



INTERVIEW WITH
GLENN BOYER & JOHN TEEL
Campus Police

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Interviewee: Glen Boyer, John Teel
Interviewer: Dan Cheatham; Drum Major of Cal Band; 1957
Date of Interview: September 12, 1997
Place: Coffee Shop at Target Store, Downtown Walnut Creek

[Norden (Dan) Cheatham edited for clarity in 2001. His clarification questions are labeled NHC. Katie Fleeman completed edits in December 2014.]

[The copy KF received did not indicate if GB or JT reviewed this transcript. JT passed away in 2010.]

Boyer: My name is Glen Boyer. I was a University campus police officer in the years 1947 through 1984. During my 47 years of service, I patrolled the campus through all shifts. During my time of duty, I covered most phases of the campus police department.

Teel: My name is John Teel. I was a campus police officer from 1959 to 1986. My primary duties were general patrol plus Plaza patrol and officer at the west entrance kiosk when it first started.

Cheatham: Mostly we are going to talk about Glen Boyer's involvement with the beginning of the Free Speech movement but John is here to add additional memory and moral support.

Glen, let's talk about a certain day in October 1964. How did your day start out with regards to your routine duties?

Boyer: On that particular day I arrived at work, which appeared to be a normal day. The duties were normal and no adverse expectations. Patrol of the campus is usually around 9:00 until noon. I came in at 12:00 to have lunch, in the squad room.

Cheatham: What was life out on Sproul Plaza?

Boyer: On this particular day, things did appear normal, however, there was a lot of activity on Sproul Plaza. There were many card tables set up, mostly distributing free-speech literature.

Cheatham: John, do you have any observations of what was going on at this time?

Teel: Yes, my recollection is that there were several tables on the Plaza and they did not have permits. All tables had to have a permit from the Dean of Students' office...

Roland Maples or Jim Lemon. They were very easy to get but they didn't want to get them because they wanted to defy the administration and the police department. After getting the permits... we had an officer, Jim Sichenider who was assigned to check each and every table for their permits and he got into a lot of bad times over it.

Cheatham: So on this particular day, during the lunch hour, things started to become different from normal. What happened next?

Boyer: We received a call by radio from Jim Sichenider, the officer on the Plaza at the time, stating that one of the people at the card tables out in front, did not have a permit to be passing out literature. At that time, Officer Sichenider requested assistance in anticipation that we would have to remove this person from the Plaza because of lack of permit. Sergeant J.P. Halloran and Officer Wayne Baker and myself were assigned to assist Jim Sichenider on the Plaza and attempt to confiscate the card table.

Cheatham: What went through your mind at this point? Did you anticipate a great deal of trouble or did you view this as a rather routine matter?

Boyer: When all this began, it appeared to be a routine matter. We didn't anticipate any problems or any confrontation. We then drove the patrol car out onto Sproul Plaza and parked it in front of Sproul Hall. We walked maybe 50 feet over to the south end of the Plaza where Jack Weinberg was sitting at a card table with some other people. Sergeant Halloran then asked Jack Weinberg to produce a permit to have a card table set up on the Plaza. When he refused, or could not produce a permit, he was then asked to fold up his table and leave.

Cheatham: What was Weinberg's response at that time?

Boyer: He appeared very arrogant, refused to acknowledge having a permit and refused our request to pack up his card table and leave. After a few moments with Jack Weinberg, we knew we were going to have some kind of a problem because he refused to cooperate. Our concern at that time was to disburse this thing as quickly as possible and get him out of the area if need be. While confronting Jack Weinberg, at that time he was quite boisterous and made it known that he didn't plan to leave the Plaza, which created a large gathering of students and non-students who seemed to be in his favor and collected around his table.

Cheatham: I presume this was the moment when the four of you reached a full realization that there potentially was a full-blown conflict building up. What happened then?

Boyer: Sergeant Halloran gave the order to place this man under arrest and "let's get him out of here." Jack Weinberg was then placed under arrest and he was handcuffed. The four of us then escorted him to the patrol car, which was approximately 30 feet, and placed him in the back seat of the patrol car. Officer Baker and myself

then got into the patrol car and attempted to drive the car off the Plaza. I, Glen Boyer, was driving the vehicle at the time.

As soon as we started the vehicle, we were completely surrounded by students and non-students who prevented us from moving the car. When I state that the car was complete surrounded, I mean students and people just sat in front of the car and the rear of the car, and completely around it where there was no way the car could have been moved.

I can recall that it was a very warm day in October. The windows were all down in the car. Students kept milling around the car, talking to Jack Weinberg, giving him advice and telling him that he would have counsel... they supported him.

During that time, there was no appearance of any aggression or any violence maintained. Everybody appeared to be in a friendly mood and it was just something they enjoyed doing. There was no personal threat or appearance of any confrontation of any kind. The windows were down, people were talking, there was a lot joking and laughing going on, and it was a very peaceful movement up to that point.

At this time, the students were very peaceful and friendly, and appeared to let us do our job as much as we could except for preventing us from moving the vehicle. Their main concern was not to drive Jack Weinberg off the premises. They thought after a period of time, he would just automatically be released and that would be the end of it. There was no immediate threat or fear of anything. Things were just normal. If I needed relief, I thought I could get it at any time. We were just standing by waiting for further orders. It was just a normal thing at that time.

Teel: I wasn't there at the time but I do recall having conversations with the people from the Chancellor's office and the Dean of Students office. The Dean of Students office and our police department were negotiating with the Chancellor's office. As I remember, the Chancellor wasn't there at the time and they had to wait until he came back. The crowd kept growing and growing until there was probably 2,000 to 3,000 people on the Plaza. There was absolutely no chance at this time for anyone to come out and take Weinberg out of the car and [replace¹] him. Savio and other of the dissidents had showed up when we were [rallying²] the crowd, to take Weinberg. And other dissidents were claiming, don't take him, we don't want trouble that way. It all evened out where poor Boyer was stuck in the car with Baker until 4:30 in the afternoon when other officers relieved him. There were two officers in the car and I believe there were two outside the car.

Cheatham: What else?

¹ Word may be transcribed incorrectly

² Word may be transcribed incorrectly

Boyer: Approximately four hours later, after being in the patrol car during that time, Officer Baker and myself were relieved by two other officers. We had no difficulty in removing ourselves from the vehicle and walking into Sproul Hall. Even during the protest, they did not create any problems or demonstrate any conflict of any kind.

Cheatham: It is very interesting to hear about the rather low-key manner which all of this started and even continued during the period of your personal participation. From reading newspaper accounts of this while I was out of town, I had a much different image than what it turned out to be.

Boyer: There was no criminal action taken in this thing and once the move had been made and the person had been arrested, the University was in a position where they were unable to back down which kept escalating until he was finally removed from the campus and placed in jail.

Cheatham: John, anything you would like to add?

Teel: I was on my vacation. I returned to Berkeley and came onto the campus two days after the incident. I walked out onto the Plaza and the first thing I remember is that the Band was playing in lower Sproul Plaza, just as if nothing had ever happened. Weinberg had been told to not come back on campus and he also was out on the Plaza listening to the Cal Band. At this time, this is where all the dissidents seemed to start a pipeline and move into the student union, which is...

Everybody thought they³ were in Eshleman Hall⁴ but the weren't, they were in Stevens, the old student union was their big office; had moved into the student union and were working out of there. And then we saw unrest for the next 25 years. But here we sit 34 years later, trying to remember, and it's tough. But it was a pleasure to be there.

Cheatham: An additional side observation here, I have just asked John and Glen off-tape what their recollections were of the arrival of Mario Savio, with regard specifically to the police car and they each answered that neither one of them was onsite at the time and are not able to give any personal observations of that moment.

I would like to take one final moment with the two of you and ask of either of you have any anecdotes to tell that involves the Cal Band. As I look around I see that Glen is shaking in a "no" position, but John does have an anecdote to tell about the Cal band.

³ Who? – NHC 2014

⁴ The old or the new? – NHC 2014

Teel: My memory of the California Band goes back to December 21, 1985. I was working the Plaza and Dick Heffner, PIO officer, came out and met with me. He came up to the steps and he said, John, let's walk over here. The Cal Band, as we walked over to the steps from the lower union, came up and formed a processional line and led me into the student union where the rest of the people commenced to retire me. Thank you, Cal Band very much.

Cheatham: I would like to observe that for about 5 years, during the early 1960's, John's duty station was at the kiosk located at the west gate of the campus. In this position, John served informally as the official greeter to anyone who wanted to enter campus and that included not only long-time employees and old friends of the campus, but also the tourists who would come up and not know their way around and want to ask a question, all visitors who came on campus. Some of them were well-known politicians, regents, and all dignitaries of all sorts who wanted to enter the campus. John had a rapport where there was always an exchange of hellos as people entered the campus. I can even remember, as I observed walking to and from in my own missions, seeing John there.

I would at this point, like to establish that John was so well known by all... this partially explains why the Cal Band went through such an effort to honor him at his retirement.