

LOREEN TIPTON CORNETTE

Lori Cornette was a student at William and Mary during the somewhat turbulent years 1969 to 1972. During this time she was involved with residence hall work, serving as a dorm president and as president of the Women's Dormitory Association, and from 1973 to 1976 she was associate dean of residence hall life. She spoke freely of some of the concerns of students in the late 1960s and early 1970s, comparing student life then and now.

Mrs. Cornette read and approved the transcript shortly before leaving her job in the office of residence hall life.

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Interviewee Wm. T. Conette

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Place Tinker-Coleman Room, Swann Library

Interviewer Emily Williams

Session number 1

Length of tape 87 mins.

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W&M students as activists in general	3 mins.
in relation to Vietnam	2 mins.
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Sarah Billingham case	2 mins.
Flat Hat (nature of)	1 min.
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student aims and accomplishments, current reaction to administration	17 mins.

Lori Tipton Cornette

February 5, 1976

Williamsburg, Virginia

Williams: I've realized, too, as I sat down and wrote down these things to ask you ^{that} in a way I was asking you to speak for students and that's not exactly the way I want it to appear. ^[I want to talk about] The students you knew and illustrate by your own personal experiences when you were here as a student what thus and so meant to the students you came in contact with.

Cornette: ~~I think that probably~~ I don't know that I was in with a particularly conservative group of people, but I didn't live with students who were particularly radical, either. I think the groups I tended to work with were more middle-of-the-road on a lot of things, ^{not} particularly reactionary in one way or another. I think we got excited or angry about a lot of things that came in. Maybe ^{that} in [^] sense, we were reactionary; [^] it took an issue to get us started.

Williams: Would you say most William and Mary students -- I've heard it said -- were middle-of-the-road and didn't get excited?

Cornette: I think so. I think there were small groups on both sides. [^] Superliberals, you know -- and I don't mean this to sound nasty [^] -- but the students who were going to Washington to march in the peace rallies, ^{and} [^] Almost the John Birchers on the other hand -- other students who probably know would fall in behind George Wallace and then would have been very staunch supporters of Richard Nixon and even Barry

Goldwater three or four years before.

Williams: So you would not characterize William and Mary students that you knew, say, from '69 to '72 as activists?

Cornette: Not really. I think when we did something we did it because we were prodded, whether it was by our conscience or peers or whatever. There were very few students who were dedicated enough to work for any cause steadily, whether the cause was the attempt ^{to bring} the war in Vietnam to an end, abolish R.O.T.C., the Board of Visitors, or Dr. Paschall.

Williams: From the Flat Hats I've read, the major activity having to do with Vietnam was the peace vigil that was held for a time, I think, every week outside the Campus Center. Can you try to characterize the feelings toward Vietnam on the part of most students?

Cornette: Well, in October of my freshman year -- I guess it was October of '69 -- there was a moratorium ^{and} I don't remember exactly why, but there were a number of students who encouraged other students to wear black armbands, boycott classes, ^{all} these things in support of cessation of hostilities in Vietnam. ~~That happened and~~ some students did do that, and I think there were students who felt threatened by a group that really felt particularly strongly about it. ^[they] I don't really think ^{they} tried to strong-arm any other students into boycotting classes or wearing armbands, but ~~who felt~~ there was considerable peer pressure on them to do that when they really didn't want to. So, it was again, I think,

a very small proportion of the campus population ^{who} felt
 very strongly about it. Another segment was willing to
 go along to the extent of wearing armbands or having an
 excuse not to go to class, but there was still a large
 majority ^{probably} that completely ignored it.

Williams: And was there great protest against R.O.T.C. here as there
 was on many campuses?

Cornette: No, I don't really think so. I think there was a waning of
 interest just because more and more guys were reluctant to
 get into any kind of extracurricular activity that potentially
 meant they would be sent overseas and shot at. There
 again, there was a group of students ~~were~~ very vocally
 opposed to it, but the vast majority of students, I think,
 felt that it should be up to the individual ~~and not run~~

I don't know
 what I was responding to.
~~In fact,~~

Williams: ~~That's right.~~ Again as I read the Flat Hat I get the impres-
 sion of great clashes between the students and the administra-
 tion. Now is that a fairly accurate picture, or does that
 just reflect that the editor of the Flat Hat and the admini-
 stration clashed? And this is not over just one year; this
 is over a period.

Sure.
 Cornette: ¹ The social regulations really, I think, were the greatest
 source of conflict. The fact that until 1968 women were re-
 quired to wear skirts in public; My freshman year we still
 had hours; we had to check in every night. We had to
 have ^{parental} permission to leave the campus; even if we

wanted just to go home overnight we had to have parental permission to do that. Social regulations for men and women were two very different things: women had them and men didn't. Students felt that there was no reason why more students shouldn't be allowed ^{to live} off-campus. It seems to me my freshman year senior men were allowed to live off-campus, and I think senior women were going to have the same privilege the following year. Again that seemed rather inconsistent to some of us and the fact -- well, you know, all sorts of things sort of followed. First of all, senior men were allowed to live off-campus, and then when senior women were allowed to live off-campus it suddenly became more and more apparent to women continuing to live in college housing that if you could live off-campus and be free and you were the same age but chose to live on-campus then you should have the same freedoms. So there [#] was great conflict about having to report where you were going, ~~the~~ in fact, I think that many women students felt that it was no one's business, particularly the house mother's business, to know truthfully or not that you were going to Richmond for the weekend or you were going to visit somebody -- or even if you decided to spend the night somewhere else on campus you had to report where that was going to be.

Williams: And they acted on this.

Cornette: Oh, yes. I think probably with the exception of first-semester freshmen, who thought that rules were probably there

to be obeyed, restrictions about curfew and visitation were not ignored so much as circumvented. You went out and had someone else flip your card for you, and then you knocked on the end door and got let in, and that was pretty much standard practice. There was a way around everything, and it didn't take very long to figure out what that way was. So I think for visitation it took maybe women particularly a little bit longer to come around to a feeling that this was something that you could do anyway. Again, maybe that was because women's residence halls were more closely patrolled than men's were since we had house mothers, older women living actually in the buildings, and the men didn't. They just had graduate students who were more or less viewed as babysitters to be taken advantage of if you happened to need something they could give you.

Williams: Now you were president of the Women's Dorm Association in your senior year -- last year, I should say. Had some of this died down? Had the rules been changed to the point where there was not this constant agitation? Was there still much, you felt, to be done when you . . .

Cornette: Well, by my last year there were still curfews. The buildings were locked every night, but if you wanted to stay out after curfew you could fill out a late card and law students sat in the lobbies of all the women's dorms from curfew until 6:00 the next morning, and they filled out a late card.

They collected all the cards that came in, signed your card. The law student checked you off, and he went away at 6:00. Now, there were certain problems inherent in this. The fact that the law student left at 6:00 and officially the buildings didn't ^{re}open for you to go back out until 7:00, so there was this twilight zone between 6 A.M. and 7 A.M. It got to the point that it was really easier to be gone all night (because that was essentially what was happening anyway). But by the last year -- well, even by the end of my freshman year ^{we} we could petition to have visitation on weekends from noon to curfew. The big announcement came ⁱⁿ the spring of '72. Graves had determined that that privilege would be extended up to a maximum of twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week ^{if} students chose ^{to} do so, as all residence halls did. There were still students who ^{didn't} ~~don't~~ want that much, and certainly that's a matter of individual choice and that's what was intended when self-determination was implemented.

Williams: Did you have any kind of a -- platform's really too strong a word, maybe -- but any certain aims to accomplish when you went in as W.D.A. president?

Cornette: We wanted to get rid ^{of} what we felt were outmoded social regulations. We wanted to have a system of R.A.s set up in all residence halls (men ^{'s} and women ^{'s}) that was consistent. Even my last year in school, women who were freshmen R.A.s didn't get any compensation at all. Male R.A.s in freshmen buildings

got a single occupancy of a double, plus payment, and we felt that that rule was rather inconsistent^e given the fact that there were fairly[#] large[#] demands on us in terms of time that we would donate. You know, it was an honor to be a R.A.; certainly it was. The competition for those positions was very intense, but it wasn't such a great honor that we felt that we could afford to do that and not have the time to hold down another job and not get any compensation at all, when the men across the street were getting considerable, so we worked^{very} real hard. Chuck Penkerton and I were^{the} students^{on the} committee to work with Dean Moseley and Dean Barnes to have a uniform R.A. system set up which was implemented the next year. I think that's just begun[#] to really work[#] effectively the past two years. We also worked on setting up a system of dorm councils within the women's buildings because we felt that students within the residence halls should be able to stop other students' hands if they didn't sign out on a late^{card,} call, if they came in sometime between 6:00 and 7:00, or committed one of the other multiple sins that were possible under the social regulations that we lived with in then. Also, the year I was involved in W.D.A we attempted to encourage the sororities to at least make a decision about whether or not to make the new women's housing complex a sorority complex, and we suggested that^{not} that be done, and eventually the sororities did decide not to go in.

Williams: I want to ask you about that some more later. One time I

read ⁱⁿ the Flat Hat -- and I don't know what year this was--
 said the W.D.A. was ^{the} "enforcement arm of something like
 outmoded practices." How would you respond to this, ^{having been}
 involved in it?

Cornette: From an administrative standpoint, from the college's stand-
 point that's what we were. ~~Well,~~ I don't think we really
 took it that seriously. I mean, we went through the motions
 because we felt it was better for us to do it than for the
 administration to do it. In that sense, it was. My fresh-
 man year there was a horrible punishment called "strict campus."
 If you came in late one night, and you accumulated a certain
 number of "late minutes," then you could be "strict campused"
 for the weekend, which meant that you had to be in at 7:00 and
 stay in your room. Well, as you can imagine that wasn't
 really a particularly effective punishment; ~~and~~ it was a
 joke, and we really didn't go along with that.
 By '71-'72 the staff members in each building or the
 dorm councils were enforcing regulations, and I use the term
 "enforcing" loosely -- we were taking care of ^{things}, let me put it
 that way.

Williams: Did you feel somewhat caught between the students and the
 administration on the other hand?

Cornette: No, I think we were playing to two constituencies, and, you
 know, the tempo was slowed up or got faster depending on who
 you were talking to. And I don't feel that was a compromise
 situation, particularly. I think that we did what we had to do

for other students, well, my role anyway and at this point social regulations were getting to be more and more of a joke. I ^{don't} feel that students thought we ^{were} forcing something down their throats. Again we served to expedite some disciplinary matters that we just didn't feel the administration had any reason to hear. We took care of ^{them internally} it entirely.

Williams: What was your reception like when you had to deal with the administration, say, with a demand or petition for open hours or something of this nature? I guess it would depend on whose office you were going through.

Cornette: Well, my freshman year, really, was the last year on weekends that that was the big deal, and that went primarily through the senate and the Board of Student Affairs (I don't know whether that was set up in '68 or '69).
~~It seems to me~~
 So most of what was accomplished initially in terms of setting up a procedure which made visitation possible originated in the B.S.A. in '71 and '72 as there was more pressure to change social regulations. The W.D.A. worked very closely with Dean Moseley primarily, and Dean Donaldson, and we worked there and S.A. and B.S.A. worked on Dean Barnes and Dr. Paschall, so it seems to be there was some chipping away there when Dr. Graves came in. Certainly I think his feeling was consistent with that of most students at that point -- that we were for all practical purposes if not adults at least individuals

who were capable of making decisions concerning the conduct of their own lives for themselves.

Williams: I was a student at this time, too, so it's hard for me to try to ~~to~~ look at it in some sort of a historical perspective, but if you had to account for the reasons why on this campus and other campuses, there was this feeling ~~see~~ (on most campuses in the late '60s) -- why would you say this was? Could you account for some reasons?

Cornette: Demands for increased social independence?

Williams: Yes.

Cornette: Well, I really don't have much perspective either. I think we felt that ~~since~~ we were high school ^{graduates,} had we chosen not to go to college or go to some other college that we would have had the things that we were asking for. So we didn't really understand why it was necessary for the college to act in loco parentis for individuals who were certainly of age to start making those decisions for themselves.

Williams: Did the students seem fairly satisfied with their student leadership in these matters, or does it go back to ~~like the~~ corps of students who wants more, and there's a corps who wants less, ~~being a problem?~~

Cornette: ~~Well,~~ I think that there was a group of students that was very vocal about wanting these changes made, and there were a lot of students who behaved as if the changes had been made, and ~~you know,~~ I'm sure there was a small -- well, not three or four, but

a group that would have preferred the changes had not been made [^] because ~~certainly, you know~~ if you were a girl and you had a date and you weren't having a particularly good time you couldn't say at 12:00 that you had to be back in your dorm. There were people who didn't want to have to make that kind of choice. That sounds like I'm making a judgment, and I guess in a sense I am, but, ~~you know~~ I think that most students felt that we should be able to make the choice for ourselves, and if we wanted to go back then we should say, "It's time," and if not then we should be able to determine that as well.

Williams: While I'm talking about student leadership I'll bring this in, though it seems somewhat extraneous to social regulations. The B.S.A. had been set up shortly before you came. Did this operate as adjunct to S.A. or was it -- at the time that it was set up I know students were rather upset. They said it was just one more layer of talk between the students and the administration. Now as W.D.A. president you would have been on the B.S.A., right?

Cornette: No. I don't remember exactly what the composition was. My freshman year I was very impressed with B.S.A., the super-organization they had elected student leaders and faculty members and administrators who seemed to have the potential to make a great deal of difference. Now, I think that that perception has lessened over the years. When I was in school I think generally the B.S.A. was perceived as being the best hope you had. I think

the Student Association has tended to be very vocal every time another organization has even been suggested. It can only cut into their sphere of influence, and I think that's a very valid complaint, but I think that the B.S.A. ⁱⁿ at least '69-'70 and '70-'71 was a very powerful tool in terms of ~~λ~~ -- you know, it's not just students now. Here are people that the administration recognizes as being rational adults; they're faculty members. You hired them to teach us; therefore they must have some sense, and therefore if their recommendations agree with ours then they must be able to carry more weight. I don't know that I ever had enough contact with the upper echelon of the administration who ultimately made decisions to know what their perception of the B.S.A. was, but I think that a lot of students felt that the B.S.A. had the potential to make a big difference.

Williams: And you sensed this feeling your first two years you're talking about.

Cornette: Particularly the first two years, maybe because there were so many things we felt immediately threatened by -- ~~Maybe~~ maybe more so than now. Maybe that's one reason why the B.S.A. now is not perceived as being a strong organization. The issues are so much different. Things like grade ^{review} averages, the almost exclusive decision of the faculty -- I would think that any time you're dealing with a body of 470 that's very used to making its own decisions it's going to be a lot harder to get something through than when you're dealing with just a whole large number

of relatively minute and inconsequential social issues. Now. I don't mean to suggest that they weren't important to us then, because they certainly were, but on a relative scale I don't think that being allowed to stay out until 2:00 on Saturday rather than 1:00 is as important as grading.

But certainly students ^{now} perceive B.S.A. as being as impotent ^{has they} are. B.S.A. has ^{made a recommendation} ~~never written a~~ in favor of grade review; the faculty hasn't ^{acted upon it}. Therefore, the B.S.A. must not have as much powers as it's cracked up to ~~be have~~.

Williams: One of the issues that was an immediate threat -- I had to use that word; let's say problem -- almost as soon as you got here was the ^{dorm-in} ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ ^{October} of your freshman year. Now I'm led to believe -- again by the only student source I have to go on, which is the newspaper -- that this was a very significant event in the life of William and Mary.

Cornette: It certainly was. Again that was my freshman year, and for my class that was really very traumatic. We'd only been away from home for six weeks and suddenly, you know, -- well, I felt, anyway put in a position of having to make a very large decision that potentially could affect my entire future if I were caught. On the other hand, I certainly felt that the issue was a legitimate one, as many students did. I don't even remember how far in advance this was set up. When it was proposed in a S.A. meeting the senate was very

emotional about it, and there was a great deal of emotion stirred by this. Students were asked to break college regulations, to go to opposite sex dorms and sign in, to sign a sheet of paper indicating that they had been there. I don't remember exactly what the reason for that was, except presumably this would be handed to the administration at some later date: "Look, this many students supported what we've been asking for." It was very frightening. Evidently, there were ten students who were charged with a violation, and that was not done until very late. (I don't remember whether it was Friday or Saturday night, but it was done very late in the evening.) It was almost as if the administration didn't want to catch anybody ~~to~~ ^{by} wait until that late, and certainly the number of individuals involved will be lower because, ~~you know~~ the rule they were breaking was the rule concerning visitation not the regulation concerning curfew, so everybody was scurrying back to get to their dorms. Dean Barnes and I guess Dean McGurk went into one of the resident^s halls and took I.D.s from ten students, but that was something that many people felt strongly about. Again, the fact that we were allowed to have visitors of the opposite sex in our own homes, and we considered the fact that yes, we were asking to have visitors in our bedrooms, but our bedrooms were all the home we had, ~~and that~~ it not only served as a sleeping area for us, but as a study place, and where we ate and played cards and listened to music and talked and did a lot of other

things, too, and we just felt that we were making a reasonable request.

Williams: The idea of dorm as living/learning wasn't really ^{an} in 1969 ^{idea}.

Cornette: No. Well, I'm quite confident that one of the great fears of the administration at that time was sex. I mean if we had men and women visiting each other in dorms then certainly we were going to have sex. Well, certainly we had sex without visitation, you know, in the Sunken Garden, in fraternity houses, in residence halls; ^{It was common all over the place} ~~and~~ I don't know whether it's easier to say if you don't have visitation then sex is a problem that you don't have to acknowledge because you're not making it easy for students to indulge in such activities. But even after Dr. Graves approved the idea of 24/7, one of the great problems that was raised in terms of implementation in residence halls was the problem of cohabitation. It was just -- not this fall but the fall before -- before the college's student affairs staff finally decided that the way to talk about visitation was in positive terms, ^{In terms of self-determination rather than in terms of "you will not cohabit"} so I think that the attitude now is much healthier than it was even three or four years ago, both on the part of the administration and the students. It's not like there's some forbidden fruit involved any more.

Williams: Do you think it's been something of a maturing process?

Cornette: I think it has been for everybody. I think it has been for the administration as well as for the students. We tended to take

advantage of it when it first happened. I think, you know, you get something you haven't had and for awhile, and you go beserk. ~~like coming to college.~~ It's like coming to college, a new freedom involved. That's a lot to handle all at once, but once you get used to it it's not nearly as overwhelming as it seemed in the first place, and I think that the students and administrators both had to learn that.

There again, for some it was never a problem but for others it certainly it was a big adjustment. One of the biggest adjustments has ~~been~~ and continues to be ~~is~~ the need for students to stand up for their own rights.

~~That~~ there is a problem with visitation if a roommate is having a guest in constantly and the other roommate objects to that, then he or she has to stand up and say they object. It really is the sort of thing students should regulate and not the administration. If you don't want that going on in your room then you have to say that. If you don't say it and it goes on ^{way} anything, it's your own fault.

Williams: About this time and along really the same subject (of students deciding what their lives are going to be ^{like} ~~out~~ there came out something called the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, which I'm sure you remember. ~~It seems that~~ even though this was not in any way written by students, and many suggestions were offered as to amendments by students, it seems ~~that~~ ~~it was~~ on the part of the board and/or administration that there was a great deal of reluctance to change this in any

way. Is this a correct impression?

Cornette: I think so. Maybe one reason for that is ~~I don't know~~ that there was ⁿever much concerted student pressure to get this implemented. Again I think maybe the State ^{ment} of Rights and Responsibilities more than a lot of other things was supported by small groups of students who understood it. It was a rather lengthy document and very all-encompassing in some ways. It really affected the relationship of students to the college, which may be one reason why some administrators were as reluctant to adapt ^o it as they appeared to be. I don't know, ^fthe only thing I can figure about the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities is that an awful lot of people just didn't know what it meant, and I think in some ways were still just finding out what the ramifications of it are in terms of a student's right to due process, to privacy, to access to his or her own records. Again, I can see how these would have been very threatening in the late '60s and early '70s possibly, when students perceived that administrators seemed to feel a need to have information ^{to} held over students' heads.

Williams: And has, say, in due process ^{and} of the other ways that you've mentioned ^{that these have} been worked out more or less in practice?

Cornette: Generally, I think yes. Again, I think there're an awful lot of people who just don't know what the statement means -- I may even well be one of them -- in terms of its ramifications. ~~You~~

~~know, when William and Mary~~ allowed students the opportunity to indicate that they didn't want grades sent home to parents before the Buckley Amendment suggesting ^{that} students have the right to privacy. So in some ways we've been ahead; in some ways I think we still haven't achieved all the things the statement suggests we should have. I don't know how far down ~~the road~~ ^{that} may be; It may just be that they're things people really haven't thought of because the statement is so broad and all-encompassing for students. ~~I think it suggests~~ ^e grade review is one big issue. ~~Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.~~ Not having grade review is not consistent ^e with the statement, let me put it that way, and maybe it's ^f a perception on the part of the faculty--"Well, that doesn't apply to us," but it does. The statement is to be an all-inclusive document, so again maybe it's just a matter of education as much as anything else. That is a big change. It is a big change, I would think, for a faculty member to suddenly find him or herself justifying to a student why one grade was given, and not only justifying it to the student, but justifying it to that faculty member's colleagues. Again I think it's just a matter of perceived threat. ^e You're threatening my judgment by saying that this grade is not the grade that should be given.

Williams: So you think the statement has worked out as a safeguard to students, is that right, in most cases?

Cornette: Yes. I think that the statement has given students things

that they wouldn't have had otherwise. They've been slow in coming *admittedly*, but again, maybe it's just -- I don't know that it's reluctance on the part of the administration or the faculty as much as it's not understanding what's involved or students not understanding what it can mean. I don't think that students have fully taken advantage of what the statement provides for.

Williams: Could you give an example of that?

Cornette: In terms of examination of records. I don't know how many students feel a need. Maybe students now aren't as suspicious as we were, or maybe they're keeping closer tabs on what goes in in the first place, which would be wise. Also, I think that -- I don't know that students trust administrators any more than they used to, but ~~I think maybe certainly~~ in the dean of students offices when a student asks for a recommendation the student either signs a waiver indicating that he or she knows that that information will not be made available to anyone unless they get a copy of whatever recommendation might be put in the file, so in that sense I think students have the opportunity to know what's in their general information folder that certainly we didn't have five years ago.

Williams: Do you think it would have helped five years ago to have say the rights that students have now? It's a hypothetical question.

Cornette: Well, it seems to me that confidentiality on the part of administrators is much greater now than it was five years ago. Confi-

dentiaity on the part of the health service is much greater now than it was five years ago. So there again maybe the need ~~is more~~ isn't as great, ~~as it was~~ rather than, you ~~know, one group wanting the information~~ more than

Williams: We're really comparing events over a time in which events moved very fast.

Cornette: That's right -- particularly for William and Mary, in that the past six years have been a time of tremendous change in this institution. It may be another six or ten years before people catch up and realize exactly what has gone on, ~~what events~~ actually have taken place and what ~~the impact was~~.

Williams: Some schools in this period of time that we're talking about had student representatives to the^r boards. Was there an effort here, and do you think ~~again~~ that it would have been in any way helpful for there to have been a student representative, not just a liason person (advisor) but a representative on the Board of Visitors?

Cornette: Given the composition otherwise of the board, probably not; I don't know that it would have made a great deal of difference. I think it would have been well for students to have someone who could speak ^{for} to their views on the board. There ^{are} so many committees dealing with so many different things that it really would be impossible for one student to have input in all the areas that the board is responsible for: finances, physical planning, student affairs. I think it ^{is} still would be advantageous to have a student on the board, simply because I think

there are things that a student knows by virtue of being in the middle of a situation constantly that a board member from New York or even ^{Norfolk or} Richmond can't know by coming to meetings ~~when it's~~ every two or three months. On the other hand, there are some students in the past that the board has been very ^{positively} impressed; ^{by} there've been others that have ^{made} a very negative impression. So I don't know who should make the determination about a student to be on the board. I think it could only be a positive one, and certainly it couldn't hurt. One or two individuals would not have sufficient votes to significantly change the policies of the institution, but I think they could give significant information, provide a very important point of view ^{that presently}, at least ^{is} not considered in every phase of its operation.

Williams: When you were here as a student what was the perception of the board? I get the idea it was looked to as a higher court than Paschall where you appeal ^{led} something higher than the president.

Cornette: Yes, I ~~would~~ ^{don't think} the board was ever viewed as a particularly sympathetic ^{body}. You know, we might have wanted to appeal things to the board, but I don't think we would ever have felt there was much chance for change. We felt that if social regulations were going to be changed, we had a better chance of doing it with the people we had here, although with as much respect as I have for Mr. Lambert

and Dr. Paschall, there wasn't much chance that there was going to be any change that they didn't want made. With the exception of possibly one, possibly two board members who we felt were sympathetic to students, I don't believe we really thought that we could convince the board to overturn or change a decision that had been made here in Williamsburg.

Williams: I know it seems that I'm skipping around; in many ways I truly am. I should have included this ~~more~~ when we were talking about social regulations per se and the dorm-in. Another case -- it didn't come up that year, I don't think-- there was a court case involving Sarah Brittingham, who took the college to court over being either suspended or expelled, and right now I don't want to say which because I can't remember. This was a cause célèbre in the Flat Hat. Was it on campus?

Cornette: Oh, sure it was. We had a heroine, somebody who had taken the college to court and won on the basis of inconsistent enforcement of college regulations, which we felt had been a problem all along. You have a dorm-in, a lot of people violate visitation regulations, and ten get slapped on the hand. There's a lot of illegal visitation going on as a rule anyway; one couple gets caught, and they are severely disciplined; they take the college to court and win on the basis of inconsistent enforcement of regulations, which was one of the reasons students had been

citing all along in support of our position that the regulations were outmoded. They were ¹unenforceable. They were not really very reasonable. They didn't have anything to do with helping us develop into healthy adults, and so what was the point of having them? So we were really very pleased that someone had done it and been successful. They'd challenged the college and been successful.

Williams: I keep asking you about the Flat Hat; maybe I should ask this question: Was the Flat Hat while you were a student, would you say it was leading or reflecting student opinion?

Cornette: I think it was definitely leading, very definitely leading. The Flat Hat tended to be two or three steps ahead of the vast majority of students here in terms of opinion about various things or at least intensity in feeling on certain issues. Many students read the Flat Hat for no other reason than it was always entertaining; There was always a victim but I think most students realized in reading it that what they were getting was a biased picture, so if you took that with a grain of salt and made decisions on the basis of what you knew and what you were able to find out in talking to other people -- that was really much safer.

Williams: It's probably true of many campus newspapers. If I'm to believe the Flat Hat there was not ^{in what} has been portrayed as something of a heyday of drug use among college students -- there was ^{not} a great ^{deal} of that on the campus. Would you say that was a true statement?

Cornette: I don't know that drug use when I was in school was very wide spread. There were some students who were very heavy users; There were other students who were occasional users; There was a vast majority of students who never touched the stuff. Now, there were a lot of students using grass, just a whole lot, and that I think has become progressively more acceptable, not legal, but at least acceptable on a peer level. But in terms of hard stuff -- coke, heroin, mescaline, anything like that -- there was and still is a hardcore group of students who utilize those drugs as part of their lifestyle and I think generally other students are tolerant of that until something happens and someones' behavior starts interfering with their studying or someone starts throwing furniture around in the room or bouncing up the walls, or narcs start coming to visit, and then those students get extremely upset.

Williams: But there was no concerted effort by the administration that I found to, say, raid the place.

Cornette: We perceived -- I don't know how true this was -- but we really felt there was a bust scheduled once a semester, that it was a regular thing, you know -- have the narcs come in and state police come in and clean things up once a semester, and everybody'd get scared for awhile and stuff was ~~is~~ hard to get for awhile and then the traffic starts ^{ed} moving smoothly again. People who had been more or less underground,

I think what I was trying to ask was: Was the administration willing to admit that drugs were on campus?

that you hadn't seen for awhile, surfaced. I don't know that that's the perception now simply because there haven't been any big busts recently. There have been some busts in fraternity houses, and there was a guy arrested -- was he even arrested? I don't even know at J.B.T. This fall, and a couple of weeks ago a guy had some grass and some seeds and a pipe taken away from him, and that really was the extent of it. So I don't know that there is the perception any longer that the college is out to police the place. I don't know whether that's good or bad, but it seems to me -- I don't know how you can stop it. We're not going to ask our staff to be narcs. We don't feel that's their function. We don't feel that they'd be able to function effectively in other ways if they're perceived as being ~~federal drug administration enforcers or whatever the~~ ^{federal} state police affiliates or anything else. But we're aware of that there's dope in the dorms. We're aware that grass moves freely. We encourage members of our staff not to allow themselves to be put in the position of being liable and to encourage students to be considerate of other students' rights. If there's stuff in a room and there's a bust, then one student is as liable as the other even if he never used the stuff.

Williams: But through the time you've been associated with the college, not only professionally but as a student, the college really hasn't taken it upon itself to consistently enforce

drug laws? I'm not asking you to say the college is committing illegal acts, but I mean the college has not done a great deal of enforcement.

Cornette: The college doesn't have the capability to do it.

Williams: Well, it's federal law rather than . . .

Cornette: Sure, it is law, and in that sense we're mindful that it's law and it's in the handbook: the use of drugs is illegal, but we're not going to search rooms regularly. We're an educational institution; we're not a penal institution, and we have to function accordingly.

Williams: A few minutes ago you started talking about sororities and fraternities, and I said, "Wait a minute, and I'll ask you more about that." The end of the '60s has been portrayed by some people as a time of real decline in the Greeks and that now we're in a period of upsurge, ^{of interest to} ~~well,~~ you've been associated with ^{the} college campus now over a period of years. Do you think that in that period when you were a student this was a period of decline, and if so, why?

Cornette: Definitely. We were just suspicious of everything. I don't know, ^{maybe} it was just a period of wanting an explanation. Why did these things exist? What do you have to offer? So I think that -- well, maybe, it was, ^{also} ~~too,~~ just the fact we didn't know what we wanted, and we didn't want an organization or stereotype telling us what we would be. According to the catalog my freshman year there was something -- I don't know ~~this is just very vague in my mind --~~

-- maybe 40 or 50 percent of William and Mary students were Greeks. Pledge classes for sororities in January of 1970 it seems to me were about 20, which is not small, ~~or that~~ although there were fewer people going through rush. It seems to me the next year, possibly, there was even a little bit less interest, but you know, it may be a function of this campus that sororities and fraternities have never really been passé, because there's really not much else to do. There is much more to do now than there was even in 1969 and 1970. It seems to me my freshman year one of the big thrills was going out to ^{the} theaters at the shopping center. They couldn't have been more than a year or two old, and this was -- boy, not only now did you have the one little theater down on Duke of Gloucester Street, you had three movies in town to pick from! Sororities and fraternities had parties on weekends. My freshman year the S.A. made an effort to sponsor a dance every weekend so that non-Greeks would have a place to go, but they really didn't draw very many people, surprisingly. Football games used to be a big thing -- ~~Guys~~ guys in suits and girls in suits -- you don't see that any more. So maybe the perception was that fraternities and sororities were finishing schools, and these were places for people who wanted to learn social skills. But I think more and more now as students have more choices about things to do -- there's the S.A. film series and lots of things going on in the William and Mary theater, more lectures, and

more students can have cars, so it's possible to get out of town. There isn't such a ^{real} social need for fraternities and sororities anymore, but they're doing better than ever. So I just don't know. I don't know how much of it may be a function of the fact that on this campus anyway there weren't very many alternatives socially for a long time. I think interest declined some, but I don't know that membership ever declined very much. I think the fraternities were hurt initially by the move [#] from the lodges into the fraternity complex simply because suddenly they found themselves in a situation where they had to ask thirty-three or thirty-five guys for a commitment, not just to pay dues, but to live in a house, and not just as seniors (as in the case of the sorority houses), but possibly for three years. We had to fill the house because we had an obligation to the college according to the lease that the college made us sign to have the house; ~~that~~ if we have to fill it, you have to live in it, which means that fraternity members weren't mingling as much with guys in residence halls, ~~and~~ ^{and} maybe that made it a little harder for them to get pledges, but certainly, now, anyway, that seems to be one advantage, ~~maybe~~ that fraternities have in rush.

They can say, "Look, if you join a fraternity, you're guaranteed housing." ~~None else~~ on campus that can make that assurance. Now it seems to me that any freshman guy who pledges a fraternity for that reason is very likely to be disappointed, but that is an argument they use, and to a certain extent, that's valid.

Williams: Fraternities did not particularly want to go into the complex, did they? This was probably before you arrived.

Cornette: My perception when I came -- ^{-- what I heard} particularly when there was talk about the Botetourt ^[Sorority] complex -- was that the fraternities really didn't want to do it. But what I'm hearing from my colleagues now is that there wasn't that much resistance. I find that very difficult to believe, but maybe that's true.

Williams: It was argued when the sororities refused to go into the Botetourt complex this would further segregate the sororities, which you're saying has happened in the case of the fraternities, and you think would have happened in the case of the sororities as well?

Cornette: I think so, yes. ~~I mean,~~ I had a variety of reasons for pledging a sorority, most of which are unknown to me now, but I would not have pledged at all had I thought I would have been required to give myself to that organization body and soul for three years. I mean, you know, it was nice to be part of an organization that had a house. ~~I mean,~~ I could go to a house with a living room and a dining room and a kitchen and a bathroom instead of staying in my little cubicle with my one little roommate in the residence hall and when I went to that house there were people there who accepted me whether I was in a good mood or not and whether I was cheerful or not, and you know, that was very comforting for awhile. But, ~~you know,~~ I think again that there were

a lot of sorority women felt that kind of house feeling would not be possible in units that were slightly larger copies of the fraternity complex.

Williams: Was there any feeling that they should go into the complex?

Cornette: I think there was some fear on the part of some sororities that if they didn't go into the complex that the college might cease to look upon them with favor. I don't think that the fraternities and sororities ^{continue to the} ~~enjoy~~ privileged position ^{they did} a few years ago, but you know, the houses are old, and they're not in particularly good condition, and they're not going to last forever. But even at that I think a lot of people felt they were a lot better than going into units that if they were constructed in the way the fraternities ^{were} ~~are~~ being constructed would be falling down within ten years anyway so you know, the choice at that point seemed to be ^{going into} a ^{forty-two-} ~~42-~~ person unit that might slide into Lake Matoaka, or staying in a house on Richmond Road that might fall down on your head, and to many people I think that was preferable. Also, I think sororities here tend to be very, very conservative as ~~orga-~~ organizations, not necessarily ^{the} individuals within them but -- I don't know. Maybe it's not fair to characterize ~~that~~ ~~them~~ as just true of sororities, but I think that students here are very, very resistant to change. "What do you mean you're going to change the calendar?" "What

do you mean you're going to change registration and you didn't involve us?" "What do you mean you want men to be involved in the housing *lottery* in the spring?" Anything that isn't the way it was before is viewed with very great suspicion ~~so I think that the possibility --~~ certainly this year the big issue for sororities has been, shall we have rushing in fall of next year? They've been talking about that for years and just couldn't do it. There was just something really restraining them from being willing to say, "Yes, we'll *go ahead* and try it, with the understanding if it doesn't work we can go back to it the old way." They really didn't want to take that risk. So I'm sure there was some of that holding people back from going into the complexes. W.D.A. felt that there was no reason for fraternities and sororities to get the newest housing that was available. There were a lot of other students who could use that and that it seemed to be more advantageous to everyone involved for other students to use it. ~~That~~ the sororities were happy with what they had, ~~that~~ there were groups of students who wanted to do things like have an American studies house, and that was a good place for it to be, ~~have~~. But the sororities really dragged their feet, I mean, they'd gone as far as choosing colors and decided who would live next door to whom in the complex -- although they hadn't decided yet whether or not they were really going to move into it. ~~So~~ *wanting* ~~wanted~~ them to take

one step forward while the other leg is stepping backwards. *Very strange.*

Williams: Most of the things we've talked about have been social changes of some nature that the students either wanted or, say, in the case of the sorority complex didn't want. There was not this much push for academic change. I'm trying to think ^{is} the reason was the feeling that, "Well, ₁ it really doesn't matter what we think anyhow" or if there wasn't as great a need. What would be your opinion on it?

Cornette: Well, I think that a lot of it was the fact that we didn't think it'd make any difference anyway. There was considerable pressure -- again~~ly~~ from a small group of students -- to drop the requirements for physical education, for modern languages, for math and science -- ~~the~~ feeling that we were wasting two years taking nothing but required courses, and on the basis of those required courses we were supposed to choose ^o a major which would determine what we would do for the rest of our lives. Again, you know, I think that a lot of William and Mary students come from moderate to conservative backgrounds, and the kind of curriculum that we found when we came here was very similar to what we had had before, so, you know, it's just kind of, "Okay, go along with the program. This is what you chose to come to, so, just do your good little liberal arts education and go on from here." I think that, ^{the new} with curriculum particularly, there are some stu-
₁

dents who have felt very threatened by the proposed changes, (by the changes from the old to the new curriculum, which I still don't ^{think they} understand, by requirements being dropped). There again, maybe it's just a matter of choice. You know, there were some students who didn't want to have to make all those decisions for themselves. It was easier having somebody ^{else} telling you exactly what you had to take. It wasn't as confusing, ^{of} certainly, and you didn't risk making as many mistakes because somebody else did it for you but I think ^{of} certainly now students have a lot more flexibility in setting up their academic program than we did four or five years ago, although I don't regret the education that I got here. You know, I chose William and Mary because of the educational program it offered; ~~Had~~ I wanted something else ~~I~~ would have gone someplace else. But once I got here ~~I~~ I found that there were a lot of things that were more important to me than my academic work, and ~~you know~~, my interests developed accordingly.

Williams: Were the students generally pleased with the curriculum change that came while you were here as a student? The old 1935 curriculum was changed.

Cornette: Yes, I think so. Again ~~once~~ they understood what that meant, once it was clearly explained, and once advisors understood what it meant, I think that students were very pleased with it because again it gave them much more flexibility in taking courses in areas outside their major.

Again there were students resistant to that: "Well, I know what I want to be when I grow up. I'm going to be a physicist, and I don't see any reason for me to have to take English courses or soc. courses to get my degree from here because they're not going to do me any good."

But I think the intent of the faculty when the new curriculum was instituted was to broaden students' education, and I think that that has been the result of the new curriculum.

Williams: It wasn't your last year, it was your second here that Dr. Paschall announced he was going to retire. According to the student ~~battles~~ I've read they couldn't have felt any other way but being relieved. Is this true?

Cornette: That announcement was met with great jubilation simply because we figured whoever Dr. Paschall's successor was couldn't be any more conservative.

Williams: Exactly what was said of his predecessor, I'm sure.

Cornette: No doubt, no doubt. We just didn't think that things could -- get any worse is not really what I want to say -- We didn't feel that the situation could be any more stagnant than it was. Now I understand when Dr. Paschall came that students were delighted and that he spent a great deal of time with students and was very involved in some of the activities that students were involved in. I'm sure by the late '60s he was worn out ^{with} that. He was certainly developing interests in other things, and you know, he didn't have the kind of contact

with students that we felt he needed in order to be able to make decisions that affected students, so we were delighted when he announced his retirement.

Williams: Do you think that the students could in any way -- I won't say take the credit for ^{it} but were they in any way responsible for, do you think, his decision? From a student point-of-view I'm asking you this. Now ~~I~~ I could ask him what he thinks and get another, I'm sure.

Cornette: Yes, I think that again a group of students felt, ~~that~~ "look at what we've done. We've put so much pressure on him in the past couple years that he can't take the heat any more." But on the other hand, ~~Dr.~~ Dr. Paschall was certainly old enough to retire, so while ^{possibly} there might be one group of students who will claim credit for their victory, I don't ^{know} ~~remember~~ but that's what it really was. Now ~~I~~ I don't ^{know} what I would have said in answer to that question four years ago.

Williams: Then students were also for the first time allowed to take part in the selection of the new president. I'm sure there was a good bit of feeling, ~~that~~ "we must have arrived."

Cornette: Very much so. ~~We just felt that, you know, we were asked for our input;~~ ^{the} we were given opportunity not just to make a recommendation after a decision had already been made, but to actually be involved in the screening of applications and the interviewing process and the decision-making process, ^{and} given what students had experienced the two years that

I knew prior to that time, that was just phenomenal. We just really felt that ^{finally} someone was acknowledging the fact that maybe we had some sense, so we were very pleased ^{by the fact that} ~~about~~ There was enough respect at least for the student leaders for the administration to be willing to say, "Okay, give us your recommendation for students that you would like to have on this committee."

Williams: And the students did participate very actively in the selection.

Cornette: That's right. I don't remember how many were involved.

I know Scott Craigie was one, and Scott took it very seriously, and he was very pleased with the process and pleased with the ultimate decision, so he certainly felt that it had been a valuable experience for him and that his contribution had been sought and attended to.

Williams: What difference did [#]you observe that it made to have another person at the top? Would it have been your last year here?

Cornette: Initially it made a great difference. Well, Dr. Graves saw students. He talked to students on the streets. He went to the pub. He went to the ~~caf~~ . He had dogs and children, who cried and yelled, and it all seemed very normal. You know, Dr. Paschall was so dignified and such a gentleman -- not to suggest that Dr. Graves isn't -- but you know, in the old Virginia sense that this young upstart from Massachusetts was really like a breath of fresh air. I just remember being really shocked at the fact that someone Dr.

Graves's age and someone from outside the state of Virginia had actually been hired by the college. You know, you just really felt that would open up all sorts of things that ^{had} only been talked about by students before, but we were very pleased in the fact that Graves sought student input. ~~He had~~ the aides to the president has been around for years I'm sure.

Dr. Graves met with us once a month and asked us what we thought, and whether or not that actually made any difference eventually, it was nice to be asked. It was nice to be in a situation where students ^{outnumbered} ~~sat down with~~ administrators, and those monthly meetings it was eleven or twelve of us ⁱⁿ and one of him, and we really appreciated having an opportunity to sit down and be very open and very honest, and I think in some cases some of the things that we came up with were not as rationally thought out as they might have been had we been appearing ^{as} in a committee of two or three before the Board of Visitors. But on the other hand, I think ^{he} you got a lot of spontaneous reaction to things that possibly ~~we~~ ^{he} wouldn't have gotten in a more formal setting, so I think ^{he} it was ^{highly regarded,} very, very ^{thought} particularly his first year, and when he made the decision to allow students the opportunity to have ^{twenty-four-} 24-hour visitation then he was in. His troubles were just beginning, I'm sure.

Williams: On balance, then, for the period in which you were a student -- this is a double-barreled question coming up -- would you say that students accomplished their aims, and could you pin-

point what their aims were? I guess you have to answer the second before you can answer the first.

Cornette: I think that students wanted a greater voice in determining how they would live their lives socially and increasingly ~~academically~~ and I think that to a much greater extent than I would have thought possible when I entered here as a freshman that those aims had been realized. I think on some issues there is still a long ways to go. ~~You know~~ I think one of the biggest problems, again, is maybe just one of perception the fact that, ~~you know~~ this is just really very typical. It's not anything that's unique to William and Mary. I don't think that students really trust the administration. I think that there are individuals who are part of the administration whom they view as relatively trustworthy as administrators go, but you know, it makes communication difficult sometimes just because people don't always say what they're thinking, or when something is said it's heard differently than it was intended so it's just really ² ~~1~~ communications problem rather than anything else. I don't think that there is any intent any longer -- I felt differently when I was a student -- on the part of the administration to ~~deceive~~ ^{deceive} students. I think that that is done unintentionally sometimes, but I think that generally the people who are members of the administration now who have frequent contact with students are very willing to listen, and there aren't too many decisions made any more that are made without at least

seeking student input. I think that there are a lot of unpopular decisions made, but I think that they're made with an eye to what the long-range effects will be rather than ~~what is~~ "what will the result of this be two months from now?" You know, how will this affect students who come to the college five or six years from now?" I wouldn't have understood that when I was in school just because it should all happen right now. *Maybe* ~~but, you know,~~ that's just an indication that I'm getting older, too, but I'm certainly much more sympathetic to *incremental change* than I was.

Williams: It's not easy to recover thoughts from even a few years ago.

Cornette: ~~When~~ I was kind of mulling this over last night particularly, thinking about things, especially what the W.D.A. did and how it was perceived. ~~You~~ know, I had very mixed feelings about that. I'm sure there were students who felt that we were tokens, that we were administrative patsies, and in some ways we were. But I don't know that we ~~as~~ ^{ever felt we} individuals ~~were~~ compromising our integrity. I think that we really felt that we were taking the heat off in other ways by diverting it, if nothing else. There was a tempest in a teapot -- I guess ^{in -- about} '73 whether or not the W.D.A. was even needed. ~~At that~~ ^{point} ~~in fact~~ it really wasn't, less and less so as regulations for women ceased to be different than those for men, and their staffing became ^{more nearly} equal, and as women became more ^{nearly equal} that there was less need, you know.

I see some of this coming up in a few years a conflict between Interhall and S.A. You know, what's Interhall maybe but an administrative patsy? This is set up to do the administration's work. You funnel the money and you do this and you do that and you're working for them. I think that's very valid, but if those students weren't doing what they're doing then administrators would be, and students would lose a very valuable potential source of input, so that I think in some ways I really see very great parallels there. I've kept my hands out of Interhall for just that reason; I do see it in some ways as an administrative tool, but on the other hand, you know, I think students would be the losers in some ways if they didn't use that tool. That can work both ways. It's just interesting to see the evolution of these different organizations. I think the S.A. has been caught in the middle for a long time where there's been one group or another -- W.D.A. -- Dean Donaldson set that up when she came -- and I don't know what the response of the S.A. was then and then B.S.A. when it was set up, certainly the S.A. felt very threatened by it. When Interhall was set up S.A. felt very threatened by that, but it seems to me that all these groups eventually are going to -- you know, there is going to be continued evolution and continued attrition, and those are going to continue to function. It just seems to

me that it's going to be one or another group of students who will continue to be vocal and who will continue to push for certain issues while other students continue going to class and concentrating on their studies or their boyfriends or their girlfriends or whatever they concentrate on but there will continue to be a relatively select group of individuals who will be responsible for the changes that are made. Now I don't know that that will be very much different simply because of the kind of students who come here.

Williams: Do you think that you've gotten a clearer view of this perspective from having been a student and then an administrator? Has it been a help to you in your work?

Cornette: I think it has been. Maybe the fact that this is my third year. The first year I was very impatient; I'm getting more mellow. Maybe it's just a function of being able to see an evolutionary process going on. Maybe I've become one of them, God forbid. But you know, maybe it was knowledge of the institution and what's involved in running it increases (that's inevitable) You cease seeing things in terms of absolutes and start seeing them as functions of things that have happened at other places at other times. I think that I have a much greater perspective on the college now than I did in '69 or even in the year that I graduated (in '72). I don't know whether that wouldn't have happened to a greater or lesser degree

had I been working some place else for the past three years, I think maybe that I have a greater appreciation for what's involved. That doesn't make me any more ^{willing} really in some ways to forgive some of the things that went on when I was here. There were some things that I think were inexcusable. There was behavior on the part of some individuals, students and administrators, that I think was inexcusable, but I think that all of that has been balanced out in one way or another and things that are wrong now will be balanced out eventually. Any institution moves along sort of on inertia. The fact that William and Mary has been here for nearly three hundred years is going to carry ^{it} a little bit farther. But certainly I hope that the changes will continue to be made and that the various groups within the college will make increasingly more of an effort to work together. I think that's been one of the most maybe frustrating things to me since I've been here. I didn't feel that there was very much personal contact between students and faculty members when I was in school. I think there's more opportunity for that now, but I don't know that there's much more real interaction. I think that more faculty members encourage it, but I think that the basic barriers are still there. "Well, you grade me. You make a judgment on my ability" and that's going to have to create a certain distance, but at least people are a little bit more willing to sit down with each other and make the effort. I wouldn't have imagined

five years ago that the ^{kind of} ~~common~~ exchange that takes place
 now at some of the S.A. meetings could have happened. So ~~you know~~² strides are being made, and people are at least
 more willing to make the effort. Maybe that's one of the
 things that I see as being a greater change ^(from) when I was in
 school. In many ways we just didn't really feel there was
 much point. We did the things we did because we
 felt they had to be done, whether it was students who parti-
 cipated in the moratorium, or students who went on strike
 after the shootings at Kent State. There were various
 things that motivated various people. Primarily -- I'm
 just sort of rambling and I don't even know where I'm
 going -- but I think that it's important that individuals
 continue to have their own causes and work for them and
 that there are more people here now that are willing to
 help a student ^{that's} work through things like that ~~than~~ there were,
 I hope ~~it's~~ true.