

Transcript – Women’s Escort Service

Narrator: Sarah Fast, Nancy Peterson, Karen Brown, Sarah Nersher, Allison Buckser

Interviewer: Karen Lamoree

Interview Date: 1988

Interview Time:

Location:

Length: 3 audio files; 1:30:88

Track 1

Karen Lamoree: [00:00:00] [brief feedback noises] This is Karen Lamoree interviewing –

Sarah Fast: Sarah [Fast?].

Nancy Peterson: Nancy Peterson.

Karen Brown: Karen Brown.

Sarah Nersher: Sarah [Nersher?].

KL: The first question we’re going to ask is why you got involved with the escorting service.

KB: Okay, well, I was here during the summer, in Providence, and I heard about the need for escorters, and it appealed to me because I had wanted to do something actively that would kind of show my support for the pro-choice movement, and I thought that this would be an active kind of commitment to helping women who were faced with harassment at clinics in the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KL: How did you hear about the escorting service?

SN: I heard about it kind of vaguely through Sarah Doyle Women’s Center and ran into someone in the summer who was coordinating [00:01:00] the program then and getting ready to leave for

Washington because she had just graduated. So she was kind of in a frenzy because she didn't know of anyone who was around who wanted to go in the summer, 7:30 in the morning on a Saturday, so –

KL: Who was this?

SN: This was Eileen McC– I forget her last name. It was a real Irish last name though, and I have it on paper in case you want it, but she's in Washington now, and she just desperately needed people to help out, so – and I was here during the summer and had a lot of time on my hands and wanted to do something constructive and to show my support for the pro-choice movement.

SF: I agree. I thought it was something that seemed like a constructive thing to do. I also thought that three hours was such a little, such a little amount of time to except from it. I thought it just really seemed worthwhile and any little bit of comfort to give to those women instead.

KL: How did you hear about it?

SF: I heard about it through a friend of [00:02:00] mine freshman year. I got involved a little bit before Karen did, and I heard about it through a friend of mine.

KL: And who was your friend?

SF: Amanda [Lare?].

KL: And was she involved in it?

SF: She was involved in it, pretty latently I think. Like, once every semester or something she would go.

NP: Well, I did it at first as sort of an experimental thing. Several friends were doing it, and one friend had done it all through last summer, and I guess in the process of hearing all her stories

about what exactly was happening there I became interested, and so Sarah here and I, we did it over Christmas break and winter break, and well, that's how it started.

KL: And so you – When you say experimental, was it because you were –

NP: I wasn't sure how I stood on issues, but [00:03:00] I wanted to have some kind of feeling about it, but my family feels differently than I do now. And I mean, just looking back from where I was before I did it I can see that a lot – from doing it I have developed my own theories and opinions about it that I wouldn't have had before if I had never like gone along for the ride that one time.

SF: I too got started as kind of an experiment. I was very unsure about how I would handle the situation, and so I went once. And the experience there really made me see how worthwhile escorting was and how important it was to the women that we escorted. I've never really considered myself [00:04:00] pro-choice or – I have real problems with those kinds of terms, but when you go and actually escort you see the amount of psychological abuse that these women undergo, and it really – it's just, it's very affecting, and it makes you feel like what you're doing is a good thing.

KL: Why don't you tell me about the first time you did it? Do you remember the first time you did it?

SN: Well, the first time that I did it I was scared out of my mind because I really didn't know what to expect, and I had not been trained, so I didn't have the benefit of having people in an organized, or somewhat organized fashion tell me what was going to happen. So I kind of just showed up with Eileen and was shocked just for about three hours straight of what was going on. And I had heard and read stories in the paper about clinics being [00:05:00] picketed and people being harassed, but it's just like the cliché, you know. If you haven't done it you won't really get a feeling of what it's like.

KL: The Women's Medical Center, that's the name of it, the Women's Medical Center, and what's the address?

SN: It's 100 Highland Avenue.

KL: And it's going to move to Cranston.

SN: Right, they're going to move to the Edgewood section of Cranston.

KL: And so go on about the first time.

SN: So I was feeling really kind of inept and just I don't really think I was as effective as I could have been because I was so bowled over by what was going on and the fact that I didn't also expect to be the subject of so much abuse. I thought that the abuse was going to be directed at someone else who I was trying to help, and what I learned was that my involvement was just as – [00:06:00] I don't know what to say, offensive to the demonstrators as the women who were using the services of the clinic. And I also remember feeling like I wasn't sure whether they were protesting Brown University or what was going on in the clinic. It was a really fine line because they spent a lot of time screaming at the escorts, so I did realize after that one time that I went that this was something that you're going to be subjecting yourself to personal abuse and harassment just as much but in a different way than the women who are using the services. It's kind of like anyone who's there gets the treatment, so that was something that I really didn't expect at all. I don't know what I did – I'm not really sure what I did expect, but I know I didn't expect to be like personally attacked, so that was definitely the major shock, and it was a big one.

KB: Boy, I remember my [00:07:00] first time. I think I was surprised that the protestors were so old. Some of them were just little old people you wouldn't – you know, they looked nice and friendly and whatever, and all of a sudden they start spewing out these nasty, horrible remarks, and I was just like, whoa. And that surprised me. And they just watch everything you do and say, the most inane things. I think I expected to be really angry, really able to control my anger at the protestors just on the verge of yelling back at them, but they were saying things out of such

ignorance and things they were saying about Brown, it was just so wrong. And they were just so, so far off from having an intelligent argument that it wasn't even worth wasting my time.

KL: Do they scream at you, or?

KB: Yes, they scream at you. Actually we got a kick out of – I mean, actually I think, I don't know. The things they scream are subject to much laughter, but it's ridiculous.

SF: I think also like you get to feel close with people [00:08:00] that you escort with, and that's one thing that I remember. You know, I just met people who were graduated, and we were all together, but we were all kind of being collectively subjected to this abuse. And I remember feeling very close to them because I had kind of suffered through it, and was able to withstand it, and they provided support to me as someone who hadn't done it before. So I found that on a personal level not only did I feel like I was doing good, I felt like, you know, I was becoming, I don't know. I don't know how to put it. I guess just I felt closer to the people that I had escorted with, and I had not known them at all.

KL: How about your first time?

NP: I don't remember it specifically. I remember my first impressions. It sort of developed, but I went expecting the worst, [00:09:00] I suppose, and I wasn't really afraid or anything, but I felt, like you said, inept. Like, what can I actually do? And I guess it really only took going that one time as an experiment just to see what it was like, what exactly was going on for it to affect me so much. It just – to see these people tearing other people apart just like really – and tearing me apart, I mean, when – I mean, they'd tear me apart, and they'd tear me apart when they would hassle people going in too. And I guess I was just so impressed by how inhumane it was when they were doing this for what they considered a [00:10:00] humane cause. It's like the unborn certainly has better off at that point than – it was confusing too because you walk away going wow, people can really do this to each other, and just the general feeling of abhorrence. But when that happened, like I said, I can only speak generally, I don't remember my first time, but when the terrible feeling, you know, leaving at the end of the three-hour stretch or however long

it is, there's also a flip side of, well, I was there, and I made it – just even if the littlest bit easier for the people going in. It made me feel incredibly good, and maybe that's the way it works when there are the [00:11:00] atrocities of – humankind are always faced with a balance of good feeling and help.

KL: How about your first time?

SF: Well, the first time I went I had been very apprehensive about my own ability to deal with the situation, so I had planned to go with a friend, and at the last minute she ended up canceling out due to schoolwork and stuff like that. So I was really nervous, and I got there. Actually, I was also with Karen, so that was comfort, but we had originally intended to go with Joan, I don't know if you remember.

KB: Right, I do.

SF: So I got there. I was really, really, freaking out, and the very first woman I escorted in burst into tears by the time I got her to the door, and I mean, that really, that really blew me away because – and that was just the very first experience I had had there, and I had expected the protestors to be, I mean, [00:12:00] somewhat sincere, and what I – excuse me?

F: Legitimate.

SF: Yeah, I mean, I had expected them to be somewhat sincere, and I found them to be mainly cruel, not completely. I still think there are a couple of them who are sincere, but like, just mainly very cruel, very vicious, and people who just do not care about these women that they're supposedly, you know, trying to move to a better choice in life.

KL: What do you think their goal is then if they're not there to help these women?

SF: I think their goal is kind of perverted because in the name of religion they're trying to – gosh, what is their goal? In the name of Christ, basically, they're trying to dissuade these women [00:13:00] from what they consider murder, I suppose.

NP: A holocaust.

SF: Yeah.

NP: They call it –

SF [?]: American Holocaust.

NP: – American Holocaust.

SF: But the tactics that they use to achieve this end, I think, is where the perversion really comes in because they end up like abusing these women so much and really torturing them with statements like, you know, “You know how many women commit suicide after they do this,” or “You're never going to sleep the same way after this,” and that sort of thing.

KL: So when you all went the first time you were not trained in any techniques. You just signed up to do this, and you showed up at the Medical Center?

KB: Well, I think – well in my case I wasn't trained because it was kind of like, they needed people desperately, but during the school year when new people are going we have a training session in the [00:14:00] beginning for people to go and just to get an idea of what they're going to expect, what some of the legal issues are, like where protesting is legal, where it's not, what you can do in the situation, you can go for help. Just kind of like a brief kind of awareness thing, and if anyone missed that meeting we try to just give it to them over the phone, just so that they know.

SN: Yeah, that's true. Well, I was trained, and it was very informal. I think there were four of us including the trainer, and we talked for a little while basically about what to expect, and now we – every semester, we offer one big training session. Actually, they've gotten pretty big. I mean, 25 to 30 people show up.

SF: Yeah, I participated in one of those like at the beginning of last semester.

SN: And we basically answer questions, but the best training is really to go. It's not, you know, absolutely necessary to train.

F: I was never trained.

SF: It's kind of logistically [00:15:00] complex, so you have to be there to understand like what's going on.

SN: It's hard to explain like what part of the building is the back door where clients are encouraged to enter, what part of the building is the front door where protesting activity is legal, and so it can get kind of complicated.

KL: Maybe when we finish with the tape we can sit down and draw a little schematic so –

F: I think it would help me understand a lot.

KL: [overlapping dialogue] – yeah, because we'll talk in a few minutes about the actual process. You get there and then what happens? We'll talk about that in a few minutes. So it would probably be helpful to the listeners of the tape if they could, you know, envision it. Right now let's just talk about, you had the training sessions with all these people, how did you get all these people? How did you advertise?

SN: I put a notice in the BDH in the calendar, and that was it. Actually, we didn't – and we put a few posters up.

KB: Actually, you know, we put up flyers, and just something that I would like to record about the flyers, they were just, you know, brief [00:16:00] flyers to help women who are confronted with anti-abortion harassment by escorting, time, date, questions call Karen, my phone number and Sarah. And I put up about, I don't know, 60. I put up a lot because I was really concerned that we weren't going to have a lot of people and that there'd be weekends, Saturdays, when no one would be going. And much to my dismay, a lot of them were taken down.

SN: Oh, really?

KB: Yeah, I told you about that.

SN: No wonder I didn't see that many.

KB: Yeah, in the post office especially, a couple were taken down and a few specifically were replaced with Bible study –

F: Oh, wow.

KB: – which I lodged a complaint with the Reverend Ames, the chaplain here, and we're not sure exactly what happened, and there's no pointing a finger at anyone, but certain groups [00:17:00] who are involved with the Bible study were kind of made aware that it was – even if, you know, no one was involved in this that they should just be aware that someone is doing this. It was the same problem they were having with putting up posters for Sarah Weddington, who was the attorney for *Roe versus Wade*, someone allegedly was following the poster guy around from Lecture Board, so there were problems with advertising for both the Sarah Weddington and for this training session, which I didn't expect at all. And then I got very concerned because my number was on it, and I didn't want someone calling me up and harassing me and my housemates on the phone. So that was really very upsetting for me because I didn't expect it at a place like Brown, which is supposedly liberal in its political whatever, and I was really – you

know, I didn't even think about putting my name down. That's how [00:18:00] comfortable I was with advertising it, and I think I'm going to have to think twice about that.

SF: I think something like this is really best advertised through word of mouth.

KB: Yeah, you're right.

SF: You know people, and you suggest, you know, would you like to do this, and they're like, wow, that sounds like a really neat thing to do.

KB: Yeah, I think that's a good point, yeah. Because it's not – to me you can't really get across on a piece of paper without going into some detail. And there's just no space for that, so.

KL: Okay, why don't you just start and talk about what happens when you get there. You get out of your car, and then what happens?

SN: You get out of the car and then immediately – well, one person goes into the Women's Medical Center to the receptionist and gets the pennies, the yellow pennies that say Women's Medical Center on them. And then everyone else stands outside and is basically harassed by the protestors who are standing outside and waiting.

KL: Are they standing outside in the street, on the sidewalk, in that [00:19:00] person's yard who rents the space out, or?

SN: Right.

KB: Both.

SN [?]: Both, and then every few –

KB: A few in each place.

SN: They're kind of spread out strategically.

NP: Again, the design will help, but a lot of them will line up at the edge of the parking lot and also in the woman's backyard, and some at the front door sidewalk. But they can walk on the sidewalk apparently.

KL: And are they carrying signs or?

SN: Yeah, especially, they post things on the back, there's a wire fence on the woman's property near the backdoor, and they have pamphlets and stuff which they – and pictures of supposedly aborted fetuses and stuff.

KB: Signs like, "Jesus loves you, save your baby."

F: "Abortion, the American Holocaust."

SN: That one's up there every time.

KB: Big, big things, and recently they invested in some pretty expensive looking like poster [00:20:00] matted on like – it looked really professionally done. I was kind of like, whoa, where'd you get that done? What copy center? Did you like haul out twenty bucks for that? But like they had a picture of a fetus or something matted with like plastic over it, so they have been kind of getting their visual materials updated, it looks like.

KL: Is this an organized, cohesive group that does it, or just people that show up?

NP: Definitely, definitely, I think they meet together during the week, and they strategize, and they're a cohesive group among themselves. Most of them, I think, are friends.

KL: And it's the same people time after time?

SN: They're also affiliated, at least the main person, with the Little Flower Home, yeah, which is a home for pregnant teenagers. So, yeah.

SF: They don't necessarily go as representatives, [00:21:00] but they are members.

NP: They're all religious.

F: I thought it was like – I kind of got the impression that they knew each other from church or something.

SN: Eileen – yeah, Eileen told me that they knew each other from, like, the same church, and it could be possible. Never asked them. [laughs]

SF: True.

KL: So the clients that– you said at one point that they're supposed to come to the back door?

KB: Well, when we make appointments over the phone, the Women's Medical Center personnel strongly suggest that they come in the back door so that they can avoid the kind of really one-to-one contact like you'll have at the front door because that's where protesting activity is legal. So they're – you know, but that doesn't mean – I mean, you know, if you get instructions over the phone a week before doesn't mean you're going to remember it. And some people do come in the front way. It's upsetting to say the least.

KL: [00:22:00] So you get there, and you get your pennies, and then you wait for the person in the parking lot, is that it?

SN: Right, there are appointments at eight, nine, and ten o'clock, so around a little bit before and a little bit after is when it's the most busy, and so we wait for them to come in, and then when they park we walk up to them, too, in pairs and ask them whether they would like an escort, and

then if they – most of the time they say yes, and then you walk them from their car to the door providing physical comfort and a physical block sometimes to the visual propaganda. And you think of conversation to say. Give them directions.

SF: It's a long walk.

F: Yeah, it is a long walk.

KL: So what do you talk about when you're trying to make conversation?

SF: The weather.

SN: A little bit about the weather, you know, you can't go too far on that.

F: It's cold out. Gee, it's cold. [laughter]

NP: [00:23:00] I think I spend most of my time actually just warning them what's ahead because a lot of the times, depending on where they're parked they can't see what's around the corner. They can't see the row of protestors up against the door, up against the – yeah. Up against the fence opposite the entrance. And so I spend a lot of time just saying, "Well, there are going to be some more of them around the corner. It'll be okay. They're just – they're very noisy," and try to be as non-partisan as possible, but it's like, "They're very noisy, aren't they?" [laughs]

SN: We give directions. That's a big thing. "First door on the right," "last door on the left."

KB: Sometimes you get it mixed up.

SF: Several times, you give directions.

KB: Sometimes I will say, “First door on the left,” and there will be a wall or someth— or sometimes you just get really tired, and I screw up the directions occasionally. But we make it clear in the training [00:24:00] sessions that escorts shouldn’t engage in any kind of —

F: Political.

KB: — ideological discourse — geez, semiotics — but just that they shouldn’t make disparaging remarks, really blatant disparaging remarks about the demonstrators because some of the women feel that they’re doing something good, and one woman even mentioned to me that she would’ve been out there with them if she didn’t have three kids at home. So that was —

F: I’ve heard that before.

KB: So that was very clear to me that her alliances and her feelings were supporting what they were doing, and for me to make a comment that was —

SF: That’s really important to me. I think that goes along with the fact that like we don’t respond to the protestors verbally while we’re there, and we don’t make comments like, “There are some crazy people up ahead. You know, you can look at the wall. You can look at me.” I mean, you know.

KB: We don’t prevent them from accepting any pamphlets or — like that.

SN: [00:25:00] I think we just basically say that there are demonstrators here. They’re here every Saturday, and —

KB: They usually ask, you know. “Who are these people over here every Saturday?” (inaudible), so.

KL: And these protestors aren’t there the other days of the week? They just show up on Saturdays?

SN: That's the only day they have appointments for abortions.

KL: Oh, oh, I see. I see. That's how it works.

(break in audio)

KL: Okay, this is Karen Lamoree, and we've – Nancy has left, and a new person has come in, and she's going to introduce herself and talk about how she got involved in the program and her memories of her first day.

Allison: I'm Allison, and I got involved mainly because Karen was involved – in charge of this, and she got Joan involved, whom I lived with over the summer. So that's basically my reason for getting involved, and my first memory [00:26:00] was I was with Karen and Jenny Chang and a guy from RISD, and we went down there, and I was really nervous about doing it. I was expecting some sort of physical confrontation and lo and behold, a physical confrontation came up. Some idiot – some man took his wife – he's not the idiot – some man took his wife into the clinic, and she was really upset, like go home, just go home. He was coming out, and those idiots, the protestors, were yelling at him. So he goes over and kicks Tom in the shins, and Tom starts screaming for me to arrest him, and what am I going to do? I'm not going to arrest anybody. So Larry comes – he goes over, and then the man goes over and starts yelling at Barbara, and then she's yelling back, and he takes a swing at her, and she takes a swing at him. I'm not sure if she took a swing first, but Barbara's a very volatile –

SF: All the named people here being [00:27:00] protestors.

A: Oh, yeah. And then Larry comes running around. He gets onto the parking lot. They start screaming, yelling at each other. Everybody else was going back inside to call the cops, and here I am. It's like, they're going to kill – he's going to kill Larry. And I don't like Larry, it wouldn't hurt Larry to get punched a few times, but that's not going to help the clinic any. So I'm starting to scream and yell at the men, it's like, "Sir, this isn't going to do any good." "You

motherfucker! How dare you talk to my wife that way!” “I am a messenger from God!” And just screaming and yelling like that, and the guy was – the husband was a very short, small, chicken-looking man. He looked like a chicken, but – and Larry’s a little bit bigger, but Larry’s just a little weasel, and so chicken-man could obviously take on Larry, and – chicken taking on the weasel, first time in history. It was – he looked like he was about to kill Larry, and he was [00:28:00] getting – it was coming closer and closer to a physical confrontation. I’m not about to stick my body in between the two of them because then I’d really get killed, and I don’t like Larry that much. In fact, I despise Larry.

So finally they break apart a little bit. Larry’s backing down, but he’s still screaming about how he’s a messenger from god and how I should arrest the man for kicking Tom in the shins, and Tom is screaming “Arrest him! Arrest him! Arrest him!” I’m saying, “Excuse me sir, it doesn’t do any good. They’re here every Saturday. They’re psychotic.” It’s not – they’re not stopping, so finally they break apart, and I get between them. I start screaming and yelling at Larry, “You get the hell off of our parking lot! This is private property! We have a warrant, an injunction against you! I’ll have you arrested!” And he’s screaming “Why don’t you arrest him?” “Because I can arrest you, and you’re smaller than he is!” And all these – I’m just screaming at him. Finally he gets off there. I start screaming at the chicken man. He’s like, “The cops are coming! You can hear the sirens! Get away from here!” He hops into his car, drives away and then here comes the cops.

And the cops first go up to Tom, [00:29:00] and Tom’s saying “He attacked me! I told this woman to arrest him!” I’m like, “I didn’t do nothing, man. I’m just sort of sitting over here watching the whole thing.” And then he goes over and talks to Larry, and Larry’s saying, oh, everything weasels normally say. And then he – then Barbara’s screaming over there from the fence, and the fence is about, I don’t know, 15 feet from the parking lot where the cop is, and the cop’s saying, “Lady, if you want to make a report you got to come over here.” And she raises up her signs and says, “No, they have gotten an injunction against me. I cannot set foot on their parking lot, this heathen place.” And so he’s like, “Lady, you want to make a report you come over here and you make your report.” And he’s just – he was obviously irritated with the whole thing. He’s probably had to come down there before, and she’s like, “No, they got an injunction against me. I can’t come over here, but I will tell you everything.” He’s like, “Lady, I’m not going to stand here and yell at you across the thing. This is absurd.” She’s like, [00:30:00] “No,

I'm," and so on and so forth, and so he finally waves his hand over her and says, "Later, lady," and drives off. I thought that was really, really impressive.

SF: That was your first visit.

A: Yeah, that was my first visit.

KB: It's funny for me because I was there with Allison, and it was just really funny because I was so scared, and it was Allison's first time, and she was kind of, I mean, you weren't bringing yourself to like, you know, bodily risk or taking a foolish thing –

A: Oh, god no.

KB: – but you were definitely in the fray, and I was, like – I was backed off and running in to call the police, and it just really – I just found it really funny because you were so much more assertive than I would've been. In that position where you were trying to, you know, convey to both parties what was going on, and I would never have put myself in that position.

A: I'm also much bigger than you are.

KB: Yeah, yeah.

A: I'm a very tall person. I'm six feet tall here. And they were both very short, and, [00:31:00] I mean –

KB: It was just really – it was funny for me because it was just really – I was amazed at how you were able to handle yourself and just not get completely freaked out, and I was trembling, and I ran inside because I thought there was going to be a real physical, you know, fistfight or something. There was going to be blood and –

SF: Maybe we should say something about what we mean when we say injunction. I guess before I was escorting, they kind of had – the protestors had a lot freer rein, and there was an incident where, I guess one of the protestors, Tom, hit someone over the head with a cross.

KB: With a crucifix, yeah.

SF: With a crucifix, and subsequently the protestors were taken to court, and that's why we know their names. And now there are certain things that they can't do, like come onto the parking lot, like wear yellow, because we wear yellow pennies, and –

KB: Right, there are certain – like they have to walk six feet [00:32:00] apart, no more than two in a group. They can't chant or sing in unison. These are all, like, things they shouldn't do, but it basically doesn't mean anything because they do do this. They do occasionally step foot into the parking lot, which is off-limits, so the injunction is, in my opinion, a real piece of paper, and that's it.

SF: It's a piece of paper, that's what I thought for a long time, however –

- End of Track 1 -

Track 2

SF: [00:00:00] Nancy and I were escorting, and Larry took out a movie camera, and proceeded to film us, seemingly with every intention of filming the next patient who would arrive. So I went inside and checked with Joyce, who is the head of the program, to see if that was in the injunction, and sure enough it was, explicitly, “No photographic device can be pointed at a patient.” Well, that didn't say anything about us, so Larry filmed us for about 10 minutes, and then the car drove up. And he tried to film the patient, so while I went inside to call the police, get them to call the police, Nancy went up to the car and advised the woman that there was a protestor with a camera and that perhaps she should drive around for a few minutes and come

back when we had dealt with it. Of course this, I'm sure, upsetting her a great deal in what was already an extremely upsetting event in her life.

So we had the police called, and like Providence [00:01:00] police they took quite a long time getting there, and Nancy and I despaired that they would ever get there, but ironically Larry must've thought that we were bluffing. So he took his – he had put his movie camera in the trunk of his car, and then he took it out again because another car was driving up, and just as he pointed that car – that camera at the woman getting out of the car – who happened to be a nurse who didn't mind getting filmed – the Providence police zoomed up and caught him red-handed. And after about 30 minutes of intense argument they took him away. And I haven't seen him, so I don't know.

F: When was that?

SF: That was –

KB: Two weeks ago?

SF: That was the first weekend, the first Saturday of spring break. So three weeks ago.

KB: It was about the 25th of March. I don't know, 26th or something.

A: I was there the week before that I think.

SF: And that was an unbelievably gratifying experience because of all the protestors I happen to find Larry the most [00:02:00] demonic, and –

A: He's so irritating. When I think about him running – there's this thing that they always do, which you'll see in the diagram, but the way it's set up, we stand sort of on one side of the building, and they stand in front of the building. And every once in a while they'll pretend there's someone coming. They'll pretend there's some patient coming, and they all go running towards the opposite direction, and we can't see where they're going or whether there's someone

coming, so occasionally we'll saunter up and look and see what – and they'll always say, "Ha! Made you come up, made you come up." And they just get the biggest kick out of it. And it's –

SF: Larry will wait for you to round the corner, and then he'll be right there, and he'll give you this incredibly leering grin, and he'll say, "Fooled ya."

A: They love it. They like, "Oh, we made them come," and they just like chuckle about that for a really long time.

SN: He's also like, his recent tactic, which I find just really upsetting and scary beyond belief is he'll come up right behind you if you're escorting [00:03:00] on the main entrance side where you can be within – as near as I am to Sarah, right near you. He'll come up right behind you while you're maybe having a conversation with another escort, and scream something crazy right in your ear as loud as he can, and I just jump.

KB: And then laugh like crazy when you jump. Just, like, laugh, laugh, laugh.

SN: Yeah, he gets real – obvious that he gets pleasure out of frightening.

KB: Yeah, he derives extreme pleasure out of that.

SN: They definitely do that. It's where, whenever you stand in the front someone always comes up and starts going on and on about how you're going to hell and burning for this, and all this stuff, etcetera, etcetera. You're going to face judgment day, and you're trying to hold a conversation over this, and there's this little old lady shaking her finger at you.

KB: Yeah, there's this one woman – I was talking to [Dawn?] about another escorter who's a sophomore, and we were just talking about where she was going to be living next year and who was her landlord and all the problems she's having in trying to find an apartment. Meanwhile, this one woman was holding up this huge sign right next to me saying "Look at me," and I was trying to [00:04:00] have this conversation. "Look at me. You won't look at me. You won't even

look at my eyes. Look at what I have.” Meanwhile I’m trying to talk Dawn about her problems in getting an apartment, and I just couldn’t carry on the conversation. It was one of the most, I mean, it was just the strangest experience. I could not carry on this conversation. I had to just stop and look at the ground, and you know, I think I just couldn’t do it. I couldn’t hold it up, and I didn’t know what to – I didn’t want to look at her and go along with what she wanted me to do, but at the same time it was impossible for me to carry on a conversation. Because she was screaming at me to “Look at me. Look at what you’re doing. You obviously haven’t read the Constitution.” I’ve been lectured about the Constitution a lot, about protecting life, liberty, and stuff like that.

A: Pursuit of happiness is definitely out, though.

KB: Yeah, definitely.

SF: Save the whales.

KB: Save the whales.

SF: Save the bay.

KB: Save the whales, save the bay, but don’t save the children. That’s one of their – Barbara’s favorite pitches.

A: [00:05:00] I do want to mention, one thing about the injunction is that Tom, you know, he hit the person over the head with the cross. They took it away as a weapon. [laughs]

KB: Yeah, now he only has his little – he’s got this station wagon, and he has a box with a very old-looking baby doll that he has in the box.

A: Hanging from a fishing pole.

SF: But he hasn't been in a long time.

KB: I haven't seen him in a while either. Maybe he's been committed.

SN: He's pretty old.

SF: I like to think he's moved.

SN: To (inaudible).

KB: He's like a grandfather. I mean, he could be easily someone's grandfather.

SN: Easily, he looks – I'm sure he is. I'm sure he's many people's grandfather. There's one other guy. I remember standing – someone who I hadn't seen before, and I was standing in the front of the building talking to a friend of mine, and he came walking by in a trench coat, and I thought he was just someone in the neighborhood.

SF: That's John. He's old with white hair.

SN: Sure. He looks respectable and normal enough –

SF: Very respectable.

SN: – and he was just walking by. I thought he was someone from the neighborhood [00:06:00] taking a walk, and all of a sudden he walks by, and he just, "Idiots," you know? Just – he's –

KB [?]: He's really horrible.

A [?]: He's so funny.

SF: He's mean. After we got Larry arrested he was so angry with us because – and Nancy and I hadn't even, like, demonstrated any amount of, like, enthusiasm, but we were, like, just bubbling to just jump up and down inside. But we had been, you know, pretty calm about it. As soon as they took Larry away he turned to us, "You Brown bastards. You dirty rotten Brown bastards." You know, and –

A [?]: It's just so – it's so childish. It's like, "You fatheads."

KB: Yeah, he's really evil. He went up to Joan – another friend of ours who me and Sarah, Nancy, and Allison lived with named Joan, who couldn't be here today – but she escorted a lot during the summer, and she's got this great smile and loves to laugh and is just a real bubbling kind of person, and she was smiling at one point for some reason. And this guy John, who we used to refer to as Eyebrows because we didn't know his name, [00:07:00] went up to her out of the blue, she was not provoking him in any way, and just said, "You know, you are really ugly when you smile." I mean, just that kind of, you know, treatment, which is very – I mean, to say the least, disarming, when some guy – and he also went up to other women who escorted with me and said "You guys have half a brain. You're such nitwits." Their response was – they said this great comeback line was, "But we're two, so we have half a brain," or something, or no, "We have half, and –" I don't remember their response except it was a very funny comeback line, but he's a weird guy.

SN: Things they say I can't even believe. I brought a friend of mine there who was black, and they were like, "First it's abortions. Then they'll start getting rid of all the black people." And then when we brought – an elderly gentleman came with, and they were like –

SF: Oh, they had so many things.

SN: – "Then it'll be the old people. The old people are next." And he was just – and then said something, "Oh, now you're recruiting [00:08:00] old people with one foot in the grave." And the poor guy was like –

A: That's one thing that really irritates me about them, is whenever a black couple goes in, or a black woman will, is that, you know, "They're just doing this to get rid of all the black people. It's a genocidal program." So they have – I remember once a black couple went in. The black man came back outside, and they spent a long time talking to him like, "You know, these people are out there to kill all the black babies because they want a Hitler-like war. They got this real thing about Hitler."

SN: Aryan race.

A: Aryan race, "They want an Aryan race." I'm just thinking here, you goddamn bigots. You wouldn't even have somebody on the picket line with you. They're so hypocritical, it bothers me intensely.

KB: One of the things they also mention which I'd like to have recorded is their anti-Semitism, which is upsetting also. And then another thing that I guess I should add to what I didn't expect when I [00:09:00] decided I wanted to escort was to be the subject of anti-Semitism, which I haven't been – I had maybe naively thought was not a problem anymore. And especially since I don't have – you know, I have Jewish written all over my face and no one has picked me out of a crowd as being Jewish, but I have felt on various occasions that various anti-Semitic remarks were being directed towards me.

A: Oh, definitely.

SF: I have experienced the same thing.

KL: What do they say?

KB: Oh, stuff like, you know, "A Jewish doctor's killing Christian babies." This is the – one of their things with picking up on their whole metaphor of the Holocaust is they say this is the only true Holocaust. "Everyone talks about the Jewish Holocaust, the Jewish Holocaust, but this is the real one. This is the true one that happened, and you are just like Hitler's youth squad. You're no

better than them, you Jewish girls, but you're joining Hitler." Stuff like that, which I find not only [00:10:00] personally upsetting, but they're really trivializing or forgetting or erasing the fact that a holocaust happened where six million Jews were killed as well as many other people. So I have found their remarks, you know, rather –

SF: At the same time that – like, I definitely find them anti-Semitic. I don't think that they're, like, consciously – it's kind of problematic. Like, they also make fun of my height, so like, I'm a very short person, so they'll make fun of my height, or they'll make fun of Joan's smile, and they see making fun of, I think my Semitic looks as kind of along the same lines. But they really – you know, some of the more thinking ones will realize that this is a contradiction in their philosophy, so whereas one will look at me and say "Are you a Christian woman? Are you a Christian woman?" And the other one will say "No, I think she's Jewish." You know, and then another one will say "Well, that's okay, it's all the same God." And [00:11:00] I mean, I think they see themselves as very generous in this, you know. "Oh, you know, we can all be brothers and sisters."

SN: When they were interviewed didn't they say something like that? "We love them all. They're just astray." Even though they always tell us we should kill ourselves.

SF: I think it's bigotry à la, you know, "Some of my best friends are Jewish," or whatever.

SN: Right, I thought that's what she said. [laughter] In the paper on one of the – I think –

F: Barbara.

SN: Yeah, Barbara was quoted by Amy Bach, who did a story on the escorting program in the *Brown Daily Herald*, and she was saying, she did this quote as saying "Oh, I have lots of Jewish friends, you know."

A: The whole episode was really funny. She was there when Scott Ash and I were escorting, and Amy goes up. Amy's been watching. Now she goes up to Barbara and says, you know, "Could I

talk to you?” And she’s like, “No, I have nothing to say at all. I’m not going to talk about this.” And so she’s walking away, and [00:12:00] Amy’s following a few feet behind her, and then she turns around and says, “But let me tell you this!” And then she turns around and says, “But I have nothing else to say,” and then she turns around and says, “But I want to tell you this,” and she turns back around and starts walking down, and so she just kept on doing that. It was just really, really funny really to watch.

And Amy at one point said, which I really admire her courage, “Well, I’m Jewish. I’ve been hearing all sorts of anti-Semitic things. What do you have to say about this?” And she was holding out her arms like – Amy was holding out her arms in the front of her in a gesture like, “But I’m Jewish. What do you have to say to me?” She’s like, “[gasps] Some of my best friends are Jewish. I have nothing against the Jews. But it’s a known fact that they’re practicing the Holocaust in there.” And she turns around, “I have nothing else to say,” and blah, blah, blah. So I think I actually have a much better time than all of you have. I really get a blast out of going.

SF: Allison’s notorious for having a good time. I’ve heard that you dance, and –

SN: Also notorious for being there when, like, violent things happen. [00:13:00] My, like, fun thing, or whatever, I think that whenever I go escorting with Allison something weird’s going to happen. It just seems to work out that way.

A: One time I went with Scott Ash. We both have a really weird sense of humor. We both hate the passionately – the protestors passionately, and we are both very tired because neither of us are morning people, and we were up there, and he made the mistake of calling me by my name, Allison, but they interpreted it as Elsa. From then on it was like “Elsa, you’re going to go to hell. Elsa, we love you. Elsa, you’re going to burn in hell. Elsa, we’re going to pray for you tonight,” and all these other things. “Elsa, haven’t you read your biology textbook.” And it really – once they catch – even though it wasn’t my name, just the simple fact they were calling me a name, it’s like, it’s so much more powerful.

KL: So you try and keep them from finding out your names.

F: Oh, yes.

F: We never use it.

SF: That's one of the things in the training.

SN: We just say that, "Do not refer to anyone by their [00:14:00] first name," because then it's just a snowball effect that you're going to be screamed at, personally identified, which is –

A: It's much, much worse when it's personal.

SF: That's really interesting because a couple weeks ago, the last time I escorted, there was a guy there who I hadn't seen too much who was a reasonably young guy, who I had only seen that week and the week before that, and he was desperately trying to get one of us to tell him our name. Like, really desperately, "Come on, just tell me your name. Come on, come on." I mean, it was like really funny because it was almost pathetic. And he's like, "You're afraid to tell me your name, aren't you?" And he was really, really persistent.

KB: Yeah, we don't – I mean, we don't – that would be a bad deal. You know, so far I don't think anyone has run into them on the street, which is another personal fear of mine, is being somewhere and running into them and having them harass me if they recognized me.

A: [00:15:00] Oh, but you can harass them back because you're not escorting anymore.

KB: But I wouldn't want to, you know. One of the things my dad is really –

SN: That's your dream.

A: My dream is to blacken his eye. (laughter, overlapping dialogue)

KB: You can tell that the personality discrepancies between me and Allison, but one of the things my dad – you know, my dad hasn't been too supportive of this whole escorting program. I mean, he finds it very admirable that I'm doing this and thinks it's something that has to be done, but at the same time he's concerned for my safety and is not at all confident that I am not at risk, which, you know – and running into someone on the street where I could be at even more –

SF: Yeah, I have to admit that when Larry was filming Nancy and I, I had to wonder what was to become of that film, whether we were going to be used as dart practice or what else.

KB: They were going to use your heads and put it on like porno star's bodies or something.

SF: Yeah, yeah, [00:16:00] I mean, it was kind of funny to have him like taking pictures of us, but at the same time it was also disturbing.

A: And I think it would be so wonderful. I used to go to work at the bookstore after I took off from escorting, and I would really – I was always fantasizing that one of them would come in. I work at the customer service desk, and Larry or Barbara would come in, and I'm like, "You're one of the protestors. Let's go outside and kill each other!" I don't know. I really don't like them, and I get a real big kick out of irritating them. I mean, one of the greatest tricks – you know how Joan smiles all the time just because she smiles, well, I smile for the simple satisfaction of watching them get really red in the face. "How can this fiend from hell be smiling when she's escorting people into concentration camps?" So I mean, as soon as they yell something, I take somebody to the door, you know, tell them [00:17:00] "Go down there," you know, "Have a nice day," whatever. Come out, and there's Barbara sitting there, "How can you do that?" Elsa, or whatever she knows my name, and I turn around, and I smile. "Hi, isn't it a great day today?" And just go on, and they nearly explode. I mean, there's nothing better than smiling at people like that.

SN: It's so absurd. The whole thing is so – I mean, some of the things they scream, you end up cracking up most of the time anyway. I mean, because you got up at 7:30, half the people there

are hungover. They're getting yelled at by people, old people telling you you're going to hell. I mean, it's just –

KB: One of the things also to mention which I also remembered the first time I went –

SN: With me, that was so bad. That was the worst.

KB: Yeah, no, no, no, that wasn't. It was just like noticing the ages of people and all the demonstrators we've mentioned, with the exception of one woman who is –

SN: Squeaky.

KB: – young, who has a squeaky voice, who dresses sometimes as a nurse [00:18:00] and wears a white outfit, all of the women –

A: Cindy Brady From Hell.

KB: Her name is Cindy Brady From Hell, but she – all the women are menopausal, are older, and are incapable of having children, which strikes me, and I can't really articulate why. It's pretty obvious that I find it very ironic that the women that are protesting can no longer have children or become pregnant against their own desires. And also that there are a lot of men there. Which is also really kind of very disturbing to me that a man would be protesting something that –

KL: So what happens when the client gets there and she comes in with a friend or a boyfriend or a husband or whatever, and there are two of you that try and go up and get on either side of her and her friend or whatever –

SN: Right. Walk her to the door.

KL: – and walk her to the door, and at what point [00:19:00] do the protestors try and get near?

SN: As soon as the car pulls up it's like they kind of go bounding. I mean, they're – one, separated from each other, and they sort of walk in a brisk pace towards the car, and –

KL: Is it a race between you and them to get there first?

SF: Well, they can't go in the parking lot, so –

KL: Right, right.

KB: We have an edge in the parking lot, but they do – when they park at different parts of the clinic, or if they're coming, they're walking, it is kind of like a race, which I find really like disgusting –

A: Irritating.

KB: – and I just can't always try to put myself in that position of getting out of a car and having four people or five people, two in yellow and other people, coming towards me as I get out of the car. Which – And another thing that is also pretty obvious from having escorted is that a lot of women don't expect that there'd be this problem with demonstrations, even though most of the time when they call for an appointment the staff at the Women's Medical Center says [00:20:00] "Come in the back door, and there will probably be some demonstrators here." So they're, you know, made aware of it. But people are still, you know, it's early in the morning, and they don't remember, or they're just not thinking about it.

SN: We've even been confused for protestors.

SF: I had a woman a couple of weeks ago say "Get the hell away from me." You know, talking to me, and that was like – it was, she came to the front door, and they, like, completely crowded around her. And I was like, "I'm from the Medical Center. You know, let me show you where to go," because it was becoming, like, a crisis situation. I mean, they had, like – she was breaking

down, and they were like completely surrounding her, and she – you know, she probably knew to watch out for me, but it's not what you think. I mean, it's not what a patient would think at the time because the escorter kind of just fades in with all these other people. There are just too many people surrounding you, and it's very, very threatening.

SN: Yeah, also it makes you like, I feel very – even though I know that [00:21:00] the service that I provide is good and something that should be provided, at the same time I find it, like, just annoying that I have to be there and have to accost this woman – in a different, in a more positive way, but at the same time it is being approached by people, and I can just imagine how upsetting it must be, you know.

A: At times I feel like – one incident I really remember is a woman drove up in her station wagon, and she's on the street beside the parking lot, so they can get to her. And all the pro– she doesn't speak English very well, and all the protesters run over there and start talking to her, and then I go over there, and I'm like, "Excuse me, ma'am, I'm from the Women's Center, blah, blah, blah, blah." And she pulls into the parking lot, and she gets out, and she's just standing there. And on the one side you have Larry and Barbara talking to her. On the other side you have me. They're like, "Don't do this. You're going to go to hell. [00:22:00] Eighty-nine percent of women who have abortions later commit suicide," that's one of their great little things. It goes from 89 to 37. You know, they keep on throwing out great little statistics like that. And I was on the other side saying, "Ma'am, you know, you can go inside and it's perfectly safe."

I feel myself having this urge to say, "They're lying." And I feel like you have that classic picture of the man, and on one shoulder you have the devil, and the other shoulder you have the angel, and both of them are arguing over his soul, and I'm wondering, "Am I the devil or am I the angel?" And we're both – I feel like I'm actually fighting for this woman's soul at times. We're both saying, "No, come inside." I don't want the woman to have – my purpose is not that, "I want you to have an abortion. Come on, let's have an abortion." I merely want her to have the chance to choose.

SN: Yeah, exactly, that's exactly.

SF: Exactly, and the protestors kind of [00:23:00] reinforce that doubt that you have in your mind by, like, talking about it in win/lose terms.

SN: Oh, yeah.

SF: Like, if one of them goes in they say, “Oh, you won another one. Don’t you feel good?” You know?

SN: “You killed another baby.”

SF: “Aren’t you happy?” Exactly, and so they instill that doubt in you, and they –

A: I don’t have the doubt, but I do have – at times I lose sight of my purpose. You know, you lose sight of the forest for all the trees, or you lose sight of the tree for whatever. But I’m saying the reason I’m there, the reason all the people who escort are there, is merely to provide women the chance to choose. The fundamental right to the control of their own bodies, and yet with the protestors there screaming “You don’t have to have – you shouldn’t have an abortion,” and I’m saying, “You can have an abortion if you want,” it almost – I lose sight of the fundamental fact. All I’m there to do is provide a woman with control of her own body, and I don’t want to say, “You’ve got to – you should have an abortion.” [00:24:00] I find myself at times almost pitching for the abortion, which, I don’t care if she has an abortion. But at times I feel like, “Yes, have an abortion!”

KB: You know, they make it such a dichotomous situation, and it’s so black and white for them. “We want people to have abortions. We are upset when someone comes out and decides that they don’t want to go through with it.” They, you know – it makes it – it does kind of, you know – put yourself in a really strange situation because they are interpreting your position as being so much possibly different from what you –

A: It’s almost like hearing a debate, and our terms are – our position is that we want women to have control over their bodies. Their terms are, “You want them to have abortions.” And at times

it's very difficult to stick to our terms of the debate. They [00:25:00] keep on trying to switch it, and we're not –they're saying, "You shouldn't have an abortion." We're saying, "You should have the right over your body."

KB: But of course, it's not perceived that way. They also try to – I mean, it should be obvious from what we've been saying that they try to manipulate what we're doing, especially in order to affect the client. One of the things they like to say when we go up to them and approach them and say, "We're from the Women's Medical Center, we can escort you from your car to the door." There are some demonstrators who hear it, their response is, "Oh, they just want your money. They're just here to get your money. They want to kill your baby. They're making money off of you. You know, it's another \$250 for them," which, and you know, we're not even getting paid, you know, it's not like we're getting paid. And it's not like – I'm not aware of the Medical Center making a huge profit. But they try to cast it in economic terms, and, you know, portray us as being these, like –

A: Money grubbing.

KB: – money-grubbing, you know women, you know.

F: Jews.

KB: Right. [laughter] [00:26:00] Who are there to like coax people in, and get them to do something that they don't want to and get the money out of them, you know. Which does – I think really upsets people when they hear that because it's really a kind of unexpected remark, and so –

KL: What is the reaction of the client, the patient to all of this [argument?]?

SN: Oh, that's a good question. Because everyone – it varies a lot, you know, and some of them don't say anything, but a surprising amount of them, or the people who they're with, you know, will turn around and say something back.

KB: I mean, it depends. And some of the women are very grateful and say, “Thank you for being here,” you know. “I know it’s early,” and stuff like that. Which makes me feel really good. Other women will be, like this one woman I mentioned before, will say, “You know, you’re no better than they are. [00:27:00] Leave me alone,” or another woman will say, “I would’ve been out there with them last year, but I’ve got three kids at home.” So, you know.

A: For the most part, they turn. I mean, I’ve seen a lot of people turn around and be like, “Hey you, (inaudible) protestors,” and, you know just lay off and swear at them and stuff.

KB: It depends. I mean, most of the people don’t say anything. And occasionally one of, like – a friend who is assertive, going in with another friend, will start screaming things back at them and being very, you know, assertive.

A: One of the most – not – almost disturbing incidents was a woman assisting a woman inside, with her friend. They’re both very tall, confident women standing straight up, you know, walking briskly. No tears. They looked like they were in complete control of their lives, and Larry starts yelling at them, of course, all his little fantasies at them, and Scott and I have this secret theory that he’s sexually really screwed up. That’s one of the things we talk about. [00:28:00] But so he starts screaming at them, and one of the women turns around. She is not hunched over. She stands perfectly straight and doesn’t scream, but yells at him, you know, “I was raped by my father.” And you know what he yelled back, of course, was “Don’t lie like this. Look at what you’ve come to. You’re even lying.” And then like she just throws her hands up and goes back inside, and I take her inside, and I told her how, you know, whatever, but I was very, very, very angry and disturbed by that whole philosophy like, “Oh, you’re just lying.” This grown woman was raped by her father, and ugh.

F: That’s just horrible.

KB: Another upsetting incident that I saw was a woman was coming in with her friend, and you know, I think it’s good when people come with their friends. Some woman are there by

themselves and get out of the car and go in. But her friend got really upset [00:29:00] by being the subject of a lot of abuse because she was also going into the center, and therefore implicated in the atrocities, according to the demonstrators, that were going on in there. And she turned around and said, “It’s not me. I’m not having any abortion.”

SF: A lot of the people.

KB: Yeah. Which is just, like, how can – I just can’t imagine a friend saying that, which is just so cutting and getting so denial and self-righteous, like, “Oh, I’m not doing it. Don’t yell at me. I’m not –”

KL: Mostly because they want to avoid the abuse directed at them.

KB: Yeah, they want to differentiate that they are not – because, I mean, you don’t know. I mean, it could be anyone going in.

A: But I mean, I don’t think most of them do that, most people who go in.

KB: No, most of them don’t, but I’ve seen it a couple of times, and it really upsets me.

SF: I’ve seen it several times, and it is very upsetting because it’s not exactly the kind of supportive role that in your mind you had cast the person in.

F: The friend, yeah.

A: And it doesn’t matter who you are. You can be an 80-year-old woman. You go inside, “You’re going in to have an abortion.” You could be three. “You’re going inside to have an abortion.” One woman – some people bring in their kids, [00:30:00] which is not a good idea.

KB: Actually it’s not, yeah. It’s not even really allowed, or you’re not really supposed to bring children into the waiting room.

A: But I remember one woman, she was going in. She had gotten a letter from her sister. She was coming down from I don't know, Wisconsin to visit her sister. And she thought this was the place, the building was the place. So she goes in there, and she has her two little kids, and they're all dressed up, you know, to see auntie. And they go in there, and they're yelling and screaming at the kids. I had warned her, "Look, you're going to get a lot of abuse. Should I go in there first, find out, blah, blah, blah." She goes, "No, no, don't worry about it." Goes in, she comes back outside about 15 minutes later. The children are screaming and bawling and crying. Their clothes are all messed up because they're just tearing at themselves because they're so upset. And the mother is furious. She's like – turns out this was not the building her sister was in.

SF: Yeah, there's a hospital [next door?].

A: There's a hospital next door, but all the protestors start screaming at her and targeting, singling out the children.

KB: Yeah, one of the [00:31:00] most horrible things that happened with another child was, a family came in. The woman, I guess, was you know, going in for an appointment, and she came in with her husband and little son, and the son and the husband didn't go in. They stayed in the car, and I think I mentioned this to you when I was talking. They were walking in, just to the door, and then she went in, and they were screaming at the little boy, like, "They're killing your brother." And this boy was about three years old. I mean, I don't think he was aware of it, but he was – you know, "They're killing your brother. Look at that beautiful boy. He could have a beautiful brother," of course it wasn't a beautiful sister, but "beautiful brother." You know, "You're depriving him of having a [play?] – look, little boy," you know. "Don't tell them to kill –" you know, the whole thing, you know. And of course the father was trying to get the kid back to the trunk – the truck I mean. [laughter] [00:32:00] Where he had been chained! Tom's truck, where he keeps his display! But they were trying to get him back, and they went out to get something to eat. But that they were really screwing with this little kid's mind. And then they went to see their mother again, and he came out, and the kid was really cute. He just said – he was being screamed at by the protestors, and he just said "Oh, shut up."

- End of Track 2 -

Track 3

KL: [00:00:00] – service.

KB: Service. I guess one of the things we want to add would be the role of children at the Women’s Medical Center when there are demonstrators. And Allison’s going to tell us about one time where Caroline’s two children, who are brought basically almost every Saturday to picket along with her mother – their mother. These two children are, I’m told, adopted, which further adds to her self-righteousness.

A: Yeah. Actually this should be by rights Karen’s story because she told me this on my first day there, and it made a really big impression whenever I’m saying, “Oh, I’m went to escorting today, and let me tell you this story Karen told me.” Karen’s mother escorts with (inaudible). A lot of times there’s some lulls, you know, people don’t come up for 15, 20 minutes, and the protestors take a break, screaming occasionally but [00:01:00] basically gossiping, and we take a break just sitting around talking, and a kitten came up. Little black kitten. And you know, we’re college students, so all the escorts start playing with the kitten, it rolled on its back, and they’re doing all sorts of things with it. You know, just playing, petting the kitten, talking to it, saying, “Oh, you should go to Brown, what a smart kitten you’d be.” All these other things. Well, Christine’s kids just all of a sudden start screaming directly to the kitten, “Get away from there kitty. They’re going to kill you. Get away from there.”

KB: Yeah, the little girl was just really, like, frightened. I mean, it wasn’t – I could tell it from her voice, she was just convinced that – because I was at that point petting the cat – that I was going to hurt the cat because I was a bad person. And she just kept screaming, you know, “Get that – you know, kitty. They’re going to kill you,” you know. And I just stopped petting the cat at that point because I didn’t want to cause her [00:02:00] any more anguish. Because she was

convinced that I was going to – because in her mind, what I did was murder, because that’s what her mother said. You know, it was really weird.

A: And I can imagine what they’re telling their kids. They bring them to this, what they term, a death camp, they let them listen to all this hatred. They, you know, “Oh look, Mommy’s screaming, ‘You’re going to go to hell. You’re one of Hitler’s death camp people,’” you know, and this is her child sitting here listening to this, and what kind of warped personality are they going to have when they grow up? Being constantly filled with this hatred?

KB: One of the things that they went to – and I was escorting with another woman who, it was her first time, and she was just minding her own business. And this child, Caroline’s daughter went up to her, and just said, “Please arrest me.” Like, just, really strangely like something out of a semiotic movie or something. I mean, just went up to her [00:03:00] and said, “Please arrest me. Please, arrest me,” you know. Like she wanted to be part, it seemed like, I mean, (inaudible), it was –

KL: How old is she?

KB: Oh, I mean, she’s probably around 10, 11 or something.

SF: Being arrested is kind of a rite of passage for them. They’re very proud to get arrested.

KB: Right, yeah, and I’ve just – to have a little girl pleading with the escorter that this happened to her seems so unnatural, I mean, to say the least. And indicative of the effect that this is having on her. I mean, it’s really just not a place for children at all.

A: That’s one thing that always interested me is the amount of power they seem to think we really have. Like after that chicken-man kicked Tom in the knees he’s like, “Arrest him.” I’m not going to arrest anybody. I don’t have any power. Little girl’s saying, “Arrest me,” and saying, “These women are going to try and kill your baby.” It’s just like we’re the – They seem to think we’re the ones who [00:04:00] are almost actually performing the abortion, and we have the

power. “We have the power” to arrest them. I mean they imbue us with a tremendous deal of responsibility and control that we don’t have.

KL: So what was it you were saying about special holidays?

SF: Oh, I was just saying generally religious holidays are important to the escorts – I mean to the protestors, and more than your average protestors will show up on say the Saturday before Christmas or the Saturday before Easter. You’ll get a lot of reinforcements on those, quote, “special occasions.”

KL: Where do they get these extra people? I mean, from church, or?

KB: I think from church. There’s actually – yeah, there is –

SF: A rather large right-to-life organization.

KB: Yeah. There also is a church in Providence somewhere downtown, I’m not sure where it is, that performs masses for unborn babies. And [00:05:00] it is very popular from what I’m told, and there are a lot of people who are going to that. So I’m sure at these masses people are recruited.

SF: They’re kind of like experts that are really vicious that just come like on these special occasions.

A: Call in the vicious [expert?]. [laughter]

SF: Along with these reinforcements they also tend to bring little children on special holidays. Just to make it – and, you know, they tell the women, you know, “You’re always going to remember this Easter,” or “How can you do this,” you know. “Don’t you know what today is,” and they sing. Like, on Christmas, they sing “Silent Night.” You know, “mother and child,” and yeah.

SN: Larry's got a pretty good voice actually, I have to admit. I mean, he can carry a tone, which is more than I can do, carry a tune I mean. I'm tone deaf by the way, so he sings a lot and will break into like the Lord's Prayer and other hymns.

A: The rosary [00:06:00] (inaudible).

SN: Yeah. They chant things. They also have occasionally brought a tape recorder and have, like, just played their tape.

SF: They've even brought like a bullhorn to, like – which is not –

KB: It's like, there's nothing the injunction can do about that. It's really funny because it's like this long bullhorn, and it says Mary on it, which I find exceedingly ironic.

SN: One of the things that – the reason why the Medical Center is moving and is really desperate to get out of this position is because some of the screams and chants and songs can be heard inside the waiting room. Which, you'd think once they're inside they're kind of sheltered from. You do, [so they've just?] had to withstand walking from their car to the door, but I think at times when it gets really crazy it can be heard in the waiting room, which is not at all good for, you know?

KL: Why do you – are the other centers or whatever that perform [00:07:00] the procedure, are they picketed also, or?

F: No.

KB: They're not. Planned Parenthood is on the third floor of an office building downtown, and it is really discreet. I mean, you wouldn't know that there are Planned Parenthood offices and clinic up there. It's also, you know, you have to go into a room and take the elevator up, and if anyone comes in that looks suspicious – which, you know, as often can't be discerned – they're

pretty much stopped before they get too far. So they don't have a problem with that at all. Supposedly, which I find surprises because it's on Atwells Avenue, there's another GYN services, and then Atwells Avenue in a pretty strong Italian community, and there's not too much of a problem there with picketing. So I'm a little surprised that it just happens that Women's Medical is one of the clinics that performs a lot of abortions gets a pretty good chunk of the protesting. [00:08:00] If most of it, you know. So I don't know why that is.

KL: So what do you yourselves get out of doing this?

KB: Like I said in the beginning, I was upset with myself at first because I did identify myself as pro-choice, and I had taken all these great Women's Studies courses, and was planning on majoring in Women's Studies, and done all this intellectual work, but I hadn't really done anything actively showing my commitment to pro-choice position, and that this was one way I found I could do that. And that makes me very happy, and I really do feel like I'm doing something good, and that for the time that I'm there I'm helping people in as direct a way as possible, which really, you know, makes me immediately, you know, it makes me feel like I'm doing something worthwhile. [00:09:00]

A: For me abortion and the freedom to choose is just about sort of symbolizes every other freedom you can have, a woman can have, just the absolute freedom over her own body. And if you can't have control over your own body, then you can't do anything. I mean, there's nothing in life. Everything else in life is going to eventually be blocked off from you. So *Roe versus Wade*, in my opinion, was one of the most fundamental rights of this country and perhaps of this millennium. It's just that women have finally been allowed. The right to their own bodies has finally been recognized, and I, like I say, I think I in a perverse sort of way I really enjoy escorting. I go down there, and they're yelling and screaming and me, and I don't know. I grew up down South, and so I'm used to their [00:10:00] religious fervor, and I feel almost like I'm this tower of strength and all these things, they're yelling and screaming at me, and so they're not abusing the woman and her companion anymore. And I'm taking it all on me, and as long as I can stand up straight under it then I really have beaten them, and I'm doing something really good, and I don't know, sort of the old going into the lion's den. It's like, we're beating the lions

every time we go down there because all they're out there is to really cause pain. They don't care about the women. They don't care about the fetus. They don't care about any, even if the woman came out. They don't care about the unborn baby. They're there so they can throw rocks at a metaphorical Mary Magdalene.

KB: Also, I mean, it just, on a really [00:11:00] simple level, I mean, they're there and they're not doing anything really practical because people go through with it. I mean, so they're there protesting at people who are intending, you know, to have an abortion, so just on a practical level, they're not changing anyone's mind. I mean, maybe two or three people in a month or less in a year, yeah, will turn back because of what they said, often. And one of the things that they – I want to record, and not even – I don't mean, I've just, I've been there a couple times and there's women from different cultures who don't speak the language, and they will just completely go after those women because, you know, and abuse them just on the fact that they are not American looking, whatever that means, and look like they might have some linguistic problems with English, which is really upsetting to me, you know.

A: I –

KB: Did you want to answer?

A: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see her. I just wanted to finish [00:12:00] my earlier thing is that I really don't – I have problems with the whole right-to-life movement anyway, but I have a special problem with these people, with the protestors because in my opinion they don't think any woman is going to turn back. They don't really care. The only reason they're there is because they get a sadistic pleasure out of inflicting pain. They know no women are going to turn back, so that's not a concern. They just simply want to cause pain. And so I get an immense amount of satisfaction by denying them that opportunity.

SF: I have to say in response to that that I think that that has something to say about a lot, and maybe even the majority, of protestors. I think there are some, however, that are genuinely sincere. Like, I know it's hard to believe that, but I personally believe that some of them are

sincere, and however perverse and twisted [00:13:00] and warped it may be, at least a couple of them, and the ones that affect me the most when I escort are the ones who, I don't know, at least rationally, at least in their rational minds think that they are offering these women an alternative.

A: I see them as rationalizing what they're doing under this assumed thing. "We're going to work for Christ. This is great." And so they are rationalizing the way they cause pain. This is a very easy out for them.

KB: But I also agree with you, Sarah. I think that what they said is, they are thinking that if they spend all their hours working there every Saturday morning and they save one life than it's worth it. And from that perspective, you know.

A: But see, I don't think that's their major – I don't see that as their goal.

KB: I see that definitely as their goal. I definitely see that as their goal. But I also definitely – there's definitely a large amount of religious fervor in there that I don't, I mean, but [00:14:00] it's like –

A: See, I see your point, and I just have a difference of opinion in that I think the religious fervor is a sham. I think their belief and their wanting to save one unborn child, I think that's all a sham. I think that's not their primary goal. In my opinion their primary goal is a cheap way to cause pain with a good rational explanation for it, not to save lives.

KB: I think there is – this is pretty obvious, but I've always thought that they're there to get brownie points for heaven.

SN: I think that's true too. That's what I think too, that that's part of the reason.

KB: And when they get pleasure out of it, you know, because in their mind they're doing what's good and what Christ says, and what the New Testament talks about.

SN: And they get to go to heaven for it.

KB: And they're going to be in good standing, you know.

SF: I was escorting a couple weeks ago with someone who had never escorted before, and he had never been escorted before. I don't think he had been trained, and he ended up getting [00:15:00] into a conversation with one of the protestors, and that can be easy to do if you're like right on that corner where they come right up to you. And this has something to do with what you were just saying in that this guy came up to him and said, you know, "Well, why are you doing this? How can you do this? Why are you doing this?" And yelling at him, and he's like, "I'm doing, you know, I'm doing what I think is right," and that totally fazed this guy. He like didn't know what to say for like two minutes. He was like, oh my god. He was doing this cause he thinks, wait a minute. [laughter] I don't think that that occurs to them, and I think that explains like what we're doing, and maybe in a perverse way what they're doing.

And I just want to say, you were asking, like, what do we get out of it or whatever, once and only once I escorted alone, and that is an awful experience, a really awful experience because for like three hours [00:16:00] you are the sole target, and you have to stand on the main side so that you can see both entrances because you are the only one there, so they can come right up to you. And at one point I was just really, you know, I had escorted a lot before, but never alone, and I just was really freaking out, and I didn't think I could take it anymore. And I went inside, and I was speaking to one of the nurses there and saying, you know, I just need a couple words of encouragement because I'm having a hard time dealing today alone. And she told me that they have like therapy with these women like after they have the abortion, and they talk about the experience, and she told me that without exception the women say how relieved and happy they were to have someone bring them in, to have the escorters there and how it was a comfort to them.

SN: That is exactly what I think I get out of it. I mean, besides I think it's a good experience to be exposed to this type of mentality and [00:17:00] stuff, but I also think it's definitely worth it if I mean, even if anyone gets comfort out of it, or however many people get comfort. That's what makes it all worth it.

KB: I think one of the nicest things that I saw when I was escorting with some other people was a woman came in with her mother, and her mother was just losing it and crying hysterically and just a mess. And another escorter, her name is Heather, she's a senior, and I don't have her last name on me right now, she just put her arm around this woman in like a really, it wasn't like a pushy way, it was just really lightly kind of put her arm around this person, and I was just like, wow. This is so nice because that's what she needed. I mean, she needed someone to really physically comfort her. She was just wracking with, you know, she was crying and I mean, almost hyperventilating and everything. And I mean, that's just a [00:18:00] silent way of just saying, you know, I think what it is is just showing your support, and that's how I see it is that by just being there I'm showing these women that I want you to be able to have the choice to do this, and I don't think what you're doing is terrible and offensive and disgusting and that there are other people there who feel very differently. And maybe that doesn't go across the board in that all the escorters feel like I do, but I like to think that I'm there to show the women that not everyone feels this way, and yes there are escorters here, students who take Saturday mornings to provide support and that's something that I, you know, want to – that's what I get out of it in a big way.

KL: So the protestors know you're from Brown. Is that a big deal?

F: Oh, yeah.

SN: I'll give you some good Brown lines. They're always like, take those [00:19:00] classes and major in killing at Brown.

KB: Bring back the dismembered pieces and have a barbecue on the green of Sayles Hall.

F: Jump off the Van Winkle Gates.

F: "Van Wikie Gates", "Van Wikie Gates."

KB: Do yourself a favor and jump off the Van Winkle Gates. Brown for death. Give life a chance, that's a whole thing.

A: President Swearer quit because of what you're doing.

SF: Oh, yeah. I escorted the morning after President Swearer resigned and Tom knew before anyone else. I found out from Tom. He told me that President Swearer resigned because of what I was doing.

SN: He named you specifically, Sarah.

KB: Like they also say, one funny conversation that was specifically directed at Brown was Larry was having a conversation with John, the guy with the eyebrows, and Larry was saying "Do you believe in [Sunday?] pills?" And then John was saying "Hell no I don't believe in Sunday pills." "Do you believe in prostitution?" "Hell no [00:20:00], I don't believe in prostitution." You know, "Do you believe in protesting every possible drop of a pin like Amy Carter?" "Hell no I don't." You know, "Do you believe in abortions?" "Hell no," and the whole thing, which I thought was really funny. They had a nice way of sifting all the atrocities of Brown in one wave.

SN: That's funny.

KB: Also, another thing that they say would be majoring in killing. You're concentrating in killing. Why don't you just go to a hardware store and buy yourself an ax, save some money rather than pay \$15,000 to learn how to kill.

SF: They're always telling us to use our brains, you know. God, God gave you your intelligence, what are you doing with it?

SN: They said something about the state paying for your education, this is what you learn. I wish.

A: That's one of the things that irritates me more about them, the fact that I'm going to a good, good liberal arts college, one of the best in the country, and [00:21:00] these idiots are saying "You're stupid. You're idiots. You're not using your brain. Why don't you read some biology textbooks?" And I bet they all have the intelligence of a dead squid. I mean, just oh, it irritates me so much when they imply that I'm not as smart as they are, and they're just, oh.

KB: And then one of the weird things is like, there was a real lull. I had brought along my Chinese short stories, which I wanted to read because I was really behind in them, and I felt really weird about bringing out this book and reading because it was going to I know provoke them like, oh look there, the student reading her book. You know, and actually I did bring it out, and they said, "Oh, you should be reading a Bible. Oh, look what she's reading. She's reading. She's reading, that little girl." And I was referred to by Larry as that little girl. And then he apologized and said "I'm sorry, I'm not offending you am I? I'm not offending you, you feminist. I refer to myself as a little boy, Jesus's little boy." [laughter] And I just [00:22:00] like, you know, I had no response. I'm just like witnessing this guy say, you know, "oh, hope I didn't bother you."

A: One day I want to wear all black and carry a *Mein Kampf* and see Larry, and have on a Hitler thing, just like yeah, heil guys, just to really see what the reaction would be. I think that would stop him in his tracks.

KB: I've been lectured on constitutional – like, listen I've taken Poli. Sci. classes out of the wazoo. Don't talk to me about the constitution and everything, and you know, this one woman said, obviously you go to Brown. I can't understand. You don't know what the constitution says. You're so stupid.

SN: Stupid, stupid girls, and there's this – we should mention that they always say something like, does your mother know what you're doing and stuff, so one girl one day did bring her mother. And her mother (inaudible).

KB: Another thing they say is “Have [00:23:00] some respect for your mother. Don’t you care about your mother who bore you, and how can you do this?” And my response was, you know, my mom’s a doctor. You know, I didn’t say that, but I was thinking, god, my mom’s a doctor, and she has friends who work, you know, work in abortion clinics or whatever, and no I think she’s very proud of what I’m doing. I think I am having respect for my mother. So, I don’t know, just like very warped logic.

A: It is irritating though when they call you stupid. It’s just, that’s the only thing that they ever say that gets to me. I don’t know why, but that’s the one thing that gets to me.

KL: When you’re done with the day with escorting, when you leave, how do you feel? Are you exhausted or?

KB: Really tired.

SN: I mean, it’s definitely like you said, it’s we get there around 7:30, 7:40 in the morning on a Saturday. People aren’t usually up at that hour at Brown.

F: Any day, much less a Saturday.

SN: Like, last semester when I [00:24:00] got back to my house I was back and no one had woken up yet, and I felt like this really weird like I had just done something and subjected myself –

F: *Twilight Zone.*

SN: Yeah, and usually I would go back to sleep because I just wanted to forget it or was exhausted or I had a headache or something.

A: I was always so keyed up. I’m always keyed up, and I want to talk, and I have this real problem with talking. I don’t stop, and, which you probably noticed by now, and so I would go

over to the bookstore, and if I wasn't working I just would grab whoever's at the customer service desk and I say, let me tell you about what happened to me this morning. I would just keep on talking.

KB: I think that one of the things that is upsetting for me – well, was upsetting for me last semester when I was living with a bunch of men, and which didn't happen when I was living with Nancy, Allison, Sarah, Joan, a lot of people there, was when I came back from escorting, when we came back, since [00:25:00] I felt close with the people and we were all women, I could explain what I went through or how I felt and could actually get some feedback and talk, like Allison said, the real need to talk about it. And when I was living last semester with all men, except for one woman, who were basically asleep when I got back or when they woke up had no idea where I had gone, I felt this real need to like explain or like disclose you now, what I went through and what was said, and just different anecdotes and stuff, and I wasn't able to do that. So I really felt like it was being kept inside me, which was, you know, not ideal. And you know if I was living with women it would have been a lot easier. And I know it was summer, we were able to explain it and express ourselves and stuff. It just doesn't go over well with guys, at least the guys I lived with. Oh, this is on tape. [laughter] If they ever see this they're going to know. Well, you don't know who I live with. [00:26:00]

KL: Does anybody have anything else they want to say?

F: Nope, that's about it.

KB: Hopefully this is going to be going on, escorting whenever anyone looking at this tape, or hopefully there'll be no need for escorting, which, that would be great.

A: And most important to keep in mind, always stick it to the bastard before they can stick it to you. On that note we'll end.

Transcript – Women’s Escort Service

Narrator: Allison Buckser, Joan Hilty, Nancy Peterson, Sue Duvall

Interviewer: Karen Lamoree

Interview Date: May 25, 1989

Interview Time:

Location:

Length: 1 audio file; 44:58

Track 4

Karen Lamoree: [00:00] Okay, this is Karen Lamoree interviewing the escorts from the Women’s Medical Center on May 25, 1989.

Allison Buckser: I’m Allison Buckser, I’m graduating on Monday, 1989.

Joan Hilty: I’m Joan Hilty, and I’m graduating also on the 30th, 1989.

F: Too bad it’s the 29th [laughs].

JH: The 29th.

Nancy Peterson: I’m Nancy Peterson, and I’m graduating also.

Sue Duvall: I’m Sue Duvall, and I’m also graduating on Monday.

KL: All right, wow, isn’t that great.

AB: (inaudible) so that’s why we got people.

KL: Yeah, yeah good, okay, why don’t we start with Joan since you weren’t here last year? You can be the first person to talk and explain how you got involved in this project.

JH: [01:00] Was it the summer of '87? I guess it was the summer of 1987. I had gone to a training meeting for escorts during the spring semester and at that time I guess – I can't remember if it was, I guess before Karen [Don?] was running the program. I think Eileen somebody was – Elaine somebody was running the program before that, but they were only three or four people at the meeting. And I wound up being the only person escorting on a regular basis, and that summer I started. I stayed here, and I started escorting pretty much every Saturday, and that's how I got started.

KL: Why were you interested in the project?

JH: Well [02:00], it wasn't very usual for me. I hadn't been involved in anything at Sarah Doyle before really except for a couple meetings here and there, but on a general basis I was interested in escorting, and I guess I had learned about it through Karen Brown, and I felt like it was something I wanted to do.

KL: Okay Sue, it's your turn.

SD: Oh, I got involved a year later, although I had heard many stories about it throughout the year. And I lived with Joan. And I got involved when I was here in the summer of '88, and I had always wanted to do this, but never had the time because of (inaudible) practice on Saturday mornings, and it was summer time and [03:00] Allison was going down to the old center, which was not in Cranston, and I got up at 7:00 with her and went down, and since then I've just done it on and off whenever I've been able to fit it in. Why did I get involved? Something about it was a really important issue to me. I just, I really feel strongly that women should have the choice to choose, and it's very frightening to have to make that choice and very frightening to have to walk into a center where there's people yelling things at you and making you feel scared. And so I felt like this program was one way of trying to alleviate that stress and a way that I could do some community outreach and get my little butt off the hill. [04:00]

KL: Why don't, if either of you remember your first time, why don't you describe that?

JH: Oh, I remember my first time pretty well. It was a very hot summer morning. I drove with two or three other people to the Highland Avenue sight, the old sight. I was a little dressed up because I wasn't sure whether we should wear nice clothes or not. I was still a little unclear on the concept, and I was wearing, not a long-sleeve, but a sort of heavy shirt and long pants, and of course it was searing hot.

F: That sounds awful.

JH: And Larry [Doland?], one of the regular protestors was – the thing that stands out in my mind is that Larry was walking around with a sign, and he just started to sing in this like incredibly still, [05:00] incredibly hot summer morning. And I was sitting there with this yellow penny like tied on really tightly because I didn't want to look sloppy at all, and there was sweat sort of running down my body, and Larry was sort of walking around very slowly singing “Amazing Grace,” and I just remember thinking what am I doing here? It was very bizarre, but it was a very positive experience overall. It was pretty much the same experience that pretty much all new escorters say they have after doing it for the first time, which is that it wasn't as bad as they expected, and they want to do it again.

SD: My experience was interesting. One of the things that stands out in my mind was the security guard over at the old center. He just had slicked back hair and chains all over his body. I [06:00] didn't know who this guy was that was talking to me the whole time. And I didn't feel threatened by him in the sense that I knew that he wasn't a protestor, but it was just really interesting, and then later I found out that he was the security guard and things clicked. That's my biggest memory of the first time. But the other memory that I remember is the kids, the little kids that some of the escorters managed to get to sing –

F: Protestors.

SD: Yeah, not the escorters, the protestors. The way the old center was set up it was much different, and they used somebody's backyard, which was right near the back door, to stand sometimes, and they had all the kids, all the little kids there, and they had them singing a song at

one point. I forget what it was, but I know that it got into the – the people heard it inside. And that really affected me because [07:00] I just thought that the kids were being pawns and maybe didn't understand entirely what the issue was. They probably understood in a very simplistic form, and they were out there, you know, being used as tools to make the women feel bad going inside. I know that really, really bothered me.

And other than that it was just Allison and I that day, and I guess it was relatively slow, and I don't know. My reaction to that first day was that's what I had expected, actually. I had heard a lot of stories about Larry and Tom and his truck and his baby truck and everything, and they were all there. And so it just was the way I had expected it, although the kids really, really threw me off. And I felt really good about that day though. A lot of people [08:00] thanked us and were really appreciative, and I will never ever forget any center that I went into, whether it was the new or the old. Walking into the room after we had ended and taking off our pennies, and I felt weird because everyone was staring at us, but I also knew that there were glances of appreciation and it was great.

KL: So what's this baby truck she's talking about? [Someone who's been here a whole want to start?]

JH: Well, this was a – I don't remember his last name. Do you remember his last name?

F: No, (inaudible).

JH: It was an elderly man named Tom, a very sort of large, pot-bellied fellow who showed up every Saturday at the old center, and he's only been reported once at the new site. I guess he can't make the commute.

F: Oh, he was there, okay.

JH: But he was there every day at the old site, and he would stand – first of all he would stand on the sidewalk on the, on the – [09:00] facing the parking lot and just stand there and let out a monotonous phrase from time to time. It was him who coined the expressions “Why don't you

go jump off the ‘Van Wikie’ Gates?’” and “Brown for death,” and when an escorter sat down on the curb “In the gutter,” he had a whole repertoire, and he was sort of very good at picking up on everything you did. If you smiled he said “Go ahead, smile for death.” But he drove a very large green station wagon that he parked next to one of the driveway entrances. And every Saturday he would park it there and with the back facing the entrance to the driveway and pull out the tailgate and place a box with a baby in it –

AB: Dismembered baby doll covered with red paint.

JH: – and put a sign on the box pointing into the driveway [10:00] and saying something like –

AB: Welcome to Auschwitz.

JH: Yeah, or “This way to the Holocaust,” or something like that. I think he was the one responsible for hitting an escorter –

AB: Over the head with a cross?

JH: – a couple years earlier over the head with a cross. I believe that she may have provoked him, but not an escorter. I’m sorry, not an escorter, a patient.

SD: Yeah, it was a patient.

JH: It was a patient, Barbara hit the escorter, but, he was, well, he was a character. The hitting over the head with the cross thing was something that happened before any of our times, but the way I understand it from the clippings on the court cases is that a woman started arguing with him, and he was carrying a large cross, probably about three or four feet tall, and [11:00] she became agitated and shoved him. And he hit her a rather sound blow over the head, and she like fell on the ground crying, and –

AB: They confiscated the cross as a weapon.

JH: – they confiscated the cross as a weapon. But wait, that’s actually, that’s another thing I remember. That’s another thing I remember about my first day at the center because, as Sue said, the back door, which we inevitably use because the front door was very bad. It was on the sidewalk, and anybody could be approached by the protestors there. We entered through the back door, and we passed by the fenced-in yard adjacent to the backyard that the protestors used, and Barbara Burgess was there, and she was extremely agitated. My first contact with Barbara was in a state of extreme agitation because some escorter, somebody had taken her sign. They propped up all sorts of signs on the fence, and [12:00] I think Joyce or one of the directors or somebody, one of the staffers came out and took her sign and took it back in. And she had already called the police, and she was going to have us all arrested, and her face was just sort of screwed up with rage, and I was very taken aback, but anyway.

KL: Well, Nancy, you’ve been kind of quiet. Why don’t you tell us about something that happened to you?

NP: Well, I’m not very good at stories, but I don’t know. That’s kind of Allison’s job, but –

AB: What about Larry and his video camera?

NP: Oh, there was that, yeah. There have been some colorful days, but you kind of get lost in all the feelings and stuff you walk away with, but here was the day that Larry brought his video camera. He [13:00] had gotten it out of his trunk, which was – this was at the old site, and he had gotten his video camera out of the back of his car. And he came, he went up to the sidewalk, and he started filming us.

And, you know, it was kind of fun, and we were waving and having a good time and dancing, but then we stopped, and we realized with horror what this meant, and we ran inside to see if this was against the injunction, whether this was in fact illegal. And we found out it wasn’t illegal to point it at us, but if he were to point it at patients it would be illegal. So we go out, and we’re a bit more somber this time, and we’re being filmed, and we think it’s really obnoxious, but I don’t remember if we told him or not. I assume he knew that it was against – common

sense it was against the injunction, but sure enough when a patient's car came up after a while he [14:00] started aiming it at the car, so one of us went to get the patient and – well, I went to the patient's car while the other escorter, Sarah, went inside to call the police. And I told the patient that he had a video camera, and he was filming patients, so if they wanted to come back they could. So they were really distraught and everything. They went around and around the block for a while, and then I went and I told Larry. I said, you know, “We called the police. This is against the injunction. You may not aim it at a patient.” So he was very obedient. He went to go put it in his car again and behave himself. And I guess he figured, see, he has this game of hide and seek where he doesn't – he thought we were kidding, that we didn't really call the police.

See, this is the mentality of Larry. Larry is the person who at the old site – this was possible, that [15:00] there were two – the front entrance and the back entrance were opposite on sides of the building, and we would have to stand in between the two in case someone would go to the front entrance by mistake, and very often taxis or cars would pull up at the front, and they would be misled by these people. So often would be standing on the side, and he's looked towards the front door and runs for the front door and disappears at the front of the building. Well, we would have no choice but to run after him to make sure that there was no patient being misled, and no one would be there, and he'd walk around laughing, like, “Ha, ha, ha, sucker,” and saying all these rotten things. I mean, this is his mentality. So sure enough you would expect that of us when we go to call the police, that we were faking.

So after a while he goes back to the car and he pulls out – he's reaching into the back of the car to pull it out, and it was [16:00] just the most amazing piece of orchestration I've ever seen because he's opened, he's unlocked the thing, and he's reaching inside, and out of nowhere three police cars just soar in and pull up to the car. They knew just where to go. I don't know how, but they knew just where to go. They soar in. They screech, and he's caught red-handed with the video camera in his hands. And he looked really embarrassed, and so he had to be taken away and everything. And he was all upset, and he was sort of martyred, made a martyr of by the people who had to remain behind because, you know, it's kind of fun to go to jail after all. So he was taken away, and he was all upset, and the next time I saw him, he was, boy he was more bitter than ever. But it was just so amazing. The timing was so perfect, and they knew just where to go. It was so exciting, [17:00] so I don't know.

So Sarah and I weren't too outgoing about doing – about escorting. We were always engrossed in our own thoughts. We didn't have a good time, and I don't know that anyone does, but we were kind of melancholy about the whole bit, but boy, when he was taken away and the other people were all off talking to each other, the other protestors. They just gave each other a quick, really big hug, and then they turned around to look at us, and we were just standing there minding our own business. So it was exciting, but that's my story.

KL: You mentioned that the feelings were stronger than in the story. Could we talk about the feeling you got from doing this?

NP: Well, the first time I went escorting was just to see what it was about, what was going on. [18:00] I lived with Joan during the summer and heard her talking about going every day and stuff. That was in '87 like she said, and just hearing all the different stories and stuff it sounded horrible, and I wasn't too anxious to go down there myself, but eventually I guess because Sarah started going and Joan had been going and Allison had been going I decided to see what it was all about, just what was going on. And so I was trying to be objective about the whole thing, but it was very difficult because I could be objective about taking people inside and listening to all these people, but somewhere along the line it was just very upsetting to witness this happening to other people, to watch people being taken in for whatever decision they had made and being persecuted, just all this verbal abuse was so inhumane.

I couldn't believe that this was happening, that people could do this to other people, and so I guess [19:00] I started out escorting with a sense of horror, and I went on to do it every weekend over the winter break and following spring break, (break in audio) times alone. (break in audio) I would go home I'd be going home to my family because I live in the area, and I'd be going home to my family, and they weren't sympathetic at all to what I was doing. And largely for religious reasons I couldn't talk about it at home. My family's Catholic, and it crops up in strange places, but I guess this is a good place for it to crop up. I felt as a Catholic fine about doing it, but I had to think a lot about it, and my brother was really antagonistic, and he would say that he was being a devil's advocate making me think about it, but he [20:00] just likes to be antagonistic anyways. And my parents expressed their disapproval, and so it would be very difficult because I'd be watching this and come home in disbelief that people could do this to

each other and starting to feel very strongly about what I was doing and going there to support people, and then coming home and not being able to talk about it, having no outlet, and worse having a negative reception.

So it was very difficult, but after a while, I guess it's been a good thing too because in my family now it's not – I think they've changed their views a lot since I've been doing this too and are starting to pay attention to the publicity that these things get. They've changed their opinions too, so I guess it's been a good thing for my family that I've been doing this, I think, but [laughs] I've been somewhat of an influence. But it's been very difficult, especially when [21:00] these people are invoking a god, and it's not my god, but they're Christian, and they sing all these songs that we sing at church that I hold very dear, and they sing these things, and it's been very difficult in that sense to figure out where it fits in. And they're saying that this is a religious thing, so, "where does it fit in" takes a lot of thinking, and right now I don't think it fits in very well anywhere in religion, and I just think they're full of it. And that's not my god that they're talking about. Those are the biggest, the biggest feelings that I've had to deal with.

KL: (break in audio) rest of you also. You must be (break in audio). You've been so quiet.

AB: Yeah, my reputation's being lost here, [22:00] stop talking.

NP: That was a slap you heard. [laughter].

AB: Things have changed a lot since last year. When I started doing this, not last year when I did it, it was sort of a game, you know. Protestors were obviously idiots, and I couldn't take them seriously, and yes, they hurt people, which got me very angry. But they were just such lunatics, it was like, total – I can't even come up with words to describe them. You can look through the log book and –

F: And find words.

AB: – And find words, lots of words, lots of very nasty words. But then Karen Brown had been in charge, and another one, but Karen had been left doing most of the work, and then she was

going all the time, and we were getting no support from anybody. [23:00] It's maybe 20 people who are going down with any regularity escorting. Nobody on campus knew. Nobody on the campus cared. Sarah Doyle didn't care, nothing, and so she was just completely burned out by the time – she had done, in my eyes, a magnificent job of just keeping it together, but then she left, and there was no program set up for the summer, and I got this really cushy job. She was doing research, and I set up my own hours, and I like doing research, so that was easy – history research. And so I figured oh what the hell, I'll start coordinating. So I went downstairs to make sure nobody else was, and there was no plans. There weren't even hardly aware of the program, and so I was (inaudible) and I started grabbing people like, hi, you want to go escorting don't you? Like Sue.

F: She's good at this.

AB: Sue, you want to do this, come on. It's fun. It's exciting. It's exhilarating, [24:00] and my housemates were very popular people, so they kept on having people over for the weekend. And it was really easy at the old site because the old site we only had about 10 protestors, not a problem. The way the clinic was set up was it was very bad for the people coming in, but very good for the escorters because we had this huge parking lot we could sort of hide in, but then in the middle of June they moved to Cranston and to one of the most anti-choice neighborhoods in all of Rhode Island, and that was something I had not been anticipating when I decided to take over the clinic. And Cranston kept on setting limits to stop the clinic from moving. Finally they moved there. When they were building the site there were protestors there every day just sitting there. "In the name of God we protest this death camp."

And we went there, and I think our first day – you were there as well, Joan [25:00] was there – there must have been at least, I don't know, 30 or 40 people all screaming, just I mean, the most horrible things at us. And big, big, big on the Nazi bit, and "You are a Nazi. You are a baby killer. You are evil. You are the moral equivalent to the death guard at Auschwitz." I was like, hi there, I'm a Nazi from Auschwitz here. Would you mind if I walk you into the gas chamber? That's exactly the way we do things. But my father's family is Jewish, and they all died during the Holocaust, and my mother's family is Lutheran. They all saved the ones who managed to be alive, but – weird combination – but I remember that hurt so much because it

wasn't a game anymore for me because I was responsible for everybody else, and suddenly, you know, I couldn't say, oh, they're just idiots [26:00] and assholes. Suddenly other people were getting hurt whom I told come on down. It's fun. It's exciting. And everything they said started really building up on me.

And they were protesting on Wednesdays and Fridays and Saturdays. I mean, it was beautiful weather and they would have picnics outside, and oh, gee, isn't this great. I'll bring the kids along, have the kids carry little child-sized coffins, have a five-year-old boy carry a sign saying, "Please don't kill my friends." And you know five-year-olds take everything seriously. He really thought we were in there killing Jimmy and Susie. As kids walked to school Barbara would stop them and point to us and say, "They're killing babies." The kids would look at us. First they'd look at her saying, "My mommy told me not to talk to people like you." And then she'd look at us, and I mean, practically see blood on our hands, and we were just escorts, and it was unbelievable how vicious they were. I mean [27:00], these were normal people, not just Barbara, Larry, and the other cooks. There were people. Well Nancy at this new site, not Nancy who's sitting here with us, was a just totally insane person, but they were horrendous.

I remember this one little grandmotherly type woman would come up there, and she was offering Joan and I some lemonade. Joan and I (inaudible) all the time. And Joan was like, oh, that's nice of her. I was like, don't trust her. Joan said, oh, Allison, you're too cynical on this. And I was like don't trust her. She poisoned it. And sure enough, pretty soon she brought out this child-sized coffin and started going "You Nazi," this little grandmotherly old woman. I remember once we were coming home and it had just been the two of us, and we were driving back, and we started seeing these old people (inaudible) the enemy, and children everywhere. [28:00] It's like they're the enemy. It was unbelievably harsh. And I started going down at least every week, sometimes two or three times a week in the early morning.

My family did not approve. My family did not want to talk about it. I'm the only political one in the family. You know what it's like. So I couldn't talk to them, and I was getting so burned out, and things were just – it was awful, but we managed to keep that damn side covered, and Sue was doing it. Nancy was doing it. Sarah was doing it. Sarah did it a couple of times alone at the old place, which is what prompted me to become coordinator so she wouldn't have to anymore. And it was horrible, but a lot of good things also happened. Like we got [BCO cars?]. We decided to advertise it at activities night so all the freshman got exposed to it, which

brought in a lot of freshman [29:00]. And in a sheer stroke of genius which I take full and complete credit for, I got Sarah and Joan to take over, and they have done an amazing job, because I went to Scotland, and it took me leaving this continent and several months being away to finally recover from it because it's horrible to have people yell at you. And the only reason they're yelling at you is just to inflict pain. And that really does something when you know some other human being is trying to deliberately hurt somebody else. It's just got to be about the most horrible thing I've ever experienced.

So things have changed a little. Anyway, so I went away for a semester and Joan and Sarah took over. It's funny, Karen, Nancy, Joan, and I, Sarah, lived together that summer. Joan was doing (inaudible) and Karen took over, and then I [30:00] took over, and then Sarah, and Joan took over, and then I took over again in the spring with Joan. And Nancy of course keeps on – “Nancy, we don't have anybody!” “Okay, okay, calm down. I'll come.” So it was interesting that way.

KL: Joan – and I'll get to you soon enough – Allison and Nancy have both talked about what kind of support they got from their family and friends and whatnot. Do you want to talk about that?

JH: Well, as far as family goes my story is a little – I had considerably more support I think.

F: You West Coaster.

JH: Sorry.

NP: She's a Californian.

JH: Well, yeah, my family's from California and pretty much transplanted, transplanted Midwesterner liberals. My mom thought it was great. My sister approved. My grandmother actually worked at Planned [31:00] Parenthood in the early '70s. She did volunteer work there, just file work and the like. So I sort of like to think of that as an inspiration, and I've had a lot of support from them, and a lot of support from friends, and what was I going to say? As far as

what Allison was just saying about things that affect you, boy, I just remember this time at the new center – this again must have been, it was during the summer. It was during the summer, and you know the place had just started up and the regulars were out there every day and, as Allison said, it wasn't the same old faces there anymore. It was some new faces as well, and –

F: (inaudible) Tom would no longer show up. They wouldn't (inaudible). [32:00]

JH: Yeah, too wide to park anywhere on Broad St. But the only time that something ever really, really, really bothered me was when this one woman who's name I've never quite learned – I called her the golf lady because she wore a short skirt and tennis socks, so I didn't know what else to call her – was carrying a sign that she kept parading back and forth in front of Broad St. And I couldn't see it, and I couldn't see it. And normally I don't make a big deal out of wanting to know what protestors' signs say, but it was piquing my curiosity. And it had been a sort of ragging morning as it was, so by the end of the day I was feeling a little irritable and hostile, and for some reason stepped off of the property into the street on my way back to the door just so I could see her sign. And it said something like “Can you [33:00] get AIDS and other diseases in this building?”

And my first reaction was that that was a gratuitous piece of misinformation. I mean, some signs have, you know, some semblance of an argument. That one didn't, you know. The Women's Center is a totally professional operation. On top of that, the nation's blood supply has been tested. There is no reason for her to be carrying that sign. It was just another scare tactic. The reason it bugged me so much is because both my grandparents, because of blood transfusions, died of AIDS a couple years ago. And as far as I'm concerned, people spreading that type of misinformation about the disease are partially responsible for the misinformed way in which my grandparents' illness was handled. I mean, they didn't think to test [34:00] for AIDS until way down the line. And I became very upset. I'm normally very boring and a tower of calm, but I pretty much freaked Allison out that morning.

AB: I didn't help the matter by – I laugh at everything. It's one of my defenses, and I just could not believe they had that sign. I was laughing in disbelief. I swear she was going to take my head off.

JH: We all have very different ways of coping, but then that was the morning which my ways of coping were put to the test. But like Allison said, even when each of us has been hurt in the deepest ways possible, we still, especially those of us who have coordinated, need to put the whole thing in perspective, and I really have put it in perspective since I started escorting. I've gone from thinking they're a bunch of lunatics to thinking [35:00] that, well, if I were opposed to abortion and it had been legal for 10 to 15 years, and I tried lobbying, I tried legislation, I felt like nothing worked except direct action, then I could see going and protesting. But there are some people who protest because they feel it's the only good and right thing to do, and there are some people that do it because they're on a massive power trip. It's a very diverse group of people just like us, and it's sort of become more so. So.

KL: Wake up, Sue. It's your turn.

SD: Oh, what do I talk about?

KL: You're going to talk about your support or lack thereof, whatever.

SD: Oh, well, I guess, I mean, my support mostly comes from my friends. Almost everybody I know on campus that is a good friend of mine is [36:00] pro-choice, and my close friends are the ones that go escort, so I have a lot of support there. In terms of my family it's a very interesting family. They were really excited that I went to the march on Washington in April. They approved, and they thought it was great, but they approved in such a way that it seemed like they thought it was just a fancy and a whim, something that a college kid did, and something that I did because I was this, you know, self-proclaimed feminist, and of course all feminists do this, and they just have a really warped perception of the world.

And it's just – I mean, my family is not very political, and I am the only one, like Allison is. And you know, I'll go home, and I'll talk about things that are going on on campus [37:00] like say the strike in the fall with the library and [plant op?] workers and stuff, and it'll get quiet. Or I'll talk about – freshman year I used to talk about the [Doug Osman?] movement from South Africa and everybody got quiet and changed the subject. You know, oh, is the steak about ready?

And things like that. And people got quiet in my family because they didn't want to deal. They didn't want to talk about it, and when I told them that I started escorting and you know describing what this was they were like oh. Their nonverbal support was – I mean, I couldn't even call it support because it was just silence, and it made it seem like, well, that's nice, but I guess you're going what – they seem to think that I do what every other Brown student's supposed to do, and, you know, I'm a vegetarian because [38:00] that's what the crew team does, and no, I'm a vegetarian because that's what I chose, and so they –

F: It's a stage.

JH: Yeah, it is. It's very much a stage, and I'm just radical, and my uncle thinks I'm going to be a communist soon, and so it's just a very warped New England perception of the world, and not having ever to deal with anybody who's willing to speak his or her mind and who's willing to identify oneself with a political cause, and so I don't feel I have any support in terms of that because it's so silent. But I also don't have any religious beliefs that stand in my way, but yeah, most of the support has come from people here, and I got a lot of support from people on my unit.

I was a freshman counselor all my years here at Brown. And this [39:00] year when I lived on the unit a lot of the women on the unit and some men – some men actually were on your list, I don't know if they ever went down – but they were involved, and we would talk about this issue a lot. And I felt like I had a lot of support in that sense. And there were – this was a big thing, especially with the march and everything like that, and there just seemed to be a lot of support in my general circle for doing this, and you always escorted with a bunch of people. I've never done it alone. I've only done it with at most – with at least two people. So I've done it usually with four, and you know, just the drive back was enough for me to let it all out, you know, usually like Allison would be sitting there like, "I wanted to flip them off," you know, and one time I think you did.

F: Yes, she did.

JH: Yeah, I remember that. We're getting out of here, and that was enough for me to ease the tension. I didn't have any conflicting beliefs. Some people go down [40:00] there really thinking that abortion is wrong, but feel that women should have the choice, and I don't think abortion is wrong. I don't think I'm killing anybody if I have an abortion, but what was I going to say? And so I don't really have a problem with that, and what the protestors yell I just usually ignore and walk off.

The only time – the one thing that really bothered me was when being this blond-haired and blue-eyed babe that I am, I was walking across the yard at the new site, and it was just really interesting what they said to me. They said “You, You the innocent-looking one.” And it was something along the lines of “You're so pretty. Why do you do this? You're supposed to be making babies, not killing them.” And they made allusions to the fact that I had [41:00] blond hair and blue eyes and was just very Aryan, and it was very, very scary, and I mean, I didn't know how to react to that. I felt like, I mean, like in this society you deal with the fact that, you know, you're the standard if you have blond hair and blue eyes, and you know, you're the one that people will label as racist and everything. And so it hit me there. I was just like, I mean, that was just a really uncomfortable feeling to be pointed out that way. And then on the other hand it was just, you guys are so irrational. You sit there, and you tell me that I'm, you know, creating a Holocaust in there, and then you turn around and you tell me that because I'm pretty that I should be making babies, you know. And you know, so it's okay to kill those women's babies because they're not pretty or something? And it's just really, really absurd, and that day always bothered me, but [42:00] I guess I really haven't had any traumatic experiences. Maybe I haven't gone enough.

F: She has been a trooper.

KL: When you go on Saturday morning or whatever, you all drive down together?

AB: We meet at Sarah Doyle. We used to meet at 7:20 and now they're starting to have appointments earlier (inaudible). We actually expanded our program to include Fridays as well because there are protestors on Fridays and Saturdays. We have three people on Fridays, three

people on Saturdays. We meet at Sarah Doyle. Somebody (inaudible) and we meet there, and somebody usually sleeps in, we get, rah, rah, rah get your butt back here, rah, rah, rah.

NP: Sorry, I slept in last week.

AB: It's okay. It was a quiet day. And if nobody comes in, one of the coordinators goes. I've gone every day for the last – not every day, but every week for the past six weeks now. But I'm really getting excited. [43:00] If I had any courage I could call somebody up who (inaudible). Joan's been able to do that. I can't. So we go down there. We usually get there (break in audio) and we go inside. We (break in audio) pennies, say hi, mumble hi to the clinic staff who are extremely nice people, and then we go outside. Then one person stays in the door because they keep the outside door locked, so they open the door, and then on Friday two people stand by the entrance, on Saturday you have a pair of people by either entrance. And we work in pairs, protect each other, and it works out very well. You know, last year we had core people, 20, now we have nearly almost 200, and we have too many people who want to do it. I mean, you can never have too many, but it's just a most amazing feeling, so many interested people. [44:00]

KL: When you're driving down and you're in the car or whatever, are you nervous about the day, or has it become kind of –

SD: Too tired. Too tired.

AB: Not anymore. I mean, probably for the first year or so after I started escorting really, yeah, for all of that summer and really into the next semester or so I would be nervous every time I drove down because no day, either at the old site or the new site, no day is a typical day, and you never know quite what to expect both in terms of what protestors are going to say and what situations you're going to encounter. And that used to make me kind of nervous, and now I think I've pretty much become –

F: Immune.

AB: – dull, acclimatized, immune.

NP: Tell them about the story about when that protestor was yelling in your face and there was that new person there. (inaudible) very short.

- END -