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## "Erving Needs a Pee. . . "

Robert Dingwall  
*University of Nottingham*

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## Remembering Erving Goffman

### Robert Dingwall: "Erving Needs a Pee. . . "

This interview with Robert Dingwall, Professor and Director of the Institute for Science and Society at the University of Nottingham, was recorded on August 3, 2008, during the ADSA meeting in Boston. A group of sociologists assembled in the hallway was reminiscing about Goffman when Robert Dingwall volunteered this story and agreed to have it recorded. After Dmitri Shalin transcribed the interview, Dr. Dingwall corrected the transcript and gave his approval for posting the present version in the Erving Goffman Archives. Supplementary information appears in square brackets. Undecipherable words and unclear passages are identified in the text as "[?]". The interviewer's questions are shortened in several places.

[Posted 10-11-08]

**Dingwall:** You should talk to Greg Smith from the University of Salford in England.

**Shalin:** I know his book on Goffman.

**Dingwall:** Yes. He did not know Goffman personally, but Goffman spent a semester at Manchester University, which is in the same city.

**Shalin:** This is Robert Dingwall from the University of Nottingham.

**Dingwall:** That was sometime in the late 70s or the 80s. Greg collected accounts of Goffman from the faculty members who were there at the time hosting him.

**Shalin:** So, he may have some stories.

**Dingwall:** He might be worth emailing to, checking what he has to say.

**Shalin:** I'll try to get in touch with him.

**Dingwall:** If you put in, I can give you a story [about Goffman] that Doug Maynard told last [?].

**Shalin:** Anything would be of interest. I collect hearsay, anecdotes, first-hand accounts, trying to make distinction between the different kinds of. . . .

**Dingwall:** Doug Maynard told a story the other day, you can probably check with him directly.

**Shalin:** Doug Maynard?

**Dingwall:** Doug Maynard from UW, Madison. . . . As a relatively junior faculty member at the University, he was sent to meet Goffman off a flight coming to Madison where he was to present a seminar at UW. Goffman comes through the gate, Doug comes over and says sort of, "Hi, I am the guy welcoming you." Goffman takes his hand and says: "I need to pee."

**Morrill:** "Was this sort of a breaching experiment?"

**[Laughter]**

**Morrill:** A year or two ago, I had a talk with Elijah [Anderson] at Irvine, he came to give a talk and we had a dinner. He was telling David Snow and myself a story of how he was hired at Penn – I cannot remember for the life of me [the details] – he told me some great stories about Goffman and the hiring process. Goffman told to him: "Here is the hiring process, this is how it works" . . . .

**[End of the recording]**