

H Thorp

Q: Today is January 15th, 2010. This is Kathy Staley, Michael Howell and Heather Thorp. So, what we want to first start with is the demographic information. Could you give me your name, age, where you were born?

A: Sure. My name is Heather Thorp and I'm 46 years old and I was born in Wisconsin. What else?

Q: What led up to your coming to Watauga County? Could you describe when and ...

A: Yes.

Q: ... how you came to live, how old you were?

A: I was, I was living in on the east side of Cleveland [Ohio] and my partner, Monica, was trying to go into a Master's and Ph.D. program. And part of the reason that she had to do that is that she's a Brazilian citizen and so needed to—she was on a work visa and so needed to seek her Ph.D. in order to stay in the country, basically. And she wanted to do it. But anyway, so we were in Ohio on the east side of Cleveland and she got into a graduate program in southern Ohio at Ohio University. And then once she finished her Ph.D., this is where she got her first job after her Ph.D. And so that's how we moved here. And that was this summer it will be seven years, so in 2003, the summer of 2003 was when we moved here.

Q: Okay. And by that point you also had a child.

A: Yes, yes, we have a son, Alex, who's 12. And he was born in 1997. And so he was five and in kindergarten that year we first came to Watauga County. We'd never been to North Carolina, only once to the Outer Banks. [laughs] So we knew nothing about it. And people were like, "Oh, you're going to love Boone." But we were like, okay. [laughs] We don't know, we'll see.

Q: Did the difference in regions and the urban versus rural difference as well play any part in your decision to relocate to Boone?

A: Um, I think more so the decision was related to being close to my family. I have a sister who's still in Ohio. I have five sisters but I have a sister who's in Ohio and one in Virginia. And they were in driving distance. Monica got; she was going to be interviewed in San Antonio, Texas. And A, I don't want to live in Texas. It seems [laughs] not a good place to live for a lesbian, I don't know. And then, you know, so this was just closer. So it was more that geographic. I don't think—I mean I think we would have been happy to be in Cleveland as well. I mean we had a big community there and, you know.

Q: How long had you been in Cleveland before she was offered the position here at

Appalachian State?

A: Well, I've been in Ohio for—let's see, I moved from Wisconsin when I was five. So I lived in Ohio until I was—30 years in the Cleveland area, let's just say that. So, and then five years down in Athens, Ohio. So a long time, long time there. And you know Athens, Ohio is—we lived on women's land there. Two lesbians owned the land, 150 acres of land. So it was kind of a transition living in the country [laughs] living there, but there was some good community there and everything. So we had kind of a rural transition [laughs] moving south and then more south.

Q: Right. you said you didn't really have much knowledge of North Carolina on a personal basis. Did you have any hearsay knowledge of what North Carolina ...

A: Oh yeah, I mean we, we still sometimes are like what the hell are we doing here? [laughs] You know, or just like, oh my gosh. Yeah, I mean like my perception of it is that it was, you know, still really identified with being a Confederate state, [laughs] you know. The Bible Belt. You know, pretty conservative, homophobic, you know. I mean that's, that's what my—you know that's what I think I thought of before we moved here. And it was—would be pretty. [laughs] You know but pretty—I mean I don't think I would have just picked North Carolina, you know, if I had all the states to pick from. I probably would have stayed in Cleveland because that's where all my community was.

Q: Could you describe what your life has been like as a LGBT person and living in Watauga County, northwestern North Carolina?

A: Mm-hmm. I wanted to say surprisingly, but I guess not surprisingly I don't know, it seems like it's been—we love it here. It's a good life. It's a little bit small for Monica, being from Brazil. She really misses more of a city life. But you know when she first came here she was out, you know, right away. And they were accepting of her. And I know that's not how it is everywhere, even on campus. But for her she's very much accepted and in the jobs that I've been in, in here, I've been out. So and that's been I think okay although it's so hard to know as a lesbian person as gay and lesbian people because you never quite know if the reason you're not invited to something or you're not—but my sense is that I've been able to find people, both gay and lesbian people and straight people, as allies and friends and all that. We've been out at Alex's school. And that's mostly gone okay. I think sometimes it seems like certain kids haven't been his friends or haven't invited him over, he hasn't been invited to things. And you know part of me feels sad about that and part of me feels like, well, probably they wouldn't be a good match for us anyway if they're, you know, maybe wouldn't have the same politics or values or religious beliefs anyway. So, but I—I don't know that Alex really feels like, "Oh my gosh, I haven't been able to be friends with that person because I've got two moms." I don't get that sense. So.

Q: Okay. Do you think living in the Appalachian region has affected your experience as being a lesbian?

A: Um ... no, I feel what's hard about living in here is the lack of diversity, period. That is hard. Lack of racial diversity. I guess there's some class diversity, different ethnicities. That's hard, particularly coming from the Cleveland area where, you know, I lived in a—I lived in Cleveland Heights. And it had a huge Hasidic Jewish population and an African-American population. And you know so that, that part has been challenging. And I think and yet at the same time—and then a lot of Christian conservatism. I mean I—that's really hard. I've never lived anywhere this conservative, even though I think the university kind of mitigates that, and if you live in that kind of—but just all the, you know, the Christian conservatism and then raising a child. You know, it's like I'm not a big churchgoer, even though I was raised up that way. But I feel like you need to go to church because I want to give my child my spin on Christianity so he's not kind of like infiltrated with this Christianity that I think is crap. So, I think that's had a lot of effect on me just in how I feel protective of Alex. You know, if it were just Monica and I, but I feel protective of him in that way.

Q: Have you found a church? Can you describe that process?

A: Mm-hmm. When I first came to town I kind of would—we didn't go to church at all when we were in Athens. And then when I came here—and I recognize that churches are places, besides the whole spiritual religious piece, they are also places that people find community. And so I felt kind of—I think in some ways felt isolated in, you know, 150 acres with a small child and all that. And so decided that I would look for a church here and see if anything fit. And I did go—I went to the Unitarian Church¹ and I really liked the people there and I really liked the Unitarian, but I also felt like it wasn't spiritual enough. Like it was a totally cool lecture series, and I really loved that. But it wasn't—that didn't fit. And then I went to the St. Luke's, the Episcopal church. And that's it's just not my tradition. So it was unfamiliar to me to kind of—although a lot of cool people go there too, a lot of allies, a lot of gay and lesbian people. And then we went to the United Church of Christ.² And the United Church of Christ is a wonderful liberal denomination. My father was a UCC minister. And Monica worked at the national offices of the UCC. So we're really familiar with it. They ordained gay and lesbian people in the '60s and a lot of gay and lesbian people go there. And it's not a new denomination, but it's new to here. And when we had come, when we first moved here I think it had started maybe three years before that as a church. So, I am ambivalent about Christianity, period. So we go and then we don't for a while and then we go again. But if we go anywhere that's where we'll go. And it's they're very straightforward about being open and affirming and, you know, accepting of all people. And there's a lot of—I mean I don't know, I don't know what the ratio is. But gay and lesbian people are well represented in the congregation [laughs], so.

Q: Has through school your family been invited to churches that are not quite so progressive?

A: Oh, yes.

¹ Boone Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

² High Country United Church of Christ.

Q: Could you talk about that?

A: Oh, yes. Yeah we had, you know, they have all these different Bible schools and things. And some of them had—one of them had the kids, you know, if they learn Bible verses, they get candy. And just I mean I just think that is just crazy. You know and then they get more candy if they recruit other kids to come to the, you know, Bible school. And then this one, I don't know, there's this one church in town—our neighbors, they're very accepting of us. But it's like my perception of the church is that it's very conservative. And yet people seem to be at least accepting of us, not necessarily trying to recruit us. So I can't quite—I don't get—and I'm not going to go and find out. But they had invited Alex this one family who had a kid in Alex's grade had invited Alex to come. And I said, "Well, I'm not sure about that because I just don't know, like is your, is your church accepting of our family?" And she said something like, "Well, we wouldn't turn you away," or something like that. And I said, "Well, I can't let my child go to somewhere that's—you know I'm in charge of protecting him. [laughs] And I can't, you know, let him go somewhere where you're just going to be like, 'We're not going to turn you away.'" I mean so that happened. But we haven't been asked in a really long time. [laughs] We're more trying to recruit people to come over to our church. [laughs] [whispers] The church of diversity.

Q: [laughs] Can you describe what it's been like for your family as your child goes through the school system, any experiences with which schools has he attended here in Watauga?

A: He's been at Parkway School the whole time. And just overall, I mean even in—he's changed about you know kind of like—and the kids have changed like developmentally. Like when they were younger they were like, "Ooh, two moms. You are so lucky you have two moms." They just thought it was the coolest thing in the world. And then just trying to figure out, like then he got some questions, "Well, is your dad dead?" [laughs] And then for a little while Alex—I think maybe he got sick of explaining his family situation. So he called Monica his stepmother for a while. And we were fine with that. I mean I think he feels good with our family and all that. I think he was just trying to mediate his social situation. And so but it was really funny because this little girl, she was walking down the hall with Alex and I and she was like, "Yeah, I know Alex has a stepmom. That must be so hard for him going from house to house." You know, thinking of it as a divorce situation. So, I thought that was so cute. And then he stopped doing that, you know. And I think the people that are close to us, and the school itself, you know, just the regular irritating when you fill things out, you know, you've got the mother and the father. And then what do you do? Do you mark off—you know, on the forms for school—do you mark off father? Do you put other? What do you, how do you—you know and it's such a simple thing for them to just put Parent 1, Parent 2 [laughs] you know. And it took about, I don't know how this administratively happened, but eventually like now they have us both as parents. But it took a while in the paperwork for that to be listed like that. And even, even today—I don't know how realistic this really is, if this is really a concern, but if Monica has to go pick him up early in the day she always wants me—even though they know her, they know us, you know, he's been in

school for seven years—she wants me to call ahead and say, "Monica's going to be picking him up."

Q: Has there been a problem with that...

A: No, no. I think it's just her own worry about, you know, she's not the legal mom. I'm the legal mom. You know, so ... but I guess I think mostly things have gone well in terms of the school as far as I know. We had one situation, it was open house and they had on the walls in the hallway they had, you know, mom, dad. And I could see that Alex's it was kind of like a poster had been folded up over the part that said father. And I was all like, oh this makes me so mad, you know. But then I went and talked to the teacher. And they had asked, "Do you want to put Monica on there?" You know, not on father, just do you want to put her? And he didn't. So I don't know if that's indicative of him feeling unsafe to do that or just like, "I don't want to explain to anybody." I'm not exactly sure how that all has worked itself out. Recently in this last I want to say two years we have told him who his biological father is. And so I think that has also—I mean he's not going to be involved or anything, but I think that has also helped him be able to talk about, oh yeah, my dad who lives on Ohio. And I have four brothers, they're half brothers." And I think that's helped him with the social piece of it even though in terms of how our lives are lived, it hasn't changed anything, except that we're not holding a secret anymore, so [laughs].

Q: Yes, I remember that time period. [laughs] Reflecting back on what you recall living in Athens and Cleveland compared to how life has been here, how has living in Appalachian region affected how you behave with regards to your identity and your family?

A: Oh, I think, I think one thing is that we're much less—even though we're out, like we tell people and we present as a family, I know that we're much less affectionate in public than we would be other places. You know, we're really affectionate with Alex but not with each other. [laughs] You know, so I think that's a big change. I think we feel more protective of that. And some of that has to do I think with our jobs. You know, Monica as a professor and I think with me as a therapist more than my job, just worrying about what the implications of that might be. I don't even know if it's realistic. It's not like something happened to do that. But it just feels because it feels so much more conservative here.

Q: Have you talked to other people who have had situations that have colored how you think people would react if you were affectionate?

A: No. I think it's just my perception of churches, letters to the editor, what's that—Judgment House.

Q: Tell what Judgement House is.

A: Judgment House is a—it happens usually around Halloween. And it's put on by I think

one of the Baptist churches.³ And it goes each room is like what would happen if you were in the hell of alcoholism, or the hell of being gay or the hell of something. This is my interpretation; I've never been to it. Although I fantasize about going as a protestor or going undercover to see what it's really like. Because I just can't believe stuff like that even exists in the world. But I know it does, I know it does. But and so you know pretty anti-gay. I've had clients, gay and lesbian clients who strongly identify with their churches, even though they're conservative. And they tell me they stand up and give sermons about, you know, against gay and lesbian people. And I know that's not just about Boone, North Carolina. I know that happens. But I guess in a larger city you could go maybe your whole life and not have—I mean I could, I could have my whole life just being around gay and lesbian people. [laughs] Not really but you know, because I'd have to go to work, I guess. But it's different when it's so—because it's small. It's like you know the six degrees of separation. It's like, oh that happened at your church? Well, I know people who go to that church. Or, you know, so it feels, I don't know, it feels emotionally more frightening, which I think then translates into feeling fearful about your physical safety even though my physical safety has not been threatened.

Q: Is there any other aspect of living in the mountains that you feel like we have missed?

A: Um, living in the mountains or living here in the mountains [laughs]?

Q: Here in the mountains. Because I do want to compare your work experience teaching in Hickory, which is also considered to be part of the mountains, with that group of students compared to teaching here in Watauga County and working with Watauga natives.

A: Mm-hmm. I think my perception is that there's a lot of I won't say—I think actually for how small this is there's really a lot of community here. You know, there's gay pride and my perception is there's a lot of lesbians at least that live here. I know there's gay men who live here as well. But my perception is, you know, a lot of lesbians that live here.

Q: Could you put a number on that?

A: [laughs] No. I couldn't. I'd like to say—people have said to me this number, that in Asheville there's 40,000 lesbians. And I like to throw that number out because that just sounds so fun. [laughs] You know, and we will go there. We feel more comfortable there. So there is—I don't know what it—maybe it's because it's not here or maybe it's big, it seems less conservative there. It seems like there's more community there. So that's nice to have that so close to be able to go and feel even more comfortable. So I guess that's mountains too. So, you know I think there's on campus I mean it seems like there's student groups. All those things make it where I live and I think other gay and lesbian people live feel comfortable even if they're not going to them. [laughs] It feels like, ah, there's safe places. People are accepting and it's okay to be out because these kind of things are happening in the community that I'm in even though I'm not a member of that particular. You know, like I've never been to SAGA⁴ but I feel good that it's here.

³ Howard's Creek Baptist Church.

⁴ Sexuality and Gender Alliance.

I feel more comfortable myself. I get a benefit from it. And so I think that's part of living here.

Q: So, if Monica had been offered a job in Mars Hill College where that college is a small college and doesn't have a very large liberalizing effect as ASU, which is probably, probably ten times the size and a very liberal university in comparison, do you think that would have make a big difference then?

A: Is Mars Hill like right outside Asheville? I think that would be hard to figure out. I don't think she'd be as happy there. I mean she—we were trying to, we were trying to stay in Ohio because I said, you know a lot of people there. And she went to one small university and it was close to Cleveland, not that far. But they had a picture of Jesus and a picture of George Bush and a picture of—I can't remember who else. But Monica was just like, oh you can't believe. [laughs] You know, so it's like just the conservatism of that. I mean maybe they were all about gay and lesbian people, but probably not.

Q: So it's something special about Watauga having Appalachian State.

A: Yeah. Yeah, I do think the university—and I think it's... I don't know maybe it's the times because it's, you know, we're not—I don't know. I owned a women's bookstore in Cleveland, and it was the time of small bookstores and you know a lot of kind of organized community things. And so historically we're in a different time but I also am very struck with here about—I always joke with friends. I say, "Yeah, Boone is like Christian conservatism meets The Vagina Monologues." It's like and somehow it coexists. And like I'm surprised there's not more protest on either side. And not, you know it's like, okay, people are preaching, people are writing letters to the editor. But it's like there's no—in some ways there's not an organized political group trying to do political—there's not a political action group that I'm used to or that I understand. And so that seems kind of I guess in some ways just okay, we're all just going to exist here together. But in other ways kind of disconcerting too, like what we're not going to protest this even more? We're not going to go protest Judgment House? You know, we're not? That seems interesting and different.

Q: Okay. So, in one of your multiple jobs you have taught in Hickory and those the students were Hickory-based students whereas when you taught here at Appalachian State of course those students are drawn from international locations. Could you compare the experience with you did discuss sexuality in one of your classes? And it seems like you may or may not have come out to a Hickory class?

A: Mm-hmm. I'm trying to remember now if I came out. I don't think—I think I did not come out to the Hickory class but I have come out to individual people there. And yeah, I taught a human sexuality class. And what was interesting, the cohort on campus is the traditionally-aged student. And then I had this cohort in Hickory, and they are more the non-traditional. They're working, they're, you know, taking their classes over time, all that kind of stuff. And what was interesting about the cohort on campus is that they were like, "Yeah, gay and lesbian people, no problem." You know, it's like they appeared not

to have any like—what they had the most trouble with was age, ageism. They had—I mean it was like oh, so that's your problem [laughs] Not your problem. Oh that's your issue you need some work on. Oh that. Much more heterosexism, homophobia in the Hickory cohort I would say. Just in their comments and their—although, you know, there was also a variety of opinions in there. I mean I could tell from their spoken word, a lot of allies and a lot of—I wouldn't say a lot of allies. There were allies in that class, gay and lesbian allies that I perceived to be heterosexual. I don't exactly know 'cause one cannot exactly know. But my perception is there was a range in that as well. And they appeared to move along in their journey of understanding of heterosexism. So but yeah it was different, it was very different.

Q: Okay. Now, the parenting groups, could you talk about what organizations you were involved in and what kind of activities they did?

A: Mm-hmm. I feel like we have never really been very consistent with any parenting groups. The groups themselves and me involved in them. There's a group down in—probably the most consistent was the one that we went to down in Asheville. It seemed to be more fitting for kids that were younger. So as the kids kind of got older and this kind of preteen and teen there weren't as many. But we would do picnics and we went ice skating and we had the holiday party, like an Easter egg hunt. For a while they were meeting it seems like monthly they were meeting up. And that was really nice to be with other parents, because I think that's some of what I grieved leaving—not Athens but leaving Cleveland—is that there's, you know, it would be likely that my child would go to school there with other gay and lesbian families that had gay and lesbian people. I had friends that had children. And so there—and you know there was enough of them that they would go on vacation together and they would, you know, birthday parties would be other two moms [laughs] you know or two dads. There was a mass of them. So that's, that's hard I think being here. And then we had some people try to get together, which wasn't really very consistent, here in town. And I know there are some other gay and lesbian, bisexual families in town. But nothing really organized around that.

Q: What would you consider to be those organizations' greatest challenges and successes and if you'll analyze to see whether it's related to location?

A: Well, I don't know. I think some of it is, I think some of it's location because of its small town. You know, there's just not the numbers. I think if you're in a big town and you have 50 LGBT families and 20 come, you know, still 30 aren't coming but you still—so I think the size makes that challenging. I think just parenting makes it challenging. I think, you know, I think some geography because of, you know, where people are located. And maybe some of weather even can get in the way of that with the mountains. You never know that's going to happen. It might be fine on my side of town but not over here. I think some of it has to do with what you can do. There's just not a lot to do here. You know, so some of it, like it's not like you can go to the children's museum with your LGBT parenting group. [laughs] So, I think some of it has to do with that. And I think that's related to geography.

Q: Okay. Could you speak a little bit about Alex being in the Boy Scouts?

A: Alex is no longer in the Boy Scouts. Yeah, it's ... it's interesting. We have a friend of Alex's, they're friends of ours now. I would say that they're pretty conservative. And I think that they were originally pretty heterosexist. The mom—I know this is a long route to get to the Boy Scouts so cut me off if you don't [laughs]—but the mother's father—so the grandfather of the son who's Alex's age—he was so against us. He was, you know, this is a guy who's lived here his whole life. I mean the little boy has 50,000 cousins because their whole family all live right here, you know. And he just, you know, he didn't want Jacob to sleep over night. He didn't want, whatever. And I don't know if there was a particular event that changed this. But like at one point Jeanie, the mom, had to come and get the boy because the grandfather didn't want him at our house. And you know this is very hard for everybody because the boys just want to play. They don't really care, you know, they just want to play. And so I don't know what happened. I think they got to know us better and they figured out we weren't, you know, creepy or I don't know. But at some point the grandfather was like he made this complete turnaround and he was just like, you know, I, you know, "I really like Jacob being"—I mean he wasn't a smushy warm and lovey kind of person. But then Jacob was allowed to come. And you know Jeanie and—he subsequently died—but Jeanie the mother then, you know, they were like, "Well, we trust you with Jacob more than anyone we can think of." You know so it's like we didn't really do anything to make that happen. But people do sometimes move along.

Anyway, she was the Cub Scout leader is what I'm trying to get to. And so Alex really wanted to join, and Monica was very much against it. She was very much against, you know, the Scouts' stand on gay and lesbian not just leaders but boys in the Scouts. And I just felt like, you know, again it's small. There's not lots to do and like 50 clubs to pick from. It seemed like there was some things that he really would like doing. Jeanie, I felt like this friendship with Jeanie and Jacob and Alex. And so you know he did go for a while. But now he's not going. But not because we're like oh—well, I don't know, maybe that's not true. I think there is a little bit more of a fear, him being in Boy Scouts than Cub Scouts. Like to me that even I feel a little bit more afraid. You know Cub Scouts the mommies are still there, the mommies go camping [laughs] or the daddies or whatever. But it's not just—you know I think there's more independence in the Boy Scouts and more opportunity for Alex's family to be talked about in a negative way or gay and lesbian people talked about in a negative way. So, I don't know.

Q: Have you found some type of organization in town that you felt like, "This is where Alex could be and be supported as a child of a same sex couple"?

A: Not, not really in terms of a group. You know I mean that's part of why kind of we're in a new rash of trying to go to church because I really like the middle school Sunday School man, who's a straight man. But he's great. Great ally. And so that's part of the reason. I want Alex to have some kind of a youth group, a youth—you know, a group experience. So that's why we're kind of—I'm saying kind of because we're not going every week. You know but I mean just we're going back there so he can have some of that with other kids who are in families who obviously are okay with gay and lesbian people. So.

Q: Okay. [To Mike] Unless you wanted to ask any particular question I was going to wrap this up with have any aspects of Watauga County LGBT life changed since you moved here? And why do you think that is?

A: It seems like, it seems like it's gotten stronger with the Gay Pride. It's more organized. I mean it's been going on, there's a history now, more of a history. I think it had just started or the year before or something. I don't know the exact. But it seemed new when we first moved here and now it seems more established. There's ...

Q: Could you say what Boone Pride is and what they offer ...

A: My perception of Boone Pride at least?⁵ [laughs] Well I think there's a parade that weekend. And Pride which is traditionally in the month of June is, you know, there's usually a parade and a dance. And usually there's some kind of party potluck, picnic kind of thing which where all the families can come. I think there have been—what am I trying to say—there's been like panel discussions I think has been some of it. I was going to say film but really there's that Queer Film Series that's really I think that's separate from Pride. But I conceptualize that as being part of what's going on in the community. You know. There's—is that what you wanted or is there something you want to say? Oh the change, okay so I also think like there were these two women that moved to town from Florida, and they've been kind of organizing this—I don't know what they call it, but there's like a women eat out together thing and there's a group called Women Outdoors that do outdoor activities. And these women from Florida seem to have kind of organized it into a listserv so it's almost like a newsletter. I don't know how to say it but that seemed—they came after we were here so I think that's become more solidified. Those brunches that happen, those women's brunches, I know Marilyn and Cheryl were doing those. But I think they've become more solidified as well and open to more people. And so I'm not sure why that's happened, maybe just the people and maybe just because as people feel more comfortable being out then other people feel more comfortable being out. That seems to be how it works.⁶

Q: A follow up question, do you feel like the fluid lesbian community in Watauga County, is it a lot of people who have relocated to Watauga County or are you aware of local-born, local multigenerational-raised individuals who are pivotal in the LGBT community?

A: Yeah, this is just my perception, but I think it is people who have relocated here. But I do know there are people who have lived here or who were gay and—you know, grew up here, didn't identify maybe as gay and lesbian but have come back here. So, yeah, I think that happens. But I would say the majority are people who have moved here. But that, I don't know any fact of that, that's just my perception.

⁵ High Country Pride, based in Watauga County, was previously known as Boone Pride.

⁶ See interviews of Laurie Weiner and Carol Quintero for more information about the Women's Chat group and Dinner group. Appalachian State University professors Kim Hall, Sandy Gravett, Jill Ehnenn, and David Orvis have co-directed the campus' Queer Film Series since 2000.

Q: And do you think that is the case for other areas, like Cleveland...

A: No. Mm-mm, no, no, I don't think so. I think people that live there—and I mean that was one of the discussions there, why it was hard for people to be out because they've lived there their whole lives and their whole family was there and their whole—you know, it's riskier I think to be out where you can risk losing your family. You know, so I mean we—I think gay and lesbian people really have to move between worlds all the time. And so if you're not in the world that you came from you can just be in one world more. And we still have to, even you know—it's like my child's—you know, anything, it's that we're always coming out, you know. I had to come out to my child's doctor. I had to leave my child's doctor.

Q: Could you talk about that?

A: Yes. [laughs] Okay, there's a pediatric practice in town and they are some of the ones who wrote the—I don't know what the actual world is—briefs or whatever being anti-gay and lesbian parenting. I think—I don't know if it was before or in response to all the American Psychological Association, all that stuff. So I can't go—and they had Bible verses on the walls. So, you know, I can't take my child there. And I'm sure they're great, you know, diagnostically and all that kind of stuff. But I can't take him there. I mean I take him to somebody who's like, "Oh, you've got two moms? That's cool." You know, it's like that's where he needs to go, someplace like that. So, we had to stop.⁷

Q: Thank you very much.

[end of audio]

⁷ Blue Ridge Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine doctors Robert Lonas and Gregory Adams are members of _____.