

CONSUMER HABITS IN ADULTS 65+

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Summary

This report explores the evolution of consumer behavior through the reflections of [Subject A], a 68-year-old neighbor of mine, whose life spans multiple generations of cultural, economic, and technological change. Drawing on a semi-structured interview, the report highlights how [Subject A]’s personal purchasing habits shifted, from TV-driven trends in his youth to online shopping and AI-assisted decision-making.

Key findings include:

- Early consumer behavior was heavily influenced by trends, peer pressure, and television advertising.
- Family and children became central to purchasing decisions during adulthood, shaping priorities and spending patterns.
- Technological advances, particularly online shopping and AI tools, have simplified purchases and made [Subject A] more discerning.
- Societal and economic events, such as recessions, wars, and cultural movements, have shaped attitudes toward consumption.
- Contemporary consumers, including [Subject A], show greater awareness of environmental and ethical considerations in buying behavior.

Information presented in this report has been collected strictly from one source; qualitative research regarding [Subject A]’s “consumer habits”.

This report has been prepared for submission as a semester-long project for MKTG 4770-115, Consumer Research, at Western Michigan University.

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1. Introduction

[Subject A], my neighbor from two doors down, is a 68-year-old man whose life offers a unique perspective on how consumer habits have changed over time. A functioning alcoholic who struggles with loneliness, [Subject A]'s candid, unfiltered reflections provide a unique insight into how his own, as well as societal consumer behavior has shifted over time. It is important to note that [Subject A] had already consumed alcohol prior to the home interview, because of this, I held off on asking [Subject A] several questions, specifically surrounding his life when he was married with children, as I wanted to avoid upsetting him with specific memory retrieval.

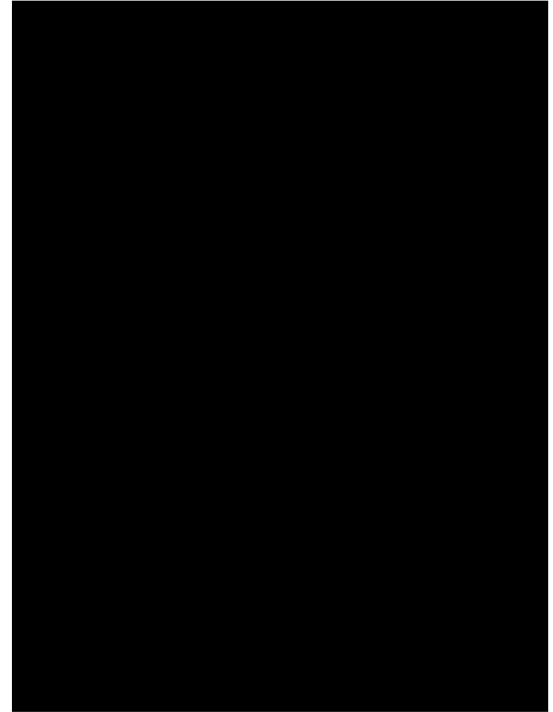


Figure 1: [Subject A] & Andy at grocery store

1.1 Methodology

This report is based on a semi-structured interview with [Subject A] in his home, supplemented by observations of his shopping habits and real-time examples of purchases, as viewed through my own observations in the field [Grocery Store]. The focus was on exploring his experiences and insights into consumer behavior, in addition to his own shopping habits, over the course of his lifetime.

1.2 Scope of the Report

The report examines [Subject A]'s changing consumer habits and situates them within broader societal trends, including cultural shifts, technological advances, and economic events. It highlights lessons about generational changes in consumption while remaining grounded in [Subject A]'s personal experiences.

2. Thematic Analysis

2.1 Personal History, Identity, and Career Disillusionment

[Subject A]’s consumer behavior cannot be separated from his rich personal history, which he so often delves into. He describes himself as a “lonely single happy sort of guy”, having transitioned from a “somebody” to “gleefully a nobody.” His professional journey spanned aspirations in baseball, religious work, and a long political career before retiring due to disillusionment: politics became “so goddamn ugly and punitive and hateful.” Retirement left to a quieter life, marked by both contentment and underlying nostalgia.

2.2 Evolution of Consumer Behavior and Marketing Principles

[Subject A]’s insights tie classic marketing rules to personal experience: “get the kids”, as he says children drive purchases by influencing their parents. Reflecting on his childhood, [Subject A] recalls TV’s large role as a purchasing driver: “TV drove things, you just had to have it.” Today, he sees a major shift: computer and AI now drive consumer habits, and according to him, marketers rely more on creating anxiety (“fear is the best marketer”); people are compelled to buy solutions to manufactured anxieties. He isn’t wrong, and in fact, perfectly encapsulates a topic spoken about in our class lectures – manufactured ideal states crafted to sell a product.

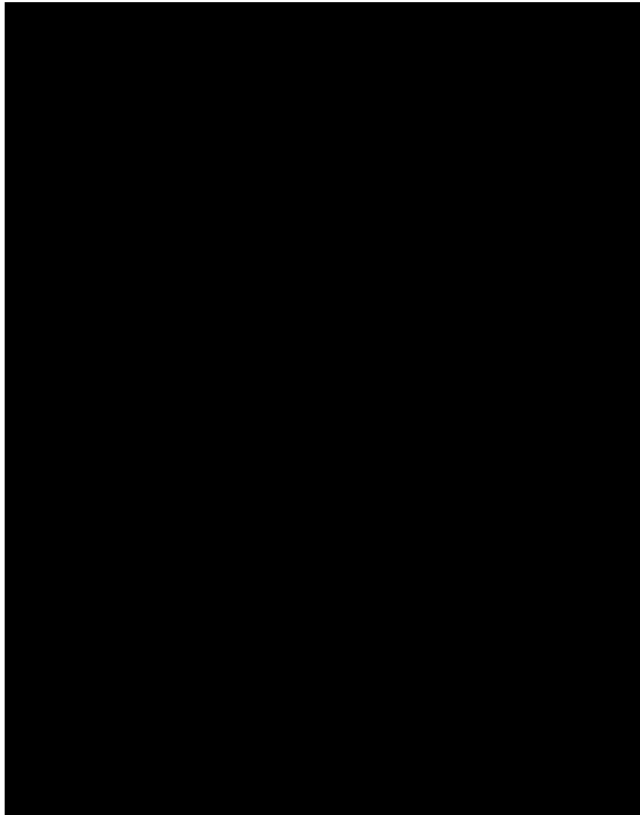


Figure 2: Notes from Home Interview

2.3 The Changing Shopping Experience (Social vs. Transactional)

[Subject A]’s consumer journey moved from social enjoyment to efficiency (a pattern frequently seen in male consumers as they age). His job at the party store represented a period of personal connection: “I love the regulars... something I miss.” Field notes echo this, with [Subject A]’s preference for small, local grocers [Grocery Store] where he “knew everyone.” Nowadays, he minimizes times and interaction – “I go in, get the f***** thing you want and get the f*** out as fast as you can.” – describing himself as a “simple minimalist guy.” He laments the loss of “the same faces,” reflecting broader cultural change: shopping is less social, more transactional.

2.4 Influence of Technology (AI and Internet) on Modern Purchasing

Technology has deeply shaped [Subject A]’s current habits. He shops online, especially on Amazon, drawn by “point and click ease.” AI acts as an “amazing tool,” enabling what he says are more discerning choices, easy price comparisons, and efficiency. Despite its benefits, [Subject A] remains critical: he rejects gadgets (“not a gadget guy, no watches”) and hasn’t worn a watch in two decades, questioning tech’s utility beyond essentials.

2.5 Impact of Family and Generational Shifts on Consumption

Having children changed [Subject A]’s shopping priorities, as well as his life priorities: “once you have kids, everything changes.” Groceries, sports gear, and clothing for the family took priority in his household. The advent of smartphones fundamentally changed consuming for younger generations, as he says, kids “got hooked,” always looking for what they “got to have.” [Subject A] discusses generational labels, like Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, Gen Z, calling attention to both the shared experiences of consumption, as well as the diverging paths as time goes on.

2.6 Influence of Major Historical and Economic Events

[Subject A]’s worldview is formed by living through numerous national crises which he references often throughout the interview: the assassination of JFK, (which stands out as an iconic memory to him), MLK, and Bobby; Vietnam; Watergate; Challenger; and 9/11. He discusses periods of economic distress, like the tech bubble, the late 70s and 80s recessions, high inflation, and 2008’s collapse. He contrasts these with the post-WWII boom, which he refers to as a period of national prosperity fueling consumer culture. These experiences inform his cautious approach to spending, reinforced by the many years of volatility.

2.7 Intergenerational Frugality and Great Depression

[Subject A]’s father, a truck driver and WWII veteran, was marked by the poverty and frugality of his era. [Subject A] recalls being admonished to “turn out the f**** lights,” contributing to his “frugal conditioning” he learned from his Depression-survivor father. His view is also filled by the realities of today, particularly in our own neighborhood, although he has lived through moments of hardship, he soberly observes, “I’ve never seen it as bad as I have now.” Despite earlier eras of scarcity, [Subject A] is deeply concerned about worsening inequality, witnessing the struggles facing local families. In his view, how, and why we consume now has greater consequence than ever.

2.8 Conscientious Consumption and Societal Concerns

[Subject A] observed a large shift toward moral and ecological awareness in consumer culture: “People are more conscientious about their purchasing, and concern for the planet.” [Subject A] worries over unsustainable consumption, claiming “we can really f**** things up.” He sees growing public concern about air, water, and the effects of unchecked spending, alongside the above-mentioned social hardship, specifically mentioning the homelessness: “the people in the park you know, you hear them at night”.

2.9 Discretionary and Intuitive Purchases (Artwork)

Despite his tendency toward restraint from emotion-based purchases, he does happen to indulge from time to time, most recently, a Marilyn Monroe canvas he bought online, which also happened to arrive via UPS during the interview. He chose it for its aesthetic appeal and subject matter, describing it as “beautiful, sexy,” and admiring Monroe’s intelligence. Retirement has allowed [Subject A] to make more of these impulse purchases, “letting loose some of that stuff” he’d previously avoided, now buying “what I like, what I really want.”

3. Field Observations: Shopping Habits in Practice

About a week after our initial interview, I accompanied [Subject A] to [Grocery Store], the local neighborhood grocery store he mentioned was one of his favorites. The close-knit appeal of the store was immediately shown, with the owner or manager greeting [Subject A] by name as soon as we entered, welcoming him warmly.

Rather than opting for a cart, [Subject A] chose a basket, reflecting his preference for smaller, more frequent shopping trips, typically around three times per week, in contrast to the bulk-buying habits of many consumers. He started in the produce section, deciding to forgo a shopping list and relying instead on habit and impulse. [Subject A]’s selections are guided by a preference for organic items and quality over quantity, with minimal regard for price. For example, he picked 2 organic tomatoes in a plastic claw box and moved through the aisles at a brisk pace. Passing through the cleaning supplies, [Subject A] selected a small box of Puff’s tissue paper - “Kleenex,” as he called it,

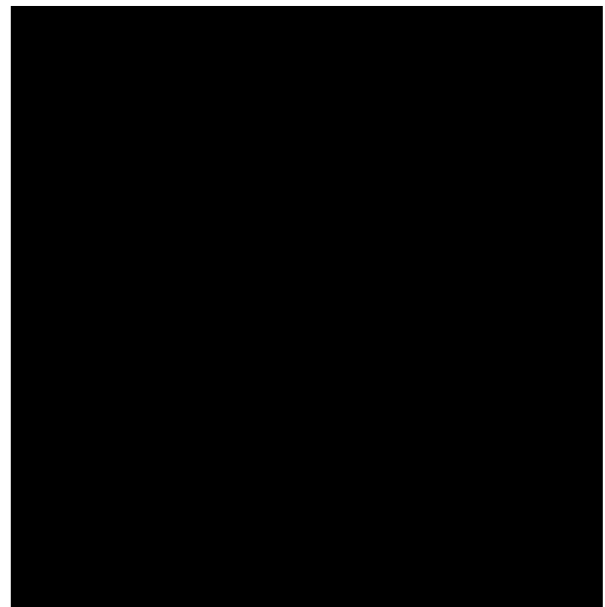


Figure 3: Grocery Trip Field Notes

referencing the color of the box as his sole reason for this choice. He wasted little time browsing the shelves, moving directly to each item with intent to purchase.

In the refrigerated section, [Subject A] paused at the bacon, opening doors and examining various options to find a thick-cut variety. When I asked why he chose Smithfield bacon, he explained simply, “I like Smithfield; their bacon is good.” This aligns with his broader approach: he prioritizes protein, mentions that he avoids chicken, and prefers brands that have earned his trust over time.

With three items, organic tomatoes, Puff’s tissue paper, and Smithfield thick-cut bacon, [Subject A] next sought out pork tenderloin. Rather than read signage or seeking assistance, he wandered the aisles independently. When no tenderloin was found, he selected ribeye steaks, referencing their taste, and versatility for multiple meals (dinner and next-day sandwiches).

At checkout, [Subject A] paid by credit card and used plastic bags. Returning to his home, his fridge showed a small selection: a few packages of lunchmeat, some bread, condiments like mayo and mustard, and a notable selection of limes and garnishes, (assuming he uses them in drinks) but very little in the way of fresh fruit or vegetables.

4. Discussion

This research combined two approaches: the first being an open-ended, qualitative interview conducted in [Subject A]’s home, and direct observation of his shopping behavior during a visit to [Grocery Store]. Together, these methods revealed how personal history, social context, and real-time choices interact to shape consumer habits.

4.1 Interview Insights

The home interview provided deep context for [Subject A]’s consumer behavior. Through only a few open-ended questions, [Subject A] described how his father’s frugality and the hardships of earlier decades shaped his own approach to spending: buying only what is necessary, avoiding excess, and focusing on practicality. He shared candid reflections on technology’s rise, mentioning how today’s consumer environment is driven by online platforms and advertising but emphasizing that his core values; discipline, skepticism about luxury, and trust in established brands, remain unchanged.

[Subject A] discussed generational shifts, family influence, and the loss of social connections in shopping, all contributing to the way he defines what and how he buys. His opinions on poverty and environmental responsibility surfaced as central motivations behind his caution and selective buying. These perspectives, gathered through qualitative questioning, helped clarify why these habits are so intentional.

4.2 Field Observations

The in-store field observation confirmed and extended these findings. [Subject A] demonstrated a practical, minimalist approach to shopping, ignoring shopping lists and focusing on organic produce, trusted brands, and rich protein foods. His visits are frequent and brief; he engages with local staff but shops alone, rarely browsing or comparing prices.

The observation also showed that habit and personal relationships influence purchasing. [Subject A] went directly to familiar items, explained choices simply (“I like Smithfield; their bacon is good”), and interacted naturally with store employees, reflecting the community connections discussed in the interview. His refusal to ask for help, reliance on gut decisions, and use of credit cards and plastic bags mirror his earlier statements about independence, efficiency, and adaptation to modern retail norms.

4.3 Synthesis and Reflection

By pairing open-ended qualitative research with direct field observation, this research captured both the rationale and the reality of [Subject A]’s consumption. The interview detailed his values and history, highlighting why he shops as he does. Fieldwork confirmed those principles in action, revealing a shopper who combines caution, brand recognition, brand loyalty, and purposeful simplicity.

[Subject A]’s experience underscores the complexity of consumer behavior, his background, beliefs, and current environment work together to form shopping habits. Observing [Subject A] in both his personal environment and the retail space allowed a complete view: values drive choices, and choices reinforce values.

Overall, this study shows that a mixed-methods approach, combining at-home conversation with practical observation - provides a thorough understanding of consumer habits. Personal and situational factors are equally important, and only by observing both can marketers truly understand why and how older adults make decisions in today’s consumer landscape.

5. Appendix

5.1 Annotation Legend

Color	Theme
Yellow	Personal History & Identity
Blue	Generational Influence & Family Legacy
Green	Evolution of Consumer Habits & Marketing
Purple	Technology's Influence & Online Shopping
Red	Economic Events & Societal Concerns
Gray	Ethics, Environmental Awareness

5.2 Transcript

[Subject A]: Yeah. So, do we start with a question or what are we doing there?

Andy Goheen: Yeah. So, I want to first start it off; by giving me a brief introduction about yourself so I can get a sense of your lifestyle.

[Subject A]: Yeah. Yeah.

Andy Goheen: Yeah. So, just your elevator pitch, right?

[Subject A]: My elevator pitch. I'm a lonely single, happy sort of guy right now who's.. I don't know. I'm just going... I'm being authentic. So, I'm single, my wife and kids, they hate me. They dump me in the trash, in the garbage. I still love them. However, they're going to come back to me at some point. Then there's my mate [Redacted] over there. She also dumped me in the garbage.

[Subject A]: I'm just saying some s***, right? I'm just going free. I'm just going free will, brother.

Andy Goheen: Yep.

[Subject A]: You know... so all right. Now, why now? There it is. So, I used to be a somebody I'm just gleefully a nobody and you know I buy a lot of s***. I live in this beautiful house. I'm supposed to be here. What else do you want to know? So, so um a long career, long life. I did a lot of things. I thought I was going to be a baseball player and then thought I was going to be a priest, and I worked for the church. I worked for the Vatican Dioses in Grand Rapids. I did that for a while and I got into politics, you know, JFK, blah blah blah blah blah. Shorten it up for you brother. So went into politics and had a long career in politics. Yeah. And um ran... ran... ran s*** here for a long time. I'm proud of my record of things I did. Uh kind of, you know, it was a

dream come true. Then I got really sick of it because it got so goddamn ugly and... and punitive, and hateful... and I finally gave it the double birds up. F*** you people. I'm out of here. I'm going to go do my own thing. And I've been doing my own thing ever since, retired for 10 years and I'm all right. I'm actually better than all right, but you know, like everybody, I'm still working through my issues.

Andy Goheen: I hear you. So, let's narrow it down here.

[Subject A]: Yeah, let's... let's narrow it down for some marketability.

Andy Goheen: That was that was great. So, over the course of your life, right, you've seen a lot of things change in purchasing and buying behavior. How have you seen consuming change for you?

[Subject A]: How have I seen consuming change for... for me?

Andy Goheen: Mhm.

[Subject A]: Well, you know, when I think, you know, the basics of marketing are to get the kids, you know, sell the s*** to the kids. The kids will drive their parents nuts until they buy the s*** for them. All right. So, you know, so back in that day, you know, I wanted this truck or that, you know, we played army. I... you know, I grew up, you know, nowadays in my... my buying habits, you know, TV drove things. Okay, if you saw it on the TV, you had to have it. Um, now that's been replaced by computers and AI. Um, that's... that's something I would say that I've observed, and I use. I buy a lot of stuff online. I go to... I go to Meijer for most of my food. And um, if I buy clothes... I'm pretty simple... minimalist guy you know I don't buy a lot of fancy dancy s*** even when I was a somebody wearing suits, you know? I really didn't like I mean, I liked wearing suits and I liked looking important, but rather just be in a pair of jeans and paint stains all over my hand.

Andy Goheen: Love it. So, going back to when you were younger and you said that TV drove things.

[Subject A]: Yeah.

Andy Goheen: Do you have any specific examples? I know you mentioned that uh... you saw the truck, and you knew you just had to have it. Was there any purchases you made that you felt were driven by TV specifically.

[Subject A]: So, now you're asking me about my purchases.

Andy Goheen: Mhm.

[Subject A]: Um... because until I started earning my own money, you know, I was... you know, my dad and I used to go to the grocery store together and I... I remember those days very well, you know, and my dad was a truck driver. He didn't make a lot of money. He was a very

courageous man. He, you know, you know... had a lot of health problems and you know, I wanted this, or I wanted that, you know, but now you're talking about my purchases. So, I do most of my buying online and Amazon being number one because I can go there point and click, and get exactly what I want.

Andy Goheen: But when you were younger...

[Subject A]: But when I was younger, it all had to do with... so how young you want, how far where do you want me to go? You want to go in my 20s and my teens?

Andy Goheen: That's about when you probably started making like purchases on your own.

[Subject A]: Yeah. I mean, I started working when I was in college and I had this really cool job at a party store. I learned a lot of stuff, people, retailing and marketing and all. Anyway, you know, my purchases were all about what the going trends were. You know, I wanted... I wanted a certain kind of clothing or a certain kind of you know... that was trendy and, you know, and you'd go to the store. You go to, you'd go to the store, go to the retail outlets. And then that's all changed. I don't... I, and for me I don't buy much you know, I go in get the f***** thing you want and get the f*** out as fast as you can. The women, God love them. They want to go in and... right. I say get, you know, make one trip to the Emerald City, right, Portage? One f***** trip to the Emerald City. Get what the f*** I want and get the f*** out as fast as I can.

Andy Goheen: Love it. So you've seen a lot change?

[Subject A]: This AI business right now is really fascinating. Everything is always good and bad. It doesn't make any sense to curse the darkness. It's here... here. It's a tool and it is an amazing tool. Um, so keep asking. So...

Andy Goheen: So you said you worked at a party store, was it?

[Subject A]: Yeah. Yeah.

Andy Goheen: You saw a lot of people making purchases. Now, how different was it? From that period to when you got a little bit older, just a little bit older, 40s, 30s. The whole shopping experience?

[Subject A]: What I loved about the party store was the people, the regulars that would come in. Uh, we've lost a lot of that. Okay. The regulars that would come in, you know, because we had a little bit, you know, beer and liquor and some food and this and that, and my girlfriend's parents owned the store and uh... you get to know people and then, you know, like I just learned a lot about myself and a lot about people. One thing that was really cool is learning how to make change. Have you ever worked in a part? Have you ever had to make change without...?

Andy Goheen: Yeah.

[Subject A]: A simple thing, but most can't even make change. I loved that job. That was, that was one of my all-time favorite jobs because it was just so... you know, the people, you know, and we'd close out, the you close out the night and have to, you know, run the tape on the machine to make sure it balanced and, you know, and the rule of thumb was you can get any, you know, while you're making it count, you know, go get yourself a beer from the from the cooler, you know, and I sample a lot of different beers. F***** a Yeah. And got drunk on some serious ass stuff in the 70s, you know, like Boon's Farm and that s*** and crap, and you do s*** to your body and... that was a great... that was a great job, man. And the people - But the people coming in... like for example people -- if I'm blathering too much... So I was born in 1956, okay? And I remember my doctor, Dr. Scoffer, he was an alcoholic. He'd come in every night. He was sad. The man, you know, and doctors have... they don't... they got a... they got a difficult life. They don't have an easy job. And come in and look on this man with like... man, he used to make house calls. The history, everything is so different now. And I'm not... I'm just like, we've lost a lot of... We've gained a lot, but we lost a lot. So um, and people are just they're looking for, you know... life ain't easy, you know. So, they're looking for, you know, a little lovin' here a little glass of wine there, maybe a lot of beer here, and, you know, just some great stories. The people I remember... the people, there was this cook at one of the restaurants - Frank. And they had just introduced the instant lottery at that time, right? And he kept playing 222 and it came up, and he won 10. I sold him the ticket. 10 grand. He won. And and three nights later that f***** number came up again. And I called him, and I called him. I said, LeBron, his name was LeBron. No, it was Levin McDonald. I said Levin. I got a sharp memory brother. I got a... I guess that's why I did good in politics. I need to f***** remember s***. And I said, "Levin, it came up again. Did you f***** play it?" He said, "No, I didn't get a chance." I said, "Well, you're out 10 grand, buddy. You missed out. You missed out. You missed out, Levin. But hey, I can tell you stories when the boats come in. The ore boats. Oh, s***. Cuz I was up in Holland, right? Okay. So, have you ever been up in Holland? Okay. So, those aren't ore boats cuz... but the, but the cement and coal and aggregate would come in, and the freighters would come in right, and they'd dump their loads off, you know, you know, like the Fitzgerald was a... was a... was an ore boat. Uh, but when those guys would come in when, when one of those boats would dock and those m***** had been out on the... out there all by themselves with just a bunch of f***** men, right? on a f***** , you know, and they would come in and they would buy booze by the f***** gallons. And I'm sure there were shore girls, you know, but that's a whole... I don't know. I just learned a lot about people life. So what's next?

Andy Goheen: So that gives me some amazing insight. I appreciate it. Now, how did that change the older you got? That kind of shopping behavior you witnessed or even the shopping behavior that you portrayed yourself.

[Subject A]: Well, once you have a family, once you have kids, everything changes. Now what you're doing is shopping for clothes, for the kids for school, you know, sports or, you know, so everything centers around the kids. And then there's the food. There's the whole food thing,

right? And then the kids get hooked on, you know, the goddamn, you know, they hook kids on s***** crap. you know, and trying to get your kids to eat the right stuff. It's just, you know, and then of course then with the... with the, once the phones came, you know, the smartphones. So my son was born 87, excuse me, was born 97, my daughter was born in 2000. Once the smartphone came along, it was like handing out speeding tickets to the Indianapolis 500. They got the phone. They got the thing they got to have, and they got to have that. That's been bad but that's the way it goes because the kids drive so much of it. That's why everything's so designed to get the kids.

Andy Goheen: So that kind of comes back to what you were saying very early on there, like you were telling me the basic understanding of consumer behavior and marketing was like, get the kids, get the kids.

Andy Goheen: Does that kind of follow?

[Subject A]: Yeah, get the kids. Get the kids.

[Subject A]: Get the kids. And you got the parents.

Andy Goheen: Mhm.

[Subject A]: Now, I mean, if you're at... if you're in business and you've got a certain niche market of thing, you're going to market a certain way, but asking general questions of me Um, you want to sell a lot of s***, food, get the kids. Just get the kids. And what was another point I was going to make? Um, oh, always fear is the best marketer. Make people afraid. Make people afraid. Tell them f***** Earth's going to end and here's the solution and they'll make a... world will make a beaten p... You know that you know that quote from Henry David Thoreau... If a man can build a better mouse trap, you know that quote, right? A man can build a better mouse trap or yada yada yada. Even if he built his house in the woods, the world would make a beaten path to his door. One of the transcendentalists... people will fly to a good idea. Um, they will. And that's still true. But fear, you know, fear, fear, fear, fear is a bad motive for anything.

Andy Goheen: That's good. I like that. Going back to like your time as a as someone who was making money, right? Let's say out of your job at the uh after the party store. How do you think your own purchasing behavior looked like.

[Subject A]: I was always very... You know, when I was in my career, I like to look nice. my clothes. I wanted nice suits. Uh, nice shoes, nice suits. Um, again, you know, I was always kind of... I wouldn't like run out and buy latest thing. Never been like that, you know. Um the latest not a gad- I don't buy gadgets. I don't gadgets. I'm not a gadget buyer. Um I don't wear a wristwatch. I haven't worn a wristwatch in 20 years. What's the f***** point of that? Everybody always knows what the f***** time it is. So why the f*** you got to wear a goddamn wristwatch to tell you? And then you begin getting when you, once you retire, you're like, what day is it and what f***** time is it? And what the f*** does it really matter? It

doesn't f***** matter at all, cuz it's all the same goddamn time. and then you begin to... so maybe I'm getting far afield but you know, I don't... like I get on, you know, I get on in the morning, I get on, and I scour the news from every f***** angle I can think to scour it. Most of it is complete and utter garbage, and it's essentially just for points and clicks to sell s***. You know, like my computer, I boot it up and there's a whole bunch of garbage about stuff and it's all to get you to click and then see the ads, and blah... where was I going with this? So, I've never been a follower. I have never been a... you know, like part of the group. I was like, "No, I don't want to do that." So, where am I going with this... I, you know, I, you know, I'm more discerning about what I buy and where I buy it from and the price I pay for it thanks to AI. y'know, It' just a tool.

Andy Goheen: Before AI came out, do you think you were... like you say you didn't have a watch? Was there a period in your life when you did?

[Subject A]: Oh, yeah.

Andy Goheen: Yeah. And you would have been more predetermined to make purchases that might not have been the best deal or didn't come from the best place, but it was like you had to have it, or you wanted it.

[Subject A]: You know, the thing about now is you can compare easily prices and things and what it is, but that wasn't what you asked me. You need to ask me how is your shopping behavior changed over the course of your life?

[Subject A]: Well... *sees our neighbor* She is a sweetheart. Do you know her?

Andy Goheen: I do not.

[Subject A]: Yeah. Her dog, her name's Gretchen. She's classically trained. She's got the little... She's got a little dachshund named Tony. That dog. Anyway, uh I only buy what I need now. With the exception of things that I like, or I really want. Whereas before, like you know, you know, yeah, like I didn't spend \$150 on a baseball bat and a helmet to go out and hit them, right? But I'm... I get to be a little kid again. I can, you know, so I'm letting loose some of that stuff cuz you get all frugal and everything, you know. I'm very, you know... keep asking.

Andy Goheen: Would you say the meaning of purchasing and consuming has changed as you've aged? Going off what you've been telling me.

[Subject A]: Um, well, you know the concept of consumption.. We have - we do consume things and we have to consume things. And then the question is all that consumption what are we doing... and what does it mean for earth and what does it mean for humanity, and I think people are... what do I know? I think people are more conscientious about consumption. I think that's something that's changed quite a bit.

Andy Goheen: Can you go a little deeper in that?

[Subject A]: Well, yeah. I mean, I think that I've seen a lot of... in, in the collective, collective consciousness. I think people are generally concerned about the air and the water and the stuff. And I think there's a there's a there's a growing realization, and un- unrest, you know, we can just, we can really f*** things up. And I think people want to not f*** things up, but they also don't have a lot of f***** choices. Now, out here, you know... I see a lot of things because back in my day I worked with homeless people and addicts and a lot of people on the street and stuff, and I've never seen it so bad for so many people. Just trying to survive people in the park you know, you hear them at night, and the sirens, I've never it... this is the worst I've ever, ever seen. Now there are the people that you know, race through and don't give a s***. But I see a lot of people that actually give a s***. You know what I'm saying? Like, like, the jack rods that go up and down here on their bikes and you got to have it f***** loud and everything fast as they can go and blah blah blah. And yet I turn around, I look, and I see people being kind to other people, caring for other people. I think I'm trying to answer your question, but I'm free associating. I see a lot of good things amid all the crap. I see a lot of young people making decent livings. And it says a lot for the future. I just see a lot of really good things. I see most I see mostly good things coming. Yeah, I do like... I just pay attention to people, you know. I mean, we have to- have growth, you have to, have jobs, but we... it can also be done in a way that we don't have to destroy things.

Andy Goheen: Do you think that's a new approach? People are thinking more about being more conscientious?

[Subject A]: I think it's I think it is. I... I think it's been seeded for a while, but it's really starting to I think it's starting to hook on to people. Um, they look around, and they see certain things, and they know they know something's wrong.

Andy Goheen: And that changes purchasing habits.

[Subject A]: Well, it can... it all depends on the person, you know. It can- it can change. It does.

Andy Goheen: Can you give me some examples of economic political events that you think have to do with these switches and changes? Like uh, think of inflation or uh... recessions, things like that.

[Subject A]: I can. The thing is, how old are you again?

Andy Goheen: 21.

[Subject A]: So, you're born in... f***** 21... I want to be 21 again. So, you're born in 20... 2002, 2003 2004... The reason I ask that is because there's different generations at play here. Are you Gen Z? What's the Gen... Gen X and Gen Z? I never know, what the f*** is the...

Andy Goheen: I'm Gen Z. My dad is a Gen X and between the two are millennials.

[Subject A]: So, I'm a boomer. Um, it's hard to emphasize to people. My parents used to talk about *the war*, World War II, and about Roosevelt. And I was born 11 years after the end of World War II. So, I was close to it, but it didn't go through it.

[Subject A]: And they would tell me these stories, and I would listen to them, and they made sense to me, but I couldn't identify with them because I didn't live them. Like when Roosevelt died. When Rose... because Roosevelt was elected to four terms and he got us through the Great Depression and he got us through the war, and then he died and they talked about that, and how devastating it was for the country. Well then, you know, in my own experience, when JFK was assassinated, he was on the same the quesas that rolled through was the same quesas that Roosevelt was on. I can't explain to people the mark that that made on my life at the age of seven years old to live that experience, of watching this man who was a very good man be assassinated. What's my point? My point is so... there are a lot of events. So in my life, you know, Kennedy's assassinated, King's assassinated, Bobby's assassinated, we got Vietnam, um, we got Watergate, we got we, got all kinds of stuff goes on. We got the moon landings. We got all this stuff that went on, you know, then the Challenger accident in '86. Then you have 911. You have um, all throughout the 60s and the 70s and the 80s and the 90s, there's all these events, these major events that, that people didn't experience. The riots in LA and so... it's an interesting mix because people like me who've been through all of it... to a point. I mean, there's, you know, and then we have all these new people, nobody knows what the hell happened before. And so, you know, we had the recession of... so so, we went through the tech bubble in in the 80s. So in the 80s we had a big recession. Well we had f*****, had recessions in the late 70s. We had them again in the 80s. Uh, we had inflation off the charts, and I mean really seriously off the charts in the late 70s. with the collapse of 08'. Um yeah!! All those things. Um all of those things have had an impact.

Andy Goheen: Especially interested in um you talk about like your parents referencing World War II as the war.

[Subject A]: Yeah

Andy Goheen: That's crazy. long time ago.

Andy Goheen: Do you think that their own personal influences from the war rubbed off on you and your purchasing behavior?

[Subject A]: Yeah, sure. Sure did. You know, the war from September 1st of 1939 till of course the Japanese and Chinese were engaged there, you know some arguments would suggest that World War II started in 31' when Japan invaded China. But between 1939 and 1945, there were 80 million less people walking on planet Earth. Hey, there were 20 million Russians alone... obliterated. The carnage... there's nothing ever been anything like it. And we talk about it in the history books. My father left for... the bootcamp...

At this point a UPS truck arrives and delivers a package to [Subject A]

[Subject A]: Hey, good. Is that the one I'm looking for? I'm your huckleberry!!!! Plus a trainee!! Oh my god!!!!

UPS Man: He's my supervisor, actually.

UPS Man: Have a good one.

[Subject A]: You too, brother.

Andy Goheen: So, [Subject A], we got to talk about the elephant in the room, man- you just ordered a package, and as I'm doing the interview, a UPS truck comes and drops a package off on your porch.

[Subject A]: Should we open it up?

Andy Goheen: Heck yeah.

[Subject A]: Well, take it, cuz this is your video. This is your f***** video. We don't have to go anywhere.

Andy Goheen: Yeah, this is great.

[Subject A]: Yeah. But you know, there were 20 million Russians, you know, people have no f***** idea. Let me go get a proper...

Andy Goheen: Let me do it, I have a box cutter.

[Subject A]: Don't cut my dick off with it. At least it's still functional, but I don't get to use it any places.

Andy Goheen: Oh, you crack me up.

[Subject A]: I don't know what the f*** this is. All right. What the f*** is this? Oh?

Andy Goheen: some artwork.

[Subject A]: It's my artwork.

Andy Goheen: So, do you like to purchase artwork online?

[Subject A]: Yes, sir

[Subject A]: Look at this. Oh, brother.

Andy Goheen: Oh, is this Marilyn Monroe?

[Subject A]: Yeah, I got two Marilyn Monroe's coming.

Andy Goheen: Nice. Yes.

[Subject A]: She was actually a spy. Did you know that?

Andy Goheen: Really?

[Subject A]: Yeah, she was... here.

Andy Goheen: For who?

[Subject A]: The good guys.

Andy Goheen: Oh, yeah.

[Subject A]: Yeah.

Andy Goheen: That makes sense.

[Subject A]: She's still alive.

Andy Goheen: Really? How old is she?

[Subject A]: Uh, she got to be in her 80s, 90s.

[Subject A]: Yeah, she's still alive.

[Subject A]: There we are. Look at that. Everybody knew she was sex symbol, right?

Andy Goheen: Mhm.

[Subject A]: Very intelligent woman.

Andy Goheen: Got it.

[Subject A]: Very intelligent woman.

[Subject A]: Anyway, yeah, sweet. Two of these m*****. Two of them.

Andy Goheen: So, talk to me about it. This looks amazing, dude.

[Subject A]: This is going to go up.

Andy Goheen: What made you want to purchase this online rather than like? You could have gone to a store to do it?

[Subject A]: Well, you know, I do a lot of intuitive things. Um, look at that...

Andy Goheen: It's beautiful.

[Subject A]: Look at her. She's beautiful. Sexy, beautiful woman. But she's reading books, isn't she?

[Subject A]: And everybody, you know, all her, but look at her. I know a little bit about her. I do. So there you go. There's my there there's your there's your there it is.

Andy Goheen: We'll probably still need to go to the store, though.

[Subject A]: Oh, we can do that.

Andy Goheen: Yeah. So, this is great. This is neat to see this.

[Subject A]: (Talking about Amazon) What I really do need is a belt, an elastic belt because my waistline is pretty much the same as it's always been. I just got a little extra hanging over the belt area, and I don't want my f***** pants falling down to my ankles. Okay. And so that's the thing I need now. But I have more things to do in the house... I love that woman. Yeah, she didn't die. She went into witness protection. Marilyn, now the one of her on the toilet's going to go up in my y'know. But that one's going in the living room. Marilyn Monroe. You ever seen any Marilyn Monroe films?

Andy Goheen: I have not. There was a point in time where she was I mean... she always was super popular. What do you think brought that on and people loving Marilyn Monroe so much that point in time? That was after World War II, right?

[Subject A]: Yeah. The um So after World War II, the country experienced a boom, an economic boom, a cultural boom. Everything changed from what it had been before.

Andy Goheen: Were people purchasing more, you think?

[Subject A]: Yeah, people. So during the depression, during the Great Depression, you know, you know, money's scarce. People are just trying to survive. Um, but then over time and especially with the war, the economy began to boom. And uh, so that's when you had the whole... like in race relations, Civil Rights Act, the separate but equal was struck down. Um, um, the country went through a rebirth, and we were doing very well. It was our it was our boom because all the other economies of the world were actually destroyed... except for the USA.

Andy Goheen: I think that's maybe what brought on like the age of like people that were called hippies.

[Subject A]: Oh, it did.

[Subject A]: Yeah. Now, that was a whole other backlash because by that time those were the sons and daughters of people like my parents. Now, I wasn't of... I wasn't old enough. The hippie movement had about five years on me, but we got involved in Vietnam and it was another goddamn war for no goddamn purpose.

Andy Goheen: Did that have a big influence on your consumer behavior, your shopping habits?

[Subject A]: Uh, I wasn't really buying s***. I wasn't really buying s*** till the mid early. I mean, I didn't have a full-time job.

Andy Goheen: How old were you then at the time when the Vietnam War? Were you eligible for the draft?

[Subject A]: I was eligible to win the draft and I- I- I registered for the draft and never got called. Yeah. Thank you, Jesus. Yeah. never got called.

Andrew Goheen: Were you scared?

[Subject A]: I wasn't really... I would have been had I been drafted. Um, but I wasn't really thinking about it that much, I almost enlisted on my own really. And then I'm like, "Nah. And I had I had an overture from uh... I worked for an engineering firm, and we managed uh projects for General Motors. One of them was a big retooling project... um, Rochester products. It's up in GR on 36th Street. I was married the first time. Um, I managed a, uh, I managed the project there and my boss contacted GM, who's former naval intelligence and he made overtures to me said you know you... could, you could do naval intelligence if you wanted to. Would you like to do that? And of course, I was 30 and I didn't want to kill people. I was like... "Thanks, but no, thanks." So, I never went. My dad did.

Andy Goheen: Yeah. Talking about Dad, early on you said that he was a firefighter, and you spoke of him as being very courageous, and you guys would go shopping together...

[Subject A]: So he was a... Well he wasn't a firefighter in the sense that he was a firefighter, he was, he had been a trucker all his life, then the army drafted in him 42', at the age of 27, and they sent him to learn tank warfare in Fort Hood in Texas, but because of his age and his experience, they ...[unintelligible], he was driving trucks in and out of Chicago, Al Capone Chicago in the thirties, and he kept a .38 in his glove box. So when the Japanese bombed pearl harbor in 41', my mom and dad got married in May of 42', and a few months later they took him, and a few months later they shipped him out, all the way to England. Where they prepared for the invasion, the invasion of Utah... So my dad was uh... Did a lot of damage to a lot of things, killed the Nazis by the dozens.

Andy Goheen: So shopping with a guy like this in the store... what was that like?

[Subject A]: When I was... I watched my dad break up a fight with a bunch of goddamn bikers trying to beat the f*** out of my Uncle Richie. My father wasn't fazed by anything, and he was no... I mean he was my height. So what was it like? Well, you know, poor man, you know, you know, he didn't make a lot of money, and he was worried about the, you know, heat and lights and he had health problems and, and so, you know, he was kind of not really, you know... "g whiz, dad, I want that truck", you know, and, "we can't afford that". Um, so it's to this day, I'll go around the house, and I say, [Subject A], turn out the f***** lights. Shut the f***** refrigerator door. cuz that's my dad's voice in my head all the time. And I go, "Well, f***. I got enough money. If I want to leave the f***** light on, I'm going to leave the goddamn f***** light on. f*** that s***." So, in that sense, you know, but that generation that went through that, the Great Depression, people don't understand. People starved to death. It was awful. And there's been nothing like it in our history, and I don't believe there'll ever be anything like it in our

history in the future. But it was pretty bad. Very bad. And uh, what we're going through now is from an economic point of view is nothing compared to that.

Andy Goheen: I'm going to be honest. You gave me some amazing insight. You've been able to share a lot with me. And I think this interview is concluded.

[Subject A]: I think it is. I think it is.