



**CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB IN CONVERSATION WITH R. CRUMB:**

*NEED MORE LOVE*

**February 14, 2007**

**Celeste Bartos Forum**

**New York Public Library**

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**PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER:** What a treat now to have this extraordinary couple back. They have an unusual way of loving, if you read the Styles section of the *New York Times*. They love in a very unusual way. Aline Kominsky Crumb, one of the original woman cartoonists and a creator of the popular graphic-novel form has over the years regularly collaborated on the comics stories based on her real life together with Robert Crumb and they were published in a series called *Dirty Laundry*. Originally we had

thought that for celebrating Valentine's Day we should call tonight's event "Dirty Laundry." They are the only couple in the history of comics to have worked together in that particular way.

I would like to encourage you all tonight to join our e-mail list. If you do so, you will receive one free ticket for any event this spring season. And we have a few good events coming up. For instance, Mira Nair and Jhumpa Lahiri, Clive James, Günter Grass, Rebecca Mead, and in a couple of days I will be interviewing Werner Herzog, but there are no more tickets for that. Nathaniel Kahn will be introducing that evening. I encourage you also to support the New York Public Library. By supporting it tonight you actually will support LIVE from the New York Public Library.

I would like now to read to you the dialogue that the Crumbs created for this evening when they were cajoled to do this by Zoro Weil and Mary Dinaburg. Don't have much light but it's quite wonderful.

Aline: "We've been living and working together for thirty-five years. As I write this, I'm astonished that we're so old and that we actually still love each other. And who would have thought when we first met at a party at Robert's girlfriend's house and he told me that I had cute knees that we were about to embark in a lifetime adventure together?" Bob: "Yeah. Who would have thought that we still would be together and that you still would have those cute knees? And the only reason I'm doing this Valentine's Day appearance at the New York Public Library this year is because Aline asked me to do it with her and I said, 'Okay, I'll do it as a Valentine's Day gift to you, since I've never given you a gift before in our whole life except for that t-shirt I bought for you in the early eighties. **(laughter)** Because in fact I hate doing public appearances. I'm becoming more and more of a hermit as I get older. But for Aline, I'll do it. Don't worry. It will be a riot. We'll do our shtick, it'll be very entertaining, as opposed to the intellectual and tedious kind of thing."—What I'm usually in the habit of doing here.—"Actually,"

Aline says, “all he has to do is ask me a few questions and I can go on and on for hours. I love to tell all. I’m compulsively honest. You’ll learn more about us than you could ever want to know. The hard job of Bob will be to shut me up and get me off the stage. Finally, I get to tell my side of the story.” Bob: “That’s right. It’s all about promoting Aline’s big new book, *Need More Love*. Check it out February 14<sup>th</sup> at the New York Public Library.” Aline: “P.S. I’ve got so many cute outfits. How am I gonna decide what to wear?” Aline will be signing her book. Prints are for sale and now it is my great, great pleasure to welcome to the Library, the Crumbs.

**(applause)**

**R. CRUMB:** Aline’s—she’s still back there putting on her make-up. She’s very insecure about her looks. She wants to look like a star. You know, this is her big moment, she doesn’t want to—Aline, come on, come on, you look gorgeous, you look great, get up here, come on, don’t be shy.

**(applause)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** This look okay?

**R. CRUMB:** You look gorgeous.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I have sparkles in my hair.

**R. CRUMB:** They love you, see? You’re loved.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And God made horrible weather, so I know they really love me because they're here tonight, they came out in that and so—

**R. CRUMB:** God was testing their love.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yes.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And none of my relatives are here because there were no free tickets for them. **(laughter)** So I know that all of you actually paid or actually wanted to come, and that makes me feel even better.

**R. CRUMB:** See, because all her life Aline's felt unloved, so she needed this proof that people love her, right?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yes, dear. Oh, look!

**(laughter)**

**(Sounds of struggle, kissing.)**

**R. CRUMB:** She loves every minute of it.

**(laughter/applause)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** My lipstick, smeared my lipstick. Excuse me.

**R. CRUMB:** You need a napkin?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Maybe.

**R. CRUMB:** Here. Okay, you look good.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Happy Valentine's Day, Bob. Thank you for coming. **(applause)** And it's true, he's never given me a present except for this one sort of lousy t-shirt, which now has holes in it.

**R. CRUMB:** Come on.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, it's true, you never did.

**R. CRUMB:** Doesn't Sophie have that t-shirt now?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Sophie has the t-shirt now because she likes things with holes in them. So tonight, this is an ultimate Valentine's Day present from Robert to me. Right, dear?

**R. CRUMB:** Right.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And he even has questions to ask. And he's wearing his Fred Astaire tie, the tie that belonged to Fred Astaire, he wore it in a movie. So anyway, tonight, thanks for people tonight.

**R. CRUMB:** Go ahead, thank them.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** All right. People keep asking me why I did this book now that I have one foot in the grave, and, you know.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Oh, come on, you'll live to be a hundred and ten.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** My last chance to say what I think.

**R. CRUMB:** Healthy as a horse.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, I am healthy as a horse. But the reason I did it now is because I had a publisher who is a cheerleader who pushed me for the last three years to work on this project, to write this book, who was always there, who was just telling me I was a star, and telling me I had so

much to say and telling me I was so talented. I needed to hear this about three times a week in order to finish this book and she stuck right with me. And the other thing was that I lost a very dear friend right around the time when I started to write the book, and I could really hear her voice with me, encouraging me to write the book, as she has encouraged me, had encouraged me, in my life before at my low points. And when I first met her—

**R. CRUMB:** You dedicated the book to her, right?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I dedicated the book to her because even though when I was a wanton slut, and like just a completely useless lump, she somehow saw something in me and I knew that she was with me while I was writing this book and encouraging me to go on, so I hope some of her family are here tonight, I don't know if they made it, with the weather conditions. But anyway, she was there with me, too, so I had these two muses, two female muses behind me, encouraging me to tell this story and also there is the fact that comics are, like, really popular now and I thought actually I might sell some books.

**R. CRUMB:** For the first time ever.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** The first time ever, since my other books sold about eight hundred copies each over a twenty-year period.

**R. CRUMB:** Power Pack Comics, the publisher finally had to use them as insulation in his barn, they were selling so bad.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah. I asked if I could buy the copies that didn't sell, he said, "No, they're in the barn, I used them as insulation," so, you know, but I said, "One day they'll rip the walls out and get those books because they'll be valuable collectors' items." But anyway, I thought now is a time when maybe I can actually reach the people who I feel I've been talking for the last forty years instead of pimply teenaged boys that go into comic books stores, that are not very interested in my work. And now I feel that the public is mature and that intelligent people are reading comics seriously, so maybe they'll actually look at my work and get a few laughs and cry and you know, love me more. Those are my parents, by the way, anyway. **(laughter)** And the reason I called this book *Need More Love* is because I didn't have enough love when I was a little girl and my parents were not very nice to me, they're not here, and I hope none of my relatives are here, either. They were not very nice to me and, you know, they were miserable as well themselves. And I never had a breast in my mouth, I had like, horrible formula and it was fed to me by somebody else, not my mother.

**R. CRUMB:** How terrible.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** My parents didn't make me feel very pretty, they didn't make me feel very special, they made me feel like I was just a big pain in the butt and so I always felt that I needed more love and more acceptance and more everything, more adoration, and so that's why I called the book that in the hopes that you would give me more. **(laughter)** And also money helps, too, money makes me feel more loved and more valuable, too, so I hope that I'll also become rich. **(laughter)** I want it all, and then maybe I will feel, I will write another book, and it will be called *Enough Love, Enough, Already*, you know, *Leave Me Alone, A Little Peace and Quiet*.



**R. CRUMB:** Okay, here's a question for you. People are always asking you why you draw yourself so ugly. And they usually say—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You mean like that, on the toilet?

**R. CRUMB:** You're much better looking than how you draw yourself, so why do you draw yourself so ugly?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, you know, especially when I started drawing comics, I felt really ugly, really ugly because, for example, when I was fourteen years old one day, I was in the bathroom putting on make-up and trying to cover up my pimples, and my father barged in and he said, "Ah, quit trying, it's hopeless, you can't shine shit." **(laughter)** And that kind of has been the motto of my life.

**R. CRUMB:** What a guy.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And so, you know, when I drew myself I kind of always went back to thinking that, and that's certainly affected my self-image.

**R. CRUMB:** I guess so.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** The other reason I drew myself really ugly was when I first started drawing comics, there was a group of women cartoonists, and some were more beautiful than others, and I noticed that some of the less beautiful ones drew themselves really incredibly beautifully and when people would come they'd say, "That's *you*?" And I drew myself really ugly, they'd meet me and say, "Oh, God, you're much better looking than in your drawings." **(laughter)** So I thought, "I'm going to stick with this." And so that always happens, and they say, "God, you draw yourself so ugly," and I say, "Oh really?" Well, you know, it works. But actually I think my drawings have gotten less grotesque as time has gone on and as, you know, since Robert has adored me for thirty-five years, I've gotten over the "you can't shine shit" thing a little bit and so I think my drawings have approached how I really look now.

**R. CRUMB:** You used to in any event constantly ask me, "How do I look? Do I look okay? Do I look pretty? Nice?" "Yeah, you look gorgeous, you look great," I keep telling her how great she looks.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It helps. It really helps, so I think so I think that, you know, that it has helped me to feel better about myself and to draw myself a little bit less grotesquely.

**R. CRUMB:** So don't forget you wanted to thank Norman Waterhouse, too.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh yeah, I wanted to thank my Mr. Norman Waterhouse, who gave me my cheekbones back.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** What'd you say they call him? What was his nickname?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Stormin' Norman. Like, a couple of years ago, when my face started to fall, I started looking like Grandma Fannie and I starting having what I call—you know, dogs have dewlaps, but I started having Jewlaps. **(laughter)** And when they started getting in the way of eating and drinking, I thought—

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Oh, come on, that's not true.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, things started getting trapped under them. Actually, it was like, I was having makeup done one day, and the guy said to me—**(phone rings)** What's that?

**R. CRUMB:** Is that for us? **(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh, no, and this guy said to me, "You're such a good-looking woman, why don't you get rid of those things?" And I said, "What, what things, what are you talking about?" And he said, "Those nasolabial lines," whatever they call them, and I said, "How do you do that?" and he said, "Here," and he gave me the card of Norman and so I had this, like, hideous procedure and I have my cheekbones back now, I'm very happy. In case any of you, you know, are contemplating doing things or have done things, don't be ashamed, you should flaunt it, you know? **(laughter)** Why should

you not want to look good as long as you can? I'm just starting to look good now, I'm almost over the hill, you know, I've gotta prolong it as long as possible.

**R. CRUMB:** Jesus. Let's talk about your work.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Look, I'm looking like Joan Baez right there.

**R. CRUMB:** Can you actually play the guitar? I've never seen you play the guitar.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, not at all.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** So, what kind of pen do you use?

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, sometimes I draw with a stick, you know, and one time I actually drew a comic with my foot. It wasn't very different from when I draw with my hand, actually. I use the same kind of pen you do. I always go and say, "Robert, do you have a clean pen I can borrow?"

**R. CRUMB:** Right.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** My tools are always like encrusted with ink and stuff, so.

**R. CRUMB:** She's a barbarian. She doesn't know how to take care of tools.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I don't take care of my art supplies.

**R. CRUMB:** She went to art school for four years, and she just didn't—never really learned how to draw properly.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** What are you talking about? There's you with your pants down.

**R. CRUMB:** Oh, no, it's not. But your drawing has a kind of a wacky appeal of its own, but the comic fans, they were not—I don't know, they were not attracted to your drawing style very much, most of the comic fans.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, because I have no comic background. I never liked comics when I was a kid, I never read comics at all. I was a painter, and until in the sixties, when I saw comics by Justin Green, who did a comic called *Binky Brown meets the Holy Virgin Mary*, and I saw your

comics and other underground comics, I wasn't interested at all. But when I saw those, Justin Green's autobiographical comics, I saw a way to get my stories out there and combine my art in a narrative way.

**R. CRUMB:** You had to tell a very personal story. That's all you gotta do.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I've gotta tell all. I compulsively want to tell everything.

**R. CRUMB:** Aline could never make up characters or anything. She just had to draw from her own life, that's all she ever did.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, I tried to make up like a little character that looked like little Lulu, it was little Juju, and then Tubby was called Schlubby.

**R. CRUMB:** That didn't work.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, it didn't work out at all. It's always me. I don't know anything else. But you know, Frida Kahlo only painted herself and she's my favorite painter, so what the heck.

**R. CRUMB:** She's one of your role models.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah.

**R. CRUMB:** Who are your heroes and your role models as an artist?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Don Rickles.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Sometimes I call her Donna Rickles.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah. Gracie Allen. Phil Silvers.

**R. CRUMB:** What about artists? I mean, you know, comic artists.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Alice Neel, Frida Kahlo, George Grosz, Otto Dix, Christian Schad.

**R. CRUMB:** Right.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You know, I don't know. I can't think of everybody else. My mind's blank.

**R. CRUMB: (laughs)** So what kind of—when did you start? What did you do as a kid? What kind of art did you do when you were a little kid? What did you do?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, when I was eight years old—I went to a—I grew up on Long Island and we went on a class trip to the Museum of Modern Art and I saw some great paintings and I was completely turned on, you know. Monet.

**R. CRUMB:** You take art classes or anything?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Not—yeah, I mean, in school. But then after I saw some real paintings, I bugged my parents until they finally let me take a painting class at the YWHA on Long Island.

**R. CRUMB:** What's that?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Young Women's Hebrew Association.

**R. CRUMB:** Young Women's Hebrew Association? Oh, I see.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, know. In that class we got to copy famous masters and we were like eight years old.

**R. CRUMB:** That's what they did? They made you copy famous paintings?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, we copied famous paintings. And I was good at it, and so I brought these paintings home and my parents took them out when all the relatives came over, and my



relatives were so impressed they just threw money at me. That was their way of showing approval. They didn't say, "That's good," or "What is it?" or "How did you do that?" They just threw money at me.

**R. CRUMB:** They, like, threw like dollar bills at you?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Threw it, yeah, and I just crawled over picked it up and stuck it in my pocket and bought Madame Alexander dolls, and I thought, "This is a good gig, you know, I'm going to be this when I grow up. I'll just make, copy paintings and people will throw money at me and that's how I'll live." You know, so that's how I got interested in art, basically.

**R. CRUMB:** Kinda didn't work out that way, they never did really throw money at you later.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, I never got any money, actually. Never made any money doing art, my books never sold, my paintings never sold, which doesn't mean that I haven't been totally constantly motivated to work, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** You're a dedicated artist. It's kind of amazing considering you never achieved much recognition until now.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Considering that I've got no approval, no recognition, and no money, and considering that you've gotten tons of approval, tons of recognition, and tons of money.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Well, who knows what history will decide? I mean, maybe they'll decide that actually you were a much better artist than me.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, just like Frida and Diego. I like her paintings much better than his. He was much more famous.

**R. CRUMB:** In his day, Diego was much more well known and admired, now Frida's definitely the much more interesting artist of those two, I think.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah. And he was, you know, a sexist male chauvinist pig, too, you know. Perfect.

**R. CRUMB:** Let's talk about that. Let's talk about— **(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** What, dear?

**R. CRUMB:** What did you—when you first saw those like, twisted sex fantasies that I draw, people want to know, what do you think, how can you live with a guy who can draw, who can make such creepy, twisted, misogynistic drawings? How could you stand a guy like that?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, I was kind of hoping you'd do some of those things to me.

**(laughter)** For one thing. It looked pretty good to me. Like, you know, our perversions obviously sort of match up, so that's one thing.

**R. CRUMB:** Sometimes we don't go far enough and she says, "Come on, show me more male anger, come on." **(laughter)** It's true.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And another thing, I just thought, you know, a thought a lot of the stuff that you acted out was really healthy for everybody to see. You're a kind of mild-mannered guy on a day-to-day basis, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** On the other hand, some of those other women cartoonists in the seventies thought you were a complete traitor to the cause of feminism by getting involved with me.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** That's right. Well, in the early days—

**R. CRUMB:** They still do, they're still harping on it.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Still, some interesting articles coming out on the Internet about what a male chauvinist pig you are and what a sell-out I am. But you know in the early seventies I was at a woman's art collective in San Francisco.

**R. CRUMB:** Comic collective.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Comic collective, yeah, and it was a very dogmatic feminist group and some of the women were very angry and when I started going out with Robert, they started criticizing me and then eventually stopped publishing my work. And there was Diane Newman and myself and most of the other women and we split off from the group and started a comic called *Twisted Sisters*. We were like bad girls that liked boys that liked sex, that wanted to be sexy, and—

**R. CRUMB:** You just liked the wrong boys, though, that was the problem.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** We also wanted to be like Amazons, you know, we were strong and we were our own people but, you know, on the other hand, you know, we weren't dogmatic feminists, and we also didn't feel that the male cartoonists were leaving us out, or being mean to us, or anything. Actually I was very encouraged by a lot of male cartoonists in the early seventies when I arrived in San Francisco, like Kim Deitch and Spain and Art Spiegelman and—

**R. CRUMB:** Larry Todd.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Larry Todd, Dan O'Neill. They were all really helpful. And I didn't feel left out of anything. Zap Comix was a closed group of artists, but that was closed to other men as well. So I didn't really experience that at all and I don't think Diane did, either. And so we weren't that angry. We might have been angry about other things, but not that, so we broke off and formed our own group, but that group of feminist women from that period still hate you and they still hate me. And I wrote an article recently about one of those women that particularly still hates me, because it's been

forty years now. And what I said was, and this was really mean, but I'll say it again. **(laughter)** I said, "Two facelifts later, how could you still be mad about that stuff?" You know.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Two facelifts later, Jesus.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You've gotta laugh about it at this point, you know. Also, I think a lot of the comics done during that period of time were not very good. They were very childlike, simplistic, dogmatic, romantic—

**R. CRUMB:** What, the women's comics?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, those feminist comics from the early seventies, they were pretty bad.

**R. CRUMB:** There's a second generation of women cartoonists that were genuinely more interesting, actually.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, well, I was going to say that we were like the grandmothers of this autobiographical style of storytelling and also of women in the history of comics and now there's, like, so many great women cartoonists doing graphic novels. Men and women, but there's no distinction now between men and women cartoonists. So many great and interesting artists and I feel like, you

know, the great-grandmother of this generation of cartoonists, because it's been like, actually two generations, and this is wonderful stuff and I'm really uplifted by that. So, you know, in the end, it's sort of—

**R. CRUMB:** Including our own daughter.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Including our very talented daughter, who's also drawing comics, believe it or not.

**R. CRUMB:** Tell them how talented that daughter of ours is. **(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh my God. Scary how talented she is. In my book is a story that she and I did called "The End of the Line," and it was—after visiting my mother in Miami, and my daughter was going crazy, and I said, "Let's just take notes and we'll do a comic," and that sort of like kept us sane. So at the Fort Lauderdale airport before leaving we drew this story and it's pretty funny.

**R. CRUMB:** You're probably the only mother/daughter that's ever done a comic collaboration in history, too.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** We're a unique family. Well, we're the only couple, I think, in the history of comics that's ever worked together.

**R. CRUMB:** For what distinction that's worth, I don't know, **(laughter)** that's something.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I mean, there have been stand-up comedy teams, you know, like George and Gracie, and I think, you know, we're more in that vein than we are anything else, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. **(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, it's true.

**R. CRUMB:** There we are, Fred Astaire and Ginger, there. **(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's think it's like really interesting working together. Our work together has another whole sort of ambiance than either his work or my work, it has a life of its own.

**R. CRUMB:** It kind of writes itself, really.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** An interesting thing about that, which I guess I should point out now, is that a lot of people think that he draws me and writes my part and his part and people say, "No that's impossible," because my drawing is completely flat and primitive and, you know, expressionistic, and you can barely read the lettering, and his drawing is round and has depth and it has perspective and the lettering is really perfect and everything.

**R. CRUMB:** But, a lot of people that, like, read those *New Yorker* strips don't, they assume that I do the whole thing, I don't know. It's surprising.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** They're too literary. You know, come on, open your eyes.

**R. CRUMB:** They don't look that close. A lot of people, it's a story, they don't look at the drawing styles.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** They don't look at anything, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** They look. They just don't look that close.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, but it's like, really, really shockingly different. And people come up to me and they say, "I saw your husband's strip in the *New Yorker* about that plastic surgery you had. Boy, he drew you really hideously." And I said, "Wait a minute. I wrote that story. I drew that. He's *in* it, you know."

**R. CRUMB:** They're mad at me for drawing her hideously and she drew herself, I didn't do it.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, it's really incredible, so it makes you wonder how much people look at anything, you know, and I don't know, but we still keep on doing it anyway.

**R. CRUMB:** It's good that you're finally getting this vindication. I mean, all those decades that your work was so ignored, and all of the books that were written about comics and stuff, they barely ever



mentioned you, and I was always surprised at that, I thought that you were innovative and original and, you know, I could never understand that, but the comics readers generally, they just—it's just hard for them to look at it.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I was ahead of my time, let's face it.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, right. (laughter)

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I was, like, innovative, oh, that's where we live. Isn't that beautiful? And then my studio's up on the roof. Sorry. And our daughter drew herself there, she was like ten years old. Anyway. I was innovative and really coming from more, really a fine-arts background, a painting background and just, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** How come you stopped drawing comics a few years ago? About ten years you quit drawing comics completely.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, I stopped drawing comics on my own about ten years ago because—

**R. CRUMB:** She got discouraged.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Nobody bought them, I didn't get any money, my publisher sold just hardly any and he always, like, told me how bad they sold. We worked for the same publisher. He'd get

a royalty check for \$19,000 and I'd get one for \$1.69, you know. **(laughter)** And comics are hard, they're really time-consuming and everything, and I just—

**R. CRUMB:** It's arduous drawing comics.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I was, like, in the middle of drawing a story and then one day I just put it in a drawer and I said, "Nah, that's it." You know, I'm not that masochistic.

**R. CRUMB:** But now you can finish it. You can actually pull it out and finish it now.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, I went back to painting and I did like a lot of painting, and it was really fun and really, I got immediate satisfaction and all the people around me really liked my painting. So, you know, that really became meaningful and really enjoyable to do. But, yeah, now I think I'm going to go back and draw comics now, because I'm getting so much approval and attention and, you know, why else would you do anything, you know, that's that hard unless you get something for it, out if it, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** Let's hope MQP doesn't go bust because of your book?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Why? Do you think my book is a kiss of death?

**R. CRUMB:** It might be, you never know.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's got good reviews.

**R. CRUMB:** Yes, it's true, it's amazing. It got five stars in *Time Out*.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Look, four generations of my family—that's me in my father's lap.

**R. CRUMB:** That's Aline on her father's lap.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** If I start looking at my work. Those are my parents and you ask me why I need more love. You know, anyway.

**R. CRUMB:** So should we start taking questions over here?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Did we talk about everything we wanted to talk about?

**R. CRUMB:** I don't know. It's enough already.

(laughter)

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You think so?

**R. CRUMB:** You got anything more to say?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I could go on for hours, you know, depends, but I don't know whether it would still be interesting or not.

**Q:** Robert, when did you start putting glitter in your beard?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** When he started kissing me.

**R. CRUMB:** She puts glitter in her hair, and when I get near her it gets all over me. She's a star. She wanted to put glitter in her hair.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I'm Cher and he's Mr. Rogers.

**(laughter/applause)**

**R. CRUMB: (sings)** It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood. Will you be mine? Will you be mine?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yes.

**R. CRUMB:** Is there any questions? Sir.

**Q:** Can you say more about how you work together? Who does what?

**R. CRUMB:** That's a good question. The man asked how we work together.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, you know, first of all it depends. Sometimes the *New Yorker* sends us to cover an event, like the Cannes Film Festival, so then we have to actually write about something other than ourselves, and that's a real challenge. **(laughter)** So at the Cannes Film Festival—

**R. CRUMB:** That's hard, that's hard.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's really hard. At the Cannes Film Festival, he went to bed, he had a terrible headache, and he said, "Go see the movies," so I like went and saw like five movies a day and met Harvey Weinstein.

**R. CRUMB:** Mainly she wanted to meet Harvey Weinstein. I said, "Why do you want to meet Harvey Weinstein?" And she said, "I want to go to the heart of darkness." **(laughter)** And, guess what, she actually got to meet and talk to that monster.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I did, thanks to Jim Hoberman, who gave me a ticket to the party—

**R. CRUMB:** A pass to that party.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** For Michael Moore. But anyway, so if we have to cover an event, you know, then we sort of actually write about the event a little bit.

**R. CRUMB:** It's easier when we just throw the shit back and forth.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** When we just write about ourselves, it's just like this, now, you know, chaotic, and I talk over him and he says, "Wait a minute, wait a minute!"

**R. CRUMB:** That last thing we did for the *New Yorker*, that Valentine thing, thirty-five years together, and all I have to do is, like, give Aline some little lead line like, "Hey, how about the fact that we've been together thirty-five years?" And she'll just go on, she'll fill pages and pages with dialogue and then we just kind of have to sort through and pare it down, and it writes itself, and then we just have to draw.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's like George and Gracie, kind of, like George would feed Gracie the lines and she'd go on and on.

**R. CRUMB:** And then as soon as we've got the whole thing penciled, then she takes a page and starts inking, and I take a page and start inking, and in a couple of days it's all done.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, we work on two pages at a time, like he'll pencil dialogue, I'll pencil dialogue. And we'll do two pages with all of the writing, and then we'll draw ourselves in pencil—

**R. CRUMB:** It's much easier than doing your own stuff by yourself.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And then we ink and then we exchange the pages and ink the next page, so it kind of goes like that, you know. It's a lot like storyboarding and it's a lot like opera and it's a lot like standup comedy, you know, it has—it's very different than working by yourself.

**R. CRUMB:** Oh yeah.

**Q:** Has it changed a lot?

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, when we first started doing it it was very slapstick, in the early seventies, it was this total slapstick nonsense.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, the first time we did it was not for publication, actually. I had broken my leg and we were stuck in the house all winter. And he used to draw comics with his brother Charles when they were kids, so he suggested we do a comic together just to keep me busy, so the very first comic we did together, it just rambles on and on, it's very incoherent. But we had done about thirty pages and a publisher came up and wanted to publish it. And so we showed it to Terry Zwigoff, our friend, and he said, "This is the most embarrassing thing I've ever seen, it's like airing your dirty laundry." And I said, "Ah! There's the title." So that was *Dirty Laundry #1*, and it does go into all these fantasies and stuff like that and after that we started to—

**R. CRUMB:** It just gradually became more and more realistic, and then more kind of just about our relationship and stuff.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And it became more of a shtick. We kind of get into our roles. We have like a role that we—almost like comedy roles we get into, personas that we get into when we're working on that. And it's fun. It's really very escapist. It's much less—

**R. CRUMB:** We could talk about our bohemian lifestyle.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You want to talk about the two husbands? But let somebody ask a question about that. Does anybody want to ask about our—

**R. CRUMB:** Where's the other husband, you want him to stand up and take a bow?

**PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER:** There are mics on each side. If you go to a mic that would be much appreciated so people can hear your question. Mics on each side of the auditorium.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Okay. Someone's coming up, okay. I'm sure you all read the article in the *New York Times* by Allen Salken where he exposed our bohemian, eccentric lifestyle, so you probably already know that I have two husbands, which if I was a man it would be nothing at all, but the fact that I'm a woman makes it very exciting. **(laughter)** And the other husband is here, he's right there. Christian!

**(applause)**



**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Thank you, thank you. Because he eats sushi and Robert hates it, so since we've been in New York Robert can go have his meatloaf sandwich and Christian will go and have sushi with me, so it works much better.

**R. CRUMB:** It works out.

**Q:** Could you talk for a bit about your relationship with your mother-in-law?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Wait, I can't hear, what?

**Q:** Could you talk for a bit about your relationship with your mother-in-law.

**R. CRUMB:** Who?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** What mother-in-law, which one? Me?

**Q:** Yes.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** My mother-in-law?

**Q:** Did you have one?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You mean, his mother?

**R. CRUMB:** My mother's dead.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** His mother's dead, but she was like an insane cat lady by the time I met her, and she thought the CIA was spying on her, so she was ripping the—is this okay with you if I say this?

**R. CRUMB:** Sure, and she never got her name right, she always called her Arlene.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Ripping the ceiling tiles out looking for bugs in the kitchen. And she never got my name right, yeah.

**R. CRUMB:** Also, she didn't like you, either, because you were the second wife.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, she liked the first wife better and she didn't really notice our child, either, and, you know, it was a horror film, it was like the Bates Motel, his mother's house, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** Ask me what I think of *her* mother, oh boy.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, I thought you were asking about what he thought of my mother. He has to deal with my mother. My mother is alive and kicking. She's jumping—my mother jumps on a trampoline every morning higher than anybody else in the gym, you know. It is scary.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** She's a monster, boy oh boy, oh boy. She's coming to France, too. Oh boy.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** When Robert first came and met my family, you know, it was a normal family dinner where everyone was screaming at each other and spitting food across the table and slamming down their dishes and getting up and, you know, calling each other names, and looking like they were about to have heart attacks, some of them actually did. He said, "Oh my God, I think your grandparents are going to get a divorce." I said, "Why do you say that?" He said, "They hate each other." I said, "No, they love each other, they've been doing this every night for fifty-seven years, what are you talking about?" **(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Just a normal conversational tone.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** So when my mother first met Robert, she thought he was the biggest creep she had ever seen. She called him "the creep" and "the retard," **(laughter)** so that went on for a long time. And then, like, years later, her best friend—

**R. CRUMB:** Tell them about Ricky Schiffer.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Wait, I'm getting there. **(laughter)** Years later, her best friend Marilyn's daughter married this guy, I hope they're not here, Ricky Schiffer, who I went to high school with. And he was the guy that my mother would have liked me to marry. He was in the sweater business. The garments business. And my mother would have loved it if I had married him. Very successful family.

**R. CRUMB:** Very popular in high school.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Very popular, most likely to succeed, everything. So anyway he turned out to be a big fan of Robert's, and he asked my mother if she could get Robert's autograph, and so my mother said to me, "How's that doll Robert? How's the cartooning business?" **(laughter)** And so from that point on she started to see he had some merits.

**R. CRUMB:** Now I'm real doll.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Now he's a doll because, you know, he earned a good living. And you know, she was upset by the Crumb film where I held this hideous picture of her up for the world to see. But you know, she got over that. Anyway.

**R. CRUMB:** Well, she called up and she said, "I saw the film and I'm only going to say one thing. I'm very hurt."

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** “And I don’t want to talk about it ever again. You wouldn’t believe the new Pilates instructor I have at the gym. Oh my God!” So that was it, it was in that order of importance. So, anyway, we’re still dealing with her. But I have to say for my mother and any of the rest of my family, too. They have been a great source of material. **(laughter)** And you know, God bless them. All you have to do is hold the phone like this and have a notepad and you have a story. It composes itself. All you have to say to my mother is, “How was your last vacation?” and you have a story. And it doesn’t matter what the vacation was or where it was, you have a story, because—

**R. CRUMB:** It’s rich.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Because she mixes everything up and you know, and you ask her, you say, “Well, you know, how did you deal with the money in the foreign country?” And she said, “Oh, we don’t have money, we had chips.” And I said, “What’s that?” She said, “Oh, they give you a chip and then you just, they add up your chips at the end of the day. You don’t really touch their money. It’s dirty, you could get the disease if you touch their money.” **(laughter)** And I said, well, “What if someone gets lost on the tour?” And she goes, “No, we have on our beanies **(laughter)** with our nametags. We can’t get lost. It’s very safe,” you know. So, she travels all over like that and her impression of everything is wonderful.

**R. CRUMB:** It’s rich, yeah.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Can I tell the story about—

**R. CRUMB:** Israel?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** The Israel story.

**R. CRUMB:** She went on about the layers of history, it was incredible.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And I'll sum this up. In Israel, we said to her, "So what did you think of Jerusalem?" She said, "Oh my God, the layers of history. Under the street there was another city. Underneath they dug up and they found another city. I never saw anything like it," she said, "And we walked on the street, you know, where Jesus went, where he carried the cross and everything," and she said, "And I bought a bag, I bought the most gorgeous leather bag, right next to where they hung up Jesus."

**(laughter/applause)**

**R. CRUMB:** And she said, "The guide was so smart. He told us why were having all this trouble with the Arabs." And I said, why? And she said, "Because the Arabs are all on drugs. They're all on drugs!"

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Anyway, so we are grateful to my family because they have provided me with tons of material. I mean, I'm still, still, I'm still writing about Long Island. I'm still writing about Belle Harbor, where I lived my first five years.

**R. CRUMB:** She tells endless stories, the stories are endless, it's incredible.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Because, you know, it's just rich and it's so horrifying and it was so traumatic.

**R. CRUMB:** And she likes being in France, because she said, "Now, I'm not in Long Island anymore."

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** When I wake up in the medieval village and I go out to get the bread in the morning and everything's really old and these gnarled old people are walking around, I look around and I say, "You know, I finally left Long Island."

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Any more questions?

**Q:** Yes, I'm over here, hi. Yes. Here I am. How many siblings do you have, Aline, and, also, do the two of you have any pets?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Okay, I have one brother and he's a recovering heroin addict and he lives with us, we take care of him. That's what happened to him as a result of growing up in my family. And he's doing pretty well now.

**Q:** Younger or older?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Younger brother.

**R. CRUMB:** Aline has really saved the guy's life.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** More or less I've saved his life.

**R. CRUMB:** He was living in his car in New Jersey and she brought him to France.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, also, Robert, you agreed to take him in, which I'm grateful for. And he's doing better, but you know, he's crippled from having grown up with my family. And we have two cats.

**R. CRUMB:** But that's why Sophie and you did that story called "End of the Line," because Sophie's like the only, the last hope of having any grandchildren.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** That's right.



**R. CRUMB:** I got my crazy brother, and he's not going to get married, and my sister Carol never had any kids.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, we both came from a—everyone has a dysfunctional family, and everyone that grew up in the fifties had a weird family, I mean, we're not unusual, but our families were pretty extreme, and I think, like, when Robert and I were together in our twenties, I think we parented each other, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, we did.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** We really sort of helped each other. He was the nice daddy that I never had. And I don't know what I was to him, but something. I was the Rock of Gibraltar.

**R. CRUMB:** Hey, if it wasn't for you, I would be dead today if it wasn't for you. I wouldn't have survived, at all. Jesus. Aline really has her feet on the ground in spite of her wackiness. She's really—I was—she's the first woman I met whose emotions didn't completely terrify me.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Thank you, dear. And that's as close to romantic as he gets.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** I never use the L word with her, ever, never ever use the L word with her. I just—I blew that out in the earlier relationships.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, but he's still there.

**R. CRUMB:** It just got cheapened, you know. Any more questions? We got two cats.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, two cats you said, yeah, Bernie and Rashid.

**Q:** I wanted to know more about your process writing *Need More Love*, because I noticed it's not like just comic-strip style, it's all mixed together, and I wondered how did you go about it and how did you put it together?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, first of all, when Zaro Weil, my publisher, came to me, we were thinking of doing an *Aline Kominsky Crumb Handbook*, similar to Robert's handbook, but when I sat down to do the book it just came out, I started, I was born in 1948 on Long Beach, Long Island, and the whole story poured out and I'd never really written text like that before, and it just poured out of me. I think I really needed to tell that story directly in that way, and it started from then and it ended now and then I realized also that my life is heavily documented. I happen to have incredible photos, as you see in the book, because my father was a photographer, I had an uncle who was a photographer, and Robert and I rescued all the family archives from my grandmother about twenty years ago. So we had huge archive of family photos and then I started painting when I was eight and I've been drawing comics.

**R. CRUMB:** This is a good story. We were visiting her grandmother in Florida, and I said, "Don't you have any old family photos?" She said, "Yeah, yeah, they're all in a suitcase out in the storeroom," "So

can't we bring it in and look at them?" "No, no, they've got bugs in it—just throw it away." "But this is all the old family photos." So we finally persuaded her to let us go inspect the suitcase, and we opened it and there was no bugs in it, so then she finally allowed us to bring it into the apartment, and we got all the hundreds of family photos out, and she knew who everybody was and gave us all the names of everybody, so we rescued them. She would have just thrown them away—bugs. **(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** So that's why I had incredible photos. And then I also had comics. I'd written comics about all the different phases of my childhood and growing up, too, so my idea then became to make an impressionistic memoir where I used all these different forms of images to illustrate the text and I think it's kind of unique but I think it works because, you know, each period is very richly illustrated and also you can read it as straight text as well, so I never thought of doing anything else before like that, but it sort of just evolved, and I'm happy with it, you know, I think it's a great doorstop.

**R. CRUMB:** When she first got a copy of the book she was so happy with it she took it to bed.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I did, I slept with it.

**R. CRUMB:** I came in and she was like, had the book like hugged next to her in bed.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's only half as long as Bill Clinton's book, **(laughter)** so you know. I read his book. Mine has more pictures, so it's okay.

**R. CRUMB:** Well, I guess that's that.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh no. Yes.

**Q:** Aline, why don't you guys talk about your move to France and how that affected you and your work. Why'd you move to France?

**R. CRUMB:** Why'd we move to France? I don't know.

**Q:** She knows.

**R. CRUMB:** She knows, I don't know.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, it was the height of my midlife crisis, and I had to do something, I didn't know what. But also we were living in a small town in rural California, where it was becoming more and more Christian fundamentalist and very redneck and right-wing and our daughter was in school, and we felt we had to do something to get our daughter in a different environment. We didn't really know what to do.

**R. CRUMB:** We could have moved to Cleveland or something.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, we could have. But Robert was in his studio—he creates Crumbland wherever he lives and he closes the curtains and doesn't look outside. He just complains. **(laughter)** But he complains and complains and complains and I take action. So I went on an

exploratory trip and decided, “I’m going to look around,” and because we work from our homes, we can live anywhere, and I thought, “Let’s get our daughter out of America before she becomes a Valley Girl,” she was like nine and she was starting to say, “Duh, Mom.” So I visited friends in France, and Robert also had an agent in France at the time—a lot of his work was being published over there.

**R. CRUMB:** She engineered the whole thing, she took care of everything.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** We visited these friends, and I found this beautiful village, and brought the family over there for a vacation, and then we started looking at houses, and half the village was empty and the houses were totally cheap and we realized we could get an incredible house from, like, the eleventh century—

**R. CRUMB:** Don’t talk it up too much, they’ll all start moving over there.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** But we got a thirteen-room house for seventy thousand dollars, and you know. It was incredible. And so we moved over there not knowing how long we would stay, what would happen, just that we would fix up the house and our daughter would be exposed to something else—

**R. CRUMB:** I’m not moving that record collection again.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** He said to me, “If one record breaks”—from his 78 record collection—“I’m divorcing you.” So not one record broke, we packed them really carefully. So everything arrived, and you know we were able to live and work much more peacefully there. And sometimes I think that it was prophetic that I moved us there because shortly after that that documentary came out by Terry Zwigoff and none of us had any idea that it was going to be as widely distributed as it was, and we were so glad that we weren’t here when that came out and that Sophie, our daughter, was there and wasn’t affected by it at all. She had no idea that we were well known or anything. So she had this, you know, sort of—

**R. CRUMB:** Normal.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, yeah, preadolescence and early adolescence in a small village in France without having any idea of who we were or anything about that. She also, you know, very much became partially French. She’s still neither French nor American, but she became sort of an international kid, with an interesting perspective on everything. And for us I think it’s been interesting for our work to come in and out of America and to have some kind of distance on it and to be able to comment on it. I feel also, as a wandering Jew, that I have no country, you know. I don’t feel any less comfortable in this small village in the South of France than I did in California.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, but what about me? My family came to America in the 1600s.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, they came on the *Mayflower* or something, I don’t know.

**R. CRUMB:** Not the *Mayflower*.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Something like that.

**R. CRUMB:** So I'm deeply American.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, but you were miserable here. You're not any more miserable there.

**R. CRUMB:** But at least it's familiar. I hate it, but it's familiar.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You have a nicer room—Crumbland is nicer there than it was in America.

**R. CRUMB:** I've got more, space, yeah.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And we just have like a—you know, it's a really pleasant place to live, as you know, on a day-to-day basis, and I think that—

**R. CRUMB:** I gotta come back here to find anybody that appreciates The Three Stooges. **(laughter)** They never heard of the Stooges over there.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, we had little French kids watching, them, though, so.

**R. CRUMB:** I showed the Stooges videotape to this French friend of mine, Jean-Pierre, and people were rolling on the floor shrieking with laughter over “Pop Goes the Easel,” **(laughter)** and he’s like, “You think this is funny? This is horrible. They’re slapping and hitting each other.” **(laughter)** That’s a small matter, anyway.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** But anyway, but who’s to say? But in general I think that, you know, we have a pretty good life over there, and it’s definitely conducive to working.

**R. CRUMB:** Yes, we do. Can’t complain.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Just having that amount of space. The luxury of space is incredible. When we come to New York, like, you know, we can’t stay with anybody, nobody has a guest room, we have like five guest rooms. So it’s really kind of an amazing place to live.

**R. CRUMB:** Don’t say that, they’ll all want to come.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** They all come already, they come already. I love to have them.

**R. CRUMB:** Love to have you.



**Q:** I thought the house was a trade for Robert's notebooks.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, we can't talk about that. As far as taxes go, we don't like to discuss how that happened.

**R. CRUMB:** We got the money to buy the house for several sketchbooks, which are now worth a lot more than I gave them away for then, but anyway.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It was a long time ago, so.

**R. CRUMB:** We bought the house with the money from the sketchbooks.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah. Yes?

**Q:** What are you working on now, since you're making comics again?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, I'm working on this long story that I put in the drawer ten years ago and it's called *Dream House*.

**R. CRUMB:** Well, wait a minute. You haven't actually gone back to work on that yet, have you?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, I did.

**R. CRUMB:** You did? You started working on it? Oh, good. She hasn't done comics in ten years.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's the story of the emotional environment in every house I've ever lived in.

**R. CRUMB:** She told me she wasn't going to do comics ever again about ten years ago. It was sad, I thought it was sad, because she still had so many great stories to tell, but she said there was just not enough feedback, and there's not enough response.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, but now I've had so much positive feedback, like from you.

**R. CRUMB:** But she's done a lot of painting and these wacky shrines in the meantime.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, I've done a lot of other artwork. I mean, I've never stopped working on art, so it's not like a sad tragedy or anything like that, you know, I just decided to do other things.

**Q:** Is there a place we can see this new work?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** My new paintings and stuff?

**R. CRUMB:** Well, as a matter of fact . . .

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh! Tomorrow night—thank you, Paul. Tomorrow night I'm having a show at the Adam Baumgold Gallery on East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, and it's going to be a lot of work from this book. Some painting. A lot of drawing. It's all for sale. **(laughter)** And I hope you all buy it because I don't want to have to carry it back home.

**R. CRUMB:** You can't imagine how happy she is. **(laughter)** She's just so bubbling over with—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I am, I am. I am.

**(applause)**

**R. CRUMB:** Aw, they love you, see?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And my next book will not be *Need More Love*, it will be like, *Enough Already*. Can I show my craft item that I made, also. When I was waiting to come here, you know, and before I saw my book, when I was nervous, this is what I made. This is for my publisher, this is for Zaro Weil, who's sitting right there. Will you stand up, please, Zaro. **(applause)** So this is for her, and this is my little—it's gold inside.

**R. CRUMB:** She's Jewish, she likes gold. She's always got gold all over everything.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Gold, and I'm also from a long line of schmatte salesmen, so I've got a schmatte to sell—not to sell, but I would sell it if I had more. But anyway, here's the invitation to the art show tomorrow tonight. See how beautifully it matches?

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** Tell them about the seamstress in our village.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, I designed this and then this woman in my village sewed it for me.

**R. CRUMB:** She's a professional seamstress, you can get your suit tailored.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Everything. You can get your pants shortened, your suit shortened, anything, you know. I draw a dress and she makes it for me, it's fabulous, but, you know, you have to admit that's pretty cute. Anyway.

**R. CRUMB:** Aline's not at all ashamed to merchandise her stuff.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, no, if anyone's out there who wants to manufacture these, you know . . .

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** She comes from a long line of—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah. As I said, I said somewhere—did I say in the book or was it— somewhere that he comes from a long line of farmers and, you know, white people that worked hard all their lives, and I come from a long line of schmatte salesmen, you know, so opposites attract.

**Q:** What first brought you to the West Coast?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, you were there first.

**R. CRUMB:** Just the whole, like, hippie subculture.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Summer of Love.

**R. CRUMB:** I ran away from Cleveland and the greeting card company and my first wife. I went to join the hippies in San Francisco in January '67. And what about you?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, I was in Tucson, Arizona, being a Jewish cowgirl, and I was living next door to Betsy Klein, who's now Betsy Sandlin, who is here tonight somewhere, I don't see you now, right there. And Betsy and I decided we'd had enough of Tucson. For me, I'd had enough of Tucson because I went in a bar one day, and I looked around and I realized I'd slept with every guy in there **(laughter)** and so I decided, "Time to move on." **(laughter)** And I wanted to, like, I wanted to

draw comics and all the interesting cartoonists were living in San Francisco. So Betsy and I set out together. She had an old Mercedes and I had an old Volkswagen, and we drove to San Francisco and found—

**R. CRUMB:** When was that?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** That was in 1971. We found a great old apartment for, like, I don't know, it was about a hundred and fifty dollars a month.

**R. CRUMB:** Those were the days.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** That was great.

**R. CRUMB:** And the rest is history.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** We had a great time in San Francisco, I met him, you know, we had a lot of adventures, and it was great.

**R. CRUMB:** But meanwhile, about six or eight months later, your old cowboy boyfriend came from Tucson to get you. He was going to take you back to Rodeo, New Mexico, with him. Ray.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** That's me and Sophie—that's a comic that Sophie and I did together.

**R. CRUMB:** Ray came to get Aline to take her back to Arizona and she said, “No, I’m not going back. I’m with Robert Crumb now. I’m staying here with him.” And somehow Ray got me alone in this room and put this pistol to my head (**laughter**) and he’s like giggling maniacally with this pistol to my head, and I said, “All right, well, get it over with if you’re going to do it.” And then he pulled it back and said, “Nah, just kidding, ha ha ha.” (**laughter**) And then he went back by himself.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** He’s in the book, too.

**R. CRUMB:** Those who live by the gun die by the gun.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** He was shot later, he was killed.

**R. CRUMB:** About six months later he was killed.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** No, it was later than that, but anyway, so. We were out West for a long time after that. That was like the early seventies, and, you know, San Francisco was an unbelievably wild city then.

**R. CRUMB:** It was wacky. It was wacky.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It was great, very different than now.

**R. CRUMB:** Aline made a big splash, though, she was very popular as the latest, you know, Jewish hippie slut.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Betsy and I were the new girls in town. Betsy and I came to San Francisco, we were the new girls in town and we had a wild time, I have to say. No regrets, it was really fun.

**R. CRUMB:** It was crazy.

**Q:** What's the Kominsky Code?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh, that's the last chapter of my book, I couldn't help myself, you know. It's my tips on style, dressing, how to get, like, free designer clothes. Oh, by the way, this dress I have to say is by Vivienne Tam, and I don't know if you're here tonight, Vivian or not.

**R. CRUMB:** I didn't tear it when I jumped on you, did I?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You didn't tear it, no, but anyway, beautiful. So it talks about how to get, like, great clothes. Mix them with your flea market schmattes, how to have a seamless line between your clothes, your house décor, your look, your whole thing, you know. And also—



**R. CRUMB:** What's the advice you've got for middle-aged women in there? What was it?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Just, you know, get rid of those jogging suits unless you're going to the gym, you know, and wear decent shoes and it can be comfortable around the house but don't go out in the street. You know, I mean French women really have good footwear and it makes a difference, you know. **(laughter)** Don't give up. Don't put on that tent, don't put on that jogging suit, you know. I say you gotta keep trying.

**R. CRUMB:** But you're very disciplined, though, you go to the gym. She has a military discipline about that thing, I guess vanity-driven, but still—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Well, the thing is, you know, after menopause, if your body hasn't fallen apart you have an incredible amount of energy and you can have a really great time, plus you have some wisdom.

**R. CRUMB:** Hopefully.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** So if you let your body fall apart, you can't have fun. So like you know you kind of have to like have this moment where the wisdom is there but your body's still hanging together, then you can have like this incredible period of time. But if your body falls apart, you know, it's a shame. So I talk about that and you know I talk about just like how to really have a good time and do it all. So that's the Kominsky Code. Thanks for asking that.

**Q:** Are there any major differences beyond meatloaf and sushi?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Beyond meatloaf and sushi—you mean between the two husbands?

Yeah, the French guy can do plumbing and he can drive, also. Robert never drove a car in his life and he, you know, he's not handy at all.

**R. CRUMB:** Me.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** That's Robert. So, they're just completely different. Together they make the perfect man.

**(laughter)**

**Q:** Can I ask a question? Over here.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh, yes.

**Q:** Thanks very much. Happy Valentine's Day, thanks for showing up here.

**R. CRUMB:** Sure.

**Q:** I saw the film *Crumb* shown at the American Psychiatric Association and the implication, you know, was that, you know, art saved your life and I'm just wondering has your marriage basically, do you feel that saved your life and made you sane? Both of you?

**R. CRUMB:** Eeh. Nah.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** What, you don't think our marriage?

**R. CRUMB:** Art saved your life? Is that what you're saying? Art?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Or our marriage? I didn't get it.

**Q:** Well, both. The film, the implication of the filmmaker that they spoke about was that art saved your life—

**R. CRUMB:** No.

**Q:** But I guess my question for you is do you feel that your marriage and your meeting each other saved your life?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah.

**R. CRUMB:** I would say that. I would credit Aline to some extent with saving my life. Yeah. Because, you know, I was with really crazy women before then and my life was total chaos. And I was somehow, through it all, I was smart enough to perceive that here's this woman, somehow she's got some sense, she has her feet on the ground, I better stick with her. It's not that she—you know, the sex thing was great, but, you know, there's plenty of them—it wasn't mainly about sex.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** There's bigger butts out there.

**(laughter)**

**R. CRUMB:** What'd you say?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I said there's bigger butts out there.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, there's bigger butts and bigger legs, but that she, you know, she had this solid inner thing that I thought, "I need that, I'm gonna stick with that." And it's true, if I hadn't latched onto her, I don't know. The art might have killed me, really.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I think Robert saved me from, you know, sort of a probably more bourgeois, conventional life, maybe.

**R. CRUMB:** You could have gone a couple ways. You could have gone totally like barstool party-girl alcoholic, that's one way you could have gone.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** That sounds pretty good.

**R. CRUMB:** Or, yeah, you could have ended up with a dentist. Nah, probably not.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Nah, no I think I could have ended up like a media monster or something, some kind of slick, successful businesswoman, you know, and I don't think I would have been that happy that way, actually.

**R. CRUMB:** Kominsky Arts Associated, or something.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Something, I don't know. Anyway, and actually, I'm not a really good money Jew.

**R. CRUMB:** You're not, actually, no.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I'm not a good businessman, so it's just as well that I ended up with my artistic side developing with him.

**R. CRUMB:** I was the provider, financially, but she really provided the stability.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, it's a two-man act, definitely. We kind of made a family business and a whole kind of extended-family scene that works and that seemed to take care of everybody's needs. And that's what it's about, basically.

**R. CRUMB:** I don't know. She just didn't have that that kind of, you know, female emotional thing that was capable of going completely off the deep end like other women that I'd been involved with before, that always like threatened to commit suicide and stuff like that. You just didn't have that. You were—  
Something in was like the core of calmness or something, I don't know. **(laughter)** No matter what happened, you seemed to maintain some kind of equilibrium. I don't know. I'm not even sure. Life is often difficult with me, but somehow you're able to manage through it all.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Eh, you're easy to take.

**Q:** Okay, Robert, I wonder if you could tell us anything about how you got started with your band, Le Primitifs du Futur—

**R. CRUMB:** With my band?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** The Primitifs du Futur he's asking about.

**Q:** And also Aline if you or Sophie or your husbands are engaged in anything musical.

**R. CRUMB:** Huh?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** He wants to know how you got started with the Primitifs du Futur and if any of us are engaged in anything musical—Sophie, you, me. I am a terrible musician. Terrible. I played the violin for about forty years, and I'm so bad. We gave a concert in Hamburg about five years ago, was that right? About five years ago?

**R. CRUMB:** Jack Benny, move over. Aline's last public performance.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah. And we did it because my friend Ulla Reauvalt's bookstore—

**R. CRUMB:** I've never saw her so fried out—it was incredible.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I practiced these like tunes with three chords.

**R. CRUMB:** Really simple. Like "Shortnin' Bread," come on!

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You know, really, a blind, deaf, and dumb person could play it. And when we got to play it I completely froze up and I couldn't even—and t was so horrible. Sophie was on the piano.

**R. CRUMB:** Fortunately we turned your microphone way down.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Sophie like really wailed on the piano and covered up all my mistakes but she was looking at me like, “Mom, Mom.” Like that. And after that I retired my violin. So that’s my musical story.

**R. CRUMB:** Sophie’s a real professional.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Oh, she’s the best.

**R. CRUMB:** She could get a job in a piano bar, tomorrow. Incredible.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** She could listen to a complex jazz tune and then she’ll fool around for a few minutes and then play the whole thing.

**R. CRUMB:** She’s great.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** She’s got an amazing musical gift and she kind of takes it for granted, because it comes easy to her, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, she kind of tosses it off, it’s weird.



**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** She picks up stringed instruments and after a few minutes can play them. She plays banjo, guitar, ukulele, she sings, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** She's so talented.

**(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And he plays around the house. He plays the piano and he plays the accordion. He actually is practicing the accordion a lot now. He plays like musette stuff and old country stuff.

**R. CRUMB:** But I stopped playing publicly, I don't do that anymore. It's too nerve-wracking.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** But you play a lot around the house now, actually.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, but I don't play publicly anymore. I quit.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** He and Sophie play at parties and with our—we have a neighbor who plays piano and violin. So we have music in the house for all of our parties and stuff like that, but he doesn't perform anymore. He's putting all of his real focused energy into his drawing.

**R. CRUMB:** But anyway we're here to talk about Aline.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Not necessarily.

**Q:** I have a question about Aline's work. Could you talk about a character that appeared a lot in your early comics, Mr. Bunch? The guy with the cigar that lived inside of you. I was wondering about the origin of that.

**(applause)**

**R. CRUMB:** They were clapping. They love Mr. Bunch.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Mr. Bunch. He's here right now. What do you want him to say to you? Yeah, he's like the man in me, you know what I mean. Like I have a masculine mind, a masculine aspect to me, and a lot of times I felt like there was a man in there observing like, other little girls playing, like I felt like a pervert because there was like a cigar-smoking man in there watching the little girls in dance class, you know. And that's definitely a part of my persona, and as I drew him, you know, he developed more and more, and, you know, I actually liked that character a lot. And when I was pregnant and I was drawing comics of myself pregnant, one of my favorite Mr. Bunch stories is where he has an office in my body and like the baby starts kicking in there. She's on the bottom floor and Mr. Bunch is on the top floor and all his knick-knacks and records start falling off the walls, so he puts everything in boxes and he moves out. And that's like when my female hormones kicked in totally and Mr. Bunch—that story's called "Mr. Bunch Takes a Sabbatical." So it's about that my masculine side, which is actually quite strong.

**R. CRUMB:** You're much more masculine than me. **(laughter)** It's true. She's much tougher and copes much better than I do. She's a much bolder, braver person than me.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Anyway, I assume we all have both of those things in us, you know, but Mr. Bunch manifested physically as like a stand-up Jewish comic, you know, because I was raised on those, you know. He's kind of like Alan King or Joey Bishop or something.

**Q:** Aline, you seem to have a very healthy relationship with your daughter in contrast to the fact that you have such a bizarre family life. And you had such an insane relationship with your parents, and you had what seems like a very bourgeois upbringing.

**R. CRUMB: (whispers)** Tell her how you went through therapy.

**Q:** How do you explain how, you know, your relationship with your daughter compared to, you know, your relationship with your mother?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I went through a lot of therapy. No, well, as I said, I think that Robert parented me a lot in my twenties and we, I think, made each other healthier people.

**R. CRUMB:** Her and Sophie lock horns a lot.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, but okay, that's normal. But I think, you know, we created a fairly healthy relationship between ourselves before I became pregnant. I was older when I became

pregnant with her. I think I had worked out some of the worst things, you know, by the time I had her, and then she's a really intense, fierce person, and I always called her my Zen mistress, because I think she forced me to confront a lot of things about myself, too, and I stopped myself from doing certain things with her. One thing I was really conscious of was never to criticize her body, ever her weight. I never said one thing to her about food or weight, you know, because my mother, like, I remember one time, strangled me when I was eating French fries, you know. She gave my brother a giant portion, and she gave me three, and I started stealing the French fries off his plate, and when she saw me she strangled me until I spit them out. That's a typical dinner in our house, you know. So I decided I would never say anything to my daughter about food. And, as a result, she doesn't have that issue at all, you know. She has her own issues, but she also, I think, came out an old soul and a very fierce person and I think she instructed *me* a lot, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** We're not sure we did a good—

**Q:** Do you think she's going to be using your home life for her material later on?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I'm sure. I'm sure. She's not there yet, because she's still hasn't worked all that out, yet, but I'm sure she will. Yeah, because her life has been public, you know. We've had her in comics since she was a baby. We have her like pooping in her diapers in comics, you know. So, you know, I'm sure that eventually she's going to toss that back at us.

**R. CRUMB:** We do a lot of speculation about whether or not we were good parents. We don't know. She's all covered with tattoos, and she's really crazy. She takes drugs.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I think that we're weird parents, you know. We didn't provide a normal education. Her education was the Three Stooges and Little Lulu, Betty Boop, and old music, you know. I don't know if that's good or not.

**R. CRUMB:** I don't know. Sometimes we think we were bad parents, sometimes we think we were good parents, we don't know.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** We love her to death, but, you know, I don't know how successful we were.

**R. CRUMB:** A couple of neurotic artists.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Anything else? Have we—

**R. CRUMB:** Sometimes we even say, maybe we should have never had a kid, we weren't really suitable for having a kid, but we had her and—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Too late now.

**R. CRUMB:** Too late now, yeah.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** There's a question over there.

**R. CRUMB:** She's loaded with talent.

**Q:** This is a question for Robert. I was wondering if you ever finished something and just thought it was too dark and personal to publish it?

**R. CRUMB:** Sure, all the time, I flush a lot of stuff down the toilet.

**Q:** Will that ever be published? Do you destroy those materials or do they linger somewhere in your archives?

**R. CRUMB:** No, it's all gone, all destroyed. A couple times I've actually then, years later, said, "Well, what the hell," and redrawn it and published it, so—and very often, I've done stuff that I thought was, "Oh, this is too sick. I can't publish this, you know," and I'll show it to Aline and say, "Aline, I can't, don't you think I should just throw this away?" and she says, "No, you have to finish that and publish it." She actually encourages me to do this, to get this stuff out there, so.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You all need to see the weirdest, sickest side of him. It's important.

**R. CRUMB:** What'd you say?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I said they all need to see the weirdest and sickest side of you. It makes them feel more normal.

**Q:** One more quick follow-up question to Robert. If you'd never taken LSD, do you think that you would be sitting up there today as the Bruegel of our time at the New York Public Library, or would that be overstating the impact of that experience?

**R. CRUMB:** I'm old enough now to know and to recognize it's all very clear now that the world runs mostly on bullshit, and I don't believe that I'm up here necessarily because I'm anything particularly special because there's just, the bullshit piles up and somehow they put me on top of the pile for a couple of minutes and you know, next week it'll be somebody else.

**(applause)**

**R. CRUMB:** Now it's Aline's turn, it's her chance, now she will—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I'm up on top of the pile of shit, and I'll just slide down there with you.

**(laughter/applause)**

**R. CRUMB:** She has her moment now. We've got five more minutes—

**Q: (inaudible)**

**R. CRUMB:** Yes, go ahead, talk, what?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Stephanie, is that you? Hi!

**Q:** Yes, why do you think your comics are doing well now, are we getting to be better people, a better sense of humor now?

**R. CRUMB:** Good question.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I think the culture's always dredging the underbelly and the bottom to try and find new stuff, you know. Fresh meat.

**R. CRUMB:** Comics are getting a lot of attention now for various reasons and lots of books being published, anthologies of comics, a lot of serious writing about comics. Because the culture's bankrupt. It always needs something new.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah, but why? Well, no, because I think that you know, the autobiographical comics style that we started in the early seventies has evolved over two generations of artists to where now you have some really great artists working that art form and because there's a public for it, it's encouraging more young people to do it, so it's a flourishing art form now, and literary form, as well, and you know, I think we're in a golden age of graphic novels and comics.



**R. CRUMB:** It took a really long time for the culture world to start taking comics seriously and in a way it's the kiss of death but at the same time, you have like she said, a grace period, a golden age, when then lots of stuff gets published. People actually get well paid for doing comics now for the first time ever and big publishers are actually interested and eager to publish all kinds of comics, and that's a new phenomenon—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's really inspiring to me to see this great work by young people, you know. I'm really, I'm so excited, I read it avidly, so it's very satisfying to see that it's evolved to this point now. I feel like the great-grandmother of underground comics.

**R. CRUMB:** Right, it's so long ago. 1971. It's thirty-five years ago.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Okay, anybody else, one more question?

**Q:** How are your brothers doing?

**R. CRUMB:** Huh?

**Q:** How are your brothers doing?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** One's dead, the other one's doing well.

**R. CRUMB:** My brothers?

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, one died in 1992 and the other one, he's still in his hotel room doing his crazy paintings.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** He's doing good paintings, he's doing better.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, his paintings are beautiful.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** One question here.

**Q:** This is sort of silly and I hope it doesn't come across the wrong way, but I'm trying to imagine Crumbville dubbed into French and when you moved to France did you find that—you know, did you immerse yourself totally with learning French, and if so, how long has that taken you, if at all, or if not, are you kind of living in a parallel universe without having to—you know what I mean—without having to know French.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** I'm totally immersed in French and in the village life. I teach exercise class in my village, I'm involved in politics in the village and everything like that and Robert lives—

**R. CRUMB:** And she has a French husband. **(laughter)**

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Yeah. And Robert, you know, doesn't—he's not a real social person, you know, wherever we live, he doesn't have that—he has an interaction with a small group of people but not that much with society in general so, you know.

**R. CRUMB:** I'm mostly still completely referential to American society. I don't understand French society. Well, I mean, I like the music, their old music.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** You like their food, you like the way of life.

**R. CRUMB:** Of course the food, you can't go wrong. You people are eating garbage in this country. **(laughter)** You don't even know—you don't realize what garbage you're eating.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** And it gets on his nerves less there so he can work more in peace. The general environment gets to him less.

**R. CRUMB:** It's about twenty years behind. You can see the American thing, you know, starting to creep up there, but still it's not to the acute level of constant bombardment by this corporate culture that in America you're just saturated with it constantly, it's just constantly beating you on the head, it's unbelievable, it's not quite as bad there.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** The French people are a little bit stubborn, they're a little bit resistant to it, which is one of their better qualities.

**R. CRUMB:** Some of their resistance is narrow and old-fashioned even, but even so, it's some resistance, anyway.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** We don't like French people better than Americans, believe me. They're just as obnoxious in a different way.

**R. CRUMB:** Yeah, they're snotty—

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** It's not the point, not the point at all. But we happen to have found a place where we can live and work in harmony and you know fairly peacefully and we have the luxury of space, and in a very beautiful rural environment and yet we're not that isolated, we can be in Paris on the fast train in like three hours, you know. So it works for us, you know. I'm not saying it's better.

**R. CRUMB:** Right.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Anyway.

**R. CRUMB:** Okay.

**ALINE KOMINSKY CRUMB:** Okay, that's it. Let's eat!

**(applause)**

