

Maureen and Mike

Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Archives and Special Collections

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History Number: 473-010
Interviewee: Lya Badgley
Interviewer: Leif Fredrickson
Date of Interview: October 17, 2019
Project: Missoula Music History Oral History Project

[Telephone rings]

Lya Badgley: Hello, it's Lya.

Leif Fredrickson: Hi, Lya, this is Leif Fredrickson.

LB: Hi, Leif.

LF: How you doing?

LB: I'm okay. It's, you know, it's supposed to be a slow morning, and now it's not. I'm happy to take a break and chat with you.

LF: Oh good, good. I'm sorry I'm a few minutes late.

LB: No worries. No worries at all.

LF: So just before getting into the questions, did you have any questions about the project or—

LB: No, I mean it's really cool and fascinating and how wonderful to sort of note that, hey, at one point in the future, this will be history and so why not capture information while people are still around? So this is a great project.

LF: Oh, great.

LB: I'm not really worried about it at all. My father, [John] Badgley, has—I think it's the Badgley family; we were homesteaders in the area so I think that there's—he actually has a sort of section at the library about the family.

LF: Oh wow.

LB: It's kind of interesting to have this be my contribution.

LF: Right, right. Well, great. So, we can just start on the questions unless you have any other things about the release form, yeah?

LB: Yeah, so I sent you the release form. I assume you received it.

LF: Yeah.

LB: And, have you—two questions for you. One, have you happened to reach out to my brother Chris Badgley?

LF: I haven't, but I'm going to. I sort of met him at a party a couple months ago. I don't think he probably remembers me. But he—I was at Charlie Beaton's house. You know Charlie?

LB: Oh, yeah.

LF: But yeah, I would like to reach out to him too.

LB: Yeah, he'll have really sort of—a really kind of different, on-the-ground perspective that would be different than mine. Reaching to, you know, what it is you're hoping to capture as far as information so. And he'll remember the names a lot better than I will of people who were active in the community.

LF: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I will reach out to him as well.

Great, any other?

LB: Nope, I think that's it actually, yeah.

LF: Okay. So just to sort of formally start it, this is Leif Fredrickson; I'm interviewing Lya Badgley. It's October 17, 2019. I'm in Missoula. You are in—where are you in?

LB: Snohomish, Washington.

LF: Snohomish, Washington. And can you just, like, say your name and spell it so we know we have it correctly?

LB: Sure, my name is Lya Badgley, spelled L-y-a- B-ad-g-l-e-y.

LF: All right, thank you. So, can you just—you just kind of mentioned this a minute ago, but can you say where you're from and where you grew up?

LB: Well, my—[laughs] that's a complicated answer. My family—parents—are originally from Montana, the Missoula area. I didn't grow up in Missoula, though I did spend a year and a half—well, a couple years there. Graduated from high school and then stayed on for a short while and then returned for a year when I started the project that probably we'll be talking about here in a little bit. And I grew up all over the world, in Southeast Asia and lived in Europe and definitely made my home in Seattle during the '80s and '90s.

LF: So how did you end up growing up in all these different places?

LB: Well, my father is an academic, and he and my mother had this sort of wonderful experience, you know. They were just young kids from Missoula, Montana, and he, during the Korean War, he ended up being stationed in Hokkaido in northern Japan. And my mother was able to join him, and they fell in love with Asia. And so he through the G.I. bill went back and got his master's and subsequently his Ph.D. in political science with a specialty in Southeast Asia, specifically Burma. Hence, I was born in Burma and then lived there off and on throughout my life and opened a restaurant there and met my husband there and so travel back quite often.

LF: Wow! And so where were you—what age were you when you ended up in Missoula, and where had you just come from?

LB: Well, we had been living in Washington, D.C. area where my father was an associate professor at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins [University] in D.C., and it was an interesting time. You know, Vietnam War raging, and my father was anti-war and so he didn't get his tenure as expected. So he—also, at the same time that was happening, my mother had a major health issue which took a long time to diagnose, and we subsequently learned it was lupus but. So, parents moved back in the early '70s—'71 maybe or something like that? And then he got a job at Cornell, and so there was a lot of moving around. So I ended up moving to Missoula to live there for the first time though I had spent summers there as a child growing up. But I was a junior in high school at Hellgate, and I was almost finished that year and then I did half a year as a senior. So, didn't have a lot of time bonding with the Hellgate High School—sort of, that world—but it was an interesting time. You know, coming from the East Coast, I brought with me a—how to say?—a worldview that was a little different than the average Missoulian, I would say—

LF: And what—go ahead.

LB: No, you go.

LF: Oh, so what year was that when you were a junior and senior in high school?

LB: Oh, so I graduated in '75 so that must have been '74 or...yeah.

LF: And then where did you go from there?

LB: Well, so I left Missoula to—wanting to get a job and wasn't so interested in following the academic path that my parents were hoping I would. And so I went to a—I guess we would call it now a trade school—but it was called the Bassist Institute in Portland, and I took a merchandising certification program. And I had been working in Missoula at a couple of places downtown. I think it was called Rosanne's. It was a women's clothing store, and then for a little

bit longer, I worked at Rings and Things, which was across the street and spent endless hours stringing heishi and puka shells onto necklaces [laughs]—appropriate to the era. And so I was interested in merchandising and fashion and design, and so went to the Bassist, and while in Portland I got a job at this groovy men's clothing store called Blackbeards—Bluebeards! Bluebeards. And that took me to Spokane where I lived for a year and managed the Spokane Bluebeards, and I did that because it was closer to Missoula. And then ended up sort of having a 'what's it all about, Alfie?' moment and went to Europe and ended up in London and discovered new wave. Well, it wasn't really new wave then, then it was punk rock, and so I came back to Spokane with a purple mohawk and a new perspective on things. And my then boyfriend introduced me to bands like Blondie and The Clash and The Cars, and I got heavily into the new wave movement and my friend Kelly Cornell and I moved to Seattle to become clothing designers. And so we started this sort of avant-garde, new wave, you know, ripstop nylon, jumpsuits with massive shoulder pads, and, you know, making '50s-style housewife dresses out of camouflage fabric and just being what...Our perception was we were going to change the world through the counter culture—and nothing new there—but, I don't know, maybe we helped.

But..So then I was in Seattle doing that and got involved with—became the assistant manager of Music Land Record Stores on The Ave, and because of my sort of design background, I ended up being, doing window displays for the record companies that bringing—were promoting what became new wave. And the music store would have all these "in" stores, you know, bringing in artists from The Police and Echo & the Bunnymen and Psychedelic Furs and The Motels, and there was this marvelous group called Modern Productions that were bringing bands to the Showbox. And so it was a really exciting time to be involved in new wave and all of that. Then in early, really early '80s—maybe '81—I sort of had a, kind of a, another sort of 'what's it all about, Alfie?' moment and ended up returning to Missoula for—I don't think it ended up being more than a year but my mother was very ill and it just seemed like a good time to sort of go back to the nest. And so that's when I, you know—so here I was, this punk rock fashion designer—oh, I was so cool, I thought [laughs] and came to Missoula and found like-minded people and so created this sort of little community center called Urbane Renewal, which was a shop on Main Street just off of Higgins. And I sold used records and promo records that a former boyfriend would get them and send to me so I could sell them there. And it was—it was a really cool thing while it happened.

LF: So, how did you...like what did...so it sounds...There was already some, you know, a sort of punk scene of some sorts in Missoula when you moved here. What was your—I mean, how would you describe the scene that was here and your sense of how it had developed here, when you got here?

LB: Well...well, it wasn't...I didn't experience it as terribly developed. I met Randy Pepprock and Sabina [Miller] and Wally [Erickson] from Who Killed Society. And then I also met the guys who would become Deranged Diction. And Jeff [Ament], of course, later became very, very famous, he—but I remember him practicing base in the back of my shop. So it wasn't that terribly

developed a scene—I mean, I’m sure there was stuff going on that I didn’t know about, but as far as, you know, in my little universe, it was pretty small. We were—I had the wild, crazy-colored hair, and I remember walking down the street and people spitting at me and, you know, shouting, “Who are you? Why are you like that?” And of course, that was all part of the excitement of it, to be so—to stand out from, sort of, quote “normal society” unquote. So that was my experience of the scene when I first got there; it was pretty darn small.

LF: And what were there—what were the, like, venues that people were playing at or the gathering places?

LB: Oh, there weren’t any. [laughs] There weren’t any. I mean, there might have been a few, like, house shows, I mean, people’s...But mainly it was...as far as...And again, I don’t know everything that was going on, but I hung out with, you know, the—and this is pre-Deranged Diction, before they actually got together. The big sort of...So I hung out with Who Killed Society folks, and then that sort of group. And then I opened the shop, and that became sort of this kind of gathering place. And it wasn’t just about the music; it was also about the art. I remember, we had a big opening and Leslie Van Stavern Millar—I think she’s still in Missoula, an artist—she and her then boyfriend, became husband, Max from Carlo’s One Night Stand, sort of—and Monte Dolack, who was a friend of my parents. And so it was all—it wasn’t just music. It was art. And this—I have an amazing memory of this opening where an artist, whose name I can’t remember unfortunately who worked with glass, and he created a whole sort of dining table, with, you know, plates and utensils and chairs and the table itself all made from glass. And then at the opening, he had two—a young couple—completely naked sitting on the glass. I mean, it was the most fabulously cringe-worthy experience.

LF: These were real people.

LB: Real people, yeah. For just the opening. So, I remember that. I remember [pauses] Shawn Swagerty—as that his name?—

LF: Swagerty?

LB: —coming. Yeah! He would come and with his little portable microphone and, you know, do his David Bowie tributes. My brother would hang out, who was quite a bit younger than me, but he would hang out with his friends. So, we didn’t so much have music in the store itself, so I think maybe we did have a couple of live shows, but mainly it was to show art and for me to show my fashion and to sell records. But then we got this idea when Deranged Diction got together and did this—at the Community Center—I did a huge fashion show as an opening for Deranged Diction and I think Who Killed Society. Is that not their name? Oh my gosh!

LF: Yeah.

LB: Senior moment here.

And [pauses] so that was, I think, kind of the sort of big breakout of like, “We’re here, and we don’t care if you know it.” [laughs] So, that in my memory was sort of maybe a turning point as far as, kind of, a scene. And there were lots of people who showed up to that show, and it got a lot of attention at the time.

LF: So, just to go back for a second, did you—when you came to Missoula were you planning to open a place like Urbane Renewal?

LB: No. I wasn’t at all. I was hoping just to get a job somewhere, and I couldn’t find a job that I could stomach. So, my father, who is an amazing person who always thinks outside the box, he said, “Well, okay, if you can’t find a place where you want to work, why don’t you work for yourself?”

And so he took me down to the bank, and he said to his banker friend, “This is my daughter, Lya, and she needs \$5,000, and she’s gonna open her own shop, and I’ll co-sign for her.”

And so, that’s what I did. So I took a \$5,000 loan and I opened the shop with that. And subsequently, I wanted to return to Seattle, and so that’s why I sold the shop was basically to pay off the note [laughs]—the loan that I had taken on it. But—

LF: Was it self-supporting? I mean, did it make money or—?

LB: [laughs] You know, when you’re in your early 20s and the whole idea of making money, you know, it’s a little different then that concept exists for me now. So, no, it didn’t make money. Was it self-supporting? I don’t think so. [laughs] I think that there were a lot of times where we passed the hat to pay the rent. But—

LF: Literally? Did you—?

LB: I’m trying to remember. There must have been—I did these sort of weird kind of events. Like, I remember bringing—there was a ska movie that was released in the early ‘80s, and I remember—I don’t know how I did it—but bringing that movie and having a showing at, I think it was called Crystal Theatre. And I think we charged for that. And so, these different kinds of sort of—I’ll never forget, I had broken my foot dancing, and so I had a big cast on my leg, and we were all just down in the front. You know, the movie screen is there, and the seats behind, and we were in that front little and created this mosh pit where we were all dancing to the movie. Oh god! [laughs] It was—it was wild and crazy times.

But back to as far as, you know, expenses, quite frankly I don’t remember the details. It was not a priority of mine to make money, and I’m sure I did not make money.

LF: And when you started it, was it like a—I mean, you didn't have a job you could find that you wanted. But when you decided to start it, was it—did you envision it as, like, this is something I want to do for my interests, or did you see it as, like, this is hole in the sort of artistic or music scene that needs help?

LB: It was a clubhouse. It was a place for us misfits, you know, who didn't fit in any other place to gather. And it was a place to show the world, or show Missoula, this is happening. That we are people...I mean, it was horrifically pretentious on my part to think, yes, I want to change the world, and I want to do that through music and art. So that was my little way of doing it. In hindsight, looking back, it was building community. And I didn't call it then. I didn't, you know, strategically think, I'm going to create a place where people can meet in community. That was a—that's a language that I didn't have when I was young. But I have the language now, and so looking back, that's what I did. And it's interesting because I've subsequently been involved in politics and my community here in Snohomish, and the foundation of what I do is community building. And so it's, like, even then, that was who I am—who I was and who I am now. So, that's kind of cool. So, thank you for this opportunity to reflect on that. [laughs] I hadn't really put that together.

LF: Well, speaking of that, who—I mean, you mentioned this a little bit, but who, like, helped with getting the—you mentioned your father—but who else helped with, like, getting the shop going or running it, if there were other people, or supporting it?

LB: Well, it was pretty much me. I had—there was another gal who ended up being a roommate. So, at first, I lived in the back of the shop, and there was no—[laughs] it was terrible. It was, oh my gosh! You know, there was toilet and a small little sink, and that was it. So that didn't last very long. So, I ended up getting a house, or sharing a house—a room in a house—with a gal who was at the art program at the University [of Montana]. And her name is Nevin Merced and so she became a good friend and so another artist. So there were a lot of artists who sort of—maybe they had, they were, if you will, a little bit more comfortable moving through sort of normal quote unquote society than me and my punk rock friends—you know, music friends. We were all just like illiterate when it came to, you know, functioning. [laughs] And so, it amazes me now thinking back, how did I do that? How did I get that loan? And how did I do the sign a lease? And how did I convince the landlord to let me rent the place? I mean, how does that all happen? I—The details are illusive in the mists of the past. But, a funny thing about the name, so I wanted to call it Urban Renewal, and I remember going down to get a business license and they told me I couldn't call it Urban Renewal because it would be too confusing. That—you know, that it was some kind of civic service, and I remember being super angry about that. And so some of my friends, we were going to go down and strike in front of City Hall or something about it. [laughs] So I just ended up putting an 'E' on the end of Urban and calling it Urbane Renewal though we all called it "Urban Renewal."

LF: Oh, okay. [pauses] So you mentioned a minute ago, you know, the sort of basically kind of counter cultural aspect of it. Like you saw the art and culture of it as being about changing the world. Why did you think that, you know like, why was the fashion—

LB: [unintelligible]

LF: What's that?

LB: Why did I think the world needed changing?

LF: Well, that too. I mean, I'd be interested in that too, but also like why—why did you think fashion was so, could be so important to that?

LB: Important?

LF: Yeah.

LB: It was a visual political statement. By having purple hair and wearing a leather jacket and torn-up T-shirts, it was obvious that we were making a political statement. It was political. It wasn't just fashion. It was, it was a big, sort of, fuck you to the establishment. And, mind you, this is—all of that became sort of a trope, if you will. It all became kind of its own worst enemy later on. But back in the—you know, in the late '70s and early '80s, definitely in a relative small town that Missoula was then, it was a big deal. And it was, like you know, I don't want to equate it with currently wearing a certain red hat that says, "I'm this person who supports this other horrible politician," [laughs] but it was a similar kind of thing. It was like, okay, when you see me coming down the street, you know—or hopefully you'll try and find out what I'm saying. That was the ego of it all, you know.

LF: And was that something—you mentioned that you'd gotten your introduction to punk in London—was that something that you kind of latched onto there?

LB: Absolutely. It was—I was very depressed, and just in general, and not sure, you know, who I wanted to be when I grew up and what was going on. And then I went to London, and there was this amazing—you know, the Sex Pistols and the Siouxsie and the Banshees, and it was just like, whoa! This is exactly the energy that I was feeling but didn't have a language for. And so bringing that back for Spokane and finding, you know, a few people in Spokane doing that and then moving on to Seattle. And I'll never forget walking down The Ave one day soon after I'd moved back, and this guy walks towards me and he said, "You have purple hair!"

And I said, "Why, yes I do."

And he said, "Well, who are you, and why don't I know you already?"

I mean, this is in Seattle. So, back then it was a relatively small community and, you know, subsequently grew to be a bigger one.

LF: Right. Well, I think that—well, I wanted to ask, did you see some punk bands or new wave bands in London? Did you go to—did you go to like Malcolm McLaren’s SEX shop?

LB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I did. And I met this—I mean, I had this horrible ‘70s perm. You know, massive frizzy ‘do. [laughs] And I went into a—it all starts with hair. So I went into a hair salon, and this guy—who I still remember his face, I can’t remember his name—and he just said, “Oh sweetie, we’ve got to do something.”

And I just said, “Just do whatever. I don’t care.” And he, you know, buzz-cut the sides and, you know, dyed it. Then it was hard to have bright colored hair, he had to bleach it, you know, all the way white so your hair is like mush and then paint the color on. I mean, we had to work hard to get our look. [laughs] So, and I just remember when I looked in the mirror after he had completely done this transformation of my hair, I said, “Ah! This is who I am.”

LF: Yeah. Well, I think...I also think this is...I’m interested in the sort of flow of ideas because punk kind of emerges in the U.S. and Britain simultaneously. But, you know, it’s interesting that Missoula—I mean, you have a pretty big influence on the Missoula early punk scene, but you that doesn’t—you kind of get that from London and transfer it to the mountains of Missoula.

LB: Yep. Well, and I think there was this amazing punk scene going on in the United States, and I mean it’s sad that the Sex Pistols copied their look from—not the Ramones. Stranglers? Or...Anyway, from, you know, the New York scene. But I didn’t know any of that, you know. I was living in Portland, and the disco thing was happening, and I was thinking, wow, that’s kind of cool. I remember going to see *Saturday Night Fever* and like, wow, that’s really cool, you know, [unintelligible] music and feel powerful and we’d go out and move and do it. But it wasn’t quite right, you know. But I knew that music was a component of it. And, but, you know, Patti Smith was out doing, you know, and Ramones and all of that going on at CBGBs, which I didn’t have a clue. So I had to go all the way to England to sort of get it, and then when I came back, of course it was like, oh my gosh, this has been going on here all this time and I didn’t know.

Though, again, that’s in hindsight. At the time, I didn’t think of it that way, you know. I was pretty Eurocentric, I must say, because a lot—most of the bands, new wave bands, that Modern Productions were bringing—not most but many of them, were from the U.K. And so, when I subsequently went on and starting making my own music and performing and I put out an album and blah, blah, blah, at the beginning when I first started recording, the engineer would always go, “Why are you singing with an English accent?”

And I said, “I don’t know. Am I?” [laughs] It was just because personally I was so influenced by those, those bands.

LF: Yeah, I think that was common. I also heard Randy Pepprock, that Who Killed Society, had a very English thing.

LB: Yeah. Yeah, he used to—oh yeah, I know he used to do this like for—it was so funny. He would purse his mouth, and I can still see him doing it and he would talk, and we would all tease him. But, anyway.

LF: There's a couple other things on Urbane Renewal. You mentioned, did you say that Monte Dolack hung out there or displayed some of his art there?

LB: Yeah, a little bit. And Mary Beth Percival. I mean, they were friends of my parents, and so I think that, you know, obviously his sort of vibe is different than back then. He was, you know, making posters and doing this sort of beautiful west landscape inspired kind of art which is quite different than what Nevin and Leslie were doing, which was more sort of abstract and. But, yeah, he was a good friend of the family.

LF: So, I read that your own designs, you called them reactive wear. Do you remember that?

LB: Yes, yes, that's a—

LF: And can you explain what that means?

LB: But again it was...so I...So when I was working in Spokane at this men's clothing store, there was this woman who worked with me, Kelly, and she was a tailor for the shop. You know, men's clothing is, like, great. You can go and, you know, get your pants hemmed and your blazer fitted and all that back in the day. So, she had these amazing sewing skills and great ideas, and I had these crazy ideas too. And so my boyfriend then, Jan Gregor who lived in—this is in Spokane—and he had a band called Last Exit, I believe that was it? Or No Exit? So we would—we designed outfits for them, and it was like, wow, this is kind of fun. And so when we did finally move to Seattle, it was like, yeah! Let's...Because, you know, we had the reactive color hair, and we were using ripstop nylon a lot and these bright, bright colors, and that was the sort of look of the, you know, late '70s, early '80s. And we were reactionary. So, that's kind of where the name came from. And then I had a huge fashion at the Showbox, opening for just some bands, and I remember going around and putting up flyers all around Capitol Hill, you know, "Wanted: Cool models for a cool new wave fashion show." And so I met—so Kelly and I met a lot of people that way after we'd first moved to Seattle, and lot of those people are still friends of mine. And that was in, gosh, '80? 1980? Something like that. Before I had moved back to Missoula.

LF: Yeah. What other sorts of—you mentioned some of the art. Was there other types of art that were related to it? And also, like, what we might now call zines, or like small press things that were in your shop or that you helped out with?

LB: I don't really remember that. It was possible that it was going on and I just—I was more visual then and less printed word. I mean it's ironic because now I'm a writer, and I'm working on novels and. But I was—graphic design was not part of what I was doing. It was all about posters, I mean, making really cool posters for shows or performances or things like that. So that would be the closest that I got to. I think my brother Chris still has the poster for that big event that we had at the Community Center, which was—I remember working, helping to make a really cool poster. [laughs] So it was—but, so no, I wasn't involved in anything.

LF: So, one thing that we're interested in in this project is the role of and experience of women in the Missoula music scene. So, what was it—what was it like being a woman in this scene, if it was a distinct experience to you?

LB: So, so, my experience in Missoula was very different than later on when I actually was in Seattle, when I was in bands and performing and trying to get signed and putting out my own recordings. Then it was horrific. Being a woman in the industry, and a woman who is—has her own mind and is like, "This is how I want it to be." It was really, really hard. But in Missoula, it was sort of this—I don't know. Maybe it was just kind of a—almost like a honeymoon period for me of kind of figuring this out—that new wave and being in this kind of community is possible. And, I did—quite frankly, we were all androgynous. [laughs] I can't really remember thinking of myself with a gender, a specific gender. We were just all, I mean, we were all he-she's or she-he's. [laughs] If that makes any sense at all. Not to say that, you know, we wouldn't dress up sexy and have sex and be crazy in that way. But I didn't think of it—though I did discover a kind of feminism while I was there doing reading an amazing book. I would go to the library and find these books, and there was this book called *When God Was A Woman* [Merlin Stone, 1976] that I started reading and fundamentally sort of changed my—I remember sitting at the counter, behind the counter in the shop, reading that book going, oh, yes, this explains everything! [laughs] And so I did sort of have that personal epiphany, but I believe that was on my personal path, and perhaps it is because I was in this relatively kind of safe, supportive place that I could explore, you know, those kinds of gender roles in our society. So, again, I'm having sort of insight as I talk to you about how that could have been. I hadn't really, you know, thought about it deeply before but, yeah. So, being a woman didn't make any difference [unintelligible].

LF: Okay, and was that—I mean, presumably that was distinct from other aspects of your life or other aspects of society that you were interacting with. So, it was sort of a safe space for—

LB: Right, exactly. And sort of an incubation space, you know, for my personal sort of growth and development. And, like I said, when I returned to Seattle and started doing my own music and, you know, being in bands and trying to tell those boys what to do, they don't like it. Or they didn't like it. [laughs] And it was really painful and hard. I put a—made a single and sent it out. Was it the single, or was it the LP? Anyway, I sent it out to some labels, and I remember hearing from Geffen Records, and it was so exiting because they were like, yeah, you know we like what you're doing; we're interested. You know, would you considering coming down and

re-recording your songs with this particular producer—that they named who happened to be the producer who worked with The Go-Go's. And I was like—well, so, my sound was completely different. My sound was dark, it was folky jazz, it was like funk-jazz if you will. And more like the—I don't know. Who were they? What was that name? Oh...Anyway. And completely not like, pop-y, you know, happy. And I was like—so, you know me, instead of going wow, what an opportunity, I said, "You got me all wrong." Slammed the phone down. [laughs] I had this like amazing opportunity, and I just gave up. I mean, the hubris of youth, right? But it was really hard to, you know, to be a woman in that industry at that time [unintelligible].

LF: Yeah. So that was the industry. Were you part of a local music scene there as well or—?

LB: Yeah, yeah. There were a bunch of us. And, you know, the pre-grunge Seattle was a really, really amazing time for bands. So, I like to think that I, you know, helped mid-wife all the bands that came after. But we all shared bass players [laughs] because there were never enough bass players, or drummers, or whatever. But it was an interesting time, but it was, I think, a pretty dark time. But that was, I think, more a reflection of the sort of place where I was versus necessarily where everyone else was. But it was a really exciting time to be in a band. To be in Seattle, in the early '80s. It was awesome. [laughs]

LF: And did you—I mean, you talked a bit about, you know, the ideas that you brought to Missoula. Did your time in Missoula then sort of affect—

LB: Influence?

LF: Yeah.

LB: Yes. I think that it gave me a confidence. Like I say, you know, it was a sort of incubation time of—yes, I think that I became more confident because of the experience in Missoula. I mean, there were very unhappy things happening sort of in my family life and private life, but as far as my developing an ability to see myself as some kind of an artist, I think that having that sort of time, you know—it was less than a year, I think, in Missoula—really helped to help that to take root within the person, the adult, that I became.

LF: Yes. And did—I mean, you know, the name of your store, among other things, indicate the very sort of, like, connection between punk and urban areas in the city. But I was curious if like your time in Missoula or Montana, if the landscape there or the somewhat more rural aspect of it, did that affect your music or your art in any way?

LB: Not at all. Not all. [laughs] I'm sorry to say. And it's ironic because now nature is so important to me. But, at the time, I was all about gritty, dark alleyways with, you know, cobbled streets and broken glass glinting in the night and, you know, shrieking cats and just a whole—which is why I didn't stay longer than I did. Because I just really needed to be in an urban environment.

LF: And...oh, I did want to...You brought this up earlier, but the sort of political aspects of it. I mean, what were—were there like local issues, or were these more like national and like broader sort of cultural things that you were revolting against?

LB: I think it was more broader. I don't think that I was knowledgeable enough to tie it in to particular sorts of legislative issues or civic issues, which ironically is kind of what I do now. But, at the time, it was just wanting to be "other." Other, quote unquote. Wanting to be—wanted to explore darkness, and punk really did that, I think, for a lot of kids who were...I mean, it's become a cliché to say, you know, "suffering from alienation," etcetera, etcetera. But there was a truth to that and a resonance with that, that we all sort of felt and brought us together. It wasn't—for me, it wasn't so much that I hated society, but that I didn't feel fine, or I didn't feel right in it, or that I had a place in it—the society that I had been exposed to. So it was—I don't know what I'm saying, but there weren't, it wasn't really tied into politics. I mean, my dad was really involved with—he started Institute of the Rockies and was very much active in creating—what's the term?—sort of civic involvement in, definitely, environmental issues. They did this huge project called Columbia River Watch. And so that was all sort of happening, and then my dad, you know, he ran for city council. He never made it, bless him, [laughs] but he, you know, he was very—and he's a political science for goodness' sake. So, so, all of that was kind of what I was pushing against in a way. That sort of organized vast—whatever "that" was. This soft mushy cloud of "that-ness." I was in my dark painful [laughs] room with the door closed and the music loud along with every other, you know, teenager. [laughs] But so. I hope that answers the question.

LF: Yes, it does, yes. So I [unintelligible]...couple other...Just to go back to the role or experience of women. Were there other women who were, like, really involved in the punk scene in Missoula that were—?

LB: Well, not as many—I mean, Sabina, the bass player in Who Killed Society, she was—we weren't terribly close, but she was there in the periphery, and she was doing the music. I had a number of friends who became sort of models for my clothing line, and they were all—we were all—just sort of kind of in the same place figuring it out. But again, in hindsight now and upon reflection answering these questions, you know, the painters were, I think, the ones who had the most sort of influence on making me feel connected. But, again, it wasn't so much, oh, they're women therefore I connect with them. It was I connected just as much with, you know, with Randy or Steve or my boyfriend who was in—who started Deranged Diction, Jon Donahue. I mean, it was all—it wasn't so much gender specific. And that was kind part of the whole thing of it, was that it wasn't like a he and a she [unintelligible].

LF: So, Randy Pepprock and Jeff Ament and some other folks from Missoula also moved out to Seattle in the early '80s. Did you continue to have contact with them?

LB: Yeah, I got them all jobs. [laughs.] Because I went and worked for this coffee shop called the Raison d'Être, which the most fabulous place—one of the first coffee shops in the whole of coffee-land Seattle. So, I went out first, and they all just kept coming [laughs], and so they would all get jobs there and then move on to do other stuff. But Jeff worked there for years and years. And I worked there, you know, off and on, for about a decade. I mean what does a—if you're an artist or in a band, working in a restaurant's the best way. You only have to—I only had to work three days a week to live on tips. And again, none of us were money motivated. We just needed the bare minimum to survive and see what our art was.

LF: So was there—was there kind of like a little Missoula, ex-pat thing that was—?

LB: Yes. Oh god, oh god yes. There was such a Missoula thing. And then when my brother came, and he sort of brought it as well, and so it was a—yes, there was definitely a Missoula club in Seattle centered around the Raison d'Être café.

LF: It sounds like it was an important part of the sort of pre-grunge scene that you were talking about.

LB: Well, definitely, Jeff went on to become, you know, one of the princes of it. But I think that it wasn't all just about music. It was about, again, maybe—oh! here's something in hindsight as I'm talking. You know, maybe it's sort of that community that we created in Missoula and just sort of having a soft place to land, if you will, in the big city. And maybe that's kind of how—yeah! Oh, interesting thought. So.

LF: Yeah, well, on that theme, how do you think that experience in punk—that sort of counter-culture movement in general and Missoula—like how did that affect the rest of your life? [laughs]

LB: Ahh! Well, I think I've been speaking to that a little bit as I've been babbling along here. I think that it was more important than I've given it credit for. [laugh] Again, thanks to you and this project of sort of—quite frankly, I didn't think so much about...You know, Missoula was a painful place for me. It was, you know, my family situation was horrifically painful. I have a lot of that I don't remember, on purpose. Purposefully not remembering about, you know, that time. But the—what community that we created there and what I was able to accomplish; though, again, that implies that I had a plan that I wanted to accomplish. But anyway, what sort of holistically grew out of what we all sort of gathered—you know, that we came together—was, yeah, really important. I think that, for a lot of us, it created trust, and it created a place to be our true selves, or at least more true than we could be when we were at home with our parents or at our regular jobs, and then that sort of spread, bled, migrated to Seattle, as a lot of those people from that sort of core group did. Yes, I think it was personally important—my time spent there.

LF: Yeah, and it sounds like talking about your involvement in like community, civic life now, that it maybe gave you ideas or even some sort of—some like hard skills about, you know, how to be involved in that way?

LB: I think that that could be true! Definitely [pauses]...Definitely confidence. Though confidence is a funny thing, you know. You might be doing something—speaking for myself—you know, I'll be doing something thinking, oh man, I'm doing a crap job of this, and this is terrible, and I can't do this, and anyone else would do a better job than me. And then in hindsight, looking back going, wow, I did a good job. [laugh.] So, you know, you have enough of those sort of experiences that sort of create this pearl, if you will, around that sand of insecurity. And so, if you can survive to be old like me, then you can look at that beautiful pearl and go, wow, look what I did. But I think it takes time and hindsight to be able to do that.

LF: And what sort of stuff do you do now in terms of—?

LB: Well, I'm—finished the first draft of one novel, and I'm working on the revision of that and I'm gonna try and get an agent and starting the second novel. So, writing—the written word—is really fascinating to me. You know, I did music in Seattle, and then in '84, I went blind and subsequently was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and so was not able to continue that sort of lifestyle and performing but had discovered the love of writing lyrics or poetry. And so that extended and expanded and grew. And that's something you don't have to be physically fit to do. You can sit, scratching on a piece of paper, clacking away on your computer and create this wonderful sort of string of words that bring you joy. So that's what I do now.

LF: And, are you also...I think you mentioned your...Are you involved with some environmental issues now?

LB: Oh yes. So there's that too. So, I was waxing poetic here. Yes, I served on city council here in the city of Snohomish and was elected to that and got involved. And I've been on the Parks Board—the commission that volunteer individuals who advise city council with regards to parks and green space. I had a job working at a Eddie Bauer call center back in early 2000s, and I was a mother, you know, and I had my daughter late and had never been around kids. And, oh my god, that was a shock. But ended up at this call center, and the call center subsequently—I did that for a few years, and then it closed. And they gave us a stipend to be, so-called “retrained,” and so I went to a local community college and took a couple of classes. One in Microsoft Word because I had been living in Southeast Asia through most of the '90s doing project management work for an Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide and then living in Burma. Anyway, doing a whole different kind of stuff not arts related. And so, anyway, came back, and so I had missed the whole Internet thing, and so I didn't even know what Microsoft Word was. So I [laughs], I took a Microsoft Word class and a Environmentalism 101 class. And, oh my god, did that open my mind and my heart. And so became an environmental activist in addition to the sort of other stuff that I do.

LF: Uh-huh. Great! So, that's all of the questions I have, but I wanted to ask if there are—if there's some other stuff, you know, that would be good to ask you about that I may not know to ask about or some other things that are important about this history that would be good to bring up.

LB: Well, I think, you know, definitely your focus is on—as I understand it—is, what's special about Missoula, that helps create, or does it, or is there anything special about Missoula? To sort of create this kind of counter-culture perspective. And Missoula has always been a really, really interesting town for 100 years. And maybe it does have to do with the coming—the confluence—of the rivers or whatever it is that the Indigenous people say. But it's—it is an interesting town. And it's—being this progressive, blue dot in the middle of red and purple, it's interesting. I think that it's changed a lot. It's completely different than when I lived there. It's much bigger. It's more gentrified. I just hope it doesn't lose its sort of unique, sort of blue-collar soul, which was a big part of, I think, what gave the integrity to our movement, if you will, you know, back in the '80s. So, only time will tell.

LF: Yeah. Well, so just to—so what do you think were the connections between the sort of blue-collar aspects of Missoula and the counter-cultural aspects of it?

LB: Well, well, I mean I—you know, cowboys, ranchers. My grandpa was a—you know, worked for most of his career at the University of Montana, and then he became a gentleman rancher when he retired. And so I grew up going and helping with the branding and calling in those girls when it was time to eat. And so for me personally, sort of that kind of, was something—an authenticity to that. You know, seeing the rodeo and doing all of that and that self-sufficiency of the homesteader mentality of the people who crossed the prairies and ended up settling there. It definitely has sort of, I believe, influenced me personally in being self-sufficient. But I don't know that that's necessarily—is that blue collar? I don't know. It's self-sufficiency; it's getting the job done. Just quit whining and go out and do it kind of mentality. And I wonder if that will continue. I see it in my brother. And he moved back to Missoula, so I don't know. [Unintelligible].

LF: The punk, do it yourself ethic.

LB: Yes, yes.

LF: All right, well thank you so much. This was fantastic. So, that's all for the interview, but I also wanted to say—I sent you this—but we're going to have an exhibit here on December 7th.

LB: Yeah, the timing won't work for me to get out there, but my brother's there, and he probably has posters that might interest you. And, you know, I know somewhere deep in the caverns of storage space land, I have lots of photographs as well. But I don't know if I could dig them out in time to be useful for you. There was—how did you hear about me, in the first place, by the way? And Urbane Renewal and all of that?

LF: Well, let's see. [pauses] We just started doing research on this, and I got show posters, which mentioned Urbane Renewal, or Urban Renewal and [laughs]—and then there was a few newspaper articles that were written on it back in the early '80s.

LB: So, that's what I was wondering. If you saw, there was one in particular that I'm remembering that had a fabulous photograph.

LF: Yeah, I know what you're talking about.

LB: Okay, good. So, I'm glad that you're able to use that as a—

LF: Well, yes. I have to contact the newspaper to see if they have—I mean, we can use the scan of it from the paper, but it'd be great if they have the original. So, I might contact them and see about that, yeah.

LB: Yeah. I mean, that was kind of the—we all sort of became a little bit famous after that, for sure. [laughs]

LF: Well, if you happen to have any chance to find any photos or any other materials, that'd be great, but I understand if you don't.

LB: Well, I'm sure that my brother would want to participate and support in any way, so. And he's over on Sussex.

LF: All right, I'm going to contact him.

LB: Okay, well thank you for your interest!

LF: Thank you so much!

LB: Okay.

LF: All right, bye-bye.

[End of interview]