

**Dave Hitchens**  
**Interviewed by John McLain**  
**The Evergreen State College oral history project**  
**May 28, 2011**  
**FINAL**

**Hitchens:** Where do you want to start today, or how do you want to proceed today?

**McClain:** I thought we were kind of at an interesting place. You were back visiting your high school, heading off to be a teacher and a PhD student. I know from your vitae that you started having a number of teaching assignments in the '60s that you did. I noticed that you were . . . how do I want to say this? You didn't quite fit the department mold of the junior professor always. I wonder if you want to talk a little bit about that.

**Hitchens:** When I got to Austin Peay, one of the things they did was they handed me five sections of the basic Survey of U.S. History 101 fall quarter; five sections in winter, 102; five sections spring, 103.

**McClain:** Teach roughly 500 years?

**Hitchens:** Well, it was U.S. History, so the first one was from colonization to 1820. The next one was 1820 to 1865. The third one was 1865 to the present. The present then was—I got there in the fall of '64.

**McClain:** Five sections?

**Hitchens:** The week was divided up strangely. I had three sections that met Monday-Wednesday-Friday. I had a 10:00, a 1:00 and a 3:00 section. Then I had two sections that met for an hour and a half each on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was Tuesday 10:00 to 11:30 and 1:00 to 3:30. They hired two of us who came in as assistant professors.

I was told in no uncertain terms by the chairman of the department—a very strange man named Wentworth Morris—I've written about him elsewhere—he said, "The State of Tennessee expects you to be in class, and to give instruction. For every minute that you're in class, you are to be teaching. You're not supposed to waste time, and because you have five sections, you are to make sure that you say the same thing to each of the five sections." Already, I'm . . . wow. Especially since I had those two hour and a half chunks.

**McClain:** Totally different set-up and timeframe.

**Hitchens:** Yeah, exactly. I got through the fall quarter, and what I did is when I put together lectures, I tried to do sort of lectures in unit chunks. I'd have a unit on politics from a period, say, 1800 to 1820. Then I would have American economic history from 1800 to 1820. I tried to give them a sense of what's going on in these areas of American life, and how it would make sense to them. Because I knew that it was very easy to confuse them. I'd spotted that right off the bat when I was at Georgia.

**McClain:** These would have been mostly freshmen?

**Hitchens:** Mostly freshmen, because like in Georgia and Tennessee—most of the states in the union at the time—if you were going to get a bachelor's degree at any state institution, one of the requirements was you had to demonstrate a knowledge of aspects of either U.S. and state history, or in some places, they had a separate class. That was the requirement.

The reason I got a teaching assistantship at Georgia was Georgia's Legislature had just passed a new law mandating that all Georgia institutions would provide a required course that all students that came through the state's four-year institutions in the state of Georgia would provide a class in U.S. and Georgia history. That was a requirement. No one was to graduate without understanding, or demonstrating an understanding of, national and state history, which was kind of interesting.

The whole idea is something I've always tended to agree with; that if you're going to teach history, one of the purposes is to help people understand what their role is as a citizen in a democratic republic. To understand their role, they need to understand something about the history of how we started, where we came from, why we've ended up doing things the way we've done, and to understand something about how sometimes the mistakes we've made can be very stupid, and how to try to avoid those. You can only cast an intelligent ballot in the future if you are an informed citizen, and have some sense of what's going on and where it came from. I've always agreed with that. I think that's a fundamental thing that part of learning should be to help you understand what your place is in our society and in our nationhood, if you will.

I think it was Alexander Micklejohn who defined that as the "moral curriculum." That was one of the things that Merv Cadwallader—he had read Micklejohn and he was a kind of Micklejohn disciple when he started his explorations in interdisciplinary study. Micklejohn's experimental college at Wisconsin had been interdisciplinary, and he felt this was the way to get students to frame them to understand what their role was in terms of our democracy. Hence, the moral curriculum. I've always agreed with that. I thought that made good sense. How in the world are we going to know if we're making the right decisions if we've got a bunch of uninformed—as we do today—voters who are going,

“Well, you know, uh, the Teabaggers seem to make a lot of sense. I don’t like taxes, so screw ‘em,” which means you screw the upcoming generation. You cut back, like they’re doing in various states, they’re closing down entire school districts and things like that. I understood that, and I bought into that. I was trying to do my best within the framework of what they wanted me to do at Austin Peay, to provide that sort of knowledge.

Well, remember I said I had this section Monday-Wednesday-Friday at 3:00? Everybody knows 3:00—especially 3:00 on Friday—the only hour that’s as deadly is Monday-Wednesday-Friday at 8:00 a.m. Maybe they’re more deadly because it’s 8:00 a.m. and nobody’s awake. But Friday at 3:00, most everybody—I had a kid come to me at the beginning of fall quarter that year and said, “I’m going to be absent. I can’t be here Friday or Monday.” I said, “Is there a problem?” He said, “I’ve got to go home and help them.” He came from a farming community and his dad owned a farm, and it was hog-killing time. He had to be there to help the family kill the hogs and start smoking the hams, and doing that kind of stuff.

I had never encountered that before. I asked a couple that I trusted, who I knew weren’t going to put me on, and they said, “Oh, yeah. It’s that time of year. They’ve got to be there, because that’s just the way it is.” Austin Peay drew their student body from more rural communities. Kids came from some places where there were still one-room schools operating—very rarely, but in different places. So I came to understand “Okay, all right, I can understand that’s the kind of situation, so go ahead on, make sure you do your good job helping your family put itself through the winter,” because that was part of winter preparations.

I could see all of that, and I knew that the 3:00 section, if I was going to have significant absences, it would be at 3:00 on a Friday. So my effort to impart the same knowledge to everybody meant that in general, I would have to say roughly the same things in five separate lectures over the course of the week. But if I’ve got three that are 50-minute periods, and two that are just under an hour and 20 minutes, how do you do that?

Well, I worked out a little system. I had codes for each section, and I would do my best—because I’d be working off a set of notes and whatnot—to get to the start of wherever I stopped in my 10:00 section, and I tried to make sure that I met that for the 1:00 section and the 3:00 section. Then I had a separate category for the Tuesday-Thursday sections to try to keep them together. I was giving them the same lectures, but organized slightly differently because of the hour and a half period.

I came in on this Monday and called the roll. In those days, I didn't get to know the names of the students. There was a seating chart, and there was a body in that seat. You'd call the roll and somebody would say, "Here," or I could just go down. I didn't even need to call the roll at times because I could just go through and see if there's an empty chair and mark them absent. If somebody came in late and didn't tell me and I missed it, they were still absent officially.

Anyhow, I got through the rolls situation, looked at my notes, and launched into my lecture. I was rolling. I was having a good time. Sometimes I'd get carried away. I do now. [laughter] I was feeling pretty good. This lecture is going okay. I think they're going to get this. I was 45 minutes into the lecture, and at the back of the room—to this day, I do not remember his name because I couldn't look it up fast enough, I had the seating chart somewhere else in my notes—this hand went up. Now, this is a quarter. It's not a quarter and a half, but it's well into the winter quarter.

Nobody had asked me a question at any point in the middle of the lecture to that point since I got there. The only time they would ask questions would be at the beginning and the end to make sure "Is this going to be on the final?" Often I'd say, "I don't know yet. These categories of things are important, so pay attention to them."

Anyway, the hand went up, and I stopped and I said, "Do you have a question?" He started fumbling, and he was really nervous. I thought, what's going on. He said, "Uh . . . uh . . . Mr. Hitchens, I don't quite know for certain. Didn't you give us this lecture on Friday?" I heard from other places around the room people going "Ah!" This intake of breath, because he had the temerity to say something that they thought was going to put me on the spot. He asked me that and I was standing there looking at my notes, and was kind of puzzled, and I thought, well, I don't know. I started looking back through, tracing my little codes and whatnot, and I'll be damned. He was right. I had given them that lecture. [laughing]

So I stopped and I looked at him, and he's very uncomfortable. I said, "I want to thank you for posing that. I have five sections. I'm supposed to tell all five sections the same thing, keep everybody together. You know. Some of you have classes that meet Tuesday and Thursday for an hour and a half, and it's been difficult for me to get used to sorting that out. There's something very wrong here."

**McClain:** He's the one who put the professor on the spot.

**Hitchens:** Right. I said, "I want to thank you for pointing that out. But what's going on here? I had no idea. You had the courage after 45 minutes of hearing me say the same things that I had said on Friday. What about the rest of you? Were the rest of you just going to sit there, and go off and chuckle after

class and go ‘Oh, what an idiot Hitchens is. He gave us the same lecture two days in a row. Hahahahaha?’”

“What’s going on here? We’re supposed to be involved in a learning experience. I’m supposed to be helping you people to understand aspects of how our nation is put together and how it operates so that you can be better citizens. So that when it comes time to vote you make a smart decision about your voting. How can that happen when either you’re so beaten down that you don’t care about your learning, you don’t care? There are things I have to lecture on that personally I’m not a big fan of. I find them dull. I’d rather lecture on other kinds of things. But I have a responsibility. The State of Tennessee is paying me so you people at least are introduced to things that will give you some sort of rounded sense of what it means to be a citizen. That can’t happen if you’re not paying attention. Anybody in here who didn’t recognize that this was a lecture that I’d already given last Friday?”

I looked around and I saw a guy, and I knew he hadn’t been there on Friday. I said, “I know you didn’t because you weren’t here.” He started, you know.

**McClain:** “I don’t know how to answer this.” [laughing]

**Hitchens:** I said to the group, “There is something here that’s wrong enough that I think I have to do something about it. Whatever I think I’m doing as an educator, I’m in this because I’m trying to help everybody learn and understand things. Clearly, that’s not happening if you’ve got people who are willing to hear the same thing, same jokes I told.”

I realized I had an inkling. One of the reasons that I think I was feeling good about what was going on is I thought, well, that joke went smoother than the last time. But I didn’t connect it up, because I was making sure, you know, this section seemed to be, for some reason, out of order or behind. It didn’t dawn on me.

I said, “We’re going to do things differently from now on. I don’t know exactly how, I’ve got to think about it. But I’ll let you know in our next class meeting or so.” I said, “Don’t jump on your compatriot there, because he doesn’t realize it, but he’s done me a huge favor. And all I can say is thank you for having the courage, because you could have kept your mouth shut. I could have gone on, and you folks could have told a funny story about this guy Hitchens over in the History Department who is so dumb, he doesn’t even know that he’s repeating his lecture.”

They all went out and they left. So I sat down and I said, okay, I’ve got to make changes. How do I do this? What is it I think I want them to do? I want them to be able to explain things, or to understand why we vote the way we do, and organizing the Constitution and the challenges to it, and

how slavery was the problem about the Civil War, and all the rest of that. I ran through some stuff and I thought, maybe it has to do—and I thought about those questions that had to do only with “Is this going to be on the final?” I thought, maybe there’s my key. Their only concern, mid-terms and finals, because that’s when things “count.” And they don’t seem to understand that there are other moments; that the whole thing counts. And we’re not transmitting to them the idea that your time in class is there because that time counts in terms of understanding. And if you’re not understanding, if you don’t think anything counts other than taking the mid-term and the final, you ain’t learning.

I decided that at the beginning of each week, I would hand out a list of terms. I would tell them, “These terms are all of the things that are going to come up in the lectures that I’ve structured for this coming unit or this week. If you spend time when you’re studying and reading, pay attention to the way I handle the terms when I’m presenting them in lecture. Because often, I have slight disagreements with your textbook. You may have already noticed. But it’s up to you to decide how you want to handle the way you think you want to understand it. By everything I tell you without question, or you want to say, ‘Gosh, he’s different from the textbook. I think I’d better hang onto the text’? Or, do you sort out ways of understanding it that makes sense to you? And if you make sure that you have reviewed and worked through, spend each week reviewing the terms that have come up, I guarantee you, they will be on the final. I will build the mid-term and the final from the terms list that I’ve already handed to you, so there won’t be any surprises. What I’ll be looking for is I will structure questions, and I will ask you things that will help me to get a sense of, did you understand this? Where did you come down on the issue where it was clear I was different than the text and the textbook said X and I said Y? In what sense did you make of it? Because that will tell me whether you’re using your brain, or working to try to achieve better understanding.”

I put it into effect. It began to go interestingly pretty well. At the end of the winter quarter, and definitely by the end of the spring quarter, when they posted my grades, there was no longer a bell curve. It wasn’t five percent Fs and five percent As, and everybody sort of stuffed in the middle. Things had moved in the direction of As, Bs and Cs.

**McClain:** Because students knew what was expected and they were owning it.

**Hitchens:** Yeah, they were understanding, and they were able to show me, in the way that I structured the exams, how well they understood it. And, as they were understanding it, they were better. They were just showing improvement. I’m going, “Yeah!”

I suddenly got questioned at a History Department meeting. Somebody raised a question about my standards. I said, "What are you talking about?" "Well, what have you done? Your grading seems to have gone to the dogs." I was trying to make sense of that. I didn't have time to explain things to the rest of the department at the time.

I went back to my office, and there was a note. I had been summoned by the Dean of Faculty. Apparently my department chairman had expressed concern to him, and the Dean was curious when he looked at this sudden change. "What's happened here?" I said, "Dean, what are we here for as an institution? What's higher learning all about?" Well, nobody had asked him that in a while. [laughter]

**McClain:** Maybe since his interview.

**Hitchens:** Yeah, maybe, because he was much older. I told him about the Friday section, and how it had started me. I thought, at least what I'm doing isn't doing what I thought I was doing to be a professor. I wasn't into this just to pat myself on the back and act like the star in the front of the room, even though I have said over and over again "No actor ever had a better part than somebody who becomes a college professor," unless you have a one-man show on Broadway. And those don't run 40 years. [laughter]

**McClain:** I'm sure Hal Holbrook can keep being Mark Twain forever.

**Hitchens:** But you've got to move around.

**McClain:** You can't do it on Broadway.

**Hitchens:** No, you can't do it all the time. It stopped me, especially after I said what I had started to do in terms of changing, and reassuring them that there was material there that if they paid attention to it, and had come to understand it, they would, in fact be able to do well on the mid-terms on the finals.

He said, "Can I see one of your exams?" I got it to him, then went back into see him and he said, "This is a tough exam. I'm not sure I could pass it." I said, "You could if you took my class." He said, "Ah."

That was one thing that definitely generated a difference between me and everybody else in the department. Because if I was right—and I think I was—the way everybody else was doing it wasn't working. The whole idea of everybody having five percent-five percent bell curve was meaningless. People figured out they could go in, and close their eyes and check off the boxes, and generally produce a bell curve.

During the course of that first year, I got to know some guys in the English Department. They were upstairs on the second floor of the building we were in. They had a good coffee room. The History

Department didn't have any kind of coffee room, so I took to hanging out with them. The guys there were much younger, in general. Little did I know, but they all felt sorry for me because I was having to deal with Wentworth Morris, the chairman of the Department of History. I didn't know about that till much later.

At the beginning of the second year I was there, I was looking at the structure of things for the beginning of the winter quarter. I'd gotten to know a guy in the English Department named Charlie Watts. In the course of our discussion, I said, "Week two of winter quarter, what are you going to be talking about?" He told me that authors that he was dealing with, because he was teaching American literature. I said, "That's funny because week two winter quarter, I'm talking about these guys, and they are interconnected with your guys. But I talk about it from the standpoint of American political literature, things that came out of the founding period that helped solidify our national understanding of things." I said, "I have an idea. Why don't we trade classes for that week? You come into my sections and do American authors of the period, and I'll come into your sections and I'll do American political literature of the period. My people will get a better understanding of how the so-called creative writing interconnected with what was going on, and your folks will get a better understanding of how the so-called non-creative writing, political writing."

Charlie thought that was a good idea. We went first to Jim Simms, who was the chairman of the English Department, and talked to him and explained what we were doing and why we wanted to do it. He said, "That's a great idea. Have you talked to Went Morris yet?" I said, "No, we're heading down. After we talked to you, we thought we'd find out if you wanted to make a decision now or leave it with you to think about it, but we're going to talk to Morris and let him know that we've talked to you." He said, "By all means, do that. I think it's a great idea."

It turned out the only difference was that Charlie had a section that met Monday-Wednesday-Friday from 9:00 to 10:00, and my earliest one was 10:00 to 11:00. He didn't have anything from 10:00 to 11:00. But we had 1:00 and 3:00. That was our hour and a half monstrosities on Tuesday and Thursdays at the same time period, so it fit very well.

Jim said, "I like it. Do it, and let's see how it goes." So we went down to see Morris. Morris was in his office. He sat there peering at us over his glasses. He said, "Well . . . I don't know. It sounds okay, I guess." That was all. We figured he'd said okay. He'd been informed. We told him what we were doing and why we were doing it. We'd already talked to Simms and the English Department was on board. There would be just this one week switch, and then we'd be back to our regular stuff.



So when the time came, on that Friday, I went in because the time was different. I went in and I met Charlie's class and went off to get a cup of coffee. Jim Simms came to me and he says, "Have you talked to Went Morris?" I said, "Well, no. What's the matter?" He said, "Did you and Charlie talk to Went and get his okay to trade classes? Because I know that's what you've been doing this week." I said, "Oh, yeah. We went to him right after we talked to you, and explained that you were on board." He said, "Well, Went apparently has forgotten that. Went had this habit, as far as he was concerned, your classroom wasn't a sacred place for him. If he had a question he wanted to ask you, and he knew you were in class, he'd just walk in and talk to you and interrupt and ask you a question."

At another point, that first spring I was there, Huge Akerman, who was the fellow that was hired with me at the same time, was lecturing in a room that was adjacent to Morris's office and the History Department office itself. The corner of this classroom fronted on the parking lot right behind. There was a driveway that came in, you went to the right to the parking lot and just had to come across. Apparently it was a spring day and the windows were open. We didn't have central air conditioning at the time.

Hugh was lecturing, and all of a sudden, this briefcase comes sailing through the back window and goes *kerflop* on the floor, startling the students who were in the back row. Right after the briefcase, there's this figure in the window who comes through and drops down, picks up his briefcase, walks up to the front of the classroom. Hugh was just stopped and stunned. It was Went Morris! Grabbed his briefcase, dusted himself off, and said, "I didn't want to have to walk all the way around to go in the door."

A couple of times, he thought he'd left things in that same classroom. I had two sections that met in that classroom. I'd be holding forth, and the door would open, he'd come in and go over to the desk, and rumble through the drawer in the desk. Sort of saying half out loud, "I don't know. The damn thing's not here," and turn around and walk away. [laughter]

For some reason or another, during the time that he thought I was to be in class for my 10:00 section, he wanted to ask me a question or see me about something, so he just walked in the classroom. Of course, we traded, and Charlie Watts is in there.

**McClain:** "Where the hell is Hitchens?"

**Hitchens:** Yeah. "You're not Hitchens." Charlie is saying, "Well, we traded. Don't you remember?" And he couldn't do it right there. Morris went "Grrrr!" and stormed out, slamming the door, and immediately called Jim Simms to ask what the hell was going on. Jim said, "Apparently Went didn't

remember that you and Charlie had come to see him. What I'll do is I've already set up a time I'm going to see him. I'll see what I can do to calm him down."

I got back to my office and I found a message from my bank. I called up the bank and my banker, this fellow I was working with there, said, "What did you do to Went Morris?" I said, "What?" He said, "Went Morris called me a while ago and wanted to know how much money you owed me, because he was going to fire you for insubordination." I said, "What?" [laughing] I said, "I have no idea where that comes from, other than there seems to be a mix-up in his understanding about scheduling. I'll try to get back to you."

I hung up and I thought, that sonofabitch. Before he found out anything for sure, or before anything was clarified, he's calling my banker. Because small-town Tennessee, that's kind of the way things operated in those days, and maybe still do, for all I know. I went back to see Jim, and I'm cussing a blue streak. He says, "Called your banker? I'll meet with him and then I'll let you know." I had to wait around my office and the phone call came through. In the meantime, I'd met another section, trying to finish off the day. The week wasn't ending quite as I had expected it to.

Jim called me and he said, "Well, I think I got it sorted out. I finally got Went to admit that he'd kind of"—I said, "He couldn't remember the two of us coming in, explaining we wanted to do this thing differently, and that we'd already discussed it? We could have come to him first, but we just happened to be closer to you to come see you?" He said, "Yeah, and you probably will never get an apology from him, because he's convinced that at some level, he's right. Come see me on Monday."

In the meantime, I hung up and I was sitting there in my office, and I thought, I can't let this go by. I went straight down to Morris's office, walked in. He was there all by himself. Closed the door. I said, "You four-eyed ring-tailed goddamn sonofabitch, if you ever get into my business like this ever again, I'll put you in the hospital." And I turned around and walked out. As I walked out the door, I thought, I'd better be looking for another job. But I'd lost it. I was just beside myself.

I go in Monday to see Jim Simms, because by this time, my second year there they gave me a private office up on the second floor, and I was catty-corner from the coffee room where the English Department was, which had solidified my interactions with the guys in the English Department.

It just hit me. It was Charlie Waters. Boy, I'm glad that popped in, because I knew when I said Charles White, that was wrong. And Watts, I'm thinking Charlie Watts? He was a football player. Charlie Waters.

So I went in and Jim says, "Have a seat. We've got a job opening up next year, a position in the English Department. We think we'd fit it well. On behalf of my colleagues in the English Department, we would like to offer you [the job]. We don't need to advertise it because you're already here, and we'd like to offer you a position in the English Department with us." I was floored.

Got back to my office and the phone rang, and it was the Dean of Faculty asking me to come over to see him. He'd gotten some word about what was going on, and he didn't quite know how to handle it. But he'd also been informed by Jim Simms in the English Department that they were going to offer me this position. He'd looked it up and he said, "I know, as an undergraduate and on the graduate level, you were close enough, you almost had a double major in history and literature." On the undergraduate level, I was four hours short of a double major, and I had minored in literature on the master's level. He said, "If your degree said American studies, it would be a wonderful shift. We won't lose you, given what's going on. But I'm afraid the accrediting folks wouldn't understand it."

So, I'd gone from down here, to back up here, and starting to cycle back down. I went down and I checked the mail. There was a copy of the bulletin of the American Association of University Professors. In those days, they carried job announcements in the back part. I sat down, and I was looking and reading through the job announcements. The Frostburg State College in Frostburg, Maryland was looking for a 20th Century U.S. history specialist. Well, my specialty is 20<sup>th</sup> Century diplomatic history, but I had enough of the other training that I could fill that slot, too.

I immediately knocked out a letter and sent it off to them. The next thing I know, I'm getting a response, and an invitation to come for an interview. So, I went there and interviewed. I liked the department chairman, and I liked what they wanted me to start teaching, so I said, "Okay." Got back to Tennessee and said, "We're moving. We're getting our ass out of here. We're going to Maryland."

**McClain:** You had a whole bunch of little kids.

**Hitchens:** Yeah, by that time, we had four. Denise was born in '65. We headed off to Frostburg, and when I hit Frostburg, one of the things I discovered is that part of my teaching load was I had one section of Survey U.S. History that met Monday-Wednesday-Friday, but it met in the college auditorium, because I had 175 to 200 people, and I'm lecturing to this big batch of folks.

I realized, as I was looking around, that the English Department had American lit introductory class that met in the same kind of situation, and Political Science had introduction to political science that met in the same kind of situation. I thought, there might be a different way of doing this. I contacted some of these guys in other departments. I took the cue from my experience with Charlie

Waters and trading classes, and how well I felt that had gone ultimately, because it had given my students a peek at a slightly different approach, but showed them that there are connections that are ongoing.

I told them what I had done about trading for a week, and that between the two of us, we thought it had been very beneficial. It gave us a slightly different audience, and it allowed me to talk about American political literature in a way that I hadn't talked about it before.

**McClain:** How did the students respond?

**Hitchens:** The students liked it. It's something different. So I said, "Since political science and history and English"—I wasn't sure about a couple others, but I thought there might be a couple other departments that we might want to bring in on it, maybe sociology or something like that—"What if we got together and divided up the semesters into units, and each one of us would offer our unit to the whole"—we could fulfill our responsibilities for introductory stuff for major areas, and reduce the individual load, each of us being responsible for 200 people, maybe more, depending on how we wanted to divide it up—"for a certain amount of time in each quarter. Everybody would contribute to that, and we'd have this kind of . . .

**McClain:** . . . coordinated studies.

**Hitchens:** I didn't have the term in my head at the time, and I wasn't visualizing it as an integrated . . .

**McClain:** . . . full-time curriculum?

**Hitchens:** I wasn't thinking interdisciplinary. That term popped up later on when Rollins College reached out to see if I wanted to come down there, because they were doing interdisciplinary studies. But I was noodling in that direction. It was like, if we put a bunch of things together, maybe what we could do is divide things among us so that we'd each have discussion groups. Could we have a core reading list? Of course we could. I was sort of stumbling, fumbling in that direction.

And I was quite surprised. I had the English Department and the Political Science Department, where there were younger guys there who thought, if we've got to do these big lectures, it's a way of continuing to make sure they're done, but we can do them differently. It would have probably ended up looking very much like some kind of coordinated studies program before it was all over with.

It was Richard Jones who came up with the name for coordinated studies. He won a half-gallon of Scotch. [laughter] I think it was Chivas Regal, although in those days, the Scotch that was his personal choice was Usher's Green Stripe. Of course, that's central to all of this. [laughter] During the

planning year, the deans had said, “We’re trying to describe this team-taught theme-oriented interdisciplinary approach, it’s got to have a better name.” So they announced this contest. Whoever came up with the best name, in their judgment, would win a half-gallon of Scotch, so there was a little incentive there.

**McClain:** Did you have an entry?

**Hitchens:** I had several entries. I didn’t take it all that seriously. I proposed a few funny things. One of the things was I took Don Humphrey’s and Charlie Teske’s and Cadwallader’s names and combined them. I said, “We would call them HumpCaTeske Units.” [laughter] I would do little cartoons and circulate them around, and somehow Charlie McCann managed to snake copies of everything that was circulating around what the planning faculty was doing. He would routinely send copies to the Trustees, so they could have a sense of what we were doing.

Years later, I was looking at something out of the Archives, and there it was, my little thing about HumpCaTeske Units, as well as some of the other things that people had submitted. A little later, I had done a sort of Jules Fieffer-esque cartoon, and there’s a Xerox of that in the folder in the notebook. I talked to Charlie about it and I said, “I had no idea you’d been paying that close attention.” He said, “Well, what did you think, that I was going to turn you crazies loose?”

**McClain:** And he’d keep his finger on what was going on.

**Hitchens:** Yeah. That gave me an even greater appreciation for Charlie’s acumen and his way of understanding how to lead from the middle.

**McClain:** Right.

**Hitchens:** I think back about the Trustees buying the guy who told them everything they didn’t want to hear, and him having the courage to say, “You hire pros, you hire people you think are going to do the best job, and you stay out of their way, unless they fuck up. It will be obvious if they are, and if you jump in fast enough, you can avoid a lot of the damage. But for the most part, they’re not going to do that. They’re not going to mess up. If you encourage them to go for it, that’s what they’re going to do.”

That whole approach, the sort of intellectual side of that, is what really worked, I think, for all of us. Because as long as we were within the rough framework of the things—no departments, no requirements, no grades, things like that—whatever else we came up with that was going to make sense—especially make sense to him—it was going to be okay. It turned out to be like that.

**McClain:** Imagine, there were 17 of you?

**Hitchens:** Eighteen. The only trouble is you mostly see 17 because Fred Tabbutt was still on contract at Reed, so he was on quarter-time here. He would come up, he'd spend a week with us. Sometimes he'd just be around two or three weeks in a row, he'd be up for a day, and then he'd be back. He didn't have a huge impact, but he made some contributions at certain points, which I think probably worked out pretty well for us.

**McClain:** You were all pretty different in some ways.

**Hitchens:** And already, each of us had established or had been doing things differently, and understood certain things pretty well. We discovered that we could then be in agreement, even though each one of us—the strange thing about the planning year was you had 17, 18 people in the room with these three founding deans, and you'd think nobody can agree on anything. Each one of us had a different idea about how and why.

But early on, we made the decision to do things differently. Richard Alexander made a pitch to us based upon his understanding of how the Quaker meeting worked. He argued to us that we should strive to achieve consensus. We made the decision, wherever possible, we weren't going to vote on stuff, we were going to work for consensus. If we could achieve consensus on an issue, that would make it stronger, and make it more likely to work in the way that we were hopeful that it would work.

The other thing we decided was that we would rotate the responsibility to chair the faculty meetings among us. I don't know whether this is a compliment to my abilities, or whether they decided that they'd found a chump that they would stick with it. But I was the only one on the planning faculty to serve two consecutive months. Everybody else served one month if they were acting as chairman of the faculty meetings.

I had two consecutive months, and it turns out—it was in the spring when we were making some pretty big decisions about coordinated studies and the curriculum and things like that—I got some compliments from folks after that. I wasn't paying a whole lot of attention.

**McClain:** Too busy.

**Hitchens:** Yeah. But as I said, I don't know whether it was a compliment to my ability to get these disparate folks to finally come together and achieve consensus, or whether they thought, "Ah he's dumb enough to do it. We'll stick him with it. Hahahahaha. We'll go off and do other things."

**McClain:** Here it is, fall of 1970. You're looking at trying to get a college to open its doors and bring students. Charlie's probably busy getting the facility built, or at least figuring out where things are going to go.

**Hitchens:** My first day on campus, they began to pour the second level of the Library Building. The steam tunnel areas had all been dug out. I went out to where the flagpoles are, where the circle comes in, to look out over what is now McCann Plaza, and it was just piles of dirt, with these trenches in front, and the beginnings of, I could see them pouring stuff there. I brought a sandwich with me, so I was standing out there and munching on my sandwich—July 1, noon of 1970—I thought, you know, I've only lasted two years at any other place to this point. I wonder how long I'm going to be here? I ate my sandwich and I went back.

By the end of the week, Charlie McCann's secretary, Rita, called me up to say that the President was inviting me to be his guest for lunch on Friday at the Jacaranda.

**McClain:** I know where that is.

**Hitchens:** We went to lunch. I'd been introduced to him earlier, but he wasn't around for interviews or anything like that. He was leaving that up to the Provost and the deans to handle. But he took me out to lunch, and I had a wonderful time. It was the first time I'd ever spent much time at all with the President of one of the institutions I attended. I spotted right away that this was a different guy from those other people that I had encountered who were Presidents.

Over the course of the rest of the summer, before the rest of the planning faculty convened, he invited the deans and me out a couple of times to the President's residence, because they were finishing stuff up. I remember one day in particular, he'd been listening to them talk about something, the decisions we were making, and he asked me, and I reinforced it. I said, "Well, I understand it pretty much the way this is," and I sort of chimed in and reinforced what the deans had been saying. Charlie kind of smiled and said to Merv, "Where did you get this guy?" [laughter] I think he was kind of startled that it was clear I understood the things that we were talking about trying to do. But we couldn't do too much because the rest of the planning faculty wasn't there, so they put me to work helping draft the first draft of the faculty handbook, things like that.

I got to know Malcolm Stilson in the Library, and discovered that there's all this money available to acquire books and things, so I started ordering. I would call up Malcolm and we'd talk about things.

He came to me one day at the beginning of the fall, after the faculty had convened, and he said, "We've got an opportunity for a deal. Do you think this a good deal? If we spend \$50,000 on microfilm

with University Microfilms, they'll give us three microfilm reader/printers included in the deal free." I said, "When you say microfilm, what kinds of things are they offering?" He said, "Well, the *New York Times* from 1852 to the present." I said, "Go for it!"

We still have in the Library this chunk of magazines and newspapers from the 19<sup>th</sup> into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It's been there, and I've tried to encourage students to go use it, and they discover it's a great resource if they get to it. The reader/printers, I think, have been superseded, and microfilm is kind of an outdated media form these days, but still, I wish there had been microfilm more available when I was doing my research. I was having to pull down big, bound volumes of things and go page by page.

**McClain:** I used to work in an old Franciscan archive. They were dealing with huge volumes of bound periodicals.

**Hitchens:** Those things were heavy, and bulky. If you dropped one on your foot, you knew it!

**McClain:** You were trying to put a college together at the same time you're hiring next year's teaching faculty, writing catalog. How on earth did all of that work out?

**Hitchens:** And working with people in Admissions if they had questions about students, especially borderline students. Because we told students that we weren't worried about GPAs, and if they had had difficulty, but they felt like they understood what we were wanting to do, and really wanted the opportunity to come here, if they'd write an essay and get a supporting letter from a couple of teachers that they'd had, that would help them, and that would help us make decisions on their behalf.

One of the guys—I've forgotten his name now—that we managed to admit under that particular structure was a kid who won the Golden Eagle Award at the Cannes Film Festival before he finished his undergraduate career at Evergreen. He'd been interested in media. He was a film buff. He didn't care about anything else that was going on in high school, so he didn't pay much attention to the demands that they were trying to make. Algebra? What do I need algebra for? I want to make films.

**McClain:** He probably would have withered at the state university system that you were withering in as a faculty member, it sounds like.

**Hitchens:** Yeah. First of all, he wouldn't have ever been admitted because of his grades. We always figured that somewhere somebody would have shown somebody something, and if we could get them to tap into that and we hear, then we could make more intelligent decisions. I think we were right.

We also told prospective faculty that we were as much interested in life experience as we were in credentials. A lot of people didn't believe us, but we were honest about that. One of our early



faculty, it turned out he had done a whole lot of work, but never quite finished some degrees, but had done a tremendous amount of work in philosophy. He was encouraged to apply, so he lied on his resume. He was a quarter-hour short of one degree, so he'd never been awarded it and he'd never done anything about it. But he said he had the degree.

This came to light about our third year, I think. We'd hired him, and he was a wonderful teacher. By that time, Ed Kormondy was the Provost, and Ed called him in and said, "Somebody mentioned that they didn't think you had the degrees you claimed. We've done some checking, and we're sorry to say you don't. Because you lied on your resume, we can't keep you." We lost somebody very good because he didn't trust us. He didn't believe that what we said was real.

Gil Saucedo was sort of a last-minute hire. We'd hired somebody who had had an accident or something. Couldn't come. Dave Barry had connections back at San Jose State, and heard about Gilbert, and just sort of hired him to fill in to plug that hole. Gil only had a bachelor's degree.

**McClain:** Is that right?

**Hitchens:** I kept encouraging him. "Get a sabbatical and go off and get your doctorate. You don't have to mess with a master's degree. You know enough that you can just jump in." Richard Jones chided me. He thought I was somehow putting Gil down. I said, "No, I just think it would give him more punch." Because every now and then you'd run into somebody who would say, "Well, I just discovered Saucedo only has a bachelor's degree. What makes him think he's up there on your level?" I said, "Because he knows a lot."

And because we weren't worried about credentials in the early days, just like we were letting people in who were lower than the bottom of their class, or we were helping people who'd been dropouts to get a GED and get into the college. We were looking at people we thought would provide good learning, and be strong members of the faculty to help students learn. Those were moments when we were clearly able to do things differently than our compatriots at Central and UW and WSU and elsewhere, and keep them around long enough to show that it paid off.

**McClain:** Right. Evergreen is one of the few places that's actually managed to hold onto a lot of its core innovations over time. And yet, it's probably fair to say that had it been created a few years in either direction, it might have never been that kind of college at all.

**Hitchens:** No. We were almost, because of budget crises that popped up halfway through the planning year—January of '71, the Legislature immediately were . . .

**McClain:** . . . “You can’t have this.”

**Hitchens:** And their first thought they were going to delay us for a year, so we wouldn’t open to students until ’72 instead of the fall of ’71. We managed to avoid that, but we confronted our first budget cut . . .

**McClain:** . . . before you’d even opened.

**Hitchens:** Yeah, we didn’t even have buildings finished and they were cutting our budget. They were saying, “Well, you’re not going to grow. We’ve got to”—so the original growth plan was we were going to have 25,000 students by 1984.

**McClain:** I saw that.

**Hitchens:** And you probably saw the plans—phase 1, phase 2, phase 3—of campus construction.

**McClain:** Right. Football stadium. [laughing]

**Hitchens:** The wisest thing that Charlie McCann ever did was convince the Trustees that we did not need a football team, in terms of our academic program. The biggest problem that he may have saddled us with in the long run convincing the Trustees we didn’t need a football team, so there was nothing that people in the immediate community could hold onto.

**McClain:** Get excited about.

**Hitchens:** Yeah. Then the basketball program sort of slid in under the closing door. I don’t know to this day how that happened. The guys who were most influential in structuring the basketball program are no longer with us. They got that going, and they went off to go to other schools and be administrators at other places.

**McClain:** How have we been able to hold onto as much as we have as a college?

**Hitchens:** Well, because we, unlike other places, built everything from the ground up. We didn’t have to go into an already-established institution with formalized tenure structures and whatnot, like UW. The institutions that would survive all of this that are sort of contemporaneous with us—Santa Cruz—they didn’t stay the same. There was, I think, Ramapo State in New Jersey that started out to be different, and they didn’t stay the same. Capital University in Illinois, Empire State, they were different enough that they in effect became a college that’s organized around individual contracts, without our kinds of coordinated studies programs.

Hampshire has, I think, stayed fairly close to its founding principles. But they were slightly different from us at the time they were formed, and they’re private. It was the Seven Sisters and other

groups that pulled together and created Hampshire as a separate institution, because they somehow understood the way to make coordinated studies work is to do it from the ground up.

At Rollins, when I got there, they were talking about the hourglass curriculum. They had the first three what they called foundation courses. I think I've told you, those looked like half-time coordinated studies programs ultimately. They had the first three in operation, but when I got there and I was elected to the Curriculum Committee, they were trying to convince the older tenured, entrenched faculty to open up and help finish off the three capstone courses that would complete the hourglass. So it was broad interdisciplinary here, and then in the middle of your time, you did the specific focus work—your major—and then it was broad interdisciplinary as you were leaving and moving out into the rest of the world.

That got real mean. It was like pulling teeth, these older guys saying, "Oh, you know, these young whippersnappers. I've got tenure and you don't." Then there began the possibility of tenure fights, where people like me who had been hired and brought in to help finish this off, who'd had crossed swords with these older, entrenched guys. They said, "You can't get away with this, so I'll show you. I'll just crush you when the time comes, when you're up for tenure."

We didn't have to mess with that kind of stuff. We didn't have tenure. We had a series of finite contracts. Things were renewable. And because we were going to evaluate ourselves, each other, and students, and students were going to evaluate us, we figured that that would prevent people from dying from the neck up. You'd have to stay on top of things. You'd have to be thinking and trying to expand, doing something different, or taking something you'd already done and refining it, and doing it differently the next time you did it.

Which is the way I've tended to operate in my time at the college. Because, again, I bought into it. I didn't have a name for it, but I'd already been a proponent of the moral curriculum before I ever heard of Mieklejohn. Got here and got to know Mervin. I'd been following my nose, trying to do things that seemed logical. I was like Br'er Rabbit. "Don't throw me in the briar patch." Wow, how did this happen? Here I am at a place that's wanting to do things, or at least is encouraging me to do the things I'd always wanted to do. And I'm going to be an integral part of the institution. Wow. How great is that?

**McClain:** Yeah. I'm just thinking about Richard Alexander introducing the whole notion of the Quaker consensus. Did introducing that idea into your work as planning faculty have a direct effect on how you

initially saw the administration of the college working out? For instance, the series of contracts, peer review as opposed to departmental review and oversight, were those values playing out?

**Hitchens:** We very early on made the decision as a faculty. We made a deal with the Trustees. We would give up tenure if they would allow us to structure the college the way we wanted. McCann sold it to them, and they bought it.

Also, Charlie was not a fan of standing committees. He'd been Dean of Faculty at Central, and he had seen standing committees develop. They had hardening of the categories, for lack of a better term, and ended up aggrandizing power and functioning in particular ways. The whole idea was we were never going to be run by standing committees. The other thing that Charlie didn't want us to do was to allow us to have the Registrars run the college the way they do in traditional universities.

There were some things that we were consciously saying, "We're not going to do it this way." So if we're not going to do it this way, how are we going to do it? What makes sense? And somehow or another, those of us sitting around that table all the time could achieve consensus. I don't know how often when I was running the meetings, I'd say, "Well, I think we've hit it. I think we have a consensus at this point. Anybody here object? If you don't think we've reached it, say so now. If you feel like we've achieved consensus on this issue"—and I would state it the way I understood it, and it would go into the record that way and that was it. No votes or anything.

If somebody wasn't satisfied for one reason or another, they raised the issue right then, and then we continued on, or we agreed "Let's put it aside for the next meeting. Let's talk about this, that and the other among ourselves, think about it some more, and then we'll bring it up at the next time."

We were doing it much differently than—the idea, when we created the Agenda Committee, I thought, oh, here we go. And when the Hiring Committee became sort of solidified, I worried about that, too. As long as we had these rotating things, where it wasn't the same group of people all the time, I thought we were more likely to hang onto our sort of core values.

We also had such a good run at it from the beginning. Some of it had to do with the way, when we hired the next 35 people, and brought them in with us, and began to civilize them, for lack of a better term, the way we got them to buy into. I've mentioned several times over the course of the years that my sense of things for the first year with students was it was earn-while-you-learn time. Students would spot things and they'd be worried, and I would think, wow, I've got to pay attention to that because that's something we didn't think about. I think that was all part of the shaking-out period.

Early on, we also had moments. Mervin Cadwallader, in about our sixth year, put forward an idea. He was concerned that he never expected us to buy the idea of what became coordinated studies as the central learning experience of the institution. His experience had been inside preexisting, functioning institutions with dual tracks, the traditional track and the interdisciplinary track. There was a part of him that always believed that was the way to go. We had a little bit of trouble. I was off in Australia when this popped up, so I was on the outside of it and wasn't involved in any of the discussions, and the college had seemed to solve its problem as a result of it. But in the fall, of, I think, '75, Mervin put forth a plan that would have had us have two tracks. We would have had the traditional track.

**McClain:** Kind of modular-type studies and discipline specific?

**Hitchens:** Yeah, and that would allow students to move back and forth as they chose, so that there would always be options. For students who got here and suddenly realized they weren't real comfortable with interdisciplinary stuff and team-taught coordinated studies kinds of programs, there would be a refuge. And people who suddenly got tired of that, they'd have a way out.

It caused a bit of a ruckus. You can look back and find records of that. The result was that Mervin left. He lost that particular battle, just like he was stunned when the planning faculty voted for coordinated studies as the major curriculum structure, reinforced by the idea of individual contracts, which would allow students to go as deeply and as intensively as they were able to into a topic or an area of study. I think he was just completely stunned. He'd had this idea it would a part of, because that's what his experience had been. We said, "Hey, let's make it all. Let's make the whole thing. That will be the showcase of what we're doing." And we pulled it off. We had enough people who stayed around long enough that I think that helped project it into the future.

Right now, I don't know. If you asked me what my sense of things is for the future, this whole year, the faculty has been involved in this RETALE thing. RETALE is the acronym for Rethinking Teaching and Learning at Evergreen. I'm thinking, uh, we've got enough younger faculty who came straight out of graduate school and this is their first teaching experience. Whereas all of us, especially those of us who were on the planning faculty had experienced a lot of things, and were completely disillusioned about the traditional way.

I have never badmouthed the traditional structure. To my way of thinking, one of the great achievements in higher learning has been the state university in the United States of America. That opened it up to people who would never have had access to higher learning in Europe and elsewhere.

When I got to Australia, I was stunned to discover there were only 12 institutions of higher learning at the university level, and less than one-half of one percent of all—they call them school leavers instead of high school graduates—were admitted to university when they applied. Murdock was trying to do something different. They were also trying to appeal to the older student who hadn't been able to do these things and wanted to come back to school, and I thought this an opportunity. They got interested in me because of my experience here at Evergreen. I thought it was a chance to export some of us over there.

It would have been just fine, except that Murdock had also been burdened by the federal university system with establishing a veterinary school. So the folks in the sciences had this vet school that said, "You've got to do things a certain way." They had used that, and we suddenly had the two cultures. There was science and there was everybody else. The science guys thought that we didn't have standards—back to standards—and it was like, oh, I'm going back home where I don't have questions raised about "Why do you do things this way?" "What's the purpose of this?"

So, hanging on to the core values, there's something about the strength of them by themselves that I think, when it comes right down to it, there have been efforts—when Olander was President, he tried to get us to sort of give up our core standards. It didn't work. I was surprised then that there were those that coalesced around "No, we believe in these things. This is the way we structured it and we want to continue to see them operate into the future, and that's how we're going to go."

But with the younger faculty, I just don't know. I don't know how—it seems to me that we're not doing a very good job of melding them in to join with us in the enterprise. It's allowed them to think more in terms of narrow, specific, personal agendas.

**McClain:** Yeah. I can't remember, but at some point, I sent out an e-mail to folks pointing to some particular historical document from early in the college's founding. Steve Herman called me up and asked me to lunch. [laughing] I went and had lunch with him and he said, "I really appreciate it that you sent that. I think we need a primer for new faculty of some of our core, historical documents, something that people can point to. What were the key points along the way where critical decisions were made, and the thinking that happened?"

**Hitchens:** And we were going to have a social contract rather than a code of conduct, and those sorts of things.

**McClain:** Right.

**Hitchens:** At various points, there's an older document that Rudy Martin and Dave Marr put together called the M 'n M Manifesto that you might want to take a look at.

**McClain:** Yeah.

**Hitchens:** I suspect you might find, if you were able to spend the time going through some of the Archives and some of the stuff that Randy Stilson has of folks on the planning faculty, or look at the stuff that McCann transmitted to the Trustees, you might find an interesting trail of stuff. Because ultimately, once we made the decision, he had to sell it to the Trustees. But he found that he'd sort of greased the skids better when he had kept them informed. They had a sense of what was going on.

**McClain:** They didn't get surprised.

**Hitchens:** Yeah, exactly. And they knew what they were doing when they made the deal with us that we would give up tenure if they would allow us to create—we weren't going to do anything super-weird and strange, we were going to do something they could be proud of. Because that's what we were after.

One of the earliest things I remember Don Humphrey saying in a meeting was that the reason he was at Evergreen was he felt that the traditional state university had become a place that hurt people because of their rules and regulations. He said, "I want Evergreen to be a place that doesn't hurt people." So there was that kind of mood and sensibility that circulated around. And we could be in agreement. No, we weren't trying to hurt people. We were trying to show people that learning is a lifelong thing, and that we give you some tools to take with you, and if it worked, you'd be able to be a better citizen, and you'd be able to cast a more intelligent ballot, maybe even participate more actively.

We've coughed out at various times some stunningly influential people. Matt Groening. When *Time Magazine* declared that *The Simpsons* was the greatest sitcom of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, I was stunned, because Matt's sensibility still reeks of Evergreen.

**McClain:** Did you have him as a student?

**Hitchens:** Not directly. I was his sponsor when he had the internship as editor of the *Cooper Point Journal*. I didn't write his evaluation or anything. He was working with somebody else. I can't remember who was doing that at the time. It was before Dianne Conrad came. I had signed an evaluation, but I hadn't written it. He had a field supervisor and somebody different. My policy there has always been to ratify the validity of what the field supervisor says has gone on, so I didn't have any

experience with Matt the way I would have if he'd been in my seminar in a coordinated studies program.

The people that sort of popped up who have become significant in terms of John Bellamy Foster was a student in the Individual and the Citizen and the State. I believe he was in Dave Marr's seminar that first year, there were students in that first program of mine. If he wasn't in Marr's seminar, he may have been in Kirk's seminar, but I think it was Marr. And Bob McChesney. McChesney worked with Tom Rainey when he was here. But they published a lot of stuff, and they've had quite a bit of influence. One of the things I do remember about Foster is that he was clearly an intellectual as an apprentice toward being a college professor when he was here. It was real obvious.

Rita Pougiales was in that program, too. Again, I think she may have been in Marr's seminar. If she wasn't in Marr's, she may have been in Betty Ruth's Estes seminar. She wasn't in mine, so I can't claim to have had any direct influence on her or him in that regard.

**McClain:** I think your influence is in a lot of places, though.

**Hitchens:** Well, it's surprising. I have a friend who's on the faculty. He's teaching graduate students in psychology up at Antioch in Seattle. His name is Phil Cushman. He was down last week, and he brought with him a little note. Because in the early '90s, I was teaching in the Great Books Program, and I had a student in my seminar, her name was Maureen Nickerson. Turns out Phil Cushman is Maureen Nickerson's dissertation director/advisor at Antioch. She sent me this little thing saying, "You probably have no idea"—she said in her note—"when I met you, I was a high school dropout, I was a street urchin, I didn't have much direction in my life, and you were my first college professor. You did it. It's all your fault."

**McClain:** Now look at me!

**Hitchens:** Phil said he often would ask groups of students up at Antioch where they came from. Where did you do your undergraduate work? Now and then, somebody would say, "Evergreen." He would say, "I've got a good friend down there. Do you know Dave Hitchens?" And he said, "Up until this fall, he'd had nobody until Maureen popped up." Apparently, they had a good time telling stories at my expense. [laughter]

**McClain:** I don't want to wear you further.

**Hitchens:** Are we getting to the stuff that you're interested in?



**McClain:** I'm interested in all of what we've talked about. I really am. Though I would love to come back one more time and talk to you a bit more about your teaching, and teaching philosophy, and how that played out at Evergreen, people you taught with.

**Hitchens:** I've had the good fortune to teach with a lot of folks that, I think, are Evergreen all-stars.

**McClain:** But I don't want to be imposing if this is too much.

**Hitchens:** This is great for me.

**WOMAN:** He likes to talk, can you tell? [laughter]

**Hitchens:** And I no longer have the podium, I no longer have the outlet.

**McClain:** I'm happy to be your audience.

**Hitchens:** I don't want to bore you to tears.

**McClain:** Not at all. Not at all. Nancy Koppelman talks about it as being someone who drunk the Kool-Aid at Evergreen. I have a case of true believerism. I love talking about the college. I didn't go there, but I worked there from a young age. I started working there when I was 23. I grew up in town. I went to St. Martin's, but I used to gravitate over to the other side of town.

**Hitchens:** One of the guys who's currently on the faculty—he's still on the faculty at St. Martin's—was in my seminar group back when I got back from Australia the second time in '79-'80, Dave Price.

**McClain:** Yeah, he's very well regarded.

**Hitchens:** He was clearly another one of those people who students would look at and sort of pegged him. Before the year was over with, they were calling him "Dr. Price" because of his approach to things. After he worked with me that year, he ended up with Mark Papworth. Mark was the one that, I think, steered him toward anthropology. But he's had stuff published in *The Nation* periodically.

**McClain:** I don't know if you ever knew Mike Contris.

**Hitchens:** Oh, yeah.

**McClain:** Newspaper. He was my faculty, and I worked with him his last four years he was alive.

**Hitchens:** He was one of the people, when I got here for the planning year, one of the things I discovered was he was an ally of ours.

**McClain:** Yes, he was.

**Hitchens:** Publishing stuff regularly on the editorial page about his anticipation about what Evergreen was going to like, and what it was going to bring to the community.

**McClain:** I think he had a lot of respect for Evergreen.

**Hitchens:** I was introduced to him and chatted with him several times, but I can't say I became a friend of his, but I knew him.

**McClain:** I've been thinking a lot about him because his wife just died. He died 26 years ago, but his widow just died a couple weeks ago.

**Hitchens:** He had a son?

**McClain:** Several sons—five, I think, in fact. They lived over here. In fact, I think Russ Fox and Carolyn Dobbs bought their house. Small world, small-town thing.

**Hitchens:** Yeah. You know Carolyn is recovering from—

**McClain:** Yeah. The other night I was out and I saw her, and she looked great. Talked to Russ for a minute. I didn't talk to her, but he says she's going well.

**Hitchens:** That's good.

**McClain:** She's between treatments right now. I think I mentioned I had lunch with Rudy on Thursday, when I saw you.

**End Part 1 of 2 of Dave Hitchens on 5-28-2011**

**Begin Part 2 of 2 of Dave Hitchens on 5-28-2011**

**McClain:** . . . publicity chairman for the Eugene McCarthy campaign in Congressional Districts 4 and 5 in the State of Florida, and that made me a bit of a target, a figurehead. I have attended a KKK meeting in my lifetime, and was horrified by what I saw there and experienced. More than once, I've had my phone tapped that I know of.

When I was in Florida, because I was so well known—my name was out there publicly because of the antiwar stuff and McCarthy campaign—I had a guy call me up, and he spent two weeks calling me every evening between 7:00 and 7:30. He would describe what my children had worn to school that day. He just couldn't understand how I could be exposing my children to potential harm, all of this communist stuff that I was involved in.

I called the police department in Winter Park and found that they had no jurisdiction. I was out in the county. I was in Orange County. So I called the Orange County sheriff's department and they transferred me to a guy, who I realized I had been talking to every night for two weeks, this voice on the other end of the phone.

**McClain:** This was in Florida?

**Hitchens:** Yeah.

**McClain:** Wow. That's chilling.

**Hitchens:** I came out one morning about two weeks after that, and right next to the water meter in the front yard had been burned. They'd poured a little gasoline in the shape of a cross and they burned it in the grass in front.

**McClain:** Subtle.

**Hitchens:** Yeah. I called the FBI and they said, "Well, we're sorry because there's nothing we can do until or unless you've experienced a direct personal threat to your well-being, or to the well-being of your family." I said, "What? Somebody's got to come up and shoot me or knife me?" They said, "Well, pretty much." I said, "You're no help."

That summer, when the primary was over with, McCarthy ended up pulling 35 percent of the vote in our two districts. Suddenly we had all these professional Democrats—who hadn't given us the time of day when we'd gone to them to try to start the campaign—wanting to know where we got the money for the billboards the TV ads. We just said, "Screw you."

I taught a summer class that summer, and at the end of the summer class, this fellow—and I'd noticed him because he always wore a coat and a tie, and he sat kind of straight toward the back of the room and seemed very attentive—came into my office and said, "I'm glad I caught you. I just wanted to let you know I didn't expect to learn as much from you as I did, and my report is going to reflect that." I said, "Your report?" He said, "Oh, I guess I ought to introduce myself."

He reached into his jacket pocket and he pulled out this oblong leather case and opened it up, and it was his U.S. Army Intelligence identification badge. He informed me that Army Intelligence and Naval Intelligence had been dragooned in. There was so much activity around the country of people that were being alleged to be security threats and communists and antiwar and this kind of stuff that there weren't enough FBI agents to go around. So people like him, he'd been assigned to take this summer class of mine and find out who I was. He said, "Whoever figured you were a threat to the American way of life, if I find him, I'll thump him for you." [laughter] And he left. I just sat there and went "My goodness".

**WOMAN:** Your story on the KKK is definitely one that needs to be shared as well. You've shared that with many students over the years.

**Hitchens:** That was one of my teacher lectures in the spring quarter.

**End Part 2 of 2 of Dave Hitchens on 5-28-2011**