230100 Interviewer: Why don't you tell us your name, and where you were born and grew up, and what your education was up through post-baccalaureate?

230111 Jon: My name is Jon Hughes. I live in Cincinnati. I am originally from Indianapolis. I went to Ball State. I got my undergraduate degree in political science and economics. I went back later and got my Master's in journalism. I have been a working journalist and educator since 1967. I came to Cincinnati in 1972 to the University of Cincinnati where I was the first full- time person hired as a journalist within the English Department. And even though I've been teaching full time since '72, I have also been working as a professional journalist, both a writer and a photographer.

230159 Interviewer: Growing up, what was it about writing or journalism or photography that drew your interest at a certain point you decided this is what I really want to do?

230213 Jon: Well, I am not sure exactly if it was pointed at an early age to the profession I was, have grown into and tried to work in. That's a very curious question because I had a very difficult time reading as a child. I didn't realize until about two or three years ago that I am dyslexic. Back then you were called slow. And so I had a very difficult time reading and because it was painful, I spent a lot of time looking at pictures because they could tell me stories. And they could tell me things about exotic places that I hoped one day to go. And also I am a child of the television, first television generation, so that had an impact on me. And then I think when I got into college I originally wanted to be a track coach. And this girl I was dating told me that I looked like a lawyer so I decided to be an attorney. That obviously didn't work out on both counts. And I was very interested in journalism because I could tell stories with it about real things and real things that were happening. And, in the '60s, a lot of things were happening. And, it gave me the opportunity to be involved in issues and report on those issues, hopefully from the objective point of view, during a very, very interesting period of our history. And I just kind of flowed into that. I think I also had an interest at that time of being a creative writer, of working in short stories and fiction, but I quickly learned that I had absolutely no imagination. So I decided that telling the story that's out there is what I can do and also often more times bizarre than fiction and I pursued that.

230408 Interviewer: Can you give me one or two examples, either in the years before you got to UC or in earlier years while at UC, of a story you covered wearing your professional journalist hat that you can recall being really satisfied as the way the story turned out either from a, as an investigative journalist, or just as a piece of work that you felt was really good?

230435 Jon: I've done so many, quite honestly, I've worked on so many stories over the years. And numbers of books, projects involving the electronic media, series, shoots that I think a number stand out as I look back over that time. Not many from my early years because you are not given that many opportunities on daily newspapers as a cub reporter to handle big stories. I do remember interviewing Alexander Karensky. I had a strong interest in Russian history, and of course he led the first revolution, which the Bolsheviks overthrew a month later. So that was really an exciting and interesting story for me. I think that most of the more interesting pieces I have done have been since 1985, actually since I have been at the University of Cincinnati. I

was able to travel to the Soviet Union in 1986. I went to Cuba in 1985. I did my first assignments out of Paris and London in '86. I was back to the Soviet Union in '91. I went back to Cuba again in '93, twice in '95. I did a documentary for television there in '99. I was in Bosnia for the New York Times in '97. So I think the international work that I have done has probably been the most interesting. On the other hand I do a lot of my work about and concerning Cincinnati. I like to hoe my own garden. Even though it is good to get out of town and do some international things, I think it is very important to work locally. So in 1996 I did a year in the life of Cincinnati project where I took an entire year through a sabbatical. A project sponsored through the University of Cincinnati, and Procter & Gamble, Star Bank, and the Taft Museum. And I shot 36,000 still images in Cincinnati during that year trying to document what goes on in the city, not from a news viewpoint but from the everyday life of individuals, from different socioeconomic backgrounds, racial backgrounds and location, different parts of the city within the beltway. And that was one of the most rewarding things that I have ever done and also the most exhausting. To shoot that many images and trying to keep some control over what you are doing and be representative of the city. It was also during that time that I continued to shoot images from Fernald.

230724 Interviewer: What happened with that project? Did it get published? Was there an exhibition of some of that work, or?

230731 Jon: There have been a number of exhibits. The largest one was at the University of Cincinnati two years ago. But I did have smaller exhibits at the Taft Museum. I had two exhibits there. It is part of an exhibit this year, this month actually, at Mount. St. Joe. I have not had a book come out of it yet. It's a very difficult project to sell because of the cost of producing three hundred images, say. Although I am prepared to do that, I haven't found a publisher who feels that they can economically go ahead with such a project. But at some point it will become, I think, very valuable to historians, because seldom time do historians have the opportunity to look at such a project that is done on a specific place with such volume. So they will, they will, I think, have an opportunity to see Cincinnati as it was for the very common people in 1996.

230836 Interviewer: What do you think of the value or communicative power, let's say, of a photo exhibit or photo with maybe some words or text accompanying on a particular subject that can on a subject may tell a viewer more than just if they read about something in a book or an article? What is it about the photos that you think is such a powerful communication tool?

230902 Jon: There are things that you can do with photographs that you cannot do with the written word and that is very obvious, but there are strengths there. In a photograph I can get set a place in time. I can have details that would be almost impossible to duplicate in printed word. I can get a sense of place and a sense of place is very important to me in all my work, whether it is writing or whether it is photographs. The image provides an immediate reaction to a place. On the other hand, in writing I can do things that I can't do with photographs, including voices, dialogue, the spoken word, a narrative, a conclusion about a place. So they are both very strong in their separate ways. Put together I think it's the strongest form of communication we have, whether it's still photography or film.

231017 Interviewer: Let me ask you one more general question before we talk about Fernald. You have been in this city for a number of years now both as a teacher scholar and as a working journalist. If could you, give us sort of your thumbnail overview of media, media coverage climate of the media industry either print or television in the tri-state area? What are your impressions about the strengths and perhaps limitations of some of the newspapers and television and how you kind of see that?

231053 Jon: As a journalism educator, I am very critical of the media. Maybe that's why I am not an editor, no one will hire me to I do that. But I think that we have enormous responsibilities in journalism, and a responsibility to be a marketplace of ideas, and a responsibility to make the community aware of social issues and social concerns. That is our responsibility. It's been the responsibility particularly of the American press since day one. And also to have an adversary relationship with the government. We have to tell the people what the government is doing or the public will not know, and I think that is our responsibility to do that. And, only in a representative democracy like we have will it work if people are informed, if they are able to make decisions. And there is that curiosity of government not always wanting to tell us what they are doing, or how they are spending our money, or why a decision is made. And, I think it is the responsibility of the press to go after that and try to find the answers that people ask. So with that in mind I think I look at all media, whether it is just Cincinnati or elsewhere, and I think that I have great concerns about what we are told and what we aren't told and why.

Cincinnati has two newspapers, the state, daily conventional newspapers, within five to seven years that will be one. They exist only because of a joint operating agreement between the two and that will be up before 2010. So at that point we will have only the Cincinnati Enquirer as a daily newspaper. And, I think any town or any city or any metropolitan area with only one voice is in trouble. Unfortunately that is the way most cities are in this country. The alternative press, which I find more interesting in many ways and also more willing to take on issues since the 1960s, is coming into its own right, maturing and getting much better. And we have that represented in the city in various forms. I consider the alternative press not to be just alternative news weeklies, but also special interest publications or publications that have a niche interest. Could be the American Israelite, could be the Catholic Telegraph, could be CityBeat, it could be the Business Courier. I think these publications are extremely valuable because they are looking at certain issues in certain ways. The newspapers today, daily newspapers, don't quite get it. They can't continue to attract readers and to actually earn money doing the same thing that they were doing in 1940. Because of the electronic media, they are going to have to go more into depth on issues, they are going to have to tell the reader more about what they heard on television minutes before or last night. And they are not doing that. There is a reluctance, there is a cost element here, and I think there is a lack of commitment to do that. So I think there is kind of a identity crisis going on there and as a result of that a lot of things are getting missed and overlooked or just simply ignored.

231442 Interviewer: Lets talk for a while now about your coming to find out about the fact that there was a nuclear weapons production facility located twenty miles northwest of Cincinnati. And some of your early encounters with Fernald, perhaps initially just as a resident of Cincinnati

and then some of your early efforts to collect either photos or information about the site. Where did you start finding out about that stuff?

231517 Jon: I don't think I knew about Fernald until there were problems. I can't recall ever hearing about it in casual conversation or even with people who had concerns about social issues. I don't remember it in that context. So it must have been the mid-'80s, '85 or somewhere in there, when we were made aware of some problems. And it was at that time that I drove out there with no intent other than just to try to find out where this place is. And it was so curious because there was a reference on the sign to a feed plant and there was a reference I think to Westinghouse. That may've been later, I can't remember exactly the context of it. But the feed plant threw me and then you saw the water tower that was checkerboard like Ralston Purina. And here you are in a rural community where you might expect to find, what anyone could make a conclusion out of a feed plant that it had something to do with the agriculture business. So I found that very disarming, thinking of how really unusual this place is in context of being what it is purported to be. It seemed so mundane, yet it seemed so evil at the same time or potentially evil. I hadn't made conclusions then because I didn't know. I'm not sure that I've made conclusions now, but I found it so curious to see this place. And you see the cattle grazing there. The corner that you turn there's a, to go into the entrance or near the entrance of the plant, had cattle being milk cows being milked in the window. I had never seen that process before either. I am a city kid and here you are driving by a barn with windows where you can actually see the automatic milking process. What a curious thing it was to me, and I didn't a whole lot of it.

And, I went to the Soviet in 1986, in fact about a month or so after Chernobyl. It was a great concern to everyone, and a great concern to me. Actually the winds were still carrying the radioactive material at that time and it was very disconcerting. And in some conversation, I don't know whether it was in Moscow or Leningrad or Yalta, the major places that I visited, someone, some Russian, during a conversation about Chernobyl, asked me about Fernald. And I was absolutely shook by that request for information about a place that's so close to me that I know nothing about. And in fact I think the comparison was made, unfairly, but a comparison was made that we have our Chernobyl and you have your Fernald. And at that point I thought, "I've got to take this more seriously. I need to understand or try to understand what is going on there."

From that point more information was made available to the public in the late '80s. There was the clean-up proposals. We had some awareness of a problem. I don't think anyone really understood the magnitude. But we had some concern about that, some knowledge of that, and also the economic reality of the costs of allegedly cleaning up such problems. And in '92, as I look back over my record of photographs, is when I just arbitrarily, on my own began taking photos. I had no intention of publication at that time. I was not working on an assignment. I had not even thought about querying a publication. But I went and drove around the Fernald facility. I remember at one point stopping and, in an incredible reaction, there was a security guard there asking who I was and what I was doing. I was amazed at how quickly they responded. I did note that there were automobiles that seemed to be very aware of where I was as I circled the place and I just thought that curious. I didn't feel threatened at all by that. But I had no intent of leaving public property to go on private property. So I knew my rights as a citizen, not as a

journalist, but as a citizen to be able to drive where I was, to stop where I would and to take photos as I would. This was just basically to get a sense of place, once again a very important theme in my work. It may have been a year or two after that, that I talked with a friend of mine, colleague, writer, Jeffrey Hillard who I knew when he was a student at UC, whose career I followed. He was in town back from being in Colorado where he was doing graduate work. And, for some reason the topic of Fernald came up. And I found out at that time that he had began writing poems about Fernald. This was completely independent; we had not, we did not know what the other person was doing. And actually we agreed at some time to get together and just talk about what we had. Well, we put that off for several years. I don't think it was until '95, '96 that we started to discuss this again. He had continued to write poems. He had talked with a number of people who live in the area of the Fernald facilities. He gave me some names and we continued to work independently. I went out on my own and talked to a couple of people just to get some feeling for how they reacted to what was going on and how it affected their lives. And Jeffrey continued to write the poems and at one point we came together and here are his poems and here are my images. We decided that this could make a small book, and an important book. So we went ahead and pursued that and that was published in 1999, oh 1998, excuse me. I thought it was so curious because we worked independently. We were only out there once together and that was simply to go out there and drive around the facility and back. We didn't talk with anyone. I didn't take any photographs, we did it independently.

Now, it was also during this time that I began to concentrate I think on the irony of what was happening out there, the contamination, the problems with the clean-up, the environmental issues and the health issues. And what's so curious about it is that it is such a beautiful place. The countryside around there is gorgeous. And I thought it was amazing, you cannot see the problem, but it's affecting everyone here. And I decided at that time, this was a decision that I made and was very conscious of it, to shoot there primarily during winter. Because I felt that shooting there and taking photographs in the spring or summer or fall would lend too much of a natural beauty to the horror or potential horror of what existed there. That was certainly an editorial decision and a very subjective decision on my part. So in the book you will see very stark photographs. All black and white, very contrasting, that I think points out the reality of the place taken out of its natural beauty. Also in those photographs you will see cows. I am just amazed that you see cows on pasture land that has contaminated water, that has testing wells, that has problems that everyone should be concerned about. Yet it also represents to me denial on the part of people in the community. So you have this natural beauty, you have this undersurface of what could be a catastrophe, and I find that chilling.

232415 Interviewer: In pursuing that angle, if you will, did you ever sort of ask yourself the question as to whether or not this juxtaposition of the natural pastoral landscape with industrial production and then clean-up, whether that was just sort of a coincidence or whether not that was perhaps part of a decision process, either in terms of where the site was located in the first place or how the site was portrayed in the community over the years. Whether that was just an accident or whether or not there was some effort to sort of create a buffer or create a sense of, you know, safe haven if you will in the middle of the rural countryside?

232502 Jon: That is a great question. Americans are very literal. Maybe that's the power of photographs also. They are very literal. If they cannot see it, then it doesn't exist. And it is less of a threat, and I think just by the natural environment, the milieu, the place, it is so disarming. So how could something so potentially horrible be there, and if we can't see it than it doesn't exist. So yeah, I think there is a natural buffer there, I think there's a buffer that's the beauty of the place. There's a buffer of the lights from the road to the plant. There is a buffer because you can't see what's there or what's been done. There's a buffer because things are buried. There's a buffer because it's a building, but what's in that building? All of these are very disarming things and very hard to take seriously. And very difficult, I think, for many people to understand. I actually went through the plant during the clean-up, and I did that on assignment from CityBeat, which is an alternative news weekly in Cincinnati. I found that an extremely interesting trip. They were very cooperative, the clean-up crew and company doing the work there, and allowed me a press tour. Of course, I was in restricted areas and I don't think that was to keep me from seeing anything. I think that was to keep me protected from possible radiation. But as you go through there and you see the vats and you see the buildings and you see the silos, and you see the area that equipment, and the clothing, and waste was dumped and simply covered over even thought it is radioactive. You wonder how could this happen? Is it total ignorance that we didn't know or that scientists didn't know or that the Department of Energy didn't know from what, 1951 until 1985 that this was going to be a problem. And I can't believe that we didn't about that or that they didn't know that. Is it a conspiracy? I doubt it. Is it an economic decision? Probably. Is it a matter of not caring? Somewhat. I think it's one of the great horror stories of the 20th century in American history. And it's just something we don't want to believe it is possible. How could our government do this to us? How could our government do that to a community? Well it has, whether by choice or by negligence, and that's scary.

232809 Interviewer: I don't know if you have been following some of the more recent activities out there, let's say in the last 2 or 3 years a couple of things of interest given our conversation, has been…

(New tape)

010055 Interviewer: We were talking about that irony in whether or not it is just a matter of coincidence and ability of someone either from a journalist or critical perspective to sort of discern that, or to what extent was it a sort of a plan for the government to pick remote rural areas for this work. I have not been to any other DOE facility I don't know if you have **(Jon: No, I haven't).** But most of them are in somewhat remote areas. What has been some of the reactions that you and Jeffrey have gotten either from the Fernald community, from the general, local sort of critical or media folks or from other folks about this book called Pieces of Fernald? What's been some of your responses?

010151 Jon: There have been both positive and negative responses to the book. Positive in the sense that people can now identify the problem, can locate the problem and associate it with people, with voices, rather than issues on the front page of the newspaper or actions taken by this group or that group or defensive positions taken by the Department of Energy. It's now become,

with that book it becomes a personal thing and how it affects lives. I think that's important. The negative reaction has come from people who work there, and some people who worked there. And there has been positive reaction from people who work there. But some negative reaction from people who work there or live in the community who say that we did not represent what happened there. Well, I should go on the record and say we did not try to represent what happened there. We tried to represent in a very objective way what people told us and how we as writers and photographers reacted to that and what we could see for ourselves. So this was at no attempt to be an investigative piece, as to what happened prior to the clean-up or what has happened since. Another reaction, which I think is kind of curious, is that some people feel that the book is too dark. And it is, it's a very dark book. I can't imagine a lightweight way to handle a heavyweight subject, and I think that it would lose its impact if it was treated less than how we treated it. That is obviously a subjective decision.

But, we all know it's been treated much lighter in the press than the way we handled it in the book. I always felt from day one, day one being about 1985 when I learned about this, that it was truly a Pulitzer Prize-winning story. Anyone who knows journalism knows that this is the kind of story that newspapers should go after and are rewarded for what they do reveal. I can never understand why the Enquirer or the Post did not jump on this. I don't think that the electronic media had the facilities, or the time, or the employees, or the energy or really the concern to go after it. But for the print media this is an ideal story. And, I quite honestly feel that the Enquirer and the Post blew it. They should have been on it right away. They waited until way into the clean-up. If they would have gotten on the story when the problem was announced and stayed on it they would have won the Pulitzer Prizes. And quite frankly this is a very subjective comment on my part. I think the Enquirer has been trying to make up for that missed story ever since. Where were those investigator teams then, that they launched a few years ago in a very unsuccessful attempt at winning awards. Awards aren't important in themselves. Awards represent the work that people have done, and they didn't do it. In fact, I think that CityBeat was the last one to pick up on the story when we did some images from there and some of the poems from the book in '96, '97. You just don't see anything much about Fernald anymore, and it hasn't gone away.

010537 Interviewer: There was a splash of coverage in the 1995, '96 time frame from a fellow named Mike Gallagher who was subsequently doing a story about Chiquita and he got into trouble with e-mail and stuff. I don't know if you followed it at that point or not, but there was mostly a focus on some contractor irregularities, that kind of thing.

016001 Jon: I did follow those stories and I was kind of amused that they were there. I am glad that they were there. I think that it was kind of important to do it, but once again this is ten years too late. It is good that they kept up on what was happening, but it didn't work. And where are they now and what have they kept up on since then? It's not there. The follow-up is not there. And ask the people out there whether or not it's important. Of course it is. It has affected their lives daily. And it's not news anymore.

010639 Interviewer: There is a major story that I think again was missed here this fall. The Department of Energy has sort of planned out a clean-up scenario that cleans up the site by

maybe 2008 assuming about $315 million a year in clean-up. And the Department of Energy and their allocation for Fiscal Year '02 asked for 290 and that's going to extend the clean-up four, five or six years out and the community is very upset about it, but there has been no media coverage at all about that.

010706 Jon: The reallocation of money is to other sites. Basically what we are talking about tells us I think something rather obvious, that the Department of Energy is putting out fires. It is simply going around reacting to public concern about sites other than Fernald and when the attention is brought to that problem the finances shift from one place to another. And that has everything to do with public opinion and absolutely nothing to do with clean-up.

010741 Interviewer: Can I ask you to go back to the Pieces of Fernald work again. Fernald is going to celebrate a 50-year, commemorate a 50-year anniversary this year, and there is some efforts being made on the site to sort of develop some historical or educational materials about the history of the site. They are preparing a book and a video and things like that. Where do you see down the road a book like Pieces of Fernald fitting into maybe a K-12 or high school educational package about Fernald or somehow a use in a educational sense, either for maybe a high school, or maybe it's going to be college age? But those kinds of educational uses for this book down the road, what do you see as possible?

010828 Jon: Never thought about its educational uses beyond the immediacy of someone picking it up and reading the poetry and looking at it. I don't know what role it will take in the future. I am not optimistic about that. I think this is an unusual book. It is one of those few times that you get a photographer and a poet working together. That is kind of unusual, and it's difficult to do, incidentally. Maybe that's why Jeffrey and I worked separately. Seldom do you have the same sense of something. So I think that it was unique in that way, but I am not sure that it's going to have wide appeal. To be used in high schools you have to have students who are interested in poetry, I would think, and then maybe someone who is interested in photography and that common interest. And it is difficult, it's a difficult book because they have to have some familiarity with the issue. Now, on the other hand, I think in the literature of environmental issues and studies, it might have a place there and probably as an archival interest that someone or two people at some time reacted this way to an environmental issue. Personally I'd like to see more people involved in reacting this way and people in the arts, and I don't myself an artist, but people in the arts, writers, people working in all forms to be concerned and take issue with environmental concerns. And maybe that is an interesting study in itself. But for the general public, I think this book is lost. And I don't, I am not optimistic about it having any impact beyond what it may have had when it was released.

011040 Interviewer: Did, were there any local reviews at that time released? Did CityBeat review it or?

011049 Jon: CityBeat used excerpts from it, both poems and photos. I don't remember specifically a critical review, more of an announcement. And what I remember from the Enquirer and the Post there was also reference to it being published. But there was no more announcements than critical response. I am grateful for the notices because if people don't know

about it they can't look at it. So yes, there was some. We even got some national ink from small literary publications who took note of it. But beyond that it's been pretty idle.

011133 Interviewer: I have a colleague that is doing some work, historical writing, about the Hanford Reservation in Washington. He is tracking sort of what he sees as the difference between historical and cultural studies in the Cold War, which I think your book would probably fit under, and official historical preservation efforts, which he labels heritage preservation, that the government will be doing, has been doing. Hanford led the way in the historical preservation work 'cause it's very historic in terms of history of Cold War. But all the other sites are moving toward what he called heritage preservation which will be well done, but somewhat one-sided portrayal of history coming out from a Cold War perspective, saying essentially "America won the cold war and this is the price we had to pay but on balance we kind of won the Cold War." I don't know if you have any reflections about sort of where the nuclear weapons complex is in the American consciousness in the sense of the Cold War being over and us, you know, the public, either by choice or by the information they receive, not necessarily thinking about these things at the moment.

011250 Jon: Fernald is our heritage of the Cold War. It's what we have. I don't know what the victory was because of the way it played out. But I do know what the cost is or some of the cost. I don't think we know yet what all the cost is. And I think that's the significant heritage that comes from what has happened at Fernald and other sites and things yet to be known about decisions that were made during the Cold War. I think if we take history seriously, it's also the kind of thing that Congress should be looking at now when they consider any kind of weapon or any kind of weapon system that is going to leave debris, whether it's on earth or in the sky. We have to understand that this stuff does not go away. That is our legacy, it's their legacy, it's our heritage. And I hope that there is some understanding of history and concern about this on a very public level. I also think that it's a very difficult thing to get people excited about. Because it doesn't directly affect the pocket book in a short-term way and it doesn't directly affect their lives except for people who live around these sites. So I think it is a very difficult political issue to get the public excited about, and the irony of that is that it's going to affect generations to come in one way or another.

011443 Interviewer: Can you recall back to your visits to the Soviet Union in the last 15 or 20 years, some of their feelings about the nuclear accidents they had and also about if there was any thought about the environmental impacts of their nuclear weapons production, or if it was mostly focused on Chernobyl, the power plant side. Are there any kind of contrasts between the folks you talked to over there and sort of America's take on those issues?

011513 Jon: Of course when we go into a system like the Soviet Union, former Soviet Union or even Russia today or Cuba, we've got limited information that is available to not only the international public, but to the citizens of those countries. So it's very curious. On a very sophisticated level, people, informed people with knowledge of other languages who have studied abroad, they were very concerned about Chernobyl. Whereas the general public would basically take as fact what the government had told them which was not accurate and not complete. A real good example of this I think is in the Soviet Union, excuse me, in Cuba. When

I was in Cuba in 1985 I went to Cienfuegos, which is a town in the southwest side of the island. And the Soviets were building a nuclear power plant there and many people of the group I was with, many of those people were very concerned about the hazards and problems and control over nuclear energy and expressed their opinions to the Cubans that we were talking with who said that everything would be fine, that there is no problem. That they've been reassured that there would be no problem by the government, and that they were confident in the construction that was taking place. That was on the record. Off the record, we began to learn about the shabby construction. In Cuba, if you see any of the concrete that's been poured, it deteriorates in a very short period of time because it's not substantial and the weather is very, very hard on it. And the Soviet-constructed structures using concrete were deteriorating. And here we had a nuclear power plant which was being built by the Soviet Union, which even concerned us more. Fortunately that was never made into a nuclear power plant. That decision was made not too long ago, even though the construction had been delayed for maybe a decade. So it's a matter of what you know, whether it's truth or not, and who tells you. And whether or not people are willing to have concerns. And I think that eventually happened in the Soviet Union because of Chernobyl. For whatever reason, it happened in Cuba. There was a good decision made. I don't know what that was based on. That could have been an absolute disaster.

011804 Interviewer: Have you ever speculated about in either the nuclear power area or in these nuclear weapon production complexes, either still operating or been cleaned up, what would happen if there was an accident of the Chernobyl's type of magnitude over here. What, you know, how we would deal with that both from a technical clean-up standpoint, but also from a public relations standpoint.

011837 Jon: I have no idea how we would react to such a catastrophic event as Chernobyl. I hope we don't find out. We can only assume and hope that safeguards are in place that would prevent such a thing from happening. And perhaps, and surely we learned from Chernobyl, and I hope the safeguards are, were put in place because of that experience. I have no idea how we would react in the United States to that kind of catastrophe. I don't know how we could spin it. I don't know what the PR would be on it. We are very fortunate here not to have experienced such a large-scale, devastating environmental event and I hope that we don't experience that. I don't see how we could call what would happen or not….

011947 Interviewer 2: Maybe you could talk about three or four [photographs in the book]? Could you describe the one with the cow or the wooden cases (?)

012041 Jon: These wooden cases are what nuclear waste was shipped from the site in early on while it was still an active plant. Wooden cases. There are also photographs in here showing the cattle in the area, both beef and milk cows, and in some relationship to the facility whether it's through the water tower or whether it's through signs on the fences posting that there is no trespassing DOE. I wonder why the cows are on property that's DOE? I could never figure that out. I also have a number of photographs of the water sources, and creeks, streams in the area to show their relationship to the property and that they indeed are flowing away from or through contaminated areas.

012132 Interviewer 2: Could you show us one and talk about it a little bit more specifically. Do you have one you remember?

012135 Jon: I don't remember exact name of the creek…yeah, Paddy's Run. These were taken in fall and winter. Some of the shots have snow, which also shows the meltdown going into the creek that will pass on to other areas. I thought that it was significant to show that there is vegetation, that there is water going through this area, that there are cattle, as I mentioned earlier that are grazing on this property. I also have in here some images from inside the facility, to give the reader a sense of that place. Now granted, this is during the clean-up. You have a lot of rusted and decaying materials. There are areas that show the containers that are now being used, like this photo, containers that will be carrying the waste away by rail, I believe. There are other images of former processing equipment that is now, of course, not being used, but rusting and hopefully not rusting when they were being used. But it gives that sense of the magnitude of this clean up that is taking place and the problems inherent in that.

012308 Interviewer: Why did you choose to get that stop sign in that particular area? That is a nice touch.

012315 Jon: That's a bit of an editorial on my part. This is one of the containers I was told was significant in that I was told it holds contaminated wastes or some materials during the process that are quite dangerous. And I saw this stop sign there and thought what a nice idea, that we "stop that." It also gives you the context of the place in that there are streets right by this holding tank, the close vicinity that people have to the materials that we are talking about and the processing. Other photographs basically take you through the plant, from outside through it and back out again. Here's two shots one having the creek once again, the run, and the other shot showing the concrete and other pieces of constructed road work that has been torn up and heaped into a pile and is noted as being radioactive. Trying once again also to show the magnitude of the clean-up and the problems that exist. So, the intent here is to take you from the outside of the plant into the plant and back out again and to give the reader an idea of what it looks like visually. Rarely for me, I am usually a photographer who takes pictures of people, this is really the only work that I have ever done that is more involved with form and these types of tangible objects that represent something. And it is also one of the few times that I felt that these images are strong enough because of what they are of to stand by themselves.

012537 Interviewer: With no accompanying narrative, except for the poetry…How many overall, just roughly, how many overall photos have you taken out there?

012546 Jon: Of ones that have been published or in general?

012550 Interviewer: You mentioned that for the, the year-long project you did for Cincinnati you took thousands. I don't know what kind of ballpark you would give the sort of amount of work, amount of photography. I know it's hard to gauge that.

012606 Jon: There were surprisingly few to be quite honest because they are of outside. I only had two opportunities or one opportunity to go inside. So when I was inside the facility I took

quite a few images, several hundred at least. Outside the facility the countryside is so similar that I had to constantly look for something that would put it into a context, a sign, cattle, the stream. So there wasn't as much duplication as I would get shooting inside the facility to make sure that I got as much as possible. So, I would think that no more than 500 images were taken to get to twenty or so images in this book.

012703 Interviewer 2: Can you describe a little bit your feelings while you were taking some of the pictures. **(Jon: That's a good question).** Why were you taking those pictures? What were your feelings behind taking these pictures as a…?

012721 Jon: When I was taking photographs out there, particularly on the outside or the plant, I was very conscious of trying to represent the sense of place of the Fernald facility, the setting. There is one long shot of the facility in work. That's a very early photo. I'm not sure when that was taken. I don't if it is in early clean-up or not, but it is intact. There is an indication of steam coming from stacks. I mean it looks like a working facility. I find that very, very eerie because it is looking through trees, down a road, over this huge facility and it's very, very large. I don't think people can imagine the size of this place unless they see it. I found that a little chilling, but I also knew I had to get on the record that shot. I may have only taken two images of that shot. I think that was the time that the security came up to me, and I felt uncomfortable with that and they wanted to make me feel uncomfortable with that. The other shots it was basically that sense of place and representative in different forms. That means I have to have the creek. I have to have the cows. I have to have the signs because those mean something in the context of the photo, not that this is just a pretty place that there are problems with. I was just amazed to see the cattle. When I first drove by and saw that, I found that so remarkable, and that I could go to a place near the property that is on public highway and I could shoot a sign that saying DOE radioactive testing, whatever, and here are cattle right there. I found that very disturbing. When I got inside the plant, I turned into a photojournalist. I basically just started shooting and trying to get down what the buildings look like, what the place looks like, forms, that kind of thing. I think I am also very conscious of lines. On an aesthetic level I look for vertical lines, horizontal lines and the things that a photographer looks at. But I just kept firing because I knew that this was probably going to be my only opportunity to get in there. Did I answer your question?

013000 Interviewer 2: Sort of. What… If you could tell students who may be seeing this, what the lesson was of Fernald, say students who are now 10, 11or12, in 20 years when the Cold War is really, has really receded. What would you like to tell them about why you did this and the importance of Fernald in the American, the national and… This is your opportunity … what would you like to tell?

013022 Jon: I think it is one of the responsibilities of journalists is to document, whether we consider it a good thing or a bad thing, is to document something that is of public interest or should be of public interest. And regardless of how one feels about it, to make that effort, to go there, to spend time there. And, that's one regret I have about doing this is I wish I had spent more time there, inside the plant in particular. But they have to document it and get it on the record. I have always felt that the responsibility ...

(new tape)

020040 Jon: I really gain no pleasure from taking photographs or doing stories in Bosnia or in Cuba or in the former Soviet Union, or in parts of Thailand and China, places that I have been on assignment. There is no pleasure in human suffering or environmental problems that are doing horrible things. The importance of doing this, though, is the responsibility that we have as a journalist, as journalists. To go out and get on the record things that are happening that are going to affect us all one way or another. And this is what's behind historical archives, concerning the Holocaust, documents concerning political events, all of World War II, Vietnam, wherever it might be. We are getting it on the record. And the whole point is that there will be some sort of historical context for these events that happened. Fernald in its way may not be as dramatic as some of these events that I have talked about or some of the news stories. But it is a serious, serious concern, not only for now but for the future. And if we don't get it on the record, if there isn't some sort of document, whether it's visual or written, then people will continue to be hurt, and people will continue to do damage, and we will not learn from our mistakes. Is that o.k.?