



Oral History of John Scull

Interviewed by:
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Brock: Well, thank you, John, for joining us, and I thought if we could begin at the beginning and talk a little bit about when and where you were born and where you grew up. I know you grew up in Indonesia and also in Singapore, and we'd love to hear about those experiences.

Scull: Sure. So I was born in the island of Java in city of Bandung in Indonesia. Lived in Indonesia until I was 12. Lived in two different places, one in Java, then also on the island of Sumatra. My father was a missionary is how we got there originally. He shifted out of the mission when I was about 12 but he stayed working in Southeast Asia for about 25 years total, but he moved the family. We moved to Singapore, and I was there until the latter part of my high school, when I came back to the United States to Oklahoma, which is where my family is from.

Brock: Okay. And were you then bilingual growing up or—

Scull: Yeah. I was raised speaking Indonesian outside the home, in English inside the home. That was pretty much a family thing. We weren't allowed, unless it was me with one of my siblings, then I could speak English, but if there's any Indonesian person around, we had to speak Indonesian, and I was raised fluent in Indonesian, so...

Brock: Hm. With your father, or your parents, I guess, being missionaries, was religion a very strong theme of your life and activities growing up?

<laughter>

Scull: It was a big part of the family's life, as far as what we did. My father helped set up churches, hospitals and schools and things like that. But yes, it was a big part of it. But, you know, you're a kid. You get up, and do your thing.

Brock: Yeah.

Hsu: Ask the denomination?

Brock: Oh. Yeah. Could you tell us which religion your—

Scull: Yeah, Southern Baptist religion.

Brock: Baptists. Yeah. So were you—where were you going to school while you were in Indonesia?

Scull: <laughs> Most of my younger years we were homeschooled because schools weren't really terrific in Indonesia. My mother had some educational background in teaching. Both my parents had met at the University of Oklahoma, and so that's our US home base... She took it upon herself to be our teacher, and our garage got turned into a four-desk school and a fifth desk for her. she taught us, using a correspondence course that provided a lot of the materials. she organized all four kids and pretty much until eighth grade she taught us. When my oldest brother finished his eighth grade, he went to a boarding school for high school in Singapore, but the rest of us continued to be homeschooled. In my case, only until part of the sixth grade, which is when we moved to Singapore. At that point I went to a really good school called Singapore American School, which is a high-quality private school where I then did my education for junior high through ninth grade before then moving to Norman, Oklahoma, and a good public school called Norman High School.

Brock: That's quite a phase change from Singapore <laughs> to Norman, Oklahoma, but since that was your family base, had you been to Oklahoma?

Scull: Yeah. We'd go back periodically.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: About every four years we'd go back to visit. That was kind of the way things were done, and so that kept a little contact with what it's like to live in the United States, so it was culture shock but it was not as severe, and plus, you're a kid.

Brock: Right.

Scull: You know, kids are pretty resilient and so, you know, it's no big deal.

Brock: What were your interests growing up? Were you interested in business from an early period or were you interested in science and technology? Math?

Scull: To be honest, I loved sports.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: That was probably what I enjoyed the most. But school came easy. I always liked math and I always had a real strong affinity to math, and sciences were easy and kind of cool and fun. But I kind of liked everything. I just actually enjoyed school. It was never something that I dreaded. I always enjoyed it. Maybe it's because being homeschooled was really interesting because I always knew what my assignments were for the next day and in Indonesia, you know, we didn't have electricity most of the time, and so we pretty much lived by the sun, right? You only had candlelight at night or kerosene lamps so I'd go to bed early and get up at six o'clock in the morning. I'd go down to our garage school and would be almost halfway through my school day by the time it was breakfast.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: I'd oftentimes be done with school by 10:30 or 11am, and then I had a while before my Indonesian friends could play—they didn't get out of school until I think like 1:30 or 2:30—and so I basically could do whatever I wanted. I was the youngest, so while I waited for my siblings to get done with their school, I read a lot and made stuff. You know, you did things to occupy your time, and I always was interested in everything, so it was actually really easy.

Brock: So when you came to Oklahoma for high school, did your interests change or develop during those years or...

Scull: Mm, I mean, girls came into the picture.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: You know, so you got to give credit where credit's due, but no, I always enjoyed a variety of things. That's probably one [of the] things I really value is I've never been narrow-minded about things. I've always enjoyed a variety of things, look at things from different angles, and I continue that in a variety of my interests.

Brock: How did that factor in then to trying to decide what to do for college or, you know, it seems like if you're interested in a lot of things it some ways makes it a harder, harder choice.

Scull: You know, you're giving too much credit to a 17, 18-year-old boy. Both of my parents went to the University of Oklahoma. My two older brothers and older sister went to the University of Oklahoma. I don't know, six or seven aunts and uncles went to the University of Oklahoma and, several cousins. I mean, it was crazy.

Brock: Okay. Yeah.

Scull: I never applied to college.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: Basically—you take your tests, your test scores. They just automatically sent them to OU and OSU. That's the other nearby university which were rivals.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And so I got accepted to both, had scholarships to both, but it's like, "Well, I guess I'm going to OU."

<laughter>

Scull: And that's pretty much it. Then it was a question of what to study.

Brock: Right.

Scull: I didn't quite know what to study. I enjoyed math. I started thinking I'd be an engineer. I took a lot of math, all the math you could, as a freshman and sophomore. Just assumed I would do something there but I ended up changing. One of my semesters, I think it was second semester sophomore year, I couldn't take a certain course I wanted, so I had a schedule gap that I had to fill and it was really late in the process to find one to fill it. But one of the ones to fill it was an upper level econ course, and since I was pretty strong in math—had good grades and stuff like that, I had to petition, they said, "Sure. You can handle it."

<laughter>

Scull: So I took this course and just had a really great professor. I really enjoyed the class and then at that point you had to decide—the end of sophomore year's when you had to make a decision on what major—and I'm like, "I think I'm going to try Econ." So I actually switched to Econ, and I finished as an Econ major. I was really into philosophy and things like that too, <laughs> and I had a lot of math. I did a major in Econ but I also took a variety of Philosophy classes too—it was pretty eclectic but with a strong math underpinning.

Brock: Oh, Philosophy and Economics often kind of go together, so...

Scull: They do. They do.

Brock: Yeah. Yeah. Maybe not the more mathematical—<laughs> well, maybe both.

Scull: Well, there's a lot of—

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: —math in, you know, in econ. Then econ major got me into some business courses, and that was also interesting. Econ was in the business school at OU and so I got exposed to business.

Brock: So what were your—what did you do as you came to the end of your studies, your undergraduate studies?

Scull: Well, then you're confronted with, "What are you going to do?" right?

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And I had no idea. I took the GRE thinking I might want to get a Ph.D. in Econ. I took the GMAT, thinking I might want to go to Business School. I took the LSAT thinking, "Maybe I'll go to Law School." A couple of my uncles were top lawyers in Oklahoma. So I had no idea, right? Took them all. Got accepted into programs at all of them and I'm like, "Oh, now I'm in real trouble." <laughs> You know, "What am I going to do?" But I was going to take some time between things anyway. I pretty much had decided through the process that I thought Business School probably was a better fit for me. I'm not a great reader and writer. I'm a slow reader. I remember things real well but I'm a slow reader and if you've got to do a lot of writing and I'm like, "Mm, maybe Ph.D. and law may not be the right fit," and business seemed pretty interesting. A friend of my brother's had gone to Harvard Business School, and so I at least kind of had an inkling that there was such a thing as a pretty high-quality education in Business but I really didn't know much about it. Either way, I just assumed I was going to go work first. I was interested in computers. Had taken some very basic—no pun intended—

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: —courses and so got exposed to it but didn't quite know for sure, but I went and applied to get a job at IBM. So I was going through various job applications and at one of my brothers' wedding I started chatting with my sister about the dilemma of what to do. Should I go take a job knowing that I was going to quit in like two or three years to go to graduate school. Just didn't feel right. Someone's going to train me and I'm going to...

Brock: Mm-hm.

Scull: Just as soon as I'm done being trained, I'm going to leave. So she said, "Well, why don't you come teach?" She had moved to the east coast and was a teacher at a prep school in Massachusetts. "They need a coach and they need a math teacher," and I'm like, "Okay. Two of the things I really enjoy." They need a basketball coach, a soccer coach, and a tennis coach. Well, I play all three of those sports. You know, this was a really interesting opportunity, so I'm like, "Yeah, what the heck?" So she went back home and talked to the school's headmaster and the headmaster said, "Yeah, get him to come out and talk to us." So I went and visit[ed] them and he says—basically doing it on her credentials—

Brock: Sure.

Scull: "If you're half as good as your sister, we'd love to have you."

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: Right. And I'm like, "Great." So I went and did that. I went and taught math and was a dorm parent and did the whole thing. Had never been at a prep school—but I think the Singapore school experience had given me a little insight because they had some boarding and my older brother had gone to a boarding house there. While we were in Indonesia he had gone to Singapore American School.

Brock: Oh.

Scull: And so I had a little insight and my sister being there obviously gave a lot of insights. So I did that. and then I found out later that I got accepted into a few business schools, including Harvard, and I'm like, "Well, I can't turn down that. That's a pretty cool opportunity," so I only did the teaching for one year. I had told them I was going to be applying, so they were pretty happy for me. So I did a year there and then went to HBS.

Brock: Which high school?

Scull: It's called Eaglebrook. It's actually a middle school. It's in Deerfield Massachusetts—next to Deerfield Academy, if you know it.

Brock: Yeah. I'm from Greenfield, so yeah.

Scull: Oh, okay. So—

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: —I hung out some in Greenfield back in the day.

Brock: All right. Yeah, yeah.

Scull: Northampton. You know, we did it all, so—

Brock: Okay. And that probably also gave you a chance to check out, you know, to—easier to go—

Scull: Correct.

Brock: —see if you really wanted to be in Cambridge or—

Scull: Correct. Well, it gave me access to the whole Northeast.

Brock: Right.

Scull: I mean, because, I applied to most of the top business schools, and a lot of them, at least four or five of them are in the general area of the Northeast.

Brock: Right.

Scull: So it was a good opportunity. I was going to wait and see where I got accepted and then I'd go check them out and so it made it pretty easy.

Brock: And how did you find—so what years were you at the Harvard Business School?

Scull: '79 to '81.

Brock: '79 to '81.

Scull: Yeah.

Brock: So you're there just after Dan Bricklin and all that? <laughs>

Scull: Well, that's an interesting story.

Brock: Oh.

Scull: That will enter into the picture.

Brock: Right. Once you're—yeah.

Scull: When I'm at Business School.

Brock: Right. Okay. Well, I'd love to hear how you reacted to their, you know, the case study method and how you took to that environment.

Scull: Case study method was a really good environment for me. In fact, I wish <laughs> it was all my schools. I'm a very verbal learner and I like discussion. It does something—it stimulates part of my brain cells different than just reading or being off in a corner. So I've always enjoyed that type of work. I'm not really a solo, by myself working kind of person. So I really enjoyed it. I mean, it's tough and they sometimes were a little overly macho back then anyway—they'd try to kind of grind people down a little bit more than they needed to—but they have since improved that and gotten a little bit more connected to the 21st Century.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: So at least from my understanding from talking to people that have graduated since then. It's improved.

Brock: And how did your interest develop while you were there? I understand you probably have to, you know, choose an area that you're focused in?

Scull: First year you don't choose anything.

Brock: Oh, okay.

Scull: <laughs> First year, they assign you, 85 to 90 students, into a section, of the class—and there's, I think, nine sections, so it's a big class, like 700 or so in the entire class. you're with this same group three classes a day. Each class is an hour and a half and everybody in the first year takes the exact same thing.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: That's what it was back then. There was no electives, right? That happens in your second year.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: And so you get the broad exposure to everything, and I really enjoyed marketing. Marketing just was very intuitive to me, and I just found it really interesting. I enjoyed other things as well, but I really enjoyed marketing. You know, had a good professor and it really proved to be very formative to the way I thought about what I'd be interested in.

Brock: And if you had to describe what was the real, the crux or the heart or the foundations of marketing as you're coming to understand it, how would you describe that to somebody who's heard of it but doesn't really...

Scull: Yeah. People look at it a lot of different ways. There's some formulaic parts of it, there's some intuitive parts of it and kind of what's neat about it is it's a discipline that is really left and right brain. There's parts of it that you've got to be pretty analytical about the way you approach things. There's others that you've got to be pretty intuitive about the way you do things and I like that. That appeals to me—because I'm kind of... <laughs> I'm kind of that way. I'm left-footed and right-handed, so I just—things aren't quite wired properly, you know, so it actually bodes well. But it's really how do you find a customer need and help them figure out whether the product that you have fits them. So it's finding that connection between a need and filling it, is what I think of as the heart and soul of what marketing is. Now, you can be more product marketing, you can be more marketing communication and you can be more strategic marketing. I happen to like all three. You know, I probably lean more towards the

strategic marketing and that's what I found really interesting about it, but I love products and I love that how you find the right customer—understand the people and the audience and the customer prospect well enough that you know that in fact what you have actually solves their problem or can really help them. Whether they understand the problem that they have yet or not, you have something that can improve their life and that's kind of what's driven me. that's why it attracted me ultimately into computers and then ultimately to Silicon Valley, and why I've stayed here. It's just that, coming up with new innovative things, products, services, that just improve the world is what I find really cool.

Brock: <laughs> You're in Cambridge, Boston, at a very interesting time as microcomputing, personal computing, all around the MIT campus, things are going on. The spreadsheet appears. How plugged into or aware of this activity were you at that time?

Scull: I got more plugged into it because I took an information management course my second year—forget the name of it. Dan Bricklin had been an HBS student couple years earlier. He came back to the class and gave a demonstration of this new product called VisiCalc that his company had done, and I was like, "Wow. This, I really understand." It's not computers for computer's sake. You know, the way it was done before with programming, that's just very tedious, but all of a sudden there's a program that you can use that lets you do something more easily and it's like, "Wow. This is really cool." So it got my mind thinking. One of the finance professors that was a good friend of one of my classmates, because they're about the same age, was really into it. but it hadn't taken over in my brain because as I had entered Business School with a preconceived idea that what I should do upon graduating, is go do international business. I was born and raised internationally. You know, going to Asia. Asia was where I thought would be a really cool place to go. It was kind of, full cycle,

Brock: Sure.

Scull: And I'm like—I kind of had blinders on. I was going to go back to Asia, and so I interviewed with people that could help me get to Asia, and it turned out back then the only people where they would guarantee that, was the big commercial banks. Okay. So very cool. I thought. So I upon graduating, I took a job with one of the large commercial banks in New York City.

Brock: And their activity in Asia was kind of like investment banking activity or...

Scull: This was not investment banking. I did not want to be investment banker or consultant. I'd pretty much ruled that out. That just didn't seem like a good lifestyle that I really would enjoy. You know, plenty of my friends did it, but it just didn't really appeal to me.

Brock: Didn't appeal.

Scull: No.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: So... But I thought doing a general business and I thought, you know, "Go do commercial banking." You'd see a bunch of businesses and I'll figure out what I want to do, because remember, I had no, I had zero business experience, right?

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: I mean, zero. I'd been in student government and...

<laughter>

Scull: And that's about the extent of my organizational skills and I'd taught one year of, you know—

Brock: Right.

Scull: —of eighth and ninth grade math, right,—and done a little coaching, so it's not like I had a lot of business experience like some of my classmates had already worked for four or five years.

Brock: Right.

Scull: I was pretty inexperienced, business wise. So I thought this would be a good formative [experience] and so I took that job and they put me through a small training program. I had just finished two years of MBA and I'm back into a training program. Kind of drove me nuts, and I am like "You want us to do all this financial analysis," but without a personal computer? I went to the head of the training department. I said, "Can I take you down to this local computer store just two blocks away. I'd like to show you this program called VisiCalc, because we should all be using it. We can do our work better, faster, than the way you're wanting us to do it with HP calculators. And doing all this analysis is so tedious and you make mistakes that you got to redo everything—" it's like crazy. So I brought the guy down, showed him, and he's like, "Wow, yeah, that's really cool. But that's not the way we do it at the bank. We think for you to learn you really need to have the calculator and pencil and just go through it. We don't want you to take any shortcuts." I'm like, "Right." Okay. So I figured out a way to get out of the training program.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And now I'm in the real bank—this is, you know, after two months in a training program. Now I'm into my “real job” and first thing they do is they want me to do some analysis of some sophisticated project and I'm like, “Wow—again without a personal computer.” So I went to my boss. I go, “You know, there's this thing called a spreadsheet on personal computers that would allow me to do this a lot better and a lot faster. Can I take you down to a RadioShack that's two blocks away. “Can I take you down and show you this spreadsheet?” He went down and, basically, I got the exact same response. “We don't do it that way.” Hmm. I'm like, “Wow, this is nuts.” So I went to my boss's boss. I said, “There's this better way to do this.” And he goes, “Ah, that's not really the way we do it.” Now I've been at the bank like three months. So I went to my boss's boss's boss.

Brock: Isn't that kind of a risky move for you?

Scull: It would probably not be the politically correct thing to do. First, I been there only 3 months—but I'm like, “This is nuts.”

Brock: Right.

Scull: And so he goes, “What a great idea.”

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: “Get one.” I'm like, “Okay.” So I went and picked who I thought would be the best dealer to buy it from, one of the dealers I'd gone to. I was really impressed by them. Turns out they were a firm started by three Stanford MBAs and they were trying to introduce personal computing into Wall Street and all the big New York businesses., they're really sharp, they were very helpful. I bought an Apple III that ran the state-of-the-art advanced version of VisiCalc and needless to say it was a huge success. And then I'm like, “Oh, my God. I just had to go to my boss's boss's boss to get this. For something that was just dead obvious and is highly productive and if every bank in New York City is just like this, there is a huge opportunity. What am I doing working at the bank? I should be working selling computers,” and because I was really interested [in] them. I'd been reading a lot about personal computers at that point, and then I had a bit of a little flashback. The marketing professor of my first marketing class said “If you ever want to be really good at marketing, you need to do two years in sales.” Well, in banking, that's what you do. You're basically a salesperson. You're selling the services of the bank, so okay, that was fun. But now I had a chance to actually be in sales—with a product that actually I could see, that I understood, and I understood why it was going to be really successful. So I essentially went to that firm that I had bought it from, I said, “You know, how would you like to have a new sales guy? I think I could be really successful here,” and after a few discussions they said, “Yeah.”

<00:28:37>

<laughter>

Scull: So basically four months after joining, I left, and joined this company called Morris Decision Systems, which was a dealer that sold Apple, IBM and Compaq computers, which were arguably the top three firms, and this is just as the IBM PC had just been introduced.

Brock: So this is—

Scull: This is '81, so it was pretty much the beginning of the IBM PC, and Compaq had not yet been introduced. It was pretty close—

Brock: No, I don't think—

Scull: It was close to being produced but we were already pretty aware of it, and so that's what I did.

Brock: And you were selling the machines to get people the spreadsheet?

Scull: Well, you sell. It's again...

Brock: But, I mean, that was—

Scull: You're—

Brock: —why they would get it.

Scull: People would buy it because they had the same need that I did at the bank. They needed it for financial analysis—you'd sell them a spreadsheet, and a word processor. In this case it was WordStar, most of the time, and sometimes they would need a database and you'd sell them dBASE from Ashton-Tate. So that became the core productivity solution pack. And then, depending on how big a firm, you'd sell one and then next thing you know you'd sell 10 to their department. Then you would sell to the next department another 10 or 20 and then next thing you know you had sold them a bunch. Yeah.

Brock: Oh, just one quick question and then—was services, were you helping them kind of getting it set up and that sort of thing as well?

Scull: Yeah. That's why I was attracted to this particular organization. They had taken a very consultative selling approach, which resonated with me. They could sell not only the hardware and the software but they could also provide training, and if need be we even could go in and do consultation. one of the founders was really a CTO-caliber guy and so he was kind of my ace in the hole whenever I really needed to win a deal compared to anybody else. None of the other resellers had a guy like him, and so we could bring him in and he could go toe-to-toe with any of the IT guys inside these banks, or corporations, and, we had a pretty high winning percentage, because we had that full suite of services, not just hardware, software, but also the services.

Brock: Right.

Hsu: Why did you choose the Apple III over the IBM PC or the Commodore, and did you have any problems with it? How well did it work?

Scull: The IBM PC was relatively new. I'm not even sure if Lotus 1-2-3 was out yet. I don't think it was. So state of the art really was VisiCalc and Advanced VisiCalc on the Apple III. Now, fast forward a year, I pretty much sold IBM PCs and Lotus 1-2-3. I didn't sell a lot of Apples after that. Okay. It pretty much went from, a lot Apples - Apple IIs, Apple IIIs—to a year later It was all IBM, and Compaqs If they needed it to be a little more portable.

<laughter>

Scull: Or luggable, you'd sell them the Compaq.

Hsu: But how reliable was the Apple [III] for you?

Scull: Oh, was great. It was fine. It was fine. I never had any issue, to be honest.

Brock: Was this a change in terms of bankers using computers as differentiated from sort of the clerical staff or people doing kind of like the transaction processing? I mean, was it, was kind of like bankers doing analysis with paper and hand calculators to personal computers or what was it like?

Scull: Well, it was a mixture. You saw, over the two years that I did it—it infiltrated a lot of places. It wasn't just in knowledge workers. It also was secretary pools, you know, doing word processing. But it

was oftentimes started by the analysts, the people that were really crunching, but then it also got in the accounting area, where people were doing spreadsheets or needed to do the equivalent of spreadsheets, right?

Brock: I had just always kind of imagined that the analysts were using either a timeshared system or—

Scull: Yeah, but they're terrible.

Brock: —running things? Yeah. They were, but it was not a good tool.

Scull: They're terrible. And you were reliant on, sometimes the timeshare system would go down, you're relying on other people. You didn't have control. Personal computing was all about, it's personal, <laughs> it's there, if you want to print it out, your printer's right there. "Boom." You know, you want to save it, you want to put it on a floppy disk and then go somewhere else and boot it up there. So yeah, and that's what you oftentimes were competing against. More than not you're competing against paper and calculators, but you would also find cases where you're competing against some kind of timeshare, mainframe timeshare-type system. On the word processing side, it was mainly Wang and within two years it was just gone. It was all, I mean, it was just <snaps> "boom." It was just too expensive, too cumbersome, not up to state of the art anymore, and people wanted to have something that was cheap and flexible where you could not only do word processing but you could do all the other things and it was just gone. "Whoosh."

Brock: So it sounds like it must've been, you know, you were right there at this inflection point, so must've been a very busy time <laughs> for you.

Scull: Oh, It was great. It was, New York City, single, working hard, you know, having a great time and just in a fascinating industry. It was really kicking, and you could just feel it. And the story then takes a little bit of change in that, one of the three guys that ran the company, was interested in being a bigger entity and had more, grander thoughts than just having one location. And knew they would need venture capital to do so. And so Venrock enters the picture.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: Venrock, which is the Rockefeller family venture firm was there in New York City. And so they became one of my customers and I was encouraged to take good care of that relationship.

Brock: <laughs> Yeah.

Scull: Right. Because they might be potential investors in the future. Well, I got to know, Peter Crisp who was the managing director and he was very interested in what was happening on the street, because I was selling personal computers. It turns out he's on the board of Apple, and so he was particularly interested in how Apple was doing. And Apple had gone from doing really well to hardly selling anything to business. We were hardly selling any Apples. We sold a few to some of the longtime Apple national accounts. Some of the accounting firms had really committed to Apple and they were pretty standardized on Apple, which is pretty interesting and so I had a few of the large ones like Arthur Young, Arthur Andersen—at that point it was Arthur Young and Arthur Andersen. Prior to a lot of the consolidation—it was the Big 8 then, so they were one of my target customer groups in addition to the commercial banks. They still were with Apple and so that led me to have some interesting conversations with Peter, which I'd do periodically when I was just checking in and he'd want to know what's going on and so I developed a good relationship with him. And because of my experience with the accounting firms, I got to know some of the Apple people. And when the Lisa computer came out, Apple wanted us to carry the Lisa and so our firm got to send one person to the Lisa training and they selected me to do it because I had some of these key Apple national accounts. And so I went and I was like, blown away by the Lisa.

<laughter>

Scull: I'm like, "Wow. I now really get it". I thought spreadsheets were cool, but now you got a graphical user interface that "I think my mom could even figure out how to use—this is just easy to do and this is really fascinating," and so I really got excited. I became the key demo-er for Lisa and so I'd demo it any time we had a client. I was the guy that they'd pull to go demo. We sold a bunch of them, but they're really to early adopters, right? <laughs> You later figured out, it's not quite ready for prime time, the Lisa, but it was still just fascinating. and so right about that time I had a really key conversation with Peter Crisp, and we're talking and he goes, "You know, I really think, John, you ought to go work at Apple. They could use somebody like you. You really know what's going on on the street. You have a really good competitive insight. Apple's having a real challenge getting into business again, and because we're losing to IBM and I think you could be really helpful to them." And I'm like, "Well, the Lisa I think is really, really cool." Now, at that point I didn't know about the Mac and so one thing led to another. He introduced me to Apple. He set it up for me to come out to California and interview. and I interviewed the whole gang—I met John Sculley, who had just joined as CEO three months earlier, Bill Campbell, who's also just gotten there, and then much of the corporate marketing and sales teams, as I was interested in sales and marketing.

Brock: Right.

Scull: So I interviewed there, thought it was really cool, thinking that I might join Apple and do Apple International.

Brock: Oh.

Scull: I'm going to... <laughs>

Brock: Sure.

Scull: It's my opportunity to now continue the journey of what I thought I wanted to do—international. but after I did a whole-day interview there, really liked it and at the end of the day, they said, you know, "We'd like you to stay one more day. We'd like you to meet Steve Jobs and the Macintosh team." I'm like—

Brock: What's that?

Scull: "Okay."

Brock: <laughs> Yeah.

Scull: Yeah. Tell me more.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: Right. You know, so I got a little info and they said, "Yeah, they're coming out with—it's kind of like the Lisa but a little smaller." You know, it's top secret. You might not even be able to see it, you know, that sort of stuff, but I'd like you to meet them. I think you would really like that team. So I showed up the next day, eight thirty in Steve Job's office just waiting.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: Wait a little longer. Then eventually he comes in, kind of looked a bit disheveled and with his cup of coffee, black coffee in a Styrofoam cup and, I guess, my resume or something on his desk. He looks at that and he goes, "What's so F-ing great about you that I got to be in here at eight-thirty to meet you?"

<laughter>

Scull: It's like, if you've ever—I don't know if you've met Steve.

Brock: No.

Scull: He had these, deep, black piercing eyes. Just looked right through you, and I don't know quite what I said. I actually have no recollection of what I said, because he's that kind of personality. Whatever I said, it seemed to be fine because we continued then to have an hour conversation. He was fascinated. He wanted to know everything about the retail experience, how it was, why Apple was losing, why Apple was this or that." It was great.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: At the end of it, it's like, "My brain hurts. Right?" But it's great. Then I continued and met the rest of the Mac marketing team and some of the product people and I was just like, "Wow."

Brock: Did they show you the computer?

Scull: No.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: No. But I had a good enough of a view of what I thought it was and the way it was described. You know, this was eight months before it's launched, right, so it might—

Brock: So we're in—

Scull: It might not have even been working. So middle of '83.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: Right. So—

Brock: Okay.

Scull: So summer of '83, it may not have actually been anything they could've demoed.

<laughter>

Brock: That's right.

Scull: Or on that given day it may not have been able to do it, but regardless, I flew back to New York City, got a phone call from Bill Campbell about two days later saying, "We'd like you to join," and Bill, if you've ever met him, he's fairly persuasive. He thought he was a coach again recruiting somebody to join his football team. It was really great.

Brock: So did that hook you in particular having been a coach or—

Scull: I was already sold.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: I was already sold.

Brock: Yeah, <inaudible>.

Scull: I thought he seemed like a great guy. The head of marketing in the Mac division, guy named Mike Murray. Just—

Brock: Mm-hm.

Scull: —I mean, these are just super bright people. Everybody I met at Apple was super bright, really energetic and seemed like good people as well and so it was a really easy decision and I'm like, you know, a little haggle back and forth, but it wasn't much. <laughs> They could've offered me anything and I would've taken it and three weeks later I'm in Cupertino.

Brock: Did you have any exposure to what was happening on kind of the Apple II side of the business, if you will?

Scull: Just from my exposure at Morris Decision Systems. I sold a few of them so I understood. It was mainly going into education at that point, and we didn't sell to the consumer, right? This was a pretty a business-focused organization but I did work with some consultants, including one of the consultants who was Missy Crisp, who is Peter Crisp's wife. She was an education consultant for some of the schools in the New York City area, so I did help her. Again, part of my role of taking care of the—

<laughter>

Brock: Yeah. That Venrock account.

Scull: Taking care. And these two people are the nicest. They're just fantastic people, so I would've done it regardless. I don't care whether there's any connection at all, it turned out they're just, just fantastic people.

Brock: When you came to, you know, came out for the interviews was the focus all on the kind of graphical user interface side of Apple, or what was happening with the Apple III? Was that at all part of your tour or exposure.

Scull: Oh, when I was doing the first day is, it was more general, it was more whether I wanted to come out and join the corporate marketing team.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: I wasn't coming out to be an engineer, right? I'm not an engineer. I wasn't coming out to program. I was going to come out and be part of the sales and marketing organization.

Brock: Okay. Was there any negotiation about which—I would imagine they would want you to do the financial business side of things or did you know when you accepted?

Scull: No. Yeah. I knew. When I accepted, I accepted to come out to be the retail marketing manager for the Mac rollout.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: They wanted somebody that knew the dealer channel, that could be in the product group to help make sure that everything we were doing, programs, the way we communicated, pricing, everything like that, fit and would be what would make us be successful in the dealer channel, because the dealer channel was pretty much the way Apple sold. We were extremely reliant on that and so I then put together that whole program for that. Working, of course, with our corporate inside sales team, and then later with the field sales organization.

Brock: When you arrived, what was the landscape like for applications that you were going to have to go with it? You know, like, I don't even—

Scull: What applications?

Brock: Yeah. Okay. That was—

Scull: Yeah. I mean, we had MacPaint and MacWrite, right? That's pretty much it. And we had been evangelizing. You know, I don't know if you have chatted with Guy [Kawasaki] or—but Mike Boich was the evangelist before Guy. Guy worked for Mike, and they were out trying to convince Mitch Kapor, Bill Gates, and Fred Gibbons of Software Publishing. Those were the three big software companies. So we were actively trying to get those guys to support the Mac. In fact, we got all three of them to say they would. That'd be good video. You guys ought to, if you haven't seen it just personally, get some of the early videos of when we, the Mac team, introduced the Macintosh to the Apple sales organization. We did it in Hawaii and they had the "dating game". It's really famous. They had the dating game, which had Steve as the Macintosh / bachelorette.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And the three eligible bachelors were those three guys, Bill Gates and Mitch Kapor and Fred Gibbons.

Brock: Oh, wow.

Scull: And so they had a—it was really funny, and they're all trying to get them, who was going to date the Macintosh. So it's really very funny, and the sales guys were just eating it up because, you know, if you're going to launch something new you had to have this great software.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: It turns out that Lotus took a real try but didn't really ever get there.

Brock: Well, that's what I was wondering.

Scull: You know, Microsoft took quite a while to get there. Ended up with a spreadsheet called Multiplan. Got out, but it was a while before we eventually got to Excel.

Brock: Right.

Scull: That was like two years later and Software Publishing just did a port and it was never any good.

Brock: Was that that PFS line?

Scull: PFS. Yeah.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: PFS File.

Brock: Okay. So they did—that was your database?

Scull: That was their database, and we never got dBASE. We never got Ashton-Tate to do it, and so pretty much it was pretty... <laughs> It was pretty lean and so, when Guy took over he had his hands full. But we eventually got some software, but it really took almost two years before we started seeing anything with any real 'oompha'.

Brock: Was that the Lotus kind of <laughs> the failure of the Lotus software to materialize for the Macintosh, was that a strategic decision on their part or what was behind that from your perspective?

Scull: I think it's just really hard to do.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: When you've been doing a certain kind of programming and you got to now go to more object-oriented programming where you have a different interface, it's just hard. These guys were flat out, they're pretty successful on the IBM PC.

Brock: Right.

Scull: You know, that was kind of gobbling up the world, and all the PC clones that were with it and it's like this is Mac, with zero installed base. How excited are you as a software guy to go support a zero

installed base system when you've got millions of installed base IBM PC and clones? So it was kind of easy to put off, took quite a bit to get them to move over.

Brock: Hm.

Scull: And Microsoft did, because Microsoft at that point was already thinking, kind of like the discussion we had, about being more than just a one product company doing OSs which was, obviously their cash cow, but they also saw that they needed to be in the application business. And then they also knew that they were going to be doing a Windows thing, so learning on the Mac was a great way to get a head start, which they were pretty smart about. I think some of the other ones didn't quite have the same strategic understanding or took the long view that Bill Gates and the Microsoft guys did and I think it ended up probably hurting some of these companies. Lotus did do a product called Jazz, which was basically a suite of products in it and it was never the killer app that it could've been. Just never was quite that good, and then when Excel came out, Excel was really good.

<00:52:00>

Brock: <laughs> I was interested in kind of that there is this difference between the Lisa and the Mac in terms of, as I understand it, sort of a closed world of programs in the Lisas. In essence, my impression is it was sort of like, well, it comes with what you would ever want or what you should ever want, more or less, but with the Macintosh it was a much more kind of open system with the idea, you know, it's—

Scull: It was more akin to what had happened on the Apple II, right, which, I think Apple had Basic, you know, that was I think the only real product that Apple did that was included—I'm not positive on that. But with the Mac it was really—let a thousand flowers bloom, and that was the approach. Interesting story on the Lisa. So I show up, you know, fresh from, from New York City, selling Lisas and selling IBMs and Compaqs and things and I show up at Apple to join the Mac team, and then of course I see the Mac and, "Wow", just, "This is awesome." You know, it's really cool, and I'm like, "So is the Lisa going to run—I assume it's going to run Mac software," and the answer was, "No." There was no anything. It was like we were going to introduce another system. They were not compatible with each other. See, the Apple II, at least Apple III had an Apple II emulation and it pretty much ran all the Apple II software, so at least it was, upwardly compatible with the whole software base, and while most people would buy it for the new stuff, not for the old stuff, at least it, you know, from a marketing standpoint it's like, "Yeah, your investment is still good as you upgrade," but, you know, the Lisa and the Mac, they just, they didn't even work together. And I'm like, again, been there a week. <laughs> we had an e-mail system at Apple so I type an e-mail to Sculley and Campbell and Jobs and my boss, Mike Murray, and I said, "Sorry. I know I've only been here a week, but we're going to get slaughtered if we introduce the Mac and it being incompatible with the Lisa, people are just going to laugh at us. The dealers are going to be completely confused and they're not going to know what to do, which one to support." "This is nuts," basically.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And I'm like, once again, showing my lack of political astuteness. But fortunately, Apple's a very flat [organization] and, you know, and it <snaps> "boom," things happened. Next thing you know, they went on a crash course to try to get compatibility—the Lisa was still trying to stay alive, right? They hadn't made the tough decision to kill it yet.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: And so they put a crash course to create an emulation system on the Lisa that would run the Mac software. It never really, really worked and they ultimately, going through that exercise, and financial and all sorts of other things led to them to kill the Lisa because they just couldn't afford both, it was too small of a company to have two major investments and Steve was persuasive enough to say, "No. I think this is the way," <laughs> and the rest of the organization begrudgingly went along with it, and the Lisa ultimately ended up being shut down pretty soon thereafter.

Hsu: Sorry.

Brock: Please.

Hsu: But the Lisa was still, I guess it was still marketed as the Macintosh XL for like a year after?

Scull: They tried to reposition it kind of as the Mac XL because it did, had the emulation system, but it just never succeeded, it was really expensive and it was still a little kludgey. It didn't work as well as it could've.

Hsu: So you don't believe that, given equivalent marketing push, the Lisa still would not have done as well as the Mac?

Scull: <sighs> It's more than marketing. One thing I did learn in—really it's been formative in my way of thinking, was something I learned from Steve and Mike Murray in the Macintosh experience was, great marketing starts with a great product.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And I think that's even more so now. It's what they had at their core in their thinking, I think it's really survived the test of time and I think it's even more appropriate today. But yes. I think it would've been challenged. It just wasn't a good enough product technically to, and at a high price point and everything like that. If it could've evolved to be more like a Sun workstation and gone after the high end and if they had thought that way about it, maybe. But it would've been a major, major investment and I don't think the resource of Apple at that point could've handled two major investments, you know, resources to do that, because it's different channel, a lot of stuff that's different.

<00:57:59>

Brock: Listening to you talk about that, writing that e-mail memo, it reminded me of this Osborne effect. You know, where you're almost, you know, you're creating this confusion in the market by saying, "Well, we just introduced this one thing." <laughs> Now we're introducing something else that's kind of like, mm, substantially different, you know, and so it just creates confusion on all levels about, you know—

Scull: Correct.

Brock: —which direction are we tacking in?

Scull: I believe that it was going to be too difficult to navigate with our dealers and with key customers. The Apple II was marketwise different. We had, you know, Apple II was really kind of the consumer but more in education, K-to-12, and they took, the Mac went into the universities through a really cool program that Steve and Dan'l Lewin headed up called the Apple University Consortium, and so that was really forward thinking in that it was really Mac's job to be in kind of small business and business. Kind of our model was we were going after knowledge workers. You know, wheels for the mind. That was kind of Steve's and Mike Murray's mantra, a general productivity tool. You know, a bicycle that you could do all sorts of things with.

Brock: How did your kind of retail channel react to the Mac and to the general kind of marketing push around it?

Scull: Well, I think the Mac launch was extremely successful. I mean, the 1984 ad was quite impactful, the way we rolled it out to the salesforce, our salesforce, was really impactful—it was a pep rally, they were really fired up coming out, so everybody was pretty enthralled and you got early adopters that will buy anything, right? You know, what we now call fanboys. You had that, and so for the first little bit, people were just buying it because it's cool. But then to go beyond the early adopters and you're now starting to get into people that have to justify why they're doing it, all of a sudden it needed to be able to do things. While it all started out pretty good, <laughs> we didn't have software and so until we were

going to have enough software we were going to struggle and by the end of '84, going into '85, the Mac was struggling. It wasn't hitting its sales targets. It was struggling.

Hsu: I want to take a step back, but what was your role in the launch itself?

Scull: I was the retail marketing manager, which means my job was to help make sure that the programs, pricing and the way we communicated and trained for our dealers was appropriate so that they could absorb and be successful with it at the retail, at the dealer level. So that was my part of it. There's others that did the Marcom, the ads. I didn't have anything to do with the 1984 ad other than saw it and went...

<laughter>

Scull: You know. You know, that was pretty wild. Or, so my main thing was really focused there.

Hsu: Was the 128K memory of the original Macintosh, was that a problem with the users?

Scull: Not the early ones, because it did things that no one else had ever done. You know, a little thing you can put in this case and says "hello" to you. I mean, it's like, this is really, really, really cool. It's the promise of what it could be, right, and people believed that there would be a spreadsheet. People believed there would be a better word processor than MacWrite. But MacWrite was okay. People believed there would be database. People believed it would have all the software that the IBM PC [had], just easier to use. That was, it was sold with that belief, and some people are willing to believe it will come. Others need it to be there when they buy it, and that's the difference between kind of early adopters and guys that aren't early adopters.

Brock: As the difficulties were kind of setting in <laughs> late '84 or into '85 I guess it would be?

Scull: Yeah, late '84, and then—but now, that's leading into '85—now we got the LaserWriter.

Brock: Right.

Scull: Right. Which, you know, that's coming.

Brock: Well, right before we get to that, one thing. Was there ever a discussion internally about in the kind of Macintosh side of things that maybe we ought to just do our own crash program and, like, make

our own spreadsheet or... As we had with, you know, MacWrite, Mac spreadsheet? Just wondering, or would—

Scull: I'm sure there were conversations, you know, because frustration.

Brock: Yeah. <laughs>

Scull: You know, because people just aren't doing what we thought, but we also had—we saw, you know, we saw glimmers of hope, <laughs> right? Because they just weren't doing it as fast as you wanted or as good as you wanted them to do, and that was the frustration. But they're out, we're out talking to a lot of different software guys. I mean, you'd probably get a little bit deeper if you talked to Boich and Guy, because that was their job to do.

Brock: Right. Well, maybe we should then switch to how the LaserWriter idea, or what was happening with Apple with printers when the laser printer idea occurs or if you could just bring us into that?

Scull: I mean, the laser by '84 is pretty much certain, there's going to be a laser printer. There's going to be something that was going to be able to take these graphics, on the screen and put it out there prettier than the ImageWriter, the little dot matrix printer. No one really knew what that was other than the guys that were working on the products who were little closer to it. But you knew it was coming. We didn't know—I think early on we didn't know what price it was going to be, but "Wow, this is going to be really cool." As it got closer and closer to the fall and we were going to be launching the printer in early '85, then the whole marketing push was to do something called the Mac Office. Now, we were also hoping that there was going to be software to go along with it, right, and we still didn't quite have the full suite of all the software that we might've wanted, but my memory may be a little foggy as whether—I don't think we could demo Excel yet. I don't think that was quite ready, but Multiplan was and I don't think Microsoft Word was quite ready yet but they were in development. So I think the view was that there was enough and that with this printer, and we had AppleTalk, a network to share the printer, which was pretty advanced, and it's built-in, no extra. You didn't have extra cards, extra cost. You just need to plug this in and next thing you know you're on a network. It's like, "Wow, that's kind of cool."

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: So there was a lot of foundational stuff that was really cool and so that became kind of the marketing push. You probably should talk to Barbara Koalkin [Barsa]. She was the head of product marketing, she was responsible for the—

Brock: The Macintosh Office.

Scull: The Mac Office.

Brock: Mac Office.

Scull: She was the product marketing head for that, working for Mike Murray, as that was being launched. I at that point did a special project. I took on another role at Apple, which was to look at the education market. But just leading up to the Mac Office I was the Marcom manager. So after the retail roll-out of the Mac I'd at that point pretty much convinced myself and my boss that I wanted to become a really good marketing guy and I wanted to someday be VP of Marketing and so he said, "Okay. You're going to go be the Marcom manager." <laughs> So...

Brock: So—and this would be for the national kind of advertising campaign and things like that.

Scull: This would be for everything.

Brock: For everything.

Scull: I would be the person in the Mac division that was responsible for Marcom, which means advertising, PR, events, promotions. Now, the decision-maker was always Steve. You know, for anything important. Anything that was in—Mike Murray was always also a major part of that decision team, but ultimately everyone knew <laughs> who the real decision-maker was. If it was a critical thing or if it was something Steve wanted he was the decision-maker. Mike, you know, his job was to be his adviser to make sure and the recommender to say—and when Steve didn't really care, then Mike made all the decisions.

Brock: Got it.

Scull: Right. And then my job was to work with the ad agency, the PR agency, our creative services, and so I did that through a program called "Test Drive a Macintosh," where we gave Macintoshes to dealers as a loaner. We had a few of them for every dealer and they could lend it out to test drive, because our view was if people tried it, they would never want to return it.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: Okay. And it was actually fairly successful. It's expensive but fairly successful and it kind of motivated [us] because we thought we needed to kind of kick it up a little, so it did that. We also had a program that we gave Macintoshes to a hundred celebrities. The Apple II had done a program called

“Kids Can’t Wait” that they—or I think that’s what it was called where basically they gave one to every school in America and that’s what seeded the Apple II everywhere. Well, Steve and Mike had the idea of, “Let’s get celebrities.” So I had a guy that worked for me named Alfred Mandel, and he became the marketing ninja. His job was to work with Steve on any special project and one of them was this, and so we’d give them to celebrities, and he’d hand deliver to Michael Jackson. <laughs> I mean, it was great, and I’d tag along occasionally if it was a really interesting person. You know, I’d go,

Brock: Did anybody in particular amongst those celebrities really get into it?

Scull: Yeah. I think we had quite a few.

Brock: Is there one that pops out?

Scull: I think we got one to Alvin Toffler.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And I was fascinated by that, so I joined that particular meeting, and then we got him to be a speaker at one of our Apple World events, which was kind of like Oracle World. We would bring in all of our customers and salespeople, and we got him to be a keynote [speaker] and I really enjoyed meeting him and talking to him about that and that was great. I’d have to go through the list. I’d have to—

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: I’d have to go spark my memory. I do know going to the, you know, the Michael Jackson [meeting], you know. Alfred and I went down to the Michael Jackson concert in L.A., you know, so that we could hand it to him, and that was pretty fun.

Brock: Yeah. I can imagine.

Hsu: Was Andy Warhol and Sean Lennon—

Scull: Yeah. Yeah.

Hsu: —were they part of that?

Scull: They would be part of that. Good, good memory.

<laughter>

Hsu: I read it somewhere.

Scull: Yeah, yeah.

Brock: Well, you know, is this an appropriate time to maybe revisit some of what we talked about yesterday in terms of how—

Hsu: Or do we want to ask more about education?

Brock: Oh, sure. Yeah. The special education project that you were doing?

Scull: Yeah. I really enjoyed it. I think partially because I had taught, partially, because my mom had been a teacher, partially because I just think education's really critical, and I saw from talking to my friends in the Apple II side that they were actually starting to be pretty nervous about what was happening in the K-to-12 [space] that the IBM PC was kind of creeping in and was now the administrators were now starting to use IBM PCs instead of Apple IIs, because the Apple III really had at that point kind of gone away, and so it was really the Apple II competing against the IBM PC and that's just not a fair fight.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: And, you know, so I talked to enough of what I thought were pretty forward-thinking members of our field organization and our corporate sales and marketing organization but to the Apple II, it was their turf, and they really didn't want the Mac interfering on their turf and so it was very political. I didn't realize quite as much when I started it but I basically came to the view very quickly that, strategically Apple needed to cannibalize itself or else they were going to be cannibalized. So I led a task force to validate some of those assumptions and talked to a few of the software vendors that were supporting the Apple II to get their view of what they were doing and sure enough they were starting to either do work on the IBM PC or really thinking about it, because they were getting pressure, and I'm like, "Well, what about the Mac? What could we do to convince you to do that?" and so that freaked out the Apple II group, <laughs> because I'm now intruding on their really strategic partners, which were the software developers. So I tried to always include members of the corporate marketing group looking at education, and key salespeople in the field. We even then went into a few of the key school districts to just bounce the idea off them. It was pretty clear that we had to do it, in my opinion, and so I put together a

presentation to Steve and the Mac team. They said, "It absolutely makes sense that you have to do it," because my view was IBM was going to come in and put a move—they were going to come in to the administrator, then they were going to go into the business classes in high school and then eventually they were just going to create that wedge and then, go down into K-8 and Apple II's going to be toast. And so we had to cannibalize ourself. That presentation went up to exec staff and it caused a—I don't know what's the appropriate term to use but it caused a real shit storm.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: I mean, it was, "explosive," and it was right at that same time that I was doing that, the Mac was floundering and the Mac Office had been launched and had flopped. The sales of LaserWriter, as I said, had gone from 2,000 the first month, to 1600, then to 1200, then to 800, then to 400 in the next few months. You know, it wasn't selling through. The channel, the dealers didn't know how to sell it. No one really wanted to buy it. It was pretty much going nowhere—and meanwhile that's going on, I'm creating this other—

Brock: Ah, geez.

Scull: —thing with the Apple II group and it's like there was just a lot swirling, you know, and that was in that mix of all those kind of things is when Steve, John Sculley and the board crisis happened.

Brock: That explodes in the middle of this already.

Scull: It was all exploding.

Brock: In this turmoil.

Scull: It was all in that, so nothing ever got decided on my project, because just as we're trying to decide, "Are we going to do something or not?"

Brock: Oh.

Scull: —the Mac division got blown up.

Brock: Wow.

Scull: Right. So there's just a lot of stuff happening and it just happened to all be happening at the same time.

Brock: So you were, in essence, trying to rip the Band-Aid off of things <laughs> and just say, like, "If IBM is—if the PC is going to displace—" you had a choice. "Is it going to be the IBM PC or is it going to be the Macintosh that's going to displace the Apple II?" in essence.

Scull: So, if you're Apple, what would you rather?

Brock: Right.

Scull: Yeah. My view is take the step back, take the corporate, take the company view, not the division view. If you're going to be cannibalized, be cannibalized by yourself. Cannibalize—yes. The Apple II and the Macintosh, there was some animosity—because Steve was not the most understanding or compassionate about the Apple II. He basically viewed that was just like yesterday and all he cared about—he didn't want anything that would take any energy away from his baby, right, which he just evangelically was going to, through force of will, was going to make successful, and so he just didn't really care, he kind of poo-pooed everything else, helping create that political turmoil, which was very, very apparent to anybody at the company. You know, the board and Sculley and everyone. There were some really tough decisions to be made.

Brock: So in that leadership change there would be little hope of resolving this education—K-to-12 conundrum.

Scull: Yeah. I think it took another 18, 24 months before it got kind of resolved, and I think, actually, it probably took the success of desktop publishing with the Mac for the education group to know that the Mac was actually going to survive to help the decision get made—you'd have to ask the education guys where ultimately the Mac then started to get in-roads K-12. But I think we lost precious time and let the PC establish a strong position in K-12. Personally I think we lost like two or three years, and it probably really still hurt. We never quite recovered it.

Hsu: Right. But I remember Apple II still being in elementary, my elementary school—

Scull: Yeah.

Hsu: —until, like, '90 or something.

Scull: Probably '90. Yeah.

Hsu: Yeah.

Scull: Well, they buy things for seven years.

Brock: <laughs>

Scull: Right? Despite the fact that most computers are good for four or five.

<laughter>

Scull: Yeah. They buy them for a long time, you know, and they're very, pedagogically, so if they've adopted a certain book and a certain software they're going to use that, and so switching to a new platform is really expensive and slow. Most schools don't have the money to do that, so it's a big decision to make a switch and it's not an easy one. So my view is you start off by putting in a Mac lab, in high school, and that's your Trojan horse. Get that in there. Because that's what I thought IBM would do. In fact, that's what they did do. You just had to think about their needs, their budget, the way they approached it and you had to also think from the software developers' [perspective] what they had to do to make them justify doing this, so you had to give them enough reason to, because they also were very conservative and took a really long view as well. It's the nature of the education business. It's hard to get in. Once you get in you're kinda locked in for a while, but it's very conservative.

Brock: The lack of success of the Mac Office strategy. We talked about monthly sales of the LaserWriter not going in the right direction. Was that the primary metrics that you could use to judge how the Mac Office strategy was doing, since it centered, in essence, on the LaserWriter?

Scull: That's what it was. It was pitched as you buy a few Macs and this awesome laser printer that can print out everything in very professional quality and it's a shared device. Expensive, yeah, but it's a shared device, so cost per is not a whole lot. If you have five or six Macs, that \$7,000 goes to, a little over a thousand per user, which is not a whole lot more expensive than a dot matrix printer or daisy wheel printer that were \$700 bucks.

Brock: Right.

Scull: So, it wasn't that much more expensive—and it was a lot better. Right? Even for just word processing, and plus, of course, you could do text and graphics. But the notion of desktop publishing,

that was nowhere in anybody's consciousness as we launched the Mac Office. Now, we had some examples. You know, Mac Publisher. There were some examples of some potentially interesting [applications] but it was just one of the things you could do. You could do spreadsheets, you could do word processing. You could do some graphics. You could maybe do a newsletter. That was kind of the way. It was just part of a—it's the Mac Office, right?

Brock: Mm-hm. So how is it that—remind us again how exactly did that shift of your focus, because you're on something important, which is K-to-12. You know, there's this other important need over here of Mac Office not doing what it's supposed to. Did you want to get from one to the other or where—

Scull: It got blown up.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: The division got blown up. They basically blew up the Mac division, the Apple II division, and the APG, the Peripherals division, and they just made a Product group.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: Right. So now they had a Product group and anybody in marketing into a Marketing group—because before, each division had their own marketing—so they put all the product people in a Product group and all the marketing people went into Corporate Marketing, which they divided by Consumer, Education and Business, and so the Mac Office went into Business.

Brock: Business.

Scull: So then there was a big re-org, a few people in the Mac group left. They did not want to be part of this. If Steve was leaving, they were leaving. So actually quite a few just did not want to—they chose to not be part of this new thing. Some were not asked to; some were—but chose not to. I got tapped on the shoulder and said, "Okay. Re-orged. Good news is we want you to stay," <laughs>, and, "Here's the role that we would like you to take," and so, I took it.

Brock: Huh. Okay.

[The beginnings of Desktop Publishing]

Scull: Because I thought it was interesting and another challenge.

Brock: What about your education project?

Scull: It became now the role of the education marketing guys, and they wanted me to be in the Business [group] because of my retail dealer background.

Brock: Makes sense. Yeah.

Scull: So...

Brock: But it's a kind of out of the frying pan and into the fire in essence, right, I mean...

Scull: Mm, well, it was all a pretty crazy time. Let's just say it was all kind of a blur. It was all really chaotic for a while.

Brock: And as you described yesterday, you, when you came into this new challenge, you're already severely time constrained. Could you—

Scull: Well, the time constraint became obvious to me but not initially.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: Right. First, I had to just figure out, "Okay. What's the lay of the land?"

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: Right. And the lay of the land was, "Okay. Apple's in trouble." Sales are bad, we're really in trouble or else they wouldn't have made this big change, you know. The way it was going they probably would've come to the conclusion of killing the LaserWriter, you know, so it's kind of interesting. We didn't talk about that, yesterday, but if we'd killed that, there might not be an Adobe. There probably wouldn't have been an Aldus, right? So everyone had an enlightened [self-]interest, and whether the Mac would've survived, who knows? Whether Apple would've survived, who knows? Might've. I mean, they still had, we

had a pretty good brand name, had some really smart people. You know, who knows? Might've, probably would've, but the Mac would've taken quite a while probably to eventually get there, and who knows whether other software guys would've abandoned it. You just don't know. But my sense was, the company's in crisis, the Mac was in trouble, the LaserWriter's in trouble. You know, that was the context, and so it was a crisis and—it was really interesting. I thought it was fascinating, personally. I mean, I was working all the time, <laughs> but I thought it was fascinating and, just you had to go make some quick actions, talk to people and get as smart as you can, assess the situation, and make a judgment call, and my judgment call was that we had to do something now. We didn't have the luxury of analyzing it and coming up with the perfect plan. We just had to do it, you know, and it fit <laughs> kind of my personality. You know, because as you may have noticed from the other thing, if I think the right thing to do is to do something I just kind of did it.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: And, I probably pissed off a few people, because at Apple, this was a different way of doing stuff, and I probably was pretty young and immature. But I knew what I wanted to do and you had to convince people. Because I didn't have a budget. It was me and a summer intern, and he was leaving in August.

<laughter>

Brock: Had to go back to school.

Scull: Right. And we're now in June. You know, this is all happening. I mean, it happened just as he came onboard, so we're there going, "I got a new thing. Whatever you thought you're going to do, you're not doing that. You're doing this with me," and so we just pulled together, went out and talked to a bunch of people, as we discussed yesterday.

Brock: Yes.

Scull: Talked to people and products to understand it. Talked to software developers that were doing anything interesting in graphics, that took advantage of the LaserWriter. Talked to analysts, people that are following the Mac, and then through that, met and talked to Jonathan Seybold.

Brock: Right.

Scull: You know, obviously talked to the Adobe guys, and they were just a fountain of information, and they were pretty panicked about the whole thing too. Everybody, was pretty [much] like, [in] crisis, and so

the great thing about crisis is, with people <snapping quickly>, there's urgency. And when you talk to the sales guys. They're, like, panicked. This thing's going nowhere. They're kind of—we're not going to meet out quotas. We're not going to do [well]—and so you have urgency. Which means if you can be pretty clear and straightforward with what you're doing, people are craving a winner, and it was that energy that was there that we were able to take advantage of. That I was able to get enough people, get someone from Training department to say, "Okay. Yes, that's the right thing. Well, we'll give resources. I'll steal some resources from PR," so we <laughs> had someone to help with that. Because what else were they doing, right? And so you got enough people, and my boss and his boss were, even though they thought I was going too fast and they weren't sure, they didn't hold me back. That's the most important thing. You know, as I mentioned yesterday, despite Jean-Louis Gassée thinking what I was doing was stupid. He just thought that was not the Apple way to do things. You know, he thought we really should just stay as "wheels for the mind" and that was the right thing to do because that was what the Macintosh was. Because that's how he had pitched it and sold it successfully in France, and he had been successful, making the Macintosh pretty successful in France was by going for that kind of intellectual approach which really connected with the French in a really interesting way and so Apple, you know, Mac was doing better in France than anywhere else and so he thought that was the right thing to do here in the U.S. as well.

Brock: I must admit, I didn't understand why that would be in conflict with working with graphics.

Scull: It's not in conflict.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: But I was taking—

Brock: Just in his mind.

Scull: Yes. Well, he was, he thought, we were becoming a vertical solution and he thought the notion of putting marketing around a vertical solution was not right—we were supposed to be going after knowledge workers, not graphic artists and publishers, right? He saw that as more [just] workers, you know, doing a specialized task, as opposed to communicators that are—actually one of the things you do as a knowledge worker is you actually communicate, and so he didn't quite see that and, you know, and my view was it was one of the early adopter groups that would understand it economically and they could justify buying a \$12,000 system, which is two Macs and a LaserWriter and some software, because knowledge workers weren't quite ready for that yet. It was just too expensive for them to do that and so, you know, the Lisa, if—the Lisa would've gone after that knowledge worker with a really expensive system too, and it wasn't quite ready for it yet <laughs> either. And so I just thought this was what we ought to do and I knew that it was going to be successful. <snaps> All I had to see was a few of our

creative services people. As I mentioned, I brought a Mac/LaserWriter system and did a demo to the Stanford Publishing course which they do every summer. We did the demo in front of, I don't know, like, 30, 40 people and everybody was <laughs> just, "Wow. You can do that? This is incredible." And they came from a variety of backgrounds and once I saw that, it was like I knew this was going to be a huge success, and so from then on I was like, really, really emotionally empowered knowing that this was the right thing to do.

Brock: Right.

Brock: Just one quick question. Do you think that some of the objection might've been like almost like a white-collar, blue-collar or non-white-collar thing?

Scull: I don't know. I don't know.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: It was just different.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: It was just different, and it was not his [Gassée's] view.

Brock: Okay.

Scull: That was, I think, as I got to know him a little better. Not that I know him real well, but he kind of had a worldview and you either fit into that worldview or else you're maybe not the smartest guy. Yeah.

Brock: One thing I will take 30 seconds though more.

Scull: Sure, sure.

Brock: Just to—so this is in nineteen eighty—?

Scull: This is '85.

Brock: Five.

Scull: This is summer of '85.

Brock: Okay. So—

Scull: The summer of love, 1985.

Brock: This is before.

Brock: <laughs>

Brock: You know, the “before” picture is crisis. You leave the company in—

Scull: No. I didn't leave the company technically until early '89.

Brock: '89.

Scull: I was actually—yeah.

Brock: So we have '85 before is crisis, by '89 desktop publishing is a billion dollar—

Scull: '88. Yeah. Coming out of '88, it was doing great.

Brock: You know—

Scull: It was, we were, rocking and rolling.

Brock: So I think this will be fascinating to talk about how it could turn so rapidly, you know, just—

Scull: Right place, right time.

Brock: Yeah.

Scull: Boom.

END OF THE INTERVIEW