Interviewee: Liz Strand
Interviewer(s): Dr. Chrissy Lau, Dr. Grace Yoo, Ella Bajar
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Bio:
Liz Strand was born in Tacoma, Washington in 1946. In 1960, her family moved to Oakland, California. She started her college career at San Jose State but then decided to transfer to San Francisco State in the Spring of 1968. During her time at SFSU, she learned about the 10 demands of the Black Student Union as well as the 5 additional demands of the Third World Liberation Front, she decided to join the students that were striking that November in 1968. While going to campus every day to join the picket line on 19th avenue and Holloway Avenue, she witnessed the growing police presence on campus. She also worked on the student newsletter that was produced a few times every week and attended every rally in the quad at the speaker's platform.

Liz was also a member of the Legal Defense Committee and helped organize fundraisers to raise money for bail and legal services for those students that were arrested. On January 23, 1969, she was among the 400 students that were arrested in the mass arrest. After being bailed out by her parents, she was tried and acquitted of all three charges six months later. She then graduated in 1971 with her bachelor's after the strike.

Abstract:
[00:00:04 – 00:05:32] Liz discusses her early childhood in Tacoma, Washington in a "working-class area." Moving to Oakland a few years later, she experienced racial tensions in her integrated high school. [00:05:33 – 00:10:52] Her father's career at the Credit Union Federal Association led her to move back and forth until she decided to finish high school in Tacoma and started attending college at San Jose State. Liz eventually got married, wherein her husband's career at IBM in Oakland influenced her to transfer to San Francisco State. Her marriage dissolved as she emerged into the strike because of conflicting values with her husband. Liz was raised culturally Norwegian because of her father, whose parents had met in Tacoma. [00:15:54 – 00:20:34] She continues to talk about her racialized childhood, in which she made Black friends, but was discouraged by her parents to engage with Black neighbors. Strand got involved in the strike working for the Communication Center newsletter, where she met some of her lifelong friends. [00:20:35 – 00:25:17] They routinely published the newsletter and kept record of student arrests and administrative actions. Her typical day during the strike looked like commuting on the M to campus and picketing along Halloway Ave until the rally at the speaker's platform. There were police presence and outcries from community leaders. [00:25:18 – 00:30:22] On the day of the mass arrest, January 23, 1969, Liz recollects the aggression from Hayakawa and the tact squad. She shares a story about a man with Doberman pinschers who got arrested, and the police seized his dogs. Strand describes the anxiety of being taken to the "Hall of Injustice" and the mistreatment in the cells. [00:30:23 – 00:35:22] Strikers were slowly released on bail. Strand was able to be acquitted of all three charges for her responsibility as a journalist, as justified by the jury at her trial. [00:35:23 – 00:40:40] Traumatized, Strand refused to take off the jacket she wore the night she was arrested. The sheriffs were quick to deny any of the

mistreatment that happened in the jail cell. The other strikers of color she went on trial with, among them Danny Glover, received a significantly severe sentence than Liz. [00:40:41 – 00:45:16] Liz was able to acquire a pro-bono attorney at a bar across the street from the Hall of Justice to represent her; strikers would attempt to politicize the city, talking about the ten demands to provide meaning to the spectacle of the strike. [00:45:17 – 00:50:12] Strand was mostly fixed on the demands for equal rights, which she had been passionate about during the Civil Rights movement when she first learned about racialized tracking systems in schools. [00:50:13 – 00:55:06] The strike strained her marriage with her husband, who Liz recalls as a conservative; she describes how her divorce played out. Strand recalls few memories from the Summer of Love. [00:55:07 – 01:00:40] Liz talks about her experience attending the experimental college, expressing her appreciation for the classes, and her youth volunteer experience in the SoMa neighborhood. She describes her first ethnic studies class. [01:00:41 – 01:05:18] Liz talks about the strike's greatest impact on her life and her work experience in the welfare department. Her ethnic studies values are channeled through the Unitarian Universalist Church, embodied by the eighth principle. [01:05:18 – 01:10:42] She continues to discuss her career path in social work, moving across foster care and human services development. [01:10:43 – 01:15:57] Her work with AFDC (Aid for Families with Dependent Children) during the '96 Clinton reelection led her to the church she currently works with now, where she talks about how the church tackled internal racial conflicts. [01:15:58 – 01:25:42] Strand explains the origins of the eighth principle, who wrote it, and how it was integrated into church policies. Final words and conclusions.

Liz Strand | Transcript, September 27, 2024

[00:00:04 – 00:05:32]
Dr. Chrissy Lau: Good morning. Today's date is Friday September 27, 2024.

Liz Strand: Hi and I'm Liz Strand of San Francisco.

C.L: Thank you so much for agreeing to do an oral history for our oral history project on the TWLF-led student strike at San Francisco State University during 1968 and 1969.

L.S: And does that include the BSU?

C.L: Yes.

L.S: Okay, okay good.

C.L: So, I'd love to ask you about the first years of your life. Can you tell us your date of birth, and then you had mentioned a little bit how you grew up in Tacoma, Washington, so I'd love to hear a follow-up question on what it was like to grow up in Tacoma, Washington.

L.S: Okay. I was born on May 23, 1946, in Tacoma. We lived in quite a few different places. I don't remember all of that, but one of them was Alaska. My family actually lived in Alaska for a couple years, but I had my second birthday there, so I don't remember it at all. We lived outside of an unincorporated area called Midland. It was a working-class area. We had a lot of land around us, although we had a house across the street and a house behind us. We had a horse, and at one time, I got a lamb and then it turned into a sheep, and it wasn't that much fun anymore because they're not really that domestic.

But anyway, it was a lovely childhood in the way that I had the whole countryside [with] some kids in the neighborhood. In those days we could just go out on our own at age six or seven without adult supervision and roam around the countryside. It was wonderful. We lived there until 1960. I finished eighth grade in Tacoma at the Franklin Pierce School District, and it was pretty white. We had one person of color, and he may have been of Indian extraction like from India? I don't even know, but everyone else was white. Then, we moved to Oakland, California because my dad got a new job working for the California Credit Union League. So, I started ninth grade in East Oakland, and it was very different because it was a city. There were freestanding houses and yards in front and back and on the side, so it was not quite like San Francisco. We lived there, and at Elmhurst Junior High is where I went for the ninth grade. It was about 50% Black and 50% White. In gym class, the teachers would let us choose our teams, so we had one Black team and one white team because it was about half and half. I had played baseball in Tacoma, and I knew the rules, so sometimes the other girls would say, “No, you can have a 4th strike if such and such,” and I’m like, “No, there’s no 4th strike. Ever.”

So, I got into a little stuff with people, but nothing bad at all. One time I felt something in class, sitting in a chair, I felt something stick me in the butt. It was maybe a fingernail file or something. It didn’t penetrate my skin or anything. But it was maybe from when I stood up to somebody on the ball team or something. One time, some kids followed me part of the way home from school. I just remember those two incidents, but nothing really scary. The teachers didn’t quite know how to handle the situation. I went

to Castlemont High School after that. I was there for tenth and eleventh. That was then 62', 63' and there started to be some racial strife because of the stuff going on in South with the, what do you call it?

C.L: The Black Freedom Movement?

[00:05:33 – 00:10:52]

L.S: Yeah!

C.L: And the bus integrations.

L.S: Yeah, yeah, civil rights movement. People of color were hearing about it and feeling like wanting their rights as well. At Castlemont, maybe after a dance, there'd be a fight or something between the kids. The teachers and the Deans didn't know how to handle it, so they just clamped down on everything. It became kind of boring. There were no more dances. Stuff would keep happening but not handled well. They didn't know how to bring people together and work things out. Then coincidentally, my dad got another job, and we almost moved to Guatemala to start credit unions among the indigenous people there, which would have been an amazing thing because credit unions are communal [banking] among the people—low interest rates and they help against usury, where there's high interest rates and people get into a bad cycle borrowing money and having to pay it back twice as much. It's a nice democratic thing. Anyway, the job fell through and we didn't go. Meanwhile, we had gone back to Tacoma to say goodbye to our relatives, then the job started falling apart, so my parents were going back and forth to the headquarters of the Credit Union National Association. I was bored and I started going to school with my cousins in Tacoma. Once it was sure that the job was not going to happen, my parents, my aunt and uncle talked and decided that I could stay there and finish my senior year of high school. Because in Castlemont, in addition to the racial strife happening, it wasn't a very good school. All of my family had gone to Lincoln High School in Tacoma. I loved being with my cousins. I just had an older brother, four years older. He was going to Berkeley, so I just really wanted to stay with them. And I did. I finished my senior year in high school in Tacoma and graduated there. Then I came back and lived with my parents that summer. Then, I went to San Jose State for college, and I went there for two and a half years. I don't really remember much about the racial stuff at San Jose State; just blank in my mind and I don't know if I've just forgotten or there wasn't much happening. But then, I got married and we were living in Oakland because my husband worked for IBM, and I was commuting two days a week to San Jose. We just had a little car and it got very tiring, even just going two days a week commuting down there, so I transferred to San Francisco State.

I started in the spring of '68 and I knew some stuff that was going on when George Murray got fired. I heard about that, but then in the fall when the strike started, I was kind of surprised that there were cops on campus. I was trying to figure out what was going on. I knew there was a strike and I didn't want to keep going to class when all this stuff was happening on campus, then I learned more about it, and got involved, and I met the people I ended up [still knowing]. Roy Harrison, Patricia Wilson, and Xander Hertzman, who's now my good friend for all of those years. So, I started striking. The political differences between me and my husband came out more. He was more conservative and worked for IBM and, to us, that was working for the man. It was also not a good match; the relationship would've ended anyways. But it ended sooner because of me getting involved with this more radical thing here at campus.

[00:10:52 – 00:15:54]

C.L: I'd love to ask some follow-up questions on the introductory narrative that you just walked us through. Just starting a little bit back, could you tell us a little bit about your parents? You said your dad worked for a credit union; would you be able to share about their immigration story or their background? Then, I'd love to hear about your mother, like what did she do?

L.S: My parents both worked—started credit unions at the places that they worked at. My dad was a bread truck driver for Langendorf Bakery in Tacoma and drove around town delivering bread to grocery stores. He somehow heard about credit unions, so he started one at his place of work. My mom did the same thing; she was a secretary. She worked at a chemical company. Before that, my mom's family has been in this country for generations. When I looked her up on [ancestry.com], I went back to the 1600s almost, and she was still in this country. Yet she's English, German, a little bit of Irish, a little Scottish, that kind of thing. Her family came from Missouri and Kentucky, and then traveled out to Oregon, and then eventually to Tacoma and Seattle. She was born in Seattle, but my dad's parents were both from Norway and they both came to the United States separately. My grandmother came from the area called Hemnes. She came to the United States in 1909, and all of her siblings eventually came. Actually, she was one of the last ones to come, but they all immigrated to the Tacoma area. My grandfather came from the coast of Norway called Kristiansand. They didn't know each other in Norway. They met in Tacoma and got married. Then they had six children and one died. My dad was the oldest and they were pretty poor. My grandpa was a house painter and fisherman. That was from Norway; he'd been a fisherman in Norway, but he was pretty young. He was [in his] late teens. I've actually visited in the last year, both of their places of birth in Norway, and it just was so wonderful to do that. I saw that exact place where he was born—not the building, it's no longer there, but the land—where the house had been right on the edge of a fjord. My grandmother, I wasn't as lucky. I couldn't find exactly where she came from, but I was in the town, so that was good enough. It was kind of a Norwegian household even though my mom wasn't Norwegian. She didn't have many relatives and we all gathered around my grandma and grandpa's house, and that's where all the dinners for the holidays and the parties and everything were. I think I had a Norwegian influence; the food, the cultural stuff. My mom was a secretary all her life and she worked. She started working when I went to kindergarten and really liked that. We always said she was the original women's libber because she really liked to fix cars; she took an auto-mechanics class at Chabot College in Hayward back in the day. My parents both died young; they've both died in their 50s from cancer, so they've been gone for a long time.

C.L: Well, thank you so much for sharing about your parents. I'd like to go back to our time in Oakland. It's interesting to hear about your school's population, it being sort of 50% white, 50% black. It's interesting to hear that it was integrated during that time and you talked about racial strife. Is there an example or a story you can offer us of an example of the racial strife?

[00:15:54 – 00:20:34]
L.S: It was tension between students and, like I said about after a dance or something, there would be a fight. I never experienced anything myself, any prejudice, or people being mad at me, or doing anything to me. It was very early in the days of the civil rights movement, and I just remember that people didn't quite know what to do, and I hope they know better now. I had some black friends that I knew and liked and would hang out with at school. I remember in Tacoma, out there in the country where we lived, down the street from our house—there was our house and then a big, long field, and then another house. At some point, some black people moved in there and my parents had told me, "Don't go to their house," and that I couldn't play with that girl. And I was glad to have a girl my age in the neighborhood because all of

the other kids were boys. Sometimes, they'd just say, "Get out of here, you dumb girl!" I also remember that my parents had friends from high school named Jones, Orin Jones. I forget his wife's name, but we went to their house one time in Tacoma. He was a mail carrier, and I forget what she did. I always say my parents weren't haters, but they were prejudiced. But then they had these friends that we actually "went to their house."

C.L: I'd love to now turn to your participation in the TWLF-led San Francisco State strike. You've mentioned that, by the time you got here, there were a couple of incidents where they fired George Murray, there were police everywhere, and you were really shocked. And then you started getting into the strike because you had met Roy Harrison and a couple of folks. Can I ask you more to elaborate more on the details? How did you meet Roy Harrison and all those folks?

L.S: Yeah, I got involved with the Communication Center, which actually had office space in the education building for a while, and then we got kicked out. But for quite a while, we would meet there every day and talk, and we would go to the rallies. There were rallies every day at the speaker's platform. I remember I met Wendy Alfson kind of early on, and I was just so impressed with her because she was so young and so smart and knowledgeable, and she may have told me about the Communication Center or something. We were kind of like, reporters, and we put out a newsletter. I don't know if it was every day, but it was more than once a week, I think. We did it on typewriters and mimeographs, that kind of thing. That actually helped me later in my trial because the jurors said that I had a reason to be at the rally because I was working for the Communication Center newsletter, but I can talk more about my trial later if you want me to. I'm not sure how I met Roy and them. I remember meeting Xander; I have this vision of meeting her on campus, maybe at a rally or something. We were both getting divorced at that time and so we became roommates. We got an apartment together on 20th between Valencia and Guerrero and we've been friends ever since.

[00:20:35 – 00:25:17]
C.L: And you were both journalism majors?

L.S: No, I was a sociology major and psychology minor, so I think I had classes in this building [Ethnic Studies & Psychology] but I don't remember where. But yeah, I was [in] sociology.

C.L: And what was the name of the newsletter that you and Wendy would put out?

L.S: Well, I'm not sure Wendy was part of it. She might have referred me there. I don't remember that part of it, but I did know her all the way through. I don't even know if anyone has a copy of one anymore.

C.L: Yeah, I would be so interested in seeing those newsletters.

L.S: Yeah, it probably told how many kids got arrested and what the administration was doing.

C.L: So, this was put out by you and other journalists?

L.S: Other kids, yeah.

C.L: And it was just ad hoc? It wasn't affiliated with any program?

L.S: No, but we had a room in the education building, and then at some point, they kicked us out. I can't remember how long we were there, but it was kind of like, "Oh, what? We can't be here anymore?" I think tensions were raising.

C.L: Okay, just one more question about the newsletter. How long did it go for? And how many issues were there?

L.S: I don't know, I couldn't tell you, sorry.

C.L: Okay. So, what was your typical day like during your participation in the rallies, during the period of the strike?

L.S: Well, we'd come out here; I didn't have a car at the time, so we took the M. You know, the M streetcar. We got off the streetcar and then went into the office and hung out. We did a lot of picketing up on 19th where the [entrance] is today and just walked around and around and around, just on the sidewalk. It was just a long narrow circle of picketing and walking. We'd chant and carry signs. It was to stop students from coming into campus. I guess it was legal because they didn't stop us. We did that for quite a while, and then there would be a rally at the speaker's platform, so we'd go to the rally. In between, cops would come and chase people and bust heads. I know that a lot of people would get beat by the cops between [the portables] — there were portables that aren't there anymore. In between the portables, kids would get—especially the leaders of the BSU, like Nesbit Crutchfield—beaten up and then arrested. We'd be outraged; there were community people that would come and try to calm things down, like Cecil Williams, Yori Wada. I forget; maybe he was a commissioner in the city? He would say, "Cool it, cool it, cool it!" I remember. They would put themselves on the line to come out here and be involved in the hubbub. Carlton Goodlet was one of them.

The rallies were always a highlight because people would speak and we'd get all excited and everything, and then the day of the mass arrest, we didn't know the police had planned to surround the rally and arrest everybody. We weren't real smart about it because we could've seen that they were staging themselves behind, (*gesturing outside*) behind the building above here. That was January 23rd, 1969.

[00:25:18 – 00:30:22]
At some point, Hayakawa and the police had gotten on top of the Admin. building and made an announcement: "This is an official announcement by the power vested in me and the city of San Francisco. You are to leave right now! Disperse!" And then Hayakawa said something, the police said something again, then we started saying, excuse my language, "Fuck Hayakawa! Fuck Hayakawa!" Just yelling and yelling. At some point, the cops came out: the tact squad, which was fairly new at the time with their military gear, very common now among police departments. They had shields over their faces and these long clubs; not little billy clubs, but these long [clubs] that were three-sided, so not round. If they hit you, it would be more damaging. We had a lot of picket signs; we purposefully had some picket signs that were square. They told us to drop those. So, they surrounded the whole rally because we didn't leave as we had been legally told to do. Most people had three counts of charges against them of: disturbing the peace, unlawful assembly, and failure to disperse. They also had a bunch of paddy wagons, buses, trucks. There was a guy that was particularly loud. He was resisting arrest and he had some dogs; he had two Doberman pinschers. He didn't want to be separated from his dogs, so he was fighting that. We were all in the paddy wagon, and then the police threatened to mace us if he didn't quiet down and give them his dogs. Finally he did, and then the paddy wagon was really full of people. We took off and

we had a flat tire on the way to Hall of Justice, and that was really scary because we were a little paranoid, I think. We were like, "Where are they taking us?" We didn't quite know what they were going to do, but they got that [flat tire] fixed and put us on a different vehicle.

We got to the Hall of Justice, which we called the "Hall of Injustice," and we were up on the seventh floor or something. They booked us all and we were told we had to give our name and address. We didn't have to give any more information. There was this one woman who refused to even give that, so they were saying, "Well, we're going to put you in solitary," and then she would say, "No, I will not give you any information." So, they took her away. We were already in the dayroom in the jail, which was a cage [on the] inside—there was a space around it on all sides and windows were open. It was very cold because it was January 23rd, so we started chanting, "Let her out! Let her out!" We thought we were going to talk them into releasing her from solitary. We were all hungry; hours were passing, and we were hungry, and so they [said], "Well, we'll give you some food if you stop chanting." And we're like, "No. Let her out! Let her out!" Then, next thing we knew, fire hoses; people with fire hoses came in and sprayed us with full force. I think it was one fire hose, maybe two. And we got all wet; one woman, she put her hands up and then the fire hose broke her thumb. And then another woman, they put it up her crotch and she fell. Those two injuries for sure.

[00:30:23 – 00:35:22]
But then were all wet. The windows were open to the outdoors, and we were sitting there, freezing and freezing, but we were going to keep up the chanting. And then this woman got on a table because it was the place where the prisoners stayed during the day, so it had picnic tables in there. So, this woman, one of the students got on the table and said, "Look, we are in the belly of the beast. If you keep this up—they've already brought in fire hoses—next, they'll bring in dogs. I've been in federal prison, and I know." Then we stopped chanting, and then slowly, people started getting released, and I got released fairly early in the middle of the night. My parents were able to pay cash bail, and they were able to pay for it rather than go to a bail bondsman. They went to this place [where] we used to eat dinner and got cash from them. It was a couple hundred bucks, I think. They came and picked me up and then everybody was saying, "Oh, do this for me. Tell this person that. Or my dog is in my car on the corner of Halloway."

Dr. Grace Yoo: So, I just have a question. What was the date that you got arrested?

L.S: January 23rd.

G.Y: And what was it like to call your parents about what had happened?

L.S: Well, they knew that I was striking and it was okay. I don't remember it being a real trauma or anything. They were cool about it.

G.Y: And do you remember what exactly was going on? You were saying you were going in circles or where were you?

L.S: We were at the speaker's platform listening to speakers talking. There were 400 arrested that day, so it was big. I think there might have, it might have been something special, but I can't remember if it was...

G.Y: Do you have memories of actually getting arrested? What was that and where were you? Can you describe that?

L.S: Well, we were in a pretty tight group and I had a picket sign, so I set it down. They had an opening where they had a paddy wagon and they'd fill that up. Then it would leave and then another vehicle would come and they'd fill that up. I think that's how it worked.

G.Y: Well, do you remember what was on your mind? Your thoughts and that sort of thing? What were you thinking about?

L.S: Well, people had been getting arrested all along, but usually, kind of individually. It wasn't really shocking. I mean, I'm sure my heart rate was up.

G.Y: Did you know at some point that maybe you would face arrest?

L.S: Yeah.

C.L: Did organizers prepare you for the possibility of being arrested?

L.S: I don't remember that.

C.L: And do you recall any people you knew, like whose names? Or were they arrested with you at that time? Any names that you would like to share?

L.S: Yeah, well. Patricia Wilson and Xander Hertzman and Juwea. Her name, she was going by her married name at that time, and her name now is Juwea Mockbee. Janet Wells; and a lot of people did time in jail. I got acquitted of all three charges, like I said before; partly because the jury could say to themselves, "She had a reason to be there because she was a journalist." But other people, just like me; White and as involved as I was, did three months at San Bruno jail.

G.Y: Do you have names you remember?

L.S: Patricia did. And I think Juwea, also. Jeanny Ciramelli.

G.Y: When they did time, do you remember, trying to support them?

L.S: Yeah. We'd go visit them and stuff.

[00:35:23 – 00:40:40]
C.L: So, let's talk about after you were arrested and then after you were bailed out, what happened? What came next for you?

L.S: Well, I went back to school. I couldn't take of the jacket I had on. I had to keep wearing it, I'm sure it was... shock. My mother hated that jacket and I was like, "No, I can't I have to keep wearing this jacket. This is what I had on." I think it was a comfort to me and I loved that jacket anyway. We just came back to school. Then of course, we had to start going to court appearances and then I think we got arraigned fairly quickly. I remember too that in the first floor of the Hall of Justice—maybe it was the next day, or it was not that long after—this guy named Carberry was the sheriff. The press was there and we told people

how we got fire-hosed and Carberry later said, “Oh, no that never happened.” Denied that it ever happened.

We probably got arraigned and then our trials got set. My trial wasn’t set until like 6 months later. It was during the summer and it lasted five weeks. They tried us in groups of 10, kind of by alphabet. I had my married name at the time, so I was in the same group as Danny Glover, which was a wonderful thing. Such a wonderful man. There was me, another white woman, Danny, another black fellow, and then a young Japanese woman. Some trials were all guilty or all innocent, and some were a mix. And ours was a mix. I got acquitted of all three charges, and then the other white woman, Anita Palm, got convicted of all three charges because she went on the witness stand and said that she advocated for the violent overthrow of the government. I think she was a member of the Progressive Labor (PL) Party. That young Japanese woman, who was just so sweet and innocent; she got convicted which I felt was just because of being a person of color. The two black men got convicted of all three charges. We would go to people’s sentencings also. When they got sentenced, it was Judge Kennedy who was also African American. Danny and the other fellow, who I don’t remember his name, [were] chained because they had been convicted and they got sentenced; I forget what their sentences were, but they got chained in the courtroom and led out in chains. There was so much racism going on.

C.L: Do you remember who was led out in chains? Do you remember their names?

L.S: Danny. Danny who was just the sweetest man in the world and had done nothing violent.

C.L: So, you mentioned your trial took five weeks and you were tried in groups of 10, but you were acquitted. Can you elaborate on that [and if there was a strategy]?

L.S: Yeah, this is interesting. I hadn’t thought about this. On the night of the mass arrest, a lot of people came down to the Hall of Justice and we could hear people chanting outside. A lawyer named Sid Tanner was there. Xander’s husband, who she was breaking up with at the time, had met Sid across the street at a bar and he told him about what was going on, so Sid Tanner offered to [represent us for free, so we took him up on it and he was really great].

[00:40:41 – 00:45:16]
G.Y: Liz, what was your maiden name?

L.S: Well, my married name was Ciucci. C-I-U-C-C-I.

G.Y: And your record is under that last name?

L.S: Yes. When I got divorced from Ciucci, I went back to Strand. And that’s my maiden name. Norwegian.

C.L: During your trial you mentioned that one of the reasons they acquitted you was [using the newsletter as evidence]. Can you talk more about that? How did that piece come up? How did that rationale come?

L.S: I testified for myself and told them about it, plus my parents both came to my trial. They didn’t come the whole five weeks, but they both took their vacations so that they could come to the trial, so that was in

my favor with the jury. “I’m sure that here this woman has her parent’s support,” and it elevated my status or something.

G.Y: Do you remember how you got an attorney?

L.S: Yeah, in the bar across the street from the Hall of Justice. Sid Tanner.

G.Y: So, they just have you the attorney?

L.S: No, he just offered to be our attorney.

G.Y: Okay, so there are people that volunteered at times to be attorneys.

L.S: Yeah, I’m not sure how many others, but I think there might have been a fair amount.

G.Y: There must have been a movement in the city at the time, “these are SF State students, and we need to support them.”

L.S: Yea. We would also go “politicizing.” Whenever we could, we’d talk about the 10 demands, that later became the 15, so we would tell people about it purposefully and try to politicize them—let them know what was going on, how rightful our cause was, and how we weren’t just these crazy students that were rebelling. We had a reason, and this was the reason. We wanted to have people have their own history taught.

C.L: Could you provide more details about the trial setting? You mentioned that the judge, Judge Kennedy, was an African American?

L.S: He was a sentencing judge.

C.L: He was the sentencing judge.

L.S: Our judge, for that group. I'm sure there were different ones. I know I was never sentenced because I was innocent. I was acquitted. I wasn’t *really* innocent. But my judge was Andrew Jackson Eyeman. E-Y-E-M-A-N. He was probably about what my age [is] now or younger, but we thought he was old as heck. He was very erratic and odd, and my parents even thought he was a real... kind of losing it or something. But it was in a regular courtroom in City Hall.

C.L: What kind of diversity was there among the jurors?

L.S: I remember there were some Asian jurors, but I don’t remember. I probably—certainly knew at the time.

G.Y: You don’t know the Japanese woman’s name?

L.S: No.

C.L: So, the jurors were mostly White and Asian?

L.S: I can't really say. I just remember that there were some Asian jurors, because [I thought it] was kind of surprising that she got convicted, even though there were some Asian jurors. And who knows, it's all just guesswork.

C.L: Looking back, I'm really interested in what attracted you to join the strike. What were some values or demands that particularly stood out to you, and what was the reason why you striked?

[00:45:17 – 00:50:12]
L.S: It was for rights, for people to have equal rights. Once I learned more about the tracking system in high schools, that people of color [who] were tracked in high schools were tracked into manual labor jobs, and white people were tracked into college. I learned more about that stuff [from] the speeches at the rallies [that] would contain that kind of history. I learned stuff that I didn't even know about. I guess this was '68 and we moved to Oakland in '60. I mean, the Civil Rights Movement had started in the South and people had gotten water hosed and dogs put on them. I saw stuff like that going on and my family was always Democratic. They were always Democrats and union people, even though they were a little prejudiced, like most people are in this country. As I learned more, then I was like, "yeah of course." I was always a person who wanted to help and also wanted to speak out if there was something unfair going on, so this was a perfect place to do that.

The other thing was that, and my friends would all say the same thing, it was fun in a way. It was really fun. I mean, we were feeling our oaths. We weren't coming out [to campus] to come to class, take notes, and have a test. We were coming out here to be with our friends, go around the picket lines, and fight the cops. We felt like we were doing the right thing and trying to make the world a better place. It was a combination of all that; it wasn't just fun, and we weren't just frivolous because we also put in a lot of work. We were here every day and then we'd have meetings. There'd be a meeting at Sacred Heart Church on Filmore. We'd go to meetings all evening; we were like warriors, and we were comrades. I'm still friends with almost all those people. Roy, fortunately, he's the only one who's died. Well, there's others, but of our close group. Roy and Patricia were a couple, and then Xander and I were roommates for years. Another friend, Julia, actually moved to Eugene, Oregon. We all still know each other and that's our basic friend group and that's like what, 55 years?

G.Y: I had a question. At the rallies, was there food, music?

L.S: There might have been music, but not food.

G.Y: Okay, so people were always hungry.

L.S: [laughing] Yeah.

G.Y: How did people communicate? Because today, we have the internet and cell phones. Like, "Hey, head out down to the Hall of Justice," or what was it?

L.S: Yeah, there [were] phones, home phones.

C.L: Could I go back to how your participation in the strike impacted your own relationship?

L.S: With my husband at the time?

C.L: Yeah, with your husband at the time, and you had other friends who [had] the same thing happening to them. They had political divides. Could you talk more about little bit about that? Was there an example of the political divide and did you see that as a trend among other strikers?

L.S: I don't think any of the other people were married at the time. I think Xander and I were both married early or something. I was 21 when I got married and that was way too early. Like I said, the relationship would have broken up anyway. It was kind of on the rocks, so [I was] involved with the strike, learning more about the history, and hardening more of my liberal, progressive ideas and values.

[00:50:13 – 00:55:06]
The husband was conservative, and he probably voted for Reagan or Nixon, I forget. It wasn't that important before the strike, but then it became more important. I left him at Christmas time, moved over to San Francisco and lived with a couple in their living room. They had a twin bed mattress on the floor. And then we did some drugs and then I told him about it and I had his car. I had his little car that I used to drive back and forth to San Jose. He came and took the car and I didn't know that. He was smart actually to do that, so when I noticed the car was gone, I talked to him and everything. He also came out to campus and had me sign papers because it was community property. It wasn't a fault divorce yet because it was 1967, I mean '68 or '69. So, he had me sign papers that said I didn't have a right to half his money, which I did. I don't even regret it to this day, even though I've needed money over the years from time to time, but it was his money, I hadn't earned it. He had earned it and if he had gone through a regular divorce without me signing those documents, I would have gotten half of it. That was an example. He came out to campus and found me without me knowing. There he was, I was like, "What are you doing here?" [He said], "I have these papers for you to sign."

C.L: Well, thank you for sharing that.

G.Y: I want to ask really quickly about the Summer of Love. Where were you during the Summer of Love?

L.S: I was here. No, I wasn't here. I was in Oakland and I got married. Yeah, we got married in the Summer of Love in 1967. July 2nd, 1967; my family came down from Tacoma for the wedding because my three cousins were bridesmaids, so all their families came and everything. We went over to San Francisco from Oakland and we went to Haight and got panhandled and you know my cousin, Sue was so excited. "Oh, I got panhandled!" and so it was an event to go to Haight Street in those days. That was during the Summer of Love, but I didn't take part in anything out here because I was this middle-class girl living in Oakland going to college and married.

C.L: So, I don't know if we covered this but, were you a part of any of the student organizations or campus clubs?

L.S: No, I think maybe because I was commuting from Oakland and I had been here, like I said, the Spring of 68' and then the Fall and didn't really have time to join any.

C.L: So, after the strike...

L.S: Oh, sorry. During the strike, I had a class in the experimental college which [were] those same portables where the experimental college classes were. They got a huge amount of student body funds to hire teachers, and it was all student-run. It was the most wonderful thing, the experimental college.

[00:55:07 – 01:00:40]
I took a class through the experimental college, and you'd get credit on your [transcript]. And I volunteered at a community center on 6th and Howard, downtown in South Market. It was called the South Market Community Center. A lot of the neighborhood kids came there. I think there were maybe two aid staff and then the rest were volunteers of students from State. I was teamed up with a young woman, a young girl, who was probably in the ninth or eighth grade or something, and I was teaching her how to sew. Yeah. It was such a great place and that was one of my best New Year's Eves ever. My mom would come sometimes, so my mom came to that New Year's Eve party. I have one picture of a gentleman standing and people sitting in the background, and my mom was there, and it was just so much fun. It was person to person, and we got to know all the kids, not just the ones we were matched with. Tt was called tutoring; we were tutoring.

C.L: And this was part of the experimental college class. Do you remember the name of the class?

L.S: No.

C.L: And this was during the strike, not after the strike?

L.S: During the strike. And then it was disbanded! They didn't let the students have the student body funds anymore. The experimental college was disbanded. It was so sad. I don't know if it was right away. I don't know. But I'll tell you something that speaks about racism and how people are raised. I was invited to their house: the girl's house. I forget exactly where it was, but I remember being there. And I was a little afraid to eat the food. I felt like "Oh, oh gosh." I ate it, I was fine, it was delicious, but that was where I came from. I was taught that they were "other." Not hating, not mean, but certainly different. Kind of embarrassed, but it's the truth.

C.L: Thank you for sharing. After the strike, what was your college experience like here at San Francisco State? And you mentioned participating in the experimental college, but I really wanted to know if you ever took one of the first courses in the Ethnic Studies College.

L.S: I did. I don't remember the name of it, but I remember the teacher was Willamette Brown and I didn't feel comfortable. It was partly me and partly because she was quite stern. I don't think I finished the class. I think I dropped out.

G.Y: What was the class called?

L.S: I don't remember, but some basic 101. Maybe Ethnic Studies 101 or something. I don't even remember what the curriculum was, but I just remember feeling uncomfortable.

G.Y: Did you feel uncomfortable bcause of the subject matter or curriculum?

L.S: I think it was her. I don't know where she ended up, or what she was really like, or [whether] it just me, but she wasn't warm and fuzzy. I was quite insecure too, so I'm sure I contributed to the situation and kind of felt like, "Should I be here?"

C.L: I wanted to ask, when the strike came to an end and the negotiations happened, did you feel that the students had earned a victory, or did you feel like there were some things that you didn't get a victory for?

L.S: I can't say that I knew that much about the negotiations, but I totally felt like it was a victory. We were friends with all the BSU and TWLF people, and we'd hear stuff about it because we all partied together. We'd have meetings and then we'd sometimes come back to our house or somewhere and so we knew Roger Alverado, Nesbit and Jerry Vernando.

[01:00:41 – 01:05:18]
G.Y: What were the parties like?

L.S: Really fun. Dancing. Lots of dancing because the music was so good.

G.Y: So, there was dancing and then organizing in between?

L.S: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

G.Y: I had a question. What do you think has been the greatest impact of the strike on your life?

L.S: That you can make change. I started working for the welfare department and I might not have done that otherwise if I hadn't been involved with a strike.

G.Y: It kind of gave you a purpose.

L.S: Yeah, and just how I *learned* so much and hadn't been *taught* so much. I'm kind of jumping ahead, but what I recognized at my church, the Unitarian Universalist Church, [was] that with this eighth principle, it's asking us to look at ourselves, our church, and how we operate in our church. But at State, I always felt like I was helping the downtrodden people, and I knew that I had to learn history, but I didn't consider myself a racist; that I didn't see my own racism. It was like the white person helping the downtrodden people of color.

[If they wanted to, each church] could adopt the eighth principle—because we have seven other principles that have been around for years—and this was an additional one to address racism and white supremacy in ourselves and our institution. We started reading books [since] there's been lots of books written on racism, helping white people understand and learn the true history of slavery, Jim Crow and white supremacy. At San Francisco State, [it] was a much broader search for knowledge. I've just learned so much and still have more to learn. We were in a different relationship; I was in a different relationship with the situation that I am now.

C.L: You mentioned you worked for the welfare department. Is that the city of San Francisco?

L.S: Yup, City and County of San Francisco Department. It was called Department of Social Services back then. I think it's called Human Services Agency right now. They always change it.

G.Y: And what would you do there?

L.S: First, I was an eligibility worker. Then I was an eligibility supervisor, and then I was a program manager. About 10 years in each position. In the beginning, I interviewed people who were applying for aid to families with dependent children. And then at certain times too, I had a case load. That was called "carrying"; it wasn't the new people coming in, it was the ones that were already on aid.

[01:05:18 – 01:10:42]

I also worked in foster care. My job was to issue the checks and MediCal cards for foster children. That was a separate group. I became a supervisor, so I supervised people who were doing that. Then I was a program manager, so I was the head of the GA, the food stamps program, the AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) program, and then the medical program. I got sick of the whole thing and went [to] found out what kind of pension I'd get and decided to retire. I retired really early. I retired in 1999. I knew I'd have to work; I'd have to supplement my pension, but I'm so fortunate to have my health plan free. I don't even have to pay anything. Knock on wood. It's allowed me to live, I'm living off it now plus social security, so that was a wonderful job in a lot of ways. I mean, it was terrible in some ways being a bureaucracy, but it was also really good—very good socially, made a lot of friends there and had a good time. I always want to have fun.

G.Y: And after you left there, what other kinds of work did you do?

L.S: I did training, I trained for a while through the Center for Human Rights Services Development or something at UC Davis and trained people in different counties in welfare departments. I really liked that. Then I got to [a point] where I didn't want to travel. I didn't like the traveling part and being in a hotel room by myself. I'd have to find care for my dog, my other dog. Then I started my own business, so that's how I supplemented my pension.

C.L: Oh, what is your own business?

L.S: I started out as an organizer, and then it kind of morphed into helping elderly people who were starting to have memory issues, who needed help keeping their home accounting—their home finances—in order. [The Sequoias on Geary and Laguna is] near my church, so there was somebody that lived there that went to my church. I started helping her with filing and stuff. She was my first client. Somebody else heard about me, so I worked for them and then I worked for different people there or elsewhere. When they started not being able to keep up their checkbook and a lot of people always had their income going into their savings account, they would have to transfer it into their checking account, but then they'd forget to do it, so they'd start bouncing checks. Anyway, I'd come in and never took over the money at all, they always could still sign the checks and everything. I'd get their stuff back in order and organized. I just go once a month and pay their bills and have them sign the check and send it off, so that was a wonderful thing. I quit doing that when I turned 70 because I said I have to keep one step ahead of them and I was kind of like, "I don't want to reconcile this bank account. No, that's not what I call fun."

C.L: Could I ask you to elaborate a little bit more about how your participation in the strike led you into social work? What attracted you to social work that was *similar* to your striking days or values?

L.S: Yeah. Part of it was also when I went down to City Hall to look at their job board, it was one of the jobs that was available. It wasn't necessarily that I went down there saying, "I want to do this." I went down there and saw it and ended up doing it, but I was already taking sociology as opposed to social work. I wasn't necessarily thinking about becoming a social worker. It took about a year for the test to come around and I was working temporary jobs down in the financial district. I wasn't that good at typing, so it wasn't like I was going to get a job through it; a full-time job.

[01:10:43 – 01:15:57]

Then, the test was announced, and it was going to be on a Saturday morning. I almost didn't go because it was early on a Saturday morning and my boyfriend at the time said, "Get up and go. You're going to go take that test." And I did. It's kind of like the rest is history. If I had been on my own, I probably wouldn't have gone and I don't know where I would have worked, but it became my career and I'm glad. I almost didn't stay; I almost left. I did leave at one point and traveled in Mexico and Guatemala and Belize. I was going to come back and do some kind of alternate job, maybe learn carpentry or do something like that, but not go back to that darn place. It was just too easy to go back, so I went back, and again, I'm glad I did because I wasn't hip on thinking about having pension, so I just kind of stumbled into that. [I'm] very glad I did because I wasn't really well-versed in finances and stuff like that. I didn't get a lot; I think being a woman in those years. My parents didn't really know how to guide me and say, "You should do this, and you should do that." I mean, they moved to California in 1960 and never bought a house. So, we didn't have that generational wealth. I've never owned a house. I've been renting all these years. I asked my brother one time, "Did they ever look for a house?" and he said, "Yeah, well, one time they were looking at a house out in Walnut Creek." And I thought, "Oh my god, what if they bought a house in Walnut Creek?" I mean, I would have had a different life, so maybe that wouldn't have been so good.

C.L: When did you join your church that you are at now? The First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco.

L.S: 1996. I went there to speak as the head of the AFDC program because in '96, Clinton wanted to get reelected. He [had a bill] called welfare reform, but we called it welfare "deform." We were trying to go out to various community groups and speak [to] people to tell their senators and congresspeople not to vote for that bill because it took away the entitlement of women with minor children. It was going to be the biggest change ever. To us, it was kind of like, "What? How could that...?" I mean, that was the most fundamental right that people had, and it passed, but anyway. I went to that church to speak. They had a morning forum where they'd have speakers, and I was the speaker that morning.

Then after that, the guy asked me [if] I [wanted] to come to the service and I was like, "Yeah. Okay. Sunday, I don't have anything to do." I had been unchurched for years and so, I went to the church and just fell in love with it. It was all the things that I liked about the Church of my childhood. We weren't big, strong churchgoers, but when I did go to church it was the Lutheran church. After we moved to Oakland, we never went to church again, so I had been unchurched all that time. But it's the community I like about it and the values. I found it was values that were consistent with what I believed in. You can believe in God, you can be Christian. We have a lot of former Christians, former Catholics, former Jewish people that come there. Its's a place to figure out what your own spirituality is and there's no holy book; there's no creed. It's just those principles like [being] nice to everybody, and tolerance, and this eighth principle, so I really like that. I joined right away, and I've been going ever since.

[01:15:58 – 01:20:32]

C.L: And when did they start to have this eighth principle be a part of their church?

L.S: Voting for it was two years ago, but the eighth principle has been underway for many years. It's a majorly White denomination, but there are people of color who belong and have belonged for a long time. One of the prime movers behind the eighth principle's name is Paula Cole Jones. She's from the east coast and she's a Black woman. Then this other fellow, a white guy, she and him wrote the eighth principle quite a few years ago, I think. They had been working on getting it approved and disseminated, so when we got in on it, we were kind of like Johnny-come-latelys. And not just us; it kind of slowly came west. That was two years ago that we approved it, and the vote I think was 92–2 or something. We had some pushback from people. We had a lot of informational activities. We had zoom meetings where we would talk about it and let people give us their feedback and ask questions and everything. We had people that thought it shouldn't be a principle, that it should be in the bylaws. Kind of technical problems with it. But then when we had the vote, it was almost unanimous.

It's been very interesting; I was on a committee that disseminated information about [the eighth principle] and conducted the zoom meetings. There were people of color on the committee: a Mexican American woman, a Black woman; and some white people, gay, straight. What I learned from being on that committee, I learned a lot. I was surprised at first that people of color underwent discrimination at our church. "What? You're kidding!" Because I thought, "We're all liberals and everybody's..." But obviously something was going on that we were white-dominated space and mostly white people historically. People would talk about feeling harmed and use the word "harm," and then some white people would be like, "Well, 'harm,' that's too strong of a term." Thinking they were overly sensitive or something. It's been very interesting to see how it has come into our setting. I think we're doing a much better job now.

We had a White Allies Group, so there were a few meetings with just white people, and then there's a BIPOC group and they meet the first of every month. We've had some situations where people felt harmed and then talked to the ministers about it, and then the parties talked about it and came to some kind of agreement. One time, we totally forgot about Chinese New Year, and we had a guest minister right around the time of Chinese New Year. He was from a synagogue, so he was a rabbi, and he made a joke about—I can't remember the joke, but it was a little not okay.

[01:20:33 – 01:25:42]

Then the Asian people complained, our ministers talked to the rabbi, and then it was talked about in the service. People thought that was too sensitive, that [it] wasn't so bad, it was just a joke. We're trying to work things out and encourage people to speak up if they feel slighted or harmed. We've started a group, a team called the Healthy Congregations team, so I'm on that. There's three of us and we've received training from a denomination to learn how to handle it. We're a covenantal congregation. We realized in order to handle situations that come up, we had to have a covenant. We had a really short covenant that we said every week in the service, but it wasn't anything that we could say, "What you did broke that part of the covenant." We had to create a covenant, and we all got together and we did it. We had a facilitator to help us and about 50 people joined in and now we're starting our service as the Healthy Congregations team. So, people can come to us if they feel slighted or feel we already have a situation where somebody felt that this other person was rude. We're handling lower- level situations and the ministers still handle

the more serious situations. If it's something concerning a minister, then it's handled at the regional level. That's one thing that we're trying to educate people on; how we expect them to behave in a way. Saying it right out, and how we handle it when the covenant is broken, so it's all very interesting.

C.L: I just have one last question and then I'll go around, see if anyone else has questions and I'll invite you to share anything that hasn't been shared. I'm curious—you said that you were unchurched for a period before you joined the Unitarian. Was there a religious or spiritual presence at all during your strike days? Did you see Christians joining the strike or any important church people being part of the strike?

L.S: Cecil Williams. I don't know if Carlton Goodlet was a church person. I think there was church participation, but I don't think among the students. We met at Sacred Hearts Church, but that was just our meetings.

G.Y: Well, then I've heard that Catholics were involved. Catholics.

L.S: Yeah, somebody else might know more about that.

G.Y: Juanita Tamayo-Lott.

L.S: Who?

G.Y: Juanita Tamayo-Lott.

L.S: Oh, uh huh. Yeah.

C.L: Okay. Grace or Ella, do you have any questions? Okay is there anything you want to share with us that you didn't get to touch upon in your interview?

L.S: I just want to thank you and all of you. It's just so wonderful that you're doing this and have been doing the commemorations, the 50th anniversary and the 55th, and the luncheons. It's just so wonderful to have people remembering us, to see how the program is thriving and the college, the school. It's just so wonderful to see the outcome of what we were doing. What we were trying to do.

G.Y: Thank you, thanks.

L.S: Yeah, you're very welcome.

[01:25:42 – 01:25:42]

[END TRANSCRIPT]