

Nancy Wayburn Cain (June 3, 1940 - August 22, 2021)

Artist/author/performer/filmmaker Nancy Cain passed away at home on August 22. Having been theater performer for Detroit's Temple Players and the Vanguard Playhouse in the 1960s, nightclub singer at Momo's Lounge in Detroit among other nightspots, harmony singer in a quartet called The Bead Game signed by Sire Records, song copyright checker for ASCAP, and other itinerant jobs, a chance meeting in 1969 on a NYC street corner with a CBS executive changed the course of her life, as well as the lives and careers of many other earliest videomakers.

As assistant to producer Don West for the pilot *Subject to Change* that was supposed to replace the cancelled Smothers Brothers Show, Cain discovered the [Videofreex](#), who were among the first to use the newly-introduced portable video recorders and cameras. She hired the Videofreex to work on the CBS show, and then, after CBS rejected it, calling it "ahead of its time," joined the Videofreex.

After 3 years headquartered in a loft studio in the burgeoning Soho neighborhood of New York City, the Freex moved together to a 27-room former rooming house in the upstate mountain town of Lanesville, NY where they operated an early media center and a low-power broadcast TV station. Over their 9-year history the 10 Videofreex partners produced thousands of hours of independent programming and spawned hundreds of Indy producers around the world with their Media Bus training workshops. She also was a portapak video producer and camera operator on nationally broadcast shows for TVTV and collaborator with Survival Arts Media and other early video production groups.

Among other Videofreex roles, Nancy stood out as an affable host of hundreds of live Lanesville TV Shows from 1971 to 1978. Her short movie "[Harriet](#)" (15:20, black & white, 1974), a prescient docu-drama collaboration with its subject about personal liberation, was recognized at the time and subsequently as a classic independent video, and as an example of 1970s feminist filmmaking.

Beginning in 1978 with her romantic and production partner Bart Friedman, Cain operated a nonprofit media center in Woodstock, NY and was the town's cable TV station program director.

In 1984 Nancy moved solo west to Venice CA and began working in Hollywood directing several early reality TV programs, field directing for *The Wilton North Report*, a late night series on Fox TV, and as West Coast camcorder correspondent and producer for PBS series *The '90s 52* one-hour programs. With Judith Binder, Cain co-produced *CamNet*, a 24-hour all-camcorder long-form TV programming service that was on throughout United Artists Cable Systems for several years.

Her book [Video Days: And What We Saw Through the Viewfinder](#) chronicles her Indy media adventures. Edits of her individual and collaborative videos are posted on [VideofreexPirateTV.vhx.tv](#). Dozens of original videotapes in her home collection will be added to her archive at [MediaBurn.org](#).

In addition to videomaking, Cain painted dozens of stunning acrylic portraits and landscapes, as well as shooting and posting wry, artistic photos of mundane surroundings wherever she was.

In 1986 Nancy met the love of her life and husband for 32 years (they were married on April Fool's Day): publisher of The Realist/writer/humorist/radical Paul Krassner. They departed Venice to Desert Hot Springs, California in 2002, where she pursued her art, was active in the continuing Videofreex Partnership, assisted Krassner's continuing prolific magazine and book writing until his passing in July 2019, and managed Paul's sweeping archive and products, like the best-selling Disney characters orgy poster.

Nancy is survived by her sister Linda Grossman, nieces Sadie Grossman and Liza Grossman, nephew Adam Grossman, daughter-in-law Holly Krassner Dawson, beloved grand-daughter Talia Dawson and her Videofreex partners. Condolence messages can be sent to NancyCainMemories@gmail.com.