



Smithsonian
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Oral history interview with Geoffrey
Hendricks, 2016 August 17-18

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Geoffrey Hendricks on August 17 and 18, 2016. The interview took place in New York, N.Y., and was conducted by Linda Yablonsky for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project.

Geoffrey Hendricks has reviewed the transcript. Corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, this is Linda Yablonsky. I am interviewing Geoffrey Hendricks, the artist, at his home and studio in New York on August the 18th—17th.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: 17th, I think, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is the date? Goodness, I wrote down the date somewhere, August 17th. It is Wednesday, August 17 [2016].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: For the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, card number one. All right, hello, Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Hi.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Thank you very much for your patience and fortitude [laughs]—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Not a problem.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —during our technical snafu. Can you tell me your age today?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: '85.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, you look great.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Thank you, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Feel good. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where were you born?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was born in Littleton, New Hampshire, July 30, 1931.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And my father had been a student of Robert Frost's at Amherst College [Amherst, MA]—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and developed a closeness, friendship with him. And after the First World War, my father was teaching flying and in a lot of crashes with students, but surviving with sometimes students dying—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —next to him and was I guess, you know, hospitalized some afterwards, but then went up to Frost's house to recuperate. And they developed a friendship at Amherst when my father was a student of his. They both arrived there the same year and my father was very interested in writing and poetry, and so that became a lifelong friendship. And so in '31, they were living in the Frost cottage in Franconia [NH]. Frost wasn't there. He was elsewhere, but they had the use of the house, and then the following summer my father found a

farm down in Marlboro, Vermont. Frost had already moved down to South Shaftsbury [VT], and Franconia was becoming very touristy and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —resort hotels, people from Boston coming up for the pleasures of the White Mountains.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In the '30s?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In the '30s, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: During the Depression?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, during the Depression, yeah, right, this was

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And, yeah, '29 was the crash—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and so anyway, my father found this farm in Marlboro, 640 acres I guess it was. It had a—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —barn and a big house and falling-down old house, hayfields, working hayfields, and so forth. And so that was where we went for the summers and then in '45, I guess it would be at the end of the Second World War, the Army set up a university in Biarritz, France, in the villas. And because they had these thousands of G.I.s there that they couldn't get back to the States overnight with troop ships and so they had this brilliant idea: well, we'll bring faculty members from various universities over to teach them and we'll give them something to do so they don't just go off and lead a wild life. And so they took over the resort hotels and the villas, and overnight created a university. My father headed the English department. He traveled around Europe to get sort of armed forces books that he discovered—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —were printed which provided him material to work with and, you know, there were other things that he gathered together and he—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And how old were you when this happened?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: 12, 15. This would—'45. I was born in '31.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right, so that makes you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So I was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —a teenager.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So was that—well, you must have loved it [laughs], right? Or did—was it shocking to be uprooted?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I wasn't—didn't go over there. He went—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, you didn't go with him?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —on his own, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, you were still at New Hampshire.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, we were—I was back in Vermont.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, Vermont, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I guess at that point, we were living in Chicago, and then summers in Vermont

because my father taught at Illinois Institute of Technology, head of the humanities division.

LINDA YABLONSKY: At which?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Illinois Institute of Technology.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: IIT, Midwestern MIT.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was your father's name?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Walter.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, and so you were—do you have siblings?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I have an older sister.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Hildamarie, she's up in Putney, Vermont, and I have two younger brothers, Nathaniel and Jon.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's your sister's name? I'm sorry.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Hildamarie, one word.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Hilda.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: H-I-L-D-A-M-A-R-I-E.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay and Nathaniel and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Jon.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Jon.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: J-O-N.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So how was that for the family with your father gone?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, yeah, you know, we carried on and, you know, I guess my mother was getting us from Chicago to Vermont in the car. And I was made to keep my little brothers in order and not—keep them from fighting and things like that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What did your mother—was she involved in the arts in some way, anywhere?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She was a writer. She was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, she was?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Your mother's name was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Flora.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Flora Bishop.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And she was the daughter of a poor womanizing farmer in Virginia who—well, my mother described her. Maybe my aunt was describing how their mother would take the kids and—off to a barn or someplace where they would be safe when she knew that her husband was going to be coming back home drunk and in a rage to protect them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he, when my mother was, I guess, very young teenager, farmed her out to a friend, neighbor, who had a chicken farm and she was made to live in the back of a chicken house.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, god.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And hated the smell of chicken and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —became a vegetarian and so forth, but anyway—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This was kind of early adolescence and then she was able to get out to Richmond, Indiana and she was working, I think, as a kind of au pair there. And went through high school and then went to Earlham College there. And at Earlham, her English professor was Merrill Root who was a poet and so forth, but who was a friend of my father's at Amherst. They were both students of Frost and, you know, two people involved in literature, and there was one point where I guess Merrill said to my father, "Walter, I think I have the woman for you." And—

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —kind of introduced my parents and I think maybe at that point—well, mother is working in Chicago in a settlement house there. There's a big one. I forget the name of it right now, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I know of it. I don't remember. Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but anyway, doing that to support herself and writing, and my father was—got a job as a young instructor at what became Illinois Institute of Technology.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess it was Armour College of Engineering and was working on his master's degree at the University of Chicago on Chaucer, which is how I got the name Geoffrey.

[Laughs.]

And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, I spelled that right, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And spelled that way and very important that it's spelled that way, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So anyway, you know, that was this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, that's good provenance [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —beginning, and so every year we would drive from Chicago to Vermont and my father would work with local farmers to get the fields cut, and he would, every summer, have a big garden which we all had to work in. And during the war, my mother canned a lot of beans, and applesauce and, you know, produce to —

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —take back usually in the back of a trailer. My father talked to—talked to the rationing board—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and got extra tickets so that he'd be able to have gas to get from Chicago to Vermont on the pretext that he was helping the food situation, which is what he was doing certainly. But it allowed us to have that long trip right through the war, Second World War. And then, as I say, at the end of the war, he was

asked by the Army to go over to Biarritz, France and help set up this army university. He headed the English department, and traveled around gathering materials to work for teaching. And when he came back, sat with us on the porch of our house up in Vermont, summer house, and said to us, "What would you say if I were to start a college here, yeah, right on the campus." Because I guess he'd been realizing that he wanted to get away from the kind of the mundane life of teaching English in an engineering school.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he was a writer and doing something more creative and seeing Biarritz emerge out of nothing overnight was catalyst for this dream that he had. I think actually when he was at Amherst, he wrote a special honors oration that was about the ideal college or something. And if I remember correctly, Charles Cole, who was president at Amherst and there for the inauguration, first graduation. And I think maybe Frost was talking about the Yankee efficiency of this, of combining—

[Laughs.]

—the two in one. And with an array of, you know, there was the governor, the senator, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Robert Frost—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and George Whitcher, professor at Amherst, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: George—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: George Whitcher, W-H-I-T-C-H-E-R. He was in the English department, and had a friendship with Frost, who would go to Amherst once a year for a short residency. And the one graduate, Hugh Mulligan, who had been a student of my father's at Biarritz, and my father was talking about this dream of starting a school, which kind of fired up Hugh. And he was saying, "Well, you know, when I get back to the states, I want to be your student there." So that June, *Life* magazine had a big picture, full spread across two pages—well, there was one picture of the thousands of people at the University of California graduation and then the one graduate at Marlboro's—

[Laughs.]

—graduation in Vermont.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was called Marlboro College.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Marlboro College, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] What year was that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: 1946, I guess. Would have been '46, '47. Maybe—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, fascinating. So you grew up surrounded by books.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: May have been '48, you know, '46, '47, '48. Yeah, oh, yeah. Right, and have lots of books still, and my sister has lots of books.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You must have a wonderful library. Did that inspire you to write as well?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I've—the writing I've done has been more like journal keeping—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —essays on my late partner, Brian [Buczak], say, for a catalogue I brought together of him. Yeah, I guess occasionally there has been an essay. Sur [Rodney (Sur)] is a great writer. I'm very impressed with his writing, S-U-R.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, and he can be very precise, very focused, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I could tell that from—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —the conversation we had earlier.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] So you grew up reading and farming [laughs]?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Reading, farming—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Gardening.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Were you vegetarian—did your mother maintain—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, she—well, my mother was a vegetarian, yeah. She—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But she didn't impose it on the rest of the family?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, and gradually got to where she would eat some meat because my father wanted her to fix meat.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But she had a certain aversion to it, you know, but did it. As a kid, I was given the job sometimes of chopping the head off of a chicken and plucking it, and gutting it and preparing it for cooking. And there was one time, several times I guess, in Cape Breton [Nova Scotia], where I have this farm that I got. I got the farm because Putney School, where I went, the headmistress of Putney, Carmelita Hinton, after the war was biking with her kids up around Cape Breton, the Cabot Trail, which was just a gravel road then, and discovered that the local farms were getting abandoned—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and being sold for very, very little. And she bought a few places and her daughter, Jean, who was sort of organizing a lot of things there and had a summer camp up there, knew about places. And when Bici [Beatrice Cobb Forbes] and I were—and her name is now Nye Ffarrabas, N-Y-E—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, Bici is—was the woman you married?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She's the woman I married, the mother of my two kids.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, we're getting ahead ourselves a little bit.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, I'll—let me write down both of her names. She was—when you married her, her name was Bici.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Bici Forbes, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And she changed it to?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Born Beatrice Cobb Forbes, but always known as Bici.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And we would send out mailings, Geoff and Bici.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then later—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —after you were divorced or while you were still—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: After our divorce—

LINDA YABLONSKY: All right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —she really didn't like being another Hendricks—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —or being another Forbes because they were this family who had an island off of Woods Hole [MA], Naushon,, and they were sort of Boston—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Aristocracy.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —aristocracy of sorts, yeah, and she wanted to be free of that. So, she changed her name to Nye, N-Y-E—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and Ffarrabas, F-F-A-R-[R-A]-B-A-S, which I think may be a Welsh form of Forbes that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —she came across.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wait, F-F-A-R-[R-A]-B-A—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: S.

LINDA YABLONSKY: S. Wow. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: All right, so let me catch up a little bit to you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you went to the Putney School yourself?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I went to the Putney School.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: My last two years.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, I went there as soon as we moved east and my father started the college.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How long was he in Biarritz?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Six months maybe.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, just six months.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, no, it was—it wasn't a long time.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But it was like the Army dealing with an immediate situation that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —rather than letting all these G.I.s just go wild over in Europe, they wanted to focus them into a program, which was brilliant.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, so okay, so you went to Putney and then—and then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: To Amherst College.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, to Amherst. Yes, you said that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Which is where my father went—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and there was a certain pressure to go there because it meant a lot to him, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And what did you study at Amherst?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I studied art.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you were already drawn to art—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —rather than literature or poetry—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, no, no, no, no, art.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —or whatever.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What—how did that happen? What—when did you know you wanted to pursue art rather than anything else?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I don't know. I guess I just liked to draw.

LINDA YABLONSKY: After you cut your first chicken head off [laughs]?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What? No, cutting off the chickens—well, I can show you a painting, watercolor in the other room that got a prize in the Champlain Valley exhibition. It was a painting I did in '48 or something like that and it was chickens with chicken wire painted in front of them, and then the frame is plywood with chicken wire applied.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Brilliant. [Laughs.] You did that in school—when you were in school?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, maybe not in school, but when I—at home, sort of between my junior, senior year in high school.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Somewhere around there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, so you were already painting, drawing—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —doing something?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I was painting, drawing from when I was a little kid.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So it just came naturally then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But you hadn't—had you been to museums or seen any art?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, sure—

LINDA YABLONSKY: In Chicago?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In Chicago, when I was a young teenager, I would take the L down to the art institute from Evanston—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —or up from Hyde Park and spent a lot of time looking at the collection there and, you know, Impressionism, Chagall, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Cezanne—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you had some—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and Seurat's big—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —*Grand Jatte*, and things like that. Yeah, so I was well aware of that and there was one point—how old was I? I guess maybe mid-teens, late teens. There was a German professor of my—in my father's department who also was a watercolor painter, and so I went over to his place and sort of got rudiments of watercolor painting from him. You know, it would be an informal Saturday afternoon tutorial kind of thing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, well, that's great.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, who were your teachers at Amherst then? Anyone that made a difference to you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No. Well, I don't know. Winthrop Judkins was kind of filled with a lot of theory about the structure of color and painting and art—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and I guess useful. And then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —he was not rehired, and the person who took his place was Bill Darr, who—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Spelled?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Bill D-A-R-R.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he was interested in the Mexican muralists, and introduced me to that whole world of painting. And I gathered, you know, also some, you know, art of the '30s which I was familiar with anyway just growing up in Chicago. That was the art of the time and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: For my thesis project at Amherst, I—there were three window panels outside the art building back in behind a gothic church tower, a Victorian gothic, that had been left from this old chapel and the windows were blocked on the inside because there were these Assyrian reliefs in the room there. So they were—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —nonfunctional windows.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, from Nineveh or, you know, wherever, you know, wonderful, beautiful.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Amherst has a pretty interesting collection. I think Smith [College] has a more interesting collection, especially in terms of modern art, but anyway, they let me make panels to put in there and I worked with the theme of the Dynamo and the Virgin. I had been reading Henry Adams and so one panel was this kind of Virgin Mother and Child sort of thing, and maybe some little panels underneath, and on the other side was this turbine structure, the dynamo, and in between was a mix of the two imagery. Doing okay or—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, just checking. I'm always paranoid.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I just wanted to make sure it was recording.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, sorry. Please go on. So did you go for graduate studies after that—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —after Amherst?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was—went to Yale's Summer Art school in Norfolk, Connecticut—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —for the summer after I graduated. When I graduated, I got drafted, but as a Quaker I had applied for conscientious objector status.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You were a Quaker growing up? You didn't mention that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Grew up a Quaker, oh, yeah, right.

[Laughs.]

Yeah, my mother went to Earlham College and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is that a Quaker school?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It's a Quaker school out in Richmond, Indiana, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —my parents were founding members of the 57th Street Meeting of Friends, Quaker meeting in Chicago's Southside, University of Chicago area. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: All right, so—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —when I was a teenager, I remember Sylvester Jones, who was this sort of big elder in the meeting. He would give me his gold pocket watch, so that I could tell the time when to break the meeting, and so as a, you know, teenager, I—well, you know, shook hands with people on either side and asked are there any announcements—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —further concerns that you might have that you didn't express and whatever, you know, right?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, so you—what—so when—what year did you graduate? I mean what year—what I'm talking about conscientious objectors, what period was this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, I graduated in 1953 from Amherst.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And there was still a draft. The Korean War was going on.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And a lot of my contemporaries—well, Philip Corner, Fluxus artist, was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Corner with a C?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: C-O-R-N-E-R, yeah. He spent the time in the Korean War, the years there playing in a military band.

[Laughs.]

And I think Joe Jones may have also done that, but I was not going to take part in the military in any way. And so

I got a job at this hospital in the Bronx through a friend of the family, Rufus Rorem, who had been in our Friends meeting in Chicago, but was head of the Hospital Council of Philadelphia. And said, "Look, talk to Dr. Merrill at St. Barnabas Hospital up in the Bronx, and I think maybe you can work out something there." So I did, and he said, fine, he'd be happy to have me work in the occupational therapy department, which I did for two years plus.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And were you living in the Bronx as well?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, they had employee housing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So I had this little room big enough for a bed, and a dresser, and maybe a chair as well.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you have any social life?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, no, I went to Cooper Union through all of this, Cooper Union Art School—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —at night rather—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —than going to Cooper Union in the day.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, that's a long trip down from the Bronx.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Third Avenue L was still running—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —the whole way when I first went there and, yeah, it was a long day. And worked and studied and developed a family of friends, and we would go over to the Cedar Street bar and drink with the big guys, and I think they were all guys at that point.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you meet—did you know them?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, and then we—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Like—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: —de Kooning and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —who else was there? I don't know.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —de Kooning, Franz Kline.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Franz Kline.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Marca-Relli maybe. Kaldis was this kind of obnoxious Greek painter who liked young girls and was very assertive, very, you know, heavysset and possessive.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, I mean that's a really long day.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Work in the Bronx, going downtown—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But I was young.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to Cooper Union and then right to the bar. It's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, going to Cedar Street bar was maybe just on Friday evenings or something—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —like that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I get it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Not every night.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. Well, that must have been exciting to meet the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was fun. It was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —major figures in American art—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —really great, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —at that point.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And one time when I was there at the artists club was the time that John Cage gave his talk on something or nothing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And there were people—well, I went to Yale's summer arts school in Norfolk, Connecticut the summer after I graduated.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The summer before, Cage was there and talking, and the classmates from Amherst and Smith who'd gone that summer came back and were filled with telling about Cage and what he was doing and the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you knew who he was?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I knew who—oh, absolutely, I knew who he was. And then as I say—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —he was talking at the club and I heard him there which was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And did that inspire you in some way?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, it was kind of nice, yeah. Inspiring? I'm not sure, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, I mean did it change the direction of your thinking about art at all?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Thinking?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or music or—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it might have nudged it a little bit someway.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then after I got to teaching out at Douglass College, Rutgers University—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, wait. So—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —you went to Cooper Union for two years and then you went to—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —started at Rutgers?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—right. The two, three years at Cooper—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —I think there were two years that satisfied the military—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and selective service, and then I stayed on another year because it was a job and I was able to continue at Cooper Union. And during that third year in New York, the dean at Cooper, who was a friend, Ray Dowden, had this letter from—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Theodore Brenson.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I—wait. All right, can you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Ray D-O-W-D-E-N.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And Theodore?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Theodore or Ted, Brenson, B-R-E-N-S-O-N—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —who was a Latvian painter—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —from the war through Germany to France, was in Paris for a while, and then got to New York, and then got this job chairing the department. And he was very connected to the art world in New York and —

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —sort of the international world, and was bringing this kind of perspective into the program at Rutgers, at Douglass College, the women's college. And over at Rutgers College, you had Allan Kaprow as a young instructor who was going into Cage's class at the New School and having his thinking blown open—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and getting into Happenings and sort of concept of Happenings, writing a little text. And I saw all three of Allan's shows that he had at the Hansa Gallery.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What were you teaching at Douglass when you started?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When I started, my first year there, they gave me a section of the survey of art history. So, every morning, Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 8:00, and I had to take the 6:30 Morning Congressional out from New York, because I wasn't going to move out to New Brunswick, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You weren't still living in the Bronx?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I had gotten a railroad flat on 24th Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenue. A friend at Cooper, and these were unheated, you know, minimal apartments that were built for the immigrant community that was coming into the country, into the city.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Since torn down for those projects.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I know them.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I got relocated so they could tear the building I was in down for Penn Station South projects, and they relocated me to a better apartment, which had heat and actually a bathtub, small.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] How tall are you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: You're pretty tall.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, 6'2", I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So, yeah, you know, you could bathe and that was over at 65th and First, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —so I was there for about three years and it was a good apartment. It was fine, worked.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Not very convenient to Penn Station however.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, and in a blizzard, and there were some big blizzards at that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —point. I remember sort of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What year are we in now? We're still in the '50s?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Probably by that time early '60s.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Nye and I got married in '64. No, because Tyche was born in '64, and Bracken in '67, so it would have been still the late '50s.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, what are your children's' names?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Tyche, T-Y-C-H-E.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Greek goddess of fortune, chance, and Bracken, B-R-A-C-K-E-N. Yeah, Tyche was named —well, their mother, Bici and I, her family would go to Naushon Island which was a Forbes Island off of Woods Hole.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, what—how do you spell that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Naushon, N-A-U-S-H-O-N, and her great grandfather, I guess, had made a fortune in the China tea trade—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with probably a little opium and so forth smuggled in along the way and, you know, Chinese porcelains and so forth. But anyway, he bought this whole island, which became a family compound and there was the big mansion house and then I guess his son built a grand Victorian stone house and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did—how did you meet—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Bici?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Bici, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: We were in high school together. We went to Putney School. She was a year behind me.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, so you've known her for a while.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, knew her then.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then when I was doing my master's work at Columbia—

LINDA YABLONSKY: When was this [laughs]?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well [laughs]—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You went to—you went to—you went from Cooper to teaching at Douglass at Rutgers.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then after I was teaching at Douglass for a year or so, that first year it was like eight to five every day—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —or, you know, eight to nine every day—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and, you know, just totally focused on work because they put me in—on the library committee and a program committee. I met Ogden Nash—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —who was one of the speakers and, you know, a few people like that, but I realized that if I was going to be able to get tenure I needed something more than a B.A. and art school training and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. What did you get from Cooper? Did they give you some kind of degree?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They would give you a certificate, but I wasn't even there that long and at that point, I don't think—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —they even were awarding the certificates.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was just art school training.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so I—Allan Kaprow had gone to Columbia for his master's degree, studying with Shapiro, writing on Mondrian, and Bob Watts was—had gone up there, studying with Wingert and writing about Northwest Coast Indian or Pre-Columbian, something like that. And so it made sense to go up there, and I was taking different courses, some with—in Baroque art and American art. Julius Held was a person I studied with. He had various courses, but it was the courses of Rudolph Wittkower, who was a great Baroque scholar, that I found —

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —most interesting and my schedule didn't work with Meyer Shapiro to work with him—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —or some of the others. Anyway, I asked Wittkower could I do my master's essay with him. He said fine, he'd be delighted. And so suggested taking the Roman Baroque church ceilings from, say, 1620 to 1720 or something, a century in there, study them, and see if there is a progression stylistically in when —because initially, they were more classical formal and then you get into the later in the century and it's sort of High Baroque. And the painting fuses with sculpture and it breaks outside of the frame, whereas earlier in the century, it was confined within a frame up in the ceiling of the nave. So, I did that and that gave me a chance to go over to Italy and spend a summer in Rome and look at the church ceilings, and sometimes have to go at six in the morning to go there when the monks were in there to say their prayers because otherwise the door was locked. Yeah, I mean, all of this and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is what year?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Your summer in Rome?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: 1960, I guess, maybe.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] What—so you were still teaching at Rutgers at Douglass—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —College?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, through all of this.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And taking these classes at Columbia?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Classes at Columbia and then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's Wittkower's first name?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What—Rudolf.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Rudolf.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: R-U-D-O—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —L-F.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Maybe P-H.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I'll look it up.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think F, and W-I-T-T-K-O-W-E-R.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So that was your first trip to Europe?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When I was in high school—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —my sister was—and this was right after the war—she fell in love with an Englishman. They were both studying at the University of Geneva in Switzerland, and then went back to London where his family was and lived, and I went over to visit them one summer.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In London?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In London, yeah. This would have been—maybe I was still in Putney School. Could I have been?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: '48, something like that. Yeah, because it was very much just after the end of the war—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, it was still—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and rationing—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —very postwar.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and I took—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —a can of Spam that my mother gave me to put in my luggage to take, and my sister turned it into Sunday dinner.

[Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Baked in a, you know, little efficiency oven and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But Rome was your first trip to the continent?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, with Hildamarie and Ben, we went from London—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —down to Geneva—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —because—sort of to visit with friends where they'd gone at the university, and then spent some time—a little bit of time in Paris. We—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —stopped at the cathedral—Romanesque cathedral in Vézelay, which was wonderful to see.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How do you spell Vézelay?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: V-E-Z-E-L-E-Y, I believe.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was Romanesque.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sort of Romanesque transitional to gothic maybe, and then they also had a house with friends up on the northwest coast of Scotland, and this was maybe before the trip to Europe—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —to France, Geneva. And, you know, Ben and his friends were studying for their exams and, you know, it was like young students, some married, some not, just renting this crofters house, buying—getting local vegetables from the person they were renting the place from partially, potatoes, turnips, and the like, and fish from the harbor, and no meat because that was all rationed, maybe a tiny little bit of something. And, yeah [laughs].

LINDA YABLONSKY: All right, back to Rome. So you were—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —comfortable being in Europe then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right. No, I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But Rome is not Paris or London so did it make any particular impact on your sensibilities?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I don't know. I loved Rome.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The energy of the city and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —I feel very close to Italy. I have contacts with, you know, have spent time in Naples and—

LINDA YABLONSKY Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Rome, and up around Venice, and other, you know, northern Italy, Italian cities—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Milan.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's a great country [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know it, yeah, right. You speak Italian or—

LINDA YABLONSKY: No, I wish I did. I mean, I feel like I should.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I took a year of Italian at college.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, you did? Oh, that helped.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it helped a little bit.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But what helped more was being in Cavriago with—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Being where?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Cavriago. It's a small town in Northern Italy.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How do you—how is it spelled?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: C-A-V-R-I-A-G-I-O, I think.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, between Milan and Bologna—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —somewhere in there, but anyway, Rosanna Chiessi was very interested in Fluxus and performance art.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I need that spelling.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What, Chiessi? Oh, what, Rosanna? R-O-S-A-N-N-A, because it's "Anna," like—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay and the last name?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —a woman's name. Chiessi, C-H-I-E-S-S-I.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And who was she?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, she's deceased now, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Francesco Conz—did you get—F-R-A-N-C-E-S-C-O—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: C-O-N-Z.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess was the initial catalyst for all of this sort of Fluxus, Happenings—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —development there in Italy. He had been in Berlin and Joe Jones, who was a Fluxus artist making tone deaf—had tone deaf music store and made self-playing music instruments and so forth, had—I think they'd met a little bit over alcohol—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and getting—fighting to get free of alcohol also. It was a sort of, you know, push-pull struggle for both of them, but Joe was a real good friend from the Fluxus family in New York. And he'd gotten over to Europe, the Netherlands, and then to Berlin, and he was in Bochum, Germany for a while also. And then got down to this little-known town, Asolo in Italy, and he was writing to us and—well, talking to Francesco about how he needed to build up a great archive of Fluxus and Happenings—

LINDA YABLONSKY: While—but wait a minute.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and [inaudible].

LINDA YABLONSKY: Just to get the chronology of this straight—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —so your first trip to Rome—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Was before.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, so let's—so you went to Rome and came back.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Back, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You got your master's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Master's degree, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then what happened at Rutgers—then—when did Fluxus come into being or—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —when did Allan Kaprow start doing Happenings at Rutgers, and how did you get to know all the players in that scene?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, Allan was the rebel in the Rutgers College department, the men's college.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Bob Watts and me, to a lesser extent, were counterparts in Douglass College, the women's college, and Bob and Allan and George Brecht, who worked—B-R-E-C-H-T—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I know that one.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Would meet regularly for lunch to discuss art ideas at Howard Johnson's.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Cup of clam chowder and a hot dog sort of thing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, god, I remember that clam chowder.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I joined them some of the time, but not in quite as regular a way, and George Brecht I got to know going in on the bus to New York. He was going into Cage's class at the New School, and I was going into my—a class on Baroque art up at Columbia. George was saying, you know, "Geoff, you really have to come to Cage's class. It's fabulous." But I couldn't because it was conflicting—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with my other classes so I didn't. What my work would be like now if I had not gone to Columbia, I don't know, but, you know, life has its own paths and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Indeed.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you do what you do and I was certainly connected to Brecht, and Kaprow, and Watts, and the European Fluxus artist, Robert Filliou, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: At the same time?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right and seems to be at one point all in there. Robert Filliou was going through the States and came and had a kind of informal class, talk at Douglass, Rutgers, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Quite extraordinary that all those people—these people that you're talking about were at— all at Rutgers at the same moment—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —either teaching or studying.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but Robert [Filliou -GH] wasn't on the faculty. He just passed through to give a talk.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I understand, but it—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean even without him—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he came because—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —it's [laughs]—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Kaprow was there and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Watts was there, and to a lesser extent, me. I was, you know—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was very lucky for you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —younger.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —that you landed—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was fabulous.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in the right place.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, absolutely, right place, right time, and it opened up all kinds of things, and connected me to, you know, this whole circle that's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —over in Europe from Ben Vautier to—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Eric Andersen, Wolf Vostell, and Joseph Beuys.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So did you participate in some of Allan's Happenings at Rutgers?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I did a little bit. Some of the bigger ones, there was one up in the Bronx.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Can you describe it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That was I think called *Eat* maybe and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: *Eat*?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: *Eat*.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: E-A-T, and I wasn't one of the people stationed there handing out bread or whatever, but I was there as, you know, quasi-participant sort of there. There were other—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What happened in that one?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was—it was more environmental in a lot of ways. It—you could go and get a jam sandwich [laughs] or something at the end. A lot of Allan's pieces are, you know, not dramatic. They're like—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —everyday activities that have been framed and separated from the flow of life.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's very well put, but who went to these?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The art community, I guess, basically.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In New York?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In New York, yeah, because they were all pretty much there, and his early Happenings that were like at the Hansa Gallery. And I went to I guess all of Allan's first environments there in the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: "Environments" meaning what?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: If we describe one.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, there was one where it was like raffia hanging down and filling the whole space and then he had bird sounds on a tape recorder playing above and fairly low light.

LINDA YABLONSKY: This gallery was on 10th Street?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, Hansa Gallery—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where was that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —was first on Central Park South—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, wow [laughs]. I didn't know that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in an old brownstone or, you know—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —limestone building there and Allan, I think maybe Lucas Samaras was also with him. Ivan Karp was the—and Dick Bellamy were the two who were, you know, gallery directors or—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —whatever there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The Hansa Gallery and then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's a new biography of Richard Bellamy that just came out.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, really? Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Like last week.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Really? I'll—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I haven't read it yet, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I'm sure I'd find it interesting.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I don't know how good it is.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But he was quite an interesting guy there, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, absolutely, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Anyway, sorry to interrupt.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Sheindi, his—I guess she was—yeah, it would have been his wife at some point, and they had a child, grown son now. Sheindi was a good friend of Jill Johnston's.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I guess I knew Sheindi more through Jill [...] But—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —people that would show up for these Happenings?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, and at the Reuben Gallery—first the Hansa Gallery, and then later the Reuben Gallery.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where was that? Reuben, R-U-B-I-N?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: R-E-U-B-E-N.

LINDA YABLONSKY: R-E-U.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's what I thought, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That was on Fourth Avenue around 10th Street or so. I'm pretty sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In a loft building and the more developed Happenings were taking place there. The shows at the Hansa Gallery, when it was on Central Park South, Kaprow's first few environments, not—this was pre-Happening—one was kind of like a carnival, lights flashing, bells ringing, and things like that. And then one was this raffia environment with bird sounds or, you know, insect sounds.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Sounds like so much fun.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, they were nice, yeah. We enjoyed them, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Art's not fun anymore in the way it used to be.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And there was—and he had a show there earlier which was more objects, but like it would be a wall piece, kind of a large piece, sort of collage from billboard type imagery things—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —to say and with bells. And you pushed a button and a siren would ring and things like that. So, you know, it was these three shows there at the [Hansa Reuben Galleries that -GH] were the evolution of Allan breaking away from the process of painting and artmaking into something else.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And what were you making then? Were you making your own art in this period?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I was making my own art, some. I was involved with—sort of swept up in teaching and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —getting my master's degree and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —studying art history. And I was maybe at that point some involved with painting expressionist work like, what, waves breaking against rocks, sort of black and white splashed or forest scenes that were sort of abstracted and sort of the play of branches, pine trees, light coming through. But, you know, with the freedom of Abstract Expressionism, it wasn't like painting meticulously.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Not realist, not naturalistic.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, not naturalistic, no. And then got—in the early '60s, I did one piece that was like a collage construction, *Picturesque America*. It was a book from the 19th century with that title.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, that's the title?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's the title of the piece.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was that the title of the piece? Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And the title of that book that I took—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —the images from—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and collaged them. And there was in an inset this 19th-century painting, *The Victor of the Glen*, the stag on the hill—mountaintop, you know, steel engraving of it. It was there and inside you—there was a little door from the cover of *Picturesque America*. You opened it up and inside a light would go on and it would blink and there was porn inside there—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —so forth which was sort of this other dimension of picturesque America.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Very good [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So, yeah, there was that and a piece called *Spirit Level*.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you show these works?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Some, you know, there were—well, faculty shows anyway.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] How did that one go over?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: How did that one go over?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was fine. People, you know, did you look inside, you know, see this, and so forth? You know, Roy, who was a colleague, was saying, "You know, if you can do a dozen of these, Geoff, I can certainly get you a show."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Roy?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Roy Lichtenstein.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, he was a colleague—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where did he—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: He was what?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was a colleague. We hired him.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, he was teaching at Rutgers?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was teaching at Rutgers, [Douglass College -GH].

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I didn't know he was there too.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah. Roy had been teaching up at Oswego in northern New York State—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and was determined to get away from there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Hard winters.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was—what?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Very hard winters in Oswego.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, awful and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And a little isolated anyway.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —we had this offering and it was near New York, and he came down with this old Suburban wagon—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with a box on the top that was filled with these large paintings of his, which were his stripes paintings. They were paintings where he would saturate a cloth with chrome—orange chrome, yellow chrome, green and smear it across until it sort of faded out, and then saturate another group of three colors, alizarin crimson and, you know, viridian and something else, and smear that and make these paintings. Later he got into painting stripes again, but in his iconic way. He had done some work before this that were sort of Picasso-like small paintings, sort of American history, sort of Washington crossing the Delaware, Custer's Last Stand or whatever, in a kind of a simplified, slightly cartoonish way.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, flat planes of color and simplified objects, but, you know, recognizable subjects, and we were less interested in the stripe paintings. They felt somehow overproduced which is—he was wanting to make big stuff to get a gallery in New York, basically what's going on there. And the others—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And did you not have that ambition too?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Some, but I actually didn't have it with that driving—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —edge that a lot of artists—a lot of my contemporaries did have.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So Roy told you to make more and he'd help you get a show?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, if I made more.

LINDA YABLONSKY: To make more of what you were doing.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, and I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And did you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I didn't.

[Laughs.]

And I got into other things at that point and should have probably. Who knows what—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, would of, could of, should of.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Could have, should have, would have, you know, whatever. It's all—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What—so how did your Fluxus connection happen?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: How did it—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —I was involved with Fluxus and some of their banquets and gatherings, but not an instigator, sort of critical figure in the group.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I need to say for the record that Fluxus—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —was—had a residence at Rutgers. Is it—am I correct?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Fluxus, no.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No. So where were these events?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Fluxus was—Fluxus began in Wiesbaden, Germany—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with a series of concerts organized by George Maciunas, M-A-C-I-U-N-A-S—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —together with a group of artists like—well, George Brecht and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —I guess Wolf Vostell was there, and Robert Filliou maybe, and others. Bob Watts didn't go over to it, but he had been sending scores and material to George, and so some of his scores were performed in the Wiesbaden concerts. I was still not—I guess feeling that all of this was more like Watts and Brecht and not quite sure where I fit into the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —whole thing so I was a little on the outside, but then George and the group came back. There were events there at a loft they had on Canal Street, and then George [Maciunas -GH] got 80 Wooster Street, and I got much more involved with things there and with banquets and all, and then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And the banquets were artworks essentially?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Artworks, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How—can you describe a typical banquet, Fluxus banquet?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: A typical banquet, everybody was assigned to make a different dish in a different color, so that there would be a spectrum of foods and so I made blue mashed potatoes and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Edible?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: With—what? Edible, yeah, edible food coloring, you know, I'm not sure how great it was for you, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who came to—did people other than the artists come to these?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Some.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There would be a little bit of a circle beyond.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Can we—can you in a nutshell describe Fluxus just for this record for people who don't know what Fluxus was or is?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. George Maciunas made a little manifesto of Fluxus, and he took the dictionary definition and broke it into its different components. And one part is about change and revolution, and so he made a little annotation there, you know, to revolutionize the nature of art and demolish the art museums—maybe not quite those words—and purge the art world of, you know, corrupt degenerate art—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in relationship to diarrhea infusing as a part of the definition of Fluxus. And George had a kind of bathroom humor about certain amount of his work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Yes, I think so.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And enjoyed, you know, things like this. I worked with him on a Flux-box called a Flux-Excretorium.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So Flux-box—first of all—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, what—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —I need to say that Fluxus was a kind of collective of artists—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Fluxus was a—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —who worked individually and as a group.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And as a group, right and all of them—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And the work—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —their own individual work—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and then their collective work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And by—the Flux-boxes were kind of a regular—a way to make objects, I guess, and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in this very ephemeral—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —group of works. So you did one of the—a box was a wood box or a cardboard box?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I—well, I have a—made a wooden box that was our Flux-Divorce Box, but these were—no, these were plastic boxes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Plastic, oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, with little compartments that you'd—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —get over on Canal Street.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And they were all kinds of different shit. And my son, who was a little kid and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: All right, let—wait—before—I'm sorry to interrupt you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You—when did you get together with Bici? After your—when did you actually get married?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: '61, '62.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess it was June 24, 1961.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did she show up at Rutgers?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How did you find each other again?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Bici and I were both at Putney School.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right, and then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She was a year behind me.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, you mentioned it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She showed up at Columbia General Studies.

LINDA YABLONSKY: At Columbia, oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was getting my master's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and she was—had gone through a marriage, real estate deals down in Florida and Sarasota, and broke up with her husband, and got back up to New York. And there in the halls of Schermerhorn, I ran into her. "Oh, Bici." Or maybe I said "Beekie" and—because there was another Bici Binger at Putney and then Beekie Forbes [spelled Bici, but at that time, people pronounced it "Beekie" -GH]. She—they differentiated their names that way. We exchanged addresses, nothing—phone numbers. Nothing happened and then came spring, and I ran into her again, same place, and, you know, "We have to get together." And it was like within three weeks or a month, we were planning a marriage and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, and you had two children?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was—and we have two children, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So—but you divorced in what year was that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I—was it 1971? I think we were—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, we were married in—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —1961—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and then by the time of our 10th wedding anniversary, which is June 24, 1971, it was like, Well, what should we do? Because we were both gay and involved with—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, you were—and had you always both been gay?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And known you were?.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that sort of crystallized, came to the surface I guess around the time of Stonewall, or after Stonewall and the first gay march up Central Park—up Fifth Avenue—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —to Central Park, we went with our kids on our shoulders. And there in the house we

had on 20th Street, she would have her consciousness raising groups with her women friends, Sydney Abbot and Kate Millett, and people like that, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But those—so you started seeing—were you seeing other people—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, so while we—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —while you were still married?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —were still married with our two kids—

LINDA YABLONSKY: When you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —mutual responsibilities there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —were able—right, so you stayed together, but you also had separate—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —sex lives.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And stayed friends?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Stayed very much friends. Yeah, we're still very much friends and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, I mean how'd you—did that surprise you? I mean, to discover you were gay while you were married to this woman. I mean you had—must have had an attraction to another man at some—that woke you up.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, I'd had sexual activity with men early along, you know, earlier.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But then—well, then I was going to a therapist who—

[Laughs.]

Dr. Hess on Washington Square North, and he was saying, you know, you don't have to tell her about your gayness and so forth. It's, you know, you can go ahead and—anyway, we were married and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was she an—she was an—she's an artist too, right?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She's a—more writer than—

LINDA YABLONSKY: A writer.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —an artist, but now she's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You said that, all right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —been doing some wonderful sort of object pieces that are playful, some puns and humor sort of embedded in the way the objects fit together.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Fluxus—the—in the Fluxus group that people were everything, gay, straight, everything in between [laughs], or was it—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It seems sort of heterosexual.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I would say I think Fluxus is basically much more heterosexual.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think Dick Higgins and I are the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —two queer Fluxus artists and Nye, Bici.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But it wasn't uncomfortable?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I don't think so. I think they were, you know, pretty open and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —accepting.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It sounds like they were open to [laughs]—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Because it, you know, it's in the nature of the group.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —options, yeah. Okay, so—and you got divorced. You made this excretorium with George, you said?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, with George Maciunas.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It became a Flux-box.

LINDA YABLONSKY: A Flux-box.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was in that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And what happened to it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, it's an edition. I guess I may have a copy—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —upstairs even, but, you know, sheep shit and a range of things. What I was going to say was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —my son Bracken, who was this little kid—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —was absolutely fascinated with this and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: The box?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The box and George's—George Maciunas's shit collection because in his—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —archive shelves down in the basement at 80 Wooster Street—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —he had these jars and each was carefully labeled with, you know, llama shit, and kangaroo shit, and chicken shit or, you know, whatever, pig shit. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —my son one summer had taken—collected grasshoppers and put them in a jar, covered, and kept putting grass in to have—give them something to live on. And then at a certain point, you know, maybe after he let them out, he realized that there was grasshopper shit in there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it was like, "Daddy, I have to give this grasshopper shit to George Maciunas." So he dutifully packaged it and we took it to George. George was delighted and some years later, Bracken was down there and, "Can I see, you know, is my grasshopper shit here?" "Yes," and George said, "There it is."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Very funny.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: But you also—did you not also do a performance possibly with Bici, a division of your property?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: There was a Fluxus performance?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, we were both quite involved with Fluxus by the time—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —by 1971.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I had already organized George Maciunas's Flux-Mass out at Douglass College in the chapel.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so with our 10th wedding anniversary coming along, it was like, How do we celebrate it? Because we were both, you know, queer and involved with others, and I just sort of tossed out the idea, what about a Flux-divorce? And it sort of resonated, and I said, "Let me talk to George Maciunas." And so I talked to George. He was absolutely thrilled and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —so he did a lot of the orchestrating of it, and figuring out how to divide up the house with a wall of cardboard boxes to separate one half of the room. For another, barbed wire between the living room and the kitchen island in the middle of the—before the dining room.

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is in your—where you were living?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In the house we were on 20th Street—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in New York. And then upstairs in the bedroom, we had a division of property and with a paper cutter, we cut our wedding document in half, the wedding invitation, some correspondence that was sort of symbolic. And then with, I guess, a utility knife, cut the mattress in half—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —scissors and ripped the sheets in half. And then I had this circular saw and cut the wooden platform of the bed in half. And there was a wicker loveseat that I chopped in half. So this was the division of property and we tore our wedding garments in half.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was this documented?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There's some documentation of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Photographs or video?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Peter Moore took photographs.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And there are maybe some others. I don't know that there's video, but then I made a Flux-Divorce Box so that I have this as an object. And there are copies of it in, I guess, in MoMA and the Getty and the Sohm [Archive] collection in Stuttgart, and sort of, you know, there maybe half a dozen key Fluxus collection series.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It sounds like it sets quite a precedent for Gordon Matta-Clark.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Yeah, right, well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Remember he split the house—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, no, I know.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —while he was in Herman Sullivan's house?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was a beautiful piece, really beautiful piece.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Let me—let me—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Do you need to take a break at all?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I'm okay. I may have just a little water to moisten my throat.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, yes, all right. You want to—I just—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, you can just pour some, that's fine.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I don't know if you've had any lunch. Okay. This is all—I mean it's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I love the detail. It's really—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean, you know, people sometimes talk about artists. I mean—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —talk about not separating their art from their life, but this is a complete—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, no, this is—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —merge.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —art and life fusing. Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And, you know, that's the spirit of Fluxus actually too.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. How—so—but your still—how long did you teach at Rutgers? A long time.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: 48 years.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and I would have retired earlier.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I retired when I was 71, I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But I was interested in bringing together an exhibition that would document this whole history, and I knew that if I didn't do it, the university would be quite happy to forget about it, sweep it under the

carpet.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really? It's so important.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no, I know.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So I made this catalogue—I made this exhibition, [*Critical Mass:*] *Happenings, Fluxus, Performance, Intermedia and Rutgers University [1958–1972]* from 1961 to 1971, or whatever the date parameters were. And I wanted to have all the text be by women, and I got Christine Styles, Jill Johnston—did Kate write something? Other than—well, you know, there was a piece of Al Hansen's.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was in there and there were, you know, scores of Brecht and Watts and so forth, but—so that it wasn't, you know, just women, but the main texts were really, you know, wonderful writing by women.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So there were a number of Fluxus events at Rutgers—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Not just the Mass.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No. Before—there was one point I remember where I wanted to get some Fluxus sports out there in the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Antilles Field, and I had to clear it with the dean, and I—she said, "Well, what are these events like?" And I said, "Well, you know, one, people are blindfolded and then there, you know, one hand in the next, and they walk their way around the campus." I thought this was a fairly benign simple performance. "Ah, but what about the insurance issues? What if they were to fall down and go into the ravine?" And it was like okay, fine, we don't do it. But, you know, that was the kind of response I got about—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —doing things there. I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The things that I did, I went on my own and just did and with the Flux-Mass, I was on the Voorhees Assembly Board, the program committee for events that would take place in the chapel. And the year or the year before I was put on the committee, they'd been made voluntary rather than every student had to attend two chapels a week. You know, they were Monday—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They were, you know, four days a week and you had to—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —attend two of them, but this was a time where compulsory chapel and assemblies and things like that were a no-no kind of.

So, the committee was turning to me and saying, "Well, what can we do to get things that will get a student crowd?" And I said, "Well, what about a Fluxus concert?" And I described a little bit about what Fluxus concerts were, and they were interested. They said, "Yeah, okay, why don't we?" And so I said, "Let me talk to George Maciunas." And I talked to George, and George said, "It's in the chapel? We've never had a Flux-Mass, Geoffrey. We have to have a Flux-Mass." So fine and I guess maybe I told the committee what he was thinking of and okay, that sounds benign and, you know, fine. And he—I got a group of students and there were Fluxus artists from New York like Alison Knowles, and Yoshi Wada, and myself, and Peter van Riper.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yoshi, how do you spell?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yoshi, Y-O-S-H-I.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And W-A-D-A.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And who else? You just mentioned someone else.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, Peter—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Peter.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —van Riper.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Van Riper?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Van, R-I-P-E-R, I guess it is.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, he and Alison were together for a while back then. And so it took place. It was marvelous. George scored it all. I guess students made a huge papier-mache bread, loaf of bread—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —about the size of this table area filled with—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —sawdust so that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Six or eight feet long you're talking?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, something like that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And, you know, four feet wide and filled with sawdust so that when these acolytes in gorilla costumes, gorilla heads, masks, attacked it with their clubs, it broke open and the sawdust went flying everywhere. So that was the "breaking of the bread."

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There was a little Superman with Wine that got—foot got cut and wine came from it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I imagine this was—must have been very popular with the students, and the university probably wanted—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The students—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to throw you all in jail.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Well, I'll get into that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. I think the students enjoyed it and a lot of the faculty, you know, some of the younger faculty—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —really had a good time there. There was an Episcopalian priest there, Reverend Lambelet.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Lambelet?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, L-A-M-B-E-L-E-T.

LINDA YABLONSKY: N or M?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: L-A-N or M?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: M, I think, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: M, okay, yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I can check and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Episcopal priest.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Chaplain.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Chaplain.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] He was sitting in about the third row back and there are photographs. There were wonderful photographs taken and you have him sitting there with a big grin on his face—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —because he probably more than anyone in the audience could see each pun and each piece of humor in the whole event, but his religious righteous self got the better of him afterwards. And he—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Too bad.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —approached the dean, wrote letters, got the other chaplains and religious figures, and members of the New Jersey senate to write letters about this horrible sacrilege that took place at the university.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What a hypocrite. He had the time of his life and then complained about it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right, but that's how people like that are [laughs].

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and so anyway, I had tenure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I speak of—to people how critical getting tenure is, the importance of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's no better security for an artist.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, absolutely not.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it blew over. It was, you know, okay. It became an event in sort of the annals of the college and got referred to and talked about. And the following year, again I was still on the committee—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Which year was this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That was '71, I think.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The year that you were divorced?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right, yeah. So, a lot of these things were all kind of coming together.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And the next year, I think it would have been '72, again on the committee, and Hermann Nitsch, who is a Viennese action artist you may know, N-I-T-S-C-H, and two Ns to Hermann—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, I know. Thank you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —was in New York—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Nitsch.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and he was asking, "Is there a possibility to do something at the college?" And I, you know, was saying, "Sure, I'll see." And at that point, there was no money in the chapel committee program. I conned my chair into coming up with \$25 from the department budget.

[Laughs.]

And then there was a woman on the committee, student, who was head of the literary publication, *Watermarks*, and she said she could take another \$25 from there. Maybe I was able to get \$25 from the program committee also, so I had \$75 for Hermann. And so I called somebody in the college of agriculture, "Where can I get a lamb?" And he said, "We can get one from the farmer who provides us with animals to demonstrate slaughtering all the time. That'll be fine." And we can do it in the roundhouse which is where they developed—demonstrated—it was like a classroom for the college of agriculture.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And if they were showing how to present animals for fairs, or how to demonstrate slaughtering, or how to demonstrate—I don't know whether it'd be birthing of piglets or anything like that, but it was their, you know, their classroom.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was used. It had sawdust floor, and then these bleacher seats around, and yeah, perfect for a piece of Nitsch's.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Perfect.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Absolutely perfect. So he was delighted and the person who got the lamb was going to have it slaughtered by the university slaughterer, and Nitsch said, "I've never seen a slaughter. Is it possible I can be there?" So I checked. Sure, that's fine. So he had some students who were going to be in the performance and Nitsch and myself, and maybe there was one other faculty there to see the slaughtering of the sheep in preparation for the performance. And Nitsch has used slaughters as part of his performances a lot since then, but that was his first.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's where it started?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's where it started.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I did not know that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: His very first experience with slaughtering, and so we had this pre-event slaughter and then the performance, and my brother was one of the assistants, and I think maybe Raphael Ortiz. I don't know that Al Hansen was there, and I think I may have had several students who were also volunteering as part of the —

LINDA YABLONSKY: With the slaughter as art, the slaughtering wasn't part of the performance?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It wasn't part of the performance at that point. Nitsch's sense—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But he just used the blood and the carcass in the performance?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, he used the carcass, and I think the entrails were used as part of his display on a table and poured—covered with aniline dye and things like that. You know, he's since incorporated slaughtering as a major element in a lot of his performances, and it would be like, you know, I've seen the slaughter of an ox and I've seen—because for a while I was able to get to various performances of Nitsch over in Europe, and, you know, we were friends and supporting his work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So how did that go over? [Laughs.] I can just guess.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, you can guess, yeah, right. The chaplain had seen the simple little posters that were put up around, and he got in touch with—I don't think he was there for it, but had members from the ASPCA there. And while the whole thing was taking place, I realized sort of who they were, and I talked to them out there, and I said, "You know, look, what will be the problem here?" And he said, "There's no problem as long as you eat the animal after the event. If you just slaughter it and wantonly throw it over the bank, then we can arrest you for cruelty to animals, but if you eat it, no problem. We're happy to let you do what you want, you know, go on with your performance."

So I quickly talked to students. "Who has a backyard where we can have a barbecue?" So we got the lamb,

afterwards went and barbecued it, and all was fine other than the, you know, the priest and the dean and so forth brought me before another faculty committee, and it was beautiful. She was wanting to reprimand me. There was a person who was head of the philosophy department who was there and said, "Madame Dean, this is where academic freedom comes in." And she thought he was saying that I was transgressing academic freedom, and when he realized that she wasn't picking up what he was saying, he said, "No, no, no. This is what academic freedom is designed to protect."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: "You may not like it, but it's serious creative work and needs to have that protection to go ahead." It was a beautiful moment, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You held onto your job. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I held onto my job, thanks to tenure, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What—you said—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] And then I made this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —catalogue, *Critical Happenings—Critical Mass: Happenings, Fluxus—*

LINDA YABLONSKY: *Critical Mass*, that was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —*Performance—*

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who—did Rutgers publish that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Rutgers University Press.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was the full title? It has a very long title.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I can show you a copy of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: All right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, careful. Wait, let me put this off. So it's called *Critical Mass: Happenings, Fluxus, Performance, Intermedia and Rutgers University 1958 - 1972*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Would you like a copy for the Archives?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, that would be great. I'd like one for my archive, but I'll get one—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Or yeah, or your archive.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No, I'll give it to the Smithsonian—I'll ask them.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I think it would be really good and to have it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Check. They may have it or—but if they don't.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, exactly—*1958-1972*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So it ended with Hermann Nitsch.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, '72 was the Flux-Mass. Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, this is only about the Flux-Mass?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I played with the idea of the Flux-Mass—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, so this—I mean, it didn't end, but—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and with the idea of "critical mass" and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —this book only—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in its scientific sense—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I understand, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —that was sort of trigger for things to happen. I got Mordecai Mac Low—Mordecai Mac Low to write about critical mass from a scientific point of view. He's an astrophysicist, son of Jackson Mac Low, Fluxus poet, and Iris Lezak, another—well, interesting artist.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I'm going to write—this is—I'm glad you did this book. It's very important to have that record.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was determined to do it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Because I knew that if I didn't put it together, the university would forget about it, and want to kind of wipe it from their history. And I was talking to—I was up at Amherst College where I graduated in '53, and it was my, I guess, 50th anniversary, 2003, and while I was talking to the director of the gallery about the show, and she said she would love to have it. And it actually was opened there which was great—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —because they had real museum personnel to handle loans and, you know, all the things that you have to do with a show—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —which we don't have out at Rutgers.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was like this informal, you pound a nail in and hang the work up, and pile it into the back of a station wagon and get it to and from where you borrowed it.

I have some early wonderful stories, a little digression here, but I was in charge of the gallery in the early days that I was teaching there at Douglass. Yeah, my first year, I had one class in art history, "Survey of Art History," to 80 students, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 8:00. I had two sections, the foundation studio class, "Art Structure," several other days, and they asked me to set up the printmaking workshop and teach printmaking. And so I found an etching press through Robert Blackburn and, you know, so forth, got that going. And they asked me to handle the gallery exhibitions, and so I was going into galleries in New York and borrowing fabulous things, you know, Chinese scrolls and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wonderful.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Marca-Rellis and—I don't know, you know, Franz Kline little paintings, or whatever. And it was a time before there was this feeling that, you know, the transport had to be super secure—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and so I would go, and it would get wrapped up, and it would go in the back of my car and get taken out and put up on the wall. And I'd file an insurance listing with the university so that, you know, it was covered.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But not like today.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But had some great shows and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Fabulous.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: You did that just for that year, your first year?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I think I was involved with it right along.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, you did so many things.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Yeah, I did a lot out there and was young and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —filled with a lot of energy, still have pretty good energy.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. When—so you said at the time of your divorce—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —that you and your wife were each involved with other people already.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who were you involved with? I mean was it any one person? Let me put it that way.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Stephen Varble, who I—is there in that picture of—in the wooden dress.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Stephen is spelled—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: S-T-E-P-H-E-N.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, Varble, V—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Varble, V-A-R-B-L-E.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And he was another artist?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was an artist, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] This wooden dress—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was a wooden dress he made.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is—oh, is he—his creation?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, his creation and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Made of what like—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Little pieces of wood that he—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Little pieces of wood.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —sawed and cut.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How did he get—how are they holding together?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Held together with wire.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he made another dress that was made from my slides. I had boxes and boxes of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you know, Kodachrome slides and it was like, you know, "What do you need all this for,

Geoff?" And so he wired them together and made a dress.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Were you living together?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: We were living together, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where were your children after the divorce?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, they were living with Bici, and she moved—was on 20th Street in the house for a short time, but then wanted to get rid of the house, sold the house, got a loft in the building where Alison Knowles and Dick Higgins had a loft, had lofts—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and was there which was a short walk down to my loft on Church Street.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you had a loft on Church Street?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I had a loft on Church Street below Canal.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And the kids were—

LINDA YABLONSKY: A Tribeca pioneer. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I guess, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And they were going to P.S. 3 before—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —it became quite the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: In the Village?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —classy—in the Village, West Village. And they were, you know, pretty adapted going from place to place—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and going with each other.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But was—were—was—you and Stephen living together, or did he have his own—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: We were living together, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So the children were fine with the new partnerships?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's not such an easy transition even for a bohemian family.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, you know, I guess and, you know, accepted it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, good. So when did you actually start living together?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Stephen and me? The Fluxus-Divorce was '71, and we were together—met in the years after that, whether it would have been '72 or '73, I'm not sure. And then were together for maybe half a dozen years.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But he was a stormy person to live with.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

[Laughs.]

You're certainly—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: You're a very gentle person I think.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but, you know, it was good and it was creative and we—well, he—soon after we got together, he arranged with Ellen Stewart at La Mama—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —for a production of his called *Silent Prayer* and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So he was doing theater?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, he was doing theater and writing. He worked on a novel and did some filmmaking. He was I think working with the board of education on some educational films, and so the concept of the set for *Silent Prayer*, his play, was that it would be a whole sky environment—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with—that I was to paint, which I did paint, and they became works that were, you know, significant works in exhibitions later. And there were these screen doors, natural wood screen doors, where actors came in and out of, in the midst of a panorama of sky. And in the platform above the range where the doors were, I sat in my Sky God costume there against a bigger sky.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's the sky?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Do you see my—it's a costume made with—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see you're behind—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —scraps of leather that he got from a dumpster and, you know, leather punched, made holes, and then tied them together with twine, and then made this helmet out of wood, and then these cones of leather that were again tied together with knots and so forth.

LINDA YABLONSKY: They look like horns, like—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. They were—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —or a wild deformed cactus.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Wild beast. [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see. Did you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Anyway that was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —have a beard really long or is that—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I had a big long beard.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —a shadow. Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, no, no. That's a big long beard.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow. How—did you always have that long beard?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, it—well, it grew.

[Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: As they will, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: As they will, yeah, right. It started out, and so I guess for pretty much all my time with

Stephen, the beard, and well, yeah, there was one point where I did a performance called *Body Hair*.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This was in a space that Billy Apple had over on—was it on 23rd Street? It was a loft, second floor—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —West 23rd.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And this piece was—and this may have been following my coming out. I think it was maybe after the Flux-Divorce, and after the realization that Nye and I were separating, so it was like shedding of skins and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, sort of purifying my body and so I—yeah, shaved each part of my hair and made each, you know, hair of the right arm into a little plastic capsule and hair of the back, pubic hair, rectal hair.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you put them in a Flux-box?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, it's here somewhere down in the basement or something, in these capsules in a wooden compartmentalized box with doors that open up so you can see the, you know, plastic pill bottles of hair. And then there is a before and an after picture, of me before and me after, maybe two views, front and side, or front and back.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So was this a public performance or it was?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was public, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who was there? I mean how—a lot of people?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: My brother, Al Hansen—yeah, no, more like a handful of people who were friends and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Joe Jones—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And you documented—Joe Jones.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, there was documentation of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When it was all done, they held me up in their arms horizontally with an arm draped down. I looked sort of like the Pietà of Avignon there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then following that, I did a piece called *Dream Event*, where I was going to be in the space, fasting, naked, on a mattress with a sheet over me, just water to drink, for a full weekend. Friday at 6:00 to Sunday evening, 6:00.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So this is—we're talking 1972 or '[7]3?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: '72, I guess, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Does Marina Abramovic know about you? This really—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I know about Marina Abramovic. I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: This so prefigures her own performance.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, I know, no.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You know?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Look, I'm well aware of that. Marina is Marina, and I've known—I knew Marina when she came up from Yugoslavia to Italy. Joe Jones was absolutely enamored of her, and there was this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —brief moment where Joe and Marina had a fling, and I think we were maybe in Basel at the art fair, and Joe and I were sharing a room, and Joe—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] You went to the art fair?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There were Fluxus gallerists, dealers in Italy who had a—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, really

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —stand.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Seems so commercial for Fluxus.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but they would, you know—in the stand, there were these performances, and Joe Jones had his music bike that he would ride up and down the aisles. It was earlier.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Go—so Marina, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So Marina kind of said to Joe, you know, this was nice, but I don't need you sort of thing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so I was—I came back from—well, I remember sharing this room with Joe, and Joe was absolutely shattered, broken, about being thrown out by Marina. And so I was, you know, holding, cradling little Joe in his grief. And so that was that contact with Marina, but she, you know, had a great respect for me because I was this, you know, Fluxus artist that she was coming a little after and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —part of this group that she was in admiration of, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was she aware of your performances?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Interesting.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] But, you know, then she charged on and was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: She [laughs] certainly did.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, very seriously charging on, and there with Michael Berger, another—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who's that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Michael Berger, B-E-R-G-E-R, who had Harlequin Art in Wiesbaden, Germany.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is that a gallery?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. He was—had a business, Harlequin Geschenke, Harlequin Gifts, that were humorous little objects that were sold in gift stores and things like that, which is how he made his money, but then through Joe Jones and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —others, he learned about Fluxus and decided that he wanted to be a real big supporter and collect real Fluxus. And the—there was a big Fluxus exhibition at the museum in Wiesbaden in '82 that Michael sponsored—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and we were all there for that, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, you kind of beat me to the punch because my next question was going to be, how did you become "cloudsmith"?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you just told me. It's your cloud—your sky paintings started with Stephen's performance at La Mama. That was at La Mama?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, sky paintings started before that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, it did? Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, maybe—when I was there together with Stephen, I got very seriously involved in painting sky. I was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So where did that come from? Because nothing you've told me so far would indicate that you were going to go in that direction.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think in the years before that, I was making these "sky bundles."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Of the twigs?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, twigs, that was something else.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But a canvas—two canvases together, one maybe face to face, and tied together with rope, and the rope and the canvas and everything all painted with a sky. And then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But what drew you to paint the sky to begin with do you think?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was—in painting watercolors, I enjoyed painting the sky and looking at clouds, but when I was five years old—and I don't know that this is immediate catalyst, but maybe has some tangential impact—I had come down with scarlet fever.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And my sister who was I guess a year or two older than—two years older than me maybe, a year younger than my sister who's living, came down with it also, and so we were together for a while being cared for, but she was getting worse and taken to the hospital. And the doctor who was treating her, who was a resident, actually a member of our Friends Meeting—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —had the feeling that she needed a blood transfusion, in the early days of blood transfusion, and took blood from my father which was mismatched. It wasn't the right match.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so she died right there in front of his eyes, and so—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, my God.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —this was this family tragedy. I remember the doctor coming and telling my mother, "Your daughter's dead," and my mother being hysterical and, you know, maybe clutching me—"No, no, no, no, it's not true. It can't be. It's impossible," you know, "It's not"—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And the resident who had done that was a member of our Friends Meeting and committed suicide soon after that, so—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What a horrible—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —that was this early—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And you were like five did you say?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, something like that, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you understand death at that point? I mean, did you understand what was actually happening?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, no, I understood that, you know, the person—she died and was gone and it's, you know, from time to time, I think it's conceivable my involvement as a sky painter, working with sky, has some links to this, you know, sort of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Because you thought she went to heaven? I mean, is it something that simple [laughs]?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, just, you know, there's that—no, not because I thought she went to heaven, but there's that kind of societal metaphoric positioning of death with Christianity, but I think Buddhism and so forth also, that after you leave this earth, you go somewhere up there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And even if you're put in the ground, there's a spirit that transcends that and goes somewhere else.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So, you know, it—none of this was conscious. None of this was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm [Affirmative]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you know, there's A, therefore I have to do B or, you know, whatever, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, in your career—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —your lifetime—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —that—once you started doing these, that became your primary subject.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Always.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —loved it, yeah, and I have, you know, 50 watercolors in there of sky, sort of this size. And I'll be having a show in Blois—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: B-L-O-I-S, Blois, in France, about three hours south of Paris. Ben Vautier, V-A-U-T-I-E-R.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I know him.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know Ben.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I already wrote it, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right—became—got very connected with the director of the gallery, the museum.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In Wiesbaden?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, in Blois and so—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, wait. Now when was—so this is back when, in the '70s?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, this—no, this is now.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Now, oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so back three months ago, four months ago.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was going from time with friends down in the Italian coast below Naples on up to Naples to work with a collector there, and Sur, to see what they had in their collection. And then I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Sur—okay, just for the record—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, yeah, Sur—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —when you say Sur, we're referring to—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: S-U-R. Sur Rodney (Sur)—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and other artists that you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —who is my partner, husband. We've officially gotten married.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Have you married? Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, we—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Congratulations, great.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Not that we're in favor of gay marriage or in the institution of marriage, but it was a realization that if there, you know, if I die and so forth—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's pragmatic. I understand.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —it's going to be so much simpler for him to be my wedded spouse than just—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, it's a—absolutely.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So anyway, he sort of hides it, but we are—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —a married couple.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So it's—so you're having this show of cloud paintings soon?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, coming sort of April, May, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's amazing [laughs]. All right, let's catch up to that when we get—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, yeah, we can—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to that part of the chronology.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: So I'm just trying—so you made these—this sky set for—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, for Stephen's play.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then what? I mean were you still involved—was he involved with Fluxus at all?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was—Stephen was much more part of the La Mama—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —experimental theater group and Charlotte Moorman's Avant-Garde Festival, and you

have this situation where George and Fluxus and Flux-festivals were one thing—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and Charlotte—and George was very specific about who was Fluxus, who wasn't, and how things were done. And Charlotte was all-embracing and, you know, "Oh, fabulous idea. Yeah, sure, come join the festival." And, you know, sort of polar opposites there and—but I was involved with both, and traveled this path successfully, I guess. There was one point where I asked George to make a box for me. This was after the Flux-Divorce and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —after it became very clear that we were apart. The wedding was over and I had taken my ring off. This is my ring for Sur. And I thought, for the festival, what I'd like to do—Charlotte was saying what would I like to do? I was saying I'd like to bury the relics from the Flux-Divorce that I had, the parts of the double bed and mattress, and the wedding clothes under a pile of dirt and sit on it in tails with a bell to ring and write in a journal for the 12 hours of the festival. She said fabulous. She told me later that she had made a mark on the plan of the Armory, that that would be where earthworks would be—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And here I was dumping a mound of earth.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And so this was at the Lexington Avenue Armory—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: On 22nd?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Twenty-Sixth Street, I think it is.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, Twenty-Sixth.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Lexington, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. The site of the first Armory Show, 1913.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The site of the first Armory Show.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, absolutely, historic place.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It is.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Dick Higgins, for the piece—for the festival—had a piece called *Mice All Over the Place*. The score was every half hour he would release a white mouse into the space because I guess when he was thinking of what he would do, he was up in Barton [VT], and a couple of mice ran across the room. Okay, fine, I'll just release mice, unbeknownst to what I was going to be doing, and his white mice found me because the mound of dirt was the one place of comfort that they could find. And suddenly there were these white mice climbing up over me, sitting on my shoulder, sitting on my head, and I became this magnet because people were fascinated. Here's this man sitting in tails writing in a journal with a little bell on a mound of dirt with these mice coming along and climbing all over him.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Weren't you freaking out? [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What's wrong with, you know, a mouse crawling into your—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And they were all white?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They were all white, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So the next issue of the *Village Voice* had me on the front cover and sitting—Fred McDarrah photographed—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Which festival was this? There was more than one, right?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, oh, yeah. There were festivals every year—[1971 -GH].

LINDA YABLONSKY: I went to one.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I wasn't in the art world then.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I see.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I was very young.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: And some friends took me and—but I saw a performance by Charlotte—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and Nam June Paik—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —that blew my mind because I didn't know anything [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I see, yeah, right. Where was the festival?

LINDA YABLONSKY: At the Armory.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, at the Armory.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, and we went to that Armory—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, then you went to that show. You—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was the same year? It could have been.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think it was the only festival she had at the armory.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, then that's—then I was there—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —at some point. That's all I remember though—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, okay, well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —is some lights and her performance and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —being wowed by—I know there was more going on there, but I don't remember.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Inaudible.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: New York was fascinating then [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Shirley Clark had—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —big film projection.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I kind of remember the projection, but not what was being projected.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I wish I'd paid better attention. I was probably stoned.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, we—yeah, you know, we see what we see, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, wow, well, that's amazing. So you got a lot of press [laughs], you know, front cover of the *Village Voice*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I got a lot of press. It was very good, yeah, and the *New Yorker* magazine had an article that talked about me I think, too, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And you're still at Rutgers?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Still at Rutgers, yeah, and with tenure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What did they think of all that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I think, you know, a lot of the students and so forth—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —delighted, and it was around this time, a little before, Yoko Ono was kind of a friend. She was a part of the Fluxus family there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: We would be doing things together and going to her performances and so forth. Then she went over to London, met John, and, you know, all that history.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And came back, and Yoko had done one film before she went over, called *Bottoms*—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —which you may know. It's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I don't know that one actually.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, I see. It's framing people's buttocks, and Tony Cox had worked out a cart that could be pulled along between people's legs as they walked with a camera mounted on it—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —so that it filmed the—this close-up of the buttocks just undulating back and forth like a little cross—the crease and the cracks forming sort of a cross formation. And they undulated and then another buttocks and another. It went on and she expanded it over in England to the version that's more projected these days.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But then she came back, and she and John wanted to do a pan of people's legs called *Up Your Legs Forever*, which would be the title of that film. And so they got in touch with people, and we were to go down and meet at—go to some door on the Coliseum in Columbus Circle. So I went there and Bici naturally went and talked with Yoko and got involved with that. And so there I was left to go and talk with John, and this was sort of a thrill. Told—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —my students when I got back, and oh, you know, what was it like?

LINDA YABLONSKY: So what year was this then? When—I don't remember when they came back to New York.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When they first came back, yeah, I'm not sure, but then John was around the art world for a stretch.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And this avant garde festival where I sat on a—the mound of dirt in the Armory; Yoko had a glass maze which had a toilet in the middle of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And John had members of the New York Philharmonic up in the balcony playing music with a fan blowing across it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How could I not notice John Lennon and [laughs]—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I don't know.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So that's unbelievable, wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, you entered through the door and there was a balcony above that and that was where his musicians were. And so they were never playing the same thing because the fan kept changing the score in front of them. And George Maciunas who—I'd spoken to George about putting together this box for me, my ring piece—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —which had my wedding ring on a dowel and 10 bells for the 10 years of the marriage, and it was in a little wooden cube that George Maciunas made for me.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he assembled the whole thing, and the cube had overtones of a box of ashes of my sister, Cynthia, who died when I was five. She was six.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And my parents took this little square urn of ashes back and forth, Chicago to Vermont, Chicago to Vermont, every year, and it was like the car would be packed. We'd be ready to go, and then one or the other would go into the house and take the urn of ashes down from there and put it in with the luggage. And then before going back, it would—same thing in reverse. So—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see where you get your sense of ritual from.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Maybe, yeah, but the form and the shape of that urn of ashes in a way became metaphoric for the square box with the wedding ring in the middle.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so, yeah, I have that. I can show it to you if you want. It's downstairs somewhere.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is the painting here the size of the painting that you're showing in France, of the show that you're having?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, what I'm showing in France—well, some of the things that I'm showing in France are watercolors that are—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —about so by so, and there will be a big wall of I guess a hundred watercolors of sky, day skies, night skies, and interspersed with roof slate.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Paintings of, or actual roof slate?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Actual roof slate, but—so it's sky and earth kind of embedded in the slate. The roof

slate, the roof being what—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, but they're slates on the floor?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —reflects the sky. No, they'll be on the wall.

LINDA YABLONSKY: On the wall.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay. How do you go about making these cloud or sky paintings? Do you ever paint just sky that doesn't have clouds in it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I guess I've painted just plain blue sky.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You have?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, watercolors.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So do you work from photographs or you just do it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Those—some of the large ones are—I use slides and so forth to work from. The watercolors—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Projected you mean?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: You project it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Projected, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And, you know, you get sort of the structure you want, and then you take off from there and, you know, work and make it a painting.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And the watercolors are all just from looking at the sky, from sketches that I make in a journal, and, you know, soak the watercolor paper and have my watercolors there and I paint.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But this is not watercolor that I'm looking at on the wall here?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that's an acrylic.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's an acrylic and that's an acrylic. Those are three of a group of four paintings, and the fourth one was a day sky with a moon in it. They were the phases of the moon: new moon, full moon, half-moon. And the day sky I guess has a half-moon that you—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —will see in the day sometimes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Do you ever paint stars in night skies?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I don't think so. I may—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Just clouds?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in watercolors. In the watercolors sometimes there'll be little stars that pop up some way.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How often do you—well, let's go—so you were with Stephen for six years, you said?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Maybe, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And you broke up because he was difficult, or you started seeing someone else?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, because he was difficult.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, and when did you get together with Ralph? Ralph, is that his name?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's his name?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: My partner?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sur, Rodney.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No, no, the other one. Brian, sorry.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Brian, oh, yeah, right, okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Sorry.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that's okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Here.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, Brian.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Brian Buczak.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Buczak?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Spelled C-Z-A-K. Yes, Brian was also—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —an artist, yes?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right. This is a catalogue of his work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, and so how long were—oh, that's nice. You both had beards. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Right, yeah. Oh, yeah, there we are together with our beards.

LINDA YABLONSKY: When did you get together with him?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: We were both at a Libra party.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Libra?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Libra, yeah, well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Like astrological sign?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Astrological Libra and Phill Niblock—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —who is a Libra would—for a while—he's an artist, musician.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So you may know him. Has a big loft over on Grand and Centre Street, but we were there and I got to dancing with Brian and feeling, you know, a special kind of nice energy there. And he'd come with friends and suddenly out of the corner of my eye, I saw him and his friends leaving. And so I went running

after him, and they were going off to the Lower Manhattan Ocean Club, or whatever, some of the various other clubs.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I used to work there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, did you really?

LINDA YABLONSKY: I was the cook.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Craziest job I ever had in my life.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] So anyway, it was like, you know, where are you going? I don't even have your name and address, so forth. So we went along and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and so forth and then that night he came back here to this house, which was at that point a construction site. It was—none of this was done. It was like my mattress was on—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But you were living in this house?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was living here, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you—when did you move out of your loft in—on—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: On Church Street?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When my brother found these two houses, and he needed a place to live. He'd fixed up lofts, and the landlord would say, "How much am I charging you, Johnny? Only \$100, you know, for this? It looks so nice," because he'd fixed it up beautifully, "I should be getting \$300 at least." And my brother would say, "Okay, got to move."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so this happened a few times.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it was like I'm not going through this again, and he walked the streets and found these two buildings. There was a welding operation in the downstairs here, and this was just kind of loft space, storage space for the welder, and a busted toilet in the corner up here. And Jon's house was pretty much intact the way it is. It hadn't been gutted, and just filled with lockers that longshoremen rented for a nominal amount to check their—lock their clothes in when they went over to work in the docks. And so he could move in there right away, and he'd given Jim Johnston, I guess, a year, couple of years, to have the whole house, and then he could have the downstairs, and I would be able to take over upstairs.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Here?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Here, yeah. So Jon gradually fixed his place up and the plaster walls were intact. There was one point where Jon was wanting to expose the fireplaces and pulled off the metal—pressed metal—that had covered them over and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What came out [laughs]?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What—yeah. The mortar was totally shot.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so suddenly there was this rumble and he had this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, God.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —huge pile of bricks in his downstairs, what's now their kitchen/dining room. And so then for the first—quite a—and I didn't move in here right away because Jim was here for a year, two years. And

then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Jim?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Jim Johnston, who was the welder, ironworks person who—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, the welder.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Jon bought the places from.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right. So what—so these buildings date—these are—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: About 1815, early 19th century.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, just—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And four stories or three?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, one—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —two, three, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's amazing to have a house in Manhattan these days—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, I know and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —especially in this now very chichi neighborhood, you know?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but at that point they were dirt cheap.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There was a threat of Westway, and if that had gone through, there would have been an exit ramp right outside the door.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I would have lost my—I lived on Downing Street while that was going on—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, really, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and that was—my building was in the path.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, but it got killed—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and so forth so—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and when we came—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Anyway—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —here, it was garbage trucks up on the corner by Spring [Street] and Greenwich. Baretta had a vacant lot where he pushed around restaurant garbage and rats were everywhere and then would compact it and then take it out to Staten Island or whatever.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Can I just out of curiosity ask you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —what it cost to buy—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: To buy this house?

LINDA YABLONSKY: —these—this house—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in whatever year that was?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Back—'73, when did—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, it was early '70s.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, early '70s.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Do you know? Do you remember?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right. No, Jon paid \$42,000 for the two houses.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: God, you can't even get a bathroom for that much money now.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I know that, and since—and I paid him \$30,000 for this, sort of respecting his finding them—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and so forth.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, and you moved—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in here with Brian or not right away?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Not right away. Well, I moved in here, and when I met Brian at the Phill Niblock Libra party, this is where I brought him back.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, in the construction site, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In the construction site.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So the mattress on the floor was upstairs, and Brian got totally involved in wanting to restore it to early-19th-century splendor, so he designed—well, he found that fireplace mantle in a dumpster.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He painted the fire screen. He designed the crown molding, and he designed the archway behind you that you come into.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, well, that—see, I would have thought that was original to the building.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What was original to the building with—when we came in was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Nothing. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Nothing. The raw walls.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But these—are these the original plank floors?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, they were—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you put those in too?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Put them in, yeah. It was like sort of rough, junky wood floors with metal plates on top—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, gosh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and things like that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So that all got taken up.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Extraordinary.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: And you work here—you—do you have a painting studio here?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, I work upstairs some.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, I don't have a studio elsewhere, and downstairs there's an alcove where I do some things, and up in Cape Breton.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, right. So let's skip—let's skip back to that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That you have this farm?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Farm, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, and you got that at what time?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When my daughter was a baby—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in 1964.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—well, I'd grown up with summers in Marlboro, Vermont.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Drive from Chicago and Bici, Nye Ffarrabas, my former wife, mother of the kids, grew up in Milton, Massachusetts, with her family, the Forbes family, having this island, Naushon, off of Woods Hole. And she would go there every summer, and so the idea of getting away for a summer to a place was natural. And we looked at farms, real estate up in Vermont.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But they were all fairly pricy—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —by that time, and Putney School, Carmelita Hinton had been biking up around there after the war with her kids and had discovered the farms there being abandoned and basically available for a few thousand dollars. And they'd bought some near Sight Point, which has become the place where Phil Glass is, Joan Jonas—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, Sight?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sight Point, S-I-G-H-T.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Spelled like "sight," okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: P-O-I-N-T, yeah, and it's—goes out—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, and Richard Serra he was up there too?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did Richard Serra have a place there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Richard Serra has a place, yeah. He's built a big modern house there at Sight Point.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And do you still go there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, but I'm not there in Sight Point.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How come you're not there now? [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, because I'm here.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's too hot in New York.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, but, yeah, I have this farm, and it's 180 acres, and I've rebuilt the barn and rebuilt the house so that it's—with the wood furnace, I can, you know, it's comfortable if I keep the furnace filled with wood.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You go there in the winter?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I've gone up there for a stretch—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, it's chill [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —of November, not through the winter—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —but up to when the snow starts to fall. It's fun.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Must be beautiful.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It's great, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Are you near Robert Frank too?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Are you friendly with him as well?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And June Leaf?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] I was walking over to the Fourth Street co-op and Robert was sitting out in front of his house just there, and it was like, "Hello, Robert," and he said, "Hello." Just this little exchange, and then I was to June's show at the Whitney Museum—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Beautiful show.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, wonderful.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, funny and, you know, it seemed that it was sort of put into a corner and made inconspicuous to the whole space, but then I realized, no, it was making a space that was private, intimate, and so forth and right for June's work. So—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was also that gallery's—is—you don't have to pay admission to go into that gallery.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You don't have to.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I see—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's free to the public.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's good, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I—they sent me—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —lifetime artist's membership I think so I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I hope so.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and the Walker also.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Have you—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But not MoMA.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, from—oh, that's right. I remember you—the Fluxus did—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, there was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —work there at the Walker Art Center.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, so when you divided your property at the divorce, what happened to the farm in Cape Breton?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I got that, and she got the house in New York.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no, but actually—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —clever.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —there was a piece of land that the farm looks out over—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —80, 100 acres, maybe, where a stream goes through down to the shore, and we'd bought that to protect the view.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so she got that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —but she in turn sold it after we divorced, and so there were—the upper part got—oh, I worked it out so that I got the lower part, paid her for it, you know, whatever I paid, but then the upper part got developed, and there are a group of houses up there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Too bad, but you have a painting studio there? The—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I have a studio—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in one end of the barn—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and a whole bank of windows to the north, and a counter with a dry sink, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: How long did you live with Brian? Did you live with him until he died?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I lived until he died, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Which was when? And he died of AIDS.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And Stephen died of AIDS.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What about you? Were—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: A memorial, 1980.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Weren't you worried about yourself?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I suppose, you know, but I think everyone at that point, it wasn't a case of being worried, but you lived with what you—who you were, what you had.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I've, you know, fortunately never got the virus.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you—were you smart enough to take precautions early on? Because most of us—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —were confused about what those—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —precautions should be, you know?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, whether it was in terms of the nature of one's sexual activity—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in terms of whether one's top or bottom or whatever—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right, right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I won't—I won't ask you which.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, okay.

[Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right, so what—he died in what year?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Brian—this is 1987.

LINDA YABLONSKY: '87.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, he was born 1954.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And how long was he sick?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: We were up in Cape Breton—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and my son was there, and we had this old Saab that was on its last legs, but it got us, by feeding oil into it sort of every hundred miles, got us from Cape Breton down to Vermont, to Brattleboro. And I was driving, and Brian was sitting in the front seat with me totally bundled up, and Bracken, my son, was in back, and I think maybe he spelled me driving some. And comforting Brian or whatever.

LINDA YABLONSKY: He was sick then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, he was very sick, yeah. We were up in Cape Breton—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, he was already sick.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and he came—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, this is—you're talking about 1987 now?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Actually 1986 -GH]—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —he got AIDS and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So he died the same year he was diagnosed?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [No, the following year -GH] because he came back, and we got him to the hospital in Brattleboro, Vermont, going to see my sister, and my mother was also toward the end of her life, and they're in the same hospital, and they're—seeing my mother, and then I was seeing Brian. And the doctor was saying we have to probably assume that it's AIDS. This is—he was the first AIDS patient they had dealt with.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I was going to say in Brattleboro that would have been—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, Brattleboro, Vermont. They—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Strange, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—but he was terrific. He contacted doctors all over the world to get as much information as he could on how to treat Brian and they—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you stayed there? You didn't come back to New York?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, we came back to New York. He—everything he had got incinerated. They were not—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you know, it was that time, so a little transistor radio and whatever, yeah. And then following getting out of the hospital, he was up at the family house in Putney and staying there, and his father came east from Detroit and took care of him. And then—because I guess I had to get back to teaching.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then brought everyone down to New York, and he was here, and his father here also. And, yeah, got to a place where Brian was able to travel and do a lot of things, and he got very, very involved in painting, huge, beautiful paintings.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What kind of paintings did he make? Oh, we have a book right in front of us.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Things like this. These are big paintings. It's sort of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, very big.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —impressionist forest, and then séances in the little inserts in the bottom.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Actual séance—what are they? Are they—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, they were paintings.

LINDA YABLONSKY: They're paintings? Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He—paintings taken from photographs of séances.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Of séances. Was he into the paranormal? Well, here, these are quite different.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: A dog and a cop, a monk.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] But there's kind of an—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And a hand.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: And an abstraction.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Those are things that he did—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in the hospital after he sort of began to recuperate.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And painting veins and arteries, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. He was there—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And blood cells.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He said, "Geoff, get me paints." So I went and bought him paints—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —basic paints and some canvases.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You were friendly with Frank Moore?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Frank Moore was—we were very close with Visual AIDS.

LINDA YABLONSKY: When did Visual AIDS start?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When did—well, Brian died July 4, 1987—and could have been like '88 that it started.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Afterward, yeah?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Afterwards because I remember talking to Bill Olander about was it possible to have a show of Brian's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —work over at the New—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Bill who?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Bill Olander, O-L-A-N-D-E-R, who was director or curator at the New Museum when it was there on Broadway.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And was—I guess maybe responsible for getting the neon silence equals death pink triangle. It was there in the window of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: On Broadway. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: On Broadway there, and they were, you know, taking a very positive stand in terms people dying of AIDS, and I guess I was with Bill Olander at a show out in Vancouver maybe or somewhere in the West Coast.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think it was Vancouver, and Bill was saying, "Geoff, I love Brian's work. I would love to do it, but there are so many wonderful artists that are dying of AIDS. I simply can't single out one artist. And we're working on—a group of us, Tom Sokolowski and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Bill Olander.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Tom Sokolowski was at NYU then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think he may have been.

LINDA YABLONSKY: At the Grey Art Gallery.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I think still was there then still.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And several others, but he was saying what we're doing is trying to figure out some bigger way to deal with the whole issue of artists dying of AIDS.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who else did you know who had—was Stephen sick at the same time? Were you still in touch with him or no?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Stephen—well, I was some, but I had to get him out of my life.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I understand.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And, yeah. Fabulous, you know, he was a great, was a great lover, you know, we had a very intense close relation, but—well, the last time I saw Stephen, I'd gotten him out and got the keys away from him so he couldn't get back in and made arrangements for his friends to come—a friend of his to come and take his things and get them away. And then, months later, years later, suddenly I was there in the loft and outside of the window was Stephen knocking on the glass, saying, you know, "Geoffrey, Geoffrey, please, please, let me in. I have to be held in your arms one last time."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so forth, so I undid the lock of the window, opened it up, and let him in. And I was there in the chair in the loft, holding Stephen and, you know, sort of rocking him and, you know, closeness while the police were coming up the stairs and knocking outside the door, you know, "We hear somebody came up the fire escape. Is everything okay?" And so, you know, I moved away from Stephen, let the police in, and I said, you know, "It's okay." And they said, "Well, come on over to the station house. We have to make a report of this."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, God.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So that was my last time with Stephen, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And that was in a way sort of the nature of the dynamics of our relationship—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and who he was and how I interacted with him too. Yeah, well, you know, life has wonderful moments [laughs].

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, he did affect your art in a positive way for a while—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, sure, no, I think so.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —I would—I am gathering.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Different ways and the performance work we did together—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —I think was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —wonderful and creative.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, but who else did you—did you know a lot of other people, artists, people in the art community who were sick with AIDS in the—around that same time that Brian was ill?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I think so and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And did you come—I mean it sounds like you had a very understanding doctor for him in

Vermont, but there were many who were totally intolerant—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and refused to treat—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —people.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —which was our family hospital—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes. They knew you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: One of my brothers was born there and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —my mother died there, and she was—my father died there. Yeah, I guess my mother did too. She was in a nursing home for a stretch, and so the doctor—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So they knew you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —was totally supportive, called all around the world to get the latest information because it was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you know, early days of AIDS.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, but his being sick when so many other people were sick and in those days, dying pretty quickly and certainly looking terrible in a very short time—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and nobody really knowing what to do. How did—I mean you must have—it must have—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Brian—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —affected your—every part of your life.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —had—yeah. Brian didn't disintegrate like various friends I know who've died of AIDS where they wasted away.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was pretty robust right to the end.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I was—well, we were able to get out to Vancouver. He had an exhibition in—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Banff and then another one in Vancouver.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The same year, '87?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess, yeah—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —that he died, yeah—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —because it was like we were there and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —the Western Front, and he came back before me. I was going to be—did a performance and he didn't stay for that. He felt he had to get back to see his doctor. It was like, you know, his body was saying, you know, I can't stay here any longer—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and went back. I followed soon after, and then he was in the hospital for a while, then he was home, and was involved in nursing him at home, just, you know, he needed care, but he was pretty hardy. And he wasn't this, you know, emaciated AIDS image.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, I understand what you're saying.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What—when did—Alice Neel painted the two of you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: When did—when was that? I mean, that's pretty fantastic.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I've seen the image.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure, okay, right, yeah. Well, we got Alice out, or Douglass College got Alice out there for a talk and an exhibition as part of their women artists series. And Brian and I drove Alice back home afterwards, and she said, "Boys, come on up and we'll have some coffee." And she had an Entenmann's cake or something and coffee.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And we sat and talked and talked, and she was great at probing people about their lives and getting them to come forth. And then finally we left, and the next morning her daughter Nancy—daughter-in-law Nancy, who cared for her affairs, called and said, "Alice wants to paint you. Can you come up?" And it was like, you know, "Tomorrow?"

LINDA YABLONSKY: That day? Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That day, yeah [clapping]. "How soon can you get here?"

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, what?

LINDA YABLONSKY: That sound, that was you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, I clapped my hands. Expressing [laughs]—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Sorry.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Nancy Neel's imperative nature of how we had to get up there. So she painted us and there were, you know, two, maybe three sessions, each one changed totally, and you could see how she zeroed right in to how you were feeling.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And how were you feeling?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Pretty good, from the look of it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But, you know, a slightly different mood each time, and she—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —went and caught it. She was an amazing, amazing artist. And then she had Brian come up, after I had maybe gone up to Canada or somewhere else, for painting just a portrait of him.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, she painted him?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She painted him also, just solo portrait. Also, a nice painting, wonderful painting.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And this was—let's see, I wrote down when this was, but what year that she made the painting of the two of you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I'm not sure. I have books and catalogues with—reproduced upstairs.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, no, no. Anyway—oh—19—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What, '80?

LINDA YABLONSKY: I didn't write down the date. I didn't write—I'll have to look it up.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you meet—then become friendly with—whatever happened to that painting by the way, the portrait of you, the two of you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The gallery had it as the centerpiece of a show of Alice Neel's. It was what you came in—they were down in Chelsea.

LINDA YABLONSKY: David Zwirner gallery?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: David Zwirner, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is like two years ago or three or—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —a few years ago.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was their centerpiece and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —it was written up in the *New York Times* and I went to the opening and arrived there, and there was this *New York Times* reporter that immediately cornered me and wanted to have me tell her everything, you know.

LINDA YABLONSKY: About that painting?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: About that painting, about Alice Neel, about our relation, about—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And what was your relationship? Did you—I mean, you'd known her for one day when she made that painting so—or did it continue?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Obviously it did, because she had Brian come back.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no, I knew Alice. Alice was very much of—a part of the art world.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it was like years before, I think, she'd asked me could she paint me and it never sort of materialized.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, so you'd already known her for years before?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And she would, you know, reach out to anybody, yeah, you know. Can I paint you? Can I paint you? Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And she painted you in her kitchen. You didn't go to a big studio.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right. Oh, no. Well, that was sort of the studio.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was the studio, her kitchen—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —table? [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Kitchen table and she had this living room. It's one of these—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —West End apartments that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Fantastic.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: And great, but you don't know where the painting is?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I'm not positive and have a feeling it may be purchased in a museum collection at this point, but I'm not sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] So, she painted you from life. She didn't make a photograph or a sketch first?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No way. No, she may have made a sketch or two, but she had her canvas and had her paints, and looked and worked and painted, and there it was. And it got finished, first day, you know, looked good.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How long—how long were you there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She was merciless.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, wouldn't be, "Do you want a break," or anything? You know, she had you there and as long as she was needing to see you and paint you, you had to sit.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Couldn't talk?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, she might have asked a question or two or—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What about you and Brian, I mean? Were you talking to each other?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No. Oh, no, no, no.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, we just sat and—but then after it was all done, we had coffee and Entenmann cake, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then we really talked.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you talk about that experience or other—whatever was going on?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, it was more about other things I think—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —rather than just the experience of painting. And, yeah, as I said, when Nancy was asking about our coming up, it was like, "When?" And I thought, well, you know, next week or something. No, how soon can you get up here today sort of thing and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What did—we talked about how the university experienced your—the Flux-Mass and the Hermann Nitsch performance.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: What did they make of your coming out? I mean that you were a couple with another man now. Did anyone treat you differently?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think I became a mentor for the gay community, and the gay students.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Great.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, so they, you know, saw me as somebody they could turn to and, you know, well, I was teaching at Douglass, but these gay women were, you know, very much—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —sort of turning to me, talking to you about ideas of performative work that they wanted to do that were about sort of celebrating gay life and so forth. And I was there supporting them and, you know, encouraging them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And—but you got—and you also got involved with Visual AIDS and—after Brian died?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I got involved with Visual AIDS right at the beginning. After Brian had died, I was talking to Bill Olander out in the West Coast, whether it was Vancouver or Seattle or wherever. I think maybe Vancouver, and we were both there for some kind of a show, program, exhibition. And told Bill, you know, "What's the possibility of getting a show of Brian's work at the New Museum?" Because he—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right, you mentioned that so—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, I mentioned. And he was saying, you know, how he'd love to, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —there were so many dying.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So there was another show, this group exhibition—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —that came out of this that Visual AIDS organized?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, Visual AIDS wasn't in existence then.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, oh, this is how Visual AIDS—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Bill was saying that he and Tom Sokolowski—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and several others sort of in the curatorial world and academic world were discussing how to get some organization going. And I soon got kind of into that circle. There were meetings. I remember

one meeting at Frank Moore's loft down on Crosby Street—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —where artists, curators, people involved with the whole question of how to exhibit the artists who were dying of AIDS, how to make an archive of their work and preserve their legacy, and also to a certain extent support them in their work. But it was more—the support was coming from friends and so forth. This was, you know, can we get a museum going that will, you know, be the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —archive of gay art, you know, artists with AIDS? And that didn't, I guess—well, what it did was evolve into Visual AIDS emerging from this and it was—there were first these large group meetings, tossing around thoughts and ideas of what could be done, and big grandiose plans and concepts to simpler smaller things. And then this discussion of how to do it and then Visual AIDS sort of grew out from that. And so I was there with the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So—but Visual AIDS, its purpose was to exhibit?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Its purpose, it was—what?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or to exhibit the artists or give them—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Purpose was to preserve the legacy of these artists that were dying of AIDS.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it began first as a slide archive—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —which then got digitized so that their work, you know, however many slides each person, would be there preserved. And then there would be these web galleries where there would be exhibitions culled from this material.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And there was one big show in the early days of Visual AIDS up in the—in Boston at the —diorama [Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Arts]. It's a 19th-century building, a big brown[stone] space that was originally for a panoramic mural of the Battle of Gettysburg—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I know the one, right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —or Concord or whatever—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and is now just a space for shows. It was kind of like, you know, the Armory or something.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so we got this and we went up there and had this big exhibition, made a catalogue for it, and there was a performance in the center of it, and made this—well, simple catalogue here.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, this is the catalogue from that show?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This is the catalogue that we brought together for that, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: *Arts/AIDS/Communities?*

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, *Arts' Communities/AIDS' Communities: Realizing the Archive Project*.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay. I didn't know about this. So—oh, this is '96.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is much later.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, but that was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —sort of the first effort—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Cyclorama.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in the Cyclorama, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right, yeah. First effort to give—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, this is the Visual AIDS, but so—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —collective—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —other things were going on before this happened. Do you remember the show at Artists Space in 1989 called *Witnesses Against Our Vanishing*?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Which—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That was a more selective show, seems to me.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, it was a huge show, actually, but it was most of the work and it came from artists who were sick with AIDS, had already died.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or it was about that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And it was a transformative show, I think.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And there—and, you know, also because of the brouhaha, the culture wars over the catalogue, and David Wojnarowicz's essay in it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then there was the Day Without Art [December 1, 1989], that started maybe '90, '91—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —early '90s.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, no, I remember.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was before this.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then the quilt and the names.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The Names Project and naming the dead.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So there was quite a lot of activity and there's a—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, my daughter made a panel for Brian.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —ACT UP of course.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, sure, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Were you part of that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Some, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You were?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was in that action against city hall when we're down there, and then I went to Washington, DC, for—well, one ACT UP demonstration against the department of health there, whatever.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then that was a time when the AIDS quilt was maybe spread out—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in its most complete way on the grounds going up to the Washington monument between the White House and the monument there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I think that was before—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —the show in Boston.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And who funded this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: How did this get paid for, the show and this catalogue?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think it could be that Nick Debs, who was director of Visual AIDS—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —his father, parents, were people of means, and I think they had a foundation—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and provided the money for it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, you were with Sur Rodney—Sur—at this.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, we were—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see you're in this catalogue.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, okay, so let's [laughs] skip over and we're—I'm going to stop for today in a minute.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: We can continue this tomorrow, but—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But, yeah, Sur had lost—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —so Brian dies in '87, and then when does Rodney come into the picture?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, what's the date of that?

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is '96.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, so it's in those nine years.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Ten years later, almost 10 years.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, yeah, nine, 10 years later.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I'm not sure of the first, you know, the day we got together.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But how did you meet?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: How did we meet?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, we knew each other.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, just through—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Because of the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —art world because—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Sur was with Gracie Mansion—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —was, you know, very central in the East Village arts scene.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The gallery.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah and I was, you know, with Fluxus and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —visible there and that whole East Village scene was kind of the next chapter in art history from the previous of Happenings and Fluxus.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But did—Fluxus didn't—did Fluxus do things in the East Village in those years of the early '80s—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —when their galleries were there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I, you know—I don't think so. Fluxus was much more SoHo when it was more—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, that's what I—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —rough and tumble, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —identify it with so—oh, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But, yeah, no. All I'm saying is that the—kind of the gadflies of the art world were there with Fluxus, and then the East Village was sort of the next decade—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was hard, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —coming along and making challenging art work and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you already—you knew each other through the scene basically?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, sure, but Sur—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did any—yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Sur has said how he knew Brian and me—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and was turned on to both of us, but he didn't want to be, you know, the filling of a sandwich [laughs] or something, is the way he put it I think. You know, he didn't want to get sort of in between us or in any kind of an interaction that way, but then, you know, and we knew him because he was this big figure over in the East Village art scene.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, he was.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He and Gracie, and Sur was the one who was sort of managing the gallery for Gracie and everything, but then there was an exhibit at the Grey Gallery.

LINDA YABLONSKY: An AIDS-related exhibit?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: AIDS-related exhibit?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I have no idea what it was.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was just—it may have been AIDS related, but it was a show there and we both by chance were there and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was it the Peter Hujar show?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It could have been Peter Hujar show because that would be certainly something that both of us would have gone to.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, that was a great show.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's quite likely. Fabulous show, yeah. But anyway, you know, there was Sur—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and there was me, and I got to talking to him and was feeling this sort of special energy there between us. And, you know, it was just more than just a casual conversation.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so it was maybe the next day or a few days later, I called up and, you know, "Hi, Sur. Do you want to go out and have dinner together or something?"

LINDA YABLONSKY: You took the first step?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I took the first step, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And sure, yeah, and so then it just tumbled on from there, and we've been actually—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You—did you ever have any difficulty with him being black and you white -

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —or anything like that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean, he was—he's—even at that time, it was a very white art world, you know?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no, I'm well aware of that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But my own—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean he's unusual in that respect—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —for him being so prominent—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —at a moment when it was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —difficult.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, I grew up—when I was a child, my mother would take me over to west side of Chicago—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —to concerts of Paul Robeson, Marian Anderson.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, you're so lucky. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no, they were unbelievable, fabulous concerts, and it was, you know, it seems to me that there were in our Friends Meeting—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —kind of a modest racial mix.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. After the Second World War and the Hiroshima bombs, Nagasaki—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —our Friends Meeting brought in—provided some Hiroshima women to come over to this country to get treatment for the destruction—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Radiation?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —of their body from radiation. And they were there in the meeting and in my—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You come from a very enlightened place.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It's been good, and my father and his department—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in Chicago hired Samuel I. Hayakawa, who you may know because he was chancellor at [San Francisco State -GH] University, I guess it was.

LINDA YABLONSKY: At Berkeley, wasn't he?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: At Berkley during the free speech movement?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, he was pretty conservative by that time.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But anyway, he was teaching in—up in Canada in extension classes in small community colleges around and really wanted to get down to the states and to a more extensive thing. He'd already written *Language and Action*, his book on semantics.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But it wasn't published. I think he may have printed some copies or self-published, and my father was aware of him there. He probably had applied to my father's department. My father hired him, and he was—and this was at a time when bringing a Japanese into your department was questionable.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Got it, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, he—was there a black faculty member? He—during the Second World War, he had Fritz Richter, who was a German, teaching German, but it was like, you know, a real German. He was, you know, in no way a fan of Hitler. Though, I remember one time in our Friends Meeting there was this kind of German Jewish couple, the Kleins, who had gone over to—over to Germany in the sort of early mid-'30s and came back absolutely glowing about Hitler, you know—

LINDA YABLONSKY: A Jewish couple?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: A Jewish couple. This was before Hitler came in and really began rounding up the Jews, and they were going there and seeing the country that their ancestors had come from, that maybe they'd come from, which they left because of the First World War. And the whole push against Germany and the Kaiser, with France squeezing reparations out of this country and so forth, really mistreating them, and this *der fuhrer*, Hitler, is so marvelous. The trains are running. The people are happy in the streets and things have changed so much from what we knew. You know, I'm sure, you know, five years later, it was a totally different story.

LINDA YABLONSKY: He hated Jews already—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: —from the beginning.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but it wasn't that much—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I'll tell you my mother was a German Jew.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Really? Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: She came here in 1931—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, really?

LINDA YABLONSKY: —when she was 11 years old and was all—he was not in power yet, but he was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: He already had—the Brownshirts were out there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: She was already being persecuted.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, yeah. No, I'm not questioning this at all.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And we—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So they—so they bought some Nazi Kool-Aid hook, line, and sinker—

[Laughs.]

—thinking the propaganda—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —worked, you know?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and my parents were, you know, well aware of what he was doing and abhorrent and shaking their heads at the—this Jewish couple, German Jewish couple—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —being sort of sucked in by it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, very naïve.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, very naïve.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I think they changed very rapidly probably.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, good [laughs] glad to hear it [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where were we? Sur.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: We were talking about Sur. How did we get off the subject? Maybe I'm—maybe we should take a break. I'm losing it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I've—we'll pick this up with Visual AIDS and your relationship to Rodney, and I would like to talk to you about the specific works that you've made—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Fine, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —like *Sky Ladder* and some of the other Fluxus things.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: And—yeah, I want to get a little bit more into your working process.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Fine, yeah. No, that's good, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then the AIDS activism which I—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, which—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —it sounds like you continued—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, absolutely.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —with Sur, you know.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Sur and I, you know, working there together in a lot of ways too.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How old is he?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sur is, what, 62? He's about 12 years younger than me.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, he looks—he looks younger than 62, the same way you look younger than 85.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no, I'm well aware of that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You're both in really good shape.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Great, so I will pick up from here tomorrow. Thank you very much for today. This has been a great session.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Good.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I learned a lot and I—it was fun.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Great, okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's a lot in your—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I enjoyed it too.

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's a lot in your life that's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —fun to talk about, not everything, but fun for most. That's great. All right, let me turn this—

[END OF SD 1, TRACK 1.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is Linda Yablonsky interviewing the artist, Geoffrey Hendricks, at his studio and home in New York City. The date is August 18, 2016, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, card number two. Hello again.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Hello, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How are you today?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Good to see you again. I'm fine.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Trying to keep cool.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was a great conversation we had yesterday. I went home with a big smile on my face.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Really? Great.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Thinking about all those—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —wonderful things you've done, and a little sad at the tragedies involved, but—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Well, you know, that's all part of life.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And realize that by the time you reach 85—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you've experienced a lot, and gotten to know a lot of people. And as you're an active, creative person, there—you know a greater collection of people that you're connected with, and know—and well, just things that you and—with your life. Yep.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, that's very philosophical. Emotionally it's quite different usually.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: But you do seem quite calm, you know, like a serene—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —sort of person. Maybe it's your Quaker roots.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's quite possible, sure. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: We're sitting in the kitchen/dining area of your house. On the wall behind me are photographs and drawings. What is this installation here?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I suppose it's—well, it's next to the grandfather clock that I got—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, fantastic—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and I guess it's all pretty much like, family photos.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But then there are things like, there's a Picasso signature that was—is an actual Picasso signature. Sur was in Paris with a late partner, Andreas Senser.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is the name?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Andreas—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Andreas?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Senser, S-E-N-S-E-R, artist, now deceased, but he was, I guess, doing prints, and in this print workshop they had a lot of damaged, discarded prints. And there were things that were, you know, there were Picassos there that had signatures, but they were like, torn, or smudged, or stained, or whatever. So, what he did was cut off the signature, because that was for the epitome of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Picasso anyway, not unlike something that my colleague, Bob Watts, late colleague, did, had a whole exhibition of neon signatures of Duchamp, Picasso, Matisse—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, really? When would—did he do those? Do you have any idea when that happened?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When he did that?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was that in New York?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was in New York, yeah, '60s, early '70s, somewhere in there, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Interesting.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Nice show. It was good, and then all kinds of other photographs. There's a piece of Ray Johnson, a beautiful collage, and there's a bath brush with the German word for bath, B-A-D, on it. And inscribed in the back is "Ray J. as a good guy." And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is that his? Did he do that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, Ray didn't do it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, and I'm just blocking—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —my artist friend who—George Brecht, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I'd spoken to Brecht. He'd done portraits of Ray.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I was saying would it be possible to get a portrait of Ray from him. And so, this is what he produced for me.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you know Ray?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I knew Ray very well.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You did?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Ray.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What kind of person—he seems like such a peculiar—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —personality. I love what he did, though.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, oh, yeah. Yeah, he's a great artist.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And I love his art.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And my late partner, Brian, became good friends with him. They both came from Detroit, Ray from—well, from different suburbs of Detroit.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Brian, when he was in high school, got into correspondence with Ray, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh really, with the postcards?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —yeah, mail art.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Generally, yeah, and sent—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Coughs]—excuse me.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —little things, and this continued right through Brian's life. I have two big boxes upstairs of all that material.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, my goodness. Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well—

[Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's amazing.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Quite valuable.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And, so then there's that collage that he bought from Ray, when he was in high school.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, it's a very cool wall.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. So, there's that, and there is, Sur's and my wedding chair, the silver Hershey-wrapper chair.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Al Hansen was a special friend.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he worked with Hershey wrappers.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I was the one in charge of emceeding and organizing the memorial for Al Hansen at Judson Church. And Sur and I were, you know, very much together. And I was saying, "Why don't we have kind of a Flux-wedding or something, ceremony, in connection with the memorial for Al?" And so, I made that. We cut it in half and reversed it, which I'd done earlier for a chair for Jill Johnston and Ingrid Nyeboe for a wedding event that I did in Odense, Denmark. They were actually getting married. Jill realized that—well, weddings, gay marriages became legal in Denmark well before here.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so, they went over there to get legally married.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Ingrid, what was her last name?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Ingrid Nyeboe, N-Y-E-B-O-E. She's Danish and, you know—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Jill is Jill Johnston.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So, I got a little—found a little red chair in a flea market, which was like the Danish flag, that's up on the stairway there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You can see it later or I can—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, well later. Don't, no, no, no, no, don't, don't.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: See, it?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Sorry.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that's okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I thought you were going to walk away with the microphone.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, no. Oh, I see, with the cord, and everything would go flying.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, so I see, it—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, so it's part of this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Flux-ceremony—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —red chair, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Flux-Wedding after their official wedding in the city, in the Radhüs, city hall. I did that, cut it in half, and we joined it. And that was a piece for them, which they said I should keep. And so then, for Sur's and my wedding I did a second chair.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And you had the wedding at the memorial?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was a double whammy?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Well, Al is a very good friend.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And the memorial took place. [30 September 1995 -GH]. And then, you know, and then it progressed on into the other celebration. And with—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I love that idea. That is fantastic.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: What year was that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: A decade ago or so, or more.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was marriage legal in New York then?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No. This was, I think, pre-legal marriage, but it was—we made up a document.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —signed by the minister there, and all the witnesses. My son was up for that, and he gathered signatures. And since then, we—since it's become legal, we've been down to City Hall. We actually filled out a marriage license and are—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —legally joined.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, what year did you say? I'm sorry, the year of the memorial? Oh, you said 10 years ago.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: About 10 years ago, yeah. [30 September 1995 -GH].

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right. I think I have the document—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I think that's right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —over on the table there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was your relationship with Jill?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: With Jill?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, who was a critic.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, she was a critic, writer—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Writer.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —lesbian activist.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, very activist [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And she wrote for the *Village Voice*, had a weekly column. And one, "Lois Lane was a Lesbian," that she wrote, which was sort of a "We're all lesbians"—and a wonderful article. And I carried that around with me for a long time, but anyway I became good friends with Jill. Yoko had this exhibition up in Everson.

LINDA YABLONSKY: At the museum?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: At the museum there, yeah, in Syracuse, and she had the whole art world up. She flew us up on a plane, and put us up in a hotel. And we all—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —there we're celebrating, and doing things. Yeah, Yoko had the money to do that, and it was fine, and you know, a great event. And I think it might have been there that Jill asked me to write in her journal, which I did. And well, Jill came to our Flux-Divorce, and wrote about that in *Dance Journal* [column in *Village Voice*]. And it gradually just evolved that we developed a closeness. And she was interested in me. She wrote a piece, an article on me in one of her collections of essays.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you happen to be at the [1971] town hall event with Norman Mailer that she—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —participated in?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I'm so jealous.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] No, that was a wild event.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was a signal event of the 1970s—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in New York City.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Jill was great, yeah, great.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. She caused quite an uproar, I would think.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I was a faithful reader of her column, *Dance Journal*—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, great.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —it was why I read the *Village Voice*, really.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: She was an amazing writer, and critic, and person from what I gather. I never met her.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, no. She was quite marvelous, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And what about Al Hansen? He was part of Fluxus. Did you make work together?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. I don't think we made work together, but—and was I in performances of his, or vice versa? There might have been, you know, a little bit because pieces were often very communal, collective, and the people who were there, you assigned rules for them that they did, but Al was, yeah you know, a good friend. And then also Sur, as director of Gracie Mansion Gallery, represented Al.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so, he—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I didn't realize that, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —developed a closeness with Al too. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yesterday, speaking of Sur, yesterday—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —when we left off, we were talking about this catalogue and show, the *Arts' Communities/AIDS' communities: The Archive Project*—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: *Realizing the Archive?*

LINDA YABLONSKY: —*Realizing the Archive Project*—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and I read last night, I read the little dialogue between the two of you, you and Sur—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in here, which did have to do with establishing or organizing artists' estates.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Which until AIDS, I don't think a lot of artists paid very close attention. I mean, Robert Mapplethorpe managed to not organize but at least establish his foundation before he died.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Andy Warhol, that was a mess getting that one going, because of course when he wasn't expecting to die when he did.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, it was kind of virgin territory even though it estate planning isn't, but for artists—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in that decade, it became a big issue. So, can you tell me—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —what was involved that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —a bigger issue for the people who were dealing with AIDS because a person not aware of their death coming along, or whatever, you know—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —time span to be able to go ahead, and develop a will, and work out their estate.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and discuss it with their gallery, or close friends. You know, we were realizing that this was a critical situation, and you were having—one was having a situation back then where an artist would be dealing with AIDS. Friends would be dealing with all of the horrors of the situation, and it was worse then, because the treatments weren't there. And the person would die. And the family would come in. And, "What's this junk?" And out it would go in a dumpster, so that a life's work would be destroyed. And so, we wanted to do what we could to preserve that.

And some of the first meetings we were having, we were talking about, you know, can we get a museum, can there be some big building that is archiving all of this? This is sort of financially, physically difficult, impossible really, but organized—well, it evolved around to the idea of setting up an organization, Visual AIDS. And I was there in the beginning with it. And I guess I was president of the board for a long time.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But Tom Sokolowski and a group of other people were all there together, and working on the board. And what the decision was, was that we would build up a slide archive, and make this visual record. And that's all online now. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Of what, of every artist who was—had HIV?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, as many—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —as we can locate, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I think the archive has maybe expanded on beyond that, not just people dealing with HIV, but other queer artists, so forth.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But I'm not positive.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The original structure was, and catalyst was, dealing with the loss from AIDS.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's tremendously important sometimes because the artist who died so young did not have time to develop fully, and so would have been ignored—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —otherwise, when their work is actually quite good, and very valuable.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Historically and in many other ways. So, it's amazing that you got that together.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: The other issue—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, it had the initial motivation of wanting to deal with Brian's work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But then, you know, obviously he's one person in a much, much bigger situation.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, very generous of you. I understand where he came from, that it was a personal motivation in the beginning.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: But involves a whole community in the end. So, it's larger than life, most literally.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: There were—I don't think it was easy for people in the '80s who had AIDS or were dealing with various HIV-related issues to get medical insurance.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you experience that with Brian or anyone else you know? Is that an issue that Visual AIDS was dealing with to—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure, with Brian I think somehow he got put onto welfare or something.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: When he first went to the hospital up in Brattleboro, Vermont.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The hospital tapped into some state program that they had—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —to cover his expenses for—it was a program for indigent people, and they just you know, automatically, "Don't worry about costs. We'll take care of it," there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was lucky.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Great, yeah. Vermont's a pretty special little state.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I'm quite partial to it. Politicians and landscape—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Were you a Bernie Sanders fan?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah. Sure. How could I not be?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. So, I was reading in this catalogue. So, Visual AIDS is the organization that was responsible for Day Without Art?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I didn't remember that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right, and for a long time that was a big focus of what we were doing with Visual AIDS.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: To—how we decided on the day, I don't know. It was like, fine, you know, it's right before

Christmas.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, December 1.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: December 1.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Now called World AIDS Day. It changed.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that's right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So it's, you know, radiated out—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —from that, but pushing to get galleries to close, museums to close, or put some kind of a tribute on a work of art, or a banner outside. I remember out at Rutgers, I would get a big banner painted, "Silence = Death" in white on a big black cloth, to hang over the entrance to the art building. Went to the museum over there, the Zimmerli, and got them to do something.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was kind of amazing. I mean, everybody did get on board for that day—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh yeah, right. Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —the very beginning of the—not all the museums—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —closed, but they would hang black bunting on paintings, or over the doorways.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And sign it, and a lot of galleries closed.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or had some kind of program devoted to artists who had died with—from AIDS, or had exhibitions related to—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —this—quite something in the beginning, and then—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —but small considering that it really did become World AIDS Day.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, but I think—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and it's still going on.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —oh yeah, right, pretty sure, and you know, then this Act Up—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —was a parallel activity, and group.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And they had their first big organizational meeting up at the Gay and Lesbian Center on 13th Street. Seems to me I was there, and I didn't get into the actual organization of it, but big raucous discussions of what and how to do, and things like that. And then they got into planning demonstrations against St. Patrick's Church. Again, I wasn't one of the demonstrators, but with Act Up people going in, you know, properly dressed, sitting in pews. And at a certain point when Cardinal whoever got up to talk, stood up and, you

know, maybe shouted, "Silence equals death." And went falling down in the aisles, and yeah. There were—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —a whole big group of them, and the, you know, completely stopped the service. And put the whole focus on that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And what happened? Were they thrown out?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, they got the police.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And they got dragged out. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —yeah. And I think there was also some activity going on outside.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There would be demonstrations with blood and so forth. I'm not sure if that was specifically there with that, but you know, careful planning, and doing it in a guerrilla way, so that it would be this surprise action. I wasn't in St. Patrick's Cathedral. I was at the demonstration down at the City Hall and the health department.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And what happened there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think it was more just a big mass demonstration with presentation of petitions.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then, likewise down in Washington, DC, there was a demonstration against—well, in the lawn opposite the White House, huge mass of people. And then, a petition to the Department of Health. And this was before the government was paying any attention to this situation.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was under Reagan, who denied any of it was happening.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, totally wanting—yeah, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You know, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —so, it was critical that very intense, forceful actions were made to bring attention to the terrible situation. And it did bring about change.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, it did.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And, yeah. And then another response to the AIDS crisis was the names quilt. And it's interesting. It started in a shop front, storefront in San Francisco. And by chance it was just down the hill from where my daughter was living at the time.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And she walked down, saw it, and thought, Well, I'll go ahead and make up a panel for Brian. So—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, she did that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She did that, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, wonderful.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So, she made this panel, which then became part of the whole thing, and I went and saw the—went to DC and saw the whole thing spread out on—

LINDA YABLONSKY: On the Mall?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —on the Mall there, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —yeah, going up to the monument.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who did organize the AIDS quilt? I mean, was it an organization? Was it part of Act Up? I can't remember.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it paralleled Act Up. I think, you know, Act Up was more focused on demonstrations, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where is the AIDS quilt now? Is it in a museum?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I have a feeling it may be in the Smithsonian.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I think it might be.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no that's my—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —sort of gut feeling here.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I think so too.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, which is great, yeah, and where it should be really, I think. Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was huge. I don't know how many names—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —were—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —sewn into this quilt.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was a genius idea, and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. In the early beginning I had a small show of, you know, 20, 30 of them out in our gallery at Rutgers.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Of the quilt panels?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —of quilt panels, yeah, borrowed them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's so hard to, you know—I mean, just talking about it and contrasting it to the moment we're in. I mean, even though this is a more politically active election year, presidential election year than—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —I've seen in a few elections.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's nothing like this. There's no movement for positive change.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Now.

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's a lot of complaining—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —currently that there was then, yeah right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —going on now.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: But it's not an organized movement, like the antiwar movement—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —during the Vietnam War or the AIDS—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: A coalition of people for Bernie Sanders was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, that's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —had some of that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's the closest we've come, but that wasn't quite as—it didn't touch everybody.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Also, because, you know, the Democratic Party is split, but then they're—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —all on the same side basically, even with different attitudes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, it's a little different, but it's very hard to—it was the first—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I'd say quite different because—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —time.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —it was more, the AIDS—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you know, response was very much of a grass roots growing—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —intense demonstration responding to something that was affecting people in a very visceral way.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I remember the Gay Pride parades in New York in—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in those years, when there was really this huge issue to bring to light.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, bring the recognition to gay rights, you know, the whole gay population who had been kind of closeted, and not discussed, or visible in some way. And it was like—it was those first Gay Pride marches were, you know, "Hey, we're here." We're—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, they were important, but—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —it got so much bigger during the AIDS crisis, because it was joined by many, many people who weren't gay but—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —were affected by AIDS.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or wanted to support the gay voices, and gay movement, and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to bring medical treatment, and proper recognition to people with AIDS, like you were saying yesterday that you were married for pragmatic purposes, then those days' partners were—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, the marriage wasn't for pragmatic purposes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: My wife and I were, you know, I suppose—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I meant your marriage to Sur.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, marriage to Sur?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: For pragmatic purposes?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, no the marriage to Bici—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, no, no.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I understand that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —very much of a marriage of love.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —closeness, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, I mean, that's part of your marriage to Sur, too, but I mean—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —you didn't have to get married?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that's right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You did.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Sur sort of reluctantly, but in feeling it was important to go ahead and get that official document, so that whatever happens to me, he's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Exactly. That's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —what I'm getting at, is in the '80s, I mean, I know many gay couples where the survivor lost the apartment, the insurance, everything.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Even though they were—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The family came in.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —long-term.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And said, you know, who are you?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Also, the state, you know—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —didn't recognize—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —the partnership.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Unless in a few isolated cases, the sick person happened to have insurance through a company that covered the partner.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: But other—I mean; I know lots of people who lost—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —everything.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean, because they—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —their partnership wasn't officially recognized.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah, and with Visual AIDS, we were dealing with this over—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and over too, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, all this—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —it came about because of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Exactly.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —needing to deal with it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. It's really quite huge. What were you—and during this time, what are the artworks or exhibitions you were doing? Were you actively exhibiting then? And now I'm going to look at your—I'm not used to using one of these.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, the—I think you have to use the—the pad in the computer I think is not functioning.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay. I see, '83 in Cologne, '84 many exhibitions.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Everywhere, Reykjavik.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Karlsruhe.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Another place in Germany I can't pronounce, in the *kunsthalle*, in Denmark, Norway, Oslo. You had a big presence in Scandinavia, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Aachen, [Germany -GH], Trenton [NJ -GH] to Paris.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Berlin.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, that was all 1984. So—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, there was a show. I don't know, was it—yeah, this is '94, but there was a big exhibition that travelled, organized by the DAAD, I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I had this residency in Berlin, with them for a year, and then the show came together from there. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, this is all one show that in 1984 in—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —all these places? That started in Berlin, and then the year before—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It started in Berlin, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The one in Berlin, I think, was maybe a different show, and then it was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —curated in—I think in—no, it was curated in Albørg, I believe, and then travelled.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And were you present for all of these?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Exhibitions?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You spent that year in Europe essentially, it looks like.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. I spent a lot of time there, and it's been fun.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, '84, or '83/'84, that was after Brian died?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And, but before you got together with Sur?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: With Sur, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What are these shows in 1986?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Wait, I guess. Wait. No, Brian died July 4, '87.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, '87.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, you were together then? I'm sorry.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: We were together.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I had this separate life and career.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think Brian felt I should have been including him more in it.

[Laughs.]

But it had its own life with, you know, gallery associations, and work that I had been doing over in Europe.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Before being together with Brian. And you know, flowing along with its own momentum.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was the work in that show, the show that was travelling? What are some of the works that you made at that time?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Big Sky paintings.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And boxes, objects.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Let's talk about some of those boxes. I made a note of—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —some of them.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: The boxes that—these boxes are Flux-boxes or are those something separate?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Separate, and well, George Maciunas made Flux-boxes very distinctly Fluxus-boxes, and he put his own special stamp on them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They were plastic boxes, very simple.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And generally with a certain humorous twist to them. There's a Flux-Reliquary made that's mine, and that emerged after the Flux-Mass out at Rutgers, but then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What do you mean it's yours?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, it's—Flux-Reliquary, Geoff Hendricks, it's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And are the objects in the box were what?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, the objects in the box were shit from the diners of the last supper.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, a little bit of cat shit in a little box.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: A nail, or nails from the crucifixion of some obscure saint, and these were just, you know, simple hardware store nails, small enough to fit into a little compartment. And you know, maybe a bit of cloth, fragment of the Veil of Veronica, or yeah, you know, whatever.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And they were humorous, and so this was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But you chose these objects, not George?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was collective, I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I chose some and this grew out of getting George out to do the Flux-Mass at Rutgers. And it was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I understand.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —well, for that I made a group of relics that would be placed on the seats that people could have, and they were just in little plastic envelopes with the text. And I think it was following that, let's make Flux a Flux-Reliquary rather than before, but they were you know, kind of in tandem.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, how did your boxes differ from those, because it was a similar idea.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes, well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And it's similar to Duchamp, I might say, the *boîte-en-valise*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure. Oh yeah, right, no. That's all part of the genealogy there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, my Flux-Divorce Box was a substantial wooden box made by a woodworking graduate student.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Brass plate, hinges locked, and the Flux-Divorce album that was a wedding album stamped "My Flux-Divorce," and "Geoff and Bici." Cut in half so that all the pictures in it were, you know, in two parts because it was cut—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —all the way through, and so, looking through it you could flip it any way you wanted. And that was sort of the main element in the box. And then, there were pieces of our wedding coats from the separation. What else?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was this the first box you did separate from the Fluxus activities?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. George did a lot of Flux-boxes for George Brecht, and he just sort of took ideas of George Brecht, and made them into boxes. And George sort of shrugged his shoulders, and let George do it, Maciunas.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And like with Bob Watts, I think he did a group of boxes that Bob was suggesting. George felt that everyone should have a Flux-box as their contribution to a Flux-inventory, and I came along sort of later maybe, and the Flux-Divorce Boxes, a little bit after that initial sort of inventory of boxes that he brought together. But, and then likewise with the *V TRE*, the Fluxus newspapers. He—

LINDA YABLONSKY: *V TRE*?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: V, capital V, space, and then T-R-E, which was a chance found fragment of some letters from somewhere, and each *V TRE* has some identifying phrase as well that's in small print on the front page.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, but the Flux-Divorce Box, that was pretty much your first box as—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —as an individual artist.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Because you've done many. You've done a number of these boxes since then.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I've done a lot of boxes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Whole exhibitions that are boxes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right. That's what you were—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —just talking about, that a lot of—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —these boxes were in the show.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What were—now I know about, well, some of them, there were boxes of, well, you know better than I do, the rubber stamp, with a rubber stamp, or that kit? Maybe that's different.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, give me some examples of boxes that you exhibited in this period. Do you remember what—one or two, just—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to give us an idea?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with Francesco Conz I made—they were kind of wooden boxes, what, 15 by 24 inches, maybe, and four inches high. Brian and I were over in Asolo, and worked on collaborative boxes there with—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Francesco and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: How do you spell his last name again, Conz?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: B-U-C-Z-A-K, Brian.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No, Francesco.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, Conz, C-O-N-Z.

LINDA YABLONSKY: C-O-N-Z, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, and yeah, Francesco became a great supporter of Fluxus, and Viennese Action, and Happenings. He was an Italian businessman who made fake antique furniture, and signs for bars, and things like that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And was in Berlin. And got to know Joe Jones, I think maybe a little through alcohol, because they were both alcoholics in certain ways. And Joe was saying, "Francesco, you know, you have to forget this, these second-rate Venetian artists that you're working with, and get to know Fluxus. And I think Hermann Nitsch was maybe there, and he got to know Hermann and the whole Viennese Action group. And became a total convert. And came over to America. And met with all of us. And said, "I want to buy \$10,000 worth of your work," you know, "What can I get for this?" And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, that was a fortune then.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was quite substantial, and he has built up a, you know, built up a great collection. And that sadly is kind of in limbo because, well, Francesco died—well, he was married. Had two children, but then they were separated. When I first knew him, I was good friends with his wife, and saw the kids, his little one, growing up, but then when he died there was an Austrian woman who was with him. You know, they may have

been partners, lovers, and but she was very devoted to his photo collection, archiving it and putting it together. And he had a secretary, very devoted secretary, Esther, Swiss/German woman who kept everything running. She was terrific, but when he died, there was no will stating who was in charge here or there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So, there was this big tug of war between Esther, and Elizabeth, and his wife and the kids, ex-wife. And I don't know whether that's even resolved yet, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, anyway—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So, that whole collection of work, fabulous collection—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —is somewhere in limbo. I think maybe the kids are selling it off, bits and pieces, rather than keeping it together for a museum, or—which was what Francesco wanted to do.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, you made a box with him in Asolo?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was in that box—you, and Brian, and Francesco?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, we did a performance. Brian and I did a performance in Bologna, in—it was Bologna Art Fair, and we were performing with two chickens and two geese.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Live?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—what?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Live chickens and geese?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Live chickens, yeah, right, and I guess they were tied together, or tied them together in their legs as we sort of bound ourselves together. And there was a whole mass of vegetation branches, grass, trees suspended above us, and we pulled a cord. And that came down, and covered us at the end.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you eat the chickens and the geese?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, they were alive and they were fine. And I think they went back to their farm life after having a—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —celebrated moment of performance, yeah, right. No, I wasn't a Hermann Nitsch, or you know, killing—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I was thinking of the sheep that you had to eat at Rutgers.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Sure, yeah that was—and that was for a Nitsch performance.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. What are some other—so, what was in the box that you made, you said in Asolo?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well we did a whole series of boxes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And they're in—I think I have it in some catalogue here. Yeah, this is something else, but postcards, found objects, each with a fairly specific focus, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Like what? What would one be?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, let's see. There was one that had maybe an alphabet across the back, and it was filled with sand. And there were some sort of, you know, worn by the sea fragments of pottery, and maybe a found card for someone with the tone deaf—you know, sign language on it, and a couple of marbles. I don't think there's any one box that has all of these, but this is—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —the kind of imagery that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —worked into it, and there would be a photograph in the back maybe of the rubble and catastrophe of a particular town after a flood rushing down the river. Or some old 19th-century shop front, maybe, you know, this is maybe some fabrication, but it was this kind of thing, found photographs that we used.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then certain conceptual base to what went in—the objects that went together, intuitive in a kind of, you know, Flux-collage like way. And they became a nice group of objects.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you ever make any boxes with our cloud imagery, or sky imagery, or representative of objects of the sky?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes, and actually I have a group that I'm working on right now.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, yes?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Plastic boxes that I think are all pretty much night skies and phases of the moon that will have objects on top of them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Now you're making plastic boxes, not wood?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, you know, I went over to a box store, a plastic box store, and bought a bunch of them with the idea that they would be good for a multiple edition.

LINDA YABLONSKY: They're like—just to give people an idea what—so, we're talking about the kind of boxes that you store, like, nails, or pills?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In those little compartments.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And there may be—the boxes I think have small compartments along the bottom, and then a larger compartment on the top where you might put your stack of papers related to the whatever, but which becomes nice space for putting a watercolor. And over the watercolor—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —there could be funny little objects that could roll across.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What were the rubber stamp kits that I mentioned a minute ago?

Do you remember those? [Laughs.] I don't know when they were from.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or let me ask you about this one. What is the apparatus for catching and distilling the shape, sound—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —taste, and texture of clouds? What is that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right. That's a collage, I believe, not a box, and it was taking an old, maybe steel engraving of some sort of 19th-century laboratory that had that kind of imagery that, you know, imagery in there that was catalyst for making that title. And then, if it was a box, there would have been objects on top of it, and it would move around, or it might have just been a straightforward, like, collage that took the original image and then added things to it. And embellished it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Such a romantic notion, catching clouds.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Sure. Yeah they're quite ephemeral.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And, but you added taste.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. That's right. Yeah, well, it was like wanting to work with all the senses.

LINDA YABLONSKY: As well as shape and sound.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, it was a very intriguing idea, you know. It caught my eye.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Good.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was your "sky ladder"?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The sky ladder? Well, that's one, yeah. No, that's not. That's a bird cage, but it was an old farm ladder.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I've done a lot of sky ladders.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then in the spaces between the rungs there would be a watercolor. And generally two-sided so that they could be hung freestanding, and you could see the progression of the skies from each side. And there would be some planned progression that might be the phases of the moon going along in a certain way, or it could be, you know, full moons with different, you know, just there, and with clouds going across.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, they didn't go from the ceiling to the floor, as the—or did they, as the ladder—or you said it hung from the ceiling?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah it would—hung. It wasn't, like, sitting on the floor and going up to the ceiling. [Some ladders did rest on the floor with wire support from the ceiling -GH].

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I liked the idea of it being suspended above the floor, and in installation, I would often have things on the floor, maybe a box that would be open. And there would be another kind of collage, assemblage, group of things in the box, imagery. Or in the box itself might have some more physical, anatomical dimension to it, so that that was in a way suggesting the body, and then the ladder was, like, ascending up to the sky.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wonderful, but so this what I'm looking at here—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, yeah that's a bird cage.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —is a bird—a wooden—a small wooden bird cage hanging from the ceiling with two paintings?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, two watercolors.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Are they paintings? Watercolors.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Two-sided watercolors with full moons, or full moons, half-moons, new moons.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Hanging by some kind of—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: By string, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —a string?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: From?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Twine.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And the bird cage I'm assuming you found—is a found object?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Sure. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You didn't make it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know; you look through flea markets or whatever—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and you pick up things that strike your fancy.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's a wonderful object.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: When did you become "Cloudsmith," when you really inhabited this identity?'

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it was '65, I guess, was the year of my first show at Bianchini Gallery.

LINDA YABLONSKY: With which?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Bianchini, B-I-A-N-C-H-I-N-I.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wait. B-I-A-N-I—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, B-I-A-N, Bian, C-H-I-N-I.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And is this in New York?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he was on 57th Street. He—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —wanted to be a dealer who was representing a lot of, you know, Fluxus, and new art. And he had a show of Elaine Sturtevant, for instance.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Early, and [Robert] Watts.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And he had a supermarket show, sort of pre-pop in a way.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Which Bob Watts was quite involved with. And you know, interested in my work, and took me on, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Sounds like a great program for you to be part of.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Good context.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What are these pictures you have in front of you here, these snapshots?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, these are headstand postcards.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Postcards?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and I've done lots of headstands. I forget just how it got started, but I got to seeing a headstand as kind of a bonsai performance, sort of the minimum of performance. It was dealing with the least amount of space that you could work with, and it was just simply positing yourself in one place, and then reversing yourself. And then—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —connected, I used my body as the armature for all kinds of things. I remember—and then I would often to begin the performance, would color myself blue with theater makeup, sky blue.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs], yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In—was it Karlsruhe, or, you know the city north of Munich? Freising? Where the Diozesan, Diocesan Museum of the area outside of Munich was. And I planned—I had—it wasn't a solo show, but I had a great body of work in it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I was there to perform.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I got a nice raised platform up in kind of a stairwell area that was closed off, so that I had this elevated space to do the headstand. And had all this grass, and branches with leaves, and so forth that I was going to attach to my body. And colored myself blue. And then I attached all of this material. And then, was ready to do a headstand, but the introductory remarks, the talk by the director, the curator, was going on, and going on. And I thought, "Well, it will be over soon." So—

[Laughs.]

—but not, you know, thinking about how Germans are.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Because they can get into that position, and it goes on in a very long way. And I thought it was in a place where it would be fine, and so forth. And I kept on my head—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with all of this vegetation tied to my feet for a very long time. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —did it, but and then the talk came to an end. And I was able to go down, but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Now they call that "durational—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —performance."

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —that was very much durational art, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was durational.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —yeah, and I guess there have been times where I've worked with the idea of seeing how long I could—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —do a headstand, and so forth too. But that wasn't one.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But it by chance became one.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, here you are. It looks like the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —Nevada desert or something or Southern California.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, no. This is a beach—

LINDA YABLONSKY: A beach.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in Cape of Good Hope, South Africa.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And I was there with former students from the Salzburg Summer Academy, really good friends, lesbian couple. And so, we were down to see the very southern tip of Africa. And on the way back we passed this beach. And I said, "Let me do a headstand." So, they photographed me there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, you made postcards of these photographs.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you mail them?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I mailed them. I'd hand them out. I've—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —I haven't gotten into any kind of serious distribution.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But, yeah. That's one. This is a headstand—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But I mean when you sent them, did you send them with some message on them related to the event?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, no, this says simply, "Geoffrey Hendricks headstand 4 April 2011" on whatever it is, "Kommetjie Beach Cape Town, South Africa. Photo Rose Shakinovsky." Yeah, which is just basic information.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But you didn't write on it other than to identify the image, yeah?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I printed the card and made that as the identification, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But I mean—what I'm asking is if you sent this to someone, did do you also write a message?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, sure, yeah, I'd use it like a regular postcard.

LINDA YABLONSKY: "Wish you were here." [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: "Wish you were here," yeah, right, fine, why not, right? [Laughs.] Or, "Sorry you missed this," you know like—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Really—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This one, it says on the back—it says, "Geoffrey Hendricks headstand for Jill Johnston, 17 May 2009, at her daughter Winnie's home in Tomkins Cove, New York, photo Sur Rodney Sur." And there was an 80th birthday celebration for Jill Johnston, and so we had a cake and everything, and so that was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So, you have, "Happy 80th birthday"—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: "Happy 80th birthday, Jill."

LINDA YABLONSKY: —on cards that are suspended from—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: From cord, string, strip of cloth, between my feet. And they're two-sided—

LINDA YABLONSKY: How long did you hold this headstand for?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I don't know it seems to me quite a while because they were doing other things. I'm not really into durational headstands—but I used to, now probably not so much so, be able to hold a headstand for quite a while.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And this looks like another interesting environment [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes, right, this was—I had this residency at the NIROX Foundation in South Africa. And I had—

LINDA YABLONSKY: NIROX is spelled?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: N-I-R-O-X.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, thank you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—well, Cradle of Humankind, South Africa. There is no—it's a foundation in its own reserve. It's a big wild animal reserve.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's behind you on the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Behind me there are two pieces of rusted, corrugated steel, that I'd picked up and found and used them as part of an installation, I think with some ladders with sky. And I see one of my cut chairs to the left here. And it was part of a whole, sort of, installation exhibition that I made. And for the opening did a headstand. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Wonderful, these are great. What a great collection.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And this when was this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This one is at Ben Vautier's house in Nice. And—well, "Headstand for Ben Vautier 27 April 2008, Chez Malabar .et Cunegonde, Nice, France." That was his name for his house. And his wife Annie said, "Ben, you can't do anything on the inside of the house, the outside of the house is yours, the inside's mine." So the inside of the house was you know a nice proper house, you know, with clean walls and furniture, and maybe a painting here or there. But the outside, Ben totally covered with his handwritten score pieces. And so there was a cover to—I think a pool there that was sort of a natural platform to do a headstand on so I did a headstand there and I see "Fluxus." I think I probably had maybe some tribute to Ben or something.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wonderful, it looks like another quilt [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, it's a wonderful background there, yeah; Ben is great.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's this—the next one in here? "Peace," with the peace sign—by that I mean a sign with the word "Peace."

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: With the word "Peace," and this is in front of the statue of Gandhi in Union Square. There's a little Gandhi garden—

LINDA YABLONSKY: In New York Union Square?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In New York Union Square.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] I didn't know that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Fourteenth Street and University Place.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I never noticed that somehow. But how is—are you holding that sign between your legs? How is it suspended there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, it's suspended with cord that is attached to my toes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, oh, I didn't see that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Quite simple.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you attract attention when you did this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I may have.

LINDA YABLONSKY: From people in the park?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I'm not sure. I arranged for somebody to take a picture because I was well aware of the statue, and it seemed I—from very early was very devoted to Gandhi and his writings as a conscious objector, pacifist, and things. And so just wanted to do it to have a postcard of that. So, that was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Are these unique postcards or did you have several printed?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, no, I printed a couple hundred or something like that, yeah. Sort of with the idea of nickel art, you know, or just cheap art that people can have. And yeah, this was at Francesco Conz's I did this, a piece for him. He had these figures, the *Bronzi di Riace*; they were statues—yeah—I have to go to the bathroom.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, let's pause this.

[Audio break.]

Oh, yeah, so this is where? You said that he had a—Francesco had a collection of what?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Francesco Conz came to New York—did I talk about Francesco?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, you were saying he had a collection of something that was related to this.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, Francesco had a big collection. He had found these two sort of cheap garden sculpture replicas of the *Bronzi di Riace*, the *Riace Bronzes*, R-A-C-C-I maybe, R-I-A-C-E.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, so I understand, yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So these were two Greek figures that had been pulled up in the waters and became very celebrated. And so you know, like Michelangelo's *David* or whatever.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] .

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There were lots of replicas made for garden sculptures—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —whatever. And Francesco found two, bought two of them with the idea that I could do something with them. So I painted sky over all of them painted them a nice blue.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then suspended—they were just standing behind, and then across in front there was a line of night skies; they were blue, and day skies. And then a shifting progression of night skies and a cord in front. So this was a whole installation—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —for Francesco. And then he had these big canvases stretched that he wanted each of us to work on, and what's next is something Alison Knowles did, I see. And what's behind me is what I did for him, which is—yeah, it's just kind of a silhouette of them painted blue, and then there are attached some night skies hanging there too. So this was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see; oh, the paintings are behind you on the wall? I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Behind me on the wall, yeah. And so Francesco is just tossing out the idea on whether I ought to do a headstand in front of them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Are you always wearing white when you do these headstands? The last few images you have

been.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, yeah, I like to be in white; it has this sort of neutral quality. It's sort of formal.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's the color of clouds, the ones that aren't storm.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it could be that way too. But then is just whatever I was wearing at the time.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, it wasn't—yeah, the one in South Africa.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it's white pants but blue shirt.

And then this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, yeah, so there, not all white? But they seemed all white.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then at Ben's it was just what I was wearing, my jeans and work shirt. But, yeah, doing—being white is a way of making it a little more formal.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is this? This is a postcard of a painting?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, it's a postcard of sky.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is this a photograph of the sky?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that I took.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it was back in the '60's. I had done my sky billboard.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, I was just about to ask you about that. So let's talk about that. The billboard was where and when?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The billboard was on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What? There was a billboard there? [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yep. On the northeast corner above an old building that was like four stories high—probably no longer there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, no, it is definitely not there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's across the street from the library.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, diagonally from the library.

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's a skyscraper there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It had maybe a tobacco store on the ground floor and some offices on, you know, with a walk-up stairway to lawyers or whatever, accountants.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And this billboard on top. And as a sequel to the—well, no, in connection with my exhibition at the Bianchini Gallery, I thought it would be really nice to have a billboard.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It sure is.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Amazing that the gallery or you rented the space?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Rented the space for—it stayed for—it was a one-month rental, but they didn't have anybody else coming along and it stayed up for maybe six months.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, my gosh. This is unbelievable.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then suddenly someone commented about how they were going there and suddenly saw them painting it out black, and I think I have a photograph of it somewhere half painted out.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] But when was this that you could get a billboard for six months that no one was using at the prime location in New York City? [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, the show at Bianchini was in 1966.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay. It's funny because, I mean, artists have done billboards now and then, but it's still a very rare occurrence because the advertising is so expensive.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean Felix Gonzales-Torres is famous for his—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, they are. An interesting little subtext to that, Claes Oldenburg was asked maybe in the following year by the people in Sweden about would he do a billboard for them. And he said, "Geoff did a wonderful billboard New York; I don't feel that I can do another billboard." You know for that moment, that was the billboard. Which was, yeah, a nice little gesture on Claes's part.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Were you the first artist to do that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: To do a billboard?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I think you must have been because I—that was the year I came to New York, so I don't know what happened before that. And I probably wasn't aware of a whole lot. But you know more recently at the High Line they had a billboard every other month.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, there's a lot of stuff with that now.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But even that, you know, they—the company that loaned the space to the High Line Art program, took it away for advertising. And now they're building a building there. I mean, it's a real shame. Because—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Suddenly it became desirable space because of the artists—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —using it and so then the advertising people wanted to take it away.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, it's a shame because that was a—I mean, it was every other month, but it was every other month on a regular basis.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: I did see a billboard—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I didn't get this clipped back in.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, gosh. I did see a billboard not too long—maybe five or six years ago. I was going uptown on 10th Avenue and I passed a billboard in the 50s or 60s somewhere. And off the West Side Highway—it was either off 10th Avenue or the West Side Highway, I can't remember. But there was this billboard with an image on it and no text. It was completely cryptic; it was kind of a garden.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And I thought that's got to be an artwork; what is that, you know? [Laughs.] And I just didn't know, and it was there. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah there's a wonderful billboard, I guess it's Felix Gonzales-Torres—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —so the two pillows—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —indented there on Canal Street somewhere.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Very powerful.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Very powerful. That was during AIDS.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean, it was about that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it was very much about that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But any—so you were the first to ever—the first artist to ever—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] .

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to command a billboard for art. I mean, that was the billboard—did it say the name of the gallery on it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was it just the image?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes, and the sign painters—the billboard person I rented it from, Kaiser and Co. or something like that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's all right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —you know, "Don't you want the gallery's name? Don't you want your name on"—"Absolutely not. I don't want any words; I just want the sky."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Amazing, truly.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] .

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right now, I mean, the whole idea of having a billboard on Fifth Avenue is so—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —so not done. It's extraordinary.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but it's interesting it stayed up for five, six months.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, incredible.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And there was a friend who was passing by, by chance, and looked up and saw them painting it out and took a photograph of it almost out.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Half of it out?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it was just down to the last corner of my *Sky* left. And so thought, Yeah, the eclipse of the sky is kind of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Incredible. What other postcards do you have here? Do you have others that are just the—not the whole—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: See I did a whole group of—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, a lot of cloud postcards.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, for my exhibit at Bianchini I wanted to have postcards of *Sky*, and well, this is one of them. And I guess this is, too; these others are some later—maybe this, yeah, that's—but I was kind of intrigued with postcards as sort of nickel art, sort of cheap art. And so I picked out images and went over to a postcard store place over in New Jersey, and they printed up the postcards for me and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Great, what is here that you have in front of you now, this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, this, yeah, okay, this is an edition I did, a special work, *100 Skies*. And I didn't—

LINDA YABLONSKY: These are postcards?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, these aren't. Postcards are a whole separate thing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Something else. They're the size of postcards; that's what I was looking for, I guess.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I guess. What—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, no, they're not the size of postcards; they're more like Polaroid size.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They're squares. And I'm trying to think whether this was some way analogous to a small box object or—but anyway I was—just as a project, thought it would be wonderful to do a hundred *Skies* and talked with Henry Martin, who is a wonderful critic, scholar, friend, who lives with his wife, Berty Skuber, a beautiful artist.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's her first name, Bertie?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Berty, B-E-R-T-Y, and S-K-U-B-E-R.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They live up in the mountains above Bolazno in Italy.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so I talked to Henry about doing this and we—you know, I painted the *Skies* and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But these are prints?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: These are, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: They're prints of the paintings that you made?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I did watercolors, and then they were all spread out, and they printed them, and did them, and then cut them into squares and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and then they all had to get collated and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is the text? Some cards are text.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, they're texts of Henry Martin interfaced with my two-sided watercolors of *Sky* that have been reproduced on—by the printer.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: "This *Sky* is about variety."

LINDA YABLONSKY: What does that say?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: "Does Geoffrey paint sky or clouds? To say either the one or the other is to create an entirely artificial separation." "Sky as firmament or the vault, the apparent vault of the heavens half of a sphere, which Plato regarded as the most perfect geometrical form and as the primeval form of the human being in his version of what was before the Fall."

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is this your design? I'll just say they're square—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —cards, a stack, which are in a cloth house with the title on it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So who made these, and how many of these were there? This is an edition.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and I probably have the edition.

LINDA YABLONSKY: They look like handmade pouches.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Number—I made 360.

LINDA YABLONSKY: 360? Who sewed all these? These are canvas—they're linen, like beige linen.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, some Italian woman or something, I think, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And it folds over—it folds closed.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's wonderful it's quite beautiful.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then the cards were cut, and the text and the skies were interspersed one with another. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Very elegantly printed I must say.

[Phone ringing.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Shall I answer? Do you want to cut that off?

LINDA YABLONSKY: You've done a number of wonderful activities aside from—all throughout this time of the works that you're making and exhibiting, you're teaching.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Are there things that you wish you could have done and didn't? That you thought about doing, but for one reason or another never happened? Some project or anything like that? I'm not speaking in term of regrets, just unrealized projects or things you were—you know, just thoughts.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I'm not sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, maybe not then. What is this catalogue here next to you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Which—this?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This is for an exhibition I had called *Day into Night*.

LINDA YABLONSKY: *Day into Night*?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: *Day into Night*.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And where was this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It travelled. It was in 1993 to '94 and went from Odense, Denmark, where it was first in the Kunsthallen Brandts Klaedefabrik there, on up to Iceland and Pori, Finland, and Warsaw, Poland, and the Kunstsenter in Høvikodden in Norway.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, all of your shows you really toured.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it was a sort of northern [Europe -GH] tour. And well—it has a text by Robert Rosenblum and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, no kidding.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: He was my teacher.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was your teacher, really? Well, I'll be darned.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then he went—and 30 years later we became very close friends.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] I'll be darned. Yeah, well, he was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: He was an inspiration to me.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] And so here we are that's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: A wonderful writer.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, he's a terrific writer. So you know, I asked him to write a text, and so this is what he wrote. And then Marianne Bech, who's a Danish critic, wrote a text.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Marianne is spelled?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: M-A-R-I-A-N-N-E.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Beck, B-E-C-K?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: B-E-C-H.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then a Danish writer, Lars Movin, L-A-R-S, M-O-V-I-N.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And are they cloud paintings; is that what's in the show?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Well it's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Sky paintings, I mean.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sky paintings and installation. There are ladders, objects, boxes, and it's, you know, covers a—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Big show.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —a good deal of spectrums; I wanted a big show, yeah. And there were early things like the railroad crossing sign, which I think is maybe from—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is that an actual sign?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, it's—I made it. It's a piece of plywood on a post, and I painted it with the image of a railroad crossing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But with clouds on it [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: With clouds two registers of clouds, one for the image and one for the background. And then performance documentation. That was in Italy, *La Capra*, that's our Flux-Divorce Box.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So that was in the show?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Yeah, I made an edition of it. There's one in, I guess, the Sohm [Archive] Collection in Stuttgart, in the Staatsgalerie there. One was for Joe—I mean Jean Brown, who was a wonderful small collector of small Fluxus.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Jean?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Jean, J-E-A-N, and Brown like the color.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you know the Silvermans, who collected all the Fluxus?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right sure. Well, my brother, I think as you know, became their—yeah, I'll finish the —

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's your brother?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Jon Hendricks is my brother.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh my goodness.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He's my next door neighbor. He's my kid brother.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, my, I never put that together. He's their curator, basically.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I changed his diapers if my mother couldn't do it when he was a little baby or whatever, yeah, right.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No—so anyway, there's one Flux-Divorce Box in Stuttgart, one in that collection which is there, and then another one in—is it—well, the Jean Brown one went to the Getty, and then the Silverman one is now at the Modern.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The MoMA, because they gave just about everything to MoMA.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Too bad for the Detroit Institute [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, oh, I know, that's had a rough time.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But I kind of think they felt that those—I mean, they did give some to the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I mean, they're whole financial situation and everything.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Detroit—but they didn't think they would be taken care of—I mean, there's quite a conservation issue involved with the Fluxus work, so I think—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think MoMA is fine.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it's here in New York; it's easy for my brother to go in and oversee it. He was sort of living there in their building out in Queens when the collection first went there. And dealing with documenting it and doing whatever needed to be done in terms of labels and all.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did your teaching in any way effect—have some impact on the art you were making while you were teaching?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What would—how would—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, there had to be.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or vice versa; did you know how did it influence your art?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: My teaching—my art ideas would get brought into teaching, and there would be—well, the students would be doing a range of interesting things. And sometimes—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Inspired by you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You were teaching a studio class at the art—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I was—I guess maybe I told you when I first went out there in '56, they had me teaching everything.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right, those survey courses, yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Survey courses, fundamental courses, and then I set up their printmaking shop, and I handled their whole exhibition program in this little gallery, and the college put me on a program committee. But I—when I was leaving, by the time I was leaving, I was teaching graduate courses. I was graduate director for a good long time. And my courses were much more about performative work and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and conceptual work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Did you make work that was in some way related to the AIDS crisis directly? I mean other than all the activist things that we discussed. But in your actual artwork, did it change the objects you made or the sky paintings that you did at that time?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I'm trying to think whether—Brian and I made a group of collaborative boxes, and I don't know that they directly addressed AIDS, but there were things like *Destruction* and *The City*. Buildings bombed or whatever and with fragments of, well, dirt and sand or scraps of wood there that could move across. Medical imagery—I did a whole series that was like a sky anatomy.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, taking anatomical drawings and painting sky with them and these—I started out working with Francesco and then Rosanna Chiessi, and then it sort of moved on to Luigi Bonotto.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wait, so these others, are they dealers?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Fluxus collectors more, in Italy.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, collectors, right. Rosanna?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Rosanna Chiessi, C-H-I-E-S-S-I.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And the other one?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Luigi, L-U-I-G-I, Bonotto, B-O-N-O-T-T-O, maybe two Ns. No, I think one B-O-N, Bon.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay, interesting.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Do you think—do you think art has a social function or that it—how do you think—not just your own art but just in your experience of the art world in your travels, in your teaching, in the '80s and '90s, when AIDS and dealing with it was very much an issue, more so than now, at least in this country, how did you see the art world change or art itself? If you did.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, no, I feel the art world and the nature of art have changed drastically, radically.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: From back before AIDS to now—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —but then along with this, together with that, is more of a kind of visible presence of gay art. Rather than being closeted, because the art world right through history has had a strong presence of gay men and women. [Laughs.] From, I guess, Leonardo, Michelangelo to Rosa Bonheur or whatever, but this being more present. But—

LINDA YABLONSKY: How did you see—how do you view the change in art as it was affected, or in this time of the AIDS crisis, whether it was affected by AIDS or not? Just the loss of the artists and the subject matter they dealt with? I mean, it's clear that the major changes in the art world over the last 20 or 30 years are related to globalization and the Internet, and this market, the money.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, that's one side there. But—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But the nature—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and that affects the artists themselves, you know, his self or herself—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But the nature of art the kind of art we're seeing. I mean all the things you were talking about that you did with Fluxus or without Fluxus in the '60s, '70s, '80s, this is of a kind that people do it, but it's very diluted and it—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, but somehow what was isolated and radical then and apart from what the mainstream art world was doing, is now sort of pervasive in the nature of an art object or how one looks at art, the art experience.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, well, things don't stay radical—very few things stay radical.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Some things do, but yeah, the radicality is gone, but there's no new radicality [laughs] is what I mean.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where is the new—who are new radicals, now?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I mean, I guess there are some.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, I'm sure there are. But—

LINDA YABLONSKY: There's this question—I've been laughing a lot while we've been talking because your work has such great humor in it, as did most of the Fluxus-related works as well. Fluxus work by Fluxus. Do you think there was a role for humor during the AIDS crisis? Certainly a need for it, I guess.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Can you think of anything you made or saw that was, had this leavening or elevating character?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Consciously, I can't—yeah I don't—at the moment think of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's hard when everyone is dying around you; it's very depressing. And there's no help from the government, and things are at a loss.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. I think for me what happened more was—I don't know that necessarily manifested itself in my own work, but I just became much more socially, politically engaged. And so—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, yes. So it affected you directly in this—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —very participatory way.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Because I was there for the formation of Visual AIDS and with the meetings with Tom Sokolowski and others forming the group when it was first—[I was president of the Board. Bill Olander was Chief Curator of the New Museum, and together with Tom Sokolowski and others, part of the group creating Visual AIDS -GH].

LINDA YABLONSKY: When did you stop teaching, what year?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I stopped in—I brought together *Critical Mass*, and stayed on there—November 5, 2003, I had the show there and stayed on through that fall, and then in the spring of 2004, William Pope.L, who is a great you know friend and former student, had this show that was organized up in Portland, Maine, and it was traveling. And I wanted to see that got there to our university and our galleries, and knew that if I wasn't around to fight for it, the dean or whoever, the people powers that be would find a way to cancel it and not have it there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: William Pope.L was your student?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was my student, yeah [laughs].

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, you had a powerful influence on him, I think.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Maybe, yeah, but he—

LINDA YABLONSKY: He's an amazing artist.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, extraordinary, yeah, I was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: He calls himself Pope.L only.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Only, yeah, no William. But I'd been away or whatever, but anyway my first encounter with William, with Pope.L, was I came back and in the art building, came up in the elevator, and the door opened, and William was there in this great heavy overcoat, which was something he wore all the time. And I think he had some message for me inside that—he opened up the coat and gave it—"To Geoff Hendricks, What a great pleasure to meet you," or something like that.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, he turned it into a performance, and it was beautiful. William was, you know, he led his own life. And I wasn't teaching him but just giving him the freedom to do what he wanted to do. And it was, like, one day I came to school, the art building, and there was William sitting up in the tree. The window looking out from the art offices looked onto this ravine, and there was this bridge that went across. And he somehow got himself from the bridge or up into the tree, and was sitting there in a tree with a birdcage over his head. And stayed there, I guess, for a good deal of the day.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] He did some—that crawl that he did through Manhattan—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, I was there for most of that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Were you there for that?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: When he dressed in a Superman outfit—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, I was there at the beginning of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —on and crawled a black man in white—he was in white face—am I remembering this, that he put white face on? I think he had—and he literally crawled from one end of Manhattan to the other.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, up Broadway, a very tough ordeal.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was determined to do strong pieces. Because he's a great artist; he's very amazing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And he's only really getting recognition in the last few years. Now he has a prominent gallery representation. He's had a museum show.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but this is the racism of the country.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, if he was a white boy he'd be a superstar, say. But—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But then his work would have a different meaning [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, no, his work wouldn't be like it is. But there's also a marginalization of this type of work in the art world also. But he's pushing hard and doing great work and is out there and is being seen now. No, I have great respect for William.

LINDA YABLONSKY: He did a performance at the Basel art fair just a few months ago in the summer. Which is the most commercial venue you can possibly—and he's showing with a very important gallery now in Europe, Hauser & Wirth, you know. So they did a performance where he came into the—it wasn't in the art fair proper but in this other section called Art Unlimited, for stuff that doesn't fit [laughs] in a booth.

And he was dressed in a white gorilla suit with a mask. A white mask and furry, white—and carrying a white umbrella and a white satchel, and he walked into the booth—I knew what time he was supposed to do it, and I suppose other people did because there were lots of other people gathered.

And he had made paintings that were on the walls of the booth, abstract paintings. Which I assume were the results of a performance. And he had a white step ladder, and he would walk around the booth, and he got up on the white step ladder and made a gesture like this, raising his arm, and then it came down. Then picking up the satchel, he would walk over to a painting and pull it away from the wall, and a stack of money fell out.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Dollars, bound, and he would pick it up and put it in the satchel. He repeated this a few

times at random moments, then he took—opened the satchel and stood in front of one of his paintings and removed from the satchel a small, white, reproduction of a Paul McCarthy dwarf. Paul McCarthy is represented by that gallery; he's one of the leading artists, from LA. And he put that down as if to say to everyone else, you know, free for the—first come, first serve—and then he left.

It was amazing.

[Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: To leave that there because you know it's all about money there. And he took it all and [laughs]. I thought it was wonderful.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I know, he's a wonderful tough artist and doesn't compromise really.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No, I don't think you have either.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I guess not, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: How would you describe your relationship to art dealers in your career, in the span of your career? You've done a lot of teaching and showing in nonprofits, museum spaces, and kunsthallen.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and I've not pushed to get into that sort of mainstream commercial world. I've had a few dealers who I've worked with, and well, like Emily Harvey here in New York, and Inge Baecker in Cologne. In Berlin, Rene Block has been strong support.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You showed with him individually or just with Fluxus?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I had a show when his gallery was here in New York, Rene Block, yeah. And then I think I had a show with him in Germany, or his gallery in Berlin may have closed. But anyway, no, I had a show with him, and he's continued you know to be a good friend. But—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But I don't think any—so none of these galleries are still open. Is Baecker's still open?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Inge Baecker—no, she's retired into a castle she has.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: South of Cologne up in the hills. I went and visited her at one point. And she has this old swimming pool that was there as part of this, you know, private estate castle, 19th, early 20th century. And so all her art collection is just down there in the pool.

LINDA YABLONSKY: All of these dealers that you mentioned are really collectors.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They've become much more, rather than dealers, yeah. And I've suffered maybe from it but—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Why? Didn't they pay you for collecting your work?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, that's another question. That's part of why I went to see Inge's place and to get money from her for some work that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Oh, God.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —she'd sold to a bank or something like that.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, and didn't pay you? That happens so much.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, she came through with, I think, sort of half of what she should have paid me, but I wasn't really clear—or she wasn't really up front. I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I'm sorry.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] You know, I—dealers are always a problem—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —some, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In a nutshell [laughs].

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but—they've been good in showing work and getting things around and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Do you go to galleries now, you and Sur, do you keep up with the shows?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I don't keep up with the shows, I'm sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You go to some?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But I'll get to a gallery from time to time if there's a friend showing or something that's especially talked about and people say you really should get up to see this show.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What about the museums?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Maybe a little more. I've enjoyed getting up to the Whitney, which is just a nice walk.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, now that's it's in the neighborhood, it's great.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The New Museum is also another walk, just in the other direction. And I guess I've been there, but I've not been sort of drawn into the things that they've been showing of late, especially for whatever reason—MoMA I have gotten up to; Guggenheim, a year ago or so there was maybe something that I went to up there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, we're blessed here with so many good museums, and they all have—

[Cross talk.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, they're great museums, and now I have all these wonderful museums just a walk away.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I know, I think everyone is very happy about the Whitney on all levels—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —its location, the building, and the shows they've been having.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: People knock its architecture design and so forth.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's great.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think it's kind of marvelous.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I know it's fantastic.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah this great mass—irregular mass that rises—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I didn't like it until I went inside, then it made sense.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Now, were you there for their opening—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —when that whole great space was just absolutely empty?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that was an extraordinary experience, with the sound of the prisoners of Attica rioting.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was actually Sing-Sing.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sing-Sing, okay, whatever. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was Andrea Fraser, was the artist who did that piece.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Very subtle, the counterpoint of their confinement with the

space of freedom that one felt in that new museum space. Yeah, and I was up to see June Leaf's show.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, you mentioned that.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, she's a Cape Breton friend and a New York friend too.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, I mean, we just talked about Pope.L and a few other people, but why would you—and we talked a little bit earlier about preserving the legacy of other artists—how do you want your legacy to be thought of? What would you like to—how would you like your work to be remembered, in what context? As what? What would be the best legacy for you possible? And you know you have very good taste and in Sur; you have somebody to make sure it happens.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Oh, absolutely yeah. Now, you know, other than beyond the love and life we share together and so forth. I'm well aware that he's someone who will be carrying on my work after I go, assuming I die before him. One never knows how things go.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No, that's absolutely true.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But I presume he will be.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But how would you like your work to be seen in—for generations to come? Considering what art looks like now and that—I don't know if a lot of younger artists are—certainly the art audience, which is so much bigger now, going to museums and galleries because it's fun and it's fashionable or whatever—I don't know if they know the history—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Probably not. Probably not.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —or where this comes into, this whole—they know about maybe Andy Warhol or Pop art or Roy Lichtenstein or—but that there was all this other performance activity in video, in found materials, in ephemeral things, that are popular now. And are being recycled by younger artists, but I don't know if they know the history. So how do you want your work to be seen or understood, or in what context, I guess, is what I'm asking?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it would be nice if the younger people were able to discover some of the histories that, actually, they're kind of building on. And some do, yeah. There's the occasional—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where would be the great Geoffrey Hendricks show? Where would you like it to be seen? In a museum, in a gallery, in some other artist space, those kind of retrospective shows of artists that haven't gotten enough visibility in years?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I've, in a way, had more recognition over in Europe, and the idea of a large Geoff Hendricks retrospective it seems to me is conceivably more likely to materialize over there somewhere.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Why do you think—I mean, that's true of a lot of artists in your generation and the one that came directly after, that they became much better in Europe, artists of the '60s and '70s—who came of age in the '60s and '70s—than they were—only recently because the market is waking up all these careers. Have they achieved the same kind—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The war, the Second World War sort of destroyed things there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And after the war there was—well, there were a lot of European artists, German artists and others, who began, you know, got into working and were working probably quietly through the war and all too. But there was this real excitement about the new developments that were going on in the States and Pop art and everything. And the different countries were putting much more money into art that may have grown out of the legacy of nobility supporting the arts. And that that just carried on. In Germany, it would be multicentric because of the structure of the country, and France, the importance of the Louvre and Beaubourg, because of Louis XIV and the concentration of power there. Here—you know, how—where would I see a retrospective of my work and performance work?

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, how do you want it to be viewed? In what sort of context should it be seen?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There is certainly enough work of paintings and objects and box constructions and things like that that could evolve into a show, complemented with photo documentation of performance work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, there's a lot of performance work that, I mean, I wasn't aware of myself that maybe

could be separate. But for the purposes of history and apart from Fluxus—do you have an artistic identity apart from Fluxus?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who were the other artists you should be linked with? And I don't just mean artists of your generation; yesterday we talked about Marina Abramovic, and she is a beneficiary of your work.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right. She, I understand, has just bought out Cindy Sherman, is it, across the street, so she has the whole building over there. But I remember first meeting Marina when she came out from Yugoslavia and was there in Italy—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, you told me yesterday so—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes, I told you that—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But that's what I mean—do you want to be seen as part of a lineage or with other—I mean look what was going on in art at the time when you started making it say in the '50s, '60s, '70s. Each decade brought something very different. But there were other things [laughs] going on; there was Pop and there was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yes, I think it would be very nice if I could be seen as one of the catalysts for all this other work that is coming along. And that with my role as a teacher, having kind of a special position, more than if I was just a practicing artist, where I was influencing young people. And like William Pope.L, and that complementing this. And then also supporting this sort of larger family of artists that I was associated with, like getting a Nitsch performance out at school and the Flux-Mass and bringing that together, which I'm getting to talk about here. So that I've, over the years, played a role in making other work by my contemporaries, colleagues, circle of artists, more public. But yeah, I should—I keep working away and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well let's go to *Critical Mass*, so this is—was this ever an exhibition, or, oh, yes, it was in the gallery, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and fortunately, it was able to open up at the Mead Art Museum at Amherst, and it was in connection with my 50th class reunion.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So this has a documentation of a lot of Fluxus activities.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Out there at Rutgers, yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It also seems to, yes, include other—is Carolee Schneemann a Fluxus?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, she's not a Fluxus artist.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But she's in this book.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, because she was teaching out there—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, she was teaching—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Now, I think I asked you yesterday, but I don't remember, why did all this talent go to Rutgers at that moment? It hasn't happened since there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] No. I would say Allan Kaprow being at Rutgers—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was he the draw? The attraction?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well he became the teacher for Samaras, Bob Whitman, and then Bob Watts and me at Douglass College and then the various students that, Pope.L more recently, and Alice Aycock was there, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think John Goodyear, another colleague, was more influential on Alice, but she was drawing from the kind of energy and experimentation that was there within the department.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Extraordinary time at Rutgers, and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But it still has a good museum; it still has a good school, but—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —nobody hears about it anymore. It's all—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: The emphasis is always on other schools, on—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —Bard or Columbia or—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] That's right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —UCLA, Cal Arts—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —you know, these other big art—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —schools, and—but that was—Keith Sonnier was there—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And also—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He and Jackie Winsor.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And Jackie, yeah. You told me about it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right. Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What did you do at the Walker Art Center? You mentioned it yesterday, that your relationship with the Walker in Minneapolis—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, well, they had a big Fluxus exhibition. They got us all out there for that. And that was back a ways. I don't know the exact date of that. But—yeah, who—the curators, Joan Rothfuss, I think, maybe, wa—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Who?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —there at the Walker, back there, and got very interested in Charlotte Moorman.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was the name of the curator?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Joan Rothfuss. R-O-T-H-F-U-S-S.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And yeah, somehow they found this an exciting body of art and got us all out there for a big show, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Which didn't travel.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It was only there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oddly.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but it was a, you know, a great event, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: They have a collection of Fluxus-related art also.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Probably, yeah, right. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: And a lot of John Cage.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: When—the first time we talked, it was about a piece that you did there. I can't remember what—the—you made a cloud—a sky installation within—what was the—it was a maze. The maze.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh. Well, there was the Flux-Labyrinth.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right, the labyrinth. Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that wasn't my piece. It was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: No, but you had—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —George Maciunas.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —piece in it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I had a part in it, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And actually, the entrance that was there as my contribution to it was an upside-down forest.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Right.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And reflected with mirrors, sort of reflecting out on each side.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And the sky was in the floor.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And the sky was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You were walking on the sky.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yup, you were walking on the sky, and you were pushing your way through these trees, branches hanging down. And that got redone at the art fair up in—

LINDA YABLONSKY: At Frieze, yeah, a couple of years ago.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: At Frieze, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, it was great.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Your part was really good.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Thank you. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But was that—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Actually, it got a lot of press.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, it was visual and people got amused by it, interested in it, so there it was illustrating an article or a bit clip on TV or something.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was the labyrinth part of this show at the Walker?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That wasn't a separate thing.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, that was there at the Walker, and it was first done in Berlin, and my upside-down forest wasn't there for at least an—I didn't get over to it. Larry Miller went over and worked with George Maciunas in bringing it all together. Bob Watts maybe was there too, but—and Joe Jones was over there and helping out. And when you exited the labyrinth, you had to put your hand into this box of elephant shit to get to the handle to open the door.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: George had a very scatological sense of humor, George Maciunas, and the Germans were, you know, very cleanly oriented—

LINDA YABLONSKY: They did it?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —cleaned it out every day—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Joe Jones would go to the Berlin Zoo and get more elephant shit to go in and replenish the supply, and I guess that went on right through the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But did people actually put their hands in there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess, yeah. You know, it was probably—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, you weren't there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I wasn't there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Too bad.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And, you know, I—who knows what they went through, whether they pulled out a Kleenex or something to protect themselves—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —or whether it was, you didn't have to really put your hand into the elephant shit to reach the handle. But that's another whole story there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What—this—so this book. I—we'll talk about this, and then we can wind it up.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay, fine.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The—this essential book, I would say—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I think so. It's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —*Critical Mass*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So this is—this has the Fluxus appearances at Rutgers, but the artists associated with, but also all this other performance activity and installation that—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, and not just confined to Rutgers. It's about—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —how the work at Rutgers radiated out.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And people—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Now this piece is—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This is—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —Allan Kaprow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And that was an installation that he did in Cologne for the first Happening and Fluxus exhibition that was there in '70—1970s.

LINDA YABLONSKY: 1970s.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You took this picture.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. Right. And I think I had a picture maybe—yeah, I did have a picture of Wolf Vostell's pregnant cow that Wolf wanted to give birth—give birth in the exhibition, and the German health authorities said, "*Verboten*," you know, No. And so there was this big struggle between Wolf and the authorities over this cow, and I am sure the authorities won. But at the same time, Ben Vautier was doing his Fluxus concert in an adjoining auditorium.

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is while this—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, this is—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —Kaprow piece was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —on, or—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, that—Kaprow's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's called *Tire Environment*, 1970 Happening—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and Fluxus—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: At the Happening and Fluxus exhibition—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But, you know, that was one aspect of it. The—in the Kunstverein—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But what is going on here? There are tires, rubber tires—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was a space filled up with rubber tires, yeah. That's Allan Kaprow sitting there, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is he just sitting there for the picture, or was—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sitting there for the picture—

[Cross talk.]

No, it wasn't part of a performance.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So he just made this willy-nilly. He just threw a bunch of tires—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Tires, and I think maybe there were oil drums I'm not sure. But anyway, the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, there are oil drums.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Stacked.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Stacked.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And they could be tossed down to make sounds, and the tires you could—

LINDA YABLONSKY: So you were supposed to go in and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —play with it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And play with them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and throw them around and roll them, and do all kinds of things. But yeah, going back to Wolf and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —his pregnant cow—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Ben Vautier was having a Fluxus concert in the auditorium in the adjacent space there, and Bici and I went in to be part of Ben's performance and perform in it, because he was having all of us perform, and while Wolf was fighting the authorities, and—so it was sort of this, yeah, German-French confrontation in its own quiet way; I think—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —Ben and Wolf were, you know, antagonists and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Rivals.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In a certain—rivals.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In a certain way, yeah, right. But it was a—it was a good event, yeah, all right. And Dick Higgins sided with Wolf. He—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —stayed there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, they really had a rivalry.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Or were competitive.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So Bob Watts, who was teaching at Rutgers, also—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] .

LINDA YABLONSKY: But he did a lot of work there also?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: But wasn't he a sculptor?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He was a sculptor, yeah, right. Did chrome objects and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is he doing in this photograph? Can you see?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it's—"Demonstrates his mechanized event with the spewed shaving cream."

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is spewing—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —the shaving cream?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I—I'm not sure whether you actually pushed something or—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —whether it just automatically did it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And it was this kind of elaborate construction—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and he was, I think, in the picture, demonstrating it. It was the first—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Pretty messy.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, quite messy. And first show at Grand Central Moderns that he had, and I think most of the work were, like, collage constructions—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and so forth, but this was Bob moving in to—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where was—Grand Central—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Grand Central—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Moderns.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The gallery in New York.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Where was that? This is—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Where were they?

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is 1961.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] They were one of the more interesting galleries at the time.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Was it in Midtown?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. And I'm not sure whether it was on 57th Street or up Madison. I think it was more maybe up on Madison. And that was Bob out in Santa Cruz—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —California.

LINDA YABLONSKY: At the university.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, you all got around quite a bit.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yup.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Traveling—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —with the work.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Flux, that's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, that's true.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —shift and change and movement, isn't it? Yeah. There you are.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's a really good way to end this conversation. [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Okay, fine.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I hear—I hear a concluding line.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I just want to see if there's anything else in here. I will give this book to the Archives, because I think it's very important that people be able to look at it—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —while they're listening.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: If they happen to be there.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: *Sky on Sky*. What is this painting of yours?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I did a whole lot of paintings that were Sky Bundles.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, so—oh, I see now. They're tied—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: They're tied together.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You told me yesterday.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And I—now I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: They're bundles—they're different-size canvases bundled together—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Canvases, and sky painted over all of them.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —with string or rope.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: What's this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It's Dick Higgins, *Thousand Symphonies*. Something else that I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: 1968, November.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: "South Brunswick Police Rifle Range"?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. Right. That I organized. I, together with I think maybe Roy Lichtenstein, Bob Watts, the—those of us that were there at Douglass, at—and this was at the time of assassination of Martin Luther King and all—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —these killings and so forth.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: With the idea of having a gun show, so it was work-gun related—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in the exhibition in our little gallery, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: But this—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Didn't—this wasn't in the rifle range?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was in the rifle range, yes.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The exhibition.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No. The exhibition was—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in our gallery.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, okay.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And Dick Higgins said—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I thought you meant the exhibition was at the police—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh no, no.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —rifle range.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Dick Higgins said that he had this score for a thousand symphonies machine gunning a thousand sheets of orchestral paper, and this became the score for the performances.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So he shot the paper.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I arranged for the whole thing to happen.

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's what I'm looking at, this bullet-ridden—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that's right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —music paper.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Is it music paper?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, it's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —regular standard orchestral paper. And so I—this is sort of in the nature of how I functioned out at Rutgers, and you know, there was an idea; I'll see about how it can happen. Called the ROTC. Did they have somebody there who could machine gun some orchestral papers? They said no, but contact the police department, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.] Amazing.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So I called the chief of police, and that's Alison Knowles there at that event. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, she's filming the machine gunning?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, she's with her camera, documenting it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, that's—she made a film of the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She—yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —of that—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Of that event.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —action.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And those are pictures of the event taking place.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, so this was also a performance.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It was a performance—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And then the results were in the gallery.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that's right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And then Dick went ahead and used the paper, the material he got for a lot of artwork. I was in—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —I don't know whether it was Stuttgart or some museum in Germany, and there were three or four pieces of Dick's scores there.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But here is an image of an orchestra actually playing that piece, that bullet-riddled score?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. So I—

LINDA YABLONSKY: What did it sound like?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Noises.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, whatever the musicians could extract and interpret in sounds from what were there, what was there. Look at the score when you go out. I think it's there in the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, right. I did see it yesterday.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Amazing. I didn't think you could play that, but thankfully I was wrong.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, you can—yeah. It was a time when scoring of music was in flux, it was open—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Who is this artist, Milan—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Milan Knížák? He's a—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I don't know that name.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He's a Czechoslovakian artist. He was, during the communist period, I guess, put in prison for a period.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: He succeeded in getting out of Czechoslovakia, some through Hanns Sohm, who was a German collector of Fluxus—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Zome? Z-O-M-E?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: S—No, S-O-H-M.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, S-O-H-M.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, now I—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Hanns maybe has two Ns.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Hanns?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: H-A-N-N-S, I think.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Ah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: S-O-H-M.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I got it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Thank you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: So Sohm was arrested, and his material from Milan that he was taking out of communist Czechoslovakia to his archive in Markgröningen outside of Stuttgart, Germany, but then he did succeed in getting it out. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —then Milan finally was able to get out of Czechoslovakia—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and was living with Bici and me in our house on 20th Street for a stretch and worked with George Maciunas. He—George, I guess, had him doing—working on Flux-lofts, and that helped—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —support Milan. And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, George was partly in the real estate development business.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —very much in—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, SoHo really—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I know, it's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —catalyst of George.

LINDA YABLONSKY: He made it.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really. That is true. He bought those buildings and sold lofts to artists.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right, yeah, yeah. And they were—the buildings—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —were, like, maybe 80 to \$100,000 a building, so if, say 80,000, and four floors—each person paid 20,000 and moved in and worked and making their space.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is this? Is this a performance or an exhibition? *The Sky Is the Limit* at the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's a performance I did at Douglass, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's a performance—

LINDA YABLONSKY: 1969, February 13th. So can you describe what happened here?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. They asked me to do a chapel program, a performance.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, yeah. This is where the Mass took place.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This is where the Flux-Mass took place, too.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In the Voorhees chapel.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: All right. So you did this other event there?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: This other event, yeah, and things took place, you know, through time, and you know, the period of time of the performance, and then at the end, there was this—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, can you describe the task?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, the finale was this large roll of polyethylene being rolled down from the balcony out over the whole audience, so that suddenly they were, rather than just having the ceiling in the chapel, they were covered by this plastic that came down, and then I think there were ping-pong balls and things that were tossed on down over the plastic so that there were things to see up above.

LINDA YABLONSKY: What was the role of the toilet paper?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Something else to toss, I guess.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That was maybe a little image borrowed from Al Hansen, who—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —took great delight in throwing rolls of toilet paper as—to festoon, you know, the sort of cheap visual effects. And then the plastic went from the chapel out into the campus around, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, that's a lot of plastic you're talking about.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, you know.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's enormous.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, this is—this is the Hermann Nitsch—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I guess, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —performance, the documentation.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right, there's Hermann Nitsch.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, with the carcass.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That we then ended up eating.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Now what's this? The—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, Jill Johnston.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —Jill Johnston text.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, this is the Flux-Divorce.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's called *In the Meantime, Art*—and comma—*Art was Happening*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah, the picture there is our—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's you and Bici—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Flux-Divorce, Bici, and me cutting our wedding document in half, wedding certificate.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, so this was the performance you did in your apartment—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In our house—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —for the divorce.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. And what did Jill write about it, with—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I guess, you know, she—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Very straightforward text for Jill.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Well, Jill could do things like that too, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So this is looking back at that image.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. Well, what a wonderful book this is. What are—what's—what is this—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Hmm?

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is this timeline at the end here? Because there are—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, it's a chronology. And that's a clock I made.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But it shows—oh—a clock with the sky—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The sky—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —phases.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —with the sky on it. I think that's in Yoko's collection.

LINDA YABLONSKY: *Timeless*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, right. So Yoho's—Yoho—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yoko.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yoko's collected some of your work?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: She has, yeah, right. Actually, at the time of the Flux-Divorce, I had a sky painting that was just a blue sky with one cloud at the bottom, and I got a phone call from them the next day saying, "John and Yoko would love to buy that painting of yours." That was there in the bedroom and so forth, how much? And I made it slightly more than I maybe would've thought about charging someone else, but not a whopping amount.

LINDA YABLONSKY: [Laughs.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And so they sent somebody down, and it went back up to them, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That was in an exhibition, or they saw it somewhere else?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, they saw it in our house.

LINDA YABLONSKY: In the house.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: In the house on 20th Street.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But it's interesting, because that cloud, Yoko used on album covers—

LINDA YABLONSKY: The album cover.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, I remember, because I just made that connection.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And that was stolen from me. Yeah. And the credit—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —on the back is Yoko Ono. Yeah, no mention of me, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: No acknowledgment, "Thank you, Geoffrey Hendricks?"

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No "After a painting of Geoffrey Hendricks," nothing like that, no. You know—

LINDA YABLONSKY: That's—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: You know, Yoko's a friend, my brother's—you know, she's my brother's employer, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —so forth. But the wealthy have, I guess, a feeling of entitlement about what they can do and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: She can—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: How they can use things.

LINDA YABLONSKY: You know, the sky is for everybody, so she can claim it—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —was hers.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But in this timeline, you do have other things that were going on. *Howl*.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, that's right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: The publication of *Howl*—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And that's what I wanted to do, is put—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —all of the activities that were going on—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —in context with what was going on here at Rutgers.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah, that's what I meant—that was kind of the idea I was referring—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to a few minutes ago when I was asking about how you want the work to be seen, whether —

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in an exhibition or with other—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Context of others, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —of that period.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: No, I would be delighted if at some point there were a museum show of, you know, kind of a panorama of my work.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Paintings, and nice photo blowups of performance work and everything. And scores and texts, journal entries on the walls.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, there's references to dances, also. I see Paul Taylor, a brief Paul Taylor—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: performance there—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There in that chronology, I wanted to bring—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —that whole world—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —into the sequence of it.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But you also made note of when Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of the bus—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right, yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in Montgomery, Alabama—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh, yeah—

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in 1955.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Really interesting, I mean, just reading the chronology without even looking at—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —anything else is pretty absorbing—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, but this is sort of in the nature of who I am. I mean—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I grew up a Quaker.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I was a conscientious objector, worked at a hospital in the Bronx.

LINDA YABLONSKY: But I mean that you mentioned this very important historical event.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: In the context of this art—their art—you know, their—here's this sudden note in the same column with a note of George Segal, who also taught at Rutgers.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, that's right, he did.

LINDA YABLONSKY: And it—and Lucas Samaras as a student at Rutgers, so this is all together—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] , yeah, sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —and it is part of the atmosphere of that moment, but—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: But what I was trying to intersperse in there with the chronology—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —were key things like Rosa Parks's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —refusal to—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —move from the bus seat. Because it seemed to be significant and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: It is significant.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Changed the world.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure, sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —in time—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —helped. Well, totally fascinating.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.] Good.

LINDA YABLONSKY: John Cage's lectures, David Tudor concerts—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. I was there to Cage's first lecture, actually, there at—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, you told me yesterday. It sounded fascinating.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It's wonderful. And have known him—knew him—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —over—through the years. And I guess maybe the last time I was with him was, we were having a Printed Editions meeting at Dick Higgins's and Alison's loft on Spring Street, and I had my car there,

and I drove Cage home, up to his loft on Twenty-Sixth and Sixth Avenue, I guess it was. And we went down; we got in the car, and John got in, and he sat down next to me. I was there driving. And the whole way up, not a word was said, and finally we got there, and you know, I left him off, and, you know, goodbye and thanks and so forth.

And I was thinking afterwards, you know, why wasn't there, you know, something that I wanted to ask him or, you know, some casual bit of conversation that we could've had or any number of things? You know, "What are your most interesting recipes that you're cooking these days?" and so forth? And it didn't happen, and I was thinking afterwards, yeah, he was just performing his silence piece, and that was fine. It was sort of a perfect way to give this sort of final time I was there together with John. I think, actually, that probably would have been —

LINDA YABLONSKY: It is kind of wonderful, those—he was listening.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: What?

LINDA YABLONSKY: He was listening.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah. Right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: To the music of the world.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: The—yeah. Right. All of that, yeah. And there we were, and it was just sharing that moment. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: It's been absolutely fabulous talking to you, Geoffrey Hendricks.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Good. Okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Thank you so much for this—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It's been a pleasure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —for this interview.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I've lived through a lot and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: And sharing all this material.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: You have.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —I'm aware I have a lot to share, and it's nice to be able to share it, and so—that it's there, you know.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I'm glad you did, and I hope lots of people share in it, and—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Thank you.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —because it's quite a bounty here. Thank you. Let me just ask you about—I just noticed—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Which?

LINDA YABLONSKY: What is this little book here?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Oh. Well, *Ring Piece*—and this is the hard cover—when I was sitting on the mound of dirt in Charlotte's [8th New York -GH] Avant-Garde Festival, I kept a journal, little red journal—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, yes, you said you were writing.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, I was writing.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So this is the book?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: And this is what I wrote, and Dick Higgins's white mice came and joined me. He was releasing a white mouse—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yes, you told me.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —every half hour, I told you.

LINDA YABLONSKY: So this—there's a photograph of you with this really long beard—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yup. And that, that's Fred McDarrah's—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, this is the Fred McDarrah picture from the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's the Fred McDarrah picture.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —that was on the cover of the *Village Voice*?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. And so Dick was saying, "What are you going to do with the journal?" And I said, "I don't know." And he said, "Could I publish it?" So he made this wonderful little Something Else Press publication, and I think it was the last thing that he did at Something Else Press, and—

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is fantastic. Are there any copies of this?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Any more?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: There are copies around. I probably have copies.

LINDA YABLONSKY: This is amazing. So it is really a diary of what was happening at each moment.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: That's right. It's exactly what I wrote in the journal.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Yeah. Amazing. Oh, I'm going to look for it. It's probably cost a zillion dollars at this point.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: I don't know. You can check online, and if you don't have success, get in touch with me. I think there are copies sort of around—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Well, what could I buy it—at what price could I buy it from you?

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Well, I don't know. You can make me an offer. But I have no idea what their—

LINDA YABLONSKY: I would think—well, I mean, I'm really interested in things like this, so to me it means—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, sure.

LINDA YABLONSKY: —a lot.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Sure. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I don't know. Only, you know, certain aficionados of art books.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah, I tend to make reasonable prices

LINDA YABLONSKY: Wow, this is great. And it's the size of the—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: It's the size of the journal; it's the exact size of the journal, yeah, right.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Oh, I see. It's just a little pocket thing.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Fabulous.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: Thank you for sharing that with me.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay.

LINDA YABLONSKY: More bounty.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Yeah, right. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: Thank you so much.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Okay. Good. Yeah.

LINDA YABLONSKY: I'll release you now—

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: [Laughs.]

LINDA YABLONSKY: —to the world.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: Turn off the—

LINDA YABLONSKY: Thank you.

GEOFFREY HENDRICKS: —tape recorder, yeah.

[END OF SD 2, TRACK 1.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]