

# RUTGERS

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Oral History Project and Archive

Interview with Alan Pisarski, January 2015  
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## **Disclaimer Statement**

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## **Biography of Alan E. Pisarski**

For the last 35 years Mr. Pisarski has served as an independent writer, analyst and consultant in areas related to travel behavior, transport policy, and data development. A keystone of these activities has been the recurring nature in which his studies have been conducted and updated over several decades. These include several National Transportation Studies; The Bottomline series; and the Commuting in America series.

He represented the United States in International Agencies such as the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, chairing the United Nations Group of Experts in Transportation Statistics. As a consultant he has served the US AID, the World Bank, the United Nations, the European Union, the World Tourism Organization and the European Tourism Commission in statistical program matters. His work has been translated into seven languages.

He has advised the US Department of Transportation, the Bureau of the Census and other federal statistical agencies, commissions and private public policy associations on matters of measurement of transportation and travel and effective designs for transportation surveys and data collection.

At the national level he has been invited to testify in both Houses of the United States Congress on many occasions regarding economic and demographic factors that define travel demand, infrastructure investment requirements and public policy.

At the state level he has been invited to advise state Gubernatorial and Legislative Commissions regarding their economic, social, demographic and infrastructure circumstances.

His career has been closely allied with activities within the National Academy of Sciences and its Transportation Research Board and has received several honors from the Academy over the years. In 2007 he received TRB's highest award, the W.N. Carey, Jr. Award, for Distinguished Service in support of transportation research.

*This interview was conducted in January 2015. The transcript has been appended with minor grammatical edits, additional notes, and comments and clarifications provided by Alan Pisarski in brackets.*

NT: I'm Nick Tulach from the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University. I'm here with Alan Pisarski, and he is going to talk with us today about his career as a transportation professional. He's a distinguished transportation professional of many, many years, and has worked very hard on transportation statistics and testified in front of Congress many times and in State Legislatures. And he is here to share with us today some of his wisdom that he's built up over the years.

AP: It's interesting. I listen to other people's description of their careers, and many of them began focused on that subject. In my case, I was just looking for a job. In 1962, Congress passed the legislation that required metropolitan planning in all areas over fifty thousand population. I was literally looking for a job. I had worked for a construction company as kind of a bookkeeper accountant and I was going to college at night. And the construction company had bank problems so I was out of a job. And I found an ad in the New York Times that said Tri State Transportation Commission is being formed [*Originally formed in 1965, in 1971 it was renamed the Tri State Regional Planning Commission, covering the nearby counties in the three states surrounding New York City and existed until 1982*]. And I went down and, with my immense experience based on working in a construction company and keeping the books, they hired me. And I was a lot of kind of serendips let's say. First thing was that I was hired to be, basically, an administrative assistant to the chief of data collection and analysis. And that chief of data collection was going to report to the technical director and that [*accidentally*] worked out fine. It turned out they never hired the chief of data collection, and so I ended up being the assistant to the technical director, and that gave me much more exposure and latitude in what I was doing. So that's kind serendip number one. Serendip number two, which is the really, really big one...as I said, as far as I was concerned I was just looking for a job. Turned out the Tri State Commission...this is now, what, '64, I suppose?...the Tri State Commission because of the national legislation; the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) had been mandated to get all of this done [*the planning agencies set up*] in, I think, by '65, they had to have all of the administrative institutional process in place across the country.

The one where they were the last to do it was New York. Obvious reasons it was the very big one, and it was a big deal. And I think the federal government, the BPR, understood that if they failed in New York, it didn't matter where they succeeded. [*According to Mr. Pisarski, at the time, New York City was considered to be a far more dominant factor in the country than today*] And so they worked very hard to get the best people in America to come to Tri State Transportation Commission. The Commission was part of, in effect, administered by the Port Authority, but basically that was just administrative support. So they brought in a tremendous collection of really great people. As far as I was concerned, those were the guys I worked for, you know, like the nice guys. But I had no idea that they were so eminent in the field. Lee Mertz [*Mr. Pisarski's immediate supervisor*] became Associative Administrator for Policy in the Federal Highway Administration a few years after that.

One of the gentlemen I consider one of the fathers of our business, J. Douglas Carroll, Jr., [*was recruited*] came from Chicago. He started the CAT [Chicago Area Transportation] Study. [*In the 1950's*] he did the original Detroit Study [*An interesting critique of this study can be found in: Hoover, Robert, 1961, Policy growth and the transportation planning in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Science Association, 7: 223-239, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01969082#>*]. And so he really was one of the founders of this whole process along with Al Voorhees. And the joke was always where do you draw your genesis from, from Doug or from Al? So in most cases I'm from the Doug Carroll genesis. Doug is just a revelation; to be around those kinds of people. It wasn't just those two; it was the whole collection of the organization was just so great. And they told me you better finish your college degree, but they kind of...the word "mentor" didn't exist at that time...but they did, they supported me very much. I was only at Tri State [*for a few years*]...if I go back and think about it, it seemed like that was a very, very formative time in my life. The one thing I remember was one January I came into the office and there was nobody there. Everybody was somewhere else. I said, Where is everybody? Like it was a fire drill. They went to Washington for something called the Highway Research Board I'm told. I said, well okay, that's nice. And that's my first introduction. And that Thursday, Friday, they're back and they're all carrying research papers. And it was a motherload. It was phenomenal to me to sit down and have all of that literature, all of that material about all of... In many cases the questions that I was asking myself, how the heck are we going to do this? What I was basically doing was setting up the home interview survey, which in New York, of course, was massive. It was 50,000 interviews, which today everybody would think is insane. It covered...I opened field offices from Bridgeport to Asbury Park, New Jersey or Elizabeth, New Jersey – I forget where it was – but it was a

massive undertaking. Hundreds of interviewers, offices all over setting up the whole survey design and structure, and I had statistical people whom I was working with, and I had good field people, people who were experienced in survey work, that I was working with. And I was, in effect, kind of the go-between between those people and Lee Mertz and so forth. Again, I just had an immense education. And my work in college was basically in sociology and economics, so they encouraged me to keep going at that realm. The funny thing is you think back: it was such a long period. But I don't know that I was there for more than two or three years. I really can't tell you how long. I can tell you that what happened was I decided that New York was an unlivable place. I mean the kind of money I was earning, which was pretty limited at that point,... Basically, I said I can't support a family here. It dawned on me, I said if I'm an urban planner I can plan "urbs" anywhere. And why don't I plan it in a nice place to be? And so I started looking around the country and I had a very warped sense of what a nice place to be was. Really kind of stupid at that point. But one of the nice places to be was Washington, D.C. I wish I could tell you that I remember how or who. The only thing I can think of is that it might have been Lee Mertz himself who told me that they were just creating an MPO [Metropolitan Planning Organization] here in Washington, the Council Government's Transportation Planning Board, called the TPB. And they were looking for a Chief of Data Collection and Analysis. I came down and interviewed for that, and was interviewed by Albert (Al) Grant and George Wickstrom, again, two great leaders in the field, and they hired me. It's a miracle to me that those guys hired me, honestly, because they were... But, again, I had a tremendous supporting cast for good field people. And I guess I didn't mention before with my Tri State work, it was the home interview survey, the taxi surveys, the truck surveys, port surveys. I did all of that stuff. And coming to Washington was a little bit easier because we didn't have a port to worry about.

NT: But you did have quite a bit of experience.

AP: By the time I got here I had gone through all of those things with so-called external surveys, where you set up field things [*stations*] and collected data from people driving in and out of the metropolitan region. But what really got me, I think, at Tri State and at Washington wasn't so much the experience, let's call it the logistics effort of putting together these big surveys because these are massive logistical undertakings, they really are. It was when I was doing the surveys at Wash COG [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments], we were 30 or 40 percent of the COG budget. It was a major undertaking. The logistics part of it was not the part that fascinated me. What fascinated

me was the results of the survey and beginning to look at the social and economic effects, you know, the observations that we were getting out of the survey. And I was delighted that they had given me the title of data collection and Chief of Data Collection and Analysis. And so I did focus largely on the economics, the economic analysis or the social analysis of what was going on. And I guess I should have been...somebody thought I was pretty good at that, because they encouraged me to do a lot of writing and descriptive work about the state of the region, where we are, and where we're going, and stuff like that. Which, I couldn't be happier, I mean that was just as much fun as I know how to have. Again, George Wickstrom was a great technician of that period. I say 'technician', I mean he was a terrific modeler. He knew that [entire network analysis] process. He knew the land use planning process. He knew what he called the "glopada-glopada" machine: the thing that Al Voorhees and others like him had basically invented, that you put all this stuff [data] in and turn the crank and good stuff came out. And so I was just delighted to be there and working again with such great people. And I guess one of the lessons somewhere in there that I learned is, in this business, is that if you just focus on working for really good people, everything else kind of falls into place. And so that was a real treat for me.

Again, it's funny, because I was only there maybe three years, four years. And so by '69, a whole bunch of the people who had been at Tri State came to Washington [and took a major role in developing and leading the planning process]. One was Lee Mertz, who was the first Associate Administrator for Policy, in, I think by then, called the Federal Highway Administration. And another one, Bob Barraclough, who was a wonderful guy and a tremendous expert on the other half of the big divide of planning. He was the land use guy [at Tri State]. He understood the land. And we did a land use survey in New York that was insane. I mean we're talking about 17,000 square miles. It was like ten percent of the U.S. population. It was a serious undertaking. And Bob developed XY [grid coordinate] Coding Systems for [the whole area], and this is the first time people really had looked into looking at using coordinates. And he digitized every parcel in the region, because Doug Carroll was very much focused on TALUS, Transportation and Land Use. That was a focus that Doug had, and that he led us on [to develop].

And so Bob came to Washington, and he went into the Office of the Secretary to be the Director of the Office of Transportation Information. And the first thing he did is call me and said, would I be willing to come over and join him? I did leave COG at that point [after completing survey work and basic analyses], and went into the Office of the Secretary DOT [Department of Transportation], which was an extraordinary experience in a lot of ways, extraordinary in the following sense: up until then, you think

about this in terms of Al Voorhees, and I think you'll understand it better, everybody I had worked for knew how to do my job better than I did. I mean, Doug Carroll was smarter than I was, and he knew all of this stuff. I mean just an anecdotal story: a guy [*staff engineer*] names Al Whoerle who was in charge of traffic counting [*at Tri State*], he did all the traffic counts for the whole region. He came in one day to a staff meeting and said, to this new assembled staff, after a year and a half of, I don't know, a couple of million dollars' worth of work, "The total VMT [*Vehicle Miles Traveled*] in the tri-state region is seventeen billion, nine hundred sixty-eight million, four hundred and fifteen thousand." And Doug Carroll said, "no", and Al Whoerle's face dropped. And Doug gave him five reasons he couldn't be right. I mean, you know, Doug had this incredible sense of scale, and so that taught me an immense lesson. So I went into the Office of the Secretary, and that was a very different environment. I knew more about my stuff than anybody else. The great thing about, especially the Office of the Secretary, may be even more unique than some of the more unique, whatever that means, different than some of the other agencies I've kind of been in, the Policy Office at the DOT was, basically, you could say the bossiest Assistant Secretary for Policy. And a bunch of little offices filled with smart guys; each one of them who was expert in something. And the Assistant Secretary got a call from the Senate, got a call from the Congress, got a call from the White House, one from the Secretary and said, blah, blah, blah, blah. And he walked down the hall, and he'd slide it under the door of whatever expert that happened to be needed. And, you know, you'd hear thrashing and going on. Two days later there would come out this five-page memo on what you should do. So it was a very different environment. [*In the metro planning process we had a work program laid out for 5 years or so and you went step by step. In the OST (Office of the Secretary of Transportation) most people were reacting to their in-baskets.*] Those leaders, at that stage, and, again, there was a tremendous collection of people that I was able to work for. Alan Boyd was just leaving when I went in, and then John Volpe. The difference was those people, the Assistant Secretary that I was reporting to, they were people who were incredibly eclectic, who could jump into a subject, absorb enough of it to understand it, and be useful, and pick your brain, and then go on to something else. It was just, again, an educational, but very different experience. I could get into the limousine with Bob Binder, who was Assistant Secretary, and we'd drive up to the Hill; he's going to testify. And he'd ask me questions – it's a ten minute ride, you know? And he'd ask me this and he'd ask me that, and I'm trying to download my brain. And he'd walk into a Senate Committee and he'd answer questions. And every once in a while he'd say, "I'd like to answer that for the record", or he'd ask me to comment. But basically, the point is these guys had that amazing skill, which is a very different skill if



you will [*from those I was accustomed to seeing*]. So I was very much exposed to that kind of capability, and I acquired an immense amount of respect for those folks.

Again, a serendip, if you will, Bob Barraclough, the guy who brought me there – Bob later was the best man when I got married, and godfather to one of my kids, my first child – had terrible fights in the department. This was in the formative days of the department, and it was dangerous.

NT: In DOT?

AP: Oh yeah, I mean, it was vicious. You went to the men's room, came back, and you'd have three knives in your back. And Bob was not exactly the world's most charming gentleman when it came to getting along with people. And so he kind of got pushed out. And so they asked me to basically sit in on his job. I had come over not as a regular Fed [*Federal employee*], but basically hired as a consultant, what they call the "full-time something." I was paid as a consultant, but I was staff. I showed up every morning the same time as everybody else did. I sat at a desk. The only thing I wasn't supposed to do was tell other people what to do because I wasn't a Fed. But what happened was there was only one GS-15 [*General Schedule-15, top-level employee pay scale in the United States Civil Service*] available, one slot, and it was me or a wonderful, wonderful man, his name was Thomas Muranyi. Doug Carroll had brought him out of Hungary during the Hungarian uprising, and his family. It brings tears to my eyes when I think about it. He crawled out of the sewers with his family through Budapest. And Tom came to America, went to Chicago, ended up in Washington. And I was maybe thirty; he was fifty-five. And I said "Give Tom the [*permanent*] job because, I know,...the [GS-]15...cause he needed to get some pension time, so he could someday retire. So I took consulting staff. I don't know what my phrasing was.

So Bob disappears. I'm working for Captain Ira Dye [*who pushed Bob out*], that's now an Office of Systems Analysis and Information, and I am the "information" in the Office of Systems Analysis and Information. My job is to, basically, inform the secretarial officers, and have the information available to them that they need to respond to policy, or to do whatever planning or structuring the Office of the Secretary has the power to do. A small sidebar, but it's a very valuable, important one to me, is my connect to Voorhees [*Alan M. Voorhees & Associates, a major planning firm*]. Bob gets hired not by Voorhees itself, but by the firm that Al [*Voorhees*] owned and that I think Tom Deen was the director of.

And if you give me three minutes I'll think of the name of it, but it was the international component of Voorhees. Maybe you know it.

NT: I don't recall the name of it.

AP: It'll come to me [*PADCO – The Planning and Development Collaborative International*]. Anyway, they hired Bob Barraclough to go to South America, to Santiago, Chile, to basically advise the Chilean government on travel surveys, particularly on how to do it. And to do the "Gran plan de Santiago," the Santiago, Chile [*Master*] Plan. Bob knows the land use [*analyses*]; he doesn't know the travel survey stuff. So he says to me, "Can you come down and help me?" And the affecting part of the story is I go to Ira Dye, who was basically my boss. He was Director and an ex-Navy captain. And I said, "I'd like to take a month off and go to Chile." Number one, he doesn't want me out of sight, but two, he can't stand Barraclough. So anyway, he says, "No, no, no, no. You can't go; you can't go." Obviously, it was just exciting to me, I'd never been out of the country, to get to go to South America. So I go back to my office and I'm sitting there pouting. And Ira walks in - I'll never forget this moment – he walks in and he hands me a Chilean peso. And it turns out that Ira, German, had grown up in Chile in the twenties and the thirties, which was when the large German immigration came to America after World War I. And they also went to South America. He said, "I can't keep anybody from having the treat of seeing Santiago and knowing Chile. It's such a great country. So you go, and I'll let you be out for three weeks, four weeks." I go to Santiago. I help Bob with the Gran Plan de Santiago, teach the Census people how to do surveys, teach them how to do a little bit of the models using the BPR [*Bureau of Public Roads*] standard modeling, the [*now standard*] machine, that was engineered, if you will, by BPR at that stage. But the most important aspect of that is that was where I met my wife. I was so thrilled [*to be in another country*]. It was February. And in February in Chile it's summertime. So it was just such a treat to leave Washington, where it was cold, and get to Santiago. And I asked...I want to go swimming. And my secretary, I was working for Ministeria de Vivienda y Urbanismo, HUD, Housing and Urban Development, MINVU. And my secretary said, "I know a lady who said you can't go swimming here. There are no public pools, but there's a country club that has a great swimming pool. And this lady is a member; she'd be happy to take you." And I met her, and that was it. So I guess that's forty-five years ago. Anyway, I guess forty-something years ago, whatever. And so that was just super. I had to go back and forth several times, and Ira put up with it. When Tom Deen had a little reunion of the Voorhees

people he invited me, because he knew that little stint of a couple of months working for Voorhees was an immensely invaluable part of my life.

I think that introduced me to international activity. And when I came back into the department, I was then given kind of a full-time Fed slot. And I...in the Office of the Secretary, at that time there was a reaching out to Europe, and to the rest of the world, to coordinate, because the department was still relatively new. And so I became involved in the work of OECD [*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*], of what was then called the Common Market. It's now called the EU [*European Union*]. And many of the other international agencies, and just developed a connect in that work. And ended up working [*as the US representative*] with a group [*within the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations*] that, with great humility, called itself the "Group of Experts in Transport Statistics." And so I was officially an expert in transport statistics. And I served on that body in the United Nations for, I don't know, five, six years I guess it was? And became Chairman of their Committee on Energy and Transportation Statistics. This is in the period of '74, '79, where we had the two Arab oil boycotts. And so it was a really significant period of important measurements in what was going on [*on a topic that had been insignificant a few years before*]. I had set up stuff in the first round, in '74, in the United States. Again, tremendous exposure. The Secretary – a great benefit for me, and I think a great benefit to America, and nobody has really recognized it much – the secretary at that time was Claude Brinegar. Claude Brinegar: the two things that are most notable about Claude was that in 1974, when the first oil boycott started, Claude Brinegar was an oilman. I don't know how he got to be Secretary of Transportation. Maybe Occidental Petroleum whichever company he worked for...I don't remember...Pure Oil – it was a California company – had made a lot of donations. I have no idea. Anyway, for a Secretary of Transportation we had an oilman, who knew more about oil and petroleum than anybody else in the US Government at that point. There was no talk of energy; there was none of that [*no information*].

NT: But not necessarily about transportation?

AP: But he knew a lot about transportation of oil. He knew about how to make it go, and how the fleets worked, and the ships, and the railroads. The other thing is Claude Brinegar was a Ph.D. mathematical statistician. Claude was a very smart guy. So he got called into the White House, and this is probably a history lesson that you may know about or not, but there was a guy named Bill Simon who

was named “Energy Czar.” He was going to solve all these problems. And there’s a little bit of competition between Bill Simon – who didn’t know anything, not that it’s criticism because he was a very capable guy who really did some good stuff, but he was very new to this game – and Claude, who knew everything. And Brinegar was just draining me dry. I mean everything I knew, he was pouring into this stuff, and he was forcing me into doing stuff that I didn’t know I could do. And we were feeding the White House. Every Tuesday morning he would brief the President on what had happened the previous week. And I was running surveys all over America on which gas stations were closed, how much were people paying, how long do people have to wait in line, all of that stuff. And then again in ’79, when it came again – I don’t know if it was still Brinegar, I forget who it was – but they said to me, “Do it again.” And I did it all over again.

NT: How long did that process last?

AP: In each case a year, maybe a year and a half. It was at that point that we created a number of documents that still exist in the department. The first one was National Transportation Statistics, and that had a big energy component in it at that point, and that became the basis for other standing documents. [*There was no Department of Energy at that point*]. I guess if there’s something I’m proud of in that period, is that I was able to establish a lot of transportation’s statistical programs in the department that still exist. One of the great treats, let me just put it this way, one of the great treats for me being in that kind of a position, which was not a high-level job, but I was either the Division Chief or I was a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary. But I had direct access to the Secretary and all of the secretarial officers. But the great thing about it was – I don’t mean to make this sound kind of grand, but the fact is that it was a great period because if I saw something that needed to be done, I could [*just*] do it. I had money and I had staff. We need a national reporting system on A, B, or C, and tell the guys let’s go do it. And so most of the issues of that period were kind of convincing people that this stuff could be done, you know, that we had the technology. We could have the focus of resources, and of people, and to institute programs. And so I was kind of a wild card in the department. I could go to the Federal Highway Administration and say, “We really need to do this.” Of course, it would be Lee Mertz that I was talking to, who had been my boss, who was the main guy in that whole subject area. And I said, “We need to be doing this.” And he could convince me to change it, or I could convince him to do it. So, again, I was just tremendously benefitted by that. And the international experience, I think, really put me in good stead.

One of the great things about doing stuff outside the country is it's a wonderful way to test what it is you think you know. You go over there thinking you're really smart about something. You try to apply it in an entirely different context, and you find out: guess what, you know, it doesn't always work that way. And so it's a very positive and powerful experience of testing what you know.

NT: Plus you have to communicate it to somebody.

AP: I'm talking to the Director of Census of Chile and he's, "Umm." So you got two or three different games that you have to play, both technological and cultural and all the rest. And I think that was immensely beneficial. In that period I worked for, again, some absolutely super people: the Secretaries [of Transportation] that I guess I've already mentioned, Bill Coleman, whose name I didn't mention that was just a great treat to work with. As we came up...this is the period when Gerry Ford became president and, in effect, in replacing Nixon. And he brought Bill Coleman into town, and Coleman is a great treat. Bill is still alive; he's 93, I think, 94. I gave a little birthday reception for him on his 90th birthday a couple of years ago. But surrounding him were some other really, really good people, one of whom was Charlie Baker, who later became Deputy Secretary at Health and Human Services. And his son is now governor of Massachusetts. So it's that Charlie Baker. Jim Beggs, who had been an administrator at NASA, Deputy Secretary. Jim Miller III...I think I'm saying that right. Jim Miller was on the staff, and ended up being Director of OMB [Office of Management and Budget]. John Snow, who was the guy in the office next door, who was really, really smart, and John ended up being Treasury Secretary. That was a period in the history of the department. When you get old, you always talk about how they're not as smart as we used to be. You know, the group is just not as good as it once was. But that was an extraordinary group of people at one time. That was the period in which the deregulation occurred. All of the guys and the staff were very strong economic analysis people.

NT: Railroad deregulation?

AP: Well all of it had...

NT: All of it.

AP: Aviation deregulation, rail deregulation, and then, eventually, truck and bus deregulation. I had instituted a series of programs of the old ICC, the Interstate Commerce Commission, of taking the data that ICC [*had*] – which was as fogbound as an organization [*could be*]...I mean it was like a pair of bronze baby shoes, I mean it was just amazing – and I kind of made a deal with them to take the manual reporting that they required of people [*i.e., the railroads*], I mean handwritten stuff, and I would digitize it, and produce [*summary*] survey [*data*] with it. And so I [*re-*]created the rail waybill statistics system which had existed, and then just disappeared, and began on the aviation statistics system. And a whole bunch had tried to do the truck thing...tried to do the same thing for trucking in the industry for me...for a long time on that.

NT: What was the conflict in that particular situation?

AP: This is an important kind of, understanding, I think, to develop that comes out of that period. You hear a lot now about regulatory capture, like Uber, you know, the fight about that, taxicab commissions are really owned by the taxicab companies and that's not true, but it does happen, a flavor. And the Interstate Commerce Commission was, I won't call it captured, but they were more protective of the carriers of truckers and rail. There was a whole thing about, "Well, what do you mean you want to have a new trucking company?" I mean, people today would find it astonishing that, in fact, you had to prove that a new trucking company was needed. It was like if Uber, today, had to say, "Well, we have to justify the fact that the world could use another taxicab." [*We do see today that in some cases taxicab commissions restrict the number of taxis in an area*]. I mean, that's what the situation was. And so that period, shining the light of statistics on it, kind of made people uncomfortable. [*If a trucker was permitted to carry certain goods from Chicago to Indianapolis unless he had explicit authority to carry specific goods from Indianapolis to Chicago he had to return empty. When gas was short that was crazy*]. And when we first did the rail waybill statistics, where basically we mandated reporting of all of the freight movements of the railroads, and began to tabulate that, the railroads were very nervous about it because they see it as a proprietary, competitive thing. The truckers were even more adamant against it. They were just totally antagonistic [*to reporting what they were doing*]. The difference in the game of the way they operated – railroads tended to be big players; truckers tended to be smaller players, and they hated to have to do the statistical reporting to begin with. I mean, it just was a burden to them. But then the thought that somebody was actually going to use it, and publish it, and tell everybody what was going on was anathematic to their interests, as far as they were concerned.

NT: A lot more competition among the smaller firms, right?

AP: Right. And so I had just turned to the aviation side and began working on effectively the same thing, reporting freight flows first for the airlines, and that's when the deregulation of the Civil Aeronautics Board came about, and I worked a little bit with the Civil Aeronautics Board people. But, in effect, what happened is that they just blew up the game, and said...*[its not needed anymore]*. So I never got to collect my statistics, because instead of their requiring this, they basically deregulated the industry in a sort of, kind of "do what you want" *[approach]*.

We're still living, in many ways, in kind of a penumbra, if you will, of the aftermath of that period. It sounds crazy cause it's thirty years ago, but I think it's not necessarily a false statement. When they deregulated aviation, the interests of some people were to get rid of the statistics. Well, if the Feds don't regulate us anymore, we have all this mandated reporting to the regulatory agency. We're not regulated; we don't need *[or have an obligation]* to tell anybody what we do. I mean there is that proprietary sense in the private sector, which has some legitimacy to it.

It was very different in aviation than the others. The truckers wanted to just run as far away from it *[reporting data]* as they could. The railroads didn't want to have to report stuff *[either]*. And basically what happened in the deregulatory process, pretty much all the rail stuff disappeared. Almost all the truck stuff disappeared. Very few reporting requirements, and they were mostly junk. The aviation thing, aviation was very different, because railroads have been around since 1840; the truckers since 1910, 1920, aviation really, commercial aviation... Aviation was a data intensive *[and new]* industry. They needed the information *[in order to function]*.

NT: Around the airports.

AP: And to know what their markets were and what was going on. And when the Congress was considering this *[ending all aviation data reporting]*, the banks from New York came and said, "If we lose the information on what's happening in airlines, that means interest rates on loans to airlines is going to up one and a half, two percent, percentage points." And so that convinced everybody. But that never happened on the rail side or the truck side and the bus side. So it was a very different environment at

that time. So that's why you still have a lot of aviation reporting, statistical reporting. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics, in effect, ended up with that responsibility of the residual, if you will. There's still a little residual of that information in the Surface Transportation Board that still looks at some vestiges, if you will, of rail freight statistics. So I was kind of in the thick of that whole process, and it taught me a lot about how the world operates with information or without it.

NT: Can we go back just for a second to the moment when aviation deregulation happens, banks approach and say...

AP: I'd have to really work at the dates.

NT: I don't necessarily mean the dates, but what I'm interested in hearing- I'm interested in transportation finance, so this is a bit of a personal question for me - I'm wondering how is it that the banks came to that conclusion. Was it something that was negotiated with other players involved?

AP: I know it came out in testimony in the Congress.

NT: Okay.

AP: And the world had been a little different. ICC was very bad, as I mentioned, in knowing how to report and how to collect [*data*] and how to do that [*and generally it was not publically available*]. CAB, the Civil Aeronautics Board, was much smarter, much more sophisticated. They took all the data and they turned it over to a private player. And the private player processed the information and sold it. And there were certain protections. You couldn't tell everybody what happened last month, you know, that stuff [*there was an embargo period, and other protections, especially for international data*].

NT: And so the banks likely had that information available.

AP: Oh, they were big time buyers of the whole thing, and a lot of other people were big time buyers, too. Airports and everybody else. This is how Boeing survived. I mean if they didn't have that, what kind of an airplane are you building, for what future? And of course at that time it wasn't just



Boeing. It was McDonnell Douglas. It was a couple of other guys. Those worlds were very... I think it's instructive that those two worlds were very different worlds.

NT: Yeah, so the banks operated without that type of information from the trucking and -

AP: A lot of the trucking stuff was Mom and Pop. And at that stage, when I first came into the department, I believe there were 74 Class-1 railroads, which is to say the big players. Today you can't get a good bridge game. I mean what's it, five?

NT: Five, I think, yeah.

AP: Maybe six. So that world has changed rather dramatically, and I think that's instructive as well. Part of that, I think, is – let's call this kind of an aside – but an observation that I've had over the years, is that the associations who are in the transportation industry have changed rather substantially from those that I knew in the '70s and '80s. In those days, those associations were statistical resources, and were policy resources, and were analytical resources. The American Trucking Association, the Air Transport Association, the Association of American Railroads, Highway Users Federation – which was called something else back then, went through several name changes – and if you go back... If you went, for instance, if you went to AAA [American Automobile Association] there'd be three civil engineers to talk to about what was going on. This is not a criticism; it's just a change in the world. Today there are no civil engineers at any of those agencies or even economists. It's mostly just lobbyists.

A couple of things happened, and I think the thing that tends to happen is, if you have an association where you have a couple of thousand members, then the association gets to be an important information source for all of its members. I think TRB [Transportation Research Board] in some sense [*provides that role*]. American Trucking in that sense became a very powerful tool of its industry. The Association of American Railroads, when there were 74 Class 1 guys, were an integral part of the system. They were the one who set up all this stuff [*interlining and financial clearinghouse functions*] and said, "Well you owe him 14,000 dollars; he owes you 12,000, so you send him 2,000." I mean, that kind of stuff. They interchanged. But as the agencies, the organizations get bigger and bigger and bigger and fewer and fewer and fewer, they don't need the association as much anymore. They're quite independent. And so the railroads are saying, "Well, thanks. We have six economists here and the staff.

We don't need the association." And so I think that is what changes, the scale, I think, is one of the things that changes the nature of the game.

NT: Do you think it has to do with growth versus decline in an industry?

AP: No, no. I think it's scale. If you have five members or twenty members and they're all big time, then they have the independent capability. They have their own economists. They have their own analytical people. They have massive computing power.

NT: They're competing at a much higher level than...

AP: That's right. And so they're very sophisticated. They think in terms of markets. They think in terms of long-term. If it's a 115,000 truckers, some of them had three [trucks], some had three hundred, yeah, they'll end up being some really sophisticated truckers and there are. I don't mean to denigrate that whatsoever. But still, those smaller guys need the association in a different way than the big guys do, and I think that's the point I'm trying to make. And I think it changes the nature of the game, and how it's played. So I guess that was a very formative period. You go back and you look now at Bob Gallamore, who was part of the group [at OST] has just written a book, a history on that period of rail deregulation which has gotten a very positive review in the Wall Street Journal (Robert E. Gallmore and John R. Meyer, *American Railroads: Decline and Renaissance in the Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, 2014). It's a terrific piece of work; I haven't finished it. And just some great guys that I still stay in touch with, who were immensely valuable and attractive to my experience.

Again, the great serendips, I'm such an immense beneficiary of, in effect, accidents, if you will. I have to connect the dots here a little bit. When Bill Coleman was coming up on the election, and Gerry Ford was running for the first time for president, they created the idea that as an aid menu for the next administration, we wanted to lay out national plans. [*Congress had been pressing for such a document*]. And so I got myself merged, for the first time, [*into a new office*] in the department, an Office of Planning in the Office of the Secretary. And we, for the secretary, for Bill, produced something called National Transportation Trends and Choices [available at: <http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/7000/7600/7617/>]. And that was really the first time that the country had done a national...I reluctantly would use the term "national plan," cause it wasn't a national plan, but something as close to it as... The previous treatment

of that was by Albert Gallatin for Thomas Jefferson. We're pretty much in a league by ourselves. And it was an incredibly instructive experience, and it was the first time that the department ever put something together of that scale. And the notion of it was this is how we're going to...this is what the next administration [*of Gerry Ford*] is going to do. Well, strangely enough, Gerry Ford doesn't win the election. Jimmy Carter wins the election, and his people come into power. And [*Senator*] Brock Adams, the [*new*] secretary, and they come to us, myself and Pat Webster, who are...he's the Director and I'm the Deputy Director of the office that just did the study, and they say, "Boy, this is really great stuff. We want you to do it again. Can you do one for us?" We said, "Sure." We had all kinds of plans of what needed to be done next.

NT: Did they use the work that you did before or they wanted something of their own?

AP: That was the question; that's what was unclear, you know. Were they trying to junk it or not? Um, I mean, they liked it. They said they liked it, they said they appreciated it. I had some excellent discussion with Brock Adams. And they said, "Well give us an outline of what you want to do." So Pat and I worked on that a week or two, went back to them and said, "Okay, this is what we see as the next step." And they said, "Nah, nah, nah, doesn't really quite do it. Try again." So we shrugged, and went back to the office. I don't remember if we only had two or three iterations of that, but I know that by some stage it was pretty clear that we were never going to be able to produce anything that they were going to love.

NT: And they didn't give you feedback. They didn't say...

AP: Well they...

NT: They did, but you were in conflict with that.

AP: Well, I'll tell you, the ultimate feedback was from the Public Affairs guys. And all of a sudden you had the Public Affairs people playing the [*key*] role. And when you see that happening you know that life is not going to be so neat. And we did this presentation and they said, "No, no, no, no, no." Allright. And Brock's Public Affairs guy said, "I don't think you guys really understand." He said, "It's like this...if Brock doesn't do planning, people will criticize him for not doing planning. So what we want you

to do is enough planning [*so people do*] not criticize Brock. I mean we need to make sure that Brock doesn't get criticized." So, excuse me, we went back to the office and we decided to call that "save-your-ass-planning." You know? And said, "We really don't think we want to be here doing this! Right?" And then it happened at that time the National Transportation Policy Commission [*see <http://transportationfortomorrow.com/> for its current work*] had been just created by the Congress. In fact, Brock Adams was one of the players in creating the Commission, because he thought that Gerry Ford was going to win the election, and the Congress wanted to, in effect, second-guess the administration. And so this Commission was created. The first thing Brock did when he was named secretary, even before he was sworn in he told the Congress, "Well I guess you don't need that Commission cause now it's me, and I'm a good guy, and so I'm going to be Secretary." And the Senate said, "Well I don't know. Maybe we'll...what the hell, we said we'd do it, let's do it." Brock was not happy obviously. And what happened, the Commission came to me, and to Pat Webster, and said, "We want you guys to come over to the Commission and run the planning and the policy, and now let's decide the data side of the Commission's work." So I came out of the department. I was loaned to this Commission for I guess two, two and a half years we worked. It was a fabulous experience. And by the time that was done, I had I guess what they call "rehiring rights" at the Office of the Secretary DOT. And so I could go back at a job that was an equivalent level. By that time the Commission had hired me, and I was...I forget what it is. The S level is the "senior," SES, the Senior Executive Service. I think I was SES. One of my friends called it minus one because I guess the highest level of SES was SES-9, and I was now an SES-8, whatever that was. Um, and I had "rehiring rights" and went back to the department. I went back to the department, and I talked to a lot of people, and I really decided that I really didn't want to go back. I mean there was just nothing there anymore that I had a taste to try to do.

NT: And this is around '78, '79?

AP: Yeah. I guess the Commission's work came out in the seventies. Transit Choices [*Trends and Choices*] came out in '76; the Commission's work came out in '79, maybe early 80, so it was around 1980. And I decided that I just wasn't willing to go back.

I told Charlie Baker, the former Assistant Secretary, that I wasn't going back to the department, and he asked me to work with him in a firm called Harbridge House. I worked with Harbridge House briefly. I found that as a consultan- it sounds funny cause I've been a consultant now for thirty-something years I

guess – but I really wasn't a very good consultant, in the sense that I really liked to do the stuff myself. I didn't want to go out and sell to keep the troops fed, and to keep the staff going. And so I worked at that with [*Gellman Research, a branch of*] Harbridge House, which is a great organization, and I'm very happy...I think the organization doesn't exist anymore. Loved Charlie and Tom Deen asked me to come over to TRB to work on SHRP 1 [*Strategic Highway Research Program 1*] as a consultant. And that gave me, like, about half of my necessary income. And so I decided to go take that and do that, and start and set up to be just an independent consultant. And so I basically worked at home, and have worked at home since that time...always by myself [*doing the work myself which I love and not having to worry about a company*]. The thing, I guess, that was a powerful influence in my mind was not so much making a lot of money, but having control of my time, having control of my own time. And so that has been, kind of, one of the attributes that I value. I can work when I feel like it. I get up very early in the morning. I work until noon maybe, and then go take a walk with my wife, and read in the afternoon or do whatever I need to do [*I can sit on my dock by the lake and think about things. Most consultants are too busy to have time to think about the subject. Frank Francois, AASHTO head, and a great leader, said AASHTO paid me to think*].

One of the hallmarks, I guess, of that work...well, before I get to the hallmarks...I'm going to write down the word "hallmarks"...is one of the nice things that happened, very early in that process, I had done some things with the [*National*] Academy, and I got to know some of the people in the Academy. And I was approached by the Statistical Office [*Committee on National Statistics*] of the Academy, and they were looking at changes [*wrought by deregulation*]. Again, the deregulatory process of aviation statistics and trucking and everything [*statistical support*] disappearing. And they were doing a study of - the Committee of National Statistics - on the impacts of this deregulation and other aspects, communications and other things, education. And asked me if I would be part of a group of basically the three people that would do an assessment for the Committee on the statistical ramifications of deregulation, which was great work and I really enjoyed it. The reason I mention it is because a guy came to me and said... a guy from - I'm sorry- in that work I mentioned a lot about tourism statistics, about the weaknesses of the losses that would occur. And I was approached by the European Tourism Commission, saying, "Could you do that for us?" And I said, "Sure." So I, in effect, did basically the same study of tourism statistical needs, and through that met a wonderful gentleman named Enzo Paci, E-N-Z-O, P-A-C-I. He was the Chief of the Statistical Programs of the World Tourism Organization [*in Madrid*]. And I guess for at least ten years, probably twelve years, I worked as a consultant to Enzo all over the

world, training people in statistics [*and assessing statistical programs in travel and tourism*]. Not so much transportation statistics, but tourism and travel statistics. So inside the United States my work was transportation; outside it was very heavily oriented to tourism. It was transportation stuff as well. So that was just a wonderful experience working on national income accounts and so forth, and teaching countries. Basically, what I did is I'd go into a country, I'd spend a month there, and I'd do an assessment of their statistical system, and tell them what they needed to be able to do, particularly the Tourism Minister wanted to know how is he going to convince the Prime Minister that he was important [*that the tourism industry was important*]. So that's kind of the ways I fed that and supported that, and it was just a great experience. I went to just about every country in the world. I would spend a month in Syria, spend a month in Thailand, a month in Jordan, whatever, Egypt, all over the world. And we did seminars all over the world training people. Again, immense exposure to the economic side of the house. And so I've had that kind of dual relationship. Most people in the United States don't have any clue about the tourism work that I've worked on, other than the fact that I had designed the inter-city travel surveys. That's how I got to know all the tourism side. People, of course, are interested in those surveys.

I mentioned the word of "continuity." And I guess if I go back and look at my work, the thing that I'm most pleased with is the continuity. We did National Transportation Trends and Choices which, as I said, was basically accepted as the first of the major national transportation studies. And I have been involved in every National Transportation study since, which is just great. I mean people come back to me and ask me to help. [*Apparently Trends and Choices has had long standing influence. Brock Adams and subsequent administrations at DOT hated it because the Congress kept bringing it up whenever they had to testify before Congress. I saw it on a coffee table in the Federal Railroad Administrator's office about 10 years after its publication so it was pretty outdated and asked why. He told me that when he arrived in the building he was told get a copy and read it – you will need it. some 20 years later in Rodney Slaters administration they did an echo report – an update of Trends and Choices using it as a starting point for their plans, and present secretary, Anthony Foxx, just released a study in Spring of 2015 Beyond Traffic – Trends and Choices [<http://www.dot.gov/BeyondTraffic>] which starts with quotes from our work now 40 years old. Very rewarding*].

In 1986, I was asked to do a study of commuting behavior by a consortium of associations, and that was the first of the Commuting in America series. And just yesterday we introduced, in effect, Version Four.

So, again, that's been 40 years I guess, 35 years that we have been doing that. While I was in the department I was very strongly involved in all of the major surveys in the Federal Highway Administration, particularly the so-called National Personal Transportation Survey [Ed. note: now known as the National Household Travel Survey, NHTS], which is the dominant source of travel behavior in the United States. And I have been involved with that ever since. We've done it every five or six years. So that's however many times we've done it, I've been involved in all of it. So I think one of the things that really does please me is that continuity that I've been able to be with the stuff and stay with the stuff.

Of course paralleling all of that is my work at TRB. There was, at that time, a committee that Al Voorhees chaired; it was called the O&D [*Origin and Destination*] Committee. I don't know, you may have bumped into that in the old days. And basically the O&D Committee was just trying to find out where people were coming from and going to. And over time, that O&D Committee turned into kind of a data committee, and I ended up eventually chairing that. I think I was the second or third chair of that committee. And during my tenure, that data committee expanded into three or four committees. And at that time the Bureau of Transportation Statistics was being formed, and I had worked in a study here at TRB on something called Data for Decisions, I think is what it was called at that time, and basically talked about the need for a better national statistical agency, which reminds me to go back and talk about whatever happened to transportation and statistics in the department after I left.

The point of it is that BTS was just coming on, and we helped form it. I worked very hard in the Congress to help make it happen. The big part of that was to really energize the department in the whole area of data collection. Cause the department was really incredibly deficient, and I worked at that. And today the data section is now eleven committees, and I don't know how many subcommittees. Just great to see that that thing has strengthened [*under Rolf Schmitt and Thomas Palmerlee*]. I think I need to go back and talk a little bit about what happened to data in the department. It's not self-serving to say that things went pretty badly after I left; it had nothing to do with the fact that I left.

NT: You had already been gone for a while.

AP: Well what happened was - and I think this is an immensely important bit of sense to have about the department - the battles that had gone on, there's always fights over who was in-charge of data, who was... Some people really wanted to, in effect, control it, have the responsibility for it. There were

battles between the Volpe Center up in Cambridge and the department where it should be in the Office of the Secretary? Should it be in Volpe? It's such a back and forth. [*The number of places where the data responsibilities at DOT have been housed are really too numerous to mention*].

When I left, and as I say it has nothing to do with the fact that I left, but it was within three months or six months that Congress zeroed out the department's statistical budget in the Office of the Secretary. I mean, just because like the fact of having a statistical office in the Office of the Secretary, which they could perceive to be something that just served the political interests of the Secretary, and I think that's an immensely important message. I was just up on the Hill this afternoon talking about that. BTS has now been moved from an independent agency into the Office of the Secretary. And it's great to be close to the Secretary, to be in the policy discussions, but it's very dangerous as well. Because you're...

NT: Exposing yourself to the political side that you're on.

AP: Yeah. And there's the Public Affairs guys who are thinking, "Why don't you just say it this way?" or "Why don't you say it never?" And you just can't do it. The department has been just...I spent half my career, or a large part of my career, convincing everybody that we need better transportation data, and I have to announce to the world that I'm a complete and dismal failure. I mean the department is still terribly weak. I often joke that I'd love to get back to 1977 when we sort of knew what we were doing. It is really, really quite pathetic. BTS's budget I don't think has changed in eleven years. I mean it's trivial. And they're trying very hard to meet the needs and the demands. The department... One of the things I did when I first came to the department...Bob Barraclough had brought me in. He produced something they called the Red Book. It was a response to the Congress that said, "What's your data program? Tell us about it. Why haven't you done anything?" So Bob put together this menu. I worked with him on it. And that book went on the shelf. And everything since has been simply trying to play catch-up and trying to convince people that this is worth doing, and trying to champion the data capabilities and the data responsibilities of the department. And I think we're just immensely weak in that regard, and I think that's one of the things, I guess, that keeps me going, keep trying to help make these things get better. There's a document called the Transportation Statistics Annual Report [[http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/transportation\\_statistics\\_annual\\_report/index.html](http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/transportation_statistics_annual_report/index.html)], which BTS has mandated to produce to the Congress. I worked on the first one however many years ago that was [*about 20*], and I just recently went back and worked on the current



one that is in the printer's right now. And just trying to kind of resuscitate that process, and make it more realistic, and create a situation where the Senate and the House and the Secretary's office appreciates the support and the value that better statistical information provides them.

I mentioned this continuity [*issue*] before, and one of the things I should mention in that continuity process is that before ISTEA [*Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act*] which was what '91, right? AASHTO [*American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials*] asked me to come up with an estimate of the state's investment requirements for legislation. And we produced something called the Bottom Line Report for AASHTO leading up to ISTEA, and, in effect, making the case for investment, and why it was important, and why it was valuable. And, again, I've done...I guess we just came out and it was just released it last week or so, the fifth of that Bottom Line Report to the Congress [<http://bottomline.transportation.org/Pages/default.aspx>]. Each reauthorization we've produced a document. And, again, I was struck by, and I said this to the Senate staff today, how hard it is to make the case for transportation investment because the data are weak, and the ability to really effectively describe what's going [*on*] or what needs to happen, what's happening...we're just so bad at it. I think part of that goes back - I attribute it to the fact that in the early days, particularly the Interstate Program, you didn't have to justify the Interstate Program to anybody. I mean it was pretty clear that it was a very valuable thing. And so I think we got kind of sloppy at making the case, and proving to people that what we did was worth that, you know, was worth doing it. The public had an implicit acceptance of that.

NT: Until they didn't.

AP: Which was great. Right, until they didn't. And then all of a sudden somebody said, "Prove it." And we weren't very good at proving.

NT: You weren't set up to prove it.

AP: Well, exactly. I mean everybody...I say we, but everybody had gotten sloppy because you were always dealing with people with an implicit acceptance of the fact that this was a valuable thing for the nation. And all of a sudden some people started saying, "I don't want that road. I don't want to put it there. I don't like the way you did it." Frank Turner and some of the people who worked for Frank

Turner would argue that...I mean it was like, what, 1.2% of the mileage of the whole thing that was controversial and that created problems. But I think the point is that we weren't very good at making the case. If you look at the "making the case" case over the last twenty-five years, thirty years, we justify the program based on the jobs it creates, which is about as stupid a thing as you can think of. I mean the good news is that every time we go up for reauthorization there's a recession. And so we can say, "35,000 jobs, 42,000 jobs per billion", whatever it is. And my answer to that...I mean good people, Norm Mineta, I love the man. Norm would make that case, "Look at the jobs we're going to create." And my answer was, "Do they build schools because of the jobs created in building schools? I hope it's what happens afterwards that matters." And we're really bad at that. So I think that's one of the things that I guess I'm just very disconcerted about.

But anyway, this most recent Bottom Line document is a good one I think, but again, we could just do the job so much better. There's a big session this morning on exactly that topic, and I think a lot of people made exactly that same point. So I guess now in my career, I can't honestly remember whether this is - I keep thinking might be my 50th year at TRB, but I think it's probably not. It's 48 or 49...somewhere in there. After that magical day at Tri State when somebody showed up with all of these research papers...

NT: You couldn't miss one, right?

AP: And literally...it's so interwoven in my life. My mother died during the TRB and I had to leave to...I didn't know she was ill, and went out to Milwaukee where she was ill. My son was born during TRB, and I ran to the hospital and ran back to tell everybody. I mean it's so funny. It just really kind of, that's the way it has worked. Um, so I guess I remember, I guess it must have been the 75th anniversary of TRB there was a meeting of kind of old hands, I guess, and people were talking about how many years they had been coming to TRB. And at that point I was at 26, 27 years I guess I was coming. And I said, "These guys got 38, 40 years. What are they, crazy?" And here I am, I don't know. But it's a wonderful organization. You talk about giving back, you know, this organization has done so much for the profession in terms of making people proud of what they do and doing it better. It's a great organization for me to continue to work with. Most of my stuff now...I told AASHTO that I don't want to do another Bottom Line, and we need to, Arlee Reno and I need to train people on how to do it the next time. Commuting in America, I have a co-author this time, Steve Polzin, who's just great to work with,

and is a topflight professional. I would be perfectly comfortable [*to see him take it on alone*]. Poor Steve, he'd still have to put up with me because I would stick my oar in. But the fact is Steve could do it by himself if he had to. So that's a great part of my work. I still love the continuity of the next travel survey, the 2015 National Household Transportation Survey [NHTS] is being designed.

NT: Can we talk a little bit more about that?

AP: Sure.

NT: I don't think we've talked about the genesis of the National Household Transportation Survey [<http://nhts.ornl.gov/>].

AP: When I came into the department they had just come back from the field for the 1969 survey. They were still working on it. And so I had very little to do with the decision of how to do the survey, but I had a lot to do with what they did with it when they finished with it. And I had my oar in that water ever since. And I've just worked with all of the different people who have come along over the years. And each of those events since '69 [*every 5 or 6 years*] I have written on the subject. One of the things that I think is - people ask me, especially students when I'm lecturing in a school, college, is, you know, why do I keep doing this? And I find it endlessly fascinating. The combination of social, behavioral elements, economic aspects, technological aspects, policy aspects and how those things interact is just a source of endless fascination to me. And there's no way I can really properly express to you how much fun it is to me and how great it is. And I wrote, I guess it was *Commuting in America III*, about how the endless pleasure I have in being exposed to that information and being able to express to people. We never really got into the fact that my work has been, I guess, two avenues of expression. And if I'm supposed to be good at something, maybe it's interpreting transportation information to people. And so the two avenues of expression of that, aside from writing all of this stuff, as a great friend of mine, a brilliant man, Will Owen, at Brookings [Institution] used to say to me cause Will would write these little folios that looked like something of Shakespeare's sonnets, you know. And he'd see me and he'd say, "You still writing those fat books." You know, I'd come out with these 400-page things. But anyway, the avenues of expression that outside of all that paper, but it generated from that paper is number one, Congressional testimony. Um, I had been testifying in the Congress, I honestly don't remember since when. I can't say that they have slavishly done exactly what I've told them to do, but it's been an

immensely valuable experience for me. Every time the Senate has considered new legislation, I have been asked to be among the first panels to talk to them. And I'd like to think it's because, number one, they just want a sense of what's going on, how are the American people behaving, and they expect me to be able to address that. But I also like to think it's because they think that I'm objective. This town is so full of advocacy analysis these days, it's terrible. And so I think legislators are just hungry for somebody that they think could tell them the truth and give it to them straight. And so I've had an immense amount of opportunity to talk to state legislatures and commissions and the US Congress, the House, and the Senate, which I approach with immense respect and a sense of responsibility. That's just a great avenue to be able to set down stuff that you think maybe can help them. And the other one is the press. I spend a lot of time talking to press. And I think mostly that's a) Because I can talk in sound bites I guess, but it's also because commuting is one of the favorite subjects for reporters. They always love to talk about how terrible it is, and how horrible, people stuck in traffic 60 minutes. Everybody wants to talk about congestion. And the fact is American congestion is really pretty decent compared to the rest of the world. You know, I'm sure in France they'd kill to have an average travel time of what, 25 minutes I guess, in the United States it's 25.5 minutes. Um, but I do enjoy that [*the press work*]. And, again, it's kind of like going outside the country and trying to apply what you know. If you're talking to a reporter who is either very sophisticated, cause they've done it for twenty years, Bob Thomson and Dr. Gridlock, or the wonderful lady [*Leslie Miller*] who used to be [*at the*] Associated Press, or some novice who either does or doesn't ask good questions, and you have the opportunity, maybe, to give them enough information to help them in the future. But, again, it's kind of testing what you know. You know, being able to express it to reporters is very helpful. You find some of them are really very good with great questions, but also it kind of forces you to coalesce what you think you know, and to express it in a way that they can carry away from you something that's helpful. So I do spend a lot of time on, kind of, not simply analyzing - I love the work of just sitting around and throwing the data up in the air and have it fall down on my head and all that. Analysis is really a great pleasure of mine, but being able to communicate it and talk about it and help people understand it is also, I guess, a big part of my goal in the whole business.

So here I am. I'm not quite sure what that all adds up to. It's great to be asked so often to present that kind of advice, and to be able to talk to people. Norm Mineta said, when the [*National Transportation*] Policy Commission, the most recent commission started. Again, I was asked to speak to them on the first day that they started, and Norm said, this is from his experience, he said, "Alan is the guy you go to

when you need to know what's going on." And that makes you feel good to hear that, especially from a man of Norm's stature who is just such a great American, such a great contributor. So I guess if you're talking about people, it's been just amazing, my exposure to great people, and it's a humbling experience really, just great to be able to work with those people.

NT: And it seems quite incredible that you started by doing your bachelor's degree.

AP: Yeah, and I don't have a master's, I don't have a Ph.D.

NT: Right. But you split yourself between sociology and economics, and that's motivated you throughout your entire career.

AP: Absolutely.

NT: And it continues to motivate you.

AP: It really is, I guess, a little bit on the weird side, but it absolutely is true. I've taught graduate courses. I've taught school [*undergraduate students*]. I took some master's courses, but never finished a master's degree or anything like that. I just was busy raising kids and working. Transportation has been such an immensely attractive activity for me. I wish I could somehow express to young people what a great world it is to play in. It just permeates so much of our lives, our society, and making mobility, and all of those aspects and attributes of mobility more available to more of the population is just great fun.

How long have we been talking? 5:40, no wonder my throat is sore!

NT: I mean I think you've covered an immense amount of material, and that's great.

AP: I hope you'll send me a copy of that if you could do it.

NT: I would be happy to.

AP: Yeah, that would be fun; that would be great to know.

NT: I'm just looking over my notes...

AP: Just remind me of what I said.

NT: (Laughing). Yeah, I think we've covered everything that I have in my notes.

AP: That's great; that's great.

NT: And so I thank you for your time.