

- Awesome, sweet. Yeah, they'll just take like a running sound. So first of all, what's your name?
- John J O H N. Allison A L L I S O N.
- Awesome. Say thank you very much. And where are you from?
- Lifelong St. Paul-ite, except for six years mistakenly living over in Minneapolis.
- Have you were in St. Paul, do you live?
- I grew up in St. Anthony park over by the St. Paul campus. My family was located there because my grandfather joined the horticulture department faculty. Later the part that became a separate forestry school right. In January 1913. Okay, so I have 110 years. Family history. In St. Anthony Park
- Okay. Yeah. I have a good friend who lives up in. In West St. Anthony, like right by the river. Up there. Right.
- I think that's St. Anthony Village. This is St. Anthony Park. Okay, which is up Snelling to go west on como by the fairgrounds. And then bef ore you get to 280 There's a little commercial area in community there that's really kind of cut off from the rest of the cities by the fairgrounds by massive railroad tracks in the southern edge. And to at the West. St. Paul campus on the east and the North. Awesome.
- Okay, sweet. And where do you live now? Just go live around up there.
- No, I live over close to Lexington and St. Clair.
- Oh, okay. So in the Macalester Groveland neighborhood,
- Technically, Matt Groveland and west of where I live in crocus Hill begins East about this by the planning and real estate designations in the city is some no man's land in between. Okay.
- All right, fair, fair. And how long have you lived around there?
- 29 plus years Okay, so you're...
- Settled.

- You're settled? Well settled. Okay. And you do work now?
- No, I've been retired for 10 years.
- Okay. What did you do? Before that? I worked as an editor at West Publishing, which later became Thomson Reuters.
- Okay. Is that a book publishing?
- It's the largest private, legal publishing and information services business in the country.
- You work for the big guys. That's cool.
- Evil Empire.
- Did you enjoy?
- It paid the bills. I never had a great amount or even a modest amount of conventional ambition for career. So it worked.
- That's let's refer, did you when did you like go into an office? cubicle?
- cubicle, cubicle, cubicle work. Respect. 30-35 years of cubicles? Wow.
- So you said retired for 10 years and 35, 35 years and cubicle work? Right? That's that's a grind, too. I mean, in your spare time, it seems like you'd like to come to coffee shops. That'd be an accurate assessment, you like coffee shops?
- People are here for various reasons. There's some people who come from there's a facility over it and summit and Hamline. There's some people from here. There's some of these weirdo kids from Mac across the street. Some of the more bourgeois kids from St. Thomas some down to earth, kids from Hamlin, some high school kids, a number of retirees are and then since the pandemic ended, there are also people who come in working professionals.
- Interesting. I have noticed a lot of maybe like virtual workers. Yeah, here.
- It's become a big thing since the end of the Pandemic.
- Okay. How long have you been coming to Dunn Bros?

- a very dear friend who used to live down fit couple blocks south of here, brought me into the old Dunn brothers when it was just the other side of this dividing wall. And this was a beauty parlor.
- So this is an expansion?
- Yes. They brought me here. It opened in 87. Is it late 80s 88-89. I was just here a couple of times then. By the early 90s, they had expanded into this space the beauty parlor had failed, or whatever beauty parlors do. I don't go to, you know, I get my hair cut. But anyway. And they had expanded here, and I started coming here regularly in 1993. So I'm 30 years in.
- this is the 33rd year university of you coming in.
- There are some people who've come here for a longer time. Not many.
- Wow. Can't imagine that's, that's not much more of a. An accomplishment year wise. That's, that's very impressive. That's longer than I've been alive.
- Eight or 10 years. Eight years...
- 10 years, eight years. Nine years?
- Well, if you're a senior, you're gonna be 22 and 24. Yeah, so it'd be 2121. Yeah I'm 21 now, yeah. Anything else I can help you with?
- Clearly, I'm a sociology student, not in mathematics. It's escaping me. Oh, okay. What do you what do you like to do when you come in to Dunn Bros?
- Just some light airport reading.
- Clearly, that's, that's Kant by Paul Guyer.
- I don't know how to pronounce his name. It's the least it's a mindfuck. Wow.
- Is it is it philosophy is philosophy. Yeah.
- And it's fundamental to understanding just about any thing that is followed phenomenology, structuralist or otherwise. And and if it's fundamental to that, and it's fundamental to post structuralism and all the crap you guys have drilled into you?

- Now? That's, that's pretty impressive. Do you do you like talk talk to people about this, like, say, What do you like? Are there other people here that you get to talk to about Kant.
- Last year 22-23, there were a couple guys were really, really good. One was also named named John. And he was mid 30s or so. And a year or two before that, I saw him here. He had received his philosophy PhD at Notre Dame, which is a, my understanding is it's pretty good program. And it's not. It's not Stanford, or some super useful. It's a pretty good program. And he was very helpful, very interesting, because he was he knew this stuff. I'm just trying to hack my way through. So he was here and there's another guy. Pete Willbow (?) and he had a legal background, undergrad at Duke law school at NYU. And he's actually he's also in his mid 30s, he was recognized national expert in some areas of securities law. And he came in and worked did his professional day job here. And he was also and then there was another guy God he was really true, Luke, and he was finishing up his history PhD at the U was history of science beginning with Descartes going forward from Descart and I'm sure cars are things about cars that are fundamental to the philosophy of science so that yeah, other than that, I try not harangue you guys, Mac kids, what nonsense Marx said.
- So do I so I talked to somebody I did another interview with I don't know if you know, Nick Mancussi.
- Oh, yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah. Tell him you interviewed me he'll, he'll shake his head.
- He'll say you were the wrong choice?
- Why did you How long did it take you to escape?
- You went for a record 40-45 minutes He's such a sweet guy.
- Oh, I love. Yes, he's best. I've met a lot of Mac people over the years, a number of them have become lifelong friends. Oh, yeah, yeah. One of my faves. Emily Royer was – is her name. She's Mac 2017. She was double major philosophy and political science. She

was not only summa cum laude, she was Phi Beta Kappa. And best of all, she was the most down to earth common sense person ever, and maintain that with that intellectual firepower in an environment like Mac. Fantastic. And she had, she's debating whether to go to grad school of philosophy of political science. She I think, I don't know her for reasons. But she opted to just go off and be with her guy. Next to him again, graduated a year or two before a year before her. And he went to university Iowa law school, clerked for a federal district court in Alaska. So they went up there. And then he came back and got a job at a big law firm in Minneapolis. And John and Emily now live down just north of Randolph. Yeah, just a few blocks south of the campus. Yeah, so I'm very fond of Emily. I don't know John at all. But Emily and I are good friends. Also this morning. Again.

- What When did when did Emily graduate
- 2017 17? Just this morning, Amanda Jean is Amanda Wenzel Cosobar (?). And she's Mac 2010, I believe. And I met her here. And she had obviously become a real good friend. And she went to grad school at the U in psychology. And she's now on the faculty at the U in clinical psychology. And that's yeah. Yeah, it's really fun to have you - one of the things that they accomplish here is expand my friends. People like Nick, Emily, and yeah, I Nick is working with a Wilder Foundation. As you may know, Nick is working for the wild Foundation. And he's saying that last I talked to him. He's saying New York, Chicago, or maybe here for the year where you were in your 20s ago. Okay, I finished college know what the fuck am I supposed to do in the real world? Yeah, everybody's going through the I mean, took me to age 28 to settle in some place. Not that I ever figured anything out. But I settled in. Yeah. So I would not complain. If Nick decided doing over here at the Wilder Foundation. Stay here with so that eventually you guys gotta go on your way. Go fly away young birds.
- But this is a pretty, pretty excellent city.

- There are. There's another Mac tradition, becoming members of the mile and a half club. And those are Mac graduates who liked the Twin Cities so much and like their experience here, that they end up settling down in living within a mile and a half campus. For about six years, the people lived in the house next to me, Peter was from Pennsylvania originally, and he was a member of obviously mile and a half. And then his daughter was three years old or so and then up next to me. graduated a few years ago. well ahead of you. So it carries on
- that's pretty funny. I never realized that was that there? Was that kind of retention?
- Yeah well, the school experience going to Mac seems like a really good experience for most people. And, you know, living here you have the big city, Minneapolis accessible if you want to go do that. We have saner, smaller city of St. Paul, the best part of it where you are. So for a certain percent of people it's not surprising that they thought, yeah, life is pretty good here. Yeah, I'll stay. Yeah.
- No 100% I completely agree with that.
- Anyway, what else you got?
- Yeah, um, so like, you said that you liked being here so you could meet people like from Mac and stuff.
- Not just from, from all from all kinds of kinds of people. Generally, again, because I'm acutely OCD, Virgo. Not that I pay, putting too much credence in astrology, but for rhetorical purposes, OCD Virgo is just about as bad as it gets. I live perhaps the most routinized life anybody can in retirement and I like to come here and socialize some and make my connections and then I like to do and then I like to do my reading. Another current project... Some of these aren't so hard incipient starting something simple you know at the beginning something gardyloo that's in medieval Scots term for when you're throw the stuff in the chamber pot out the window to warn... Gardyloo! Oh shit, you didn't hear me Oh literally. Anyway, mark of peace as somebody slacker who does nothing but

leads to look luxurious life is from Othello. Yes. And fractious. I don't remember Oh, stimulus or sirtuins handling is kind of a lousy loser. weepy person, a base object, or wretched person? Yeah tegular Having to do or made of tile range, or range like tile ti le tile tile floor. Dulcify, sweeten or smooth. Ergo file one who loves their work. Ziggurat a rectangular pillar from Mesopotamia third century BC often was a temple on the top

- My dad's studies ancient Assyriology.
- Oh, so you knew that one already do know that. Nonetheless, impressive a layperson would pick that up.
- Yeah. for better for worse I know.
- map mapoumonde. Medieval map of the world. Map of mind. Yeah. Medieval.
- No, the world like crazy maps that. Yeah, I've seen this.
- Yeah. Watch out for the sea monsters. twitterpated infatuated or obsessed? Anyway, you get the notion
- do you make? Like, how long have you happened do you make that I've been
- working on for four and a half years. I have 567 words. So far.
- how? are they just words that intrigue you? Or words?
- Yeah we have these email things that come every day. Word genius. We're daily. Oh, yeah. And Patreon. There a grandiloquent word of the day and that that's a great source for these obscure English words.
- What's grandiloquent.
- Overly grandiose, rhetoric language, interesting. And the
- I'm gonna use that in my capstone
- Oh, check the definition. That's make sure you get it exactly right before you start. That's the thing. You're gonna throw these words around to get you gotta have them. Otherwise you sound like you sound.
- Yep, yep, pull one out.

- sesquipedalian. See, it's a grand total word of the day since these things out almost
- Seven was quit smoking or never smoked.
- Oh, interesting. That's pretty cool
- and I've been a follower of that page for years. And I have a little, sorry. A little better than 1000 of them. Here not that I know. So pretty
- good collection now. I like I like the drawings. Yeah, the artwork for the prints.
- Here's one here's what I hadn't done. Euceterus (?), man, a man that lives off and nuts. Okay, could you use that one all the time. So not every day, but I try and work on the words that's great. Little journal like books, but I filled that one up. So then I got another one. But then that got to be cumbersome to just page through that. So so I made started making flashcards
- They look more handy and ready for action. Yeah,
- good. turnable this deserves so
- that's pretty awesome.
- You impress easily, you're young.
- No, I would like to say I'm impressed by certain things.
- Anyway, what else you got?
- But that's just a couple more. One is, are you big coffee drinker? Do you enjoy
- I mean, I, I love coffee. And like everybody else, we had some taste for alcohol. I was born but didn't really discover that I had been born with a funky heart electrical system until santal atrial node starts to heartbeat, and it sends that atrial beating away. It sends a signal down to the AV node in the center of the heart to go hey ventricles get on board and then the ventricles fire. Right. I came with defective, SA node that eventually crashed. So I have a pacemaker that covers for it quite nicely. And but I have to go for the heart stimulants of that too. If you ever give me any kind of serious arrhythmias from you have to avoid heart stimulants, coffee and alcohol. Alcohol. Interestingly, although



it's a brain depressant is a heart stimulant. So I have maybe one beer a month. And if I was your age and had to give up both coffee and alcohol, I would be grieving the loss of the alcohol more than the coffee. If my age I grieve more of the loss of the coffee, right.

- So how much coffee? do you have one now?
- No, coffee – tea decaf, decaf, green mango tea, and there's a place over in st. anthony park your wellness place where they have a fifth chakra to you is what they call it, but is it a spice spice kind of tea is the best tea in the twin cities. So I get that a couple of times.
- Said you do bring you bring beverages here you don't
- know I get the bring my mug here and their beverages in there. I'm bringing beverages from imagine we're trying to sell that shit outta here.
- Okay, what do you what do you prefer to get here? I bet it changes on the daily.
- As I mentioned before, I don't know how many times I'm gonna have to beat this in your head. I am acutely OCD Virgo, I get the same goddamn thing every day. Green, green mango tea, m&m Cookie.
- m&m Cookie
- except Mondays cuz Mondays. They don't have any cookies because they don't get a delivery on Sunday, but they do get a delivery of them. muffins from a bakery. And mostly they have their double chocolate muffins. And so that's what I have on Mondays but the bakery has been fucking ordered the last couple of weeks, so I've had to put up with something else. I am upset this is what this is what constitutes a big problem in my life
- I'd be upset. I like my m&m cookies. I get those pretty regularly here.
- If I haven't been here yet don't take the last one.
- I can't make any promises John. All right, just interviewing. We're not We're not I'm not taking your m&m cookie yet.

- no personal relationship I understand. You have to talk with Nick about you. He's really a prick as
- I find it very sweet. But
- no, I'm talking about you
- by i have two more questions for you.
- Which hasn't been anywhere near 45 minutes first.
- Well then maybe I can squeeze three questions in first is how often do you come to undress?
- Almost every day almost every day. Okay.
- And I try and keep office hours
- here Yeah. Open to the public are you
- sitting down here aren't ya? I might have to rethink that policy
- might need to have like one of those ticket ticket takers to get tie with you Yeah,
- time's up by actually i i I try and manage most social things or many social things. I do like to visit with people and I do intend to establish some kind of bond by keep my headphones handy. And it's a pretty universal cue. Who can wind down a conversation start looking at what you're going to do next? If need be you put on your headphones virtually everybody goes okay, I got it
- that's pretty good. What kind of music do you listen to? Or do you listen to books
- Oh PJ every nice
- huge fan of Glenn Gould playing bach Yeah, also just all just all kinds of stuff.
- That's an excellent collections.
- And then I stumbled on to things some run through your playlist and then it goes through the auto pick playing a new cost because I forgot to put it on the random selection thing instead of letting it play through and it goes a lot to go but sometimes
- you stumble into somebody

- Yeah, find some good. Somebody else already had auto play now happened with discovery. I don't know who that is Elijah Boston, Bach. new agey kind of pianist. But I really like least cuts on this album over
- Do listen to that while you while you read or do cards?
- When I read I will listen to the Kitaro or or other not to light and love and light kind of new age music but with something with some heft to it. Or I will. Huge go to this is me Bach special and if you really want to know my go to go to go to piece it's almost always start oops
- Oh, yes.
- And Gould was known for traditional classical pianists, a lot of them sneered and hated at Glenn Gould because he went, Well, you guys played back the way it's been played for 300 years. And let's do something different. He played it with more gusto and more attack than they did. And they go, you're not playing Bach at all. And he said, I'm playing, I'm playing at a new way. And I, for the most part, I just really like him. Awesome. Because he takes all that complexity and counterpoint and theme on top of theme, and rubs it in here. Which is
- I do like upbeat. I mean, I think there's certainly a place for like I haven't studied to just random I know almost nothing about classical music. Already.
- Of course, and I know you know, the music, popular music business has not only been changed, but many ways simply destroyed by screaming. Back in the day, when I was your age, people will form a band, some agent would hear 'em, see some commercial niche opportunity. Take him to the studio, put an album get airtime on radio, either alternative radio or mainstream radio, and then go out and do various prominence concert tours, and not make money from the concerts which build audience to sell albums. And it was really the album's the musicians made money. But now the step from being local musician and being found to being widely recognized, which is the get an

album concerts, promoting the album, air play sell records. All that has just been wiped out in the summer, we'll have to go from having your recorded song put out on the internet and have enough people catch on to it all on their own. Yep, yeah. And then if you become big enough, Ticketmaster will make you a ton of money giving you some of the money they may have. When you start being able to fill big venues, right. And that gap of how you used to go from down here to up here no longer exists. And that's why 80 year old Rolling Stones are out filling concert venues again, right. And it's in why? I've met a number of people of Mac people over the years ago Oh yes, 60s. Music in it is 60s music is in waves is what they really like, because also the any company that's putting music into any band or a chorus wants doesn't want to take any risk. So they want something as formulaic as possible. So they're like four basic pop songs that are on synthesizers, and and they just repackage them and repackage them with subtle little changes in the lyrics. And it's promoted as the latest dance music and it's just like it's mind numbingly so so I really feel badly for you people your age because the music business for original Infineon activity and making the work commercially for people like Nirvana. Nirvana couldn't couldn't happen today.

- I agree. Yes.
- Among many other, any of those even that's just the 90s oh and what's that San Francisco band?
- From San Francisco?
- Yeah, anyway, but any of those bands weren't strictly synthesizer program music. Anything alternative
- doesn't work?
- Yeah, you can't, you can't, it doesn't get commercial traction, because nobody's going to invest millions of dollars for something that's outside the box.

- Now the place that I honestly see that kind of alternative stuff, really picking them up is like bluegrass, and versus like, pop-country.
- that's, that's the one thing. Memphis, Memphis in places like that are the one place where something like the old model can still happen. And indeed, where did Taylor Swift start?
- Yep, yep. Nashville, Memphis, right?
- Correct. Is this internet I meme image, where Taylor Swift started, and she had a handwritten sign playing like a flatbed truck in front of a river and look like an 18 year old, which she was. But you course in, as with many other things, Taylor Swift came from a really privileged background. Yeah. So if again, but that's true. Like you'd be amazed at how many Hollywood stars it's just 80% nepotism. And even if it isn't directly like that. Now the kid I met here, he went to cretin, Derham Hall. They're theater groups he used to come in, in the spring when this was open in the evenings. And they would actually have the spring play that come in after rehearsal. And this guy, Bob Gallagher, good guy, a really good guy. And he was one of the leading people. And he did a BFA in theatre at the U. And his observation, you know, obviously, he would have liked to have had a career in that. Right. But he, after graduating quickly realized that if you didn't have independent money, used to fund you in New York or Los Angeles for five, maybe 10 years. You just couldn't do it. You literally couldn't do it. And so now he's think he's like, beer lobbyists to the legislature. Good guy. Good. I mean, he ended he and some friends moved to Austin, after they graduated from college. Another are that's pretty Yeah, no, no, the classic thing here, Jim. Yeah. And he ended up getting working becoming a brewmaster in a brewery. And then it came back here. And that led me wanting to get out of just being the guy running the vats, to to career wise, move on with his personalities, theater background. So I don't know exactly what he's doing. But it's something like, but again, he the way things are. Yeah, what you got to do to where you

want to go if you want to pursue music or arts period. Tough shot. Yeah. Unless you want to question many of the people historically, who succeeded him, Dostoevsky. Faulkner, Nietzsche, just all kinds of people. What's his name? Anyway, in all kinds of people have been so committed to what they are doing, whether anybody was ever going to realize it or not, that they do it. But you have to be an extraordinary person to ever pursue that. And you likely will never know whether you succeeded or not. Like, like Van Gogh takes decades, centuries. Yeah. And often Yeah, after you're gone like Van Gogh sold. Three paintings during this Like yeah so anyway so sell out and become bourgeois

- Yeah I'll join the PMC, ugh, I'm not thinking about that now. well, how would you describe the average Dunn Bros patron?
- Well, we kind of went over that we did do it there is no one representative genus, genus, genus and species. Of course that is pure medieval philosophy, universal and particular genus and species. There are several discrete genuses, genii? whatever they come in. Students to retired people that are recovery people. The weekends used to be the evenings but they only open in the evenings anymore. You get regular working people coming in and you get some people from the suburbs sightseeing the parade or the zoo. Yeah, by the way, look weird enough for you all right you've had a good visit haven't you?
- but what time do you usually come in? Or
- It varies. Can be as early as 10 can be as late as noon. debate and some days especially on the weekend that you have other things to do. But Monday to Friday, mid mid day.
- Awesome. That was my last question for you.