

- And I'll say, today is Tuesday, March 26th, 2013. This is Rose Norman in Huntsville, Alabama interviewing Mandy Carter in Durham, North Carolina by phone, for the Southern Lesbian Feminist Herstory Project. And I probably ought to make sure that, I think that's going to be okay without playing it back. You want to just, the first question I had had to do with the biographical intro that we're using. Do you think that I could just get that off of your bio when you send that?

- Well, you can but I can also, I mean, I'm looking right at it. So what I hear you saying though, is that I'm looking at that paragraph you wrote, Rose, and so, are you going to use that, or you want me to just send? I can either field that information now or send you my bio and you can, did you want me to type that up, or you're gonna do it on your own? I wasn't sure how that--

- Oh, I'll do that on my own. This is pretty much the boilerplate we're using. I mean, I filled in what I knew, but this may not be the way you want to say it. I just picked this up online.

- Right, okay, well two things. One, I'll just, the ones that are really quick, I can do, but when I send you my bio, let's do this. Let me send you my, I'll email you my bio after we get done with this call, and then once you see it, Rose, if you have any additional questions for me, let me know. That might be a much easier way to do it, if that's okay with you. So I was born November 2nd, 1948 in Albany, New York. And I think the most important part to know about that is that in my bio, I also say, I was a ward of the state of New York for the first 18 years of my life because my mother got up one day after I was born, left and never came back. So me, my brother Rodney and sister Dolores were in orphanages in Albany, New York. And then we got divided and split up, but I was in two orphanages and one foster home for the first 18 years of my life as a ward of the state of New York. So I was in Albany Children's Home, Schenectady Children's Home, and then between a foster home in Chatham Center, New York. So that's the first 18 years. I must say, the reason that was pivotal as to why I got involved in what I'm doing now, Rose, is that in Schenectady, children, so they mainstreamed us into the main regular school system there. So I went to Mount Pleasant High School in Schenectady, New York, graduated 1966. And a history teacher of ours brought someone in from this group called the American Friends Service Committee. And that one 40-minute class literally changed my life, because I had never of the Quakers, never heard of the AFSC. But he talked about Quakers and power of one and equality and justice for all, but they had a high school work camp. And they said if anyone wanted to go, I raised my hand, I went, and then the rest is history, (mumbles) a really short form. But that is the key reason that I do what I do now, because of that class with the Quakers and the AFSC.

- That's great. And they were talking about, I guess I want to know what it was that bent your ear, what it was that grabbed you about that?

- Well, let's remember that I, it's funny, because right now, we're looking at the demographics of the country, and one of them that's interesting is that post World War II Baby Boomers, that were born after WW

II, so between 1946 and 1955, that's that huge Baby Boomer, 79 million people right now, that generation, what was going on at that time? The Civil Rights movement was huge. Now, we're in upstate New York and we're very much aware of what's happening down South, but I think that when the gentleman, he was just a young kid from the local, now have you heard of the American Friends Service Committee? Are you familiar with them at all?

- Yes, I do know about that.

- Okay, yeah, well they had a New York branch, and so when he came into our social studies class, it's a history class, he was talking about the fact that the American Friends Service Committee and the Quakers as an institution, they were down South as the white allies, trying to figure out how they could help in the Civil Rights movement. So against that backdrop, he was saying they're down there, what's going on, remember this is '64, '65, '66, and said that one of the tenants of Quakerism, which is a long tradition, was this concept of the power of one that every single person had the potential to impact change. To hear that, number one, secondly he was talking about this broader concept that if your fundamental philosophies around equality and justice for all, that means that at any particular time, at any particular point, whatever particular issue or issues are involved, that you really see kind of a broader kind of a pattern. And I didn't quite get that at that time, but when he said that, it really struck me, because remember, what happened on November 22nd, 1963? Kennedy was assassinated; everyone knows exactly where they were at that moment in time, in terms of what was going on with the president being assassinated against the backdrop of what was happening down South, with the Civil Rights movement. Rose, at the time, they were still doing these air raid drills, where these sirens go off and you duck under your desk, or you run home as quick as you can. And then also the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. I distinctly remember, as young as I was, on the radio, they were saying last rites on the radio because of the potential for a missile strike to hit New York City, would impact Albany and Schenectady were not that far away. So all that's rolling around in this young kids mind and then someone comes in and talks about this power of one and equality and justice for all. But it was the third thing he said at the end of his presentation, he said, and by the way, we have an AFSC high school work camp in the Pocono Mountains, who would like to go? I raised my hand and I got permission from the Schenectady Children's Home to go. It was going to that summer, that one week in the Pocono Mountains that really just sort of went from hearing great ideas, sounds great, to spending a week in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. They were bringing people up and in as resource people, we read about Gandhi, read about nonviolence, and then there was this young, white folk-singing couple, Guy and Candie Carawan, from the Highlander Center. Never heard of them, never heard of the group, but they came and I was just fixated on just what they were doing. They were singing, but they were recording songs of the Civil Rights movement. So what was just something (mumbles) made real by two people, white, young folk singers coming to our one week session, and then he talked about the School for the Study of Nonviolence with Joan Baez and Ira Sandperl, which I ultimately ended up going to. So I guess what I was saying is that at the moment, I had no idea what the impact was, but when I look back and ask, what was the turning point, or what was the moment that really sent me in this direction? That would be it. And also in our school, we had an NAACP chapter, but it was a white guy, a white young student. I thought well, isn't that for Black people? Anyway, so just a bit more background because that's the grounding of which I then moved onto a much longer span of time with this stuff. I ended up going to the institute, blah-de-blah-blah, got arrested

during the Vietnam War, went to jail and then got my first job at the War Resisters League in San Francisco, 1969. But in '68, went to the Poor People's Campaign in Washington D.C., '68 went to the Institute session, '69 got my job at WRL and that's where I am now, here in Durham.

- Well, that's a great story, I'm gonna transcribe that story, I mean that'd be a good beginning to the, I will edit these notes, it won't just be a straight, literal transcript.

- Yeah, understood, but that would just help you kind of get the, a little of the journey, because when you read it as a text it's one thing, but when I tell it, it's just, I just don't know how to describe it. But that, you know what I was just thinking of, Rose, though? That wasn't the thing I was thinking of, can I just ask you, how old are you? Just, I don't know if I'm being disrespectful or not, but.

- (laughing) 63, I'm 63.

- Okay, you know what I'm saying? That was our generation, when I say our generation, of that 60's generation. Not everyone was involved but that was, to be a anti, a lot of us were too young for the Civil Rights movement, but King, when he gave that moment, not that speech that he gave in '63 at the March on Washington, but when he gave that speech, April 4th, 1967 at the Riverside Church in New York, when he talked about, we have to challenge what we're doing in Vietnam. And that speech he gave, when he said, how can you ask Black men to go thousands of miles away to another country of color, Vietnam, and basically kill or be killed in the name of democracy, when they didn't have it when they left this country and they didn't have it when they got back. And so I'm not sure if he hadn't given that speech that a lot of us who were just a little too young for the Civil Rights movement then smack dab in the middle of that Vietnam War thing, and then (stammering) a lot of Vietnam War, I was working in San Francisco, it was so male dominated. And then you had feminists start toughening up and talking about nonviolence and feminism, is more about just Vietnam. And then feminists who didn't want to have lesbians involved. So lesbians, and then lesbian feminists, it was like, okay, we'll go where we need to go to get this stuff done. But then you had people like, oh my God, Barbara Deming. Lesbian, feminist, and (mumbles), just incredible and it unrolled before our eyes. And so there's a lot of the South here part of that, and then we'll still here. That's the key, we're still here.

- Well, let me just for dates... When that quaker guy came to your class, is this after Kennedy's assassination?

- Yeah, because Kennedy was assassinated in '63. It was '64 or '65, it must have been my senior year, so it would be '66, '65, '66, but it was after the Kennedy assassination, yes.

- '65, '66, so that would've been when you went to that Quaker...

- Yeah, the high school work camp.

- Work camp; that would've been the summer of '66 maybe, after graduation?

- I'm trying to figure out the timeline because it would either have been '65, '66 because I graduated in May of '66, but I didn't hear about, and when Guy and Candie Carawan talked about the Institute, that didn't even start until '66. So it had to have been either they had heard about she was starting it, because the Institute started in 1966 in Carmel Valley, and they told me about it. So it was either in my junior year of 1965 or my senior year, either one of those. I'd have to almost get the exact time, it was either '65 or '66, for sure.

- It's not real important but I just, whenever I can (papers shuffling) get dates.

- No, no it's good. And I'm still trying to figure out that timeframe for myself because because after I graduated high school, one of the things at the homes that they would do, this was extraordinary, they would pay for my entire college education, if I stayed in college. Well, I tried to do that, but I had already heard about the Quakers and what was going on with the movement or whatever, and I dropped out and they said, you had to stay in school, they didn't pay for my education. So I dropped out and ended up going to San Francisco ultimately. But I spent the summer of '67 in New York, so I think it might've been '66, actually, Rose, because after I graduated I went to Hudson Valley Community College, then I decided I didn't want to do that, dropped out, then I spent the summer of '67 down in New York City. So I think '66 is the right year.

- Okay, so summer of '67, you're out of school, you've dropped out of that community college, and you're in New York City?

- Yes, down in New York City and long story short, I ran out of money and ended up sleeping in the park, but that was like, the hippie thing was going on then. And it brought me one of those, who knew moments, I'm sure you had one, (mumbles). I ran out of money, I was working on the West Side and there was this sign in the window, free lunch, come on in! I went in and it was a place run by Timothy Leary (laughing) LSD. And I got a job there for the summer, sleeping on the couch in the back. They said, as long as you are willing to answer that phone between the hours of eight at night and eight in the morning when people are having bad trips, and you tell them how to come down from it, you can stay here. And I did, it was great. And then at the end of the summer, everyone was (mumbles) well let's hitchhike out the San Francisco, because that's where it's happening. And that was a big year, going to San Francisco, and Haight-Ashbury and three of us hitchhiked out across the country and got to San Francisco, one of those, another one of those who knew moments. Anyone who got into San Francisco, they went to the Haight-Ashbury Switchboard for a place to stay, right? So three of us go down to the Haight-Ashbury Switchboard and get the phone number of a guy named Vincent O'Connor. Of all the people in the world we would've gotten a place to stay, Vincent O'Connor turned out to be a draft resister working with the Catholic Peace Fellowship and because we all three stayed there, ultimately he said, you two have to go, she can stay, because I was interested in nonviolence, in what was going on and volunteered at the Catholic Peace Fellowship in San Francisco and boom, got the opportunity to go down to the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence with Ira Sandperl and Baez. And they were talking about doing a CD action at the Oakland Induction Center; who wants to be involved, who wants to go? I went. It's almost too weird, but yeah, I went and in jail, it was like a hundred women got arrested at the Oakland Induction Center, December, 1967. Jane Schulman came over and said,

Mandy, have you ever heard of a group called the War Resisters League? And I said no, I never heard of it. Well, we'd like to invite you to one of our potlucks. (Rose chuckles) I went, that led to stuffing envelopes and mailings, to going on a couple of trips to listen to people talk about WRL. And a gentleman by the name of Randy Keeler who was at the office with Jane Schulman was doing draft resistance, went to jail and said, we have an empty spot, who'd like to fill it? I did; Rose, that is literally how I got my job at the War Resisters League in San Francisco in 1969.

- Gosh, things were really lining up for you there.

- Oh man, I don't believe in pre-destination, but it makes you wonder; the likelihood of going into that place on the West Side and going to places, the Haight-Ashbury Switchboard and getting with Vincent O'Connor, getting to the Institute and blah-de-blah-blah.

- Well, I want to go back one thing I'm a little vague; there was the Poconos work camp, the Quaker work camp, and then there was another place that you went after that? I don't think I quite have that straight.

- Oh well, let me do the... How it went. So I graduated high school in 1966, and technically, not even technically, legally in the state of New York, at that time, and (mumbles) too across the country, at the age of 18, you aged out of the welfare system. So if you're not adopted, either you're in a foster home, or you're in an orphanage, the way the law reads that once you turn 18 years old, you no longer are a ward of the state, you are on your own. And so when I was graduating from high school at the age of 17, the Schenectady Children's Home, the guy who ran it said, Mandy, you're one of the few who's ever gotten this far in high school, and I got a college prep because I wanted to be a doctor. He said, one thing that we think we'd like to do with you, because most guys were going off to Vietnam or women, they got out of the home, whatever, they went on with their life, but they said, we'd like to offer you this possibility. If you get in college, and I got into Hudson Valley Community College, we will pay for your entire education because this is what we'd like to do, invest in you, even though I'll turn 18, you see what I'm saying, Rose? They said the option (mumbles). And I started to do that, Rose, but I was living at the YWCA in Troy, New York because I was, the community college is part of the SUNY system, was there in Troy. But every day that I stayed there, I wasn't happy because I had lived in institutions all of my life, with the exception of that foster home experience for four years. And I felt like, what's different about this? I'm not happy, but also because of that class and hearing about what was going on with the nonviolence, and hearing what was happening in the South. And at this point, because I had done that AFSC high school work camp, had new resource people coming in, talking about nonviolence, reading about it, getting more information about the Quakers and the American Friends Service Committee. This was all rolling around in my mind. So when I decided, I don't wanna do this anymore, he said, well, you realize if you decide not to do this, then you are on your own. I said, I realize that, and that's when I said, that's when the break happened. I literally took a bus to New York City with \$80 in my pocket, hoping I could get a job and start there. That's when I ran out of money, I didn't get a job, and that's when I happened to go by this place that Timothy Leary ran, and I spent the summer in '67. So that literally was... Graduate high school, Schenectady Children's Home, didn't work out to do school, then I hitchhiked down to New York City, did that, and then I got out to San Francisco. Does that help a little bit with the question you had about just the frame?

- Yes, so the American Friends Service Center work camp was the summer of '66, before you went to the community college?

- Yes, that's right.

- So this is rolling around in you as you start with community college--

- Oh, absolutely. But not just me, and again, whenever I share this I say, not just me. When you think about where this country was at that point and even though the Civil Rights movement was happening down South, and even though we're all (mumbles) in Upstate New York, it seemed like almost a world away. I don't know how to describe that. But because of the kind of change from the absolute focus on what was happening down South, '64, '65, '66. By '65, '66, more and more of what the news was what's happening down South, it was the war in Vietnam because after the assassination of Kennedy in '63, who came into presidency? Lyndon Johnson, and Johnson would still focus a bit on the Civil Rights movement, because remember, he was the one who signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I'm in high school, then we got the Voting Rights Act in 1965, I'm still in high school. And by the time the Voting Rights Act, but the other extraordinary thing that happened in '67, Rose, was in 1967, it was the Loving vs. Virginia case of ending, once and for all, the ban on interracial marriage in this country. And look what's happening today, by the way, what's happening in the US Supreme Court today? (chuckles)

- Wow, yes indeed.

- Yes, and so that's why I thought that the King speech, even though it didn't get as much high profile as his speech in the March on Washington in '63. When he gave that speech in 1967, that was almost a transformative moment, I think, for this entire country, because here's a Black man, who was leading the Civil Rights movement down South who said, we now have to talk about not only the war in Vietnam against the backdrop of Black men, but also before he got killed, also on April 4th, 1968, what was he talking about? He went on to economic justice issues, Rose, because he said if we fight for the right to go to a lunch counter and have a right to sit at that lunch counter and get a meal, do we have any money in our pocket to buy anything once we're there? That became the focus of his, with economic justice, thus the poor people's campaign of 1968. So it's like, my personal life and that whole generation of their lives at this point. And then what was happening with the sort of like Civil Rights, boom, right into Vietnam War

- Gosh, you ought to write a book about your life, this is so interesting.

- Very interesting, I'm glad to talk, well now they have this thing called Dragonfly, I think you can actually talk in it. I don't write, but anyway, but yeah. But that was all of us, Rose, I mean, I don't know, where were you November 22nd, 1963, when you heard the news about Kennedy?

- Oh, I was, yeah I was walking to PE class in Alabama.

- There you go. And by the way, you're in Alabama, you could never forget. It's funny you're talking about that, because we're doing, I was just at the UA Tuscaloosa, we're doing this big stuff around, this is a huge, big anniversary down there with then Governor, George Wallace standing in the doorway down in UA Tuscaloosa. What was it, June 11th, 1963? Amazing, and after the March on Washington, Birmingham, Alabama, 16th Street church bombed by the Klan.

- Yeah, I don't know, I think I was, I had a lot to overcome in terms of being ignorant of... I grew up in a county that was very, very, well, what's the word? Well, racist, and it was majority Black but of course the white people ran everything. A lot of civil rights activism. I mean, I was sort of watching and not understanding. And I'm making up for it now by (laughs)--

- No, no, but you know what fascinates me when you share that, it's so interesting because someone said the way we look at life is like we're all around a certain thing, they use an elephant, for example. And then you ask each person, well, what do you see, what's your reality? Well, what I see is a long trunk and two big tusks. No, no, no, that's not what this is, I'm looking at something that has a tail. But unless you then all kind of rise up above it all and realize you're looking at the exact same thing. But what you're looking at is your reality, and from where you are, because all you know is all you know, but when you start stitching these little stories together, you begin to think, oh, my gosh, because I know exactly where I was on November 22nd, and everyone does. And then you ask, where were you, what did it mean, what was going around you, you know what I mean? And you're living in the state of Alabama, which is the epicenter of whatever, but yet, how old you were and what was, I mean that's what I find fascinating, history. I love it for that reason. And then here we get to share these stories now because this is where we are, this is the... Just at a recent, I was just at UA Tuscaloosa, they had a sixth annual Southeast LGBTQ student leadership conference. And one of the demographics is that people who are between the ages of 18 and 23, 80 million, and we have 79 million who are our age. I said, talk about needing an intergenerational conversation here, this is it.

- Yeah.

- Anyway.

- Okay, all this is really good because our early, our period starts in '68, we're just trying to contain it to '68 to '94, and of course, the women's movement and lesbian feminist activism in that. So let's shift over to that. I still want to know why you picked Durham, did you want to go to school, or?

- Oh, there's a practical reason, because that's where War Resisters League office was. Because when I was living in San Francisco, working at the War Resisters League in San Francisco, I said, when I decided to leave San Francisco, I said, I wanna go east of the Mississippi, because I was born and raised in Upstate New York, I missed the four seasons. And I said, is there a War Resisters League office anywhere east of the Mississippi? You know where it was? Durham, North Carolina; that's why I chose it, because they had a WRL here. I interviewed for a job and got a job at the War Resisters League southeast office in Durham, North Carolina, that's how I got here.

- And that was really kind of a hotbed of a lot of civil rights activism

- Oh, my gosh, tons. Well, between Duke and then, the thing that struck me about Durham, have you ever been here at all? Have you ever been to North Carolina or in Durham?

- Yeah, I spent some time at the Duke University Library going through ALFA archives

- Oh, yeah! Oh wow, yes, yes, they had their archives at, is it the Sallie Bingham?

- Yes, at the Sallie Bingham, they have the Mab Seacrest archives are there, Minnie Bruce Pratt, I looked at all those.

- Oh yeah, Feminary and now SONG has all their stuff there, Ladyslipper has all their stuff there.

- Oh, I don't know that I looked at the SONG stuff when I was there, because that's really what I wanna, we're trying to write a chapter about SONG. And maybe I should ask you if I'm wrong, but it seems like, here SONG comes at the end of our period. And of course, historically, there's never any sort of beginnings and endings, there's all this transition going on, but it does seem that SONG coming where it does right before ALFA closed down.

- Yeah, (mumbles) how many years was that group, how long were y'all, how long did that group exist for, when did it start?

- I think it started in '72 or possibly, I need to go back and look at that, I don't have my timeline. It's either '72 or '74, because we're saying about 20 years on ALFA, which is a very long time. A whole lot of groups formed, Knoxville had a lesbian feminist alliance, too and it lasted not hardly at all, like two years or something.

- No, yours did for a long time. I think, weren't you one of the longest running ones?

- I think it was the longest running one, although I don't have the date on it. But here comes SONG right at the end of this period, and it's like there was a new way of looking at things. Maybe something like that transition you were talking about between civil rights activism and then economic rights. So okay, let's think about, well I want you to respond to the lesbian feminist activism question, whether you see yourself fitting that label or you want to expand it or how do you feel about the label lesbian feminist activism?

- Yeah, okay I'm looking at it right now. Well I would say personally for me, for me personally, I would say, how do I (mumbles)? Well one thing about being in San Francisco, certainly because I was there, once I got connected with the War Resisters League, I was still, that was my first movement job. And so the whole thing, that entire time was all around that war in Vietnam. And because San Francisco was literally across the bridge to where every single male who was going into Vietnam had to go through the Oakland Induction Center, which is why we had Durham, or one reason why the War Resisters League was in Durham is because we're only literally three or four miles away from every military post that's involved in every war in this

country. Fort Bragg, Camp Lejeune, whatever. So WRL sets up where you're in the backyard basically of where the war machine happens. So but I was also a lesbian, and so when I joined the staff of WRL West, I knew that the staff in New York, there were so many gay men there, Igal Rodenko, Dave McReynolds. But Igal Rodenko wasn't just a gay man, he was on the 19, oh we just got done celebrating the 65th anniversary of the pre-'63 Freedom Ride. He was working with Bayard Rustin and some other men, not as a gay man, but as someone who believed in pacifism, who was gay. And I say that because when I was at WRL in San Francisco, I wasn't old enough to go that lesbian bar called Maud's, because you had to be 21. So not only was I active in the anti-war movement, but as a lesbian, the only place you could go as a lesbian were the lesbian bars, but when you went to the lesbian bars back in that day, Rose, that's where a lot of the beginnings of Harvey Milk and the kind of political activism of the queer movement, because there was no roots, no place to go except the bars. So the bars were, in essence, the kind of breeding grounds of activism, in terms of the queer liberation in San Francisco. So I was doing both. I had to wait to be 21 to go to the lesbian bars but I was hanging out with the lesbians there. So in a way, I would describe it as sort of like Barbara Deming, and Mab Seacrest, and Suzanne Pharr. I'm a lesbian, but my world is more defined than just being a lesbian. I care about domestic violence, I care about the Klan, I care about. And so when you think about SONG, when you think about the six individuals who ended up forming that organization out of the 1993 Creating Change conference, where Mab Seacrest gave one of the most amazing speeches about why as an LGB, I don't know if we had the T at that point, we have to care about NAFTA, we have to care about the fact that President Clinton, at that time, because that trade agreement, between Mexico and the United States, in terms of economically what it was gonna do to people. People at Creating Change said, well, why are we talking about NAFTA? What does that got to do with being gay? Well, we did a workshop, Rose. It was Suzanne Pharr, what was she doing? Domestic violence out of the Women's Project in Little Rock, Arkansas. I don't know if you know her, but Joan Garner, who was working with the Fund for Southern Community, who was funding progressive organizing in the South. Pat Hussein, out, Black lesbian, organizing around issues in the South, in Atlanta, not just around being gay. Do you know Pat Hussein, or Joan Garner? They're both Atlanta.

- I don't know Joan Garner. Pat Hussein is, like you, is difficult to get a hold of, and she was recently interviewed so we've arranged to get permission use those interviews, but Joan Garner

- (rapid talking) but I think if you keep trying, she's in a good place right now. We were at the Creating Change conference in Atlanta and she's really in a good space, she's doing well. So I don't know, when's the last time you contacted her, do you know how long ago?

- Lorraine contacted... Well Lorraine was at that (mumbling), a whole bunch of interviews in, I think it was last fall. That was when Lorraine talked to her, but I don't know that she's actually turned us down.

- No I think, in fact, I told her, I said Pat, we really should do this. I will give you her phone number, I'll be more than glad to call her and tell her be in direct contact with you. I know she'd love to do this with you, Rose.

- Well, great, give me her phone number!

- (stammering) I'll get my Rolodex. In fact, can you hang on one second? I need another thing of water and I'll get my Rolodex and then I'll finish answering that question, okay?

- Okay.

- Okay, hang on. (telephone receiver clicking) Okay, I'm back, sorry. I think I pulled the wrong one, I'll see if I can find that. I certainly have her address too, just in case. She's also on Facebook too, by the way. So what I was saying is that, so this might get to, so anyway, (stammering) so for me, personally, I don't mind using the term, I'm a lesbian feminist. I don't mind it; I wouldn't certainly, if I had to qualify it I would say, well what am I? I'm a southern, Black, lesbian social justice activist. But I don't use it like, Barbara Smith would say, good friend of mine, well I would consider myself a Black, lesbian feminist. And that would probably be really true and accurate for Barbara. I probably would say I'm an out, Black lesbian social justice activist. But feminism is certainly part of it, but I wouldn't tag it that way, does that make sense?

- Yeah, I see. And I think that can, you put that in there and a lot of people have different, seems to me like they have different reactions to that label.

- Yeah, maybe it's almost by default, just by who I am or whatever, but some people want to make sure that they stretch that, so. But you know what I find interesting? I have to tell you, maybe it's just, remember I said all you know is all you know, what's around you at the time? In San Francisco, this huge world, besides the stuff we were doing in terms of the anti-Vietnam organizing, was just how male-dominated that whole thing was, because when the draft resistance, you know, we had the draft at that time. And so we had all these men, no disrespect, but you go to meeting after meeting, men, men, men, men, men, and I thought one of the best meetings, when someone really tagged it about what was wrong. We were at a meeting down in Palo Alto and they had a what was called the resistance, which was happening all across the country. We're sitting in a meeting, men and women, and someone said, well we need people to sign up for something, and let's pass that sheet around. Well it got to a women, a friend of mine, and she looked and said, there's nothing but penises on this list. (laughing) And I thought, that just tagged, that just marked it, there's nothing but penises on this list. And a lot of women who were so active in that movement, not just lesbians, but feminist women were saying, well where's our voice, what do we get to do? Well, this great group out of Boston, was called Resist, R-E-S-I-S-T. They wanted to figure out, how could we complement the draft resistance movement that was all men by people who couldn't be drafted because they were either women or too old or whatever, and that became a point of where we could feel like we could have an equal voice and an equal role or equal visibility. And remember, one of the first people who signed that was Dr. Benjamin Spock, the baby doctor. And look what happened, see what I'm saying? It was like, oh, finally! That all of us could figure out a way that we could have a role in terms of how we ended that war, protest the war in Vietnam. But for women, a lot of women said, and also people, Barbara Deming maybe could point you, said it's more than just this particular war in Vietnam. What's going on here? The rapes, the women that were in these clubs with all these guys. You looked at what was happening to the women of Vietnam, with the soldiers, that there's more than just the killing of men and women, each other, talked about all the other surrounding things that happen when a war happens in your country. And she began to

fine tune it, started to understand some of the bigger reality. People like Suzanne Pharr, who talked about that great book she wrote, Homophobia, A Weapon of Sexism. You see what I mean, Rose? So you've got more of a dissecting and a bigger, bigger picture of what the hell was happening. And so for WRL, that was, has always been opposed at every single war, started by three women. Three women!

- Who were they?

- I knew you were gonna ask me that.

- I can look it up, that's okay.

- You can look it up, but if you go to War Resisters League, what is it warresistersleague.org? Three founding women, Jesse Wallace Hughan. Anyway, but that was interesting too, was that it was three women who started that legacy as well.

- So do you suppose that Palo Alto meeting, one of Lorraine's questions was when did you realize you wanted to do work on sexual orientation, along with race or class? Was that, where was your feminist consciousness raising?

- Well actually, I think, what I was gonna say, I mean, that was already happening already because for the War Resisters League, I think was one of the few leagues that actually hired, I mean, had women on staff. Everything was really male, it was like, men, men, men, men, men. We even began the movement with gay men, men, men, men, men. I mean, there was a interesting parallel, we had a movement called the gay movement. We had to end up adding the L for lesbian but for WRL, all I'm saying, that moment in Palo Alto, it was just one of those a-ha moments like, yeah, that really said it all. But a lot of that feminism was really whirling around the WRL because the War Resisters League, even when I joined it back in 1969 on staff, you had some very strong, powerful women in the War Resisters League out of New York. I mean, these women, they were my role models of, we can be women, we're strong, we're feisty, we're started by three women. But never a meeting would happen without equal voices in the room because, you know what the key word was, Rose? Intentional. That, to me has been, if I've learned nothing else over all these years, if you're intentional, when SONG started, it was intentional to have three Black, three white. It was intentional, about intentional intersections of why we understand about those isms. And I think that where we are now, and I look back against the backdrop of all the groups we've had and what we've done and the journeys we've been on. That work, to me, is the essence of what is and needs to be right now. And so I think one reason why SONG has carried on for 20, we had no clue, believe me, Rose, when the six of us got together and thought, well, what do we want to do? Well, it came out of the fact that, if you don't mind me sharing this really quick story--

- Sure, go ahead.

- Are you familiar with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force or the Creating Change conference we do every year?

- Yes.

- Okay, well in this particular year, in 1993, Ivy Young, Black lesbian working with the task force, whatever talk that they were gonna do, it fell through, and she knew we had some good stuff in Durham. She called and said, Mandy, we just lost the site, can we bring the conference to Durham, North Carolina? And she said, that would be good because it's the first time it's ever happened in the South. Yes, absolutely, we have a great community here, fantastic. I had moved here in 1982, this conference didn't happen until 1993, so I knew what we around us, what we pulled together. So here are the phone calls we started getting, Rose, from people coming to the conference, and this is the tone, (speaks indignantly) well is there an airport down there? (Rose laughs heartily) Yeah, Raleigh-Durham is like, 20 minutes from where we're gonna be meeting in Downtown Durham. Well why are we holding it in North Carolina? Isn't that where Jesse Helms is from? We're holding it in North Carolina precisely because that's where Jesse Helms is from. Well are we gonna be able to get regular food, and what are grits anyway? Do you see the tone, do you hear what I'm saying? This is what we were getting. My God, what did you think? And then finally, I always throw this in jokingly, are the streets paved down there? I mean, am I lying? The anti-Southern bias was unbelievable. And so we thought, well maybe a few of us who know each other, let's do a workshop on what it means to be living and organizing in the South as lesbians. So who'd we get? Suzanne Pharr (chuckling), Mab Seacrest, who's doing anti-Klan organizing, Pat Hussein, who's down in Atlanta, Georgia, Joan Garner. And then we ended up adding Pam McMichael later, who's doing organizing around labor stuff in Kentucky. That one workshop and Mab's speech, which I think is printed somewhere, I know I could find for you and send it to you, and (mumbles), who gave a speech about why we have to be beyond just queer stuff. That was the kernel of the dream of what now is still going on with SONG all these years later, because we were intentional but because of that backlash around being in the South, what?

- Cool, I like that, that's a great connection.

- That's it, that's--

- That's the beginning.

- And intentional, we were intentional.

- So SONG, you get the idea for SONG because there's... Because you're doing a workshop on doing activism in the South.

- In the South, right.

- Then you've got all these leaders in Southern activism. And this Joan Garner, I have not heard her name, I need to get in touch with her, I think.

- Yeah, do; and I can also, I'll get you her information. She's now, she actually ran for (stammering), I think

she's either on City Council, or some kind of elected position down where she lives, down in Atlanta. She's also on Facebook as well. But at the time, I don't know, are you familiar with Funds for Southern Communities at all?

- No.

- They fund activist groups in the South, and that's who they are but you could google that or whatever. But that's where Joan was at the time, now she's a elected official in Atlanta. But at the time, that's what she was doing. So really, I mean the essence was, we knew who was around, that people were gonna come to Creating Change, and Mab was already tapped to do this keynote. And so it was almost a culmination of all those little things, but what really what made SONG, and the reason why we came up with this name and the reason why we ended up coming up with our original purpose; the thing you have here, that was the more recent update of the statement of purpose. Our original one that came out of our forming with Mab and me and Suzanne and Joan, and the sixth, Pat, was building transformative models of organizing in the South that would connect race, class, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and I think we added gender identity. And I think the key word's transformative models of organizing and with the intentional thing around the isms was to show that it wasn't just about being a Southerner, it wasn't just about being gay or Lesbian or whatever. And then if you took all that and then looked at the world around you or what you're organizing around, you could see the connections. But I will tell you this, Rose, I think one of the key things that was most important for us when we all met, the six of us, when we were meeting, we were talking about the work we were all doing at that time, and we were talking about how do we take each piece that we were talking about in what we're doing, and trying to figure out how we could then say it wasn't just about us, it wasn't just about being Lesbian, it wasn't just about being a Southerner. What would be the thing that you could take anywhere, particularly in the South, that would allow us to sit at a number of different tables, right? What would be the thing or things that would allow us to sit at a number of different, that were not ours, that were not gay, whatever. And one of the first things we decided to do was to try to figure out how we could work with a non-gay issue that was around economic justice. And one of the things that we worked on was the, it came a little bit later in the years, but it was this thing called the Immigrant Freedom Ride. I don't know if you remember that at all, but there was an immigrant workers Freedom Ride around farm labor, across the country. And you know, there's a lot of farm labor in the South, as you know. And so that was a particular intentional thing of hooking up the African-American community with our history of our Freedom Rides in the South with the farm labor organizing that was Latina, Latino, and figuring out how we would work with that and not just as a gay thing with SONG. So one of the stops was in Durham. Another one was the Mount Olive Pickle Boycott, out of Mount Olive, North Carolina, and SONG was at that table. So it was almost like we had to intentionally go to someplace else that normally we wouldn't be sitting at that table. And those relationships, that work, really probably for a lot of people said, well maybe being gay isn't just about being gay, it's about broader issues. But also for a lot of groups, like the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, you name it. There's a lot of gay and lesbians in those organizations but they wanted to find out, how can I be real with who I am, continue the important work that I do, but bring all of who I am to the work that I do, bring all of me? And I think that has just been such a touchstone for SONG. So we work with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. We are in coalition right now with immigrant organizing in Atlanta, Georgia and Alabama. And so people see, we show up. We're there, we're serious, we mean it. We're here

because of your issue and we all understand about the justice issues across all of those different levels and SONG will continue to be a constant partner in this effort. We don't want you to join us, we don't want you to be us. We want to figure out how we, we, move all of us forward. That's it.

- That sounds very much like what Bernice Reagon Johnson talked about with coalition building in the 90's.

- Dead on. That's the future too, for me, in my opinion.

- Well that is a great story. And so the longevity, you think, has to do with this fact that it's focused on being at the table and being there?

- Yeah, and there's a quote that I got from my good friend, Randy Roma, down in Little Rock, Arkansas, one of the quotes is, are we about, and that's, yeah I think this queer movement right now, at this point, are we about justice, or are we about just us? We are right smack dab in the middle of that, as far as I'm concerned, and I am so upset, I cannot tell you how upset I am with a movement that seems to be, I shouldn't say all, I'll qualify it. But I've heard more than one time, Rose, I've heard this quote. I've heard people say, well you know what? We're almost getting everything we want. You know, Don't Ask Don't Tell, thanks Bill Clinton. DOMA, who knows what's going to happen with the Supreme decision--

- That was another thanks, Bill Clinton.

- Yeah, don't even get me started. But the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, if we put anywhere near even 1/4 of the energy and money we would put in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act for jobs, at the behest of marriage. Well I've heard people say, I'm good, and I've said, well what about other issues, what about immigration? What? No one told me that was a gay issue. I mean, that's penalty; no that's not a gay issue. You know what I mean? It's like people have been so focused on just their gay stuff and the minute you try and bring something in, reproductive rights, that's not a gay, in fact, you have a group of gay people who are bent on, they're anti-choice. And so as we move on, depending on what's going with the court case, but also what happened before this one? The Voting Rights Act, my God! We're gonna bring that up again? And I've heard people say, well who cares about that? We want to talk about marriage. It's frustrating, and so SONG and other groups are in this moment of asking, I'm looking online, Facebook, there's tons of stuff on the Facebook right now. Scot Nakagawa has this great piece about marriage equality. Yeah, but what about the broader big issue of equality and justice for all? And Suzanne Pharr and I and a bunch of people signed this great thing called Beyond Marriage. Why is it that the only way you get access to all these things, being married, gay or straight? What if you never get married, what happens to us? No, you should get this stuff just because. So we're gonna have some interesting conversations, I think, however the state goes, but it's been out there. And it's gonna come to a head sooner or later, because it is more than just about the queer thing. I'm done with it, I just can't deal with it anymore. I'm for marriage equality, great. But I'd like to have a job (Rose chuckles). Put energy into that, for goodness sake, get on with it.

- Yeah well, this project is focused on all the kinds of activism that lesbians were doing. And what's happening, I've interviewed a whole bunch of Gainesville women, and we have a whole chapter about the

Gainesville Women's Health Center, which was one of the first. And what happened there was, well they did a conference on women's health. A national conference, in Gainesville, about the year after they did their clinic. And they had been having struggles with lesbians and straight women working together at the clinic. So they had a workshop on this at their Women's Health Conference, and it was so popular they had to have two sessions. And then they started keeping meeting, and of course by the time this was over, they were all gay (raucous laughing).

- When did this happen?

- This is in the 70's.

- Oh, my gosh, really?

- Yeah, so working on women's health issues in the 70's in Gainesville, Florida and working with straight women and all this. What would happen, in fact, one of them told me, this was interesting. I asked her if she identifies as a lesbian feminist, she says, you know, I've been living with a woman for 20 years, and I still identify as a heterosexual who's chosen to be a lesbian. (raucous laughing)

- Now that's fascinating, isn't that (mumbles). Wow, that's interesting.

- Because you know, lesbians had a great time and the straight women were jealous, really, I think (chuckles).

- I always wondered that too. I always wonder, deep down whether or not this sort of, I can't believe there's lesbians (mumbles), I don't know, I don't want to go too far on this. But you know what I mean? What is that, what is that kind of a (grumbles). But listen, remember the Lavender menace was now. I mean, look at that drama that went on, are you kidding me?

- And that new show, the Makers movie that was just on, it's so depressing to me. I don't know, I guess I should've felt better about it but when it talked about the 1977 World Conference on Women, when NOW and Betty Friedan come out in favor of lesbians. And the white wing used it against them, in 1977.

- Oh wow, what movie are you talking about? What's it called, The Makers, what's that?

- The Makers, it was on PBS. I didn't even know about it, I was interviewing Billie Avery who was in, she was with the Gainesville Women's Health Service, what I was interviewing her about, and she was telling me about that movie, which is really a good movie, it's three hours long. I mean, I could not watch it all at one time. But it's a history of the Women's Movement, on PBS, I'm sure you can get it somewhere.

- I'll have to look it up.

- Yeah I think it's called Makers.

- Is it called M-A-K-E-R, The Makers?

- The Makers, I believe that's it. Wait a minute, let me look at the...

- Yeah, please do, I'll google that.

- It goes over a lot of that anti... That anti-women's stuff. (mumbling) Oh, there it is Makers, just Makers. It came on February 26,

- Okay great, I just thought I'd write it down.

- It's (mumbles) about the history. It's a good show but whoa, reel in some of that the bad stuff, like the ERA not passing and all.

- Oh, yeah. Can I ask you a real quick question? It's still relevant with this interview. I am struck, and maybe it's just me, I am so struck right now over, well remember how Women's Studies programs started at college campuses, remember how, now we have Women and Gender studies, but I was thinking about the Women's Studies programs going on, and now here at Duke, we have a great women's, they're doing a three-part series on Women's feminist stuff. And we're in these classrooms, Rose, the kids know all about the reading of these people, they have not bumped into the real, live people that are living right here in Durham, so. Kathy Rudy, who's a professor, said what would be good, and we're partnering with the Sallie Bingham Center, what we need to do is, you can read the book but why don't you bring the people in who you're reading about, because they're right here? I mean, it's not intellectual, it's real life. So I guess what I'm saying is that when people study, when they study Women's Studies, and they're going back to the 1970s, we're all still around. (laughing) So Sally Bingham, last year had this great symposium, and she brought back women who were active then and now from the 70's, so they could look at us and say, we're here, ask us what you want to know. I mean, it's not like reading some intellectual kind of, you know what I mean? There's a difference between reading it and seeing it and hearing it from the people who were actually there.

- Gainesville's University of Florida has been doing a series called Radical Women of Gainesville. And they do these little panels where they bring these people, Corky Culver's the person that was my connection in Gainesville. She was on one of these panels and they video taped them. But they don't have a huge crowd come to them, but at least there are these women talking about, and they're mostly not lesbian, I think Corky's usually the one that talks about that. But they were women who were radicals, who are still radical feminists.

- Exactly, exactly, and I was gonna say to you, what I found fascinating is that when I think about it, and when the 70's, I mean that's a huge pool of people, so we're all still around. And in fact, now that we're doing this big anniversary at the March on Washington, when we screen the film, we always ask people who were there, come and talk about what it was like, you were there, and share what that's like. And then all of

us will, because we have set the dates, it's gonna be what, the 24th through the 28th of August. Back in DC, the King Center's gonna do this big 50th anniversary thing. But they're focused on King, we'll be focused on Bayard and all the other whatever. But when you have living history right in front of you and you're not aware of it or you're not accessing it, because these students, they're at Duke, they never venture off that damn campus. And you're right in the heart of Durham with Duke. Some of the major Civil Rights stuff that happened in this community; feminist stuff that happened in this community; lesbian feminist stuff is two blocks away. And they're not moving from that campus so we have to almost bring it to them. But with the series that Sallie Bingham is doing and Kathy Rudy's class, it's really opening up a lot of doors, it's just wonderful. I see the young women and some of them said, no we don't use the word feminist anymore, everyone knows we just are (chuckles). And when you can say you just are, please remember those came before you so you can just say, we just are.

- Wow, I think we might have covered, oh, did you know, one of Lorraine's questions, did you know any of those SONG founders before? You must've known Mab because she was--

- Oh, knew them all, oh yeah, I knew them all. And that was the reason why we were able to bring the people together, that was it. (stammering) Yeah, the reason why we brought together the people we did, because we knew each other. And so we all were working in the South, and when this kept on coming up about this anti-Southern bias stuff, and plus because we also wanted to, probably for the first time if I remember, interject into the usual LGBT stuff around progressive work, issues, not just gay. Yeah, so we already knew each other. Then the question was, how do we go from knowing each other to forming this thing called SONG? And that came out of a five day retreat, when we met, talked, what we wanna do, what was gonna be the issue. I must say probably two critical points in our growth, is I'll use that term, and this might've happened without it as well; remember, we were three Black women, three white women in the South, but at one point we said, this is not the South anymore. This is not the South, we're not reflecting the real South in which we live. It's not just Black, white anymore and it's not just women. So we made a critical decision to, oh, also remember intentionality of three Black, three white? The other intentionality was co-directorships. All we have are co-directorships, not just one. So we had Pat Hussein living in Atlanta as a co-director and Pam McMichael, white lesbian living in Kentucky. So when we decided to shift up the dynamic, we hired a Black, gay man, Craig Washington in Atlanta, who took over for Pat and Pam in Kentucky. But then we said we also have to start looking for non-Black, non-white people. And at one point, we decided, it's time for us to let this go. Who can we else get in, keep the SONG thing going, but who else can we get in? And because the current co-director is Paulina Hernandez, was at Highlander where Suzanne was the executive director for five years, as was Caitlin Breedlove. They became the new directors. And so Suzanne's still in there, we're in the mix, but you see what I'm saying, Rose? I mean that intentionality, being very careful, being very committed, being very serious about the intentionality. And I think another reason why the longevity factor, we have so many (papers tearing) we partner with in the South. And I think the South is much more conducive to how can we cooperate, not compete? I have been organizing for so long where you go, no we don't work with them, no you can't look at our list, no you don't, everything's always being so, we don't trust you. Here it's like, what can we do together? And I think that's another part of why the longevity. We're just like, how can we be a part of? I would say that.

- That reminds me of, I've interviewed some people about the National Lesbian Conference in '91 that was such a disaster (laughing).

- Oh, my God who could ever forget that conference? Oh, my lordy (laughing). Were you there?

- No, a friend of mine has the archives from it. She was local, it was Gayle (mumbles), she was the local disability person. And when they packed up that thing they left the office just full of stuff she had to pack up, she didn't want to throw it away.

- What are they doing with it? That should be archived, is it not being archived someplace?

- Well, it is now, when I met with her she was going through it and figuring out what to keep, and then she will send it to Duke, so.

- All right, good, good, good. All of my stuff's there too because I've got, listen, being in the heart of that, all my stuff over there too. But I have to tell you, despite the drama over that thing, that was one of those moments I would call a moment, was that lesbian conference. Anyway, I'm sorry, go ahead.

- Well, you know, you're talking about the longevity of SONG and being intentional, and the NLC was doing that, was trying really hard to be intentional around a lot of things, but it just backfired all over the place.

- Well, if you want my two cents, having been in the mix of all that, no disrespect. (stammering) This might be true for you, sometimes things happen at the moment but it takes a few years later to figure out and go, oh, so that's what that was all about. Well, that's what I would say about the National Lesbian Conference. From the very beginning and the perception of the concept of it, to where we ended up doing it in Atlanta. This is me, and I'm gonna tell you straight from my heart, I thought there was some lesbians who were being so intentionally disruptive. And even to this day, I have gone on my trips and I see people that, I don't know how to describe this, I don't know what it is. It's almost like NOW, what is this negative thing that happens with NOW? There's so much drama in there, and it's almost like, someone said maybe because as women that we have been so traumatized ourself that sometimes we don't know how to shut that off. So we end up doing the exact same thing to other people that's happened to us. It's like a mother who batters, someone who is a victim of battering, but the person who's battering her, had that happen to her. And with NOW, I finally had to just kind of withdraw. Deep battles over who's going to be the president, who's going to be the vice president, who's going to be these teams? And you've been to a NOW national conference lately, or have you been?

- I have never had a good feeling about NOW, I don't know.

- But I think, and part of that might be I don't know if it's just me, and I'm telling you, a lot of that played out against the National Lesbian Conference. We'd have these meetings, and there'd be one or two lesbians who just, it seemed like their purpose in life was just to be as disruptive as they could be. And because there was (mumbles) and everyone has a right to say, blah, blah, blah. We're having something on a main stage, a

woman comes up out of nowhere, steps up and says, we need to stop everything right now because I just heard blah-de-blah, blah. And how we got through it, I don't know. And I don't know, I don't know how else to explain it but I felt that there was almost a very, a pattern of what can I do to mess this up? I'm not trying to be not fair, but I'm also saying, I've sat in too many meetings.

- Under the guise of political correctness.

- Go ahead.

- Under the guise of political correctness, this all comes--

- That's it, exactly. And because everyone bought into that, everyone stopped everything (mumbles). And finally someone said, you know what? Enough. And then this is what we ended up saying, maybe people need to make a decision at this point, if you decide you don't get along in this process, the question you have to ask yourself, do I remove myself, or do I continue to be something that's gonna hold something up, or do we figure out at some point, consensus doesn't work anymore, and you move on?

- I've seen that a couple of different... Well, organizations. One is the Atlanta Women's Feminist Chorus, or Feminist Women's Chorus. I've transcribed an interview with some of those people, and they were talking about toward the end why it didn't last, this no longer really exist, and it ended in the 90's, was that there was a toxic group who finally had to (mumbles). And similarly, at Woman Rights, which is the organization that's working to put this project together. You know about Woman Rights, don't you?

- Oh, yeah. In fact, I want to go at some point in my life. I might go next year when I have my year off. I've never been able to get to it.

- Yeah, I hope you do. We will make it happen if you want to come.

- Oh, definitely, definitely would like to do it. Go ahead.

- Back in the day, I think this happened in the 80's, I only started attending in the 90s, but there were these sort of tales? We're at a point right now where the biggest issue is that we don't have enough young people coming. But there used to be all these issues that would come up, and one that was told a lot had to do with, about anti-racism. We also don't have enough Black people come, and from the beginning that's been a problem. Here we are, so close to Atlanta and there might be three Black women at the whole conference, and there might be 80 people. But there was people who would make these little dramas around, somebody gets up and gives a reading and they decide that it's racist somehow or other, and they make a fuss, and so then we have all this processing.

- I always wondered, so how did (stammering) what happened, did the group shut down, or what happened?

- Well, this is our 35th Woman Rights. We have never missed a year since 1978.

- Wow, so do you know where it's gonna be in 2014 at this point?

- It's always the same place, and I attribute that location to our longevity. We never have to look for a place.

- Oh, good, good, good, oh yeah.

- It's in (mumbles) State Park, which is about an hour south of Atlanta, actually less than an hour, but. How did we get onto that? I think what happens is that time passes, and then the people who were there don't wanna do it again. They don't want to have to deal with that again, and maybe people go away, like, Minnie Bruce Pratt doesn't come anymore.

- I was gonna say, and this is what I wonder too, Rose, and maybe this is one of those interesting how do you make lemonade out of lemons? I think another thing I've realized, and I think a lot of people do, there's this great quote, I don't organize, if there's a need, fill it. And this is happening on a lot of campuses right now where you have gay student groups, but you have people of color within those groups who say, but I don't feel comfortable, and they want to start a people of color group and then they say, don't do that, why do we have to be separate? Well that's what's happening with Prides. I mean, in a weird way, this kind of gets to a bigger piece of it, but you always had Prides, well the Prides are predominantly white, no big whoop, that's okay. But when we wanted to start doing Black pride, to complement, not compete, the first reaction we got, this was in DC, why do you need a Black pride, we already have pride? They missed the point. The point was, we all want to be a part of your pride, but we want to have something that celebrates, honors, and acknowledges the Blackness of who we are. You could say the same about Latina, Latino, naming whatever it is, but if you want to put it in either or, and you don't put an and in there, and you don't find some way in which you can co-exist, that's when you get people going against each other. And then here's the real reality, the demographics of this country are shifting dramatically. California is now majority people of color. Why am I going to a meeting, it's a gay meeting, there's no people of color in that meeting? See what I'm saying? And now women are numerical majority in this country. So at some point, I think each person has to ask themselves, am I gonna sit here and be dramatized or traumatized, and I don't like it, I'll go start something else. What's the point? And to me, the more we start, some things last, some don't, but what scares me, we're losing good people. We're losing talented people because they just can't deal with the drama anymore. And where do they go? So you try to create something where it's a space for them, whether it's one or two or something. I just kind of think we have to figure out some way in which you don't lose wonderful people. But again, the intentionality; for me, this would be my opinion, if you start anything new at this point, how can you start without starting automatically with the diversity of what you'd like to get? That was (mumbles), we didn't want to start with all Black or all white. These orgs do that and they say, well who's missing? Oh, let's go ask them. Well you've already started your group already. Start from the get with what you want it to be, what you want it to look like. Then you might have a lot more success in terms of where it could go. And that's just, to me, practical, from this point forward, whenever, if you're serious. And then there's other times when you need to be just by yourself, what's wrong with that? It's complex, but I think if we're honest and serious about trying to get all of us moving, we, not the I, not my, but we, how do

we have a serious, honest conversation about how? Or if you find out it ain't gonna work, then be honest about that and get on with it, move on and not hold up stuff. But I mean, I think we're in an amazing moment. I think we are truly, this country, this world; if anyone thought, on August 28th, 1963, standing on that hot Lincoln Memorial and on the mall, that 50 years later we would have a Black man, who's the son of an interracial marriage, who supports LGBT rights, in that White House, people would say that it's not possible, it's not possible. And look what's happening to Supreme Court, it's just unbelievable, but yet we are in a moment. I get chills about it, seriously. So where do we go? (chuckles)

- Okay, this is good. This is a lot of really good stuff here. I want to sit down and transcribe it and start editing and shaping it some. I have got Suzanne Pharr lined up for Thursday this week. And what I would like to do is go ahead and share my transcript of this with her, as well as you, before you have had a chance to respond, is that okay?

- No, no, no problem, go ahead. Knock yourself out, not a problem.

- (laughs) okay, I mean we are, the deadline we're looking at is to send this (mumbles) everything we have, in May, and have them tell us. And it's way more than one issue, what we have already is enough for a double issue. But they have to tell us if they'll let us have a double issue. So we're trying to get as much good stuff as we can ready to send in May. Our final deadline is November, but until we know whether we're gonna do one issue or a double issue, we don't know what we would have to cut, how long the interviews can be. We're shooting for 1500 words but they're tending to be 3000 words. This interview's probably 10000 words right now, but of course there's a lot, like all my stuff that can go out, but. So it won't be a literal transcript like somebody who's, like a court reporter would do. It'll be what I think we can use, it'll be what I think we can use, and it'll be edited and I'll have questions for you in it.

- Great.

- Okay.

- Okay, well what I'll do is, I'm gonna, when I get off this call, I'll forward you my bio, I'll find Joan's email and Pat, but they're both on Facebook as well. And also their phone numbers and email, so that should help you. And then I'm in for the rest of the week, so if anything else comes up, let me know. But I really appreciate this call, because I have to tell you, Rose, one thing about interviews, and this might be true for you (mumbles) but I'm so busy doing it, I don't take time to stop and think about, well what's it all meant? So until people ask me these questions, that's what I love with the questions Lorraine had, and yours. (stammering) that's why interviewing and keeping record is so important. And I realize the importance of that. So thank you, you've got me jazzed now, I'm up for the rest of the day now. (laughing) Anything else, are we good?

- I think we're good, knock on wood (rhythmic knocks).

- All right, thank you.

- Okay, talk to you later.

- Wait, and hopefully, oh and are the dates always the same every year for Woman Rights (stammering)?

- They aren't; we do meet twice a year now, in May and then again in October. And it's roughly, this year we're meeting kind of early, May 12th through 19 is the whole conference, pre-conference starts May 12th because there's something called Mondo Homo in Atlanta. We used to meet close to Memorial Day weekend, it turns out that's conflicting with Mondo Homo and we think that's why we're not getting young people.

- Oh, I see, okay, all right. Well for next year, I definitely, like I said, next year, in fact, one thing nice about taking a year off, I get to do all the things I've never been able to get to, like Michigan, Woman Rights. And so I'll check it out, and then I'll be able to kind of put it on my calendar because I can go where I want, when I want, which is nice for a change.

- Actually, I have the May 2014 dates because we were able to get those, I'll send those dates.

- Oh, really, for next year? So when is it, May what?

- Oh, I have to look it up.

- All right, well if you find it, either forward it or whatever, because I'm starting to put my 2014 calendar together now, and so there's certain key things. I wanna keep a lot of dates open because that's the whole point, don't have any things on the calendar. But I definitely want to get to Woman Rights, never done that, and I told Lorraine I would love to and some other people, and Michigan I think, maybe. Once in my life, at least once, I've never been there and I wanna--

- Me either! Yeah, I want to go to Michigan too.

- Anyway, okay, all right well, let me get this other stuff down, I'll get it to you and thank you, thank you, thank you, Rose, I appreciate this.

- Thank you too, great.

- All right, bye bye.

- All right, bye bye.