

Paula Margeson

**Executive Director of the
Dayle McIntosh Center**

Interview conducted by

Morgan Russell

On March 29, 2018 in Arlington, TX

Disability Studies Minor

Special Collections and Archives

University of Texas at Arlington

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Biography

Born in Texas, Paula Margeson is the ninth in ten generations of individuals with visual impairments, including her mother, grandmother, daughter, and two grandchildren. Paula spent most of her grade school years at the Texas School for the Blind in Austin, Texas, a boarding school common for people with disabilities at the time. She was able to spend her senior year in Midland before attending Texas Tech with a view towards becoming a teacher.

After being advised by the Dean of Students that, due to her blindness, she would be refused teaching credentials, Paula dropped out of college, got married, and moved to southern California, where she resumed college, ultimately graduating from Cal State Fullerton with a degree in counseling. It was through a college friend that she found herself involved in disability advocacy, starting out in the critically important issue of housing. Her involvement in advocacy snowballed from there, continuing after a return to Texas in 1989.

In Texas, along with raising a visually impaired daughter and doing work in grant and technical writing, Paula found herself diving back into advocacy, sitting on the state rehabilitation and independent living councils, advising state-and-federal bodies, and going to work for Resource Centers on Independent Living (REACH) in Dallas.

Paula returned to California in 2014, where she is currently the Executive Director of the Dayle McIntosh Center for the Disabled, which provides services to people with disabilities and facilitates equal access and inclusion within the community.

Topics Discussed

- Early life and education
- Entry into advocacy
- Housing and shelter in Southern California
- Return to Texas, renewed advocacy, and REACH
- Working with ADAPT and the benefits of confrontation
- Growth, development, and continued advocacy in Texas
- Texas politics and a Wikipedia fail
- Sovereign immunity and Greg Abbott
- Equality vs. Equity
- H.R. 620 and Clint Eastwood
- The Collision of Politics, Business, and Shady Lawyers
- Modern Challenges
- Keeping Motivated
- The Intersectionality of DACA and Disability Advocacy
- A Mission Statement
- Just talking shop
- A personal journey towards activism
- Education and the challenges of mainstreaming
- The ghosts of eugenics
- The possibility of "reversal"
- Parenting with a visual impairment
- How far we've come, and where to go from here
- Final message to the next generation
- How toddlers detail conversations

Russell

Alright, this is Morgan Russell, interviewing Paula Margeson for the UT Arlington Texas Disability Oral History Project. Today's date is March 29th, and I am at my apartment in Arlington, Texas. (laughs) And where are you right now?

Margeson

At my office in Laguna Hills, California.

Russell

I am here to talk with Paula Margeson...I'm saying that right, right?

Margeson

Well, it's Mar-ghe-son.

Russell

(repeats pronunciation) Apologies. (laughs) About her life and her involvement in disability advocacy. So, I want to thank you for participating in the university's oral history program.

Margeson

Well, thank you for asking me.

Russell

Absolutely! So, we'll start pretty low-key at the beginning here, so, I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about yourself, where you're from, that kind of thing.

Margeson

<topic>Early life and education</topic>

Okay. I was originally born in Oklahoma but moved to Texas when I was three years old and grew up there. I am the ninth in ten generations in genetic blindness in my family, so I was educated at the Texas School for the Blind in Austin, that's where I went for the first eleven years of my education, and then the senior year I mainstreamed myself, I guess you could say, and graduated high school in Midland where my family lived. Then, I started my college career at Texas Tech and at the time my goal was to be a teacher and I was told by the Dead of Students that I wouldn't be issued a credential because of my blindness, and in those days, which was kind of the late '60's, nobody would buck authority much-

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

Certainly not me.

Russell

(chuckles)

Margeson

So, I just said, "okay, if you're gonna let me do what I want to do with my life, I ___? drop out of school and marry and do other things. So, my perspective has changed and needless to say if I were then the woman I am now I would probably have taken the school apart-

Russell

(chuckles)

Margeson

(chuckles) -before I let them tell me that!

Russell

I can imagine! I was looking at all the things you've done over the years, and there's an article about in the LA Times, and she's pretty tough! (chuckles)

Margeson

I've been around! You know, but I grew up in an era where you respected authority figures and just didn't, if they said, "That's the way it was," you kind of said, "Okay," but it's not that way anymore, you know. (chuckles)

Russell

Right.

Margeson

So, I married and we moved to California and I resed my college education, but of course changed my major because I didn't wanna hear another Dean of Students tell me that I couldn't get a credential for teaching. So, I got my degree in psychology, because in those days blind people were either getting degrees in counseling or piano tuning, and I don't have perfect pitch so I didn't think that piano tuning was the right career path for me. (chuckles)

Russell

Can I ask you one quick question; I have to stop you there...piano tuning?

Margeson

Yeah! A lot of blind people went into piano tuning back in the day. That's kind of a joke I'm making but in actuality there's a lot of truth behind it-

Russell

Hm.

Margeson

There were a select few careers that society sort of deemed appropriate for totally blind people to pursue, and that was one of them. Psychology or counseling was another. It wasn't that I was particularly interested in psychology or counseling, in fact I'm not a good counselor because I'm too much of a "fix-it person," and just sitting there listening to people's problems all day without being able to tell them, "Hey, go do this or go do that," that makes me crazy. I guess I've indirectly used my education, but in a very direct way.

Margeson

<topic>Entry into advocacy</topic>

So, I had two children and was a single mom for a while and then, after graduating from Cal State Fullerton, Orange County was opening its first independent living center. This was just when the movement was starting because it started here on the West Coast, and one of my college buddies said, "Hey, I gotta job at this new place, can you come and volunteer? Because I need help setting up a housing registry, and I want all of the listings to be in braille and print." So, I thought, "Hey, sure." So, I went to volunteer and, within six weeks, he told me he was leaving to go back and get his MSW and that the program was all mine! (laughs) So-

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

So, okay! I started as the housing coordinator at the independent living center and I worked my way up and eventually became the program director. And I think at that time I probably was supervising fifteen people, so we grew pretty fast.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

And that got me involved in the political arena because we were engaging in advocacy, particularly around the issue of housing because it was such a big issue here, and I remember we were, we had applied to HUD to get funding to build an apartment complex and we were awarded two-and-a-half

million dollars to do that. So, somewhere in the archives of HUD my signature is on, I don't know, four-hundred-pages of (chuckles) loan docents.

Margeson

<topic>Housing and shelter in Southern California</topic>

Which, thankfully, is paid off now. I learned a lot in that process. We had originally found a piece of land and, the neighbors were definitely against us putting a HUD project for people with disabilities in their neighborhood, so they showed up at city council, about five-hundreds of them, and it was a big broaha. I was personally threatened, but, you know, it was a fight worth engaging in.

We ultimately did not build on that bit of land, but we moved to, really, a better piece of land because the other one was near some power lines and that could have ultimately been unhealthy for the residents, even though in those days that had not been determined, but, in retrospect, it was better in the long run that we never got the project build and then ended up building a second project. We also opened the first emergency shelter for disabled people who were homeless. And those projects taught me how to negotiated with political leaders and decision makers because of lot of that had to happen.

Russell

Right.

Margeson

And we had to keep the programs funded.

Russell

(chuckles)

Margeson

<topic>Return to Texas, renewed advocacy, and REACH</topic>

Especially the shelter. So, that was more negotiating and more learning about how things worked politically. Then, in '89, my husband's business closed and we had a new baby to raise, and I said, "You know, I really don't want to farm this baby out to daycare, I want to raise her myself," so we decided to move back to Texas because we could afford to so that in the Texas economic environment whereas we couldn't here. And we came back, bought a house in Plano, and I was self-employed as a grant writer and a technical writer for seventeen years while I raised his kiddo. But, during that time, I had been so used to being involved in the community that it drove me crazy a little-

Russell

(chuckles)

Margeson

At home. So, I go on the board of directors of the independent living center in Dallas, which is REACH, and served in that capacity. Then, during that time frame, the ADA passed and state independent living

councils were also formed during that time with the Reauthorization of Rehab Act, and I thought that would be a really good place for me to serve – on the state independent living council – because I have that experience. So, I was appointed by Governor Bush to the council, I wanna say in '98 that happened, and.

Russell

Feels like forever ago, doesn't it?

Margeson

Yeah, because it feels like quite a while ago. But I really enjoyed working in the council and became, ultimately, the chair and then was the liaison to the state rehab council that, basically, was the advisor to the vocational rehabilitation program for the State of Texas.

So, I learned quite a lot about how state government works, being on those two councils, and was still in systems advocacy because, one of the mandates that we had as the state independent living council was that we developed the state plan for independent living, which was a three-year plan. We also were responsible to do what we could to build up a network of independent living services, so, here again that put me in a position of negotiation and advocacy.

<topic>Working with ADAPT and the benefits of confrontation</topic>

I've always felt that I worked really well with ADAPT and Bob Kafka, because they get the attention of the legislators and the public because their techniques are very confrontive, and there's a real need for that because you can't get anywhere with people if you can't get their attention. So, I applaud their methods, it's not exactly my approach-

Russell

Mm-hm

Margeson

But I could come in and negotiate and compromise and, kind of be-

Russell

The good cop

Margeson

Once everybody's ticked off be the voice of reason a little bit. (laughs)

Russell

So, you're kind of the good cop.

Margeson

Yeah, yeah I got to wear the white hat.

Margeson

<topic>Growth, development, and continued advocacy in Texas</topic>

And so that kind of worked for us and we were able, while I was on the state independent living council, I think we added seven centers to the network. I think we had seventeen when I came on, when I left we had twenty-five, so it was a lot of growth.

That was a good thing and, as issues came up that were important, related to people with disabilities, we were a voice for our community, was part of how I saw our function. It wasn't just all about making sure that centers were staffed and funded, there were other issues that came along during that time that we needed to advocate for, that related to disability rights, or how rights weren't being, legislation wasn't being followed as it should've been. By that I mean primarily, the individuals with disabilities education act - IDEA - the rehabilitation act, and the ADA was the three big ones. So, I was able to attend the national independent living conferences, and also the association of programs for rural independent living, connect with other leaders across the nation, and be able to have that national perspective along with the state perspective.

Making progress in Texas wasn't always easy.

Russell

Mm-hm

Margeson

It wasn't necessarily that we always had the ear of the legislature. So, we had to do some face-to-face meetings and try to educate and advocate to get leaders to see our side of key issues. So, there was a lot of that, it wasn't something that I would say I was ever one-hundred-percent comfortable with, confronting is not my personality type, but when you believe strongly in something, you can definitely rise to the occasion. (laughs)

Russell

So, you did have to get confrontational-

Margeson

Yeah

Russell

From time-to-time.

Margeson

Yeah, we did have to. And, when we needed to do that, then, that's what we did. I know that we had a few allies, in particular Vassellini [sic] was a big ally of the disability community during the time that I was on the state independent living council, and working to advance our movement and basically, our belief system.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

<topic>Texas politics and a Wikipedia fail</topic>

Then I went to work for REACH. One of my criteria for accepting the job was to be able to continue to work with the state independent living council and the rehabilitation council because I really enjoyed that and it allowed me to keep my finger on the pulse of the movement from the state gubernatorial perspective

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

And I didn't want to lose that. So, the director agreed that I could continue in that capacity. And actually, the law says that you're only supposed to serve two three-year terms, but I was on the state independent living council for ten years and then I basically had to resign because I felt like I needed to make room for someone new to come on and as long as I would continue to serve they would continue to allow me to do that! (laughs)

Russell

(laughs) That's Texas politics for ya.

Margeson

(laughs) Yeah, that's Texas politics, that's, you know, the governor. Basically, the view is he appoints you and you serve until he's done with you serving, that's basically the mindset. And that was one of the things we had to challenge, believe it or not, both the state independent living council and the state rehabilitation council were under-appointed, woefully under-appointed, and it was difficult to get work done with just a handful of people. We asked the attorney general for a ruling about that, I'm trying to think if it was Greg Abbott at the time...

Russell

Oh, boy.

Margeson

I think it was before Greg, I think it was the one that was attorney general before Mr. Abbott, you don't want to hear me rant about him, but. (laughs)

Russell

Abbott or the guy before Abbott?

Margeson

Abbott.

Russell

Abbott.

Margeson

I can't remember, was it, gosh, it seems like it started with a D...

Russell

I wanna say Dewhurst, David Dewhurst?

Margeson

Yeah, Dewhurst! Yeah!¹

Russell

'Cause he's the lieutenant governor now, I believe.

Margeson

Oh, is he?²

¹ This is the "Wikipedia fail." We're both wrong, on multiple levels. The attorney general before Abbott was current senator Jon Cornyn. David Dewhurst is not, in fact, Lieutenant Governor at present; that is Dan Patrick. Dewhurst was Lt. Governor for Rick Perry, Abbott's predecessor; before that, he was Texas Land Commissioner under then-Governor Bush.

² Again, he is not

Russell

I believe so.

Margeson

Well

Russell

But don't quote me on that. I'll have to look that up. (laughs)

Margeson

Well, here was the dilemma: You had a state with the state practice of the governor appoints, the appointee serves, until the governor releases them, but you have several legislation that says, "These terms are limited to two three-year terms." So, we asked for a ruling from the attorney general of which took precedent. Well, of course they didn't like that. We got called in, and they said, "If you will rescind the request for this ruling, we will fully appoint both committees, within thirty days." So, we did that, we-

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

<topic>Sovereign immunity and Greg Abbott</topic>

We agreed to rescind, and they did follow through and appoint both councils. Another big battle that we had was use of sovereign immunity by the attorney general, especially in ADA and rehabilitation act complaints, which was just heinous.

Russell

What is sovereign immunity?

Margeson

Okay, so a state can, and I will state right up front that few do, but of course Texas with its mindset that it basically can secede the Union if it wants to.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

And doesn't really have to follow federal law. [Texas] Was one of the few states that's ever used this. Basically, what it says is that if a state, elects not to comply with a legal, federal requirement of a federal act they can declare them sovereign from that act. So, how that played out was, someone would file a complaint against the state for non-compliance, let's just say with the ADA.

Russell

Right.

Margeson

And, one of the cases that I remember because it was so blatantly ridiculous was a professor out at Texas Tech, and she had a visual impairment and she requested that some fluorescent paint be put on the edges of steps so that when she came up to them she could see that there were stairs, going up or down, and it would be safer for her. And, they refused to do that. She had requested that as an ADA accommodation. And, I mean, a little thing-

Russell

That sounds eminently reasonable.

Margeson

Yeah, very reasonable! And, gosh, it was Abbott that refused that case and declared sovereign immunity. I remember I was so angry because when he got his law degree and set up practice or went into a firm, the building where the attorneys were housed wasn't accessible, wasn't ADA-compliant, and he used the ADA to force them to make modifications for himself. But when it came to people in the state, filing a claim against [the state because] they were state employees like this professor was, then he declared sovereign immunity and I felt like that was, myself and most all of the disability community, felt that that was hypocritical.

Russell

Yeah, I have noticed that Greg Abbott does not have a good reputation with the disability community in the state of Texas.

Margeson

No, not at all, not at all. And then, you know, when he was running for Governor, he played off his disability, what he was able to accomplish. You know, there was a video ad where he shows himself pulling himself up the ramps of a parking garage and how hard it was and how he overcame his disability one step at a time and that's how he was going to lead Texas, one step at a time blah blah blah.

Russell

(chuckles)

Margeson

But we felt very strongly that he was not an advocate, and you know, just reading of, I've heard that people with disabilities, when they make it big and they're very successful, they can either have the attitude, that "I'm going to help my brothers and sisters now because I'm in a position to do so," or the attitude, "I pulled myself up by my bootstraps and you can do the same." And that seems to be Greg Abbott's attitude. So, no, he's not respected in the disability community.

Russell

It's interesting to hear, this sovereign immunity idea, I'd never heard that-

Margeson

Yeah, yeah.

Russell

A lot of things in Texas make sense. For example, my wife, she's the ESL coordinator at her high school, and it's a constant battle to get the school district to be in compliance on federal guidelines for educating.

Margeson

Mm-hm.

Russell

English Language Learners, and it's a constant battle and she's constantly saying, "We could be sued, this is a very serious issue," and they'll typically like, "Well, if they sue, they sue, whatever."

Margeson

And that's exactly what would happen. If someone did sue the state for non-compliance, they would probably declare themselves sovereign immune. I could see that happening.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

Because that's when it comes into play, when an actual claim is filed against the state, then state can basically step in and say, "We declare ourselves exempt from this." It's what it comes down to. And like I said, very few states do that, I think only seven in the whole fifty have ever done it in regard to the ADA, but Texas has done it more than once. That's not something I'm proud of.

Russell

Mm.

Margeson

<topic>Equality vs. Equity</topic>

It's funny, you know, I'm learning a lot about the difference between equality and equity. We used to have our battles around equality, but equality and equity are not the same thing. You want people to have accommodations that are really fair to them, that are equitable, not just equal, you know? Because equal doesn't work.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

Doesn't work for everybody, you know?

Russell

And those are much more, kind of nebulous, smaller battles, it seems, would you say?

Margeson

Say that again.

Russell

Oh, like the battles over, say, equity, over accommodations and, I've read about, the issues in the civil rights community, no, the, the

Margeson

Mm-hm.

Russell

Well this is a rather, many different facets of the civil rights movement have said, in the beginning, the fifties and sixties and seventies it was, not necessarily "bigger," but more black-and-white, a battle against segregation, a battle against, not allowing people to have teaching credentials, or

Margeson

Mm-hm.

Russell

And, as time moves on and you win those battles for equality, and then, and you can tell me if I've got it wrong, and then it becomes harder to get in the news, I guess I'm saying.

Margeson

<topic>H.R. 620 and Clint Eastwood</topic>

Well, you know, I'm sure you're aware of H.R. 620, which is a horrible piece of legislation that has passed the House of Representatives.

Russell

In Texas?

Margeson

In the U.S.

Russell

In the U.S.

Margeson

But will affect all people, because what it basically does is changes how ADA noncompliant complaints are handled. It passed the House, really what it comes down to is a huge battle between business and the disability community.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

And, I gotta tell you this whole thing started with Clint Eastwood, so, to say that I'm not a fan of Clint Eastwood would be putting it very mildly.

Russell

Clint Eastwood?!

Margeson

Because Clint Eastwood, of all people.

Russell

(astonished laughter)

Margeson

Because, what happened was, good ole' Clint was the mayor of a little touristy, elite town called Carmel in California.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

And he had a very high-end and nice little classy hotel. So what the ADA says is that, when you have an existing property, you don't have to make modifications unless you decide to remodel and when you do then you have to modify for accessibility. Well, he wanted to remodel but he did not want to make it accessible because it "spoiled the ambience," in his opinion.

So he was the first person to start to pass what we call "ADA notification legislation," and basically what it says is that, businesses don't have to be compliant until a complaint is filed, and then they have a 120 days, or a 180days to change whatever violation that they're guilty of, without any penalties, without any retribution. So, what that means is that businesses will just say, "Well, I'm not gonna do that unless someone makes me."

So the first few times that this ADA notification legislation was proposed, we were able to defeat it, and I remember the first time, when Clint Eastwood was at Congress testifying, an eleven-year-old boy with cerebral palsy testified also. He said to him [Eastwood], "You used to be my hero but you're not anymore because you want to take away my basic human rights." And that was very powerful. But now, as time has gone on and business has figured out ways to be a little more sneaky.

Russell

(chuckles)

Margeson

So, this legislation, H.R. 620, was proposed this year, and it is called "The ADA Education and Reform Act," which sounds so, so positive.

Russell

It does, doesn't it?

Margeson

"Well, we just want to educate and reform, you know," and it's insidious. And basically what it does is, it tells people with disabilities, "You have to prove that your civil rights have been violated," so if you find something that is not accessible, you have to, yourself, serve written notice to the property owner and you have to quote the portions of the ADA that they're violating, and then they have, let's see, I think sixty days to respond to you and they have another 120 days to make any kind of modifications. It totally puts the burden of compliance on the backs of the disability community, and it basically says to the business community, "You don't worry about it, you don't have to do this."

Supposedly this is to combat so-called "drive-by lawsuits"? But the irony is that only about five states have added, see because the ADA doesn't allow any punitive damages. It's not allowed and it was structured that way for this very reason that we didn't want people to take advantage of

Russell

Right.

Margeson

Of the act. So, we got that to be one of the main reviewers when the act was crafted. There was sixty of us across the nation who went to Washington, D.C., to look at the first draft and that's one of the things that I'm the proudest of, so I take it very personally when people mess with the ADA. (laughs)

Russell

(laughs) That, that must be frustrating.

Margeson

<topic>The Collision of politics, business, and shady lawyers</topic>

It is very frustrating, and we have done an inordinate amount of time to educate and time to talk to legislators and, one of the legislators here in Orange County, he's a Democrat and he is known for being very, I guess, you know, interested in human rights. He actually said, "Well, I'm not going to have this job always and when I leave here I have to get a job and I don't want to alienate business." So.

Russell

(exasperated sigh)

Margeson

He is very self-serving. So only a few states, California, Florida, and I think three others have passed additional legislation that allows punitive damages under the ADA, and now they don't like what they got because there are drive-by lawsuits, and like last year, for example, six-thousand, basically I'm rounding, six-thousand ADA complaints were filed.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

The vast majority were by twelve attorneys who have made this a business and use people with disabilities, basically, as their puppets to file these complaints. Well, we're not for that, either. We don't support that approach, we the disability community, we don't support exploitation, we just want honest compliance. And, so, this is how the case was made and how this terrible piece of legislation actually passed the House. So now we're frantically trying to keep the Senate adopting a companion bill and, up until this point, we've been able to get forty-three senators to sign on that they would not endorse a companion bill. Our goal is to keep this from actually ever making it to the president's desk, because I have no doubt, he would sign it. He's all about business.

Russell

Yeah. (nervous laughter)

Margeson

So, I guess there's always, always opportunities for advocacy.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

<topic>Modern Challenges</topic>

It's been such an intense time for advocates with what's, you know, the efforts to gut the Affordable Care Act, which has horrible ramifications for the disability community. And efforts to basically kind of dismantle the effectiveness of the IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. So, I think advocates are just worn out trying to safeguard these very, very crucial, vital civil rights. Rights to access in the community, rights for fair and nonrestrictive education, rights to adequate healthcare, things that are so basic to life. And we're fighting every day to maintain those rights. So, it's very discouraging, it feels like we're going backwards now. And-

Russell

You keep stealing questions from me! (laughs)

Margeson

I'm sorry! (laughs)

Russell

That was literally going to be a question. I was going to go, "So, do you feel like we're going backwards, or..."

Margeson

Oh, definitely! Definitely. It's so disheartening. I can't tell you how disheartening it is. We're spending so much energy just trying to maintain what we had already gained, let alone making any progress. So...amazingly in this budget that just passed, for some unknown reason to all of us there was a twelve-million-dollar increase for independent living. We have been getting steady decreases, so we're like, "What the heck happened with that?" And I don't know whether, I don't know whether we've just been thrown a bone, like, "We gave you money, now go away and shut up"...

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

I don't know. I don't know what motivated that, none of us do. But I think under this current administration, advocates are always gonna be...and you know what? It's absolutely crazy some of the stuff, for example, there is still a private, I don't wanna call it "school," I'm not sure what you would call it, it's a private institution-

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

And they actually are still using electric shock for behavior modification. And mostly their students are people with autism, and so, you know ADAPT has been

Russell

In the United States!? Today?!

Margeson

Yeah! Yes! It's in the United States today, and it was brought for a couple of years to the attention of the FDA which is where monitoring or control of this kind of situation falls. So, regulations were drawn up that said that you cannot use electric shock to modify a person's behavior, but the director of the FDA has refused to sign those regulations for two years. Can you even freakin' believe that?!

Russell

I'm literally, and I mean that in the, in the dictionary sense, stunned that

Margeson

Yes!

Russell

I mean, ah!

Margeson

You would think that we had put that sort of thing so far behind, but

Russell

That's something out of, that you see...Hollywood makes movies about horrors that that was done.

Margeson

<topic>Keeping Motivated</topic>

Exactly, exactly, it's horrifying, just, it's heartbreaking to even think that people with autism, if they get unruly, or they are viewed that way, that they can actually just, be shocked. I mean, people don't even do that to their dogs. It's crazy. So, the fight goes on, there's always good fights (laughs) to be had! You know what? As much as I'm not the confrontative person-

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

I'm a person that will stand up for what I think is right, and I think a lot of us feel that way. There just comes a time when, whatever your own reticence and your own comfort zone is, you have to lay that

aside and say, "No, no, this is not right, and I'm not gonna be silent." So, that's probably my greatest motivator as an advocate, because I believe in human rights, and I think that they're precious and they need to be preserved and safeguarded, and if that causes me to do what is not comfortable for me to do then I'm gonna do it. So... (laughs)

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

That's what I have to say about that!

Russell

I feel like I should give you a round of applause! That was...

Margeson

(laughing) Thank you!

Russell

I cannot even begin to imagine how frustrating many of these things must be. Like I mentioned my wife, she's not just working in ESL, she's Hispanic, as well, and every day she tells me how frustrating it is right now, and (laughs)

Margeson

<topic>The Intersectionality of DACA and Disability Advocacy</topic>

Yeah! She probably feels the way I do. And on my staff, I've probably got about four awesome employees who are all DACA, all of them have disabilities, all of them have gotten their degrees, they're all amazing employees. And now, I'm worried about what's gonna happen to people that have become personally dear to me, so that's yet another fight that we're gonna have to have.

And, you know, the movement I'm part of here, as soon as the election occurred and we saw how things were going, we issued a statement of solidarity that we stand with our brothers and sisters, with anybody, any population that is treated as less than, are viewed as somehow not worthy or inferior or they're not an equal member of this society, that we stand in solidarity with them and, so... (sighs) I just, it just breaks my heart to see, to know that they're worried, that they don't know whether they're gonna actually be [allowed to stay], we were actually strategizing ways that we could protect them.

Russell

Right.

Margeson

And I'm totally on board, "Well, you know, if you send us over to Mexico, to, do"...we had a consumer advocate here who was so motivated by the services he received that he went back to Mexico and started his own version of an independent living center, and we provided him some technical support, so they said, "You can send us down to meet with him, on a business trip, and then if we can get back in the country, then we'd have a legitimate stamp on our passports." So, we were strategizing how can we protect these people. It just, it brings you to a different level of advocacy-

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

You realize that you're really talking about people's lives, and, how...how they could be sent, literally, away from home and family and all that they've known for their whole lives.

Russell

And to countries where the situation for people with disabilities is...a little bit behind, to

Margeson

Yes!

Russell

To be kind.

Margeson

Yes, to say the least.

Russell

'Cause, I remember when I went to Mexico with my wife to visit members of her family, I didn't see a single ramp anywhere.

Margeson

I bet you didn't! (laughs)

Russell

At the very least a ramp.

Margeson

It was very weird because, when I've gone to Europe a couple of times, and we've been, London, Paris, Dublin, Edinburgh, Munich, Rome, it's weird to us, because this is my husband telling me because I'm totally blind, but he said, "I see so few people with disabilities out in society here, I don't get it." I don't know what that's about. That's just, an aside, but (chuckles) and yet, in some ways, their policies are ahead of us.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

You know, especially in Europe.

Russell

Right.

Margeson

<topic>A mission statement</topic>

-not so much other Third World countries certainly, but, you know, people are starting to catch on that the whole cornerstone of the disability rights movement is that people with disabilities are the best experts on themselves. And they have an innate right to say how they wanna live their lives, not to be managed by others, not to be treated because their disability is undesirable, but to make life choices just as nondisabled people get to do, and that is just such a human basic right! I feel like I'm, why should this even need to be said for God's sake?! You know?! So, of course I have a daughter who's blind, I have two granddaughters who are blind and, all of them still live in Texas and, it concerns me a lot how their lives are gonna play out, you know? And I don't wanna see them going backwards and losing the rights that we've all fought so hard to gain.

Russell

I can imagine.

Margeson

So I'm pretty passionate about this, even as an old lady.

Russell

(laughs, stutters) It's gonna be one of those statements where, "So...how's the weather?" (nervous laughter) And you keep answering my questions before I ask them, too!

Margeson

<topic>Just talking shop</topic>

Yeah! Well... once I get going... (laughs) You're probably, "Wait, I don't want you to start about that, I want you to start about this..."

Russell

I have no problem with that, makes life a little bit easier.

Margeson

Good!

Russell

I was very afraid, because one of my classmates had an interview with someone who was very much, "Yeah, no, I suppose, yeah we did do that..."

Margeson

Oh!

Russell

It was a Robert De Niro interview.

Margeson

(laughs)

Russell

Because he's known for that!

Margeson

(laughs) I can see that! You know what's funny, there's a guy on my staff, and he's very, very much an introvert

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

But! Amazingly, he, ___? person with disability, before he became disabled was involved in community theater. So, he's a member, he's on the staff of our youth program, and we've done some youth training, and I've been there as part of the training team, and all a sudden this guy is like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde! He's just engaged with those kids, he's got them laughing, he's telling them anecdotes and I was like, "Dave! I don't get how you're so reticent, you're so reserved, you're so quiet, and then, in the classroom, you're all a sudden someone else!" And he goes, "I'm just acting."

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

"I'm just playing the part of teacher!" He goes, "As long as I think I'm acting I can do it." But it was kind of funny to me, because, it's not really his natural bent, you know?

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

But I'm a talker, from a long line of talkers, so I don't need a lot of prompting. (laughs)

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

The only thing I would've needed you tell me would be, "No, this is not the direction we want this interview to go, we need you to talk about this instead of that," you know.

Russell

Well, it is important for me to allow you to tell your own story, to a certain extent, and there are a couple things I wanna hit, and we've hit most of them so far, because this has been an incredible interview. I don't want to cut you off, or say, "No, you're not allowed to talk about that, even though it's important to you."

Margeson

(laughs)

Russell

"I need to check this box of mine over here." That not a good interview and that would go against, as you so eloquently put it, the very cornerstone of the disability rights movement, of me sitting here going, "Yeah, no, no no no, we're gonna go this way!" (laughs)

Margeson

I appreciate that you just let me kind of speak extemporaneously because it's easier once you're in the flow of it.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

You know, to not have to stop and redirect your thinking. But I did think of something that I was gonna tell you.

Russell

Okay.

Margeson

<topic>A personal journey towards activism</topic>

When I was at the school for the blind, and this was really when people didn't have a voice. For some reason we decided we wanted to take a stand about something, and we got together and we went into the president's office and asked for...oh...I think it was that we wanted to have a social time on Sunday afternoon where the boys and girls could actually get together, and so we kind of had our own little march (laughs), so to speak, and I remember a teacher saying to me, "Paula, I was so surprised to see you there, I never would've thought you'd do something like that," like I had done a bad thing.

And, for me, you know, I was just standing up for what we thought was fair and right, and that we needed to let our voices be heard, you know I felt very condemned by that, as a young person, I'm gonna say I was probably in ninth grade when that happened. So, it's been a real, personal journey, and personal growth, to be the one that stands up and speaks out because, I haven't always felt that, the support of others in the community to do that, you know, so, I think what happened is, when you feel so passionately that something's right, that overrides any feeling of condemnation or reservation that you might have. At least I can say that that's true for me.

Russell

I think it's true for many people. I hope it's true for many people! (laughs)

Margeson

I think that it is, I think when it comes down to it, and I'm really, really counting on that Russell, I hope that we as a society do band together and speak out for what's right, because we will lose so much. And we don't even understand people that are, "Well, I don't care if these DACA kids stay here or not, it doesn't concern me, doesn't matter to me," but what they don't understand is, it may be them today and it may be you tomorrow. When you start going on a slippery slope where people's human rights are disavowed and not protected, then where does it stop?

Russell

So, you would definitely say that all of these issues are all interconnected? They're not separate from each other.

Margeson

Absolutely! Absolutely. And that's why it's important to have a voice. So now I can answer specific questions, I'll shut up. (laughs)

Russell

(laughs) No! No, please don't shut up! I did want to go back a little bit, and once again, you preceded me, anticipated where I was going to go. Did the Texas School for the Blind that you attended, and you mentioned, "social time" for boys and girls to meet and hang out together-

Margeson

Mm-hm.

Russell

So, you lived at this school?

Margeson

<topic>Education and the challenges of mainstreaming</topic>

I did. So, before the passage of Public Law 4192, which I think was during Lyndon Johnson's presidency, students with, especially students with blindness or deafness or developmental disabilities, were not integrated into regular schools. It was very typical that a state would have one school for blind students, one school for deaf students, and a school for what they then called "the mentally retarded." And the students that were young people, that were in education age, six-to-seventeen-or-eighteen or whatever, they would literally leave their families and towns of origin and go to these schools where they stayed, some of them year-round, in my case at the School for the Blind, we were there from Labor Day until the

end of May. Some of us would get to go home for the holidays, most of us, the school became our family, and that was our growing up environment, and that's how it was done.

So, then my daughter, who's blind, when she came along, the law had passed and she was actually in the first group of kids to be mainstreamed under the new law, and that was a whole different environment when I had to step up and be an advocate, on a personal level, because, as her teacher said, "I've never taught a blind child, I don't know how to teach a blind child, if I have to teach one, we should get more money." And that's what she said to me! So, I had to, as her mom, look out for her interests, and she had a little bit of vision, very little.

Russell

Mm.

Margeson

And they didn't want to teach her braille, because they said, "Well, she's got some vision, so we'll just write really big letters," and I said, "No! Because I know this is progressive, I know she is going to lose her sight, and I want her to be grounded in reading and writing and have her own medium when that happens, so that's at least one thing she's not going to have to deal with!" But I mean, I feel like when I say that, it's not rocket science, it's intuitive, but I had to fight for that, because that's just not how they saw that it should've played out. You know?

Russell

Which seems strange, you would think it would be that teaching in braille would be easier than writing in giant letters on everything.

Margeson

Yeah!

Russell

But...

Margeson

Yeah...they didn't think that they should have to, it was just a difference of opinion.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

I would think...well, I guess...maybe teaching braille, braille is, in and of itself is not hard.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

But, it gets complicated because it takes up so much space, it's very abbreviated so, it's like learning another language, you have to learn all of these contractions and, it's like learning shorthand?

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

Abbreviations and so, you don't just teach the basic alphabet and then every word is spelled out, so a blind kid, they'll learn braille and they'll learn the alphabet but then they have to learn how to spell the words the way they're spelled but then they have to learn how they're written in braille, which is a whole different thing. So, it's a little bit complex.

Russell

Yeah.

Margeson

But, the point was, this little kid, probably by her teens was going to be totally blind, and there wasn't gonna be any option for writing big letters, and so starting her education off with a medium that she's ultimately gonna end up using for the rest of her life just made sense to me. But evidently, not necessarily to the teachers, so... (chuckles)

Russell

It can, it can be interesting, where conflict arises.

Margeson

<topic>The ghosts of eugenics</topic>

It can, it can. And, I know I felt judged a lot by the medical profession felt that, overall, if you have a genetic disability, you should not have children. "Why would you ever want to do that?" But see, from my point of view, that's a denial of self, that's like saying, , "I'm not gonna bring a child into the world because it might be blind" and yet here I am, a blind person, leading what I think is a quality life, why would I then not wanna do that? Why would that be, because a child of mine might not have one of its

senses, and yet still have the remaining four and intellect and the ability to just engage and experience all manner of wonderful things that life has to offer. And yet the medical profession, because they can't fix it, you know, they think it's, later on my family got into a study in Dallas with the Retina Foundation and they were able to isolate the gene that carries our blindness.

Russell

Mm.

Margeson

And I said "Well, that's good, I don't really know what good it will do us," and they said "Well, then you can test every pregnancy and if this gene is mutated or it's there then you can abort the pregnancy." "We're not gonna do that! Now gonna happen! That's not part of our family value system!" We believe life is good the way it comes, and we're about making the best of our realities and basically, sometimes I try to really get youth with disabilities to understand that there's pride in having a disability, that you are a survivor, you are a person who can adapt and can find new ways and different ways of doing things and doesn't that even put you one up, because you have to work harder, and yet you're able to do it, so, be proud of yourself and your disability and what you can accomplish. That's whole 'nother passion of mine!

Russell

It's a good message, definitely.

Margeson

I think it is, and you know what? It really does kind of relate back to advocacy because people come from the perspective of, "Oh, people with disabilities, they're to be pitied, we wouldn't want to be like that, we wouldn't want to deal with what they're dealing with," and you know that perspective of disempowerment and just, lack of value and worth, that's what makes it easier to then discredit the rights of that population. So!

Russell

(chuckles) That is, though you have once again anticipated one of my questions.

Margeson

(laughs) Okay!

Russell

And partially answered it, because you generally associate that kind of eugenics based thinking with-

Margeson

Mm-hm.

Russell

<topic>The possibility of "reversal" </topic>

You know, the 1900's, well, the 1800's, even. And then the other day, while I was actually working on this interview, I saw a news article, I should've saved it, I'm on a laptop, not my regular computer, so I don't have it saved on this, but about scientists, and here I think the English language is about to fail me, so I apologize. I don't want to use the word "restore," there's been some kind of breakthrough in a surgical procedure to...reverse? Restore? I...mm...blindness, and-

Margeson

Well, it would depend on type of, I mean, there's so, so many-

Russell

Right.

Margeson

Causes and reasons for blindness, but yes, and...I'm gonna tell you truthfully, and I really have struggled with this for a long time, if a quote-unquote "cure" were available, quote-unquote "medication" were available, that would reverse my blindness, I wouldn't opt in, and that's because, this is part of who I am, part of my identity, it's so strongly part of my identity, that to me it would be an utter denial of self, and I would have to rethink who I am. It'd be like saying to you, "Okay, Russell, we can give this pill and, lo and behold, you can become a woman!" You know, you'd probably be like, "No way! Why would I wanna do that?" Well.

Russell

That's not for me, that's not who I am.

Margeson

"That's not who I am." So, from my perspective that I'm gonna say, here's my caveat-

Russell

Okay.

Margeson

I'm a very positive thinker, I'm a glass-half-full person. I feel like life has been good, it's been fantastic,

and the thought of not being able to have this opportunity for the lack of one of my senses is absolutely appalling to me. But not all blind people have that perspective, and for some of them it's the deepest, darkest hole, and they struggle with it every single day. So, if their choice was, "I'm opting out of this reality, and I will take the pill or the cure," I wouldn't judge them for that, because their reality's not my reality, so they've gotta do what they've gotta do that feels right for them, but like, in the Deaf community-

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

There is a cultural...norm that, you know, that's why the Deaf community in general is, first of all does not view deafness as a disability.

Russell

Right.

Margeson

Not at all. They view it as a difference, but not a disability, and so they have a whole culture that they've built, and they would be very judgmental of someone with genetic deafness who chose not to have children, 'cause they would view that as an affront to them and their whole society. But, I'm kind of like, this is an individual thing, and it just comes back down to people being experts of their own lives, you know. So, for me, I wouldn't, I wouldn't want to alter my reality. I like who I am, I like the experiences that I've had, and I think my blindness has actually opened doors for me, the door to my career, for example.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

It has given me purpose, it's opened the door to some relationships, and...I don't know! It's just part of my uniqueness, so I'm good with that.

Russell

If you can give me one second, I think I just heard a...thunk from my son's room-

Margeson

Oh!

Russell

So just give me one second real quick here.

Margeson

Alrighty!

(Note: Silence from 1:06:49-1:07:40)

Chuy³

Daddy!

Russell

I'm back!

Margeson

Hi!

Russell

Yeah, someone was getting up into mischief. His dresser is right next to his crib, and he's finally gotten big enough that he can reach into the nearest drawer-

Margeson

Oh!

Russell

-and there's diapers in that drawer, and so there's about ten diapers scattered around his room!

Margeson

(laughs)

³ Jesús Donald Russell Ramirez, the interviewer's then 15-month-old son

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

Well, he was busy! He was exploring his possibilities.

Russell

And I'm all, "I'm gonna get him out of there before he starts breaking things." So, say hello! Say hello!⁴

Margeson

Good idea.

Chuy

Da-da-da?

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

(laughs) What a cutie!

Russell

Now my dog's wandering in, guys, I'm still busy! Shoo, shoo-shoo-shoo! (dog collar rattles)

Margeson

(laughs)

Russell

(laughs) Say hello!

Margeson

⁴ Statements such as "say hello" or "say hi" are being said by the interviewer to his son

<topic>Parenting with a visual impairment</topic>
Oh my gosh, I worked at home with a baby so I know what that's like.

Russell

(laughs, sighs)

Margeson

I was doing most of my grant writing during that time, and I had to kind of keep her confined, so I put gates up so that I could keep my ear on her, I couldn't just let her go throughout the whole house and not be able to hear what she was doin'.

Russell

Of course not. So, since we're on the topic, I didn't even think about asking this, I didn't write down anything about asking this, are there particular challenges to being visually impaired and dealing with a toddler, because I can't even imagine-

Chuy

(giggles)

Russell

(laughs) Trying to do that with this little one.

Margeson

That is a really big challenge, when they're tiny infants it's easy-

Chuy

Da-da-daddy?

Margeson

-because they're containable-

Russell

Yes.

Margeson

You can kind of keep track of them, but boy, when they start moving around... And people try a lot of different techniques, like I tried putting bells on my kids' shoes. Well, they just took them off, that was the end of that. If they couldn't get the bells off they took the shoes off, so I didn't get a kind of audio feedback where they were, so I just kind of had to really limit how far they could explore and, just constantly have my ear on them. Challenges were things like, feeding babies, you know, you got the food on the spoon and they turn their head and you put it in their ear, or in their hair, they're not looking.

Chuy

Da-da-da-da!

Russell

Yes, you did that this morning didn't you?

Margeson

Gosh, he sounds so cute.

Russell

He's lucky he's cute.

Margeson

Fifteen months?

Russell

Mm-hm!

Margeson

That's a cute age. I adore babies. One of my goals, when I retire, I want to be one of the surrogate grandmas that goes to the newborn, in the nursery at hospitals and just holds babies, 'cause I think that's one of the times I'm most at peace is holdin' a baby. (laughs) So!

Russell

I like when he's asleep! Sorry. I feel very at peace when I hold him and he's asleep. (laughs)

Margeson

Yeah! Like to hold him when he's asleep?

Russell

Then he wakes up and he doesn't want to be held anymore, he wants to go run around.

Margeson

But those little tiny newborns, they like to be held.

Russell

They do.

Margeson

So, I would love to do that, oh, goodness, I would love it so much.

Russell

No, leave that alone. (sighs) Let me get through a few more questions, Chuy.

Margeson

Okay.

Russell

(laughs) I'm not sure how much longer he's gonna let me continue here.

Margeson

That's okay! We've covered a lot of territory.

Russell

Yes, we have.

Margeson

I know we'll be good.

Russell

I do wanna ask one final, just, kind of a summative, and I think I'm gonna be able to interview you again, but I'm not sure, because I know we have to do a second interview, well that's a whole other issue, we'll talk about that later. But, just kind of a summative, what has been the biggest, you think, how would you feel has been the biggest positive change between when you were younger-

Chuy

(sneezes)

Russell

Young, and now? For disabled people, the disabled community.

Margeson

Oh, that's hard to put my finger on one thing...

Russell

Well, just a collection of things.

Margeson

Okay.

Chuy

Da-da!

Margeson

<topic>How far we've come, and where to go from here</topic>

Well, I definitely think that there's been some progress in how people with disabilities are viewed by society. That we're not viewed as so incapacitated. I think people are more open to those of us who have disabilities as seen as capable, and, I'm hoping that I'm correct about this, that's definitely what I've observed, and you know I've done a lot of traveling by myself.

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

And spent a lot of time on airplanes, even still, at least once a month I'm flying to Sacramento and being out in the public, people seem more willing to help, to offer assistance, and they seem less offended if you say, "No, I'm good, thank you for offering." So, I think that just the overall viewpoint of disability has shifted some, and that we're...not viewed as, you know, helpless and dependent as much. There's more an attitude of acceptance. But that's the reason why we really get on our, our soapbox about things like what we call "inspiration porn." Have you heard that term?

Russell

Yes.

Margeson

So, we don't want to go backwards, we don't want things that present us as, , "Oh, you know, they overcame this and that and isn't this wonderful," we just really, kind of want to be viewed like everybody else is viewed. So, there's, this is a weird concept, you know, in the disability community itself you can be viewed as equal, or special, and I think a lot of times in the disability community we want it both ways, we want to be special and we want to be equal, but it kind of doesn't work that way. You want to think it through, and you really wanna be equal with your fellow citizens and stand toe-to-toe and meet the challenges of life like they do or do you want to be in this quote-unquote "special category" where things need to be done differently for you, by you, or whatever. So, that's a real, I think paradigm shift that's slowly occurring over time. So, that's why we don't like terms like "special needs," our needs are the same as anyone else's, they just may need to be met in different ways, but the needs aren't, the need for, you know, to survive, and the need to thrive and the need to discover our own sense of self-worth

Chuy

Daddy?

Margeson

Advance as far as we can, just like anyone else, you know?

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

It's not different, it's not special, it's just what we all need.

Russell

Amen.

Margeson

(laughs)

Russell

I can't think of anything else to say to that! It's just...amen.

Margeson

Well...

Russell

Well, I think...how do you feel? Do you feel like that's a good place to stop for now?

Margeson

I do, I do. Then, you know, after you listen to the tape, which is gonna be tedious for you and I'm sorry about that, if you see some gaping holes then call me back and we'll just fill in the gaps.

Russell

Absolutely. I just wanna end by saying this has been, I was very nervous, before

Margeson

Aww.

Russell

But, this has been a, a very...thank you so much for talking to me.

Margeson

Aww, you just

Russell

I've learned so much in the past hour-and-twenty-minutes.

Margeson

<topic>Final message to the next generation</topic>

Well, I'm very honored to be asked about my story and, because I think it's an important story to tell and I want, especially the younger generation of people with disabilities not to forget their heritage and not to forget that some of us really had to fight to bring them to the place of enjoying the rights that we have today. Because, they don't get sent from their families to go to school and they can count on the fact that accommodations are gonna be made on the job or in the classroom for them, those are rights we had to fight for, so, being able to tell my story allows them to know that those things didn't necessarily come easily and that others were willing to fight those fights and they need to be willing to fight whatever fights come up in their generation and not just sit back and assume that it's all gonna be done-

Chuy

Da-da!

Margeson

For them. Yeah, you're a cutie.

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

I can tell.

Russell

<topic>How toddlers detail conversations</topic>

He's determined that this conversation won't be serious anymore. (laughs)

Margeson

(laughs) So, do you guys call him "Chuy" for short?

Russell

Yes.

Margeson

Yeah, I have a good friend here, his name's Jesus and we call him Chuy, and I can't figure out where that came from!

Chuy

(babbles)

Russell

No one's entirely sure, actually.

Margeson

I think that, it's weird, nicknames, why do we call people named Richard, Dick, why do we call people named Margaret "Peg," it makes no sense!

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

Isn't that odd?

Russell

It is very odd.

Margeson

(laughs) Those are the kinds of things you wish you could get to the origin of. One of the ones that was bothering me so much was how we use this term "vet" now?

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

"Well, we vetted him and we vetted that and we vetted this," and I'm like, "Where in the world did that term come from?" Ten years ago, nobody said, "We vetted this person or that person," but I actually know the origin of that!

Chuy

(more babbling)

Margeson

It originated with, when a veterinarian was called to check a racehorse, that was called "vetting"-

Russell

Mm-hm.

Margeson

-a horse, and now we've just applied it to all manner of things in society, so now, it means "being checked out," really, that's originally what it meant, so, that's just a little piece of trivia that I found! (laughs) But it's weird to me, that would make a really good retirement project, to get all into etymology, the origin of words and phrases, it's kind of fascinating.

Russell

I would read that book. (laughs)

Margeson

Yeah! You know what, I am writing a book, actually.

Russell

Oh!

Margeson

And it's called, "Laughing in the Dark," and it's a hundred misadventures of people who are blind, and they're all funny. And I see it as an educational tool, but also to give people the freedom to laugh about the quirky things that happen in the lives of people with disabilities, you know? I'm about sixty-percent done with it, but my job is so freaking demanding-

Russell

Right.

Margeson

(laughs) I don't have time to sit around and do fun stuff too much.

Russell

That's something, I'm definitely gonna keep an eye out for that. That sounds like something I would like to read.

Margeson

Okay!

Russell

You got one customer at least!

Margeson

Yeah!

Russell

(laughs)

Margeson

You know, and I don't want to self-publish, I want to go through a regular publishing house, and I'm hoping I'll be able to do that. I'll try to let you know if that happens.

Russell

Absolutely!

Margeson

We should friend each other on Facebook or something, so we can stay in touch.

Chuy

(baby squeal)

Russell

(frustrated sigh) Are you determined to have the last word here? (sigh)

Margeson

He got the last word in!

Russell

He's cute.

Margeson

Well, call me if you need anything else!

Russell

Absolutely.

Margeson

Okay? Thank you so much!

Russell

I hope this has been a pleasant experience for you, too!

Margeson

And I'm glad that you didn't feel uptight once we got to talkin'.

Russell

I'm glad, too. Thank you very much.

Margeson

You take care of yourself and your little family.

Russell

Say goodbye!

Margeson

Okay! Bye-bye, Chuy! Bye-bye!

Russell

Oh, now he's quiet! (laughs)

Margeson

(laughs) "The lady said my name!" Say bye-bye, Chuy! Bye-bye!

Russell

(sigh) Now he's shy. Thank you very much! You have a wonderful day!

Margeson

Take care!

Russell

You, too!

Margeson

Bye-bye!

Russell

Bye-bye! (pause) Alright, and that is the end of the interview, now it's on to the fun part.

End of Interview