



**Artists Documentation Program  
Video Interview Transcript**

**DANNY LYON  
March 27, 2012**

**Interviewed by:  
Jan Burandt, Conservator of Works of Art on Paper, The Menil Collection**

**Video: Laurie McDonald | Total Run Time: 01:03:22  
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This interview is part of the Artists Documentation Program, a collaboration of the Menil Collection, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museums.

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## **About the Artists Documentation Program**

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, artists have experimented with an unprecedented range of new materials and technologies. The conceptual concerns underlying much of contemporary art render its conservation more complex than simply arresting physical change. As such, the artist's voice is essential to future conservation and presentation of his or her work.

In 1990, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection for Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, then Chief Conservator, to establish the Artists Documentation Program (ADP). Since that time, the ADP has recorded artists speaking candidly with conservators in front of their works. These engaging and informative interviews capture artists' attitudes toward the aging of their art and those aspects of its preservation that are of paramount importance to them.

The ADP has recorded interviews with such important artists as Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, and Cy Twombly. Originally designed for use by conservators and scholars at the Menil, the ADP has begun to appeal to a broader audience outside the Menil, and the collection has grown to include interviews from two partner institutions: the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museums. In 2009, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection to establish the ADP Archive, formalizing the multi-institutional partnership and making ADP interviews more widely available to researchers.

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**[Speakers (in order of appearance): Danny Lyon, Photographer, Jan Burandt, Paper Curator, the Menil Collection]**

**[BEGIN INTERVIEW]**

**[00:00:50]**

Jan Burandt: It's March 27, 2012. We're here in Houston, Texas with Danny Lyon. I'm Jan Burandt, the Conservator of Works on Paper for the Menil Collection, and we're here on the occasion of the survey exhibition, "This World Is Not My Home: Photographs"—"Danny Lyon Photographs," curated by Menil, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Toby Kamps. We're in Room 4 of the Menil Collection, and the Menil Collection holds approximately 250 photographs by Danny Lyon. So, welcome Danny.

Danny Lyon: Nice to be here.

**[00:01:30]**

Jan Burandt: So, I was hoping that we could start our conversation, maybe with the idea of just, you were talking a little bit about your ideas about photographic papers, and that your ideas of getting the appropriate grain, or the grain, that look that you like on a print, on a given print, your choice of paper, and developers that would give you a result that you're looking for, and I chose this print [*Jackson Mississippi Greyhound bus to the Delta*, 1962] to bring out to just maybe start that conversation.

Danny Lyon: Okay, but I'm—you should mention [sounds like]—so the first thing I'm going to have to do is look at the print, which means I'm going to have to take the mat, open mat, (opens mat) which I'm allowed to do, and...

Jan Burandt: Oh wait.

Danny Lyon: Oh, I see, I'm not allowed to do that.

Jan Burandt: Yeah, no, we...

Danny Lyon: But I know how to do this, and I was going to say something, because I'm being interviewed. I've taken care of many prints for 40 or 50 years, and they're fine. No white gloves. So I know how to take a print out, but in order

to answer your question, I'd have to look at the verso, because the verso will identify the type of paper it is. For instance, Agfa puts the little water marks on it, says Agfa, Agfa, Agfa. I'm just guess[ing] here, this is a modern print, which means it wasn't made 45 years ago.

Danny Lyon: That picture was made 45 years ago, through the window of a bus, probably on [Kodak Professional] Tri-X, and because a mat cut off the black border, some of the information is lost to me or anybody else. Those are sprocket holes. You know, they talk about sprocket-driven technology. That goes back to Thomas Edison, who basically invents this machine like a claw that grabs this piece of plastic, and film is long, it's like rope, you know. It can be hundreds of feet long, and movie film, it's in reels, but if you—and they're all perforated, those are the sprocket holes. If you pull it out, it would be a can of 16 millimeter in feet, is 400 feet long, which is probably longer than this building, whereas this is a roll of Tri-X, and if you pull it out, which you do in a darkroom, it's about three or four feet long. So, as far as presentation, and I noticed it at the show, I would've preferred the mats were opened.

Jan Burandt: Yeah.

Danny Lyon: And we're talking about a half an inch here.

Jan Burandt: Right.

Danny Lyon: Because you do see part of the object, which is the edge.

Jan Burandt: Right, and I have some images that talk specifically to that issue a little bit later on, that we'll pull out. I knew that that was something...

Danny Lyon: You know, this print [*Eduardo Rivera Marquez, Bernalillo, New Mexico, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston*], you know again, you can barely see the edge. You can kind of see it, but because you can see the edge, I can tell immediately, one, that that's an older print, and that I made it, and this weird, double border, this is really a great border, but it's—when the negative is put into—there's something called a negative holder. They come with enlargers. They are these aluminum plates, and photographers, those plates would crop the pictures. In other words, they'd crop them just the way these mats are cropping, and photographers didn't like that. In other words, I don't know who started it. Someone once came to me and said, I was the first person to publish a book with all the black borders in it, [Danny Lyon,] *Conversations with the Dead*, [New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1971] which was the prison book with this stuff in it [referring to *The Line, Ferguson Unit*,

*Texas 1967-69, 1967–1968, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Kenneth G. Futter*]. I think it shows all these black borders, which have been covered. I don't...

Jan Burandt: And I noticed in the civil rights book, that some were shown and some were not shown, and so it was an interesting...

Danny Lyon: Which civil rights book? I mean, there have been many, no no no—the thing is, that the original civil rights book was a piece of junk published in 1964. You're talking about a book that was done 25 years later [Lyon, Danny, and Julian Bond, *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.].

Jan Burandt: Yeah, it was a more recent...

**[00:06:02]**

Danny Lyon: But this goes back—so these pictures are published in 1970, and every black border is shown. So I learned—I came of age as a student at the University of Chicago, and there was a guy named, I forget his name, Fred Beekman, I think his name was, and he was a very serious photographer before I was a photographer, as I was becoming a photographer, and he would say, “I have the black border to show that I do not crop my negatives.” And he said, “If I have to crop a negative,” he said, “I've failed.” “And it's so easy to make a picture,” he said, “I should then just go out and make another picture,” which is an interesting argument. So this black border was a thing of pride, saying look, “I've made a perfect picture,” you know.

Danny Lyon: This is not a perfect picture [referring to *The Line, Ferguson Unit, Texas 1967-69, 1967–1968, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Kenneth G. Futter*]. It's not even a very good picture, but say this is a perfect picture, and you want to—you can say, “Look I made it,” and look, there's this guy, and there's another guy, I didn't slice his head off. There's a guy, and he's right on the edge. There is, in fact another person here, and another person here, but they got excluded. If you count them, they're like—six, seven, eight, nine—there are thirteen people. This is called a row. So these rows, in fact, would [have] always had eighteen people in them. I mean, this is Texas. They ran it kind of like Auschwitz. They were very careful about all that. So, every work gang had eighteen or nineteen people. So this is not the whole squad, but the point is, the black border shows that that's what the negative is.

Jan Burandt: Right.

Danny Lyon: Walker Evans cropped pictures. You can see in many early pictures, you know, he did long ones, he did all kinds of funny things. I did it when I was very, very young, but I would really never do it again. This is a piece of dirt that's in the negative, this black thing.

**[00:08:03]**

Danny Lyon: This is a piece of dirt that's in the negative, this black thing.

Jan Burandt: And that, in fact, is why I brought this one here to show, because there are some features, and these are as we'd found them in the collection. This one had been over-matted, in fact, so that you don't see the border, and you don't see the flaw in the negative, and...

Danny Lyon: That has a ding in it too, by the way [referring to *Eduardo Rivera Marquez, Bernalillo, New Mexico, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston*].

Jan Burandt: Right.

Danny Lyon: In other words, if you try to sell these now, there's a double standard in prints. I mean, if someone buys a modern print, that means that Chuck Kelton, who does most of my printing, he makes it, or he made it five years ago, or ten years ago. People want those to be perfect, meaning, if I send it to the art dealer, and he sends it to someone who paid \$5,000 for this, and he sends it back, and he says, "Look, there's a little ding in it." There it is, right there. You see that? I mean, I know—did you notice that?

Jan Burandt: Yes.

Danny Lyon: I noticed it immediately. So, some of these are paper flaws, meaning they were actually a flaw in the paper made in Germany. I bet, would you take that out? All you have to do is pull that out. [referring to print on table]

Jan Burandt: I'd rather not take it out right now, because we have so many things in front of us, that I think maybe it would be good to...

Danny Lyon: Oh that are out? okay.

Jan Burandt: ...to continue on, and...

Danny Lyon: All right, so.

Jan Burandt: ...we do have some photos that are completely loose...

Danny Lyon: Well I want to talk about my black line here. So, you would go to a machine shop. Marty Forscher [owner, Professional Camera Repair Service, New York] on 46<sup>th</sup> Street ran a very famous place where you fixed cameras, and everybody went to this guy, and his story goes back to World War II, I think, and repairing cameras. But by the '60s, this guy had 20 employees sitting there, taking apart Leicas with thick glasses and all this stuff, and you take it to Marty, and he would file it out for, you know, a considerable charge, like \$60 or something, with a, you know, in a machine shop. But I did it myself with a file, and which became really grotesque because, you know, you're talking about something that's an inch and a half long, but when it's enlarged, the error gets gigantic, and so this was caused by this very weird border, and the light reflecting on this thing creates these.

Jan Burandt: I can see why it would be important to open that up.

Danny Lyon: That's a vintage print. That's an old print that—I made that when I made the negative. This is a modern print.

**[00:10:43]**

Jan Burandt: So, in talking about some of the issues of prints, and them coming straight from the studio, and retouching, I'm sure that you did retouching in the studio. We have several prints back here that have spot touching in the print.

Danny Lyon: Right, so, and what do you mean by studio?

Jan Burandt: Well, in your darkroom, or your—wherever you are working to produce the work.

Danny Lyon: Okay, okay, that's fair. So retouching give me the creeps, just the word "retouching," because you know, I'm a street photographer, meaning I come from a whole other world, but as Hugh Edwards said, photography is everything. Scientists use it. NASA use[s] it. I mean, people who sell shoe polish use photography, you know, and you know, retouching is a word that goes back to when, you know, when I was a little boy in 1945, my parents would take me into a studio to be lit up and photographed and then printed on this nice paper, and you get proofs, and it'd say proofs on it. These are very precious items. Now, none of this exists anymore, but you're right though. I was going to say, one of these pictures is really dirty at the bottom, and in the old days, there was a—retouch—you would spot them, which means you'd get this dry

material, and I was terrible at it. People who do it now, get \$40 an hour. They sit there like jewelers doing this all day. There's a guy named Jerry, who's incredible at it, and because I can't afford him, he collects my work and I trade him. Nancy [Lyon, Wife of the artist] used to do it for years. The right way to do it, there's a liquid that comes in a little jar that's made by some company in California, and they're the tones that match the different papers, you know, Agfa paper, cool paper, or number two, or whatever it is—and it's a little jar—and you take a little drop of this, you'd mix it with spit or water—I mean there's a whole process, and then you take a number zero-zero brush, and you pick up a little on the spot. And that's the right way to do it. Having said that, this company went out of business like five years ago, and people went crazy, you know. Because it was like, you know, it's like in *Dr. Zhivago*, I'm lighting the last half of the last cigar in all of Moscow.

Jan Burandt: (laughs)

Danny Lyon: So, people were hoarding it, and buying it, and there were big fights over it, and you know, psst, I got a dozen of them, you know, because how would you ever retouch a picture again?

Jan Burandt: So how would you—if, can you...

Danny Lyon: Did I do this? I did it terribly.

Jan Burandt: There were...

Danny Lyon: On the old print, yeah...

Jan Burandt: These are just examples of...

Danny Lyon: I think Mrs. de Menil bought—yeah it's horrible, so this is amazing [referring to *Eddie, Llanito, New Mexico, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston*]. So this...

**[00:13:47]**

Danny Lyon: You know, I met Dominique [de Menil, Founder, the Menil Collection] many years ago, because I lived in Houston, but then I think, around the time I—I'm trying to get this straight historically, but it seems to me it must have been the following sequence. I don't know if I ran into her by accident, or I showed her the pictures of this boy. Or maybe I saw her as a potential client, which you know, there really wasn't a market in photographs. People really didn't collect



photographs. Only three museums in the United States were devoted to photography, so this was a very early—even collected photographs. This was very, very early. We're talking about 1962, and I think I was in Houston maybe doing something else anyway. I saw her, and I showed her that boy smoking a cigarette [*Joselyn, Santa Marta, Columbia, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston*], and those were good pictures. And then she said, she made some comments about them, which were very nice. She said there was always a happy-sad feeling in all of my pictures. It was an interesting comment. I mean, it was about emotion, from Dominique, and she said, “Well, I'd like to buy some of these,” and she said, “I'd like about twenty of them.” So, it was a big sale for me, because whatever, they probably might have been \$400 each or something, but it was a big deal for me, or two—I don't really remember. And I wasn't really being a photographer, and I think (points to prints on ledge behind him) this was one of them, and this was one of them, and this was one of them. That's a really good picture, and probably worth fifteen or twenty thousand dollars [referring to *Llanito, New Mexico, 1970, The Menil Collection, Houston*]. No one has copies of these [referring to *The Wiggins Brothers, Wedding, Placitas, New Mexico, 1971, The Menil Collection, Houston*; and *Eddie, Llanito, New Mexico, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston*], or wants them. I don't know if they've ever been published. They all came in the same box. It was really a mixed bag, because I wasn't really being a photographer. I think I was intentionally trying to sell her things that I knew, and so these were done in New Mexico.

Jan Burandt: And at that point in time, it was you doing all of the dark work and all of the printing...

Danny Lyon: Yeah, I would've print—these are all again, I would have to really look at the back of that to know, for real, but if that's what I think it is, then it's a vintage print I made then, which makes it a very, very valuable picture. These I know I made, and I can tell, these borders should all match, and again that's why—the border's like a fingerprint, because it shows the carrier that it was in, and they'll match. This crazy funky border should match that one.

**[00:16:28]**

Jan Burandt: Well I think one of the next batches that we'll bring out has more of that issue, but I wanted you to take a look at this picture [*Teenage Girls in a stockade outside of Leesburg, Georgia, 1963, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil*], which to me, I find this such a powerful work, and I noticed this here.

- Danny Lyon: You know, this is great. So, this is a proof by Kelton, And you know, this is now more than a generation later, and I became friendly with Addie [Adelaide de Menil Carpenter]. I never knew Addie—I never knew Addie in Houston. I never saw Addie in Houston. I meet Addie in 1980s on Long Island, and so we became friends, and she knew all of the kids, and of course, she's a photographer herself, and had a totally different interest in photography than her mother, and so we became friendly, and I worked on this fisherman project [*Men's Lives: The Surfmen and Baymen of the South Fork*]. And then, recently, she wanted to purchase specifically civil rights work, and work on the Texas prison, with a focus on African-Americans inside the Texas prison, which was strange because the Texas prison is—it'll imprison anybody of any race for any length of time, but Addie just wanted pictures of black people in prison, which is a funny way to edit pictures. But anyway, these people in prison—this one I've got to look at the back of it. So this is right, you should take, this is a proof. Take that picture out.
- Jan Burandt: You know, we have another—we can have Adam [Baker, Matter and Framer, The Menil Collection] do that for us, if you don't mind.
- Danny Lyon: We're going to get in a fist fight. You know, at the Whitney [Museum of American Art], there's a union, and you're not allowed to touch—the artists can't touch their own work.
- Jan Burandt: Well...
- Danny Lyon: It's similar.
- Jan Burandt: It's similar. We have...
- Danny Lyon: Is he going to remove this?
- Jan Burandt: Actually, well that won't tell us what he's looking to find, but...
- Danny Lyon: Yeah but why—because this is like the point of this discussion, why are you afraid to remove that? Do you think you will destroy it?
- Jan Burandt: I'll illustrate...
- Danny Lyon: Hurt it?
- Jan Burandt: I'll illustrate exactly what I'm afraid of. I have to walk around the table...

Danny Lyon: You're going to bend it back.

Jan Burandt: I'll show you something that we find in the works, that we call handling creases...

Danny Lyon: All right, so you're afraid to damage it.

Jan Burandt: I'm afraid to damage it, yes.

Danny Lyon: Well you need to get over that.

Jan Burandt: (laughs)

Danny Lyon: You know, listen, see I got a—someone put a coffee cup on one of my prints, and it doubled the value. It made a big, brown stain on it, and we've reproduced it, and it was very successful. (laughs)

**[00:19:07]**

Jan Burandt: So, the point, the question about...

Danny Lyon: Well, there's writing on the back of the picture [referring to *Teenage Girls in a stockade outside of Leesburg, Georgia, 1963*, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil], which you are hiding from the public. I don't know how else to put this. There you go. Be brave. All right, there we go. A man of action. See Norman Mailer would admire this.

Jan Burandt: (laughs)

Danny Lyon: Okay, we're going to bring it over here, and you're going to see why that picture has this weird thing coming through the front. Is there writing on it?

Jan Burandt: There is writing on it. In fact...

Danny Lyon: You've got a lot of writing.

Jan Burandt: In fact, this is one—we've photographed the backs of all of your photos so that...

Danny Lyon: Well, so this is absolutely weird. So this is—I'm going to show this to everybody. So this is kosher—you know, this is my signature and stamp—but this stuff is the printer, writing on it. He prints this—it's a proof, and this is

some secret language to himself. He says, these are filters, and he says plus five, with the number one filter. What that means is that he's going to give five seconds more of light to the top half of this image, with a number one filter, which is the softest filter, other than the zero and double zero, to bring that out.

Danny Lyon: So he's communicating with himself, but Addie says, oh you know, an art dealer will say, oh that's no good, there's writing on it. And not only is there writing on it, it comes through the front. You can see it. It came right through there. And so Addie says, oh these are cool because Addie has worked in the darkroom, knows what Hypo and Dektol is, and she buys these, and she's the only person—one art dealer did recently, who's ever collected this, which is interesting, because it does—it preserves something that's, I mean—there's no more of this. You can't get the chemicals, when this guy goes out of business, and there's no more. Di Suvero once said to me that it was about process. I'm not even sure what he meant. I think he was talking about his sculpture. I think he was talking about seeing the welds. But I can relate to it, because this is about process. It's about the actual process, the nuts and bolts of how you make a print.

Jan Burandt: Well, and also, this one has the word "good" circled there.

Danny Lyon: Yeah.

Jan Burandt: And we have other examples, where there's the word "perfect" circled.

Danny Lyon: Oh I see.

Jan Burandt: And in fact, I have one to show you, that we have two different exposures of the same print [*Arrest of Taylor Washington, Lebs Restaurant, Atlanta, 1963-64* (Winter), The Menil Collection, Houston; and *Arrest of Taylor Washington, Lebs Restaurant, Atlanta, 1963-64* (Winter), The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil], one is considered perfect by your studio, but I guess this...

Danny Lyon: You know who's going to—on Thursday, the guy who did this [Chuck Kelton] is going to be here.

Jan Burandt: I'm looking forward to meeting him. I hope I get a chance to meet him.

Danny Lyon: You should film him, and I'll tell you why. He's like the last man standing, and he's probably 50—his name's Chuck Kelton, he's probably ten, fifteen

years younger than I am, and yeah he's at least fifteen years younger than I, and he makes these prints, not just for me, but he's amazing.

**[00:22:15]**

Danny Lyon: And Terry Etherton, a dealer, once said that I was the only person who credited the printers. The truth is, there've been certain printers. There was a guy named Igor Bakht who printed all of [Andre] Kertész's work and was a friend of Addie's, and print work on this fisherman project, and he was like a famous printer, but no one—you never see, you see the work on the walls, and no one's heard of this guy.

Jan Burandt: Well, and we've wondered, even in the media description about your work, you have negatives that may be from 1967, but a subsequent print is from a different year, and do you, in fact, want to credit—in some of our notes in our registration database, we have the printer credited right there, along with the later date of the printing, and in many of the backs of the prints, which we...

Danny Lyon: That's a—this is supposed to be a K, it's for Kelton.

**[00:23:41]**

Jan Burandt: Right, right, and I've noticed quite a few different initials for various printers, and I wonder if that has any relationship to any sort of editioning, or...

Danny Lyon: I've never, you know, I mean, I've been involved in this my whole life. The first picture I ever sold, I got two dollars for. And then, Hugh Edwards showed me a couple times at the Art Institute of Chicago, and I was in my twenties, and I had one-man shows, and he said that photography was a multiple. I mean, I never studied art—I was a history student, and after college, I went into the civil rights movement, and then I never went back to school, but—and I never really was, you know, that interested in art as studying or anything. I'm not a great museum-goer. But having said that, and Di Suvero once said to me, “Photography's a plastic art—do you even know what that means?” And I don't think I did know what it meant, but so it's a multiple. So what that means to me, is that it is a natural process, having made the original of this—is this a good picture? Yeah, these are the girls, right? That's a good one.

Jan Burandt: That's a, historically, very...

Danny Lyon: You know, I love holding prints, and at the Art Institute in the '60s, you could go in, and they'd say, oh I'd like to see Edward Weston, they'd bring out a box. They didn't give you white gloves, and you can sit there and look at the prints. I mean, it was great—real prints—and I did that a lot, because I would go to the Art Institute, and he said, here, [Alfred] Stieglitz, and he said, oh we just bought a box of [W. Eugene] Gene Smith, and he said, we paid him \$75 apiece for these prints. It was a big—yeah, it had [Benjamin] Katz and all kinds of stuff, and he said, you know, an artist of that stature, you have to pay him at least that. That's real money, \$75 for each one. These are vintage Gene Smith.

**[00:25:21]**

Jan Burandt: So for this later print [*Teenage Girls in a stockade outside of Leesburg, Georgia*, 1963, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil], and seeing the writing through there, how do you feel about the presentation of that? Is that something that bothers you? Would you rather that it were...

Danny Lyon: Well I think it's great that it's here. If—it's what it is. I mean, if I send it to a gallery, they'd send it back to me. They'd say, "We want a good one. The client doesn't want this. I once gave a guy a decorated print, and covered all the decoration. So, that I can't understand. No, this is not. This is a fluke. I think it's nice that Addie, who's a craftsperson, appreciated and cared about it.

Danny Lyon: But back to the multiples, so I always felt it was artificial to say, okay, I'm only going to make ten of these, or twenty-five. In other words, it's a natural—it's natural to me, having a negative, to keep making copies, to restrict it is basically just a kind of bow to the art world, and say okay, I'm merely like Dalí or Picasso, and I'm going to make a, quote, "limited edition." I don't really do it. I mean, I never have and it's worked out fine. People still want them. On the other hand, I mean that print is unique. There's two of them in the world, and I'll never go back and make it again, and if people want that and like it better because of that, that's fine.

Jan Burandt: And so this print [*New Orleans*, 1965 (Jan.), The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Leon and Ginette Henkin family] is a mounted print?

Danny Lyon: Right, because I mounted it. That's my cousin, Leon [Henkin].

Jan Burandt: In New Orleans.

Danny Lyon: It is in New Orleans? It's interesting. You know, he was a really great man.

Jan Burandt: You know, I'd like to really...

Danny Lyon: Oh you want to put it up?

Jan Burandt: I'd like to take this print away, and if—I know that you would prefer to handle the prints, but it would be nice for maybe the flow of the material.

Danny Lyon: You know, I used to say, well it's *my* fingerprint.

Jan Burandt: (laughs) And making the print more valuable?

Danny Lyon: Well, you know, that brings up another issue, which is the size of pictures. You know, there's an obsession to make these gigantic pictures, and you probably know about that, but in the art world, they say that they're making huge photographs. So this is an eight by ten piece of paper, and the image size is eight inches. It's teeny. The proper way to view this is to pick it up, and hold it in your hand.

Jan Burandt: Like a daguerreotype.

Danny Lyon: You can't see it any other way. It's small. And, it was a gift, so he was my first cousin. He was a genius, a mathematical genius. He was a physicist. He, as a student, worked on the atomic bomb for Einstein. I saw Einstein once as a kid, because Leon was at Princeton, and we drove out to visit him, and Einstein was raking the leaves on his lawn, or something. And he was head of the Berkeley math department for many, many years, and he's passed away about five or six years ago. But this was a donation, of him and his wife [Ginette Henkin] had many pictures I'd given them, and they'd kept them.

**[00:28:40]**

Jan Burandt: And it's here now because it's mounted to a board. As these are mounted to boards...

Danny Lyon: Yeah I did this myself. You know, this is a—this is some kind of—this is not Strathmore. I don't know. It's some kind of art board.

Jan Burandt: I believe that's...

Danny Lyon: I like this, because I actually signed it in 19—this is an old signature. Rare. Well then I didn't put my last name because it was a gift.

Jan Burandt: And, so, these are other mounted pictures, different techniques that in this case...

Danny Lyon: Right, so this is a terrible picture [*Neshoba County Fair, Mississippi, 1964, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Leon and Ginette Henkin family*], mounted, and I don't know where it came from. Did I give that to them, do you know?

Jan Burandt: I'm not sure what the source of this picture is.

Danny Lyon: Well look at the mount board is really discolored.

Jan Burandt: It's very discolored, and...

Danny Lyon: Like it'd been out in the open, or something.

Jan Burandt: You know, if the board causes too much of a risk to the artwork at some point in time, do you...

Danny Lyon: Right, you can pop them off.

Jan Burandt: Yeah, this is the kinds of questions that we conservators like to think about, whereas this board, which is obviously a higher quality board, is signed by you...

Danny Lyon: This [*The Woods, Ellis, 1967-1968, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Leon and Ginette Henkin family*] was a part of a limited, Aperture—the reason this is mounted—Aperture did a book of mine [Lyon, Danny, *Pictures from the New World*. New York: Aperture, 1981.], a collection, and in order to sell books for more money, they did a slipcase edition that came with a print, and like, there were a hundred of each, and this is one of those prints, I think.

**[00:30:19]**

Jan Burandt: And so, for you, the fact that it has a signature, is that—do you want to see that sort of thing covered, or do you think it's more appropriate to have it open to view?



- Danny Lyon: You know, this is a commercial thing. In other words, this was made—Sid, I think for five dollars a piece, Sid Kaplan made like fifty copies of that picture, and so—this is much more interesting. That was, I think, also a gift to my cousin...
- Jan Burandt: And this is...
- Danny Lyon: I don't think I have something. This is a great print [*Ruleville, Mississippi*, 1964, printed 1965, The Menil Collection, Houston].
- Jan Burandt: Now this is also inscribed along the edge, that's been covered down.
- Danny Lyon: You know, we're talking about two—I mean the photograph and the print are two different things, meaning you can get all excited about a print as an object, even though the picture might not be that good. This is, actually, not a bad picture. I think it's when you have both a good picture, and a wonderful print of it, that they come together, and it's really neat. So, this has a dreaded crease. This has serious damage, but it's off in the white, so who cares? You know, I think within photography and modern times, where they come across—they'd have a glass-plate picture of Lincoln, and the glass would be broken. In other words, the original is a piece of glass, and the glass is broken. They used to touch this out, and spot it, and all this stuff. They don't do any of that. They consider now, the crack in the glass, which is of course appears in the image, is part of the object and best left alone. So that doesn't really bother me. It's not through his face. It doesn't hurt the picture. It's there, and that's the way it is.
- Jan Burandt: Right, and in looking at photographs that you have made inscriptions, and there's a wide variety of that type of print, and we have more here than I could bring out to show you for discussion.
- Danny Lyon: You know, even Kelton, unlike me, is a professional with a lab and all this stuff. This was dried by me in a Midgeco [sounds like] dryer. There's rippling on the edge there, you see that? So that's probably always been there, but it doesn't hurt the image. One reason to print with these big borders is that it protects the image, because the damage is almost always from the edge. When we looked at the film last night, which looked really horrible, I said to the projectionist, can you make it smaller? And he said, smaller? Because, just like this is smaller, just to have that white thing. So this was also a gift to Leon and Ginette [Henkin]. Yeah I would open. Just in terms of viewing, I mean if this is in the show, I would float something like this. I would float the...

Jan Burandt: And show the entire...

Danny Lyon: Well because it's so neat, that the paper's there. You know, again, I made this almost 50 years ago. I didn't make it saying, "Oh some day there'll be no prints," but there was a sense of doing something for the future. I think that's just the nature of photography, and in fact, we're in the future. There's no more paper. This is an object, itself; it's very special, and I remember washing—I would make these in a bathtub or something, and washing them, and I knew that if I washed them longer, they would last longer. I was really into that. I even—I was like 22 or something, when I made this. I was into making something, wanting it to last, and to survive into the future, by washing it in my bathtub longer.

Jan Burandt: We're happy to hear that, and in fact, in looking through your work in our collection, it's in really remarkably good condition.

Danny Lyon: Well thank you, coming from you, and I have no training, no degree in it. I was going to say, Nancy and I have argued about this. You know, we're proud of it. We've taken care of, you know, not these, but others like them for years, and years, and years, and there've been a few major screw-ups, but most of the stuff survived, and...

**[00:34:41]**

Jan Burandt: I think that this [*Untitled: Orphans*, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist] may be a good one to look at now, with that in mind, because you see the pinholes in the corners of this, which, you know...

Danny Lyon: Right, oh look.

Jan Burandt: ...I imagine this was tacked up to, perhaps, your bulletin board at one point in time.

Danny Lyon: That's correct.

Jan Burandt: So, fashions change, you know, in presentation of material, and so we're seeing what has happened in the past here in the collection, and we're trying to come to a practice today that suits your feeling about the material, and then projecting into the future what may be requested by a different generation of curators, and so it's great to be able to look at this with you...

Danny Lyon: You know, sometimes on these corners, they'll leave one off. Have you seen that? And just so you don't have to bend—that's why you objected, because you have to bend this to remove it. You can hold this, just as well, with three corners. I mean, I've seen that with, you know, they just affixed three corners. You know, these push-pins, in the Texas Prison [Series], which is a long, long series, more ambitious than this, there were hundreds and hundreds of prints made, most of them were made in Midway, Texas, in a bathroom, and I would go out and photograph, you know, every couple of weeks I'd process the film, and then I'd go into the darkroom, and quickly print, you know, like the first print ever made of these guys with the hoe, was a little eight by ten. And I would usually make one or two or three prints, at the most. Those are the most valuable prints, and I would never go back to that picture, because I was, a month later, there were new pictures, etc., etc. Of course, within them were just pictures, and occasionally, there were masterpieces, but that's just part of the process, you know. I was working, working, working. I did this for 14 months, non-stop, photographing, coming back, and I think in the end, I'd done about 200 rolls of film. So say, you know, every month, I'd have like another ten or 15 rolls. But I had a bulletin board, someplace in that house was a bulletin board, and I would put these pictures up with thumbtacks, with these push-pins, in the corners, through the prints, to try to create this book which was based on chapters, and units, and bring them together. Meaning, if in fact I decided there was going to be a section on the Ellis Unit, I would put them up, and say, this is what I got, you know, I got too many pictures of horses, or I don't have a picture of solitary, or I need to get a picture of this guy, and that's why—and on the Texas prison pictures in particular, there are prints like that that'll have five or six holes in each corner, and the more holes they had, the more indecisive I was, or the more it got moved around, or the more questions there were. Those prints still survive, you know, but I haven't seen any here.

Jan Burandt: And so, in that sense, it becomes a more interesting, again, to open—to open up and see them...

Danny Lyon: Well, it's that these are what used to be called work prints—you know, again there are different ways of looking at them. I call them work prints. On the other hand, for collectors, these have been the most valuable and sought-after of my prints. On the other hand, you know, I've heard people say, those aren't your work prints. Those are your prints because, you know, Ansel Adams—who I've never met, I didn't particularly want to meet him, had just a totally different standard of photographs, of proofs. I was not a studio photographer. I jumped at that word. I have a studio now because I'm old, you know, and I spend a lot of time in it, but when this work was done, I mean the Civil Rights

Movement, I mean, I didn't have a studio, you know. If I was lucky, I had a darkroom in a bathroom. My darkrooms were in bathrooms until the—I built, I think, my first darkroom in New Mexico, and I wasn't really being a photographer. I actually built a darkroom, and it's an adobe darkroom made out of dirt. It has dirt walls that are plastered, you know, but that I think probably was my—here in Texas, they were always in bathrooms, meaning I wasn't turning out these final, beautiful prints for the art world. I was just functioning, but I worked very, very hard on those prints, and wanting them to look as good as possible, and then, I mean, there's a whole history of these prints. So this [*Road to Madrid, New Mexico, 1970*, The Menil Collection, Houston] is one of these kind of mediocre pictures—that means I didn't make that print. I made this print, and you can know exactly when I made it because of this cockamamie border. Look at it. I filed it out by hand. Igor made that, I'm pretty sure, because Addie hired Igor to do all the printing for this project, Igor Bakht.

Jan Burandt: And note, there's three corners on this one [*Clamming. Tonging for Hard Clams. Three Mile Harbor, East Hampton, 1982*, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Adelaide de Menil Carpenter]. (speaking to Adam off-camera) And those two, yeah. Thanks, Adam. We'll just do a quick change out here.

Danny Lyon: Hm?

Jan Burandt: We'll just do a quick change out here.

Danny Lyon: Okay.

Jan Burandt: In fact, let's get this one too. All right, so...

**[00:40:48]**

Danny Lyon: Well, can you see me over here? Well, I—this is [*Joy Reagon, Jessie Harris, Peggy Dammond, Sam Black, Dorie Ladner, Nashville, Tennessee, 1962, Nashville, 1962 (Nov.)*, The Annual SNCC Conference, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil], you know I was telling you, a roll of film is three or four feet long. So these are three pictures, which means a piece of plastic is about yey-long, and you can put this is in a bigger, a glass holder, and these were shot in sequence. In other words, you can tell by the numbers that this is real. I mean, it's almost like a movie, meaning I'm going there and going click-click-click, meaning that's the first click, that's the second click, and that's the third click. I still

know Dorie Ladner. These are all very well-known people. This is an early demonstration.

Danny Lyon: This [*Demonstration on the courthouse steps. My last pictures of the Movement*, 1965 (Mar. 7) Montgomery, Alabama, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil] is similar, but different because I'm almost certain that this is made from a copy negative. I think, this is kind of a mystery, but I don't think I have the negatives to this. I think I have some contact sheets. I think the negatives have been lost, and it looks like I made these in 1965. I think I was gone from the movement. I had a job. I'm not sure. Maybe Bruce Davidson took these. It's a mystery. That was joke. But, anyway—that's why—you see how flat this is? The white is not really white? It's kind of grey. I don't know if you can tell. It's a good copy, but so I think we had a contact sheet and no negatives, the negatives are lost. So, someone re-photographed the contact sheet, and made a negative to create this. That's why there are no—so that's what that is, but this is much better quality, I think. I don't know if you can tell.

Jan Burandt: Right, and here this again, we see [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. & Rev. Ralph Abernathy escorted to jail, 1962 (August), Albany, Georgia, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil]...

Danny Lyon: That's from the original...

Jan Burandt: We see the...

Danny Lyon: Yeah, that's just kind of goofing around with this border. These are crop signs, and my guess is this was used in a book, and the information's on the verso.

Jan Burandt: And that they would've...

Danny Lyon: They cropped it...

Jan Burandt: They would've cropped it for the book.

Danny Lyon: Right, because someone marked it—a printer, and my guess is, on the verso, there might be more information about it.

Jan Burandt: So again, it's part of the history of the bookmaking process.

Danny Lyon: Yeah, the new book, I guess. I have really amazing prints that go back to books that were done in the '60s. In fact, the Whitney [Museum of American Art] paid \$30,000 for one print, and the verso was almost as interesting as the front. It was a civil rights picture. It was a very strong picture, and it had this beautiful border, and it was in pretty good shape, but the back was amazing, the amount of stamps and notations, as this print, which was 50 years old, had gone to different magazines, gone back to Magnum [Photographic Cooperative], and everybody was writing and scribbling on the back.

Jan Burandt: Well I have, as I told you, all of the prints that are coming in now, we are photographing the versos as a matter of course, and we're keeping that information in the file. This is an enhancement, just so that...

Danny Lyon: Right, this is a Chuck [Kelton]. Right, that's the same one.

Jan Burandt: So that all that would be available for anyone researching the photograph, all of the details.

Danny Lyon: You know, is there any chance you'd interview Chuck? I don't know how long he's here, but he'll be at the opening, but he's only here for a day.

Jan Burandt: I would like to meet him.

Danny Lyon: But he's a fascinating guy, and unless there's another occasion, he's based in Manhattan, in Jersey City, and I'm not the only guy he's printed for. He prints for everybody, but he's, like I said, they never again—and those are the people that actually process this stuff, and see that it will survive, and tint it, and do all kinds of stuff.

Jan Burandt: Yeah, I've seen his website.

**[00:44:42]**

Danny Lyon: Oh, wow. So that's fading badly [*Christ in Juárez, Mexico, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston*]. That's magenta, and it's coming out. Interesting. So, these are probably doomed. Meaning this one is badly—I think these are type C prints, I'm just guessing, and this is a pre-archival age. This one's pretty good [*Goats, Llanito, New Mexico, 1971, The Menil Collection, Houston*]. There's no way to—oh wow, look at that. I kind of like that. That's like the snow's turning blue. So, I live here, right in this spot, but this was—so you know...

Jan Burandt: If we look at the original...

Danny Lyon: These were all done—yeah, and that's a reproduction.

Jan Burandt: A reproduction.

Danny Lyon: I was going to say, these I think are all negatives. I'm not sure about this. These are all negatives, and the negatives are probably fine, meaning you could go to the negative now, you know, it would be—they would be scanned and redone in a different format. In the show that's up, there are Cibachromes (TM), which are stable and permanent, and they're also—because I photograph the occupy, our pictures made from digital original, and they're archival, Fuji color prints, or something. I don't know. But these are fading. This is the worst. They say red is very unstable. Look, he's turning blue too. This is worse.

Jan Burandt: And so, what would your opinion be about our handling of these at this point?

Danny Lyon: Well, you know, I think if they're kept in a dark box, is the best thing you can do for them. Any exposure to light hurts them. I would—this is close to being time to destroy it, you know. I mean, this is really, badly changed color [referring to *Christ in Juárez, Mexico*, 1972]. This isn't bad at all [referring to *Goats, Llanito, New Mexico*, 1971]. Again, I know you can do better than that. This isn't bad at all, either [referring to *Joselyn in Santa Marta*, 1974 (May), The Menil Collection, Houston]. I mean, you know, you can put anything on a scanner now. I mean, you can make a high-res quality scan, and at least preserve them as they are now, because I think, eventually, these will be blank, you know.

Jan Burandt: Well, in terms of...

Danny Lyon: No matter what you do to them.

Jan Burandt: Right, in terms of thinking about these images for the future, in order to, well, preserving these particular images might be just impossible, unless, some future...

Danny Lyon: I mean, if you—in terms of the actual image, this one, this one, this one, you can put these on scanners and preserve it. I mean, you can do it this afternoon. You have to make a high-res scan, which is not hard. I mean it's better than nothing, because when these are blank, that scan will still exist, assuming they're supporting the software.

Jan Burandt: And the point is that we want to protect these images rather than the artifacts in a way...

Danny Lyon: The artifact is doomed. This is the worst. I have these myself. I haven't looked at them, you know, and I'm just doing it from memory. I mean, ultimately, you could come to me and say, hey you know, we care about these. We bought them. You got the negatives. Why don't we work out a deal? We want to scan them and do it right and put them back in the collection. I mean that's a negotiable position for everybody. You know, they should survive, but right now, I think the originals are in Magnum. I don't know that they've been scanned, or what now. They're interesting pictures.

Danny Lyon: I'm doing a retrospective now, of my own work, and you know, looking at these, I wouldn't mind including—that's a great one [*Laying Adobes, Llanito, New Mexico*, 1971, The Menil Collection, Houston]. I live in this house. That's my—Nancy's studio. That's the spot you visited many years ago. But this is made in 1970, or so. Yeah, those are early type C prints. These are the two worst. I wouldn't show these. Those aren't bad. I think it has to do with the color, and how much light they got. That's the Juarez cemetery [*Pantheon, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.*, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston]. Of course, Juarez has become a killing field, with horrible things. You know, this is like you say, this is another—I mean, it's unfair to compare ink on paper to that, because they're never going to be even similar, but that you see the potential of the color in this. And you're right, I think all of these appear in this book [Lyon, Danny, *The Paper Negative*. Bernalillo, NM: Bleak Beauty, 1980.].

Jan Burandt: So it'll be a conversation maybe to continue.

Danny Lyon: For the shredder. Well, couldn't that be kind of a work of art, you know, like the shredder, just having people feed him.

Jan Burandt: In the museum, we try to preserve the...

Danny Lyon: Right, you're against the shredder.

Jan Burandt: ...as much of the object as we can.

Danny Lyon: You know there's a lot—I don't do it enough, but you know, I have boxes of prints, and occasionally, I rip them up, and there's something about ripping something up that you'd been carefully taking care of for 50 years, it's very satisfying. It's like a bad picture, and you could never bring yourself to just



throw it out, you know. But again, as you get older, if you don't start ripping stuff up, people like you are going to get a hold of it, and God knows what'll happen to it.

Jan Burandt: Well, we're hoping to understand your feelings about the work, so that we can take your intent to heart as it's preserved and shown in the future.

Danny Lyon: Yeah, it's too bad. I don't want to look at those anymore.

Jan Burandt: Okay.

**[00:50:44]**

Jan Burandt: Let's take a break and pull those down first. Yeah, and then, so.

Danny Lyon: Do you think we're getting near the end?

Jan Burandt: Yes.

Danny Lyon: Okay.

Jan Burandt: Are you ready to be near the end?

Danny Lyon: Yes. I think we've done great. There's some interesting pictures there. We should look at the McHenry track. That's a good one. But you know what you're doing, so. I'm not crazy about the fisherman project. I can see one of them over there. I know Addie cared about it, but...

Jan Burandt: The track might be a good one to end with, because there's—I've just got a couple...

Danny Lyon: And I think it's interesting to look at different versions of the same picture. It is interesting.

Jan Burandt: Okay. Well we have three versions of this one, and so...

Danny Lyon: Well, that's one of my favorite pictures. I don't care for that one.

Jan Burandt: Okay, we won't bring that out.

Danny Lyon: Did this come from my aunt? Oh that's incredible. You know, I think this came from my aunt, and you know, I hope they're identifying that [*Funeral of*

*the Murdered Girls*, Birmingham, 1963 (Oct.), The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Leon and Ginette Henkin family]. You have it in your records, right? You know, these were a gift of 20 pictures. This woman is near the end of her life, to put it mildly.

- Jan Burandt: The registrars keep careful records about...
- Danny Lyon: They know. Yeah, because maybe you have numbers on the back or something?
- Jan Burandt: They're all carefully documented. Yes, so that we—and in this case, it's particularly interesting...
- Danny Lyon: But this is kind of amazing. Is one of these a Kelton proof? What have we got in the back? Oh no they're not. They're different borders. Ninety-three. Right, got it. Okay. You flip them over. I know what they all are. Is this a Kelton proof?
- Jan Burandt: I'm not sure about that one.
- Danny Lyon: Well, this is pretty amazing. I mean, this is—this says \$20 on the back, you can see that. I mean, I'll give you 30. No, I mean, this is exactly the vintage of what the Whitney paid \$30,000 for. That's—I mean, there's a point to talk about money, because there is a market in prints. So that's worth 30 grand. This is worth less, and this is worth, you know, ten percent of that, and this is amazing to me because it's one of my favorite pictures from that time. This is not burned in. I mean, see how burned out that is? So Kelton is in fact a much better printer than I am, and much more sophisticated...
- Jan Burandt: Danny, can I put it on the easel?
- Danny Lyon: Yeah, sure, will she see it?
- Jan Burandt: Yes.
- Danny Lyon: Oh, okay.
- Jan Burandt: And we'll insert it later if need be. There we go.
- Danny Lyon: So he's poured light through here. So you're going to see inside the car, you can see the hood, you can see something. There's nothing here. On the other hand, I almost like mine better. It's lighter. You can't—You know, I don't

want to criticize Chuck, but this is just lighter, period. But, this is quote, "the better print," but this is made by me, and I still remember doing this, so I'd done this work, and there was an art fair, in like the north side. I was in Hyde Park where the university is, and where Obama lives now, but I lived there first, and a lot of other people did, and so I lived in Hyde Park, and I had a darkroom in the bathroom. And there was a little art show in the streets, like they had in Greenwich Village in New York, on the north side of Chicago, and I mounted these pictures to take them up there to sell, and this is just on some—I'm sure this is not archival board.

Jan Burandt: No that's not archival board.

Danny Lyon: Right. And I wrote a title, "Birmingham Funeral," October '93. I signed that. I put \$20, and I went out and hung them on a fence. In front of somebody's—it was, you know, kind of a block party. People allowed you to do it. I have no idea how I put them up, and of course, I didn't sell anything.

Jan Burandt: So this might have been there.

Danny Lyon: But this ended up being a gift, I think, to my aunt, and that's my guess.

Jan Burandt: I think so. I think so.

Danny Lyon: This was made by Lupe Alvarez, many years later when we were trying to make portfolios of this work, no border, which is why I know she made it. It doesn't say what kind of paper. I mean, by then Agfa—I mean this was probably on Agfa paper, and this is, I think, a more modern, a newer version that Chuck made. My guess is, if Addie bought it then it's a proof, because—or it might have been an earlier portfolio that the Center [for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson] bought.

**[00:56:00]**

Danny Lyon: Yeah, "Gift of Leon and Ginette Henkin." Great.

Jan Burandt: So that'll be on the label text, on the wall.

Danny Lyon: Oh marvelous, yeah, huh.

Laurie McD: (inaudible)...

Jan Burandt: Okay.

- Danny Lyon: You're close to...
- Jan Burandt: This is...
- Danny Lyon: Turn that over again. I'm just curious what—just flip that print. So no stamps, Agfa paper. Great. Interesting. Huh.
- Jan Burandt: So.
- Danny Lyon: Did you want to put that up there?
- Jan Burandt: No, it's not mounted, so...
- Danny Lyon: Well, this is again, this is, it looks like I made both of them. They're better prints. Kelton makes incredible renditions of these. This is a difficult picture to print [*The Scrambles Track at McHenry, Illinois, 1965, The Menil Collection, Houston*], because this fence, you have to hold back the fence to see it, which I didn't do a very good job of, here. This, you have to keep the light out of there, to bring that out. This is a very early print of this [*The Scrambles Track at McHenry, Illinois, 1965, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Leon and Ginette Henkin Family*], which is this is a priceless picture. Again, it belonged to Ginette, who's still alive, and she had about 20 of these, more than my parents had, and she's in Oakland now, and at the end of her life, and she gave them all to the Center, which was a great, great thing to do. She was going to give them to the Oakland Museum. I said, well no. I mean, and I didn't want them coming on the market, either. I mean one of the boys wanted to sell them and whatever. So that was really great that she did that, and I think there are three or four of them in the show.
- Jan Burandt: I believe so. We're really grateful for...
- Danny Lyon: And some were in Dominique's house last time I visited there, I saw the old house where they lived, and had hung them in the room. So, on the other hand, this is not a very good print. I remember pouring light through it to show the background. So this is all really dark and grey, and this is white, so this is really a half-assed job at printing. On the other hand, I did it, and that's the best I could do. And it's one of my best pictures. This, I assume I made it. It has a weird—the signature is so weird, it makes me think it's a very old picture. That's like an old signature. Yeah, that's Agfa—you wonder if this is another vintage. Who—do you know the history of—how do you know what this is? Because there's no numbers on the back?

- Jan Burandt: It's the location that they're stored in the collection.
- Danny Lyon: I see. Well, unless I sold it to Dominique, in what was an old...
- Jan Burandt: We can—it was in a portfolio, I believe.
- Danny Lyon: Oh well yeah, who knows. Then it's whatever it is, but...
- Jan Burandt: So as you continue to...
- Danny Lyon: Well, you know, [Hugh] Edwards loved this picture. He was the curator who gave me my first show. As he got older, you know, first he said, that's nice, then he said that's really good, then at the end of his life, he said that was his favorite picture, period. He had it in his bedroom. So this is ironic, because here's this old one that I made, and it looks horrible. The best versions of this are by Kelton, and they're newer.
- [00:59:30]**
- Danny Lyon: I have a question for you. How do you all feel about making it big? There are people coming to me, and saying, oh you should make that four feet high?
- Jan Burandt: Well this was, the question and the relationship, these sizes are clearly dramatically different, and you talk about continuing to print, and I was just curious about your, you know, the idea of your continuing to interpret these negatives into prints, and...
- Danny Lyon: Well, I don't—I mean, I printed the China work as it's new. If someone prints this, it's going to be Kelton. But now, there's a lot of pressure on me, they say oh make it big, and we'll sell it for much more money, and we'll make a limited edition, and blah, blah, blah, and those are kind of for the art world, which I have always tried to avoid. I mean, I do what I do, and I'm glad the art world likes it, but it's not done for the art world. It's done for me, or it's done for a book, or it's done for whatever reason I'm doing it. Having said that, when you go through—it's wonderful to come in here, you see the John Chamberlain standing there, I guess it's a Chamberlain, and it's real high, and there's nothing else around it. Is that a John Chamberlain? It's at the end of the corridor? It is [John Chamberlain, *Elixir*, 1983, The Menil Collection, Houston]. So it's an incredible—and it's all by itself, and wow, you know. If photographs are treated that way, then you go in this other room, and there's all these little black and white things, you know, but it's a photographic print. Edwards said making them bigger does not make them better. Would you

rather see one, kind of poster-sized thing, or would you rather go and see 20 different photographs, get up close, and look at them, and all that stuff? I mean, it has to do with what a photograph is and what it's meant to be.

Jan Burandt: And there's a lot of storytelling with multiple images and history.

Danny Lyon: I showed this picture to Bob Dylan. He used to go to this track. I mean, we met once or twice, and he used to—because he's from the Midwest. Where was he? Yeah, he was biker. I mean he was interested in motorcycles. He rode motorcycles, and he was from Minnesota someplace, right? Hibbing, Minnesota, I think. So I think when he was a kid, he probably went to some of these. This is called a McHenry track, in McHenry, Illinois, the same name as Fort McHenry, which was involved, I think, in one of the wars. They fired on the flag at Fort McHenry. Isn't that "The Star Spangled Banner" is written about the flag at Fort McHenry? The British were probably shooting at it? Or burning it up. That's McHenry, Illinois.

**[END INTERVIEW]**