

Interview with Raymond Jungles

- Kathy Hersh:** This is May 30th, 2019. We're interviewing Raymond Jungles for the Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project. My name is Kathy Hersh. Speaking of fun, I'm going to ask you an interesting first question. Is your last name really Jungles?
- Raymond Jungles:** Wow. That's so original. No, it is. I was born in Omaha, Nebraska with that name.
- Interviewer:** Really?
- Jungles:** Divine intervention.
- Interviewer:** Did you feel you were compelled somehow to do something? Did you identify with jungles?
- Jungles:** Well, I identified with, we moved around a lot when I was a kid. I was never in one school more than two years, so I was always a new kid in the school, and I was always Tarzan and Jungle Jim and George of the Jungle. That's what I was. That's what I identified with, but I was always a nature lover. I never dwelt on the fact that I had an unusual last name.
- Interviewer:** Where did you grow up?
- Jungles:** I grew up in Nebraska for a couple of years and then southern California until, I think, fourth grade and then back to Nebraska. Then Chicago area and then Peoria and then Columbus, Ohio. After I graduated from high school, I moved down here when I was 18.
- Interviewer:** Have you stayed since then?
- Jungles:** I have. I wasn't planning on it when I first came down. I was an ice hockey player, and I thought I'd have to go back up to college up north to be able to play ice hockey. I just never left.
- Interviewer:** Why is that?
- Jungles:** Well, I love Florida. I think it's fantastic. It's a land of opportunity for a young person. At least that's how it worked out for me.
- Interviewer:** When did your career begin?
- Jungles:** I worked in the landscape nursery when I was in high school. It's how I helped support my hockey habit because I was on a traveling team that was rather expensive, and I paid for all myself. I worked in a retail wholesale nursery. We did some landscaping, but a lot of it was selling plants to customers and helping them design their gardens to some degree. That's all I really knew.



I came down here, and I got a job as a landscape laborer because I had to eat. The person I worked for didn't really want to work all the time, so I ended up with long periods of time of inactivity, which led to hunger, so I looked for a more steady job. I ended up getting a job at Haulover Beach as a lifeguard for Dade County. I worked four 10-hour days there, and I went to school at Miami Dade North.

Then I, when they opened North Shore Open Space Park in Miami Beach, I got hired on Miami Beach as a lifeguard. I literally go way back in the city of Miami Beach to having worked as an employee there. I think it was 1974, no, '76 when I started working there. It was the year that it snowed in Miami because when I was setting up my lifeguard stand one day, I actually had snow on my cold-weather outfit that I had.

Interviewer: You could probably make the Guinness Book of Records with that story.

Jungles: Well, a few old timers remember that.

Interviewer: Tell us about your motivation then, the love of the tropics, is it?

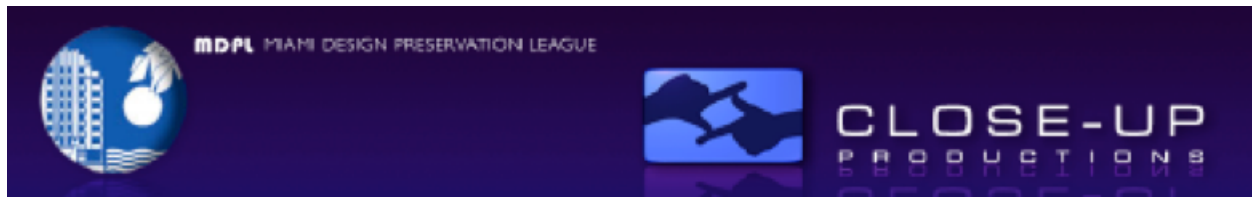
Jungles: Well, that came afterwards. I think because I grew up more in the temperate climates, I always spent most of my extra time hiking and camping and just going away from the developed urban centers. I loved wildlife, liked plants a lot. That's what really appealed to me.

Before I hit puberty, I was going to be a mountain man and live off the land in the mountains. I was just going to be like the guy who trapped and lived off the land. Then I realized there were no girls out there in the mountains, so I better be more in the urban area.

I started looking into things like I have an older brother who's two years older than me. He went into forestry school. I thought, "Well, that sounds like it makes sense," but he got very alienated from it because it was more about extracting board feet of timber from management of the forest than hanging out with Yogi the Bear or to fight forest fires and to teach people about nature.

Then I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian because I liked animals and I worked in a vet's office for a week when my friend went out of town. I took his job and then I realized that wasn't for me. I had heard about landscape architecture when I worked in the nursery up in Ohio. There was a gentleman who was going to Ohio State for that.

When I finally went back to school because I waited a year before I realized I didn't want to just be a landscape laborer for the rest of my life. One of my lessons was to write research and write an essay about a profession. I picked landscape architecture. It was just a little, tiny blue book about that thick.



I opened it and the first paragraph was, "If you're looking for a profession where you can make a lot of money, this is not it." It said, "But it's such a great humanistic profession. You could really have impact on the environment and on people and everything." I said, "That makes sense." There was really no looking back after that.

Interviewer: It seems like you've done pretty well by the profession in terms of saying that it's not a way to make money. It looks like you've done okay by it.

Jungles: Well, where there's a will, there's a way. People say to me that I'm very lucky. I have to say that that's true, but the harder I work, the luckier I get. I have to say that I was really, I got here in the right time. Some of the more eminent landscape architects like Jonathan Seymour and Bill O'Leary were getting towards the end of their careers. There was a vacuum available there for landscape architecture in Miami.

Miami was growing. It was becoming much more international. I was able to be sponsored on my thesis project at the University of Florida. I did a project called 'The Downtown Bayfront Park System of Pedestrian Celebration'. Marty Fine, who was the head of the DDA at the time, was one of my sponsors. Then O'Leary Schaeffer [Phonetic] [06:33] Cosiya were one of my sponsors.

I got a lot of press and publicity with my thesis project. I presented it in front of all the movers and shakers downtown with the DDA and everything. I took this project on that was really larger than probably I should have. I was warned against it.

In school I was studying Noguchi's park and all that sort of thing, but I knew that I wasn't going to work in an office after I graduated and it would be a while until I had another chance to work on these urban projects at waterfront projects which impact a lot of people, which is my favorite type of project.

It's interesting how I came to be and getting those kind of projects of just through the body of work that we produced over the years is what led to it rather than coming up in a firm that was already doing that kind of work.

I never actually worked in a firm out of college. I worked one summer in a landscape architect's office, but that was before I was even in the landscape architecture program. I was just taking the prerequisites and mostly architecture classes at the University of Florida at the time.

Interviewer: It sounds like a lot of it was timing.

Jungles: Very much so. Imagine so I go to University of Florida. I never thought



of myself as a designer, but I did see some work by Luis of Aragon, that really very poetic work that caught my imagination. Apart from taking some design and drawing classes at Miami Dade, it wasn't until I went to the University of Florida and taking architectural design 1 and 2 that I got exposed to a lot more about design of the built environment.

Then one of the classes that I had as a prerequisite to the landscape architecture program, which is in the college of architecture at the University of Florida, was the history and theory of landscape architecture by Newton. It was called 'Design on the Land' was our textbook.

In that book was Roberto Burle Marx and about the work that he'd done in Brazil and Copacabana and Brasilia and all these great projects, Parque del Este in Caracas. I saw his work. Then he came and he lectured in 1979, and I got to meet him and I got his card. I had a job lined up for Caracas to work in Caracas, Venezuela for the summer.

I asked him if, since I was in South America, if I could come down to Rio and see his office. He's like, "Sure, come on down." His work really, really impacted me. I decided to seek out a mentorship with him.

That's one of the reasons I didn't take a job in anybody's office because you get two weeks off a year if you're lucky when you're first out of school. I needed to have the freedom to be able to go down to Brazil when it worked for him to be able to basically just observe his world.

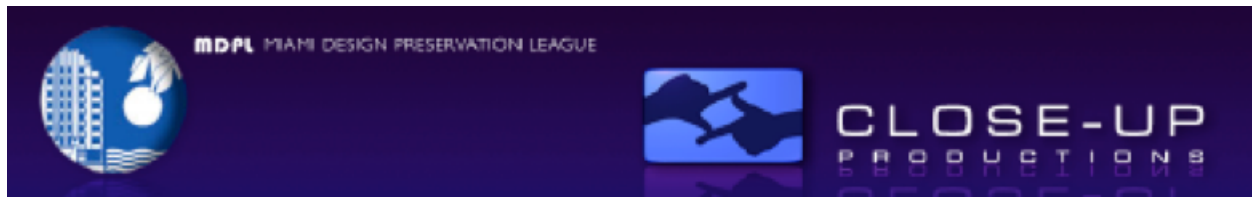
Interviewer: You mentioned the word 'poetic' a couple of minutes ago. Would you explain that please in terms of landscape architecture?

Jungles: Certainly. There are a lot of different ways to design anything. I always say my mother used to say there's more than one way to skin a cat. I have to say I never saw her skin a cat once, so I don't know where she got that from. Any two designers are going to come about and do something, find a solution in a different way based on their knowledge, their talent and their life experience.

There are some people that take things to the next level, and they do things that you'd say, "Wow. How could he have come up with that?" Well, that's Burle Marx. He always found a way to do something in a poetic way that was stronger than the solution.

Interviewer: Something that captured the essence of the place.

Jungles: Always. Pretty much, his work was so strong he created places. He created gardens that could tie a whole urban fabric together, such as he did in Copacabana and such as he did at [clears throat], excuse



me, on Biscayne Boulevard in Downtown Miami.

I wish they would have had better materials to use like they used real stone in Brazil, but it's more successful than if every architect on each block decided what sidewalk they were going to have in front of their particular building based on their structural grid or what have you. He came up with a way of creating a composition that would accept the different textures of the buildings and yet unify the entire, in this case in Copacabana, the whole beach front part of the city.

Interviewer: To some extent, he was able to do that on Biscayne Boulevard.

Jungles: Absolutely. It was the same basic concept. Jack left when he was the head of planning, I believe, at the city of Miami at the time. He was instrumental in convincing people to bring Burle Marx in to do that project, which was one of the reasons I got to spend so much time with Roberto because he was in Miami all the time. Talk about perfect timing.

Roberto would also come through Miami whenever he was traveling anywhere in the United States and even sometimes before he'd go to Europe he'd come through here. He had friends, and I was fortunate enough to be able to spend a lot of time with him. He'd stay at my house, and I would entertain him when he was in town and get to hang out with him and go shopping for his employees and friends and things like that.

Interviewer: Were you already in practice then?

Jungles: I graduated in 1981, and I was building gardens on the weekends and everything when I was school, so either in Gainesville or I'd come down to Miami. I never wasn't in practice. I started out with a roommate in college in a design build firm initially when I got out of school called the Orr-Jungles Design group, but I got licensed after a year and then I started the company then. It's been nonstop since then.

Interviewer: Burle would advise you when he came through?

Jungles: When he'd come he'd stay at my house. He'd see me drawing and he'd come up and say, "Why are you doing that?" He would say. He'd go to my projects with me, and he'd look at things. Being a friend, he was brutally honest with me. If he didn't like something, he'd tell you.

I remember one time we came around the corner and we saw something that was something my client liked that I did it because of their input. He came around the corner. He looked at a good thing they weren't there and he says, "That's horrible." That's what he said. With friends, you don't need to explain. Just talk straight out.



I got to see a lot of his projects of before and during and after construction. I got to meet a lot of his clients down there. When you think about it, Burle Marx was 75 when I met him. I was 25. I got to see him really at the zenith of his career as a designer and as a painter because he was painting a lot when I was going down to Brazil.

He would travel with his paintings. I'd help him sell his paintings, and I would get a commission. Then I would just buy his paintings, so I have quite the collection of his work because I love the man and I love his work.

Interviewer: It sounds like he was the major influence on you.

Jungles: Definitely.

Interviewer: Tell us about the evolution, if there has been, of your style or your way of approaching, philosophically, an environment that you're going to be working on.

Jungles: Well, Roberto is very much a preservationist and an environmentalist, but he was also an artist. Initially all his great gardens were basically appreciated based on their creativity and their originality and their fine arts approach of everything that he did.

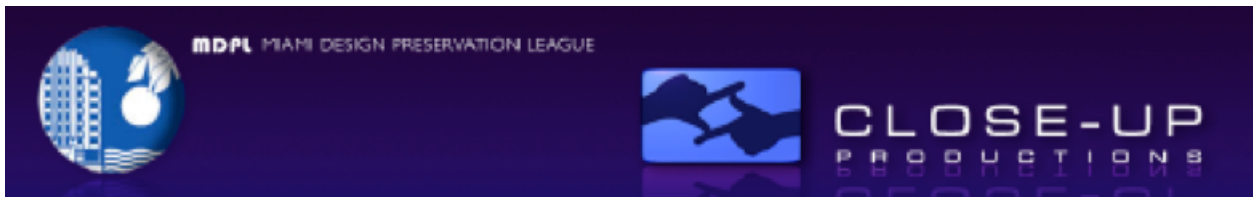
I came from a school that had the McHargian approach, which is 'Design with Nature'. Ian McHarg was a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, I believe it was. He wrote a book called 'Design with Nature', and that was one of our textbooks. That was really in line with my whole philosophy of respecting nature and ecology from a very young age.

My gardens are getting more and more about creating habitat and restorative landscapes in urban areas and trying to bring back what was once an ecosystem that provided for the local flora and the fauna.

I think that people should be able to live in harmony with a disturbed man-made environment and provide what the other creatures need that were here before rather than just destroy something that's a real landscape and replace it with a bunch of combinations of plants that don't give anything back, which is what the majority of constructed landscapes are in urban areas.

Interviewer: This is not necessarily in this, I may be injecting opinion here, I probably am, but this is a city where so much development is about density and about making money. It strikes me that a lot of times, the landscaping is an afterthought. Is that a challenge?

Jungles: Well, I see that changing because remember, right out of school I took whatever type of projects I could get. They were residential in nature. Then as I had more things published, I got better residential projects, so my clients were people who really wanted a garden. My clients were



people that put a high importance on the exterior living environment, not just the interior and the architecture.

What has happened over the time in Miami is the developers, the bar kept being raised of using these star architects from out of town. Then the landscape became something that was very important to also create amenities for people because you go to a lot of urban areas in New York and a lot of the denser cities and there's very little landscape component to anything that anybody's doing in the urban area. What you see are more parks.

There's nothing wrong with density so long as they leave some low density where they can have green space in the outdoor. In fact, it's one way to stop humans from building over the entire planet, but I think that I've seen the architects coming into town and the developers putting more importance on landscapes.

By the way, the only reason I'm doing any kind of commercial projects is because I'm only doing it with developers where the landscapes are contributing an element. It's not just decoration at the end of the day. It's not just putting a bunch of plants together. I think that if you see our projects that we've done, the landscape is as important as the architecture in creating the whole place, the whole sense of what the project has become.

Interviewer:

Tell us about the design, your work at the Miami Beach Botanical Gardens.

Jungles:

Sure. I believe my first big project in Miami Beach was 1111 Lincoln Road, but I did the Botanical Garden, I think, even after I did the new World Symphony. There was a group of people at the Botanical Garden that were working with the city to renovate the Botanical Garden because after Andrew, it never was really put back in place. There were remnants of old structures that were parts of.

They used to have a glasshouse, a conservatory there. Everything was just in disarray. There was a bunch of different episodic events that had happened over time. The city was looking for someone to master plan and design, in phases, a new look for the Botanical gardens. We won that interview process.

I know it was George Gonzales who was the city manager at the time for, I think, when I was doing all those projects in Miami Beach. He came to me and told me, "You got this project, but you've got to do it for this amount," which was such a low amount that there was no way we could make any money on it. We really wanted to do a project that the public could really benefit on.

It's funny because we're still very involved with the Botanical Garden doing a lot of pro-bono work and trying to help them bring it back up.



There were a lot of very interested people there. Sandy Shapiro's been great there to keep me involved when anything's happening. I'm just so pleased to see the way that the Botanical Gardens has survived the convention center project construction and is doing better than ever right now.

Interviewer: It has a kind of magic hidden garden aspect to it. Was that intentional or is...?

Jungles: The thing is about they call it a botanical garden, but there was more land in the Miami Beach Botanical Gardens. Over time pieces were taken away, and it ended up with the footprint that it has right now, which is really too small to be a true botanical gardens. They had some native plants in the back corner, and they had a lot of interesting plants, but there was really no cohesiveness to it.

The first thing we tried to do is come up with a whole new way of entering and approaching the gardens. The way we orchestrated the circulation to the garden is what makes the place feel bigger and have a lot more experience. We maximize the user's experience.

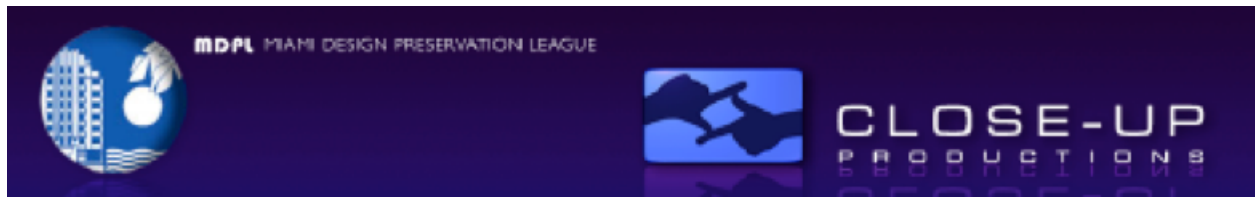
We took native plants, and we brought them through the whole garden. We created some other interesting plant collections, but part of what we did was clean up this nice architecture, but it was all hidden behind chain link fences and the atrium areas were back of house areas, so we created a true back of house area where they could do the plant propagation and back of house type things and brought the circulation through the whole building complex.

I think that worked very successfully because within the spaces, you can see the garden. The garden permeates everywhere there now.

Interviewer: I went to the annual Japanese art fair there this year. It was very popular. Lots of people came, and yet you didn't feel like there were people right on top of you even though you were in a fairly small space.

Jungles: It has that hidden kind of. If you don't know it's there and you stumble upon it, it's this beautiful little tranquil environment in the middle of a pretty dense city. I think it's a great, green urban space. It has a lot of botanical interests, but what I think it is, it's a great venue for people to have activities like a lot of people get married there. There are all kinds of events during Art Basel and everything.

Unfortunately for the Miami Beach Botanical Garden, they don't get a lot of money from the city, so they pretty much have to say that old saying I don't like, "Kill what you eat." They have to have these functions to be able to generate the money to be profitable so they can keep their doors open, whereas there are other places like Naples Botanical Gardens where the money that's given from the public is phenomenal.



I'm hoping that in a wealthy, progressive city like Miami Beach, they can do a little bit more to make the Botanical Garden as important as it should be.

Interviewer: Miraculously, it's free and open to the public, which is something...

Jungles: Yes. That's—

Interviewer: I appreciate that very much.

Jungles: That's wonderful. Then now they're getting rid of all the surface parking and adding more parks there, so it's bound to be a great thing for the botanical garden.

Interviewer: Tell us about some of the other projects you've done on the beach.

Jungles: Well, one of my favorite projects is 1111 Lincoln Road, which was working with Herzog and de Meuron to take the last block, the 1100 block of Lincoln Road, which was at the time when we were doing it, when Robert Wennett bought the project, was open to vehicular traffic still. There was really no liveliness on the sidewalks.

The Sun Bank building was basically closed on the ground level. Then the rest of their property, because it was an internally functioning building. The rest of the property was a surface parking lot. The project to the south across the mall was successful. It was new retail in the cinema, but it was a lopsided block. There was really no place there.

That's what Robert Wennett did so beautifully. He basically went out on spec and he created this project to try to convince the city to close the block back and to do a true public space and to be able to create retail all on the ground level that would activate the space and to be able to create this great piece of architecture, the garage that would become an icon to draw people to that end of the mall. I think it worked very well.

I got involved in that project. Robert was looking for a landscape architect to work with Herzog and de Meuron on the mall project. I went to an interview with the two of them. It was just the two of them, and they were talking to all the landscape architects in town.

I just took one project that I had done, and it was this project in Key West where we actually renovated the architect. We did the house and everything because it was one of those projects. You couldn't spend much on the house because it was below flood plain and you couldn't spend more than 50 percent of the value of the house and all this sort of thing.



We made the house part of the garden, and we did the whole thing. I showed it to them, and we won a national American Society of Landscape Architects award on it. At the time I thought it was the best thing that we'd ever done. I showed it to them and I told Christine Binswanger, who was the architect, the partner in charge of 1111. I said, "This is a project we did. We did all the structure as well as the garden."

She said, "Landscape architects don't do structure in Herzog and de Meuron projects." She was very firm with me and everything. I thought, "Wow, I've really blown this interview." I left there thinking there was no way in hell I could be doing that project. They came back to me to work with them on that, which was such a great experience. I got to go to Basel and work with them in their studio over there.

It was a great project. It was the kind of project I always aspired to but couldn't really do because I wasn't known enough to be able to do projects like that. That project, we got approval from the historic preservation department, the planning board. Everybody loved it. They got behind it, and it became a very successful project.

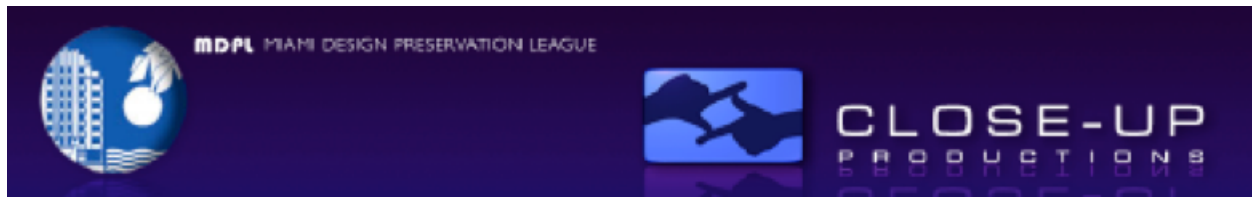
In fact, William Carrie, who was really high up in the planning department at the time. He gave it the name 'The Urban Glade' because my approach there, I had seen in the research, the photographs of course, of, I think it was Mr. Collins who was pulling mangroves out with elephants in order to be able to make Lincoln Road.

I kind of tongue-in-cheek said, "Well, I'm bringing mangroves back to Lincoln Road." I used all native plants from the Everglades and from South Florida in the project itself. Live oak, cypress trees, pond apples, red mangroves and the like of things like that. It was my chance to really bring nature back into the city and create vibrant public spaces, flexible spaces for people to enjoy.

Much like Lawrence Halpern was a big influence on my life and I got to see some of his spaces that he created in California and Washington and watched how people would use his space. It was fun for me to do that project.

Then of course we ended up doing the penthouse on top of the garage for Robert. Working with Herzog and de Meuron, the amazing thing was we ended up designing all the structure in the mall and all the structure on the penthouse level other than the architecture itself, of course, the pools, the steps, the pavement and all.

We developed a really great working relationship with Herzog and de Meuron, which led to the project we did at Jade Signature up in Sunny Isles just recently that's going to be a very well known project. It turned out great.



Talk about timing. It was also the same time I was working on 1111, was able to work with Frank Gehry Partners on the New World Symphony. We did the rooftop of the New World Symphony and all around the parking garage. Then we were going to do the park too, but Frank and the city manager had a disagreement on how it would proceed.

Frank pulled out of it, but he said that he'd be happy to work with West Aid and give critique at the design phase, which is what we did. I was a little disappointed because I had this vision of doing the park with a lot of native plants and create a real sort of like 1111, create sort of a living urban habitat, but that didn't happen. I did get a lot of big oak trees around the main buildings though, which was a plus.

That was great. I got to go out to LA at the time also because I had just recently moved back from Key West because I lived in Key West for seven years. It's sort of hard to run my business from Key West at the end of the road. When I moved back to Miami in 2002, things just started really happening. We went from a two-person, three-person firm. I had had a larger firm before I moved to Key West. Now we're 23 people, so the business has just been booming here.

Being in Miami, it's such a great place for doing international work. I would say probably 60 percent of our work, depends on the year of course, is international work in the Caribbean and Central America and Mexico, which is in Central America, Panama. It's fun.

I love traveling to do projects, and it also gives you a little bit of a safety blanket when the economy goes up and down in the United States because everything's so cyclical. If you're working commercial projects, you really feel it, and that's why a lot of firms will down staff, up staff based on the economy.

We just keep going because we have a diversity of projects and the international characteristics of the work we do has buffered us. We didn't let go of anybody during the worldwide financial meltdown, which was a pretty tough time there for a while.

Interviewer: Would you say that because of the increasingly obvious impact of climate change, that there's more of an awareness of environmental conservation and stewardship perhaps?

Jungles: That would be nice. I can remember when I was a lifeguard on the beach that in the summertime, every afternoon, the evaporation would build up over the Everglades and then there'd be black storm clouds. They'd come and they'd push all the way out over the ocean. They'd stop just over sea and they'd kind of peter out out there and then it'd clear up.

Every afternoon, almost, there was a thunderstorm, but now with the



heat buildup with all the asphalt and construction and everything, the storms don't really make it to the ocean anymore. They kind of get stuck on the west side of Miami or they move into Miami and they dissipate. We didn't have iguanas before, when I lived here for many, many years. We definitely can physically see climate change here.

What can you do? Well, what we try to do is use plants that are from the climate that we're working on. We talked about other projects that we've done in Miami Beach. We did Soho Beach House, which at the time had a lot more native planting than anything that was being built on the beach at the time. We also did the Confidante Hotel, which was going to be a Roosevelt Hotel, which turned out pretty nice. We were able to plant a lot of native plants there also.

Then we did the whole Faena District, the Faena House, the Faena Hotel and the Faena Arts District across the way and the beach walk for four blocks there. That was a big project. We really became immersed in Miami Beach rules and regulations.

We've been working on the Raleigh for many, many years now, change of ownership and all. We're going to see that one over the finish line at some point in time. What else have we done on Miami Beach? It's just been a joy. Some projects that haven't been built, it's been a joy to work there.

Starting out not knowing anybody, but we've developed a really good rapport with the people who work in the city. They know that we're trying to do the right thing. We believe in planting canopy trees and planting native plants and creating a sustainable environment. That's really what the city wants. We've kind of worked together well on that.

Now we're working on the Ocean Terrace project, which is an exciting project up on 72nd Street north to 75th Street. That's a place where I was working as a lifeguard on 72nd Street when it was snowing back in 1976.

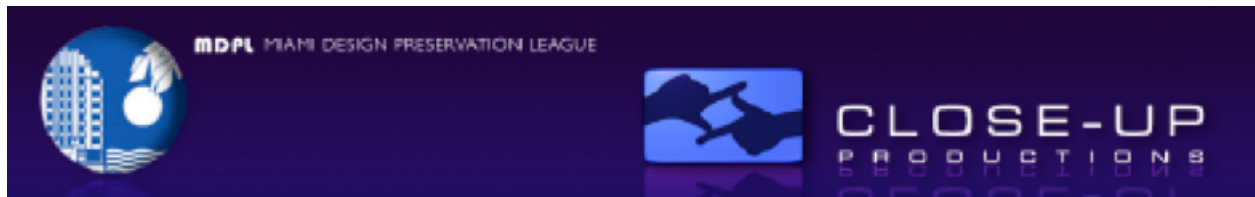
They're going to turn that from being a parking lot in a street into a beachfront park. There are so many great amenities in North Beach with the North Shore Open Space Park, all the plans they have with the other parks, the tennis courts, the parking garages and everything, the volleyball courts, the civic center there that Rene Gonzales designed. It's really a happening place.

Interviewer:

About the relationship of the landscape to the built environment and using the example of 11 how once you started paying a lot of attention and the landscape environment became an outstanding element, then it sounds like they adopted the building to the landscape.

Jungles:

Well, that's interesting because working with Christine, she really loves landscape. I brought her books on Florida native plants in the Everglades and a [Phonetic] [33:26] guado of bamboo. She was really



receptive to plants. Then you see what she did at the Perez where they have the hanging columns and everything.

Plants, if you went to their studio in Basel, they had all kinds of interesting structures they were doing to try to incorporate plants into their architecture. When they insisted that I be the landscape architect to do the Jade Signature for them because they wanted the landscape to feel like a natural beach that came and rolled up over the subterranean garage.

Then on the western side to then be beach-y still but then kind of go more into like canopy trees and a natural Florida environment, most of it built on structure. That's what I've seen a lot. We've become masters of figuring out how to make gardens look like they're on the earth when they're actually on structures.

A project we just did that took the next level, the highest level, is we redid Dan Kylie's Ford Foundation in New York, the very famous interior atrium project that was done in 1968 where all of his design, basically nothing survived. We brought back the essence of his design and planted a forest there this last year. If you go up there now, it's just 35-foot trees, and it's a dense, green landscape in the middle of a building in the middle of the city.

Interviewer: Where is that?

Jungles: It's between 42nd and 43rd, right by where the United Nations complex is, just east of Lexington.

Interviewer: Back to the rooftop garden, I actually went there quite by accident. I was having lunch at Juvia. I had actually parked in the garage, and the owner of Juvia said, "Where did you park?" I said, "In the garage." He said, "Oh, I don't want you to have to pay. Follow me." He took me through the vegetated wall, and I felt like Alice. Being from the Midwest, I saw this rolling hill with gaillardia planted all over it. I was just dumbstruck. How on earth did you get the earth up there?

Jungles: Well, it's a sleight of hand in a way because there's not a lot of soil there. That's why we used vines instead of trees, per se, because you can get more foliage with less soil with having climbing plants and things like that.

It's so funny because when we were working with the architects and I wanted trees on what they call the slope garden because it's a concrete ramp basically, I did a concrete planter so I could make sure I could keep enough soil for a tree. When the architect saw it, he says, "No, get that thing off because this is going to be just a slope garden." I did a rendering to show them how you'd never see the planter but what the tree would look like then.



Once I did that, I didn't take no for an answer. I wanted to show him that I felt strong conviction about having trees up there. Then he went for it after we did that, and so there are a few big trees you can see as you go up and down Alton. We've created sort of a forest on top of the building, but it's mostly from vines and things.

We've undulated the grade from this much soil, six to nine inches to some areas two feet and in a few areas a little bit more. It's been there for a while now, so it's really grown in. Robert really cares it. It looks great all the time, so I'm always over there when they have any questions and just trying to keep it. It's a show place, just trying to keep it looking the best it can.

Interviewer: Maybe in terms of timing, the trend to vegetated roofing might serve you well. Have you done projects where the intention was to reduce the impact and cool it down?

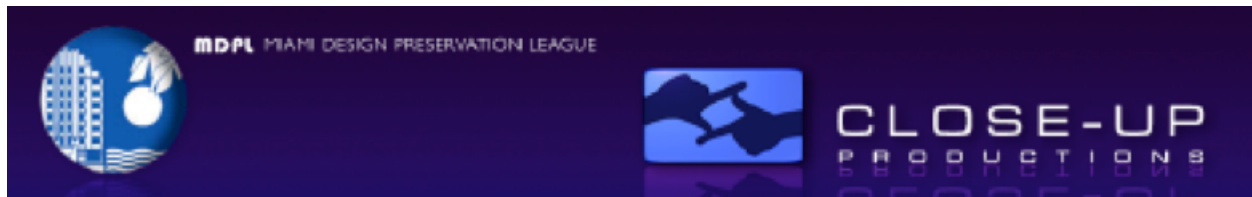
Jungles: Well, we've mostly done gardens, but I think there are some great projects where they've done whole factory roofs. I wish they had designed Miami Beach Convention Center to allow that because what a great amount of green space we would have had there, but mostly we're doing gardens on roof terraces and things. They're a lot more complex than regular gardens on the ground. They're usually more expensive and definitely more technical.

We do them when they're good ones, but we don't seek really rooftop gardens that much, but we've had some really nice ones. Therefore, people come to us to do that. One of the projects that we've done in town that we're really proud of is the grove at Grant Bay, which is behind us here.

We worked with Bjarke Ingels and Big out of New York where he has the twisting towers. The developer was David Martin. Before Bjarke was on the project, David had come to me with a project he was thinking about for the site. I didn't want to do it because I said, "The landscape isn't contributing enough. It's not enough of a. The site doesn't compel itself for me to think of it as a garden."

If you go there now and you see the project that we ended up doing together, it's kind of hard to imagine that most of the garden is on top of the structure there, but the garden is as impactful as the beautiful architecture that they've created.

Interviewer: Are there any? I had read a long time ago that there was a Japanese landscape firm in the early days of Miami Beach when they were landscaping public spaces that operated on the beach and did quite a bit of work. This project that we're doing, we're in our ninth year of interviewing people. We've interviewed 126 people. A lot of people reminisce about the landscaping and about some of the beautiful plantings and so forth. Are there any remnants of that left?



Jungles: I've never. That's the first I've heard of that. Some of the landscape architecture firms, there was an interesting character named James Laurent Brown who was doing a lot of gardens and was in the press a lot. I would have only been aware of that probably the late '70s and early '80s because before then it wasn't really on my radar.

Interviewer: There's nothing that you've heard about. I'm trying to think because a lot of what we've talked about with people has been with the preservation of the built structure. I'd certainly be interested if there were pockets of something like not on the scale of a Fairchild Gardens but—

Jungles: Well, that's what popped into my mind, Fairchild or Montgomery Foundation and those sorts of places. There's Greynolds Park up in North Miami that was done by William Lyman Phillips, who worked for the Olmsted Brothers, same people who did Fairchild and did Block Towers and things.

There were some other tourist-type attraction gardens a little farther up the state. Of course there's, I think it's called Murakami, the Japanese garden that's up off, I guess it's north of Boka in that area, off Yamato Road that has some very nice design there. When I think about Japanese gardens, I think about Japan because I've been there a couple of times. Oh my God.

The design of these old temple gardens and just what they've preserved in their urban environments from many hundreds and hundreds of years, like a thousand-year-old tree right in the middle of the city and that they would never think of cutting it down because they believe that their ancestors' spirits dwell in the tree. They revere a tree as much as they do profit for sure. There are some things that should be sacred, right? Like an ancient tree, for sure.

Interviewer: William Lyman Phillips, I read a biography about him. He was another person who came from another area and fell in love with the tropics and couldn't leave.

Jungles: He was from Indiana or someplace, wasn't he?

Interviewer: I'm forgetting where he was from, but I think it was Midwest. Just coming here on the CCC project....

Jungles: They did some great work back then on the stonemasonry and everything.

Interviewer: Oh, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

Jungles: Matheson Hammock, of course.

Interviewer: Then J.D. Barnes, J.D. Barnes, A.D. Barnes, A.D. Barnes who was the



first. We did a project for the 75th anniversary of the Dade County parks. A.D. Barnes was responsible for getting the CCC here because they were freezing out in Wyoming or wherever they were building. He said, "Come on down. It's warm down here."

Jungles: Fantastic.

Interviewer: "We'll give you some tents." Then he came up with all these excuses to keep them here, which is why we have this legacy of the CCC here, which is fascinating.

Jungles: I'm just amazed at the stone work I see along Old Color Road.

Interviewer: That's how we got William Lyman Phillips here. I just think the Fairchild is just what he saw there in a flat plain and then made it look like an English almost landscape but with tropical. It's just brilliant, brilliant work.

Jungles: Talk about another character. How about Stanley Whitman, who basically created Bal Harbor shops from remnants of what was on Lincoln Road at one time when, of course, there was the things. Lincoln Road wasn't doing so well. That's one of our projects actually, the expansion of Bal Harbor shops.

We've learned a lot about the legacy of Stanley. He created an amazing thing there. He grew up where there was the Saxon Hotel, now the Faena Hotel. His house was right on that part of the beach, so you could imagine.

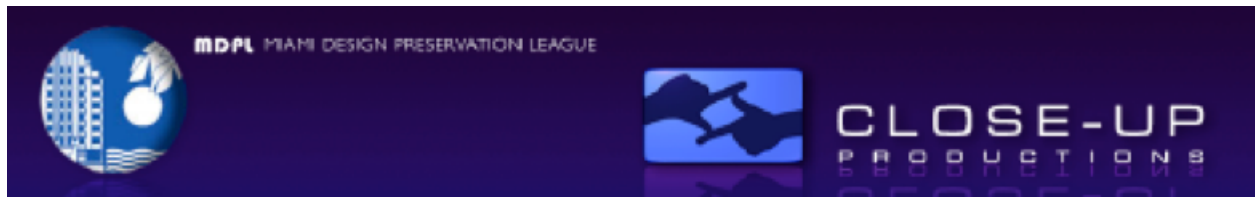
As a lifeguard on the beach, I met some of the old timers who had been working as lifeguards for a while. They'd talk about back when Jackie Gleason was, back when the Rat Pack was at Miami Beach and everything. Of course, in the late 70s, South Beach was not in its best form at the time, so I've seen that whole thing completely turn around.

I have a lot of clients from New York and California now who want to live in Miami Beach. They want to live in Florida. Taxes for one reason, but I also think it gives you a great lifestyle here. It's an indoor/outdoor lifestyle. It's convenient to get up to New York or down to the Caribbean. I'm glad I decided to come here when I was 18.

Carl Hersh: I want to know how this boy from Nebraska wound up going around Latin America. Excuse me, this is not common.

Jungles: It's very interesting. When I was 16, I worked at a gas station. The owner of the gas station, this was back during gas wars. I think I was getting a dollar an hour for pumping gas. That's when you'd check people's batteries. You'd put the wiper.

Interviewer: Dryer. Clean the windshield.



Jungles:

Clean the windshield, fill the wiper, check the oil, all that stuff, Then you'd see the guy across the street would have a sign. His gas would be five cents less than yours and then you'd have to do other things to get them. Martin, the owner, Martins Westland Humble was the name of it. He said to me, "Raymond," he says, "If I was a young man right now," he said, "Alaska or Brazil." He said, "That's the land of opportunity."

It's funny because I would have thought I would end up in Alaska being a hockey player here. They had the pipelines and everything, but I ended up having Brazil. It didn't even occur to me until much later that I basically followed his advice as the best thing I ever did.

No I don't know. Living in Miami is a very Latin city. I feel more like a Latin American sometimes than an American in many ways because I live in a city where everybody speaks so many languages. I love Spanish. I love Portuguese. I love hearing all the other dialects that are here. I think South America's a pretty amazing continent.

When you think of how Alexander Von Humboldt saw it for the first time when he went down there and to Colombia and when the Spaniards, it was their domain and he was German. There's a great book about that right now.

No, I think the landscape is very powerful in South America. I don't know. Born in Nebraska, I think it was living in southern California that really opened my eyes to the beauty and impact of nature because my stepfather would take us to Yosemite, Sequoia, Baha, California. He was a sailor. He would sail to Catalina Island.

The grandeur of the landscape in California and these places I've just mentioned is powerful. The same thing when I went to Brazil and I saw the architecture and the landscape architecture and the Brazilian landscape. It just felt very special to me. I was with some good people, so...

Interviewer:

Not much landscape in Nebraska, right?

Jungles:

Landscape is prairie. There's plenty of landscape wherever you go. It's all landscape until they build on it, right? I would go to fishing at the Plat River. We'd go hiking all the time. There are beautiful cottonwood groves along the rivers and everything. It's different. I think that's what we try to do wherever we're doing a garden, to try to get the spirit of the region that we're working in and try to bring that out.

I think that our gardens look like Florida gardens. They don't look like they're in Tahiti. They don't look like they're Hawaiian. Sometimes people complain because I use sable palms, but it's our state tree and it's a distinctly Floridian plant.



Of course it can grow all the way to South Carolina, but I think that you want to plant plants that nature has developed the capacity for them to live in the soils and in the terrain and with the climate that we have over billions of years. How can we do better than that really? I'm all for as low maintenance landscape as possible.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]