

**Judy versus Capitalism
Script
Mike Hoolboom**

1. Family

TV announcer: The name Judy Rebick is synonymous with feminism in Canada. She's the former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She was also the woman who blocked a man from stabbing Dr. Henry Morgentaler in front of an abortion clinic in Toronto in 1983. But the answer to the question who is Judy Rebick is complicated. Her latest book is called *Heroes in My Head*, a memoir.

Thank you so much for coming in. I'm such a huge fan of yours, I'll get that out of the way right away, my gushing. But I was saying to you off camera, so I'm reading a book a memoir about childhood sex abuse, multiple personality disorder, and then I find myself laughing and feeling sort of guilty about laughing. But it's a wonderful humour that you carry through the whole thing. You call them "heroes in my head" because you say that the multiple personalities are a way for a child to survive horrible trauma.

Judy: That's right. Multiple personalities are an extreme form of dissociation.

Judy vo: My father.

His parents came to Canada as refugees when he was four. There was a lot of anti-semitism in Toronto and he says his brother and him fought their way to school every day. I think they probably got the best of it, they were good fighters.

He was recruited for the farm team of the Brooklyn Dodgers but he turned it down because it didn't pay enough which really tells you how times have changed. He played baseball every Sunday and he would take my older brother and I, Lenny and I, to watch him play.

Sometimes he would get into a fight. He was a slugger, if he could hit the ball he'd slug it out of the field and then he'd run around the bases. Sometimes he thought somebody tripped him, and then he would get into a fight with that guy. I've never seen anybody get into a fight on the baseball diamond except my father. The referee would have to break it up and we'd get scared because we thought he'd get hurt. Even when he was in his 50s in Toronto, he played ball with the Toronto Argonauts which is a professional football team. He got into a fight with Cookie Gilchrist, a 25-year old running back. But Cookie wouldn't fight him.

The thing was he got really angry at home but he never hit us because his father beat him. He pledged that he would never hit his children or his wife and he only hit Leonard once.

When I was 16 I was popular. I was pretty, I was smart so the most popular boy at camp asked me out for new year's eve. I was thrilled. His name was Marty Silverstein, it's funny I still remember. When he came my father said to him, "Aren't you going to help her on with her boots?" and he pushed him on his shoulders onto his knees. It was really bad and upsetting and he was humiliated. I was furious and never went out on another date after that.

As long as I lived in my parent's house, between the ages of 16 and 21, I never went out on a date after that.

2. Fat

Judy live speech:

If you're happy and you know it clap you hands.

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it, if you're happy and you know it clap you hands.

If you're happy and you know it stamp your feet.

If you're happy and you know it stamp your feet.

If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it, if you're happy and you know stamp your feet.

If you're happy and you know it say "Radical is practical."

If you're happy and you know it say "Radical is practical."

If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it, if you're happy and you know it say "Radical is practical."

Judy vo: When I was 16 I suffered what I now believe was a clinical depression. After that I started to gain a lot of weight and I got fat.

I think I gained weight to protect myself from unwanted advances.

I feel safer when I feel fat. Most of my weight is around my hips and I think the reason is that there was a song I loved when I was a kid and one of the verses was: "She's got a pair of hips, just like two battleships, oh boy that's where my money goes." I have a pair of hips just like two battleships, only nobody gives me money for it. I gained the weight in my teens, I gained about 40 pounds between 14 and 18, then I fell in love when I was 21 with an older man who made me feel safe for a while and all the weight just dropped off I didn't even try. And also I moved out of my father's house.

WACHIA was a tent city for transient youth that I was involved with in my 20s. We occupied the University of Toronto, it was a big news story. I was thin then, I was watching myself on TV and thought Omigod, I look so fragile. Of course this was ridiculous because when I was thin I was running, I was much stronger than I was when I was fat, but I was so fragile, I just have to get bigger, I really thought that.

Having weight on your body is a way of feeling protected.

I gained weight on purpose. I actually set out to gain weight. It sounds so crazy but I did.

It was many years before I realized it was an emotional problem I had.

3. Feminism

Changing power at a state level is related to changing our relations with each other. Until we learn how to not dominate in the process of change, we learn that in the process of change, we're not able to change the nature of society. People who haven't struggled

with their own privilege, their own ability to dominate, when they get into power, we've seen it a million times, they carry out power the same way as the others.

Judy vo: Violence against women was so hidden, nobody talked about it.

There's a lot of shame around violence against women. In my own family my grandfather beat my grandmother on my father's side, but I never heard that from my father. I heard it from his younger brother after he died. I was like a big feminist you know, but my father never told me. There was so much shame surrounding it that nobody talked about it. And then in terms of other forms of violence, a lot of what we now consider sexual assault was not considered sexual assault then, just bad sex. If you went out with someone and they pushed you hard to have sex with them you felt like shit after but you didn't think of it as a sexual assault. Sexual harassment was just part of the territory. If you worked at a job and there were men there you got sexually harassed. You just lived with that.

We became aware of male violence when women's centres started to open. There were no services specifically for women so women's groups started to set up these women's centres or emergency call lines. Almost everybody who called was being beaten.

Consciousness raising groups were basically small groups of women, usually friends, or people who worked together on campus on feminist issues, would meet around somebody's kitchen table or somebody's living room, and talk about their lives. Talk about what was upsetting them. The joke I always tell is you would say what an asshole your boyfriend was and how badly he treated you and then you find out that everybody's boyfriend was an asshole. Then they realized oh it's not just my problem, it's a social problem. Relationships are a problem, love relationships, romantic relationships, and that was true of everything so by talking about our own experiences we developed ideas about what needed to change.

What was new was the idea that you could develop theory from lived experience.

The other thing was that we didn't know anything about our bodies. The only books about sex were written by men.

We lived in a completely male-defined, male dominated world and there was very little expression of women.

In the CBC archive there's a news report about a consciousness raising group where women are taking a mirror to look at their vagina because they didn't even know what a woman's vagina looked like. What were the parts of it. There was this discovery of who are we.

The personal is political is the other innovation of the women's movement. Most of women's oppression and violence were personal, they were inside the family, they were what would be considered the private world. And one of the contributions of feminism was to make a lot of the violence going on in the family public. Violence against women and violence against children.

4. Abortion

4. 25th anniversary of Pro Choice decision

Judy speech: I'm going to reminisce. I'm doing that all the time now. I first got involved in the Pro Choice struggle at McGill when abortion was completely illegal and a friend of mine asked me if I knew a doctor.

Judy vo: I was at McGill and a friend of mine called and said did I know a doctor who performed abortions. I didn't, but I made it my business to find out. I found a doctor and became part of an underground referral service.

When I quit the Trotskyist movement the next day there was a meeting to form the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and I went. I got involved because it was what was happening.

Peter Cole, who became a doctor, and who later became a big public health figure, he nominated me for the organizing committee just because I was articulate. And I have a big mouth, I always had a big mouth. I was just coming out of a clinical depression and dealing with a lot of stuff in my life, but I just knew I had to be active or I wouldn't be happy so I got involved. It was a whirlwind right from the beginning. The first time I met Morgentaler was at the first rally we held at OISE. It was packed, people were lined up around the block because we'd gotten some publicity. He was the speaker and I was chairing the meeting. The first thing that shocked me was that when I walked in he gave me a big hug. In those days people didn't really hug each other so much and I really didn't like to be touched, unless it was part of sex. I just did not like to be touched, I had walls up. I was really quite surprised. But even more, at the end of the meeting, he says to me, "Judy, I like your energy, would you like to be the spokesperson for the clinic?" He was a very heart-driven person so he just had this feeling that I would be the right person. He was living in Montreal so he needed someone here.

OCAC at that time was quite a broad coalition, Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, and in that coalition there were radical feminists, and in those days radical feminists meant very anti-male. So there's no way they wanted a male doctor, especially not Dr. Morgentaler. But we couldn't get a woman doctor to do it because it was illegal, they might go to jail.

They wanted a women's clinic run by women, run by us. Caroline Egan and I thought it was going to be enough to organize a movement to win this, to be responsible for a medical clinic too it made no sense. It made much more sense for him to run the clinic and for us to run the movement.

The clinic opened at 10am but we weren't going to have patients the first day. It was an opening for the media. I would open the door, do that for the cameras. He was going to come at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It was crazy, I must have done it twenty times. Climb up the steps, open the door. Climb down. Can you do it again Judy?

We had asked people to come to welcome Dr. Morgentaler as a picket. So when Dr. Morgentaler arrived by taxi from the airport there were about 50 pro choice people there and about 100 media. My job, along with this woman Cheryl, who was a psychiatric nurse and knew how to handle violence if it came, we escorted him across the street. So we're walking across the street, and all of a sudden I see this guy and he just grabs Dr. Morgentaler, and I pull his arm off and Cheryl ushers Morgentaler into the clinic. I push the guy and say "Get the hell out of here." He says "Get out of my way." And then I see he's got garden shears and he goes like this, to stab me.

He had the garden shears, he was going to stab Henry. But my mind didn't see that. I stepped right in front of the garden shears but I was really not aware of that until I saw the clips later on the news.

Political assassinations don't happen in Canada. Political violence, it was huge news. So I became the girl from the clinic. People recognized me, nobody knew my name, but people gave me money, on the subway, for Morgentaler. The one I remember most was I was driving along Bloor Street on my bike, because I rode my bike everywhere in those days, and this big truck passed, "Hey, you're the girl from the clinic. Here, give Dr. Morgentaler some money." It was incredible.

I never went out to eat with Dr. Morgentaler where the staff didn't pay for the meal. The restaurant staff. It was amazing, I'd never experienced anything like it. He was really a popular hero. I think it was partly because it was the little guy up against the system. It was also because he was so heartfelt. He was always emotional, always compassionate, always talking about why he was doing what he was doing.

I think people really connected to that. It was very rare in those days especially for a man but for anyone really to be publically open about your feelings.

I had death threats pretty regularly.

And then one day, I guess it was in the heat of the struggle, this guy came up to me, he was a pretty big guy. He started yelling at me about killing babies. And then he put his hands on my throat and started to push me. I think he wanted to push me into the train. The thing was that I had some concerns, especially crossing the picket line, about violence so I took a Tai Chi course. One of the great things about Tai Chi is that they teach you to take a stance so that nobody can push you. You take the stance and the Tai Chi instructor was a big guy who would try to push you with all his might and you get to the point where he can't move you. So I took my stance and the guy couldn't do it and I managed to get away from him. The train came and I went into the train. The funny thing is that I never told anyone that happened at the time.

I don't know, it would make it too real? I just went on the train and that was it, I didn't tell the police, I didn't tell other people, I didn't tell anybody. But the memory came back when I was writing 10,000 Roses. And even now it feels... the fear from that.

If a singer spoke out on choice who hadn't spoken out before that person would get shit in an envelope. In the mail. They were trying to intimidate people to stop talking.

I think when I was getting a lot of threats I said to Henry, who of course was getting way more threats than I did, and he never seemed to be worried about it. At the beginning he didn't have a bodyguard or anything. He didn't have a bodyguard until they started shooting people up here. I said, "How do you deal with it?" He said, "Well, you can't be intimidated by it." You used to say in French ne larche pas. You never give up. You can't let them intimidate you, how can you do that? He said I just don't think about it, so that's the way I handled it too.

Probably the turning point in the struggle was when the Catholic Church called out the troops. This one week they wanted to shut down the clinic. They called their schools and

parishioners and they had the priests reading an encyclical to come and close down the clinic. We hadn't attacked the church, but we had discussed how we would attack the church once it became obvious that they were a major force in this which it wasn't for a long time.

I get a call from Michael Valpy at CHS and he read me the encyclical, so I said what we had already planned to say, anybody who doesn't want to have an abortion should have the choice not to have the abortion. We're talking about freedom of choice. But the Catholic Church gets public money. It does not have the right to use that money to force the government to keep abortion illegal, which is their religious belief, right? They don't have the right to impose their religious beliefs on the rest of us.

CORAL was the other group involved in the pro-choice movement. They were older, more of a lobby group. They had been waging the fight all along, since the new law came in, to repeal the abortion law. Norma Scarborough who was the spokesperson for CORAL, and who became a friend, she called me and they were very upset that we were calling a counter-demonstration. The Catholic Church had called demonstrations Monday to Thursday, we called a counter-demonstration on Friday. They said we can't out-organize them, it will make us look weak, and we felt well that might be true but we can't not fight back. We have to fight back. Our own people have to stand up against the Catholic Church. Whether we out-organize them or not we have to do it.

So we called the demonstration for the Friday. They were there every day with their rosary beads and all that crap and people got really pissed off. Because what we were saying over and over was that they had the right to their religious belief. Nobody's trying to make them do something they don't want to do. But they can't impose their religion on us.

People got really angry. A lot of people who never had anything to do with the pro choice issue didn't want the Catholic Church running the province. Every day the media is reporting, they're down in front of the clinic, they're reporting about the demonstrations there every day and at the end they say, "There's going to be a counter-demonstration on Friday at such and such a time." We had the media building our demonstration. We had a demonstration I think it was about 15,000 people. It was huge. In those days you could stand on the steps of Queen's Park - they didn't have all those barricades - and watching people coming out of the subways. It was amazing. I think that was the turning point. An anti-choice person wrote a book and said they got demoralized because they really believed they were the majority and after that they realized they weren't the majority anymore. And we realized we were.

5. Others

Judy Rebick street speech:

OK as I was saying I've been marching on these streets for 40 years. When the media says to me "What's the good of protest?" I'll tell you what's the good. We ended the war in Vietnam. We legalized abortion in this country. We freed Indigenous comrades from jail. We won the right to vote for women. We won the right to organize the unions that negotiate for these beliefs. And every one of those battles started with the people who fought being criminalized, marginalized and jailed. We fought for and we won the right to speak. The right to assemble. The right to protest. And Stephen Harper is not going to shut us the fuck up. We may in this huge crowd here disagree with how to exercise our

freedom of speech but we'll all fight for the right to protect it. Chant: We Won't. We Won't. Shut the fuck up.

Judy vo: All my life I had very serious health problems. Mental and physical health. For example I had my gall bladder removed at 18.

I suffered from depression off and on for most of my life but I didn't call it that. I called it burn out.

Then in 1980 I suffered a very severe clinical depression. I couldn't do anything. I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep, I couldn't get out of bed.

I started to be flooded with memories of me being abused as a child. Just flooded with them.

I couldn't see the face of the person who was doing it. I knew it was a man and I was a little girl (but I couldn't see the face.)

There was a woman who worked at OCAC, Marsha Weiner her name was, and I knew she was working with survivors of sexual abuse so I called her.

I told her about the memories so she hypnotized me.

The first thing was that I was very easily hypnotized. That was a surprise to me because I think of myself as very controlled. She asked me to think of the memories and watch them on a TV, and then get it into focus. When I did that I saw that it was my father.

It took a while for me to accept it.

After a few sessions a voice emerged, and he called himself Simon.

A voice came out of my mouth and it wasn't my voice! She recognized right away what it was. He said "My name is Simon." It was no big deal to her. She said, "Hi Simon."

Simon is actually a lot like my brother Alvin. Very calm, rational, caring. Very concerned about everybody, compassionate. He's what they call the guardian personality.

He said to Marsha he thought it was time to talk to her. He talked about "the others" as well. That's when it started to get really weird, you know?

He said the others aren't sure about you but I think you're trying to help Judy. And she said "There are others?" And he said "Yes. They're still scared."

They all had very different personalities, different ages, different genders and there was one that I noted in my journal that wasn't Jewish.

She explained to me that some people who are abused at an early age develop what at that time they called multiple personality syndrome, now they call it dissociative identity disorder. Over the next two months more of them started to come out.

They were all children of different ages. Simon would have been 12 or 13, probably the oldest. All but one were children.

People talk about this experience of being above yourself or beside yourself. It wasn't like that, it was like I was in a corner of my consciousness. I could hear what they were saying but I couldn't see what they looked like. It was just a voice.

Sophie was one of the alters. She asked if she could meet my friend Robert, if she could sit down and talk to him. The big reason for this is so she could ask: why won't you be Judy's boyfriend? She wanted him to be my boyfriend. I guess she figured if he was my boyfriend she'd see him more.

I asked Robert: "What was it like?" He said it was like you introduced me to a friend of yours and then left the room.

I said how could that be, it's my body. He said I know but it wasn't you. There's somehow in which my face looked different, my body language was different, and my voice was totally different.

I knew it was coming out of me, I guess that's the difference between being a multiple personality or being psychotic. I never thought it was somebody else. I always knew it was me, it was coming from me. They were fragmented parts of my personality.

What it means when an alter comes out is that they speak in a different voice than I do and they would say different things. I'll give you an example. The first time they came out in front of my friends Sue and Gord we were watching TV and someone on TV said, "Everybody likes me," and then I said, or a voice said from me, "I wish someone liked me." And they said "Was that an alter?" I said I don't know. It didn't sound like you. They would speak from my mouth but they didn't sound like me.

One of the ways I had of talking with them was I would write in a journal and they would write back. I'd say who's there? When I felt one of them was there when I was home I would say: who is there? And then they would write back. I still have the writing, and what's amazing is that their writing is so different, one from the other and from my writing.

I was in love relations, like my relationship with Ken. I thought I loved him. I lived with him. But as I understand what love feels like now, because I don't think I ever knew what it felt like until after I went through all this, I don't think I ever felt love for him. I think we were really hot for each other, and we lived together for almost a year, but I don't think I was capable of feeling love. So I never had a partner relationship that lasted.

A child of five who is being abused by the person who is supposed to take care of them, can't survive that. The only power I had was my imagination. I had imaginary friends who protected me from my father. And they experienced the abuse.

It's a tremendously creative thing that only a child could do.

6. Endnotes

**Running the largest women's org in the country
(NAC)**

Toronto Rally for Palestine August 10, 2014

Judy speech: I'm Jewish, I was raised a Jew. I never got a hand for that before. My understanding of "never again" is "never again" for anyone. I consider it a responsibility as a Jew to stand against this slaughter because when the Nazis slaughtered the Jews no one stood with them except for communists. No one stood for them. This country turned away a boatload of refugees. We can't do it again. That's what we can't do again. Whenever a government slaughters civilians we have to raise our voices, we have to raise our voices against Israel who is committing one of the worst massacres we've seen because our government is supporting them. We have a special responsibility. I'm here with you to say never again, stop the slaughter in Gaza, free free Palestine.

Judy vo: Neoliberalism comes as a reaction to the successes that the working class achieved after World War Two. It was a form of capitalism much closer to the capitalism that Marx saw in 1848 what they called then "liberalism." No rules, no regulation. They had child labour, slave labour.

Even more individualism, even more turning turning human relations into cash transactions.

Neo-liberalism starts in the 70s with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Neoliberalism came later to Canada. It came in the form of free trade with the United States.

But really what it was, was a turn to the right.

In OCAC, the abortion coalition, we always thought of NAC as a very mainstream women's group.

So I couldn't believe they wanted me to be president of NAC because I was like a real radical you know, in the streets radical. But they knew they needed a fighter, they were smart. They knew this right wing turn was coming and this government was no friend of the women's movement and they needed someone who could fight them.

Marsha was against it, she didn't think I should do it. Alvin, my younger brother who I was closest to at this point, he was against it. Simon was against it.

So when I was approached by Norma Scarborough to run to be president of NAC I thought that that would be a good idea. Because the feeling of abuse, when you start to remember it... For a long time I didn't feel anything, and then when I started to have feelings it was a feeling of total powerlessness. I was totally powerless at the time, right? I would experience that feeling and it was horrible, it was so horrible to feel that way. I just couldn't stand to feel that way. I thought that if I'm the president of the largest women's group in the country I'll feel powerful and then I won't feel powerless, or I can handle feeling powerless in my therapy if I feel powerful in my life.

Even if you're a victim, even if you know rationally, that it wasn't your fault, you feel shame because you're not allowed to talk about it. In a way, it's my most revolutionary act.

