- Okay.

- Okay. We'd like to start now. What we're going to do this afternoon is a series of three vignettes. There was supposed to have been five of us here to do this for you, but one of us got arrested this afternoon and we were unable to get her out of jail in time to do this. Yes. So I hope you'll understand that we're doing the best we can, but we're one person short. There's one more important thing I'd like to tell you before we start, and that is that everything that we say and everything we do is real. By that I mean it has been said before. It's been done before. We've tried to make the, to quote everything as directly and as close as we can. So this is accurate. I guess that's the only important thing that this has all happened to us and to our friends.

- Yeah. Why don't you figure out something. Huh? Did you figure out something? Yeah. Hi, Jenny. Hi. You mow it Chris. Hey Chris. Time for class. Would you please take your seats? Rose? Oh,

- Psychology. I hate psychology. Yeah. New professor. So cute. He's a doll, he's not married either.

- I know. I heard he makes a lot of money. Could you straighten up those rows ... the girls make it easier for you to concentrate. You are fine. Our lecture today is going to be on the normal woman. Now Freud, in all of his years of study, learned many things. But there was one thing which he felt he didn't understand, and that was he never did quite decide what woman wants. Now, according to Helene Deutsch, there are three things that woman wants. Woman wants to be masochistic. We all know that women enjoy and secretly desire to be raped. The second thing that woman wants is to be passive.

- I can't wait to get home. This is the first time that things have really gone right for me at the hospital. I can't wait to tell my husband, John.

- Working mothers, they never take care of their kids.

- Hi honey. I have great news for you, I got the promotion. You know the promotion I was talking about? I'm in charge of sales. [Woman tries to talk while man talks over Her] ...we do need a new car now. I know the washing machine's broken, but the car, we have to be more conscious now, I think... [Crosstalk]

- John, you never listen to me!

- Why you so emotional? Oh, honey, I hate it when you argue like this. Let's just go to bed.

- Women need and like to be dominated by their husbands. Just

straighten up your rows...

- Now the third thing that women want is to be narcissistic.

- I love the way I look.

- It's really my personality, not just my beautiful body.

- I hear she has affairs.

- How could she with such small breast? Neat rows, please. That's all for today. Your grades will be ready in the morning. Thank you. Well, thank you doctor. She's done.

- Well Time to go home.

- Okay, let's go home now. Class is over finally. My name is Jean Harris. I'm 42 years old. My hair is Mousy brown and I'm a little too thin. Ever since I was a small child, I have had problems adjusting to my role as a woman. And now more than ever before, I find myself more upset. So I've gone to see a psychiatrist.

- Yes. Come in. Yes. Good morning, Mrs. Mrs. Harris.

- Good morning. Dr. Adjustment.

- How are we this morning, Mrs. Harris?

- Well, I guess you know that I wouldn't be here if I didn't have some kind of a problem, Doctor, all my life I have wanted to be someone and now I find that I'm just a mother.

- You seem upset about being a mother, Mrs. Harris.

- Doctor. I love my children very much, but sometimes I just feel like I'm crawling the walls. How long have you had this feeling, Mrs. Harris? Ever since the second child Doctor Adjustment, I wash and I cook and I clean all day long. I try to keep a decent home for my husband and my children, but sometimes that kid gets on my nerves. Mommy, I haven't got a thing to do.

- Chrisy. I have a headache. Will you go outside and play. Please.

- I don't wanna play. You never pay any attention to me.

- Chrissy. I have a lot to do today.

- You're always like...

- Chrissy. Get outta here. Stupid,

– My dear. I feel that you're suffering from a Deep seated feeling of inadequacy as a mother. Perhaps you need to learn how to accept your natural role as a mother.

– Well, I never thought of it that way. Maybe you're right. Maybe. Maybe. I just haven't tried hard enough. See you next week, Mrs. Harris.

– Goodbye, doctor Adjustment

– Jean, come on. We have to fix ourselves. He says. He says, if we do this, we might get better, but times those kids just get me so upset.

– I just, let's just try it his way. Come on.

– Oh.

– Good morning, Mrs. Harris.

– Good morning, doctor. Doctor?

– Yes.

– I have something to tell you. But it's very difficult for me to say. This morning, early in the morning, I had a dream. It was about a friend of mine, Melanie. Oh, doctor. I think it was a lesbian dream.

– Go on dear.

– Well, it happened this way. Melanie and I were lying naked side by side in bed and I wanted to make love to her very much. But every time I reached over to touch her, a man came in between us. Doctor. It was like the worst nightmare I've ever had. Every time I moved, he moved. It was like being in a mirror. I couldn't get around him.

– Jean I love you.

– Melanie kept trying and trying. But she couldn't reach and she finally just gave up.

– Jean it's no use.

– Then I woke up, doctor, what does it mean? I can't, it frightens me when I have dreams like that.

– What do you think it means, Mrs. Harris? Who do you think mans man is?

– Well, the only man in my life is Tom.

– Well,

– I don't know Tom. Tom gave a party the other day and he had a bunch of friends in and they were his fancy friends from work. And they kept laughing at me and Melanie all the time, doctor.

– You seem angry, Mrs. Harris.

– Well, I can't help it doctor. When, when he does things like that to me, I feel much closer to Melanie than I feel to him.

– You seem to feel some guilt about that. Mrs. Harris

– Doctor. All my life, I was raised to believe that my husband should come first.

– Do you feel that's a mature attitude, Mrs. Harris?

– I don't know.

– Mrs. Harris. Perhaps you should think about your need to revert to an adolescent stage of sexual development as an offshoot of your inability to cope with your role as wife and mother.

– I guess I'll just have to think about it some more.

– Time's up. See you next week. Mrs. Harris.

– Come on, Jean. We're gonna have to try it one more time his way. Oh, but I love Melanie Jean.

– I know. Maybe we'll get better.

– I feel a little better for a while when we go here. Let's just keep trying this.

– Good morning Mrs. Harris.

– Good morning, Doctor Adjustment.

– You seem angry,

– Mrs. Harris. Well, it's my job. Do you know what I found out this week? I found out that my father withheld a scholarship from me. If I had been able to go to college, I could be head of my own department by now.

– I love this view. I've had this farm for 25 years. My father had this farm for 50 years and my grandfather bought this farm and worked

it all his life. But I didn't have a son to carry on this great family tradition. But now my little daughter, Jean, is getting married and she is going to give me a grandson to carry on the family honor. I'm going to have a grandson.

– Good morning, Joe. [Did You] hear about my son Paul?

– I think I did hear something about that.

– Full scholarship to the university.

– Bright boy.

– You know the twin Paula? She was a sweet, pretty little thing. She's built like her mom, so she ain't gonna have no trouble with first grandchild. Family seed. Family seed. You got a letter here from university, here for Jean.

– University?

– Well, I'll see you tonight at the bar.

– What is this from the university? This says that Jean has a full scholarship to go to the university. If Jean sees this, she won't get married. And I won't get my grandson. Well, a little dishonesty in the greater good. Never hurt anybody. I'm gonna have a grandson.

– Hi Dad.

– Oh, hi Jean. Did I get a mail today?

– Mail?

– Yeah. I was expecting something from the university. I wrote to them a long time ago. I don't know why they haven't answered.

– Jean. Huh? You didn't get any mail, but your young man's coming over today.

– Tom.

– Jean, you seem to have some difficulty of accepting authority. I never thought of it that way. Maybe you're right.

– It seems that your problems with your husband and your role as a mother stem from your deep seated hatred of your father. The first step towards maturity is insight. Time is up. See you next week. Mr. Harris.

– Come on Jean. One more time. We gotta try it this way.

– I wanna go to school Jean.

– I know, but they won't let us go to school.

– Why do we always have to do what he says?

– Because maybe he knows he's a psychiatrist, isn't he?

– Good morning, Mrs. Harris.

– You seem depressed, Mrs. Harris.

– I don't know what to say to you. Doctor Adjustment.

– Are you angry with me, Mrs. Harris?

– I guess I am. I quit my job this week.

– That's a very rebellious thing that you've done, Mrs. Harris.

– Well, I went in and I asked for a promotion, which I deserved and they refused me.

– Mr. Baker?

– Oh yes Mrs. Harris come in.

– I came to see about the, the application for the head of the recreation department here.

– Yes. I've been, I've been looking over your application, Mr. Harris.

– Yeah. Well what do you think about it?

– Now we, I I wanna make this perfectly clear that we certainly do appreciate the time and the effort and the new ideas that you have put into this, this job.

– Yeah. I brought, I brought in woodworking, you know, middle of last year.

– Yes, that was very good. However, it is my opinion that this job, the head of the department, does require a college degree. And you do not have this degree. Mrs. Harris.

– But I've worked here a year and surely my experiences is worth something.

– Of course we want you to stay on and acquaint the new director with

the various things in the department.

– Stay on! With the shitty wages I've been getting? Well, take your job and give it to somebody else!

– Now, I dunno why she's so upset. I mean, her husband has a job. Her job is merely supplementary income.

– She's so aggressive, huh?

– As I said, Mrs. Harris, this is, this is a very rebellious thing you've done. I thought that our treatments were helping you.

– Well, I don't know Doctor. I'm tired of being pushed around.

– Yes. What makes you feel as though you're being pushed?

– Every time I say something, you twist my words. Every time I try to be who I am, you tell me it's wrong.

– Mrs. Harris, you are resisting treatment. But you don't wanna get... We have to cure the sick part of you for once and for all. It's going to have to become normal or it's going to have, it's just going to have to die.

– No [Crosstalk] I'm sorry. No, I can't do that. No. She's too important to me.

– Yes, Mrs. Harris! [Mrs. Harris screams]

– These women, they just never learn what their natural role is. They'll never take you away from me.

– The vignette that you just saw was about a real woman who really did kill herself. What we are is a collective of women who live together and who work together, who are trying to build some ways so that women like Jean will not have to kill themselves anymore. What we are about is trying to help women to live up to their full potential as human beings. Think about it. When a baby boy is born, everyone asks what he will be when he grows up. Will he be president? Will he be a doctor? Will he a bricklayer? Will he be a policeman? When the baby girl is born, everyone asks who she will marry. Will she be pretty? Will she win the Miss America contest? But nobody asks who she will be. What we want for women is for women to be able to be someone as well as to be a loving, giving full human being that she already is.

– Anybody here?

– Yeah. Come on in Kate. [Mumbled Dialogue]

– Guess what? My turn to cook dinner tonight, right? After the sweet and sour eggplant we had last week, I thought I had to come up with something equally good. Just so you wouldn't think Tuesday night, you just wouldn't have to bother coming home. So guess what we're having tonight?

– No what?

– We're having boiled potatoes, right?

– Yeah.

– We're gonna mash them up, right?

– Yeah. I'm gonna boil some rutabagas. Rutabagas. I'm gonna mash them up. I'm gonna mix 'em up with the potatoes and I'm gonna put 'em some sauteed onions and some green peppers with cheese and garlic on the top. How does that sound?

– It's a step up from gourds.

– I thought the gourds were good.

– Yeah, they ...

– All right. Well it'll be ready in just a minute.

– Whatever happened to meat?

– You can kill it? You can eat it.

– She always says that

– Dinner! [Group Chatter] How is work?

– It's alright. The same thing.

– Prison's the same. Prison is the same.

– You look depressed. Well, I am a little depressed.

– And what was it? Us?

– No, it doesn't have anything to do with you. It was at school today. At nursing school. [DING DONG] I was going to lunch just like I usually do. Hi Miriam.

– Oh, hi Bren.

– Food any good today?

– Same thing we've had for three nights. Unreal. Have you, have you noticed that there's absolutely nothing going on here now or ever?

– No. School is absolutely dead.

– Joe and I were gonna go to a movie, but it was the same movie. I know. I got so bored this weekend that I had to go to that dance. You know, they got on campus? The dance with the homosexual. Oh, you mean for the gay festival?

– What was that like?

– That was God! was it just unreal.

– What happened?

– I went with my boyfriend. I'll tell you the worst thing about it was I couldn't stand to sit next to them when they were touching each other. The boys were – yeah – the girls? Touching, kissing each other.

– It's disgusting! Why can't they do that in private...

– Wait a minute! wait a minute. If you don't like to sit next to gay people, I think I better leave 'cause I'm gay.

– Mary, wait a minute!

– I'm sorry, come back.

– I, I really respect you for telling them Like who you were, who you are.

– Well Mary, you know like now that you've told the women in your class, the administration's gonna find out about it. Probably, inevitably. And like, what could happen?

– I'm really scared. There's a law in the state against sodomy. And if they find, if they find out and they want to be really bad about it, they could keep me from getting my registration. They could keep me from being a nurse.

– That's the same with my teaching license in the state of New York. It's the same with all the professions.

– It really gets you everywhere you turn.

– I know it's getting so I just, what I don't understand is why they're so afraid of us. You know, we simple minded homosexuals. What do we do?

– You know?

– You

– Think we threaten you so much or so? Oh, we really do. Like Annie and I were walking down the street last summer holding hands. It took three pigs to stop. To make a stop. Yeah, yeah.

– Oh boy. I heard of this happening, but I didn't think it was gonna be us.

– Oh, Doug. These are the, these are the people. We got the call, isn't it that they look a little strange.

– These must be the weirdos.

– Yeah,

– Well like the sergeant said to be really careful, you know, we had some accusations.

– We're always tying the police department's hands.

– Yeah, well we can't just take care of it.

– So. I agree. Let's just find out what's going on here.

– Let's find out. Alright. What seems to be the problem here? Girls?

– There isn't any problem. We're just walking home.

– No problem, huh? Yeah. What's your name?

– Catherine Fox.

– And where do you live? I live 282 Meigs Street.

– Do you work?

– I don't have a job right now.

– You don't have a job, huh? Yeah. What's your name?

– Ann Calin.

– Where do you live Ann?

– In 282 Meigs Street.

– Do you work?

– Yes I do.

– Oh, you do?

– Yeah.

– What's your name?

– Pam Morrison.

– Oh, okay. You live with these other two girls, Pam? What's that address?

– 282 Meigs. Do you work Pam? Yeah, I work within a nursing home.

– The nursing home, huh? Yeah. Okay. Well you want, just wait here for a minute. 2... 282. Isn't that, isn't that the place that the vice squad's been watching?

– You're right. Yeah.

– I think we better like ask a few more questions here.

– It's obvious to me that these two weirdos holding hands are the ringleaders.

– Yeah. They are holding hands, huh? Yep. Well I'll talk to them and you talk to the other little girl.

– Alright, you wanna come on over here with me? Come on now. Let's go right on over here. All right, Tammy. That's good right there. Now Pam, how old are you?

– 19.

– You're 19. How long have you lived with these other girls?

– About three months.

– About three months, huh? Where do your parents live ma'am?

– They, they live in Syracuse.

– Syracuse. And you, you live here and you're 19 years old?

– Yes. Yeah.

– How many other people live in this house there?

– Well, the four women that live there permanently and I, I'm just staying temporarily til I find my own place.

– So five people. All girls?

– Yeah.

– All girls, huh? Pam, how do you feel about lesbianism?

– Everybody's own business. Well, Pam, you know some of these people you fall in with are really sick.

– I understand girls, uh ladies, I don't want you to get excited. I just had a call from the captain. He said keep it cool. No harassment. This is not harassment.

– Well if it's not harassment then why do you need so much information?

– Well, you have to understand a policeman does his job and we have had six calls this month. Six. From the funny farm, hospital, whatever you call it about escape crazies. And we policemen protect the community against the sick.

– But we're ... just walking home.

– Yeah. Come here Joe.

– Yeah. Okay. Go back to your friends. Well it's really weird, you know, it's three girls out by themselves. It's almost 10:30 at night.

– Out by themselves at 10:30! Jesus.

– Well, you know, like, I, I just think we gotta... How many, how many people did those two say was with living again?

– Six girls living together by themselves.

– Ann said five.

– We better not call the squads in now. Better send people on home. Don't harass them or anything. No harassment. Alright girls, you know, we think you ought to just keep on going home. Now we don't want any loitering around here. Don't want any more problems here tonight.

– They sure make you feel dirty, don't they?

– What I can't believe is that I gave them all that information and you know, the only reason I know that you don't have to give them

anything except your name and address. But I felt so intimidated 'cause I knew that they would harass us. I knew they might take us downtown and I, they've been watching our house anyway.

– Yeah, well you know, like that dance we were just talking about a minute ago when I left, I left a little bit later than the rest of you. And when I came to campus I was driving and I was followed by a police car

– – seven in the morning, This guy has to harass me.

– God, quarter to seven, we're gonna be here till six.

– That's 11 hours on your feet. Look forward to it. Oh my God. Why? Why did you take this [Garble] BEEP BEEP. Oh wow it's a girl. Hi sweetie. Gimme $2 worth.

– Yeah I'm not your sweetie. How much gas do you want?

– Two dollars worth.

– Yeah. Okay. Hey what's a nice girl like you working in a place like this? [Woman grumbles]

– You oughta have a husband, take care of you.

– $2.

– Here you go. He wants $2, why's he gat a five? To make change at this hour of the morning.

– Come on honey. Hurry up!

– Take your change and get outta here and don't you ever touch me again.

– That's so cute...

– God! You really touched me! You just walked in here like I'm public property and felt my ass! I don't believe it!

– We should have done something Cindy.

– Oh Jesus.

– Well the thing that ... me about that is that you almost always get angry in that situation and if you're, if you are intimidated, like everybody else must be super intimidated.

– Like, the guy is like this tall to me. You know, and so like, like I

wasn't worried about my physical, you know, about getting physically harmed 'cause I'm standing like I felt like I could take care of him and Katie's right there, I know I'll get support from her. But yet I, I let this guy just, you know, just do, just feel my body. Like he had some right to do that and like I didn't --

- So often when things like that happen like it's just, just a total shock, you know, you don't even think about it until it's too late to do anything.

- Well we're also taught to smooth it over like a jump rope.

- Yeah. We're public property or something.

- But I, I know that like I, I was kind of... Remember the incident with the drunk? and I was kind of frightened but I just remember when I knew I would count and everyone to come down and help me. That's the good thing about this house.

- You gotta get up so early. Let's go to bed.

- Okay, I'm taking off people. I'll see you tomorrow morning.

- Bye bye.

- Get him clean Mary.

- Get outta here.

- Hi sweetheart. How's about [Garble] ... baby, hey, come on honey

- Get outta here. Get outta this neighborhood. Get outta here, you're not wanted here. [Group yells at man]

- Okay. What's going on?

- Friendly, I'm friendly ...

- He comes right up to our front steps and starts coming at me

- Right up our front steps?

- Yeah. Thanks for coming down. I got a little scared but I mean thanks for support. Yeah.

- You okay?

- Yeah, I'm okay.

- We'll see you tomorrow.

– Again, everything that you saw here did happen and it's real. We'd now kind of just like to go around the table and introduce ourselves to you individually and tell you something about ourselves.

– My name is Mary Sculwin. I'm a junior student at this institution. I came to this the house and started living with these people in September. I was a little scared to come, I'll admit it because of strong personalities and the fights that I knew I'd get into. But I feel one thing about the house is a place where I can be honest and it's a place where I can grow and I guess that's the most important thing to me.

– My name is Kate and I guess this is the first time, first living situation I've been in where I've been free to relate to people as people like when I was living at home, like the roles were really set and like you had a certain set of responses that you made and at school there was just a, you know, everyone was kind of on a "hi" basis. There was no real relationship at all with anybody. And here I can, I can get to know these people and get to like them and to love them.

– My name's Cynthia. I came to Rochester about three years ago to go to school here and I stopped doing that last spring 'cause it didn't relate to me at all. And I started living in this house last spring. I've chosen to live here because of my feelings towards women, which I've been aware of for most of my life. This is the first place I have felt like I am a good person. Like it's okay to be who and what I am. It's the first place that I have felt like I'm free to love other people and not have to play games with them continually. And like I can't exist without loving other people and I can't exist without people loving me. Not that it's an easy thing and not that it's all roses and there's a lot of fights we've had. There's a lot of fights we will have, but at least I, I think we relate to each other and relate to each other's needs on some real basis.

– My name is Ann Caitlin and I guess for me the house is a dream that has partially come true and that is a dream of living with women and learning to respect women, learning to be friends with women. Learning to love women. And I guess there are two things in the house that mean a great deal to me. One is that we work together. We worked on this play for over two and a half months and we teach each other new skills. Mary and Cynthia are learning how to fix cars. And the other thing that I think I'd like to say also what Cynthia said and that is that we are trying to relate to each other honestly. That if there is anger and if there is tension, if there is jealousy, we try to talk about it and we try to find new ways of handling it. And that doesn't mean that it isn't hairy because we, as you see from our little vignette, we are under constant pressure from every place, from our jobs, from the police, you know, from classmates. And it's, and it's

hard enough to keep our individual heads together, let alone everybody else's in the house. But I think that we are honestly trying and I think we have partially succeeded and that makes me feel very good.

– My name is Dodie Robinson and I came to Rochester from Chicago, Illinois and I've been accepted in this house. I kind of was a crasher and now I have been accepted. I've known for a long time also about my feelings about women. And this is the first place that I've felt that I could be who I was and who I am. And it's meant a great deal to me. 'cause instead of feeling essentially very shitty about who I amm, I now have a positive image about myself and that's growing stronger right now ... It's kind of hard to break 25 years of being told you're nothing. I guess the other thing too that I feel is struggling to really learn how to relate to people and not playing the games or not trying to smooth things over and realizing that sometimes tensions that you have don't get worked out when you want to get them worked up. It takes time. It's a home to me. That's something that I don't know if I can't express in words to you, it's home.

– We feel like we've just given you a whole lot of ourselves on what we just said and in fact that five of us have worked on this collectively, which is not easy for as Ann said over two and a half months. We'd like to have a short question answer period. Now first question that we'd like to ask you is like if you can say the word lesbian and if you can think about it, I hope you can. What did you think a lesbian was before you came into this room today? Did you think you knew any? Do you think you know any now how do you feel about lesbians now?

– You'll be marked in grade. [Laughter]

– I might as well talk first and to say that I've known Mary a couple of months now and I've known from the first that she was a lesbian and you know, I guess the personal experience as knowing Mary. You know, it's like... is knowing Mary. You know, I don't, I don't really know what else to say, you know, what else can you say? I know Mary, Mary's my friend, you know, that doesn't matter. That's all.

– I really appreciate because like I said, we feel like we've given you a whole lot and otherwise if there's any questions you'd like to ask us, we'll answer those, if you feel like answering. The rest, we'll tell you don't answer. So go ahead.

– If anybody wants us to [Quiet] ... or talk, you can say anything.

– You know, this whole thing is, is really frightening to talk about.

– I can't even say

– That's beautiful.

– Anybody else wanna cry? I'd like to say something. When Mary came and asked me or talked with Jan and myself about doing this as their presentation, I think you were a little hesitant about whether or not you could even do something like this. And there was only one thing I asked Mary to do when she was working this out and that was not to defend the thing she believed in. And I'd like to thank you for not doing that.

– I think, you know, I'd like to say one thing about the play and that is that the intent is not to induce guilt in people because, and I'd like to say this because I have come from a place where I used to like rap terribly about homosexuals. You know, like I was probably one of the worst, probably 'cause I was closer to it than most people. And you know, the intent is to just allow people to think a little bit more freely about it. And have it out in the open, the worst thing that is oppressive to me about being lesbian is not being able to talk about it. Having to hide it, not being able to say it.

– I guess I'd like to say something too. Kate and I, the scene we saw with us at the gas station was real. We happened to get a job at a gas station that paid $175 a week. So we took it 'cause women don't make wages like that being secretaries or typing or something. So, yeah.

– Pay in blood.

– But what happened, you see was the guy who hired us thought it was a little strange that women wanted to work at a gas station. So one day he sort of confronted me and said, are you a, well, I mean, are you a lesbian? I said, oh, you mean queer? Yes. And we were fired a week later.

– The the other thing too, I think that that incident brings a, is just I guess general, you know, oppression that all women feel about ... I remember the guy that came in and said, you working here? I mean, isn't it difficult? And you checked oil and everything, Cynthia said, how difficult is it to put gas in someone's car and check your oil? So I'm sure that all of you, you know, probably, you know, have had incidents when you've, you know, felt kind of like put down because of your, you know, sexuality and

– Like oppression isn't singular to lesbian.

– Right, right.

– I understand that very well.

– I really enjoyed the play but you know, like I've been a guest in your house many times. One thing that I don't think it it pictured was all spontaneous love that you know is in the house. Like, because you

went through all the same things and you showed all the problems you know, that you face and how you deal with them, like the drunk and stuff like that. And in a play situation, like with the drunk, it sort of looked like you overreacted 'cause you can't really picture that. How it happens.

- So I think you did overreact because the guy was on a front porch and Kate Dodie couldn't get in the door 'cause she'd forgotten her keys.

- Just remember how scared you are when you meet a drunk man on the street. You know, what do you, you start to shake and you start to run.

- But I used to like, I remember like when I first came to Rochester when there were three guys standing on the corner and I knew just as soon as I walked past there, I was gonna get all the comments and, I was gonna say I'll cross the street. And I thought, I'm so sick of crossing the street. You know? And so one thing that, that the house has really done for me is really, you know, giving me a feeling that I can deal with situations like that, that I don't have to cross the street, because they get, sometimes they get so shocked if you just tell 'em to like, you know, like, get the heck out of here. 'cause like, you know, it's a woman and you know, that kinda thing

- She's defending herself.

- Yeah.

- Gasp.

- I I guess like have any, I'm sure you've had like incidents like that, you know, would, would any of you like to share, you know, an incident or, or ask a question or?

- I it's really hard. You know, like the, the impact of what you've done is just so tremendous. You're, you're talking about it in terms of women and I'm many times, you know, I dunno, between every, every woman that I, there's, there's always that barrier there. You can't, you can only love her up to that floor. If it's a sexual type of touch, you can't love her. And it's not, it's not just, you know between women, it's between men and women. Is between men and men. And if you look back at your families, you know the fuck ups that are in your family.

- Right.

- It it, it's just everywhere.

- I guess that's what we're trying to do is to make some place that it

isn't, which is impossible, but sometimes close. Sometimes we can forget it for the one. What about responding in terms of the feelings that she's just expressed? I mean, someone just called for an expression of similar experience from the audience. And what about a response from you in terms of what she just expressed? Which are feelings, you must have confronted at some point, at some decision making point. You must have dealt with that consciously. Can I love this far and no farther? And if you decide that you can love beyond that point, what are the feelings that surround that?

- Stark terror.

- What, your response is stark terror?

- Yes. I mean, 'cause we just shown some of the things that this society does and the way they affect us, to try to keep us, what I consider to be in line, to try and make sure we love only the right people. The only man I ever went out with was black. And my parents flipped out about that too, you know, and so like, there's all these things just to make, we love only the right people. And when you find yourself loving someone who isn't a right person, it is, it's terrifying. And it's very hard to to, to even realize, to even try to make the effort to break down those barriers. 'cause it is, it is really scary. 'cause you're putting, going against almost everything the society tells you. That's, that's almost a statement of externals. You know, what will happen to you from the outside if you think that. What about the internals that you learned?

- I'd like to talk about that. Do you wanna talk Mary?

- Dodie wanted say something.

- I, I guess I can, you know, like I remember just so well, like times when I was in grade school especially in high school when I'd start, you know, getting close to one of my, you know, women friends. And I just, you know, I'd go out with guys, you know, and I, and there was always just something missing and I'd just get so scared shitless that I was queer. I mean, and I'd, you know, I'd go to bed and I'd cry and I'd say, my god, what's happening to me? And I went through like, I mustn't feel like this. I mustn't feel like this. And through like really heavy repression and you know, building up walls to say, well I only can get so close to you, Nancy or Joyce. And then Joyce saying, well, what's wrong? Why are you so hesitant? And not being able to say, because I'm so afraid that I want to love you. And like fully. And then I had done a pretty good job of like repressing my feelings. It would come out, you know, sometimes and I'd say Get back down, get back down. And what happened to me is when I came to Rochester and I had lived with this woman in Madison and she, she was gay and it was just like the whole world off my shoulders saying, well, I can finally be, you know what I am. And I think I spent about an hour just crying,

you know, with her. 'cause I was just so happy to be free of this.

– Another thing that that's really scary is that when you say you're gay and act that after a while you begin to realize that, that you can't go back. You can't get married, you can't, I don't know, do whatever it is to be acceptable anymore. You have to create a life where, where you're not safe. And creating that life is, is hard because like you're, you're very ingrained with a lot of things that say, you know, this isn't right and you don't, you weren't taught the al essential emotional tools to deal with the new situation sometimes. And you have to create them in yourself and like, it's a real long, hard hassle.

– Yeah, I guess this is a little closer to me because I made what I think is a really conscious decision to be gay. You know, it wasn't something that just sort of crept up on me or, or something that I, you know, I'd always thought of myself as heterosexual most of my life. And it sort of happened to me that because of my strong personality, the strong person that I am, that it's impossible for me along with men, you know, forget I can't be what they want me to be. I won't be what they want me to be. So I was confronted with a number of alternatives and you know, it was either celibacy or love women, respect women kind of thing. And so I thought about it for a long time and when, you know, I thought, you know, it's very easy to make a conscious decision once you realize it's okay. You know, intellectually it's not, 'cause I found myself going through all kinds of, and where my guts were just playing all kinds of tricks on me, you know, that I just couldn't, I couldn't, like Cynthia and I, when we first got together in the women's movement, we said, we can't talk about our lesbianism because, you know, it'll affect the other women. What we were really saying isn't that we were really feeling bad about it, but because we were trying to hide it. And the fears that I had, the concrete fears, you know, before I slept with a woman, what, why you, maybe I'll get freaked out. Maybe I won't like to touch her. Maybe I'll get sick, you know, kind of thing. And also the feeling that I wouldn't know what to do that would be so much different from sexuality with a man, which it is qualitatively much different kind of thing. Like I feel it's much more loving, much more sensual kind of thing instead of trying to produce something, you know, like an orgasm. But you know, technically it's no different. So, you know, I try to overcome some of this stuff because it's like I had many, many identity crisis, you know, and I'm still having it. But I guess the thing, it looks easy. You know, what we're saying. It looks easy to us, but it isn't, kind of thing. Like, it's a decision that I would make every day. You know, do I tell like... two people from where I work, nobody knows I'm gay if they know they aren't telling me, and I know I could be fired. And so they said, oh, your party's Thursday afternoon, we wanna come, we wanna come, you know? And I don't know what I would've done if they had come, you

– Know, I don't know how I would've confronted all this.

– One thing when you were talking about, you know, the family, you know how they're fuck ups in your family. Well, parents always want their kids to be happy. So here I am, like really happy, you know, I mean a basic happiness. It's not saying that I, I don't go through like, you know, like pain and stuff like that. But basically I'm happy, but, "Hello mom and dad, I'm really happy. You know, I'm, I'm finally, you know who I am. I'm gay." I can't right now. Like I can't share that with them. And the kind of relationship that I've had with my parents has more or less been kind of like, I think honest in the sense that I always told them what I was doing, even though it upset them. Like when I went to work in the inner city in Chicago, what they just had hysterics and they said, you can't go. And I, I actually left kind of against their will, but they knew. And now like when I'm talking to them on the phone, they say, well, "Going out with anybody?" That, that puts a pressure, you know, on me because I, I love them and I want them to know that, that I, I really, I'm doing things that like I never thought I could do before, you know? And I can't right now. Eventually I will, you know, there'll come a time. But, but right now that's, you know, a private, a private pain. Every, you know, every other Sunday when I talk to my parents.

– I feel like we've just done a lot of talking. Someone ask a question, say something.

– You mentioned ... police have been watching your house, right?

– Constantly for about a year, B18, it's a van people have been followed to and from our house almost any night you can go outside and pick out the unmarked car. Parked a block from our house. Our phone has had funny noises on occasionally

– On the day after Batavia and Buffalo, all the draft files, we got a call from a man asking us on what we're doing, you know?

– Yeah, that was weird.

– [He asked] I wanna know what your house, what specific kind of activities does your house have? I'm asking for my wife. He says.

– Yeah, this is right after he draft files were ripped off. So he calls and wants know if we'd ripped off the draft files, basically, which we hadn't done, you know? Sorry, now you've got the wrong number.

– I wonder if you could say what kind of effect that has on you personally, because I think that it's my opinion that being harassed like that, whether it's by police or by anybody, has an effect on the way you feel and the way you relate to other people. If you could talk

about that.

– Like Katie said, sometimes it makes you feel really dirty. I think other times it makes me feel scared. I wonder what's gonna happen when I, when I walk into a, when I walk into fundamentals tomorrow, it never goes. And I don't know if that's, you know, it is, it's frightening.

– You alternate between being really furious and being really depressed and you know, kind of don't care. You know, let them, let them surveil me. You know, do what they want to. I'll do what I want.

– Sort of between walking out the door and waiting and giving 'em the finger

– Or sometimes just not walking out.

– Sometimes I feel really overwhelmed with the powers that are mobilized against us.

– I think it's perfect. What you've done for us this afternoon, in a sense is overwhelm us with how much of yourself you've been willing to share and how much of yourself you've been willing to lay open with, you know, as you say Mary. A lot of vulnerability, a lot of risk. I think if it doesn't do anything else, it challenges us to the, you know, somehow or other to the fullness of humanity and the kind of unconditionality one human being owes to another human being. I would guess it's probably why we have so little to say because it's so big we're not quite sure how to handle it. We haven't really fought your battles, any of us, even intellectually I would guess, or very few of us.

– What decision was it to put this play on?

– Pardon? What kind of decision was it to put this play on?

– I guess like the first day that sister mentioned that we could do what we wanted. So project, just about, was pretty broad. I've been feeling a lot of anger about psychiatrists because a good friend of mine who happens to be a man had just been overhauled by a psychiatrist. He walked in and said, I have a small problem, I'm gay. And she said, you're not gay. It's a symptom of a deeper problem, you know, problem, problem. Yeah. And I guess like, just the chance to get out [Garble] was the reason that it struck me right away.

– Each one of us had our own motivations. I think that was also mine. I spent three years getting my head tinkered with across the street. And one day I just realized that even, you know, it wasn't a political decision, an intellectual decision. I just realized I was getting worse instead of better. And I walked out.

– That's where the lines moved for me. It came from the shrink across the street. The, the shrink in my...

– Who, who actually did, I mean, he had a very definite idea of what a woman should be. And I wasn't it, he was very upset. He made me upset, but he used to do things like I, I'd come and I'd be wearing the skirt and the blouse and then the next time I might come wearing, you know, jeans and my, my pea jacket and he'd say, that's very interesting Miss Robinson, last week you wore something very feminine and now you've wearing something very male and what's wrong? And I, I just went like, oh god, oh god. You know, am like, am, am I, you know, eh ––

– I think a lot of people, it's very difficult to go the organizational route looking at their problem. It's really tough to walk into the daughters of Sappho and say, here I am.

– Yeah, I know

– For the individuals that wanna look at this, want to talk about it, but don't want to confront society in, in those first trying days. Since you have presented yourself, you know, to a group of people, are you prepared to make yourself available to discuss this? To just kind of like hear the fears as they come out? Just well, I'm in this class.

– Anyone?

– Yes.

– Anytime.

– Yes. That's what I wanted to say is that the whole thing of, of women's movement does not have to confront somebody who's politically superior. You know, kind of ugly thing is, is to get women together who are feeling the same way and having, talking among themselves, consciousness raising groups, which gay women's consciousness raising groups are available and they can be started, four people, that's all it takes.

– and also just women processing groups. Not necessarily if you feel you're gay.

– Where are they? That's...

– Well, good question!

– Somebody in the background there want to give...? Yeah. Gay women. We can say women's liberation groups are ... Rena.

– I can give, if people call our house, we can, we can [give] numbers.

Yeah. Just contact Mary. We can give you number if you want to be in a gay group. A gay group, or, women, women's consciousness. Yeah.

– Anything.

– And basically, I don't know, I feel like I should say something about what the are cause I know, before I knew what happened in them, I was really intimidated by the idea of going to a consciousness raising group. It sounded like I was gonna get put on the rack.

– Sounds horrendous.

– Yeah. Sounds like a little bit of a shrink in it. Which isn't true, but, but what it is, is like people will just talk to us or call us, or friends will tell us about someone or someone will have a friend and they'll wanna get together and talk and like just a group of women who are all feeling sort of the same way or something. Six, eight -- did she say, oh, that's same address. Yes, she did. She recognized the address.