# An Oral History of

# Rémi Jourdan

## 4th Street | Prater Way History Project

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Interviewer: Paul Boone

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The 4th Street | Prater Way History Project is a collaborative community history project launched by the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County in 2011. The project's website, with full transcripts, photographs, and other historical material about the 4th Street | Prater Way corridor through Reno and Sparks, Nevada, may be found at http://4thprater.onlinenevada.org/.

Photo by Patrick Cummings

# RÉMI JOURDAN

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Boone: I'm here with Rémi Jourdan, who's the owner of Club Underground and a member of the E4 Business Association. We are on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. Today is April 17, 2012.

Mr. Jourdan, why don't you tell me about your background, when and where you were born, and bring us all the way up to now.

Jourdan: Sounds good. I was born in Paris in '68, the month of a student revolution. It was actually May '68. I was born a month after, or two or three weeks after, but that was a revolution that impacted the social and economic situation in France. It started with a student movement.

I was born in Paris and I grew up most of my teenage life in Paris and moved to the Alps, France. Then later on I moved west, to Toulouse. My master is from a culinary arts school. I did five years of Cordon Bleu and a couple other well-recognized cooking schools in France.

Then I moved. I came for the first time to the United States in 1989, to Los Angeles for a month's vacation, and ended up staying six months. I drove around the country, not just the states, but I went everywhere—east, west, crossing Texas and about twenty other states, and fell in love with it, fell in love with the country and, obviously, fell in love with an American woman.

I went back to France and she came to visit. Kind of the same thing happened. She came to visit for a month and she stayed five. We ended up getting married and we lived in Paris and always had a dream to come back to the States one day, and that dream became a reality when she got relocated from the company she was working for and we moved to Los Angeles in '97.

Boone: What was it like growing up in Paris as a kid? How old were you before you moved to the Alps?

Jourdan: My parents were both in politics and they were hippies. It was '68, so it was the elephant pants and funky shoes and smoking a pipe and big beards, long hair. It was interesting.

I've never been to Israel, but it almost felt like it was a kibbutz community type of an environment where I grew up. Where we were living in an area in Paris, we were all sharing. We were all family. The parents were friends and the kids were going to school together and it was kind of like a big community, very social. And growing up in Paris is interesting because you're exposed to multiculturalism. You see all different facets of living in the big city where culture is predominant, with art, music, and whatnot. So very young, you're exposed to a lot of culture that typically kids are not exposed to.

At that time there was a black and white television only. We were only allowed to watch it, maybe, just before the news for a half an hour and we were not spending hours watching TV. There were no video games. You have beep-beep. I don't know if you remember the beep-beep, with the two little tennis balls back and forth. Pong. Call it beep-beep, the noise it made. But that's about it, so it was more outdoor activities. It's fun for kids, Paris.

Boone: What were your favorite activities to do around there? Were you into sport or hobbies or art when you were a kid, what were you running around doing?

Jourdan: Soccer and fights—

Boone: Fights. [Laughs]

Jourdan: —and Judo. I was in Judo. Now, I had a lot of energy, so anything that could consume me physically, my parents were happy about it. Yeah, that's about it, and then when we moved to the Alps, it was obviously skiing. We were living a half an hour from a ski resort.

Boone: Where in the Alps were you?

Jourdan: Grenoble. In '68, they had the Olympic games in Grenoble, which is kind of a valley where all the major ski resorts are located, but you can ski any of those resorts. It was mountains everywhere. You're surrounded by mountains, so that's the main activity. I used to ski in the Alps.

Boone: What was it like for the Olympics? How old were you when the Olympics were going on?

Jourdan: I was born in '68—but Albertville did the Olympics in '92, I believe that was '92, and for us it was overwhelming as kids. Albertville is in Savoie, which is about an hour from Grenoble and an hour from Geneva, right there. We just remember a lot of people coming to our town but it definitely had benefits for the city, for the development of the infrastructure and they built a bunch of parks and stadiums, and it was big money coming into town.

Boone: You mentioned when you were in Paris you had a community school that you went to. Was it just the commune school or you went to a public school?

Jourdan: It was all public, definitely—all the neighbors, basically knew each other. Around that time, we were not closing doors, we were not locking doors, so we could go to each other's place. All the kids were the same age and the parents were friends, so it was in that respect a big community. In the seventies a lot of things changed. After the student revolution a lot of things changed for more women's rights and more equity, liberty and for everyone pretty much.

Boone: Did school change? Did you have a different type of teacher or curriculum?

Jourdan: No, no, later on. But it was more like the mentality was changing, the generations of my parents—that was '68. That was forty-four years ago. My parents were twenty-five. They were just toward the end of their studies, but it was very influential on a lot of people. We were not just students. People were impacted by the movements.

Boone: What was school like for you in France? It's probably very different than the United States or maybe it's similar. But what was it like going to school for you?

Jourdan: I hated it.

Boone: [Laughs] You hated it? What was it like?

Jourdan: I hated it.

Boone: What was the problem with school for you?

Jourdan: Like I said, I had a lot of energy and I couldn't still sit for more than ten minutes. A lot of kids at school were looking for attention and doing stupid stuff. It was in the early ages. I was really into girls.

I never fit into a system of education, a system, work systems. I was always different. I always wanted to do things my way, not the teacher's way, and if we were told to do specifically some way, I would do everything the opposite way, so kind of fighting the authority, which was very different at home.

My parents were very laid back—not the authority that you would expect from parents who had troubled kids like myself. They were kind of like "Let him do his thing and see what happens."

Boone: So you said your parents were involved in politics. Was that their profession or was that just what they were involved in?

Jourdan: It's funny because I spoke about it to someone earlier this week, and I think I had a dream where I was explaining to someone in my dream what my mom was doing and someone was asking me where I was from. It was in a suburb of Paris and she was, at that time, head of the urbanizing organization, basically, building the city. It was a new city, and they were planning a city plan to build the new city in a suburb of Paris. My mom was not an architect, but she was heavily involved with all planning aspects of building the city.

My dad is a civil engineer and both were in politics working for different ministers. My mom was the equivalent of the Secretary of State for the minister of the city. That was the minister that was built, I believe, under François Mitterrand in the eighties, and they've always been involved in the community. Today my dad is a mediator between the judge and troubled kids. He's retired. He's seventy-two and he's still heavily involved within the community and in politics in general, as is my mom.

They're socialist. I know it's a bad word here, but it sounds different in France. Actually, in French politics, being Republican is really—it's a bad word, and here it's "socialist," but I don't think people know exactly what it means to be a socialist. But from generations since socialism as a party has been created, my family has been in that party, so we share liberty, fraternity, equality among everyone, and sharing, making sure everybody's protected and got healthcares and everything they need, even though France is completely broke.

But we might have another socialist president three weeks from now. The French election is—the first round is Sunday and the second round in two weeks, May 5th or 6th, so there's a good chance we're going to get a socialist president again.

Boone: So you moved to the Alps when you were a teenager.

Jourdan: Yes.

Boone: Was it for your parents' work or did you guys decide to just move from Paris?

Jourdan: Yes, because it became tougher and tougher to find a socialist city. [Laughter] So they were moving quite a bit—my dad was in the private sector and he wanted to put his time and his work towards more the public sector. So they were looking to be relocated, and there was a place and he found a job, and there was work for the city of Grenoble and so we moved there.

Boone: Was that a big switch for you, moving from the cultural capital maybe in Europe to a smaller town?

Jourdan: Yeah, but because of the way we were living—very open-minded and sharing everything in the community, within the community—it was not such a big change as I was expecting it to be. Of course when you're kids it's easy to make friends. I was nine years old, ten years old, so at ten years old, you lose your friends, but you kind of forget about them anyway and you make new ones, so it was not very hard to adapt. So it was really cool. We had snow, which we didn't have in Paris, so that was a different element, a new element for me.

Boone: And you enjoyed that?

Jourdan: Yeah, definitely. It's exciting. Snow, it's exciting in general.

Boone: So you said you went to culinary school.

Jourdan: Yes.

Boone: So that was after your public school experience. You wanted to do something different?

Jourdan: Right, very young, after I finished the equivalent of high school, I wanted to learn something and I was not really into the school system. It was definitely a hard time to focus, a hard time to concentrate and study and be calm and be able to sit for more than an hour in school, so I wanted to learn something.

I didn't know what I wanted to do, and my parents went on vacation to Corsica Island, southern France, and we went to Club Med for a week and I was looking at people working there and went, god, this is a great job. You work in Club Med you can go and swim in the Mediterranean, and yeah, you work, but it didn't seem like it was really work.

I was thirteen years old, thirteen or fourteen, so I talked to those guys that were working there and I said, "Hey, what did you do to be doing what you're doing?"

They said, "We went to hotel and restaurant management school."

And so during that vacation I told my parents, that's what I wanted to do and good or bad, that's what I did. And so I went to Thonon-les-Bains, which is the oldest traditional culinary art school, very hard. Traditional.

Boone: Where was that located?

Jourdan: Thonon? It's on Lake Geneva, Lake Léman. Basically, you're looking across to Lausanne, which is another great hotel/restaurant management school. I was there for three years. You learn everything pastry. You learn how to become a chef, but you learn also to manage a hotel and to do any type of jobs in hotels and restaurants from chef to waiter, working at reception, reservations and all this.

And then I didn't want to work after this, so it was like, I was going to continue to study so I went to do my master, my culinary art school master in Toulouse, which is not in the Alps, but towards Bordeaux on the west coast, and did two more years there, and I still didn't want to work. [Laughs] So after this, that's when in '89 I went to Los Angeles.

Boone: How did you decide Los Angeles or the United States, and not traveling around Europe?

Jourdan: I have two sisters, and one of my sisters was in school, and there was a student exchange and there was this guy, this Californian guy who was in our class. He was doing an exchange, staying in this terrible French family where they were really mean. They would not let him do anything, no going out. They were opening his mail and they were just very rude to him, and so my sister invited him to come home to our house, my parents' house, for the weekend.

He stayed six months, which got my parents in trouble with that organization because the kid didn't want to go back to the previous family. My parents told that organization they didn't want any money from them. They just wanted to take care of a kid that was great.

And then I was very young. I was ten or twelve years old, and then he came back when I was nineteen, when I was graduated, and he said, "Well, if you want, you can come with me. I'm going back to L.A."

I had no idea where L.A. was, and he mentioned Hollywood. I had no idea what Hollywood was, where it was on the west coast and whatnot. I said, "Sure," so I went and that was the year of the bi-centennial of the French Revolution, 1989. We partied for a week, crazy, and I jumped on the plane and came to Los Angeles. I was living in Santa Monica and loved it, on Venice Beach, actually, and just fell in love with it, all aspects.

Boone: What was your first impression of Los Angeles after living in France?

Jourdan: I love it. I love it. It was very different. People were open-minded, very different, but a lot of space. That's what I really like. It was like we were not on top of each other in a small car in a small apartment, on narrow streets always trying to find parking and whatnot, or in the subways and underground, and so it was that sense of space and it was very enjoyable.

Boone: How long did you stay in L.A.? What did you do with yourself?

Jourdan: For months I kind of stayed in L.A. and got acclimated to living in that big city, and then we had some friends. We went and we left cross-country for a couple months. We drove from state to state all the way from south Texas, New Mexico, Alabama, and Mississippi, Georgia, and all that, and Florida, all the way to New York City.

Then we were going to fly to New York City. We split and I said, "Okay, what am I going to do?" I was twenty-one and I was in love, so I went back to L.A. And my visa was getting expired, and my great-grandmother was going to die. She was 89 years old. So I said, "I have to I have to tell you. I can't take the risk not being there." So I went back. I went back to France.

Boone: What was your impression of the United States as you were driving across it? What do you remember from that trip that stands out for you?

Jourdan: What stands out, being in Lompoc, somewhere in Texas at this friend's property, his parents' property, where he has his own gas station in front of his house, and it was a hundred of acres of land and cotton and lakes and cows, and it was just like something I was not exposed to, like a John Wayne Western movie.

It was kind of like comparing to movies you might have seen younger in your life. It was that, plus it was real. You were discovering with your own eyes that life of living in those big spaces.

For me it was interesting coming from France, where France is not even the size of Texas. And there's a lot of diversity in the language, the food, the landscape, the everything. If you drive 100 kilometers, it looks completely different, and here it's like you have to drive 300 miles. You can be in the desert driving for five hours and you're still in the same landscape and the same thing.

And then you go from state to state and people are so different. Alabama, Atlanta, or, New Mexico, Texas, New York, Florida, all those people are very different, very different, very different.

I think Texas is interesting for me because they could probably not understand a word I was saying and I could not understand a word they were saying, and we had a great time. It was very different.

Boone: So you said you met your future wife when you first came over.

Jourdan: Yeah.

Boone: Did you meet her in L.A.?

Jourdan: Yes, yes, we met in L.A. She was working for Congressman Waxman, I remember, at that time. It was in '89. She was a major in political science and a very interesting lady and a very smart, beautiful Californian, like you will describe a Californian. And we were young. We were living in Venice Beach, surfing and not worried about anything, and I was not worried about what I was going to do in my life. Plenty of time to figure it out. I was enjoying myself. I mean, that's the best way to do it.

Boone: And she came back with you to France?

Jourdan: Then I went back and I start managing a hotel/restaurant.

Boone: So you decided to work, finally. [Laughs]

Jourdan: I finally decided to work, not for very long, though, and then she came six months later and I quit my job and said, "Okay, let's find an apartment in Paris," and I moved with a friend of mine. She didn't speak a word of French and she came with her cousin. They were in trouble for a month, kind of the same story, reverse. It's kind of interesting because I did that, and she did the same thing and she never went back, so we ended up getting married. She ended up going to Alliance Française, French Alliance, to study French, and she ended up getting a job and got promoted in that job, and being fluent in French and really enjoying herself, too, yeah.

Boone: So when did you come back to the United States permanently?

Jourdan: May '97. I think May '97.

Boone: So you had been continuing to work in Paris at that point?

Jourdan: I was—I was managing clubs and a cabaret.

Boone: Is that when you started to get into the bar/entertainment business?

Jourdan: I was first in the clubs and cabarets when I was very young. When I first moved back to Paris, a friend and this boyfriend and girlfriend, I was very successful, made a lot of money, and I decided to travel around the world, which I did. I backpacked. I left everything and I went and traveled the world, and I came back a year, a year and a half afterward.

Boone: Where did you go?

Jourdan: Everywhere. I did twice around the world, thirty-seven countries. I mean, briefly, I started from Paris to Moscow, Moscow, then New Delhi, and in between I would take the train and buses and bicycles and whatnot, hitchhiking.

But New Delhi, then New Delhi to Thailand, Malaysia. In New Delhi, of course we went to Nepal, Himalayas, all this trekking. I went down to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, spent a lot of time in Australia, the east coast mostly, Darwin, Brisbane, Sydney. And then from there we went to New Zealand, Cook Islands, Rarotonga, Tonga Islands, Fijis. We spent six months in the Pacific and then from there went to Tahiti, Bora Bora, Huahine, a bunch of other places in the Pacific. I went back to L.A., down to Mexico, Central America, came back to L.A., and flew back to London and then Paris.

Boone: Wow, that's quite a trip.

Jourdan: It was. It was a trip. It was a trip.

Boone: What are your strongest memories of that? What kind of stands out of that experience?

Jourdan: That we're very fortunate. I think we don't realize what we have in our culture and our country. Whether it's France or the United States, it's the same thing. We are spoiled very spoiled.

I don't think we realize what we have, and it's important to see so many people who are unhappy. When you travel around the world, you see very poor people who have a smile on their face and open the doors and welcome you to their home and cook for you and invite you to stay over and will pick you up and drive you and give you anything they can give you. There's less of a sense of possessing things and there's more value of sharing in general.

What I really remember is, for me, the fun part was being able to adapt yourself to not only a different currency, but language, religion, everything, culture, countries, weather. When you travel an average day a week, two weeks, three weeks in each country and you do that for a year and a half, two years, you have that sense of being world citizens and not being French or coming from a specific part of the world, but you feel more connected, actually, with people and life in general.

It was quite an experience, quite an experience especially because we were traveling—I was traveling pretty carefree, meaning all I possessed was my passport, my tickets. This is the only thing I was worried about. We had this little thing we put under your pants, little pockets, and that's all we cared about. So we left with a little bag like

this and we were just giving things away. We were buying after we were done with it, so we're moving to another country.

Boone: Was it you and your wife?

Jourdan: No, it was with a friend of mine.

Boone: So you said in '97, you moved to the United States.

Jourdan: Uh-huh.

Boone: Why did you decide in '97 to move to the United States and what did you plan on doing?

Jourdan: I thought at that time, I was done, and I went around the world. I had successful businesses. I kind of learned on my own leaving school and by leaving my parents when I was fourteen, so I learned pretty much what I know by myself. I feel I had done a lot and it's hard to go back to the same routine, or I had a hard time—I tried to go back to Paris after traveling around the world, and that was this amazing experience with incredible people and I was exposed to so many cultures, and I felt like I was back to where I had left a few years before that and it was not satisfying anymore. It was not as exciting as it was at first, and I wanted to find a challenge and I always had the dream to go back.

And so the opportunity came when my wife at that time relocated to Los Angeles, so we just jumped on—I was ready to go. I said, "Okay, let's do it, move to L.A.," and in very good condition because it's a national company. They took care of everything. They moved our apartment from Paris to L.A. I got my resident card and my citizenship a while after. It was very easy for me to move to the United States.

Boone: So when you moved, you got settled in, and what did you decide to do?

Jourdan: I worked in a car wash because I remember the movie *Car Wash*, they did Rolls-Royces, in the seventies and eighties—I thought I wanted to do jobs that I would have never done and nothing that I'd have to be proud of, but I just wanted to be exposed to people and close to people, and learn, because my English was still not so good. Interestingly enough, my French accent is coming back more and more. It's kind of ironic, but at that time, it was more like I just wanted to do fun jobs. I didn't really have to work. My wife had a great job making good money, so I sold disposable cameras on Hollywood Boulevard and I worked in a car wash and a French bookstore.

What else? And then rapidly that was for about a year, and I got really lucky that Microsoft offered me a job. It was kind of unexpected. They were looking for someone with hotel and restaurant management experience and knowledge to develop and recruit what we called ISV, software developers, independent software developers, and bundle packages for small businesses in vertical markets, so I got a great job, and was paid a *lot* more money than I ever imagined I would ever do in my life.

I had a great job and I started a company with another guy. I was literally in an office with Steve Ballmer—he's president of Microsoft—with Mike Pickett, who at that

time was the co-founder of Merisel, which is before Ingram. Now Ingram is, I think, the biggest one, Micro Ingram, but it was the largest computer store in the world, an $8 billion company, and so I was with those guys and we were just twelve employees, so it was kind of fascinating.

Boone: Would you explain what you did with that a little bit more?

Jourdan: Yeah, they hired me for the wrong job.

Boone: They did?

Jourdan: Yeah, I ended up doing dental and healthcare on top of hotel and restaurants. But it's a funny story. When they told me how much money they were going to pay me, with my broken English I said, "What?" They sensed it was definitely not enough.

And rapidly they said, "If that's a problem, we can discuss it."

And I said, "Okay," and when I realized the fact I was like, "Absolutely no way." Back in the nineties, it was way over a six-figure job. It was just incredible and I was in Venice Beach—everything was an unreal kind of thing. They hired me and I traveled around the states again, all around the country.

The initiative was called Microsoft Big Day and they were doing seminars for small businesses where they were inviting the ISV, the software developers, and serving vertical markets.

I was a senior product manager and there were three different virtual markets: bundling Solutions with HP, Compaq Okidata, that time Lexmark and with selling those services, basically, bundling the services for small businesses, so it was kind of that forum to explain to small businesses how to run their business.

So I was an expert finally almost overnight explaining "You're a small businesses owner," how to run the business dental practice, law firm, healthcare, hotel, restaurants. I don't know. It was a lot of fun. Very hard to work with Steve Ballmer. You start at five o'clock in the morning.

Boone: So you were going around the United States this time as a businessman and working. Was it a different experience?

Jourdan: Totally different.

Boone: What kind of impression did you take back from America this time?

Jourdan: Business. It was all about business, and when you work for a company like Microsoft, basically you sign off your life. Someone will call you on your team at four o'clock in the morning to ask you a dumb question that cannot wait until you get up at seven.

For staff we had 180 seminars in 200 days or something, so we were doing a seminar almost every day. It was fast-paced, but at the same time, it was exciting because it was something new. And we have all stock options. We were all going to become

millionaires, and so what the hell if you wake me up four o'clock in the morning. You make a couple million dollars in a year or two, so why not?

Boone: How long did you do that?

Jourdan: We did that for two years. I never thought we would and then that was not the training things anymore, and then I got other jobs in other dotcoms. Obviously, when you work for and with Microsoft, it's the land of opportunity knocking on your door for jobs, left and right. It was ridiculous. We kind of could pick and choose what we wanted to do, and they were all like today, very famous companies, and I went different a route. But yeah, it was an interesting, interesting time.

I remember it was '98, '99 those three years until 2000, and after 2000 after the internet world trade show in New York and everything collapsed—it was very interesting for me to see that. There was no money exchange. It was just crap. It was just business to business. They were trading but there was knowledge or platforms or software or hardware. There were no transactions. There was no money.

The money was coming in for venture capital massively, but when I say massively, the second company I worked for, first round of funding, we got $3 million. The second round of funding we got $150 million. It was ridiculous. I was located in L.A. I had two offices, one in L.A. and one in San Francisco. We were flying private jets and it could be just me in the plane. Money was flowing. It was just insane, insane. In San Jose, everybody had their own private jet. Everybody was below thirty years old. It was just unreal, just so much money put into it.

Then when everything fall—when the big castle fell apart it fell apart really quickly and everybody start becoming consultants, kind of like trading the knowledge, the know-how as independents, and obviously we had millions of people in the job market. There were some serious issues because everybody was living way over their standard.

They had very expensive houses. The real estate market was absolutely ridiculous the million-dollar houses. So when everything collapsed, I got another job for a company called Digital Islands and that was doing connective network, mirroring network. And then one more time I got hired for the wrong job, but I took it, and it took me a couple weeks to figure out what I was supposed to do, but it was fun.

I ended up working for the CIA in Chinese governments, big financial corporations all around the world doing intelligent networking, DNS stuff kind of like if you remember AT&T, the big scandal a couple years ago where we found out that they knew where you were, what you were doing. They all know. They all know.

Actually, the technology I was in charge of as a project manager again was the technology that allows those big guys to do intelligent networking, which is basically they ground it in your zip code, find out who's doing what from where, how often and why, where you're buying and where you're connected to, and that sort of thing.

So there's an application for Microsoft, where if you download in your product—if it's inside of your server, if you're in France or on the East Coast or somewhere in Seattle, Richmond, to upload or download your upgrades, then that same technology was used to send you the closest server where the content is.

But the Chinese government was using it—now I can talk. I couldn't talk about much of my work. We had a nondisclosure for five years after this due to serious background checks to get that job, but the Chinese government was using it to block sites. CNN was not in China for long time and a bunch of other Fortune 500 companies, very few were actually in Chinese markets. CIA, that's obviously what we were doing. It was fun. It was fun. I have no idea what I was doing, but I was really good at it. I have a very funny story about that.

Boone: Okay.

Jourdan: Because I didn't know what I was doing, and because I got hired for the wrong job, and because probably people would figure out very quickly that I didn't know nothing about it. The team I was managing, they were all double PhDs, scientists, that actually built the Internet and built those mirroring networks completely and it was very impressive, and so I was kind of afraid that they would find out that I didn't know what I was doing or didn't know anything about it.

I didn't have to do anything. That's the best part. I was a manager, so I was managing those guys, but they are better than anybody and they knew what they were doing. So in the corporate world, you have meetings, team meetings and cross-department meetings and whatnot and lunch meetings, and so what I would do, I was using Outlook at that time, Outlook calendar, and I was booking all my days, Monday to Friday and I would leave about half an hour between meetings. I didn't have any meeting, no meeting. I was creating my own meeting, right? So I was blocking, basically, my calendar.

So everybody was like, "God this guy's busy. We can't get a meeting." So I was going to meeting, a half-an-hour meeting. Everybody sits down. There's only five minutes. We talk about the meeting agenda. That's another five minutes, so I was good already for ten minutes. Then everybody's introducing himself. It's five more minutes. We talk about an issue. Five more minutes, so like, twenty minutes, twenty-five, and then I will just open questions. I will ask people questions "What do you mean? Which way do you think is the best way to go?"

And then when they were asking me questions, I would just respond to them with another question and I got away with it for a couple months. And I was very successful at it and I got a promotion and perfection in the art of working in any circumstances.

I think what I learned the most from all the travel is being able to adapt myself to any situation, to be in a very challenging position where it's not easy. No one's going to make it easier for you, kind of like you built your own, you work hard. You focus, you learn, you stay motivated in whatever you're doing, and that's the ability to adapt yourself in different environments, whether you're in one-on-one conversations or talking to a diversity of people or find yourself consigned to an environment where you have no knowledge or you don't know anything an d you don't know what's going to happen. So I think that's traveling and being exposed to all those different cultures, I think that's why I had the ability to adapt myself.

So then after that, the dotcom was not doing so well. We got bought by Cable & Wireless, which is the oldest telecommunication company, 120 years old, from London, UK. They're the one that put the cables through the Atlantic and that it's used for fiber

optic, but that was done in 1900, so there's nothing new in technology, really. They bought out the company and my company got bought by those guys who bought Exodus and we merged and it was a nightmare within—they had no idea what the U.S. Internet business was about.

They were an old telecommunications company, old mentality, and they didn't understand the business period of the markets. We went from billions of dollars to nothing fairly quickly, and we started laying off people, and I decided I would volunteer. I was one of the last one to leave and I said, "I'm leaving. There's nothing else. We have no work. We have nothing to do and we're just getting paid for no reason."

So I started a funnel cake business. I went to Arizona. In between I got divorced, but that's a detail. I had a girlfriend and she was from Arizona and we went there. I went to a street fair and I saw a trailer of this old couple selling elephant ears. I thought, what is this? It's kind of like a flatbread fried and doughy, crunchy from the outside, doughy from the inside. You put powdered sugar on it, and literally I was fascinated by this old couple working in that trailer, and there was a line of fifty people nonstop all day long buying those elephant ears, and it was not cheap. It was five or six bucks for a little piece of cake.

And I thought this looks like something interesting here. What about doing something similar? And then her dad was with us and said, "Well, there's another product called funnel cake from the Dutch in Pennsylvania. Why don't you guys do that?"

That time, my girlfriend was managing a Target store. Me, I had just quit my job, going back to L.A. I thought, "That sounds interesting. We could do music festivals and figure it out. We'll buy a little trailer and buy a big truck and just give a shot."

We started doing it. Literally two months after we'd done a hundred festivals in the first year and then fifty festivals the second year and thirty festivals the third year and then ten. We did the Coachella, the street scene in San Diego to a big half-a-million-people festival, three-, four-days' festival and made a *ton* of money, and so we did that. It was interesting. And then I came to Reno.

Boone: So how did you go from funnel cakes to Reno? What was the transition there?

Jourdan: A friend of mine called me. There's no real transition. I had money, and it was like, okay, what's the next thing? Because I'm not going to sell and make funnel cakes the rest of my life. It's good for a while. It's good money. We had a good time, saw a bunch of festivals. It's fun. We only worked thirty, forty days a year and made a good living. It's not bad, but I was like, okay, what's next?

Then when I was thinking about it, a friend of mine called me and says, "Hey, I got this opportunity in Reno, man. You should come and check it out."

I'm like, "Rio, Rio, Rio." I'm like, "This is really cool. I'll come. Rio, man. How do you get that? That's awesome. This is so exciting."

He's like, "No, no, no, no. I mean Reno. Reno, Nevada."

And I was like "Screw you." I said, "No way." I hung up on him, I hung up the phone.

He called me back and said, "Just come and check it out. It's a club. It has music and I thought about you," because on the side job when I was doing the funnel cake and working for the dotcom, I had a record label as well at that time with digital download at

the same time Napster got shut down. We got a major lawsuit by BMI that was definitely going after us because we were two smart kids and we figured out how to do digital downloads. They were losing a lot of money, so I was doing that on the side.

I said, "Hmm, music. Music, cool, but Reno, man. Rio is a lot cooler than Reno."

"You ought to come and check it out. Come and check it out."

So I came and fell in love with the place,—once again, I didn't know really what I was doing, but I said, "This is again something different. It's probably going to be very challenging," because I didn't know anyone, not one single person. I was living very comfortably in my house in L.A. in a very good situation, and I never went back to L.A. I stayed. I said, "All right, let's make it happen."

Boone: So what was your first impression of Reno when you came up to check it out? Did you have any expectations coming in?

Jourdan: I had no expectations. I was really confused with McCarran Boulevard. That really took me a while to figure out what the hell—why McCarran is everywhere I go, and I didn't understand that it was all around the city in a circle. But drugs, drugs. I had never been exposed to drugs like this crystal methadone and—it was crazy. Here it was just everywhere.

Boone: What year was this?

Jourdan: 2007. Everywhere. It sounds like maybe it was the environment, but especially on Fourth Street. And we were living on State Street, a little place there when we first moved to Reno. I have a business partner and he had the multi-million-dollar house, tennis court, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, I mean 7,000-square-foot house. I'm like, "Woo-hoo, I'm a club owner," boom, boom, boom.

Well, we ran out of money three months after we took over, didn't know what we were doing, so it took us a while—and then the business partner quit. It was three different people trying to run the business. They were not really ready to work hard. They just wanted to get laid and I mean, cute girls and have a good time, but they didn't want to do the work or learn how to make it work, and I put all my savings, all the money I had. I'm like, "I have no choice. I got to—I got to figure out."

At that time, I had someone doing booking. I didn't know what booking meant. I have no idea and I knew we were losing money. It was like, "if we're going to lose money, I'd rather do it myself and learn. At least if I lose money I can blame myself and not someone else." So I let that person go and learned by doing it .It was very hard.

Boone: This is the Club Underground you took over?

Jourdan: Yeah, yeah. It was very hard, very hard, very hard. No one's made it easy at all. There are not many friends in this environment. It was very competitive. People are jealous. They don't want to work together.

Boone: These are the other club owners?

Jourdan: Yeah, yeah, just like a fearless battle all the time like stealing shows and who's doing what, and I was just never exposed to that type of business and mentality. And then coming from L.A., where you have 10 million people versus 200,000 people—the L.A. attitude at the same time, because I've traveled so much and I lived in a small city before for myself, I thought it's kind of cool.

Yeah, it's hard. It's a really tough business, really, really tough, because we didn't know what we were doing, obviously, but also because that was 2007. By February 2008, everything collapsed. The economy went to the dump completely. I mean, almost overnight in a month we lost 50 percent, 60 percent of our business. People started losing their jobs and the economy, they lost their house, got evicted from their house and it was not too much of a party with people spending money to come to your bar or come to see a show.

I never felt unsafe on Fourth Street. That's a funny thing because even though I was never exposed to as much drugs as in Reno, it was not Fourth Street. The drug thing was not Fourth Street. It was everywhere, everywhere in the city and they put the homeless shelter there and that definitely didn't help. I was like, "Oh, god. What are we going to do?" And Tent City. That's not going to help us. People are not going to feel safe to come here.

So just try to stay positive all the time, and then my two business partners left four years ago. I've been running the Underground for five. I just keep focusing on the positive aspect and try turn it into something, not thinking about all the different reasons why I should stop and not do what I was doing, and just do my best.

Four agreements: Always do your best. Don't take anything personal. You can't take anything personal in that business. Don't do anything that you would not want someone else to do to you, which is a respect thing, and be positive just hoping for the best and not the worst to happen.

Of course, your mind can't stop thinking oh, what if, but to run a business like this a nightclub business on Fourth Street when you don't know anybody, you have to be objective. You have to be positive about things.

Boone: So how has it changed over the last five years? Do you feel like you're in a better spot now than you were at the beginning?

Jourdan: It's not easier. It's very interesting. Times change. Business goes. As of today, I'm the longest club owner in Reno. I've been five years as the New Oasis, Stoney's, the Green Room closed. You name it, 210 North. I mean, you name it. A couple other small places, they're all gone. There are new ones, but it's not easy and the economy is not better, so it's been going on for five years. It's hard. I feel like I'm somewhere running a successful business, but it's not making any money and not enough money to pay myself the five years, so it's between a business and a hobby.

But I'm passionate about it and I'm passionate about the community. I think that I found a really strong community in Reno, maybe lacking in support, but that sense of community that I had maybe when I was ten years old. I was explaining earlier I felt kind of the same especially with the Burning Man community. I feel that sense of connection with art and want a better world, a better place to live, and beautifications of our areas and dreams and things like that.

There are the Burning Man communities, the biggest Burning Man communities anywhere in the world, the Burner capital, obviously being so close to it, and kids. I love to do stuff with kids, giving an outlet to stay away from drugs and trouble, be in a safe environment where they can practice art whether it's dance, music, or painting. I always think about it. There's not much to do for kids, meaning under eighteen and one way for them to stay occupied and not going crazy is music. That's why there are so many bands here in Reno. It's unbelievable the amount of bands, we're very fortunate to have so many here in town.

Unfortunately financially, it's not really viable. If I could get some help somewhere from the city to recognize that it's a must-have to have outlets and venues and just locations that can cater to kids again so they have something else to do so it's the two aspects: the music, the local, the community, Burning Man, and the kids, .

When I walk down the river in the summer, and I see all those kids, "Hey, Remi! Thanks, man. Awesome! We love The Underground. Thank you for doing what you're doing." It means the world to me. That's why I do what I do. It's not because of the money. It's not because it's great. It's because people really appreciate it and it touches people's lives individually.

Boone: What's it like working at The Underground for you and your employees, and what's the work environment? What's in a day for you, and especially if you have a show that night, what kind of goes into your workday? What's it like working at the Club Underground?

Jourdan: My girlfriend, right now is getting up at six-thirty, so that's usually when I'll wake up. I wake up. I don't get up. I work. I do all the administrative stuff like booking, which takes quite a bit of time. We do about twenty events a month, so we have to create those shows. It's not just booking a band; it's booking a show. So I usually do that in the morning and then I come into town at two o'clock in the afternoon. It's pretty much almost seven days a week, taking care of the club, cleaning. I have a cleaning crew that comes in. I put in some orders and delivery.

Working at The Underground, I couldn't do it if I didn't have such a strong team of really cool people who are the same since the day I bought the place, so it shows you that it's kind of very unique in this environment. And I couldn't do it without the people I'm working with, but it's long hours.

Usually my day starts early in the morning and finishes early in the morning, and people don't realize when we have a show at eight or nine o'clock at night that I've already done my fifteen hours, twelve hours of work. It doesn't matter. No matter how tired I am, or frustrated, or worried, I automatically, when the doors open, I switch. It's show time. I don't let that impact much on the business or my employees because I realize if I don't have good time during the show, my employees won't have a good time and nobody probably will have a good time, and the reverse. If they don't have a good time, I don't want to have a good time, so we'll make it a good time.

I mean, life is too short and it's a difficult time right now for a lot of people, especially in Nevada and especially in Reno. Then I feel it's one of my responsibilities to make sure they have a good time. And who cares if I'm tired and frustrated, or if I have to deal with issues all day long? When it comes to shows, if you come to a show, you

don't want to see a club owner being pissed off and mean to people or not acting accordingly to the environments, which is you're providing dreams and entertainment for people and a little time to escape from their life and the reality of it.

Boone: So what do you do once the show starts? What's your routine?

Jourdan: There's no routine. That's the thing. It fits me and the same time it makes that business a little tricky because there's no routine. There's some of it, but not really, depending on the show, but typically, I run nonstop. People who come see me, usually they say, "We love to see you, but when we come to see you, we don't see you. You don't have much time for us."

I make sure everything's supposed to be where it's supposed to be—the music, the lights, the bar, the door and sometime we have multiple events going on. There's also the other club, the Tree House Lounge, in the back, so there's always something else, something to do.

Boone: Do you own the whole building?

Jourdan: I don't own the building; I'm leasing the building.

Boone: And so the Tree House, do you guys have a partnership with them or are they separate?

Jourdan: No, that's me, too. It's two cabaret licenses, two liquor license. You can close the door and have separate businesses.

Boone: What's the Tree House Lounge for you?

Jourdan: Tree House Lounge is more underground. It's only twenty-one. We don't allow all ages there or under twenty-one. It's a bit more artsy. It's a bit more sexy, but also we do punk rock. We can have a metal show, punk rock. We can have DJs. It's a smaller room. It's more intimate. It has that feeling of a major city like San Francisco or L.A. You will find those dive bars and there's no signage. You have to know where it is, and you walk through a small little door and you walk in there, and there's minimal lights, people having a good time. There's art on the walls, and people can be themselves and not act different than who they are, and that's kind of the idea.

Boone: So it's more of like a bar with entertainment than a club and a cabaret like the Club Underground.

Jourdan: Right, right. It's not open as a bar. I'm never open as a bar. I'm only open there as an entertainment. So there's a different type of entertainment, smaller, and sometimes it's because the Underground might be booked. We're doing the Tree House Lounge and the lounge in the back and sometimes when we have a big party we have both places going on.

Boone: Now, you mentioned the sense of community in Reno that you really like. Is that part of the reason you started or helped start the E4 Association?

Jourdan: Yes, yes.

Boone: So why did you decide to start it? What were some of your hopes and what are some of your concerns around that idea?

Jourdan: Because I think Reno has so much potential. I was talking to businesses down the street for a while and all I was hearing is what they didn't like, what they didn't want, and I thought, gosh, that would be great if you can tell me as much as you told me what you don't want, if you were able to tell me what you do want. Just start the list. Think about it—that took a while to get to know each other a little bit.

I saw the baseball stadium coming up. I thought, oh, maybe that's an opportunity. Maybe that's a chance for us on Fourth Street, that corridor where we lack—I don't know if it's interest or attention or money. I don't know what it is, but I don't see anything coming our way. I truly believe that if you start doing something on your own and you show people that that could work, that people will show interest in what you do, maybe they'll ending up helping you, and if not, that's fine. We'll still do it.

There have been several people in the last twenty years. That's what I heard last week. I'm not the first one who tried. Usually it lasts a few months and then it goes in different directions or ideas, so people get tired of it or don't want to put the energy and effort into it, and don't want to do it anymore because it's too much.

And it's true, it's too much, honestly. It is. It is a lot of work and I'm by myself running my business. It takes time from my business that needs me more than anything, but sometimes if we don't think outside the box and we don't do things for others, helping each other and as a collective try to come up with something better and be productive in what we do, and we don't act on those ideas, then nothing happens.

And we can complain about what we are supposed to do and I'm really hoping that by doing that, people realize and act on it. People realize it's almost like a natural expansion of the city. Where else is the city going to expand? We have so many empty buildings on Fourth Street, vacant buildings that could be used for art projects like the Burning Man collective.

As a matter of fact, there are galleries opening left and right, so it's really encouraging. Since the Reno Bike Project moved in, now there's another art gallery opening next to mine, so the whole block where The Underground is has changed in the last couple years just because of this.

Now the members of E4 are getting to know each other as merchant business owners. We can list what things we don't like, but why don't we focus on things we think we can change and have a positive impact on our community, on our street, and hopefully in our business, to make it so people understand it's a safe place to come and hang out. As a matter of fact, not to point fingers at anyone, but it's probably safer than downtown Reno—some areas of downtown Reno—and we can try to change this perception of Fourth Street, the wrong perception people have about Fourth Street, which actually has more diversity, more variety of entertainment and can offer so much more than any other areas in Reno.

We have parking, which you don't have in Midtown. Midtown, they get a lot of attention and that's what Jessica's Junkie did for Midtown. It took a couple or four years, five years, and had a good buzz about it. She deserves to be successful like any other businesses, but if she didn't start it years back, then nothing would ever have happened. So I feel the same.

It's not about me and it's not about The Underground. It's about finding the positive and building on this and doing something and not expecting anyone to take your hand and say, "Well, let me help you," because that's not going to happen.

We used to have a redevelopment team. I don't even know what happened, if they do have a team or if I believe they probably don't have any money, and if they have a team, it's probably one guy. He's probably asking himself the same question, "What can I do?"

So doing little things like putting those monthly events together, making awareness and getting some media coverage so people show interest in this part of town, I think that's positive. That means a lot. That's the reward for me. I'll see it happening.

Now the next phase is that I have ideas because Reno is so predominant with Burning Man. I think Burning Man generates over $30 million just in local businesses, not Burning Man itself, but people who come by for Reno, buy food or stay in hotels or consume and help the local economy. I think the Fourth Street corridor could be really a great spot to have, whether temporarily or permanent, art installations related to Burning Man. Burning Man is huge. You've got to take benefit from it any way we can.

Boone: The capital of Burning Man is Reno, and the natural center is Fourth Street.

Jourdan: Yeah, and I don't think we really capitalize on that opportunity at all. I think permanent sculpture along Fourth Street would help make Fourth Street the Burning Man art cradle, or corridor, or whatever you call it.

A matter of fact, I just had a meeting with the Reno Burner LC. They have a core project that we're working on, and they specifically want to do what I just mentioned. I have some drawings here. They're building a regional network where people come to Burning Man with a project. I've only been to Burning Man one time.

I'm living in a different world, but I'm more a burner than most burners who go for ten years. I don't know. I feel like it speaks to me, the mentality, the art aspect of it, but they have a bunch of different regions and each region has a regional network, like the Reno Burner LC represents Reno and Tahoe.

They're all Burning Man communities, and they're building a gateway arch which is like this with Burning Man. Obviously it's visual. The idea will be to do an E4 Plan/Burner/gateway for Burning Man, but having it all year around not just one week a year—and leverage that as a tourist attraction.

So people are coming from out of town to stay in those casinos in downtown, and what do they do? What do they do in Reno? There's plenty of things to do—don't get me wrong—but that would give them additional attractions or activities and interests and reasons why they should come here.

And the idea with all this—it's nationwide. It's all around the country, having those regional networks, those networks been built that belong to Burning Man LC of its original network and exchanging art.

So the art, the gateway, a big arch being built in Reno, that's the Reno project, might go to Chicago in October and then here we might get a sculpture from Seattle—so it's creating synergy and also leverages the restoration of Lincoln Highway, the historical aspect of the street.

So there's the Burning Man community aspect, the Lincoln Highway Restoration Project with permanent and temporary art placements along the streets, special events maybe summertime next year or springtime, a big garden party, whatever it is, to then promote the city, promote its activity outside the city, and in California there are a lot of people who love to come to Reno. We just have to give them more reasons than twice a year with the Hot August Nights celebration, a reason why we should come.

Boone: So you talked about the reputation of Fourth Street and perceptions. When you first got there, was that something you knew about or was it something you saw? And then in the five years you've been there, is this kind of the motivation behind why you want to create a new East Fourth Street?

Jourdan: Yes, correct. Like I said, I never felt unsafe. I spend more time on Fourth Street than anybody I know, well over twelve, fifteen hours a day for five years. I know people on the street and I know business owners, and I didn't have that sense of being unsafe, insecure.

Boone: But is that the perception of Fourth Street has that you'd heard about?

Jourdan: No, because I didn't know anything about Reno. For me, I was working with some redevelopment in downtown L.A. and I was a docent. I was part of a Los Angeles Conservancy doing a historical walking tour about art deco in downtown L.A. And that was ten years ago and a lot of people, a lot of Angelinos won't even go to downtown L.A.

We were dealing with 70,000 homeless. We had tent cities on every sidewalk, every street in downtown. I mean, it was not easy, but by doing it repetitively and not giving up and doing what we thought was the right thing to do, now downtown L.A. is booming.

Last weekend I was listening on NPR. They have 110,000 people going to downtown L.A. on a bicycle, which would never happen. They would not even drive to downtown L.A. Now they are going on bicycles. Real estate is booming. It's a hip, trendy place to be. There are artist lofts left and right. There are restaurants and bars. There's a brand new Nokia theater. People invest millions of dollars, developers renovating buildings. They are all occupied.

So I keep that in my mind, why not do walking tours on Fourth Street, because there are definitely a lot of historic landmarks down this street. People don't even know the history of the old building where the temple, Burning Man temple was built. It's a big deal. But I mean, the temple was built there last year. So we already have some success stories under our arms.

Boone: You might want to talk to the Historical Society. They do walking tours of Reno. You should see if you could sell them on a walking tour of East Fourth Street because

they know the landmarks out there. They know the fighting stuff, so and the other buildings there.

Jourdan: You are talking about one specific group in Reno?

Boone: Yes, the Nevada Historical Society. They do walking tours. [Ed: The group is called the Historic Reno Preservation Society.]

Jourdan: Yes, I know Barrie [Schuster]. She gave me a little kind of private tour one time and I was really excited about talking to her a little bit more about it. She's done some amazing stuff on Wells and she knows a lot about it, too.

Boone: The graduate students did an architectural survey, too, so they might be able to add to some of that, too.

Jourdan: Yeah. That's awesome. That's awesome. I mean, that's basically leverage is what it is, and so we built the E4 and then we turn into a collective effort. Say, "Okay, well, E4 is—." We call it E4 to move away from East Fourth Street, the stigma, and promote it as a safe place to go out. I never heard anyone getting in any problems on Fourth Street.

How can we brand our area? Like Midtown did. Midtown is Midtown. E4, E4 is great. It's good branding, but that's not going to draw the tourists. They don't know about E4. E4 doesn't mean anything to them. The younger crowd that tends to be congested in the same streets downtown—what can we do to get those guys a little bit more excited to come see us, come see that it's a totally safe place and we have more entertainment than any other places in Reno just in a few blocks.

And so we came up with the red-light district. Growing up in Paris in the red-light district, I see it successful in a bunch of different cities around the world. In San Diego, they call it the Gaslamp District, but it's kind of a red-light district too. Nobody wanted to go there. Downtown L.A., you don't have to call it the red-light district, but there's the garment district, there's the fashion district, and now people go, but believe me, ten years ago it was a ghost town. You would not find any people in downtown L.A. Now it's booming great.

So it's kind of doing the same thing. We call it the red-light district because that's where it is. We have three strip clubs in town that are on the streets and we have a lot of historical landmarks. It's an older part of town and there are a lot of arts. That's the reason it attracts a lot of artists, because it's not so clean and there's a lot of empty buildings, and it has an industrial feel to it that you don't find on Second and West. So that's what artists want. That's where artists want to be and there's no disturbance of residential areas, no nuisance, no problem with finding parking. We're ready to bring the big crowd.

Boone: So what does the red-light district mean to you? I mean, what was the red-light district like in Paris and how do you see Fourth Street being a red-light district?

Jourdan: Not sure yet. We just started last week.

Boone: What are your hopes for that, then?

Jourdan: The concept is really working closely with the Lincoln Highway folks to bring back this good old time. This great landmark we have, these great historical facts about our city and about the street, so maybe educate people. You're right about doing a walking tour, educating people, like you said. You'd be surprised. I mean, those walking tours—what I was saying, in downtown L.A. with the Los Angeles Conservancy, they were not tourists doing the walking tour. There were Angelinos who were born and raised there. There was on the average, some of them, thirty, forty, but most of them fifty, sixty, seventy. They have no clue that they just discovered another part of their city where they were born and raised about in two and a half hours with a walking tour of amazing art deco architecture, and we could do the same thing on Fourth Street.

We just call it red-light because it's something a little bit more sexy, and it's capitalizing on the way it is already. It's a red-light district. That's where people want to get a little bit funky and go to be able to see a rock concert, or maybe go to a swinging bar down the street, or go to a gay bar, or go to a biker bar or just a regular bar, or go see Cuban restaurants or go hang out in an art gallery or exhibits or just walk down the street and be exposed to things that they haven't seen and they don't know about.

Boone: You mentioned a couple times, when you traveled around the United States, about how the movies you saw had one concept of America and then you had another. When you were growing up in France, did you see a lot of American movies and what kind of impression did you have of America before you came here?

Jourdan: Americans were strong, tall. They drive big cars. It's a big country, very rich. They're number one. As far as the movies, mostly Western movies, Woody Allen, John Wayne just to name two. There's an adoration. There's really a love relationship between the United States and France. I don't think it's comparable because they are based on different principles and they have different histories, and it's still, I feel, a young country. Both are very rich in histories and culture. Here I feel like it's new, everything's new.

My family, in the house we have in Provence, it has been in our family for 250 years. There is a portrait of my great-great-grand-parents in 1750 at home. So I feel very fortunate I have this, and I think people sometime disconnect it because they don't have much family history, because it's only second- or third-generation immigrants most of them are—and it's built on the individual here. It's very different. It's more individual, but at the same time there's a very strong desire to do things together as a collective way—stronger than in France, stronger than in Europe.

Maybe to explain, when I first moved to the United States it was my birthday and I decided to invite the people I knew. I already knew quite a number of people and invited about thirty, forty people and I catered and I cooked, and five people showed up and I really had a hard time. I was new. I didn't understand. It was like, why people didn't show up?

And the next day I see my friend and he's like, "Oh, yeah, sorry, man. I couldn't make it. I got busy and something else came up," and I didn't understand. In France, if you do a party, that's the opposite. You invite five people and you tell them "Okay, you

can invite one person," and they invite ten, and then you have fifty people, right? Every single time.

The other thing in the United States is you go to a party, you bring your own drinks. You don't do that in France. Yeah, you bring, but you share. It's not your beer. You're drinking. You brought the beer you're going to drink. It's like put it all together. So it's different. It's a different attitude, different mentality, but I think both work very well.

And when I go back to France, if I hear someone saying something negative about the United States or America, I'm totally defending them. I'm a U.S. citizen, too, so I have dual citizenship. I'm French, but I'll feel almost equally a U.S. citizen, so the same thing here. If I hear someone saying, "Oh, the French people don't like us," Freedom Fries and what we went through with the Bush era for years, it was pretty tough. It was like close-minded, trying to make people believe that French people hate Americans.

Well, if you know a little bit about their history, you're going to find out that we're very connected. We're very connected from 200 years ago, even Napoleon when he bought Texas. Mississippi or Lafayette and Montgomerie and the Americans helped facilitate the French Revolution after your own independence. And the same guys fought here and there in World War I and World War II.

When I hear about the war, you know exactly what happened, and it's like "Well, we saved your ass." Well, yeah, but there were about 15 million people who died and yeah, you waited until Japan invaded and whatever.

I don't want to start a whole conversation here, but I think in school in France we learn more about history and geography and we are more exposed to elsewhere, not just learning the French geography as much as we learn about your United States and Russia, and so we can place a little bit more where things are. Here it's so big but in a big country it's harder for people to learn about each other's states.

Boone: Let me ask you some of the transportation questions and we can wrap up, and if there's anything else you want to talk about after the transportation questions, we can. Do you think the transportation issues play a big role in the health of Fourth Street Corridor?

Jourdan: Yes.

Boone: How so?

Jourdan: I will take an example. Some of the members of E4 say, "Why don't we rent a bus and get the bus going up and down the street?" And what we've done is something different. We leveraged the pedicab. I don't know if you've seen those pedicabs in town where it's easy to stop. You don't have to worry about parking. There's no pollution and it's more friendly. It's more fun than jumping on a bus to jump on the pedicab. You can jump on a pedicab for a block or two and decide to walk, and it's kind of like what we want.

We want people not be afraid to walk down the street. Nothing's going to happen to them except finding out about what's actually along the street. I didn't quite understand why they moved the bus station from one block to another. For me, it's probably a big money thing, but they probably got some funding that they have to use,

and I honestly don't know, but I think it's a waste of money to move it from where it was.

And then what are they going to do with this empty lot where the bus station was? I don't see that much benefit because people who hang out in bus station don't hang out anywhere else. They go to the bus station to get their bus. They might cross the street and get a soda or something—so I don't see a really positive impact.

I think that the street itself maybe could have one lane and have bicycle lane. I don't think we need four lanes. I would personally rather not have that much—there's a lot more traffic on Fourth Street.

Unfortunately, it doesn't do any good for the businesses. It doesn't bring any additional income to all the small businesses down the street, and I would try to divert that traffic maybe to Fifth Street, or to Sixth Street. There's nothing really on Fifth Street. I don't think there are a lot of businesses on Sixth Street. There's a lot more traffic now.

Also planting trees, maybe. Make it maybe be more attractive to people so they do feel like they want to walk down the street and it could also reach up to Sparks. This whole area, there's so much to do, but we start block by block. We start little by little.

Boone: What do you think the biggest transportation need is in the whole East Fourth Corridor?

Jourdan: Bicycle.

Boone: Bicycle lane? Yeah.

Jourdan: I would take the bus. I personally don't take the bus to go anywhere—in France we have a lot more public transportation. Here the distance can be challenging, but I know the people will take the bus. Two of my employees who work long hours, late hours, early hours, they live in South Reno. Two of them can't drive or don't have a car. They're taking the bus, so for me it makes common sense to take public transportation. For a lot of people, it's not.

And as far as the bus, they have a beautiful bus station now. I don't think they need anything else themselves. As far as the bus, it doesn't do anything on Fourth Street. I don't see any benefits having a bus going up and down Fourth Street.

Boone: Are you aware of some transportation safety issues in the corridor? For example, is traffic too fast or are there bad sightlines?

Jourdan: Buses riding fast.

Boone: Buses riding fast?

Jourdan: Jesus. The problem is that at some areas, actually, it's right in front of The Underground, my neighbors have this issue that the line is narrow, so if you park where you can park, and there is both a bus and a car, they can't drive at the same time on those two lanes.

Boone: So the two lanes are too narrow?

Jourdan: Yeah, the one lane is too narrow, so therefore they all have to move to basically one lane. Buses are driving fast. That's all I have to say.

Boone: So with the arrangement of lanes, how would you like to see that corrected then, modified in any way? You mentioned before a bike lane or two lanes of traffic and a bike lane?

Jourdan: I would like to see a dedicated bike lane and a lane. I heard there was some project underway, but that was four years ago.

Boone: So you'd like to make sure there's enough room for parking bikes and traffic, but with the two-lane situation, you have to drive around buses, so it's really a one lane that's crammed into two lanes?

Jourdan: Right, right, right.

Boone: You mentioned this before about pedestrian and bikes, that we don't need to necessarily go over that again, but maybe I'll ask you so you can clarify, because it's in that section. What would you like to see for pedestrians and bicycles in the area?

Jourdan: Be able to ride their bikes. I mean, we need a safe bike lane. There's a huge sidewalk, but no one's walking, so maybe there's something to do there. And not on the safety aspect of it, but another idea would be painting the sidewalk. You have an art commission on each block or whatever makes it happen—it costs nothing to be very attractive and invite people to walk and park their car.

Obviously parking, because right now, not only do we not get the benefits of the baseball stadium, but they take all our parking spot. They walk. They don't come to a business to patronize the businesses, but they do park right along the street to go to the Aces stadium, so I think even the Aces stadium doesn't have enough parking.

Boone: That's actually the next question. How would you like to change the parking there? For example, do you like more on-street parking? Would you like it to be parallel or diagonal? If you could create the parking on Fourth Street, what would you do to change it?

Jourdan: Maybe there's a designated area where you can park. For me as a business owner, I need some space where the band can load in their stuff and load out. They've got to be able to stop in front. If they can't stop, then I'm out of business. They're not going to park a block away and bring their drum sets and guitars and amplifiers.

Boone: So more loading zones for a business like yours.

Jourdan: Yes, for businesses, a proper loading zone. This was weird, a red curb in front of my building. I don't understand why it's red. There is no garage door. It's not blocking

anyone and it's almost a safety issue because, therefore, we have to back up a little further. And like I said, the lane is getting shorter on one side, so almost every car mirror gets broken and stuff like this. So make it convenient for people if they want to drive and then park somewhere, and then they can walk or take a pedicab, or even take the bus or use those other mean of transportation than cars which pollute, make noise, and are so inconvenient. You have to park. They're expensive.

The other thing I'd like to see is that from the Aces Stadium, instead of closing that whole end of it, maybe there's a path they could open up on—where Valley Road is. So make it not so congested. They're not coming all the way. Mill Street is crazy when there's a game. There's no parking anywhere. I think it's going to ten bucks or fifteen bucks, last time I saw, for parking so obviously that's an issue to be addressed. They're using every other neighbor's parking. They don't have any parking facilities just for the Aces stadium, so at least maybe we could benefit from what they built there for the overall benefits of the city and not just specifically the Freight House or the Aces stadium.

When you have 2,000 people coming to see a game it should help our economy. They should not just jump in the car right away—they should come in a little bit earlier and be able to walk down the street and have more facilities to park in than just that same cluster, the same area.

Boone: So specifically, Valley Road, you could maybe access it through a pathway, for cars, or just for bikes or people?

Jourdan: Yeah. If you see the Aces stadium, it finishes on Valley. You just open it up so people can have another gate where at least people can get out. They can not necessarily get in, but they can get out.

They're making things more transparent, and especially what I heard that we, as taxpayers, are paying for, so maybe some small businesses on the street could benefit from it. Provide some additional benefits, and I would be happy. I think it's great what they're doing. It's just—I don't think—they didn't consult a lot of people about what we thought, and I don't know if they have any interest to know what we thought would be probably beneficial in the long run because if there are businesses that close, we all burn. If we close, they all burn. We could work together. It seems like they try to isolate themselves. It sounds like it. I'm not saying they are at all, but it looks like that's where it is.

Boone: Maybe they could be a partner in the E4 Business Association.

Jourdan: Right, I would love to have the Freight House District be a part of the red-light district. Why not? What I find fascinating is that people in downtown L.A. with 20 million people find ways to work together, developers, business owners, our conservancy a bunch of nonprofit organizations, and address the issues, but in a city with 200-plus, 300,000 people in the area, it seems like we can't work together, for some reason. People have a really hard time cohesively coming up with ideas that will benefit each other in the long run and they really struggle to work together.

It's kind of an interesting dynamic. It's like everybody's scared. Everybody's so worried about their own that they're looking with a narrower view instead of enlarging their view and seeing the bigger picture, like we're all going to benefit each other if we work together.

And if we open it up, we get to know each other, and that's what the E4 is all about. There are no other areas, and not just downtown, but in Reno or Sparks, as a matter of fact, where people intentionally get together and say, "Well, let's change what we can change. Let's take ownership of our own future and destiny and at least do what we can."

And if it's not much, it's not much. If it's all we can do, that's what we'll do—but with the issue of the wine walk, the beer crawl, they're all fighting. They're all fighting with each other. "Which one's going to take more business from me," and we are desperate to get more business, so we are not in a position to point fingers and say, "Well, you do this, and how come you got—?"

Me, personally, I do a show and I get four, five hundred people. I don't want to share. It's like when those people are done, after a concert, I don't want them to go other places, not so they go home, but you see what I mean? Like going out and maybe stopping by another bar or seeing the gallery that's still open or a coffee shop or going to late dinner—there's five hundred people right there. There are people who are scared. In other areas, if we don't work together, it's awful. When we work more and more together for the best and for each other—it all benefits the city, and makes the city more attractive to people out of the city to come and visit us, patronize our businesses, help our local economy—contribute to us because there's a lot more money in California than there is in Reno, and there's no reason why those guys stop coming. If we stop doing events or if you stop giving a reason why they should come, then, you know, they don't come. If you tell them, "Hey we've got some cool stuff going on," then they want to come and check it out.

Boone: Well, thank you for your time. I appreciate it.