

PROFESSOR OF SCROUNGE - JEFF FERRELL TRANSCRIPT - VIDEO DADS

my name is jeff ferrell. ... i'm jeff ferrell, i'm a writer and dumpster diver, and scrounger. and i live in fort worth texas.

scrounging is, sort of a direct action, i would say. a matter of directly engaging with the environment and with the trash that's thrown away. to pull it out of the waste stream and bring it back to, uh, some sort of use.

i really like scrounge because if you know - which i didn't until i researched it, but the old english origins of scrounge are actually the old english word scrunge, which indeed sounds like, old english. and scrunge, to be a scrunger mitt, partly you were a little bit illegal, and sort of taking things that weren't yours maybe, **but also meant you were very innovative, and creative, and self sustaining and could get by on very little. so i like the tension, uh, in scrounge, and the sort of sense of illicit survival.**

well i, to quote mary douglas, the famous anthropologist, trash dirt things that we consider like that, are really in some ways just matter, that's lost its place in the world. so, much of what we consider trash is, is physical matter that can be reused, if we have enough imagination and commitment, so. i see trash is more potential than i do as [throw at] end of the road.

well, what i find is very little of it is actually trash, if by trash we mean, fouled, ruined, material. really most of it is plastic, packing material, boxes, lots of discarded clothes, uh. food, some edible some not. a great amount of food goes to waste. and then mixed with of course new items and tools and appliances, **so, its really a melange of, of everyday life and consumerism more than it is a trash in a pure sense.**

one thing i've learned over the, gosh decades now, of scrounging now is not to look for anything in particular. because a, you'll generally be disappointed, and b it'll blind you to what actually , the potential is. so i'm really looking for anything thats usable to anyone. uh, and so what that leads me to look for, is scrap metal that can be recycled and make a little money for me if possible, but also clothes, uh, kitchen, kitchen ware, tools, bedding, anything that anybody can use, at the homeless shelter or at a thrift store, or at the food pantry, so looking for edible food that can be salvaged. i'm open to anything that i can imagine or can learn has any sort of use.

yeah i certainly, since i was young, come from a progressive orientation, which meant thinking about social justice and, the politics of how you live your life everyday. so in that sense scrounging always appealed to me, as a way of trying to do good environmentally, and socially, but also a way of living freely and independently, so i guess thats always been there. but what i've realized over the years is just how many people are in need in different ways, and how many organizations and, underground groups there are, that you can tap into, to be part of networks of scrounging and sustainability. so i think the conscience was always there, but i think my knowledge of it is, has grown every year that i've done it.

i'm not sure about that. i've always been careful not to assume that my politics are somehow more sophisticated than other people just because i have gone to school, or thought about it a little more. in fact what i tend to find on the streets, which is where i really been for decades now, is that people have a pretty good sense of politics, they might not articulate it in the same way that you or i would, but theres often a sense of, of self motivation, self survival, not bowing down to authority, not selling yourself short. i find a lot of dignity on the streets, and a lot of sense of commitment community. so i think, i think a lot of people who are digging dumpsters are desperate, in some ways, but i think they're making choices, in some ways very good choices than other ways.

the danger that comes from scrounging i find to be almost entirely legal. once you master the art of avoiding, foul smelling trash, and learning not to rip open bags full of glass, after that its not that dangerous. um. well the danger is really from security guards and police officers, um, partly because in american society in the last few decades, we have become increasingly aggressive in terms of our laws that regulate and criminalize the homeless and people on the margins. so i'm often perceived that way, which is fine actually, if thats how i'm to be perceived. but because of that, theres a good bit of legal, uh, and sort of security orientated aggression, towards people who dig in dumpsters.

the scenario is either to be run off by security guards, or ticketed by police officers. in one case i've been given a lifetime banishment order from an area, because of dumpster diving there. i try my best to calm those situations down. and to, reestablish a sense of community, which i find is often possible, certainly with neighbors, and small business owners. sometimes less so with police officers or security guards, but. often theres some consequences or at least certainly the threat of consequences.

yeah i see dumpster diving as - i've been a dumpster diver in the same set of neighborhoods for almost 15 years, and my goal is to build relationships with people,

and let them know that i'm there to salvage goods not to look through information, that i'm there to leave the dumpster cleaner than i found it. in fact, people often find me moving the recyclables into the recycling bin, because they were erroneously thrown into the dumpster. so i try to be, a member of my community as a dumpster diver, not a threat to it. now, i can't help if people perceive me as a threat, but when they do i try to convince them otherwise, and let them know that i'm trying to keep the community neater, more sustainable, and more just, i hope, in terms of everyone having access.

again, i've been on the streets for 20 some 30 years as a researcher, and i would say the key to all the streets i've been on is demanding respect and showing respect. and so, what i try to do is demand that you treat me as a person, even though i'm in your dumpster, or you perceive me as homeless, or somehow on the margins. but also am bound to show you respect as well. so, i try to, create respectful interactions, which is not a matter necessarily of being, um, overly obsequious or of bowing down, but rather a sort of establishing a sense that we're both people, and we should try to work on that level.

what would you like to know about academic? . . . i'm in academia for a couple reasons, one is that i wanted to always learn more about how to understand the world i lived in, and to be more critical and thoughtful about the everyday life i lived, but also i really cared about trying to pass some of that on to students, and get them to think creatively and critically. so for me doing research that i've done with graffiti writers, and homeless folks, and dumpster divers, and train hoppers, is part of my passion for learning about the world but also i find when you bring that into the classroom, that often is a really powerful moment, with students being able to see the world out there than what they've seen so far, and help them begin to think about that. ...

yeah thats a very good point. i really do try to become the phenomenon in that sense. i think you have to be careful, you never are the phenomenon because you bring to it education and privilege, others haven't had the privilege to, to gain, but you certainly can become the phenomenon to the degree that you're able to embrace the risk and vulnerability, of those moments and those situations, and as i did, for, and really continue to do, to try to basically live from, uh, dumpster diving, and to pass on what i find to others, yeah i would say at this point i'm certainly as much a dumpster diver as i am a writer or a professor.

i certainly supplement my living, i certainly get paid to be a professor, but i really mostly live from what i find, which is uh, allows me and my wife karen to then spend that money really more on charitable work, or on, as we do, rescuing animals, and the high

vet pills that accompany that. so i don't live from dumpster diving, but i certainly live mostly from dumpster diving, and like the sort of freedom and autonomy that gives me, both as a person, and financially as well.

very difficult, very difficult, if thats all you have, uh, partly because to scrap, unless you're very strong powerful bicyclist, who can haul a big trailer, which some of my friends can do, i can't any longer, you're gonna need a truck, and the truck means insurance, and, gas payments, and that sort of thing. so given the price of scrap metals, it's a tough road to hoe to try and make a living off scrap metal, but you can certainly begin to make part of your living that way. and learn to live from what you find, so you may find some metal to haul in for cash, but in that same dumpsters as we saw today, you may find some clothing, or some packing materials, or some building materials, that you can use and therefore not need cash, uh, to buy them. really a lot of what i do is try to create in my own life and to help others create a non cash economy, thats based more on barter and learning to make do with what you find and be innovative about it.

good things end up in the trash i think for very, uh, clear sociological reasons. we live in a society that has shifted almost entirely to a consumer economy, certainly in places like europe and the united states. a society awash in advertising, which convinces us regularly that we have to have the next iPhone, the next fashion, the next round of products that are sold on television. the consequences of that have to be, either peoples houses are gonna explode from having so much stuff, or they're gonna have to discard that stuff. and of course what happens is, that last years fashions, last years iPhones, last years bicycles, end up regularly in the trash. so i think the fact the trash is full of usable materials is not magic, its actually the result of, of consumer oriented economy, of people who are convinced to always purchase the next thing, in a search for excitement or pleasure or self affirmation.

yeah i think its inherently bad. i think what that does is contribute to, the increasing gap between rich and poor, because its really based on what people can afford, and acquiring the goods that are, uh, affiliated with wealth. but also its extremely negative for the environment. its completely unsustainable to live in a way that constantly creates tons and tons of waste, which again means going back and mining materials all over again, re manufacturing next years products, and of course filling land fills, which are now engorged, with more and more waste. so, yeah, i see what i do as kind of on the ground environmentalism, as well as, as well as a matter of social justice, or everyday living.

well that gets back to how you see politics. i have always seen politics at the level of day to day life, and again, direct action do it yourself. so the machine may be too big, but i'm not smart enough to be sure it is. and so i'm gonna live as though its not too big, and as though if enough of us do things on a daily basis that, begin to engineer social change, that change will matter. i see the possibilities of always being there, and the ironies are there. the very machine that spits out all that waste, also creates the possibility of creating new ways of living, from that waste.

i don't know, i try to be very inclusive as a teacher, i really don't believe in lecturing students with my beliefs. i believe in getting them to think, and open up, so i think i attract a variety of students, but i know i attract students who are interested in exploring alternative ways of living, and who, have a sort of residual discomfort with the way they were brought up. they know something might be missing, when life has been mostly shopping malls, and, and private schools, and this sort of thing. so, i hope i at least let them see the possibility of other ways of thinking, and other ways of living.

yeah there certainly is. one of the old sociological constant is, status inconsistency. which is the tension between the various ways you live, different parts of your life. it can be very negative, if that means you're discriminated against in one part of your life versus another. but i find it actually source of creativity and joy, which is actually to dig the inconsistency between being in a dumpster one minute, and being in front of a classroom of college students the next. i like the tension, i like bringing both those worlds to the other one, and seeing where the energy and the creativity can come from.

yeah, there really is a rhythm to all this, and a pattern to it. first of all the pattern depends almost entirely on whether you have a place where you can store things or not. if you're homeless on the street, all you have is a shopping cart, then you have to live on what you find every day, and maybe squirrel a few things away behind a tree, but thats about all you can do. if you're like me and you're lucky enough to have a small house, and a shed out back, that means you can then begin to accumulate materials you need, sort them carefully, put them into categories, put them into scrounge containers, and scrounge, uh, storage cabinets, and then you can have for yourself and others what you need down the road, in terms of materials, or tools, parts. that sort of thing. so much of what i do actually is discovery, bringing what i find back, and then knowing and learning how to sort it in ways that make it more valuable make it more usable for others, so, behind me here perhaps you can't see it in focus, is the room where my wife and i sort through the clothes we find, the house utensils, that go to the homeless shelter and go to charities, and out back then would be the shed where i sort scrap materials, and

metals, and tools, into their own categories as well. so its really a vast kind of, uh, sorting machine, to make some sense out of the chaos of trash, and waste.

my shed, uh, is probably at this point listing under its own weight, because that shed is full of really every kind of, bolt, nut, screw, and nail you can imagine, every kind of tool you can imagine. uh, storage space for building material, wood, joiners, braces, um, all these kinds of things, as well as being a bicyclist all sorts of spare bike parts, out of which i and my more skilled mechanic friends, are able to build bicycles for ourselves and others from scrounged bike parts. the shed is a vast, sort of reservoir of potential for building, repairing, imagining new uses, that sort of thing.

one of the things i most enjoy, and back to the issue of are you an academic or are you a scrounger, is actually i guess i would say having mastered or at least tried to master the theory of metal, and the theory of metal is actually a very complex theory because metals are made out of different alloys, a washing machine, a tripod like we found today, are all built from different types of metals for different types of uses, and the more you do this, and the more you learn from the old boys who taught me to do it, the more you know how to break down an electrical motor, a tripod, an old washing machine, into its component parts, which makes each of those parts recyclable, or valuable, and more able to be reused. so yeah theres a real theory here, theres a real sort of knowledge to, metal which i really enjoy the link to knowing that, and then the practicality of getting your hands dirty and sometimes bloody, and actually breaking it down, putting it in bins, hauling it to the scrap yard.

yes. yeah i think one of the things i most enjoy about being a scrounger is the physicality of it, i think we are animals as much as dogs and cats are, and we, need physical activity, and one of the things i think thats happened, both in the last 200 years and certainly now with the digital revolution ,is less and less sensuality, less and less sweat, dirt, blood, uh, engagement with the physical world. i find that spiritual cleansing, in a matter of mental health, and perhaps others might find it as well, so i really enjoy the physicality of dumpster diving, i really can't do without the bicycling, the sweat, the blood and tears, the scrap metaling, i really think thats an essential part of it.

fort worth is a challenge in a sense for those of us who ride bicycles and, uh, enjoy sustainability, because fort worth is not particularly strong in either of those. but what that does is create is a lot of potential for carving out new ways of living, and finding people who share our, our interest. I've been able to build in fort worth something of a network of like minded folks, and we together can get more done than we can individually, in terms of sustainability, and reuse. so, fort worth is a challenge, i was born

here, was gone for a long time, not born here grew up here, was gone for a long time, and now back, so, you know, as steve earle says nothing brings you down like your home town. then again your home town has some real strength to it as well. so, i struggle with fort worth but i enjoy the, i enjoy the wrestling match.

texas stereotypes. if what you're talking about i think is oil, gas, cattle and cars, then yes i think they're largely true, theres a lot of red meat out there, there are a lot of 8 lane freeways, theres a lot of oil and gas money floating around in fort worth especially, perhaps even more than dallas. but, you have to be careful, every place is also another place. theres always, as real marka said, the weird history underneath the official history, and so fort worth in texas as well as any other place has a long history of, labor organizing, and alternative living, and communes, and, innovative agriculture, so thats swirling around too, and maybe not on the surface, but its there to be discovered.

i think you have to be able to embrace the battle sometimes, i find that you have to actually, push back in terms of creating space for yourself, but you also have to be open to other people, and what they have to offer, and to be honest, theres more folks out there than you might imagine in cowboy boots and, and stetson hats, who have some interesting ideas and some alternative ways of living, so, you don't wanna push people away because they seem to, fit a stereotype, you gotta explore who they are, and hope they're willing to explore who you are as well.

well i like to remind people that my, i come from very humble stock, and my grandfather who was sort of a central texas dirt farmer, but a very, precise and innovative dirt farmer, always had behind his barn, uh, piles of scrap metal, because he and his sons had learned how and had taught themselves how to build almost any part for a tractor or a pickup truck, out of scrap parts. and i like to remind people that my grandfather and grandmother during world war 2, of course were part of scrap drives and victory gardens, and clothing drives, where americans embraced recycling and reuse in order to win the war. so i think, in some ways to come from that kind of stock, all those were texans, is in some ways to come from oil and gas and cowboy boots, but also to come from the long tradition which we perhaps lost, of sustainable living, do it yourself, uh, autonomy, and direct action toward better goals. i think thats there as well.

great question. i think, scrounging as i've learned to do it, is done worldwide actually, i've tried to sort of learn about it as, globally ,is in some ways an urban phenomenon, because cities along with accumulating people, also create remarkable densities of stuff, and of waste, and of use and reuse, so in that sense scrapping or scrounging is a

different enterprise in the city than it is in the country. on the other hand, I've certainly done my share of collecting insulators along rail road tracks, and scrapping metal along the countryside, and helping my grandfather build things from scrap metal, so I think in that sense I think there's the rural tradition of self determination, and getting by on your own wits, which also leads to perhaps a different kind of, different but certainly a valuable way of sustainability or, scrap ability, to everyday life.

yea. when I wrote the book empire of scrounge, I realized, I talked about in I think the last chapter, I realized what I done actually was remap the city, that I had remapped an urban area entirely on trash pickup schedules, dumpster distribution, how all these connect, how to get from point A to point B without being seen, or without having to be out in traffic. then with that sense to live an alternative life, to live as a homeless person, wanderer, uh, street musician, any of those kinds of ways, is to, to do so you have to be able to create maps that other people don't have. and part of the great joy of it is to remap your life, in that sense also.

yeah, definitely. I think there, there are always again multiple cities within a city, and people imagine they know the city because they've driven to work, or driven to a restaurant. there's a different city when you're sleeping under bridges, when you're hopping off of trains, or when for example you're doing public murals or wall art illegally, and learning where the art can go up at night, and still be seen at day but not be caught when you're in the shadows. so whatever we're talking about that's not sort of in the mainstream, I think is a world that's largely, known or unknown but in some ways I think meant to be not known, meant to be not noticed, but those in that world, are forced to live under the radar, to survive, and those who live above the radar often don't want to look any way, so it's almost kind of conspiracy of invisibility, and I guess what I try to do is, ease into that conspiracy, and see it in a different way.

yeah I, I actually find a great degree of acceptance. um, I think there are a couple keys to that. one is my admiration for them, and humility in the face of what they're able to do, is honest and, and deeply sincere. and so I think they never smell on me the stench of privilege or condescension, because I don't feel that way at all, nor do I bring that to the situation. I think their thing is that I'm, quite willing to embrace the risk and vulnerability, whether that's physical damage, or legal harassment, or, other consequences, I think that's morally and practically part of being a researcher and part of being someone who tries to understand that, other city. so I think you have to make yourself to some degree vulnerable, and to embrace, and accept and maybe even rejoice the kind of pain that comes with living on the margins, if you're gonna have the right to be there, and hope that others will accept you in those moments.

yeah, i mean, my academic career i suppose has been very successful on one level, but would be considered checkered on another level. I've come and gone from jobs, and have been criticized very aggressively in print for my research methods, and certainly had my shares with falling out with, with those in authority, so, yeah absolutely, I'm not sure id want to live a life where my boss and those above me are always comfortable with what i do, i think that would be a danger signal, as to where ones heading in ones life. so, again, I'm willing to play that tension as need be.

i think the american dream clearly, and by the way I've spent a lot of time working with european scholars, they talk about this too that even for europeans their dream is the american dream, which traditionally was again, the notion of acquiring material comfort, and of being able to signify ones success through the whole penple of, shiny cars, and new appliances in the kitchen , and a boat in the drive way and this sort of thing. i think the american dream was never available to anybody but a very select few, it probably peaked in the 60s and 70s, and, the years after world war 2, and now i think the american dream is largely bankrupt, and almost entirely mythological except for the increasingly small one tenth of one percent that can afford it, so. i think the american dream might have been a dream or maybe it was a fever dream, maybe it was a sort of, uh, fantasy that was dangerous and never quite true, i think that dream is changing very profoundly, as we talk.

i think what we're beginning to see, and i'm writing and thinking about this right now, is a dream based more on, flowing between situations, a new generation that perhaps values communication, and adventure more than it does material acquisition, I'm shocked to hear that some research suggests that some kids are less interested in their first car, than maybe their first trip to europe or maybe their first iPhone, and while iPhones have significant problems associated with them, at least they're means of communicating and learning, as opposed to simply acquiring material possessions. so, i think maybe the dream is being forced to shift more toward experience, and engagement with the world, than simply acquiring parts of that world as status, and if so, then maybe theres some hope, amidst all this, all this environmental degradation, and failed economy, that we can bring ourselves back up by those old boot straps, and reimagine ourselves as members of the global community, and in thinking about our lives in ways that aren't simply about material acquisition and acquired status.

i would add, of course that intangible can quickly become commodified. when you seek experiences you can still end up signing up for a 20,000 dollar fully catered adventure in

the woods, so even there we have to be careful, but yeah i think theres that possibility thats almost being forced to emerge, out of the present situation.

i have to say, i would want to mention that, one of the things i find most enjoyable about dumpster diving and scrounging, and the greatest lesson that taught me i think, was to learn to enjoy what you find, don't go out trying to find what you think you'll enjoy. that is, don't be limited by your own imagination, but rather, let the world make the first move, and you'll be amazed at how interesting the world gets when you quit going out trying to make it be the one you want it to be. so in that sense yeah i think, to actually think about authenticity, as not something you can purchase, but actually something you have to give up your own control, and see what the world has to offer, i think theres where authenticity has a, a shot at surviving.

exactly, play off what someone else says or the world does, not just what you think it should do for you.

i think they would describe me as, rebellious, um, maybe overly or annoyingly dependent, um, i think they would certainly describe me as sincere in my, uh, attempt to engage with the world, and work toward an alternative society, maybe sometimes too sincere, or too committed, but i think they would probably describe me as rebellious, uh, enthusiastic, and committed.

the, not only the phenomenal injustice of the present legal and political system, of the economic system that generates ungodly privilege for a handful of folks and misery for, everyone else, but what especially makes me angry is the inability of people to, confront that, or to see how that affects them in their own lives, and to lead lives where they imagine that they are not beneficiaries of that privilege, uh, when in fact i think they need to, and i, we all need to think about, how we can live on a daily basis that moves toward, uh, addressing the suffering and pain that so many people are afflicted with. i, don't mean for that to sound like a sermon, but rather like, a call to myself and you and all of us, to think about how we're living and to think about what needs to happen in the world, uh, just past the end of our street, or just past the end of our city, where people are really in great need, and gravely pained, by whats going on.

current phase of my life, interesting. i, seem to be, uh, back to our point about independence, i seem to be less and less willing to, uh. conform, to that which is expected of me, and more and more eager, and eager to engage with, kind of alternative ways of living ,and i actually looked, if retirement means, uh, not going to the office regularly anymore, than i actually look forward to retirement, uh, as a time of sort

of unfettered scrounging and reuse and recycling. so, i suppose i'm madder than ever, or crazier than ever, uh, to live a life that is sort of fully integrated on the streets, in the shop, working with folks, that really strongly appeals to me, to live a life that is holistically integrated in every moment, as much as possible.

thats a good question. i seem to be doing it, but thats. what i find actually is that which came easy to you when you were younger, is almost more of a pleasure when you gotta battle for it now, when your knee hurts while you're doing it, or when people don't expect that you'll do it, so, i've actually not seen a tendency in myself toward easing into your golden years, but rather, to use the wisdom of the past 60 years as a kind of lever to keep prying up assumptions and to keep pushing forward, even more, . . i said before my dream i think is to sort of stumble the last mile toward whatever the end is, but still moving forward, if the best i can do is stumble and crawl.

yeah , i'm not sure i'll be here in 15 or 20 years, but if i am i'm sure i'll be a dumpster, i'm ,you know, when i wrote the book empire of scrounge, so that i didn't engage in some kind of false claim, i said that i'd, i took that year and quit being a professor and dumpster dived, the truth is actually i've been dumpster diving since high school and early college, on a pretty much daily basis. so other things have come and gone, thats always been there, riding a bicycle and dumpster diving, so i'm pretty sure that'll be there when everything, everything else is gone, yeah.

i'm hopeful, uh, that little seeds of innovation and humanity and decency, are constantly being planted, and i think what history has taught me is they'll sprout in ways we can't imagine. so, what i hope, it was, i can't remember who said this, it'll come to me, but, someone once said, pessimism of the mind, optimism of the will. so when i look around at the world right now, theres a lot to be pessimistic about, but theres been times before when there was a great deal to be pessimistic about, and up and sprouted little, little sprouts of hope and alternative, uh, living, so i'm willing to keep throwing those seeds out, and plant a few myself, and nurture those that other people plant, because i guess i'm militantly hopeful, in the face of all odds, i think that resistance and human dignity has a way of surviving, and coming back, uh, but not in ways we may predict, so i'm, i'm hopeful that tomorrow or the next day somethings gonna happen that, i couldn't have imagined, thats gonna be able to change things, in ways that i also couldn't imagine.

i don't think i'm afraid of much, at least i'm not afraid of things that other people are afraid of. um. i guess i'm, i would guess i'm afraid of confinement, in any sense of that word. i'm afraid of being, boxed in, and um, limited in what might happen the next day, and i'm willing to fight pretty hard to avoid, um, confinement, physical confinement,

economic confinement, legal confinement, uh. so i guess thats what scares me, is being locked away, in any sense of that word, without access to the keys. i'm willing to work pretty hard to pick any lock, put in front of me, to avoid being locked in.

i guess i would start with, emma goldman who either did say, or famously said to have said, if i can't dance its not my revolution. by that i mean that. i find that, scrounging and living with what i find, and living simply and learning to live off of less than others, joyful, pleasurable, and affirming. it also is hard work, it also is i think a pretty good example of direct income redistribution, of directly taking the discards of the privileged and giving them to those that need them. i think its also a pretty good example of sustainability and environmental engagement. so i would hope that you would take from the way i live ,is not that everyone else can do it or wants to do it, but maybe there are ways, to live your life, in a way that gives you joy and pleasure, and excitement, while getting something done, and while also maybe confronting the issues that need to be confronted.. I'm still figuring that out on a day to day basis, but at least on the good days that seems to work, that there seems to be the possibility of, social change and social engagement, thats also pleasurable and joyous, and exciting, uh, at the same time.

i don't. the only thing i would suppose i would say is, simply that, i would always want to avoid, the stereotype that i'm typical of scroungers or anyone else is. that, the reason i call the book i wrote empire of scrounge is, i was amazed at how many different kinds of folks there are out there, finding how many different kinds of uses for the peoples discards, so. the last thing i would want to be is the poster boy for dumpster divers, nor would i want anyone else to be. **i think its a, remarkably diverse, uh, innovative world, don't look at me as though i'm the one who's figured it out, i've just figured out one way doing it, but theres a thousand other people doing it too.**

yes, i think, they come from very different economic, and even political backgrounds, i think it does require a willingness to sort of take things into your own hands. a willingness to, to, directly engage with your problems, without asking a psychiatrist, a police officer, a professor, for permission or that much advice. so i do like the idea of, just get out there, get your hands dirty, and figure it out, and let others, learn from them, and you learn from each other, lets get active in every day life. that i think would be the common thread.

yeah I' mean , people ask me, would you like to be a city sponsored, official dumpster diving program. no, i would like to see more, intervention before it becomes waste, but this kind of activity, i think and many kinds of progressive activities, have to be remained on the edge of visibility. they can't really become completely visible and sanctioned, or

else now they become also under surveillance, and regulated, and you have to sign up, and sign the insurance waiver. this kind of world works really well, if you let us who do it use our knowledge and communities, to get this done. so please throw away less, and please recycle more. but once its up in the trash, we'll take care of it i promise, and we'll generally do so in a way you won't notice, and won't cause any problems if you'll just not arrest us, or make us sign a bunch of forms.