

**A C T U P
O R A L H I S T O R Y
P R O J E C T**

A PROGRAM OF
**MIX – THE NEW YORK LESBIAN &
GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL**

Interviewee: **Lola Flash**

Interview Number: **091**

Interviewer: **Sarah Schulman**

Date of Interview: **July 08, 2008**

ACT UP Oral History Project
Interview of Lola Flash
July 8, 2008

Tape I
00:00:40

SARAH SCHULMAN: Okay, so we usually start, if you could just say your name, your age, today's date, and where we are.

LOLA FLASH: Okay.

JAMES WENTZY: and you'll be talking to her.

LF: So, do I say my name is Lola Flash, or just Lola Flash?

SS: Either one is fine.

LF: Okay. All right. Uh, my name is Lola Flash. I'm 49 and a half. Uh, we're ha-, in Manhattan. Can I do that again?

SS: Um hm.

LF: Yeah? Okay.

SS: No, it's okay. We're not editing. It's all, just, whatever it is.

LF: Oh, really?

SS: Yeah, it's just transcripts.

LF: Oh, okay.

SS: Just say today's date.

LF: Say my name again?

SS: No, you're fine. What's today's date?

LF: Today's date is July the 8th –

SS: Two thousand –

LF: July 8th, 2008.

SS: And we're in your amazing new apartment.

LF: Yes, we're in my new low-income apartment.

SS: With a gorgeous view.

LF: Yeah.

SS: I have to ask you this right away: is Lola Flash your real name?

LF: It is, has been for a long time. Lola's my real name, my grandmother's name; my dad's mother. And Flash just seemed to work with my photography.

SS: And what happened to your other last name?

LF: I left it at the courthouse.

SS: {LAUGHS} Okay, okay.

LF: Yeah.

SS: Okay. So the way that we've done this is that we think it's really important to show who everyone was before they come to ACT UP; before they came to ACT UP. So with each interview, the first tape, which is like 40 minutes, is usually about who you were in your life before you got into AIDS activism. So that's what we're going to start with.

LF: All right.

SS: So where were you born?

LF: I was born in Montclair, New Jersey, just over the river.

Parents are both teachers. Went to college –

SS: Okay, let's start with Montclair, New Jersey.

LF: Uh huh.

SS: And Montclair, New Jersey is now this hip, expensive, bourgeois, sophisticated suburb.

LF: Um hm.

SS: But what was it in 1959, when you were born?

LF: Then, it was still kind of bourgie, you had a lot of really wealthy people who lived in Upper Montclair. And then you had people, like myself, who lived in, just regular Montclair. So there were a lot of middle-class black people that lived there, as well as lower middle-class people. But it always had a really strong educational system, which my mom taught in, and was actually a principal in.

So it's, I think it's changed a bit. But I don't think it's really changed so much. And I think there's always been that sort of money in that neighborhood. And the taxes is what's driving you crazy, that; the land taxes were crazy. But it was a great place to grow up.

SS: So you lived in a house, you had a yard, you rode your bike. I mean is that—

LF: Yeah, I rode, rode my bike; played tennis; went skiing. Most of my friends were white, because those were the kids that afford to do things that my parents could afford to give me. But I do have some close black friends from Montclair, still. And I don't really have that many of— a few of my white friends

I still see, but it was kind of weird. I feel like on Friday nights, I would go out with my black friends. And then on Saturday nights, I would go out with my white friends. It seems like it wasn't quite as mixed or as integrated, so far as the way that we hung out.

SS: Did you do different things?

LF: No, pretty much the same thing; just with different people. So I think I've always been like that; enjoyed going, being with different groups, and not feeling like I have to sort of just say I'm with this one group. And now I guess it's more mixed, my friends are more mixed.

SS: So your father was a teacher also?

LF: Yeah. Both my parents were teachers. And my dad was in the Newark school system. And Mom was in a Montclair school system.

SS: So which came first; being an artist or being gay?

LF: I feel everything; it all came t-, it's all the same point. And I always – I guess for me, and I guess a lot of people that you've interviewed that are my age group; there wasn't the *L Word*. And so I really didn't know I was gay. I just thought I was like from Mars or something. I didn't really like boys. I liked hanging out with boys. I was always the only boy at the – I mean the only girl; that was a good slip – at the birthday parties. I would never go to, I never had dresses. My mom – in fact, there's one picture I have in a dress. And my mom is like, she said after I took the dress, after I got out, got finished getting my photo taken, that I just was crying, I was so upset. And she said, from that day on, she

never made me wear a dress again, because she said, it made me so sad that she didn't want me to feel that way.

And I was always, I can remember going to restaurants, and seeing – I remember this one guy, I remember seeing him. He had this yellow-black shirt on, striped shirt. And I was like, I said to my mom, Mom, that shirt would look so cool running. So I guess in my own mind, I could see the blur of how it would look, or somehow I knew that motion would make that shirt look really different.

And my mom said even growing up, lots of times I would say things, and she would just kind of nod, I don't really know what you're talking about, but okay, Lola. I mean, so they were both very supportive, my parents.

So yeah, I've always looked at things differently. I've always felt really different. But because my family is very supportive, I've never felt weird or that different wasn't right.

**SS: So did you have an arts education from a very early age?
I'm sure in Montclair schools, there was something –**

LF: Yeah. And we used to, my mom used to take me to – every Saturday, if I wasn't in some class, I would go to some kind of craft store. We were making all kinds of thing – boats, with all kinds of – I think they're called, I forget this wood, but this really thin wood, we used to use, to make boats and put them in the oven, and I was, I made model cars. Those weird velvet paintings, I would make those things. So I was always doing art. And as soon as I wanted a

camera, my parents bought me a camera. They got me a darkroom, which I set up, at that time, in my boyfriend's house. He had an extra bathroom.

So when I was in high school, I was shooting a lot. I started out shooting.

SS: What was your first subject matter?

LF: I just did kids in school. I was working for the school yearbook. So I just did people. I regret that I didn't do much of my family, now that I'm older, and no one's really around anymore. But, I thought I was this fancy artist, and that that wasn't part of my art. I wasn't a family photographer, I was an artist. But you look back on things. I don't regret anything, but I suppose that maybe would be one tiny regret; that I don't have a lot of photographs that I shot of my family.

SS: When did you become aware of photographers whose work would influence you or excited you?

LF: I really think not until college. Although my parents were really well-educated, they weren't really into the art world. So we didn't go to galleries and museums. We went to museums, and we didn't go to openings, and I don't really think that I sort of had in my mind a favorite artist or favorite photographer before I went to college.

SS: Okay.

LF: I went to Maryland Institute of Art in Baltimore. And again, my parents were really supportive. They paid for the whole thing. I would come

to New York, and Dad would take me to, around Sheridan Square. Is that where it is? Yeah, like right around Time-, Macy's.

SS: Oh, Herald Square.

LF: Herald Square. Yeah, Herald Square, and just buy whatever I needed. And I'd go and like, use it all up. So in that was, I suppose I was very privileged, to be able to just do what I wanted, and have the equipment, and not have the bills afterwards.

SS: Yeah.

LF: So, it was there. I had some great teachers there. And one of my favorite teachers at Maryland Institute of Art is Leslie King-Hammond, and she's actually going to be in this project that I'm doing, this series.

So it's kind of like it's all, the cycle, which, I think, is always, that's what life is, it just keeps going around, and –

SS: So what about politics? Were your parents politically active?

LF: My moms did sort of, towards the end. I think, my parents were separated, although they kind of raised me together. My mom, I lived with my mom for the most part. So I think being a full-time educator and a parent was pretty much all she could handle. And my dad was pretty much tennis and teaching. So they weren't really political. I guess – I don't know if this is a racist thing to say, but I think that it's kind of hard to be a black person and not be political, because you have to think about what's going on in your environment,

and if you don't do anything about it, no one else is going to. So I think in that sense, yeah, they were both very strong. And they weren't, they taught me the golden rule, and, so, no, I don't think that they were really that politically minded per se.

SS: Did they take you on marches, or anything –

LF: Not really.

SS: No.

LF: Not really. But they taught me how important it was to read, and have my own opinions. They were very helpful with my homework. But I wouldn't say that they were really outspokenly political.

Now my great-grandfather, great, great-grandfather, he started several Y's in his day. That's when the Y's, or that's when the Jim Crow laws were around. So at that time, the Y's were separate. So they had the black Y and the white Y. And that was a really amazing thing that he did, because it was basically the only place where black people could learn how to swim; they got, a lot of people who were good at sports, they got scholarships. And it was a real place where the black community learned their manners; they had all kinds of events there. And that was a really big thing –

SS: He did that in New York City?

LF: He did that in Montclair, actually. He set up –

SS: Wow.

LF: – yeah, they did –

SS: You were third-generation Montclair?

LF: Yeah.

SS: Oh, wow.

LF: Yeah, lets see, great-grandpa, grandma, mom. I was fourth-generation. Yeah. So my grandmother even went to Montclair High. So yeah. So my great-grandfather, he was a real big shaker. And they actually just knocked that building down last year, and we're trying to build, we've been trying to organize a committee. We have a committee that has been trying to organize getting his name, be used for the school that they're building on the land where they knocked down his Y. So that we have all these memorabilia that I photographed.

SS: What was his name?

LF: His name was Charles Bullock.

SS: Bullock?

LF: Yeah, Charles Bullock. So he did one in Brooklyn. He founded one in Brooklyn, and also, I think, in Kentucky or something. So I think that a lot of my inspiration, and just the way I am with people is a lot, comes from him, like what I hear about him. They called him a little mayor. So I think the way he was with people, what I hear, his stories, I think that that's kind of trickled down to me.

SS: Well, we're exactly the same age. And so it's like the first 10 years of your life, black people, the civil rights movement and the black

power movement, on television, were using the kind of tactics that you later participated in in ACT UP.

LF: Mm.

SS: And how did your family, what was the message you were getting about those kind of tactics?

LF: Well, that's, to me, that was the whole thing, that I – I can't say I loved it. Whenever I talk about ACT UP, I can't say that I, I love the fact that I was able to do it, because obviously, it would be great if there was no AIDS, we didn't have to, to do that, to get together and fight for it. But I did feel like I missed out on those, those revolutions, and that I wish I would have, even been able to go to Woodstock. Those things are really part of history, that I knew that were going to be always talked about. So I felt that it gave me the chance to do all those things that I had learned about and read about and seen on TV, and try to help the cause. So definitely, it felt like, wow; now I've got my chance.

SS: Okay. So –

LF: Sadly.

SS: Yeah. So did you come out in art school?

LF: I totally did, yeah. I had a boyfriend in high school, like I said. And I'm still very close to his family. And I had a girlfriend, who oddly enough, just got in touch with me, a month ago; my first girlfriend. And she's living in Jersey now. So yeah, I was living in the girls' dorm. And that's pretty much the end of that story, it's like I figured it out.

SS: Okay, what year was that? Seventy-six, or –

LF: That would have been '77, '78.

SS: Okay, so that's, the women's liberation explosion is happening. Were you aware of lesbian artists, or were you looking at any feminist artwork at that time, or black artists?

LF: No. No, I really was not. I was – that was also around the nuclear disasters and stuff like that. I was going to Washington a lot, and going to demonstrations, and to be honest, I was just going to demonstrations just to kind of see, I don't know if I knew I was, why I was doing that; but just to kind of see the anger, see what the tactics were, see the – I think of the Iranian demonstrations. I can remember, they used to wear brown bags on their heads. And I remember seeing effigies of, like, all kinds of, I suppose there must have been –

SS: The shah?

LF: Pardon?

SS: The shah? Of Iran?

LF: Can't remember. No, who was our president then –

SS: Carter?

JW: Reagan.

LF: Rea-, no, Reagan would have been later, yeah.

SS: No, Reagan is 1980.

LF: So it would have been Carter.

SS: Carter.

LF: And there would have been effigies of places of wherever they were from. And that was the first time I saw effigies burning.

SS: Yeah.

LF: And so – yeah, I really wasn't that, I think I was just really sort of into my little art, and going to museums, going to the different Smithsonian Institutes, and drawing from them. I really was not – that sort of driven. And I think – I think the feminist movement, for me – I suppose that's where the divide; I think that the black – my blackness was more of an issue at the time than my femaleness was. And I don't know if that's because of me being gay, or because of having such strong women in my family that – I felt that the black thing, or I don't know what that was.

SS: Where were you living, after college?

LF: After Baltimore, I lived in Philly for four years. And sort of always following a girl. So my girlfriend lived in Philly, so I moved to Philly for four years. My relationships have always been four or five years. So after that four or five years, then I went to Atlanta. And actually didn't date anyone the whole time down there. Ended up staying there four or five years. I moved back, then I moved to New York. Well, I moved to Provincetown for awhile, then I moved to New York.

SS: So when you were in Philly, were you on the lesbian scene there at all?

LF: Not really. My girlfriend and I had a carriage house. And she used to get a lot of film, 4 x 5 film, from her, where she worked. And so I've always had a 4 x 5 camera, and they have, using the Polaroids, which now they don't make anymore, which is crazy! So she'd always get these 4 by 5 films. And we would just have friends over, and we would just play, we had a studio. We'd just play with the camera, get dressed up, make the cats or animals pose. And we did a lot of art. I think we went out clubbing a little bit. But for the most part, we hung out at our apartment, and friends would come over, and we would just make art. We had a lot of artist friends, and we'd go to their studios. And one of my friends was a glassblower; another friend was a really good painter. So, yeah, we really didn't do much there; other than have fun – politically.

SS: And what about in Atlanta? What were you doing there?

LF: Atlanta, I lived with my cousin. And – it was the first I really had my own place.

SS: You were shooting a lot, or –

LF: I was not shooting a lot. I had, to be honest, I had been partying a little bit too much in Philly. So I went down there to kind of just chill out and relax. So I just, I think I started waiting tables. And I worked for a photographer as an assistant. And one of the best things working with him is I was doing aerial photography, so I got into the mode of being high up. But it was all very boring kind of stock photography that he was doing. We weren't really making art, or anything like that. But it was a good job. Honest job.

SS: So what year did you go to Provincetown?

LF: In Atlanta, I met this woman who had a restaurant in Provincetown, so that's how I ended up in Provincetown. And that would have been – I'd like to say '87 or '88; somewhere around there. And that's where I met Sharon Niesp, who, when she met me, in Provincetown, and I don't know if you know Sharon, but she was really, she was like one of the big people that was in John Waters's films. She was Cookie Mueller's girlfriend.

SS: Oh yeah.

LF: And she had those beautiful green eyes, and blonde, crazy blonde hair. So she pretty much took me in. She saw my work, and she said, girl, you don't need to be in Atlanta, you need to be in New York. So that was my first apartment, was on Sixth Street between First and Second. We lived on the sixth floor; one bedroom. I mean, one room, we lived in, and she was nice enough to share it with me. So that was my in into New York.

SS: Let's talk about the Provincetown scene a little bit, because the '80s was just incredible for gay artists in Provincetown, and it's also the epicenter of the AIDS crisis at the same time.

LF: Mm, um hm.

SS: Can you describe what both of those worlds were like?

LF: Yeah. I mean, one minute, you've got Cookie Mueller coming up. And at that point, she's still looking so beautiful, but she can't speak. It's, I just always found it so amazing how it seemed like the instrument that people

used was taken away a lot. Like Ray, Ray Navarro, he lost his eyesight. It's just, sometimes it just seems so strange, how a lot of people, it just seemed to go in and affect those, the sort of heart of the person.

So yeah, one minute you'd have Cookie there, just kind of hanging out. The next minute, my friend Charles, from Atlanta came to visit; not telling me that he was sick. His boyfriend had told me a little bit about him being sick, but Charles didn't mention anything. He gets off the bloody ferry. And my girlfriend at the time rushes — she had been a caretaker — she rushes up to help Matt, hold, to help Matt, who was Charles's boyfriend, hold the other side of Charles, so that they could come down the walkway together. He was totally gone. He was this big, muscular guy, and he was — .

So it was, Ray. Ray came to visit me. And we were, one minute, we were at the fair, riding around on all the different rides, giggling and laughing. The next week, they call me and tell me that he had been diagnosed. And it seemed like the next week, he was gone. It was — and then, in between, I have like four or five shoots a day. I greet people in front of Spiritus [Pizza]. And I'd have a 12 o'clock shoot, and a two o'clock shoot, and just sort of spacing out through the day. I did nudes of all these wonderful people, because there were so many places I could take photographs of people, and not sort of have people be freaked out that they're nude. And the dunes. I did, like Munch, kind of, impersonation of "The Scream" on the breakwater. You know, that scream.

So it was a lot. It was, -- I suppose when you're in that scene, when you're in there, you don't really, you're just kind of dealing with everything. You don't, it's hard to reminisce, or to think about those times. But yeah, it was very – very hard.

SS: Also Jack Pierson is there; Nan Goldin is doing her Provincetown photographs. There's a lot of photographers there.

LF: Yeah. Well Nan was, I mean, I don't know why I'm not in any of Nan's photographs. I think I do know why; because at that time, I was more into being behind the camera than in front of the camera. Because Nan and Sharon were best friends. And a lot of those pictures that Nan has, that I see in books all over; I was there. But I just didn't push myself in front. Just like with John Waters. I was around John, I lived in his building. But — and I'm straying from the subject a little bit but –

SS: Okay.

LF: I just, I'm not in any of the John Waters films, because I just wasn't that pushy. But I – a lot of those photographs that I did shoot, I sold a lot. I did actually make a lot of money. I made, I was teaching in the, in the city, once I started my sort of Provincetown–New York thing. And I was making more money scooping ice cream in Provincetown, because I was also photographing a lot. And I would almost usually almost sell out, not to brag, but I would sell a lot of my photographs at the end of the year, that I had shot. So for me, it was quite a good, at that time, it was really good for me financially.

SS: How did you know Ray?

LF: Maybe I, I think I met Ray through Catherine [Gund].

SS: How did you meet all these people? Because you said '88.

When did you come to ACT UP?

LF: It was '89? Because see, when I was in –

SS: Provincetown –

LF: – yeah, I think it was '88. But that summer, then I went to New York – see, I only would stay for the summer and then I came to New York in the fall. For about 10 years, I did that. So I think it was the summer of '88, or the fall of '88, or '89. As soon as I came into the city and I heard about ACT UP, I just immersed myself in it. And I can't remember what demonstration it was, but I met Catherine –

SS: Catherine Saalfeld [Gund].

LF: – Catherine Saalfeld, when we went to, and Ray went to – and I think Anthony [Ledesma] and Aldo[Hernandez] – it was – when we went to Washington? The first time I had ever been to Washington, so I can't remember what that particular rally was called.

SS: Was it the big March on Washington in '87? There was an action at the Supreme Court, and there was the Dyke March was that – was it –

LF: Yeah –

SS: That was 1992. No.

LF: No, no, it wasn't that one.

SS: Okay.

LF: It was earlier.

SS: So it was '87.

LF: And we stayed in, in all these kind of strange basements of places, and –

SS: Oh the NIH action?

LF: Yeah, that was it.

SS: Okay.

LF: Yeah. So I actually got a ride down. I believe that's how we hooked up, was that I got a ride down with them. So, I don't know how much detail we need to tell about that, but yeah –

SS: So that's how you entered into ACT UP.

LF: Yeah. I can't remember much before – I remember that demonstration was just so incredible. And I think maybe I had gone to a few marches or demonstrations here, smaller ones, before. But in my memory, that seems to be the biggest one. That was sort of the beginning, for me, of my ACT UP time.

SS: Okay, so when you first came to ACT UP – did you used to go to the Monday-night meetings, or how did you fit in?

LF: Yeah, I did. I mean, gosh, I, I don't know how it is for you. Maybe your memory comes back, like, talking about it more. But I remember, I

mean, gosh, the Monday-night meetings; Wednesday, Thursday. It seemed like every bloody night there was another thing. I felt like – there would be something going on with the women's group. And that was something I felt like I had to, needed to go to. Then there was Art Positive.

So it felt, to me, almost any night that I wasn't at a meeting, I was probably in the hospital, visiting someone, or helping take over someone, what we did with Ray a lot, I don't know. I suppose other people have told you that, but we, because he couldn't afford 24-hour healthcare. And when he got the dementia, he would always jump, try to jump out of bed. So we would have to, – Julie and I, at one point –

SS: Julie Tolentino?

LF: Yeah, Julie Tolentino; we used to go from – Milk, or some club that Chip was doing?

SS: Chip Duckett?

LF: Chip Duckett, yeah. I did the flyers for, all the photography for it. We would go, at four o'clock, from the club to the hospital, to make sure that Ray would be okay for, from like the four to eight shift. Then his mom would come at eight. And then we would be able to leave.

And I can remember, we used to say, we used to always laugh, and say, oh, we can't wait to tell Ray what we used to do. Because we thought he would think that was very funny, that we came from the club to the hospital. But he never – never got better.

SS: First of all, you are forever preserved in history as the face on “Kissing Doesn’t Kill.” Right? That is, so many people own a picture of you, or have worn a picture of you. You became this emblematic face. And it’s ironic, because you always were behind the camera. So how did, can you just tell us the story of how that shot was taken, and –

LF: Well, I heard about it, I can remember, Julie and I, think, had just sort of started going out with each other. She really wasn’t too into it. But I was like, come on, Julie, it sounds like it’ll be fun. And I guess maybe through Craig?

SS: Who’s Craig?

LF: Craig – Craig Paull, possibly. Because we were quite close. Or Tom Kalin. One of those guys, you know, one of my close ACT UP friends, that told me about it. And it was fun. There was so many of us at the apartment, and just, they were just putting clothes on us, and fixing us up and everything. It was really fun, I can remember, because you really didn’t know who was going to be doing it. There were so many couples that shot for it. And I guess for me, it was kind of nice because Julie and I had kind of just started going out with each other, so, for that time period, it was nice to have that represent us, plus to be able to go national, and be serving a larger cause.

SS: What was the name of the art collective that produced that shoot?

LF: Gran Fury?

SS: That was a Gran Fury project?

LF: Yeah, it was Gran Fury.

SS: Okay, now, had you ever collaborated with them as an artist, or only as a model?

LF: No. No, it was mostly boys. I'm not going to say that they wouldn't have let me in. But – it was mostly white boys. And they did a great job. I'm just being specific about it, but – Art Positive is where I did more of my art, and contributed more art ideas.

SS: Can you tell us about that? No one has brought that up to us yet.

LF: Art Positive? Okay.

SS: How it got founded –

LF: Just to finish up on the ad, is that it's funny, because – I can see how models must be, because I can see how, Imam could probably just walk down the street, and no one can know her. Because that's how it felt. I could be, I was, at the time, I worked in Brooklyn. I mean the Bronx, excuse me. And I used to be standing there, waiting for the bus to come, and there is my big old face on the side of the bus. And no one knew it was me. And it's like, I, I thought it just looked so much like me. Same thing. I took my kids to the Whitney, and it was in the front of the Whitney Museum. And none of the kids noticed it was me. It was very, it's very strange.

And now, the younger generation have no idea that that's who, that I'm the girl on the poster. So it only has a certain amount of fame time. But I think that – those people who actually are, the younger group, younger students, who have done a lot of art history, or they've done a lot of just political history; they know about it. So it's kind of cool. I've done a few kind of things where I've talked to younger students, and they're like, oh yeah, you're that girl. That's kind of interesting.

But anyway, let's go on to Art Positive. We –

SS: How was it started?

LF: Gosh. I think it was started because of the need for people of color to have their input with what was going on with us and with, and doing it in a art way. For me, that was one of my favorite parts about ACT UP, was that whatever your specialty was, that that's what you were able to do. So for me, I felt, I suppose, thinking about art versus science; in some ways, maybe it feels as though science was more important, to deal with the virus. But the way that was all integrated, I feel like – being an artist was just as important. Being a club kid was just as important; giving out condoms, spreading the word.

So that was, to me, that was one of the real strengths of the organization. You felt really empowered by whatever your specialty was, however frivolous or however, how many ever degrees you had.

So that was what Art Positive was about. We did shows to bring awareness about the virus within our community.

SS: Who was in the collective?

LF: Gosh. Aldo Hernandez. David Wojnarowicz used to put, give us a lot of stuff. Because I think he was probably pretty sick when we were starting it. But he used to donate a lot of stuff. Keith Haring would give us a lot of stuff. I think that Anthony was in it; Anthony – I don't remember Anthony's last name. Ray's boyfriend?

SS: Yeah, it was Ledesma, or –

LF: It begins with a L, right?

SS: Yeah.

LF: And I think that Ray was in it. I can't really remember the others. I think Aldo would probably be able to tell you, give you the list of all the people. Because I can't think of any of the girls that was in it. That's kind of weird.

SS: Was Jocelyn Taylor?

LF: Yeah, I think, Jocelyn might have been. It's a little foggy.

SS: Okay.

LF: Yeah.

SS: So what were some events or projects that you guys did?

LF: You know, I can't, I remember we did a bunch of different things at PS 122; we did shows and stuff there.

SS: What kind of shows?

LF: We did group shows. I'm pulling at straws here, Sarah –

SS: Do you remember the work that you made for it? No?

Too bad.

LF: Gone, it's gone.

SS: What about House of Color? Were you part of that?

LF: No, but I do remember that. Was that an art collective as well?

That was maybe later on, after Art Positive, possibly.

SS: That was like Robert Garcia –

LF: Oh yeah. So could Robert have been a part? I think Aldo would be able to give you much clearer explanation of Art Positive.

SS: Okay. So you don't remember any of the actions there –

LF: Not a lot.

SS: Let's talk about the Clit Club.

LF: Okay.

SS: The Clit Club was like a hugely important place in the gay world at that time. And you were deeply involved in it. Can you just tell us what it was, and how it got started?

LF: Well, the Clit Club was – it was interesting, because we, Julie – I was with Julie at the time, when she started it. And she, we actually went to this performance. After this performance, a dance performance, because Julie Tolentino is a dancer. And we went, after, we went to have drinks. Just really quickly. We went to have drinks at this bar. And the guy whose girlfriend had, was also a dancer; he's talking to Julie, and he's like, ah, I'd really like to do

something with this space. Because it was this jazz club, and he wasn't making any money. Of course, then, the Meat District was a place, then, where no one wanted to go there. And he's probably kicking himself now, for not holding on to it.

Anyway, he let Julie have a night. And I was the head bartendress, with my boobs hanging out, and some kind of S/M-gear-looking thing on. And Aldo was the DJ, started off being the DJ. And that's right; Jocelyn was with Julie, started off with Julie, doing that. And –it was, it was great. I only worked there for about a year and a half, because after that, I moved to London. But for that year and a half, it was amazing. There was just so many types of women; sizes, colors, races, ages. It was, I think a lot of people talk about it, when they reminisce, about the fact that there was just so, such a conglomerate of people.

It was wonderful. The music was great. And as the years went on, it just became this institution for women who were coming out. And I can remember, coming back, even eight years later; and meeting, talking to the girl next to me. And she's, she's, she, I remember this one girl in particular, because she was from Bloomfield, which is right next to Montclair. And I was like, you're kidding me, I'm from Montclair. And she said, yeah, this is my first girl bar I've ever been to.

And I try and tell Julie, how many people I've met that tell me all the stories about it. Because it was really her baby. I worked there, and I was glad to support her, as I would support any close friend of mine. But another friend of

mine, Joyce; she met a girl there, and she ended up moving someplace exotic for five years, and it, it's really, there's a lot of really great memories there that I feel Julie was, helped create; this really happy, I think, loving community. And a lot of those girls, we're all still very close friends. It's like that's our family. Shigi was one of the people. So yeah. It's nice.

JW: We have to stop in two minutes –

SS: Okay, let's change the tape. Okay. Good, I want to ask you more about that.

LF: About the Clit Club?

SS: The Clit Club –

SS: Until the Clit Club, lesbian bar life was completely segregated in this city. I remember, in my young days, many clubs where black women were double-carded. It was like two separate worlds. And Clit Club was able to burst that apart. How did you guys do that?

LF: Well, it's funny, because I'm just making a parallel, and I just got chills, because, if Barack gets in, I think that that's what's going to happen. I feel like when, I suppose when the underdog is in power, heh, then you see a lot more, one sees a lot more, and it is more inviting. So I think that that was the idea, was to make everyone feel welcome. So –

SS: And how did you make everyone feel welcome?

LF: Well you know, I – I was just the bartender.

SS: Right it was your girlfriend, but you were talking about it every day.

LF: I think that Julie got people on the door that were – that knew who to let in and who to let out; who to let in, who not to let in. Julie's very quick. One thing, I really admire her quickness. If there's any kind of problem, or any kind of situation where they're not sure, they would just get Julie, and Julie would be at the door, and she'd be like, eh-eh-eh, or whatever. You know what I mean? Like, yes, no.

SS: Who would you not let in?

LF: A bunch of guys. Guys had to be with girls, unless they were, regular kind of guys. She always wanted to make sure that it was more girls than guys. One of the love of our lives — that's funny I said Ray – but Aldo, he was our DJ for a long time, until we got a girl DJ. So that, again, is one of things that was so great about ACT UP, was the way that we all got together.

But I think that part of it is maybe that girls went there knowing that it was going to be a more open environment. If you're going there feeling like you're going to be ripped off at the door, or interrogated, then you're going to go there with, feeling sort of defensive. But if you're going to go there feeling like this is a place that's going to invite you, you're going to go with a nicer feeling. And that's why, I think, once everyone was in there, it was a happy feeling. It started off being happy. You start off from home, when you're getting ready, knowing that you're going to a family affair, in a way.

I suppose in some ways I never really thought about it, because – it just seemed like it, the way it was. Maybe Julie, I think Julie has a very magical way of just making things flow together, from the way she made the club look, to moving things from here to there. We used to bring our TV, our, at the time, our VCR, from home. My Volkswagen was packed with all stuff from our apartment, because in the beginning, we didn't have a lot. As time went on, we, those things became stationary. But a lot of the stuff came straight from our apartment.

SS: So there you were, in ACT UP and completely transforming lesbian social life in New York City at the same time. But it's the same people — it's you, Aldo and Julie — making, in these two different spheres. But they're really interrelated. What was the relationship between the Clit Club and ACT UP?

LF: It just felt like we were, okay; almost like a costume change, , like this long play. We said, okay now, we're, now let's put on our ACT UP shirts; now let's, now we're doing this, now we're going to, you know, now we're in a army. Now let's go and look sexy, let's go, it's just – it was just part of the whole play of life. That was – I'll tell you, I've, in some ways, I think that's why I eventually — there's other reasons, too, some personal reasons — I think that's eventually why I had to leave and go to London. It was just too much. There was never a time when you could, I've never really been a TV person, but I mean – TV, forget about even pajamas. I feel like – my answering machine would have 30 messages on it. Sometimes I didn't want to deal with the answering machine;

Tape II
00:05:00

that was a whole day of work. It was just the constant, shower, dress, this. Then change, then that. It's like I could barely even remember actually working, teaching. It's hard to even remember that, how I made my money. I guess I was bartending, and I was teaching.

And yeah, supposedly, I guess that's why it's good that I was young, because I had a lot of energy, and it – I suppose when your friends are dying, it's very – it's, it's not, it's not very easy to get tired. It's, you, sort of, it keeps your momentum going.

And I remember, at the same time, my grandmother's friends were dying, and I'd say, hey, Grandma, what you doing? She'd say, oh, I'm just making biscuits for so-and-so. And I was like, oh yeah, I just came from a funeral, too. And thinking how bizarre that was, that this woman, 50 years older than me, just, we were dealing with the same thing.

SS: How did she receive that information from you?

LF: She, she, they were just very supportive. They were all s-, sorrowful for me, and. But I, I suppose, like a lot of people at that time; I wasn't really in close, close contact with my family. I'd go home for Thanksgiving and Christmas. But I didn't really go back and forth as much as I probably should have.

SS: Did they know what you were doing? Did they know about the Clit Club –

LF: They did, they, they didn't know about the Clit Club. I think eventually, I probably told them Julie had a club. I don't think I was brave enough to say "the Clit Club." And yeah, because they would sometimes see pictures of us, because it seemed like Julie and I did get photographed a lot. Because there was one point, when we used to sell a lot of buttons. We'd make these triangle buttons and sell them. So we'd have all these buttons all over us. I remember there was a, her grandmother actually found that picture; someone, one of her friends said, oh, isn't this your granddaughter?

So she called us. We have a big picture of you. So – yeah, I'm not sure if they really knew everything that was going on. But they would come to my openings and stuff, like at PS 122 they came to a couple of the openings. And I can remember the time my mom had, um – her, she'd just gotten remarried. And this guy bought her a fur coat, full length. And I was just like, please don't wear that coat, Mom. And she was like, I'm going to wear it.

And it was that, that sort of teen-to-twenty period when you're, just have those kind of fights with your parents. And I, when I look back on it now, now that my mom's not around, I think to myself; why did I even care what she was wearing? The fact that she wanted to support me and come along; but that's right when we were sort of, people throwing paint on, on coats, and there was a lot of anti-fur demonstration going on. And, but anyway, the point is that she came, and supported me; enjoyed my artwork. Because at the time, most of my artwork, all of my artwork was about ACT UP.

SS: I want to ask you a question, I'm not sure how to ask this. just talking more about the subculture around ACT UP, and around the Clit Club. Now, gay people are trying to be bourgeois, clean-cut, married, good citizens. But at that time, we saw ourselves, I think, almost as part of the criminal continuum, but that was positive; that we were oppositional to those values, and because of that, there was a dark side, too. There were people who had a lot of drug problems, there were people who were very marginal, there was a lot of chaos. And a bar is where all that is expressed.

So in the Clit Club, how did you deal with that side of it – the criminal side, the dealers, the emotional chaos that a lot of gay people were in at that time?

LF: It's funny, because – there, as far as I know, there wasn't a lot of drug-taking. I think that – I don't know why. In some ways, I have to think that because the music was good, just the vibe of it. I know myself, even now, I still go out clubbing, believe it or not. And I'll have another drink, if the music's not too good, I'll have maybe one or two more drinks, and maybe try to make the music sound a little bit better. Or if I'm not having interesting conversations, I find that I'll drink a little bit more.

So I think that the environment, if it's a happy kind of environment, it makes it more inspiring, and less detracting. So maybe people, maybe they had drugs on them, but they felt so happy, they didn't need to have the drugs.

I don't really know. But I know that we, there wasn't a lot of sort of people falling out, and –

SS: But you had a bad-girl image. Like you and Julie, right? You were like, you looked bad. That was your look.

LF: Oh, good!

SS: Okay?

LF: Good, we looked bad.

SS: Because that was, but there was something underground or illegal or oppositional about gay people. And that was the aesthetic was to reflect that. And now it seems to be completely disappeared. I don't –

LF: Yeah. I can remember – well, before Julie, I was like, oh, I'll never go out with a girl with long hair, and. I would never go out without an ACT UP T-shirt on, or – I had a lot of these kind of, oh well, if, they don't know about this, I can't talk with them, or-

And I can even remember sometimes traveling places, and people not really being very politically charged, and just thinking, what's wrong with them? Why aren't they concerned about this, traveling outside of the city.

I don't know. I don't know how I feel about the change. I think, definitely that marriage for gay people is important, so far as the civil rights side of it. For me, I can't imagine myself getting married; never to a man, when I was younger, and never really to a woman, now. Maybe now, I don't like to say “never,” because I've learned my lesson. But yeah, because even in the *Village*

Voice, I was reading about gay pride, and the author actually said that most of the lesbian women don't look like lesbians now; they just blend in. And when I read that, I had to kind of read it again, because I thought, ooh; did I miss something? I'm not blending in yet. I'm like, oops, I guess I must be out of date?

I think – it's the same as so much with being black and so much with being gay is parallel. And I see where, for instance, where Barack has gotten so far from speaking properly and being well-educated and – where some of the guys who play football and basketball are making really good money, but they still don't speak like – really, in an intellectual way. And I see how gay women who are now making a lot of money do look like straight women. And I don't know if they had, could get that far looking like I look.

A lot of girls, even now, girls will come up to me in clubs, and they'll be like, wow, I wish I could wear my hair like you, but – and they still, sometimes still, I can't believe it, because they don't know I'm Lola Flash, and if they knew who I was, I don't think they would say it. But they're like, well, what kind of job do you have, almost in a really demeaning kind of way. And basically, I've made my look work for myself. I'm respected wherever I go, almost whatever I do. And then my photographs, too, what I try to get to is the old saying about don't judge a book by its cover. I think it's people like, people that I photograph who are actually going to change things. People who are willing to still not change the way they look and feel about themselves, but still make those moves.

But it all, it takes time, and I think that a lot of people don't have the support that they need. And so I'm not really so — I know it's kind of, I'm sort of going around and around — but I'm not so sort of crazy about the fact that — gay people are looking straight. It's just like, I don't think that black people should try and look white — so to speak. But I think there has to be some kind of happy medium, and I think that you have to realize and take it into your own, rather than just becoming some kind of magazine example of what you think is right.

So, I suppose if people are happy, it's fine. But I think it is kind of weird that we have gone from being, this really sort of counterculture to being part of the culture. I do love the fact that gay people are having children, and I love the fact that there's families that are, really want to have kids. And I always have felt that you should have, one should have a license to have children. Since I work with so many kids in my jobs, I see so many kids who aren't being loved. And I think that, I know that gay people aren't perfect, but if you have a kid and you're a gay person, most likely you wanted that kid a lot. So you're going to really invest in them. And if you could see some of the kids that I see that, even just a day of giving a kid love makes him feel better. So on that side of it, I think it's a good thing.

Tape II
00:15:00

**SS: Okay. I want to talk about photographers in ACT UP.
Because there were a lot of different kinds of photography going on. Can**

you just talk about that a little bit? Who were the other photographers, what were your relationships?

LF: I can't remember any other photographers' names, Sarah. I'm so sorry.

SS: Well, there's Ellen Neipris, and –

LF: Ellen, yeah. She used to get a lot of play.

SS: Donna Binder.

LF: Donna – do I remember Donna?

SS: John –

JW: What kind of photography?

SS: Well there's a range. I mean, you're an art photographer.

LF: Mm.

SS: They were journalistic – Donna and Ellen were journalists primarily–

LF: Right, yeah.

SS: There was John [Dugdale] – what was his last name?

Something like Dugan, or – Dugal? He went blind. He was a photographer.

LF: Really? See, he went blind. Another example of –

SS: Because –

LF: – for me, mine was because I did the negative color stuff, right? So if I photographed myself, I looked like I was wearing white. So my work — which is one reason why I changed my work — my work never seemed

to really fit in. I felt really – I needed to express myself in that way, but I can just remember feeling a little bit alienated a lot of times, when it came to times when there were shows, opportunities for shows and things like that.

I thought that – I think with ACT UP, I think as one of the few, or it's an organization that I felt that there really was not a lot of racism. And so I thought that a lot of times, my photographs, when there were like big group shows and things like that, weren't accepted was because they were the weird colors. And they weren't really documentary. Although they were – they, because of the colors, they kind of tinged what was actually going on.

SS: What do you mean group shows? Like ACT UP would have a group show?

LF: Yeah. I can't remember stuff, like different, like museums and things like that, that there were. And there would be – different kinds of artwork that would be included, and I was not included.

SS: Can you think of some examples?

LF: The New Museum; when they had a show there. And I don't remember if it was the year when they had the Silence = Death logo in the front window; the neon sign. I don't remember if it was that year. But I did feel a little alienated so far as being included. Not in the sense that I wasn't able to shoot; I actually was able to shoot whatever I want. But I don't feel like I was really included a lot with my artwork, and I kind of feel maybe it was because it wasn't straight black and white documentary stuff, or color. It was reverse color.

SS: So who were the artists in ACT UP who you shared with, and who you talked to about your work, or looked at their work?

LF: Probably Aldo. I mean, Aldo was always, has always been like my backbone, really. Tracy Mostovoy, but was Tracy in ACT UP for awhile? I know she was around. She was really my, we did a lot, we shared cameras, we shared models. So, I guess for me – photography is a, even though I was with everybody, it's kind of a solo thing,. And I think that I wasn't very much of a – I really wasn't a self-promoter. I didn't really do it for that reason. In that time, I probably could of been one of those artists that you could probably just said, found my slides underneath my bed after I died, kind of thing. Really wasn't the mode that I'm in now. I'm much more confident now. And I'm much more clear about my focus, and what I'm doing. I love a lot of the images that I shot. Like the AIDS Warriors, was –

SS: What is that?

LF: AIDS Warriors was one of my favorite shots. I did a picture of Catherine. She was, I had these fake plastic water guns. They were like this long, like rifles. And I was attacking all these different institutions that I felt at the time weren't doing enough for HIV. So we did, Catherine was – I think she was a subway, yeah, so it's the subway – I think that was to do with transportation, because at the time, there wasn't a lot of transportation for people to get to clinics. So I stickered up this subway sign, with Silence = Death stickers. And then I had, I think Catherine had a Silence = Death shirt on . And

then she's standing there, like this, kind of at guard. I did a *New York Times* one; my friend Soo Ok. She was a *New York Times*.

Tape II
00:20:00

The scariest one I did was with Ray and Tracy and Greg.

SS: Bordowitz?

LF: No, Greg Hubbard. And that was on the side of a post office truck, an actual truck. So we went to the one on Fourth Avenue, the post office on Fourth Avenue and like 11th Street, or whatever. And we put all these Silence = Death stickers on the side that wasn't facing the post office. And then I said, okay; take your shirts off. I think Ray had the Reagan shirt on, that cool flesh and green one? Can't remember what the others had on. And then they all struck a pose, and I shot like probably about four shots, and then we just ran. Because we had messed up the truck.

So yeah, so it was all talking about all those institutions needed to do more. Because of course, that was way back in the day, Now that there's, the AIDS stamp came out, and, as time went on, things did change, which is, that was, for us — I don't know about for you — but that was one of the miracles; that we actually saw how much our work paid off. Don't you think? Totally, it's mind-blowing.

SS: What made you leave ACT UP?

LF: Partly — because I left the country. I moved to London; broke up with Julie. And — I was doing my Provincetown thing, and I just was thinking, I don't know if I can do another fall. It was just too much. It was the kind of

thing where I couldn't say no; I was always saying yes. As soon as you say yes, I don't know about you, but I, as soon as I say yes, I think, how am I going to squeeze this in? I already have way too much on my plate. But, everything seemed just so immediate.

So I left. And I thought, well, maybe I can spread the word over in London with my pictures, and –

And it was kind of disappointing, once I got over there, because the demonstrations were like six people. The six people you had met with, or the six people that were there. It was really hard to get – because that's not really the culture there. Although it's changed. They've been doing some good rallies, as of late, to do with the war. But back then, there really wasn't a lot. So I kind of showed my work in a lot of gay places, and hoped that that was helping people talk about the virus. I think that for me, that was the biggest part of, one of the parts of helping solve the AIDS crisis, was to talk about it. So, it's like a in.

SS: We just have one more question.

LF: Yeah?

SS: So looking back, what would you say was ACT UP's greatest achievement, and what do you think was its biggest disappointment?

LF: Hm. Well, biggest disappointment, I would say, was that we weren't able to kill this virus. That would have been the ultimate. And I probably shouldn't say, but every time I have a birthday and I blew out the candle, for some years, I've been wishing for an end.

The greatest achievement? I guess some of the little things that we were talking about. The fact that I saw that those people are taking it seriously. With that said, it's crazy, when you hear the statistics of what's going on now, with the rise, with all these, even with senior citizens. It's mad to think that people still are not practicing safer sex.

But I suppose so far as governmental things are concerned, there are actually things in place; there are organizations in place that help people with AIDS.

I think it's – sadly, I think it's just like, it's very similar to how I imagine Martin Luther King and Malcolm X feel. There's been a lot of work that has been done; a lot of people who have lost their lives. But we still have a long way to go. It's just – I suppose for me, though, I think of – the, when we blocked the Brooklyn Bridge; I think that was one of my most favorite demos. And probably this is just kind of going on a little bit here. But I just –

SS: That's fine, tell us about it –

LF: – I loved it, because – I can remember being there. I used to wear army gear all the time. And it's funny you said that about me and Julie, because it's funny. Most of this time, I'm inside of myself; I'm not outside looking; I'm not thinking about what people are thinking. So it's kind of interesting that you said that about us. But – I was in my little army garb. I'm sitting there. And Catherine was filming me; or someone from Catherine's – what was it called? –

SS: DIVA TV?

LF: DIVA TV, yeah, it was either Catherine or one of the girls. And so they're, they say, so what are you doing? I say, oh, I'm blocking the Brooklyn Bridge because there needs to be more attention paid to HIV and AIDS. And right when that happened — there wasn't any editing — the police came, and handcuffed me, and pulled me away. And it was just so brilliant, because I was like, that couldn't have been, like, better planned if we tried to stage it.

And then the other time was when we got like a thousand dollars each, all the women got a thousand dollars each, because they had strip-searched, or they had said –

SS: Could you tell that story, because we don't have that.

LF: Yeah, well, we –

SS: What happened, from the beginning?

LF: So, I can't remember that – if it was that actual demonstration.

JW: Target City Hall.

LF: Was it? When we got money? Okay, so we had all been, one of the greatest things, I think, about the actual demonstrating, and then being arrested was that you knew that you weren't going to get lost in the system. And I'm sorry; being black, I don't want to; I don't want to get lost in any system. And so they're taking all the people, all the legal people are taking your numbers down as you go in.

Now when we get in, generally what would happen was that the guys would be in one place; and they would put the girls into another cell. Of course, because the feeling was that all the guys were HIV-positive, so they couldn't touch them. But all of the girls, of course, weren't. I mean, this is obviously being sarcastic.

And I can remember, they took us downstairs, like maybe three by three. It feels like we were in like this dark, cavernous place. Like a film. And I can remember, what I remember in my head was that there was these three huge black women, with like yellow, like washing-up gloves, standing there. And they were like saying, okay, empty your bra out; take your pants down.

And they actually didn't touch us. But they were acting like they were actually going to like do some kind of internal thing. And – some of the women who had been abused, and some of the women who just were – me – I was, I was really kind of just, whatever. I really – I was like, okay, if that's what you have to do, I'm just more laid back about that. But some women, it did really freak out. And from that, they, ACT UP sued the city. And we each got a thousand dollars.

Now I think — and it was made out to Lola Flash, okay, not to ACT UP. My thought is that that was one of the reasons why the women's group ended. Because there was a lot of friction. Some women needed to have trips. They needed a break. I needed to buy film. And at the time, Ray was really sick, and he wanted like Ray-Bans; he wanted, like, the real, like, Ray – Ray Charles

glasses. So I got him those. And you know, whatever he wanted. I spent a lot of my money on him. So everyone had their own agendas, basically. And I really feel like that was the end of the group, because we all just kind of like fell out.

SS: But why? What was the conflict?

LF: Because some people, a lot of people – I think maybe 50 percent of the people thought we should put the money back into ACT UP. And 50 percent of us said, we need a holiday here, buddy. We're tired. We're – we're ACT UP, but we also are people, too.

SS: Some of you had inherited wealth or were independently wealthy, and some of you were living on the edge. So wouldn't that change your relationship to whether you needed the thousand dollars?

LF: What do you mean? What'd you say? Say it again?

SS: Some of the women in that group had inherited wealth.

LF: Mm.

SS: And some of the women in that group were living on the edge.

LF: Mm.

SS: So there'd be different relationships to who needed a thousand dollars.

LF: Yeah. It was – I really don't know. I mean, I'd be curious to see what other women that were in the group said. But for me, that's what – or maybe it was just me; maybe I just thought to myself, okay, well, time for me to

go. But I felt like soon after I left, that it kind of dwindled out. But, money has that way of doing things. Yeah.

SS: Okay. Do you have anything, James?

JW: Where are your negatives stored from that time in ACT UP?

LF: Funny you should say that. They're in Jersey, and I – as you can see, I have some boxes around already. And I have a few more boxes coming over. But eventually, I'd like to get a hold of them, and actually do a slide show, or something like that. So I'll definitely let you guys know when I get those images, because – I have a few on my website. If you go to my website, lolafash.com, there's a few. I think there's a ACT UP section, or something like that, I think. But yes, definitely they're somewhere in storage, and they'll be archived, at some point.

Tape II
00:30:00

JW: Oh, and if we were to reproduce the photos in “Kissing Doesn't Kill”, what would you look like?

LF: I was the one at the end. So yeah, I would be, left, I would be like that. And Julie was like that –

Yeah, I was like that.

JW: Maybe we should do it again.

SS: Yeah, we should shoot it again.

LF: That'd be really cute. Have you done Julie yet?

SS: Not yet. She's afraid to do it.

LF: Really?

SS: I'm going to make her do it. But so far, she's kind of put me off. But she has to do it. She's such an important figure –

LF: Yeah. But also – now we're like this. I don't know if you know that. But we're – if she was here, we'd be inseparable. I mean, it's amazing, the crazy breakup, and then – the worst breakup. And now, we're the closest we've ever been.

JW: and you were kissing her on the poster?

SS: Yeah –

LF: Yeah, Julie.

SS: – yeah, yeah,

LF: Julie,

JW: Made in heaven.

LF: Yeah.

SS: Yeah.

LF: Yeah. So – we even have land together now. Well, not together. You know she has land out in Joshua Tree? Joshua Tree. She wants us all to move out there. And she's always kind of been the ringleader of us all. I guess almost like her and Aldo, like Mom and Dad of us. So it's a nice way to – come back into America, and just sort of have the family again, you know.

SS: Right, as you're turning 50.

JW: I think you were the first person to ever mention AIDS dementia in an interview.

LF: Really?

SS: Yes, yeah. We interviewed –

JW: What was it like?

SS: Oh.

LF: Well, one minute, he'd be talking normally. The next minute, he's talking about, in a different language, or something. It was amazing. But he would try and jump out of the bed; that was the worst thing. And he was so frail. If he was able to actually pull himself out, he would have really hurt himself. But yeah, he was – I mean, he was doing work with Zoe. Zoe –

SS: Leonard.

LF: – Leonard. She did a bunch of photography with him, towards the end. But he was, I remember, we had cards, playing cards, to try to get him to see, focus on them. And he would try his hardest to try and keep his vision.

JW: Did you photograph him?

LF: I didn't. Even with my mom – my mom just died recently, and I, now, I realize, I wish I would have done more photography about it. But my, it's just like Oprah. Oprah stopped being a newscaster, because she was crying at scenes of –. And same for me. My heart just gets into it. I can't see through the lens.

SS: Okay.

LF: Yeah.

SS: Thank you, Lola.

LF: Okay, yeah, thank you.

SS: Great. Thank you.