

FINAL SCRIPT – REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG – May 21, 2014

01:00:18:15- **Picture starts**

01:00:20:19

SS: I love being alive. I wake up every morning very grateful that I'm alive. It's more than enjoyment; I'm very happy to be alive.

SS: I began writing when I was 6 or 7 or 8, stories and poems and plays. It was—yes—it was like enlisting in an army of saints or something of that sort...it sounds very foolish, but uh—I didn't feel that I was expressing myself, I felt that I was uh, well-- taking part in a noble activity.

David Rieff: My mother was very much someone who was interested in everything. Intellectual and cultural and aesthetic and sensual experience.

SS: When I turned 40 I was in China; when I turned 50 I was in France; when I turned 60 I was in Sarajevo and the bombs were falling. Being 70 sounds very awesome.

Despite my two bouts of cancer I feel fine. I feel as if a lot of things are still ahead.

Audio montage....

Newscasters: ...one of the country's most controversial writers and social critics...she was a relentless campaigner for human rights and against war...the most intelligent woman in America... critic, activist, playwright, essayist... she wrote seventeen books and won major awards, including the National Book Award... Susan Sontag was seventy one years old.

01:02:31:13 - **Title**

01:02:53:03

SS: For the last hundred years in our society, all the interesting writers have mostly been critics of the society. The writer has very often taken some kind of adversary position. I like that adversary position. I like the position of being able to express dissenting opinions.

01:03:24:17

Amy Goodman: Shortly after September 11th, Susan Sontag became one of the first prominent Americans to publicly state the attack was carried out in response to US foreign policy. Sontag writes in the current issue of *New Yorker* magazine:

SS VO: *Where is the acknowledgement that this was not a 'cowardly attack' on 'civilization' or 'liberty' but an attack on the world's self-proclaimed superpower?*¹

SS: This sort of build up of moralistic words to describe this horrendous atrocity was not helping us to understand and reach an intelligent response, political and military which I'm absolutely in favor of. I'm not a pacifist.

There are so many opinions around. And I'm, I guess I'm just a very straight First Amendment-- strict First Amendment person. I want to defend Ann Coulter –

01:04:20:16

Todd Gauziano: Well, you're also a very offensive writer. You are part of the blame America first crowd. You said that we were to blame for our foreign policy–

SS: I never said anything of the kind. Believe me-- I'm just as patriotic and against the terrorists as you are.

Todd Gauziano: Well, your version of patriotism -- blame America, blame America.

SS: Oh dear. We have a long tradition of debate. I'm interested in people having a historical understanding of where we are so that we can better defend ourselves and stop international terrorism...

Gauziano: Well let's get into your position....

01:05:02:06

SS VO: *It is difficult for the citizens of America, having never seen their country devastated by war...to really understand and appreciate the full horrors of war... The battle for peace will never be won . . . by calling anyone whom we don't like a Communist . . . If we do this, we shall some day realize that, in the effort to preserve our democratic way of life, we have thrown away its noblest feature—the right of every person to express his own opinion.*

01:06:00:12

Peter Haidu: Everyone who knew us knew I was totally in love with her. We never dated but we were always together. She gave me the first academic lecture of my life. She sat me down on her bed and ran through the argument of the critique of pure reason. Kant's critique of pure reason. She must have been 15.

SS VO: *In Los Angeles I tracked down a real bookstore. The first of my bookstore besotted life. The Pickwick on Hollywood Boulevard. Where I went every few days after school, buying when I could, stealing when I dared. I had to acquire*

¹ *The New Yorker*, printed in "Talk of the Town", September 24, 2001

*them. See them in rows along the wall of my tiny bedroom. My household deities, my spaceships.*²

01:07:13:14

Haidu: In '48, I graduated from high school. Sue had another semester of high school to do... and in the second semester she went up to Berkeley.

SS: And the very first day, I was standing in line registering for a class, and I heard somebody ahead of me say, "Proust." And I thought – oh my God. It's pronounced "Proust." I thought it was "Prowst." And then I thought, "I'm home. I've – I've reached a place where somebody else has read the books that I have read." It was freedom. It was like escape.

Harriet Sohmers Zwerling: *Drag. ... Go In Drag. A Drag Party... Straight. East. Jam. West. Act Swishy. I'm Swish tonight.*³

This is a list of slang that Susan learned when I took her to San Francisco to learn about the world of 'Gay People'.

This is '48, and I'm going to Berkeley and I'm working at the Campus Text Book Exchange, which was staffed entirely by gay boys and me. And then Susan came in the door one day to buy a book. She was absolutely overwhelmingly gorgeous. She walked in, and he said to me... "Go get her." So I went.

01:09:06:00

SS VO: *First we went to the 299 then to 12 Adler where we met Bruce and went with him to a homosexual bar.*⁴ *The singer was a very tall and beautiful blonde in a strapless evening gown. I wondered about her remarkably powerful voice. Harriet had to tell me she was a man.*⁵

Harriet: And then I took her...to Peggy's bar, and that was the night we both got very drunk ...and we started making out together, and she was wild. She was so - she was so naïve and so innocent. She'd never had any kind of sex. She probably necked with boys in high school, but I mean it was not anything real, you know? Because men left her cold.

SS VO: *I know the truth now. I know how good and right it is to love. I have in some part been given permission to live.*⁶ *Everything begins from now. I am reborn.*⁷

² ["Pilgrimage"?]

³ *Reborn*, p. 41

⁴ *Reborn*, p. 33

⁵ *Reborn*, p. 25

⁶ *Reborn*, p. 32

Harriet: And then I left. I went to Paris. Susan went to Chicago.

01:10:44:11

Haidu: How Sue became Susan Sontag led through Philip Rieff. I was assigned to Philip Rieff's social science class at the University of Chicago. After, I think, two or three weeks I called her and said, "you've got to go hear this guy. He's a brilliant lecturer who manages to put together Freud and Marx" ... So she went and apparently ten days later they were engaged. Um, that was not my recommendation.

SS VO: *At seventeen I met a thin, heavy-thighed balding man who talked and talked, snobbishly, bookishly, and called me "Sweet." After a few days passed, I married him. We talked for seven years.*⁸

01:11:53:03

Judith Sontag Cohen: It was a very small wedding. We went afterwards to Bob's Big Boy for a hamburger. She and I were giggling a little. That I remember, that we just each caught the other's eye and that was it.

When I visited them in Cambridge, they seemed totally close, inseparable. How much of it was intellectual, and how much was not? I mean, there had to have been, at some point, some physical attraction somewhere. And they certainly acted like there was. They were just really kind of like they were one person.

SS VO: *I had a difficult birth. David was big. A lot of pain. I wanted to be knocked out. Not to know anything.*⁹

SS VO: *Rules and duties for being 24: have better posture, write mother 3x/week. Eat less. Write two hours a day minimally. Teach David to read.*¹⁰

SS VO: *If only I get the fellowship to Oxford then at least I'll know if I'm anything outside the domestic stage. The feathered nest.*¹¹

Judith: I think for a while it was just really fine but people change in marriages. And obviously she did. He did not.

01:14:25:15

⁷ *Reborn*, p. 34

⁸ *As Consciousness is Harnessed to Flesh*, p. 362

⁹ *As Consciousness is Harnessed to Flesh*, p.5

¹⁰ *Reborn*, p. 127

¹¹ *Reborn*, p. 128

SS VO: *In marriage I have suffered a certain loss of personality. At first the loss was pleasant, easy; now it aches and stirs up my general disposition to be malcontented with a new fierceness.*¹²

SS VO: *Just got the fellowship. Study philosophy in Oxford.*¹³

Alice Kaplan: She had made arrangements for her husband's parents to take care of the child. But to today's parents it's just unthinkable. Course she was so young when she had her child, she hadn't been able to live out her own adolescence.

Judith: I think she just wanted to do what she wanted to do. And it, you know it's—that's really all there is to it.

01:15:47:17

SS VO: *Je l'aime*

Je l'aime beaucoup

Je l'aime bien.

Je l'aime beaucoup is more than je l'aime bien but less than je l'aime.

*J'aime bien Paris. I like Paris - stronger, more reserved. J'aime Paris. I like Paris.*¹⁴

Harriet: The end of '57 she came to Paris at Christmas from Oxford and she stayed. And we started living together in a hotel.

SS VO: *Harriet is beautiful, relaxed, affectionate. I, dizzy with passion and need for her, am happy. Good God—I AM happy!*¹⁵

Harriet: We gave a big party, and the night before the big party, we had a lesbian couple over to visit, but we drank a lot and we smoked a lot of grass and things started getting a little sexy, and Susan got into it a little too much, and I got very jealous and punched her in the face. The next day was our big party with all the American ex-pats, the Beats - Ginsberg and Corso and all those people were coming. And Ginsberg came over to me at one point --Susan had this big black and blue mark on her jaw, and he said to me, "Why'd you hit her? She's younger and prettier than you." And I said, "That's why."

Noel Burch: I was, at that time, the assistant, to a director named Pierre Kast. Susan was having money problems. And I offered her a walk on in this film.

¹² *Reborn*, p. 135

¹³ *Reborn*, p. 139

¹⁴ *Reborn*, p.???

¹⁵ *Reborn*, p. 180

01:17:50:23

Alice Kaplan: It's just so funny to think of Sontag being in a New Wave film since she's going to go on to make New Wave film something very very important in the US.

She is somebody who is constantly being reborn. I mean it wasn't just from being in France or from making love with Harriet. She was constantly discovering things and becoming a new person. And that's her kind of essential avante-gardism. You can either suspect it or really, really admire it. I see Paris as getting her out of her marriage.

SS VO: The thought of going back to my old life—it hardly seems like a dilemma anymore. I can't. I won't.¹⁶

Judith: Susan had her year or whatever it was, came home and said, that's it. It was not a really pleasant divorce.

01:19:10:16

Susan Swain: College at 15-years-old; marriage at 17?

SS: Yes, yeah.

Swain: A child at --

SS: Nineteen.

Swain: -- nineteen.

SS: Yeah.

Interviewer: These numbers suggest what?

SS: Eagerness to grow up. I hated being a child. I couldn't do what I wanted to do. I wanted to stay up all night. I wanted to see the world. I wanted to talk to people. I wanted to meet people who were interested in what I was interested in. My parents lived abroad; they lived in China. My father was a businessman in China.

They came back to the United States for my birth and for that of my younger sister. Then they left us with various relatives.

SS VO: Milk with vanilla flavor in it and peanut butter crackers. The egg timer on the wall in the kitchen. Betting 25 cents on the world series with Gramps. I for the

¹⁶ *Reborn*, p. 187

*Yanks, he for The Bums. From my upper bunk, testing Judith on the capitals of all the states. Daddy died October 19, 1938.*¹⁷

Judith: He fell ill for the last time. And uh, and died in China of tuberculosis.

SS: My father died... so far away, and without my knowing it--I didn't even know he was dead until about a year after.

01:21:02:10

*SS VO: I didn't really believe my father was dead. For years and years I dreamed he turned up one day at the door.*¹⁸

SS: When I was 6 -- my sister was 3 we ended up with my mother, who was very much a part-time mother in Tucson, Arizona.

Judith: Our mother, Mildred, didn't focus totally on us. Let me put it this way—we had a lot of uncles who were not our uncles. And they just kind of came and went.

*SS VO: I wasn't my mother's child—I was her subject, companion, friend, consort. My habit of "holding back" is loyalty to my mother.*¹⁹

SS: My mother met a very glamorous war veteran. Full of medals and shrapnel. He had been shot down six days after D-Day and was convalescing in Tucson. His name was Sontag.

Judith: They just went to Mexico one day and they came back and they said "We're married." Susan and I were extremely hurt that we weren't invited to uh go to Mexico to the wedding.

We were delighted to have a change in name. We were so clearly identified as being Jewish with a name like Rosenblatt that my sister who was older and I guess an easier target did get hit in the head and called names.

From Tuscon we moved to Southern California and ended up in Sherman Oaks in the valley.

01:23:13:23

SS: I can remember a rather small house, very modest. And I was lying on my stomach in the living room and I was reading. And then this large pair of pants and shoes walked by me, and it was of course Mr. Sontag. He said "Sue if you read so much you'll never get married". And I burst out laughing. I thought this was the most preposterous thing I ever heard because it never occurred to me

¹⁷ *Reborn*, pp. 104-117

¹⁸ UCLA Papers, Box 128, folder 1; journal entry dated July 17 [1976]

¹⁹ *Reborn*, p. 286 9/14-9/15/61

that I would want to marry someone who didn't like someone who read a lot of books.

SS(in French): I had asthma. So I spent a lot of time in bed. Reading all the time. When I was thirteen I read the journals of Andre Gide. It gave me an idea of what writers were like, and that made a big impression on me. A writer is someone interested in all the arts, in politics, and of course in the psychology of people. Someone passionate about everything.

French Narrator: Susan Sontag was a professor at Columbia University. She taught philosophy. In 1963, she published her first novel, *The Benefactor*. The book was translated into 18 languages.

01:25:01:03

Georges Bortoli (in French): So what is your novel? Fantasy? Comedy? Satire? How would you define it?

SS: It is hard to choose a single category, as any of them would fit, but it's also, if I may say, a philosophical novel.

SS VO: *The truth is always something that is told, not something that is known. If there were no speaking or writing, there would be no truth about anything. There would only be what is.*²⁰

Harriet: She gave me a copy of the book. Signed to me and the baby. It's- it's back here somewhere; *The Benefactor*, that's her first novel. It's awful.

Alice: The *Time* magazine reviewer for *The Benefactor* in 1963 said it sounded like a blurred translation from some other language.

SS: All interesting writers now have been touched in some way by this search for new forms or trying to do something with the story or with narration in one way or another. That nobody's really writing straight stories.

Alice: Sontag really opted out of realism. Very abstract, philosophical prose. That's what she was going for. And I think she fashioned herself as being both a theorist and a fiction writer. Always wanted the double identity. That's why I find *The Benefactor* a really brave book even though it's a bad novel.

01:26:57:12

Harriet: I started feeling very lonely and it was winter. Winter is awful in Paris. Susan was living in New York already. I just had the idea - maybe I should go back to New York for awhile and see what it's like.

²⁰ *The Benefactor*

SS VO: *There has appeared in New York recently a new and still esoteric genre of spectacle. At first sight apparently a cross between art exhibit and theatrical performance. These events have been given the modest and somewhat teasing name of "Happenings".*

Harriet: Susan was living on West End Avenue with her son. And I moved in with her and she met Irene Fornes. Irene and I had been involved before. I really loved her. But we had broken up already. Anyway, concerning Susan, things were going on that I didn't quite get. I'd be there with David, putting David to bed and she'd come home, like, 3:00 in the morning, reeking of Mitsouko which is a wonderful perfume of Guerlain, which I had given to Irene, and I didn't pick up on it. Irene was her best lover. As I've said to many people, Irene could make a stone come. I mean she was just incredible.

01:28:48:23

Stephen Koch: With Irene you had a real functioning creative artist. A part of the downtown Bohemia of her time. Susan discovered the brilliance of talent as opposed to the brilliance of intellect. There were these remarkable people who didn't know anything about the issues that were so important to her. Who had never read Nietzsche. Who can't spell or pronounce his name. That was a jolt for her; and a liberating one.

SS VO: *What I love; what draws me very much to writing is it's a way of paying attention to the world. You're just an instrument for tuning in to as much reality as you can.*²¹

01:29:53:02

Stephen Koch: I met Susan right around the time that "Notes on Camp" hit and transformed her position.

Debbie Nelson: Sontag was an iron lady. She was imperious, magisterial, authoritative - here's what camp is. No one's ever thought about it before, and I'll tell you what it is.

SS VO: *The two pioneering forces of modern sensibility are Jewish moral seriousness, and homosexual aestheticism and irony.*²²

Koch: Here was the possibility of this gay trash coming forward and claiming a position for itself. Moving away from supposed high seriousness to low seriousness was seen as a very threatening thing to a certain generation. It was a watershed moment.

²¹ NEED TO FIND

²² "Notes on Camp," *Against Interpretation*, p. 290

SS VO: *The essence of camp is its love of the unnatural. Of artifice and exaggeration... The most refined form of sexual attractiveness, as well as the most refined form of sexual pleasure consists in going against the grain of one's sex.*²³

01:31:26:01

Koch: She's not making a big theoretical argument. She's saying 'look at this, look at that, look at this, look at that', and by the time you're through something's been opened up to you. You don't have to be Schoenberg; you could be Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire and it could be good. Maybe it's so bad that it's good!

Fran Lebowitz: The idea of camp was something absolutely unknown to straight people. Really what camp was was a code.

Debbie Nelson: She's saying "I'm a cultural ethnographer. I've gone into this strange land of queers and I know something about them but I'm not the native informant. I'm the outsider who's gone in to study them with a certain kind of scrupulousness, but I'm not of them."

Wayne Kostenbaum: You could just read between the lines—of course she was paying attention to gay lingo. She couldn't have written "Notes on Camp" if she hadn't done decades of homework. Honestly.

SS VO: *My desire to write is connected to my homosexuality. I need the identity as a weapon to match the weapon that society has against me. I am just becoming aware of how guilty I feel being queer.*²⁴

Terry Castle: The photograph of her on *I, Etcetera* was a sort of pin-up for every graduate school lesbian that I knew. It was just magnificent. And you felt sort of like ohhh...it's school girlish to respond in this way to the photograph. Especially cause she won't come out.

SS VO: *No matter what I have said, my life, my actions say that I have not loved the truth. That I have not wanted the truth.*²⁵

01:33:53:13

Terry: I distinctly remember people saying "well she should just—she should come out. Um, she is just letting us all down.

²³ Ibid, p. 275

²⁴ *Reborn*, p. 221

²⁵ *Reborn*, p. 225 (1/11/60)

Fran: This is a completely unfair - first of all, to me, it's an unfair thing to say of anyone. At fir- I - and this - this *is* an age thing. To someone my age, this seems to me like a private thing. Why is it a private thing? Because for someone my age, for most of your life, it had to be a secret thing.

Wayne: In *The Benefactor*, her first novel, in 1963, she has the following sentence: "I am a homosexual and a writer, both of whom are professionally self-regarding and self-esteeming creatures." Does the author of "Notes on Camp" have to come out?

SS VO: *To interpret is to impoverish. To deplete the world in order to set up a shadow world of meanings. The aim of all commentary on art should be to make works of art and our own experience more rather than less real to us. We need an erotics of art.*²⁶

01:35:26:21

Reviewer VO: *The lady swings. She digs the Supremes and is savvy about Camp. She likes her hair wild and her sentences intense. Miss Sontag has written a ponderable, vivacious and quite astonishingly American book.*²⁷

Stephen: Susan was a star. It was certainly not just her ideas. She had gone from being a rising figure of obvious interest to being suddenly this famous writer. Boom - there would be something by Susan and it leapt out...and it wasn't because of anything other than its literary star quality.

Mark Danner: Style was a huge part of her work. And style—her style as a writer was inseparable from her style as a person. She was beautiful and glamorous. There was no question about that. And she was very conscious of the effect she had on people.

Warhol: Now Susan, smile. Say cheese.

Stephen: Susan was, among other things, tremendously photogenic; and knew it.

Warhol: Just what you're doing (mumbles)

Fran Lebovitz: Whenever I read about her, there's almost always a phrase: "One of the most photographed women of her generation," like this is some sort of accident of nature, like an earthquake. She knew the power of photography. So she created that image, and it worked.

²⁶ "Against Interpretation", *Against Interpretation*, p. 7

²⁷ *NY Times*, Benjamin DeMott, on "Against Interpretation"

SS VO: *Being photographed I feel transfixed, trapped. I become the looked AT. For as much as I am a professional seer, I am a hopelessly amateur see-ee. An eternal photographic virgin. I feel the same perplexity each time I am photographed.*²⁸

01:37:47:16

SS: I don't like being called a "lady writer," Norman. I know it does-- it seems like gallantry to you, but it doesn't feel right to us. It's a little better to be called a woman writer. I don't know why, but, you know, words count, we're all writers, we know that.

Noise from crowd.

SS: Ah, well, how about a woman doctor, a woman lawyer? Yeah, I mean, if you were introducing James Baldwin, you wouldn't say our foremost Negro writer. And we certainly wouldn't say a man writer. And so in thi – a lot of it, a lot of it –

More noise from crowd: "A gentleman writer!" Laughter.

Norman Mailer: Susan, Susan –

SS: No, I really, I really ask you this not in an argumentative spirit.

Mailer: -- I will never use the word "lady" again in public.

SS: Don't allow yourself to be patronized, condescended to. Which, if you are a woman happens, and will continue to happen all the time, all your lives. Don't take shit. Tell the bastards off.

Sigrid Nunez: When she had just become a Farrar Strauss & Giroux author, Roger and Dorothea Straus were giving one of their parties. The custom was that after dinner the men would go off to one room to smoke their cigars and have their conversation, and the women would go off to another room. When Susan saw this she just went to join the men. And that was it. Susan broke the tradition, and after that, we never split up after dinner again.

01:39:26:20

Eva Kollisch: I don't think feminism gave Susan anything. Susan had already taken out the license to be a great woman before there was any feminism; any talk of feminism. In fact I think feminism must've curtailed her sphere of activity because she had suddenly to identify with all these women; all these dopey women!

²⁸ "Certain Mapplethorpes" in *Where the Stress Falls*, p. 234

SS: I'm a militant feminist but I'm not a feminist militant. The main activity that I have as a writer I have as a writer and not as a woman writer.

SS VO: *To be a woman is to be an actress. Being feminine is a kind of theater. With its appropriate costumes, décor, lighting, and stylized gestures.*²⁹

Cate Stimpson: The feminism is there. But she was *such* an individual; you know, she so hated to be pigeon-holed, that I am not going to stamp my little feet and say "naughty, naughty Susan Sontag. Why weren't you marching with your NOW button?"

Sigrid: But she was a feminist who found most women wanting. "Why do they waste so much time worrying about what they look like instead of what they thought?"

SS: I don't know what it means to be trapped in domesticity. I—I was married, I had a child whom I raised mostly myself because I was divorced when my son was 7 years old. And I have had a domestic life. I just don't think it's a trap.

01:41:13:05

Eva: My son was seven, when I first met Susan, and David I think was about 11 or 12. It was the first time that a woman courted me and won me. I might actually have met Susan via Irene. I don't think I ever knew the whole truth. I don't think she told me really how deeply she was still involved with Irene and how much she was still in love with her... I didn't know. I mean I never considered myself her main lover—lover #1, main wife, or whatever—no. I was sort of the interlude. We tried to have a life where we could do our mothering and pursue our work and have a little extra time for fun or walking around the Village or talking or making love. I was a much more traditional mother. I wanted my son to have a regular bedtime. I wanted him to eat normal food. And I think that Susan treated David like a peer I think long before she should have done that.

SS VO: *Yesterday David announced as he was being prepared for bed "You know what I see when I shut my eyes? I see Jesus on the cross". It's time for Homer, I think. Paganize his tender spirit.*³⁰

01:43:03:04

Eva: I think she came to me for the part that was the old Susan, the one who was hungry and took off her shoes and raided the refrigerator and started to gossip and be very comfortable. I knew that she had really another life among very famous people... On one or two occasions when I was in some lecture or some social event, Susan treated me quite shabbily, she didn't introduce me or if she did then

²⁹ "Double Standard of Aging", *Saturday Review* September 23, 1972, p. 34

³⁰ *Reborn* p. 103

she left me standing there, and that offended me and hurt me a lot. She was never able to know what goes on in another person. I mean the sensitivity that we exercise in everyday life all the time, you know, like “What are you thinking, what are you feeling? Where are you in this?” Susan was not sensitive. Was not a sensitive person...

SS VO: My image of myself since age three or four: the Genius-Schmuck. I develop relationships to satisfy one or the other. Irene, obviously, was for the ‘Schmuck,’ Philip for ‘the genius.’ Yet both are always there, like Siamese twins.³¹

SS VO: It came to me last night that I have lost Irene. Like a bulletin coming into view in Times Square. Her eyes are blank. She has let go.³²

01:45:00:12

Don Levine: She was briefly involved with Jasper Johns.

Stephen: In Jasper Susan’s ego met it’s match.

Don: She didn’t think that there were many people around who were her equal, so she sought out people who were her equal though in very different areas. She slept with whomever she felt like sleeping with. She was very resistant to categories.

Sigrid Nunez: She had relationships with women and she had relationships with men, and she fell in love with women and she fell in love with men.

Don: After Irene and Eva—oh and then there was Lily Engler and Carlotta. Things were very elaborate. I mean this was after all, you know, this was the ‘60s in the Village.

01:46:12:23

Sci Fi guy: Stop! What are you doing fools? I’m not crazy! Make them listen to me before it’s too late! They’re here already! You’re next!

Sci Fi woman screams

³¹ *Box 125, Folder 5, Bound Notebook, (from Arwen’s UCLA notes), entry on p. 128, dated*

April 11, 1966 [not included in ACHF]. Capitalizaation and parentheses are slightly different in the notes than in the script.

³² *Reborn, p. 259. We added “Irene” to the original, instead of “her.”*

Debbie Nelson: She writes about science fiction - like - trashy science fiction B films - you know - *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. You cannot imagine any other New York intellectuals writing about this. It's just preposterous.

SS VO: *We live under continual threat of two equally fearful but seemingly opposed destinies. Unremitting banality and inconceivable terror.*³³

SS VO: *It is fantasy which allows most people to cope with these twin spectres.*³⁴

SS VO: *It was from a weekly visit to the cinema that you learned how to strut, how to kiss, to fight, to grieve.*³⁵

Darryl Pinckney: In the days of the New Wave, the latest Godard or Faustbender—this was a big, big deal and Susan was there before anybody.

SS VO: *Cinema was poetic and mysterious and erotic and moral-- all at the same time.*³⁶ *You wanted to be kidnapped by the movie.*³⁷

01:48:17:05

Stephen Koch: She says to me blandly over dinner in a Chinese restaurant, "Oh by the way, I'm going to Sweden to make a movie." She had got a letter saying "Dear Ms. Sontag. We would like you to make a movie". This is like fantasy land. It's fantasy. It doesn't happen to anybody.

Jack Kroll: Its a very strange movie.

SS: You think?

Jack Kroll: Yeah, I think it's strange. Politics is involved in some way. The sexuality of these people, the ideology of these people are played with.

SS: Most people you see in movies have very little relation to real people. In the average Hollywood movie you don't see real people, either mainstream people or marginal people.

Duet for Cannibals (in Italian):

Woman 1: Mouth.

Woman 2: Mouth. What's the word for this?

³³ "The Imagination of Disaster" in *Against Interpretation*, p. 224

³⁴ Ibid, p. 224

³⁵ "A Century of Cinema," in *Where the Stress Falls*, p. 118

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

Woman 1: Body.
Woman 2: Body.
Woman 1: And soul.

SS: You're a little annoyed at them I mean because they aren't eating or whatever it is.

SS VO: *Filmmaking is blind instinct. Petty calculations. Smooth general-ship. Daydreaming, pig-headedness, grace, bluff, risk.*³⁸

Darryl Pinckney: I remember the films as feeling very Bergman-esque to me, you know? Um, but she was learning how to do it right in front of us.

SS: Yes I know. I read the reviews.

Interviewer: Have you any comments?

SS: I think they're wrong.

01:50:14:06

SS: I love photography so much. I look at pictures. I think about pictures all the time.

Brokaw: If I were to say to you right now, Susan Sontag, I'd like to take your picture, you'd pull yourself up, arrange yourself...

SS: Sure, and I'd do this (*arranges hair*) and, ah, that's right. We have a notion of about a photograph. You see, we want photographs to tell us the truth, and we value them because they really are records in a sense, let's say, that a painting isn't. At the same time we want photographs to lie. We want them to make us look good, that is to say, better than we normally look.

SS: Our sense of the world is now ruled and shaped by photographed images.

SS: What was the first photograph you saw that shocked and horrified you? Does it still horrify you?

I think the overall effect of photographs, of painful, terrible photographs, is that one is less shocked. I think when you see a lot of very shocking, painful photographs you flinch less.

³⁸ SS on filmmaking from *Vogue*, July 1974, p. 84. Quote is last sentence of opening paragraph.

Debbie Nelson: She's very deeply concerned about the way that the image is consuming all the public space for thinking. She thinks we should be dieting, right? That we should be consuming fewer images.

SS VO: *The problem is not that people remember through photographs, but that they remember only the photographs.*³⁹

01:52:25:11

Don: I come in—I had my own keys—and I see the first sort of pre-copy of *On Photography*, so I take the book and I go running upstairs, and there she is, indeed, lying spread eagled on her back on her bed. And I say, “Oh - you know - it looks so beautiful in the two tones of gray,” and all of this, and - nothing. Not a word. Sit down on the bed, and she just turns her head, looks at me, straight in the eyes and said, “But it's not as good as Walter Benjamin, is it?” And I thought – okay, moment of truth. And I took a breath and I said, “No, it's not, but that doesn't mean it isn't the best book of essays by an American since the Second World War”.

SS: The first time I ever saw photographs of the Nazi camps I was 12 years old, and I was in a bookstore and I opened this book—and I thought I was going to faint, I was so upset. I immediately closed the book, I was trembling, and then I opened it again. And I knew, I knew what I was seeing. I knew that the Nazis had killed a lot of Jews, I knew that I was Jewish, but I didn't know it meant what I saw.

SS VO: *Let the atrocious images haunt us. This is what human beings are capable of doing—may volunteer to do, enthusiastically, self-righteously. Don't forget.*⁴⁰

01:55:11:21

Interviewer: Being Jewish—does it matter to you?

SS: It matters in the sense that I would always stand up and be counted any time that it mattered for other people. I'm Jewish because other people say I am and because that's what I am sociologically or historically. I come from a family which generations ago belonged to a religious culture.

Eva: We talked a lot about my life as a German Jewish refugee. My having come out of that background, and Susan just I guess peeling down to certain essentials. It was very important to live a mundane life and yet also be in touch with the possibility that your life could change radically any moment.

³⁹ *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p.89

⁴⁰ *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p 115.

SS VO: *I feel-- as a Jew-- a special responsibility to side with the oppressed and the weak.*⁴¹

Narrator (in French): Susan Sontag is a woman in revolt. Critic, essayist, novelist and filmmaker, she divides her time between France and New York.

Susan Sontag (in French): A writer can do everything. One can think about everything, one can get involved in everything. Clearly that can entail a commitment. I feel that I've tried to express my commitment in my essays. All writing is political. All acts are political.

01:57:00:04

William Buckley: What are we gonna do about Susan Sontag?

James Dickey: Is there is something to be done about her? I don't know, I haven't, I can't read her, she's unfathomable to me.

Buckley: She is as useful as anybody else to recall a mood about America which is very fashionable these days. America as being philistine, conformist, dedicated in the words of Howard Zinn, to death.

SS: At this moment firm-bodied children are being charred by napalm bombs. Young men, Vietnamese and American, are falling like trees to lie forever with their faces in the mud. As writers, guardians of language, we may and should conceive ourselves to have a vocational connection with the life of truth, that is, of seriousness. Let's be serious.

SS: I had accepted an invitation from the North Vietnamese government to visit North Vietnam as a reward for all the public speaking and getting arrested and whatnot that I had done.

SS VO: *Shakespeare, parliamentary government, baroque churches, Newton, the emancipation of women, Kant, Marx and Ballanchine ballets don't redeem what this particular civilization has wrought upon the world. The white race is the cancer of human history.*⁴²

01:59:31:20

Godimer: Indeed, I think she epitomizes what Albert Camus said: "The day when I am no more that a writer, I shall cease to write".

SS VO: *I arrived in Israel with a small crew during the recent Arab Israeli war to*

⁴¹ UCLA Archives; Box 131, Folder 5, Blue cloth notebook 1990, 1991, 1992. From Arwen Curry notes March 2011.

⁴² *Partisan Review* (Winter 1967), p. 57

make a so-called documentary.

*Being rather tuned into sadness, to the tears of things, I put a lot of that in the film.*⁴³

SS: What I want people to think about is how serious war is. It is more horrible than any kind of pictures could convey, and maybe one of the most horrible parts of it is that it becomes a normality. There is a- a culture of war.

SS: I have many criticisms of the government. But I'm generally a supporter of Israel, and I don't feel that this is incompatible with a general left-wing point of view.

02:01:07:11

Stephen Koch: *Promised Lands* was made possible by Nicole Stéphane.

Kaplan: She was born Nicole Rothschild. She had had to flee France from the Nazis. She entered into the Resistance. She was arrested. Then she became a movie star, and these fantastic films - the great film *Les Enfants Terribles*, in which she's this wonderful butch girl ... And she was Jewish. So there was absolutely everything to fascinate Susan Sontag.

Levine: She had rented an apartment on the Place St. Germain, and of course, being Susan, it wasn't just any old apartment. It was Sartre's old apartment ... so this is where Beauvoir and Sartre would meet. And she literally never spent a night in the apartment. She had immediately moved in with Nicole.

SS VO: *I'm in love. Don't ask me how it's possible. It's just not in character; my nightmare-ridden, stubborn, melancholy Jewish character. And yet, it's happened.*⁴⁴

Monique de Rothschild (in French): My sister was really overwhelmed by Susan. "First Susan, and then me." That's how it was. I admit it really bothered me sometimes.

02:03:07:06

SS: Despite the fact that I have lived a good part of my adult life by choice in Europe—mostly in France—I always come back here. I certainly would not live in this country if I didn't live in New York City.

Stephen: We were talking one morning, chatting, and she said, "Well I have to hang up now. I've got a very busy day today. I have to find out whether I'm being

⁴³ SS on filmmaking from *Vogue* July 1974, p. 84, 118. Original uses *Promised Lands*, not "the film" in tears of things quote.

⁴⁴ Letter to Joseph Chaikin

thrown out of my house and whether I have cancer.” The answer to both those questions by the end of the week was, “Yes.”

SS VO: *While I was busy zapping the world with my mind, my body fell down ...*⁴⁵

SS: I was told the cancer was too advanced to be likely to be curable. And that I had 6 months or a year to live.

SS VO: *Trying to race ahead of my death, to get in front of it, then turn around and face it.*⁴⁶

Steven: It was discovered that she had a very aggressive breast cancer that would require very radical surgery.

Don: The phone rings and it's Nicole and she says, “You have to come immediately. She's going to have this operation and it's a very good chance she won't survive.” I never thought Susan would die, right? She was so alive.

02:05:22:06

SS: They were still being very conservative about how much chemotherapy they wanted to be used. So, I found a very mainstream famous French chemotherapist who was willing to give me a lot more chemotherapy for a lot longer time. And it's really as simple as that. I didn't accept the fact that it— that – that my case was hopeless.

SS VO: *I feel like the Vietnam War. They're using chemical warfare on me. My illness is invasive, colonizing. It makes me want to shut up. My body is talking louder than I ever could...*⁴⁷

Monique: Nicole did everything. It was awful, because rather than living upstairs, Susan was right in the next room, where she suffered terribly.

Don: Only with Nicole could she completely let her hair down. And she treated Nicole terribly. Yelled and screamed, and you know, ‘why are you living and I'm dying?’ and y'know all of this.

⁴⁵ UCLA Archives, Box 128 folder 1, undated entry, 1976 journal; also published in *Swimming in a Sea of Death*; p. 35 & p. 41

⁴⁶ *As Consciousness is Harnessed to Flesh*, p. 408 (11/5/76)

⁴⁷ UCLA Archives, Box 128 folder 1, undated entry, 1976 journal; also published in *Swimming in a Sea of Death*; p. 35 & p. 41 [Our quote is correct, but in the original, the part about her body talking louder than I ever could occurs before the chemical warfare quote.]

And I remember these marvelous moments - we'd be at the dinner table and Nicole would literally feed Susan by the fork. She'd find some particularly good morsel of whatever - you know - and Susan would just - would take it.

SS: I don't like feeling like a victim. And, even though I had to believe that my doctors were probably right and that my case was hopeless, I always believe in the power of being an exception.

Monique: And then from one day to the next, she was saved. She recovered because of the doctor, because of Nicole, and because of Susan's own will to live.

02:07:41:19

SS: I fought for my life. I really wanted to live. I have no difficulty in saying 'yes I fought for my life'. I did.

SS: *Everything remembered is dear, touching, precious. At least the past is safe; though we didn't know it at the time. We know it now because we have survived.*⁴⁸

SS: The oldest idea of illness of what causes illness is that it's some punishment, something that you actually deserve or that you've brought on yourself.

SS: My subject is not physical illness itself, but the uses of illness as a figure, or a metaphor. My point is that illness is *not* a metaphor and that the most truthful way of regarding illness is one most purified of metaphoric thinking.⁴⁹

02:09:17:16

SS: There is such a thing as accident, there is such a thing as fatality, and there is such a thing as thoroughly un-undeserved catastrophe. And one shouldn't try to make sense out of one's catastrophe by coming to feel guilty and feel therefore that you merited this terrible thing that happened to you, or allow other people to impose that kind of judgement.

Sigrid: Susan had been in a relationship for years with Nicole Stephane who lived always in Paris. And Susan had been in the habit of spending almost half her time there. All the summer for one thing. Uh, but that relationship broke up.... It was long and slow the break-up. I think that's what made it more painful.

SS VO: *I have been hoping that Nicole would take me back. I have pleaded, wept, denounced, argued, raged.*⁵⁰ *Don't bother to lie. Don't bother to call. I am not interested any more.*⁵¹

⁴⁸ "Debriefing", *I, Etcetera*, p. 42

⁴⁹ *Illness as Metaphor*, p. 3

Sigrid: When I met David he was living at home. Susan had just had breast cancer. She had never wanted to be alone, but now of course she was absolutely terrified of being alone. So um, she really, really did not want him to move out of that apartment. She didn't want to eat a sandwich by herself in the kitchen, or have her morning coffee by herself. She wanted us to be there.

SS VO: *Do I resent not being a genius? Am I sad about it? Would I be willing to pay the price for that? I think the price is solitude.*⁵²

02:11:57:22

SS: I have lost, a number of close friends. I've been going to funerals for the last five years.

I realized that people were made to feel guilty or ashamed for being ill. And that drives me—that drives me crazy. I—then I do feel that I must get on—get on a horse and do battle on behalf of the punished ill.

Darryl: That memory I have in the kitchen of the phone ringing. She explains that she's been on the phone with a guy she doesn't know who had AIDS and who called her up and wanted to talk about illness. And at the time, you know, there wasn't a lot about AIDS and – and how to deal with it, how to talk about it. It was still a very terrifying and stigmatizing sort of thing. And she got calls from guys, because she had written about what it was like to have the kind of disease that ostracized you.

SS: *"When I was home, he is reported to have said, I was afraid to sleep, as I was dropping off each night it felt like just that, as if I were falling down a black hole, to sleep felt like giving in to death, I slept every night with the light on"*⁵³ *...Never mentioned ... Kate confirmed, that whatever happened it was over, the way he had lived until now, but, according to Ira, he did think about it, the end of bravado, the end of folly, the end of trusting life, the end of taking life for granted, and of treating life as something that, samurai-like, he thought himself ready to throw away lightly, impudently.*⁵⁴

02:14:06:02

SS: *Like a hyperactive queen, I cruise culture daily. Have a thrill or flash of ecstasy several times a week. My appetite is compulsive, promiscuous.*⁵⁵

⁵⁰ UCLA archives: draft letter to Ana Carrigan August 8 1977

⁵¹ Frangment dated 3/9/77 (from "Notes from third visit to SS papers")

⁵² ACHF p. 170 1/4/66

⁵³ "The Way We Live Now", *The New Yorker*, November 24, 1986, p.50

⁵⁴ "The Way We Live Now", *The New Yorker*, November 24, 1986, p.49

⁵⁵ UCLA Archives, Box 129; Notebook entitled "Reading Notebook", entry dated August 11, 1981

Don: Susan was attracted to women who were dedicated to something, right? So Irene had her plays. Nicole was this producer. Lucinda Childs... They were very successful at what they did.

Lucinda Childs: You could never keep up with Susan, but if there was something she really wanted to see, or a book she really wanted me to read, I would make the effort.

Darryl: She was very commanding. And doing something rather new. And plus Lucinda was a real star of downtown New York.

Lucinda: Susan's feeling was that she preferred to stay very private. Wanting to just be a professional. 'That's my identity, as far as I'm concerned—I'm a professional.' And um, not wanting to hide anything, but you know just not wanting to necessarily ah-- demonstrate or be demonstrative about my private life.

02:16:01:02

SS VO: *It hurts to love. It's like giving yourself to be flayed and knowing that at any moment the other person may just walk off with your skin.*⁵⁶

Richard Howard: Susan broke off with Lucinda. She was wretched, and I took her home from something and stayed there that night—all night long with her cause she was so miserable. She spent about half the night telling me what a horrible person Lucinda was and how much she hated her and so forth. And then, we got past that and she then said "you know, about poetry, Richard. Could you tell me about how to – how to read verse?" And we spent the rest of the night doing that with Wallace Stevens.

Katie Couric: Annie Leibovitz, welcome back! Nice to see you. So why, Annie a book of photographs about women?

Annie: Why not? I mean it's a glorious, incredible subject. I mean it's half the human race. [Like a half stop darker or something like that.]

It was Susan Sontag who suggested American women and I said I would do it if she would write the essay.

She was interested of course in photography like she was interested in so many things and, you know she said "You're good, but you could be better".

Darryl: Annie photographed her and then some flowers came, and Susan said she saw the flowers coming toward her and she was thinking, I hope they're from Annie.

⁵⁶ *Reborn*, 8/8/60, p262

Josh Kornbluth: Susan Sontag was your very close friend and companion?

Annie: We never used words like y'know like that. I mean it—you know-- very intimate friendship is probably a better y'know better way. It just-- I just never felt, we never used those—the jargon words.

02:18:14:04

Judith: I would go to New York and stay with Susan. Susan would leave in the middle of the night because Annie was having a crisis. Annie was having a crisis with her family or something. Well that story got to wear very thin after a while and I kind of figured it out.

Wayne: Susan Sontag lived in, I think 410 W. 24th and Annie Leibovitz lived in the tower here 465. So they could see each other from their penthouses.

Don: I remember having dinner with Susan and Annie and Susan starts yelling at her about being stupid and all of this. And then the next day we're going off to something at the Museum of Modern Art during the day and I'm walking behind them and I see Susan and Annie are holding hands as they walk along.

SS VO: *What makes me feel strong? Being in love and work. I must work.*⁵⁷

SS: My name is Susan Sontag; president of American Center of PEN...

Mark Danner: Susan really embodied an idea of an intellectual that is indeed, you could argue—passé.

SS: Mr. Chairman, uh, distinguished members of the subcommittee— I'm very glad to....

Danner: It had to do with her belief in what the role of a writer should properly be. The writer was supposed to take a stand. The writer was supposed to be there on the front lines. The writer was supposed to stand for something.

02:20:28:13

SS: I guess I go to war because I think it's my duty to be in as much contact with reality as I can be. And war is a tremendous reality in our world.

BILL MOYERS: You didn't go to be a spectator either. What did you do?

⁵⁷ *As Consciousness is Harnessed to Flesh*, p. 313 (1/16/71)

SS: No-no. I worked in the city. I worked in the city. I mean when I first went to my great surprise they asked me to work in the theater. I said, "No. You know-- I don't want--" I didn't wanna do it.

BILL MOYERS: In the midst of war?

SS: Yeah. I said, "What do you want a play for?" And-- And they said, "We're not animals. We're not just people sheltering in our basements and standing on bread lines and water lines getting killed."
I chose to do *Waiting for Godot* because it did seem to illustrate a lot of the things that people are feeling now in Sarajevo. The play is about weak, vulnerable, abandoned people trying to keep their spirits up while they wait for some greater power to help them out.

Stephen: There's a certain kind of person who likes to put themselves in extreme situations because they feel life is lived more fully there. And Susan was one of those people. You're just a little bit more notched up than you are sitting around having coffee in New York City.

Fran Lebovitz: Writers don't save lives. Writers would like to save lives because it's more heroic. Military action—that's what it takes to stop a genocide, by the way. Not productions of *Waiting for Godot*.

Castle: She had this kind of heroic sense of what some human beings could accomplish, in music, in writing, in art, in film -- in everything. Extraordinary people. But, you know, it was a – it was a limited number of people, and was she ever going to drag herself up there onto Olympus.

02:22:32:10

Susan Sarandon: What do you believe in then?

Kevin Costner: The hanging curve ball, high fiber, good scotch. That the novels of Susan Sontag are self-indulgent, overrated crap. And I believe in long, slow, deep, soft, wet kisses that last three days.

Susan Sarandon: And I think Susan Sontag is brilliant.

Debbie Nelson: She had an unbelievably good sense of what was important, of what was interesting and what was significant, um-- and I'm talking mostly about the '60s and '70s and maybe the early '80s. I mean, I think as time goes on she's less engaged with the moment because she's getting older. She-- her interests are changing. And she's - she's less on the front lines.

SS: When I began to write in the '60s when I was very young, I worried that certain forms of popular culture were being neglected or ruled out or treated in a snobbish and stupid way. And so I seemed to be defending popular culture. I think that the high culture which I took for granted when I was growing up—the high culture that I aspired to live in and to make my minute contribution to, that certainly has—the quality of an endangered species.

Gremlins Interviewer: What sort of civilization are you speaking of, Creature?

Gremlin: Diplomacy, compassion... That's what we're reaching toward. The Geneva Convention, chamber music, Susan Sontag. Everything your society has worked so hard to accomplish over the centuries. That's what we aspire to. We want to be civilized. I mean—do take a look at this fellow here. (Gun shot)

02:24:10:07

Christopher Lydon: Don't you find yourself almost inevitably drawn to the television set? To the so-called popular questions... the questions of what most people are seeing – most people are seeing as art, thinking, being sold, um –

SS: No. [shakes her head in complete disgust]. No, I don't. And you know I don't. I've said it in countless interviews.

Lydon: Not that I'd read.

SS: Oh, well, then you haven't read many interviews. Maybe that's the problem.

Wayne: She represents grandiosity, I think. And it is a little comic. And there is an aspect of camp. Susan Sontag is camp. Her seriousness is kind of camp, because it seems a bit of a pose and it's mannered and stylized. But that's part of the fun of the package of Susan Sontag.

Charlie Rose: Does any part of you wish that you had earlier focused more... on writing novels more?

SS: All of me wishes that. (*She laughs*). Don't drop the book, Charlie. Yes, isn't that awful? I wish... I wish I were just starting now, but what can I do?

Those essays from the '60s, they were very insolent, you know, like a young person's work. I wouldn't mind if the essays eventually evaporated. I think fiction, I think—I think literature, I think narrative is what lasts.

I do believe that there is such a thing as truth. But I prefer the mode in which truth appears in art or in literature. In literature a truth is something whose opposite is also true.

The last two novels that I've written--one is called *The Volcano Lover*, and the more recent one is called *In America*. I discovered I was a storyteller. I felt I could spread my wings. I felt I could—I could even be entertaining.

02:26:43:23

SS: *True there was still time for something really vivid to happen. Someone might have a heart attack or whack a dinner partner over the head or sob or groan or toss a glass of wine in an offending face. But this seemed as unlikely as my charging out of my window seat to dance on the table or spit in the soup or fondle a knee or bite someone's ankle.*⁵⁸

Gordimer: She wouldn't like to hear this, but her novels were not received at the standard at which she wanted.

Sigrid: Because she was so well known, there was a certain amount of attention, and I - I mean - I think it was Gore Vidal who - who wrote that, as a fiction writer Susan Sontag has no talent whatsoever. I mean, it was always these very strong, harsh statements.

Sigrid: She did win the National Book Award for *In America*. *The Volcano Lover* was a huge critical and commercial success.

Danner: Sometimes awards are given in recognition of a career as much as the merits of a particular book.

Sigrid: But in spite of all these well-earned awards and all her accomplishments, a sense of failure clung to her. She was not happy.

02:28:26:22

Castle: She was haunted by a sense that her younger self would not have been satisfied; that she hadn't been good enough. I think she was terrorized by the fact of her own transience; that she too would become a part of the past. Fade to black.

Interviewer: And did you fulfill all your desires?

SS: Certainly not.

Charlie Rose: Anne Leibovitz is here. She is perhaps the best known American photographer around. She has also published six books of her photographs. Her most recent one is called *Nine Pounds*. No, it's called *A Photographer's Life, 1990 to 2005*. In it, Annie publishes celebrity photographs as well as portraits of

⁵⁸ *In America*, p. 25

family members, her three children, and perhaps the most important person in her life, Susan Sontag.

Annie: My gosh, the years that I'm supposed to work on the book, 1990-2005, are the years I was with Susan. And I just got very excited because I thought I'm going to look at my work as if Susan was standing in back of me. You know, as if she was there you know, working with me to - to put the book together.

02:30:23:19

David: My mother had three cancers. She had a breast cancer when she was in her early 40s. When she was in her mid 60s she had a uterine sarcoma. Then 7 years later—or 6 years later-- she was diagnosed with this disease, MDS, which is this lethal blood cancer.

Judith: She needed to have a bone marrow transplant.

Monique (in French): Susan seemed to know if the bone marrow transplant didn't work, things were not going to end well.

Lucinda: I had just gotten back to the States and she told me what was happening, that she had this leukemia and that it was just raging and she was very ill. And then she said once I'm over the transplant, maybe you would come out at that time. She was assuming that the transplant would be successful. And she said "of course there's a risk because of my age, and because of the previous illnesses and so forth and so on, but" she said, "but it's my only chance."

David: If she wanted to believe in the idea that she would beat the odds once more as she'd done twice in the past with cancer, it wasn't for me to stand in the way of that.

02:32:02:14

Judith: We had a conversation. She said "you need to tell me what I've done that - that —how I've wronged you." I said, "Well, I'll do it if you'll do the same thing". And that's when she told me, you know, this inane wish of hers that I'd become an attorney. And I thought, well that's really soft ball. I told her the next day that I very much resented the fact that she didn't attend our wedding. And most of all I resented that she spent most of her life not being honest with me. And I think I really did strike home. And she admitted that—she was sorry she didn't come to the wedding. And um, she um, said that I was right and she was sorry about that.

David: My mother was afraid of extinction. You are extinguished. And I think that's what she felt and I think it terrified her.

Stephen: So the way that she decided that she would face it was to fight to the last breath. Fight, fight, every moment.

Judith: I guess I'm a little like uh-- Susan in that I always thought that she would survive too.

02:34:03:19

David: She had this transplant in the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle. And when the doctors came to tell her it hadn't worked, she started to scream.

Annie: I went to Seattle to bring her home in an air ambulance. It was really a harrowing experience.

Stephen: She then returned to Sloan-Kettering because it was over and she was being sent there to die. Um, and she did.

I immediately went to the hospital and then I went in and-- and sat with Susan's body for a while. Quite a while.

David: If you're interested in everything, if you're curious about everything. It's a lot harder to die.

Alice: I saw her one last time way at the end of her life. I was walking down the Boulevard St. Germain past the great café, The Flore. And she was sitting in the front with her notebook, writing. Sitting in Paris looking out and writing in her notebook still.

02:36:40:00- CREDITS

02:40:03:11- End of film