

Transcript of edited excerpts.  
MEKAS, JONAS

“This is Jonas, Jonas Mekas. M-E-K-A-S.

And Lenny Bruce, on Seventh Avenue and near 4th Street there. I walked in just by chance. It was a hot summer day, and I had to stop for a cold beer. There was this guy telling jokes. Not a big place. And you know, I drank my beer and listened. And I was amazed. I did not expect anything, [I expected] some jokers and performers. [laughs] And he was incredible, the way he was delivering, the voice and the presence. [So] I had my beer and walked out, but I never forgot it. He was arrested later. And I was arrested around the same time...

I was arrested first for screening *Flaming Creatures*...And later at the Writers' Stage on 4th Street, for showing *Un Chant D'Amour*, Jean Genet's film. Why did I screen it? I knew I would be arrested, of course. I even had sandwiches prepared in my pocket. I knew I would be arrested.

Because independent filmmakers, we did not believe we should license our films. It was like taking a stand against licensing and censorship...But our case helped to abandon two, three years later censorship. And of course the Lenny Bruce case. It was all the same time.

Only that Lenny Bruce, they managed to really destroy him. But they did not destroy really us, because we knew exactly what this was all about, and that we had to do it."