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## RADIO PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

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SAVING AMERICA'S RADIO HERITAGE:  
RADIO PRESERVATION, ACCESS, AND EDUCATION

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WORKSHOP: CONTEMPORARY MATERIAL PRACTICES  
IN ARCHIVES

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SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 27, 2016

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The Panel met in the Broadcast Instruction Room of the Hornbake Library, 4130 Campus Drive, College Park, Maryland, at 11:00 a.m., Lynn Spigel, Panel Chair, presiding.

PANEL MEMBERS

LYNN SPIGEL, Northwestern University, Chair  
NEIL VERMA, Northwestern University, Workshop Organizer

ERIKA DOWELL, Lilly Library, Indiana University  
PATRICK FEASTER, Indiana University

KARMA FOLEY, Smithsonian Network

LAURA LAPLACA, Northwestern University

ALLISON SCHEIN, Northwestern University

CARLENE STEPHENS, National Museum of American History

DEREK VAILLANT, University of Michigan

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(11:06 a.m.)

CHAIR SPIGEL: So, I'm Lynn Spigel and my function here is really just to chair. Michele Hilmes basically invited me to do this cold. So, I'm just going to be introducing people.

Neil Verma really organized this panel. He is going to just say a few words about the panel after I go through the introductions.

So, the first speaker is Patrick Feaster from Indiana University and he is going to be speaking about the Indiana University Media Digitization Project.

And Patrick is a specialist in the history, culture, and preservation of early sound media. He has been nominated for Grammy's three times and is the co-founder of the First Sounds Initiative.

He has been actively involved in locating, making audible, and conceptualizing many of the world's oldest sound recordings. And he received his Ph.D. in folklore and ethnomusicology

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from Indiana University, where he is now the Media Preservation Specialist for the Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative. He is also the current president of the Association of Recorded Sound and Collections.

The second speaker is Erika Dowell from Lilly Library's Collection of Orson Welles Recordings, which I have always wanted to visit. And she is the Associate Director and Head of Public Services at the Lilly Library, where she supervises reference and instruction activities, exhibitions and development of digitization activities. Just add anything if you like because I am obviously just -- and she is the past chair of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

The third speaker will be Allison Schein. Am I saying that right?

MS. SCHEIN: Schein.

CHAIR SPIGEL: Schein on new media -- this sounds like such a cool project -- and the Studs Terkel Archives. And this summer, she is going to

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talk about work she did this summer with teams in the Chicago area of the archives.

MS. SCHEIN: Yes.

CHAIR SPIGEL: And she is the Archive Manager there and the Archivist for the Creative Radio Archive.

MS. SCHEIN: Creative Audio Archive.

CHAIR SPIGEL: She earned a bachelor's degree in audio arts and acoustics from Columbia College in Chicago and an MLIS from Dominican University.

The fourth speaker I know very well, Laura LaPlaca, because we are both at Northwestern, who is a Ph.D. student at Northwestern and she is writing a dissertation now on radio and television sitcoms. And Laura is a Ph.D. candidate. She is the former Celebrity Estate Archivist and a media archivist with experience at the Warner Brothers Archives, The Paley Center for Media, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Library of Congress, and other institutions.

And she is going to be speaking about

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the current initiative for radio archives at Northwestern.

The next speaker is Derek Vaillant. I hope I am saying your name right, Derek.

DR. VAILLANT: Yes.

CHAIR SPIGEL: I did, right? Okay. And you have to tell me because I don't really understand what is CE loss? Or is that a typo?

DR. VAILLANT: It might be a typo but I will be discussing a range of topics reacting to some of the other points made earlier.

Essentially, I am working on a transatlantic project, so I use international archives as well. I will talk a little bit about the circuits of discovery that can occur around endangered collections. How does that sound?

CHAIR SPIGEL: That sounds great, better than I could have read with the typos here.

So, Derek is an Associate Professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He writes about broadcast history found in the United States and France and he is Preservation Director of the

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RPTF.

And finally, my new colleague Neil Verma, who just accepted a tenure track position at Northwestern and is really the organizer of this panel. He is now also the Associate Director of the MA in Sound Arts and Industries, a Division at Northwestern, the Network Director of the Radio Preservation Task Force at the Library of Congress, and he has a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and a great book called Theater of the Mind.

So, Neil is going to talk about just the brief structure of the panel and then I guess you will all begin and I am going to get lost.

DR. VERMA: Thanks so much, Lynn.

So, just to tell you a little, so I know many of you I have probably pestered by email and that is because my role last spring as the Network Director of the Radio Preservation Task Force, which sounds like a very important title but actually it just means that I pester nice people with emails. But one of the good things about this job is that I got to look at all of the finding aids that came

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in as part of the Radio Preservation Initiative last year.

And so when we were thinking about this conference, Michele Hilmes asked me if I could put together a group of people who are working on or thinking about archives right now and that are in the midst of different kinds of cataloguing, digitizing efforts, and things that weren't necessarily like big like NPR or WNYC scale but also had kind of interesting material problems that they are dealing with. So, that is sort of what inspired me to bring this group of people together, all of whom I think are working with really interesting and compelling archives and bringing that into the world in different ways. And that is sort of the core idea.

The way this panel is supposed to work is it is a workshop. So, everyone will speak for about five or ten minutes and then it is supposed to be a discussion where we can kind of exchange ideas, practices, and questions. And that's about it.

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We are supposed to go in the order in which we were introduced.

DR. FEASTER: So, I will be happy to talk in general about the broader project that is underway right now at the Indiana University, our Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative. In a nutshell, an effort to digitally preserve and to make as widely accessible as possible all time-based media on all Bloomington campuses that are deemed important by experts. That is a phrase that can, of course, be interpreted in a number of carefully nuanced ways.

But I would like to focus for my remarks this morning on a very specific collection there just because I think it is one of the most colorful stories that we have run across in our project there so far and one that pertains very directly to radio. Radio does form a portion of the materials that we are working with there but this is a collection that is quite specifically connected to radio.

But to tell the story, I need to go back a few years to the Media Preservation Survey that

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we undertook back in 2008 and 2009. This was motivated by a couple of large stakeholder units on our campus that realized they have had a great many holdings that were at-risk and that at the rate that they were preserving this material, either through grant projects or through more permanently funded positions, but I imagine it was one item at a time, that it would take them over a hundred years to preserve everything that they felt was important.

And so, this Media Preservation Survey was undertaken to take stock of all material on campus that was time-based media; so, audio recordings, video records, and film, if you want to think of it as a separate category.

The initiative, at this point, was referred to as the Media Preservation Initiative, MPI. My role in this was I was the person who was tasked with physically going around to all of the units on campus, knocking on their doors, pestering them with emails, asking what do you have. Do you have anything? Is it important to you? What format is it in? Can I go through and count them all? Have

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you had any problems with them and so on and so forth? So, I got to visit a lot of places on campus over the course of that year, 2008 to 2009, many places I never would have set foot in otherwise, rooms full of athletic films and things of that sort.

But at ten months into the project, we had scoured campus. We really limited this to the Bloomington campus, although our mandate now extends more widely, looking through the big list of campus units on the internet; going through it, has anybody mentioned having media of any sort? Sending emails around to everybody. Calling everybody on the phone. Anybody who has media, asking them well, is there anyone else we should talk to? Just really shaking the trees to try to find out what was there.

But ten months in, we were still getting leads about material that was out there that we had not yet registered.

And it was in July 2009, just as we were really wrapping this process up that we got a lead in from a maintenance inspector for the Office of

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Risk Management who, a few years earlier, had been poking around the attic of Franklin Hall, which is one of our administrative buildings on campus, an unfinished room with plaster peeling off the walls, grit all over the floor.

He had spotted a bunch of disc recordings there, he said, and looking at the labels he wasn't quite sure what they were but he had seen the phrase Indiana School of Sky. He thought this might be something connected with astronomy or telescopes or something like this.

So, he tried to get somebody interested in this material for a few years and talking to anybody who he thought might be able to do something about them. We were the first people who finally took an interest.

So, one afternoon in July of 2009, I went up to this space. You have to climb up a vertically-mounted metal ladder just to be able to get there but it was quite an interesting dilapidated room.

So, there was a tangle of open-reel tape

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strewn about the floor and nothing could be done about that. But then two stacks of transcription discs, lacquered transcription discs about this high off the floor. And then a few other discs scattered around as well; some of them bowed in interesting ways. You could see the imprints of the bottoms of people's shoes. Apparently some people had broken into the room at some point and had a disc-stomping party or something but this hadn't affected too much of the material.

So, lacquered transcription discs, for those of you who aren't familiar with the format, this is a highly endangered format. We like to use this as the poster child for media preservation. I take people in to see delaminating lacquered discs when I have interviewed them for positions with our initiative. These were actually in pretty decent shape, although they were in disintegrating gritty sleeves.

This material was utterly orphaned. Nobody knew it was there. Nobody knew anything about it. I don't think there was really any

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institutional memory. So, aluminum base with a lacquer coating that can often flake away without warning. Yes, this is the sort of thing we are talking about but imagine stacks of these about this high off the ground.

Now, the fact that these didn't belong to a unit was kind of problematic for us. Our whole survey was organized by unit but still, it appeared that this was likely significant material. So, I immediately just took out a sheet of paper and wrote "Do Not Disturb - MPI" and stuck it on top of the stack of discs, just in case someone would come in and decide to trash them within the next week or so.

And then I scoped around. What can we do about these things temporarily? Alan Burdette, from the Archives of Traditional Music, graciously allowed us to move them into the vault at the Archives of Traditional Music for safe-keeping, even though they really didn't belong to anyone on campus. There was no custodial unit.

So, we set up this assembly line up in

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the attic of Franklin Hall. Everybody climbed up the ladder, went through all the discs one-by-one, took label photographs, to vacuum off the worst of the grit, and then very carefully lowered them down out of the space and moved them over to the Archives of Traditional Music.

And so, a mix of material. There are a few concert recordings, prints of campus ceremonies, an Indiana Victory Series of radio produced in 1945 and 1946 on the history of the State of Indiana. But most of it came from this School of Sky, as it was labeled on the discs themselves, not something to do with astronomy, as it turned out, this was a radio educational program of the Indiana School of the Sky, or, as it was announced on the discs themselves, "The Indiana School of the Sky!"

(Laughter.)

DR. FEASTER: So, for a few years in 1947, as it turned out as I investigated this, the School of the Sky supplied thousands of classrooms around Indiana and adjoining states with a 15-minute

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educational broadcast every day of the school week, usually in dramatic form, although the format varied. Each episode would first air live in Bloomington at 2:15 p.m. and then was rebroadcast from recordings a week later in other points around the state. So, that was one of the key motivations for recording it.

The first season geared for grades four through eight, later seasons adding high school programming and adults started tuning in, too, to get a sense for what their kids are doing in school, or it is people who are home-bound for some reason.

And even though there wasn't much memory of this on campus, I did look going through the campus histories that historian Thomas D. Clark had written at one point: "Nothing that the university had done in almost a century and a half of existence had served so well its third objective of rendering public service." So, up until this point, there was virtually none of this available to anybody. I scaped around online. There seemed to be about seven episodes of this thing available through OTR

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exchanges, you know copies of copies, of copies, terrible to listen to. But it seemed like we might have a nearly complete set there. So, we were quite enthusiastic about it.

We digitized a few sample recordings. They sounded terrific. I played one of them and, of course, I was teaching on global sound cultures, an episode that originally aired live on October 26, 1949 part of "Great Days of Science" Episode 5: "Muslims Keep Science Alive," which is this clever dramatization of the arrival by camel train of a shipment of Byzantine manuscripts in Baghdad, with all the sound effects contrived by students. And this is all scripted and acted out by students. I did blog about it and the history of this program in our old MediaPreservation.wordpress.com blog.

For the next few years, only a few episodes of this were digitized but then just a few years ago, the MPI was superseded by the Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative, so MDPI. People don't like it when I pronounce it mud pie but it is easy to remember the acronym.

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(Laughter.)

DR. FEASTER: Again, with the mandate of preserving all time-based media deemed important by experts, this, I think everybody can see that it was fairly important material from a number of standpoints. It is important for documenting the history of Indiana University's forays into radio but also very useful for educational purposes. We have things like social guidance broadcasts and so forth from the late '40s, news commentary and so forth. So, there is really some really decent stuff.

So, as we were gearing up to begin digitizing things, there was a lot of interest material that we could make widely accessible right away. And you know a number of the collections we are dealing with have encumbrances of various sorts.

And Naz Pantaloni is working specifically to scope out guidelines for what we can and can't make available in conjunction with the legal counsel at the university but he loves The School of the Sky. He went through the

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university archives, which has some paperwork associated with this. They really crossed their T's and dotted their I's in terms of getting the rights lined up for this back in the '40s, material produced by the university. We are golden for this. So, this was material that we could certainly make a big deal of right off the bat.

And in the meantime, the University Archives agreed to accession on that. I think it is a no-brainer that they would want to but now it finally had an official campus home after 50 years of being in limbo.

So, for the public watch of our project last fall, we put up all the audio that we digitized so far, just a very few episodes. But since then, The School of the Sky and all of the other material from this attic were chosen as the first lacquered discs on campus that we were going to digitize.

So, the project is divided into two halves. There is one side run by Memnon Archiving Services that is a very industrial-scale processing. There is the IU site, where they do

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other things that require a bit more one engineer focusing on one item at a time. Transcriptions discs are done on side.

But we needed to do a little extra work for this. At one point a few years ago, someone had gone through all the label photographs and put together a spreadsheet of what was in the collection. That was the one casualty when we lost a server at the Archives of Indiana University but I went through it and regenerated that from the labels again.

The process of digitizing all these, I created rudimentary records, a physical object database that we are using to track items through our process. It has certain minimal technical metadata that we have to track. You need to know these are 16-inch discs at 33 1/3 rpm, coarse-groove aluminum-based, things like that that we really need to support the digitization process. And then very rudimentary, basic descriptive metadata. Of course, there is no existing records for this stuff anywhere but just the title off the discs or a

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broadcast date that then people can later build on to create a more robust catalog later down the road once, perhaps when we have a little more leisure for this.

So, 341 of the discs are School of the Sky related. It is about half, a little over half of the total. Some duplications. Some are single-faced. Some are double-faced. But over the past couple of months, we have had our audio-visual technician assistant cleaning the discs methodically as we deliver them over there to audio preservation engineers digitizing them. We just finished last week. So, this material should soon be available and we are really looking forward to people being able to play around with "The School of the Sky."

MS. DOWELL: All right. So, thanks for the invitation, Neil, to be part of this. I am kind of an outsider to this committee in a lot of respects. I am the Associate Director of a big rare books, manuscripts, and special collections library. So, we have everything from mediaeval

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manuscripts to 20th century archives, from the Gutenberg Bible up through books that were published just this year.

And sound materials are an important part of the collection but numerically, they are small out of the total of everything.

So, I am here to talk a little bit about some of the most important sound recordings that we have in our library, which the introduction mentioned. These are original recordings of Orson Welles radio productions, including a number of his different series "The Mercury Theatre on the Air," "Campbell Playhouse," "Ceiling Unlimited," and it includes a number of more obscure materials and, as Patrick has identified, some materials that were thought lost are included here, on about 500 or so lacquered discs. Some of them have been digitized as part of planning part of this large campus initiative that Patrick described.

I was recently involved in writing a grant to finish digitizing and actually make available publicly online the contents of all these

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discs, as well as digitized scripts that are associated with some of the programs.

And that grant is how I ended up here. I contacted Neil, who is a great network director because he just connects people like crazy.

And what I want to talk about today is how I'm at a university that is ahead of the game in so many ways. Right? Patrick was in our library and everywhere on campus, making an inventory years ago. And how we can still have such knowledgeable colleagues, have such institutional support, and still do some really puzzling things in describing our sound recordings.

Listening to everybody talk at this conference has been really interesting. I don't think I'm going to tell you anything you don't already know but I think just to reflect a little bit on the different sort of contingencies and gaps that can exist, even in places that should know better, should know what they are doing.

And of course, these discs were originally, as we talked about how things were

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saved, they were saved by the creator, Orson Welles. They were later in the custody of his long-time aid Richard Wilson. And film scholar Joe McBride wrote about how he saw them in Mr. Wilson's garage in the 1970s, I believe.

And then in 1978, they were acquired, along with Orson Welles papers, production materials and things from Welles and Wilson, acquired in 1978 and came to the Lilly Library.

The sound recordings came to the Lilly Library in disc format and there were also tapes that were made of at least a significant portion of the discs that arrived more or less at that same time. And what I have been trying to puzzle out, talking to retired people at my library, is how it was that those discs really just dropped out of the written record at the Lilly Library for a long time. So, there were people who were retired -- well, they are retired now but there are people who were involved with the acquisition and description of them. They knew that they existed. They were always kept safe in the vault. They were there.

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But when we came to developing finding aids and guides, discs were not mentioned. They said the collection includes tape recordings made from the originals but nothing about how the originals were here, too.

(Laughter.)

MS. DOWELL: I talked with my former department head who, at that time was a manuscripts archivist. She said, well, you know we talked about the discs sometimes with people from the Archives of Traditional Music or people who would be familiar with these physical formats but there wasn't any money to do anything with them and, in the meantime, lots of people are using the Welles collection. People are using the tapes or eventually other digital use copies that were made from the tapes.

And so these discs were there and they were safe but never really visible. They don't really rise up into consciousness again until this period, I think, when Patrick and the MPI project is coming and actually saying, what do you have? What do you have that is at-risk and important?

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So, my retired colleagues said, in some ways, the best thing we did was not to throw them out. Right? We kept them safe. We kept them in one of the most protected areas of our library. But the question I ask myself is, you know, why? Why did we end up ignoring the discs up to the point where we were developing a grant last year? We needed to amend the finding aid in order to reflect the fact that these discs exist because all we have in the finding aids are these tapes.

And so just to conclude, some really brief remarks. I mean here is where I think it kind of comes from in our respect. So, we are, in our institutional history, we are obviously very paper-focused. So that is one reason. We just are oblivious or confused about how we should deal with sound recordings. And our specific institutional history, for many years, there was a very strict divide between book materials and manuscript materials, such that they had separate public services staffs and they had separate people involved in describing those materials. And where

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I think people who were using MARC eventually had lots of great guidelines for describing sound materials and described commercially-created materials that came into the book side of things according to those standards. The manuscript side of those materials received much, much, less thorough description.

In some ways, that aligns with archives. Archives isn't about describing everything at the item level. It is about describing things at the archival level. And so even though there is a list of those tapes, originally, it just has a lot less detail.

I also think that some of our description got hung up on the question of what do people really use. And that the discs, because they presented such a problem, like we can't play them, we don't know what to do with them, that they didn't get described. Because there is nothing -- I mean I come from a library that is very, like I said, paper-focused and so there is nothing like -- I mean it may seem funny to people who do sound recordings

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with their whole life. But there is nothing like being somebody in a library that has stuff you can't use and the terror, and helplessness, and dismay you feel when Researcher A comes in and says yes, this is what I want. You are like oh, okay, well, here are our options. If you have two months and are willing to help fund it, we could get you this.

And I think that that contributed to only describing things that we knew could be used or that we had some kind of a version other than that. And it let the discs just drift into this sort of limbo for a period of time.

And so now, I can say that I am so grateful for all the people involved in this kind of effort to preserve audio recordings and especially to our campus partners who are doing this really wonderful work to help us identify, describe properly, digitize, preserve, and make available these recordings because I think that is just central. Of course, the MDPI project is now just at the verge of beginning to return some of these digitized files of other things. I think we will

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be getting back some recorded or some spoken word LPs as digitized material soon.

But to know that it is coming back in a way that we can effectively manage it, that we can enhance the description, that we have procedures so that we know how we can make it available to researchers. Even if we can't make it available to the world, how we can make it available to individuals and that is just such a great feeling.

And I think my conclusion is just that even some of the places with really great resources, if they aren't getting help specifically on sound recording materials, it is still possible for them to make really puzzling, not great decisions about how to describe and handle some of these materials, and that we need all the help we can get from people who really know what they are doing and I hope to --and we have got some funding that is going to be announced pretty soon to get this Orson Welles project off the ground.

So you know by the end of next year, I think we will start to be seeing some stuff out there

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in the world, and it is going to be really exciting and that I hope we can do our best to make available and describe properly all the other kind of audio materials that we have in our archival collections.

DR. VERMA: Thank you so much.

MS. SCHEIN: Thanks, Neil, for the invitation. I am kind of in a strange spot in this lineup because I am not in an academic setting but I am the archive manager for the Studs Terkel Radio Archive. It is really great to not have to give an introduction as to who he was because I am assuming everyone here does know.

We, in partnership with the Chicago History Museum, with the digitization done by the Library of Congress, WFMT Radio Network has been tasked with disseminating Stud Terkel's vast radio archive collection of almost 50 years. And usually when I talk about it, my opening line is so, what do you do with 20th century conversations? You give it teens, of course, which is exactly what I did over the summer.

So, the archive has been in existence

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for about two years and before it wasn't accessible at all. And so as a way to kind of announce it, we decided to partner with several different open-source technologies to create the digital access to it as well as partnering with Chicago Public Libraries, the Media Department, which is a digital learning space for kids, for teens, rather. They are in 41 locations in Chicago.

So, we wrote a grant to start this program called New Voices on Studs Terkel. We just shortened and NV on Studs. And for two months, we went to three different locations where students led by instructors were guided in various different activities to introduce them to these conversations and then the culminating part of the program was for them to fill a 5,000 square foot art gallery with new works created as a response to what they had listened to during the summer.

We didn't put any limit on the kind of media they wanted to create. So, if it was audio, great. If it was photography, you know it didn't matter. These were mostly incoming freshman with

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a few seniors and a few juniors.

What we didn't expect, I didn't expect, was they didn't want to listen to famous people. I mean they loved hearing Martin Luther King talking to Studs Terkel in Mahalia Jackson's bedroom. They loved that just because there was you know Dr. Martin Luther King. What they really gravitated towards was high school students, because Studs was out there in the '60s in Hyde Park talking to four kids in a car at one o'clock in the morning in Humboldt Park, excuse me, which would never be able to happen today; or high school students who were raising funds to put their dance/conga team together so that they could just be themselves and express themselves.

And one of the lead programs that I always have students listen to is a conversation between Studs and his Pacifica counterpart, Elsa Knight Thompson, where he goes into his practice and his kind of methodology. And he goes in and says it is the art of conversation. It is listening. It is talking. It is going up to that person and going

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into the conversation, making sure that the interviewee knows that they have got an important story and what they are saying is tremendous and everyone wants to hear it.

So, one of the sites was on the South Side of Chicago that had been rocked by a student death and the media had come in and not asked the student anything. The media completely mis-portrayed their whole life and they were really, really angry about that.

So, having them listen to this old white guy talk about walking up to an African American guy on the street or going to Selma and Montgomery right around the time of the marches and letting people verbally hang themselves, so to speak, because the cab drivers are super racists and he winds up drinking bourbons in a bar with what turns out to be members of the KKK and he is trying to think of an exit plan because he is like okay, we just starting talking about baseball. Like that is how it started.

And they were really like wow, he

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understood what the ordinary person, what the importance of their story was. And that really resonated with them, which is what we wanted them to do. So, that was the south siders and their interests.

And then our other location was Chicago's only public performing arts high school. So, you had to audition but it was for novice to intermediate or whatever the top of that is. So, anyone could, as long as you could audition, it doesn't matter what your level is, you could still do it.

They took it in a different route. They were really inspired by the conversations that he had had for like Division Street or working. And so I took a team out of teenage girls and we walked around Millennium Park and Grant Park. And they approached all these people, these strangers, in the spirit of Studs and interviewed them about things today and did you know who he was. And they filmed it. They recorded it. I mean they handled everything. I was just there to make sure that

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everything was on the up and up.

And it was fantastic and they were fearless. Fearless. All these girls just walking up to anyone, giving them full attention, asking very thoughtful things. And we captured all of that and worked with a partner to edit that to be part of the installation as well.

Others were just not comfortable talking to people so, they created just art. They also created two response pieces that made the public interact with their art. So, and they also led a roundtable with people that knew Studs and worked with him, which was great and wonderful.

The most heartbreaking aspect of it was there was this one girl named Brenda who wrote this beautiful poem. She was clearly just so wrecked about this shooting, she was from the South Side. And we print the poem on a pedestal, so it was actually printed on or pasted on the pedestal and she had created a jar. And she wanted people -- this is a credit to her teachers because she was like I want people to leave notes with no identifying

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information, of course. She looked at her teacher to say that, which was great. And she just wanted them to respond and to feel.

So, we got an old typewriter, similar to the ones that Studs used to use and we put it on top of the pedestal and some of the messages in there were just incredible. A lot of them were like your words are so inspiring, great job. And then there was this woman: I'm pregnant and I don't know what kind of world I am going to bring my black son into.

And I wanted to staple those to a blank spot in the gallery but it was not permitted because of staples. But just for the emotion and that is not even the digital tools.

So, we have got all these digital tools that we are using, too, like a Hyperaudio Pad, which in the span of the next two years we are going to make 1,000 programs available online that are fully transcribed with interactive transcripts and then they will be ported into the Hyperaudio Pad where anyone, it doesn't matter what age level, can go

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in and drag and drop portions of the interviews to create your own re-mix.

So, for instance, students can go in if they have got a civil rights project that they need to do, they can list down from the category, the civil rights Studs Terkel programs, listen to whomever, drag and drop the parts that they want, and then they can embed that and shoot it out to anyone on social media, turn it into their teachers.

We also encourage media makers to use all of the archive as well. The Library of Congress is halfway through digitization. So, we are only about at 2,000 programs but our intent is for all 5,600 hours to be made available in the same manner.

We also developed a curriculum through that grant program. We hired two CPS teachers; one created curriculum for AP history that actually got approved by Chicago Public Schools to be used system-wide as a service-learning project so they get 15 credit hours. And the other one at Curie High School is English-based and their transcripts, because they took it and ran with it, they actually

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went off curriculum, based on the students' enthusiasm and interviewed people they had never talked to before within our community. And those transcripts are getting published through 826 Shy and will be available and made for purchase. And we start in Detroit next month, running the curriculum there.

So, the curriculum that was created was based on a low-tech/no-tech/high-tech. So, whatever school or whatever barrier there might be, we tried to remove that to make sure that they are just able to use it. We are partnering with The Great Books Foundation to have that curriculum disseminated nationwide.

And our back-end system, thankfully, will be able to grab from multiple points, no matter where in the country and ingest into our system, which is great. And eventually, our tool, you will go to our website and you will be able to interact with the media, as to you can insert your own voice into the programs, which will be then a new item.

DR. VERMA: Wow. Thanks so much.

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Derek?

DR. VAILLANT: So, I guess I am speaking in recognition of the fact this is, I think, a unique meeting of communities, librarians, archivists, preservationists, and folks like me, academics, researchers in the history of radio, television, and sound. And it is a great opportunity for me.

And Lynn mentioned in the introduction that I am involved with the RPTF with an impressive title, Director of Preservation, but sometimes also Director of Preservation of Endangered Collections. And I have been thinking about that idea of endangerment and it makes it sounds like I should come out with a pith helmet kind of camo gear on the sense of going out into a landscape of sort of wild creatures and dangerous forces and so on.

In the remarks this morning, one of the speakers I think from the Pacifica Archive said we don't want to colonize the past and so on. So, I have been thinking a little bit just conceptually about how to identify an endangered collection and

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that is, perhaps, a separate conversation but I wanted to get that point out.

I am also sort of speaking as an historian of looking at the past who has sort of feel good stories to tell about lost archives and sort of not feel good stories to tell. So, I will start with a feel good story.

And the feel good story involves my work looking at the sound history of the United States and France connecting through radio in the 20th century and this has been a wonderful project because it sent me into all kinds of archival spaces in France, which is a great privilege but in the U.S. as well and my story kind of takes me full circle.

The feel good story is not a story about sound materials but textual materials and it is a story of an archive that was resilient in ways are quite astounding. So, the roots of this archive were what is called a Surete Nationale. It was basically the state national police force of France in the 1930s and their job was basically a little

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bit like Homeland Security, NSA, sort of it is not really an analogue here but their job was essentially to snoop around and surveil political activists around France. And in this period, that meant following quite closely activists on the political left, essentially socialists, as well as those on the political right.

And like any good bureaucracy, they generated all kinds of fascinating biographical information. They were wiretapping. They were listening to private regular communication, every communication. And this was a secret archive. No one really knew about it. I mean people who worked for it knew about it but it was not available to anyone in the 1930s.

And as you know, in June 1940, the German Army rolled into France and into Paris. One of the first things that happened was that the military seized these archives, seized the archives of the French National Police and immediately took them to Berlin. And of course, you can understand why. They wanted to see who their friends were in France.

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They also wanted to see who needed to be rounded up and purged. So, these archives sat in Berlin throughout World War II, until the moment when the Russian Army was streaming in from the east and the allies were converging from the west and other directions, I suppose, from the south.

The Russians got to Berlin first, they go to these archives first. Naturally, they seized these secret archives and took them off to Moscow, where I assume they were used for further sort of checking who are our friends, who are our enemies, and who did bad things to our friends who maybe we should investigate.

Flash forward to 1989, that wall comes down. Various international treaties are signed and documents were repatriated. So, along that came the archives in 2005 and this was this enormous collection. It was just called the Russian Collection.

(Laughter.)

DR. VAILLANT: The Russian Collection. Well, I'm a radio person. I will just take a

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desperate gander into this thing and low and behold, there was an amazing trove of data there.

But what was sort of tangibly, materially interesting was to open up a box and see a sort of brown paper wrapping with Russian Cyrillic. I don't read Russian but to open that up and inside of that find a brown archival paper document with German Gothic lettering. Open that up, unbundle it, and there were the original files. And the fascinating thing was maybe some files were lost along the way but this was a quite comprehensive collection.

So, this is a feel good story. This is a story about an archive that moved around and that was really endangered in all kinds of moments in the process that survived, amazingly, sort of for institutional and political reasons. And I guess it speaks to the point that history is written by the victors. And in a sense, at each point, the potential victors made a grab and then it came back. So, that is something to think about, getting back to what is endangered and what is not.

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My second story, which I think is something that connected me to Neil and sounding out at some others was what happened to me in Detroit. And so I am at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and through my work on France, I was chasing after sources that would speak to this transatlantic history of broadcasting. As I discovered, there was quite a history there.

And I was on the hunt for some recordings, transcription discs, as it happens, which I guess are different. They are 16-inch discs but they are maybe, I don't know if they are lacquer or quite what they are made out of because I had never seen them. In any case, I just started canvassing all the U.S. stations that might have run these series. Low and behold, there were these unfamiliar call letters located in Detroit.

I started hunting around and I discovered that there was a station in Detroit established in the 1920s, WDTR. It was a station operated by the Detroit Public School System and it had been, essentially, in operation, first as

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a radio station, then as a television station and it had sort of, basically, collapsed around the time that Detroit, prior to Detroit's bankruptcy but it had basically collapsed, along with the city, along with a lot of the infrastructure in the public schools. But I was able to backtrack and find people and I started asking questions and they said well, talk to the old engineer.

There is this old engineer and he kind of is the minder of this old building on the west side of Detroit, where we keep a transmitter now.

The station became a public radio station, WRCJ with studios elsewhere, not run by the public schools anymore but, essentially, a public service of the schools, kind of a buy-out of it, of frequency and so on.

And so I went into this building and it was in that mode, getting back to the guy in the pith helmet, sort of very energized about what the RPTF was talking about. We are going to go out, we are going to save these endangered collections. You know we can't cross-breed them and repopulate

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the planet but it is kind of a missionary complex which historians we have to have active imaginations because sometimes you are in an archive and you are feeling for your own pulse. It is not always exciting and glamorous. So, here was a great moment to get out into the field.

And you know I am not a native of Detroit so I just sort of followed my MapQuest to this address and I discovered I was in quite possibly one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the city. And I could tell because it was broad daylight and I really didn't see pedestrians and I felt very, very strange. And there was this station just overgrown with weeds and not sign of human life. And then a guy pulls up in a pickup and that is the engineer who took me inside.

And it was truly the land that time forgot. It was as if the station had been operating until maybe the mid-1980s and then people had just literally stood up from their lunches, stood up from their desks, and left. And it had just sort of settled into this suspended animation. It was

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very, very strange.

And I wrote out this on the blog, so I will just cut to the chase quickly. So, I looked around and there were tapes everywhere. There were audio tapes, there were discs, stuff on reels, tape reels, quarter-inch tape, everything. And I just thought, this is the lost archive. My mind is racing ahead. This will give us a wonderful oral testimony of Chicago's neighborhood radio station, the public schools. I am racing and really excited.

I said great, I'm coming back. And they said well you have to come back really fast because this building is going to be completely cleared out. We are throwing everything away and you have about 90 days, if you want anything.

And I started scrambling. I didn't know who to turn to. And this was part of the issue here. What happens when you actually find something and it is endangered? And I contacted resources at the university, which fortunately has a library, the Bentley Library, specializing in Michigan history and I sort of gave them this pitch. And they said

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okay, the Director of the Library, Terry McDonald is this historian, one of us. And he is like well, we can send a truck in there and take it all out. You know it was sort of we have got it covered.

But first, it had to be appraised. And the preservationists and archivists know appraisal is a very complicated process of triage and technical matters, which, as an historian, I was really not clear on.

So, an appraiser came along and we talked it over. He was really excited. And he walked into this environment that I saw as just rife, pregnant with possibility, full of great stuff. And his sort of eyes went up and down, we poked around. We looked for any signs of an archivist, of station logs. We looked for a map to get through this just pile of junk which, to me, was sort of beautiful and there were things to be done. And he just sort of said I don't think so. I don't think so. I said but really, this is a unique collection it can be really saved. And he just we could come in here, we could spend days in here just doing the appraisal part

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just to figure it out and it just wasn't going to happen. And I was so dispirited.

And I went back and talked to Terry McDonald at Bentley and he says, you know Derek, I am getting stories like this every day. He said just like Detroit, I mean these were textual archives not oral archives, but this idea of endangered collection is kind of part of a larger story about historical change, I think particularly in cities, but a sort of a past that is really dissolving before our very eyes.

What I learned from this experience --, and I haven't given up, I took sort of a transection of what I could. And the building is I think still sort of in limbo for all sorts of reasons because the Detroit Public Schools got involved again and that is a different story for another time.

But just to finish, Patrick told this wonderful story about going into the process and having a kind of prior notion of the landscape and being surprised, serendipity, finding some things you didn't know existed.

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There are other things I think that are going to happen in this process of locating collections that are endangered. And so I would hope this tale will speak to is the fact that extinction is somewhat of a natural force in the world but I'm hoping for better luck next time.

The next story that someone is going to tell is when we are actually, that appraisal will work and will get traction. But this was sort of for me a sobering moment to realize the complexities archivists and preservationists have been talking about these complexities. Now, we have historians trying to figure out what would we like to see saved from our academic perspective. So, these kind of coming together conferences I think will be extremely useful exchanging information and techniques.

So, I look forward to more of that. That is just my story, two stories for today.

Thank you so much.

MS. LAPLACA: I'm excited to hear a lot of resonances with what everyone else is saying.

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I'm a Northwestern grad student and I am currently kind of moonlighting as an archivist for the Northwestern University Radio Archive Project.

This is our revitalization of our collection that is almost 50 years old and has been left untouched and was essentially erased from institutional memory at our university. Our last known interactions with it were in the mid-1970s.

So, I was a fellow at the Library of Congress in 2013 in the Recorded Sound Division. And my mentors there advised that I attend a meeting of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections, which Patrick is president of. And there, I happened upon Mike Biel, who is here, who is also a Northwestern alumni, and he informed me (as a grad student working on radio) that there was a sizeable radio collection on my campus. So, as a scholar and an archivist, I was really excited about a potential treasure hunt.

I returned to Northwestern and I spent over a year tracking down the collection. I was

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cold-calling librarians and faculty members. I was told over a dozen times that it couldn't exist on our campus; that it would have been accounted for somewhere.

But a year later, I stumbled on 10,000 transcription discs in a basement on our campus. And stumbled is a very accurate way to describe what happened. We did have to crawl and climb over discarded furniture, files, actual piles of garbage, in order to access the collection, which was stored in a large basement that was deemed too dangerous to enter prior to our interest in it. It was a really happy moment when they put a sign on my door saying that it was no longer a dumping area.

So, there was no institutional record of this collection on our campus, in the university archives, or in the administrative offices. There was no finding guide attached to the collection, when I found it. There were no labels on the shelves. The discs were not in any discernable order, save a numbering system that was completely illogical -- and which I learned yesterday had also

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been illogical when Mike interacted with it in the 1970s.

I found a number of markings like yellow stickers, red x's. Mike explained what they meant yesterday. But when I found them, all I could tell was that someone had once organized the collection.

I have since learned that it has been moved between eight and ten times in the past 40 years, probably shuffled each time -- and that it has been moved by handlers who were convinced that the discs were vinyl. In fact, they are transcription discs and many of them are glass-based transcription discs. Obviously, each of those moves posed a huge risk to the collection's longevity. Luckily, they were moved vertically every time, which is, I think, a miracle.

So, I cleared out a little path through the basement. I have a four- by ten-foot area that I work in that includes one table on which I have to organize and safely handle 10,000 discs. The discs are currently stored directly below a hot water pipe. They are in a basement that has drastic

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temperature fluctuations. It is a main conduit for our steam heating system. They are also covered with decades of dust, including chunks of concrete.

About a month ago, I walked in and there were two contractors on a ladder seconds away -- Neil witnessed the emergency -- seconds away from scraping insulation off the ceiling and sending all that sticky particular matter onto the exposed discs. So, had I not walked in five minutes before that, that would have been a major issue for us, in terms of me even being able to enter the space and work with the discs.

Now for the good news, and there is some, remarkably. I processed about 7,500 of these discs in the past six weeks. This is a brand new collection. And by processed I mean triaged their condition, entered them into a cataloging system, re-sleeved them, and put them in order by title and date. Remarkably, only 50 of the discs are cracked; only 100 have signs of delamination; and only about 300 have water or mold damage, which out of 10,000 is pretty amazing.

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Interestingly, I am of the opinion that their horrible storage conditions actually saved their lives. They were jammed together so tightly on these shelves that I actually had to disassemble them in order to remove them but that prevented the water damage. It prevented the water from seeping onto all of the discs. It was just the outer edges that were damaged. It prevented breakage because no one had touched them in 50 years. No one has dropped them, never left their fingerprints on them. So, the majority are in very pristine condition.

We are working on integrating this collection into our university's brand new master's program in Sound Arts and Industries, with the hope that students can ultimately use the materials to learn about radio and radio technology and maybe even become involved with digitization and curation in the future.

And I have also had a wonderful opportunity to train an undergraduate who is interested in radio archiving and that was really a win-win for us because it expedited the process,

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which was otherwise me alone, and it also gave her a really unique opportunity to work hands-on with radio materials. So, even in six weeks the collection has had the really important function of inducting at least one new radio archivist into our community.

So, I do want to say that even though I had virtually no context to work with when I encountered this collection, it was the convening of this group has that has actually been the key to unlocking these discs. Like I said, I had lunch with Mike yesterday and I learned more about the collection in 15 minutes than I have in two years of this process.

And I also want to point out, which is so often the case, that it was an individual who kept the records, which he is holding right now, not an institution. So, it is so valuable that we are getting together at meetings at this and talking to one another. And that chance meeting that we had a few weeks ago really brought these to light for the first time in almost half a century.

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So finally, what do we actually have? We have over 460 discrete titles in our collection, ranging from the last '20s to the late '50s. We have unique samples of university-produced content from Northwestern and the University of Chicago, including an almost complete run of the University of Chicago Roundtable, which is a very highly sought after program that exists only in script form elsewhere.

We also have a huge amount of Chicago-originated programming and Midwestern regional programming, including a huge runs of women's programming that I am really interested in, including "Mary Merry Field's Radio Journal," "Mary Lee Taylor Presents," and "Elizabeth Hart Home Forum." We have hundreds of episodes of all four of those shows.

And we also have a large collection of Destination Freedom, which many of you might know about as a Chicago-originated African American Affairs program that is pretty hard to come by.

We also have huge amounts of rural

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programming like the "National Farm and Home Hour," "Town and Farm," "RFD America," things of that nature.

We have representation of very well-known personalities like Bob Hope, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, ... but we also have a lot of pilot programs, auditions, voice tests, and a surprising amount of early television audio, which is decidedly less easy to come by.

So, after preliminary research, again it has been six weeks, I am not finding the bulk of our collection duplicated elsewhere. So, we are really excited to continue to assess its rarity and to work toward creating a path for moving forward.

I'm working on this as a grad student on a stipend. I have ten weeks to do this first phase. So, I am doing my best to figure out what is there, figure out what shape it is in and, hopefully, work toward a more comprehensive digitization strategy in the future.

DR. VERMA: Thank you so much.

So, I want to thank all of our

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presenters. We have about 20 minutes for questions and discussion.

Maybe I will start with the panelists. Do you have any questions for one another?

PARTICIPANT: We have respondents, too?

DR. VERMA: Oh, sorry. I didn't know we had respondents. Well, maybe we will have the respondents.

MS. STEPHENS: Okay, I'm Carlene Stephens and I was really impressed by every story. I am a historian and a curator and I love other people's stories. I guess my job as a discussant is to try to pull out some common themes.

And first, I probably ought to explain that I am probably the outsider-est of all of you. I was struck by the phrase "meeting of communities." So, maybe that means nobody here is an outsider. That is very inclusive when talking about all of this.

But I think the reason I am here and I think the reason I am sitting in this room, rather than some other room, is that accidentally, I have

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my own story of sound recording. Most of my career at the Smithsonian has been as a student and curator of the timekeeping collection. But also under this very weird umbrella of objects that I take care of: timekeeping, office machinery, locks and keys--are very early acoustic sound recording machines and records. And it just so happens that in that is a set of experimental recordings from Thomas Edison, tin foil recordings, the holdings of the Volta Laboratory, Alexander Graham Bell's recordings from the 1880s, and then even some Emil Berliner experimental materials.

And just recently, with the help of the Library of Congress and Lawrence Berkeley Labs and Patrick, who did what he called a discography of everything in the Volta collection, we actually got sound from recordings from the Volta Labs that were considered unplayable from the 1880s.

So, that is my story, which I am not going to elaborate on but I think that is my "street cred" here, if there is such a thing.

One of the threads that I heard from

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everybody is this, if not voyage of discovery, process of discovery. In this "meeting of communities" coming across sound collections, every single one of you just about used the word "discovery" or "I discovered" or "oh, my gosh, I was surprised." And it is an indicator of the interesting stage that the sound media, with respect to the different communities, the standing of all of that. There has been this, the last couple of decades, focus on sound studies across the humanities. It has drawn attention to these collections. It has given them credibility as sources that they had all along but nobody was paying any attention to. And so the idea that there is this "meeting of communities" focusing on sound is at a particularly interesting stage.

And adding on what Sam Brylawski said yesterday about looking ahead, I think maybe one of the other communities to gather might be the scientists and technologists and the engineers who actually are the hands-on people. Preservation has lots of meanings. These are material things that

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we are dealing with and, of course, there is the curator creeping out. I start with the object. I start with what is the physical thing. And materiality is enjoying revival as well as sound studies.

And so saying this is a thing made of material and maybe there is a better way of handling it, analyzing it, processing it, getting sound from it, comes directly to the top of my head because of my experience with this.

I think I will stop. But anyway, thank you for the opportunity to say these things. It is a wonderful moment, I think, to go forward.

DR. FOLEY: I'm Karma Foley. I direct the archives at the Smithsonian Channel, which is, we are affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution but we are actually a privately owned company under Showtime and CBS and we have only been on the air since 2007. So, in terms of broadcasting, it is like lacquered transcription discs to our old materials are DVCPRO HD tapes and HDCAM tapes from the field and we are now almost entirely tapeless,

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almost entirely file-based, which raises interesting questions about materiality but so many of the issues are the same.

And I have also worked in traditional film archives and so I have dealt with the things.

The thread that really struck me in all of the fantastic presentations was this idea of possibility, that that is why we look for this stuff and we want to try to save it is the possibility of what it contains, how it can be used, what it can tell us and the flip side of that coin of the lost possibilities, either entire collections or individual items from the collection that is from damage.

And I found Allison's presentation about the Studs Terkel Archive and this reuse and mixing to be -- that is like one of my favorite stories that I have ever heard about why we do this. What the whole point is is so that the materials are there and things like that can happen. That is the only point I wanted to point out.

DR. VERMA: That's really great. Maybe

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we should open it up to the questions on the floor. I'm sure you have got something to say.

MR. BEALE: Of course, naturally, I am thrilled that the Northwestern collection is being resurrected. It is a good story of endangerment for several different reasons. One is that we talk about it at corporations and networks and stations but there is a lack of corporate memory. you go back there, you know you can't find people at radio stations that know anything about their past. And maybe you would find a former employee. Well, it is the same at the universities, which really dismays me.

You know Larry Lichty would be the connecting link. He came there after I left. He left before you came there but Larry would have been the connecting link. So, there would have been that, if I was not able to be found.

But one of the other problems is, first of all, the Northwestern Collection was the subject of two outright thefts that reduced the collection probably by a third. And I know who was responsible

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for the thefts. I know where a lot of the discs have safely re-arrived. So, there is that factor as well.

But one of the other things is the endangerment of all of the collections that are involved with an educational institution. That includes this, as well, because you can get a new administration coming in and they say we don't need this garbage.

I saw it at the University of Kansas for a beautiful collection of opera recordings that for about ten years was shoved into storage. So, time after time, after time, we hear these stories about magnificent educational institutional collections that get put into abeyance or I had, when I was at Temple University before Northwestern, we were given the collection of WCAU. Fortunately, I spent a weekend and recorded the whole damn collection the week before I graduated because two years later, they dumpstered the collection.

So, that is one of the other factors. Your collection, you may think that it is safe. You

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may think that you have rescued it from the abyss but educational institutions are very easily able to recreate abysses.

MS. LAPLACA: If I could just jump really quickly. When Patrick was talking I was reminded that you know we talked about there being a link that kind of we both almost missed but the people who knew where this collection was all along and who have known where it is for 40 years are the janitors, people who work in the basement. And had we gone straight to those maintenance people, they would have pointed us there right away. In the end, those have been my greatest allies. They are putting tarps over it so it doesn't get it wet. They are telling their friends not to touch it anymore. They are not eating lunch right next to it anymore. You know the same with Patrick, I was hearing.

So, that is an avenue for people at universities is go talk to those people who work in basements or attics and ask them if they see anything.

MR. BEALE: There is one other thing

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with Patrick with the educational programs. We had a program like that at Philadelphia that I recorded on "Time Now for Studio Schoolhouse." Nobody at the Philadelphia Public Schools knows anything about this series. It was on the air for 40 years on WFIL and WFIL-FM, a commercial radio station. We haven't been able to find anybody that knows anything about it. Marguerite Farley, one woman who had done the program for like 40 years, she died and nobody knows what happened to any of her materials.

And a couple of -- well, I didn't have any. I, unfortunately save any programs. Three or four programs were saved by a couple of guys from a couple years before I was there. So, I don't have any programs that I was on. But you know we also would like to find where Studio Schoolhouse -- you know, does somebody have an archive for "Studio Schoolhouse?" There are these local educational programs I think all over the country.

DR. AUSTIN: I maybe have a question, perhaps a suggestion for upcoming conferences and

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other caucuses that may deal with this kind of stuff. But I teach at Howard University here in D.C. and I am sitting on a collection of student thesis films, some of whom have gone on to be famous actors and directors, especially important in the African American community, where they don't have a lot of those opportunities. And right now they are just kind of sitting in my office. And I intend to die of old age in there and I can protect them until then but I can't promise anyone is going to take care of them.

But it would be nice to know of best practices or ways to approach university administration and the library and the people who go and throw stuff in our like mold abyss of old technology and stuff, just to make sure that you run it by a librarian or somebody that might know what it is and what is worth and how to save it before this gets thrown in the dumpster or whatever.

I don't know if being an archivist if you all have ever come across people who did that well, or didn't do it at all and wish they had, or

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that sort of thing.

DR. VAILLANT: Well, this sounds insane. But as I think about these stories and I think about the politics of institutions and campuses and universities, I think about what would happen -- there are certain mechanisms that go into automatic procedures, think of Title IX, mandatory reporting, certain kinds of federally-mandated procedures started. And if you think about endangered species, this sort of analogy, if there were a way to kind of create a category of -- I mean this is cultural patrimony. I don't like that word but I mean, effectively, you would have to disclose the existence of this collection as part of being on a public university. Anyway, this would create a kind of a ping in the archival community and so on.

It is kind of a really hair-brained idea but in other words, it is sort of like thinking about indigenous artifacts. Someone is digging and they come across this stuff. In the old days, they just sort of pocket it, sell it all, whatever. But now

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we have a kind of a process. This is part of the history of this culture that you have to respond accordingly.

It is totally hair-brained but, theoretically, this might be a way to mark these discoveries and kind of elicit.

DR. AUSTIN: So, in other words, rather than someone having like technical and having to go and find them later, they kind of self-generating. That is an interesting idea.

MS. SCHEIN: Have you ever thought about applying for a CLIR grant for the hidden collections?

DR. FOLEY: I think you should find a friendly librarian in the archives or something who would just talk with you gently and not --

MS. SCHEIN: Absolutely.

DR. FOLEY: Because a lot of librarians now are very interested in -- I mean I can't promise it will keep it from the abyss because it is always a danger. You know this whole article "Librarians as the Enemies of Books." But there are a lot of

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librarians who are very interested in what makes them distinctive because big universities are all buying the same electronic collections, subscribing to the same big databases.

And at least on my campus and other campuses I hear about, it is interesting well what makes us distinctive. What do we have that nobody else has? And sometimes that can help lead to grant opportunities that they would know about or help you with or even the resources that exist already. Who knows?

MS. SCHEIN: Yes, and they just transitioned to a digitization focus as opposed to just a cataloging focus, which totally hindered my project but would be great for yours.

But yes, and they have got archived webinars where they go over what that is. And I am sure, like you mentioned any librarian or archivist at your university could probably help guide you to that. But I would definitely check that out.

DR. VERMA: I do think one other interesting thread line in this panel that I didn't

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think about when we put it together was that there is kind of an element of storytelling that is important to publicizing and like keeping these stories, keeping these materials vibrant. And in the institutional context, that can take the form of getting your department newsletter, getting your little publicity materials in some way. And that can actually heighten awareness of this in a really important institutionally-located way.

MR. LUKOW: I would also recommend identifying a filmmaker whose work is represented in your collection, who has gone on to some kind of preeminence, whether it is the Hollywood community or a more independent community, and outreaching to them to see just to remind of this, look for a spokesperson. Look for somebody who can help raise the profile.

I would also encourage you, in addition -- my name is Gregory Lukow. I work at the Library of Congress. I am head of the Packard Campus in Culpeper.

In addition to the National Recording

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Preservation Board from which this Radio Task Force is an outgrowth, we have a National Film Preservation Board and one of the subcommittees there is devoted to assessing the nation's student film, university-based or other AFI type organizations. And they would, I think, be very interested to hear about independent African American student films at Howard University. So, I could put you in touch with people on that committee.

MR. BEALE: Some of them may look back in horror if they are student productions.

(Laughter.)

DR. VERMA: We have a couple of questions.

MR. BARNETT: I am coming at this from a sort of researcher's point of view but I have two thoughts; one, directly related to materiality and this relationship between sound recordings and paper.

So, we are talking a lot about the relationship between a radio and radio transcripts.

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I think from a larger kind of focus thinking about sound recordings and their relationship perhaps to sort of industrial institutions, I do a lot of research on the recording industry in the 1920s and '30s, and I find I get a lot of recording archives and find recordings with very little in the way of paper. And I am finding a lot of that paper in the hands of private collectors at the level of city and county historical societies.

And so this relationship between kind of preserving the sound recordings but also not sort of getting the array of supplemental materials that are on paper that can tell us an awful lot about the audio.

The second thought is also in a way related to materiality and archival settings is how much we just have no idea about at the city, county, and state historical society levels. So, introducing those levels, like we already have a complicated -- the mission of this conference is already like trying to do the relatively impossible getting all these groups together. If we opened it

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further, right, so in all of these stories of stumbling upon things, I found an experimental log of the TV researcher, Charles Francis Jenkins at a Wayne County in Indiana, Richmond, Indiana, Wayne County Historical Society's early TV materials. I found it because the archivist was mad I wasn't looking for it.

(Laughter.)

MR. BARNETT: I was looking for Gennett Records, a Richmond, Indiana-based label, Gennett Record. They were hugely important in the 1920s. They were looking at Gennett materials. And the guy said, we everyone always comes here to look for the Gennett stuff but no one ever comes here to look for this. He drops the logbook on my table.

(Laughter.)

MR. BARNETT: And so I am reminded at the level of which I imagine like an aggregating website that would bring the state, county, and town historical societies together. Oh, we have got this guy, he was born here. We have got this. And that is an even -- that is perhaps on the to-do list

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for later on.

MS. DOWELL: Can I just respond to that? I mean oh, gosh, when I started out a hundred years ago, there was a thing called the Union List of Names. Is there a Union List of anything related to sound, and film, and so forth? I mean that was a publication that was in every single legitimate and illegitimate library.

DR. FOLEY: Well, I mean there is ArchiveGrid now and I have never tried to explore ArchiveGrid to try to limit it to sound recordings. I mean it is what would be the Union List of Names for collections now that sucks in kind of archival-described as finding aids and makes them go researchable.

PARTICIPANT: What is it called again? I'm sorry.

DR. FOLEY: ArchiveGrid.

MR. BEALE: There were a couple of books which have come out that show that that list, where there are sound archives around the country. And Siegel, Dave Siegel with his wife did one about four

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or five years' ago. And we had done in ARSC back in the very beginning of ARSC, the history back in the 1960s, the Red Back Book.

DR. VERMA: I think we can take a couple of questions really quickly.

MR. GLICK: Okay, well, I have a quick thing to say. I will just briefly introduce myself. I am probably one of the youngest members attending this conference. I am actually an undergraduate student at RIT in Rochester, New York. I live a few miles away and I am up there for school. And I am actually studying electrical engineering but I work at the radio station there. I produce a weekly show and I also work part-time as the media productions engineer for RIT Production Services.

And my boss came to me a few years ago and tasked me with going with through the whole collection -- we have hundreds maybe thousands of hours of video collection produced by students on the RIT campus going back to the early '70s. And a lot of this stuff he says they are running out of storage space. And so they are thinking about

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throwing it out. They have already thrown some of it out.

And the process I am going through, there is this disorganized array of tapes and so I have done the work of cataloging a fair amount. And the process, they are going to the university archivist. And of course, this appears to be kind of an afterthought for many people across the board. The university archivist is very busy, hasn't gotten back in several months. And then once she gets down to look at it and see what is worth keeping, what is worth throwing out, and perhaps the head of the Production Services Department will look at it. And then he is saying well, we should contact all the departments throughout the university to see is there any professor you had who might have any notion of anything that was produced on the campus of any value that they might want.

My boss says we don't want someone coming back in ten years and say we did a video project but I'm sorry, we threw it out; it is no longer with us.

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And there just seems to be perhaps a lack of knowledge about entities that might be interested in rescuing this kind of stuff.

There is very much, I am sure you are aware, but it is just a burden to hold this material and just a tendency to want to get rid of it. And part of it is a lack of knowledge organizations like you folks who are actually interested. For example, before attending this, I had very little knowledge of the great numbers of people who are actually dedicating their time to preserving all this stuff.

So, perhaps if you want to take some action on a national scale, perhaps contacting universities in a systematic manner and expressing the need for saving stuff that is old.

(Laughter.)

MR. BEALE: Us professors.

MR. GLICK: I was thinking twice before throwing that out and making appropriate context.

DR. VERMA: I think there was one more question.

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MR. LUKOW: Yes, I have a question for Derek.

So, the Detroit situation is still in play, to some degree, right?

DR. VAILLANT: Well you know in the language of the public schools, the assets have been removed from the building. Assets, as I understood them, were things that could be effectively auctioned off on eBay through a kind of consignment.

MR. LUKOW: Well, the bulk of my question this appraiser who threw up his hands and said -- why did he throw up his hands and shrug his shoulders because he determined it was not valuable, because he couldn't determine, it would take too long to determine whether it was valuable? You said you took a cross-section out. How did you do the triage?

DR. VAILLANT: Well, I mean it was I could physically carry. I mean what I considered doing was renting a van and getting a couple of people and going in there. but you know I have this day job and I don't have a graduate student. I mean

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I went in with a friend. He took some photographs.

But it is a great question. What exactly was the problem? I mean this gets back to you are talking about the Philadelphia Education -- there are certain kinds of collections. It wasn't immediately clear that this had a kind of sexy component. I mean he said oh, no one is interested in student-produced radio or TV stuff.

MR. LUKOW: So I wonder who your appraiser was but don't go there.

DR. VAILLANT: Well that's it, I don't want to say. But I was taken aback. And maybe you know there are sort of collection mandates that come through institutions and this was challenging because I was just sort of a maverick. I was this crazy professor who says hey, what are we -- and very naive. I mean I didn't have the grounding to sort of frame this because there was this sense of urgency.

But I immediately got stuck in a kind of bureaucratic place between the station that had formerly controlled access to the building and they

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sort of walked away from it. A Catholic school across the street has bought the building and, presumably, everything that wasn't taken to the consignment place will eventually be junked but it may, as of yet, be sitting there.

MR. LUKOW: Is there ways to triage based upon format, based upon likelihood of uniqueness?

DR. VAILLANT: Well, I was hoping that I would get some help and guidance with that. I mean I could see reels. I could see stuff that obviously that wouldn't be -- I mean a two-inch video tape that was sort of probably passed through from PBS. I mean there is just stuff that I am not qualified to do this. That was just based on my own experiences working for NPR back then.

But I mean I felt as if there was more that could be done there but I got such a -- I kind of probably quit, too. I didn't quit but I was so taken aback. I thought I really had advocates and backers and this was going to go places. It is not over but the former station is not interested.

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Detroit Public Schools, they have got much bigger problems. I mean getting someone over there to let me in, the only person that seemed to care, getting back to the janitor, was this engineer who is basically semi-retired. His job was to take care of the electronics that were still in the building driving the transmitters. So, I think they have switched that off. So, I haven't gone back there.

I mean when I walked into the office of the Archivist in Ann Arbor, his eyebrows shot up when I told him the address of this station. He said wow, that is one of the worst neighborhoods in Detroit. I was like oh, I didn't know that.

So, there were just lots of questions about how to get a group in there, how to gain access. I mean I would be willing to do it, maybe in the spring or summer. I can't do it right now.

DR. VERMA: So, we will get there with a pith helmet.

DR. VAILLANT: Exactly. So, that is why -- I mean if anyone wants to come out from the

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preservation crowd and help me with an appraisal, shoot me an email, please.

DR. VAILLANT: I regret to say that we are over time but thank you so much to our presenters and respondents.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:38 p.m.)

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