

Audio Recorded: November 5, 2017
Transcribed by: Ayan Ali

AYAN ALI:

This is Ayan Ali, and I am here with Janey Archey. Could you please say and spell your full name for me?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Janey Archey. J-A-N-E-Y A-R-C-H-E-Y.

AYAN ALI:

Great! Today is November 5th, it's about 2pm, and we are in Janey's apartment in Saint Louis, Missouri. Janey, do I have your permission to record this interview?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Yes.

AYAN ALI:

Great! Thank you and thank you for participating. So could you just start off by telling me a little bit about where you come from and who you are?'

JANEY ARCHEY:

Okay. I'm a 63-year-old white woman and my family background is rooted in Saint Louis. I was born and raised here, and I have seven family members, or did, so a total of eight of us. We were in a working class area in University City, and then we moved to Mehlville when I was in seventh grade and from there -- well you know I was an adult after I graduated from high school -- but from Saint Louis.

AYAN ALI:

Great. Could you tell me a little bit about your family?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Well my family, large family. My father, very interesting, raised Catholic Irish background. My mom, Pentecostal, minister father, very large family on her side. They lost one sibling, I think, but she had nine brothers and sisters. And originally, I'm trying to think if she told me they came here

from Kentucky, maybe? And my dad, he's the one who has a grandmother that was first-generation (sic)¹ here from Ireland. Anyways, so, her family was not as large, but her husband, her second husband, was 25 years older than her so we never met him. But anyways, so, that's the two backgrounds, and when they met and married at 17 and 18 they decided to become Methodist, and it infuriated my grandmother, who wanted them to raise us Catholic Irish.

But anyways, that's who we ended up with but, religion was never a big part of my family. I don't even know what it is to this day, and what's interesting about it is, I guess I'm more looking at this became sort of aware of, political stuff in high school, when my best friend's brother introduced socialism to her and me, in high school, and one of the other cheerleaders -- I was a cheerleader, believe it or not -- was kicked off the cheerleading squad for her and her twin brother's saying they were socialists. But anyways, Terry's brother was very, you know, just open about it, he was an anti-war activist too, so that did sort of politicize me. But at 15, I wrote a letter to the Methodist Church we belonged to, and told them I resigned. I wish I had a copy of it now still, because it's kind of interesting to think about. But anyways, my family didn't say anything to me about it, they weren't real strict. They let us kind of pick our own friends, and all that except, and this is a big except, during the time of white flight in the late '60's in Saint Louis, my family was a part of that.

We were told by my father that black people were moving into University City and that he needed to protect his girls, there were four girls and two boys. So we moved to Mehlville, which is basically still a predominantly white suburban area. And there I went to junior and senior high and graduated from Mehlville High School. I mean, when I was in University City I loved it, it was very culturally, racially diverse, and most of my friends, actually, were Jewish. I was one of a couple of only Christian-raised families, and again it wasn't really that -- except that I knew when there were high holidays and stuff like that we would be the only three sitting in the whole classroom, so it was kind of interesting. But they weren't the issue for my parents, Jewish folks, it was black people moving into University City, so we were part of white flight. I guess 1969 is when we moved to Mehlville.

AYAN ALI:

Was that, with your friend's brother, your first knowledge or memory of political groups, and things like that? Was that your first entrance into politics?

¹ Second-generation

JANEY ARCHEY:

I think so. I think so, and I didn't act on it, I just listened and was very interested in what people had to say, because one of the other things that happened before we moved, that was a huge impact to me and I didn't figure it out until much later, is my dad used to take us on Sunday rides. It's kind of a cheap thing to do when you have a big family and when gas was cheap back then, and we would go all over the place. And I remember my mom always being afraid, and my dad just going really fast, that was one of the reasons she was afraid, but we would go everywhere, all over Saint Louis, and when we would get to a neighborhood that he felt was a danger, he would tell us to lock the doors. (00:05:00:00) One time I looked over, locked my door, because that's what I was told to do, and there happened to be a black male in the car that saw me do it, a young person, and he locked his door. I just will never forget that because I thought, huh, so, what does that mean? [laughs] Who's not safe here, you know what I mean? So, that has stuck with me all my life. But yeah, so the high school thing, I didn't really start to act on it until I was in college, politically.

AYAN ALI:

What was the effect of your father's racism, him being open with that and living in an all white community, what was that like for you growing up?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Well, I mean, the first thirteen years it wasn't -- well that's true it was all white, because as black folks moved in we had to sell the house, the small house we had, so there was some racial equality in the schools for the first year. But then, when I left at the end of the seventh grade and moved, it then went back to an all-white -- because the Jews, obviously, in University City were of European descent, they weren't Jews of color. So, anyway, when we got to Mehlville, there were no Jewish folks, there were no people of color, and my father did get a raise, which was the other reason why -- or a promotion I should say -- that we were able to move to a better house. So that also changed our outlook, but it was sort of interesting, our house was mostly empty, it was just sort of an outside façade, none of the neighbors talked to each other hardly, whereas when we were in University City everybody very close knit, we walked to school. So this was the first time riding a bus. But I think that carried with me into the fact that the school was all white, so for some reason then, that message just, I don't know what it meant until I actually then began

talking to people, reading, and joining different groups and finding out what that was all about.

AYAN ALI:

Did your family make comments about members of the LGBT community in the same way that they made comments about people of color? Or did they discourage you against that sort of “behavior”?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Yeah, when they knew what it was.

AYAN ALI:

Right.

JANEY ARCHEY:

My dad died when I was – before I had my son, so 22, I was 22, he was only 54, he died of a brain tumor at home, and at that time I was in Springfield, Missouri for two years getting my early child education associates, and then again as an all-white city. [inaudible] Not a rural white area, but the city of Springfield was all-white too. So I went there, and I came back, still almost entirely – all white, young people like myself – and I came back and wanted to finish my bachelor’s, that’s really what it’s about, went to Webster, and it was a little better. I would say there were probably more international students at Webster than there were locally, people of color, African-American and Latino students, at that time. So that was ’82-’84 when I finished my degree.

But while there, that’s when I came out, had my first girlfriend that I met there in class. I had a wonderful femtor teacher, who later killed herself, but a feminist, a lesbian. Literature was her main thing and she kind of got me interested in reading stuff about multicultural education, so I think that’s part of my entrance too, you know, what do we really want to teach kids. I taught at Head Start for a couple years in Springfield before I moved back, and that was very low income and racially diverse children. The staff was all white. [laughs] Like many still are today, right? Clientele is people of color a lot of times in Saint Louis City and a lot of the people in charge are still white. But anyways, so that still was the case. I was there two years to finish my bachelor’s, and my first organizing there, as coming out as a lesbian, I also a single parent on AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children], it was called then, welfare and food stamps, was to try to open an onsite daycare center for parents.

They led us along. Just like, thinking that we were going to be able to do it. I have letters in there saying, thank you so much for your cooperation, to the administration. We rallied around, we had fundraisers, we had a plan, and they just completely blew us off in the end and it never happened. (00:10:00:00) But, it was so needed. My son at the time was 4, I guess, and he went to a church daycare. It wasn't religious, but in the basement. That's where I met one of my closest friends, she was a lesbian and one of his teachers, at Webster daycare center. That's still open, just a different location. It had a huge influence on him, because he could be a kid of a lesbian family there, you know? He had some issues with some of the other teachers.

But my family, getting back to your question, sorry, was not happy about it at all. Now, I do have a gay brother. He's younger than me but he came out younger. I don't know if that tide is changing since things are so much more open for people to come out, but at that time, he was 12, and it was not through a good relationship. I didn't come out until 23. He kind of paved the way for me, really. My family was not – my dad and him had fights, I mean verbal, but he also chased him, and my brother ran away, and so I knew that. And then my dad got sick and passed away, and I didn't come out until 23.

My mom was very upset she couldn't understand why I could say that when I had a child. I mean at that time this wasn't as heard of. Now, I think about thirty, forty percent of LGBT folks have children, closer to forty probably. But at that time, either they were closeted and weren't having children, or I don't know. I was a part of a lot of things for lesbian parenting at Webster, we started a support group, and tried to do the daycare. We had a women's resource center, which we just insisted that lesbians were vocal, visible members of it. So that was really where a lot of stuff started.

AYAN ALI:

Speaking of Webster, what was it like being a single mother in college? What was that like for you?

JANEY ARCHEY:

It was hard. The only main thing, and I'm just so thankful to my mother, I had Justin at home with my mom. I mean, not literally at home [laughs], I lived with her! Yeah, I wanted to, and she was like, no way, you gotta go to the hospital. But I lived with my two brothers and my mom when I got pregnant, and I wanted to be pregnant. I moved home from Springfield, and lived at home with her, and, I mean, she was freaked out about it but she was supportive, and she helped me, she loaned me the money for the

Webster daycare. That's why I was trying to get the onsite, sliding scale, right? Because, mine could be down to zero on the FDC (sic). ²I ended up owing her \$3000 that I didn't get to pay her back until, 2000. Long time. And then I paid her when I got some pension money, all of the pension money. But anyways, so she was not liking it, she thought it was bad on Justin, what would he think, and I said well I'm just going to try to raise him like everybody else's family. I mean we are different, and I'm going to use language so he knows it is, regular language, this is my partner, just like somebody says, this is my husband. It grew on her, I think through the years, she would never go around talking about it, but she met several of my partners.

Now, when I ended up with an African-American partner, that just added another layer for my family to deal with. I was at one time banned from coming to anything for four years, and it wasn't because of the queer stuff, it was because I had a Black partner and my mom, quote said to me, what do I say to her. So we had a whole conversation of hello, how are you, you know, how you get to know people, it's the same thing, Mom. Some of her racism, some of the stuff she said and did. But she fell in love with Terri, my partner I just split with of seventeen years, and Terri loved her. I think through that personal relationship, even after all those years, she had become the most supportive, my mother.

My other siblings, they could take it or leave it. Except my oldest sister now has a granddaughter who's come out. Its always interesting, you never know! Anyways, so they've been okay. My dad never knew, just because of, you know, he's dead by then. But my brother and him went round and round about it, so. And that's why my brother and I are more connected than my other siblings.

AYAN ALI:

You spoke to me previously about the obstacles you faced being a lesbian single mother, how you had a lot of issues with the state government, or someone, trying to take away your child. Could you speak on that?
(00:15:00:00)

JANEY ARCHEY:

Well when you were on AFDC then, and this was – ADC [Aid to Dependent Children], then AFDC, then it was TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families], you know it had several different incarnations and names. But anyways, when I was first on it, unbelievably, you had to have three references every month, you had to fill it out, and

² ADC [Aid to Dependent Children]

people were called to ask about if you were a good parent. You also had to report what birth control you were using, every month. Now the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union], no Legal Services, filed a lawsuit and that came off of there. And they had visits, the no man in the house rule, okay? It was real! And I mean at that time, I wasn't really dating, I went through a period of like two or three years of nothing, no relationship, because I was coming out, I think, and so Justin and I were just sort of in the world together, and he was a wonderful, creative kid. So they would come over and actually look around at your apartment, that stuff really happened, it's insane. So finally – but, the reason I'm saying about being taken away is, there were sodomy laws at that time, so I never told them I was a lesbian parent, but Justin's father was never in the picture until Justin was a lot older, but this always hung over my head that that could be a way for him to get him away from me.

And it could, because there were cases all across the country, several in Missouri at that time actually, where an abusive father got custody over a lesbian. I mean, there were documented cases of it, so I'm like – Justin's father is a recovering alcoholic and heroin addict, and that didn't even matter to me, I was like, that's not going to matter. But I think part of was, I knew it could happen, but Rick just didn't have the wherewithal to put all that together, and he has had enough personal issues that – and he lived out of state too, so it couldn't have happened, but it definitely, if I would've reported it, the then state itself could have acted on behalf of the child's best interests, and removed him and put him in state custody, so it was always sort of just looming there. I'd have to lie about birth control. I mean I gave references, and I'd have to tell the references, remember not to say so and so when somebody calls you. [laughs] And they were actually called.

AYAN ALI:

Did being a single mother affect your student activism and things you were doing on campus as well?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Actually, it encouraged it more, because I felt like if I banded together with other people, and it really turned out to be true, that then we could share childcare, we could study together, the kids could play together. There was this wonderful group, I don't think it's in existence anymore, but you've heard of RAVEN [Rape and Violence Ends Now]?

AYAN ALI

Um-hm.

JANEY ARCHEY:

RAVEN used to have a group called Brothers in Change, and I don't think it's around anymore, but when I was a younger lesbian, we used to have women's dances here all the time, and they would come to the lesbian dances and provide free childcare and give an opportunity for children to be around men who loved kids, because Justin wasn't raised around men, he was really raised around mostly all lesbians and then my mom, and maybe some of my other family members but they didn't see him as much, even my brother, as much as women who were really connected to the community. So no, I would think that's made me more insistent on not being isolated, was to try to join things and have things for myself and him, that would then assist us while I was in school.

AYAN ALI:

Was college your entrance into the world of activism? What got you started?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Yes, and the first thing was that daycare center, so that really took a lot of organizing, knowing the workings of the college, how you write a proposal, and getting people interested, doing fundraising and grant writing. So that was the first thing. And then we did some workshops and stuff, there was this thing going on at the time called Fight the Right, and we did community information workshops, and I met some people, it became broader. There was an anti-violence project here, Susanna Rose, who's not here anymore, co-started it, and we became involved in that and I met some other lesbians of color and women of color, and other straight women, allies who just wanted to work on anti-violence stuff.

(00:20:00:00) She started a hotline, and then we'd have these forums, where we would try, even back then, to get the police to stop harassing queer people, at the bars they'd stand out and harass them, they'd follow them, they'd beat them up.

We had a lot of that stuff going on, so that really politicized me, just the whole issue of violence in our community. Then at Pride, we'd be out there but people would be followed and abused and harassed, so that kind of made me think there are so many things going on in our community, let alone health issues and housing, because at the time too, I lived in Section 8, and my son was on the list for the first group of magnet school kids, after the desegregation. [inaudible] Schools had to be integrated, because they were so racially segregated here, and so he was going to stay in the city and go to a school that was predominantly kids of color, and then kids

of color were then offered if they wanted to go to schools in white – you know what I mean, it’s always part of deseg. I got him on a list for that, and then I got on a list because it was the first time ever that South County was going to build a project-based Section 8, and I was threatened when I went to the meeting, physically threatened, had to be walked out of the meeting, because they said they do not want these folks living here. And I said, well I’m one of those folks so is that who you’re talking about or are you talking about Black folks, and so they really weren’t talking about me. The way they said it was that I was speaking as a race traitor to them and that you better get yourself out of here and don’t ever come back, so that kind of led me also to thinking about poor people and queer families that are poor and the state of housing and education for kids. It all started to kind of go together, and that’s why I ended up being interested in social work.

AYAN ALI:

Okay. We talked about how your political ideology was kind of changing throughout college, could you also speak on that? I know you talked about how this was your first entrance into feminism and things like that.

JANEY ARCHEY:

Yeah, because the woman I told you about, Margaret Erickson is her name, it’s so weird to say her name after all these years, who lost her life, but she just really got me thinking about a lot of stuff around kids, but also lesbian literature, I mean it wasn’t just kids. Her primary focus was on literature for children, but lots of stuff to read, so that caused me to really think about the broader reading of feminism and lesbian feminism and I just really started taking extra reading materials home with me, started informal reading groups, lesbian reading groups. That just kept broadening – it wasn’t really until after I left Webster, I started working at—well I did a practicum there, so it was the end of my college years, at a battered women’s shelter, and it was run by, the first time ever, I worked in a space completely run by black women. I was the children’s program coordinator, they wanted me to develop a program for babies through high school. I was like, okay! So, people would come in and it was just, run by feminist women on the board and it was a collective and just such a wonderful experience, I mean, just a wonderful experience. I met some women that are still doing stuff today in different areas, but anyways, so that kind of broadened – just in terms of violence against women, patriarchy stuff, what really needs to be done, children’s issues still, again all tied into that.

But it just didn’t seem enough, I mean it felt like you were just helping a shelter, you know? Why can’t the men leave? We used to say that, leave the women stay home, the men should be put in a shelter. So it felt like,

okay, I need to do something that gets to fundamental, institutional change. I'm trying to remember if I actually knew anybody that was in the MSW [Masters of Social Work] program, I don't think so, I mean I was scared to death, because I was going to have to take out loans. I was the first person in my family to go to college, there's only two of us now, me and my younger sister, I was six. But, I mean I had to borrow all of it, and I'll say this about my parents. They said, if all six of you can't go then we're not paying for anybody. So they didn't send the boys, and they didn't want to go. We were sort of in an interesting twist, that the two girls wanted to go. (00:25:00:00) So they said, you're on your own, though. So I borrowed, I told you I still owe \$8000, and I'm 63. So it was WashU [Washington University in Saint Louis], the expensive WashU, but Webster's a private – so I started with some private money there. I did get, I guess because I got on that summa cum laude, whatever its called, that good grades--

AYAN ALI:

Yeah, summa cum laude. [laughs]

JANEY ARCHEY:

[laughs] Yeah the second one, I don't think it was summa, the second one. And that was good because when I went in to apply to WashU, they saw that, they knew I had good grades. I had a good essay and recommendations, so they offered me a Benjamin Youngdahl for the first year. And then that was it, they cut me off. And so I borrowed \$25,000, which doesn't sound like a lot, but it's 1986 and it was 9% interest. So by the time all these years have passed, it was almost \$100,000. Yeah. I mean I didn't care in the sense that I've never regretted going to college. It's opened up so many more doors, it's made me really think more broadly, I met this mentor Jack Kirkland there, who always really – I mean he opened up students' eyes to what was happening in our city and why. Who had the power, why they did, the role of racism and white privilege and white supremacy and showed us, didn't just have us read about it in a book, you know. We worked with groups a lot. I think that added to the experiences I had as myself, and then meeting new people and then combining that with an ideology of capitalism, white supremacy -- and that really seemed to connect the dots.

AYAN ALI:

Yeah absolutely. Did you work in the women's shelter after you went to WashU for social work or –

JANEY ARCHEY:

No, after Webster.

AYAN ALI:

Okay, so do you think that was a big influencing factor in you deciding to go into social work?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Yes! Yes, definitely. Because it showed that women, I mean, were great when they were working together in the shelter, but there was so much trauma and fear, and they felt stuck. The kids were traumatized, and the influence of how poorly the courts responded, the police at that time did not do first arrests, there was no first arrest laws in. It just really propelled me into, there's got to be something bigger we can do, so women's lives are more their own and in the community, in a supportive way, that leads to something bigger than just having a shelter. And there's still shelters now, it's not that I don't think there shouldn't be, we just spend so much money still on that, including with the homeless, that we get rid of the housing and just get more beds, and – I just don't like that, but that's kind of helped people look at things, because they think it's just temporary and that people just need to pull themselves up, bootstrap thing, oh you'll get back on your feet just get a job, you know?

AYAN ALI:

Right. What was your experience in the Brown School? Were you still able to activism in the community or were you more focused on your academics?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Both, and I think that was because of Jack. I mean he said to us, basically, you can sit here for two years or you can go tell the administration what they need to do for you and for the community. I mean, he was a very big advocate of that. I told you he won a lawsuit there, so they were sort of afraid of him after that. [laughs] Because he won! And he was like, hey, these things work if you stand up for yourself and do things together. So the biggest thing that happened was the elevator issue, and becoming aware of how cut off students with disabilities, visitors -- I mean, how could family members that needed access, mobility primarily but other stuff too, come to graduation? That's what sort of fueled it, and we just decided to do a petition, and talk to the media, and said, we're walking out of this so you better find the money in this rich school. Now, at the time

see, Brown School was the little, tiny, I don't know what you call it, sibling of the big, big campus. And I thought the school was fine, but you know, they kept improving it, not a lot when I was there, but they did build that computer lab. And it did seem like we were outgrowing it, because they did have an increasing amount of international students. So, they would tell us they didn't have the money. And we knew better, you know, go find it. So they did. They found a million dollars, we felt very successful about that, and graduation went off fine. Let me think then, that was '85 to '87, wow. (00:30:00:00)

What was I doing then? I'm trying to think of when—I don't think that was until the '90's, so I think it was mostly stuff around campus, we did do a lot of things on campus. We had a LGBT group, we brought in speakers, you know, because they had those speaking things. We had stuff like that, I'm trying to think if I remember – oh! Well, I don't think PROMO was until the '90's either. I did end up joining some community groups through PROMO. It used to be called PREP, but PROMO is Privacy Rights for All Missourians, or something like that, it used to be called Privacy Rights Education Project. They changed it, but it was still statewide organization that worked on lobbying stuff in the state. And I did see a need – because I did focus on socioeconomic development and policy. I did see a need to look at policy and laws, and stuff like that. So I joined them, I worked with them for six years, and we tried to get an anti-discrimination bill passed for LGBT people and people with disabilities.

Years later, after it was our idea, they just decided to expand the human rights commission's coverage of – and just add in the language, which we had suggested before, so. There is a law in Missouri, I have no idea now, because things have been so retracted, what it says, I'm pretty sure it's still there, that it covers some things. Now, the City of Saint Louis – I also worked on the city ordinance here, well that wasn't until 1994, but soon after GWB [George Warren Brown School of Social Work], to try and get the civil rights ordinance to include LGBT folks too. And they only included lesbian and gay folks, they did not do gender identity until fifteen years later, you know? But at that same time, we got our first African American mayor. Early '90s, so again this is right after I got done. I was appointed with ten other people, to be the first LGBT mayor's taskforce. I was the co-chair. We were trying to enhance that, work on civil rights enforcement, people that were discriminated against in housing as queer folks and with their kids, employment, because -- and then the ordinance passed. I mean it says, I have a copy of it from 1994, and it added in that we're supposed to be protected, it's a low like \$500 fine, and as you know still federally, there's not protection for queer people in employment and overall. The city's probably the best, the state has been, I don't know, back and forth, depending on the state legislature, the one which is very regressive.

When I first came out of GWB, I worked 12 years as the homeless program coordinator at the Human Development Corporation, which was a community action agency -- you'll probably be familiar with that if you go to a MSW—because that started around the war on poverty in '64 or whatever. There were like 19 of them, I couldn't believe this when I started this, I started working there in 1988 until 2000, and they told me there were nineteen, when I went to work there, there were four. So the budget cuts, the decrease of support, and what they were for was for low-income people, right in their community, to access a neighborhood center, find jobs, get training, there were food pantries and there was a homeless program that I ran. I also ran the flood program, we got that huge flood here in 1994 and we gave people money to fix up their places, but mostly what I did was rental assistance and back taxes, so that people could prevent homelessness and or relocate from a shelter. So there were several hundred people per year and that was almost an entirely African American agency as well, the Human Development Corporation. Over here on the south side, that was primarily white. Now things are much more racially integrated, just always been low income and poor people on the south side, but, I think the geographic and demographic stuff has shifted in the last twenty, thirty years, too, which is a good thing.

But anyways, worked with people at each of the satellite centers, which would have homeless people come in and try to get them an application filled out for assistance and get them involved in the other programs. I wrote grants then, got a pretty big grant, from the state, and then I got some other local grants to do a homeless manual. And it's funny, talking about technology, because the young woman that worked there at the time was in school, and she spent, I swear, five years she spent teaching me how to do stuff with computers, because I have a learning disability, I didn't mention that earlier, but she was so patient and wonderful. We became friends, I still keep in contact with her, but she taught me and every time I see her I thank her, all the time, how patient she was. But we did, and it made services better, because it kind of computerized, not computerized – well I guess she did do it on the computer too, but there was also a hard manual that we could hand out to people that were homeless, and they could take it, and we made a smaller size, so people could know where all of the services were.

Things were diminishing, even as Clinton came in, after Reagan and all that, he did not assign any new housing to the budget. So we were losing public housing, we were losing build housing, and the money was disappearing. The agency lost its funding through, they call it, what should I even say, mismanagement? So the agency closed. And I was already gone, that's when I was hired at UMSL [University of Missouri-St. Louis] to work – I was working part time there, at night, while I was still at HDC.

Then they offered me a fulltime job and I worked there four years, no benefits – you know, you see the adjunct stuff’s going on right now? I’m so happy to see – we had no benefits, we taught four or five classes a semester, crummy pay, and no security. I loved it, I met new students, they were so excited, and that was the other thing, to really feel time to give back and also just, what would you do if this happened, you know? Just asking questions like, do you think organizing could be something to think about. Because, back then, there was a wave towards therapy being the main interest of students, and they had to take my classes because it was still a requirement, and most people would just sit there [laughs]. Every now and then, I would get maybe three or four people that were pretty interested and I’d run into – I actually do organizing work with, still, a couple of them today, that were in my class.

So I taught community organizing, social policy, social welfare history, and, first ever, I offered a diversity in social justice class, I created the syllabus with a lot of women friends and men activists that I really respect, they helped me on it. Then I got, I’ll say fired, they’re going to say that they didn’t have the money, but they continued to have other adjuncts there. I had my students involved in a voluntary, I showed it to her on the thing – we went through mediation. I showed her the syllabus, it was a voluntary thing, they didn’t get extra points. they had the same points as someone who chose to do an in-house or more of a community focused project from the book, and this was outside community project but it was with the Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression, and I had been involved in that since the late ‘90s, early 2000’s, and they didn’t like it. Even though UMSL always comes off as saying that they have a pretty democratic, strong public policy, political science, and social work departments – they didn’t want, at that time, much said about the police. In fact, their criminal justice department has a guy, who still gets on TV today, I forget his nickname, because it’s kind of an interesting nickname, and he just says so many things that you just cannot believe, still, about the police. He’s white and he’s an academic, and he just sticks up for the police all the time.

So I’m sure there was pressure – because I probably had fifteen to twenty students who wanted to do it. And they did a great job, they learned the demographics of the neighborhood, we were working on a civilian oversight education piece, and they didn’t do lobbying or anything like that, I knew they weren’t supposed to do that, but they put together booklets of different communities, they went to town halls and speak-outs to hear neighborhood people – like Peabody housing, we had a hundred people show up, and of course we also had police in uniform around the inside of the Peabody housing town hall, and actually (00:40:00:00), a couple followed some of the people in Peabody housing after the town hall

and beat them up. And we talked about that, well we talked to the students, and we reported it in our coalition too.

So that was all happening, and that really – I was drawn into that, I should say, by Tonya Hutchinson, who was my partner at the time but she also started a lesbian avenger here, and we did all types of fun action stuff, like we handed out condoms at a high school, got in trouble, got the police called on us but did it anyways. Just, fun stuff that was direct action. We were together and we used to go this coffeehouse, used to be right over here on Gravois, called the Women's Coffeehouse. Started by two lesbians, and we'd have music, we'd have rap stuff, sessions, we'd talk about the avenger stuff, we'd have parent meetings for lesbian and gay parents. It was just such a wonderful place to meet, it was before Mokabe's war over here, Mokabe's started in Kirkwood as a place for people in recovery, a lot of people don't know that. But anyways, we had the Women's Coffeehouse, and it stayed open for a good five, six years or something, I worked there for a while, but Tonya's the one who got us all thinking about, you know, there's more than just lesbian and gay issues, there's violence happening not only to us as queers, but to people of color. She's a Black lesbian, and always very vocal about it, and so we tried then to work with the Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression, did more speak-outs, anti violence stuff, and just going on that for so long.

And then, probably in 2001 or something, we started the Justice Institute. I was also, at the time, recruited to be a part of Freedom Road Socialist Organization, by some seasoned activists here, and was involved in that about five years, but I'm such a local community activist, this was a lot of national work and – I have to say though, the materials, if you looked up FRSO online, the materials are extraordinary, they keep up on stuff-- that and this black commentator that Jamala Rogers and Bill Fletcher still write, but Jamala and Steve recruited me and, it just changed my world. National and international writings, we had discussion groups, teaching and study groups, and then we started a political education group called the Justice Institute, and it was to try to fill in the gaps or just to bring activists together and do political education with each other. It was just wonderful, I mean we did everything from patriarchy stuff, anti-capitalism, LGBT studies stuff. We'd read articles sometimes, we'd see movies sometimes, and we'd invite the general public but it was geared towards other activists to get to know each other and be in solidarity with each other's work. So stop me if you need to, I don't even know where I'm going.

Oh! I forgot about the zine. Okay. So, also for five years, which – there was another lesbian newspaper, because the Gay News-Telegraph was the first one I knew, it was white, gay men. That went on for a long time, Jim Thomas started it, I don't even know if he's still around, I haven't heard

his name in years. So of course lesbians were furious, we were hardly ever in it, you get tired of pushing and saying what about us – so, *LezTalk* started a newspaper, two white lesbians, and Tonya wrote for them as sort of the black lesbian voice. Well then she got tired of that, right! So then she said, hold on. So it was primarily a women of color zine, queer women of color zine, but then they wanted someone to write on racism and white privilege to white lesbians and bisexuals, and that was my role. And then another woman joined and she was Jewish and she wrote on anti-Semitism in the LGBT community, Mel Braman. She's the person who referred my name to Andrea!

AYAN ALI:

Oh, okay! [laughs]

JANEY ARCHEY:

Small world! Anyways, so she was in it later, so it was about eight of us or so and we wrote on all kinds of things, sometimes poetry – my main thing was like a half dozen or a dozen different pieces, and at that time I happened upon an online – this is the first time I did this – challenging white supremacy workshop and Marlene, the other woman I referred to be interviewed, her and I did it for a year. It was with some of the most phenomenal, like Steve and Jamala and Tonya, but some of the most phenomenal activists from across the country. (00:45:00:00) Sharon Martinas, a white woman who is very very ill now, it just makes me heartbroken about it, but she is just – they would put together these packets of the history of Turtle Island, you know United States, and talk about land theft and the manifest destiny, and all this stuff about how things really started, the books and stuff. Then I started using them in my classes, probably another reason [inaudible] because I wasn't using traditional social work texts by themselves, but it was just such a wonderful education –and then I find out Sharon is a part of FRSO, and you know, everyone is sort of connected to different national groups, but she was such an influence on me as a fellow white person with her, me and Marlene, and it so affected and enriched my anti-racism work here, and that's when I got involved in starting – first we did a queer, anti-racism group, and we did that for several years.

And then, we wanted to do – because it was mixed racially, then we said -- and some of the people of color in the group were like, go talk to yourselves. So then we kind of went and did like a white folks group, and only the women stuck with it. We had maybe two or three men, the women stuck with it, we met for another two or three years.

Then, as this workshop was ending, and CAPCR [Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression] was really getting underway with the civilian oversight bill, I decided to start ARC, the Anti-Racism Collective, reason being, all the black alderpeople said yes, sign me up for that I'm in support, zero white alderpeople were in support of it. Our job, then, was to educate ourselves on the bill, meet with the white alderpeople, tell them we should be championing this issue, any of us could be beat over the head at any time and when they get done with certain other groups, they're going to go after anyone who challenges state power.

It has had three or four morpheses (sic) or whatever you call it, so it started support for CAPCR and it was connected to JWJ [Jobs with Justice], Tonya was an intern then working for JWJ and she really kind of brought that to JWJ, Jobs with Justice, and then we collaborated on that, we passed it one time, and the mayor vetoed it. That's that same year we just got rid of Slay and Lyda Krewson took over, he was in office for sixteen years. Anyways, so he vetoed it – it was a better bill than we have now, so then we worked and worked and worked, we finally got local control of the police, us and Kansas City were only the two cities in the whole country that didn't have local control over our police departments, it was controlled by the governor's office, so that happened in between. Then, we kept fighting, we had more victims of police brutality, and I mean it just became so apparent of how all of these things were so tied in, you know.

You can't just focus on your own survival and life, I mean you have to day-to-day and do responsible things, but you have to connect all this stuff. Whether it's class and queerness and state violence and police brutality, whatever it is it just all seemed to be linking, and Tonya really was saying, this is where we can make a difference, there aren't a lot of queers in the coalition, so when we joined we brought like five people with us. [laughs] So it made a difference, and that's what we focused on for years to come and to really get people educated to the Justice Institute to what all of these things meant to our community. And I think it's made a real difference, I mean a lot of things have happened since then, including Ferguson and now the Stockley verdict stuff. And then, after that I taught there for the four years fulltime, twelve years all together, was laid off and then I got the job with the death penalty, anti-death penalty in 2005 until I retired.

AYAN ALI:

This is Ayan Ali, I'm back with Janey Archey, we just had to pause for a second. Do I have your permission to recording?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Yes.

AYAN ALI:

Great. I would love to hear a little bit more about the origins of the Anti-Racism Collective that you started. What was it like starting that organization and what got you into anti-racism work in general?

JANEY ARCHEY:

Okay. (00:50:00:00) I think actually meeting women of color, have always probably been the most influential part of my political education and then luckily my friendships, sometimes partners. But, there just always seemed to be something more that I needed to know, needed to listen about, needed to broaden, and the anti-racism part just seemed like it was full circle because, as we started talking about my family, it just brought up all of that stuff about, wow this really has given me a chance to maybe educate my family, with opportunities possibly, but also my son, raising my son in a different way, and he was around completely different people than I was growing up, not just the queer community but a lot of women of color, in particular lesbians. So, all those things, and then just, I don't know, it's such a connection for me to work that was so needed for myself as well as the responsibility for us in the white community to start taking some actions not just talking, but talking is part of it, to try and dismantle white supremacy and white privilege in our country. I mean, it's constantly an upward battle, I mean I've pretty much lost my family, not only because of the lesbian stuff but also political stuff in general, but in particular racism stuff, that they feel too—and I think I might've said this to you or somebody else, I feel like they feel indicted, and I understand that, but if you can't break out of that – and this is the things that Tonya used to say to me all the time was like, just because I say this shit I am not talking necessarily about you personally, I might be and when I do I'll tell you! [laughs] You've got to be able to sit and listen to people's pain and rage and trauma or else forget it. You're not going to be friends or understand or even have any idea or notion about what it's like to be raised in this culture under white supremacy.

I learn a little bit differently than some of the women and men that joined the Anti-Racism collective. It's been a very interesting process, because at the beginning we had a task to try and get this civilian oversight bill passed, and to inform and educate white people, particularly about police brutality and how it was happening to our black and brown brothers and

sisters in Saint Louis. It's not that it couldn't happen to white people, but the statistics were all there. It was primarily happening by white officers, but there were some black officers that were participating too. We did have a couple of black officers in the coalition with us though, who broke from the ranks, got death threats, lost their jobs. Now, one in particular, Redditt Hudson, who was in charge of the racial justice program at the ACLU, now he's doing a national project on police accountability. He used to be a cop. So there were cops, black cops, we haven't had any white cops, and there is a black society called the Ethical Society of Police that had to develop its own association because of all the racism.

So, you would start with statistics, you would start with personal stories, we had the speak-outs, and really what it came down to at that time we had more black alderpeople than white, or I think it was pretty even but you only had to have two-thirds to have it pass, and so we did the number game, we knew we only had to have like two white people [laughs], because we had so many African American supporters, so we would work on those that seemed a little bit more progressive, go knock on their doors, bring their constituents, sit down with them, do postcards. I mean, we did sit-ins, we did everything, and finally we got two people, and then it ended up being a snowball effect, literally snowball. So we got enough white people to vote for it and then the mayor – and that was the whole learning thing, because white people were just like what? Why wouldn't the mayor support this, he's a democrat? So, that was all just a bunch of political education, I think, for a lot of us, to learn how the power works in Saint Louis, how the racism and white supremacy is so ingrained. It's still run by mostly white men, and women. (00:55:00:00)

So then it shifted, after that challenging white supremacy online thing that Marlene and I went through, and we said, well there's a real need for us to broaden besides police brutality. We also need to be looking at all kinds of issues that relate to people of color in the city of Saint Louis. We did stay a lot connected to CAPCR, because we figured we need to stay connected, accountability-wise, to organizations and coalitions run by people of color, and CAPCR is, and then we worked a lot with the Organization for Black Struggle, they're definitely a Black, mass organization, and a little bit with Nation of Islam and a little bit with UAPO, Universal African Peoples Organization.

Being a coalition, there were a lot of different players in it, but as white people, we knew our job was to recruit people and the best way to do it was to not just fill the meeting with white people, but to have a place where then white people can meet, do some of our own political education, and then report back, what are some things you think we can make an impact on, here's what we're thinking, what do you think. And then, Ferguson happened. but four months before Ferguson, this was in

April, Jamala, some of the leadership [inaudible] in JI said, you know what? It's time to write something. We want you to write something about how to get white people engaged and organizing. It's not just enough to do political education, read, attend meetings, maybe even go to protests and stuff. How can we do mass organizing together, you know, but get people educated on how to be good, skilled organizers. We wrote this pamphlet, I'll show you a copy of it, that was four of us, and four months later Michael Brown was shot in the back.

And it just completely changed the organization again, because we were heading towards – we had a big turnout for the brochure, we had a lot of people come, we had committees set up, we were going to do media, political education, mass organizing, we had several different groups that people could funnel into, and then we had an accountability team of color that we actually formulated with JI and OBS, and we were going to report to them, we were going to write a six-month plan, review it. I think they're still doing that, it's just a little bit – it's grown, you know. And so, everything just totally went to on the street, we did do some writing, I think I told you, I sent the stuff we wrote in ARC to the WashU archives. They were asking for people to submit stuff that was written about Ferguson, so I submitted two or three things, I think it was through the Brown School too, so there is some of our stuff in there. So we did that, we did fundraising. I remember working on emergency kits, we made backpack kits for activists on the streets so that they could have water and food, snacks and first aid, transportation, childcare –oh, we have a childcare group in ARC now, too. Any event that people of color are having, they call that committee head, or two people, and they arrange to do childcare, that's still happening. The material support would be transportation, Xeroxing, just anything needed for people of color led groups, that's still happening.

The activism I guess – most people were out on the street, going to meetings, trying to really figure out what we need to do about police accountability, and some laws passed and all of that, but so much stuff got undone at our level, at the state legislature. They got sit in on, but it's Republican controlled, at that time we did have a Democratic governor but he didn't run again because he was shamed out of his position from Ferguson. He sat back and watched as things erupted in Ferguson, and some were things started by infiltrators and police themselves. He took a lot of heat for that and did not run again and that's why we have Greitens [Eric Greitens], and Greitens' a Republican so now we have a republican Republican. So you know nothing's getting done there, there were really beautiful bills written by this hands up don't shoot coalition that formed, we had really good participation in that to try to work on legislation and policies, and it just all got – now there's the Ferguson Commission which

is now taking some heat, (01:00:00:00) because since the Stockley verdict, we're back on the street, right? I've been a lot on the street.

Then, I was working in the public defender traveling. So Ferguson, my role there was a lot of support work and writing. This time, I've been more in the street, but I think they're just wanting to keep it, pretty much, let's work on policy, let's do this, and there's not as many of those same people that were involved in Ferguson protests in the street now. There are some, but there are also younger people involved too, and that's the third or fourth change with out – we were very nicely told, because there's three of us that are elders, me, Marlene that I keep mentioning, and Steve. Steve Hollis is a labor organizer from decades. And we were nicely suggested that maybe we needed to take a little step back and let some younger folks [laughs]- and I was like, yes, that's cool. But, I mean, it was a little bit of a generational pull. There was some ideology stuff, but by and large I think it was just, we've done it a lot the same way, many, many years, even with JI and CAPCR, there have been some changes with that.

I'm okay with that, I really am, and now I'm more of an honorary member of ARC, because I felt like, as long as I was sitting there – and there's a student I told you about that was in one of my classes, she's one of the main leaders of it now. And I'd always see her looking at me. And I talked to her, you don't need to do that, you know? But if that's your mentor, your femmetor or something like that, you can feel – so now I do some one-on-ones, coaching stuff, or consult a little bit with some of the leaders, if they have—what do you think of this, just to run by an idea. But they're also going through some changes now because they said that accountability has become an interesting issue across the country for white people, does it mean having a team of people? What if you're accountable to somebody and somebody else isn't accountable to that same person's ideology. I think they're going through a transformation and change on what that means, how to be consistently or open and transparent with our work, because I still agree [laughs] that we really can't be trusted to march on our own!

I mean, we have things that we've done that have been effective, in fact the front of that book that I'll show you in a minute, we did a very effective – and this was ARC, not me but younger people planned to usurp—the Aryan Brotherhood came right after Ferguson happened or, maybe a year or something, and they planned a rally before the Aryan Brothers were supposed to be there, and we went on the steps where Dred and Harriet Scott's case was heard, or his case, and scared them off. They never showed up. So we had like a hundred of us out there, and that was primarily white people, I mean there were other people of color out there just because they think, hey! But we took the leadership of that, they planned it superbly, they got good media, and they just said no you're not.

I was afraid that if they did show up it was not going to be pretty. We're known for that here, there's even been literature recently, not too far from here in Holly Hills and some other places, primarily all white neighborhoods still trying to solicit white people in some rural parts of Missouri have chapters of different groups, offshoots of white nationalist groups. It's still a big issue, but—so they've done that, they're still supporting. They have a signal group, and other groups of people who keep in touch with each other for support with each other as well as what to do in support with people of color on the street.

It's working well. They still do internal political education, they have workshops in the community, there's one coming up next month called how to be a better risk taker in the movement, for white people. It's interesting, I don't know if you saw this on TV, there was a call for us to do a white people's protest down at the stadium.

AYAN ALI:

Um-hm.

JANEY ARCHEY:

Several hundred of us were there, it was very well organized, whatever, and we get over there. But a very different approach from the police. Nobody was in riot gear, now somebody pointed out, they were down the street with the riot gear, but not right in front of us. They were with the bicycles, but nothing like The Galleria (01:05:00:00) and all of these things, I mean, buses with riot cops. Just that, for other white people to see that, or to have this conversation with my brother, who I still have not lost hope with but he's struggling a lot. He doesn't like me talking about it a lot, we talk fine about gay and lesbian stuff and we've shared some other personal history stuff that we've both been through as kids, but he can't seem to get past why anybody would try to go up against the police. And I said, it's not even so much of that, it's that so many centuries – and where police started, I mean I just finished Mumia's [Mumia Abu-Jamal] book *Have Black Lives Ever Mattered?* and he kind of goes back to all of that, slave patrols – but, he just looks at all of that, like a lot of white people do, that was then, it doesn't matter now. But, trying to show him, even if it's statistics, he just cannot understand why anybody wouldn't just do everything a police officer said. And I said, people do and they still get killed. Look at Philando Castile, Sandra Bland, what were they doing? Tamir Rice, a twelve-year-old. A

You can explain yourself to death, but I don't know what it is. I was asked this one time, it's so interesting because we're doing this interview, there was a guy that was a co-chair with Jamala at the coalition, [inaudible],

he's with the UAPO, Universal African Peoples Organization, we've had some interesting discussions about homophobia. But, he did ask me one time, why are you here? It just kind of came out. So, I told him about my family and I told him, you know, I finally figured out that it isn't all about just who I am, but my life's tied to yours. Our freedom's tied to each other. Until that happens, I don't think we're going to get the kind of unity we need to make the changes we need, so every now and then, it's interesting to ask each other, because we don't sit down and do life story stuff with, which is actually an approach that some cities have used to get people involved in these people assemblies, which is my next, I hope, big interest. Have you heard of the Jackson Plan?

AYAN ALI:

No, I don't think so.

JANEY ARCHEY:

This man who died right after he was elected mayor in Mississippi, it seems suspicious to a lot of us, but his son now, I think, had run and won. He started this thing called the Jackson Plan for Jackson, Mississippi, and it's just so beautiful. We had some training after Ferguson, where you get people to come in, on like my block, and we just sort of meet each other, socialize, and what's on your mind about this area? Now you are going to get people saying we need a hundred more cops, which is what our mayor's already committed to, and then with Prop P coming up this Tuesday to pay them more for killing black people. We could have a conversation like that and then my education would kick in around activists to say, we've tried that, people are still being killed, we have huge amounts of incarceration, let's think of some other things that maybe we would like to see. So you try to build on that, you build on more human needs, human services, jobs and education, and youth stuff.

I think that that could be a way to build local power, and then force the board of alderpeople and the state and whoever, to do what we want, from a real grassroots – so it's a beautiful plan and it's been replicated other places, so – and some of the newer alderpeople and committee people, Rasheen Aldridge, Megan Green, have really been making an impact on participatory budgeting with their communities. We've held some town hall meetings just to gauge people's interest in these people's assemblies, so I think that's going to be coming again soon with Stockley's decision happening, again people's focus has really been on being in the street and shutting down economics in this town, which I think is up to fourteen million, from six weeks. People either not coming in or leaving or not going to something. They've made an impact, but the long term, as Mumia talks about, let's get beyond things being a moment, and Angela Davis,

who has also been a major influence on me (01:00:00:00), but we need to keep building the longer term movement for fundamental change, not just being angry and reactive.

He gives a lot of props to the activism of Ferguson folks here in that book, and the book is skinny, but there's a lot in it, just little short essay things, and actually comes up with an idea too, it wasn't his idea it was Fred Hampton's from the Black Panthers, about what we really could be doing through, not just the assemblies, but councils in our neighborhoods to develop our own patrols of people who are concerned about people's mediation and conflict resolution and human needs, not gun-toting, kill you if you look the wrong way or you got the wrong skin color police. There's a whole little portion of that book in there that talked about bringing that back forward, or the other stuff that we're doing is never going to get us to the point when they're not killing people, because they all get off.

I would say that probably my life's work with anti-racism and challenging white supremacy has been focused on state violence, police violence in the last, almost, twenty years. I think it's such an issue around the planet, in fact, there's a book called *Policing the Planet*, I happened to see it at the library and I read it a few months ago, and it is phenomenal. It takes almost every group – the groups and folks that we've been talking about, and looks at women's bodies, how we're policed, trans bodies, it didn't say it in there what trans women's bodies, to people of color, to nations, to Native American water and land, and our air, and how everything is so policed over this planet, and it's the issue of our times. Besides all of the other things that could unite us – I mean in some ways, that feels like the things that divide us that you do want to change, but the things that unite us is what I have not been as successful doing, with other white working class people, is how can we work together to understand that, those things about state violence, because white working class people get the hell beat out of them too for lots of different things, maybe not for their race, but for other stuff, and labor folks. But to connect on issues of capitalism and class and how that really is how they're winning, I mean they are so wealthy and we are becoming, you know, rich and poor. People see that everyday by all of the things they're losing, so – but the wedge is racism, and that wedge, and Mab Seagrest always used that term when I first saw it in her writing, is what is so difficult.

Even looking at ARC, we've talked about this, by and large I would say, maybe half and half, it's white working-class folks and white middle-class folks, so we need to really be more aware of our own class stuff in ARC and how to engage more—and there have been some spreading out of that, in fact there's two other groups now, there's White Folks Work, it's a group and they do a lot of stuff in the county, and then there was another

one I can't remember what – White Folks for Racial Justice or something like that, it's a Facebook group. So there are several groups, and people are like, we've got plenty of work, spread it around, so that continues to be something – and I really think the people's assemblies could be a way that everybody is coming in, we're definitely going to have some ground rules because there are ground rules in the Jackson Plan, there's no homophobia allowed, Islamophobia, everybody's going to be welcomed and part of the process, and in particular, we're going to make sure that the issues that are prominent are looked at, addressed, and not negated, because they can go to their neighborhood association if they want just a regular meeting – people actually do that, I've gone to a couple of them and people still stand up and do the Pledge of Allegiance – I'm just like, what? So anyways, there are more traditional places for people to go and do that, and they get money for those neighborhood associations, that's the one thing that's kind of aggravating. But we can build in and find ways, creatively, like people are, to make sure that people's assemblies (01:15:00:00) are something people feel like they have a piece of some local power, their voices be heard, and then really push that to where some of the stuff that's going on in our neighborhoods can be addressed. So, I'm hopeful about that. I really would like to do that. I'm in the ward now with Megan Green, fifteenth ward. I was in Dutchtown, which also has such abandoned property and all kinds of poverty and unemployment, but they've got a strong Dutchtown South Corporation, that actually two black women are executive director and, I forget what Sunni's management or something development, are running it right now and really doing some awesome stuff, so they've got a strong group started over there in the last few years that I think will be great.

I like to do local stuff because that's right where I'm at and I'm a Saint Louisan and I really want our city to be better, but as I get older, I think, okay, I've contributed some things, done some things I've wanted to do, and so I do want to be a little bit more in a supportive kind of role for – the every week, every meeting kind of thing, I can't do all that anymore. I don't have a car now, but I can walk over to our meetings here in the ward, I can actually start doing some things on this block with other people, so I'm looking forward to that.

AYAN ALI:

You speak a lot about the importance of intersectionality to you. Were you doing any work directly with the LGBT community here in Saint Louis, whether that was through your anti-racism work or other avenues, were you working directly with queer people here in Saint Louis ever?

JANEY ARCHEY:

That was PROMO.

AYAN ALI:

Okay.

JANEY ARCHEY:

Okay so, Privacy Rights of Missourians? I don't even know. It used to be called PREP, Privacy Rights Education Project, then they changed it to PROMO, I have no idea why. So for the six years then, I was mostly doing legislative stuff, stuff like that. Then I was on the LGBT mayor's taskforce, that disbanded after a couple years, all kinds of internal struggle with the civil rights commission. Then the lesbian avengers, we did direct action and that kind of stuff. Then, we had a queer discussion group and anti-racism group. What else? Oh, the zine, writing for the zine, and planning speak-outs and town halls and community information stuff, focused on violence against LGBT people.

In fact, I have the book, it wasn't edited very well for grammar and spelling, but me and Tonya and Marlene are in it. It's called *Lesbian Friendships*, Suzanna Rose wrote the book and interviewed us for it, and put in – the chapter we were in was on cross race friendships, so that was a fun thing to do. We each talked about how we met doing political work and – the other thing that me and Marlene and Tonya were involved in was Gay Pride here has also had a terrible history of not listening to women, lesbians, trans people, and its mostly been run by white, gay men. Finally, I don't even know how this happened, but there was enough people leaving the board, that for the first time ever it became mostly women and quite a few women of color too. At the time, that's when Tonya and I were partners. Marlene's a writer, a poet and a writer, so we did the booklet, because every year they had this booklet, it used to be pretty good sized, and it was filled with all this wonderful stuff on important issues that were happening to lesbians, but queer people too around our city and the country. We also got Barbara Smith as our main speaker, have you heard of her?

AYAN ALI:

No, I don't think so.

JANEY ARCHEY:

[inaudible] To come, and that was the first time we ever had a Black lesbian as a main speaker at Pride, and she's now ill, they had something

on Facebook about doing a fund me thing for her, because she's done so much. Really a wonderful writer, speaker, activist, and wrote a lot too, her and, of course, Audre Lorde, about intersectional issues, and she was wonderful and it was the very first time that everything was centrally focused (01:20:00:00) on lesbians, bisexual women, and having a Black main speaker. I mean, they'll have people of color as entertainment, food, from different places, but not main speakers that come and talk about the history of the LGBT movement, so that was a huge success – that's never happened again that I know of. Now what's happening is they've moved downtown, Forest Park, then Tower Grove Park, now downtown, now some of us are involved in the smaller alternative one. It's not even really a stage or anything, which is fine with me, but it's really changed, there's two – and then there's Black Pride in August, so I should say that, I mean Black Pride, obviously, had to form their own to make sure they would have, almost entirely focusing on that Black and Latino community because of white Pride, that's what they ended up calling it with it being so exclusionary. And really not even open to thinking about why and how they needed to change that, I mean it had to be forced on them, kind of like with white people, sometimes [laugh] you've got to get right like this, we're not going to work with you anymore unless we see this, and not in five years either.

We had the same problem in PROMO, the men were taking over in leadership and we felt that women and people of color were not being heard and their issues weren't being addressed at the state level. But the zine was the most fun.

AYAN ALI:

Yeah, that sounds amazing. [laughs]

JANEY ARCHEY:

We met all the time, we'd fight and eat and write, but for five years – I have every copy of it. You know I saw this at the library, I was going to tell Tonya, so they have a zine collection and it's in the main, central library downtown, that beautiful new renovated library, and it does say that anybody who's done any kind of a zine, if they want to they can have them put into their collection.

AYAN ALI:

That's so cool.

JANEY ARCHEY:

It's a good thing, because if it's just in an LGBT history project, you're not going to get as many people to see it.

AYAN ALI:

Exactly.

JANEY ARCHEY:

Especially young people who might be coming out or something and come across it at the library. So I'm going to show that to her and see what she thinks about maybe me bringing the copies down there, I'm going to ask her if it's okay.

AYAN ALI:

That's great! Well our time is coming to an end.

JANEY ARCHEY:

Wow! Really?

AYAN ALI:

I don't know if there's anything that you missed or I missed that you would want to touch on.

JANEY ARCHEY:

Did we get through all of the questions you wanted to ask me?

AYAN ALI:

Most of them yes, most of the topics that I wanted to talk about. I don't know if there's anything you wanted to add.

JANEY ARCHEY:

Gosh, I can't think of anything. These are just notes because I'm eventually going to pull together not just events and flyers and pictures, but my thoughts, I mean you want to have some sort of narrative to go with it. The only thing we didn't mention was the very last panel I've been on which was the generational activist panel.

AYAN ALI:

Okay.

JANEY ARCHEY:

That was just in June, on my son's birthday, which was so cool, June 11th and that's why I remember it. It was young to old, from, I think Rasheen's twenty-two to a Doctor – she was friends with Maya Angelou isn't that terrible I'm blanking on her name, and Percy Green, so they're both in their late seventies, eighties, I'll think of it. But anyways, we just talked about our journeys, our struggles, and then the one question that got me, which was the first question, was how were you supported when you were an activist? I can't really say – it wasn't the same, I mean I guess I shouldn't have said in no way were we, but it's not like how we think about it now, where they even have self-care community days now with the activism. There was no such thing, but we at least had support groups, we would set up support groups. There was consciousness raising groups when I was still in high school in the Civil Rights Movement for women and feminists and queer folks, and we learned from that, I think, to do something with it. And then I remember Jamala was saying, sometimes that just means going to cultural things with each other, having a drink, hanging out, and that kind of thing too, so we did do that. When the Justice Institute was happening, for five years, we met once a month and had a drink somewhere, at somebody's house or at Mokabe's, had dinner. (01:25:00:00) So that was a form of support, but that was much more later on, not when I first came out.

So anyways, there was like ten of us. I would say half, people identified as women, there were no – and I made several suggestions of people, there were no trans people at all on the panel. There was no bisexual people on the panel. It was half men, half women – nobody said cis or whatever, but I know people on the panel. It was probably three white people, there rest were people of color, and it was just really nice to sit and talk about people's experiences like this. Cis and queer or straight, or whatever, and that wasn't really the main focus it as activism in general, roadblocks and successes and just how we think our age does or does not affect now and impact our work. Most of it was ideology, some of it was interesting around age. But it was fun, I wish there would have been a little more follow-up, but I think then things started getting kind of geared towards this decision thing happening, because we knew it was coming, and then they held it for so long.

He's been out of town for five years, on – and they paid a million dollars for his bail, the police officer's association. That was so ironic – I went to the trial.

AYAN ALI:

Oh, really.

JANEY ARCHEY:

He testified. It was the biggest bunch of bullshit I've ever seen. I was trying to explain to this young person there who was doing a report for *The American*, and I said this is so interesting because I just came off doing death penalty cases. He was not charged with the death penalty, and he got a bench trial. I said to her, just a couple of observations in case you're interested, first of all, nobody, nobody – and we've had million dollar bonds, believe it or not, the youngest client we had, he was African American from Hayti, which is the southern part of Missouri, charged with the death penalty, nobody goes home on bond that's poor and black, but poor. And second, here he is talking on the phone, walking around like this. Well then of course, we realized he had been out on bond for five years. So he's just walking around like this in the courtroom, our guys – there was only one woman in ten years, had leg things on so if they even got up and took any steps they'd fall over, and three guards, two on either side and a guard behind them, for suspected of killing somebody.

So I said just observe that a minute. And he's talking to family members and friends on the phone. None of our clients were allowed to use the phone. So it was a very interesting – and of course everybody notices that he's white, and the judge, it as his last case, he's retired. They were calling for a while to get rid of him, but he's retiring. It's like you've always got to be ready for that kind of stuff to happen because it's happening everyday, that's what's so horrifying about it, and so you want to be there, you're going to be there, you have to be there. Yet, to have then the time, energy and family stuff—I'm in a very good situation because I don't have a job job anymore, but other people who do, and I did it top, went to school, activism and raised my son – but it wears people down, and I'm glad to see they're doing more around community care, and therapy, I mean they have all of this stuff set up. So it's really been some wonderful changes.

AYAN ALI:

Well that's about all the time we have. Thank you so much for speaking with me, Janey.

JANEY ARCHEY:

You're welcome!

Word List

Mumia Abu-Jamal (Black nationalist and member of the Black Panthers)

Rasheen Aldridge (5th Ward Democratic Committeeman)

Maya Angelou (American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist from Saint Louis)

Sandra Bland (28-year-old black woman who was found hanged in a jail cell after being arrested in Texas)

Mel Braman (friend, political ally)

Michael Brown (18-year-old black man who was killed by Officer Darren Wilson in 2014)

Philando Castile (unarmed black man who was murdered in his car by Officer Jerimono Yanez)

Terri Coats (Janey's former partner)

Angela Davis (noted American political activist and Black feminist)

Margaret Erickson (past professor of education at Webster University)

Bill Fletcher (activist, writer)

Justin Flory (Janey's son)

Andrea Friedman (professor of history and women's studies at Washington University)

Rick Flory (Justin's father)

Megan Ellyia Green (15th Ward alderwoman)

Percy Green (social worker and black activist in Saint Louis)

Eric Greitens (current governor of Missouri)

Fred Hampton (chairman of the IL chapter of the Black Panthers)

Steve Hollis (president of the American Federation of Government Employees)

Redditt Hudson (ex-cop, past coordinator of Racial Justice at the ACLU)

Tonya Hutchinson (best friend/political mentor)

Jack Kirkland (professor of social work at the Brown School)

Lyda Krewson (current mayor of Saint Louis)

Audre Lorde (American feminist writer and activist)

Sharon Martinas (political femtor, past founder of challenging white supremacy workshops)

Mokabe's (coffeehouse in Saint Louis)

Tamir Rice (12-year-old boy who was killed by Officer Timothy Loehmann)

Jamala Rogers (political activist, writer, youth mentor)

Suzanna Rose (past professor of women's studies at UMSL)

Sunni Hutton (program assistant at Dutchtown South Community Corporation)

Marlene Schulman (main white ally, dear friend)

Mab Seagrest (American feminist writer and activist)

Dred and Harriet Scott (enslaved African Americans who sued for their freedom)

Francis Slay (former mayor of Saint Louis)

Barbara Smith (American black lesbian feminist and socialist)

Jason Stockley (ex-officer acquitted in fatal shooting of Anthony Lamar Smith)

Jim Thomas (past president of the Gay News Telegraph)