

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Ed Loedy

Peter Sala: That light makes you look twenty years younger.

Ed Loedy: I hope so [proceeds to take a picture of himself], there you go.

Background: Sound is good all set.

Interviewer (Jason Schaaf): Let's start off with the basic stuff. Please state your name.

Loedy: Yes my name is Ed Loedy.

Interviewer: How long have you been in the Hudson Valley?

Loedy: I came to the Hudson Valley in 1953, so that's... I am not sure about how many years must be about fifty something years.

Interviewer: And what is your over-all feeling of the Hudson Valley?

Loedy: Good question, I love this valley and I have traveled a bit because most people like where they have been or where they were brought up and I have traveled a bit and I keep coming back here because this is a terrific place to be it's beautiful the river's beautiful, the whole place is beautiful.

Interviewer: Anything in particular sticks out about the Hudson Valley?

Loedy: I can't say anything particular except I like the topography and for instance compared to Florida which is rather flat and boring this is interesting topographically driving over hills, going over and underneath things, the river obviously is a big attraction to the Hudson Valley. I love the river. I lived close to it as a kid. I've been on it a lot.

Interviewer: So can you describe for me what it was like the first time you came across the bridge.

Loedy: You remembered what I told you yesterday right? Well actually the first time I came over a bridge to Poughkeepsie was when I moved here in 1953 and back then the approach of the bridge was different. There was a road much closer to the river and you took a sharp left turn to get on to the bridge so when you finally saw the bridge it was [snaps his fingers] in front of you like this and I never to this day forget and that every time I come back to Poughkeepsie from the other side of the river. I imagine that its almost like the first time I went over it... uh, then I have another view in mind of the railroad bridge which when I was about fifteen or so. When I came here near the river and I used to look up at the river at this bridge and its 200 some feet above the ground and I remember seeing, I remember seeing a small train. It traveled slowly across the bridge because the bridge was designed to support trains but the impact of a train increases as it speeds up so the trains had to go slowly and this train basically crawled over. In my mind crawled over the bridge and it was filled, a lot of flat cars filled with construction equipment

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painted orange and yellow backhoes front end loaders track holders and I still to this day have a picture in my mind about that.

Interviewer: Great, so what brought about inspiration for you in some of your designs for the bridge?

Loedy: Well I really only have one design and there was only one particular inspiration. I also remember that very well it was in 1978, back thirty years ago, that I for some reason happened to be down by the river and happened to look up at the bridge and by that time it had already been defunct for four years. There had been a fire on that bridge in 1974, again, I'm looking up at the bridge at the bridge and saying to myself, "it's a shame. This bridge I don't see my little train over it anymore. There's nothing going on, on this bridge" and bingo [snap's his finger] a light went off like in the cartoons [clears throat] thing about the light over the head you know it's a perfect icon or description of what it means to get an inspirational thought and I didn't see a defunct bridge anymore. I didn't see a bridge that was uh... half destroyed or on its way to its makers. I saw a building half built. I saw a building, don't forget I am an architect, I am thinking the foundation's here the sight here the structure's here everything is here we jus have to add the floors, the walls and, the lights whatever we have the building half done and that got me to hustle back to my office and make a drawing which had been kicking around now for thirty years of what I pictured this could have been.

Interviewer: Uh I didn't get this from yesterday so I will ask you a brand new question about the fire um... Did you see the fire, do you have any recollections do you remember what the news coverage was like?

Loedy: The only thing I remember about the fire, Jason, was that I saw a newsprint. I was not down by the river at that time. I have pictures in my mind about newspaper articles and the smoke coming off the bridge. Frankly I could have seen the pictures five days or five months later but was not there when this happened.

Interviewer: Now you mention that your background is in architecture, can you briefly describe what that background entails what interested you in architecture just a quick profile of you?

Loedy: Well, I but my mother says because I don't remember this far back, but my mother says, when I was about four or five I used to steal all my brothers building blocks and [clears throat] put them with mine, and I was always building things. She always encouraged. She saw an architect. She was right. I mean this was a long time ago and she encouraged me. She never told me to become an architect, she never told me anything [clears throat] but she did encourage it, always supported it, and I liked that and I do like it. Its very creative and I like art and I like to paint and I like to sculpt like my friend Peter even though I think he sculpts more than I do and I uh... also like technical things. I like math. I like geometry, [clears throat] particularly solid geometry where which this is really architecture can be described really in solid geometry and those two things art and architecture and math and the technical part together. I have come to realize over the years what you really need to become an architect. You need to have a facility with both of those disciplines. Feel comfortable as an architect and I have had this since I was a

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kid. I went to school in Pratt at the Pratt Institute in New York back in the 50s uh... graduated from there and got my license and have been practicing since '67, its about forty years.

Interviewer: Can you describe for me, from an artistic point of view, architecture in the form of art? When you get an idea into your mind can you describe for me the way in which you go about pursuing it from the point of view from an artist? How you go about pursuing a project?

Loedy: Well it depends on what you say. An idea, our projects, always starts off with a client. The client can come in here and say I need to extend my warehouse another sixty feet and I know exactly how I want it. I want this and this and you know, any idea I might have is [clear throat] like out the window. There's no idea that goes with that. But then you might have clients come in and go I like to have let me just say a house, but it could be a club or a church and someone who doesn't describe their ideas that specifically and they come to an architect and ask them to do something that goes beyond being just my drafts person to draw up what I have in mind, I think you might relate to this in your work so what I like is somebody comes to me and challenges me and you know here is what I like to do. Let's say we would like to have a church here. This is our congregation we have just so many dollars, so now its up to me to deal with. Frankly, I have to deal with financial matters, I have to deal with technical matters, how big is the sight, how do I get water to this thing? How do we get rid of the waste? Is the parking lot big enough? And then what I am really in this for? Is how do I give expression to this structure in this case being a church, which I picked out on purpose which has an obvious spiritual quality or side to it. How can I express this structure where people are going to be in to do something they usually do or don't do all day long? There're going to be in their spiritual situation and how can you give expression to that in the structure which consists of steel and wood and concrete you know its like a musician in a way you know how are you going to describe Romeo and Juliette having this tragic love affair and you have clarinets, pianos, violins how are you going to do this, its somewhat like that, but were very technically rooted. When its all done it has to stand. It can't collapse, it can't leak the door's got to be able to lock, the waste got to be able to go out got to be able to put hot water there, it goes on and on. So it is a complicated thing there are no child architect prodigies the damn discipline is too complicated.

Interviewer: So that being said could you walk me through and granted we don't have any paintings. I guess we have a painting up there could you walk me through that the design a little bit.

Loedy: Well I came up with that idea thirty years ago [clear throat] and I took a photograph of it. Actually when I was there I did not have a camera. This is 30 years ago now I have a little one in my pocket camera, bingo so I ran back up to my office. I think I got a Polaroid camera which back in those days was the instant camera of the day, and I took a picture and it went [zzzzz sound effect], and would come out I put it in my pocket and it would get nice and warm and about a minute later you would peel it off and have picture and I took that picture and had it enlarged and uh, but at first I just took a small picture and sketched my idea over top of it... I came up with the idea that this could be basically almost a city over this bridge, that would have housing on it, uh it would have businesses on it, museums, sporting facilities, ability to get some boats the idea of putting an extra train stop after Poughkeepsie train station so you could get off the train not only at Poughkeepsie but at Poughkeepsie North as they have at White Plains and

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that would take you right up to this bridge. I saw a complete self enabling structural entity that would support housing, businesses, entertainment areas, restaurants, bars you name it. Anything frankly, you can do anything you want with it even today the mixture of uses there, really does vary over time so could the visual picture of it vary.

Interviewer: Imagine if this thing was complete. How you think this thing would impact Poughkeepsie, the Hudson Valley?

Loedy: Well my opinion, this my idea, if it was complete of the way I see this, and by the way I will back up a little bit because I never said I would just want to do this. Let's say I was uh who was that fella with all that money... a couple of guys, Gates, if I were Gates, I wouldn't go out there and just do that, because Gates could literally write a check for this. My idea all along was to make a feasibility study that we would study the structure, legally, environmentally, economically, any which way and if the study would permit, the outcome of the study was that it made sense to do it. Then you would have the people there willing to finance it. That's how this all works. So based on a study that says this will work and you would execute this idea. I think it would be just a wonder of the world. People would come here the same as if they go to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower, they go to India to see the Taj Mahal, they go to Rio De Janeiro to see Sugarloaf with the Christ statue on top, if you ever saw a picture of that, that thing is about 600 ft up in the air. These are the kind of things that people are willing to talk about even if they've never been there and most of them don't get to see these things, but they somehow... they get the human, human beings get excited about things that are extra-ordinary. So that's what I think. I think this would have put the Hudson Valley on the world map, not on the New York State map, on the world map.

Interviewer: How was your design received by the business, political communities?

Loedy: Okay that's a good question that frankly, officially, and when I say officially, at the time the Poughkeepsie Journal carried some articles and the basic attitude was that this was something that was too big. Nobody could grasp it. I mean, who needs to go shopping up on a bridge when we have plenty shopping centers down on route 9, and who would want to live up there. So it was not well received. Now among many of my friends who were just talking to me on the side would say, "Ed this is crazy and fantastic idea" and so on... It was probably received kind of like the Eiffel Tower when by the way, it was built as part of an exhibition and when the decision came along to keep it after the exposition was over, then how was that idea received. Everybody in Paris went nuts you're going to keep this thing here you got to knock this thing down. This was the ugliest thing built in Paris and I do not know the details on how it ended up staying, but it stayed. A hundred years later it was the greatest thing ever to happen to Paris, but that's how humans are, you know. Change is difficult for most humans and if something has been around long enough, guess what, then it's a good thing. Why do you think Italians love meatballs and, like, Hungarians like goulash or the Hindus like cow flops, not because they studied it, they just do what they have always done and are stuck on it. So if you change it, a hundred years later you might have Indians eating meatballs and Italians eating cow flops. I don't know, but I swear to God, I betcha that's how it works.

[Laughter]

Loedy: Don't you think so?

Interviewer: Great can you tell me some of the benefits that would come if your design was considered?

Loedy: Well, to go back to what I said earlier, in order to get to my design, it was my idea an idea at first, then I realize because I have one foot solid, maybe more than one foot, solid in the business world as an architect... so I realize you just can't build something like this without understanding the financial and economic impacts. Would this had come to fruition as I said earlier; it would be a fantastic thing here. There are thousands of people who would have jobs. This would be a fantastic tourist attraction. I mean from aside what I have already said, you could take a train from this place to New York, you could take a car to New York, you could take a boat to New York, you could take a helicopter to New York, I guess you could walk or swim to New York, if you had the time, but I mean its just a fantastic place. You could have windmills on it to generate power, you could have underwater turbines that would take advantage of the tides that go in and out because the Hudson River is half a river and half a [fjord], you if know what a fjord is; that over in the Norwegian area there are these mountains with all these cervices so when the tide rises water rushes into these valleys. Well you get salt water coming all the way up to Newburg you get seagulls nowadays you can get them up this way so there are a lot of ways to capture energy. Solar energy, I mean, this could be a fantastic by the way; a completely self supporting place to live. You could anchor... what I am going to say... a couple of warships, I don't know your feelings about war or not war, but there are plenty of extra warships around. You could put one there as a museum... you could have regular boat trips down to New York like they used to have in the old days, or when I was a kid, you could get on to one of these boats to New York and back. You could have bungee jumping contests. People would say to me, "Loedy you're crazy. What's with this bungee jumping"? You bungee jumping what's so different about bungee jumping from... for, for instance speed skating or downhill skiing? It's a sport that downhill skiing has been around for a long time. Somehow prestige accrued. Why? Because it's been around for a long time, bungee jumping hasn't been around for a long... but is it any crazier than coming down a goddamn mountain at 65mph on a pair of wooden sticks then jumping off? A bridge on a rubber band, frankly, I think it's safer to come off the bridge because at least you know you are going to stop. Those guys coming down the mountains, you never wonder how they're going to stop. So this could have been a fantastic and by the way, I don't rule out all together yet. The walkway is in the works right now, but I suggest that it is possible that the walkway people will find out something I have said all along, the most expensive part of the that bridge is the maintaining of the structural integrity which requires its continuous painting which I checked just recently with the New York Bridge Authority and I was told and they told me not to quote them but they said \$30 million dollars just to paint this bridge. That would need to be done on a continuous basis. How do you pay for that you charge the average person who walks across with their family? "Yes sir, that's \$615 dollars for your ticket, and the kids goes half price that's \$312 dollars for those two kids a piece" and so on. You can't do that. So who is going to pay for painting this bridge? The tax payers are going to pay. Now my idea called for no taxes, the idea was this was a business where everybody had to carry his or her weight. So I am thinking if this walkway takes off, that's terrific, but it might just happen that at both ends, maybe even along the walkway, someone's going to say, "Listen I

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will pay you guys \$200 dollars a week if I can put a hot dog stand here”, or McDonald’s says, “I tell you what I’ll pay you a \$1 million a year to put McDonald’s down there” and Marriot might say, “I’ll lease this spot over here for \$18 million a year to put this hotel here” so before you know it you have my ideas on the two ends subsidizing the walkway and then in some fashion this thing might start crawling all over the bridge and end up looking something like I had in mind. It’s not to be ruled out because that will pay for it all. Otherwise we all, as taxpayers, will have to pay for it all.

Interviewer: The other thing you mentioned yesterday that would be advantageous to your design related to the concrete and steel. Could you kind of talk to me about it as well?

Loedy: It’s a very good point what I said earlier. The maintenance of the structure as it stands right now requires continuous painting. Now painting sounds easy you just get a brush and you go like this. Not in today’s time when you have to be so careful about polluting things and God forbid a little speck of dust falls off the bridge and you gotta to catch it and all that now. So if you ever watch how things are painted on the bridge now, if any of you have driven through bridges you’ve seen these gigantic machines on the side you get these big ducts and as you go by and goes. [Loedy makes a sound effect] What they are like? Gigantic vacuum cleaners on wheels and anything they do brushing, scraping goes straight into a vacuum cleaner. So when you scrape that bridge you can’t have any dust fall into the river. God forbid some fish is going to swallow that. He’s going to do something so before you know, your cooking this fish your going to have a brown spot on your face because you ate that piece of rust, whatever, but the idea is that you can’t paint bridges like you used to. You have to go through the process of protecting the environment and its... that’s why, when the fellas told me \$30 million bucks, I said, you know, \$50 is probably more like it. So my idea of building this structure was to use the existing bridge structure to support it all, but it would be totally encased and situated. So the existing steel and concrete isn’t exposed to the weather anymore consequently you do not need to continuously maintain it, because this would be a big saving so you think just on the basis of that you save yourself \$30 million dollars. Let’s stretch it for ten years I think it’s more than that so \$3 million a year just to maintain, you saved that.

Interviewer: Great... Okay, I want to switch a little bit and start going into talking about the process of meeting up with the different people and then getting up to a point where you eventually had to travel a little bit. So could you talk about the first time you started pursuing this vision.

Loedy: See, I’m glad you remember all this stuff, yesterday when I was down there, I told them everything and here’s a big component of my story. Where I at first came up with this idea and for about ten years I simply viewed myself as the idea guy and I frankly did nothing else about it. And that’s the thing, people said, “Ed that’s a neat idea” and I said, “yeah.” I was waiting for someone to maybe pick up this idea. About ten years after that, I was down on the beach down in the Bahamas, on vacation, with my family and my eighteen year old boy and I was on the beach and I am trying to teach him lessons about life that he was about to confront and I said, “you know if you want to do something the way you go about that is that you put that in your head. That I’m going to become a movie maker I’m going to become a concert violinist I am going to be whatever and you put in here [points to his head] and you focus on that and you just

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stay with that and that's something you really want to do, you just say to your self I'm going to do it, and you will end up doing it." So the kid in all his brightness as an eighteen year old kid turns the tables on me and says, "oh yeah dad, that's all there is to it, why didn't you do this bridge already?" So I said, "well that's a good point", but I said, "this is a big deal this is not just becoming a violist." He said, "yeah but you said whatever it was." So I said, "Ok." So by the time I got back from that vacation I made up my mind to do just that. I said ten years had gone by and nothing had happened and nobody seems to be interested. I think still is a good idea so I will do it. So I started calling the owner, a fellow named Gordon, I think Schreiber Miller and I had met him once before, but I knew he was difficult to get a hold of. I made up my mind I would take my good old time be patient. Call them once a week... I called them for months. The lady always answered the phone with the same thing, "sorry he's not here." I was very apologetic to bother him I would like to speak to him tell him if he gets a chance. I was playing my game. I knew sooner or later I would get to her and I did. After a while I started to become her friend and she started to feel bad that Gordon wouldn't talk to me. As it turns out later, she was his lady friend so I had an excellent end. She finally arranged for me to meet Gordon and I meet with him because clearly the thing I had to do is have a right to that bridge. In the same fashion, I might not have to own it; if I had the right to develop it was another thing. If I was a partner with him to do things that would have been another thing, even if I had a limited time to do something on some agreement. I had a right to that bridge. I needed that in order to basically make my idea stick with the people I wanted to talk to because, you know, what I could say to you, "I want to paint the Eiffel Tower pink" and you would say to me, "yeah so what Ed, you got any other good stories"? But if I told you that, "you know we just acquired rights to the Eiffel Tower and we were going to paint it pink or were thinking about it," they're going to say, "oh you have rights here so yeah that is a different story." So anyway, I tried to convince him and tried to persuade him to make some kind of a deal. He had this bridge for ten years already and hadn't done didly squat with this bridge. He collected about \$10,000 dollars a month for two years from Central Hudson because they had lines over the bridge, power lines, [clears throat] they caught on to his deal quick and they put their lines under water so that fell through. So after that he had no income. So I said, "well Gordon, maybe you think my idea is a little pie in the sky," which he always said, but I said, "What ideas do you have?" and he didn't have any. [Clears throat] Well he wouldn't make any kind of deal with me and I became frustrated so I said, "OK there are other ways," by the way there are always other ways. And so I came back and he hadn't paid his taxes, had been totally delinquent. He wouldn't even bother keeping up the navigational lights on the bridge which were a safety matter. So I made an arrangement with the county through my attorneys. We formed a cooperation called Sky Track Incorporated and we formed a corporation and we made a deal with the county so they would foreclose on the bridge and then we would be assigned the county's rights in effect this would give us control over the bridge. Now interestingly enough you wouldn't ask but I will tell you were only taking ½ the bridge because the county stops right in the middle of the river. I had that going so I agreed. So I went across the river and made my same plea speech to Ulster County, well they listened politely and they entertained some letters from my attorneys but they didn't act on that. So now I had ½ of the bridge and then this was about fifteen years ago and there were some tough economic times and I had so many things on my plate that I had to deal with economically and financially, and frankly even domestically with my family. This had to go a little bit on the back burner and during that time was when the country was proceeding ahead with the foreclosure on the bridge and when the newspaper got a hold of that, of course, everyone got nervous whose buying this bridge. My

name wasn't connected. Who's Sky Track? What's this mysterious firm? And little by little this balled up into something. The county felt the pressure and did renege on the deal with us. We had the right to sue the county but I never pursued that. So there was my second chance of getting hold of the bridge. So a little time went by, maybe a couple of years, then I was remarried. A completely separate matter here but during that time I had a great advocated, my second wife and present wife she found out about this and she said, "Why don't we talk to this guy Gordon?" Well, I said, "I already talked to this guy Gordon." [clears throat] "Well lets talk to him again", I said, "Ok." So we started this process again. Making phone calls and so on, which was easier this time and I was able to get a hold of Gordon this time. I went down to see Gordon, had a meeting with him and low and behold would you believe he agrees to a deal. Yep I forget the details but we had a deal. We had the right to develop or at least go through the process of doing all the due diligence. All the analysis that was required to see if this whole idea made any sense at all, which I was not going to bother to do without having a right to the bridge because an analysis like this is more than if you had enough money in your pocket to go pizza that night. So he said, "Fine." We come back here, I instructed my attorneys to prepare a contract to send it to him. They did, and I never heard from Gordon again, and you know by this time we are twenty years into this thing, and I'm getting a little tired. So I actually at this point stopped putting energy into this, found out that he handed the rights over to a Vito Moreno. Vito Moreno was a partner of his but had nothing to do with the bridge itself. Vito was given the bridge so Gordon could get way from under the deal with the Coast Guard, who was now breathing down his neck to make sure he put the proper lighting on it, and who knows whatever other requirements. I heard there were some \$150,000 in fines involved and Gordon's way of dealing with this... he bought it for a dollar, and he sold it for a dollar and now Vito had it and Vito was his strong man. He made it clear that he could control Vito and, Vito now, Vito was hiding this bridge. Vito did call me at one time and needed some help from me because a local disc-jockey wanted to hang bras from one end of the bridge to the other to deal with some kind of a breast cancer thing. Which, I think the idea was fine but I was getting to the point where I wasn't going to be involved anymore and all the local attitude was, "You guys are crazy/nuts. All you bridge people are nuts, this bra thing is the last thing we want to deal with." So I declined to assist and then the next part of the story is interesting. Vito for unknown reasons decided to give the bridge to Bill Sepe who was counting all along to put a walkway on it and he did do that after which Schreiber calls me up and says, "Ed I need your help, Vito gave my bridge away." [chuckles] I said to Schreiber, in so many words, it's too late now. Twenty years I have been dealing with this maybe more. I said, "I don't care what happens now." I said, "My ideas aren't coming on and I'm out of it now." So that is how Bill Sepe ended up with it and that basically describes my attempts to get a hold of the bridge and my inability ultimately to be able to get a hold of it.

Interviewer: Just for purposes of color, could you describe what Gordon Schreiber was like on a personal, level one to one level?

Loedy: He was a very interesting guy, I actually only had two really good meetings with him, and each one was at restaurants down in the King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Each lunch was probably two- three hours long and we ate and drank and it was just a wonderful meeting. As for meetings [Loedy puts his thumb up] they were perfect meetings but as far as results, no good. He was an older feller, and I say older I mean at that time I though he was older but he was colorful in that sense but I didn't have a whole lot to do with him. He has written me some letters for

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somebody who was claiming to be involved in big deals like buying this bridge from Conrail and having investors to deal with it, his letters were always handwritten, very scribbled all over the place... a little difficult to read, but, I can't say a whole lot more. He was a fun guy to have lunch with though.

Interviewer: Do you have an opinion why he might have gone towards [Loedy checks his watch] Vito Moreno rather than stick with you?

Loedy: I really don't know. I think I will venture this guess, Vito Moreno was in his pocket so by giving this to Vito he felt he didn't give it way. Vito very much surprised him. Vito then gave it away, that when he called me and he got all upset and wanted me to help get it back. I, on the other hand, wasn't in his pocket, he and I disagreed all a long. My plan was, I think, too big for him. He was forever looking to make a buck there, and I think his version of making a buck was can we rent it to someone to run wires across it, can we hang bras across it, can we get bungee jumping off of it. If he was here he might say something completely different. I don't know, but he and I did not see eye to eye and that's why we couldn't make a deal.

Interviewer: Did you ever have conversations or meet up with Vito Moreno yourself?

Loedy: Never met the man, I spoke with him, he made me agent for what I think... what they call railroad management association. I have a document in my files that says Ed Loedy is here by for the agent for this outfit but I don't know what that meant because I don't know they meant. I don't believe for a minute it would have been honored by anybody. If I walked into the mayor's office or the Dutchess County Executive Office with that paper they probably would have respectfully said since they knew me, well Ed this is very nice we don't know what this means. I am sorry we can't help you.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your relationship with Sepe?

Loedy: Yeah Sepe and I met, first time probably twenty five years ago he came into my office. I had this picture which you have a copy of [pointing behind him] behind me [clears throat] and he sat there and he was a good boy [chuckles] and he said I would like to talk to you about this bridge. So I've been the bridge guy for five years at least by now and he explained to me his idea of a walkway and you know to me, doing a walkway there. [slight pause] I would compare if you had the New York philharmonic at your disposal, would you ask them to play Happy Birthday or one of Beethoven's symphonies? So I didn't think he was taking advantage of the opportunity that was there and I basically explained this to him and he was nice. He left and we have had other talks since but he decided to make me an adversary. He, I think, after awhile he got upset with me. I don't know why, I never got upset with him. Maybe he felt I should have thought more of his walkway idea. I told him, I said, "Why don't we join up and I will design you a walkway that you can't even imagine," because the walkway being purposed is fine, and by the way, I have nothing against this walkway... but this walkway... but this walkway as you get on one end, if you have seen any visual renditions of this, nowadays is very easy to do with a computer, its almost as if you were bowling ball sitting in a bowling lane and you look down like[arms and hands make a point] this and that's it. Now obviously that's not were you want to be looking because the views are fantastic any which way, but you just keep walking and after a

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while the views... I don't know I haven't walked over that. Peter Sala has walked over that but the idea to me wasn't enough, look I'll design you a walkway that will go over the bridge, that will go through and come out the other side, go up and down, you could stop for a hotdog, you could go to the movies, you might be so busy you'll never get to the other end the first day. Well this did not entice Bill Sepe. As far as he was concerned, I was crazy and frankly did not want to talk to me a whole lot about anything. Peter Sala can tell you stories about that separately, about Sepe, what he thought of me... [chuckles].

Interviewer: You told me an anecdote story about the bridge yesterday that concerned your father had known about this bridge back in Hungary as I believe it was.

Loedy: Well my uncle was an engineer in Budapest and he came to visit here in the 60s and at that time I was aware of the bridge but I had not my idea and he enlightened me about the bridge. He said, "Do you realize that this bridge is world famous?" I said, "no." He says, "We studied this in engineering school in Budapest, this was the longest and biggest bridge that was built at that time in the whole world," and so that was just an interesting little story that twenty-five years, twenty-years later whenever I had my idea. I realized that here's another little treat that goes into this story about my uncle who knew all about this bridge because he never knew about my idea. He passed on by that time but that I thought was a very little interesting story, that's why I told you the other day about it.

Interviewer: That's great. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the bridge or your experience with the bridge?

Loedy: I just trying to think because yesterday we talked [clear throat] you didn't ask me any questions yesterday. [Pointing to someone] I just sat down and I ranted for an hour and fifteen minutes, James was there right? [Pointing his finger] And I have to confess, I'm not in the business being in front of these, this paraphernalia, that the new word used now, all this paraphernalia used for other things and so yesterday it all came flowing out of me.

Someone in the background: It is flowing out of you.

Loedy: Well it is, but there are a number of reasons because you and I met more than once. I wanted to make sure of that. I met James and Jason. I wanted to do that on purpose. Katie and I just met but she is a very nice lady, she keeps smiling on occasion, so I can tell that I am doing Okay when I see a smile and Peter of course, we go all the way back. So I feel comfortable, but I tell you what, if I was on NBC, it would be a different thing. I would be looking at all these strangers and I'm not used to this. So yesterday went a lot smoother and he didn't ask me one question [pointing to Interviewer] I told ahead, the questions Peter [looking at Peter] you know why he is asking those? Cause I told those things yesterday. If I had to think of the stuff right now I would think geez I don't know. I'd be looking at this thing [turns the chair]. [Laughter in the room] So I am just trying to think what else there might have been. I think you covered Sepe, we covered Gordon Miller, we covered the idea. Ok there [clears throat] is one little thing that maybe, we should add. After I had come up with this idea I realized there was a thing such as the London Bridge. Now London Bridge back in the 19... no 1750s. They literally built a bridge across the Thames and they made it into a city block they didn't just build a bridge to

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travel over. They built houses and stores, I am talking, five-six story buildings and this was actually a complete city block so there was really like a city within a city on a bridge. There also are other bridges around the Ponta Vecchio which is in Italy is a three-story high bridge which has residences and businesses on it and so recently I read someplace, somebody, somewhere wanted to encourage the idea of using bridges for more than what we use them for. That while building all that infrastructure which is just dramatically expensive just to accommodate vehicles and traffic, you just might as well go on and for a minor additional cost add the shops and the dwellings and all that to it, and use these bridges for other things, and frankly down the future, I think these things are going to happen. So I think that is an important thing to do to think about. To put this idea of mine into perspective I guess over thirty years I have had so many people tell me I'm crazy that I'm looking for things [chuckles] to kind of shore up my idea.

Interviewer: Just a couple of final things. You've done a fantastic, great interview.

Loedy: You just want me to buy you a beer after this [laughter] which were going to do, you're coming [pointing at the camera].

Someone else: Maybe after class.

Loedy: It's too late [laughter] you've got to do Peter yet [points to him].

Interviewer: Let me ask you [background noise and laughter] what do you see is going to be the future of the bridge?

Loedy: Very interesting question because I have a little picture [points in the direction of the picture] which Katie, I think should photograph, if you see the picture on the bottom right hand corner there, Katie, the black and white thing. I see the future. I hope this is going to happen. A future, frankly, the future I see right now is with the Dyson Foundation behind it, with the New York State Parks Department behind it, I think its possible that this bridge will be saved and will be at least used for a walkway. So I see that as an immediate possibility for the future. About five years ago I saw a different thing, I saw the weakest link in any chain is the smallest little thing and when that breaks there goes the chain and if you take a look at this bridge the very middle of it there is, a small little link that is hung between these two gigantic cantilevers and there it hangs and if you take a look at the picture that I prepared it basically imagines that, that fell out and I imagined if at some point something is going to give on this bridge, that piece is going to fall out and I just got a little angry and I took the damn thing and sketched it and said you know when that happens you might as well just make a sculpture out of this thing and guess what make a dog out of this side and a cat out of the other side and have them looking at each other and I'd be happy to give you that sketch so you can see what I am talking about. It was a kind of frustration that I had with the fact for, by that time, for twenty, twenty-five years nothing had happened with the bridge but you know there's always something you can do with everything. So that was a little idea about the bridge as an aside or maybe not as an aside. I have a limited number of prints of this bridge in color, that I have on a very selective basis given away on occasion. Somebody offers to buy one but when I give them away I usually make them very personalized and I have, for instance a friend of mine who owns BTM here in Dutchess County, or Hert Redel who owns businesses. I have given them drawings of the bridge which I have

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personalized by making it look like it was their headquarters, Redel World Headquarters, World Headquarters of BTM and I would like to add in the case of BTM a lot of little pieces of equipment around and so they have it hanging in their offices for like a fun thing, you know. I'm their friend and its something to look at and frankly I think one day there might be a group of people who, before I kick the bucket, maybe I will give way another thirty to fifty of them and maybe they'll get together on some occasion and compare their pictures that would be a fun thing for them.

Interviewer: Ann do you have any questions?

Someone else: I thought of a Democratic Donkey

[Laughter]

Loedy: Well maybe that's what it should be an elephant or a donkey at the time I thought of a cat and dog do you see it Katie?

Katie: Umhum.

Loedy: I mean it took me a minute and a half to draw it, I did not try too hard but I think I captured the idea.

Interviewer: One other question, yesterday you kind of showed me a couple of other designs that you had, a colonial one could you talk about that one.

Loedy: Well I showed you a little sketch of an alternate visual image. So this bridge, the whole idea behind that, Jason, is that my concept isn't really rooted in that particular drawing. It doesn't have to look like that, its as if you took a beautiful woman and you said there are twenty gowns, you could put on her, so any one of those gowns can be put on that woman or any of those she could wear. So this could look any number of different ways. If you gave this project to twenty good architects, and you gave the basic part we want to use this structure to support your plan, they're going to come up with twenty different things. They're all going to look different but not for a moment does it take away from the basic idea. So that little sketch I had [clear throat] was meant to illustrate that this idea did not really depend on architectural language.

Interviewer: Excellent work. Thank you very much.

Loedy: Glad you liked it, Peter what did you think?

Peter: After what you did...

[Laughter]

Loedy: I think I'll go.

[End of Interview]