Ellen Cassedy
Interviewed by Ann Froines
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Ellen is one of the founders of 9to5. Let's start by talking about the beginnings of 9to5. What led up to it? What were the first steps in organizing 9to5?

Karen Nussbaum had gotten a job at Harvard as a secretary. I think because wherever she went she looked for opportunities to organize, she had started a little lunchtime group of office workers there. I applied for a job at Harvard, too, with the thought that I would join her in doing that. I was looking for a venue for organizing, in particular, women's organizing, and that looked like a good place. A few years later it occurred to me that I had also, obviously, needed a job, not just an opportunity to organize, and that was a good part of why I had gone there. I had a college degree but I had no idea how to get a job of any kind. This seemed like an easy job to get.

What department did you work in?

I was in the School of Education in a little office by myself. I had three or four different bosses who gave me work. The group of us who began to meet weekly honed my ability to express what the problems were in a vocabulary that had some strategic value. It was a challenge for me to take seriously the concerns of office workers and myself as an office worker. It took a long time to turn my head around, because I had absorbed what was in the culture -- that office work wasn't really work, office workers were not true workers, women's work was not that important. The Harvard office workers' group changed my consciousness. And, simultaneously or a little bit later, we got together this tiny group of women to talk about forming a citywide office workers organization. As you've heard, we sat around and told our life stories for a year.

And again, meeting weekly?

I don't remember, maybe. There were not fifty-two of us so I don't know what we did every week. We also started putting out a newsletter. Again, that was a process of figuring out what lexicon we were going to use in some strategic way. Then, after six months or a year or so, we heard about the Midwest Academy, which was starting in Chicago. It was a summer long internship. I think it was a four week course and then you would be placed with a community organization. We decided to send me as a representative of the group to get ideas about what to do next. This was an enormous turning point for us. I learned all these tactics of community organizing. It was based on the Alinsky style, figuring out where were the "leaders in the community" and where were the targets and how you could set up fixed fights that you knew you could win, which would then empower people to go and demand the next thing. I remember I brought a little pile of our newsletters that we had proudly published, and the director, Heather Booth, flipped through the newsletters and put them aside and said, "OK, so,

what have you been doing?" I was completely shocked because for us the newsletter was such an achievement, but to her it was, like, "OK, so you have a newsletter, great, but what are your activities?" That period was sort of like an apprenticeship for me. A lot of what I was being taught did not come naturally to me at all. Growing up, for example, I had been afraid of calling a movie theatre to find out what time the movie was. Before I picked up the phone, I would write down what I was going to say and leave a little blank for the answer and then my next question. So, I had to get over that. I'd be given a stack of cards and "Call all these people." Or "Go door to door and ask for money." I felt that I was developing new muscles and going against the grain of what I'd been brought up to do. I came home bursting with new ideas about how we could go public.

Before these beginning discussions and trainings for 9to5, had you had any experience as an activist or organizer? Had you participated in any other activities in college, for example?

I had been brought up to think of myself as an activist to some extent. My parents were either in or around the Old Left. I lived in my elementary school years in the Baltimore area, which was legally segregated. For example, the public health service had different days for giving immunizations to Blacks and Whites... {unclear word 85}. [And the movie theatre --. I was in second grade in 1957 – when integration came in, and a few Black children came to our school for the first time. My parents made sure that I became friends with one of the girls. I invited her to my birthday party and then it turned out we couldn't go to the movies because they didn't allow Black children into the movie theater. My parents would very consciously educate me about these issues. When I was around twelve, I participated in demonstrations for fair housing where we then lived, on Long Island, New York. I raised money for the March on Washington in 1963 and went to it with my parents. My parents gave me a sort of counter education about the Cold War. Counter to what I was learning in school. The Cuban Missile Crisis I remember I saw from a very different standpoint from other kids in my school. I was 12 then. And then the Vietnam War -- I went to the first national march that was called against the war in Washington at 15, by myself, with a friend, on the bus. Also, I want to mention a few books that were important to me. One was Male and Female, by Margaret Mead, which is an anthropological study showing that gender roles are not innate. One was Let Us Now Praise Famous Men by James Agee, which was about a couple of journalists going down and reporting on the extreme poverty of the South during the Depression. One was The Feminine Mystique by Betty Freidan, which I read when I was about 17 -- a classic work that helped to start the women's movement. I felt somewhat humiliated by it -- I could see in myself the timidity and confusion and lack of drive that she described in the book. That was a very important book for me to read. I started college in 1968 at the University of Chicago. The whole campus exploded with a sit-in and I was very torn. I wanted to study and read Aristotle and all that, but then this whole social justice agenda just flooded into me . And so, I hung onto the studies for a year and then I became part of the student strike the next year. Then I transferred to the University of California and got into the women's movement. The women's studies movement was just starting then. It was an incredibly exciting moment where the professors were just discovering the material themselves and the classrooms would be packed with auditors and it was this

really electric time. It was like turning everything upside down to see there were documents about average women who were not famous, who were not presidents, and we could study that history. You didn't have to have this either/ or thing – either Aristotle or you're out on the picket line. There was a way to bring those two things together. I wrote my paper about the Women's Trade Union League, which, I later realized, was the grandmother of 9to5 -- a bridge between unorganized women and labor unions. I was so captivated by the tales of the garment workers' strikes -- these women who came from the kitchen into the sweatshop and then up to the soapbox. I wanted to be those people. I felt them as characters – Rose Schneiderman, Clara Lemkin, who spoke at Town Hall at a huge gathering of garment workers. I felt that I was there. When I got to Harvard and was sitting at my desk, I began to think, "Well, hmmm, maybe office workers are the garment workers of today." I think I brought that with me to the beginnings of our organizing.

Had you participated in activities with the Women's Movement in addition to doing the Women's Studies and research and writing?

I was in a consciousness raising group and I guess I went to a couple of conferences. All very theoretical and personal as opposed to active or strategic. It wasn't about making a change, making a demand. It was about making myself heard in various personal ways. It also involved a big shift -- making myself pay attention to other women and ally with other women instead of walking into a situation and thinking, "Oh, the men have the power; I'm going over there to be with them," which had been my standard operating procedure. I remember how difficult it was to turn the ocean liner around, turn the camera to women and force myself to be interested and to stay with women. Once I had done that, it was incredibly rewarding. Today I treasure my relationships with women so deeply, but it took a really conscious effort to get there.
But as far as activities in the women's movement, not too much. Not really.

In those early discussions you had with these ten women about your lives as office workers and I guess you were beginning to talk about the potential for organizing office workers probably was there any discussion about feminism and office workers that you remember in those meetings?

Feminism per se. Probably, yeah. I mean we were trying to see things through the lens of women's status in America. So, I'd say yes. We looked at how had we been brought up to think about ourselves as members of society. What was expected of us as girls. What was our upbringing as girls.

Can you tell us the story of the launching of 9to5? And here I should admit that I am an old friend of Ellen's. She and I worked together in 1972 organizing something called the Women's Assembly in the Boston area, which was sort of a multi-issue one-day women's conference, which I somehow in my dim memory associate with some of the steps of organizing 9to5.

It could be. I had never done anything like that. I had never taken a leading role in an organization. I'd always been somebody sent out to go door to door in the civil rights era or stand shaking a can or hold up a sign. I'd never been the person who actually planned things. Now here I was on this little committee that planned this women's assembly. The slogan was, "A woman's work is never done, Women's work has just begun."What was new for me was actually helping to plan the leaflet, figure out how we were going to get people to come. I guess we probably got some names for 9to5 there. But I have to say that was a very different type of organizing from what we ended up doing when 9to5 actually launched. I think that for that Women's Assembly we went to the existing left wing organizations and handed out our leaflets there and called our friends who had participated in anti-war activities or who identified themselves as radicals. To make the change from that to actually penetrating the mainstream of the office workforce was a huge change. We had to do something very different -- to hand out a newsletter with a carefully developed vocabulary. We handed it out in the morning while people were on their way to work. I did not wear my work shirt and my blue jeans. I put on clothes that looked like office attire. Very different for me. You had to get there at 7:30 in the morning with a huge stack of newsletters and figure out exactly where to stand to get the absolute maximum of people passing by. We handed the leaflets only to women.

What did those early leaflets or handouts say?

I remember we used a font that looked like a typewriter. There was a picture of a typewriter and the information was on the little roller. It told the time and place of our first meeting at the "Y" – a downtown place, a neutral place. A women oriented place, "Y*W*CA", and it was on pink paper.

Pink-collar.

Pink-collar workers, right.

What were those early meetings like?

Very structured. The women's movement had moved toward sitting around in a circle and sharing in a personal way. This was a real departure from that. We had people who had carefully prepared remarks who would stand up at a podium and talk. We had some people giving little testimonies about what it was like to work in an office, which were carefully geared toward what we were going to do about it. It wasn't just rapping. Maybe there'd be four speakers, and then the last person would say, "And here's a proposal for what we're going to do. We're going to hand out this survey which will then result in a report which will then do this and that and the other."

Were those early meetings attended by good numbers of office workers as you remember?

Every person who was in there we had to work for. We had to work like dogs to get people there. Again, it was all designed to look like a model of what it could become.

So, the people who were standing up to talk were just like the other people in the room and they were talking the way the people in the room would talk if they eventually…so it was all sort of modeled…

…if they eventually would.

It was sort of like one of those little Japanese flowers – you pour water on it and first it's little and then it's bigger and bigger and bigger but right from the start it looks like what it's going to become.

At some point the organizers of 9to5 started to fundraise so that you could hire staff full time and you became one of these staff members.

Yes.

How were the responsibilities and things like that divided up once you were a staff member? How would you characterize the organization at that point?

We got this little office at the "Y" and I went there every day. Karen came, I think, part time and it was a question of starting from zero. We held the first meeting and set a date for the next meeting and then we called all the people who had come to the first meeting and tried to get them involved in passing out leaflets and getting more people. Then there were, of course, the recruitment lunches where we started going out to lunch with people to

…that you had met through the leafleting?

Yeah, it was sort of like anthropological research -- like "What's going on in your office?" and trying out different approaches. We were interviewing people and listening really carefully and incorporating what worked and what didn't work into our next recruitment lunch.

What were some of the early campaigns of 9to5 that are particularly memorable to you?

Our first thing was this citywide survey, which again provided a lot of opportunity for people to take roles, which we then put together into a report. Then we planned what we called a public hearing, which was a bigger meeting where people spoke out. We got press coverage for that. At some point we went to the Chamber of Commerce and made a demand.

You said something about meeting with..

We met with some official there. Maybe we demanded that he come to the hearing and listen. We got members of the anti-discrimination commission to sit up on the stage and listen to the testimony. We approached the insurance commissioner and the banking

commissioner of the state. We made demands of them that they play some sort of oversight role in looking at discrimination by banks and use whatever powers they had to take action. We were successful in getting them to make some changes. I started working with women in the publishing industry. Boston had a fair size publishing industry and it was a place where the workers had a lot more options than they did in banking and insurance.

By working in the organizing end? {363}

They were more able to organize. That took off like nothing else that we were doing. It was much, much easier to get people to come to meetings and take action on the job and speak out. It was almost too fast to keep up with, which was definitely not true in the other industries. Those women expected to be able to move up and to express themselves on the job. They didn't need to be coaxed to be really outraged, whereas in banking and insurance it was a different culture, a different class. In publishing, the industry was ready to change. Within a few years, we made big, big changes in that industry.

For example?

Pay was raised. Women were considered for promotions. Job ladders were created. We got the Attorney General to file cases against three big publishers -- race and sex discrimination cases. We found plaintiffs without much trouble. Now I think back on it and I think, "Well, it was safe for the Attorney General to go after this pipsqueak industry with a bunch of literary editors – pretty different from taking on the big guns in the financial industry." But still, it was a model and the other industries knew what was coming if they didn't watch out. And, we got to use our publishing members as a base to reach out to women in other industries. A lot of our members, disproportionately, were from the publishing industry, yet the public face that we presented was a little different from that. It was more working class and it encompassed the other industries

When did you begin talking about unions in 9to5?

I think from the beginning we knew that if office workers were really going to gain a voice it was not going to be through an ad hoc organization like 9to5. We thought it would take five years for 9to5 to make its point among office workers and to get the attention of the unions. In fact, it took a lot longer than that. People were interested in being part of an ad hoc organization longer than we'd expected. And it took longer to get the point across to the unions.

(end of tape 1, side a)

...you were a national organization though, right? You had many chapters. Were you involved in that kind of national organizing {unclear word 442) How did that work? How did you go from Boston to being a national organization?

At first, we had five organizations, in Boston, New York, San Francisco, Cleveland and Dayton. Then we started more of them. We'd come together and plan national campaigns to put pressure on the anti-discrimination agencies within the Carter administration.

Earlier in this interview, you talked a bit about your own development as an organizer, as a leader midway in your career in 9to5. Do you have anything else to say about your development as a leader? What were some of the new things that were taking on and learning about yourself?

To give a sense of the texture of what it was like for me as a leader – I was very much in the background. I never stood up in front of a group. It was always people who actually had office jobs who did that. My role was coaching people, helping them prepare their speeches, sometimes writing their speeches for them. I worked with people to plan how they were going to chair the meeting and what they should try to get out of it and so on. It was a question of giving a little nudge here and there rather than being an out front leader myself. In the staff meetings, on the other hand, I did a lot of talking. Those meetings were very collective. I have always felt very dependent on the group discussion process to come up with ideas. I didn't think of myself as somebody who could sit down and figure it all out on my own. I didn't know what I thought until we had all talked about it.

What you're describing, would you say that was 9to5's characteristic approach to leadership? I mean in other words you were a staff not trying to be out front of the women you were organizing. You were trying to involve them and get them to speak up.

Yes. This is not just a personal characteristic. It was a style of leading from behind and a collective style of decision-making. Another really important thing was that this was my life. I was so strongly identified with this work. It was a total passion. There was zero separation between me and the organization. I did leave the office by 7:00 at night or so, and I had hobbies and I didn't take work home a whole lot, but I was just in love.

Can you say a little bit, is it relevant to talk a little bit about what home was for you then at different stages I guess?

I lived in a group house when we started 9to5, and then I lived with my now husband. I didn't have kids, at first.

When you said there wasn't much separation between you and the organization I guess what I was wondering was, were you living with and socializing with others who were also progressive activists at the time?

In order to do this work I actually stopped being friends with a lot of people I had been friends with earlier. I think we've talked some about how much pressure we were under in Boston from other parts of the progressive movement. "Why aren't you talking about the Vietnam War? And why aren't you talking about the need to seize power at the

workplace? Why aren't you talking about unions?" NOT talking about such things was a very important part of our strategy. It became impossible for me to be friends with some people; I shared many of their viewpoints but not their view about strategy. That was a big rupture for me. Can I talk a little about what happened when I had kids?

Yeah.

I worked for 9to5 in Boston up through 1979 and then Jeff, my husband, and I moved to Philadelphia, where he was starting a chapter of a Citizen Action organization. My job was to work in Washington, while living in Philadelphia, to work with leaders of national women's organizations on issues like pay equity and national anti-discrimination policy. It was not a particularly good fit for me. I've just described what it was like to be a leader in 9to5. This was being a leader in a whole different way.

What was the idea behind it? To, sort of, make allies with these groups that {overlapping talk}changes in federal policy and that sort of thing?

Yes. And to be able to contend for money from foundations that were funding this kind of thing. After a while I moved out of the Washington role and into a role where I wrote grants and our national newsletter and did national planning. I did that until 1985. In 1981, I had my first baby. In 1985, I left the organization. Some women found working in 9to5 and having children to be compatible, but for me it was not, particularly. For example, to have to go to a 3 day meeting with an infant was almost more than I could do. I tried bringing the infant and leaving him with a childcare worker in Cleveland, and it was really costly for me emotionally. Then I tried leaving the baby at home. I was breast-feeding and so I had to bring an electric breast pump, carrying it like a little office machine on the plane. And worrying that when I got back, he wasn't going to want to nurse anymore. One of my critiques of 9to5 is that we never really met the challenge of talking about the work/family crisis adequately. I don't think any women's organization did. We would demand on site childcare centers and sick childcare – in other words, when your child was sick you should be able to bring that child to a care center for sick children while you went to work. I felt that people shouldn't be working when their kids were sick. And the family should be earning enough money so that you didn't have to go to work full time when you had an infant. I began to feel this gulf between me and the rhetoric of the organization.

Not that many of the staff and national leaders at that time had infants, right?

At the very beginning of the organization, almost no one in the organization had kids. We were all either very young women, women who had no children , or women whose kids were grown. And then at the beginning of the eighties a number of the leaders of the organization started to have kids and we all did that a little differently.

Did you find ways to have more flex time in 9to5 in those four years?

Yes. After I had my first baby, I didn't work full time. However, it wasn't made that public that that was the case. I was working 30 hours a week and doing a little more work at home. It was not...

Something you felt you could advertise or the organization felt it could advertise.

Right.

And how did this change make you feel personally I mean given what you say about you passion for the organization.

It started to make me feel that I needed to leave. I had already begun to feel that way because I had left Boston, where it was so collective, and now I was in Philadelphia, which felt in comparison a little like the hinterlands. Also, I had turned thirty and I began to feel a hankering for parts of myself that were not being expressed in this work. Maybe the "study Aristotle" side. I was brought up to be an intellectual, a writer, and I started to get in touch with more reflective parts of my personality and I started to be ready to move on.

Let's go back a minute. When you got out of college at Berkeley and were trying to figure out what to do next, what kinds of choices did you face there and which ones did you make and so on because that's usually some kind of choice making point in our lives.

Right. I had not been brought up to take myself seriously as a worker or as somebody who would have a calling. I'd been brought up to express myself, to be self-actualized, but the venue for that was very vague. My mother had combined being a mother and a housewife with being an author of children's books. Very seamless. She was a housewife, she was a mother, and then on the side she was also this fantastic writer. I couldn't picture how that was going to work for me. I applied to graduate school in women's history, but by the time I was accepted I had moved to Boston and gotten involved in organizing the Women's Assembly and doing anti-war work. I could not imagine going off to school by myself and pursuing an academic career. And so I decided to stick with this group that felt very nurturing and fun and communal and more comfortable than striking out on my own with a career.

(Tape 2, side a)

Ellen, tell me something about other kinds of activism going on in the various communities in which you were during the time you were active in 9to5.

OK, that would span from the early seventies to 1985. I think we've touched on how 9to5 was very adamant about keeping ourselves separate or keeping our boundaries separate from other organizations in the women's movement. Boston had a big Left presence and a young, student presence. There was always some kind of ferment going on there. Even if we, as staff people, might have had personal connections to people who

were doing some of that activity, we really didn't get involved with it. Then, at the end of the Carter administration and as Reagan was being elected, I worked in Washington with other women's organizations on campaigns to get the government to be more aggressive in combating discrimination. These organizations were mainly not grassroots organizations – they put their energy into lobbying in Washington. We felt pretty different from them, but in thinking back it might have been good for us to be more creative about our alliances with some of these organizations. We did have a lot in common with community organizing, especially labor-oriented groups like the Ohio Public Interest Campaign, which Karen's husband was the head of, that were working with the labor movement but not in the labor movement, organizing to deal with the social cost of industrial downsizing and industrial flight out of the Rust Belt. It was a similar strategy to ours, where the labor movement was not taking the lead in dealing with this and these organizations came forward and said, "We've got some ideas. Maybe we can be sort of a demonstration project for how labor could respond." We had personal ties to the people who were working there.

When 9to5 became Local to District 925 and was part of SEIU, were members of the organization in different regions of the country ever drawn into {682 unclear word} support for political campaigns of particular individuals who were progressive around labor issues. I mean, I know SEIU, now, is doing a lot of that kind of work, campaigning for particular individuals.

Certainly on an individual basis, people did that. But organizationally, I don't recall that we ever endorsed anybody. We had some candidates' forums in Boston, where we'd invite the candidates to come and talk about the issues that we brought up, such as race and sex discrimination on the job and what the government could do about it. My view is that we mostly did that to get our members thinking, "Hmm, we're certainly important. These candidates came to see us. Isn't that something?" Rather than actually trying to influence what happened in the race.

Do you think that the aims of 9to5 were realized? A big question but...

I think that it's a mixed story. I feel really proud about a lot of what we were able to do. And I think that as I said, we both rode a wave and created a wave. The workplace was transformed during the time that we were active and that had something to do with us. Women have moved into much higher positions, women are respected more, women's job duties have changed. It is no longer taken for granted that the woman in the room will be the one to make the coffee – a small matter that is a symbol of enormous changes. Women have a recognized, stable place in the workplace in a way that they never did when we started out. However, our society is still profoundly sexist. The number of women at the top of any institution in the United States is tiny. Labor movement, corporations, government. People are working harder for less today. The labor movement is arguably less powerful than it's been in a long time. Speaking even more globally, the oppression of the underdeveloped world by the developed world is going like gangbusters. Even so, I am very encouraged by some things that are happening today in the labor movement. I want to mention the project that Karen is working on at

the AFL-CIO, Working America. There's something very similar to 9to5 in that they're recruiting people one at a time to be part of a very loose organization, where when you join you're not taking an enormous risk. I think that's creative and flexible and the sort of thing we were trying to do. .

It's putting all those people in touch in a direct way with labor issues, isn't it?

Right. It's mobilizing their power. The members receive information and education about activism. That's what we were trying to do. I was looking at these two brochures that I had in my mailbox. One is a brochure in the old style -- on the front is a picture of a young woman with her mouth wide open and her fist in the air. And then here's the brochure from Working America, which also has a big crowd, and they're all smiling like crazy, waving little American flags, and sort of looking forward into the future. I think that reflects something that we were trying to do with 9to5. We were not requiring that you see yourself as somebody who could get out there and fight fight fight, but instead somebody who wanted to be with others, working together. It's a difference in tone.

What impact do you think 9to5 had on SEIU possibly, and also the labor movement in general?

I don't really know. I do know that when our organization built our relationship with SEIU, SEIU was also very admirably building similar kinds of relationships with other organizations outside the labor movement proper -- community organizing, organizing in the South, cultural organizations, racially based organizations. They saw the energy out there and they brought it into their union. Their openness to what we were about was reflected in their ability to think outside the box in other ways, too.

Do you think 9to5 had any impact on the way SEIU thought about organizing women or embracing women into leadership positions?

Certainly I think it became impossible not to notice how many women were at the table or whether the union was paying attention to women. I think that was partly us and partly the times that we were part of.

What do you think you learned about yourself working as an organizer or a staff person those 15 or so years in 925? Big question. And in many ways, you've touched on it.

I learned how to do a lot of things that I had never imagined myself doing. But I also felt that I was living out a heritage that I had received from way back, from my grandparents' era, of feeling common cause with other people, respecting people who were not like me, being curious about other people's experience and doing what I could to help people who had critical needs. I feel very privileged that I lived in a time that it was possible to express that and make that my life.

What kind of work did you do after 925, maybe focusing, too, on what you're doing now?

In 1985, when I was pregnant with my second child, I decided that I would leave the organization and do things that were associated with 9to5 but that allowed me to be home taking care of her. I worked out of my house as a speechwriter for John Sweeney, the president of SEIU then. I became a columnist at the Philadelphia Daily News, writing about work from a worker's point of view. I wrote for women's magazines about working women's issues. I wrote a book with Ellen Bravo about sexual harassment. In the first Clinton term, I became a speechwriter for the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. I wrote speeches for Andy Stern and Anna Burger at SEIU. More recently, I wrote a play based on a diary kept by my great-aunt, a lifelong secretary. Now I'm writing about how Lithuania, the country where my Jewish ancestors came from, is working to involve a sometimes resistant population in looking at the Holocaust and moving forward.

I've given some thought especially in the last few days when you were coming here as to why it is that I'm not in the labor movement today. It has somewhat to do with having had kids, which I think is too bad. I think there should be more flexibility there. But it goes beyond that. I've been thinking about some of the other people in 9to5, some of the activists, who are not in labor today, and I think it would have been better if the labor movement, SEIU, had said, "We're going to really, really extend ourselves to pull in the talents and skills of Janet Selcer and Helen Williams," people who, today, are using those same skills someplace else.

Any final words you'd like to add?

One thing is, I to this day am just flabbergasted over the question of why it is that an immigrant, a woman from Central America, working three jobs, one of which is being a janitor in an office building, maybe doing work under the table, kids, poverty -- why is that person able to organize and become part of a union drive, yet the office worker working in the same office building feels she can't? I don't think that question has been answered. I don't think it's because the office worker is tied to her boss, because in many of those cases there really is no individual boss. I'd like the answer to that question. And the last thing I want to say is I feel like there was something so fantastic about 9to5 and the experience of working in a group on a common cause, feeling so much optimism and hope. It was just unbeatable. I remember when I was debating whether I should leave 9to5, I was imagining myself saying to my grandchildren, "Oh you know those 9to5 years, they were the best years of my life," and that sort of stopped me in my tracks and I thought, "I can't let go of this." I did let go of it – but if I should live so long and have grandchildren, I believe I will say, "These were just fantastic, really precious times for me."