

**Interviewer:** John Kearns

**Interviewee:** Frank Constantino

**Interview Date:** 2002-03-16

**Description:** Interview with Frank Constantino about his relationship with Sylvia Rivera, Sylvia's mental health, and her time in upstate New York.

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**Disclaimer:** This transcription omits vocal fillers (e.g., "um" and "like") for clarity and flow. Sensitive and/or personal information has been redacted.

[00:00:00]		[ <i>Ambient noise</i> ]
[00:00:11]	Interviewer	Now we should be recording, I hope. [ <i>Laugh</i> ] So, what's... Actually, I'm with Frank, it's March 16th, 2002 in Tarrytown. Why don't I just start by asking a little about you?
[00:00:33]	Waitress	You guys know what you'd like yet?
[00:00:35]	Interviewer	Yeah, you want something to eat or anything?
[00:00:36]	Constantino	Yeah, I was thinking of something to eat. Will you give me a minute?
[00:00:38]	Waitress	Sure.
[00:00:48]	Interviewer	I think I'll have a sandwich or something.
[00:00:51]	Constantino	Yeah, sure, I was thinking of that, we already had McDonald's before.
[00:01:11]	Interviewer	Why don't we start? I'll just ask a little bit about you, and then we'll go into...Are you from up here? Are you from the city?
[00:01:17]	Constantino	Originally?
[00:01:18]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:01:20]	Constantino	No, I'm from Dutchess county.
[00:01:22]	Interviewer	Dutchess county, okay.
[00:01:24]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah. Rhinebeck, Pine Plains, Red Hook, around that area.
[00:01:27]	Interviewer	I know that area very well. My grandmother and aunt lived there.

[00:01:32]	Constantino	We have seven and a half acres up there, roughly.
[00:01:35]	Interviewer	Okay, so that's where you grew up, up there?
[00:01:37]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:01:42]	Interviewer	So, why don't... We'll just talk about... Do you remember when you met Sylvia?
[00:01:48]	Constantino	I met Sylvia in this town.
[00:01:50]	Interviewer	Here? Okay.
[00:01:53]	Constantino	But it was north Tarrytown, not on this side.
[00:01:58]	Interviewer	Okay. Was Sylvia already living here?
[00:02:00]	Constantino	Yeah, with her lover.
[00:02:05]	Interviewer	Okay, all right. And do you remember what year that was?
[00:02:07]	Constantino	No, no. This was a long time ago. I'm not good on dates.
[00:02:14]	Interviewer	Think it was like in the nineteen seventies?
[00:02:16]	Constantino	Oh yeah, it was in the seventies. Well, let's see. <i>[pause]</i> Yeah let's say, ... seventy-eight, seventy-nine. Somewhere in that area because I graduated out of school ... in seventy-seven.
[00:02:34]	Interviewer	Oh okay, what were you studying?
[00:02:35]	Constantino	Huh?

[00:02:36]	Interviewer	What were you studying?
[00:02:37]	Constantino	No, just high school, you know.
[00:02:39]	Interviewer	Oh okay, so you went to high school in Dobbs Ferry?
[00:02:41]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:02:42]	Interviewer	Oh okay, all right.
[00:02:43]	Constantino	I was living at the Anders home, the home for kids. Yeah. My parents died and I bounced around.
[00:02:52]	Interviewer	Was that the same place that Sylvia had been as a kid?
[00:02:55]	Constantino	No, no, no, no.
[00:02:57]	Interviewer	Because she was living up here a while when she was a kid.
[00:02:59]	Constantino	When she was a kid?
[00:03:00]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:03:01]	Constantino	Are you sure?
[00:03:02]	Interviewer	Yeah. I don't remember the name.
[00:03:04]	Constantino	Well you got a one-up on me. I don't remember...I had no idea.
[00:03:07]	Interviewer	Yeah, she was up here somewhere. I don't even know if she knew the name of it.
[00:03:10]	Constantino	I think it's...It might've been further up, I'm not sure.

[00:03:12]	Interviewer	Yeah, maybe further upstate.
[00:03:14]	Constantino	I'm not sure, but it wasn't around this area.
[00:03:16]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:03:17]	Waitress	Hey guys, you know what you'd like yet?
[00:03:19]	Interviewer & Constantino	Yes.
[00:03:21]	Constantino	You want to go first?
[00:03:22]	Interviewer	I'll have a grilled cheese sandwich with tomato in it.
[00:03:25]	Waitress	On white bread?
[00:03:26]	Interviewer	Do you have whole wheat?
[00:03:27]	Waitress	Yeah.
[00:03:28]	Interviewer	Thanks.
[00:03:30]	Constantino	I'll take a roast beef club sandwich.
[00:03:34]	Waitress	On white toast?
[00:03:35]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:03:44]	Interviewer	So, you met Sylvia in the late seventies.
[00:03:46]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah, late seventies, yeah.

[00:03:50]	Interviewer	So, she was already living up here.
[00:03:52]	Constantino	Yeah when I moved here.
[00:03:53]	Interviewer	Okay. All right.
[00:04:03]	Constantino	Well, I left the home and my brother kind of hooked me up with an apartment, like right across the hall from him.
[00:04:12]	Interviewer	Oh so that's how you met, you moved in with him.
[00:04:14]	Constantino	Yeah yeah, we're neighbors.
[00:04:16]	Interviewer	Oh okay, good.
[00:04:17]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah.
[00:04:19]	Interviewer	And Sylvia was living here with her lover at the time?
[00:04:22]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah.
[00:04:23]	Interviewer	Do you know...Does he still live around here?
[00:04:25]	Constantino	No, I hope not. <i>[Interview laughs]</i> I didn't like him at all.
[00:04:29]	Interviewer	So, he's...you don't even know where he is.
[00:04:31]	Constantino	No, not even if he's still alive. Sylvia would've said the same thing. <i>[Laughs]</i>
[00:04:35]	Interviewer	Yeah, yeah... I knew that he...

[00:04:38]	Constantino	He was bad though. I didn't like the way he treated her at all.
[00:04:42]	Interviewer	So you knew him, too?
[00:04:44]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah. I mean I tried... I try to like everybody but, I'll give you an example. Sylvia would tell him that her friends from the city—Bebe and Coco and all them—are coming up to see her. “You know the rules, you speak to them out in the hallway.” When I first met her, she was... He broke her spirit really bad. She was like, every time we see him out in the street, she'd move very quickly and pray to God that nobody saw her. He made her feel so ashamed of herself. Nobody should have to live like that.
[00:05:31]	Interviewer	Yeah, eventually she could leave so.
[00:05:33]	Constantino	So, I'll tell you a story if you want to hear it.
[00:05:37]	Interviewer	Sure.
[00:05:39]	Constantino	How it came about was... They used to have big fights in their apartment. They didn't neglect any other rooms. <i>[Laughs]</i> You can hear them. It sounds like thunder, you know? So, me and my brother, we smoked weed back then. He was always like, “Oh man, I'm going to get my buzz and then I'll come down.” <i>[Laughs]</i> <i>[mumbling]</i> Anyway, eventually, when he wasn't around, we used to talk in the hallway, you know, that's where he wanted her all the time. Little by little we came back instantly to each others' apartments. We knew basically what time he was going to be home, so we were out of there and separated. So, and then, I invited him in one time. We were partying and stuff like that, and he was highly jealous the whole time. Anyways, poker. So, he decided he was going to start fighting in my house. He picked up a chair at her, you know, and I grabbed the chair and I grabbed him, and said, “This is my place. You want to do that, you go next door.” So, they did <i>[mumbling]</i> And they calmed down, she came out. We had two other friends, I had my roommate and this other guy that used to come hang out, you know, once in a while come hang out with us. She came back, she apologized for the fight and stuff like that, that he started. So I told her, and the other two, my roommate and the other two over at her place, so I told her I said, “Look, I don't...” But this time I'm getting tired of this, seeing her being treated like this. “I don't think we should be friends anymore, you know.” So, she was surprised. She didn't take it too well, you know. So, <i>[mumbling]</i> she went home, she went to her place and two seconds later,

		<p>my roommate and the other guy, a friend of ours came flying in the room like they saw a ghost or something. I said, “What’s the matter?” And then, they looked like, “What did you say to her?” “What are you talking about?” “What did you say to her?” I said, “I just told her that I thought we shouldn’t be friends anymore,” I said, “Why?” He said “because when she came back in there, there was a bottle of vodka there. And she drank, she grabbed that bottle of vodka and she started guzzling it like it was water, slammed it down on the table and looked at him and told him, ‘Five minutes, your ass is grass.’” [Laughs] And sure enough, she chased him out with a butcher knife, out of the house.</p>
[00:08:53]	Interviewer	With a butcher knife?
[00:08:55]	Constantino	<p>[Laughs] Big butcher knife. And she threw an antique dresser down the stairs at him and she just went off. So of course the cops are on the way and stuff, so I’m like trying to talk to her, “I understand you’re upset but don’t be stupid. If the police see you with the knife, you’re just going away, you know. And it’s not worth it, he’s not worth it, believe me. Just give me the knife, and you can do whatever you want. I don’t care,” you know? [Laughs] So she gave me the knife and I got rid of it. The next day, we saw each other later, towards the afternoon. And we looked at each other questionably and we just started talking, we started walking. We ended up in .... estate.</p>
[00:09:51]	Interviewer	Oh, is that big estate that’s like a farm?
[00:09:53]	Constantino	<p>Yeah yeah, I used to call it Neverland because it’s like woods and fields, and woods and fields, there’s no sign of life or houses or anything. And I always say, “Wow, I wonder [mumbling] [Laughs] Nobody would ever find it. Next thing you know, we just started getting into it, you know? In this tall grass, and then she stopped me, and I was like, “What?” And we looked up and there’s a guy on a horse looking down on us. He didn’t say nothing, just smiled and rode away. Then we relocated our... [Laughs] But that’s where our relationship basically started.</p>
[00:10:34]	Interviewer	Okay. All right. But that was long after you met Sylvia though.
[00:10:40]	Constantino	Mmm yeah.
[00:10:43]	Interviewer	Probably by then, it was the nineteen-eighties.



[00:10:45]	Constantino	Yeah. And, so then, yeah, and then it was like, well I knew it was right, you know what I mean?
[00:10:50]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:10:51]	Constantino	I mean, she was right. I was right. I tried to explain it to the others down there, but you know, and say, forgive me if I say he instead of she.
[00:11:02]	Interviewer	Oh, that's fine.
[00:11:04]	Constantino	You know, because she even says that too. They look at me like I'm insult... I say, "No, I don't mean it like that."
[00:11:14]	Interviewer	So, you always use Ray?
[00:11:16]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:11:17]	Interviewer	And he?
[00:11:18]	Constantino	And then it was like my thing where... Okay well now I have her. So it's like... Now, my biggest thing was trying to get her spirit back. You're not a bad person. You're not an ugly person. And you know, build her spirit up. And before you know it, Ray was gone and Sylvia arose. <i>[Laughs]</i>
[00:11:43]	Interviewer	Really?
[00:11:44]	Constantino	Yeah. Ray was never be seen from again.
[00:11:48]	Interviewer	Really?
[00:11:49]	Constantino	Yeah, came right out of the closet with Sylvia. Never going back.
[00:11:53]	Interviewer	Really?

[00:11:54]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:11:55]	Interviewer	So, was it like a change in dress and behavior?
[00:11:58]	Constantino	No, no, well yeah, it was like little by little. Little makeup here. Started to get a little obvious.
[00:12:05]	Interviewer	Wow, that's interesting.
[00:12:07]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah well. But it was like, I found it slightly a little embarrassing sometimes. But at the same time I was like, well I can't change things 'cause, I created a monster. <i>[Laughs]</i> So, I said I couldn't see her going back in the closet.
[00:12:30]	Interviewer	And the guy Sylvia was living with at the time, did he move out or?
[00:12:35]	Constantino	Oh yeah, hey. He took off that day. She chased him out with a butcher knife and I never seen him since. Yeah.
[00:12:45]	Interviewer	That's interesting.
[00:12:46]	Constantino	Mhm. Yeah.
[00:12:49]	Interviewer	That's funny. I had listened to some... some interviews that Sylvia had done a number of years ago and there's mention that she worked in the food service industry.
[00:13:05]	Constantino	Oh yeah.
[00:13:06]	Interviewer	What was she doing?
[00:13:08]	Constantino	Well, that's a story I'll tell you about.

[00:13:11]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:13:13]	Constantino	The one in Technicon, I know. I don't know, did you ever know anything about Technicon?
[00:13:19]	Interviewer	Technicon?
[00:13:20]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah.
[00:13:21]	Interviewer	No.
[00:13:21]	Constantino	No. A kind of company that worked with... She eventually served like thousands of people at the time, you know. It was like a big... In the kitchen.
[00:13:34]	Interviewer	So, it was like a cafeteria for a company?
[00:13:36]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah.
[00:13:37]	Interviewer	Okay, so she worked in the kitchen.
[00:13:40]	Constantino	Yeah. So, but it was funny because when she started there, she was just spot washing. You know, she didn't know nothing about no cooking. Eventually, she, you know, got interested in it and stuff like that. But the interesting part was... Where... The reason why she got her spot there was because she was bilingual. You know, and a lot of the ladies there were Spanish, and the boss couldn't translate what they had to be serving and stuff like that. So they asked Sylvia ... mumbling... Then, she started getting smart and was like, "All right, you need me here." And then they did one better, they kind of promoted her to like management, kind of hot washed her to management because you know. Guaranteed, she had to talk to the Spanish ladies all the time. So, it was only right to give her that position.
[00:14:51]	Interviewer	Sure. Good. She was a hard worker?

[00:14:56]	Constantino	Yeah, she was. She was dedicated.
[00:14:58]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:14:59]	Constantino	Even in her sleep. She was dedicated. <i>[Laughs]</i> Really, it was because she'd be yelling out in her sleep, "Throw these tomatoes in the refrigerator." <i>[Laughs]</i> <i>[Unclear]</i>
[00:15:28]	Interviewer	So she worked there for a long time, I guess.
[00:15:31]	Constantino	Yeah. And then she started getting into garnishing, which she's very good at. Turn them into little mice, she loves her mice.
[00:15:38]	Interviewer	What's she doing?
[00:15:40]	Constantino	Garnishing. You know, it's like where you take a... I always mention the mouse. She always mentions the mouse because that's their favorite thing. Where you take limes and lemons, and you know.
[00:15:51]	Interviewer	Oh, and you cut them up into shapes?
[00:15:53]	Constantino	Yeah, and you make a little, yeah.
[00:15:55]	Interviewer	Oh! Okay.
[00:15:57]	Constantino	You know, and then you get little cherry tomatoes and make roses out of them, and stuff like that.
[00:16:05]	Interviewer	Right right. All right.
[00:16:07]	Constantino	Yeah she became very talented, you know? And every time that the people that I stayed with that night, at the funeral, anybody that knows her, that she can take something so simple, plain and simple and turn it into something new and exciting. <i>[Laughs]</i>

[00:16:37]	Interviewer	So, were you working together at the time too or you had a different job?
[00:16:40]	Constantino	No. I helped her for two days one time. And it was interesting because, well she would always tell you, I'm known as an eater. I love to eat, you know? So I was in my glory there. Wow, all the beautiful food being passed around. You know 'cause I [...] to eat. No, no I wasn't hungry. I finally realized, in the two days that I worked, by the time it came for a break I was hungry. You just saw all that food, and it just made you feel like you were full already. [pause] But I got a couple friends that she worked with. We'd hang out and drink and have a good time. We even went to Maine together one time.
[00:17:54]	Interviewer	Like a vacation?
[00:17:55]	Constantino	Yeah, it was like a three-day, a package deal. [...] It was pretty cool. You get a boat ride, a free boat ride. It was Memorial Day weekend, only a three-day weekend. You get a Broadway show. You know.
[00:18:25]	Interviewer	Was this up on a lake?
[00:18:27]	Constantino	No. Well, no. On the boat ride, they take you around to different islands and stuff. There's the seal island, where nobody is allowed to live.
[00:18:40]	Interviewer	Oh okay, because it's on the coast.
[00:18:42]	Constantino	Yeah, seal lions or something. Yeah, it was interesting. And it was fun because the Broadway show was actually an old movie theater, all right? But they took every other row out and put little cocktail tables in between.
[00:19:01]	Interviewer	Oh okay, so you could have drinks.
[00:19:03]	Constantino	Yeah, they gave you one free drink and a sandwich or something. A Reuben sandwich was the biggest thing they had there.
[00:19:10]	Interviewer	Mhm.

[00:19:14]	Constantino	I mean you could get more drinks but you had to pay for them. But the interesting part was that the people serving you were the same people putting on the play. It was funny because they'd be like, "Sorry, it's my turn, I gotta get up there." [ <i>Laughs</i> ] It was so cool.
[00:19:37]	Interviewer	So, the two of you pretty much spent all your free time together, when you were living together?
[00:19:43]	Constantino	Yeah. [pause] Yeah, a lot of battle.
[00:19:49]	Interviewer	The two of you?
[00:19:50]	Constantino	Yeah, because a lot of drinking. I tried to get her to stop. She'd always just say, "I drink because you make me drink."
[00:20:03]	Interviewer	Is that what ended things, it was the drinking?
[00:20:10]	Constantino	Yeah. It just got tiring, and stuff like that. And we [ <i>Coughs</i> ], we broke it off but, we're very different. That's why it hit me so hard when she left, you know. I know a lot of people who died, never really cried. But her... I always used to say no matter how many battles we had, whenever either one of us was in trouble, we were always right there, you know? All wars were canceled, you know? And then, we would continue and after everything's okay. [ <i>Laughs</i> ] It sounds kind of weird, the way we was.
[00:20:59]	Interviewer	So, is that when Sylvia moved back to New York? When your relationship ended, she went back to New York?
[00:21:04]	Constantino	No well we [ <i>Coughs</i> ], when we split up, because I had this house in Tarrytown, you know, and we rented.
[00:21:16]	Interviewer	Is that the one you pointed out when we were driving?
[00:21:18]	Constantino	No, no. This is another one, it's on the other side of town. We'd travel around to many places.

[00:21:24]	Interviewer	You lived in a lot of, right here in town, you just...
[00:21:26]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah [ <i>Laughs</i> ]. I can think of four or five different places we lived in, just in this town alone.
[00:21:32]	Interviewer	What were you, like, looking for better rent or something? So when you found a better deal, you moved?
[00:21:36]	Constantino	Yeah. You know, you just get tired of just one place or something. Or the landlord's no good or something.
[00:21:44]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:21:45]	Constantino	But... [pause] I just forgot what I was saying, I'm sorry.
[00:21:55]	Interviewer	Oh that's all right. I was asking if she, if when you ended your relationship...
[00:22:03]	Constantino	Oh oh!
[00:22:04]	Interviewer	...if she moved back to New York, and you said no, that she was still here.
[00:22:08]	Constantino	Yeah, so what happened was, all right, excuse me. What happened was, with the house, it was a two-story house with a studio underneath, all right. And the studio was rented out separately, okay? Now, we had to pay for our own heat. I had the thermostat. Now the problem was the people at the studio had their own thermostat too but I had to pay for heating. They didn't have to. So I argued with the landlord a couple times. I mean, in the beginning it wasn't bad. Whoever, there were a couple people who used to live down there who were cooperative with us, you know? But the last one, [Unclear ] We padlocked our place for four days to go to Yonkers and put the heat up to eighty degrees, you know? "Oh well you guys come back in 4 days, you guys..." okay well I put it up, don't touch that thermostat. She wouldn't listen. Sure enough, on average, we used to average two-hundred dollars a month. Which is a big drop, [unclear]. We managed to deal with it. But with this was, it was an additional three-hundred. I said no, I'm not going to pay this. I argued it out with the landlord. "She called me on my job!" [Unclear] "You know I got an

		additional one hundred dollars?” “I don’t care. She needs her lights.” I tried to explain to her, if I’m going to be paying for the heat, don’t you think I should be able to control it? Why don’t you just get rid of that thermostat down there, I don’t need it. “Well if you can’t afford it.” Well fine, I can’t deal with it. And we, so, and I talked to her, Sylvia, and this other roommate that I didn’t really get along with either, “ [Unclear] I need help with the rent.” Well all right well, I put up with it. She worked with him. They’re both heavy drinkers, and Sylvia lost her job.
[00:24:47]	Interviewer	Why did she lose her job?
[00:24:48]	Constantino	Because of the drinking. She was falling asleep, you know, falling asleep on the slicing machine or something like that. It’s just that everything takes its toll, you know?
[00:24:56]	Interviewer	Sure, sure. So, she was unemployed at the time?
[00:24:59]	Constantino	Yeah, so I kept telling her, “Look for a job, look for a job.” And I had to, [...] I wasn’t stealing but, I was doing everything I can to keep things, I mean using up all my vacation money on the job. Working, just taking the money and paying the bills, you know. Going to the Salvation Army, getting bags of food, [...] And then, I come home and there are cans all over the place, and I was like “What’s this?” “I was hungry.” I was looking at her, “This shit has got to last, Sylvia.” You know? “It’s not only for you,” I mean you know? “We’re trying to make ends meet, we’re trying to stretch things out here.”
[00:25:53]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:25:54]	Constantino	Finally she got a job.
[00:25:57]	Interviewer	What was she doing?
[00:25:57]	Constantino	Like a part-time job. On average, when she worked at Children’s Village.
[00:26:04]	Interviewer	What’s that?



[00:26:06]	Constantino	A home for kids.
[00:26:07]	Interviewer	Oh she worked there too?
[00:26:08]	Constantino	Yeah, in the cafeteria.
[00:26:10]	Interviewer	It's called Children's Village?
[00:26:12]	Constantino	Yeah. It's in [Dogsbury? Dodsbury?]
[00:26:14]	Interviewer	Is it the place where you lived when you were a kid?
[00:26:15]	Constantino	No, no.
[00:26:16]	Interviewer	No, it's a different one?
[00:26:17]	Constantino	No, no, it was another home. Yeah, but... So, she was making pretty good money there. I mean like four hundred every week, but she got paid every two weeks, so it was like seven, eight hundred dollars, you know. So she's used to decent money like that. So, and then when she got the part-time job, she got her first check and it was a hundred seventy five dollars. So she got really depressed, and I said, "Don't even think about that. Think about how long it took you to find the damn thing. 9 months." You know?
[00:26:59]	Interviewer	Was it because people wouldn't accept her when [Unclear]..
[00:27:02]	Constantino	A little of both maybe. Maybe she's a little shy or whatever, you know, so.
[00:27:10]	Interviewer	But it seems like when she did get a job, she stayed with it. She did all right for a while.
[00:27:14]	Constantino	Oh yeah. Mhm.

[00:27:19]	Interviewer	But would people use Sylvia or Ray when she would go to work?
[00:27:25]	Constantino	Ray, I would say. She gave this speech, up on White Plains, very fascinating. For the gay community and stuff like that.
[00:27:40]	Interviewer	Oh, in White Plains.
[00:27:41]	Constantino	Yeah this one time, 'cause she wanted me to go up there [Unclear], I'm not really into the politics thing. That's probably why I didn't really go all the time. So, I'm kinda glad I did though. But she was telling them how, "You people put me down, you know, because they're different. Well, you know, you guys are gay but I'm transgender." Whatever, you know. "They look at me and put me down. But let me tell you something, I am what I want to be. And you people are gay, but you're giving into the system. You follow like sheep into the system. I don't do that." Which is true.
[00:28:33]	Interviewer	And how do people react to that?
[00:28:35]	Constantino	Just started hitting them one by one. This one guy stood up and said, "You're right. You are what you are." You know? He said, "I got to give it to you. It takes a lot of guts to be what you are." [Laughs] "You might get knocked around or criticized," you know what I mean? But you know, he's not giving up.
[00:29:01]	Interviewer	I know Sylvia had a sister. Do you know if she was ever in contact with her sister when you knew her?
[00:29:06]	Constantino	No, I tried to get her to do that. But she blew it off the whole time.
[00:29:13]	Interviewer	Yeah she did, okay.
[00:29:14]	Constantino	Mhm. "Oh she doesn't want to see me. I don't want her to know."
[00:29:20]	Interviewer	Right. Did she wish she was, she could've gotten in touch.
[00:29:23]	Constantino	No, I don't think she did.

[00:29:25]	Interviewer	She didn't, she didn't, okay.
[00:29:26]	Constantino	She might have a general...I don't know. I mean you're talking about a lot of years later.
[00:29:30]	Interviewer	I know, that's why I asked.
[00:29:31]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:29:32]	Interviewer	I didn't know if she did. So, tell me about when you met Marsha.
[00:29:39]	Constantino	Well, it was at a march.
[00:29:42]	Interviewer	At a march, okay.
[00:29:43]	Constantino	Gay march.
[00:29:44]	Interviewer	In New York? City?
[00:29:45]	Constantino	Mhm.
[00:29:45]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:29:47]	Constantino	I marched with 'em. And it was interesting, you know. She's just like she is in her pictures. She's like somebody totally different. It's like you don't know how to take 'em. But, she was just, I can see why her and Sylvia are very good friends. They both have the same exact attitude.
[00:30:11]	Interviewer	Really?
[00:30:12]	Constantino	You know, caring and like take me or leave me. You know, because I remember that one banner, I think it was one of the first marches I went to, you know, with her. I went to a couple of 'em, not too many.

[00:30:29]	Interviewer	Marsha was just at that one time you went?
[00:30:31]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah. She just happened to be there that one time. I think it was maybe a year before she died or something.
[00:30:36]	Interviewer	Okay so it was like 1990, 1991.
[00:30:38]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah. [Unclear]
[00:30:42]	Interviewer	That's okay. That's okay. <i>[Laughs]</i>
[00:30:43]	Constantino	Anyway.
[00:30:47]	Interviewer	So, Marsha never came up here?
[00:30:50]	Constantino	No, she never. Coco and Bebe did.
[00:30:55]	Interviewer	Coco and Bebe?
[00:30:56]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:30:57]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:30:57]	Constantino	They put, matter of fact, a musical right over here. They put a show on.
[00:31:01]	Interviewer	Oh okay.
[00:31:02]	Constantino	They put a drag show on. Yeah, they made a big hit on that.
[00:31:07]	Interviewer	So during the period of time that you were living here with Sylvia, there wasn't a lot of contact with Marsha? Or was it just like the phone?
[00:31:15]	Constantino	No, not really. The only time they really saw each other was, I'd say, at

		the march.
[00:31:24]	Interviewer	At the march. Did Sylvia talk much about Marsha?
[00:31:28]	Constantino	Oh yeah.
[00:31:29]	Interviewer	She did?
[00:31:31]	Constantino	Yeah. Marsha P. Johnson. Pay It No Mind Johnson.
[00:31:35]	Interviewer	Okay, because they had met when Sylvia was around 12 or 13 years old.
[00:31:42]	Constantino	Mhm.
[00:31:45]	Interviewer	But I didn't know if once Sylvia came up here.
[00:31:48]	Constantino	She always mentioned Bebe. She put her in her first dress and all that.
[00:31:52]	Interviewer	Oh okay. Was Bebe at the funeral? Okay then I'll have to try and get in touch with Bebe.
[00:32:00]	Constantino	She was up in the front. She's a Black, like Coco.
[00:32:09]	Interviewer	I think I know who Coco is.
[00:32:11]	Constantino	Coco's a Black girl. [Unclear] "I cried like a baby. She would've loved that. She would've loved that."
[00:32:22]	Interviewer	What kind of music did Sylvia listen to?
[00:32:29]	Constantino	50s.
[00:32:33]	Interviewer	Can I get you guys anything else?

[00:32:34]	Constantino	No, I'm good, thank you. [pause] To make it plain and simple, WCBS FM.
[00:32:45]	Interviewer	Oh really?
[00:32:46]	Constantino	Oh yeah.
[00:32:46]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:32:47]	Constantino	It was mandatory, yeah.
[00:32:49]	Interviewer	That was her style of music.
[00:32:50]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah. And it was funny you mentioned that because I was telling them down there, I said, well, could get her all the different types of music that'd give her different emotions, you know? If you want to see her cry, you play, you would play "Imagine" from John Lennon. She'd cry like crazy.
[00:33:20]	Interviewer	Really?
[00:33:21]	Constantino	Yeah, she'd sing right along with it.
[00:33:23]	Interviewer	Wow.
[00:33:26]	Constantino	You want to bring her spirits up, then you got "Power to the People."
[00:33:28]	Interviewer	Mhm. So she was a John Lennon fan then.
[00:33:30]	Constantino	Oh yeah well. She was... She was like the way he was; peace, [unclear], all weird things. Oh, "we're saying give peace a chance." And there was this one, this one that brought it all out of her. [Unclear] She'd jump right out of her bed and start dancing. It was, 'cause he came here one time, Johnny Maestro.

[00:34:07]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:34:08]	Constantino	On the Brooklyn Bridge.
[00:34:09]	Interviewer	Uh-huh.
[00:34:09]	Constantino	He played here. We got tickets and we watched. I didn't really know what kind of songs he played. Excuse me. And I knew it was the 50s so we were bound to have a good time. So he ended up doing that song, "You Make Me Wanna Shout."
[00:34:33]	Interviewer	Oh "Shout," yeah.
[00:34:34]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:34:34]	Interviewer	Sure.
[00:34:35]	Constantino	That one. No matter where she was, she'd just jump right, and I was too slow, I thought I was fast enough. [Unclear] She was out of her seat, down on the space [Unclear] with the hands. It was so funny, 'cause he took it well though. He really did.
[00:34:54]	Interviewer	So she knew how to have a good time.
[00:34:56]	Constantino	Oh yeah, let me tell you, that was one of the beautiful things about her. So many, so many times I remember I was telling them all the stories down there. The people, not Rusty but...
[00:35:13]	Interviewer	Randy? From the lamp shop?
[00:35:14]	Constantino	No well, I saw him down there. But I'm saying the people that stayed with Julia.
[00:35:23]	Interviewer	Oh okay, yeah.

[00:35:24]	Constantino	At their house.
[00:35:24]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:35:25]	Constantino	Yeah so I was telling them all the stories in the morning and stuff like that.
[00:35:28]	Interviewer	Oh, you stayed there after the funeral.
[00:35:29]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah.
[00:35:30]	Interviewer	Oh that was nice, that was nice.
[00:35:32]	Constantino	Yeah, like I said, I don't know anything about the city. I told Julia, she was like, "Look, you've been through enough," you know what I mean?, "Tomorrow is another day." I'm not going to ask you to drag me to the train station after all this, you know?
[00:35:48]	Interviewer	So you stayed over and went back later.
[00:35:49]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:35:49]	Interviewer	Sounds like a good idea.
[00:35:50]	Constantino	I was going to sleep there anyway.
[00:35:52]	Interviewer	So I have a video for the service that they had for Marsha, when Marsha died.
[00:35:58]	Constantino	Really?
[00:35:58]	Interviewer	Yeah. Were you at that service?



[00:36:00]	Constantino	No.
[00:36:01]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:36:01]	Constantino	No, I was not.
[00:36:03]	Interviewer	'Cause Sylvia's in that video.
[00:36:04]	Constantino	Oh, is she?
[00:36:05]	Interviewer	Yeah. She, she was one of the people who talked at the service, but I didn't know if you had been there.
[00:36:10]	Constantino	Mm. <i>[pause]</i> But I remember getting the letter from The Loft, this place called The Loft.
[00:36:21]	Interviewer	Oh okay, that was Bob Kohler?
[00:36:23]	Constantino	Yeah.
[00:36:24]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:36:25]	Constantino	Yeah. She was lost, you know?
[00:36:29]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:36:29]	Constantino	'Cause you know, I mean, I don't blame her, you know. The way they were saying, they found her in the river.
[00:36:35]	Interviewer	Yes.
[00:36:36]	Constantino	She didn't take that very well at all.

[00:36:39]	Interviewer	Yeah. [Pause] So, what prompted Sylvia to go back to New York? Was it a certain point in the early 90s she was back living in New York?
[00:36:59]	Constantino	No matter what, she was destined to go back.
[00:37:05]	Interviewer	Why do you say that?
[00:37:06]	Constantino	Because she [Unclear], she made up her mind about the politics thing. She wanted to get back into politics.
[00:37:19]	Interviewer	‘Cause she wasn’t involved when she was up here?
[00:37:22]	Constantino	No no, well I mean, different politics stuff like that. She started towards the end, you know. Going to, like I said, she went to the place in White Plains.
[00:37:34]	Interviewer	She was what?
[00:37:35]	Constantino	Went to the place in White Plains.
[00:37:37]	Interviewer	Right right, yeah.
[00:37:38]	Constantino	And eventually we went to discos and that’s where they, you know, gay, gay discos. That’s where she got involved with, you know, what was the gay community going on. But it was definitely, she was definite in her heart and I tried to talk her out of it because I mean, like I said, I wasn’t into politics.
[00:38:03]	Interviewer	Right.
[00:38:04]	Constantino	I even told her, I was like, “Look, I don’t know much about this world. You know that. But I’m almost sure it’s not like it used to be when you were unionizing. Now they just assume [Unclear] and just blow you away.” But that don’t scare her. Got to do it. Got to do it.
[00:38:23]	Interviewer	After she went back to New York, she ended up homeless. Were you still

		in contact with her at that time or did she kind of disappear?
[00:38:32]	Constantino	Oh yeah, yeah.
[00:38:36]	Interviewer	You were still in contact?
[00:38:38]	Constantino	Oh yeah, as a matter of fact I spent a couple weekends here, down at the pier with her.
[00:38:44]	Interviewer	Oh you did?
[00:38:45]	Constantino	Oh yeah.
[00:38:45]	Interviewer	Oh.
[00:38:46]	Constantino	Oh yeah. She invited me down to her little hut and everything, you know?
[00:38:49]	Interviewer	Was she living there long?
[00:38:51]	Constantino	Mmm, I don't know. Well I kept telling her, you know, this is cool for the summer. What are you going to do in the winter, you know?
[00:38:58]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:38:59]	Constantino	You're right on the water, kid. You're not gonna survive very well, you know? "Ah, don't worry about it," you know?
[00:39:07]	Interviewer	So what did she eventually do? Did she, when the winter came, she left?
[00:39:11]	Constantino	Yeah. Well she, by that, you know, you start finding places to go, you know. Get offers, somebody got an apartment or. I mean, come on, you got enough time to do this, you know. You're not waiting 'til the first snowfall or something, so.

[00:39:27]	Interviewer	Right. But she never came back up here to live again?
[00:39:31]	Constantino	No, she wanted to leave.
[00:39:33]	Interviewer	She did?
[00:39:34]	Constantino	Yeah, she did. She wanted to find a place up here. I mean, 'cause this is like a little hideaway, you know?
[00:39:43]	Interviewer	Yeah, it's a quiet little town.
[00:39:44]	Constantino	You know? And she's like, oh, she went up to the country. You always call it the country.
[00:39:53]	Interviewer	Yeah, one time she said it was "upstate."
[00:39:55]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah. Mhm. I'll tell you a couple stories here. The ones I was telling you I told them. To kind of give you the kind of person that she is. Like the spontaneous thing or something, you know? Now, we went to this park, Untermyer park.
[00:40:24]	Interviewer	Where is that?
[00:40:25]	Constantino	In Yonkers.
[00:40:26]	Interviewer	Oh, cool.
[00:40:27]	Constantino	I used to hang out there as a kid.
[00:40:30]	Interviewer	Was it down by the river? A park down there.
[00:40:32]	Constantino	No, it was right off of Broadway there.
[00:40:34]	Interviewer	Oh, what's the name of it?

[00:40:35]	Constantino	Untermeyer park.
[00:40:36]	Interviewer	Untermeyer, no I don't know it. Okay, anyway.
[00:40:39]	Constantino	So, we used to get grubs there all the time, you know? Especially in the summertime. People will live there, you know, and sleep there. It had fountains and a nice, nice bathing pool, but it wasn't, you weren't allowed to go in it. It was like two feet deep. Nice size, you know?
[00:40:59]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[00:41:00]	Constantino	I took her there. Because we were looking for drugs, we were looking for weed or something. And it was really hot that day. Next thing I know it, boom, she's going right in that water and I turned around and the rest of the park just followed her. Oh, it was just so funny.
[00:41:20]	Interviewer	Dressed and everything?
[00:41:21]	Constantino	Oh yeah.
[00:41:22]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:41:23]	Constantino	Yeah. I mean she had her shorts on and stuff like that. I was like, "You know, you ain't supposed to be. "To hell with that. I am fine." And she says, "You want to tell the rest of these people?" <i>[Laughs]</i> "What, they're going to throw us all out?" No, and there was another time, we went to Madison Square Garden. She used to, we used to be into wrestling. You know, watching the wrestling.
[00:41:48]	Interviewer	Professional wrestling?
[00:41:49]	Constantino	Yeah like back in the day with André the Giant and stuff like that.
[00:41:52]	Interviewer	Mhm, right.

[00:41:53]	Constantino	And now they had this referee, this guy who's bald. So she had her bottle there, in the Garden you know, sipping on her bottle. She was cheering on, just like she always did. Oh you, "kick his ass, kick his ass," you know? So I'm like, "Calm down, calm down." You know she, she's having a ball. So all of a sudden everything got quiet. Everyone calmed down, got quiet. She just blurts out, it was funny, it was like, "You bull-headed sapsucker." And the next thing I know, the whole section where we are just started chanting it.
[00:42:33]		Really?
[00:42:34]	Constantino	And then it went around the whole station. "Holy shit, look what you started." She goes, "Well yeah."
[00:42:47]	Interviewer	It's a surprise, I mean, that she was into professional wrestling.
[00:42:54]	Constantino	She got out of it very quickly though.
[00:42:57]	Interviewer	Lost interest?
[00:42:58]	Constantino	[Unclear]
[00:43:04]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:43:07]	Constantino	But I tell them about her drinking, you know? Said I had learned a trick, which I told this other guy in Dobbs Ferry that his wife, and his wife is a heavy drinker, you know? And you know, when they get to that point where you become their enemy. They'll sit there and have a conversation with you, but that certain drink that they had, all of a sudden something clicks, and it's like, "You're not my friend." And it's like they turn on you. So I tell him, "Oh yeah, look, it's all in the timing." I had a friend of mine talk about Sylvia, and it was like their fifth drink, that's where they turn. You got to get them out before the fifth drink. A couple times I got lucky and I was able to get her out before she had that. And then, and then the next trick was to get her to eat something, you know?
[00:44:13]	Interviewer	She didn't eat when she drank?

[00:44:15]	Constantino	No. She didn't really eat, you know. So...
[00:44:19]	Waitress	Can I get you guys anything else?
[00:44:21]	Constantino	No, I'm good, thank you.
[00:44:23]	Interviewer	Me too.
[00:44:24]	Constantino	But...so.
[00:44:28]	Interviewer	When did she decide to stop drinking? 'Cause the last three or four years she had stopped.
[00:44:34]	Constantino	You know, it's funny you asked me that, because I kept asking her and Julia. I kept saying, "Julia, how in the hell do you do it? You know how many bottles I had with this one? Couldn't get her to stop drinking, and just poured another bottle." I didn't know what to do.
[00:44:54]	Interviewer	Right.
[00:44:54]	Constantino	I mean, the bottles I was finding, half-bottles, you know, Irish, no Canadian Mist. That's what she preferred.
[00:45:07]	Interviewer	Canadian Mist?
[00:45:09]	Constantino	Yeah, it's a rye or something like that. I don't know. But I'd find a bottle and pour it down the sink, you know? Just hope that, [unclear], she forgot she even had it. I got away with it, you know? But, or I'd just give it to somebody, "You want it? Take it. Because I don't want to drink it." But, neither of them would tell me.
[00:45:34]	Interviewer	Oh really?
[00:45:35]	Constantino	They'd just like, "I don't know. I don't know." Two people at the house that I stayed at that night. The next morning, we talked about it, it was so fascinating. Because I thought it was Julia that got her to stop. This one

		<p>girl said, “Could she remember her going through the changes?” She locked herself in the room and she wouldn’t come out. She got a non-alcoholic beer [unclear] and a lot of pot. She smoked a lot of pot, but she wouldn’t drink nothing, and she didn’t bother with anybody for like two weeks. [unclear] were looking at each other because they remember that, and they were like, “I believe Julia went through a lot of hell on that one.” But apparently, she stopped because, she stopped herself, because Julia is on medication and she wanted to take care of her. I thought that was really cool.</p>
[00:46:45]	Interviewer	Really? Oh, that’s interesting.
[00:46:47]	Constantino	<p>And that sounds like her too. She was a very kind person. I remember in Yonkers, I used to, I mean there were druggie days, you know, people crashed out all over the floor. [Unclear] She’d wake up, have her drink, and I’d say, “Who’s this?” Nine times out of ten, she’s like “Eh, somebody, eh, they’re cold and hungry. No place to go.” “Look at you, bringing in strays.” “Well, I used to be one myself, I know what it feels like.”</p>
[00:47:31]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[00:47:34]	Constantino	So she was a caring person.
[00:47:36]	Interviewer	Yes.
[00:47:36]	Constantino	[Unclear] I thought, all you have to say is that you were hungry, she would give something in a heartbeat. No problem at all.
[00:47:46]	Interviewer	Did she ever tell you anything about when she and Marsha started STAR House?
[00:47:52]	Constantino	Mhm. I don’t really remember too much. I remember, yeah, she did mention it some.
[00:48:03]	Interviewer	Yeah, I think it was nineteen seventy, nineteen seventy one, back then. And that was the...



[00:48:09]	Constantino	There should be some kind of articles or something still on it.
[00:48:12]	Interviewer	There's a few things, yeah. A few things out there. She'd also told me that she was going to write her own story, I don't know if she was talking notes.
[00:48:21]	Constantino	Yeah, I know. I tried to push her on that, but...I even had a name for it, you know? But she didn't, she really...
[00:48:34]	Interviewer	Do you know what the name was?
[00:48:36]	Constantino	No, I gave it.
[00:48:37]	Interviewer	Oh you gave it, okay.
[00:48:39]	Constantino	I wanted to give her a name. I said, "Hey, I even got that name of your book for you."
[00:48:42]	Interviewer	What was the name, if you were gonna give it?
[00:48:45]	Constantino	Girl.
[00:48:46]	Interviewer	Girl?
[00:48:47]	Constantino	Yeah. G-R-I, I mean, G-I-R-L. Gays in real life. And it's spelled like girl, I thought that was really cool. She can't tell, but she had so much to do. Didn't have time for it.
[00:49:07]	Interviewer	Didn't have time for that, yeah.
[00:49:08]	Constantino	You know?
[00:49:09]	Interviewer	Yeah.

[00:49:10]	Constantino	Never, she's never, [Unclear] you know?
[00:49:18]	Interviewer	And at the service, I heard them saying that they drove her up here. And I guess she wanted to say goodbye to you when she knew she was very very sick. They brought her, someone brought her up, up to Dobbs ferry to see you.
[00:49:32]	Constantino	Mmm no.
[00:49:33]	Interviewer	No? Oh, did I misunderstand that? I thought that they had come up here...
[00:49:38]	Constantino	No.
[00:49:38]	Interviewer	Shortly before she died.
[00:49:41]	Constantino	No, she called me.
[00:49:43]	Interviewer	She called you.
[00:49:44]	Constantino	She called me before she died. And she said, that's why I was looking at that Revolution picture that they had at the Walter, that was her all the way. But, Rusty left it on my bed when she left.
[00:50:04]	Interviewer	Oh nice.
[00:50:04]	Constantino	You know? "You son of a bitch, you weren't supposed to call yet. You were supposed to come see me first." She called me a week before she died, and told me, "Oh yeah, I'm going to be up there and spend some time with you." I told her, "You're always welcome, you know, my door's always open. It's no problem." And then when I mentioned it down there, after the service, and the next day, everybody's looking at each other. "A week before she died she could barely walk, she wasn't going nowhere." She didn't want me to know about it, I guess.
[00:50:35]	Interviewer	Yeah. But she did talk to you?
[00:50:38]	Constantino	Well it was funny because, I'll tell you another story, we lost contact at one time. Because of my job, my job was making a move, the office was

		moving and [unclear]. We didn't really have a phone [unclear]. So I lost contact with her, and everything that, all the numbers that I had, I lost.
[00:51:16]	Interviewer	So you didn't even know her number.
[00:51:17]	Constantino	The only one I really had originally was Randy Wicker, you know?
[00:51:22]	Interviewer	Okay.
[00:51:23]	Constantino	The store, deco lightning place. And I couldn't find out anyone, you know? So I lost her and that felt really bad.
[00:51:34]	Interviewer	So how did you re-establish contact?
[00:51:36]	Constantino	Well, well I worried about it for a long time. I [Unclear] me.
[00:51:47]	Interviewer	But that was like for a couple years that were gone?
[00:51:49]	Constantino	No, no, no, not for that long.
[00:51:51]	Interviewer	Not that long, okay.
[00:51:52]	Constantino	I'd say maybe a month. Month and a half at the most. But that's too long not to hear from her, you know? So, one day I get a letter, you know? Never so glad to see that thing. She give me [Unclear], she cursed me out and everything. She said, "I called your job, and all I get is 'ring, ring, ring'." And the whole time, I'm reading it real fast, I'm like "Yeah, yeah, yeah, give me your number, give me your number, give me your number." And she gave me two different numbers, one for her home and one for her hospital. So I called her, I called it right away as soon as I got it. I called her right away, and she answered her phone, and I said "You listen here you son of a bitch, don't you ever think that I'd give up," you know? She was like, "Oh well look who's decided to call me?" You know? I said, "Don't ever think [Unclear]."
[00:52:55]	Interviewer	Do you, do you still have any photos or letters or anything like that of Sylvia's?

[00:53:01]	Constantino	Mm, not really, no. We lost so much when we were in Yonkers. We lost everything, everything.
[00:53:09]	Interviewer	But you actually lived in Yonkers for a while?
[00:53:11]	Constantino	Oh yeah.
[00:53:12]	Interviewer	Oh okay.
[00:53:13]	Constantino	Yeah. What happened was she moved there first. After, oh, so, what happened was, with the house, right?
[00:53:23]	Interviewer	Oh yeah, the house. Right.
[00:53:24]	Constantino	Okay so what happened was, eventually I had to give it up because I couldn't do it anymore. The two of them wasn't helping me, you know? And I sat them both down and I said, "Look, I want to give you guys, you know, I need some help here. These bills and everything. We can't do this no more. I'm running out of ideas. I need some help. I'm giving you guys two weeks to get your shit together. 'Cause, I mean, you're leaving everything up to me. And if you're leaving everything up to me, I'm going to have to decide and you're not going to like my decision."
[00:54:04]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[00:54:05]	Constantino	I can't do it, you know? And they paid me no mind, they called my bluff and sure enough two weeks later, I explained to Sylvia, I said, "Look, I'm going to get, I can't afford, I'm going to get a room. For me and, you know, for me alone. I can't afford a place, an apartment if she wasn't really working. And she ended up going to the shelter, you know?"
[00:54:34]	Interviewer	And that was down in—
[00:54:34]	Constantino	White Plains.

[00:54:35]	Interviewer	Oh, White Plains.
[00:54:36]	Constantino	And then they got her in Yonkers.
[00:54:38]	Interviewer	Oh okay, they found a place for her to live there.
[00:54:40]	Constantino	<p>Yeah, and that was a big mistake. Oh that was a big mistake. Because I, almost the same day, oh God I'll never forget that, I was talking to a guy in a bar and he went, he went down there years ago. He found his [Unclear] "Shelter?" "Yeah." "You get her out of there right away. That place is no good. That place is like a jail down there." You know? Sure enough, it was on a Saturday, I got a phone call. She was in tears. I could barely understand her. She said, 'You come get me or I'm jumping off this damn bridge.' I said, "Why? What happened?" She just, "You just come." She ended up getting raped by ten guys. And I, she was at the train station I met you at, and she's all curled up in a little ball all scared, man. Oh, it broke my heart. Oh my God, and all banged up. [Unclear] You know Deborah, and I tried to explain to her [unclear] but I really got a lot of work to do and I really can't afford to [Unclear]. "Eh, eh, eh, don't worry about me." I said, "Relax. Calm down. Okay? I'll do the next best thing I can think of right now." I said, "I'll put you in a cab, give you some money and go to the bar, okay?" "The bar for a drink?" Yeah, so I went back to work. I got on the phone to the lady at the bar, she's a friend of mine. I explained the situation so, "he just got raped," and stuff like that. "Oh my God." "Give him [unclear]. Give him whatever he wants, you know? Try to keep him away, you know? He just doesn't need to be around people, you know?" "Oh no problem, for you, no problem." So, and I explained to her, I said, "Look, if he runs out of money, just give him what he wants and I'll, I'll take care of it when I see you, when I get there." "Alright, no problem." So, and when I got off, she was in pretty good spirits. She was calm, and you know. I said, "Aw, look at you. You just feel so much more relaxed, you know what I mean?" And I pulled her to the side and I was like, "Come on, alright, I just want to make sure you're doing alright." "I'm doing okay, nobody messed with me." "Alright." But I, and then I took him out for his birthday. It was around his birthday. So I took him.</p>
[00:57:40]	Interviewer	Right.
[00:57:41]	Constantino	<p>Right. So I asked him, I said, "Why? Why did you let this happen? At the shelter." "Eh, eh, eh." "Yeah, because you didn't believe, you know? I told. I didn't want you to go to no shelter." I felt so bad for her. [Unclear]</p>

		And not knowing, you know, what's going to happen to her, where she is, and not being with her anymore it's kind of, you know, not in arm's reach, you know?
[00:58:17]	Interviewer	So she stayed with you for a while after that?
[00:58:21]	Constantino	No, no.
[00:58:22]	Interviewer	No? Oh okay.
[00:58:23]	Constantino	No, what did she do? She, oh she ended up, that's when she ended up in Yonkers in an apartment.
[00:58:32]	Interviewer	In an apartment. Oh okay.
[00:58:35]	Constantino	With a bunch of people on welfare and stuff like that.
[00:58:39]	Interviewer	And then she just eventually ended up back in Manhattan?
[00:58:40]	Constantino	And it was, yeah. Yeah, 'cause it worked out great for her because they were all transgender.
[00:58:49]	Interviewer	Oh really?
[00:58:49]	Constantino	And they were prostitutes. She wasn't really a prostitute, but they were all on crack. Yeah, so.
[00:58:59]	Interviewer	I just want, something you said that was interesting, I just want to get a better idea.
[00:59:04]	Constantino	Sure.
[00:59:05]	Interviewer	When you first met Sylvia, she was using the name Ray, and I guess she was traditionally in men's clothes.

[00:59:14]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah, but still always had the long hair.
[00:59:16]	Interviewer	The long hair. But, so, it was over time.
[00:59:19]	Constantino	Yeah, no makeup and not like that.
[00:59:21]	Interviewer	Okay that's interesting, and...
[00:59:23]	Constantino	Yeah, very plain looking.
[00:59:25]	Interviewer	So as time went on, she was using "she," and Sylvia,
[00:59:28]	Constantino	Oh yeah, especially—
[00:59:30]	Interviewer	And the clothing was different.
[00:59:31]	Constantino	You know, the real her came out.
[00:59:35]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[00:59:36]	Constantino	Like I said, the first one broke her spirits. Hiding from everybody, you know?
[00:59:43]	Interviewer	Right.
[00:59:44]	Constantino	Like, "Don't look at me, you're hideous," or something, I don't know. Don't do that with her. But [ <i>Pause</i> ] yeah she was somebody fascinating.
[00:59:58]	Interviewer	Yeah, yeah. Well, if you ever do come across any pictures or letters that you have. But, there's, down in Manhattan, there's the Gay and Lesbian Archive.
[01:00:14]	Constantino	I'll have you write it down.

[01:00:15]	Interviewer	Yeah. They keep anything of historical value in gay history. And, you know, with Sylvia, she was such an important person.
[01:00:22]	Constantino	You know it's a shame because we went to Florida, you know, to [Unclear] at Disneyworld.
[01:00:29]	Interviewer	Really?
[01:00:29]	Constantino	I took her to Disney World, yeah.
[01:00:32]	Interviewer	Was that back in the nineteen-eighties?
[01:00:34]	Constantino	Yeah that was, I don't know, she kept saying, probably was, maybe eighty-seven, I think it was.
[01:00:39]	Interviewer	Uh-huh. What prompted going to Disney World?
[01:00:43]	Constantino	Well, I did because I had three thousand dollars in the bank. And I was working at McDonalds down here, and it was really getting on my nerves, you know.
[01:00:56]	Interviewer	You just wanted a vacation.
[01:00:58]	Constantino	I was like, yeah I deserve it, you know? And I had enough to take her with me. She was working.
[01:01:06]	Interviewer	How was that trip? Was it fun?
[01:01:08]	Constantino	Oh yeah, yeah. She made it fun. Well, we got to a point, we're on the way back, we're on the back, another story, we were on the plane, she was drunk.
[01:01:22]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[01:01:22]	Constantino	Okay. And you know, this is around an hour. You got to understand, this is the same time, around the same time where they're doing the hijacking



		from Miami to Cuba. With the gasoline bottles, bottles of gasoline, I don't know if you remember that.
[01:01:38]	Interviewer	I remember they used to hijack planes to Cuba, yes.
[01:01:40]	Constantino	Yeah well, they were using gasoline bottles. You know what I mean, bottles of gasoline or something, you know like a bomb or molotov cocktail. So she [ <i>Laughs</i> ] decided, I don't know, I guess coincidence, and she just collected bottles. It's like the old Coke bottles that you don't see anymore. Yeah, yeah they're pretty cool, you know. She got a couple other ones. So went through to the X-ray thing, you know, and the bag you see all these bottles in there, [ <i>Mimics buzzer noise</i> ] Stopped, you know? So she's like, the lady's just doing her job, she's taking them out. And there's Sylvia, "Ah, you know you got to put everything back in that bag, just like that." I'm like, "Sylvia, she's just doing her job." "I don't give a shit." Then she pulls out the rum, ABC rum, it was like half a pint. "Watch this. Rob, do you want a shot?" Aw, I'm getting embarrassed here. Then they just moved her on by real quick. I made, I made a mistake by giving her a window seat, you know? And, you know, she was fine on the way down there. There was no problems, you know? So, everything was fine and then all of a sudden she just started freaking out. "What's the matter? What's the matter?" You know the, on the wings, that little piece that flaps. Yeah, she saw that. "It's breaking." Aw, why did she do that? I was like, you know better [ <i>Unclear</i> ]. Oh my God, trying to calm her down was one thing, but the passengers were jumping out of their seats. Oh my God, is she drunk, what has she done?
[01:03:29]	Interviewer	But at Disney World you had a good time?
[01:03:31]	Constantino	Oh yeah, that was great, that was great. It was funny because she said, she always had, she always carried her shoulder bag with her wherever she went, you know? She said, "Huh, they must've know I was coming today," everywhere the centerpieces were bolted down, she always stuck things in her bag.
[01:03:47]	Interviewer	Really?
[01:03:47]	Constantino	She liked it. Oh yeah, she'd call it liberated. "I'm liberated." My my my. Then we went to [ <i>Unclear</i> ] on time, and they used to give you those free peanuts.

[01:04:02]	Interviewer	At the bars?
[01:04:04]	Constantino	Yeah, you know, the ones with the shells and everything.
[01:04:07]	Interviewer	Mhm. Yeah. Right.
[01:04:08]	Constantino	You got to peel them, throw them on the floor and all that. She's like [Unclear] the whole basket, they'd put it out again. She did it like two, three times. Later you know it, she walked out of there with like three pounds of peanuts. I was like, "What are you doing? What are you, an elephant over there?" And she walks in, we go to the other bar, over here. "Here, have some. Have some. Have some." I was like, "Why'd you put the peanuts in?" "I don't know."
[01:04:41]	Interviewer	Were you, did you know back in New York how involved she was in organizing and those kinds of activities?
[01:04:47]	Constantino	She, she spoke to me. But I didn't, really, you know. Like I said, I really—
[01:04:51]	Interviewer	You weren't really paying much attention to it.
[01:04:53]	Constantino	No. But she was... I got, I'd have to look. I'm almost sure I still have, the only picture I might have of her is the one from the calendar. There's a calendar, a gay calendar.
[01:05:15]	Interviewer	Oh yeah?
[01:05:16]	Constantino	And yeah, but see, that's a shame and all because we did take a lot of pictures in Florida, in front of the castle and stuff like that.
[01:05:31]	Interviewer	Mhm. And you don't have those anymore?
[01:05:33]	Constantino	No. And then we ate. I'll never forget that. We ate at the Crystal Palace, this place called the Crystal Palace.

[01:05:45]	Interviewer	That's in Disney World?
[01:05:46]	Constantino	Yeah.
	Interviewer	Oh okay.
[01:05:47]	Constantino	And it's real fancy in there and everything, you know? We both had the same thing. Barbecue chicken. In a matter of minutes we were racing each other to the bathroom. It's like, "Whoa, we made a [Unclear] in there." [ <i>Laughs</i> ] I thought it was me.
[01:06:07]	Interviewer	Oh my gosh.
[01:06:09]	Constantino	I said, "Well it couldn't have been me because you got it too." You know? [ <i>Laughs</i> ] So, nah, it was great. It was great. Oh, that was one of the big things that she <i>had</i> to do so she could talk about it, and I'd be damned if she didn't do it. The next morning, you know, our first night there, checking everything out, the hotel and everything, jumping into the pool and, you know, just enjoying our freedom. And then sure enough, first thing in the morning, got to call the job, "Oh, guess where I am." You know? "I'm at the pool having my cocktails here. What are you guys, sweating over a stove?" [ <i>Laughs</i> ] Like rubbing it in. [ <i>Laughs</i> ]
[01:06:58]	Interviewer	I, at the, at this, when we got down to the river service—
[01:07:02]	Constantino	Yeah.
[01:07:03]	Interviewer	They played "When You Wish Upon a Star," that's I think from one of the Disney things.
[01:07:09]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah it was.
[01:07:10]	Interviewer	Did you notice that? Yeah.
[01:07:12]	Constantino	No I didn't.

[01:07:13]	Interviewer	Oh okay.
[01:07:14]	Constantino	I, <i>[Laughs]</i> it's funny because, well you were there, and they were chanting so much you didn't really get to hear it.
[01:07:23]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[01:07:23]	Constantino	[Unclear] with some pieces of music there.
[01:07:25]	Interviewer	Yeah okay.
[01:07:26]	Constantino	But, one of our favorite things, is, in Disney World is "A Small World."
[01:07:35]	Interviewer	Oh, in the boat?
[01:07:36]	Constantino	Yeah yeah.
[01:07:36]	Interviewer	Okay yes.
[01:07:37]	Constantino	That was great. We went on that thing three times.
[01:07:41]	Interviewer	Really?
[01:07:41]	Constantino	Yeah because we liked it so much.
[01:07:45]	Interviewer	That's nice.
[01:07:45]	Constantino	That's, that's, I mean, one of the most relaxing things.
[01:07:48]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[01:07:49]	Constantino	I mean, after coming out of the "Haunted Mansion." You know? We went with this four year old kid.

[01:07:57]	Interviewer	Oh.
[01:07:59]	Constantino	I went with a bunch of friends—
[01:08:01]	Interviewer	So you went with a group?
[01:08:02]	Constantino	A lesbian couple. There was one girl who had a son, you know, and wherever he went with us, which is very good. And it was funny, we just had a good time I guess. She, she really enjoyed that. She needed that too, you know? Nobody messed with her, nobody, you know?
[01:08:34]	Interviewer	When was the last—
[01:08:35]	Constantino	No confrontations— Huh?
[01:08:36]	Interviewer	When was the last time you saw Sylvia?
[01:08:38]	Constantino	The what?
[01:08:39]	Interviewer	The last time you saw her?
[01:08:40]	Constantino	Yeah?
[01:08:41]	Interviewer	When, when was that?
[01:08:42]	Constantino	Oh. She came up to my house, and she just spent the weekend.
[01:08:53]	Interviewer	Oh nice. So, this was before she got very sick or?
[01:08:57]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah. She called me and told me what happened, “Well, I’m in the hospital,” which I’m so used to hearing all the time. But this time it was like, you know, nature, you know? It wasn’t, “Somebody jumped, somebody beat me,” or something. She used to get a lot of that.

[01:09:22]	Interviewer	Oh really, from being out in the street?
[01:09:24]	Constantino	Yeah, you know. But, it's, like a lot of straight people said, at the bar said, "You can knock her down but you can't keep her down. She'll get right back up in your face. Right back up in your face."
[01:09:39]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[01:09:40]	Constantino	Knock her down, she'll get right back up.
[01:09:42]	Interviewer	Yeah, but this time she was in the hospital because of the liver—
[01:09:44]	Constantino	Yeah yeah, something like that. I said, "Well you're going to be alright, right?" "Uh, I don't know, they're still doing tests."
[01:09:55]	Interviewer	Yeah, that was like last fall I think, right?
[01:09:58]	Constantino	Yeah. [Pause] Did I tell you, there was another story there I thought was kind of fascinating. It was educational for me actually, well, she was always educational to me anyway, 'cause I mean she was one of the most educational, street-wise people that you ever, you know. It was not too much that you could put by her, you know? Even if you did, she suspected something the whole time anyway. But, she, when we lived in Yonkers, now I know why she did it, she wanted me to go live with my brother, you know? 'Cause we were living out in the street, you know?
[01:10:53]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[01:10:54]	Constantino	And my brother, I hadn't seen him in 5 years, you know? We're real close, you know, we always were close before.
[01:11:01]	Interviewer	At that time you were?
[01:11:02]	Constantino	Yeah. I was always the baby of the family, and when I was down and out on drugs, I don't want to put that on people's heads. Like oh, who's going

		to take care of the baby? “You’re a jerk. It’s your fault.” My fault on me, I’m picking myself up, you know? So anyway, she kept telling me, “Oh, go live with your brother, go—” I said, “What’s going to happen to you? I ain’t going nowhere until I know something,” you know, “Am I going to leave you out on the street and see you?”
[01:11:29]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[01:11:29]	Constantino	I can’t do that. So, I did one better. So she, I come home one day and our friend John Riley, I don’t know if you ever met him.
[01:11:43]	Interviewer	No.
[01:11:44]	Constantino	No? Well, he is another, he’s another one who’s on the street. Always lived on the street, loved it. I mean when you see a waterfall, you know, it’s like a [Unclear] waterfall from the rocks, for me, it’s a waterfall from [Unclear] and shower. <i>[Laughs]</i> Yeah you know, so shower. <i>[Laughs]</i> But, so, I come home and he goes, and we had a cat but it was, the cat used to stay down in the basement, you know? We used to give these people, that had the key, like 20 dollars, you know.
[01:12:22]	Interviewer	To take care of it.
[01:12:23]	Constantino	When it, when it rained we could stay out in the street and he wouldn’t have to get wet. So I come home and he goes, “Oh well, we got bad news. I got bad news and bad news.” <i>[Laughs]</i> “Well hit me with it.” “We can’t find your cat, the cat’s not in the basement.” I said, “I left the cat in the basement this morning.” “Well, it’s not there.” “Alright well what’s the other one?” “Sylvia’s all passed out [Unclear] on the bench and we can’t move her.” So, he thought I was going to go over and see her. [Unclear] “Well let’s go. What are you doing?” I said, “I’m going to the basement.” “What about her?” “She made her own bed,” I said. “I don’t have any time. My cat depends on me,” you know? “I mean what the hell, you said she don’t want to move so let her sleep there. I don’t give a fuck. I don’t care right now, I’m worried about my cat,” you know? So, we’re getting halfway over there and I started thinking, I said, “Well, who told you,” I said, “How do you know the cat is missing?” “Sylvia told me.” So [Unclear] the cat’s there. Sure enough, the cat heard my voice and started <i>[Mimics meowing]</i> , “I didn’t know the cat was here.” “Come on, the cat [Unclear] You don’t want to hang out with someone that is drunk all the time? [Unclear]” ‘Cause she, she always wanted to hide when she felt like

		that, you know? So anyway, alright we solved that problem, let's go check out this one over here.
[01:14:11]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[01:14:12]	Constantino	So, I'm like, "Come on, come on, wake up." She was like, [ <i>Groans</i> ], you know on the, on the park bench, giving me a hard time. [Unclear] But this time was a little bit different. All of a sudden, she just got up just started running for the river, you know? Just ran. She started carrying on, you know? I mean this isn't just one of the times, it's full of them, you know? Almost trying to climb a [Unclear] in the river. "What are you doing?" "Marsha's calling me. Don't you hear her calling me?" I was like, "What?" I was like, "You're losing it." "Marsha's calling me." She just kept saying that. Little by little, she's like sinking into the, you know, falling and almost, and the guy John Riley, he was a big biker guy. He was trying to pull her out, fighting him. I didn't know what to do, I panicked. I didn't know what to do. I said, "I can't deal with this." So, the police station is a couple blocks away. I run over to the police station. I told them, I was like, "Look, some guy is trying, is trying to commit suicide there." They were like, "Oh, well, that's nice." And it took them ten minutes, ten, fifteen minutes, and next thing I know, it looks like half the police force is coming down the river. And they grabbed her and they took her away and she's like, "My friend Marsha, Marsha, don't you hear her?"
[01:15:51]	Interviewer	Had she been drinking?
[01:15:53]	Constantino	Yeah. So, but watch this, so, 'cause I wasn't ready for that. I said, you know, I talked to my friend John, you know, and they took her up to the psychiatric ward up in Saint Joseph's in New York. And John's like, "Oh yeah, that's messed up, yeah." You know? All of a sudden it just hit me, I was like, "You know what? To hell with her." "What do you mean?" "She got a bed and meals and everything else." And then when we went to go see her the next day, [Unclear], she had this big grin on her face. "What are you grinning about?" "I'm sorry. This is what I do when I'm tired of living outside." You know? She's very smart.
[01:16:53]	Interviewer	She knew she'd be taken care of for a while.
[01:16:54]	Constantino	Yeah. It's not the first time for her. I said, "You little punk shit. Well, I got to give it to you." [ <i>Laughs</i> ] At least then, then, basically she did that so,



		‘cause, I think, I would go live with my brother ‘cause I kept telling her, “I’m not anywhere until I know what’s going on with you.” Sitting in there was funny, it was like, I just needed to go see her, bring her a carton of cigarettes, you know. She was calling me, “I need this, I need that.” I was like, “Yeah I’ll go.”
[01:17:33]	Interviewer	But then you did go to live with your brother?
[01:17:34]	Constantino	Yeah yeah. Yeah. And, yeah [Unclear]. And then what was funny was that when she was getting out, there was a couple other patients in there that did the same thing, you know? I didn’t know if she’s aware of it. She was getting out, “Bye Sylvia! Bye Sylvia!” Everybody’s calling her Sylvia. “Oh, did you make a big hit here, did you?” Then one girl grabs her, “Bye Sylvia!” And she looks at her, the girl just looks at her and says, “You’ll be back.” And she winks at her, “You can count on it.” [Laughs] “You know it. We’ve been here before, we’ll be here again.”
[01:18:26]	Interviewer	Oh gosh.
[01:18:27]	Constantino	They knew how to work the doctors. It was funny because they’re psychiatrists and all that stuff, they knew what they were doing, you know? They’d act a little bit more crazy if they wanted more time to stay there. “Well I thought you might be ready but this doesn’t seem—” “Yeah.” [Laughs]
[01:18:48]	Interviewer	I’m just, one, one question. The guy that Sylvia was living with when you first met Sylvia.
[01:18:54]	Constantino	[Coughs] Yeah.
[01:18:55]	Interviewer	Do you remember his name?
[01:18:56]	Constantino	Yes, Ralph Brown.
[01:18:57]	Interviewer	Ralph.
[01:18:58]	Constantino	Ralph Brown, yeah.

[01:18:59]	Interviewer	How do you spell the last name?
[01:19:00]	Constantino	Brown. B-R-O-W-N.
[01:19:03]	Interviewer	B-R-O-W-N, okay.
[01:19:05]	Constantino	Yeah.
[01:19:06]	Interviewer	Alright. 'Cause if I need to—
[01:19:07]	Constantino	Better known as Binky, for some reason.
[01:19:08]	Interviewer	Binky?
[01:19:09]	Constantino	I don't really know why but that was his family nickname I thought was really stupid. I said, "Don't ask me to call you that. I'll call you anything under the sun but not that."
[01:19:21]	Interviewer	[ <i>Laughs</i> ] Alright, I'm going to use the men's room, and I guess, well we can just go back down to the train station, right?
[01:19:28]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah.
[01:19:31]	Interviewer	Okay. I don't think there's anything else.
[01:19:34]	Constantino	Well we'll be walking and talking and I'll show you the music hall where they performed.
[01:19:40]	Interviewer	Oh okay, that sounds good, alright.
[01:19:42]	Constantino	You know, and the house.

[01:19:45]	Interviewer	Yes, good.
[01:19:45]	Constantino	Our only house.
[01:19:46]	Interviewer	Alright, let me just run to the men's room. I'll turn this off while I—
[01:19:50]	Constantino	Got everything?
[01:19:51]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[01:19:53]	Constantino	[Unclear]
[01:19:57]	Interviewer	Yes, thank you.
[01:20:00]	Constantino	[Unclear]
[1:20:02]	Interviewer	No, that's great.
[1:20:05]	Constantino	[Unclear] there was a lot of years.
[1:20:08]	Interviewer	Well that's just, you see, those years you were the only one who could really help me fill in those years.
[1:20:15]	Constantino	Oh yeah.
[1:20:15]	Interviewer	Because as people who knew—
[1:20:17]	Constantino	Well that's the same thing that Rusty said.
[1:20:20]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[1:20:20]	Constantino	When Rusty was the one who was supposed to be doing a thing—

[1:20:23]	Interviewer	Oh Rusty, really? Oh okay, I'm going to have to talk to Rusty.
[1:20:26]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah.
[1:20:28]	Interviewer	Oh I see the music hall.
[1:20:28]	Constantino	There's the music hall, yeah.
[1:20:29]	Interviewer	So they used to have shows and things there?
[1:20:31]	Constantino	Yeah yeah, they did drag shows. They were so cool. They made a big hit with a lot of straight people, that was really impressive.
[1:20:40]	Interviewer	Really? <i>[Laughs]</i>
[1:20:42]	Constantino	It was funny because it's like, at one point, Sylvia's trying to get ready and she's like checking on the tickets and everything, make sure everybody's alright, she's still got curlers in her hair, taking tickets. <i>[Laughs]</i> You know?
[1:20:54]	Interviewer	Taking tickets?
[1:20:55]	Constantino	You know, giving the tickets out.
[1:20:57]	Interviewer	Wow. It's a nice building.
[1:21:01]	Constantino	<i>[Coughs]</i> Yeah.
[1:21:10]	Interviewer	So—
[1:21:10]	Constantino	And this—
[1:21:11]	Interviewer	Yeah, go ahead.

[1:21:13]	Constantino	This laundromat over here, it used to be a bar. That was our famous bar.
[1:21:20]	Interviewer	That's where you hung out?
[1:21:21]	Constantino	Oh yeah, it used to be called The Huddle.
[1:21:23]	Interviewer	The Huddle?
[1:21:24]	Constantino	Yeah, that's where our first, I would say our first, straight drink was, you know. And it was, I mean it was a straight bar, but that's where she started coming out of her shell.
[1:21:38]	Interviewer	Oh really, in this place here?
[1:21:39]	Constantino	Coming home with, with drunks and [ <i>Laughs</i> ] you know, new friends, have a drink.
[1:21:45]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[1:21:50]	Constantino	Yeah. She'd always, like I told other people, the phone would ring when we lived on the other side of town and it was always, "Oh, can Sylvia come out and play?" I'd say, "Ah, it's for you," you know?
[1:22:13]	Interviewer	So friends that Sylvia met here?
[1:22:15]	Constantino	Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, yeah.
[1:22:18]	Interviewer	Is there much of a gay world here in this town?
[1:22:22]	Constantino	Yeah but it's not very public like, you know, it's kind of private and personal or. But they're out there, [ <i>Laughs</i> ] you know?
[1:22:34]	Interviewer	Right.

[1:22:35]	Constantino	And she can spot her own kind in a minute, you know?.
[1:22:37]	Interviewer	Uh-huh.
[1:22:38]	Constantino	She'd go, "Oh, Miss Thing," you know? [ <i>Laughs</i> ]
[1:22:46]	Interviewer	So after all these, all those years of the crazy goings on, how were you able to put yourself back together?
[1:22:54]	Constantino	[ <i>Coughs</i> ] What do you mean? [ <i>Coughs</i> ]
[1:22:58]	Interviewer	You know, you have a place to live and you have a job and everything now.
[1:23:03]	Constantino	What do you mean? I'm sorry.
[1:23:05]	Interviewer	All those years, that you know, you were living things like on the street and the drugs and the rest of it. I mean, now you have a job.
[1:23:12]	Constantino	[ <i>Coughs</i> ] I, I, I always had my job.
[1:23:14]	Interviewer	Oh you did always have your job.
[1:23:16]	Constantino	I always had my job. I've been on that job for over twenty years.
[1:23:21]	Interviewer	Really? Okay.
[1:23:22]	Constantino	I always had my job. I mean, [ <i>Laughs</i> ] I came real close to losing it on drugs and things like that but. The only thing that saved my behind was that I had so many years there. And it was, it was horrible, you know?
[1:23:37]	Interviewer	Oh.
[1:23:38]	Constantino	But I could look in their eyes, and say they didn't really, we can't be

		doing this no more.
[1:23:42]	Interviewer	Right. Right.
[1:23:43]	Constantino	And I broke a lot of rules, you know? You know, I get, ask for my check on Thursday and wouldn't show up, and not even call, on Friday.
[1:23:52]	Interviewer	Uh-huh.
[1:23:53]	Constantino	[Laughs] You know?
[1:23:54]	Interviewer	Okay.
[1:23:54]	Constantino	Which is not a cool thing, you know?
[1:23:56]	Interviewer	So at one point were you able to stop the drugs and—
[1:23:59]	Constantino	Oh yeah. Yeah.
[1:24:00]	Interviewer	Oh that's—
[1:24:01]	Constantino	I want to tell you about this.
[1:24:02]	Interviewer	That house there?
[1:24:03]	Constantino	This house right here, yeah.
[1:24:04]	Interviewer	The big, the white one with the, oh okay.
[1:24:05]	Constantino	Yeah. You see, you see these windows right here?
[1:24:10]	Interviewer	On the side?

[1:24:11]	Constantino	Yeah, on the side, on the top. The second floor?
[1:24:13]	Interviewer	Mhm.
[1:24:14]	Constantino	Alright, those three were mine.
[1:24:16]	Interviewer	Okay.
[1:24:17]	Constantino	That was where my room was.
[1:24:19]	Interviewer	Okay.
[1:24:19]	Constantino	Her room was the two over here, on the second floor.
[1:24:23]	Interviewer	Okay, in the tower part.
[1:24:24]	Constantino	[Unclear] not far from each other, you know?
[1:24:25]	Interviewer	Okay. And that's what, Baylis Court and is this, what is this Main Street? What is this street called?
[1:24:29]	Constantino	Yeah, Main Street. Yeah yeah yeah.
[1:24:31]	Interviewer	Okay, so this is, what is this, 73 Main Street.
[1:24:32]	Constantino	And it's interesting I wanted to point this out because, when we first moved in there we didn't really know the guy or nothing like that. So we're telling people where we live, at Joe Juan Carlos' house or whatever his name was. Joe Juan Carlos. "Oh, that's the landlord that killed one of his tenants." We needed to hear this.
[1:24:54]	Interviewer	Oh my God, yeah.
[1:24:54]	Constantino	You know, it's like, oh what do you mean? And I kept hearing it, and I



		was like, they're just trying to spook us, you know? But, so I asked him one day. I had the nerve to ask him. He told me about it, he said, "Yeah it's true."
[1:25:12]	Interviewer	Wow.
[1:25:13]	Constantino	He told me what happened. The guy was a whine-all, useless guy never really, he was supposed to be paying child support several times, never did anything and worthless. And he came to knock on the door asking for money, you know? I mean, he told him that he didn't have any money for him, and he kept pushing, you know, like walking towards him. So he backed him right into his shotgun and blew him away.
[1:25:39]	Interviewer	Oh my God.
[1:25:40]	Constantino	You know, and the other building here. Over here.
[1:25:42]	Interviewer	This one, the taller one?
[1:25:43]	Constantino	Huh? Yeah.
[1:25:44]	Interviewer	The taller one on the end?
[1:25:46]	Constantino	The first two windows were ours. That, that was a hellhole. That was, well no, the first window was ours. And that was an apartment, alright? It used to be just rooms here.
[1:25:57]	Interviewer	Oh, oh okay.
[1:25:59]	Constantino	Alright, and that's where we did a lot of [Unclear], I mean because it was ridiculous. 'Cause we just moved out of our apartment and here we are in this tiny little room, and it was like a hallway, you know? It felt like a hallway.
[1:26:10]	Interviewer	Yeah.

[1:26:10]	Constantino	And we tried to salvage as much furniture and stuff that we could because it's only temporary, you know?
[1:26:16]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[1:26:16]	Constantino	Until we could find a better place. But we didn't want to get rid of anything so you couldn't move, it was really nerve wracking. Especially in the summertime, it was so hot. You didn't have no A.C.—
[1:26:26]	Interviewer	So you lived there for a while?
[1:26:27]	Constantino	Huh?
[1:26:28]	Interviewer	You lived there for a while?
[1:26:29]	Constantino	Yeah, a little while. And then we moved on the top floor—
[1:26:33]	Interviewer	Of the same building?
[1:26:33]	Constantino	There was a kitchenette up there, it was nice. We got ourselves a pull out couch. That was, there's an adventurous story on that one too because Sylvia saved all this money for this Oriental couch. She always loved Orientals, so she got this Oriental couch, brand new, ordered it right out of the catalog and everything. But the day it was coming, I made a mistake because we had our friend, [Unclear], big Puerto Rican girl. She was a lesbian and a nice girl. But, oh sorry, [Unclear] they were still in their heavy drinking and stuff like that. So I asked them a question one day, I say, "You know, I don't understand. What is the difference, I mean, you guys go out, you spend all this money on, you know, a bottle of alcohol, and then when you get something cheaper, you end up getting drunk anyways? What's the big difference of that?" They both looked at each other and started laughing, they decided, "So, I tell you what, we'll get your shit and we'll get our shit and we'll see what happens." Okay. They got me Nitrene. I don't know if you know anything about—
[1:28:01]	Interviewer	It's like wine, right?

[1:28:02]	Constantino	Yeah, it's like [Unclear], it's like real dirt cheap. I made two mistakes. I drank it all and I didn't use any ice. You know, I didn't have it with ice I just drank it because it was just so sweet and kind of cough medicine-y, you know? So, sure enough, oh my God, I went, almost convulsing. I broke out in a cold sweat, oh man, I got sick as a dog. But it was the same day that that cough was supposed to come. And then the cough was here. And then they go in to deliver it and it took four people to pick me up by all fours and then move me, and they're standing at me laughing. "Now do you understand? Now do you understand?" [Laughs] "Yeah yeah yeah. Shut up. Leave me alone." [Laughs]
[1:28:54]	Interviewer	Oh my gosh.
[1:28:55]	Constantino	They said, "You see us down there?"
[1:29:03]	Interviewer	The trains come pretty frequently?
[1:29:04]	Constantino	Yeah, they run every hour I believe.
[1:29:06]	Interviewer	All right.
[1:29:08]	Constantino	Ours should be coming twelve after the hour.
[1:29:11]	Interviewer	Okay.
[1:29:14]	Constantino	How much time we got?
[1:29:15]	Interviewer	It's 5:25 now. Oh yeah we got plenty of time.
[1:29:22]	Constantino	It's not cold out.
[1:29:24]	Interviewer	No, it's not a bad day. Not a bad day at all.
[1:29:27]	Constantino	You want to take the elevator?

[1:29:29]	Interviewer	Yeah, is it over here?
[1:29:30]	Constantino	Yeah. Yeah, I usually get lazy.
[1:29:37]	Interviewer	So you living with your brother in Dobbs Ferry? Is that what you—
[1:29:40]	Constantino	No, no. Not now, no. I got my own place.
[1:29:44]	Interviewer	You got your own place.
[1:29:48]	Constantino	But, like I said, I haven't, when I was with George in Yonkers and stuff, I hadn't seen him for like five years. And I'd seen, I was like ducking and losing him, because I didn't want him to see me like that. So, but I'd seen a couple of his friends, you know, people that knew us. [Unclear]"Oh your brother is looking for you" "Yeah" "He's telling me that he wants to, he was thinking about hiring a private detective to look for you."
[1:30:23]	Interviewer	Oh, he didn't even know where you were?
[1:30:25]	Constantino	No. But he was worried about me. <i>[Laughs]</i>
[1:30:27]	Interviewer	Yeah.
[1:30:27]	Constantino	"Just tell him I'm fine and I'll be alright." So, and then when, I ended up getting scared, literally scared straight from the drugs.
[1:30:42]	Interviewer	Really?
[1:30:43]	Constantino	Yeah, because there was two, two buildings that were dealing. One was ours, the building right out of our apartment, that's the dealer that we'd meet, you know? And he [Unclear] the whole thing. I mean, he, it was amazing, within a week—
[1:31:01]	Interviewer	Down here?

[1:31:02]	Constantino	Down here, yeah. Within a week, we went from black and white thirteen-inch television with little coat hangers hanging out of it, to a twenty-seven inch color TV, a couch and all tons of stuff.
[1:31:25]	Interviewer	Can you hold on one second?
[1:31:26]	Constantino	Sure.
[1:31:27]	Interviewer	I'm running out of batteries. I got to change them. [Pause] Not sure why it's turned red now.
[1:31:42]	Constantino	What's that, what's that mean?
[1:31:43]	Interviewer	I don't know.
[1:31:45]	Constantino	At least you got power.
[1:31:47]	Interviewer	Yeah. Okay well, I think, maybe that's what it's supposed to be doing. Well, to write this, basically what I'm doing is I'm talking to everybody, recording everything and then I type it all up.
[1:32:08]	Constantino	Yeah yeah.
[1:32:08]	Interviewer	And then, what I will do is an outline, you know, the childhood and go all the way forward, all the different things that happened. And then, like for example you told me about, basically the time from like 1978, the late 1970s—
[1:32:26]	Constantino	I still got more stories if you want to hear them.
[1:32:28]	Interviewer	Yeah, of course. Forward, so then I'll take that and that gives me an idea of, what was the person doing and you know I'll use, other people will tell me things, and then you put it all together and you get the whole, you know, the biggest story that you possibly can.
[1:32:45]	Constantino	Alright. So, alright, so I'll finish telling you what I was just telling—

[1:32:49]	Interviewer	Yes, yes, please go on, sorry. [ <i>Laughs</i> ]
[1:32:50]	Constantino	No no. So what happened was, there were two buildings that were dealing. One was ours and one was a block down the street, you know? The one down the street, 94 is what it was called because that was the number, that used to get raided like every other week or something.
[1:33:09]	Interviewer	Oh boy.
[1:33:10]	Constantino	And then they shove off for a week and then they come back and go back into business. So—
[1:33:20]	Interviewer	And this was in Yonkers?
[1:33:22]	Constantino	Yeah. And then once, so one day, the police went to raid it and they claimed in the paper that one of the dealers got shot because he pulled a gun on a cop or something. And everybody looked at each other and said, “What?” The guy never owned a gun. And I freaked out there, I was like, “Woah.” That’s it, I’m out of here. I’m out of here. I can’t do this no more. The dealer was like, “What’s the matter? What’s the matter?” I said, “Look, I’m not going out like that. What’s to stop them from coming in here, you know, cleaning house and putting a gun in everybody’s hand? I’m not going out like that. No, no, no.” So I made a deal with God. You know, I’m not a religious guy, I don’t go to church or nothing but I do keep in contact with him. I do talk to Him and He did prove to me that he does [Unclear] because He provided for us. He always provides.