

**BETTY BALL.**

**TRANSCRIPT of OH 1233 A-B**

This interview was recorded on October 24, 2003, as part of the University of Colorado class "Critical Thinking in Feminist Studies," under the direction of Professor Anne Marie Pois. The interviewer is Jennifer Davis. The transcript was prepared by Sandy Adler.

**ABSTRACT:** Betty Ball describes her life's work as an activist who put into practice the philosophy of "one struggle, many fronts," as she worked on problems and in settings as varied as Hull House in Chicago, environmental issues in California. In the Denver/Boulder area, she has worked with an alternative resource center for hippies and transients; an anti-racism program, the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, a non-violence education program, and on pesticide issues.

**NOTE:** Interviewer's questions and comments appear in parentheses. Added material appears in brackets.

[A].

00:00 (My name is Jennifer Davis. It's October 24, 2003 and I'm interviewing Betty Ball at the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center. Can we start by talking about your background?)

Sure. What would you like to talk about?

(Start by talking about your childhood, where you grew up, your family—)

My father was a YMCA director. My mom was a teacher of handicapped, physically disabled kids. We were in Milwaukee. That's where I was born was in Milwaukee and we lived there the first six years of my life. Then my dad was transferred to Scottsbluff, Nebraska, to start a YMCA there. My mom actually started the handicapped program in the schools in Scottsbluff at that time. And she—it was like a demonstration room. That was pretty exciting. She got to work with the University of Nebraska in setting it up. Then they were doing a study and collecting data about how the program was working. So that was pretty neat. My dad started a YMCA there. I went through fourth grade there.

Actually, I went partly through fourth grade there. Then we moved to Lubbock, Texas, which was a total shock to my system. It was—I had never experienced anything like the South before. It was in the days of "separate but equal" \_\_\_\_\_. I was just shocked to discover two water fountains on every corner; two elevators; signs in windows marked "No Coloreds Allowed," just really amazing stuff. It had a huge impact on me. My dad was really limited in the work that he could do because of the segregation. He couldn't

have African-American people come to the YMCA. So we started a separate program for them in their neighborhood and worked out of the schools and on the playgrounds of the schools there.

(Your dad did that?)

Mm-hmm. It was really great to get to be a part of this African-American community, which was absolutely shunned by the rest of the community. They built a new high school then because of the “separate but equal” stuff and wanting to provide funding so that they would have so-called “equal” schools. Well, yes and no. What they had the BEST of was the Home Ec Department. They had the state-of-the-art Home Ec Department. Because they just expected that these girls would end up being maids for the white community.

Anyway, it was a really great experience. I was really glad to be there. And I was always baffled about why the Latino kids could go to school with us but the African-Americans couldn't. I mean I didn't understand the racism and the segregation in the first place, but I really didn't understand that finer division of who was OK and who wasn't. Not that the Latinos were treated well, but they at least were allowed to go to the school.

So we were there clear through—I graduated high school in Lubbock, Texas. Then I came to CU. I started out majoring in physical therapy. And that didn't last long—about as long as until I got to kinesiology, and then I realized that that wasn't the field I wanted. I really didn't like the sciences at all. So I decided to follow in my Dad's footsteps instead of my Mom's, and I switched to sociology. Then I was working with the Town & Country YWCA while I was going to school here and realized that I really loved that work. I actually ended up literally following in my Dad's footsteps and went to George Williams College outside of—well, it was in Chicago when I went there.

05:12 So, I ended up going to George Williams College, which was founded by the YMCA to educate people to do recreation and group work and all kinds of things in YMCAs and in settlement houses and in Boys Clubs, Girls Clubs and that was great. I really loved George Williams College. The first year I was there, they were still in Hyde Park in Chicago, which was a great laboratory for what we were studying, because we were right there. Saul Alinsky was just up the street at the University of Chicago. So we had access to him and all his knowledge and on community organizing. All of our field work placements were, if not within walking distance, within an easy bus commute.

There were a lot of riots happening. The Blackstone Rangers, who Saul Alinsky was actually working with at the time, and other gangs were pretty active. There were a lot of riots and uprisings. So the school decided that maybe middle-class white parents weren't feeling comfortable in sending their kids to George Williams because it was on the South Side of Chicago. So they built a new campus out in the suburbs outside of Downers Grove, which was ludicrous, because it removed us from everything we were supposed to be becoming and studying about. We then had at least an hour drive or an hour-and-a-half train commute to go into our field work placements. And we were isolated! We weren't

in ANY community. We were outside of Downers Grove—Downers Grove was the closest one but it was not—we weren't really in Downers Grove. It was beautiful! They had a wetlands there, an arboretum, and it was actually gorgeous, but not the urban environment that would have furthered our studies. As it turned out, that was really true and it wasn't—their lack of funding was not due to white parents not wanting to send their kids to school. It was probably more due to the fact of what they were training us to do! They were training us to go into social work fields and recreation fields and community organizing fields—and those fields don't pay a good deal of money. So their alums aren't wealthy and there alums are not able to make huge endowments and gifts to the college. Not only that, they don't have any defense contracts. So they were really hurting for money. And about five years after I graduated, the school actually had to close down.

(What time frame was that? Do you know around what year that was?)

I graduated in 1967. So by '72, the school had actually closed down. They've now merged with Aurora University in Aurora, Illinois, which is kind of interesting but it may

\_\_\_\_\_.

While I was finishing my senior year at George Williams, my field work placement was at Jane Addams' Hull House. That was just great because Jane Addams had always been one of my models. And the work at that settlement house was great. I was interning to the program coordinator and helped set up after-school groups for kids and make home visits and meet all the families of the kids that were participating in the program, and helping organize day camp. And when I graduated, I actually got hired. That was really cool. I loved it.

10:10 I was living on the North Side, which is where that center of Hull House was. After Jane Addams started Hull House and it really was flourishing, they actually created several Hull House associations. So there were Hull House associations in four or five neighborhoods in Chicago. I was at the one on the North Side. [Pauses to talk to someone entering her office]

Working at Hull House was a really neat experience. We were in a neighborhood that was very diverse, but segregated in its own way. Because the neighborhood we were in spanned from Lakeshore Drive clear to—getting into the West Side of Chicago. Lakeshore Drive and the apartments just a block or two west of Lakeshore Drive were more affluent and basically either Jewish or Anglo people, who were more affluent. Then as you moved back west into the neighborhood, it sort of morphed into Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Mexican, some African-Americans, but generally the African-Americans lived a little further north. So it was a diverse neighborhood. There were a lot of people from Appalachia, too. A lot of Appalachian people had migrated to Chicago and settled in that neighborhood as well. So it was a really interesting neighborhood and, I really loved working there. Like I was saying, gangs were pretty active at that point in time. But there was also a lot of politicizing of the gangs going on. This was the time when the Black Panthers were getting started, and the Brown Berets were getting started, the

Young Lords were getting started. And they were—through the help of some great community organizers—being kind of converted into political groups, which was very cool. So that was exciting.

We had—one of the kids we worked with was shot in the back by a cop at a fast food restaurant. The cop claimed self-defense, although no weapon was ever found, and he was shot in the back! We did a lot of organizing with the churches in the neighborhood to protest this and did protest it around there. We did a march and demonstrations around the precinct police department. It was the first time that I know of that I got my picture taken for the police files. But it had very little impact at that time. I think it was a step, but it had very little impact. The day that the sentencing occurred, there was a man being sentenced to—had been found guilty of petty theft and he was sentenced to five years. The cop—you guessed it—was sentenced to the internal investigation division, so that he was taken off the beat and he was put on probation, but he still got to work at the police station. So that was one of many interesting experiences.

I loved the day camp that we created. We took kids up to the forest preserves during the day, and did a lot of activities, took them to the Museum of Science and Industry, the Natural History Museum, just all kinds of good stuff that we got to do with the kids. Of course, traveling in Chicago on the El is always interesting. One time we actually lost three kids because the El door shut before they got on. We had to get off at the next stop and take the El back to where we had left the kids and start over again.

15:23 I was there—that was when the Democratic Convention happened, in 1968. Chicago became—first, Martin Luther King was assassinated. So that was a heavy-duty time. There were massive riots after he was killed, in Old Town and on the South Side of Chicago.

We were also—we were being under surveillance because of our protesting at the police department. So there was tear gas being used all over the place in Chicago. That was for the so-called suspected arsonists and to disrupt any crowds that might be gathering for protests and whatnot.

One day I was sitting in my office—this building where Hull House was used to be a Jewish temple. My office was on the fourth floor of the Jewish temple, which was also where the gymnasium was. Don't ask me why they put the gymnasium on the fourth floor. It made it very noisy for the rest of the offices. And there was a fire escape that went down to the alley that came up into the gymnasium. My office was just right—the door was here and there was just—adjacent doors to the gym and to my office. So one day I was in my office and it was really nice weather out and so for some fresh air I had opened the door of the fire escape, and a tear gas canister came flying in the door.

One of my colleagues that I worked with very closely, Jean Michener [?], had her house entered and they were going through stuff in her house as well. They would do things to make it apparent that they had been there. Like they would leave the radio on when she had had it off and they would move things just so she knew that somebody had—make it

creepy for her. You know, just harassment.

So all this was going on, and this was right around the same time that King was assassinated. And then, of course, there were preparations throughout the summer for the Democratic Convention. The Yippies came to town, the Youth International Political Party. There was Jerry Rubin and a bunch of other names you've probably heard; the radical people that were really active that sort of orchestrated the protests at the Democratic Convention. People were starting to come for that and taking over Lincoln Park. There was a lot of looting and vandalism and whatnot that was going on, just sort of random. After one day when the police had arrested a bunch of people, some of the protesters set some fires in and around Lincoln Park. That was when Mayor Daley issued his shoot to kill arsonists and shoot to maim looters order.

Then there was the—the convention happened, and it was incredible. There were tens of thousands of people in Lincoln Park and down at Grant Park across the street from the hotel where the convention was being held. The number of National Guard people and Chicago cops that were there—it must have been like Seattle [during the World Trade Organization demonstrations in 1999]. I didn't get to go to Seattle, but it must have been very much like that. It was phenomenal. One day—they had three rows of cops plus the National Guard in trucks around the perimeter. One day they saw busloads of more cops coming, and so people got really scared and figured, "Oh, my God, this is it. They're going to create their own riot here." And they weren't—not that they wouldn't, but they weren't. They were changing shifts. So thankfully Peter, Paul, and Mary were there, and they got on the stage and just said, "Please don't panic. It's OK." This was bad enough, but they really aren't doing this to us. They're just changing shifts. So they're going to take some of these guys away.

That was pretty incredible and then anywhere you went down there it was tear gas, tear gas, tear gas. So a pretty amazing time. It was a pretty exciting time. One evening I was in my apartment and just had gotten home from work and turned on the TV and realized I couldn't just sit there and watch it. I had to be there, so I got on the bus and went down to the park. It was something you just couldn't stay away from. You had to be there. And when I got there that night on the bus, two National Guard trucks full of National Guard people stopped to unload their people right in front of the bus doors, and it just broke my heart because these guys that were getting out of the truck were my age! That was pretty phenomenal.

21:33 I stayed in Chicago only one more year after that because the board at Hull House was taking things in a very weird direction and wouldn't have been approved by Jane Addams at all. They decided they needed to bring more money in. They needed to have programs that would generate more revenue for the center. So they started gearing a lot of their programs to the kids who were \_\_\_\_; dance classes and theater classes. And we protested that. We had three or four VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America] volunteers that were working at Hull House too along with me and some of the other staff people. Our director, June Janz [?], was just sick about it. She really didn't like what was going on either. She approved our protest. We went to the board meetings, and I think

made very passionate, articulate pleas for maintaining Jane Addams' vision and—not to deny the lower-income kids or poverty kids in our neighborhood all these programs with the \_\_\_\_\_ or their dance programs. At the last board meeting when they were considering this, they voted to change the programs and go where the money was. So we all walked out and quit.

(How many of you were there?)

There were three staff and four VISTAs. So basically the whole staff, excepting for the theater director, the dance director, and the swimming director, all quit. That was in the summer of '69.

And that's when we went to the moon. I was sitting in my apartment. I stayed in my apartment, and we had friends over, and we got to watch this whole thing, which was totally amazing also. But we also protested that in the neighborhood too, because of all those funds that were being put into the space program. We've got the Vietnam War going on. We've got the space program going on. So it's sort of like the situation today, where there's no money for social programs and social services.

One of the churches in the neighborhood was really, really neat and very progressive. The pastor there was pretty instrumental in helping us, organize around that issue and protesting—not that it did any good, but you can make a statement.

Soon after we went to the moon and since I no longer had a job, I moved back to Boulder. Because \_\_\_\_\_ going to school here in Boulder, I became rooted in Boulder. Sort of felt like Boulder was very \_\_\_\_\_. So I came back here, and my parents lived in Longmont, so it was an easy transition to make. I was able to stay with them.

25:08 That was right when Bob McFarland was creating the People's Clinic in Boulder and the \_\_\_\_\_ program. And a \_\_\_\_\_. So it was a pretty exciting time to be in Boulder. There was still a lot of Vietnam protests going on. Like \_\_\_\_\_ but at least they had a clear purpose as opposed to \_\_\_\_\_.

I worked for a while at a nursing home. It was called Mesa Vista then, it's called something else now. It's the one up in North Boulder where a woman died and they found that some of the staff had failed to recognize her—she didn't have a DNR [Do Not Resuscitate order] at all. She had an aneurism or a cardiac arrest or something, and instead of trying to resuscitate her, they let her go. And then some of the staff destroyed the records up where it happened. That's that nursing home today, and it was much like that when I was working there. You can imagine I only tolerated that a very short period of time. I couldn't stand it. We called the state inspection people and asked that they do surprise inspections instead of the planned ones, but they didn't.

(While you were working there?)

Yeah. Some of those staff people who were working there were just appalled at what was

going on, and the lack of cleanliness and the lack attention to people. We tried to intervene, but that didn't work. So I quit.

At that same time a group of the churches in Boulder were—in fact this building where we are used to be the United Ministry for Higher Education, \_\_\_\_\_ campus churches were here from the Baptists and Presbyterians were all operating out of here. They recognized that we had a problem in Boulder—many, but one that was really elevated at that time was the influx of hippies and transients and street people, and the clashes with the cops and the clashes with the community. So they wrote a grant, this group of churches here, along with the Boulder Council of Churches, and got funding to start an alternative resource center for hippies and transients. It was called the Boulder Communication Center. The first year it existed we worked out of here, in this building and had a place where people could come and stow their packs and use the phone and hang out and get off the streets. We set up a bust fund for people who were getting arrested overnight to go get them bailed out and a bust fund for people who were getting arrested for smoking pot in the park. Also found a campground where we could take people at night to camp so they wouldn't get busted. One of the pastors came every night at 10 in this huge old school bus and picked up everybody who wanted to go up to the mountains and camp. And we started a free food program. \_\_\_\_\_ But we were serving food every day in \_\_\_\_\_ Park. The churches in Boulder let us rotate and use their facilities to cook. We went out every day and got donations from the stores, and then we cooked in one of the churches and at 4 o'clock every day we served the meal in the park.

29:19 (Were you involved with the church, is that how you got involved with that or did—?)

Well, kind of. The church was part of the progressive community in Boulder. There were a lot of activists who knew about this church and hung out here to some degree, so we knew about when they were starting the program. We were able to come and get involved. So it was great. But the funding only lasted through the summer that time. There were a group of people who had been involved with it who knew the need was there and it needed to continue, and so they continued to work on writing proposals and getting funding. I left and went over to the Western Slope to Nucla, Colorado, to work for the Welfare Department. That was an amazing experience, too.

Nucla is in the uranium mining area of Colorado and it has very similar dynamics to Appalachia in terms of \_\_\_\_\_, and people being developmentally disabled because of the toxics that they worked with. Also, it being a very small, inbred community, so it's difficult for the kids who live there to leave and be successful in college or in jobs in a larger environment. So I was the welfare worker, and most of my clients were old-age pensioners who were very interesting, and I really learned a lot from working with them. But I really felt sorry for the kids over there, because their opportunities were so limited. A lot of them who did leave ended up coming back home.

I was only there a year, and then I went back to Chicago to graduate school at Jane Addams School of Social Work, which was actually built right where Jane Addams'

original Hull House was. The Hull House had been turned into a museum. We were still in the Vietnam War at that point. I was in group work in psychology and began to realize that where I really wanted to be was community organization, not group work in psychology, but I didn't have money to start over.

Then we had something happen when our wonderful government decided to bomb Cambodia again. We, a whole bunch of us at the School of Social Work, spent all night at Jane Addams—at the museum making posters and banners and stuff. We did a banner-hanging the next morning off of the overpass by the school. That was really exciting and really, really awesome. But then, we went back to school after that protest was over and the professor of the History of Social Welfare wouldn't even let us discuss what had just happened and wouldn't even let us discuss Cambodia or Vietnam or anything. I recognized then that this was the wrong place for me, so I dropped out at the end of the semester and didn't finish graduate school. I just completed one year.

I came back to Boulder again. They had in fact gotten funding, partly from churches and partly from the city, to continue the resource center for the hippies and transients. It was still a pretty exciting year. The STP family [a commune that existed in the late 1960s and early 1970s] which, depending on who you ask, means a variety of things. They were a lot of kids who came from New York City and from the West Coast and kind of converged here in Boulder. They were revolutionaries. A lot of hippies became very attracted to them, and so they hung out together. That was a pretty interesting phenomenon, a very interesting time too. A really interesting time in Boulder! I wish more was actually written about it. Roger Wade [?], who now teaches at UCD [University of Colorado at Denver] in the Soc [Sociology] Department, was very involved with it. I think he has written some stuff. And David Williams, who also was instrumental in the program, and a very good friend of mine, has collected just a massive collection of newspaper clippings and articles and everything from that period of time.

It's interesting, when the Mall celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary last summer, some of the pictures were from that period of time. They had pictures of the hippies on the Mall and in the parks. That was pretty neat. One at the bandshell had a whole bunch of hippies there obviously listening to music and very openly smoking dope.

35:21 So I did that until the money ran out again, and I got married shortly before \_\_\_\_\_. And I got married in 1973. After the center had closed down, I went to work for one of the pastors who had been involved here and had been instrumental in starting it. He was working with at the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He got a grant to do a program called—it was a program for interfacing police and community relations, National Institute for Criminal Justice and Community Relations. \_\_\_\_\_. So I went to a National Conference of Christians and Jews and worked with that program and helped organize a national conference in Denver. Police and community activists from all over the United States came together and talked about police and community relations. That was really, really good.

I stayed at the National Conference of Christians and Jews as their office manager after

that program ran out and helped create a program called The Panel of Americans. Got funding to do that. And that was a panel of African-American people, Jewish people, Latino people—we went and talked to service groups and schools and churches about their experiences of being in Denver and what it was like, with the racism that was there. It's different in the North than in the South, because in the North people pretend like we're not racist. It's not cool to admit that there's any racism. They were talking about how—for some of them it was much more comfortable to be in the South, because then you knew who your friends were and who they weren't. It was all much more open. It was horrendous, but in the North there was the added problem of people pretending to be very compatible and compassionate, pretending to be anti-racist. [laughter about something happening outside where the interview was taking place]

So we did that Panel of Americans for a couple of years. One thing the National Conference of Christians and Jews did every year was give a Brotherhood Award to somebody in the community that they thought deserved it. They always brought in some big name outside speaker and had this huge fundraising dinner for \$50 a plate or you could buy a table of ten for the company that you worked with. So we did these what are considered to be very elitist, atrocious dinners. Who was the guy—who was the military guy who was working in the Reagan administration who, when Reagan was shot said, "I'm in charge" when he was way down the ladder from being in charge? I can't think of his name. [Alexander Haig, Secretary of State, who said, "As for now, I'm in control here, in the White House, pending the return of the vice president..."] Anyway, they brought him in to speak! And he was like—

(Whoa!)

I know. That was disturbing. The next year they brought in Gerry Ford. So that was the point at which I left that organization.

40:11 I went to work as a counselor up in Nederland. It was very different, but it was also very interesting. Being a counselor up in a little mountain town, where everybody knows everybody else's business, and if they don't, they make it up. I also worked with the water renovation project and people decided that since I was working with the water renovation project that \_\_\_ water \_\_\_ that I should be called at midnight—like I was going to go up with my shovel or be able to fix it. But it was fun. I loved Nederland. A great community. It's changed a lot. It's gotten a lot calmer than it was then. I did that for a number of years.

Then we started a business with Gary's father—an optical business. So I quit working at the city and we moved over to \_\_\_\_\_ and we worked on setting up the optical shop for Gary's dad. Our timing was so good—just at the time the chain optical stores started. So you can imagine, we didn't do real well.

So we were looking around for something else to do. It turned out we were going to California pretty often in the summer for vacations. We went out there for a vacation with some of our old \_\_\_\_\_ friends. We were going on a trip up the coast and up into Oregon

with them and we stopped at the \_\_\_\_\_, which is this very special area up the coast in Mendocino County just north of Fort Bragg. It's just an incredibly beautiful area. We were there at the beach, \_\_\_\_\_ Beach by \_\_\_\_\_, hanging out there and watching the seals and the pelicans and all this great wildlife. It was really great. Gary and I looked at each other and said, "Maybe if we moved to California we'd go somewhere else for vacation." Since neither one of us had great jobs that we were thrilled with, we decided to do that. After which, we both started having a fantasy of opening an environmental center that could be utilized by all environmental activists so they weren't competing with each other for resources, and that they could really work together and coordinate a lot more and share resources.

So we decided to do that. We left here not having a clue how we were going to make this happen. We had very little money in our pockets. Just before we left, Holly Near was performing at Macky [Macky Auditorium]. I love Holly, she's just absolutely great—not only her music, but her message. She does such great songs about the issues. We were there watching Holly and it came to me, "Oh, Holly's doing what her passion is telling her to do and the way for it to happen is made clear. OK, we can do this. We can go, because it's the right thing to do, feel like we're following our path, the way to do it will come." The first year we were out in California, we sold Jim Morris environmental t-shirts at fairs and festivals every weekend. We spent the week contacting environmental organizations all over the state to find out what their issues were, get copies of petitions, get copies of stuff that you should write letters about, ordering our shirts, and updating our inventory. Then on weekends we would go to a flea market or a festival or a fair of some kind and set up and sell the t-shirts and tell people about environmental issues. And that was really fun but we were \_\_\_\_\_ broke. We realized that we needed a more steady source of income.

44:27 At Christmas time we were in Santa Rosa at a show. These people who had actually been active in the Rocky Flats protests here, happened by our group. We were talking and saying that we really needed a more stable place to be and that we needed someplace where we could work out of during the week and then do the shows on weekends. They said, "Wow, you should come to Ukiah and meet our friends who are opening a science and fantasy store and a graphics business." They called the graphics business The Green Map, and they called the store Between the Worlds. We said, "Well that sounds interesting." So we did go up to Ukiah—we had friends in Ukiah anyway so we went and stayed with them. Met these people and it was a collective, although not a very successful collective, because when any one or two people in the collective are the ones that have the money to make it go, you end up with subservient relationships and it gets pretty weird. To do a successful collective, the money has to be equal. Even with people who are conscious and really want to make it work, it's just weird. So it was kind of a rocky road, but it was a great experience because we did get involved then with the environmental community in Ukiah the year that we were at the store and the Green Map.

[break in recording to adjust equipment]

We spent the year getting acquainted with the environmental activists in the area and

learning about the issues: the off-shore drilling, the deforestation, the toxics that were spewing from the wood-processing plants. We started organizing with an Earth First group in that area that was protesting the overcutting of the national forests and also just discovering about Headwaters Forest, which was owned by Maxxam, which had originally been owned by Pacific Lumber Company and then Charles Hurwitz from Maxxam did a leveraged buyout. Very scummy thing where Michael Milken and some of the other players in all of the savings and loan rip offs and scandals that were going on with the insider trading. Charles Hurwitz never went to jail. But he was right on there doing all this stuff with the other people and he did this leveraged buyout by Pacific Lumber Company and proceeded to triple the cut of the forest that for the most part had been managed correctly. In fact, Sierra Club often touted Pacific Lumber as the model of how logging should be done.

See they were ripe for a takeover because they had so many older [?] trees that were so valuable. They sped up the cut and Hurwitz put his people in charge and so we—besides National Forest organizing—they were out organizing—started the Headwaters Forest campaign, which goes on to this very day.

So we were working on that and we worked at the Between the Worlds and the Green Map while we were starting to do all this organizing work. Then one day, after we had been there a year, this guy from Ukiah came into The Green Map and said that he wanted to talk to me and Gary and said that he had just inherited a bunch of money from his family, and he had been talking to \_\_\_\_\_, who was one of the most notable of the environmental activists out there and he said that he wanted to—besides the money he had inherited a building and he wanted that building to be an environmental center, and so Mika had told him to come and talk to us, and we said, “Oh, boy, when do we start? Can we play?” That was just like—you put it out there in the universe and you pursue it and it happened. It was very clear that the universe had meant for us to be there at that point in time because that same time was when Judy \_\_\_\_\_ showed up in that area in that county. And \_\_\_\_\_ showed up in Humboldt County. The activism just went like this, and we got to be at the hub of it. We got to create the center where everybody could come together and do their work. Having that center amplified everybody’s efforts because we knew where to find each other. They would share resources. They had a place to make copies. They had a person to get messages. We provided an infrastructure for them so they could do the work. It was really cool, and it was really, really great, and it was really exciting. The level of activism was amazing. We had everybody there at the center from Sierra Club to the various watershed groups to groups working on toxics issues to Earth First. Everybody worked out of that center. It was amazing. It was so exciting to see that happening. Because usually little groups and environmental groups end up fighting with each other about strategy. They agree on the issue, but then they fight about strategy. In fact, the truth is we need every non-violent strategy there is working for us.

51:24 It was really great to be in that environment. There were some qualms about Earth First and some of the more middle class people were really concerned about Earth First’s tactics. But the Earth First where we were did not engage in tree spiking and other forms of violence. They used tree-sitting, road blockades, playing cat and mouse in the woods,

and other kinds of non-violent means of protest. But still, they were still pretty radical and a little scary for some of the people. But basically we got along really well. It was really great.

We also included social justice issues with the Latino community and the Native American community. As opposed to here, there really is a significant Native American community in Northern California. There are ten rancherias out there in that county, which is just phenomenal. Here they've all been run off. We have somewhat of a community that is living in Denver, but nothing like in California where there are ten rancherias. So we included a lot of Native American issues in our work as well.

And off-shore drilling, we helped organize this huge protest, when they were about to offer the leases again for off-shore drilling. We did a huge protest in Fort Bragg. We made the people from the government who had to take the testimony stay there for forty-eight hours because of that many people wanting to testify. They did take a break for six hours at night finally and then shut it down at three in the morning and started again at nine the next morning. But we had that many people turn out to testify at this off-shore oil hearing. And there were demonstrations right out on the street and music. It was awesome. \_\_\_\_\_ of people in Fort Bragg, which is very much a timber community. The Georgia Pacific mill was there. But the ocean is an issue that we could all unite around. So we had the fishermen, we had the environmental activists, and we had the lawyers all united around the off-shore drilling issue. And of course the bed and breakfast industry that didn't want their pristine coast destroyed. So it was awesome. It was totally awesome. It was amazing for me to get to be a part of it. And we did stop it. It comes back every year for reconsideration. There's always the threat of oil drilling, which by the way our esteemed Congressman [Mark] Udall isn't helping any with right now, because at Rocky Flats they're \_\_\_\_\_ wildlife preserve, which is cynical in and of itself. When the government bought Rocky Flats to start the bomb plant, they didn't buy the mineral rights under the ground. Private individuals still own those. So now they want to make this wildlife preserve there. Udall has offered the people who own the mineral rights off-shore oil leases in exchange for relinquishing their mineral rights at Rocky Flats.

(How do you own mineral rights?)

Well, it's something that started happening during the gold and silver mining days in this country, that you used to purchase the mineral rights under any piece of land that you thought you might want to mine.

(How long were you in Mendocino County?)

Ten-and-a-half years. We were at \_\_\_ ten and a half years. We were there a year before that.

[discussion about changing the tape]

56:21 [End of Tape A]

[B].

00:00 (The only thing that I want to—this is exactly what I wanted to get, everything about your life. The only things that I want to get to—I want to talk about \_\_\_ and about the Peace and Justice Center, at least what you’ve done in Boulder, in Colorado. And then also about your ideology about freedom, about revolutionary ecology, \_\_\_\_\_ I want to touch on your ideology about activism and civil justice issues.)

OK.

[some off-mic discussion]

(We were talking about the offshore drilling—)

\_\_\_\_\_. I think the absolute highlight of working in \_\_\_\_\_ was getting to work with \_\_\_\_\_, whom I met very soon after we opened the environmental center. We were doing a protest over at the county courthouse which—the environmental center was right across the street from the county courthouse, which was amazing. It was such a powerful place to be. We were there because there were a lot of people from the coast and all over the county \_\_\_\_\_ population. So people would come from all over the county to attend meetings or hearings, perhaps do research or whatever at the county courthouse, and our center afforded them a place to hang out and to be and to come to while they had to be over there. So that was great. And also—we were keeping an eye on them.

So what happened is that in Mendocino County, each of the county commissioners which is like—they call them board of supervisors like our county commissioners—each of them had the ability to appoint a representative to the planning commission from their district. Well, a pretty progressive guy had gotten elected to board supervisor and the other conservative people on the board of supervisors were trying to prevent him from being able to appoint a representative. We were protesting that. We went over to intercede on his behalf and to make sure that he could get to appoint his representative. Judy showed up. That was the first time I met her. She was great. She had a sign. One of the supervisors’ names was Marilyn Butcher. Judy’s sign said, Marilyn Butcher is a name for \_\_\_\_\_. That’s just an indication of her spirit.

The way she came and got involved with us, and we talked a long time about our mutual philosophy and awareness that all the issues are intertwined and connected and that you can’t separate them. Racism, deforestation, animal abuse, it’s all connected. So she’s the one that said, “One struggle, many fronts.” That’s exactly what it is. I recognize that every day, that whatever it is I’m working on here is not disconnected, it is in fact interrelated with every other issue. So it was really great to meet her. She was powerful. She was witty. She was charismatic. She was very good. She had been a legal activist in Maryland and came from that perspective and recognized that the environmental

community had done a huge disservice by alienating the loggers and by not reaching out to them and organizing with them. Because just as forest was being destroyed, so was their livelihood. That because the mainstream environmental groups had either failed to recognize that or chosen to ignore it, not because—the mainstream environmental community is pretty \_\_\_\_, pretty well educated and pretty affluent. So I think it's understandable they wouldn't have a lot of compassion or feeling for loggers. Anyway, that mistake had been going on for quite some time and had allowed the corporations to create a real wedge between the loggers and the timber workers and the environmental workers. Because they just manipulated that. The environmental community hadn't done anything to counter that, or to reach out and to try to even get acquainted with the workers. They were successful in turning the workers against them, big-time. Judy was able, because of her background and because she actually liked loggers, she was able to bridge that gap and to start even building alliances.

06:15 The cutting was escalating more and more, and the timber companies were cutting faster and faster. We realized that very soon they were going to cut and run. And \_\_\_\_\_ was going to be left devastated. And the community was going to be devastated. So we got together with some of the loggers and workers that we had been working with and formed a proposal for Mendocino County to declare imminent domain and take the land back away from the timber companies because they were in fact destroying the county's ability to be economically sound and messing up the water supplies by overlogging and depleting the fish as well.

So we went together with the loggers and the workers, the ones that we were friends with, to the board of supervisors. There were a lot still that hated us and were very vocal about that. \_\_\_\_\_ meeting and we \_\_\_\_\_. After that, \_\_\_\_, the supervisor I mentioned before who was pretty progressive, took Judy and Walter out to lunch to talk about it further and to see what roads could we take to actually pursue such a thing. \_\_\_\_\_. But some of the loggers realized that the writing was on the wall and the logging was pretty close to done in that area. So they were willing to support \_\_\_\_\_.

Well, it was right after that happened that Judy started getting death threats and \_\_\_\_\_ started getting death threats. \_\_\_\_\_. A lot of the death threats came to the environmental center. We started having \_\_\_\_\_ —excrement dumped outside our front door. The tensions in the county were escalating to the point where you could cut it with a knife, partly because the forest activist community had organized statewide to get the Forest River Initiative on the ballot, which would have incredibly reformed logging practices in the state. That presented a real threat to the timber companies, because they were faced with losing millions and millions of dollars from the cutbacks that would have been necessary \_\_\_\_\_.

So they started ramping up the workers again—you know, you're not going to have a job, and \_\_\_\_\_. And Judy started getting death threats, Lord knows from where. Then one day I got to work and there was [pause] \_\_\_\_\_ was a photo of Judy from the supervisors meeting, \_\_\_\_\_ a picture of her from the paper \_\_\_\_\_. And a yellow ribbon on it, which supposedly was supposed to symbolize the yellow ribbon movement which was the

organization of loggers and wives of loggers that was protesting us. So that was pretty scary. We continued on, more threats came in the form of mail. One just said, "You'd better get out. You won't get a second warning."

11:07 So Judy and I and one of the Native American women that we worked with went together to the Mendocino County Sheriff's office and talked to them about these death threats and the \_\_\_\_\_ in the community and the fact that a couple of environmental activists had been physically assaulted, and he said they didn't have the manpower to investigate. If you turn up dead Judy, then we'll investigate. But we made sure that we reported every incident that happened both to the \_\_\_\_\_ and the sheriff's office, regardless of whether they were going to do anything about it or not. We kept a file of what we called our "\_\_\_ shit file," the hate mail, the hate letters, and the weird stuff that was going on. We kept a file of that.

Then a bomb was found outside, an unexploded bomb was found outside—a pipe bomb—of the Louisiana Pacific Mill right up the road from us. Of course they tried to blame that on Judy and us, because whoever planted the bomb there put a sign there that said "\_\_\_\_\_ workers." So clearly it was trying to make it look like our bomb or that we had done it. That was pretty scary. Of course we assured everybody that we were nonviolent and hadn't ever done anything like that, ever; hadn't even done tree spiking in Mendocino County. Shortly after that, one of the small timber companies in Mendocino County, Harwood, recognized that things were really getting out of hand and if we did the Redwood Summer protest that we were planning to keep trees standing from the initiative that got voted on, if we did that, they recognized that with the tension at the level that it was, that somebody was going to get killed.

Judy also recognized or felt—because she was a great student of previous battles and campaigns—recognized that she and Daryl both were probably going to be taken out. But she figured they'd be arrested on some trumped-up charge or something like that and put in jail for the summer. She prepared all of us, to whatever degree she thought that she could, for having to mobilize and take over. We in fact were \_\_\_\_\_, with offices all the way from Arcada to Southern California that were working on \_\_\_\_\_ and public \_\_\_\_\_ and taking on various responsibilities in organizing this huge thing.

14:35 We started with the smaller timber company, Harwood, started organizing lots of Earth First meetings that were \_\_\_\_\_. We'd get together with some of the \_\_\_\_\_ loggers and some of the workers from some of the corporations and some people from the sheriff's department and middle-management people and talk about what we were going to do about the situation, and how we were going to keep from killing each other. We came up with this agreement— oh, Utah Phillips came, too, because he and Judy were going to go to the area to—

[Interviewer asks unintelligible question]

Utah Phillips and Dakota Sid Clifford, who was another famous songwriter, came. They were going to meet up with Judy and go down to the Bay area and \_\_\_\_\_ organized and

Utah had a concert scheduled \_\_\_\_\_. So he actually came to a meeting when the logger association—he was great. \_\_\_\_\_ students about how we're all in this together and that the corporations are screwing all of us and whatnot. Some of the people who already were catching on got it and knew what he was saying and some of the others who were just hostile didn't.

So what we were able to agree on at that point in time was, we wouldn't touch their trucks,

and they wouldn't carry guns when they came out to the woods. It was coming a long way. They hadn't \_\_\_\_\_ anything. The day after the meeting that we \_\_\_\_\_, that night \_\_\_\_\_ all hours. Judy had more death threats on her phone when we went to her house. The next day Judy and Utah could've come into town because we were actually doing a press conference because \_\_\_\_\_ one of the activists, \_\_\_\_\_ activists \_\_\_\_\_ had gotten the \_\_\_\_\_ by a logger up at one of the protests. He had totally attacked her. She had filed a claim in small claims court. The court didn't find him guilty of anything, but she was able to file a claim in small claims court and won. Of course, they didn't pay. Anyway, we were giving a press conference to announce her victory in the small claims court decision. Judy was there. Utah was there. Utah and I walked back to the environmental center while Judy finished the press conference, which was in a lawyer's office a block away. Utah got a chair and was sitting outside the door of the environmental center, leaning back, and playing the guitar and singing. It was awesome. It was just really incredible.

18:34 Then they left after that and went to the Bay area and Utah and Sid went off to do their concert and Judy and Daryl went to an organizing meeting at Peak to Peak, where they agreed to help do the infrastructure—bathrooms, and kitchen, and food—for the Redwood Summer protest up at Headwaters in Mendocino County. We went to \_\_\_\_\_ with them and talked more about it and talked more about fundraising and stuff. Then Judy went to spend the night at one—a guy's house who convinced her and had invited her to spend the night at his house. Daryl stayed with some friends. They got together the next morning to—one of the people from Peak to Peak, Jen, was leading them through Oakland to get them on the highway so they could go to Stanford for their event that was happening later that day. At noon, as they were driving through Oakland, the bomb exploded under Judy's car seat. It was absolutely amazing. She almost died at the time. She would have died if she didn't have the strength in her life. She said the pain was so bad she couldn't even picture her \_\_\_\_\_. She couldn't even \_\_\_\_\_. She was trying to \_\_\_\_\_. She couldn't even \_\_\_\_\_.

20:20 The hospital called me at the environmental center and said that Judy was there and that she had been bombed and that there was a man in the car with her and because of the bomb threats and everything that had been going on, I accused him of playing a cruel hoax on me and saying this when it wasn't true. He said, no, no, no, I'm a social worker at Highland Hospital. Here's my name. You look up Highland Hospital phone number in the phone book and call and ask for me so I can verify \_\_\_\_\_.

It was just—I was in shock, obviously. I kept trying to function like nothing was going

on, but I was in shock. Then we started calling the police department, we started calling everywhere we could think of to get more details. I called Sharon Pickett, who was one of the main organizers in the Bay area, and she immediately went to the hospital and to the police department to figure out what was going on. She started organizing people down there to start doing a vigil at the hospital. It turned out that we really needed a vigil, because it wasn't too long after that that the cops decided to arrest Judy and Daryl for transporting the bomb that bombed them. That they were knowingly transporting this to go do an action \_\_\_\_\_ themselves. So there Judy was, practically dying, on her way into emergency surgery, and being arrested for bombing herself. Daryl got off much luckier. He had some shrapnel in his eye and his hearing was damaged for a time from the bomb. But he was arrested and taken to the police department, where he was held for twelve hours without sleep or without being allowed to go to the bathroom.

Then one of the lawyers that we all knew really well came forward and said that she would represent Judy and be her attorney and try to intervene and at least got in to see her and was able to make some statements to the press about this. Because this is serious. It's really, really horrible. We didn't know for days, if Judy was going to live or die because of the extent of her injuries. She was in the hospital for eight weeks and then she was taken to a rehab center in Santa Rosa. Then her friends from her estate house—it was her former midwife that had delivered her girls, a house up in the hills in west Mendocino County, and she stayed there at least until she was able to live on her own and be in her own house again. We went and visited her every weekend. The thing that helped her healing the most was music. She would have other people play guitars and sing and whatnot and listen to music for hours and hours and hours. That was the best pain medication she had. Then she was able to move back home, and the hostilities continued. Art Harwood [?] again came to the rescue and wrote some very pointed editorials about how \_\_\_\_\_ needed to back off and that Judy had done nothing to any of them and that the hostilities had to go and that it was serving no purpose. That did seem to help a little bit.

Judy was very slowly getting better. We didn't think she'd ever walk again, but she was a carpenter—what she did for work. One day somebody was helping her fix something in her house, up on a ladder, and she saw that she needed the hammer, picked up the hammer and walked over to her and gave it to her. \_\_\_\_\_. That was how she discovered that she could walk. She had to walk with a cane after that.

25:20 We were there working with Judy for about five years after that and then she discovered she had breast cancer. She discovered the lump in July. We were organizing another huge protest at Headwaters. Judy was just a nonstop organizer of protests [?]. This is why she was so good. But she didn't bother to go get it checked. She realized that she was getting more tired than she ever had gotten before. She said she was going to get through the protest. So we did get through the protest and had a magnificent turnout at the protest, about ten thousand people in Humboldt County. So that was pretty awesome. Then after that she went to the doctor and was diagnosed with breast cancer, but she didn't tell anybody yet because she wanted to \_\_\_\_\_. She called her friend Alicia \_\_\_\_\_ who had been organizing on the road, and Alicia went with her to the doctor, and they gave her a new biopsy and discovered that it had metastasized to the liver. So there was

no point in doing a lumpectomy or a mastectomy. And in fact, the needle biopsy may have made the lump in her breast grow even faster.

She tried to research and research and tried a couple of forms of treatments that—which she suspected and it was confirmed by the doctors that what she was doing would only buy her a couple more months at most and would impair her quality of life while she lived. Judy was recognizing that she was going to die and wanted to spend as much quality time with her kids as she could. She wanted to—they had filed a lawsuit against the FBI \_\_\_\_\_ for falsely accusing them of bombing themselves and for smearing them and by then there were civil and criminal \_\_\_\_\_. She wanted to get the lawsuit in the best shape it could possibly be to pass it on to Alicia and her friends to continue after she was gone. So with the help of friends and a lot of more people, she was able to do that. It turned out \_\_\_\_\_.

(She was \_\_\_\_?)

Yeah, she was \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ prepared long before \_\_\_\_\_. So we only stayed in Mendocino County six months after Judy died. Maybe it was and maybe it wasn't connected to that. I just know that during that winter, I started getting this strong feeling that it was time to come back to Boulder and come back to my mountains and work here. So once again I was wondering about that. A lot of people were saying, Oh, my God, don't do that, what are you going to do once you get back there? It just so happened—Holly Near is from Ukiah—and it just so happened that she was doing a concert \_\_\_\_\_. She had just moved home. She had been in the Bay area with her record company and going on tour all over the place for years and she had just moved back to Ukiah. We went to hear this concert that she did. I said, Oh, Holly came home. OK, it's time to go home. It was just sort of amazing. The fact that Holly was so much a part of each of those big decisions had just amazed me, and her.

30:18 So we did end up coming back here and started coming here to the Peace Center to meetings, organizing for the Rocky Flats reunion, twenty year reunion of the sitting on the tracks at Rocky Flats. We helped plan that. Also I got involved with the nonviolence collective that was working to prevent the riots on the Hill and doing interface with the community and the police and the University to work out strategies to try to keep the riots to a dull roar anyway.

And so I was volunteering to do that. It turned out that somebody in the \_\_\_\_\_ was hiring. So it was just like, I came home.

[Unintelligible question.]

Since March of 1998. And I've been doing the non-violence education and along with that co-coordinating the office and doing a lot of work with Safety Net, which is our anti-racism, civil rights, human rights program, and working on the pesticide issue in Boulder as well.

Thank you so much. Is there anything else you want to add?

Not that I can think of now. Probably think of a lot. "I wish I would have said—"  
[laughs]

OK, great. Thanks.

32:08 [End of Tape B. End of interview.]