

Day March 10, 2010

Q: This is Kathy Staley on March 10th, 2010. Could we start with your age, birth county, and where you now live, and how long you've lived here?

A: I'm 50. I've lived here for five years. Um, birth county?

Q: City, a lot of people don't know their county.

A: Virginia. Birthplace Richmond, Virginia.

Q: OK, what we're interested in primarily is your Appalachian experience. So that would've been the last five, six years living here in the Buncombe County area. But some people are talking a little bit about their personal experience, about when they first learned about LGBT issues, and how it applied to them. So if you want to just give a general overview or as detailed as you want.

A: OK, so what specifically do you want?

Q: When did you first hear about homosexuality and transsexuality?

A: Um... the short answer is I really don't remember. I've been, I had my first lesbian experience when I was about 22. And before that, I had dated guys in high school and in college. But I also had grown up having very strong attachments to girls, to friends and couple teachers along the way.

Q: Did you begin self-identifying as a lesbian after your experience at 22 years old? If not, could you describe your coming out process related to yourself as well as your family and friends?

Q: OK. What about Asheville and the Appalachian Mountains attracted you to move up here?

A: I had been in my location in Virginia for almost ten years, and it was very conservative area. Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. And I was ready for a change. Asheville had become my default vacation spot, about a six-hour drive. I started coming here once, a couple times a year, for a period of, most of the time that I lived in the Shenandoah Valley. And I just decided I wanted a change. And it seemed more progressive generally than where I was living in Virginia, and I was hungry for that.

Q: Could you talk about what aspects of Asheville is more progressive, like what was the attraction?

A: Um... what I perceived to be the diversity of the area. Actually, I knew that there was a very active or I had the sense that there was a very active LGBT population here. And that certainly drew me. That was probably the main thing, because I actually don't think this area is nearly as progressive as it has reputation of being. I'm disappointed along those lines really. But initially, I was drawn by mostly what I perceived to be progressiveness around LGBT stuff and an active LGBT community in this area.

Q: Could you talk a little bit more about what you were expecting and didn't actually find?

A: I don't know that I had concrete expectations, but one example of what I mean when I say the area is not as progressive I think as it's pegged is that the Asheville City Council, as you probably have heard, is debating whether to offer benefits to domestic partners of gay employees. And the Mayor of Asheville, who coincidentally but interestingly is a Black woman, a young Black woman, has come out

against it. And another council member has. Anyway, it's not getting consensus. Uh, and I find that extremely disappointing, just on the face of it, not to mention the demographic that the Mayor happens to be in. You know, this is 2010 and this City Council is not unanimous behind this. I find that very disappointing.

Q: Where are they in their decision process?

A: They had a hearing on it, a public hearing on it, last month I think. Within the last month. And I think they did what governments like to do, and that is um, referred to the staff for review. Staff I think is gonna come back and among other things tell them, OK, this is what it might cost the city. And so I don't know when that follow-up meeting is going to be. Soon presumably.

Q: Right. Have you found there to be an organized lesbian and/or gay community here?

A: There are a number of social groups. Unfortunately, I'm not really a group person, so my partner and I have tried to take, and we have checked out some of those groups. It's not really for me. But there certainly are uh, at least three lesbian social groups I can think of, I may be forgetting about one. There are at least four in the Asheville area.

Q: Can you name them?

A: Do you want the full name or the acronym?

Q: Both.

A: OK, ALPS, I think that's the Association for Lesbian Professionals, I don't know what the S is. But it is a social group. That was the first one here. Um, that's been around for a while. And um, LIM, Lesbians In the Mountains is another one. And OLE, Older Lesbian Energy, something like that. That's another one. There's one called Stella's Place, that's based I think out of Hendersonville or South Asheville. There's a group called Gorgeous, which is male and female, and it's, to my knowledge, that's solely a supper club, a monthly supper type club for people more on the east side of Asheville, Bat Cave, Black Mountain, Lake Lure. I mean anyone can go. I've heard, although I don't know anything about, that there's a group in Sylva. I don't remember the name of it. But I think that's still around. There are at least two organized transgender groups, Phoenix and Transmission.

Q: Transmission's more of an activist group?

A: I went to one of their meetings. I don't know that I would call it -- I mean it may be. I wouldn't have called it that necessarily. They do outreach sometimes I think, maybe in that sense they're activist. They may do something with federal and state policies, I'm not sure. So those are the groups that I can -- I think I've seen notice of a men's supper group, but I don't know anything about that. Maybe a gay men's choral group. I'm not sure about that either. Basically Asheville area based. There is no -- another thing I find curious is that there is no LGBT center here. There is in Charlotte, which is a much bigger city, of course. But I'm a little surprised, in fact there was an attempt to get something like that going in Asheville in the last couple years. (coughs) Excuse me. It didn't get off the ground as far as I know. I don't know what happened to that initiative.

Q: I remember hearing about it trying, and I thought they had found a location, but something happened with the location.

A: Yeah, I thought so too. I just lost track with, because I stopped getting emails about it. (coughs) Sorry. Yeah, so. Those are the groups I'm familiar with. Another example. I have some notes here actually. Another example of this area not being as progressive as I would've hoped is I did a six-month stint with the Asheville newspaper, daily newspaper, [Asheville] Citizen Times. I got the job offer, the money was pretty good, so I thought, well, I'll give it a try. Back into the newspaper field for a while. Wasn't good, so I left after six months. The day, it may have been literally the day before my first day. And this is now going about four years ago, but only four years ago, there was a full-page advertisement in that newspaper that I was going to start working for, that I wish I could remember exactly what it said, but it was something anti-LGBT basically. In effect, that's what it was. It was some kind of statement that had the names, long lists of names of people who agreed with something like affirming family values, "family values" in quotes, that sort of thing that was clearly aimed at -- it may have been businesses that endorsed whatever that sort of sentiment was. And there were a whole lot of them. It was a full-page ad. I was disgusted.

Q: That colored the rest of your tenure there?

A: Well, I remember talking with my direct supervisor about it. And she was kind of embarrassed. She was definitely LGBT friendly. It was not a good working situation, but I couldn't complain about her in that sense at all.

Q: What else about it led to it being uncomfortable situation?

A: [Jess—you may want to edit this so you tell the story or so that you don't include the reference to topics you don't mention. Let me know what you want to do. ~k] It just uh... affirmed the reasons I had been ready to leave the newspaper business basically. I probably don't want, I'd like to say more than that, but I probably won't. Another thing about that newspaper is that they have -- well, I'll skip that. I don't think I remember enough about that. Very, very high pressure, high stress. It was not generally a happy workforce when I was there. The specter of layoffs hung over us. I think the week before I started there, and then more than the week before, they made a bunch of layoffs at that newspaper. In that sense, it was kind of a strained situation to walk into too.

Q: So it was the current national trends of journalism embodied in this one town newspaper.

A: Not sure what you're getting at.

Q: Over the last several months, we've been hearing of all these different news organizations that are laying off their --

A: Yes, yes, this was though four years ago.

Q: Beginning.

A: Yeah, pretty much, 2006. And they have taken even more measures along those lines since I've left.

Q: So you're now working as an independent freelance journalist, and are you working in other area newspapers ever?

A: Do I work with newspapers at all?

Q: In the area, like Mountain Express.

A: No, I was a contributor -- I was an editor for Mountain Express for roughly a year I think. And then I took the job with the news-- and I wrote a couple, I did some writing for Mountain Express too. Actually, that was the publication that ran that big transgender, the second big transgender project that I did. But I haven't done anything for Mountain Express in a few years, no. I write for some local magazines, regional and local magazines.

Q: Are you finding them to be LGBT-friendly or do you section off that part of your life when you're working?

A: Um... I don't have a sense of that actually. I've been curious about it. That's not something I would hide, if any of the editors I work with were to ask me outright. I don't think that I have volunteered that. I guess because I don't know if that might affect something. For the most part, when I interview people and do articles, that's just not relevant. I would not hide it or deny it if someone asked me flat out, and there may have been situations where it seemed pertinent to mention it. I don't remember, but generally that's just not relevant, because I'm writing about other people.

Q: Could you talk about your research about the transgender population in Asheville?

A: Um, yeah, I talked with a bunch of people, both male-to-female and female-to-male, people who identified both ways. And talked with a professor at Warren Wilson College and I don't remember her name, who had worked, I mean there was a reason I talked with her. I don't remember, guess she'd done research or something like that. I think she was a sociology teacher. That's usually the discipline (laughs). And I talked, went to a meetings of both transgender groups in Asheville. That was interesting. It's a tight-knit group. It's a hard road to take. If being gay is hard, I think being trans just adds another layer onto that generally.

Q: How so?

A: Well, it's even weirder, you know. In the eyes of the layperson, I would imagine that it's even more out there. You know, people who, whether you have surgery or not, or your bind, however you present yourself, I imagine that the general perception of that by the population, that's just weird and they don't understand it. Therefore, they don't like it.

Q: How did the people who were attending the meetings describe their life here in Buncombe County?

A: I don't remember that really coming up at the meetings that I went to actually. I'm trying to recall what people told me in the interviews I did. The people I talked with, and I'm thinking of three people, I talked with four people I talked with in person, lengthy interviews. And it may have been more of that. I can recall four people I talked with one-on-one very in-depth. Three of them had lived here, have lived here for a long time. And so, one of them grew up in this area. And I think they were generally satisfied with things here. I mean they were, one of them is in the medical field. He has a steady job. He's doing well at that. And they you know, it's a tight-knit group, which is good. At least one of the trans folks I talked with mentioned, I think this was years ago, that she had been fired and she thinks it was for a related reason around her transgender. And I think one of the folks I talked with, I guess she would call herself male-to-female, but I think at the time I talked with her, this was several

years ago, I think she basically presented as male when she was at work. So, but she has a daughter who I think is supportive of her. And another of the trans folks I talked with has a son, who I think is generally supportive, at least implicitly.

Q: Were most of them natives to the area or were they transplants?

A: No, one was new to the area. Of the four people I can recall talking with, most of those, only one was native.

Q: Seems to be differences in how people experience living in the mountains, depending on whether they grew up and go to school here or whether the person has come to terms with their sexuality or gender identity outside of the region, and then moved in afterwards.

A: Right.

Q: How has your life been like living here in the Appalachian region as an LGBT person?

(pause)

A: See if I have any vignettes I can offer you. (clanking sound) Overall, it's been good. I find it sad though to say that I don't think I would be comfortable walking downtown Asheville holding my partner's hand. That's me, but, whatever my perception is that I would not feel entirely comfortable doing that. I can't say I'll never do it. That's kind of disappointing. I'm not sure why I feel that way.

Q: In previous places you lived, or I guess visited, did you feel comfortable, and what types of communities were they?

A: In Provincetown, Massachusetts I certainly did (laughs). That's probably, and in Northampton, Massachusetts I think I would feel comfortable. I'm sure I would. I did have a partner when I lived there, I recall if we did but I know that I would have. But there, protection for the LGBT community is codified. It is not except in a few cases Boone has some protection I know. But for the most part, North Carolina is not a friendly state, and I'm very aware of that. And Asheville is not entirely friendly for that matter in my opinion. And that makes a difference. The state isn't behind me. That stinks.

Q: Did knowing that before you moved here have any effect on your decision process of moving here?

A: Probably not, no. I guess it didn't, because I knew, before I moved here, I knew North Carolina was not, would not protect me. I knew that. And I was moving from a state like that too, of course most states are like that. So no, that didn't stop me. There are very few places in this state that I would live though for that reason. Asheville is somewhat of an oasis from that. But there are, I might only consider living in Durham besides Asheville that regard. It's our sense that there's a gay population there. I think there is some, maybe some protections for gays by the city of Durham, which again is not backed up by the state. What it's been like for me, just a few things I'll mention. I'm a little disappointed in the pride fest here that it's not a more robust thing. I've been to the few years that they've had it and just been really underwhelmed. Maybe my expectations or too high. It is new. And I definitely give whoever organizes it, I give them a lot of credit for doing it. It's not an easy thing to do. But I think that's really lacking.

Q: What was there in the years that you visited or participated?

A: What was there at pride festival? Some entertainment – but not entertainment that had any appeal to me. Well I'm sorry, that's not entirely true. This past year, there was no entertainment there that I saw that appealed to me. In the previous couple of years, there were a couple of acts, couple of singing acts that were pretty good. That is true. But it's mostly just a bunch of booths set up. And I understand that, vendors, and that is good. Either LGBT friendly vendors or LGBT vendors, some restaurants had a presence there last year. But overall though, this seemed to be, I don't know if the people organizing it just seemed amateurish. I don't know how to put it. It was just a bit of a disappointment.

Q: Were you expecting more something that would be at a big city like Raleigh or Charlotte?

A: Maybe. And I haven't been to their pride festivals, so I don't know what those were like. I've been to the one in New York City. You can't get a lot bigger than that. I've been to the one in Washington, you know. You can't beat that, so I don't expect that in Asheville. I wish they had a parade. I think that's really a nice galvanizing thing. Maybe they'll work up to that. If they can get approval, you know.

Q: Do you think that the town would not approve something of that caliber?

A: I don't know if that would require city council approval. Some city agency I guess would have to issue a permit, whether it's police department or whatever. I don't know. I wouldn't assume that it would be granted. So I don't know, I don't know how that process works. I have absolutely no doubt that if there were a parade, there would be protesters, people, the religious right out there.

Q: Were there protesters when you were in Washington or New York?

A: I don't remember any in New York, which is not to say that there weren't some. I think there would be, but I don't remember seeing any in Washington. There may have been some in Washington. That was many, many years ago. So in some ways, I mean there have been things here that have been here because it's Asheville that wouldn't have happened where I lived in Virginia. Kate Clinton, lesbian comedian, who's been here twice in the years that I've lived here. We went to see her once. Yeah, she's been here twice. The first time I was, I wrote an article about it for the newspaper because I was (inaudible). Melissa Ferrick, a lesbian singer-songwriter, has been here several times. We've seen her in concert. The Indigo Girls have been here several times although they play pretty much anywhere. Ferrick is a more obscure performer. So that's been good. Those have been things we couldn't've taken advantage of if I still lived in Virginia. One thing that has... one thing that happened that caused a lot of controversy, this is not Asheville. It was Madison County in a resort there. Wolf Laurel [Ski Resort]. There's a ski resort there that a couple years ago, two or three years ago decided it no longer needed the services of a lesbian couple, who I think they did photography for the resort. And it was perceived by many people that they were fired for a really flimsy reason and that beneath it was just homophobia. So that was pretty gross. And this couple who got married in Massachusetts and then came back here, of course their marriage didn't mean anything. They were very vocal about it. They raised a stink. I'm glad they did. They came out. Some group in support of them came out with bumper stickers, and we have one our refrigerator that says "I don't ski with bigotry" (laughs). So there was a group that did rally in support of those women. I don't know their name. Think they're still in Asheville area. One thing that is among the biggest disappointments with this area is the congressional representation. Heath Shuler, he's just awful.

Q: What party is he in?

A: He's Democrat. He says he's Democrat. The guy's a conservative Republican really. He's a blue dog Democrat. There have been a couple of issues that have come up, LGBT related issues, and I wish I could remember what they were but I don't. One of them I think was around hate crimes, think there was another issue that came up, that both of these required congressional votes. And he voted against you know what would've been -- he was not supportive of the LGBT community.

Q: The School Violence Prevention Act, by chance? That was last year.

A: Could've been. That was federal bullying type thing?

Q: It was state-wide bullying.

A: Well, he's in Congress.

Q: Oh, he's up in Washington?

A: Yeah, right. He represents this district. He's a Representative. And there are a couple issues that came up before the U.S. Congress that were LGBT-related. He gave a pathetic reason for not supporting one of the pieces of legislation. It was just a total nonsensical answer, which is all I expect from him. It was totally nonsensical. It was obviously a homophobic reaction, obviously. And on the other issue that came up, he was actually quoted in the newspaper as giving his biblical upbringing as a reason for opposing whatever it was. I don't remember if it was about, I don't remember the issue, but it was an LGBT issue, and he voted against it, and said you know that it was because he grew up as a Christian and da, da, da, and da, da, da. That was why he opposed it. I get furious about that. I really do.

Q: Is there an active group of people who are trying to find someone to replace him with?

A: An LGBT group? I think most LGBT people around here have no clue who he is or, or the sort of votes he's taken. He is so not LGBT friendly, totally not friendly. I've actually gone to the point of calling his office and emailing him a handful of times. I've never done that before. Because I've been so disgusted with his votes and his conservative stance on things. And that has caused no, brought no satisfaction. I'm not aware of any LGBT group that's trying to get him unseated. I hope he is unseated. I don't think a Republican would be any worse, actually. Really don't.

One good thing that happened here, one affirming thing that happened here was when my partner and I bought our rings. This was probably 4 years ago. There was a jeweler in downtown Asheville, think it was called [Artichoke?] something like that, I don't know why that was the name. And we went in there and looked at some rings and had him, had the jeweler customize a ring for us. And when he gave us the rings, I remember that he took both of our, took one hand of each of us in his hands and kind of went like that, gave us a really affirming smile, and said congratulations. It really was touching. He was a complete stranger to us, but he really sincerely to be recognizing that for us, it was an important thing. That's a good memory. That could happen anywhere in the country. I don't know that that's Asheville focus, but there are plenty of places where that wouldn't happen too. He's no longer in business I think. That was very warming. (long pause)

I'm aware that there are situations, and I lived in western Massachusetts for six years. So that's a very progressive area in a state that does have protections for LGBT people. And that's not to say that everyone up there is LGBT friendly because they're not. That's for sure. In fact, shortly before I moved from Massachusetts to Virginia, would've been I think November of 1995 election, local election up there, referendum, asking voters to decide whether or not they supported, I think it was an initiative to give benefits maybe to gay city employees, or to give benefits to the (inaudible) gay city employees. Something for gay city employees. And it was defeated. And I think a lot of LGBT people up there just assumed it was going to pass and they didn't vote. I voted, my partner and I at the time voted. So that's just an indication of the fact that not everyone in Massachusetts is on board with that progressiveness. What I was going to say is that generally here, in Asheville, I'm not comfortable with certain repair-type people who come to the house. I mean, in our office, the office my partner and I have, we have some very visible signs of our lifestyle on the wall, posters and such. There've been a couple times when we've had repair people who've had to come into the office, an AT&T guy, phone repair guy had to come in once, and a guy who installed the skylight for us last summer. I know when they've been in here, I've taken down some of the stuff. Reluctantly, but I have because I just don't trust. I don't want potential harassment. I don't want to give anyone reason to do that.

And that's different from Massachusetts, because if they did it here, I'm not protected state-wise. This happened in Northampton, if I lived in Massachusetts, I would keep this stuff up. (coughs) But to me it's just an indication of the larger political and cultural climate between the two states.

And I think that bleeds over a bit into how I feel about the neighbors here. I'm not sure, most of them we don't know even what their names are. Most of these people whose houses are contiguous or across the street, we don't know those people. We don't know them. I mean we know them. We know their names, because the guy on one side of us was the realtor, represented the seller of the house when we bought the house. But for the most part, I wouldn't be comfortable being blatant around these people, because I don't know how they would react. They might be fine with it. And certainly, we walk on our street together almost everyday, and I'm guessing that after five years of doing this, people if they think about it probably assume we're a couple. But it's not because of anything overt that we've done. I think that's too bad. Again, if I lived in Massachusetts, I think I would feel differently about that.

Q: Have you tried to meet any of your neighbors or have you just let it go because you're private?

A: We haven't tried hard. We don't find this a friendly, I use neighborhood for lack of a better word. It doesn't feel like a neighbor-hood. They don't feel like neighbors really. No, we have not made effort to meet people much. When we moved in here, no one said anything to us, no one, including the next-door neighbor, who was the realtor, represented the person who sold the house to us. Nothing from them.

So I've just kind of given up on actually I think. Plus I mean I get a sense of the demographics of people who live around here. I'm not aware of any other people who, for one thing, they're all straight, which is not bad, I mean necessarily, at least half of my friends are straight, so it's not that. But they're middle-aged couples, they're just people I think I wouldn't have anything in common with, let's put it that way. Because we know who lives in the houses, most of the houses, but we don't know the people, OK, it's this over here is a married couple. They're both on their second marriage and they may have kids. That sort of thing. And there are in this neighborhood a number of conservative Christian families. That we



do know. Which isn't to say that they wouldn't be welcoming to us. I guess not. I don't really want to deal with them.

Q: During the election season, did you get a sense of what type of --

A: From signs in yards? Actually, there were very few houses that I recall in this immediate area that had signs. The ones that did, most of them were [Barack] Obama. But again, talking about not many yards at all that had these signs. There were, excuse me, two or three yards that had Palin-McCain signs. But we know for a fact that a lot of the, you know, fairly significant percentage of the homes on the few streets that are here are I think conservative persons.

Q: Have you made a group of friends within the lesbian population?

A: I wouldn't say we have any close friends here actually. Oh, we do have a few friends. I don't know that I would call them close friends. We do have a few friends who are lesbian. Couple of them are in a poetry group that we hosted, a monthly women's poetry group that we hosted at our house. Couple of the women in that group, lesbians in that group. I've been around long enough to know that lesbianism is not the only, is not enough for a friendship. I mean you've gotta have common interests with people too. So we're certainly open to having straight friends here too for that matter. I guess I haven't been... maybe my expectations are too high. I have not been overwhelmed by the lesbian groups I've interacted with here. I mean it seems like slim pickings for friendship. I don't really understand it. A number of the women here are, I would say significantly older than we are, certainly than I am. My partner's older than I am. Which is not bad, but we've actually had lesbians here before. I can think of two lesbian couples we've had here for supper. And there's been, there was no attempt to reciprocate on their part, which is OK. We didn't issue the invite to get an invite. But still, they just didn't seem interested in new friends. And the group dynamic thing with the groups around here as I've said is just not something that draws me. And I don't think, my partner's maybe a little bit more open to the group thing, but she doesn't take initiative really. So I guess my sense, not having plumbed this a lot, my sense is there's not, we've had trouble finding a lot of commonality with other lesbians around here. Either their interests just seem to be very different, or they're retired and are somewhat affluent, which is not our situation. So we haven't given up, but --

Q: You're not moving out any time immediate, in other words?

A: Going to another area? No, although I would be more open to that I think than my partner would be. But a lot of that is because the employment situation here is very difficult. I've also thought about wanting a place that overall is more progressive, which would mean I guess being in a state that is more, or what I consider to be progressive. But it's not bad here. In a lot of ways, this really is a great place. And it's nice to know, even if I don't want to get involved with something a group's doing even if I don't want to get involved with (inaudible) it's nice to know those groups are out there (coughs) so if we ever change our minds, they're there.

Q: Have you found being here compared to not your time in Virginia, but your time in Massachusetts, that the, being out, the label, being your outness is different. Does an LGBT Appalachian person identify as being out, despite not being out to significant acquaintances and family members, whereas the mainstream definition of out would be someone who is out to basically everyone,

colleagues, family members, and would be somewhat not necessarily every minute of the day obviously, visible as an LGBT person?

A: Sorry, I'm not clear on what you're asking.

Q: OK, here is it different how people would consider to be out. For example, there are people in Boone that consider themselves to be out, but they aren't out to any of their colleagues and they're neighbors would probably be a hit or miss on whether or not they realize they were gay. So whereas the mainstream belief of what outness is that your colleagues would know. You would be holding hands walking down the street. You would have a bumper sticker and not be concerned about anything happening because of the displays.

A: OK, I got that part, but what is the question there.

Q: The question is, is there a difference between how people conceive to be openly gay in the mountains here in Asheville in particular, versus other places, specifically when you were in Massachusetts?

A: Sorry having put you through all that, I'm not sure I can answer that (laughs) now that I finally understand the question. I think that's just, you know that's just up to the individual how he or she perceives, I think that probably varies a whole lot. I consider myself to be fully out, despite the fact that I don't tell the AT&T guy that comes here that, 'hey, my partner and I went to see Melissa Ferrick.' I still consider myself out. I was out at the newspaper when I worked there. I don't try to hide it, I'll put it that way. Is that not being totally out? I don't know. I've done poetry readings in Asheville, where I've read lesbian protest and lesbian love poems. Standing up there, reading what I've written to a bunch of strangers. So it's nothing I am ashamed of or want to deny or anything. The only hesitation I have ever, in this area ever, is about employment. And again, that's because the state doesn't protect LGBTs as it should. So that is the only thing that I sometimes hesitate about. Having said that though, if anyone I have ever done work for as a freelancer in this area, if anyone said to me, are you a lesbian, I would say yes. If anyone ever asked me that question. It just, it's not relevant to me to offer it in most cases.

Q: I'm just thinking about other people in the area as well. There's been a lot of discussion about people who are native to the area, how they behave different from people who come into the area and how it's changing the atmosphere of the area, particularly with --

A: Transplants?

Q: Mmm hmm, right.

A: Meaning, opening it up to be more, the people who come here as transplants are bolder generally, and being out. I can understand why that would be. I'm thinking about what it would be like go back to the city where I grew up in. And I think that I would be, well that's hard to say, because I have family who live there, whom I'm out to, and have been for a long time. But I might be a little hesitant in terms of being out there, mostly because it's not a gay-friendly city. That's why. I don't think it's because that's where I grew up, because it's where I grew up. When my father died, in that city, when he died there several years ago, the obituary listed my partner as a survivor. Stated that she was my partner, said where we lived. I was the one who wanted that in there. There you go.

A couple things come to mind about the newspaper, but it may not be a good idea for me to bring those up, because I may up changing my mind about the pseudonym thing. Couple things I'd like to say, but I was not comfortable there as a gay person. Despite the fact that as I said, my supervisor was definitely I think LGBT-friendly. But I was not comfortable there. Yeah. (pause)

I wrote an article as I said about Kate Clinton and she had an appearance here several years ago. It was my idea to write an article about her. I had to get that basically approved generally direct supervisor. She was OK with it. Ended up, I think it was on the front page of the section there, big photo of Kate Clinton and the story I did. And I got the impression it was a big deal at the newspaper, they had a story about this lesbian. I thought that was kind of too bad that it was a big deal. And the newspaper is in this area. And I made it clear with the editors there, because I suggested a couple times that they consider letting me or another reporter there kind of have a mini-beat of the LGBT community, and I never even got a response to those emails that I sent. No response at all to that. So I thought, this newspaper that's in this area with so many, huge LGBT, percentage-wise, a huge LGBT population, it's a big deal to put a photo, to put a story in the newspaper about a lesbian comedian who's coming?