KEY TO SCRIPT:

Maggie Kuhn is represented in two ways in the script:
MAGGIE ON CAMERA refers to video clips of Kuhn on camera, taken from a range of film and television sources.
MAGGIE VOICEOVER refers to an actress reading from Kuhn's writings.

All other "characters" are listed below. Supertitles will identify them the first time they appear and intermittently throughout the film.

Abe Bloom, Gray Panther, Montgomery County, Maryland

Robert Butler, M.D., Director, International Longevity Center

Carole Estes, Ph.D, Sociologist, Director of Institute on Aging, UCSF

George Gerbner, Ph.D., Dean Emeritus, Annenberg Scool of Communication

Historian #1

Historian #2

Dieter Hessel, Ph.D., Theologian, Publisher of *Ecology, Justice, and Faith*

Karen Hessel, National Council of Churches

Elma Holder, Director, National Coalition for Nursing Home Reform

Gretchen Killinger, Cousin

Myrna Lewis, Ph.D., Geriatric Psychologist

Christina Long, Writer, former editor of Gray Panther newsletter

Steve McConnell, Director of public affairs, Alzheimer's Association

Ralph Nader, Consumer Activist

Mary Jane Patterson, Retired colleague, Presbyterian Social Action Office

Studs Terkel, Author and producer of *Wrinkled Radical*

Fernando Torres-Gill, Ph.D., Sociologist, UCLA, Former U.S. Secretary on Aging, Former Gray Panther

Ron Wyden, Democratic Senator from Oregon, Former Gray Panther

MAGGIE GROWLS: A Script

Opens with film clip of Maggie Kuhn, founder and leader of the Gray Panthers, at their national conference in 1994. 90 pounds, 89 years old, frame twisted with arthritis, vertebrae collapsing from osteoporosis, half blind with macular degeneration, skin so transparent it appears as silver as her trademark haphazard chignon. She stands in front of 450 people, young and old, and invites them to join her in the Panther Growl.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: Reach for the sky! We know no limits!

She throws her arms high over her head, triumphant. Eyes wide, gnarled hands reaching for the sky, her tiny frame seems almost lifted on the roar of the crowd. Suddenly a surprisingly long tongue hisses out at us, as Maggie Kuhn exhales raggedly, and growls:

"GRRRRR! GRRRRRR! GRRRRGHGH!!!"

TITLE SCREEN: Maggie Growls, The Life and Work of Gray Panther Maggie Kuhn

Cut to still photos of Kuhn, age 65, in work-related situations.

NARRATOR: Maggie Kuhn found her growl in 1970, when she turned 65 and, out of the blue, the Presbyterian Church retired her from her post as editor of *Social Progress*, its journal on social action. She was a born radical and a lifelong activist, and she loved her job. She'd been doing it for 20 years and it had never occurred to her to retire. Men she worked with in the church's national office in New York had been allowed to continue working past retirement age. She took it for granted that she would, too. When her boss told her she was out of a job, she was stunned.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: Truthfully, I didn't think of myself as . . . old. I was just—me.

Cut to archival photos of period office parties, dissolve and zoom into a vintage Singer sewing machine.

NARRATOR: And then she was furious. Her colleagues threw her a farewell party. They gave her a sewing machine, which didn't help.

CHRISTINA LONG: She was just absolutely mortified over that present. And she loved to say she never even opened that sewing machine, she never had time to open that sewing machine.

STUDS TERKEL: . . . very funny—a sewing machine. Of course she wanted a mimeograph machine. The kind where you roll out all those leaflets: Come to that rally to fight this obscene military intervention in which young lives are lost, ours as well as

the Vietnamese. Join the civil rights movement, by dammit: Give people the right to vote, a right to participate, to become American citizens no matter who or what they are, no matter what color they are.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: Instead of sinking into despair, I did what came most naturally to me. I telephoned some friends and called a meeting.

Cut to archival film, street scene of mid-town Manhattan, circa 1970.

NARRATOR: The Gray Panthers started with six friends, all professional women, all facing retirement, meeting for lunch in New York.

Text screen over black: "DON'T AGONIZE, ORGANIZE"

Fade up to text over still photos of Kuhn and her friends: **Actress reads from the writings of Maggie Kuhn.**

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: We didn't feel old. In fact, we felt more radical and full of new ideas. . . our lives had reached a sort of climax, not an ending. Something was wrong with a system that had no use for old people like us. We met in Philadelphia, Washington, and New York. Some members of the group wanted to work on a national health plan, some on pension rights and others on age discrimination in the workplace. Others wanted to have a say in the organizations that governed their lives—retirement homes, political parties, churches and pension boards. Others wanted to work on larger issues—the war and the 1972 presidential election. . . . In the end, we decided to do it all.

Cut to still photos of Kuhn's parents.

NARRATOR: Activism came naturally to Maggie. Her father, an executive with Dun and Bradstreet, had been one of the new breed of "company men" who moved often from one expanding industrial city to another. He and Maggie's mother, Minnie, were living in Memphis when Minnie became pregnant.

GRETCHEN KILLINGER: Minnie refused to give birth to her first child in what she perceived to be a racist town. In July, 1905, eight months pregnant, she boarded a train for Buffalo, leaving her husband behind to his duties at work. In the family, we refer to this as Maggie's first political act.

Combined still photos and location footage exteriors and interiors of Old Stone Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

NARRATOR: Maggie's sense of responsibility for the rest of the world was nurtured by the church—the same church that, 60 years later, would retire her and spark her

campaign for a new view of old age. From the time she was five until she was 24, the Kuhns lived in Cleveland. On Sundays they sat in pew 72 of the Old Stone Church, the city's largest and most influential Presbyterian congregation.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Above all, mine was a churchgoing family. I cannot remember missing a Sunday for any reason other than dire illness. When my family moved to a new city, the search for the right church was more important than the search for the perfect house or school. Attending church was not just a spiritual duty. It was a social rite and an opportunity to participate in public affairs.

Archival film of industrial Cleveland in the early 1900s.

NARRATOR: Her first brush with activism came when the elders of the church joined a campaign to end dumping of industrial waste into the Cuayahoga River and reduce the soot that poured out of the smokestacks of the steel mills.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I'll never forget how everything—-park benches, porches, cars—was covered with black grime. My father argued that as stewards of creation we were under God's judgment to protect the earth.

NARRATOR: It was the era of robber barons and laissez-faire capitalists. The campaign failed. One Cleveland industrialist—a member of their church—defended dumping lead into the river, claiming it would cleanse itself by the action of the sun shining on it.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: The sun shining on it! Even then that sounded preposterous. Furthermore, he said his customers would not pay the costs of alternative disposal.

Cut to live footage of Christina Long.

NARRATOR: Christina Long, who edited the Gray Panthers newsletter, *The Network*, and helped Maggie write her autobiography, thinks Maggie may have formed the habit of worrying about the weak and disenfranchised as a child, when she began taking responsibility for her younger brother.

CHRISTINA LONG: Maggie was a quick learner, loved to read, she was at the top of her class. But her brother Sam was always sickly and shy and afraid of everything, hated to go to school. Their father always thought Sam didn't try hard enough. Maggie always stuck up for Sam, looked out for him at school, helped him with his homework. When he came home with a bad report card and their father would be angry, she'd tell him, "No, Sam is really trying, and I'll help him, and he'll do better."

Cut to combined live and archival footage of Case Western Reserve University.

NARRATOR: Maggie graduated from high school with honors at 16 in 1922. Her parents vetoed her plan to go East and she enrolled at the College for Women at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland. Higher education for women was still a privilege. The college in which Maggie enrolled was established during a backlash against co-education, when the University president declared women "too distracting and damaging to the morals of the young men."

Dissolve to archival classroom photos.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: One of my favorite courses was sociology, given by Professor Gehlke. It was my introduction to social class structure in America and the relationship of institutions to that structure. I was inspired by Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Max Weber, who believed sociologists should not only explain society but work to change it.

Dissolve to still photos of slums and manifestations of poverty in Cleveland.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Professor Gehlke took us to Cleveland's jails, social welfare institutions, sweatshops and slums to expose his sheltered students to some of the city's harsher realities. I couldn't get those images out of my mind. I would return home from the field trips and tell my father that the city's poor were neglected, underpaid and exploited.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: For the first time, my father and I disagreed. My father was the quintessential man of his generation and class. He believed everyone could pull themselves up by their bootstraps and the poor were poor because they didn't work hard enough. He was absolutely furious at me and accused me of expounding theories that were "disloyal" and "antisocial."

Zoom in on photo of father.

NARRATOR: There was one other subject Maggie and her father disagreed on.

CHRISTINA LONG: Maggie's father never approved of any of her suitors. I remember her talking about how, when a boy came to call on Maggie, he wouldn't even speak to him, would act as if they weren't in the room. And she had a ten o'clock curfew—if she wasn't home by then, her father would go get her. At that age, she said, there was nothing more humiliating than having her father show up at a party and insist that she follow him home. So when she started to get interested in the son of the pastor at their church—he was tall, dark, handsome, and I guess kind of unmotivated—she kept it a secret. She started to lead, really, a double life.

Cut to location footage of Cleveland parks and romantic spots in the evening.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: We had a passionate romance. During the first semester of my junior year, we went out almost every night. The college curfew unfortunately cut short

our interludes in Wade Park, where we found secluded spots to make love. I enjoyed sex and I never questioned my right to it. I was not a fearful young woman. When Paul and I began to have sex I did not fret over the loss of my virginity.

Cut to still photo of Kuhn with her sorority sisters, pullout from closeup of Kuhn to show group.

NARRATOR: Nor, being Maggie, did she keep it a secret. Her sorority sisters were alarmed.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: The year before, a pregnant sorority member had left the college in shame. "You just can't get pregnant, Margaret!" one trembling sorority sister told me. "The honor of the sorority hangs on it!" I went to a gynecologist and told him I was on the verge of marriage and was not prepared to have children. I left the doctor's office with my first diaphragm.

Cut to still photo of Kuhn as a young woman.

NARRATOR: Maggie's suitor wanted to elope and at first she agreed. But at the last minute, she changed her mind.

Archival classroom film footage from the 1920s.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I realized I loved school and wanted an education more than anything. When I was exposed to the work of John Dewey, the philosopher and educator, I began truly to want to be a teacher. I think I always had a passion for reform; it's in my blood. Dewey's efforts to upset the traditions of the classroom excited me. Teachers were most likely to succeed, he believed, if they took advantage of a child's natural curiosity.

CHRISTINA LONG: But Maggie's first try at teaching turned out to be kind of a disaster. She was practice teaching, and she wanted to get her students interested in a grammar lesson, so she organized the class into teams and staged a relay race—the first team would race up to the blackboard and underline the subject of the sentence, and the next team would run up and underline the predicate, which was great until somebody bumped into somebody else and a fight started.

Sound effects, classroom disorder, objects being thrown.
Location footage of exterior of school built in 1920s, sounds appear to come from within.

CHRISTINA LONG: So they're all yelling and throwing pencils and erasers at each other, and Maggie's stamping her feet, and finally hoping to get their attention, *she*

throws a couple of erasers, and just then her supervisor walked in. She was not impressed.

POV shot, exterior door of school slams in her face.

CHRISTINA LONG: She said she wouldn't fail her, but she was going to give her a C—and that meant no school would hire her. Which is how she started volunteering at the YWCA in Cleveland's, while she was trying to figure out what to do with her life.

HISTORIAN #1: In the 1850s a religious movement swept the Northeast, and the Young Women's Christian Association was one of the groups that came out of that. The Y was founded in response to the increasing numbers of working women migrating to industrialized cities from rural areas. It was a favorite charity of progressive upper-class women in Cleveland.

Cut to archival still photos of labor conflicts, suffragettes marches, crowded immigrant life.

HISTORIAN #1: They started typing classes, schools for nurses, day nurseries. Immigrants flowing into the country's harbors were met by women working for the YWCA. Later the Y would encourage women to join unions and would support legislation that would improve their working conditions. At its 1920 convention—at a time when women didn't even have the right to vote—they adopted a resolution that "women should have full political and economic equality with equal pay for equal work, and a maximum 8-hour day."

CHRISTINA LONG: Next thing you know, Maggie's visiting factories and sweatshops to hand out fliers about the Y.

Text screen over black: DRESS LIKE A LADY, THINK LIKE A MAN, AND WORK LIKE A HORSE

Dissolve to location footage of Shaker Heights and country clubs, other signs of prosperity.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: My roommate became engaged to a young doctor and polo player... I was one of her bridesmaids. They bought a house in the prosperous suburb of Shaker Heights with lots of ground to keep their horses. My life was going in a different direction.

Cut to archival still photos of women in garment factories. Zoom into sewing machine.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I remember standing on the floor of a garment factory before what seemed like hundreds—no, thousands—of women bent over sewing machines... Many of my colleagues at the Y were socialists, and I joined and became active in the Young Socialists League. You might say our meetings were an early expression of feminism. While we talked in broad terms of utopia, capitalism, and the rights of labor, the beneficiaries of most of the reforms we had in mind were women.

After a year as a YWCA volunteer, I was hired.

Cut to still photo of 25-year-old Kuhn in business suit and hat.

NARRATOR: Maggie joined the workforce in 1927, one of the new breed of 20th century working women.

Cut to archival film of women doing office work.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: They were unmarried and hardworking. I remember the clouds of cigarette smoke that hung over the desks and filled the meeting rooms. A favorite saying was "To get ahead in a man's world you have to look like a schoolgirl, dress like a lady, think like a man, and work like a horse."

Cut to archival still photos

NARRATOR: For four years, Maggie worked in Cleveland with the factory girls whose plight had so moved her in college. In 1929, with the crash of the stock market and the onset of the Depression, organizations like the Y were needed more than ever. When her father was transferred to Philadelphia in 1930, she looked for a job with the Philadelphia Y.

Cut to archival photos from YWCA convention.

NARRATOR: She traveled to the Y's national convention in Detroit.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I remember I wore a smart red coat with a mink collar and hat. I was an earnest young woman, with long chestnut hair wrapped in two little knots on the back of my head. When I walked into Detroit's Masonic Temple on the first day of the convention, and saw the spectacle before me—several thousand women representing what appeared to be every walk of life and every layer of society—I felt part of a great and historic enterprise.

CHRSITINA LONG: Maggie hit it off right away with the president of the YWCA in Germantown—which is a section of Philadelphia—and she was hired to take charge of all the programs for business and professional women, which meant mostly secretaries, clerks in department stores, bookkeepers, elementary school teachers.

Archival photos of Philadelphia YWCA and activities. Dissolve to period advertisements for female consumer goods and pamphlets on sex education.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: We may have chaperoned dances and hosted fashion shows, but we thought of ourselves as community activists and social reformers. I wanted the women to really study their own lives and their place in the world. They talked about truth in advertising, the profits made in cosmetics and drugs, working conditions. I started a class on marriage and human sexuality. Quite radical for that time, the class discussed everything from the mechanics of sex to birth control, sexual pleasure, pregnancy, the trials of motherhood, and the difficulties of remaining single in a world where marriage was the norm.

NARRATOR: Years later, when she was writing her memoirs, Maggie would remember a Sunday night discussion group at the Germantown Y where the talk turned to striking workers who had been arrested the week before. A small elderly Quaker lady, not unlike the old woman she herself would become, stood up and shook her fist and said: "That's what we need, more brushes with the police!"

Cut to location footage of New York: Columbia University, Riverside Church.

NARRATOR: The Y sent Maggie to New York for several months of training in social work and theology at Columbia University. She met some of the leading thinkers and social reformers of the day.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I will never forget my class with Harry Emerson Fosdick, by then the renowned pastor of Riverside Presbyterian Church. Fosdick's theories on Christian activism were an extension of what I had learned in my Bible literature course in college.

DIETER HESSEL: Fosdick really represented the second wave of the social gospel movement and was extremely popular in the anti-fundamentalist movement. He taught what was then called "practical theology" at Union Seminary. He believed he was on this earth to cure the ills of the world through Christ-like behavior. I think this very much guided Maggie's work.

CHRISTINA LONG: Except for that time in New York, Maggie was still living at home. Her brother Sam had had a breakdown, and eventually he was diagnosed as schizophrenic, so she was the one her parents depended on. She felt responsible for Sam, just the way she had when she was a kid. She was afraid that, because she'd been everything her father wanted, she'd made it too hard for Sam. She was a tough act to follow—almost as if it was her fault.

Cut to still photos of Kuhn and brother as children, and later as adults.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I was the perfect daughter. He was the son who could do nothing right. In being good and in being happy, I had brought torment to my brother. I was deeply ashamed of the contrast between us.

NARRATOR: By 1941, when the national board of the YWCA asked Maggie to work in their headquarters in New York, Sam had been hospitalized, and was adjusting well. Maggie took the job.

Cut to archival footage of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, homefront efforts: USO dances and teas, war preparation.

NARRATOR: On December 7, 1941 Japanese planes bombed the U.S. Navy's fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and the United States joined World War II. To help with the war effort, the YWCA, along with the YMCA, the National Catholic Community Service, the Salvation Army, the Jewish Welfare Board, and the National Travelers Aid had joined to form the USO—the United Services Organization—to look after the spiritual, recreational and social welfare of Americans in uniform. Maggie was recruited to be a program coordinator and editor for the YWCA's USO division, serving women defense workers. Later she'd remember a poem from the *New York Herald* about these women:

Background music and archival "Rosie the Riveter" footage

MAGGIE VOICEOVER:
Oh the girl I adore isn't here anymore-
She's a welder at Plant 23.
She works night and day getting overtime pay
And she hasn't a moment for me.

In vain do I wait by the factory gate,
And waiting, I plaintively pine
For a vine-covered porch, an acetylene torch,
And that little spot-welder of mine.

NARRATOR: But not all the women she worked with were cheery Rosie-the-Riveter types—and, typically, Maggie did more than pour coffee and spin Glenn Miller and Harry James records for them.

HISTORIAN #1: From the start, the YWCA saw itself as the advocate of the hundreds of thousands of women recruited to work in defense production plants. The war created crushing problems for these women—1.75 million of them by 1942.

Cut to archival footage of war-time work conditions for women.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I will never forget the laundresses at a defense camp in Jacksonville, Florida, who slept on the ground in the woods because no housing was made for them. Or the women war workers who handled chemicals that made their hair fall out or who packed ammunition that exploded. In 1941 the average woman in a defense job made less than $20 a week. Women who made $15 often spent $6 to $9 to rent a room. Some could not locate decent housing at any price. Inadequate child care was a constant problem.

The YWCA held itself up as a watchdog against discrimination. I was amazed when I traveled in the South and witnessed the tension between blacks and whites. Our own troops were segregated. When I went to represent the YWCA in a USO Council meeting in Charleston, I was shocked to see the black members standing in the back of the room; they were not allowed to sit down!

HISTORIAN #2: When the war ended, things actually got worse. Several million women were unemployed overnight. Women were told to go home and tend house to make room for the returning servicemen.

Cut to animated stills of post-war posters encouraging women to be housewives.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Everyone from assembly line workers to teachers and college professors turned to us for counseling on unemployment insurance and job opportunities. We organized job fairs and rushed in field workers to meet with the unemployed. The work was endless—and but I loved it. You could tell when you had made a difference.

Text screen over black: "JESUS IS A METAPHOR"

CHRISTINA LONG: In 1948, Maggie got a job with the General Alliance for Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women in Boston. Back in Philadelphia, her father liked to joke with his Presbyterian friends that she was doing missionary work among the benighted Unitarians. But her parents were getting older, and she worried about them. So when her father learned about an opening at the Presbyterian Church of the USA—Philadelphia was the national headquarters—he called her. She was hired in the Social Education and Action Department.

I think she had mixed feelings about the church. She was a deacon of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia when she was 30, and she was even nominated to the session, which was its governing body. But the pastor said no way.

Cut to photo stills of male pastor and men in church.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: The pastor was among those who felt the business of the church was a man's job. On the day my name was put forth, he stood before the group

assembled to hear the nominations and said, "No! As long as I am pastor of this church there will be no woman on the session." I felt as if I had been slapped in the face. At first I was mortified, then furious.

Cut to still photo of Kuhn in church-going clothes.

NARRATOR: But, even furious, she was still a Presbyterian.

Cut to location footage of First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I have always liked the intellectual quality of Presbyterianism, its constant analysis of ethical values and social justice. There is a thread of passionate soul-searching that runs through our history.

NARRATOR: Her new job was a perfect fit. She had been raised on what came to be called the social gospel.

DIETER HESSEL: The social gospel movement pervaded most of the Christian denominations beginning early in the 20th Century. It was the same theology that informed Martin Luther King. Its' adherents were inspired by fundamental themes of love and justice in liberal theology. They believed that Christians were called on to not just serve the world, but change it. This belief informed their fights for civil rights, peace, economic justice for the poor, self-determination for the oppressed, universal health care, and against poverty, the draft, the war in Vietnam.

MARYJANE PATTERSON: Maggie was an early supporter of minority participation in church decision-making. Less than 5% of Presbyterians are African-American, but she understood that our voice was important, especially in light of our obligation to society as a whole.

DIETER HESSEL: As editor of the journal *Social Progress,* she was engaged with key progressives to make radical changes to social policy in the 1960s. Civil rights was part of it. Participatory democracy. The human sexuality report that the Presbyterian church adopted in 1970, HUD, poverty programs. . . . She picked up on all the social policy concerns.

Cut to animated stills of issues of *Social Progress.*

NARRATOR: When the social action department was established, an editorial in *The Presbyterian,* a newspaper published by one church faction, had complained that it sounded "too communistic, or too fascistic or what have you, rather than Calvinistic or Christian." But to Maggie it sounded exactly like what she'd learned at Old Stone Church in Cleveland when the church elders advocated for cleaning up pollution, and Maggie's father argued it was their Christian duty.

Cut to animated stills of movement posters from the period

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: The social action department came out of the same tradition of Christian social reform that gave birth to the YWCA, the temperance movement, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the Salvation Army. These great movements, inspired by the evangelical revival of the late nineteenth century, demanded that Christians take on more of the problems of real human beings. Their influence can be seen in hundreds of organizations and government social programs today.

NARRATOR: Naturally, the department was controversial—right up Maggie's alley.

MARY JANE PATTERSON: Our office urged churchgoers to take progressive stands on important social issues—desegregation, urban housing, McCarthyism, the Cold War, nuclear arms. We believed that, without powerful institutions like the Presbyterian Church advocating reform, many problems would go unsolved. It was a fight to get the church's Assembly to adopt our proposals, but during the '50s and '60s the church came to be known for its enlightened stances on many issues, particularly civil rights.

Text screen over black: DO SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUS EVERYDAY

CHRISTINA LONG: Maggie liked being outrageous—and it worked for her when she was older. She made a vow to do something outrageous every day. But she was a pragmatist. She knew about protective coloring. So, when she was working with the church, she could be a nice church lady.

Cut to still photos of Kuhn first in her purple sneakers and then in prim clothes and demure hats.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Whenever I was making a speech before a group that I suspected might be a little cool to my ideas, I would dress in an especially becoming, though prim, hat. You know, they say the Indians hunted Buffalo with Buffalo skins on their heads.

Cut to headlines for Social Progress *concerning issues affecting elderly.*

NARRATOR: It was Maggie's job to research and analyze any social or public policy issue the church might want to take a stand on. She had researched health care financing for the elderly and been an early advocate for Medicare. As a board member of several of the Presbyterian retirement homes, she had argued that residents should have a role in policy-making. She had lobbied the board—unsuccessfully—to go on record for universal health care.

Cut to archival still photos of the elderly poor.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I found it absorbing—an education in dozens of issues I had never studied before. Since the 1961 White House Conference on Aging, which I attended as a Church observer, I had developed an interest in the problems of the aged. My interest in these issues was not personal—I was only in my 50s. The facts appealed to me as an activist. Many of us in the churches were concerned about soaring poverty among the elderly and the staggering growth of the country's aged population.

ROBERT BUTLER: By 1969, there were 20 million people 65 years or older, and the number was growing at a rate of 900 a day. Nearly one-fourth of the aged population was living below the poverty line. Medical costs were skyrocketing. Private pensions were unreliable and social services for the old inadequate. When the Senate Subcommittee on the Problems of the Aged and Aging held hearings around the country, older Americans lined up to testify about the trials of their lives. They spoke of loneliness, destitution, and alienation.

Cut to archival still photos of Kuhn.

NARRATOR: When she faced mandatory retirement after 20 years, Maggie was stunned at losing a job she loved. But she soon realized that those 20 years of policy analysis had provided her with the perfect education for her next career.

Text screen over black: SPEAK YOU MIND EVEN IF YOUR VOICE SHAKES

Cut to still photos of Christina Long in college. Dissolve to film footage of Kuhn working with young people in her broom closet office, from Wrinkled Radical.

NARRATOR: Christina Long first heard about the Gray Panthers in the mid-'70s, when she was a college student. Working in a nursing home to pay for school, she'd been shocked at what she saw. She sought Maggie out after seeing a broadcast of Studs Terkel's program, *Wrinkled Radical.* Chris remembers Maggie's reaction to what has been called the most significant retirement in history:

CHRISTINA LONG: It all goes back to Maggie "don't agonize, organize!" I think that lifted her out of her depression and impelled her to go forward and she never stopped. At the first meeting they called, over a hundred people showed up. And right off the bat, they started talking about the Vietnam War, which they considered immoral and they considered outrageous. And so the next few meetings that they called, Princeton, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., young people started to go, and that's when that initial alliance between young and old-it was really over the Vietnam War.

Cut away from interview to archival film footage of Vietnam War demonstrations.

Maggie always looked at everything in terms of, well, we don't have the resources for human services because we're putting all this money into the war machine. And there were people who were not comfortable with that, who just wanted to be a group working for older people. Maggie fought that thinking. She said, "We're not going to be another service organization, we're radical." She even wanted to radicalize golden Age clubs-it was, like, "Infiltrate their meetings!"

ABE BLOOM: What do you do after you've been an activist in the anti-war movement and we've won a victory there? Well I was getting on in age and the senior problems were there, social security, Medicare. And where would you go, what organization was really challenging the issues? And it was the Gray Panthers.

Cut away from interview to still photo of Abe Bloom on the picket line with other Panthers.

KAREN HESSEL: She wasn't just about senior issues. Her agenda intersects with the consumer rights movement and the Nader agenda. Nursing home reform is a good example: She was concerned about working conditions for the staff as well as living conditions for the patients. She took a holistic approach to social justice.

STEVE McCONNELL: People couldn't grasp the complexity of her movement. The aging piece was almost secondary. World peace, etcetera—she had a million agendas going. People were always wanting to pigeonhole her into the role of the senior activist, and in the end it was where she was the most effective. She so looked the part of the wrinkled radical.

Dissolve to still photo of Maggie Kuhn, the "wrinkled radical." Cut to a succession of archival stills from the civil rights movement, the women's movement and then seniors demonstrating for universal health care.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: We've experienced the Black movement and the women's movement. Now it will be the Wrinkled Radical Movement—and watch out, because we have years of experience behind us. Society and its institutions will have to change to accommodate us. We've got to see services for old people for what they are—novocaine. They're not really changing anything. They're simply dulling the pain!

RALPH NADER: In the early '70s, we had recent high school graduates from Connecticut come down and form a task force on nursing home investigations. They worked in nursing homes, investigated inspection reports filed with the federal government. And of course Maggie Kuhn was working on that as well—she was galvanizing older people and here we had the young people, and she loved that melding of the generations.

ELMA HOLDER: Maggie looked like a natural to come work with Ralph Nader, and I think she would've loved to come work in Washington, but her brother Sam needed her very badly. So Nader agreed to send his task force on the elderly to Maggie in Philadelphia.

RALPH NADER: We thought the best thing to do, when you have a leader like that, was to merge our Retired Professional Action Group with the Gray Panthers.

ELMA HOLDER: Instead of her coming to work for Ralph, we decided I should come to Philadelphia and work with Maggie, and that's when I moved in.

Cut to archival film footage a young Elma Holder with Kuhn.

NARRATOR: In 1973, Nader merged his year-old task force, the Retired Professional Action Group, with the Panthers to press for the rights of elderly consumers. Nader gave them their first funding—$25,000 for two years—which enabled the Gray Panthers to have their first real office, albeit in the janitor's broom closet in the basement of the Tabernacle Church in West Philadelphia.

Dissolve to location footage of the Tabernacle Church. Dissolve to archival footage showing Maggie and her staff of young and old volunteers at work.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Jonathan, the janitor, moved his mops and buckets out, and we moved in a desk, a filing cabinet, two chairs and a telephone. We got hold of a typewriter and a hand-operated duplicator, which we named Gussy. We started writing newsletters. We had a little brown notebook in which we tried to keep track of expenses. When the first donation came in for $10, we added an 'Income' column and we celebrated.

NARRATOR: The group's first project was an expose of the hearing aid industry's exploitation of old people.

NADER: Elderly people were paying very high prices. Often shady operators, who would come in on them. They'd phony up the testing for their hearing and sell them a bill of goods.

Cut to animated stills of older people having their hearing tested and period advertisements for hearing aids.

NARRATOR: They published a scathing report, "Paying Through the Ear," that would lead to new regulation of the hearing aid industry.

Text screen over black: "GO TO PEOPLE ON THE TOP"

Dissolve to location footage of older people on the street in Philadelphia.

NARRATOR: Maggie knew that if its members didn't feel ownership, the organization would go nowhere. So, instead of telling them what was good for them, she asked them what they needed. In the early days of the Panthers, elderly people in North Philadelphia needed checking accounts. Many couldn't afford them.

Dissolve to location footage of First Pennsylvania Bank in Philadelphia, interiors and exteriors. Dissolve to old people leaving bank and walking down street.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: On the third day of the month, when Social Security checks arrived, folks would go to the bank to cash them and walk home with wallets full of cash. There'd been a series of muggings, so we agreed we'd approach the First Pennsylvania Bank, the largest bank in Philadelphia. One bank official told us such small accounts were unprofitable and a nuisance.

Dissolve to newspaper clippings of robbery.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Then an elderly woman was killed and robbed of $309 on the way home from cashing her check. I called Ralph Nader who, in a great stroke of luck, knew the chairman of the bank. A meeting was arranged. There is something wonderfully exhilarating about standing up to the head of a powerful bank. Just a few weeks later, the bank agreed to set up special checking accounts for people over 65. The bank got great publicity.

CHRISTINA LONG: That same year, Maggie went to the Presbyterian Church's General Assembly in Denver. She wasn't really there for the Panthers, she was a volunteer member of a commission on the status of women in society and in the church. One morning she got a call from the church's PR director—some important delegate was a no-show at his own press conference, would Maggie come down and talk to the press. She said, what about? He said, talk about those old folks.

Cut to still photo of Kuhn behind microphone, dissolve to montage of newspaper clippings. Dissolve to clip of Kuhn on Tonight Show.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: By then we had our name—Gray Panthers—and they asked a few questions, and I started to talk and talk. About retirement, senior citizens, nursing homes, sex at 75, gray-haired activists picketing for social justice, young people feeling powerless. The press conference lasted an hour and a half. The next day it was all over the country—AP, UPI, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the Denver Post—more than a hundred news organizations picked it up. We were famous. The

phone in our broom closet started ringing. Invitations to appear on the *Today Show, Johnny Carson, Mike Douglas.*

CHRISTINA LONG: One of her brilliant strategic moves was not to pit the old against the young. Not only did she love working with younger people, but she was adamant that the Panthers not champion one group at the expense of another.

SENATOR WYDEN: The 70s were the time of 'don't trust anyone over 30.' The Gray Panthers understood that we could build a powerful coalition with the experience of the old and the energy of the young.

STUDS TERKEL: I remember suggesting, Maggie, there's a song sung by Janis Joplin that has a line in it-Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose. That's it. In a sense, Maggie was saying to her friends who were now 65 and mandatorily retired, "We have our old bodies to put on the line to help the young survive."

Music fades up under Terkel: "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose" from Me and Bobby McGee.

CHRISTINA LONG: Maggie always said, 'the old and the young have a lot in common.'

Cut away from interview to a montage of photographs of old and young.

CHRISTINA LONG: Both are not taken seriously. The old are told "we don't do it that way anymore." The young are told, "You don't know what you're talking about." Both have limited incomes. Both are going through dramatic bodily changes. The young are growing hair, the old are losing hair. Both are involved in the drug scene, though faced with different drugs and different pushers. Both are in varying degrees of conflict with the middle generation. Both have difficulty securing employment because age discrimination against young and old is rampant. And both are free to be agents of social change. When they work together, the changes can be dramatic.

CAROL ESTES: She was right there on the front line with young people, she could go to jail—she could do things that would demonstrate not just her commitment but the ability of older persons to play a major empowering role in society. She was committed to the idea that programs in housing, for example, should not just help the elderly and forget about kids that did not have housing. At the time, the AARP and virtually all the national aging organizations were working on Medicare only, or long-term care of the elderly or income adequacy for the elderly only. Her work on single-payer national health insurance was an example of how the needs of all generations could be met by an integrated program.

HISTORIAN #2: The AARP's lobbying strategy was constrained by an overriding consideration, namely that its policies can't alienate substantial portions of the

membership that pays dues and buys products and services marketed by the organization. It chose to defend the *status quo* as best it can and not form alliances with non-age-based interests representing the poor, the disabled, and ethnic and racial minorities of all ages.

Cut to location film footage from nursing homes, showing old people in isolation.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: We were deeply disturbed by the growing segregation of the old. Services in senior centers and meal sites under the Older Americans Act and federal housing programs for the old, though well-intentioned, had segregated the old from other age groups. Retirement communities, nursing homes, increased mobility—all had created a physical and emotional distance between the young and old. More and more grandchildren didn't know their grandparents, or any old person. A friend of mine went to speak before a group of elementary school children and asked, "Where do old people come from?" A child answered: "They're born from other old people."

There are college students who have never known an old person and who study topics like World War II and the Depression through textbooks only. There are nursing home residents who cry to see a child and busy adults who come across children and old people only on the street. How many of us really talk to old people about their lives before we ourselves become old?

Location footage dissolves to younger people interacting with nursing home residents.

NARRATOR: The Panthers' commitment to young people would continue to be one of its hallmarks. In 1988, they would achieve an intergenerational amendment to the Older Americans Act that would expand volunteer opportunities for older people to nurture and assist children. By connecting senior centers with facilities that served children, the amendment would serve children, and as it gave old people a chance to make a difference in young lives.

Text screen over black: OLD AGE IS NOT A DISEASE

ROBERT BUTLER: In 1968 I coined the phrase "ageism." There were so many myths surrounding old age—senility, forgetfulness, confusion, lack of productivity. At first people rolled their eyes—Oh, another ism. Prejudice against old people runs so deep we often aren't even aware of it.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: Much of what we call senility and confusion is not organic brain damage but effects induced by society-frustration, despair, sense of loss, and invisibility that follow inevitably with a loss of roles and status. We've been brain-damaged by a society that believes old age is a disease. We're expected to be docile, serene, compliant. This is one of the stereotypes: We accept things without protest.

But I'm very proud of the fact that the Gray Panthers are a rallying point for people who are not willing to accept this stereotype.

Cut to still photos of Kuhn, boating, picnicking, working, flirting.

NARRATOR: Looking at old age from the inside, she had a very different idea of what it should be.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: A zesty, gusty, lusty period rather than supine. Most people have signed themselves out, and we've been supported in this kind of cop-out by some very destructive gerontological theories. The theory of disengagement, which the gerontologists have said is the only way to age successfully—that to my mind is suicide. You decide you're going to resign from this and that, you're not going to be active in this and that cause anymore because, after all, you're old, you've had your day. And it's time to take a nap and to play. One of the signs of our own sickness is when we feel complimented when people tell us how young we look: You know, Maggie, you don't look 69!

Dissolve from still photos to driving location footage of the junkyard, heaps of old cars.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: To get from the airport to my home in Philadelphia, I have to pass a junkyard where old cars are thrown on a heap, left to rust and disintegrate, and finally smashed to smithereens by a society that wants everything shiny-new. The junkyard haunts me because America does the same thing to its people. When we turn 65, we are trashed. Well, I don't want to be dumped on the scrap heap. I don't want to be isolated from mainstream living or from the companionship of all ages. And there are millions more like me."

NARRATOR: Nowhere was ageism more pervasive than in the work place.

HISTORIAN #2: Before the Social Security Act was passed in 1935—as part of Roosevelt's New Deal—the vast majority of men worked well into old age. But as early as the late 19th century, business had begun programs to push older workers out in favor of cheaper labor—they justified their policies by asserting that a great medical and mental decline accompanied old age.

But the Social Security Act was *the* decisive catalyst of change for older workers. It was passed, of course, to deal with the new anxieties the old were facing in the Depression. It replaced the fear of being old and obsolete with a totally new concept: retirement. At first the benefits were slim, but by the '50s, the combination of higher benefits, pensions, and rising incomes during middle age all came together to encourage workers to leave the workplace permanently.

ROBERT BUTLER: The ideal of retirement was supported by a widespread assumption that old age was naturally a time of withdrawal. The psychologist Eric Ericson had

posited the stages of adult development culminating in a phase of "disengagement" where it was just sort of better not to be too involved.

Cut to clips from television shows such as Seinfeld, showing retirement, golf courses, aging parents talking to their kids on the phone, etc.

HISTORIAN #2: Retirement began to be portrayed as a deserved reward for a lifetime of work. People came to believe they had a right to retire not just from a particular job but from work and worry. The new ideal of retirement involved a move to someplace sunny and plenty of time to play cards and work on your golf game.

Cut to advertisement from Newsweek, *1945: "How a man of 40 can retire in 15 years!"*

HISTORIAN #2: They built "leisure villages"—new communities residential specially designed for retirees, that provided security, recreation, and other services, and admitted no one under 50. As older people disappeared into these leisure villages and retirement homes, it began to seem that the larger society had no need or use for them.

Dissolve to location footage of leisusre villages, dissolve to Presbyterian retirement communities.

NARRATOR: Maggie knew about retirement because the church had established retirement homes for (mostly well-to-do) Presbyterians.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I remember visiting a friend who had been president of Princeton Theological School at one of these homes. "Maggie," he said, "this is a glorified playpen."

NARRATOR: Maggie saw the infantilization of the old as a disaster.

HISTORIAN #2: It's interesting—at the time, Maggie's idea of old age seemed to be coming out of left field. Most people couldn't wait to retire so they could move to Florida and play golf. But even if they can afford that—which many people can't—it's not always what they want.

FERNANDO TORRES-GILL: People who live longer are finding that, when they retire, if they retire, they're finding that the golf course and puttering around the garage maybe will last two weeks, two months. Then you go crazy. And then you ask yourself: Is this all I'm going to do? They are starting to realize that not only must they get involved in volunteer work–and the importance of having built that pattern in younger years. But maybe some of them would have been better off if they could have just kept working.

HISTORIAN #2: Mandatory retirement policies had been instituted at the end of the 19th century, partly to make jobs available for young people and partly because of a growing perception of the obsolescence of older workers—too frail, mentally losing it.

Cut to location footage of old people sitting on a bench on the city corner, looking at loose ends.

NARRATOR: But even with the financial security of Social Security and pensions, mandatory retirement turned out to have a serious downside.

RALPH NADER: Just think how destructive it is when someone who's been active all their life, and worked, done their job well, and then they retire, and within a few years they realize that society wants nothing from them, that they don't want their judgment, their experience, their idealism. It's very devastating, and it's a quiet destruction of their sense of identity.

Cut to location footage of older people outside homes, both rural and urban, that appear impoverished.

NARRATOR: Maggie knew from experience how it felt to be told you were no longer needed. She also knew, from her research for the social action department, that mandatory retirement had devastating practical effects for many Americans. In 1970, the year she retired, millions of retired Americans had no income beyond Social Security—4.8 million people 65 and older were living below the poverty line. They needed to work.

CAROL ESTES: Mandatory retirement is an example of the way our society creates dependency in old age. And even though we don't have mandatory retirement now, we do continue to have age discrimination, which means that people who are older often have a difficult time maintaining their jobs or finding additional work. And that means people don't have access to earning incomes and therefore are—or become—financially vulnerable and dependent.

NARRATOR: The abolishment of mandatory retirement had been an obsession for Maggie ever since she had been a victim of it.

STEVE McCONNELL: Maggie was the right person at the right time for this fight. She actually looked older than she was, but she was energetic and totally fearless. She had a flair for the media, she was galvanized by the camera. Her biggest contribution was to change the concept of aging. By calling attention to the issue of ageism, she helped provide the context for Senator Claude Pepper's fight against the mandatory retirement age.

CAROL ESTES: Maggie would've described Claude pepper as a co-conspirator...

Cut to still photo of Kuhn with Claude Pepper, dissolve to pan of Congress.

CHRISTINA LONG: The Panthers polled all the different Congressmen—it was mostly men then—about what age they planned to retire. You know, to get them thinking about whether it was fair to make people retire at 65.

Archival news footage of Kuhn on Capitol Hill with Claude Pepper.

NARRATOR: The Gray Panthers played a vital role in the enactment of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1978, which raised the mandatory retirement age from 65 to 70. They fought for passage of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Statue (Proper name?) of 198—(information to come) which protects people over 40 from employment discrimination on the basis of age.

Text screen over black: (TITLE TO COME)

Dissolve to television clip from the Beverly Hillbillies.

NARRATOR: Maggie recognized that one reason it had been possible to shunt the old aside was their portrayal in the media. From her experience in the civil rights and women's movements, she recognized the way the media tended to marginalize older people by portraying them as foolish, forgetful, infirm, powerless, unattractive and badly dressed.

GEORGE GERBNER: By the 1970s, it was unacceptable to ridicule people for their race, ethnicity, religion or disabilities. But making fun of old people—like making fun of women—continued to be acceptable. We live in a world erected by the stories that we tell. And most of the stories are no longer told by a parent, nor by the school or the church, or by the community—but by a handful of global conglomerates who have nothing to tell but a lot to sell. Whoever tells the stories of a culture controls the socialization of its children and ultimately controls the behavior.

Cut to television clips of Aunt Blabby from the Tonight Show*; Carol Burnett's portrayal of an old lady; the little old lady in "Where's the beef?" ad; and the one who's "fallen and I can't get up"; followed by "humorous" versions of same, as from Saturday Night Live.*

GEORGE GERBNER: In studying TV, we found that as women age, they get fewer roles and more negative roles. Older women, 65 and above, are few and far between-but when they appear they tend to be evil. Furthermore, look at Sean Connery. He's a leading man, and in every movie he's paired up with younger and younger women. I

realize that gives girls a fear of aging, much more than for boys. But we also find that old people of both genders are much more likely to be victimized.

Cut to still photos of Kuhn with Lydia Bragger, close in on Bragger. Dissolve to television clip of Kuhn walking on to stage of Tonight Show, fade up on audience clapping behind narration. At end of narration, Kuhn begins to speak.

NARRATOR: Maggie set out to change how old people were portrayed. In 1975, the Panthers created Media Watch, a nationwide volunteer force run by Lydia Bragger in New York to keep an eye on the way TV portrayed old people. Even distinctly non-radical organizations like the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Council on Aging joined in on this one. Maggie guested on the Johnny Carson show to protest his portrayal of Aunt Blabby and advise him that the nation was full of elderly women who weren't dingbats.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: We may not be in good shape physically, but there's nothing wrong with our heads. The thing that offends us as old people is the opportunity to work and be with young people.

JOHNNY CARSON: So you wouldn't suggest people move into a retirement village?

MAGGIE KUHN: They're a horrible waste of time. All those experienced Americans wasting their time, wasting their lives—it's a rip-off! (applause)

JOHNNY CARSON: Have you seen the character I do occasionally on the show, Aunt Blabby?

MAGGIE KUHN: Yes, I've seen Aunt Blabby and I wish you wouldn't do her. And I don't like what Carol Burnett does with that kind of blithering thing (Kuhn blithers) —that's terrible. People laugh, and they shouldn't —because that's the ultimate in human indignity.

JOHNNY CARSON: So she should be a little more independent?

MAGGIE KUHN: Yes, and feisty! There is something feisty about her, but she ought to be fighting, a life of outrage!

JOHNNY CARSON: YES! Bless you, bless you Maggie Kuhn!

Kuhn pins Gray Panther button on Johnny's lapel. Cut to interview with McConnell.

STEVE McCONNELL: Maggie had a flair for the media. She did it in an unself-conscious way—it wasn't about her. But the media is star-oriented, doesn't take the time to explore a story in depth.

Cut to archival newspaper clippings with Kuhn.

NARRATOR: So Maggie became a media star, and Media Watch made a difference. It documented the media's denigration of the old so powerfully that the National Association of Broadcasters moved in 1975 to amend its Television Code of Ethics to include age along with race and sex as issues that deserved sensitive handling on the air.

GEORGE GERBNER: Television commercials' portrayal of women, especially of older women, has improved a great deal. And certainly when they are portrayed in a negative or ridiculous fashion. But you can see now commercials are portraying older women as leaders and as dignified and respected.

Text screen over black: "USE IT OR LOSE IT"

Cut to still photo of an old person watching television.

NARRATOR: One of the least questioned stereotypes about the old, on TV and off, was that, with age, people naturally lost all interest in sex—and if they didn't, they ought to.

GEORGE GERBNER: The desexualization of aging—in, especially, women—is one of the burdens, one of the unfair, unjust and deadly phenomena that media representations tend to impose on people's conceptions of aging. The difference between the portrayal of older men's sexuality and older women's is that men are allowed to be sexy and play romantic roles until they fall into their graves. Women are usually retired from the romantic scene at 35 and 40.

Cut to animated movie poster of Sean Connery with young actress.

GEORGE GERBNER: Sean Connery and Clint Eastwood make love to younger women all the time. I'll believe gender equity has come when I see Sean Connery make love to a woman his own age.

CAROL HABER: There are no older people in the *Kinsey Report.* Kinsey was afraid to talk to older people about sex—especially older women, he thought they would be embarrassed.

ROBERT BUTLER: Writing *Why Survive?* we talked to hundreds of Americans over 60—their needs became clear to me.

Cut to cover of book: Why Survive, *Narional Bestseller.*

ROBERT BUTLER: These folks were interested in—and having— sex at the close to the same rate as their younger counterparts. But a lot of them felt they were the only ones.

NARRATOR: Even as a young woman, Maggie hadn't been bashful about sex. She wasn't about to start in old age.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: There's a myth that old age is sexless: "It's not appropriate for you anymore, grandma. You can't do it anymore." But I say that until the end some form of intimacy and loving relationship is necessary. Now since women outlive men—we don't know why men are so fragile, but we outlive them by 8 to 13 years—maybe when men are more liberated they'll live longer too? And how do we fulfill our sexual needs? And I say, maybe there's a possibility of a lesbian relationship in old age.

CHRISTINA LONG: I remember hearing, "Maggie's done it again." You know, she'd gone to some meeting, and now the phone's ringing off the hook with people calling to complain because she had suggested that because there were so few men around that, as women get older, they should consider being with each other . . .and, you know, people were threatening to cut off their support to the Gray Panthers, and how dare she say this, and it was outrageous. Everybody tried to muffle Maggie, but she wouldn't be muffled.

Cut from interview to still photo of Christina Long with Kuhn. Dissolve to photo of Kuhn looking self-contented.

CHRISTINA LONG: I remember I was over at her house shortly after I'd given birth to my second son, and somehow the topic of sex came up and I said, "I don't know what the big deal about sex is. You know, after a while, it's just not so important." And Maggie looked at me and she said, "Chris, speak for yourself."

Cut to still photo of Kuhn.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: For women my age, 69, sex is a no-no. Yet human sexuality is a basic part of all of us, as real to me as to young women.

CHRISTINA LONG: I think she realized in her heart of hearts that sexuality was so important to people and really defined who they were. It goes back to her course in human sexuality at the Y, which was fairly unusual at the time.

GEORGE GERBNER: The combination of sexiness and age was, I think, a key factor in her image. The first time I met Maggie Kuhn was accidentally in a restaurant. I recognized her from her pictures. I introduced myself, said, may I join you. She said, yes, I'd love to have lunch with you. And we immediately began a mutual flirtation and

a lifelong friendship. Older people are sexy, and sexual feelings do not stop, it's a lifelong habit—I think Maggie knew that, she felt it, she accepted it.

ABE BLOOM: If you read her autobiography, sex plays a pretty important role. She even lectured to medical students that the stereotype of the older person being sexless is all wrong. She was very blunt. She used to use the slogan "Use it or lose it."

GRETCHEN KILLINGER: I think a lot of things fed into her decision not to be married. She loved her work and, at the Y, when women got married they resigned. And Maggie's father didn't approve of any of the men she brought home–except for a doctor . . . You know, Maggie had a very independent streak and I remember her telling me about this guy—they were supposed to move to Montana together, and then she very abruptly cut everything off, and I said, what was it? She said they were going out one evening, and she went upstairs to get dressed, and he told her exactly what he wanted her to wear. She was just disgusted, thought it was completely inappropriate, thought, if this man is just gonna think he can dictate to me—well, no one could dictate to Maggie.

CHRISTINA LONG: You know, it's hard when you're not married and everyone else in the world is married—she had a hard time meeting men. When she lived in Philadelphia she was going out with an insurance salesman who her father just thought was way beneath her. Then when she lived in Boston, she was going out with, I think he was basically the manager of their building, or the, um, janitor, and he was black, and I'm sure she never told her parents about the Boston affair. Then when she finally went to the Presbyterian Church, she met a minister who was very prominent in the Social Action department, and they were passionately involved in social causes and shared an intellectual—you know, it was a real meeting of the minds. He was married, but they carried on a secret affair for 15 years. Oddly enough, his family would come to their house for Thanksgiving, they shared holidays, and I think he was the one man she was really heartbroken over. When she wrote the book it sounded like the breakup was mutual, and after she died we found some letters she'd written to him and obviously never mailed—and I think she was heartbroken and devastated over that whole breakup, but to protect herself she made it sound like it was mutual, but it wasn't mutual.

She didn't set age limits, especially after she was retired. She did have an affair with a man 50 years younger than she was—there's a picture of them demonstrating in one of these newspapers I just saw. He was 21, from Seattle, she was organizing out West or something, had dinner with his family. And they started this affair. I remember her saying quite clearly that, the first time he got undressed, she said, "He looked like that statue of that Greek god right there!" She had this little bronze replica on her night table.

I remember I asked her, "Maggie, weren't you heartbroken over some of these affairs, and I never forgot this because I thought it was so funny, she said, "Salacious

as it may sound, Chris, no—it was always on to the next." She was very chipper about it.

Cut to still photo of Kuhn (closeup).

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Many people ask why I never married. My glib response is always "Sheer luck!"

NARRATOR: For many, an inevitable consequence of choosing not to marry is facing old age alone.

Text screen over black: "THE ULTIMATE INDIGNITY IS TO BE GIVEN A BEDPAN BY A STRANGER WHO CALLS YOU BY YOUR FIRST NAME."

NARRATOR: Maggie had a longstanding interest in conditions in nursing homes from her days with Presbyterian social action.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: We're concerned about the gross neglect of people who are confined really as inmates in long-term care facilities. The doctors have just, you know, walked away. They've extended life, they've made certain people into vegetables, and then they've walked away from any kind of economic or moral responsibility for the wreckage they've created. Of 77 Pennsylvania nursing homes we looked at, only one has a medical director.

RALPH NADER: There were over a million people in nursing homes at the time the Panthers were forming, and there were billions of taxpayer dollars being used, and they testified before the House of Representatives, before the Senate, and went on national TV, and made the nursing home abuse situation a visible issue. They found neglect, overbilling, lack of medical oversight of medications.

Cut to location footage of Holder at nursing homes.

NARRATOR: Inspired by the success of the hearing aid project, Gray Panther Elma Holder founded the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home reform in 1975. Two years later, the Panthers and the Coalition published "Nursing Homes: A Citizen's Action Guide," a handbook that documented abuses in nursing homes. By 1982, the Panthers had persuaded the Food and Drug Administration to regulate the hearing aid industry and monitor it for deceptive and fraudulent practices. The same year, they successfully brought suit to simplify Medicare forms and streamline the Medicare claim appeal process. They also compiled and published directories of physicians who would treat Medicare patients at no cost beyond what Medicare allowed.

ELMA HOLDER: The national nursing home reform law passed in 1987, and our organization was very active in getting it passed, but it kind of grows out of the whole

Gray Panther movement. It's a major nursing home law that promises that everyone who lives in a nursing home will have protection and safety. Now the issue is, how do we implement it in all the nursing homes?

Dip to black and come up to still photos of Gray Panther conference.

NARRATOR: In 1974, the Panthers in Coalition with others sponsored a conference on "Health Care as a Human Right: What Does It Mean?" The conference inspired 10 follow-up workshops—and a "house call" on the AMA at its 123rd annual convention in Chicago. The Panthers challenged the AMA with demands for action and demonstrated at the Convention Hall.

Cut to film footage from "Wrinkled Radical" at AMA convention. Dissolve to Terkel.

STUDS TERKEL: The Gray Panthers were engaged in guerilla theater. One member played the patient and had a heart attack. The doctors opened his heart and found, instead of a heart, green dollar bills. The patient was the AMA. As Maggie said, "Doctors rarely made house calls so we decided to pay the doctors a house call."

Cut to still photos of Gray Panthers in Washington, D.C. demonstrating for single payer health care.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: Early on, the Gray Panthers believed the health care system was in crisis. The bottom line had replaced the Hippocratic oath.

CAROL ESTES: Maggie was way ahead of the curve on preventive care and in advocating for a single-payer system.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: Those of us that are old have a certain view as the largest consumers of health care. Medicare pays not a dime for preventive health care. How ridiculous to wait until we become ill and incapacitated. This is a useless silly system that has got to be changed.

CAROL ESTES: We pay medical and tech industries to provide care that is not appropriate or most needed—for example paying for high-tech intervention rather than for social and supportive care, or transportation to get people out and involved, or an adequate income so that people can actually participate in an intellectual and meaningful life. We are taking resources and putting them into high-profit-margin industries with highly paid lobbyists that aren't helping the elderly to be independent and involved. Public policy is pegged more toward acute care and medical services—when care for chronic illness and social and supportive assistance to the elderly to manage their daily lives would be extremely helpful.

ROBERT BUTLER: xx% (information to come) of all the money spent on health care in this country is spent to provide high-tech interventions to terminal patients at the very ends of their lives—but, as Maggie would point out, we can't afford to vaccinate all schoolchildren.

Cut to still photos of brother Sam a an adult.

NARRATOR: Medical institutions became a personal issue for Maggie, as her brother's mental condition deteriorated. In 1970, as the Panthers geared up and took more and more of Maggie's time, her brother Sam had objected. By then he was living with her, and he wanted her to stay home and take care of him.

MAGGIE VOICEOVER: I was troubled by his utter dependence on me and I knew neither of us would benefit if I gave up my life to see to his needs 24 hours a day. I invited two university students to live with us, so Sam would not be alone in the house. It was the wisest decision I ever made.

Cut to location footage of exterior of Kuhn's house in Philadelphia.

NARRATOR: Eventually, a steady stream of roommates would join her household in the Germantown section of Philadelphia.

CAROL ESTES: Maggie was committed to shared housing because she believed that older persons and younger persons both had difficulty with housing issues and that their needs were complementary so they might be able to solve the problem mutually. Often, older people would have to move into a nursing home because they needed assistance with cooking or shopping-sometimes even fairly minor assistance, but daily assistance of some kind. Her idea was that this could be addressed by linking the needs of older and younger people.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA WITH LINDA HORN AND ELMA HOLDER: Linda and Elma—in other circumstances all three of us would live independently. But I think of what my life would be like without these women. How lonely I would be in this big old house. And how lonely many other women like me are in their big old houses. We share on an economic level, but the thing that really reinforced this feeling of as new lifestyle was the way in which the three of us watched beside the bedside of my brother who was terminally ill. And the three of us bore the burden, the pain, the anguish of that.

NARRATOR: Not that there weren't occasional difficulties.

ABE BLOOM: Shared housing was a concept that worked for Maggie but a lot of us who weren't so famous tried it and it was hard to get going.

KAREN HESSEL: Maggie was exploited at times. She took in dysfunctional people. She did help start the shared housing movement, but for her it was a commune. She loved having a reconstructionist Lesbian rabbinical student living next door and that worked out great. But the squabbling lovers in the other apartment got to her.

Text screen over black: "SPEAK YOUR MIND EVEN IF YOUR VOICE SHAKES."

Come up to photo of Kuhn in front of the White House.

NARRATOR: Maggie had a gift for speaking the uncomfortable truth to the powerful.

STUDS TERKEL: Maggie told me about the White House Conference where a group of seniors had been invited to the Oval Office for a real tete-a-tete with the President. Thinking he was being lovable, Gerald Ford asked her "Young lady, do you have something to say?"—and Maggie said firmly, "Mr. President, I am not a young lady, I'm an old woman."

KAREN HESSEL: Back when she worked for the Presbyterian Church in the Witherspoon Building in Philadelphia, they had a segregated lunchroom, men only.

Dissolve from interview to archival photos of exterior of Witherspoon Building to photos of Presbyterian lunchroom.

KAREN HESSEL: One day Maggie and her cronies decided to have lunch there. What can I say? The place has never been the same.

Cut to cartoon sketch of Kuhn doing the Gray Panther Growl.

NARRATOR: The Gray Panther Growl was another gambit Maggie could count on to capture an audience's attention.

ABE BLOOM: Maggie had read somewhere, I think it was Buddhist meditation, that if you want to meditate really well you are supposed to stick your tongue out. And that's supposed to help you focus. So Maggie came up with this idea of the Gray Panther Growl. Nobody did it like Maggie.

CHRISTINA LONG: Let me tell you a story about the Panther growl. Maggie went to Poletown outside Detroit. They were trying to build a Cadillac plant and Ralph Nader called her in because there were a lot of older people that were going to be affected by it. 3500 people lived in Poletown, and they were just going to knock down all their houses, the churches, the entire community. So, in a last-ditch effort to save Poletown, Maggie went to a church there and gave a big speech.

RALPH NADER: She went up to the pulpit, put her hands on the podium, and let out a bloodcurdling Gray Panther scream to establish the proper atmosphere of defiance.

Dissolve from interview to newspaper photo of Kuhn doing the Panther Growl.

CHRISTINA LONG: Well, the next day, the front page of the Detroit Free Press, there's Maggie—GRRRRRRL!!—her tongue was, like, spilling out all over this front page! OK, and we're getting phone calls again, you know, and I remember, the executive director was absolutely so dismayed that Maggie had done this Panther growl again. And OK, you know, first thing when she gets home we're going to have to tell her to stop.

Dip to black.

The following head shots will be intercut with still photos from the less Kuhn with the person who is sharing the memory.

MARY JANE PATTERSON: To be friends with Maggie was like having a sister.

MYRNA LEWIS: Maggie was a giraffe: She always said, you have to stick your neck out. We had a personal relationship: She was a friend and a role model. I admired her fearlessness, her inventiveness, her wild sense of humor, her generosity of spirit, She gave young people a sense of what it's possible to become. She was a work of art.

SENATOR RON WYDEN: I'm convinced, absolutely convinced, there were older people at that time who'd get up in the morning and they might have an ache or a pain or something, but they'd think: I'm getting up and doing it 'cause Maggie is. I'm getting up and I'm going to make a difference.

ROBERT BUTLER: She was diminutive. Sassy. Irreverent. Had a gift for phrase-making. A wow—a wild old woman. She did a lot of street theater, used guerilla tactics, but never tasteless. She knew she was onto something.

CHRISTINA LONG: When a reporter asked her how she had written her autobiography, she said, "Oh I just wrote it out in longhand in pencil on pads of yellow lined paper." At first I was taken aback—I had been sitting with her for hours on end, writing while she talked. But then I liked the idea—she was appropriating it!

STEVE McCONNELL: I went on vacation with her once. Maggie liked young men. I have a picture of her on a speedboat with her hair flying. Age was a non-issue. She was a young person in her attitudes. We had a spiritual connection.

KAREN HESSEL: She was raised to be a Victorian gentle lady. She had genuine class. She was a citizen of Germantown. It there was a local issue she was involved.

Desperately wanted to be part of the community. Visionary. She helped plant trees in North Philadelphia. She was a grassroots citizen.

STEVE McCONNELL: She was the conscience of the aging movement. A gadfly. When I was working for Claude Pepper, she would say, "You guys are going for peanuts. We need universal health care." She wasn't interested in just changing legislation. She wanted radical change.

RON WYDEN: Much of what I am trying to do in the United States Senate comes from Maggie Kuhn's playbook.

KAREN HESSEL: She knew how to work the establishment, but she couldn't play hardball with her own people. It goes back to her father. She couldn't deal with difficult men. We used to joke that she had a death wish for the organization.

STEVE McCONNELL: Maggie wasn't an organizational person; she left that to others. It was a charismatic organization—and the fate of charismatic organizations is that they often fade away without their figurehead. She never got around to laying the groundwork for the organization's survival.

KAREN HESSEL: Maggie made some bad decisions in hiring Gray Panthers directors. That was her fatal flaw. The one time she had a chance to hire somebody good, she ended up with a leftist peacenik. She could've hired Mary Hurtig, but Mary was married to a doctor—part of the establishment—and that simple fact made her ineligible.

ABE BLOOM: There were groups that split off. Tish Sommers was a major figure during the Gray Panther years and she split off and formed the Older women's League which is still active. The National Caucus on Back Aged also came out of the Gray Panthers and in that case they're a much larger group than we are today.

STEVE McCONNELL: The Gray Panthers always had the seeds of their own destruction built in. It was made up of a lot of old socialists. Always had an anarchistic core. And it's hard to organize people who believe in anarchy. The Gray panthers never ended; they degenerated.

MYRNA LEWIS: By the end of her life, Maggie was living in poverty. Ironically, she had fallen right into the group of women who cycled into poverty.

KAREN HESSEL: She was founding chair of the Panthers, but not executive director. And, even though she was a charismatic leader, the board didn't treat her well. She didn't take a salary from the Panthers. She lived on her speaker's fees. And radicalized movements are always trying to get crowd-drawing people to speak for free.

CHRIS LONG: We had to take up a collection just to keep her in groceries.

CAROL ESTES: She remained in her house and was climbing her steps until very near the end. Once I asked how it felt to be in the position of needing help when you climb the stairs. Because I wanted to offer a hand, but I knew how important it was for her not to feel dependent. She said, "My dear, it's interdependence, and that's all right. And that's what we're doing: walking these steps together.

Cut to film footage of Kuhn at 89 in front of a rapt audience in a large auditorium. She is so old she cannot stand, and the audience strains to see her.

NARRATOR: Age was not kind to her physically. Two bouts with breast cancer, osteoporosis, arthritis, macular degeneration. Even so, it had its pluses.

MAGGIE ON CAMERA: There are three things I like about being old. First, I can speak my mind and I do. And I'm always surprised at what I get away with. I can be outrageous.

The second thing that I like about being old is that I've outlived much of my opposition. The people who said to me, "Maggie, that would never work, it's a crazy idea"—they're gone.

The third thing I like in my old age is that I'm privileged—the sheer joy of reaching out to people like you and being a part of your future. What a blessing and a privilege—and fun!

CAROL ESTES: McLuhan said the medium is the message. Maggie was the message. Her purple tennis shoes, her crippled hands, her gray hair, her strident commitment that carried us into a new era.

Cut to montage of images from Kuhn's life: Young Maggie, Cleveland smokestacks and tenements, college campus, YWCA, Witherspoon Building, newsletter she edited.

NARRATOR: Maggie often spoke of the usefulness of doing what she called a "life review"—she thought you should look at your life against the history of your time, and consider how the times had shaped your life and your character—and how what you did with your life had affected your time. As a girl, Maggie saw what happened when business could do whatever it liked, without regulation, and when poor people were out there alone, with no safety net. She attended a women's college that had been created to keep women out of Case Western because of their probably deleterious effects on male students, and because education was wasted on them anyway. She saw what happened when men controlled women's lives and their sexuality. She knew firsthand the consequences of limiting women's role in the world of work. All these experiences formed her idea of what life should be like and what society owed even its weakest members. She fought for that vision her whole working life—so, when, at 65, she found the cause we remember her for, she was ready. She knew exactly what she thought about it, and she knew what she wanted to do. And, more than any other single

person, she gave voice to a new idea of what old age is and can be, and of the role older people can and should play in our society.

Montage of images from the mass media that span Kuhn's lifetime: Magazine covers touting "Sexy Senior Citizens," assisted living brochure with couple on cover doing something other than playing golf, old person peace corps volunteer, old person poll watcher, Bob Dole Viagra ad, Gray Chic hair color package, old executive doing the books for Habitat for Humanity, old woman walking a grandchild to school, old John Glenn climbing into the space capsule, old George Bush parachuting out of a plane, the 60-year-old woman who finished the New York Marathon this year just a few minutes behind the woman who won, Heywood Ford at his community garden, white-haired woman in Banana Republic ad, old minister preaching, white-haired woman on runway in Donna Karan show, old woman lifting weights, old person working at a food bank, tutoring a school child, throwing a pot, teaching a class, treating a patient, etc, etc. .culminating with image of Maggie "growling", hands thrown over her head, at the Gray Panther conference.

CREDITS