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# The Dog

By Allison Berg

**MAN:**

they're dead.  
Anybody moves, they're dead.  
Anybody makes a sound  
before I leave this movie,  
they're fucking dead.  
My name is John S. Wojtowicz.  
You can call me The Dog  
because that's my nickname.  
Hi. I'm Jeanne Parr,  
and this is John Wojtowicz.  
Right now, he's in jail.  
It was 5 1/2 years ago  
when he attempted  
to rob a Brooklyn bank  
to get money  
for his lover's  
sex change operation.  
They made a movie about John.  
It's called "Dog Day Afternoon,"  
and Al Pacino  
played the part of John.  
This is John's lover Liz Eden,  
who wanted  
that sex change operation.  
Well, she got it, and today  
she's living happily as a woman.  
John is still in jail,  
and we'll reveal  
for the first time in  
my exclusive interview with him,  
his side of this very dramatic  
love story.  
So stay with us. We're live.  
That's the abbreviated version.  
OK. The reason I call myself  
a pervert  
is that I'm sexually oriented.  
It's very easy because you  
got to look at it this way.  
Most people drink.  
Most people smoke.

A lot of people do drugs,  
and they have sex.  
So they have all  
these outlets, OK?  
I don't smoke. I don't drink.  
I don't do drugs.  
I don't gamble.  
So I'm an angel... ha ha!...  
but I got horns,  
OK, and the trouble is,  
when you got horns,  
you only can do one thing, OK.  
And that's fuck.  
I consider myself a romantic.  
There's sex, and there's love.  
I'm a lover.  
When I met Ernie  
for the first time,  
it was love at first sight,  
and because I loved him,  
on August 22, 1972,  
I had to do something.

**ANNOUNCER:**

August 22, 1972,  
was a summer day just like  
any other summer day...  
hot, humid, with everyone  
trying to get a bit of relief  
from the oppressive  
heat and humidity,  
and then it happened.

**At 2:**

two men entered a bank  
in Brooklyn  
and began what turned out to be  
the most sensational,  
most bizarre,  
most unbelievable bank robbery  
in the history of crime,  
and before they were through,  
what should have been  
an ordinary bank robbery

turned into a 3-ring circus.

[People shouting]

[Sirens]

**WOJTOWICZ:**

what I did.

Nobody would ever rob a bank  
to cutoff a guy's dick to give  
him a sex change operation.

That's why they made  
a movie about it.

You know something, people?

You're gonna be remembered  
the rest of your

lives for the day

you got held up and kidnapped.

We made history here.

We did it.

**ANNOUNCER:**

A true story.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

What you got to understand  
is that in my lifetime,

I have had 4 wives.

I also have 23 girlfriends  
because, remember,

I'm a pervert.

They all know each other

because I'm like Prudential.

I'm the rock, OK,

and I give a piece of myself  
to everybody,

and you go,

"How can you do that?"

I says, because, idiot...

it's very simple...

you can love

more than one person.

**HARRY REASONER:**

the strangest hijack attempts  
to date began when two gunmen

held up a bank  
in Brooklyn, New York.  
The gunmen got \$29,000,  
but before they could leave,  
police moved in,  
and the bank robbers  
seized 8 hostages.

**BURKE:**

pointing a shotgun  
at 8 employees, the other robber  
spent much of his time  
pacing outside the bank,  
either negotiating with police  
or screaming at them  
to back off.  
Police, in turn,  
tried to keep the pressure down  
by ordering the hundreds  
of spectators to move.  
All right, fellas.  
You got to move back.

**BURKE:**

bank robber  
is 27-year old John Wojtowicz,  
an out-of-work  
New York City resident  
and an admitted homosexual  
who left his wife  
and two children 3 years ago.

**WOMAN:**

I was with my girlfriend  
and my two kids  
on the beach in Rockaway.  
It was a hot, hot day... oh, God...  
and I'm listening to the radio,  
and I hear,  
"an admitted homosexual  
has just robbed a bank  
in Brooklyn, Avenue P,"  
and they said his name  
and everything,

and I'm listening to it.  
I'm listening to it  
at the beach.  
I listened to it on the train.  
I went home  
and watched it on TV.  
I'm listening and listening.  
I didn't hear Wojtowicz.  
I heard John something.  
So I says to my girlfriend,  
"That sounds like my name,  
doesn't it?"  
She starts laughing.  
We went in the back yard.  
We had a barbeque, not realizing  
it's Johnny all the time.  
[Camera flash pops]

**WOMAN:**

[Hal David and John Cacavas "We May  
Never Pass This Way Again" playing]

**WOJTOWICZ:**

high school,  
I met my female wife  
called Carmen Ann. Bifulco.

**MAN:**

this way again...  
She worked for Chase Manhattan,  
as I did.  
So we're your friends  
at Chase Manhattan.  
I was a teller, and it's what  
I call love at first sight.

**MAN:**

to meet again...

**BIFULCO:**

to go on a date.  
He picked me up with  
two other girls, and he says,  
"One of you is going to be

my lucky bride in the future."

I thought the guy  
was crazy already.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

talking to each other  
and dating, and then,  
boom, I got drafted.  
I'm a Goldwater Republican,  
which means I'm conservative,  
which means I'm also  
a warmonger,  
So I was willing to go  
to the war and fight in the war.  
[Crowd cheering]

**BARRY GOLDWATER:**

remind you that extremism  
in the defense of liberty  
is no vice.  
[Crowd cheering]

**WOJTOWICZ:**

to basic training,  
that's when I had my first  
gay experience.  
I met a hillbilly  
by the name of Wilbur.  
One night, I was dreaming  
that I was getting a blow job,  
and instead,  
it was the real thing,  
and Wilbur was blowing me,  
and just before I came,  
I woke up, and I go,  
"What are you doing?"  
and he said,  
"Well, doesn't it feel good?"  
and I go, "Yeah. It feels good."  
He said, "Well?"  
I said, "Well, keep on going,"  
and then we kept having  
this relationship  
because he blew great.

He was like a summer breeze.

Ha ha!

I went to Vietnam  
in October of 1966.

I first went to Saigon,  
and a few months later,  
they shipped me up to Da Nang,  
OK, up by the DMZ,  
and that's where  
we got into action...

and then in February of 1967,  
there was the first  
rocket attack  
on the Da Nang Air Force Base,  
and 90% of my fellow soldiers  
were killed.

So what happened is,  
I went from being a Goldwater  
conservative in 1964  
to a McCarthy peacenik in 1968  
because if we're not  
gonna win the war,  
why should all these young kids  
get killed and die for nothing?  
We lost 50,000 people over there  
because they wouldn't  
let us win it.

So if you're not  
going to win it,  
let's get out and end it.

I married Carmen  
in 1967 in October.

We wanted to get married  
before I went to Vietnam,  
but my in-laws said no  
because they were hoping  
I didn't make it back.

Soto disappoint my in-laws,  
I lived through the Vietnam War  
and came back and married her.

**BIFULCO:**

want me to get married at all.  
My relatives despised him,



but I got married.  
These are the pictures  
from my wedding...  
October 21, 1967.  
Got married at St. Rita's Church  
in Brooklyn.  
The whole neighborhood  
was there.

**MAN:**

Want to let you know  
There was a big thing  
at the end.  
It was terrible.  
My priest wanted to annul  
the wedding that night.  
Annul it.  
The night of the wedding,  
we almost broke up  
because we had a fight  
over the wedding money.  
The father wanted me to pay  
for part of the wedding.  
So we got into a big fight,  
me and Carmen, that night.  
So I took the money  
and just threw it at him  
and walked the fuck out.  
[Sirens]

**TERRY:**

Ha ha ha!

**BIFULCO:**

Everything was gone.  
My kitchen set was gone.  
My engagement gifts were gone.  
"I left. Go to your mother."  
That was it. Ha!

**WOJTOWICZ:**

June 20, 1969.  
That's when the first man walked  
on the moon, Neil Armstrong,

and then they had the Stonewall  
riots on June 26, 1969,  
and that's what they call the  
birth of the gay movement, OK?  
So the gay movement happened  
at the same time  
that the guy walked on the moon  
and I walked on Carmen.  
So it logically follows that  
that's where I would wind up.

**EDWIN NEWMAN:**

acknowledge their homosexuality  
and pattern their lives  
accordingly are known as gay,  
and the gay liberation movement  
is challenging  
a society that abhors  
homosexuality.  
The Gay Activist Alliance  
is the largest  
and most vocal  
of several homosexual groups.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

in the gay movement  
after the Stonewall riots.  
So what happened is, I joined  
the Gay Activist Alliance.  
We used to meet  
in different locations.  
Then finally, they got  
their own headquarters,  
which was called the Firehouse,  
and it was on Wooster Street  
over in the Village.  
[Music playing]

**MALE REPORTER:**

The Gay Activist Alliance  
holds dances  
every Saturday night  
at its headquarters,  
an old firehouse

in Greenwich Village.  
Upwards of 1,000 attend.  
Many would not appear  
in this film.  
Freedom of sexual expression  
is as much an issue  
of the gay movement  
as civil and legal rights are.  
Gay people  
want to be themselves,  
flirt, hold hands, kiss,  
and talk openly about sex  
just as heterosexuals do.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

of the entertainment committee.  
So I would meet and greet  
new gay people  
coming into the scene.  
I could have sex with them  
quicker than anybody else  
because they were just  
coming out,  
and in those days,  
we did a lot of getting down.  
You got to understand that  
the thing about the gay movement  
is that it was more  
sexually driven than anything  
because anybody can be straight,  
but it takes somebody special  
to be gay.  
OK. Now, you're now entering  
Christopher Street Park,  
where gays from  
all over the world come  
to see the famous statues  
that are supposed to represent  
the gay movement.  
OK. These two statues right here  
represent gay males, OK?  
The only problem is that  
a lot of black gays  
and a lot of Spanish gays

hate these two statues  
because, as you notice,  
they're all white, OK?  
What this statue should be,  
there should be a black face  
on this statue  
and find some kind  
of colored clothes,  
and this statue, the face  
should be more olive  
so he can be like  
an Italian gay, right,  
or a gay with a suntan  
or a Latino gay,  
not to mention Chinese  
and all the rest.  
I come here all the time.  
I would say once or twice  
a month.  
Usually, I come into the city  
for two things... money or body.  
Usually, it's body, OK,  
and usually, you would come  
to the park and sit down  
and a lot of the people  
I know in the park  
I have sexual  
relations with, OK,  
and they enjoy it,  
and they have a good time, OK?  
Also, if they need a meal  
or if they need a place to sleep  
or they're just horny like I am,  
this is where you come.  
I hope you enjoyed your tour.  
Have a nice day.  
Enjoy yourselves.  
[Edwin Starr's "Easin' In"  
playing]

**TERRY:**

**STARR:**

Slick as he can, mm-hmm

**TERRY:**

**MAN:**

I relate emotionally to men.  
I like men emotionally.

**DIFFERENT MAN:**

I'm totally gay.

**TERRY:**

Yep.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

the movement, I met people.  
I liked the people,  
and we had sex,  
and then, like, around '71,  
I became more active.  
I went to more meetings, OK,  
because I would meet  
a lot of people,  
but they were more politically  
oriented than sexually oriented.

**RICK WANDEL:**

Alliance, what we wanted to do  
was to tell people  
that ultimately,  
the key to our getting  
equal rights was to come out  
so that everybody knew  
they knew gay people.

**MEN:**

**WANDEL:**

nonviolent,  
militant organization.  
"N"!  
"N"!  
Give me an "O"!  
Ho"!  
Give me a "W"!

**RANDY WICKER:**

one of the very early members.  
They used to have  
a demonstration  
once or twice a week...  
Gay power!  
Gay power!

**WICKER:**

of the few people  
that had a video camera,  
and I caught all  
this fabulous stuff.  
Hi. I'm Randy Wicker.  
Today we're talking  
to Father Robert Clement  
of the Church  
of the Beloved Disciple.  
Father Clement,  
what type of church  
is the Church  
of the Beloved Disciple?  
Like all churches,  
it's basically, first,  
a church for everyone,  
but our congregation  
is primarily gay...  
I'd say 90%, approximately...  
and we exist for the needs  
of the gay community,  
and I am gay myself.  
I see.  
WICKER, VOICE-OVER: At the time  
in the gay activist community,  
gay marriage wasn't even  
on the agenda,  
but the city clerk of New York  
came out and said,  
"You know, there's this guy  
in this gay church,  
"and he's performing blessings  
of holy unions or something,  
"but weddings are what they are,

and if he doesn't stop it,  
we're going to take action  
against him."

Well, at this point,  
on the one hand,  
gay activists didn't want  
to do anything  
with the issue of gay marriage  
because they would argue  
among themselves about that,  
but they couldn't sit back  
and have a city official  
attacking the gay community  
and threatening a gay church.

**MARC RUBIN:**

that we should never  
understand their point of view.  
Any point of view  
which is opposed to gay rights  
is a wrong point of view  
categorically  
by fiat and word of God.

**MAN:**

WICKER, VOICE-OVER:

So they decided,  
"Well, we'll go into  
the Wedding Bureau,  
"and we'll take  
a big wedding cake.  
"We'll take over  
the Wedding Bureau.  
"We'll throw  
an engagement party.  
We'll have made our statement,"  
and that's exactly  
what they preceded to do.  
We have two leaflets.  
One is an invitation.  
It says, "The Honorable  
Herman Katz, City Clerk,  
"invites you  
to an engagement reception

"for Messrs. John Basso  
and John C. Bond  
"and Messrs. Steve Krotz  
and Vito Russo.

All are welcome.

Dress optional."

[Laughter]

Spokesman for this should be  
myself and Jim and John Basso.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

in the gay movement,  
I didn't use the name Wojtowicz.  
I coined the phrase  
Little John Basso, OK?  
Little is because  
my prick is little, right?  
So that's where I got  
the nickname Little John,  
and them-being my mother  
was a Basso, B-A-S-S-O...  
I used the name Basso so people  
would know I was Italian.

**RUBIN:**

to try to get marriage licenses?

**RUBIN:**

Now, a lot of what we do  
is playing to press.  
This is supposedly,  
aside from my terror,  
a very up action.  
We're happy...

**MAN:**

take some ups.  
[Laughter]

**MAN:**

"Gil!  
Give me an "A"!  
"All!  
Give me a "Y"!



"Y"!

**WOJTOWICZ:**

is a holy institution.  
Love is a holy institution, OK?  
If I love somebody,  
I want to marry that person.  
I want to make a commitment  
to that person,  
and in straight society,  
the way you do that  
is getting married,  
and I don't see why gays  
can't do that.  
Oh, this is definitely  
the Marriage Bureau.  
Your mother and dad  
want to get married?  
Are they gay?  
Oh, I'm sorry.  
We can't help you.

**CROWD:**

[The Zombies  
"Time of the Season" playing]  
What's your name?  
What's your name?  
Who's your daddy?  
Who's your daddy?  
Is he rich?  
Is he rich like me?

**WOJTOWICZ:**

June 6, 1971.  
It was St. Anthony's Feast,  
and he was in what we call  
semi-drag.  
He had pants on,  
but he had makeup on, OK,  
and he was with two gay priests.  
So I went over,  
and he caught my eye  
because, like I told you,  
I'm one of those guys

when you first meet somebody,  
you become infatuated with them,  
and the first time I saw Ernie,  
I knew I had to have him.  
So we went  
to 250 West 10th Street,  
and this is the first time  
that we had sex together,  
which means I fucked Ernie, OK,  
and then after that,  
our relationship started, OK?  
I would bring him roses  
every week,  
and I would come here every week  
and take him out.

**LIZ EDEN:**

at St. Anthony's Feast,  
and we sort of hit it off  
right away.  
He was very, very romantic,  
never forgot a date,  
never forgot a birthday,  
Christmas,  
anniversary, or anything.  
In the beginning,  
it was a dozen roses  
almost every time  
we saw each other.

**MAN:**

I first met Liz Eden in 1966.  
Liz sort of dressed like a guy,  
but like a girl  
because in those days,  
there were strict laws  
about dressing like women.  
She always had a loud,  
loud, loud mouth.  
The wallpaper would curl off the  
walls when she started cursing.  
Liz was the center  
of every scene,  
and she had a lot of energy.

She was a great dancer.  
He had a portable record player,  
and he would play records  
over and over...  
Judy Garland or Carmen Miranda  
and all of that.  
He loved that,  
and then I remember  
at the gay firehouse  
on Wooster Street,  
Liz saying this Vietnam veteran  
was in love with him,  
and I saw this guy,  
and he was short.  
I said, "He's tiny next to you.  
"What are you going to do  
with him? He's tiny."  
"Oh, but he loves me,"  
and blah, blah, blah.  
He was sort of a troll,  
and he loved her.  
There's a troll that loved her.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

Ernie, I started to court him.  
I knew that he sold his body  
because he told me about that  
to support himself.  
We had a relationship.  
We got closer  
and closer together.  
I fell in love with him  
more and more,  
and that's why I wanted  
to get married,  
and he was against us  
getting married,  
but, like I said, I convinced  
him into getting married.

**EDEN:**

[Telephone rings]

**BIFULCO:**

from my priest,  
the guy who married me.  
He says to me,  
"Carmen, there's going to be  
"a wedding coming in December.  
You're going to get  
an invitation for this wedding."  
I go, "Who's getting married?"  
He says, "Are you ready  
for this? You ready?"  
and he told me,  
"John is going to get married  
to someone in the Village."  
I said, "What do you mean,  
getting married to someone?  
What kind of marriage?"  
and he told me,  
"He's marrying a guy,"  
who was Ernie.  
OK. You ready?  
Testing 1,2,3,4,5, right?  
Action?  
OK. Now, in the old days,  
this bar was called  
What's In A Name Caf, OK?  
We had the wedding reception  
here and the wedding.  
A gay priest came in, right?  
He did the ceremony.  
We were married.  
GAA filmed it  
for the archives, OK?  
The cops from the 6th precinct  
over here came out and say,  
"What the fuck is going on  
out there?"

**EDEN:**

congratulated us,  
thinking we were all girls.  
The whole wedding party  
was all guys,  
and when we came out for  
the reception, they found out.

They said, "Hey, we didn't know  
this was all happening."

I said, "Neither  
did the priest."

WICKER, VOICE-OVER: I didn't  
know John, but I heard  
there was going to be  
this wedding, and I said,  
"I have to videotape this,"  
because, first of all,  
I don't think I'd ever heard  
of a gay wedding at that point,  
and not only was it  
a gay wedding,  
but the mother was going  
to be there,  
which was also sort of like,  
"Oh, wow, what would  
the mother be like?"

**WICKER:**

the groom's mother?

Yes.

And how do you feel today?

Is John your only son, or...

How about the rest

of your family?

Will they be attending?

Any reason for that, or...

OK. Well, I hope

everything goes well,

and thank you very much.

WICKER, VOICE-OVER:

John was the apple of her eye.

You could just see this woman

just loved her son so much

that almost anything he did

would not cause her

to reject him.

[Organ playing Wagner's

"Bridal Chorus"]

**WOJTOWICZ:**

the most expensive dress

he could find on Grand Street.  
Cost like almost \$1,000,  
so he could look regal  
and drive what we call  
all the butch numbers crazy.  
So I said, "Well,  
he'll get over that bullshit."  
So I put on my army uniform  
with all my medals  
to drive all the girls crazy.  
So it's always that rivalry,  
and that's how it is  
in the gay life.  
Everyone tries to one-up  
the other one,  
and each one wants to be  
the star,  
but there's only one star,  
and that's me.

**WANDEL:**

a little looped  
by the end of the evening here.  
The other thing I remember  
about the wedding is,  
John was kissing everybody,  
everybody.  
I mean, when I say kiss,  
I don't mean peeks.  
I don't mean like  
you kiss the bride  
on the way out of the church.  
I mean, he was kissing  
everybody.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

wedding ceremony on December 4,  
we lasted to April,  
and then we broke up, OK?  
The reason we broke up is  
because we kept having arguments  
and fights because he wanted  
the sex change operation,  
and what a lot of people

don't understand  
is that I didn't want Ernie  
to have the sex operation.  
Now, I, at the time,  
was interested  
in a guy with big tits  
and a little dick,  
but Ernie wanted to be a woman,  
and in the beginning,  
I didn't realize how badly  
he wanted to be this woman.

**NEWTON:**

of people back then  
who had had sex changes,  
and Liz was always talking  
about having a change  
and how enjoyable it would be  
and how wonderful it would be  
to be a woman.  
They both tried very hard  
to have a life,  
but I don't think  
she was happy that much.  
I really don't.  
She showed me her wrists once,  
come to think of it,  
and I could see scars  
on her wrists,  
and I said,  
"Why did you do that?"  
and she kind of downplayed it,  
made it into a joke.  
OK. Now, as I explained  
to you earlier,  
after we got married around  
the corner, what we did is,  
we moved out of the apartment  
where I got down  
with the two gay priests and  
my first relations with Ernie,  
OK, and then we moved  
into this fancy place, OK?  
This is where our apartment was,

and about a month or two after  
we got married in December,  
this is where Ernie first tried  
to commit suicide, OK,  
because he still wanted  
the sex change,  
which we agreed he wasn't  
going to have  
because I was against it, OK,  
and he said,  
"I can't take it anymore.  
I want to have a sex change,  
or I want to die."  
So he took a butcher knife out  
this long  
and tried to stick it in him.  
I grabbed the butcher knife  
from him,  
and as we struggled,  
I got out in my hand, OK?  
So we wind up getting into a  
fight because he wouldn't stop.  
Somebody called the cops, right?  
They came and arrested us,  
right, and they brought us  
to St. Vincent's,  
to the nuthouse.  
When we got there,  
Ernie turned the story around  
and said that I had tried  
to kill him with the knife  
because he didn't want to go  
in the nuthouse.  
So then they tried to put me  
in the nuthouse,  
but after the cops  
stopped and left,  
I knocked down two  
of the security guards  
and one restraining guy and  
ran the fuck out of the place  
because I ain't going  
in no nuthouse, right,  
but this was the apartment



we lived in.

WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER:

Ernie kept becoming violent.  
He would take an overdose.  
He would put his hand  
through a plate glass window.  
He would cut his wrists, and he  
kept getting worse and worse,  
and then his birthday came  
on August 19, 1972.

**EDEN:**

The doctor told me, "You know  
he's never getting out of here,  
"right, and we're going to give  
him electronic shock therapy,  
"and he's sick.  
He wants to chop off his dick."  
Then I got in to see him,  
and that's when I made  
the decision right then  
because they're never  
letting him out.  
So I'm going to take him out  
by force.  
OK. This was Ernie and I's  
neighborhood bar.  
It was called Old Jimmy's,  
and it was owned  
by a guy named Buddha,  
who was a fat guy, OK?  
In this bar, Ernie and I used  
to socialize and meet everybody.  
This is where  
I met Bobby Westenberg,  
and he's the second guy  
that went with us  
for the bank robbery.  
He had a bad lung,  
and I offered him \$50,000  
to help get Ernie  
out of the nuthouse, OK?  
That's why we robbed the bank,  
to get the money.

Also, in here is where I met  
the third partner  
that robbed the bank with me.  
His name was Sal Naturale.  
His real name was Masterson.  
He was an escaped fugitive  
from New Jersey,  
and he never wanted  
to go back to jail then, OK?  
He had just turned 18,  
the way I understand it,  
and Bobby Westenberg was  
about 20, and that's the story.  
Cut.

So we went and got the guns,  
the rifles,  
everything we needed.  
Then we went to  
the Golden Nugget Motel  
the night before the robbery.  
OK. While we were in there,  
I grabbed a hold  
of Bobby Westenberg,  
and I wanted to fuck him  
because he used to dress up  
as a girl with a dress, right,  
and he goes,  
"What are you talking about?"  
I said, "I want to fuck you."  
"Well, I don't want you  
fucking me."  
I said, "I'm giving you  
\$50,000, right?"  
"You're going to tell me I'm  
not getting a fuck out of it?"  
"You're out  
of your fucking mind.  
Because I'm getting  
a fuck out of this."  
So then I fucked him,  
and then Sal came over,  
and he wanted to fuck Bobby.  
Bobby tells him no.  
So they start getting

into a fight.  
So I come out of the shower.  
I says, "Hey, what are you  
two bitches arguing about?"  
"Well, he won't let me..."  
"Hey, what is it  
with you Bobby?"  
I said, "We could all die  
tomorrow, so let's die happy,"  
but Sal was pissed off at him  
because Sal didn't  
get the booty.  
Next morning, we get up.  
We leave the Golden Nugget,  
and then we started going  
to different banks.  
We went down to one bank  
on Delancey and Essex Street.  
So we park the car.  
Bobby and Sal  
get out of the car to go,  
and all of a sudden,  
I hear this boom.  
I go, "What's this boom?"  
I look out the side  
of the car window,  
and the assholes  
dropped the shotgun.  
It fell out of the back  
of the box.  
They were carrying it in a  
Wrigley's Spearmint gum package.  
It's about this big, and it  
says, "Wrigley's Spearmint gum."  
It's pop art, like Andy Warhol,  
all right,  
because, you know, if you walk  
into a bank with a package,  
they're going to be suspicious,  
but if you walk into the bank  
with a Wrigley's Spearmint  
gum package,  
they just think it's pop art  
and you're bringing it home

to put on your wall  
or something, right?  
At least it made sense to me,  
right?  
So I get out.  
I pick up the shotgun.  
I said, "You two assholes  
get in the car,"  
and we drive away,  
and all these people  
are standing there  
looking at us,  
but, you know, who's  
going to say anything?  
"Oh, you dropped your shotgun,"  
right,  
and we were gone in the wind,  
and I said, "You dumb fucks,  
what's the matter with you?"  
"Well, I told you the box  
was too heavy."  
I said, "Oh, you fucking wimp,  
Bobby, be butch, will you?"  
and then Sal gave him  
the, "Oh, he can't be butch.  
He's a girl that don't  
get fucked."  
I said, "Well, you can fuck him  
after the robbery.  
Don't worry about it."  
We went to this first bank...  
it was on Delancey and Essex...  
The Manufacturers Hanover Trust.  
Then we out down here  
on Howard Beach.  
It looked like an easy hit.  
There's a lot of money  
in that bank,  
being that it's  
the only one around.  
We walked in there, and  
my mother's friend,  
her best friend, is,  
"How you doing, Bobby?"

while Sal is ready to take  
his gun out on the guard.  
So we foiled that one.  
Then we get into this other  
Chase Manhattan Bank  
down in Manhattan.  
Now we're driving all over,  
a series of banks,  
and we get in front  
of this one bank,  
and we're just doing  
a practice run.  
Goes in for a silver dollar,  
comes back out.  
"OK. "Lets try to get away."  
Try to get away,  
we smack into a car,  
and they're threatening to call  
the police and have the police.  
They'll want to search the car,  
see the guns, the note, which...  
The note was weird.  
At the end of the note, it says,  
"This is an offer you can't  
refuse," from "The Godfather."

**WOJTOWICZ:**

Before we went to the bank,  
we decided to go to 42nd Street  
to watch "The Godfather"  
for inspiration, and it was  
the first time it was playing.  
So I said, "Come on.  
Let's go get turned on."  
It's just like a coach.  
You get your team ready.  
You get them all fired up,  
and they go gung ho, right?  
So we go and watch  
"The Godfather" for inspiration,  
right, and then I write out  
the note.  
I go to the bank manager,  
"This is an offer you can't

refuse," signed, the boys.  
Ha ha ha!

**WESTENBERG:**

we foiled  
all these bank robberies.  
So John says, "I know a bank."  
I says, "OK.  
Let's not mess this one up."  
[Telephone rings]

**MAN:**

**at 5:**

I walked into the newsroom,  
and this was already under way.  
They had walked into the bank

**at 2:**

and taken over,  
and the editor said,  
"Start working the story  
by phone, see what you can get."  
So I said, "I'll call the bank."  
So I called the bank,  
and, lo and behold,  
this guy picks up the phone  
and says he's one  
of the bandits.  
So I started interviewing him.  
He's giving me  
these great quotes.  
I said, "Are you afraid  
of dying?  
Could you really kill  
these people?"  
and I'm sitting there  
listening to this, taking notes,  
typing like crazy and my mind  
is going, "Wow! What a story."  
They said, "All right.  
Why don't you go down there?"  
So I went down to the bank.  
It was a circus.

[Helicopter]

I mean, obviously you had  
all the cops and the FBI,  
emergency vehicles, ambulances,  
even a fire truck in case  
they set the bank on fire.  
You had snipers on rooftops,  
and then you had this crowd.  
It was just a big mob.  
There was about 2,000 people.  
They would cheer.  
I mean, that was  
a Brooklyn crowd that night.  
"YO!" Ha!  
I didn't see any hot dog wagons  
or t-shirt guys,  
but it had that same kind  
of atmosphere, TV cameras.  
It was a full-blown show.

**WOMAN:**

we knew something was happening,  
and we all went.  
Everybody was there...  
children, parents, everybody.  
You know, one person  
told the other,  
and before you knew it,  
it was a mob scene,  
and the more they heard  
what was going on on the news,  
the more people came  
from even further away.  
You know people come.  
They're curious. We all are.

**WOMAN:**

Oh, there was a mob.

**DIFFERENT WOMAN:**

There was a mob here.  
You couldn't get  
down the street here.  
You couldn't get down.

The street was  
completely blocked off.  
On both sides, you couldn't go.  
Of course, my  
neighbor Gino's...  
They had all those news people.  
It was loaded with news people.  
But I had to go to the city,  
Sloan Kettering, with  
my mother to see her uncle.  
Everybody came from all over  
to try to get over  
here, everybody.  
When I came home, I said,  
"So you don't know  
what's going on?  
They even saw on television.  
But the people that were  
outside, forget about it.  
They were having a party.  
It was funny, you know?  
Not for the people in the bank.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

when we went inside the bank,  
Bobby walks over to me and says,  
"I can't do it."  
I go, "What?"  
He says, "I can't."  
I said, "What the fuck  
do you mean, you can't do it?  
We're in here."  
"No, no. I got to go."  
So Bobby says, "I'm leaving."  
So then I got to make  
a decision.  
Am I going to walk out the door,  
or do I still rob the bank?  
I go, "Fuck it."  
So being I'm a Roman Catholic,  
I go, "In the name  
of the Father,  
the Son, and the Holy Ghost."  
I pull the shotgun



out of the package.  
I says, "OK. Nobody move.  
Back up.  
Nobody touch any alarms."  
I said, "We're going  
to take the money,  
"We're gone.  
We don't want no problems.  
Everybody does what I tell them,  
"and everything will be  
all right,  
and we'll be out of here  
in 5 minutes."  
So we go, and we start  
taking the money.  
I think after 10 minutes,  
you knew they were amateurs.  
They were not  
professional bank robbers.  
They kind of let us know this.  
Actually, this is when the ball  
started rolling.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

"What the fuck is going on?"  
and I'm looking in the window.  
Then I see them.  
In the windows,  
on the fire escape,  
there are cops.  
On the roof, the cops  
are standing up,  
coming around the corner.  
I don't know what went wrong,  
but that's why  
whenever you see  
bank robbery movies,  
they go, "We only got a minute."  
Now you know why.  
[Crowd cheering]  
So we're sitting there  
in the bank.  
Then Sal comes over,  
and we're looking at each other,

and he says "I don't know  
what we're going to do."  
I says, "I know  
what I'm going to do.  
"I'm going to get Ernie.  
"I'm going to tell the cops  
to go to the nuthouse  
"and bring Ernie down here.  
"We're going to get  
on the plane.  
"We're going  
to fly him to Denmark  
and get him the sex change  
operation."  
"You're crazy."  
"Watch."

**MALE REPORTER:**

is under way at this time  
in the Chase Manhattan Bank  
branch  
at Avenue P  
and East 3rd Street in Brooklyn.  
What's going on now?

**WOJTOWICZ:**

to negotiate the release  
of the people so we  
can get out of here.  
What are your terms  
for release?  
Well, I want them  
to deliver my wife here  
from Kings County Hospital.  
His name is Ernest Aron.  
It's a guy. I'm gay-

**BIFULCO:**

I was watching it, and I hear,  
"There's another  
bulletin out now.  
He wants to see his wife,  
and this is his wife,"  
and they put the picture

on the television  
of Ernie in the bride outfit,  
which I never saw before,  
and my relatives never knew  
Johnny was gay.  
Don't forget now,  
this was broadcast  
like the World Trade Center.  
This is on  
all day and all night.  
They took Nixon off the TV  
to put Johnny on.  
So tonight,  
my fellow Americans, I say...

**BIFULCO:**

and then I get the phone calls.  
"We told you not to marry him.  
You see? You see what you did?"  
I was getting the blame  
for the robbery.  
And just last morning...  
Hoo hoo!

**NEWTON:**

world why he robbed the bank.  
He was being honest, you know,  
and I think it was a big  
explosion in people's eyes.  
"What, a guy robbing a bank  
for his...  
"Is that a guy he's  
robbing the...  
I don't understand."  
I mean, it was a big shocker.  
It was like gay liberation  
right down your throat.

**KAPPSTATTER:**

We said, "What?"  
and, "Sex change? My goodness."  
This had never really happened  
before, to our knowledge,  
anything like this.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

is standing out there  
with a bullhorn.  
He said, "All right,  
you faggots.  
We're coming in there,  
and we're going to get you."  
I said, "What did he say?"  
I said, "You call me a faggot  
one more time,  
"I'll kick your fucking ass,  
and if you think  
"you're so fucking bad,  
why don't you put down that gun  
"and come over here  
and call me a faggot?  
"Because I'll fuck you up.  
"Come on. Put down the gun  
and come on over.  
"You see me with a gun?  
I don't got no weapons.  
Come on over. Let's go."  
Then you hear the cops  
cracking up and laughing  
because they know he ain't  
going to call me a faggot  
because they done seen  
the artillery I got,  
and then I knew I'm the man.

**WICKER:**

there was a whole mantra  
that he played very nicely into.  
This was a guy who was wacko.  
He's robbing a bank,  
supposedly to finance  
a sex change operation.  
Well, that's not robbing a bank  
to take a vacation  
in the Bahamas.  
You know what I mean?  
That's not a selfish, but  
supposedly altruistic motive.

Then you have  
all these theatrics.  
They had pizzas delivered.  
He threw money out the door.  
Anybody would love.  
This is Robin Hood.

**KAPPSTATTER:**

against the system,  
the little man trying  
to do something good.  
Banks. Who loves banks?  
Anybody love a bank here?  
But I don't think  
he was playing to the crowd.  
He was too involved in getting  
him and Sal out of there alive.  
We didn't know how this thing  
was going to end.  
Was he going to start shooting?  
Were they going to work  
their way  
into that bank building somehow?  
That was what made those hours  
tension-filled.  
We did not know how this  
was going to resolve itself.

**WOMAN:**

we were becoming very depressed.  
We were tired. We were hot.  
We were hungry.  
We were frightened.  
You name it, that's how we were,  
and by a couple of the things  
that he said,  
I realized that he was friendly,  
he wanted to be friendly.  
I mean, there was a purpose  
why he was robbing the bank.  
He really didn't think that  
it would take that long.  
He thought that he would be  
in and out,

but the way things happened,  
he didn't get out.

**MAN:**

He is making demands  
for an escape route.  
The problems with the demands  
of the escape route  
is that he wants to take the  
hostages with him at this time.  
All of them?  
All of them.  
And what does he want  
in exchange?  
Does he want his lover?  
He did, and he does.  
We have his wife here.

**MAN:**

for the releasing the guard.  
That was the way  
we got one guard out  
on that bargain to let him talk  
on the telephone.  
The wife is right  
across the street  
but refuses to go near him.  
She believes John  
to be unstable  
and will kill him.  
That's his current wife,  
is it not?  
Well, I believe so,  
unless he has 3 or 4.

**EDEN:**

[Telephone rings]

**WOJTOWICZ:**

the cop gets on the phone.  
"Somebody's here to see you."  
So I think it's Ernie.  
So I go outside.  
It ain't Ernie.

I said, "What are you  
doing here?"

It's Patsy.

[Wolf whistle]

Before I met Ernie, one of  
my relationships was Patsy.

So Patsy comes down  
because Patsy really loves me.

[Crowd cheering]

So I go outside,  
and I walk over to him,  
and I tongue him.

**MAN:**

[Wolf whistle]

What people forget is,  
in those days in a gay bar,  
you were not allowed  
to touch each other.  
You couldn't walk down  
the Village holding hands  
because the straights would  
beat you up, or the cops would.

**CROWD:**

The phone rings.

I says, "Hello?"

He says, "This is the mayor."

I said, "The mayor who?"

He said, "The Mayor of New York."

This is Mayor Lindsay."

I says, "Yeah?"

What do you want?"

He said, "We will kill  
all the hostages to stop you  
"because you're not making  
New York City look ridiculous.

"You're not letting the  
New York City Police Department  
"look ridiculous.

The whole nation  
is watching us."

**TERRY:**

he turned his head.  
He felt more likely embarrassed  
because he's very close to me,  
very attached.  
He's not that rugged.  
He's timid.  
He might've been or try to be,  
but he's not.  
He's very harmless,  
no meanness in him.  
He's always been good-hearted.  
You know what I mean?  
He's never been gambling or  
drinking or anything like that.

**TERRY:**

**MAN:**

made by the other man...  
Wojahowitz,  
whatever his name is.  
He said, "The Supreme Court  
will let me get away with this.  
"There's no death penalty.  
It's ridiculous.  
"I can shoot everyone here,  
and they can't put me  
in the electric chair."  
I wonder what your response  
to that would be?  
I have no response  
to that, really.

**MALE REPORTER:**

the two bank robbers demanded  
a plane at Kennedy Airport  
and a car to get them there.  
Finally around 3:30  
this morning,  
an airport limousine  
pulled up at the bank  
with an FBI agent at the wheel.  
Only then did the second gunman  
come out of the bank,



a rifle slung over his shoulder.  
26-year old Salvatore Naturale  
then joined Wojtowicz  
and their hostages  
in their limousine  
and headed for Kennedy Airport.  
Along the way, they had  
plenty of company.  
Perhaps 40 cars followed  
carrying police  
and relatives of the hostages.  
The caravan would pass  
through an airport gate  
leading to a secluded runway.  
The bank robbers had hoped  
to make their escape  
in a small jet plane.  
They failed.  
The aircraft was rolling up,  
and as we were making plans  
to depart from the limousine,  
we had a driver  
in the limousine, an agent,  
and Mr. Baker and Mr. Feld  
charged the men  
and diverted the shotgun  
and the machine gun,  
and in the meantime, the agent  
had a chance to shoot him  
and when one was shot,  
the other immediately gave up.  
[Police radio chatter]

**MALE REPORTER:**

Naturale was killed by the FBI.  
Wojtowicz is in jail.  
[Police radio chatter]

**TERRY:**

**WOJTOWICZ:**

in Brooklyn, New York.  
This is my brother Tony.  
He's been away since

he was 5 years old  
because he has epilepsy and he has  
seizures and he forgets things.

Yeah.

And when he forgets things,  
he has to start all over from the  
beginning like he was just born.

Yeah.

So if he has a seizure,  
it's like going back to zero  
and then they got to  
re-teach him everything.

So once a year, he comes  
down to New York to visit us  
and we take him out sightseeing  
and to different places.

Yeah.

Today we took him  
to Western Beef,  
a couple of blocks  
from my mother's house.

Yep.

Then we're going to be going to Coney  
Island to put him on the rides  
and show him some of the sights in  
New York while he's here visiting.

Yeah, well, we know that.

WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER: I have two  
brothers, one older and one younger,  
so I'm the middle one.

My older brother, Tony... the court  
took him away from my mother  
and put him in a state institution  
that he's still in now.

**WOMAN:**

Coney Island a lot together?

Nope, never. First time.

For him.

No, I don't know what  
you're talking about.

You're out of your dick.

We never went to Coney island...  
stay in the middle lane.

Always in the middle.

'Cause these assholes don't know  
where they're gonna get off.

**TERRY:**

**WOJTOWICZ:**

See what it says here?  
Home of the Dog Eating Contest.

**TERRY:**

All the way down, right?  
You see, that's  
the ocean out there?  
Yeah.  
Right?  
And you see the Wonder Wheel?

**TERRY:**

WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER: That's  
the way they play the game.  
I'm telling you.  
That's what they do.  
It's called the system, and the  
system doesn't give a fuck.  
I can't believe we can't get a fucking  
ride and they got no ice cream.  
My mother says I'm crazy.  
I say,  
"Well we know that."  
I said, "You got to remember,  
"they only put the nuts that are  
pretending in the nuthouse.  
The real ones,  
they don't want."  
Yeah. Yeah.  
I've been in a couple of them.  
Yeah, they're not too bad.  
Yeah.  
The cops for robbing.  
No, I did.  
Yep. We're gonna  
pass it.  
Yeah, we should drive by it.

Avenue P and East 3rd.  
Yeah. Yeah.  
Yeah, we got almost a quarter  
of a million dollars.  
Quarter of a million dollars.  
From the bank.  
No, no, no. A quarter  
of a million dollars.  
That's \$250,000.  
Yeah.  
You know, being we're down  
here, we'll take a peek.  
Yeah.  
OK. Let's see  
what they did.  
Where, down here?  
OK, that...  
let's see.  
That red awning that's  
across the street,  
that should've been  
where the bank is.  
Do you believe they  
changed my bank into a...  
The bank I robbed right here.  
They changed it into  
a Brooklyn Medical.

**MAN:**

I had a ladies fashion store.  
Well, anyway, when I had my store  
there, I was having a check certified.  
And I went into the bank  
not realizing these...  
So I understood, they were waiting for the  
last one to leave the bank, which was me.  
The guy who did it,  
I think he's still alive.  
Where he is,  
the detective may know.  
You know where he is, this guy?

**WOMAN:**

Oh, you can tell me.

I'm not gonna...  
Well, he's actually across the  
street right now, with us.  
I don't know if you'd  
want to meet him.  
Oh, I don't care.

**STAN:**

**TONY:**

Good, Good. And you?  
Stan.  
Tony.  
How do you do, Tony?  
Big John, how are you?  
How's everything?  
OK. how are you?  
I give two.  
I'm Italian.  
OK. Now, wait a minute, were  
you Al Pacino in the movie,  
or was the other guy?  
Who was Al Pacino?

**WOJTOWICZ:**

Fuck Al Pacino.  
WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER: I'm like Babe  
Ruth, but I'm the gay Babe Ruth, right?  
I hit a home run.  
Know why I hit a home run?  
Because I beat  
the fucking system.  
I won.  
I didn't lose. I won.  
Ernie got the sex change.  
Ernie lived.  
Ernie was happy.  
Ernie survived,  
and I'm happy for that.  
Am I rattling too much?

**WOMAN:**

Oh, you want detail.  
OK.

OK. hold on a minute.  
I have to clarify one thing.  
I have skin cancer of this ear,  
which is my right ear.  
I have breast cancer.  
I ain't gonna go  
through that crap.  
I'm waiting for them to  
tell me how many days,  
so I can go party.  
OK. Let's go.  
Quiet on the set.  
Scene 5.  
[Claps]  
OK, they took me to the  
Port Authority Headquarters  
at Kennedy Airport.  
Then the Port Authority police  
accompanied me to FBI headquarters  
on 69th Street in Manhattan,  
and that's where  
they grilled me further.  
They wouldn't believe  
the true story...  
that I was robbing the bank to get  
my lover a sex change operation...  
so I had to invent a story,  
and then I signed the confession  
that it was the Vice President  
of Chase Manhattan Bank  
that told us everything  
and how to do it.  
From there, they took me  
to the Federal Holding Pen  
in Lower Manhattan  
on West 11th Street.

**WOMAN:**

that had walked in with them,  
and he ran out,  
he chickened out.

**MAN:**

So, there's a third man?

Mm-hmm.

**MAN:**

the third arrested,  
is Robert Arthur Westenberg.  
He was arrested  
by FBI agents today.  
We're charging that Westenberg  
fled from the scene  
before the police  
actually moved in.

**WICKER:**

the story of the hour,  
but the reaction of  
the Gay Activist Alliance  
was one of horror.  
They would simply say, we don't  
want to be involved with him  
in any way 'cause he's  
a mentally ill person.  
I mean, that was generally the  
consensus of the gay community.  
He was nuts.

**WANDEL:**

was a terrible thing, you know?  
The fact is, he terrorized however  
many people were in the bank,  
and he was the direct cause  
of somebody being blown away  
and witnessed by some  
of these hostages, also,  
whatever that did to  
their heads, you know.  
That's not a Robin Hood to me.  
That's a very sick person.

**WICKER:**

in the gay activist community.  
I mean, I felt that John was  
being railroaded to some degree  
because he was homosexual  
and no one seemed to care.

As a gay reporter,  
I wanted to go out and  
find out what I could.  
So I met Bobby Westenberg and I talked  
to friends of Sal's in the Village,  
who said he wasn't the nasty person  
everyone portrayed him to be.  
He just hated jail, because I guess he  
had been raped in jail or whatever,  
said he'd rather die  
than go back to jail,  
and I wrote these long,  
detailed articles about this.  
So I had a whole different take.  
Today, I'm Randy Wicker and  
I'm talking with Ernest Aron,  
the boy who John Wojtowicz demanded be  
brought to the scene of the robbery.  
Now, do you consider yourself a  
homosexual or a transsexual or what?  
No, I'm a transsexual.  
I'm attempting to pay for a  
sex change which is in the...  
right now, it seems impossible  
but I'm attempting to do it.  
I have to raise somewhere in  
the neighborhood of \$2,500,  
and, uh... I just hope  
I can do it.  
I know John wants it now.  
He never did want it before, but now  
he wants it more than anything.

**WICKER:**

she has this national fame  
as a pre-operative  
transsexual.  
So now, if you're gonna live that moment of  
fame out, you've got to have the operation.  
I understand that John was  
very opposed to this operation  
when you first told him that you  
wanted it a few months ago.  
Yes, he was.



He didn't want me to have it because he didn't know what his reactions would be to me after the sex change, but now he feels that he could love me either way, as a man or as a woman. I understand that John is still married to Carmen, his wife, and they have two children and in my conversations with his wife Carmen, she feels that John isn't really a homosexual. Well, I don't even consider him a homosexual as long as he goes to bed with women. I think he's bisexual. I think he leans heavily towards women, otherwise he wouldn't want me to make such a drastic change in my life. He continued going to bed with women even after he was married to you? Yes. He saw his wife at least once or twice a week. Sexually? Oh, yeah, sexually. I believe that John sometimes uses his friends to fight his battles. He sort of makes sure that each person knows that he's in love with him only, and then, of course, when they get together, they fight over him. I think it's a wrong thing he's doing, but unfortunately, there are a lot of people

that do care for John and  
if we have to fight over him,  
we have to fight over him, and  
that's all there is to it.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

I think in October and said  
people have been talking about making  
a movie and if I was interested.

Right?

And I told him, "Hell no,  
I don't want no movie." Right?

Then Liz came and said, "Hey, hey, hey,  
they want to make a movie," you know.

"We're gonna get money, you know. I  
gotta get the sex change," you know.

"You make the movie, you get the money,  
I get the sex change," you know.

And then I says,

"Yeah, all right,"

and then I signed the paper.

And the last time I saw him was  
after he had the sex change.

OK, he had it on March 27, 1973.

He came to see me and he said, "I talked  
to my doctors and my psychiatrist."

And he said, "I will never see  
you again. It's not good for me.

"It won't help me. I have to leave,  
start my own life as a real woman  
and have nothing  
to do with you."

And Ernie got up and left.

So on Saturday, April 26th,

I went to confession.

On Sunday, I went to communion.

Then after that,

I out my wrists

and sat on the toilet bowl

and cut my forearms,

like the Romans used to do,

and tried to bleed to death.

Instead, I became unconscious

and passed out.

And they took me to the  
hospital and stitched me up.  
Then they brought me back  
to the prison on a Monday,  
and they said I had to go  
to be sentenced.  
So they took me to  
the Federal Court,  
and I don't remember  
what happened.

**BIFULCO:**

He was so out of it.  
He was all bandaged up  
and he was like this.  
"Mr. Wojtowicz,"  
Travia asked,  
"do you have anything to say  
before I pronounce sentence?"  
And Wojtowicz says, "Love is  
a very strange thing."  
Wojtowicz began  
in a low, even tone.  
"Some feel it more  
deeply than others do.  
"I love my wife Carmen, my son, my  
daughter, my mother, and I love Ernie.  
"I love all of them.  
"I know it was wrong  
to rob the bank,  
but what is money  
compared to human life?"  
I said, "Don't you  
love your wife?"  
He goes, "Yeah  
I said, "Well, imagine your  
wife is dying of cancer  
"and you didn't have the money  
and you needed \$10,000,  
"and you couldn't get it,  
you tried everything to get it.  
"You tried to borrow it, tried to  
make deals, nothing worked out,  
wouldn't you do something illegal to

get the \$10,000 to save your wife?"

He said, "No."

I said, "Well, then you don't know anything about love.

"In fact, you don't fucking love your wife, because if you loved your wife, "you would kill for her, you would do anything for her to save her.

"So don't talk to me about love because you don't love your fucking wife.

You don't even know what the fuck love is all about."

And then he sentenced me.

Terry yelled out in court, "Have mercy on my son, Your Honor."

Like that, she was screaming, and he got sentenced to Lewisburg Penitentiary.

I was like, "Wow, he's there forever now," and that's all I thought. That's all I thought.

That was it.

[Static]

OK. we told Liz that John would be speaking directly to her from jail on today's show, so let's hear what he has to say.

This is to you, Liz.

Do you have any message you'd like to give Liz today?

If you do, would you like to do it right now?

Yeah.

**PARR:**

I love you a great deal,  
and I did what I did  
because I loved you  
and I wanted you to be happy,  
and I don't regret doing it  
because it saved your life.

And all I want you to do is to be happy.

And I know I don't see you, and I know I don't hear from you,

but as long as you're happy,  
that's all that counts  
because I love you.  
That's it.  
Are you happy?  
Not as happy as I would be  
if he was out here.

**PARR:**

special about Ernie?  
How did you fall in love  
with him in the first place?  
I don't know.  
My wife, Carmen, always  
asks me that question,  
and I said, "I don't know."  
Because if I knew why I loved him,  
then maybe I could stop loving him,  
but when you don't know  
why you love somebody...  
because he's lousy in bed.  
Out of all the guys and girls I've been  
to bed with, he's one of the worst.  
Do you ever think of him  
in that prison?  
I mean, when you're getting  
ready to go out at night,  
do you ever think of John  
being locked up in his cell?  
There isn't a day that doesn't  
pass that I don't think of John.  
WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER: When I got to Lewisburg,  
they beat me up because they told me  
I was in the big house now.  
And I said, "it doesn't  
look so big to me."  
So they beat me some more,  
and that's where I met George.  
He was a jailhouse lawyer.  
He did the legal work  
that got my time cut.  
He was also black and Irish.

**MAN:**

is a very rough, tough facility.  
More than half the  
inmates carried weapons,  
and when I got to Lewisburg,  
they were getting ready  
to kill John.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

were killing an inmate every month.  
There were times when inmates were  
being stabbed every day in the place.  
When your door opened up

**at 5:**

you didn't know if they were  
going to come in and beat you,  
rape you, rob you, or whatever.

**HEATH:**

was very vulnerable.  
Someone like myself, that  
carried a knife all of the time,  
they didn't bother because I was  
considered a tough guy.  
I was arrested for bank robbery,  
kidnapping, the whole works.  
Of course, John, he couldn't  
associate with anyone  
because of the fact that  
they considered him gay.  
He was gay.  
They didn't like him.  
They were making a movie about  
him, so they were jealous of him.  
They were just, "Oh,  
let's do something to him.  
Maybe we can get a name  
for ourselves."  
So he had to fend for himself.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

in the laundry, OK,  
and I was raped by 3 guys  
from Washington, D.C.

They hit me in the head  
with a lead pipe, right,  
knocked me out, and  
they raped me repeatedly.  
I still have dreams  
to this day.  
I woke up,  
I was in the hospital.  
They operated on me.  
I was in tremendous pain.  
Then they finally let me  
back out into population.

**HEATH:**

for John.  
So when I took John under my  
wing, they left him alone,  
but they would nag at him  
occasionally if I wasn't around.  
I don't think that he  
realized the consequences  
of things that  
he would do or say.  
He didn't care about  
what might occur.  
He was just there  
and not there mentally.  
WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER: The 7 years I was in  
prison, I spent more time in segregation  
than I did out in  
actual population,  
but I don't linger  
on that too much.  
My attitude is, I'm from the old  
school and I'm old-fashioned Italian,  
I'm a male chauvinist pig,  
and I'm the fucking boss,  
and I run things.  
You run the prison,  
you do your thing.  
I run me.  
I do my thing.  
You don't bug me.  
I don't bug you.

You bug me, we have  
a problem, and that's it.

**HEATH:**

John was, to me, a bad,  
crazy individual,  
but the thing I liked about  
John... he had a lot of heart.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

in the prison yard in 1974.  
I met him on July 16th, OK, and that's  
also my wife Carmen's birthday,  
my female wife, and I married  
him 2 weeks later on the 31st.

**HEATH:**

because John was on the marriage trail.  
He loved to be married.  
He had to have a wife.  
So I became his third wife.  
I've always been in the  
gay life to some degree.  
I had been in drag, I had been in shows, and  
John immediately gravitated towards that.  
His wife came up, and John would have me wave  
out the window to her and stuff like that.  
I don't know if he actually  
described me as his new wife,  
while she was coming up, but  
she did come with the kids.

**BIFULCO:**

my husband up until 1978.  
He would send me flowers  
from the prison,  
and it would be yellow roses or flowers  
for an occasion or something like that.  
Always with the flowers,  
you know.  
Letters, constant letters,  
and then he'd give me orders what  
to send him, what he wanted.  
He would want this, he would



want that, you know,  
things he wanted to eat like chips, the  
joy of a Jewish candy, the jelly rings.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

bars, you know, like Snickers.  
You know, I prefer Mounds.  
I like Junior Mints and Mounds.  
Not Almond Joy. Mounds.  
Mars Bars and then  
the 3 Musketeers.  
Just put like Chuckles  
next to it.

**TERRY:**

**MAN:**

Like what kind of stuff?  
Mom, what are you  
doing down here?  
Run. Run. Run.  
Where am I gonna run?

**HEATH:**

John when the movie came out,  
and they showed it  
to John first in private  
and then they showed it  
to the general population.  
[Siren]

**FILM ANNOUNCER:**

neighborhood, it was a sideshow.  
Sonny.

**CROWD:**

Sonny!

**FILM ANNOUNCER:**

Sal, the hostages and the cops,  
it was a "Dog Day Afternoon."

**WOJTOWICZ:**

"We're not showing this."

And I said, "if you don't show this  
in the prison, I'll go to the press  
"and I'll hang you by  
your fucking cannolis,  
"and I'll start the biggest  
prison riot you ever saw.  
"I want the fucking movie shown and  
I want it shown to the inmates  
"because I promised them  
for years, because nobody  
believed there was  
gonna be a movie."

**HEATH:**

over the country wrote to John  
because of the movie.  
A lot of people liked what  
John stood for in the movie.  
He would try to answer  
as many letters as he could,  
and I think that he picked out a lot  
of letters that were more romantic,  
and he enjoyed it.

**BIFULCO:**

who he was. Everybody.  
You would see everybody turn around, looking,  
you know, "That's the guy from "Dog Day."  
You know, everybody  
in the prison.  
People would come up for autographs,  
and he would love that.  
Oh, yeah.  
He was... ooh!

**HEATH:**

became cellmates.  
He was too hot.  
He was a hot potato  
because of the publicity  
that he was generating  
and the publicity that I  
was generating also for him  
in terms of his criminal case.

Because at the time of sentencing,  
he had swallowed pills.  
He's already crazy, so he definitely was  
out of his mind at the time of sentencing.  
So on a legal level, he really was  
deprived of his right to due process,  
and the court did reduce his sentence  
when he went back for re-sentencing.

[Man howling; panting]

New York City is a place of  
contrast and contradiction.  
Studio 54 here is a shrine to  
the city's celebrity cult.  
People who come here are either  
famous or want to be famous,  
but just 50 yards  
down the street here  
is a building which people enter  
for very different reasons.  
The Hotel Bryant is a federal  
prison halfway house.  
One man living in this  
fleabag hotel  
can lay claim to being one of the most  
celebrated losers in recent times.  
The story of the life of  
John Wojtowicz is so bizarre  
that even the jaded people of  
New York and Hollywood  
find it unbelievable.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

after the judge out my sentence to 15,  
he recommended that the  
parole board release me.  
So at the end of '78,  
I was sent to the Bryant Hotel.  
You're only allowed to  
stay there for so long,  
and you have to get a job or  
they send you back to prison.  
OK. I finally got a job cleaning toilet  
bowls on Park Avenue for the rich people,  
and then finally,

I went back to my parents.

HEATH, VOICE-OVER:

I was released in 1978,  
and I must have lived with John  
and Terry for 9 or 10 months  
at their Flatbush Avenue  
apartment.

John still saw me as his wife,  
and we stayed with each other  
while we were out for 2 years.

Eventually, John got work  
with Project Return.

This was an inmate organization  
that helped ex-cons.

WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER: I only got to work  
at Project Return for a couple of months,  
and then they had to lay me off  
because of a budget crunch and  
then they threatened  
to lock me back up  
because I wasn't working.

I guess everybody don't want to  
hire me 'cause I'm an ex-con,  
but they can't use that  
excuse because of the law,  
so they always say  
I'm not qualified.

You're a former bank teller?

Yeah, for 8 years.

Specifically, what type of a  
job would you like to have?

Well, anything that's got to do  
with bookkeeping or anything  
that's got to do with finance, but  
a lot of people don't like you  
handling money because you were  
away, you know, for bank robbery.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

Manhattan when I first was out  
at the halfway house,  
and I wanted to be  
a security guard.

My reference was

"Dog Day Afternoon".  
I says "I'm the guy from  
"Dog Day Afternoon,"  
"and if I'm guarding your bank,  
nobody's going to rob the Dog's bank.  
OK. also I could sign autographs for  
people that open up new accounts."  
So it took them 3 weeks to  
finally get somebody to tell me  
that I couldn't be  
a security guard.  
Just like I was gonna drive  
Dog Day's Disco Limousine.  
And in the limousine, you would watch  
my movie and disco music would play,  
but my parole guy refused  
to let me get a license.  
Also I had to be kept  
under a psychiatric care,  
and then I refused to see the  
psychiatrist as part of my parole.  
Because how can they claim  
I wasn't crazy when I did it  
and now that I'm out  
on parole, now I'm crazy?  
But the judge ruled that parole  
is not a right, it's a privilege,  
and if I want to be out,  
I gotta see the psychiatrist.

**MAN:**

mess when he got out of prison.  
For him, prison was  
really horrible.  
Some people use prison to pull  
their lives together.  
John, I think it helped cement the  
personality that he was becoming.  
When the movie came out, that  
became the essence of his life.  
He then became The Dog,  
and there was a real personality  
change of a major degree.  
So it was easy to slip into this

notoriety rather than settle down.

**BIFULCO:**

of prison, the week he got out,  
he didn't come straight  
home to my house.

He went to visit Ernie or  
whoever else he went to visit,  
and when he was good and ready, he came  
to visit, to stay over that night.

And nothing happened.

And I was upset, because if you come out of  
prison and you're not with me in 8 years,  
why didn't you come to me  
and the kids first?

And I would always say, "Well, he's gay, but  
he'll get over it and he'll come back to me"...  
always hoping for that white picket fence  
that we always used to talk about.

Mm-mmm.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

Stanley Joseph Wojtowicz.

I'm the one they made the movie  
about, "Dog Day Afternoon,"  
that Al Pacino portrayed,  
and I'm the husband of  
Carmen Ann Wojtowicz,  
who is the mother  
of my two children.

I'm also the husband of George Heath, who  
got me out of prison by cutting my time,  
and I'm also the husband  
of Ernest Aron,  
the guy that I robbed the bank  
for to get the sex change for.

**HEATH:**

a lot of respect.

People wanted to  
get to know him,  
to see what kind  
of person he was.

So everyone wanted to

take him back to the bank,  
to get a picture of him  
in front of the bank,  
and John would do anything  
for a couple of dollars.

I remember when  
he tipped everybody,  
threw a lot of bills  
out on the sidewalk.  
Oh, that's for the pizza.

That's when they  
brought the pizza.  
How much did you pay  
for the pizza?

A couple thousand dollars.  
\$2,000.

I find this  
a very sad commentary...

Why?

On our civilization that  
1, 2, 3, 4 technicians,  
all of whom I assume  
are reasonably paid,  
should be sent down here  
to interview somebody  
who has become a celebrity  
because of crime.

It's ridiculous!

I mean, young kids  
of today see that,  
and they're gonna want to rob banks  
just for the attention that they get,  
and it's not fair.

Have you ever talked to him?

No.

Are you scared of him now?

He's just standing over there.

I still get the jitters just  
remembering that whole night.

It was no laughing matter.

I mean, he acted crazy.

You didn't know which way he was gonna  
go or what way he was gonna turn,  
so you did what he said.

And now he's out  
signing autographs.

Yeah.

Signing autographs  
and becoming a big star.  
Making money on an ordeal  
he put a lot of people through.

**HEATH:**

to the actual bank,  
and some of the people that  
were involved with the bank  
or, in fact, maybe one or two  
of the hostages, approached us  
because John's wearing this T-shirt  
saying "I robbed this bank."

A lot of people in the  
neighborhood didn't like the fact  
that John was coming back to make  
more money off the bank robbery.

So they ran us out  
of the neighborhood.

Society has got a  
right to condemn you  
for expecting to make money  
out of committing a crime  
after you've been caught.

Yeah, but see, you're  
forgetting one thing, right?

What about Hollywood?

Hollywood can make a movie...

namely Warner Bros...

make \$50 million off of it,  
get 6 Academy Award nominations  
and win an Oscar for it.

They can make money  
off of crime.

Why can a big company and a big  
corporation make millions and millions?

They gave the hostages a hundred  
dollars, couple hundred dollars each.

My wife Carmen got \$50.

I got a couple of thousand, which I  
used to get Ernie his operation.



I never got a nickel out of it.

**MAN:**

Warner Bros. recently paid Wojtowicz a cool \$100,000 as a final settlement. Legal disputes have temporarily blocked that money.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

still in court with my wife George trying to get the money.

**HEATH:**

George Heath.

My relationship with John Wojtowicz is that I am his lover.

I've also been known as his wife.

He uses the term "wife."

[Cash register dings]

HEATH, VOICE-OVER: Everybody was out after money.

I'm the wife of John Wojtowicz.

My name is Carmen Ann Wojtowicz and I have two children, Dawn and Sean.

[Cash register dings]

HEATH, VOICE-OVER: Carmen got paid, I got paid, John got paid...

[Cash register dings]

And, of course, Liz was trying to make money herself.

**MAN:**

sex change operation cost?

**EDEN:**

was 2 1/2 weeks ago, and it's now up to about \$54,000.

**MAN:**

Now she's got a personal agent. We had to pay him to get this interview.

She's trying to write a book,  
but then, so is almost  
everyone else involved.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

have a relationship at that time.  
I would see her in different clubs, and she  
would tell me not to show her guy pictures.  
I said, "You don't fucking  
tell me what to do."  
And then she told a lot of people  
that different guys are the real Dog  
so they'd get treated to  
celebrity status, and I would  
come there and spoil  
it all for them  
because I'm the real  
motherfucker.  
We did a thing called "Let's  
Talk Dirty" with Mark Stevens,  
the big porno star on Channel J.  
They're here at Studio 11 B,  
and I'm going to be  
talking to John Warzinski.  
Did I say that right?

**WOJTOWICZ:**

No, no, no.  
I shouldn't...  
Wojtowicz.  
John Wojtowicz.  
I'm sorry, John.  
OK. I'm going to call  
you Dog from now on.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

the "Jeanne Parr" show,  
Liz is telling me  
how much she loves me  
and she wants to get  
back together with me,  
but then when we did the  
TV show with Mark Stevens,  
she starts accusing me

of all kinds of stuff  
and starts turning it around.  
I talked to Liz a few weeks ago  
about Dog robbing the bank  
for Liz's sex change,  
which I think is incredibly  
amazing, right, don't you?  
No, not really.  
Well, why? Don't you think  
it's incredible?  
Because I don't think John  
really robbed the bank for me.  
I never have.  
I really honestly believe  
he was in debt to the mob  
for unknown amount of  
money for my wedding.  
All you have to remember  
is that I robbed the bank  
to get Liz the sex change  
even though I was against her  
getting the sex change,  
and that was the only  
reason I robbed the bank.  
Didn't you leave anything out?  
Nope.  
Give me a break.  
I feel like I'm playing  
ping-pong here.  
I can't give you a break.  
Never mind.  
Go right to...  
Oh! She's getting slick.  
Come on, Liz, right?  
It is incredible, isn't it?  
If you had gotten caught,  
what was the contingent plan?  
What were you gonna  
do when I came in  
and kissed you in the  
doorway of the bank?  
The truth John.  
Remember, we don't lie.  
The truth, John.

Who? Who lies?  
You do. Go ahead.  
I very rarely lie.  
OK, the truth is, if Liz wasn't  
going on the plane with me  
to get the sex change operation, I  
would have blew her fucking ass away.  
You would have blown her away?  
See, Mark, you didn't know us  
during that one-year period  
between the time we met and  
the time after we got married  
that he robbed the bank.  
I mean, it's all right to say  
you're in love with somebody  
and it's all fine and good.  
But he also put me  
through a whole year  
of getting letters  
every day that said,  
"You have 28 days to live,"  
"You have 26 days to live,"  
"you have 15 days to live"  
because I left him.  
The thing that led me into  
the mental institution,  
which everybody talks about, is the  
fact that I got these threatening notes  
all the way down to number one,  
and I figured since it was my birthday  
and everything else was fine,  
I said, "Why don't  
I just kill myself?  
It would end all this,"  
and that's just what I did.  
I tried to kill myself.  
And you think I really wanted  
a person to rob a bank?  
I got the shaft.  
I might have got the sex change,  
but I got the royal shaft.  
I can't enjoy it.

**MAN:**

with Liz, and Liz said,  
"You know, I don't want  
to be with him,  
"but he's there all the time,  
he like, tracks me down.  
I don't know what to do."  
I mean, they had this link,  
you know, this symbiotic link.  
And there was nothing she could do to  
release her from this mock marriage.  
Well, I told her, I said, "Liz,  
you wanted to get married."  
"Oh, thank you,  
thanks a lot."  
Liz was talking about how the sex change really  
wasn't what she should have done to herself  
and how she thought  
it would make her happy  
and it didn't make her happy,  
and it opened up a new series  
of problems for her.  
She started prostituting, and she  
moved to Rochester eventually,  
and she hustled there  
until she got AIDS.  
She would write to me,  
and I says, "Are you ill?"  
"No, I'm fine.  
I've been diagnosed.  
I'm fine."  
And then, time just moved ahead  
and she was dead, you  
know, and that was it.

**LOWENKOPF:**

it was a question  
of how he was going  
to live his life.  
He settled into this pattern,  
sleeping most of the day,  
going out late, and going  
down to West Street  
where there were lots of  
transsexuals

and regarded himself as a kind of protector, watching out for them.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

took over the Village,  
that's when I started getting  
people I never got before.  
They would come to  
my mother's house a lot.  
Then they would eat  
spaghetti dinner a lot.  
They used to sleep over, because  
most of them were street people.

**LOWENKOPF:**

Terry really didn't care.  
She was like fairy  
godmother to these guys.  
I never got a clear-cut idea of  
what the father was like.  
Almost like he was the little  
man that wasn't there.  
He worked, he came home, he watched  
television, he had dinner.  
Whereas, the mother was a much  
more vibrant force in John's life.  
It was a mother/son combo,  
and if you want to talk  
about his great love,  
that's the great love  
of his life.  
His mother.  
[Bell dings]

**WOJTOWICZ:**

What?  
Come here!

**HEATH:**

like husband and wife.  
[Bell dinging]  
Terry would button up his coat,  
help him with his clothes,  
and when he wanted something,

he rang a bell.

**TERRY:**

I got a good memory.

**WOMAN:**

OK.

Quiet on the set.

1, 2, 3, Action.

Good morning.

I'm "Dog Day Afternoon,"  
the real one,  
who Al Pacino portrayed in the  
movie "Dog Day Afternoon."

**BIFULCO:**

to impress people.

He always wanted to look like  
he was the main character,  
but after all that he put me  
through, he's my past.  
That's all I can say.

**KAPPSTATTER:**

probably had a hard life  
but really led a twisted life.  
I think for his own  
sense of self-worth,  
this is what he spun  
in his own mind.  
That here is someone,  
you know, what I did, wow.  
But you know, give us  
a break, he robbed a bank.  
He was a criminal...  
a romantic criminal,  
but he was a criminal.  
He had to make it  
a fantasy in his mind,  
because what else  
did he have in reality?  
It's what you do  
to survive mentally.  
There.

There's your autograph.  
Thank you.  
Thank you very much.  
Thank you.  
Have a nice day.  
I'm going to frame this.  
And don't rob  
no banks without me.  
All right. Ha ha!

**HEATH:**

wanted to be somebody,  
but I don't think that he  
really ever found himself.  
Thank you very much.  
Any time.

**HEATH:**

come to a confession with saying,  
"Well, I'm sorry for this, I'm sorry  
for that," but John was always John.  
He would never change.  
How are you, buddy?  
How are you?  
Not so good.  
How you been?  
How are you?  
Not good, not good, not good.

**WOJTOWICZ:**

he don't understand nothing.  
He doesn't understand  
what dying is.  
He doesn't understand  
about cancer.  
That's why nuts have more fun.  
Come on, you asshole.  
Get up here.  
Ha ha ha!  
That's so funny.  
I'll blow you,  
if you come back.  
OK. here he is.  
Come on, you know you



want that blow job!  
Yes, you do, you big devil.  
See that, see that?  
Bent over right in front of me.  
Yeah, don't tell me  
I ain't got it.  
All right, let's go.  
WOJTOWICZ, VOICE-OVER: Life is too short.  
So there is no "no."  
Thank you...  
[indistinct]  
If you want to  
do something, do it.  
Don't let anybody tell you, "No you  
can't do this, you can't be that,  
you're no good,  
you're rotten."  
Whatever they say to  
you, fuck them.  
Do what you want to do, because  
tomorrow you could be dead.  
So live every day as if it's your  
last, and whoever don't like it  
can go fuck themselves  
and a rubber duck.

**TERRY:**

OK?  
You understand?

**T REX Moves:**

Strange  
Life is strange  
Life is strange  
Oh, life is strange  
Oh, God,  
life is strange...

**WOJTOWICZ:**

regret what he does.  
And I used to tell everybody, "if I had a  
dream the night before, and in that dream  
"I saw everything that happened,  
exactly how it happened,

"would I still  
go out and do it?  
You're damn right I would  
still go out and do it."

**T. REX:**

Strange  
Life is strange  
Life is strange  
Life is strange  
Oh, my life is strange  
Cut.  
[Rock music playing]

**ELTON JOHN:**

I been thinking  
Just how much  
I miss my lady  
Amoreena's  
in the corn field  
Brightenin' the daybreak  
Livin' like a lusty flower  
Runnin' through  
the grass for hours  
Rollin' through the hay  
Whoa, like a puppy child  
And when it rains,  
the rain falls down  
Washin' out the cattle town  
And she's  
far away somewhere  
In her eiderdown  
And she dreams  
of crystal streams  
Of days gone by  
when we would lean  
Laughing fit to burst  
upon each other  
And when it rains,  
the rain falls down  
Washin' out the cattle town  
And she's  
far away somewhere  
In her eiderdown

And she dreams  
of crystal streams  
Of days gone by  
when we would lean  
Laughing fit to burst  
upon each other, whoa  
Lately,  
I been thinking, whoa  
Just how much  
I miss my lady  
Amoreena's  
in the corn field, whoa  
Brightenin' the daybreak  
Livin' like a lusty flower  
Runnin' through  
the grass for hours  
Rollin' through  
the hay, whoa  
Like a PUPPY 5  
Like a puppy child  
Whoa