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## Bill Kenah Oral History Interview

William Kenah  
*Raymond College*

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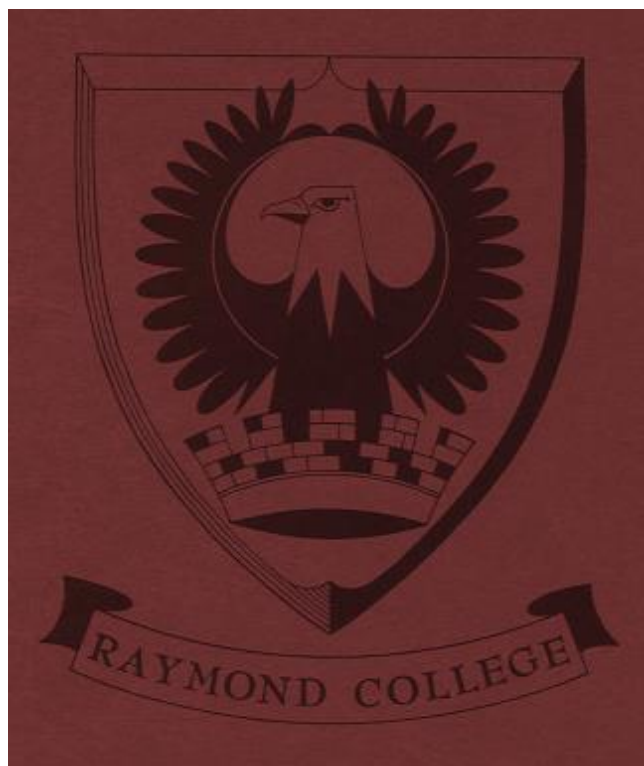
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RAYMOND COLLEGE PROJECT ORAL HISTORIES  
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



**William Kenah (1962-1965)**  
**Raymond College Student**

July 14, 2023

By Lorenzo Spaccarelli

Transcription by Lorenzo Spaccarelli University of the Pacific,  
Department of Special Collections, Library

## William Kenah Interview

Transcribed by: Lorenzo Spaccarelli

**Lorenzo Spaccarelli:** Hello, my name is Lorenzo Spaccarelli and today I'm going to be interviewing Bill Kenah. Today is July 14, 2023. And I'm conducting this interview from London. Can you please state your name and where you're zooming in from, for the record?

**William Kenah:** Sure. This is Bill Kenah. And I'm in Long Beach, California.

**Spaccarelli:** Perfect. Okay, so... What years did you attend Raymond College?

**Kenah:** I was there for the first three years. So I came in the fall of '62 and I left in the spring of '65.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. Perfect.

**Kenah:** However, I was a member of the first class and the second class, in that I flunked my freshman comps and I did my freshman year over again.

**Spaccarelli:** Got it. Okay.

**Kenah:** So while I was there for three years, I wasn't there for the three years.

**Spaccarelli:** Got it. Got it. Got it.

**Kenah:** Didn't graduate from there.

**Spaccarelli:** So you left midway through your intermediate year. No, towards the end of your intermediate year. Did you hear that?

**Kenah:** Say it again.

**Spaccarelli:** So you left towards the end of your intermediate year.

**Kenah:** I left. Yeah. When I finished my intermediate year, I left.

**Spaccarelli:** Perfect. Okay. Okay. Okay. Moving on here then. What was behind your choice in attending Raymond College?

**Kenah:** Oh, it was a complete accident. I went to a boarding school in the East and while it was called a college prep school, they didn't really help us at all in the college application process. And I got stuck on

the application on the personal letter, the personal essay. I don't know if it's cultural or family or religious or what, but I was very uncomfortable about promoting myself. I thought that was something you really didn't do, to tell everybody else how wonderful and deserving you were. So I got stuck. Anyway, by the time I sent in my applications, the deadlines had passed. And one college that- I applied to three different colleges here in Southern California, two said, no, no, you're too late, but they kept my check anyway. But then Occidental College put me on the waiting list. And through, I was going to leave for Japan, that I was going to spend the whole summer in Japan, but I had a couple of days in Los Angeles. So my stepfather and I went up to Occidental to see what the story was and the dean we met with said, well, it's between you and a fellow whose father's going to donate \$10,000 to Occidental. And the implication was, can you beat that? But my stepfather was not going to bite on that hook. But when the dean realized that, he said, well, he said, here's one thing we can do. I've heard about this college up in Stockton. He said, isn't this a quote, Stockton is kind of a cow town, but the college sounds very interesting. And he went on to explain about Raymond College and three years and close faculty-student interaction. And he said, it's irregular, but I can just take all the, you know, your materials that you've sent to Occidental and send them up to Stockton and see how that works. And he said, hey, it was worth a try. I didn't have any other options, really. And so the next morning, I got a call from Dean Peckham just asking me, did I indeed want to go to Raymond College? I said, yeah, I'd like to. And he said, well, when we get your records, we'll look them over. And when I got back from Japan at the end of the summer, I had a letter of acceptance waiting for me. And I really had no idea what I was getting into.

**Spaccarelli:** (Laughs) Nice.

**Kenah:** The way- and other people have said this wasn't quite right, but the way I thought of Raymond was, it was for people who really wanted to, who knew what they wanted to do with their lives and wanted to get on to graduate school. And this was like, they could cut off a year of, you know, by doing in three years, they could get on to doing what they really wanted to do in life. And I had no idea what I wanted to do in life. So this, anyway, that was my introduction and acceptance to Raymond.

**Spaccarelli:** Well, you got there. So...

**Kenah:** I did. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And for me, it was a wonderfully free environment. I had been at a boarding school that was just, every moment was scheduled. You know, when you had to get up, when you had to be for breakfast, what you had to wear, you know, when you had to do your chores, when you would study, when you had to be in bed. I mean, the whole thing was- and Raymond, which many people found kind of constricting, I found wonderfully free. I mean, I don't have to go to breakfast? You know, I can sleep late? This is amazing. So, anyway.

**Spaccarelli:** So, right, right, right. Well, I mean, also, I'm sure it was different because, you know, you being a man versus some of the women had more restrictions placed on them as well.

**Kenah:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, of course. Of course.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah. Yeah. Oh, but that is interesting. You know, most people I've heard a lot of people say how confining it felt. So it's interesting that you felt more liberating to you.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** Cool.

**Kenah:** It was.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. So, you know, here you are. You get onto campus for the first time. What are your first impressions?

**Kenah:** Well, the first thing that really struck me and many of my classmates was that the landscaping had not yet been finished, that they had put- spread cow manure over the whole quad and planted grass seed evidently. And it smelled terrible. And there were flies all over the place. We had an English professor, Walter Hipple, who- he would be speaking in class and a fly would land on his face. And he wouldn't brush it away until he'd finished his point. We just thought that was amazing that this guy could do this. There was, soon after we got to Raymond, there was, I'm not sure what it was, but some kind of deal where the parents would come. And I was very embarrassed that my mother and stepfather would see this, you know, cow manure all over the place and the flies. So when I got to the quad, I said to my stepfather, you know, they haven't planted the grass, there's no grass here yet. And he said, there's grass here, Bill. It's just been chewed once.

**Spaccarelli:** (Laughs) Nice.

**Kenah:** Yeah, so anyway, but I mean, that just, you know, you said first impression, that's just what struck me. You know, and, you know, on more reflection. You know, I'd had small classes in boarding school. But I think, I think one of the things was the respect that the instructors gave us. I really felt, you know, my ideas were weighed and listened to and thought and the other students as well. It was another kind of freeing example of Raymond.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And so, and how well did the seminar thing work for you, the discussion class, discussion-based classes?

**Kenah:** It worked very well. As I say, I mean, I went to a boarding school, we had small classes, we had discussions like that. But, so I was, I was used to it. But the level was on a much, much higher level. I felt much better about it.

**Spaccarelli:** And then what were your first classes? Do you remember anything specific? Like I know most first years would take Introduction to the Modern World.

**Kenah:** Sure, sure. With Mike Wagner, that was a class that opened up a lot of our, opened up a lot of us to think about things that we had accepted as just this is the way things are. And Mike would say, well, not necessarily, you know, think about it this way. I remember one example he gave, we were talking about ownership. And he said, well, if there's, you know, if there's a group of people where everything belongs to the chief, if you make a spear, that spear isn't yours. That spear belongs to the chief. And to get that, but wait, I made this spear, you know, I went, I found the stone, I found the stick, I put it together, you know, it's mine. And he said, not if the society is organized in a different way. And things like that, that they just never questioned before, all of a sudden, we were questioning. And I think it was very difficult for people, many of the sort of Christian people, brought up in a Christian tradition and had never questioned that aspect of things that, I don't remember Mike making us question it directly, but at least indirectly, many of us had to deal with, well, what are these beliefs that I thought I had? Do I really have them? Are they really founded in something? So that was a transformative course, I'd say.

**Spaccarelli:** Right. Okay.

**Kenah:** Yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** Any others?

**Kenah:** I had French and I had English. Those are the three I remember. But I think, you know, IMW was the one that had the biggest impact.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. And then also, this was the first year, right?

**Kenah:** Absolutely.

**Spaccarelli:** So you had freshman camp, right?

**Kenah:** Right.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah. How did that go for you? Do you remember anything in particular about that? Speaking of first impressions, I mean.

**Kenah:** It was fun to get to, you know, the Lake Tahoe area was beautiful. I'd never seen that area of California before. We had to make friends with someone and then introduce that person in a big meeting. And then that person would introduce you, like you'd find out things about the person and it was a way of introducing ourselves. I forget who, probably my roommate, Pete Windrem was the, well, I don't really remember who I introduced, but I thought that was a really cool way of getting to know at least someone and then getting to know the group through these introductions.

**Spaccarelli:** Oh yeah. No, no, that's smart. Nice. Nice, nice, nice. Yeah. Okay. If you're ready, then we'll move on to the next question.

**Kenah:** Please.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. So, were there any memorable events that stood out to you during your time at Raymond? These could be high tables, but they could be any sort of memorable event.

**Kenah:** Okay...

**Spaccarelli:** I will mention, we are going to have a question on controversies later. So we're going to have, just so you could figure out what stories you want to tell where.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Well, you've heard about the fish in the water glass at high table.

**Spaccarelli:** Yes.

**Kenah:** I don't know if that's actually a controversy, but it certainly was memorable. And the way I remember it was that Mike Wagner, who taught the introduction of the modern world class was going to be the speaker. Usually we had speakers from the outside, but this time we had one of our professors. And Mike was a very popular, approachable professor. So the plan was hatched to put a goldfish in his glass at high table and at Dr. Martin's glass at the head of the high table. They'd be sitting next to each other. But at the last moment, President Burns showed up. And so President Burns got the seat of honor next to Martin. And he also got the glass with the goldfish. And so we would stand before the meal and one of the students would give the prayer. And then everyone would sit down after the grace. They'd say the grace. And so Martin retold this story. And he said that he was standing there and he saw that he had a goldfish in his water glass and that Burns had two goldfish in his water glass. And that he said to Burns something like, we can't let them get the better of us on this. The only thing to do is to drink these down as soon as the grace is finished. And so, sure enough, we as students, we all knew what was going on. So we were watching and watching and grace is finished. And Martin and Burns lift their water glasses dramatically and Martin downs his with a fish. And Burns had two fish in his and you could see Burns eyes' kind of crossing as the fish got closer and he couldn't do it. He put a glass down and called for some more water for the fish. But Martin got instant credibility with the entire student body for that, out-pranking us. So that was a fun prank.

**Spaccarelli:** So the real question is, would Mike have drank the two goldfish?

**Kenah:** That is the question. I guess we'll never know. I guess we'll never know. So you know, I think the memorable, many of the memorable events would fit into the controversies section best.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. Well, before we move on, were there any memorable speakers or anything else like that?

**Kenah:** You know, the one I remember was Dizzy Gillespie, the jazz musician? Martin loved jazz. And that was another professor. I don't know, I can't remember who, also was a jazz aficionado. And they went to San Francisco and they saw Dizzy Gillespie in a performance in a club. And they asked him, would he come and perform at Raymond? And he said, well, my contract doesn't permit me to do that. But I could come and give a lecture with music involved. And they said, well, that's great, you know, come to high table. And so he came and, at Martin's suggestion, we bought him a Raymond blazer. And we had it lined with white silk. And we all signed our names on the white silk. I got mine right in the armpit. Anyway, he was impressed, I think, with the jacket. And I do remember that one really above all. You know, is there a list somewhere of high school, I mean, high table speakers?

**Spaccarelli:** Certainly, certainly. Well, I'm not sure we have every single one. But we do have some documentation on high table speakers. Let's discuss it more after the interview, if that's okay with you.

**Kenah:** Sure, sure.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay, so moving on here. So yeah, next question. Do you remember any controversies during your time at Raymond? And these can be anything. They can be between Raymond and the university. They can be between administrators. They can be between students, any sort of controversy.

**Kenah:** Okay. Well, I was involved in one, at least, that there was a kind of a tension, let's say, between the food service people and the students, the food service people. The food quality wasn't the best. The food, the administrators of the food service were kind of surly. And if we were late to a meal, the doors would be locked. We couldn't get in. We missed that meal, you know, even though we paid for all the meals in advance. And those of us who worked there, the pay was, you know, very small, tiny amount of money. So, there was always this tension between students and the food service. Well, I lived on the third floor. This was during my intermediate year, my third year, but the intermediate year. And my window looked down on the top of the kitchen. And it was really hot in Stockton in late August, early September. And I looked down on the kitchen and I noticed there was like a hatched door on the top that was open. And I thought, hmm, I wonder if they're going to close that at night. And so, at night, I looked out, the hatch was open, and it didn't take me very long to get up on the roof and get down into the kitchen and grab five gallons of ice cream and get out of there. And, oh, I guess I had some chocolate syrup too, along with the ice cream. And so, I took the ice cream around to the people who were studying late at night. And we had ice cream parties, the guys dorms. And then we called the girls down to have ice cream down there. And this continued a couple, at least weekly, for quite a while. And I'm wondering, but sometime they're going to realize as the weather cools that the hatch has to be closed. And I said, well, if I could find some keys, I wouldn't need that hatch. And I did. I did a search of one night and I found in the back of a drawer, a whole set of keys. Most of them were stamped "do not duplicate under penalty of law". But there were some that didn't have that marking on it. So I took those. I borrowed, next day I borrowed Barbara Sayles' car, went down to a little kiosk where they made keys, duplicated keys and had them duplicated. Barbara Sayles asked me, well, what do you need the car for? I said, I'm doing something bad. And she said, well, don't get caught.



**Spaccarelli:** (Laughs)

**Kenah:** And anyway, so I found the keys and then I put the whole ring complete back where I'd found it. And the keys opened the kitchen. I could get into the kitchen with these keys. And pretty early on, I got my roommate, Jim Allen, involved in this scheme. And we would go and we would either make big sandwiches for everybody, ham sandwiches for everybody or ice cream and help the late night studiers with some brain food so they can keep on working. So anyway, one night we were in the kitchen and there was a big walk-in freezer and we were in the freezer and we opened the door to come out and there was the campus policeman standing right there. And we, I don't know who was more surprised, the policeman or us. We both jumped back and then he said, come out of there. So we came out and we had, and he took our names and we had some frozen tortillas with us and took those and said, you'll be hearing from the Dean in the morning. Sure enough, Dean Peckham had us called in and very sort of sanctimoniously told us that we were expelled, not suspended, expelled, pack up and get out. But the student body was really behind us on this. You know, we hit- and one of our good friends was the president of the, the student president of the class. Another friend was the chief justice of the court, Raymond court. And so Peckham was supposed to be invited to all meetings of both the student government and the court, but his presence was not mandatory. So they called him up about midnight and said, we're having a meeting of the student government meeting and he said, well, he was all groggy, he'd taken his sleeping pills and he wasn't going to come down. So the student government rescinded the expulsion and the court imposed an interesting argument. They said that, well, that this was, we were being given an academic punishment for a social crime and that they thought that that was not appropriate. And so they fined us a hundred dollars and we had to do some community service work. And, but probably even more importantly, the, many of the people that had benefited from the ice cream and ham sandwiches late at night signed a letter saying that since they were complicit in this, that they demanded if we were expelled, that they should also be expelled. And there are about 15 of these people, at least 15 of them were seniors- who was about half the class, I think. And we, Peckham was let, he knew about the letter, but the letter was never presented. So he never got to see who had actually signed it. And I think that's really what, what kept us from being expelled, was this incipient revolt. Because if half the class had left, I don't think, Raymond wouldn't, this was the first graduating class, it would have been a little difficult to explain. So I think that's really what saved us. But you know, Peckham, we knew Peckham was very vindictive, that he held grudges. And both my roommate and I decided we better make other plans. And we both applied to Berkeley and got in for the following fall. So...

**Spaccarelli:** There you go.

**Kenah:** That's how that went. There was another one. This happened in the year after I left. There was a girl named Peggy Gunn, and she got a terrible infection and went to the nurse. And in examination, they found that she had an IUD, you know, intrauterine contraceptive device. And it probably was the Dalkon shield that was, you know, killing women at this time from infections. Anyway. I don't know what happened with patient confidentiality, but the dean, Peckham was told about this woman who had this contraceptive device. And he was horrified. He said it was premeditated promiscuity.

**Spaccarelli:** Oh jeez.

**Kenah:** Yeah, really. And she was thrown out. She was expelled for this. But it was all kept very quiet. However, I knew Peggy from the time I had been there, and she'd come visit me in Berkeley. So I learned the whole story and would send letters back to people who were still there explaining why Peggy disappeared from the school. So there was controversy over that, but nothing happened.

**Spaccarelli:** It wasn't as well known, right?

**Kenah:** Yeah. I think that's it.

**Spaccarelli:** I think- it sounds like, I would think that would have been a pretty big deal if it had been widely known. Right?

**Kenah:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, also, you know, now, yes. Then...

**Spaccarelli:** Oh, would there have been students who would have agreed with it, probably. Right? But still, I think it would have been a topic of some serious discussion.

**Kenah:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I think it was among some, but like I was the only conduit of information and I just would send a letter. So anyway, no, I mean, looking back on it now, I mean, here, this woman, you know, had a potentially life threatening problem. And the dean gets all moralistic about it and throws her out in the service. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, yeah, there's another part when we talk about different professors. I don't know if this would fit, but Barbara Sayles and I were friends and she would often give us insight into what was happening behind the scenes in faculty meetings and faculty discussions. And she told us about how Peckham was let go, finally, from doing some of these sort of underhanded things with students. We can talk about that now or we could talk about that...

**Spaccarelli:** I think this is good. I- honestly, my next question was sort of going to be following up with Dean Peckham, if you had any more stories about him. Yeah, so go ahead.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Well, again, this happened in the year after I was there, but I still knew Barbara and would see her often. And she said that, well, the backstory is that Dave Wellenbrock was providing people with pot. That's the first pot I ever really heard about at, at Raymond. And Peckham also had someone who was, let's see, who would tell Peckham stories about what was going on. You know, one of the students.

**Spaccarelli:** An informer.

**Kenah:** An informer. An informant. You got it. That's the word. And so Wellenbrock got busted and the informant was going to transfer. Faculty meeting came up and they brought out the informers grade sheet. And they gave it to Barbara Sayles and said, do you see anything wrong with this? And she said,

well, yes. You know, I gave him, I forget, an unsatisfactory and it's been moved to satisfactory or I gave him a satisfactory, it's been moved to superior. Anyway, the grades had been changed for this informant. And the secretary said, yeah, Dean Peckham. I guess the secretary was the one that figured it out because Peckham had requested to see his grade sheet. The secretary gave it to him. And then when he handed it back, the grades had been changed. She alerted the faculty. So this was, this was a step too far for the faculty. But you know, they didn't fire him. They did this, you know, where he could resign and, you know, get a glowing recommendation. He got a position down here in community college in the San Fernando Valley outside of Los Angeles, which was really a promotion. You know, I mean, and Barbara Sayles said, oh, yeah, that's, that's the way it works in academia. She told us, you know, you don't- you just push them on and you give them nice recommendations and they go on to somewhere else. Yeah, so...

**Spaccarelli:** Jeez, that's harsh.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Yeah. And then there was another one with Peckham where one of the seniors named Karl Van Meter was accepted to St. Andrews in Scotland. And in his last semester or so, he was in love with a, with a second year. So the intermediate student, Sana, Sana Binching, and he kind of gave up on the academic aspect of Raymond in those last months. And he wrote his final comps and he'd been reading a once and future king story of King Arthur and he wrote it all in sort of this old English type of, type of language. Anyway. And Peckham was very upset by their obvious love affair. And when Karl got accepted to St. Andrews, Peckham wrote them a letter saying that this was an immoral person and he should not be accepted. And so they rescinded their acceptance. And then Karl's mother wrote and said, you know, what are you doing? You know, this is, this is- anyway. St. Andrews wrote back finally and said, look, this is a controversy happening thousands of miles away. We have no idea what the real story is. We'll have Karl come to St. Andrews on a sort of a probationary period. We'll see how he does. And if he does fine, fine, if he doesn't... But, you know, for, for Peckham to, to.

**Spaccarelli:** It's petty.

**Kenah:** Was... Yeah, but, but I mean, potentially life changing. You know, OK, you can't go to graduate school, because of this, this stuff, you know, well, Karl and Sana got him back. One of the key- Karl had one of the keys that I got from the, from the dining hall. It didn't fit the dining hall, but he found that it fit a- like there was an access in the basement of Price House. There was an access like a hallway or a basement where you could get to all of, all of the electrical and plumbing stuff underneath. So he and Sana got an old mattress and they put it in there and they got all these old liquor bottles and they spread it around and and they got packages of prophylactics and they put the wrappers all around and set up this like this, this den of iniquity. And when, when Peckham, I guess they found it and Peckham was just horrified that this had been going on under his nose for so long. You know, they set the stage pretty well. Yeah. Yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. Fantastic. I feel like we've covered a lot of it. Controversies outside, you know, the Raymond-Dean Peckham, Raymond students/Dean Peckham scenario. Were there any others that you

can think of? Like was there something going on with Covell? Were there things going on with the rest of the university? Anything like that?

**Kenah:** Well, there's the Band Frolic story where the movie Gypsy had come out, a story of Gypsy Rose Lee. And there was, there was this movie. It was very popular at the time and it played in Stockton and they had a... cardboard cut-out of Gypsy Rose Lee, and we decided we're going to steal this thing out of the movie theater and how are we going to do this? And they, so one fellow hid in the, in the restroom, went to the late night show and hid in the restroom. And when the theater was locked up, he, he grabbed the, the cut-out, the life size cut-out and it was a getaway car waiting for him, and he drove it back to campus and we played around with it. You know, did different things with it and then left it in a tree by the DU fraternity and the DU people. Oh, and it made the newspaper that this, you know, this thing had been stolen and what- anyway. So- Stockton record. And so DU returned it to the movie theater. Well, when Band Frolic came, we decided that we would sort of use this as a- this heist, as a basis for the Band Frolic, our theme. And so, and someone tracked down where the, where the movie was playing and somewhere in Northern California, convinced the guy to loan us the cut-out again. And so we did the heist. And then the the story was that the guy, the thief, fell asleep in his dorm room with Gypsy Rose Lee and he had these different dreams. And some of the dreams were, were the ones of Jinx doing her dance.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah, yeah. No, she- I heard that story from Jinx.

**Kenah:** Yeah, yeah. And then I was another dancer and I was in drag with a mustache and a red lacy brassiere. And that was the nightmare that he had. You know, oh, my God, he woke up and he was all horrified about this. And Dr. Martin had brought a potential donor to the Band Frolic. And he was going to give \$40,000 to Raymond College. And after Band Frolic, he decided that he was not going to give \$40,000 to Raymond. He would give it to the university, but it wasn't going to Raymond. Dr. Martin sought me out the next morning and said, I will remember you as long as I live.

**Spaccarelli:** Oh, goodness.

**Kenah:** Anyway...

**Spaccarelli:** That's funny.

**Kenah:** We thought it was funny. I don't think Dr. Martin thought it was too funny.

**Spaccarelli:** Oh, I doubt he did.

**Kenah:** You know, the Covell College, some of us really, some of the guys would play soccer with them. And I think one was actually good enough to be on their team, but the ad hoc games, you know, so we got to know those guys pretty well. And then many of them went on to Berkeley. So when I went to Berkeley, I sort of continued my friendship with some of the Covell people.

**Spaccarelli:** Nice. Nice.

**Kenah:** Yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** And relationships between Raymond and Covell were solid?

**Kenah:** I thought they were. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** Cool. I mean, part of it's just proximity, right? You were closer to them.

**Kenah:** Right. Right. Right. And they were exotic. You know, they were from another place. And, you know, it was cool to meet these people who had all these different ways of looking at things than we did.

**Spaccarelli:** Right. Right. Right.

**Kenah:** Yeah. I brought one of them home for Thanksgiving. So yeah, it was, we had close relations.

**Spaccarelli:** Nice. Nice. Okay. Cool. Okay. If you're ready to move on.

**Kenah:** Please.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. What were your thoughts on the educational style of the Raymond teaching philosophy?

**Kenah:** I liked it. You know, they taught us, or they told us, you know, we're going to take you to the frontiers of knowledge. And we believed them, you know, and I think it's impacted a lot of our lives. You know, we can do anything, you know, we can just, you know, just dive in and learn about it. And in a way, we took responsibility for our own education. And they foster that idea that you can, that there's a lot out there to know, and you just have to go out there and learn it.

**Spaccarelli:** Nice.

**Kenah:** So I think it was, it was great. I mean, you know, I myself have been a college instructor, and very rarely do I see that kind of attitude in students that I had taught. It was like, we got to get through this, we got, you know, we're here so we can get a good job at the end.

**Spaccarelli:** Right, right.

**Kenah:** But sort of the love of knowledge? Very rare did I see that kind of student.

**Spaccarelli:** Right, right. No, it is true that that was, I think that's something that Raymond was pretty, did really well.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Do you know the story? We heard this at a reunion about, I don't know the guy's name, was someone much later in the year, years of Raymond. He went on to graduate school, and there was a course he wanted to take, but it was, there was a prerequisite. He didn't want to take the prerequisite. So he asked the teacher, he said, well, I'd like to, you know, take your course, but I don't really want to take the prerequisite. And so the professor said, well, it was the end of the, like, you know, end of the fall semester, he said, here's the syllabus for that course that you don't want to take. Study it over Christmas. When you come back, I'll give you the exam. And if you pass the exam, then you can take the course without taking the prerequisite. And the student said, I didn't really know he was just kissing me off, you know, that he was telling me that. He said, but I'm a Raymond student, I said, sure, I can do this. And he read the books and took the exam. And the professor called him in and said, well, you've passed the course. And he says, as a matter of fact, you did better on the exam than any of [the] students who took the course.

**Spaccarelli:** (Guffaws)

**Kenah:** And I'd be very happy to have you in my advanced class. But as the guy told the story, it was like, I went to Raymond. Of course I could do this. You know, this was, I just thought, of course, this is how I'll do it.

**Spaccarelli:** It seems that that says something both about the quality of the student, but also the quality of the teaching in that class that's a little bit concerning.

**Kenah:** Could very well be, could very well be.

**Spaccarelli:** But that's true. I think that's one thing that nearly everyone has told me is that Raymond gave them a lot of confidence to be able to do what they wanted to do afterwards and feel that they could figure it out. You know?

**Kenah:** And I think a great part of that was the respect that the professors gave the students. And I think I was going to talk about this later, but, you know, respect engenders respect. I mean, I learned this when I first started teaching junior high school. You know, if you show those kids you respect them, wow, they will respect you back. You know, and, but I mean, I think it works on all levels. So I think that was, that's one of the things that, that engendered that feeling that, you know, our thoughts are worthwhile, our work is worthwhile. And we can do it. So- I wonder if that was if that was like they discussed that in faculty meetings, you know, how can we build their self-confidence? But I don't know if it just sort of arose naturally, or if this was part of the plan.

**Spaccarelli:** It's a good, that's a really good question. It seems so organic. At the very least, they made it seem very organic.

**Kenah:** Yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** So that's impressive to me.

**Kenah:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay, moving on. Who were the individuals at Raymond that were most memorable to you and why? These can be everything from administrators to faculty to staff to students, anyone who was particularly memorable?

**Kenah:** Well, let's- there were many, but let's start with faculty. Hugh Wadman, the chemistry teacher. He had this amazing ability to take complex scientific ideas and make them into these more easily understood concepts. You know, I thought my chemistry course, can I really do chemistry? And again, he gave me the confidence that yes, indeed, I could. And he just, he made things so clear. And a lot of it was with his examples. One of the things that we were talking about, the properties of materials. And he told us that he was in the lab that developed cellophane. And cellophane is this amazing, amazingly strong material, except if it gets a tear, and then it fails. And the scientists who developed it thought that was a problem. And they worked to solve that problem so that it wouldn't tear, you know, wouldn't tear. And then somebody said, Wait a minute, this is a fantastic, you know, easy-open packaging material. And so the idea that he was trying to get across was, yes, materials have different properties, but it's how we interpret those properties that give it value to us, you know? And he also was in that same lab, they developed Silly Putty. You know what I'm talking about?

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Kenah:** Yeah. And he said, Silly Putty has all of these different properties, but they could never figure out any use for it other than a child's toy. So again, you know, it's not just that it has different properties, it's how we interpret those properties, which, I don't know, that was a cool lesson that stuck with me for a while. You know, he was a photographer. He liked taking candid portraits of people. But he was saying, you know, when you stick a camera in someone's face, you don't get their natural look, you know, they put on some kind of a look. So he developed, or put together a lens that it would point one way, but with a series of mirrors, it would actually take a picture off to the side. And so he showed us one of the pictures he'd taken, he'd been on a fishing boat in Mexico, this old, you know, weathered fisherman, and he had been, so he pointed the camera as if he were taking a picture out to sea, but actually he was taking a picture of the guy right next to him who didn't know it. It was this beautiful portrait of this, you know, old, weathered, lined, scraggly beard fisherman, you know, anyway. So that was sort of a can-do thing that Wadman did. Anyway, he was also, again, I think it's as part of respect that his comments, you know, on our, you know, what we said in class and the work we did were always so positive that it made me anyway just want to work for him, you know, just like, you know, a grade school kid, you know, I want to please the teacher. He was just so positive about it. Anyway, so that was one. Let's see. Barbara Sayles. I never had a class from Barbara Sayles, but...

**Spaccarelli:** What did she teach?

**Kenah:** German. She was a German teacher. She probably never knew it, but I was in love with Barbara Sayles. Maybe infatuated is the better word, but she was so fun and so smart and so, you know, willing to be with us, to talk with us and stuff. Let's see. She'd take students to San Francisco to see plays and performances. She took me once or some of us to a performance where Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the poet, did a fake fight on stage with his dog over his shirt, pulling, you know, like tug of war on his shirt. I forget who won that fight, but anyway, that was Lawrence Ferlinghetti. And at the same one, the San Francisco Mime Troupe performed and they did a rendition of the Star Spangled Banner and they got to, you know, 'and the rocket's red glare' and then they scream, no, and then 'bombs bursting in air', no, in the middle of the Vietnam War. And it was just, it was very moving. So she was great in that she would, you know, take students to things like that. I think I told you the story once we were in an ice cream parlor and sitting up at the counter and there was in a box a little genie who would, for a price, answer any yes or no question. And so she puts in her coin and she says, genie, is there a God? And out comes a little slip of paper and says, if you want it that way, yes.

**Spaccarelli:** (Laughs)

**Kenah:** So you know, what better answer to that question? So yeah. You know, I saw her many years later at a reunion and she had gone over and taught at UOP and I think she taught like great ideas of Western culture or something like that. And I remember two things that she said. One was that in this class, often she would get students from, she said, from the Central Valley who refused to read Darwin.

**Spaccarelli:** Oh goodness.

**Kenah:** Yeah. And she said, how can you teach the great ideas of Western thought without Darwin? But they said, no, no, we know what he says and we don't have to read that. So she found that just, you know, completely incomprehensible.

**Spaccarelli:** Understandable.

**Kenah:** Yeah, yeah. She also told, she said that there was some kind of a performance, I don't know if it was a band frolic or what it was, but when she was at UOP, you know, many years later, and she did a dance at this, where at the end of the dance, she had these long black gloves on and she took off one of the gloves and threw it over her shoulder. And the audience just went wild over this and she kept getting comments, you know, for years afterwards about this. And she said, you know, all the things I have done in my life, you know, the classes I've developed, you know, the lectures I've given, the conferences, the papers, the research I've done, and all I'm going to be remembered for is taking off my glove on stage. So anyway, she was, she was a great, great friend, I would say, of all the faculty there, I, you know, considered her a friend. Like I said, I never took a class from her, but we were, we were [on] very good terms.



**Spaccarelli:** Fantastic.

**Kenah:** Yeah. And then the third, I went, well, there's two, George Blum. George Blum, historian, very kind man. He, when I flunked my freshman comps, I was in a real funk, you know, do I really belong here? You know, do I have what it takes to continue here? You know, what am I going to do with my life? He approached me and asked me to take a individual, independent study with him in modern European history. And so not only did he teach me modern European history, he also worked in how to take essay exams. He really helped me with that, you know, and he did it very methodically, non-judgmentally, and it was just what I needed at that point in my life and, you know, my academic career. So I really owe him a debt of thanks for that. Like I say, a very kind, kind man. And then the last teacher was Sy Kahn. And I did not have a very good impression of Dr. Kahn. Dr. Kahn came, I forget, in the second or third, he wasn't a member of the original faculty. I don't know if he came in the second year or the third year. And I think, you know, for this interview, you know, thinking over why didn't you like, I think it's because he didn't share that same respect for the students that the other faculty did. That, I think he had a pretty big ego, and it was pretty much all about him. And we were just kind of there. That you know, his word, his interpretation, that was the way things were.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah, yeah.

**Kenah:** And he would sort of tolerate us, barely. Anyway, I remember there was a lecture with Paul Ramsey, the English teacher and Sy Kahn. And there was sort of a debate. Anyway, Sy Kahn was talking about a Freudian interpretation of the world. And when Ramsey, to rebut it or whatever he said, he said, he said, well, maybe I can't convince you. But I could convince most intellectuals that da da da da da da, whatever it was, which was the most cutting thing that I had ever heard one faculty member say to another. It was done just so smoothly, you know, that it kind of just passed over. And Ramsey's idea was that any of these philosophies that explain everything in the world, even their critics, oh yeah, Freudians, oh yeah, we have a place for you. You didn't like your father or something, so you're rejecting Freud. Anyway, that these kind of all-encompassing philosophies are suspect.

**Spaccarelli:** Right, yeah, of course.

**Kenah:** Anyway. Yeah. So, I guess Sy Kahn didn't seem to respect us. And I don't, I certainly don't think others didn't really respect him that well. There was one, he had been in World War II, I think I told you this story. He'd been in World War II. And he was, he told us he was glad that the war had ended with the United States dropping the atomic bomb on Japan, because the other scenario was going to be a land invasion, that the US troops were going to have to invade Japan. And he thought that was a suicide mission, and he was slated to be on that mission. He thought that was going to be the end of him. And I'm pretty sure he had some form of PTSD. So in Stockton, on Friday at noon, they would blow the air raid siren to test the siren, every Friday at noon. And we were in class one Friday, and noontime came, and the whistle, the siren goes off, and he became visibly agitated. He grabbed the, we were at a big oval table, and he grabs the side of the table, and he becomes pale. And one of the girls says, what

should we do, Dr. Kahn? And Dr. Kahn said, quick, get under the table. And the student at the other end, Ralph Juvenal, quite a joker, said, and gather ye rosebuds, while ye may. Now Dr. Kahn was always quoting poetry in what he thought were these appropriate places in conversations, and to have it sort of played back to him sort of broke the spell. And he sort of came back to reality and realized, you know, there was no bomb attack, no imminent bomb attack going on. This Ralph Juvenal was, as I said, quite a humorous fellow, and he would sign his letters, your friend and mine, Ralph Juvenal. And I've lifted that ending of letters sometimes in my letter writing career, too.

**Spaccarelli:** That's funny.

**Kenah:** Anyway, yeah. So those are the faculty members. I mean, there were so many. There were so many. As you probably can- have figured out, I was more interested in the social life at Raymond than the academic life. So I got to know lots of people, and lots of people made pretty lasting impressions on me. But I think I'm just going to leave it with the faculty and Ralph.

**Spaccarelli:** Perfectly fine.

**Kenah:** Okay?

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah. Because otherwise I feel like we could be here for another hour or two, you know?

**Kenah:** We could, we could, we could, we could.

**Spaccarelli:** I think that's a good place to move on. Okay. So yeah, what issues were you involved in that stood out in your mind as important to the growth and development of Raymond?

**Kenah:** You know, the Vietnam War was not really too much on the horizon, at least the first two years. I do remember one student burning his draft card in the dormitory. But that was more to impress his girlfriend, I think, than any kind of anti-war protest. You know, we were all in college, so we had that deferment. I myself was, my father was killed in World War II, and I'm his only son. And so they have a special dispensation for sole surviving son of a deceased veteran. And it's called 4A, 4A classification. And the 4A classifications do not have to go except in time of national emergency. And you may remember that the Congress never declared the Vietnam War an actual war. If they had declared a war, then that would have been a national emergency and I would have had to go.

**Spaccarelli:** Right.

**Kenah:** But the Congress was so cowardly that they couldn't bring themselves to even say what they were doing was what they were doing. Anyway... Also the Civil Rights Movement. Some students one night came over from UOP and said, you know, we're going into the South to do some work there and we need someone to come with us. My roommate said, I'll go. And that was Pete Windrem. And he left in the middle of the night and, you know, just packed his toothbrush and extra pair of socks or

something and jumped in the car with them and off they went to Georgia. And they were back in a couple of days, a lot of, you know, a lot of driving. But that was really the first I had- firsthand, well, it wasn't really firsthand, but as close as I came to people going to the South for voter registration and things like that. You know, there were so many things that were changing. I mean, music. I first heard Bob Dylan at Raymond. You know, who is this guy? You know, I would say that, you know, maybe the music was even was one of the strongest or most formative changes for me at that time in that era.

**Spaccarelli:** Understandable. All makes sense to me. I don't think I have any follow ups. So if you want, we can move on.

**Kenah:** Okay.

**Spaccarelli:** This we've already somewhat covered. It's very connected to the last question. And that's just what was the conversation around civil rights, feminism, community activism, and of course, Vietnam? And how did Raymond like as a school support those conversations?

**Kenah:** You know, I don't remember a whole lot of overt support. I think there was, you know, we were so close to Berkeley, and Berkeley was going through a lot of-sort of, I won't say violent, but very public, very noisy...

**Spaccarelli:** Right, right.

**Kenah:** ...demonstrations and things. So I think they, you know, they wanted to keep the lid on that. They didn't want to have the students too riled up. But, [on] the other hand, I think that there was this, you know, abiding deep belief in equality and, you know, trying to put an end to segregation and anti-war. Although as I said, the war didn't, I didn't hear a whole lot about the war until I got to Berkeley.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah.

**Kenah:** So I would say it was an undercurrent, but I didn't see it as a, you know, one of the main things that was going on at Raymond.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. Okay. Yeah. But what about the other things? Like feminism, for example?

**Kenah:** I don't know if we knew the word. We certainly knew there was a difference the way the women were treated than we were, and we didn't approve of it or appreciate it. But certainly in the classrooms, the women's ideas were, you know, given just as much weight as the men's. I mean, we saw them as our equals. So, again, I don't think it was stated outright as a feminist cause or movement, but I think that there was this very strong idea that we were all in this together. I mean, some of the smartest people at Raymond were the women, the ones who could, you know, Norma and Margaret Myers and people like that were just, I mean, when they spoke, we listened.

**Spaccarelli:** Right. Right. Right. Nice. Okay. If you're ready, then let's move on. What contributions do you feel that Raymond made to the local communities in Stockton, if any?

**Kenah:** I remember that there was something, I think it was with the Y, a program with the Y, where there were different things that you could, and I was, for a while, I worked with a group of young adults. We called them retarded at that time. I don't know what the proper word is, but these were people with serious developmental deficiencies. And we would come on, or they would come on Saturday, and we would go to a playground and we, you know, bounce big balls with them and do things. I found it, after a while, very depressing in that, you know, no matter what we did, they weren't going to get any better. You know, there was no, it was like, they're stuck. And then sometime, you know, there'd be good days and bad days, and I remember, I think the last day I was there, there was one young man who previously had been, you know, sort of interested in bouncing the ball and talking or doing whatever we did. But all he would do was walk along the side of the playground where there was a wall with his head rubbing against the wall. And you know, we couldn't get him to participate or to stop doing this, you know, repetitive movement. I just felt it was something I couldn't do anymore. So there was this outreach, you know, to different members. That's about all I know.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Well, glad there was something going on there. Okay, moving on then. So has Raymond College met your expectations as an institution and as an education? And why or why not?

**Kenah:** Well, I think, as I told you, I didn't really have expectations when I went there. I just was going to go to college, you know.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah. You got in somewhere.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Yeah, I got in and, you know, what do I do now? So I think, I mean, yes, I wish that the, you know, the education that we had there, I just wish could be duplicated and made available to other students. It was so enriching, you know, for so many of us. Now, probably, you know, the ones that it didn't work for, you may not have contact with. And there were those, there were some that just couldn't, didn't want to do it, couldn't do it, whatever. And one of the people I contacted for this last reunion said, why would I want to go there? They were the worst years of my life, you know. So I don't know if you contacted any of those people, but...

**Spaccarelli:** I'm trying to.

**Kenah:** Yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** You know, I do want to get a diversity of perspectives, for sure.

**Kenah:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll see if I can find who that was.

**Spaccarelli:** And if they would be willing to, because again, if it's associated with something negative, they might not be willing to.

**Kenah:** Yeah, yeah. Well, yeah, true. Absolutely true. So, I mean, I had, you know, negative things like I flunked the exams and I, you know, was on Dean Peckham's shit list and, you know, but for me, it was a wonderful experience, really.

**Spaccarelli:** Right, right. Yeah.

**Kenah:** So, so how, where are we now with...

**Spaccarelli:** Did it meet your expectations...?

**Kenah:** Yeah, the expectations. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I think I've said it that, you know, I just wish that this kind of transformative experience could be somehow made available to other students.

**Spaccarelli:** Right. No, it did feel like it was sort of, my understanding is that Raymond always felt sort of isolated, like it was the separate little campus within the university, far away from everybody else, this little ivory tower, so to speak.

**Kenah:** Yeah. And, but that wasn't, I didn't see that as a bad thing.

**Spaccarelli:** No, no. It just means it isn't as accessible to, you know, everybody else.

**Kenah:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, there, yeah, there was an elitist type of thing that, you know, we thought we were better than UOP, I'm sure.

**Spaccarelli:** Right, right, right. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Moving on then, how has your education at Raymond influenced your career or life choices?

**Kenah:** Well, I became a teacher.

**Spaccarelli:** That would do it.

**Kenah:** Yeah. And I always tried to engage my students. I tried to respect my students.

**Spaccarelli:** Right.

**Kenah:** I never gave multiple choice exams.

**Spaccarelli:** (Chuckles) Inspired by Raymond.

**Kenah:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

**Spaccarelli:** Did you give them grades or did you give them term letters?

**Kenah:** Well, unfortunately I was, well, I taught in a private, I taught in a couple of private junior high schools. And we did give grades, but we also had to write a paragraph about each student, you know, along with it, which happened at Raymond too, that the instructors would write comments about our progress or lack thereof. And so, so I think, but they also did that in my boarding school. So I was very used to that kind of evaluation type of process.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think also in the reading of students' essays that I tried to read them very carefully and make probably more comments than they wanted or expected, but, and you know, with the idea of helping them to improve what they had put down.

**Spaccarelli:** Right. Right.

**Kenah:** And a lot of that came- or if it didn't come from Raymond, it certainly was reinforced by Raymond.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. Cool. Did you, what about like the seminar experience? Did you try to translate the discussion-focused element into your classrooms as well? It's more difficult if it's not college though, of course.

**Kenah:** Well, yeah. Well, yeah. The junior high school classes that I taught, it was in private junior high schools and they were small classes. So we could do that. And then I transformed myself into a college prof. And while there was, you know, some, certainly some lecture aspects of the course, I always tried to get discussion. I always tried to get discussion going, you know, pose questions that would make them think and I found it increasingly difficult in the larger classes to get people to talk.

**Spaccarelli:** Yeah. Well, of course, of course, everybody hides between each other, behind each other.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And I would always ask the question, you know, oh, let Jose, you know, let him do it, you know, I don't, yeah, we'll just wait for him to do it. One thing I did do, we would have- part of the writing, in part of the writing process, I would have them do peer review of each other's papers. And we'd either go to a park or go to a cafeteria on campus where we could sit at different tables and just like groups of four or five, and that they would go over their essays with each other. And then I would go from table to table and sit in on, you know, one of the, participate in one of those.

**Spaccarelli:** Ah, so peer review. Nice.

**Kenah:** It was a peer review. Yeah. But it was also, they were spread out enough that the teacher wasn't breathing down their neck and they could really say what they wanted. But then I would come to each one for at least, you know, for one of the readings. And so that was sort of like a seminar situation where, yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** Nice, nice.

**Kenah:** More open and free, more open and free than the lecture type stuff.

**Spaccarelli:** And do you attribute that to Raymond? At least in part?

**Kenah:** You know, I think the idea of, I want this to work. What can I, you know, let's figure out a way to make it work is certainly a Raymond type of lesson to learn. So I don't remember doing exactly that at Raymond, but it was like, what can I do to have these students learn from each other and learn from me and, you know, on a smaller group basis. So that's what I came up with.

**Spaccarelli:** Perfect. Okay. So that's it for my questions. Now I turn it over to you and I ask you, what have we not covered in this interview that you still want to discuss?

**Kenah:** Well, I think love affairs.

**Spaccarelli:** Okay. There you go. (Chuckles)

**Kenah:** I think many of us had maybe our first, but certainly many of us had very meaningful love affairs with other students. That was maybe at least as formative as some of the stuff that happened in the classrooms. You know, I came from like this all boys boarding school. So for me, women were like, kind of strange creatures that I didn't, you know, I really had to figure out who they were, what motivated them, what they wanted. So, and I think, you know, Raymond was great for that in that, you know, we all live together and we all knew each other really well. And we all, you know, we're in close proximity and nowhere else to go. Nobody had cars pretty much. So, and my, you know, Norma Chinchilla and I are together now for many, many years. And we got together, you know, long after Raymond. And, but it was that Raymond shared experience and trust that we had that really helped our relationship, you know, certainly at the beginning, but continuing through this shared experience that has informed a lot of our present relationship. So...

**Spaccarelli:** Of course, of course.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Spaccarelli:** Makes sense. Okay, cool. Anything else?

**Kenah:** Well, for me, one of the realizations, you know, I came to this boarding school I went to was in Western Massachusetts, lots of snow and ice, you know, hockey was the big sport and everything. And the first year, you know, it, I got up early one morning and I was walking off-campus, the little sort of sidewalk between houses and these camellia bushes were all in bloom in February. And I'm thinking, winter ain't coming, is not coming, you know, what is this place? It's just like, it was, it was just an amazing realization and, you know, joy that, you know, it's not cold and snow, it's warm and flowers, you know, it's just, it's beautiful. So anyway.

**Spaccarelli:** It's a beautiful, beautiful area.

**Kenah:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, anything you want to know that I didn't cover?

**Spaccarelli:** I'm trying to think, I feel like we covered most of the things I wanted to talk about. Yeah, no, I think, I think you answered all my questions. So I think we're good if you're ready to wrap things up.

**Kenah:** Sure. Okay.

**Spaccarelli:** Perfect. Okay. So I'll stop the recording and we can chat a little bit more afterwards, if that sounds okay.

**Kenah:** Okay. Yeah. Great.