

**Oral History Interview of  
Marci Roberts**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson  
August 10, 2017  
Marathon, Texas**

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Marci Roberts as she discuss her late friend Mimi Litschauer. Marci goes on to describe how she met Mimi, Mimi's art, and their friendship with one another.

**Length of Interview:** 01:01:13

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Background information	05	00:00:00
Marci's Architecture background	16	00:09:19
Meeting Mimi	21	00:16:22
Mimi's fearlessness	29	00:24:07
Mimi's window washing business	32	00:30:43
Mimi's field sketches	36	00:36:17
Other descriptions of Mimi	42	00:43:21
Mimi going to Wisconsin; her health going downhill	48	00:51:34

### Keywords

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**Andy Wilkinson (AW):**

Okay, let's see, this is the tenth of august.

**Marci Roberts (MR):**

Yes.

AW:

Twenty seventeen. I'm going to set this a little closer to you.

MR:

Okay.

AW:

Andy Wilkinson with Marci Roberts. That's M-a-r-c-i.

MR:

That's right.

AW:

And we're at the Evan's Gallery, which is party the Marci Roberts Gallery.

MR:

Yes, this is actually my husband, James Evans is my husband.

AW:

Oh, oh, I didn't even— I didn't have that connection either. So in the Evan's Gallery here in Marathon on a really wonderful pleasant day. We'll be talking about a variety of things— Mimi Litschauer will be right up front, but right now could I get a— your date of birth and where you were born just for our—make sure—as we talk about which Roberts.

MR:

That's funny, they just did an interview on me with— for the [inaudible] [0:00:56.5] it's the most I've ever about myself.

AW:

Really? Is that out yet or is that—

MR:

Yes, it's on the stands right now, I believe.

AW:

Oh, well I'll get a copy of it.

MR:

So, I was telling them— I've never told anybody where I was born, no one's ever really— and that was the first time and there's a big article that came out. But I was born in 1960 on Fitzsimons Army Base.

AW:

Really?

MR:

In Aurora, Colorado.

AW:

I know right where it is. I used to live in Aurora.

MR:

It's not there anymore.

AW:

Well, I used to live and work in Lakewood.

MR:

Oh really? Yeah, yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

And then my mom brought me here when I was six months old to Texas.

AW:

And where did you come to Texas?

MR:

Dallas.

AW:

Dallas.

MR:

Um-hm.

AW:

What is your actual date of birth in 1960?

MR:

August fifth.

AW:

Well, happy birthday.

MR:

[Laughs] thank you.

AW:

My daughters is August fourth. [Pause] So did you grow up in Dallas, in the Dallas area?

MR:

I grew up—I was in Dallas until I was about seven years old. My mom remarried. My dad died when I was a year and a half years old. And—

AW:

Was he a military—?

MR:

He— no— not any longer.

AW:

But I mean that's why you were—

MR:

He died in a car wreck. He died—

AW:

But that's why you were in Fitzsimons?

MR:

Yes, yeah.



AW:

Got it.

MR:

Yeah. And she remarried and we moved to Virginia for a year or so and then moved to Tyler, Texas for a year or so. Then moved to Atlanta, or Doraville really, for a year or so. Then moved back to Tyler but outside of— out in the country. So that's when I— where I went to high school.

AW:

Did you go to college?

MR:

To North Texas State University.

AW:

Yeah. For music?

MR:

For architecture.

AW:

All right, great. And did you—

MR:

I'm a registered architect and interior designer.

AW:

Oh, very cool. Well, you were mentioning that you played piano, so North Texas would've been—

MR:

I know.

AW:

A great place for that.

MR:

You know what and— dad gum, why I never took piano lessons being at— I just put that together. I just— I had never taken a piano lesson and my dad—



AW:

I play the guitar and I've never taken a guitar lesson.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

I think it would just confuse me.

MR:

Yeah. My dad taught me how to play when I was in the third grade, and I use to accompany him. He played the trumpet, he was in the Army and played the trumpet, so I would accompany him.

AW:

Really. Yeah.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

That's fun.

MR:

So, I'm lacking some things there, but I just tinker around, I don't really—

AW:

As an ear player I've had to learn to— I don't read music except brutally slow, brutally slowly, but I had to learn when I started writing for some stage things, I had to write and I learned how to score it.

MR:

Right, right.

AW:

Which I'm still not very good at. So I've sort of pieced together my little bits of theory but it turns out that those of us who play by ear know a whole lot of theory, we just don't have the names for it.

MR:

Right.

AW:  
You know?

MR:  
Right.

AW:  
So, it's—don't ever poor mouth your tinkering around.

MR:  
Well, people who play by ear wish that they could read music, and people that read music wish they could play by ear. I read music.

AW:  
Yeah.

MR:  
I don't play by ear.

AW:  
Oh, you don't?

MR:  
No.

AW:  
Really?

MR:  
My mom plays by ear. Yeah, but not me. Then James will say, "I can't believe you can pick up any music and just kind of play it."

AW:  
[Door opens and closes] Oh well, I'm in amazement of that too because I am so clumsy at that.

MR:  
We're going to have clients come in and out.

AW:  
That's fine. Anytime you want to stop and visit with them just tell me and we'll pause it.

MR:  
Hello.

Client 1:  
Hello.

MR:  
How are y'all doing?

Client 1:  
Good.

MR:  
This is all James Evans work and these are his two books on the copy table.

Client 2:  
Okay, thank you.

MR:  
If you're not familiar with him, he's lived here almost thirty years in Marathon, and he just photographs Big Bend, so this is just some of his work up.

Client 2:  
Nice, thank you.

Client 1:  
Do you know if Maisie Lee is still—

MR:  
She's still alive.

Client 1:  
--With us?

MR:  
Yeah, she is.

Client 1:  
Is her work on display anywhere in town?

MR:

No, it's not.

Client 1:

Not currently.

MR:

No, no. Except at the doors of the church. [Laughs]

Client 1:

Doors of the one up the road here?

MR:

Several of them up here. She did the doors to the churches.

Client 1:

Okay. Does— is she— does she still have a studio?

MR:

No, she's almost a hundred years old.

Client 1:

Yeah.

MR:

Yeah, she's not doing her work anymore.

Client 1:

Okay.

MR:

How do you know Maisie?

Client 1:

We've got a couple of sculptures by her and—

MR:

Just talk about all the artist, huh? (Laughs)

AW:

Yeah, well it's— I was making notes about that, One of the— and it seems in some ways a little annoying. This happens at galleries and as a musician and there's always people wanting to talk to you about who they like as a musician, but every time I start to get pinged about that I remember— I don't know if you've read Jeanette Winterson's book, *Art Objects*? It can also be pronounced—it was intended to be pronounced both ways, art objects or objects but she's a novelist probably best known for her book *Sexing the Cherry*. But she talked about, as an adult and a successful writer, being stuck in— can you imagine being stuck in Rome, but she was stuck in Rome, and didn't have anything to do. So she went for the first time to an art gallery and— stayed for an extra like week and had this profound experience and realized that what she had to do was learn to have a dialog with the art, with the visual art. Which was something she had never done and so when I hear people in galleries or at concerts and they do this thing, and I always think that that's what they're doing. They're finding some common way to connect with things that are best served, usually, without words, like paintings and music. So, I don't know, I think that's— it's really kind of a good deal.

MR:

[Talking to customer] Hello again. [Talking to Andy] I'm sorry about this.

AW:

No. No, it's all right.

MR:

We didn't have one person all day yesterday. Not one.

AW:

Of course, I was somewhere else. Tell me how much is the *Crazy from the Heat* book?

MR:

They're both fifty five, and we've got signed copies but James would be happy to personalize it.

AW:

I want one of the *Crazy from the Heat*.

MR:

Okay.

AW:

That's the one that has a greater variety of landscapes and people?

MR:

Yes. Yes.

AW:

Okay, that's what I would like.

MR:

Yeah, this was his first book and it's half landscapes, all black and white, and half people— half portraits.

AW:

Oh, really?

MR:

Yeah and this—

AW:

So one is not— this is not duplicated in that.

MR:

No, not at all. I always say that this is kind of a black and white documentary on the people and the landscape.

AW:

I want one of these.

MR:

Okay. And this is more like just the artist doing— being creative in the place that he lives because there's everything. Abstracts, there's light works, nudes, just— his brain was just going off.

AW:

Well, I would like to have one of each before I leave today.

MR:

Okay, okay.

AW:

Now, also— just in terms of schedule, I don't have to be anywhere until— it was an hour from here to Stockton?

MR:

Yes.

AW:

Okay, I need to be in Stockton about midafternoon.

MR:

Okay.

AW:

So, we can take our time but I don't want to use up all your day either.

MR:

Sure, sure. Yeah.

AW:

So, and if you want to stop and get a bite you let me know. We can be very flexible, I don't—

MR:

Okay, good.

AW:

--It shouldn't take that long.

MR:

Okay, good.

AW:

Depending on how many people come in to the gallery.

MR:

Yeah, right, exactly.

AW:

But that's a good problem to have.

MR:

Yeah, yeah.



AW:

Well, we—you were talking about being an architect, a professional architect. You practiced your architecture and where?

MR:

Well, see after college I moved back to Tyler and then I moved to Connecticut, and worked in New York City for five years.

AW:

Oh that's cool.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

And for a firm?

MR:

Yes.

AW:

As an individual? Yeah.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

An architecture firm? An interior design firm?

MR:

They were a design firm. They had architects on staff, they were a design firm. They're not in business anymore but I was right there on Fifth Avenue across from Rockefeller Center. I would bring my ice—I learned how to ice stake and I would ice stake at lunch at Rockefeller Center. And then I'd go to St. Pat's [Patrick's] Cathedral to meditate. So, I kept myself calm through that whole thing. It was great.

AW:

I love the city. I use to work for a company that was headquartered at 42<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. And so I used to get to go up for our meetings and I had a few clients up there. It was when I was in a different life.

MR:

Yeah, that's what I feel.

AW:

Yeah, but I just— I really— I don't know if I have the energy to live there. So you're talking about meditating to keep your wits about you that makes sense, but when you were there for a week or ten days it was pretty cool.

MR:

Yeah. Oh, I love every—

AW:

Taking the energy.

MR:

--I loved every minute of it, but I do think what saved me was that I did live in Connecticut and like the place everybody goes to vacation. So, I lived right on the Sound [**Long Island Sound**] and—

AW:

So, how did you get into the city? Was there—

MR:

Metro North.

AW:

Okay.

MR:

Yeah, it's fabulous.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

So I just had an idealic life, really. I would walk a twelve minute walk by a five mile river, it's in the woods and I would go to this quaint little train station in the middle of the woods, and then it was exactly an hour to Grand Central Station, and I had a twelve minute walk to my office.

AW:  
Perfect.

MR:  
It was perfect.

AW:  
So, why did you leave?

MR:  
My family. My nephews had just been born and I just—

AW:  
Well, I was not here a few weeks ago because of the new grandbaby so I'm with you.

MR:  
And they change so quickly, I just wanted them to know me better.

AW:  
Yeah. So when you— so I'm assuming that when you left the city—

Client 2:  
Thank you so much.

MR:  
Thank y'all for coming in.

AW:  
-- That when you left the city you came back to Texas, is that right?

MR:  
I came back to Texas, yeah.

AW:  
And did you continue your practice in architecture?

MR:  
I did, I worked for several architectural firms in Austin and then I took a trip to France for a couple of weeks and realized those guys knew about life— knew how to live.

AW:

The French?

MR:

The French.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

And it was really— it was Paris. It was when I went out into the country and Loire Valley and I came back and gave my two weeks' notice and I said, "There's got to be another way."

AW:

Really? [Laughs]

MR:

This is too stressful.

AW:

Good for you. So, what was the other way? What did you do?

MR:

I went in— I did my own business. I was my own boss. But then that kind of threw me into— see I was senior designer so, I had someone else doing the construction documents—

AW:

Yeah, the staff. Yeah.

MR:

--Someone else did the project management, I mean I was really— now that I look back, it's like why did you leave that? But then I had to do all of that, and I ended up actually being a pretty good project manager. That really happened when I moved to Marathon is that I— all of those skills got fully developed out here.

AW:

So, you were— until you came out here you were in Austin doing your own firm?

MR:

Yes. Um-hm, um-hm.

AW:

Okay. And so when you talk about projects, were you— was it a mix of commercial and residential? Did you have—?

MR:

I was all commercial. There at the end I was doing some residences. Yeah. Yeah.

AW:

So, then you come out here and why Marathon? This is— a person has to discover this place usually.

MR:

Well, I met James at his book signing party in Austin and we became— we were just friends for like a year and then it just developed into something more, and I was coming out here more and more and visiting Big Bend and seeing him, and then I ended up moving here. I don't really know how that happened. It wasn't really— I say it wasn't like when you face a big decision, you have this column that says what are the pros and you have this column that says what are the cons? I don't remember doing that, I just— it was a very natural thing. It was like—James at that time, his gallery was across the railroad tracks and it was like a dirty little gallery. He never cleaned, it was all dusty, all the T-shirts that he did were in bags that were in the attic that were all dirty and I mean—

AW:

So, we're looking at the Marci Roberts version of the gallery here.

MR:

Yeah. So, when this space opened up, he— I remember him calling me in San Francisco saying, "Hey what do you think? We could do this." I said, "Yeah let's go for it." At first we were going to carry a lot of things but over the years it developed into this really just needs to be James' work.

AW:

So you—at first you were going to carry other artist's as well.

MR:

Yeah, yeah. And then once we got his photographs up on the wall— there's a picture of him—I don't think he could quite believe, like, that this was his gallery. You know, because he's really a wild man. He's just a little, you know, his favorite place to sleep is on top of his truck in the park. I mean he really is— wasn't used to it. I mean, he just— buildings or fine interior. This

was just not a part of him and so he's developed to get used to having a really nice gallery.  
[Laughs]

AW:

You civilized him somewhat. [Laughs]

MR:

I don't know if I've done that but he does like nice things, but he just never did really have the knack for making a cool space. Or keeping it. I should say keeping it. He's a mess. His gallery is a mess.

AW:

Well, you know, there's a— when you're doing work— I know the place where I work in writing is a complete mess

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

But it's like when I'm in there, do I want to spend my time writing or cleaning. and the answer's real easy. [Laughs]

MR:

Yeah. Right, right. Yeah.

AW:

So, I can appreciate that. Well, had you known—I'm assuming, and so correct me if I'm wrong, that you met Mimi after you moved out here.

MR:

Yes.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

I'll never forget the first time I met Mimi. James and I were at Alicia's which is a little place in Alpine.

AW:

One of my favorites.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

If you can find it open when it's not so crowded you can find a place to sit.

MR:

Yeah, and she was just a little smart ass. You know, she had really quick wit, and I really didn't think she liked me. At all. And so we kind of had that kind of relationship, right—

AW:

And Garland. Garland always said she liked the guys better than the girls.

MR:

Oh, yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. I don't know what that was, but— so over the years I learned to just snap right back at her. And then— I don't know, then something happen— you know, something happened. She started coming into the gallery and we'd talk and we just became really good friends, but not fully developed, that's the heart break of it all is I just felt like that she was kind of— it's real had to make close friends in a small town like this.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

It's really hard. I mean you can have lots of acquaintances and everyone knows you and everything but really when you're down and out, it's really hard to find those people. That's what Mimi was becoming and—

AW:

And why— what was causing her to become down and out?



MR:

Oh, I mean when— I would just make that as a general term.

AW:

Oh.

MR:

When you're— when someone's down and out, like when I'm down and out, it's really hard to find someone that you can turn to.

AW:

Yeah, got it. Got it. Yeah, but she was becoming that person.

MR:

She was becoming that person for me.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

And she was so intelligent, and just curious like me, and always getting information, and giving me information and— you know, it's just— yeah. She introduced me to Ted— the Ted Talks. Said, "You've never heard of Ted Talks?" I said, "No." Yeah, so stuff like that. She was just—

AW:

Did you— when you were first getting to know her, did you know anything about her work?

MR:

Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, in fact at that time we were— we started carrying some of Mimi's work. Her oil sketches are fabulous.

AW:

I know it, those are— I think I prefer—

MR:

I mean, really those are the gems.

AW:

Yeah, I prefer them to the—

MR:

I agree.

AW:

--The studio pieces that came from—

MR:

I agree.

AW:

Yeah and the— speaking of heart breaks, the heart break is that most of them are on two sides and you can't— how would you— you know, which side do you show.

MR:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

AW:

Yeah, they're extraordinary pieces, and so did you carry some of those?

MR:

Yes, we did.

AW:

Oh, very cool.

MR:

We ended up buying some as well and— in fact, I think I've got some of her sketches. [Gets up and moves to a different location]

AW:

Oh, I'd love to see it.

MR:

I think with all the oil sketches—I think that Spider made sure to photograph all of them before he sent them on to you, didn't he?

AW:

Yes, we did and we're— we'll be photographing them as well so that we can do a thumbnails for the web, you know, they won't be great quality but at least so people can—

MR:

These are some of her— just her sketches.

AW:

Oh, now those— we don't have anything like this.

MR:

You don't?

AW:

No. The closest we have— these look to be charcoal, is it?

MR:

Yeah, I think so.

AW:

Yeah. We do have some charcoal pieces that are in the journals, but we don't have anything as quite this nice. It's amaze—

MR:

Y'all are welcome to photograph these if you need to for the—

AW:

Yes, I think we would at some point.

MR:

Yeah. I also have a few oil sketches over there. In fact, I'll get the photograph and then the oil sketches. We can go over there too.

AW:

Sure.

MR:

I'm also renting the house that— the last house that Mimi lived in here.

AW:

Oh really?

MR:

Yeah. So we could go there if you wanted to see that.

AW:  
Yeah.

MR:  
But it doesn't—I mean, certainly doesn't have that look like Mimi.

AW:  
Yeah, then it was not that critical. Now, these are in your personal collection, right?

MR:  
Yes. Uh-huh.

AW:  
These are not things you're selling.

MR:  
No. No.

AW:  
Yeah, I don't blame you.

MR:  
Yeah.

AW:  
Now those are quite nice. [Pause]

MR:  
Yeah, she had a— did Garland or Spider tell you about the workshop that she had been working on that she wanted to do on drawing?

AW:  
No. No, tell me about that.

MR:  
Oh, I wanted to—I couldn't wait. I wanted to take it because she was saying, "It all starts with the drawing, and it all starts with the light and the shadows." That's something that she could look at and she would— like she was a great salesman, too, and she would tell you about the negative space and inform people. And she had it all laid out, she had like chairs in the front room, just chairs. They weren't even— they weren't even like in a straight row, I remember they

were just kind of haphazardly put around. But she laid all these sketches and ideas in a progression about the workshop.

AW:

The sketches in the chairs?

MR:

Yeah, in the chairs. And her notes and her outlines about how the workshop would progress, you know.

AW:

Do you know what happened to that— to the material?

MR:

I don't.

AW:

I'll ask Spider about that.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

Because all we— the written things we have are in the journals, other than correspondence and a lot of that is business correspondence.

MR:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah and I've wondered about that. About, like, who—did Mimi pack all that up or, you know is it— if I know Mimi, if she packed it up, it's organized in a box or something that says workshop on it.

AW:

Yeah, I'll find out because we're getting the—and we're— we've gotten some of the documents that are paintings or sketches, but some of that is still over at Garland's storage, so I'll look when I get back to Lubbock and see if I can find out about those, because I would really be interested in that. That's the things, as we talked a little earlier, that really knocked me out about it, other than, of course, just the brilliance of the work, was her discussions in her journals. And I'm assuming, but I think Spider and Garland both suggested this was the case, that these were journals she was writing when she was out.

MR:

Um-hm.

AW:

And they were like almost notes to self, talking about these same issues. About drawing and about blank space—

MR:

Yeah, yes. Yeah.

AW:

--And all of that. So I wonder if that found its way into the—

MR:

Oh, for sure. In that workshop.

AW:

Yeah and that would be nice to be able to show, you know, in the archive.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

Very cool.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

Very, very cool.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

Okay. Just don't let me get us too far off but one of the things that always struck me as also interesting but I appreciate it, is that she would go out alone on those long trips. My guess is that that was driven by the fact that when you're working you just like to be alone and not have to deal with people, but it's also to go out alone in to Big Bend and this area incurs some risk, you trip and fall and break something.

MR:

Right, yeah.

AW:

You know, a snake bite. There are all kinds of things that could happen.

MR:

Yeah, yeah.

AW:

Was she as fearless as it sounds to someone like me to do that sort of thing?

MR:

Yes. Yeah. Yeah, in the same way that James is fearless. I think that—and comparatively, I mean, she was young, too.

AW:

Yeah, she sure was.

MR:

And I think that maybe, you know, the surgery or if you're never faced with a huge injury or something then you never do—and I speak for myself because I was fearless, as well. I would go out by myself in Big Bend.

AW:

Really?

MR:

Oh, yeah. Camp on top of my truck—on the truck. I would—never thinking that anything would happen. It's just never in your mind, and I'm sure it's never in Mimi's mind. I mean, she would—she knew what she had to do to prepare herself, for water and things like that, first aid kit and I'm sure, but as far as—I bet it was never in her mind that she would be hurt.

AW:

Yeah. Well, it's admirable and you went out and camped out for the pleasure of it—?

MR:

Oh, yeah. I just—I was raised—when I finally got to the country in Tyler in the woods, I think Mimi and I had that—well, and James, too, is that we do like being by ourselves in nature. It is—we get a lot of solace and a lot of peace and strength from that, and I think Mimi was the



same way. So where ever I've been I've— even when I was Austin, I'd throw my mattress in the back of the truck and go out to a park somewhere and just sleep in nature. Or in— I remember in— when I was at North Texas State University, I had a little kitten, and there were some huge drug raid in our apartment complex, and I think there might have been a murder, I don't know. I don't know, but I packed up my truck and I headed North to Oklahoma and I literally drove my truck in the middle of the woods where no one was around, and I camped for three days with my kitty and hiked with my— I felt safer there than I felt in my apartment complex.

AW:

Well, that's probably true when it gets down to—

MR:

But, yeah I've always had that. But never in my mind was there a thought that that was dangerous. It felt— it's always felt safe to me. It was the safe place to be.

AW:

When you and Mimi developed a— or as you were developing this relationship, did she talk about that work in the same way that she was— her work in the same way that she was preparing this workshop idea? I mean, was that a topic of discussion with you?

MR:

Her work?

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

You know, she would never— she never really talked about her work specifically. There's only one time I can remember and it was— and it stands out in my mind because she has never asked my— she had never asked my opinion or for my help or my— you know, review or anything of her work. And she was doing a triptych, and she was kind of stuck and so we talked about her work then. We talked about, like, what needed to happen there, and I think that got her unstuck. But I think she was probably struggling mentally at that point, to paint.

AW:

This was after the surgery?

MR:

No, it was actually before the surgery.

AW:  
Really?

MR:  
Um-hm.

AW:  
Oh, that's interesting because the story— or the way I took the story from Spider and Garland, I haven't talked to him at length about it, but it was almost as if the surgery— the aftermath of the surgery was what was the problem with her painting, but not so necessarily.

MR:  
You know, when something like this happens, everybody goes back and tries to figure out exactly what happened. But I think that— this is just my observation, but I think something was happening before. I think that she was having a hard time handling it all, because before then, a couple years before then— and if you look at your sketches— if you look at the sketches and the dates you'll notice that there's no sketches dated like recently.

AW:  
Yeah— just for— to help me through, recently would mean like?

MR:  
Like two or three years before her surgery. I have found no oil sketches that were three years— in that three years before her surgery.

AW:  
So, do you think the— and again, making you be one of these people who tries to come back with the idea— that it was health related?

MR:  
I don't know. I do know that a couple years before that, everything was getting hard for Mimi. Mimi was developing her own website— have you gotten ahold of that website she was developing?

AW:  
I saw some of it right off the bat but I haven't seen it since.

MR:  
Okay. Because I know the guy that's got that website. I think Spider has that.

AW:

Yeah, I think he does.

MR:

It was a fantastic website. It was really stunning. I used to be able to go and link to it when I was really missing Mimi and I would— because it was really her words in there.

AW:

Yeah, yeah. Oh so that's interesting to know.

MR:

Oh, if you want to know Mimi, that website was— I read it so many times after her death. But she was really struggling with every minute detail, every single thing. It was almost like she was obsessed by it, and then she came up with this window washing business. Have you heard about that?

AW:

No, I haven't heard a word about that.

MR:

So, she decided that she was going to start washing windows, and it just came out of blue or it seemed to come out of the blue. But she would say, "It is so hard, I have to paint then I have to figure out what the framing is and how to matte it and then how to ship it," and it seemed like it was all— what used to be something that she could handle was becoming something that was overwhelming to her. Then she said that this window washing— she said, "What's great about it is I go in, I do it, it's done, I get the money and it's done within an hour," you know, the deal is done. She really liked that.

AW:

Yeah, but how could you even stay busy though in a small community?

MR:

You know, she—

AW:

Window washing it's—

MR:

Somehow she made it through. But so there was something happening. There was something

happening, and then I look back and I think, you know, Mimi has never asked me for direction on a painting, and that she asked me for help on that triptych that she was struggling with—

AW:

And that was about the same time?

MR:

Yeah, that was before— yeah, that was during the—and then it just start— I looked at the oil sketch because I— when we were going through the oil sketches, I kept looking at them and I think I wrote and email to Garland and Spider, and I said, “Guys do you realize that there’s no oil sketches, like she had stopped oil sketches for a while.”

AW:

Do you still have that email or I wonder if— you don’t have to do it now but if—

MR:

Okay.

AW:

If you would look, I would love to just have that so I can give it to—

MR:

Okay, yeah.

AW:

That’s a really interesting observation and—

MR:

Yeah, so—

AW:

And an important one.

MR:

And then after her surgery she was doing great and this was— I’m going to say it might have been November or December, I’m not sure, Mimi and I went swimming at Sul Ross at their pool.

AW:

Yeah, salt water pool?

MR:

Yeah and she was in a— I mean we were— we had so much fun and she was swimming. I mean this was like, I don't know, two or three months after her surgery, I think and that evil little grin she'd have. I always remember sitting there at the pool on the edge— we were sitting there talking in the pool and her saying, "Can you believe that I'm swimming after my surgery." She was just so delighted that she was— she loved to swim. She went swimming a lot. She was so happy that she was swimming. And so there was— I mean she was on the mend, she was— you know and— something happened after that. There was something happen— there was something— I feel there was something—something happened that was traumatic and that sent her in this other direction.

AW:

And something that happened here or happened after she moved because she was—

MR:

No, not after she moved. That was after she was in the pits. In the ditch.

AW:

So, something happened here.

MR:

Something happened to send her that way.

AW:

Was— and I haven't— again I haven't interview Garland or Spider in any depth about Mimi but I— so I'm not quite sure about the time frame of the relationship, particularly with Garland, when that stopped.

MR:

Uh-huh.

AW:

Was that before all this?

AW:

Oh, way before. Garland was way before. Yeah.

AW:

That's what I thought. Yeah. And she and Spider were always pals and not romantic.

MR:

That's right, that's right.

AW:

Yeah, okay. So, I thought that was the case but I wanted— I didn't want to—

MR:

Garland moved here with Mimi together, yeah. In fact, Mimi used to have her— this was her gallery as some point.

AW:

Oh, really?

MR:

Yeah. Um-hm. Yeah.

AW:

Gosh, I think— did Garland have work in here, too?

MR:

Yes. Yeah.

AW:

I think I saw that at one time.

MR:

Yeah, they— at first they had a little place over there at part of the Richie Brothers building.

AW:

I don't remember that but I—

MR:

I wasn't here during that time this is just what I'm told.

AW:

I do think I remember seeing some of Garland's work here in town and it would've had to been on this side of the track.

MR:

Yeah.



AW:

So, no clue as to what kind of trauma that would be or—?

MR:

I don't know. You know, I'm sure that Spider and Garland might not want to talk about this, but I really do have to remember that I'm being recording.

AW:

Yeah, do you want to pause a minute?

MR:

Yeah, let me pause.

AW:

Okay. Not a problem. [Pause in Recording] We're back, same day. Marci and Andy and looking at some digital images of field sketches of Mimi's, and these may be from the show that—the memorial you had showing her work or maybe these are just sketches you made. I mean copies of the sketches that you made.

MR:

This isn't from the show.

AW:

Okay.

MR:

I actually can't—I don't know what this is from. [Pause] God, where is that sketch, I love that sketch.

AW:

This is a night sketch we're looking at?

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

You know, I don't recall—we have such a pile of them, but I don't recall very many night sketches. Not like we don't have any but—



MR:

See, I'm not even sure— maybe this is— I'm not even sure what this is from. This is awful.

AW:

But it's Mimi's work.

MRL

It's Mimi's work but there's these things that are just taped—

AW:

Uh-huh.

MR:

Like—

AW:

Like they were from the journals or they were study thumbnails she was doing.

MR:

Like maybe I— before— maybe I had these and I just photographed them before I turned them over. Maybe they're from her— I'm not sure. I can't remember.

AW:

That looks like a journal page, is it?

MR:

Yeah, see this almost looks like part— I was going to say— oh my gosh did I document her sketch class, her drawing class because that's almost like this was on her chairs but I guess not, that's the only one that is there. See and that's—

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

I don't know. God, my memory's awful. See these are some of the things— these look so familiar to me. And what is that? That's like something else that I put on. I don't even have a scale as to how big these are. Well, see there's a paper clip. These are very— some of these were tiny, tiny, tiny.

AW:

Well, they struck me as being— because she had some— a few thumbnails that she would do in charcoal.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

And— well and I brought a hard drive, would it be possible to get copies of that and if you don't want us to have them we'll give them back to you.

MR:

Oh no, these pictures?

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

Oh for sure, yeah.

AW:

Let me fish that out. [Background noise] Well, that was good, it's a good thing hard drives aren't delicate like they used to be.

MR:

What's this? Mimi's slideshow. Oh, this is—

AW:

And maybe these—

MR:

Okay so this is the slideshow that was— that we had at her memorial. You have this. Do you have this?

AW:

I don't think so. No I don't.

MR:

That was her first husband.

AW:

All of this is—

MR:

And that's Sherri, that's her friend that she went to live with. Of course, they were really young then. That's Garland.

AW:

Uh-huh. No, I haven't seen any of these.

MR:

I love that photo

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

That's Spider's favorite photograph of her.

AW:

I may have seen that one of her with her **pushhard box** [?] [00:39:54].

MR:

Oh, so I photographed these for the slideshow. So—these must have been the sketches that she had in her house, and I photographed them all because we couldn't hang them and I— so that everyone could see the rest her work.

AW:

So, this would be the slide show that we've been looking at.

MR:

Yeah, this is— yeah, see these are the same— all the same sketches. So, that tells me I photographed those before the memorial. I wonder what I did with those photographs of the— James must have them on his hard drive. I'll make sure that Spider has those though because we can get that.

AW:

Yeah, I will. If you can— if we have time, if you can download that, then I'll compare it to what we have. We haven't gotten— Spider, I think, has copied everything but we haven't gotten

everything from Spider that he's copied, so— well digital files. So, I won't have a quick way to do it until—

MR:

That was always cute.

AW:

Yeah, Spider was up in Lubbock—

MR:

That's Spider's work right there.

AW:

Yeah, a marquetry piece?

MR:

Um-hm.

AW:

Um-hm. He was up for his high school reunion—

MR:

There's Spider.

AW:

There he is. But, as you might expect, didn't have time to—

MR:

This was the place, I think it was in North Carolina, she loved to go to sketch.

AW:

Yeah, this is great stuff. I haven't—

MR:

That's back at the beginning. I can— okay, I can put all of this on there.

AW:

Yeah, here. I'll let you—I want you to— I'm going to pause this while you're doing your computer work. [Pause in Recording] Back on. Just— and you said you included a letter that—

MR:

For the memorial service, Garland wrote a letter, and Sherri wrote a letter, and Spider wrote a letter, and I included all those.

AW:

Great.

MR:

[Inaudible 00:42:09] Okay.

AW:

Thank you so much.

MR:

Sure. [Inaudible 00:42:21] Oh, I should— well here's Spider's poem, do you want Spider's poem?

AW:

Sure. I'm sure I will get one from Spider but it never hurts to—to get it while one can.

MR:

I can email that to you, too.

AW:

Okay, that'd be fine. It's probably about as easy to do as to—

MR:

[Pause] Okay, there you go. Okay.

AW:

Well, thanks for making those copies and I do— before I leave here Fort Stockton, I would like to see the photographs.

MR:

Oh, yeah. Let's go over there.

AW:

Yeah, we— do you want to do that now?

MR:

Oh, unless you're— let get this through.

AW:

It doesn't matter.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

Let's think about what else we might want to talk about on tape and then we could go do that afterwards. You've said some things that were— that give us a pretty good idea of what she was like. That she was a bit of a wise ass, and she was pretty feisty. What other kinds of descriptions would you make of Mimi? And this can be about just her personality, it can be about the work or how you reacted to the work. Any of those kinds of things.

MR:

Well, Mimi was very observant. So, she'd be the person— like she's sitting and just watching and really seeing, she's really seeing, and that reflected in her work as well. I mean, they say that the biggest thing about drawing is actually seeing, and she certainly did that in her work but she did it in life too. So, she would just be sitting— I mean, I can just see her, she's sitting there and she's taking it all in. Without judgement, I mean, it was very interesting— that I didn't find her judgmental at all.

AW:

Really?

MR:

Unh-uh.

AW:

And can you expand on that a little bit. How did you— what kind of things showed that she was not being judgmental when she was observing?

MR:

Oh, I remember having this one conversation. There was someone in the bar who had so much money and can be really snotty and hard to relate to. And I— we were talking about that and how it was just like—I was, "Ergh," and Mimi just said— oh she just had fun with it. She was just like— she wasn't judgmental at all, and I was terribly at judgmental and she just said, "Well just have fun with it." This is just who she is and, you know, in that devilish little—she just

played with it. She just played with things. And she could just kind of see what was going on and then would observe, and then just come out with these terribly intelligent and thoughtful, very well put together observation about what it was that she was seeing. Whether that was, you know, a person or an action or something that had happened or whether it was a light, you know, what was going on in the mountains or—she just was very observant and really saw things I think.

AW:

Is that a thing that is— that comes from doing the work of drawing, or is it something that precedes the work of drawing?

MR:

Oh, that's a good question. I don't know.

AW:

I didn't know if there was a way to—

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

It seems to me like it may preceded in the fact that she's—

MR:

Yeah, that was just who she was.

AW:

Yeah, about everything else, but on the other hand drawing is a really good training for—

MR:

Yeah, that's true.

AW:

--Keeping your eyes open.

MR:

Yah, because you know, she was really good about calling me on stuff. Like I would be talking and she said— she'd look at me and she said, "Boy isn't that— didn't you just contradict yourself," and I'm thinking, You're right. So, she really heard, she was really listening.



AW:  
Yeah.

MR:  
Yeah.

AW:  
Did she and your husband, James, talk much about their art and—

MR:  
I don't think so.

AW:  
Really?

MR:  
I don't think so. We could ask him.

AW:  
I just— I was just curious, I'm sure you would know if that—

MR:  
It's funny that— I don't—except for that one time, I looked at her sketch— she showed me her sketch workshop, and then when she got my opinion on that triptych, I don't ever recall at any other time talking about her art.

AW:  
Really?

MR:  
Unh-uh.

AW:  
That's interesting because not very many artists are willing to keep quiet about their work, you know?

MR:  
Yeah.

AW:

So that's pretty unusual.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

What were the things she liked to talk about?

MR:

Oh my god, everything.

AW:

Everything.

MR:

Everything and that was what—

AW:

That was your topics— those were your topics of discussion— the everything.

MR:

The everything, you know, I mean if you—well, case in point, she loved Ted Talks and she turned me on to Ted Talks. Are you familiar with Ted Talks?

AW:

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

MR:

Well so that is like the mind that I related so much to because I'm the same way. I want— and she was terribly curious about everything as well as I am. So, that's what we would talk about, you know.

AW:

So, just— this is a sideline but are you familiar with the web magazine of essays called "Aeon," A-e-o-n?

MR:

No.

AW:

I'll send you a link, it's out of Australian, it's free. It's like a Ted Talk in words.

MRL

Oh, interesting.

AW:

There are essays on sciences and the arts but you will— it's one of my favorite things. I look at it every single day.

MR:

Oh, cool. Oh, great.

AW:

And there's not much that I will take my time to. I'll make a note to send you— send that to you.

MR:

You know, we also talked a lot about relationships, you know, because she was in a difficult relationship, and at that time James and I were having some difficulties. I mean—

AW:

This was her relationship with Mike that you're talking about?

MR:

Um-hm. Yeah.

AW:

Yeah. Well— and when—I mean, I've been married now forty-nine years in a week.

MR:

Wow. Wow.

AW:

So when is a relationship not some degree of difficulty? So, there's plenty to talk about.

MR:

Yeah. Yeah.

AW:

Yeah, so was it a thing that was helpful to the— I would think that it would be—

MR:

Oh yeah, we were very—

AW:

--Mutual benefit.

MR:

Oh, for sure. Yeah, we really did support each other on that. Yeah.

AW:

Interesting how we can be so independent in so many other areas of our lives and yet in that area it's hard being independent.

MR:

I know. I know. That was the thing we really did have a lot in common with is that we were both really strong, hard headed women, and independent. But yet those relationships that we've had really are our vulnerable side where we don't really know how to cope sometimes.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah, that's a great topic right— that'd make a good Ted Talk.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

That may be your Ted Talk.

MR:

Yeah, yeah.

AW:

And Marci that may be the— maybe the one you do. Well, lets— if you don't mind, I assume it's— we're walking distance from seeing—

MR:

Oh yeah, right across the tracks.

AW:

And can I leave this junk here?

MR:

For sure.

AW:

Are you going to lock up or—

MR:

Yeah, I'll lock up.

AW:

--I mean, I don't—I can hide it—I put it back in the car, and I'm going to stop this for the tape and we'll reconnect here in a minute. [Pause in Recording] This is Andy, back with Marci. Same day. And we were just trying to think of things that we needed to catch up on before we stopped the interview. You mentioned something about—

MR:

Well, so how Mimi got to Wisconsin, and you know, Mimi—I didn't realize really how far downhill she'd gone until I went and saw her and kind of—

AW:

In Wisconsin or here?

MR:

No, here. Here.

AW:

Here.

MR:

And I don't know [Phone chimes 00:51:58]. It's probably a couple of months or so—this is James.

AW:

Okay.

MR:

[Talking on phone] Hey, babe. Yeah. We'll be there in a few minutes. Huh? Okay. Okay. Okay, bye. [Talking to Andy] I guess we need to go over and get these signed because he's got to get some stuff done, but real quickly. Do you think we could walk and talk? Or is that—

AW:

Or we can— why don't we come right back here.

MR:

Come back, okay. Okay.

AW:

Yeah, and I'm just going to stop this right now and— [Pause in Recording]

AW:

And I'm trying to think of no carbs, what else would be no carbs? So you're looking for meat?

AW:

Well, I have to have some kind of protein. I've got a type two [diabetes].

MR:

You know what— you know who is really— oh you do?

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

Really?

AW:

And so I have to watch— I just have to be really careful about having—

MR:

You know, the Oasis down here, they could do— I've gone in there and do customs things.

AW:

Oh really?

MR:

If you just tell them— like I've— when I wasn't eating bread I would just have a burger and they'll put it in a lettuce.

AW:

Oh cool and that's just right here on the highway?

MR:

Yeah, yeah.

AW:

Okay.

MR:

Well, it's just in this next block.

AW:

Yeah, I'll just walk over. Okay.

MR:

Yeah, yeah.

AW:

Yeah, I'll do that before I head to— because in Stockton it'll be truck stops.

MR:

Yeah, I know. I know. They do have that—

AW:

They have good Mexican.

MR:

They sure do.

AW:

Yeah, but I've had a lot of really good Mexican the last two days.

MR:

Yeah, yeah.

AW:

I've— probably a bun-less burger would do. Okay, I'm sorry. We— you were talking about seeing Mimi before she went to Wisconsin.

MR:

Right before— I mean, it was really a fast decline for Mimi ,and Mike just couldn't do it anymore, he— and so he told me that, that, "I can't do it anymore," and so I kind of took over



and, I mean it was really— but to true to form, for Mimi, she knew something was wrong. And we would talk about it, like what was happening with her brain— in that—I would have to cook for her, it was very difficult to get her to eat. She was terribly thin, like anorexic and she said, “Marci it’s so simple for you to put together what you have to do, like you have to boil the water to cook this, to prepare it. I can’t— I can’t think of the process.” Well, she wouldn’t even say that, she would say, “I don’t even know the process, I can’t put together the process to get to a meal.”

AW:  
Yeah.

MR:  
And so we would talk about that and even laugh about it sometimes. What was it she said— someone had been so kind to pay for her to go get her hair done because Mimi’s always so fastidious about her hair and she couldn’t do her hair. So she had gray and, you know— Mimi doesn’t like the aging process at all I don’t think. So, we went and had her hair done and— oh, what was it we were talking— I remember we were talking in the car and it was something that she couldn’t handle, and we looked at each other and I said something smartass and we just laughed. We were laughing about the fact that she was like she was losing her mind. But she was still being able to observe it.

AW:  
Yeah, so that part of her was still—

MR:  
Still in that state she was being able to observe herself. And it really did get to critical— I knew— I did not have the tools to deal— to take care of her because it was beyond my scope and I was all consumed with it. I was— so I knew I had to get her to Wisconsin and Sherri said, she needed to be with someone that didn’t work.

AW:  
And Sherri is lifelong friend?

MR:  
Lifelong friend.

AW:  
From childhood. And—

MR:

Mimi was raised in Wisconsin.

AW:

Right.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

And so her returning to Wisconsin was more geared toward Sherri than her mother.

MR:

Oh, absolutely.

AW:

Yeah. That's—

MR:

Yeah, her— yeah. Sherri and Glen, both who—

AW:

Glen?

MR:

Her husband.

AW:

Sherri's husband?

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

Got it.

MR:

Yeah and so she lived with them, and Sherri was who kind of got her back, you know. Mimi started eating, and then she started working with them and she just started coming back up there. But Sherri and Glen had— they're retired and they could dedicate all of that time to Mimi.

AW:

Yeah. So she did come back because when you were talking about sitting on the side of the pool in Alpine, was after she had had her surgery.

MR:

Yes.

AW:

And she'd come back from Wisconsin.

MR:

No, no, no.

AW:

No. Oh so going to Wisconsin was—

MR:

That was the last—

AW:

That was the last thing, it was after the surgery— going to Wisconsin.

MR:

Way after the surgery.

AW:

Way—okay.

MR:

Yeah.

AW:

I'm getting this all confused.

MR:

Yeah, see, Mimi—

AW:

When you say way after, you mean a year, two years?

MR:

Yeah, a year.

AW:

A year.

MR:

Yeah, because— see, going by that— see Mimi's surgery was in November, I think it said.

AW:

Yeah. Well, you sent that to me right?

MR:

No, I need to ask Spider.

AW:

Oh, you're going to ask Spider, okay. That's all right.

MR:

And then a couple months later we were in the pool swimming, and then she got back together with Mike, January and then she took a dive in April or May.

AW:

And that's when she went back to—

MR:

And then I took over—

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

For a month or maybe two months and then we got her to Wisconsin.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

Yeah. Actually the Marathon Foundation was so wonderful about this, I'm the executive director of that and two of those board members which is Bruce Blakemore and Marshall Miller who are huge patrons of Mimi.

AW:

Yeah.

MR:

Really came in—I mean with their private plane and picked Mimi up.

AW:

Wow.

MR:

Yeah. And I flew with her to get her to Wisconsin because she was—it was—the airports were—I mean it was just frightening to try to—we didn't even know if we could get her to go because she's so freaking hard headed that I had Garland come down without Mimi knowing. Garland came down the night before we were supposed to—because I said, "Garland I don't know if I can get her in the car. I don't know." And Garland came down and it was a smooth, smooth process because of Garland. Yeah.

AW:

Is Garland in touch with Sherri?

MR:

We all communicate by e-mail periodically. Yeah, on Mimi's birthday too.

AW:

Okay, well at some point it might be nice to visit with Sherri. For me to visit with Sherri if she'd be willing.

MRL:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I'm sure.

AW:

Okay.

MR:

Oh, yeah, Sherri loves to talk about Mimi.

AW:

Okay, well I'll—

MR:

They were best friends for forever.

AW:

Well I'll connect with you on that and find out how to do it well. All right. I don't—I mean I have a bazillion questions but I—

MR:

I will send an email to Bruce and Marshall—

AW:

Please.

MR:

--And I'll copy you on it so you have their email and I'll just introduce you to say, I thought that you could— they could help shed some light on Mimi's work since they were such huge clients.

AW:

Yeah, I would really love to talk to them as patrons. I'm already planning to be back down in Alpine in October, at least when we can maybe— the week after that come back to do some of those interviews. So I would have time to come back.

MR:

Yeah. I just briefly saw Carol. Carol was a patron of Mimi's as well.

AW:

Carol— and Carol— who is Carol?

MR:

Carol is the manager of the Gage Hotel.

AW:

Oh.

MR:

I don't know if she's out here so I could introduce you. [MR gets up and walks to the door, she

opens the door to the outside and it closes shut. Voices can be heard talking outside. AW flips through papers] [Pause in Recording]

AW:

I'm just going to say that we're stopping until the next time, and thank you so much for taking time today, Marci.

MR:

No, I was so happy to do it.

*[End of Recording]*



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