they did was drive the title into the ground. When I checked in the late nineties, maybe one person had it, or two.

So what I did was talk to a few retired colleagues and ask if they were still interested in the title. And I drafted some guidelines. They were more loose, but they were guidelines. And they’d say, “Well, you’ve published something; you’ve gone to a meeting and given a paper. You’re working with grad students.” I said, “Give the title to anyone who does one of these four things.” I went to CAP and I explained to the chair, and they said, “Yeah, we’ll get in on this.” Then I was able to take a plan to the deans and have it approved so people could just turn in their little vitae and go through this process. Ah, but they’d only let them have two years at a time. So they still remained their uptight selves, instead of letting people feel good about themselves, letting them use this to go to conferences. Because emeritus does mean you’re done, you’re on the scrap heap. Research professor means you’re still out there. And it’s used in a great many campuses.

**Rabkin:** People wanted to limit it to two years—

**Domhoff:** Well, they still probably do. But I then told people, when I’d go to give advisories to these potential emeriti meetings, and I’d say, “Look, just use the

title. Nobody's going to hassle you." And I explained what I just explained now, of why we had to go through this rigmarole. But we shouldn't. Whether people then reapplied, I don't know. I know there's one person that doesn't, and that's me. I call myself a research professor and if they don't like it they can go jump in the lake.

The second time that I was chair of the Committee on Emeriti Relations I think it was mostly just routine, helping people. I was officially chair through the summer. And in June I had a meeting with Ronnie Gruhn<sup>13</sup>, who was going to replace me. I talked about what we'd done and gave her some files. I think I had my senate administrative assistant with me, so it was all smooth. And a week later we receive word that OPERS is suddenly going to charge us half price, 130 bucks, for the right to go in the Wellness Center and use the pool. That was a shock because we had been promised that this would always be free. For us, it was a breach of faith. It was a very symbolic kind of issue, and there was a lot of fear that the next step, if they did this, was to take our A sticker—which by then, for parking, was nine hundred dollars a year.

So what happened was that a new young guy that didn't know any better—a good guy—in OPERS was told by the administration, "You got to raise money. Find a way to bring in more money." And so he thought, "Well, I'll charge these retired people." Which includes staff, and it was a bigger percentage of their retirements usually, if they were going to buy one of these for a 130 bucks. There were a lot more of them, and a lot more of them used it.

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<sup>13</sup> See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Professor Isebill "Ronnie" V. Gruhn: Recollections of UCSC, 1969-2013* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/gruhn>

So we thought about it. Ronnie and I checked with people and said, "No, this is wrong. We've got to fight this." So we wrote to people. I wrote long letters. We got all the documents. And we found a letter from 1989 that somebody had in their files in which the head of OPERS had said, "Note that I hereby say that from now on all retired professors and staff will have free use of OPERS." It was certainly among the temptations to convince us to retire in 1994. It was one of the perks, along with an A sticker. Suddenly they're renegeing. It just doesn't feel right to us. It made us feel unwanted. It's symbolically stupid on their part. So we tried to talk to Kliger about it, who was then the executive vice chancellor. He would not even see us.

But we did see [Chancellor George] Blumenthal, and he had done a little research on it. He suspended the order to make us immediately pay, and he was going to investigate it throughout that year. We met with him personally. It was Ronnie Gruhn, it was me, and it was Lee Duffus, a guy who had been in the early administration, working with students. A wonderful guy. He'd left the campus for a while, he and his wife, to run a bookstore, and had come back. He was the head of the Silver Slugs, which was the retired staff group. Great people, wonderful fun. I went to one of their meetings to give a talk on my coauthored book *The Leftmost City* and it was just a great time.

So the three of us saw Blumenthal. We explained to him what was a stake. We thought it was symbolically wrong. There wasn't going to be much money involved. And we told him we feared they were after the A sticker, to which he said, "Oh no, no, no."

At any rate, at the end of the year, in June, when everybody's gone, he then decided that we would pay. So he made a breach of faith, in my view. I had

told him, I said, "I could never give this campus any money if you did that kind of thing." And I never will, symbolically, because of this. I think it's an example of how a good person, when they take on that kind of role, does these totally out-of-tune things. I think he feels badly about it. He should change his mind and it would make him more beloved, like what happened to Sinsheimer with the banana slug. Instead he has us to lunch once a year. All emeriti are invited. I've gone to those luncheons.

But, in any case, it was a small kind of thing. A lot of people then didn't use the fitness center and the wellness center and so on anymore. And, in fact, we now have access, if we're in Health Net, to free use of 24-Hour Fitness, and maybe one or two other [health clubs], as part of keeping the elderly healthy. I suspect some other health plans have that too. But those were two post-retirement things where I said, "Oh boy, how can they do this?" It was so not sensible by either Tanner, on the research professor title, or by Blumenthal renegeing on our free OPERS passes.

### **The Trajectory of Domhoff's Research**

I now want to turn from my work on the campus to my own research work from 1965 on. It was mostly about power, some about dreams. And I want to explain what I did between '65 and '80, and then go back and talk a little about the political things I was involved in, and how I was drawn into politics and to writing about how to change the United States, based on my power research, which had zero impact, but at times looked like it was going to mean something.

Well, my dream research was essentially done by 1965, even if I published a little bit of it later in the sixties. I also had been working on three essays in

applied psychoanalysis, the first on the origin of the ruling classes. The second compared Norman O. Brown's view of Martin Luther with that of a more ego-Freudian named Erik Erikson, who was a very famous guy, was called "Two Luthers: The Orthodox and the Heretical in Psychoanalytic Thinking." Then I wrote a big paper on the left and the right. They all appeared in the late sixties, but I had, in fact, been on working on them for some time.

### **More on Calvin Hall**

Although most of my research was on power by 1965, I did keep up with dreams. And I did come back to dreams later. How was that possible? The answer was real simple. It was because my mentor and friend and co-author, Calvin Hall, retired here in the spring of 1966. His research grant to study dreams in a sleep lab was completed. Miami's not that intellectual of a place. He had gone to UC Berkeley, loved the West Coast. He loved the ocean. He decided he was going to come out this way. And he visited with people in Santa Barbara, talked to an old friend there. But he knew Bert Kaplan here. He was a friend of mine. He liked my wife. He liked to have little kids around. But he was older by then. And so there were my kids here. And there were a couple other people.

So he decided to retire here, which was a bonanza for this young campus. He arrived in the spring of 1966, and because he was here a person at Brandeis interested in dreams came out and spent a year, a man named Richard Jones. Calvin also knew a young sleep researcher, who was one of the leading people, a man named Ralph Berger, a British guy. And Calvin mentioned Berger to Kenneth Thimann for his science college. And, of course, Thimann liked that, because Ralph was a graduate of Cambridge and Edinburgh, and he was a great

researcher, and did both sleep and dreams, and later focused exclusively on sleep, and did some important work. He was really the first person to put forth an energy conservation theory of sleep, which was then revived later, and may win the day, based on new data.

So because Calvin was here we could visit. I could keep up on what was going on. We did one or two little projects over the years. Most of all, though, in the sixties I taught a dream seminar, I think, through Cowell. I did at least twice. And I'd say at certain point, "Calvin Hall is going to join us."

Now, he was a very, in a way, shy guy. And by that time he didn't want to teach much. But he would come to the class and sit in, and pretty soon he's involved, and he's answering questions, and he's working with lots of the students, which was just his kind of style—not to get out there and lecture and be organized and mix it up with students. He just wasn't that kind of a person.

He continued with his research and I would read his manuscripts. He wrote a book with one of our students; it was on the dreams of Franz Kafka, called *Dreams, Life and Literature*. That was about 1970. And then he wrote a book that was interesting, the dreams of a child molester. He wrote it with a psychologist who had worked with this child molester in prison, and the guy had written down dreams. So Calvin studied them. And then he wrote a book in 1972 called *The Individual and His Dreams*, which was a popular book. I begged him not say 'his.' By that time I knew better. But he was old-fashioned.

I had read and critiqued these manuscripts, was involved with them. And he dedicated this 1972 book to me. It says, "To Bill Domhoff, fellow psychopomp." We had joked we were psychopompologists because we knew from Greek myth that psychopompologists were the people that carried people

to the underworld. And that was our goal, was to carry people to the underworld of the unconscious.

Calvin was very supportive of my work on sociology and power. To my shock, at that point I learned that his first vote in 1932 was for Norman Thomas for president, the Socialist Party man on the ticket. He was pretty much a pacifist. He'd been a part of Soviet-American friendship committees that later got him hauled before the House [Committee] on Un-American Activities, or at least he had to answer questions to them when they came to Cleveland, Ohio, where he was. He was never a communist, but a dedicated, principled kind of leftist. He was also very involved in the 1948 Progressive Party campaign, and it's told about in a book called *Gideon's Army*, by a journalism professor at Northwestern named Curtis MacDougall. It's a three-volume work, very detailed. And I learned all that about Calvin only later. So that's why he was sympathetic. I didn't know some of those things that I just said in the seventies. So Ralph and his family, me and my family, Dick Jones—Calvin, he'd have us to a birthday dinner. We'd talk. And so it gave me this parallel life about dreams.

Now, I said that I came here with the first draft of *Who Rules America?* I said that earlier. And then, I wrote the next draft the summer of '66, and it was published in '67. But the key to my research here was that basically I was getting free volunteer student help, courtesy of money from the U.S. federal government. It was partly War on Poverty, but they had other programs, I think. And then from Academic Senate research grants.

### **Student Researchers**

Of course we were small, and I was actively researching, and maybe not everybody was. So I had money. I had student helpers. And I'll never forget, the first one walked in and she said, "Would you need any research?" I said, "Well yeah, but what's the deal?" She said, "Well I have all this money because I'm low income, and so I just have to find a job that's meaningful." I soon learned the guidelines were it had to be a sensible job students would learn from, which was incredible. That was soon abandoned. The campus needed money, and so pretty soon you're working on the loading dock, or passing out books at the library, or doing some more everyday task.

**Rabkin:** Was this the work-study program?

**Domhoff:** Maybe partly it was work-study.

**Rabkin:** It was something else?

**Domhoff:** But really, it was federal government money at first. Maybe there was state money. I didn't know. I just know it was manna from heaven. Some great students chose to work for me. I put the first person to work—the person I mentioned that walked in my office was Sonne Lemke, a wonderful woman, who went on to get a PhD in development psychology at Berkeley. Great, great student—focused. I put her to work. We did research on the left and the right. She read all these autobiographies and biographies of leftists and rightists for me. And we developed profiles of what their families were like and so on.

She then went to work for me on essays for my next book, my 1970 book, which was called *The Higher Circles*. And when she was working for me on that book, I had maybe five, six other people working for me on subsequent books. On into the early eighties, I always had a student or two or three working for me. They're all mentioned in the preface to these books. They were all, as I say, wonderful people. UCSC attracted very high-quality students and the openness of that time was pretty amazing.

### *Who Rules America and The Higher Circles*

Well, my interest in the power structure stuff was really boosted by a huge, unexpected response—a popular, friendly, supportive response—to *Who Rules America?* in 1967. It was really beyond my wildest hopes or dreams. It was reviewed pretty early in the *New York Review*, which was still fairly new, by a man named Robert Heilbroner, a famous economist of the day. Wrote a very well-known book *The Worldly Philosophers*, but had written other things as well—he was between Marxism and mainstream or whatever. He was good. And in that review he also reviewed a book called *The American Power Structure* by a pluralist sociologist named Arnold Rose. He gave people the idea to use my book and *The American Power Structure* in tandem in courses, which I know because students all over the country would write me—not by the hundreds, but maybe dozens, over the space of several years, and say, “I have this assignment to compare your books and I wanted to ask you this question about yours. What do you think of that?” and so on. Which, incidentally, led me to write an essay on his book in great detail that was part of my next book that I’ll talk about briefly, called *The Higher Circles*.

When *Who Rules* came out, a number of people raised questions about it, although it had received very friendly reviews, certainly from anybody left of center, but from some others as well. It certainly drew attention. We had a political scientist on this campus who was a moderate Republican. I suspect he's a Democrat in his older age. He left eventually. His name was Karl Lamb. And Karl said, "Well, to really convince me you'd have to show me how the Democrats fit in. You'd have to show me how the Social Security Act fits in, and especially the National Labor Relations Act."

And that started me thinking, well, I'm going to research those and find out. So I put these star research assistants to work on some of those kinds of things. Then I did write about the Social Security Act and the National Labor Relations Act in long essays in *The Higher Circles*. I also want to say I had some things wrong, but particularly on the National Labor Relations Act. I didn't know it at the time, but it became a lifelong quest to understand those two acts, and to find archives about them. I'm going to explain that in a minute.

But I did—I finally found brand-new, original material on these two acts and wrote about them in a coauthored book in 2011 on class and power in the New Deal. And I wrote essays on them in between. But getting those right became real important to me because they were the ones that seemed not to fit. But more generally, I realized that I could answer most of the kind of questions that critics raised. And so that pulled me more and more into this power research, and pushed dreams aside. So there were kind of two things that were going on there.

In 1967, I was invited by a friend, by a new friend—to go to the socialist scholar's conference in New York. This new intellectual friend was named Jim

O'Connor, James O'Connor. He was at San Jose State. He was an economist. I forget how he knew of my book, maybe because I had made mimeographs before it was published. And he thought my work was just really useful as a prelude, from his point of view, to introducing students to Marxism. I was—not now, never was a Marxist, but I certainly thought there could be a left that would be more ecumenical. It would certainly include us all coming to a new theory. O'Connor was very symbolic and symptomatic in that, and he did end up a colleague here. I had an office next to him for a number of years. But I'm going to explain that it was acolytes of his, grad students in other campuses who were part of his study group, who really externalized me, in a way stigmatized me.

So it was kind of ironic that Jim was the one that took me to this conference. I met a number of people there that became really good friends. One was named Jim Weinstein, James Weinstein. He wrote *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State*, *The Decline of Socialism in America*, and other books. He became a lifelong friend. He was ten years older, kind of a mentor. Why a mentor? Because Jim had been a communist. He was from—I learned later—a quite well-to-do family, millionaires, but at Cornell he had become a communist and was in the Communist Party in the forties and into the middle-fifties, when he gave up on it and just said, "This is going nowhere." So he wasn't an anti-communist; he was an ex-communist—but friends with all these communists. We got along really well, so he explained to me the difference between a Trotskyist and this and that. We would be in a meeting and a guy would say two words, and Jim would say, "That's a Trotskyist." And somebody else would say something and he'd say, "That's a Social Democrat."

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** It was just fascinating. He had another friend, a really easygoing guy I met there, named David Eakins. He was on a similar path: he had been a communist, and then he gave up on it. Both he and Weinstein had returned to graduate school, Weinstein at Columbia in history and Eakins at Wisconsin in history, where there was a big-deal historian who was leftist but not Marxist, named William Appleton Williams.

The important point is their historical work on class and power had tremendous parallels with work I'd been doing on how American foreign policy is made. And they gave me an opening. From their work, I really saw a way to explain how policies are made—which I hadn't talked about hardly at all in *Who Rules America?* It was based on social backgrounds of people, network connections. But now I could really show how policy was made.

So I thought, boy, this is great stuff. My books were doing well and I had all these students working for me. I had these new friends. I should add that it was hilarious because there were lots of people of different political persuasions left of center who would invite me to talk. So I'd talk to the communists, or I'd talk to the Trotskyists. And I'd learn—just about *Who Rules America?* which was, basically I came to understand, something they all could agree on. It was a basic premise for all of them. And then they would hate each other and fight about everything else.

And in that context, one of the things that happened by 1970 was that O'Connor was in disagreement with Jim Weinstein. They were arguing over some particular article, and Weinstein, with some reluctance, had published an

article in their journal called *Socialist Revolution*—a critique by O'Connor that had to do with American corporations somehow.

But at any rate, they get into these fights. And I learned that this is the perennial; this is the norm, these constant divisions, splits. And so, when people would ask me, "What are you," or "What are you joining?" I said, "I'm not joining anything until I understand why there's constant arguments and divisions and fights." Which of course it never ended, so I never had to join anything. But it did make me wary.

So at any rate, as I said, I wrote on the National Labor Relations Act and the Social Security Act in *The Higher Circles*. I had other new original research in there on social cohesion, social indicators. And I wrote a long article called "Dan Smoot, Phyllis Schlafly, Reverend McBirnie, and Me." These were three extreme right-wing conspiratorial thinkers, the latter of whom, McBirnie, for his 125<sup>th</sup> book, he'd written this little pamphlet called *Who Rules America?*—maybe he called it *Who Really Rules America*. But it was clearly inspired by my title, but never, of course, mentioned my book. And people would ask me, "How do you differ from these conspiratorialists?" Phyllis Schlafly had had a book on conspiracy.

I wrote a chapter showing just how wrong they were in terms of saying "This was all secret." It's all in the *New York Times*. I tried to explain very carefully that they really had a psychological theory. We had a sociological theory. We thought it was more open, that these are not secret organizations. People are in their proper roles: the capitalists are trying to make money; the politicians are trying to get elected. The chapter didn't have any effect, because then my critics that were pluralists, if they didn't like it, they'd still just yell

“Conspiracy!” Which was the equivalent of calling somebody a Red or a Communist.

But in any case, that book also did very well. And so *Who Rules America* and *The Higher Circles* put me right out there with everybody else. They were selling a lot, and I knew they got a lot of currency. People would write me about them.

But at any case the interesting thing about that I’ll come back to slightly, is that in 1998 a sociologist decided to find out what were the top fifty bestsellers in sociology between 1950 and 1995. He’d written to publishers and then to authors of books that he thought were likely to have big sales, and he asked us to send him our royalty statements. So I’d sent him my royalty statements on all of my books, and I didn’t know where they would stack up in these whole lists.

But it turns out *Who Rules America?* was the eleventh bestselling book. So I was in the top fifty at number eleven, which is interesting to keep in mind when I’m being thrashed in the 1970s and disappeared in the 1980s, that when the students of these people saw how much at one time I had been A-Okay, some of them were a little surprised. To the point that when I spoke at NYU in March 2013, the person who introduced me, who is twenty-five, thirty years younger, he said, “If I’m not mistaken, Bill had four books in the top fifty in sociology.” He’s telling this to these grad students. So it gave me some standing, once again.

And *The Higher Circles* is number thirty-eight on the list. And they were my two highest. I’ll come to the others later. But the point for now is that by the 1990s, people were shocked to know of the high standing of these books, the frequent reading they had once received.

***Fat Cats and Democrats: The Role of Big Rich in the Party of the Common Man***

Well, at that point I'm really riding high, as you might imagine even from the tone of my voice. But I went to work on a book at that time called *Fat Cats and Democrats*, we later named it. *Fat Cats and Democrats: The Role of Big Rich in the Party of the Common Man*. I had a contract for it with Prentice Hall, which had done the *Who Rules America?* book. And it did come out 1972.

Part of the research was done when I was on a visiting year at Santa Barbara. I was getting antsy within psychology. We thought it would be good to at least try down there. I had written some of the people. I'd met them. Two or three of them became lifelong friends from our visit down there. But during that time, I was traveling around a lot and doing a lot of exciting interviews—the first time I'd done interviewing for these kinds of books. I traveled to New York City and conquered my height phobia momentarily to go up to the eightieth floor to talk to one of the biggest deals in the investment banking business. I went to San Francisco. I went to Washington, D.C. I had interviews in L.A.

And then I saw, "Boy, I'm running out of gas and money on this." So I telephone-interviewed all over the South. I would spend six, eight hours a day talking to these people about Democrats, particularly around campaign finance. I had an enormous amount of data on how they were financed. I knew the history of the Democratic Party cold at that particular point. And I'd even, to finish it, I had gotten an advance that essentially was one third of my salary then. I think my salary was about \$21,000. And I got an advance of \$7500. And I thought, I can't save this. I've got to spend it on taking a one-quarter sabbatical.

So I did what I always believed in: I said, “We’ve got to invest in our time and in our own selves.” And I just took a quarter off and threw my advance into, in effect, my salary, so we could continue to live—by that time with four children.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** My daughters were born in '62 and '63, my son in '65, and we had another son in 1968. So we had four kids in tow down at Santa Barbara. So it was quite a busy and wild time. We’d rented a house from a chemistry prof. We were right across from a really nice field near a creek. We’d go out there and run around, and chase and play sports. It was, in many ways, an idyllic time. I’d ride a little motor scooter—it was a Honda Ninety—up to the Santa Barbara campus. A little bit of my ride was illegal on the freeway because it was only a Ninety. I’d been riding such a contraption since we’d arrived in Santa Cruz, incidentally, because we couldn’t afford a second car. It was easy to go from where we lived on Alta Vista on the hill, so I’d just buzz up to campus. And it was so few students, an easy road, went through one little field that’s now fully developed.

But in any case, it was a very busy time, an exciting time. I still thought I was on top of the world. But the book was a mistake in how it was written. It was my fault. I’ve had many regrets over this book, because it was too flippant. I didn’t use all of my data. I buried it in glibness. I was influenced a little bit by a guy we’d met named Ferdinand Lundberg, who was a jaunty journalist of the twenties. And he still enacted that role. He’d written a famous book in the thirties called *America’s Sixty Families*. He’d written a couple other books, and in the sixties made a little bit of comeback. He was kind of a character. He wasn’t an

academic. He didn't have degrees, but he wrote a book on 'the second sex,' or something about women that was too Freudian and very sexist, patriarchal. And it certainly besmirched his reputation. He'd coauthored that book with somebody else. He was more of a writer than anything else. At any rate, he loved the alliterative kind of terms and phrases. He made a lot of suggestions. And I took too many of them. But it was still my fault. I had written it glibly.

**Rabkin:** Did he have an influence on your choice of title?

**Domhoff:** No, not at all. That title came from my wife, *Fat Cats and Democrats*, because people used the phrase "fat cats" at that time. So that's where the title popped up.

But I talked of the limousine liberals and was flippant about the liberals—although I was right that they were marginal. I talked about the Southern albatross; I talked about the Southern rich and their importance in the party. I wrongly said that they would never leave the party, based on my interviews, because they liked feeding at the trough of all the federal subsidies. Which it turned out they could do while voting Republican at the national level, and didn't leave the party until decades later.

Worst of all, I had an opening chapter called 'Jews and Cowboys.' I had done some research showing, first of all, very few of the corporate leaders were giving to campaigns at that time. I was trying to understand the pattern. It would tend to be the Jews on these corporate boards that gave to the Democrats—which then, is no surprise if you look wider than just economic. But at any case, they did a lot of business through Wall Street guys with other outsiders, Texans, which I called cowboys.

And what I really had discovered was, a generalization that I've always used since, the Republicans and their predecessors were the party of the established, of the proper, the Federalists, high-minded, the WASPs, the high religion, proper bankers and so on. Everybody else who is a Democrat, from the day the party was started in the 1790s, has been marginal in some way. And that included the rich Southerners: Jefferson and all the presidents that were slave owners. They were slave owners in a land of free labor. They were agrarians in an industrializing society. I came to realize that they were marginal. That was the big thing. The party is made up of marginal people to this day; people who are in some way mistreated or excluded, or made to feel second class—they are the people that remain Democrats.

And it was Catholics at that time, still, too. But they're now okay, because they're lumped in as 'Christians,' and so lots of them—and especially the rich ones—leave the party. But the Jews have never left the party. And I think I understand that in terms of antisemitism, the history of antisemitism—in the seventies I'd learned more about these social clubs—they still included Jews at that time period. Many of them still do.

And in work I'm going to tell about that I've done with somebody else where he did the interviews, we learned just how annoying this was to wealthy Jews, and how they were mistreated in prep schools and so on. But in any case, it was a mistake to talk about Jews and cowboys and to write glibly about these touchy kinds of topics. I had a sense this could happen.

I'd had a number of friends read it who were Jewish, who were sociologists, and particularly at Santa Barbara, two or three people, including the very militant wife of one of my sociology colleagues. My colleague was Richard

Flacks, Dick Flacks, who had a lot of training similar to mine. I feel very close to him and his wife, Mickey. They both grew up as red diaper babies, and I learned a tremendous amount about leftism and Communism and so on from them. They were founders of the New Left. He helped write the Port Huron Statement, period. He was really a right-hand man to [Tom] Hayden. But in any case, they read my manuscript. They said, "No problem, no problem." And Murray Baumgarten on our campus read it, and "Oh, Bill," he said, "My grandfather would only want to ask one question," he said, "He'd want to know, is this good for the Jews?" But he said, "I think it's fine. I think this day and age," and so on.

But I had one friend, Maurice Zeitlin, a sociologist now at UCLA. He said, "Bill, I don't like it. I don't like that way of talking." It surprised me, because he was a real heavy Marxist. But in a way he was quasi-Zionist, and he actually spent a year in Israel with his kids. He said to me, "This antisemitism is so deeply ingrained, damn right I'm taking these kids to Israel. They have to know what they may face. They have to be ready, just in case." So he said, "You're making a mistake."

Well, he was only one voice, but I sure learned you listen to that voice. Because I was criticized. I was even—in some reviews it was hinted that I was an antisemite, about this particular book.

I'll come back to some of that, because it did create an interest in constantly understanding divisions in the power structure, and certainly alerted me further to the importance of religion in people's identity. I'd understood that as a psychologist. As I say, I was never a Marxist, so I never put everything on class or economics. But it was certainly a very useful, experiential kind of learning. I was later able to put these main insights into a chapter in a 1990 book

about out-groups and marginality in the Democrats. I understood that the Democratic Party North and South was really a spending alliance, because the Republicans didn't like to spend money. And the urban Democrats liked to spend on their city projects, and the Southern Democrats liked their agricultural subsidies.

But anyway, that book was a failure, and took me aback. And they didn't put it in paperback, even.

*The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats: A Study of Ruling Class Cohesiveness*

My next book was on social cohesion. It was called *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats: A Study of Ruling Class Cohesiveness*. It was a book that was meant to answer pluralist critics that said, "Oh, you just have a list of names of people. You don't even know if they know each other," and so on. I knew from social psych literature that there was a lot of evidence that when you bring people together face-to-face and if they share common values and it's a relaxed setting and so on, they develop social cohesion. The claim by pluralists was, before you could talk about a dominant class, you had to show that they had common interests, and that they hung together. Critics wanted proof of what was called cohesion, social cohesiveness. So I developed a mantra that cohesion makes possible consensus, that when people have social cohesion they listen to each other more. And there was experimental social psych literature on that, and I did use it in the book.

The book began while I was interviewing in San Francisco for my *Fat Cats* book. I was waiting to talk to this guy who was a bit of a maverick. I noticed he had these membership lists for the Bohemian Club and the Pacific Union Club in

the room where I was waiting. So I asked the secretary, "Do you think he might be able give me copies, or loan me a copy?" She said, "He might, he might." At any rate, he was glad to talk to me. He was really a proselytizer for employee-owned businesses. He was a character. He was marginal intellectually, but respectable by his day job, and you know, obviously worked and made some money and so on, because he was in the elite social clubs. So we had a great chat. He knew something about some of my earlier work. And so we had a real good chat about the Democrats. And I asked him if I could have copies of these club lists. He said, "Sure, great."

Well, the reason that was so important was that then I had a solid basis. I could trace these names into corporations, other clubs, schools, and so on. Huge social background analysis. It was a great starting point. So I decided, this is the organization I want to focus on to demonstrate social cohesion. I had been looking for a way to do this kind of study—the right prep school, the right club, whatever. I'd heard a little bit about the Bohemian Club.

I knew, ironically, a tiny bit more about it because [Chancellor] Dean McHenry was a member. He was so thrilled with that. I think he was so pleased with himself to be a member. I was once at a dinner he had for the ambassador to New Zealand. He would often invite a different mix of faculty to dinners. So I was there, but so was the social psychologist, Dane Archer, on the campus, who had studied for a year in New Zealand. And so he fit. Dane and I were buddies. But at any rate, McHenry turned somehow to the subject of the Bohemian Grove and its retreat. We didn't know anything about it. So he had to explain. And you could just see it puff him up with pride. And then he said, "When we're there," he said, "We dress just like students when we're up there."

So I'd had a little inkling of it. I'd read of it briefly. But I went into historical archives, found lots of stuff. And I did interviews and I had a couple of informants, in effect, through friends of friends. I was in the clubhouse at two or three different times. I was even in the Bohemian Grove, before the July encampment, for the Saturday Picnic in June, which was also known as the June Picnic, or known as Ladies' Day, because you could bring your wife or friend or daughters and we could all walk around the Bohemian Grove.

**Rabkin:** Was it normally a male enclave?

**Domhoff:** It's all male-only. And tremendous tensions about that in the 1970s. I even ended up testifying in Sacramento—I had forgotten about that—against their tax deduction because it excluded women. They fought it unbelievably. They refused to let women in that club. They said, "It would ruin everything on our encampments. We couldn't go around naked." One of the things they often talked about is they'd just stop and urinate anywhere, like on the redwoods and so on. And they'd drink a lot when they were up there.

So the fight over inclusion then narrowed to employees. They didn't want to hire any women downtown or in the grove. But the last I knew the way it worked—and probably since the eighties—there's a center circle in the grove where they have the mess hall, basically all the cooking and that kind of stuff. They bus women into that circle. And they have a badge that sort of tells your zone or what areas you can enter and not enter. So women can't go outside their center zone. The guys that work there are making sandwiches or delivering stuff and so on. They've got a different badge, of course. They can move out further from the inner circle, into other zones. But the women are isolated. And I

actually, through a friend, learned something of that because a woman he knew who was at Cornell's hotel management school—this was in the nineties—I think she did an internship there as part of her hotel experience.

I knew of a comparable group from my stay in Santa Barbara. It was called the Rancheros Visitadores: the RVs. And this was a spin-off, in effect, of the Bohemian Club, where a guy in the 1920s or 1930s, who had been at the Bohemian Grove encampment, he said, "We need one of these in Santa Barbara." He was a rich guy. He set up a party week in which they would ride horses back into the Santa Ynez Mountains. They would hang out for a week, and they've got their little chuck wagons with them. They were really far more coarse even than the Bohemians in their whole way of doing things, because they were playing at being cowboys, so they were raunchy, and more dirty pictures, and more silly stuff. If you messed around, they put you in the wagon that's got these bars, and you had to ride in this like you were in prison for a while.

So that project had a lot of rich data in it from interviews, and from the historical archives. And at a certain point in my research, a member of the club who was an official got in touch with me. They were willing to talk to me because they were afraid I would distort some things. By then, they knew I was determined I was going to do the book. Here, the interesting thing I might say, intellectually, is they wanted to reassure me that they were just about to have a black member. And I said, "I don't think you have any Jewish members." The point is that wasn't the issue at that time. The issue was a black member. "Oh no, we now have a couple, three Jewish members." But they were very recent as well.

He also was very afraid that I would overemphasize what was legendary as the club stereotype—and mostly wrong—that there was an enormous amount of prostitution, both inside the grove and outside in Monte Rio. Which I had learned from a reporter for the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* was wrong. They had studied it. The sheriffs had studied it and so on. There was a small amount, but it was trivial. These are older guys, and they're not up there for that and so on. And when you go to the bars where the pick-up things are, which I did, you can't tell a Bohemian from a schmohemian when you go in there.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** A guy walks up to this obvious woman, but who is the guy? There're a lot of resorts up there, and a lot of guys up there playing golf that aren't Bohemians. So all the while the Bohemian official wants me to tone it down about prostitution, which by then I wasn't even going to hardly mention. He'd totally talked about how much they drank, the millions of gallons of this and that they brought in. So his presentation of self was totally revealing: oblivious on Jews, oblivious on an enormous amount of drinking. As a presentation of self, it was pretty shocking. But he was worried that I might emphasize that they had no black members and that some of them visited prostitutes. Of course, no prostitutes came in the Grove—something I'll come to in a minute.

The last chapter of the book was a gigantic network analysis, very quantitative, of twenty-five or so policy groups and clubs, and all their interconnections. Because the book was built like, "Okay, I'll draw them into it through all these fantastic ceremonies and the silly stuff they do," and then in the last chapter I became more analytical and I was saying, "Okay, and here is what

this relates to: social cohesion creates policy cohesion. They're all in these big policy groups: the Business Council, the Committee for Economic Development. And they're all big corporate leaders.

Then I had an appendix of heavies, we called it. People like that were known as 'heavies' in those days. So I had a big appendix of heavies that showed which of five to eight groups they were a part of. So it was a fairly big book because of that appendix, but it was fairly short without the appendix of heavies. And it particularly got criticized for allegedly padding this hardcover book—and particularly by one pluralist that annoyed the devil out of me. So I took the appendix out for the paperback, which I now regret. Because people would have had a lot of fun playing with it.

Well, the book got some play. It got reviewed in *The New York Review*—actually [it was] the third time I'd been reviewed in *The New York Review*, because none other than Gore Vidal had reviewed my *Fat Cats and Democrats* book in *The New York Review*. And at that point I thought, "Wow, this'll take this book sailing." But it still didn't go anywhere. This time I was reviewed by a curmudgeon of a political scientist, a contrarian named Andrew Hacker, who'd been a thorn in my side in many ways. He made a sport of it, "Oh, they're just out there drinking and what's the big deal?" and so on.

And he named four or five random members. He said, "That's silly: Edgar Burgen, the ventriloquist." And he named a few others. So when I wrote an answer to him, I had restudied all four or five of the names he casually mentioned. I put my researchers to work, which, of course in those days, was in magazines and business books. You had to go to the library and look in different books. It wasn't googling anybody, that's for sure. It was very time-consuming. I

showed, in fact, that all those Hacker mentioned were interconnected in numerous ways, and that they were also all in the Century Club, and that Edgar Bergen was friends with four or five major businessmen and had certainly made some dough and invested. And a couple of these guys sat on boards together. So he was a wise guy, this Hacker guy, that never did any research, just kibitzed and chirped. He didn't hurt the book at that particular time.

Basically, the interesting thing was that the pluralists piped down talking about consensus. Now they said, "Oh, well, this is a conspiratorial book. I mean, he's trying to say their plans are hatched in the Bohemian Grove." Which, of course, they're too drunk, and I had said so in the book. But it was also seen as irrelevant. And that will come up when I talk about my relation to the Marxists in the seventies. So in that sense—while, people tell me, "I loved it. I love the opening part about the ceremony they have where they burn the body of Dull Cares." So it's symbolic: let's get rid of our concerns and be free. And so they burn the body of a man named Dull Care.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** So people liked it. They used it. But it didn't have the impact I had hoped. It didn't have that many sales, which I use an indicator of how really successful a book is—not for the money, but for, is anybody reading it?

And it had an aftermath which was kind of shocking. The book came out in '74, but by '77, '78, some leftists started the Bohemian Grove Action Network. They're hassling the members coming in the gates, and they're saying they're plotting about putting in nuclear plants: "PG&E will have nuclear." So they completely distort the book. I went up to one of their gatherings. They had a

woman there who said she's a former prostitute. She had done prostitution inside the Bohemian Grove, she claimed, and she knew they were plotting and planning because she was right there in bed with them while they were plotting and planning. And it was a just horrifying experience for me, to see what the activists were doing and how wrong it was. You want to say, "No, no. That's not it."

**Rabkin:** Were they using your book as the basis for those accusations?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, they used it as bait and a draw. And before I knew how horrible they were, I'd gone up and I was one of the speakers with this prostitute and some others. But wow—and a couple of them are the nicest people in the world. But it was upsetting.

But even more upsetting is—and you can go onto YouTube and all and see this—a really crazy rightist, a conspiratorialist to the utmost, a Texan named Alex Jones. He says that these people are practicing child sacrifice up there in this cremation of care ceremony, and that there's rampant homosexuality, and the people who run our country are all secret gays, and so on and so forth. They don't reference my book as much anymore. They've got their own insane literature. But nonetheless, I really was the person that called that much attention to the Bohemian Grove.

And it's just a shocking commentary on something people told me. Calvin Hall had said, "Look, Bill, books have a life of their own. You cannot control that." I think he even said, "They're like anyone's children. They can't control them. What happens to a book—who knows?" And that's what happened.

I want to say, though, that the Bohemian Grove still goes on. It hasn't changed a bit. And I now write about it in several paragraphs, as a section in each edition of *Who Rules America?* to talk about it in terms of social cohesion. I also, in effect, updated the book and put it on the web. I have a web site called WhoRulesAmerica.net. And people now can go on that web site, and they can read the background on why I did it. They can read the main parts of it. And all the various photographs and slides I'd collected I put up there, so people can see what really goes on, and what it looks like and so on. So that was a big deal project, but boy, did that have some ending.

### **A Study of New Haven**

Now, right about this time in the early 1970s, my life took a different intellectual direction, just out of another happenstance. Often I'm looking for opportunities, but you don't know what's going to happen. So there's a certain way in which this research is opportunistic, in a different way than if you had a lab—you know, you're going to march, march, march, march. But here, I've got to take my openings when I get them.

There was a guy on our campus who was on the staff in the social sciences that I knew, a nice guy named Bill Robinson. I think he was some sort of social scientist in his training. And he said, "Bill, do you know Floyd Hunter?" I said, "No, I don't." Well, Floyd Hunter was a very famous power structure researcher of the fifties who'd written a book called *Community Power*, in 1953. It was really about Atlanta, and it had caused a hullabaloo because he said only a few people run Atlanta. It had led to political scientists fulminating against it, but also to a famous political scientist writing a book about New Haven, a book called *Who*

*Governs?* in which Robert Dahl said—the author, a Yale political scientist—basically said New Haven is a little America; it’s a little example of how America works, that you get a sense of America from studying New Haven. He had written that in the early sixties. He had won prizes. It’s one of the most cited and famous books. And it was interesting, because he was a theorist before and after, and this was the only really systematic, empirical thing he ever did. It was with helpers. He had a grad student who was in the mayor’s office, and he had another guy doing the literature and so on.

I met Floyd Hunter and I really liked him. He was a good old boy from Kentucky. He was now retired, but he had a nice style. As I talked to him, I thought, “This guy really knows his stuff.” Now, I had not been that interested in local power, but I had read with care a book he’d written called *Top Leadership, USA* in the late fifties, where basically by travelling back and forth around the country on his own money, he had interviewed a lot of the powerful people of that day. And he listed out their names and also the ones he’d learned about in his interviews. His lists overlapped tremendously with our network analyses based on archives. And I had said so in *Who Rules America?*

So I got to know Floyd, and it turns out he was partially embarked on a study in which he was going to compare Dahl’s New Haven with Atlanta. He was going to update them both. I thought, what a great idea. That would be so perfect. He told me he’d talked to some wheels in New Haven and had this a little bit of a start and all. I was really excited and I was hoping he was going to do it. But he was out of gas, and he wasn’t going to do it. He said, “I’ve really decided I’m not going to do that. I’ll be lucky if I finish my updated Atlanta.”

Which did take him then another seven, eight years. And it didn't have any impact. It had some good stuff in it.

But at any rate, it got me thinking about, "Yes, I've got to study New Haven." I got into a study of New Haven, primarily inspired by Floyd. I started to look at archives. I did interviews. I went back there. I'd call friends and say, "I want to talk at Trinity," or whatever college was nearby. And I'd earn money to fly back there. Nobody was going to finance me, foundations, whatever, to do this kind of research. Yeah, I still received grants from the Academic Senate. I was never hassled on the campus or anything. But I'd have to hustle money to go to New Haven. Then I would go through these files. And I did telephone interviews like crazy with people. Some face-to-face, too, but telephone interviews from California.

But I also had a chance then to meet and talk with Dahl. He was really nice to me. He was a friendly, outgoing guy. And he said, "You're welcome to use all my files." And he kind of gestured over to a wall, and there sitting in the open are all of his interviews and so on. He said, "You're free to look through them and use them in whenever way you want." I thought, "What a guy." What he had told me when I interviewed him, he said, "I was a socialist in college in the thirties. I always thought that at various times America would continue to lurch leftward." I think the civil rights movement had rekindled this interest. He had also become involved in a movement that was trying to convince General Motors to do something decent, maybe it was around integration, but I forget. And he really was annoyed by General Motors and how it treated people. By then he was pretty much of a critic of these big companies. He was still a

pluralist, but he'd actually improved his theory, and the other pluralists did not follow.

But at any rate, he let me look at these files and these interviews. I looked at them and I about jumped out of my skin because a lot of them, I thought, said something very different than what he thought. So I'm starting to take notes, and I said, "I can't take notes. This'll take forever." So I photocopied a tremendous amount because he said I could use them, right? So I photocopied a tremendous amount of that important material, so that I could integrate it and so I would have photocopy evidence, not just notes, if anyone doubted me. And I then did a very careful network analysis once again of all of the directors of big companies in that city. I obtained the membership lists of social clubs. I essentially replicated but expanded his particular study. I was basically able to show that he had a lot of things wrong.

**Rabkin:** Hmm.

**Domhoff:** I won't go into any detail. But he really didn't do a good job at all. And he really had taken the Democratic Party perspective, and the interviews he trusted the most were from these Democrats—and certainly he was a liberal guy—and also he relied on an employee of Yale, an alumnus that worked for the mayor, and whose father-in-law was a dean on the Yale campus. And this right-hand man to the mayor also had gone to Yale and loved Yale. He later became a very big deal in urban renewal all over the country, including running things in New York. His name was Edward Logue. I spoke with him, and he was very candid, outgoing and helpful.

So I had this book and it came out in '78. It caused a little bit of a stir. People were shocked by it, upset by it, pleased by it. There was a big panel on it at one of the sociology meetings.

**Rabkin:** What were you saying that contradicted Dahl's interpretations of his research?

**Domhoff:** Well, I don't want to try to go into the detail on it, because one of the things we'd talked about [before the oral history] was that I should just characterize sort of the background of these books—because people could read them. I will say it's also now all up on the web. I'll come to that.

But in any case, the point is that there were two or three key questions: Why did urban renewal suddenly take off in 1953 or '54 in New Haven, which was precisely when Mayor Lee, the famous Democratic mayor, was elected. And why did they receive so much money from Washington? There were a couple of other questions. And he gave them all the same kind of answer, which was, "Mayor Lee and all these political activists, they were able to really work with the bureaucracy in Washington and win all this money."

But the answers were different to each question. In fact, what happened was that local real estate elites—we call them growth coalitions—had been able to block what little money there was for urban renewal between the passage of the Housing Act in 1949 and '52. Because they didn't want housing. They wanted to tear everything down and rebuild their downtowns.

What happened that was crucial was that Eisenhower won the presidency and Republicans took over Congress in early 1953 for the first time since 1930. And they immediately changed the urban renewal law so you could build more

downtown buildings, not housing. The city's one-third could be partly accounted for if Yale builds a building and so on. So they jimmed it to favor big real estate interests. And that's why it really took off at that particular time.

But also, Dahl missed the fact that they couldn't move on urban renewal because there were a lot of challenges to it by smaller landowners, and by right-wing ideologues about private property. So there had to be some key decisions by state courts, and I recall in Connecticut it's called the Supreme Court of Errors or something like that. Until that Supreme Court ruled that urban renewal was okay, New Haven couldn't move.

As far as why they received so much money, it was all Yale. Dahl said Yale was not important. Yale was tremendously important. As he said, most professors don't pay any attention. Well, of course they don't. They don't pay attention here. But the top administrators sure did. And the trustees sure did. And the head, one of the key trustees, was none other than George W. Bush's grandfather, Prescott Bush, who was a very big Wall Street financier who lived in Connecticut. He was a senator from Connecticut, as well as being a Yale trustee. I find out in the archives that they're calling him every minute for help. So are they big geniuses sitting in New Haven? Or is their success because they got on the phone and said, "Hey, Prescott, they're not moving very fast at the Housing and Home Finance Agency, HHFA." So Logue would call Bush and then things moved faster.

But the interesting thing then another researcher found—this is where archives are so important—later a political scientist found that basically every proposal that was put forward by a city between '54 and '55, while the Republicans are in charge was eventually approved—and they wanted to pump

up the economy at that point, besides. The New Haven people weren't geniuses. They just sent the application in first and then pressured. Every one of them was approved for everyone. [hits table] So this blows Dahl's claims out of the water. It's really risky to do the kind of study he did without a lot of documents. Such a study has to be historical.

So I really showed that. The book did pretty well its first few years. It sold three or four thousand copies a year. My Prentice Hall publisher had said, "Bill, we won't publish it because it won't sell big. Because there's not enough courses on community power." Now, they happened to be dead right.

But I then found another publisher, and found for him a paperback publisher. We did sell up to three thousand, four thousand a year for three or four years. But it fell back. That book was buried. You will see thousands of references still to *Who Governs?* But they never mention that it was questioned by me, although a few people believe that I'm right. So I thought, wow, that's amazing denial.

But it was also really a sign of the times. Things were heading back to normalcy, and the kind of stuff that I did was going to disappear. I'm going to come to that just a minute.

### *Who Rules America Now?*

But the fun thing about the New Haven book, just like I'll explain with the National Labor Relations Act: I stayed with it. I went back to New Haven in the late seventies, and I did more research, and saw more documents and did this and that. I can't remember the details. And then I put a better version—shorter, obviously, but better version of my account of New Haven into my 1983 book

called *Who Rules America Now?* Prentice Hall said, “Bill, you’ve got to update this book” and so on. And so at this time I had a really long chapter on urban power structures, thanks to Floyd. And I’d learned a tremendous amount more about the topic. I hadn’t really cared about urban power with *Who Rules America?*, I should say. And I said, “Yeah, at the local level I think Dahl’s probably right. But Hunter’s probably right for Atlanta. Cities are different.”

But by 1983, I had a powerful chapter that also linked to a new theory that a friend of mine (Harvey Molotch in sociology at UC Santa Barbara) had developed, that I had finally assimilated. It’s very simple, and I love it. And that is, local politics are strictly about land values. That’s all that the real estate people care about, is that it’s always a good time to buy; it’s always a good time to build. And they’ve conned a million, billion people. It’s a mentality. So even the littlest real estate salesperson in this town is part of this growth coalition, always trying to pump up these land values. That’s the way they make money—not by selling gadgets and other products, but by intensifying the use of their land, whether it’s building prostitution houses in Las Vegas, or a better roller coaster in Santa Cruz, or making Santa Barbara a great tourist attraction, or building high rises in New York. They’re all about making land valuable.

And their main opponents are neighborhoods, because growth coalitions always want to put a bigger road in your neighborhood; they want to put a high rise in your neighborhood; they want to do something. Or they want to roust you out of your neighborhood, if you’re black and close to the inner city, which has caused most of the problems in the city. Push them out because we want the land for a stadium, which will then make our other land more valuable.

So I now had this great theory, thanks to this friend—it's incidentally a theory that beautifully contradicts Marxists. I'll come back to that when I talk about the study of Santa Cruz.

So I put that in my '83 book, and I still kept researching on New Haven. When I retired, I went back to New Haven again because more archives were open, and I saw more material from the trustees, and also from the former mayor, who would not let me see his papers while he was alive because he was so upset about the book. Now I see all of his papers. I see all of Logue's papers. So I had a lot of new stuff, some of which I haven't fully used. But the point is that there's now a new version of the New Haven book in more detail on my web site at [WhoRulesAmerica.net](http://WhoRulesAmerica.net), with these great pictures that I'm going to explain about and (inaudible) from a great research assistant that I have to tell about. So I now have enormous closure on New Haven and that 1978 book.

### *The Powers That Be*

All along I'd been working on a new book that would talk about just exactly how—what are the details of the process that these elite rich people, these big corporate people—use to relate to government. And in 1979 I wrote a book called *The Powers That Be*. I told about four key processes. One of them was very common: lobbying, interest groups. But the other one is more genteel. It's these policy groups like the Council on Foreign Relations. Experts and corporate guys sit around and discuss, and the corporate guys learn from that. And then they go be the head of the state department. I showed just how policies are made. I showed how that particular same set of organizations is tied to a whole set of public relations organizations, which I call the opinion-influencing network. I've

studied it more since. Basically they outsource all the PR material to advertising agencies. PR people give corporate money to the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, help the local newspaper. And then I also wrote about the role of campaign finance again in the rise of big politicians. So the book exactly explains how corporate domination occurs. I've used that model ever since and constantly updated and improved it.

That book was very successful. It too climbed into the top fifty, so in that sense I later learned that I was back in the game in 1979. It was number forty-six on the top-50 list. *Who Rules America Now?* now ended up forty-two. So I had books at eleven, thirty-eight, forty-two and forty-six. Which, as I say, came as a total shock in the nineties. People hadn't realized—I'm repeating—that those books had been that successful. I was the only person with four books on the list. Another guy had four, but two of them were coauthored. So I was right up there, and that helped me in the late nineties and 2000s, as a retired guy, to have the little connection I could still maintain with the new generations of sociologists.

Now, I also want to say that that book contained not a harsh critique, but a gentle critique of the Marxists, who had by then become my critics, which I'm going to explain just a little bit later. On this work I had a great research assistant I want to mention, Hal Salzman, an undergraduate. He later earned his PhD at Brandeis in sociology, and is now a professor at Rutgers. He was into computers, and God love him, he was trying to bring me up to speed on the new computer developments. I'd remember and I'd try, and then I'd forget if I wasn't doing it. But we did a couple of papers together that then were assimilated into various books later. They were very original kind of network research papers that really refuted the kinds of claims that pluralists have made.

### A Broader Political Context

I want to stop at that point, as far as my research, for a reason that you'll see, of my becoming very marginal. And I want to explain about politics, both in the real world and in the academic world, that were going on while all of this was going on. So at one level, you see I was doing well, and these books were well-received. Then I kind of screwed up on the *Bohemian Grove* and the *Fat Cats* books. But the New Haven book was well received and *The Powers That Be* book was well received. Lots of sociologists, lots of students were still interested. My classes were still pretty large. But there was something else that was going on, that related to politics.

So let me begin by saying that while all this was going on from the sixties on I was trying to be an unpaid consultant, as I called myself, to political activists. I was curious. I would like to be able to see a change. I admit to being an egalitarian, but I tried to be very careful to keep that separate from my findings and my research, and I think the evidence that I succeeded is how upset many leftists got with what I wrote about various kinds of things. For example, I said, "Look, newspapers, the media: they aren't that important." They hated that conclusion. But I'm going to give other examples here as well.

Now, I already said that my red file, my FBI file, had begun with being in the union. And I had given a speech to the Free Speech Movement down at Cal State LA. But on the campus I was not much of a strong activist when there were antiwar things. We once kind of semi-blocked a campus drive. We'd march around. We'd let cars through. We had a big, long car back-up. We'd hand them papers. It was students and faculty. I think that might have triggered them to

move my FBI file from LA to Santa Cruz, because as I say, I now know retrospectively that they reinvestigated me in Santa Cruz in the middle sixties.

But what happened that really got me involved in a fairly minor celebrity kind of way, but with no impact, was that in 1967 SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] nationwide called for an international student strike day. There was a little bit of SDS on the campus. I didn't really know much about it at the time. They asked me to speak. I spoke in the quarry. And I called my speech "How to Commit Revolution in Corporate America." Which you can tell already [with] that kind of title, it had a little bit of—it had the flavor, still, of the positive aspects of the New Left.

And the interesting background to that was, as it was coming up towards the time of this strike and my talk and all—maybe it was publicized on campus—the chancellor sent out a notice to all of us, kind of a flyer, that pointed out that you're not allowed to strike if you're a faculty member at Santa Cruz, or at a UC. You'd be fired. You can be fired for striking. This was just general information. It didn't say anything related to this teach-in kind of event and the student strike. I figured, and others figured it was definitely aimed at intimidating us over this event.

So I was really annoyed. I called the Regents' office. I said, "I want to talk to one of your lawyers." I finally get one on the phone. And I said, "Look, I want to send you up this piece of paper that McHenry put out saying you're fired if you're involved in the strike. I've been asked to speak to the national student strike day. Can I be fired for this?" He said, "Oh, I'll get back to you." So he gets back to me. He said, "No, you cannot be fired for speaking at an event."

Now, I didn't have a class that day. So it wasn't like I was cancelling a class, or anything like that. So I began my speech by saying, "I appear before you here today by the courtesy of the Regents of the University of California."

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** "I have been told by these men, good and true, that I will not be fired for participating in the strike. And I want you to know that I am just an unpaid consultant. And it's perfectly legitimate for any professor to consult. We have a lot of examples of that. Most of them are paid. Most of them consult for corporations. I'm consulting for you, and I'm unpaid. But I do expect this to be on my vitae and to count towards my tenure."

That's how I started. And I went on then to say you've got to develop visions that I called 'blueprints for a post-corporate America.' It needs to be a mixed system. Sure, you'd have to socialize some big companies, but you've got have a market. We need to have a better analysis. We've got to know there's divisions among the elites." But I also then said, "And you need a new third party," which was standard leftist rhetoric. I knew it historically. Yet again—and I hadn't yet done the research for *Fat Cats* at this point—so yet again, a new third party.

So then I said phrases like, "You need your own Lenin, not theirs; you need your own Castro, not theirs." And I called for strategic nonviolence. "You must continue strategic nonviolence. You've got to keep doing it—" I even used this trivial phrase, "—but with a smile on your face." I really liked that part of the New Left. I thought they could reach people. I said, "You have to do that." This was in a context that was starting to turn sour. Many of the SDS members

were heading towards violence, as part of the antiwar efforts. And it was right within a year or so that it all broke the other direction and it became a disaster.

I remember my students would tell me what they had seen and heard in Berkeley, and I used to say to people, "The New Left will be dead within a year." I knew that. Nixon's victory was really the killer. But the real killer, of course, was in the summer of '69, right as our first class graduates, three or four of our leftists, one of them who was a research assistant of mine who went on to get a Harvard law degree and become a great tenant lawyer—they marched off to go to this SDS meeting, and came back in total despair because they had split in four different ways. There was one article that described it "More Mao than Thou." Who was the most Maoist, the real Maoists? It was a disaster.

So I was speaking against all that, in a nice way. That's why I say I've had zero impact, because things didn't go that way. But I gave the talk. Palo Alto SDS, somebody over there wanted me to give this talk. And one of the people that heard it turned out a well-to-do guy that had been in the Communist Party and made some money with a little invention. He asked me, "Do you have a copy of the text?" By then I think I had a copy of the text, so I said, "Sure. You can print it and give it to anybody." But he didn't give it to anybody. He wrote on the bottom, he wrote, "Send 25 cents to Domhoff at Cowell College and he'll send you a copy." Now he gave away a lot of them, and then he sent the rest to me, a huge stack. And I thought, oh, my. What am I going do?

So pretty soon, you know, two, three a day, I'm receiving letters with a quarter in them. So I'm sending them a speech and taping the quarter on it, and sending it back, and then franking it out from the university as intellectual material. So that was a little flurry.

I didn't get thousands, but I certainly got hundreds of these kinds of letters over the next year or two. It came into the hands of an editor at Ballantine Books, and he said, "I want you to write a book. I'll give you an advance. I want you to write a book with this title and your topic and expand it out." By that point I got cold feet. I said, "I don't know enough to do this. I can't do it." I was particularly, by that point, nervous about the third party stuff, because the '68 election had happened and no blacks had voted for Peace and Freedom. Although Stan Stevens in the library had signed me up for—the first time I was ever registered to vote was that year. I'd never voted, I know that, which shocked one of my more staid political scientist friends that I wasn't voting in the local elections. But I'd never voted. At any rate—

**Rabkin:** Why was that?

**Domhoff:** I just—I don't know for sure. I think I just didn't bother, just didn't have time, didn't care. Was more distant from it. Remember, I was a dream researcher; I was a father. I was all this and that. I was preparing lectures. You know, I'd read the newspaper and have the usual, "Oh no!" That kind of outrage and shock.

But I wasn't prepared to do it. I knew I had to understand better on political parties. Particularly a couple of political scientist friends from my Cal State days had warned me. They said, "Be careful." One was a really good friend, he said, "Yeah, you ought to read this and that."

So I got into it, and that was part of my reading, of course, for understanding the Democratic Party and why there were no third parties. I came to understand that it really was the electoral rules, the way our system works

with single member districts. That is, you're elected from a house district or from a state. Or you're elected, I realized, from one big district called the United States, and it's winner-take-all. It's plurality. You don't have a runoff to win a majority. So a vote for a third party on the left is really a vote for the right-winger, and vice versa. And that's what shrinks the parties down to two.

So I added that as an addendum to my "How to Commit Revolution" thing. I put it on there, so any copies I sent out after that, probably in '69, had that addendum that we had to be Democrats. And I started then working on why leftists, why socialists should be Democrats.

Well, that also then contributed to my problems, because not only were Marxists starting to think that—I'm doing this superficial stuff on like the Bohemian Grove, but they really hated this idea of being part of the Democratic Party. I'd go around and give talks, and they were super-revealing in the feedback and what they'd say. They'd say, "How can we be Democrats? They're so impure. They're corrupt. They're full of these rotten machine, Democrats, these horrible Southerners. They're racist. We don't want to be in the same party." It's like they have cooties.

And I'd say, "Well look, there's this rules thing; there's these electoral rules that shape. It's the structure of the system," you could say. They couldn't understand that. And that was especially interesting and infuriating to me, because my critics were all what were called structural Marxists. There was a structure to the economic system that made it inevitable that capitalists would come to agree, but they didn't even have to tell that government what to do, because the government would see what's necessary to keep this system going. And the politicians have to keep it going or we won't be reelected. So the

structure of the system was governing everything. But it was the structure of the *economic* system, according to them.

So I'd say, "Doesn't the political system have a structure?" And it came to be quite frustrating, and I really felt amazed. It's an example of what I mean, where I think I stuck to data, and rules, and history, and rules of evidence—because I could see that the political scientists were right about that, and that history certainly bore them out. And cross-cultural research on electoral systems shows it.

So Marxists are on my case. About 1973, '74, I came to know a slightly younger guy named Derek Shearer, who was very liberal, a recent graduate of Yale, originally was going to go into foreign affairs. Turns out—I didn't know it at the time—he was a friend of Clinton's and lots of other people. His father had been the head of *Parade* magazine. But he was more of an upper-middle class person. But in any case, he was somebody that knew everybody and had a good sense of what would work for the left and sell. And he asked me to write an article for *Ramparts*, which I called "Blueprints for a Post-Corporate America." It appeared in '73 or '74, and had a little bit of play. And it got me into being more involved in trying the strategy. I thought, "We have to try it."

Shortly after that I received a call from Tom Hayden. He says, "I'm going to try your plan." Now, he was really already decided before he read my article. He was already a Democrat, and he was going to make a run at senate for the United States in California, running against a sitting senator and friend of Kennedy's named John Tunney. So we were going into these Democratic primaries, which is what I had said: "Look, if you're going to be serious and kick ass, you have to challenge these Democrats in their primaries. You'll get to see

how many people support you. You'll put your ideas out there. If we lose—which we probably will—we're going to support the Democrat no matter what." So he went for that. But as I say, he was going to do it anyhow.

I wrote a pamphlet for their campaign. I did a couple of other little things, went down to a few meetings. But it was too disappointing, because it was totally top down: Tom [Hayden] and Jane [Fonda] ran it, Jane's money and Tom. And they had this big meeting and all these campaign volunteers made criticisms of the person that was running the campaign, a guy who was a friend of the Haydens. And they said, "You just don't understand electoral politics." He had been an activist. He was a gutsy activist. He has written a book on himself. His name was Bill Zimmerman. He wrote a book called *Troublemaker* in 2012 or 2013. He's a fine guy. And he was a sleep and dream researcher, and a PhD from the University of Chicago, when he quit and became an activist. And he became a big-time person in running ballot initiatives for liberals and leftists in California.

But Zimmerman was running the campaign before he had any electoral experience, and they all said, "You don't understand electoral politics. You have to do this and that. And you have to quit or listen better." And they told Tom and Jane, "You have to get rid of this guy, it won't work." Tom and Jane didn't do anything, so the campaign really had no impact. Plus, Tom and Bill were suspicious of the 'electoral types.'

The volunteers Tom and Bill didn't trust were good people that had been liberal Democrats and wanted more, and they were willing to help a leftist like Hayden. I would say, "Well, they couldn't be all bad. They're willing to help the most dangerous radical in America. What the hell do you want for nothing from

them? Do they have to strip themselves down and confess the errors of the past?" Well, I withdrew some from the campaign. Not in any formal way, but I was wary of it.

But nonetheless Hayden won 37 percent of the vote against a sitting senator in the Democratic primary. That made my theory look pretty darn good. It looked like we were maybe going somewhere. The leftist journal I mentioned earlier, *Socialist Revolution*, which had been started by my buddy Jimmy Weinstein, although he had by then moved on to Chicago to start a newspaper called *In These Times*. But some of his sidekicks were still there at *Socialist Revolution* and others, people I knew. One of them asked me to write an article about my general view on electoral politics. So I wrote an article called "Why Socialists Should Be Democrats: A Tactic for the Class Struggle in Corporate America." And that subtitle was based on a similar title from a paper Marx himself wrote for some conference for the social dems in the early 1880s, I think it was. So I'd used his phrase. (laughs) I was trying to tug on all of the strings with that title and article. And I wrote it kind of kickass. And my buddy Flacks, who was in the campaign and had helped write a great document called "Let's Make the Future Ours," he then wrote an article just strictly on the Hayden campaign for the same issue of *Socialist Revolution*. They appeared and had little or no impact.

But the interesting thing was there was enormous tension within the *Socialist Revolution* collective over publishing my article. Many of them did not want to and there was a real split, it turned out. They finally agreed they would do it, but there would be an answer by a guy named David Plotke, who at the

time I don't think had any advanced degrees. But he was the managing editor of the magazine, and was reading a wide range of stuff.

Plotke went on to get a PhD in political science. He probably teaches at the New School. He's written a couple of books that I think are really lame on the Democrats. He's a loyal liberal Democrat, and he holds to some—to me—pretty dumb theories. But in any case, Plotke wrote this answer—he was in his full leftist garb at that time. It was longer than my article. So if my article was, say, eleven pages, his answer was twelve. But I had the opportunity to answer it, and I just teased him all over the place. I'd say, "This is not Sweden," or "This is not 'X.'" Or, "I said: weariness grows." A year or two afterwards, I saw him and he said, "Bill, I think you had the better of that argument."

But anyway, he was on his way to other things, and ironically, in a way, to my right, both theoretically and politically. Which is the story of a number of the young Marxists of the 1970s.

**Rabkin:** The people who were criticizing your work, nominally, from the left.

**Domhoff:** Yeah, from, "my left," both theoretically and politically—they end up far to the right. Some of them I have contempt for. They became pluralists. But they didn't explain why they were out there throwing darts from the left, and what was wrong with that, and how they had intellectually changed; what had brought them to their different view. One of the few rancors I have left is towards those kinds of people, because I think that they have no intellectual integrity.

### The 1980s

Well, at that point—I was riding high. I had done that article for the *Socialist Revolution*. I think the next issue became *Socialist Review*. I forget whether it was in *Socialist Revolution* or *Socialist Review*, but they had clearly—the times were changing, and they were seeing that their third parties and their NAM and all this hadn't worked.

**Rabkin:** NAM, New American Movement?

**Domhoff:** The New American Movement.

At any rate, I went around and I went to see various activists, and I said, "Look, we have run in 1980 in the presidential primaries. That's the next step, whether with one or several candidates. We need to put out there what we truly believe." By then we had a view we called economic democracy. I was no longer really a socialist. "And we've got to put our new platform out there, whether we use one or several candidates."

So I went to [Ron] Dellums. First, I see Dellums. He's sitting there with his big Afro. And he's a member of DSA: Democratic Socialists of America. And I tell him my thing. And I remember him pointing at his head. He said, "I know, I have that in the back of my mind. I have to think about it." I said, "Look, you'd be perfect. You just do it in some states. We're going to win a big vote. We're going to win all the leftist vote; we're going to get the black vote." And he wouldn't do it. But the irony, of course, is—and I had no connection to this and was not an influence in any way—Jesse Jackson did what I had hoped for. I'm not implying anything, but of course when Jesse Jackson did it in '84 and '88 it

was more than just the liberal vote. He attracted every leftist in the world. Every Maoist was working for him. Every leftist grouping, it seemed.

Then I had a chance to talk to Michael Harrington, who was a big deal of the left at the time, an Irish–American Catholic who had become a socialist, a fairly rare species. He still drinks at his Irish bar and all that. And he’d been close to Norman Thomas. He’d been around since the late fifties and he was still vigorous. He had written a book on the hidden poverty in America in the early sixties. He was a well-visible figure, and I wanted to talk to him.

I went up to Berkeley and he was giving a talk, totally dumb talk. I was standing there with my black buddy Hardy Frye, a sociologist. And Harrington is talking about the working class, and “Unions, we’ve got to be with unions.” And Hardy turned to me, he said, “Is that the same unions that have been kicking our ass? Are those the guys that excluded us?” So Harrington is talking on and on like there’s no racism, no sexism, no nothing-ism. But I said, “I want to have a chance to talk him.” And they said, “Could you give him a ride to Palo Alto?” I said, “Can I give him a ride to Palo Alto?” (laughs) Of course, a perfect opportunity.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** So I gave him a ride. He knew who I was. We talked. And I had his ear for an hour. I’m talking at him with all this stuff. He said, “Well, we’ll have to see what the unions are going to do.” And I said, “Yeah, look, we need the unions for big change. But they’re not going to start it. They’re cautious, they’re cautious.” “Well, we have to see what Teddy Kennedy’s going to do.” I wanted to say, “That philanderer? Chappaquiddick?” I didn’t say those things. I said,

“Look, if a Kennedy comes in, we’ll get out. We won’t do it. But for now it looks to me like it’s going to be only Carter, and we’ve got to challenge him. It’s just us and him—David and Goliath.” [makes waffling sound]

So, of course, Harrington just kite-tailed Kennedy, and that was what was so wrong with his kind of approach. Then Hayden later sort of did what I had hoped for, going around doing an exploratory tour. People said he was a stalking horse for Jerry Brown. And, of course, none of these leftists did enter the Democratic primaries.

But the other thing that happened in 1980 that really finished me was that Barry Commoner, a biologist-environmentalist, started a third party called the Citizen’s Party. So they blew away then, basically, everything that I’d been working on in the seventies. And Jim O’Connor, who I thought I had convinced, he became the chair of the local committee on the Citizen’s Party. That, to me, symbolized what a lot of people did. And Zimmerman, who had worked for Hayden, he later told me—and I hadn’t even paid attention—he was the campaign manager for Barry Commoner. “Oh, it was good fun and all,” as he told me when he happened to be in Santa Cruz.

So I said, “That’s it for me.” I was not really then involved at all in much politics after that. I was just so sickened by what I saw as the pluperfect stupidity of the late seventies and early eighties. I thought these people were hopeless.

I do want to finish up on just saying my politics thing. So I didn’t do anything really at the national level for the next twenty years. But the Nader Green Party campaign really disturbed me.

## Ralph Nader and the Green Party

**Rabkin:** Hmm.

**Domhoff:** It really made me upset and angry, given all the experience, all I'd written, all that had been said, all the failures—and I tried to write about that and speak about that. I did write an article. *The Nation* finally wrote back to me and blew it off, but it was months later. It was a casual postcard. So they didn't publish my article. I couldn't ever forgive the haughty editor for that.

I later went on, then—and also, there had been an ad in *The Nation* for all the supporters of Nader. It had Chomsky and Fran[ces Fox] Piven, the big-deal political scientist, and others. I read that list and I just kept getting madder and madder. It said “The rest of the names available on request.” I had known that the leftist that was putting this together was a total third partyist named Jesse Lemisch, a historian who was an early New Leftist, and always seemed to be in an argument with somebody else on the left. He and I always got along, but he really despises my views on the Dem Party.

But he sent me this list, and I see this whole list. And I say, “In my mind, here is a list of idiots that don't respect the social science.” I even wrote a letter to Chomsky. We had at some earlier occasion exchanged letters, due to a mutual friend. I said, “I don't understand it. You don't take the social sciences seriously. You're all talk about structure, but you don't take the political structure seriously.” He said, “Well”—and he wrote back a conciliatory letter which said, “Look, that might be true. I haven't really studied it that much. I've been mostly trying to just keep activism alive and so on.”

So I really decided they were what my father would have called thickheads and ideologues. Then I really lost all political respect for just all of those people.

*Changing the Powers That Be: How the Left Can Stop Losing and Win*

I did then write a book. In 2003, I wrote a book called *Changing the Powers That Be: How the Left Can Stop Losing and Win*, which was 105 pages. Just loved it. Every day, it just flowed out of me. It was just amazing how it flowed out and flowed out, each step. I ended with, "Let make the future yours." And I had a chapter on that: "You're not this, you're not that; but you are this, and you've got to confront that." I restated the argument for nonviolence and improved the argument for equality through the market system, based on some fine work by one of Dahl's best buddies, Charles Lindblom, that had changed his views, and written a really fine book on the market system and how we could use it to change things. And there were various other chapters that really went into detail. I explained the third party issue even better, I think. It's a quick little 105 pages. The mock on me is that it only sold about 990 copies, I think. No one bothered to read it, let alone critique it.

It's now in bits and pieces on the web. And I have a paper up there I'm really proud of—it's called "The What-If Campaign of Ralph Nader." It's this daydream in which Nader declares that he's running against Gore and he goes around and draws big crowds—because, you know, he had ten thousand people actually come out to hear him in Portland as a Green. So I used other actual numbers, and then I said, "He won 25 percent of the Democratic Party vote in the California Democratic primary and they have to let him speak at the national

convention.” And he says, “Well, I wish Gore had a better platform but I endorse him and we’re going to work for him.” And, of course, they have to appoint all these Nader people, as Carter had done. So I put that fantasy on the web. That’s the one *The Nation* wouldn’t publish. So that, once again, really scalded me at the national level, alienated me further from all leftists and their politics.

### **Santa Cruz Harbor Commission**

But I want to say something briefly about the local level. I was a local activist in some ways. (laughs) When we moved to King Street in 1971, ’72, the traffic seemed a little heavy, what with our little kids. So we started the King Street Residential Association. My wife and I went up and down the street, got a lot of people involved. And we were going to try to have traffic barriers and what was later Berkeley kind of traffic controls. I had read about neighborhood traffic alternatives. So we had this group. It didn’t work out because people from other neighborhoods were nervous, and so the city council, which was very mainstream anyhow, wouldn’t move on it.

And I was always then very close—but not working very hard or doing much—to the activists that then gradually tried to take over the city. I was a small-time advisor to the campaign of Bert Muhly when he won in ’73, and knew the others, and had really supported Sally Di Girolamo.

The insurgents—this was before the progressives took over in 1981—had three members on the city council. One of them came to me and said, “We want you to be on the Harbor Commission.” I said, “No, I don’t want to be on any commission.” They said, “We want you to be on the Harbor Commission. We

want you to fight those yachtsmen." I'd say, "I can't even swim. I don't like boats. I'm not interested in being on a boat."

But they guilt-tripped me and I went on the Harbor Commission. My goal was to deliver amenities for non-boaters. We were going to put walkways in. The harbor leaders were going to try to raise the price on people who were just putting their boat in the water for a day, and I made them do a cost-benefit analysis, and they had to back down from that. It was just such classic gouging of the ordinary person for the rich person. The harbor needed more money. They're not going to hike the docking fees, the guys who got a slip, who are wealthier people. They may charge these folks who are going to push their boat in the water for the day.

So I did those various little things. And I stayed on it for a couple of years. It was hilarious because the anecdote just so epitomizes politics. One of the people on the commission—because, obviously, of the five of us, I'm far out. But one of them is this liberal democrat named Norm Lezin, who ran Saltz Tannery. And he was a really good guy. He was certainly for what I was talking about, I could tell, and I knew him just well enough. We really got along well, and I really like him.

But there's a third guy that's a sort of moderate Republican. Hard-nosed, made his millions. He later gave us Simpkins Pool, the pool out there in Capitola. So he was a potential third vote because he was smooth and educated like Norm. And then there were these two pluperfect jerks, one a fisherman still with a little German accent, I think it was. He was a right-winger. And the other one was a real fancy real estate guy. He was just a reactionary. He wasn't a rabid kind of a right [winger].

So anyway, when I voted, I often went along with the consensus, being helpful, friendly, because I'm looking for those two other votes, which we eventually did win. But at any rate, the people that appointed me were annoyed. Particularly Carole DePalma was annoyed as hell, because I was not fighting them. I was assigned to fight them. I said, "Well, I thought I was assigned to deliver these pathways and all this other stuff."

But I was like a looking like a sellout to them. And it was kind of interesting, in terms of when you are on the inside and trying to look for a way to actually accomplish something, you're at least going to have to be nice and smile, and not vote against accepting the budget and a few routine things like that, and not be a total jerk and thorn in their side. Which made me have an empathy for [Mike] Rotkin, what he suffered, because he eventually got himself into that role, although it was certainly nothing that he ever contemplated.

So at any rate, I did that for two years. And we were going nowhere. In fact, we'd lost an election. It was going to go backwards. I resigned. I'd had enough of it anyhow. It was not that big a deal. But I was very supportive of course, but from a distance, of the progressives and of Gary Patton.

### **The Politics of UCSC's Growth**

But then about '85, '86 I became involved again, and got myself in more trouble. Because the campus was going to grow. And by then we—meaning people like me—were in charge of this campus. Not me, but particularly my buddy John Isbister had a fair amount of say, and others. And there were some sensible things that could be done. We had to grow. The state was going to jam it on us anyhow. You have to be for the students of California. You can't become

totally elitist. I remember my buddy Tom Pettigrew, a social psychologist and an anti-racist. He was mad as hell at these anti-growthers for the campus, because if we don't have more spaces we're certainly not going to achieve more affirmative action. When times are tough who gets screwed? It's the lower-income people and people of color. And we understood that.

So I started a town-gown forum, where I met with Lezin, and then he brought a guy from town and I brought a guy from the campus. And we were up to twenty-some people meeting, and we found we had a lot of agreements. I wrote an article in *The Sentinel* talking about some of these things, and campus growth, and how it could be done if we put a lot of housing on the campus, which, of course, got me in trouble with the progressives.

But I also want to mention a pair of articles that I wrote that I was really pleased with that simply analyzed the city in the middle-eighties. They talked in terms of our growth coalition theory and how the growth coalition had been defeated in this town, time and again. Particularly at Lighthouse Field, but lots of other things. I said the thing that was sad was that this former pasture, this former farmed land called Lighthouse Field, remains a patch of weeds, when it was bought by the people in California for a considerable sum of money—it was seven and a half million. Today that would be twenty million. And the neighborhoods wouldn't let the state put a tennis court on it. They wouldn't let them put a softball field on it.

I wrote, "This is the dead end danger of neighborhood politics." Because neighborhood politics can sometimes be progressive when they're fighting real estate expansion. But they also can be anti-black. They can have antisemitic covenants in their deeds from the homeowner's association. They won't let

anything change and so on. In this case, blocking anything on Lighthouse Field was really the narrowness of neighborhood politics, which can range from right to left.

So basically I said that the state did not buy this land for neighborhoods,, and we did not advertise that we were going to make it into essentially a buffer zone for those neighborhoods. This was supposedly going to be a field for all California, part of a park. It's still a weed patch. You know, you can't get very far into those weeds. You get scratched and so on. (laughs) That didn't win me any friends, needless to say. But that's how I saw it, theoretically.

I then wrote a piece in the newspaper too about the kind of trade-off—I might have already said this—relating to UCSC: “We'll grow, but we'll grow on campus.” And this really annoyed Gary Patton. They wanted to deny us every kind of water and timber permit. So even when we started to build housing, we needed a timber permit. And Peter Scott in physics, and Gary Patton—they were all fighting our timber permit even though we had kind of cut this deal. I was really annoyed with them, and I thought this was really crazy.

And Fred Keeley, he looked like he was going to go along with them. He had come up to talk at Stevenson College, and boy, did Tom Pettigrew and some others tell him what they thought. Tom can really get heated. He understood, yeah, I think there's ways that progressives can sometimes get a little narrow. And we have to grow this university, not for the sake of the downtown, but for the sake of students. So I did become involved in that for a time.

But I never did then anything after the 1980s. So I was at a distance. But I wanted to mention that past political involvement and political watching and the attempt to shape both national and local politics in these kinds of directions that I

thought might gain us some hearing with the great mass in the center. I would say that some of it was a lot of fun, some it was very frustrating. Later on I'd say, "Don Quixote rides again" whenever I'd go to meet people on these things.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** I didn't call it just quixotic. I thought, "Boy, there's Don Quixote on his horse." I've always loved that book and the imagery of it. So I did feel a lot like Don Quixote. My political views totally lost, I believe.

### Looking Back

**Rabkin:** Would you do anything differently, looking back on this, if you had to start over again?

**Domhoff:** I don't know. I always find it hard to talk about that kind of thing because it's so hypothetical.

**Rabkin:** Yes.

**Domhoff:** And it can be so-serving, and I might feel totally different two years from now in terms of how events might unfold. At one point I thought that, yeah, I would answer that kind of question by saying, "I wish I had confronted my Marxists critics earlier. I wish I had really been highly critical of them." But when I step back from that I'd say, "Yeah, and then I've just added another splinter to a hopelessly splintered thing."

**Rabkin:** Mm-hmm.

**Domhoff:** So then I took the perspective that—what follows could kind of even be a cop-out—I actually said this in places, but it’s time to take the idea more seriously again, and that is, “Maybe there is nothing we could do that would work. There is nothing we could do that would work.”

Our assumption was, in effect, “If we get it right, we will succeed.” And for me, I think that meant reaching the Middle Americans, as Nixon called them. For other leftists I’m going to talk about now, I think finding the right way involved getting a theory right, developing the grand theory just right. Should we be Maoist? Should we follow André Gorz? (He had a theory that was part of the inspiration for NAM.)

I didn’t think in terms of theory as far as social change. I was much more pragmatic and empirical. And I respected the social science literature that finds that everyday people have their own opinions, that race and religion are really independent variables, and the structure of the government matters. So I wasn’t talking at the high level of theorists, which I had once admired, and still do when theory is really done well. But I think left theorists really screwed things up and they’ve never gotten anything right. And so let’s assume we can’t quite do grand theory that well and quit kidding ourselves. But that’s where all the fame and glory is, and that’s what most academics and theorists would like to be. After all, most of us would like to be Einstein or Darwin or someone like that in our insights. So we’re reaching for those high levels.

So I don’t know what I would’ve done differently. I just can’t imagine a scenario that would’ve taken us another direction. We don’t know how to talk to rightists to make them less defensive. I think there’s evidence that they really dislike violence and disrespect for flags and so on. Which was why, of course,

then, the Seattle thing, the Battle for Seattle [WTO protests] group went all wrong, because they really did slip into violence, and let anarchists rule them from their extremes, and win control of the movement's direction.

But I don't even know whether that would have been enough, because when I read the history of the sixties now, for recent research I just finished, the white working class, lots of parts of it, resisted any integration in the North, from day one in the early sixties. And even in the liberal UAW, by the middle sixties and '66, they were saying, "This civil rights movement has gone far enough." And I think they were voting race in the '68 election. At the time I thought, well, they're voting also antiwar and stuff.

But they disliked two things: they didn't want any integration. And the second thing was they disliked the war. They were against the war, but they were more against the antiwar movement in its violent aspect. But they weren't going to distinguish between the violent ones and the scruffy-haired nonviolent ones. So I think, in that sense, the die was cast by racism.

But our whole style—we were atheists, we were drug-takers—this comes up against the rigidity of the whole rightist mentality. That kind of thing takes rightists further to the right. I mean, these people were patriarchal. So they were really upset by the women's movement. There was even resistance from liberals, from campus male professors. So if they're resisting you, can image what a more authoritarian person, a more rightist personality—they're just frightened by all those things. It stirs up, I think, a lot of emotions for them, a lot of things they don't want to think about or rethink.

There're obviously exceptions. But the point is, that enough people from Middle America that had voted Democratic from the New Deal onward were

willing to stay with the Democrats on bread and butter issues. But once their unions were strong—and they thought their unions would last forever, they didn't feel as tied to the Democrats. They were making good money. They were sending their kids to college—then these other factors that play into our complex decision-making, I think, started to be big deals. Race trumped class.

**Rabkin:** Hmm.

**Domhoff:** Patriarchy mattered too. Middle-American white males weren't going to let women have any blue collar jobs that were any good. Homosexuality freaked out another 1 percent or 2 percent. In 1964 60 percent of whites voted for the Democrat. In 1968 only about 40 percent did.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** The rest voted either for George Wallace and his racist party, or for Nixon. And the Democrats never fully got them back. Occasionally liberals would win because of a Watergate. Or Carter runs and he's a born-again Christian from the South, and so he wins the Southern states. Clinton does the good old boy thing and puts Gore on the ticket, so they're able to win Tennessee and Arkansas, and maybe one other Southern state, which is just enough, given that by then all the Northern states are more liberal.

But I look at those election successes for the Democrats and they look a lot like rearguard actions or temporary blurps, as we move in this rightist direction, as the white majority solidifies as "We are the white people." Now, even though many of these people then talk about poor white trash and trailer trash, which is a pejorative class putdown that shows that these whites have a lot of class

arrogance going along with, "We are all white people." Yeah, but except for the trailer trash, right?

So the Democrats and liberals and leftists got defeated in that kind of way. So what could we done differently, would have been impossible to do differently, because what the moderates and the older people would say was, "Just go a little slower, you black people. Just take it more gradually, you young women." Well, lots of luck—I mean, people have been taking it gradually for a long time. "You are a woman and you're twenty and want to go to grad school or want to go to Yale. How the hell, what do you want them to wait for, their granddaughters? What's that do for their lives?" So people live their lives and they see what's going on and they're part of it, and they see an injustice. And they're not going to compromise and trim on that. So it becomes really difficult to develop a sustained social movement.

### **A New Generation of Sociologists**

I want to go back, though, to talking about my research and intellectual life. By the early seventies, gradually what happened was that the ecumenicalism of the sixties—and including in the academy began to decline. And part of the ecumenicalism of the academy I now, in retrospect, think might have been because Marxists had been under such attack in the fifties. You know, in the Red Scare and McCarthy and all that kind of stuff. So they were more conciliatory and so on.

But a new generation was coming along, and they were symbolized by famous sociologists, particularly Fred Block, and Erik Wright, and Theda Skocpol, and others. They're all now very big deals. They're in their sixties.

They've been presidents of associations. They've done a range of things like that. But for them, the kind of thing I did, and that power structure research did, and that C. Wright Mills did—was not enough. It was not theoretical enough. It was not rich enough. It was not theorized enough, as they would say, to give us a theory that would lead to a revolution. Because that was their goal, like Marx's. They were academics, but they were revolutionaries in their minds, and wanted to create this revolution in some kind of a way.

And so they began to put down the kind of work I do. They wanted to put me and others in theoretical boxes. They'd say, "Oh, you're Marxist," or "you're quasi-Marxist," or "You're left Weberian," or "You're Millsean." That's what most people said: "Oh, he's a Millsean. He carries on the spirit of Mills" or some such. I call them pigeon-holders. Everybody's got to fit in the slot, or even they get anxious. Talk about right-wingers getting anxious—Christ, if sociologists don't have a category for somebody, they get traumatized.

I could see this coming on. You could see it in the arguments among old friends that led to rival camps. For a while, I remained cordial with all of them. I was at a distance. I wasn't in their collectives. I could always beg off on a true thing: "Hey I'm going home to be with my kids." I had other things to do than fight with them, and listen to their arguments.

So, in any case, it gradually developed, various kinds of people wrote things that I could tell were nipping at my heels, and saying negative things. They'd say things like I was spreading pessimism by saying there was a dominant ruling class, or I hadn't talked enough about the working class. I even wrote an article in '72 for our insurgent journal, which was called *The Insurgent Sociologist*. It was called 'Some Friendly Answers to Radical Critics.' And I knew

it from gossip, not in print. I answered all of their kinds of criticism. I said, “Look, the larger context for me involves a whole set of”—and I named names of—they were partly Marxists and partly not Marxists, but they were all these various kinds of leftist theorists.

But in 1975, there was an article that appeared that really symbolized the start of the split. It was on Neo-Marxist theories of the state, and it appeared in this very respected Marxist journal, *Monthly Review*. It was written by David Gold, an economist that disappeared, and Clarence Lo, who was a sociologist who later said, “I back off from that article,” and wrote in a footnote and apologized to me and we got along. We’re great friends. And a very rigid guy, in my view, named Erik Wright, was the third author. He was the big deal of the three, the leader.

So it was Gold, Lo, Wright, and they wrote this article in which there were three kinds of Marxists, basically. One was me. So first of all, they call me a Marxist. But it’s an ‘instrumental’ Marxism. It rests, they say, on something of a rather crude level of tracing out individual patterns, and has no sense of an overall structure and picture to it, and so on. It has its uses, but it’s clearly the lower part of the thesis-antithesis-higher synthesis, which is what they’re really doing. So then they name all the structural Marxists of Germany, and Poulantzas is a theorist in France. And then there’s this higher synthesis, the way I put it—this is not how they put it—which is them; which is Jim O’Connor, and Erik Wright, and their articles and so on.

So now I was known as an instrumental Marxist. I was mad. I wrote saying, “I am not an instrumentalist.” I wrote a long answer for their journal called *Kapstate*, with a ‘K.’ I mean, this is the kind of dumb, alienating things—

they call themselves *Kapitalist State*, with a 'K,' so clearly that's not American, right, and they're drawing from these German theorists, which are okay, but it's just dumb politically as well as highfalutin' bullshit.

So I wrote this critique that said, "This is not true," and "that's not true, and furthermore there's this. And on this we need more research." And they made me trim it down, which really made me more angry. They received enough space for them to jabber on forever. But they made me trim it back.

But then in 1980, Theda Skocpol, who I've mentioned before, became a very prominent figure. She wrote an article on her views on the Neo-Marxist theories of the state. She had developed her new theory, which she called state autonomy theory, that none of us had given proper respect for the potential autonomy of the state, and the state's more powerful—even America—than we had thought. She was at Harvard. She'd been working with Daniel Bell and other fairly mainstream people. But she was beloved in the early seventies by leftists. I remember Wally Goldfrank, of our campus, in sociology said, "We got to go up and hear her. She's really good."

We went up and saw her, heard her. I met her. She asked me what I was doing. I said I was working on this article on blueprints for *Ramparts*, "Blueprints for a post-Corporate America." And she said, "Oh, I'd love to see it." I either gave her a copy or sent her a copy. I guess I gave her a copy, because I think the postcard, which I still have, that I got a few weeks later said, "I read your piece on a plane. It's just delightful. It's the best thing I've seen for a sensible political change in America."

I never saw her again until '79. We were on a panel together. It was an alternative panel put on by the Democratic Socialists of America in the context of

the ASA [American Sociological Association]. She was just a little standoffish. It didn't feel quite right. I'm talking about power, and she's talking about how she's going to devote a good part of the next ten years to working for socialism in America. And I'm thinking, "Wow, that's crazy. You know, I've certainly been there, done that, and if you could learn from our experience you wouldn't be doing that."

But in any case, it turned out she was giving a paper at that meeting which was her big critique—very similar to the 1975 Gold, Lo, Wright thing. It critiqued various views by Marxists and then presented her non-Marxist view. So once again I appear as the simple-minded Marxist. So I write to her and ask for her copy, because had seen the paper listed on the program after the meetings were over. And she sends it. I wrote her a long letter. I say, "Theda, I don't say that. I didn't say that. I've also pointed out that I had said I made mistakes on that National Labor Relations Act. You can find that correction in this and that." So she made little tiny changes, "Where Bill has convinced me that he's changed his mind" or whatever 'on this and that,' but it doesn't change my basic argument." She basically trashed me, and then trashed Poulantzas and then Fred Block, and then Erik Wright.

These two people—Wright and Shocpol—symbolize how I was defined as a simpleminded Marxist. So they've got me in this box. And things are changing anyhow, for another kind of reason, and that is—movements were going away. All the people in social movements were back to their routines. It was just in a heck of a mess for liberals and leftists. It was the malaise of the Carter years—even though the economy was growing and more people were employed. And so lots of people are falling away from taking any interest in what we were

doing. There are no new people joining us as researchers or as movement people. It's the remnants, and we're becoming smaller.

And the other thing that was happening was, I think, it was so contentious among these various Marxists, and me fighting them, that who would want to join that as a young person? You'd say, "Jesus, I don't want to get in that mishmash." Plus—young black people were interested in studying about blacks when they came to college; and the same way for Hispanics, and the same for women. So there's a rise in feminist studies, in ethnic studies, in racial studies. Which were then derided by some big-time leftist theorists as "identity politics." Well, what the hell? Class is an identity. So they're putting them down as identity politics, and said they had abandoned class politics. Which implies, of course, that gender relations are not a structure, and the racial structure is not a structure.

So they're talking in this dumb way about these new people, all of whom I personally get along with well. I was okay with them, partly because I had studied dreams. [Nancy] Chodorow would always stand up for me, and a few other people like that. And when there would be these macro battles, like in sociology, because I'd been in social psychology, the micro people thought I was okay—and especially because I knew social psychology and I hung out with social psychologists. I was in Stevenson College at the time, as I've said, and there are Elliot Aronson and Pettigrew and others. So I'm keeping up with this stuff a little bit. And my friend Dane Archer. So I had a foot in both worlds, not just through friends or something, but intellectually I was interested, and had a background in all of these kinds of things.

But, in fact, in many ways, the Marxists, Skocpol and the new identity interests, they finished me off. I became persona non grata. And Mills was completely disappeared, which is what is so fascinating to me intellectually. Theda Skocpol is really a Millsean. She has statements in her articles and books that could have been written by Mills. But she never cites his book called *The Power Elite*. I'm not saying she plagiarized or whatever, but at some point she must have read *The Power Elite*. But it's never cited. Oh, and these articles on Neo-Marxism in the *Monthly Review*—no Mills. Not a bit.

So the person that had been the young intellectuals of the sixties, for ecumenicalism and for social change, because he was the best—he did an amazing amount of stuff I had never known about until at least the last few years. He was going all over the world trying to say, "Take the new openings—we don't know what it's going to be like ten years from now. Let's not be old futilitarians. Let's be a New Left." He was begging guys that later became big-deal Marxists, like Perry Anderson in England, to, "No, stay with this." And they of course went Marxist, just in the way that Erik Wright and Fred Block did—and Block turns out to be a wonderful guy, incidentally, and he was one of the first to defect and say so.

He wrote a book in which he said, "I'm now a post-Marxist." And he said—he even wrote, and I've quoted him in my 1990 book, where said, "It looked too pedestrian to us, too American." He said it. He was willing to kind of admit what he thought was going on that led them to be such put-downers of us.

The other thing I think was going on that I didn't understand at the time, you always feel you're younger; you're a part of things. So I thought I was one of the gang. But from their point of view, "He's a big deal professor. He is a tenured

professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He's written three or—" by that point I had four books out there. So maybe in their minds I was part of the establishment. I was probably a full professor—although I was not made a full professor until '75 or '76.

Incidentally, I was held up a year on full professor. McHenry didn't like the Bohemian Grove book. Being a Bohemian, I should say as a footnote, he didn't like it. And there were delays, then, in getting my case together. So at a certain point the social science dean, who was Brewster Smith, who was the guy I told you about who turned out to have been a communist in the thirties, very awkward, but very nice guy—the guy who was sort of in the background of my hiring I didn't know about, he had to call me to tell me there'd be a delay. And he was very circumspect and shy and quiet. But anyway, he said to me, "I think Dean found that book a little beyond the pale." (laughter) So I was delayed.

**Rabkin:** But these guys thought you were a big-deal professor and part of the university power elite.

**Domhoff:** Yeah, probably. I didn't see myself that way. I thought that I was part of the New Left. I'm a socialist, and a radical, and older social scientists saw me as an outsider. I'm sure we all have these multiple perceptions and visions and so on. So they really began to isolate me and not cite me and so on. My classes got smaller, but that was not because of them. That was because the eighties were very different.

And these Marxists and Skocpolites were, if I may say, for the record—and I've said it in publications, too—their theories were totally destroyed by the Reagan Administration. Their theories were blown right out of the water. None

of what Reagan did was supposed to happen. The crises of the seventies were supposed to be solved by the state. There was going to be state capitalism. And here comes Reagan, and he's ripping through the state. And Fran Piven—she and [Richard] Cloward had written a book called *The New Class War*, which is a great analysis of why the capitalists were trying to cut various kinds of social programs.

But then they end the book on moral uplift. I mean, it read like Marx in 1848. There's a new moral economy. The people will rise up. There is now a solid coalition of the elderly and the workers and the poor and the people of color. And there's going to be this fight-back. And so in '82 or '83, I wrote a review of that book in *Social Policy* in which I said, "I don't think this is right at all," in pretty strong terms.

The other thing I was called was a "corporate liberal." My friend Weinstein had made the fatal mistake of saying that these moderate capitalists were corporate liberals. Mills already had called them sophisticated conservatives—and that's all they were. But they were willing to accept the legitimacy of democracy and the state. But they were certainly going to try to jimmy it in every way they can. I never liked the term "corporate liberal." I never used it. But they lumped me as a corporate liberal, just like I was supposedly a Marxist. So Piven and Cloward used that phrase "corporate liberal" without any names in *The New Class War* book that came out about '80 or '81. And I said, "Hey, you've got this all wrong."

**Rabkin:** Can you explain—I'm sorry—briefly again what they meant by corporate liberal?

**Domhoff:** Yeah. The corporate liberals were a set of capitalists who accepted as a given that a liberal state has some role for regulation. Elections are legitimate. They weren't fascists, you could say. In other words, the ultra-conservatives, left to themselves, they'll suspend law and order. They will put people in jail. We just saw an example of this in 2013 that will be not current when people read this, but there's a man right now in the U.S. Senate from South Carolina. His name is Lindsey Graham. In the face of the horrible bombing at the Boston Marathon, he wants to try one of the perpetrators as an enemy combatant because he was an immigrant and had been influenced by radical Muslim ideas. This is fascism. This is nuttiness. He was not part of any group. So Lindsey Graham, who's always saying these kinds of things, he and several of those like him, they're more like fascists than corporate liberals. And this is not what the corporate liberals believe.

Anyhow, current events aside, what Weinstein and some other left historians found was that in the face of real serious labor unrest and disruption and violence in the early 1900s, a set of capitalists sat down and said, "Let's talk to these workers. Let's try to work this out." And they discussed in their organization, called the National Civic Federation, which others, besides power structure researchers like me, have written a lot about—and they talked about kinds of regulations, social welfare programs. They even talked in a very general way about labor agreements, which came to be known as collective bargaining. Now they were only tentative on collective bargaining, and they really only wanted to let that be possible for other skilled workers.

But the point is that their immediate answer was not to raise a private army or to call in the U.S. Army, which had been the response of most capitalists

throughout the nineteenth century. So these were now big corporations. They wanted to last a long time, not just the lifetime of the entrepreneur. They wanted to sell overseas. They wanted things to be more regularized and they were willing to work through a democratic state. That's who corporate liberals basically were.

**Rabkin:** I see.

**Domhoff:** What I intellectually found out when I studied them in a 2013 book on the 1930s through 1984 is that they were always willing to accept Social Security. That's no threat to them. It's no threat to their power. They always disliked intensely the National Labor Relations Act. They have fought it. They still fight it. They've got the percentage of unionized private workers down to 6, 7 percent and they're still fighting. They will never stop. On this issue there is nothing moderate about them. So corporate moderates (sophisticated conservatives) are not moderate on everything. I certainly knew that by the late seventies, wrote it in the eighties in articles, which then became a book in the nineties, where I'm going to soon come to. And I've shown this even more convincingly since then, I think.

At any rate, in the eighties I tried to write these various articles that fought back. I wrote one that had the subtitle, "An Empirical Attack on a Theoretical Fantasy." In that paper, I used the Employment Act of 1946 to show it doesn't fit the Marxist or state autonomy view at all. Workers and liberals almost passed a law in 1946 that would have allowed the state to invest in private companies in situations like America was in from 2008 to 2013; namely, when there's under-consumption. When there's not enough spending, the government could spend,

instead of doing the right-wing kind of stuff Congress is now doing. So I wrote a lot of articles like that.

### *The Mystique of Dreams*

But I also had my first return to dreams as a book author that I want to mention. It was a book that pleased me greatly. Calvin Hall was still alive. And I was teaching my dreams course by the early eighties. And the students would ask me, "Well, what about these people who control their dreams?" They were called the Senoi. It was called Senoi dream theory. So I thought, "Ah, I've got to update my lectures." So I went over to the library and there still was—I think we had a computer at the time, and I put in "Senoi," or "Senoi dream theory," and up comes a book about nonviolent people. And the Senoi are nonviolent people. So I read the book, and I see nothing about dreams. So I write the author and say, "Hey, when you studied these people did you study anything about their dreams?" And he sent me back this paper of his. Very tortured language. He's very cautious about it.

So basically, all the Senoi dream theory talk is fantasy. It was made up by a guy that was not an anthropologist at the time. The story is that in the highlands of Malaysia are this healthy and happy people that are so healthy and so happy because in the morning they wake up and gather in a circle and they tell each other their dreams. One person might say, "I was chased last night by a lion." The group says, "Next time you turn around and confront him. Say, 'Don't do that, lion.' Or else they say, 'Jump up in a tree in your dream.'" It's this sort of social reinforcement kind of theory that's behind it, if you got theoretical. But supposedly, for this reason they have wonderful dreams. They're very positive.

And this had been picked up in the New Age stuff of the sixties, and furthermore, now we're going to have better sex dreams, great sex dreams. We are married but we can have sex with other people we like in our dreams. So a few New Agers had their little Senoi dream groups.

So I got into studying it. I started to see it was all hokey. I interviewed anthropologists. Once again, I'm on the road. I go to Chico State and meet this anthropologist. Then I find out that the perpetrator of this, who was just a goofy romantic, a fallen Mormon, had a brother who was still alive in Boulder. I was on the next airplane. He was a wonderful guy. He was an ACLU liberal helping the Indians to hold onto to their religion, including their right to smoke peyote or whatever. And he told me all about his brother as this big bullshitter and storyteller, but a wonderful guy, and a liberal. And he gave me his brother's unpublished autobiography and other writings.

So I wrote a book called *The Mystique of Dreams*. It was really a sociological study of an idea. It was about, how did this myth of the Senoi arise and spread? I showed this mythmaker had written an article on it '52, but no one noticed. But in the mid-sixties, a dream researcher I knew, who was also a parapsychologist and taught at Davis, named Charles Tart, he found that article and he took it down to Esalen. He took it to Esalen, and they soon had these Senoi dream groups, allegedly. They didn't work. But then an Esalen enthusiast wrote about Senoi dream theory in an article in *Look Magazine*. Then Charlie Tart put the article from '52 in a book called *Altered States of Consciousness*. And right there I knew how that ideology was created and spread.

**Rabkin:** Interesting.

**Domhoff:** And so I write a book, and explained what the Senoi are really like. They're really a conquered minority. They were chased into the highlands about seven, eight hundred years by the people who are now Malays. They were very attractive small people, so if Malaysians could capture them, they'd either enslave them or make them concubines. So these people are very wary. And they're more like when you're a black in the South in the past, "Oh yeah, everything's fine"—and they stay away from dangerous people. Their lives were the opposite of what the mythmaker said.

Well, you can imagine that it was fun. Calvin and I had a ball working on it, because he'd read it, he'd laugh. We met with an anthropologist based in Singapore who was an expert on the Senoi, when he happened to be in California. We found the mythmaker's dissertation. He wrote a dissertation at the London School of Economics, even though he hadn't done any real research on the Senoi. He didn't know the language or anything. It was a totally ridiculous story.

But boy, did that make some of the dream researchers annoyed. They didn't want their myth destroyed. Now, finally, twenty-five years later, they don't speak of this theory anymore. They found a replacement in lucid dreaming. But in any case, it made me read the literature on controlling dreams, which you can't do, and shaping dreams and so on. It was a gentle debunking, though. But nonetheless, they were annoyed with me. But it was a UC Press book that did all right. And I had a lot of fun doing it. It was a good time out.

### **“My Rehabilitation”**

But then, in the late eighties, it was all about power for me again. And I was ready to fight back against my critics. I had adopted a new theory. A British sociologist, Michael Mann, who teaches at UCLA, developed a theory that involves not just the economy, but, in fact, the religious system, the political system, and the military, which is often separate from government. It's these four organizational systems that are the base of power structures everywhere. They interact in complex and changing ways. He stresses that government is basically about regulating interaction in any given territory or geographical area. But it's too much to try to spell out his theory here.

Anyhow, as I read his historical work it brought home that what makes America distinctive is that we don't have a feudal past. We don't have one big church like a big Catholic Church. Our churches are fragmented into separate systems, and there's a bug in some of them that makes them fragment even more all the time. The U.S. military was always small, whereas it had to be big in European countries, or France wouldn't be France, that is, it would be wiped out by rival states. So it was sort of an arms race from 1500 on in Europe.

But in America there wasn't a big military. Everybody had to have a gun to fight Indians and to keep their eye on slaves. So the military, the political, and the religious networks have never been important in the United States. In that sense, it's a pure capitalist country. So it's very atypical, if you look at its power structure, compared to France or any of these other countries. They have different power structures. And some power structures are run by religious people, like Iran, or they're militarily dominated power structures. And there're

some places where the state is extremely powerful. But the United States is not one of them.

But now I was really armed, because I had his theory. I now knew more history. And I went after my critics hammer and tong in a set of essays, including my new research on unions, on Social Security, but a lot of other things that I won't go into. But that book (*The Power Elite and the State*, 1990) had an impact.

One of my critics of that day—but a very gentle critic—was a sociologist named Jill Quadagno. She was more historically oriented. She was studying gerontology originally. She's a major expert about aging and social welfare. The point is, she had enough distance from the others that she wasn't an ideologue. And her views and mine are now very similar. She marched away from whatever Marxism she had. She later became president of the American Sociological Association.

But anyway, she wrote a review for *Contemporary Sociology*: it was called 'Who Rules Sociology?' In which she said, "You know, I think he's got some points to make." So it kind of started what I would call my rehabilitation. And there was a panel on this book at the American Sociological Association meetings. A lot of people attended. A lot of reconciliation with a lot of people. By then the Marxists were looking for, as one friend of mine put it: "By this point," she said, "I'm glad to be friends with anybody that uses the word 'class'." Because class and the Marxists had disappeared from the sociological agenda.

**Rabkin:** Wow.

**Domhoff:** But the new dominant thing was Skocpol and her historical institutionalists, the word she changed to when "state autonomy" became so

patently wrong for the USA in the 1980s. And they certainly have always kept me at distance and don't read my work. And there's now a third generation of her students out there that all consider me not very good, not very smart, and so on.

So that seemed like closure to me, with that 1990 book. And I turned to working on a book on dreams, that I published in 1996. It was a book that I had to finish up after I took retirement. But what I want to say at this point is that even though I thought I had closure on the power stuff, and now I wanted to do this dream book, then this opportunity to retire came up, the VERIP of which I spoke earlier.

I thought, wow, there is more I want to do on that. There're archives I want to look at. There's stuff, more, I can do. And so that's why that retirement was so incredibly lucky for me, because now I could really do both. My kids were grown. They were in their twenties. By then, I'm living as a single person in my own condo near the campus. I certainly would see my kids, go swimming, go to events and all. But now I'm totally aimed at—and I was too old for sports, which I had played all through into the, even a little bit in the early nineties when I was a senate chair. We had a softball team for faculty and staff in psychology. So sports were over. Kids were grown. And I didn't have the obligations. So I was able to do both dreams and power, when I was now free of campus obligations. So from here on, I'll weave a little bit back and forth on dreams and power, because that's what I did. I'd study a little bit of one; a little bit of the other.

### *Finding Meaning in Dreams: A Quantitative Approach*

So the first thing I did when I retired was to go back to this manuscript on dreams that I had been working on in 1992. This book is called *Finding Meaning in Dreams: A Quantitative Approach*, with Plenum, a science publisher, which really helped it. It's dedicated to Calvin Hall. He was, by then, deceased some years. But he had given me all his files, and he'd written a lot of papers that he'd left unpublished. And there was a way in which, some of them I know he was leaving for me. Or at least I felt that, because he had great hopes for me. There had been a lot of people that had supported me or believed in me, but never anybody as strong as Calvin. So he had decided that I probably, potentially really could do something good, unlike what these Marxists thought. So he'd say, "I'd written this," and "I've got this for you," and "I want to show you this new thing. So he'd analyze the new set of dreams and so on.

So what I did, which was a labor of thanks and love and gratitude, I put all that together, plus all the other literature I hadn't been looking at, together in this book *Finding Meaning in Dreams*. And it's all the studies of dreams that build on his system of content analysis, using these categories for characters: social interactions, objects, settings, emotions, and so on. It's a very detailed and sophisticated kind of system.

And as I began doing the book, I was stunned when I went to the literature. We just then had the capability of going back in the *Psych Abstracts*, because of some technological breakthroughs. The *Psych Abstracts* were now online. It was clunky compared to now, but boy, it was incredible. I'd go there [to the library] Friday nights even in the early nineties, just sit there and go back

through these articles and print some of them out, and go over to the printer, grab them. And it would be me and three or four other people that were like that, just catching up and doing backlog stuff. So there had been studies in India, Japan, and many other countries using our system.

So I wrote this book in which I drew together all this literature. So there's a cross-cultural chapter; there's an age chapter; there's a consistency over time chapter, which is all these studies Calvin had done. And there was a chapter [of] case studies, blind analysis, where we have the dreams from somebody, we do the content analysis, we make inferences, and then we ask them questions. And they give us answers.

So I brought all of that stuff together of his, published and unpublished. Sometimes he'd published little bits of it. And I put the full thing out there. And as I say, I wanted to make him coauthor, but several people said, "It wouldn't be right. It's not right." One guy, a famous dream researcher, he said, "My wife and I kind of role-played that. We don't think you should do that," he wrote to me.

**Rabkin:** Because it was posthumous?

**Domhoff:** Well, yeah. Because he hadn't said it. He hadn't authorized it. I knew it felt a little funny to me. So I dedicated the book to him and said, "And on whose ideas and writings this book is based." And then I had the preface that said, in effect, "Although I've written it, he's really the coauthor, except in name."

It was really a successful book. Our normative findings for college men and women in the fifties had been replicated by two or three people by then, including somebody I think I mentioned earlier, Veronica Tonay. When she went

to Berkeley, they forced her to update, they didn't trust our norms, in effect. Because you know how things change. Well, she did the study; she obtained enough dreams from women, and the norms totally replicated. She was the first woman who had collected dreams and quantified them herself, and then had these similar results. It may look like nothing today, but that was a significant event, and it made some of the women who were critical of us say, "Well, I guess women are allowed to quantify too." Because math was a male thing for some certain kinds of feminists, at least ones within dream research. So Veronica really was a huge help with that. A fine study—would that she had done more. But in any case, then, the book was very successful and legitimating.

So I did this book called *Finding Meaning in Dreams*. But I also had been, at the same time—because I had all this time now, I had gone to various archives that I had always wanted to look at on Social Security, and had found new stuff. And I'd had other essays I'd written that were critiques of these historical institutionalists, as they now called themselves. I remember I used the word "state autonomy theory." Well, it didn't fit very well for the United States, and Skocpol had kind of admitted that in 1992, in a terrible book that got five prizes called *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, which I reviewed at great length. I knew the Progressive era and I just knew it was terrible. She's talking about these wonderful women as if they're floated in from Mars. They're well educated. They're all upper-class women, and all the issues they won on were issues that their male counterparts didn't care about. They don't care if there's mother's pensions, or this or that for kids, and so on. But when women tried to help with minimum wages, no— So when you look at what happened and didn't happen in the Progressive era, it's straight class.

### *State Autonomy or Class Dominance?*

But at any rate, I then wrote a book, again of essays, called *State Autonomy or Class Dominance?*, which was in a way a follow-up to the 1990 book, in which I wrote essays on a variety of topics, including the military, opposing state autonomy theorists. One of them wanted to say, “Oh, the military is practically autonomous in America.” Which I had studied from the day of reading Mills, because Mills had semi-claimed that they really had some independence. And it didn’t fit any historical literature, and nothing since.

I reread that literature and did some more original research and went back over Mills’ writings. So it was a set of essays on a variety of topics that was meant as an all-out attack on the historical institutionalists, including—I lengthened and upgraded my critique of Skocpol on *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, and I thought just really did her book in.

But it was another time by then, another place in a lot of ways. I was dead, as far as the mainstream and the historical institutionalists were concerned. It didn’t receive many reviews. One historical institutionalist reviewed it and said, “Well, it’s got some interesting things in it, if he wasn’t so angry.” (laughs) As though I had been out attacking them all the time.

This was a second or third generation Skocpolite that wrote that review. Interestingly, I came to know her a little bit ten years later, and she’s doing stuff relating to social welfare. She’s using the University of Chicago’s archives. Much of the Social Service infrastructure was financed by the Rockefellers. I had given a talk about my work on the New Deal, where she was present, at the Midwestern Sociological Meeting. She was on the panel, and she really listened. I

think she got what I was saying, that I was not a Marxist and I had new data. So when I saw her a year or so ago, I said, "What're you up to?" And she's writing a book. She says, "I'm coming to sound a little more like you," she said.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** But at that time, I was still pretty much too far out there for the new generations. It was too directed at them. And my friend Dick Flacks at Santa Barbara, he said, "Bill, Theda Skocpol will love this book because it's all about her, even though you're criticizing her. But," he said, "I don't know anybody else that's going to read it." Which was a wonderful way to put it.

### **Two Key Colleagues**

As I talk about the rest of my research career, I want to talk, interject things about two colleagues that made everything possible for me, from the nineties on. One is a social psychologist named Richard Zweigenhaft, known as Richie, and a good friend of mine since the early seventies. And the other is my research assistant on dreams, who I first had in a class in '92, or spring of '93, probably, and had had an independent study with him in '93 or '94. Then he graduated and I retired. He's been my research assistant ever since, both on dreams and on power stuff. And once again, I invested in myself and my rehabilitation, because I hire Adam with whatever royalties I receive from books, plus some of my pension. I just invested again in my own research, because I knew nobody, again, would ever finance me. Dreams were too peripheral, and the power stuff was too controversial. And even though I would just blow it off,

by then mainstream sociology was amazingly without interest in power. Power is now really studied better in political science. It's just a stunning turn of events.

Richie Zweigenhaft was a guy I met when I came back from Santa Barbara. He was a grad student here. And one of our mutual friends said, "You're going to like Richie." We just plain got along well. Our styles are the same. He's a little more conciliatory, as he says. I'm a little more combative. But we knew each other playing basketball together on the faculty-grad student team and the softball team. And we both knew stuff about social psychology.

We wrote four books together, and worked on a couple of later editions of those books. That's a lot of work. And we've stayed friends ever since. I think it's important to say he was never my student. I think that mattered. And he certainly has a leftist sort of orientation, but he totally avoids all the theories and the controversies and politics. He's a nonviolent activist, at times, in Greensboro.

But he wanted to be at a small liberal arts school. He'd gone to Wesleyan as an undergrad. Then he went to a big-time social psych program at Columbia. All the big deals of then and later times were there. And he wasn't sure he wanted to do that, and he took a leave and went to teach at a community college for a couple of years. Then he decided he wanted to do something different, and he came to Santa Cruz. Our guys were thrilled to have him. He was really good, and he did some fine research in social psychology. He could have gone to a wide variety of universities, but he knew he wanted to teach at a small liberal arts place. And he chose—a place that wanted him was Guilford College, a Quaker school in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Here I want to interject, too, that I was so close to him that I got a him a gig—a Nader group had asked me, would I join the Nader's Raiders one

summer, like '72 or so. I couldn't do that—family. But Richie went and he had a great time. And he met a woman from what turns out to be a suburb near where he grew up in Washington, and they just hit it off perfectly. It was still horrors for their families, especially hers; he was going to bring her out there and they were going to live in sin together. Which they did in Santa Cruz. But she became my research assistant on the Bohemian Grove book. She's really a very artistic person. She drew the maps for it and drew an owl. The owl is their totem animal.

### **Jews in the Protestant Establishment**

So I was very close to both of them. And off they went to Greensboro. He's just going to teach, but he becomes interested in the question of, "How is it going to be for a Jewish guy here in Greensboro?" So he writes me, "I'm going to do this research." So he does a study of Jews in Greensboro. And it's very interesting. It's not a very antisemitic town at all, but in a lot of ways the town was started by Jews. The person that started Cone Mill was there. German Jews. More Jews had come there. So it had integrated its clubs and so on.

But right next store—it's twenty-five miles away—is Winston-Salem. They share an airport, Greensboro and Winston-Salem. Winston-Salem was a tobacco town, a total antisemitic town. So then he writes an article as he finds that out. He studies lists, does interviews. And he writes a paper called "Two Towns in North Carolina," one totally antisemitic and one not, as far as integration, and even attitudes and people—he did the survey—but in terms of how people talked about Jews. So he's scoping out what it's going to be like to be a Jewish guy in the South.

But he's also—clearly he's a guy that likes to be out in the field and talking, not doing social psych experiments, although he's done some of those. But even there one of things he's studied was handwriting. The higher status you feel, the bigger deal you feel, the bigger you will write. And he's shown that in a number of ways.

But in any case, then he decided he's going to do something on the South more generally. He asked me for more help. So he did a paper on the South. Well, at that point—and it's all fun for me, because I'm learning this stuff. It fits with the troubles I had gotten in over *Fat Cats and Democrats*. And at that point he says, "Hey, you got to join me. We've got to do a book on Jews in America and the establishment."

And we wrote a book. It was named *Jews in the Protestant Establishment*. It came out in 1982. And it symbolized our working relationship, because he went out and interviewed. (laughs) Just incredible interviews. He's such an engaging, relaxed, nonjudgmental kind of guy. They're telling him these stories about their prep school life and antisemitism. Very polished and smooth, but they really become hot under the collar, as I said before, when they begin to speak of how they've been treated at prep school, and in clubs, and so on. And we do clever little studies like, we take *Who's Who*—and we know which of these Jewish guys sit on a lot of mainstream corporate boards and which don't.

And basically, we developed a scale, a Jewishness identification scale, out of *Who's Who*. Where it asks for "religion," do you put "Jewish," or not? If it says "list clubs," do you list B'nai B'rith? Do you list the American Jewish Committee and so on? Lots of them don't. The more corporate boards they are on, the less Jewish groups they mention. So their presentation of self is less and less Jewish.

And finally, it comes to the point where they would just mention they were a trustee of Brandeis or Yeshiva University. They only put in their elite stuff. So we show how class really came to trump, in a lot of ways, Jewishness—but not totally.

However, a lot of the German Jews did become Episcopalians, and [join the secular] [New York Society for] Ethical Culture, and all this kind of stuff. Some of their grandchildren go back to Judaism and some of them stay Episcopalian. It's kind of fun. But some of them being interviewed were Eastern European Jews, and they were far more into Israel. And one question he asked; he'd ask people, he'd say, "Have you ever been to Israel? And one guy said, "Twenty-three times." Other guy said, "Just got back last week."

But the German Jewish guys hadn't been there except one guy said, "Well, sorta." He said, "I was at a layover at the Tel Aviv Airport on the way to somewhere." This was a Pritzker, in the family in Chicago that's really super rich. Penny Pritzker might become secretary of commerce some day.<sup>14</sup> She was a main fundraiser for Obama in '08. So Richie had interviewed one of her uncles. And actually, the uncle had named out all the kids that might come up in the business, and didn't mention Penny. So we write about that later: of all the people Jay Pritzker mentioned as potentially running the business, he didn't mention Penny. But Penny—he didn't see it coming on either, but she's in college and she's at an elite school. And pretty soon she's a runner. And pretty soon she says, "I think I'll go into business." So she's running the show. She's the hammer of her generation.

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<sup>14</sup> She did so in 2013—Bill Domhoff.

**Rabkin:** Did he not name her because she was the girl?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, she's 'just a girl.' He didn't think she was going to become the deal.

*Blacks in the White Establishment?: A Study of Race and Class in America*

So then I said, "Richie, we've got to do a book on this program." It was a program that started in the sixties called ABC: A Better Chance. It was liberal rich guys and headmasters that wanted to bring blacks in that had potential. Bring them in seventh, eighth, ninth grade into prep school. Finance them totally. They've now graduated about 12,000 people. Richie—he's doing other things, and he's teaching mostly. He's got a heavy teaching load, all with ten or twelve students in the class. He loves it. He's got a life with his wife and millions of friends and so on. So finally he says, "Hey, I think I'd like to do that book." That book's called *Blacks in the White Establishment?* And once again, he did all the interviews. My role was more writing and theorizing and saying, "Hey, we could that. We could do this. Why don't we do that?" It's the perfect kind of role, while I could do all this other stuff. He liked that, and I liked that. We had fun doing it together. We write compatibly and so on.

So he went out and interviewed all these black people from, oh, I guess they were from ages thirty to fifty, that had been in this program in the sixties. And we put a theory on it about the difference between immigrants and subjugated minorities, that I really like, still like, but people hate. Black people especially hate it because it says—see, if you've been conquered, in some way subdued, like Native Americans or people who have been enslaved, people have

taken over your country—conquered minorities are totally different than immigrant minorities. Immigrant minorities come with their culture, their language as protection, and hope. And they can always go back. That’s not the situation of conquered minorities.

So to talk about black people or Native Americans in the same breath with any immigrant, white or brown or whatever is just wrong, wrong, wrong—including black immigrants, who have a different attitude and sometimes keep their accent to avoid the tremendous unfair, unjust stigmatization, and stereotyping that goes on for African Americans to this day. Even a guy like Obama, he’s got a Kenyan father. He’s biracial. He went to prep school, due to his grandparents, and he’s a Harvard law graduate. Two-thirds of the black students at Harvard are [from] biracial or immigrant families. So it tells you something about the power of this stigma. But that theory made people nervous. Another place where I get in trouble as not quite politically correct.

It’s a wonderful book, tells wonderful stories about these people. They liked their prep school. College was pretty good too. But they say, now boy, out there in that business world, yeah, now there’s racism. So we’re pretty sure that we had pretty good data. We looked for failures. There was one guy that was a real strong failure. We found him. But he wasn’t a failure on his terms. He was now head chauffeur of a company. He lived in this black neighborhood, and he’d helped organize it to resist the developers in Richmond, Virginia. Lots of people loved the book. A black guy said, “You wrote *Blacks in the White Establishment?*” He was manning a table at the soc meeting. I said, “Yeah.” And he said, “I want to shake your hand.” (laughs)

But what we'd basically shown, our point was, it just said this stuff about "It takes generations to make a classy person" is wrong. You take a teenager at twelve or thirteen and isolate him or her into one of these total institutions called a prep school, boarding school, for three, four years, and you've got one smooth, cultured person.

Incidentally, one of the graduates, the most famous graduate, the most visible graduate, is currently the governor of Massachusetts. He left slum tenements, in Chicago, to go to prep school near Boston. Became a corporate lawyer, was in Clinton's administration, became a corporate director, worked for Coca-Cola, went back to Massachusetts. And he's the governor. We put that information into a second edition in 2003. Richie did more interviews for the update. We received more cooperation. We had better lists. It was a great book. (laughs) It's called *Blacks in the White Elite* the second time around.

### *Diversity in the Power Elite*

So in the mid-nineties then, just as I am in this retirement stuff—Richie knows I'm vulnerable to attack for temptation—he said, "We have to write a book updating Mills' *Power Elite*." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "We're going to look at every position that Mills said made a person part of the power elite." So the first book was his idea, the second was, "my idea." The third book was totally his idea, and he says, "Hey, we're going update it. We're going to look at every person that's a general and admiral, in the cabinet, or is a director. We're going to study them all, and we're going to find all the women and people of color. We're even going to look for gays. And so we wrote this book called *Diversity in the Power Elite*. It came out in 1998. And it was well liked.

Then we updated it in 2006 and made it even better. I talked him into a subtitle that he thought about—and he finally decided it was okay. It says, *Diversity in the Power Elite: How it Happened, Why It Matters*. It's one we could stand on with total closure. We show how women came up through the ranks, how people of color came up through the ranks. We draw mostly on literature, but he did do some key kinds of interviews for that book as well.

*The New CEOs: Women, African American, Latino, and Asian American  
Leaders of Fortune 500 Companies*

Then he talked me into—really against my will, about 2009 he said, “We’ve got to write a book on the all nonwhite males, anybody who’s not a white male who’s become a CEO.” Because before we’d only written about directors. And it’s easy to make somebody a director: they’re maybe a token, they’re one of twenty. People on the board—they don’t always have money. They’re not sitting there representing a bank or their billion-dollar fortune. But now there’re also people who are CEOs. He said, “We’ve got to study them.” So he talked me into it.

I always say, “Okay, I’ll work along, and then if I deserve to be an author then I’ll be. Or maybe we’ll make it ‘Zweigenhaft, Zweigenhaft, and Domhoff.’ I don’t deserve full credit.” But finally I did enough, and we did just a great book on these new CEOs: on women, Asian Americans, Latino, and African American CEOs. And it led to us being invited for two years to the meetings of a group called HACR, Hispanic Association for Corporate Responsibility. The established Latino executives come there. We gave a talk to the young executives about what they’re going to face and showed them the statistics, and they asked questions. It

was a very gratifying experience to be able to do that, to have the book feed back into these things.

So here we are: we wrote *Jews in the Protestant Establishment*, and then two versions of *Blacks in the White Elite*, and two versions of *Diversity in the Power Elite*, and now *The New CEOs*. So we've written four books together. The process was incredibly fun—but we also learned so much, because we're passing literature back and forth. He's reading stuff I've never read. I'll read it. I'll read about the stuff in the draft of the manuscript that I'm the coauthor of. I learn new things. So I've learned a lot about diversity. At the elite level we know more about diversity—and he does even more. I can brag because he did the work. I'm comfortable bragging when other people are involved. We've just learned a lot about how it works and what the pitfalls are, and why diversity could well turn backwards to the past.

There was just an article in *The New York Times* in April of 2013 in which a big-deal woman that had been on Wall Street had lost her job in the crunch of the recession, partly because, she said, "We sold these people these various securities in good faith, but they've lost a lot of money. We ought to share the loss." (laughs) The macho white guys didn't think much of that—she was a white woman. Anyway, she was pushed out. There's been a little decline of women on Wall Street.

I think she had it right: she said in times of stress people want even more people like them around. Even white rich men will exclude rich white women

when there's stress. So it could go backwards. So we keep an eye on that, and we write about it.<sup>15</sup>

**dreamresearch.net**

I want to speak now, jumping back to dreams, I want to speak of Adam Schneider. Adam was the student that I had in the dreams class in '92 or '93. He's sitting in the first row, and the first day, after the first day—we're just giving the overview—he hangs around a little bit after class to let me know he's very skeptical about Freudians. You know, "I'm a little bit edgy." And I said, "Hey, we've got something for everybody." And we do. I said, "We've got quantitative. We've got this and that."

Anyway, he sits there and he's a great student. But he also turns out to be totally fantastic with a computer and had been using computers since the sixth or seventh grade. He also is a brilliant person. I saw his GRE, so I know. In fact, he got 800 on two parts, and I asked, "What did you get on the other one." And he said, "I got 790." I turned to him—and this is my relationship with him—and I used a curse word in front of him, and I said, "Adam, how do you screw up like that on that reading exam!" He got a little flustered.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** Because he's a shy, introverted, good guy. But at any rate—for the class, he put our findings and our system on spreadsheets. He created a little

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<sup>15</sup> Domhoff added the following footnote during the editing process in early 2014: "And since the interview, Richie and Bill have documented an increase in traditional white males as CEOs for the 2014 paperback edition of *The New CEOs*."

graph. I said, "Holy cow." So he did more, and then I hired him. And he's been my research assistant ever since.

And because of him, I have a web site called [dreamresearch.net](http://dreamresearch.net) that has all our findings, all our articles, examples, everything you need to do a study anywhere in the world. And I feel satisfaction about that, that somebody in the poorest country in the world has access then to the best quantitative tools. He created a program to do the summations of all the coding. You still have to code by hand, that is, say, "Oh, that's a one MFA," which means 'your father.' One MFA—"One" is just 'one person'; 'M' for 'male'; 'F' for 'father'; A 'adult.' So you have to enter all those codings, but then the machine spits out a beautiful kind of graph and shows you statistical significance level and effects sizes and all these fancy things that are important, that I won't try to get into here. So Adam did all that.

### **[dreambank.net](http://dreambank.net)**

And then he developed a resource for the world for the future that I'm really gratified by and pleased by and proud of. He developed [dreambank.net](http://dreambank.net). What we have up there is 25,000 dreams. They are dream reports, we call them, more technically. Dreams reported from labs, from long dream diaries, dreams collected in high schools with our method, dreams collected in classrooms and colleges, where we ask people, "Just write down your most recent dreams, with repeated stress on recent." We ask the professor for twenty minutes, the instructor or teacher, twenty minutes, have people write down their most recent dream they can recall. Most recent—we prime for that by saying, "What was the date it happened? What was the hour?" And then if they say, "Oh, it was a year

ago," we tend not to use those. They ignore the instructions and say, "This is most incredible dream I have remembered since I was age six." We toss that out. If you collect the most recent dreams from 125 people, you have a representative sample of the dream life of that group, period, end question. We've done enough studies of that to be fairly confident.

So we have a lot of different sources of dream reports. We have 19,000 in English and 6,000 in German. The ones in German come, on the one hand, from a dream researcher in Switzerland, who collected dreams as part of a longitudinal study from the same boys and girls, age nine to fifteen, in the lab and at home. And a German man, who moved to Switzerland, published a book in which he had a CD with several thousand of his dreams, and we put those up there. So we have blind people, different age groups, everything.

And then, Adam developed an incredible search program, far better than anybody else, because he used a simple language that they didn't think to use. He didn't assume what the answer should be. He said he started with the assumption, "people know better what they want to ask than I do. And they may have questions we don't have." So you can put in the word "house," and if you've marked all 19,000 dreams in English, up will come every dream with "house." It will tell you what percentage that is of each of the series. You can also go on there and put in, say a lot of emotion terms for one particular dream series. And you could say, "We want to see the consistency of these emotion terms per 50 dreams, or 100 dreams, or 500 dreams." In a nanosecond, it spits it out.

So we update that. People give us new dreams. It constantly improves. It becomes a resource. It's been used in some really significant papers by mainstream psychologists that are the equivalent, for psychology, of  $E=mc^2$

squared. A mathematical psychologist has shown that the social networks in dreams are very similar to social networks in waking life—this is a professor at Purdue. And a few other things like that that have been done that are really, really great.

Adam and I have coauthored four papers. He's more than a research assistant, which is why I call him a colleague. He chose never to go to grad school. He earns his living as a graphic designer. He's made some great web sites, including some that track your hiking trails. And a company pays to put ads on his site. He's no millionaire, but he lives well, partly from his web site, and partly from his working for me and for a few others. He's a very independent, focused free spirit, a very unique individual.

So we have those two great web sites—and I continue to do research, thanks to him, and to have books with full graphs and tables that make me look so quantitative. I know the concepts. I don't want to 'down home' it too much. I know them. But he's the one that does the technology.

### **More on *Who Rules America?***

I also convinced Adam, at some point in the early 2000s, to make a web site about *Who Rules America?* In 1998, after I was retired, an editor just over the hill in a little company called Mayfield Publishing said, "I've talked to people, and you ought to update the *Who Rules America?* I didn't really want to do it, but friends said, "You ought to at least listen."

So she came over the hill and we had lunch. And we talked about it. She'd give me maybe a thousand or two to have a helper. So in 1998 I wrote what I then called the third edition of *Who Rules America?* It was longer than the two

previous ones, and it was more detailed. It really should have been out there as a new update—we were aiming for classrooms, but we were above classrooms. We were in upper-division level. It had a lot of great stuff in it that I now draw on, as I do more recent editions.

About 2002 she said, “Hey, it’s time to update.” So I was working on an update. Then she wanted me to go even faster, because their company was about to be bought by McGraw-Hill. So she wanted it done before McGraw-Hill took it over. Now I’m a captive of this gigantic gulf and devour company called McGraw-Hill, that has no sensitivity to research. They’re just—it’s just indescribable. The people are nice. It would hurt their feelings, but the truth is that they are just paper pushers and putting something out that, for all I know, they haven’t even read. They’re out to make money. They want just these big textbooks. I’m hoping someday they’ll finally let go of *Who Rules America?*, although I’ll be too old to do anything with it by then. They have it way overpriced, so we argue. I want it to be widely read. They want the highest possible profit margins.

But I’ve written updates for them. They essentially had the 2002 one, and then there’s one in 2006 and 2010. And there’s one that just came out in 2013 with a 2014 copyright, and a new subtitle, *The Triumph of the Corporate Rich*. That means that *Who Rules America?* might be in print for fifty consecutive years, and that’s very gratifying for me at this stage of my life.

But where this links to Adam is—and I am really talking about Adam, but might as well have worked that in—is that I asked Adam to do a web site for me on *Who Rules America?* By then, he was even better at making web sites. People look at it and they say, “Wow, I can’t believe it.” It’s so good in so many ways.

Very sophisticated. It's not a popular web site because it's academic. It's full of academic papers that I rewrote and updated, like on the Bohemian Grove, like on New Haven. He puts up great graphics, finds old pictures on the web that are free. So the documents are beautifully illustrated, at least in my opinion. Other people say so too. And I took my *Changing the Powers That Be* book and I updated the various chapters and put them up there as separate papers on separate issues. I put a couple of other people's papers up there.

I put some stuff Richie did up there. Because he did some interesting stuff, where he spoke to a prep school about elites that became involved in social change. And there are some elites that do that. Once again, it reminds me of how the Marxists talk about the working class, and the working class is going to conquer, and everybody has to pretend they're from the working class. And then I slowly find out that many of the Marxists I knew were from well-to-do backgrounds. But I don't think that's wrong. It's about values. If you want to change the power structure, it's because your values say you'd rather have more equality. It's not about "God said," or, "It's more efficient," or any of that kind of stuff said by religionists or some economists.

There are people who are upset by inequality, even if they're wealthy. And it's sometimes from the trauma of seeing poverty, or they've been treated unfairly because of their skin color, or their religion, or they're sensitive souls. There's liberals who we just can't understand in terms of their backgrounds.

One of the people I interviewed for my *Fat Cats* book was a liberal guy that was from an old line, Southern cotton plantation family. Informants told me to get in touch with him. He had helped the Mississippi Freedom Democrats in the late sixties and so on. He became more and more pro civil rights and more

liberal. After that book came out, he wrote me and said, "I saw your book. I'm now an Episcopalian minister, or priest, in New York. I went to divinity school and became a priest." And as you know, Episcopalians have become more and more liberal, at least a lot of them.

Anyhow, going back to the Who Rules web site, I'd take stuff out of the book and put it on the web site, if it was too detailed. So I decided to do that with wealth and income, tell them more about wealth and income. So I wrote this document. It was called "Wealth, Income and Power." It tries to explain how wealth and income are different. I want to use tables. And this next is classic for how Adam and I interact. He adds pie charts to complement the tables. And I said, "Adam, what are you putting those pie charts up there for?" He said, "Well, people can understand them and see them together." And I said, "Well, I want to have tables." He said, "Tables are right under. You didn't look far enough." Oh! So I looked and saw there were my tables.

In effect, his pie charts created a web site bestseller, so to speak. But it's all Adam, the way he's formatted it and so on. And pretty soon, all of sudden people are writing me, "Can we reprint your pie charts? Can we link to your site?" And so if you google "wealth and income," certainly we'll come up number one. Put "wealth and power," we come up number one. For "income," or "wealth" alone maybe we're in the top five or ten. So suddenly we have this amazing document that receives eight, ten, twelve times more hits than any other document up there. And in terms of reading and staying with the site, it's the only one most people read. In other words, they land on it because of some link, or because they put in "wealth" and they land on it. They don't really read another thing. They just go to that document. (laughs)

So he just showed me, for spring of 2013 for a couple of months, he showed me some of the figures. He tracks all that kind of stuff. He's really organized and statistically minded and quantitative, as well having a beautiful, artistic sense on a computer. There were 25,000, 30,000 hits for the wealth document, and there were 4000 for what's sort of a synopsis of the *Who Rules*. Six times as much, and they don't linger long when they go to a document such as the synopsis of *Who Rules*.

We have other great documents up there, though. We have the whole history of American labor. Social Security is a long document, and there are topics up there I only touch on briefly in the *Who Rules* book; it would have become too long. As far as the instructors and McGraw-Hill were concerned, some topics are too historical. Everything has to be about right now for these textbooks and these young people. But I said, "Okay, there must be some of them that want to read more."

So in the book there's these links. It says, "For more on this, see [www](#).—" And there's ten of those now. They can go there and see about the Bohemian Grove, or New Haven, or Santa Cruz, or the history of labor, or the history of Social Security. So I feel like I'm out there educating. It may be grandiose, but the whole world that can read English can read about—the book tries to get it right about what the United States looked like.

Adam is constantly updating, constantly doing that kind of thing on both the dreams and power web sites. So thanks to him, I've done a lot of empirical dream research on and off through the first decade of the 21st century. Some of that will eventually come together in a book that I'm going to start on very soon, where we have these amazing dream series, like from a fifteen-year old. She's

now in her twenties, but she had written down one hundred or more dreams when she was in her mid-teens. We're going to do a great study of that.

*The Scientific Study of Dreams: Neural Networks, Cognitive Development and Content Analysis*

I want to emphasize how much various people have made all this stuff possible for me. With Adam helping me in the late nineties and early 2000s, I gradually accumulated a dream team, I called them. My best student from one year wanted to come work for me, a woman named Sarah Dunn. Then I talked a woman who was working in a restaurant, who had been a great student in my class into joining us. I said, "Hey, do you want to work for me too?" And she came back to campus. And she and Sarah were great. This was Melissa Bowen. And then Heidi Block, who was the year younger than them, she joined us. And then a Dutch guy came to be a visitor for year. One male named Ryan Harvey worked for me a little bit. And we did this book called *The Scientific Study of Dreams: Neural Networks, Cognitive Development and Content Analysis*. And the American Psychological Association Press published it. And it's really, really, really rigorous. I dedicated that book to "the greatest dream team of them all," and named all of those six people.

Then I turned back to power again in the late 2000s. I went again to the archives. Actually, I had gone to the archives in the early 2000s too, and now it was time to go write all this up. And the interesting thing is that I found original sources, absolutely original sources, by doggedly keeping after things.

**Rabkin:** This is Sarah Rabkin. I'm with Bill Domhoff for our fifth and final interview. It is May 13th, 2013. And we are in Soquel, California.

**Domhoff:** Well, I was talking about *The Scientific Study of Dreams*, and following the publication of that book and the creation of our web sites that I had mentioned, I started to do research and work on a variety of documents. I've put them on the web site. I also updated the *Who Rules America* every four years. Then I wrote lots of little papers on dreams. And that was sort of getting me ready for a final push.

Around 2007, 2008, I was ready to go. I had about three projects I really wanted to finish, and write another *Who Rules*. So that was a full agenda, then, for those years.

So I was really ready, basically, for a full focus on power after doing a lot of research on dreams. I had collected a lot of interview material and archival findings that—this is in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. But I was also not completely satisfied with some of the archival findings for one of the projects. I did some more research, and around 2010, 2011, I struck it rich in the University of Chicago archives on one of these projects. So that carried me forward, too. But I'll get to that.

### *The Leftmost City: Power and Progressive Politics in Santa Cruz*

So the new power surge began with a book that I wanted my former grad student, Richard Gendron, to write, which we ended up calling *The Leftmost City*. And the story of the way that book came about was that, yeah, I'd always followed Santa Cruz politics since the seventies, and based on the theories that I

had come to like in urban sociology, I realized, increasingly, it was unique as a case study. But I wasn't ever really going to do anything much about it. I'd written an article or two about it in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, in fact.

But it was Rich's great idea for a dissertation that triggered the project. After the [Loma Prieta] earthquake happened in 1989, he came to me and he said, "How about I do my dissertation on the aftermath of this earthquake, in terms of the power structure?" Because we know, from various studies, that accidents and scandals really catch the power structure without being able to dress itself up and have PR and all. So it kind of exposes everything.

Here was an incredible accident and a situation in which, on the one hand, progressives controlled the government, the machinery of government, and there were a set of landowners that controlled the land on which rebuilding would take place. So they were going to have to work together if anything was going to happen. And if they were going to have a power struggle, it would be a matter of who outweighed whom. So it was a perfect situation, given that most places, if there was an earthquake or anything like that, the same people that owned the land would be in charge of the city and they'd do what they wanted. But here, they couldn't do what they wanted.

So Rich went out and observed. He interviewed. Just did a lot of background work. And then he set out to write in 1993, '94. But he and his family had to move back to Massachusetts, which was where they were from, because his wife, who was also a grad student here—and a friend of mine that I'll get to—she got a great job at Holy Cross. She had finished up in social psych, and their plan had been, as a reentry couple with a child, she would start first and then he would follow along, in terms of their staggering their academic work. So they

were both scheduled to finish about the same time, but not quite. And as I say, I did know his wife well. She had been my TA. We had co-taught a course called *Gender and Power*. And she used to joke that she was going to go in the first day and say, "I'm gender and he's power."

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** And her name was Gendron, although her maiden name was [Ruth] Thibodeau and that's the name she's published under. She's really a supremely fine social psychologist, as Rich is a really great sociologist.

So at any rate, he finally finished his dissertation about 1998. I kept after him to turn it into a book, but he, by then, was teaching at a small school, Assumption College in Worcester, Mass. So he was very, very busy with child-rearing duties and other duties, including teaching.

But finally in 2006, he wrote this really fine paper for a good journal called *City and Community*. They liked it so much that they asked for commentary on it by various people, including me. So that gave me a new basis from which to hassle him to write this book. He was reluctant in various ways. Then he asked me to join him. I think he did later say it was because of his wife, Ruth. Rich and I got along. We were good buddies. So she said, "Yeah, write it with Bill; write it with Bill." So I became the second author, which—we always liked to joke I'm the junior author on this project.

We just had an incredible time doing it together. I went out and interviewed a few more people. I went to see people from the seventies. I can't tell you what a great trip it was down memory lane, getting back in touch with various people. So, in that sense, it was very gratifying. It was also very

humbling, because we learned so much that I didn't know anything about, even though I'd lived through these events. You don't know what you're living through. I mean, all this stuff's going on; you're too busy to notice it. In a word, you're living your life.

It put me in touch with people like Stan Stevens, who knew everything about the nineteenth century [in Santa Cruz]. And it turned out the whole history of Santa Cruz was perfect, from our theoretical framework, because the basis for attracting people here was, first of all, industry. But the redwoods declined, so they had to bring in other things. And finally, they switched fully to tourism.

So we framed this book—it's a very academic book, I want to stress—and we framed it in terms of a critique of rival theories. And we were able to show, I think, to my great satisfaction, that the two dominant theories—one based on market theory and one based on Marxist theory—just don't capture a place like Santa Cruz, as they don't most cities. But here it was really glaring.

We got wonderful, wonderful reviews from the academic world. Couldn't have been better. Never did better in my life as far as reviews. We received a very friendly reception in Santa Cruz. As a way of saying thank you to people we created a web site, a web document on *Who Rules America?* It has pictures. It has links to local sites. You can download a whole dissertation by Mike Rotkin. Various other things.

**Rabkin:** This is *Who Rules America? Or Leftmost City?*

**Domhoff:** Yeah. This is *The Leftmost City*, but it's on the whorulesamerica.net web site.

**Rabkin:** I see, I see.

**Domhoff:** The particular document is called 'The Leftmost City,' just like the book is called. It was a way of saying thank you to everybody, to all those that had helped us. And it's out there. As I said, it gets a limited kind of attention. But it was still a very gratifying project to do—and just a lot of fun.

### **Current Research**

So then I turned right away to my final go at the Social Security Act and the National Labor Relations Act. And also, I had some new material on the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Which were the three biggies of the New Deal. As I said earlier, they had turned into a lifelong quest. I said, when I was talking about the late sixties, 1970s, I didn't know at the time it would be this lifelong quest. But here's the evidence: it's 2010 and here I am, deciding finally I can focus and write this material. I truly had new stuff that I was proud of. It was the equivalent of going out in the jungle and finding some new creature or some new fauna.

So I was really into it. I had gone to this Schenectady museum, which is mostly just a bunch of old lights and trinkets and technical stuff, but in their basement they had letters back and forth between three of the most powerful heads of companies in the New Deal. So that gave me new information. I also had the private newsletters of a key consulting firm at the time, which was actually financed out of John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s pocket. Nobody really had known enough about that organization. And now I was able to show how they were really deeply involved in creating the Social Security Act. So I had a week-

by-week account of what was going on, on both the Social Security Act and the National Labor Relations Act.

I had smoking guns. And I was pleased. I could do okay on the case history, but I was struggling. By then, I knew from working with my buddy Richie, and from working with my former student and friend Rich Gendron, that I could work well with other people. And I needed help. I needed more theory. I needed more history.

I turned to one of my other former sociology grad students, Michael Webber, Mike Webber, who by then was a very good friend. He came to our campus as a grad student from Wales with an MA in history, and a total love of American history. Even though he's a sociologist, he knows all about the Southern United States, and much, much about U.S. history, especially the thirties. His dissertation had turned into a fine book called *New Deal Fat Cats*, which was about campaign finance in '36. He did it systematically, methodically, empirically, testing various claims by various hotshot theorists that just weren't right at all about who was really financing the New Deal.

The only businesspeople that supported Democrats were Southerners, whatever industry they were in, or people of ethnicity who were excluded by the WASPs. That was who supported the Democratic Party, end story. It had nothing to do with their allegedly being in high finance, or being proto-Keynesians that could see that they needed consumer demand. Which he destroyed as a fantasy by pointing out, by showing, that all the people in retail that were Republican WASPs, they didn't give any money to Roosevelt. It just happened there were more ethnic people able to get their hand into the merchandising field. And so they were supporting Democrats for the same reasons they'd always supported

Democrats: because of this exclusionary WASP power structure, and the heavily, brutally antisemitic Republican Party at the time.

So once again, here I'm working with a good friend, a former student, and we complemented each other totally on our strengths. We ended up with this really, really fine book that Stanford University Press was glad to publish. We had not only a lay-down hand on these three key acts—the Agricultural Adjustment Act, Social Security Act, and the National Labor Relations Act—but we also were able then to really go after what other people had claimed about the New Deal. And the particularly bad, egregious fantasies were the Marxists' in terms of why they think this happened, how they happened. They had no clue. And we then take the key New Deal acts and we point that out.

Certainly, the other theorists had their weaknesses. None of them had ever been to any archives. Everybody was arguing strictly from what historians had written. Historians had written fine stuff, but it was focused on politics; it was focused on the president; it was focused on the maneuvering in the Congress. And they would start particularly with, "The president's program was sent to Congress. Here's how it was developed by the president."

But all those who proposed the key policies, we showed, came from the corporate network. They were all financed by a handful of big foundations, tightly controlled by big business people. And we were then able, I think, to be very successful and do something that was genuinely new. It's just gotten a few reviews so far, and I think they've been friendly.

But I think the lack of excitement over the book reflects the fact that the old fights are over as far as the sociologists are concerned. They're not going to revisit these issues. Future sociologists that look at the literature might decide

we're right. And the other thing is that historians usually don't read sociologists. Sociologists rely enormously on historians, but historians feel that—probably rightly—most of us can't do archival research. But this was like shooting fish in a barrel. And I did probe around enough to find enough archives that they hadn't found, that they may take a look.

So at that point I was ready for my big finale: a study of the United States from the late thirties, early forties through the eighties, in a very focused kind of way. I studied it through the eyes of a set of people I call moderate conservatives or corporate moderates. They had formed an organization in 1942, after thinking about it for a couple years, called The Committee for Economic Development. It's an organization in which experts and businesspeople get together to discuss what makes sense for any given issue. In other words, it's policy-oriented. It was serious. And they would write their statements and publish them, not only with their names on it, but also any disagreements. So if Joe X disagreed with one part of the statement, he could have a footnote saying so. And if other people agreed with what Joe X said, they could say, "His comment is joined by persons A, B, and C." So you can see the cliques of dissent. You can see what they argue about. It's really open.

Furthermore, the organization was pretty open, and they allowed me to see their archives from the sixties and seventies, where I was really focused. And several of their employees—by then retired, when I started this project, late eighties, early nineties—were willing to talk to me quite candidly. And their archives—people from the eighties and nineties didn't know that, but the archives were full of smoking guns about the sixties and the seventies. They didn't know. And furthermore, these people don't care. Business leaders don't

care what you write about the eighties or nineties. That's history. They're moving forward, and they're plowing forward, and they win. A book on a shelf is just an academic book in a university. It's not, in their eyes, any kind of a threat.

So I have this really good stuff, but on the key times in the seventies I didn't have perfect stuff. And then finally, poking around, I found what I needed. I struck gold in a University of Chicago archive. Because there was one person, one key guy in the organization, that had kept good files. And that's the point of this kind of research: not everybody keeps files. Not everybody gives them to universities. Not everybody keeps every piece of paper.

The great thing about this man's files was that the letters to him, and his letters to others were all there, and also copies of letters he wasn't directly involved in. In other words, he was copied on a lot of stuff because he was the chair of their Research and Policy Committee at the key moment. So that gave me further confirmation [for] something that I had in writing that fit with what I had learned in interviews. Because I had interviewed a fair number of these guys—about half a dozen to a dozen. I forget exactly what it is.

But, for instance, I had arranged to give a talk or two at Vanderbilt in order to fly down there to interview a particular guy who turned out to be not that much help—but just enough. And I had had the chance to interview the most liberal guy in the organization in 1995, who I also interviewed in the 1960s about his support of the Democrats. So I had his information.

And then I interviewed another guy that I really wanted to see. He was coming out to Palo Alto. I said, "Why did so-and-so become the chair of such-and-such a committee?" And he just said to me, he said, "Well, many people were starting to feel that the chair was too liberal." Just that kind of thing, fit in

with the documents, is really telling that there was a battle going on within this organization.

So basically then I could piece my interviews together with these archival things, and I had myself a really good case once again. It was the kind of thing I like to do, which is original research, whether it's interviews, or observations, or in my old age here, archives. Which, it really turns out to be fun. So the point of the story would be that nothing was going to stop me now, and I was rolling along.

And then lo and behold, something stopped me. Because I was still looking at the psychology journals, and there was all this new work going on in what they called imaging. It's brain imaging stuff with a couple of different methods. And what these people were finding was that there was a particular network in the brain that becomes very active when our mind is just wandering, when we're not doing a task of monitoring incoming stimuli, or if we're not thinking through some serious analytical problem, we're just, "resting," we fall into what's called the default mode. And there's a network for that, and it's called the Default Mode Network. And studies had just been done showing that indeed people do mind wander and they do daydream when the brain's in that state. Better studies have been done that really match it up and clinched the case.

But what I knew that they didn't know was that this was also the REM sleep network. This is the area that reactivates during REM. And so they had really hit on the neural networks for dreams that I had written about, first in 2000 in a paper and then in my *Scientific Study of Dreams* book. I knew it was just a matter of time until somebody figured that out, because there's other dream

researchers out there. And in the process of reading about daydreaming they would have bumped into dreaming.

So I just plain dropped everything, boom. Just let it sit there, and I began to really read and write on this issue, talked to people, wrote a draft, sent it to four or five of the default mode network researchers. And one or two of them gave me responses and said I was on the right track and gave me some advice and feedback and help. So that paper was then published in late 2011 in a journal called *Consciousness and Cognition*, which is a pretty decent journal, as those things go for a dream researcher.

Since then, there have been a couple different studies that have supported my claims. One of them was reported at the dream meetings a year ago in the summer. And it was reported in the context—I had just given a talk on this very thing I'm saying, that the default network is the basis for dreaming, just like it's the basis for dream-reading. Just slightly different—it's a subsystem. Some things are a little still inactive, obviously. But the point is, it's a huge overlap. And so somebody in the audience—which I couldn't hear personally with my bad hearing—what she said was, it turned out, that she had really done work that had replicated these claims.

So to my research assistant, who was giving half of our talk—I said, "Okay, what'd she say?" And he turned to me. He had a smile on his face. He said, "She said she's just replicated your work." He was smiling, so I thought, "He's probably kidding me." So I said, "She said she replicated it?" He said, "Yeah." And everybody's hearing this dialogue. I looked out there and I said, "Well, where are you doing your research? What country?" And she was a little

taken aback, a very stern, serious—classical prototypical Frenchwoman researcher. So she says, “France.” And I said, “Viva la France!”

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Domhoff:** I was so excited and she was so flustered.

And then more recently, four Canadians have done a study where they’ve matched, compared what’s called a meta-analysis. You take all the results of various studies to find the degree of overlap of their neural network findings. This paper shows also that the default network is the same as the REM network. And they were working along on this paper. At a certain point they wrote me. I didn’t know about it. They said, “Hey, would you join us? We need somebody that can tie this literature together.” So lo and behold, I’m now a coauthor on a paper that has all this fancy stuff in it that appeared in 2013 in a journal on frontiers of neurology, or frontiers of neuroimaging, or something like that.

So it was really a very gratifying thing to be able to be one of the first to say, “Look, that’s where it is.” I think it’s going to work. I think it’s really going to—it’s going to hold up, and it’s going to be useful.

**Rabkin:** Are there some interesting implications of this discovery that those two networks are the same?

**Domhoff:** Yeah, I think there are. It puts daydreaming on a continuum. It really suggests that there’re just the slightest changes that probably happen that—just like falling in the rabbit hole, literally all of a sudden there’s a quick switch. Something else drops out—you know, ‘something else’ being basically some area that’s got to do with vigilance and self-control. Where am I? I’m right here. I’m in

this kitchen. And then if I nod off, all of a sudden I'm running down the street and I see a couple of friends. And then you say, "Bill, Bill, you're drifting." And I'll go, "Oh yeah." But I've had this little scenario. I think it happens that quick. And I believe that, because we know that's true also in falling asleep. We know it's true in the morning, when you drift in and out of sleep, that you're in those light stages. You can very quickly be back in a dream.

And furthermore, there was work done that I knew that they didn't know about from the mid-seventies. A friend of mine had done this research where he'd taken people into the sleep lab during the day, hooked them up just like they were going to go to bed. Had all the leads on, all the electrodes pasted on. And they were awake. He knew that, because he had the EEG on. And then he would periodically say, "Hey, what's going through your mind?" And he even used the phrase 'mind-wandering.'

And he had found that 15 percent, 20 percent of these probes during an hour where you're allowed to be by yourself, but awake, and just let your mind drift, were dreamlike. And then he did two repeat studies with similar results. So neuroimaging researchers didn't know about that. And I had put that in my 2011 article.

So it shows that this overlap is greater than we thought. And that means we really can then study this default mode network, and just see, in terms of a kind of subtraction thing now, what's not there during dreaming? I think the best time to study that would be late in the early morning. You've awakened. You've gone back to bed. Now we put you in the MRI and you drift off. And then we see what's there and what's not there. And we say, "Hey, what was going on?" "Oh, well, I was just having a great dream. It was so vivid." Okay. Then we'd look at

the pictures in terms of what was there; what was missing; what was not active that was active just five minutes before or two minutes before?

The other way it has an implication is we've never been able to figure out whether dreams have any adaptive function. So now the question, the way I'd phrase it, is: To the degree that the default network has an adaptive function—that is, that mind-wandering is maybe useful for new connections and creativity—to that degree, do dreams also have a function that is sort of residual? That dreaming is a continuation in a different form of the fact that mind-wandering is adaptive.

Now, it's still very controversial whether mind-wandering is adaptive. Studies are just starting on that. And some researchers point out that mind-wandering leads to all sorts of accidents. You miss things. You get lost. On the other hand, mind-wandering sometimes leads to new connections: "Oh, right here! Of course, I should mix that with that," or "Yeah, Joe's the guy to do that project." So mind-wandering—and this is what it'll come down [to]—do the plusses outweigh the minuses? It might be that mind-wandering does have some adaptive functions for us in terms of creativity. But that network is also there, at least to some extent, in other primates. So it'll be a whole long process of sorting it out. But it gives a whole new purchase on the question of adaptation, whether dreams were in any way selected for.

I think there's at least a fair chance that the default mode network was selected for—in terms of why you're not online all the time, so to speak—why you're not cogitating or taking in sensory information and making sense of it. On the one hand, you're analyzing incoming stuff and then you're cogitating stuff. Maybe when you're not doing either of those, it's not just a matter of resting.

Maybe it's the fact that a particular network comes to the fore, is an indication of some usefulness. And that was new to me, and interesting. Because, without going through all the arguments, it's just not there as far as any good evidence for any other claims about the adaptive value of dreams. Other claims are not supported by research. And research that was just done on REM sleep—all of that stuff that was done in the lab—just doesn't fit in any of those past theories.

So anyway, it was fun. And it's something I'm going to obviously go back to pretty quick somewhere in the next few months.

But anyway, after I finished that paper, I very quickly went back to my project on the Committee for Economic Development, and I did finish my book called *The Myth of Liberal Ascendancy: Corporate Dominance from the Great Depression to the Great Recession*, in which I show, to my surprise—when I started out I didn't think this—that actually from the time the Republicans won back a lot of seats in Congress in '38, particularly in the House, which led to a conservative coalition in Congress, liberals and labor have not won a single important legislative victory. Not a single one.

I was stunned by that. When you look at the Employment Act of '46, the Housing Act of '49, so on. Medicare was certainly a victory for the liberal-labor alliance. It's an important exception. But it was jimmed in such fierce ways that labor was immediately distraught. They knew it would be inflationary. They knew it would lead to these huge private hospitals. And so, even that was turned to the advantage of the conservatives. And all along the way, every battle over labor legislation was lost. And the corporations basically destroyed the unions, which made it possible to do everything else they've done. Because the Democrats don't have a base from which to fight back.

The civil rights movement was not an achievement of the liberal-labor alliance; it was the achievement of African Americans with the help of a few whites, most of whom defined themselves as leftist, and most of whom were told to “Go slow, and don’t do that,” by liberals and by labor. Parts of labor viciously opposed the civil rights movement, particularly those in the building trades, those in the AFL: skilled tradesmen, white Protestants, who always had a strong tendency to vote Republican, just started voting Republican even more.

And that’s what really then destroyed the liberal labor alliance, which was an irony— The liberal-labor alliance was built on a bargain. The Southerners and the Northern liberal-labor alliance could get along by excluding blacks. Both agreed, in effect, to exclude blacks, overtly so in the South. But in the North, there was no great rush to register blacks as voters, because if they were to become a majority in a city, as they did, the whites knew that they would be replaced in the government, in Congress, by blacks—and as mayor and so on. Some white Democrats really were fighting it. Still, ultimately they lost out. But it distorted everything.

And enough whites went to vote for Republicans to change things. So LBJ won 60 percent of the vote in 1964. And [Hubert] Humphrey won just a little more than 40 percent in 1968. And Clinton, he won with like 42 percent of the total vote. So when you look at it, white people have, they’ve basically declined in their Democratic voting. One-third of them, roughly, have deserted the Democratic Party, and have, with a few exceptions ever since, such as when a born-again Christian from Georgia runs, and they think he’s okay, he’s a good old boy. Although he would not agree to give a tax deduction to these segregation academies in the South where they wanted an exemption on

religious grounds for the new segregationist academies of the 1970s. And that and other factors—and all the Southern states except Georgia turned against him in 1980, when he lost. So it was quite a switch by those states between '76 and '80.

So I've written about that. I've shown how that happened. It was totally contrary to the new mainstream wisdom that the corporations were tired of being pushed around, like the superman on the beach and people keep kicking sand on him, and finally he gets up and beats them up. "Finally," these other stories say, "the corporations decided to get organized and fight back."

Well, in fact they had been organized the whole time. They had some small differences within their general shared class perspective. One group of conservatives was much more conservative. There were ultra conservatives and moderate conservatives. They disagreed over Social Security; over how to deal with insurgencies from civil rights—a few other things like that.

And basically what the ultra conservatives always wanted to do is what they're doing now: they want to blame always the poor people. They want to roust them out. They want to incarcerate more, which of course they've done in enormous numbers with people of color since the 1980s. It's a very different kind of strategy. One is much more open, and moderate, and assimilatory, and allows some social benefits.

But where they totally agree is, there will not be any power rivals. And so they therefore work together to undercut unions. They also work together to only make it possible to control inflation through high interest rates. Whereas there's other ways to control inflation, including with government guidelines. But that would give too much power to government.

So my book shows this in detail on how these corporate moderates gradually said, “Hey, we’ve seen enough. We don’t want to go any further. It’s the early seventies. Blacks are not rioting anymore. The Vietnam antiwar movement is over. The feminists are going to school. The environmentalists—we’re working with them. We can work with them, because it’s not the end of world, this environment stuff. A few environmental issues might be a real hassle, but most of them are really easily accommodated by the system.”

So my book tells that story. And it has a final chapter called ‘The Road to the Great Recession,’ telling how, once moderate conservatives had become hard-liners—still not quite the same as the ultra conservatives, but pretty hard liners on more things—once that happened, all this deregulation started to happen. Once deregulation started to happen, then of course all of the old 1920s scams in the stock market and other financial misdealings came back. It’s almost like rerun city. So I discuss the efforts towards deregulation.

In this particular book, there’s no criticism of any other theories as big theories. It never even mentions Marxists. It doesn’t mention the other rival school of thought by name. It does have a particular set of people it critiques, but it’s over their information. Their account is descriptively wrong on when various things happened, and on the importance of a group called the Business Roundtable, which everybody “Oohs” and “Aahs” about.

The Business Roundtable began as an attempt to deal with organized labor. That was their issue. But the people I’m critiquing think that Business Roundtable arose because these corporate moderates were upset by regulation by environmentalists. And again, they have not read the primary sources.

So it definitely still remains a critical kind of a book, in the sense of saying, “Here’re some people that are wrong.” I call them ‘wistful romantics,’ and sometimes ‘wishful revisionists.’ Because they want to have the—essentially—glory days, the glory days of when the liberals ruled. Looking back and going through the files, it didn’t look that way. Certainly I believed that in the sixties, when there’s all the excitement of antiwar, and new environmentalists, and feminists rising. And, of course, the civil rights movement is the engine to all that. So you think, Wow, things are changing. LBJ won. The right has been scattered, supposedly.

But from the time Nixon came into office, it went the other way. Even though—see, what all the revisionists say is, “Well, Nixon still spent a lot of money.” Yeah, but it was all on middle-class programs that went into the South and conservative states. And they really improved Social Security, but they wanted to hold onto the elderly vote. And Social Security is no threat to their power. So until 1980 they had remained pretty strong for improving Social Security, and supported the indexing of it, which is one of the greatest things in the world for the elderly population of America, even though most of them are not still nearly as well off as ultraconservatives claim. So ultraconservatives are now trying to undercut the indexing by cooking up new ways to adjust for inflation, which, of course, will benefit them.

Now, I was going to take a break after I finished that book, because I finished it in the summer of 2012, in the middle of July. And I was going to take a little break, and then I was going to start in on a revision of *Who Rules America?* that would come out in 2013. And in the past revisions I’d had to give it to them by the middle of January. So on their new schedule, these new people—because

now it's just horrible, it's just a corporate assembly line. They wanted it, "Oh, we thought were going to get parts of it in the summer. We want some of it by November," and so on. Deadlines I finally met. But working with McGraw-Hill a horrible experience. So I said, "Look, this book is not like I finished the chapter on how the eye works, and then I can put it aside and go on. This book's a whole. I move stuff back and forth."

But I went back to work hammer and tong, and I had the benefit of a new database—a database with all the names of people, and corporations, foundations, think tanks, discussion groups, networks, and how they were connected. So I had all their names and their organizations. And I was able to then have a much better network of the power structure than we'd ever had before, thanks to a sociologist I had gotten to know at the University of North Dakota named Clifford Staples. So Cliff became my running buddy on this one. He had some great new findings, which he and I then presented at the sociology meetings. I also put a document on the whorules.net web site with his findings in it.

It's kind of interesting because Cliff has just turned sixty and he was doing all this work. But he's decided, "No, I don't want to do it anymore." He's back to reading general theory. But he had sort of this late, great, last hooray and hurrah, where he assembled this incredible database that I had my own research assistants streamline, take out any little bugs in it, names that don't quite match, first names that are off, or misspellings. He got all of it, and created a database he gave to other people to do all of these fancy kinds of studies. So I was able to make the *Who Rules America?* genuinely different on that score and several others

that I won't go into, so that it was sort of a major, major revision—the most major revision from when I'd first written the third edition in 1998.

So it ended up, once again, this very gratifying feeling of closure. And in the face of the way things have gone I gave it a new subtitle, which was fun. It's called *The Triumph of the Corporate Rich*. I tried it out on all my various friends. The ones that want to keep hope alive and not spread despair to the masses and this kind of talk—you know, that more leftist uplift talk—they said, "Oh, don't do that. It's too despairing." And the others said, "It's good. Got to tell it like it is. If this is the thesis, that's what it should be. People should know that these people have triumphed. Let's quit kidding ourselves." It was interesting on the feedback. But the people that I trusted the most and thought about it in terms of the impact of the book favored the new subtitle. I went with *The Triumph of the Corporate Rich*. It may raise some hackles, but maybe that's good for keeping the book in the mix and in the discussion.

So as I'm doing this oral history, I have these two books that are about to come out. *Who Rules America* is due May 24th, 2013. And *The Myth of Liberal Ascendancy* has an official publication date of July 1st, 2013. So I've got them both out there. I feel this enormous sense of closure. I know I'm going to leave this power research behind. I'm not going to do any new power research, I don't think ever, but certainly not for several years. You just don't know, when you're older, when you're going to lose interest, or shut down, or not be able to do it. So at best I'll do reactive essays and reviews on power or, maybe rewrite a few things I'd like most to be remembered for, write that into something.

But I'm also at the point where I have all of these new data on dreams. There are case studies I did and didn't publish on purpose. And also research

that was done for me by research assistants over the past ten years, where I've had different research assistants that know how to use our coding system, how to quantify dreams reports.

So I have all of these little things sitting there, waiting for me. And I'm going to work on them for a book that will be called *The Neurocognitive Theory of Dreams*. With this one, though, I feel no pressure. If I finish it, fine. If not, fine. It'll be bits and pieces. But it'll encompass my last ten years of research since *The Scientific Study of Dreams*, which had a great run and was mostly methodological. So that work on dreams, plus occasionally teaching for psych and sociology, is where I stand at this particular point.

And so for me, it's a perfect time to have done this oral history, because I've had this enormous sense of closure, this enormous sense of satisfaction about some of the things I've been able to find in new archives, or with this statement about the default network being also the neural network for dreams. It has a feeling of—yeah, I can leave this. It's taken a lot of pressure off my mind, because I don't know whether it comes out of my training or just my general past, or what the university inculcates in you, but it was literally like a sin to leave data unpublished. That was especially so for the sociological material. With the dream data, I have it in different places. It's in little papers. And they're on my web site. A couple of them aren't that big a deal. So if I don't write the *Neurocognitive Theory of Dreams*, that's okay. Because it's done, and the basic points are out there. My books have had their chance. And I've had my say. Now we'll see what effect it might have.

So that's my story, as of May 13th, 2013. (laughs)

**Rabkin:** Thank you so much, Bill.

**About the Interviewer**

Sarah Rabkin taught in UC Santa Cruz writing program and environmental studies department for over twenty-five years. She holds a BA in biology from Harvard University and a graduate certificate in Science Communication from UCSC. Her book of essays, *What I Learned at Bug Camp*, was published in 2011.