Voices of Feminism Oral History Project

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College
Northampton, MA

WYNONA WARD

Interviewed by

JOYCE FOLLET

January 17–18, 2004
Vershire, Vermont

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with generous support from the Ford Foundation.

Narrator

Wynona Lund Ward was born July 4, 1951, the third of five children in a family beset by physical and sexual violence. The family lived on a dirt road a few miles from the village of West Fairlee in rural Vermont. When not unemployed, her father worked in copper mines, granite quarries, logging, and road construction. He drank excessively. Her mother worked as a housecleaner, school bus driver, dishwasher and cook. Wynona's father raped her repeatedly, beginning when she was three years old. Her grandfather raped her at age nine. Her mother and grandmother were verbally and physically abusive as well. Family members, neighbors and others turned a blind eye.

Wynona graduated from high school in 1969 and soon married a school friend, Harold Ward. She held clerical jobs in the 1970s until she and Harold formed a long-haul trucking company, Ward Transportation Services. From 1980 to 1995, she drove an 18-wheeler around the country.

In 1986 a niece reported sexual abuse by her grandfather (Wynona's father) and, in 1991, rape by her uncle (Wynona's brother). These reports triggered Wynona's own traumatic memories of child sexual assault. As Wynona became her niece's advocate through a protracted series of legal proceedings, she became versed in family law and wrote lengthy, reasoned critiques of court rulings and procedures. Once her brother was convicted, she lobbied for sex-offender treatment for him, then mounted a public campaign to deny him parole when he refused to participate.

From 1993 to 1995, while riding in the truck, Wynona completed studies for a college degree. In 1995 she entered Vermont Law School. In the course of her studies she focused on issues of family violence and worked in legal clinics. Upon graduation in 1998 she created Have Justice Will Travel, a mobile service that addresses rural poverty and isolation by providing free in-house consultations, transportation, and legal representation for low-income women and children who are victims of domestic violence. She has begun to receive national attention (e.g., Sunday *Globe* Magazine, *Ms*. Magazine, a Lifetime TV Achievement Award) as well as grants from foundations and the Department of Justice. HJWT now has offices in Brattleboro and Bennington as well as in the Wards' home and has developed a women-in-transition component to provide support and life skills for women moving toward self-sufficiency. Through lectures, trainings, and involvement in local and national organizations, Ward promotes HJWT as a model for ending rural family violence.

Interviewer

Joyce Follet (b.1945) earned a Ph.D. in Women's History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and works as a public historian, educator, and producer of historical documentary. She is Coordinator of Collection Development at the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

Abstract

Ward has written accounts of the abuse in her childhood home; the oral history does not recount that experience. Ward describes her experience of poverty and rural isolation as they

influence gender relations and domestic abuse. She assesses the impact of the women's movement on responses to family violence and details the in-home, "wraparound" services that distinguish Have Justice Will Travel from other advocacy groups and service providers.

Restrictions

None

Note

The records of Have Justice Will Travel are at the Sophia Smith Collection.

Format

Interview recorded on miniDV using Sony Digital Camcorder DSR-PDX10. Four 63-minute tapes. Sixty-minute audiocassette copies may cut off end of miniDV original.

Transcription

Transcribed by Luann Jette. Audited for accuracy and edited for clarity by Joyce Follet. Reviewed and approved by Wynona Ward.

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Video Recording

Bibliography: Ward, Wynona. Interview by Joyce Follet. Video recording, January 17–18, 2004. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Wynona Ward, interview by Joyce Follet, video recording, January 18, 2004, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, tape 2.

Transcript

Bibliography: Ward, Wynona. Interview by Joyce Follet. Transcript of video recording, January 17–18, 2004. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Wynona Ward, interview by Joyce Follet, transcript of video recording, January 18, 2004, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, pp. 22–24.

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Transcript of interview conducted JANUARY 17, 2004, with:

WYNONA WARD
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802-685-7809
jfwt@together.net

at: above

by: JOYCE FOLLET

FOLLET: The red light-

05:25

WARD: Yes, I've seen it a couple of times. Now you've got a red light on.

FOLLET: OK. OK. Now we're up and running.

WARD: OK. Good.

FOLLET: So, I should say that this is Joyce Follet with Wynona Ward at her home in Vershire [section of Chelsea], Vermont, on Saturday, the 17th of January, 2004. Thank you very much for giving your weekend over to this.

WARD: Thank you for coming.

FOLLET: Since we have a couple of hours today and a couple of hours tomorrow, what I had in mind was sort of a life history, starting at the beginning and coming to today. And because we have some of your papers and records at the Sophia Smith Collection, I've been able to read everything that's there. So I've done some background reading and I know that you have written a great deal. Between your schoolwork and your personal essays, you've written a lot about your personal experience in childhood -- and legal briefs, essentially. So, I thought that we could move from your personal experience to what you've learned from that personal experience, and then what you're doing with what you've learned from your personal experience. And since you've written so much about it, I'm not sure that we need to restate a lot of the details of the experience, but let's see how the time goes. OK. And we

can stop whenever you want -- if you get tired, we just need a break, if the light changes and that kind of thing, and we'll be forced to stop every hour anyway.

OK. So, your family background and childhood. I was really interested to read the essay that you wrote about Native American rights in Vermont and to learn that you have a biracial background, that your father was part-white, part-Native American, and I was wondering how did that biracial background influence your childhood?

WARD: My father grew up the same as a lot of the Abenakis that were in Vermont at the time. He was born in '21. I was roughly 10 or 12 years old at least, before I knew that, realized that, because it was kept a secret. It was kept a secret because nobody, you know, they didn't want anybody to know about it because you were looked at as a redskin, you were looked at as being dirty, as the lowest denominator that you could possibly be. And so (crash) I think we have kittens playing (laughs).

FOLLET: They don't like being ignored.

WARD: Right. They're chasing each other around. And so what happened was that we were forbidden to talk about it. We didn't talk about it in the family. And we were told that – not to talk about it and not to mention it to anybody.

FOLLET: How did you learn about it?

WARD: Um, I don't know. I don't know if it was something that was discussed among the kids, that maybe my older brother and sister knew about somehow and so I asked my mother about it and she said, Don't you talk about that. Your father will be mad. He doesn't want anybody to know. Don't make him mad -- that type of thing. And so we just never discussed it, never talked about it. And my father – of course then we called them Indians, we didn't call them Native Americans back then -- he considered them dirty and he didn't want anybody to know that we were part of that culture. But you know, now that I think back at it, and think back to the different things that he loved and so on, it was those parts of him that came out that were nice, that were good. He loved to hunt. He had a wonderful green thumb. He loved to plant flowers and trees and have a garden and all of those kinds of things. That was what I considered the good part of him, and to me that came from his Native American heritage. It was sad, I think, that he did hide it.

FOLLET: So he never affirmed it. I'm going to move my chair here.

WARD: I think, you know, as I grew into an adult and the world outside began to think it was an OK thing, then he discussed it some. Not that much. I

think he talked with my brother more about it than he did me because the last several years that he lived, we didn't have contact, my father and I didn't. But my brother and my father did. And so, after his death, my brother and I talked about it quite a bit, and so I think he acknowledged it more to him than what he did to me. But you just didn't talk about it. [cat comes in and is removed] It's sad, I think, that he couldn't do that, that he couldn't recognize that. And I think that's probably because -- from I've read and the history of it that I've researched for writing that paper that you discussed -- when my father was growing up with that, you didn't want anybody to know what your heritage was because you were put down. Sometimes I think about it now -- when you think about the Vermont heritage and the Vermont history and so on, and what you hear are the Green Mountain Boys and the Ethan Allen Boys and all of that, but the truth of the matter is the Allen Boys and so on were the same as other white men at that time that really pushed the Native Americans out of the state, just the same as the white men did in the rest of the country. And so I think that's something we never acknowledge and that should be acknowledged.

My husband Harold worked with a heating and plumbing company and they were in Hanover, and they were cleaning out the basement down there to put a new heating system in, and he brought home this sign that says "The Middle Grants" on it, which is the grants that were given by King George to the white man to come and settle in New Hampshire and Vermont. And he said, I want to put this up out front. At first I said, No, you're not putting that up, and I was really kind of angry about it, and then I said, No, go ahead and put it up, then when people ask what it is, I'll tell them, Oh, that's when the Englishman gave the white man the right to take the land away from the Abenakis, because that's what it was.

FOLLET: So is it out here someplace?

WARD: Yeah. It's out where you drive in.

FOLLET: Oh, no kidding. I'll have to notice when I –

WARD: Yes. It's called "The Middle Grants" because they were called grants -- New Hampshire and Vermont and New York. It wasn't Vermont, it was New Hampshire and the New York grants, and it was a grant that the king – it was King George, I think, at that time, of England gave to the settlers here to settle those lands.

FOLLET: Well, that's nice that you've reclaimed that piece of your-

WARD: I think so. I think it's neat, and it's sad that very few others in my family talk about it. It just didn't get passed down, but what did get passed

down is if you look at some of my nieces and nephews, you can see the Abenaki strain going through them, you know, the dark hair, the dark eyes, the high cheekbones and so on. You see that it's still there, even that far down. And this started with just one person. There was - my great-grandmother was an Abenaki, full Abenaki, and my great-grandfather married her.

And then there's other that came in through, actually, my grandmother who came from Canada. She came from Quebec City. The story that we were always told is that when she was 8 years old, she was one of, like, nine children and they couldn't take care of her. And so, her father brought her down to the U.S.-Vermont border where she stayed in Canada and worked in a kitchen there until she was 14 and when she was about 14, she was allowed to wait tables and she met my grandfather, who was 27, who brought her to this country and married her.

FOLLET: What about the economic circumstances of your family as you were growing up?

WARD: We lived in a very poor area in town. It was out of town, like three-quarters of a mile out of town. And when I say out of town, the town I grew up in was 300 people, so the town consisted of a church, a town hall, a school, and a store, and a post office. It was just a very small town, but a state road ran through and we lived off that on a back road, about a mile or so out of town. Everybody that lived in that – it was like a little valley that we lived in – were very poor, and we were one of the poorest. What happened is, when my mother and father got married, my understanding is my maternal grandparents bought them a little tiny chunk of land and a house. It was an old mining house from the copper mines that were there in the 1800s and fixed it up and they moved in, and it was just four rooms, just a very small mining shack is what it would have been called. And my father did various kinds of work but it was always hard labor work. The work that he did was very hard. He worked in the copper mines. He worked in the granite quarries. He worked logging some, farming some, that type of work, so he was always doing hard manual labor.

FOLLET: And your mother worked, as I understand it?

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: What did it mean to the family dynamics that your mother was a regular contributor to the –

WARD: I remember back when I was 8-10 years old, she worked just during the summer when the children weren't in school. They had a lot of camps

then. People from the city, with money, would send their children to camp. And so she would either work ironing the camp outfits, the clothes they wore then, or she worked in the kitchens. and by the time I was 10 years old, then she felt that I was old enough so that she left me home with my two younger sisters and I took care of four or five other neighborhood children. I stayed at home and did that and so then she could go to the camp and make more money and she worked in the kitchen and in the laundry there, I think. Then, I think I was 12 years old before she went to work on a full-time basis, and she went to work in a kitchen in a Norwich Inn in Vermont and worked there for many years before she got done.

FOLLET: Did the fact that she had an income give her any options that she might not otherwise have had?

WARD: Oh, yes.

FOLLET: Did she – how did she-?

WARD: It was really when she went to work that we were given things that we would have never had. I mean, we had a lot. We had plenty to eat. We had clothes. We could go placed because she had money for gas. You know, we just weren't held there. With my father, when he worked, and he was gone, but he had the only car. There was only one car, and so it really was difficult. We didn't have much. And part of the reason for that was he drank. He was an alcoholic. And so, a lot of his money went for that instead of to support the family. It just took a lot away from that. Plus, he was ill a lot.

This is the story he always told us. When he was 5 years old, 4 or 5 years old, he had polio, and he couldn't walk for quite a while, and so he had always limped and had a bad foot. Then when he was 12 years old and he was splitting wood, he split that same foot open with an ax, and so that made that leg even more difficult. He was in World War II but just for a short while, like for nine months towards the end, and he chauffeured, he drove generals and the high military ranking people in this country. He didn't go out of the country at all, and then they gave him a medical discharge. Being in the Army for that short amount of time during the war meant that he got benefits and that he could receive medical care from the VA, the Veteran's Administration Hospital, which is located in White River here. So they essentially did all of his medical care.

FOLLET: You mentioned, I think, that – it is West Fairlee where you were? -- that the population was 300, about 300?

WARD: Uh-hm. About 300 when I was growing up.

FOLLET: Was there much of an economic range within that population?

WARD: You know, I look back at it now and I realize that, yes, it went from middle class or middle-low income people to poverty stricken, which is what we were. To me as a child growing up, these people were rich because, they had nice homes that were painted and papered or they had nice furniture. They were clean homes. They weren't cluttered. And also, they had cars and they had nice clothes and all of these things. And bathrooms and running hot water and those types of things. And we had an outhouse. So, to me, it was like they were rich. That's how I thought of them as a child. But looking back at it, I would say they were middle- to low-income people for the most part.

FOLLET: How did you understand those differences at the time? Did your parents talk about politics or any of those-

WARD: No. No, they didn't. We didn't have a TV until I was in ninth grade, I think it was. No, we had a TV, I think, when I was actually in seventh grade. But we didn't have a telephone until I was in the ninth grade. We always had electricity and always had lots of cold water, but it was a while before my father actually put in a hot water heater so that we had hot water. No, they didn't talk politics. Town, you know, neighborhood politics, but not state or country politics at all, no. The only thing I really remember back aways about politics is, I remember when John Kennedy died. I was seventh grade, and we didn't have a radio or anything. I was going to school, I was either a sixth or seventh grader, a two-room school, and the teacher allowed us to go out to her car and we listened to it on the radio as they broadcast it on the radio. My grandparents had a TVever since I could remember, and they lived in Post Mills, which is a town about two miles away. My grandparents on my mother's side, they were like middle-class people, and we would go there and stay a lot. My mother sent us there a lot to stay. I'm going to say a good half of my childhood was spent with my grandmother.

FOLLET: Oh, really?

WARD: Uh-hm.

FOLLET: Your maternal grandmother.

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: After school and that kind of thing?

WARD: After school, overnight, during the summers, almost every weekend. It was a way for my mother to get us out of the house, and that way, she only had to deal with my father being an alcoholic and didn't have to deal with him abusing us. It was easier to deal with him that way, if we were gone. And we wanted to be gone.

FOLLET: Of course.

WARD: Because it was an abusive home to grow up in and so we were gone all that we could, all that we possibly could.

FOLLET: You've written about that and I've read your stories – "The Stew" and "The Child's Trauma" and "No More Me" and "Mama's Song." Are those descriptions, accurate descriptions of your actual childhood?

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: They are. I took them to be.

WARD: They're all real stories.

FOLLET: I took them to be.

WARD: As I remember them, yeah. And there were good times, too. My father played harmonica and he played the Jew's harp, and there were lots of times when we would sing and the family would be together at night and so on. And those were good times, and when you think about it, you know, now that I'm away from it some, I can think of both. There was a while there when I couldn't do that. I could only think of the bad that went on and the traumatic things that went on. But now I can look back and look that there were good times also. And I realize now that when people look at their lives and they talk about their lives, that's what they can do. They can separate that out, so you can hear about a person's life and you can hear that it was wonderful, because they only want to remember what's good. But then, if you think about also what the traumatic times were, you know a lot of people don't want to talk about that. So, you think of the good times as being the old times but really they were very hard times.

FOLLET: I think it's so exceptional that you have chosen to speak about this and write about it in such vivid and gripping ways and I do want to say I'm really, I'm really sorry that all that happened.

WARD: You know, it was a really hard childhood and sometimes I think, gee, if I'd only, if it had been different, then I wonder how far I could have gone, you know, how much different things would be for me. But then

again, I learned a lot from that, and make used of what I learned now, even then. You learn, you come away with it, with good and bad, I think. You learn to use it. But I think it makes it harder financially, I think, is the big thing. You don't have things handed to you that some people do and so you have to work to get those things, and struggle, where other people may just take things for granted. And I think a lot of people are like that, people in the Vermont area and in this Central Vermont area, which is very poor and very rural. They just choose not to speak about it. But a lot of people went through what I went through, in many ways. They just don't want to talk about it.

FOLLET: How did you understand it at the time? What explanations were offered to you or did you come up with for the abuse that was in the family?

WARD: You mean, like, for other people in the community?

FOLLET: To yourself or to anyone that you had to explain.

WARD: I learned very early on, at the age of 2 or 3, that you don't talk about this. My mother and my grandmother both -- my maternal grandmother. When I speak of my grandmother, for the most part, it's my maternal grandmother. We had very little to do with my paternal grandmother because she lived at that time what we felt was a long distance away. It was about 40 miles away, so. Of course, that was a long way away then. But my maternal grandmother lived just two miles away. And they made it very clear to all of us that you do not talk about this, that this is shameful, that it's bad, that it only happens to you. We didn't talk about it to one another within the household, what went on, because it was supposed to be kept a secret and it was the divide-and-conquer, which is very common with incestuous families, what happens. So we never talked about it. We didn't discuss it.

It was just understood that you don't bring friends home, and mothers in the neighborhood knew that, they wouldn't allow their children in our house. They knew what went on. I was welcome to go to other girls' houses and stay overnight but we were never allowed to bring friends home. And not because my mother wouldn't allow it, it was because other mothers wouldn't allow it.

FOLLET: Because they knew.

WARD: They knew. You just didn't discuss it.

FOLLET: Did you have-?

WARD: It was understood. It was almost like it was an understood, unspoken way of life.

FOLLET: So you had exposure to other families or to other messages that made you think of your own family situation as having something wrong going on?

WARD: Oh, yeah. Wrong or something that wasn't – yes, it would have been wrong, not accepted by others, not OK with others, shameful, very shameful. So you hid it and you didn't discuss it. And it was like black and white. I've often said with children, what children learn, if a child grows up in a home and is told all their life that black is white and then they go to school and they're told, no, white is black, they're going to adjust and know that at school that they have to say white is black. But when they go home at night, they know that black is white and you just adjust. You go back and forth. It's no different than children that go back and forth between divorced families. You learn the rules at each place, and you learn, in a divorced family, you learn that at dad's house you eat at 6 o'clock, and at mom's house you eat at 8:30. And this is no different. You learn that you don't say this is school and you don't discuss it in school, and at home, you know, it's different.

FOLLET: Was there anyone you turned to? Anyone you trusted with what was going on?

WARD: No. Absolutely not.

FOLLET: So, from your child's perspective, what made the world tick?

WARD: Eating. That you had food on the table. That you were warm. I think those were the things that you appreciated, and those were the things that were important to my mother and father. They both grew up in the Depression years. Both from big families. My father came from a family of six and my mother from a family of nine, and so the fact that you had food on the table was important, that was one of the most important things. That you had heat and a roof over your head. Those were the essential things. I think as a child what made the world tick was being able to be outside, whether it was winter or summer, no matter the season. You were outside. That's where it was safe. It was safe to be outside and it was fun. And we were allowed free rein. My brother and I, we would – and I was a tomboy. I was very close to my brother until, probably, I was 10 or 11 years old. We were buddies. And even after that, we sugared one year, just him and I, traipsing around through the woods, gathering sap in milk cans and things like that. We went sliding all the time. We were allowed to hunt. I hunted from the time I was 7 years old. The outdoors. It was like our lifesaver was the outdoors, being outdoors, all times of year. We would walk the mountainsides and

the hillsides and the woods and we were always allowed to come and go as we wanted when we were doing those types of things.

The copper mines – one of the things we used to love to do, the Vershire copper mines. They were called the Ely Mines at that point in time. There's a number of copper mines in this area in Vermont. The Strafford one is the one that's most recent and was most recently worked, and is going through EPA cleanup and so on now. The Ely copper mines were older than that. They hadn't been used since the late 1800s, but they had a smokestack that went up the side of the mountain, and that was just really up over the hill from where we lived, a couple of hills over, and we used to go up there. And the smokestacks were made of big stones. It was just a big stone, huge. We used to run up the middle of it. We'd bend over, but we were little kids and we would run up the middle of it and we'd come to where it had broken down and rocks had fallen down, so we'd climb out and back up. We were always doing something like that, building forts and playing in the woods and playing in the fields and those types of things, the fun things. And the neighborhood children, there were a number of neighborhood children right around in that little valley area that we lived in.

FOLLET: Was there a wider world as far as you were concerned? You mentioned you didn't have a television, but through any kind of reading or fiction or otherwise, was there a wider world that you were aware of?

WARD: I spent some time as a child with my uncle and aunt who lived in Bennington, but it was just like it was just a long ride to go there to stay. And we spent some times in the summer at family gatherings and things like that. I was in school, I knew that there was a United States and learned all the capitals in the states, and knew that there was a world and a moon and a universe. And my father always showed us the stars and the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper and the different stars that he knew about. So, in that way. But for me to say, oh, gee, so-and-so is from California or something like that, no. Because all of my relatives were in Vermont for the most part. Not until I really got into high school did I start thinking about the bigger world out there. But the bigger world out there was, I want to get away from home, get out of home, get a job so you can get out of home and support yourself.

FOLLET: When did that first occur to you? Do you remember first having that thought?

WARD: 12, 13. Because I started working out when I was – I think the summer I was 12, either 11 or 12, 12, I think. I worked as a chambermaid at Norwich Inn where my mother worked, and then it was still work to get money, because at that time we went to the Thetford Academy and you had to pay for your books. It was a private school – and it still is in

existence, but they took all the surrounding town high schools, even though it's a private academy, and they still do that. The academy's been in existence since mid-1700s, and it's privately run but they take students from the public schools around.

FOLLET: So there's no separate high school? No separate public high schools? Thetford Academy is the high school?

WARD: Is the public high school. That's the way it's always been. Now Vershire and West Fairlee have formed a union school with Fairlee and Orford, New Hampshire. But Thetford was the public high school for West Fairlee, Vershire, Thetford, Lyme, New Hampshire, there was a number of towns -- Strafford, Vermont -- that sent their high school students to Thetford. It's a school of about three or four hundred.

FOLLET: Ah-hah. Yeah, I came through Thetford, I'm sure. So what was high school like? Was high school ninth grade on, or tenth?

WARD: Yes, ninth grade on. Until the seventh grade I was in West Fairlee, in this two-room school, four grades in each room. And then in the eighth grade, West Fairlee and Vershire joined a union and the first four grades in both towns went to West Fairlee and the upper four grades, 5 through 8, went to Vershire, and that's where I met Harold was in eighth grade, I met him in Vershire. At that point, in February of that year, the eighth grade, we started going steady. At that point in time, even then, I was thinking that you need to get an education so you can get out of home and support yourself. And my father did push how important it was to get an education. He wanted me to be a schoolteacher and he wanted me to get an education.

FOLLET: So, high school, the world got a little bigger and you started imagining. What was it like? Did you like the study part of it? Were you active in sports? Or what was social life?

WARD: I did some sports in school because I liked it. Not a lot. I did softball mainly in high school. By the time I was in high school and Harold and I were together, that was my whole – it was almost like it was, um, to be with Harold and to get through high school, to study. I liked studying. I liked learning. I also knew that if I studied and got good grades that I could do what I wanted. If I wanted to come up to Harold's or go to my grandmother's or do whatever I wanted, my father would allow it because if he said, you need to be home so you can do your schoolwork, I would say, I get good grades. And then he couldn't say that to me. But he always saw me as the one that could go somewhere, and he pushed me to get an education before he would the others in the family.

FOLLET: Why you?

WARD: Well, it's the whole dynamics of the whole family that I studied when I was at Vermont College and looked at family systems theory. If you look at my mother and father, my mother was pregnant when she married my father. I don't know this, I don't have proof of it, my mother won't discuss it, but I feel my oldest sister's father was my mother's father. My father didn't know that when he married my mother. He didn't know that she was pregnant. I think what it was, was my maternal grandparents -- you know, he got her pregnant and they married her off to my father and it was, like, they bought her a husband. It's kind of what it amounted to as such. Fixed up the house and gave them a place to live. So my father didn't want my sister, and then my brother was born, and he came from a family of five – uh, six boys, he had five other brothers, and so he really didn't want my brother either.

And so what happened was, I was like the first child and instead of being the middle child position that I actually was, I was given the position of the oldest child. I was daddy's girl, daddy's favorite. And that's how the whole family has been structured ever since – when my brother abused my niece -- the division of the family has always been like that. My mother with my older sister and brother and my father, and then myself and my two younger sisters, the other side of the family. And it's always been structured like that ever since. I didn't realize that until I actually looked back at it and knew that that's how it was at the time that the abuse was revealed in my family, but then looked back at other things and realized that's the way it'd been for a long time. It had always been that way. You just didn't realize that or look at it that way, but when you actually studied the history of it, that's how it was.

FOLLET: So when you thought about getting an education and getting out and moving on, what did you imagine doing? What did you aspire to?

WARD: [talks to cat] I did the one thing that I could do at Thetford Academy, and that was – you could take business courses. They didn't have any other voc rehab or voc technical type courses, really, at that point in time. It was either business or you could be a farmer. And so what I did was I took secretarial courses. I took shorthand and typing and bookkeeping, so I was actually prepared to go to work as a secretary when I got out of high school. [talks to cat] I took all those courses and had a job before I got out of high school. I started work on Monday. I graduated on Friday. And I went to work for the Superintendent of Schools in Hanover, New Hampshire, as a secretary-receptionist. You see, Harold quit school when he was 16, which was common in his family, and went to work, and he was working down that way so we just rode back and forth. And I actually moved in this house before high school was out because Harold's mom had an operation for breast

cancer and needed someone to help and so I came here everyday after school, like from April on, and took care of Harold's two younger brothers and did the housework and things like that, because she was recuperating.

FOLLET: This house, where we are now, was his childhood home? Is that right?

WARD: Yes. Harold's lived here since he was 7.

FOLLET: Was there a college-bound track at Thetford Academy?

WARD: Yes, there was, but, the Vermont Student Assistance Cooperation, I don't know if they existed back then or not. I didn't hear of them. I wasn't offered to go to school, to college, because I was from the wrong side of the tracks. I graduated third in my class. Part of the reason I graduated third in my class is because I didn't take physics and I didn't take geometry. I did take algebra. They had the A track and the B track, and A track was to go to college, and I took all of those courses, but rather than take geometry or algebra -- algebra II -- or physics, and like that, I took the business courses so that I could get out of high school and go to work. That was my goal. And so, that was my goal and I was never asked if I wanted to go to college. It was just understood that I couldn't because the money wasn't there.

FOLLET: Even though your father hoped that you could be a teacher?

WARD: High school. Oh, yeah, he wanted me to be a teacher.

FOLLET: Did I see somewhere that you attended Boston University for a time?

WARD: Uh-hm.

FOLLET: How did that happen?

WARD: I decided, after being in Hanover and being a secretary at a couple of different jobs, that I wasn't going to get anywhere if I didn't go to college. And the company I worked for at that time agreed to pay for a bookkeeping course at Dartmouth, and I took that and did well and said, I want to go back to school. And so I applied at BU and at Columbia and some other schools, UVM, and decided I wanted to go to BU because I wanted to be able to live in the city and see what the city was like. The last job that I had before I went to college was office manager, but I worked with some of the sales people so I spent some time in New York City with some conferences and projects that were going on there, and I really liked city life, really like it, because it was so different from country life. You could do whatever you wanted to do. Nobody knew

you and nobody cared what you did, and it was so different from being in the country where everybody knew everybody else and knew everything that you did.

FOLLET: So you graduated in 1969 from high school?

WARD: Uh-hm.

FOLLET: And then when did you end up at BU?

WARD: ’78.

FOLLET: Oh, not ‘til then.

WARD: I was 25.

FOLLET: Ah, I see.

WARD: And Harold, at that time, was driving a tractor-trailer unit out of Boston, hauling gasoline and fuel oil out of Boston, so quite often I would ride down with him on Sunday night and ride back on Friday night, and I stayed down there. The first year I had to stay all week. And then the second year that I was there -- I was there one semester of my sophomore year – I was there from Tuesday to Thursday and was home the rest of the week.

FOLLET: So now, Harold is part of your life at this point. You graduated in sixty-

WARD: From the time I was 13 on.

FOLLET: Yeah, and you graduated in ’69-

WARD: And we rode back and forth to work together.

FOLLET: You rode back and forth to work together, and then did you get married right-?

WARD: At 18.

FOLLET: At 18.

WARD: Right after I graduated from high school.

FOLLET: Ah-hah.

WARD: At that point in time, his mother and father had to sign for him to get married, because he was a boy. So you think about discrimination. Back then, girls in Vermont, young women at 18, could get married without parental signature. Boys could not.

FOLLET: He was 18, too?

WARD: He was 18. We were both 18, the same age. So his parents signed for him so that we could get married.

FOLLET: Would he have had to be what – 21?

WARD: 21.

FOLLET: No kidding.

WARD: Uh-hm.

FOLLET: Now, you had these desires to move on and see the world –

WARD: I think that the main thing was to get away from the abuse and I didn't even see it then – just to get away from that home life, to get out of it – and now I realize it was to get away from the abuse. You know, I wanted just a regular family life. See, I lived here with Harold's family from the time of April when I graduated in high school until we were married, and two days after we were married, Harold and I were gone, his father died. And so we were called home and lived with his mother after that here. And talk about feminism. She didn't even know how to do the checkbook. She didn't know how to do anything – the bills or pay bills or anything like that. Harold's father had always done that. She had worked very, very little, had really been taken care of and such. So I took over the finances and Harold and I really ran the family life, the family home here, and lived with her and his two younger brothers for about two years. Then we bought the house and she bought a mobile home and had it on property here, and her and the boys lived in the mobile home for a number of years. Then she moved around a couple of times and has lived in Fairlee, Vermont ever since, in an apartment. And she really likes it out there. More town, people around and so on.

FOLLET: I see. What do you remember about your expectations for marriage at that point?

WARD: Get married, work, and have a baby. That was it. Have a house. That type of thing. But Harold didn't want children, and I didn't want them right away, and then one thing led to another to another and we ended up not ever having children. Because we went on the road and after I

went back to BU for that year and a half, the money, I just didn't have any more money, I couldn't borrow anymore. And he wanted someone to go on the road with him, to drive, because he was going to have to team drive. And our marriage was real shaky at that time – we'd been married about seven years, then, I think, and it wasn't going well, and so on. So I said, Well, I'll go with you then. And so I went with him on the road and learned to drive tractor-trailer then. And we did that for 15 years. And you don't have babies driving a truck. And by the time that got done and I didn't want to be on the road anymore, it was a decision then, either you have a child or you don't. He still didn't want children and so I said, Well then, what I'm going to do is go to law school at this point. Because I was over 40 then and I said, you know, it's too late to start having kids now.

FOLLET: You mentioned in one of the letters that I read that – I think you used the words "a rocky marriage" and you've just mentioned it. Can you talk more about that?

WARD: I think we had different expectations. You know, when I was 13 and Harold wanted to be with me -- because that's how it started out -- I was, like, wow, this nice-looking boy from up on the hill -- they were much better off than what we were -- wants to be with me from the wrong side of the tracks. And so we were together all the time in high school. We didn't date anybody else. We didn't see anybody else or anything like that. And then we got married and I worked in Hanover with Hanover people. Now I look back at it and think they're no better than what I am, but back then I saw them as being much better than I was. They were educated, they had beautiful homes, college careers, you know, all of that, and here I am. And people down there talk down about Vermont hillbillies, about real Vermonters. They criticize them, which was no different than the same struggle I had had all my life of trying to be – trying not to be poor, trying to be just accepted among society. And so I went into the Hanover as, you know, 18 and 20 years old, still struggling to come out of that same past as being from the wrong side of the tracks. And Harold, even then he was really rebellious and, they're no better than I am and I'm just as good as they are and if I wanted to have –. Of course we're talking about the late '60s. The 60s and the hippie revolution and all of that really didn't come into Vermont until the late '60s and the early '70s, which is the period of time that I'm talking about, because we were married in '69 and so, Harold had long hair, he wanted to grow a beard, and he came and went as he wanted to and if you don't like it, that's tough. Tat's the attitude he had, where I was – we need to get a home and we need to be associated with Dartmouth people and be just so.

So we clashed, our social interests clashed. I wanted to go to a play, he wanted to go to a movie or to a beer party. You know, those types of

things. When you're in a marriage like that, that's hard. And I wanted to get an education and he didn't. So it was hard for us to work around all that and yet and at the same time be struggling trying to pay for your first home. We had the house and we lived here for just, I think it was four months, and he was in the Army Reserve and he got called for his basic training. And so it meant for the first time in my life, I was living in a house by myself, with three dogs and a cat and a car that was a '56 car at the time, and I used to have to push it out of the driveway every morning to get it to start, because it wouldn't start, and coast it down the road to get it to start to go to work every day. And at that point in time, in the Army, he was earning $70 a month and I was earning $70 a week, but we could hardly make it. We had like a $70 a month mortgage payment, but it was really hard to make that then, and insurances and all that. I was very young and so that was a hard time for us, too.

So all of those things were going on, and then I went to school and we were just, like, you know, this isn't working. And he had some flings and I had some flings and then we said, No, this is not what we want, so let's put this back together. And so being on the road in a little truck, you either put it together or you don't. (laughs) And it worked out well.

FOLLET: It did?

WARD: Yeah. It was hard learning to drive. He's not a teacher. He still isn't. But I learned eventually and I really liked it when we started going cross country. Then we got to see all of the country. I had never been out of the – I'd been to New York City, and I had been to Maine, and most of New England, and that was it.

FOLLET: Before I hear more about that, let me make sure I have this right. It was about the late '70s by then and you had been at BU for, was it two years?

WARD: '78. I went a year and a half. My freshman year and half of my sophomore year. I started in '78, went all of '79, I think it was, if I recall right. But it might have been '77 to '78 and all of '78.

FOLLET: OK.

WARD: It was either – in there.

FOLLET: You mentioned that the money ran out for going to school and the decision about keeping the marriage together or not keeping the marriage together –

WARD: Right, uh-hm.

FOLLET: And do they add up to the decision to go on the road together?

WARD: Yes, uh-hm.

FOLLET: That's how you ended up.

WARD: At BU, I was 25 and I wanted to learn, and so I went there and there were these professors and they were, like, And you will do this and you will do that and I won't take any excuse for that, and I'm thinking to myself, What's wrong with these professors? and then I realized that what they were doing, they were talking to high school students that were there really just to have a good time. I went to the School of Public Communications. I had it in my mind I was either going to be a journalist or I was going to go into public relations for a company or something like that. It was the time of Watergate and some of those things and so it sounded glamorous to be going to work for a company. By the time I left, if I had continued, I'd have probably gone into the business school. I realized that journalism wasn't going to be for me.

FOLLET: Oh, really?

WARD: Yeah, I think I would have gone into the business school, but then I left and went on the road. Even then I was considering law school back then.

FOLLET: You were?

WARD: Uh-hm. I thought, you know, I really would like to go to law school. I think it would be fun to go to law school. Then again along for the business angle of it and so on.

FOLLET: What about it appealed to you at that point?

WARD: Getting things down and getting them right. It wasn't family law or anything like that, it was just the idea of being a lawyer, I think, and being respected. That type of thing. And organizing things and seeing that they were done and done properly, and so on. That all kind of appealed to me at that time.

FOLLET: Interesting, interesting. But you went behind the wheels of an 18-wheeler instead.

WARD: Yes, and it was fun seeing the country. In 1980 we bought our own truck, and we went just to Chicago. We'd never went west of the Mississippi. It was just mostly Chicago-east, back and forth, and we hauled refrigerated foods and it was called "less than truck load," which

means you left Chicago with maybe 30 stops on to bring into the New England area. That was mainly what we did. And then into New York City and so on, and it was hard work, hard, hard work, but we made good money.

FOLLET: Was it unusual to be a female driver?

WARD: Yes, uh-hm.

FOLLET: What was that like?

WARD: I knew with this company in Chicago that we went to work for, there was one other woman that drove, and around here there was one other woman that drove in the New England area, and that was it. And so, I hid behind Harold, you know, I didn't drive by myself. It was easier being out there with him to kind of protect me – do you know what I mean? You weren't by yourself. And so other men didn't try to come on to you or anything like that, because they understood that you were married. It was difficult when you wanted to take a shower and they didn't have any women's showers, and so we would have to make sure we stopped at a truck stop that had either individual showers or had a women's shower and that type of thing. Some of the truck stops weren't set up to have services for women. And when you stopped at a truck stop, you never looked anybody in the eye. Harold would say to me, Well, it's obvious that guy was on something. I said, Well, how do you know? And he's say, Well, didn't you look at his eyes? And I said, No, I never look at anybody's eyes. You know, you just don't do it when you're a woman.

FOLLET: Why?

WARD: Because then they would think that you were trying to come on to them or something, so you – you just don't look at them. That's just accepted in the truck stop world. It's a different world. It really is.

FOLLET: I read one of the letters you wrote at that time – I think you wrote it to your brother -- and you were talking about the "lot lizards."

WARD: The lot lizards, yep. "Coin-operated beavers" and "lot lizards." A lot of prostitutes. It was really sad. You know, a lot of young girls. Really sad. Out there, pimping. Men pimp them in the truck stops. I remember one time when we were cross country and we pulled into a rest area out on the Arkansas-Texas border, and this big car pulls in and four or five of these girls get out, young girls [discussion about camera flashing] So these four or five young girls get out. And that's when we had Toby our cat with us and he was looking out the window and they were coming

up to the truck, oh, nice kitty, nice kitty. One had a huge shiner. And then they'd go up to these trucks and ask if they want a date and they were there to perform oral sex or whatever they wanted, and get paid for it. It was so sad. It was amazing, here they are, just little girls that were fascinated with a cat and then they were there to be prostitutes.

FOLLET: Wow.

WARD: Yeah, it was something to see that.

FOLLET: Any particular reactions to you that you remember as a woman truck driver? Any that were funny or otherwise?

WARD: Oh, there was one time when we were first hauling frozen and we always set it up so that I would go in on the dock. Because we hauled less than truck load, a common thing to happen was you back the trailer up to the dock and if you've got something valuable on there, they'll steal it from you. And so we'd always have it that I would go in or I would be in the trailer when Harold backed up to the dock so that that wouldn't happen. And this guy wouldn't let me on the dock, that I was a woman. It was a freezer out in a Chicago and he wouldn't let me in. He wouldn't let me in because I was a woman. He wouldn't let me on the dock. We have men in here. We can't allow women in here. (laughs) And so I was angry, and so was Harold. And people wouldn't believe that you were a truck driver. And you'd hear them talking on the radio. I seldom talked on the radio. I would listen sometimes, but I didn't talk unless we were running with other couples. And then by the time we got our Diamond Reo trucks, one was in '85 and one was in '89, there were a lot more women out there by then. Across the country there were more women. And more women that were running with their husbands. And this last company we were on with, it was called Trailer Transit, there were a lot of men and women couples on for that company. They were team drivers and so we would run the same types of routes and the same types of loads that they did, so then I got to know a lot of people. That was the last, I think, five years of us running. And with that company we ran all over the country, north to south, east to west, and talked a lot on the radio, and that last couple of years was when I was getting my degree from Vermont College of Norwich University.

FOLLET: Now, were you and Harold self-employed

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: -or was there any opportunity for wage discrimination between the two of you?

WARD: We were self-employed. We were contractors. We would contract to these different companies and they would find loads for us and we would haul them, and then we would get so much of a percentage of what the load paid. So we were self-employed. No, there was no wage discrimination then.

END TAPE 1

TAPE 2

FOLLET: OK. We are back. We're running. OK. So you were saying that this arrangement of going on the road with Harold worked out well. I'm just thinking that you mentioned that it was the years of Watergate and things like that, and I'm thinking about the bigger political scene at that time and that the late '70s and early '80s were the years when the women's movement was becoming very big and very visible. And I wondered if you were attuned to that?

WARD: I think when I was at BU it was going on there then, and as part of the courses that I had there and the students that I were with and so on, that I became attuned to it then. And I think before that even, in Hanover, I was exposed to people there. My first job was at the Superintendent of Schools and I was mainly working with older women that were already settled, had families, were from the area, so they – they weren't into that so much. It was still family – the whole thing about families and so on. And then, when I left there and went to work for – it's called DTSS, which was Dartmouth Time Sharing Systems – and that was a company that was like a subsidiary of Dartmouth College and they sold the software for Honeywell Computers and there was a whole software system that we sold. And it was then that I began to get exposed, because I was working with some husbands of what I would have said then would have been feminist women and modern women, and began to get exposed then to what was going on. And then when I went to BU, you read about and you were involved with it there at the college. Not as much as what probably students were then because, you know, I was still an older student, but I made friends with some older students that were there and began to see that kind of thing.

And then when I was on the road, one of the things that we always did was I was always (hiccups) buying newspapers and magazines, constantly buying them. (Hiccups) Wherever we were on Sunday, whether it was Philadelphia or Chicago or San Francisco or New York, I'd buy the big Sunday paper, and you began to read about things and see a lot of stuff that was going on with the women's movement and feminism and so on.

FOLLET: What do you remember about your reactions?

WARD: Um. [long pause]. Reactions to what? I guess I would say.

FOLLET: To any of the news that women were speaking up about their inequality?

WARD: See, I think here at that time. Stop and think about it, um, women [pause]. Before I went to BU, you really didn't hear about it. You

didn't really -- somewhat when I worked out of Hanover, but not that much. You just didn't hear about it, and I didn't think about it. I had a good job, what I considered was a good job. I didn't have a college education at that point in time. I was making better money than Harold was. And I saw myself as an equal to him, or even better in that I had a better education and I was making more money. And so I didn't see myself as being unequal and I think I accepted it that – and realized that it was a male world, because all the men, all the salesmen and so on that I worked with were salesmen. And then the women were secretaries, and you just accepted it, that that's the way it was. Unless you had an education. The boss I had, his wife had a BA and she went to Tuck School to get her master's degree. And I thought, that's really good that she can do that, you know, and she'll earn more money than he does, and began seeing it a little then.

But still, I was exposed a little bit more to it when I was at BU, and did I hear about the glass ceiling then? No. Um, I don't think I started reading and thinking about those kinds of things until I was reading about it in the newspapers and reading about it in magazines and reading about it on my own and reading about NOW, with the formation of NOW. And realize that when I was 18, the birth control pill was out and so I started taking the birth control pill when I was 18. I wasn't among those that it wasn't available for. And so I just accepted it, at 18, you know, I can choose to do this if I want to. And I went on the birth control pill so I didn't have to have babies, and I could work. And I feel that that was – it was almost like I took it for granted, not realizing that ten years before that, women didn't have that. You know, just accepted it as part of life. And I think that some ways, that's the way young girls are now. They accept what there is and don't realize that 25 years ago or 20 years ago, that wasn't how it was.

And so, I didn't – you know, I can't remember – I'm trying to think of before I went to BU. See, I didn't see that so much because, like I said, I earned more money than Harold did. I had a better job than he did. Both my sisters worked. They had kids but they worked, they weren't at home. It was expected that women around here would work. My mother worked. You didn't think about whether you were earning more or less, really. And when it comes right down to it now, both my sisters earn as much as what their husbands do. So it didn't effect us so much, I don't think, here as what it might have in other areas. But I could go on and on about the way it is now.

FOLLET: Ah-hah. OK. We'll get to that, we'll get to that for sure.

WARD: OK.

FOLLET: So, at the time, it sounds as if it didn't strike you as something that was personally important.

WARD: No.

FOLLET: Did you have any reactions about, oh, wondering what in the world they were all complaining about, then?

WARD: I remember the bra burnings. You know – I'm just thinking about this because I do remember them. And in the papers and I thought, well, if she doesn't want to wear it, she doesn't have to, you know. It's just the way – the way I felt.

I think one of the things that was different for me than what it might be for other women that were growing up in this area is, remember I said to you I was a tomboy, with my brother? And then I was Harold's girlfriend, and Harold and I hung around with a good friend of his. It was like it was the three of us during our teenage years, and so I did men things. I did boy things. We would go looking for cars. We would go racing around on the roads. We would do all of those things and I was right there doing them, these boy things. I wasn't hanging out with the girls or putting on lots of makeup or doing stuff like that. I was doing boy things. I mean, I would help Harold change the tires or work on the car or things like that. I wasn't seeing and I didn't – I didn't think too much about it. It's just the way I was.

And a lot of my friends by that time, if they didn't – if they weren't pregnant and married before they got their high school education, they were shortly after that, and I wasn't. I was working. And so it was different for me than I think it was for some women that had babies and stayed home and watched soap operas. I never did that. I was always out there in the working field. Which is quite a bit different than – if you think about it, the way some of my friends were, and I hadn't really thought that about that before, because they were usually – they got married and had kids. And so, for at least a while, they were at home when the kids were younger, and then after that, probably went to work.

But it wasn't – with Harold and I, it wasn't – you know, he hangs out with the boys and goes to bars or does – goes on hunting trips or fishing trips or something like that. Or I went to the movies with the girls or we played cards. We didn't do that stuff. We were always together.

FOLLET: Yes, I see. I see. OK. So, beginning in 1980, I guess, you started the trucking.

WARD: Right. One year we were both employees of a local oil company here, and we transported propane and fuel oil and gasolene and we actually drove their truck, and then Harold wanted his own truck and we both wanted to get out and do cross-country work and so on and so we bought our own truck. And we did that for three or four years and then

we came back and we were local and went back to work, actually, for that first company. We were the first owner-operators for that company, the same company. And then eventually we went back on the road for a couple of other companies and ended up with Trailer Transit, which was a company that we have the tractor but they provided the trailer, or they provided loads for us and we hauled loads like Disney on Ice and Cirque du Soleil and different theater shows. New equipment. It was really fun because we got to see some of these shows and we got to see all the country and meet a lot of people, and it was my last two years for getting my BA was when I was on the road.

We learned a lot about business then. We learned what it was like to be out in the big world. We learned that you don't trust people, that you can be taken for a ride, that things can be stolen from you. We learned the good and the bad, like I talked about the prostitutes. We pulled into Detroit to deliver one time and these people came up to us and did we want to buy a TV or radio or gun or on and on and on and we just said, No, no, no, no, and then we find out that a guy had give these people like $300 – an elderly, well, not elderly, but an older gentleman -- they'd faked him out and he'd given them $300 for a TV. They went away and came back and said that wasn't enough so he gave them some more. Well, there was no way they were going to get him a TV. You know, it was just – it was just the way people were, you couldn't trust anybody when you were out there in that type of world. And so we learned that there was a really different world out there than what Vermont was. But at the same time, we made friends with a lot of people, a lot of the couples that were trucking. We would go to their homes or they would come here, and we met a lot of nice people, and really enjoyed it.

FOLLET: Uh-hm. Nice. As I read through your papers and what you've written, the year 1989 jumps out as a year that was a turning point, when you became aware of your childhood in a way that you hadn't before. What was it about that moment, about the early months of 1989? What had led up that?

WARD: I look back at different things that were going on in my life up to that point in time, and in '89 was when Harold and I had bought the second truck. We were really settled in the business, we were doing fairly well. Things were going well. Our own personal relationship, I felt, was going really well. We were more mature than what we'd ever been and comfortable with one another. In other words, I felt safe, you know, I felt safe. And so, at one point in time we had hired somebody to drive with us, to drive for us, and he couldn't drive for some reason, he was sick or something. So we were each operating a truck, and we had done that some, because we had three trucks at the time, so we took on a lot. We had a little trucking business of our own. And so, there were times

when I would operate the truck by myself, and it allowed me to think, I think. You know, you're by yourself then and so on. And of course in '89, that was two years, I think, after my niece had revealed that my father had sexually abused her. And at that point in time, I still wouldn't admit even to myself that we had – that I had been abused. I just said, it didn't happen in my family. Yeah, it happened to other people, but it didn't happen to me. It might have even happened to my older sister or whatever. It happened to some of the others, but I'm sure it didn't happen to me.

And I just – it was one of those things where if you don't allow yourself to think about it, you just say, I'm not going to think about it. I'm not going to think about, that it goes back further enough in your brain so that you don't think about it and you just – it's like it's a cutoff there. And I say a cutoff, it was almost like there was a curtain drawn there, and you don't draw that curtain back. Because if you do, God forbid. And that's what it was like.

And then, it was almost like when I started to look at what was behind that curtain, there was just like a flood of stuff that came out. And that was all the stuff that I had just stored back there, and had chosen not to talk about it or not even think about for years, since I had left home as a child, really since the time I had been 13 or so. I just, you just don't think about it. It was very easy to do all those years, I think, because there was so much else going on. Harold and I were married and we had his family to think about because his father died. And then my family expected me to solve all of their problems. Whenever anything went wrong, they came to Wynona to solve the problems, and the same with Harold's family. They came to him. So it was just – you know, it was – there was so much other going on. Then we had the trucks and we were on road and I ran the business, essentially. And I ran the business side of it and Harold did the mechanical side and ran that part of it. And then we shared the driving. So our lives were really, really hectic and busy.

And at that point in time, I think I felt safe enough and secure enough, and was with Harold enough at that point in time so that I could be comfortable and talk about it, and really re-live some of the stuff that went on. And it was a hard time. But it brought Harold and I really close.

FOLLET: It did?

WARD: Oh, yeah. Because he was there. He was like my everyday shrink, someone that could – was further enough away from it so it was like he could be almost an objective person about it. Not really, because in some ways, but in other ways he could be. In other ways, he could confirm things for me, too, because he'd known me since I was 13.

FOLLET: Right.

WARD: I remember when I went to the doctor about whether I had a learning disability or not and I came home and said she wanted me to think about back when I was kid, you know, where there some things I was behind in developing. And I said, You've known me since I was 13. What do you think? And he has this dry sense of humor, so he said, Well, you've always been a klutz. (laugh). And it's true. And it's more than likely because of the learning disability that I have, which was caused from domestic violence. My balance isn't good. It's never been good. And I have a hard time with that. And so it's things like that that he has seen and realized about me, that others wouldn't have known, because he's known me for so long.

But at that time, yeah, that's when I really started thinking about it and studying about it and reading about it and realizing that this is what happened in our family. And of course, when my niece revealed that she'd been abused by my father and we went through that whole ordeal, then it was like my sisters and I were really close for a while, a period there, and then we just all pulled apart and went our own separate ways because it was so hard to deal with, so hard to deal with. And they had their families and I was on the road and all of that, and it was very, very difficult to deal with. And they didn't want to deal with it. Nobody wanted to deal with it anymore. Just the same thing as always had happened in the past -- put in on the back burner, it'll go away and it won't happen again.

But I didn't let that happen. Instead, I delved into it, and I really wanted to find out what it was all about, and so I did a lot of research on my own. And this was before I was at Vermont College. Whether it was in a bookstore, because when we were hauling different loads, we were in the cities and so on and I could go to a bookstore or wherever and research a lot like that, or could buy books from on the road, and had time to read on the road, where they didn't and they didn't want to deal with it, and so I could pick up these books and read different books about it. I read Judith Lewis Herman's book *Father-Daughter Incest*. I read Carol Gilligan. I read her book and different books like that I was reading. That's when, I think, how I got my first look at feminism and women and that type of thing was through those books, through Carol Gilligan and Judith Lewis Herman, really. And they were on my own, when I was on the road at that point in time. And I wasn't doing it for school, I was just doing it for myself. The *Courage to Heal* book, I read that then. Other books about child abuse, and feminist books then, too -- Gloria Steinem and some of those things. I was picking them up and reading them on my own.

FOLLET: You were.

WARD: Yeah, while we were on the road.

FOLLET: Do you remember any ah-hah moments of particular books or particular ideas that really hit home?

WARD: Well, of course, Judith Lewis Herman's book *Father-Daughter Incest* was oh, my God, this is our family. You know, I really think I was at Vermont College before I really started talking about a lot of it.

FOLLET: Hm. You talked to Howard, I mean Harold. Sorry. You talked to Harold and you did reading on your own. Did you seek any assistance or-

WARD: When things got difficult and I was going through some of the childhood stuff, I saw a psychiatrist for about eight months or so, whenever I could. It was kind of once a week but not really. And just around the psychological stuff of what's going on and how do I handle this and I don't want to see my mother and father anymore and confronting them about what went on and so on, and saw him for about that length of time. And the rest of it was really on my own. I had a friend in California who had – she had gotten a lot into feminism and that type of thing and so different articles and so on she would refer to me and I would read them, and really started researching on my own on it.

FOLLET: At that point, as you started to come to grips with this and tried to make sense of it, do you remember, at that point, what explanation held together for you? Did you have an explanation for what causes this or who's to blame, or -?

WARD: I think before I went to Vermont College, it was, like, I came from a really messed up family. Really messed up family. And the psychiatrist that I saw, Andy, he was, like, you know, you need to realize that you're not the only family that this has happened to. And I remember one time, sitting and saying to him, You know, I know these things that I'm telling you are probably hard for you to understand, but you need to realize that when I was growing up in this small town, that Vermont was at least twenty years behind the rest of the country. And he looked at me and said, No, you're not right. Forty years, he said, forty years behind the rest of the country. And that's why, when I'm saying to you, I mean, when it was hippies and drugs and all of that in other parts of the country during that '60s and stuff, it did not hit Vermont, not this area that we were in. It just did not hit here.

You know, at that point in time, when I was growing up and I was a teenager and we were in high school, there weren't drugs. You either went out and parked and had sex with your boyfriend, or you were part of the alcohol group. You went out and had beer parties. There wasn't

marijuana and drugs and that kind of stuff here. When I was in high school, girls couldn't wear pants to school. They had to wear skirts. And boys couldn't wear jeans. They had to wear slacks. So by the time it really hit here, Harold and I were married and were in our twenties. And then he was in the army and then I went to college and then we went out on the road. And so we were not part of that scene. We were never part of that, although Harold did want long hair. But the reason he wanted long hair and he was rebellious, he was like the '50s rebellious, you know, the James Dean roll-up-your-tee-shirt-and-stick-your-cigarettes-in-underneath -- that kind of rebellious. He wasn't the '60s rebellious teenager, or the '70s. It was really back to the '50s, for that went with the rest of the country. Vermont was behind, and it still is in these little towns and hollers, I call them.

FOLLET: Hollers.

WARD: Yeah, like they have in Kentucky and Virginia.

FOLLET: So how did this realization affect the way you thought of yourself at that point? How did it change the way you thought of yourself? In say, 1989 or '90?

WARD: I think I thought, no wonder I'm so screwed up. (long hearty laugh). Really, I think I did. I thought, God, no wonder. No wonder this and no wonder that, after what I grew up in, you know. And you began to filter that through. This is an example. I remember Harold, all the time we were working I worked in Hanover and he worked in White River, and he would come over, and I would walk down from Hanover and sit on the New Hampshire side of the Ledyard Bridge at the Connecticut River and he would have to come over and pick me up because I wouldn't walk across that bridge. I was deathly scared of walking across bridges with water underneath them. It was all right if they didn't have water underneath it. And I never knew why, never could figure out why, and one time, I remember I came in and he had dropped me off in Vermont. And Harold said, Well, how are you going to get across? I said, Oh, I can do it now. Because I had remembered a time when my father tried to drown me when I was like a year and a half or so old. He was giving me a bath and he was fondling me and I was protesting it and so, he'd stick me under the water, stick my head under the water, and I almost – I couldn't breathe. And once I remembered that and dealt with that happening and dealt with that fear, I can walk across bridges with water under them all the time now. And I said that to Andy. I said, You know, I wanted to just stand there, walk back and forth, back and forth across that bridge. And he says, Well, that probably would've been all right. They'd have just brought you here anyways. (laugh) And that's the different things that you learn that have stuck with you from what

happened to you when you were a child, have come up and you deal with them, and then those fears go away.

I could never figure out why I didn't want to stay home alone, and there were times when I would not. I would have someone come stay with me or I'd go stay with someone, and it was all because of the fear of what went on in the nighttime, which is when my father usually abused us. And now, you work through that and I can stay in fine by myself. FOLLET: Uh, huh. WARD: You know, you just work through those things. What it did at that time was [phone rings, voice in background], it allowed me to have respect for myself, to have empathy that I didn't have before, so that was good.

FOLLET: Yeah. Um, -

WARD: It was about that time, too, that we left from New England and started going cross-country on the trucks and it was after we had dealt with my father. No, let me think. No, that was '93. Oh, and see, we were on the road again, and that was when my niece revealed that she had been abused by my brother. And so during those years I had been doing all this research and so on and learning about child abuse and learning about families, incestuous families and so on (phone rings in background) and so again, the family all turned to me. But I had a good idea of what to do about it then. Much more than what they did, and I knew what needed to happen to help her, and what the rest of the family needed to do. Psychologically I knew. I knew about that. I knew about it being passed down through the generations and who abused who and those different kinds of things. I didn't know the law. I didn't know the law. I knew a lot of the psychological stuff I had learned on my own. I had learned about myself and about other people that went through it and so on.

FOLLET: On your own and in college, right?

WARD: Uh-hm.

FOLLET: Now, how did you –

WARD: I didn't start college until '93.

FOLLET: Oh, I thought it was '91.

WARD: No, '93.

FOLLET: Oh, '93. Because you had the prior college – you graduated in '95, right?

WARD: Yes, because I had two years – I transferred in all my credits from Boston University. I had the course at Dartmouth. I had some CCV stuff – Community College of Vermont. And they let me transfer in some seminars and different things that I had done, and so I transferred in two years' worth. Two years minus four credits. And so then what I did is I took 15 credits a semester. The last semester, I think I took 20 credits at Vermont College to be able to have my full four year credits, 100. I ended up with like 124 credits.

FOLLET: I see. Now, what made you go back to college?

WARD: Harold had a heart attack in 1990, or '91, one or the other, and I realized at that point in time that the work that we were doing right then really depended upon him. I could not do that work. I didn't – I probably could've but I didn't want to. I didn't want to drive a truck, because I couldn't do the mechanical part of it that well. I could help him and so on but I couldn't have done it on my own. And so, I wanted to – I knew that I had to prepare myself to take care of myself and that I might have to take care of him someday. And also the trial had gone on, my brother's trial had gone on. That was before I went to college.

FOLLET: I see that now, yeah.

WARD: That happened in '91 (background noise) and so I saw that I wanted to help children. By that time I had been through my own stuff, I had been through my brother's case. I had tried to help my niece and so on, and done all of that, and realized -- and then Harold had had his heart attack -- and realized that I had to do something then, to change, for myself and for what I was doing. And I was tired of being on the road, too, by then. Although it was ideal for getting my BA, and the good thing about it was Harold could drive and he took over more of the driving because I had to spend more time on my studies and so on.

FOLLET: So your brother's case preceded going-

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: -going back.

WARD: And see, what I did is I became like a volunteer victim advocate for the family. They couldn't understand. They were close to it but they didn't have the education to be able to call the state's attorney and say, What's happening now? And he would explain to them what was going to happen and they couldn't – they couldn't understand it. So I would call him and he would tell me what was going to happen and we're going to

have a deposition now and, well, you know, tell my sister there was going to be a deposition, she didn't have any idea what that word meant.

FOLLET: And you knew because you had been reading?

WARD: Reading and I had had a year and a half of college and I had been working with Hanover people. And we had been out on the road, we had been exposed to people. We had been exposed to people in a variety of walks of life. We weren't just hillbillies back here in the hills that watched soap operas or watched sit-coms at night. You know? And that's what people do.

FOLLET: So when your niece came forward in '91 with this accusation about your brother, you talked about the conspiracy of silence that you had grown up with. You talked about her first report in '86 of abuse from your father. What was different about '91 that -?

WARD: By that time I had read about it and I knew what it was about, and when this happened, I said, This has to stop. I said this to myself. I said this to my niece, to my sisters, to Harold, to my sister's husbands, to anybody that I could talk to. This has to stop. It cannot keep going on. It happened to me, it happened to you, it happened to you, it happened to you. This has to stop now. [speaks with emphasis, points finger] And that's what propelled me into helping that case. The only way this is going to stop, I had researched that. I looked up a lot of stuff. How do I get help for Richie, my brother? He has to stop this. He has to get help. You know, I didn't see him as being a culprit or being a criminal. I know he was, there's no question he was, and there's no question my father was, but I saw it as a sickness. And everybody in the family did. And so I said, The only way he's going to get help, from what I've read -- I had read Salter, Anna Salter's book *Treating Child Sex Offenders and Victims* -- and the only way he's going to get help is to go to prison. That's where he's going to get help, and he's going to get in-house treatment that way. Otherwise, he's never going to get help. So I said, We have to put him in jail. And my sister wanted him punished, because he had abused her and then he had abused her daughter, and, you know, she really – she wanted him to get help but at the same time, this is wrong, he needs to be punished.

So that really propelled me after that to want to do something else. And we had this friend. Her daughter had been sexually abused. She had gone through SRS [Social Rehabilitative Services] and gotten a divorce, and she'd been sexually abused by her father and so through a mutual friend, we were talking, and she said she was working – and she had gotten her BA and she said, You know, there's this is Vermont College. You can go there weekends if you want, but I think they've got something where you don't have to go but a couple of times a year, and

you could finish then. So I said, Oh, all right. So I called and got information on it. She wrote me a recommendation. Another friend wrote me a recommendation, and I got in.

And that's when – when I went to Vermont College, I think that's when I really got exposed to feminism as such. I got exposed to more of Judith Lewis Herman, to more of Carol Gilligan. I did child development and started with some of the women's, the way women look at -- Mary Belensky, *Women's Ways of Knowing*. All of those books like that were written. Alice Eichholz, who was my professor and was about my age, a little bit younger, had me read all these books, (Harold's voice in background) and that's, I think, when my eyes opened up as to how unequal things are between men and women and how unequal they've been. That's when it really opened my eyes to that. And, I realized when my niece's case was going on, that if we hadn't had a woman judge, and specifically the woman judge that we had, it might not have turned out the way it did.

FOLLET: Really?

WARD: Yes, she was very sympathetic to my niece. She followed the law but she was very sympathetic. I did a paper in school after that – I don't know if you've read that one or not, the one on child witnesses in the courtroom?

FOLLET: Yes.

WARD: Yeah.

FOLLET: I did.

WARD: A lot of that was based on that case, and she was very good with my niece about letting her have someone sit close to her and things like that. Had that been a male judge, it might not have happened. That's how I feel. So that's what propelled me to go on, I think, to college, was that case. And at that point in time, I was thinking more of possibly going afterwards for a master's degree in counseling and doing child counseling, child psychology and so on. But then decided somewhere in there that I felt I could be of more help in the courtroom than I could be as a child psychologist, as a lawyer representing women and children.

So I went to law school with the idea that I was going to hang all sex – child sex offenders. But then I realized it was too close. It was really too close to go into just that. And if you were going to do that, that's going to be criminal law and you're not going to – do you want me to close that door?

FOLLET: Actually, it probably would make sense. Here, I can – there. OK. We are –

WARD: So I think, when I went to Vermont College, a lot of it was to define myself but also I wanted to know more. I wanted an education. And I was really glad. I sucked it up, because you had to read twenty books a semester and write papers on them and write a paper at the end and present in class and so on. And I would read 30-35 books and write ten-page papers on them and that wasn't necessary. I didn't have to do that. But I really enjoyed doing it. I really did.

FOLLET: You can tell – it shows in the papers. They're wonderful to read.

WARD: I really enjoyed it, too. It was a perfect way for me to go to school, rather than going somewhere and reading a textbook and, you know, spouting out what they wanted on a test. It was really wonderful to go to Vermont College. I really liked it. And I could concentrate. By then they said, All right, you've got enough. You've got enough math, we don't have to worry about that. You've got almost enough science. From the courses that I had taken at BU -- I had taken economics and I had taken some language and so on, and so I could take pretty much what I wanted to do. To get a little bit more science in – it was fascinating. She had me start out with evolution and DNA and then work up to child development. And then the next semester I did adult development. And so it was really good. It was cool. And my first semester, I did a lot of research – it was kind of like a social studies semester. I did religious cults, everything, from Mormons to Oneidas to the Amanas to Satanism and Moonies and all of that. It was really fun to do that kind of stuff. And then I did some on my own family and learned Bowen's Family Systems theory.

FOLLET: Yes, you've mentioned that. Did your understanding of how families work change as a result of what you were learning in your formal studies?

WARD: It really did, because the stuff I was learning on my own, a lot of that – some of it came from Freud, and Bowen is not Freud. It's the whole family, and so I began to understand that it wasn't just victim-perpetrator, that the whole family in some ways were involved. And what I mean by that is that one person in the family moves and it causes everybody else to move. It's like a mobile. You move one part of it and all the rest of it moves.

And that was part of the reason why when my family – it was at that time when my family still was turned against me -- my mother, my father, my brother, my oldest sister, and how wrong I was and that the reason that Richard was in jail was because I had put him there and it

was a conspiracy because I was mad at my mother and father for what they had done and that I was a liar and I was crazy and I was nuts and I was making up all of this and nobody wanted to believe or accept or admit what I said was true. Um, and those members of the family and a lot of the extended family members, too, that were still all bound in this horror of child abuse and spouse abuse.

One of the things I learned from Bowen is if I can just stay my own, eventually others in the family will change, and that did happen. It happened – I mean, my younger sisters and so on, they believed what I said and added to it, what had happened to them. And eventually, my brother came around and said, yes, there were other cousins and nieces and nephews that said, yes, we've been abused, too, and eventually my older sister admitted it and my mother has and my brother did before he died. Now there are more people in the family that admit it and say, yes, this happened, than the other that say, no. I really have just one uncle left that still denies.

FOLLET: That's quite a-

WARD: Yeah.

FOLLET: That's quite a change.

WARD: Well, that's a change but it's a change over twenty years, you know, it doesn't happen overnight. But Bowen taught me that. You know, I really learned that from him. Bradshaw is kind of like a pop psychologist and really does follow family systems theory and so on. And I've watched a lot of his lectures that he had on PBS. That was very helpful. John Bradshaw.

But it was a time when I really – I was ready to learn and ready to take all of that in and learn from it. And the good thing about it was -- because I was doing it on the road, a lot of it -- Harold was there, and so he learned a lot of it. He learned a lot of Carol Gilligan, of *Trauma and Recovery* from Judith Lewis Herman. He- he learned a lot of the Bowen Family Systems Theory. All of that, he learned.

FOLLET: Because you would be talking about it?

WARD: Oh, yeah, uh-huh.

FOLLET: -as he drove?

WARD: I'd read papers to him and say, What do you think? and he would make comments and that kind of stuff. (phone ringing) You can just let that ring. So we were close with that. And then when I decided to come in to go to law school, he decided to stay on the road, and he stayed on the

road just one year after I came in to law school, because I think he was tired of it but I don't think he liked being out there alone, either. And so, then he came in. He still drove truck for local people, and then he drove bus for a while and so on.

FOLLET: Now, when you were in law school -- I think it was when you were in law school and not at Vermont College, that you also started involving yourself in the practical process of legal proceedings in abuse cases -

WARD: Some before and some –

FOLLET: (two voices) and some during, and I'm wondering what did you see in the real world that may have differed from what you were learning in the classroom as far as handling these kinds of cases?

WARD: Law school, your first year, sometimes I would think, what am I here for? You're learning torts and contracts and property and you know, common law. Common law, I liked. At least, it was like a history course. I really liked that. But the others, what am I learning contracts for? And civil procedure, and I don't want to learn all this stuff. There were women out there getting beat up and children getting abused every day and what am I doing here? But I learned to hand it back out, give 'em what they wanted to get the grades, because I knew that was important, and by the second semester of the second year, I was doing practical stuff. I was doing skills courses. I um, worked as a – yeah, second semester, first? Yeah, second year – I did a clerkship and worked with a family court judge. And so it was really good. I was learning and doing practical things. And the summer of my first year, I received a New Hampshire-Vermont Schweitzer Fellowship and did research for Safeline, which is the local victim advocacy group, and went to court right down here in Orange County, and read all the affidavits for 1995.

You want ah-ha moments? Well, that's the one ah-ha moment that I could tell you. I had been reading these for – I don't know, I had been there for three or four days, and, you know, I've been beaten, he hit me, he did this, he did that, he did the other, and I just got up and started pacing back and forth and said, I can't believe this. This is the same shit that went on when I was growing up. This is the same stuff that happened to my mother. This is the same stuff. And here it is 1995 and it is still going on, and it's going on right here where I grew up. And I was just, like, I was like, Holy Moly. You know, it just amazed me. And then, of course, I sat down and I began rationalizing it. Well, at least they can come in here and talk about it now. They couldn't do that then. And at least there's help out there now and there's Safeline and there's these other places. But then I began observing in court and seeing what was going on and I said, you know, it's got to stop.

That was when I realized that it was going to be family law for me, not criminal law. Because in criminal law, to prosecute, you work and you work and you work and you work to build up this case against somebody and then you go into court. But you don't get really to see the victim hardly at all. You're the state. You're there and yeah, you hope the victim will testify or whatever, whether it was a child or a woman or whatever. But you don't have that closeness, where in family law, you're there every day. You're there, you're working with the victim, or at least, that's what I do. And so, and you're much closer. It's much more hands-on than it is with criminal law, where criminal law is more the play that works out in the courtroom, you know, that type of thing. And so, family law was where I wanted to go.

FOLLET: What did you see at that time about what was adequate or inadequate about what these women who were reporting could do? How were they being treated? How were they being served or ill-served by the legal procedures that you were observing?

WARD: They could get a temporary and if they could get back into the court, they could ask for a final order. Temporary is for ten days, and that you can get *ex parte*, and you can ask for the person to be removed from the home. You can ask that they not contact you in any way -- all the things that a relief-from-abuse will give you or a restraining order will give you. But you have to get back in court to finalize it and if you don't have a car, if you don't have any transportation, then how do you get back into court? That's what I saw a lot of.

And then, when I observed in court, because that was part of my project, I saw they would come back into court, they didn't have any money, they couldn't hire an attorney, the state doesn't appoint you an attorney. He's working, he's got a job, he goes out and hires an attorney. So here she is, sitting in the courtroom three feet from the person who beat her up a few days ago and she has to talk and present her case in court against an experienced attorney that he has hired. And she doesn't know what – and the attorney talks with the judge and they talk all this legalese and evidence and hearsay and *pro se*, and you know, all of this kind of stuff that she has no idea of what they're talking about. And yeah, she's got a victim advocate person that can sit beside her but they can't say anything. And so how are they supposed to get a final order? And then the defendant more than likely is saying how sorry he is and that he will never happen again and so on. So what does she do? She goes back to him.

You know, and so that's what I saw. This woman needs a lawyer. And that's where my idea came up for Have Justice. And she needs a lawyer that can speak for her in the courtroom but also someone that understands what she's been through and someone that can go to her home, and provide her with transportation, because she didn't have any.

And then it was after that when I really started working at the clinic, the South Royalton Legal Clinic, when I realized that these women need a lot more than just in-home consultations and transportation. They need this whole social service kind of one-stop shopping wrap-around services to be able to get free and independent. So that's how I came up with that.

But that was the ah-ha moment, when I sat there and read this stuff and said, this is what I've already written. That was after I had written "The Stew" and you go down there and you could read it. And I still have the statistics that I put together of how many women in 1995, and children, were beaten and hit and slapped and punched and – there was one case where they blew up a mobile home. He tried to blow it up, set dynamite under it. Another one where he kept running into a house with his four-wheel drive and guns and wrenches and crowbars and shovels and threatening pets and, you know, the whole gamut of all the stuff that went on in my own house, and said, Here it is, forty years later, still going on. And I said, you know, why? And I said, here it is. I mean, at least people are realizing it's not OK now. I guess people are realizing it's not OK, but here it is. And that's where, when I talk to you about how it was when I grew up, that I just wanted to grow up, get away from home, and my duty was to get married and have babies? Well, that's what many, many young girls in this area are still brought up to believe, that that is their goal in life. Grow up, get married, and have babies. Not everyone, not all of them, but many times it's still happening. And if that isn't happening, at least they're being told that that's what their worth is. So it's not everywhere, and it's beginning to change.

I had an instance this fall when I was so happy. I went to Thetford Academy and spoke for the women's literature group and showed them the documentary that was done for Lifetime television ["Women Changing the World," 2003] and talked to them about domestic violence and what I do and what Have Justice Will Travel is and so on. And had a really nice question and answer time and so on and said how special it was for me to be there because I graduated from Thetford and really glad that they wanted to talk and hear about these things. And they're reading Carol Gilligan, you know? It's wonderful. They're reading it and these different women's literature books that we never would have read back then. They weren't even written back then.

so then they had me come back. I went back in November, mid-November. They did this whole campaign in October, domestic violence awareness month. They put posters up all over the school that said, like, every 15 minutes a woman is beaten in this country and one out of four girls will be abused by the time they're 18. All over the school [camera begins to flash] we're flashing. And that sounds kind of funny – no, the girls didn't flash (laugh). And they did a real big campaign. They wrote a grant for $500 to Have Justice, plus there was three boys in the group

and one of the boys drew this picture of a truck on it and I have journals that I can give my clients now, they made those up, and they adopted a family for Christmas, one of my client's families for Christmas. It's just – like, wow.

FOLLET: The students did?

WARD: Yeah. All of these students did and it was, like, WOW. That's one of the good things about helping, because I reached out to them and then they've reached out to all these other people and these students, they did a seminar for seventh graders about violence. It's been really cool.

FOLLET: Isn't that wonderful.

WARD: Yeah. And this is just a happy story I have. A lot of the victim advocacy groups and so on are reaching out into these schools now, because there is where they need to learn and those girls, some of them were there, and I talked to them about equality. In Vermont, women are lucky. They earn close to 80 cents on the dollar that men earn, and when I said to them this is what it is, they immediately, because they're young and enthusiastic, think, that's not right. I'm just as good as a man. And I would have never thought that when I was their age. It would have just been accepted that that's the way the world is.

FOLLET: What do you attribute the change to?

WARD: All of the work that women have done since the 1960s, the feminist movement. All of the work that they have done. All the education, all of that work that has been done, that is constantly done over and over and over and over again. And it's working. You've just got to keep doing it.

FOLLET: That's good news, isn't it?

WARD: Yeah, it really is. And it's good news, too, I think that men are beginning to see it, too. Men like Harold, that see women as being just as good and able to do as much as men. His older brother – it's like day and night. He's still, you know, from the older generation and Take-Back-Vermont generation and all of that and so very, very conservative and much, much different than what we are.

FOLLET: He didn't ride in the truck with you for several years. (laugh) He didn't have the benefit of that education.

WARD: No, that's right. And it really is. I think it'll make a big difference when girls get an education. I think we need to think about that like in

Afghanistan and Iraq and all over the world. What a difference an education will make for young women. And that we have to keep it up.

FOLLET: That's for sure.

WARD: And I think, you know, that's what I thought about my own family, too. I'm not going to see the domestic violence or the child abuse stop in the world, but it's stopped so that my great nieces and nephews now won't [01:02:44: END TAPE 2].

TAPE 3

FOLLET: Here we are on day 2 of our interview and I was thinking that we would focus primarily on Have Justice Will Travel -- hw you got from what we covered yesterday to Have Justice Will Travel, and what you do and how it works and why it's different and how it connects to other approaches, and then some wrap-up questions.

WARD: OK.

FOLLET: But as I said, um, there are a couple of factual things from yesterday that I just wanted to clarify, make sure I have them right. When you were talking about the, um, biracial heritage in your family, you mentioned your father's side and the Abenakis and then you said some others came from the other side, a grandmother who came from Quebec City? Is that right?

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: Now was that a grandmother on the other side or-?

WARD: No, that was actually my father's mother.

FOLLET: Oh, your father's mother. OK.

WARD: And as far as I know, she was French and Indian also, but I don't know what came from her, you know, what kind of tribe or anything, that her heritage would've been from. But she was definitely French.

FOLLET: Great. OK.

WARD: Canadian French.

FOLLET: OK, great. I just wanted to make sure I had her pegged right in the family tree. And then when you were talking about your parents' marriage and that your mother was already pregnant, I believe I heard you say that it was the paternal grandparents who set them up with a home?

WARD: No, maternal.

FOLLET: Maternal. OK. Maternal.

WARD: It was my mother's parents that did.

FOLLET: OK. Then the second piece of that that I wasn't sure about. You gave that as an explanation of why your father wouldn't have been especially fond of that child, and you said –

WARD: Right. Stepfather.

FOLLET: Yeah, but he didn't know that your mother was pregnant when they married?

WARD: That's my understanding.

FOLLET: Might he have assumed that this was his child, then?

WARD: Well, you know, they were married in June and my sister was born early November, so you just kind of put the math –

FOLLET: The math, OK, do the math. I see. All right.

WARD: And what the little town gossip was, was that it couldn't have been his child because he was in the Army.

FOLLET: At the time?

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: OK, so that's two good reasons. I see. And then, the reason that he didn't warm to your brother – something about your father had grown up in a family of boys and I didn't understand-

WARD: You know, this is just my own putting the family dynamics together, but um, not only that, but it's just that what was expected out of a boy child then rather than a girl child was really different. Some of that is even still there today, you know, what we expect out of our sons and what we expect out of our daughters. And it's a really different dynamic, and back then, I think it was even more. My brother was expected to carry on with the family traditions. And it's kind of a crass way of saying it, but I say that, you know, if you have a doctor in the family, then the son becomes a doctor, or a lawyer, the son becomes a lawyer. I always say, in my brother's circumstance, he was expected to become a child abuser. Just the same, you know, that was in the rest of the family. And one of the things that I talked about with the professor at Vermont College was the fact that there were many years when my brother was the only male child of those six boys for many, many years. And so he was expected to not only to carry the family tradition of the male for my father, but for all those uncles also. And so what kind of pressure that

was on him. And all those uncles were spouse abusers and most of them were child abusers also.

FOLLET: Ah-ha.

WARD: So I mean, there was a lot of pressure put on him as a child for many years to have that, the male tradition of that family, be carried on. And some of the things that I studied at Vermont College, you go back into studying primates and how it happens there and the whole evolution idea of it and so on and what is expected for families to carry on and to survive. And all of that comes into it still. And I'm certainly not an expert on that, you know, I just touched on reading that kind of thing. One of the books that I remember reading – it's called *When Elephants Weep,* and it's about evolution and what is expected and how your species survives, and what's expected out of the young to have that species survive. So it can all be kind of wrapped up into that, and there was a lot of pressure on him.

FOLLET: I remember hearing or reading in something that you wrote, that you said as a girl, you were, um, how did you put it? I actually have it here. you said "we were raised in a family where women were taught to be victims."

WARD: That's right, we were, and he was taught to be a perpetrator, my brother was. And we were taught that our worth was to grow up and get married and have babies and be servants to our husbands, which is exactly the role that my mother played, and that was what was expected of us. And that was what was expected of most young women in the area where I grew up. And in some families it's still expected. And I think what amazes me now, even, like recently, I spoke to a group here in town called Vershire and spoke about Have Justice and what I'm doing and so on, and friends -- or schoolmates, I guess I would say, that I had back then when I was growing up -- were in attendance and I realized how avidly they listened to see how I had gotten out and the fact that they're not out yet. And it made me realize that it's still there in a lot of our families.

FOLLET: How did you get out?

WARD: I think the way I got out was, it wasn't any ah-ha moment, it was the idea that Harold wanted to be with me and I wanted to be with him, and that was my way out. My sister got out that way. Both my sisters did. All of them did. You found someone and got married.

FOLLET: But you didn't find someone who perpetuated the kind of family abuse, so you didn't just make a lateral move. You made a leap. How would

you explain that? At one point you say that you draw a sharp distinction between your mother -- who was abused for over fifty years, became an abuser herself, um, defended her son as an abuser -- between her and her generation and you and your sisters, who have not been abused spouses. That's a huge leap.

WARD: Well, see, my older sister Pauline, I think – I don't know if her husband physically abused her but there was a lot of mental abuse that went back and forth between them, and she is of the older generation and denied for years that our father had abused her, until very recently. And she's eight years older than I am and just in the last three or four years has said that yes, that happened. And my younger sisters, they didn't marry abusers. They were stronger. They had their families but they're really the strong ones, the leaders in their families, both of them are. The common phrase would be, They wear the pants in the family.

FOLLET: Oh.

WARD: Yeah.

FOLLET: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

WARD: And with Harold and I, I feel it's more of an equal, you know, we're pretty equal with what we do. And I think we let that happen with one another. There's certain things that he does well that I don't, and vice versa, and so we let that happen. And we don't feel that one of us has to be ahead of the other one. But when we were younger -- and I talked to you about the rocky marriage -- that was happening then. It was almost like a competition between him and I as to who was going to have the say as to what happened. And over the years we've learned to compromise and to work together efficiently, you know. And there's still some points that we will never agree on. But that's OK. We've agreed to disagree.

FOLLET: Uh-huh. But you seem to be the one who has gone beyond surviving that situation to become a public spokesperson.

WARD: Yes, a public spokesperson. My sisters speak openly, my younger sisters, about what happened to them and how wrong it was and how traumatic it was. And they talk amongst their friends or with me or other professionals or whatever. But they're not a public spokesman for it like I am. But they support me. They've heard me speak and listened and have participated in some of the efforts that I have made, whether it's interviewing with reporters or, you know, just giving information and so on. And so they've been helpful. But their lives focus around their children's lives. Where I've been more of a spokesman for it and said

that this is wrong and it needs to change and this is how we can change it. And I think that's because – I don't know if it's because they have children and that has to be their everyday focus.

But, in the same instance, I'll tell you that one of my nieces -- she will be here tomorrow, she's meeting a client here, a mutual client, and asking that I represent the children in the case where there has been child sexual abuse. And so that niece is out there working. She works in a child psychology type position, a case manager position for one of the local mental health centers in the area, so she is actively out there and she has three children, but she's actively out there in this area.

I have another niece who, in New Jersey, works with the elderly now in nursing homes and so on and does a lot to make sure that the elderly aren't abused. Now that's a niece that my nephew married. It's not a direct blood relation, but – so there are people in my family that go into the social service area and I think a lot of that is because they see the need and realize – as the generations come down, even though that generation was not abused, they're still affected by it. You know, just like you talk about the Holocaust. One of my best friends, she's a doctor in Ann Arbor – her mother was a victim of the Holocaust. So she wasn't, but it affects her still. It affects the generations after that. And so I think that's something that even though my great-nieces and nephews will not be abused, that they will still be affected by what happened in their families.

FOLLET: Uh-hm. It's nice to know that they're doing that kind of work.

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: As you go about this work as a public spokesperson, you do speak so openly about the nitty gritty details of your childhood experience. What's it like to have that, such traumatic and personal and intimate experiences, be the core of your professional work and your public work?

WARD: I think it's because I want people to realize. I recently said, and this is an example, to an opposing client who has finally admitted that he abused his wife and is going into a batterer's intervention program, and we were dealing with supervised visitation for this child, and I said to him, When you get into your batterer's group, you talk with your facilitator. I will be happy to come. Because he was trying to say that the child was only 2 when the battering went on and she didn't really see any of it. So I said, I remember back, vividly, when I was 2 years old and there was abuse going on in my family. And when you get into your group, you ask your facilitator if I can come and talk to you in your group so that you will know what it feels like to be a child and have your parents abusing one another, I said, or to have your father beating

your mother. I said, I will be happy to come and talk to you about that and read to you some of my writings about what that experience is like. I said, Then you will know what it's like to be a child and know what it feels like to be abused and how traumatic and how frightening it is. Because I think that is the way, if I can reach people with that message, that they will realize that it has to stop, that it can't continue on, because if it does, then that's what we're doing to our future generations that we expect to take care of us and expect to take care of the world. So I think it's very important.

I often say we will not stop street violence and we will not stop school violence until we stop violence in the home. Because as I said to you yesterday, even though things go on at school that you know are not acceptable at school and they're acceptable at home, deep down inside you learn that it's acceptable anywhere, and you can bring it from the home into the school and onto the streets and so if you can stop it in the home, I think that's the key to where it all starts.

And, you know, if - the whole idea that women need to be equal with men and can be equal with men. One of the things that has always turned me against the Bible and against religion is that my father would quote from the Bible while he was, you know, the next minute abusing my mother or abusing one of his daughters, as if he were supported by the Bible for doing this, and would turn it all around. So for a long time I was against the teachings of the Bible, but now, I can look at it more objectively and realize that yes, it's very patriarchal, especially the Old Testament, which is what he would quote from, but now I can look at it and realize that that was the way he interpreted it.

FOLLET: Did he quote actual passage to justify actual abuse?

WARD: He would – well, you read the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible does it prohibit father-daughter incest. It prohibits everything else – brother-sister, um, mother-son, and everything, but father-daughter incest is not prohibited.

FOLLET: Was he challenged on it in a way that made him-

WARD: No one challenged him.

FOLLET: -need to justify it?

WARD: No one challenged him. Because if you did, you just got beat up. My mother - I remember there was one instance when my mother tried to protect my older sister and I think I've written about that. That was the *Mama Sang a Song*.

FOLLET: Yes.

WARD: And when she tried to protect her, she was beaten to within an inch of her life. And that only happens so many times and you have no way out, then you don't do it anymore. Because, yes, it may be hurting your child but you're alive and the child's alive. It's like being a hostage.

FOLLET: And even though she had some income of her own, she didn't see that as a way to leave and support herself?

WARD: You know, one time – and this is after I was married, and I think this was the time that it was reported -- my niece reported that my father had abused her -- and when they arrested my father, we brought my mother here to my house, and the family met here, which was a common thing that went on during the cases. There were family meetings here, because this was the one place that was away from the homestead. Everybody else lived right down there around my parents. So we said, We've got a safe house you can go to -- it was in Bradford – and he won't know you're there, and you know, you can come and go as you want. Either that or, if you want, we can ask that he leave the house and that you be able to live in the house. And she said, Well, he wouldn't have any place to go. He doesn't have any friends. She just stated that. And I said, Yeah, that may be true, but you could go to the safe house. [mother replied] Well, it won't do me any good. He'll just come there and get me and drag me home by the hair on my head. So I wonder in my own mind -- I didn't think of it then, but I wonder in my own mind if that hadn't happened to her at some point, that she had run away and that he just came and made her go home. I don't know that. I haven't talked with her, but I wonder.

FOLLET: Right, right.

WARD: My mother – one of the other things that she has said since my father died, You know, you couldn't have asked for a nicer man the last two years that he lived. He didn't have any legs. He had diabetes and they had removed both legs, and so he depended upon her. And so, yeah, he was nice to her then. And that's what she said. And then there was another time – it's so funny, because she just takes so much of this that that's the way my life was. You know, she doesn't realize that it didn't have to be that way. She still doesn't realize that, and she never will realize that, but what we need to remember about women her age is -- she's 70, going to be 77 this year -- that she was born only six years after women got the vote.

FOLLET: 1926?

WARD: Well, 1927, she was born ’27. And so, her mother was – I doubt her mother ever voted, ever in her whole life. My mother has some, sometimes she has, but I doubt my grandmother ever voted. So they were brought up that that’s life and that’s – you live it that way. You made your bed, you sleep in it, you know. And so when she turned for them to help, there wasn’t any help. So you do what you can to survive. Just like Judith Lewis Herman talks about being in prison, or being in an internment camp in the war. You do what you have to to survive, and that’s what my mother did. She did what she had to to survive.

After he died, she gave me a ride one day, my car was broke down, and I said to her, Well, after you drop me off, what’re you going to do? Well, I think I might go down the line -- down the line here means to go to White River or Lebanon -- and I think I might go shopping or do this. And I said, Well, I can remember when you used to go down the line shopping, that you would always say, I’ve got to get home. I’ve got to get home. She says, You know, I thought that recently. I was off shopping and I thought, I’ve got to get home. Paul is going to be really mad and he’s going to yell at me and be angry and be violent. And then I realized, Oh, I don’t have to do that anymore. He’s dead. And it was like – it took her a while, even after he died, to come out of that, that I’ve got to get home.

FOLLET: That’s such a huge change, in between her generation and --

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: -- yours, as you say, she didn’t know that it could be different, and here you have assumed it could be different and are making it different for others.

WARD: Right.

FOLLET: Yesterday, when I asked what you ascribed that sea-change to, you mentioned the importance of the women’s movement.

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: And you said that by the time you were – probably when, I guess, you were at Vermont College, that that’s when you really learned how unequal women were, and I’m wondering how those ideas about women and whether what you were reading or the women’s movement have affected your – personally, your ability to move from being a victim to a survivor to an advocate?

WARD: I think one of the things that it taught me then -- and it’s kind of what my whole being is about -- is to help those that are downtrodden, or

those that are victims. And if you look at it, women have been that way for centuries -- you know, more than decades, centuries. One of the first lectures that I gave back in 2000, I think, in the summer, was for women who were part of the Getting Ready to Work Program in Vermont, and women that were getting education or getting skills and working with PATH [Prevention, Assistance, Treatment and Health] and different departments, and the Agency of Human Services in Vermont, and I spoke with them and to show them how far women had come. I went back through a history, did some research on the internet of when women could vote, when women could own land, you know, when women worked in the factories and worked out and when they didn't.

And I went over with them, because this was on, I think, a labor web site, about the differences in pay for men and women and what that money amounted to over a lifetime if you had just a high school education or if you had a college education or a PhD and so on. They did this on the web site and so I brought it down to them and showed them that how many hours of daycare that that money that they did not get paid, simply because they were women and they were not men, and how many years of college education it could pay for, how many years – how many vacations, I think it was, and then what it came down to, which really made them all realize, was how many meals of macaroni and cheese that could pay for over a lifetime. And they were just flabbergasted. I said, This is because you are a woman. It has nothing to do with your education, your experience, or anything else. It's just because you're a woman. And they were livid about it, absolutely livid. Because of the fact that they were women and this is what was happening to them and what would happen to their children.

And so they were – well, what can we do about this? And so that was when I started introducing a little bit of the legislative procedures and how you change the laws and how you can change the law to improve women and children's lives and family lives and so on, and tried to get them interested in the idea of politics, which was really foreign to them, and the idea of voting. Which again, we do that in the Women in Transition group too. We even go as far as registering people to vote, so that they will vote. And there's been several of the women that never voted before that have now gone and voted and I think it's – they need to realize how important this can be, and that that's part of their survivorship.

And that's how I see it -- if you get involved, you can change things. And it may be just one little thing at a time. But this is what I often say about my work. It's one woman who wants to help another who wants to help another who wants to help another. And that flows, it's like a domino effect. And that's why I try to reach out to more than just clients, legally. I mean, I want others to do that, but I know that it's important for me to be out there doing the Women in Transition group,

where we learn a lot of these things, and also, um, speaking to crowds so that you can reach more than just the one person that you're helping.

FOLLET: You mentioned yesterday that it was when you were, I believe, sitting in the – oh, you were reading the affidavits, and seeing that the abuse, even then in the early 1990s, was still going on, and that's when you resolved that helping women get out of those situations was going to be your professional work. And that that's when you began to think about organizing Have Justice --

WARD: Right.

FOLLET: -- Will Travel. Um, so let's – let's talk about how this commitment to helping women and ending abuse affects your work and influences Have Justice Will Travel. I have this chart here that came from your papers. You'll recognize this, I'm sure, this comparison of services offered by Have Justice as compared to victim advocacy organizations or private attorneys. And the list of services provided by Have Justice is single spaced, the full page, and the other lists are pretty spotty.

WARD: I think that's because the others don't see the need to have what I call wraparound services. The whole. You have to look at a person as a whole. I call – that's why I call Have Justice a holistic multi-service approach. Because if you look at all her needs, then you realize that you can provide one or a few of those needs, but that's not going to get her to independence and on her own and supporting herself and supporting her children. And not just financially, but socially and psychologically, emotionally. She needs a lot more than just getting a relief-from-abuse order or getting a divorce. You know, she may need job skills, she may need education to be supportive of herself and her children. She may need a home, a housing, you know, she may need food stamps. She may need a car.

Transportation is a major problem in rural areas. It's really a catch-22. Because, if you're going to work in a rural area at a job that pays enough to support yourself and your children, then you've got to have an automobile. But you've got to work to be able to afford an automobile. And so it's a vicious cycle that's very difficult to get out of. And I think that that's one of the things that I've realized – and that comes from just common sense, but it also comes from growing up in it and knowing the many things that my mother did and was able to provide for us once she had a job and had an automobile so that she could get back and forth to work and could access the help that we needed.

FOLLET: Why is it, do you think, that, say – well, let's take the legal system first. What was it about the assumptions of the legal system that didn't extend to that kind of vision?

WARD: I guess that one of the things that you would say -- the legal system isn't there to be a social service. And I've often heard family court judges say that. You know, we're not here to be a social service. We're here for legal efforts, your legal concerns, which may be a divorce or parent-child contact, or parental rights and responsibility, custody, visitation, child support. They're there for those things and that's it. That's what their job is. That's how they see their job.

And then, if you go to Path, which is Vermont's social welfare organization, if you do that, then their job is to see that they have money for food stamps, or they have food stamps, they have money for rent, for the basic necessities of life. Of course, when you go to welfare, I think what some people don't realize is they have a formula so that they figure out what your full needs are and they multiply that by 51 percent and that's what you get. And so they try to help out that way.

But they don't help emotionally, they're not counselors, you know, psychological counselors, and so then if the woman needs psychological counseling, then she needs to go to a mental health agency somewhere to get that. They're not there to help your children with homework and all the things that are necessary to get them a good education.

All of this support that a woman needs is – she has to go from one place to another to another to another to another, and when you don't have an automobile to do that or if you don't have a telephone or the finances, then it's really difficult to do that.

So if they come to me, I try to provide them with as much as I can, although I'm not a counselor, but I try to hook them up with and point them in the right direction to get the counseling that they need. We do provide some counseling in the Women in Transition group, the support group. It's more like an education and mentoring group, it's not run by a psychologist or a counselor. We have people come in that speak with them about the various issues that they want to cover and it's always domestic violence and child abuse. They want to cover that, and I do most of the education on that. But then we might have someone come in and talk about healthy relationships. We have someone come in and talk about writing a resume, getting an education, parenting skills. We've also had a woman from Path come in and talk about what services they provide for women and how they can help through what's in Vermont -- it's call the Reach Up Program, which gets women in education, helps pay their tuition and things like that. And we have some representatives come in about voting, and also we've had a branch manager come in from a bank about how to manage a checkbook and talk about finances and budgeting and things like that.

So it's the everyday thing that they may need in their life and they get to hear about it. That's usually the first part of the evening, and then the second part of the evening we'll be talking about how they handle that in their life, that issue, whatever it is. [cats are becoming active] So, I think we'd better send them out.

FOLLET: Yeah, I think we maybe. I'm sorry. Our little four-legged friends.

WARD: Which one is it?

FOLLET: I'm afraid it's scratching. We'd better… [cats are removed]

FOLLET: OK, we're back. You know, as I hear you describe all the work that you're doing and comparing it to the legal system and to the victim advocacy groups, it seems to me, and let me run this by you that your approach has women at the center and you are assuming that the status of women is central, a central part of family violence. Is that fair?

WARD: Yeah, definitely. Because I think that when women become involved in violence, it's because they've been brought up to accept it and accept that that's the way life is, and even though they may not have expected it in their life, that it wasn't going to happen, or really hadn't thought about it, when it does happen, they're either shocked by it and close in, almost become introverted and not want to talk about it, or they accept it and still don't want to talk about it. And I think until they can come out of that and realize that it's not OK, that it will continue.

And what I see is that in the past, I feel a lot of our efforts in this country have really been centered on getting the woman out of and away from the violence, breaking off that connection. And I think that is necessary to happen. But then our efforts have not continued into what happens after that. You know, you've got the woman out, which I think is the way it had to start. Thank goodness for all the victim advocacy groups in this country, that really are grassroots organizations that realized that someone down the street was being up and needed a place to go and live, and that that was how a lot of our victim advocacy groups started in this country. And it was those groups that began to say it's not OK and you don't have to live this way, you can get out. And I think those groups started with the women's movement in this country. It was those groups that started in the '60s and said, we can't allow this to continue happening. What we need to realize, if you go back into the history of this country, is that in the 1800s and the early 1900s, it was OK to beat your wife in public, and it was accepted. And then when they said, OK, this is no longer acceptable, then it went behind closed doors. And the legal system at that point said a man's home is his castle, we don't interfere there.

And that was the times that my mother grew up in and lived in. When we were growing up in the '50s, that's just how it was, and there wasn't a victim advocacy group. The only time anybody on the outside interfered was if, you know, someone was murdered or killed or that type of thing. But now people, I feel, feel more inclined and feel it's their responsibility to interfere and to help, although many still don't. And I think that's where we need to do more work, especially in rural areas, that it's not acceptable. I feel that child sexual abuse is just now where spouse abuse was probably twenty years ago. It's just we're really beginning to say it's not OK and we have to do something about it.

So I think that because of the women's movement that started those groups, we wouldn't – I wouldn't be able to do the work that I do today without that first happening. That had to happen so there would be shelters for women to go to, there would be the ability in the legal system to get a relief-from-abuse order, to get a restraining order. My mother couldn't do that, you know, there was no – she couldn't have that. When my mother went to a doctor for help, he treated whatever her bruises were or whatever her ailments were but didn't ask where they came from. And the church encouraged people to stay married. You know, marriage is for better or worse, until death do you part.

And so it's those things that my mother grew up with that we've had to change, and we've had to come to a realization that they were incorrect and that they were not acceptable. It's those things that I now, with Have Justice Will Travel, can build on, and I can say that yes, it's right, the woman can get a relief-from-abuse order, but in addition to that, once she's out, she needs a lot of follow-up services.

I feel, really, in the 1980s and maybe the 1970s, that those in the psychological field realized that women who were chronically abused suffer the same kind of trauma that a woman does when her spouse dies. And it's very similar, the amount of trauma and what you go through, but if your spouse dies, what does society do? We send you cards, we send you money, we make sure that you have food. Someone stays with the spouse to make sure that she's making the funeral arrangements and making sure that she's making decisions that are acceptable because we don't want her making decisions in times of trauma that can affect her for the rest of her life, and so on. So we're there, completely supporting, for weeks and months afterwards. But if a woman is beaten and she – what does she do? She has to ask strangers for help, and she has to get all her help from strangers. And a lot of the family and friends don't want to be involved because they may know both people or it's just something that you don't get involved in. Or you'll have those who say, stay together for the children. Or the church won't accept a divorce. Those types of things.

And so, that is, I think, the difference in how we treat these things, and what I feel that a woman needs when she first leaves, because nine

times out of ten, when a woman leaves, it's going to be after a violent incident, because she realizes she can't stand it anymore, she can't take it anymore, and neither can the children. So she will leave. And at that point in time, someone can be there, even if it's for a few weeks or maybe it's a few months, to take her hand and guide her. Not to enable her and not to have her depend on you, but just to give her guidance as to, well, you know, you're living in the home but remember he used to pay for the fuel and now you've go to pay for it, so let's go get you some fuel assistance. Or the car is going to need to be serviced every once in a while. He used to do that, but you're going to need to take it to a garage now because if you don't, it's going to break down and that's a really important aspect of your everyday life. And you know, it's cheaper for you to buy groceries if you make a trip down to West Lebanon to one of the bigger stores than to buy from the little market down the street, although it may be closer. Your kids have to get off to school each day and you're the one that's got to do that, and, you know, just those everyday decisions. And if you want to go to work, then where are we going to find a daycare provider for the children.

All of those things that we help that woman with when her spouse dies but yet, when this woman is all of a sudden on her own and having three children or four children or whatever to support and guide through life, we don't give those services too. And that's where I think it's important. Some women's groups will say, no, you can't do that. You're enabling her. She's got to empower herself. But I feel that there is a fine line there. You know, if you can do that just for a few weeks or a few months depending on where she is in her life and in her healing, that really can make a big difference of whether she goes back to that abuser or not, or goes on to another abuser. Because if she feels that, I can't get the food or my car I can't fix, or I don't have the money, and the kids – I don't have any food to put on the table for them or I can't buy them clothes or whatever, then she's going to go back to where that source is, and it's a source of survival. So if you can put that there for them and help them along that way a little bit, then they don't go back. I mean, that's what you constantly hear, or why she doesn't leave.

FOLLET: You work with a um, women who you refer to as the "real Vermonters," and you describe them as low-income. In fact, Have Justice serves a low-income population. How does that connect up with your work? How does that --

WARD: One thing I want to make clear is that it's not only low-income women that are abused. Abuse knows no class lines, and I think that that's important to realize. But I think there are pros and cons when you talk about both sides of that, and what I mean by that is if you are a woman and you have a credit card and you have money and you have your own car, it may seem easier to be able to get away or to go hide the abuse, go

stay in a motel or fly to a vacation spot or something like that. But at the same time, if you're middle- or high-income, you're giving up a lot more – if you don't have the skills to support yourself in the same kind of lifestyle that you've been accustomed to, and your children have been accustomed to, then it can be just as hard to give it up, give that up, that provider that is providing for you and your children. So those decisions are really difficult to make. But when it comes down to the nitty gritty of I've-got-a-black-eye-and-how-do-I-hide-it, if you've got money, you can hide it easier. You can go away, you can go on a vacation, you can buy makeup. You know, it's just those little things like that, that it's easier to hide it and you can go talk to a psychologist because you can afford to hire one. You don't have to go to one that's free.

And so I think it becomes more evident in our society that low-income women are abused, but that's because they have to reach out for help from free services. If a woman came to me that was a doctor's wife – and I've had this happen where a woman -- the total marital assets were over a million dollars, but she walked out with her kids and the clothes on her back, and I helped her get the relief-from-abuse order and get her back in the home and get her some access to some of that money for her and the children. And then I said, You know what? Come to the Women in Transition group, you know, join that, and so on. But why don't you hire your own attorney because, you know, you can afford it, and my services and my time really needs to go to those who can't. And so she did. And still – she's doing well. And she went back to work and she has a PhD and is doing well.

Not that I wouldn't help someone like that, but I think that the sadness about women that haven't worked, that don't have the skills to work, is that they can't afford that makeup. They can't afford that car. They can't afford to put food on the table for their children. And so it makes them even more of a hostage to the abuse in many ways than what it does women that have money and can, at least have that to get away. And I understand that, because that's what I grew up with.

FOLLET: Now you provide free services to these women, which means that you are dependent on finding funding.

WARD: That's right.

FOLLET: They're not paying customers.

WARD: That's right.

FOLLET: So how does that influence what you can do? Do funders have certain assumptions, certain limitations on what you can and cannot do?

WARD: In some ways I've been fortunate with funding. My first funding started through the National Association for Public Interest Law, which is a group of law student groups throughout the country that actually pay chapter dues and so on to this organization, the umbrella organization in Washington, D.C. It's now called Equal Justice Works. They funded me for a full year at thirty-seven-five [$37,500], which paid my school loans and, you know, paid my own expenses and that's what was initially there to begin Have Justice Will Travel. And then the second year they funded half and I had to raise the other half, and I raised that through the Vermont Women's Fund and through private donations. Then after that I was able to get an Ashoka Followship. Ashoka Innovators for the Public is an organization in D.C. that helps social entrepreneurs with new ideas try to change whole areas, whether it's law or society. They call it social change.

Since that time I have able to apply for grants from the government and from private foundations, and we have a database started so that we can actually send out a yearly -- and we're going to try to move that up to twice a year -- funding letter that goes out asking for donations. So that's essentially what it is.

And the good thing about that is that I've been able to expand services. I have an office in Bennington and Brattleboro now that's staffed with an attorney and a half-time legal assistant for each one of them, and then I have an attorney here in this office, a full-time attorney and myself, and then I have two part-time attorneys which are volunteers. And I have had a lot of volunteer students, volunteers from the community, and both undergrad and law students that have come in and helped.

The sad thing that I see about it now -- and I think I mentioned this yesterday -- I sometimes see myself as my mother sitting at the kitchen table, wondering where a penny went in her checkbook, because I'm constantly having to find funds. And I call it my patchwork quilt, the funding, because I find it here and there and put it together and it takes too much of my time. And my board -- because we are a nonprofit organization, I have a board of directors and they have insisted in the last year that I take fewer and fewer cases because of this other need that I personally have of having to write grants and fund and expand and reach out so that others will replicate the Have Justice Will Travel model.

FOLLET: You mean that you personally take fewer cases?

WARD: Cases, that's right.

FOLLET: You individually. The organization is --

WARD: Yes - Is taking more and more-

FOLLET: -- but you would – I see.

WARD: But I'm taking fewer. And so, it's been a real hard time for me personally to think, I didn't come into this to write grants. And, I like the speaking part, I really enjoy that. I like reaching out to others, especially when it's younger people, when it's college or law students or social workers or, you know, whoever it is that is out there helping these people. I like doing that. I don't care for the fundraising. I don't care for the grantwriting, really. And to me, it's not what I'm here for, but I think it's that transition time that I'm in right now, and that what I have to do is look at the fact that if I can do this for the next few years, that there will come a time when I can come back to doing cases and doing more cases and have others who can to do the grantwriting and the fundraising and so on. And so it's those growing pains that are really affecting me right now, personally, and so it makes it hard for myself.

But it's a joy to see others work. When Jessica McManus who's the attorney in Bennington started and she went to her first court case, I was, like, yes, she's doing it. (laugh) And it was such fun to see that, and Mary has her first case on Tues- Wednesday in Benning- in Brattleboro. And to see that happening, it's, like, yeah, they're doing it. But I have to get my satisfaction out of that rather than, um, seeing and feeling it myself, you know. It just felt really good to see them doing and to see Kate [Kathryn Kennedy, HJWT attorney] on her first case in Washington and see the help that she's given those women. It's been wonderful. And so, I'm transitioning that. It seems I'm transitioning all the time to something different. I'm at the point where we're growing enough so that I'm thinking about for me to be doing these things, I can't be right in the center of things anymore, even in the office, because then I'm not getting my work done. I'm there to help everybody else, which is common in a legal aid type organization. So I'm having to change those things, too. And I'm going to need to have space of my own where I can write grants and can focus on the administration and those types of things. And manage my time more like a manager than like an attorney. So, it's – it's – that's happening, and it's taken me a while to accept that.

FOLLET: So organizationally your role is shifting. I wonder in terms of the – I guess, the goals of your organization, if you see them shifting. I know yesterday, you said that when you started your legal path, you said your goal was to become a lawyer and hang every child sexual abuser, sexual offender. How would you describe your goal now?

WARD: Now it's different, definitely different, because I think I'm – and I think even the goals of the domestic violence movement itself has changed, and the abuse field has changed, because everyone is beginning to

realize that it can't be just a win-lose and it can't be just a him-her battle. That in addition to helping victims and helping them get out and become independent and become survivors and become advocates, that you've got to change the batterer. Because if you don't change the batterer, he's just going to go on and batter somebody else, which happens time and time again. And although I'm not doing that myself as far as Have Justice is not involved with providing treatment for batterers, that kind of treatment is out there and we support men into doing that.

But we also realize that they need help, but part of that help is them being accountable for what they've done. And what I mean by that -- admitting what they have done, suffering the consequences of it, and realizing that jail time may be necessary. That's part of our system, and part of our system of jail time can be rehabilitative, and that's where a lot of our rehabilitative programs start. Batterers Intervention Program that we have in Vermont. The Intensive Domestic Aassault Program in Vermont. Those are all run through the Department of Corrections. Those types of programs, men have got to go to those to change. And one of the parts of the program that they have for the Batterers Intervention Program, it's called Cognitive Self Change, and it's looking – it's having men look at – we're flashing [camera flashes] -- having men look at the fact that they need to change their beliefs and their behavior, and that they need to understand that and where they – how they think of women and how they treat women and the affect that that has on not only women but on their children.

FOLLET: I was talking just the other day with a woman whose name is Fran Henry, you may know her-

WARD: Boy, that name sounds familiar.

FOLLET: She's based in western Mass. and she runs an organization called Stop It Now!

WARD: Oh, yes, Stop It Now! OK.

FOLLET: She's going to be interviewed for this project, too.

WARD: And Stop It Now! is in Vermont, too.

FOLLET: Yes, that's right. And she was telling me a story, that she came up to Vermont in the early '90s, maybe '92, '93, to a conference. It was for survivors of sexual abuse, the conference was, and there were 400 people there. And she offered a workshop on dealing with offenders. Not a single person came. A couple of years later, she was invited to give the keynote in Vermont to a conference sponsored by coalitions of

rape crisis centers and services and victim advocacy groups, invited to give the keynote on her work in working with offenders. And because it was the keynote, of course, people did attend. But she said she was met with a kind of stunned silence, almost bordering on hostility. And she knew that Vermont, at the same time, had one – nationally, one of the most recognized programs for treating, providing treatment to offenders as, I guess, part of the criminal –

WARD: It's the Department of Corrections.

FOLLET: -- system, so very advanced in that respect, and yet the women who were survivors and organizations like rape crisis centers who were dealing with this issue were really not ready to touch working with offenders.

WARD: Right.

FOLLET: In her mind, people were still too, um, just not ready to go there and stuck in a we-need-to-punish kind of mode.

WARD: And I think--

FOLLET: Does that-? You know I think maybe we should leave it at the question and then put your answer on the next tape because we're winding down here. OK.

END TAPE 3

TAPE 4

TAPE 4

FOLLET: OK. Let me take up my position here in the chair. Here we go. OK. I think I was describing Fran Henry's description of her encounter with the different systems in Vermont dealing with family violence in the early to mid-'90s and asking you if that rang true for you.

WARD: And it did. I remember when Stop It Now! first came to Vermont, it was not respected because they felt that, oh, here we have someone on the abuser's side, the batterer's side, and the whole idea of the domestic violence movement then was you get the victims out, including the mothers and the children, and you send the perpetrators to jail. And that's the solution. And when someone had a solution besides that, then it was wrong. But I think what a lot of that stemmed from was the fact that at that time it was still very common in the legal system and in society to blame the victim, and that it was the victim's fault.

And so many times, even today, when I speak, a hand will raise and they'll say, Well, why doesn't she leave? or, Why does she go back? or, Why does she stay? SO I will logically go through all of the – there is an actual chart that I have with a circle, like the power-and-control wheel, but it's why she stays, and around it will be the psychological reasons, the children, the economic reasons that we've already talked about it, the legal reasons – he gets a pat on the hand and that's it and don't do that again, and the family reasons and the religious reasons and all of that, the logical reasons, and then I will say, and I'll flash on the screen with my Power Point and I'll say, But isn't the real question why does he beat her? Because when you're asking why does he beat her, you're asking for the batterer to take accountability for what he does, instead of putting the onus on her, that it's her responsibility to leave, it's her responsibility to get out, it's her responsibility to stop the violence.

And so because that went on for so many years, and still goes on, I think, like in rape cases, where they blame the victim, they put the victim on the stand and abuse her all over again, which can happen in domestic violence cases, too, domestic assault cases. And because of that, there was that staunch feminist movement that said, What the solution to this problem is, is get them out and put the abuser in jail. But I think at the same time, as that was a solution at the time. That was one of the solutions at the time. But as society has looked at the whole problem and realized that, yes, that's part of the solution, but if you look at it from a family systems theory point of view, or from just a logical point of view, you take them away from that but then he's going to seek

out others to do the same because you haven't done anything to change him.

And so, I think the pendulum has swung now and that a lot of the domestic violence movement as such is to help the batterer, to get him treatment and so on.

Where I see the errors that we're making in that -- For instance, in Vermont, the that's run through Corrections, for three months, I think it is when they're first in that program, they have no contact whatsoever with the family, with the spouse or the children. None whatsoever. So during that three months, if the couple have come back together, and that sometimes happens, she's sitting there pining away because she can't see him, and is she learning anything about how to become independent or anything? No, that does nothing for her, absolutely nothing. There's no counseling offered, there's no group – women's group offered. There's nothing offered for the children about why daddy's away for three months and we can't see him. There's nothing offered at all. And so, again, what's going on right now is that we're helping the batterer, which is really important, but gee, what about this woman that's left behind and these children that are left behind?

And so he goes in and he learns all this stuff about cognitive self-change and how to treat the woman and all that and he comes back home and she's like, what is this? This is not something I know. You know, why isn't there a program for everybody? And I think that is an important mistake that we're making right now in the movement, that you've got to get something there for the woman while this IDAP [Intensive Domestic Assault Program] is going on, because if you do that, you're coming at it from all sides.

I feel that so many times in this country, that's the way we do things. We start out with a grassroots movement that is helping the victims and helping them get out and so on and we're all concentrating on that, and then now, we've swung to – OK, we've got to help the batterer, so we're going to help him, and meanwhile we're getting them out but that's where it stopped.

Where we need to come in – and that's what I try to do with Have Justice – is to help the women after the separation. And if that woman decides to go back with a batterer, then I'm still there to help her. It's no judgment made at all as to – when she does that. It's OK, let's get a safety plan, let's see what you can do, let's make it safe for you and the family, and you know, I think it's really important that we realize that we need to help everybody. And, Have Justice's mission is not to help the batterer, it's to help the woman, but that doesn't say that we don't see the necessity to help the whole family.

Another social agency that we participate in is supervised visitation programs. They're set up so that the mother, the victim, can take the children, drop them off for court-ordered supervised visits with the batterer and then come back and pick them up after the visit has

occurred. It's monitored visits, and there's no contact between the batterer, the mother and the father, so there's no chance of further abuse, and the children are not seeing any conflict or abuse or being a part of that, and yet they have a relationship with their father.

And now some of the victim advocacy groups feel that a man batters his wife, children see it, or just because he batters his wife, that means he can't be a good father, so therefore he doesn't get to see his children. And that's how they feel. But I can sit back and remember that when it was going on in my household, I didn't want my father to be taken away. I wanted to see him. I wanted him to love me. I just wanted the abuse to stop. It was scary. It was traumatic. I wanted it to stop, but I certainly didn't want you to take my daddy away. And so that's how kids are. So you need that program, too, and there's a lot of those in Vermont now, there's ten different programs around the state now, and it's very important to have those, again, so that the woman is not continually abused while trying to exchange the children, and the children, you know, putting them first, get to see their father and have a relationship with him, too. And it's a good, safe relationship. It's not one where he's out abusing them or not properly caring for them. So I think that's a real important part of the Have Justice Will Travel model and of the domestic violence movement.

The other thing that we're trying to do here -- and it's been a very slow process and I'm trying to really start instituting it now -- is to replicate the Have Justice Will Travel model in other areas of the country and of the state. I call it – what I'm doing in Vermont -- the expansion of Have Justice in Vermont, but it's really replication. It's replicating what I've done here in central Vermont for my clients by having other attorneys do it in other parts of the state on their own in their own offices and so on and do the same thing that I do, but I really would like to be able to expand it outside of Vermont and in other rural areas in the country so that this model could be there and, you know, it wouldn't have to be rural Vermont, it could be rural Montana or rural Nevada or rural Texas.

FOLLET: You're involved, I know, in some national organizations, The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and others, so obviously you see a place for Have Justice and the model you have here elsewhere. How does it – what you're doing, how does it compare to what's going on in the bigger picture?

WARD: I think the bigger picture is very similar to what it is here in Vermont. I know through colleges -- well, through law schools and so on -- they have their domestic violence programs and clinics where they actually represent women who are victims of domestic violence. They have victim advocacy groups which provide very important services that we can't provide, and by that I mean a 24-hour hot line. We do answer the

phone here 24 hours, but we don't really get calls in the middle of the night. Sometimes we do, maybe once or twice a month, but really the hot lines that, run by the victim advocacy organizations that can help a woman who's in crisis right then and needs to get out, you know, they will meet her and help her at a police station, get a relief-from-abuse order and so on, and also they will come to court with her -- if we're not available, they will do that. They can also provide shelters there, the ones that organize the shelters and provide those.

Those advocacy groups are throughout the country, everywhere. And, you know, it's – it's amazing what they have done in every state, absolutely amazing, that what started out as a grassroots movement is part of the fabric of society now, and I often think that if only my mother had had that. It's a part of society now and I think it's so important that we realize that, and it's almost like we take that for granted now, that it's there. And we need to realize that they struggle every day to fund and finance what they do, but they do get funding from the state and federal governments and so on, but it becomes so overwhelming sometimes for those groups, because they don't have the funding that they need. I think we all suffer the need for more funding. But I think that is throughout the country.

What I would like to see is more Have Justice expansion so that there could be these services in rural parts of the country for in-home consultations. Because advocacy groups do not do in-home consultations because of the safety involved. And frankly, we don't do it unless it's safe. We take precautions, and if it's not safe to go to a person's home, then we ask if they'll meet us at the court house or at a restaurant or at a library, or in some public place where it's safe.

FOLLET: How do you determine if it's going to be safe?

WARD: We work with the victim advocacy groups who quite often know the families in the area. If they're not sure, then we talk with law enforcement, your local sheriff or your local constable -- is it safe to go to this person's home? And if it's not safe, then we don't do it.

FOLLET: How does a case come to you?

WARD: Most of the cases in the beginning were through the victim advocacy groups. They referred direct to us. But now, with the publicity that we've done and by getting out there in the courts and in the legal systems, people know of us and they refer. We get referrals from courts, we get referrals by word of moth, by law enforcement, from doctors and nurses, where we've spoken or where our fliers are, from counselors, lots of times from counselors, from guidance counselors in schools for children. We do not have a lack of clients. We turn people away all the time. Hundreds of people a year we turn away. And when I say turn

away, we offer them phone advice or refer them to other legal agencies or other social service agencies, but, I mean, the number of clients you can serve – it's very time-intensive, very, time-intensive, especially when the woman first gets out, as I said, you know, as you hold her hand and guide her along. It's tremendously time-intensive for the first few weeks, few months, and then after that, you can kind of let go a little at a time and they'll be more on their own.

So I think that this model could work anywhere in any rural area. You've got to have a dedicated attorney. You've got to have transportation. You need to be able to be set up to go to people's homes with an office, which we have. All of our vehicles are equipped with computers and printers, laptop computers and printers, and also with phones, cellular phones, and with AC-DC converters because we have had some clients that don't even have electricity. That's not a lot, but a few. You need to have those things to be able to serve these people -- really integral parts of the Have Justice Will Travel model -- but that's not saying that you couldn't use parts of it, such as the South Royalton Legal Clinic, which is the teaching and practicing clinic at Vermont Law School. When I was there, where I really received my mentorship about the legal field and about domestic violence, I provided services for their clients but they would Have Justice, Will Travel services -- I would go to their homes and pick them up and take them to court and do interviews and so on with them at their homes and so on. So a clinic could do that part of it, you know.

I think what I'm hoping to do is, that if someone wants to say, this is Have Justice Will Travel in Montana, then they're going to have to have certain aspects and receive guidance from here, because I don't want the Have Justice Will Travel name used and abused. We provide quality services here and I want to keep that quality up. But if someone – I'm sure there are other people that probably do parts of this, parts of it, but not as a whole model as such.

FOLLET: Yeah, right. You know, I was driving up yesterday and listening to the news, and one of the items on the news was the announcement that President Bush is proposing to take – I forget the figure – 1.5 – it's probably more than 1.5 million, it's probably more than that – 1.5 billion – I don't know, but take funds from the welfare program and apply them instead to a program that promotes marriage. And I wonder what you think of that.

WARD: Promotes marriage?

FOLLET: Yes.

WARD: There's one reason why I can think in Vermont that I would promote someone -- if you're going to live with someone and have children -- to

get married. It's because if you live with a man and have children with a man, Vermont Family Court will take jurisdiction over the relationship and over the custody and the visitation and the child support for the child. But say you are living with that man and you have a house, and you bought a house together, and the deed is in both your names, or you have an automobile and so on, Vermont Family Court does not take jurisdiction of any real or personal property unless you are married. So, what would have to happen for you to get your part of that would be you have to then hire an attorney that would take you to what's called Superior Court, and sue. You'd have to make a suit, file a suit to get any portion of that property back.

FOLLET: If you were to separate.

WARD: If you were to separate, yes.

FOLLET: And either party would have to do that, the male or the –

WARD: Yes, uh-hm.

FOLLET: -- the male or the female.

WARD: More than likely, you know, I would say it's seven chances out of ten, the property's going to be in his name. So your chance of getting any of that is, like, nil. So my idea would be not promote marriage but to promote that Vermont Family Court has jurisdiction over the property when a relationship, when they've been together for so long. Just the same as they do with divorce. That would be my way to solve it. I don't know what his promote marriage is about. Is it to promote marriage so that they are not paying so much welfare to single moms? Is that what it's about? I don't know.

You know, I remember when my sister, my younger sister, she's three years younger than I, she was 16 and she was pregnant, and her husband still wanted to go to school -- or yeah, it was her boyfriend. They got married, my parents gave them a place to live, the house next door, and I went to welfare with her because they didn't have any income. He was in school and they didn't have money to live on. And the man said to her and said to me, Well, you shouldn't have gotten married. You didn't have to do that. We'll help you. You shouldn't have married him. You didn't have to do that." And we just sat there and Gloria looked at him and said, Well, we wanted to get married. We were gonna get married anyway. But of course, she's 16, you know. They're still married, and they have two wonderful children and grandchildren and so on. But that was what she was told. And I'm assuming that women are still told that -- you don't have to get married. And it's true. I can't see promoting marriage. I think you need to promote families.

But families don't have to be married, and marriage doesn't have to be a man and a woman. There's all kinds of families in this world. I consider my cats my children and my great-nieces and nephews and, you know, all children. And I know families that are two men or two women that have children, and they're just wonderful. I think that you need to look at families beyond something of the patriarchal idea of what marriage and family is.

FOLLET: Between us, you and I, we live in two states, Vermont and Massachusetts, that have recently wrestled with this issue, Vermont with the civil unions and now the question of legalizing same-sex marriage is going on Massachusetts. What would you say about civil unions as a solution to the issue in Vermont versus the possibility of same-sex marriage as a legal option in – (two voices)

WARD: I don't know why they just didn't go with same-sex marriage in Vermont. I think it was because there was such a protest, that you couldn't have that. I was glad that at least they came to the halfway point or whatever for civil unions. A civil union is treated just like a marriage in Vermont. Go to the law -- it's the same thing. You have a dissolution, which means a divorce, and you have all of that. And it's the same rules. Everything is the same as if it was marriage. It's just called civil unions. So it was a solution, I think, to – and I'm really glad Vermont took the step because I think if they hadn't of, that maybe Massachusetts wouldn't have same-sex marriage. In Vermont it was such an issue that divided everybody. Divided families, divided people. Harold has two younger brothers who are both gay, and his older brother is staunch conservative. They live across the highway from us.

FOLLET: Is this one of the two brothers?

WARD: Uh-hm. The oldest one. And we're like day and night. When the election year will come next year, they'll have all the Republicans signs out on their lawn. And it's not just politics, you know, it's everything we believe in, morals and everything. And in my family, the same. My uncles – it's OK to be a child abuser but the idea of being queer, as it was said back then, was just a total sin and as bad as being a Native American. They were all lumped together, very, very bad. But his brother died, his brother that was five years younger than him, in a car accident, a single car accident on an icy night. We knew that he was gay and a lot of people did. It was open, they were both openly gay and he -- my nephew, Harold's nephew who is the son of his older brother -- said, Well, we don't need to mention that at the funeral services, and things like that and I was, like, you know, you need to realize that although Joey didn't make a big deal out of himself being gay in front of you and your parents -- because he knew that you didn't approve of it – that in

front of the rest of us and out in society, he was openly gay, and you need to know that there are going to be a lot of gay people there at that funeral. I tried to be nice and diplomatic about it, but then I was angry about it, too, and I went out and bought red ribbons and just about everybody at the funeral wore red ribbons. I did the eulogy and actually mentioned it as part of his life.

I just think the difference between families like that really came to a crux, came to that-that place, that-that clash in the middle the road, really split families apart and so on. And so I think maybe at that time Vermont needed civil unions versus gay marriage, but that maybe at some point it will be called marriage, same-sex marriage, in Vermont.

We put up Democratic signs. It's a wonderful place here on top of the hill.

FOLLET: Oh, I bet.

WARD: So many people go by that – and Orange County is a very conservative county, Republican county, but the Democrats that are here are becoming more vocal and so I had Marion Milne sign on my lawn. And people were stealing people's signs and there was a Take Back Vermont and Remember in November [protesting Vermont legislature's approval of civil unions for gay couples] and all of this stuff was going on all over the state. So I had the one sign on my lawn for Marion Milne. She was a Republican but she voted for civil unions and so then, she was thrown out of the Republican party, you might as well say, so she ran independent, and so I had her sign on our lawn. And they had all kinds of Republican signs over there -- Bush and, oh, everybody over there, and one for this local representative, who was a woman, but she was local and Republican. The morning of the voting – voting day, my sign comes up missing, and in its place is the Republican sign, and lo and behold, of course, that person's sign is missing from across the road. So we know that they had done it. Steve and Harold were always doing these kind of things with each other, you know, going back and forth, picking on each other and it's just part of their makeup.

FOLLET: So, it's a good natured-

WARD: It's good-natured, for the most part. And so I said to Harold, Burn it. [laugh] So he took some lighter fluid out and put it all over the sign and set it on fire. People were going by. But it was all done good naturedly. If they need something, we're there to help them.. If we need something, you know, we're there to help them. It's just – that's the way it is. We go back and forth. But I think there were families where it was much more serious, where it really got nasty, and so I think that the civil unions was a good compromise, and a step that was that little baby step that the whole country needed and now Mass [Massachusetts] has taken

this step. And I think the thing that I think about in some ways about that is, Vermont was the first state that when they had their constitution, that prohibited slavery. But remember that Vermont – the story that I told you about the Ethan Allen Boys and Vermont – and Governor [Howard] Dean who's now running for President – did not support the recognition of the Abenakis as a tribe, because he's against gambling and he felt that they would build gambling casinos and so on.

So, you know you have all your views and so on, but the important thing, and the thing that I would like to see change in Vermont and in rural Vermont and in the poorer communities is the idea that a girl's purpose in life is to grow up, get married, and have babies, and that women are seen as second-class citizens. That is changing a little at a time but it is still there. It is still there that the woman is expected to be super-mom now, and you know, go to work and raise your children and do all the transportation of the children and still earn a lot of money and let's face it, you can't have a home today unless you've got two people working, I think that those pressures are still there on women in this area and on young girls. It's changing, there's no question that it's changing, but it's still there.

FOLLET: You mentioned speaking to young girls and you mentioned that yesterday, too, about speaking to young people at Thetford Academy and elsewhere, and I wonder what, how sexuality figures as a piece of the message. It seems to me I saw that Kate, for example, gives talks to high school students about sexuality and the potential for abuse, and I wonder what you tell young people about being – being sexually active. Personally or as an organization, do you have a position on that?

WARD: Nno, we don't have a position, as such, that's stated on that. That's not something that I speak about. When I go out, I'm usually speaking about domestic violence and dating violence, and that type of idea, but not specifically about sexuality. I think that -- this is my personal feeling and I think that we need to realize that teenagers will be teenagers and especially in rural Vermont, where there is not a lot to do, that when you put teenagers together, male and female, that it's going to happen, and that what you really need to be able to do is talk with them about safe sex, and about that type of thing, whether it's condoms or abstination, if you want to do that, whatever. But really, the safe sex has to be the most important thing to happen.

When I talked with my sisters and we talked to their children about it and so on, that's the thing that we empathized. You know, if you choose to do this, you need to do it safely, and you need to think about who you are doing it with and talk about it openly. I think that's one of the most important things -- it's not something that's hidden from people -- and my mother never talked with me about it, you know -- that you talk with your children openly about it, and that it be a part of

family conversations, that it's not something to hide and it's not something dirty, that it's a natural human instinct and desire and so on and that you talk about it openly. I think that's the most important thing.

FOLLET: I wonder about the question of pornography, too. When we were off tape, changing tapes, you mentioned that it was, as you called them "staunch feminists" who started the movement against domestic violence and child sexual abuse. The debate about the role of pornography in all this, was all part of the feminist discussions, too, and I wondered if – do you have a feeling about how that figures in into the dynamics of abuse?

WARD: When I was – summer between my second and third year in law school, I worked at the attorney general's office and worked in their child protection agency team there. W had a conference and it was on internet child pornography and how they were prosecuting that. I think that was in 1997, the summer of '97, how we were beginning to be able to prosecute child porn and so on. And I think that it's really important that we realize that that's out there and that it can affect our children, and that it can be devastating for them, especially when you hear of -- whether it's older men or older women who will get on the internet with these young people and pretend that they're a young person and come meet me and then you hear of children being killed or raped or the circumstance that happens from that type of connection to pornography.

In the same voice, -- and this stems from my law school education, I think, too -- in one of my last cases, it was brought up because he had porn in his house and he was an abuser, and we mentioned it, and that he was showing it to his 6-year-old son as if this was an accepted way of life, and we brought it up as a fact that it was not an acceptable parenting skill, that that showed that he did not have any parenting skills. So I've used it that way as such, but I also realize that the Constitution gives adults the right to observe and look at porn as part of the Constitution. Do you see what I mean? And so you get that battle going back and forth. Personally, I feel that if women are looked at as sexual, their bodies are just looked at as sexual bodies, then you're not thinking about their mind, you're not thinking about their worth, you're not thinking about what they can give to society or a relationship, or, you know, that type of thing. So I think we could do without it without any problem. I wouldn't hesitate at all to use it in my cases if this was – and I have already done it, that this shows an inappropriate parenting skill, if that's what was happening, if they were being shown to children. And I think as far as bringing children into that, and that type of thing, it's terrible and it needs to be stopped, just the same as child abuse needs to be stopped. Child porn is part of child abuse.

FOLLET: But you wouldn't go so far as to promote banning it?

WARD: Um, yeah, I'd probably sign on it to ban it. But the other thing is then – you see, I can remember my law school arguments about, Then, OK, what are we going to ban after that? Are we going to ban, um, that we can't look at erotica or, you know, some Monet's paintings and things like that. Just how far are you going to – we called it the slippery slope in law school. How far are you going to go? And so I think there's always that argument. But if it's degrading, and that's the way it is, then it's wrong, you know? And I don't care if it's pornography of a man or pornography of a woman. You know? You shouldn't degrade people. Whether it's *Penthouse* or *Playboy* or any of those magazines, then what do we need that for? We don't. Why not promote being loving and gentle and not violent with one another? Because let's face it, what those articles and those magazine and so on lead to, or videos, or whatever, porn videos, they lead to violence. And that's not what a loving relationship is about. It's not about violence. Whether it's physical or sexual or emotional, it's not about violence.

FOLLET: You seemed to have retained a great deal of faith in the legal system as a vehicle for change. You also acknowledged the role of social movements, the women's movement, in laying the groundwork for your work. Where do you see, where would you like to see the future going as far as directions for ending family violence and child sexual assault? Where would you --

WARD: I see it as a movement as a whole, that we have to really work at from all ends. What I mean by that is we need to start with our babies that are born, that men and women are equal, and that one is as equal to the other and as good as the other and maybe one woman may have certain characteristics that another doesn't have or that a man or a boy doesn't have. And so you need to start when they're born.

I was really proud of Kate. She refused to have an ultrasound that said whether she was having a boy or girl because she didn't want all pink or she didn't want all blue. And so I went out and bought her red. [laugh].

FOLLET: Your favorite color.

WARD: Right. And she got lots of greens and yellows and different stuff like that, and some pink and blue and so on. I think that's where we need to start, even before they're born. And then you grow and you bring that into the schools and into the homes, that violence is not OK and that little girls can play with trucks and little boys can play with dolls. You start that we're equal, and along with that, that violence is not OK, that violence hurts people, that hands are not for hitting, that we don't spank our children, and we don't solve violence with violence, and that we

work on that all the way up through. The sad part is now, we can't just cut it off and say, OK, this is where we're going to start and this is going to be it and, you know, throw the rest of the world away. So you've got to start at the bottom level now, with the children that are born now.

But meanwhile, you've got teenagers and adults and elderly people, and if you're looking at just the family sphere as such, that you've got to be able to work with it. Safeline goes into schools. We go into schools. You talk about campus dating and campus violence and so on, and dating violence, and then you work with the people that I'm working with now, which is really a crisis in some ways. We're working on the crisis situations. But meanwhile, we're trying to do some of the preventative, too. And if you can work with that altogether, then some day, maybe the whole circle will be covered.

But then, if you're going to look at it beyond that, beyond the family circle and beyond the family unit, then you've got to look to society and society needs to know that violence is not acceptable, that you don't shoot your neighbor because they're doing something that you don't like. And then you get to countries and states and so on, and you need to learn that violence is not OK, that compromise is OK.

I often think, and if you look at it, that if women ran the world, how different it would be. Because I feel in many ways there's less competition, although there are women that are just as competitive, you know, they're on the rugby teams, and that's great, wonderful. But I really do feel that if women ran the world, there wouldn't be so much competitiveness and I'm-better-than-you and the power struggles that we have now, that if it could be just different, that it would solve a lot of our problems. It would be neat just to see that for like a month.

FOLLET: Give it a try?

WARD: Yeah. And see what happens.

FOLLET: I wonder if it'll happen.

WARD: I don't know.

FOLLET: f you don't mind, I would just as soon stretch for a minute and then kind of collect our thoughts and make sure that we – I can think of a couple of final questions I want to ask and I want to be sure with you that we've covered – we'll never do justice to Have Justice --

WARD: But I think we've gotten the most of it out.

FOLLET: There's consolation in knowing that [WARD: the writings] the records will ultimately be saved and come to the Sophia Smith Collection so that the – but if you don't mind, if we can break for just a minute…

[BREAK]

FOLLET: OK. We're back on the air. OK. It's amazing what you have accomplished and what you're doing. I'm – I'm just so struck by the fact that you have – you're tackling a problem that runs so deep and has such deep historical roots and so pervades our society. Where – what's your greatest source of strength as you go about this work?

WARD: I just think that it needs to be done. I think – I think the greatest source of strength is when I see families that are together, that are happy, that children aren't having to see violence, that women aren't having to suffer it anymore, that that's where the strength comes from. And I think that when – when I need – Oh, I'm not hooked up. [refers to microphone]

FOLLET: Whoops. Sorry. OK.

WARD: It probably would've picked it up anyways, but –

FOLLET: Yeah.

WARD: OK. But I think the greatest source of strength that I see and that I feel as I do my work, is to see families together. And by families, I mean women and their children that aren't being abused anymore and that are happy and that can enjoy life and children can be children. And when I need rejuvenation, a lot of what I try to do is, I do some *guardian ad litum* work, which means I get to spend time with children. Or I might just go spend some time with my client's children. We even – we've been a baby-sitter once in a while for a mother has to work and doesn't have someone for that child that day, and they'll come and spend the day, you know, here in the office, and Kate's going to be bringing her baby, I think, to work with her and when she comes back to work. That's the inspiration that you have, is that you see these happy children, and you know they're going to grow up and contribute to society and contribute to life, so that they're not damaged. I think the fewer damaged children we have, the better.

FOLLET: What's the biggest obstacle? The biggest hurdle?

WARD: Money, money. There's no question, it's money. It's almost like I've always wanted to not have that be the obstacle or the hurdle, or whatever, but it's the fact of life. It's money, that's my biggest burden

that I worry about. I can't tell you what a relief it is when I've gotten a grant and I say, There. That's going to get me another few months or another six months or another year, in southern Vermont, another two years. When I get it, it's just such a relief to be able to have the money to provide those services. And it's sad that that's the way it is, but, you know, I can't hire an attorney and ask that attorney to work for nothing. They've got to pay their own bills, they've got to support their own families and so on. And so, to do that, then I have to come up with the funding. That's the biggest hurdle, I feel.

FOLLET: If we think of money as part of a budget and a budget as really a set of political priorities -- money is going to certain things, but it's clearly not going to yours, to your operation in sufficient amounts -- then we're talking about a system of values. And what is it about the work that you do that isn't sufficiently valued?

WARD: I think what isn't sufficiently valued is the whole idea that violence is OK. That-that idea, you know, that that isn't valued. That there is violence out there and there is only so much we can do. That there aren't people that believe we can stop violence. Because let's think about it. I mean, since man has been on earth, there's always been violence, and before that, there's always been violence. So how do we stop that? Well, we're getting there. A lot of society realizes that it's not OK and it's no longer acceptable. And if we can keep working on that and putting our efforts into it, I think that we – and I think we need to be clever, more and more clever about how we're spending our money on the values that we have. How we spend our money and that we get bang for our buck, as they say, that, you know, that our money is spent efficiently. Such as the federal budget that I've just gotten the grant from for southern Vermont. [FOLLET: Right.] They wanted to specifically have that one of the major goals was the mentoring. And I think that's because they see the mentoring project, the Women in Transition group, as being a way that women will become more self-sufficient. So if they're more self-sufficient and able to support themselves and get out of the violence and don't need the support from the government, then they're getting their money's worth, as such. So I think that that's an important thing that we need to look at for our foundations that we request money from and from the governments that we request money from, that we're spending our money efficiently and we're getting the results that are necessary. Otherwise, you're throwing your money off to a losing cause.

And I think we need to emphasize how we are succeeding and how it's more than one woman at a time, one family at a time. If you can reach out there, you need to realize that maybe your numbers that you're reaching aren't as high as what you would see right there that day, but what you're going to find is that because you've reached out, the part

that you reach out to is going to pay off down the road. We're educating our children. We're providing for our future, is what's happening. I often say that the world's most greatest asset, the most precious asset, is our children. We really have to work for them and be able to provide them a home that's violence-free.

FOLLET: You mentioned to me recently that you're planning to write a book.

WARD: Eventually, yes.

FOLLET: Do you have a title for it yet?

WARD: No, it's a project I tell people that I'll do when I'm old and decrepit and can't do anything else.

FOLLET: So you don't –

WARD: No. You know, in the back of my mind, it's there – which is the way I do a lot of things -- you think and think and think and then you sit down and you write it. I would like to write a book someday about the devastation that violence can, you know, really affect a family and how it can be very devastating and the difficulty in getting away from it and the need that is there to help people and how we can solve the problem. I think it's -- it can be important – and I would love to do it. But, right now, I thought, well, gee, I should go out and get a grant so that I can take a year off and write a book. But, I don't want to do that right now. I would want – if I was to go out and get a grant, it would be to further expand Have Justice, to help more people. And so I'll do that later.

FOLLET: So if you're going to do that when you're old and decrepit, there's a long time between now and then. You're young, you're in your early fifties.

WARD: Well, I guess so. And that's the way to think about it. My grandfather died at an early age – I think he was 43, my paternal grandfather did. My paternal grandmother lived into her seventies, as did my grandparents. My mother – if it wasn't for medical technology, would have been dead long ago. She has diabetes and she has some other problems, other physical problems, but she's going to be 77 and so I hope I live to be 80. I don't know if I have aspirations of living beyond that. So I have a lot to do in the next thirty years. And that's where sometimes I look back and I regret, and I think, if only I hadn't had to go through all of that and, you know, if I could've done this quicker or sooner, you know, if I was 35 now or 40, what a difference that would make. But then again, I have all those life experiences that make a big difference. So you have to look at it more positively.

And I think the big thing we need to tell the world is that even though people can be abused and are abused, that they grow beyond that, that they don't necessarily grow up to be abusers, although that's highly likely in many cases, and that women can get beyond that, and that you don't have to dwell on it all your life, and that you can look back on it and become more objective and apply what you learned there to be – going on to be an advocate for other people.

FOLLET: Well, you're certainly living testimony to that. It's- it's very moving, what you've-

WARD: Well, I really hope that people will take my life as an example, that they can do it, you know, and when I sit and talk with clients, I say that -- I know what you're going through. You know, my mother went through it and I know how difficult it is for you. But you know, you've got this and this and this going for you, and these are positive things and look at how strong you've been through this. And you know, they don't stop to realize. They don't give themselves credit. And if you can do that and give them encouragement and show them how they have empowered themselves and how they can continue to do it, then they will go on and help others. So I think it's really important that we continue to do that. Because eventually, it's like I said -- one woman helping another who helps another. It'll be a good way to stop the violence.

FOLLET: Well, your combination of hope and determination are very inspiring and the world is better for it.

WARD: Thank you.

FOLLET: I- I thank you very much, very much. Is there any finishing touch that you would like to add? Any topic that you can think of?

WARD: I don't think so. I think we've covered just about everything. I'll probably think of something tomorrow. [laugh]

FOLLET: Yeah, won't we? Well, you know, you will get a chance to add-

WARD: Yeah, well you know, that's good.

FOLLET: As the transcript comes back, you may see things where you want to add a little P.S. to the bottom. And of course, we're in touch anyway --

WARD: Yes.

FOLLET: -- as we continue to work on saving the amazing documentation of your work.

WARD: Sounds good. OK.

FOLLET: The Sophia Smith Collection is very proud to do that, and we do it because, by saving it, the record of this work will be – it's one way of spreading the work.

WARD: If you wanted to look at it on a personal basis, Harold's aunt just died. She was the – well, back in May – oh, second – almost oldest in the family – all her brothers are gone except for the youngest. So by virtue of old-fashioned ideas and ways, the property was left to him. And he doesn't want anything to do with it. So, so many things were just thrown. He kept some photos and things like that. But, you know, we went through a lot of it and we saved a lot of it, and I got to thinking about that. I don't want that to happen with my stuff. We don't have children. And it's not that so much that I want my work saved, it's the photographs that I have of my family and the generations back of my grandmother and of my great-grandmother, and things like that, that are so precious, that I don't want that to happen. And so it makes me even more want to be able to pass that on, like you said, to a place where it can be preserved so that when we die and something happens, people just don't come in and chuck it into the fire.

FOLLET: Yeah. Well, it'll be preserved but it'll also be accessible, available. And so will be the lessons that you've learned from your work, and the anti-violence movement will be able to build on your work from here on because the evidence will be there. So that's – that's very gratifying. Thank you.

WARD: OK.

[FOLLET invites Wynona's husband Harold to have a picture taken with her. He agrees reluctantly but good-naturedly.]

WARD: Now you're on.

FOLLET: There we go.

WARD: Light's on.

FOLLET: Yeah. The light's kind of glaring on your glasses. Yes. Oh, there. That's a little better. OK. OK. Harold, any words to the wise?

HAROLD: No.

FOLLET: No words to the wise? OK. Here we have Harold.

HAROLD: The common thing should be no means no and there you go. No.

FOLLET: There you go. [laugh] OK. I totally accept it. OK. The other – the main man for Have Justice Will Travel.

WARD (Wynona): The only one, really.

FOLLET: We don't need to say that.

WARD: Right.

FOLLET: Thank you very much.

END TAPE 4
END OF INTERVIEW