Population and Reproductive Health Oral History Project

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College
Northampton, MA

Sharon Camp

Interviewed by
Rebecca Sharpless

August 20–21, 2003
Washington, D.C.

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Narrator

Sharon Camp, Ph.D. (b. 1943) is president and CEO of the Alan Guttmacher Institute. She was the head of Women's Capital Corporation—which commercialized Plan B emergency contraception in the United States—as well as the International Consortium on Emergency Contraception. From 1975 to 1993, she was senior vice president of Population Action International.

Interviewer

Rebecca Sharpless directed the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, from 1993 to 2006. She is the author of *Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices: Women on Texas Cotton Farms, 1900–1940* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999). She is also co-editor, with Thomas L. Charlton and Lois E. Myers, of *Handbook of Oral History* (AltaMira Press, 2006). In 2006 she joined the department of history at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

Restrictions

None

Format

Four 60-minute audiocassettes.

Transcript

Transcribed, audited and edited at Baylor University. Transcript has been reviewed and approved by Sharon Camp.

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Audio Recording

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Transcript

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Sharpless Okay, today is the twentieth of August, the year 2003. My name is Rebecca Sharpless and this is the first oral history interview with Dr. Sharon Camp. The interview is taking place in Dr. Camp's office in Washington, D.C., and we're going to be talking about her work as a population pioneer. This project is being sponsored by The Hewlett Foundation. Okay. All right, Sharon, we want to start at the beginning, and I think what I'd like to do is just get a little bit of background on you. Tell me a little bit about where you were born and where you grew up and just a little bit about that.

Camp Sure. I was born in Easton, Pennsylvania, which was the nearest hospital to my parents' home in New Jersey across the Delaware. I've never lived in Pennsylvania (laughs) and only briefly in New Jersey. I actually grew up in the middle of the Mojave Desert. My dad was an MIT-, Yale-trained rocket scientist, and we lived, for much of my childhood, on a big Navy base out in China Lake, California, where he was developing rocket fuels and engines and so forth. It was an interesting place to grow up, although there wasn't a lot to do, and I spent most of my spare time riding my horse out into the desert and a lot of time by myself, which I think may have been actually

pretty good for my development. I learned to become pretty self-reliant, learned to entertain myself. I went to Pomona College when I went to undergraduate school down in Claremont and that was a wonderful experience. That's still the best part of my life from the past, although in some ways, my life keeps getting better. I don't look back and really miss it, but if I could relive any four years it would be my (laughs) four years of undergraduate school, which were great fun. And then I went on to Johns Hopkins to do my doctorate. I did my master's degree essentially in African Studies with a real focus on development economics and political development, and decided when I went into the doctoral program, after actually spending most of a year hitchhiking through Africa with a backpack and a sleeping bag and a female friend, that my real commitment was to the theories of development, generally, and not to Africa specifically. And so, at the doctoral level, I switched into comparative and international politics—again, with an emphasis on economic and political development, but ended up doing my doctoral dissertation on what had by then become my home county of Charles County, Maryland. And I actually did research on political development in southern Maryland, which was a rapidly modernizing area of the country. It had been a real backwater for many, many years—very traditional kind of political system, and suddenly, with the growth of suburban commuters into Washington and Baltimore, took on many of the characteristics of a modern political system. And what was interesting was not only to apply the dichotomous pattern variables, and other, you know, theoretical constructs used to study Africa, Latin America, Asia—developing

societies—to apply those in one's own backyard, but to discover what happened when you did that, which was that you saw the downside as well as the upside of modernization. You saw the degree to which people left behind in the traditional part of the society—less well educated, less upwardly mobile, less geographically mobile, less sophisticated—lost political efficacy because the intermediary structures through which they had accessed the political system were destroyed by modernization, which, you know, eliminated a lot of the "ward bosses," so to speak, other political intermediaries, including the role that religious leaders might have played or the local grocery store owner might have played. So, it was a very interesting dissertation, and it was well received at Johns Hopkins. But probably what meant more to me was it was very well received in Charles County. I shared it with many of the political leaders whom I had interviewed, and it was wonderful to have some of those people say to me, You know, Sharon, I finally understand what's going on here. And that's, I think, rare in political science or social science generally, that you actually live in the community that you're studying, rather than sort of drop in, study it, and leave. But I really had to take responsibility for what I said in that dissertation with the people about whom I was writing, which was really interesting.

Sharpless Let me back up.

Camp Anyway, that's the history!

Sharpless That's a quick romp. Let me ask you—you majored in international studies even at the bachelor's level.

Camp Um-hm.

Sharpless How did you get interested in international affairs as a young person?

Camp I had a biology teacher who was kind of a mentor—I think it must have been my junior year—and she was the advisor to the American Service Association or American Foreign Service Association. I can't even remember what it's called now, but it's the group that sponsors foreign students both going and coming. And she convinced me in my senior year to be the student president for that organization. And that's how I first got interested in international studies. Actually, I think that must have been my junior year, because then in my senior year, I had a Danish foster sister coming to live with me. And one of my best friends had a Chilean gal come and live with her, and the four of us kind of palled around, and that sort of helped to cement my interest in—and I think I was born with a wanderlust. You know, I don't think I have it to anywhere near the same degree anymore, but, you know, for years and years I had such itchy feet, you know, I just—I had to get up and go. And that legitimized the wanderlust, to be interested in international politics.

Sharpless Um-hm. And you studied in France, did you not?

Camp I studied in Switzerland.

Sharpless Switzerland, okay.

Camp Um-hm. I spent a semester abroad in Switzerland at the University of Geneva and the graduate school in international studies that's based there. And I monitored the Palais des Nations, the UN bodies that are based in Geneva, and that served as one of my courses.

Sharpless How did you get interested in Africa?

Camp Um, well, it's kind of—I'm not even sure I should admit to this, but I had, at the undergraduate level, to pick an area of specialization. And I'd had already quite a few courses in international studies and I sort of mentally went around the map. And I looked at Latin America, and it seemed to me that—and those were the years when most of Latin American countries had military dictatorships and very corrupt regimes. And somehow, that made the—this was, remember, the sixties, early sixties—and that made the region unattractive to me. And then I looked at Asia and the societies were so old and so complex and the languages were so imposing, I thought, you know, I don't think I want to tackle China or India. And then I looked at Africa, and those countries were just emerging from colonialism. And Africa was a continent full of hope and it seemed, at the time, very romantic, you know, the—well, we've all seen the movies and read the books and I got swept up in that sort of ideological wave about the possibilities for African independence. And it wasn't until I went to Africa that I realized that my attachment to the continent really was sort of emotional and romantic rather than intellectual, and it helped me to make the decision to broaden my focus and get a much stronger theoretical base. I didn't really want to become an old Africa hand. I really wanted to become a—actually at the time, a serious political scientist. Unfortunately, I also, very early on, developed a taste for politics and for national policy debates and was, while still in graduate school, drawn into a number of campaigns.

Sharpless Give me an example.

Camp McGovern, Humphrey, several congressional campaigns. A man named

Peter Hart ran for Congress against a particularly onerous Republican and I spent a lot of time on his campaign. And then, I think in part as a result of having met all of these local politicians during my dissertation research, I ended up getting asked to run for the Democratic Central Committee in Maryland, which I did, you know, as part of a slate. And, you know, I didn't really know anything about local politics and didn't expect to get elected, and lo and behold I got elected not once, but twice! So, I served for eight years on the Democratic State Central Committee as one of seven people from Charles County and got involved in a number of local activities: the Drug Abuse Committee, the local Mental Health Advisory Committee, and that sort of launched me into some of the state health activities. So, I was involved in the Statewide Health Coordinating Council for a number of years.

Sharpless And what did they do?

Camp They try and develop a plan for health services in the state of Maryland and try and determine where hospital beds should be and shouldn't be and, you know, in those days, where CAT scan machines should and shouldn't be. You know, trying to rationalize the health system. They were advisory to the state agency that approved new medical services based on criteria.

Sharpless And this is while you were working on your dissertation?

Camp This was while I was working on my dissertation. Right, right. I got distracted for quite a long time by political campaigns and volunteer activities of various kinds. And also while I was working on my dissertation, I did a little bit of teaching at Hopkins. And when I contrasted the activism

of a political campaign with the sort of passive role of teaching and research, I realized that I really never was going to be a serious academic, that I had too much energy (laughs) or ambition or something, that I really wanted to be in the thick of things. I wanted to help change the world, and I saw getting involved in national policy issues as a way to do that. For a long time, I wanted to run for Congress, and I was a member of the American Council of Young Political Leaders for a number of years. During the time when people thought I was, you know, headed for the state assembly and then for Congress eventually. But I realized fairly quickly, once I got into public interest lobbying, that it was easier to make policy outside the Congress than inside the Congress. That unless you were part of the leadership, and that took years and years to achieve and you had to give up everything else, including a life, that you really could pick a few issues and have enormous impact on the direction of national policy. And so—

Sharpless How did you come to that conclusion?

Camp I don't think it was one day I woke up and realized, but I observed the lifestyle of people in Congress. I observed it change over thirty years and become much less attractive. By now, most of what members of Congress do is raise money to get re-elected. And they depend heavily on staff to actually develop legislation and analyze legislation, write floor speeches and whatnot. They're always campaigning. They don't own their own lives, and it's really hard to get anything done up there anymore. It must be enormously frustrating to be in Congress right now. So it—I grew away from it over time. And one day, you know, I realized that I—when filing

time came around, I hadn't thought about it. But probably every two years at filing time for a good ten to fifteen years, I thought about running for Congress.

Sharpless What about status? You had mentioned the status of the First Amendment.

Camp Well, no I mean normally you would work your way up through, you know, pay your dues at the state level. But that was not an attractive route. As far as I was concerned, I didn't want to be a county commissioner. And I didn't really want to be in the state assembly. What I really loved were the national and international issues. And those were things that it would have been years before I could deal with it. So, the only thing that really did interest me was Congress. And I suppose if somebody said to me today, you know, "Paul Sarbanes is resigning for health problems and we want to appoint you to finish his term and—on the condition that you don't run and you won't have to raise any money," then I'd love to be in the Senate for a few years. But I think those are the only conditions under which it would actually be at all attractive. And I'm not sure even then, you know, that you could have much impact. And Paul Sarbanes has, clearly, with the Sarbanes-Oxley bill. But, you know, when I think about his career—and I admire him greatly; I worked in his campaigns—it's hard to think of much else that Paul's accomplished.

Sharpless Um-hm. It's major gridlock now.

Camp Yeah. Yeah. So, and that's one of the things that makes me hesitate as I go back into the field of public interest lobbying because I think—I've been away for about ten years now. Not away from the field, but away from, you

know, lobbying Congress and trying to make things happen in Washington. And I think it's gotten a lot harder. If you want to move something forward, if you want to stop something, in a way, it's probably easier now.

Sharpless I interviewed Jeannie Rosoff several years ago and, you know, she would just kind of march herself up to the hill and present herself and build her coalitions. And it seems like it was probably easier then.

Camp Yeah. Right. You could get people's attention. And they're overwhelmed with what they have to focus on at any one time. They're overwhelmed by lobbyists and fundraising and, you know, every night they've got twelve places to go. They don't have time to really focus on anything, to become experts on anything. And they're always running for office. So, it doesn't—it's not attractive. And I'm not even sure it's attractive to work as a public interest lobbyist anymore. When I do get up to AGI [Alan Guttmacher Institute], I think one of the things I'm going to try and do is look for, um, look for a way to think outside the box. You know, the idea of going back and spending the next twelve years of my life or ten or however many I have left of usable work life, fighting the Mexico City policy and UNFPA de-funding just has no appeal. But, doing something creative like building a website that ranks every HMO and health plan in terms of how well they deal with reproductive and sexual health and, you know, creating a market force to get better reproductive and sexual health services for women, that sort of thing attracts me. So, I hope that there will be an opportunity at AGI to find—I think we have been beating our head up against a brick wall. I want to find a way around the end of the wall.

Sharpless It's been a long time since Mexico City.

Camp Yeah. That was '84.

Sharpless Uh-huh. Almost twenty years.

Camp And we're still—we fight about it in every committee with jurisdiction every year. What an enormous waste of energy. There has to be something better we can do with our time to make progress for women. So, everything has become a set piece and we replay it year after year after year, and there has to be a—

Sharpless The anti-choice people over here, and the pro-choice people over here, and—

Camp Right, right, right, right. And one of the things that has attracted me about emergency contraception from the beginning is that, um, the pro-choice movement doesn't really own it. It's the anti-abortion pill.

Sharpless Uh-huh. If you take the pill, you don't have to have an abortion.

Camp Right. And maybe—I don't know if there's any middle ground that anyone can stand on anymore, but if there is, if there is a place where people who are against abortion on the hill or out in the hinterland and people who are pro-choice can come together and agree to do something constructive, maybe it's to get easier access to emergency contraception. Now, certainly the social conservatives are still going to fight the effort to take this over the counter. But I'm hoping that people who are simply anti-abortion are going to sit out this fight, or maybe even a few of them join on.

Sharpless Um-hm. Interesting. Well let me back you up a little bit, if you will.

Camp Sure.

Sharpless Back to the seventies.

Camp Yeah, I tend to get drawn into today very quickly.

Sharpless Yes, that's great, you're enthusiastic—

Camp Or tomorrow. (laughs)

Sharpless You're enthusiastic about what you're doing, and that's so wonderful. Is there anything else that your doctoral dissertation that was a particular harbinger of what your career was going to become?

Camp Well, I suppose the fact that I did something unexpected. Um, you know, most of the people who were in my kind of a program went off and did their research in Africa, which would have made perfect sense, but I thought this was more interesting. And I had an AAUW fellowship for my doctoral dissertation which allowed me to send out a huge questionnaire to a whole lot of people and gather absolute mountains of data. So, you know, it was an atypical dissertation, and I think in—at some point, it would have been publishable if I would have had the patience to sit and put it in publishable form. Certainly my doctoral board urged me to try and publish it, but by then, I was, you know, halfway down the road into my next political campaign (laughs) and I couldn't be bothered.

Sharpless Now, you did a number of different things in your graduate school years, I'll call them, before you finished your dissertation.

Camp I procrastinated. I really procrastinated for five years and Johns Hopkins finally told me my time was running out and I had to get something to them right away. And fortunately, I was working, at the time, for a woman by the name of Phyllis Piotrow, whom you probably know and may have even

interviewed.

Sharpless I have, yes.

Camp And who was my mentor at the time, the person who mentored me into the population field. And I happened to mention this to her and she was a Hopkins Ph.D. herself. And she said, "I'm throwing you out of the office. You may not come back to work until you finish—until you turn in your dissertation. And I will read every chapter and comment on it if it will help, but you may not come back to work!"

Sharpless That's great.

Camp And then shortly after that, I broke my leg wrestling with a billy goat on the family farm and was kind of laid up anyway. And so, for eight weeks I did nothing but write. I had to finish crunching some numbers up at Johns Hopkins, but I wrote, you know, fourteen hours a day with one leg propped up on a chair with an old typewriter and pounded out four hundred and eleven pages, turned it in, and it was accepted. But, thank God for Phyllis or I probably never would have finished it. And the experience of what happened to me after I got the doctorate, after I finally finished, has turned me into a real witch on the subject of advanced degrees for young women and every young woman who comes into my life at some point gets the lecture about how she needs a Ph.D. or she needs to go to medical school or law school or whatever, because I had—one day I had ABD: all but the dissertation. And the next day, I was Dr. Camp. And the difference in the way I was perceived from one day to the next was absolutely mind-boggling. You know, all of the sudden, I was qualified to do all of these things that no

one would have ever invited me to do. You know, serve on multidisciplinary committees and I suddenly was a serious person. And I was no smarter or more confident or, you know, I was a day older and that was it.

Sharpless It's credentialism out there.

Camp It is. And so, and I was in my twenties. I was young and, you know, moderately attractive, and I just realized that any woman in that same position has to be able to call herself Dr. Camp or esquire or whatever for instant credibility.

Sharpless Interesting. Well, at some point during that period, you circled through USAID.

Camp I did, between my first and second year of graduate school. I started out as a summer intern at AID along with a friend who was in African Studies with me. We ended up in the same office. And on our breaks, we talked about Africa. And by the end of the summer, we had decided that neither of us wanted to go back to graduate school. She had been in the Peace Corps in Africa and she wanted to go back. I had never been and felt I needed to go if I was going to be a student of Africa Affairs. And so, we asked AID if we could stay on. And we were working on a priority project for them and it hadn't finished, so they said, Yes, you can stay through December. So, we worked for another three months and accumulated enough money to buy the backpacks and the round-trip air fare to Africa and we took off for nine months. And we hitchhiked eighteen thousand miles in Africa.

Sharpless Where did you start?

Camp We started in Ghana, which is where she was in the Peace Corps, and we

made a couple of loops around West Africa, and then we went across the continent, and then we went from Ethiopia down to (laughs) South Africa. So—and occasionally, you know, we had to fly across the border because there was a war. There was—we were in Maiduguri in northern Nigeria when the Biafra War broke out, and we, you know, we just slipped out of the country days before all the borders and everything shut.

Sharpless How old were you?

Camp Well, I guess I must have been twenty-one, twenty-two? Um, and so, we had lots of adventures. And I don't think you could do that trip today. In fact, I know you couldn't. It wouldn't be safe. Africa is a completely different place than it was then. But, you know, most of the towns were small, provincial, everybody was friendly and, you know, except for the revolutions and border wars, we weren't ever really in any danger.

Sharpless Interesting. Let me turn the tape right quick.

Tape 1, side 1 ends; side 2 begins.

Camp The—I think probably the scariest thing that happened to us is that we arrived in Khartoum—we had to fly from Chad to the Sudan because the border was closed between the two countries. And, um, we arrived in Khartoum on the first day of the seven day Arab-Israeli War. And as we were arriving, so were all the Egyptian jets hiding from the Israelis, and the airport immediately closed down. Meanwhile, the Arab radio stations were all claiming that the Americans had come into the war on the side of the Israelis. And, so, as we—we hitched a ride into the—into downtown Khartoum and decided—because we were hearing rumors—decided we'd

better head for the embassy and see what was going on. We were coming down, walking down the street toward the embassy and we saw, coming at us from the opposite direction, a mob of people who were pulling up pieces of the sidewalk to get ready to throw at the embassy. And we started running to try and beat this (laughs) crowd to the embassy, and we literally dove under the metal shutters as they came down and were locked in the embassy for days (laughs) with Marine guards!

Sharpless Oh my gosh.

Camp So that—but that was as close as we came to really (laughs), really getting into big trouble.

Sharpless That's pretty close. What were the most formative aspects of that trip?

Camp Hmm.

Sharpless What do you think were the most important lessons you learned?

Camp Boy, you know, I've never thought of the trip that way. I mean, I think I learned a lot about what kind of a commitment I had to Africa as a field of study. Certainly that was the most important thing intellectually to come out of the trip. Um, I also met an incredible number of challenges in that trip. You know, it wasn't—I was sick most of the time. I had everything that Africa has to offer, you know, malaria and gastrointestinal this, and so, you know, I felt ill much of the time, but we kept traveling. And I think, you know, that being able to carry on—I also learned to travel lighter than anyone else in the world, because when you're carrying it all on your back—and that has served me—up to this day, I can travel for two weeks with a small roll-on suitcase. And very few people can, because until you force

yourself to do it, you don't realize how little you can live with. But when you carry it from place to place, you learn it real fast. I think we each had one change of clothes and we washed out, you know, what we were wearing each night.

Sharpless Anything else about the African trip or the USAID stamp?

Camp Well, I realized when I left AID, I never wanted to work for a big bureaucracy. I mean, I enjoyed the time and I liked the people at AID, but I never applied after that to work for AID. We were in a management unit trying to computerize all of the AID paperwork, and I can remember sitting in one meeting at which someone said, "Well, you know, if we can get all of this onto the computer and if we can generate these kinds of reports, we're going to be able to tell Congress what we're doing." (Sharpless laughs) And there was this silence in the room. And I forget how it was said, but it was clear that that wasn't actually a good idea. And the system that was being considered at that meeting never was implemented. So, certainly understanding the relationship between the foreign aid program and Congress at that point, and the ability of a bureaucracy to bamboozle the Congress was an important lesson to learn at sort of a, you know, formative stage of my lobbying career is that you really—in order to make the town work, you had to have allies within the bureaucracy and if they were strong and courageous people, they could hold off an attack from Congress or a new president for a very long time. And essentially that's what happened in the Reagan administration. Probably if I hadn't been inside the bureaucracy, I wouldn't have understood that quite as fast as I did once I became a

lobbyist and had to make the principle work.

Sharpless Tell me about you and Phyllis Piotrow.

Camp We had a close working relationship. I think I could say we're still friends. We parted good friends. I don't have much contact with Phyllis now that she's retired, but I did, you know, even after I left Pop[ulation] Action for a couple of years to talk to her from time to time.

Sharpless What types of work did you do for her? Or with her?

Camp Um, I—well, she left a couple of years after I got there, so I worked directly under her. And then, when she left, I took over most of her responsibilities but not her title.

Sharpless Oh, okay.

Camp She was—

Sharpless So, you did social marketing?

Camp No, this is when Phyllis was at population—what was then the Population Crisis Committee.

Sharpless Okay, I'm sorry, I'm backwards. Okay, gotcha.

Camp Right, right.

Sharpless Okay. I was thinking—

Camp Phyllis was at Hopkins twice—

Sharpless Okay.

Camp —doing the population information program. And she was in what's now Pop Action twice.

Sharpless Right, what was in Pop[ulation] Crisis.

Camp And I came into Population Action at—toward the end of her second stay

there. She was executive director. It was after General Draper's death. And I—very quickly, I came into work as a lobbyist to do constituency development and to help Phyllis up on the Hill. I ended up developing some serial publications to be used in lobbying, and, you know, with constituency groups, sort of fact sheets on population, different aspects of population. Took over the editing of *The Draper Fund Report*, which was eventually abandoned, and a number—and over the years, developed a whole series of different kinds of publications including a number of new publications after Phyllis left. And after Phyllis left, the organization started to move away from the sort of volunteer model, which was General Draper's with Phyllis as executive director and a lot of volunteers and no professional staff other than Phyllis. I was one of the first professional staff to be hired, and then I brought in additional professional staff.

Sharpless Okay, okay. So, that was not at Hopkins; that was at Population Crisis—

Camp Population Crisis Committee, right.

Sharpless Okay. Well, then, let's talk about that. You started working there before you finished your dissertation.

Camp Right, right.

Sharpless Okay. How did you come to that work? How did you get interested in population?

Camp Um, I wasn't actually strongly interested in population. I'd read some. It was one of the issues that interested me as—but a lot of the development economics that I had taken treated that as an exogenous variable—had nothing to do with development, you know. That was—that was the

economist view of population in those years. So, I hadn't really focused on it. I had read Harrison Brown's book on *The Future of Mankind* which was kind of impressive and maybe the Ehrlich book. I'm not sure. But a couple of things that had tweaked my interest, but I didn't have a passion for it at that time. But I knew I wanted to work in the international field, and I had, by that time, gotten into lobbying, but I was working on child nutrition and low income food assistance programs, had developed a cadre of clients representing American Indians and Hispanic groups and whatnot, whom I was trying to help with federal food assistance programs. That was when I was at the Children's Foundation. But even though that work was really compelling, it wasn't in my field. And so, someone I was working with up on the Hill said, "Did you know this population group, whom I think is a good group, is looking for somebody to help with their grassroots lobbying effort. Are you interested?" And I interviewed with both Phyllis and with Bob Wallace. And they hired me and I very quickly became a zealot. And what held me to the population field for so many years was it allowed me to be multidisciplinary. Um, it allowed me to pursue interests in women's development, which I care deeply about, in environmental conservation, which I had, over time, come to care deeply about, as well as the things that I had gone to school for, which were basically economic and political development. So, it was—it was a way to satisfy a huge range of interests, to continue to read very widely, to write about lots and lots of different subjects, and to get involved in a lot of different organizations and leadership roles, like Family Health International and The International

Center for Research on Women and the various organizations that I played a role in during those years.

Sharpless How much was the spirit of General Draper still around when you joined the staff?

Camp It was still pretty strong at that point. In fact, I think that the organization was kind of floundering around a little bit. This was '75 and he had died in '74, so it was less than a year before he had gone—since he had been gone. And then organization was trying to find its place in the world, because it had been so Draper-centric that—and it was a lot of volunteers. It was friends of Draper's who made up most of the staff other than Phyllis, and then there was me. (laughs) But Bob Wallace and his wife were volunteers, and Larry Keagan, I think, was largely a volunteer, and there were—you know, there were a whole bunch of people who subsequently, you know, reached the age of real retirement and already returned once or twice before and—

Sharpless Yeah, Bob Wallace is Henry Wallace's son, right?

Camp Yes. Right.

Sharpless Okay. Yeah.

Camp Now, it is in his foundation that we're now housed.

Sharpless Okay. I hadn't picked up on that.

Camp Yeah, yeah. Um, Bob Wallace—and we're jumping ahead here—was my angel investor. Bob Wallace loaned me the first $450,000 to start the company, and we lived on his money for fifteen months. Not well, and at times we (laughs) ran out of money, but he provided the seed capital for

Women's Capital Corporation.

Sharpless And you first met him when you interviewed for that job.

Camp (both speaking at once) And I first met him—right—and I worked very closely with him and with Gordy Wallace, obviously, for years for the eighteen years that I was there, because they were there the whole time. And so I knew Bob well, and he knew me well, and I think he had confidence in me. And, you know, when I left Pop Action, he was one of the people I stayed in touch with. And Catherine Cameron, who was his—by the—soon after that, Bob Wallace and his wife pulled their special projects fund out of Pop Action and made it The Wallace Global Fund. And then Catherine, who had become a good friend at Pop Action because she had been the director of the special projects fund—became the director of the new foundation—she joined the board of Women's Capital Corporation. And she and I were the only board members for months and months and months, so we couldn't afford director' and officers' liability insurance, and none of the boys would come on the board until we had it. So, Catherine and I, you know, were the only people whose names were, you know, signed on the bottom of any kind of corporate documents for months and months and months. Finally in April of 1998, after we had managed to sign a licensing agreement, after I had been able to bring in more financing, after I put in place the D&O insurance, then we brought Gordon Perkin onto the board and Gordon Duncan, who had been, you know, a consultant to the company up until that point. And he became an officer, and then his son came into the company as our "moonlighting," as our CFO for the early

years. Um, but, I mean, Catherine was the stalwart. And Bob, soon after—well, I guess it was four or five months before the product was approved, Bob had a massive brain stem stroke and probably should have died, but was kept alive artificially for many years, probably against his wishes, you know, he had a living will and all that, but the children wanted to keep him alive. But he, you know, he couldn't talk or feed himself or any of that. But I went to see him in the hospital after Plan B was approved. And I took him a package. And not thinking he was going to understand anything I said, I told him the whole story, told him about the, you know, seven month fight for the trade name and, you know, the fact that it was a priority review and they approved it in just six weeks. And, you know, showed him the package. And he reached out and took the package from my hand, which sort of surprised everybody. And then he went like this—

Sharpless He covered his face his hands.

Camp Well, he was—

Sharpless He was feeling around.

Camp —hunting, hunting on his face like this. And Catherine realized he was looking for his glasses. So, she went over, and—to the—and dug out his glasses, put his glasses on for him. He opened the package and read, or appeared to read the entire package.

Sharpless Wow.

Camp And then he reached out and shook my hand.

Sharpless Wow!

Camp This is a man who had not uttered a word, you know, since his stroke.

Sharpless Yeah. Wow, that's a real goose-bumpy kind of thing!

Camp Yeah, yeah, it really is. So—but he's passed away now. And his—he converted his loans into shares once it was clear the company was going to go forward. And his shares are now the property of the foundation. So, Catherine remains on the board and is voting his shares.

Sharpless That's wonderful.

Camp Yeah.

Sharpless So, how did—how did Pop Action—well, first of all, I'm sorry, I don't remember. When did they change the name? It was Pop Crisis for a long time.

Camp We tried—yeah, we tried to change the name on the twenty-fifth anniversary, and it took me two years to get it through the board. So, it was twenty-seven years into the organization's history. I'm not sure which year that was, but I think the organization was founded in '65, so—

Sharpless So, for most of your time there, it was Pop Crisis.

Camp Yeah, yeah. That's right.

Sharpless Okay. So, that's what we can call it. Um, so how did you make the shift from this Phyllis and the volunteers to a more professional staff? How did that happen?

Camp It was very gradual, and I think probably the—well, eventually, a new chair came in. A man named Bill Goud was the first successor. And I think he—he came—he was a former AID administrator, and I think he wanted to see the organization professionalized and depend less on volunteers. And, you know, the longer I stayed there, the more responsibility I took on, and so I

ended up hiring quite a lot of people over the course of the years that I was there. I was probably there sixteen years after Phyllis left, so I really built the organization with the help of a series of chair/presidents, including Joe Speidel, whom I brought in as a vice president, sort of on my co-equal. And then when the last of the presidents prior to Joe left, we did this sort of Alphonse and Gaston, and I said, "Well, you're five years older (Sharpless laughs) and you're a medical doctor and you've, you know, administered a big AID program"—because he had been a former head of the AID office of population—"It's much more likely that the board will take you than that they'll take me. And so, you run for president and I'll be senior vice president." And so Joe and I, then, ran the organization for a number of years until I left, and then a couple of years after I left, Joe left and went to the Hewlett Foundation.

Sharpless Right, right. When you came on board there in the mid-seventies, obviously, a lot of things were happening. *Roe* vs. *Wade* had passed and Helms Amendment was kind of brewing along.

Camp Actually the Helms Amendment was passed that same year in '73.

Sharpless Okay.

Camp So, that was already on the books. Um, and there had already been, you know, some audits and efforts to, you know, catch AID and its grantees cheating. But those were also the days of really relatively strong support for population. The Nixon—the Johnson and Nixon administrations were probably the zenith, if you will, of population assistance funding and of priority within the state department for the issue. Now, some of that

commitment was for the wrong reasons. You know, there were security concerns, you know, choke points and ceilings and, you know, overpopulation leading to terrorism and things like that. I think those aren't the wrong reasons, but those are not the reasons that motivated me in particular. I was interested in saving the planet and in promoting equal opportunity for women, and thought that both of those ends could be best achieved by giving women real reproductive choice, choice over childbearing. And I've always believed very strongly that if we—if women really had informed—the ability to make informed choices about when to have children and how many children to have, there—you would solve the population problem and women would become equal partners in development. I just thought it was really a basic part of solving the problems that I saw in the world.

Sharpless You mentioned that women's issues were something that you came to, perhaps, after the dissertation, or that they weren't maybe involved in the dissertation.

Camp No, they weren't.

Sharpless How did you—

Camp Yeah, I'm not sure that I was a conscious feminist, at least in terms of involving myself in women's issues and women's organizations until I had been at Population Action actually for some years. And I got involved in those early years—I can't even remember the exact years—it was one of the outside organizations that I became involved in early was the international setup for research on women. And I got an introduction to women-headed

households and how they were the poorest of the poor, and began to get intellectually involved as well as emotionally involved in women and development issues around the world. Now, I had read *Le Deuxieme Sexe* and—oh, who is the very heavyset woman, the American woman who who wrote that—oh, *The Feminist Mystique*.

Sharpless Oh, Betty Friedan.

Camp Betty Friedan. You know, while I was still in graduate—undergraduate school, actually, I had read those books. So, I was conscious but sort of at the same level that I was conscious of population as an issue before I got to Pop Action. But Pop Action brought together for me and gave more urgency to things that I'd had more and more casual commitment to before that. But the more I thought through population issues, the more I became convinced that women and development was really a part of them and they were a part of it and also, that population and environment were closely linked. So, I grew simultaneously in all those fields, I think, and they helped to feed—each interest helped to feed the other.

Sharpless Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Do you need to prepare for your conference call at 3:30?

Camp No, no, I've got the agenda right in front of me. We'll just set up the—someone will come in and start bugging me about five or four—

Sharpless Okay, well let's tape for another ten minutes if we might.

Camp Sure.

Sharpless Let me change the tape.

Tape 1, ends; tape 2, side 1 begins.

Okay, this is the second tape with Sharon Camp on August the twentieth.

Okay, when you went to Pop Action, you went as basically a lobbyist, you said. What were some of the types of things you worked on in those early years?

Camp Oh, the first lobbying activity that I did was to try and work with church groups to bring them—you know, the faith—communities of faith, to bring them into the population debate. And we didn't make a lot of headway at that point. The Methodists and the Lutherans were, through their work in international development, generally interested in the subject and we were able to get them more on board. But this was not a front-of-the-mind issue for most people in the faith communities.

Sharpless How did they—how did you target them?

Camp I think—well, it was Bob Wallace's instinct that we needed, you know, the faith-based commfunities with us. He was a strong Quaker, he and his wife, and I think he thought they were a really important community to have on board. And he was right all those years ago, and we still don't have the level of commitment that we need from the faith-based communities. And so, we end up in so many of these votes, turning this into a religious war when it really shouldn't be because most mainstream denominations don't have any problem with these issues. So, you know, here I am thirty years later, still thinking about how do we get the faith-based communities more heavily involved in our issues.

Sharpless Um-hm. So, you worked on that.

Camp I worked on that. I did, as I said, develop these four-page briefing sheets, we called them, which was a new publication. The organization didn't have—

had had only, I think, one publication prior to that, which was *The Draper Fund Report*. I took over *The Draper Fund Report* and I, you know, edited it, solicited and edited and rewrote articles contributed by people from around the world and increasingly started going up on the Hill for Phyllis, either with Phyllis or in Phyllis's place. And after Phyllis left, took on some additional administrative responsibilities—all of the lobbying activity. And at that point, there hadn't been much work with the media. But some of the new publications that I started to develop in the years subsequent to Phyllis's departure, which were big wall charts in which the gimmick, so to speak, was to rank as many countries or cities of the world as possible, for which you could get data. In the first one, the idea for which really came from a consultant, a media consultant that we had hired to try and raise our profile in the media, or raise the profile of the issues in the media, not the organization, per se. And it was called The Human Suffering Index, and we ranked ninety-nine countries in terms of levels of human suffering and tied that directly to population growth. So, obviously, the countries with the highest rates of population growth were the countries with the highest rates of human suffering, for the most part. And then it was such a success. I mean, we got media coverage all over the world, because every country had to write about where it was on the Human Suffering Index and argue with the way the data were developed and whatnot, so it was great. We got people talking about the relationship between poverty and human suffering generally and population, and talking about it at a level where, you know, thinking people who had newspapers could engage in the issue. So having

had that good luck or good success with it, we developed a whole series of these. And we developed a chart. These were studies on a wall chart, so usually we printed on both sides and there—on the front side were graphics so that people could hang them up. And they were actually very attractive. They—we spent a lot of time on the design. And then on the back was all the methodology and, you know, text explaining some of the issues and whatnot. So, they were, in fact, small reports, but they were reports that you could put up on the wall, which was a unique idea, which everybody now does, you know. At that point, the only people doing wall charts were the Population Reference Bureau, and they did the same wall chart year (Sharpless laughs) after year after year. Now they do, you know, fifty wall charts and (laughs) everybody else does wall charts. But—and then we did one which was my all-time favorite called "Poor, Powerless, and Pregnant," which was about—which linked the status of women to population growth and vice versa, and, you know, talked about the importance of reproductive choice for women and the importance of women's reproductive choice to population stabilization. Um—

Sharpless At this point, you're trying to raise consciousness about awareness of population.

Camp Yeah. Right, right, and how it linked to other issues that people cared about, including women's rights. Um, we did one called "Access to Birth Control" in which we ranked every country in the world that we could get data on. There were fewer countries in those days, so you could do a hundred countries and cover most the world. So, you know, we looked at access to

safe abortion, sterilization, methods of contraception, and so forth. And I think they're still doing the wall charts. I'm not sure. We got—then got into the more urban environmental issues. We did one on the—ranking the world's hundred largest cities and their livability. So, that turned out to be quite a good gimmick, and then we started some other serial publications. We started doing country reports on major countries and the success or failure of their population efforts and what was right and wrong about them. We did India and China and Pakistan and a number of other countries, and those got not as good coverage, but fair coverage. And it allowed us to enter the debate over China and coercive abortion and so forth with a more evidence-based—I mean, one of the things that I think I learned early on was that you—to be an effective lobbyist, you needed good science. That wasn't, in itself, sufficient, and you had to dummy it down to make it politician-friendly. But if you didn't have the science behind the two page executive summary of the science, you weren't going to have the impact that you needed to have, both with the politicians and with the media. And the longer I was in that job, the more and more the media really drove the public policy agenda. So, the science became an excuse to talk to the media about the public policy issues, which then forced the Congress to deal with them because they were on the front page of *The New York Times* or on the editorial page or whatever. So, they—my role evolved. I, you know, I started out doing a little bit of grassroots lobbying, constituency development, and serial publications, and built a much larger public affairs publications and media liaison program from that beginning. And a lot of that is still ongoing

at Pop Action.

Sharpless When you—when you went up to the Hill to lobby, how did you decide which issues you would lobby for?

Camp Well, we always lobbied for more funding, I mean, that was the central objective was to—

Sharpless More funding for family planning?

Camp More funding for family planning, more funding for international family planning. I didn't do a lot on the domestic side in those days. Um, we lobbied against restrictions on the funding, and during—actually, some democratic administrations initially we had to fight to keep a population—a categorical population program, both domestically and internationally. There has been a tendency for years and years and years for administrations to want to drop the categorical programs. The conservatives want to give all the power to the states on the domestic side and on the both liberal and conservative side, the instinct of the AID administrator and the administration in power is to get rid of those line items in the budget so they can spend the AID budget however they want. So, that was always a fight, to protect the categorical funding, to get the funding levels up, and to keep restrictions off the funding.

Sharpless Now, you mentioned that the Nixon years were sort of the high water point. What happened when Carter came in?

Camp Carter brought in a man as AID administrator by the name of John Gilligan.

Sharpless He's the one who fired Rei Ravenholt, right?

Camp Well, he tried to. And Rei had also burned some bridges up on the Hill and

angered some women's groups by being insensitive. And so, Gilligan and some of the people he brought in with him, including Sander Levin who is now in Congress, initially went after the population office and were going to fold it into health or, you know, get rid of Ravenholt and downgrade—I mean, they didn't like that prominent categorical program. It made them uncomfortable. And Carter himself was not a strong advocate for reproductive choice. You know, he didn't like abortion and he wasn't all that comfortable with family planning. And Rosalind was never an advocate for women's rights, really, certainly not in that sense. So, the Carter administration, surprisingly enough, was not a good period for AID, and we fought a lot of internal battles, kind of behind-the-scenes, both up on the Hill in the House of Foreign Affairs Committee, which was headed by Zablocki, a strong Catholic. And, you know, I think that Rei's enemies, you know, the people whose toes he stepped on too many times, finally caught up with him. And he was—he was a colorful—you know, he was someone who attracted enemies because he was a colorful—a genius of sorts, but someone who didn't tolerate fools. And how he landed—how he managed to survive so long in the bureaucracy I'll never know. I actually dated Rei, so I have spent a lot of time thinking about Rei and his contribution to the field. Those were in the early years; in the seventies, I dated Rei.

Sharpless Uh-huh.

Camp Um—

Sharpless But give me an example of lobbying activities: how you would say, okay, this is happening. We need to do—you know, "x" is happening, so we need to

do "y" and I'm going to do go "z." How would you—how would you target those sorts of things?

Camp Well, you monitored the four committees with jurisdiction and you watch the bills. These were annual authorizations. Sometimes you had a two-year authorization, but usually it was a one year authorization. So, year after year, you had to watch the authorization bill. You lobbied the two authorization committees in the Senate and the House. You developed a testimony for, you know, the hearings that were held on the bill. You tried to plant questions for administration witnesses about the program, you drafted amendments, you drafted report language, all to try and strengthen the legislative history and support for the program.

Sharpless And the program was primarily AID?

Camp The program was primarily AID Yeah, the UNFPA money was within AID's account, so the whole population effort, really, was in AID, but in the population office was the predominant source of money, or the—it was the place where most of what was happening was happening. But there were also missions, country missions (telephone rings) had their own population money and—I'll just see who that is.

Sharpless Okay, so we were talking about going up the Hill and—

Camp (both speaking at once) Yeah, I mean, you did pretty much the same thing every year and the issues didn't change that much. You know, your objective was to get another twenty to fifty million dollars into the population account and certainly to avoid any loss of funds from the prior year's funding. If you thought that a particular administration was misspending the money in some

way, you know, putting too much into natural family planning, which was an issue we dealt with for many years in the Reagan and Bush era, then you would try and get report language into the committee report, saying, you know, that AID had to evaluate these programs or couldn't give money to people who didn't talk about other methods of contraception, you know. So, you fought with your opponent through that legislative language and report language. And you did testimony, and sometimes, you know, you got a little press attention if you said something interesting, but rarely you did and it was kind of routine. And most members of Congress didn't turn up for the hearing and didn't really listen to most of the witnesses anyway. It was sort of all *pro forma*. But you worked with the staff, both the committee staff and the staff of individual members who were sympathetic to population. You lobbied the other side as well just to see if you could neutralize some of the votes against the program. And you watched for surprises. You know, you hoped that nothing would get offered in subcommittee or full committee or on the floor, which were the different stages these bills—the four bills—would go through. So that, you know, you didn't end up with the Helm's Amendment in the middle of the night with the foreign aid appropriations bill on your floor, which did, from time to time, happen. So, you rally very quickly and as the press became more important, you would, you know, call members—(pause in recording)

Sharpless Okay, we're back on. You've done many things. You had a conference call and all sorts of things and I know you're very focused on the over-the-counter introduction of Plan B, so I appreciate your being willing to circle

back into the past, (Camp laughs) because the present is so interesting. But thinking about those early days with the Pop Crisis, to what extent did the abortion issue color the entire family planning picture in the seventies, let's say? Yeah, before Reagan won.

Camp It really didn't in the seventies, and it really didn't even too much in the early days of the Reagan administration. But before we get there, you know, in the seventies, there were still quite a few key members of Congress who were opposed to abortion but very strong advocates of family planning, and they were in key positions.

Sharpless Like who?

Camp Someone like Silvio Conte who was the top Republican on the House Appropriations Committee. Very, very senior guy, very nice man, Catholic, from Massachusetts, a practicing Catholic, an observant Catholic who was very consistently opposed to abortion, but felt that because that was his position, he had to advocate all the more strongly for contraception. And so, we could go to Sil Conte and, you know, boost up funding for Title X and for international family planning programs. And one of his counterparts on the Republican side was Mark Hatfield who was a senior Senate Appropriations Committee figure, at one time, head of the Appropriations Committee. And he was the same. He was a moderate, thoughtful, statesmanlike Republican who was very opposed to abortion, consistently opposed, but a champion of family planning. And there were a number of people like that. You know, John Porter was there in a key position in the Foreign Ops. Subcommittee. So, scattered through the Congress, there was a

much larger number than there are now. There are almost none now. Pro—anti-choice members who had a mixed record on these issues, they themselves recognized that the way to reduce the need for abortion was to promote family planning. That group of people doesn't exist to the same degree anymore in Congress. Now, I think there are a lot of them out in the American public, but they have no political representation because the issue has become so polarized. The middle ground has been chipped away, and with each retirement of someone like that, the replacement was someone who was a strong advocate on one side or the other and generally on the anti-choice side. And who would vote down the line for the—generally speaking, you know, whether it was parental consent, or family planning, or more money for Title X, or de-funding UNFPA. You know, the lines became increasingly hardened and the number of swing votes became smaller and smaller. Now, I have been away from the Hill for awhile, but it's my perception that we're in that stalemated situation now, where there's virtually no room for anyone to maneuver, and nothing changes year after year. It's the same set battle piece year after year. Um, the other thing that I think was true and related to that atmosphere in the seventies was that there were many more pro-choice republicans and a significant number—greater number of anti-choice democrats. Someone like Gephardt was originally anti-choice. Al Gore as a House member was anti-choice. A lot of southern democrats were anti-choice, even though they were liberal on a lot of other issues. So, it wasn't a partisan vote. These didn't become party-line votes in committee or on the floor. They really—you—they really mixed it up, and

you had republicans and democrats on both sides of all of these votes. And so, the votes were less predictable.

Sharpless From your perspective, what happened?

Camp I think what happened happened at the national level, and happened as a result of the primary structure. It became, over time, impossible for someone to run for a national office at the state level or nationally for president in the Democratic primary, who was not pro-choice, or in the Republican primary, who was not pro-life. And, um, you know, there are exceptions. If Arnold Schwarzenegger gets elected—but they're in places like (both speaking at once) California, where you can elect a Pete Wilson who is conservative but pro-choice. I think even in the Republican party generally there are fewer Pete Wilsons, fewer people who are libertarians, so to speak. There are more of people who call themselves "neo-cons," and whom I would call "wingnuts" (Sharpless laughs), less sort of mainstream business, free trade—

Sharpless Corporate capitalism.

Camp Yeah, and more of the social conservatism dominating the primaries. The base is now much less business and much more ideological conservatives.

Sharpless Uh-huh. How did Mexico City affect your work?

Camp Um, it provided a lot of free publicity. When—

Sharpless Did you see it coming?

Camp I guess, maybe not in a form, but certainly early on, after Reagan's election, there was, swept into office, a whole hoard of ideological conservatives who were part of what was known as the "de-fund the left" campaign. And a

major element within that "de-fund the left" campaign was the anti-choice movement, and their favorite target was Planned Parenthood in any guise, you know—Planned Parenthood affiliates, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the International Planned Parenthood Federation. And I think it, from the beginning, you know, that was the pelt they wanted to put on their wall. And the way to de-fund those groups was to, you know, make a law that they couldn't live with. And so—

Sharpless To draw a line in the sand, as it were.

Camp Yes, basically. You either give up your commitment to abortion, including advocacy for abortion, or you go without government funding. And so, I think we all could have seen that coming. And once we saw it on the international side, seeing the domestic gag rule follow soon thereafter aimed at the very same kinds of groups domestically. But the Mexico City conference itself—

Sharpless Did you go?

Camp —at which that was announced. I did go. My mother had died just three weeks before that, and so I arrived late. But it was a media circus and we were the main act because we would, you know, get interviewed on television lambasting the administration. James Buckley, who headed the U.S. Delegation would then hold his own press conference and dig himself deeper in a hole. And we'd blast them again, and—

Sharpless By "we," you mean Pop?

Camp Well, the Pop Crisis Committee. Joe Speidel and I were down there together doing interviews together, and, you know, the press were having a field day

because they knew that, you know, we could make Buckley angry enough by our statements that he would have to respond to defend the policy and he would look foolish. And the U.S. was very isolated; there were only a handful of countries that were supporting the U.S. position at this point. It wasn't quite as bad as, you know, the post-Cairo, Cairo plus-five meeting, but it was close. And, so, I had a wonderful time. (Sharpless laughs) You know, I probably never did as many interviews in a short period of time as I did at any time in my life. But—

Sharpless The rest of the world was just incredulous that the United States would do that.

Camp Um-hm. Yeah. But, you know, that was the first sign of the degree to which the ideological conservatives in the Republican party would be willing to have the United States go it alone on a whole range of international policy.

Sharpless Um-hm. Interesting. Let me turn the tape.

Tape 2, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

What else do we need to talk about during your Pop Crisis days?

Camp Well, one of the things that I think might be—one of the points I think might be important to make is that the damage that was done to the international population and domestic family planning programs didn't really occur right away in the 1980's, despite the take over of the Senate and, you know, the number of very conservative people in the administration. They weren't very experienced at government, and it—the—you know, within the bureaucrat—bureaucracy—there was very strong support for these programs. People were committed to them and worked on them for years.

And with a sophisticated advocacy community with friends on the Hill, we were really able for—and some moderates within the administration, including those in the Vice President's office—people like Craig Fuller, who was George Bush the first's chief of staff when he was vice president. Um, Peter McPherson, who was the Republican head of AID, who was actually a very moderate Republican, very committed to development, and by no means anti-family planning. Understood the importance of population assistance. So, by working with those people both within the administration and within the bureaucracy, the civil service, and with the media and with the Hill, because we were on the pro-family planning side, so much more sophisticated and so much, um—so much better rooted in the policy-making circles, including the media, that they really didn't—they spun their wheels for quite a lot of years before they really had any impact. But toward the end of the twelve years of Reagan-Bush, you know, the stress on the programs had begun to show: the limited funding, the restrictions, and the additional administrative costs of dealing with them. No, the programs did, in fact, suffer. They survived, but they didn't thrive. And what is different, I think, today, with the new Bush administration taking over from Clinton is that these people are that much older and that much more sophisticated. A lot of them have spent a lot of time now in government. They know how Washington works. And they're much more dangerous.

Sharpless Um-hm. Much more savvy. Interesting. What are you proudest of at your time—of your time at Pop Crisis?

Camp Hmm. I guess our work at the Mexico City policy—Mexico City conference,

which we won. I'm very proud of the wall charts that we did over that period of time. I, you know, still have some of them hanging around my house and offices and whatnot. I think they made a contribution to the field. And I, you know, I'm proud of the fact that despite a full court press against the population program, then as one of the key spokespeople for it in Washington, it survived. It didn't do what it needed to do all over the world, and we lost a lot of time. We lost a decade of—you know, to get up to speed about both environmental and population problems. But we didn't stop working on them, and that in itself, in that climate, was probably an accomplishment.

Sharpless To what extent—you said you'd lost time—to what extent did you lose—did the population movement lose ground?

Camp Hmm. I guess you could say that we lost ground in the sense that we became an issue that was considered controversial, and no longer as bi-partisan as it once was. You know, in the days of General Draper, in the days of Nixon and Johnson, these were not partisan issues. And pop—there wasn't anything terribly controversial about population. I mean, once we got over whether or not government should be involved in family planning, it, you know, these weren't—we didn't have fights. There wasn't a floor fight on population until the mid-eighties. Really, until the time of the Mexico City policy. Those were the first floor fights on this issue. And there were very few floor fights around the Title X program. Now, we have multiple floor fights every year on both houses. So, that's what we lost. We lost that sort of standing as a mainstream bi-partisan issue around which lots of people could

rally.

Sharpless And you and I were talking on tape that the floor fights take place basically over the same issues, the same constituencies every year.

Camp Right. We haven't recovered from that stalemate and we certainly had a reprieve for eight years in the Clinton administration. Those fights went away, we didn't worry about them, and we made some headway in terms of the amount of funding. But the minute the George Bush—George W. Bush administration came back in, it was as if Clinton had never been around, in terms—I mean, we were right back where we were the day George Bush the first left office, in terms of all these policy issues, and in terms of our relationship with people overseas around these issues. I mean, our behavior at the Cairo plus-five was absolutely appalling. In fact, it was worse than anything that happened at Mexico City.

Sharpless Uh-huh. Well, we can talk about that in a little bit. Anything else from your Pop Crisis days we need to talk about?

Camp Well, it was a great group of people to work with. You know, I adore Joe Speidel. A lot of the staff of Pop Action I would hire again today in a heartbeat. They were bright, committed, really hardworking people. There were people there who stayed all weekend—never went home—to meet a deadline. People worked late at night—

Sharpless And you hired most of them.

Camp —and I hired most of those, yeah.

Sharpless How did you identify them?

Camp Um, I guess I looked for any sign of fire in their belly about the issue. And

that's what I did here with Plan B, too. You know, I looked for people who didn't need to be motivated, who believe so strongly that they could change the world that they would work their butts off to make an impact. And it's wonderful to work with people who feel that way about their work. And when all you have to do as a supervisor is keep reminding them of the impact that they can have by, you know, doing their piece of the project, whatever it is. And I—when I started here at WCC [Women's Capital Corporation] and started putting together people to work on it, I forgot that lesson. Somehow, I thought that since this was a private industry, you know, those rules didn't apply. And so, I brought in people with Big Pharma [large pharmaceutical corporations] experience, who required big salaries and who, you know, worked thirty hours a week and lived very well off, you know, this poor little company's meager budget, you know, who couldn't propose a project that didn't have the six-figure price tag attached to it, and who needed to be pushed and prodded to get anything done, who were never in a hurry to do anything. And I—at one point, two springs ago, I just decided this wasn't working. You know, we were burning through capital like mad, we weren't going to make it, we were going to crash. Sales were not growing the way they should. We weren't going to get to a positive cash flow position as far as anybody could see. And we had a reorganization, and all of the big, fancy Big Pharma people left the company and I hired some bright, committed young women and consolidated all of the operations here, trained people in what they had to do to be managers of a pharmaceutical operation. And now, we are in a positive cash flow position and, you know,

our expenses are under budget and our sales are over budget.

Sharpless That's fantastic. I want to talk some more about that in the morning. Anything about the changes in the publications programs at Pop Action over the years? You mentioned that *The Draper Fund Report* was discontinued.

Camp Yeah. I mean, that was kind of a nice service to the field, but it didn't change policy, at least not in the United States. It may have given some prominence to some third-world authors who needed a place to, you know, have something published. But these were not peer reviewed articles. They were not contributing to science, and they really weren't, at least in the U.S. context, contributing to policy changing. And the more important it became to work the media in order to set the public policy agenda, the less tenable it was to be spending time on a publication like that. You needed things that you could take to the press.

Sharpless And you mentioned you had to have the science.

Camp Yeah. You had to have good science. And *The Draper Fund Report* wasn't really good science. It was, you know, interesting, modest articles. But it—there was nothing groundbreaking about any of the publications. And certainly, they had absolutely no interest in the press. So—and—or Congress. In fact, I'm not quite sure why they were ever started, except that they made the authors feel very good and feel closer to WCC. But, by changing the focus of our publications and—I wouldn't describe what we did as science, but what we did was to take science and translate it for the policy maker and for the reporter, the media person. But there was enough fact in it, and the methodology was sound enough and explained transparent

enough, that it withstood press scrutiny, but it was very sexy stuff. I mean, you rank a hundred countries in terms of human suffering—that is sexy stuff. And everybody writes about it. So, and we—you know, people at the Population Council with their, you know, Ph.D.s in demography, I'm sure, didn't consider this science. But it worked. It worked to get attention to the issues, and by getting attention to the issues in the press, it meant that we were able, in an increasingly difficult political climate, to kind of hold the ground and even in good years make progress on our policy agenda.

Sharpless You left Pop Action in 1993—

Camp When everything seemed safe. You know, remember the time, now: Bill Clinton had come into office. In the first week in office, he had wiped out the Mexico City policy, wiped out the UNFPA de-funding, and told the FDA to rethink its position on mifepristone, which was another major issue that I had been working on. I had already been very active around the issue of RU-486 [mifepristone]. And, you know, I was kind of tired of what I'd been doing, and I didn't really see what I should do as my next act. So, it seemed to me that was a good time to make a career change. I'd been there eighteen years and I'd really developed a very strong interest in contraceptive technology. I really wanted to work in that area. I wanted to try and find a way to get new products to market faster. I was convinced that we really didn't have all of the choices, all of the technologies that we needed in order for contraception to be easy. I mean, I felt contraception should be easy. Shouldn't—we shouldn't have to make this hard. We're not punishing women for being sexually active, after all. And I felt that the pharmaceutical

industry, based on my observations, demonstrated the political instincts of celery. And that, you know—

Sharpless Celery as the vegetable?

Camp Right, or cinder blocks, you know, pick whatever analogy you want, but they, you know, they're sort of lifeless in terms of any political—they don't read the tea leaves. They just seem insulated from what people are talking about and concerned about anyway, not to go down that track. I thought that I could use my skills as a public interest lobbyist, as someone who is very well networked with the women's health and reproductive choice communities, to try and accelerate the adoption and commercialization, approval of new contraceptive technologies for women. And that if I could do that successfully, I might actually have as much impact on women's reproductive choice and population stabilization as I had batting my head against a brick wall for twelve years in the Reagan-Bush administrations. And I actually went to work for two weeks—this is not on my resume—for Wyeth, as head of women's health care policy—Director of Women's Health Care Policy, a title that no one really knew what—I mean, no one knew what that meant. People came to me my first few days in the office and said, What is it you're going to do? and I said, "I don't know yet." (laughs) I had tried writing a job description and sent it up the flagpole and nobody thought that was my job description. And then I, you know, talked about a budget and discovered very quickly that I was going to be scripted and sent out to talk to constituency groups for women and, you know, basically tell everybody what a wonderful company Wyeth was—that, you know, I wasn't going to have

any role in the development of Wyeth policy. So, I started on November 1, 1993, and I turned in my resignation on November 15 of 1993, and we all agreed that they had made a mistake and I had made a mistake and we just—that would be it. We wouldn't refer to it again. And so, I—meanwhile, I had, you know, gone through my savings accounts to build an apartment in my basement so that I could have a house sitter and work in—you know, keep my house with the farm in Charles County, which is a lovely place on the water, and still, you know, work most of the time up in Radnor, Pennsylvania. And I had gone off and gotten a pilot's license so that I could fly myself to Pennsylvania.

Sharpless Which is where Wyeth is?

Camp Which is where Wyeth is, because I figured, you know, it's a five hour drive each way—the train doesn't come close—so I have to fly. So, I went out and got a pilot's license, which was a lot of fun, but turns out to have been a terrible waste of effort because two weeks later (laughs), I left the job, though I still would love to fly and would love someday to have a plane. So, I—when I walked out that door, I didn't know where my next mortgage payment was coming from, because I had, you know, shot my savings getting ready to take the job at Wyeth.

Sharpless Oh, boy.

Camp But fortunately, I had lots of friends out there who immediately hired me as a consultant. And among those people who hired me was my friend Steve Sinding, who's a former head of the AID Population Office and was then at the Rockefeller Foundation. And I did, over a series of two—over a two-

year period, I did a series of projects with them, including being seconded by Rockefeller to Nafis Sadik, the secretary general of the Cairo Conference, to write the Cairo Plan of Action.

Sharpless Right. Why don't we pick up with that in the morning?

Camp Okay. All right.

Sharpless That would be great fun to interview your study on that. Great. Thanks.

end Interview 1

Interview 2

Sharpless All right. Today is August 21, 2003. My name is Rebecca Sharpless and this is the second oral history interview with Dr. Sharon Camp. The interview is taking place at Dr. Camp's office at the Women's Capital Corporation in Washington, D.C. It's a part of the Population Pioneers Project of the Hewlett Foundation. Okay, when I cut you off pretty abruptly (laughs) yesterday afternoon, you had just told me, one, that you thought you were going to work for Wyeth and that that had terminated after two weeks, that you had no idea where the next mortgage payment was coming from, and that your friends came up with consulting—not came up with, but helped you locate consulting.

Camp Um-hm. Yeah. Half a dozen people hired me as a consultant and in fact, one of my former colleagues paid me in advance, so I could actually make my—pay my bills for that first month.

Sharpless That must have been a very scary time.

Camp Well, it was a little bit, yeah. That was cutting it pretty close.

Sharpless But you mentioned that Steve Sinding—

Camp Steve Sinding was then head of the population program at the Rockefeller Foundation, and I had worked with Steve for many years when he was at AID and then with the World Bank and we had a strong mutual admiration society going, so I—it was a very comfortable assignment for me. And I worked on some communications programs with them, helped them to develop a partnership of developing country leaders in the population field to try and give them more prominence in the public policy debates internationally, and did a number of very interesting projects while I was there, this being 1993 and

in 1994 were the two years that I worked for Rockefeller and a number of other organizations as a consultant. The best assignment, though, that I had for Rockefeller was the secondment to Nafis Sadik in her role as secretary general of the Cairo Conference. And what had happened was that the UN Population Division, which was doing the documentation for the conference, had turned out a very dry, uninspired, uninteresting, unambitious plan of action for the conference. And it—

Sharpless I think Laura needs something. (pause in recording) Okay, they turned in a dry document, unambitious.

Camp Yeah. And so, Steve sort of conspired with Nafis, who was very disappointed in the document, to pull together a group of wise men and women to comment on the document, and I was part of that group, at least in an observer role, although, I guess, as a commentator as well. And according to plan, we all trashed the document, which then resulted in a recommendation from the wise men and women that the document needed to be rewritten.

Sharpless Who were some of the other wise men and women that you—

Camp Well, Steve was there. Gee—a woman from the Pew Charitable Trust. It was an international group. I think Mechai Viravaidya from Thailand was there. Steve would be a better person—Steve or Sara Sieims—to ask. And of course Nafis, and a number of people from the population division, as well as Nafis's staff. But various outside experts. I think Tom Merrick was probably part of the group from the Population Reference Bureau.

Sharpless Let me know if you need to get something to drink.

Camp Yeah, I think a glass of water would be—(pause in tape)

Sharpless Okay. So, you trashed the document.

Camp (both speaking at once) So the group of—yeah. The group trashed the document and said it should be rewritten. And that essentially gave Nafis Sadik permission to bring in her own people to rewrite the document. And, as she and Steve had previously agreed, I got assigned to her personally, working directly under her, taking her instruction as to what the document should look like. And the Pew Charitable Trust provided some free time from the Population Reference Bureau. And at my request and under my direction, staffers there pulled together all of the documents and organized the—from the regional conferences and the specialty groups—all of the lead-up—the preparatory conferences and whatnot. So, all of the documentation that said what the world community was willing to support in various areas and language that had already been adopted by various groups around the world, and organized that into a big binder by subject. And so, when I sat down to actually start writing the document, I had this wonderful resource from which to pull language that had already been agreed to. But it was—I worked on it—I think—well, I know I stayed in New York for sixteen days straight, working through the weekends and meeting surreptitiously with Nafis at Rockefeller or somewhere, or at her home. And I believe that I wrote the Cairo plan of action in about three weeks, from start to finish. And then it went through Nafis's staff, and they chickened out on some of the stronger language around abortion and adolescence, and in a couple of cases made kind of nonsense out of what I had spent a lot of time making very elegant prose. But I would say that even after the following prep com and the Cairo meeting itself that eighty-

five percent of what I wrote survived.

Sharpless That's very exciting.

Camp Yeah, yeah.

Sharpless Now, most people, I think, point to Cairo as a sea change in population—that something really significant happened there. What happened between Mexico City and Cairo that permitted the shift in thinking?

Camp I think a lot of the credit goes to feminist groups who really raised a lot of concerns around the demographic—demographically-driven programs in places like China and Indonesia and India.

Sharpless The elements of coercion.

Camp Yeah, the allegations of coerced abortion, coerced sterilization. Really, people really started focusing on that. I think also the issue of unsafe abortion—that the level of awareness was much greater and the commitment from the public health community to try and do something about unsafe abortion was there. And I—what I did in the plan of action was to write into it my own personal belief, which is that if you took—if you provided real reproductive choice to women, you didn't need to worry, to that same degree, about demographic targets. And so, the Cairo plan of action was built on a sort of three-legged stool, one of which was women's development, another of which was child survival, which I think there was substantial consensus—was important to work on simultaneously with fertility control. And the other was family planning.

Sharpless The sentiment being that if you had to have six children, to have three of them survive—

Camp Right, right, right.

Sharpless —you're going to have six.

Camp Right. And that was fairly well accepted, that you needed to do these together. There wasn't, in my mind, evidence that you had to do the child survival first to demonstrate this, but you had to make a commitment to—sort of a holistic commitment—to women and their families, to women as individuals, not just wombs, and to the context in which they were making their reproductive decisions, which was the family. So, putting women at the center of the population agenda, the plan of action, and giving it more of a family health context, we were able to bridge the chasm between the population mafia, who just wanted to do family planning, and feminists and others interested in other development issues who wanted to see a broader agenda. And that really was the Cairo Compromise. The advances that were made in the areas of adolescents and abortion, though, were also very significant. And I think that the commitment to do something about unsafe abortion in Cairo really laid the groundwork for the almost immediate push around the world to make emergency contraception more available.

Sharpless Uh-huh. Say more about the adolescents and abortion.

Camp Well, I think prior to Cairo, there had been virtually no discussion at an international policy level of unsafe abortion. And although the language got, to some degree, watered down from what I wrote, first by Nafis's staff, and then subsequently by the negotiators themselves at the conferences. But it remained a very strong commitment to deal with the problem of unsafe abortion within the context of local mores. But it was right out there on the table.

Sharpless What did you write?

Camp Um, I wrote that access to safe abortion should be available worldwide, knowing that it would get watered down. But it—maybe not quite in those words, but that this was a major public health problem, that it was a leading cause of maternal mortality, morbidity, and disablement, that it was a burden on families and—I made the public health rationale—and that restrictions on abortion made little difference in its incidence. So, it was very much an argument for making abortion safe. And some of that survived. Some of the tone of that survived, and certainly the public health rationale for being concerned about unsafe abortion survived. The adolescent language didn't do quite as well. What I wrote was that adolescents have a human right to information and services that could save their lives, i.e. sexual—sexuality education and family planning information and services. And that sentence was one of them that got just mauled. (laughs) So, as it came out, it made absolutely no sense at all. But that turned out to be much more sensitive, really, than the abortion issue. I guess the—people had been accustomed to fighting over abortion issues long enough. But for many people at the conference, the fight over adolescent sexuality was much further out. And so, that—we didn't make as much progress on that. But at least there was a discussion of the needs of adolescents.

Sharpless Uh-huh. How much of the document came from the binder and how much of it came from your head?

Camp Well, I think, um—I'm not sure I can answer that. Certainly the conceptualization came from my head.

Sharpless Oh, to format it.

Camp And quite a—yeah. The sort of construct into which to put all of—all kinds of language that had been developed. And certainly I gave much more prominence to the things that fit with my own ideas of what the world community ought to be doing on these issues. The one chapter that was a real disappointment to me was one I didn't write; it was written by Dick Benedict—Richard Benedict, who was—had been at the state department and was then in the environmental community, working as a sort of senior scholar. And that was the chapter on population, development and the environment, and the draft, I don't think, was particularly good. And then, when it got to the conferences, it got further torn apart. But my regret—when I wrote the original document, there was more of the demographic rationale, more of the save the planet. It—some of the language that I had in the early sections where I was building the construct talked about this as being the critical decade in which the actions that we took as a world community in the area of population development and the environment would determine the future of—for generations and generations, and tried in that to make a bargain between reproductive choice and the need to reach populations, early population stabilization, in order to achieve other goals, other development goals. And a lot of that didn't survive. I think that the strength of the feminist pressure, at that point, on policy makers and their presence at the conference was such that they kind of aligned themselves with conservatives who didn't want to talk about sterile—population stabilization—in order to get a lot of that language out. And the fact that that key chapter wasn't stronger meant that it was hard

to keep that together. So, even though I'm still proud of the Cairo document, I think it was a mistake. It was unfortunate that we didn't preserve that integration of the need for population stabilization with the need for development, including women's development and family development.

Sharpless Were you able to go to Cairo?

Camp I was. I went as a member of Nafis's staff and I worked on some of her speeches and represented her at the NGO Forum. I had one young woman, very bright young woman, working with me. And we put feelers out to all of the non-governmental organizations that were doing anything at the forum. We kept our ears to the ground. And every night, starting at about 5:30 when the sessions would end, we would do a confidential memo for Nafis and her staff about what was happening in the forum. They were very concerned about the forum, because that's where the feminists were mobilizing and—

Sharpless International Women's Health Coalition was focusing—

Camp Right, right. And Nafis was—and her staff were very afraid that they were going to attack UNFPA and essentially disrupt the conference. And so, we were there to kind of reach out to those groups a little bit, to stay in touch with what was happening, and to encourage other non-governmental organizations who were less radical around some of the feminist issues to play a stronger role. And I was—and we were also keeping an eye on the anti-choice groups who were there at the conference, and reported on their activities.

Sharpless So, keeping an eye on both—

Camp Chris Smith was there. Right.

Sharpless Both sides.

Camp Right, the far left and the far right, yeah. But these were—these memos for Nafis, which were delivered under her door by 6:00 A.M. in the morning and then circulated to her key staff, were so popular because they were fascinating reading. And I think someone at one point commented that Nafis must have the whole staff of intelligence officers monitoring all (laughs) of these groups because they really were a very comprehensive view of—

Sharpless So, how did you pull that off?

Camp Well, we wrote most of the night.

Sharpless Who's we?

Camp Well, the young woman who was assigned to me, whose name I can't remember now. She—

Sharpless Just the two of you?

Camp Yeah, just the two of us, and—but we had a key network of people. So, we would check in with—each of us—with a dozen or so people every day to kind of keep our fingers on the pulse of the NGO meeting, and then were able to report back what was happening. And I think that what we were able to do was to provide some real comfort to Nafis, that the fears that were in her mind and her staff's mind about what was being prepared against them really wasn't, and that she had support at the NGO Forum, that she shouldn't consider it a hostile place. And some of the Third World, developing country women's groups approached me at one point and said, Could we get Nafis to come and speak to the forum? And I said, "I'll try." And so, I went to Nafis and she agreed in principle, and then—and so we got it set up. Must have been a couple thousand women in this auditorium. And that morning, before the

session, I was told by her security people that she would not be allowed to come because of security concerns. And so, I wrote her a memo, and I said, "These are your people, Nafis. You have to be there and speak to them." And she came, over the objections of her staff.

Sharpless Wow. Wow.

Camp And the crowd went wild.

Sharpless Yeah. What a high moment.

Camp It really was.

Sharpless What were other high moments from Cairo? It's hard to top that one.

Camp Yeah, I don't think you could top that one. Um—yeah, I think that was the one that stands out in my mind so much more than any other. I mean, a lot of the conference was a bit of a disappointment. We had—had primed and media-trained a lot of Third World spokespersons, leaders of family planning programs in developing countries. Tried to set them up with press interviews, did a press conference trying to get Third World voices to speak on behalf of population and family planning programs, and particularly to highlight for the press the success stories from places like Indonesia and South Korea and Thailand and Mexico and so forth. And we had this corps of very prominent, very well-spoken people that we had tried to make available. And we had told every one of them, "Now, what you don't do is get up and talk about the demographics of your country. You've got to punch this up." And we worked with them and worked with them. Sure enough, they got—they stood up there in front of the assembled press and gave the standard spiel, the population of my country is such-and-such. It just—dull, dull, dull, and they got no coverage

at all. So, that—a lot of what we tried to make happen at Cairo in terms of promoting greater recognition for success in family planning really didn't come off very well, which was too bad.

Sharpless What do you think the successes of Cairo were then?

Camp I think the progress made on safe—self—safe abortion has to be one of the top ones, and the—I think after Cairo, a lot of countries with strong commitments to population stabilization went back and reworked their programs and made them much more women-centric. Started training a lot more women, starting focusing on a broader array of services, started integrating some of the family planning and child survival, and sexual health issues. I guess one of the things that did happen at Cairo, though not to the degree that it has subsequently, was that people began to focus on sexual health, including HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections. So, that was important progress, to get some of that out into the public domain and get people focusing on it. So, family planning programs, in my view, started to get a lot better after Cairo. There was more of a focus on quality and certainly more of a focus on volunteerism, less of a focus on demographic targets, more of a focus on service delivery targets. And I think women in development as a field gained strength from the Cairo meeting.

Sharpless Just on a personal level, how does it feel to be integrated into something of that scope?

Camp Um, we were so busy, I'm not sure I thought about it at the time. It certainly was exciting to go to Cairo and it certainly was exciting to be on the inside as part of the secretariat for the conference. I wish I could have done more. And,

having been kind of sidelined over at the NGO Forum, I didn't have access to some of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering that went on in Nafis's immediate circle. But, I think I made a contribution, nonetheless, and it was very generous of Nafis to invite me to come and give me a pass to go wherever I wanted at any time during the conference.

Sharpless Anything else about Cairo?

Camp I don't think so. I've kind of lost touch with Cairo because I then, almost immediately after that, got deeply involved in the effort to bring RU486 to the U.S. In October of 1994, I was approached by a couple of colleagues who had been working with the Population Council and had been invited by the Population Council to put together a bid for the license for mifipristone, which the Population Council was negotiating from Roussel Uclaf in France. And—

Sharpless They received the—am I right? They received the license for—

Camp They received the license in 1994, right, and were beginning to set up clinical trials and so forth. So, they wanted to put a—they didn't want to market the product. They didn't want to take it—well, I think they were going to work at taking it through the FDA, but they wanted a pharmaceutical company to take it on. And apparently, they didn't like any of the proposals that they had gotten from industry. And so, I got a call from Lance Bronnenkant and Forrest Greenslade, saying—and I'd been involved for a decade in advocacy around RU486, so I knew the drug. I was very committed to it and was still puttering around with consulting at the time. And Forrest and Lance said, Would you like to head up a non-profit, that is going to hold the license for—maybe—may get the license for RU486? And the idea would be to set it up as a non-profit

and then probably spin off a for-profit distribution company or sublicense to a for-profit company, but that we'd get it onto the market with this kind of fund organization. It was a non-profit and it would pull together all the constituency groups and so forth. And so, I did. I said yes. And we all met in New York and at that meeting, fifteen minutes prior to the meeting with the Population Counsel, I was introduced to Joe Pike, who was the venture capitalist who was going—who was supposed to finance the whole activity. And he had set up a very complicated corporate structure and was supposed to be putting in some of his own money, as well as raising money for it. And we went into the Pop Council—this was, I think, in November of 1994—and expecting to make our pitch for why we should have the license, but not to hear anything. And we're told that our proposal had been accepted and here's a draft licensing agreement. Let's start negotiating. So, we—we all, kind of—we literally had—some of us just met (laughs) fifteen minutes before that. But—

Sharpless Let me turn the tape right quick.

Tape 1, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Let me make sure I understand. Can you go back over that again what happened?

Camp Okay. So, I was invited by two friends—Forrest Greenslade and Lance Bronnenkant. Forrest—

Sharpless And they were at the Pop—they were at the Pop Council?

Camp No, no. Forrest was the president of IPAS, and Lance Bronnenkant ran a small company that made all of the—or most of world's copper IUDs [intrauterine device]. It was called FEI Enterprises, or FEI International. I can't remember.

So he was a businessman, but he was on the board of IPAS, and he was a businessman whom I admired greatly. I didn't know him well, but everything I knew about him led me to believe that he was a really fine person.

Sharpless Fellow traveler.

Camp The kind of business person I would want to be involved with. And I'd known Forrest for many years in his capacity first at the Population Council and then later as head of IPAS. I'd never met Joe Pike, but Joe Pike was the board chair of Lance's company. So, I just assumed that the Pop Council had been dealing with him for years around the IUD issue because his—Lance's company licensed the IUD from the Pop Council, obviously, and assumed that Lance knew him well. And certainly there was nothing in our early meetings to lead me to believe that he wasn't another Lance Bronnenkant. But over the eight months that I worked with Joe very closely—and Lance and Forrest kind of dropped out, particularly Forrest was hardly seen from again, and Lance was busy running his own company and didn't put a lot of time in. So, it was Joe and I trying to get to yes with the Population Council around the licensing agreement, and trying to raise money. I started to realize, I guess about four months into the project, that, number one, I might not ever get paid for the work that I was doing. And secondly, that Joe really wasn't an honest man. I knew he wasn't always telling me the truth and I was in the room when I knew him to be lying to the Population Council. And so, I think around May of '95, I went to the Pop Council. I had gotten myself a pro bono lawyer, former Maryland senator Joseph—Joe Tydings and his law firm agreed to represent me and the non-profit that I now had formed and headed—

Sharpless And it was called?

Camp —called New Choices for Reproductive Health. And it still exists. I have it in a deep freeze just in case I need a non-profit one day. But he—I'm sorry, I lost my train of thought.

Sharpless (unintelligible)

Camp Joe Tydings and I went to the Pop Council and I argued that the non-profit which I was going to be heading needed to have greater decision-making authority; that it couldn't just be a pass through to a bunch of investors who were in the shadows; that if we were going to really mobilize the constituencies for mifipristone (RU486), if we were going to ask prestigious leaders from our communities to serve on this non-profit board, it couldn't just be a front. And so, I tried to kind of divide responsibility for some of the marketing and sales and regulatory things from the, sort of, manufacturing and distribution functions in order to ensure that the non-profit had the ability to really manage some aspects of the development and commercialization of RU486. And Maggie Catley-Carson would not back me up. And so, in June, I left the project and in the end, didn't get paid for many, many months of work. Some months I was working on that almost full-time. Um, so, a year and a half later, everybody was in court suing Joe Pike to try and get him out of the project because it turns out he was a twice-confessed felon.

Sharpless Wow.

Camp And there was an editorial in the *New York Times* at the time that everybody was suing everybody else, actually urging Joe Pike to (laughs) get out of the company for the sake of this important, new technology. And Forrest

Greenslade called me and he said, "Never has your opinion of—your low opinion of someone been so publicly validated." (laughs) But I learned a lot of important lessons. First of all, I learned enough about business to actually think about starting a pharmaceutical company a couple of years down the road. I learned a little bit about how companies get financed, and learned a little bit about venture capital, and about the regulatory process—how drugs are developed and get through the FDA. So, that was my first taste of it and I—it broke my heart to have to walk away from RU486, because I had a really strong, personal commitment to the drug. But I wasn't going to stay in bed with a crook. So, I went back to consulting, having abandoned most of my clients, tried to rebuild my consulting business at that point. And I had been starting to do some work in emergency contraception, and that's—

Sharpless You mentioned you had a long-standing interest in it.

Camp Well, it really started in the early 1990's. I was the founding chair of a group called the Reproductive Health Technologies Project, which was run by my friend Marie Bass. And I chaired that board for a couple of years. It was initially formed to pull together an advocacy coalition for mifipristone, for RU486, to get it into the United States. And once the process was moving along toward a license for the Population Counsel, we decided to kind of look around and see what other action agendas might—that the coalition might take on. And the coalition was very interesting in that it combined groups who were often at each other's throats. So, the feminist health groups were part of it, the groups representing women of color who were often very critical of the family planning and population communities were part of it, but so were the

population and family planning people. So, we had—we had all of the, what I would call "progressive community" interested in these issues at the table, and we made common cause around the issue of abortion. We learned, I think, for the first time, to speak to (laughs) each other respectfully and to cut each other a little slack, and to try to understand each other's perspectives, and to work together to get something important done for women.

Sharpless Well, what was the common cause?

Camp RU486.

Sharpless Okay.

Camp Um, but pretty soon, it got to the point where we didn't—we had room on our agenda to do something else. And we looked around at other issues and ended up deciding to work also on vaginal microbicides, which eventually became another passion of mine, and post-coital emergency contraception. And before that, I only had a vague awareness that there was something called the Morning After Pill. I really didn't know anything about it. And I remember Felicia Stewart, who is still very active in this field, probably one of the most prominent spokespersons for emergency contraception, came to one of our board meetings and briefed us all. And she had been providing it for twenty-five years or something and we all agreed that this was something we could make common cause on.

Sharpless So, the—it—the technology or the pharmacology, perhaps, was known at that point.

Camp Oh, yes. Um, actually, the use of emergency contraception goes back to the early sixties, and the first methods were estrogen alone over a course of five

days, and women got violently ill from it. But in the seventies, Albert Yuzpe in Canada, who ran a student health center at a college in Vancouver, started experimenting with Ovral, which was a high dose, oral contraceptive, widely available in those days, and came up with what subsequently was known as the Yuzpe Regimen. And what's interesting is that—it was almost accidental in that he used the pill that was most readily available to him. And the seventy-two hour window of time was actually between Friday night and a condom breaking and Monday night getting treatment. So, that's—it wasn't based on any research. He defined the regimen first and then tested it, which isn't normally the way drugs get developed. (laughs) So, a lot of what we know about emergency contraception results really from clinical experience, rather than from the kind of traditional drug development that normally is the case. But my first project was in 1994 when RHTP, for which I was then a consultant because I had already left Pop Action and I had resigned as chair of RHTP, but was—they were one of my consulting clients. And they were asked by the Compton Foundation to do a little mini research project on the needs of victims of sexual assault in the former Yugoslavia. And, specifically, to look at what post-coital—whether it was RU486 or something else was needed in that context, particularly where women were being raped for political reasons. And so, Lael Stegall and I put together a report on the needs of these women in Bosnia and Croatia and circulated it in both the reproductive health community and also in the refugee community. And, although it took several years for the refugee community to kind of grasp hold of this issue, that report, I think, started the process by which UNICEF and the refugee community generally

adopted emergency contraception as part of the standard of care for women in refugee camps and refugee situations. And one of the great victories of that effort was to get emergency contraception into the basic health package that is the first set of supplies to go into a new refugee situation. So, that was a major achievement because a lot of the refugee groups are very—they have very strong religious ties, and the Catholic church plays a very prominent role in the refugee community. So, getting emergency contraception mainstreamed as part of refugee health was a huge victory. But that was my first foray beyond chairing the board of RHTP in emergency contraception. And then the following year, in early spring, I got money from Mahmoud Fathalla, one of my great heroes, who was then at the Rockefeller Foundation, to travel to Europe and look at the use of emergency contraception in Europe because it was much advanced compared to what was going on in all of the rest of the world, including North America. And I visited, oh, I think, seven countries in eight or nine days, and interviewed key people in the field about levels of use and regimens for emergency contraception, standard protocols, outreach, talked to Schering AG that had the only dedicated product on the market, and came back and prepared a report that got widely circulated and, I think, helped begin to mobilize the U.S. advocacy community around the need to get this into—make it a standard in women's health care around the world. And then, I was standing around at the National Council for International Health meeting that June of '95 and listening to Francine Coeytaux, who was then at the Pacific Institute for Women's Health, describe a project she was doing with Kaiser Permanente, which was a demonstration project at eight sites in San Diego—

Kaiser sites—where they were going to make up their own emergency contraceptive product. Basically they punched out Ovral, and put the pills in a little glass gar and labeled it, and put in instructions in English and Spanish, and put everything in a little box. It was very complicated. It cost us—it cost them like thirteen and a half dollars to manufacture this so-called product. But then they trained all of their clinicians in the use of emergency contraception, urged them to inform women in advance about its availability, and then monitored what happened to unintended pregnancy and abortion and what kinds of attitudinal problems developed and how patients and physicians and nurses responded to all this. It was very successful. But as we were all standing there in this international conference setting, I said to—I think it was Douglas Huber of the Pathfinder Fund was there, and Gordon Perkin, who was then president of PATH [Program for Appropriate Technology in Health], and Francine, of course. I think Francine's colleague Barbara Pillsbury was there. I said, "You know, this is what we ought to do internationally. Why don't we put a group together and do this kind of a demonstration project in some other countries?" And begin to demonstrate that emergency contraception is something that can have an impact on unsafe abortion and whatnot. So, people agreed that this was probably a good idea. So, I kept promoting the idea over the next few months. And, in October, we had a first meeting at Rockefeller, of just the groups that had been there, and decided to invite a few more friends in, including the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the World Health Organization, which was working on the new levonorgestrel method of emergency contraception. And that was the first meeting of the Consortium

for Emergency Contraception. And then we had another sort of organizational meeting with more of the members. I think all of the eight original members then came to the next meeting, which was held at PATH in Seattle. And I sort of just assumed the role of coordinator of the consortium, and then went out and started raising money for it. And we agreed that we would raise money as a group, and that I would raise money to finance my own salary as coordinator. I would work out of my home; we'd be a virtual organization. Those were the early days of email, so it was—we probably couldn't have organized this before email. And we set out to make emergency contraception part of mainstream women's health care all around the world. So—

Sharpless How did you target those first countries?

Camp Um, they were countries in—well, we wanted one per continent, and they were countries in which several of the consortium members had the capacity to work together as a team at the local level to launch a product. And they were countries in which we thought the political climate was probably conducive to getting emergency contraception as part of the family planning program eventually, if we could demonstrate its acceptability. So, we began working in Kenya, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Mexico. And different groups combined and recombined in different countries.

Sharpless According to who had the capacity where?

Camp Yeah. Yeah, basically, and who wanted to work where, and so forth. And WHO and the Pop Council did a lot of the designs of the evaluation tools and so forth. Um, but—and one of the important things that we did within the first year was to hammer out, through long negotiations, a standard protocol—

medical protocol—along with a manual for health care providers, some prototype patient information that could be translated easily into lots of languages, and a training module on emergency contraception. And these became products of the consortium, and it was, I think, the first time that that many of the major groups involved in reproductive health all signed on to one protocol. And it was really well received overseas because very often, if you're a grantee of several different American aid organizations, you end up having to follow three different medical protocols for—you're getting contrary instructions about how to do a program. And here we developed common talking points for the press, I mean, we gave—it was a turnkey operation. You took our kit and you had everything you needed to launch yourself into an emergency contraception program. And the fact that we had IPPF and WHO and Pathfinder and the Population Counsel and PATH and Pacific Institute, representing the more feminist health groups, all of them—everybody signed on to the same set of documents meant—

Sharpless And you were doing this all out of your house?

Camp Yeah. Meant that we could actually accelerate the adoption of this because no one questioned it. Once we had hammered out—and we spent hours agreeing on exactly how these protocols should be written and whatnot. But once we achieved that unanimity, it meant that we were a juggernaut. Nobody—it was instant credibility in every country around the world, and so we were able to raise money to translate it into Span—first into Spanish, and then into French and Portuguese, and then the Chinese decided they'd translate their version. And I think we actually had one Taiwan and one Chin—main—Chinese,

mainland Chinese. And it, I think, materials got into Bahasa and Hindi and it really—it just took off. And AID missions paid for the translation of some of the materials. But very early on in the consortium's life, in part because my experience in Europe, and looking at the difference between having a dedicated product in Europe and not, I urged on the consortium the need for a partnership with someone in industry to bring forth a dedicated product that could go on to the market anywhere in the world.

Sharpless Because, at this point, it was just—

Camp We were cutting out packages of pills.

Sharpless Yeah, lots of doses of birth control pills.

Camp Um-hm. Right. Eight pills per dose in most settings. And it didn't look like real medicine. We felt that if we—if this was going to be mainstreamed, it needed to—we needed a real product that was packaged and labeled and taken through the regulatory process—a registered drug product. Otherwise, it was always going to look like insurgent medicine. (Sharpless laughs) So, we—Regan Warner-Rowe who was then head of the Concept Foundation, which is one of the consortium members and was funded by Rockefeller and had a relation—existing relationship with WHO and UNFPA to do—to hold licenses for—sublicenses for contraceptive products that industry was not bringing out in certain countries. Anyway, so they had—already had some of this industry background. And Regan and I went around looking for an industry partner. And obviously we went first to Schering AG because they were the ones with the dedicated product on the market that was specifically approved for this indication. And they were willing to partner with us, but only in certain parts of

the world where there would be absolutely no chance that their product would end up over-the-counter. They wanted a learned intermediary between them and the consumer, or their product and the consumer. So, we didn't feel that we could write off all of Asia and Latin America, so we then went to Gedeon Richter. And Gedeon Richter had provided tablets for a small study of 834 women in Hong Kong comparing the old Yuzpe Regimen of estrogen and progestin with levonorgestrel alone. And the tablet in question was a tablet that was already on the market, starting in 1980, in Eastern Europe, used for regular post-coital contraception by women who didn't have sex very often. So, they might use it two, three times a month. And they took one tablet soon after intercourse. It was particularly thought appropriate in—by the company for adolescents who might just occasionally have sex.

Sharpless It was an over-the-counter then?

Camp No, it was a prescription product. But I think we all sensed very early on that if women were really going to get their hands (laughs) on this, it was eventually going to have to go over-the-counter. And Gedeon Richter was willing to partner with us, signed a collaborative agreement with the consortium through the Concept Foundation that involved, I think, about forty countries in which we agreed to collaborate to try and get a registered product for emergency contraception based on their tablet through the regulatory authorities and onto the market in a harmonized public and private sector launch. So, their distributor would handle the commercial side of the launch and the non-profit groups would handle the general advocacy and public sector, availability and education and—the idea was that the two sectors would work together to get a

real product onto the market.

Sharpless And this is still the consortium?

Camp Yeah, this is still the consortium doing all of this.

Sharpless Do you need to get ready for your conference call?

Camp In about five minutes.

Sharpless Well, why don't we stop now—

Camp Okay.

Sharpless —and we'll—

Tape 1 ends; tape 2, side 1 begins.

Okay, this is the second tape with Sharon Camp on August the twenty-first and we are eating and talking at the same time, so transcribers, don't hate us too much. Okay, when you took your conference call, we were talking about—we were on the consortium and you were working with Gedeon with the for profit and non-profit licensing, is that right?

Camp Well, Gedeon Richter worked to get the product registered in various countries—

Sharpless Okay.

Camp —in which the consortium—

Sharpless Forty countries, I think you said?

Camp Well, it took a while. Initially it was just a few. And in those first few countries, we actually did introductory trials, more than a demonstration project. But we did—we tried to develop model training programs, public outreach programs, and then we evaluated how various tactics worked to spread awareness and lower barriers to use so that we could develop a set of best practices that we

could spread around the world for other organizations and countries wanting to initiate emergency contraception services. And I think in part because of what happened at Cairo around unsafe abortion, we found in many countries we were pushing at an open door, that policy makers were in fact looking for something that they could do that would be relatively low resource. They could do by changing policy and incorporating into existing family planning norms and training programs and what not the materials that we had developed on emergency contraception. And in virtually every country, there were methods of oral contraceptives that could be used even if the dedicated product was not available. But I always felt that the dedicated product was very important to the effort, and so pushed that part of our initiative. And Gedeon Richter actually brought out a new product that was done to our specifications. And we all worked together to trade-name it, Postinar-2, and my original business partner, who was involved through the Concept Foundation in the consortium, Gordon Duncan, wrote the labeling for Postinar-2.

Sharpless How much education—please eat (laughter)—how much education did you have to do to tell people this was not RU486, this was not an abortiofacient.

Camp A lot, a lot, and we're still fighting that battle. I mean, here in the United States, the confusion is virtually universal. I can remember watching the Lehrer—

Sharpless McNeil/Lehrer—

Camp McNeil/Lehrer news hour and heard—who is the African-American woman who—anyway, refer to this as the morning-after abortion pill. Now, here is someone in public television, the leading news in-depth show, and she gets it wrong. So, it—we have a lot of work still to do on that, but I think that the

effort that we have underway now to take Plan B over-the-counter is an opportunity to generate a lot of press, serious press, around the issue of emergency contraception, and to finally make the distinction in people's mind. And we—what we—I think what we really have to do is brand this as the anti-abortion pill.

Sharpless Um-hm.

Camp The pill that you take so that you don't have to have an abortion.

Sharpless And you started in these four countries—

Camp Um-hm.

Sharpless —and eventually moved globally.

Camp Right. And now, I mean, at the time the consortium started in 1995, there was a single dedicated product on the market. It was the old yuzpe regimen, just a high dose birth control pill packaged in a special way, and it was available only in seven countries. Now the new and improved levonorgestrel regimen, progestin only, much lower side effects, more effective, simpler to use, is available in ninety countries. And that happened—maybe the total expenditure worldwide was fifty million dollars.

Sharpless Wow.

Camp And it, it's now 2003 and we've managed to mainstream emergency contraception in most countries around the world and we've got a dedicated product that is better than anything that existed at the time that the consortium started. Now, the consortium can't take credit for all of that. Gedeon Richter gets some credit, Schering AG gets some credit, WHO gets lots of credit, but in a very real sense, this was a method of birth control, a new method of birth

control that was developed almost entirely with public sector resources and brought to market in one country after another, at least in the first wave, bought through the efforts of non-profit groups. But in the process of launching the product in developing countries, it quickly became clear that if we weren't going to appear to be promoting second-class medicine for third-world women, we needed to seek approval for the product in a major western-industrialized country. And because of the role that AID played in contraceptive supply all around the world for family planning programs, we targeted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which was also reputed to be the toughest in the world. So, we knew that if we could get the product through the Food and Drug Administration that it would be validated as safe and effective all over the world, and it would accelerate the adoption of this new and improved product all over the world. So, I went back and made the rounds again of the pharmaceutical industry. Gedeon Richter wasn't willing to bring the product to the United States on its own, but was willing to secretly supply the product to a U.S. pharmaceutical company. And this was in 1996. And I couldn't find anyone who would do this.

Sharpless Why not?

Camp And so—

Sharpless Why do you—

Camp Well, a combination of reasons. Fears of product liability, fears that it would be politically controversial, and in fact that there might be large case action suits driven by anti-choice groups to try and put the company out of business. There were fears of economic boycotts, threats to executives. Remember, this was a

scary time. People were starting to shoot doctors and clinics were burning.

Sharpless So, it was all based on the misconception that it was an abortifacient.

Camp Or that somebody would perceive that it was an abortifacient. And the whole field of contraception is viewed as one that is very high risk in terms of product reliability anyway, and so the combination of something that might be inherently controversial on top of that made it a non-starter with a lot of companies. They were afraid the sky would fall in if they brought it to market and they'd just be in all kinds of trouble. The other reason was it didn't look like it would be profitable. The impression was that this was a product that was needed most by low income women and teenagers who didn't have any money, so you'd never be able to charge anything for it and it'd be a public sector product. And why would you take all of that risk if you couldn't make tons of money? So, it became pretty clear by the end of 1996 that nobody was going to do this. And so, in January of 1997, I started a pharmaceutical company.

Sharpless How did you come to the conclusion to do your—what were the steps you went through in your thinking as you decided to do it yourself?

Camp I think I did it out of frustration. Damn it, if they won't do it, we should do it ourselves. I think Elli[Eleanor] Smeal, who now heads the Feminist Majority Fund[Feminist Majority Foundation], had some influence over me, because about that time she put together a conference called "Doing It Ourselves," the theme of which was it's time for women to take charge. We've been waiting for men to do things for us too long and it, we all, in every aspect of life and business, it's time for women to take charge and do what women needed. And I kind of got swept up into that. I was part of that conference. And I said, well,

why not? Why—and no one told me that I couldn't run a pharmaceutical company. Although subsequently, a lot of people told me (laughs) I shouldn't be doing it, including my business partner Gordon Duncan, who, I guess, assumed when we got together on this that he would run the company and I would sort of front for it and raise money from my friends and what not. But anyway, so I went to friends in the non-profit community to help me get the company and the project off the ground. I went to Family Health International, whose board I had chaired for five years and on whose board I had served for fifteen years, where I really got my founding in contraceptive technology. And I asked them if they would help put together the application for the FDA, help reanalyze the clinical data and put it in the shape that the FDA needed it in. And I—

Sharpless Now was the clinical data from—

Camp From WHO.

Sharpless Okay.

Camp The principle data were from WHO.

Sharpless From these pilot countries.

Camp No, the principle data were from clinical trials that WHO had done, including a big international trial that was already halfway through in 1996, and which was the basis for the consortium adopting levonorgestrel rather than the old regimen. I mean, we leapfrogged over the old regimen based on preliminary WHO data. So, but the WHO couldn't put together the application for us and so we needed—

Sharpless So FHI—

Camp —staff people who knew clinical studies and knew something about the regulatory process. So, contracted with FHI, a non-profit to do that, and then contracted with PATH in Seattle to help us with the packaging, to find a packager in the U.S. who would do the finished packaging to develop some of the materials for health care providers and patients and help us think about the introduction strategy. Went to Planned Parenthood and got agreement on a marketing—sort of co-marketing plan at the American College Health Association. Went to essentially the non-profit community to help develop and then launch the product. We hired DDB, which was the firm that had done the first public service ad campaign for emergency contraception in the U.S. under the auspices of Reproductive Health Technologies Project. So, we hired an ad company, a for-profit company, but one that had already worked with non-profit stakeholders and was already well up to speed on emergency contraception. And that was the initial grouping. We hired some regulatory consultants in both the U.S. and Canada—both small, women-owned and operated companies. And then, as it got closer to launch, we had to figure out how to distribute the drug and how to market it and have a sales force to promote it, and over time, we put it all together. During this formative stage of the company, I went out to some 150 private equity groups to find sources of traditional capital to finance the company, and no one would provide me any financing. And I think it's because the—even funds that were run by women who really wanted to get involved in this—apparently felt that their underlying layer of investors, the pension funds and the college endowments were—that this was simply too risky and controversial for them, that some of their

investors would object to this. So, in the end, I had to turn back to the reproductive health community and their donors. And we financed the development and launch of Plan B without any venture capital or traditional capital in the project. We had eight foundations that provided financing, six Planned Parenthoods, Family Health—their foundation invested. And a combination of recoverable grants and loans and—mostly from the Packard Foundation but from other foundations as well. From the six Planned Parenthood affiliates who became investors and from a handful of people like Bob Wallace, who provided the original seed capital, who had made plenty of money and didn't object to making more money, but really wanted their money to make a difference, and invested—looking for a double bottom line. So, the company was, from the very beginning, quite unique in that it was—its mission was to deliver a double bottom line.

Sharpless Which means?

Camp Which means to deliver—to meet the social goals of the investors for—with respect to unintended pregnancy and reductions in the need for abortion—to promote reproductive choice but also to provide a financial return on the investment. And I'm happy to say I think we're going to do both. I mean, we've definitely met the social goals of our investors. I mean, we have probably prevented several hundred thousand unintended pregnancies, at least half of which probably would have ended in abortion.

Sharpless And that's in the United States?

Camp In the—just in the United States. And if we looked at how much of this same product under different trade names has now been marketed around the world,

it would be probably tens of thousands of unintended pregnancies that have been prevented.

Sharpless How did you get it approved by the FDA?

Camp Well, we put together a professional submission with a lot of safety and efficacy data in it. It took us four months to get access to the WHO data because, well, it took—first of all, it took us a year to negotiate a licensing agreement with Gedeon Richter. Because it was in the middle of the negotiations they got scared to death, and they got scared to death because they had been selected by the Pop Council to produce mifipristone. And suddenly, things started to heat up in the U.S. and they started imagining all kinds of scary things, panicked, pulled out of that supply agreement with the Population Council, and were immediately sued by the investors in mifipristone. So, all U.S. projects went on hold as they re-examined whether they ever wanted to be in the U.S. market anyway at all. And so, it actually took us, from the formation of the company in January of '97 to January 30, almost a year and three days to get a signed agreement with Gedeon Richter. And then we couldn't get access to the WHO data to which they had some—which they had control over—because they had picked a fight with—their lawyers had picked a fight with the WHO lawyers, and it took four months for that to get worked out. And, in the end, I had to sign a separate agreement, a memorandum of understanding with WHO to be sure that we had exclusive use of the data for the U.S. market, which was the only way we could raise any money. We had to have some protection because there's no patent protection of any kind for this product. So, once we got a hold of the data, we then moved very fast and in about—

well, we submitted—a year from signing the agreement with Gedeon Richter, we submitted the application. So, even though we lost the first four months, we did very well in terms—pulled together the submission in eight months, basically, which involved reanalysis of all the WHO data, gathering other data, doing big literature searches—

Sharpless And this was FHI [Family Health International]?

Camp Um-hm, with FHI's help and some regulatory consultants. We had to write an integrated summary of safety, an integrated summary of efficacy, develop labeling. We had to trade-name the product and develop packaging and get the packaging and labeling through the FDA. The trade-name was a very interesting fight. We formed a naming committee, which included folks from Planned Parenthood and DDB and both public and private sector people who had been involved in emergency contraception. Some of the pharmacists out in Washington who were involved in the early stages of pharmacy access. And we hired, through DDB, a naming company who came up with twenty-five names and presented the twenty-five names to this naming committee. As soon as we heard Plan B, we all went, "Ohhh." Now, what they said when we said, this is our number one choice, then we'll also test in the naming study these other things, but this is the one we all really knew immediately we liked. That they explained to us that the secret of a—the difference between a good trade-name and a great trade-name was the degree of risk. And as it turned out, this was a very risky thing to do because when we submitted it to the FDA Labeling and Nomenclature Committee, they turned it down. And by that time, we really had no other second choice. We didn't like any of the other trade names. They

didn't—

Sharpless Why did they turn it down?

Camp When I finally got hold of their minutes through Freedom of Information Act request, it was—the minutes were two lines, which said simply that the name is unacceptable because it's flippant and has a meaningless B suffix. (Sharpless laughs) Plan being the name and B being the suffix. But we knew this was the right name for this product. It was the right public health message. This is not plan A. You were supposed to have a plan A, whether it's abstinence or condoms or whatever, but when plan A fails, you can go to Plan B. And our naming study showed very clearly that once people had heard the trade name in context, they remembered it. And given all of the barriers to access, it seemed very important to us that people could remember what to ask for. So, we decided to fight, and it took us seven months of appeals. We went through about five layers of FDA bureaucracy with one appeal after another. They would write back and say no for these reasons and we would write back and argue with the reasons. We finally got all the way to Janet Woodcock, who is head of the entire—she's just—

Sharpless I'm going to write her a letter.

Camp (both speaking at once) _____(??), I'm pulling this plaque off the—um, in April of 1999, literally a couple of months before the goal date for a final decision—we almost got approval without a trade name—Janet Woodcock finally ruled on her—on our trade name appeal. And this is what she said in an internal memo to all these layers of bureaucrats: "I received an appeal of the denial of the trade name Plan B for the emergency contraceptive product

levonorgestrel NDA number blah, blah, blah. I reviewed the documentation in the case and consulted with DDMAC"—that's the part of the FDA that oversees promotion—"on the consumer research that was done for the firm, and I find that the trade name is acceptable. The reasons are detailed below. The phrase Plan B is ordinary—in ordinary usage denotes an emergency or backup plan, something to employ when "plan A" fails. This common usage does not connote superiority or inferiority. Rather it implies a sequence or order that emergency contraception should be a backup or emergency plan, not the primary method. It's a useful public health message that is reinforced by the name of the product." Yay! (laughter) "Many therapies in medicine have a sequential component to their indications, i.e. indicated in patients who have failed, et cetera, et cetera. While this failed, there is usually a judgment of the physician managing the patient. The emergency contraception scenario is unusual in that only the individual woman is in a position to recognize when plan A fails and the need for emergency contraception is triggered. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the individual consumer thoroughly understand the role and timing of this intervention. I think this name will be helpful to women and do not believe it will mislead those who, due to cultural factors, do not understand the vernacular usage." Isn't that—

Sharpless That was _____(??).

Camp —the most wonderful memo? And this is after seven months of, you know, agonizing bureaucratic double-talk to have that kind of—so, that was one of the big victories. We also had a major fight over the packaging. I felt that the packaging, and you can see it here, is—needed to be designed in such a way

that all of the really essential information about side effects to expect, warning signs, how to use the product—all of that needed to be right out there where women could see it, next to the pills, and in a way so it could never get separated from the pills.

Sharpless So, what you have is—you have a three-fold package?

Camp We have a four-fold package that has all the key information actually printed on the package. The model was this zithromiacin package, but the zithromiacin—

Sharpless The Z packs?

Camp The Z pack. But in the case of a Z pack, the entire patient package insert is printed on the package because it's a much more expensive, elaborate package than this. We couldn't afford to do the Z pack. This is the Volkswagen version of a Z pack. But we knew that the same principle was needed here. And so, we fought with the FDA to get this packaging concept accepted. And I remember one late Friday afternoon shouting match with four FDA officials in which at one point they said, Are you accusing us of not representing the public health interest? And I said, "Yes, I am." (Sharpless laughs) And that was pretty close to the end of the conversation, and all weekend I was so depressed because I was afraid I had really blown it, but I had—this is not the way you treat the FDA. The FDA are used to people tiptoeing around them and saying "yes ma'am" and "yes sir." But on Monday morning at nine o' clock, I got a call from our project manager, who said, "We had a meeting after we spoke to you on Friday afternoon, and we've decided we'd like to work with you on your packaging concept."

Sharpless Wow.

Camp And so, they put together a team and we negotiated and back and forth with the language. And essentially what they did was to approve a very, very, very short, simple, brief summary. And this is officially our brief summary for use in consumer ads.

Sharpless It's on these sides and then there's an insert.

Camp Yeah. And then the package insert is actually both a physician and a patient package insert. It's written in plain English. No attorney was ever allowed to look at that insert.

Sharpless What a concept.

Camp It was not written for lawyers to keep their clients out of product liability suits. It was written to communicate with women and their health care providers. And most women with high school education can read that. It's about tenth grade reading level.

Sharpless That's excellent. Well, let's stop for a second and you take a few bites of salad here.

Camp Okay. (laughs)

end Interview 2