5   *Gail Jefferson*

On "Trouble-Premonitory" Response to Inquiry

A study of how people talk about their troubles[1] is yielding, as a recurrent and central feature of such talk, a tension between attending to the "trouble" and attending to the "business as usual." Participants to a conversation in which troubles are reported are engaged in proposing that some event or situation is both a problematic departure from the course of ordinary events that warrants special treatment and is manageable in such a way that it need not drastically interfere with their familiar, everyday activities. This paper focuses on one device in which this dual aspect of "troubles-talk" is present: the "trouble-premonitory" response to inquiry.

Two fragments of conversation are shown below in which inquiries are followed by versions of "Oh pretty good," which are themselves followed by reports on troubles:

   (1) [TCI(b):9:1:SO] ((Initial turns
      unrecorded; Bob is caller))

Bob: → [How are you] feeling now.
Jayne: → Oh::? pretty good I
        gue::ss::
Bob: Not so hot?

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                        (0.8)
Jayne:    I'm just so:rt of: waking u:p,
Bob:      Hm:m,
                        (3.6)
Jayne:    Muh- ((hiccup)) (0.9) My:(ear),
Bob:      Huh?
Jayne:  → My:(ear) doesn't hu:rt, (0.4)
          my head feels (·) better,


(2) [NB:II:4:1:SO] ((Initial turns
    unrecorded; Nancy is caller))

Emma:     Hi: honey how are
          yo u.
Nancy:  →    [Fine how'r you.
            .
Emma:   → ·khhhhhhhhh. Oh:: I'm pretty
          goo::d I had a little
          o:peration on my toe this
          week.I had to have (·)
          toenail taken o:ff.
```

The particulars of these fragments differ. In fragment one the response follows a request for an "update" by one who is acquainted with the trouble and is followed by evidence of some improvement, while in fragment two the response follows a conventional and, in this case, reciprocal inquiry produced with no expectation of trouble and is followed by an announcement of the troublesome event. But on a grosser level it can be noticed that in each fragment the utterance "Oh pretty good" happens to occur as a response to an inquiry and to precede a report on a trouble. It will be argued that such an occurrence is not happenstance, that such an object in such a position is systematic, and that it is orienting to and managing the dual relevance of the polar features "attending a trouble" and "attending to business as usual."

Downgraded Conventional Responses

A response like "Oh pretty good" is recognizably different from, for example, "Fine," and might be characterized as a

Note: Brackets following citation to transcript materials identify the source of the material for future reference. Transcription symbols were developed by the author, and are explained in the Appendix to this special issue. Arrows point to the location of that material for which the segment is first cited.

mildly downgraded version of standard, conventional responses to an inquiry. While in the two fragments above the "downgraded conventional response" ("Oh pretty good") turns out to constitute an introduction to a report on a trouble and, for example, in fragment one is understood by its recipient as having negative import—an understanding that he exhibits with "Not so hot?"—there are materials in which a variety of similar objects are treated as conventional responses, even if downgraded ones; that is, they are not followed by troubles-talk but by whatever might follow something like "Fine." For example:

```
(3) [JG:I(S):X15:1:SO]

Pete:      How'r you: .
Marvin:    I':m great,
Pete:      Goo:d.
Marvin:  → How'r you.
Pete:    → Pretty good?
Marvin:  → Hey we're havin a meetin:g
           Tuesday ni:ght,


(4) [TG:2]

Ava:   → ·hh How've you bee:n.
Bee:   → ·hh Oh:: survi:ving I guess,
         hh [h!
Ava:   →    [That's good, how's Bob,
Bee:     He's fine,
Ava:     Tha::t's goo:d,


(5) [DA:2:1:SO]

Goldie: → How are you
           Jessie [and the] fa:mily.
Jessie:         [·hhhhhh]
Jessie: → Oh:: no complaints,
           thank Go [:d,
Goldie: →          [Goo:d.
Goldie:  [[Wonderful,]
         [[I mean uh ]
                (·)
Goldie:  [[Wu-
Jessie:  [[Usual: uh::: (·)
           wa [y  o f  l i f e,
Goldie:      [How long you go nna be
           he:re,
```

```
(6) [JG:I:6:1:SO]

Pete:  → How are you.
Hank:  → Pretty goo:d.
Pete:  → You gonna be down in the morning?
```

Given these sorts of materials, there is no warrant for proposing that the occurrence of a downgraded conventional response to an inquiry necessarily premonitors a report on a trouble. It *can*, but it *need* not. Nevertheless, it is not the case that "Fine" and "Pretty good" are co-class members. Specifically, while "Pretty good" *can* project that its speaker has a trouble that he will proceed to report on, "Fine" appears to project that a speaker will *not* proceed to deliver a report.

Perhaps a glimpse of that distinction can be gotten by examining two fragments in which the conversational currency of a trouble seems to be in doubt. Both conversations are between non-intimates, and each trouble has occurred some time in the past. This combination seems to provide that *if* the trouble is to be talked of, it is to be arrived at over a series of moves in which the inquirer does not explicitly address the trouble and the one with the trouble does not volunteer a report. In each, there is an inquiry that carries the sense of a request for an "update" (see fragment one, "[How are you] feeling now"); the inquiries in fragment seven, "How are you feeling Joyce," and in fragment eight, "How are you doing hon," are each followed by a version of "Oh fine." It appears that "Oh fine" proposes that if the trouble is to be reported on, it will be by virtue of some further pursuit by the inquirer, and not on the basis of an inquiry that might or might not be a request for an update by someone who might or might not be acquainted with the trouble.[2]

The following sequence stands in contrast to the "voluntary" reports seen in fragments one and two:

```
(7) [Frankel:QC:I:2:SO:Fr trans]

Helen:   How's everything with you:.
Joyce:   Oka:y.How are you.
Helen: →            ⌊How are you feeling
         Joyce.=
Joyce: → =Oh fi:ne.
```

```
Helen:  → Cause- I think Doreen mentioned
           that you weren't so well? a
           few⌈weeks ago:?⌉
Joyce:       ⌊Y e : a h ,⌋ couple of weeks
           ago.
Helen:    Ye:ah.  And you're alright
           no:⌈w?
Joyce:      ⌊Yeah. Everything's alright
           now.
Helen:    Alright good.
```

In this instance, the inquirer moves through several stages, starting with a version of the "conventional" inquiry, which is perhaps more inviting of talk than is the standard "How are you" (that is, "How's everything with you:"). But that gets a conventional response, "Oka:y," to which is appended a conventional return-inquiry that will, at least for the present, close off the initial inquiry. The return-inquiry, however, is intersected and overridden by the possible request for an update on a known trouble ("How are you feeling Joyce"). It is at this point that we get the "Oh fi:ne," with no appended conventional return-inquiry. The floor is returned to the inquirer with the inquiry still open, and the inquirer now provides an explicit mention of the trouble of "a few weeks ago." To this, the one with the trouble responds by, among other things, making the trouble a bit more current (that is, "couple of weeks ago"). And, although the trouble itself does not appear to have much currency, some interaction is managed by reference to the fact that there was a trouble and now there has been recovery.

In the following fragment we find, not the three-stage inquiry of fragment seven, but a two-stage inquiry in which the initial move is perhaps a compromise between a talk-inviting conventional inquiry ("How's everything with you:") and a possible request for an update on a known trouble ("How are you feeling Joyce"); that is, "How are you doing hon." This initial inquiry gets "Oh just fi:ne," with no appended talk that might close off the inquiry, and this is followed by explicit mention of the trouble, to which the one with the trouble responds most enthusiastically:

```
(8) [TCI(b):7:2:SO:S]

Cora:  → How are you doing hon=
Lily:  → =Oh just fi:ne.
```

```
Cora:  →  ˙hhhhh We:ll I::, heard about your
          accident I'm sorry to hear that.
Lily:     Oh::: tha:nk you it's sure been
          the most painful of all my li:fe
          put together a:ll my: pain does
          not compa:re to this foo:t.
         ┌eh heh heh,┐ha┌(ha)
Cora:    └C a n  you┘  └Can you wa:lk
          good now?
```

On the one hand, then, there appear to be response-types that specifically do not project that a speaker will proceed to deliver a report on a trouble. On the other hand, a downgraded conventional response, such as "Pretty good," *can* but need not make such a projection. Thus, while some responses seem to be clear as to their sequential import, the downgraded conventional response may specifically be equivocal, possibly projecting a report, possibly not.

It turns out, however, that while a downgraded conventional response to an inquiry need not project an immediately forthcoming report on a trouble, it may nevertheless mark the *presence* of a trouble. So, for example, in fragment three the one who produced "Pretty good?" at the start of the conversation does eventually come forth with a trouble.

(3)

```
Pete:     How'r you:.
Marvin:   I':m great,
Pete:     Goo:d.
Marvin:˙  How'r you.
Pete:  →  Pretty good?
Marvin:   Hey we're havin a meetin:g
          Tuesday ni:ght,
          ˙
          ˙   [[approximately
          ˙   36 lines omitted]]
          ˙
          ˙
Marvin:   O:kay. Between seven 'n
          seven┌thirty.
Pete:          └Yeh I'll be there,
Marvin:   (And) it's alright uh?
```

```
Pete:     Okay Mar┌vin,┐
Marvin:           └How:┘'r things goin.
Pete:     Aw::::: nothin doin,
Marvin:   Nothin doin
          u┌h,
Pete:      └No: how's it with YOU:.
                 (0.3)
Marvin:   ˙t˙khh (        ) everything's
          gr:eat, h┌avin a good time'nd
Pete:              └Is it?
                 (˙)
Marvin:   ˙h e┌n j's wunnerful.
Pete:        └( )-
Pete:     Yeh well that's goo:d. I'm
          glad somebody's enjoyin it,
Marvin:   ih hih hha hh┌eh
Pete:  →               └Je:sus I've had
          a hell of a ti:me.=
Marvin:   =hih u- Have you?
                 (0.3)
Marvin:   ┌┌Wuh
Pete:     └└Since the ei:ghth of O:cTOber,
                 (0.2)
Marvin:   W:uh- uWhat's 'a:t.
                 (0.2)
Pete:     We:ll ah nothin t'DO:.
                 (0.3)
Marvin:   Oh you mean you're not
          worki┌n?
Pete:          └nNo::.
Marvin:   °Oh I didn't know that,°
                 (0.3)
Pete:     I went over'n got fou:r, four
          days in la:st week and the week
          uh the week before one da:y,
                 (0.2)
Marvin:   Aw::: Jesus.
```

And in fragment five the one who produced the downgraded conventional response has some bad news to deliver:

(5)

```
Goldie:   How are you
          Jessie┌and the┐fa:mily.
Jessie:         └˙hhhhhh┘
```

```
Jessie:   → Oh:: no complaints,
             thank Go ┌:d,
Goldie:              └Goo:d.
Goldie:   ┌ ┌Wonderful,┐
Jessie:   [[└I mean uh,┘
                      (·)
Goldie:   ┌ ┌Wu-
Jessie:   [[└Usual: uh::: (·)
             wa ┌y  o f  l i f e┐
Goldie:         └How long you go┘nna be
             he:re,
             ·
             ·   [[approximately 185 lines
             ·   omitted; making arrangements
             ·   to get together]]
             ·
Jessie:   ·hh So I mean if you:: uh have
          a p-cup of coffee or something
          I mean tha:t uh that'll be
          fi:ne.But ┌uh ·hh┐=
Goldie:            └Fi:ne.┘
Jessie:   =other than tha:t
          don' ┌t  u h┐·hh=
Goldie:        └Fi:ne,┘
Jessie:   =Don't bo:ther with anything
          e:lse.I: uh::::::
                         (1.0)
Jessie:   → I: uh::: I did wanna tell you
          and I didn't wanna tell you
          uh::::: uh:: last ni:ght.uh::
          because you had entert-uh::
          company I, I-I had something (·)
          terrible to tell you.
          So ┌u h :┐
Goldie:      └How t┘errible ┌is it.┐
Jessie:                    [→hhhhh]=
Jessie:   =Uh: as worse it could be:.
                      (0.7)
Goldie:   W'y'mean Ada?
Jessie:   Uh yah.hh=
Goldie:   =What'd she do die:?=
Jessie:   =Mm:hm,
                (·)
Goldie:   When did she die,
                (0.2)
Jessie:   Abou:t uh::: (·) four weeks ago.
                (·)
Goldie:   °Oh how horrible.°
```

Once the bad news is delivered, it can be seen to have been fore-shadowed in the downgraded response to the initial inquiry. Further, we might now understand the deliverer's overriding of the recipient's responses ("Goo:d." and "Wonderful,") with a continu-ation of the downgraded response ("I mean uh, (·) usual: uh::: (·) way of life") as an attempt to set up a matrix in which the bad news might appropriately be delivered much earlier in the conversation.

In fragment six the relationship between an initial down-graded conventional response to an inquiry and a subsequent trouble is perhaps more obscure, since there is some issue as to whether what we have here is a "trouble" or an "excuse," these two formula-tions of an event or situation standing in some systematic contrast to one another. In this instance, a reminder of a meeting is met with the posing of more pressing business:

(6)

```
Hank:   Hello,
Pete:   Ha::nk?
Hank:   Ya:h.
Pete:   This's Pe:te from down at the
        Drum Corps.
Hank:   Oh: ya:h.
Pete:   How are you.
Hank:   → Pretty goo:d.
Pete:   You gonna be down in the morning?
Hank:   → Well sir now I'm gonna tell you
        something.I'm running a garage
        sale here.hh
Pete:   You're having a garage sale,
Hank:   Yeah.hh
Pete:   Well for crying out loud.
Hank:   If I can possibly get away I'll
        be do:wn.
Pete:   We:ll ┌o  k  a  y  w-┐
Hank:         └If I: have eno┘ugh other
        he:lp so I don't have to stay
        here.
Pete:   Oh I see,
        ·
        ·   [[approximately
        ·   15 lines omitted]]
        ·
        ·
```

```
Pete:    I:'ll tell uh Ace('n them) that
         eyuh you k- if you can make it
         you'll be down.
Hank:    Yah.
Pete:    Oka:y uh- Han k
Hank:               [But you can see my
         poi:nt,h
Pete:    Yah.
                   (0.3)
Pete:    Okay Han k, I'll see you.
Hank:           [( ) we had s o much
         stuff we just had to clear ou:t.h
Pete:    Yeah. Okay Hank,=
Hank:         [( )
Hank:    =You know you try to k-
         w'y'combine two households you
         really got it.
```

Here, an activity that might well be seen as preferable to attending a meeting is being posed as a possible obstruction to that attendance, a disruption of routine activities, that is, a "trouble." From the moment he recognizes the caller (Pete) as an agent of the Drum Corps, the one having the garage sale knows that this is "the reminder call" and can, from that point, start building his case. And one component of that case may be the downgraded conventional response with its possibly trouble-premonitory properties. That is, before the reminder is produced, some indication has already been given that things are not quite as they should be.

It turns out, then, that three of the four fragments initially collected as instances of downgraded conventional responses attended to by the inquirer for their "conventional" rather than their "downgraded" aspect—and as instances not leading directly to a report on a trouble—do seem to at least foreshadow such a report.[3] The remaining instance, fragment four, is rather more subtle as to this issue and will be considered in due course.

Premonitoring Trouble

Given the forgoing considerations, we can note two features of the downgraded conventional response to an inquiry. First, inasmuch as it may, but only *may*, premonitor a report on a trou-

ble, this response is not itself, on its occurrence, the "telling" of the trouble. It is, on its occurrence, a version of a conventional reply to an inquiry, perhaps shadowed by a trouble—a trouble that may or may not be told. What is being done, on its occurrence, is the routine business of a conversation's opening by one who might or might not have a trouble, which trouble might or might not be told.

Second, such an object as "Pretty good," on its occurrence, can be invoking and managing the dual relevance of attending to a trouble and attending to business as usual. If there is a trouble (which there might not be) and if it is to be told (which might not occur), then it is being deferred-while-adumbrated in the interests of the business as usual of a conversation's opening, of which "Pretty good" is an appropriate component.

This kind of involuted activity stands in contrast to the following fragment:

(9)   [JG:I:19:L:SO:Gold trans]

```
Marge:    Hello.
Jean:     Hello Marge?
Marge:    Yes.
Jean:  →  How are you feeling
Marge: →  Oh terrible I I feel so badly
          that I just really can't imagine
          what's wrong with me.
Jean:     You what?
Marge:    I feel so badly I can't
          understand (it) what it is
          that's wrong with me.
Jean:     Oh::: Well it's probably the
          flu::.
Marge:    Oh I'm sure it is oh yes but I
          mean I (      ) had flu  lots
          of times but this is such a
          completely different devastating
          kind of flu . . .
```

It is interesting to note here that the immediate delivered report on a trouble is met with resistance by its recipient. It is followed by a "repeat request"—"You what?"—that at least proposes that the recipient is not tracking and requires another chance to catch what

is being said. Such a proposal can also carry with it a "compliant" to the effect that the prior speaker has not done proper work to orient her recipient and to prepare her to catch the utterance in question. The "repeat request" can also premonitor various forms of disaffiliation by the recipient to the utterance in question. Roughly, it can be giving, and can be understood by the prior speaker to be giving, a chance to revise the utterance in its ostensible repetition. In this case, the utterance is revised, but its thrust is preserved, and the incicpient disaffiliation is actualized. The mysterious ailment is proposed by the recipient to be "the flu," second cousin to the common cold, hardly worth such a fuss.

Fragment nine is the only instance of this sort in the current corpus. There are two other instances of immediately delivered negative status reports, but they follow inquiries of an altogether different type—inquiries that expect a report of improvement. In the following fragment, conversation has been going on for awhile, and arrangements have been made to get together that evening:

```
(10)  [Campbell:4:5:SO]

Arthur:   So I'll get round there about
          seven.
Bill:     ˇhh Yea:h.
Arthur:   P:robably, (·) you know, give
          or take, (0.3) a few
        → minutes are you feeling better
          now.
Bill:   → Uh:m no:.
Arthur:   °Oh you poor cunt,° ˙hh
                (0.4)
Bill:     I think it was food poisoning
          last night cause . . .
```

And even here there is a preliminary search token, "Uh:m," that not only "delays" the negative report but indicates an attempt to find a positive response; the negative, then, occurs on the failure of that attempt.

In the following fragment, a suicide prevention agency has phoned a potential client and has been told by her to hold the phone a minute. She then returns to the phone:

```
(11)  [SPC:IV:6:1:SO]

Called:   Now I can talk,hh
Desk:   → Ri:ght. ˙hhh You're feeling
          better now huh?
Called: → No I don't feel better?
          Somebody stole my record player?
          hh ˙hh and the fellow that stole
          it,hh ˙hhh called up and had the
          nerve to say he didn't steal it
          but I know he di:d.hh
                (0.6)
Called:   I called the police,hhh
Desk:     Uh huh,
```

In both these instances someone with a trouble is confronted by and is dealing with an inquiry weighted toward "business as usual." And in both instances, although in utterly contrastive ways, the one with the trouble exhibits the understanding that such a question as "Are you feeling better?" ought to be answered in the affirmative: in fragment ten with a token search for an affirmative, on the failure of which a negative is produced, and in fragment eleven with a vehemently negative reply that treats the question as conveying a position that warrants, not an "answer," but a "challenge."

So, of the three instances in the current corpus in which an inquiry is met with an immediately delivered negative status report, two of them are produced as "defenses" against an inquiry weighted toward "business as usual" ("Are you feeling better?"). In the one instance in which an inquiry weighted toward attention to a trouble (the request for an update for a known trouble, "How are you feeling?") gets an immediately delivered negative response—that is, in fragment nine—the recipient of that response exhibits disorientation and resistance.

It appears, then, that the downgraded conventional response to an inquiry can orient recipients to the possibility of a report on a trouble in such a way that, should one occur, recipients are prepared to track it. And the deference to the usual business of a conversation's opening by the use of an appropriate component such as "Pretty good" can propose that, should a trouble be reported on, the troubletellers will attempt to align that report to the

already proposed status of "Pretty good"; that is, they will not make an undue fuss about the trouble and will themselves be as "troubles-resistant" as possible. Such a proposal can dispose recipients to an affiliative, "troubles-receptive" hearing.

Further, the downgraded conventional response can provide that, should there be a trouble, the actual telling of it will be negotiable. For example, whether the trouble will be mentioned at all, as seems to be the case in fragment three, or whether it will be mentioned now or later, as seems to be the case in fragment five, can turn on what the recipient does following the downgraded conventional response.

Another sort of negotiation that may be involved has to do with whose trouble it is and, thus, how it will be talked about. So, for example, in fragment five, the bad news adumbrated in the response to the conventional inquiry is about a mutual friend. Such news may specifically not be appropriately delivered in response to "How are you?" in that it is not necessarily "my trouble." Now, in the collection of downgraded conventional responses to an inquiry that is not treated by the inquirer as troubles-premonitory, we find an instance of a standard procedure, as in fragment four:

(4)

```
Ava:    'hh How've you bee:n.
Bee:    'hh Oh:: survi:ving I guess,
        hh h!
Ava:       └That's good, how's Bob.
```

Having received some information about the status of his coparticipant, the inquirer goes on to ask about relevant others (the possibly troubles-sensitive character of this next inquiry will be considered shortly). Should the "secondary inquiry" happen to locate the party whose trouble the downgraded conventional response was produced by reference to, then the news about that party is due and deliverable. In fragment five, for example, the dead woman is the keystone of the relationship of these two participants; they became acquainted in the first place through their association with her. It is therefore not inconceivable that, should

there be a secondary inquiry, it will be about her; the news of her death, then, is due and deliverable at that point and is retrospectively recognizable as having been premonitored by the downgraded response to the initial inquiry.

A downgraded conventional response, then, can "pass" on introducing a trouble or its like by reference to a primary inquiry, while indicating that things are not quite as they should be. In this way, the response both clears the way for a possible secondary inquiry and perhaps makes available to the coparticipant that a secondary inquiry could locate the trouble that the downgraded conventional response to the initial inquiry may be adumbrating.

From Preliminary Inquiry to Talk About Trouble

The possibilities raised in the forgoing considerations will now be brought to bear on a single, extended interchange that will be examined segment by segment. In this interchange, a primary inquiry is followed by a version of the response-type that proposes that its speaker will not proceed to deliver a troubles-report on a voluntary basis (see fragments seven and eight). In this case, the response is rather more elaborate: "Oh fi:ne. Ye:ah. Goo:d." After approximately eighty-five lines of talk, a self-assessment is produced that stands in dramatic contrast to the response to the initial inquiry: "I'm just s:sick." The journey from the former to the latter is long and convoluted, and it may be that the initial response has set a trajectory for just such a journey, making available that there is a trouble and indicating the terms under which that trouble can be brought to the conversational surface.

```
(12)  [NB:IV:14:6-10:SO]

Emma:    How've you been.
Lottie:  Well- (0.2) oh fi:ne. Ye:ah.
         Goo:d.
Emma:    How's Ea:rl.
Lottie:  Well he le:ft today.
Emma:    I was thinking about it.
         Y┌eah I didn't see his car,┐
Lottie:   └Y - y e a : : : : : h ,┘
```

A wealth of issues and activities are present in this fragment; some of these can be readily enough shown, others would require lengthy analysis and will simply be pointed to. So, for example, the fact that the matter that Emma and Lottie eventually come to be talking about is something they have been tracking together and something that is significant can be glimpsed in the fragment itself: for example, in the "indexical" character of "Well he le:ft today," which relies upon and refers to some prior talk for an understanding of the particulars of his leaving, and in the inquirer's response to that—"I was thinking about it."

That it is indeed something they have been tracking together and something significant is most easily shown by reference to a fragment of conversation that occurred about a week earlier:

```
(13)  [NB:IV:13:2-3:SO]

Emma:      What's new with you:.
                  (0.7)
Lottie:    Nothi:ng,
                  (·)
Lottie:    [[really
Emma:      [[('Cep-) I- You had Ea:rl down.
Lottie:    Yeah.
Emma:      Ya:h I saw his car
           last [°(    )°
Lottie:        [Ye:uh,
Lottie:    His mother's real low.
Emma:      Oh really,
                  (0.6)
Lottie:    His dad wants him to come ba:ck
           and gosh Earl doesn't know what
           to do . . . and poor Dad is all
           by himself, it's (a-) ·hh sad.
Emma:      It's a sa:d thing. But gee I
           don't know, like he said he
           doesn't know, you know sometimes
           these linger on . . .
```

Earl's mother is possibly dying, and he has been summoned home—and that seems clearly enough to be the matter referred to by "Well he le:ft today" and "I was thinking about it." It is the way in which this candidate trouble comes to be addressed that is inter-

estingly difficult to demonstrate. Roughly, there appears to be the following series of moves:

First, a matter (Earl's going home to his dying mother) elicited by a primary inquiry ("How've you been") is almost addressed in response to that inquiry (with "Well-") but is abandoned; the matter is rejected as talkable-to on a first-party basis and/or as a voluntarily reported-upon trouble with "Oh fi:ne. Ye:ah. Goo:d."

Second, the inquirer thereupon provides a secondary inquiry ("How's Ea:rl") that is sensitive both to the fact that the report was initiated and then abandoned and to the possible dual grounds on which it was abandoned. It is also sensitive to the fact that the report had been initiated in a particular way. Thus, while inquirers tend to follow such an object as "Oh fine" with an explicit mention of the trouble being inquired into, as in fragments seven and eight, in this instance we get no more than a mention of a name that is associated with the trouble being inquired into. That is, the inquirer can be understanding that the report is imminent and need not be explicitly formulated but merely indexed. The inquiry is sensitive to the fact that the report was abandoned and to the dual grounds for that abandonment (as not appropriately talkable-to on a first-party basis and/or as not to be handled as a voluntarily reported-upon trouble) in that it provides a third-party basis upon which the matter may be talked to and, in so doing, uses a format that, in standard usage, does not invoke a trouble but is merely a conventional secondary inquiry.

Third, the reformulation of the basis on which the matter will be addressed is then accepted as talkable-to, and the report that was almost delivered in response to the primary inquiry now emerges in response to the secondary inquiry—now, not as a possible "my trouble," but as a bit of news about this relevant other ("Well, he le:ft today").

This negotiation, over a series of moves, is conducted under the auspices of a standard sequence-format that, in its standard usage, does not invoke or address a trouble; that is, under the auspices of (1) a conventional inquiry (of the "How are you?" type), followed by (2) a conventional response (of the "Fine" type), followed by (3) a standard secondary inquiry ("How is [relevant other]?"), followed by (4) some news about that relevant other. It is

this approaching of a known possible trouble by way of a standard, no-trouble sequence-type that makes the procedure interestingly difficult to demonstrate, since, for the approach to a trouble to be successfully "masked" as a no-trouble sequence-type, it must look very much like the object it is "imitating."

Let us now focus on the object that is the most analytically troublesome and interesting in that it looks precisely like what it is proposing to be—a conventional secondary inquiry ("How's Ea:rl") that just happens to locate someone by reference to whom a candidate trouble can be talked of on a third-party basis.

The particulars of the local materials yield at least a glimpse of the fact that "How's Ea:rl" is not just a conventional secondary inquiry but is specifically located in and is referring to, the issue of his leaving. The materials run as follows:

(12)

```
Emma:      How's Ea:rl.
Lottie:    Well he⁻le:ft today.
Emma:      I was thinking about it.Yeah
           I didn't see his car.
```

This series may be compared with a rather similar series in fragment thirteen:

(13)

```
Emma:      I- You had Ea:rl down.
Lottie:    Yeah.
Emma:      Ya:h I saw his car last
           °(     )°
```

Fragment thirteen is quite clearly a matter of one party's offering a candidate statement of fact that is confirmed by the coparticipant; further, that confirmation is itself confirmed, and evidence is shown as to how the candidate statement of fact was arrived at ("Ya:h I saw his car . . .").[4] Fragment twelve contains an almost identical device; that is, a [post-confirmation-confirmation + evidence], "Yeah I didn't see his car." Roughly, this latter instance of the [post-confirmation-confirmation + evidence] can be exhibiting that, although its speaker did not in fact *offer* the candidate statement of fact to which this object is sequentially tied,

the item that took the sequential place of the candidate statement of fact—that is, the secondary inquiry "How's Ea:rl"—should be seen as "standing for" such a statement, a "version of" it, an interactionally sensitive "replacement for" it; in fact, the inquirer here had evidence to suggest that Earl had left and, in inquiring after him, *was* inquiring into that issue after all.

But the recharacterization of "How's Ea:rl" from a conventional secondary inquiry to an interactionally sensitive reference to his absence is done after the coparticipant has begun to address that issue. On its occurrence, the object itself and its positioning constitute an utterly standard secondary inquiry, one that makes no reference to absence or to the reasons for that absence. It is not, on its occurrence, seeking a report on a trouble. It merely happens to make available for further talk someone by reference to whom a known candidate trouble might or might not be addressed. It can turn out to generate troubles-talk, as is the case in fragment twelve, or it can perfectly appropriately take the sort of response it gets in fragment four, "He's fine":

(4)

```
Ava:      How've you bee:n.
Bee:      ˙hh Oh:: survi:ving I guess,
          hh ⌈h!⁻
Ava:  →      ⌊That's good, how's Bob,
Bee:  →   He's fine,
Ava:      Tha::t's goo:d,
Bee:      °(Goo:d.)°=
Ava:      ='n how's school going.
```

Earlier it was proposed that three of the four fragments initially collected as instances of downgraded conventional responses treated by the inquirer for their "conventional" rather than "downgraded" aspect turn out to foreshadow troubles-talk, and that the remaining instance, fragment four, is rather more subtle as to that issue. Somewhat later, this fragment was used as an instance of the standard procedure: Primary Inquiry → Conventional Response → Secondary Inquiry. We have just explored the possibility that another instance of Primary Inquiry → Conventional Response → Secondary Inquiry, that is, fragment twelve, could involve an inquirer's attempting to elicit a trouble under the aus-

pices of simply asking about some relevant other. In that exploration, we had some help from the local materials. Troubles-talk does eventuate, and the inquirer retroactively reformulates the secondary inquiry as, after all, directed to the troublesome issue.

In fragment four we are not so lucky. Nevertheless, very much later in the conversation, there is an interchange that suggests that the response to the primary inquiry ("·hh <u>Oh</u>:: survi:ving I guess") does indeed mark the presence of a candidate trouble. The interchange also suggests that the secondary inquiry does accurately locate the domain of that trouble, it happening in this case that the recipient of the inquiries is declining to introduce the trouble into the conversation.

At some point well into the conversation, the recipient of the initial inquiries (Bee) mentions an upcoming four-day weekend, asking, "So you gonna be around this weekend?" Her coparticipant thereupon produces a list of activities she will be engaged in, and then we get:

```
(4)

Bee:    Well if you're arou:nd I'll
        probably see y(hh)ou
        hn ┌hh! ·hh
Ava:  →     └Why, won't [[ERASURE]]
Bee:  → Uh-u-uh:: goin o:ff::
Ava:    Where's he goin.
Bee:    To Wa:shington,
Ava:    Oh.
                    (0.7)
Bee:    He hasn't been there sih-since
        Christmas=
Ava:=┌┌Mm.
Bee:  └└so:.hHe's going.
                    (0.5)
Ava:    Yeh well I'll give you a call
        then tomorrow . . .
```

It is almost certain that the utterance "Why, won't [[ERASURE]]" refers to the relevant other of the secondary inquiry, "How's Bob."[5] If so, then the downgraded conventional response to the primary inquiry may be colored by the prospect of the impending four-day

weekend that will be spent without this fellow who is off to Washington.

While the inquirer may be in a position to hazard what could turn out to be a good guess at the source of the candidate trouble adumbrated in the response to the primary inquiry, she proceeds on an alternate course. She first of all exhibits that she takes it that the downgrading is a "stylistic" rather than a "substantive" matter by making the assessment "That's good." This assessment also marks the primary inquiry as satisfactorily closed (see also fragment five in which "<u>Oh</u>:: no complaints, thank Go:d" is marked as a stylistic matter and the inquiry closed off with "Goo:d. <u>W</u>onderful."). In addition, she provides the secondary inquiry that, on its occurrence, is not to be seen as seeking a report on a trouble but merely as happening to make available for further talk someone by reference to whom a candidate trouble might or might not be addressed, under the auspices of an utterly bland, conventional sequence-type.

In fragment four, the recipient of such a secondary inquiry treats it as a conventional sequence component, with "<u>He</u>'s fine." When, much later, something emerges that might well be the matter adumbrated by the downgraded response to the primary inquiry and might be located by the secondary inquiry, it is in no way treated as *the* trouble, and only in the most guarded, reluctant sort of way as *a* trouble. In fragment twelve the conventional sequence-type produces a bit of news, "Well he <u>le:ft</u> today," that the conversation of a week earlier, fragment thirteen, permits us to see as locked into a candidate trouble. However, the current talk on that matter is equivocal as to whether this candidate trouble is being, or will be, addressed:

```
(12)

Emma:    How's Ea:rl.
Lottie:  Well he le:ft today.
Emma:    I was thinking about it.
         Y┌eah I didn't see his car,┐=
Lottie:   └Y - y e a : : : : : h ,  ┘
Lottie:  =Be:n called me this morning.
                    (0.2)
Emma:   ┌┌(                    ) ((sniff))
Lottie: └└uh Earl leaves at twelve
         o'clo:ck.
```

```
Emma:      Good ⌈I'm glad he's go:ne,⌉
Lottie:         ⌊˙h h-   t o d a y̱  I ⌋was
           gonna take him out the a̱irport
           but I was afraid of the,
Emma:      fo:g.has ⌈been t⌉errible,
Lottie:             ⌊fo:g?⌋
```

For one, the inquirer's "I was <u>think</u>ing about it. Yeah I didn't see his car" starts out with a possible invocation of the candidate trouble, the "it" being not only the departure but the reason for it. However, the appended [post-confirmation-confirmation + evidence] focuses on the departure and may recast the initial component of the utterance in that light. Further, a subsequent reference to the departure, "Earl leaves at <u>t</u>welve o'<u>clo</u>ck," is greeted with "<u>G</u>ood I'm glad he's go̱:ne," which, among other things, does not carry any sense of the sad reason for the departure.

The recipient's talk, then, appears to be moving further and further away from the intial troubles-sensitivity seen in the secondary inquiry and in the first component of the response to the bit of news elicited by the secondary inquiry. At the same time, the coparticipant's talk seems to be moving in the opposite direction; that is, toward a trouble-telling. The initial bit of news is that the relevant other "<u>le:ft</u> today." A subsequent reference to the departure has it that he "leaves at <u>t</u>welve o'<u>clo</u>:ck." In other words, it turns out that he hasn't actually left yet.

The use of these alternative characterizations may be related to the negotiability of the telling of this trouble; "He <u>le:ft</u> today" *can* be all that is going to be said on the matter. But that he "leaves at <u>t</u>welve o'<u>clo</u>:ck" catches a course of action in its midst. Such a formulation recurrently provides for the introduction of events intervening between initiation and projected completion of some course of action, as turns out to be the case here (see "<u>I</u> was gonna take him out the airport but . . .").[6] The initial formulation, "he <u>le:ft</u> today," refers to an episode that is over and done with, a matter that is closed. And that is consistent with this speaker's responses to the primary inquiry—consistent with the proposal that a troubles-report will not be delivered on a voluntary basis or on a first-party basis, leaving it to recipient to move the talk toward or away from addressing the trouble.

Here, if the recipient takes up the option to treat the matter of the departure as closed, then that may be that. But the recipient's response to this news, at least its initial component, "I was <u>think</u>ing about it," displays that she, too, is tracking this matter, and the response thus warrants its further talkability. And the moment that the recipient aligns herself as a co-tracker of this matter, it appears that her coparticipant decides to go ahead and pursue it. And, now, a range of devices are deployed that actively work to pursue it.

First of all, immediately following the indication of co-tracking, the one with the trouble starts an utterance, in overlap with further talk by the recipient. That utterance, "Y-yea:::::h," is hardly consequential in any "substantive" sense, yet it is extended across the talk it overlaps (the [post-confirmation-confirmation + evidence], which, as it happens, is tending to focus away from the candidate trouble) and is coterminous with that talk. This is a standard device for competing in overlap, that is, for proposing that one has the floor while another is also talking.[7] The floor is competed for across the overlap, and, immediately upon resolution of that overlapping talk, a course-of-events narrative is initiated, with "<u>Be</u>:n called me this morning" (Ben is apparently Earl's brother, and the two of them are returning home to attend their dying mother):

(12)

```
Lottie:    Well he le:ft today.
Emma:      I was thinking about it.
           Y⌈eah I̱ di̱dn't see his car,⌉=
Lottie: →  ⌊Y - y e a : : : : : : h ,⌋
Lottie: →  =Be:n called me this morning.
```

Secondly, when the recipient produces what might be a sequence-terminal assessment, "<u>G</u>ood," which treats the secondary inquiry as satisfactorily completed—again, see fragments four and five, as well as fragment seven, "Alright good")—the one with the trouble deploys a standard device by which a speaker can counter a response that is not "in the best interests" of a line that the speaker

is pursuing. She produces a recognizable "continuation/comple-tion" of her prior, at-that-point adequately completed utterance[8] and appends to it the projected "intervening event":

(12)

```
Lottie:     Be:n called me this morning.
                     (0.2)
Emma:      ┌┌(            ) ((sniff))
Lottie: →[ [uh Earl leaves at twelve
             o'clo:ck.
Emma:    →  Good┌I'm glad he's go:ne,┐
Lottie:  →      [·h h-   t o d a y  I ]was
             gonna take him out the airport
             but . . .
```

In sum, the one with the trouble exhibits an observable reluctance to tell the trouble until her coparticipant produces an utterance that aligns her as a co-tracker of the trouble, at precisely which point the one with the trouble switches to an observable eagerness to tell the trouble.

However, the utterance that seems to warrant the switch from reluctance to eagerness, that is, "I was <u>think</u>ing about it," is equivocal as to what it is locating. And the subsequent talk—those utterances that are overlapped and competed with by the one with the trouble, that is, "Yeah I didn't see his car" and "<u>G</u>ood I'm glad he's go:ne," not only move further and further away from a recep-tive alignment to the trouble but are, among other things, indexes of the routine, business-as-usual monitorings by the speaker of Earl's presences and absences (see, for example, fragment thir-teen), and of the coparticipants' shared attitudes toward their trou-blesome husbands. So, for example, "<u>G</u>ood I'm glad he's go:ne" is perfectly fitted to remarks Lottie has had occasion to make about Emma's husband; for example, such utterances as "To <u>hell</u> with him" (NB:IV:4:18). It appears, then, that the responses to the pri-mary and secondary inquiries, the former projecting no voluntary report on a candidate trouble and the latter projecting no elabora-tion of a reported event ("Oh <u>fi</u>:ne. <u>Ye</u>:ah. <u>Goo</u>:d" and "Well he <u>le:ft</u> today") have left the recipient the option of focusing away from the admittedly "sad" events (see fragment thirteen) and con-

centrating on their more local aspects—specifically, that while the dying mother had brought Earl back into Lottie's life (again, see fragment thirteen), that situation has now reached a point where it has, happily, removed him again.

And it may not be incidental that, following a reference to Earl as "well departed," his wife offers materials that have him affiliated with a pleasant experience for her.

(12)

```
Emma:      Good┌I'm glad he's go:ne,┐
Lottie:        [·h h-   t o d a y  I ]was
             gonna take him out the airport
             but I was afraid of the,
Emma:      fo:g.has┌been t┐errible,
Lottie:            [fo:g? ]
Lottie: →  A:nd uh::, we went down to San
             Diego last night and we had a
          . uh big banquet. . . Gee I had
             more fun,
          ·
          ·  [[approximately 25 lines
          ·  omitted; talk about the
          ·  banquet]]
          ·
Lottie:    So uh, I was up there Monday
             and Tuesday and we got him all
             packed┌and,
Emma:            [Goo:d.
```

As the talk about the banquet closes, it appears that the talk about Earl's departure is also being wrapped up. The circle has been completed, and they are back at a point where, in effect, all that remains to be said has already been said (he's "all packed" and he "leaves at twelve o'clock"). And at that point, the recipient again produces a terminal assessment ("Goo:d") However, simultane-ously, the teller has produced a "continuation marker" ("and") and, upon completion of the terminal assessment, produces another one. That is, when a recipient proposes that enough has been said and a teller simultaneously has proposed that there is more to come, one option open to the teller is to accept the recipient's understanding of the situation and leave it at that. Here, however,

the teller specifically reoffers that there is more to come—some continuation of the narrative. Appended to the second continuation-marker is not, however, some next part of the narrative, but some tangential materials, including an expression of sympathy for the departed husband:

```
(12)

Lottie:    and we got him all
           packed and,
Emma:           Goo:d.
Lottie: → An:duh you know he's kind of,
           ·hhh hh(h)I feel sorry for him
           really.
```

It appears to be a recurrent phenomenon that statements that carry a sense of "good riddance" are followed by reconciliative statements. So, for example, these two women have lively interchanges complaining about one or the other's spouse. For example:

```
(14)

Lottie: God, just to go out fishing with
        him would- drives me up a wa:ll.
Emma:   Me too.  I hate to go with him.  I
        hate to play golf with him.  It's
        no fu:n, he just uh, you know,
        don't do that. de-and uh we'll say
        well come on let's fish here. Y-you
        think he'd go fish
        there, Go:d no he wouldn't go there.
Lottie: Hell no.
Emma:   He wouldn't go there,
Lottie:               Just for damn meanness.
```

When the talk moves to a 'good riddance' sort of statement, however, its recipient becomes reconciliatory. For example, from the same conversation as fragment fourteen:

```
(15)  [NB:IV:4:18:SO]

Lottie: → To hell with him.
Emma:      Ya:h,
                    (0.5)
Emma:   → He's gonna be lonesome,
```

And, at a bit of a remove, a similar series is present in fragment twelve. That is, after a "good riddance" statement, "Good I'm glad he's go:ne," there is a "reconciliatory" statement, "hh(h)I feel sorry for him really."

Further, the "good riddance" → "reconciliation" series appears to be operative not only for the recipient of a "good riddance" statement but for the one who makes it. So, for example, in fragment fifteen, the one who offered "To hell with him" subsequently aligns with her coparticipant's "reconciliatory" line:

```
(15)

Lottie: → To hell with him.
Emma:      Ya:h,
                    (0.5)
Emma:   → He's gonna be lonesome,
                    (1.0)
Lottie: → Oh sure, he'll be down, don't
           worry. He'll be down uh, he'll
           be down Weh- he'll be calling
           you,
```

In fragment twelve, the one who had earlier produced "Good I'm glad he's go:ne" now offers an extravagant understanding of "hh(h)I feel sorry for him really" through the statement "Your h:ea:rt aches," and she goes on to provide a proverbial formulation of the situation, followed by an analogy from her own circumstances:[9]

```
(12)

Lottie:    hh(h)I feel sorry for him
           really.
Emma:      ·mpt·hhhhh
```

```
Lottie:    Cause he doesn't express
           himself but I mean I=
Emma:    → [[Y- [your h:ea:rt a[ches.]
Lottie:  ≅ [ [u [h:everything's [ fo:r]goh-
           It i:s.
Emma:      hh[hhh
Lottie:      [Jes[us.
Emma:    →      [Oh::: God in a time of
           trial Lottie it is. You have
           to forgive and you know there's
           love there between you two
           gu[:ys, I mean you don't
Lottie:      [°whhhhh°
Emma:      know what it is but-
         → Gee you've been the same
           [as Guy and me:
Lottie:    [awhhhhhh!
Emma:      °You know?°
Lottie:    Hu:h?
Emma:    → ·hhhh Sometimes I could kill
           hi:m and then I think oh God
           this is ridiculous
```

The analogy from her own circumstances catches and accounts for the co-occurrence of "Good I'm glad he's go:ne" and the "reconciliatory" statements. The analogy from her own circumstances also occasions a bit of information about her own circumstances,[10] which results in a mutually agreed-upon topic shift, recipient of that information "topicalizing" it by treating it as "news," as something warranting further talk:

(12)

```
Emma:      °hhhhh Sometimes I could kill
           hi:m and then I think oh
         → God this is ridiculous °hh Hey
           we're gonna ret(h)ire the end
           of Ma::rch,
Lottie:  → O(h)h I can't be[lieve it.
Emma:                      [·hhh Ye-ah,

       .
       .   [[approximately 9 lines
       .   omitted; talk about re-
       .   tirement and a permanent
       .   move to the beach.]]
```

```
Emma:      And I'm gonna get carpeting
           here in a couple of weeks. A:nd
           um- the bedrooms and the hall,
           and get that on this- this
           year's deduct.
```

Once again, and now by mutual agreement, the matters generated by the primary inquiry and its *sequelae* are at an end. And those matters appear to have consisted in the main of negotiations as to an appropriate position on the party located by the secondary inquiry and on his troubles. Consensus having been achieved, other matters have been turned to—matters consisting of some mundane particulars of "business as usual."

However, in the course of talk about those mundane matters, the one who initiated the topic shift retroactively formulates the current talk in such a way as to invoke the relevance of the prior talk; she does this to propose that the prior matters are still the matters at hand. That is, the current talk is now formulated, not as a locally occasioned topic shift but as a purposeful "interruption." And the one who had been telling the third-party trouble, but had subsequently awarded the status of 'news' to the bit of locally occasioned information about her coparticipant and thus collaborated in a topic shift, now produces an utterance that appears to be excusing an "interruption" of the talk preceding the topic shift:

(12)

```
Emma:      A::nd um- the bedrooms and the
           hall, and get that on
         → this- this year's deduct.I'll
           change the subject cause I'm
           crying too, ((sniff))
Lottie:  → Oh that's alri:ght, yeah,
```

Both are proposing that the prior matters were interrupted. But while the recipient of the third-party trouble, who is now the teller of some mundane particulars, provides a direction to take in accounting for the interruption—namely, that they go back to where they left off—the teller of the third-party trouble, who is now the recipient of the mundane particulars, although excusing

the interruption, makes no move to return to the prior talk. Indeed, the talk that excuses an interruption occupies a position in which a move to return to the prior talk—specifically, a follow-up of the direction proposed by the coparticipant—is sequentially appropriate. That is, the utterance that marks the topic shift as an interruption of the prior topic ("Oh that's alri:ght, yeah") occurs as an alternative to actually returning to that prior topic.

Earlier it was noted that the recipient of the primary inquiry deploys a series of devices that exhibit both that there may be something to tell and that there is a reluctance to tell it; the telling of it is then shaped by her coparticipant's activities (such devices as, in response to "How's Ea:rl," "Well he le:ft today," which in part constitutes a "no more to be said" version of the circumstances). Similarly, here, the offer of an opportunity to treat the matters generated by the initial and secondary inquiries as still in progress ("Oh that's alri:ght"), by excusing an interruption while declining to return to the prior topic *or* continue with the current one, exhibits both that there may be more to say on the prior topic and that if there is more, then there is a reluctance to produce it. Again, then, it becomes incumbent upon the coparticipant to decide where and how the talk shall go. And the coparticipant opts for a return to the prior topic, now, finally, explicating the third-party trouble:

(12)

```
Emma:     I'll change the subject cause
          I'm crying too, ((sniff))
Lottie:   Oh that's alri:ght,┌yeah,
Emma:                        └I know
          bless his heart I'll pray
→         for him too.hh You know it's no
          fu-un to lose anybody,
```

And it is at this point that the self-assessment that was earlier characterized as standing in dramatic contrast to the initial "Oh fi:ne. Ye:ah. Goo:d" is produced: "I'm just s:ick." That is, at the moment the troubles-recipient specifies the matter as a death, the troubles-teller treats it as a first-party trouble that engenders great distress. And, finally, the moment it becomes a first-party

trouble, the recipient marks it as having achieved that status by proposing that it warrants particular attention, that it constitutes grounds for a disruption of the everyday routine, and, specifically, that it constitutes grounds for an emergency being-together.

(12)

```
Emma:     You┌know it's no fu-un to lose
Lottie:      └uh- hh-hh
Emma:     anybo┌dy,
Lottie:        └Oh-: I know=
       →  =and I'm just s:ick┌nnh!
Emma:  →                     └Come
          o:n do:w:n,
```

Thus, a narrative that almost began in response to a primary inquiry, that is, was almost told on a voluntary basis and as a first-party trouble, comes resoundingly full circle. Now, however, that it has been told, it is properly to be treated as first-party trouble, having been mutually and collaboratively achieved rather than unilaterally proposed by the one with the trouble.

Summary

The dual relevance of "attending to a trouble" and "attending to business as usual," which is pervasive in people's talk about their troubles, is invoked and managed from the very outset of such talk. A range of "trouble-premonitory" responses to inquiries can adumbrate but not then and there deliver a trouble, providing a recognizable standard component of a conversation's opening. The adumbration of a trouble can orient a recipient to the possibility of a forthcoming troubles-telling, while the use of a standard conversational-opening object can inform the recipient that the trouble, if it is talked of, will not be emphasized unduly and thus can predispose him or her to a "troubles-receptive" hearing. Further, the equivocality of "trouble-premonitory" responses can propose that the telling of a trouble is negotiable as to whether or when, and under what auspices (for example, first- or third-party) the trouble will be told, thus providing for the recipient's participation in the shaping of the troubles-talk.

Footnotes

1. The study of how people talk about their troubles is a Social Science Research Council (SSRC)-funded project at the University of Manchester.

2. See Sacks (1975). In this paper, Sacks considers "the regulation of information exchange with regard to, for example, 'troubles'," noting that "for any two parties not any item of such information may be offered to any given other" (p. 71). In these two fragments, we may be looking at a sequence-type through which that issue can be negotiated by parties whose rights to such information exchange is in doubt.

3. In each of these fragments, it may also be the case that the inquirer is not attending to the possible trouble-premonitory aspect of the downgraded conventional response in that he is geared to some other matters. In each case, the inquirer initiates "arrangements." The inquiries, then, may be offered as utterly *pro forma*, on the way to the making of arrangements, with the inquirers not listening for or hearing other than some equally *pro forma* response.

4. In the two utterances "I- You had Ea:rl down" and "Ya:h I saw his car," we may be looking at a similar phenomenon to that proposed for fragment twelve, "Well- (0.2) Oh fi:ne" *vis-à-vis* "Well he le:ft today," that is something started and then abandoned and then showing up subsequently. In other words, just as "Well- (0.2) Oh fi:ne" may be an abandoned start on "Well Earl le:ft today," so "I- You had Ea:rl down" may be an abandoned start on "I saw Earl's car," which, following the announcement that "Nothi:ng, (•) really" is new, would come off as sly and accusatory.

5. "Bee" initiated and taped this telephone call, and subsequently went through the tape attempting to erase each reference-by-name to her boyfriend, "Bob." The other attempts, including "How's Bob," resulted in blurred but retrievable segments of talk. It is virtually certain that "Why, won't [[ERASURE]]" is another attempt to erase the boyfriend's name, this one totally successful, blotting out not only the name but a bit of the utterance in which it is embedded.

6. For some consideration of formulations of activities that set up the introduction of some intervening event, see Jefferson (1978a).

7. The phenomenon of prolonging a sound in overlap is considered in Jefferson and Schegloff (1975).

8. The phenomenon of the recognizable "continuation/completion" of a prior, adequately completed utterance, is considered in Jefferson (1978b).

9. See Sacks' (1968, 1970a, 1970b) consideration of the "second story" as a device for "showing understanding."

10. For considerations of "locally occasioned" stories, see Sacks (1971a, pp. 8–9; 1971b, pp. 2–3 and pp. 7–9) and Jefferson (1978a).

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