

AUG 20, 1978. Buffalo, N.Y.

(C) We'll just do the same thing, chronological remarks, so we'll just start at the beginning and go straight through. And some of it will be in these things in words, Like some of the things when we got to the part with the Kitchen, and the reasons for founding it and what we did, its pretty clear in the other interview, so its not necessary to go over the dates and everything. So if something is particularly well outlines just say, its in that.

(S) You could also tell me, Woody talked about this, or...

(C) But he would refuse to comment on you much, so he said, you'll have to ask Steina,

(S) Oh, really,

(C) Very democratic.

(S) Did Woody say he loved me?

(C) No, we didn't talk about that much. He told me you took in shattered Jewish students instead of having children. \_\_\_\_\_ I think that was one of them.

(S) Well, that's only because of his own father's example. The grandparents had always related to Woody as a father, since he was 20. You know, all these people come, and they want to have him supporting them, like kind of a rabbi or father figure.

(C) He's very good at that kind of arm-around-the-shoulder.

(S) yes, encouragement, so then he calls me mama just because he's a papa.

(C) Nothing to do with you. . OK you were born in 1940, and brought up in Iceland,

(S) Yes, until I was 17.

(C) So you were through to the point of the University.

(S) I never went to school.

(C) What did you do?

(S) I started going to school when I was six, and it didn't go so well, nobody knew what was wrong with me, but I found out ten years later, I was **dyslexic** dislectic. You know, you have trouble with the right and left hand.

I was one of those who read d like b and things like that. Then I just had to go to school, my parents didn't want me home, so they sent me to this class, I was doing so poorly, and I was the last in the class and everything, they saw how I suffered, so they said that I could do anything I wanted to. And then I was also sick all the time. So I pretty much did all I wanted to and I 6, 7, 8, 9, I pretty much went to school and suffered it, then I got sick and I was in the hospital for awhile, and I didn't have to go in anymore, and I had this wonderful doctor, he was our family doctor, Every fall he came and I said listen man, I need some kind of paper I can't go to school.

(C) And you were allowed not to go to school.

(S) yes, he always brought me this paper. But I would always go in the spring and take the spring exams. To get to the next class. And basically I could always prove that I could read and write, see I, for reading I went to my aunt who lived in the same house, and she taught me a little, see I read in Science magazine that there is only one way to cure ~~dyslexia~~ dyslexia, and that is individual tutoring.

(C) You can't cure it, but to teach them how to see it,

(S) Yes, you just have to practice all the harder, and you have to have somebody who is an individual tutor who is with you every day.

(C) and you had it by accident.

(S) Yes, I had this aunt who just couldn't stand it that I would be so dumb.

because she was teaching in the same school that I was going to and they talked about me. She took me every morning 8 o'clock, for a walk she took me , and read with me for half an hour, And then I had a grandfather living on the floor below her, and he taught me mathematics. and all those things, And I played cards with him.

(C) Basically it just affected reading, the... just the reversal of letters.

(S) No it affected spelling the most, I could never make a, what's it called, when they read to you and they write it down, anything like that, I flunked on all those exams. So then I had ;this fantastic thing, I just always took the exams in the spring.

(C) How did ;you take them, by writing or by talking.

(S) Both oral and written. Eventually when I was already 13 or 14, they became very tough because the teacher said we have no idea what the student has been doing all year, we never saw her in class, and so I never did very well on them, but I always got up to the next level.

(C) You studied the things at home? You family

(S) no, after awhile I didn't need the family help, except in English, I got my uncle to help me in English,

(C) You have many languages, how did you learn them. all those languages?

(S) Well, you learn everything by yourself. Most people learn how to learn by themselves late, like when they are 18 or 19, and I learned it when I was you see I really learned it when I was 13 because I was really way behind, and I realized that all the other kids were now studying Danish and English and Algebra, and I no one had told me about it, and I got very mad and I sat down and I just studied like crazy. It's so fantastic if you take that history book and instead of reading between Monday and Friday about

the Sumerians and the next time about the Phoenicians, and go on this way, I like in one day, I would start in the morning and I would read and read and read until I fell flat in the evening. Then I tried to go to school, I tried to sit in school and learn the way you learn in school, I couldn't stand it it was so slow. So when it came to sending me to sending me to gymnasium I couldn't stand the speed. So that was it. I went to Denmark, my parents sent me to Denmark, not because I wanted to, but because my sisters who were older have both been to Denmark when they were seventeen, it was a part of sort of the education. And they sent me, and I went alone, they went with their friends, but I went alone,

(C) To do what?

(S) A school at the \_\_\_\_\_. And what was it, what was it? I had wanted to actually, I had wanted to live by myself. Because I didn't care so for this whole family life. I didn't actually have my private room also. So I slept under the piano because I refuse to sleep in the same room with my sisters.

(C) You had two sister in your family, no brothers?

(S) None. And, it was nice, I went to Denmark, I realized I could live all by myself. I could have my own room.

(C) You were in a dormitory or something?

(S) Yes, I was in a dormitory, and it was like, what's it called, when you get the food and everything? Boarding school. And then I went to Copenhagen, I stayed there for awhile, like a month, with friends and people like that, see when you are 17 everyone to take care of you. And I got into this whole thing there, I was going between families and everything. I had my own bicycle. So after that, I came home, and I told my parents I wanted to go to

5  
to Germany.

(C) How did you decide Germany?

(S) Because after I came from Denmark I spoke Danish fluently, and I realized it was dumb to go to school to learn languages, you could just go to the country. So I decided that German was the next language I wanted to speak fluently, so I went to Germany. Half a year later I was gone again.

(C) Where did you live, did you go to school?

(S) I went again to a boarding school for like two months or so, and I did very poorly, I didn't understand a word of German, it wasn't as easy as I thought, but again, I got into it. I studied it like crazy. And then I was also studying violin. when I was in Germany.

(C) That was the first you started to study music, was in Germany?

(S) No, no, no, I had studied at home all along. when I was 6 or 7.

(C) Taking violin lessons. Was it your idea, or your family.

(S) My family idea. My family is all crazy about music.

(C) And also there was that tradition of children taking lessons.

(S) Now, I tell you, my family was very extraordinary. I am very indebted to them because they understood that I couldn't go to school, and they didn't let me, and my sisters wanted to go to school, they could go, Actually I remember my father once the teacher called, and my father picked up the phone, and then my father talked to him, and I heard my father say, Yes, Hello old friend, I found out they were old friends, How are you, Oh, I don't believe it, she is really something. I'll spank her. I'll tell you, and he went on like that, and he said I'd be sure that she shows up and that she does her work. ~~As if~~

(C) As if he didn't know.

(S) Yes, and then he came in and he sat down, and playing the cards and didn't say anything to me, so I said What did he say? \_\_\_\_\_

(C) He didn't say he didn't mind at all, but he knew you were learning.

(S) Yes, He didn't worry about me, my father always trusted me, always.

(C) But they were sort of extraordinary, your mother was...

and they were from the intellectuals, He was in the foreign service, so they could afford to be a little bit lenient.

So they were very interested in music and they encouraged you? Then you studied violin.

(S) So I studied violin, and I studied theory, and harmony and everything, this was again funny, I was always supposed to be with a class, and because I was sick I came in late, and the harmony teacher said, Never mind, I'll just give you a couple of private lessons and after that you will fit into this class. And he was a little absent minded and I asked will I now fit into the class and he looked at me and said Oh, you are way beyond that class, I can make you fit in with another class. So I kept always taking private lessons with him because he was always trying to fit me into some of those classes. And by the time I fit into a class I had worked so that my speed was much faster than the class So all my schools was either private tutoring or just by myself. I just never could make it to any classes.

(C) Did you have friends. How did you make friends if you didn't go with other students when you were young.

(S) I never made much friends. Well until I was over 13, 14. Then I was pretty lonely kid. Then I make more friends than I wanted. And I have to sort of keep them off. It was interesting, it just sort of changed. I guess when I was a little kid it was necessary to have friends, I wouldn't mind now.

(C) So we have you up to 17,

(S) But if I am going to synapse this now, there is more things I should say, like because I didn't go to school I could go to all the rehearsals of the symphonic orchestra, I would go to many rehearsals. I went to all theatre performances, all concerts, everything that happened in this little town. And there was a lot because there was a cultural war going on between USSR and USA and USA would send Issac Stern and then USSR would send \_\_\_\_\_ . So in two months you would have heard them both.

So I got actually a fantastic training in that sense. And I also went to a lot of Art exhibitions.

(C) You knew of - you didn't study art , you know traditional painting or sculpture.

(S) No.

(C) You went to a lot of cultural

(S) I had this aunt who was a painter, and she hung out with pretty crazy people.

(C) The one who lived in the house?

(S) Yes. The one who helped me read.

(C) What kind of painter?

(S) An \_\_\_\_\_ painter. She was very much, she came to America in 1945, and with all those new things going on here, and absolutely flipped.

Do you know a guy called Art Copley?

(C) Bill Copley?

(S) Bill, yes, Well, he was married to an Icelander.

(C) Well, he's had about three wives, He's had many wives, \_\_\_\_\_ is one,

(S) Nina, she died after I came to america. 1967, 68.

(C) He's like a sort of semi-surrealist figure.

S) So my aunt hung out with his group. Here in New York City.

(C) And she came back?

(S) Yes, she always did.

(C) Incredible. Independent women.

(S) Yes, that's why I was brought up to be very self-sufficient.

(C) Your sisters got married?

(S) Yes, my sisters they were sort of \_\_\_\_\_ for marriage, but I was not, so I always joke that I was brought up to be a spinster.

There was a great traditional spinsterhood in my family. Yes, and also the women always do very well for themselves. Artists and entertainers.

(C) <sup>Role</sup> ~~No~~ models. for you?

(S) ~~no~~. It has always been clear to me that I wouldn't have a family. I never had the inclination. When I was young I always thought One day this motherhood thing will strike, And it hasn't done it yet, and I guess its maybe too late?

(C) Woody doesn't want any children? He liked the adopted family?

(S) Yes, I guess so. But with my sisters it was obvious that that was what they wanted.

(C) Do they live in Iceland? What do they do?

(S) Oh, one is a \_\_\_\_\_ And the other is, what is she, she is a drafts person, a commercial artist, and now she had a degree in psychology I guess, and she just keeps having all those kids so she just keeps going to the University and pickigg up all those degrees. Because her husband earns a lot of money so she doesn't have to work.

(C) How many kids does she have?

(S) Three .

(C) That's a lot.

(S) She has them so spaced, see, she had them every six years.

So she's coming up for another one in another three years.

(C) OK, so we have you studying music independently, 1957 you went to Denmark, 1958 you went to Heidelberg, Then you went from Germany to Prague? Or you went back to Iceland and then to Prague.

(S) I went back to Iceland, and there was an ad in the newspaper that , from the Minister of Culture, that some students could apply for grants to go to Checkoslovakia. Now, first of all, very few people would apply. And the only people who would apply were avowed communists who understood that it was better out there~~y~~.

(C) You weren't brought up as a Communist, with your father in the Foreign Service.

(S) Absolutely not. But that's a part of the rebellion when you are 18 or so. When its nice to do exactly what your parents don't want you to do. So I applied, and there was one position reserved for a music student and I was the only music student who applied, so I was sort of a sure-shot. And it was a nice grant because it was a extended every year and it took basically care of all expenses.

(C) This sent you to the same school that Woody was going to then.

(S) No, I went to the Music ~~C~~Konservatory.

(C) And it was a one-year grant?

(S) It was a one-year that was extended four times for me.

(C) So you had four years of this scholarship.

(S) Yes, of sort of like a full scholarship. Meaning all tuition and room and board, and some extra money.

(C) And you were living in Prague? You liked it there? You met a lot of interesting students? It must have been very lively there.

(S) Yes, I also delighted, it was for a kind of totally different kind of life. I had never encountered.

(C) And you thought you would be a concert violinist?

(S) No, I thought, I had figured it out this way. That I would sit in an orchestra and orchestra meets for three hours rehearsals maybe three or four times a week, and one concert, and I would play with the Icelandic Symphony, and of course it was such a small workload, and even if the pay wasn't that good it would be good enough to support me and a I would have the free time.

(C) And you would do what in you free time? Go to these cultural events?

(S) No, I was at that time, I was when I was growing up, I was extremely interested in philosophy, psychology and all those things. But I know that I wouldn't study them in schools, and I wouldn't care for any degree in it. Just wanted to read it. I wanted to be sort of a private scholar. I figured that this would be the way, but its so wrong, because once you are a musician you have to practice all the time, and you are so tired after a rehearsal that you just go off and do nothing for several hours, you know, But this was the idea. It was not to be a concert violinist, I never , I wanted to have the music or something I could support myself. So I could do something else. And I know you don't know any musician who does anything else, I don't know either. They just do music.

(C) When they're not performing they're practicing.

(S) Or working up article, reading about it, writing about it. So all the time professional.

(C) Did you meet Woody during the period 1959 to 1963?

(S) No, I met Woody during the last year, just about when I was about to get out.

(C) So you lived in Prague until what year?

(S) I left... Well actually until the day I married Woody.

I left for good a week after I married Woody. But I had actually left before, I just came in to marry him.

(C) I don't quite get this, you had the four-year scholarship, then what did you do?

(S) That's 1963. Then I went to Greece for several months, then I went for a little while to Vienna, and then there was Christmas, and I wanted to see Woody, and its not so easy to get married in Chechoslovakia, I mean we have applied for it like half a year ahead, and the paper that allowed us to marry came while I was there, so then we said, So what the hell, lets get married.

(C) When did you actually meet though? You were married in 1964.

(S) We met sometime in 1962.

(C) So when you went to Greece and Vienna it was just traveling,

(S) No, I was studying violin.

(C) Were you performing at all?

(S) No. just studying.

(C) So then how did you meet Woody?

(S) Oh, he, I asked him to fix my motercycle.

(C) So American, my God! He said that you invited him to Iceland.

12  
(S)

(C) He and a friend to stay with your family, to make a film.

(S) And then you had to pay the bill. So he had to marry you...

(S) No, it was the opposite. We got married, actually the marriage was meant, see, there is no reason ever to marry. I don't think, and Woody doesn't think either, and we never thought so even then, because see in Iceland people don't get married, you, unless they have a child, and until after the child is born, or maybe even the second child. Then you say, OK, we should legalize this because we have to protect the children.

So marriage in Iceland is not a romantic, ~~you know~~, affair, it is strictly legal. And a lot of people draw up those contracts. Like both my sisters drew up contract before they got married, I never did.

(C) For what belonged to who, and if the husband left or died, what they got.

(S) So its very interesting, and that's how I always looked at marriage.

But this one was also strictly for legalities. Because how are you going to get Woody out? How was he going to be able to travel? This was the easiest way, and that's why I took half a year for us to get the paper.

(C) And that's also when you decided to come to America. You had a relative in America and he couldn't have come unless he sponsored

(S) No, but he had already decided when I met him, actually the first time I met him I was sort of in a hallway, and I, we were introduced by a friend and he turned to me and said, Get me out of here, marry me and get me out of here. It was funny. Everybody was hilarious and we were laughing, I really should, I said.

(C) So 1962 you spent in Prague, 1964 you began with the Symphony Orchestra

in Iceland.

(S) In order to pay the way for Woody to make a film.

(C) So you left in 1964 and Woody came with you and you both went to Iceland.

(S) See I left immediately after we got married, within a week after, and I started working in Iceland, and then he came in June. With his friend, and they made, or we made two films.

(C) These were these kind of narrative films he was telling me about. And you were part of that.

(S) I was sort of like a producer.

(C) And he was directing, and the friend was the cameraman. So you did that for 1964, and you played in the orchestra, and you then hatched this idea to

(S) No, we already, we had applied for entry visa to America. When I went home I applied for to go to America.

(C) Did you want to go to America?

(S) Well I wanted, because that was a continent I had left, I had sort of done Europe. But Woody was much more adamant about it because he had conceived of this idea already as a kid to come to America. For me it was just another land in the conquest.

(C) Another language.

(S) Yes.

(C) So you left in 1965, came, he said to Pennsylvania, someplace in Pennsylvania where your relatives were, and then you moved to New York.

(S) Yes, we moved to New York in the fall, we just stay for summer up in Pennsylvania.

(C) What do you remember about coming to America.

(S) No much. I spoke lousy English,

(C) Woody must have spoken none.

(S) Almost none. I couldn't understand half of the things that are going around. And I didn't particularly much even care, I mean it was fun, and I See I lived here half a year for myself before Woody came. That was sort of very nice. So when he came, I was getting pretty fluent in English.

(C) In Pennsylvania, with this family

(S) No, I lived at the beginning in New York. I lived *at the YMCA*

(C) When was that?

(S) From January 1965 until May 1965 when Woody came.

It is amazing I tell, this is off the record, \_\_\_\_\_

(C) So when you came to New York, did you know anybody in the music world. or the Art world, or did you have any friends.

(S) No, I never got any friends in the music world. My friends were all Woody's friends. Because I never belonged there. I never had anything to do with musicians. I would P Lay in orchestras and then came the intermission, and I wouldn't know what to do. Because I had nobody to talk to. I would talk to them, and I would always get so insanely bored. So they would tell me about the third position on the fourth string, the G-string, they would say, you should really use the third finger and not the fourth finger. And I just,

(C) You'd had it.

(S) Con ductors are a little bit better, but not much.

(C) So where did you live when you first came to New York?

(S) I lived on Riverside Drive in International House. And that was fun, we got lot of friends. Then we mixed very much, we were very much together with the foreigners. And I think this is general pattern for all immigrants for

15

the first three years. They stick with the foreigners. Our foreigners were Argentinians, they were from the middle East, they were all kinds, but non-Americans. And they, well there's nothing to tell about that period. What could Woody say?

(C) Well, he told me about the jobs he got with the film people, which enabled him to find out about equipment and he made those expo films and the ideas of having equipment and he said then he began to bring it home. First he worked in the studios, and then he began to bring it home, and during the day you were home and you would

(S) But this is after video. See after video, man, those five years in New York, those five years where we lived and had a lot of fun, awful lot of parties, and like we discovered Central Park on Easter Sunday, like we just walked into it innocently and discovered all that was going on, but we were not a part of this whole culture, we were jsut there, and it was just wonderfl. And we found out after three years that we wouldn't want to live anywhere else. Because by the time they wanted to deport us we had figured out no we shouldn't let them do it. We got out papers together.

(S) So you're both immigrants now

(S) Yes, residents now. But Icelanders. Woody is also Icelandic.

(C) Because he married you? No because they sort of threw him out of Chieckoslovakea, he was going to be stateless. So I just arranged for him to become Icelandic.

(C) Iceland must be very casual about these things.

(S) Normally it goes through parliment, and you could vote

I could arrange it because I am Icelander, but normally everybody who wants to immigrate to Iceland has to get voted in the Parliament.

(C) It must not have much to do. Or not that many people want to move there.

(S) Both, some of both.

(C) So for jobs you were free=lancing.

(S) I just was a free-lance musician, and I knew by then that I didn't want to do it. I did it because it dawned upon me actually after I came here that I did music only for money and that it wasn't right because music should be only done for the passion and for the fun. instead of doing it only for the money. So I was so ready to jump onto something else. When Woody started bringing home this equipment.

(C) So you pounced. When was that,

(S) Was end of 1969 beginning of 1970.

(C) And he was making these things with these people and it had just all degenerated and there wasn't much work and they were just all doing these experimental things with the equipment and stuff. He said they did these projects, but that in between times there was just this lull.

(S) What happened, which is important is that there were a lot of equipment at the place where he worked, And Woody had the key, so they started spending all the nights there and all the saturdays and sundays And nobody knew about this, and we started doing tapes, and then our tapes.

(C) Video, studio or television equipment.'

(S) Yes, there was all the video equipment at the place.

(C) You taught yourselves how to use it.

(S) Woody taught me, He is I guess self-taught. And I would pick it up from him.

(C) What did you make tapes of?

(S) We would maybe come in and just sit for hours and just watch feedbacks. Because its a self-made process. It's something that just goes on. You point the camera at the monitor set it into motion, and then you can sit and watch it and talk, and after awhile you can look at it again and it has changed. And then you started to figure out how to interfere with it, how to control it, what to do to change it, you know, finding out the laws if there were any. Why it happened in the first place, what was the reason for it. Then we did an awful lot of sort of jokes, all kind of performances.

(C) Just the two of you.

(S) Yes. But somebody else. Oh, like a let it be, a close up of one mouth trying to lip-sink I did a lot of other kind of lip-sink, when I would turn on a record and I would take a mike and be a rock star, or what else, we had this dancer who saw himself in a monitor being turned up and down and right and left at frantic speed and through this all trying to tell a story. And this kind of things. A lot of them. They were called sketches.

(C) And you have all those tapes still.

(S) Oh, yeah, we have all them, We are actually going to distribute them, they are going to be in the catalogue.

(C) Are you going to make them into things, or are you going to use them as is?

(S) Use them as is. They are all like three or five minutes long, And we started playing those to people to our friends. They started coming by, and you know, turning on. And at the same time also Woody was going to Fillmore East picking up Jethro Tull and Jimmy Hendrix and this kind of

(C) You'd just take the camera, the portapack and film for a half an hour?

(S) And people just were crazy and wanted to see it, We had a steady stream of people incoming. First of all, first happening was we couldn't stand

\_\_\_\_\_ 's place anymore, \_\_\_\_\_ was the guy who was the industrial photographer who had all the equipment. So we would take something out to tape something, we would take like a Jimmy Hendrix or a performers, and instead of returning the equipment back there we would take it home, And realized that nobody missed it. Because nobody else was using it. So eventually a lot of it wound up home.

(C) He didn't use it himself.

(S) No. He was a photographer. And the other people weren't interested that much either. And then we also did at that time those experiments like where hooking up sound into image and image to sound. and all those things.

(C) And you really started to discover that there were things and pieces of equipment that you could buy and , like the oscillator, was that one of the first? Something he said he bought on Canal Street, and plugged in?

(S) That's when we realized all those things, that it didn't have to be a camera. There were a lot of other things that would make images. And that's when I started it, I stayed home, I wasn't doing anything. And when Woody came home at five o'clock from work I would say Hey, look what I've done today! And he got so envious, Because he realize I had all the time and I could

(C) You were having all the fun.

(S) So one day he comes home and says "I'm going to quit." And I looked at him and I said "Yes." And I thought it was very funny because we both realized that this meant we wouldn't have any money, and he wouldn't have also this equipment if he was going to quit, because then he would have to give it back, But, you know, it was just understood I remembered it because

it flustered me, Jesus God, what were we going to do. But on the other hand, I couldn't agree with him more. He was dying on this job, It was just awful.

(C) When was that?

(S) That was like 1970, sometime in the spring or so.

(C) So he quit and you gave all the stuff back.

(S) We hung on to it for awhile. And then I wrote to my parents and asked them if they would lend us money, Did Woody talk about that? No. I just said we are now into something new and hot and its called video. It's some kind of atelevision. and in order to start with it we need money.

Can you help. And in the same way my parents always trusted me, they trusted me this time. After having spent so much time on me being a musician, they didn't mind, that I told them I was going to quit. And I got a letter back saying well, we can give you 5,000 dollars, but it will come in 1,000dollars chunk over a long period of time, And I was very surprised.

(C) That's a lot of money.

(S) Yes. But and like that. Then I understood that they got loan. They mortgaged the house and they got loan, that's why it came in little chunks.

(C) You're kidding.

(S) And when it came for me to pay it back, they said never mind, we give your two sisters also 5,000, so you don't hvae to pay yours back because they also got 5,000. They were both newly married at that time, and had to set the house up, and things like that. And also when my parents died, you know, and we started splitting up that was a few years ago, there was not a penny left.

(C) They had given it all to the children. Amazing, fantastic.

C) Did they ever see what you made?

(S) My father saw, he didn't really like it. He thought, he didn't understand.

(C) But your mother never saw it?

(S) Nol Then I had taped my family, and they look at that and they think is fantastic. of the little babies, and \_\_\_\_\_ walking, now he is seven years old.

(C) Like a scrapbook.

(S) Yes.

(C) Did they have television in their house?

(S) No.

(C) Because Woody said that in Checkoslovakia there were no television and all the film makers when they were heard of television thought it was just garbage and could never be as good as film.

(S) I saw my first television, I think, unless I maybe saw it in a store or somewhere first time I could watch television was in Sweden in probably 1960 or 1961. I remember the first thing I watch was the match between \_\_\_\_\_ and Floyd Patterson. Do you remember those things?

(C) Yes of course.

(S) I saw it televised in Sweden and I was of course on Ingmars side, then and I wasn't impressed. As a medium. or as a toyl I thought nothing of it. It wasn't until I came to America and now we had to sit in our uncles place in Pennsylvania and there was nothing to do, we turned on the TV, and I really loved it to see what three years later, or five years later when we were a part of the video revblution, everybody came and touched video camera, we never understood about what our colleagues told me about down with Chronkite and we are goig to bury Brinkley and all because we loved them.

21

We just, we loved all those shows and then, It was television. We didn't take it seriously, when Cronkit said and that's the way it is, I know he is lying like everybody else. But you know, he is a nice grandpa and I still watch him.

(C) So it was separate from what you thought you were doing.

A lot of the video people that I knew about in California in the 60's it was the same as the student movement where the underground newspapers, it was a political movement it was a way to steal from the government something that was owned that government controlled the air waves. and therefore controlled the news. And that was a way of calling a revolution. It was not a revolution in terms of art in any way, it was a way to make information public to use something thing illegally. Tell people things. That was all the Mac \_\_\_\_\_ stuff too.

(S) Also it became, it wouldn't be a property of a big corporation anymore. Become property of every man.

(C) But then it became institutionalized. Now there's Channel 17 or 29 or whatever in New York, you could just in a tape, they'll play anything. They played these gay reviews played by these guys in their bedrooms in the West Village, I mean you know they managed to incorporate almost all the revolution.

(S) It was going to be an alternate network. It was going to be our own network, and you see I liked it all very much I would I liked the attitude because I didn't have this in my upbringing and I don't know how much you have had it, or Americans, but this absolute disregard for authority. I loved it. Who says so? you know. And that everything should be challenged, and this was really what I think the 60's were about. That there was nobody there

22

who was any authority to tell you anything. The government didn't own you, couldn't draft you because it didn't own you, and that nobody owned you and all those things, I was really, I loved the rhetorics, but when it came to this kind of the revolution and also the community, they all talked about community, and community stinks to me, I mean I'm so glad not to belong to any community I just, that was New York for me. Because everywhere else you have neighborhoods, You have people you have to say good morning to, How are you today Mrs. so-and-so, Suddenly you know, I could live in an apartment and I wouldn't know anybody else. So we just, we were still a part of it, we were the outsiders. But we were a part of it, it was very nice. But then early on we were doing different stuff because we were doing only this kind of entertainment, or performances, and then this weird electronic stuff.

(C) You didn't do anything, with manipulating, like there were people I remember some people at San Francisco who were They would film the news and make their own voice-overs and so on. You didn't do any of that stuff.

(S) Didn't do anything that was off the air. We were very puritans in that sense, we wouldn't borrow any images from anybody else.

(C) But a lot of people did, your friends, didn't they?

(S) And it was all a part of it, We opened the Kitchen because we couldn't handle it any more, there was a steady stream of people into our loft all the time. To look at things and to turn on and things like that.

(C) You bought all your own equipment with this money. You bought portapaks and monitors with your parents' money. So you had then as much equipment as you had now?

(S) Oh, no.

(C) What did you do first.

(S) First, we, for the first thing we bought ever was a portapak but we it didn't work in the beginning, but it didn't matter, we had other portapaks, then we bought sound synthesizer. That was very important, the next thing was sound synthesizer and the third thing were three monitors in a row. And that influenced very much what we did ever after. And then, always as the money came we would, I think we would by month, or tri-semester, we would buy one piece of equipment. So we have been collecting all this time, so you see our place eight years of collecting.

(C) So you had the sound synthesizer even then.

(S) Was one of the very first.

(C) You were making images generated by sound?

(S) Yes, and vice versa. That was one of the first things we did and I was one of the first sort of principle we had.

(C) Where did the idea come from, do you have any idea?

(S) Yes, I've been asking Woody about it because it was his idea, and what did he say,

(C) He said the \_\_\_\_\_ was an important influence but he didn't rather say much more than that.

(S) Yes, because you know, you started hearing those electronic sounds.

And they were so attractive to me. And then there was also a film by

\_\_\_\_\_ Where he used the same sound, with white and black lines that turn on and off,

(C) Peter \_\_\_\_\_?

(S) Yes, and as they do, the sound goes on and off. And then later he juxtaposes it so its like a counter -point. We were never interested in, we were interested in this absolute inter-face. of sound and image. Adn that we did see before we started , but I think it just occurred to Woody sort of that because we used to tape record, through audio tape record, and we love our recorders, we used to take the speed up and speed down and distort sounds. And we taped two mikes together to make a feedback.

(C) So its just parallel to the image making

(S) It seemed to be just an extension , using audio tape, and also the video tape, the principle was the same.

(C) Also there's a sound to feedback isn't there, when you play it on a TV monitor? Has a buzz or something?

(S) The feedback sound is actually very beautiful, its a high pitch that you get sometimes in big halls when you ... But if you take that kind of a sound and you feed it through a kind of a tube, and you put the mike in and out against the speaker, then you get fantastic sounds. Very pure sounds.

(C) Did this relate at all to your music experience, or was your interest in sound was continuous. You didn't have anything to do with the Rock art music or that kind of sound thinking.

(S) No, there is a much greater jump for me between the music I make and electronic music than between electronic music and video. That was very close. But you know, just like Woody when he did imagine when he related them totally to his film experience, and I related them totally to my music experience. So he knew everything about camera angles, about cutting, lighting, miking.

(C) He talked about light all the time. And about that relationship of light.

(S) I didn't know anything about those things. But to me, I could endure a lot longer holding a camera than Woody, I could hold it steadier for longer. That was just because I had played an instrument. So for me a camera was another instrument, another instrument that had to be handled the same way. When you play viblin for half an hour you're going to make a certain amount of mistakes and go on, you make them and you go on, and I had the same attitude, you cannot hold the camera for half an hour without making certain mistakes, but you can't linger on them, you go on. And the whole idea about flow, rythm and things like that. Were, are for me a direct extension. of music making.

(C) and he was involved in cut and splice and stop and go and scenes,

(S) and the perfection of the image which I the craft of the image which I didn't have, which I just picked up slowly.

(C) You didnt'edit any of those tapes did you?

(S) No.

(C) They're just straight tapes.

(S) Yes, I hate editing, I still am not totally, I still like one point of view for as long as that takes because that's how we experience things in real life. We don't experience them cut and spliced. Anyhow, therefore its interesting that Woody became the audio person and in our relationship and I the video person. I was much better with the images, I had this, because in a way he was spoiled, he had seen them all, he knew the principle, I was curious because I would know , I knew so little about visual medium. And on the other hand, I I couldn't hear the sounds at all because Beethoven and Bach was just crawling all over me. Woody had no problem you know, he just went in there, and he

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could make, shape sounds any way he wanted to. Its interesting that we actually changed roles.

(C) Was there ever any question of working separately. You just worked together all the time on this.

(S) We worked together and separately, see very often I would start something, and get everything set up or figure out a way, see that I would set up a monitor have a cake plate on a monitor, have the camera picking that up, go to a tape recorder and then that would be something. I would set up that kind of a situation. Then I wouldn't know what to do with it. Woody would come and say, Oh great, now we do this and this and this, Or vice versa. Or that I would make a tape and Woody would look at it and say, oh great, I know what kinds of sounds I want to put on it. So there was always this thing of like we actually never really worked together. because everyth time we worked to gether , it wouldn't work together because its just so difficult. One of us would always take over , but then very often what happens is that he would take over for five minutes and I would assist him. Then I would say, let me see, I think I would like to do something, and he would assist me. And basically it was just playing around. But anything you want to set up even now, it takes hours and houss to set up to get rid of some \_\_\_\_\_ in the image you know all these technical things, find out in \_\_\_\_\_ where certain cable goes, because you want to rehook it to some other cable, and all these things we still today to totally silently. And I never ask Woody what part of it he's going to do, and He doesn't ask me what part of it I'm going to do, just go and do it, do all those patches, and that's very funny. We can always totally combine each other in that sense.

(C) But one of the other things was you didn't think you were making art, or a product of any kind, so you didn't, it wasn't a concern whose name would be attached to it. Or who would take the d credit for what. It wasn't a commodity in any way. in terms of art was it?

(S) In that sense neither of us has a big ego in that sense of who actually did it.

(C) Even in the beginning, kn 1970-71, nobody showed video tapes, so it wasn't a

(S) Oh, we certainly knew what we were doing, we were not like innocent and dumb, What's interesting is that we were doing our kind of video and none of our colleagues were doing that kind of video. But we were pretty convinced of what we were doing was of primary concern, like to ourselves. And also we got very nice feedback always from other people they were usually stoned and drunk, but who cares, they got off on the stuff, So when we opened the Kitchen we did it out of the necessity of as we had an audience. Quite remarkably because we played for \_\_\_\_\_ house for a long time. For us there was no division between us and the community of people. No reason for division except in concerns See, like when we started the Kitchen we certainly wanted everybody else to participate. Y

(C) You made no aesthetic decisions, you let everybody show their tapes. And people did music on the other nights.

(S) Which interested usa lot, what they were doing. We had heard \_\_\_\_\_ we had heard something of what was going on, but we had no idea of the extent. of the sophistication of the audio at that time. The only people, we never invite anybody to the Kitchen, we didn't tell somebody, listen you are a good artist you should have a show, it was always the other way, people would come and

say, we want to have a show. We would say sure, how about Thursday?

So that's why people like \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ or John Jonas or those people never performed there. It was just because they never came

around. But if they ever had, We would certainly have... as a matter of fact, Wegman came around once because he wanted to have \_\_\_\_\_ transferred, with just two tape recorders, and I saw his stuff and I said its great, do you want to have a show, and he said, maybe sometime. but never came back. Because they didn't like it, they said it was a schlock place, which it was.

(C) They were all in the commercial galleries then, they were afraid to do that, or they didn't?

(S) They just were not a part of our revolution. They were , they had their own revolution, their own culture.

(C) They wanted to be part of the art world. The galleries.

(S) We were much closer to the Mac \_\_\_\_\_ crowd. and Buckminster Fuller, and

(C) And John Jonas comes out of the dance and performance and all that art performed in the galleries mostly. Cage, and ~~Capreau~~ <sup>Know</sup>, and all that.

(S) And you know, still today, I feel very close to all people doing media. At the same time I feel quite alien to almost all people who do media,

because I am not interested in , not personally interested in documentary genre or community or trying to say ~~the world~~ <sup>the world</sup> to tape video. And I'm not

that interested also in the \_\_\_\_\_ I mean personally I am not interested in that kind of video. So what I consider our colleagues is a verytiny

group. Mdaybe ten or fifteen people. Mostly I know people like \_\_\_\_\_ Hocking, or \_\_\_\_\_ or Steven Beck, or \_\_\_\_\_

(C) And how do you see their work?

(S) We exchange tapes, we send each other tapes. things like that.

(C) And how do other people find out about their work?

(S) They don't. As far as I'm concerned, most of those people, not \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_ or Garry Hocking are totally anonymous. They live here in the state, downstate.

(C) What about the film people? Do you feel closer to some of the film makers?

Like you were mentioning

(S) I feel especially close say to Paul Skeets but also Tommy Conrad, whose from around here, people say, John Rubin people who work with the material.

(C) In terms of concept. In process you feel closer to them. And imagery or lack of it.

(S) And images or lack of images, or for \_\_\_\_\_ but the process of behind the image, the way they deal with the material itself. Like \_\_\_\_\_ through scratching the film, and through using the solid frames, or apparent motion, where he studies the grain of the emulsion. That's very close to what Woody and I are doing, we are , there is just we cannot study grain and emulsion because there is no such thing in video, but there certainly is a grain , we have done a lot of tapes about that. about the video noise as we call it. And John Rubin is a character who puts his films into chemical baths distorts the image that way. Now there are no chemical baths in video, There certainly are ways that are similar to treat the materials until the image becomes something else, or istransformed like all our black boxes, those input-output boxes,

(C) So then, where do we go, the Kitchen we know about, 1971-1972,

So then you disinvolved yourself slightly just so ;you'd have more time to make

tapes and make your own work. 1972? From the Kitchen.

(S) 1972 it was pretty much around with other people, we were just ready to give it up because it had been nice and everything was good and fine, and we didn't have time for it any more.

(C) And what kind of tapes were you making in 1972. Faces, 1 and 2, Distant Activities, The West, SoundPrint,

(S) Yes we went to the west, We went to San Francisco, And, well, I should tell you something about our grants actually, It started with , Woody did this dance tape, I said Woody, I helped him with it, but its really his tape. about a dancer who triggered the sounds with his movements. First ofall he triggered a feedback space so he could control the feed back, he was looking at himself. by dancing, That in turn triggered sound envelopes, on the audio track, and Woody wanted to do this life as a live audio , did he talk to you about this, that's strange, because I think this was one of his more important things. He made the whole proposal. and he sent in this proposal to \_\_\_\_\_ for I think 15, 000 dollars or something. which \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't handle at all, and to Guggenheim. And on the \_\_\_\_\_ tape I put it together for him, and it was a twenty minute tape, and the piece was only ten minutes long, So I put another piece on the end which we had taped only a couple of days prior to sending the tape, and it was of \_\_\_\_\_ playing all kinds of instruments, in Washington Park. And the people on the panel

(C) Was that the tape I saw the other day?

(S) No, So the people on the panel wer documentarians, and theysaw the \_\_\_\_\_ tape and that's why he got that grant, not because of his fantastic audio/video hookup of sound and image, And for Guggenheim, they

called us and said what are you going to show, and we said video tape. And how do you do that they said, Just play it on a tape recorder. They had never heard of such a thing. So what we had to do the day that the committee was going to meet we got a big checkered cab, put a monitor in it and our play back in it., carried it up to whatever 19th floor on this building on Park Ave., So we must have been the first applicants in video. In 1971. Actually its 1970, we applied at the end of the lyear 1970.

(C) And the committee had never heard of video.

(S) Nor \_\_\_\_\_ or anything. Needless to say, they turned us down for that grant. And we paid all the cabs to get the equipment there and back, Then, so we had this \_\_\_\_\_ grant which was wonderful, we did a lot of stuff for them, we did a couple of shows, upstate, and also a lot of shows in the Kitchen. By the time they gave us the money we already had the Kitchen.

(C) And you were in demand in other p laees, people were

(S) No, we were not in demand, no, no. We were known maybe, but video wasn't in demand anyway, no we had to find places to show it. But we had gotton the grant and one of the requirements was to show upstate.

(C) So you had to take all your stuff with you every time. Because nobody had any.

(S) Yes, that's what we did. Oh, we took everything everywhere. That's how we taped all those things. By just going there.

(C) And you had to take the monitors to these shows and stuff because no one had a monitor.

Or could you use a television. .

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(S) No, we went to the WPAI Music store, with eight monitors, We rented a truck. That's what we had to do, That's why we figured out we had to have the Kitchen because we couldn't go on. you know, like a rock group.

(C) Without any Rowdies, or whatever they call them, those people who set up . So that was the first grant in video, \_\_\_\_\_'s grant.

(S) Yes, and then what happened was, like the New York State Council being very generous in giving video. I think it has to be credited to a guy called \_\_\_\_\_? For some strange reason considered video to be art long before anybody had heard of it. So he hired a man called \_\_\_\_\_ to disburse this money, I think it was quarter of a million dollars or something like that,

(C) for video alone.

(S) Well, its a lot more now that video gers,

(C) But amazing for the first time around.

(S) So he came down to see how it was, and see like our audio, our colorizer/ synthesizer, \_\_\_\_\_ had made.

(C) This was when, when did Howard Wise have this involvement in video?

(S) This must have been somewhere in the beginning of 1970 because we had \_\_\_\_\_, he came back from California just around that time, and he did very well, We sort of understood that we were doing similar things, And we liked each others personality very much.

(C) What was he doing?

(S) He was building

Side Two.

(S) So Russ went to see Segal, Eric Segal, at Horowitz's Gallery, and he was very impressed, and he wanted, he talked Eric should apply for money,

and the only way Eric could apply, he couldn't apply as an individual because of the rules of the council, you have to be a group, and he would have to have a non-profit organization behind him. So Howard Wise decided to make a non-profit organization which he called Electronic Arts \_\_\_\_\_ because of Eric, I think. mostly. And then he asked Eric what people should be in the group, and he said Steina and Woody Vasulka. And one more person called Willie Novak. Who I help with the designs. And we formed a group called Perception. And we got 15,000 dollars.

(C) From the Council?

(S) Yes. By that time we had started the Kitchen and we were going to run it on profit, and the rent was too, see, what we did was we fixed it up, the place physically so we got a lot of leeway on the rent. But eventually we would have to pay the rent, And the landlord was very nice about it, he was going to give it to us for 5,000 dollars. The whole rent for the first year because we had fixed it up. But we didn't have any \$5,000. So that's where the first grant went. Half of it. See we split it three way, \$5,000 apiece. And one \$5,000 chunk went straight into the rent. So it was actually our personal grant. that got the Kitchen started. But that was really a lot because otherwise we would never had it happen.

(C) What was Howard Wise's involvement, he was a friend of Segals,

(S) He was the non-profit corporation through, the umbrella corporation under which we could get the money.

(C) But he was just interested in video, why did he

(S) No, he had put together the first exhibition of video in 1969. He had a gallery on 57th st. And he did this unheard of thing, he made a video exhibition, which is by now very legendary. Because \_\_\_\_\_ was in it and then \_\_\_\_\_

(S) and everybody who became famous video artist.

(C) You weren't in it?

(S) No we had just about a starting then we saw it, and were pretty impressed. It helped us decide that there was nothing illegitimate about doing what we were doing. Other people were there, you know, Lot of people got very influenced by that exhibit. So Howard Wise has a very definite role there. He later helped a lot of other artists. To get money from state council like \_\_\_\_\_ and Juan Downey, and Peter \_\_\_\_\_ and the Council eventually asked him not to do this, - just because individuals were getting money because that sort of is not right. That was very nice of him, that he enabled artists directly to get the money and he would never hold any back, he would give a straight check directly to the artist. That set us for the Kitchen therefore we had the freedom There was nothing else, but the rent was paid for. So we only had to get some kind of donations to run some posters and stuff. That's why we could keep it as a strict playground. for anybody. That's what it was. So then in the summer, of 1972, we were invited to San Francisco. Did

Woody talk about that?

(C) No.

(S) All right, we were invited to be artists in residency at \_\_\_\_\_ what is called Experimental Center for ... National Center for experiments in television. And that had come about because they were doing quite similar exploration into video also. There, and they thought they were alone, that nobody else was doing similar things. And they were as surprised as we were to see how similar work we were doing. So we met the director of the center, just in the early winter of 1972, and he invited us to go out there. and by the time , we had never been to the west, we figured out we would have to buy a car,

and once we had bought a car, we had not money left to go out there.

We talked to a person if you could maybe lend us the money or anything, he was close to the national endowment, and he told us to call \_\_\_\_\_ Allen, and we called \_\_\_\_\_ and she sent us an application papers and we asked for \$1,000 in travel money and we got it. It was very interesting, that was our first NEA grant.

(C) That must have been one of their first grants to video as well.

(S) Yes, they had been giving to film mostly, and I think that it was easier to get it because it was for travel.

(C) And they can give money directly to artists, the NEA, New York State Council can only do it through \_\_\_\_\_ which is an under organization.

(S) Well, they could do it, like through Howard Wise, until that was cut off

(C) NEA actually can give money directly to artists.

(S) So then we took our car out to california, and we stayed in Dd San Francisco for six weeks. At the center.

(C) Working on tapes?

(S) We made a lot of tapes.

(C) What were some of the tapes you made while you were there?

(S) The tapes that we distribute that were made there were Soundprints, and Spaces 2, and we made a three channel piece called West which we don't play any more, but also it was a lot of source material.. that we used over and over again. That we taped out there. Like we sent to, on the way back, we took an awful long time, to travel south north instead of east-west. Down into Utah and New Mexico, and we taped a lot.

(C) Landscape?

(S) Landscape. It became landscape pictures. What was actually interesting about the

we did this experiment that I have never heard of anybody else doing, we did the same thing as a painter does when he takes his canvas and brush, out into nature, We had the station wagon, and we had our separate 12-volt batter, video runs on 12 volts, so instead of having to plug into AC you could plug everything into our battery. And we run off the batter three cameras, two keyers , a special effects generator, and a tape recorder. And we had also three tripods, So we would set up somewhere in nature, and and instead of just covering tapes that we would work on later, mixing and keying, and working with, we did directly there, on the spot. We had this kind of mini-studio, We went down to the coast near \_\_\_\_\_, Calif., we did lot in like Monument Valley,

(C) I didn't know you did that.

(S) But it was quite combersome, we never did it again.

(C) Only once. And then you came back to New York, after that summer. And then you were invited to Buffalo.

(S) No, well, we came back to New York, we were invited to have a gig in Buffalo, we had one gig and nobody was impressed, least of all Dr. O'Grady.

(C) You did it at UB?

(S) Yes, you know, just one time.

(C) What did you do, you showed tapes?

(S) We just showed tapes, and then we went back to New York City.

And we were over a year in New York City. Then Jerry happened to run into us, I mean it was funny actually, \_\_\_\_\_ was going to show up at this class, he taught a class at NYC, Jerry, And Scott didn't show up, so the night before, about midnight, Jerry calls and says can I bring my class over to your place about 10:00 tomorrow morning.

(S) So we spent the rest of the night to set it up and everything, clean the floor and everything, and we gave a good class, very very nice class.

Woody was on his peak of rhetoric. and <sup>6</sup>erry was so impressed. That is when he figured out that he wuld have to get this man for Buffalo. Since then he didn't stop.

(C) So you were invited to come for UB or media study?

It was both then together, the two.

(S) No, the first, we gave a workshop for ~~four~~<sup>12</sup> weeks, and during that twelve t weeks Jerry talked us into staying. That's how it happened.

(C) And Woody said the idea of moving to someplace like Buffalo was sort of appealing because there was a sort of overwhelming in yourloft and your life and the Kitchen and stuff took up so much time. You felt like stepping back a little bit.

(S) No, we had decided to move. The loft was too small, and it was wonderful loft but it was too small and there was too many junkies on the street and we wanted actually to go out to Long Island, We found ourselves a fantastic place. A villa that was sort of half-sunk and was condemned because it was built on the marshes, but it was by some millionaire star lady or some star in the twenties and the place was not hobe believed. So we only needed it for a year or so, we didn't care if it was going to sink. It wasn't going to go that fast. The whole place was going to become a suburb, so in the meantime they just kept it , it was all those marshes, you didn't see any house, all just birds and But anyhow, we had made that decision so it was not so hard to say OK Buffalo, what the Hell?

(C) There's something's about festivals and prizes and stuff, is that something you want to talk about? You did an installation at Minneapolis,

(S) No its not the an installation, we just won the prizes there. Actually I'm not altogether so proud of it or so interested I like to take part in festivals but I don't care for those prizes.

(C) What is it , money? or

(S) Yes, I got money, that was the nicest frize, \$500but otherwise I resent the idea of other artists just put up one against another and one of them gets a \$500 prize and the other doesn't . Because I think its actually totally obscene.

(C) I don't like prizes either.

(S) Since then I have never sent tape to anything that gives prizes, I sent to festival that just show tapes, because I remember when I got the news that I had won I was really quite pissed. Because I thought sick, sick

(C) Because somebody had to lose. So then you were artists in residence at WNET, before you came to Buffalo. What did you do there?

(S) Sort of nothing, We got some money and we started to initiate the program, we asked several people to join us, who were doing interesting visual image, adn we thought <sup>belonged in this</sup> ~~you know it was~~ kind of imagery research because they would call themselves TV lab, so we figured it would be some kind of lab with experiments. But broadcast doesn't really have that leeway. Because they had it, the money was specifically allocated for that as a broadcast station. So they couldn't use us and we couldn't use them. We only could use them for the money, we couldn't use them. It just didn't work out. We decided ;to drop it. It wasn't like that we just dropped it because we were going to come up here.

(C) In September you moved to Buffalo. ' 1973? What were your first impressions of Buffalo? '

(S) Actually it was a long wonderful indian summer, and we were glad not b to be

in New York City,

(C) You found the studio, the loft? You lived there the whole time you were here?

(S) We found the loft, and we didn't move out of New York City , we went there at least every month, for the first half year. And we kept our place there. actually until recently. So we didn't like burn any bridges behind us or anything like that. Then we realized pretty soon that all those people came here. All our colleagues, and we would get them one at a time and we could sit down and have a glass of beer and talk instead of in New York City you can never talk to anybody. It is so Frenzied.

So we met all those people like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and all the video artists which were before, but we could sort of talk to them on a much different level.

(C) And you were both teaching ?

(S) More or less.

(C) What did you teach?

(S) The first year I didn't teach. We taught a joint 12-week course, and then we didn't teach any more that year. Woody was hired by the university to do some research. And then the next year Woody was hired and I worked at just a course, Media Study, and then the year after that we both taught at Ontario college or We went every second week for two or three days.

(C) This is 1974 you did that.

(S) 1974-75. It was a good class, we got a lot of people interested. And it was interesting because Toronto is the oasis of the conceptual artist, so we created a sort of a different school in that , Actually our student is now running the SEAK, our students are all over the place . They're wonderful.

(C) What kind of tapes were you making then, 1973-74 ?

(C) The Golden Voyage, now that was the beginning of the , you did use some new tools then.

(S) Tapes always come as a new tools, I'm putting together now this catalogue, and I wonder if I shouldn't just head it by the tool, because we can't and then name the tapes, because we come back here, and it is like concentrated within like two or three weeks. Many many hours of tape. because we were discovering it and we had to take \_\_\_\_\_.

But 1973 , when we were in the Kitchen we always have a color monitor, and we showed our black and white tapes colorized. It's still black and white but we run it through a colorizer, so one channel was always in this kind of artificial colors. But we never taped it. And Home was the first color-taped tape that we made, that was original in color.

(C) Made on color video tape.

(S) and the reason for it was two fold, first of all,

(C) That's 1973, Home, yes,

(S) Yes, early 1973, the first reason is that we got to be able to arrange the image into layers, colorize them separately, we could use more colorizers than one. And therefore to have a black and white version of it wouldn't do. We would have to originate it in color because it we would colorize it later. The other reason was that at that time Sony came out with her color standard that was acceptable. There was a color standard before, but it was very lousy. We have always been slightly ahead of industries, we still are. Because we are waiting for a disk now. They always come out with what we need a couple of years after we need it. But everything comes out.

(C) So that was the first color, color was 1973.

(S) So that was Home, and shortly after Golden Voyage, that was our last

show in the Kitchen, so we decided to put out a poster and everything,  
We filled the house, that was the only time I think we filled the house,  
<sup>people</sup>  
~~we~~ had to be turned away.

(C) Your farewell.

(S) Yes, and we even got money for it. because we charged entrance.

So that was sort of nice, That was our farewell. That was given in April,

And then in the summer we went to Europe, and when we came back we  
went to Buffalo. and since then we have done all our tapes in colors.

(C) And what new tools since, anything progressively, 1974, Women in  
Film and Video Festival at State. You never taught at State did you?

(S) No, why did it say at State? University of Buffalo, it was UB.

I curated the video part of it.

(C) Oh, you were the curator for it.

(S) Well, just for the video department.

(C) Any comments on feminism. Feminist colleagues?

(S) OK, was no problem in

(C) Was no problem in terms of the Kitchen because you were the establishment,

(S) No, what happened in the Kitchen was the first spring I mean it must have

been the spring of 1972, we had a festival, what you called the first annual

of course, video festival, was going to be devoted more or less to people

who did kind of video we were interested in. But since we sent all kind

of restriction and we wouldnt say you can't be in and you can be out, we

just generally hinted that we were interested in the signal processing of

image with the video. But of course anybody else was interested in taking

part in the festival, was there, even if they were doing different kind. So that

was our festival and there were just very few women in it. I remember \_\_\_\_\_

was in it, and I was in it, and I could \_\_\_\_\_ maybe there were a couple more. It was amazing to me because out in the field at least one-third of the video crowd was women. It was interesting that the women ranged, like they went through the whole spectrum, but few women if any do repair, like going through the electronic components, they were the cameraman, the go-fers, the light people, all the way up to being the executive presidents of whatever, \_\_\_\_\_ was there who was head of all the media center. And even State Council was very heavily women infiltrated, Women were in every facet of video, and then when ~~they~~ it came to a festival they didn't show up. And when I asked some of them they felt that they shouldn't, they weren't up to it or something like that. And was very strange answers I got. I asked Susan who was one of those who had not decided to be in our festival, Susan Milano, I asked her if she would be interested in arranging a festival for women, because she knew more women, she was more feminist, she wasn't really feminist either, I wasn't either, But she sort of thought it would be a nice challenge to see what she could come up with, And just by the fact of doing it, and seeing what the problems were and how women didn't feel that they should show their tapes or that they were in the competition or anything, she became quite feminist. I think I turned around. So she made the first women festival in the fall of 1972. Only like four or five months after the other festival.

(C) In the Kitchen.

(S) Yes, and it became an annual event as well. until \_\_\_\_\_ after that they moved to a women's rights center, and she kept doing it there. So that was sort of my brush with feminism. In a way.

\*C) It's interesting too that even the very first video tapes made by men

they needed another person so its always their girlfriend or their wife or their woman they live with so the images are all often women, the performers the first ones when they wanted a hand or a foot or someone to act or a face or a mouth or something, It's always the person nearest so the girl, their wife or their girlfriend.

(S) Yes, it was probably the same way with us, but what was funny was that people would always come to Woody like at first here and talk about his tapes, and he would always say, sorry, they are our tapes. Yes, your tape, I especially like the tape of yours when you do this and that, and he would say, oh, that, Steina did that, Oh, but how you handled this when the close-up of the mouth, Woody would say, I didn't do any close-up of the mouth, Oh, it's wonderful tape, whose mouth is it? She helped you in that tape, and so on and so forth. And we would both have to always go through this incredible thing that it was ~~always~~ just, I think that people thought that it would be an insult to the man if you gave any kind of credit to the woman because it was sort of sick, the way that, you know, '

(C) Has it gotten better?

(S) Oh, it totally changed, yes, ina couple of years it totally changed.

Because the whole attitude changed of the ~~whole~~ world. And because people eventually got the idea that I had something to do with them too. Things like that. But I think it was mostly the attitudes of the world.

(C) Did you toy with the idea of making them separte in any way?

(S) No, because it was hard, because they , and also that didn't seem to be the reason , it was just

(C) You would stubbornly hold down and they would come around?

(S) And they did. But not because they would havejust because of us, but

because the whole culture came around. There you see, like earlier on, I would never get a job or be asked to do anything. But now I am always asked. Woody hardly gets any gigs. They always need this token womento fill in on their program, of the festivals or whatever they are doing so then they can show administrator, I hired a woman here, look, here's a woman speaker, and ;her's a woman ... So nothing changed except the world.

(C) So you had a festival in 1974 here, quite a few tapes listed for 1974. So it was a prolific time.

(S) It didn't look like that because in a way we experimented less than in all the other years, but the porportion between all the tapes we did in 1974 and what we distribute was very very high,

(C) So you distribute more of what you made in 1974.

(S) Yes, the shooting ratio went very rapidly down because all the other years we did shoot a lot more, we sort of felt we did a lot more, but when we take to putting together a catalogue, that's where all the tapes were from, from this period here in Buffalo.

(C) How do you decide which tapes to distribute out of the tapes that you shoot.

(S) It is totally arbitrary because welike different tapes from what we figure other people like, and we don't want to torture ourselves and other people by wanting them to worry what we like because its irrelevant, there is so muc h o of it, that there can just be all the tapes, and so but not really, its just sometimes like that, We feel really that the tapes we distribute are our best work. It is something that we have cut out to put the titles on and decide that this goes out.

(C) But you are always going back to material you 've shot before and makeing it into distributable tapes?

45  
(S) Yes, like that's the whole idea behind this channel 17 thing. We went back quite a bit into old materials.

(C) That's what you're doing this year, your program for channel 17. So will you date that material this year? Or will you date it from when it was shot.

(S) I think that we are going to have some flashing titles come on, with the year when it was made. When it was shot.

(C) 1975 then, quite a few tapes listed in 1975 too is distribution, no, they just have longer titles. From Cheektowaga to Tonawanda,

(S) Though in 1975 we totally lost interest in working together. And it actually it was this kind of natural divorce never any question about it, Woody was interested in doing his, by that time we could do things separately. So I wasn't interested in much doing much of anything for awhile, and he was doing tapes by himself. That mostly related to the material. Very didactic and specific which I'm not interested in, I'm much more anarchistic. On images than Woody. So he was starting to do his own. We are still under a joint name, but he was doing them and now we are going to fix that up. Then he started doing films, and as a matter of fact he got a grant to go out to Art Park to make a film, I would absolutely have nothing to do with films.

(C) Documentary film.

(S) No, no, films that deal with video. Films, film of the screen and stuff like that. But he needed that material because of the resolution because he needed to stereo things because he liked to interlock and that's easy to do on film. And also he was interested in how the material differs and things like that. And for him it was easy, it was just going back to his old medium. And I have no interest, I could have probably followed him into it, but I have no

interest whatsoever. So when he was out at Artpark, I started

(C) the summer of 1975?

(S) Yes, I visited him quite a bit, I was driving the car, I mean I kept the car because I was teaching and he was without car out there, so I would come and pick him up. I started strapping camera on to the car. Like that was the first tape I did, I just strapped the camera and then I drove all the way to artpark. And when I came back home I looked at what I had taped, and I just like to see it to look at because I handn't controlled while I was doing it. Then I did some more of them, and I was wondering, I didn't

really know what I was going to do with them, if I wasn't going to cut them to get so they would have this going up and down and right and left, But each of the experiments was different, one I strapped it on the back of the car, I put it on the hood of the car, Or I put it upside down, and those kind of things. They just stacked up, those kind of tapes, then I was playing around with this step colorizer, That takes up a discrete part of the picture, a discrete density of gray and assign colors to it, And it becomes quite spectacular when you see wit it with sthis continuous moving. The continuous motion. Just in one single direction. So I put them together like that, like a tape, and when I have just finished making this collage of what I call Cheektowaga to Tonawanda which was actually where I went when I was taping those things, I found a way to use what I call a flip-flop switching an automatic switch that switches between two tapes, And if you would take a tape that was going forward and a tape that was going backwa4rds, and you would have them switched at an automatic way you were going forward, backware, forward, backward, So I did that, And I started also doing a lot of other tapes

because we were going to have a show in the November. And I realized that Woody was going to have all this material, all those prints and stuff, and I wasn't having any, so that's when I did tapes like that, and a tape called Signifying Nothing, and I started getting into it. But again at this time, especially also I started working alone because Woody was up at Artpark, So there was a physical separation, and we haven't actually worked together since on any tapes, but we work together a lot now, like we edited this whole thing together. At that was again a very, it was strange after like two years we had to work again side by side and always be together like 24 its very heavy.

(C) For Channel 17

(S) Can you imagine, you wake up with a person and say what are we going to do today, so you sit and you do it and you say are we going to go and have something to eat, eat together sit together and then you go to bed again. Its insane.

(C) So you have to adjust your rythms to the other person all the way through Here you come to work, and you know, or if its real bad you stay in your office,

(S) And sometimes one of us feel like working and the other doesn't feel like working, and you have to wait for the other person.

(C) You have no place to go since you live and work in the same place, one of you can't go ~~the~~ to the studio, you sit and wait, or go out or go shopping or something.

(S) And then you say, are you ready? No let me have another coffee or then, are you ready, well I think we should go out and get some vegetables,

(C) Well, so far it hasn't ended in blood, OK let's do 1976 and 77 quickly,

(S) Well, that is just more of the same, by that time I was working totally on my own. And I did like Switch \_\_\_\_\_ which is an hour tape, which is edited down from might be six or twelve hours tape.

(C) That's 1976;, Switch Monitor Drift.

(S) And that was shown in Collective \_\_\_\_\_ Cinema. IT's been shown a couple of times since, but not much. It's a long tape. black and white. I went very much back into black and white when I went on my own.

(C) Any specific reason?

(S) TYes, because of the graphic quality, and I didn't want to add any elemtns, What I'm interested in actually in all those tapes is space. See ~~W~~ Switch Monitor Drift has to do with Machine vision. H~~o~~as to do with mounting the camera to kinds of devices and rotate them or make them move. And color is just an additional unnecessary information on it.

(C) So what machine-made vision means to you is getting the image by some sort of mechanized device.

(S) Inducing some movement, But its not about the movement, its not about the space. Like when I put a turntable in the room and I turn it, I don't care what the camera sees, like It never occurred to me to rearrange everything. Like that there would be a table or a chair that was in the way, and should be moved to some other place.

(C) Or to make a still life on the table.

(S) Or arrange anything for the camera, its not about the image, its about the process and the movement. And about what happens when it goes like that continuously. Then when you mix that with another image that's going somehow differently.

(C) That started when you began to work independently in 1975.

(S) No, I had never been interested in image as a painter is interested in image.

(C) But this idea of machine vision, comes about, or is it just a name you've now given to all those films.

(S) No, it started with Cheektowaga, because that was again my first machine vision, I strapped the camera on the car and said What is going to happen. and the only way to see it is to do it. and to play it back and to see what it looked like. That's how it started. Then I started doing like putting two cameras, one looking at the other, and switching from one to another, and I wasn't terribly interested, but when I walked into the middle, so I saw myself always from both sides, and that was again very interesting.

(C) But instead of making a tape of that sometimes you made an actual installation. Like the thing in Holes.

(S) No, I'm more interested in making it as an installation, but its almost impossible. The \_\_\_\_\_ thing was a very simple one. And it was of \_\_\_\_\_ equipment. I don't even know if \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ I trusted him, but basically you have to take your own equipment and have to take it someplace then you have to figure out how people can interact with \_\_\_\_\_ very hard because the monitors were set up on the side. and it \_\_\_\_\_ on the monitors while you were walking around in \_\_\_\_\_ just a hint of it.

\_\_\_\_\_ in a tape, that was just , camera monitor.

(S) Well it did later result in a tape, the other one where the camera was on top of the monitor. in the other room? I made that tape about it later. Walked around ;so that I would be turning around on the monitor and things like

40  
that.

(C) But that idea of not having a product from the end, is that of interest to you.

(S) No, I would rather, I mean the product is one thing, a separate thing. I am very interested in people interacting with it, seeing themselves the way I see myself. When I... that's poor explanation. Just for people to discover the magic of video by themselves. By having something set up and they think they can discover this magic of both seeing and being in a space.

(C) And Woody is very separate from that.

(S) Yes, he is not very interested in that.

(C) Even his title, his description for his piece is completely different, its telling someone else what it looks like, and your is a different kind of involvement altogether.

(S) Though I would like to see, to me video is definitely magical. And I'm still totally so that I can get mesmerized by this magic. And that's also my love for technology goes into that, which I didn't have prior to video. The technology has enabled this thing. The more you think about it the more magic it becomes. That there is a spot, there is like a flying spot, that takes like this box and then coats it into a certain grey level and that goes through cables and wires and finally shows up on a screen. Any level you take it at, or any even that you can transmit it, that you can take an image of us sitting here and you can show it in Australia, is just unbelievable. And everything in between and so I am interested in involving people into this, this magic. Its not a mystery, because you can't know everything, even if you know everything, its really far out. And I would like people to be able

51  
to learn also to trigger their own sounds, and by introduction to be alone in a space basically, people should be allowed to be alone in a space, to discover those things. Which also a gallery isn't so good for either.

(C) One other thing, 1976, you did ~~get~~ a Guggenheim, for video.

(S) Yes, I just asked to continue my work. It's the shortest application form I'd ever written.

(C) And no monitors in ~~cars~~ <sup>cars?</sup>

(S) By that time they had it all figured out.

(C) That was what, 10 years later?

(S) No, only six years,

(C) One other thing that Woody talked about that you might want to talk about was that idea of showing at a museum and how ... that's not your original, that's not your context or idea, it's not a controlled situation, Museums don't show video very well, and ~~Everson~~ <sup>EVERSON</sup> built a little room downstairs with a bench, and we have this monitor and in a room with a little carpet, and and none of that, nothing is suited to that, it's much easier for us to show avant garde films, we just show them the way we would show any other films,

(S) Well, video is both fitted and not fitted. There is hardly a situation where video doesn't fit in somehow, and if you take it from that context and then

museum is certainly one situation. There is such a heavy breathing down your neck with centuries of masterpieces that museum brings with it just the main use of it is sort of frightening to video. It isn't yet in any kind of state like that. Of preservation of \_\_\_\_\_.

(C) Do you think it will be some day?

(S) Why not? that, who knows.

(C) No reason for it not to.

9

(S) I'm certain that when new machines are preserved in the Smithsonian,

(C) Well, they already are, the space capsules and they are machines aren't they I suppose, with the grain thrasher and whatever's inside the museum in Philadelphia, isn't that

(S) About the museum, about what we are doing rather, that we don't really have a program to call it art, or non-art. It can be called either way. It's a label. We have always felt quite distant from from the painters, from basically people who show in museums Because we haven't this, like we the interrelationship to the iconic image youknow, we don't have that because its rather than the process that makes the image that we are that interests us than the image itself. we also, for that reason probably, or not for that, for other reasons I feel quite distant from most of the artist who show in the museum. From that crowd, from that group of people.

(C) Even the video people.

(S) Yes.

(C) Because there are some people like \_\_\_\_\_ who Peter Campus who show exclusively, I mean that's their aim, ks to put that work in a museum.

(S) I had a long talk with Peter about , because Peter really likes museums, especially for the idea that they can provide him with a white or a black space that has nothing in it. I cannot use such a space. That's why I brought to Horowitz those things with the checkerboard on it. There had to be something so that you could see it was going to move and go upside down. Because the bare walls give me nothing. The camera cannot look at bare walls, but on the other hand, we always related it to an art because in a sense we have no other way. Because in a way I've always been an artist. and Woody I guess too. We've always , if artists were to describe those useless things that cannot be sold

as a commodity, on the market, We are not producers, we are not in the service end we are not a producer, we must be artists.

(C) Poetry, music, all those things.

(S) So we are there, so we are artists, so therefore we can relate to museum like any other space. So its interesting, its impossible to

(C) Its a funny situation to be \_\_\_\_\_

(S) I think that all art must be uncomfortably yourselves, no? Like when you look at those art magazines, People those \_\_\_\_\_ stories, and stuff like that. It can fit in, \_\_\_\_\_

(C) \_\_\_\_\_