

Dyke TV Collection: Interview Transcript, Mary Patierno.

Date: 20 November 2016 over Skype (an application that provides video chat and voice call services).

Interviewee: Mary Patierno, co-founder and executive producer of Dyke TV

Interviewer: Amanda Belantara, student at Pratt Institute

Format: Recorded using AudioHijack. 48Khz, 24 bit, WAV.

Duration: 1 hour, 23 minutes, 31 Seconds

Abstract: In this interview Mary Patierno, co-founder and executive producer of Dyke TV discusses Dyke TV, a groundbreaking public access program produced by and for lesbians in New York City in the 1990s. Patierno talks about the program's history and its goals. She mentions some of Dyke TV's important news stories and recollects some of the interviews the show conducted with women artists, activists and public figures. Patierno stresses the importance of preserving other Dyke TV footage that currently remains in storage. She also describes the production and post-production process, the ideas behind show segments and reflects on how she would like the show to be remembered.

Background: This interview was recorded as part of Dr. Anthony Cocciole's Moving Image and Sound Archives fall 2016 class at Pratt Institute's School of Information. The semester project involved digitizing and presenting Dyke TV footage from the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA). Students sought out to speak with Dyke TV producers in order to inform the introduction to the LHA's Dyke TV collection that would be placed on the LHA's audiovisual collection website

Interview Start

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AB: It's the 20th of November, and my name is Amanda Belantara a student at Pratt Institute speaking with Mary from Dyke TV via Skype from your home in Asheville...Massachusetts?

MP: Ashfield.

AB: Ashfield, Massachusetts. Thank you.

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AB: And did I pronounce your name properly?

MP: You did. Patierno.

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AB: OK great. So I was just hoping you could start off by saying you name yourself stating you roll in Dyke TV

MP: OK. My name is Mary Patierno. I was one of three founders and original executive producer, uh with Linda Chapman and Ana Maria Simo of Dyke TV.

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MP: Dyke TV was a direct offshoot of the Lesbian Avengers. [coughs] Excuse me I'm getting over a bad cold, so pardon me when I cough and hack.

AB: Oh, that's no problem. Would you mind saying that one more time?

MP: Sure. Dyke TV was an offshoot of the Lesbian Avengers which was... The Avengers was founded in early 1992 and Anna Maria Simo was one of the founders of The Avengers and she approached me and said We'd like to have like a video wing of the Lesbian Avengers and this is similar to what ACT UP did. ACT UP had sort of a video brigade called DIVA- damn independent video activists.

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MP: And they made it their mission to like be videotaping as much as possible from every angle at all the ACT-UP demonstrations. And I think I saw TV as being sort of that. Like I always joke and say it was the propaganda wing of the Lesbian Avengers. So she met with me because.. I... Ana is a playwright. Linda Chapman is a play is a theater producer or she is actually an assistant artistic director at The New York Theater Workshop now. And you know the three of us basically organized... Well we met and we organized the first meetings around Dyke TV to kind of brainstorm about how we might put something together. There were a lot of documentary filmmakers slash activists who were interested in participating and we had it as one of our big missions to train women in video production. And so that's what we set about doing. The show started as a weekly show which is amazing if you think about a predominantly volunteer organization pulling off 30 minutes of broadcast, I say material every week. And we also have a distribution component that distributed the show to where it needed to go over the week. Back then there wasn't the web so we were literally sending tapes to Madison, Wisconsin and Albuquerque, New Mexico. And you know even you know like West Orange, New Jersey or wherever the stations were that were carrying the show we would send to tapes Weekly.

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AB: That's a very very impressive to imagine just everybody pulling together to make that all happen. Like you said 30 minutes every week. That's a big project.

MP: Yes. So...Yeah go ahead.

AB: I was just going to say maybe for news readers he might be discovering this online for the first time and don't know what the Lesbian Avengers is. Could you just talk a little bit more about what you hoped the goals of the program would be and how you saw it coming together as a team in terms of what you want viewers to take from it and get out of it.

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MP: Well our tagline was television to incite, provoke and organize. And I think that summed up the mission. I mean the only thing that wasn't included in that tagline was to educate too. So we wanted to get people educated about what was happening around the country and around the world about lesbians. You

have to remember that this was an era not long ago where there wasn't one gay person on television, not one. And so there wasn't a lot of... And if there was visibility of gay people it was always a gay men so there was a real push to have lesbian visibility increase and organize around lesbian and feminist ideas. So we... You know like I said our, our well our motto was to incite provoke and organize. We hope to incite people, provoke them into action and actually do something and organize. To change to change you know, locally and federally and just systemically people's views of lesbians and of gay rights and of women's rights.

AB: Yes, it's a very powerful message. I was doing a little bit of research on line and I really liked that it says the founders sought to document rising lesbian activism and to provide a viable platform for lesbian voices enter the realm of popular culture. And do you feel that things have changed since the time of time TV in terms of how lesbian culture is now presented in the popular culture?

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MP: Oh my oh yeah of course. I mean first there was Ellen and that was a very you know a small step, but you know she was like this sitcom which started I believe just a couple of years after Dyke TV came into being. And when I had a show where she was basically closeted and at one point maybe in the second season or third season she came out. Well the next season she was canceled. So even at that time was early 90s there wasn't room for a lesbian voice in mainstream culture. And now, I mean you look it's a totally different situation.

There are lesbian characters in so many films and television shows and you know in sort of mainstream fiction and poetry. And so I think that in terms culturally I think lesbians are really much much more visible and accepted and more than accepted. You know, honored you know like... Ellen what her daytime TV show is beloved probably gets the best ratings in daytime TV I suspect. And there's so many out lesbians in popular culture now. It's a completely different landscape than when Dyke TV started.

AB: Well I'm sure Dyke TV played a role in helping create that change.

MP: I'd like to think so.

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AB: So could you just maybe describe a typical episode in terms of what would have you see and hear from, like kind of if you could just walk us through a typical episode as you remember it.

MP: Well we set it up from the very start to be what we call a magazine format so we wanted there to be topics on all different. We wanted there to be pieces on all different topics. We always started off with the new segment so that was maybe I would say five. One minute stories we had a news anchor and then we had a segment called eyewitness which was our more feature, non-fiction piece news piece which went into a news topic in more depth. And then from there it would rotate we always had an art section. I actually feel like some of our strongest material was our art segment and that was produced by Linda Chapman who was one of the executive directors. And like I said she's a she's at artistic director at New York theatre workshop. So she's got amazing contacts. So we we interviewed like incredible people. You know. Nicole Eisenman like when you know like Guggenheim genius you know Eileen Myles Lisa Kron- two Tony award winners. Well you know like there's there's a ton of people that we featured when they were early on in their careers.

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MP: I think they were beautiful beautifully done pieces. There's a piece on Dolores Prida, a Cuban playwright who unfortunately a couple of years back passed away. But you know we have her life documented so I think actually the arts section was was always part of the mix. And like I said it was one of those sections that we were really committed to and proud of. We would rotate other sessions like we would do sports, we would do... There was a producer called that Beth Trimarco. She did kind of a funny almost mockumentary type piece called Fab Girls Fix-It. And she you know would start off as a narrative like I don't remember the exact story but say a woman is riding her bike to go meet her girlfriend and she gets a flat tire. Well, she would tell you how to fix the flat tire, which was always like a super fun segment. I think we had a dating section once... We had health, was a big section for us. Julie Clark, who's now a physician in California she did a lot of the curating of that, the health segment

so it was just a real mix of material and so much of it wasn't being heard anywhere else.

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AB: Yeah we were really... We really enjoyed the interview we saw I think it was from the arts segment with the filmmaker Sue Friedrich.

MP: Sue Friedrich. Yeah.

AB: Yeah, that was really beautiful, a well done interview. And I think one of my classmates actually contacted her personally to get her permission to use the clip of her film online and she remembered it fondly and was quite happy to participate in the program.

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MP: Yeah she is so she just said an opening at BAM on Thursday night. So she's still you know out there doing stuff. So yeah. Really. Yeah we did a lot with the arts.

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AB: And so, one of the other things I wanted to ask you about was show's logo. Could you could you describe it if you could talk about it in a way so that somebody who hasn't seen it could picture in their mind and then discuss how you came up with the show's logo?

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MP: Well we the first thing we had to come up with was the show's name and at the very beginning when we were first talking we had, we called it Dyke TV -the working title and we sort of put it out there. What to people... What should we call this show? And we just never came up with anything better. We wanted it to be provocative. We wanted it to be in your face. We wanted it to be unapologetic. And so we ended up sticking with the title Dyke TV. And I think the logo was also unapologetic in that it looked like a superman logo. And that's what we were going for, like lesbian superheroes. And proud and unapologetic and loud and in your face and just out there. So that's that you know.... and intelligent. We weren't just screamers you know, we did- I think our show was real well rounded and that had funny... we had hilarious stuff. I mean um, we also had that segment (This isn't to do with the logos to stop me if I'm going

off topic) but we did that second segment weekly called I was a lesbian child people narrated their baby pictures and that wasn't always, but that often was really comical. So we tried to just keep it you know, a combination of like lesbian superhero and lesbian every woman and every girl - just you know just a well-rounded well-rounded dykes and well-rounded program.

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AB: So did you get feedback from the community that you were involved in and working with on the show title in terms of Dyke TV. Did everybody feel like yeah right on that's that's the best name?

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MP: Well some people hated it.

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AB: And what was your response to that?

MP: Some people don't like the word Dyke, you know. So we you know, respect that. But we were going for something we going for that provocation that the word dyke engendered. And so I understood that some people thought it was a little bit in their face or crude or crass but it definitely was memorable and I think it summed up what we were trying to do, you know, which was to be provocative and to be unapologetic and to be out there and to be memorable.

AB: Yes. To tell your own stories. Right. Because they weren't being heard elsewhere. And so could you talk a little bit about how you wound up making connections to the public access TV stations?

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MP: I think the initial contact was... oh you mean, across the US?

AB: Well both locally here in New York and then just maybe briefly how it continued to get further distribution.

MP: Okay. Well we initially before we even started the show we needed to have a venue. I mean we were at that point, like I said that it wasn't the web so we needed to have a venue to air the show. And I think it was Ana María Simo who had the initial contact with Manhattan neighborhood network who still is the

local public access station in New York City and by the way they're still alive and from my understanding I think they're still thriving. So, they gave us a slot. And once we get a slot committed we had to get going. You know we had to start producing. We I think we asked for a slot like three months in advance because we knew doing a weekly show that we would need to get some stories like in the can and ready because you know once the show started airing it was like nonstop nonstop. So we worked really hard three months before the show started airing which I believe was something like June 1st 1993 it was early June 1993 when it was our first air date a Manhattan neighborhood Network. And then people heard about it I me first we went to Brooklyn. And people are like we want it in Brooklyn we want it in Staten Island we want it in Queens. And I think we started doing outreach through like marches whenever there was a gay and lesbian march. We would definitely bring flyers around and say this is where we're airing if you want to be aired Contact your local cable public access station and so that got us into other other locations. But I think also there started to just be a buzz about it that this was out there and people started contacting us and saying we want it we want Dyke TV in our area. So then you know we would leave it up to them to work out with their local public access stage and how they were going to make that happen. And you know it was local community members. They were the ones that you know had access to to the to the public access stations. So and then when it got after we got to like I mean like I said I don't remember the precise figure but I I'm pretty sure we topped 100 at one point. Once it got to be that many cities we had to have a distribution coordinator because we needed to literally make copies of the show and send them out. That's what we had to do. So it was like very time consuming and and pretty expensive.

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AB: And I can imagine what were you sending the copies on, what format, because you were shooting in high eight so...

MP: Sue Yeah well we did average the local stations wanted they had specs that we had to comply with but I'm pretty sure most of them were three quarter inch.

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AB: And so just while we're on it, could you talk a little bit more about your working process? So say... Could you talk about how you would sort of set up

the production and how they would how they would each be produced because you mentioned that different people were producing different segments so to speak so could you maybe talk us through maybe setting up a production schedule an actual shoot in action to the finished product?

MP: Well we had what was called producers meetings where people would come to the meetings and we would get stories and basically if anybody wanted to do a story we let them do it. I mean there was very little that I mean I don't think we ever said no to anything. I mean I think we had to comply to some like nudity stuff and you know there were some small things that we had to work around but for the most part we were there to let people voice whatever they were wanted to whatever issues or topics was was of interest to them. So we'd have producers meetings meetings and and I was the coordinator of the schedule for the most part. So I would... I knew that the first five to six minutes was news. And I think at the beginning it was Harriet Hirschhorn and Janet Boss if I'm not mistaken who did the news and then later Sally Sasso were the news producers. So they would be the one sort of responsible for coming up with the three to five stories at the top that that we talked about. And then we the I-Witness piece was the longer piece so that was one of the things that we got feedback from from the producers it's like who's got a story that can run four to six minutes. When can you have it done? And then we go down the line it's like you know other people will be there don't necessarily have an interest in news per se but would have an interest in more health segments. So you know like Julie Clark, I would say Julie how many pieces can you do this month when can they be done. You know the art segment Linda committed to an art segment every week and she was excellent so we knew that towards the bottom of the show we had you know three to six minute piece. So it was about like filling in all that time and you know I mean you probably know... you don't have the masters. But we did repeat some episodes. Especially you know as time went on It was hard to do that complete 30 minutes fresh every week. But we did the best we could and we you know, primarily had new segments along the way and then you know I was a Lesbian Child was a weekly piece and what we would do is like every third or fourth Saturday- I actually produced that piece. So I would gather like four or five people would shoot it all in a day. And then I have five of those segments ready to go you know to put in any of the of the shows. So and it was just a matter of then I think I think for the most part I think it was Sally Sasso. At first I compiled the shows I'd like make a list, a running time someone would put it together and then I think I did that at first with music and

not the inter-titles. And then after after a while I'm pretty sure Sally Sasso did that.

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MP: So it was basically very we always said we didn't run as a collective like in the end the executive producers had the final say, but we were really democratic and inclusive. It's like whoever wanted to produce something basically produce something which is why there is such a range of different materials because we just felt like it was important to highlight lesbian experience and experiences in all the arenas that we exist. Not just demonstrations or not just sports but in the health fields. And you know, in every field imaginable. So that's what we did.

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AB: And once you had all of the episodes... so where would you actually be editing all of this were you editing collectively together or which you each kind of go way in and come back and say this is what I have and then all of the different segments would be compiled? How did that work?

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MP: We had we always had a studio. You know our office, it was small and basically a few desks with a partition and an edit, you know, a three quarter inch edit system behind the wall and there was a high 8 deck where we would make the transfers so that editing room was being used at all times. You know some to some of us had our own editing systems. Like I edited for a living already, some some of us already were working on video and filmmakers so we had our own systems in which case... Another producer of ours is Greta Olafsdottir and Susan Muska they're the ones that did the piece on Edie Windsor, Edie and Thea. They did the piece about Brandon Teena. So they had their own systems their own edit systems, and they would just bring in the pieces when they were done. But for the most part the work was caught onsite in the Dyke TV offices. And then when the pieces were done, you know they were just given to me and I you know figured out the timing. And we you know we put the shows together. He had bumpers. We tried to have bumpers. Like you know I don't know if you saw the the little the kind of funny ad we did that was "Lesbians What a beautiful Choice" did you see that?

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AB: You know I don't think we've come across that in the tapes that we have. If you could talk about it that'd be great.

MP: Well that was we just knew that you know because we were working with volunteers and we didn't want to have to be so precise that sometimes the shows would be running a little long and sometimes they'd be running a little short. So we had bumpers like at one point we had we try to get people like we got Martina Navratilova to say you know put on a Dyke TV hat say you know, I can't even remember what she said you know...

AB: I want my Dyke TV

MP: I want my Dyke TV or something like that. Did you did you see that one?

AB: No.

MP: It's something like that. So we get other people to do that and then we had this really funny. I thought it was funny commercial that we actually shot in film that was beautiful. We had these women kind of hanging out in this idyllic farm. Our voiceover being you know don't quote me exactly but it was like Daddy used to be married to a man who's now balding and broke and then she kind of set saddle's up to her girlfriend, "Lesbianism. What a beautiful choice" And there were other things like that there was maybe three scenarios like that in a row. And so we had things like that that we could insert in between segments to break it up and to also stretch out the show if we needed you know time and time wise to be precise.

AB: And so could you describe a little bit about what the atmosphere was like during the production and post production together because it seems like a really tight knit community project as a whole. And I just wonder if you could maybe describe what it was like to be producing the show in action on site and in the studio.

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MP: Well I mean I remember it very fondly and it was excitement and exciting time. It was a time of ,really the first time lesbians had on our own demanded visibility apart from you know gay men and where you know we were just proud out there Dykes, you know demanding our place and this and we also one of the

other cool things that we did is that every. I think it was every month. We had...we did workshops so we were training women all the way every step of the way on how to shoot and produce. In fact, Sally Sasso who ended up being one of the executive directors took what she started off in our class. So and there are people out there in the world making stuff who started out at Dyke TV, you know. So we it was just a really exciting time. I think that it was a way for Dykes to come together in a really productive, fun and political way and see tangible results.

So you know of course...Was there was there tension? Of course it was a tense time. It was a tense thing to do to put on a show and get it done every week. But I think overall that was kind of you know we had very very little conflict. And I'm mostly just you know were all on same page about about getting the show done. It was you know very project oriented and the deadlines came fast and furious, So you know we had to we had to work together as a team and I think overall we did.

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AB: And this was a full time endeavor for you and say, Linda Chapman and Sally Sasso.

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MP: For me it wasn't full. I mean I worked full time but I wasn't paid. I I was one of the... My brother was one of the... My brother passed away from AIDS. He left some money to Dyke TV. And so I felt like I couldn't get paid to do any of the work. It just seemed like a conflict of interest so I never took money from Dyke TV but I certainly work there full time. I was teaching at the School of Visual Arts at the time and also freelancing but Linda Chapman, Linda Chapman It was a full time job I think for a little while Ana Maria Simo was paid full time or half time. I think Julie Clark she was our first distribution person. I think she got paid. We basically paid me to pay the couple of positions that we knew we couldn't get people to do for free. And so production, anybody working in production kinda didn't get paid because that was more like people were willing to do it for nothing. So you know we didn't have endless resources. We had very little resources so we needed somebody to coordinate it and we needed somebody to get it out. Out in the world so those are the people who get paid. But yeah we had we had many people working you know 40 hour plus weeks who weren't being paid. But it was you know our passion at the time. So that's what we did.

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AB: So that's what we did made it happen everybody coming together. So kind of touched touched on this a little bit. I was just wondering if he could talk a little bit more sort of specifically about how some of the segments evolved particularly the ones that we have found in the tapes that we have so for example example. OK for example

00:29:59

MP: Yeah...remind me

AB: So one actually that we have the most of is the I was a Lesbian Child segment. Could you describe that just you know what this segment is and the origins of how the idea for that developed?

MP: Hmm... Well that was my segment. I think that honestly how the idea that came up was if I'm not mistaken I pretty sure that was a Lesbian Avenger T-shirt. I think you might want to check with Ana Maria or someone else, but I think one of the first actions that the Avengers did was they did it at a... Might have been a middle school and between you and me and the lamppost I don't remember exactly what the it was if there was a teacher who had been fired or if there had been some anti-gay thing happen there. So I think that they went to that demo with T-shirts that said "I was a lesbian child" I remember, in my mind I can see those T-shirts so based on that phrase, I decided to do a piece called "I was a Lesbian Child" where people narrate their baby pictures and I thought it was just a fun way.... Number one you know I mean it's you know think of throwback Thursday on Facebook right. People love looking at their old photographs and talking about it and in trying to remember, you know their younger days and more innocent times. And so I think it was also just to show that. I hate it I hate the idea and like we're like everyone else. But the fact is we're... you know like humans like everyone else. We started off as little babies and awkward adolescents and and strident college students and you know mellowed into adults I mean and. And I think that was part of what we were trying to achieve there is to just show it is to allow for form of nostalgia, but also just you know I don't know I don't want to seem normal but just like sort of just how average and funny people's lives are when told through pictures and

they are also pictures that were curated by the women themselves so they told a story that was that the participants are the people who were being highlighted. Wanted to tell in their own voice. So we thought it was an opportunity to educate, to get to laugh, to have some nostalgia. And it was you know a very fun, easy piece to put together. And that's that's why we did that.

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AB: Yeah and the other segments that we have. Well we think we're not sure because like I said we have a lot of footage from ACT-UP Dyke marches and there is another demonstration against Don't Ask Don't Tell and Clinton is visiting the city I think. And we were wondering whether that would be something that would fall under eyewitness or in the news. And if you can if you know that that would be great if you could tell us. And then also describe... You said I witnessed was a little bit longer than the news section if you could just maybe say again a little bit more about how those two segments were differentiated.

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MP: Well the news was... I don't think our stories on the news really went over in a minute maybe a minute and a half. I think we tried to have three to six stories within the course of five minutes five years you know things were loose and are a little fluid. So five six minutes. And you know when you're telling a story in a minute and a half it doesn't allow you to include as much nuance or analysis as you can in just a you know more straight news story. So the eye witness was allowed us to go more in depth

about about an issue or a topic or person. So for instance when Teena Brandon was murdered, I don't know if you know about that story in Nebraska. Boys Don't Cry- the film Boys Don't Cry was based on it. But the first people who went out and did a story on that was Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir. The first place for any information or news about Teena Brandon was broadcast was on Dyke TV. And so I'm certain that we get a news story when they first got out here just a short piece. And then when they had time to cut something longer, we did an extensive piece that included interviews with like her ex and if I'm not mistaken, I think they even interviewed the guy in jail who killed him or her I think she still said she was her. So at any rate that's sort of how it worked. I mean we do know it was shorter. I don't want to say factual but just more lean stories in the news segments and then

fleshed it out in eyewitness where we could go more extensively with interviews of participants or people who were affected a little bit more analysis just are you know diving into the material more in depth. There was overlap. I mean sometimes the story would start off as a news story and then develop into an eyewitness. And by the way we also like I think I said this we got producers from all over the country to produce for us. So we we had a producer from Madison Wisconsin who would send us stuff and we tried to get them, you know first she started off sending new stories and then ['scuse me 'scuse me] started doing new stories with them would do some eyewitness pieces for us. We tried we really did try not to have it be so New York/Northeast centric as much as we could. You know given the constraints that we had financially and also technologically

AB: It is just an amazing production just the reach that you had. You can tell that there was such a big need for Dyke TV because of the way that people were able and very willing to contribute from not only from New York but from around the country and you know it is just a really important groundbreaking program. And then we also have some segments that we think would be classified under the Arts. You mentioned that a little bit already but if you could maybe just give us a very brief description of the arts and the idea for that segment.

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MP: Well women artists or even to this day such a small segment of artists that are exhibited in museums and galleries. You know if you look at like the top 100 best selling artists I mean there might be like three on the entire list that are women. Never mind lesbians. So we realize that lesbian artists were invisible to a good part of humanity and we wanted to bring out their talents and their personalities and you know their abilities. And so we had people like Elizabeth Streb she's a genius you know and we did an extensive piece on Elizabeth Streb. Nancy Fried is a really influential sculptor. [Scuse me.] You know, there were you know Nicole Eisenman, as I mentioned before. Lisa Kron and the five lesbian brothers. So I think we did a piece on Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver, Split Britches. So we really knew that there was a wealth of talent out there that was not recognized or even known about.

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MP: And so it was really in our interests to get that material and those women out there. And I'm not even saying to mainstream culture. To lesbian cultures I mean lesbians didn't even know about these women these amazing women that were out there toiling away and creating amazing stuff. So yeah, the arts was really near and dear to us. I mean like I said, Ana Maria is a playwright. Lisa is the artistic director in the theater. You know I'm a documentary filmmaker at the time I was doing more experimental work. So we had a commitment not only personally not only in terms of the show but also personally we had a commitment to the arts. We were both. All three of us were very ensconced in the art community in downtown Manhattan at the time. And so we knew of dozens and dozens and dozens of women who were out there working doing amazing work that no one knew about. So that was that was really a big commitment of ours to make sure that those women were recognized and celebrated. And that became a very important component of the show.

AB: I thank you very much succeeded in that. Like in the episodes that we saw with the one. Like I mentioned that contains an interview with Su Friederich and then another one is with a filmmaker named Maria Maggenti. I'm not sure how you pronounce your name. Yeah yeah. And they were both very well produced segments and really made us want to discover their artwork more. Mm hmm. And then another segment that's mentioned in one of the things that we have one of the tapes is called from the archives and you do remember what the idea was behind that particular segment.

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MP: The idea behind that was you know we have a great resource in New York City. I hope young lesbians know about and that's called the Lesbian Herstory Archives. They have their own building in Brooklyn and they own the building if I'm not mistaken I think it's paid off. They have an amazing collection of archives of lesbian material from forever. And so what we wanted to do was take advantage of that collection. And each week, I actually I don't think it was a weekly segment it was only a monthly segment more. More likely a monthly segment- dive into the archives and show and explain some of the material that they that they had there, so that women knew that there was a history- that we weren't we weren't inventing the wheel that there were women who had come before us, brave women who had made a place for where we were and to look back on the struggles that they had and put our current struggles into

perspective and to know that you know people -women have been fighting for a long time for their rights. And yeah and also to highlight the good work and the great collection of the archives. It was an opportunity for us to highlight that because it is an amazing institution with incredibly valuable material and an incredibly unique collection.

AB: Oh that's so great. We hadn't realized that it was actually we thought it was maybe from Dyke TV cause we didn't know it was from LHA archives.

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I'm pretty sure what was the segment you saw it just I don't think that we were. I don't think "from the archives" meant that we were showing old stuff of our own. I think we were showing stuff from the Lesbian Herstory archives.

00:43:08

AB: Yeah I'd have to double check our records from that because we've seen so many tapes. I'm not sure which one was exactly that from the archives one but I can look it up and let you know because we do have some descriptive metadata. And another one of our groups has been working on in terms of just describing it segments that people could find it online. So in terms of Dyke TV sounds like it was really successful and rewarding project for everybody involved. Did you ever receive any negative feedback on the show? And you know, how if you ever did, could you talk about how you dealt with it?

MP: You know to be honest with you I'm not remembering a lot of negative. Like there wasn't like death threats or anything like that. I think if there were any threats they probably went to the public access stations and maybe they shielded us from it. I think there might have been one station and I'd have to double check with someone on the veracity of this but I believe that might have been one station that told us. I think we might have done a cervical exam as part of one of the health segments and we might have gotten pulled from a couple of stations after that. But other than that, I mean you know course sometimes you know people would approach us and say oh you should be doing more stories about whatever fill in the blank. And we always say well you know come and do it. It's like it's a volunteer organization. People do the subjects and a subject matter that they're interested in. And if that's subject interests you then you should come. Come on down and help us produce, because we were pretty much open to any stories being made. I mean one of the really the only

restrictions we had was that we thought it was really important not to criticize any other gay and lesbian organization, because unfortunately I think that that happens way too much. I think that's part of the reason why the left, you know lost this last election and to be honest. I think that we spent a lot of time eating each other up and you know and I think that... I mean there are organizations that I don't respect terribly, but they're doing work on behalf of gay and lesbian people, not in the air arena that I would want there that I find near and dear to me. But I didn't want to spend an hour of our time criticizing those organizations. They are not the enemy. And so we really try to be very keep a very very positive outlook and point of view to anybody during trying to do anything to make change and I think that you know as though you know the left should do more of that because you know not everyone can be uber activist. Not everyone has the ability or the disposition to do that. But as long as people are trying to do something then I'm not.... I don't want to spend an ounce of my time criticizing and we made a point at Dyke TV not to do that. There's an organization called the Human Rights Campaign. I'll give you an example.

00:46:51

MP: They really fought for gay marriage and for the rights of people to be in the military. Well early on in Dyke TV a lot of us were like really the two most conservative institutions on the planet. You're going to fight for that? And the other thing that they did was they supported a Republican senator over. Was that the guy at the time the guy's name was Al D'Amato. They supported him over Charles Schumer who's now currently our senator in New York. And it pissed a lot of people off. But we weren't going to spend a second of our time on that as much as a lot of us were very unhappy with the direction of the organization. We didn't spend a second of our time. They were not the enemy. So I mean I think that it helped us. You know just keep a pretty positive place in the gay and lesbian community. Of course there were many people who were offended by the name, but you know, we came to terms with that very early on. We felt like the power that was inscribed in it in the end the number of people who actually appreciated the name far outweighed the kind of you know more conservative people who thought that that was a crass, unwise name for our show. I will say it did make it hard to fundraise.

You know it's hard to raise money with name like Dyke TV back in the 90s. [Scuse me I'm going to cough again. I'm sorry]

00:48:39

AB: Speaking of keeping things positive. Could you talk a bit about what you feel are the the main successes of the project?

00:48:51

MP: Well honestly I think the main successes is that we like really really very comprehensively documented a critical time period and gay and lesbian history. I mean I think there was so much happening in the 90s. It was the peak of the AIDS epidemic or you know the early 90s late 80s early 90s peak of the AIDS epidemic.

It was at the very beginning of...I mean it was I mean gay activism of course had been happening since stonewall. [coughs] I'll say again it again. I'll start again. Gay activism had been happening since stonewall but it was really coming to a critical head, I think pushed a lot by what was had happened with ACT UP all the activism around AIDS.

And so I I do think that that period of the late 80s, all of the 90s into the early oughts were just very very instrumental times for the gay and lesbian movement in the US and frankly around the world. So, I would say our biggest achievement is that we have for for you know, millennials I hope, and I don't mean that as a category, but like for into the future have documented and I'm hoping you know preserving this history for other people to see it was an amazingly dynamic exciting time period of activism and tangible change

AB: For all of this success, is there anything still that you might have done differently.

00:50:42

MP: Well I just wished ITV had lasted like five more years because we just missed the Internet. And I actually think the Internet would have been better venue. It certainly would have been an easier venue. But I think Dyke TV would have been sort of tailor made for the Internet. Just the magazine format the way we dealt with different topics, so that you know people with different interests could tap in and not only as viewers but as producers.

00:51:17

MP: I think that that if we could have made it in and had an internet presence, that would have been great not only for the show but for our fans and viewers.

AB: Absolutely. Well speaking of the Internet we are going to be putting the materials that we do have online for people to access via the LHA web site. And I just wanted to run by you our idea for how we're going to be presenting it. Because since we don't have full episodes per se we have this kind of archival challenge or you know we have to kind of brainstorm to figure out the most suitable way to present what we do have. So the idea is to actually take the footage that we have and then break it into the various segments that will have an introduction to this show just explaining the background and naming key producers such as yourself. And then we're going to have for example, I was a lesbian Child section where we'll have three clips of that of three different. I was a lesbian child segments and they were going to have the Arts segment and we'll have Maria Maggenti's interview and Sue Friedrich's interview and then we're going to have an eyewitness section. So we're thinking of breaking it down into segments like that. How would your feelings be about that?

00:52:51

MP: Well this is my thing. I know that Sally is even more cautious than I am, and that is If I find I'm mistaken. I don't think we ever got a release form from anybody. So for instance Maria Maggenti, I don't know if she considers herself a lesbian anymore I would feel uncomfortable with you showing her piece. But Sue Friederich on the other hand, I think would be fine. I guess before...,I think that what we had said initially Sally and I...this is what we're doing with Smith initially is anything that's in public domain can be screened with no problem at all. It sounds like you got permission from Sue Friederich already. But I would feel terrible if you're going to do that and you get permission. There may other people like her who are no longer gay and you don't have a husband who has no idea that they were allegedly also there showing up on this lesbian website. Well I mean I just I just don't know how people are going to react. And legally we don't want any trouble. But, I mean I think if there are understanding is if things are shot on the street there's a presumption. There's no presumption of privacy. But, You know in an interview with Maria Maggenti. You might just want to get her permission. Plus you're also showing clips of her film which is owned by like Warner Brothers and I don't even know it's owned by.

00:54:24

AB: Yeah there's all sorts of rights implications there and it's a bit of a sticky issue.

00:54:29

MP: Yeah I think that to be honest with you I doubt Maria owns the rights to her films. That's really what it is. So I would seriously, you know just be mindful of that and you can just put anything you want up. Yeah. Where you can get permission and start compiling that. Like if you could even like get a you get an excel sheet where we know, because Smith wants to do this too and we cautioned them. We're not sure that just anything can go up there you know.

AB: So, Yes I know that. Another one of my classmates, Victoria. She's been e-mailing a few of the people that are in the I was a lesbian child segments and she's gotten permission from people the ones some the clips that we're going to show in specifically with people who have said that they are OK.

MP: Yes. Good.

AB: And then there's also a really powerful interview by a woman, I'm not sure if I'm saying her name correctly, but it's Jelica from Yugoslavia or former Yugoslavia now.

00:55:33

MP: Yes she was awesome.

AB: Yes, it was very powerful interview and she apparently said it was all right as long as we didn't make her name searchable on the Internet. So she was OK with it being present she just didn't want you know a search for her name to bring that up necessarily. So we're not going to include her name in a way that that's going to show up in the metadata.

MP: If you will if there's a way for you to just keep track of this so people don't have to do all this work twice. You could let Smith know that you got the OK for these specific things. I mean have a way of dealing with it because they didn't want to have to go segment by segment get permission and to be honest with you. I need to meet with them again but they had a strategy that basically we're not responsible... I mean you know. Nor have the producers given. You know. There were some.... Believe me they have a legal team so they have some way of dealing with it where it seem to make things hard to litigate. But

I could get back with you. I mean the more you can get permission, obviously the less trouble there's gonna be.

00:56:50

AB: Well that's why we're just kind of really showing. I mean first of all that's mostly what we have is the rushes or the raw footage of the demonstrations so we're including those in their entirety. There's like an hour per tape or something like that. And then after that there's the little segments there's another one I think we're going to include in the eyewitness section which actually I'm not sure now if this would be considered eyewitness or not but there is something at Clark Corners where a woman is reporting on some discrimination she and her partner faced in a restaurant. Does that ring a bell?

MP: It doesn't but I tell me did you get in touch with Sally Sasso.

00:57:33

AB: You know we've tried reaching out to a few different people without getting many responses. And then we did hear from Laura.

00:57:42

MP: Laura Perry

AB: You know she got in touch and said that she'd be willing to speak with us but that she wanted us to speak with you first and that if we weren't getting everything that she would talk as well but she wanted us to speak with you first I think.

00:57:56

MP: Yeah. Sally Sasso and so I think Sally and Laura ran it together it was mostly me.

Me, Ana and Linda at first and then Ana dropped out it was me and Linda for a while and I think it was Laura and Sally for a long period. Sally just entered law school. So that's the reason why she had been talking a lack of interest. It's just she's, you know she's got a kid and she's in law school and she's just you know barely keeping her head above water.

AB: I understand that completely. I'm right there myself so I get it. So just one other thing I mean I'd love to get Maria Maggenti's contacts if you have it but maybe we could.

MP: Let me look

AB: But maybe we could get back on that via e-mail. But I was just wondering if you could say little bit about how you'd like Dyke TV to be remembered and described for future generations.

00:58:56

MP: Oh I think I'd like it to be considered ahead of its time. Dynamic. You know, important. A catalyst for change. An activist organization that used the arts to inform people to get them excited, in a venue where lesbians were revered and honored and... and given the attention that they deserved, in not only in the activist community but in the greater society at large. You know what I want to be remembered is fierce and uncompromising... but also funny and irreverent. You know in a show that was really well rounded and ahead of its time. And I think I think we were all that.

01:00:07

AB: I think so too from what we've seen so far. And if you would like I mean if you could just say how would you like it to actually be described. I mean you've mentioned how he'd like to be remembered. And so here it is being groundbreaking and fierce. And you know ahead of its time how would you like the program to be described by you know previous viewers who were watching it live as broadcast and then now for maybe youth now just maybe finding it in LHA archive. How would you like him to describe it?

MP: I mean I think you said it. I would like it to be thought of as a groundbreaking fierce.

Early television show that highlighted lesbian activism and visibility. In a time when lesbians weren't even on the map and that we came together as a community of artists and slash activists and produce something that was meaningful and I think still relevant today.

AB: Absolutely. And would you ever maybe think about now that there is this new internet and web vehicle for showing shows would you ever start up Dyke TV again?

01:01:39

MP: I don't know that *I* would but I would certainly encourage someone else to. I talked to a woman it was about a year ago who was interested in doing something not quite like Dyke TV in maybe a little bit more I would say more like a blog, slash video site. And that was that was geared towards lesbians. I mean so much just like lesbian gay by transgendered. And so, but she really wanted to focus on lesbians which I think has been something that's been quite a controversial idea, that by focusing just on lesbians somehow it's excluding gay experience bi experience or trans experience. And I don't think that so I think that you know women and and lesbians need -we need visibility. We're not out there in the world enough still to this day. And so I think it's something that if somebody had the energy, that I think it could, I think it's not only necessary but could be successful. [coughs] Let me say it again it's not only it's not only necessary but could be successful.

AB: Absolutely. Do you think at the moment that there is any programming that's on right now that resonates with what Dyke TV was doing at all?

MP: You know I'm not it was you my friend who was going to do some saying she was a colleague of mine and she was going to actually do a collaboration with someone and she told me I'm just looking to see if I can find... what she had... because I thought she had a name. So I can't find it. I can't find it right now. But not that I know of. Like I said I think there's a lot of I think that in some ways people perhaps don't feel like there's a need you know which is is a bit depressing to me, because you know we made a lot of strides as gay people and and I don't think that gay people feel as marginalized or under siege. Maybe they do now with Trump. But, so I think that there hasn't been- there are still certainly arcane lesbian organizations but I'm not sure. I don't know. That's a really good question. That's a really I think there's a need and I think that that it's you know like just like women. Women are still, we've made progress sure but we still have so much that we have to overcome in terms of discrimination and the way we're treated in society at large. And so I think that to highlight women's experience and specifically lesbians experience is still a necessity.

01:05:06

AB: Very much so. And so you mentioned before that you know you've got really strong connection to the LHA archive And we were just curious if you could just briefly discuss how Dyke TV wound up at Smith. Because I think our professor at the start of it was really excited at the idea of it but he didn't understand that the masters were all somewhere else.

MP: Yeah but you know what. I don't think that I don't think that the Archives has. I don't I don't think it's that college has an exclusive deal at all. So if you guys want it masters I think that you could get him

AB: Right. OK.

MP: My guess is is that if you want a masters you could get them from Smith and we and we make that really clear we didn't want an exclusive thing. I don't want an exclusive thing. That's not their deal. But that's not that's not how the Smith archives works it's really about getting women's material historical material about women throughout the ages. Out in the world. So I don't think they have. An exclusive way of dealing with their material. I think they are actually quite generous in sharing. It's my understanding of them.

01:06:38

AB: Oh yeah. You've been very friendly because we've contacted them in order to get a finding aid, you need to find out what they actually did have because when you first visit their web site it's not obvious about what is actually there. We are trying to piece together what it was LHA had and what Smith had to try and figure out what the content was on these tapes because these are just you know unlabelled U-Matic tapes and a lot of cases and we were just trying to get a sense of what you know complete episodes were like and how you they were produced and so on and so on. So yeah everybody's been very friendly we were just curious about how some of it you know got separated.

MP: I think that what happened was the original high 8s. And maybe there weren't maybe the U-matic parts that you have, or individual segments that people edited probably ended up in our closet in our archive closet at Dyke TV while we were still functioning. 'Scuse me. [coughs] and then once our closet got full, we were like we got to get this somewhere. So we gave it to the Lesbian

Herstory archives. But we still had the masters and when I moved up here, Sally Sasso who had also been one of... I stopped being involved with TV after a certain period. I think I worked until like 97 or something like that. And if I'm not mistaken maybe. Dyke TV.... you do you know the end date. No. You'd have to ask Sally Sasso about that, but I think it would only be to know that we were around for 9/11 so maybe it ended at like 2000. So when. When Dyke TV got rid of their office. They asked if they could put you know a bunch of their stuff in my basement. And to be honest it's still there. I just have a ton of stuff in my basement, which I think are mostly masters.

AB: Oh wow.

MP: You know I think. Smith got the other half I think there were two sets of masters. So I think that's how it works. But like I said by the end, I wasn't involved in the day to day any more. I'd say for the last three or four years I wasn't. So the person who would know how that came about would be Sally. And my guess is that you probably...I know well it's beyond the scope of your particular assignment due soon. But if somebody was following up the time to reach her is obviously school break when she's in between semesters at law school.I think when she's in law schools there's just no finding her or getting in touch with her. She's swamped.

01:09:41

AB: Like I said I'll definitely let my professor know I know he'll be really pleased to find out that there is you know more footage out there to kind of capture and add to the LHA collection because he's been working with them. Pratt has been working with the LHA. for you know I think at least a few years now and I think that this relationship is going to continue since it's a mutually beneficial situation where students are getting real firsthand experience of you know archiving materials. And then LHA is you know getting some really important work done on their behalf. So right I think I don't see that this relationship is going to not continue.

MP: You know what I had heard was that the high 8's were given to the archive and then

AB: You mean Smith or LHA.

MP: LHA

AB: OK.

01:10:34

MP: And then for a while I thought I heard they were being stored in the basement. And I think we said that's not a good idea and you need to get 'em somewhere. And if I'm not mistaken which I could be...I thought that they were brought somewhere that had like better climate control. But you know the same people are still there. Like Maxine Wolf. Did anyone talk to Maxine?

AB: Oh yeah we met with her she's lovely.

MP: Yes she's a doll. I'm just what I'm trying of who we gave that material too. But there were high eights like like boxes and boxes and boxes and boxes and boxes and you know some of it's going to be not so good it's like raw material, you know, but I mean some of it is going to there's going to be some gems in there. Just gems.

AB: I can imagine I mean just thinking is this everything that you guys were out there to capture as it was happening you know live on the streets. And. There's some stuff in there that if it gets lost it's going to be a real loss to the community at large.

01:11:42

MP: You know just in unity at large interviews with people like Tammy Baldwin for instance she's a congressperson and was in Wisconsin she she's the first lesbian and gay Congress person I think we interviewed her when she was running for like state/.. in the statehouse in Wisconsin I mean we have interviews of people along the way who are now you know have moved on to bigger and better things. And it's you know to see them in their early iterations not only artists but politicians and you know musicians poets. I think we Eileen Myles from back in the 90s. So I you know I think that there's stuff in there and that's just really worth looking at. And you know we had cut pieces that were

relatively short but like you know the piece we did on Nicole Eisenman I'm pretty sure I shot that. I mean I was there for an hour and a half two hours is probably two hours of material of her you know. So but you know we can only air a five minute segment. So it's you know so there's going to be a lot of really interesting stuff if somebody can track down those tapes.

01:13:01

MP: And the reality is there's no time to lose. High 8 does not it doesn't. Archive very well.

AB: Yeah it's not stable at all. Yeah. Well I'll definitely bring that up and I'm sure that there's going to be a lot of interest in it and hopefully if Maxine has the same memory that you do we can get those tapes out into the eyes of new viewers.

01:13:27

MP: Yeah that'd be great. Yeah.

AB: Oh one other thing I want to quickly ask you about was the music in the program.

I noticed there was some credit that would say you know thanks to music donation from so and so. But I was just curious about how you did wind up sourcing the music and how you would go about picking it. For example, I was a lesbian child has a very distinct song that plays before the segment starts and I was just wondering if you could talk about that a little bit too.

01:13:57

MP: Well we...the opening that we used what is the credits say I can't remember who it was. It was a lesbian band and we got permission from them. But everything else we found three you know music music places like music DVDs, like sound effects to be honest like that we were just kind of scoured places and um I think in some instances we had some. People compose specific music for specific pieces but for the most part we were working with just free source material whenever we could because we knew that it was going to be broadcast and we didn't know what to run into any copyright issues. So the main people that we thought like we need get permission from. The group that gave us the music for the intro. And it was like it was like a feminist punk band. I can't remember their name right now.

01:15:10

AB: Yeah I'll double check the credits I know I've seen it a couple of times and unfortunately I didn't note it down before speaking with you but there's some very. Of the time period music in there and it's pretty pretty funky.

01:15:27

MP: Definitely.

AB: Well I think I basically covered everything I wanted to discuss right now. I mean unless there's anything else that you would like us to know in terms of you know what you would like people to take away from the program and how you how you'd like us to share it with wider audiences.

MP: I mean I guess I would say I would encourage you to talk to other people. I mean I know you tried it you try Linda Chapman?

01:15:57

Yeah. Well we basically e-mailed any. Linda was definitely one of them. We've sent out e-mails to anybody whose e-mail we had basically And yeah we didn't really hear much back apart from you and Laura.

MP: OK let me look up Linda because I can't imagine that Linda would want it when she's really busy. But I mean.

AB: Well I love that she corresponded a little bit with Maxine before we got started just in terms of saying yeah it's OK for the stuff to get digitized but she didn't necessarily get back to us. The students who were hoping to incorporate your words into the site.

01:16:40

MP: So to speak Laura, if you could to Linda. Ana Maria. I think she's hard. I don't know if she talks about Dyke TV She's she's so she could be difficult to get permission from. I would think that Linda would talk and Sally I think would talk to if you know when she has time. So maybe you can leave that up to the next group to try to track down Sally and Linda I think they're there they're going to go with their memory. You know even Harriet Hirschhorn, she'll probably be here any minute. Oh she was you know she wasn't one of the

founders, meaning she wasn't at that first meeting with me, Linda and Ana. But she wasn't about involved pretty much right away, Harriet. She did the news and she is very very active in the Lesbian Avengers and ACT UP. A video activist. You know always one of the main contributors to Dyke TV. She might she might be someone you want to talk to and I think she have time to talk to you.

01:17:54

AB: OK. Well that would be fantastic. Maybe when you see her if you see her today just mentioned to her that we're doing this project and if she's open to getting in touch I would obviously love to speak with her.

MP: OK. Yeah I think that just because I think people are going to remember different things. It was such a communal effort. There were so many people involved that it wouldn't be great to get as many point of views as possible. Well I think that's it for me though.

AB: Oh. Oh. So maybe this is something as well that you might want to think about and then let me know my e-mail. But one of my classmates wanted me to ask you about how you would like the materials that LHA has to be cited. So say for example, somebody watches what we put up online on the site and they want to give credit. Is there a particular way you would like that to be. I mean I guess it depends on which video they're actually talking about. But if you have any preferences or ideas about that we'd like to know so we can put that on the site as well.

01:19:02

MP: Let me talk to Sally about it, because she's very... I mean like I said she's going to law school, but even before her interest in personally getting into law She was always a little concerned about like liability and you know so I don't feel like we, I don't think either of us would want to be credited. I think we'd be like that Dyke TV was a collection of blah blah blah. You know after this video artists who came together to produce a week weekly which ended up turning into a monthly by the way it didn't work. I think the first year it was a week and it converted to monthly But I can I can. Let me check with Sally and a few other people about how that should be cited. OK.

AB: Yeah. Because I mean we can come up with something that what we most prefer. I mean it's very important to us that we would do as much as possible in your words coming from you rather than you know just trying to piece things together by looking things up from various web sites or any scholarly resources. It's better if it comes from you.

MP: OK. Yeah. Oh I'll see if I can track down Sally. And you know I'll talk to Harriet, just ask around just indulge me if you don't hear for me.

AB: OK. So just so we can kind of be on the same page here. We basically need to submit everything to LHA, I think. I think it's by the 8th of December.

01:20:43

So if you have any information leading up to say maybe the fifth. That would be better because we've got to put everything online and have everything written and checked and basically ready to go. We're going to deliver a hard drive we're going to deliver this site with all of the materials and everything that we're doing at least for this time around needs to be completed by that date.

MP: Do you mind sending me away to the site when you're done.

AB: Yeah absolutely. I mean right now what we have is like an unpublished working site that we're doing because everything is just finally starting to come together now. How our class works is that there's different groups doing the details and other groups are doing the metadata for everything. And then now that we have all of that we're able to start putting things up. So it's still under construction. But once it's ready to go I'll be more happy of course to send you a link to the site. It's going to be part of the Lesbian Herstory Archive website so you can see what our classes have been doing for previous years like there's other projects that document that daughters of politeness and a bunch of other oral histories that LHA has. So I can send you a link for that now. But the segment on Dyke TV really isn't up yet but when it is I'll send you the direct link to that as well.

01:22:01

MP: Well OK. Awesome.

AB: Yeah yeah. Thank you so much for taking a chance to speak with me I am really really pleased that we got this opportunity to work on the project as a whole. And now it's just even better getting the chance to talk with you in person because it's making everything kind of come to life so to speak.

MP: Great. Happy to help you.

AB: Yeah thank you so much. And if at any point there's something else that you might want to say that maybe he forgot any other bits of information you think we should have in order to do Dyke TV justice on the site. Feel free to get in touch I'll be happy to chat again or if you just want to send something and e-mail as well that's fine.

01:22:44

MP: OK. Great. Great.

AB: Well thanks again so so very much. Y

MP: Yeah thanks for your work, appreciate It.

AB: Yeah absolutely. Oh and by the way Mary, would you like a copy of this interview for any reason or are you just happy to be in LHA hands.

01:23:02

MP: Sure. I think I'll take it if you have it. I'll give it to my niece.

01:23:04

AB: Yeah. Great. OK so once I have it I'll just send it to you by we transfer. If you get that service. Yes. All right. Perfect. Thank you so much and I hope you enjoy the rest of the weekend Take care. We'll be in touch again soon. OK. T

MP: take care. Thank you. Bye bye.