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Interviewee: **Tracy Morgan**

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ACT UP Oral History Project
Interview of Tracy Morgan
October 12, 2012

SARAH SCHULMAN: The way we start is you tell us your name, your age, today's date, and where we are.

TRACY MORGAN: Okay. My name's Tracy Morgan. I'm fifty years old. We're at my apartment in Brooklyn, and today is the twelfth of October, 2012.

SS: Where did you grow up?

TM: I grew up in New Jersey.

SS: And what kind of environment were you raised in?

TM: I was raised in an environment — I was raised in Bergen County, so I was raised always looking over the river at the city. The George Washington Bridge was the way in. I was sort of always thinking how can I get out of there. As a friend always called it, the open prison, you can leave but there's nowhere to go. And I was, "How can I get out of here?"

It was upper middle-class suburb, but my parents were teachers. I was sort of raised around a lot of people who had a fair amount of wealth, and we were comfortable. We went to the Caribbean or did things like that, but we really — I was not going to get a BMW when I got my driver's license, but that's who I went to school with.

And my parents were both very socially minded, my mother particularly. I remember her locking herself in the bathroom, when Martin Luther King was shot, and yelling. I remember, I have these memories. They didn't go on marches or anything like that, but I was raised with an awareness of those that have and those that don't.

SS: What did they teach?

TM: My mom taught mostly history. Social studies, I guess it's called. And my dad was a remedial reading specialist. He was less political. My mother really

had, and has, a very active mind politically, and it's her passion. But my dad was a basketball coach. He was a Catholic, born and raised. He went to the church as often as he could. That was his way. But my mother was Protestant. Somehow they married. In the fifties, it was like a Jew and Catholic, you know. It might as well have been. And I have a brother whose not quite two years younger than me. So we're Irish twins.

SS: So your parents, where they involved in — you said your father went to church a lot. Was he involved in the church community. What I'm asking you is did you grow up with values about community.

TM: No, not particularly. It was not particularly stressed. For instance, I was not raised in the church at all. I was raised sort of knowing my father was going to church, but I was not raised — I was baptized. I never made my first holy communion. I never felt any pressure or need to join in and become a part of that.

I think that my sense of community came more from friends. I really felt always as a kid that I had a community of friends who were sort of a substitute family that I really felt a lot closer to and more at home with. I was like, "Was I born into the wrong family," a little bit. Friends were always it for me. Tomorrow I'm going to have my fiftieth birthday party, and there'll be seventy-five people here, many of them I've known for twenty-five, thirty-five years.

SS: So what would you say was your first sort of political participation?

TM: My first political participation was when I was in the second grade, and I was in New Jersey at the Stony Lane Elementary School, and that was — what year was that? I can't really figure that out, but what's —

SS: You were born in '63, right?

TM: Sixty-two. Second grade, you're seven, seven, six?

SS: Sounds like '69.

00:05:00 TM: Sixty-nine, yes. I went into the school and I was really distressed that girls couldn't wear — how did it go? You couldn't wear pants until November, and then you couldn't wear pants after April. That just bugged me. So there were all these photographs of girls wearing pants under dresses, which is a cute look now, but it was mandatory then. You had to have a dress over your pants. You couldn't just wear your pants in September. That was not allowed. You could wear pants in November. Well, the photographs of the school were always taken in September for each class, and there would be these girls, myself included, with pants.

I wrote a petition, and I got all the girls and boys to sign, saying girls should be allowed to wear pants whenever they want. And so they changed the rule. I met with success. I had a good experience.

SS: How did your parents respond to that?

TM: They thought it was great. They found it — you know, they liked that. They didn't know what would come later, maybe didn't like that as much, but they really thought that was great.

SS: So that was the beginning. You did direct action at age seven.

TM: Yes, I did direct — it was really just a petition, no sit-ins. But a petition, I really was getting — I had the desire to get others involved and thinking, like, “This is not right. We should be able to wear pants whenever we want to to school.”

SS: So where did it go from there?

TM: Where did it go? Let's see. When I was in high school, I'm thinking that — I was the homecoming queen. I was very friendly with everyone. It wasn't because I was beautiful, but it was more like you got voted that because you were friendly with lots of people in lots of different groups. But I had a natural draw or inclination to protect those who — of course, amongst teenagers somebody's always being vilified. I remember I had this guy who liked me who was on the football team, and he was always asking me out. I was walking down the hall with my best friend at the time, Jennifer, who'll be here tomorrow at my birthday party. Anyway, we're walking down the hall and he mooed at her. She was a little bit heavysset. And I just said, "Don't moo at my friend."

And he was like, "What?"

And I said, "Don't moo at my friend." I was like, "You can't do that to her."

And so then I experienced the fall from grace. I went from being the most popular girl, but once you stood up against one of these football guys you sort of lost your standing, and people — I remember other girls being scared to be associated with me because I had stood up to one of these guys, and they didn't kind of want to catch it — be contaminated by this, by my act.

That was not quite political activism, but it certainly was a sense of like, "You can't just treat my friend that way, and I'm not going to watch that happen and say nothing."

But then when I went to college — things were so different. I remember that I read — you might have said maybe you're a bit of a feminist, or you had a feminist

consciousness. I wouldn't have said I had that as a young girl. Yes, my acts looked feminist, but I didn't really have the mindset. When I got to college, I remember being at a boyfriend's house, his mother's house in Philadelphia, and she had a copy — I think it's someplace here — of *The Women's Room*. Remember that book?

SS: Marilyn French. That's right.

TM: I took that book off the shelf and I read it. I think it was between my freshman and my sophomore years. I transferred colleges. I read that book, and I was like, "Oh, my god. Abso-fuckin'-lutely." Every aspect of it was like a mini consciousness-raising.

So I transferred. I was at American University my first year of college, didn't really like it. It was too much money for my family. They said, "You have to transfer." So I transferred and I went to SUNY Albany, which was much less expensive, even my being from New Jersey. And so I get there, and I've read this book.

I have this Intro to Psychology class, which I hated. It was a 300-person class, and at the end of the class, the professor was doing this review with us, and I'll never forget what he said to this class of 350 students. He said, "Well, everything we've studied, just as an aside has to do with the psychology of men. Very little has really been done on the psychology of women."

And I remember I sat up, ran down the aisle. Class was over. And I said to him, "Are you telling us the truth? Is that the truth, what you said about women?" I was like, "I'm just dumbfounded by this." This is 1980, I guess, maybe '81.

He said, "Yes, it's quite true."

I said, “Well, why would you tell that to us at the end of the class and not at the beginning?”

And he said, “I don’t know. I hadn’t really thought of it.”

00:10:00

And I was like, “Well, wow.”

I walked up the stairs. I was always studying history, that was what I was studying, and I added Women’s Studies to my topics. I went right to the registrar and I said, “I’d like to declare a major in Women’s Studies, thank you.” Before it was Gender Studies, right? It was Women’s Studies. And then Women’s Studies at Albany was really quite incredible.

SS: Did you go to school with Rachel Levitsky?

TM: Yes, sure.

SS: There was some teacher who was blowing everyone’s mind, I remember.

TM: Oh, Judy Fetterley.

SS: That’s right.

TM: We loved Judy Fetterley.

SS: What class was that?

TM: Rachel and I are old roommates, so we know each other from college. We might have taken a class with Judy Fetterley and G.J. Barker-Benfield, who wrote the – I’m going to get the title wrong – *Horrors of the Half-Known Life*, something about medical history of women in England or some nightmare. And he was great, terrific guy. They team-taught a course in nineteenth literature and culture.

So I read Hawthorne. I read *The Scarlet Letter*, the *Blithedale Romance*, read a lot of Melville, read *Bartleby* — and read it in such a way that really linking up my social change and creativity, and creative expression through literature. It was a terrific class.

She was a ball buster of a writer. She taught me how to write. Every time I sit down to write today, I can write because of her. And she was fabulous. She was really butch. I remember walking into class and I was like, “Is she a man? Is she a guy?” Is she a guy, that was the question. And I was like, “She not a guy. She’s a woman.” And she was so charismatic and so unbelievable, you couldn’t not pay attention to her. She was from Indiana. She had these freckly arms and this white bunch of hair, and she dressed buttoned down and her western belt or western boots. She had it going on.

That Women’s Studies department was amazing. It was all these incredible lesbians who ran this department — really fabulous, really interesting people. I was taught by Judith Johnson. Judith Sherwin. She was a poet. And I was taught by Audre Lorde. Not *taught* Audre Lorde; I was taught *by* Audre Lorde. I was taught by Gwendolyn Brooks, taught by Judy Grahn. They had these women come. She was connected. They came. What’s her name — June Jordan, before she died. A whole list. It was incredible. What I was exposed to at this state school where anything could have happened or nothing could have happened at all. It’s a state school. It was a fabulous department.

We got to teach Introduction to Feminism. If you wanted to, you had to join — you would take Introduction to Feminism, which was really Introduction to Lesbianism. It really was Lesbian 101; men are bastards, and this is the only way

forward. I remember reading *Lesbian Studies* by Marilyn Frye. I remember reading Mary Daly. Hello! *Gyn/Ecology*. That's what we read, and I was like, "This stuff is awesome." It was mind-blowing.

I took this Intro to Feminism class, which was taught by students. So cool. I was like, "What's going on? This is terrific." If you wanted to teach the Intro, you had to join the collective. Then you join the collective, and we would meet weekly and have consciousness-raising. I did this probably in '82. And then I taught, and I taught with a woman who was my lover at the time, Cris Mayo, who's a professor of educational philosophy in Illinois now. We taught that together, and it was terrific. It was a great experience.

I felt really respected and taken very seriously, and for the first time in my life, I really knew — in high school, I was just an okay student. I just soared. There was something about this moment, this environment, this Women's Studies Program, that gave me a context for — it sort of organized my already formed but inchoate way of thinking about the world. It gave it more shape, maybe more legitimacy. It was one of the best things I ever did.

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SS: I just want to ask you one more thing about high school and then go back to this. So, abortion was made legal in '73.

TM: Right.

SS: And you're in New Jersey. I know in New York it was '71, but I don't think it was so in New Jersey.

TM: Right.

SS: Were you aware in high school of people getting pregnant? Was that an issue that was on your radar?

TM: No. It was on the radar. I didn't know of anyone who got pregnant, but it seemed that there was enough birth control around that it wasn't such a big worry. You could get on the pill if you wanted, just go to the — there was a good clinic nearby, so you didn't have to jump through hoops or get your parents' permission. I think that most of us were protecting ourselves from pregnancies because there were no obstacles to that.

SS: So you graduated from Albany with a degree in Women's Studies.

TM: Yes. And said, "What am I going to do?"

SS: Then how did you get to New York?

TM: Oh, I just came back. I was like, "Okay, I'm leaving Albany." I loved school there, but I hated Albany. It's a town of people with — I don't know. It's very strange place, and so I was happy to leave.

I came back to New York. My grandfather had said, "I'll help you to get an apartment."

I was like, "Okay, great." So Rachel and I got an apartment with a friend of hers, who I don't remember, who has an old cat of mine. But, anyway, we lived uptown. We lived uptown, and we were like, "What are we going to do for a living?" I think she was at Union Theological Seminary. I'm pretty sure that she got a job there, and I got a job at the Foundation Center.

I'd been accepted to Rutgers to the doctoral program in literature, and I was interested in studying with Elaine Showalter, and she was there. I had been accepted

and I'd deferred for a year. I thought, "You know what? I want to just live a little bit of life before I go into a doctoral program." I took a year off.

Showalter went to Princeton, and I remember I corresponded with her. I don't know if I have this letter anywhere. I believe in the letter she wrote me was that she wanted to begin to teach, sort of the elite, these ideas, and Rutgers was not as elite, and Princeton was more so. So she went there.

I took that year off. I just worked at the Foundation Center doing boring fact checking or whatever I did, just made money and just fooled around.

SS: That was '83?

TM: No. I graduated right in '85.

SS: So we all know the AIDS crisis starts in '81.

TM: Right.

SS: And you're in this lesbian feminist scene.

TM: Right.

SS: And at that time it was very gender-separated.

TM: Right.

SS: So when did you start to get exposed to gay men or did AIDS start to enter into your reality?

TM: Well, let's see. I definitely knew gay men in college. But there wasn't a real mixed community. I was definitely friends with individual gay men, but I wasn't part of a group. In fact, I was more part of a group that were the guys from the radio station and the Women's Studies Program. We got along very well, strangely.

It was an all-lesbian world in some respects. There was a bar called Frank's Living Room that we used to go to, and it was all the college radio station guys like Craig Marks, who went on to become the editor of *Spin* magazine. That was who we would hang out with if we hung out with guys. And gay guys, obviously, weren't at Frank's Living Room, which was some dive, a terrific place, sort of like the Holiday Cocktail Lounge in St. Mark's [Place].

I'm trying to think how AIDS first — obviously, all of that. It seems to me like sort of like Rock Hudson, like that kind of like — I knew there was something really wrong. I knew, obviously —

SS: Maybe I'm asking the wrong question. So you move here in '85. Did you get involved in politics before you got involved in AIDS politics? Because you were in WHAM! [Women's Health Action and Mobilization], right?

TM: Oh, I was one of the founders of WHAM!

SS: Was that before ACT UP?

TM: Yes, that was definitely before ACT UP.

SS: Okay. So that's where you came in. So how did WHAM! get started?

TM: WHAM! got started — okay. I worked on *Paris is Burning*. I was one of a zillion associate producers, so I had to make money to pay myself to make a living. I worked at night doing phone-banking at NARAL [National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League]. I went to Rutgers. I said, "Oh, my god, I'm definitely not going to read all this Shakespeare. I'm out of here." I lived in London for

six months. I had boyfriend at the time. I lived with him in London, came back. Here I am in New York.

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I worked in *Paris is Burning*, and at night I would do phone-banking for NARAL. Somebody gave me at NARAL — they said, “Oh, do you want to go see Faye Wattleton? Right? Wattleton, who used to be the head of Planned Parenthood, beautiful black woman. They said, “Do you want to go see? She’s going to be on some talk show.”

And I was like, “Wow! Cool. Television. Sure, I’ll go.” So I’m there in the audience, and — you know, I forget. She was obviously talking about attacks on abortion and reproductive freedom, and there was a woman seated next to me who says — I guess we struck up a conversation. I was there by myself. And she said, “Oh, you should come to this meeting.” I can’t remember her name, but she was definitely a Marxist-inflected person, you know, and she gives me this thing. It’s called the Reproductive Rights — or, no, it was going to be at the Center for Constitutional Rights, and there was a meeting about reproductive rights, and I’m like, “Well, I definitely am interested. I really want to go.”

I remember reading, in college — *Seizing Our Bodies*. It was a great book about the politics of women’s treatment by the medical establishment.

SS: Oh, yes, Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, that one?

TM: No. There was another one. Or maybe it was that one. That’s right. That seems right. And I just remember being really interested in that and thinking about the politics of women’s bodies and of medicine. So I was like, “Oh, maybe I’ll go to this meeting.” And so I went.

In college we did the self-help exams. I was part of that crew, where we all got speculums and we were sort of interested in that and learning about our bodies and unveiling the mystery of it all.

And so I just thought, “Oh, I’m going to go to the Center for Constitutional Rights, and I’ll check this meeting out.” Well, I walk in, and it was Bernice Williams? Bernice — oh, god, I can’t remember her name. Anyway, a powerhouse of a woman, who was from CCR, who had organized the meeting. There were probably fifteen women there, mostly very professional. Vicki Alexander, who I later went on to work for from the Community Family Planning Council, she’s a doctor, was there.

SS: Right, Vicki Alexander. She was also in *Line of March*.

TM: Yes, that’s right. So there were a lot of them. Sue Davis —

SS: She was Workers World Party.

TM: Right. I didn’t know who these people were, but I could tell that they were definitely — they’d taken orders from somewhere else about how to approach this meeting. And they just let me in. So I just came in, and I was like, “Oh.” I think it was the *Webster* decision. I think it might have been the *Webster* decision, and they were talking about what to do. And I was like — clearly, I knew about ACT UP at that point.

In fact, my first memory of ACT UP is being — I didn’t go to the demonstration, but I was down in Wall Street. Was it one, was it two? I don’t know which one, which demo. But I remember going into an ATM to get money, and there were these Silence = Death stickers everywhere, and I was like, “Who are these people?”

Who are they? I have to know who they are.” I implicitly knew. I was, like, “They’re absolutely right. Who are they, though? How can I find them?”

And there was a guy — I don’t know who he was — tall, good-looking guy, with a button on. I was like, “Hey.” I was like, “What’s up, you know? What’s going on?”

And he’s like, “Look over there.”

And I was like, “Oh, my god.”

So I go over to this demonstration and took a flyer, and it was very moving.

And I saw there — this is really interesting — I saw Maria Maggenti there. Now, I know Maria. It’s very strange. When I first moved to New York — I think she and I are about the same age — I think we both lived downtown. The summer before I went off to Rutgers, I lived in the Bowery between Hester and Grand, and I would talk and take the train sometimes or walk up to the Foundation Center on Fifth Avenue, like Sixteenth Street.

When I would take the train, I would see this woman who was always reading feminist film theory, and I was always reading feminist something or the other. And so we sort of were, like, “Hi.” “Hi.” Like we should be friends sort of thing. I knew her very peripherally, but I would see her around. “Oh, yes, hey, how are you?” blah, blah, blah. I don’t even know if I knew her name, but she’s very striking-looking. So she’s easy to remember.

So I remember seeing her, and I was like, “Hey, there’s that girl.” And I was like, “Wow, how interesting is that.”

But it didn't make me go right away to an ACT UP meeting. I still didn't understand all of that, and I was probably more drawn to reproductive rights issues. I felt I had a very strong, sturdy scaffolding to enter into things to do with reproductive rights.

Also I'd had an internship in college. That's right, and it's very funny. Here we are in Brooklyn Heights. It was right over on Court Street. I was an intern for Planned Parenthood, and I worked for this woman Lisa D'Esposito, who's this incredible young Italian woman having an affair with, I don't know, somebody — I shouldn't talk about that.

But, anyway, she would take me all around, and we would go to Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Women. This is an old organization, and we'd talk to them about reproductive rights, and it was fascinating. She knew how to just get in. She was from the neighborhood, and she knew how to talk to people, and I worked with her for a summer.

So I was further politicized. I was already politicized in terms of, by feminism. I've had these experiences, and I did stuff with NARAL. Then I thought, "You know, these politics. The way that this movement's going is just terrible. It's a tragedy. There's something wrong."

SS: You mean because it was single issue?

TM: Well, no, not just because it was single issue, but just sort of, once every several years there'd be a big demonstration in Washington. I was like, "Well, who are we kidding?"

I was a young woman at the time, right, so I could identify, for instance, with those — I wasn't a teenager that long ago, to imagine having to get parental consent

or notification. Those things, so far away now, I can still resonate with it. But I remember how it really resonated with me then; what would that have been like for me? How horrible would that be? What if I didn't have money to have an abortion? Which could have been a reality in my life. I didn't have a lot of money. If I'd gotten pregnant, what would have happened? How would I manage? What would I do? The Medicaid stuff made a lot of sense to me, women who were \$20,000 poorer than I was. I was like, "What do they do?"

I go to this meeting, and everyone seems to have this idea that there has to be this coalition-building. Coalition-building, coalition-building. I was like, "Coalition-building, yes, I know." I know from the Women's Studies Program. It's all the battles around identity politics, so I was like, "Oh, gosh, here we go, battles around identity politics. This is really going to be tough." And I was bored. I was like, "This is just not —."

I remember people saying at this meeting, "You must be very careful that people don't feel at risk of arrest." That was a big topic. And something didn't sit well with me. I kept thinking, well, yes, I understand if you're poor and you're black and you've been arrested before, and let's say you have a conviction, a felony. You don't want to get arrested. But I just didn't like the assumption that if a woman was black or Latin, that she would not want to participate, for instance, in a demonstration, where she might be arrested or might choose to do civil disobedience. It just seemed like there was some strong reaction against civil disobedience. And I kept thinking to myself, well, I only know about civil disobedience from black people. What's happened? How has this changed in this generation or two generations? This attitude is so different.

But I mostly just listened and wasn't a part of any coalition. I didn't belong to anything. I didn't belong to NARAL. They paid me some money. So I thought to myself, well, there's got to be other women I know who are going to be interested in this issue, younger women, because most of the women in that room were probably thirty-five and up. And I was like, "There have got to be other younger women.

They were supportive of me getting other younger women, but who was I going to get? How I was going to find these people? Just call a friend or two, you know? Well, I called some friends. Now, if I could remember how this happened, it would be incredible, but I can't. Somehow Dolly Meieran, Karen Ramspacher, and Diane Curtis — and Diane Curtis was not in ACT UP at the time, if I recall correctly, but Dolly and Karen were. How they got to that meeting — I remember trying to find Maria Maggenti to say, "There must be some women in ACT UP who would be interested in the *Webster* case." Was it *Webster*? Well, anyway, they must be interested in this impending Supreme Court decision that's going to circumscribe women's reproductive freedom.

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I just knew intuitively. I said, "There have to be some women there. How can I get to them?" I might have made a phone call to ACT UP, but I know that somehow we were all at one of these reproductive rights coalition meetings, and we clicked. We were like, "Okay. All right. Good." And from there, the seeds of WHAM! were planted.

So this big demonstration was planned. It was the first time I was arrested. My mother framed the picture, but I think there's a crack in it, and I don't know where the hell it is. It's very funny. She put it in a T with me, and I'm dressed wearing a

red dress that was really a costume. You know, you used to be able to get those costumes from like 1920s —

SS: Vintage, right.

TM: Vintage things. So I stuffed myself — it's really obscene what I did. But I stuffed my shorts or something to look pregnant. And Ellen Willis had come up with a fabulous slogan: "Abortion without apology." I remember that being on the cover of the *Village Voice*, and I cut it out and I pinned it to my dress. That statement — I loved her work, and that statement, I was like, "Yes, that's right. I think she just unearthed something, that there's a feeling that one should be apologetic," and that I thought that was pretty lamentable.

So this big demonstration was planned, and people got arrested on the Brooklyn Bridge. We got arrested with a fourteen-year-old girl whose mother had to — but we had some knowledge, because there were people there from ACT UP, Dolly or Karen, that we should have support. So I learned a lot. I was like, "Okay, yes, somebody should know we're being arrested." And I think just eight of us were arrested on the bridge.

Oh, and it was the flag-burning summer. Remember the flag burnings? Somebody had burned a flag somewhere. Those were the days. So I think people were burning flags on the bridge, and there was a demonstration of about 10,000 people, and I had helped organize it, and we made these t-shirts, "Pro-choice, Pro-women, Pro-Health," which were in English, Spanish, and, I think, Mandarin. And on the back said, "Reproductive Rights Coalition," and it had this Victorian sort of — not Victorian, but a

sepia tint and this sort of naked woman with “Reproductive Rights Coalition” wrapped around her or something.

And WHAM!, I think, was the direct-action wing of the Reproductive Rights Coalition. That’s how we started, as a wing, an unwanted wing. I don’t think we were the most wanted of the wings. But I was very involved with WHAM! for starting off with all these different meetings and trying to do clinic defenses.

SS: So how did you get to ACT UP?

TM: Really simply. I got a phone call. I’d been to a couple of meetings. I would just go to meetings, just such a wild experience, at the Center. I’d just stand there and just sort of breathe it in and be like, “Wow, this is amazing.” But I wasn’t sure how to become a part of it. I was interested and I was learning, but I wasn’t going every Monday night. I would go and then six weeks would pass, and I’d go again, because I was really involved with WHAM!

But I got a call from Victor Mendolia, and it was my birthday. I remember this. Cardinal O’Connor said he wanted to go on an Operation Rescue, shut down abortion clinics. It was the cover of *Newsday*. This is how old it was, how long ago it was. And I was like, “Wow, this is just horrifying.” I was like, “Happy birthday. Wow.”

Victor calls me, somehow gets my number, because WHAM! had a number. We had a phone or something, and he could get to me. There was phone books.
00:35:00 And he says, “Listen, we’d like to know if WHAM! would like to join with ACT UP to do a demonstration against Cardinal O’Connor and the Catholic Church.”

I said, “That’s music to my ears.” I said, “Wow, that’s incredible. I would be very interested, but I have to bring it to the floor of WHAM! to see where people are at and see what people think about it.” And there were mixed feelings, but mostly it was my sense that people were interested and thought it was a good idea.

Then we had to have people to liaise back and forth with ACT UP, so I was liaising, as was Karen, and, I think, maybe Dolly, but Karen definitely. We used to meet with Vincent [Gagliostro] and Victor. So we were just this little group of people, and then we’d go to the floor of ACT UP, and I was like, “Oh, my god. Wow, what is this?” That’s how I got started.

SS: What was it like to work with men?

TM: What was it like? It could be really fun. It was so different.

SS: What was different?

TM: It was so different. Well, I think in ACT UP what struck me, coming from poor WHAM!, we were trying — “Oh, I found \$50 on the street. Put it in our bank account.” It was amazing. ACT UP, you could not just dream of something, but you could do it. I’d never experienced that before. It was always a limit to what you could really make happen. I could imagine many things, but what could I really do politically? I remember making those t-shirts, the Reproductive Rights Coalition t-shirts. And Richard — oh, come on, what’s his name?

JIM HUBBARD: Deagle.

TM: — Deagle, right, in Jersey City had a silkscreen. Because Karen knew him, I got to know him. But it was our own money to buy these t-shirts. Not that in ACT UP it wasn’t people’s own money, but it was like, “Okay, I can give fifty. You

can give fifty.” It was smalltime. So that was one difference, just the access to ease of operation. That was pretty heady. I was like, “Wow, we could do what we want.”

The Stop the Church, we had a major budget. There’s no question. The kind of graphics that we did for that, the way in which they were done, there was no expense spared, and they were incredible. They were beyond eye-catching; they were gorgeous. And we could reproduce so many of them and put them so many places. People know about that demonstration. People say to me now, “You were one of the organizers of that? I remember the posters on my block.”

I was like, “Where’d you live?”

“Oh, on West 96th Street.” What? That’s what it was.

Working with men, I don’t know if I could generalize. There were some guys in ACT UP who I just adored, who I really felt I miss. I miss Randy, because I think Randy Snyder and I would have remained good friends had he lived. I think so. So there was some guys I didn’t really like and some guys I really liked.

SS: But this is what I’m really asking you. Can women accomplish what men can accomplish without access to their money in this country?

TM: Well, if we don’t have money, we can’t do anything. No. Maybe this is an aside, but in the middle of my psychoanalytic training, there are people who are doing the training and they have money. They have trust funds. And then there’s somebody like me who has twenty-five people in a private practice and is trying to pay her institute bills. I feel like I can do less, I can’t go to as many conferences. I’m not writing as many papers — to present.

00:40:00

So yes, having more money makes a big difference, and I think if I'm really honest about it, I think part of what drew me to ACT UP was that there could be effective politics without the worry about the finances. I was able to take my political thinking — there were problems everywhere, right? There was an AIDS crisis, people were dying; there was the reproductive rights. What was happening in that period was really intense, and I could put my energy in either direction, but I liked that in ACT UP I could put my energy — what we did with the CDC took so much money. It took so much money, and I was glad we had that money. But those trips to Atlanta to sit down and to meet with James Curran, etc. etc., and to deliver to them the literature search and to have the hotel —

SS: So does that mean that an autonomous Women's Movement can't win, that you have to be connected to men to have access to men's money?

TM: Good question. It depends. I wonder today, and I don't know — because it seems like you keep reading *The End of Men*. Is this the end of men?

SS: Right, but we're still only getting 73 cents.

TM: No, I hear you.

SS: I'm really asking you this question, because you have this whole background in feminism and you come right out of feminism and you come to ACT UP, and in ACT UP you did all this work for women. So this is a real question.

TM: Yes. I couldn't imagine doing it any other way as effectively. I'm proud of having been a part of creating WHAM! and bringing WHAM! into existence, but when I got involved with ACT UP, I knew around the CDC, that we could win, and I knew that we could win because we had access to money.

SS: So then after Stop the Church, you got really involved in ACT UP.

So that's like '89, '90.

TM: Pretty much.

SS: So where did you put your energy?

TM: CDC mostly.

SS: So you went into ACT UP and you went right into the women's agenda.

TM: Yes, I did. I just stayed with the ladies. I met Risa Denenberg, was volunteering at Community Health Project, doing more speculum exams, Pap smears, whatever we were allowed to do, which really was great. Risa felt like the connection in many respects.

SS: So how deeply involved did you get in ACT UP?

TM: Very deeply involved. I think that ACT UP was my — if somebody had asked what are you doing, what's your career, I was like, "Oh, I'm in ACT UP." I think that that was it. I made money. I worked at the New Jersey Women in AIDS Network. I worked at Community Family Council in Brownsville and in East New York while I was in ACT UP. I had a job, but once I got involved —

The CDC issue really spoke to me, and just the politics of epidemiology really spoke to me and who's visible, who's invisible, what's going to be allowed to come to the fore, what's going to be held back, and I'm always interested in that. I'm in psychoanalytic training. I'm interested in that. That's a question of what can't be said. What's not allowed to be articulated is the thing that we need to keep our eye on. So this CDC issue really brought that home to me.

SS: So what were the specific tasks that you were involved in?

TM: Just CDC working group meetings.

SS: So what were some things that you did as part of that?

TM: Worked on the campaign to get the five hundred signatures. That was one of the biggest things that we did.

SS: Can you explain what that is?

00:45:00 TM: Sure. There was a — let's see. How does this go? I don't know if it was the first or the second time. We went to the CDC twice to demonstrate, and these were national demonstrations with people from ACT UP from all over the country coming in to Atlanta. I was working at the time with Terry McGovern also. I was doing some fundraising, some grant writing for her at the HIV Law Project. So I knew about her lawsuit, *S.P. v. Sullivan*, which was looking at how Social Security Disability was being denied to people who were suffering because they did not have an AIDS diagnosis.

Let's see. We decided, from what I can remember, that we needed to really push the CDC. We had the feeling that it was a tipping point. I believe we'd have both demonstrations. I think, I'm not sure, that we'd had already two big demonstrations down there, many arrests. We'd served them with their papers, like, "Here's the research. Do your job. Here's all the medical literature that says there's a relationship between HPV and morbidity in HIV-positive women. Come on."

We had the feeling that if we could do something really public, not just public at the CDC, but something more public, like in *The New York Times*. So we said, "Hey, well, we could run one of those last-minute ads at *The New York Times*," which are

a little more discounted, you don't know when it's going to run within — like buying a flight. Within three to five days, you can get the cheaper deal.

I remember Avram Finkelstein, I believe that he and Grand Fury came up with “Women don't get AIDS; they just die from it.” I don't know who put that phrase together, but once that phrase was enunciated, we knew we had to use it. So we began to do a postcard campaign, and getting people from all over the country, from community-based organizations that got their money from the CDC, and they received CDC funding to provide services to people with AIDS, and they began to take a stand, saying, “Change the definition.”

SS: Can you say some of the names of some of these groups, if you remember?

TM: God, can I remember? Caribbean Women's Health Association here in Crown Heights, actually, just jumps right out. I think the Community Family Planning Council also. I'm also positive they did. I was working for them. What was her name? Gwen Braxton. Not Gwen Braxton.

SS: I do remember Gwen Braxton, a large black woman.

TM: A heavysset black woman with Black Women's Health Project, yes, and they were out of Atlanta, perhaps.

SS: It was like Byllye Avery?

TM: Yes, I think so, yes. Gosh, my mind is really not good for this. But, anyway, those are just some of the ones, and I remember cultivating those relationships and encouraging. We would have groups that we would work on to get them to — you know, it's a big project, right? So here you have this organization that's getting \$250,000

from the CDC. They're getting money they really need to survive, like out in Crown Heights, providing services to HIV-positive women. For them to say, "Okay, we're going to take this stand," it involves everybody on their staff, on their board, thinking this through. This is a big step for them. We had to provide them with the educational materials, do the teach-ins, go meet with them, make sure that everybody understood what was involved and what the win would be, that there was going to be a huge win, but in the short run, you might get hurt. And people would make decisions, I remember thinking to themselves, well, you know, if we can't provide any services, then, because we're going to lose our CDC funding because they might perhaps be spiteful.

SS: They were worried about punitive de-funding.

TM: Punitive measures from the CDC for taking this stand. So is it better to say nothing and continue to get this money, okay, and cross our fingers that the right thing will happen?

SS: How did you communicate? Did you go out in person? Did you talk on the phone?

TM: Oh, out in person. Yes. No, out in person definitely.

SS: How did you do the national communication?

TM: On the phone. That was on the phone. But going to the small organizations. I was working in Brooklyn and I was sort of hooked up, for instance, with those kinds of groups.

Lei Chou, he could make inroads with certain Asian Pacific Islander groups. I think we all kind of broke it down to who do we have access to and who could we talk to, who could we really look at face to face and watch them make decisions.

00:50:00 “We will sign,” or, “We will not sign.” And it was really personal for the organizations to make the decision to sign or to not sign, to realize that they were too frightened to take collective action, to have their names beneath this *New York Times* advertisement that said, “Women don’t get AIDS; they just die from it,” and with five hundred signatures. And our goal was five hundred. I don’t know where we came up with that number, but we thought that would be good.

People in ACT UP San Francisco, people in ACT UP Chicago, and all the CDC working groups. Everybody was doing the same sort of thing — building relationships with organizations and individuals – Dianne Feinstein – that might sign on. So we got to five hundred, we were like, “All right. Let’s go. Let’s run it.” And it was during an AIDS conference, but where was that AIDS conference? I don’t know where it was. I was not at it.

SS: But that ad was controversial in ACT UP.

TM: It was?

SS: I just remember people complaining about how expensive it was, because it was like \$60,000.

TM: It was a lot of money.

SS: Yes.

TM: It was a lot of money. I don’t know how much. I don’t know what a regular full-page ad in the *Times* would have cost then, but I know we were doing standby. I don’t remember that.

SS: Okay. Skip that.

TM: No. If it was \$60,000, that would have been something to argue about.

SS: How many years were you involved in this campaign, the CDC campaign?

TM: Until *S.P. v. Sullivan* was resolved, until really when I knew that the CDC definition was a go, that it was going to be changed and in a direction that I knew I had fought for, that was pretty much the end of my time in ACT UP.

SS: Why do you think that we won, or how did we win? I guess that's a better question.

TM: I think we won because it was a unique blend of several things. You have Terry's lawsuit, which is really not a CDC-based lawsuit; it's Health and Human Services. But, nevertheless, it opens up the same can of worms. It's like here is the same thing.

We have this sort of legitimate lawsuit that's taking place, and then we have — because the CDC is located everywhere. They have regional offices. I'm thinking about different regional CDC offices that I've been to, not just in Atlanta. There's people in New York, there's people in whatever different states. So different ACT UPs could really go to their local regional CDC office and start giving them some hell and demonstrating in front of them or doing a sit-in or whatever. But it was this constant — I remember when — oh, what was his name? Not James Curran, the one after him, right after him. This guy who ran — anyway, he was a big macher.

JIM HUBBARD: Gary Noble.

TM: Thank you. That's right. Gary Noble. I remember, I think it was "Bro" Broberg and Charlie Welch, maybe, and maybe Heidi Dorow. I'm not sure if she was there. We knew when he was flying into New York and we knew his flight. This is pre-9/11. We knew these things, and we'd meet him at the airport.

SS: What happened when you met him at the airport?

TM: I wasn't there, but they met him at the airport with signs. There was such focus on people doing things like that all the time. Once a week he'd get off a plane, and there'd be people from ACT UP at American Airlines. How weird is that?

I think that because it was such, on the one hand, a national issue with the regional centers, it was a no-brainer. You could really begin to put pressure on your local offices and keep the pressure in the national office as well. There was a feeling of being able to — it wasn't just people who were near Atlanta could be effective with it; we could be effective with it all over the place.

SS: One of the things that younger people don't understand about ACT UP that we're constantly trying to explain is how something like that gets organized, something that is so persistent and so focused for years. There's not one person masterminding this. There's a culture. Can you try to articulate how that —

TM: There was this really interesting culture. For me, it was not all women, but it was largely women. The thrill of meeting these women, for instance, in Atlanta, these women from San Francisco or from Chicago, we hadn't met before. There was no Skype. There was no text. We were just talking and faxing or something. We were faxing. You could read about what they did in the news or the back table of ACT

00:55:00 UP. “This is what they did in ACT UP Chicago. This is what the women’s caucus there did.” So you’d get a sense of people. And the thrill of actually getting to meet them was terrific. You’d go to a big demonstration in Atlanta, there was a sense of meeting people who had my heart’s passion in common with, and we were a tenacious group.

SS: But I’m asking something a little bit more psychological, I think, which is how did so many different people know how to do creative actions all the time in so many different places on this focused goal where no one is coordinating it? How did that happen?

TM: Well, because the idea was to do whatever worked. You didn’t know what was going to work. So whatever’s going to work. You’ll try this, we’ll try that. There was a sense of we can come at it from fifty different angles, because there’s no one road to Rome. I think we understood, for instance, with this issue that this was a huge issue and that to raise consciousness around it took some time. Trying to raise consciousness in ACT UP, for instance, around this issue, you could see people getting it, some people not getting it. We saw it took time even there.

How many different ways can we raise consciousness *and* challenge power? And I think there was sense that we didn’t know, but we had a goal, which was this is really unethical and we’re determined to point that out however we can in whatever way that might be useful, to all kinds of people, to people who don’t know; to feminist health people who aren’t really thinking this way, and get them thinking about it; or to people at community clinics who weren’t necessarily thinking politically; to people in power, who are running the show; to doctors with general practices.

You wanted people to begin to think your healthcare and your access to healthcare is delimited by something called epidemiology. Let's break down epidemiology. It impacts you every day, whether you know it or not. And I just think it was let a thousand flowers bloom.

People did all kinds of stuff. We formed an organization called MACA, Manhattan AIDS Community Alliance. This was a group that was a spinoff of the CDC working group in New York, and we invited the regional CDC officials, as if we were a real organization. Okay? I was like, "And who's the president? Who's running the show? Who's on our board?" And we made stationery. We had cards. Where did we do this? In what church? Some church. I can't remember what church.

SS: And who else in ACT UP did this with you?

TM: Well, it was Heidi and Bro and Charlie and Heidi DeRuiter, Barb Monoian. We just thought, you know, just coming at it from the point of view of ACT UP is not going to be enough. This was not an ACT UP thing. We did it ourselves, but we were thinking if we present ourselves as a mock organization that's going to have a debate, and we're going to ask these people to come and debate, but it was an entirely staged event.

In other words, everyone that came in was like, okay, they knew the right questions to ask of these people, they knew the way in which to put the CDC official on the spot and to raise consciousness. It was a complete theatrical event, and it was a faux event. We were a false organization, but we were real in our — here's whoever the moderator was. I might have been the moderator. "And now we're going to hear from Mr. Blah Blah Blah, thank you for coming."

SS: Who was in the audience?

TM: Actually, it was people from ACT UP, friends of ours from ACT UP, but it was also people from community-based organizations. We really did real outreach as a fake organization that wasn't ACT UP. People who wouldn't come to an ACT UP anything would come to something from MACA.

SS: That's hysterical.

01:00:00

TM: But we didn't care, because we were like, okay, this a copy of the copy of the copy of the original. We were so many generations removed when we were doing this, but we were like, well, this is going to work because people who don't want to hear what ACT UP has to say will be interested.

SS: How many nights of your life did you spend every week sitting around with people saying, "What about this? What about that? Let's do this. Let's do that"?

TM: All the time. Probably three to four nights of week and then weekends of socializing. I certainly could say in the CDC working group and I think in many other working groups in ACT UP who have the capacity to attach to an issue and to just split it and atomize it, and really get absolutely attached and obsessed, and if you didn't have that kind of a personality, you probably weren't in a working group. But the working groups were people who could take it apart. It was a Rubik's Cube all the time. Move it this way, move it that way, move it this way. It was incredible.

SS: You said you were socializing. What was your social experience in ACT UP?

TM: I was with Heidi, so this was sort of new lesbian formations, the Avengers. I wasn't sure that I truly ever fit in in ACT UP.

SS: Do you know that 98 percent of the people I've interviewed have said that?

TM: Okay. Well, there you go. Who are those 2 percent that fit in? I don't want to meet them, actually. It's a total band of outsiders, right?

SS: Yes.

TM: But I think, in part, because ACT UP was so very diverse, people really were all over the map. If you really got down to it and you spoke to people, you were like, wow, this person is extremely conservative politically, from my point of view, but here they are. And they would see me as completely a nutcase, and yet we're still in the same room. So how could I ever really belong when there was so much difference already? Could I know the people in Treatment and Data? I could, but I didn't really fit into their culture. So were they the center of ACT UP and was I on the outside of it?

SS: There was no center.

TM: Yes, but it's strange, you know, and I think people perceived different centers, like, there's a center over there. That's the center. These people are the center. It was kind of like high school in that way.

SS: It's also because of our generation and their experiences being queer, that people were so rejected.

TM: Right. That's right.

SS: So that was the experience.

TM: You come bearing that badge of already outsidersness, and then how to come together, how to trust other outsiders.

SS: And also people had AIDS. They were being punished with their lives.

TM: Right.

JH: Could you just say who was in the CDC working group?

TM: Yes. A lot of people. Rand Snyder. People were sometimes in it and sometimes not in it, if you know what I mean. It was pretty fluid as a group. There were people who were doing CDC stuff and then they were doing something else, but they'd come back to it. I think it was a home base for a lot of people in ACT UP who also went off to do other things but would come back to it, because we knew this was going — , not that every campaign was not long and ongoing, but this one sort of had a thoroughgoing nature to it, that it wasn't going anywhere. You could go off and work on some other issue, but come back because we're still going to be working on this here. So, Heidi Dorow, Bro Broberg, Charlie Welch, I just said Heidi DeRuiter, Barbara Monoian.

SS: Heidi who was the second one?

TM: DeRuiter.

SS: DeRuiter. I don't know her.

TM: Yes. Lei Chou, Cathy Chou.

SS: What's Barbara's last name?

TM: Monoian.

SS: I don't know her.

TM: M-o-n-o-i-a-n. She and Heidi were lovers for many years. Who else? Rand Snyder, of course.

Okay. So, for instance, here's how it worked. The Latino Caucus were also members and serious members of the CDC working group.

SS: Like who?

TM: Like Juan.

SS: Juan Mendez.

TM: Juan Mendez, yes. Jose — help me. Jose, tall, blond, slender, little gold earring, not that that helps me remember who he is. Little gold earring. But he had a little gold earring.

SS: But how was this different than what Maxine was doing? Was Maxine part of the CDC group?

01:05:00

TM: Maxine was absolutely part of it, but I think that what I remember are the people who I really felt closest to and worked with. Of course, Maxine was a part of it, but there were people who kind of went and you were on the phone like, "How did that go?" blah, blah, blah. Your subgroup of the CDC working group, I think is the way to maybe understand it. Linda Meredith, although she was in D.C., was a good part of CDC working group, I think.

SS: And who were the women with HIV who were involved?

TM: Katrina Haslip. I think the women with HIV's involvement in the CDC working group, how I saw it was it was peripheral. They would come to demonstrations, but when it came to sitting down at meetings and —

SS: What about Mary Lucey? She was very involved, right?

TM: I don't —

SS: You don't think so.

TM: I don't know. I don't recall. I remember the HHS demonstration in D.C., and I remember organizing HIV-positive women to come and to speak. But at the lived level of it was a mix.

There were some HIV-positive women like Mercedes, whose name I can't remember, who she was a part of Life Force. There we go. I should have done this interview ten years ago. She was a part of Life Force, and Life Force was in the Bronx and it was for HIV-positive women. And I went up and spoke to Life Force from the CDC working group. Then women from that group began to get more involved and on occasion would come to a meeting, but definitely were there for the demonstrations or for speak-outs, that that was their level of involvement. And, of course, they would educate people in their communities about the issue, but I don't think — the center of action was more or less Lower Manhattan.

SS: Is there any corrective that you want to make to the way the campaign was depicted in our movie?

TM: I'm trying to remember how it was depicted in the movie. No, I didn't have any objection to any —

SS: Just asking, because we did show leadership from Phyllis Sharpe and —

TM: Oh, I see what you're saying. You know what? I didn't have a problem with that at all. When I saw it in the film, I was like, "Well, right. These women were definitely there and a part of it." But on the level of living with this

obsessional thinking about how can we find Gary Noble or how many postcards have come in today for the campaign, and how many more can I get people to send in, administratively, okay, that's the kind of work, in a way humdrum work that I did, that Heidi did, which involved a lot of face-to-face meeting and planning. Right?

And I don't recall having — there was one action we did, which was after. This was when things got very, very — things felt like they were going to fall apart with the CDC issue, and I remember at that point we had built relationships with these women, particularly from Life Force. And there was a — oh, what was it? It was a meeting with Catherine Lynch, Liz Cooper. She'll never talk to me again. But, anyway, there was this meeting with the CDC officials in the room to discuss women and HIV, and we knew we were near —

SS: In Washington?

TM: I believe it was, yes, in Washington, and it felt like it was a tipping point, and we thought, you know, this is not going to fly. Catherine Lynch or whatever, whatever GMHC — it's not Catherine, but it was GMHC's policies. We knew the ACLU's stance. We knew GMHC's stance. And we thought — did GMHC sign on to the five hundred?

SS: I don't know.

TM: I think that they might not have. I think that they might not have, and I think that for us that was really, really tremulous, to have an organization with so much power, but still power in the AIDS and AIDS discourse, that they were not with us on this change in the definition of AIDS was pretty terrifying.

01:10:00

We were near sort of a moment where we had the sense they were going to make a decision, and there was this meeting in D.C., and so we went down. It was clearly 50 percent HIV-positive women, and 50 percent of the rest of our ragtag — Randy, Walter, me and Heidi, Bro, what have you. That's when we handcuffed ourselves to people.

SS: What did you do?

TM: We handcuffed ourselves. I think I was handcuffed to Liz Cooper. That's why she'll probably never talk to me again.

SS: But tell us how it happened.

TM: It's funny, but — you know.

SS: The hearing was going on?

TM: No, it wasn't a hearing. They were having — it was a closed-door meeting, and we kept saying, "We want to come. We want to have somebody from the CDC working group there."

"Nuh-uh."

And it was like, "Why not? We're sort of the moral, ethical barometer here. Everybody knows that. We have nothing to lose here. You all have something to lose because you are dependent upon the CDC, upon the federal government in many ways for your organizational survival. That's one issue, but we don't have anything to lose. So why shouldn't we be there? Why shouldn't somebody from the CDC working group — ?" And the answer was no and no and no.

So we said, "Oh, that's just too bad."

SS: So what did you do?

TM: We drove down to D.C. We got a bus. And the question is, who paid for this? I don't think that ACT UP paid for this. I don't have the feeling ACT UP paid for this, because this was not approved by ACT UP. Definitely was not approved. We went down and we had hotel rooms, and six in a room or whatever, for the night. Got up the next day. Urvashi Vaid was our — what's it called — legal —

SS: Observer?

TM: Observer, thank you. Not an advisor, but observer. She was our legal observer. And their meeting started about — a busload, how many people are on a bus? Thirty-seven, forty-two, or something of us came in, and we said, "We need to have a seat at this table."

I remember the ad was, "Well, we're not going to just do what you want because you want us to do it."

And we're like, "Well, you're not going to have a meeting, then. It's pretty simple. Because we're not going to let you make this move, because we know who's at the table and we know their background, we know their politics on this issue of AIDS epidemiology, and we can't let you move forward with the imprimatur of GMHC and the ACLU, because their point of view is not the point of view that's going to save anybody's life."

Because we worked with them or we tried to work with them. We read their policy statements. We knew who was with us and who wasn't with us. That was that. Then we had handcuffs, and we handcuffed ourselves to people at the meeting.

SS: But how did Liz Cooper sit still enough for you to put a handcuff on her?

TM: That's a really good question. I don't know. I'm like, was I handcuffed to her? Anyway, there were definitely handcuffs. Heidi and I were the ringleaders, so to speak. We're like, "Okay, this meeting is not going to happen, so you can just go home. Go home, and you can try again. You try again, and we'll be here again, or you can just let us in. So figure it out. We're ready. We have our policy paper."

"No, we know —," blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

But yet we're not really acting on behalf of ACT UP. There's all these activities like MACA not acting as ACT UP, you know.

SS: I know. But I'm still on to the handcuffs. So you're handcuffed. So how does this end? How does this event end?

TM: I don't know. You know, it's videotaped somewhere.

SS: Oh, who videotaped it?

TM: That's a really good question, but somebody has a videotape of it. I know that.

SS: I have never seen that.

TM: I know that.

JH: I never have either.

TM: Yes, I know it. I know it because I think I remember Karen Rampscher — I think she saw it and was so upset by it that she didn't talk to me for a bit. I was like, "Well, so — yes."

SS: So just tell me exactly what was the point of view materially that was being excluded from this meeting by keeping you guys out?

TM: That certain diseases were going to be pushed off the table. They weren't going to be included.

SS: So in other words, our demands of what had to be recognized as an AIDS symptom.

TM: Two hundred T plus equals — yes.

SS: Right. And in the end, in the final decision, did it reflect an agenda that you were comfortable with?

01:15:00 TM: It did. I think that by the time it got to the end, you know how compromise happens, slowly, incrementally, and you don't really notice it. I'd like to look at what it is today and see what I think now. Because I think that then it was the amazing thing to have — I said, "Oh, of course, we were going to win," on the one hand. On the other hand, it was like, "How? And if we're going to win this, what does the win look like?" I think that that win was blood, sweat, and tears definitely to get there.

And then what we got, I believe, we were comfortable with, but I also believe us being like we were — I know I was battle fatigued. It was like somebody's got to call this to a halt or — you know. But it wasn't called to a halt, and I was like, "Oh, my god, we didn't get anything we wanted," because I would have kept going. You know what I'm saying? It couldn't have been that egregious.

SS: No, it was a victory.

TM: Yes, it was. We felt it as a huge, a huge victory.

SS: Now, it's really kind of ironic because you win this huge victory for women with AIDS at a very moment where this issue of women is becoming a

divisive question inside ACT UP. The forward motion in the society is a little bit different than how it's being expressed in the organization.

TM: That's an interesting question, or observation.

SS: In fact, there's this famous moment where there's this demonstration in the rain, and then the TAG guys are coming out of a hotel. Were you there for that?

TM: No. Can I pee?

SS: Yeah, sure. But remember that you're plugged in.

TM: Yes, I'm not going to go running off anywhere. Hold on I gotta pee.

SS: We'll take a little break — So ACT UP wins this huge victory for women, for poor women, for women of color, for poor people.

TM: Right.

SS: At the very moment that section of ACT UP is becoming more insider, at the same time that another section of ACT UP is winning this huge victory for people who don't have any power. And I'm thinking about what the consequences are of that moment, because now I'm going to ask you about 076. And it seems to me — and please tell me if you disagree — that one of the reasons that people in ACT UP were so informed about 076 and so sensitive to 076 was that they had just spent four years thinking about women with AIDS. So that reality was very much in people's minds. I don't know if you think that that's accurate.

TM: When you say that people had just spent four years, you mean people in the CDC working group or that we were able to sort of switch into this NIAID ACTG mode?

SS: I don't think that the 076 controversy inside ACT UP would have happened if there hadn't been so many people in ACT UP thinking about women with AIDS for so long. Obviously not the whole organization, but a section of the organization.

TM: Right, they were saturated.

SS: But also, in order to have a critique of 076, you have to be thinking about the woman in question.

TM: Right.

SS: And people had just spent four years thinking about that woman.

TM: Right, right.

SS: So could you just explain to us from your point of view what the controversy was about 076?

TM: The controversy about 076. I think there were two controversies. It still gives me tsuris to think about it. It's like, "Oh, that one." The controversy there was dual. So here was Janet — oh, come on, what's her name? Janet from Harlem hospital. Mitchell, a black female doctor up in Harlem Hospital. Vicki Alexander, another black female M.D. So there's the issue of white women saying — it was perceived through this prism — white women saying, "This trial is a problem because it's giving women the garbage drug, whatever, and it's privileging the fetus over the woman," or whatever. I forget all the particular complications, but I think those were two. And these black women M.D.'s who were also increasingly a part of the establishment, the AIDS establishment, were saying that we were denying women healthcare.

SS: Well, let's just review what the criticisms were. One was that the drug, which basically was AZT, I believe, at the time —

TM: Yes, it was AZT.

SS: — was going to make women who took it not eligible for the upcoming combo therapies that were on the horizon. So there was a drug immunity issue. There was women as vectors of infection instead of as people with AIDS. And then there was the question of what is consent. Did women feel guilty that they were perhaps pregnant with somebody who would be born with HIV, and did that pressure them into consent, and is that consent? So those were the three major criticisms. Okay. So why was that controversial in ACT UP?

01:20:00

TM: Well, I think what was controversial in ACT UP perhaps was that it was a lot of people stepping into territory at a certain kind of level, right, stepping into a terrain that was not ours. In part it was about turf. We were at the AIDS Clinical Trial Group, if I recall. That was where the whole 076 thing took place.

We, meaning Women's Caucus, not Treatment and Data people, but Women's Caucus people who really had learned a lot about the federal government and its medical workings, but we were not really members of Treatment and Data, but we were talking about drug trials. I think that we may have been perceived as going someplace where we weren't supposed to go. I think that that was something that I understood. I didn't understand that then, but I understood from the reaction. I was like, "So have we sullied relationships that Treatment and Data has built with people here?"

SS: Had we? Is that what had happened?

TM: Perhaps. I can't really recall that, but I wondered at the time. It was Janet Mitchell, the gals that were incensed that white women would stand up and say something like this, and then I recall people from Treatment and Data being incensed that we had taken this stance, that we had incensed these black women. Suddenly you have this strange coalition of these black female doctors and Treatment and Data, as I recall, and those of us who weren't in T&D or weren't M.D.'s. It was really people in T&D by that point were M.D.'s, you know. What I mean. They were. They really had done everything but the internship and the residencies. They were more like M.D.'s, and we were laypeople. We were lay professionals stepping in and commenting about the politics of this without as much medical knowledge. We just didn't have that.

As much as we critiqued policies, we didn't have basic science. I didn't. I don't have any basic science, and I don't think most of us in the Women's Caucus, aside from Risa, somebody who's a trained clinician, had that. That's how I understood it. I was like, "Wow, how could this be, that this woman I used to work for is now kind of shaking hands with Treatment and Data, who are enraged with us for our having taken this step?"

SS: And how was that position articulated? Did the Women's Caucus make a proposal on the floor about 076?

TM: Good question. I don't recall if we did. Doesn't seem like we did. You know what I'm saying? Because then these objections would have been delivered to us then, right?

SS: Well, how do you feel in retrospect about your opposition to 076?

TM: I guess I feel 076 felt like something I'd gotten involved with because I was saturated, you know, and then found myself in the middle of, going like, "Oh, god, this is a mess." Right? I don't know what we should have done differently, but we definitely should have done something differently. I remember going, "Wow, this really has had a bad effect," because within ACT UP it's created more tension and we're being delegitimized by these doctors, and it just felt terrible. It felt like we should be working together, and somehow I think — maybe we were just really naïve. Maybe we just thought that people would agree with us. I think I remember being shocked that Janet Mitchell considered a drug trial a form of healthcare. I was like, "I understand it can give people some healthcare, but let's not stoop to that level."

01:25:00

SS: But I'm looking at it in terms of the trajectory. So everybody's in ACT UP. You start, you come in, it's Stop the Church.

TM: Right.

SS: And we're all in it together. Abortion, AIDS. Then there's this four-year campaign that uses all these grassroots tactics, showing up at airports, sending postcards, newspaper, regional offices, all of that kind of grassroots stuff that ACT UP was so good at is successful.

Simultaneous to that, the T&D guys are getting more inside and more inside and more inside. And suddenly after this huge victory, and they're having their own victories getting the ACTG and all of that, there's this conflict between these two approaches, and it happens around 076.

TM: I wouldn't say that it happens. I think it happened long before 076.

SS: Tell me. What do you think?

TM: Yes. I know 076 was pivotal for people in Treatment and Data really coming out in opposition to Women's Caucus. I remember I was like, "Wow, I've never seen that before," so boldfaced.

But there was an NIH-sponsored conference on Women and AIDS, and I went to it, Linda Meredith went to it, Risa the group that was sort of CDC, sort of Women's Caucus. Maxine was there. We had our treatment agenda for the NIH, Xeroxed. I think it was my — this is bad — with my handwriting, "The Women's — ." It wasn't even print in typeface. I don't know. I have one up there someplace. I looked at it, and I was like, "Really?" I also found my moratorium speech, which was handwritten.

SS: Okay. We'll get to that.

TM: Yes. That was incredible for me to read. So what was I saying? What happened with —

SS: So you're at the meeting.

TM: Well, it was a conference. We're doing all this stuff with this conference. We've done all this organizing. We've organized the floor of ACT UP regarding this conference. We've done the work of informing people what we want to do, how we want to do it, etc., etc., getting floor approval, and we go, we do our thing. There's no arrests or anything like that. It's a daylong thing, but a lot of activity and flyering and asking hard questions and what we did.

I remember coming home, and I remember getting a call from Risa Denenberg, and she said, "You wouldn't believe this."

I said, "Wouldn't believe what?"

She was still there overnight, and she was with Linda Meredith, and they were in the bar at the hotel where the conference had been held. She said, “I just ran into Mark Harrington.”

And I said, “What’s he doing there?” Because he was not at the conference. It would have been a dream to have Mark at the conference. It would have been a dream. To have Mark with us at the conference would have been a shape shifter in many ways, if not on the political front, at the level of micro politics in the organization. It would have been really terrific.

I couldn’t seem, even though it’s NIH, to get the Treatment and Data interest around this Women and AIDS conference. I said, “Well, what’s he doing there?” I remember. I felt heartbroken. It was just heartbreaking. I was like, “What’s he doing there? He wasn’t with us.”

And she said, “Well, he was going to a dinner party with Tony Fauci.”

And I cried. I remember I just went — because it was so disturbing to me, that I was like, “How could he be in D.C. and not have been with us and then go to dinner with Fauci? Fine. But come throw your weight with us.” Because Mark was really extremely, clearly very intelligent, but also accruing a certain cachet and power that it would have been really great. Just in the way that we cultivated and got Dianne Feinstein to sign at the bottom of the *New York Times* ad, having Mark be with us would have carried a certain imprimatur, a certain weight. And I was like, “Wow.” That blew my mind. I didn’t know what had happened. I was like, “How — ?”

SS: So what happened, now that you understand? What was going on?

01:30:00

TM: Well, I think then it just seemed to me that we were very, very far apart and that the cleavage was already then. The cleavage was not 076. It was kind of like the divorce, when your parents file for divorce, but their relationship has died eight years prior, and if you just paid attention, you kind of could see it. I was like, this is not going to be good, this sort of thing. I found this, because, I was talking to Larry about his book, Larry Kramer about his book, and he wanted some documents about harassment. I went and I found all the stuff, and I was like, “Wow, I have a file like this of the harassment stuff.” So I looked at *TITA* —

SS: *Tell It To ACT UP.*

TM: Yes, *Tell It To ACT UP.*

SS: Bill Dobbs’ newsletter.

TM: Yes, Bill Dobbs’ newsletter. I see that I’ve written at the top — and Bill Dobbs picked this, Pick of the Week. He used to do Pick of the Week, and this is Pick of the Week. I was like, “How is it possible that Mark Harrington can go to D.C. to go to a dinner party with Anthony Fauci, while we spent the whole day confronting this man? We needed Mark with us. How did this happen?” Something like that, to that effect. And it really was one of those things.

I remember somebody — I think it was Jim Eigo. He was really angry, he said, “How could you say that? Mark’s just been diagnosed as positive,” or something, which really annoyed me, and I was like, “Well, what am I supposed to do with that?”

So that kind of a problem was clear right then. I don’t know what date that was, but it was way before 076. And I think there were those micro-fissures that continued and grew and grew. And if you were paying attention, which I think in the

CDC working group we were paying attention, could we get people from Treatment and Data to come work with us and do things with us? — Is my printer going off? — Could we really get these people to be with us on this issue? And it proved to be more and more difficult to create cross-pollination. I think that in my mind if we had that kind of cross-pollination within the organization, we'd be fine. We'd be okay. We don't have to go to each other's working group meetings, but if we can all show up and be at the big demonstrations without faction, without being factionalized, that's where you build faith and trust. And that was happening, and my sense was that was happening less and less and less.

SS: So how did the moratorium proposal come about?

TM: The moratorium proposal came about from my watching this sort of micro-splitting of things and micro-abandonments and micro turning the back.

Maxine, I remember, asked me, and I remember being so surprised to be asked. I was like, "What?" "We're going to have a strategy brunch," Max says. "Larry and I, we're putting this together. We want to get some people to put together strategy papers or something, and talk, so we can begin to think about strategy." And I was pretty surprised that she chose me because I didn't feel like I'd been in ACT UP for very long. I don't know. I don't remember the year of that brunch, but it was at the Center in a big room. It wasn't attended by that many people, as I recall.

SS: Who was there? Larry Kramer.

TM: Larry, Maxine, myself, Dobbs. I remember David Barr was there for sure. Was Mark there? I don't know. Heidi was there. I was very nervous. I probably couldn't remember who was there. I remember being palpably nervous, and I remember

writing and rewriting. It was handwritten, right? It was weird, but I didn't have a computer yet, I don't think. Writing and writing and writing this idea that Maxine, I guess, had sensed. I had an idea that was really not fully formed. I don't think it was fully formulated, but I think she's pretty perceptive, so she sensed I had some nascent something.

01:35:00

I sat down and would write, and I really looked at my experience in the Reproductive Rights Movement, and I said, you know, the Reproductive Rights Movement suffers from this kind of sort of insider politics. It's almost who's in charge of the Reproductive Rights Movement now? Who? What? But they're all people who have salaries. They definitely have jobs, and they definitely are paid to do what they do, but they're not really touching my life, and they weren't really touching my life then. They hadn't touched my life.

I reached out to them, to Planned Parenthood and did my internship or what have you, but it wasn't as if they were trying to grab my attention. My attention was already zeroed in in that direction. And I thought this organization should be trying to grab women's attention rather than wait for women to come to them, and that struck me as upside down.

I wondered if in ACT UP we weren't at risk of heading in the same sort of direction, that we would lose the best thing that we had in many respects, which was this incredible group of people who are very obsessive and meticulous and thorough-going and very bright and very tenacious. Those qualities are what you need, I think, to create social change, and that I was noticing a drift in the organization to an insider-outsider sort of fissure, which just struck me as very sad, really tragic, because I thought, well, the

Reproductive Rights Movement doesn't have a movement. They have a demonstration every two years that a million people come to you, but what's happening on the local level? Nothing. We need to stay on the local level alive and lively, or we're ruined.

I thought, well, you know, perhaps as a way — and I think I was trying to address the sense that we weren't all going to each other's bigger demonstrations, but perhaps we just cool it with these meetings with the powers that be. And I think I said something like, "We're all vulnerable to the temptations of approval by those in power and those in authority. Nobody's beyond that. But let's hold hands with each other rather than let those that are in power divide and conquer us. Our bread is buttered on this side, not that side." As activists, I really had that feeling that the organization needed to critique this inside-outside split, and so —

SS: You floated this at the brunch?

TM: Oh, this came totally at the brunch.

SS: And how did Barr and Larry respond?

TM: Well, Barr, as I recall — it was terrifying for me. I thought, "Oh, my god, what have I done?"

Barr said to me, "You know, what you're saying would kill me."

I was like, "Holy shit," you know. I thought to myself — and I grounded it very historically. I was like, "Okay. This is not my idea. This is historically what I've seen, and I'm going to reference history." I have a background in history. This is my thing. People could hold on to it as history. It's not just our history. It's not just the reproductive rights history. Many movements have this history. How do we want to contend with this thing that could tear us apart? That was seen as a very negative idea.

The idea was, I think, for a six-month moratorium on meetings with governments, meeting with government officials, that we would pour our energy back into direct action to working together.

SS: So when you floated it at the brunch and David was so opposed to it, why did you decide to continue with it?

01:40:00 TM: Well, just because David was opposed to it didn't — I didn't think David was right. I understood his feelings. And perhaps if I had been HIV-positive and I had Anthony Fauci's ear, I would have the fantasy that I, too, was going to be saved by that. But to my mind, that was just a fantasy. A powerful fantasy and a generative fantasy and one that in many respects a fantasy can keep you alive. I get that. But I just thought it was — I didn't think he was right. I was just like, "This kind of stuff, with Mark doing this, it's not going to work. It's going to create so much animosity and difficulty." And it already was at that point. It was already there. It was already clear that this kind of stuff, if we didn't have a better way to work with it, was going to tear — you know. Back to Joy Division, "Love Will Tear Us Apart." Well, the government will tear us apart again.

SS: So can you read the speech to us?

TM: I can get it on the computer.

SS: Yeah, totally.

TM: How do I do this?

SS: We'll just hand you the computer.

TM: I'll need my eyeglasses.

SS: We'll hand you your eyeglasses

TM: They're, um, right over — okay.

JW: You can't move very far.

TM: Ok, and then I've got eyeglasses there

SS: Okay. Because we're all old now. We were young then and now we're not.

TM: I know, I was like, "Could you find me my eyeglasses?" It's someplace in here. Okay, it is in my gmail, okay. I mailed it to Larry and I mailed it to Peter [Staley], because I was in a fair number of conversations with them in January, February. Okay, inbox, sent mail, Larry Kramer, hello. There we go. Alright.

SS: What's the date?

TM: I don't know yet. Let me see if I can find it. Larry — scan first email. there's two huge scans, let me view this. Let's see. It's a major file. I find harassment. I scanned it in. "Activist women debate tactics at AIDS meeting." Yeah, yeah it's my handwriting. How weird is that? '92, it's not this one. Okay, this might be it. There's old TITAs. Let's see. Yes, really you should see it. Do you want to see this? It's handwritten and scanned in here. The real copy is all the way up there and we.

SS: Let us take a look at that.

TM: Larry was like, "you have that?" Yes, I have it.

SS: Do we have it?

JH: 1/91.

TM: That's the date

TM: January '91, yes.

SS: Okay. Can you read it to us?

TM: Yes. Let me just make sure this is in order. Oh, my god, and actually there is a little typing. It's cut and pasted together. All right. This is pretty funny. Okay.

[reading] "To begin, there's something I had to say, and that's how very surprised I was to have been asked to speak on this topic, for I've only been an activist with ACT UP for a bit over a year, beginning my involvement with Stop the Church, which is not exactly something like working with NIAID or on the ACTGs. So to Maxine and Larry, who invited me to speak here, and to other activists here to hear myself and to share ideas, I want to say thank you. Thanks a lot."

"ACT UP is very important to me, and like many women in ACT UP, I arrived here via the Abortion/Reproductive Freedom Movements, and I arrived full of disillusionment, anger, and a willingness to work with other people committed to both the democratic process and direct action. I also arrived with about ten years of feminist practical, lived, theoretical, and academic experience. I have "under my belt," then I crossed that out.

01:45:00

"I walked into ACT UP knowing I needed a place for my fury, a fury that the Reproductive Rights Movement did not have much appreciation for. Unfortunately, at this point the Abortion Movement, the Reproductive Rights Movement is populated largely by lobbyists, feminist officials, and movie stars. Every so often this movement produces a large rally in D.C., giving its rank and file, if I may, the opportunity to buy buttons and hear the point of view of women no longer able to get pregnant. These events do send a confused message.

Then I have A and it goes to — Go to A, go to B — oh there's B. Okay.
Sorry guys, this is very antiquated and funny.

SS: It's alright.

TM: Okay, I'm just going to read it as it is. I don't know how I put it together but we'll see how it reads.

“So when I was asked to speak of what direction we should be heading regarding the NIAID, the ACTGs, and so on, I immediately knew my reply. Without a doubt in my mind, we should be taking it to the streets and far more frequently than we have in the past year. Although my answer, take it to the streets, is a simple and straightforward one, the question of why we have done far less direct action than we might have gives me reason to pause. Why is this the case, and why are others moving toward lobbying, negotiating, and service provision?” That's Part F, so I don't know.

Now here's E. “NOW, National Organization for Women, etc., has become a polite organization, no screaming, no yelling. They call senators and members of the House of Representatives by their first names. I lobbied once in my life in Albany, years ago with NOW, and their line of parental consent and Medicaid funding was actually frightening. We were told to say, ‘Tom, Dick, Harry, we don't want the taxpayers' money going to raise unwanted children in need of welfare, etc.’ I protested too much at that moment and was reprimanded in the hallway. I was told that that was the way we had to deal with Senator so-and-so to get what we wanted. My reply to this NOW lobbyist, was, ‘This Senator so-and-so would listen more closely if we were a thousand people outside this building screaming for what we really wanted and needed.’”

“This movement has failed almost entirely. I assume that everyone in here knows — I’m reading this all mixed up, but here goes — that *Roe vs. Wade* will soon be either overturned or so reduced in its power by other Supreme Court rulings as to be nothing but a source of frustration. Although abortion might be allowed to remain a right, we will see more women jailed for children born with birth defects, fewer doctors willing to perform abortions, fewer clinics able to keep their doors open,” and I’ve crossed out “for they will be denied federal family planning funds if they continue to have an abortion clinic even one day a week, and so on.”

“How, then, if the majority of people in this country supposedly support abortion as a right, is abortion in such jeopardy, and what can we as AIDS activists learn from this? Well, the movement for abortion rights was originally a movement about the repeal of abortion laws, a much more radical prospect indeed. The movement started in the late fifties in the streets with women handing out literature on do-it-yourself abortion techniques and moved on to have speak-outs, demonstrations, write books on women’s healthcare, in fact, many things that AIDS activists have done and continue to do.

“But one portion of this movement sought to make abortion legal, believing this was the only way to win the struggle. The other portion of the movement, let’s call them the repealers, felt that there should be no laws regulating abortion, i.e., abortion is a personal decision; abortion is healthcare; abortion is not the business of the government. Eventually there was a split, and those intent on influencing the government won out. What they won is the dead-end street we’re on today. They asked for less than they wanted and needed. They were asked to do that. They were asked to do that, make sacrifices, that is, in order to have abortion made legal. Legal means in the hands of a

doctor. Legal means it is subject to multitudinous legal modifications, i.e., Medicaid funding, where it can be performed, and now today we have so radically lost control of the issue that fetal personhood is already being established.

I was listening to [Paul] Ryan last night. That's true, right?

“This once vibrant movement sacrificed its radical vision in favor of going after what they felt they could get. Those in government, Bella Abzug, Pat Schroeder, etc., and those not as directly employed by the government, for instance, Gloria Steinem, various presidents of NOW, went on to effectively erase the radical past and radical views of the movement they were a part of.

01:50:00

“When federal Medicaid funding was cut for abortions, there was no outcry. Abortion rights activists had already learned to accept less, which is what we continue to get. Hence, I am nervous when we do activist business with the government in a polite way. I believe we have every right to demand a government response that is aggressive, intelligent, and compassionate in this crisis, our collective crisis, the AIDS crisis. I do not believe that we gain anything at all by sitting on government committees, by meeting informally for coffee or a meal with government officials,” take that, Mark, obviously, “by making casual phone calls or attending parties with these people. For three years, we have proved to them our extreme intelligence. Now that we've got their respect, it's time to show them our anger.

“I know many people will think people are people; just because they're federal, state, or city government employees and aides, there's no reason to be so hard on them. I ask people to remember this: people working for the government, in particular the federal government, have either been appointed by Republican administrations or

hired by the people appointed by Republican administrations; that is, Ronald Reagan or George Bush. If you want to try and convince me that these two murderers care about people they consider, quote, ‘faggots, dykes, welfare mothers, drug addicts, niggers, spics,’ I must say I haven’t got the time. Indeed, many nice people, caring people, people with AIDS, even, work for the government, and, indeed, this prohibits their ability to take radical action that is honest.

“We all know what it’s like to fear losing your job for refusing to toe the company line. I can name many AIDS activists who worked in AIDS and refused to toe their agencies’ lines, their lines on AIDS, and got the chop. It happens. If there was more turnover in AIDS, meaning AIDS services, etc., and policy, I believe people were opposing the Republican administrations’ policies.

I have “Ellen Cooper” written at the top, but I don’t connect her with anything in particular.

“Working within the system — .” And then I have crossed out “pays the rent.”

“But working closely within the system — .” This is all crossed out.

“Working within the system — .” And then I think what I must have said is, “Working within the system exacts a price. That price is a high one. It inhibits your ability to criticize the system that is killing you and your friends. Sure, you might get to know how a system works, but the closer and deeper we are inside the NIAID, ACTG systems, acting on a first-name basis, the less scared of ACT UP these people are, and the bottom line, as far as I’m concerned, is this: we’ll get nothing but personal gratification from being polite. We might get what we want and need.”

This doesn't make sense. All right. That's all crossed out.

“I have a different suggestion, a different tactic, one that asks us to remain as on the ball as we are now, smart, brilliant, and tough, without a doubt, and scary. Unfortunately, just as it was a hard lesson for many of us in ACT UP to learn that the police were not our friends, we also need to learn the same lesson about Fauci, [Dan] Hoth, Curran, Noble, various, etc. I don't know all their names, and maybe I don't care to, but we're not going to get what we want and need to repeat that theme by gaining our credibility through being as smart as these people. Our credibility resides here at home with other activists, not at the ACTGs where different PIs know our names and will entertain our questions about trial protocols. Remaining more elusive, more anonymous, even, we become perhaps a scary element, one that cannot be tamed, named, or held down. We do not become members of the system that is killing us. We remain outside of it, able to affect it with our mass power.”

I see that I move from something else. Here we go. I wonder if this goes here? I don't know, this is mostly crossed out. Alright.

“To use myself as an example. Along with other activists who are women, I understand from our presence at the ACTG gathering, we were named — .”

Okay, here we go. The junta. So when was 076?

SS: I don't know.

JW: Ninety-two, I thought.

JH: That's what I thought, it was '92.

TM: Okay. This must have been at the ACTG, maybe the NIH conference, whatever.

01:55:00

“We were named the *junta*. Okay, fine. We’re on to their tricks, I thought. When I heard this, I realized they were nervous. I asked how much further should I personally go on seeing so-and-so, so-and-so, the big macher such-and-such Women’s Committee of the NIH. My answer was perhaps not much further. Maybe I’ll go to the next ACTGs and hand out the next women’s treatment agenda, confront people, and leave. When the people on this committee know my name, I leave knowing that when they never see me again, but instead see other people who feel as I do who refuse personal relationships with them as well, that there are more and more of us.

“We become unwieldy, nerve-wracking, undeniably a force to be reckoned with. I fear how tame we have become, how manageable to NIAID and the ACTG system. We are not manageable to the CDC. May we never get that way. In fact, I’d like to see us go down in another two months, all of us. That includes people in — and, boy, will I be unpopular for saying this — Treatment and Data. Every other committee had people there but T&D, whose absence was noticeable to people besides me. My criticism of T&D strategies are not random. I don’t want what goes down between, for instance, Mark Harrington and myself to look like we’re just having personal disagreements — it’s hard to read this.

“What we’re talking about here are tactics and strategies. If we are going to appreciate the work each other does, let’s not undercut it. Mark’s having had dinner with Fauci was a prime example of what I’m talking about here. I can’t help but to feel that breaking bread with Fauci, in fact, being with him as he recovers from being called on the carpet by us for his negligence of women in the AIDS crisis did anything but let Fauci off the hook.

“I used to think that it was a sign of our power that after we did a huge demonstration or beforehand, we got to meet with the people in charge, the people we were protesting against, but I’ve changed my mind. I think that as activists screaming in front of the NIH, for example, Tony Fauci knew that he’d meet with our rational factor later on so he could dismiss the rest of us and our anger. He could dismiss us as a political force. Any threat we could have posed to his power was turned — ,” bad handwriting; it’s only gotten worse — “was turned into useless theater. All meetings with government officials, in particular federal ones, must be approved by the floor. We must not let ourselves be swayed as mostly lesbians and gay men by people in power, those people largely being straight men. And we do not have to understand precise details of the ACTG and NIAID in order to criticize them with fervor. Let’s stop being pitted against each other, expert versus novice. Let’s remember our impulses for justice that bind us together.” I think that’s where I ended.

SS: But you didn’t call for a moratorium.

TM: It’s got to be in here, Sarah. If you could see this thing, it’s like A, E, F —

SS: Try to find it, because that’s the important part.

TM: I’m like, “How did I do that?” Okay. Let’s see.

JW: You called a vote for after every meeting.

TM: Yes, I did call for that.

“AIDS and abortion are not the same issues all around, though they share many similarities.” This is some other section. “Real differences lie in the fact that living with unwanted children is seen as preferable to having an incurable illness. As

some people say, by any means necessary. People are dying on all levels. We need to act. My concern is how we act. I've never considered lobbying a form of activism." I think that belonged in that other part.

"From the FDA what have we got? We have seven drugs. In fact, I no longer feel that ACT UP serves the great function in the AIDS crisis, that of normalizing or making look not so radical the demands of AIDS lobbyists groups. I'd rather have — .” Oh, this is why David Barr hated me. “I'd rather have the stuff of GMHC that does policy work, in fact, all AIDS lobbyists and policy types quit their jobs and take part in frequent and regular direct actions. My fear is that we've become acceptable, that if we let that become our fate, who will deal with the direct action we need to save our lives?"

I don't know. I don't see it. Let me see. There's one section that I didn't know where it belonged. It doesn't seem like there's a moratorium in there.

SS: No. You're not calling for anything, actually. There's no proposal here.

TM: Right, there's no proposal here.

JW: Well, a vote before any government meeting.

TM: There's that. But let me see. It's got to be in here.

SS: But that's got to be in here. Otherwise it's not —

JW: Moratorium on the moratorium?

JH: Was there speech on the floor?

TM: Oh, that happened later. Oh, this is so weird. It's like, A, B, C —

02:00:00

there's Ellen Cooper again. Perhaps it was just implied.

SS: Let me ask you this. In terms of your memory, what did you propose? What was your concrete proposal?

TM: I don't think I had a concrete proposal. Clearly this was an attempt to get people to think about what they were doing, its impact on the organization. My proposal was, "Think about this."

SS: So who proposed the six-month moratorium?

TM: That came out of a lot of the women's groups across the country, discussions. People were fed up. What was happening in ACT UP New York was replicating in Chicago and in San Francisco. There were a lot of divisions between inside, outside — big medicine, small social policy, whatever you want to call the divide. There was a lot of that, not just in New York.

SS: But when did you stand up in front of the room and say, "I propose a six-month moratorium"?

TM: I never did. Maxine did that.

SS: And why did Maxine do it, if it was your idea?

TM: At that point, the moratorium really took on a life of its own. People gravitated toward it, they were interested, and in different ACT UPs across the country. This call for a moratorium came from those — I remember having conference calls at the workspace, having conference calls about this and discussing this.

What happened for me, I was like, "This is an idea that's never going to fly here." It was really clear to me, so I backed off more from it, but Maxine is very, I think, democratically minded. Here the women's caucuses had this interest, right? I was

somebody who, by saying what I said probably a year prior, was certainly very much associated with the idea —

SS: Do you think the moratorium proposal was a year after this?

TM: I don't know. It seems a while.

SS: I'm going to take the computer away from you right now. Did you read Maxine's testimony, the transcript on the ACT UP oral history website?

TM: No.

SS: I wish you had, because I think that there's a difference of opinion about why it was introduced and when it was introduced.

TM: What's her idea?

JH: Well, I think it's actually quite similar.

SS: She said that she thought it should be discussed, but that she didn't necessarily support it. That's her argument.

JH: Right.

TM: Right. She didn't necessarily support it, but she was willing — I remember this. I said, she's very democratically minded, so she's like, "Well, I can represent this."

SS: But you still supported it?

TM: I supported it, but I didn't think it was going to work. I was like, "Yes, but this is not —."

SS: You thought it was a good idea, but you didn't want to present it because —

TM: No. I thought it was a good idea, but I didn't think it was feasible. There was one thing, I liked the idea, but by the time we'd really discussed it and you could feel all the tension on the floor, I was like, "This is not feasible. This is not going to work here."

SS: So let me ask you this. So now it's twenty-something years later.

Looking back, what is your feeling about this?

TM: About the moratorium?

SS: Yes.

TM: What is my feeling about it? It's painful. I think it was a nodal point. It was, god that the feelings were around this split, that it had come to a very painful point, and it's very painful to think of it now. However, I don't think that the moratorium ideas — it was sort of a symptom. I think I view it as a symptom of a larger problem in the organization, not an answer to — an attempt to answer that problem. A desperate attempt to answer this problem. Not the right answer. I don't know what the right answer would have been.

SS: Can I tell you what my reaction is to hearing the speech?

TM: Yes.

SS: I think it's about feminism versus — I mean, I think it's what we were talking about earlier. I didn't hear you give this speech, and I didn't know that you were going to read it today, and I didn't know what was in it.

TM: Neither did I.

02:05:00

SS: All the previous conversation that we've had, I didn't know that it was going to lead to this moment. But you were coming from an experience of the Feminist Movement.

TM: Oh, totally.

SS: I mean, which I was just as Shulamith Firestone's memorial service and Ti-Grace Atkinson said the two things that killed Women's Liberation Movement were opportunism and cooptation by the establishment.

TM: I'm right with those girls, obviously.

SS: In terms of the Women's Liberation Movement, that is accurate.

TM: Yes.

SS: And that's the history that you're coming from, and those are the expectations that you're having.

TM: Right.

SS: However, these are men, and when they go into the system, they can make it work for them. So actually what happened historically is these men did go into that system, did make it work for them, and it ended up not working for people who don't have the power that they have.

TM: That's absolutely right.

SS: So it seems at that moment you were coming from feminism and they were coming from being men.

TM: Yes. I knew that I had — I didn't know until I knew. It was one of those, "Oh, this like a really hateful idea? Why?"

SS: I know, but as far as David Barr was concerned, for him, he was right.

TM: He was right.

SS: Because it did work for him.

TM: He was right.

SS: But we interviewed Kevin Frost recently at amfAR, and he told us that of the 1.2 million people with HIV in the United States today, only 30 percent are undetectable. That means 70 percent are not getting treatments that exist. So the people that you're thinking about, the going into the system did not work for. And the people that they're thinking about, the going into the system did work for.

TM: Right? I'm not surprised. I, like, hadn't —

SS: This is just occurring to me now.

TM: Yes. No. Gee, Sarah, I hadn't — that's such a chilling piece of information. I don't have the — I'm not in ACT UP anymore, I don't have those numbers. But that's a chilling piece of information.

Of course it worked for — you know. David and Mark and Peter and, these guys, they're alive.

SS: That's right.

TM: They are alive. And many other people are alive because of — you know. But there are people who — it's sickening. I don't even like to think about it. It makes my blood boil. I'm too old for boiled blood. No, never.

SS: But it's just very interesting to look at it that way. I'd never thought about it that way before.

TM: Yes.

SS: Because we've interviewed 140-something people, and whenever we ask people about the split, they're always, like, Mark Harrington versus Maxine and Tracy Morgan.

TM: Right.

SS: You have become the historic emblem of this.

TM: Right.

SS: But now I'm seeing it really differently, based on our conversation, that you would have a different expectation than they would have.

TM: Oh, very different. I think that I was so surprised at the reaction. I just didn't — I didn't know. I thought, for sure, here's this incredible organization where people are putting their bodies on the line and fighting to stay alive and sort of just short of by any means necessary. That's what drew me to the organization. This other stuff was not — I was like, "This is not where it's really going to be at, where change is really going to take place." Or it's going to take place.

I wonder, for instance, I wouldn't have turned away a relationship with Anthony Fauci if I had HIV at that time. Don't get me wrong, because he perhaps could have tapped me and put me closer to something that could have kept me alive longer, and I would have done that. But I think that what I was hoping for was that actually nobody has to give that up. But you have to have a critique of what functioning in that way — what the political endgame is there.

SS: But there's also this way that that the Women's Movement cannot be successful. We don't know how to be successful. We have a history of not being

successful, and AIDS activism has been successful for a certain group of people.

That's what I'm getting out of this conversation.

I just want to move on to the harassment issue. So can you just explain to us what happened, what your experience was?

02:10:00

TM: I was like, "Oh, it's in that document, because I kept notes of what happened day by day by day." I kept a calendar for a number — for as many months as it went on until I left ACT UP. And I knew that the moratorium issue had made me very unsafe, there's no question. I was like, "Oh, I'm totally unsafe in this organization, so I am going to leave." It was so frightening.

SS: So when did it begin?

TM: After Stop the Church, just after.

SS: So that's like '89?

TM: Yes. After Stop the Church, I would get phone calls at home, really lewd phone calls, and, god, talking about sexual positions. That would be like three in the morning, my phone would ring. And I didn't really think about it, and then I had to think about it, because it became more systematic and formulaic.

And I think the day that I really had to take it seriously is Heidi and I were at Yonah Schimmel getting a knish, and we were walking. It was a nice fall day or early spring day or something, and it was beautiful. And this man — we didn't have on buttons or anything. We were unmarked. And this man walked up to us, and he was a tall, slender, very almost malnourished-looking black man. He said, "Are you going to the Women and AIDS demonstration today in Tompkins Square Park?"

And I looked at him and I said — first of all, there's nothing going on with Women and AIDS at that time. You know how you're at that moment you would know where it is and what it is. And Heidi and I were like, "What?"

And he's like, "Yes. Aren't you going to go?"

And we were like, "What was that? What was that?"

Well, not long after that, we had the CD-ROMs for the CDC campaign for the five hundred names, constantly adding all their data and information, and we kept it at the workspace, and it was cut in half and slid under my door. And I was like, "Wow." And that was —

SS: So what did you do when that happened?

TM: Well, when that happened, I took it to the floor of ACT UP. In there I have all the documents. I typed up everything that had happened since Stop the Church. I spoke to Eve Rosan. I spoke to people who had histories, more to do with COINTELPRO. I turned to Joan Gibbs. I was like —

SS: Why didn't you think it was somebody who worked at the workspace or someone in ACT UP?

TM: I couldn't imagine that and that seemed to me — I could imagine that. I'm not saying — I could imagine that, but to my mind, being pretty thoroughgoingly political, I was like, "Well, if it's somebody in the workspace, who is that somebody?" Is it really a person who's angry with me or is this a person who is in the employ of the NYPD, for instance? And I preferred to think of it, and I preferred politically to think of it that way rather than to make it be about some individual not

liking me, and also because other people were being — it wasn't just me. It was Heidi, it was Bro. Things were happening to us all.

SS: But it was all in your group. It was all people in your little group.

TM: It was all people in my group, yes. Yes. So I never would think to approach it in a way that it was somebody internal to ACT UP. Whatever was happening was very frightening.

And then for two months there was a car in front of my house. I lived on South Portland in Fort Greene, and it was an unmarked car with a guy in the car. And I was like, "Why is this guy always here, just sitting here when I leave in the morning, when I come home at night? What's going on?"

Then other people had experiences like being approached in the street in that way. And I knew. Being approached by a stranger — what was that? There was that article recently in the *Times Magazine*, I think, or *The New Yorker*, about these people who were arrested for small-time drug charges, who then they send in to do —

SS: Yes.

TM: I knew about that. I was like, this level of harassment, like this strange man approaching me on the street, smacks of that. So that really seemed to me —

SS: You know, I don't know. I mean —

TM: I know. We don't know.

SS: So many people remember you as this emblematic figure in this negative way, right?

TM: Right.

02:15:00

SS: In the interviews. The way that Mark is remembered in the same way and Maxine in the same way, it's the three of you. And there were a lot of people in ACT UP who were dying, who were extremely angry, who were very confused, who did all kinds of weird things, right?

TM: Mm-hmm.

SS: And it never occurred to you that it could be something like that?

TM: It's not that it didn't occur to me. It occurred to me, but I really thought to myself — you know, I guess I was certainly thinking politically. I was like, "Well, we are really doing something here."

SS: But why would you be singled out?

TM: It doesn't matter. Well, you could single out the weaker link. Not because I was doing anything in particular, but I was a weak link and so could be a fall guy. That was my thinking. I was like, "Well, this is not how I want to live my life."

SS: But do you think that ACT UP was infiltrated?

TM: I would imagine so, sure.

SS: And I'm not going to ask you who, but do you have people in mind?

TM: I don't.

SS: Because I've asked a lot of people this same question, and there are a number of people who think they know who the infiltrator is, and they all are thinking it's different people.

TM: Yes. That's why I never thought in those terms, Sarah. I never was like, "Oh, who could it be?" Sure, at the time it would cross my mind, and I would get

frightened, right? But I thought there's a higher plane here, which is that it could be that these people are infiltrators. I will never know. It will wreck the organization to try and hunt out the infiltrator.

SS: But there were also people who were not infiltrators who did incredibly destructive things. Dan Williams stole \$20,000. There's that guy Scott Sawyer, who stole all this money and disappeared, has never been heard from again. There was Derek Link, pretended he was HIV-positive. There was all kinds of psycho stuff being acted out there. So why a woman who's doing all this women's stuff wouldn't become an object of someone's misplaced resentment and anger, it fits in with a lot of — there's a lot of pathological behavior in ACT UP.

TM: Sure. Sure.

JW: You were listed on the contact sheet?

TM: Probably not. I don't know that I was.

And then one day we went to a meeting and somebody put — I have it there, too, like, "Tracy Morgan and her robot-like girlfriend Heidi Dorow." And I was like, "Really?" It just kept coming. These small explosions that are like, "Wow, this sucks." And this is really heading in a negative direction.

But even if I thought — oh, it's some person who's psycho in the organization, you're vulnerable when you're in that position.

SS: Of course, absolutely.

TM: I was like, "Well, I have to take the approach of sort of like war at home." I was like, "Okay, I get the argument in that book." I think that that argument is valid. What's his name? Brian — who wrote that book.

SS: I don't know.

TM: It's all about COINTELPRO, and it's a slim volume, and it was out everywhere. ACT UP bought it and gave it to people at certain points. It was really, really an interesting book on the Black Panthers, etc. That perspective made sense to me, and I was like, "You know what? This organization is really doing something." This CDC stuff is going to force the federal government to give a lot of money, a lot of money, in perpetuity if we win. This is not chump change. If the fissures in ACT UP could be exploited any further, it could be very bad for the organization, right?

SS: Have you asked for your Freedom of Information —

TM: Yes, but you know FOIA is all fucked up, right? Joan Gibbs did all that stuff for me, and then it was under Bush that they weren't giving out information, so then I kind of dropped it.

SS: Because Petrelis has the complete file, I believe. I mean, you can ask him if your name is in there or whatever.

Okay. So when did you leave ACT UP?

TM: The day of the moratorium vote. I knew I could never step foot in there again. I said, "I will be killed." I was like, I know that I am seen as this — to blame. For bringing to light, representing this rather large problem that already exists. And I was like, wow, okay, if you're scapegoated here, you're screwed. And you don't want to be screwed, and you want to live your life. You did the CDC thing. One of the best things I ever did. One of the things I'm most proud of. And I said, get out now, and get out while you still can. There were — it was just clear to me. I was like, "I'm going to have to leave." I knew the moratorium vote, if I could have stopped it, I would have.

02:20:00

SS: What was the vote, by the way? Do you remember how many people voted?

TM: I have no idea. It just was voted down. And with that — it wasn't so much whatever happened with that vote. It was more just like, "Wow." There wasn't a politics. I think what was hard was there was not, to my mind, a politics in the organization about what could create fragility within an organization. That was hard. That was really the beginning of sort of the real heartbreak. It was like, "Wow." And I didn't understand why not, because it seemed to me what I was saying in that strategy brunch talk was sort of common sense as I knew it, right?

And I left ACT UP. I was like, "I can never go back there again, because I'm seen as that one with this idea," which I no longer — this organization can't — I was a lot less interested in the organization because it couldn't tolerate and metabolize that idea. Or work with that idea. It didn't have to go the way I laid it out or whatever, but that it didn't get people thinking like, "Oh, you know what? There's a point here."

And I remember when all the harassment was happening, I approached David, Mark, Rebecca Pringle Smith. There was a lot of harassment stuff that she dealt with that was going on, and I just would reach out to her and just be like, "All right, let's not call names. Right? I'm not doing this to you. You're not doing this to me. There's a third element, and it's not us." That was my attitude. And she and I worked that way, because there was something was put out. I forget. There was a fax that had her name on it that she hadn't approved, that was not hers, that was very destructive toward Heidi and myself. And she was, "I didn't do that." I believed her. I was like, "I believe you, and I

think that we have a third force, so to speak, on our hands, and we don't have a politics in this organization to recognize that.”

And I think it made ACT UP a place where I knew I could only do the CDC stuff. It made it more like a single — not a single issue, but really I withdrew a lot from the organization and just worked on CDC stuff.

SS: This is a historic question that we've asked a lot of people, and there's people who believe that ACT UP was destroyed because of some kind of infiltration, and there's people who believe that we just did it to ourselves, perhaps because we came from different experiences. Unless someone reads through that FOIA information and proves otherwise, that is just going to be a matter of opinion at this point. But I mean, what did you do? There you were. You'd been living and breathing ACT UP every single day, every single night. Your lover was in ACT UP, everything. And then one day you're gone.

TM: But we left together. We did. The people I was close with in the CDC working group, it was like we just left.

SS: So what did you do with your time? It must have been hard to adjust.

TM: Yes, but I continued to do stuff. I continued to do reproductive rights stuff. We did the Holland Tunnel. I just put that energy into other things, which was really terrific. We did lots of civil disobedience training, and we worked on the model that we will be infiltrated and will not be able to get to the tunnel, so how will we work to prohibit infiltration. And I believe we were successful.

SS: How did you do that?

TM: We did things like we gave people at meetings slips of paper with different locations where they were to go to, and in small groups, and they didn't all necessarily know each other. And they were all at different addresses, and then we moved to another address, we moved to another address. There were no cell phones, so it wasn't somebody could be someplace making a phone call. There were people in charge of these small groups, that nobody left the room, didn't go to the bathroom. That was that.

When it came time to burst out on that Holland Tunnel rush hour, we never should have gotten there. ACT UP never got where it wanted to go, right? The other thing is that with big demonstrations, you understand you're not going to get in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Forget it. But with smaller actions, you begin to realize that you showed up and you were met by police. Well, that was interesting.

SS: Sometimes and sometimes not.

02:25:00

TM: Sometimes, sometimes not, but sometimes you were, and you were like, "Well, how did this happen?" Out of this meeting of forty or fifty people or thirty people, we're going to do this clandestine action, but the police are there. So they know about this. Because this happened frequently, I never doubted that there was infiltration. Because it wasn't just what we were saying on the floor, but these were small actions that weren't taken to the floor. So I think that that was a reality in the organization.

SS: ACT UP was part of the Holland Tunnel coalition. No?

TM: No. No, no, no. That was a different one. That was CUNY —

SS: The Midtown Tunnel.

TM: — Midtown. That was a different tunnel, Sarah. That was not the Holland Tunnel. The Holland Tunnel, I remember Zoe Leonard was there and Nancy Brooks Brody.

JW: I was there too.

TM: You were there? Did you get arrested there?

JW: No, but I had the camera there.

TM: You had the camera there?

JH: Wait. That wasn't an ACT UP thing?

JW: There were a lot of ACT UP people.

TM: There were a lot of ACT UP people but, no. No, we met at ABC No Rio. Yes. That's where we were meeting, right on Rivington Street with the floor caving in, and it's where we did all of our CD, nonviolent civil disobedience training.

SS: So in our film when we show this action at the tunnel, is that your action or is that —

JH: No, that's at Midtown tunnel.

TM: That's Midtown Tunnel. That's different. That's different. Maybe this one was just around the *Webster* decision. God knows, all those different Supreme Court decisions meld into one for me. But they're all —

JH: *Webster* was '89 and *Casey* is '92.

TM: There you go. Ninety-two is *Casey*. Thank you. Yes. So it was '92. So I was no longer in ACT UP. It was '92. It was the summer. It was right before July Fourth. We didn't set a date when we were going to do it. We had people scattered in small cells everywhere. They kept moving every hour or something that until finally they

ended up at one place, and no one knew where they were going to end up, right? That was the genius. Because I was like, “Aren’t we sick and tired of going to do things and finding that the police are already there?” So I find it surprising. You don’t think about infiltration that way, because that happened all the time. There was definitely a level of infiltration even at the small experiential — these groups, because we were thwarted. So you knew that, like, all right —

SS: Can you give an example?

TM: Probably not. But one will come to me. It’s like showing up and, like, “What are the police doing here?” How did that happen? Why should they know about *this* stupid thing? So we began to think, like that MACA thing we did, it was really like, “We should really think outside the box.” So that kind of thinking.

It was that same group of people who went on to do the Holland Tunnel. But we got the tunnel, rush hour, July Fourth weekend. That is an impossibility. With infiltration, that’s impossible, no matter how smart and savvy we were. We kept it — you could infiltrate, but you couldn’t stop it. That’s it. It’s not infiltratable. You could infiltrate, but you still couldn’t stop it. And that took a level of thinking, that kind of a mind. I don’t know what I could use that part of my mind for ever again. What do I do? Like, oh, for planning a birthday party, it’s going to be really good. How can I utilize this? Just got a lot of good organizational skills.

SS: I want to recommend that you read Brian Zabcik, Gerri Wells, and Maxine Wolfe’s testimony, because I think it will illuminate some of the things that you’ve brought up. I only have one question

TM: Illuminate what sort of —

SS: Some of the things that you brought up, like when *The Split* actually started, when there started to be division, gender division, infiltration, these kinds of questions. I only have one question left. Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you think is important?

TM: Probably there's many things, but, you know.

SS: We've asked everybody, just looking back, what would you say, in your mind, is ACT UP's greatest achievement and what do you think was its biggest disappointment?

02:30:00 TM: Oh, my god. ACT UP's biggest achievement was ACT UP. Yes, I think so. I don't know if that makes any sense, but that's what I think of. I think that that was quite an incredible achievement in and of itself: that it lasted as long as it lasted, that it did so many different things — many of them very constructive, but some of them very destructive. But still, that people came together under such circumstances — such dire circumstances — and found a way to be creative together is pretty phenomenal. And that we didn't just — it's like *Civilization and its Discontents* — that we didn't destroy each other for a number of years. You know, yes. The wish to live and the wish to die; we didn't destroy ourselves for quite a while. We got a lot done in a short period of time.

And the biggest disappointment is that if I'd done this interview ten years ago — which I couldn't have done because it was still too close to me and still too confusing — I would say the biggest disappointment was that on a personal level that I felt really like my idea was very misunderstood, but I don't see it so much that way now, because time has passed, because I have relationships with people who have a very

different understanding of what I was communicating then than they could have heard then, which I appreciate.

I think that this doesn't exist anymore. People still go to meetings, and I know Larry and I wrote together in the ACT UP Alumni Page, "Could we have a funeral for ACT UP, please? Could we come and mourn and say goodbye and not keep this alive forever, but actually have a proper mourning?" Because what was really evident when Deb Levine wrote her request for names of our dead last January, was that the mourning was so truncated and fucked up and frozen, and what people were writing about, it was so unsettling. I thought, why can't we come together and say goodbye — a proper goodbye?

It was clear nobody could mourn. People didn't mourn the loss of the organization; people mourned the loss of people. But I feel I now have mourned, a lot, the loss of the organization, and it's brought great people in my life who are still in my life, but it'll never be — I don't know. Yes, I miss it. I miss it and I'm very proud of it. And as difficult as it was, it was — and I think many people feel that way — it was the thing they did that they're most proud of in their lives. And something about that, I mean is — you could live life and not have that kind of pride. And die without that sense of when the going got tough, you did your best. So —

SS: Okay, thank you.

TM: Okay, thank you.

SS: Good job, how long did we go? It's almost 5 o'clock.

JW: Two and a half hours. That's a long interview.

TM: Okay.