– The shadows of their desire. Take the form of flickering light. Murder by knife, by razor, by strangulation. Cunt meat eaten by a dog. And more of this. Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's. Blood money. You pigs, you motherfuckers. He screamed at the women and children holding signs, the questions in the air being Who pays the price? Who reaps the profit? Who has the power? Who feels the pleasure? Who does the bleeding? Who sheds the blood? October 22nd, Rochester, New York. Holiday Cine, Snuff, a slasher. Continuous from 2:00 PM made in South America where life is cheap. Manson like gang does a lot of killing. Ending with a Tate-like victim. Dagger plunges into pregnant belly explodes, gushing blood, amniotic fluid. The cameras pull back. Film crew shown talking it over. Pretty blonde assistant agrees that it turns her on. The attractive director suggests a good fuck. She sees the crew is still filming. She protests, tries to get up. The director picks up a dagger. Blood, chopped, fingers, arms, legs, river of blood flows from her mouth. He cuts her open. Brandishes entrails and sex. Screams orgasmic conquest. Fade into blackness. It's doing good business. October 30th, four women arrested by vice officers I, a male chauvinist, according to police, smashed a display case with a hammer, ripped out the poster of a woman slashed with scissors. Chained shut the door. Snuff's run ends earlier than planned, but before it goes, the vice squad has a look, rates it four stars, no genitalia showing. Therefore, it's not obscene. Torture and murder of women. Legitimate entertainment. Assistant DA Avery tells the papers we give more weight to the vice squad than to the average citizen. No chance DA's office will drop charges. We cannot condone violence under any circumstances.

– Stop violence against women. Stop violence against women. Stop violence against women.

– Some of us had met the theater owner Cesar Dagostino at another demonstration. In June, 1977, he had showed a movie called Nazi Love King. When we demonstrated in front of the theater, he lost his temper, struck me and then called the police.

– Move outside, okay. Gonna call the police now. You have to have a permit to do this.

– Oh, they get permits to do this?

– Yes.

– Oh, I don't think so,

– Alright?

– Oh, I don't think so.

– This is our property. We're not doing this, this is our property.

– Where do you live?

– 24 Strathallen.

– What is it?

– 24 Strathallen.

– Your date of birth?

– 21st. June.

– June?

– June 21st, '47.

– On October 30th, 1977, Sylvia, Lee, Margaret and I were arrested, jailed, and charged with criminal mischief. Third degree, a felony. That night as we sat in jail, we watched our friends on the evening news demonstrating against Snuff, and in our support. Months later, we discovered that we had been arrested because someone had informed the police of our plans.

– ...picture. Come on, come on, come on. Well, I am because you're taking our pictures. On October 31st, we were arraigned in criminal court before Judge Charles Malloy and released. Although we have been arrested together, we hardly knew each other at that time.

– Robert Kilpatrick being duly sworn deposes and says that he works at 150 South Plymouth Avenue in the city of Rochester, county of Monroe and state of New York. That on the 30th day of October, 1977 at the city of Rochester in this county when Sylvia Gasoi, AKA Simon, Margaret M. Hall, Evelyn Walker, and one Martha Gever wrongfully and unlawfully did commit a Class E felony, to wit, the crime of criminal mischief in the third degree.

– Then spray painting. Then I, I mean, watching her then she's, I think I started spray painting while she was doing the lock, although it's vague now. I did start spray painting. I, I was sort of nervous about that because I never spray painted before. I didn't know how it was gonna come out. But then I really got into it and I enjoyed it very much.

– At about 9:30 AM he did observe the above named defendants, breaking a window of the premises, known as the Holiday Cine Theater, located at 120 East Main Street in the city of Rochester, New York. That deponent did also observe the said defendants remove a large poster there at, tearing same up.

– She was checking up another hallway and I said, I sort of said,

should I do it now? And she's saying, you know, go on, get it done with. And I, I don't want to. So I turned around and I hit the window with a hammer and it bounced right off. And I remember just thinking, oh my God, after all this, it's not gonna work. I'm not gonna be able to break it. And I looked at her and I started to say something and then I didn't, I just remembered why I was there. And I looked at the poster and I just got furious. And I gripped the hammer up close to the head, which is how I cut my finger, and just smashed it very carefully, five smashes. And by then I was getting a little out of control.

– Deponent did catch up with the defendants identifying himself as a police officer, and did request them to accompany him back to the said Holiday Cine theater, which they did, That upon arriving, deponent did observe that one large window of the said theater was broken. That the double doors to the said premises had been chained together and a lock put in. The original lock to the said doors being broken. That the words, "why does Holiday Inn hate women" Had been written in red paint all across the entire front of the said theater.

– Oh, when he said that he was a male chauvinist pig, I asked him how he would feel if I said that I was a racist pig. And he said, that's okay. Anybody can be what they wanna be. Something like that. And I also remember him saying to you about that he was in Vietnam. And I think that's real important.

– One, this one cop who was acting somewhat fatherly towards us, said to us, now, why didn't you do a sit-in? Why didn't you do something, you know, that would've gotten you further, that would've been a better thing to do.

– I felt very depressed in the jail. I, I felt very alienated in some way. I mean, I, I felt like people in the jail didn't really know why we were there. I felt sort of like a liberal do-gooder in, in juxtaposed to, to the women in jail.

– ... go during the day and it was concrete. Four concrete walls, no windows, no fresh air with a television and a toilet and a table and hard benches. For lunch, we had Kool-Aid and hot dogs

– Where there was a little, little, like big chair, little couch. I don't know. I could fit into it because I'm small. And I just would curl up on it. And I just fit on this thing and I spent most of the afternoon laying on it, facing the wall. And it's got white tiles and this cement in, in between. And I kind of stared at this little spot a whole lot that afternoon.

– I just, I, then I heard about the civil rights movement in the south, and I, I felt very frustrated at that time. 'cause I felt like I should be going down there. I don't know why. Not gonna ask me why.

I don't know why I felt like, I mean, why I felt so compulsive about it. But I did go through a lot of anguish. I felt like, what am I doing here? But I had an infant. It felt like I had to stay at home. But what I did do that was substantive at that time, was I started to write letters to the president about when they were using hose at in, I think it was in Alabama. Yeah. Using fire hoses on people and bulldogs or police dogs. They call the guy Bull Connors. And I, I wrote a few letters and I was working in an office at that time and I, I wanted people to, so, it became a petition. Emily is very together. She, she feels, she's a very staunch feminist. I feel that she's a very staunch feminist. She's very proud. I think Paul is also, actually, at first he was very upset because he thought that he, people would, his peer group would make fun of him and so forth. But now I think he feels very good about it. I think at the time he had mixed feelings also. But he, he was very upset when I was arrested. The thing that was most offensive to me about that poster was what it said, which was that life was cheap. And that was the thing that enraged me because of, because hm, it just reflected the entire thought of Western man and how they have cheapened life. I, I think I would've preferred a sit in with a, a whole lot of people. I know that I would've preferred that just be, simply because that would mean that more people were taking responsibility and were more interest... more people saw the need to act. But now I feel that in retrospect, I feel that that was, I still feel that it would've been a, a better thing if more people had acted. But I don't have any misgivings about it at all. None whatsoever. And I would do it again, the exact same thing. Just the knowledge that somebody's watching something like that. That something like that was made and that people are watching it and, and that people allow it to be in their community even though they're not looking at it. And even if they say that is horrible, but, but what can we do about it? Or somebody has to make a buck or someone saying that they want to, that they don't really like these magazines in their store. They hate it also, but that's what sells. And we have to make money. That's incredible to me. It's horrendous that people would even live lives like that. What's the point of it? I don't, I don't understand. I mean, I feel like their lives are very diminished. Also, I'd like to think that once one crosses a certain line that is, understands that they can't accept this any longer, that they continue and then, and then it can, then that situation can't continue anymore. Because once you start seeing things, you see more and more things and you have to act. I think people, I I, I think possibly people understand that without, perhaps not on a conscious level, but that they understand. And that is why they are reluctant to do that. That is, put themselves on the line, so to speak, because that is a commitment. Then you can't stop. You continue. I, I used to think about that during the anti-war movement. I, I felt that a lot of people could not go to demonstrations, could not cross that line. That is to, to actually commit themselves to something because they looked upon the government as their father. And, and to act would be to really disown, to be out on... to disown their father and to be out on

their own. And I think that's the way people feel about, the same thing in terms of responding to pornography. I mean, nobody can look at those magazines or films and, and think of women as, as even equals or, or to put it another way, as not think of women... No one can look at those things and not think of women as objects, as pieces, as parts, as something to be used in any way they desire to use them, as something less than they are. This is a record cover. This is a record. It's uh... Wild Angel. A woman is being gagged with a heavy chain. That's the name of the record. Wild Angel. These are all put out by Warner Company. The next one is The Best of New York City. Four men chasing a woman down the street and then Thriller. A woman is lying on the ground, unconscious. Her clothes are messed up and the contents of her purse are strewn about, Do you want to do a thing? A group of men dragging two women across the floor. Here's a, here's now, here's a beauty. Pleasure. Pleasure.

– Very soon after our arrest, two lawyers agreed to represent us. Jack Carter, a public defender, and Barbara Handschu, a feminist lawyer from Buffalo, New York. In our first conversation, Barbara suggested that our defense strategy be based on a claim that our action was legally justified.

– Justification, such conduct is necessary as an emergency measure to avoid an imminent public or private injury, which is about to occur by reason of a situation occasioned or developed through no fault of the actor. And which is such gravity that according to ordinary standards of intelligence and morality, the desirability and urgency of avoiding the injury sought to be prevented by the statute defining the offense.

– Barbara also advised us to form a defense committee, a group of supporters who will be able to speak about the case in public, help raise funds and assist with defense research and planning.

– No group in our society would stand for similar defamation. Women must recognize and confront all forms of terrorism against women and children. This film was shown in Rochester whenever it was at the Holiday Cine managed by Caesar Dagostino. It was produced by and distributed by so and so. Women fight back, support [garble] and come to the Hall of Justice May 22nd.

– There were times when the defense committee meetings became real frustrating for me personally because I felt ... put in, in some kind of role or else I put myself in some kind of role where I had to do a lot of the talking or felt like I had to do a lot of the, the coordinating or doing the agenda. People would talk all at once sometimes and it was very frustrating.

– Yep. That's it. I'll make some ...

– Okay, why don't I put that under trial itself schedule. Is that a

good thing or no?

– Well, I didn't even know. I was thinking the other day, I didn't even know almost any of the women before that demonstration that day. I didn't know Martha, Karen, almost anyone. [Wild Laughter]

– Carman Miranda over here!

– Mark, what do you do as counsel?

– Co-counsel... What that means would be that, for example, one or all of us could do opening statements.

– Oh, I see.

– Talking about... what are the issues that we're asking the jury to look at, that we see. You could cross-examine, we could get up and talk, cross-examine the cops or, or Caesar. It would mean that, you know, Martha's testifying. And I remember something that maybe Jack and Barbara didn't think to ask her. 'Cause I live with Martha and I know when I get up and I'm able to ask it. It means that you can do summary statements at the end. That's as far as I understand...

– That would drive that man crazy. That would drive him insane.

– Yeah, probably would.

– Then he would look like the lunatic that he is. Yeah, I mean, if you could very sanely start laying on him just a few questions and watch him just go crazy in the courtroom, wouldn't that be gorgeous?

– Lily Engler called, this is just a message. I didn't speak with her, but, and all I really have here is that she called in reference to the "Snuff thing" and that she talked to...

– I think it was good. I like the ways that we finally got around to developing a structure without being very structured. That we had to do things in a certain way in order to get them done, but that that evolved kind of slowly. Things like who was going to take the minutes and who was going to run the meeting and someone timing it so that we would get through things.

– ...a blow up of that Hustler.

– A blow up would be prohibited, but if you just walked in with your magazine...

– Sure, yeah.

– You're not allowed to read in court.

– You're not?

– But you may certainly have, you will be told not to read.

– No, the thing is you don't wanna read, you wanna just if you wanna open the thing to a really seedy picture and hold it like this and just carry it in as your reading material, people will look at it and think you're weird.

– Well then the press will ask us...

– Press will say, what are y'all doing with this? And you'll say, oh, you wanna see this? Here, take a look at this.

– But the jury's still...

– We want everyone to...

– I think you ought just carry it along and say, when you're asked to talk, you wanna document what you're saying.

– Exactly.

– It's very graphic and...

– No I mean, just carry it. Only, only stick out a really good picture.

– Well that cover, the Hustler.

– You don't need anything else except that cover. Just like this poster.

– Yeah.

– I feel like, yes, that, that created a kind of a core that I feel is really strong that, I mean that I can't even imagine anything stopping us

– A group to be very strong, a group to be very independent. And I got that from my mother. I grew up with a notion that I was going to be exceptional, unusual I grew up with a notion, that I wasn't going to get married right out of high school. And that I wasn't going to get caught in the traps that she felt she was gonna get caught in or that she had gotten caught in. She, I grew up to be very intellectual and to do, do things by myself very much the... pull yourself up by your own bootstraps kinda notion, you make it on your own. I had no sense of needing to work with other women, very kinda male oriented. I, I considered everyone a neuter. Everyone was persons. And there was like

no gender involved in my perception of... I was 18 and very young and very naively young, still am, and traveling alone. People have said to me that it was very brave thing for me to travel alone. That it was courageous and it wasn't brave at all. To be brave, you have to have an understanding of fear. It was just totally naive. I had no conception that anything you would need to be brave about anything. I was walking in the countryside, the empty, empty countryside of Belgium, had been going to walk between two youth hostels and started off going through the woods, a track through the woods and was stopped by one man who tried to rape me. He, he gave up quite quickly, actually. We didn't, we just fought a little bit. And when he realized that he wasn't going to get it without fighting, he stopped. I was real scared and went back to the main roads and decided I would walk the main roads to the hostels. And I got... Briel was here and La Fontaine was there and I was going to [Location], which was there. The road was started to go through pine woods and I couldn't see things on the other side. And I was very afraid to go into the pine woods again because the car, the man who had tried to rape me that morning, it was early afternoon by now, had gone by, had driven by a couple times and I had stopped when I saw him going by and sat down in the bench and I thought, I'll just wait for him to get good on his way. I don't want him going around the corner and waiting for me. Also at the same time, thinking I was being very paranoid, but scared nonetheless. And I did sit down on a bench and waited for about half an hour and I was just gonna get up and go when his car comes creeping very slowly back down. I think he must've gotten tired of waiting for me. So I, I kind of waited for him to get outta sight. I was very nervous. And I also tried to hitch, but again, I mean like two or three cars had gone by me in about an hour and a half. A different man accosted me on my way through the pine woods. I finally gave up and started walking and another man tried to rape me. Trying to think what I wanna say about this. Something, there's so many things that are important about that. One of the things, I mean, he didn't get into me. What he did was upsetting enough. God knows how I'd feel if he'd actually gotten in me. I got away through sheer luck. I did what [Name] or whatever his name is, tells you not to do. I made him angry. Made him so angry that he lost control for the first time and I got away.

– How did you make him angry?

– He asked me if his erection was beautiful and I told him it was ugly and he didn't understand English, so I had to scream it in French after I'd screamed it in English. And I used the feminine pronoun wrong. I didn't realize I was doing that, but I screamed at it that it was ugly. He kept, I think he kept thinking I was going to like it once I settled down, you know? Yeah. He kept telling it was going to be love amor, love. He just, he he, he lost control then. And I got by him. I learned passivity a long time ago, like when I was about 14 I, 13 or 14. I got very suddenly like super passive. I grew up in a family where I was beaten. I remember seeing my mother beaten when I

was young. I, all of us kids have been beaten a lot. And I used to fight back. And then when I was about 14, I stopped fighting back. My, I just changed my mechanism entirely and lost all my physical strength. I couldn't... so that I'm real afraid of inflicting violence. I just had this real feeling. I'm very afraid of pain and I'm very afraid of inflicting pain. So that when the man, the second man who tried to rape me was... I, I could fight him only enough to keep him, well I couldn't fight him enough to like make him stop. I couldn't slap his face. I mean, I could put my hands in front of my face, but I couldn't slap his face. It was like, there's just, there was such a limit to what I felt like I could do. I was so angry. I was so full of rage and yet I, I couldn't hurt him at all despite what he was trying to do with me. I found it such a contradiction. I had jeans and work boots and a down jacket and a hat and a scarf and mittens and a 25 pound backpack on my back. And I am surprised I looked female when he tried to rape me. What I had to learn from that was that no matter how I saw myself, if they thought that you had a cunt, that was all they, all that mattered. All that mattered to them. But the fear, those two things, I can't separate them, is very, I can't talk about them separately. I'm finding that when I start talking about the fear, I also have to talk about this realization that no matter what I was, how I moved, how I dressed, whether I wore high heels or whether I wore shoes I could run in. I was still gonna need to run. But... cunt is a horrible word. I hate that word. And yet that's how, that's how they see us. I was new to Rochester and looking for the women's community, felt the need in my life to be actively feminist, to take a part in changing what I didn't like. I mean, I've just always felt that need. So I came to the Snuff protest not knowing anything about Snuff, but having been told, I mean, except for what I had been told on the telephone, is outraging. I mean Snuff is, it's sort of like another, to me, Snuff is just another piece in the puzzle, just another thing. It's, it's kind of like a little bit more horrifying than walking down the street. Except for that in fact, I deal with walking down the street all the time. I walk everywhere. That's very connected with my personal safety and just, I was trying to break into a, a field that is traditionally male. I was trying to work on the printing presses and this is something that women aren't allowed to do. It is just all very connected

– By obtaining several estimates on the cost of plate glass windows. Our lawyer Jack had persuaded the judge to lower the charge against us to criminal mischief fourth degree, a misdemeanor, maximum sentence one year in prison or $1,000 fine. Our trial was scheduled for May 22nd, 1978. Judge Malloy had told Jack off the record that he would not allow testimony or arguments based on justification. He also expressed his displeasure with the publicity this trial had received.

– Which courtroom is it? Mom?

– That one. It's not a very good courtroom. I can't get all the lights

on here. Hi Barbara.

- ...a picture. Someone, she's taking it. Are you recording this? 'cause if you are, I'm gonna tell you not to without my permission.

- That's right.

- You want to get yourself in a lot of trouble?

- No, we don't.

- Well then don't you, record anything.

- Who are you with?

- We have the same right to free speech as you do.

- Right, we're exercising our free speech right now, right? Isn't that what the First amendment is all about?

- You don't have our permission...

- criminal mischief in the fourth degree his exact quote, a person's guilty of criminal mischief in the fourth ...

- What is that?

- Criminal mischief?

- She wondered what, no, I just need something to do...

- Oh it says he, it's not us.

- You're right.

- This crew.

- It says he!

- HE intentionally damages property of another person, reckless endangers property.

- Criminal mischief third is similar except for that it, it doesn't need the second sentence. And it just says the intentionally bit in the amount exceeding 250.

- I hope that we'll be able to say the things we want to say in the courtroom, although I am rather jaundiced in my opinion that we'll be able to truly litigate the issues.

– Has that been sort of determined already by the judge?

– Pretty much. It's subject to change and we have to make a formal offer on the record for it, but it, he's pretty much decided he wants to hear about a broken window and we'd rather not talk about a broken window. That's not the issue.

– Well, I, I don't know how many people could stand to go. Supposedly when it first showed in Rochester, people were vomiting in the theater. So I don't know. I'm not interested in seeing it myself, but I think people should listen to a description of the film and they should understand exactly what's, what's happening. That, you know, this mutilation happened on camera and it was supposed to be sexually exciting.

– What has the theater owner said about all of this?

– We haven't found him to be particularly articulate on these matters at all.

– Do you feel that he's not supportive apparently of your view then?

– Absolutely not.

– And he has not relented in terms of... He did stop the film after your protest or?

– Yeah, the film was supposed to be here for two weeks. We were told that it left after four days.

– Okay. So that... to say it's impermissible is not censorship?

– It's a form of censorship. I can't dodge it. I would say it is a form of censorship, but there comes a point where certain censorship is necessary. Standing in the crowded movie theater, crying fire is the clear and present danger. And I think Douglas was right. There does come a point, you draw a line.

– Barbara, can I add to that? We, we do compare this situation to the, the situations where First Amendment rights don't apply because there is a clear physical danger toward, toward a person or some people like...

– So you're saying then that the film

– Encourages the violence against women?

– Well I think that any community where this film is showing that the potential terror, terrorism against women is heightened. Absolutely. I believe that. And just as the First Amendment doesn't allow you to cry

fire in a crowded theater or allow you to threaten someone's life directly, I don't believe First Amendment rights should cover a case like this.

– ... racist, it's sexist, it's horrible.

– Is there any other way that you can get that movie from just to get rid of the movie? Isn't there something you do like take it to court or something, movies?

– Monticello women have sued the distributor and the producer of the movie. What happened was they brought the lawsuit and then the distributor then sued them back from misuse of the... of the judicial process. I mean, so it opened up, then they were defensive. And it probably, in Buffalo, at least New York City, we were successful with very large protest picket lines.

– I mean, but you know, I think their whole point is that they're trying to get across the fact that they didn't like the film being shown and they're on trial for breaking glass. You know, I don't see how they can incorporate the two and get their point across.

– They may not be able to.

– Yeah. And if they can't, then what are they gonna do? Well, there's nothing, I don't think there's anything they can do about that. If the judge does not, you know, if there's certain information that he doesn't allow in the courtroom, then it just, they could appeal his ruling on anything. But, you know, it may not mean anything. It would just be determined what might...

– I, I saw an analogy that made a lot of sense with, to me, if a man in a business suit were robbed at 10 o'clock at night, no one's gonna question his right to be out on the street at that time. But if a woman is raped, then automatically she's at fault. I feel that kind of attitude is a direct personal attack on me because I live here and I have a right, you know, to my life and that's not being accepted.

– Do you think that, say like in this particular instance that the movie Snuff, how do you think that's related to what you're talking about?

– Well, I just think it's, it's the, it's simply an extreme expression of a whole way of thinking that exists throughout the society on all levels. The culture as a whole, I feel encourages this kind of violence. I feel like it's just, it's a matter of degrees that basically the kind of crap that goes on the way women are portrayed in Playboy, the way women are portrayed on TV commercials is ineffectual and stupid and weak and passive. It's, they're basically saying the same thing as Snuff is saying, only they're saying it in subtler ways

about what women are and what kinds attitudes men should have about them. And I feel like those attitudes are a direct threat to me. This movie, this movie is making it real obvious. You know, this movie is shaking its fist at me or shaking it's knife at me. I feel like these other things are doing that too.

– Yesterday I was riding my bicycle down the street and some young men said, let's rape that woman. And I think that that type of attitude is projected into our society that women are seen as objects to be sexually abused.

– I guess when you talk about political, you also have to talk about personal and that sometimes is very difficult for me. As for violence against women, I guess movies like this show it very clearly. As for myself, I feel very strongly about these issues, having been raped a few years ago. I know exactly what that violence is and what it means and, and how it affects your life.

– We formed a support group around the four women who were arrested because we stand with them as we identify completely as, as victims of the basic structure of this society, which is not a subtle, but a very active, physical, violent hatred for women. And as such, it's taken me years to recognize that it isn't just other women who get beat up now and then like an occasional hooker or a wife who bothers your husband. But that terrorism applies to me. Every woman who hears this program, everyone here, the women who were arrested, none of us are allowed out after dark. Why? Real physical fear, threat of violence. As a little girl, I remember I was supposed to get home from my piano lessons before dark. Nobody ever told me why. I really never consciously knew. I just knew that it was okay for my brother to be out. It wasn't okay for me to be out. And now I know why. It's because there is a real hatred, a discipline of women. It's like making sure the dog stays in the yard or you beat it. I mean, it's just a very physical restriction of the activities of all women. So that's why I'm here. I'm here to stand with the four women because I know I am one of them. I'm as angry as they are. I won't have it anymore.

– Judge Malloy grew up in the same neighborhood as Marg's parents and knew her grandfather. Just before the trial began he discovered this relationship and with a broad smile on his face, he disqualified himself.

– At first I was incredibly, I mean, that afternoon I was incredibly upset and tired. I mean, I couldn't imagine all these people that came and waited all day and nothing happened and all the organizing. And I almost felt like it went down the drain. And then I realized the next day, I guess that it was in fact very effective. I mean, we didn't even have to do this shit. The shit in the courtroom isn't probably very important at all. I mean, because we're probably not gonna, we're gonna try to educate the jury and try to, to make it something

interesting for people observing and whatever. But it seems to me that most of the work is done outside the courtroom and mobilizing people and talking about it and getting people talking about what Snuff means, what this trial means, and that the trial is just like that kind of event for doing that. And I think we did a good job. Not only that, I think that the showing in the courtroom and the, the awareness that that we brought to the community had an effect on the process itself. I, I guess you gotta look at the way laws are used in this society to maintain the status quo and to, and preserve privilege and to really punish, systematically, certain groups of people. I mean, we know that there is a clear double standard of justice. I mean, white collar criminals do not get the same treatment that black people do or non-white people do, or poor people do. So I feel fairly cynical about the, the present system of law and law enforcement and all that happens around that in this country. I think law is a tool that's a weapon of the powerful and the privileged against those who perhaps at times are, are struggling for change. It's a weapon that they use all the time against certain groups of people. And I think it's also not a, I come, I come from a kind of authoritarian tradition in the Catholic church, and I think there is a tendency to confuse, in this country, to feel like it's a sin to break the law or that it's, it's a, it's a terrible thing. And I think that you gotta look at the situation and always look at the law in the terms of, in terms of the context of a situation and perhaps strict adherence to the law may not be a necessarily a good thing. Some things are legal that are clearly wrong. I mean, we know rape in marriage is legal and I don't think that's tolerable. That is a crime. I mean, many crimes against women are legal and, and even when they're quote not legal, we know where the system stands frequently in terms of enforcement. I mean, it's the, the police who are men, you know, who respond to calls of women who are getting beaten and, and you know where their heads are on that and, and rape victims. I mean there's like, there's double crimes at the hands of those who are quote, supposedly enforcing the law. So I don't think we should confuse rightness with the law. There are different things.

– I was born in Rochester and I stayed here most of my life, I'm the oldest child of seven children and I come from a nuclear family. I, I I spent a number of years in the convent. I, I guess that I could attribute that to youthful idealism and wanting to be with women and, and having an attraction to religious ideas. I've done a lot of different sorts of jobs. I don't consider that my work though. I mean, I feel like my work is, is organizing, doing work that nobody in the society really would get paid for because it's too subversive, it's too threatening. Too revolutionary maybe. I think direct action. The, the idea behind it is that you take steps as directly as you can conceive of to achieve the, the justice that you're seeking. That you don't reinforce the powers that are oppressing you, their legitimacy as, as, as authorities, by asking permission. That you also maybe step outside the proper channels, which those channels frequently are

devised not to facilitate change, especially changes in favor of justice for powerless groups. that the system of government, the bureaucracies, the concentration of economic and political power, that it's all set up in such a way to be very slow and to also favor those people who already are in power. And so people like black people, like farm workers, like women don't have so much access to that power. I mean, I think one good thing about taking direct action for women is that we're no longer, that we're not being nice. I mean that's one thing about direct action usually it's not very nice. And I think that can be, that can be a, a beneficial thing in that you're, you're... you're showing the urgency of the situation by not being nice. And also that nice, nice approaches aren't effective. You know, when you're not nice, that's when it's effective. And for women to not be ladylike, you know, to break out of that. I mean it's like there's almost a double thing. Not only is it not nice, it's not ladylike, see and to, to take direct action, I think challenges that stereotype and, and that's why I don't know about, I mean it's not, I don't know about waiting around for the police to get arrested. You know, I think, I think we should try to avoid, you know, being too much the martyr. You know, if you get caught, you get caught and you know that's a risk you're taken. But I think my feeling about the time of that Snuff came was, I would, I preferred not to get caught.

– No judge wanted the case. One judge told Jack that he was surprised that such an intelligent lawyer was wasting his brains on us. All summer we waited to hear who our judge would be, evaluating and reevaluating our ability to pull our defense together on short notice. We hoped that Judge Davis, a liberal, would take the case. The district attorney offered to reduce the charge against three of us to disorderly conduct, a violation, and to drop the charge against Sylvia entirely in exchange for guilty pleas. The only penalty would be $100 restitution to D'Agostino. We had considered a similar offer before and decided no, but we reconsidered.

– ...We can't use our time waiting for justice.

– So I'm just thinking that copping a plea. It's hard to say the words. Okay. And even paying something gives one a lot of freedom then you can really say everything,

– Right.

– You can say yes, we did it and this is why we did it. We hope other women do the same. Look at this person and look how they fucked us over. You know, we could, I mean justice can't deal with this. Really gives one a great deal of freedom.

– Yeah, I would like us to address this problem of how to, how to not discourage women from doing similar things. In fact, maybe we could even explicitly state that we want this, we want women to...

– Well humiliation and getting convicted and getting restitution and going to jail 'cause you didn't pay it is pretty damn discouraging.

– I mean I

– Discouraging

– A lot of people went to jail during the anti-war movement and that didn't seem to be a deterrent to more people doing things. It seemed to really escalate the movement in a certain way.

– Is that movement different? I mean, women are usually in harder positions though. I mean, I don't know anything about the anti-war movement, but it just seems to me Sylvia can't afford to go to jail because she's got children

– ...and he's not even agreed never to show sSnuff again. You know, he's free to go and show Snuff again, you know, and you're punishing us. I guess I'd really, you know, be angry and I'd say, what

– Kind of justice is this?

– I don't know what I'd do in the end. I don't wanna go to jail, but I don't wanna pay the fine. I guess I'd say that and then I'd say I have to think about it for a while or I don't know what I'd...

– Yeah, I think ... you withdraw with honor.

– Do you see the light at the end of the tunnel?

– My fellow Americans, I want to say this is not a defeat! What I'm, that's what I was saying to the chairman the other day. My visit to Red China. I mean the people's... Well, the people's, what they call it over there. It doesn't matter what they call it, it's red China! That's my Nixon number. That is somehow everything you were saying just reminded me a whole lot trying to get yourself out of Vietnam.

– Right, right.

– Without getting yourself out Vietnam,

– so, okay, this Jack Davis isn't going to do it.

– He isn't?

– so much...

– cool.

– On September 20th, 1978, Lee, Marg and I pled guilty to disorderly conduct. On October 4th, judge Malloy sentenced us to pay $100 for restitution.

– Well how do you feel now that it's almost over? They always ask you, how do you feel? I feel quite nervous yet and I'm, I think I'm very disappointed in everything. But I dunno what else you could expect, really, considering all the, all that we're up against, I don't think there's any way that the system can deal with human beings on a human level dealing with issues. I could just sort of grind out what they call justice in a very poor way.

– What other things do you wanna move on to?

– We wanna continue to confront women hating culture in all of its manifestations, specifically pornography and maybe anti-rape work.

– What is a Woman hating culture?

– Yeah. This culture. Can you just give us a very brief description of what you're talking about?

– It's when we, if I can, it's when we grow up as an object, an object of sex, an object of men's sexual pleasure. It's when I walk into that stupid room here or elsewhere and people look at me like, who are you girl? And look at what I'm wearing, not what I have to say.

– What do you think you've proven by, by doing what you did?

– That women are going to fight back.

– Do you think you've, that simply, do you think you've hurt that cause though by pleading guilty and by not taking the whole issue to trial? Do you think that

– No. 'cause the court wasn't gonna let us take it to trial. It became clear and clearer over the months that we weren't going to be able to present our defense and not in, not necessarily just in our terms because we never expected that, but even in any shape or form, side issues were gonna consume the attention, the judge had decided it would take one day. Doesn't seem like that, he was counting on too much going on there, and so we decided that wasn't possible, and they'd make the rules! We had almost nothing to say, but we never talked to the judge. We're never allowed to talk to the judge.

– Are you satisfied now with the way it's turned out?

– Yes, because we'll go on to do other things. This case is over.

– The treatment of women as property is the foundation of crimes

committed against us by men. How then can you expect us to respect male laws enforced to defend male property rights? Especially when that property is being used to perpetuate this very attitude that we are the property of men that they can do with us as they please even to the point of murder. I just can't imagine what sort of sentence you could possibly dream up to meet the avowed goals of this court. I will never be rehabilitated into accepting male domination or deterred from doing what I can to stop violence against women.