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Interviewee: Sally Mullen

Interviewer: Darla Torres

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Sally Mullen: Actually my grandfather sending money to the Michigan women's suffrage movement in 1915 or something like that. The women in the family were very...It's kind of a matriarchy. It took a long time to figure this out. But, we're very active in a lot of different things, and really into educating women. My mom—I'm going to just sort of tell you about how I got dragged into. Not dragged into it, but my mom was a social worker and she started working in the 1930s. She went to east to Smith Women's College and graduated. But in 1929 she went there and then the Depression happened. Her family kind of collapsed financially. She ended up staying back there and not being able to come back to Montana, but when she did, she worked for what was then the Department for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Children. She worked in Lewistown and in those days when they ran out of funding, their offices just all closed and she'd come back to Billings to stay with her folks. Then she went back to work after she'd had her kids in 1954 I think. She just had such strong feelings that she communicated very well to her children about, particularly reproductive health care, because she'd seen so many women who had kids they couldn't afford to take care of or who'd had health problems because of having kids, or she also really felt that the suicide rate in women who had kids that they didn't want was higher than ...than was acceptable. She was a modern woman in the '30s [1930s], and was...I love it. She had four kids. We were all planned. In that day and age, that was kind of an unusual thing to have happen. I think she really wanted to see that women took control of their own destiny. She made me feel like a piker in the pro-choice department. Even in her 80s. She would just froth at the mouth, she'd get so mad at the legislators. That's kind of how I got into, I think, the mindset of feminism and reproductive health care.

One of the things that happened when I was a kid was that when she was working for the Welfare Department, a woman from Malta came and stayed with us during the last probably month of her pregnancy, and then for a little while after. She had her... what was it? An out-of-wedlock baby in those days. I think I was maybe ten at the time, but I, the thing that struck me in retrospect was that there was no judgment involved. It was just that this was a woman. She was going to have a baby, et cetera, et cetera. So, there wasn't a stigma attached to that, or placed on that by my parents. Which I thought was pretty impressive. That was the family background. When I came to school here, and it was the '60s, and everybody was bumming out and doing drugs and stuff.

Darla Torres: Now what year was it that you came to Missoula?

SM: I came to here in '67. I spent summers here as a kid. But, came to school in '67. Then I dropped out in 1970 and went back to Billings for a little while, but then went east for a couple years, then back to eastern Montana, then back to Missoula again, and back at the beginning of 1975. At that time, I was looking for work. I had an old friend that I'd gone to college with, who was involved in Women's Place. Through her I met somebody I went to work with, and ultimately lived with for a few years, and who also became one of the founding members of Blue Mountain.

DT: And who was that?

SM: Anne Maclay. She was the first nurse there. I got involved in Women's Place, and then there was the group of people at Women's Place who had...Well, because we were referring women out of state all the time for abortions, it became painfully apparent that there needed to be some local access. So that's kind of what happened, was that a bunch of very strong women put their minds to it, and their shoulders to the wheel, and made that thing happen. I think there were certainly seemingly endless obstacles to opening the clinic to start with. Not as enormous as some of them that came later, but the landlords really didn't want to, I'm sure, rent to places that were going to do abortions. I don't know, because I didn't do any of those. I wasn't really that involved. I was involved in some of the physical stuff, like painting and ripping off wallpaper, and cleaning the lab and that sort of thing to start with. I'm not sure quite how upfront people were about renting that facility, but anyway...then finally found a place, and—

DT: And where was that place, Sally?

SM: 218 East Front, in that medical / dental building, upstairs. I bet the whole thing wasn't 600 square feet. It was amazing. There was a large closet that was used as counseling space. The divider, that people would be sitting on the floor behind it to use it as a counseling space. There was one—one procedure room, and a recovery room, so people would just be kind of plopped into the recovery room. It was tiny. Only one bathroom, which was kind of a story of...did not (unintelligible) when I was in that bathroom. A few years later it moved downstairs, and got a couple procedure rooms.

DT: So what year was it that they opened?

SM: The first abortion clinic was the...I have this idiot savant streak with dates. February 19, 1977. But they'd been working probably for nine months ahead of that to make it happen. It was incorporated in '76. What became very apparent very quickly was the...what a huge need there was. You'd do 20 or 30—well, not so often 30, but, probably 18 to 25 procedures every weekend.

DT: Oh, my gosh.

SM: And women were coming from all over the state, and Idaho and eastern Washington, and sometimes as far away as Wyoming. Because there just wasn't anything. It was a huge boost to people to not have to, for instance, go to Seattle, although Spokane was in that (unintelligible) area. So anyway, that started booming quickly.

You wanted to know what a typical day was like?

DT: Yes. I'd like to kind of go back first and talk about the early organizational days before the clinic actually opened. Who were the people that were working on this project, and who were the advocates for the...? Were there doctors that assisted you?

SM: Yes, okay, I can. Sure.

DT: What was happening with the legislature at the time?

SM: Well, the *Roe v. Wade* kind of opened the door. There was a decision in the courts by a Federal Judge Russell Smith that struck down big parts of the Montana Abortion Control Act, such as needing permission of the spouse and so on. He held a number of sections to be unconstitutional.

DT: Do you remember what year that was?

SM: I think that was probably '74 or 5. I can probably find out someplace in my roamings if I ever get my hands on that stuff again. So in the courts things were happening to make it legal. Then in the women's movement things were happening to incite people to action. There were a couple of doctors. There was one doctor in town who was performing abortions—Pennell, at that time. Then there was another guy named Jim Lewis who had come to Missoula, or...Well, I'm trying to remember. Was he in Idaho at the time? I can't even remember. I think he was. So he'd travel over. But he provided training like to Anne Maclay and some of the other early medical people.

One of the things too you have to remember is that this is collective (unintelligible). So that the organizational structure was a collective, and the idea was that everybody'd be able to do everything. So, some people went to Seattle and got trained. I think at Arada and Fremont clinic. I know Anne Maclay, and I don't know about Barb Burke—she was also one of the early nurses—trained with Jim Lewis. May have trained a little bit with Pennell. Then Doug Webber, who's been with the clinic for many years, trained with Jim Lewis also. Doug was just a pup in those days. So, I think that in an organizational way it's really a fascinating study, and I'm pretty sure it probably mirrors a lot of places.

So there's a group of really active women who are very strong, into it. There were two sets of sisters. There were Judy and Lin Smith were there. Then Barb and Pat Tucker, neither of whom has stayed, I don't believe, very active in the women's movement. Barb's a lawyer in Billings. I

don't know what Pat's doing now. But Pat had some sort of a conversion that turned her anti-choice at one point. I don't know where she is on any of that now. Rona Finnman, Jennifer Thompson—that's who I'm remembering right now. So they were able to get this thing off the ground. The day before the first clinic—so it would have been the 18th of February—there was an article in *The Missoulian* that this was going to open. Everybody was sort of frantic because even then there had started to be, I think, some, at least, hints of violence against clinics. They did have support of the doctors who were going work there. The rest of the medical community always did hate Blue Mountain, I think, and kind of looked down their noses at Blue Mountain. But what's interesting is that it was the people—people before profit—and just this huge push to have information available and to have...so people can make informed decisions. The informed consent there was amazing compared to every place else in the world practicing medicine at the time. Some of the stuff you get in the doctor's office now just routinely telling you about any affliction you might have, I think, is a real direct result of the women's health care movement. I remember in the olden days, geez, you'd have to generate all of that information yourself because there wasn't any place you could steal it from. Well, now you can steal it on the Internet or from any women's clinic probably or women's health facility in the country. So I think that's been a huge boost for everybody, all medical consumers in this country. I don't know if it was the intensity, and it was in the days before anybody'd gone to counseling. But it was really hard for us for a few years, because the people who started the clinic weren't people that could sustain it. There was a huge rift pretty shortly into it, and a lot of unhappiness. So some people stayed, and some people went. Even the people who stayed didn't...ended up not staying really long after that. That was within the first year already.

DT: Why? That seems to be such a typical thing in women's organizations, that...Why do you think that is? Do you have a theory of why there's these deep rifts that happen? Like it happened at Women's Place as well.

SM: Oh yes. No kidding. Where everyone tried to dive (unintelligible) in the meantime. Are they still happening? That's my question. Are they? I think what happened at Blue Mountain anyway was that people was that there were agendas, hidden agendas, that people couldn't even articulate probably, even if they'd known they were there. That the ability to, of people, to communicate about their emotions was just stunningly lacking. I think that when you get people who are that involved and their self-image has a lot to do with being involved in cause work. They maybe don't have the best communication skills. At that point anyway, most people hadn't really worked out their own stuff, so that they brought with them not only their fervor, but also their baggage. That it was just sort of the playing out of the American family in a lot of ways. I'm not sure, but it...What I know is that it takes such a huge toll on people.

One of the things I've done in my life is I go around to organizations that are in crisis. That's kind of my shtick, so I try to put them back together again, a sort of a Humpty Dumpty routine. I think, too, that this doesn't happen at (unintelligible) because people don't give enough of a shit, I think, about what they're doing. But when you have a bunch of women who are really into the cause, and they have really strong feelings about what the politically correct route to

go is, and those feelings aren't shared by everyone. I don't know. It's just sort of a recipe for disaster. I think the people who start stuff aren't necessarily very good group people. Judy was tricky to work with. Because Judy always has her opinion about what's the right way though, and Judy's really smart and certainly has talent and all of that stuff. I know that the Tucker sisters, I mean, they really...Plus everybody had come out of the consciousness-raising stuff and assertiveness training. So, it's like, who could hold out until the end of the meeting saying what they wanted in exactly the same words for the 400th time was the one who got her way. It wasn't a very well-oiled communication system.

DT: It was the days before consensus training, and—

SM: Yes. I don't know. It was too bad though.

DT: So, how was the organizational structure? Was there a hierarchical structure in the beginning?

SM: No. It was a collective, supposedly, but they needed names because when you file articles about a corporation, or when you have to file your annual report, they don't recognize collectives or committees. They only recognize a board and officers and managers, executive directors, or whatever. So I think on paper Jennifer Thompson was the early executive director, and so it opened in '77. It wasn't until '78, about a year later, that the first official executive director was hired. Her name was Priscilla Phillips. I don't know if you know her. She's still in town. She was there for a year and brought a lot of order out of chaos in terms of kind of putting in a name on somebody and the accountability stuff.

I came then in...I was working in the lab then. That's how I got in the back door kind of, was I worked in the lab. Seventy-nine [1979] was my first stint as executive director. That was for two years. Even then what I know is, so you're called the executive director, but everything's still decided by the group. You make the same amount of money as everybody else, which was pretty bad. You put in a lot of work and know a lot more than other people because you're there more. It was very frustrating to not have the power commensurate, or the authority I guess, or whatever you want to call it. (Unintelligible) Commensurate with a responsibility.

It kind of ran like that for a while, and then it went...I mean it, really it does have quite a colorful history. After I left in '81, a woman named Christina Powell Driscoll...Oh no, I can't believe I can't remember her last name. I guess I can believe that. Women in our 50s. She was there for a year, and things got very dysfunctional, so it went back to a committee structure for a little while. Then I came back in September of '81. The board asked me to kind of snoop around, see what was going on. Powell Driscoll. That was her last name. Christina Powell Driscoll. I think she's in Bozeman now.

When I came back what I realized was that I needed to have certain—I hate to sound so hierarchical—but I needed to have some kind of authority instead of just not being able to back

myself up. So I'd snooped around to figure out what was going on, and then they offered me the job again. I would do that as long as I had the power to hire and fire. I certainly fired by myself. But I would hire by committee. So I think that that kind of collective mentality even yet comes into play at Blue Mountain and probably other places too. I needed somebody to run the office and somebody to deal with some of the personnel stuff. Like just getting job descriptions together and that sort of thing. That's what I wanted. I wanted some structure. Ever since then it's been pretty much...one executive director after another. I think I stayed there...I don't know if I was there the longest. The second time I was there four and a half years.

DT: So you were there for almost seven years.

SM: Then I came back after the fire in '94. And was there for two and a half years. So, I've done three stints. In my 30s—no, 20s, 30s, and 40s.

DT: In what capacity are you still involved with the clinic?

SM: I'm not. I'm a patient. I get an occasional call about various people, and I try to be supportive and I give them money, but...I think three was the trick for me. The last time that was so exhausting to rebuild that place.

DT: Yes. Yes, I remember the fire. I was sitting in a feminist theory class—

SM: How appropriate.

DT: —and someone came running in and said, "They bombed Blue Mountain Clinic." We all got up and went down there and stood around and watched the fire trucks, you know.

SM: I know. I remember crying in a parking lot.

DT: Yes. Yes. Let's go back to when the clinic first opened up, in '76. What sort of services were you offering besides abortion?

SM: None, to start with. The only thing they'd do, like...I might even have a little history of the services someplace. But pretty quickly it became apparent, people came for their follow-up care. So what they were doing were abortions and birth control. People would walk out the door with pills. In order to get those, they'd have to have pap smears. Pretty soon it became apparent that people just needed to come in for family planning purposes. That happened probably within the first year. Then the annual exam started happening and started probably a half day a week being open to do both follow-ups and annual exams for people who wanted birth control. Then things evolved pretty rapidly in the '80s. I have one little something here. So it was in 1977, the same year the clinic opened, that Medicaid funding for abortions was cut, and I think the clinic got paid for maybe four or five abortions that first year. Probably did—oh, I wish I had these too. These are all down at the clinic—a few hundred procedures. You know the

most it ever did was about 1,600 I think, and that was when Canada...It was such a hassle to get an abortion, and so one year we had like 400 women from Canada come down.

The nurse practitioners came probably at the beginning of the 1980s. That would be right, because we'd just moved to Professional Village and were able to hire nurse practitioners to do regular care, including pediatric care and Doc Pennell, as a matter of fact, to start delivering babies. So we were able to add obstetrics in the early '80s. That was a real renaissance period. Started doing vasectomies probably in '82 or '83. A lot of well child care, and then did some really innovative workshops on, for instance, women and addiction. That was probably in about '84, way before...I think Blue Mountain, especially in those days, and before it got—it really got thrown back by the fire--was always on the leading edge.

One of the really exciting things about working there was that the people there were just really interested in what was going on and making sure that women in Missoula could have information. There were menopause workshops in the early to mid-'80s. A natural childbirth conference in probably the mid-'80s that...That was before everybody was trying to get into that. Practitioners from all over the state came to that. There was a lot of interest in it. Herpes—we did herpes workshops, and the place would be jammed. Then in the '90s even, after the clinic reopened, did a fibromyalgia workshop and there was standing room only. It was, I think, one of the things Blue Mountain always did really well. This really reflects, I think, coming out of the women's movement and listening to what people are telling you is that it really has responded to the needs of the community. I always used to say that as long as we listen to what people tell us we need to do, that would give us the direction we needed to go. That worked very well for Blue Mountain over the years. It's like, okay, this community's going to lead us wherever we need to go. Regular men's services, it wasn't '82. Oh, we don't even want to talk about the all-women's run into with—

DT: Are you sure?

SM: That came in '84. That was the first where it was one of those things. One of the people who worked there came into my office and said, "Oh, I just went to that Sacagawea Run last weekend. It was so much fun. I think Blue Mountain should do a run, don't you?"

"Oh, yes. Great idea. Okay, let's do that." Of course, it turns into this many-headed monster, that's a total pain in the ass. But it's a huge hit in the community, so you can't...You work a 1,000 hours and make 1,000 dollars, which it didn't even do the first few years. It didn't even break even. But it's kind of an institution in town now. They have great art shirts. What can I say?

We used to also, starting in the early '80s, go down to the senior citizens once a week and did blood pressures, just as a community service. That was kind of fun, a fun thing to do. Those are the kinds of things that nobody in the community knew that Blue Mountain was doing, because of course it got labeled the abortion clinic. That's why it probably changed its name, was to quit

being labeled as the abortion clinic. But we have people with grey hair who come here for services, because by then there was an internist working there. I'm being very circular today.

DT: Oh, it's okay. We have two hours to talk about anything you want.

SM: Okay.

DT: So when did Planned Parenthood come in?

SM: Planned Parenthood was already here, and in fact some of the first nurses who used to come help were Planned Parenthood nurse practitioners. The clinic just contracted with them to work the evening and day of the abortion procedures. Then Planned Parenthood didn't start doing abortions until after the fire. I think they felt that somebody needed to be doing them, and Blue Mountain hadn't quite gotten its poop together to do it yet. I think it was a natural thing, but I think it...There's been on and off, I think, very competitive feelings between those two agencies, even though ultimately I think everybody wants the same thing. It's just like the rest of the non-profit world. There's kind of limited resources and big needs.

DT: But they did have a deal with...I remember in 1988, that I got a loan—

SM: Yes, they did. Prior to the fire, it was a lot easier, I think, because Planned Parenthood did have a loan fund. That worked really well, certainly for Blue Mountain. It never covered the whole procedure, but that way we needed to pick up part of it. There was a really good working relationship, for the most part, during those days. There were other kind of funky business things that happened. Right before I left the second time—insurance. Suddenly, it's like all kinds of leverage had been put on the insurance companies of America to quit providing, or covering abortions, even though it was a very rare thing that anybody'd come back. I'm sure that the (unintelligible) on women seeking compensation for abortion problems...I mean there was nothing. That would be my guess. But it was a total political thing. So we had a hell of a time getting insurance for the doctors there, because they all practiced someplace else, and nobody...“Oh, yes. We either want their whole policy or none of it.” That was a big mess. And—

DT: So you couldn't get malpractice insurance.

SM: We finally did but, but it was hard and it was very expensive. Made out like bandits. Our insurance carrier, the agent, screwed up. We actually had been practicing without malpractice but he hadn't let me know it. On my very last day of work in 1987 at Blue Mountain Clinic, I got to call and bite his head off. Then everybody just sort of scuttled around, finally came up with something. But it'd have to be these exotic out-of-state things with no local agents, and it was a mess.

DT: So let's talk about the Medicaid thing. When were you able to take Medicaid?

SM: I think it was August of '77.

DT: Through August of '77, and then—

SM: Never again.

DT: Did the legislature (unintelligible)?

SM: Oh yes. I'm sure it was the legislatively-driven, to not allow Medicaid. Well, or nationally it could have been, no Medicaid funding for abortions, and there hasn't been since. Although I think that there were some exceptions for life and health of the mother. But there were probably two in the entire United States. I'm probably exaggerating slightly, but not a lot more than that. It was quite a strenuous thing. Also it was hard just to get Medicaid to reimburse for the rest of stuff. You know, like pap smears or any of that. I've always thought that Medicaid was set up to make sure that people in poverty and providers don't unite. Because if they did, it would be too scary to contemplate that something might go well. It's a great divide and conquer tactic, I think.

DT: Yes. Medicaid is not where we need to be going with our health care plan.

SM: Oh, it's a terrible idea, and it's terrible for the people receiving it. It's terrible for the providers. They're not natural enemies, but I think that it really has been set up in a way that makes them feel like that which is very unfortunate.

DT: Yes, and unless you're lucky enough to find an alternative health care provider, women on Medicaid are treated like cattle. So they don't want to go there either. When the clinic first opened up, the clinic opened up in '76?

SM: Seventy-seven.

DT: Seventy-seven. So in '77, was there a feeling in Montana that there was...How strong was the anti-abortion movement then, you know?

SM: Well, the first picketing started in December of '77. So picketing started really early, and they were very active politically in the legislative session, starting then and kind of going to the constitutional convention vote of 1981 during the '81 legislative session, which I don't know if you've heard about this. It was terribly dramatic with Mazurek not having his vote registered, and finally tipping the scales when he had to say, "You know. I need to let you know that my vote didn't register." He'd voted against it. But they were very active. There was an active group here. What was their name?

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

SM: Those were the days when—well, those days aren't gone—when the churches would take buses of people over to Helena for the legislative session. There was starting to be some kind of ugly literature dropped at the clinic, or given to women. Although in those days, the anti-choice people were more polite. It wasn't until really the later 8s—mid to late '80s—when they started getting pretty rude. Then of course culminating in operation rescues. There were two of them at Blue Mountain. But yes, there was a very active anti-choice contingency here, just as I'm sure there still is.

DT: But it was mostly religious groups, church groups that—

SM: Yes, I think they were.

DT: Do you remember at what point the conservative right stepped in and...because I know in the early days of the anti-abortion movement it was Democrats that were sort of the anti-choice, and the Republicans, of course, were pro-choice.

SM: Right.

DT: And then there was a shift in the '80s, in the mid-'80s and late '70s and the early '80s.

SM: Right. Reagan, yes. Well, I think that is when the—don't you think the early '80s that the Reagan years are harder—deals started being cut between the religious right and the Republicans. That's kind of what I think. I'm trying to think. Suzanne Morris was the name of the woman who was...I mean, she was sort of the spokesperson for the anti-choice groups out of Missoula in those days. I don't know if she had a religious affiliation. I do know that some of the subsequent people were ministers' wives from conservative religious groups and that sort of thing. I'm trying to remember how Birthright sprang into being here. Probably the early to mid...I'm trying to remember because I used to work on some...I worked with a Birthright person on a teen pregnancy committee probably. That was my second time there, so early to mid-'80s.

DT: What do you think is the motivation of women who...not the men. It seems like there's two things going on in the anti-choice movement. There's the women that really care about women, and then there's the political motivations. But in your contacts with the women that were actually involved in the anti-choice movement, or the pro-life movement, what do you think motivates them?

SM: Pain. I think that somebody offers...I don't know. I went to the closing arguments for the Operation Rescue. The thing that I was really struck by...because they defended themselves. There was one attorney from Great Falls. There seemed to be so much pain in all the people there. Of course the men talked more than the women. There's this sort of sideways stuff that

comes out, because I don't think they're resolving their own personal stuff, so they can hook onto a big moral issue that pumps them up and makes them feel better. I've always thought that, and I really felt like anti-choice people have taken total advantage of that for people who have, with people who have gone, to give them some place between tacit and overt approval for behaving very badly. And turning them kind of into heroes, even though once they've done the deed or killed somebody or burned a clinic, then of course they try to kind of wash their hands of them. Publicly, anyway. I remember one time there was picketing outside the clinic over on Kensington, and I went out. That woman that I had worked with on committees was out there. I just told her, "I'm really sorry that this is such a divisive issue." She just started crying. She was just...I don't know. I think she was being manipulated by somebody.

There've been pretty extensive studies on pro-choice versus anti-choice, all kinds of stuff, like educational background and blah, blah, blah, blah. People who are less autonomous are more, I think, drawn to the anti-choice movement. If you think you're a terrible, horrible sinner and bad person, then how can you get yourself out of there, well you can find people who are worse than you are, you know, baby killers and then work to eradicate them. It's pretty twisted I think. That's just my opinion. On the other hand, I think there are people who genuinely philosophically are opposed to abortion, but that they absolutely put their money where their mouth is. They're the people who are anti-choice, support all of that, like the religious (unintelligible), et cetera, but also adopt children, support Missoula youth homes, and—

DT: Support welfare rights?

SM: Yes. Support welfare rights. People like that, I can...that's absolutely fine with me. At least they're being congruent.

DT: I mean, count the people that are...and I can even though I don't really...In some ways I can see their points—people that have that strong religious background—

SM: But as long as they also oppose capital punishment, I can be okay with that. I don't see those people as the enemy. I think a lot of what you do in this kind of work is try to figure out how you can go forward sanely, and not get your energy devoted thinking less of other people. It's pretty tricky sometimes. You know, when somebody's just burnt Blue Mountain to the ground, it was very tricky to try to be compassionate toward those folks who thought that was the right idea.

DT: Yes. So the doctors that were doing the abortions, do you remember conversations that you had with them about how they were treated in the larger medical community? I know some of them were emergency room doctors.

SM: The emergency room guys, I think, they got a lot of pressure from St. Pat's Hospital [St. Patrick's Hospital] over time. The insurance part of it was one of the ways I think St. Pat's thought they were going to pull the rug out from under Blue Mountain Clinic. That's my

opinion. Because they paid for their malpractice insurance. It's like, "Okay, well, this is an exception then." But I think all and all, they seemed to do okay. Plus they worked over there, and so they had some camaraderie. I think Jim Lewis eventually went to, I think, Reno, someplace. I think it was Reno. The last time I saw him, he's packing a gun around with him, and has a bulletproof panel in his briefcase, which he holds in front of him all the time. So—

DT: But he still does abortions?

SM: He does abortions. He was a gifted, smart physician. Then Wayne Pennell is now in Virginia. He did a lot of abortions for us too, as well as delivering babies. He was more in the mainstream. He was out at Community [Community Hospital] with Baumgartner and those guys and Smith at the time, had already established a reputation in the community. Mostly I think they stayed pretty low-profile. I don't think... I'm sure they were shunned by some of the medical community, but really, like Webber has a fabulous reputation as an ER doc. So, nobody could argue with him. He's a smart guy. He's a really good diagnostician and has a lot going for him. Plus, he's pretty personable, although I know it was hard on him. He testified once at the legislature, and got a lot of crap.

DT: Do you think for the doctors it was a medical issue, or a political issue, or both?

SM: And sometimes, let's not forget financial.

DT: Financial issue.

SM: Because the doctors certainly made way more money than anyone else doing this work. I think that it was. That it has to on some basis be a political thing for them. That they really did believe that nobody should be telling women why they had to have children. I also know that Webber and Pennell, because I knew them better, both had a lot of respect for women and our ability to run our own lives. I think Webber is an emergency room physician. Over time one of the things that happened to him was, he was the doctor who came in one time when a kid had been beaten to death. So I think his political grounding just got deeper and deeper. Because he saw the implications of unwanted pregnancies right before his very eyes, and they weren't very attractive. The other guys, I'm not sure. I really don't know. There's got to be some political strand there.

DT: Yes. Well, of course the anti-choice lobbies make the claim that abortion is a multi-billion dollar industry, and that people are taking advantage of women in their time of need.

SM: It probably is a multi-billion dollar industry.

DT: Yes.

SM: On the other hand, what I know is that nobody was getting rich. Wages there were probably comparable to other non-profits in town which was not very good. But people do that work because it's a cause, and that's just a bunch of bullshit as far as I can tell. There probably are physicians who do abortions who've made a lot of money off it. But the way that the feminist clinics were set up to provide counseling and information and have somebody go through the procedure with them and bring along the family and feed everybody afterwards, and those aren't set up to make money. That's just not how it goes.

DT: So what did you have to say to the people that would come to you and say, "Why do you want to do...provide abortions for women? This is wrong. This is cynical." What did you say to them in those early days?

SM: Well, I've probably said different things to them in the early days then. I think in those early days it was just that there is a big need for it, and that women get to control their own destiny. It was not a hardcore political kind of thing, I think. I mean, it was obvious. Women get pregnant. They don't want to be pregnant. They're not fit to be moms at this time, and that's their own judgment. It's not even my judgment that they haven't done what they need to do to be in a position to be good parents. They don't want to go through the pregnancy and have...and give a kid up for adoption. One of the things I think that was distressing to me is that the pro-choice side has...You know, one of the things that we did over the years. You'd always trot out the worst-case scenarios. There's actually one of my favorite things we did. I wonder if anybody still has this. This is my only film-editing experience, thereby getting rid of one more possible profession. We did a video, a speak-out by women who'd had abortions. My very favorite one in there was the woman who just said she just didn't want to have a kid. I think that's an absolutely legitimate reason to have an abortion, but it...instead of the "Oh, and I didn't have any money, and my mother had just died, and the dog had gotten run over, and—"

DT: The 12-year-old rape victim.

SM: Yes, exactly.

DT: You know, a mother of 13 can't have any kids. Yes. I remember going to one of those speak-outs in '89 or '90. No, maybe it was right after the clinic was...right after the clinic was burned down. I went to this speak-out, and I got up and I said, "You know, I have issues with birth control. I can complain on everything that birth control is. It's not that I'm trying to get pregnant, it's just that I'm extremely fertile, and I get pregnant. That's when he's going to tell me not to have sex. I can have sex if I want to, and I have the right to do this." Then there was this altercation or whatever, and then two years after that—so it must have been in '90—because two years after that—or '89, or '89 – I was pregnant.

This woman came running up to me, and, and she said, "I saw you a couple of years ago at this speak-out, and I'm so ashamed of you that you would be pregnant again right now, after you

said that beautiful thing about you have abortion rights, and being pro-choice, and now here you are pregnant again.” And I was just shocked.

SM: So, what is this pro-choice all about? Please! I know.

DT: I was just in shock. It was like, well I’m pro-choice. That means that I get to choose if I want to have a baby or not, but I think that sort of anti-baby thing was laid onto the pro-choice movement by a political agenda and it really stuck.

SM: It did for a long time, although I was...after the clinic reopened...This was one of my favorite things—the Blue Mountain Clinic staff, a bunch of baby-haters, man-haters, et cetera—we’d probably been in the new building for a year or something. When we had staff meetings, there were six babies there. We had a great time, passed them around, had a wonderful time. By then it was more okay, I think, than it was even earlier. I just think there’s this real insidious thing that has gone on that you have to...like, do you hate men or don’t hate men and all of that stuff. Should we include men in the all-women’s run or shouldn’t we include men in the all-women’s run? All of that stuff that keeps getting kind of flung up, but I think it’s just so much camouflage to kind of take your eye off the ball.

DT: Yes, that issue comes up in Take Back the Night.

SM: Oh yes.

DT: Should we include men in Take Back the Night?

SM: Yes. Yes. Every year.

DT: Every year.

SM: Yes, and it probably will for a while. That’s just kind of how it goes, I guess. But also, it gives you a serious case of *déjà vu*. I spoke at Take Back the Night a few, a couple years ago when I was still working at, or when I was...first year I was at the Y. For one thing, when I got there I felt like a mastodon because the average age was about—it seemed like about seven, but I’m sure it was more like 20. They were talking again about, “Could it end? It empowers women to not have men involved and blah, blah, blah.” It was like oh my god, this is like an acid flashback or something. But it was! I remember this conversation from 100 years ago.

DT: Yes, I really think that Women’s Studies students (unintelligible) young feminists, have to go through this period of man-hating—

SM: Well, you do.

DT: —and come out of it. I know I did, and—

SM: Oh, you do. And—

DT: Sometimes I just laugh at them, like (unintelligible). You know, you'll figure it out.

SM: Yes.

DT: They're not the enemy.

SM: Yes. No, they really aren't the enemy. I don't think. I mean, there are a few who probably are the enemy, but—

Now then, where are we? One of the things that was interesting, it talks about allies there, is that Eisenhower is pro-choice. Because some of the kind of old line Republican people who really believe in being fiscally conservative, but staying out of other people's business, that kind of rugged individualist stuff, were and can be huge allies in the pro-choice movement I think. But that was the way—definitely the pre-Reagan Republican Party. Like Goldwater.

DT: Well, Reagan was pro-choice when he was—

SM: I know, when he was in California. I know but he didn't think that was expedient anymore when he won the ticket. Elected President.

DT: Do you remember who the pro-choice legislators were in Montana at the time, or actually the anti-choice legislators? Do you remember having encounters with particular—?

SM: Well, the one person I remember the best was a guy named...He was the Anaconda legislator, and then a guy named Tim Whalen from Billings. But the Anaconda legislator— it was after the smelter had closed. So the economy in Anaconda sucked in huge, big ways. This must have been 1981. So, I went to talk to him, and I took the statistics along to show him that the prior few years we'd usually had one or two women from Anaconda. Then after the smelter shut down and there was no work, we'd have 15. To me that was a pretty loud statement that it was an economic issue for them. It didn't make any difference to him. He still voted the way he voted. But—

DT: Is he pro-choice, or—?

SM: Oh, no! No. Butte and Anaconda are kind of tough places to get pro-choice going. The church has a pretty good hold there.

DT: (unintelligible)

SM: Oh, yes. Very impressive. Oh, and then I remember a conversation with Dr. Brown one time too. That's the other thing too, I think that was hard over the years was, it's just a little piece of tissue or whatever. What I found is that nobody was ever pretending that it was, a dinosaur fetus or an alligator fetus. I think that certainly the counselors were very upfront about we aren't talking about a cow baby, that... but there was an assumption that there was a... That that was one that came from the legislators, too. But there was an attempt on the part of providers, to diminish the reality that this is potentially their baby. I mean I just didn't buy that. I don't buy that. I think that gives everybody not very much credit.

DT: So you're saying that the legislators tried to portray the pro-choice movement as—?

SM: Oh yes. As pretending like it wasn't really human life.

DT: That it's just a piece of tissue.

SM: Right. Yes.

DT: And did you get that from... Like, what kind of women came into the clinic? Can you just—? Especially in the early days when abortion was really not very well accepted, in the '70s and the early '80s. I mean now, it's, it's a part of our culture.

SM: Right.

DT: You know. But back in the early days, what were women saying when they came in for counseling?

SM: Oh, god! They were terrified somebody'd find out, and we were terrified somebody'd find out too. I mean, in those days, we sent all the lab work out under fake names, or actually we didn't even do names for a long time. We just did numbers. Patient numbers. Then the labs wouldn't take them unless we had names, so we just made them up, and then kept a list of who was really what—using the same initials and stuff.

I don't know how many women have come in and said, "I don't really believe in abortion," but of course when it's their life, then suddenly it makes a lot more sense. But I think they were scared. They were scared that people would be mean to them, and that they'd be disowned from their families. It was not a very pretty picture. One time—oh, god, this was a terrible scene, the tiny clinic—we had two women from a small town show up at the same clinic, one of whom was in a position to have quite a lot of authority and power over the other one, but she was the one who was freaked out. It was a teacher and a student, and the teacher just flipped.

DT: Because the student found out what she was there for?

SM: Right, because in those days, there was only one reason somebody'd be there then. So that was kind of interesting.

DT: Yes, I bet. I bet that made for some interesting classroom discussions.

SM: I'm sure it did. I'd love to Q and A.

DT: Yes. So, do you find now—? Let's see, you've been out of the clinic since six years ago?

SM: Is that right? Ninety, right after '97 again. Yes. Five years.

DT: Five years. So, do you find now that women are generally more educated about things like their health care issues, STDs, fetal developments? Do you think that women know what's going on more than they did back in the mid-'70s when you started or...People say, "Well, now people understand. Now women understand how not to get pregnant, and there's all these options, and—"

SM: And they still get pregnant.

DT: "—and they still get pregnant, and there's no excuse for getting an STD." I just wonder if the people that come into the clinic now, do they really seem to know anything about the human body?

SM: I think it's a case by case thing, just as it's always been. I think AIDS actually probably did a lot for education. Although I understand that AIDS incidence is going back up again, but I think there's really no substitute for fear for making people take precaution sometimes. Not always though. I mean, fear of pregnancy has been a huge thing over the years, and you know what? We're animals. You know what? There were actually a remarkable number of people who were on birth control who became pregnant. It was kind of the bane of their existence, to get pregnant on—using a diaphragm and foam and condoms and the birth control pills. Just really a drag. The other thing, too though, is that like the human papilloma virus epidemic too. I think those are the kinds of things—they aren't very positive—but they have made people a little more aware of, kind of how...what the repercussions are from unsafe sex, or being careless.

DT: Do you find now that when you left, what the differences in the sorts of clientele that you have? Is there—?

SM: I don't think so. I think it was—

DT: Pretty much the same?

SM: Yes. The huge bulk of the women were from like 18 to 24. The women who were getting abortions. About a third of them, I think, were repeat people, who'd already had at least one

abortion. My guess is that's probably the same now. Because there really hasn't been any huge development, I don't think, in birth control. Unless you don't mind taking a shot, however often, just feeling like hell and hating sex. I mean, that's kind of like early birth control pills. "Oh, gee this is fun! Look, I weigh 500 pounds and could care less." But—

DT: But I'm not pregnant.

SM: That's right. "But I'm not pregnant. Hallelujah!" I'll tell you another thing though that I think has changed—I was just having this conversation with somebody—is the stigma that's attached to being single and pregnant. There really isn't one now as far as I can tell and particularly in a certain age group. My guess is there's been a big drop-off in the young teens—that 15 and 16 year olds—just because that's an acceptable thing to do now is have a baby young.

DT: What do you think of welfare reform and President Bush's marriage encouragement thing?

SM: I think this is like being in a bad movie. I think that my biggest disappointment with Clinton will always be the welfare reform. I think he really did a huge disservice to a lot of people and used it politically because as my mother the welfare worker used to like to say, "You know, welfare is a drop in the bucket." And that—

DT: Point zero zero zero one percent of the gross national product.

SM: Yes, exactly. Barely a drop. I think again it's diversionary tactic stuff. I think actually that the anti-choice movement—a lot of it, like Reagan, I don't think he really cared. But I think it's great. You get all these people squabbling over here and putting all that attention there. So meanwhile then I'm going to run this agenda and run us...triple the national debt, and nobody's going to have their eye on me. So I think it's been a very big topic for a lot of politicians, and I feel the same about welfare reform. That there's a lot of chest-thumping and nut-scratching that goes on and hawking away and talking about these lower forms of life and how they should all have jobs and none of it is very reality-based. But that it's just...It's kind of showcase stuff, because it really appeals to people's idea that they don't want somebody else to get something for nothing. As long as somebody else is lower than they are, then this is. I think welfare reform pretty much sucks, and that they've done a really bad job with it. Especially because there was some good direction going on. I do think training programs have done a lot in trying to get less traditional jobs for women and that sort of thing. But a lot of funding's been cut. When I was at the YW, they've lost tons of funding for vocational services. It always ends up being the same thing with welfare reform. It's always on the backs of women and kids. So—

DT: (Unintelligible) gets hurt.

SM: Yes. Same old, same old, been going on for centuries.

DT: So what do you think of Patrick Moynihan's theory that single motherhood produces violent, criminal children?

SM: Oh, I think that's good, Patrick. I mean, don't you think? Isn't that the case? But I think that's pretty bigoted. That's probably the nicest thing I can say.

DT: Yes.

SM: And racist.

DT: And racist. Because those single mothers are also poor.

SM: They're poor. Right. Well, but, no! It has to do because she's a single mother. Because after all, it would be better to stay in a relationship even if you get the shit beat out of you than to raise a kid by yourself. I just think that's so despicable. It's the sort of thinking that some days you sort of think, "Oh, maybe, that's a thing of the past." And then, what? We cannot come one millimeter—

DT: Do you think that the lives of poor women and children are better in 2002—

SM: No.

DT: —than they were in 1972?

SM: No. I really don't. It could be because I've worked with more poor women since then. But I think that the whole thing of having this big—something looming. If you don't get a job, even though the jobs are shitty, I mean you can be among the working poor and still not have enough to support your family, then you're going to be off the rolls. So there's this whole big punitive aspect to it I think. Plus, all these hoops for people to jump through. We had people at the Y, who really—they should be on SSI—and part of it is that that's so difficult to get on, and it's such a long and involved process. Most people left to their own devices can't do it. It is really arduous. So, instead then, what they had to do was they'd have to come to the computer classes. But they have other things going on in their lives that are probably going to preclude them from being employable in any traditional sense at all or anything that we've trained them for. I hope what they take away is computer skills so they can go down to the library and use the computers for their own whatever. But it's silly to think that everybody's going to be able to work. It's just silly. You have to just get over that idea. There's a certain percent of the population that will never be able to work, and you know what? It's our job to make sure that their lives are okay.

I think poor women are doing really badly, really badly, and single moms especially. The Y has transitional housing for homeless women and their kids. Honest to god, I mean, those women had had one or two kids and then they'd had a job that paid them minimum wage. How do you

do the—? They'll get public housing vouchers, section 8, probably but even so. I mean, that's a hell of a...They're going to be scraping around.

DT: Yes. Yes, and I think now you have to work 30 hours a week to get...

SM: Yes, 30 hours. The whole education part of it is right. I mean it is. It's so punitive. So that if you didn't have low self-esteem to start with, which likely you do because you're in this big jam, you will have by the time you've been in that system for about six months.

DT: So let's go back to the clinic.

SM: Oh!

DT: The clinic—

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

DT: —Right before when the clinic burned down, what was going on at the clinic, and what was the climate like at the clinic at the time?

SM: Well, I wasn't there then. I was over at another non-profit. I think things had actually toned down a little bit, in terms of picketing, because the clinic went...I bet the clinic was picketed maybe 300 times through a series of six or seven years. After the two Operation Rescues, and all those arrests, I think that things toned down in terms of the weekly picketing. Or they started behaving themselves a little bit better. But I think things were just kind of going along. The one totally bizarre element was that Willa Craig, who had been the director for a couple of years, had resigned and Gwyneth Mapes had been hired as the new director. The fire happened on the transition weekend. So Willa was done Friday, and Gwyneth started Monday. Willa stayed around and helped out, but Gwyneth, in the meantime, was hired to do a job that really had completely changed that first day she started. So I think that was pretty unfortunate.

As far as the political stuff, I don't know. I can't even remember quite what all was going on in '93, but I think that the violence had been accelerating because the anti-choice had been losing in the courts. So they started taking it into their own hands more. Certainly by then, I know that...Well, we had invested in Kevlar vests actually after the fire, come to think of it. But there was just a real heightened sense of security I think.

DT: And the clinic at that...in '93 was located—?

SM: Over on Kensington at Professional Village there, where it had been since 1981. We moved it there.

DT: Who were the people that were working there? Do you remember? The nurse or the—?

SM: Nurse practitioners, when it was burned?

DT: Nurse practitioners at the time?

SM: Yes. Louise Flanigan, who had actually gotten hired in, I think, '81. She was still there.

DT: Laura Marx.

SM: Laura wasn't there. I hired her after the fire. I don't know if Mindy was there, because I'm trying to...Yes, Mindy was a physician's assistant back then. I really don't know. I'm probably not the person to ask. You might want to talk to Willa Craig. Do you have a date? Oh, good.

DT: So, what? You woke up in the morning and—?

SM: Got a phone call. It was just one of those horrible feelings that...Just this sort of (unintelligible) and I had to get over there. So I went over, and I remember seeing Louise and Mindy and some of the old Blue Mountaineers in the parking lot. I was working someplace else at the time, but I just couldn't...I mean, I couldn't go there for a while. I remember I wrote a commentary for KUFM. I wish I could remember the line, because I talked to my mom, who was still alive then and living in Billings and...She had this great line like, "I curse all the zealots and weep for Blue Mountain" or something like that. It was a terrible day. A terrible day in the community.

I was really reminded of it again—it's amazing how it comes back with the fire at Carla and Adrianna's. It was like that same sort of sense of total invasion. It's like the boundary is busted, and something is really wrong. Because of the change, I think, in management and the clinic had always just kind of puttered along on its own. It didn't have a huge slush fund or anything, but...it also took some time to get the insurance money, and the staff was in shock. I just remember seeing the deer caught in headlights expressions. I mean they probably had PTSD for a long time. But thanks to the goodness of the community, the practice continued but abortion stopped. All of that stuff stopped, but Beth Thompson was the internist at the time. They were able to run that practice out of Missoula Medical Oncology, which just donated their office space. Then the administrative offices were down in the First Federal Building, so it was a two-site deal.

DT: Missoula Oncology at the time was over on West Alder?

SM: Yes. So that part—the internal medicine part of the practice rolled on. There was certainly some women's health care in with that. But many things were scaled down. Oooh. When I got back in '94, I think there were eight employees, and there had been 26. Not all full-time, but before, and that's what we needed to hire up to ultimately, again. Although the destruction was sort of interesting. I'm sure Willa will go into a lot more detail about this. I don't know if you've ever seen the stuff down at Blue Mountain. There's a melted phone and stuff.

DT: My medical records have—

SM: Singes.

DT: Just singes around—

SM: Yes, mine too. But there is something to be said for having jam-packed file cabinets, because there just was not enough oxygen in there to destroy things. I think one of the things that happened was that there was a lawsuit brought against Blue Mountain a couple years later by...let's see. I've repressed his name, and I'm trying to undo it. That very active anti-choice guy.

DT: What's his name?

SM: Well, that's a good question. It's going to take me a while to remember. It might be today that I remember. But he found a woman who'd had a procedure there, and her partner'd been HIV positive. Blue Mountain had told her that the baby would be HIV positive, and she had to have the abortion and blah, blah, blah, blah, and on and on and on. He just coerced her because he was trolling for stuff. He actually was advertising for...Why can't I remember his name? Anyway—

DT: So he was actually advertising for women—

SM: Oh, women who have had terrible experiences with abortion and blah, blah. Well, I think she'd had all kinds of problems, and he was just her latest abuser as far as I can tell. It finally went to the Supreme Court. Ultimately she withdrew the case, because I think she'd kind of come to her senses by then, but... I would put money down that he thought that her files had been destroyed. But her files hadn't been destroyed, and there was such great documentation in there, it was just amazing. They'd actually sent her away to think about it again, and so he got nowhere but it took us...I mean we had to go through discovery and dragging out this and that and...It was a big pain in the butt. Robert Kelleher.

DT: Robert Kelleher.

SM: Yes. But I think after the fire, certainly the thing that we...It was just so financially exhausting. I don't think the clinic has recovered financially. For a lot of reasons. One is it was the height of the market, I mean, the real estate market was going insane. There had been so much violence against clinics that nobody wanted to rent, of course, and the price of land was high. The price of everything was high because the boom was in full swing. So I think that through that first year—because I didn't come back until about a year and three months after the fire—that people really tried. Plus, then I think Gwyneth had...didn't have the confidence of the staff. So she kind of left, and...the people part of it was having problems at the time.

DT: Was there ever talk about just not opening the clinic up? Was there fear? Pray for their lives at that point?

SM: Sure. Oh, yes. Absolutely. I mean, one of the things that people always get mad at me because they can't write to me because my address isn't in the phonebook. But that had nothing to do with it. I took my address out of the phonebook in probably 1982 or 3 because of this very fear. I knew there were people who would hate me, and I just didn't want to be an easy mark. People were sure afraid. Then people were afraid to come there too, and it took forever to have it happen. So, it was March '93. It was like two and a half years before the clinic was built.

DT: How did you get the money?

SM: By hook and by crook. I mean, we didn't have money to pay staff sometimes. I mean, we wouldn't until the day of. We had back bills. We didn't have enough money for the final construction payment until the day before it was due. We fundraised probably 800,000 dollars. But also then there are ongoing operations, so it's not like it all goes toward the building. We got the county to float a bond and one of the banks locally picked it up, so we were able to get a low-interest loan from them in return. That was kind of an interesting political process, because, I mean Barbara Evans would deny this to her death. But I went in to see her and Ann Mary and Fern Hart to ask them if the county would do that, because that would, could, make a huge difference. Barbara said, "Oh, you know I can't. You know, blah, blah. Oh geez! I would get killed by my supporters."

Ann Mary just said, "Barbara, you'll be gone that day." So Barbara was in Washington D.C. the day that we came and did all the public hearing stuff and presented everything and, and (unintelligible) said, "Of course we'll issue this 425,000 dollars worth of bonds."

DT: (Unintelligible) how you got the money.

SM: Yes.

DT: So you actually own that land now?

SM: Yes, yes. Yes. Owns the land and the building, and still owes a lot of money, I think, on the building. But then also I mean, I got in before the...After the design but before the construction. Then the murders in Boston happened in between starting the building and finishing the building. So that was a caveat no one had thought of, and—

DT: Could you just talk about the, the murders—?

SM: Yes, when the, the two workers in Boston were murdered by a guy who just went into a Planned Parent...No, he went into two different clinics there with a gun. I can't remember when that was. Must have been early—I don't know—maybe spring of '95. But it was horrifying, because to that point, it was, you have this sort of false sense of security because who have they been killing? They'd been killing doctors. Then suddenly it was like these receptionists for god's sakes. So we had to go back and the contractor and architect and I just...

We spent so much time trying to figure out how to configure that entrance, so that somebody couldn't just come start wasting people in the waiting room. It had never occurred to us, I don't think, that we had to protect people in the waiting room from gunfire. It had certainly occurred to us we had to protect them from something being projected onto or into the building, but (unintelligible). So that was very sobering and hard. It was so expensive. The resources needed for that, the bullet-resistant glass is 100 bucks a square foot, and there's a lot of it in there. But you couldn't not do it. The amount of concrete in that building is pretty formidable, and I got real sick of all the jokes about "Oh, this looks like a fortress." But then I decided, you know

what? It is a fortress. So we might as well just sort of take advantage of that and say, "That's right. Because we really want to protect the people who are coming here." But it was long and exhausting.

Then people are very interesting about supporting...I mean, the, the inflated sense of self-importance sometimes was just remarkable to me. There was an ophthalmologist in town, who had the capacity to give. We knew that he and his wife were pro-choice. At that time, though, what we were trying to do was get some other people in the community together. We talked to them about, "We need help fundraising. And would you be willing to do this? And do you have means? And could you make even just one contact?" and so on and so forth. So we invited him to that.

He said, "No." That he didn't want...The next thing you knew that he'd be getting picketed by the Right to Life people. I don't, I still don't know. You never know if that's really the reason, or if he just is...People are so uncomfortable, even pro-choice people, with the issue...that they're worried that if they give 1,000 bucks, somebody's going to find out, and then burn down their house or whatever. It was interesting.

DT: Well, now of course they have that internet website with all the doctors' names and the slashes through them.

SM: Yes.

DT: I mean, it must be—

SM: The Internet's added a whole other dimension to it that is pretty ugly.

DT: Yes. What do you think's going to happen in the future? Just look down five years. The new Bush era.

SM: God, John Ashcroft. He scares me worse than Osama Bin Laden does. I think he's way more insidious and more of a chameleon. I really don't know. I sometimes like to think about what would happen if tomorrow abortion became illegal, because you have generations now of young women who don't know anything about the struggle to get it legal in the first place. But on the other hand, they also assume that it is their absolute right to have one. So I think it would probably politicize them in a heartbeat—I hope anyway. I really don't know. I think that we're just going to kind of struggle along and win a little, lose a little, probably. And have a ton more energy kind of siphoned off on this issue that really...I mean, I really do think in some ways it's the perfect red herring. Because it's legal now, but it's not resolved. It probably won't ever be resolved as long as the churches are involved and so on and so forth. But I think it's great if you can get people's eye on the abortion issue, then you can...that sleight of hand will lead you into the Alaskan wilderness to drill and all kinds of other things.

I really do think that a lot of people who are outraged about abortion. Politicians especially, and especially males really don't give a shit about any of that. I can't imagine that they would, unless it's sort of this proprietary thing, that women and kids as chattel, and not to mention fruit of their loins of course, but that it's really great. They can feel self-righteous, look self-righteous, and then just do horrible things. While everyone else is kind of paying attention to the choice issue.

DT: Yes. Because people will vote on a single issue, and they'll vote for whoever is anti-choice.

SM: Yes. Or pro-choice.

DT: Or pro-choice.

SM: I know I don't vote for anti-choice candidates.

DT: Yes.

SM: I really like it if they're into environmental stuff, and lots of other things, but I can't bring myself to vote for an anti-choice candidate.

DT: Yes.

SM: How about you?

DT: I won't vote for an anti-choice candidate.

SM: Yes.

DT: Of course, I won't vote for an anti-environmentalist candidate.

SM: Well, me neither. I have left more blanks over the recent years than I had for a long time.

DT: Yes.

SM: Let me just have a little look at this sheet again. Oh, one of the things I was thinking about too, is that I think Blue Mountain Clinic—even though it really did have a bumpy start—but that, I'm an organization person, so what I know is that as I mentioned earlier, the people who start something aren't the people who can sustain it. That transition period, usually sometime within the first couple of years, is really bumpy. But overall, what I noticed is that...As the women's movement went forward and quit worrying so much about whether women were putting on nail polish or wearing dresses or what they were doing with their hair, dying their hair, not dying their hair—all of the things that I think have, I hope anyway, have fallen by the wayside as a way to judge women—that all different, all kinds of women have worked at Blue

Mountain Clinic. The thing that I really believe is that every single one of them has walked out the door stronger than she came in. It was an atmosphere—I think this is probably true of a lot of institutions that came out of the, the women's movement, although somehow institution seems like an oxymoron for this situation—that really women were empowered to do what they needed to do. To do whatever kind of personal work they needed to do, well, they were in a really safe environment to do it.

As a for instance, more than one woman I worked with even got off drugs or quit drinking or got out of a relationship. It made huge and major changes in her life, because she suddenly had the support system to do what she really needed to do and hadn't had whatever it was to kind of get her moving in that direction. There's, I think, a lot of fondness for the clinic because of those experiences that the hundreds of women really, because hundreds of women have worked as abortion counselors there over the years, not to mention in the office, and what not. That's a really important part of the feminine model of power, which is also something that we used to talk about. Don't know what they're doing now, but that whole—I think it was sort of a working model of that whole idea that—that power isn't a pie to be cut into pieces. If your piece is bigger, that means mine is smaller. Because it's more like a fountain that just keeps flowing, and so that all, everybody's job then is just to get up to the fountain and take what they need. It was just so wonderful I think to see women transform, to see...

We had people who'd barely heard of the women's movement at various points, but they had a real strong feeling that they wanted to do something. Some of them we hired because they'd had an abortion, and they came back when they saw the job advertised. They wanted to be able to help somebody else through it. Just to kind of watch the lights go on was really good. I mean there were women there who would say the classic thing of, "You know, I never liked other women very well," or "I think I"—who had finally realized that they had been brought up in an atmosphere where they were supposed to view other females as competition. So I think that personal empowerment that happened is probably as significant in the long run in a lot of ways—certainly for the staff, but also for the women just making choices in their lives. "Am I going to have this baby or not have this baby," or "Am I going to take better care of myself," or "What kind of birth control am I going to use?" But to be given credit for being able to make good decisions for themselves, I think was kind of a foreign experience for a lot of people, both who worked there and who came there as clients. It was a good experience.

DT: A lot of those women went on to do other things?

SM: Yes. Oh yes! You know when Anne Maclay died in January—she and I were many years friends—and I actually ended up giving her eulogy, but one of the things that kind of surprised me was how many old Blue Mountaineers were there. People that I'd sort of forgotten had ever worked with her, but that the...I mean, it was sort of bad begin...Oh, I don't know, that a change in the era or something. Cherie Garcelon I was just talking to did a quilt piece for The Bra Show this year, and one of the panels on it is dedicated to Annie, whom...I don't even know if Cherie ever met her, but it was just like, what really struck her and struck home I think that a piece of

the fabric has busted somehow or else has, it's over the edge of the loom somehow. It made me feel good that there were still those kinds of connections out in the community. Even though, I bet they hadn't seen her in ten years. Maybe 15.

DT: What do you think of the women's movement today?

SM: The women's movement today? I was interested in seeing...what was her first name—Walker? Did you see her when she was here?

DT: No. From N.O.W.?

SM: Yes, or from Third Wave.

DT: Oh, oh yes. Rebecca Walker.

SM: Rebecca. Yes.

DT: Yes. It's Alice Walker's daughter.

SM: Yes, I know. I think there's a lot of hope. I have a niece who's 23 who is very feminista and is, she's going to The University of Chicago. She went to a Ms. Foundation thing, and she worked at Blue Mountain when we were still trying to get our shit together to build. She was in high school then and then worked a little bit after we had rebuilt, but...So she has this other...it feels good because it's sort of like the family legacy going on. Her foundation is so different. It's not like a whole bunch of "ah-has" to her. Her's is more she can take anything that—and she loves historical research—and try to present it, kind of her thing is to present it from the feminist perspective. So that kind of cuts across whatever she's doing. But it's just sort of like part of her now. I'd like to think that it is...that she has other things she's worrying about. She's not worrying about the same things that...She isn't somebody who had...

One of my early experiences, my first year in college I loaned a friend money to go to Mexico for an abortion. That would be like talking about prehistory to her, and that's good. That means we're moving on. It's hard as an old, kind of leftie feminist, I think, to not see as much rallying around cause. But what I think, I think the cause shifts. The cause now is probably going to be more like one of the things I love about the YWCA is the mission—the elimination of racism and sexism. Peace, justice, freedom, dignity for all people. I think those are the things that resonate a little bit more with younger women. We're just not in the same place we were. It's hard to believe that the continuum has moved on so that our issues are just not the same. I think some of them probably are. I'm pretty sure that the economic issues are certainly the same. I think poverty—a huge issue, way more than we were aware of. I mean, we all sat around. I was giving lip service and worried about it. But it was tied up I think along with some other things.

DT: Do you think there's been a backlash against the feminist movement, like Susan Faludi says? Have you seen that in your personal experience?

SM: I think that there's this sort of...the thing that happened that I saw at some, kind of in all, was this sort of apologetic thing about, "Well, I'm not a feminist, but... I'm not a women's libber, but..." this and that. I think there has been a backlash. I think that misogynists all over the world hate feminism and the women's movement. My guess is that part of that backlash is Christian Right stuff. That it's really threatening when the means of production of the next generation wants to take power into its own hands, so my guess is that when you have systems that are built on women as free labor that you're going to fight tooth and nail to make sure that those systems stay in place. So I think those are all kind of backlash issues.

The other thing that I have found a little disturbing is—even though philosophically I can kind of understand this—people wanting to divest themselves of the feminist label for the humanist label. Part of it is because of the history of feminism. When you look at the women in this country over the last 250 years or whatever that really they have never just been focused on women's rights. They've always been focused on children. They've always been focused on eliminating racism. Some of the harsh words about suffragists have to do with tradeoffs concerning racism, but I really believe that the women's movement has brought out a conscience to light and that that conscience has been big enough to include all of those things. So I proudly call myself a feminist and unapologetically. That's always very interesting, because I think that...I think it's just like the stupid Democrats these days, like you got this great...people blushing (unintelligible) not to offend anyone. You just end up with this huge blob of pablum that has no substance to it. God, Democrats are like Republicans in sheep's clothing these days. Of course I would consider myself a humanist. But really my variety of it is certainly feminism, and I don't think that that limits me in any way. But that doesn't mean that I'm not an environmentalist or any of that other stuff. I think it means that I resonate with all of those things. I like the label a lot better than many I can think of, than other names I've been called. Feminist is not the worst thing I've ever been called.

Oh, one of the stories I should tell you too, I used to get letters once a week from...Oh, my god, my memory today. Michael Ross. He was in prison for threatening the woman doctor over in Bozeman.

DT: Oh, yes.

SM: Geez! It's amazing what you can repress. He called me a few really great things over the—

DT: Her name, from the Blue, or from the Mountain—?

SM: Mountain Women's Clinic.

DT: Oh! Oh, gosh!

SM: (unintelligible)

DT: That's where women had to go when Blue Mountain Clinic caught fire—

SM: That's right.

DT: —for a long time.

SM: Go up to Bozeman.

DT: They had to go to Bozeman.

SM: Yes, and I met her too. I can't remember her—

DT: Yes, she went to Fargo.

SM: Yes, she did. He got sent to Texas during that...when they shipped a bunch of prisoners off to Texas. Michael Ross.

DT: Right. Michael Ross. I remember he was (unintelligible).

SM: Yes. Was it (unintelligible)? Yes. But he, among other things...“Yellow whore” was one of his favorite terms. I was a yellow whore. Everyone who worked in abortion services was a yellow whore. My favorite two were “a hairball in a men's urinal” and then the other one was “a blood-flecked piece of...a blood-flecked feces protruding from the rectum of a bitch dog.” That was like geez! He doesn't have enough to do.

DT: You wonder about people like that, like you were saying earlier that people like that are, it seems like they would be involved in something to vent their spleen. I wonder how childhood was for this person—

SM: Oh, terrible!

DT: What kind of person was his father to raise a son like that? If he wasn't out there threatening abortion fires, what would he be doing? Would he be a neo-Nazi or—?

SM: Yes, or beating his wife or whatever. In his case he just didn't pay child support. That's it too, I think, is that over the year...in the early days when the conversations at the clinic, the communication was not that clear, even though people were very verbal. But I think the anti-choice people, it's sort of the same thing. That's why I said that, that what I saw in those closing arguments at the Operation Rescue trial was just how much pain people were in that, I think, was displaced. It's like they could really suffer on behalf of these unborn children, and “God,

this is so horrible! It's so painful to me," et cetera, because they can't feel their own pain because it's too scary to them.

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B]

SM: So I think one of the things that has happened too is that there isn't just such a knee-jerk response to the danger is always when you start thinking of people as labels, and not as people. So I think that over time one of the things that happened for me was thinking about anti-choice people as just people in pain. Or Michael Ross, as you were just saying, as somebody who drags his, all his baggage around with him, which we all do, but some people go get help to figure that out. And some don't. I think that the people who don't are the ones who are dangerous. Sometimes are, or can be dangerous, and that, and that they're usable, which is very unfortunate. But meanwhile, okay, so you want the little moral?

DT: Yes, so what are you doing now? You left Blue Mountain Clinic, and you're working at the YWCA?

SM: No, I'm not actually.

DT: Oh.

SM: But, I really am a kind of a crisis manager person. So, I left Blue Mountain Clinic, and then I worked at Mountain Line as the first local manager ever for a couple of years. It had had a big crisis in confidence there. They got rid of the national management company that had been running it for 19 years. I really liked that because it was...public transportation is all about economics. That half the riders...oh, I'll just give you a few little statistics. Half the riders every day can't afford or don't have any other kind of transportation, and three-quarters of the riders on Saturdays don't have any other form of transportation. Since we know that, then we also know that probably a pretty big chunk of those are women and their kids.

So I did that for a while, and then I took a little tiny bit of time off. Then the YWCA was in crisis internally, and so I started working there and worked there for about two years, trying to get it back on track. They had some board turnover and some staff turnover. The staff was mostly new when I got there. And oh, my! It had been a big mess. The funders were mad at the Y, and so I spent my first few months filling in assorted funders and just trying to get a good team going there again, and get back to the mission, which I was talking about earlier. That whole focusing on the mission again, because the Y is a great organization. It is almost 150 years old. It has such a terrific history of feminism and anti-racism, and, I mean it, being so damn progressive, which I don't think I've ever thought of the YWCA in Missoula being that way. In fact, I used to kind of look down my nose at it. So it served me right to work there. But they started advocating for sex education in the nineteen-teens. They were just appalled at the internment of the Japanese during World War Two and had Y services in the internment camps. A lot of the YWCA's were the only places that would rent to Japanese women when they came out of the camps. So, it just has a great history of trying to do the right thing. Anyway, so I did that for a couple of years, and then I—

DT: What was the time span there?

SM: For the Y?

DT: Yes.

SM: I just left in the end of September. So it was from the prior two Septembers ago (1999-2001).

Then I decided I needed to take a little time off, and then my friend Anne was ill, so I spent a lot of time with her as she was going through her process of dying. She just died in January. Now I've been cleaning out my house, and trying...I have a bunch of stuff I've inherited in the last ten or fifteen years. So I'm trying to lighten my load in this life. So that's kind of what I'm doing—catching up on old friends and reading and that kind of stuff.

DT: Where do you want to go from here?

SM: What I am pretty sure I don't want to do is being a non-profit manager again. I've done that on and off now for over 20 years. Since, of course, I'm not interested in organizations that are going smoothly, it makes it a little more exhausting. So I'm hoping I'll do maybe contract work, or get...There are some things to be said for a job that you just sort of don't think about when you leave. I don't know. I've hardly ever had one of those. But, just something that isn't so energy-consuming. That's what I want to do, I think.

DT: So—

SM: Yoga.

DT: Sally, in retrospect, you started feminist activism in your early 20s.

SM: Yes. Probably more like my mid-20s.

DT: Your mid-20s?

SM: I was too busy with my drinking career before that. (laughs)

DT: You've been active basically your whole life. What are you most proud of during this long span of time as activism? What is it that you can lay claim to?

SM: Well, I think certainly my involvement with Blue Mountain Clinic is probably...Well, I don't know. I don't want to call it the centerpiece, but it's certainly the repeating theme. Even though the three times I was there were so different. But I think, it's such a wonderful institution and has done such great work in the community, and we were able to overcome adversity. It's

always a group. It's never just a one person deal. It'd be lovely to take credit for some of it, and some of it I would take credit for. But really, overall, it's been this amazing effort of a bunch of women in this town who, in spite of everything, go on. Really, internally sometimes, in spite of ourselves, it's gone on. I've always said it had a life of its own because if left to our own devices, we probably would have helped it collapse at least a few times by now. I like that. I like it when I see that other medical facilities in town have sort of taken over—and I'm sure this is true around the country—because everybody's scared of malpractice. Not because it was the right thing to do to start with, but really there is way more of a model of informed consent being used.

I like being in a place that had such good brain juice working for it, and was so innovative. I haven't even talked about working in the disabilities field. I worked at a place called MDSC for a couple of years. I like to bill myself as its fourth, sixth, and eighth director, because I was called in when the third director went on medical leave. Then it became wildly apparent that the place was just in chaos, and it was a new organization. They'd built some group homes around town, brought in 52 clients, mostly out of Boulder. Hired 130 full-time staff and a few dozen part-time and relief staff. Oh! The place had just sort of fallen apart.

DT: MDS?

SM: Missoula Developmental Service Corporation. It was really on the brink of losing a 3.2 million dollar contract with the state. So I'm able to come in there, and as I told the state director, "You know, it was sort of like taking the great ship *Queen Elizabeth* and turning around in Frenchtown Pond." Doable, but very tight. It was really exhausting.

While I was there the thing we did that made me the most insane—and ultimately made me decide I didn't want to be there anymore because it was just like too much of a hassle, but was the best thing I think—we took one of the group homes and turned it into the first group home with 24-hour medical care, maybe in the West, maybe in the entire country. It was a huge hassle with the state and trying to get funding and getting LPN's on staff, but it was so that we could retire that population now and they wouldn't have to move again. They'd come out of Boulder, and they were finally feeling comfortable. It all started because there was one guy who was getting dialysis three times a week who was being brought over from Butte in an ambulance each time. So you can imagine what that was costing, and he was staying in a nursing home so he was pretty unhappy and he had behavior problems. So we figured out how if we could have a 24-hour care so that our people could get good treatment as they are fading, then we'd take him. He came finally, and he was very endearing even though he'd be horrid some times. He popped out of the car that brought him over and looked at the Kent Street Group Home and said, "My new home!" He actually died within a few months of this whole deal being cut, but...

I think that was really innovative and a hassle. A huge hassle. It hadn't been done, so where are we going to get the money? And how could they possibly and blah, blah, blah, blah. But we just

sort of toughed it out until we were able to make it happen. I was pretty proud of that because it seemed like the good humane thing to do.

I think the thing that I'm proudest of is that I have some kind of weird gift or something. I don't know what it is, or it's a virus on some days that...like the YWCA staff, which had all kinds of talent and no direction when I got there. Somehow or other I can be a catalyst for change or whatever it is. Again, I can't really take credit for it because they're the ones with all the talent. But it's like you can kind of get this team going. It's like, "Oh, yes. We are all in this thing together," and "Yes! We're all going the same direction!" Just to kind of get a group revved up to believe in the same thing and move the same way and understand the mission the same way, and...It's amazing what you can do. You shoot the moon. It's great. Do innovative things, kind of in spite...I think maybe that's what I like. I like doing innovative things in spite of the systems.

DT: New things.

SM: Yes. Or not just saying, "Oh, well. Okay. We can't. They say we can't." That's why I hated Mountain Line the most because I really hate working with tax dollars. One nice thing about Blue Mountain is it's not allotted any tax dollars. You know? So at least you get to guide yourself by your own lights there. Don't have to kind of say, "Yes, sir" to anybody.

DT: Yes, you didn't have funding struggles like Planned Parenthood did when they got cut.

SM: Yes. Yes. Had huge funding struggles when we got burned, but you know? You still get to kind of call your own shots though. So let me think if there's anything. Mountain Line was really fun in some ways. I was really excited that we got busses that are visible while I was there. We were able to get pretty much a new fleet started. Some of it had started before I got there. Oh, and also the "kids ride free" program. That was a really fun thing to do, and people were stunned at how successful it is. The average kid ridership the summers before had been something like 1,200 all summer, and it just, it jumped to like 16,000. So, that was fun.

DT: My kids ride the busses in the morning.

SM: That's good. I think it's a great thing to do. So I'm pretty proud of that.

DT: Yes. Transportation is a huge issue.

SM: It is a huge issue.

DT: Public transportation is...We've got to get it under control.

SM: I know. There's so much resistance, particularly I think in this neck of the woods, to the idea...People just assume that everyone can own an SUV or an old beater, but that isn't the

truth. Then having it be a tax entity. It'd raise taxes. It made it really hard because there are all kinds of cool things you could be doing, but it's hard to get the funding and also working within the federal transportation system. It's very hard to be proactive. It's like, "Then, I think in five years we should do this or that."

Oh yes! I forgot the transfer center. That was completely stuck when I got to Mountain Line.

DT: Oh, right! The transfer center.

SM: Yes.

DT: Moving from the courthouse over to—

SM: Yes. I mean, the idea had come up in the '80s, but nothing had happened, so I was there for the design. I wasn't there for the construction, but I was able to get the process through so that the city said yes. They tore down that old fire station. The city gave us right of way to the street. The county stepped aside one more time because Barbara Evans hates the bus system, but she agreed to step aside after I spent a lot of time over in the courthouse talking to everybody who was concerned about this and that. Most of it is, of course, worshipping at the altar of parking. So that was fun.

DT: The transfer station has been a great success.

SM: It's a huge success. It makes life way better for everybody.

DT: Yes.

SM: Plus, it's one more bathroom downtown that people can stop into. (laughs)

DT: Yes, and the fumes aren't destroying the courthouse building anymore.

SM: Right.

DT: So, let's look to the future.

SM: Yes.

DT: Twenty-five years from now, what do you think needs to happen in maternal/child health, feminism, public transportation? I mean, how would you like to see the political climate moving from now for the next 20 years? What needs to happen?

SM: Oh, okay. Well, health—I think that we're killing ourselves with the health system we have now. That as long as we're willing to let the health industry be on, be driven by large

corporations such as the drug companies and insurance industry, that we're just...it's going to get worse. I would like to see some rendition of universal health care happen and some kind of accountability. The insurance companies are really past masters at, again, just putting up barriers so that the system can work well. If there's no one single universal reimbursement form which is so stupid...I mean, what is the deal here? I think it's just because they want to say no. As a matter of fact, I'm sure that you read recently that some companies their policy has always been to just always say no on the first claim. Right there they're making zillions of dollars because a lot of people either don't know enough or don't have the energy to hassle it.

With the aging baby-boomer population, it'll be interesting. I think hospice care is going to continue to improve. I certainly hope so. At some point the whole technology thing has got to give a little bit. There really aren't any substitutes for, at a certain point, good nursing care and good nurses' aides care. That whole level of direct care needs to get more support than they have now. Of course when there's a nursing shortage because they've been so underpaid for a long time, then suddenly it's like, "Oh, yes! We really...Gosh! Maybe we should be paying more attention here." It will be interesting to see. I think it could get real ugly before it gets better.

Okay. So, feminism. I think we're just going to be struggling along. I guess there's just certain things you have to know. For instance, that's pro-choice, for me anyway, is going to be a lifelong struggle. I assume that probably will be life-long for my niece and your kids, and that's just kind of, goes with the territory I think, with women's liberation. We're very threatening.

Public transportation. God! Okay, here's what I'd like to see. I'd love to see a good train system working.

DT: Light rail?

SM: Yes, light rail. Traditional rail. But I don't know if that's going to happen, but the infrastructure is not going to work for...One thing is that they're, they just don't have the capacity to rebuild more runways for years so without eating up a lot more land, which is probably already getting eaten up by something else. Hopefully they'll be a little bit saner. Public transportation—one of the things that pisses me off about, for instance, the trains and passenger trains is they always like...they like to pretend like they're going to make money or break even or be able to support themselves. That just isn't reality with public transportation. No public transit system in the country supports itself. There isn't a single one. If we're pretending that we're doing anything but padding the pockets of the airlines, I mean, if anybody thinks that the airline industry is supporting itself, they're totally nuts. I'm sure way more dollars go through...get thrown out that window than certainly Amtrak.

Also I think that with environmental stuff that hopefully it's going to become apparent that it's just a lot better way for a lot of people to go. I don't know. But the thing that made us innovative is the thing that is we like to cut off our nose to spite our face. That rugged individualism. I have the right to burn my stove, and I don't care that you have to breathe it,

and I'll smoke in your face, and...So, and I think that it's going to take a little bit. We're so greedy and spoiled that the American consciousness somehow has to change a little bit. I'm not quite sure what all it's going to take to have that happen. You hope that something like September 11 will—that people really have returned to certain values of being more...I heard somebody talking about that New Yorkers are more polite than they used to be and that sort of thing. But what's going to get us to the place that, you know, maybe we don't all need to have automobiles that get 15 miles to the gallon and can go deface the earth wherever we want them to. I don't know. It's very perplexing to me. I think these are kind of funny times.

DT: What about issues in poverty in the next 20 years?

SM: I don't know! Sometime I'd like to say that I...that I feel like we're kind of rushing toward the lowest common denominator. The epitome of it is something like Walmart. But sometime, I mean, are poor people going to get pissed? I don't know. I hope so. Because if the trend of the last ten years of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer continues, it's going to be a real homely scene here in 20 years. I don't know. I think that we have some very basic soul searching to do. I feel like we worship at the marketing altar more than anywhere.

DT: Do you think maybe welfare reform and the sort of pulling the rug out from under the poor women and children is going to galvanize them into action like it did during the welfare rights movement in the '60s?

SM: I hope so, but they're going to need help.

DT: (unintelligible)

SM: Oh yes. I don't think change happens because things are happy. Who else is going to have to galvanize with them because it's not all going to just be pro-woman. It's going to have to be the rest of us too—the aging feminists and the third wave and then just people of conscience, I think. What would happen if the religious community started getting more active? Particularly the right wing ones. I don't know.

DT: I've seen a very hopeful thing in, like, the Jubilee 2000 movement where a lot of the religious groups came together to agitate for getting the rights to the third-world debt.

SM: Yes.

DT: That was a real coalition of the movement—left-leaning society of friends with more conservative religious groups.

SM: Right. They actually do come through—like the litany of churches that are pro-choice is pretty long. But I don't know. What's happening in the churches? How is it that you can spew

hate out at Christian Life Center, and then good old Peter Schober does the right thing one more time.

DT: Yes. Let's talk about the Carla and Adrianna thing just for posterity.

SM: Yes.

DT: It was that Carla Grayson and her partner Adrianna Neff...Carla is a professor at the University—

SM: At the U. Yes.

DT: —Montana, and she teaches in the Psychology Department. They filed a lawsuit trying to get the Board of Regents to get them to allow Carla to buy Adrianna...health insurance for Adrianna which is something that's offered by many universities around the country. Then their house was burnt. It was an arson fire at the house.

SM: Right.

DT: They basically almost died with their young son. Do you want to talk about that?

SM: Oh, yes. I think it's pretty scary. Don't you feel like the last bastion of being reasonable, at least even trying to be politically correct is in the whole gay and lesbian rights? Because I think that people who have trained themselves to not be publicly bigoted about maybe even women and blacks and so on, that they still... I think anything that threatens the heterosexual system—which of course has traditionally been dominated by men—it's so scary to people that they can't...they just lose their brains. I mean to the point that they're willing to, to kill people. My guess is that whoever started that fire is also pro-life or would label themselves as pro-life. Just this huge inconsistency. I think it's really scary. Also in Missoula we get kind of complacent thinking because a lot of us around here who are pretty upfront about our—whatever you want to call it—emotional preferences or whatever. To realize that there's that sort of hatred is always a frightening thing. But it reminds me a whole lot of working in the reproductive rights world for a long time. Realizing pretty much in the early '80s that people might want to do something real mean. But that's for sort of political reasons. This is for personal stuff. It just makes it even ickier.

DT: Don't you think it's galvanized the gay and lesbian community?

SM: Oh, I hope so. What I hope is that the stupid Board of Regents gets their act together. You know what? I know this is Montana and that the legislature is very conservative and so on and so forth, but what price are you willing to pay is what I think it boils down to. Are you willing to say, "Oh, okay. It's okay as long as the house that you're going to burn down belongs to a gay or

lesbian person.”? Or that the people you kill are gay and lesbians. There’s so much cognitive dissonance in there.

DT: Yes. Yes, there was a study that was done recently among, with high school students around the country. It was very interesting because it was just like you were saying, homophobia is the last bastion.

SM: Yes.

DT: High school students that would never admit to being racist—

SM: Yes.

DT: —or you know—

SM: (Unintelligible)

DT: —or sexist. They make homophobic jokes. I know even a lot of them don’t even—

SM: Don’t even know. Yes.

DT: It’s, it’s just—

SM: It’s the easy chit chat.

DT: (Unintelligible) and it’s really the last bastion.

SM: Yes.

DT: I don’t know how that’s going to change. I think that these interviews are really great because people are going to be listening to these tapes and reading the transcripts in 25 or 30 years—

SM: Yes.

DT: —and I wonder if the same issues are going to be cropping up?

SM: Yes.

DT: Like September 11. How do you think that the bombing of the World Trade Centers is going to change the landscape of American politics?

SM: That's a really good question. I don't know. It seemed to change it for about 20 minutes or so. The thing I find alarming is that our response continues to be the same. Which is always aggression and also the sort of a name-calling, "You're not a patriot," et cetera. That kind of stuff goes on. Although I'm also glad to see that there's more kind of upfront talk about, "Whoa! How do you say to somebody who's worked all their lives or whatever in this country that they're not a patriot because they don't think we should be in bombing the piss out of Afghanistan?" But I don't know. God! American politics. Who in their right mind would want to run for President? You're right about Ralph Nader.

DT: Yes. I mean, it's a—

SM: Why would you want to do that to yourself? Well, and then just the amount of pressure that George Bush would have on him even if he didn't have those leanings in the first place to just automatically take the kind of bully response "Well, I'll beat the piss out of you" from the kind...the powers that be. Ah, what a formidable job that would be.

DT: What do you think a more appropriate response might have been?

SM: Well, you try to start talking and look at some of the...It's a pretty simplistic response I think. It's like, "You hurt me. I hit you," instead of the things we were talking about earlier. "You hurt me. You're in pain. What's going on here at maybe a deeper level?" I think it's longer, and it's not as satisfying. You don't get as many votes for it, et cetera, et cetera. But maybe you end up not obliterating a country and killing a lot of innocent people. The other thing I really hate...I mean, I get real tired of seeing all the American flags waving around. It's a very simple-minded approach to very complex situations.

DT: Yes. Do you think that in some ways that the events of September, the events of September 11 have been used as a bully pulpit or manipulated by certain portions of the political—?

SM: Oh! Hell yes! I mean, phoof! (unintelligible) just throw money at the military. Oh, you bet. Yes. Absolutely. Yes. I think all those guys. They make me gag. Dick Cheney, he really scares me, especially since I think it's likely that he has a hell of a lot more power than anyone even imagines in their wildest dreams. It's the white male entitlement group, that "You have been mean to us and we will show you by obliterating you from the face of the earth." Instead of trying to figure out why you're mad or try to work it out in other ways. It's like there's no imagination there.

DT: No. We have about five minutes left here Sally on the tape. So what do you have to say to feminists in the future?

SM: Hold in there! Keep the struggle up, baby! (laughs) Keep on moving. Yes, and don't be complacent. Or don't assume. One of the things we love to trick ourselves into thinking is that men have come so far. Men are men and women are women and many men have come so far.

But there are a lot of men who now know the language, and so they know the right things to say but the behavior is still the same. One of the issues that we didn't talk about really is domestic violence, which is a terrible name for it, I think. Domestic always seems like the nice dog by the fireplace or something. But I think that there is so much violence against women in this country and kids too, kind of garden variety violence, sexual violence, any kind of violence to make sure that they are always in the lowest power position. That until we're able to start addressing some of the, the underlying reasons for that, and to change those systems, we're not going to get very far.

DT: Yes.

SM: And we—

DT: I read in the newspaper the other day that they announced that the crime rate—

[End of Tape 2, Side B]

[Tape 3, Side A]

DT: As I was saying, I think it's just really interesting that, that they say that the crime rate has gone down, when in fact the violent crime rate and, and the assault rate, and domestic violence rate has gone actually up, but because property crime has gone down, that means the crime rate has gone down. It seems like—

SM: Oh, good news! Yes. That's right. Less falling on property. There was also a study by the...some federal statistics were compiled—this was before that reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act—and one of the things that came out...I got a phone call from, oh, I don't know, a radio station or somebody wanting an interview. Well, that was before I had heard about it so I needed a little while to get it back together. What came out was that the murder rate had gone down with...since 1977, I think, was the year. What it boiled down to though was that fewer men were murdered in domestic violence, acts of domestic violence. Well, that was when the shelter movement started. Seventy-seven [1977 was when the shelter in Missoula opened. I think probably starting about the mid-'70s was when domestic violence shelters started opening around the country so that women actually got to leave the situation and have a safe place to stay instead of killing their husbands so that they themselves could survive. That's what I think—or their partners. But it was like this huge big news thing of “Good news! The murder rate is down!” Well, not for women it isn't. Women are still getting nailed on a daily basis around this country and then certainly in Montana. Right in Missoula we've had like half a dozen murders, probably, in the '90s. But once again, I just think that this, the whole western culture is so used to succeeding on the backs of women and children. Or not succeeding. When people aren't succeeding, then it's women and children who...It's sort of liking kicking the dog, only the dog gets off easier than the women and kids. I just think there is such deep-rooted misogyny in this culture for a lot of reasons. We started out pretty well burning witches in Salem, and that...I think that whole mentality is still alive and well.

DT: Yes. So some feminists are now making the claim that the success of feminism has created this backlash, that the increase in rape and assault against women and domestic violence is really linked to men's feelings of powerlessness because of the successes of women in marketplace and in their domestic life. Do you agree with that?

SM: I don't know. But I would need a lot more information before I would be able to either agree or disagree with that. I do think that in this society that women...We've figured out kind of how to take care of ourselves in some ways and in some ways we haven't. We still aren't financially where we need to be, and...But at least there is, there's recourse for women who are getting beaten up or raped or who are pregnant and don't want to be or whatever. That is pretty easy information to get to. Men don't operate that same way. When they're stressed, they blow, or tend to blow, or else get depressed. I think. Maybe it hasn't been okay for whatever reasons. They don't have access to the same tools, and maybe they can't use the same tools. I don't know if we know that yet. There was a little thing I got on the Internet the other day about a couple psychologists who are doing a study on women's stress responses,

not being in fact just fight or flight, or one of the ones that we talk about too in domestic violence is freeze, which is a very primitive animal behavior to try to become invisible. They said that what they're finding in their studies is that when women are stressed they nurture their children and commiserate with each other. I think that that's that idea, I mean, of Carol Gilligan's thing of we define ourselves by our relationships and men define themselves by their successes, then we just have built different conduits I think for taking care of our own evolution. Maybe men are reacting to that. Maybe men are mad at that. But I don't know that I'd want to go out on that limb quite yet.

DT: What do you think of the nascent men's movement.

SM: The which one?

DT: The men's movement, the Promise Keepers and—?

SM: Well, I think there was some early men's movement stuff that, like Robert Bly and those guys, who were way more into trying to get in touch with their feelings. The Promise Keepers scare me. One of the reasons is that the...Because I think what's being presented as the Promise Keepers way of life—and I actually know a promise keeper whom I like— is sort of the principles. I think a lot of the guys who get into it are...because they think they've been bad. They've lusted after other women and they want to be true to their whatever. They want to be real men and the man and the family and provide the stability and stuff. I don't think those are terrible things to do. But I also think it's built on...Instead of understanding your behavior and your needs and changing your behavior, that it's built on despising your behavior and therefore reacting in a different direction. There's somehow inherently in that system, there is something that isn't going to work very well. It's a, "You're still the biggest banana." That you're the biggest walrus. That you're the one who's going to make the final decisions and that's just part of the job. Oh, that's too bad. But you still get the biggest vote. So for me anyway that basic premise is probably very untenable.

DT: Yes, the Promise Keepers is, of course, based on the biblical premise that the man as the husband is the head of the household—

SM: Yes, and she's the weaker vessel.

DT: That the feminist movement has... that men have given up their power to the women, and that that's the reason why (unintelligible).

SM: We're all such a mess. Right.

DT: So that men have actually broken their promises—the promise that—

SM: Even though it's women's fighting and not us?

DT: Right. Yes. So it seems to be based on some things from the religious right, and yet some of the men that I've talked to that are in the Promise Keepers are not—

SM: That's what I was—

DT: Christians, you know?

SM: Right, and that's what I was talking about. The person I know who, that I've actually talked to about it, it's kind of a Jimmy Carter "lust in his heart," or he was having these...whatevers. It's sort of like they're paying penance somehow. I just think that whenever you're kind of coming at something from that direction, it's not a very firm foundation.

DT: Yes.

SM: But also, he isn't religious right. I don't know that he thinks it's all women's fault, but I agree with you. I think that there's a big difference between the guys who are getting into the Promise Keepers and the guys who are manipulating it at the top.

DT: Kind of like the pro-life movement?

SM: Yes.

DT: Yes. So do you think that the United States is...I mean now we're just going off on tangents—this extra tape.

SM: That's right. Tangents. Rant, rant, rant.

DT: But do you think that the United States in general is becoming more violent in...The '60s were a sort of peak period of time. There weren't massive school shootings—

SM: There were drive-by shootings mentioned in the '60s. There was violence, but it was between cause people and...Certainly, I mean, in whole areas there were race riots. There was always that kind of violence. But there wasn't so much, I don't think, internal violence in the, for instance, black community. I don't know if we're becoming more violent. I don't look at the statistics. What I think though is that it's such a default position for us, that I don't know what it's going to take to shift that. Starting just with shit like gun control. I mean, talk about a Pavlovian response. Oh, my god. It's pretty alarming I think, and so predictable in some ways. I know guys who are good, liberal, pretty left wing, and boy, talk about gun control and they just lose it.

DT: Yes, start waving the Second Amendment around like it's a flag.

SM: Yes. Yes. That's right. The right, right to bear uzis. I mean, it's silly.

DT: Yes.

SM: I think one of the really big things in this country now is that we really have been used to kind of doing it our own way. The, yes, self-made man, and this and that and the other thing. By god, my property and blah, blah. But we're at a size now and certainly communication is at a point that there are some decisions to be made about, "Are we willing to subordinate some of our personal rights for certain other—for the greater good?" I guess that's the thing that concerns me most in some ways is how do we turn our mind, our collective mind, to the greater good? Because right now the greater good really we know is being controlled by big corporations and lots of money and guys in suits and white shirts and with mostly white faces. And I think that there are...that people who are elected to make policy, I mean, they must be bombasted with special interests. I think there are probably some really good politicians. I don't like term limits personally, because I think that there's some real dedicated people who we then don't take advantage of. But it's hard not to be jaded about what's really going on behind that door or somebody's standing there blah, blah, blah. What is it that they're really protecting, or what is really swaying their decision that direction? It's too bad, but it's hard not to be cynical.

DT: We have a whole world to think about, now that globalization has—

SM: Oh, yes.

DT: —opened up issues of the World Health Organization—

SM: Yes.

DT: —and reproductive rights for women—

SM: Yes.

DT: —all over the world. September 11 is a really good case in point because the Taliban really was out there oppressing women—

SM: Yes.

DT: —and they were a horrible group of people. I just wonder if we're doing those women any real great favors by installing—

SM: An interim government that...yes.

DT: —An interim government that...Like what are we doing out there on the global planet? The World Health Organ (unintelligible).

SM: Well, one thing I know is that we're not normally...that we aren't doing it as a country because women are being oppressed because we don't do that. We don't do that. In fact, we do everything we can in half of the last 20 years to make sure that women stay oppressed. The big thing, of course, is not funding any country that allows abortions or reproductive health care. So I think that what we do is, we get mad at the Taliban and go bomb the hell out of them, but then we finally notice, even though the rest of us have known for years, that Taliban women have really gotten a bad deal. Then we kind of use that for our own agenda. I don't think that it's out of the goodness of anybody's heart that they're trying to help Taliban women. I think it's because it's now very politically expedient to do that. They're going to get a lot more support. They get a lot of support from American women because they're doing that work, or supporting it. I'm telling you, the old paranoia of the '60s comes up again sometimes. Then it all comes true. Enron is just a great example of that. See, we told you so! It is the big multinational corporations. Eisenhower was right.

DT: Have you followed or kept track of the anti-globalization—?

SM: Just a little bit. I mean, that is a whole area that is really important. It's like I was saying in this country with...we're so close now.

DT: Yes.

SM: I think time and again, it's been easy to make money on the backs of not only women and children, but poor people in third world countries, and so why would we want to not do that still? Because after all, the most important thing for us is to have a good stock portfolio. It'll be interesting.

Yes. It's nice that people are getting up in arms.

DT: Yes. Personally I think that the anti-globalization movement is really where the future of feminism—

SM: Yes.

DT: —and environmentalism—

SM: Yes.

DT: —and human rights are really going to have to be going, because we can't stop globalization. We can't stop this global, global village that we have.

SM: Right. No, but if you can kind of have a little insurrection in there somehow or infiltrate and change.

DT: Yes. Yes. It's almost like the '60s all over again.

SM: Yes, it is. I know when the Seattle thing happened, oh, it was like, "Wow! Just like the olden days."

DT: Yes.

SM: The sort of knee-jerk reactions of trying to paint the protestors as the bad guys and just these upstanding World Trade Organization. It was funny.

DT: Yes. Do you think people will pay attention?

SM: I don't know. I think people pay more attention when there's something more immediate. One of the really hard things to argue with and the uphill battle, I think, is when you can get goods so cheap.

DT: Yes. Walmart founding.

SM: Yes, absolutely. Even though I'm happy to say I haven't darkened the doorstep of Walmart—

DT: Walmart refuses to sell RU 486.

SM: Yes, I did hear that. Isn't that surprising? Don't want to offend any potential customer.

DT: Right.

SM: Yes. I don't know. I mean I sometimes think that there, pretty soon there are going to be five stores in America.

DT: Yes. Yes, Costco, Walmart...I know.

SM: Doesn't look like K-Mart's going to make it.

DT: Yes. Yes, I mean I think that that's just a huge issue. Also I think that...very much the future of feminism in the next 20 years is going to be along the lines of racism, eco-feminism—

SM: Yes.

DT: —racism, social justice, environmental justice, and the plight of indigenous women and children. I think that that's where we really need to be moving towards.

SM: One of the great things I got to do when I was at the Y was go to a couple of conventions.

DT: Yes.

SM: There's a worldwide YWCA that has 25 million members. Just to get that perspective from the world wide YWCA women, which is very different from the American women, because they were talking about going into villages or this one village where this woman kept coming and asking if they could get her an industrial iron. What do they call it? A mangle. They kept saying, "No, no. You need to have programs to this and this and that." She kept coming back and coming back. Well, what they finally did was give it to her or get it for her. Pretty soon they realized that, of course, the entire village of women came around to get things ironed. As they were ironing they were talking about this, and then they would figure out how they were going to take care of each other's kids, and then they would figure out how they were going to make this difference, and so it was just a very different way of organizing that we didn't get.

DT: Yes. Yes, I just talked to this woman from Mexico who was working in a sweatshop. I think it was a Gap sweatshop.

SM: Yes.

DT: She decided that she was going to buy a sewing machine. So she bought a sewing machine, and she started making stuff. Then some of her friends bought sewing machines.

SM: Yes.

DT: They didn't know what they were doing. They had no idea what they were doing, and several of them bought sewing machines. Then they started their own little factory, and now it's a huge collective in Central Mexico.

SM: Cool.

DT: It's organized completely by women. All women run—

SM: Everybody wins.

DT: And they sell to fair-trade organizations like the Jeannette Rankin Peace Resource Center. They started it because women started coming over to her house to use her sewing machine—

SM: Oh, cool.

DT: Same exact thing. I mean I think women sort of organize differently in different parts of the world because—

SM: I don't know if it's clan or tribal or that whole inclusive kind of way of doing things.

DT: Yes.

SM: Very interesting. Again I think it's that, "No, it's my sewing machine, and I'm the only one who's going to do it." But figuring out, "Oh, yes. This could be good for everybody," and "Sure, the more successful I am, the more successful you are."

DT: Yes. Yes, I think it comes from sharing, just personally, I think it comes from sharing babies. One of the things that happened in the '40s and the '50s with the suburban housewife was that women became very isolated.

SM: Yes. Very.

DT: Very, very isolated. So of course, they wind up with post-partum disease. Existence is now their kids.

SM: That's right. They do.

DT: In other parts of the world, women share childcare.

SM: Child care. Right, and—

DT: Now, there's no reason. It's just wrong to force women to raise babies by themselves. It makes them go crazy.

SM: Yes.

DT: In other parts of the world, I don't...There's a real global, there's a real village (unintelligible). That I have seen from living in Mexico, and now I'm really going off on a tangent, but I think that women really do interact with one another on a different—

SM: Yes.

DT: —in a different way in some of the third world countries—

SM: Oh, yes. I—

DT: —and that American feminists had to relearn that, and that may have had a lot to do with sort of divisiveness that plagued the early days because we just don't do that. That's just my little tangent.

SM: I think that's true though too, and it's also good for the kids. It's like in Native American tribes where really, I mean there are cultures where there isn't a word for mother or father, or that word is used to describe all of the adult males and females. That makes a lot of sense, because then it's like, "Oh, wow! You get support from everybody." You know? It's everybody's job to take care of you. I bet in those societies that child abuse is almost non-existent.

DT: Yes.

SM: A friend of mine was in Finland a few years ago, and she was on a bus on which a woman was starting to lose it with her kid. Within a couple bus stops, the police had arrived to visit with the woman, not to tell her she was bad, but just to say, to let her know that she must be stressed out and the kids are hard and exacting and what could they do for her? I just thought, "What a sane...?" How many times have you seen somebody being an asshole to their kid in the store? In this country it's like we can't interfere with that person's property instead of, again, the greater good. You know? That what's important here is the kid's life.

DT: Yes. And the woman's—

SM: Yes.

DT: —emotional well-being, I mean.

SM: Right. Well, that she's not real high on herself I'm quite certain.

DT: Yes. Finland has one of the lowest neo-natal mortality rates.

SM: Yes.

DT: Which it just seems like what we are as feminists becoming more and more aware of the interconnectedness of things that go on in the world. The Nestle Corporation has, for example, has so advertised and so much blitzed Africa and many of the third world nations with formula commercials that Zaire, which has terrible water and has terrible, just horrible sanitary conditions, one percent of babies are now breast-fed in Zaire.

SM: Oh, god!

DT: Babies are dying of diarrhea, they're dying of...They buy this formula for the babies, and then they go home. They can't boil the water. They don't get enough formula.

SM: Yes.

DT: It's become a massive health problem for them.

SM: Oh, but hey, the stockholders are doing well.

DT: But the stockholders are doing well. I think that that is where we're going to go—

SM: Yes.

DT: —as, you know.

SM: I hope so.

DT: Going beyond our borders because, I mean, we have a lot to, a long way to go in the United States, but we've made strides that—

SM: Yes.

DT: You know? That the rest of the world hasn't really made yet.

SM: One of the interesting things to watch with South Africa, just in terms of people finally getting it, that it's not okay to support a government that has apartheid as a policy.

DT: Yes.

SM: I can't even imagine how long people worked for that to happen. But by golly, it finally did. It worked. South Africa is not totally blissful now, but a lot of things changed in quite a hurry once the pressure was brought to bear.

DT: Yes.

SM: Hopefully it'll be the same way with some of these other issues. But a lot of it, too, is in this so-called Information Age, when everyone's senses are just impinged upon nine zillion times a day, how do you get somebody's attention long enough to have them do anything? I think that's real tricky, and the Internet may or may not make that worse.

DT: Yes. Well, I guess we'll find out.

SM: Yes. All right.

DT: All right. Well, thank you so much, Sally.

SM: Sure.

DT: This has been a lot of fun.

[End of Interview]