Elizabeth Ferry: Greetings from Brandeis University. Welcome to Recall This Book, where we assemble scholars and writers from different disciplines to make sense of contemporary issues, problems and events. Today as usual, your hosts are me, Elizabeth Ferry and my brilliant colleague and friend John Plotz.

John Plotz: Am I a brilliant friend also?

Elizabeth Ferry: You are a brilliant friend.

John Plotz: That's all I want.

Elizabeth Ferry: And we are joined by my equally brilliant colleague and equally brilliant friend Chris Walley. Chris is Professor of Anthropology. Hello Chris.

Chris Walley: Hi.

John Plotz: Hi Chris.

Chris Walley: Thank you guys so much for having me be here.

Elizabeth Ferry: Chris is Professor of Anthropology at MIT. Her project Exit Zero uses family stories to examine the longterm impact of de-industrialization in the United States. It includes several iterations including an award winning book with the University of Chicago Press called Exit Zero: Family and Class in Post Industrial Chicago. The book won a number of awards including the CLR James award from the Working Class Studies Association and second place for the Victor Turner prize in ethnographic writing. The project also includes a documentary film made with director Chris Boebel and a current collaboration, still current right?

Chris Walley: Mm-hm, yeah.

Elizabeth Ferry: Collaboration with web designer Jeff Zoick and the Southeastern Chicago Historical Museum to create an NEH funded interactive archive and storytelling website that highlights multi-generational storytelling around de-industrialization in the United States and that website is supposed to launch in?

Chris Walley: June of 2020.

Elizabeth Ferry: June of 2020 and where does the term Exit Zero come from?

Chris Walley: Come from? So Exit Zero is the the highway exit ramp number for the old steel mill communities and after the first time he had visited my family and he was like, "Wow, that kind of legacy of kind of the steel mills closing. I mean it's so heavy here," and we were leaving and going down the exit ramp and it said kind of Exit Zero and he's like, "Oh my God, somebody has to make a film about this place and call it Exit Zero because that kind of sense of being overlooked."

John Plotz: Yeah, road to nowhere.

Chris Walley: Road to nowhere.

John Plotz: Last exit to Brooklyn.

Chris Walley: Being passed over, exactly. So we started working on that. So he became interested. We were both interested then and there were a lot of visual materials. It's a very visual place, these kind of old, big old industrial areas. So we started working on the visual part of that. So we were, I was actually working on the book and we were working on the film simultaneously and it was really trying to capture what was happening in the area through whatever media were available. So it wasn't that I intended to start out doing like, "Oh, it's going to be a multimodal project," but that how do we best capture the experience, the transformation in places like this and how do you get best get at the experiential dimensions?

Chris Walley: And the other thing that was really important for me was that when I was in college and first started reading sociological accounts of places like this, it was written in very technical theoretical language and it felt like it was material that was written *about* communities like Southeast Chicago, not for people in them and I remember being offended at the time as a teenager, how come this isn't more in conversation with people in the area?

Elizabeth Ferry: Right, right.

John Plotz: Can I ask a sort of random English professor's question, which is that, Chicago actually as far as literature goes, seems like an extremely storied place. I mean, I think about, I don't know, Theodore Dreiser, Willa Cather, Carl Sandburg. Did any of that stuff, did that feel like it gave a voice to Chicago or does that stuff just feel so long ago that it doesn't represent what Chicago is now?

Chris Walley: Well-

John Plotz: And I'm not saying everyone in Chicago is probably reading Carl Sandburg in high school, though maybe they are, but does it speak... I mean this in a way it gets to what it means to live in a de-industrializing city rather than an industrializing city.

Chris Walley: Yeah, yeah. I mean I think, I mean one of the things that I actually ended up teaching from Chicago's history is Upton Sinclair's The Jungle for example, right? I mean there's so much literature that's kind of about the harsh rawness of capitalism in the early period. So there's the great kind of literary works about Chicago.

John Plotz: Frank Norris

Chris Walley: Frank Norris, exactly. And there's also at the same time on the University of Chicago, Chicago School of Sociology-

Elizabeth Ferry: That's what I was thinking of, yeah.

Chris Walley: ... which for anthropologists, I think that's probably more, kind of that's the storied kind of way looking at-

John Plotz: The life cycle of a taxi driver.

Elizabeth Ferry: Street Corner Society.

Chris Walley: Yeah, exactly. But again that kind of, those kinds of sociological accounts kind of felt like looking at people rather than being in conversation with people. So the idea partly for the multimodal work and the emphasis on stories as being at the center of this was also to find ways to work that would feel like it was more inviting people from the area into the conversation. And so the book is written around stories. The film is told through family stories. So the idea was to use family stories as a way to kind of create more conversation with people in Southeast Chicago and that's largely been the case. It's actually been quite nice going back that there's been a kind of a, you tell stories and then people tell stories back and so it's been great to hear lots of people's stories of their own experiences with de-industrialization in response to the work. So that's been fantastic.

Elizabeth Ferry: The way you've described times that you've gone back and given talks there and how many things are going in, how many different directions in conversation. Can you say a little more actually about that with respect to the third part of the project, because that seems like the real kind of coming to fruition of the whole concept?

Chris Walley: Exactly. So we're working on this website project that's a collaboration with the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum, which is a community based museum that's been around on all volunteer labor for 40 years now and so if the idea in the Exit Zero book and film is to use family stories as a way to get at larger issues around de-industrialization, changing class structure in the US, the idea of the website project is to use all these materials, these objects that people have saved from the community and the stories that they tell around and through those objects and to really get at the full range of storytelling in these old industrial communities and even though people sort of in the Trump era, people tend to think of the working class once again a sort of “white working class,” but it's always been an incredibly diverse place.

Chris Walley: Many Mexican Americans, many African Americans working in the steel mills since the World War I era and so what we're trying to do in this website project is to use people's stuff that they say to really get at the kind of diversity of stories in those communities and again, for the whole project, what does this

stuff feel like? What was the experience of de-industrialization like? Not just kind of at a some kind of statistical way, but like what did it feel like for people?

Elizabeth Ferry: Right, right, which will really pick up on once we start talking about the novel, but I wanted to ask you, what do people say about why they saved something and what they had in mind when they did? Was it for their kids or was it, some people must be more kind of archival in sensibility than others.

Chris Walley: Well I think it's interesting because the museum was just forming right as the steel mills were going down and then people really donated an incredible amount of material and I think part of what was going on, sometimes more articulated, sometimes less articulated, but I think that people really felt the history of the area was disappearing or kind of what they had grown up with, what they had known that they, I think a lot of people were aware, that feeling that their past was being erased in some sense and they wanted it to be remembered. And so the museum is incredible. It's got like 10,000 images. It's got, I forget, 84 different scrapbooks, letters and 250 pieces of clothing and addresses all these incredible materials and part of the point is how all the storytelling in which these material objects are wrapped up in and the museum also has about 180 oral histories. So we're interweaving the oral histories with the objects that people, with the objects that people save and the home movies that they took.

Elizabeth Ferry: And their imagined public, I mean probably very many different imagine publics, but maybe the the neighborhood going forward, or maybe a broader audience.

Chris Walley: Yeah, I mean we're trying to kind of capture hopefully multiple audiences with this, but one of the main ones is for the community itself, people in the, and I think a lot of older people, I think for a lot of younger people, they kind of feel this heavy weight of the history there, but they don't necessarily know that history and they don't know how to connect to it and a lot of the older generation that remembers really want to be able to be in conversation again with the younger people about this.

John Plotz: Can I ask the question about that community and it's kind of along the lines of the Benedict Anderson imagined communities argument, which is I just feel like one of the things that is an outsider coming to Chicago, one of the things that clearly distinguishes it but lets you feel how American cities used to be is the neighborhood-ness of it and I'm just wondering basically if you could talk about how that question of, I'm going to call it Balkanization, though maybe that's an unfair word. How neighborhood identity has changed in the de-industrializing times? Because I feel like Elizabeth and I both lived in Baltimore for a while and Baltimore used to be incredibly like that, but the changing patterns of wealth and poverty and race have somewhat erased those neighborhood distinctions. When you use the word community, which I almost heard a capital C there, I was wondering if it still feels like the borders? Do you know what I'm asking? Whether the borders remain or whether things are being reconfigured?

Chris Walley: No, and that's a very fair question about the community with the capital C, particularly since my earlier book and work was all about taking apart communities with capital a C, but anyway-

Elizabeth Ferry: The dilemmas of being an anthropologist.

Chris Walley: But I think part of, I mean part of what we're trying to do is I mean, when we talk about Southeast Chicago, there's a whole range of different neighborhoods that were there in the past and those neighborhoods were completely driven by ethnic and racial divisions from the very beginning into the current moment, but as you said, as to neighborhoods' identities were incredibly central for people and so that's one of the ways we're going to try to get at those larger histories is to think about those kinds of ethnic and racial tensions within neighborhoods and communities and what those came out of. So we're actually trying to kind of both construct and deconstruct the "community" and at the same time with this.

Chris Walley: But one of the things we do want to do with the objects, there's an art historian who talks about with albums, that how people's photo albums that those things, the way they work for people is people would usually tell stories in relation to the album. You'd show the album to people, you'd talk about the stories.

Elizabeth Ferry: More of an event than an object, yeah.

Chris Walley: Exactly, that it's a conversation. So if one of the things we're trying to do with this museum is to kind of reanimate that conversation in the community with the objects that older members of the communities have saved and a younger people are saving as well but kind of reanimate some of these kinds of suspended conversations as Martha Langford refers to it. So to me that's the part of the kind of the imagined community there in some sense of how do we reanimate these kinds of conversations.

Chris Walley: At the same time we're acknowledging that there was a lot of fighting. There was a lot of ethnic and racial divisions. There was a lot of, those were very tempestuous places at the same time. There's a lot of material in museum actually on some of the civil rights struggles in the area. I think one of the things that's really striking with the materials from the museum when you see, kind of again, photographs and other materials and you see the diversity of people who worked in these steel mills, again, this kind of idea now that somehow the working class, "working class" being talked about again as being sort of largely white and male when again, these have always been incredibly diverse places and that's one of the things we really want to emphasize with this website project.

Elizabeth Ferry: And that's incredibly political, politically important intervention at this moment. You wrote an article about the Trump election for American Ethnologist, right?

Chris Walley: Yeah. To talk about sort of discomfort with talking about class and how Chicago relates to that. I mean so you have anthropologists like Sherry Ortner who have argued for some time that that kind of idea that Americans are uncomfortable often talking about class and so we tend to displace it onto other things about conversations about gender or about conversations about race and so we have to think about all those things and how there are co-constituted, but on the other hand we also need to keep them intellectually. You'd be able to see the distinctions between each other at the same time and how, and challenge our displacements and our kind of what happens when we don't have a language of class, talk about the world in which we're in and I think that's kind of a lot of what happens sometimes in the United States that these anger gets displaced onto other kinds of things. Even as, again everything is tied up and bound up with each other at the same time.

Elizabeth Ferry: Which is also a divide and conquer. Has a divide and conquer effect at least.

Chris Walley: Exactly.

Elizabeth Ferry: Right.

Chris Walley: And in terms of, so Chicago around this and now I think you know I don't actually use when I was working on the Exit Zero book and I would go home, I wouldn't use working class, the language working class because I think a lot of people took it to be insulting. I mean because after that post World War II period it's like "Okay but no, we were middle class," and I think my mom challenged me at one point after the first thing she read on about this and she said, "You called your dad's family working class," and to her she read that as an implication of being “stupid.”

Elizabeth Ferry: Right, “uneducated and dumb…”

Chris Walley: Exactly. So again that kind of US kind of meritocratic notion then if you use the term working class you're saying that somebody screwed up in some way because they ended up being working class, which is I think part of the hesitance about using that language, but I do think that that right now, because things are shifting so much and inequality has become so extensive, there is a real shift. I mean it used to be everybody in the US used to call themselves middle class and more and more people are not identifying that way anymore, I mean reflecting the changes that are happening. So again, I think this is a really interesting moment in class terms because those old labels and how we count class and think about class doesn't work and people realize it doesn't work, but we're not quite sure what we're talking about.

John Plotz: Yeah, I think the category of an underclass is totally fascinating that way because it has of this kind of quality of abjection in it. So it's below the working class lies the underclass, but then it's another way of just talking about a substantial decile or pentile of the population that just doesn't have access to

education, but people don't want to call themselves underclass. My only point about the UK is people actually are willing to call themselves working class, which is different.

Chris Walley: And it is it, I mean the kind of history of kind of working class identity and sort of unions there and thinking I was just there for a conference and there was a number of folks who are coming out of coal mining communities who were writing about the de-industrialization of those areas and some of them were talking about some of the coal mining communities have been there for 450 years. So if we're talking in a place like Southeast Chicago, we're talking about late 19th century. We're talking about 450 years worth of history that's been transformed there, but it is, it is fascinating how there's both so many parallels but also so many differences in how class gets talked about.

Elizabeth Ferry: I mean this is a side point, but I always think it's an interesting thing about mining and since I've studied mining, is that in a lot of mining working class communities, the place is there because of the mines. Because you can't actually decide where the mines are going to be in advance. So sort of why somebody saying like "That's so funny that there are always rivers next to cities." So that sort of idea that not only is this a place that has a long history but the entire point of the place had to do with this resource.

Chris Walley: Yeah, the area that I work and write about, Southeast Chicago is exactly the same thing. It was a wetland region that a lot of it was created on landfill and that came out of the slag from the steel mills itself. So even the kind of places where the land is all about the history is all about.

Elizabeth Ferry: Well maybe we should shift a little bit to talk about North and South.

John Plotz: This would be a great time to talk about Gaskell actually.

Elizabeth Ferry: Yes. So we do have another book on the table, on the metaphorical table here, which is by Elizabeth Gaskell and the title of it is North and South and John, do you have the date of it?

John Plotz: Yeah, it's 18, if I did it a second ago, 1854.

Elizabeth Ferry: 1854. So this is a-

John Plotz: Near enough to the dawning of the Industrial Revolution. I mean, certainly there'd been 90 years of technological breakthroughs, but this is the moment when you get large scale industrial factory operations.

Elizabeth Ferry: And that's very much in the forefront and like a lot of 19th century novels it's in a kind of romantic idiom. So a young woman, because her father has a crisis of conscience in the church and has to leave the church and his comfortable living down South, they move to Manchester and -

John Plotz: The Chicago of Britain, shall we say? Maybe.

Elizabeth Ferry: The Chicago of Britain, yes. I don't know how the Manchesterians feel that.

John Plotz: Mancunians man.

Elizabeth Ferry: Mancunians.

John Plotz: Who cares what they think? They have two winning soccer teams. They can think whatever they want.

Elizabeth Ferry: And one of the things that I really love about this novel is the way that she talks about what you can call the structure of feeling of industrialization. So I think given that Chris, your book is so, it's so rich with respect to stories and feeling and kind of the relationship between livelihood and life in all of its many other dimensions, those two really spoke to each other. Maybe I'll just give one example and which is one of my favorite moments of the book where she is meeting a worker and his daughter for the first time and they come to be crucial characters in the book and she meets him and she says, "Oh, I think we must be neighbors. We meet so often on this road." I'm not going to try to reproduce the accent, which is there is a kind of dialect in the book.

John Plotz: We can add that later in post production.

Elizabeth Ferry: All right, "We put up at Nine Francis street, second turn to the left after you've passed the Golden Dragon. And your name? I must not forget that. I'm not ashamed of my name. It's Nicholas Higgins. She's called Betsy Higgins. What are you asking for? Margaret was surprised at this last question for it Hillstone, which is in the South. It would have been an understood thing about the inquiries she had made that she intended to come and call upon any poor neighbor whose name and habitation she'd asked for." So she sort of takes it for granted that this would be appreciated, that you would just come without being invited to somebody's house and he responds, "Well, I'm none so fond of having strange folk in my house," but then he says, "Well, you're a foreigner and maybe you don't know many folk and you've given my wench here flowers out of your own hand. You may come a few like." So that's a great kind of moment of this, as you say at this sort of very crux of industrialization, this kind of clash of two different modes of relationship between classes.

John Plotz: Totally. And can I actually say something about that in terms of the title North and South, which is that she has the Southern attitude and the Southern attitude is that she feels that she will come and call upon any poor neighbor whose name and habitation she had asked for. So the category poor neighbor there is like a caste designation. In Southern parlance, yeah it's given like "I am gentry and you are one of the poor."

Elizabeth Ferry: One of the tenants usually, right?

John Plotz: "Therefore you ought to go your place, which is to come and be visited by me."

Elizabeth Ferry: And to appreciate it.

John Plotz: Totally. And what's changed in Manchester and here we are in Waltham, which also had factories paying high wages in the 1810s is what's changed is that the people who are workers in this context no longer take it for granted that their status is to be basically yeah, as you say to be like peasant, to be like-

Elizabeth Ferry: To be in a relationship of dependence.

John Plotz: ... right, so the thing that's so great about North and South, which I think is still true 170 years later, you can still feel the tension of the working class people inside that novel striving to be seen in some other category than that of poor neighbor and that's what's so fresh about it and I feel so relevant in a moment of de-industrialization is that we're watching a shifting of category relationships that have to do with the disappearance of this kind of high value waged labor, but Gaskell was writing about its appearance. She's writing about how people can get along with each other once they have these new social and economic relations.

Elizabeth Ferry: She has another part right near there where she describes Margaret's, who's the woman from the South, her discomfort of walking around on the street and these both women and men who are workers have no problem just kind of addressing her directly and saying like, "Oh, what a pretty smile," or grabbing her shawl to feel the fabric and stuff and this is very shocking to her.

John Plotz: Totally. I was thinking about those low working women of the 1820s who basically could start buying themselves nice dresses and you can buy a dress that basically it looks like what upper class people are wearing and that's okay.

Chris Walley: One of the things I thought was really great about the novel is that, so you really get so in the context of the strikes happening in Milton, which is really Manchester, is the fact that it's so from the point trying to be from the point of view of both groups in their interactions with each other.

Elizabeth Ferry: That is what the narrative is trying to be.

Chris Walley: Exactly. So really trying to get at sort of what does something like an industrial strike, what does that look like from the point of view of the factory owner? What is it look from the point of view of this sort of unionized factory worker and their interactions with each other and one of the things I'm wondering for and John, you might know more about this, thinking about in the literary world, but thinking about in the contemporary moment, it seems like we need to go back to some of that as well. Thinking about what are the representations of classes in interaction with each other because it seems like what's happened in more recent decades is that you see a kind of marginalization of working class

people of all backgrounds often in cultural representations whether the celebration of the entrepreneur and sort of folks that-

Elizabeth Ferry: So atomization of communities or?

Chris Walley: Yeah or just that compared to say, movies, TV programs, so that in the past that there were more sort of working class figures as part of that in the way that there's not so much in the current moment, but thinking about where I think there's a kind of invisiblizing of kind of large segments of the population and thinking about not only kind of countering that but also thinking about really the inter class moments between different classes and why because I feel like one of the things that's happened too is that there's fewer moments of inter class interaction now in our current period. Say the World War II generation that happened through the military for men anyway pr there's kind of different kinds of kind of spaces in-

Elizabeth Ferry: Even things like public transportation.

Chris Walley: Yeah, exactly.

Elizabeth Ferry: Those are fleeting moments, but they are-

John Plotz: And I think it's a sign of the failure. So I totally take that as a good question to ask in terms of artworks and I think it's a sign of the failure. It might be my failure, but it might be the failure of where fiction is right now that my mind immediately went to, I was like, well Bruce Springsteen, maybe hip hop music. There are places in the popular culture where those sorts of conflicts of economic goals are addressed, but then when I think about England, I think about JD Smith. I mean I do think that there are novelists in England doing it. In America, it's definitely harder to think about who those people are. When I think about the sorts of existential despair we've talked, like we've talked about Sheila Heady on here and my year of rest and relaxation by most effect, if that's her name. Those are all, those are not, those don't those leave the class dynamic invisible for sure. I agree with that point.

Chris Walley: And I do what to, thinking about it I'm not sure if you're some of the discussion around the precariat two coming out of Guy Standing's book on the precariat and one of the, this goes back to what you were mentioning, basic income, which is one of the things that gets argued there and that's another interesting question then is that another way to go? But I would really worry as an anthropologist that focuses on work and I'd be curious to know Elizabeth your thoughts on this, but it seems like a lot of that discussion about basic income.

Chris Walley: I mean it ignores the social aspects of work and the importance of work to people, feeling that they have some kind of importance in life and sort of going through these materials in Southeast Chicago for the museum project, you see this over and over again in oral histories and in the stuff people save, the sense

of pride that comes out of work really even really horrible and dangerous work and does that whole basic income idea, which seems kind of Silicon Valley-esque in some ways to me because it's like then you don't have to kind of fix work or make it better. You can just kind of do this other thing.

Elizabeth Ferry: One interesting or sort of contribution to that discussion is the James Ferguson Give a Man a Fish, because he really, and I just really liked the title because it's sort of like give a man a fish and he has a great discussion in there about sort of this idea of work being, providing a sense of value but also that itself kind of playing into this notion of work as a moral activity and the flip side of it, that the flip side often gets mobilized against people who don't have work as being, you lazy or get a job or whatever.

John Plotz: That's a huge 19th century. I mean that's Henry Mayhew is those who cannot work and those who will not work.

Elizabeth Ferry: Exactly.

John Plotz: It's the condition of the undeserving poor.

Elizabeth Ferry: And he discusses particularly that in the 19th century. So I mean his intervention and I think there were problems with it. One of the big problems I think has to do with the environmental implications of how, where is that money coming from for that basic income. In Southern Africa it's often coming from extraction, but I think one intervention would be to say, well let's actually look at this idea of the relationship between work and value and think a little critically about that too. Not necessarily saying there's that we kind of completely ignore it but, but it too can be available for some thinking.

John Plotz: And since a moment can't go by and which I don't mention in our rent, I will say that like the distinction she makes between labor work and action seems worth thinking about there too, because it's we use the word work to lump all of those things together and there are types of work we do that exist in a space where, right. I mean it's either degrading or it's corporeally degrading and dangerous or it's just life shortening. There's other types of work. I mean I'm sure we can all think of the things that we love doing, making a podcast for example or when I'm in the classroom, that's the work-

Elizabeth Ferry: Or baking or something.

John Plotz: ... that the work that I would define as action because it's satisfying. It has a kind of pastoral quality to it and that, so in other words, we could nuance those distinctions rather than thinking the way the utilitarian economists of the mid 19th century taught us to think as if, extraction of value provided a per hour basis on which everything could be valued. In other words, that's one paradigm that you can use, but basically by the logic of utilitarianism, if you like doing it, it's not work. Because if somebody doesn't have to pay you to do it, then it's not

really work. That just seems like a very depleted account of what counts as meaningful work.

Chris Walley: Particularly when there's not enough work to go around.

John Plotz: Yeah, exactly. Right. And again, this is in the moment of North and South is the moment when the economy is waking up to the realization that people are going to have to be compelled or induced to go into the factories and labor and in the colonial context, that's the story of the late 19th century empire as well. It's not about how much land you can control, it's how much labor you can control. So that's a control mechanism-

Elizabeth Ferry: Particularly when people have other options.

John Plotz: So Chris, I totally hear what you're saying about the way in which we have invested work with all of this value and meaning. I just think that too has a historical genealogy that we can think about how it couples and decouples over the generations.

Elizabeth Ferry: Should we go to recallable books?

John Plotz: Yeah, we totally should.

Elizabeth Ferry: So mine was The Road to Wigan Pier by George Orwell but one of the things that I like about it that sort of reminds me of your work is the way in which it has this kind of, it's sort of two books that are connected to each other. The first one is a sociological study of workers in the North of England near Wigan and really excellent sociology including counting beds and all kinds of very detailed data and then the second part of it is a kind of rumination and sort of personal essay about a class and about class feeling and about kind of the visceralness of feelings of repugnance towards the working class and this really, and why sort of as a way of mobilizing why people, more people aren't socialist and I just think it's an extremely kind of moving and just explains a lot in a way that yeah, he sort of gets at something about the kind of effect of class that people don't always get it. Chris, what do you have for us?

Chris Walley: I was thinking a great book to go back to would be Jane Addams 20 years at Hull House because to me that it has a lot of parallels for me in thinking about Gaskell's work. I mean Gaskell's work is a bit earlier, Jane Addam's Hull House was 1890s or into the early 20th century, but similarly a kind of feminist sensibility, thinking about the kind of social questions of the day in terms of kind of a multi-class kind of organizing or analysis. I mean so what Hull House did was creating this house in a poor immigrant industrial neighborhood and the idea of sort of being good neighbors and creating this kind of space at these settlement houses where sort of people in the community could come in and they'd do child care and they would do artistic programs and they would have

playgrounds and they worked on sanitation issues and they worked on child labor and fixing it things.

Chris Walley: So there's a whole range of progressive social era reforms and a lot of the women that came out of Hull House ended up being some of the most prominent... Thinking about somebody like Francis Perkins who was the one who really kind of created social security under FDR for example. So the influence of that kind of Hull House model of using a different model for thinking about how do we think about class relations of communication and sort of, well anyway, I don't know, it could be-

Elizabeth Ferry: And also the neighborhood-ness of it.

Chris Walley: Exactly. And so on the one hand, people have criticized it for being kind of these upper middle class women and there's a certain kind of patronizing element to that, which may be true, but think about also in the current moment, how can we think about sort of multi-class kind of organizing in different kinds of social experiments. So looking back to the 19th century not only for the problems, but what are also some of the social movements that came out of that that had a big influence.

John Plotz: You guys are making me feel really bad because you're kicking it old school, whereas my recommendation is actually from 2015. I wanted, I'm sort of on the other end.

Elizabeth Ferry: Breaking from the type.

John Plotz: Yeah, kind of. So I wanted to, I kind of went all in on the sort of precarity model and I wanted to recommend a book called The Dog by Joseph O'Neill, which is a set. It's a young London banker who ends up in an unnamed middle Eastern city where he's basically kind of a, it's like a new, he's in a techno world. He's essentially a servant or a minder for a spoiled young Emirate and/or son of an Emir and whatever the diminutive of Emir is, Emirnik. And it's just, to me it was, it was kind of some of the things I was talking about. It's like coming out the other end from an era in which people's labor is defined by their fixed position.

John Plotz: It's more like what it means to live in the precarity of coils of money. In fact I could have recommended Money by Martin Amis. That would be maybe another early version of the same book, but it's the point of what it means to be Mister Nobody from nowhere. But the reason I feel a little guilty about it as Chris, I do think your point about the invisibility of the class to relationship that actually includes the laboring body is, this is certainly guilty of that because it's in the world in which encounters with people from a truly different classroom is just essentially across a great gulf. So it doesn't solve the problem that you identified of where are the stories of that, that world. I agree with that.

Elizabeth Ferry: So we've come to the end and I just want to thank you Chris Walley for joining us in this conversation and thank you John for joining us and-

John Plotz: Oh my God, it was such a pleasure. Thank you.

Chris Walley: Yes, thank you thank you both so much.

Elizabeth Ferry: You'll be hearing from us all soon again, and I hope that we get the chance to hear from you dear listeners. Recall This Book is hosted by John Plotz and Elizabeth Ferry. Music comes from a song that by Eric Cheslow and Barbara Cassidy, Flyaway. Sound editing is by Claire Ogden, web design and social media is done by Matthew Schratz. We always want to hear from you with your comments, your criticisms or suggestions for future episodes. You can email us directly or you can contact us on social media and via our website. Finally, if you enjoyed today's show, please be sure to write a review or rate us on iTunes or Stitcher or wherever you get your podcast joy. You may be interested in checking out past episodes like Christina Thompson's on Polynesia or opiate addiction, the iconology of female heads of state, as well as interviews with Sadie Smith, Samuel Delaney, and Cixin Liu, and we're going to have an upcoming episode with Ajantha Subramanian on the topic of merit and meritocracy. Thanks for listening.