A Class Discussion on "No Place for a Woman"

In the 1970's, women across the country began breaking into male-dominated professions. The women who took jobs as miners in northern Minnesota faced a hostile reception. "No Place for a Woman" chronicles the women who filed a landmark sexual harassment case against their employers.

In this class discussion, students will listen to first-hand accounts of what it was like to be a woman miner in the 1970's. The attached annotated transcript contains links to specific segments of audio as well as suggested class discussion questions and additional pieces of information.

Estimated Time:

30 – 60 minutes plus 10 – 30 minutes of prep, depending on how much of the recording your choose to use.

Materials:

- Computer with Internet connection and classroom speakers.
- Real Audio Player 8.0 or higher
- Map of the Iron Range (see "Selected Resources" on the April 2006 Sound Learning page.

Objectives for High School Students:

- Students will describe and discuss a type of working environment women encountered when they tried to enter male-dominated professions.
- Students will identify and describe the various points of view surrounding women working in Minnesota's iron mines.

Optional:

- Students will formulate their own questions about the content and techniques used in the audio segments and participate in a small group class discussion.

Correlations with the Minnesota Graduation Standards

Grade	Subject	Strand	Sub-Strand	Standard	Benchmark
9-12	Social Studies	Historical Skills	Historical Inquiry	The student will analyze historical evidence and draw conclusions.	2. Students will identify the principal formats of published secondary source material and evaluate such sources for both credibility and bias.
9-12	Language Arts	Speaking, Listening, and Viewing	Media Literacy	The student will critically analyze information found in electronic and print media, and will use a variety of these sources to learn about a topic and represent ideas.	5. Evaluate the content and effect of persuasive techniques used in print and broadcast media. 7. Critically analyze the messages and points of view employed in … documentaries.

PREP: Estimated time: 10 – 20 minutes

1) Peruse the transcript, selecting discussion questions and audio clips that you think will be of greatest interest and most relevance to your students.
2) Preview the audio segments and practice using the embedded links in the time codes below to pause, advance, and "rewind" the RealPlayer application to the segments you want to use. Check that your speaker volume is high enough to reach all corners of your classroom.
3) Locate space on your white/blackboards, transparency paper or butcher paper to write class discussion notes on.
4) Set up your classroom to accommodate a large group discussion or small group discussion format (depending if you choose to follow the ALTERNATIVE steps 8 and 9 below).

INSTRUCTION: Estimated time: 35 – 50 minutes, depending on how long the class continues its discussion and how much audio you select.

1) **Building Prior Knowledge, 5 - 10 minutes:** Brainstorm with your class what it would be like to be one of a few people to work in a place with many more people who actively didn't want you to be there and little if no protection from being harassed or threatened. Have they ever encountered such a situation?
2) **Purpose, 1 – 2 minutes:** Display map of the Iron Range. Explain that the class will be listening to a documentary about a landmark struggle between women who were the first to work side by side with men on the Iron Range's mines.
3) Play the entire RealAudio clip (or the segments you selected – see transcript below for links to specific segments).
4) After the clip plays, gather your students' initial reactions. Compare them to the results of the brainstorm.
5) Refer to their initial thoughts about what being routinely harassed would be like. Did the recording change their impressions?
6) Ask your students to think about what was, for them, the most compelling part of the tapes.
7) Use the links in the transcript below to load specific sections you'd like to discuss further with your class.

ALTERNATIVE:

8) Model and then have your students develop a discussion question on an audio clip:
    - Identify an idea you want to discuss.
    - Form a question about the idea that starts with the words "why" or "how"; those words allow for more open-ended conversation.
9) Break your class into smaller groups and have students pose their questions to each other. After an appropriate amount of time, ask each group to summarize what they talked about and share their summaries with the rest of the class.

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
0:00 – 1:00	**Deborah Amos:** From American Public Media, this is No Place for a Woman": an *American RadioWorks* documentary. I'm Debra Amos." *It was only fair that women should work there too.* In the 1970's, women untied their aprons and joined the workforce as never before. They took jobs as truck drivers, lawyers, and steel workers. *…and we were taking jobs from their sons. So they did not like that at all.* Some women found the workplace was hostile territory. In the iron mines of Minnesota, women were groped, threatened, and assaulted. *When it started, nobody had ever heard of going to court and suing because of it. We just kinda thought "well, you gotta take because you're in a man's world".* In the coming hour, how a lawsuit on the iron range helped change the workplace for all women. "No Place for a Woman" from *American RadioWorks*. First, this news update.	What do you think will be the main idea of this documentary? What "mood" have the producers created with the audio clips and music? Why did the producers choose to set that "mood"?
1:00 – 2:15	**Deborah Amos:** From American Public Media, this is an *American RadioWorks* documentary: No Place for a Woman. I'm Debra Amos. In 1970, nearly half the women in the United States had paying jobs, but most women worked for low pay. Women were waitresses, clerks, and cleaning ladies. Less than five percent of lawyers were women. About three percent of police officers were women. In the iron mines of northern Minnesota, zero percent of the steelworkers were women. But in the mid-70s, women there began taking jobs running shovels, driving trucks, and operating enormous machines in the ore processing plants. Some of the men tried to force the women miners out. Women were harassed, threatened, and even assaulted. But they needed the jobs. They wanted their rights. And they wanted to change the world for their daughters and granddaughters. So the women miners of northern Minnesota fought back, and made legal history. Catherine Winter and Stephanie Hemphill produced this documentary. It's narrated by Catherine Winter. A note of warning: This program contains graphic language and descriptions.	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
2:16 – 4:00	**Catherine Winter:** The Mesabi Iron Range is a hundred-mile stretch of northern Minnesota forests and bogs sitting on top of a band of iron ore. Miners strip off the trees and dig deep for ore to ship down the Great Lakes to steel plants. Denise Vesel grew up on the Iron Range, and in a lot of ways, she's a typical Ranger. She's worked at a mine for nearly 30 years, and she's got strong opinions about how those eastern mining companies treat the workers. She's tough and she works hard, and she used to drink hard. She tells a good story, with creative cursing, like when her foreman told her she needed to radio in and ask permission before going to the bathroom, even though none of the men had to ask. **Denise Vesel:** And I told him there'd be a blue moon in hell when I ask permission to go to the bathroom and there'd also be a blue moon in hell when I announce to the pit when I've gotta go to the bathroom. **Winter:** "The pit" where Denise Vesel works is an enormous crater. *[shovel sounds]* **Winter:** From the rim, a mine pit looks like a canyon, stretching from one horizon to the other. The trucks and shovels in the bottom look like toys in a giant sandbox. But they're huge. A tire from one of the trucks is twice as tall as a person. The mines run 24 hours a day, in Minnesota's bitter winters and steamy summers. Denise Vesel is on midnight shift this week. **Vesel**: I'm a rotary drill operator. It's this big machine that looks like a double wide trailer house on tracks with this huge steel that drills holes in the ground. And they fill those holes with dynamite and explosives and that's what they blast, for the shovels to scoop up and haul it away. *[blasting sound]*	For a map and background information on Minnesota's Iron Range, see "Selected Resources" on the March 2006 Sound Learning page: http://www.soundlearning.org/features/2006/03/

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
4:05 – 6:12	**Winter**: Most of Denise Vesel's co-workers at are men. Since Eveleth Mines started hiring women in 1975, women have never made up more than five percent of the hourly workforce. Vesel was hired in 1977. She got on fine with most of the men, but a few let her know she wasn't welcome. Some called her "Amazon". Some called her slut, or bitch, or worse. One man kept poking her breasts and grabbing her. He tore up her newspapers. He melted her hardhat. **Vesel:** And I told the foreman I don't want to work with him, oh but they thought it was so cute, little sideshow, he made everyone laugh. And I came to work one morning, I'd just had it up to here with his bullshit. We're down in the south crusher and he wanted to fight and he starts punching me in the arm and I'm like, I'm hung over, I didn't feel good, I didn't want to be there that day. And I yelled at him a few times knock it off... just knock it off and he wouldn't and I just made a fist and I backhanded him as hard as I could. And all of a sudden I heard a snap and he grabbed his side and called it quits. ...But it was a week later we found out I broke his ribs. He wouldn't admit it at the time. And after that he left me alone. **Winter**: Other women who worked for Eveleth Mines in the 1970s and 80s have stories, too. They testified in court that buildings at the mine were full of raunchy pictures of women and filthy graffiti about the female workers. Women were groped and grabbed and punched. Men exposed themselves. They threatened women with rape. They called women at home to make obscene suggestions or threaten to hurt them. Some of the women feared for their lives; they barricaded themselves into their work areas so men couldn't get at them. When they crossed onto company property, some women carried mace in their lunch pails or knives in their boots. **Marcy Steele:** We used to say that once you cross that guard gate, there are no laws anymore. No normal laws that apply on the outside. **Winter:** Marcy Steele started working at the mine in Eveleth in 1976. Men told her she was stealing a man's job. One man grabbed her crotch. A man twice her size tried to punch her in the face, but she ducked just in time.	Describe the position that Vesel and Steele were put in. Why would they want to stay in those jobs given what they had to endure?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
6:12 – 7:51	**Steele:** My sister remembers me going to work crying and coming home crying. You didn't know day-to-day what was going to happen, and that's where probably the stress level came in - not knowing. **Winter:** The constant fear made some women sick. Several were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, the illness that affects some combat veterans and rape victims. In court, Judy Jarvela said a man stalked her at work, and she couldn't get the image of his threatening smirk out of her head. She later told a CNN interviewer what happened to her: **Judy Jarvela:** My locker was broken into, my clothing was masturbated on three times. **CNN interviewer:** When your reported this to the supervisors, what did they do? **Jarvela:** Nothing was done. No one even came to talk to me about it. **Winter:** The women say they didn't realize what was happening to them was happening to other women too. But it was – other women at Eveleth Mines and other women around the country. Women were breaking into men's professions, and they often weren't welcome. Historian Sara Evans says people forget what it was like in the 70s, because these days, families generally have two breadwinners, and women expect to work. **Sara Evans:** That is a fundamental shift in American culture. So that's part of what's hard to communicate about what it was like before, when women who wanted to do meaningful work outside the home, they were the unusual ones, and they were the suspect ones. People assumed that work was – real work, you know, work with benefits, full time work, work you would identify with – was something men did.	Why weren't women welcome in the jobs they took at the mine? Why were some men so against working with women?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
7:51 – 9:54	*[Rally]* **Winter:** In the 1970s, the women rallied for the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. It was an era of tremendous change. Women went to college in record numbers, and demanded entry into male strongholds. Sara Evans says the ERA would have made it illegal to keep women off juries. It would have ended the practice of refusing credit to a married woman unless she had her husband's signature. Job discrimination was already illegal, but newspapers still ran separate want ads for men and women. Evans says women who wanted to break into male professions often had to sue. **Evans:** At the University of Minnesota, in the 70s, the chemistry department refused to tenure a woman, and there was a note that was found crumpled up in a wastebasket that said, "No woman will ever get tenure in chemistry," and there are plenty of stories in the chemistry department of the university of women opening a drawer in their desk and finding dog feces in there or some kind of harassment like that. Wherever there were places [where] women's presence was deeply threatening to the men who worked there, there was enormous resistance and whoever spoke up probably got greater harassment in the short term, for sure, so they were incredibly brave. **Winter:** When three women at Eveleth Mines spoke up, they were harassed by men and shunned by other women. In the end, their fight would break new legal ground, making way for women around the country to demand an end to harassment on the job. But they didn't set out to be pioneers. They were just trying to make a living.	Why would men find a woman's "presence deeply threatening"? Aside from suing, can you think of other ways women could have gotten access to the same jobs?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
9:54 – 12:10	*[North Country Blues song]* **Winter:** The towns on Minnesota's Iron Range boom and bust with the mines. In boom years, nearly 20,000 people worked in the mines. Bust years mean thousands of layoffs. Bob Dylan grew up on the Range, and he wrote about the bust times, when schools closed and people moved away, leaving behind the empty pits. *[song continues]* **Winter:** When the mines are running, they pay the best jobs on the Range – with good pay and benefits. So it's no wonder women wanted those jobs. They got their chance early in the nineteen seventies after the Federal Government sued a group of steel companies for race and sex discrimination. Some of those companies owned mines in northern Minnesota and the mines started hiring women. **Lynn Sterle:** My dad just asked would I like to come to work in the mine. I said "Whatever -- I'll give it a try.' And I started on my 19th birthday. **Winter:** Lynn Sterle was hired by a mine owned by US Steel in 1975. **Sterle:** It was unreal. Because, living up here, as a child, your folks work in the mines. You don't know what they actually do. You never step foot in a mine. You have no concept of what your dad does. You know? And, it was scary. Just the immenseness of the equipment and the noise and the trains running and rocks coming down conveyor belts and it's just constant droaning. **Winter**: Sterle says some of the men accepted her. And some didn't. **Sterle:** Some of them had sons who couldn't get on and we were taking jobs from their sons. So they did not like that at all.	What two sides are described in this clip? Describe each position: that of the men already there and that of the recently hired women.

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
12:11- 13:57	**Lynn Henderson:** I got hired in April of '76. And I was always kinda a tomboy so I just really fit in. **Winter:** Lynn Henderson got a job at another US Steel mine. She says her dad told her she'd have to take some grief if she wanted to work with men. And she did. **Henderson:** I had my butt pinched many times. Breasts bounced up, or … "You got a nice set of stacks." They were just the kind of guys with what I consider pretty small brains, very insensitive, trying to get rid of the women. **Winter:** Henderson says most of the guys weren't like that, and she never complained about the ones who were, until some men made up a t-shirt with a crude reference to female genitals. **Henderson:** It was a female symbol, the circle with the cross. And it said, "I hate dumb gash." I was a union grievance person at the time and people were coming up to me and complaining to get rid of those t-shirts. ...I went down to the union hall and spoke to Joe Samargia, the president. I said, Joe, we have to do something with these t-shirts. He said, "You know, Lynn," he goes, "if you women are going to work in the mines, you're going to have to put up with the words f--k and c--t and blah blah blah, it's just the nature of the beast around here." I says, "You know Joe, I don't have a problem with the word c--t. I happen to think that my c--t is one of the nicest parts of my body, but I don't want anybody referring to any of us as being *dumb*." The guys in the union hall just roared.	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
13:57 – 15:09	**Winter:** The former union president, Joe Samargia, says he doesn't remember the t-shirts, or the conversation. But he figures he would have said something like that. His memories of those days are different from some of the women's. As he remembers it, the men and women at the mine got used to each other quickly. **Joe Samargia:** I always remember an older gentleman who was a carpenter, and he came up to me one day, and said, "Joe," he said, "you know, there's rumor they're going to hire a woman to be my apprentice, and I'm not going to let her work with me." I said, "Wait a minute, if they hire her and she's going to be an apprentice and they tell you she's going to work for you, she's going to period." And he bristled and walked away from me and a few months later I saw him with an apprentice, a woman apprentice, and he was protective of her like it was his daughter. It was the greatest thing. [laughs] It was the greatest thing I ever saw. **Winter:** Many women miners say there were men who protected them and taught them the ropes. But others tried to make their lives so miserable that they would quit. And the women at Eveleth mines had to fight to keep the best paying jobs they'd ever had.	Why did the producers think it important to include Joe Samargia's version of what happened? What do you think Joe Samargia's perspective on the woman's claims would have been? Why?
15:09 – 15:27	*[music]* ***Amos**: Coming up:* ***Jan Wollin:** 'Cause I said, "I will not be pawed and I will not be patted by any damn man out here."* ***Amos**: I'm Deborah Amos. You're listening to No Place for a Woman from American RadioWorks. Our program continues in just a moment, from American Public Media.*	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
15:27 – 16:38	**Amos:** This is No Place for a Woman, an *American RadioWorks* documentary from American Public Media. I'm Deborah Amos. It's easy to assume that women who broke into men's professions in the 1970s were pioneering feminists, women who had a vision and wanted to change the world. Some were. But for many women, it was simply matter of survival. Many women in Minnesota's iron mines endured the hard work and dirt and abuse from coworkers because there wasn't really another choice. A job in the mine meant escape. An escape from poverty. An escape from a husband with a violent temper. When men tried to shove them out of the mines, the women were forced into an ugly fight that many of them didn't want. They couldn't have imagined their case would take 11 years, or that it would help to set in motion changes that would be felt across the Range and across the country. Catherine Winter continues our report. A reminder: This program contains graphic language and descriptions.	
16:38 – 20:13	**Winter:** In 1977, iron miners across northern Minnesota and Michigan held a long, bitter strike. **Striker:** Big people been running this country long enough. They've neglected the working man. The working people. By God, now it's time for us to show 'em we're still here and we are people. **Winter:** The miners were virtually all working men. But women walked the picket lines, too. Jeannie Aho was working at US Steel's Minntac mine. She remembers going to a union rally and seeing an unusual sight: a woman getting up to speak. **Jeannie Aho:** I said, "Who is that?" because I didn't know there were any other women active in the unions and I was getting active in Minntac union and I got to know her and we went to union school together and we got to be good friends. **Winter:** Jeannie Aho's new friend was Pat Kosmach. She worked at a different mine, Eveleth Mines. At union school, they learned how to negotiate, and how to handle problems on the job, though no one ever mentioned dealing with sexual harassment. Pat Kosmach is dead now, but Jeannie Aho remembers being shocked by her friend's troubles with some of the men at the mines.	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
16:38 – 20:13 (cont)	**Aho:** She saw things that I never had to put up with. She used to tell me all the stuff that was going on. You know, when it started nobody had ever heard of going to court and suing because of it. Nobody really knew what do to. We just thought, well, you had to take it because you were in a man's world. **Winter:**. The women had never heard of anyone suing over it because no one had ever done it. It wasn't illegal to make a workplace hostile territory for women. Sex discrimination had been illegal since 1964, but for years, the courts gave sex discrimination a narrow definition. Law professor Melissa Hart says at first, sex discrimination only meant refusing to hire or promote someone based on gender. **Melissa Hart:** But it wasn't until the mid-70s that the notion that sexual harassment could also be sex discrimination was widely recognized. **Winter:** And even then, Hart says, a woman could only sue for sexual harassment if her boss demanded sex from her and fired her when she said no. **Hart:** It wasn't until the 80s that courts started looking at the notion that a work environment that was pervaded by sexual harassment could be sex discrimination, even if no firing occurred. **Winter:** So at first, the women at the mines had two choices: put up with it, or quit. **Aho:** Pat didn't quit because she said she'd be damned if she'd quit. This was the best paying job she'd ever had. **Winter:** Jeannie Aho says her friend Pat Kosmach was divorced and had to support her kids. There weren't other good paying jobs on the Range – especially for women. **Aho:** You could be a hairdresser, you could be a meter maid, you could be a nurse, go to school, but for somebody like Pat, those jobs were impossible. She tried to work hours that her kids were in school. She needed a decent job, she needed the medical benefits, having four kids. She didn't want to be on welfare. She wanted to support her family. She needed that job. She really did.	Is there a difference between sex discrimination and sexual harassment? Why would courts start to recognize pervasive sexual harassment as sex discrimination? Give some examples from the women's stories to illustrate your reason.

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
20:14 – 22:25	**Winter:** As women around the country broke into good paying men's professions, they reveled in their new financial independence. Suddenly, women could leave bad marriages, or not get married at all. Denise Vesel says when she was a child, she saw her mom beg her dad for money. She never wanted to depend on a man like that. So she was thrilled to get hired at Eveleth Mines: **Vesel:** Growing up with six kids in a family, there wasn't really money for much and it's like, now I have complete freedom of doing what I want. I can buy ten t-shirts if I want. I don't have to go buy them on sale. I can do what I want. And it felt so great just to go to a store and whip out the money and pay for it, or buy a new pair of boots when you want or buy a couple pairs of jeans and don't have to ask permission. **Winter:** And Vesel loved the work. Her co-worker Jan Wollin did too. After all, mining was a prestige job on the Range. Wollin had never imagined she could be a steelworker like her dad. The only women who'd done that were replacement workers during World War II. While men were away fighting, women helped mine the ore to make steel for tanks and ships and airplanes. But when the men came back, the mines sent the women home. Jan Wollin never forgot the time she met a woman who'd been a wartime worker at a mine. **Jan Wollin:** And that impressed me. I was a little girl, 1952. I always said, "I want to be like her." And I told my dad when I was a kid growing up, I said, "Oh daddy, I wanna drive that truck. I just wanna drive one of them big trucks!" And I thought a 35-ton truck was huge. And he said, "well I don't think the day will ever come [that] you'll ever drive one." Well I got hired in the mine. Oh boy, I had to go train on them big trucks. Well these big trucks was 120-tonners. I'm drivin' that truck and I stop, put the truck in neutral and got out and I said, "How do you like Me now?" And I told my mom, I called my mom and said, "Mom, I drove that big truck last night!" She said, "Your dad would be so proud of you."	For more information on the women replacement workers during World War to see "While the Men Were at War" (http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/ironrange/d1.html)

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
22:25 – 23:55	**Winter:** But for some other women, driving those big trucks wasn't so much fun. Kathy Anderson drove a truck out in the pit, where there was nowhere to go to the bathroom. She was told if she wanted to work like a man, she'd have to piss like a man. So she tried to hold it for hours, sometimes all day. She got bladder and kidney infections. And men harassed her. They left lewd notes in her truck. Anderson later told CNN about a supervisor who kept showing her a rubber penis: **Kathy Anderson:** He would take a phallus about this big out in front of the entire crew, which were all males except myself. And he would put it in my face and say to me, "Kathy, what would you do with a piece of meat like this?" **Winter:** Some of the women went to Pat Kosmach. Since she was a union leader, maybe she could get the union to help. The union did try to settle some disputes, but union leaders said there wasn't much they could do, because the company had no policy on sexual harassment, and the issue wasn't mentioned in the union contract. Jeanne Aho says the lack of union support deeply disappointed Pat Kosmach. Finally, as a last resort, Kosmach decided to sue. **Aho:** You're edged into a corner and you either come out fighting or you lay down and … die. And she wasn't ready to lay down and die. And if she had to go out and fight for all the other women, she would, because it was only fair that women should work there, too.	What do you think of the union's response? Why?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
23:55 – 25:50	**Winter:** It was 1988. By then, a sexual harassment suit wasn't unheard of. A survey that year by *Working Woman* magazine found that a third of the Fortune 500 companies surveyed had been sued for harassment. One of Pat Kosmach's coworkers wanted to sue too. Her name was Lois Jenson. But the women couldn't find a lawyer within 200 miles willing to take the case. Finally, they talked to Paul Sprenger in Minneapolis. Sprenger was intrigued. **Paul Sprenger:** It was clear that there was pervasive sexual harassment rising to the level of being a hostile environment for any woman to work there. It was pretty awful stuff. **Winter:** Sprenger thought he could use this case to try a new legal tactic. He wanted to show that a hostile work environment could be so bad that it affected all of the women at a workplace. For the first time ever, he wanted to bring a sexual harassment case as a class action. He asked the two women to find a third plaintiff, someone who worked out in the pit. They did. Kathy Anderson, the truck driver, agreed to join. Sprenger filed a suit demanding that the company pay damages and adopt a sexual harassment policy. Jeanne Aho remembers talking to her friend Pat afterward. **Aho:** She was excited, really excited, she thought there was an end in sight, But at work, it became a revenge thing. If you think you had it bad before, wait. Guys that weren't part of the problem became part of the problem because they were defending their buddies. It was hard on her. Real hard on her. She was afraid sometimes. You should never have to be afraid to go to work or afraid to be at home, afraid your tires are gonna get slashed, stuff like that.	Why would Mr. Sprenger decide to sue for sexual harassment as a class action? What benefit would that have brought to the women?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
25:51 – 27:47	**Winter:** Some men were appalled by the harassment, but they were afraid to say so. Brian Lahti was a maintenance mechanic at Eveleth Mines. **Brian Lahti**: I did support the women. I had to go to that job, too. You had to be careful how you walked and talked and treated the whole thing. **Winter:** Other men were sure the women were lying, that they filed the lawsuit just to get money from the company. Vern Niedermeier drove a service truck at the mine. He carted supplies, ran errands, and drove people where they needed to go. He says the women were out to get the men. **Vern Niedermeier:** If you had to, myself, if I had to take a girl to the clinic, I'd go with somebody else in my truck. There would be three of us, because things were getting that bad. You didn't know. If you touched 'em, they'd go in and complain. **Winter:** In fact, most of the other women at the mine did not support the suit. Some women even signed a petition saying they disagreed with it. Jan Wollin was one of the signers. Wollin says things changed after the suit was filed. One day, she was waiting for an elevator with a maintenance man. **Jan Wollin:** I walked into the elevator and he said, "I don't think I can ride the elevator with you," and I said, "why not?" and he goes, "Well, I'm afraid of this lawsuit." And I said, "Get your butt in here. I said "I'm Jan, okay, remember me, I'm Jan." You know. I said, "I've never had any trouble with you. I've never had any trouble with any of the guys. What makes you think I would cry rape?" "Well," he said, "some of them would." I said, "I'm not some of them. I'm Jan. I'm not like the other women." **Winter:** In fact, many women testified for the company in federal court. They said they didn't feel harassed at Eveleth Mines and they weren't offended by the pornography or the swearing.	What problems did the harassment create for men? What problems did the lawsuit create for women? Given what you've heard so far in this documentary, why did the producers think it important to include Brian Lahti's comments?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
27:48 – 28:58	**Winter:** But in spite of the opposition from their coworkers, the women won the first round in court. It was 1991. Their victory made news around the country. **News broadcaster:** U.S. District Judge James Rosenbaum has ruled that all women who have been employed at or applied for work at Eveleth Mines since 1983 may be included in a class action suit against the company. **Winter:** It was a historic decision - the first class action sexual harassment suit in the country. In fact, it was a big year in the history of sexual harassment. That same year, Congress changed the law so people who sued for sexual harassment could collect more damages. And a nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, Clarence Thomas, was accused of sexual harassment. **Clarence Thomas:** I have suffered immensely as these very serious charges were leveled against me. I have been racking my brains and eating my insides out trying to think of what I could have said or done to Anita Hill to lead her to allege that I was interested in her in more than a professional way and that I talked with her about pornographic or X-rated films.	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
28:58 - 31:06	**Winter:** Suddenly, sexual harassment was all over the news. The number of people filing harassment claims with the federal government shot up over the next year. At Eveleth Mines in Minnesota, women began signing on to the lawsuit. Eventually two-thirds of the female hourly workers at Eveleth Mines joined the suit, 21 women, even some of the women who'd originally signed the petition against the lawsuit, like Jan Wollin. She remembers the incident that changed her mind. **Wollin:** I had went into the office and was checking, about overtime and the foreman patted me on the butt, you know, and I said, "Don't do that!" Well, he did it again. He said, "Oh, you know you like it babe." **Winter:** Wollin went to the boss to complain. **Wollin:** He said, "Well what happened." I says, "I don't appreciate being patted on the ass." I said, "It's mine, nobody has a right to touch it. So you either take care of him or," I said, "I'm going to come back down here," and I said, "I'm gonna have a set of bloody nuts in my hand." Well, they laughed. They thought it was funnier'n hell, and I was mad, 'cause I said, I will not be pawed and I will not be patted by any damn man out here." So that's when I joined the lawsuit, because I was mad. **Vesel**: My husband told me at first, he goes, "If you join that lawsuit," he goes, "I'm divorcing you." **Winter:** Denise Vesel initially opposed the lawsuit, but another of the women told her she had a good case, since a man had harassed her until she broke his ribs. At the time, Vesel was laid off, and her husband was sick. In fact, he was dying. The lawsuit offered the possibility of money. And revenge. **Vesel:** Whether he liked it or not, I was gonna join. And, I … I think it was a whole year I went without him knowing, and then I had to go down and do a deposition, and I had to finally tell him and ohh, [laughs] that went over like a lead balloon. He did not like that. Well there's a lotta things in life I don't like either. When he started getting sicker and sicker, it's like, "Go ahead, divorce me. I'm gonna do what I wanna do and you're not gonna control me anymore."	Why would women who initially resisted the lawsuit, start to join it? *deposition* – Law: the process of giving sworn evidence. (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2nd Edition)

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
31:07 – 32:32	**Winter:** Vesel had a fight ahead of her in court, too. To get damages, each woman had to prove she'd suffered harm from harassment at the mine. Lawyers for the mine tried to prove that if the women were psychologically scarred, it was from other events in their lives, not their years at the mine. A retired judge was appointed to hear this part of the case. Twenty years later, lawyer Paul Sprenger says he's still appalled at the personal questions the judge let the company lawyers ask. **Sprenger:** He allowed depositions of former lovers from 30 years prior. I mean, it was ludicrous. Examination of their entire life history from their birth records and every hospitalization they ever had. It was awful. **Winter:** Denise Vesel remembers the defense lawyers asking her what she and her husband did at motorcycle rallies. They asked, Were bikers into wife swapping? **Vesel:** If I'd ever had venereal disease. If I'd ever had an abortion. I mean just getting personal. Did you ever have intercourse with anyone on the job? Who did you have intercourse with? How many times? It was like, no. When they started subpoenaing women's personal records, they found out things they shouldn't have. That was bad. That was wrong. That was evil.	*subpoena* - require (a document or other evidence) to be submitted to a court of law : *the decision to subpoena government records.* ORIGIN late Middle English (as a noun): from Latin ***sub poena 'under penalty'*** (the first words of the writ). Use as a verb dates from the mid 17th century. (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2nd Edition)
32:32 – 33:57	**Winter:** One of the lawyers for the mine, David Goldstein, says the blame for these invasive questions lies partly with the women's own lawyers. If they had simply claimed the women suffered mental anguish, these questions would not have been necessary, he says, but the women's lawyers were arguing they had diagnosable mental disorders. **David Goldstein:** We were solely asking the questions and obtaining the material that you would need in order to do a proper psychiatric evaluation. Many psychiatric problems have their origins in childhood or early life. You need to go back that far in order to understand the record. **Winter:** Goldstein, says they were not trying to scare women into dropping out of the suit. But one woman did quit: Jan Wollin. One of her sons had been convicted of murder a few years before, and she didn't want to relive that. Her arthritis was aggravated by stress. And besides, she says, what she really wanted was an apology, and she got one. **Wollin:** We went to court and the foreman was on the stand. They asked him if he ever had patted me. And he said, "Yes I did." And he said right on the stand, he said, "Jan I'm sorry." He said, "I was out of line. He said I never should have done that." And I was happy. I was happy.	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
33:58 – 34:57	**Winter:** When the trial was finally over, the other women suing Eveleth Mines would not be so happy. They had spent months making their case, but the judge did not believe them. *[music]* **Amos:** I'm Deborah Amos. You're listening to No Place for a Woman. Coming up, the end of the lawsuit, and the workplace today. **Vesel:** It isn't like it used to be in the 70s and 80s. The ones that were causing trouble are either dead, retired, or quit. So we don't have that breed out there anymore. To see photographs of the mines, read stories and see photos of women who worked in the mines during World War II, and share your story about changes in the workplace, at our website: americanradioworks.org. You'll also find information on ordering a CD of this program. That's all at americanradioworks.org. Major funding for *American RadioWorks* comes from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Our program continues in just a moment, from American Public Media.	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
35:10 – 35:58	**Amos:** This is No Place for a Woman, an *American RadioWorks* documentary from American Public Media. I'm Debra Amos. When 21 women sued Eveleth Mines in 1988, they never guessed that their case would be in court for more than a decade, or that their case would have an impact on businesses and workers around the country. Other business owners began seeing that sexual harassment could lead to expensive legal battles, and they clamped down. No more posters, no more groping. But while workers at some businesses won victories, others still faced bosses, and judges, who doubted their claims, or thought they had asked for it, or told them to stop being so sensitive. And the women at Eveleth Mines were still years away from winning. Some of them would not make it to the end. Catherine Winter concludes our story.	How did the lawsuit against Eveleth Mines affect the workplace across the country? Why did it have such an impact?
35:59 – 36:58	**Winter:** In 1997, CNN producers went to Minnesota and interviewed some of the women who'd filed suit against Eveleth Mines. *[Music]* **CNN Host:** Now, on *Impact*, the brutal struggle against sexual harassment. **Woman:** I put a bar in the door to keep the foreman out **CNN Host:** A system of sexual harassment so pervasive, when women miners dared to expose the mines' dark secrets, they found themselves on trial. **Bernard Shaw:** Earlier this year, we took you deep into the iron ore mines of Minnesota, a harsh workplace for just about anyone. But it was especially tough for the first women miners there. Their male coworkers made so many lewd remarks and sexual advances that one federal judge wrote, "Sexual harassment was standard operating procedure." The women sued their employer and set a precedent when the court ruled they had all been harassed as class, a huge legal victory that paved the way for other class action sexual harassment lawsuits	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
36:58 – 38:18	**Winter:** The legal victory for the women miners had paved the way for others, but, ironically, their own suit wasn't going well. After eight years of court battles, Judge Patrick McNulty had decided how much they should get in damages, and it wasn't much. McNulty is dead now, but he made clear in his opinion that he just didn't find the women's stories credible. McNulty wrote that discrimination claims were often full of "exaggeration and histrionics." He said the women were misinterpreting the men's actions at the mine. One woman had testified that a man asked her for sex, and later lunged at her. She thought he meant to rape her. Judge McNulty said she had an active imagination; the judge said maybe the man just meant to say, "Boo." McNulty said hostile environment cases were so new that the mine had not been on notice that its behavior might be illegal. And besides, the judge said, it couldn't be expected to counteract years of male dominant culture overnight. **Aho:** It was like a slap in the face. **Winter:** Jeannie Aho remembers the women's reaction. **Aho:** To rule like that, obviously he didn't feel the case had any merit and what they went through wasn't bad enough. You know, they were insulted by it.	Why do you think Judge McNulty didn't find the women's stories credible?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
38:18 - 40:18	**Winter:** The judge gave the Minnesota women damage awards ranging from $2,500 to $25,000. In other sexual harassment cases, women had been winning hundreds of thousands of dollars – even millions. So the women decided to appeal. But it was too late for Pat Kosmach. Kosmach had been healthy when she first filed the suit. Tough and feisty. She was a natural leader. She pulled the women together and helped keep their spirits up. But as the case wore on, she began having trouble walking. Her friend Jeanne Aho remembers they day Pat Kosmach learned that she had Lou Gehrig's disease. **Aho:** It was like one of the worst days of my life. She said she was relieved that she finally found out what was wrong. But it was a death sentence. **Winter:** As she got sicker, it became clear that even if the women won the harassment policy they wanted, Pat Kosmach would never benefit from it. She wouldn't be able to work. And she wouldn't be around to enjoy any money they might win. Still, she went on with the court battle, hoping she could win some money to leave to her children. Aho says her friend signed court documents from her hospital bed. **Aho:** It was horrible. To watch somebody lose their body inch by inch, and all the while trying to keep up her strength to keep fighting this thing. Although she did live longer than they expected her to, out of sheer determination to try to see this thing through. **Winter:** Pat Kosmach died in 1994, six years after filing the suit against Eveleth Mines. Because she died before the case was resolved, her family would get nothing. Jeanne Aho says her friend left a piece of herself at the mine – literally. She made sure some of her ashes were sprinkled over the Eveleth mine. **Aho:** Kind of like, I'm gonna haunt them forever. [laughs] They're not rid of me. They'll never be rid of me.	For information on Lou Gehrig's disease, see the website - http://www.neurologychannel.com/als/

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
40:19 – 42:44	**Winter:** Sixteen of the remaining women appealed their case, including Marcy Steele. **Steele:** I think we went through phases. “I wanna quit. I wanna quit.” "No! We’re gonna stick it out. You know you’re right. That’s what they want us to do. What more can they do to us?" There were quite a few years we didn’t go out into the community much. You just felt everybody was talking about those damn women from Eveleth Taconite, you know? **Winter:** But in the end, the women won. In 1997, a federal appeals court reversed Judge McNulty. The court scolded the judge and the lawyers for letting the case drag on for a decade, and for letting the mining company lawyers ask invasive questions of the women. The court ordered a new trial. And in 1998, the news came that the mine and the women had finally settled. **Reporter**: While the settlement amount is confidential, plaintiff attorneys hint the per-person awards may exceed those in the $34 million Mitsubishi settlement. **Winter:** The Mitsubishi settlement was another nationally publicized case. It involved hundreds of women who said they’d been groped and faced lewd comments and obscene graffiti at an Illinois auto plant. Like the Eveleth Mines case, it was a class action suit. The Eveleth case laid the groundwork for that suit – and others. In recent years, there’ve been class action harassment suits against Dial Soap and Merrill Lynch; against the federal mint in Denver, mental hospitals in Nebraska, and the dockworkers union in Florida. Teen workers filed a class action harassment suit against fast food restaurants in Arizona and New Mexico. Still, law professor Melissa Hart says the Eveleth Mines case did not lead to a flood of class action harassment suits, as lawyers thought it might. She says one reason is that the kind of company-wide harassment that happened at Eveleth Mines is less common these days. So it usually doesn’t work to sue as a group. **Hart:** I think there’s been a sort of a settling down to a place where a lot of workplaces, most of the time, most employees live without sexual harassment. At the same time, it’s still out there, and still out there so much more regularly than you wish it would be. But I definitely think things are wildly better than they were 30 years ago in 1975 when Lois Jensen started working at Eveleth Mines.	For more information on the 1998 Mitsubishi settlement, see http://www.eeoc.gov/press/6-11-98.html and the Marketplace report - http://marketplace.publicradio.org/shows/1998/06/11_mpp.html

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
42:45 – 44:00	**Winter:** Today, the mine in Eveleth has the anti-harassment policy the women fought for. Denise Vesel says if someone harassed her today, she could report it, and management would make it stop. The mine has new owners now. Vesel says the graffiti is painted over. And she hasn't felt she had to slug any of the men recently. **Vesel:** The guys themselves have all more or less cooled their jets. They don't harass anymore. There's a few with big mouths, but they'll get there someday. It isn't like it used to be in the 70s and 80s. It was terrible back then. I mean, all the ones that were causing trouble are either dead, retired, or quit. So we don't have that breed out there anymore. **Winter:** Vesel says workers at the mine, men and women, feel like they have to stick together these days, because there are so few of them left. Changes in the steel industry have led to big job cuts. The workforce in the mines is less than a third of what it was in 1979, down from more than 13,000 people to fewer than 4,000. There are fewer workers, and fewer of them are women; women got laid off first because they had the least seniority. But women are still there.	Which factor do you think was more important in changing the workplace: the new policies that were part of the settlement or that the population of workers has changed? Why? How have industry changes forced the men to work with the women?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
44:01 – 46:40	*[shovel sounds]* **Winter:** At a mine called Hibbing Taconite, Sharon Petron runs an enormous shovel. Her seat is two stories off the ground; she has to take a hydraulic lift up to a set of stairs to climb up to the cab. Inside, she uses two joysticks to guide a scoop the size of a one-car garage. The scoop digs into the wall of blasted rock in front of her. A dump truck as big as a house pulls up below her. **Sharon Petron:** I honk my horn to tell him to stop [Honk!] and then I load him. You have to be careful, because sometimes big rocks will hang up on your teeth. If I drop it on his canopy or uh on the back, ...they really feel a lot in that truck, so you have to be careful with them. I know what it's like because I drove truck for 10 years, so I like to be gentle with them. **Winter:** Sharon Petron's hands on the joysticks sport bright fingernail polish and lots of rings. She's so small, she has to sit with her feet on a box. Her legs are crossed, and she looks as comfortable as if she were watching TV while she swings the enormous bucket past her face and the cliff in front of her crumbles and crashes. She says she wanted to be a shovel operator for years. She's grateful to the men who taught her to do it. **Petron:** They knew how nervous I was. They worked with me and had a lot of patience with me. **Winter:** Petron's been working at Hibbing Taconite for 12 years, and she says she's never seen graffiti or lewd photos like the ones that used to be on the walls at Eveleth Mines. She says there are still men who don't want women in the mines, but they don't feel free to say so these days. **Petron:** There was only one man and that was when I was on trucks. He came into the lunch room and told me that I belonged at home, barefoot and pregnant, taking care of my husband. The other men said, "You shouldn't say that to her." I said, "No, let him speak his piece." And he did. Then I said, "I'll just prove it to you." And I did do that. I had four children. I was married. It's possible to work and take care of a family. *[truck beeping]* **Winter:** When the truck is full, it creeps off down a dusty red dirt road. It hauls its load up a steep slope, out of the pit, to the processing plant where the ore is made into pellets to ship to steel mills.	

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
46:41 – 47:47	**Winter:** At the pellet plant, it's shift change. A line of workers climbs metal stairways and threads down catwalks among roaring, spinning machines many stories high. There are a few women in the crowd, including Briana Sterle. Under her hardhat, she wears her dark hair in braids, with a couple of streaks of green. She heads out of the dim pellet plant into the bright sun outside. Briana Sterle is a college student, working here for the summer. There are ten students this summer, and eight are women. **Briana Sterle:** The two guys are alone, I feel kinda bad for them. One of them doesn't talk much. So the other guy must be pretty bored. [laughs] **Winter:** Briana Sterle's mom used to work in the mines, but Briana says she never really thought about the fact that her mother and other women of her generation cleared the way for her. **Sterle:** I don't. I wasn't very worried about getting treated weird, because I knew with new laws, women aren't getting treated like they did back then. **Winter:** Some of the women who fought for a place in the mines say this is what they hoped for. They wanted their daughters and granddaughters to have a safe place to work.	What effect did the lawsuit and settlement have on the workplace for women who joined the workforce afterwards?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
47:47 – 50:10	**Lynn Henderson:** It's a way different world today! **Winter:** Lynn Henderson isn't working in the mine anymore. But she still works in a man's world. She's a painter now, and most of her coworkers are men. Henderson keeps treasures from her mining days around the house. A collage another woman miner made for her. A folder full of photos and newspaper clippings. **Lynn Henderson:** Here, that's me with the megaphone, marching the streets. **Winter:** A news photo from 1979 shows Henderson at a demonstration on the main street of the Iron Range town of Virginia, demanding equal rights for women. It was a winter day. The caption says the wind chill was -25. **Henderson:** All I know is I was on that megaphone, and I was cold! But we got our point across. There had never been a rally of that nature ever on the Iron Range. It was a pretty scary town. Because women didn't have a lot of rights and women didn't organize, women didn't even have sports back then. **Winter:** These days, high school girls on the Iron Range have their own hockey teams. And the story of the women who broke into the mines is getting some new publicity. Hollywood is making a movie based on the Eveleth Mines case, and Henderson is pleased. She wants the story to get out. **Henderson:** Just basically, what we went through and what we walked through, and just appreciate if that if we wouldn't have done that, where would it be today? **Winter:** The women miners who filed the lawsuit have mixed feelings about the movie. A few wish the publicity about their story would just go away. They still get prank phone calls. They still have nightmares. But several hired on as consultants for the movie. Marcy Steele met with the filmmakers. She's not working at the mine anymore, and she say she wouldn't want that job back. But she doesn't regret fighting for a place for women. **Marcy Steele:** I hope somebody some day can use the policy that there. The interesting thing I found when the movie was up here I had more girls from, some of the women from the makeup department came and said, "Thank you. You don't know what you did for us in California." So it was very nice to hear that. Finally to hear somebody say that's they appreciated what we went through.	How could a lawsuit brought by miners affect the lives of make-up artists?

Time Code	Transcript	Suggested Discussion Questions and Resources
50:10 - end	*[music]* **Amos:** No Place for a Woman was produced by Stephanie Hemphill and Catherine Winter. It was edited by Stephen Smith. Senior producer Sasha Aslanian, project director, Misha Quill, Assistant Producer Ellen Guettler. Mixing by Craig Thorson. Production assistance from Bryant Switzky, Elizabeth Tannen, and Marta Berg. Web production by Ochen Kaylan. The managing editor is Stephen Smith. The executive producer is Bill Buzenberg. I'm Deborah Amos. To see photographs from No Place for a Woman and learn more women in the iron mines, visit our website at americanradioworks.org. There you can download the program, sign up for our email newsletter and find out how to order a CD of this program. Major funding for *American RadioWorks* comes from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. *American RadioWorks* is the documentary unit of American Public Media.	