GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

SOUTH VILLAGE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral History Interview

TOM BERNARDIN

By Liza Zapol

New York, NY

March 23, 2015

Oral History Interview with Tom Bernardin, March, 23, 2015

Narrator(s)	Tom Bernardin
Birthdate	9/25/1948
Birthplace	Lawrence, MA
Narrator Age	66
Interviewer	Liza Zapol
Place of Interview	Tom Bernardin's home on 7th Ave and 14th St
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Tom Bernardin in his apartment, March 12, 2015. Photograph by Liza Zapol.

Quotes from Oral History Interview with Tom Bernardin

"...Then at the same time I founded a not-for-profit organization: Save America's Clocks. That's clocks.org. I think I incorporated in 1997, and put together grant kits, and not knowing what I was doing, all right? Margot Gayle was my Vice President, and also Marvin Schneider is my Vice President now. He's the official New York City Clock Master, the most charming guy you'd ever meet. It's his job—and his cohort, Forrest [Merkowitz]—to go and maintain all the city-owned clocks, to wind them. All of a sudden I'm learning all about public clocks. This is courtesy of Margot with her inspiration with the Jefferson Market clock, the library clock. What I wanted to do was find one historic object that appears throughout the country, that were once the pride of these communities, and get them working, because it drives me nuts to drive around—Or you're in a train or something or other, you're looking at an old factory, and there's this great big clock up there that's just frozen in time. You don't know what's behind it, whether it's a beautiful Howard or Seth Thomas mechanism rotting away. I thought, this is a perfect thing to galvanize a community, and hopefully point them in the direction of historic preservation." (Bernardin p.10)

"Fourteenth Street here, between Sixth Avenue and Eighth Avenue, was polka dotted with all of these small, ethnic restaurants—Spanish, Italian, Greek, Chinese—dirt cheap. Every year they would close off Sixth Avenue to Eighth Avenue for three nights in June, and the restaurants would put tables out in the street and serve food. It was a real street fair. It was the Real McCoy, as opposed to the nonsense that goes on today that we all have to live with. Not piped-in music, no. Disco boot[leg] selling, you know, pounding music and all of that. That's just dissipated…

The Village was terrific. There was always stuff to look at, the antique stores. Pierre Deux there on Bleecker Street, on West 4th Street. Now it's all horrible. I try to avoid going west of Seventh Avenue. I very much resent the money and the pretension. All of those high-end stores. I'm not even going to give them the grace of saying their names. Just ruined it, just absolutely ruined it.

That's happening everywhere, of course."
(Bernardin p. 14)

"Julius'—I have no idea what it was named back then—would have been one of those pubs, a White Horse Tavern. That's still there, of course, on Hudson. It gradually segued into becoming a gay bar. The Village of course is left-minded people, more all-embracing people, more nonconformist, anarchist, socialist, lefties, rabble-rousers, all of those great things…Being more open-minded and liberal, it gradually became a hangout for gay men. Hopefully always will be. That's another one of my battles. You would have people like Edward Albee and just everybody, everybody passing through there at some point."
(Bernardin pp. 15-16)

"Stonewall, of course, is famous—1969. June, 1969. Judy Garland is lying in state at Campbell's Funeral Home on Madison Avenue, causing great disruption to the gay community…But there's something that happened three years and three months before that, at Julius', which I consider to be one of the opening salvos in the gay liberation movement.

There was an ordinance in the state liquor authority that it was illegal to serve homosexuals a cocktail, believe it or not. There was a group, the Mattachine Society. Harry Hay and a group of kids from California in the early '50s start this group. Very secretive. You're not in the public. You're in somebody's house, OK? They start something called the Mattachine Society…The Mattachines were a theatrical troupe in medieval France, in my understanding. They're the court jesters. They could tell the truth to the king. They could make fun of his affairs, all of this kind of stuff, without getting their head chopped off. They are the truth tellers…They founded this group, the Mattachine Society, and then chapters open up in Washington, DC, in New York City, and whatnot…These are guys in their twenties—young kids. I would never have been able to do that. I was just too frightened by the whole thing so I salute these folks. They decide they want to challenge the state liquor authority regulation. They staged what's known as the sip-in, the famous Sip-In of April 1966, three years and two months before Stonewall…Julius' was not sympathetic, all right? The Stonewall kids would have been, say, the 'bridge and tunnel' crowd—kids from Jersey, kids from Brooklyn, the Bronx, whereas Julius' was very preppy. You're talking about college-educated businessmen in their blue blazers and ties and penny loafers and all of that kind of stuff. They were not particularly sympathetic to the group of these more flamboyant kids causing all of the trouble. They didn't want their apple cart pushed over, to cause too much attention. You know probably a lot of them [were] living very closeted lives, and paying for it, and the rest is basically history."
(Bernardin pp. 16-17)

"The Village, at that time, with this newfound liberation, this happens I think in any movement. All of a sudden we're communicating with each other. We're getting politically active. We're starting to get some acceptance. And sex. Just sex. That had to implode on itself. It just had to because it was just wild. It was just crazy! The gay bars, and the trucks over on Jane Street, and the Mine Shaft, and the Anvil—and, oh god, the Dugout and the bath houses. And it was fabulous! It was terrific… I loved it. I found it to be all very good-natured, a heck of a lot of fun—and ultimately very dangerous. It had to stop.

I was very fortunate that I did not contract HIV. There was a time here that you would have thought a concentration camp had opened up, that—it was just horrible. It was horrible. I mean how many friends did you lose? Forty? My college friends, the guys that I moved to New York to be with, I lost most of them. Terrible, terrible."
(Bernardin pp. 18-19)

Summary of Oral History Interview with Tom Bernardin

Tom Bernardin was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1948 to Mary and Fernand Bernardin. Tom recalls Lawrence during his childhood as an "Immigrant City" and was very grateful for the early exposure to different ethnicities and cultures that it provided him as a child. His family later moved to Andover, Massachusetts, which Tom enjoyed less, describing it as "like going from a black and white movie to a Technicolor movie." He found Andover to be wealthier, "very 'white bread,'" and a "very pretty community." While he does not dislike Andover, he was glad he grew up in Lawrence.

Tom attended Holy Cross College in Worchester, Massachusetts, graduating in 1970. With his draft number coming due for service in the Vietnam War, Tom sought conscientious objector status, which he earned with the support of Catholic priests and the spiritual guidance of Joan Baez. While Tom was waiting for his status to be officially approved, he worked at an English language school in Lawrence. Tom admits that "I didn't know what I was doing, but it was great fun." During this summer after graduation Tom also spent nine weeks in London, where he became a frequent patron of the theatre. After returning home, Tom decided that he would move to New York, and following approval from the draft board of his conscientious objector application, he did so.

Bernardin first stayed with a sister in New Jersey, where he lived while looking for work and a place of his own. One of the first places that Tom decided to see when he got to New York was Fifth Avenue, and the department stores located there. He eventually secured a job at the B. Altman's Department Store, working as a candy salesman. Tom augmented this job with more English language teaching, this time in Times Square. This job as an English teacher working for the City of New York offered Tom the opportunity to have his own apartment, and he lived on East 52nd Street. While living in this apartment, Tom began his work and volunteerism in Village preservation and activism, inspired by Margot Gayle, "one of the most charming, smart, and gracious people" he recalled meeting. Her organization, the Friends of Cast Iron, inspired in Tom decades of work in historical preservation and restoration. Margot also connected Tom with another job that he views as a major turning point in his life, which was working as a ranger at Ellis Island for the Parks Department for three years. This time spent at Ellis Island helped create one of Tom's publications, *The Ellis Island Immigrant Cookbook*, which he still sells.

Under Margot's influence, Tom became a champion of clocks and lampposts, earning himself the nickname "Lamppost Tom." In 2001, Tom founded Save America's Clocks, and Clocks.org. Unfortunately, this non-profit was launched the day before the terrorist attacks on 9/11 and was also shadowed by later legal troubles, although it still functions as a national preservation society for large American clocks and clock mechanisms. Tom's nickname as Lamppost Tom was earned in his work to preserve the Bishop's Crook-style cast iron lampposts, most of which are found in the West Village. He personally fundraised for, and maintains, a lamppost in front of Julius' (bar) that is dedicated to the memory of "our departed friends." Tom's work with both endeavors has recently led him into conflict with the Landmarks Preservation Commission, which he views as no longer being devoted to historic preservation but instead being directed towards acquiescing to developers' wishes. He sees this as an uphill battle against ever-increasing market values of real estate, which he sees as singularly

responsible for the changes in Village culture, stating: “I very much resent the money and the pretension. Now it’s all horrible.”

Mr. Bernardin views these changes as being driven by shifts in demographics in the neighborhood over the last forty years, as the ethnic neighborhoods and working class persona that he related to Lawrence, Massachusetts were replaced. He also believes New York University is culpable for these changes and for the dramatic increase in real estate value. One place that he refuses to lose to the changing demographics is Julius’. Julius’ holds a very special place for Tom, as it was one of the first places where gay men could be free to express themselves and congregate in the permissive, bohemian atmosphere of the Village. He recalls the efforts of the Mattachine Society, and the Sip-in of 1966, where the Mattachine members publicly challenged the New York laws against serving alcohol to homosexuals. He believes that this a triumph of human rights before the more publicly-known and celebrated Stonewall Uprising.

Tom also reflects on his own personal sexuality and how the Village fostered it when he was a young man. He recalls the sexually charged times of the early 1970s as “just wild…a heck of a lot of fun, and ultimately very dangerous.” While he celebrates the newfound sexual and emotional freedom that the time granted to himself and other homosexuals in the Village, he also mourns the dozens of friends he lost to AIDS. Tom also resents that St. Vincent’s Hospital (as the first hospital to publicly accept people suffering from AIDS) is being converted into luxury condominiums, feeling that it is an insult to those who died there.

Mr. Bernardin ends his interview by discussing the changing nature of the Village, and how, while it has always been in a state of change, never before has the change disrupted the everyday life as much as recent gentrification has. He believes that the Village should be a place for those who have had to struggle in their lives, and he identifies personally with minorities as a homosexual and a native of working-class Lawrence. Tom believes that the recent influx of wealth in the Village has greatly decreased the diversity, leaving only high-end retail businesses that close shortly after they open and large national chains such as Duane Reed and Rite Aid. Tom is concerned that what was once a safe space for homosexuals to be around others like themselves is rapidly becoming a commercialized spectacle for white, heterosexual, upper-class New Yorkers to come and “look at all the gays” in their pursuit for yet another dive bar.

Tom Bernardin ends his interview by discussing the building he lives in, also noticing how the diversity has decreased in it over the decades that he has lived there. He remarks that he would not encourage young people to move to New York anymore and that this “breaks his heart.” He tempers this by saying that he believes young people should seek out others who are struggling, and form community with them, emphasizing that this is much more important than “handbags that are my month’s rent.” He continues to work in his efforts in historic preservation and still gives tours of Ellis Island, where he tries to inspire a love for immigrants and for their tradition of change and diversity.

General Interview Notes:

This is a transcription of an Oral history that was conducted by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. GVSHP began the South Village Oral History Project in 2013. The GVSHP South Village Oral History Project includes a collection of interviews with individuals involved in local businesses, culture, and preservation, to gather stories, observations, and insights concerning the changing South Village. These interviews elucidate the personal resonances of the neighborhood within the biographies of key individuals, and illustrate the evolving neighborhood.

Oral history is a method of collecting memories and histories through recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of adding to the historical record.

The recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. Oral history is not intended to present the absolute or complete narrative of events. Oral history is a spoken account by the interviewee in response to questioning. Whenever possible, we encourage readers to listen to the audio recordings to get a greater sense of this meaningful exchange.

Oral History Interview Transcript

Zapol: OK, so it is March 23rd, 2015, and this is Liza Zapol for the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. This is the Greenwich Village Oral History Project, and I'm here on, let's see, is this 56 Seventh—

Bernardin: 56 Seventh Avenue—

Zapol: Great.

Bernardin: —that's right, right at 14th Street.

Zapol: Perfect. And if I can ask you to introduce yourself, please.

Bernardin: My name is Tom Bernardin, and I have been a New York City resident for forty-four years and been here in the Village, in this building, for forty years. Moved in, I think, in 1975. Very fortunate—rent stabilized, everybody! So that makes all the difference in the world.

Zapol: Wow.

Bernardin: Yeah, very, very delighted to be in this Rosario Candela building. Twenty stories. It's about eighty years old, pre-war, and a beautifully appointed building. I'm blessed, very blessed.

Zapol: So, if we can start at the beginning. If you can tell me where and when you were born, and a little bit about your early childhood, that would be great.

Bernardin: OK. I was very fortunate to have been born in Lawrence, Massachusetts. That is in the North Shore of Boston, and it's known as 'Immigrant City.' The site of the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912, which is a very, very important chapter in labor history. This was not discussed when I was a child. It wasn't until I came to New York that I really learned about Lawrence's rich history. I was very fortunate in the respect that the kids that I was growing up with—very working class—and they were Greeks and Italians and Lebanese and Syrians and Armenians and Italian Sicilians. First of all, it was a lot of good food. But also, just being exposed to a different culture—a lot of cultures. It was something you didn't even think about. We subsequently moved to Andover, Massachusetts, which is a bedroom community from Boston, right beside Lawrence.

It was like going from a black and white movie to a Technicolor movie, where Lawrence was very working class, red brick factories, tenements, that kind of stuff. Andover is just very white bread, and much wealthier. Very pretty community, Philips Academy and all of that kind of stuff. But I'm glad I didn't grow up there. I'm glad I grew up in Lawrence.

And I subsequently wound up going to Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass[achusetts]. I got out in 1970, and that was the height of the Vietnam era. I was in line to be drafted, and I certainly wasn't going to partake in any of that. I filed for conscientious objector status, which was not an easy thing to do, and got all of the letters of support from various priests and all of this kind of stuff, you know. Joan Baez was sort of my guiding light with her wonderful music and her concerns and stuff like that.

My draft board wanted me to stick around Lawrence, stick around Andover, in case I had to go before them to present my case, so I wound up teaching English as a second language to fourth, fifth, and sixth graders, in downtown Lawrence. Kids, god, from Turkey, and Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic and India. It was crazy. Of course, I didn't know what I was doing, but it was great fun. And then, I finally went to my draft board in, I guess, September of 1971, and I said, "Listen, I want to get to New York City." They said, "Call us when you get there, give us your phone number and your address, and let's see what happens with this conscientious objector situation."

So I had spent nine weeks in London. The time of Attica, I remember that was going on. [I] went to the theater once or twice a day. I think I saw forty-five shows: the Old Vic, the Young Vic, Laurence Olivier and Vanessa Redgrave, you name it. That was the first time I had ever been exposed to a big city.

I came back to Andover around Thanksgiving. I remember one morning, I got up and I packed my bags, and I went to the kitchen. I asked my mother to take me to the bus station, and she said, "Where are you going?" I said, "New York." **[00:05:03]**

It wasn't until twenty-five years later I thought, what a lonely ride home that must have been for my mother. I'm the youngest of five, and I was the last to leave. She was from New York, all right. She's Irish German from Elmhurst. Born in 1908, married at Our Lady Chapel in back of the main altar at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. She marries this French Canadian guy, Fernand Bernardin. Very nice people, very nice man. He was a lawyer, serving his French Canadian immigrant community in Lawrence. All of a sudden she winds up in Lawrence, Mass

in 1938, and it's like, "Fern, where is everybody?" My father would reply, "Mary, it's nine o'clock at night. They're all home!" Well, this was [laughs] quite a shock to my mother. She shucked out five kids right away and was just a most wonderful person ever. I, again, am very blessed that my mother was—My father was very strict, as was my mother, but my mother was very sensitive to social concerns, volunteering at food pantries or soup kitchens and making lasagna and whatever to bring to serve the people in need of that kind of stuff. I like to think that any outreach that I do in that direction was courtesy of what my mother exposed me to.

I came to New York. My sister was living in New Jersey. I stayed with her. I remember this is right before Thanksgiving. I started to wander to Fifth Avenue, right at Bonwit Teller's and made my way all the way down to the department stores: Saks Fifth Avenue, Lord & Taylor's. Finally I hit 34th Street, the beloved B. Altman department store. I applied for a job there, and I was selling candies and delicacies on the first floor of the Madison Avenue side. Gee, all you have to do if you run into an old time New Yorker, mention B. Altman's. They just moan because it was such a marvelous, marvelous store with those three magnificent chandeliers. There I was in New York! One of my first customers was Leontyne Price. Well, I had just seen her in London in *Aida*, my first opera. Two weeks later, I'm waiting on her at B. Altman's. I'm this skinny, scruffy, you know, kid, with corn sticking out of my ears. I look up, and I said, "Oh, Ms. Price, I just saw you in London." Well, her jaw hit the floor. She just couldn't believe that this kid selling jams and candy is all of a sudden one of her fans. That was pretty terrific.

With my teaching experience, my first other job was teaching English as a second language to adults, thirty—right at Times Square—four dollars an hour, OK? I'd teach three hours in the morning, three hours at night, and bicycle back and forth to my first apartment at 65th Street and First Avenue in a landmark building—that complex that's being threatened, right at the zipper, right on the fourth floor at 42nd Street. So I'm teaching, looking over the kids' heads, and I've got that red zipper running around the Times building. I said to myself, "I have died and gone to heaven. It just doesn't get better than this."

I subsequently wound up at a fourth-floor walk-up, East 52nd Street. [Greta] Garbo's living at the end of the block, all right, over by the river. I see her once. I'm there for two years, fourth-floor walk-up in a brownstone. The building's gone, of course, two hundred dollars a month. I got the Seagram's Building up the street, OK, right at Park Avenue. At night, I would

just go and walk and sit in front of the Seagram's Building, and gee, it was great. I swear for about two years I was high, just to be in New York. It was a great time in the city and a great time to be young, and it was affordable. **[00:09:43]**

I did get a real job. My only real job from [19]72 to [19]76 was, again, teaching English as a second language in a city manpower program. In '76, the city went bankrupt. Almost did. That's the headline you know, "Ford to New York: Drop dead!" President Ford is not going to bail out New York. They slashed all of those programs; I lost my job. June, 1976. I was getting $12,500, and that was good pay. My friend Kathy said to me, "Tom, remember this, you will never have such a good job as this." And you know what, I haven't.

I went to the beach a lot, Jones Beach—$4 round trip. That was fun. Finally in [19]78, I had to get a job-job, right, because I was doing odds and ends, and this and that. My friend Margot Gayle—and I'm sure a lot of you are familiar with Margot Gayle, my mentor, my guide—said to me, "Well Tom, you collect Statue of Liberty memorabilia." I have to say right now I'm looking at about fifty images of the Statue of Liberty on my wall here. Margot said, "Why don't you go and apply for a job there? I know somebody there." I said, "Really? Work at the Statue of Liberty?" Never occurred to me. Margot made a call, I made a call, and then lo and behold I wound up going out there in April, interviewing like March '78, and bringing a few pieces of my collection with me for the interview.

My future boss must have thought I was a crackpot. I wanted a job cutting the grass at the Statue, OK, just being outside, minding my own business, being away from the noise of the city and all of that kind of stuff. Well, my future boss, the best boss I ever had, Ellen, said to me, "Tom, you've got teaching experience and immigrants, as well," and I said, "Yeah," and she said, "Well, why don't you become a ranger at Ellis Island?" which is part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, of course. A lot of people don't realize it, but Ellis Island opened in 1975 for visitation for six months of the year—the end of April until the end of October. There was no heat, no electricity, bottled water. Most importantly, there was no telephone. If you wanted to use the phone, you had to take the ferry into Battery Park. I could still point out where the phone booth was. You would go there, and you would make your phone call, and you're back on the ferry. The boss was at Liberty. The superintendent of the park was at Liberty Island. So it's all of us kids. I was 'Father Tom'—twenty-nine at the time. They were all twenty-one. We had a blast. We had a terrific time. Again, no phones, no iPhones, no computers to distract

everybody. We just hung out, climbed over the thirty-five buildings and the contagious disease wards, the morgue, just everything. It was our playground. We played the board game *Risk* for, gee, I don't know, a thousand hours? [laughs] I really lucked out. I did that for three years—three seasons, I should say, and then I was burnt out. There was a future boss coming, and her reputation preceded her. I said, "All right, this is it. I'm not going to do battle here. This is a perfect time to exit. Perfect memories. I know a lot of stuff." That's how I wound up what I am right now, a licensed New York City guide. I support myself by giving tours of Ellis Island and selling my book, *The Ellis Island Immigrant Cookbook*. If I ever put my nose to the grindstone, I'll develop my Greenwich Village walking tour.

Zapol: Thank you for getting me up to speed in terms of your work. A lot of this was about your work—

Bernardin: Yeah, yeah.

Zapol:—and how you came to so much knowledge, about Ellis Island in particular. I'm interested in how you became so interested in New York's architecture. You talked about being in heaven in Times Square, and all the buildings that were near you when you were on 52nd Street?

Bernardin: As I said, my mother was from New York. I like to think that one of her five children wound up here. When I would go home, I'd always bring the *Times* and the *Post* and the *News,* and she would love looking at the stuff. She'd love telling me stories. She went to Holy Cross Academy on 42nd Street, right at Port Authority. Just watching movies when I was a kid that took place in New York City, it hits you. It just really all of a sudden, you just know that that's where you need to be. I don't know if I'd do it today. I don't know how anybody moves here today. So it was really just a natural—Plus, at Holy Cross I had a lot of friends from New Jersey and New York, and I came a couple of times to visit them. I was just coming out as a homosexual, as they were, and it was not an easy task by any means. Hopefully it's easier today. I just wanted to be around my gay friends and forge a gay identity and find out who I was. **[00:15:55]**

That, of course, was a very important aspect of it. I could have stayed and been gay in Boston, but I found Boston really boring. I still do. New York was just a natural. As I said, those

were the days you could be a kid and move here, and at $4 an hour, you could find an apartment and create sort of a nice life for yourself.

The architecture: I'm living on East 52nd Street there for a couple of years, and I'm reading the *New York Times*, and there are activities for the weekend. This person, Margot Gayle, has an organization, The Friends of Cast Iron Architecture. I didn't know what cast iron architecture was. She was giving a tour of SoHo on a Sunday afternoon, at, I don't know, say two o'clock to four o'clock. I go down there. For those who don't remember SoHo before it became SoHo, it was no man's land. You couldn't buy a cup of coffee, OK? It was deserted, except for these artists, who were camping out in these loft spaces. I am talking 1972. I go down there, and there are a group of us. Margot was just one of the most charming people, and smart and gracious and engaging. The sun is setting. It's November, and we're in a doorway huddled against the wind and stuff like that. I just fell in love with the architecture. I certainly fell in love with Margot. Everybody did. That was it. It's funny how in life, you do one thing, and everything changes.

I get home, and I send my $2 in to be a member—two bucks. At the end of it, I write, "Do you need a volunteer? I'd be happy to help you out." [snaps] Bang, OK? I get a letter from her with a little magnet, a little rectangular magnet that you can hold up to a building. She calls me up and says, "Tom, please, I could use a volunteer." She was a master at lining up volunteers. She had quite a stable. She lived at 44 West 9th Street, so I would hop on the E train or F train, and that was the start of my first real exposure to the village. We'd sit there with a typewriter and carbon paper and write to the Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. All of a sudden I'm hearing these names, Jane Jacobs and Ada Louise Huxtable, and, "Oh, Margot, do you know Ada Louise Huxtable?" "Yes I do." "Wow," you know, this kind of stuff. That was just pretty heady to be exposed to all of that. I just continued doing that sort of stuff for her, and then she'd say, "I'm going to an event," some sort of awards ceremony, "Would you like to come along with me?" That was just the beginning of going to a million different preservation ceremonies. They were creating awards to give to Margot. I was meeting all of these important people, sort of wondering what I was—well, I knew what I was doing there, but why I managed to get there. Then it just continued, and it just grew from there.

Zapol: Talk to me then about that. You said that was your first exposure to the Village. Was where Margot was—

Bernardin: Pretty much.

Zapol:—what was the Village like? Where did she live? What was it like?

Bernardin: She lived at 44 West 9th Street, in a huge apartment filled with all sorts—oh, my god—sculptures and books and files and whatnot. She raised two or three daughters there, and that was shortly after she had saved the Jefferson Market Courthouse Library. She had done that by drawing attention to the clock. It was slated for demolition. Margot vey wisely figured rather than just all of a sudden, let's raise a gazillion dollars to save this building, why don't we get the clock working? That will draw attention to it; so she did that. This is the late '60s, I'm in Massachusetts, and bang, she gets the clock working. She starts a committee. She gets some important people on board and manages to have the building declared a landmark and saved. She brings in Giorgio Cavaglieri, the great architect, to do the interior and exterior renovation. That was maybe four or five years before I encountered her. She came up with the idea to save thirty of the bishop crook lampposts—the originals. Now you walk around the Village and you see reproductions, often with a plaque by the Charles Street Block Association, 'In Memory of' this or that. I have clippings of the old time Villagers up in arms that the city is tearing down these wonderful artifacts. Putting in those cobra head lamps because that was going to be the solution to all of New York's urban problems, just turn up the volume on the lights. I guess to some extent it worked. This city was pretty hairy for a while. It still can be at any given moment, right?

They tore a lot of them down, but they were still throughout Manhattan, a lot of them remaining. Margot said to me, "Tom, let's save them, some of them." I said, "OK." She said, "First, we need a list." I was a big bicyclist back then. I'm not anymore. I hate bicyclists. Not that many people bicycled back then. I bicycled, I think from 110th Street, all the way down, all over the city, and came up with a list I think of about fifty or sixty of these things. Margot sent me down to the municipal building to go to the Department of Transportation. I'm a kid, so all of a sudden I'm dealing with city administration. This is all very official! We were going to get permission to put on these thin little plaques, and I had to research how to get these plaques manufactured. All of this is new, and I'm learning. Just wow, here I am in New York, I can make a phone call and say, "Well, I would need thirty plaques," and they said "Historic Landscape Preservation, Friends of Cast Iron Architecture, 1974." No official designation. Not landmarking them, but just to kind of alert—

A lot of them are very fragile, and if they get hit with all these big trucks we have now they're goners, OK? But some of them still do. They still exist around. I saved the one right outside Fraunces Tavern. That plaque is gone, though. That was a really nice feather in my cap, and I'm very proud I did it. It's just important. It's not the end of the world stuff, but I think it's important stuff. It draws people's attention.

Now, let's flash forward to outside Julius', my home away from home. We're talking about the drinking establishment at Waverly and West 10th Street. It's been a bar since right after the Civil War and very important in the gay rights movement. There was a new cobra head lamppost outside the front door. It's 2000. I had been away for twenty years. I used to hang out here in the '70s, OK? I had been away, say, twenty years, going to other places, and whatnot. I go back there exactly a year before 9/11, and it was perfect because I got—all my friends from the '70s were dead, passed away from AIDS—but I got to meet a whole lot of new people. **[00:25:28]**

So 9/11 happened. I had a place to go to. I live alone; I work alone. I could have easily been in my apartment watching TV by myself, but I had Julius' to go to, and I had my friends to hang out with and to share all of that with. A year or so later, I got tired of looking at that ugly cobra head lamppost outside the front door. I probably had too much to drink, and I said, "Guys, what do you say? Let's collect some money and put in an old bishop's crook lamppost." A few people made the mistake of saying, "OK, that sounds like a good idea." The next day of course—I don't like to say I'm going to do something and not do it. The next day I'm on the phone, calling the Department of Transportation, "How do we do this light? How much money do we need? How does this whole thing work?" Lo and behold, I start fundraising. Oh god, we did book sales. People were bringing books—we'd set up tables on the sidewalk—just donate, grab a book, give me a dollar or two. We had little plastic Easter eggs I sold for $2 with candy inside or a lottery ticket. We had bake sales, and people would bring in cakes and cupcakes, and all of this kind of stuff. And we did it.

Of course people don't—they don't know me that well—so they don't know whether I'm going to be in Rio. "Bye guys, thanks a lot for the vacation!" I contacted the Department of Transportation. There's the manufacturer out in Long Island. The manufacturer of choice for the Department of Transportation for the new bishop crook lampposts is out on Long Island. I place my order with them, I send them a couple of thousand dollars, and they get to work on it. I get a

hold of a plaque manufacturer and raise all the money. I've got six or seven grand, and I call DOT [Department of Transportation]. My connection there is a terrific guy, whoever he is. I say, "I'm all set. Let's go." He said, "Bad news." "What?" "You have to pay for the installation." I said, "You gotta be kidding. How much is that?" He said, "It's another six grand." I said, "This ain't gonna happen," I said, "You can't do this to me. You told me that you're gonna install this thing if we come up with the cost of the lamppost." I said, "I can't go back to all of these guys—what am I going to do with all of this money? They're going to run me out of town! My reputation!" [laughs] All this stuff. He spoke to the powers that be, and they grandfathered us in.

Zapol: Mmhm.

Bernardin: So I think that that bishop crook lamp is the last one that we didn't have to pay for the installation. Now, as they do the various streets in the Village, I think it comes to like twelve or fifteen grand to put those lampposts in, which is a chunk of change, OK?

Zapol: Yeah, sure, yeah.

Bernardin: Saturday before Gay Pride—and that's always the last Sunday in June—it's installed. Friday, Saturday, the brass plaque installer comes to install the plaques, and they read, "In memory of our departed friends, dedicated Gay Pride Sunday, 19—" oh, god, "2003" kind of thing, with the dogs and the Julius' logo and all of that kind of stuff. Actually, this week it needs a bath, and I need to sand it and paint it and all that kind of stuff. I kind of take care of that and make sure it looks nice. I'm very, very proud of that. My nickname is Lamppost Tom. If anybody wants to find me, "Is Lamppost Tom around?" That kind of thing. Julius' has been around for so long and has an older clientele. Nature is, you know, doing its thing, and we're losing a lot of people. We'll lose a friend, certainly every month. Then, they become part of that lamppost, because it's in memory of them. All that added emotion goes onto it, that kind of thing.

Then I was really on a tear with doing the fundraising, I was having so much fun. I had a great rapport, and there were a number of people there with a couple of extra bucks. A lot of people are struggling, OK? I just continue with my fundraising. I think ultimately I raised thirteen grand. A hundred dollars to Katrina victims, a hundred dollars to pets of Katrina victims, a hundred dollars to Doctors Without Borders, a hundred dollars to Jefferson Market Garden, a

hundred dollars to the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. I just kept on doing that. Then I got distracted with work. This has always been a struggle for me, to keep a roof over my head, rent stabilization not withstanding, so I just had to change my focus and get back to work. I launched my tour business. I also founded—This is pre-9/11, OK, everything changed 9/11, of course. I had started an anti-noise organization, FANNY, Friends Against Noisy New York. I just couldn't stand it. I live right at 14th Street and Seventh Avenue. It's the noisiest intersection on god's planet, and it just got to me. Those were the days of car alarms. We don't have them anymore, right? But they were constant, and it's still a horribly loud city. I thought, I just have to do something.

John Tierney, in the *New York Times*, writes an article in the magazine section about his noisy neighbors or something or other, so I chime in, and write a letter to the editor. I said, "The furthest I've gotten along is naming my organization, Friends Against Noisy New York." Well, they publish the letter, and I thought, oh damn, now I have to actually do something. I wound up volunteering with the League for Hard of Hearing, and they are concerned with hearing loss induced by exposure to noise. I figure to educate myself, I'll volunteer there, so I did that for a while. Then finally, my future boss said, "Well, do you want a job?" I said, "Sure." Then I'm going to community board meetings, and just learning a heck of a lot about noise. I did that for, I guess about six months or so, and then at the same time I founded a not-for-profit organization: Save America's Clocks. That's clocks.org. I think I incorporated in 1997, and put together grant kits, and not knowing what I was doing, all right?

Margot Gayle was my Vice President, and also Marvin Schneider is my Vice President now. He's the official New York City Clock Master, the most charming guy you'd ever meet. It's his job—and his cohort, Forest [Markowitz]—to go and maintain all the city-owned clocks, to wind them. All of a sudden I'm learning all about public clocks. This is courtesy of Margot with her inspiration with the Jefferson Market clock, the library clock. What I wanted to do was find one historic object that appears throughout the country, that were once the pride of these communities, and get them working, because it drives me nuts to drive around—Or you're in a train or something or other, you're looking at an old factory, and there's this great big clock up there that's just frozen in time. You don't know what's behind it, whether it's a beautiful Howard or Seth Thomas mechanism rotting away. I thought, this is a perfect thing to galvanize a community, and hopefully point them in the direction of historic preservation. **[00:34:53]**

I would be traveling around the country with my cookbook, *The Ellis Island Immigrant Cookbook*—When it came out twenty-four years ago, I went to the San Francisco Bay Area Book Festival. Chicago has a great thing, Printer's Row. I went to Book Fest of the Palm Beaches. New York once upon a time had—New York Is Book Country. There was a huge book fair on Fifth Avenue, from 59th Street all the way down to almost B. Altman's, you know, 34th Street. It was about eight hundred bucks for a booth, which I had to struggle to do, but my first year I did it—god, this was crazy. I had friends helping me out and signs, and all this kind of stuff. I sold 210 books and came back with almost four thousand dollars. OK, so I'd be able—This was unbelievable. I came home, I empty out my pockets, and there's all this cash. I stack it all up, and I count it. Then I mess the whole pile up again and do it all again, and that was really terrific. How we lost New York Is Book Country is beyond me. It's a disgrace that New York is not the sponsor of the best book fair in the country. That's just totally nutty.

So, I would travel to all these cities—Chicago, my god, beautiful clocks. In my free time, I would just go and photograph clocks. I really have quite a collection. Finally the time has come for me to put out a newsletter. Again, I scarcely know how to use a computer, let alone a publishing thing or anything like that, so it was a real cut and paste job. I come up with this newsletter with an interview with Marvin Schneider and stuff like that, a little one-pager, right? I stuffed the envelopes and mailed them to whomever I could cook up. They arrived in people's mailboxes the day after 9/11. Timing could not have been worse to try to draw attention to clocks and get clocks working, let alone look for donations. Was the furthest thing from people's minds. Very understandably, of course. But time has moved on, and Save America's Clocks is back in business.

I have a dilemma right now. I didn't have any income, and any expenses were out of my pocket. I didn't file the taxes. I didn't know I had to, I'm not filling out this huge application to get my 501(c)3 status, you know, re-applied. That's a job. It's a bore, but I'm confident it'll happen. There's a group called Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. At the time, they're right off East 52nd Street. They had these seminar kind of things. You go there [and] there were about a dozen of us. You present what your project is. If they deem it is worthy, for the common wealth—somebody wanted to go to Jamaica and write plays, I mean that's not gonna—But if you can show that it's for the public good, then they will assign you a law firm. They hooked me up with Davis Polk Wardwell, which is an extremely important law firm in the city. I think it

took us a year, year and a half, to hammer out this application, which is like the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. All that legal stuff is so mind-numbingly difficult for me. Then great, got it! Then subsequently, because of my neglect, lost it. But I hope to have that status reinstated before too long.

Zapol: Tell me, are there some clocks that are in the Village that interest you, beyond the Jefferson Market?

Bernardin: Well, yeah, it's funny you mention that. I have quite a few photographs of clocks. And I have spoken to the GVSHP [Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation] about putting together a slide lecture, or a PowerPoint or whatever, about the clocks of Greenwich Village. My game plan is to put up photographs of the clocks and have the audience participate and say, "Oh, that's that one, and that's that one." The most beautiful one, I would have to say, would be the Cooper Union. They have the original mechanism there. I've been up to that clock tower and of course, the Jefferson Market. I've been up to that one as well. Unfortunately, when Margot got that clock working, they threw away the mechanism. The company that electrified it was not, in those days, sensitive to these beautiful, beautiful mechanisms. So that's a shame, to have lost those things.

I'm currently in a battle with—I'm very proud to say that I am a plaintiff in a lawsuit. It's still pending. By the time this interview airs or gets transcribed, it will be resolved. We're going after the City of New York, the City Council of New York, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The fact that I can even be saying this to somebody, that this kid from Massachusetts is so mature and courageous enough to do it, it's an honor. Bring 'em on. **[00:41:10]**

346 Broadway is at Leonard Street. It is a McKim Mead and White building with a beautiful clock tower. And a number four—I think a Number Four Howard, E. Howard & Co. mechanism. The thing is beautiful. Marvin Schneider, on his own, restored it. When they landmarked the building, they landmarked the clock. You have to understand, the clock is the mechanism; there's the clock and there's the clock faces. When you're talking a clock, you're really talking the mechanism. Marvin, with great foresight, had that clock mechanism included in the designation and the twenty-foot by twenty-foot room that houses it with glass walls to keep

the dust out and whatnot. Mayor Bloomberg, shortly before he left office, sold it to a developer for a $160 million to turn it into very high-end condominiums, so they have to go before—

You know, there's a ton of approval. In November, which would be November 2014, there was a hearing on a Tuesday afternoon with their architect and whole team. Slick as can be, really, really slick. They do this whole presentation to the Landmarks Preservation Commission. A few people got up and testified for it, a few people got up and testify against it. I didn't, I wish I had. They basically want to rip it out. If the developer had his druthers he would just junk the thing. We have to fight this. Unfortunately we found ourselves in a situation; we're fighting the Landmarks Preservation Commission. That is not right. We shouldn't have to do that.

Everybody's celebrating fifty years of Landmarks Preservation Commission here in New York. Isn't that splendid? Look all the things they've done, yes indeed. But why are we fighting? Why are we educating them? I think the board, the commission, is compromised. I don't think that they have preservationists aboard. The commissioner, I don't believe, is a preservation[ist] at heart. It really seems that they view their job as assisting developers in developing buildings, rather than challenging them. This is a landmarked building; it's a landmarked clock. They get up, "We're gonna move this balcony. We're gonna change a front door." There's a landmarked room called the Marble Room, gorgeous, magnificent room on the fourth floor. With their design plans for these condominiums, they want to dismantle this Marble Room, and put it down on the second floor. OK, I could live with that, all right? It's supposed to have public access. Who's 'the public?' Is John Q. Public some Joe Schmoe? Can I bring a tour group up there? I don't think so! You think they're gonna let the public into this super security apartment building? No way. It'll be 'the public' being the condo owners. That's where they can have high-end cocktail parties and their condo board's meeting, as far as I can see. **[00:44:58]**

Right now—this is going on as we speak—our law firm is in arbitration with the law firm for the developer to see if we don't oppose the move of the Marble Room. Then perhaps they'll leave the clock alone. But I do know now. For the first time in many years, that clock is not working. It's not moving. It's not telling time. The bells are not ringing. The bell—that is really unfortunate. As I emailed the friends of 346 Broadway, the other day, I said, "This is the opposite of what Margot Gayle did. She got a clock that wasn't working, got it working, saved the building." Now the developer is shutting down the clock, and what's happening right now? The developer's claiming that Marvin and Forest, who go every week to wind it, they can't let

‘em in because of construction and insurance problems. Well, OK, I guess that’s the case. We just have to see how this plays out. I’d love to find an investigative reporter to look into this. Why did this happen? Who are the Landmark. Who are the commissioners on the Preservation Commission? Once upon a time, they were really active, and now they’re not. I’ve got to say, I think Andrew [Berman] at GVSHP surely knows what I’m talking about here. That everything seems to be such an uphill battle.

And the changes! Greenwich Village, jeepers creepers—There used to be art supply stores, fabric stores right across from Julius’. There was a fabric store, a sewing machine store. You think anybody sews anymore? I do. But across 14th Street here, Delsemmes, this great art supply store. Patterson Silk over by Union Square—they tore down that building that should have been a landmark—to go in and get fabric and notions and stuff like that. Fourteenth Street here, between Sixth Avenue and Eighth Avenue, was polka dotted with all of these small, ethnic restaurants—Spanish, Italian, Greek, Chinese—dirt cheap. Every year they would close off Sixth Avenue to Eighth Avenue for three nights in June, and the restaurants would put tables out in the street and serve food. It was a real street fair. It was the Real McCoy, as opposed to the nonsense that goes on today that we all have to live with. Not piped-in music, no. Disco boot[leg] selling, you know, pounding music and all of that. That’s just dissipated.

There was a store right here on 14th Street, the south side—the name will come to me. It was a Spanish food store, and what the hell was the name of that? [Casa Moneo] When that closed a long time ago, that was it. That was the lynchpin of Spanish 14th Street. There’s one left, La Taza D’Oro on Eighth Avenue and 15th Street. I’m sure that the only reason they’re surviving is because the owner of this Spanish lunch counter owns the four-story building. That’s how anything survives anymore.

The Village was terrific. There was always stuff to look at, the antique stores. Pierre Deux there on Bleecker Street, on West 4th Street. Now it’s all horrible. I try to avoid going west of Seventh Avenue. I very much resent the money and the pretension. All of those high-end stores. I’m not even going to give them the grace of saying their names. Just ruined it, just absolutely ruined it.

That’s happening everywhere, of course. That’s why Andrew [Berman], Saint Andrew, [is] fighting to save the South Village, however he can. The man is incredible. The service that he is doing for the Village and for all of New York is setting an example as to what—It isn’t like

they've got this huge budget, but certainly a lot of talented people and a lot of very smart people. I have a deep, deep admiration for Mr. Berman and the whole crew over there. It's just important work. **[00:50:06]**

You get the feeling that you're closing the barn door after the cows have left. A huge part of the Village is landmarked and stuff, but it's a fight. Tooth and nail. NYU, don't even begin. It's just so sad.

Zapol: Let me ask you about the Village when you first moved to New York. You said you started going to Julius'—

Bernardin: I started going to Julius—

Zapol:—in the '70s, and that's not that long after Stonewall, so tell me—

Bernardin: That's right, that's right.

Zapol: Talk to me about what the gay Village was like then, and also just some of your favorite hangouts in the area.

Bernardin: All right, to put Julius' in some context, it's now at the corner of Waverly and West 10th Street. That would once be the corner of Amos Street and Factory Street. There was a huge carding factory on Waverly up towards Seventh Avenue. It became a bar right after the Civil War. The Village would have been polka dotted with a hundred pubs—a hundred Irish pubs—when this part of the West Village here. This side of Sixth Avenue would have been working class—Irish, Italian, working on the piers, OK? Over by Washington Square Park would have been the more patrician—the Henry James crowd and all of that. They didn't necessarily get along.

So, Julius'—I have no idea what it was named back then—would have been one of those pubs, a White Horse Tavern. That's still there, of course, on Hudson. It gradually segued into becoming a gay bar. The Village of course is left-minded people, more all-embracing people, more nonconformist, anarchist, socialist, lefties, rabble-rousers, all of those great things. Artists and sculptors and writers all living here cheap, so they could do their thing and create their art, would have started to hang out in Julius'. Being more open-minded and liberal, it gradually became a hangout for gay men. Hopefully always will be. That's another one of my battles. You

would have people like Edward Albee and just everybody, everybody, passing through there at some point.

Stonewall, of course, is famous. Nineteen sixty-nine, June, 1969. Judy Garland is lying in state at Campbell's Funeral Home on Madison Avenue, causing great disruption to the gay community. I'm in Massachusetts when this is going on, and they have that riot, the birth of the gay rights movement. But there's something that happened three years and three months before that, at Julius', which I consider to be one of the opening salvos in the gay liberation movement.

There was an ordinance in the state liquor authority that it was illegal to serve homosexuals a cocktail, believe it or not. There was a group, the Mattachine Society. Harry Hay and a group of kids from California in the early '50s start this group. Very secretive. You're not in the public; you're in somebody's house, OK? They start something called the Mattachine Society. Brilliant name. The Mattachines were a theatrical troupe in medieval France, in my understanding. They're the court jesters. They could tell the truth to the king. They could make fun of his affairs, all of this kind of stuff, without getting their head chopped off. They are the truth tellers. So inspired, what a great name. They founded this group, the Mattachine Society, and then chapters open up in Washington, DC, in New York City, and whatnot. These are kids. These are guys in their twenties—young kids. I would never have been able to do that. I was just too frightened by the whole thing so I salute these folks. They decide they want to challenge the state liquor authority regulation. They staged what's known as the sip-in, the famous Sip-In of April 1966, three years and two months before Stonewall. **[00:55:34]**

They had a written statement saying, "We are homosexual. We are orderly, and we would like to request alcohol." They chose this place over on Saint Mark's Place, the Ukranian American Fraternal Society. They chose that place because there's a sign behind the bar that says, "If you are gay, please go away." Well, you've got to love that 'please' thrown in there, right? They show up. They alert the media, the *Village Voice*, the *New York Times*. The three of them show up. They're late. The media's there first. They go in and they say, "Where's this gay rights? Where's this homosexual demonstration going on?" The guy says, "What are you talking about?" They tell him what's going on. He shuts down. He doesn't want to get involved with this stuff.

Then they head over to Sixth Avenue. There's a Howard Johnson's at Sixth Avenue on Eighth Street. They go there; they do the same thing. I'm sure that half the staff was gay—they

knew these guys—and they said, “We don’t care that you’re—what do you want to drink?” They go a further block up to the Kon-Tiki—another gay place, I guess—and they do the same thing. Well, they get served. Then they have to really figure things out here. Somebody goes [snaps], “Julius’!” There’s a sign on the window: “This is a disorderly establishment.”

Apparently, a few days earlier, this straight married minister tries to pick up an undercover cop. They would send these cute young cops out to the bars, and entrap them. If you said, “Well, gee, want to go back to my place?” bang! You’re under arrest. They nail this guy, and you’ve got to wonder what happened to his life after that, right? So they say, “Well, they’ll turn us down.” But they went to Julius’—Fred McDarrah from the *Village Voice* started as a photographer at the *Village Voice*. That’s how he began. Talk about being at the right place at the right time. He’s over in the corner. These three guys, Mattachine members, all in suits and ties—as everybody dressed back then—they go up to the bartender, who was a straight Irish guy in his kitchen whites, and say, “We are homosexual. We are orderly, and we would like to be served alcohol.” The bartender very dramatically puts his hand over the glass and says, “I cannot serve you.” Thank you very much.

They then contact the Human Rights Commission, newly founded—Mayor Lindsay, I believe. The Human Rights Commission conceivably deals with women’s issues, minorities’ issues. I don’t think they planned to deal with a lot of faggots, OK? They contact the Human Rights Commission and they say, “If you don’t overturn this regulation, we’re going to sue the state liquor authority.” State liquor authority puts one and one together, and they say, “Wait a minute, this is a losing battle.”

A great success story—three years and two months. That’s how long it takes for things to percolate. It’s not a very long time. You’ve got the theater on Carmine Street. Oh god, Joe [Joseph Cino] what’s-his-name, all of this great avant-garde theater—Caffe Cino. All of this avant-garde theater going on, and you’ve got the rise of feminism. You’ve got the bra burners, Betty Friedan and all of that stuff. These women are finding their lesbian selves and the gay men are finding their gay selves, and then—finally—Stonewall explodes. That was it. I was not there. That was quite something.

Julius’ was—my understanding, and I have to throw in that caveat—Julius’ was not sympathetic, all right? The Stonewall kids would have been, say, the ‘bridge and tunnel’ crowd. Kids from Jersey, kids from Brooklyn, the Bronx, whereas Julius’ was very preppy. You’re

talking about college-educated businessmen in their blue blazers and ties and penny loafers and all of that kind of stuff. They were not particularly sympathetic to the group of these more flamboyant kids causing all of the trouble. They didn't want their apple cart pushed over, to cause too much attention. You know probably a lot of them [were] living very closeted lives, and paying for it, and the rest is basically history. **[01:01:00]**

There is a certain element—I mean, god, we can get married, for pete's sake. If I had known I'd be able to get married, I would have tried to find somebody! I have to clear my throat here.

Zapol: It's OK. [Bernardin clears throat]

Bernardin: Let me grab a slug of water.

So now all of a sudden we can get married—not all of a sudden, but we can get married. But there are a lot of people, say ten years ago, twenty years ago, a lot of gay people who don't really support that. I like being an outlaw. I am very thankful that I'm gay. I'm very thankful for the challenges it has presented to me. If I were not gay, I would be a white, middle class, college educated spoiled guy. A kid, OK?

[END OF FIRST AUDIO FILE, 'Bernardin_TomOralHistory1.mp3'; BEGINNING OF SECOND, 'Bernardin_TomOralHistory2.mp3']

Bernardin: But now I'm a minority. That, I like to think, makes me sensitive toward other minorities. That I'm not the powers that be. I'm one of the people that's fighting the powers that be. That's very ennobling, and it's very life enhancing and enriching.

The Village, at that time, with this newfound liberation, this happens I think in any movement. All of a sudden we're communicating with each other. We're getting politically active. We're starting to get some acceptance and sex. Just sex. That had to implode on itself. It just had to because it was just wild. It was just crazy! The gay bars, and the trucks over on Jane Street, and the Mine Shaft, and the Anvil—and, oh god, the Dugout and the bath houses .And it was fabulous! It was terrific. I loved it. I fully partook in it. I found it to be all very good-natured, a heck of a lot of fun—and ultimately very dangerous. It had to stop.

I was very fortunate that I did not contract HIV. There was a time here that you would have thought a concentration camp had opened up, that—it was just horrible. It was horrible. I

mean how many friends did you lose? Forty? My college friends, the guys that I moved to New York to be with, I lost most of them. Terrible, terrible. The first hospital to welcome, to take, to treat them with any sort of dignity? Saint Vincent's. Now, here we go. It's down the block from me two blocks and going be high-end condos. Who are these people? Are they going to be going to the community board meetings? Are they going to be shopping at some little mom and pop store?

I have an Associated Supermarket at 14th and Eighth, that's the place where I go shopping. I can't afford Balducci's and Gourmet Garage, except very occasionally. I think any of these last of the Mom and Pop places are going to be forced out, because these rich people—West Side Market right here at Seventh Avenue and 15th. Do you know they sell in those plastic clamshells? They sell peeled clementines and tangerines. [Zapol laughs] You gotta say to yourself—The only thing I can think of is it's these young women who get their nails done twice a day [Zapol laughs] don't want to damage their nails. That's the only thing I can figure out. How could you not peel? That's part of it! That's part of it. [Zapol laughs] Don't get me started on seedless watermelon, how they could take one of nature's perfect things and mess it up so it tastes like mush. And it's not seedless! [Zapol laughs] That's the killer of it. It's those little nasty white seeds, where once you should be—The proper way to eat a watermelon is to stand at the kitchen sink, chew it, and spit 'em out. I have a friend in New Jersey who brings me in watermelons—real watermelons. [laughs]

Zapol: So talk to me about this amazing moment in the '70s and early '80s in these places—the Anvil, the Mine Shaft, the trucks on Jane Street. Tell me a little more about maybe a particular night or a particular day that comes to your memory when you think about that time. You know, did you ever go the piers, what was that like? Can you evoke—

Bernardin: Oh, I mean—

Zapol:—a day?

Bernardin:—I pretty much covered the waterfront. I didn't particularly like the trucks. I liked the bathhouses, I liked the Anvil, I liked the Mine Shaft. I almost get embarrassed talking, 'cause it's sort of like a secret, and you kind of don't want people to know about it if—'cause they won't get it. **[00:05:07]**

I used to work the Barefoot Boy Disco, all right? The time of Studio 54. This is, when? 1975, '76? Right before Ellis Island. I was the doorman. In the winter I was the hat check. I knew every gay person in New York City. It was a terrific, great, great club—39th and Second. The building is gone now, of course. It's a Duane Reade and condos. God, it was $2 to get in, and you got a drink ticket, OK? Very popular. Across town, there's Studio 54 going on. I was very friendly with Kevin [phonetic] [00:05:46], the manager, and stuff.

One night—it closed at like four o'clock—I remember a group of us hopping into a cab and going down to the Anvil at 14th Street and the river, right near Barry Diller's vanity park he's putting up—[noise]. Whoops. Oopsy-daisy.

Zapol: No worries, no worries. It's fine.

Bernardin: —smoking a joint in the cab, as people did back then and going in and seeing this guy Uba. [phonetic] [00:06:22], also known as The Amazing Uba. Now, if you speak to older gay people they remember this guy, this, I don't know, six-foot-two black guy in full drag—just so dramatic—and so fabulous, singing 'Vilkommen, bienvenue.' You just walk in and it's filled with men. Filled with smoke. You go, my god, I'm actually here. It's like Berlin, you know? It would have been sort of like that cabaret kind of thing, the decadence! But great, just great.

One of my favorite places—and I've spent a few thousand hours there—would be Marie's Crisis. Now that's on Grove Street, right off Seventh Avenue. It's beside the original Duplex—the original one, where Joan Rivers would have appeared, Lily Tomlin, Woody Allen, all of those people. Marie's Crisis is still there. It's the location where Edgar Allen Poe—not Edgar Allen Poe, Tom Paine—died, all right? It's a piano bar. It's straight now. But at those times it was all men with this woman playing the piano, and everybody knew every word to every show tune. You'd just go there and just sing. You would just sing your guts out for an hour, an hour and a half, or two hours or something. That's really good for you! I haven't done it since. As I'm speaking to you I'm thinking I miss singing! That was a very, very magical place and very magical time. It wasn't all tawdry. Just good times.

And Julius' conversation bar. That is my big contention. It is a conversation bar. When I see cell phones, when I see iPhones—Unfortunately, they got rid of the old jukebox that you had control over, the person who put in the records. Now it's one of those internet jukeboxes, and it's far too democratic for my taste. You get people coming and put in hip-hop or rap, or anything,

stuff that I really dislike. Too loud. I'm always saying to the bartender, "Could you lower the music?" It is a conversation bar! It's becoming very popular with straight people, and that we don't like too much at all because you do have —I like gay men, OK? You do have an awful lot of straight, blonde women with the same haircut, the same makeup, the same nails, the same clothes coming in. They're having their margaritas, and once they have two, the voice level—To a gay man's ears, it's like nails on a chalkboard. We just grit our teeth and bear with it, because what could we do? You can't do anything. You know, it's not my bar. So I get in there, and I get out. I go almost every night. I have a couple of drinks, catch up with my friends, and get the hell out, because later on the in the evening, it turns more straight. So I'm always fighting to make sure it is hopefully a gay men's conversation bar.

Zapol: How do you preserve that? **[00:10:28]**

Bernardin: I give dirty looks. I give attitude. I'm always busing tables. If I see a group of gay men back there, "Hi guys, welcome! You having a good time? Can I get rid of these glasses for you?" "Oh yeah, great, thanks." I say, "Listen, I want to see you here more. This is our bar. This is our turf, and we have to make sure it stays that way," that it is not taken over by straight people as the last of the dive bars. "and isn't this kicky, and we go and we get to look at all of these gay men, because we're all equal." That's bullshit to me. That's bullshit.

Gay men would not be welcome in straight bars, if we were to touch each other or be more open or flamboyant. Certainly in some of them. It's like the black churches up in Harlem, where they have the busloads of tourists coming in and taking over the place and interrupting their thing. It's very, very important to the African American community, to a lot of them, to have that. To have that place that's theirs, that they get to celebrate being themselves, and I feel that way about Julius'. I met some awfully nice straight people there and had some nice conversations and stuff, but it's when they come in, and they're sort of condescending or they're slumming. That's when my back goes up. So, there we are.

Zapol: Mmhm, mmhmm. Talk to me about the changing Village. When did you sense that this space that you felt like was yours or that you loved [Bernardin sighs] was shifting? Or, I'm sure it's always shifting, right? It's a city, but—

Bernardin: You know, it's always shifting, and I read an awful lot about the Village. Since 1822, they're complaining about how it's always shifting. But it's different now. This is a different shift. It's all about commercial rent control, and it should've been there. I don't know if it was there once, but if it was de-controlled, that just did it. I would say when you walked across Bleecker Street—and that would have been Ellis Island immigrants, Italian. After it was Little Africa, of course—but 1890. They came over and saved money, bought those buildings, opened up Faicco Sausage, the butcher place there; Aphrodisia, if you remember that—the spices and herbs with the great big white cat in the window—Murray's Cheese. There was all of them, though. It was just the whole steady stream. I think once I walked by there, and it was just, oh, Aphrodisia is gone. I can't get my whatever. [sighs] Oh and look, that's gone. It's a nail salon. And that's gone; it's an ice cream place. Then all of a sudden you just see it all happening. Just like dominos, it just knocks everything over. That's all we talk about. That's all anybody talks about in the Village.

Jeremiah's Vanishing New York, if you're familiar with that website. Even the Facebook group—if you're not familiar with this, you have to be—Greenwich Village Grapevine, where every day this woman posts four photographs, anything from 1890 to 1960 of the Village. You look and of course, it's so romantic with those old photos and no cars on the streets, and stuff like that—but it served the community! They'd have, 'We buy your coal,' or this or that. I don't have a coffee shop in the neighborhood—well, I do actually, on Greenwich Avenue. But there used to be all that stuff, all that support stuff—dry cleaners, Laundromats. Can they pay the rent on those kind of establishments? Now everything's empty. You move in, you're some rich kid who daddy has given him or her money to open up this high-end clothing store where things cost a gazillion dollars. Then they can't make it, and then the storefront goes empty. Harry Chang's, over here at Charles, I was happy to see that place close. It's unfortunate. **[00:15:25]**

You know what it's like? It's akin to farmland. That's why the best thing that ever happened in New York, since I've been here, is the founding of Greenmarket. Of course, that's courtesy of Barry Benepe, saving the farmers in the tri-state area. Best thing that happened to New York. Once farmland is developed into housing, it will never go back to farmland. The situation here and in New York and in major cities around the world—it's not all of a sudden going to go back. I would love nothing more than to have a storefront. There used to be a guy from Barefoot Boy,I'm sure he's passed away.

Welcome to New York, over on Carmine Street—Cornelia Street, Carmine. Sold all New York City stuff: posters, books, maps, artifacts, whatnot. I would love to do that! What, come up with $20,000 a month? Poor Bonnie Slotnick's Cookbooks, right beside Julius'—wonderful neighborhood person, terrific! Used cookbooks. What's not to like? She was forced to move to the East Village. She found a very nice situation, bless her heart. I'm looking forward to going over there. She's one of the unique ones.

It's just not fun. The street life isn't fun. You used to be able to walk anywhere in New York City and come up with a little store that sold whatnot. Now, you're going to encounter a bank. You're going to encounter a Rite-Aid, a Duane Reade, and that's it. Even pizza places are closing in the neighborhood. How do you close a pizza place? [laughs]

Zapol: So what do you see as your responsibility as citizen? What is your responsibility as you see this happening?

Bernardin: Just doing what I'm doing. Just doing what I'm doing. Hopefully more of it. Try to get the word out there; for some reason I get invited to give this oral history—Great! I love that. I have a Greenwich Village map I sell of 1961. Beautiful map. It helps pay my rent. It also helps draw attention to the Village. I sell my cookbook, *The Ellis Island Immigrant Cookbook*. Nice book. Draws attention to our immigrant roots. My activities with Save America's Clocks—I can't do anything with FANNY. I've discovered that there's no money in anti-noise. There's only money in noise. If you're making a louder car horn, a louder toy, some noise making device, then you make money. But you really have to have money to run something like an anti-noise organization, because you're not going to get grant money or anything like that. That's why I'm focusing my activities back into Save America's Clocks.

Zapol: Mmhm, mmhm.

Bernardin: I've had a great life. I've had a lot of challenges. It has not been easy. I had a very difficult time coming out, very difficult. Very Catholic. Sixteen years of Catholic education with the nuns, and the guilt, and the "you're sick." You're embarrassed, and all that kind of stuff. So until that moment when you're a gay man or a gay woman until that moment that you can verbalize, "I am a homosexual," it's very difficult. Then I remember the first time I said it to my Holy Cross friends in probably 1969. I remember pretending I was talking to my parents—"Oh,

guess what, Mom and Dad. I'm a homosexual." I'd practice it. Then you get to say it a few times, and then it's great.

I'm very comfortable with my own skin, and that is great, great. **[00:19:56]**

Zapol: Yeah. My question about what do you do as a citizen was saying to these issues of the city changing, what do you feel like your responsibilities are? And I think you're right, you are very active. You're very active in these ways—

Bernardin: Well, I complain! Does that help? I complain to my friends, and stuff like that, which is next to worthless—

Zapol: And you showed me your letters to the editor, as well. You're—

Bernardin: Oh yeah, see, yeah.

Zapol: You know, you also, you try—

Bernardin: Yeah—

Zapol:—to share it in a public way, too.

Bernardin: I try to verbalize. It's very frustrating. When I moved in this building—what did I say? '74, '75, or whatever. It was filled with elderly Jewish and Italian couples, or widows or widowers. They would have been children of Ellis Island immigrants. So I was Golden Boy. I'd be wearing my National Parks Service uniform off to work, "Where do you work?" "Ellis Island." "Oh, Ellis Island," and all that kind of thing.

The poor landlord couldn't paint the front door, couldn't paint the lobby. There weren't committee meetings, and we had to get together and form a group. There were monthly tenant meetings and all of that kind of stuff, the wonderful tradition of that borderline socialism, lefty intellectuals. Eighty-five years old, Anna Rowland is off to the New School for a course in Shakespeare. Those kind of people. They all died off, and then it turned gay. That was great. Then they all died off, and then it turned yuppie. My perception is that these kids worked—rents rising and rising and rising—and they're working sixty or eighty hours a week. I'm thinking lawyers, or whatever they did. I don't know. Now I think it's just trust fund kid that work, but I think that daddy pays the rent. You can't get them to say hello. You can't—First of all, you walk

into the elevator, and they're on the phone. They're staring at their phone. It's almost like there's arrested development action going on here. "Hi, how are you?" Mm. Nothing. People, these kids, they ignore you! I want to say, scream at them, "I just said hello to you!" But you don't even—Some of them are very nice. I'm not saying that they aren't. Some of them are very nice, of course, but boy, it just astounds me. It's like they're lacking a social skill here where, "Hi, how are you, gee it's cold outside," or, "God, we've had a lot of—" whatever bullshit you just sort of say to people to make little chitchat. It's boring, I've been doing it for sixty-six years. It's tiresome, but you just say something! Acknowledge me. You never know, you could wind up with a new friend.

Zapol: Mmhm, mmhm, mmhm.

Bernardin: I have to watch myself in public, because with the cell phones, with people talking on their phones, it's just really irritating. It's unforgiveable. It's a horrible invention, horrible! I wish they never existed. I'm walking down, making my grocery list, and all of a sudden it's like, "When are you going to come over Thursday? You're going to come over for dinner. What time" What am I thinking? I'm thinking about Thursday dinner at—no, I want to think about my grocery list. This kind of nonsense.

Zapol: Mm.

Bernardin: There's no putting that toothpaste back into that tube.

Zapol: Right.

Bernardin: It isn't like all of a sudden everybody's going to wake up.

Zapol: Right, right. It's interesting in terms of what you were saying about noise, too, like this is a part of our city life, it's this—

Bernardin: Noise, it's noise! If I have to hear you, and I don't want to hear you, it's noise.

Zapol: Yeah, yeah.

Bernardin: I am the quietest person in the world. My neighbors don't hear a thing from me. I will not drive a nail in after five o'clock, certainly not on a Sunday. Or vacuum. My friends think

I'm nuts. I would never vacuum on a Sunday. I wouldn't do that. It's the quiet day. Can we not set aside some sort of a quiet day?

Zapol: Mm, mmhm.

Bernardin: That's just a whole other issue. The noise is just endless.

Zapol: Talk to me about your hopes for the future of the Village. **[00:24:59]**

Bernardin: I was talking to a friend last night with this condo, Greenwich Lane. The former Saint Vincent's Hospital, a hundred and sixty-year-old hospital. How do you shut down a hospital that old? Right in the middle of the island, away from the water, not flooded like Bellevue was during Hurricane Sandy. How do you shut that down? I was saying to a friend, "Why don't we make these really beautiful embroidered pillows that say, 'Welcome to Greenwich Lane' and mail them to each of the new tenants?" But just happen to slip in a few bedbugs. [laughs] I just want to sabotage—It's a nice looking building. It's too big, and $47 million? You know, what is that? I hate—I don't like new buildings. These glass buildings? I don't like 'em. It's not a home. They don't look like a home. It's like you're there for a couple of years, you have some parties to impress your friends and all that kind of stuff. I don't get it. What do you do with all that space?

I don't know. I'm sixty-six. I'm hanging in for as long as I can hang in, fight as many battles as I can. I wouldn't encourage young people to move to New York, and it breaks my heart to say that. Not even Brooklyn at this point. Queens? Sometimes I say to myself, where would I go if I had to go somewhere? Believe it or not, I would go back to Lawrence, Massachusetts. It's a very poor town. Huge new immigrant population. Asian all over. Not Italians, not Russian Jews and stuff like that, but a whole new different wave. I'm sure there's terrific food, and there's Lawrence History Center, Lawrence Heritage State Park. I saved the clock there, their Post clock. A lot of community people doing good, good things. I would go back there, because I prefer to be around struggling people. I don't like rich people that much. I met some very rich people on my tours of Ellis Island. They're very nice, but some of them are just so uppity that I don't want to know them. I don't want to be around them. Simple as that. I see these poor—these women—I'm standing outside Julius' and I see these young women with these four-inch heels dressed to the nines. Their handbag is my month's rent. I thought, when did fashion become so

important? When did—is this what you're doing? I don't get it. I just— [exhales] I don't have to get it. It doesn't matter.

Zapol: But it's interesting. You talk about your cookbook, about the immigrant cookbook and your own roots in Lawrence. What do you think has happened to the immigrant New York?

Bernardin: Oh, it's still here. It's still here. And it's thriving. We do it very, very well. I like to think that America does immigration very well. It is a nation of immigrants. It's the best part of New York. A good example of that is when Mayor de Blasio—very unwisely—shut down the subway system. First time in a hundred and ten years, and—

Zapol: For the snowstorm.

Bernardin: For the snowstorm, right. Recently, a couple of months ago, and Manhattan shut down because the dishwashers and the food servers and the food preparers—the immigrants—they couldn't get into the city.

It really lets you know how much we depend upon them. I love teaching English as a second language, and I love immigrants. Every once in a while I'll get somebody on my tour, and they'll go, "You know, these immigrants went through Ellis Island. Those are the good immigrants. The immigrants today are not so good." Hand me my blood pressure medication, because I want to go ba-boom. They obviously don't know what they're talking about, because these immigrants that came to Ellis Island, they were considered troublemakers and frightening. They were darker than the earlier Northern Europeans, different customs and all of that kind of stuff. There was the nativist movement that still exists, of course. They did not look kindly upon these people. Horrible prejudice and suffering and hurtful things were done and said. I won't truck it. I won't listen to it. I just don't. It has no currency with me, so I kind of firmly say, "Let them all in. Let them all in. We'll figure it out." I don't understand how people—I feel sad for all of them. If they haven't been exposed to immigrants, then they ought to go volunteer and teach and have English conversation with them. Then they realize how they struggle and the good things they do and how they enrich our society. Can you imagine living in a New York City that was Dutch, English, German, Protestant? God help us! [laughs] Where would we eat? Where would we laugh? [laughs] You know what I mean? I love the Dutch, love the English, sort of, and [laughs] you know, the Germans—but my god! What would we do? **[00:31:42]**

Zapol: Mmhm, right. Yes. And of course, as you say, the immigrant New York is alive and well, it just isn't—

Bernardin: It's not here. I'm not getting on an elevator and running into a Dominican family, OK? I'm running into somebody maybe from Andover, Massachusetts. Whatever, some spoiled people—white-white. But I get on the street, and I'm at 14th Street and Seventh Avenue, and I look around, and I am the only white-white person there! I love that. This browning, or this tanning, of America is great. It's great. And Julius' is the same way, as well. I remember when I went back to Julius', seeing a black cook. Well, I don't think back in the '70s and [19]75, there would have been a black cook at Julius'. So that inroad has been made. I've got a lot of black friends at Julius', and, great, this is my chance to meet 'em. Where would I generally hang out with them in my life? That's most welcome. That's why I love the place so much, and that's why I love New York City. That's why I love Greenwich Village, because you still have that, but you have to go looking deeper.

Zapol: For more diversity, for more—

Bernardin: For more diversity, yeah.

Zapol: Yeah. I think we're in a nice spot right now, in the conversation, but I'm wondering if there's anything that I haven't asked you about that you wanted to talk about in this time.

Bernardin: You know, I don't think so. I think we've kind of covered the bases that I wanted. I got to tell a little, some of my story. Hopefully not too boring—some insight—as to what this person, me, has experienced. Of what value to you, to the future, I have no idea. Maybe none. Maybe in two hundred eras, somebody will go, "Oh gee, that gives us a little bit of insight as to what's going on.

When you emailed me, and I emailed you back I'd be honored to do it, I was sort of like, why me? But I feel very honored and a chance for me to connect with the terrific people at GVSHP. It isn't like I'm a major donation. If I gave them a check for $10,000 every year, I could say, "Wow, they're kind of patting me on the back or flattering me. Keep those checks coming!" [Zapol laughs] But you're not doing this cause I'm sending a hundred bucks a year. I find that very flattering. Plus, you get to talk about yourself. [laughs] What's not to like about that?

Zapol: Well, if anything else comes to mind, as you review the transcript and everything, you can let me know.

Bernardin: Sure.

Zapol: But I really appreciated hearing you talk about your changing New York, and—

Bernardin: Our changing New York—

Zapol: Yeah.

Bernardin: Right?

Zapol: Yeah. **[00:34:59]**

Bernardin: Right? I also have to say, when I first met you a couple of hours ago, your arriving here forced me to clean my apartment! I do have to say I have one of the cleaner apartments in Greenwich Village [Zapol laughs] at the moment!

Zapol: Well, tell me—we didn't get a chance so much to talk about this. You did a bit about the building, but talk to me about your knowledge about the history of this building in particular, and this space.

Bernardin: Rosario Candela was a Park Avenue apartment [architect], big, important. He's always in the real estate section in the *Times*. These fabulous Park Avenue buildings, when the Depression hit, he lost those commissions, and he started to do more pedestrian buildings. There's one at Fifth Avenue and 11th Street that's much more opulent than this one is. He brought the same talents, and the attention to detail to even my lowly building. Red brick, art deco, sort of had a slightly Moorish feeling to it. As you can see, beautiful beam ceilings, parquet floors, nice details—the kitchen cabinets are perfectly proportioned for the space, wonderful closets, all of that kind of stuff. When I moved in here in a studio back then, I said to myself, this is my home. I am going to spend my life in this building, because it's so beautifully appointed. It has all these nice touches.

About eight years ago I'm walking up Seventh, walking into the front door, and I see these two huge black SUV's. I can't tell you how much I hate them. There's a group of suits standing outside, looking up at the building. I walked to the doorman, and I said, "Well, that's

it," and he nodded his head, and he said, "That's it." Because I knew what was happening. They sold the building. This family owned a slew of apartment buildings in Manhattan, and they sold them all.

Who bought it, I don't know. They hired this person—this interior designer—to do renovations. They messed up the front lobby. There used to be a built-in niche for a vase or a something or other. Well, that's all plastered over. They glitzed it up. As you can see when you leave, they bought the most horrible black and white photos that you see in any framing shop of the sunlight going through brick—Penn Station and all of that really boring nonsense and ripped the floors. We had tile floors. We had these five-inch square black terracotta tiles that were stamped "Made in Great Britain." They were the baseboards. They ripped all of those out and put in fake—They're not even wood. They're like plastic baseboards. They put in this hideous wall-to-wall carpeting, and that's to make it luxury. We can't hang anything. We can't have a doorman outside. We can't hang anything on the walls. They're trying to make it look like it was put up on Second Avenue and 85th Street two years ago with the sign out front, luxury rentals kind of stuff. The only good thing they did was to put in new elevators, which we needed. There is, down in the basement—I put an exhibit down in the basement. These images of the building that I collected, mounted on foam core, I got permission to put them into the laundry room. But they took a space there. There's this little gymnasium, maybe almost the size of my living room, with some exercise things. I can't use it because I'm not a market tenant. So you have to have your—you know they have one of those palm things that reads your palm to gain entry? Stuff like that. We're talking about a poor door. That is just really—If I go down there and work out, which I'd like to think I would, I'm gonna wear out a dumbbell? [laughs] Like this thing has a time limit? You can only use it a hundred times? Well, Tom Bernardin can't use it, 'cause then we're gonna have to replace it. That's just mean-spirited, and that is just lousy. That's not good for society. It's not good for New York City. It just isn't. **[00:40:00]**

Zapol: Mm.

Bernardin: Poor door.

Zapol: Yeah, yeah, just separating—

Bernardin: Drawing a wedge.

Zapol: Yeah, yeah. You moved in in a studio but then you moved into this—

Bernardin: Yeah.

Zapol: So when did you move into this [apartment]?

Bernardin: I think I was in the studio for about ten years, up in 17L, which was a beautifully designed studio. I wish I had never moved because I—but then I saw this. After a studio, you think, oh, wow, getting a one bedroom. Now I'll get married! Now I'll find the man of my dreams! It doesn't work that way, [laughs] but it has allowed me to—As you can see, I collect Statue of Liberty memorabilia. I collect some artifacts from Julius', Rupert Brewery, Jacob Rupert. I'm looking at this beer barrel top over here. I have clock faces and so it's certainly allowed me some wall space to put up my stuff that I'm very proud of. This is very comfortable, right? It's a very comfortable apartment.

Zapol: It's beautiful, and you have beautiful collections—

Bernardin: Yeah.

Zapol:—that are shown really well here, so—

Bernardin: Yeah, thank you. I can't wait to start entertaining. I've alerted my friends last night, three of them, I say, "You're coming over to dinner at my place. I'll go to Ottomanelli's, and I will get a stuffed veal roast, stuffed and wrapped in bacon." I'll say, "I got four hungry guys coming over [Zapol laughs]," all right, and the guy will write down, on a little piece of paper, how to cook it, and it makes for a wonderful presentation.

Zapol: Oh, that's great.

Bernardin: So I'm looking forward to that.

Zapol: Well, have fun with that!

Bernardin: Thank you, it's been a pleasure.

Zapol: Oh, thank you so much.

Bernardin: Thank you, Liza.

[END OF INTERVIEW]