P.1. Southern Journalism: Media and the Movement

Interview P-0016
Casey Czarnik
12 May 2015

ABSTRACT -- Casey Czarnik

Interviewee: Casey Czarnik

Interviewer: Joshua Clark Davis

Interview Date: May 12, 2015

Location: Phone interview (Czarnik in Richmond, CA; Davis in Baltimore)

Length: One hour, eighteen minutes

Casey Czarnik founded Diana Press, a lesbian/feminist publishing house. Born in Detroit, Michigan, Czarnik dropped out of college to become an activist. Among other organizations, she was involved with the Poor People's Campaign, the Catholic Left, and Women Against Daddy Warbucks, which prevented the draft in New York State by destroying files. The male-dominated Antiwar Movement drove her to the Women's Movement, where her publishing knowledge was respected. Along with other members of the Ida Brayman commune, Czarnik published a poetry book, *The Palm of Her Hand*, as Diana Press' inaugural work. After others abandoned the project, Czarnik and her then-partner, Coletta Reid, were left to manage the Press alone, using Reid's connections to authors such as Adrienne Rich, Audre Lord, and Rita Mae Brown. Daughters, Inc. provided financial support and the two joined FEN (Feminist Economic Network) to learn small business skills—despite working 60-80 hours per week, Czarnik and Reid had no salary. The Press moved from Baltimore, Maryland, to Oakland, California, to be closer to FEN and was criticized as capitalist, despite its identity as a working-class publication, and for its affiliation with the Oakland Feminist Women's Health Clinic. Shortly before her departure from the Press, the building was broken into by an anonymous person who likely had connections to the movement and artwork, publications, and equipment were destroyed. Czarnik describes Diana Press as being pulled in multiple directions by different movements and by its founders—Czarnik and Reid separated and the Czarnik left the Press after a series of financial problems and disagreements over its management. Czarnik then left the Movement and had two children with a husband who she later divorced. She worked for Pleasanton Unified School District for twenty-two years as a high school graphic design and printing teacher before retiring. This interview is part of Media and the Movement, an oral history and broadcast collection project housed in the Southern Oral History Program and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

TRANSCRIPT: Casey Czarnik

Interviewee: Casey Czarnik

Interviewer: Joshua Clark Davis

Interview Date: May 12, 2015

Location: Phone interview (Czarnik in Richmond, CA; Davis in Baltimore)

Length: One audio file, 1:17:34

START OF INTERVIEW

Josh Davis: I am interviewing Casey Czarnik. It's May twelfth, 2015. I am recording this call, and I'll be sure to get you a copy of the recording and also I'll send you a consent form showing that this was, you know, a voluntary interview

Casey Czarnik: Right.

JD: And it's both for the book I'm working on and I'm working on a project that's based at UNC that is called Media and the Movement, and we're focusing on activists who were involved in media making in the 1960s and [19]70s.

CC: Awesome! This sounds good. I'm always impressed when people, you know, take the time to really try to find out what really happened. You know, I always read things and I go, "Huh? Wow!" [Laughs]

JD: Yeah.

CC: It's different than being there than when you hear things later on that people write, so that's great.

JD: Yeah, and I think, you know, I can share with you also what I've already written about Diana Press. It's not published yet.

CC: Okay.

JD: But I think this interview will help me to—you know, I've got a few questions here and there because the sources I've been working for are really spread out, and sometimes they say different things. But, yeah, it's great to have you on the phone. And so, before we get too deep into Diana Press, I always like to ask people a little bit about their background, where they're from, just, you know, maybe a little bit about your childhood before all this stuff happened.

CC: Okay. That sounds good. Yeah, I'm sure you get a lot of different versions of what happened, because everyone, you know, everybody saw things a little differently, you know, when it was going on, you know. And there also wasn't a lot of agreement sometimes, so you're going to—and then, also, as the years go by, you kind of have a way of thinking of things and reinterpreting things. So, that's good.

So, you want me to tell you about myself? I grew up in Detroit, Michigan, and I was—I'm the—yeah, of a family of six children, I was the oldest girl. I was the second oldest child. My father is Polish American, my mother is German American, so I was raised mostly American, within Detroit. And we went to like—we lived in a Polish community, kind of, with a school, with a Catholic school. And when I finally—I graduated from a Catholic high school. I went to a Catholic college a little bit up north, a little bit, in Michigan. It was called DeLima College. It doesn't exist anymore.

And then, I went to Wayne State and dropped out from there and became an activist in the Peace Movement. But I was also involved in Detroit, things around the university. We were involved in the Civil Rights Movement with the Poor People's Campaign that came through. So, we got involved with a lot of the—I was involved with the Catholic Left, so I was involved with the Berrigan brothers and I was involved in Women Against Daddy Warbucks in New York City, let's see, before I got involved with the Diana Press. So, I was involved in a lot of other kind of movements, activities, before I got into women's, the Women's Movement, and also into the women's press and into the lesbian press. So, that's where I came all the way to Baltimore. I actually was an activist in the, you know, in Baltimore movements there, as well, before I got involved in Diana Press, not just with women. It was with a whole, you know, men and women in that community, because that's where the Berrigans were from, and that's why I ended up for a while.

JD: Um-hmm. Right. Just for a quick clarification, what year were you born?

CC: I was born in 1949.

JD: Okay So, the years in Detroit where you were politically active you were describing, that would be which years? Like the late [19]60s?

CC: Yeah. I graduated from high school in [19]67, so [19]68, [19]69. I moved to New York for a while in [19]69. I was going back and forth between Detroit and New York. I kind of moved away from there when I was like eighteen, nineteen, and ended up in New York and in Baltimore after that. So, yeah.

JD: Um-hmm. What was Women Against Daddy Warbucks?

CC: Well, we were—[laughs] we were a group of women that destroyed draft files in Manhattan in 1969. It was in July of 1969. [0:05:00] And we were a part of the Catholic Left movement, but we also, our group had a lot of other religious affiliations. We had someone who was in the Episcopal movement and from the Jewish—we were kind of involved with people who were at the Peace Center on Bleeker Street in New York. And ( ) moved to Bleeker Street, and so we were involved with that, with a lot of people who were there, but they didn't really know what we were doing exactly. We were affiliated with them, but they didn't really—they didn't know what was going on exactly.

But we—so, we broke into the draft board and we filled two big conference rooms with shredded up, chopped up, shredded up draft information so that they had, in cross-referencing things, so that they could not reregister people. And it was—it was like thirteen or fourteen draft boards, so it was Spanish Harlem, Harlem, all of it. It was really fantastic. And when we didn't get caught at the scene, we decided to leave. And then, we had a demonstration in New York at Rockefeller Center, and all the Peace Movement people got together and supported us with that demonstration, and we kind of threw shredded files in the air and poured oil on the plaques at Rockefeller Center. And we got arrested, some of us, not everyone, and they actually arrested the wrong people, as well.

JD: Wow.

CC: So, anyway.

JD: Wow.

CC: It became quite a fiasco. [Laughs]

JD: What was the significance of going to Rockefeller Center?

CC: Because we believed—we were really into that that the whole war in Vietnam and everything was tied to resources about oil. And it wasn't just about—you know, it was a lot of things. We were kind of coming at it from the leftist, the left imperialistic, the anti-imperialistic kind of view there. But, yeah, so the Rockefeller was one—we had a statement. It's in a book called *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, if you ever want to look up the statement. I have one copy of it, I think. I could actually send you a copy from it.

JD: Yeah.

CC: It was by—oh, I already packed my books. I'm moving. Robin Morgan wrote it. [Laughs] She compiled that book. I don't know if you've seen it, *Sisterhood Is Powerful*.

JD: Yeah, I have seen it. I've looked at it, and I don't think I've seen the document.

CC: It's in there. It's like—it's way in the back. It's like one of the just documents about things, and it's in the five hundred pages, somewhere in there. I can't remember exactly. But, yeah, we have a statement, and it kind of tells us why we did it, and why we went to Rockefeller Center, and why we—you know, we were trying to oppose the draft and, you know, people dying in Vietnam. So, it was a—you know, it was kind of in the spirit of the Catonsville Nine, the whole thing with it.

JD: Um-hmm.

CC: What's that?

JD: Yeah, I was—that's what it was reminding me of.

CC: Yeah, that's what it was. We had been working with that group for a while, but we kind of broke away. The women kind of had had enough of them [laughs] and (their organization). So, we kind of wanted to do our own thing, so that's where we were coming from with that, to show that women, even though we weren't drafted and we weren't going to Vietnam, we were opposed to it and we were opposed to the draft. And so.

And what happened with our group, and I don't—you're not going to hear it a lot of other places about it. I don't think I've really seen too much about it. But a lot of lawyers got involved with our case, and we had some that were just defending us on just the criminal charges. It was like, I think it was "receiving stolen government property" or something like that. We never did get convicted because a judge threw it all out because they could not bring us to trial. But the thing was is that they used our case to block the draft in New York State. So, Kunstler—I don't know if you know—you know Kunstler?

JD: Yeah, sure.

CC: Yeah, well, he was our, one of our lawyers, and he really blocked it all. And they ended up having to—they couldn't draft anybody. [Laughs] And it kind of was like—went down the road. A lot of different states were involved in trying to block that, so the draft kind of—we were very, very optimistic, you know, about stopping them, and we did. Of course, it went to the lottery system. But, anyway, that's all that stuff. I don't know if you're writing anything about that, but—[laughs] it was (fun).

JD: Well, not exactly, but that's really good background, because I really—.

CC: Yeah.

JD: It's important to me to know how, you know, people's political development and—you know, it's interesting not only that it was antiwar work, but like you said, it's really connected to a criticism of capitalism.

CC: Right, exactly. And I was one of the—not everybody saw things like—they were not all like as much as I was at the time. You know, I was really much—[0:10:00] I'm not that way anymore, actually, but I was very much opposed to capitalism at that time.

JD: Yeah. Interesting.

CC: Yeah, and I still support what I did and I think it was the right thing to do. But it was—and we were willing to go to jail for a long time, even though we didn't. I ended up in like Women's House of Detention for a week or something, and then I had to go to court, you know, back and forth to New York a lot to go before—they put it before the grand jury. So, it was—not that I said anything, but they just kept bringing us back. [Laughs]

JD: Yeah. So, were you already in Baltimore? Or how did you get to Baltimore?

CC: Baltimore was—or Ballamore, as you say—Baltimore was kind of like where I had gone first from Detroit, and I knew Mary Moylan. I knew a lot of people there who were involved with the, you know, the movements there. And I met the people in New York through them, and so I ended up in New York for a while, and then back to Baltimore, so it was kind of like going back and forth. I actually lived in Baltimore about seven years, all told.

JD: Okay. And these were the antiwar activists who you knew there, or—?

CC: Yes. Yes, I was. I was an antiwar activist and becoming more political with the Women's Movement just because of having—being in the Antiwar Movement with all the men in there. They were just—they were pretty—even in New York, I mean, I was a printer already. I already had learned to print in New York, because I was working at the Bleeker Street thing on the—they had a small press there, a Multilith. And we were printing flyers for subway—you know, we had a subway strike kind of thing going on, and we were printing flyers and doing activism in that regard.

And they would just like say something about, "Oh, you can print?" They would make all kind of comments, like, "What?!" You know, like they just didn't really think that we could do anything, that women could do anything, and it was kind of just disgusting. After a while, we kind of went, "Yeah, I can print. I can do this. I can do that." You know, "What are you talking about?" You know? So, it just made us more political the more that we were, you know, we were put down for things, and we were going, "What?!" You know?

So, anyway, so that's how I learned to print. My first press was at the Peace Center in New York.

JD: So, that's interesting. Now we're kind of beginning to get into the Women's Movement that you were just describing. Yeah, tell me a bit more about how you got more involved in that. If I'm thinking correctly, we're about—in this interview we're roughly at year 1970, it sounds like.

CC: Yeah, right.

JD: But Diana Press starts, I think, in [19]72, so maybe you can kind of summarize your growing involvement with the Women's Movement.

CC: Right. Well, what happened was that there was other groups of women in Baltimore that were growing. I was also friends with—I don't know if you know, if you've heard of—you've probably been—I think I was contacted through Carmen Arbona. I don't know if you've talked to her.

JD: Yeah, well—.

CC: She was a friend of mine—what's that?

JD: Yeah, I don't know her, but I think I saw that she forwarded my name to you.

CC: Yeah. And so, we've been friends for a long time. Well, I'm hearing a feedback on here.

JD: Can you hear me?

CC: I'm hearing myself.

JD: Okay.

CC: Yeah, something is going on there.

JD: Let me pause it just for a second, okay?

CC: Okay.

[Recording ends and then resumes]

JD: Okay, part two. We're picking up on—you were telling me about Carmen.

CC: Yeah, right, Carmen, and I don't remember a lot of the people's names. I remember a few people. I remember Karyn and Dee Ann and, let's see, there was some others. A lot of people I knew at the women's magazine. And I used to go out, do down

there and help them every now and then and do stuff, probably mostly annoy people, but—[laughs].

JD: Just a quick clarification—.

CC: I was one of the younger people at the time and kind of had a persona of being kind of, I don't know, just comic sometimes. I don't know, it was kind of my role that I filled a lot of times there. But they were very much involved in Baltimore, and I was on the periphery of a lot of things that they were doing. And then a group got organized that put out a—that started the press, started Diana Press, with *In the Palm of Her Hand*. They were putting out a poetry book. And that's when I got involved with them, because I knew how to run presses. So, I was already like helping out with that kind of stuff. So, they were—other people were running the presses, but I think I had more experience than most people.

JD: So, just to pause, [0:15:00] to pause—.

CC: So, that's when I kind of stepped in and I—we didn't get paid anything. We were just kind of—you know, whatever we were doing was to help out. And so, I kind of joined that group. And then, Coletta moved from Washington to Baltimore at some point, and we were involved in a relationship, and we decided to put our energy into that. Coletta was really awesome with knowing lots of people that were published or publishing or—she was just really, she was very knowledgeable, and I had the more practical end of it. And so, we got involved.

And then, one by one, people started to drop away from the group. After they published the book, the poetry book, people were not as interested in running the press.

And this was a business. We were helping out John and I forget the other guy's name. They were running Paine Press, or Paine Printing, I think it was. I don't remember. But—I'm still getting a little feedback.

JD: Oh, okay. Is it—you're getting the feedback right now?

CC: Yeah.

JD: Can you hear me, or are you just hearing yourself?

CC: I can hear you, but every time I talk, I just hear myself. Now I don't.

JD: Okay. Sorry about that.

CC: That's okay.

JD: Hopefully, that won't happen too much. Just to rewind for a second, the women's magazine you were referring to was *Women: A Journal of Liberation*, right?

CC: Right, right. That was it.

JD: Okay. And—.

CC: Yeah?

JD: That's been a little bit confusing for me. That was a totally different group of women. But like you said, you began to get a bit involved, you had some printing experience, you were younger, they were—maybe they had been in Baltimore a little longer.

CC: Yeah.

JD: And the poetry book that the printing press produced, what was it called?

CC: It was called *The Palm of Her Hand*, I think it was. I'm not positive. It was either "A Palm" or "The Palm" of Her Hand, but it was a poetry book. And some of the

people in there used to live in a house where I lived in. I lived in a commune called Ida Brayman. And I know Ann Gordon was in there and somebody else. There were other people who were in that house who were involved. So, I kind of got—I knew a lot of people in Baltimore. So, they were doing this poetry book and they were also running a press for this other print company that was not a women's press yet. It was just a—you know, it was John, and I can't remember the other guy's name. But anyway—.

JD: You said it was called (Perennial) Press or something like that?

CC: No, Paine. Paine, like Thomas Paine, P-A-I-N-E.

JD: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

CC: Paine Press.

JD: And what was the name of the—can you spell out the name of the collective, I mean, the house where you lived.

CC: Oh, yeah, Ida Brayman. I-D-A Brayman, B-R-A-Y-M-A-N. And that was an activist somewhere in the United States in the Workers Movement probably that we—we picked names like that for our communes.

JD: Uh-huh. And where was that?

CC: It was on the same street as—what's the name of the street? It was in the same area where John Brown Collective was, and that up the street from us. And Carmen lived in that house, too. Carmen Arbona was part of that commune for a while.

JD: Is this on 25th?

CC: No, it was on—no, that was—no, no. It was up in—you know, I haven't—I did stop by there. So, what's the street over from Montpelier? What was the name of our street? I can't even remember the name of the street. I'm sorry.

JD: That's okay.

CC: I have to look it—I have to Google it to look it up. But it was a block over. But in Baltimore we had like almost ten communes or collectives that were political communes. And it wasn't all—it was men and women, except for the Ida Brayman one, which was the women who broke away from John Brown, which was up the street. So, we lived—it was over by York Road. Do you know where York Road is?

JD: Right. It's near Greenmount and that stuff.

CC: Yeah, yeah, Greenmount! We were like right on the back of the street that was where the stadium was. We were like one block over. There was a convent right next to us.

JD: Right.

CC: And a church or something. I don't remember.

JD: Right, right, right. And, I mean, this is all good for me to hear, because I'm very interested in Baltimore, having—you know, I just moved here and started teaching here, and we live on 25th and Guilford, which is near all of this stuff.

CC: Yeah!

JD: Around the corner from the press and from the places you're describing.

CC: Right.

JD: The stadium was torn down and is now the YMCA we use, and, yeah—.

CC: Oh, okay.

JD: This is good stuff to know, like the health clinic, I think, is near there.

CC: Yeah, and I was involved in the health clinic, setting that up, actually. [0:20:00] Carmen was involved, too. We were all—those were the people who were involved in that magazine, the *Women: The Journal of Liberation*. They were also involved in the health clinic at the time.

JD: Um-hmm.

CC: So, we were setting that up. Mary Moylon was involved, and ( )

JD: Who was the name you just said?

CC: What is it?

JD: The name you just said? Which one was it?

CC: The name of who—the person?

JD: Yeah.

CC: Oh, Mary Moylan.

JD: Okay, Mary Moylan, right. I recognize that.

CC: Yeah.

JD: How did you get involved with or linked up with Coletta? I mean, they're down in D.C. It's not that far. But you weren't involved with the Furies or anything, were you?

CC: Yeah, I was.

JD: Okay.

CC: I was involved with the Furies as a friend. I used to stay over there. I used to visit them. We were kind of—yeah, they kind of pushed up in the direction of more Women's Movement, because we were more like with the Black Panthers and involved with them. At that point, the Black Panthers were supposed to be the ones doing the health clinic, but because everybody was reacting to the Black Panthers so strongly, and also they got arrested for—there was an infiltration. This was all like so long ago I don't remember anything that happened exactly, but they ended up—there was a murder of some sort that involved one of the lawyers. It was just all—they were going to court. We were going to their court case all the time, and the people in Washington were saying, "What are you involved with them for? They're just men," and blah-blah-blah. They were just like really giving us a bad time all the time. And so—.

JD: And you're referring to—when you say "we" you mean the Ida Brayman House, basically?

CC: Yeah, Ida Brayman House and—yeah, they were just giving us a really bad time, because we would go there. We were on a softball team with them. We used to play softball there, in front of the White House. There was a league that we played with them and with the Furies. A lot of people—like, it was Helaine and, oh, Ginny, I don't know—a lot of people were playing softball, too. There was a lot of stuff going on. So, we were—but so, anyway, so Coletta and I got involved because we used to go out to bars and everything. And we got involved there and we—she ended up moving to Baltimore at some point and didn't live in Ida Brayman. We actually rented a house across from the

other place.We lived right across the creek on that block, whatever that is. I can't remember.

JD: You said it's near Montpelier Street?

CC: Yeah. It was like one block over. It's the street between Montpelier and the bigger street up there that the stadium used to be on. You know, it's just really weird. I should look it up on Google, but I don't want to take the time to do that right now. But anyway, yeah, so we lived—so Coletta and I moved in there. But there was actually other people with us at first. It wasn't just Coletta and I. We had other—it was kind of like a commune of sorts. But it ended up with Coletta and I. And then, she got her daughter back, got Kara, and Kara came and lived with us.

And so, we—we just worked at the Press for like,you know, I forget from what year it was. Was it [19]72 to—we moved in [19]77, so like five years. And we had actually moved to another place at the end of that period. We moved to California in [19]77.

JD: Right. So, what you were describing—oh, by the way, is it Homestead Street?

CC: Yeah, it's Homestead Street! There we go!

JD: Okay, yeah. Good to know.

CC: Yeah, yeah, I lived at three places on Homestead Street, yeah.

JD: You describing the print shop, it was originally started by men, or was it men and women?

CC: It was these two guys, and then they had an employee. It was more—it was in a commercial print shop. And then, Diana Press decided—they asked them to run the

press in the back. So, Diana Press started in the back of the building, just with the press, just with one press. And so, that was just women, and they were separate from the Paine Publishing but they did their printing for them. So, they did the, you know, and there was another woman up at the front. She did the typesetting at first.

And then, when these guys didn't want to do it anymore, they said, "Well, you can have the typesetting machine, and you can take over the payment or whatever it was on it, and you can take over the lease." And we said, "Okay," but then all the other people dropped away, because they did not want to commit, and at that point you needed people to sign papers and to do things, you know, legally. And nobody wanted to do that, and so [0:25:00] they started to drop away. And it ended up just Coletta and I, and there was one other person for a while, and then that person dropped away.

And so, we ended up taking on more responsibility. We ended up buying another press. We bought a plate-maker. We bought things on credit and leased things. And we started to grow. And we had a lot of—in that—right around ( ) there was a lot of nonprofits there. I don't know if it's still like that. But, like, Arthritis Foundation was in our building, and we did all their printing. And we started to do printing for all these people in the area. And we ended up getting one of the first Xeroxes that came out and we had it in the front of our building. When we took over the front part, we had a Xerox machine, and then everybody from the area used to come in and use our Xerox machine. And we just had a—they could just—had a monthly account. They'd just keep track of how many copies they made, and then we'd bill them. And so, that was a little quick print and copy place.

JD: Uh-huh. To rewind just a little bit, I wanted to clarify something. I don't know if you remember the *New Women's Survival Catalog*?

CC: Oh, yeah.

JD: There's a nice long narrative about the early days of Diana Press in there. It's unsigned but it looks like maybe people from—maybe you and Coletta wrote it. It's not clear. But one thing it says in there is that the men in the print shop were asked to leave, and I didn't—.

CC: [Laughs]

JD: Yeah, I was just curious—you know, I don't want to repeat that if it's not true.

CC: [Laughs]

JD: But I didn't know if that was just incidental the way you just described it.

CC: They might have been asked to leave, but it was *their* place.

JD: Right.

CC: I don't know. I mean, they might have—maybe they—who wrote that? I don't know. I don't remember there being any antagonistic thing with them. They were already—they were done. They didn't want to do it anymore.

JD: Yeah.

CC: As far as I remember.

JD: Okay. I guess, you know, it's—some of those kind of particular details I don't want to, you know, put them out there if your memories are different.

CC: Yeah. I don't remember it really being antagonistic to them, though it could be that some of the other people wanted them to leave, and then they thought they left.

JD: Right.

CC: And that was why they did it. But they—one of the people there—like, there was a woman there who was a typesetter. She stayed on as our employee. And so, there wasn't really a lot of antagonism between those guys and us, really, I mean.

JD: Yeah.

CC: As far as I—but I wasn't that way. I wasn't really like that separatist at that point. I was—I worked with men and women at that point, and I didn't really have that kind of issue. But there were people there who were. They were. Maybe that's why—and that may be why they left, too. I mean, it's been a long time, and I haven't kept in touch with those people, so I don't know.

JD: Who were the other women involved, other than you and Coletta at the founding?

CC: There was a group of people that were from—friends of Ann. I know Ann Gordon was at the house, at Ida Brayman, and she had a new relationship, and I can't remember the person's name, but she was there. I can picture her, but I can't remember her name. And there was probably other people that may have left before I even got there that I don't know, because I wasn't doing it right at the beginning. So.

JD: Well, what's her name? Erma Randall?

CC: Erma was a friend of mine from printing school. I went to Visual Arts Institute in Baltimore and did some illustration and printing there. And she was going to

school there for printing and she was working at some big—I don't what the—big bakery downtown. I forget the name of the bakery. She was a printer there, in-plant. And she ended up coming to work for us, not at the beginning but like more in the, like maybe 1975 or so, [19]74 or [19]75. I know that also Nancy Myron worked for us for a while, too. And she was—she had been a Fury.

JD: Right.

CC: She worked there for a while, more in design (elements), but she did other things. She did other production, as well, but she didn't—she lived in Baltimore for a little while. But she was friends with Charlotte, you know, Bunch-Weeks.

JD: Right.

CC: She was a friend of hers. So, we had a lot of contacts with, you know, Washington. And they also started the journal *Quest*, that journal.

JD: Exactly.

CC: And we did all the printing for that.

JD: Yeah.

CC: We did that.

JD: Why do you think—what did you want to do with Diana Press? Like, why—I think it's fair [0:30:00] to say that you and Coletta are the founders. Are there any other people I should mention as founders?

CC: I would say it would just be us. Erma was more of an employee and a printer. She didn't have any real political, you know, interest at all. We were very much interested in getting women's work out there. We, you know, there was quite a lack of

publishing women. And we were, you know, especially like our first book, real book, was—besides the other one, the other poetry book, we did the *Songs to a Handsome Woman*, the Rita Mae Brown book.

JD: Um-hmm.

CC: Was one of our first—I think it was our first one. And we decided that, yeah, we could do this. You know, we could produce the entire book. We could do, you know, not only the design, but the printing and the binding and also the distribution of it. So, that was a big thing. So, Coletta really had a vision. Colette was really coming from it from more of a, you know, from the publishing angle, and was also friends with—I don't know if you know the Daughters, Inc., you know, June Arnold and all those folks in New York.

JD: Right. Yeah, I'm aware of them.

CC: What's that?

JD: Yeah. I haven't looked into them too much, but I am aware of that company.

CC: Oh, yeah, they were a very big supporter of us. They gave us money. They even gave us money to keep going when we didn't have money, [laughs] because I didn't get paid ever. I mean, I worked like sixty to eighty hours a week and never made any money, you know, so.

JD: [Laughs] Yeah.

CC: They kind of helped us out.

JD: I mean, one of the things that's most interesting to me—well, there are several things. It sounds like, like you said, you would describe yourself at the time as

anticapitalist, and I think that comes across in Coletta's writings from then, too. I mean, she—I think it's—there are several articles from *The Furies* magazine, newspaper, that are talking about how feminists need to control—how *women*, excuse me, just women in general need to control their own institutions. And from one angle, Diana Press was a small business. From another angle, it's a anticapitalist workers coop, or even just a workers coop that's critical of capitalism. Like there's an interesting tension, because you had to pay the bills, but also there's a very strident criticism of capitalism. And I think that's really very interesting to me, and I'm kind of curious if that was something that came up.

CC: Well, it was one of those contradictions that you find yourself in, you know, when—you know, coming from being on the left and anticapitalist, and then you're trying to, like you said, pay the bills and have a business and you start to—all of a sudden, we're getting a business education. It's like we went—all of a sudden, we were in school, [laughs] learning how to do it. And it was a revelation to us that, you know, that people who were in business, they weren't necessarily ripping people off, but they were just trying to—you know, they weren't trying to like rake in excess profits. They were actually trying to just scrape by most of the time, and there was a very little amount of margin that was allowed in a small business. Now, when you talk about corporations, that can be a little different. So, we were coming at it from more of the small business angle and we were much more sympathetic to other people who were in business, as well.

And that's how—I think that's how we got involved with FEN, or Feminist Economic Network, is that we were more interested in seeing women be able to, you

know, form businesses, but also have that network that supports them so that they can do what they want to do and, you know, create the social change that we want to do, you know. So, that was kind of where we were coming from, and we got really slammed by the Women's Movement for being capitalists, pretty much, then. It's like we were turned—it was turned on us pretty much. So, we—when we hit Oakland, the community here did not go for that at all. They were very much, you know—they didn't like FEN. They didn't like all that stuff going on that we had been involved with in Detroit and everything, so.

JD: Yeah. I mean, that's—there's a lot to talk about there. Thinking about FEN, yeah, how did—which stands for Feminist Economic Network—how was it that [0:35:00] Diana Press got involved with FEN?

CC: Well, that's because we—I can't remember exactly, but we knew the people with the feminist—all the credit unions, as well.

JD: Right.

CC: Joanne Parent and also the—Laura (Kay) Brown from Oakland from the Women's Center. We knew Judy Grahn and Wendy Cadden in Oakland. We used to come out to California and we knew people out here. And we were—we didn't really know the people in Detroit, the credit union there, but then when we did, they actually gave a loan to us when we were in Baltimore. And so, we kind of knew—we kind of connected in that way.

And then, they invited us to come to—as our business, they invited us to come to a big conference, I think it was, in Detroit. It was right around Thanksgiving, and I went

to visit my parents there and my brothers and sisters, and we went out there. And Colette and I both went, and we decided to become involved. We listened to what people had to say and we decided to do it. And that's where we kind of stepped in, [laughs] maybe in over our heads, because the people we were involved with, you know, knew a lot more about things than we did. And I didn't have a business background, so I was just learning as I went along, and so it was pretty intense.

And we had to commit—actually, meant—went to having our business be part of it, but also to having one of us be on the board, on the board of directors, and so, we got involved that way. So, I did that, so then I had to even learn some more and go to a lot of different kind of meetings. But it was a very interesting time. And a lot of people ended up, when the whole thing kind of come down in Detroit, and they lost the building there, they moved to Baltimore. And then, that's when we were talking, you know, with our friends here at Oakland who had the Women's Press, and they were needing help with their operation, as well, so we decided to move out here. We decided to get out of Baltimore and to come to Oakland. And so, that's how we ended up at Oakland, because of all the connections we had.

JD: Yeah. Well, I—you know, the story of FEN is a very complicated story, and I'm trying to write about it. And, you know, there's all these different accounts of what happened, and some of them are very, very polemical. And I guess one thing I'm kind of curious about is why was there such a fierce backlash against FEN? I mean, you know, there's the—.

CC: I'm not quite sure, except that people were—there was something going on with all the credit unions, which we weren't really involved in. There was a lot of things about that. And you'd think that because they were helping people with, you know, with loans and money and all that, that that—it was basically part of the capitalism thing, but they—for some reason, they were having their own issues about expansion and going larger, and there was—I really don't understand that. I read the account you gave me of what was going on and I know on a personal level what was going on. I knew that Joanne Parrent was in a relationship with someone at the time who was breaking up.

JD: Valerie Angers.

CC: And that they were totally like—there was a total fierce animosity going on. And she, this other person, kind of rallied a lot other people around her. And so, there was something about like that, very vindictive kind of stuff going on that I didn't really totally understand.

There was also a backlash, I think, because of the health clinic in Oakland that some people in the movement, in the Women's Movement or Lesbian Movement, really were not really supportive of them. And, to tell you the truth, they were the people who had a lot of money, you know. They were, you know, because the health clinic had a very good income base, that they actually helped us in our move. That's how—when the whole thing—when I read that account of why they said that we overextended ourselves when we moved to Oakland and we didn't have the commercial printing base, which we didn't really, but I think that we always relied on other organizations to help us out. And so did the Women's Clinic help us out tremendously in our move financially.

And also that, you know, when we came to Oakland, the model for the management [0:40:00] thing, style, was very much different than what we had operated in Baltimore. Because, before, Coletta and I used to make the decisions. We used to—we were pretty much in agreement about, "Well, we were going to do this or we were going to do this. You know, we're going to go to this, we're going to publish these books, and we're going to buy the paper with this, and we're going to—," you know, we just were really—we (were really) together.

And then, when Coletta and I did not agree anymore on things, and then she pulled out this management team idea. And I'm going, "You know what? You know, people want to sell off all the equipment so that they can pay their salaries." I said, "Well, that's not going to work, because then you'll have nothing to print with if you sell the press." So, I think what was happening is they wanted to be like a publishing company that just farmed out everything.

JD: Oh.

CC: You know, because I know the first thing they did with that insurance money was to publish Pat Parker's hardback book and Judy Grahn's hardback book, and they had to send those out, because we couldn't do that kind of binding anyway. And so, it was kind of like that's why I think they wanted to go with it, whereas I was more coming from it as, "Well, we'll do our own work and we'll publish our own stuff." But we really didn't have the capability unless we expanded our equipment to do things on a bigger scale. And so, I think that, like I was reading a thing that said they didn't have enough people that could operate stuff, and I think that's probably true that we would have had

to, you know, figure out a way to get more skilled people in there. But I, you know, once we were at, you know, on opposite ends, Coletta and I, it's like the whole thing was ripping apart. Because we had been kind of the foundation of it, and once we didn't do it anymore together, it was kind of like it wasn't going to happen that way, so.

JD: Right.

CC: So, I was pulling farther away.

JD: And you were still a couple, or had you broken up already?

CC: We broke up, I'd say, in [19]78.

JD: Okay.

CC: After we were out here. And it was—we broke up like in, I think, around February or something of [19]78. It was about a year after we got here.

JD: Okay.

CC: And we were just not—and then, I was still working with the press, but at that point, it was just not—we were just not in agreement. And, you know, I just couldn't—I couldn't see people who were making decisions about things who really had no—they hadn't been with the press very long, they didn't really know the history of it. I really felt that they were trying to just sell everything off. I mean, I just couldn't believe it. I was just like going, "Oh, really? You're going to sell that piece of equipment so you can pay the bills for a month or two? And then, what are you—how are you going to pay the bills after that?" You know, so I was kind of disgusted with it all.

JD: It sounds like that was a really tough move. I mean, to me, it's interesting, one thing that's really interesting about Diana Press is that it really kind of straddled different

parts of the Women's Movement. Just a few minutes ago, you said, used the phrase "both the Women's Movement and the Lesbian Movement", which obviously there's overlap, but also, you know, this very strong critique of class. That's an interesting thing in Diana Press. Like, a lot of other feminist businesses, they didn't make a point of working, having a working class business, right? That seems to be something really important. And so, there's these different things going on. And I don't know, I mean, where—I guess kind of what I'm thinking is that in some ways Diana Press—sometimes it seems like different parts of the Women's Movement tried to pull it in different directions. [Doorbell or other buzzer sounds]

CC: Yeah, that's probably true. [Laughs] That's probably very true. Yeah, not having seen it from that way, I mean, I think that we were more focused at that time of being lesbians and, you know, the Lesbian Movement, but yet we were part of a lot of other things and still associated with a lot of different people. And, yeah, so, yeah, I think you're right. You know, we did like to think of ourselves as being working class, to be working people.

JD: And so, when you say the Lesbian Movement, you're using that as almost describing a different movement than the Women's Movement?

CC: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. There was a different—definite different group and a different—in fact, a lot of people in the Lesbian Movement did not like [0:45:00] a lot of people in the Women's Movement. I mean, there was a lot of that going on. And it got narrower and narrower. I've got to say that's one of the reasons why I really got away from a lot of things, because I just felt that the more you started categorizing yourself as

this or that, the more you boxed yourself in with these labels, the less and less you were able to work with anybody. So, you know, kind of just—kind of isolating yourself.

JD: Um-hmm. You mentioned that really the main motivation for the Press was—well, my sense is that it started as a print shop. And then Rita Mae Brown, from what I understand, she brought the manuscript for *Songs for a Handsome Woman* to the Press, and it's almost like—is it fair to say that Diana Press kind of almost without planning to became a publisher of books?

CC: Exactly. I think that, though, Coletta was—it was more her vision of that. I think that she was friends with Rita and she, you know, she brought a lot of that with her and she had that vision. She was the one who dealt with a lot of authors. She was the one who was very well-read and knew lots of people. I mean, we would go to, you know, different print conferences, like West Coast Print, and we'd talk to people there. You know, we knew Adrienne Rich and we knew Audre Lorde and we knew, you know, Joanne ( ). We knew a lot of the people—we just knew them. You know, they were just people that we would go hang out with and stuff.

So, she knew—she was—Judy Chicago. We used to go down to L.A. and talk to her. And, you know, we were going to publish her book, and then that's when—that's one of the ones that did not get done, as well, because—and also that was way over our heads with equipment. We couldn't possibly have done what she wanted to do unless we farmed it out, because her book that she envisioned was so full of color plates and stuff, so, you know, color photographs of her *Dinner Party*.

JD: Right, yeah.

CC:So, yeah, so, we just knew a lot of people, and a lot of that was because of Coletta. Coletta knew lots of people—or the people in the Midwest. I mean, she knew all *The Ladder*—you know, *The Ladder* people. She just knew everybody.

JD: Right.

CC: Talked to everybody and wrote to everybody. And I'm sure you've got—if you've got her correspondence, you probably know everything she did. [Laughs]

JD: And *The Ladder* is the lesbian magazine from the [19]60s you're referring to, right?

CC: Right.

JD: Yeah, just for the purpose of the interview because, you know, the interview, it will be transcribed, and so occasionally I'll just kind of clarify things.

CC: Oh, yeah, yeah.

JD: You know, what did it mean to you—you said you never really made much money, but the Press was self-sufficient for many years. What did that mean to have a women's business that was self-sufficient?

CC: Well, to tell you the truth, we were undercapitalized, so that everything that we should have made in a salary went back in to invest in the business. And everything that I worked for years, you know, since I got no pay—except at the very end I think I had a stipend. You know, I didn't get any salary at all, and neither did Coletta. We didn't have any money and we were raising, you know, a child, and we were—you know. Coletta got some kind of support because she had been married or she had—I don't know exactly where she got some of the—you know, we just lived very frugally on a shoestring

budget and we just worked our butts off all the time. I mean, I just worked night and day, you know, at that place. That was just—that was it. I mean, we just felt that ( ). And I've always, because I had come from a background where I never had any money, I've always felt that all I can really do is work hard. You know, I had a really good work ethic and just worked, worked, worked.

And then, the people we got involved with, we did pay them. We would pay like Erma, or we'd pay Nancy, or we'd pay the other employees. You know, we'd hire somebody to run the collating machine or the bindery equipment and stuff. We would pay them, but we just didn't pay ourselves. [Laughs]

JD: Yeah.

CC: ( )

JD: Yeah, but it's interesting you—I mean, one of the things that Coletta wrote about in—it's a big article she wrote about feminist business in one of those issues of *Quest*. It's about how important it was to be able to [0:50:00] be economically independent from men, as a—.

CC: Yeah.

JD: As a, you know, kind of like an economic form of feminism. And I think that's a really interesting concept. You know, her writings are really—they're sophisticated in how she's talking about economic systems as like undergirding patriarchy in a way that I don't think a whole lot of people were thinking about then. It's more common now. But it seems like that's an interesting kind of philosophical part of the business and, yeah, you know, it's—I like that. That's one of the reasons why I'm

really I'm writing about Diana Press is that, you know, you all left a paper trail, and you can really see what the thinking was behind the business.

CC: Yeah, it was definitely—we had—I mean, like I said, Coletta really was—she was the thinker and the writer, and, you know, I was more the practical person and trying to get it done, what she wanted to have done, I would—I mean, it wasn't that I couldn't think about it or I didn't. I just didn't have a way to put that into words. But I was, you know—and I always—and the whole thing about being economically independent, you know, I've carried that all the way through to my own life, you know, where I've always—I mean, I ended up like not in the Lesbian Movement. I actually got married to a man and I have two children that are adults now.

And I have always been wanting to be independent, even though I was married and divorced, as well. I'm ten years divorced. But I always felt that, as a woman, I needed to keep working, and had my children in childcare, and I felt that, you know, to always—to do something for myself and, you know, have my own pension or my own, you know, my own way of keeping, you know, working and etcetera. I think that personally I passed that on to my daughter. My daughter is very much an independent woman, as well.

And so, I don't know. I think that it was something that we were trying to express through a real thing, through this institution of Diana Press. I felt very, very proud of it. I felt it was a symbol. We were out there with a lot of other women's presses, but also businesses, and also—you know, it was quite an accomplishment, and I have always felt that. I was very distressed that it kind of went under. I wish it would have kept going, but

I know why it didn't keep going. And it was sad in a way, and I feel responsible that it didn't go, but I couldn't keep doing it the way it was going.

JD: Yeah. Was there any back—I know you said there was backlash in Oakland and around FEN—but in Baltimore was there any backlash, I mean, even like harassment from the police or other activists who were not comfortable with what you were doing, or was it more just supportive?

CC: I think that Baltimore was very supportive. There was other—I mean, I remember that we had—there was a gallery called Tiamat Gallery. I don't know if you've heard of that gallery. It was an art gallery up on—it was on 25th Street, I think, up the street. But it was a women's art gallery, and I got to do a show there of my artwork. That was really nice. So, there was a lot of—I felt they were very supportive of the things that we were doing in Baltimore. I mean, I never felt—I didn't feel that antagonism until we moved. [Laughs]

JD: Yeah. But you never had like hassles from like inspectors or anything like that?

CC: Well, we did actually, because of my background with my arrest record with the FBI, the FBI went to our insurance agent, Nationwide, [laughs] I think it was, and they weren't going to cover our business insurance because of me. And Coletta read them the riot act. I don't know what she did, but she finally got them off our case and said, "You better darn, you know, insure us. You can't do that." I don't know what she did, but she wrote something or went and talked to people. But, yeah, the FBI didn't like me in Baltimore, so the FBI was always picking on me there.

JD: Wow. So, the FBI tried to prevent the insurance company from insuring the business, based on the fact you had an arrest for the Women Against Daddy Warbucks stuff?

CC: Yeah, yeah. Well, actually, that and I had gotten arrested in Baltimore at a demonstration for, [0:55:00] I think, the invasion of Cambodia. We had a big demonstration in Baltimore, and I was still doing antiwar stuff just up until I started the Press. So, I was not a favorite of the police in town or the FBI. And then, we were told we could not go—I was on parole there for several years, and we were told we could not go to the big mobilization in Washington when they had that big one. They came ( ) and said, "You can't go to that." And so, I said, "Okay, I won't go to that." They went to my parole officer. [Laughs]

JD: Huh. That's interesting. Have you ever seen your own FBI file?

CC: No. [Laughs] I can't imagine what it looks like.

JD: You know you can request it, and they'll send it to you, or at least they'll send part of it to you.

CC: I know, I know. I don't really care. [Laughs]

JD: Yeah. I've been doing that—you know, you can request, as a researcher, FBI files of people who are deceased or businesses.

CC: Oh, really?

JD:Yeah. And I've done that as part of my research because, you know, I'm looking at different kinds of businesses—feminist businesses, Black Power businesses, head shops, natural food stores—and because all of these businesses often had owners

who were activists, there's always a few businesses that had harassment from police, or some of the owners have FBI files. So, it's interesting to hear about your FBI story, because I also recently requested records from Baltimore police, which I probably will never get, but—.

CC: [Laughs]

JD: You know, it's interesting that you would have been on their radar.

CC: Oh, I was on their radar, I know, I know.

JD: So, I think we're getting closer to the end. I wanted to ask a few more questions.

CC: Okay.

JD: The fire? Can you tell me—do you know anything—how did the fire happen? Or was that still never—?

CC: There was no fire. There wasn't a fire.

JD: Oh, I thought there was a small fire at some point.

CC: Oh, we had—oh, not the—you mean the vandalism?

JD: Well, I thought there were two incidents. I thought there was a fire, and then I thought there was the vandalism.

CC: Oh, there was a couple of fires in Baltimore.

JD: Yeah.

CC: There was—okay, the Baltimore fire. The fire, the one that created a lot of damage was the one that happened upstairs. One of the employees had a candle that was lit, and she was helping with filling orders and everything. I don't know what happened,

but she let it burn down, and it started a fire above us, because it was like an apartment that we turned into an office. And when the firemen put the fire out, they flooded the basement, which was where we were—it was kind of a ground floor basement there—and it ruined a lot of our paper. So, that was probably the fire that you're talking about. That was upstairs, and it also ruined papers up there, probably correspondence and things. Coletta used that office, too, so—to fill orders.

JD: Yeah.

CC: Yeah, that was just a—yeah, I think we had more damage from water damage than anything, if I remember correctly.

JD: Okay, and that wasn't like the fire—?

CC: We had a couple—we always had a couple of fires there anyway, but they never got reported because, like, the press, like the motor would catch on fire, and we'd put it out. You know, I mean, those kind of fires, you're not talking about that kind of stuff. [Laughs]

JD: Right, okay. But it was an accident, and the damage was mostly the firefighters trying to put it out?

CC: Yeah, yeah, that's what they did. And then, from then on, we kept a—we just tarped—I think I put a cover over the paper every night or something, just to make sure nothing else would happen. But part of the problem was that those buildings were not really meant for businesses. It was more like apartments changed into businesses, and so, you know, there was also people—there was apartments even above that. I think there

was another one, third floor, that I'm not sure anybody lived there for a while, but, you know, old buildings—things can happen. [Laughs]

JD: Well, it's a CVS now. It's right down the street from us, because it was 12 West 25th Street, I think.

CC: Oh, yeah.

JD: And it—that was like Printers Row, right? Like there's like still a couple of bookstores on that block.

CC: Uh-huh, yeah.

JD: But there's like a CVS on the corner of Charles and 25th.

CC: Yeah, I remember. I went to Baltimore a while ago, and I remember that I saw that CVS there, yeah.

JD: Okay. So—.

CC: I forget, it was about 2001, I think it was. It's been a long time, about fourteen years ago. I stopped by there.

JD: So, what was the deal with the vandalism? That's something that is just so destructive. [1:00:00]

CC: Okay, the vandalism was real. It really happened. It was very traumatic to us all. We had alarms on the building, and somehow they did not get in through an alarm. We don't know exactly how they got in or what they did. But they destroyed a lot of stuff, a lot of things that I—I took it very personally, because the only artwork that was destroyed was my artwork, and that really ticked me off a lot. It made me upset. But we had, at that time, we had all this artwork that was supposed to be in one of the books, I

think with Pat Parker, and it was beautiful charcoal renditions, and a lot of things that were hanging all around the place waiting to be photographed and put into a book. But everything that was destroyed was pretty much my stuff, in terms of the artwork. And then, a lot of the production work, and then some of the equipment was damaged, etcetera.

But it was very, very specific type vandalism, and it was just very odd. And I've puzzled about it for a long, long time, not just at the time it happened. But it wasn't Coletta or I that did it. We had nothing to do with it. But I can't say that it wasn't somebody who was affiliated with us. We had a lot of employees at that point, and we had a lot of people working part-time with us and part-time with the Oakland Feminist Women's Health Clinic, as well. And they were also involved; that was Laura was involved and then, you know. So, there was a lot of people who were there. Plus, we used to let people use our place. We had a big warehouse that they used to practice music there, as well.

So, I don't really know. Somebody with a personal thing—I mean, it was made to look like it was a political act against us, kind of in a way that could have been a rightwing reaction, because we had been involved in the—we had printed a whole bunch of postcards addressed to Anita Bryant and we passed them out at the Gay Pride thing. [Laughs] We did a lot of things like that in the Bay Area, so I don't know. We don't know exactly why somebody just had it in for us.

And they either got inside through, you know, some kind of loophole in our security system, because it wasn't—I don't think it was perfect, but they could have

gotten in. There was a sliding bay door for a loading dock that was not real secure. So, you know, I don't know. But you'd think that we would have been called. We had the alarm system, and I was called all the time over there for nothing, you know, people throwing rocks at the place, so I don't know why that didn't trigger anything. But after it happened, I couldn't—I slept in that place like for like a month afterwards. I never went home. So, totally traumatic.

JD: Yeah, it sounds just terrible. I mean, it sounds like, if I heard you correctly, you think it's more likely that someone with a connection to the Press did it, someone from the Women's Movement.

CC: I think I'm probably—I don't know if I'm alone in that or—I mean, other people, I think, said something about that they thought we did to ourselves. We didn't do it. I mean, whoever the "we" was, Coletta and I didn't do it. But I don't know if somebody was thinking they were helping us out by doing something like that, but some of the production—some of the stuff that was destroyed was something that was already ruined anyway. We had had a run of something that was incorrectly folded, and that was destroyed. And it was no good anyway, so I don't know, you know, it gave us a way of delaying what we were (doing until we got)—figured out what we were going to do. But I just don't think—you know, I don't think that anybody—you know, I know that Coletta and I didn't do it. I don't know if anybody else who really cared about the Press would have done something like that unless they thought they were helping us out in some kind of way. You know, that's a possibility. And I don't want to point fingers and name names of anybody, but, you know, I suspected somebody for a while.

JD: Yeah. You know, I mean, this is also within the context of all the anti-FEN stuff—.

CC: Yeah.

JD: The article that Martha Shelley wrote, "What is FEN?"

CC: Right.

JD: And it's really quite vitriolic. I mean, you know, she has a whole section on how FEN is Fascist and—.

CC: [Laughs]

JD: You know, my—[sighs] part of what I've pulled out of her writings is that she had belonged to the Women's Press Collective, and she and maybe some other women there felt that Diana Press was trying to take it over—.

CC: Hmm, [1:05:00] yeah?

JD: And that—I mean, I'm not saying that she was involved with that, but there is—the way I'm writing about it, there is this context of incredible animosity towards Diana Press. And it's a very hateful environment that makes something like a willful destruction—from some, you know, if not her, someone who maybe was influenced by that piece of writing—possible.

CC: Yeah.

JD: And I'm never going to suggest that in writing, because there's just no evidence for it, but I think—.

CC: There's no evidence. Yeah, there's no evidence, but the climate was definitely—was not good at that point. So, you know, so I don't know. I don't know what

to say about that, but I know for a fact it was not Coletta or I that did it. And I don't know if anybody ever accused us of doing that personally, but, you know, I just know—I mean, we just didn't. I mean, we were there, we were together, you know, we were totally devastated. I mean, I've read what Coletta wrote about it and what she said to other people. I'm sure there were other people who would not have done it either, who were new to the Press, but wouldn't have done it either. But I do think that the climate, like you said, was—somebody could have done it based on what somebody else wrote. But I'm also saying that somebody might have done it to think they were helping us out.

JD: Insurance payment you mean?

CC: Yeah. But I don't—yeah, you know, they thought we would get an insurance thing out of it. I don't know. But I don't know why they would have thought that, but maybe they were overthinking the whole thing, because when you think about that, it's just not worth it. I mean, the psychological impact of having a vandalism done to your business—.

JD: Right.

CC: Is not worth the money that is involved in getting it—getting none of that money. It was like only eighty thousand dollars or something. It wasn't really, you know, a lot of money, not a sustainable amount, you know. It would have helped somewhat but—.

JD: Eighty thousand dollars was the insurance payment?

CC: I think it was like eighty-three thousand, I think it was.

JD: Yeah. And just for the sake of the—.

CC: It's not worth it. What's that?

JD: Sorry to interrupt. I was just going to say, for the sake of the interview, I mean, this was—for anyone who reads or listens to this, it was a terrible act of vandalism, including like pouring ink on things, destroying published works that were in process, destroying pieces of—destroying printing equipment, right?

CC: Yeah. There was—it was—yeah, there was things that were damaged, you know, the typesetting equipment. I can't remember all the stuff, but I just remember, yeah, they poured stuff on everything, so. It was lucky there wasn't a fire, because some of the stuff that they soaked—the books that were being printed and everything, they soaked them in solvent, too. I mean, they had poured lots of stuff on everything. That could have gone up in flames. That would have been really bad.

JD: And that was 1977, I think. Maybe you can summarize the rest of your time at the Press, although I think you already explained most of it. But you're not at the Press for much longer after that, are you?

CC: No. No, it was pretty much after that. And I think that that could have triggered a lot of the things that were going on with, you know—actually, that money that (they were) waiting for, that was one of the factors that drove me out of there, because I would not agree on how to spend that money. They wanted to go ahead and farm out all the work and—you know, instead of buying and fixing things up and getting it back to the way it should be, they didn't want to do that. And Coletta was going to a different kind of management style. She wanted a team.

And I said, “Well, you know what? We’re going to change it from being a corporation, partnership, or whatever and go a different route, but I don’t want to be a part of that.” So, that’s when I kind of pulled away. And I was involved at the Health Center, was working over there and kind of just waiting to see what was going to happen. And then, finally, I just broke away from the whole movement entirely and I just went a whole other direction. I got a printing job and got other jobs and just, you know, just left. Just left it all.

JD: Wow.

CC: (It kind of drove me) away. Yep. That was the end of it for me.

JD: When would you say you left the Movement? What year was that?

CC: I’d say in [19]78.

JD: Okay.

CC: And I left there and then I, you know—I ended up in a printing business. I actually went and became more of a typesetter [1:10:00] and designer. And then I ended up working for Pleasanton Unified School District for twenty-two years and I retired from there. I was a teacher, high school, graphic design and taught printing. And, yeah, I worked there, was the supervisor of their print shop. I retired like three years ago. And I’m—now I’m an infant-toddler teacher. [Laughs]

JD: Wow. And this is in Oakland, or where are you now?

CC: I’m—what’s that?

JD: Are you in Oakland still?

CC: No, no, no. I lived in Livermore for like thirty years. I went out there and I worked in Pleasanton for twenty-two years. And then, I moved to Richmond. I'm in Richmond right now, but I'm moving to Fairfield. My daughter is a kindergarten teacher.

JD: Okay.

CC: And she got me interested in early childhood, so now I do infant-toddler teaching.

JD: Wow.

CC: And I got an AA in it and I'm working. I'm retired and I'm still working part-time.

JD: Right. You said half-retired, right.

CC: Yeah, yeah.

JD: Well, that has been really good. I really appreciate you taking the time. I like to end interviews generally by asking if there's anything I should have asked and didn't, or things you wanted to add that maybe I should have brought up.

CC: Probably I'll think about it later. If I think of anything, I'll email you or whatever. But, no, I think you covered everything. It wasn't as painful as I thought. I kept thinking this was going to be very painful going back to the end of Diana Press and how—because I had so much invested in that.

JD: Yeah.

CC: And just felt really bad when it all ended and just kind of—you know. But, I mean, I haven't really kept in touch with the movement, the Lesbian Movement, but I do read a lot and I've kept in—I've read a lot of things about what's going on, but I'd be

interested in reading your ( ). I don't know if you've ever read the book—one thing you might have asked: Do you know that there's a section that covers some of that about, you know, Jeannette Foster, the woman who we did the book that was like the history of literature book that we did?

JD: I'm not sure. That sounds familiar but it's not—so, tell me—.

CC: I'll send you the title of that book. I just packed all my books so I can't look it up. I just realized I have everything packed to go. But I'll send you that, because there is a section that I was interviewed for that by—her last name was Joanne Passat, I think, P-A-S-S-A-T, [Note: Passet] was the author, and it was, uh, it's kind of a, you know, biography of Jeannette Foster. So, in there they talk about Diana Press.

JD: Uh-huh.

CC: Because they sued Diana Press, actually, her estate.

JD: This is coming back to me. It's—the woman's book. She was a lesbian like in the [19]30s or [19]40s or something.

CC: Yeah.

JD: And she has—right. Right, right, right. And they—yeah, I am familiar with that. But, no, if you can send me the title again.

CC: Okay.

JD: Let me just—so, I'll go ahead and turn off the recorder.

CC: Okay.

JD: And I just wanted to do a few quick business questions.

CC: Okay.

JD: So, let me just save this real fast, too.

CC: If you need to mail me something, I have a new address, too.

JD: Right. I was going to ask: For the copy, would you just prefer a CD or a digital file? I can do either way.

CC: Digital is fine.

JD: Okay. I think I can share that with you online. It should be fine, depending on the file size.

CC: Okay.

JD: Let me ask this. I was going to send you a consent form in the mail, and you can just drop—I'll have like a self-addressed stamped envelope, and you can return it. But what's your address?

CC: It's 2041 San Angelo Street, Fairfield, California 94533.

JD: 94533?

CC: Yeah.

JD: 2041 San Angelo Street, okay.

CC: Yes.

JD: And is it—I just—in my book, is it okay if I spell out your name, C-A-S-E-Y, or do you prefer KC? I didn't know if you had a preference.

CC: Oh, no, C-A-S-E-Y is fine. That's what I went by back then.

JD: Okay.

CC: And just my initials, it was just a nickname anyway, because my name is actually Catherine.

JD: Oh, okay. Gotcha.

CC: Yeah, and then, what happened was that later on when I was at work in Pleasanton, they hired this kid named Casey, with a C-A-S-E-Y, [1:15:00] and so, then my boss changed my name to KC. It was like, "What?!" I don't ever get to pick my nicknames.

JD: Yeah. Do you ever—you haven't kept in touch with Susan Rennie or Kirsten Grimstad, who did the *New Women's Survival Catalog*, have you?

CC: No. I was not as much friends with them as Coletta was.

JD: Okay. Because I'm going to reach out to them to see if they will maybe give me permission to reproduce some of the photographs in their book. You know, there are some really great photographs of Diana Press in there, and I didn't know if you know of any others.

CC: I don't know. I don't know who else has got pictures, but I wonder if I—I don't know if I have any.

JD: Yeah.

CC: I wonder if I've got some. I'd have to go—I probably don't. I wasn't big into taking pictures back then. I might have had a couple. I'll have to go back. If I find any, I'll give them to you.

JD: Okay, I appreciate that. Yeah, you're not still in touch with either Coletta or Erma?

CC: No. Erma had moved to Detroit. And when we doing that building there, and I don't ever know if she moved back to Baltimore. Her family—she had twin daughters

and a son, so she might have moved back to Baltimore. And so, I don't know. She would be—she's a little bit older than me, so I don't know. I have no idea. And Coletta? I'm not sure. I don't know where she's at.

JD: Okay. Okay.

CC: Yeah.

JD: Well, this has been really nice. I appreciate—I really appreciate your flexibility.

CC: Okay. Okay, Josh.

JD: I'm going to send you the stuff in the mail and I'll send you a copy of what I've been working on writing, and if you see any inaccuracies or anything, you can let me know.

CC: Okay. Okay, great.

JD: Okay. Thanks so much, Casey. I appreciate it.

CC: Alright, Josh.

JD: Okay.

CC: Alright. Good luck with this!

JD: Thank you!

CC: Bye-bye.

JD: Bye.

[Recording ends at 1:17:34]

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Sally C. Council