

**Tom Rainey**  
**Interviewed by Stephen Beck**  
**The Evergreen State College oral history project**  
**August 9, 2017**  
**Part 1 of 2**  
**FINAL**

**Beck:** This is Stephen Beck. I'm back with Tom Rainey on August 9, and back in Tom's living room. Tom, last time we covered a fair bit of ground, and I think there are some questions I still wanted to ask you. A couple of things about some of the controversies that came up over the years. But you mentioned, early on, that you were involved in the hard card campaign for the union, bringing the union to the Evergreen faculty back in the '70s.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** How did that come about? What were the main motivations that led you and some other faculty to push for a faculty union then?

**Rainey:** There were a couple of aspects of that. One was another one of the crises we faced, not of enrollment or that sort of thing, but of legislators who were very vociferous about closing the college and turning it into this, that and the other. My perception, and the perception of a number of faculty members—David Marr and a couple of others—not Rudy, Rudy was not involved in it really, but David and Matt Smith and a few others—we felt that somehow, the administration at that time was not fairly representing the faculty.

It was at that time, I think, that we discovered that we were being paid, with a workload that was, I thought, bigger than, say, someone that was at Western or Eastern. We were not making comparisons with faculty at WSU or the University of Washington. But we were falling behind, and we continued to fall behind. So, just in a conversation that David Marr had with a representative at a conference of AFT that couldn't understand why we weren't creating—we had all these concerns, and he was talking about them, and why didn't we create a union, and offered to come and talk to us about it.

At that time also, I was involved in pushing to have some kind of, not faculty senate, but some kind of faculty body where we discussed those issues and those problems—the curriculum standards and those sort of things—that are the purview of the faculty and not of the staff. I just thought we had to have a separate voice. And at that time, as you probably know, there was opposition on the part of

faculty—like Willi Unsoeld, which I understood—that felt that that would not be equitable as far as the staff and other people; that we should all be one voice.

But it also had to do with my perception of the structure of the school. I had taught in three schools before—Duke, the University of New York at Buffalo, and the University of Arkansas—and they had strong faculty senates, which were the representatives of the faculty and the faculty voice. So, the way I perceived—the term I used for the school at that time—it was like Plato's *Republic*, with electricity—they really did have a hierarchy, not within the faculty so much, but a hierarchy—and that we needed a stronger voice as a faculty on questions of benefits and salary and that sort of thing. And I didn't feel at the time, as a number of other faculty did not feel, that the administration—I will not name presidents or anything of the sort—was pushing our interest or representing our interest.

So, that was one factor. And I felt that, yes, we should have a union. The major concern of a number of faculty that was opposed to that was that would put us in an adversarial position with the administration, and I argued not necessarily. That would just give us a voice that, in a sense, is institutionalized.

So, Peta Henderson and David—David wasn't very much represented in the actual structuring of the union—a number of us joined the AFT. The major problem, as we discovered, was that, unlike the community colleges—I almost called them junior colleges, that's what they were called in New York when I was there—unlike the community colleges, where the faculty with similar experience levels were being paid more, they were already unionized. So, most of the people I met around the state were from community colleges, particularly the Seattle ones and Yakima and so on.

I think the other thing that's back of that is that I was at institutions where, if it had not been during this tumultuous time of the '70s—early '70s and late '60s—if we had not had a strong faculty voice, we would have had dictatorial presidents that were essentially telling us what to do. I sort of experienced that at the University of Arkansas, which was an institution they wanted a football team to be proud of.

But the problem was that we didn't have enabling legislation, and so much of the struggle was to get enabling legislation, which was from all AFT chapters. And we nearly got it. We missed it by one vote in the senate.

So, the AFT's representative that we had then suggested that we see what the real faculty concerns were, and that the best way to do that is to do a hard card campaign. Now, we could not have organized a union without enabling legislation—that was the perception then—and we did. And 62 percent of the faculty signed up. Even a couple of the deans were, at that time . . . and I think one of our

saving graces then, and later, was that the deans actually did come from the faculty. So, it was not aimed at autocratic deans or anything of the sort. It was largely a perception that we should speak for ourselves through the union, on benefits, on compensation, everything. So, it was, for me, an act of faculty sovereignty and autonomy, and a union would give us that autonomy.

At the same time, I was agitating for something like a senate, without the structures even, but the procedures of a faculty senate that I had experienced at Duke, for example. There were a lot of people that felt the same way. I'm not quite sure if they had felt differently if we weren't, again, in one of these crises that we seem to be periodically. We're like the five dynasties of China, I think—consolidation, crisis, revolution, consolidation and crisis and so on. We were going through this almost cyclical experience here.

I guess the other reason I mentioned that, to put the crisis around—at least bracketing—what we were doing, is the one we're going through now, not really with the exception on what's happened on the questions of equity. That was not an issue then. I hope I'm not sounding jaded, it's just the latest crisis that we've had. So, that was the general circumstance.

When we didn't get enabling legislation, and it was not possible really to set up a chapter and have anything to do meet at Spud and Elma's and have a few beers, then people just lost their interest. Actually, we had a budget, people paid dues, and so ultimately, when it got down to about 10 to 15 people, we just decided to dissolve the group. The question was what to do with the money? Peta set it up as a fund—I think she was our secretary—Peta set it up as a fund that any faculty could, as a union would have, any faculty could call on if they needed some support for anything that happened within the school of a legal nature. So, that's the general circumstances of it.

**Beck:** How long did that last from the time . . .?

**Rainey:** Oh, I would say mid-'70s to early '80s.

**Beck:** Early '80s? And that's pretty much when it—

**Rainey:** Yeah, we disbanded in the '80s.

**Beck:** And then, of course, the enabling legislation for the four-years came through in the early 2000s, I think it was.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** Were you involved at all in the organization of the current UFE?

**Rainey:** No, I was not.

**Beck:** You retired by then?

**Rainey:** Well, I retired nominally. I'm a failed retiree, as you know. [chuckles] But I retired nominally in 2000. I had a heart attack and a stroke, and my perception of it is that I retired too early now, but it seemed like the right thing to do at the time, because I didn't know how I was going to recover from those, and I recovered quickly. Good genes, I guess.

**Beck:** Yeah.

**Rainey:** I recovered pretty quickly, and have been teaching some ever since. [laughing] So, I wasn't part of that. I encouraged it, and I think I was one of the first people to join. I remember, when the staff—was it two years ago, three years ago?—when they were not represented yet by the union.

**Beck:** I think it was two years.

**Rainey:** It was the housing people.

**Beck:** Student Support Services Union.

**Rainey:** Right, Union—when they were having trouble getting recognition here, they called on me to talk about these earlier efforts, and why I thought all of us needed a union. I'm still a very strong union member. [chuckles] I say "strong" union member. I don't take much action.

**Beck:** But strongly behind the union.

**Rainey:** Absolutely. Absolutely. So, there was that notion then that I could not quite understand when I came from Buffalo [laughing] of, why, we're all just one, big happy family here. We're glad to be here. This is a wonderful experience for all of us. And I felt that way, certainly. Immediately accepted, not only even on trial, the notion of us not having ranks at that time was great. I particularly liked the fact that we had rotating deans. So, I personally not feel threatened in any way by speaking out on things, or I didn't feel the kind of pressure that I felt when I was an assistant professor, for example, at Duke, and I had to see what the senior professors were doing.

So, the faculty were very welcoming, and the staff were very welcoming, and we had a kind of rude egalitarianism that I thought was very good. But at the same time, I began to see that each of us, because of our working conditions, have different needs, and we need some united voice to express those needs.

**Beck:** One of the arguments that I've heard over the years against faculty unionizing is that faculty academics are professionals, and professionals don't unionize.

**Rainey:** It that right? The AMA is not a union, is it? It doesn't lobby for doctors? Virtually every professional organization in this country has some sort of collective representation, some collective body that lobbies for them, and that protects their interest, and sets up professional means. Veterinarians do the same thing.

**Beck:** So, basically, you consider that line of argument . . . ?

**Rainey:** I don't buy that at all, never have. We're workers. And part of the ideology of professionalism has been that you're not. That's a way to separate. In some ways, I thought that having our union—and I encouraged staff, at that time, to form their union—is a way that equals who have different needs, and different working conditions, and different working atmospheres, could achieve a kind of egalitarianism—that's why I've always supported the staff unions—and egalitarianism with teeth in it. The union, I don't believe, has been divisive, as far as the staff is concerned. They led the way in unionizing, and I was very much approving of that.

To use the old saw, my perception at Evergreen is that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. And if it's many wheels united together squeaking, it has more power.

I think the other thing that I've always felt, I assume that any relationship is a political relationship; that power has something to do with that relationship, and if you have an institution of higher learning that has an administration, they answer to a board of trustees. Since the great examples at Wisconsin, with the creation there of the whole notion of academic freedom, and collective faculty organizations that protect it, was that AAUP protected academic freedom.

So, I frankly see a union as another way of expressing our academic freedom, or defending our academic freedom. If we don't have that, then what do we have in the way of encouraging inquiry, sometimes unpopular inquiry, into difficult social, political and economic problems. I think that the stronger the collective voice, the greater the academic freedom. I've heard the argument to the contrary, which I don't think has happened in faculty unions at all around the country. I don't think that the WEA dictates to me.

**B:** Let me ask about some other tumultuous times at Evergreen, and your experience with those. You mentioned that there were the times in the '70s when various legislators were trying to close Evergreen down.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** Any particular recollections of that period, other than just the fact that they were trying to do that?

**Rainey:** I would link that, I think, to community perceptions as much as anything else. The perception of many people in this county, and in South Sound until Dan Evans became President—Dan was our President at a very important time in our development, it seems to me, and I'll say something about that. But the perception that many people in Rotary, for example, in Kiwanis—the business community here—was very much like that of Hamilton Farms; that this was a crazy place with all these anarchists

and homosexuals and weird people. But the community was more conservative then, because Evergreen had not worked its way with Evergreen faculty here.

I joined Kiwanis specifically because I wanted people to understand in the community that we were not that weird, and that we didn't have two heads, and we could talk with reason and so on. Oscar did the same. Charlie did the same, joined the Lions Club. So, I thought we should join, and participate in community affairs in a way that would, I guess, allay the fears and the negative perceptions of Evergreen.

That was, I think, a continuous crisis, in a sense, that we didn't have a lot of support. We didn't have a lot of students coming from high school in the county to Evergreen, because of what I considered to be false perceptions. The dynamic of that is that at the same time that we had that reputation, we had a lot of faculty—Byron [Youtz] and Rudy [Martin] and a number of us—that were [sighs] beginning to firm up, let me say, our educational philosophy. And much of that educational philosophy was a philosophy that recognized that we had academic standards, that we had expectations of our students. So, this was a tumultuous period for us, as we are sort of defining ourselves, and what it is we do at Evergreen, and why we do it and so on.

A number of us ended up, I would say, far away from the Summerhill model—I would say that—and from what I would perceive as the anarchic model. We'd have discussions like authoritative and authoritarian. I consider myself authoritative, but I'm not an authoritarian. That gets back to a discussion we had before about why it is I lecture. I am an authority on Russian, European and Eurasian affairs and studies, and if somebody wants to learn about that, they can learn it from me, and they can learn it from other people.

So, I wanted to convey the fact that we weren't all that strange, that we had high expectations, many of us—I think most of the faculty. The scientists figured this out a long time ago at Evergreen, and they organized themselves in much the same way that they are now. It's interesting when you talk about a crisis of identity or anything, it's only been in the humanities that we feel that [laughter], not in the sciences or environmental studies here. They've known what they're about, and have known how to set the standards for students and so on.

I guess I would call it an antagonism between perceptions of what the school was like, which some people still have, and the State. What's changed that, I think, is the fact that Evergreen students have graduated; decided to stay here; they liked this area. There was a time when every county commissioner except one had been a former student of mine. We had Greeners in the Legislature, we

had Greeners in political office, and we had Greeners who were stealing the internships from the University of Washington, in the Legislature, and in the Governor's office and that sort of thing.

That was our sort of continuous crisis of trying to decide who we are and what our standards were, and at the same time, try to convince people in the state. And I could see the change after about 15 years. In the State and the Legislature, we had defenders, so it made voices to close the school that would come from yahoos, I don't know, I won't say where because I may have a student who might be offended if I talk about their hometown.

That's still the case, that's still the perception, clearly. You read it in the newspaper from time to time. But again, Dan ended that crisis period. I wouldn't say Dan did much at all for the curriculum—he shouldn't have, that's our business—or that sort of thing. Dan was very supportive of the way we were teaching. And Dan sort of looked at the school as his baby, because he fought with the Legislature initially that it would be a different kind of school. It would not be like all the rest of the schools.

But Dan could play hardball. He'd go to Kiwanis, or he'd go to some meeting and say to town people here—City Council and Chamber people—he said, "You want to close the college? Do you understand what that would mean in terms of loss of income in this community? Do you understand the multiplier effect?" [laughing] That's the way Dan did it, and so Dan was, in some ways, as a President, our best representative. Charlie was good. I'm not saying Charlie was bad, but Charlie is not Dan. Charlie is an academic.

**Beck:** Dan was a three-term Governor.

**Rainey:** And a damn good one. I haven't voted for a Republican, but I did vote one time for Dan. [laughter] I mean, even Brad Owen, who just retired as Lieutenant Governor, was one of the people that was after our hide. But their charges about the school began to seem, as some public opinion began to shape, as ridiculous.

**Beck:** A little later in Evergreen's history, there was another President we had.

**Rainey:** Joey O.

**Beck:** Yeah.

**Rainey:** Broadway Joe, we called him.

**Beck:** What was your experience with him? There's a lot of controversy around—

**Rainey:** I did not have any particular personal bad experience, but I have a perception of him that I would share — you talk to three people, you get three different opinions about Joe.

Joe's way of dealing with the faculty and the institution was to divide and conquer, to divide and rule. I don't even know if he was aware of that. I do remember one time that he reminded us of his

Italian background. I asked Joe after he did that, “Is it the Mafia side that you remember, or is it the Renaissance politics part of being Italian?” One of my favorite novels is Pär Lagerkvist’s *The Dwarf*, where a dwarf does all the assassinations while the duke maintains this outer visage of munificence. So, he was very divisive, I would say. There’s no particular act that I could point out that was terrible, except his dismissal of Patrick Hill.

But, I must say, he succeeded, because there were defenders on the faculty right up to the time, people I never would have expected would have defended Joe. And when David Hitchens and Craig Carlson got the dope on his real credentials, rather than what he had said his credentials were, which was the start of the unwinding of him, so that eventually, the Board of Trustees had to do something about the situation. But we were sort of constantly at each other, largely, I think, due to the way he—it was certainly a crisis. I remember the faculty meeting, when some colleagues—some of whom I respect, some I don’t—some colleagues attacked David and Craig for exposing these credentials. Because Joe was very clever at making deals with “I’ll get money for you to do this,” “I’ll get money for you to do that.” So, he had his defenders, but I think he had a very destructive—it took us a long time to recover from him.

But I didn’t have a personal vendetta against him. Some faculty did. But the joke that went around after [was] that Joe made more friends for Patrick than Patrick made. Not that Patrick was Machiavellian or anything like that, but Patrick had this maddening—and I hope Marie never reads this—I like Patrick and Patrick liked me, so it’s hard for me not to like somebody that likes me. But he’d go to, let’s say, Mark, and say, “I’ve been talking to Tom about this, and he thinks we ought to do it this way.” Then he’d go to me and say, “I’ve been talking to Mark.” He was an Irish politician. And I liked Patrick, but some people were really turned off by that.

What was good about Patrick is he did push this whole notion of a learning community. So, he had pedagogical ideas, and he supported the way we did things, and suggested refinements and that sort of thing. But I ended up not [laughing] entirely trusting what he said.

Yeah, Joey O. was very destructive.

**Beck:** Do you think that the whole divisiveness that developed under Joe had any lasting repercussions on the faculty?

**Rainey:** Absolutely. Absolutely did.

**Beck:** What were those lasting repercussions?

**Rainey:** Well, I will just use one example, and that is my dear, departed good friend, David Hitchens. David was so, not shattered, but he was so disappointed with this faculty meeting. This was a faculty



meeting much like the faculty meetings I've heard that have happened recently. [chuckles] Because, I guess, Joe had supported the Tacoma Campus, or something like that, one faculty member got up, and attacked David particularly, as being a white boy. "This is white boy's concern," because actually, he had supported the Labor Center. Joe did support the Labor Center, and got money for the Labor Center, and he got money for the research center that was set up, the Public Affairs Research Center [that is, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy]. So, he would do this. He acted like a Renaissance prince, in that sense. But finally, it just didn't work for him. So, David never went to another faculty meeting, nor did Craig. David hunkered down and taught his programs. I taught The South with him during that time, and Looking Backward.

Bit by bit, crisis by crisis, with faculty taking different positions on it, it was divisive for the faculty. We didn't have quite that camaraderie, that level of trust for each other, after. That's what Joe did. So, it was divisive. I think it was. And there are other examples of that.

**Beck:** Can you think of any right now?

**Rainey:** Well, I'd have to name names, and I don't want to.

**Beck:** Okay. But other faculty, it sounds like, felt as though they were no longer able to trust some of their colleagues as a result of it.

**Rainey:** Yeah. Which is kind of precisely what I think Joe, consciously or unconsciously, was up to.

**Beck:** He left sometime in the early '90s it must have been?

**Rainey:** Yeah.

**Beck:** I wasn't in the area at the time, so I'm not sure exactly. What was the college like, I guess, for the next near-decade until you retired?

**Rainey:** After?

**Beck:** Yeah.

**Rainey:** I view the '90s as the period when, despite some of these divisions and lack of trust and so on, as the golden years for Evergreen. The best years.

**Beck:** Why is that?

**Rainey:** Maybe my experiences. [laughing]

**Beck:** Okay.

**Rainey:** The best years, where, certainly for me, we had worked out in Language and Area Studies the sequence, where I was teaching the Russia program every two years. We were doing all this. People retired and we could hire someone. Andrew had to retire just before he died, and so it was not hard to hire somebody to replace him immediately.

My teaching experiences then were uniformly great. There was an individual crisis here or there, but, again, other people will tell you other things about it, but the '90s were the best years for me.

**Beck:** Was that when Pat Krafcik was hired, to replace Andrew?

**Rainey:** Yeah, Pat was hired to replace Andrew.

**Beck:** And you taught in the Russia program with Pat a few times?

**Rainey:** Six times. Andrew, five times. Andrew and I created the program. Maybe it's in the '90s I finally had worked out my way, and other faculty had worked out their way, to easily teach in faculty teams. Every once in a while was a real rub and a blowup and so on, but it didn't seem to be as—we got used to each other in the 20 years.

Mark Levensky put it this way. He was talking to Rudy, and to Pete, and to Beryl, and we were talking at the dinosaur table, and [he] said, "You know, the good thing about where we are now is that"—there were about 10 of us there, a big group—"any of us would be able to sit down and put together a program in three hours."

So, there was trust within the faculty, but it was not with the whole faculty. It was with the experience that you'd had with teaching people, the respect that you would have—for me—for their intellectual heft and their curiosity, and their willingness to transcend their disciplinary—but keep their discipline. One of the things that I remember that we talked about is hiring people that had experience with interdisciplinary teaching, which was good. But I remember the argument—I think it was Merv who made it, I certainly made the argument—that teaching interdisciplinary program without people that are strong in their disciplines is an oxymoron.

**Beck:** You have to start with disciplines before you can be interdisciplinary.

**Rainey:** Exactly so. You take a problem and you look at it from a historical standpoint, or an evolutionary standpoint, or cultural standpoint. That sort of thing. That, to me, was in the best programs that I've taught.

For example, when I taught a program with Byron called Discovery, Exploration and Empire, Byron gave a series of just absolutely brilliant lectures about the scientific revolution—Newtonian physics. Bob did the same, mostly on insects. Bob gave a lecture one time on wasps that would bring tears to your eyes. [laughter]

I don't know, in some ways, I felt good about myself that I'd reached a level of excellence in teaching, and knowledge of everything I was teaching, and the joy of learning new things. And all of it applying back to history. Every interdisciplinary program that I taught in, from what I learned from my

colleagues, made me a better historian. I don't hear that anymore. It may be out there, it may be experienced by people now, but I don't hear that as much as I did then.

**Beck:** I wanted to raise another conception of interdisciplinary programs, just to hear your response to it. You've said that interdisciplinary programs need to begin with faculty who are strongly grounded in their own disciplines.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** There's another view that I've heard; that really, disciplines themselves are decrepit, and we really need to not worry so much about being grounded in disciplines, but rather bring whatever it is we can to the table from whatever area of study there is out there, and focus on a particular theme. But nobody needs to be grounded in any particular discipline. We could read some sociology, we could read some sociology with some psychology, find a good psychology book. We could read a history book, and as long as all of the faculty are committed to studying a theme, wouldn't that be good enough?

**Rainey:** Well, all I can tell you, Stephen, is that I would not want to teach with a person that has that philosophy. I would not want to teach with that person, because I wouldn't think I could learn anything from them. I'm looking for a word of someone that knows a little bit about everything, but not much in depth about anything.

**Beck:** The jack-of-all-trades idea?

**Rainey:** No, there's a better word for that.

**Beck:** Dilettante?

**Rainey:** Dilettante! That's dilettantish. That would be my view of it. I certainly would not want to teach with somebody in that program, and I would say I've got 45 years of teaching interdisciplinary studies, and I've only had one failure in that time, in terms of working with somebody, or what I've learned from them, and I trust what they've learned from me. I don't see how you could learn anything about a current social program, for example, without understanding how it developed, which is to say, from a historical standpoint. So, for that reason, I must say that I don't buy what I hear. "Well, all you've got to do is read a book, and anybody can teach history, anybody can teach literature." And, I confess, this might reflect that I am becoming an old fogey.

For example, in our current hiring, there is no substitute for hiring a professional historian with a Ph.D. that has studied historical methodology, has a strong specialty area in it, has studied historiography and philosophy of history, and all the things that we study in graduate school. So, I just don't buy that at all. Furthermore, I don't think the students would buy that. [laughing] I think for students, in terms of teaching by example, historians do look at things in a slightly different way than a

philosopher or something. But taking a problem or an issue or something and looking at it from various perspectives, and trying to elucidate it from various disciplinary perspectives, I think, leads to a higher understanding of it. As I once joked to a student, I came to Evergreen to discover I had academic standards, and they're very high. [laughing] But that's one of them. I would not want to teach with somebody like that, but that's very dilettantish.

**Beck:** Good. After the golden years of the '90s, you retired.

**Rainey:** Yeah.

**Beck:** And you've been in Evening and Weekend Studies pretty much since then. We talked a little bit about that last time.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** In looking back at the whole of your career, what stands out to you as being a particular success at Evergreen, something that you're particularly proud of at Evergreen?

**Rainey:** I'm very proud of the Russia program, and I'm very proud of what we've done in Environmental Studies. I'm proud of what small contribution I made to the MES program. And I used to be proud of Political Economy, but for reasons that I talked about last time, I'm not so proud of that anymore.

What I'm . . . I don't know if pride is the word, but . . . I'm very happy about the way I've spend my 45 years here. And I'm like an old horse in the traces, in that sense. One thing I'm actually trying to break now, in preparation for real retirement [laughter]—when I stop teaching—is that the way I teach is when I teach something I've never taught before—for example, what I just taught, Pacific Rim Rivals—it's an opportunity that I actually like exercising in Evening and Weekend Studies, where I'm really partially retired, so I have a long time to prepare for that. For example, when we taught The Classical World, I must have read 20, 30 books on that. All of my life since I was an undergraduate, I've read in order to teach. I've read in order to understand things. Now, entering my not-too-tender eighties, I'm wondering how I'm going to do.

I'm proud of the students that I've been associated with. As I've said before, if I have any chance of immortality—I'm not a believer, and when I die, the screen goes dark. That's it. But if I have any chance of immortality, it's in the minds of my students. And the things that I've written, but in the minds of my students. Things I've written will be quickly forgotten, and in a couple of generations, too, my students will not be my students.

But for the 45 years that I've been here, I've never been more than two years separated from students. I've filled in for Rob Smurr and I did a series of lectures I'd never done quite like that on Stalin, because that was the program Territorial Expansion in his program. Most of the students there had not

known that I had been associated with a Russia program, so they were not sure why this big fellow coming in talking about Stalin knew what he was talking about. [laughing] So, each time sort of created anew.

I'm very proud of Bob McChesney, and I'm very proud of Tom Wilkerson. But teaching has been my life, and I'm very happy that I've spent my life teaching, and I'm very happy that I've spent my life in scholarship, and I'm very happy that I've spent 45 years at Evergreen teaching.

**Beck:** Did you happen to have Matthew Frye Jacobson as one of your students?

**Rainey:** I think so. I'm beginning to . . . yeah. Somebody came up the other day at a political thing and said, "Tom, what you said in So-and-So changed my life." And I said, "And your name is?" [laughter]

**Beck:** Well, Susan and I used part of his book, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, in our program this past year. He was an Evergreen student, a little ahead of me. I think he was here in the late '70s, early '80s. He went on to get his doctorate at Brown in American studies, I think, basically history.

I know that when we were talking about doing these interviews that there are some things that you were thinking about with respect to the future of Evergreen you wanted to talk about. What were you thinking about? What are your thoughts about Evergreen's future?

**Rainey:** Well . . . I'm not sure. I mean, I . . . I'm not sure how Evergreen will pull out of this current crisis. And I don't have any great ideas to confer to anyone about how to do this. I don't.

**Beck:** You mentioned to me that you had some concerns.

**Rainey:** I do have concerns, and the concern come from the incident in May. We were talking earlier about my estimation—and, again, I'm not interested in indoctrinating students. What I'm interested in is helping students to become critical thinkers. As Hemingway says, developing in students a "crap detector"; that when they hear an idea or an ideology or a view, they know it's crap because there's no evidence to prove it. It's somebody's idea, and they're trying to sell me something—an idea, or some ideology, or something of the sort. Skepticism in the best sort of way. I'm well-named Thomas, I guess. I've been a skeptic all my life. Not a cynic, but a skeptic. And students that know something that they can talk about, eventually with some authority, or know something that will help them understand how the body works, or the psychology of fascism or something like that. But to give them writing skills, thinking skills, critical thinking skills, and the only way we can do that is to have an institution of free inquiry.

That incident, I think, to me, was the greatest danger that I have seen at this institution everywhere, where a faculty member was shouted down, called names, and something beyond ad hominem attacks. And these were ad hominem attacks on a faculty member. That is destructive to the

community, it seems to me, because it has caused in a number of faculty—not this one, because what do I have to lose about saying what I think about everything that’s gone on? I know there are faculty here, I’ve talked to faculty here, that are afraid to say anything, because they’re afraid to be labeled as homophobic, or labeled to be racist or sexist or something of the sort. What has been created here by this incident is an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship. You can’t have free inquiry in a situation like that.

I guess I’m a left-leaning liberal, if I’m anything. And I’m conservative in some things [laughing], but I guess what I see—and this may be, I hope not, the coup de grace—but this has raised the issue again, it seems to me, in the minds of citizens in this state, of the usefulness of Evergreen and the Evergreen method. Because it was supposed to be, in some ways, the freest place, where students and faculty and others could express their opinion freely, without being attacked physically, or without being attacked verbally. I just don’t see that anymore. I don’t see that kind of freedom of inquiry that we had. That’s my biggest fear for the future of Evergreen. I think it’s had such a pernicious effect that people are wondering; “I’m not going to send my child there.”

I’m a white person, and still have relics of racism, because that’s the way I was raised, and I have struggled with it my whole life. I freely admit that every once in a while, there’s a little wrinkle of that that comes up in my thinking. I don’t think it’s ever occurred in my classroom.

But Evergreen has now joined the great polarization, it seems to me, of opinion. Right here, it happens. I think that incident, in particular—building up to it, it was happening in the faculty, but it went public. That incident went feral, and I think it’s done serious damage to Evergreen. And will continue.

**Beck:** I want to just touch on that a little more. One line of thought is that, well, yeah, there was a lot of anger and a lot of shouting that students of color were doing during that incident. That’s coming from the experience of being excluded, and being discriminated against throughout their lives. And then to come to Evergreen and find it to be continuing there, some would say that this is actually an expression of well-founded anger and frustration. What are your thoughts about that?

**Rainey:** [Sighs] All I can say to that is I think that they have done their cause more damage than they can possibly imagine in the way they did it.

The larger thing—and this can be recorded—we are facing, I am absolutely convinced now, we are facing the greatest constitutional crisis and threat to what little democracy we do have, what freedoms we do have. And we do have a lot of freedoms. If this were South Africa, they would have been shot down, of course, before what happened in South Africa with the . . .

I am frankly looking at this with the largest political spectrum I can, [and] what has happened, in my opinion, is that identity politics, whether it's on racism, whether it's on homophobia and homosexual rights—which I absolutely support, as every sane person I know does—or sexual equality. I've got a wife and children to prove—a half-black grandson to prove—that at least I've been able to get over some of my sense of entitlement that I had as a white boy from the South. [laughing]

Identity politics is dividing the left at a time when the left should be united, or try to unite themselves, at least in the face of this danger, and it's not. What I see identity politics as doing is factionalizing any possibility that we can face this crisis against what I see as creeping fascism. And that is the larger question; that is the larger struggle. If that side wins, it will be a blow to everyone who's struggling for their racial identity be recognized, for every equity issue to be recognized. And it's there. It's there on the faculty. It's there on the faculty. I mean, people that disagree with what happened are just as important for the unification that's necessary to give some kind of voice to that.

Now, I am somewhat heartened by the large demonstrations of women, the large demonstrations of gays and lesbians, and the demonstrations against the racist policies of authority. But what I see it as doing is playing into the hands of Jeff Sessions and people like him, so that he can stamp out as much as he's able to do—if he's got the backing of the Legislature, which he may have—to restrict voting, to restrict all of the progress that we've made, and we have made considerable, it seems to me.

I grew up in a society where there were separate bathrooms. My hometown had a sign as you came in, as late as 1942, where I grew up—and I loved my hometown at that time—“Nigger, don't let the sun set on your back in this town.” That was the way I grew up. That's the way most of the South was. And when people tell me that there has not been made any progress towards dealing with racial equality since then, I just say, “As a historian, I see that as a monstrous lie, and an exaggeration of their particular position.”

And I understand. I have a half-black grandson who's more black and African-American than he is white, and he identifies himself with that. I would join the struggle to keep the fascists from doing what they're doing for my grandson, as much as anything else, and for my Hispanic nieces and nephew. So, I see it as I understand it. But I watched just such politics—single-minded, single-identity politics—destroy the left during the '60s. And the result was Richard Nixon. That's my view on it.

**Beck:** Well, and you can admit that there's been progress, without admitting that we've achieved equality, that we've achieved equity.

**Rainey:** Far from it. Far, far from it. But what they did to Bret [Weinstein] in that moment—and believe me, I have supported virtually nothing that Bret’s done since then—but what they did to Bret does more damage to their position than anything else, because it has alerted, it seems to me, those people in this state that have some positions of authority, who are taking the position that that was an infringement of free speech. And it was.

So, what I’m saying is, yes, Martin Luther King knew how to do this struggle. Right? But they don’t have the power to do more than do the shouting, and they won’t get the power when they drive away possible allies to their struggle. And I consider myself an ally to that struggle.

**Beck:** Yeah, good. I wanted to ask you about some other concerns that you raised. You raised a concern about the liberal arts at Evergreen as well. What is that concern?

**Rainey:** Well, the symptoms of that concern, I should start with that. Okay? As people in the humanities have retired or died, they have not been replaced. Part of that I understand because of budgetary restraints, and declining enrollment and that sort of thing. But the other part of that is what I perceive of some of the solutions proposed at the national and at the local level, that you have to prepare people just for the jobs that they may have. The problem with that is that the jobs that they have now or they can get will not be the jobs of the future.

Only liberal arts, broadly defined, can help a student develop the kind of critical thinking, the kind of problem-solving, that they’re going to need for jobs that they don’t know what will exist. So, preparing people to be part of the great cybernetic revolution, the jobs that a technical school is preparing them for may be gone by the time they get out and go to work.

The larger problem is that the jobs just aren’t there anymore, because they’ve been exported elsewhere. But I still believe that we’re not in the business just to prepare people for jobs and employment and so on. We’re preparing citizens, people that have critical faculties so that they can understand when they’re being lied to, when they’re being manipulated. And I don’t see a technical education as doing that.

There’s this great line in Harry Braverman’s book about the difference between German education in the nineteenth century and American and British education based on utilitarianism, as he puts it, by rule of thumb. At the time that the Germans are developing the best theoretical physics and theoretical chemistry, it has no immediate application, but eventually will. And it made Germany able then, in the late nineteenth century, to leap ahead. Without the war, Germany would have become a major rivalry to the United States as an industrial power. And it’s largely because of their respect for philosophy, their respect for literature, their respect for theoretical excellence, and developing ideas



that didn't have immediate application. So, what we are doing is reverting to the worst aspects of the American educational system, in the name of anti-intellectualism.

**Beck:** It's reverting to the utilitarian, purely practical.

**Rainey:** Purely practical, right.

**Beck:** And you see that at Evergreen?

**Rainey:** I see that at Evergreen because there are two areas that are in serious trouble at Evergreen, liberal arts—now, it's not the same as it was at the University of Florida and most schools where I was an undergraduate. You had schools of arts and sciences, and the sciences were there and there were the rest of us, in history and philosophy and so on. The best of the scientists would also have to take humanities—all of them had to, in the College of Arts and Sciences—and it's in the humanities that they learned critical thinking.

Now, they learn empirical thinking in their science, and how you judge the validity of a statement, a scientific statement, or the validity of a scientific discovery, or a scientific theory or something. So, they learn essentially to be skeptical about that. But I see that in serious decline at Evergreen. And, you know, the immediately past Provost, I thought was supposed to be working on that, but I think that was just nominal.

The other area I'm terribly concerned about is language and area studies, and it's for the same thing. Now, the science programs at Evergreen, it's almost as if we have the two cultures that were talked about at Evergreen, so far as I can tell, in Environmental Studies and the sciences, M to Ois still one of the best interdisciplinary preparations for anything you're doing in geology, or anything in the hard sciences. They seem to be just fine. It's in the decline of humanities at Evergreen that most concerns me, because that's what helps, I think, our students to develop the kind of knowledge and critical skills that they need.

**Beck:** Particularly in area studies and the languages, you see it there?

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** Here's a softball for you. What's so important about area studies and languages?

**Rainey:** Well . . .

**Beck:** I know you spent 45 years preparing to answer that question.

**Rainey:** Oh, that's easy. Donald Trump and born-again nationalists in the United States notwithstanding, this is a global world, and we don't have a universal language yet to communicate, and I hope we never do. Language and area studies help students study different cultures from themselves, and that ends up leading them to maybe critical thinking about some of the things they were taught

about their own culture and their own society. Language studies are important for communicating with people. They make global citizens. Now, there are people in this country that are not interested in global citizens, but only in parochial citizens, so to speak.

We live in a world, if we don't understand what's happening in China, and if we don't understand what's happening in Russia, we only understand half as much as we need to know to become a good citizen, voting for a particular person to be President of the United States. And the current crisis that we have, I think, is an excellent example of an affirmation of what language and cultural studies will do for a person, will help them do. I'm just sorry that I didn't start Chinese about [laughing] . . .

Our students will have to function globally, in a global economy, and language and area studies prepares them for that, whether it's Latin America, as the Mexican Americans continue to take back the territory that they lost in 1846 [laughing] in the southern part of the United States, now English is the universal business language, but people better learn Chinese, they better learn Russian, and they better learn Spanish, in this country, if they want to function well, it seems to me, in a global economy, and in a global society, which is what we have.

**Beck:** Were there other concerns? I remember you mentioned several things.

**Rainey:** Is that enough on language?

**Beck:** If it's enough for you. I'm interested in hearing anything you have to say about the importance of area studies. It's certainly something I have a strong belief in.

**Rainey:** At the very least, our enemies, of course, can be friends. I was opposed to the Vietnam War; most difficult decision I made in my life, because I was a proud veteran—I am a proud veteran—of the U.S. Navy, and my time in the Marine Corps and so on. I think the war was a mistake. It was a terrible war. It divided American society. And Vietnam is now one of our major allies in Asia.

And a knowledge of Russian history, a knowledge of Russian foreign policy, I can't convey to large crowds enough that they need to know, to be an informed citizen, about what Russia's up to now. But the big one is China. The big one is Asia, and if our students don't learn about Asia and China, and China's ambitions, and China's economic power, they're not going to understand the dynamics of the twenty-first century, the international and global dynamics. So, once again, we pull, like a turtle, our heads in, and say we're just interested in fortress America, and what's happening here. And the elephant of China will step on that turtle and smash it.

**Beck:** I think you said something the other day about learning Russian; that is was only once you learned Russian that you felt you could really understand Russian history.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** I'm assuming that that has something to do with the way in which the Russian language frames perception and knowledge.

**Rainey:** Yes.

**Beck:** Is that fair to say?

**Rainey:** Well, there's two parts. The older I get, the more I love my own language. I love Shakespeare. It's Shakespeare for the language for me now, for me; not just for the content, but Shakespeare, like Russian writers of the nineteenth century, plumbed the depths of every possible human condition or circumstance, or human experience. Language helps you do that, too. Knowing your own language does that. In a strange sort of way, I did fine in literature when I was in high school, and I learned how to write the language fairly well in graduate school and in undergraduate school. But I didn't know English grammar until I studied Russian. [laughing] I didn't know what a nominative case was.

There are two things that I'm beginning to do. I read a little Russian every day. I'm beginning to do algebraic problems, and I'm even reading a grammar book. And all of this is sort of fighting off dementia. [laughing] I'm sort of convinced the more active I keep my mind, the longer I'll be here, at least not just in spirit.

**Beck:** But learning Russian helped you to understand English better?

**Rainey:** Oh, it helped me understand English better. And the spillover is this, from language studies to the humanities, the serious study of literature of any people gives you the best avenue of understanding the inside history of a people, as studying mythology does in studying the ancient world, and studying their language and their literature.

**Beck:** You also mentioned a concern about advanced study at Evergreen.

**Rainey:** Yes. I guess I should repeat this for the tape, if I haven't done it before. I remember a conversation that I had with Kirk Thompson after one of our endless discussions about advanced studies, and how we were going to do it. Kirk said that Evergreen threatened to become the best community college in the state, and there are two barriers, it seems to me, to doing advanced study at Evergreen. They absolutely do it in the sciences here at Evergreen. In Environmental Studies, they do advanced work, and language and culture study, I see as a way to do advanced work.

But the way we thought about doing it, and the way we actually did it, in my estimation, was with group contracts. But that gets at one of the major problems I think we've had with advanced studies. Advanced studies are, by nature, more selective, taken by students that want to know something—American history, Russian history, something of that sort, or philosophy in more depth.

That means that if you hold that study to the strict ratio we have, the student to teacher ratio that's been opposed, essentially—then you may have six people that want to understand ancient philosophy, but you couldn't run the program. You couldn't teach it.

The language studies programs have been well-enrolled, for the most part, I think. But in other areas, if you wanted to do advanced work, we'd have to do it in such a way, it seems to me, that you subsidize it with a lower ratio of students to teacher. But if it doesn't get a certain number now—certainly in Evening and Weekend Studies, I think in some ways, we do some advanced work. The way we taught The Ancient World, it's advanced. The way I teach Pacific Studies, it's advanced. But I think we have to suffer, and we're up against that, because we're cutting back on faculty now because of the enrollment. That means, in my experience, that the deans and the Provosts will be stricter, if it's perceived that this particular program will not get 22 people to the one faculty member, or 42 to 48 to the two faculty members, you can't do it. I know that to be a fact because I've tried a couple of times with things. My programs have been generally pretty well enrolled, but it was cut. An intensive study, for example, of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the study of the Reconstruction is absolutely essential in understanding that the promise of emancipation was not realized in the United States. We had eight good people, but it was canceled.

**Beck:** So, you think that the way around that is that the college needs to have more flexibility around enrollments in the upper division programs to allow upper division work?

**Rainey:** Absolutely.

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**Beck:** One way that people have tried to do advanced work is to have all-level programs or multi-level programs, where there might be part of the program that would make possible advanced-level work.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** In your experience, has that sort of thing been successful?

**Rainey:** No. Also, not looking at this strictly from a union standpoint, it's a form of what they call in the cotton mills "stretch out" for the faculty.

**Beck:** What does that mean?

**Rainey:** It means that you've got to spend more time with a smaller number of people, and at the same time, do what you're supposed to do in other parts of the program. It's a form of stretch out, as I see it.

**Beck:** Really, it's basically unsupported faculty work.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** It's an ongoing problem at Evergreen.

**Rainey:** It is, and I don't see how it's going to be solved. That's another reason why I'm not so sanguine about our future.

**Beck:** The last area you mentioned when we were talking the other day was that one of your concerns is the routinization of charisma. What do you mean by that?

**Rainey:** Well, I was a Marxist for about a year and a half, but I've always been a Weberian since I read Max Weber—Max Weber—talking mostly about religious movements. There are two parts to this, two sources of wisdom, at least as far as I'm concerned. The other one is Isaiah Berlin's *The Hedgehog and the Fox*. And there's a great study of the German Social Democratic Workers Party by, I can't remember his first name—Michael—but he was a student of Weber. But Weber's argument about bureaucracies—and I see this absolutely in the Russian Revolution, and certainly—certainly—in the Chinese Revolution, and with Christianity and so on—is that mass movements based on charismatic leaders, or charismatic visions, or that sort of thing, in two or three generations, become bureaucratized. Routinized.

That happened to the Catholic Church. That's one of Luther's major problems with the Catholic Church. It became less spiritual and more political, largely because this bureaucratization occurred. And it happens with labor unions in the United States. It happens with virtually every mass movement. If it's successful, every revolution has become routinized in this way. So, you eventually end up with an institution where the actual function of the institution is less important than the perpetuation of the bureaucracy that's created. And I see a lot of that happening at Evergreen over the years.

The other thing that comes from routinization is the series of what I would call "institutional noes." It almost verges on undermining academic freedom. One of the institutional noes is that you cannot run a program if it doesn't have an enrollment at a certain level. I don't whether this is the impingement of State laws, or regulation, or that sort of thing that have pushed this institution into what I consider, and what some faculty consider, an excessively bloated administration. Frankly, one of my major concerns about creating a vice president for this, and a vice president for that, and some of these newer initiatives to deal with equity, is what it means is that administrators will be hired at a higher price, and they need then staff to help them with that. That's where the money goes. That's where the money goes. That means that you can't subsidize with a lower student ratio. It means all sorts of things.

The other aspect of that for us as faculty is that we have become our own secretaries, we have become our own organizers. I finally agree with Patrick Hill that the continuation of the evaluation process that we have is largely a bureaucratic relic. So, if there's two cultures at Evergreen, it's the administration and the faculty. They've kept up well with salaries; we have not. What happened in

Russia in two generations after the revolution is the creation of a post-revolutionary bureaucratic elite, whose major concern was keeping their jobs, and expanding their bureaucracy, and I see that as happening at Evergreen, and it's very disturbing to me.

It's why, in some ways, I was sort of halfway—not all the way, I want to say—that seemed to be one of Bret's early concerns, which was opposed by a group that engaged in riotous behavior; that will create now more administrators; that—as a Board of Trustees friend who will remain nameless, and should—said, “It seems that what we have is a series of administrative fixes to something that cannot be fixed by creating one more office, or one more vice president.” That's what I mean.

**Beck:** So, growth of the administration.

**Rainey:** The growth of the administration, and the fact that the charismatic vision—which, there was never a unified charismatic vision. There were a lot of charismatic visions. But, you could at least dream. Right? [laughing]

**Beck:** Yeah.

**Rainey:** It was easy then to approach other dreamers amongst the faculty and say, “Let's do this.” It's much more difficult to do now. You could say, “Let's do this.” It might require going out and talking to some loggers. I mean, you have to go through a whole office now that says okay to that.

As I say, some of that may be imposed by the State, it may be imposed by Federal government in the kind of way we get money, and that sort of thing. I understand that, so I'm not saying it is a sort of pernicious conspiracy to create a bureaucracy. I just think it happens. It certainly happened in China. In a sense, that's what the terrible, terrible thing that Mao dreamed up called the Cultural Revolution was all about [laughing] was to attack the bureaucracy, was to loosen the bureaucracy. By making that criticism, I should also add that I think it's pretty much inevitable in any charismatic movement.

**Beck:** Bureaucratization.

**Rainey:** Yeah, routinization.

**Beck:** I'm hesitant to end on a dark note. [laughing]

**Rainey:** Okay.

**Beck:** I'm wondering what . . .

**Rainey:** I guess I could maybe say this. I consider myself an Evergreen success story. Had I stayed at Duke, or had I stayed at Buffalo, I would have been able to teach Russian history, Balkan history, European history. I would not have been exposed to minds like yours, I would not have been exposed to minds like Bob Sluss, or Byron [Youtz], or Rudy [Martin] or that sort of thing, and learned so much that's

been important to me as a person, and as a historian. That's one of the reasons that I'm happy that I've spent my 45 years here.

**Beck:** What advice would you have to faculty members of my generation, or younger than me? I'm not exactly all that young anymore. [laughter] But what would you recommend to the successor cohort of faculty to your cohort? What do you suggest we strive for, or do?

**Rainey:** As trite as it may seem, keep abreast in your discipline, because that's one thing you have to bring to the table is your knowledge of philosophy, to use you as an example. Take chances with yourself. Open yourself to learn from other colleagues. That's the best part of it, for me, of Evergreen, my reflection. As I said, I've had the best of students I've ever had here, and I've had the worst. I taught at Duke, and there were no bad students, because it was an elite school. It was hard to get in, so there were no bad students. There were no C students. I trust that I've become somewhat adept at teaching C students, Evergreen style.

I guess the last piece of advice would fit in with this other thing, and that's the advice that comes from Bertrand Russell—and that is where you said one time—whereas a dogmatist is dangerous, a cynic is useless. I am not Pollyannish in my optimism. I'm not saying that. But I've always promised myself—and this is not why I'm quitting school—that if I became cynical, I should step out of the classroom. I have nothing to teach, and I'm not going to go before young people and spill my cynicism on them. That is unconscionable, as far as I'm concerned. So, stay reasonably optimistic about the future of Evergreen. But [laughter] *illegitimi non carborundum*—don't let the dirty bastards grind you down. [laughter] Every time I get a little bit cynical about the school—and sometimes I do, I confess it—I talk to Oscar [Soule], and Oscar calms me down. [laughter] He calms me down.

But I have continued to teach largely because of my optimism about what we do in Evening and Weekend Studies. Yeah, I would end certainly on a positive note. It has been a great experience for me, and I am delighted that I spent my life this time. I didn't get as much published as I thought I would, but I've learned more about love, life and the American way. [laughing]

**Beck:** I just remembered a question that I wanted to ask you. This is as much for my own personal curiosity as it is for recording for posterity. I heard a story, secondhand, about your role in bringing what is, in effect, tenure to Evergreen.

**Rainey:** Yeah.

**Beck:** I can at least start the story, and maybe you can complete it. Apparently, it came before the Legislature, I understand, the question of whether Evergreen faculty members had tenure.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** It might have been through the courts or something, but the word came through to the faculty that it had to be something that the faculty affirmed, that they did not have tenure, and it needed to be unanimous.

**Rainey:** Yeah.

**Beck:** The way I heard the story is you stood up and said, “Well, I’m going to make this a short meeting, because I want tenure.” I don’t know if that’s true, but I wanted to see if you have a recollection.

**Rainey:** Yeah, that is. Well, yes. There are two parts to that. I never liked the designation of—we have, essentially, a six-year up or out. If you’re not converted, you’re out. Anybody that survives that, I think, should have tenure. And I think we should have tenure, not necessarily for any clear and present thing that’s happening, but what could happen. With the atmosphere we’re in now, with the attacks on the university by the right, I’m glad we have tenure. I’m glad. I think any faculty that gives up tenure is idiotic and stupid, because the reason for tenure in the first place—and for the most part, I think this has fulfilled its promise—is to protect academic freedom.

Let me use a kind of reverse example, and many of my younger colleagues would agree, and many would not agree. If we didn’t have something like tenure, the President could dismiss Bret Weinstein as an inconvenient problem for him. We’ve had certain examples, where we’ve had to hold on to somebody too long. Jorge Gilbert is an excellent example of that. But tenure, I believe, offers a certain level of latitude for a faculty member to say anything they want to say. Not yell fire in a crowded theater, but within reason.

The other thing is that you have to understand that, in some ways, I’m a real traditionalist. Maybe this is because of my Southern upbringing. Maybe it’s because I’m a historian. I don’t know. But my ideal, if I could be anything else in the world, if I could choose a historical figure to be, I’d be a Renaissance Pope, because I love the ceremony, and I love the dress. I would gladly give up the designation of “member of the faculty” for “professor,” because I have something to profess.

I thought that that tilt towards egalitarianism was not good. So, I use the title now, “Emeritus Professor of Russian and Eurasian Studies.” The reason for that, as much as anything else, is you go to a conference, or you want recognition of a paper or something like that, and you say member of the faculty and they think you’re an adjunct faculty member or something like that. And because I frankly like the title, and I think it fits.

But I am strongly in support of tenure, even though I knew I would probably, on the basis of my own performance, never be fired. But I was denied tenure at Buffalo, and denied even a second contract, because I spoke out against the war, and because I spoke out against inequality. I was arrested



in the largest civil rights demonstration that's ever been done, in North Carolina. I'm a strong advocate of civil rights. I saw, throughout the South, those people that were not protected by tenure that stood up for civil rights being dismissed from their positions, so I'm strongly an advocate of tenure.

I was denied tenure for bad reasons. I had published a monograph and three major articles in refereed journals, but it was purely political. But they could do it, and everybody that had involved themselves in trying to get the police off campus, or trying to get the administration to back off on some of the sort of draconian ways they were dealing with students at Buffalo, that was vulnerable did not get renewed.

So, that's the history that I came to Evergreen with, and I thought, as long as we didn't have tenure, we would be vulnerable to any shift in the political winds. Tenure will probably protect both faculty involved in our recent fracas. And rightfully so. I don't think either one of them should be fired.

**Beck:** When was this discussion about tenure?

**Rainey:** You know who brought it up? What started the whole discussion was Patrick Hill came back from a conference somewhere, and the conference was about tenure, and about contracts and things like that. There was a case, I think in Boston—and Patrick was Boston Irish, and almost never left [chuckles] except to go to Stony Brook. I really liked Patrick, you know, but he was one of those people you had to take a lot of time with when they stopped you. He's the one that gave me the idea of evaluations being bureaucratic nonsense.

He went to a conference there—and this is from a Provost, so I think that's significant—came back from a conference—Olander was the President then—and one of the discussions was about a case where a group of faculty were denied tenure. And the case ends in some wonderful Massachusetts Commonwealth State of court, said that a professor who had been in a job for a certain length of time had a property interest in their job. That's what started us to talk about it again, and discussing it again, when Patrick brought that back to the faculty. He was the one that organized that. He was the one that carried through on it.

Then, we redid the whole evaluation thing. I think the other part of that is to do an evaluation with everybody every . . . was occupying 40 percent of the deans' time, and to clean that up some so we had some kind of cycle. At that point, it was decided that after two contracts, if a person was not converted, then they were gone. If they were converted, they had tenure, and that's how that worked out.

**Beck:** That must have been in the late '80s.

**Rainey:** Yeah, late '80s. I give Patrick credit for birddogging that one and getting it before the faculty to discuss.

**Beck:** I know you have to get going, and I should probably get going, too.

**Rainey:** Okay. Any other questions?

**Beck:** You know what? I can't think of anything right now. I think I've gone through the questions that I had for you. I wanted to see if there was anything else that you wanted to say before we end the day.

**Rainey:** I just want to thank you and Sam and Nancy to put the thing together. It's long overdue. Just one point. If I were 10 years younger, and not otherwise occupied, I would get back into this. David [Hitchens] and I talked for years about writing a history of Evergreen. David Hitchens, the two professionally trained historians, right? David was on the planning faculty, and David knew where all the skeletons were buried, and it would have been great. David had the knowledge of the planning faculty conflicts, which were immense; people that made enemies then that they never forgave. We talked about that, as he lay dying, and many other things.

One, I urge you to put this in Sam's ear. Somebody needs to talk to Joan Hitchens, because she recorded some of that, and that's the only thing you're going to have on David. Plus, his records, and it includes about a 50-page thing that he wrote about why he came to Evergreen. He talked about the conflicts, particularly over art, and Sid White's view and other views. I think that part of it needs to be raked over a little bit by anybody that's going to do a history.

The other part of that is why I think it's splendid that you all are doing this. It's that I had a conversation with Chuck Nisbet. No two people could be so different as Chuck and I, but we taught very well together, because we believed that things ought to happen on time, and you had to do some planning, and you had to organize it, and had to hold people accountable.

About four years ago, he was through here, and we had dinner together. I told him that David and I were thinking about working on this. He says, "You and David can't do it." I said, "What do you mean, Chuck?" And he said, "You can't do it because"—and he used this specific example—"you can't do it because you don't know all the experiences of all the faculty. You and David will do it from your perspective, but that won't be the true history of Evergreen."

So, I hope somebody in the future picks this material up. I don't have time to do it, or I would say I'd help do it. I'm trying to get Nina to write her family history.

The other part of that is that I have decided that I am going to write something about my experience at Evergreen, as soon as I get this book finally out the door. I'm just going to call it *My Evergreen*. [laughing]

**Beck:** I take E. H. Carr to heart on this. "The historian is always present in the history."

**Rainey:** That's right.

**Beck:** That's just unavoidable. It's as unavoidable as being human.

**Rainey:** That's right. You have to be careful that you're not a hero in your own novel, though.

[laughter]

**Beck:** That's a point, yes.

**Rainey:** And that's the tendency.

**Beck:** That's true. Yeah, I think that's one of the valuable things about the oral history project is that we get multiple voices.

**Rainey:** I do, too.

**Beck:** If anybody ends up writing a history about Evergreen, it's still going to be that historian writing it, and it will be from that person's point of view.

**Rainey:** Right.

**Beck:** But if that person does so responsibly, they'll have to draw upon all the voices, and there are a lot of different perspectives.

**Rainey:** Yes.

**Beck:** Thank you again, very much.

**Rainey:** Oh, you're welcome.