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Joy, Drew

Andrew Volkers

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We are here the Southern Maine Workers Center on Friday December 1, if you wouldn't mind,
give your name and spell it out.. My name is Drew Joy D-R-E-W J-O-Y

And I am Andrew Volkers A-N-D-R-E-W V-O-L-K-E-R-S

Andrew: So can you describe your childhood a bit (both laugh)

Drew Joy: We're gonna go right to that? (both laugh)

what do you want to know about it?

Andrew: Just like, any fond memories?

Drew Joy: So, I grew up in Gorham, which is not far from Portland, and yeah... I wasn't thinking
about my childhood, I was thinking about this interview

Andrew: Or I guess how like, was there a path from your childhood to your activism?

Drew Joy: Cool, um yeah, I think so in a lot of ways. I grew up in a family that encouraged
asking a lot of questions and reading a lot and paying attention to the world around me and i
think that, that those things really helped prepare me for um, being a young queer person, for
thinking about how that connected to larger issues in the world, um, so for me, my path a lot
came from coming out as queer when I was 14 and in high school at Gorham High School and

um sort of discovering punk rock around the same time and so having sort of having a political awakening that was about culture and also about queerness and like a place to put sort of the anger I felt around not fitting in a way that felt collectivized instead of just individual.

Andrew: Explain that punk rock, what was the mood like at that time period?

Drew Joy: So I came into punk particularly in like the mid and late 90s, and I think what was... So like the politics underneath that was generally about anarchism, anti-authoritarianism, anti-capitalism, that really resonated with me, but also at that time there was riotgrrrl and queercore and so these punk movements that were breaking new ground for women and feminism and talking about those issues and also around queerness. Those things all together, really sort of gave a musical education around a set of politics. Particularly influential to me was that there was a lot in punk at that time, beginning to be a lot of conversation around race and racism and white privilege. So there was sort of like this big picture of like, I'm queer, I feel like the world that i live in is really messed up and like here is a whole big picture about how those pieces fit together um, that was just really helpful for me when i was in high school and kind of figuring out what to do with... Like being queer, being genderqueer in a way that there wasn't like a lot word around at that time, so I think... Punk really provided a framework for me where I could put the ways that I was feeling and also a community of people, there was a big punk scene in Kennebunk at that time and I was real close with some folks in that scene so I was like going to shows and building friendships and community around that so I think the punk and political community have really important to me ever since.

Andrew: Was there like one moment that you remember in that Kennebec [sic] punk scene that was your favorite moment or a favorite story?

Drew Joy: So two things come to mind which are like a little more on the trouble maker side of punk rock. A bunch of my friends from Kennebunk, drove to Gorham one day, to like break me out of highschool one day, and arrived with like neon colored squirt guns and were like running through the hallways at my highschool and like came by the classroom and I was like "hey!!!", and we left together and then had to figure out, they got all their squirt guns confiscated, and we had to figure how to get back into the office and get them out. Which is really how I lived most my highschool lives but it was a pretty fond memory of some ill-advised teenage solidarity, yeah. There was like a level of disruption that we could have that was useful for me at the time and mostly not traumatic, most of us were straightedge, but we found ways to break the monotony of the world that we were living in.

Andrew: So what was your first activism struggle, or what was that beginning like?

Drew Joy: You know I don't remember the first thing, I remember talking stuff when I was a little kid and having sort of this peace orientation and this environmentalist stuff and just kind of like dabbling in what would be a better world, I think in high school, and punk gave it a form it could fit, and also like being queer, so I wrote a zine throughout high school and there was you know like zine culture, it was really part of the punk scene at that time, especially the riotgrrrl and queercore scenes, and a way to connect nationally, but I wrote one for my high school it was about sort of what was going on in our high school and what was messed up and how education

was shitty and also about anarchism and anti-racism and also, at that time there was one of the early gay... it was like an anti-gay ballot measure that I don't remember the details of um so there was this 'Maine Won't Discriminate' thing there was you know... it wasn't about marriage, it was about discrimination stuff it earlier than that. And like, writing about that in the zine but also like starting talking to other students at school about it and doing some canvassing around that and with part of starting the gay straight alliance at my high school. So, some of those early memories of like actual doing stuff particularly, the outlet was around my queer identity at that time.

Andrew: Was it comforting, in finding a home, like struggling with the political scene and also coming into your queer identity, was that affirming for you?

Drew Joy: Yeah, I think, um, there was, so there was a strong community at my high school, I was one of the first people to come out, and then there was, probably like five to seven, maybe around ten by time I graduated, of students who were out. Which I know at this point is history, is like, a tiny amount, haha, but it was a big deal in 1994-98 and um, there was a good community in my high school and we had, we actually had a couple of out teachers and like really supportive teachers, which was like, super helpful in terms of my high school remaining a safe place for me and I'm really grateful for that, it was a relatively easy place, at that time, to be out. So there was a community there, but I think, for me a political home has always been the most important and I that comes out of what punk gave me at that time... To be part of the punk scene, and have that scene be connected to politics and have those politics be connected to

queerness, I think was important to me then and helped me be an out teenager and then has like stayed really important to me.

Andrew: So with it staying really important, where did you kind of go after high school? I know in the notes it said Philly, there were a few places listed... Was Philly the first?

Drew Joy: So I started college in New York and didn't last very long there, but had some really important experiences around racial justice work, anti-racism, white anti-racist organizing that were super instructive and hard, hah. And also, did some studying around immigration and latin american studies and um, that sort of helped develop more internationalist perspective, for me. That was really important, but it was not a good fit for me, and I ended up moving to Portland, Oregon, in large part because the Northwest at that time was really the center of riotgrrrl and queercore scenes. And so, looking for that community, and I was sort of in and out of Portland for about three years, as a place to start. Which led to some important experiences in being part of that scene. But, I happened to living in Portland, Oregon when the big WTO (World Trade Organization) protests happened, and so I was there and that was a really big pivotal moment for me and sort of where I started to engage in the anti-globalization movement that was big at that time, and the sort of big mass mobilizations that were happening.

Andrew: Can you describe your experience with the WTO protest?

Drew Joy: You know, I wasn't super involved in... in planning it. I just kinda showed up with some friends and I don't think that... Like it ended up being this historical moment kind of in a

lot of ways but like was not something that I certainly went to thinking that it would be. But, it was the first time I had experienced like any mobilization of that size and just what it felt like to be in that large of a group of people sort of like in like this kind of protest. It was totally life changing, I mean, it was so exciting to be apart of, um, and I have a lot of really fond memories of just like how people were interacting with each other in that space... and it was also the first time that I witnessed... like... the police response and violence... riot police and tear gas and all the things that really put the state in a more highlighted way in my mind. I think that was really important... the whole thing had a huge impact on me in terms of the commitments that I had to my politics and the ways that I wanted to center that in my life. At the time, was deeply in an anarchist framework around that... It was a pretty special moment

Andrew: Yeah I can only imagine, just being in that environment.

Drew Joy: And then from there I moved to Philadelphia.

Andrew: Okay, yeah, and then you were DJing a lot, right? In Philly

Drew Joy: Yeaaaaahhhh haha

Andrew: haha, or hosting parties

Drew: Yeah, so, you know, a lot of the work that I did in Philly was like solidarity work with organizations that are folks of color mostly, and so, a lot of what I did and what my friends were

doing were like throwing house parties to like raise money for stuff. So, yeah, so I started DJing there and throwing parties and um, it was a fun way to feel like you were doing something.

Andrew: Yeah that's really interesting, because I feel like, do you have any thoughts into that kind of solidarity organizing where it's, right now the left is very much in this weird kind of sectarian, you don't have that solidarity, how do you feel about the idea of a solidarity DJ and that kind of philosophy?

Drew Joy: That's a good question... um, you know, I think it served a purpose and I think it serves a purpose, and I think that kind collaboration is really important and that kind of support for each other's struggles was really important. I think it's really limiting or really limited in what it can do, and I think, looking backing on those years I don't think that they were like my most like politically disciplined or strategic, um, but I do think it helped build some relationships and raise some good money. But, I think both being part of the punk scene and then sort of being part of a queer left, in Philly, was very sub-cultural, and very segregated, and I think provided a community for me that was really helpful and where I felt really safe, but I don't think sub-cultural politics or dropping out is really an answer to the problems that we have and needs to be different level of engagement and dropping in and really doing organizing together with people, so yeah, I think there's just a deeper, like a deeper level of work that needs to get done.

Andrew: Yeah, so was there a moment in Philly where you kind of realized that and you were like, "I need to do more," or was it kind of just like you moved again and then got involved in another community?

Drew Joy: Um, so for me, Hurricane Katrina is like, is really the pivotal moment in my adult life, so that's 2005... August 29 of 2005. I think, I had like developed a strong analysis, I was doing anti-racist work, I was doing the solidarity work and fundraising and stuff. And, um, but like I said, in this very limited sub-cultural kind of way, and I ended up, a friend of mine went to New Orleans pretty soon, like a few weeks after Katrina, and had a pretty trans-formative experience and I was working as a carpenter at the time and so, when my friend came back, she was like, "I think you should go, there's like two skills that people need right now, and it's people who know how to do construction and people who can do anti-racist education with white people because there was just tons and tons of like white folks coming, like super well intentioned, politically active or oriented white folks who were coming to help, and it was just raising all of the... you know... and all of their whiteness and privilege and entitlement was coming with them, so there was a need to be like, "Okay, you're here and that's awesome," and like what do we do with that energy that like de-centers ourselves and re-centers the folks here that have lost everything and re-centers people of color and working class folks in the work. So, and so I went and it was a really really intense experience and came back to Philly from that first trip with like a different sort of understanding of what organizing was and what I wanted to do, so I started doing a lot of solidarity work with people had have evacuated from the gulf south, who were living in Philly, and then sort of getting involved in other stuff from there.

Andrew: So was the Survivor's Village and Fightback Center, was that, in New Orleans? Or was that also with the refugees?

Drew Joy: So, um, I went first in late 2005 early 2006, I was there for like a month, like December to January, and like I said, I came back and got involved in some of this work with folks who had landed in Philly. And I kind of like, I like, came back from that experience being like, "there is no role for white folks in New Orleans at this time, we are just messing this up," um, haha, and was like I'm gonna dig down in my work in Philly and do what I can from here and so I didn't actually think I would go back. But, the same friend who encouraged me to go the first time, had gone back and spent some time there, and was going back and was like, "I really think that you should come with me, we'll stay with people I know, it's gonna be a different experience" so it ended up being connected with a bunch of different organizations, and particularly organizations that were directly connected, were being led by and directly connected to communities of color, particularly the black community in New Orleans, people who were radical organizers, who had a critique of capitalism, who were thinking about class, who were also you know Black Marxists and Black Nationalists and Black Liberationists. It was like, totally life changing for me, I like grew up in Maine, my politics had always grown up alongside whiteness, and seeing radical politics that were in the black community and that made so much more sense, and were about organizing, and were base buliding, and were about engaging our neighbors and our communities, and building power rather than like just responding... I don't know building internal community to deal with stuff. It was like, everything changed for me, in terms of how I wanted to do this. And Survivor's Village was part of that.

Andrew: Yeah. And what specifically was Survivor's Village?

Drew Joy: So, Survivor's Village was an organization that came out of the closures of, particularly the Saint Bernard public housing development in New Orleans. And the public housing, basically after Katrina, New Orleans just shut down all the big public housing, regardless of damage, regardless of anything, and so people who may have not lost their homes, who may have not lost their belongings in Hurricane Katrina lost everything because basically the city and state government took advantage of this moment to like take some really extreme austerity measures, to close public housing and then to rebuild it in these mixed income private/public disasters. And so, there a really big fight in New Orleans after Katrina to save public housing, which was, you know, a moral fight around the right to people to have their housing, for those communities who are directly impacted to maintain their housing, and also I think a really important strategic fight around maintaining public goods and fighting austerity, and folks on the ground knew that they were working sort of from those two angles. Survivor's Village was particularly related to the Saint Bernard public housing and was doing a lot of direct action stuff around that so that's how I first became involved is that they were doing this, we were building these makeshift little houses, these little plywood huts on the property of Saint Bernard, like just on the sidewalk side of the fence, because it had been all fenced in and boarded up, and doing sort of this occupation of the land there. So that was sort of my first involvement of what they were doing.

Andrew: So was the state just constantly trying to interfere with you, or did they kind of just be like... Did you have that free reign or was the state always there interfering with you and causing trouble?

Drew Joy: Yeah, New Orleans at that time, this was spring of 2007, was still heavily policed and militarized as it had been since Katrina. There was definitely like regular harassment by police and also like, they got torn down twice in the time that we were there, so yeah, it was kind of a tense moment.

Andrew: Is there a story in particular from New Orleans, that you remember more than anything else, a favorite story, or the most impactful moment for you?

Drew Joy: Um, that is a good question. The final fight of, around public housing, the public housing struggle in New Orleans is a story of loss, and it's still a really painful issue for folks there, and it's not... we didn't win, at all. But there were some really special moments along the way. We did a big week of action in 2008 around public housing. So I never lived in New Orleans but after 2007 I was back and forth multiple times a year and particularly connected in an ongoing way with the public housing stuff. Survivor's Village and then a space that they still hold called the Fight Back Center. My friend Endesha, has been holding it down for years, and he's been an important mentor to me. So we had like a week of actions and we planned this lockdown in front of the Housing Authority of New Orleans, which it was like right before Christmas, I don't remember the actual date. We did this with some friends that I had been working with there and a long time, and coordination with Survivor's Village and The People's Hurricane Relief Fund, and other organizations working on public housing. We did this lockdown at HANO and it was, we used this homes for the holidays like theme and they had, everyone had pajamas and santa hats and we had houses wrapped as presents. It was just like a very good looking lockdown, it had been, it was the first action like that I had done and I wasn't

locked down because I couldn't get arrested at that time but um, but it was just a really good looking lockdown, and it was one of the first times those kind of tactics had been used in New Orleans, and it got a lot of publicity, but, I don't know. It was a pretty special moment I think, to do something like that was really powerful and it was the first time I had been involved in something like that. It took them a very long time to figure out how to get everyone unlocked from the gate haha.

Andrew: So once your work waned with New Orleans, where did you go after that.

Drew Joy: In New Orleans, through conversations that I was having with organizers there, I made this decision to move back to Maine. Which, my parents did not believe that it was actually going to happen until I showed up. They were certain that I would never moved back and I had been too. But there was like, people were seeing a strategy around, "Okay well where do we need people to organize" and "What is the role of white folks in Maine, in a struggle for black liberation?" "What is the role for white folks in Maine to be engaged in fighting back against austerity?" "How is a movement for racial and economic justice happening strategically on a national level?" were some of the questions that I was getting particularly from black organizers in New Orleans and so I kind of made this decision, I gave myself five years to do it, to move back to Maine and do organizing here. I ended up moving out to San Francisco to get trained as an organizer, so I worked with this organization called Catalyst Project, that does anti-racist organizer education as part of a multi-racial movement for racial and economic justice and they were very involved in New Orleans after Katrina and so they had also come out of the anti-globalization movement and sort of a critique of like what good are these mass mobilizations and

where are people of color, who are most directly impacted by this in that movement and so then they're like also moving towards this more like community organizing base building model. So their trajectory mapped along side my own and I was very influenced by that and so they have this organizer training program called the Anne Braden Project, and so I moved out to San Francisco to do that. And through that you get placed with an internship and I was placed with an organization called People Organized to Win Employment Rights and I, you know early on in my time there I was like, "I'm really looking to learn like solid skills as an organizer I want to move back to Maine and do this work," and so they sort of took me on in a more full time capacity as an intern and I worked with them for two years sort of getting trained specifically in organizing and a base building model and a, transformative organizing model. So that was like, I was there for about three years knowing that time that I would be moving back.

Andrew: Yeah, and then, so were you involved with action and struggles out there during your time as training or were you kind of just like fully engaged in like internship and learning?

Drew Joy: Yeah, I mean so the internship that I was doing was like very much connected to like a network of left people of color led base building organizations, and so, was very much part a movement of working class people of color building power, engaging around policy fights, in the city, and in the region. Particularly I was organizing mostly in the Bayview neighborhood, which is sort of San Francisco's last remaining black neighborhood. And doing organizing, sort of anti-gentrification and displacement organizing with like also an interconnected struggle around environmental justice. The Bayview neighborhood had a Naval shipyard on it, that is a super fun site, and there was a big redevelopment project that was happening on that. So we were kind of

fighting it on multiple levels. And so a lot of what I was doing was talking to folks in that neighborhood and getting people involved in that, in that campaign people were getting involved in an organization. You know people would come in through that work and be connected to an organization that was intentionally multiracial, that was mostly black and latino and was like you know, the programming that happened together, there was a women's worker project, that was sort of the other half of the organization so there was like spaces where people were coming together doing work in english and spanish and doing black/brown solidarity work and also leadership development and political education that was really about connecting the issues that people were facing in their own communities to like this bigger picture of like what is capitalism and how does it work and how is that related to white supremacy and how are we organizing to counter that stuff? So, you know that work was very much like part of what was happening there. Um, I was also, I had left POWER but was still in San Francisco when Occupy happened. It was an interesting time to be there, particularly in San Francisco because there was a lot of you know there was all these organizations who were doing sort of like day to day work on the ground, who were organizing this like new surge of energy. I ended up spending a lot of time at Occupy San Francisco to particularly try to do anti-racism work in that space but also do bridge building between what was happening at Occupy with the community organizing that was already happening and trying to kind of like, there was like a few, you know I had some of those relationships and there were some folks in those organizations who were interested in kind of building that bridge. So, I was involved in kind of trying to do that, yeah.

Andrew: And then, what year did you move back to Maine?

Drew Joy: So I moved back to Maine in 2012

Andrew: And how did the skills learned transfer back to Maine from this kind of very diverse anti-racist to like one of the whitest states in the nation? How did that all transfer over?

Drew Joy: You know I think the two sets of training were really helpful, and my intention and what I was called to do here is around organizing white people and honestly like, living here now, I mean, Maine has changed a lot since I lived here as a teenager, my whole life until I left, and then and also in the five years that I've been here, and so, it's been interesting in that I feel like, I came here with sort of this like, orientation towards organizing white folks, and I have a different sense of like, how are we doing multiracial organizing in a place like Maine, and what is my role in that, and what is my organization's role in that? So, just to say that there's a next set of questioning I think, and experimenting and developing a political analysis and a strategy that matches it, that I'm definitely like, sorting now. But, I think, In short, a lot of what I learned about sort of engaging... you know community organizing model, you know... we're looking for people who're looking for us, right, like people who like are looking for a political home in a way to be active, that we're not necessarily looking for people who are already politically developed, or like, know and say all the right things, or you know, can like come into an activist space and know all the lingo... We're looking to connect, and mobilize, and engage new people and people who are looking for answers who may not have them yet. And so, I think there can be parts of the more activist oriented spaces that are really inaccessible to people that like, ask you to have all the answers already, that are really unforgiving of mistakes, and I think that that can be an overwhelming part of white anti-racist culture in a lot of ways, because white folks want to

distance themselves and be like, the good white people, but I think it really limits our ability to connect with other people in general. And what I have found in sort of these base building models and these community organizations was that, was a political space that was not requiring people to have a whole lot to get involved right, that we meet people where they're at. Both like literally at their doors, at their community centers, on their streets, but that we're also meeting people where they're like, "Yeah, I know that there is something wrong, I feel really frustrated about that, I do want to be involved in something," and that we take folks there, and bring them into something that develops collective power, that develops a stronger analysis, that gives people the tools to be leaders, and so I think that that model actually transfers really well in Maine. I don't think that means that we don't push white folks to understand how racism works and to like gain knowledge, and skills, and better language around that stuff, but we're not expecting people to have that through the door, and I think that having sort of a balance of learning from these community organizing models and also learning from white anti-racist models has been really important in trying to build a base building organization in Maine, a membership and member led organization, and also like I feel really aware of the ways that those tools and that training I have are not always transferable and don't meet all the needs of the organization that I work in and um, yeah.

Andrew: And how did you come to this organization, the Southern Maine Workers Center?

Drew Joy: So I moved back to Maine and I didn't have a plan of where to organize or anything really lined up. But I did a lot of just sitting down with people and having coffee and talking about organizing, getting introduced to anyone I able to, to talk to anyone who anyone thought

had any interest in political work in Maine and I happened upon the Southern Maine Workers Center just like looking, I think I like found their website and called, the website at that time was like looked very ancient, and I was like, "probably this doesn't exist anymore," but it did! So I got involved, first sort of like as a volunteer just kind of like checking it out, and being interested in sort of the potential around it, and then as a board member, and I served in that capacity for a long time, and then um finally as a staff member. But it was, it had so much potential, and it had history, and it had people who were invested in it. It also was actively looking for ways to really root itself and reach its potential and so it was just a really good match for like where I was at and where the organization was at. And so, just made sense to throw down there.

Andrew: Do you have a favorite campaign or project you've worked on with the SMWC?

Drew Joy: You know I think, ahhh, *both laugh*. For me, the thing that I feel the most proud of the SMWC is that, we... you know there was sort of like an old guard and a new guard and the old guard was a little bit older, were folks really mostly engaged in the traditional labour movement, this is not exclusively, but this sort of some of who the main players were, I got engaged and then I pulled some other folks in and most of us were like a little bit younger, and not necessarily coming from a traditional labour movement, having a different critique of capitalism, and also a lot of us were queer. So there was sort this like, this decision that everyone made to like figure that out together and to like learn how to value the parts each other that were different and the way that complemented each other in terms of being able to have a worker's center and run a worker's center and like create something that had lasting power. And so, overall all I feel that sort of like transition of the organization is something that feels really special to me

in part because of this project... of everyone being willing to see each other and respect each other and learn from each other and build like this sort of like multi-generational, multi-experiential organization.

Andrew: And how has kind of like, that community also, I guess now that you've kind of established this community, what are you doing right now in Portland?

Drew Joy: So in Portland, the SMWC right now has, sort of, three main moving arms and one is Work With Dignity, which is a little bit more of the more traditional worker's center stuff. And then Healthcare Is A Human Right, which is a long term campaign for universal healthcare, using sort of a human rights framework and also thinking about how do we organize people who are directly impacted by the healthcare crisis. And then we have a political education committee that's working on some of this like, bigger picture, how are talking about class, how are we talking about race, how are we thinking about systems, how are we giving people the tools to be leaders in this organization, in this movement. Um, and Work With Dignity is most of our work in Portland and we're working on a campaign for paid sick days in Portland right now, which has some momentum there's a ordinance that we helped write that's being considered by city council, it's probably going to go through some changes, but, hopefully we're gonna make something happen, um, and then, we also have a worker's rights hotline. So right now we're doing a lot of like plan... it's exists, people can call it if they think their rights have been violated at work, both their legal and their human rights, and we can help them think about what next steps to take. Right now we're like in conversation with lawyers, service providers, community leaders, workers from different industries to kind of figure out what would make this project really work

for them, especially thinking about access for immigrant communities, language access, cultural access, that kind of stuff. So we're working on that, it all feels really exciting right now. And then, the healthcare work, we just released last year, this report on healthcare and we're organizing in Portland, and Lewiston, and Biddeford, and sort of starting to get some new stuff moving outside of Portland, which is really exciting.

Andrew: I guess from there, like, where do you see it going, like short of dismantling capitalism *both laugh* and the systems of oppression, kind of, just where do you want the SMWC to go, what do you want the future to be?

Drew Joy: Yeah, that's a good question. Um, I mean I think... I mean the big picture is a question of how are we developing leaders across... from my perspective, across the state. Particularly, working class people, to address the systems of oppression, for us to bring people together to develop a clear analysis of, what are the systems that are oppressing us and how are we working together to undo those? I think that there's a real need to engage in white communities around this work um, to align people with a multiracial movement for racial and economic justice that those two things are deeply interconnected in our culture and we need to be able to have a conversation and a strategy around addressing those things simultaneously. And I think there's a need for organizing people around that, right, like that analysis is not something that a lot of people have access to, so how are we bringing people in to that and how are we... like and at the same time I think like how are we building that space in a multiracial way, how are we centering racial justice and addressing the experiences of oppression that people... the most marginalized in our society are experiencing. I don't know, it's like big picture there's... and I think there's just

thinking about a strategy around how do we develop power and how does that, how does that analysis like drive change in the state, and so, you know I think, we're trying to answer that question on two levels right now. One is like, how are we building power in Portland and able to like address some of that on a smaller scale, especially given the state of our state right now, which there's not a lot of opportunities to move stuff at the state level, so doing some of that work in Portland, but then also like how are we doing that across the state, and so that's the role of the healthcare work. And you know, I think the most that we can hope for is that we are developing an organization that is part of a bigger strategy, that is around this around this sort of concept of trans-formative organizing, how are we providing spaces where people feel empowered, where people are transformed by doing collective work together, by building an analysis together, how our organization is transformed by the experiences of our members, and our experiences organizing with our members and what the conditions are on the ground, and then how are we really using that to build power in a way that can um, create change, not just for change sake but for addressing these bigger systemic issues. So no big deal, we got it covered, *both laugh* it's totally fine

Andrew: We got this *both laugh* In terms of developing leadership, I'm interested, because like, right now we have this surge of like this younger generation coming into activism and like organizing and like... What would you have to say to them? Like, you have so much experience, especially from like being kind of involved for such a large portion of your life. What would you say to them?

Drew Joy: To me the most important thing about this work, is that it's our job to bring new people in. And so, when we're developing our own sense of politics and our own sense of self as an organizer, that it can't just be about having the right analysis, or knowing the right things, or taking action against stuff. We have to be thinking about how do we build a movement, how are we bringing new people in, how are we opening the door for other people to have those transformative experiences. So, I think for young organizers, thinking about what do they see that's doing work to bring new people in, what do you see your role in that as, how are you helping people develop as leaders too. When I was in my early 20s, in my work in Philadelphia, in that sub-cultural world of sort of punk-anarchist stuff, our politics were really mostly about having the right analysis and calling other people out when they didn't and it was really damaging to my community. Literally people died, because we couldn't take care of each other because our egos were too involved and our commitment to righteousness overpowered our commitment to change. It's something that I see... I think there was an intentional moving away from that, that a lot of people, myself included, realized the limitations of that and moved to a calling in, and a building with people, and a developing other people's leaderships model. And I see... I see this sort of resurgence of callout culture, of people seeing or acting as if our role as activists, as leftists as whatever, however we define ourselves within that, as being again about having a strong analysis, which is great, we need to study, we need to understand, we need to have a strong understanding of the world around us. But we can't just do that, and we can't use that power to hurt other people right, like we have to use that to understand strategy, to help bring in new leaders. You know, and I think some of that as a queer person I think some of our impulse to do that, is protective, we grew up in a world that doesn't think we're right, and when we have some tools to say that we are right and we do have a place and whatever, we are really prepared

to cut other people down with that. And it doesn't serve us, you know, we really need to figure out... like this work is not about being wrong or right it's not about being moralistic or like having the right answers, it's about how do we change a world that is structurally set on destroying our human rights. But that is a really big thing, and we have to have room in that for our mistakes and to learn and to build each other up because we are up against something huge and we need to think strategically about that and we need numbers we need a lot of people that are prepared to do that and that means bringing people in. End of lecture hahaha

Andrew: Amazing lecture, I could hear that all day haha

Drew Joy: Just to say in the last sentence about that. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't be held accountable for stuff. Like, there are times that we're going to screw up and we need people to be like you just screwed up, like really badly, and this is the impact of that and this is why it happened and these are the holes in the way that you're thinking or acting about this. But that's different than wrecking people right, that's like, cool, you made a mistake but we need you for the long haul so like, who is going to help you re-engage in a way that is more productive. Now really end of lecture

Drew Joy: Wrap up soonish?

Andrew: Yeah so um, we can wrap up here if you want. Um, and I just want to preface this, um, always we'd love to hear a follow-up or if you're interested in a follow-up we can schedule that at

some point... Or down the road schedule it. Yeah, thank you so much, I mean, that was actually incredible.

Drew: Ohhhh, thank you. Thanks for inviting me to do this and it's really nice to get to chat with you, um, it's awkward to tell your own story for an hour, but, I'm excited to be able to be part of this.

Andrew: Thank you so much

Drew Joy: Yeah you're welcome