Voices of Feminism Oral History Project

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College
Northampton, MA

BARBARA WINSLOW

Interviewed by

KATE WEIGAND

May 3–4, 2004
Williamstown, Massachusetts

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with generous support from the Ford Foundation.

Narrator

Barbara Winslow (b. 1945) grew up in Scarsdale, New York. She attended Antioch College for three years but graduated from the University of Washington with a B.A. in 1968 and a Ph.D. in history in 1972. A student and antiwar activist, she was instrumental in founding Women's Liberation Seattle and was heavily involved in grassroots feminist activity, particularly reproductive rights, in Seattle, Detroit, Cleveland, and New York City. Active in socialist and feminist politics for many years, Winslow was also at the forefront of the movement to integrate women, African Americans, and the working class into the teaching of history in the 1970s. She is currently teaching history and women's studies at Brooklyn College.

Interviewer

Kate Weigand (b. 1965) has a Ph.D. in women's history and U.S. history from Ohio State University. She is author *of Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

Abstract

In this oral history Barbara Winslow describes her privileged childhood Westchester County, New York, and at Solebury Academy in Pennsylvania. The interview focuses on Winslow's activism as a socialist, a feminist, and a historian. Her story documents the life of a socialist activist and feminist and the challenges that come with combining those two identities with one another. It also details the ins and outs of grassroots feminist activity in Seattle in the 1960s, in Cleveland, Ohio, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and in New York City from the mid-1980s on.

Restrictions

None

Format

Interview recorded on miniDV using Sony Digital Camcorder DSR-PDX10. Five 60-minute tapes.

Transcript

Transcribed by Luann Jette. Audited for accuracy and edited for clarity by Kate Weigand. Barbara Winslow did not respond to our requests to review and approve this transcript.

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Video Recording

Bibliography: Winslow, Barbara. Interview by Kate Weigand. Video recording, May 3–4, 2004. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Barbara Winslow, interview by Kate Weigand, video recording, May 3, 2004, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, tape 3.

Transcript

Bibliography: Winslow, Barbara. Interview by Kate Weigand. Transcript of video recording, May 3–4, 2004. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Barbara Winslow, interview by Kate Weigand, transcript of video recording, May 3, 2004, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, pp. 34–37.

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Transcript of interview conducted MAY 3–4, 2004, with:

BARBARA WINSLOW
Williamstown, MA

by: KATE WEIGAND

WEIGAND: I'm Kate Weigand here with Barbara Winslow at her house in Williamstown, Massachusetts, to interview her about her life and about the women's movement. I want to start out, I think, talking about your background and your parents and your childhood and then to move forward chronologically from there. Part of my aim in asking these questions is to give a sense of what it was that made you an activist, because, certainly, lots of people were at that point, but not everybody. So, could you just talk a little bit about your family background, and particularly about your parents and who they were and where they came from.

WINSLOW: I was born Barbara Slaner in 1945, and I have to say I was a child of privilege. I was born in Westchester County and I spent 16 years in Scarsdale. And I always joke that it took five years of therapy and turning 50 to admit to the world that I was from Scarsdale. My father, Alfred Slaner, was raised in Oklahoma.

My grandfather, Jake Slaner, was from Belarus, came to the United States in the late 1880s. He was in the Oklahoma Land Rush. He went back to Russia at one point and was conscripted into the tsar's army. Because he was Jewish, he was made the embezzler for the tsar officers to steal money for them. He knew that he would be hanged when he got caught so he fled the army with the tsar's money and came back to Oklahoma and set up a small haberdashery store called the Dixie Store in southwest Oklahoma. The Jewish side of my family always jokes that you can never steal money from the tsar, you just earned it.

So my father grew up as a Jew in southwestern Oklahoma. I think there probably was something like 36 Jews in all of Oklahoma in the 1930s. Both my grandfather, Jake Slaner, and my father always wanted to be American, and I think that being so isolated and Jewish in Oklahoma sort of informed his sensibilities of what it meant to be Jewish.

My paternal grandmother was Jessie Joth Slaner and she was born in the United States. In that Jewish section of the family, half were philanthropists and half were socialists and garment workers. My grandmother was a librarian. She didn't want to marry and married late in

life, as she talked about it. She married at 29. She had my father when she was in her thirties, which was late for whenever it was they got married, and she didn't like Oklahoma at all. And I could spend hours telling Oklahoma stories, but we don't have that much time.

On my mother's side of the family, my maternal grandparents were from Kansas and I found out much later in life that my grandmother's family were McGreavys from Oklahoma. They came to the United States and moved to Ohio and then, in 1857, moved to Kansas. There was only one reason anybody moved to Kansas after 1856 and that was to be a partisan in the Civil War. He was a Union officer and he joined the Army during the Civil War and I later found out, much later, that I had a great-uncle, Hardy McGreavy, who was one of the leaders of the Green Corn Rebellion in Oklahoma, which was the only twentieth-century integrated armed insurrection against the United States government. So — he also was a dentist and in my Trotskyist history — I once heard that Trotsky called the Socialist Party a party of dentists, and that was my great-uncle Hardy.

My grandfather — my maternal grandfather — was a scientist. His name was Victor Remayer. He was a colloid chemist at Columbia and he worked on the Manhattan Project. In 1939 he went to Eastern Europe with my mother and his wife with money to give money to Jewish scientists to bring them to the United States. It is sort of like something out of Lillian Hellman's story "Julia," except this was true.

So, I was born and raised in Scarsdale. I was a daughter of privilege. I hated Scarsdale. It was a horrible experience for me in the sixth grade. In both the second grade and the sixth grade, I was for Stevenson for president and I was reviled by my classmates. There was only one other girl, Jane Marks, who was for Stevenson. In the sixth grade, I was involved in the debate on the death penalty. I opposed capital punishment and I remember somebody stood up and said, "Slaner's debate stunk and so does Slaner." So I was sort of not the most popular kid. And how I came to these positions, I really don't know. My mother was a Rockefeller Republican and my father was a New Deal Democrat.

My father, by the way, did not want to marry a Jewish woman so my mother was not Jewish. My mother was a very lapsed Catholic, and we were raised as Congregationalists. In the sixth grade, I asked in my Sunday School class, "If Mary was a virgin, how come she had a baby?" They kicked me out of class for that and I think that sort of helped inform my attitudes about organized religion and started me on the path of my very well-informed atheism.

I became very conscious of race living in Scarsdale because so many people in Scarsdale had maids and people worked — we had an African American couple who always worked for us and it's something that, you know, always embarrassed me and mortified me. My father's chauffeur would drive us to school and we used to hide in the back seat of the car and we would have him drop us off other places. I just had bitter fights with him about it, and especially by the time I got to high school. It was

just horrible and I hated it. And the civil rights movement had begun, let's see, it started in — when I was around nine or ten, and we just had bitter fights all the time and at that point. Scarsdale would not allow Harry Bellefonte to move into Scarsdale. They redistricted it. And the same thing's true with Floyd Patterson. So I was very aware of race, and I was very angry about it. And I'm not exactly sure what did it, but I'm sure the idea of having black servants bothered me.

And then, when I was in the tenth grade, I cut class to go picket Woolworth's. And at my fortieth high school reunion, which was held last fall, I was asked to talk about Scarsdale. One of the things I said to the class, because I didn't want to sort of present myself as "I'm so wonderful," but I said that I had the black chauffeur drive me to the train station where I'd get on the train and go and picket Woolworth's for racial equality. And I said, "Now, that's a contradiction." So in this essay for the *Feminist Memoir Project*, I wrote about how I saw my life as contradictory because of being a child of privilege, and yet being able to use my privilege to get involved in social activism.

I hated Scarsdale. I did terribly at the high school, just terribly. I got Cs and Ds and my parents wanted to send me away to a fancy all-girls' school. I just raised such hell about it that they sent me to this progressive private school in New Hope, Pennsylvania.

WEIGAND: Can we back up just a little? I wanted to — can you talk a little about the composition of your family when you were born. Did you have siblings?

WINSLOW: Oh, I was the middle daughter. There were three daughters. My oldest sister, she was two years older than me. My younger is three years younger. And the composition of my family? My mother was, as I wrote in the *Feminist Memoir Project* and at her eulogy, a tireless civic activist. She was at one point the acting mayor of Scarsdale. She was the campaign manager for Ogden Reed — again, a moderate Republican. She served on every planning commission, every board meeting, she was the president of the Wellesley club in Westchester at one point. She went to Wellesley. She was the president of the League of Women Voters, she was the president of the town club. I mean, she was a tireless civic activist.

And at the time that she was the acting mayor of Scarsdale, my father was the chair of the school board. And so they were parents like that. I should say that my father was in the hosiery business and he invented Supp-Hose. I always joke that he did something wonderful for women, and for those of you who are too young to know what Supp-Hose was –

WEIGAND: I was going to ask.

WINSLOW: It was stylish support stockings. His mother, who was a librarian, was on her feet all the time. She had varicose veins and her legs get very tired. All the stockings that existed for women who worked on their feet looked like Ace bandages. So he developed a sheer support stocking. And later, when

I became a political activist and I was working with nurses or women who were on their feet, when I would mention Supp-Hose — I didn't say my father invented it but when I mentioned Supp-Hose, they would talk about how it was the greatest thing in the world. And my father became a political activist because of his three daughters and actually was on Nixon's enemies list, so we were very proud of him.

WEIGAND: And what were the gender dynamics of your family when you were a kid?

WINSLOW: Well, my mother was a traditional corporate wife. She did not work outside the home. She had wanted a career in the State Department — a professional career in politics — but she had made a choice. She made the choice to be within the limitations of, you know, middle-class white society. And to have the kind of marriage she wanted to have, she could not be full-time in politics because my father didn't care what she did during the day, as long as she was there at night for him. My mother was also a very good athlete. She was a competitive golfer. Her lowest handicap at one point was a three and she won, I think it was ten or 11 consecutive club championships. So, she was a really good golfer.

WEIGAND: So, do you remember what you thought when you were a kid about what it meant to be a woman versus –

WINSLOW: No. No, I wasn't aware. I know my mother was a role model for me. She seemed, at the time, very strong willed. She was beautiful. She was an athlete. She was the depiction of the perfect wife — you know, civic activist by day, wonderful loving wife in the evening. She wasn't the most nurturing mother and in fact, it wasn't until much, much later in life that sort of we developed a relationship where we could talk about issues. But no, the issue of — I mean, my father believed that a woman's role was to be like my mother, the corporate wife, and that was the most important thing.

WEIGAND: So, do you have any memory when you were a kid of what you thought your life might be like later, or what you were going to be when you grew up?

WINSLOW: I'm so boring. Ever since about the sixth grade, I just wanted to be a history teacher. I loved history. My parents would take us on trips to Gettysburg, to Washington, and to Monticello, and we went to Niagara Falls. I loved that sort of stuff. And then we played a game at the table called the presidents game, where my father would ask questions about which president did this and which president did that and then I would study up and I started asking the questions. So, I mean, I'm now a professor at Brooklyn College and I teach history teachers how to teach history because I'm in the school of education, and I'm also the head of the women's studies program, but I just wanted to be a history teacher.

WEIGAND: How interesting. And what was it like being in a family with three daughters?

WINSLOW: I wasn't conscious — I think my daughters are probably more conscious of it. I mean, we fought all the time, until I got to be about in the tenth or eleventh grade. My older and younger sister used to gang up on me, but that's the middle-child syndrome. But, you know, my father always loved the fact that he had three daughters. I later found out that he really wanted a son but after my mother had three kids, she said, "I'm not having any more." She didn't want to keep trying for the son and end up with eight daughters.

WEIGAND: Right. That's interesting. You were talking a minute ago about the civil rights movement –

WINSLOW: I was more aware of being privileged as opposed to gender.

WEIGAND: OK. And did you have thoughts about that?

WINSLOW: Oh, yeah, all the time.

WEIGAND: Why don't you talk about that?

WINSLOW: It was embarrassing being from Scarsdale. I remember there was a book that came out sometime when I was in high school about Scarsdale being coddled kids and the town of Scarsdale sort of was up in arms. They printed a button that said something like, "I'm not a coddled kid," or "I don't coddle my kids." I mean, it was the butt of jokes. There'd be movies, they'd be talking about — remember *Auntie Mame*? There was some line in *Auntie Mame* about Scarsdale. And I think it was a Frank Sinatra–Debbie Reynolds movie, some crack about Scarsdale — I mean, you couldn't live there and not be aware of that it was a different kind of community. 14:40

I was also very aware of anti-Semitism because we lived in the Jewish area of Scarsdale. The only way blacks could live there was if they lived in white peoples' homes and cleaned up after them. But there were Jewish areas of Scarsdale and Christian areas of Scarsdale, so that was also something about which I was very well aware of.

And then I went to a summer camp and part of me loved it because we had great trips. It was an all-girls camp with great outdoor activity, which I really liked. I had wonderful friendships with the girls. But it was all white and very Protestant. So, I mean, I was aware of the handful of Jewish girls at this camp. They were the ones who talked about being Jewish and how aware they were about it.

WEIGAND: So, did you — I mean, you said your father was Jewish and your mother wasn't and you went to the Congregational Church. So, where was your identity in all that? Did you think of yourself as Jewish?

WINSLOW: No. We never went to temple. My father wanted to be an American, and I think he and my grandfather felt being Jewish really was being an immigrant and really not being an American. So by marrying a Christian, you became more American. But what was funny is we went to the Congregational Church. I wonder why we didn't go to the Unitarian, but I think it was sort of the least offensive in terms of Christianity. I mean, even today, when I meet friends of my parents, they're sort of surprised that we weren't cultural Jews where on the high holy days, you just go to temple to be there. Uh-uh. We celebrated Easter. Now for a Jewish man to preside over Easter where you're eating lamb and the Easter eggs, that means you really — but he was a supporter of Israel and he was very philanthropic to Jewish causes. My mother became the biggest Zionist. We used to fight about Israel all the time, but I don't even see myself as having an ethnic identity.

WEIGAND: So what did you make of living in the Jewish section of Scarsdale?

WINSLOW: Well we — during the Jewish holidays, there were three of us who would be in school. It was just very bizarre, but I didn't think that way then. You know, looking back, I sort of wonder — I wonder why we didn't think that way, but we didn't.

WEIGAND: How about other political stuff that was going on at the time? I mean, were you cognizant of the cold war? 18:08

WINSLOW: My parents were political people. I heard them all the time. My mother used to go, "I wouldn't vote for McCarthy for dog catcher." I remember she had those expressions. I think my mother voted for Eisenhower both times, my father voted for Stevenson. I know my mother voted for Kennedy. I think Eisenhower was the last Republican she ever voted for.

When we went to Washington, D.C., we went on the tour of the FBI building. I think it was in 1956, like two years after they executed the Rosenbergs. I remember the FBI was just gloating about how they killed the Rosenbergs. In fact, they said they fried the Rosenbergs, and that started me on my path of being against capital punishment. It was so appalling. I just saw *Witness to an Execution* by Ivy Meeropol, about her grandparents. And it's still there in the Spy Museum, the big exhibit is about the Rosenbergs. It's just chilling. So, those sorts of things, I think, had an impact on me.

WEIGAND: How about role models? You said your mother was a role model for you. Were there others?

WINSLOW: I wasn't aware of it. I had a role model later on in Seattle, but my mother had to be my role model because my sisters, my two sisters, were all very active in different areas. My cousin was writing a letter for one of my daughters for college and wrote about how we come from a generation of very strong activist women, and I know my mother was. She's very good organizationally. I mean, I'm not athletic the way she was, but I am athletic, so, yeah, I think she was the role model.

WEIGAND: You mentioned in your essay in the *Feminist Memoir Project* book that she did something about voter registration in New York?

WINSLOW: Yes. She was active the League of Women Voters, and it's — god, it's so interesting, because when I was eulogizing her, I talked about how she campaigned for this thing in New York State called Permanent Personal Registration, and she was profiled in the *New Yorker* in an article entitled "They Darn Near Killed Luella." My mother's name was Luella. And I'm mentioning this and all of a sudden, here I am talking, this huge crowd at my mother's funeral and I go, "My goodness, I now know why I do suffrage history!" I talked about how in 1956 — it's what, 11 years after the end of the Second World War — in order to register to vote, you had to go every year to a police station to re-register. Now, you think of the number of immigrants you have — think about going to the police station as if you're a criminal. It's very scary and it's a way to keep people from voting. And so, my mother's involvement was a very important reform in terms of suffrage history. I mean, it was sort of like this revelation about myself. But it was a very, very important thing to do. Because now, you just register in New York and you don't have to register unless you move.

WEIGAND: Yeah, yes, that's sort of like the Motor Voter thing.

WINSLOW: Exactly. And you know, you think about what we learned in the 2000 election, about how difficult it is to vote. It was quite an important reform.

WEIGAND: So it sounds like even though she voted for Eisenhower and was a Republican, she had political empathy for "the people," or something.

WINSLOW: Yeah. She founded a Planned Parenthood office with my father. They used to joke, they believed in arms control and birth control. Remember, there was a moderate — remember the Republican Party wasn't always –

WEIGAND: It was a different organization than it is now.

WINSLOW: It wasn't always rightwing fascists. I mean, Rockefeller — even Goldwater seems moderate now when you compare it with what we've got. I mean, at one point, in 1960, when Nixon was running for president, the black community was divided over whether to vote for Nixon or Kennedy. Nobody can believe that these days, but the Republican Party

had a better record on race than the Democrats, because the Democrats controlled the white South, so –

WEIGAND: Why don't we go back now to where I cut you off before, talking about your high school years. You talked about how you hated Scarsdale and you took these unpopular positions and it sounds like — I was going to ask you what made you a nonconformist and –

WINSLOW: Well, I don't know if I was a nonconformist (laughs).

WEIGAND: Yeah, you're right, but what about the contradictory nature of your –

WINSLOW: I think I was a mass of contradiction. I was a bleached-blond cheerleader with the nickname of Bubbles who went on civil rights demonstrations. You can't get anything more contradictory than that. And at my fortieth reunion, I talked about how I don't even regret being a cheerleader because I'm always good on demonstrations. I know how to get the crowds going and I tell my women's studies students that. So, I mean, I think maybe being a nonconformist or what have you had to do with the fact that on the one hand, I wanted to be popular, but I wasn't. I wanted to be stereotypically attractive. I wanted a boyfriend. I wanted to do well in school.

But on the other hand, there was something seething in me, and when I went away to this private school, I'd come back from a trip to Europe and I got into fights. I mean, think of it: I got into fights with these kids about free love! They thought it was shocking. I didn't believe in marriage. In high school, all you want to do is sleep around. You know, I mean, your hormones are raging. They were shocked at me for that. I was so disliked that the boys named the football dummy, the tackling dummy, after me. Think about that in terms of sexual abuse and violence against women.

And I loved the school I was at, and I struggled with it, but it helped make me whatever I am today, if that's good, bad, or indifferent. But I went back to my school to talk about women's issues. They always invite me to speak. And at one point the new headmaster, who was two years younger than me, and had heard about me. At one point, without thinking, he said, "Barbara, you're really nice." And I looked at him and he said, "You know, the tackling dummy was named after you." And it was like, it brought back to me how disliked I was. And his wife, you could just see she was kicking him under the table. And he all of a sudden had this stricken look — because I know I had a stricken look for a moment — that this was something. You know, the boys did not like me, and one time we had this co-ed hockey game and the boys came after me with the hockey sticks and I ended up smacking them, I mean, really fighting back.

So I think part of me, the combativeness in me, was sort of part of me struggling to figure out who I wanted to be and what I was going to be. So Solebury was very nonconformist. I was at the U.N. demonstrating against the United States in the Cuban Missile Crisis. I mean, we all thought we

were going be blown up. And so I got involved in the peace movement through that. And at my school, you know, as I wrote in the *Feminist Memoir Project*, was all sex, drugs, and rock and roll. And New Hope was a place where there was a lot of dope. There were a lot of musicians, there was a lot going on. I got interested in poetry and all sorts of stuff like that. So there was this sort of turmoil and I think I responded in a more confrontational way than perhaps I would now.

WEIGAND: So, when was it in your life that you started thinking about women's oppression? In college? I mean, you went on to Antioch from there. 27:20

WINSLOW: Well, I'll say one thing just about high school. It wasn't expressed but I really was aware of the double standard. I mean, I had girlfriends who got abortions. I was very well aware of girls being [defined as] sluts and boys not being. I thought there was nothing wrong with just sleeping with boys as much as you wanted to, but I knew they would view you as a slut. Yet at the same time there was something in me that said, "This is so stupid. It's just as much fun for me." And I remember we had a health teacher who actually said at our school that girls could not experience sexual pleasure the way boys could. I mean, the kind of crap you got, it was really, really terrible. But I was becoming aware of that stuff then.

And then I went to Antioch. That was the only school I wanted to go to, and I got in. And what's funny is that Antioch in the 1960s was this very famous radical school and, yet, when it came to women, it was as retrograde as any other place, with probably the exception of women's colleges. Probably the only places that were not as retrograde were Wellesley, Smith, Mount Holyoke, those kinds of schools. But it was — on women, Antioch was pretty retrograde.

WEIGAND: Can you talk about what that atmosphere was like and –

WINSLOW: Well, it's not like I remember. It's just I remember, you know, all the professors were men. I had this history professor who prided himself on never giving women A's. I think, if I'm not mistaken, I was the second woman who ever got an A from him. And I ran into him at a meeting of the American Historical Association, I think about three years before he died, and of course, he didn't remember me.

Oh, I'll tell you the story about how retrograde it was. He didn't remember me. Nobody remembers me there. And I'm now on the board of trustees at the college. I'm actually the vice chair. I say, "I'd love to be known as the chair of vice." And when I first got on the board, you know, they had a little cocktail party for all of us, and I went. There were two board members who had been there when I was there and one of them was this guy who had made a huge sustained pass at me when I first got there. I mean, a huge sustained pass. And I went up to him and I said, "Hi, do you remember me? Blah-blah." He didn't remember me, and the only way he remembered me was when I said who my boyfriend was. And that is

true of everybody I have met who was in my class, is that I was not remembered until I said who my boyfriend was. I think it's the way in which women were thought of, as who your partner was, unless you were somebody really extraordinary like a Joanie Rabinowitz, then you'd know who Joanie was. But I think with a lot of the women, the girls, it was who your boyfriend was, even at a place like Antioch.

WEIGAND: Did you have any of the infamous radical professors there? I can't think of who they are, specifically, but I know a lot of people who had trouble elsewhere, like in the '50s, came to Antioch.

WINSLOW: Oh, yeah, I mean, the professor who had the greatest impact on me was Louie Filler. Now, he wasn't particularly radical. He was very liberal. As a professor, I think that he was a bit of a bully, teacher-centered — Louis Filler centered — but he was really brilliant. Oliver Loud counseled students about draft resistance. Yes, I mean, the faculty were great, but if we talk about gender, it was still quite traditional. There wasn't a challenge to gender roles yet. When it happened, it happened there.

WEIGAND: So you went there knowing you were going to major in history?

WINSLOW: Yeah. And then I went to England for a year. I met Cal Winslow and — I laugh — I married my childhood sweetheart. And actually he was very working class. His parents divorced and his mother basically raised the kids, and he was very good on the issue of women. And I remember, I was taking a course in England and we wrote every day — two, three times a day, even, sometimes — and I'd ask him what is this thing on the women question. He would write back and explain it in very traditional, sort of orthodox terms. We're talking about 1966 and 1967. No, we're talking about 1965 and 1966, so I started thinking about it and I — oh, I remember one other thing. Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* came out in 1963 and I read it that summer and I knew Betty Friedan was writing about my mother. She really wasn't, but that book resonated with me in '63 because she was writing about my mother. I do remember that, very, very vividly.

WEIGAND: So you didn't think about it, how it applied to you at all?

WINSLOW: No, because she wasn't writing about — I wasn't a suburban housewife. But my mother was and that's who she was writing about. And Friedan was not writing about younger women.

WEIGAND: So you met Cal Winslow at Antioch?

WINSLOW: Yeah. He was also my role model.

WEIGAND: And a history major.

WINSLOW: Uh-hm. And he had just come back from England and he was, you know, very radical, too. So I was in a circle of history people, history folk. We were all quite radical. We were all opposed to the [Vietnam] war and opposed to racism. There was one exception. I think there was one Republican the whole time I was at the school.

WEIGAND: And I've read some allusions to Yellow Springs as being kind of an alternative community even when –

WINSLOW: When I was there in the '60s, we had a black mayor. So, now remember, I was there from '63 to '67 — that's before hippies. And if you ever saw the Antioch pictures from that era, I mean, the girls are wearing skirts and the boys — you know, it's not the way that kids dress today. The town was half black. One of the most popular bars was a bar called Coms, which was owned by this black couple. There were two historic black colleges, Central State and Wilberforce, that were right nearby and we would go on demonstrations with them about civil rights. The summer of '64 was Mississippi Freedom Summer and they did the training at Oxford University. We went there. I mean, I met, very briefly, Mickey Schwerner. And it's funny, Mickey's brother, Steve, was a student at Antioch and he's now a professor there.

So, Joanie Rabinowitz had gone down South, so there was a real connection between the college and the civil rights movement. Coretta Scott King, of course, and Eleanor Holmes Norton are two of our better-known graduates, and King spoke at graduation in 1965. The Klan burned crosses. So there was sort of this real sense of mission, of what we were supposed to be doing, of what we did at the college. I wanted to go South, but you had to have parental permission if you were under 21 and I wasn't 21, so I couldn't go. I had huge fights with my parents about it but they were not gonna let me go, and I guess I just didn't feel I could do it. And the civil rights movement workers said, No, you can't do it.

WEIGAND: Yeah, I guess that's sort of in keeping with what I've read about Yellow Springs. I seem to remember something, somewhere, that I've read about an interracial couple going to live there because it was a place where you could safely be an interracial couple.

WINSLOW: Oh, yeah, oh yeah.

WEIGAND: But the civil rights movement really was right there.

WINSLOW: Right. But southwest Ohio, southern Ohio, was the South.

WEIGAND: It still is.

WINSLOW: It still is, particularly in Cincinnati. But in those days a lot of kids, especially the boys, would hitchhike out West. I think it was Route 40 that took you through southern Indiana, and if somebody picked you up, you would not take that car unless they took you all the way across Indiana, because that was such big Klan country.

WEIGAND: So you must have gone to England on a junior year abroad kind of thing?

WINSLOW: It was the equivalent. It was 1966, January of 1966. I got married in June '67, and I think 1966–67 was a year when the world really changed — American politics really changed. Cal and I really didn't want to get married, but we knew if we lived together it would cause such hassle with both sets of parents. We didn't want to have this kind of fighting and so we got married. And what's very interesting is that if we had been able to wait two years without living together — by 1968 or '69, you could live with somebody. It was no big deal. It was sort of how things changed that quickly. But we wanted to have harmony with our families, so that I would stop fighting so much, for the most part, with my parents. 36:45

And so, we got married in June '67 and then we drove out to Seattle, Washington. Of course, in those days, I dropped out of Antioch because you followed your husband, you know. And he had a big National Defense Education grant. And we go out to the University of Washington and really, the women's movement begins in Seattle. I mean, we formed one of the first groups in the fall of 1967. I wrote about this in the *Feminist Memoir Project* — because I was very married to Cal. I was so — I was madly, madly in love with him, and we were both very, very much in love and a really very close, tight-knit couple. And he was the chair of the Committee to End the War in Vietnam and he was a big shot, handsome, charismatic — all this sort of stuff.

And I remember, I was at a party and these two guys, and I write about it, Ed Mormon came up to me and said, "Why don't you ever speak in the meeting?" And Ed Mormon was around this political group called Progressive Labor. He said, "You should speak." And I really did, I said, "Anything I would want to say, Cal could say but only better." And it was sort of like (laughs), I look back and you have to laugh. And then, in October, this woman, Susan Stern, came to me and said, "There's gonna be a meeting." And this other woman, Judith Shapiro, "There's gonna be this meeting to discuss women." And it was going to be at Susan Stern's house. No one took minutes or anything like that. I sort of — it seemed to me, like, 30, 35 women. It was the only political meeting I'd been to without Cal, so I didn't say a word. And Seattle Radical Women was formed. It was one of the first groups formed.

WEIGAND: Nationally speaking, or in Seattle?

WINSLOW: One of the groups formed nationally. I mean, this woman, Susan Stern, had gone to the National Council for New Politics in the summer of 1967

and it was at that meeting where women formed the Women's Caucus. Susan and Judith Shapiro and Robbie Stern, Dan Smith, came back and reported on this conference. They didn't mention the Women's Caucus, so we didn't know anything about it, but we formed this women's group.

I wrote about this all in the Feminist Memoir project but two other things were going on. One was that — I think it was because I was interested in *The Feminine Mystique* — in the fall of '67, the SDS chapter invited this woman, Clara Fraser, to speak and it was on Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*. And Clara Fraser was an old-time Trotskyist. I say old — she must have been 40-something, and she was my second real role model.

But Clara was very interesting. She grew up the daughter of working-class immigrants in LA. I've written about it — I can't remember offhand, but I can correct it for the accuracy. I think one of her parents was an anarchist. I don't know if one joined the Communist Party. But she joined the Trotskyist movement, the youth Trotskyist group, and then was a member of the Socialist Workers Party. She moved up to Seattle and she was active in the Boeing strike, which took place in the big strike wave after the end of the war, and she worked at Boeing and she helped organize the Women's Auxiliary Brigade — you know, when they got the injunction against the strikers, she organized the wives to picket with their kids and so forth. She got blacklisted in Seattle, I think.

She was on the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. She was married to a guy named Richard Kirk, and either he was or she was, but this chapter of the Seattle Socialist Workers Party believed in feminism. You know, a lot of Marxist groups support equality for women but don't support feminism. And this was a group that understood. It was called the woman question in those days. And they leave the Socialist Workers Party, if I'm not mistaken, in 1966, because it's so bad on women. They don't believe they can convince the national leadership of the importance of women. And they form a group called the Freedom Socialists Party. And this is a group that is different from the Socialist Workers Party in that they see the woman question as central. Two, they thought China was Socialist as opposed to the — it's all this complicated Trotskyist stuff. Is it a deformed or deranged workers state, or what have you — it was those sorts of questions. But they were more sympathetic to China than the American Socialist Workers Party.

But they're isolated. They're a small group. And you're having the beginning of the youth movement. And so, they teach a class at the Free University — this woman Clara Fraser, and Gloria Martin — on women in the United States, or the role of women. And Susan Stern, who's your classic New Left woman — she's white and middle class — came to Seattle from Syracuse. She takes the class. A woman named Judith Shapiro, who was actually a red-diaper baby, but at that time she was a professor of economics. She was one of these really bright young women. She graduated from high school at 16, got her Ph.D. at 21, comes to the university to teach economics when she's, like, 23.

What made this meeting so important, and I am arguing this in this book if I ever get time off to write it, is that people sort of — in Seattle, the old left and the new left came together to form the Women's Liberation Movement in 1967. You don't have the National Organization for Women coming to Seattle until 1970. The left played a very significant role, and in this case, in Seattle, it was the Trotskyist left. The Communist Party didn't come near to having anything to do with feminism until really 1972 or '73.

So I was at this meeting and I never said a word. You know, I didn't know what to make of it. But Clara gave this talk on the woman question and I remember, I went and I raised my hand, showing off that I knew my Marxism and I talked about how Friedan didn't deal with class and she was just talking about middle-class people. And Clara, in her polemical way, pointed out that I did not understand the dynamic, blah, blah, blah. And probably Clara was more right than I was, but maybe she wasn't. But I really loved that talk. And so, something in me really clicked.

And then, two things happened to me in late fall of '67. I had a lump in my breast. We go to the doctor and the doctor says, "What we're gonna do is you're gonna have a biopsy. And if the biopsy is fine, you're fine. If it's malignant, what we do is we take everything out. And we do it right then and there." And so, I'm there with my husband and ask, "Why do you have to do it?" And the doctor said, "Well, you know, we don't want to sew you back up and then you'll sit and think and so forth." I wrote this all in my book. I said, given we were trained never to question doctors, and I'm sort of a no-nonsense type person, it makes sense. Why go into surgery twice, you know.

And then he gave the form to my husband. He was surprised, I was surprised. I said, "Why does he get it?" And the doctor said, "Because women are too irrationally and emotionally attached to their breasts. They cannot make an informed decision." And, it's like, that did it for me. I was outraged. But that was actually the law. I mean, within a year, it changed. But, you know, we could make all sorts of jokes about how irrationally men are attached to you know what. But this idea that a married woman couldn't sign for a procedure — I tell my radiologist, who's 20 years younger than me, and the women, when I do my regular mammograms, and they cannot believe a world like that existed. But that was the way it happened.

The other thing that happened to me and I think that was in the spring, like, January-February of 1968, I was going to be graduating with a BA in '68. I wanted to go to graduate school, so I went into the graduate office to ask about applying for an NDEA. Cal had one then. In those days, all you young people who are listening to this tape, the Defense Department funded education, massively. And the National Defense Education Act grant gave you money. Cal had a four-year grant. The first year it was $5000 plus tuition and books. The second year it was $7000, the third was $9000 and the last was $11,000 and it included when we went to England. So he was a very well-off scholar. They were very, very prestigious. You

know, in the good old days when government actually believed that the best defense was education. Now, of course, things are different.

Anyway, I was told they weren't going to give money to women because they wanted to give money to men because of the draft. And once again, here you're faced with this dilemma. I'm against the war, I'm against the draft, I don't want men to be drafted but yet, at the same time, I can't get a prestigious award because they're privileging men over women. And again, I'm repeating — I said this in my book, I said, you look back and you think why didn't you beat up your doctor or tear up the graduate office and it was because there was no movement to put this in a context, nothing to do. But I know these two events would've pushed me in the direction.

You know, nothing really happened with the Seattle Radical Women except they had meetings about theory and, of course, the Trotskyists who dominated the group had the idea that if you come up with the theory and the program — I think what happened is what happens in history.

It was mid-April and there was going to be a week of antiwar activities. It was, you know very exciting times. The Columbia strike was going on and students were protesting all over the country, if not the world. So, it was a month before the May events and Czechoslovakia and Mexico and all this. I'm already on some sort of academic probation, or something, because we spoke into loudspeakers at an antiwar protest and we weren't supposed to. It was very heady times. It was just great times to be in college.

We find out that a Playboy bunny is coming to speak at the University of Washington. And the University of Washington had this thing called Men's Day and Women's Day, organized by the fraternities and the sororities. And for Women's Day, they invited the wife of the governor — and that's how it was described, the wife of the governor — who presided over a sorority tea. That is all she did. But for Men's Day, in April of 1968, they invited a Playboy bunny who was first going to speak to a group of women, and then to a group of men in the ballroom. I wrote this in the *Feminist Memoir Project* and it had to be edited out, but she spoke to men in the *ball*room and I wrote, "No pun intended but enjoyed." And they took it out. I was very upset about that. And then there was going to be a show of antique cars and a Phil Ochs concert.

So, Barbara Arnold and Susan Stern got us all together and we had a meeting. We said, We have to protest this. And they were designing this protest where they were going to read sections which they thought were appropriate from the Book of Common Prayer. They were going to rush the stage with paper bags over their heads and chant that this Playboy bunny was an empty vessel. I still just didn't speak in public, but I thought it was a stupid protest. I just didn't get it. But I went to the meeting and I sat on the aisle because I at least wanted to be there for them. And, I mean, my sense of why it was going to be a disaster was right. They get up on the stage, they have these paper bags over their heads, you can't hear what

they're saying, nobody could figure out what's going on. And then, they're being dragged out and beaten up.

And you're talking about someone who's never spoken publicly in her life. Someone, I don't know who, said, "What made you do it?" I don't know, and I remember I was wearing a green dress, a green miniskirted dress. I mean, and I wore them real short. I was very skinny. And I got up on the stage and I felt I just had to explain to the audience what was going on. I started talking, and I didn't know what I was talking about, in a sense. I mean, what did I know about women's liberation? But it was unbelievable. Nobody could believe what we were doing. I was trying to explain that women were tired of being treated like sex objects. We wanted to be people. And here I am with a shorter skirt than the Playboy bunny and of course, I'm what? It's 1968, I'm 23 and, I mean, all women are beautiful but when you're 23 and you're in a short skirt and you're what have you, you know, people wonder, What does she mean? She doesn't want to be treated like a sex object? People couldn't understand it.

At one point — the Playboy bunny's name was Reagan Wilson — she goes, "I do my bit to support the boys, the troops. I send them pictures of myself." Things were crazy. So I'm dragged off the stage and we're arguing and arguing. And what I never, to this day, could figure out was why women would go and watch this. But the women were screaming, I should get lost, I should get laid, I should find a husband, you know. I mean, I just couldn't believe what I was hearing. We were being unladylike.

And I'd been taking this course on English history and I had also just read George Dangerfield's *The Strange Death of Liberal England* and he has this chapter on the Pankhursts and, at the time, it was the most wonderful chapter in any history I'd read. Now that I'm a suffrage historian I can talk about all the problems with Dangerfield. But I talked about how the women broke all the windows in the West End of London and blah, blah, blah.

Afterwards we were dragged in front of the dean of students and we were told we were going to be kicked out, and I was introduced to the dean. Susan Stern and I were both dragged in front of the dean and I was introduced as Mrs. Cal Winslow. I kid you not, I stomped my foot and I go, "I'm not Mrs. Anybody. I'm Barbara Winslow." And it turned out it would be hard to kick us out because we were the ones who'd been beaten up. One girl actually was bitten and so forth. We really didn't do anything that bad.

But I found a voice. I mean, that was the moment when I found a voice. And the whole thing was a hoot. At one point, the word had gotten out that we had been roughed up. So, in leading the charge with Judith Shapiro and the guys from SDS there was a guy in our SDS chapter who was a professional football player. He was a second string guard with the St. Louis Cardinals and he's a big, extraordinarily handsome, really nice man, really nice man. And he had a good friend who was also a big guy, and these guys come in going, WHO HIT A WOMAN? WHO HIT A

WOMAN? And Judith Shapiro's going, "No, it's not who hit a woman, it's who hit a comrade?" I mean, it was just these wonderful moments.

But with me, what happened was I ended up being the spokesperson. I'm on the front page of the *University of Washington Daily*, and I have a copy, I'll show you. They have a picture of me with the Playboy bunny with me with the shorter skirt and the headline was, um, "Playmate Meets Radical Women." I mean, it was a perfect, perfect headline. The front-page headline in the *Seattle* — whether it was the *PI* or the *Times*, I can't remember — was, "Coeds Gulp, Girls Sulk at 38-24-36." But because I had been a leader of it, people came to me. And it really was from then on, I found my voice. That was April. Memorial Day is we had our second public protest.

WEIGAND: Actually, this tape is going to run out.

WINSLOW: OK. So you can start barking, Chloe.

END DVD 1

DVD 2

WINSLOW: So, we were moving from April to Memorial Day and, because of the Playboy bunny demonstration, we made it big time. Then we started moving. Memorial Day, we had a demonstration in downtown Seattle, near where the World's Fair had been. We were demonstrating our support for our sisters in the National Liberation Front. We wore black pajamas. We had Vietnamese hats, and we were handing out leaflets saying we supported our sisters of the National Liberation Front. Now, talk about being gutsy. Can you imagine women doing a demonstration in defense of either their Palestinian or their Afghanistani or their Iraqi sisters? It just isn't being done. So, I mean, it was a different period, there's no question about it. But it still was very, very gutsy.

And then that summer, we had a summer class on women in American society and I did the one on women in the labor union movement, and that's when I read Eleanor Flexner and I read Philip Foner. He did a history of the American worker and he had sections on black workers and on women workers. And that was, sort of, in a sense the first phase of how people were looking at women's history. I called it "inclusionary," sort of. Everything was "and women." As a result of these, at this summer school, real differences emerged between the people from Radical Women and the new left women.

The women from the Freedom Socialist Party really wanted to create what we in old-left terminology would call a front group. That is, the Freedom Socialist Party would be the Trotskyist group and then they would create and control this women's group which would help them bring people into the Trotskyist group. And we didn't understand, or at least, I certainly didn't, but they wanted to create this women's group that would be democratic centralists. My friend Judith Shapiro explained all of this to me and it seemed ridiculous and so we all broke away and formed Women's Liberation Seattle, which was much more like the women's liberation groups that were emerging at the time.

By the way, I have to just step back a second on the Playboy bunny story. When we were organizing for the Playboy bunny demonstration, we had read about the Columbia strike and about how — I'm pretty sure it was the *New York Times* — at one point, the men had told the women to make the spaghetti, and we had read that the women at Columbia said, Liberated women are not cooks. You know, we were hearing this stuff all across the country.

Um, so Women's Liberation Seattle gets formed, and Radical Women, basically from that point on, really is a women's group that is really a Trotskyist women's group. And it still exists today. It plays a very significant role in a number of things; it continues to do that.

So I joined Women's Liberation Seattle. Now, we were a very complicated group. We were not an independent group yet. What we were, we were both a committee of SDS and of this radical electoral group called the Peace and Freedom Party. And so we were the Women's

Liberation Committee of SDS and Peace and Freedom, so we went WLS/PFP/SDS. Talk about alphabet soup. And in the summer of '68, you have this very, you know, exciting summer. You have May '68, you have Czechoslovakia, you have Mexico City, and Peace and Freedom is this radical alternative. Oh, and in '68, King gets shot, Kennedy gets shot. I mean, it's just the world is turning upside down. We have this demonstration against Humphrey, and I'm bringing in the equipment, and I got this dress from the Salvation Army. It was red, white and blue, and it was a pregnancy dress, a maternity dress, and I'm carrying the equipment in and I'm sure we're not fooling the cops.

At this Humphrey rally, we made so much noise and we just drove the Democrats nuts and finally they called the cops to throw us out. This is after Chicago, by the way. And the first person they throw out is Bob Apple of the *New York Times*, Robert Apple. And the second person they throw out on top of him is me. Bob Apple picks me up and goes, "Are you all right." And I go, "Yes, I'm a liberated woman." It makes the front page of the *New York Times*. And this is how my parents found out about the women's movement. All their friends call and said, "Barbara, blah blah blah."

And then, our Women's Liberation Committee met and we actually played a very important role in SDS and the Peace and Freedom Party. We insisted that women chair all the meetings. We insisted that a woman be called on after each man. I mean, it sounds sort of forced today, but we're talking about a world where women were not used to speaking. So we really did insist upon a lot of this sort of stuff. And two things that were sort of fun and important are, we found out — we hadn't done anything on our own, and we found out that there was this organization called Fascinating Womanhood, which was very much supported by the Mormon Church, and they were going to have a meeting, and it was all about — it was a precursor of Maribel Morgan's stuff about, you know, wrapping yourself in cellophane and covering yourself with whipped cream, but it was in that vein. It was sort of like how to just be totally sexy and please your man. So we contacted the press, and only women in the press, and we showed up to do guerilla theater and we went in to talk about it. And Joan Geiger wrote about it. She was totally sympathetic to us but, you know, you have to do both sides. So that brought more people around.

And then when the fall started, along with all the stuff around the campaign, the leading antiwar group, which was called the Student Mobilization Committee — which was actually run by another Trotskyist group called the Young Socialist Alliance — announced that they were going to send women into the dance halls to dance with GIs against the war. And we called this huge meeting. There were about 200, 300 of us — SDS, Peace and Freedom, SWP — it was the most interesting discussion about the role of women in the antiwar movement, GIs, and so forth. We didn't expect to win, but we won the vote saying that women would only be viewed as sex objects if they went into the dance halls; they should find other ways to reach antiwar GIs. I believe that was the genesis of our

setting up a GI coffee house. I worked with GIs, and a lot of us in the Women Liberation movement did, and we were really good on the woman question.

There also was a group called Draft Resistance Seattle, and people may remember that Joan Baez had coined a slogan, "Girls say yes to boys who say no," and it never was challenged until much later. But our local chapter challenged it. And it was due to the women in this group called the Freedom Socialist Party. They opposed it, they wrote articles and so you had a draft resistance group that really was not like a lot of the other draft resistance groups. They had a picnic in July 1968 and I was invited to be the Women's Liberation speaker. And I think it's the first time there was a Women's Liberation speaker at a draft resistance meeting. I actually have the speech I gave. I am such a pack rat, I actually saved it. And so, I mean, I was saying how I became the spokesperson. I have a picture of me speaking and all that.

And so events unfold faster and faster, and by after the election, we read a very obscure article about what was happening in Washington state vis-à-vis abortion. Can you stop this? I've got to let the dog out.

WINSLOW: Everything's going on.

WEIGAND: I think you were just starting to talk about after the election in '68?

WINSLOW: Right. Two things happened. The Peace and Freedom Party put out a newsletter called the *Western Front* newspaper, and I was the Women's Liberation editor. Then, in January of '69, we found out that there was going to be a discussion in the legislature regarding liberalizing the abortion laws. And to be very honest, Radical Women, Clara Fraser found out about it. And it's a great story, because Clara worked for SOIC — Seattle Opportunities Incorporated, or something or other. And it was a Great Society program designed to educate poor and working poor folks. She read this professional group that was trying to liberalize the abortion laws and she sent a proposal to her boss. She really wrote this brilliant proposal about how the liberalization of abortion will enable women to go back to school, be in the paid labor force, and so forth. And she got money for buses and picket signs, and she brought all these African American women to Olympia to demonstrate in favor of abortion reform. 09:40

I remember I went because I was going to cover the first set of hearings. Well, I will tell you, these legislators in Olympia — if you think legislators in Albany are bad, or, you know, sort of provincial legislators, that's nothing. I mean, Olympia, east of the mountains — well, I shouldn't be such a snob. But anyway, they had never seen so many black people together and it was just, it was like the great unwashed had shown up, and they completely freaked out. But it got abortion on the front page. And I think, in my book, I write, they got it off the obituary page. They used to print abortions in the obituaries. So it got on the front page as a political issue.

And then they organized another rally, and we actually got 1500 people to Olympia. And, you know, we're these new left women. We have no fear. It's not the way it is today where people are like, Oh, we've got to be nice to these legislators. I mean, *I* can't lobby because I can't be nice to these people. We basically sat in their offices and they were so freaked out. I look back and I know all the scholarship, I know, they were so terrified that these young, good-looking, aggressive, what have you, miniskirted, et cetera women were in their offices and wouldn't take anything from them. We got that bill that was being sort of filibustered in committee out on the floor.

And then, Clara admits that the Radical Women stopped doing anything, and we at Women's Liberation Seattle started taking it up. We had set up an abortion subcommittee and we started going to the larger meetings, and we made the argument that we should have a referendum, as opposed to doing it, you know, behind the scenes. And part of it was guts on our part, that is, and the fearlessness. We just thought, Of course it's gonna pay off for us, of course we can convince people. And part of it was pure political naiveté. But we actually got a referendum, and Washington State is the only state, the only place in the world, where there was a popular referendum on abortion, and it passed four to one.

And I believe the great achievement of the Radical Women's Liberation movement in Washington State was the campaign to liberalize abortion because not only did we have the most liberal bill, but out of it came a series of feminist health clinics providing information and services regarding abortion. When people write about the women's liberation movement now, there's always the fighting, the sectarianism, but it was — this thing was a great, great accomplishment because our — the legislation we got passed, the referendum we passed resulted in saving women's lives, improving women's health, expanding women's health, educating women, mobilizing women and so forth. And, I mean, I remember, I would be invited to speak to the Seattle Symphony about it. We even got invited by the American Legion. And in those days everybody was for a woman's right to choose. It was so much more radical. It was abortion on demand.

I will never forget, on Halloween, it was the day of the big antiwar march — no, no, it wasn't the antiwar march, it was the day before election day, or it was the Saturday before election day and the anti-abortion movement, which was called the Voice of the Unborn — it was before the antiabortionists knew how to do good press. Their slogan was Let Him Live and they had a sign with a hand with a fetus in the hand and it would say, Let Him Live. A group of women would climb up to these billboards and cross out the Him and write in Her. And those ads were so awful. They sort of convinced people to be on our side.

So the Voice of the Unborn has a rally and we bring all the various women's groups. By now, in Seattle, there are bunch of women's groups. This is now the fall of 1970. We all meet and this group called Fanshen shows up as witches and it's wonderful. And at one point, the anti-

abortionists, the Voice of the Unborn, are singing, "He's got the Whole World in His Hands," and we would shout back, That's the problem. They had terrible signs. Their signs said, Kill the Bill, and the biggest word was Kill. So you see these people marching up this hill in Seattle with signs going, Kill, kill, kill. I mean, they learned about publicity. And I remember Clara Fraser and I got cornered by a bunch of them, and they started hitting us and beating up with their picket signs. I mean, we were barely rescued.

And the other thing that happened in the referendum, which was very important, was there were two black Muslim groups and two black newspapers. And when I did my research on the referendum, what is interesting is, Planned Parenthood, who we in the radical women's movement, you know, derided, was clearly far more racially integrated than we were, had more African American spokespeople and you know, they had a black doctor who spoke for them. But it's at a time of the height of the black nationalist movement, and on this black radio station, they had people from the Nation of Islam and other black nationalists talking about abortion being genocide. There was no voice from the anti-abortion movement, no black voice in the anti-abortion movement challenging it.

This woman named Jill Severn, who was in Radical Women — a really gutsy woman, I really respected her so much — she went on the radio and debated black nationalists, explaining why abortion was not genocide. And for whatever my criticisms were about the sectarianism of the Seattle Radical Women, they were the only group on the left that had the guts to challenge the male chauvinism of the Panthers, you know, all the BS, the macho BS of the nationalist movement and the reactionary aspects of the Nation of Islam — the only group. And credit should be given her and credit is deserved. So, that was the great achievement.

18:50

Now, since we're talking about it, in the fall of 1969, I go to England to study, my husband and I. I got involved in English women's movement, and one of my closest friends was Sheila Rowbotham, who was, of course, the foremother of the new women's history. I was I was studying with E[dward] P. Thompson and Sheila was a good friend of Edward's, and so she would come up. We were studying at the University of Warwick in Coventry and so we met and we're still very good friends. And in the fall of 1969, we formed this group, Coventry Women's Liberation, and it was made up of student women at the University of Warwick. I was in an MA group studying U.S.-British labor history and one of the members of our MA group was this guy named Chris Ryan, and his wife was Hugh Scanlon's daughter. Hugh Scanlon was the president of the Engineers Union, the equivalent of the Automobile Workers Union. It's like marrying Walter Reuther's daughter. They lived in this working-class council estate called Hillfields. She had all these working-class women about. And what was really so interesting, especially for us middle-class women, is we wanted to meet in Hillfields, where the workers were. These working-class women, they wanted to meet at the University. They wanted

to date college boys. We were all in our blue jeans; these women came dressed up. And it was a real lesson in terms of class and expectations and so forth. They thought, Why would we want to meet in this ugly industrial council estate when we could meet at the university and get away from it all? It was so interesting.

And we went down and we were on the demonstration against the Miss World Contest. It was the first time we had the demonstration against the Miss World Contest. And the London women were sort of like, Look at these women from the North coming down. Now, in England, the North is viewed as like these hairy-chested, sort of straight out of Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*, or something like that. And of course, we just thought, What on earth? This is so stupid.

What also happened at Warwick was that Germaine Greer was a professor there, and she was our neighbor, so she spoke for us. She never was interested in joining a group. She was really very much, you know, an individual. But it was like, here you are, hanging out with Sheila Rowbotham and then Germaine Greer. It was the time Germaine's book came out [*The Female Eunuch*], so it was very exciting.

Late that fall there was a conference at Ruskin, which is part of Oxford, but Ruskin is the trade union college, which is not part of Oxbridge but it's in Oxford. There was a labor history/social history meeting, and Sheila had said, "Let's have a women's meeting." So we were all meeting in a dorm room and they were talking about having a meeting and Sheila suggested having a meeting on women's history and I said, "No, let's have a women's liberation meeting." And so we had this — we organized this meeting at Ruskin in March, because it was close to March International Women's Day and, you know, we sort of expected maybe a hundred women. It's sort of like the Seneca Falls story and so forth — a thousand showed up. And in fact, it was so big that we had to move from Ruskin to Oxford and we had the meeting in the Oxford Union.

Now, we're talking about 1970. Women were never in the Oxford Union. We weren't allowed in the Oxford Union. And we just took it over. And when you go into the Oxford Union, there are all these busts of famous men, so we put mop things over them. And then, I'd been to both the tenth and twentieth anniversary of the Ruskin conference, and I remember a whole bunch of women wrote signs that said, "Down with Penile Servitude." And I thought it was great, but people said that the cleaning women had to clean it up and they didn't like it. And I think as you get older, you get a different sensibility.

But the Oxford conference is sort of — it's the equivalent of the Seneca Falls convention for the women's movement in England. And it also made the front page of the *New York Times*. And it was very, very exciting. It also was part of the height of the student movement in England. There were sit-ins when I was at Warwick, and our school started the sit-ins. We discovered that the university was spying on the left and so we all were demonstrating and sitting in. So it was very exciting

and just as a little aside, folks, we were all in Oxford raising hell at the same time that a certain man who ended up being president of the United States was at Oxford. And we all knew about this guy. He was sort of known, but we had total disdain for him because he was clearly in the Democratic Party and, you know, we were not interested. He didn't go on any of the Panther demonstrations, which we did, and, you know, probably he would have loved the Oxford women's conference to look for women. You know, I don't think that was the purpose of that.

But what is interesting about that conference — you know there's been such an attack on the radical women's movement. People say we hated children, we hated mothers, we hated housewives, you know, we hated absolutely everybody. At that conference, the theme of the conference was "how to create a society that could liberate men from the strictures of sexism." We had this — in England it's called the crèche. We had sort of child care provided, and when I took my kids to the tenth anniversary of Ruskin — it'd be 1980, maybe it was the fifteenth. It was 1985, I think. Or maybe it was 1990. Whatever it was, they showed video clips, and, I'll tell you, it was very strange, because first of all, the style in 1970 is that you all went to thrift shops and bought fur coats. And we all smoked. So my daughters get to see their mother in a raccoon coat smoking, two really quite shocking images. And then you see all the men in the crèche taking care of the children, but they're also smoking. I mean, it was just, you know, a different world.

But I stayed active in the women's movement, and it was in England that I started my research on Sylvia Pankhurst. I eventually wrote a book on Sylvia. But working in that area and being an activist helped inform my research and I actually spoke to trade unionists a lot about women. That was very exciting for me.

When I came back to the United States in 1970 I was mainly active in the abortion work and in women's work, and then I helped form the women's studies movement at the University of Washington. At one point, a group of women who were in our women's group from Seattle Community College came to me and asked would I be willing to teach women's studies at Seattle Community College. They had been petitioning and doing what women did in the early '70s to get women's studies. And the president made a big mistake of saying, "Well, if you can find somebody who is qualified, we'll hire her." And they said, "We have somebody qualified." And they came to me. I mean, it's like, my first job I got because of the women's liberation movement. They found a job for me.

26:35

Seattle Community College was a working-class college and I think I had 40, 45 students in my first class. I was so nervous the first day, I was just a wreck. I had stopped smoking and I used to smoke cigars on occasion, but I was just such a wreck. My first day, my first teaching job, I tripped over the threshold of the class and fell, my book flying. I tell my students that. I say, "Don't ever let that happen to you your first day of class, because your students will never forgive you for that or forget it."

But these students brought a real sensibility and it informed my scholarship. I remember I had a student who was a cross dresser, and it was very interesting. He was very bright and he was very nice. He later had a sex-change operation. He died of AIDS. The black women, the black working-class women, couldn't stand him because they felt he was caricaturing women. He would come in with a handbag, with a hat, gloves and stuff. I never forgot that. So when that wonderful movie *Paris is Burning* came out, I still remembered these black working-class women who found this so offensive. I mean, it was very interesting to have a mix of different kinds of working-class students in your class.

Oh, there's another abortion story I forgot to mention which is really quite important. In our women's liberation group, Women's Liberation of Seattle, one day this woman, Theresa — I remember, she goes by IV — Theresa came into our women's group and told us that she'd been sterilized and she was really upset, and she told us this story. She already had one child. She was a student at SCC and helped me get my job. She was white, she was involved in an interracial relationship, her first child was a mixed-race child, and she couldn't afford a second child. This was after abortion had been legalized, and she went to what was then Group Health, which was sort of the public hospital, and said could she get an abortion. They said she could only if she agreed to be sterilized. She was desperate. So she went through the procedure and then after it was over, she really felt violated, and so she came to our women's group, we set up a subcommittee and we did research. We found out that basically Group Health required poor women to be sterilized, and this is in the — it had to be 1970 or 1971. This was at a time when the issue of sterilization was just coming to the fore. I can't remember when the information of the Wells sisters became public, but it led to the formation of the Committee Against Sterilization Abuse and then (inaudible) took it up. But to be very honest, we were aware of sterilization abuse.

And the other thing that made us aware of it was when I was in Peace and Freedom. Our Peace and Freedom group brought Fannie Lou Hamer to speak at the University of Washington, and they asked me to speak alongside her. I was about 23. If I'd had a brain in my head, I would have said, "Of course I won't speak with her." She stands on her own. I mean, why would I do it? But, you know, they wanted me to speak on our abortion work and so she spoke about (inaudible). I have pictures of me with Fannie. And then I speak. And she got up to speak afterwards and said she never really thought about abortion in that way before. She said something about how she was one of whatever it was, 23 children, she had 11 children. She told us the story about one time when she went on a demonstration and was beaten senseless. They put her in a hospital and she came out, having been sterilized. This was before Theresa's story, and I remember just — it was like, white, middle-class, I'm-privileged, Doctors do that to people? But they did, so, yeah.

WEIGAND: So, it sounds like you guys were sort of on the cutting edge of that work?

WINSLOW: But I think it was because of the influence of the women from the left. I mean, I just wonder the extent to which we would have been able to listen as well because a lot of these women. There'd been a strong civil rights movement in Seattle and they really had you listen to them. I just think it's very important. I mean, Clara and Gloria and Susan Stern — Susan Stern was in the new left, but she had been a social worker in the central district. My husband and I lived in the central district. We lived across the street from the Black Panther Party. There'd actually been a shootout in our front yard between the cops and the Panthers. So, I mean, it's — and my ex-husband, he was the vice presidential candidate. It was Eldridge Cleaver as president and Cal Winslow as vice president. But our Peace and Freedom platform called for women's rights and equal pay and stuff which none of the others did. But I think it had to do with the fact that this old left group was very much committed to the women question and really had instilled in us a sense of how important this was and that it was a feminist point of view.

WEIGAND: So, when did you get involved with SDS? Was that at Antioch?

WINSLOW: There was no SDS at Antioch, ever. I should also say that I had an abortion in 1966. I was in England, and this also was one of the reasons, for me, this is such an important issue. I've had two abortions. One when I was in Europe. I found out I was pregnant. I didn't want the baby. And my uncle helped me — my aunt and uncle helped me get it. And in Switzerland, you could go to a doctor and you had to convince the doctor you're crazy. And I had to convince the doctor by speaking French. I concocted a lunatic story about how my father was a senator running for president. I didn't fall into the racial trap. I didn't say it was a black man who impregnated me but I said, you know, if I got pregnant it would kill his political chances. I made up this incredible story. I had to tell it to the doctor in French, and it turned out later the doctor didn't believe me. He thought my uncle had knocked me up, and he signed the papers so I could get the abortion. When I heard this later, I was so furious because the doctor knew I was lying, didn't care because he wanted me to go through the hoops, and that was the moment in which I said, for whatever reason a woman wants an abortion, I didn't care. 33:15

I also knew at the time that it would be painful, but I knew I wasn't gonna die. I'd known women who had illegal abortions. A woman at my college had died from an illegal abortion. I'm sort of forgetting things as I go along, but that's a very important part of my life.

Now, we joined SDS basically after the Peace and Freedom movement had declined. I never felt at home in SDS. I didn't like a lot of the people who were the leaders of it, but we had a good women's committee of SDS. I just didn't like most of the male leaders. A lot of the guys who I did like were sort of doing other things. My husband was very active, but it was sort of like this new group of people were coming in and –

WEIGAND: So this is –

WINSLOW: 1969.

WEIGAND: Oh, OK.

WINSLOW: And I was given a voice because of the women's movement. Now, there'd been an SDS in Seattle, but my husband had been involved in the antiwar group, so I went where he went.

WEIGAND: Right. I just mean, you're getting involved in SDS sort of later than a lot of people.

WINSLOW: At the end. That's right. And our — the women's committee of SDS, it was a really good committee. It was very big, very strong, very active. We always had women speak at all the rallies and all the demonstrations. We did stuff around daycare and so forth. But in the spring of 1969 we found out that there was this strike of these women who were photo finishers. And I remember, they were older women, probably were in their thirties. And the president of the photo finishers' local, the woman, was married to this guy named George Startkovitz, who was the head of the AFSCME [American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees] at the University of Washington. He had been in the Communist Party so he had come to us and asked if we'd help.

So we show up one morning to go on the picket line to help them picket, and none of them are there. But we're picketing. They called — the company calls the cops and this scab truck comes to drive in, and he literally drives his car, knocks some of us — Cal reaches in, turns the key off, and throws the key away. He sort of prevented the scab from coming in and hurting us. The cops came in and arrested us all. I was arrested. I laughed. My husband wasn't arrested but I was. We go off to jail, and we get out, and we go immediately to the SDS meeting.

And it was an eye opener, because the SDS sort of line about white-skin privilege was emerging. And here were all these white middle-class boys explaining why we couldn't support these women on strike because they would not renounce their white-skin privilege. And for me, it was like, here were women, working-class women, even though they were white, on strike by a union that treated them like crap. They had low wages, horrible working conditions, and they're photo finishers. And a bunch of snotty, college age, middle-class kids are saying, you're sort of like not good enough for our support. Now that's just — that was it for me and SDS.

As a result of that, two things happened. Our women's committee discussed the strike ad nauseam and we realized we did absolutely everything wrong. Because we had gotten arrested, we made the front page of the paper. We were red baited. We tried to go back and provide

support. They wouldn't come near us, and Starkovitz was furious with us, and rightly so. And what we realized is you just don't barrel along to a picket line and get yourself arrested. You just don't do that. You go, you meet with the women, you ask them how — it was like, talk about experiential learning. It was very important for us. I mean, it certainly stayed with me forever.

The other effect it had is that a lot of us started saying we don't want to be a committee of SDS. I think part of it is that we were developing a new way of looking at women's organizations. But it was also — I just couldn't stand the male leadership. So we had a three-week discussion and it was very funny. It was not a bitter faction fight. One half decided to stay in SDS and it was so interesting, because these women were arguing that we resolved the question of male chauvinism. There's no longer a problem in SDS. We don't need a women's committee. And the other half said, No, we always need a women's committee. So they left. But it wasn't like we were called sell-outs. It was just sort of over and done. We had gone through being founded in the summer of 1968 and within nine months, we were now Women's Liberation Seattle, which was an independent group. And that positioned us, in a way, to do the abortion work.

Now, while I was away, 1969, '70, was sort of like the big explosion of all the different women's groups. This is also when the National Organization for Women comes in, and what's so interesting is — I mean, I wasn't there and I can only base it on all the research I did — but August 26th really begins to mark the decline of radical women's movement.

WEIGAND: That was the day of the Women's Strike for Equality?

WINSLOW: Yeah, the Women's Strike for Equality, because NOW comes in and NOW has the money and the resources and so forth. So that's one thing that happened. The other thing that I think happens is that, aside from the usual theories of why women's movements come and go, I think by 1970, we passed abortion, 1972 is the Equal Rights Amendment, and we have women's studies. By 1973, many of us begin to turn our energies into institution building. And I think that once you move the process from building the movement to building the institutions — the institutions are very, very important, and don't get me wrong, I'm not saying they aren't, but they have an unintended result of almost conservatism. I'm not saying right wing, but Seattle formed the first rape crisis clinic in the country. Now, you're going to form a rape crisis clinic. It means you have to develop relationships with the police, you have to know about the law, you have to find a space, all these things, which means that you have to change your approach and what you want to do and so forth. So I think that's one thing which sort of led to sort of a new phase in the women's movement and it enabled NOW to have a larger, more co-optational role.

I think, too, in the absence of radical politics — and a lot of you listening are going to be screaming at me — a lot of women go into support the Democratic Party and Democratic politicians, which I think is

a big mistake. Our women's groups, believe it or not, in 1972, did not support McGovern. I mean, McGovern was better than Nixon, clearly, but we felt that the Democratic Party was the party of racism, the party of the war in Vietnam, did nothing to support women's rights. People forget that Gloria Steinem was the one who mounted the campaign to get the abortion plank off the Democratic platform in '72. I haven't forgotten it because Steinem came to speak at the University of Washington and we had a huge fight with her about the Democratic Party. Now I recognize her great contributions, but she was not particularly radical in the early '70s when the women's movement was particularly radical. So, it's sort of an interesting dynamic. And then I left Seattle in 1973.

WEIGAND: How about the way race came up, if it did at all, in these situations? 43:25

WINSLOW: Oh, race came up all the time. One of the biggest charges about women's movement is that we were all white and we were racist.

WEIGAND: Right.

WINSLOW: Now, the women's movement was overwhelmingly white and college educated — there's no question about that. But it never was all white, and black women were always there from its very beginning. Radical Women, Women's Liberation Seattle, we always had women of color. Two, I think people have to contextualize what was happening in the late 1960s, that is, when with the emergence of the Panthers and radical black nationalists, radical black nationalists said to white people, You have to organize white people, we're gonna organize black people. For better or for worse, for whatever reasons, we took the lead from blacks who said, You organize whites. If we had said to blacks, Just a minute, we want an integrated movement, blah-blah-blah, we would have been denounced.

WEIGAND: Right.

WINSLOW: I mean, that was just the nature of the period. Looking back, of course white people can't organize against racism in an all-white milieu, of course. But that was something we had to learn. I mean, we could look at how history went. But that was not the dynamic. I mean, if you read the literature by black women in the period, if they saw themselves as feminists, they got denounced as race traitors. They had to choose, and until the mid-'70s, the pull of radical black nationalism was far more appealing to African Americans than was the pull of feminism.

But also in this period, even though the groups were overwhelmingly white, I'm telling you, we obsessed about race. I mean, if somebody did a time in motion study of how many times we had discussions about race, you would find it came up all the time. Given that we had to deal with the fact that we were overwhelmingly white, we made coalitions, that is, we did joint events. When I think of all the early — at least when I was in

Seattle — the International Women's Day events, we made coalitions with women from the Farm Workers, women from the FARA [?] boycott, Black Panther women, welfare rights women. So it wasn't that we ignored [women of color], or said we want to be an all-white group. It was that the way in which we could work was through coalition work. Do I think now were we not as sensitive about race as we could have been? Of course. Did we make tons of mistakes? Of course. But it is not because we wanted to be an all-white movement.

The other thing that I think we were not aware of is when — let's say, me — I would get up and speak about women. In my mind, I did see an all-inclusive woman. I did see women of color. I saw lesbians. I saw this sort of thing. When black women see a white woman say the word woman, she didn't think I was being all-inclusive, even though I thought I was. And so that is something that we learned painfully. But I will say what is very interesting is that when you look at all the stuff that's written about the social protest movements of the '60s, no one has ever said, SDS was a racist movement — no one. And SDS was all white. No one ever said that. No one said the antiwar movement was racist. You know, it's only the women's movement that gets it, and I think it has to do with the profound notion that it's fine for women to be against imperialism, women can be against racism, women can be against something, but once women fight for themselves as women, we have stepped outside our sphere and we get accused of being everything bad in the world.

And the other thing, too, is — I sound like this Seattle chauvinist — but Seattle was one of the first places where there was no lesbian/straight split. In Women's Liberation Seattle, after Stonewall, two of the leading women in Women's Liberation Seattle were lesbians and came out and one of them was a woman who lived with Cal and myself. There wasn't in Seattle this idea that we were afraid of lesbians or anything else like that. There was a big brouhaha when they found out that the Socialist Workers Party had that exclusion — that if you were gay, you couldn't be in the Socialist Workers Party. There was a big fight about that. But there never was that kind of dynamic. I mean, the Gay Liberation Front is founded in, by 1969, and then there was the Gay Women's Alliance, and many of the women from the Gay Women's Alliance came out of Women's Liberation Seattle with total support.

The same thing was true with the women who were in the YMCA. They created a YWCA that actually split from the YMCA, and they had a building, you know, they had space. One room in the space was for our abortion work, the other was for Gay Women's Alliance. I mean, it was — I think Seattle's provincialism at the time, sort of, kept us out of a lot of the national fights that went on. It isolated us but is also protected us.

WEIGAND: Uh-huh. That makes sense.

WINSLOW: I mean, I remember when Robin Morgan came out to Seattle. She was so divisive — I mean, to this day, you know, my blood pressure probably

goes up because she started about [male]-identified women and all this sort of stuff, and I remember she said something about Rosa Luxemberg and so I raised my hand and I said Rosa Luxemberg was murdered, you know, and she wasn't — you know, I was trying to explain. She said Rosa Luxemberg just got her ideas from men and I just sort of went, No, Rosa Luxemberg was a genius in her own right. I mean, it was just so outrageous, this male-identified woman type stuff. I never could stand it.

WEIGAND: I don't quite know how to ask this question, but there are all these theories out there about why the women's movement emerged when it did. I'm thinking mostly, I guess of Sarah Evans and her whole thing about the sexism of the civil rights movement and SDS creating the situation that gives birth to women's liberation out of the new left. But it sounds like things were really different in Seattle, and I guess I'm just wondering what you think about why that is.

50:30

WINSLOW: I agree with her. I think Sarah Evans's point of view is right but it's in the context of social protest movements arise during periods of rising expectations. If you look at the civil rights movement, why does that emerge? Well, in a sense, it had to do with rising expectations after the Second World War. Also, the fact that there had to be — I'm not an economic determinist, but I think there's something to the effect that black integrated labor was absolutely necessary if the South was going to survive. There wouldn't have been a civil rights movement if there hadn't been conscious political leadership. And I think the same thing is true with women, is that you have a period of rising expectations. Why wouldn't women think that they were a part of it?

And on the one hand you have this sort of group of women that Friedan describes: middle-class women who just aren't happy with just being wives and housewives. And then if you take somebody like myself, a middle-class white woman who was raised to get married and also wanted to be a history teacher. You know, in part, I think I was raised that my main role was to be wife, but by 1968, that was not the issue. If we think about the expansion of education which begins in the '50s — I mean, you have to laugh. An unintended consequence of the cold war was, of course, the expansion of education, which gives rises to higher expectations. So you also have a lot of black women who want something more for themselves than just to be maids.

I mean, you look today. The public sector in New York City is African American women. They're the ones who work for the City, they're the nurses. It took a civil rights movement and I think also a women's movement to get them into those kinds of professions. So I would put Evans's piece in the context of an expanding economy, rising expectations, and people demanding that they be fulfilled.

WEIGAND: And in Seattle, specifically? I mean, you've got Clara Fraser and those other people –

WINSLOW: Well, that's where the issue of consciousness and — I guess the word is agency — fits in. There would have been a movement in Seattle if there hadn't been Seattle Radical Women. No question about it. But the fact that it was Clara Fraser hooking up with Jill Severn brings the old — I mean, I write all about this — they bring the old left and the new left together. And the early women's groups, they're not essentialist, they have a class analysis, a racial analysis. Because Radical Women is sort of a more traditional Trotskyist group, they certainly don't understand issues of sexuality, and they're sectarian in a way that's, you know, unbelievable. But I think they helped ground the women's movement in a reality which was not quite as true in places like New York. I mean, we didn't have those kinds of fights. And I think part of it was that, a lot of us, we were very lucky from '69 through '71. We were involved in the struggle to liberalize abortion laws and expand access to abortion. You know, you sort of are focusing on something real that has a real impact on women's lives. And so the theoretical questions, you know, is this male-identified, and some of the Red-Stockings debates — they're very interesting but we were looking at other issues.

WEIGAND: And you write in that essay in the *Feminist Memoir Project* about Seattle being kind of ignored or neglected in history and being very influential. It sounds like of the really influential thing you're talking about is the whole abortion rights thing. Are there other –

WINSLOW: I'm not saying Seattle was influential, because nobody heard about what we did. You read histories of the abortion movement and if they mention that Seattle had a referendum, it's very rare. Nobody mentions it. So I'm hoping that that can be the contribution. I mean Ruth Rosen's book doesn't mention Seattle, and when she does, it's wrong. I mean, she cites Betty Friedan as saying the demonstrations against her were organized by the CIA and the FBI, and Mary Rothschild and I are not members of the FBI and the CIA. I can state that. So I just think that the original history was written from a very New York-Chicago-Boston-Washington perspective. And I don't think that Ruth's book really fundamentally changed that.

I think that Susan Brownmiller's memoir — which I liked very much, although it's very flawed — at least talked about some stuff that was going on in Colorado. Judith Ezekiel's book *Feminism in the Heartland* talks about something that those of us in the women's movement knew a great deal about but also hasn't gotten much recognition. The problem is, I mean, the women's liberation stars were all in New York, which was the center of the media, and so they got all the publicity and so many of them were also journalists and professional writers. So, we worked in Seattle.

END DVD 2

DVD 3

WEIGAND: I have fewer specific questions about life after Seattle because your essay provides all those useful background information for the Seattle stuff.

WINSLOW: And you know nothing about Cleveland.

WEIGAND: I don't know much about what happened later.

WINSLOW: I want it on the record that Kate Weigand was once Katie Weigand and was a babysitter for my two young girls.

WEIGAND: It's true.

WINSLOW: And I'm crediting part of her feminism with my library (laughs). Anyway, we moved to Cleveland in 1973. We were a member of an organization called the International Socialists, and we were committed to building branches of our group in industrial cities. The idea at that time, and it was true among most of the left groups, whether it was the Trotskyist left or the Maoist left, was to go into industry — the automobile industry, the steel industry, coal mining, hospital workers and so forth — and try to build a revolutionary current within the working class. That was the idea. And we moved to Cleveland, and I got a job teaching at Cuyahoga Community College, and I had lengthy talks with my mentor, the man I studied with, E.P. Thompson, the historian, about whether or not I should go into industry.

I had very mixed feelings about it. It's not that I didn't want to work or work hard, but I just felt that there was no way I was going to convince workers that I was proletarian. I just feel that I have this horrible way I sound. I think I sound like a debutante. And worse, or, not worse, but I do see myself as an intellectual and I don't think there's anything wrong with it. And Edward, who talks the way Peter O'Toole talks, is certainly intellectual. He taught at a worker's college and he really guided me through this very difficult discussion because the idea of being a teacher meant you weren't a worker and he just said that workers will expect you to know more if you're middle class. They expect you to know more. But if you're honest and have an honest relationship with them, you know, you're freed of a lot of the BS. So I considered myself really lucky. I taught at Cuyahoga Community College from 1973 until 1983, with a brief stint in Detroit, Michigan.

And when I came into Cleveland, there already was a women's newspaper, but not yet much women's activities. And in 1974, I think it had to be, we had really the first International Women's Day celebration. And it was organized by the International Socialist Organization. We were working with the Farm Workers, so we had Elaine Esparsa of the Farm Workers. We had — oh, I can't remember her name — Doris, or Dolores Robinson. I can look it up in my other book. She was from the Domestic

Workers of America. We had a woman from the Garment Workers Union, and we spoke about women workers. And at that time, there was a group called Cleveland Union Women, and it was founded by Jean Tussey, who was, at the time, in the Socialist Workers Party.

And what was going on across the country was you had the emergence of feminism reaching trade union women, and you also had women from the new left who had been involved in the women's liberation movement, founding groups based upon either the workplace or within the unions. In 1972 I was one of the founding members of Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality, or Union WAGE, which was an organization of union women that fought for women's rights within the union at the workplace and in society.

You also had, across the country, women office workers' unions being formed. It was actually was called Women Office Workers in New York, or WOW. There was 9to5, I think, in Boston. I think it was Bread & Roses in New Haven or vice versa. But these were organizations of women who were secretaries, especially in the publishing industry. You also begin to have an interest by women trade unionists in the issue of women's rights. And in March 1974, 3600 hundred went to meet in Chicago to form the Coalition of Labor Union Women [CLUW]. I was there and I will tell you it was probably one of the most exciting meetings you could go to. It was all the excitement of founding a very new, distinct group. And it was probably the most integrated, racially integrated feminist meeting I had ever been to, then and now.

Of the 3600 women who were there, I broke it down — and I wrote about it quite a bit — it seemed to me about a third were women from the top echelons of the trade union movement: Olga Madar, who was the highest woman official of the UAW; Addie Wyatt from the teamsters — help me with me names — Joyce something-or-other from the Amalgamated. But these were high-level women who clearly needed an organizational vehicle — I don't want to make them [sound] selfish but to promote their — and this is not necessarily in order — but to promote their career and certain career aspirations, and they needed a vehicle to promote a women's rights agenda and they could not do it within the existing AFL-CIO structure.

I would say another third of the women who were there were sort of lower-level union officials: an organizer or a local union president or a grievance officer, who were very much affected by the radical ideas of the women's liberation movement but very committed to the union women, the union movement.

And I think probably a thousand women came from various radical leftwing, organized leftwing groups like us, in the IS, or in the Stalinist groups or in the Maoist groups. But also there were just myriads of left collectives, whether it's all-women's collectives or mixed collectives, who were involved in industry. And it was really very exciting.

There were lots of issues. One, of course, was what the structure would look like. The left was arguing that it should be open to all working

women. I actually took a contrary point of view. I said it was perfectly valid to be an organization just of women trade unionists or women involved in organizing drives. That is, there could be a group of just nothing but working-class women, but I think it could make sense. And I remember a lot of people at my group thought I was wrong. But, you know, and I could have been. It's no big deal.

So the struggle about this got reflected as, could the women from the Brookside Women's Club — now, this was in Brookside, Kentucky, and it was the site of the Harlan County mineworkers' strikes in the early '70s, in 1971 to 1975, and women in Harlan County formed a group called the Brookside Women's Club, which was really a women's auxiliary. And the question is, would they would be allowed to join the Coalition of Labor Union Women? And the union leadership said, no, you had to be in the union, so that was a struggle. I think it'd have been worthwhile to have had the women from the Brookside Women's Club come and speak to CLUW, to find ways to convince coalminers, and at that time, women just started going into the mines in 1974, so I don't think there were any women coalminers then.

The other struggle was, of course, around the Farm Workers. Now, this was a bigger struggle within the structure of the AFL-CIO because the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, which was headed by Caesar Chavez, was trying to be recognized as a union and they were involved in a life-and-death conflict with the teamsters, who were also trying to organize farm workers. So, everybody who was on the side of the farm workers was on the side of the Farm Workers [Union] but it pitted you against the teamsters, and you have Addie Wyatt, who's the head of the teamsters. And I remember I went to the teamsters' lunch and they served scab lettuce. The IS had women in the teamsters' union, and so did a bunch of the Maoist groups, and they actually — and there was also an organization called the New American Movement that was involved. And these radical women, bless their hearts and souls, were throwing lettuce at the teamsters, scab lettuce, and they said, We won't eat scab lettuce. And that was sort of, you know, a lot of the fights and the struggles.

I was a member of the American Federation of Teachers and I went to the Teachers' caucus and that was a lot of fun. I met Roz Baxandall there and that's where we began our friendship. And the big — the organizational fight was going to be about to what extent would the Coalition of Labor Union Women be a group independent of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. Now, when we all went back to our respective cities, back to Cleveland, I was on the executive committee of Cleveland CLUW and I was also a member of the International Socialists, and I used my position, and it was really one of the most exciting times of my life. I traveled around the state of Ohio speaking to union women. I went and spoke to the Lordstown UAW local and at that point in time, Lordstown had been made — had been discovered, shall we say, by the press. And it turns out that a lot of the cultural issues of the new left — the long hair, the music, the drugs — were picked up by young workers, especially young male

workers, and Lordstown was a very rebellious UAW plant. The young men who worked there — it was mainly men, you know — had the long hair, the drugs, um, the music, the counterculture. Most of the women who worked in the Lordstown local were older. Many of them who had gotten their jobs because the Second World War, because of seniority, were sent there even though it was a new plant. And I went into Lordstown Local and I spoke about women's liberation. I spoke at Youngstown to steel mills. I spoke in Cincinnati. I spoke to coalminers. It was so exciting to be able to say, "I've got this organization that believes in women's rights."

And I remember there were a group of women who worked in an aluminum plant outside of Youngstown and they had called me and they were facing certain forms of discrimination. That is, the owner of the plant said, You want equality, you have to lift the same weights as the men. However, he would give the men the equipment so that they could use the equipment to lift the heavy machinery and make the women lift from 90 to 175 pounds of aluminum bars, including pregnant women. It really was a way to drive women out of the factories. And you know, once a week, I would drive out to Youngstown and I would meet with anywhere from 30 to 50 of these women who were worked in this aluminum plant. It was fascinating.

I worked with a group of postal workers in Cincinnati, all African American women. The Cincinnati Coalition of Union Women Chapter was all African American women and one of the leaders, her name was Anna Palmer, we became very good friends. She died in 1984, but she was a really dear, wonderful friend, a very good friend. For me, it was a great time because, you know, it fit in with my politics, that is, feminism was definitely wasn't alien, it wasn't an alien ideology, it wasn't alien to working-class women. It was very exciting.

I traveled to Houston for a CLUW meeting and Seattle for a CLUW meeting and all over, and then the leadership had a resolution passed that said the Coalition of Labor Union Women could not engage in any activity without the support of the union involved. And for those on the left, this really meant the end of the Coalition of Labor Union as an independent entity. It sounds like I'm thinking everywhere I went, everything happened, but one of the cases that tested it took place in Cleveland Heights with Hester Butterfield.

Hester Butterfield was what we called an industrialized radical. She was a middle-class woman who went into a small electrical plant and she got fired for union organizing. And we immediately rushed to her defense. We picketed, we leafletted, and we called upon the Cleveland Coalition of Labor Union to support Hester. We had a big fight about it and the president of the chapter was in the Socialist Workers Party and she opposed it. She went along with the — they were trying to be so acceptable to the trade union movement. And so, we actually won the vote and our chapter went on record as demanding that Hester be reinstated — I still have all these leaflets — and get her job back.

Olga Madar called us up and said we had to change our position if we wanted to stay in CLUW. She came to Cleveland and read us the riot act and we just said, no, no, no, we're gonna continue to support Hester. And then at the next CLUW convention, they passed the resolution. And in a sense, that was the end of the radical dynamic of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. What it continued to do was to be an effective pressure group to get women into the upper echelons of the trade union movement. I forget one of the — I think it was the woman from the Amalgamated actually got on the AFL-CIO Executive Council, but as an organization that really could mobilize women, it sort of had effectively ended.

But for that one year, the CLUW chapter celebrated International Women's Day. We had one in Cleveland and I remember I spoke. I spoke and John Conyers came down from Detroit to speak. Here you have this leader, civil rights, militant and all that, and basically he was very liberal, very nice, but he was such a nick-nick. He liked to feel up the women. I mean, it was just — it was really amazing, but we did very good. We had good educational activities and Jean Tussey now, she's is still alive, and she does very good stuff for the Western Reserve Historical Society, especially around the labor movement. So, I mean, I think, you know, the Coalition of Labor Union Women was a positive thing. They played a role in forcing the AFL-CIO to support a woman's right to an abortion because the radical women did press those kind of social issues. So that was one of the activities that we did in the women's movement in Cleveland.

Then, in the mid-'70s, with the attack on abortion rights, the Cleveland Pro-Choice Action Committee was founded. We used to call it "cupcake." And Ohio was the center of anti-abortion activity. Cincinnati was the home of the National Right to Life Committee and I think it was in 1977 or 1978, a clinic was actually blown up on, I think it was Euclid Avenue. And I did a big story about that. Then there was the very famous Akron ordinance, which was going to deny women abortion and we set up pro-choice groups all across the country. The anti-abortionists every year used to have a demonstration at the Masonic Temple on January 22nd and we used to do a great counter demonstration and we would bring Kristen Lems, who was a folk singer, to sing. One time we had Rhonda Copeland speak. It was really a great organizing tool. We also began to defend abortion clinics. We were a group that had an impact.

16:30

And then, in 1979, the Reproductive Rights National Network was founded and the Cleveland Pro-Choice Committee was a part of it. I was on the steering committee and our founding meeting was in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and we worked with a group in Kent, Ohio. We worked with a group in Oberlin, and the socialist group that I was in, they had a chapter in Cincinnati which had a pro-choice group. And then in 1979, the Right to Life was going to have their convention in Cincinnati. We mobilized about 3000 people, I think it was that many, to demonstrate against the Right to Life. And my daughter was born just before that. At three weeks old, my first daughter goes to her first pro-choice march. I remember nursing her as we marched and putting her in the little, little

buggy. So that was very, very exciting. And basically, we did a lot of — I would argue, we in Ohio did a lot of really good work countering the Right to Life.

Within the Reproductive Rights National Network, we got a grant where we were allowed to put ads in newspapers to help build our group. We did very good public work about the adverse effects of Depo-Provera. And one of the great things we did was — it had to be 1982 — in Cleveland there was a City Club, and every month the City Club would invite a somewhat controversial speaker, and you would go and you would listen to the speaker. Actually you can hear it on some of the NPR stations. I know I can up here in Williamstown. It was one January and it was, you know, you're in your women's meeting and it's late at night and we're getting ready for January 22nd, and somebody tells us that Phyllis Schlafly is coming to speak at the City Club. And you know, you're a little punchy, it's late at night and we were, Oh, we have to have a picket line, and we start talking and come to the realization that if we do a picket line, it's boring, and Phyllis Schlafly is gonna destroy us with it.

Deborah Van Kleef, who was in our group, had heard about this group called the Plutonian Players who were in the Doo-Dah parade, part of the Plutonian Players were a group of women called Ladies Against Women and we decided we would do a Ladies Against Women action against Phyllis Schlafly. We began with making up sort of names of women's groups. Now there was a group in Cleveland called WELCOME, which existed to help with the desegregation of the schools. So one of the groups supporting Ladies Against Women we called UNWELCOME. We had a group called — you know, you have Women Strike for Peace — our group was called Women for War. And we started making up all sorts of, you know, crazy names. And we had a little logo of gloves and a hat or something. And we had a big picture of Phyllis Schlafly and we said Ladies Against Women invite you to greet our national leader. We decided we weren't going to mock, you know, do the traditional thing where you mock working-class women with your hair up in rollers and you're wearing scuffs and a bathrobe. But you had to wear a hat and gloves. We sent it out to the media and they loved it.

The thing with the City Club was that some friends of ours knew hot-shot lawyers and I had a friend who was a lawyer, his name was Ken Weinberg, who probably knew your parents. He was a prominent attorney. He had been Stokes's campaign manager. So Kenny came to me and he said, "If you promise not to scream and yell and shut her up, I'll get you tickets." And in those days, tickets were $7.50, which for us in those days, it'd be like buying a $75 ticket. So we couldn't afford $7.50 so we were given something like 20 tickets from sympathetic people.

So the day of the demonstration, we had signs that said, "My home is his castle." "I'd rather be ironing." "Fifty-nine cents is too much; real women do it for free." We handed out membership cards that said in order to be a member of Ladies Against Women you had to have your husband's permission or your clergyman. We only would speak to women reporters

and if a woman reporter would ask us a question, we'd say, Why aren't you home with your children?

I found a pink dress and a pink pillbox hat at the Salvation Army and I was one of the spokespeople. Two women were barefoot and pregnant and we got them into the City Club. We had chants that said, "Keep America on the track, one step forward, two steps back. What do we want? Nothing. When do we want it? Never. Hit us again, hit us again, harder, harder." I mean, it was really fabulous — it was just so great. "Suffering, not suffrage." Um, it was, you know, "Save the males." It was just — and then we had one that said, "Outlaw masturbation, billions of future draftees are destroyed every year." "Pasting it is wasting it." I mean, it just went on and on. And the more we got into it, the more inventive we were about it. I mean, I still have all the materials from it.

And then when we got into the City Club, what we decided, we had decided in advance that we should all just have the same question to ask, because we doubted if they would call on a lot of people. What we decided to do was — the title of her talk was, "Do we want a gender-free society?" And we would ask questions, sort of riffing on that idea with like, no, gender shouldn't be free, it should be based upon the market, or that sort of thing, and do a takeoff on it.

But we did write a serious leaflet once we got into the City Club which explained who we were, but we went in dress. So I'm in my pink outfit and these other two women are barefoot and pregnant, and we scattered ourselves around. We were sitting at tables, and you could tell people were wondering what on earth was going on. I mean, we were being very nice. And we decided when Schlafly said something outrageous, instead of booing, we cheered and we waved our handkerchiefs. So when she said, "Women don't want higher paying jobs." We'd go, Oh, you're so right, and we would wave our handkerchief. And she was really getting rattled. And we knew we were OK because the man who introduced us said, "Good afternoon, gentlemen, ladies, and women." And we knew that if we behaved ourselves, it would be great. Nobody was sympathetic to her and she'd make these outrageous remarks and we'd go, Oh, you are so right. Oh, this is wonderful.

Finally, at the end, they called on Deborah Van Kleef, who asked the question about "Isn't the only thing you think should be free is the market?" She completely lost it, and she went, "I believe in free speech. I believe in choice." She was going on and on and then they called on me and I said, "Oh, we're so disappointed. We thought you were against choice." I mean, it was just — it was so terrific, that we led on the news. We blew her away. So the next day, we, of course, were on the headlines. We were a major story in *Ms.* magazine, we were a major story in the *New York Times.* Then it turned out that the next month they had a creationist speak, and somebody showed up in a gorilla suit and walked around the whole thing. So one of the great lessons, I think I learned from it was, of course, that you have to have a sense of humor. And sometimes, you just can't do the straight old picket line, the straight old demonstration. You

have to do something that makes people laugh and makes people sing and so forth and look for alternative things.

The other thing, of course, I was involved with in Cleveland was I taught women's studies at Cuyahoga Community College. And I laugh, I taught women's studies, black studies, and labor studies. So I was sort of all good things rolled into one. And we inspired a bunch of students at Kent State to do a Ladies Against Women there. I worked with — there was a wonderful Oberlin pro-choice group and we had a student conference on reproductive rights with students from all over Ohio. About two hundred students came and did a conference about fighting the right, and reproductive rights, so that was some of the stuff that I did in Cleveland. I had my first child in 1979. My second child was in 1981, and I think two weeks after Samantha was born, I was on a Take Back the Night with Samantha and Jessie. So there was a lot of feminist stuff going on.

Our pro-choice group also helped bring Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party. Remember when that came to Cleveland Heights? So, I mean, we really were involved in lots of things and I think really played a role in the Cleveland political scene. I mean, our January 22nd counter demonstration was always large. We defended abortion clinics. We got good coverage. I think Ladies Against Women made the press sort of like us and so we got reasonably good coverage. We would be interviewed all the time on the radio, on TV.

It was sort of a good time, but things fell apart for me personally. My marriage ended and I, we, were no longer in this political group and so we moved to New York.

WEIGAND: Can you talk about the — I mean, so you moved to Cleveland when you were in the IS and you were there to do this industrial concentration stuff. How far back does your involvement in these Trotskyist groups go? When you were in Seattle – 28:30

WINSLOW: I joined in — when SDS busted up. What happened was is that there was a women's liberation movement, which was very important. A lot of the men joined these political groups. So did a lot of women. Basically half the Seattle chapter went with the Weathermen. The other half went with left groups. Half went with a group called the International Socialists. But at the time we joined I went to England, and there was a larger group called the International Socialists in England. I mean this was a group, large — you have to joke, it was about 2000 then. So I was involved in that group in England. And I talked a little bit about it. I met a lot of factory workers, and was involved in the English women's movement. And then when I came back to the United States, a group was moving to the Midwest, so I moved to the Midwest. And a lot of political groups did that.

WEIGAND: And how was it being a member of that kind of a group and being an outspoken and visible feminist activist? Were there tensions?

WINSLOW: Yes. When I was in the International Socialists, I was what was called the women's organizer, and the group had this theory about sending people into industry. It was, in particular, automobile, steel, the teamsters, coalmining, and telephone. And in particular, in the telephone industry, it was among plant workers. It was not among operators, who were slowly being phased out. And the theory was that these were the groups of people who were going to be the leaders of a revolutionary party. Well, I subscribed to that for about a year and then, when clearly it meant that women were excluded, I mean, the teamsters are all white men, the skilled automobile workers are white men, the steel workers, you do have a lot of blacks but it's mainly men, and that it meant that the most important work, the work that was valued by the group was only involving men. And basically the theory said that only men are gonna be leaders, and it took me a while to figure out because one of my not good qualities, when I join a group, I really become loyal to that group.

[I'm loyal] sometimes to the extent that I don't critically think a lot of things through. Once I started thinking it through, I said, this is crazy. Number one, you're excluding women and, two, this isn't where the most exciting, dynamic stuff is going on even in the labor movement. By the mid-'70s the group of people who are having the successful organizing drives are actually in the public sector, and very much inspired by the civil rights and black struggle and the women's movement. So we had a big fight to change that and as a result, we all got expelled and we formed another group called the Internationalist Socialist Organization [ISO], which still exists. There was always, you know, there always was a women's caucus. The leadership was always overwhelmingly male.

I was married and my husband was very supportive. I mean, he never said that his dinner came first or I couldn't go to a meeting or anything else like that. For the most part, we provided childcare. But, you know, you've got kids, I've got kids. I didn't want to bring my kids to meetings and I didn't want to dump my kids off to a place where, you know, two guys who didn't want to be watching kids had to watch kids. So, it was sort of, I'd rather you be at home watching my kids than something like that. So I think the issue of childcare is a very complicated issue, and it's one that really hasn't been completely resolved satisfactorily. I just think if women earn more money, they can afford better childcare. But that's another story.

Now, what's funny about the ISO is the ISO did really good work in the reproductive rights movement. It was still, you know, male leadership and so forth and then the faction fight where I got kicked out was actually on the women question. The issue of women's liberation was a major factor, and our work in the reproductive rights movement was a major factor. It was the idea that I supported the idea of independent women's organizations to the exclusion of building the ISO and I was going, What's

the difference? You can do both. But their point of view was you have to build the ISO and the only reason for women's groups was to recruit people out to the ISO and I just thought that was crazy and sectarian. Even at one point the ISO would say things like, Only socialists can build the pro-choice movement or the reproductive rights movement. And I have to say, that's one thing that socialists did but they did it as socialist feminist women and not in socialist groups.

WEIGAND: Right. So in some ways, it's the same kinds of questions that were coming up in Seattle in the late '60s.

WINSLOW: Oh, yeah, and I think — now, I've written one book on this woman named Sylvia Pankhurst and in her period is the formation of the communist parties internationally. I don't know the answer to it — the idea of the vanguard party with the line and so forth. Could I be in a group that called itself socialist that was for the death penalty, or that was against a woman's right to choose? And there were people who claimed to be socialists who are anti-abortion. I don't know the answer to it. I think part of it is that the first successful revolutionary party and group came out of Russia, which was a country that had no tradition in any kind of representative government, where the western countries did, and so we haven't figured that out. And I think, in the absence of real mass struggle and involvement, all these groups are the most tragic caricatures of what everybody says about the left. So, I mean, it's — I just don't know the answer.

Then, about two years ago, I was writing a big article about feminist movements internationally, like feminism from Eve to Beijing almost, and what I realized is that the Leninist tradition was always for women's rights but hostile to feminism. I think that has not been resolved in the orthodox socialist groups.

WEIGAND: Yeah, so the whole thing about the unhappy marriage [between Marxism and feminism] –

WINSLOW: That's right. And, I mean, there's no question about it. Lenin was for women's rights. But he did not want the women's rights carried out except under the umbrella or the total control of the Party. And that was also true of national struggles and racial struggles and so forth.

WEIGAND: How about, can we turn to somewhat more personal things? I mean, how did you — how did the whole decision to have kids work for you? 36:30

WINSLOW: Well, the personal stuff. I was very happily married. I think I had a good marriage for 15 years. The last five were terrible and my divorce was horrendous. In my twenties, I did not want children. I had two major fights with my husband while my marriage was good, and one fight I won and one fight I lost. The fight I lost was I was going to get sterilized. I was

gonna be a revolutionary. I said, "Rosa Luxemberg never had children, blah-blah-blah," and we had a huge fight and I lost it and I was so glad I lost that fight. But I had Jessie when I was 34 and I think by the time I was in my thirties, I wanted children. And then once Jessie was born, it was so wonderful that I wanted another one right away. We had Samantha. As soon as we had Samantha, I wanted four children. I wanted six kids. I really did. And I wouldn't say my children caused the breakup of the marriage, although it does destabilize things. One of the things, for a long time I was very bitter about, was that I didn't have a larger family.

It's a cliché, but children really do add real insights to one's feminism. I had known, from England, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey. Bernadette and I had were friendly, and she always supported women's liberation. But later, she had two kids and one time I went to visit her in the 1980s. I visited her in her apartment and she was telling me about what her life was like with children and her husband, Michael, who she loved very much. She did all the housework. For a while they lived out in the countryside and she had to walk into the village with the laundry, to do the laundry. And she used to say, "I always spoke about women and supported it, but I never really got it until I had children."

And I remember this. I was the main caretaker of the kids in Cleveland plus I was the major breadwinner, and when I was living in Cleveland Heights I never had a problem finding a babysitter. I remember when my kids were born and I had to get babysitting full time and in those days it cost a dollar an hour, and there were a lot of places you would drop your kids off in someone's home. But I mean, sometimes my kids would be there six to eight hours a day and you wonder how you could afford it. And after Reagan got elected, the tax was changed so that women could no longer deduct as much for babysitting, and I was doing a lot of research and the amount of money that a single working mother would spend on babysitting was such that it was cheaper not to work. So that became a real — much more of an issue for me.

I began to think about issues of the mother-daughter relationship. I never liked Mother's Day. I really hated Mother's Day once I became a mother. I just realized that the government, the private sector, hates mothers, hates motherhood, does everything they can to make motherhood difficult, and then one day here somebody takes you out to dinner. I mean, I used to go on peace marches in Cleveland on Mother's Day and then, when I moved back to New York, I'd take my kids to baseball games because I didn't want to do these traditional Mother's Day things. To this day I can't stand it. And it gets worse because as it gets commercialized.

And having daughters, you think about how you want to raise your daughters and it challenges all your theories. All my friends who had sons would just say, "I don't believe it, you know, it's not biological, and yet the boys are more active, they want this, they want that." And then, when I was working in New York, it became even more difficult because I was a single mother and, you know, when the kids were sick, they couldn't go to school. Sometimes I'd have to bring them to work. I don't know if it

happens with you, but in New York, everybody has outbreaks of lice and the kids get called home and their father doesn't do it, I do it.

And I thought of the most creative ways of helping me get babysitting. Before I could afford babysitting I would have students of mine come and live with me. In exchange for a room, they would do babysitting and so forth. Then I had 86 different experiments with babysitters and it turned out — I had a babysitter, she was a Mormon girl from Utah who comes to New York and it's like she's in the chocolate factory. She's into pornography and drugs and 80 different guys and all this, and I come back from a research trip and the house is a mess and I had to call the police. I kept thinking — I was in the middle of litigation for my divorce — if my husband found out, I mean, who knows. But you get a sense of how, if you don't have decent childcare, what are you gonna do?

And I was always the one who left the job to take care of the kids, take the kids to the doctor and so forth, and the main thing is, I don't complain. I now teach at Brooklyn College, which is part of the City University of New York. The majority of our students are women, and so many of them are parents. I have a bond with them because even though I'm white and middle class and I'm a professor and I'm privileged and all this, I still know what's it's like to have to bring your kid to class because you don't have the babysitter, or to miss a class and so forth.

So, aside from the fact that being a mother, I think, is the greatest thing I've ever done, being a mother, I think, has enabled me to look at feminism in an even more visceral way. And now that my daughters are grown up, they're feminist young women with strong social consciousness, and they're activists, so I consider myself very, very lucky.

WEIGAND: Well, it shows, too, that motherhood is, can be very explicitly political.

WINSLOW: Well, I'll tell you. It may be, but I would always say to my kids, Now if and when you want to marry, and you may not want to marry a man, you may want to marry a woman, just I'd tell my students and they would just say, you're nuts. You know, you try to sort of challenge the stereotypes and as my kids got older, they'd go, Oh, mom, quit it with that. But I mean I really consciously tried to and I think sometimes, I was probably everybody's caricature of the person who wrote *Heather Has Two Mommies* or something like that. But I like to think I did it with a sense of humor.

WEIGAND: Yeah. Well, it does sound like you did a good job.

WINSLOW: Well, I take all the credit. I do say, the other thing about a difficult divorce is that it informs your feminism. If you ever want to know what marriage is about, get divorced. And it also gave me a sense of humor.

WEIGAND: Well, that must have been a rough time, I mean, because your political world fell apart and I'm assuming that that was sort of like –

WINSLOW: The political stuff and my marriage fall apart at the same time, so sort of what my identity — I was 40 — so what my identity had been for 20 years, that is, a person in this political group and a wife, falls apart. And now I have two children and I have to find full-time work. And it took me a long time. I mean, I basically, at one point I had five part-time jobs, and when my two grandmothers died they left me some money, and then when my parents died, they left me some money. So then I could have a slightly more comfortable life. But my first ten years in New York I was working five or six teaching adjunct jobs and I was editing encyclopedias and doing all this stuff, you know, just to get by.

WEIGAND: Right.

WINSLOW: So it was very, very tough. And I was luckier. I mean, when I say, get by, we were not living in a one-room what have you. I mean, I was getting by in a middle-class lifestyle but really struggling with it.

WEIGAND: Well, I would imagine, too, that when you're active in a group like that for a long time, it's not just that you go to meetings and that it's your political activity, but that it sort of impacts your whole life.

WINSLOW: It forms who you are. It forms who you are. I mean, I was in this little tiny group called the International Socialists and the International Socialists Organization and in a sense, that's your family. It's not just going to meetings. Yes, you do, you go to meetings three or four times a week but they're the people with whom you socialize, and toward the end of it, I actually didn't like any of the people in the group. I wanted to play tennis and I wanted to listen to music, and you had no time. And I was now ten years, 15 years older than a lot of the people — and nothing against, even, some of your friends. I was in a different place. I was a mother of two children and I was in my mid- to late-thirties and I wanted to do different things. And, I certainly didn't want Cal to continue to do it. And when you're in a small group, all you do is argue politically, and I was fed up with this kind of fighting. I just didn't want to fight anymore.

WEIGAND: Right. So it must have been both hard and a relief in some ways?

WINSLOW: Well, I think it was a contributing factor in the breakup of my marriage, as many things were, but I know that when married couples lose a child, I think there's a 90 percent chance that the marriage is not going to succeed, and I think that's what happened with us, because we were both the leaders of this little insignificant group but when it went, it was sort of the glue that held us together. In a sense, people used to say to us, You're the perfect marriage. We want to be married like you, blah-blah-blah. And I used to joke, I said, "We're so interested in politics, we don't have time to fight over if you leave the toilet seat up." And in a sense, that's both good

and it's also bad, meaning, we had no time to think about who we were, where we were going, why we were going there and what we thought of ourselves in the world. So, after my marriage broke up, I did spend five years seeing a shrink for two reasons: one, to figure out who I was, because I'd been 20 years as my father's daughter and 20 years as somebody's wife. And also to make sure I wasn't a jerk when it came to the divorce. And I was very upset and unhappy and blah-blah-blah, and I think it made me a little less screwed up.

WEIGAND: What else do I want to ask you about Cleveland?

WINSLOW: Well, I can talk about New York. Or –

WEIGAND: I wonder if we should save that.

WINSLOW: Well, it's ten past three.

WEIGAND: Yeah, maybe we can stop here.

WINSLOW: Sure, and you can think about Cleveland questions.

WEIGAND: Yeah, I will.

WINSLOW: Let me do one more thing. It's important.

WEIGAND: OK.

WINSLOW: Throughout my marriage, I didn't have any women friends. And you look back and sort of think, Gosh, how could you not have women friends when you see yourself as a feminist? And I think part of it was my marriage, the kind of man I married. He was my only friend, and I couldn't have any friends. And in fact he did a lot of things to discourage me from having friends. And when my marriage started collapsing, there were a group of women in Cleveland, in my pro-choice group, who were not in this political group who have now been my friends for 25 years. And we started developing these friendships in this pro-choice group and they were very different from me. And when you're in a political group, you agree on everything. You know, we used to joke and say, Can you fall in love with somebody who believes that Russia is a deformed worker state? And you look back and you go, This is nuts.

And so, now, female friendships, they're going to be there forever, you know, along with, you know, my family and stuff. You're going to have lovers and maybe your lover will stay for a long time, but these are the people who, you know, you need more than anything. One thing about my daughters is, even with their men in their lives, they're not going to give up female friends for some man. I think they're both heterosexual. And I know I did. And it's very interesting, Cal's current wife has also given up

all her female friendships in the marriage. So it's clearly the nature of that kind of relationship.

But I, you know, I remember when I was moving to New York and these five women took me out to dinner. I was just so overwhelmed by it, because that had never happened. I never had women friends. I know I wrote this in the *Feminist Memoir Project*. I said when I was married I could not take the sort of radical personal essence of feminism into my marriage, but now I think I do in my friendships, my relationship with my children, my sisters, and, you know, any lovers I have in my life. I'm going to be 60 in a year, if my genes are like everybody else in my family, I may live to be 80 or 85. So I have another 20 to 25 years and my friends, women friends, are now in their 20s. Even my women friends who are married, we were talking about how we're going to live when we're 75 and 80 and we're talking about buying a building in New York and creating something that's not only feminist but truly communal so we can all take care of each other and so forth. So I think the great thing about the women's movement is in spite of all the snottiness that reporters write about baby-boomers is that we are taking it every step of the way.

WEIGAND: Yeah, but I've read of other women doing that. Well, that woman I interviewed in New York, Eva Kollisch, founded an organization called Older Women for Mutual Aid, or something like that, and they get together and, like, they donate money to a common pot and help each other out and –

WINSLOW: Well, a bunch of us have talked about maybe we should buy a building and then we all get, like, two-bedroom apartments, so that you can always have your children and your grandchildren and your best friend to come visit, and we'd find a way to make sure that nobody's lonely and so forth.

WEIGAND: Yeah, it's a good idea.

WINSLOW: I mean it's like assisted living, in a sense.

WEIGAND: Well, it's sort of taking the stuff about the personal being the political to the next age.

WINSLOW: It's just the only people who can afford to do it are people with money.

WEIGAND: OK. Well,

WINSLOW: Do we end there?

WEIGAND: Yeah.

END DVD 3

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WEIGAND: So, I realized I didn't ask you much yesterday about teaching at Cuyahoga Community College and what it was like to teach women's history there and to teach women's history, black history, labor history there, in the 1980s.

WINSLOW: I got hired in the full academic year of 1973 and I was starting out on the central campus and I just loved it. It was a wonderful job.

WEIGAND: Is that the one –

WINSLOW: That's on 33rd Street, downtown.

WEIGAND: Oh, downtown.

WINSLOW: It's the downtown campus. And, boy, you learned about race teaching in Cleveland, because in the '70s, the west side was all white with a tiny Mexican population and the east side was racially mixed. I was teaching my class and, see, the white kids would sit on one side and the black kids would sit on another. It was like, the Cuyahoga [River] went through my class. And I taught — I was in the social behavioral sciences department and they had this social science sequence which went three semesters and the third semester, it could be in any topic, so that was the topic in women's studies, and it was really popular. And I learned a lifelong lesson. The academic year, 1974, they allowed the students to choose the graduation speaker, and I was chosen. And the men in the department were so furious because they hadn't been chosen, and I lost my job.

WEIGAND: Oh?

WINSLOW: And — a number of things. They cited inappropriate dress, and I really did, I showed up — I was really skinny and everything else — and I showed up in tight blue jeans and tight tee-shirts and everything else. And ever since then, I've sort of dressed more formally than I needed to. I don't want anything to be a pretext for getting rid of me. I tried to file a sex discrimination suit but I really didn't have a case and it would've been very expensive and I was active in the union and they said they might help, but you could just get a sense of it. So I basically — I got a job on the eastern campus, which is in Beachwood. But even though it was in Beachwood, it still had a working-class population. In fact, middle-class white women who wanted to take sort of extracurricular things tended to go to Lakewood Community College. So I taught on the eastern campus and it was — I mean, I loved it. You know, my students were working class, usually African American women and white working-class women.

One of my greatest students was a black man. It was when I was teaching black history and I could tell — I walked into the classroom and

everybody had this look, like, why are you teaching African American history? It really took a while for me to win them over but when I gave them the book *The Black Jacobins* to read and they came to me and said they could not believe a white person would assign such a book because it was so wonderful. And then they read David Walker's *Appeal*, and they sort of were like, What is this crazy white woman giving us all of this wonderful stuff? It was a great class. And then, one semester, I did a black history through literature. They read John Hope Franklin's history but they read DuBois's *Souls of Black Folk*, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, Alice Walker, Malcolm X. It was sort of through literature and texts like that, and they had an assignment about — we had this wonderful discussion about Bigger Thomas — gender politics, sexual politics, and Bigger Thomas — and it really was what would have happened if Bigger met Janey. Do you remember?

WEIGAND: I've read the book but it was a long time ago.

WINSLOW: Janey is very — she has three husbands. People say it's an example of early black feminism. It was a fascinating discussion because we came to the conclusion that Bigger was terrified of women, and that he would've been terrified of Janey. It was just sort of like imagining all this stuff. It was really wonderful. And I know the cliché is you learn from your students, but you really do. You really do.

WEIGAND: So, how did they respond to women's history?

WINSLOW: Most of them were African American women and my belief is that if you give them — if the professor, the teacher, can give literature that connects to their experience, and helps make the connection, that's — it makes it. I think it also helped being a political activist. That is, I didn't see myself as apart, and I didn't see myself as examining their lives in an academic way, but sort of learning from their lives. And, granted, I lived in Cleveland Heights, but I went into Cleveland and so forth and, you know, I just — I think my political point of view and my political activism gave me a connection in a way that, you know, is very important.

WEIGAND: Did you have much of a connection with the field, the historical field at that point?

WINSLOW: I wrote this in the book *Voices of Women Historians*. I said when I first got to Cleveland, there was a group of Cleveland Council of Women Historians and I'd have to look it up — the woman who was the leader of it was at John Carroll [University] — and it was wonderful. I only went to one meeting because my political activism kept me away, and I stayed, of course, friendly with Sheila Rowbotham. Sheila was not an academic but she stayed on top of the field. And when I moved back to New York, I started going to women's academic things and I felt so out of it. I still do

in a way. I sort of still feel I'm — the academic world is not my primary world.

And even though I wrote a really good book on Sylvia Pankhurst, in the *Journal of Women's History* — I was furious about it — it got a review basically for not being postmodern enough. That is, the woman who wrote it said I should have gone into the kitchen with my — whatever it is, my literal/figurative spoon, and that's how I should have written the biography. I was very upset about it. I mean, you do get upset. But then I realized, My god, Sheila Rowbotham wrote the introduction so it couldn't have been that bad, and Edward Thompson thought it was wonderful. So my attitude is, who are you, woman? But it's not a postmodern book. It doesn't use the word discourse, I think, once. It doesn't problematize anything, and it's a political biography of a certain moment in this woman's life.

But I think the fact that I was out of the academy, and that I look at the academy differently, does affect my scholarship, my connections with people and so forth. So no, I wasn't [involved in the larger field of history]. I mean, I read a lot, I subscribe to labor history journals. Sure, when *Signs* came out, I subscribed to that, and I knew there was a Berkshire Conference on Women's History, and I wish I had gone to that, but when you're in this kind of sectarian politics, it's hard to do anything. And doing anything outside of sectarian politics is viewed as suspect.

WEIGAND: I wonder, too, if you could talk a little more — I mean, we talked yesterday about your becoming a mother, and you said that you, in your twenties, didn't think you wanted to have children, and then you really did. I was just wondering if you could talk a little more about that process. 08:25

WINSLOW: I was not particularly self-reflective until after my marriage ended. So, when you say, How did you feel about this? I probably never thought about it. All I knew is something was going on with me when we moved back to Cleveland. I had a house, and I think part of it is just you're in your thirties. You know, my older sister — a whole bunch of women I knew started getting pregnant, so I'm sure that was part of it, and part of evolving. But the thing that was very interesting about my pregnancy — I loved being pregnant. I loved it.

I remember I read Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born* when I was pregnant with Jessie, and that book gave me such insights into marriage and motherhood and pregnancy and ways to look at women in society. I mean, I think Adrienne Rich is a wonderful poet. I remember disagreeing with her about Israel and I think she's — I could be wrong — but if I remember, she's more of an essentialist than I clearly was. But her insights about the evolution of motherhood were absolutely fascinating and I used it when I would give talks about women and so forth. It was really very insightful.

WEIGAND: So when you had your baby, finally, after being pregnant — I know you said you loved it, and I totally know what you mean, but do you remember what it was like to really be a mother after thinking about it?

WINSLOW: Well, no, I'll tell you, I was never introspective. I remember loving being pregnant. I thought I looked beautiful. I looked voluptuous. After the first three months, I felt good. We were in England and a photographer from the *London Times* wanted to take nude photos of me. I wanted to do it. Cal said, "Absolutely not." And I remember saying to Cal, "You'll be in the room." And he said that would be even worse. But I mean, I really loved my body. And I remember thinking, Gosh, the changes in it were fascinating and I sort of felt sorry for men that they could never experience it. Now, part of it was I was very healthy. I swam a mile every day. I ate right. I didn't smoke then. I cut down on the drinking. No caffeine. So, I mean, for middle-class people, you're probably healthiest when you're pregnant, and this is something new because usually women, couldn't eat as well and so forth. And Susie Bright wrote about this, because Susie Bright is a friend of mine and was in this crazy group that we all were in. But I told her that –

WEIGAND: She was in the ISO? Wow.

WINSLOW: Yeah, the IS. Yes. When she was 16 she lived in my house in Detroit, and Susie and I have stayed really dear friends. In fact, yeah, I remember I was telling her that in the middle of giving birth, I got tremendously horny. I guess all the blood rushes to your clitoris and everything and I'm saying to Cal, "I'm horny," and he's looking at me like, Ah-h-h-h, what is this woman doing? And I know Susie wrote about this in one of her books about sexual feelings. So the whole physicality of the experience was wonderful. And the nursing — I mean, I remember, after Jessie was three weeks old, I took her to New York, maybe a month old, and I'm nursing her on the plane and her eyes were back in the sockets, you know, a when the baby's nursing, they make those orgasmic noises, and it was sort of like gives me insight into what Freud meant by sort of like the first stage about child sexuality. I mean, I could tell stories about my kids, about how it could inform my understandings. I mean, I remember when Jessie was about two years old, in the so-called Oedipal state, she walked into our women's group meeting and she looked around and she said, "Have any of you seen my daddy's penis? It's that big." And I mean, you know, talk about Oedipal. I mean, it's a hoot. It was really — and so it gives you insights. What does it mean? So, I loved it, I loved it, I loved it.

The other thing that would happen when I was pregnant with both girls is that's really when everybody trotted me out to speak on abortion rights. There was nothing better than to have somebody out to there talking about a woman's right to choose, or when you bring your baby with you on a pro-choice demonstration. And I remember when I was in Seattle, on our first demonstrations in Olympia, all the anti-abortion people had children

and none of us did. And we kept joking that we should rent children so at least (laughs) we looked like we had them. So, ten years later, we didn't need to rent children, we had our own.

WEIGAND: So, I have to ask you more about this Susie Bright thing, although I don't know what –

WINSLOW: Well, Susie became politically active when she was a teenager in California. She was in a group called the Red Tide. This group existed in the late 1960s and they hooked up with the International Socialists. And Susie and a whole bunch of them moved to Detroit to help organize young workers. So, Susie Bright and a guy named Michael Letwin, who is now the head of Labor Against the War, lived in the house we lived at when I lived in Detroit for two years. Susie and I became life friends. And when Susie left Trotskyist politics she moved back to Long Beach and had a partner, and then, I think she got a B.A. or finished her high school degree, and then she started writing about sexuality. We've stayed connected ever since. She has a daughter who's now a teenager named Aretha and I see her every time she comes to New York.

WEIGAND: I saw her speak at Smith once. It was a long time ago.

WINSLOW: Yeah, in fact she just interviewed me for one of her radio shows.

WEIGAND: Wow. It's another –

WINSLOW: It was all about the sexuality of people like Sylvia Pankhurst and Rosa Luxemberg, people that I knew really intimately, but it was a historical discussion on sexuality.

WEIGAND: I'm just sort of, as you know, fascinated by these ways that radical politics and social justice stuff sort of leads one to these other worlds, or maybe it doesn't lead them there, but –

WINSLOW: But you know something? Historically, it's true as well. I mean, sometimes people say what other period would you love to live in, and I would love to live in the period of the socialist internationalism of the turn of the century — like 1890 to 1920 — because there were all these different interconnections around Marxist politics and sexuality. I mean, in New York, there was the Heterodoxy Club. There was all sorts of experimentation and discussion about ideas about sexuality. And there was an equivalent group in England. After all, I've been thinking about this.

WEIGAND: And I wondered, too, if you could talk a little more about — this is kind of a vague question, but what some of the other left groups in Cleveland were doing around women's stuff in the period you were there? 16:40

WINSLOW: Well, I think it would be better just — I could talk a little bit about what was left of the left in that period because we had lots of groups in Cleveland and, this is not so much for you, but with the breakup of the new left, the bust up of SDS, a lot of people looked to what we called more orthodox Marxist groups. They were divided between what we would call the Trotskyists, and the Stalinist-Maoist groups. The Communist Party comes to women's liberation late, and I think all the orthodox groups are sympathetic to women's rights but hostile to feminism. I mean, that's the key thing.

There were a very few groups that genuinely supported autonomous women's organizing. For a brief time, the IS and the ISO did, for a very brief time, and then when they became sort of overcome by Trotskyist sectarianism, then they said no. And when the ISO did it was when they expelled me. But they all did work among women. First of all, every group was involved in the Coalition of Labor Union Women. The Socialist Workers Party got involved in the National Organization for Women for a period of time, then they left. A number of the Maoist groups and the Socialist Workers Party went into Women Coal Miners.

When the group I was involved in was involved in the Coalition of Labor Union Women and was involved in the pro-choice activities — plus the IS was involved in the teamsters' union in Cleveland — there was this one woman who was the second woman to get a job driving a truck for the United Parcel Service out in Oregon. She moved to Cleveland with us and she got a job driving a truck and she actually helped form the rank and file group among UPS drivers called UPSurge, which became part of Teamsters for a Democratic Union. And that's a reform current in the teamsters' union that still exists. Was she able to raise women's rights issues? No, I mean, not in any sense. It was part of that crazy IS strategy I described earlier. The idea is you send women into these industries and they will become leaders. Well, the only person she was going to be a leader of was other men. The UPS workers then were overwhelmingly white, although there were more African Americans who worked for United Parcel Service than in the other areas of freight.

There were a group of Maoists, I think they were called the Communist Workers Party, who were steel workers. But again, they worked in rank-and-file organizations and did not do anything really feminist. They were in the Coalition of Labor Union Women. There was a group in Cleveland called Modern Times, and they ended up all joining the IS and they were what we would call in the 1970s and '80s socialist feminists. There was a New American Movement group and a number of those women were in the pro-choice work but not in the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

And then Karen Nussbaum came and there was 9to5. Now 9to5 was, interestingly, was a women's organization. It wouldn't take a pro-choice position. It really didn't work with the other feminists. I think that they were really jealously guarding their position and, you know, they did a lot of very good things. I think Karen Nussbaum went on to work in the

Clinton administration. And they were involved in Peace and Justice. Peace and Justice would bring Jane Fonda out, and they worked with Jane Fonda. I mean, those were the main groups. I don't know what was left of the Communist Party in Cleveland and what they did, so I can't comment on that.

WEIGAND: It's interesting. Having grown up there, and my parents were particularly involved in integrationist politics, and I know that a lot of the people they worked with were older people who had, at one time, been Communists, but I don't know.

WINSLOW: Right. Well, they probably worked with Mickey Stern. I remember her.

WEIGAND: I don't remember that name.

WINSLOW: I met her later on. She was — what was that? — it was a group that began with Peace and Justice in Vietnam. Mickey Stern would always bring Holly Near to Cleveland so that whole milieu. And there was a very sort of liberal community that sort of coalesced around the first election of Stokes.

WEIGAND: Right.

WINSLOW: It was Geraldine Roberts, by the way, who spoke. Her name was Geraldine Roberts, from the Domestic Workers of America, who spoke at the International Women's Day. There's a picture of it in the book, the memoir book called *Voices of Women Historians*.

WEIGAND: I'll have to go back and look at it again.

WINSLOW: Yeah, I may have a copy here — all my little collections and books which I leave out to impress people.

WEIGAND: So, that's all I have to ask about Cleveland. Have I missed anything important?

WINSLOW: I'm sure, but I can't think of anything.

WEIGAND: Um, so, you moved to New York in –

WINSLOW: 1983.

WEIGAND: 1983.

WINSLOW: No, 1984. Sorry, the fall of 1984.

WEIGAND: I wondered, why New York?

23:00

WINSLOW: Well, our marriage was a mess. We wanted to find jobs, and there were only two possibilities. We had families in Seattle and New York, and my husband wanted to go to New York. I wanted to go to Seattle. I'm glad my husband won out on that. But we moved to New York and our marriage was, you know, a wreck. It was two months away from ending, and what he later told me finished it off was we both were applying for jobs in New York everywhere, and I got offered a full-time job and he was so angry at me, so I turned it down. Can you imagine? This feminist turns down a job to please her husband so he won't be mad at me. It made no difference, as soon as he heard I was offered the job and turned it down. I have no regrets because it was not a job I would've liked, but it meant that from 1984 to 1992, I was adjuncting all around New York. Who knows? Maybe if I'd taken it — it was a tenure-track job at Empire State — maybe I would've gotten tenure. Who knows what would have happened?

But to me, the interesting thing is, in order to what I thought would save my marriage, I turned down a job to make him happy and it didn't work anyway. That's a life lesson. And what makes that story sort of funny is when Cal and I first met and I had a chance to go to England for a year and we were madly in love, he was the one who said, "Don't give it up for me, because you'll use it against me if we ever fight. You should go and experience it." And I did it on my own, I thought. And I think that when I was making that decision — I can't remember exactly when, but two books had just came out on Emma Goldman and her love affair with Ben Reitman, and then there was the subsequent information about Simone DeBeauvoir and her relationship with Sartre. Now, I'm not comparing myself in any way with those two, but again, it shows the contradictions in people's lives. The public persona is one of a feminist, self-confident woman and yet the things we do to try to keep men happy, in spite of everything we know. I mean, I think that that's — I wanted to add that to my little story.

WEIGAND: Well, it is an interesting question.

WINSLOW: Why do we?

WEIGAND: Yeah. It's hard to overcome –

WINSLOW: And would I do it now?

WEIGAND: What do you think?

WINSLOW: I have no idea (laughs). I would like to think I wouldn't, but you never — I mean, I just don't know.

WEIGAND: So, you did this adjuncting stuff for a long time, and you're teaching history or women's history?

WINSLOW: I taught everything I could. I taught for three years at Barnard in the women's studies program. I taught women's history courses at the NYU School, the equivalent of the NYU extension program. I taught history at Baruch. I taught at the thematic studies program at John Jay. I taught a women's studies course at Hunter College.

And for two years, I taught the first women's studies classes at Riker's Island Prison. And that was really something. Now I think they have more programs, but when I was there, it was the first time. I did it through John Jay, which is the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which is part of the City University of New York. You had no resources. You had to do it all on your own. I had to find ways to bring books into the prison. I had to find a way to Xerox things. And I would drive to the prison — you had to go through all these complicated things to get in there. I will tell you — the romanticization of prisons and prisoners — I remember hearing the Richard Pryor riff on the movie he did with Gene Wilder and I remember him going, "I know why there are prisons, and I'm glad there are prisons."

The first day I walk in, when I was going in, they were telling me that they don't have any violent offenders. But they were talking about men, because the assumption was that women are not violent, even if there are women who have committed violent crimes. There was a woman in my class who killed her children in order to get crack, but that was not considered violent. Rapist men were not considered violent. They were only violent if they killed the woman or if they beat her up. So the act of rape in and of itself was not violent. It's a fascinating thing, gender politics in the prison.

Then you sort of ask why — and I'm in a classroom by myself. None of the prison officials are in the classroom, but they sit outside. And the question is, Why do they take the class? Well, the main reason they take the class is to get out of their cells, and a lot of them have their partners there, too. So it's a chance for them to sit with their partners. And they're not taking it necessarily to improve their minds or to work for their degree or anything else like that.

And you know, I thought a lot about, you know, how I would dress. I mean, I dressed just very basic — slacks and a shirt. I don't even think I wore earrings. I dressed very, very plainly. And the first day, I walk into my classroom, there's 75 people in the classroom, they're like ten whites and ten women, and I'm sure I had a look on my face that went, What am I doing here? And I walk in and I'm, Hello, How are you? They size you up the first minute. One of them raised their hand and said, "Can we open the window?" And I was told by the officials, you can't do anything without their permission. I'm looking around, going, I don't know the answer. We're on the first floor of the prison, and they're laughing, saying, We can't jump.

And it was just like you did everything wrong, and it was interesting what worked and didn't work. Nothing worked until I showed the movie *La Oppression*. This was a movie made in the late '70s or early '80s by

Anna Maria Garcia, and it's about sterilization abuse in Puerto Rico. It wasn't until I showed that movie that there was the click made with the students, because so many of them were Puerto Rican and they knew what this was all about. And I made a lot of mistakes.

I did stuff on violence against women and what was so surprising was how supportive everybody was about violence against women. It was really upsetting. I'd found this article about violence in lesbian relationships and it — at that time, we're talking about the '80s. The article was talking about that the greatest violence takes place among, I think, homosexual men, then heterosexual couples, then lesbian couples. And I was trying to get them to think about, you know, why this was. Well, one of the students was a lesbian, raised her hand, and said, "That's not true. My lover and I beat each other up and I stab her all the time."

So it was just sort of mind boggling, and I realized that I was doing everything wrong. So I totally changed my tack, and I went and I bought a whole bunch of books about women who had been in prison, including Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of My Soul*, and Assata Shakur's book, Winnie Mandela's, and then I had them write book reports about these women. That changed everything. I was gonna have them read *Sula*. At first I was thinking of Alice Walker and I said, "You know what? These men will go nuts," because it's mainly men in the class. So they read *Sula* by Toni Morrison and that worked. And what I realized is that they don't need to read about violence against women. They live it. You know, what they need is maybe the window of opportunity.

There was a student at Hunter who had been at Rikers. She was a recovering alcoholic, a recovering drug addict. She had been a prostitute, and she had been arrested for transporting stolen goods across state lines. She spent six months at Rikers. Now, Rikers is not a penitentiary, it's a jail. That is, you get arrested, go to Rikers. You're awaiting trial, you go to Rikers. You are waiting being sent to your penitentiary, you're at Rikers. It's a big holding pen, and so had been there for six months and she came and spoke. She was really gonna try to talk to the students about her research on prostitution. They weren't interested. They wanted to know how she stayed out, and it was wonderful. She just said, she said, "Hunter." She's a member of AA at Hunter, a member of NA at Hunter, and she said she needs help and she goes to her professors and her advisors and is constantly talking to people about help. She lost her child as a result of everything that happened. She's trying to get the child back. It was an incredible story. Those were the things that slowly got them to like me.

And then, I was doing reading about everything and I came across the fact that there's a painting by Faith Ringgold. Do you know who she is?

WEIGAND: No.

WINSLOW: Well, I've got a print of hers. She's a very famous African American artist who is probably — I actually argue she is one of the first to do black

feminist imagery. She was a radical painter. She was in the black arts movement, she becomes a feminist, and she does these very famous quilts. And I found out that there was a painting that she had done. She had been commissioned by the state of New York in 1972 or 1973 to do a painting for Rikers Island Prison. I went to the head of the prison and said, "Can I see this painting?" And it took like two weeks of rigamarole.

And I see this painting, and it's an extraordinary painting. I mean, we're talking about a painting done in 1973 — this is before "The Dinner Party," this is before any kind of discussion about feminist imagery. Linda Noklin has just written — her thing came out about 1971, so it was, you know, eight years. So it's the beginning of the feminist art history movement, of which Faith Ringgold was a central part. The painting is many different — it's triangular and it's many different stories about a woman being a basketball player, and this is before even anybody even thought of the WNBA. And the woman basketball player, I think, has Wilt Chamberlain's — no, two women basketball players, one with Wilt Chamberlain's number. There's a thing of a woman Supreme Court justice, a woman president, a woman the head of the Senate. And there's this very famous wedding scene, and it's two women walking down the aisle. Many people thought it was a gay marriage, but what it was, when you interview Faith, it was the mother walking the daughter down the aisle, and she was making a point: why does the father get to do it? The mother is much closer. The mother is more involved in the wedding. It was just wonderful.

And then she changed roles. There was a woman cop, and then she had a thing of that was clearly not a mother. It was a caregiver and a baby, and the baby was black and the caregiver was Asian. Faith said, "I don't know anything about Asian people." But it was her attempt — she had Hispanic women. It was really — it's an extraordinary piece of work. I always joke, the only way you get to see it is if you work at Rikers or if you get incarcerated.

So, I went to the head of the prison, and the class was held in the women's prison because they felt the women were less dangerous and less violent, which, by the way, is the thinking that goes on in prisons and it's why women get less resources than the men. The assumption is that the women aren't gonna revolt the way the men are. I asked if I could take my class to see this painting and to talk about it. It took about six weeks of negotiation, and finally, we all marched in front of this painting, and we spent 45 minutes talking about this painting. They loved it. The students loved it.

What I got out of that experience — I mean, it didn't matter, I could have been teaching cooking or shoemaking, or — it just didn't matter. But what it was, for two hours twice a week, there was somebody who actually cared about them, who was interested. Do I think it made a difference? Probably not, because it was only two hours twice a week for 16 weeks.

About two years later, I was in a book store in the Village and I ran into one of my students. He was so nice. I mean, in the end, they all really liked me, and the last day I taught it was an extraordinary experience. There was another guy who taught with me who was also at John Jay and taught acting. The last day he couldn't be there so he asked this friend of his who was on the soap opera *All My Children*. Now, I don't watch soaps, and it's not because I'm a wonderful moral person. I just work during the day so I don't get a chance to see them.

This was a black actor who played a doctor on the soap opera *All My Children*, and when the word came that he was coming, it was like Brad Pitt was coming, or Denzel Washington. Everybody was so excited. I introduced myself and I said to him, "Listen, there is no way my class will function. Could we put the two classes together?" And he said, "Sure." A bigger audience for himself, and I got permission, because my class would've been just furious. So we all met and it was very interesting. He begins by talking about himself, as actors do, for a half an hour and then he did this piece. He'd been in this play and it was about a white cop who mistakenly shoots a black kid, and he did part of it. It was really moving. It was really, really moving.

And then, he got the students doing improvisations. The first one he did — we had two or three groups of students do it. He said, "This is the situation. The man is at work, he comes home, he wants to go out partying, but the wife has been with the kid, is tired, doesn't" — no, no, no, sorry. He said, "The man comes home, he's tired. He just wants his bottle of beer, sit in front of the TV, veg out. The wife has been home with the kids, she wants to get dressed up and party. Resolve this without violence." The improvs were wonderful. Then, he was calling the next group and I raised my hand and my class laughed, because they knew what I was going to do. I said, "This is how we're gonna do it. The woman's been working all day. She comes home, she would like her dinner made, to have her bottle of beer, and just chill. The man has not been working. He wants to go out and party. Resolve it without violence." And they couldn't — they couldn't imagine. It was so interesting. It was just, everybody was just —

I tried to write an article for *Feminist Teacher* or *Radical Teacher* from the Feminist Press and they didn't like what I had done or something. To this day, I wish I had written about it because it really was an extraordinary experience. Then I did two presentations at the National Women's Studies Association on my experience. The first presentation was a total disaster, because there were all these women who, when I talked about preparation and I said I was very careful about how I dressed, didn't wear my rings, you know, black, gray, brown slacks, nothing that revealed. They were denouncing me for this. I mean, they were going on and on and on saying, You should be yourself.

And at one point, this one woman said, "Prisoners are the most honest people in the world." And I felt like saying, "Nope, they're not." I mean, it's not like everybody was in prison is Nelson Mandela. They're in there

because they're thieves and robbers and muggers and rapists and drug dealers, and I'm very sympathetic to the social causes and consequences of inequality and how it creates crime, but let's not romanticize. It was the most disastrous thing. They were denouncing me because I would use the word "prisoners," and I'd say, "You're right. I could use criminal offenders. I could use my students." I tried using them interchangeably. It was just — it was the National Women's Studies Association, the famous one in Akron where they had the big bust-up about racism and stuff. I don't know if you would've ever heard about it.

WEIGAND: I was in graduate school then. I was going to go that year and I didn't.

WINSLOW: I had a friend who went to it and they had a panel on vegetarianism and they basically said, If you eat meat, you can't be a feminist. She was so furious about it, she went and ordered a roast beef sandwich and ate it ostentatiously. Susie Bright had been invited to that one and she had told me the reason she didn't go is, a few months earlier she had been invited to speak — I think it was the University of Indiana or Ohio or someplace — and she was denounced for wearing perfume. It was almost the height of what everybody said about what was wrong with women's studies. I mean, it was just awful.

But as a result of it, I formed the first task force on teaching women's studies to criminal offenders, and then I went back two years later and did it and it was really very good. I was able to bring together people who had taught, whether it was literacy or what have you, in prison situations and it was very, very effective because there was none of this BS going on about romanticizing prisoners.

And I stopped getting involved with NWSA. They have it at times that are not good and I'm not always crazy about the agenda. But I know the task force still exists and I think it's really terrific that women are in the prisons teaching. There were a group of lawyers who went into Rikers Island to help women with their rights. Rikers Island had a nursery, and you could keep your child in the nursery until it was a year old, and then it had to go. So it was a very sad time. You think of your kid's first birthday — I mean, I remember Jessie's and Samantha's first birthday. I had huge parties. It was sort of like the greatest birthday. And for a lot of the women, it's an exciting birthday but it was a sad time. And even though Phyllis Chesler's book *Mothers On Trial* is very, very flawed, a lot of stuff that she wrote about women in the prisons is really right in that so many women lose custody of their children, lose their kids into the foster care system for no other reason than being somebody's drug pusher. So I would say the Rikers Island experience, difficult as it was, was one of the highlights of teaching.

The other thing about teaching in New York, I was asked to co-teach a course with a colleague of mine who was an art historian, called Women as Subject, Women as Object: The Female Nude in the Western Tradition. It was a great course, and I would love to try to teach it again, if I could

only get the women's studies program going at Brooklyn College. It's going fine, we're just revitalizing it.

But there were two aspects of it, three, that were really great. One, we did a whole thing on pornography, and this was during the height of the debate over pornography. I didn't totally agree but I did have some sympathy with the anti-porn people, and as a result of that module, which lasted two weeks. It was fascinating. The first assignment we gave our students is that they had to write a definition of pornography and bring it in. Then, Mary Gibbons and I, the woman who I co-taught it with, we went out and found a painting that appeared in the Met, the Louvre, you name it, that went into everybody's definition and that's when I learned there is no such — you can't define pornography. Whichever Supreme Court justice says, "I know it when I see it" — it was that, it was really interesting. People were really quite shocked because they said, Well, you know, sexuality of children is pornographic and then you show them the Gaugins. And they go, Oh, animals. You show them the Fragonard, you know, the lady with the dog. I mean, it was just so interesting.

And the other part that was wonderful was that I got to meet a number of women artists who became friends: Josalee Carvio, who does really great leftwing feminist art, a woman named Emma Amos — I had one of her wall hangings up there [gesturing] but I lent it to a museum.

For the — it had to be the 1990 Berks at Rutgers — I organized a panel on race, gender, and the female nude. And that was, in part, a disaster but it sort of brought me into the world of women artists and that was very useful. I learned how to look at things visually and how to use visuals with my teaching. So that was a wonderful class and I taught it two years in a row at Baruch and one year at Hunter. I did it with Mary all three times. It was really wonderful. It was very, very interesting.

WEIGAND: It sounds like it.

WINSLOW: It was a great class and I'll try to recreate it, if I could, when we develop courses at Brooklyn.

WEIGAND: So, I know, since then, you've been really active in the — oh, I had the initials here– 46:55

WINSLOW: Well, I joined, when I moved to New York–

WEIGAND: CCWHP [Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession] and the –

WINSLOW: Well, first in New York City, I joined the Brooklyn Pro-Choice Network and it was, you know, pro-choice activists in Brooklyn. It was really terrific. I mean, we did a lot of clinic escorting, you know, picketing, demonstrating, defense of clinics, and I designed our button. It was the Brooklyn Bridge and it said, "Brooklyn is Pro-Choice" and we had a big

banner that said, "Brooklyn is Pro-choice" and I stayed active in that for quite a while.

And then, just the full-time work, it made it difficult. The other thing, you're right, what happened was I became involved in both CCWH and the Berks. I was the executive director of a group — at that point it was called the Coordinating Committee of Women Historians' Conference Group on Women's History. It was a way to bring together women historians and people who did the history of women. It's affiliated with, but it's not part of, the American Historical Association and it has played a very important role in promoting women's leadership in the American Historical Association, which is the major professional organization of historians.

One of the things it demanded and won when it was first was founded in what, 1969 or '70, was that there had to be at least one person of both sexes on any panel. In 1968, probably 6 percent of the panelists were women. Now, I think the majority of the panelists are women. But if I'm going to do a panel on women's history, I also have to have one man on the panel. I said, "Could you imagine if we passed that rule regarding racial diversification?" We'd get more people of color into graduate school. We're trying in terms of the academy itself and that's tougher. But we've made great progress, so it's a wonderful network.

And CCWH has also done a lot of activist work in terms of promoting the Sears case, which involved — it's a very famous court case with two leading historians, Alice Kessler-Harris and Rosalyn Rosenberg, testifying against each other, really, in a case involving Sears and gender discrimination. We helped co-author the brief on abortion that went to the Supreme Court — the historians' brief on abortion — which, I can't remember if it was the Casey case or one of the cases, but it was a major brief. And, so, that's the kind of work we do.

And then the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians is the oldest women's history group and, every three years, they have a big conference on women's history. The next conference is in 2005 and, for the first time, they're going to have a teaching day and I helped organize that for kindergarten through twelfth-grade teachers. So, yeah, it's very important.

WEIGAND: So it was through those organizations that you've got more connected and involved in the profession?

WINSLOW: Connected, yeah — more involved in the profession. These groups are, in a sense, less academic so that when we're together, we're not necessarily problematizing discourse and stuff, but we're actually talking about real issues involving gender and race. So it makes it a little bit easier for me to feel that I'm part of the academy. And now that I'm located at Brooklyn College in the school of education, there's less discussion about history there, so in a sense, by being in these groups, I sort of stay abreast of what's going on in my field.

WEIGAND: Did you find it difficult, getting involved in those groups and taken seriously in those groups, having had the kind of unconventional academic career that you had?

WINSLOW: No, no, no, just the opposite. What — how I got my job at CCWH — a really close friend of mine, Eileen Boris — do you know the name?

WEIGAND: Yeah, I do. I know Eileen.

WINSLOW: Eileen and I were in the Reproductive Rights National Network together and she's married to Nelson Lichtenstein. Nelson and I were in the IS together.

WEIGAND: Oh, I didn't know he was in the IS. That makes sense.

WINSLOW: In fact, I expelled him for (unclear) deviation, and Nelson and I are now really good friends and play tennis together and Eileen and I do our history work. I was adjuncting and I was looking for work and Eileen called me up and said would I like to be the executive director of this group and so, I said, "Well, tell me what it's about," and she said, "A group of historians are going to Washington to lobby," and this was around the gag rule. So I said sure. And so I went to Washington.

It's the only time I've ever lobbied in Washington, D.C., and I will never do it again. It was about the gag rule, and we were going go speak to Republican senators and members of the House of Representatives to urge them to oppose the gag rule and to thank those who did. And I remember, we had to dress up and we'd get our marching orders and we have to be polite, and you'd have your badge saying Barbara Winslow, New York City. If you don't vote in that state, they don't care about you. They barely look at you. And part of me thought, How could anybody support a law that prevented doctors from giving the full range of options to women regarding medical treatment? It's — I mean, there'd never be a law that said you have a cancer and you can only be told about chemotherapy. You can't be told about surgery or anything else. You can only be told about this one thing. It's outrageous. And I just said, "I can't sit and go, Oh, thank you for doing what you're supposed to do." But I had to.

And what was good was I was from New York, so nobody paid attention to me anyway. I hated it, and they're just so smug and full of themselves and their legislative aides are even worse. And then you meet somebody who's really hostile, and it's like the aide is the one who evokes the senator's utter contempt and you know, ego. I remember we met with Schumer from New York, and Schumer's from Park Slope and I live in Park Slope, and he would always walk by our table, we would have it up on Seventh Avenue, raising money for our group. He'd always come by and he'd go, I'm pro-choice, and I'd say, "Good — give us a dollar." He wouldn't give us a dollar, and I would embarrass him and he would finally end up giving us a dollar or something like that.

But it was through that that I got to meet the women in CCWH. When I was there Nancy Hewitt was active. I mean, you had activists like Nancy Hewitt, Eileen, so that was not the issue with me. And I'd go to AHA and I started delivering papers when I started doing my research on Sylvia. And then I'm writing a book on the women's liberation movement and I realize that what I'm doing is interesting and good and blah-blah-blah. So I am a little less insecure, but I do feel part of me is very alienated from that world.

WEIGAND: We're almost at the end of this tape. The other thing I was thinking is, when you moved back to New York, you must have been in closer proximity to your family of origin? 55:00

WINSLOW: Right.

WEIGAND: And that made me wonder what your relationship with them was like when you were an adult. It sounds like you had this –

WINSLOW: Well, when I moved back, my father had Alzheimer's and my two sisters lived in Westchester. Both sisters were married. What was interesting about the family dynamic is because I was the only person not married, and given that I was basically raised that you should be thin, beautiful, and well married, but I'm not married and so I was treated very differently, or I felt I was. But I'll give you one interesting example about family dynamics. When my grandmother died — my mother's mother died — and we were at the funeral and we were arranging the cars that go to the cemetery. My mother goes, OK, Jeannie — my older sister — you'll be in this car. Debra, you'll be in that car. Oh, Barbara, you can drive your car. And I gave my mother the dirtiest look. Now, my mother isn't stupid. She knew what she did was wrong. But I'm absolutely convinced it was because I didn't have a husband, so I was not as important.

After my father died, my mother had to figure out how to be somebody besides Mrs. Alfred Slaner. That wasn't easy for my mother, because my mother was an angry woman and she was an alcoholic. She was no day at the beach. But what was interesting is that she went back and started taking classes at SUNY-Purchase and she really loved it. I think being in a classroom and getting to sort of see other people and different kind of interactions — it didn't make her a kinder, gentler person but it opened her up to a lot of things. But I think my mother was always Mrs. Alfred Slaner and I always felt my father didn't particularly like me.

END DVD 4

DVD 5

WEIGAND: So you were saying your mother was taking classes at SUNY Purchase and –

WINSLOW: And I just think it opened up her world quite a bit. I think it was only when my father died that she began to appreciate and like me for who I was. I think as long as she was married to my father, she couldn't really approve of me, because my father didn't really approve of me. But, you know, I was as close to my mother as one could possibly be. I think she ended her life actually loving me very much and, when she died — I remember I was very depressed after my father died. I wasn't depressed after my mother died and I think it was because I had a good relationship, or as good as relationship as anybody could have with one's mother. It made a big difference. But, by the time we moved back, because of the Alzheimer's, you know — he was all right for a while. He didn't like this one man I was dating and so that added to the disapproval.

WEIGAND: So do you think the disapproval was because of your politics?

WINSLOW: Yeah. I didn't end up growing up to be a corporate wife, and when I broke up with Cal, he said to me, well — and he didn't dislike Cal. But he said, "Well, I hope you now marry someone who doesn't have those kinds of politics." At one point threatened to cut me out of the will and I said, "Well, it's your money, you can do anything you want to with it. It's not gonna make me like you any more if you do it," and so, he stopped. I mean, he would threaten me and I said, "Do you think that I have my politics because of money?" I said, "Do you think if you cut me off, I'm going to become another person?" I said, "You can, there's nothing I can do about it." But he — you know, he just didn't approve of me. And it's interesting, because he was liberal. He thought — he believed in women's rights, he believed women should be independent and so forth, but he also felt that, you know, you should be a certain way, and I wasn't.

WEIGAND: So you don't think that there was tension because of your socialism and their world, or –

WINSLOW: Well, the biggest fights we had were actually not about socialism. It was Israel and trade unions, because they both were Zionists. I mean, we had screaming fights. And then, after a while, we just wouldn't argue. I mean, we would just shut up and talk about things that we didn't fight about, and that bothered my father, but I didn't want to have screaming fights every time I came to New York over something we're not going to convince each other about, so we might as well talk about the Yankees or how awful Nixon was, or Ford or something like that. But –

WEIGAND: So, in the end, was it a good thing to be closer geographically to them?

WINSLOW: Oh, yeah, oh absolutely. I laughed. You know, once you have kids, you begin to appreciate your parents, I think.

WEIGAND: Right, or at least to sympathize more with them.

WINSLOW: And, I think it's better to have difficult grandparents who care than no grandparents. And I stayed close with my mother-in-law and I insisted that my kids have relationships with both — you know, Cal's family and so forth, even though Cal became estranged from his family. I think it's very important. I think the more people who love your children, the better off they are. And, you know, I don't know who thinks the nuclear family is a good thing, but extended families are really important.

WEIGAND: How about politically? You mentioned that you did that pro-choice stuff briefly, and certainly there was politics around your teaching work, but did you continue to do other kinds of political work in Brooklyn? 04:00

WINSLOW: Oh, yeah. I'm involved in Brooklyn Parents for Peace and I'm involved in my union and I actually believe those of us who work in CUNY campuses — City University of New York — that in a sense that's political work. I have a commitment to public education, to the mission of CUNY, which is to teach the immigrant and working-class community. So I see what I do every day is political. Education is certainly political and politicized. So the fact that I'm not in a socialist group doesn't mean that I'm not political.

WEIGAND: Right. This is a sort of a vague question, but do you see what you've done over the years as relatively continuous?

WINSLOW: Continuing?

WEIGAND: Yeah.

WINSLOW: Well, the continuing is the activism. The question is, Do I see myself as a socialist? Yes. A Marxist? Yes. But then the question is, What does that mean today? I mean, I hate capitalism. I think it's awful. Would I like it overthrown? Yes. Does that mean I'm a revolutionary? Yes. But what does that mean? You know, we live in a particular kind of world. Do I think that what groups like the International Socialist Organization does is helping to get rid of capitalism? Probably not. Is it better that there's the voice of keeping these ideas alive? Perhaps. To what extent are Lenin's writings and Trotsky's writing applicable today? Probably not very much, just because times have changed and they were writing about their experiences in a backward country with no traditions of self-government. We're talking about the United States, with different sets of traditions. Yes, they had a lot of insights. Useful, most of them aren't. I think the

worst thing people could read is Lenin's *What Is To Be Done* right now. There are other basic things to read.

WEIGAND: What do you think are the important things to be done that can be done now? If you had the time and the energy, where would you want to put your political energies?

WINSLOW: Well, whether I have the time or the energy, what I'm doing between now and November 2nd is anything I can do to defeat Bush. And who knows, if he wins the election, they may burn these tapes. But I do believe if Bush gets elected for the first time, it will be the end of constitutional republican — small R — form of government. I think that what he will do — the thought is so dreadful, it's hard to believe. Now, whether or not we're going to succeed is another story, but I know that's what I'm doing between now and next November.

If Bush gets elected, I probably will spend a few months trying to recover and figure out, then, what we do next. I mean, I'm not particularly confident of what would happen if Kerry gets elected. I am absolutely convinced that if Gore had been allowed to be president of the United States, he would have been impeached as a result of September 11th. I think the right wing is out to run this country. I think that, basically, there is this fascist group that runs the Republican Party and I think we're in for very serious problems. And, as I said, if Kerry gets elected and the Senate continues to be Republican and the House is Republican and god knows, the courts are, I don't know what he can do, except maybe just stave off. But the Democratic Party believes that by moving to the center, they're going to accomplish something. I think by moving to the center, all they're gonna do is get more votes for Bush. So, it's — we're in very discouraging times.

WEIGAND: I know that you serve on the board of the North Star Fund?

WINSLOW: Y es.

WEIGAND: I don't know a lot about it.

WINSLOW: The North Star Fund is one of a number of groups of progressive funds. They're connected in an organization called the Funding Exchange. They all were founded in the late 1960s by young women and men who came from very wealthy families but who had been affected by the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, women, and lesbian and gay movement. What they did is they gave a lot of their money to fund organizations that would fund grassroots progressive organizations, but also to change the way one looks at money.

These groups — I can talk about North Star — is what's called, the slogan is, "Change, not Charity." It's the idea of creating partnerships with activists and donors. Many of the donors — and I became a donor — are

also activists. But what distinguishes it from other groups is that donors give their money to the organization and where the money goes is decided by a board of activists. It's called the grant-making board. And the group that decides to make the grants are leading activists in the city: health care and housing and women's rights and workers rights and the arts and so forth. So, in other words, the donors don't decide where the money goes. Now, for me, when I got my inheritances, the *New York Times* actually did a story about me and it was about how women are a new generation of donors. What I did when my grandmother died is set up a fund which we call part of an overground railroad. It's used to help teenage women in states where they could not get abortions to come to New York to be able to obtain abortions. That was written up in the *Times*.

I joined with North Star because I was in New York. I was not in a political group, I wanted to be politically active, and I was coming into money. This was causing all sorts of issues for me. And so the North Star Fund enabled me to find a really good political outlet for the kind of things I want to do. I can just give my money away, whatever part of my inheritance I could give away, because I don't believe in inherited wealth. I laughed. I said, "I give my inherited wealth to help create a system to get rid of inherited wealth." I sort of like that description of myself.

It got me to work with a wide range of activist organizations without making myself feel like Lady Bountiful. And because I can't control where the money goes, that's also a good thing. And then the North Star Fund has events for the donors where you talk about issues of inheriting money, and gender issues of inheriting money, as well as things like socially responsible investing or relationships, if you have money and your partner doesn't, and so forth. So, it was a wonderful world for me.

I'm now on the advisory board. I've been on the board for 11 years. The woman who had been the executive director was one of my closest friends. She was killed two summers ago. It was just horrible. I'd been off the board for about six months before she was killed. But I'm on the advisory board and I continue to work with them all the time.

WEIGAND: Yeah, so that's another –

WINSLOW: It's a political act, yeah, and it could lead to a whole range of discussions about women and money and all this sort of stuff, which, you know, if you have 80 more rolls of tape, which you probably don't, but –

WEIGAND: Well, I think those are all the questions about the New York years that I was able to come up with, given how little I know about you during that time.

WINSLOW: I think that's it. I raised my kids. I played on three/five tennis team. I said this in the *Feminist Memoir Project*. I was able to struggle and I became tenured. I'm hopefully going to get promoted and who knows what's

going to happen. I'm looking forward to becoming a grandmother (laughs).

WEIGAND: A lot of people say that. I have some reflections questions that I ask everybody. They're sort of grandiose, but if you had to list your most important contributions or achievements to the movements or to the world or whatever –

WINSLOW: Well, I'll tell you. I know it sounds like Jackie Kennedy but I think my daughters are the greatest gift that I could give. They're great, great kids. Other than that, I think that my contribution to the women's movement — I mean, I was one of many hundreds of thousands, and I believe, and I have written this, but I believe that the second-wave feminism is the movement that has had the longest lasting contribution. It has saved women's lives. It has improved women's lives, not only in the United States, but globally. I played my own little role in that, you know. If I die tomorrow, I feel it's OK, it's OK.

WEIGAND: Are there major things you might have done differently if you could go back?

WINSLOW: You know, I really don't know. I mean, when I was in the IS and the ISO, I was not a nice person. I think — whatever it was — my personality in a sectarian group brought out the worst in me. Once I left the group — most people weren't very nice, you know? Having spent all these years in this group, you had to be hard and you had to be this and you had to be that. I struggled very hard about it. Is there anything I'd do differently? Regret? I don't regret having been into Trotskyist politics. It got me into a working-class milieu, which was very, very important. Sometimes I think if I hadn't done it, I'd be a full professor and I would have written more books and I'd be more blah-blah-blah. But then I say, you know, the experiences I've had were just wonderful. I have no regrets. I don't have very many regrets when I do things. It's — what would you do differently? I don't think that's particularly useful. The only thing I can say about myself is I did not like who I was when I was in that group. I didn't have any friends. I didn't have a life. I'm better off not being in a sectarian group.

WEIGAND: This is a question I've mostly asked people who are really quite old — women in their eighties and –

WINSLOW: And I'm a youngster at 59.

WEIGAND: Well, you are, but nevertheless, I have this question about how you want to be remembered. What legacy do you want to be thought of as having left behind?

WINSLOW: Well, I know I will leave a legacy to women's studies. That I know. I'm not worried about that. Part of the legacy will be how my kids turn out. I'd like to be remembered as somebody with a good sense of humor (laughter). I mean, it's — I'm not gonna have a gravestone so it's not gonna be, Here is Barbara Winslow, remembered for blah-blah-blah. So, you know, you're remembered for, you know, because I've written, it's always going to be there, for better or for worse.

WEIGAND: So, we've talked about a lot of things. Is there anything that you were hoping I would ask about that I didn't? Or are there things you feel like have been left out?

WINSLOW: I'm trying to think. No. I just –

WEIGAND: OK. Well, maybe we're done then.

WINSLOW: OK.

END DVD 5

END INTERVIEW