

**Interviewee: Wolf, Brandon**

**Interview Date: August 10, 2010**

**University of Houston**  
**Oral History of Houston Project**

**Brandon Wolf**  
***GLBT History***

Interviewed by: John Goins  
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Transcribed by: Michelle Kokes  
Location: Houston, Texas

JG: Good afternoon my name is John Goins and I'm going to be interviewing Brandon Wolf today. It's the 10<sup>th</sup> of August. We are in Houston, Texas in 2010. We are going to start by letting Brandon introduce himself and beginning with biographical information so we can learn where he was from and where he grew up and etc., etc. So Brandon why don't we start with your childhood?

BW: Okay. I was born in 1947 in Traverse City, Michigan and I was the youngest of three boys. My parents were also... it was quite an age differential. My mother was 40 and my father was 46. So I grew up in what I would call a very mature home. Most of the friends I had growing up seemed like their parents were like about 20 when they were born.

JG: Right.

BW: I always thought it was kind of an off and on thing. My parents seemed older but then I think I had the advantage of growing up in a really mature home so I learned how to... I just had a more mature attitude about things. My father was a real successful businessman at the time. He had a chain of dime stores like Woolworth. He worked for Woolworth. He had gone out on his own and he had about 30 stores and a big

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warehouse. So they had a big house probably one of the nicest in town. So I was born into a really nice family. Well it made a very good situation. My mother had had three miscarriages so she was really lucky that I came along. In fact she had a miscarriage before me. If she hadn't done that I don't think I would have been here. Somebody else would be here. My oldest brother was Don. He was also gay. He died in 1979. And my middle brother was Dick and he is straight and he is a Baptist preacher and then there's me. Dick and I are about two years apart. Don and I were about 8 years apart. So what I remember... I don't remember very much about I know that they lived in a big white house up on a hill and overlooking a bay in Traverse City but when I was about 3 my mother built a summer home about 50 miles from there and then she finally decided she had three young boys and she didn't want us.. she didn't want to always be yelling at us because she had white carpets and she had white furniture and white walls and so this was... so she had the place made actually to a full time year round home so actually that is where I grew up and I grew up out in the country in a little town called Central Lake, Michigan, probably about 1,200 people there.

What I remember mostly about my childhood was just two things. I remember being real close to my mother. I didn't really like playing with other guys... well there wasn't anybody around. But there was a woman who had been my, kind of my nanny after I was born because my mother had a car accident right after I was born and couldn't take care of me. And she had never had kids so on Saturdays when my father worked at his warehouse which was 50 miles away he would take me down and drop me off at her place. This was like... we would do things like have little tea parties. She is one person that thought all that was cute and fun. I can remember there was a dog next door and I

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used to go for long walks with the dog. My mother used to tell me, "You are the one child I never have to entertain." I was really kind of creative. I was real religious. We were real, real religious.

JG: Your family was?

BW: We were incredibly religious. We were fundamentalist Baptist and it was...

JG: When you moved up to the summer home there was a church nearby?

BW: Even worse because the pastor lived right next door.

JG: Oh no!

BW: To show you how fundamentalist they were when they lived in Traverse City before they moved to Central Lake, the pastor of our church had taken, had left that church and taken a group of people with him, including my parents. The reason he left was because one night they had a missionary family visiting and the wife played the piano and she was wearing lipstick.

JG: Can't have that!

BW: Can you believe that? So it was 24/7, 365, around the clock everything was just, everything was filtered through religion. They were separatists. They believed it was the world and us. I believed all that stuff when I was a kid but I can remember like going walking with my dog well, it was the dog next door. It was over at my place wasn't it, it was a collie. Back then I'd go up there and I'd have little church services. You know I'd get up and I'd be the music director and then I'd preach. I'd lead Laddie to God, you know and Laddie would be "saved." So that's what I remember of my childhood.

JG: What about your school setting, what was that like and particularly in conjunction with this religious, fundamental religious?

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BW: That was the first big jolt for me was when I went to kindergarten. I was about a year younger than everyone else because my mother had... I was just, I sort of missed the deadline but she went and got special permission for me to be in there. She said she wouldn't have done it again if she had to do it over again. But it was a big shock for me because first of all most of these kids lived in town. Well that's not really true. Most of them... some of them lived in town but none of them were as religious. They thought I was weird. They didn't have money and my parents were the richest people in the town. I wasn't at all physically aggressive. I really wasn't a sissy, but I just wasn't a physically aggressive. I was just a real passive little guy and so immediately it was stressful for me. I almost instantly took up playing with the girls and not with the guys. I just didn't have much interest for them. I got smart enough in a short period of time to learn how to get protectors on the playground. I just sort of charmed my way I guess with certain guys that were bigger than me, that if anybody was trying to give me trouble I would just make sure I moved my way over towards where they were at.

JG: Close proximity to the big guys.

BW: Yeah. But I never liked to fight myself. I remember my father gave me a football helmet once and I took it to school and, of course everybody thought it was cool because we were like in second or third grade, they didn't have football helmets. He said, "Come on, play football with us." All I remember is being, having 10 guys piled on top of me and I took it off and handed it to a guy and said, "Here keep it." I never wanted to do that again. When I was probably about in... it was the third grade I was always fascinated with the cheerleaders. On day I was out on the playground with three or four girl friends of mine and we were practicing cheers. The coach walked by and he said, "Oh you kids

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are so cute." He said, "Why don't you come to our next pep rally and do a cheer?" I asked my mother if I could do it. I was absolutely shocked that I could.

JG: She said okay?

BW: She said, "Okay." In fact she even bought me a little, a pair of dark blue pants and a red shirt that were the colors. So for at least that year, I don't know what happened after that year, but at least that that year they always invited us to the pep rallies and we always got to go out and do one cheer. Now they've never seen a boy cheerleader before in their lives. But it was sort of like once you kind of grow up in a group they just get used to the way you are. So I was just... well I'll guess I'll have to say I changed my name in 1997 so back then I was David. Actually my original name was David Dahlquist. So D-a-h-l-q-u-i-s-t. I was just David to them. What I do remember too was that, what do I remember? I lost my train of thought.

JG: Growing up third grade did you finish talking about the third grade?

BW: Yeah.

JG: Or just the cheer thing.

BW: Oh, I know! We weren't allowed to dance so...

JG: Meaning your family or the community?

BW: In my family.

JG: In your family.

BW: So I do remember I think I was maybe in the second grade, one of the girls had a birthday party and my mother said, "Are they going to dance there?" I said, "No." She said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yeah I'm pretty sure." She said, "Well if they do you haven't better dance?" I said, "Okay." So I went to it, they had music, I danced.

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JG: Of course you did.

BW: And I was terrified that somebody would ever tell her. But when I was in the fourth grade that's when the shit really hit the fan because there was a radio program that came from the University of Michigan once a month where they taught you music for an hour.

JG: What kind of music, teaching music what do you mean?

BW: Ummm.

JG: To sing or an instrument?

BW: Yeah to sing or a movement... just sort of music appreciation I guess is what they called it back then to get kids interested. So we would listen to it. Well I remember at one point they told everybody to stand by their desk and do the hokey pokey. And I knew I would absolutely, I couldn't do it so I sat there in my seat. The teacher kept telling me to get up. I kept sitting there and you know she got mad. I just said, "My parents won't let me dance." She said, "Okay." So then my parents wrote them a note so every time we had a class like that I had to sit there in my seat like a weirdo. Well then, unfortunately when we had school assemblies, I shouldn't have said this but one day these kids came up and they were at a local tap dance school and they did a little tap dance. You know they were little kids like this and they were so cute they were like 10, 12 and so I told my mother and she said, "Well then you can't go to assemblies anymore." So...

JG: That's terrible!

BW: It was awful!

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JG: This isn't really dancing. The hokey pokey and the tap dance it's not like you are doing rock and roll.

BW: The biggest irony is when my mother turned 80 she spent seven years in Arthur Murray.

JG: Oh really?

BW: Well then I found out after my father died it was my father that was pushing all this. But I was close to my mother. I wasn't close to my father at all. So if it was physical discipline it was him. But if it was day to day, just raising a kid it was my mother. And she and I were real, real close. My other two brothers didn't get along with her that well. My oldest brother was real attached to my father. My middle brother just had oodles of friends and I was real close to my mother. But so then, you know that made me even weirder. I had to sit there every time there was an assembly I had to sit there for an hour while everybody else... you know look at the walls, while everybody else was in there. So that wasn't a whole lot of fun. I have to laugh because I wanted to join the Boy Scouts and they said I couldn't because they said it was a worldly organization. You know now the Boy Scouts won't let the homosexuals in. I'm thinking!

JG: My goodness!

BW: I think that the guys next door, the pastor's kids were not allowed, even though they were athletic, were not allowed to be on the athletic teams. We were probably one of the last people to get a television set because that was, you know... We didn't go to movies. That was ruled "something of the devil." I remember one time I was in the car with my parents and I was in the front seat and for some reason my mother opened up her

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purse and I looked in there and I saw a TV guide. I'll never forget it because it had Hal March on the front. He was with the \$64,000 Question and it had this character of him with all these coins coming out of his pocket. I looked at it and I said, "Is that a TV Guide?" and she snapped it shut! She said, "Oh well, never mind." Well about a week later our TV set showed up.

JG: Really?

BW: And I think when we first got it whenever there was a cigarette or beer commercial one of us kids had to take turns walking up and turning the volume off. But as I discovered you know my parents, give them enough time and they get tired of all that bullshit. But school was kind of semi, I got to where I remember in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I was out playing ball and I never was any good at it but I was playing soft ball and I was on second base or something and this girl turned to me and she said, "You know you're really pretty cool now" because I really was up on everything, on popular music and all. I wasn't supposed to be but I guess if you put it off limits to kids then they want it all the more. In some ways kids thought I was real hip. Well she said, "Yeah you're not weird anymore." Well on one hand I liked it and on the other hand it just hit me. Because I thought, "Oh God, I'm a bad Christian."

JG: Oh no!

BW: To show you how extreme they could be right across from our church there was a big it's where they had the ball diamond for school and in the summer they used to show movies for free because it was kind of a small town and that was a big thing for people. Well they did that on a Thursday night, we used to have what we called a prayer meeting

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on Wednesday night. They moved it to Thursday night purposely so they could see us walking in the church while they were watching movies over there.

JG: This is a very extreme religious organization. When you said fundamentalism I naturally termed it to what I am used to here.

BW: They thought Southern Baptists were liberal.

JG: Yeah.

BW: They were just real, real... I mean they really believed in separation, that is what they called it. They valued that. They said, "You've got to be separated from the world."

I mean I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal savior when I was five years old. But I don't think it never really got through to me because I was always scared I hadn't said something right and I was going to go to hell, so I would get saved again. You know I'd go up to the preacher and say, "I'm not sure I'm saved." They'd say, "Why?" I'd say, "I don't know maybe I didn't do it right." They'd say, "Well let's just make sure." So I kept getting re-saved.

JG: My gosh!

BW: I was still worried that I'd die and go to heaven, and you know I'd get there and they would say, "You missed a word."

JG: There's something wrong.

BW: "You missed a word."

JG: Well how did you... so in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and the girl came up to you and said, "You're cool now" since you felt up on things, how were you accessing the world? Did you have a transistor radio?

BW: Yes.

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JG: Oh, so at night you could go listen to?

BW: Yeah. My brothers did too and if I was in the car with them by the time that they got to where they could drive, they would listen to popular music. My brother had a radio. It was sort of like, you know, we didn't play it real loud.

JG: No.

BW: And then let's see yeah I was still too young to be buying records but then there was television. At least we had... I think we had the television in '57. That may not sound late but that really was pretty late. I think most people got them around '53.

Because I remember kids at school talking about Mighty Mouse and stuff. I was just... I just felt like this deprived child.

JG: Right.

BW: Actually my cousin, my aunt and uncle got a TV set before we did. So I think that kind of convinced my mother to go ahead and get one. Strange people! Well there was Life Magazine and Look Magazine...

JG: Your family allowed those in the house?

BW: Oh yeah, and the newspapers. So I just gravitated towards those things because on one hand it bothered me I thought I shouldn't want to be interested in that stuff. On the other hand I was. So that was kind of an internal thing inside me. I think I led two lives. I led one at school and I hoped it would never get back to my parents. But you know I would talk about... and I learned to be a good actor I think for me at a young age. I would talk about, "Wow did you hear that cool song by so and so?" Well I'd heard it maybe once. I think because these kids it was everyday life for them; they kind of liked my sense of passion for things because I had this passion, because I couldn't do it. It was

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always like I felt like I was on the outside looking in and they were on the inside and didn't realize I was on the outside it was just their everyday life. They were like, "Wow, if he's excited I guess I'm going to get excited." So, they kind of liked me.

JG: Did you have anybody at this point or is there any sexuality going on with yourself? Have you come to any realizations?

BW: No.

JG: Not at all?

BW: Oh yeah! Actually, well actually my oldest brother told me he touched another guy when he was five years old. [REDACTED]

JG: He came out and just told you?

BW: Yeah. The kid next door. He went up and locked the door and I guess they played around and showed his dicks. But I got to be incredibly clever at seeing naked men. Because I was just, the first time I saw a naked man, an adult, I just, my whole body, you know every electron started buzzing.

JG: How old would say you were at that point?

BW: Maybe five. I mean it was like I was fascinated with pubic hair. "Oh God," I just thought that was fascinating to me. I just loved to look at guys cocks. Every summer we had, we lived near a lake and the guy next door who was a preacher had been a traveling preacher in Canada for years. So he had this big tent, they used to have tent revivals. So he used to put that up in this field between our houses and the lake and used that for a changing room because we had a real pretty part of the lake. It is where the lake kind of curved so for some reason the sand there was real good. So people really liked to swim there. So I think that was the first time I ever got to see an older guy take his clothes off.

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But I got to where I would time things. I mean I was a master strategist. If I could tell that somebody was... if I heard somebody talking about, "Well I guess ..." if an older guy was maybe like in his 20's or 30's was there with his wife or son, "Well I guess we better get things together." I would just time it just perfectly so I just happened to walk in. "Oh it sure was fun out there today, wasn't it? I need to get home because my mom wants me home." The first thing I'd do I couldn't wait until that bathing suit came down. That was like my prize, was to see a guy, a guy naked and I tried every trick in the book to do it. Usually about the best way I could do it was to be in some kind of swimming situation where people would get changed. I wasn't interested in my family. I wasn't interested in my father or my brothers. But I sure was interested in lots of other guys. So...

JG: Is this causing you... so you are aware of the sexuality... is it already interfering really greatly with your religious background and your turmoil over the right and the wrong?

BW: It did and it didn't. I sort of compartmentalized it. It was something that I thought... well I remember the first time I said to my brother, my straight brother something about a guy having a nice physique. He looked at me and said, "Are you queer or something?" Obviously I never remarked about a guy's body ever again.

JG: So that hearing that terms was automatically pejorative, you already knew that was not a good thing?

BW: I really didn't even know very much about what a "queer" was.

JG: But you could feel the negativity?

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BW: Yeah. It was just real negative word. In other words I guess I knew that you liked guys but I never thought guys... I didn't even know what people did sexually.

JG: Right, either one?

BW: I... the only thing I really wanted with guys was to dance with them. I was so jealous of girls when I would see them like in a Dick Clark show or something and I thought, "Shit you know they get to put their head on this guy's shoulders, this guy's got their big arms around them and they are cheek to cheek." I was like, "I want to be there!" That's all I really wanted was to just be close to a guy. I never thought about playing with his dick or... that came later. But I always had best friends. None of them were gay. But I kind of gravitated towards athletic guys. Especially if they were athletic guys who went to our church, they were the ones that could protect me on the playground because you know they knew me from church so if they were bigger and stronger they would kind of help me out. But by the sixth grade I think I was pretty well I was pretty well adjusted. This is going to be like a therapy session. Then my whole life just went to hell because my parents decided to move to Florida for the school year. My father had bought another business. He bought a wholesale firm that did like stationary, school supplies and things like that, that was failing. He went in with three other men, and two of them finally left, and then it was him and another guy. Everything my father touched turned to gold. So they did things like, there was a big drug chain like Eckerd's, if you ever heard of them, like Walgreens. But this was back in the '60's and at that time that was... they subcontracted others, in other words he came in and he would take care of the whole gondola of school supplies. They didn't have to order. They didn't have to do anything. His salesmen were constantly in there making sure they had fresh stock and he

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just handed them an invoice. So he just did well. The major thing I can remember about my childhood was always riding in the back seat of a Cadillac because nobody else around us had a Cadillac. I always thought that was so cool. That was one thing I had that was, that kind of gave me some status, because I didn't feel like I had status. You know I was this weird Christian. I wasn't athletic. I was smart. I was like third best in the class.

JG: But none of this, you didn't feel like any of this made you superior at least...?

BW: No just the opposite. I had just an inferiority complex, incredibly low. I actually had girlfriends when I was young and I was always talking about getting married. All I was thinking of a big wedding dress, not me in a wedding dress. I never really wanted to be a girl. Well that's... no I didn't, but I did start playing with dolls real soon. And I'm surprised when I asked my mother, whenever we would have somebody visit and there would be a girl and she had a doll, I would end up playing out here with her and the doll. Then my father sold toys too and sometimes I would work in his warehouse on Saturdays. Well every once in a while I would steal a doll and go way up to the third floor attic in this place and play with it for a while. I just liked changing the clothes and things. They were like Barbie dolls. I asked my mother for a doll and she said, "Okay." This is the strangest thing I'll never figure this out. She loved to go to Chicago and shop. She was always... she used to joke, if she liked it, it would never sell in my father's store. If it sold in the store she wouldn't like it. She liked to go to Chicago and shop at Carson, Pirie, and Scott. Well she brought me two dolls. They were a male and female black doll. I can't figure that out for the life of me why she did it. I mean she wasn't a racist but she certainly wasn't an integrationist. I mean our church was against that. We

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wouldn't let black people in our church. Well we would let them in the church, but they couldn't be members. But and I got a couple of other dolls. I can't remember them that much. I don't remember making a big deal out of the dolls because I tended to think people would make fun of me. But anyway in the sixth grade they decided to move to Florida for the school year. I remember when they first told me I begged them. I said, "Let me live with the preacher" because we had gotten the old preacher had gone and his son was now the preacher and he was super cool. He was nothing like his father. He was real young. I used to think he and his wife reminded me of the Kennedy's. I said, "Let me live with Steve." They said, "You can't do that. You've got to grow up with us."

"Oh please?" They wouldn't listen. So from the sixth grade on my life was just fucked.

JG: Because you would go to Florida for the school year and come back to Michigan in the summer?

BW: I always missed all my friends in Michigan because I had gone to school with them for seven years. The first thing I would do was get a yearbook from somebody and just look at it. I just wanted to be there so bad. In seventh grade I was planning on trying out for a junior high cheerleader and I bet I would have got it because I was politically savvy. I'd have... I probably would have talked kids into voting for me. I really wanted it, and I think they would have because they wouldn't have thought anything about it they would have always thought, "Yeah, that's David. So what if we've never had a boy cheerleader before, David is David."

JG: Why didn't you like any, once you were in Florida you didn't like any of the boys in Florida?

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BW: It was horrible. Well they put me in a Christian based school. Most of those kids had known each other. I didn't know them. Instantly I had to make a whole new group of friends, I had to get a whole new group of protectors. I was the class sissy immediately.

JG: Where were you in Florida?

BW: Saint Petersburg.

JG: So you were in a Christian school now as opposed to a regular public school when you were in Michigan?

BW: Yes, you are right. That was different.

JG: That made a different environment.

BW: So now it was like even worse now. I didn't even have my double life I could live at school. Surprisingly for Christian kids they could be very mean. I finally made friends but it took I never fit in and...

JG: Junior high is the toughest, for me it was the toughest years and for many people will say that.

BW: In junior high?

JG: Yes and that's when you arrived there was to come right into.

BW: That's good to hear because I've always thought it was the wrong thing at the wrong time. I had just arrived in the seventh grade and that's when you, you know you weren't anything until you got to the seventh grade. Then you could be in junior high this and junior high that and you weren't a kid anymore. At that point, that's when they yanked me out. So just when I had built up to that point, where the girls that I had been friends with would be trying out for cheerleaders and the guys I knew would be in the

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junior high team, I was like robbed of it. So I went there for three years and through the eighth grade and I can remember, and then I can remember having friends at church and I always, I remember specifically this one time that my friend Jimmy invited me and my friend Skipper out to his place for a Saturday. We all went swimming or something and he said, "We'd better shower. Let's just all get in the shower together." Jimmy was built like a God I mean he just had a great body. He had already gone through puberty, had dark hair, he was handsome and I was... it took everything I had not to get a boner. So here were three of us in the shower and just fooling around and just soaping up. I was in heaven. But I know we went... when we went on the eighth grade at this school that was it there wasn't anything beyond it. So we went on a class trip. For some reason we went to a dude ranch camp. Well I can tell you I did everything I could to make sure I knew what everybody's dick looked like.

JG: Was the dude ranch camp in Florida?

BW: Yeah I mean everybody in my class because this was the first time I really had a chance to... you know go out swimming we had showers and stuff. And of course I always tried to learn how to do it. One thing I developed real quick was I realized you can't stare at a guy's dick. So what I did was I learned how to cough. I would just, "cough" and that was just enough time to, you know when you are coughing your head can go anyplace right. So I would [cough] and it would give me just enough time to take a photograph in my brain. Once I had a photograph of their dick you know it was good forever. I know to this day, I remember exactly how everybody's dick was shaped and which ones I liked, which ones I didn't.

JG: Wow so in junior high you've got all that figured out?

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BW: Well and then I had... on top of all this I had a major problem that probably most kids never have to deal with. I don't know why but I didn't go through puberty until the second half of my freshman year of college.

JG: Really?

BW: If you want to know what hell was like, it's being in high school and being in a locker room and you are the only one who hasn't got pubic hair. I mean I felt like...

JG: So this is just adding onto everything else?

BW: Yeah. I felt absolutely humiliated. It was just, it was the most horrifying thing in the world. I just... and my mother, even one day when she... for some reason I told her something or I was real depressed or something. She said, "Oh well, I'll take you over to the doctor." So he went over and looked at me and said, "Oh no, he's okay, it will happen." Because she thought maybe I needed hormone shots. But nothing ever happened. I remember the first time I got any little public hair in my crotch it was like, "Yes finally!" It was such a relief. But I never wanted people to see me. But after the eighth grade then I went to a boarding school in North Carolina for four years, three years actually. I stayed home my junior year. My father was on the board of several religious groups because of the fact that he had money. They liked to get him on there because he was very... well he was a successful businessman too. He was on the board of a school in Ashville, North Carolina. It was a school that had about 200 kids and it was mainly for missionary kids to stay at while their parents were on the mission field when they were in high school. My oldest brother had been there for two years, my middle brother had been there for two years, and then I went there. Well surprisingly enough I actually found it easier to live there then I did at home because even though we had a real regimented life,

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it was different then having to answer to my parents. Not only that, but I got to see guys naked all the time in the dorm. I mean you know, and most of those guys were absolutely, I mean you weren't supposed to go out of your room if you didn't have a bath robe on. I mean it was so bad that there was literally you know it would be like someone would yell out, "Woman on the hall" if a woman was coming because they didn't know if some naked guy would be walking down the hall to the shower. So I got my eyeful all the time after athletics, all the guys in the shower room. You know, again, I was always embarrassed as hell that I hadn't gone through puberty but I sure got an eyeful and I was even so smart because the seniors were the ones... that was the senior privilege you didn't have to use the showers in the shower room you could use the showers in your dorm. Well the first year I was there that meant I never got, I wasn't able to see the senior guys naked. So I figured out every excuse in the world to get on the senior dorm, especially after we had a soccer game because I knew they would all have to shower.

JG: At the same time and being there at once.

BW: So for some reason it was just, I am just amazed how clever I was. I always had an excuse and I would go down there to do whatever it was and it would just happen these guys would just walk through the hall with their towels around their neck bare ass naked, their dicks swinging from side to side. I, of course, again I was just pretending like I wasn't even seeing anything coughing a lot.

JG: I bet you were coughing a lot at that point.

BW: I mean sometimes I would even do things like open up the door to the shower room and say, "Does anybody know what time that special meeting is tonight?" Of course I knew exactly when it was. "7:15, 7:00" "Oh yeah I guess that's when it was."

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But I remember when some of the alumni would come back for homecoming weekend.

They would usually stay in the junior and senior dorms. Same thing! I made sure that I got down there and somehow I tried to see them with their clothes off. I was just obsessed with it.

JG: Did you have any idea that you were not the only person in the world that was like this or did you deal with it at all or did you just...?

BW: I thought I was the only person in the world that was like that.

JG: At which point did that end that you figured out that you were part of a whole population of people?

BW: That came in college.

JG: All the way in college?

BW: Oh yeah.

JG: So you were there for three years and then you went home for your junior year?

BW: My middle brother had graduated so he was in college and he was going to college in Michigan at bible school.

JG: So everyone is still, the prep school is bible school and now they are going to college in bible school?

BW: My brother now even prides himself in the fact that his two children never ever have had one minute of public education.

JG: Wow!

BW: From kindergarten up through...

JG: So they have successfully passed this down to two of their sons? They are taking it to a whole another generation.

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BW: Actually my brother has two girls. It turned out that both of them are on Facebook and the oldest one asked me to be her friend and I have discovered that she is launching out on her own. Like she mentioned something out there about Twilight, you know the movie? I said, "You mean like Twilight the movie?" She said, "Yeah!" I said, "Well I love that movie."

JG: That's got to be...

BW: The next thing you know... I thought "this is fun" I've got a niece that is doing all this stuff she's not supposed to be doing.

JG: Right!

BW: But my brother was gone, so it was the empty nest syndrome. My mother said, "I want you to stay home." I went to public school for one year and it was so horrifying. It was just, I was not prepped for it. I just, it was awful.

JG: So that would be which year do you remember your junior year?

BW: That would be my junior year.

JG: Which would be do you remember what date it was?

BW: Yeah it was '63 to '64.

JG: So there are a lot of changes going on and what you are going to find when you are going to a public school and you haven't been in one since the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

BW: It was totally different because these were real wordly kids. They swore, they cussed. They fucked girls and I wasn't prepared for it at all whatsoever in any sense. They all had known each other. It was like the difference. It was hardball there. It got so bad there was one class that I had to go in, the history class. I had such an inferiority complex I couldn't even speak in public. Sometimes the teacher used to have different

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ones of us read a portion and I remember one day he got to me and I was just paralyzed and I started to read and I remember people turning to look at me as I was gasping for air. I couldn't get the words out. I was like, "And... somebody... went... to..." and after a paragraph I think he decided to move on to somebody else. Every six weeks we had to give a report, an oral report. I was always the first one that popped up because I wanted to just get it over with, it was such hell for me. I totally didn't feel like I fit in. I remember I had made some comment to somebody about being a cheerleader. They said, "Oh well, you're going to look cute in a skirt." I won't try that. Fortunately you didn't have to take P.E. there. I don't know why because I would have been absolutely I would have been wiped out if I had to. Of course that meant I didn't get to see a lot of guys in the shower room but. But I had other ways. Like in the bathrooms there's a couple urinals. They didn't have vanity things back then so I did the cough thing a lot taking a peak.

JG: So you were that kid that coughed all the time?

BW: I remember I used to do that at Atlanta airport too when I was flying back and forth. Because Atlanta had gotten this new airport and they have this whole string of urinals, about twenty of them. I'd be sitting there in the middle of Atlanta airport waiting to catch my plane, because it was like maybe a three or four hour layover and I'd see some hot guy walk up to the bathroom and man I was heading right there. I can even remember once and here's twenty urinals...

JG: You entertained yourself in the bathroom?

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BW: There is this hot looking go and I go like not next to him but the next one and I think he looked at me like, "What are you doing there? There's twenty urinals here can't you give me a little privacy?" But it was like...

JG: No! That's funny.

BW: But that, the one thing though about that year about being at home was that probably was the thing that had the biggest impact on my life was when President Kennedy was killed. So I got to see the whole thing unfold. It would have been different if I had been at the, we couldn't have TV's. Actually I found out they did get a TV that weekend.

JG: They did?

BW: They did. But of course I got to see the whole thing. I remember before the election they told us in our church that if JFK was elected that the Pope would run the country.

JG: That the Pope would ruin the country?

BW: Yes, run the country.

JG: Run the country?

BW: Yes. Because a Catholic has to obey the Pope and so JFK would have to do whatever the Pope said. Well JFK came out and said, "That's ridiculous." Of course they didn't believe that but I remember going to bed that night because it was such a close race and I was terrified that JFK would win.

JG: And that the Pope would run the country?

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BW: So I was just like sick to my stomach when I got up and found out that Nixon had lost. But the day of the inauguration they had a TV and I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, they brought a TV in I mean the minute I saw Jackie out I was in love. I thought...

JG: That changed everything!

BW: I thought wow this woman is so super cool! I don't care what my parents think they are cool, they are hot! I couldn't wait to get a hold of the Life magazine every week and see what Jackie was doing, what she was wearing. You know she did that White House, actually I was at school when they did that White House tour and it was like 20 years later somebody actually found out I'd never seen it and got a video copy of it. That was before it was available like it is now. I was fascinated with it, she was so good. But I remember that day being in school and I was in a math class and first of all this thing came over the intercom that the President had been shot. It was strange because exactly a week before he had been in Tampa. A lot of kids had skipped school to go over there. They even made the announcement, "Anybody that skips school to see the president will be counted tardy or whatever you call it, absent from school." It won't be an excused absence. But lots of kids did, I remember them coming back and telling me what a beautiful tan he had. So he had been there, that was just a week before and then suddenly... the minute I heard that all I could think was, "Well if you are the President of the United States, they can operate on you and they can do anything." Well when they said he was dead I just couldn't believe it.

But to show you how petty these people at church were. I used to... the one thing I could do that made me feel like I could do something is I used to make the Sunday programs, the bulletins. I'd mimeograph them. I did it on Friday afternoons. So I had the

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thing all typed up and... because my mother had taught me to type at a real early age. So I took it over there to run it off and I had left a little space in there. So I thought maybe we could put a little picture of... because they had these little mimeograph graphics that you could paste in there. I thought we could put a candle in there and say something in memory of President Kennedy. So I got there and I went up to the preacher and I said, "You know, I left a little space here." I said, "I was wondering if maybe we should put something about President Kennedy?" He thought for a minute and he said, "No I don't think so." And I'm thinking, today, "Talk about small! That is just utterly, totally and completely small!" I'm sure in their minds that's what they thought was, "That's what happens to people that are worldly. They get shot!" But you know that whole weekend was just absolutely just mind blowing for me. You know when Jackie came out at the funeral I was just hypnotized. She was so classy and then it was all over. Then I was so sad because the Kennedy's were like, well there was a lot written about her but you know they weren't in the news and those were the Johnsons. But that had a big impact on my life.

Actually what I didn't mention was that back in the sixth grade I started buying comic books and I just, like Batman, Superman. I loved them. They were always miles ahead socially of the rest of the world. For some reason I always thought if they were real characters they would take care of it. They wouldn't let anybody pick on me because I wasn't real athletic. So I always had my heroes. But I went back, my junior year too my mother said to me... well I'll have to admit of the three boys in the family, I probably got the best looks. I really had, really grown up in that year and I was six feet tall and I was slim and I liked to dress well. She'd given up on my other two brothers. So anyway

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she said to me, she said my ears stuck up like Alfred E. Newman. She said, "You know your brother's best friend has a sister who works for a plastic surgeon. And you know they can do things now where they pull your ears back." So she took me over to a mirror and said, "How do you think you'd look with them?" I thought about that for a week and said, "Okay." So I had my ears pulled back.

JG: Really in your junior year in high school?

BW: Then I remember afterwards first thing I did was I went and I got what I called a Kennedy haircut because I always had longer hair but I wanted to have more of a short cut, they called them Princeton's back then. So that was cool. It really changed my whole looks too. So when I went back to this college or back to this boarding school my senior year not only was I tall, I got my ears back, I had a different hair cut. I'd worked aside all summer clearing the land in front of our house between our house and the beach and I had gotten a great tan so it was like I walked in and people were like, "Who are you?" People would say...

JG: You can go ahead I'm just going to turn this over.

BW: Would say, "You really look different!" I'd say, "Yeah I got a different hair cut." Nobody ever figured it out.

JG: No. You had gone an entire year?

BW: Is that running okay?

JG: We're good. So you went there for your senior year?

BW: Senior year.

JG: So you graduated?

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BW: Actually I had gone there and I had practiced all summer because it turned out my freshman year for some reason they decided to have boy cheerleaders. I tried out my freshman and sophomore year and never made it. I tried out my freshman year and didn't make it. I tried out my sophomore and they decided not to have any junior high cheerleaders at all. I don't know why. Then I wasn't there my junior year. Well I practiced and practiced and practiced. I almost learned how to do a flip except I kept landing on my back and knocking the wind out of me. I wanted so bad to be a cheerleader. So I got back and discovered they weren't going to have tryouts for guys and I went to the head master and asked him why and he said, "I feel a spiritual check on that!" I said, "What is that?" He said, "Well I don't think the Lord, the Lord is telling me that we shouldn't." I said, "Could you pray about it?" He said, "Alright." I said, "Okay I'll come back in a week. I'll pray about it too." I came back in a week and I prayed every night. I prayed to God. He said, "No the Lord is still leading me not to." After that I just gave up. I just thought... I just wanted to get out of there and go someplace else because I just, I had nothing that I could feel like, I could feel proud of myself.

JG: That you were good at and you could be proud of and you could excel.

BW: Here I still was this guy, this hairless guy and there were already comments that people made. I remember I went to one guy's room one day and there were about eight or nine guys there and he had a family picture of himself. Missionaries tended to take family pictures. His brother was so cute. I just looked and I said, "Who is that is that your brother?" I was looking at it and he said, "Yeah, what are you, interested in him?"

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JG: Ah!

BW: But I did tend to have a lot of interpersonal problems. I didn't really get along with my roommates that well. I don't know why. I think it was mostly about I was already rebelling against all this stuff and they were more religious. So I was forever getting called in and counseled. Then there was this ridiculous thing you had to go through to have a date. They felt that people shouldn't go steady. That wasn't the Lord's will. Also that all girls should be invited to something so here is what you had to do when it was a thing you could take a girl to. First of all you decided who it was and you went to your counselor and said, "Can I take her?" If he said, "Yes" then you ask the girl. Then if she said, "Okay I'll talk to my counselor." Then she'd go back and talk to her counselor and then if her counselor okayed it she would come back and tell you yes. Then you could go.

JG: Oh my gosh!

BW: Now if the girl decided she didn't want to go with you. She couldn't accept any other date for that event.

JG: These are such strict rules for people at that age to try to get to go somewhere and socialize.

BW: Also you couldn't date the same girl twice in a row unless somebody else had dated her in between. So the kids that liked each other they would like you to have deals with each other, "I'll date Diane if you date Sue." So... well unfortunately my freshman year I fool heartedly asked one of the best looking girls in the sophomore class to go with me. She came back and said, "Well there's so many friends that are going to be here. I really kind of want to be with them. I'd rather just go by myself." Which was basically

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just saying, "I don't want to go with you, you're a dork." There was somebody that wanted to take her and he got me in the bathroom and got me up against the wall and was just, he was ready to hit me. He said, "Do you realize what you've done? I wanted to take her." God I was scared to death. But I dated girls, just because I had to. The one thing that always was always kind of funny was that I quickly found the flower shop up town because on Saturdays we could hitchhike into town if we had hitchhike permission or there was a bus that would take us in.

JG: This was in Ashville right?

BW: Ashville and it was maybe like five miles outside of Ashville. And so I quickly found a flower shop there and everybody else would go through their counselor to order the corsages but I wouldn't. I would always go down there and pick out exactly what I wanted. Well everybody else was getting red and white carnations and I would get sweetheart roses. You know the minute I would walk in, especially for a big event where they had a corsage, the minute the girl would see that box, it was like her eyes would get big. You know obviously every other girl was envying her the whole night. Well then some of the other guys would say, "Where did you get those flowers? Those are cool!" So I told them. Then they started doing it. Then I thought, "Well this is not going to work." So then I changed to coral. Because everybody else was getting red sweetheart, or pink, and then my date walks in with this coral and then all the girls go, "Shit!"

JG: Oh how funny!

BW: It was my one little chance. That was actually the beauty of going to school there was this was my big coup, was I discovered my freshman year, I was always fascinated

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with newspapers and periodicals. I found a couple newsstands. That was back in the days when you went to newsstands where they had 200 magazines.

JG: Exactly huge...okay so wait a minute, so senior year?

BW: No this was my freshman year.

JG: In college?

BW: My freshman year of high school.

JG: Oh back to the freshman year of high school.

BW: If you can believe it.

JG: So '60...

BW: In Ashville, because we could go uptown and I could go alone or you could go with somebody. Well I would usually go alone because I wanted to shop on my own. Anyways, I always wanted to see like Look magazine. Usually I didn't have enough money to buy it but I just wanted to see if the Kennedy's were on the front and if they were I'd look through it real quick before the guy at the counter would say, "Stop looking at those magazines and buy it!" Well then one day I look up and there is a little magazine called "Physique." "Fizeek" it had a guy on there in a posing strap and I looked all around and oh man, wow... so my heart was just beating. Well first of all I didn't know... I took it up to the counter, to the register and I thought they were going to tell me I was too young. He said, "How old are you?" I said... I lied, and I'm looking. "Well okay." He put it in a bag. He took the money. He just wanted my money. I guess he really didn't care. I took that back to school and in the bathrooms we had the toilets thank God were enclosed and they had locked doors on them so I could go in there and

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beat off. I think it was the end of my freshman year I finally discovered the joys of masturbation.

JG: And you found the Fizeek magazine.

BW: Yeah and I actually liked to do it so much, and to this day it's a wonder I didn't hurt myself. I figured out a way where I could lay in bed, even in the middle of the day, because we didn't have locks on the doors. So if it was... I couldn't take my pants down so I would just be beating out. But I didn't want to cum in my pants and I would just stick my finger there and it would keep anything from coming out, although I do remember one time I was...

JG: Were there... how many people were in a room?

BW: Two.

JG: So it was like a regular college dorm?

BW: But a lot of times my roommates, I was the one that was never involved in anything so in the afternoon if it wasn't athletic time then I was just kind of by myself studying or beating off. But I mean a couple of times people almost caught me but, you know I'd just take my hand out real quick. Except I remember one time it was about 15 minutes before, 10 minutes before supper and I was up in my room and my roommate wasn't there and I was over by the sink and I was in my bath robe and I got horny and I beat off and just as I started to cum he walked into the room. I just pulled my bath robe and leaned up against the sink and I could feel the stuff squirt all over in there. "Oh God I hope it doesn't start dripping down my leg." Thank God he just grabbed his money or something. He took off.

JG: Oh how funny.

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BW: Nobody ever caught me. So I used to buy those things, the damn thing was though I would beat off and then I would get convicted and think, "I've done something horrible." Half the time I would sit there and tear those things up and flush them down.

JG: The whole magazine?

BW: Yeah. Then the next day I'd think, "Shit!" So then I'd go down the next week and buy the same thing again. Well you know it was the same thing with the posing straps, you know you couldn't hardly see anything but then every once in a while you'd get lucky and you could sort of see the tip of their dick and once in a while you could see a little bit of pubic hair. Oh God those were like treasures for me. But I think the two stories that I remember the most about just utter frustration, what it can do to a kid when you are so closeted and yet you've got such a strong libido. There was a guy named Burton Pot, what a horrible name, but he was as handsome as all get out and he was the most athletic guy in school. He was also friendly. I was just absolutely in love with Burton. And I'd seen him naked and he had a great dick and everything. Well one time, one day during a game I mean I used to just get these wild things that came over me. While everybody was up top I went around down into the locker room and I knew where his locker was and I went into his locker and he had a jock strap in there and I pulled it out and he had two pubic hairs in there and I pulled them out and I put them in my pocket and then when I got back into my room I got an envelope and put them in there. Sometimes I used to just take them out and just brush them on my face. I wanted to have sex so bad with a guy. Then another time Burton was... well we went to different churches. I think every semester you could change but...

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JG: Who took you to church? The school people would take you down there on Sundays?

BW: Yes but there were a couple of churches that most of the kids went to so they would go on the two busses but there were two or three other smaller churches that not that many went. Yeah I think you had like five you could pick from. Well I knew that Burton was going to go to the smaller one and so we would always go in private cars. Well anyway one day he was asked to drive the car. Anyways I was determined, because we sat three people in the front, that when I came back I was going to sit next to him. This was my chance and he looked so stud that day. He had this long winter coat down to here and he just looked... he was a dream. So after church I just instantly got over to the car. Well anyway when we are getting ready to get in the car for some reason I think another guy decided to get in the front seat from the driver's side and I just jumped in and got right in the middle. I said, "Sorry I got this." He tried to push me over. I said, "No, I got this!"

JG: How funny!

BW: "Come on let me, slide over!" I said, "No you have to come over here and sit next to the window. So then he came over and then of course Burton got in and drove the car and just like that was 40 minutes of my life I was in heaven because it was so tight. I could press right in next to him. I could smell him. I could just feel the warmth of his body. He was always so friendly and he would be over there looking at me laughing and joking with everybody in the car and I'm thinking "I'm his "date." So that was my traumatic years in high school.

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JG: So you graduated and it became time to go to college? You went back to Florida I assume?

BW: Actually there was another thing about that school. In '64 I remember that is when they published that Life magazine.

JG: You remember it?

BW: Actually I've got a copy of it here. I tried to lay my hands on it. I bought it off

the internet last year because it meant so much to me, so I've actually got a copy of it. I

had seen it at home because my mother had always got Life magazine. Obviously even

though I liked to... I would keep magazines sometimes if the Kennedy's were in them.

But my mother for some reason, you know just had a photographic mind and she knew

what magazines were there and when she was going to toss them out. So I thought... if

that one goes missing she'll know. So unfortunately I had to watch her throw it out, you

know or do whatever she did with it. But then when I got to school the next year my

senior year they had Life magazine in the school library. Well they only had the most

current issues for like a month or two but you could ask for back issues and like once a

week I'd go up and ask but I would always get a different librarian assistant because I

didn't want them to see the pattern. I would ask that and I would go way into a corner

and I would sit there and open it up and hold it up like this and just look through it and

look at it and especially the beginning, I loved those guys in that leather bar. I thought

they were so fucking hot.

JG: Amazing, so good. It's an amazing photograph.

BW: I would just look at it and think, man these are really queer guys?

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JG: So at this point you for sure know that you weren't alone anymore and that there were a larger group so did you associate yourself with them?

BW: You know I thought about that question real hard and I thought the best answer I can give you is Brokeback Mountain. Remember that line where after they had sex they were out in the hill and one guy looks up and says, "By the way I want you to know I'm not queer." That was it. I knew that I liked guys but I also thought I wasn't queer. I compartmentalized it with sin and my freshman year of college I started keeping a diary and I used... when I went back to look at it I used to have abbreviations. I would say, "I" still having a problem with "H" and "M" homosexuality and masturbation. Well because we weren't supposed to masturbate.

JG: Yeah.

BW: In fact one year I think it was my junior year the preacher in my church called me in and said, "I don't mean to get to personal but you know you're a young guy and I just sort of sensed that maybe you might have a problem. Do you have a problem with... do you know what masturbation is?" Oh God and I panicked. "Yes." He said, "Well you know the Lord doesn't like it." They used to call it self-abuse. We used to have these big lectures about what to do, "Go to athletics and get...so that you are real tired and that that was wrong, to spill the seed was wrong, and if you had wet dreams then you were a good Christian because that's how the Lord meant for it. But you were not meant to... and I was doing it all the time. Anyway so I had to report to him once a week if I had. And I really tried but usually half the time I would go back and I would say, "I really tried but the devil got the best of me." So we would pray that the Lord would somehow lift this burden from me. Thankfully I went off to school and never heard anything more

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about that. He also gave me a little book about it. It was a little booklet for young men about sex it was only about that. I started reading it and then I got to this one about “strange uncles.”

JG: It had a section on “strange uncles” and what did it say?

BW: Who are too friendly. I thought, “Oh my God, he knows, he knows!”

JG: How wild!

BW: But afterwards he gave it back to me and he said, “Well what did you think?” I said, “Well it was pretty interesting.” I was always terrified I was on the verge of discovery but I never touched a guy, ever, ever. Wouldn’t have thought of having sex.

Had no idea my brother was gay. Because he totally, he acted totally straight. So did I know there were people out there? Yes and no. I knew there were those people in Life magazine.

JG: Yes because you had seen Life now.

BW: Yeah it was almost like they were... there was this other world, this netherworld in Life magazine that I could open up and be in that bar with those guys in leather and look at it. Actually I remember another funny thing. I had an 8 millimeter movie camera and projector and I had gotten, I actually ordered a little bit of this porn. It’s not really porn, but you know. They had like ads for movies and I ordered this one movie where these guys were like thieves and they broke into a place where a guy made statutes and there are all these other guys were supposed to be statutes and posing in straps and they come to life and they have sex with the guys. They didn’t have sex but they are playing around. So I got this thing and again my heart was beating. I was...

JG: Make sure everybody was gone.

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BW: Yeah it was a school but right in the middle of course my roommate walked in. I snapped it. "What are you looking at?" "Nothing I just actually finished it here." They knew I had home made." "Let me see it." "No I want to edit it. You can see it another night but not now. I don't want you to see this stuff until it really looks good." Then one day I got real convicted and I chopped it up into little pieces and flushed it down the toilet.

JG: Oh you poor guy!

BW: So...

JG: Your penance to chop things up and flush them down the toilet.

BW: So then my freshman year of college I went to a bible college in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I remember before even going there my brother had told me that there were two or three guys there that he said, "They are queer as three dollar bills."

JG: Which brother told you that?

BW: My middle brother because he was there at school too. I tried again to be a cheerleader. They never had one there but I actually got to a point where I got a uniform but I never could really get it to where I was out there doing the cheers with them. I don't know I just never worked it out and then finally it got to be so stressful for me I just gave up on it. Except I made sure we had a picture taken I was the editor of the yearbook because nobody else wanted to do it. So I got the picture in there. Then after I got that year book I sent it back to the head master that had told me the year before that we couldn't have cheer leaders. "I just thought you might like to see this."

JG: That's funny!

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BW: Actually that was my big moment, was actually college was different because well like for example I was real friendly but I wasn't interested in girls except I knew the talk. If someone got nice knockers or stuff, "She's really hot," but I didn't date anybody. I wasn't really interested in anybody except to like an event. But this one girl, her name was Sharon Pratt and she worked in somebody's office and she was real friendly and once in a while when I would walk through the administration building I'd see her and she's say, "Hi David" and I'd say, "Hi" and we'd chat for five minutes and she really liked me. Well at the end, kind of in February we had what we called Royalty weekend because we couldn't have Homecoming dances and all but they wanted to have queens. So they had a girl from each class and it was down to two for the junior class and then everyone voted one of the two would be queen. Well it was Sharon, Sharon was picked to be one of them. I thought, "Oh my God my friend Sharon how cool!" Then Edna who was real popular, I mean like super popular. I mean this sounds silly but she was like, when she punched her ticket at the end of the line when you ate, when you went to the cafeteria, everybody knew Edna. I was sure Edna was going to get voted. But Sharon came up to me a couple days before and said, "My boyfriend," (whatever his name was) "Is up in Wisconsin and doesn't have the money to fly down here. I was wondering if you would like escort me during Royalty weekend?" I thought, "Wow!" So we are there that night and they announced and I'm all set to hear the name Edna and they announced that it was Sharon.

JG: And you are the escort?

BW: Yeah I turned to this girl next to me and I said, "Oh my God. I'm the queen's escort!" Well then we had a basketball game the next day and they had it all fixed up

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with a thing and a big old heart and they said, "Queen Sharon" and they had this little platform and two chairs up there and we had to walk in and I can remember standing there and right before they were about to announce us I just about blacked out. I was so terrified. I remember walking out there and I could see my brother and his girlfriend in the stands. My brother must have just been, "Ugh" because he didn't really like me that much and he must have been like, "How did my brother..." "How did my fucking queer brother get to escort the queen!" So we got to sit there... it was almost like I was the king. We sat there and clapped every time we made and we'd stand up every time they did. Well then it turned out that people got together and surprised her and collected money and flew her boyfriend in for the banquet so he actually took her to that, thank God, because by that time I was already stressed out. I made sure I got lots of pictures with me with the queen in the yearbook too.

JG: How fun!

BW: Yeah that was fun. I was still up to my same old thing of doing everything I could to memorize everyone's cocks. I remember this one guy, Don Morris, and my brother said he was queer as a three dollar bill. He was one of the top basketball players. I remember once when I was, some nights I had to actually take pictures or be there to set them up because nobody else was interested in the yearbook. We were setting up the varsity team and I had the photographer there and I said... the guy said, "Now you are going to have to get in closer." So they got in closer and one of them made a joke about, about, "Well how close are we supposed to get? Do you think we are queer or something?" Don said something, "Well you know 10% of people are!" Well he never came in the shower room when everybody else did. I never could figure that out. Well

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one night I saw him about 11:30 at night. It was real late. He was walking down the shower room and I was down there. I remember when I walked in he said, “Isn’t it awful late for you to be in here?” I said, “Yeah yeah this is the first chance I had to take a shower.” But again I memorized everyone’s dicks. Finally I started to grow pubic hair my second half of my freshman year. Boy that sure was a relief. But I was so in love with guys. I was constantly in high school and in college I always had a crush on somebody and it was to the point that it was obsessive. It was like...

JG: You were never, you didn’t ever act on anything?

BW: I couldn’t do it. To the point that I was terrified to be around them because they were so awesome. But if I ever got into a situation where I interfaced with them I would lose my breath. I do remember my freshman year of college the class president happened to be one of my roommates, we had three roommates then. He didn’t really have any place to go at vacation. I guess its vacation and I said, “Why don’t you come down and stay with me in Florida?” For some reason there was a Volkswagen mini bus, I thinks my father had bought it in Michigan and it had to get down to Florida and he said, “Well why don’t you two drive it down here? So we did.” I remember, you know, we had to stay overnight a couple of times and so one night I stopped and I said, “Well I’ll go in and get the room.” I said, “I need a room.” “One or two beds?” I said, “Two beds.” Then I said, “Oh wait... make that one bed.” So I went out to him and I said, “Oh look I’m really sorry John but they only had one room left and it’s got just one big bed.” Well I remember in the middle of the night. I’m like pretending like I’m asleep and I just started tossing and turning. I was such a little actor and one time I just happened to toss a little further so my head just kind of landed on his shoulder and again I was like “snore.”

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Like I was asleep and after a couple of minutes I'd flip back over. Well the next day he said, "Did you know that you were like real close to me last night?" I said, "No!" "Did I do anything?" "No you were just sleeping real close to me for a while there." "Oh well I'm glad you told me. I don't remember I was asleep all night but I toss and turn a lot. If I get too close again just push me away." Of course I knew exactly what I was doing, it was like this moment of heaven when I could just make contact with somebody's skin. I did the same thing after him my freshman year there was this guy who was just a big stud but he was real friendly and he had invited me to come and spend the weekend with him. I mean back then people did that all the time.

JG: Yeah.

BW: I did the same thing with him. The next day he said, "Did you realize?" I said, "No." Then he even asked me if maybe I had a problem about that. I said, "No." He said, "Are you sure?" "Yeah." "Are you positive?" "Yeah." I've often wondered if I just said... "What would you say if I said 'yes'?" I like to fantasize that he would have said, "Well I'd tell you I had the same problem."

JG: Yeah.

BW: And that he would take his towel off and we'd have sex... but I endured that. Then after my sophomore year, well in my sophomore year of college the last second quarter my brother and I moved out of the dorm. We moved into an apartment. We convinced my mother of that. That was nice because I had wanted to go and become a doctor like my oldest brother. So I was actually going to a junior college and then another college to try and make up for it so it was easier for me to get all around. I remember one night I saw that there was going to be a program about "the homosexual"

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and my brother wasn't there. It was on CBS. I've got a copy, well actually it's now on the internet. You can go and watch it on Youtube. Mike Wallace did it and my brother wasn't there and I was watching it and halfway through it the door opened and he came in. He said, "What are you watching?" I said, "Oh just this CBS special." It came back on and he said, "What is this? Is this some special about queers? What are you watching a special about queers for? Are you queer?" "No. I'd just like to know what's going on in the world." I kept thinking, "Get out of the room, get out of the room so I can listen to this show!" So that summer I stayed there, my brother got married and I stayed there and I decided to work as an orderly in the hospital. Because I thought, "Well you know if I want to be a doctor I'd better start at the bottom and clean up people's asses." So I went to work it was like at the geriatrics unit with the old people. So we had a lot of poop to clean up. I got used to that pretty quick. Slicing carrots, it's what you do, you clean up shit. There were two, there were three of us. There was me and Larry Phelps and I can't remember the third guy I think his name was David and David was so stuck up. But Larry Phelps one night after work he said, "How would you like to come over to my place for a while and visit." I said, "Okay." So I came over there and he lived up in a second story. I remember they had a little bar there and they had these bumper stickers and I went and I saw one of them and it said, "The Green Hornet is a fag." I looked at it and I said, "Oh that's funny." He said, "Do you know what a fag is?" I said, "Well yes, but I didn't know the Green Hornet is too. That's just sort of funny." So anyway we were just, I did happen to notice his roommates weren't there at the time. I did notice there was a bunch of books in a bookshelf up there and there was a picture of two guys together. And I thought well they must be really good friends. But anyways, he and I are

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sitting there talking and all of the sudden the door bell rings and Larry goes down to answer the door and I heard this voice, "Girl how in the world are you?"

JG: How funny.

BW: So these guys came up and there were two or three of them and they were such queens and they were just, "la, ta, da..." And they stayed for about an hour or an hour and a half and then they left. Afterwards Larry said, "Well I guess you know my secret now." I said, "What secret?" He said, "That I'm gay." I said, "You are?" He said, "You couldn't tell?" I said, "Well, no." He said, "Man they were reading my beads." I said, "Oh." I said, "Are your roommates gay?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Oh." He said, "You're gay aren't you?" "No."

JG: Oh no!

BW: "Oh," he said, "I thought you were." "No I'm not gay." But I said, "I want you to understand even though I know it's wrong, even though my church tells me it's wrong it's okay with me if you're gay it's just that I wish you could find one guy and stick with him because you told me about all these guys you've had sex with you know airline pilots and stuff. I just wish you could not be so promiscuous. He was like, "Uh." His big dream was to go to Finnnochio's and work as a drag queen in San Francisco. So I do remember one time though he came to me and (this is so terrible) there was a guy who was up there in the geriatric unit actually because he had been in a car accident and he was like brain dead. But anyway and he was on a catheter and Larry said to me. He said, "Have you ever..." (and I never worked that thing). He says, "I'm working this unit. Come on over here. Have you ever seen this guy's dick?" I said, "No." He said, "Come on over here you've got to see this." So he pulled the sheet back. Well this guy had a

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gorgeous cock. I mean that's terrible. I know that's against everything ethical in the world but it's like I was looking at it and I just started smiling. I just said, "I guess his wife probably misses that." But he and I both had a hard on for David but I never would let on. So that came and went.

JG: So you still?

BW: So that's when I finally, that was the first official gay person that I had met.

JG: Yes!

BW: And I never forgot Larry and my life was never the same. I mean I had finally come into touch with someone. They were not these strange people lurking in hallways. But I also found out quickly in Grand Rapids, where to find these little Fizeek magazines and I used to buy them regularly. Only up there I used to do, it was different, we were kind of out in the country and lots of time I would take I would pull, there would be little side roads back in the woods and I would just sort of pull back in there and pull out my magazines and beat off in the car. I do remember in my senior year of high school at the end of it we went to Washington for a week and we were in an Oriental restaurant and I had to go to the bathroom and I went down there and I was sitting in the stall and I looked over and somebody had written a story up there about it was raining and I went down with him and you know his pants were tight and then he pulled out and I could see his cock and then I'm reading this and I'm like, "Oh boy!" and all of the sudden I looked up and there was this eye ball looking at me. "Um...Do you want something?" I was like, "I'll be out of here in a minute." So then the eyeball sort of pulled away and it was like, I zipped my pants up. I didn't even bother to wash my hands and flush the toilet. I was just out of there. I don't even know what the guy looked like. But I was terrified.

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JG: That scared you to death? When you got... so towards the end of college and when you finally came in contact with a person what year was this?

BW: That was '67, summer of '67.

JG: Okay so you went from college to?

BW: Then I went to Baylor for my last two years in Waco.

JG: That's where I went to school.

BW: You did?

JG: Yeah.

BW: In Waco?

JG: Yeah.

BW: For God's sake!

JG: I didn't get there until '74.

BW: Well then I was gone in '69. I graduated in '69. What a year to graduate!

JG: How appropriate.

BW: What was ironic about that was Baylor had never had female cheerleaders.

JG: Like A&M.

BW: They only had boy cheerleaders. They called them "Yell Leaders."

JG: I didn't realize that because of course when I was there they had both.

BW: The second year I was there they made a big deal for homecoming weekend because they decided they wanted to make a good impression on the alumni because they knew there was going to be a ruckus because they had decided to have female cheerleaders for the first time. I wanted to try out my first year and I went over and watched them practicing one day and I was too terrified. I thought these guys are way

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too good I could never do it so I didn't. But the head cheerleader was in one of my classes. So I had this super gigantic crush on him. Those things were really, they just wiped me out in high school and college. They took away so much. I was so depressed all the time. That's why I spent a lot of time sleeping because I couldn't get these guys out of my mind. You know I obsessed about them. I wanted to be near them. I wanted to be... instead I had to watch them dating girls and stuff.

When I went to Baylor then things started to change because that's when I finally tossed off, well actually it was I think the first big crack in my religion, was my second semester of my sophomore year. I lived about four hours away from our summer home and my parents weren't there anymore. But every, at least once a month or every three weeks I would go up and spend the weekend there. I loved it because I had the whole place to myself. Anyways one time I was coming back and I went to this small town and there was a movie theater in "Wild Angels" was playing. It was a movie about Hell's Angels. I read in Time magazines, you know what trashy movie was and how there was a gang rape in the end and I thought, "I wonder if they will show anybody's dick in that?" So I went. I pushed the money in and the first time I went I just remember it was like another dimension. It was like heaven. I walked in and saw that screen and I'd never seen a movie screen. It was big it was so luminous. I was captivated. Of course they did have the gang rape in the end but you know you couldn't see anything much. But I remember I felt so convicted afterwards I got two quarters in change that I started driving and I opened up the window and tossed those quarters in the field. "Oh I'm such a terrible person." Well then a couple months later I visited my former roommate who was from my freshman year who was now at University of Michigan for a weekend and I said

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something about “Dr. Zhivago” was there and he said that... I just made a joke, I said, “Want to go see it?” He said, “Oh I’d really like to but I’m busy tonight.” I said, “You mean you’d actually go see it?” “Yeah.” I said, “Well we’re not supposed to see it.” Actually kids got expelled from the schools I went to if they were caught going into movies. I knew kids who got expelled for going to movies. So anyways, I said, “You really would.” “Sure.” So I went and saw “Dr. Zhivago” and I was mesmerized and then I found out back in Grand Rapids that it was playing in a theater there and luckily it was on a side street and I saw that thing 20 times. One time, and I was, of course, terrified that someone would see me and report me to the school but they didn’t.

So I got to Baylor and I had been going to church every Sunday up until then and finally I just, after two months I stopped going to church. That was, that was when my mother and I first started arguing. You know, “Are you going to church?” I was always honest. “Have you found a nice church there?” “Well...” “Have you found a nice church there?” “Well I’m not really going to church.” “Oh I can’t believe that you’re not going to church.”

JG: It would be easier just to say yes.

BW: I mean my oldest brother was the smart one. He always... he lied. But that was '67 I went there. Well my brother was now... it was odd because my oldest brother was in Houston, he was a doctor. My middle brother was in Dallas at Theological Seminary and I was at Baylor so all three of us were in Texas. I would visit. Well one time my brother invited me down to Houston and all he had was this little cot that I could stay in but I remember I was looking at his book case and he had a book called, “Blue Denim” and I pulled it up and it was something like, “Today is rebellious.” Then I think he had

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something last summer. I looked at it and he came out and looked at it and says, "Have you ever seen that movie?" I said, "You know we're not supposed to go to movies." He said, "Well don't you go to movies?" I said, "Yeah but I don't want mother to know." He said, "Ah don't worry about her." He smoked, just chain smoked. It drove my mother nuts. He said, "I've got some magazines you might like to see." They were nudist magazines. I said, "Oh these are interesting." I look and I say, "Man look at the tits on her." Then he says, "Well you know, you never can tell, sometimes it's guys and girls, and sometimes it's just guys." I said, "How can you tell which one it is?" Whatever he said he flubbed it. What he didn't want to say was, "I want to get the ones with just guys." But he said that and then I realized that he realized that he sort of flubbed it and he kind of, but he didn't really come out to me but it was like, you know he said he liked to buy these magazines. Well then I get a little hazy but I went back a couple other times because I wanted to be a doctor and one time I went back and he let me go into the emergency room. But there was another time I remember he just started taking about all the penises on the black men that came into the emergency room and how big they were. I remember writing my mother because I used to type letters to her, I've got copies of them I'm sure. I wrote her this one letter and said, "You know Don was kind of strange this last time. He was talking about all these black men and their penises." She wrote back and she said, "Don't ever write me any filth like that again in a typed letter."

JG: You chose to mention that to your mom?

BW: I was that close to her. I just, I don't know I just never could be... she did tell me. She told me. "You're the one son who's always been honest with me." Anyway so I

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started going to movies regularly. Then I started going out to Dallas to see movies. Then there was this big explosion at that time that all these gay movies came out, "The Fox," "The Killing of Sister George," "Fire Agent." Man I was right up there. I couldn't wait.

JG: Wow.

BW: To get up to Dallas and see them. Then I saw, "If." Did you ever see, "If?"

JG: No.

BW: Man it was such a great movie. But that was the first movie I ever saw that had, in fact I have a little clip that I put on Youtube. I'll show it to you before you leave. It's only about a minute and a half long. I saw that movie so many times because of this one and a half minute scene. There was a homosexual relationship set in a boarding school. This guy, he is a younger guy, he is coming back from athletics and he is on the balcony of sort of this gymnasium and there is another guy all dressed in white and he is a gymnast and all the guys stopped because they want to watch him and he jumps out and he's about to put something on his hands. He is about to jump and then he realizes these guys are looking at him and he turns around and looks at them and then he realizes this one guy is looking at him and he turns around again and looks right in his eye and smiles and then he just does this thing in slow motion where he is just spinning around and the guy is just, you know he is just in adulation looking at him it was just this beautiful thing. But all the movies then were all kind of bummer-ish, you know like in "The Fox" Sandy Dennis got killed. "Killing of Sister George" she was such a trashy old woman, making her lover eat cigars, and in "The Sergeant", he went out and blew his brains out in the woods. But I, you know things started slowly happening. I think it was the summer of

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'68 I'm pretty sure that was it. Bobby Kennedy had already been killed and I was just bereft and I was at home for the summer and...

JG: Home would be Florida?

BW: It would be Michigan.

JG: Michigan.

BW: They would always come back in the summer.

JG: Oh you were back up there.

BW: It was strange but they always came back to stay for the summer until my father died and then my mother just stopped. She hated all that back and forth stuff. She just sold the house and lived in Florida. He died in '76. So anyways, yeah it was that summer. Well my brother was flying in, Don. He was the gay one. I loved to go to the airport because back then they were just little small airports. I think planes had gotten to where they didn't land on the rear wheel but there were still turbo props so I thought it was exciting. It was just glamorous. It was a small town so you didn't see that many planes. We rode down there to pick him up and the plane door opened and he walked out and I just gasped. I could tell from that far back that he had make up on. He had on the tightest pair of white pants and the nelliest shirt I had ever seen my whole life and then that second I just knew I thought...

JG: Oh no and you're mom's there with you. We're going to stop for a moment.

BW: Actually maybe the other thing I should say about in college is that in '68 my brother came out to me.

JG: Okay.

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BW: He said, "You're gay aren't you?" I said, "No." I lied and I told him I liked big tits and all this stuff. "Well you sure seem like you might be gay." But I denied it. Then after college I went to teach at a place called Hargrave Military Academy in Chattham, Virginia because I didn't want to teach in a public school. I didn't think I could handle it. But I thought I would like to be near Washington D.C., which was like four hours away, and I wanted to teach in a private school. So I interviewed there and got the job right away. I taught high school English for two years. Well it didn't take very long before some of the cadets started making comments. I remember one day I walked into my room and they were all sitting there kind of smirking and it was Christmas time and there was a piece of paper on the desk and it said, "Happy Birthday Mr. Dahlquist and a jar of Vaseline."

JG: No!

BW: Things like that I usually just tried to brush it off. I just walked up and looked at it and said, "Do any of you guys out here use this?" Then I just put it in the drawer. I could tell they were all pissed off because they really wanted me to get upset about it. "Aren't you going to say anything Mr. Dahlquist?" "What for?" Well there was one time...

JG: Is it 1970 yet?

BW: Yeah it was '69 that I started teaching.

JG: You started teaching in '69.

BW: So there was another time that there was a cadet in class. I don't know what it was that he was taking a test and he muttered something under his breath about a "queer" and it's the only time in my life I've ever done this. I walked over to him and I grabbed him

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by his shirt collar and yanked him out of his seat and yanked him over to the door. I still can't believe I did it. I opened it up and I threw him out in the hallway. I said, "Go to the principal's office." The principal came back and said, "You can't throw him out here." Of course I couldn't tell him why I had done it. Anyways I got, I still had not come out. I remember Time magazine had a cover story about homosexuals in America and I was sitting there reading it. It got to...

JG: And Stonewall is happening.

BW: Stonewall has happened.

JG: You were oblivious to that, or do you remember?

BW: I remember that real well because I used to go to the Baylor library and I always went to look at the movie ads of the gay theaters, the little gay porn theaters and one day I looked and there was this thing about "Stonewall." I was like, "Wow!" So yeah I was following that. Also, "The Boys in the Band" came out that year and I'd seen the pictures in Look magazine and I couldn't wait to get up and see that in Washington.

When I saw that I really felt like I had come home, I still wasn't out but it was like, "Man." I thought, "Oh that's what I want to be." But I still couldn't quite get there. So it got to be it was like March I think and I came into the faculty lounge and they had these little slots that everybody got and I noticed everybody had an envelope in there, except I didn't. I asked somebody, "What's in your envelope?" They said, "Oh it's my contract for next year." So I went to the dean and I asked if I could see him. I said, "Well I noticed I didn't get a contract." He said, "Well David, there are rumors that you are homosexual." My heart just stopped. I said, "They are not true." He said, "Well let me think about it." So I immediately started dating girls. There was a girl's school in the

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same town and they had some young teachers. So I purposely started dating real visibly.

I dated one guy's sister in fact, one of the cadet's sisters worked for a lawyer real near where I lived so I dated her a couple of times. So everybody could see. So six weeks later he called me back and he said, "We'd like to offer you a contract."

JG: Oh God!

BW: So I breathed hard. I came back the next year. It was in October and I was regularly going out to Washington D.C. and staying in a motel and watching movies and I was staying in a motel but I was also going to buy porn. So I went to this one porn shop and I was looking at it and everything was in plastic bags and I just didn't see anything I liked and I walked out in the street. Again, I knew my brother was gay. So there was still this thought, "Well you know maybe someday I'll admit I'm gay and I'll have him take me to a bar." I was standing there and it turned out I was only three blocks from the FBI building and exactly one block for two gay bars but I didn't know that. So I was standing there at the stop light and I realized the guy next to me about my age was looking at me. I kind of looked back and I smiled. He smiled at me and we kept smiling and we went through like two lights. He said, "Um, what's your name?" I told him. I lied. I told him it was something else. Because I could kind of sense what was happening finally. And he said, "Well would you like to go get a drink?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Where would you like to go?" I said, "I'd like to go to a happy bar." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well you know a gay bar." "Oh a gay bar why didn't you just say that?" "He said there's one right near here." I have to laugh because the very first bar I ever went into was called Louie's and when I looked up there it was a leather bar. They had all these posters up there of Marlon Brando from "The Wild One" I mean

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going back to Life magazine. But here is all the guys. I'm thinking, "Oh my God, I've arrived!" Well you know I had a beer and it was like I was just, you know it was like my heart was just beating 100 miles an hour. Then he said, "Well I'll show you another bar." So about a half a block down is a placed called, The Hideaway it was right across from the FBI building you had to go underneath. So we went there. It was just a regular bar. It had a little dance floor. We stayed there for about an hour and I said, "Man this is so cool." He could tell I was just dazzled. He said, "Well you ought to see the Pier Nine." I said, "What's that?" He said, "It's a really, really great club." So he took me out to this one. It was kind of out in the warehouse district and I walked into that thing and I really thought I had arrived in Heaven. It was such a great bar that straight people used to love to go there. You came in and there was a big landing and there was a bar up there and then a big drop off with stairs down there and beyond there, there was a whole area where you could sit. There was a dance floor and a restroom. All the tables had telephones on them and a big number and you could call people just table 23, you go to 23 and...

JG: Are you serious?

BW: If you were really shy you could go to the bathroom and there was a phone there and you could punch in a number and talk to someone on the phone at one of the tables. Here was like 600 gay guys and there's music going and I'm thinking...

JG: You went from one extreme all the way to another?

BW: I looked at him, I looked at this bartender and this bartender was just gorgeous. I said, "He's not gay is he?" "Of course he is." I said, "You're kidding!" I mean I never could put, I never put together that you could be athletic, handsome, somebody that the girls would want and be gay because I always felt that the girls didn't want me. So I

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thought, "How could this be?" and I'm looking at all of these men and It's just... it blew my mind. It blew my fucking mind! Well finally, he said, "Well do you want to something?" I said, "Well you can come back to my room."

So we went back to my hotel, my motel room and I didn't know what to do. I was just sort of sitting on the side of the bed. He was sitting there and I am just kind of looking. Finally he just sort of just reached over and put his arm around me and pulled me over and kissed me. That was it. It was like. After all those years finally and I got to touch another man. I think that was the longest kiss. It felt so good. It felt so right. It was like instantly I was thinking, "God this feels right." Then the next thing I know he has pulled my pants down and is giving me a blow job and I came in five seconds. Then he said, "Well aren't you going to do me?" Well I didn't want to do that. I didn't want some guys cock in my mouth. Actually I had only discovered in the porn movies because I started going to porn movies a few months before what guys did. I didn't know they fucked each other and sucked each other's dicks. I really didn't! All I ever thought I was dancing with a guy or laying in bed with him. I said, "No I don't want to." I told him it was my first night. He said, "Oh," He said, "I wish you'd told me that. I don't want to be the one to bring you out." I thought, "Well it's too late now." He said, "Well you're lucky that you came on me because some guys would be real mad if you didn't go down on them." Then he said, "Well I guess I'd better go." I thought, "Yeah." So I went back to the boarding school and thought about that for two months. I just thought I was a really bad person.

JG: Oh no.

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BW: But I had a friend that was a girl that lived across the hall. She was very unattractive but she and I became very good friends. One night we had gone out to dinner together and we were coming back and I told her what I had done. She said, "Okay." I said, "Okay?" I said, "It's terrible what I did." She said, "Why?" I said, "Well don't you think it's terrible?" She said, "No. That's you." So I thought about that and thought about that. Finally after about six weeks I wanted to go back to that bar. So I went up there and I found the Pier Nine. I went in by myself and it was just like heaven. There was this guy that looked at me and I looked at him and I thought he was so good looking. I couldn't believe he would look at me. I thought nobody would ever look at me. I thought I was so unattractive. So he invited me to dance. The first dance I had ever danced to was Neil Young's Heart of Gold. If I had one moment I could live over it would be that.

JG: That one dance?

BW: That night because that night they played a lot of slow songs like George Harrison "Isn't It a Pity?" and it was a real long, like seven minutes long. It was just so wonderful. It was my dream from high school from all those years of having my arms around a guy dancing. I remember the first thing he said, "Are you leading or following?" I said, "I don't know. I don't know anything about dancing." He said, "Alright we'll just stumble around." So we went back and went to bed and then after that it was like almost instantly I got to know people and got invited. I'll never forget because I got invited to a New Year's Eve party and it was way up in a high rise and they had black lights. They had black light posters but it was probably like 20 guys in there and I walked... and Tom took me, that was the guy. He already had a lover but they kind of tricked out. But he wanted

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me to get introduced to people. So we walked in the door there was this little hallway and there was a living room. I walked in the living room and 20 heads turned around and looked at me. I had never felt like that in my life. It was the most spectacular feeling. I mean it was just one of those magic moments. I looked up and there were all these sparkly lights from Washington because we way up in the sky and then these black light posters and here's 20 gorgeous looking guys all looking at me. Well, you know I was fresh meat. Well everybody already wanted me because I was a new guy. So they were like, "Wouldn't you like a drink." "Let me tell you about." I couldn't believe these people were fighting over me.

JG: That's wonderful.

BW: But then one thing after another and I kept going back up there. Then I pretty soon decided I'd better get my ass out of this school. So I already decided I'm going to quit at the end of this year. I actually found another bar in Greensborough, North Carolina which was only about an hour and a half away called The Renaissance in a little strip shopping center some of the most fun times in my life. On Saturday nights it was because it was all small town people coming into there. You got to know everybody. It was different than Washington. I couldn't wait to get there on a Friday night. Sometimes I'd go Friday and Saturday night. I just couldn't wait. Then finally I interviewed up in Washington and got a job at a community college doing public relations but it was only half time. I thought, "I still want to do this. I want to get out of here. Just figure out how to live." So I waited until the end of the year and really I got kind of ballsy at times. I thought, "What can they do fire me? Let them fire me!" And the last thing I had to do was go to graduation and I had bought a Clairol summer blonde kit and...

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JG: No!

BW: One hour after graduation I went up there. It said leave it on for 20 minutes. If I leave it on for a hour it will make it blonder! I'll look like Gina Harlow. I remember, the next day I walked out in the street and one of the cadets saw me. "Mr. Dahlquist?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "You look different!" "Yeah." Well I moved up to Washington D.C. and moved into a little place called Heartnet Hall where you could just rent a room by the week. Then I decided I was going to go home to Michigan just to visit my parents because my job didn't start until July 1<sup>st</sup>. So I go home and everything is fine and I'm having a nice vacation and one day my mother makes lunch for me and we are sitting at the lunch counter and we are talking something about houses and I said, "Oh I've seen some really beautiful apartments up in Washington." She said, "Really?" I said, "Yeah, I have some friends up there now. They have really beautiful apartments." She said, "Oh." And out of nowhere she said, "Are your friends gay?"

JG: Does she know about your brother?

BW: No. I said, "No." She said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yeah." She said, "You sound awfully nervous." I said, "No." She said, "I don't know." I said, "Okay they are gay." Then she just gasped. She said, "Oh God, I hope you're not gay." I thought and I said, "Well I am." I remember she got up and she said. "That is the worst sin known to mankind." And she literally was like something was pushing her. She just backed up she was against the kitchen sink looking like somebody just slugged her. She said, "That is just the most horrible thing you could be." And I was just so hurt because at the time you know the thing was you had an overbearing mother and a big father. I didn't want them to think that. So I was going to tell them you know, "Don't blame yourselves." And

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suddenly she's blaming me. I was so mad and I said, "Well you know maybe you just fucking ought to think about what you had to do with it because you've got two gay sons!"

JG: Uh oh...

BW: She literally fled. She walked out of the room and the next thing I know she slammed the door in her Cadillac and she tore off out of the driveway. I don't know where she went. Maybe she went to talk to the preacher or something. I was so mad I went into my room, packed everything in my car and by the time she got back I was gone. They didn't hear from me, they couldn't find me for a year and a half. I was like the lost son. Finally...

JG: Did you go back to D.C.?

BW: Yes but I refused. I didn't want to have anything to do with them because I was so hurt. I did tell them. I talked to my gay brother. I said something to him about visiting him and I said something to him about going to a gay bar and he said, "Why would you do that?" I said, "Because I'm gay." He said, "Yeah I thought you said you weren't." I said, "No I was just lying." He said, "I knew you were gay all along." So you know at least I had that brother. After that it was just a generic gay life. I started living in Washington D.C. and going out to the bars and going home with people and going to the baths and I got real involved in gay activism because it was all happening right there. My parents and I continued to fight about it for years. Finally they did something like they went, my mother flew out to California to a Christian counseling center. She called me up one day and she was crying and she said... no that's not true. They came out to visit me and I remember I tried to kind of make up with them but I never felt right. I felt like I

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was still rejected. Again, my brother is thinking, "What are you making such a big deal out of this?" He only invited me down two or three times to Houston. He had big gay parties. But then my father died in '76 and my brother had diabetes and he was starting to get really bad. He was at the point where he was almost blind. So my mother said, "I want you to move to Houston because I can't keep flying there every time something happens. Maybe you can find a better job in Houston." So I moved down here and moved in with him for a few months and got my own place and got into the gay life here and then he died in '79. So I'm glad I had a chance to get to know him. He and I were just as different as night and day. I liked leather bars he liked to go in drag. When he was away from work his name was Donna Sue and he was just an absolute girl, just an absolute girl. So that's my gay life.

JG: And of course your mother never knew any of that about your brother?

BW: Oh yeah they had one talk.

JG: One talk?

BW: One talk. My brother said, "Well I'm glad we talked." He said that is the only time they ever talked. When I told him that I told her he said, "Oh thank God!" He says, "Now they will stop bugging me about getting married."

JG: Isn't it funny how two people can have... that you and your brother have the opposite attitudes. He was like roll with the punches and he sort of did much better and you are the one who was so deeply affected by the whole thing.

BW: Totally.

JG: Which is more like me.

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BW: He was a Republican. He told me once he hoped someone would shoot Teddy. Because my brother was a doctor, he was an M.D. and he thought Teddy wanted to make socialized medicine and he knew how much I loved the Kennedys. He just said that just to annoy me. But he was, we were just as different as night and day. He finally I think he began to develop a little bit of pride in me when I introduced him to Leonard Matlovich because I had gotten to know Leonard in Washington and he came out here for a fundraising weekend because I hooked him up with people here. I actually brought him out to the house to meet him and he was kind of impressed. Afterwards he was like, "Oh you know I'm really kind of impressed with you." I think that was the only time in his life he ever said that. I really wish he had lived because I think it would have been so different having a gay brother because the rest of my parents life, my mother's life I fought with her. Now she totally changed about 1980. She started going to Arthur Murray. She lost weight. She had a face lift. She started buying different clothes and then she started going to movies with me. She didn't care if I drank.

JG: Where did she live though did she still?

BW: In Florida.

JG: Okay.

BW: But she would visit here a lot. She would fly out. She had a pretty nice amount of money to live on. She was a wealthy widow. But the only thing she would not, she went into a bar with me but she would not go into a gay bar with me. She went into a straight bar. She thought bars were so terrible and I said, "I want to show you one." So I took her to a real nice night club. She was like, "Oh this is pretty nice." But we fought about that and unfortunately the last three years of her life well my, my fourth lover had

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died of AIDS and I thought they were so with me that she... she was living up with my brother now because she couldn't get around anymore. She was in her 90's and I went up to visit them the year after he died and said something to my brother. I said, "Well I guess you all kind of understand about gays?" "No. It's still a sin." We were out in his garage. I remember telling him, "I am going to divorce this fucking family. You people, I just can't believe you." He said, "Well you know you are one way, we are another. But I want you to know" he said, "Janis and I are proud that we were both virgins when we got married." I looked at him and I said, "Isn't that precious?" And I saw his face get beet red and he started to walk towards me. I knew he wanted to take me and bash my face in. But he was a preacher. He just stopped himself.

But for about the last three years I wouldn't communicate with my mother at all. Finally about three weeks before she died I called her up and the first thing she said when I was on the phone was, "Praise the Lord." I had even gotten a chaplain up there who she liked. She said, "There is a chaplain here that you ought to talk to." So I talked to him and said, "Would you talk to my mother." And he did and I told him about my brother and I said, "Was she accepted?" He said, "Well I went in and talked to her and I said, 'Marie I understand you have two gay sons?'" I said, "What did she say?" She just rolled over in bed. So until the day she died she never would accept it.

JG: Of course she had to have made it easier for her to be that way when she was living with the brother that would reinforce all her.

BW: But it just left this hole there. It's like... I don't believe in closure. I think closure is just a manufactured word. I don't think. You know once you are wounded you are always wounded. You can try like hell but you have to pretend. But I can't I just

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have to learn I've had to learn to live with this hole in my heart because she and I were always like that. To me it's such an insult that she would believe that I would tell her a lie, that this is not a choice. But her, she said, "Well the devil makes people do things that they shouldn't do." But there was a woman I met and she kind of put everything in perspective. She was my age and she found out she had a lesbian daughter and at first she was upset and she went to her Episcopal preacher, priest and he says, "Well you know your daughters is wrong" and then she thought about it and she said, "Well I changed my name in '97 because that was it. I finally just wanted to tell my family to get fucked. So I changed my name to Brandon Wolf and Phyllis Frye was my... do you know her?"

JG: I know the name. The transgen?

BW: Trangen, yeah. She was my lawyer.

JG: Yeah.

JG: She was used to name changes. It was kind of funny too because she would always done like female, male to female and so when we walked into the judge the judge was looking at her and she looked at me. She looked at the papers and she kept looking and finally Phyllis said, "Oh I forgot to tell you." She said, "This is my first non-transgender." They were looking at me, "Wow that is an awfully convincing job."

JG: Oh how funny!

BW: But now I can't imagine being anyone but Brandon after 13 years. I can't imagine being David Dahlquist. Every once in a while when I hear that name it sounds like a lifetime away. It did help me sort of psychologically break from them. But it gave me my own unique identity. I thought, "I'll never have to worry about sullying the

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family name again.” You know because my name had appeared in print a few times, and I can show you, in gay things and I thought... “I won’t have to worry about that anymore.” But my mother never knew. She died without every knowing I changed my name. The last phone call I had, I told her I loved her and she said she loved me. But the whole thing broke my heart. I will never forgive her religion for what it did. I think that is why I ended up being such an activist. Life to me was painful being gay. When I had the chance to do something about it politically and then you know, now that I’ve had the chance to go nose to nose with religion like with this wonderful Prop 8 thing, you know the judge’s decision was great where he said, “You can’t take away people’s rights because of someone else’s moral beliefs.” That is what churches think they can do. There was this woman, the daughter said; she was trying to deal with it. She finally said, “Brandon,” she said, “I realized I know my daughter’s heart” and she said, “I went back to my priest and said, ‘I know my daughter’s heart and I know she’s telling me the truth.’” He said, “Well she’s wrong.” And so she left that church and went to a liberal Episcopal church. But that was the key thing she said, “I know my daughter’s heart.” And I thought my mother didn’t know my heart and she should have because the truth was I was her best child. I adored her. I worshiped her. I never gave her problems really. I wasn’t a bad kid. I didn’t give her financial problems. My oldest brother had to get bailed out of debt three times to the tune of about \$200,000. I never did that. My brother when he was in high school he was wild. He got thrown into jail once for shooting the bird at a cop and I was always just this good kid. I always thought about her on Mother’s Day and Christmas. I told her that her dresses looked great. I was her

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biggest supporter. How could she not have known who I was inside? You know it's just such an empty feeling. But...

JG: But you have to realize how strong all that dogma was.

BW: I do and that's what I have to keep batting back and forth in my head. On one hand I think, I've divorced it now I'm not mad at her, I'm mad at her religion. But does that take away the whole in my heart? No. Because before she died I told her, "There's only one thing I want. I want you to believe me." She said, "I can't." Her exact words were, "I can't give up my salvation for you." Because to her it was like if anything isn't right, if I admit that anything about Christianity is wrong then the whole thing could be wrong so I've got to keep the whole thing and that is one thing that convinced her that the Bible...

JG: There can be no gray.

BW: So.

JG: Well let's sit on a couple of these. Because you have already mentioned that you had became political but you think it started in Washington. So what was the main venue or what did you jump on first as far as beginning to participate in politically in the movement?

BW: It was real easy because in the bars they had a little thing called the Gay Blade and it came out once a month and they put it on top of the cigarette machine plus any kind of ads or anything. I'm just a real big communicator so I just instantly I kept current. I almost instantly met people that worked on Capitol Hill who were gay and they would tell me, "Hey want to come to this meeting?" So then there was a gay activist

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alliance there. I joined that. I went to their meetings. It was like I just totally always gravitated towards that.

JG: So when you moved to Houston what was the first organization that you?

BW: The Gay Political Caucus.

JG: It was? So you moved to town and did you get a job right away in teaching?

BW: No I'm not teaching anymore. I work at Chase Bank.

JG: You work at Chase Bank?

BW: Yes.

JG: Then you, did you go to a bar or how did you hook in or did you, had you already done that?

BW: It was when I moved in with my brother one of the bars I sit in in Montrose. I looked at a map and I just found one and walked in. You know it really doesn't take much once you go into a bar and you pick up a **twit, you're on your way. (2.09.21)**

JG: Right then you can kind of.

BW: So and I was just shocked at all of the publications out here. I mean I thought that D.C. was good but man Houston is wide open.

JG: You're right.

BW: They have leather bars. They have back room bars.

JG: You know I interviewed Henry McClurgh.

BW: That name sounds familiar.

JG: Well he started, he is the one that started the Montrose Voice eventually, but he started The Montrose Star first. He is the first person or is the first anything, really, that had the name Montrose on it as the name, as the name of the neighborhood and the name

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of the gay scene. So there is a real establishment there I think that people haven't noticed before and I had not thought about. But people clued into that rather quickly. His publication in the gay bars, it's about the gay community. It's called The Montrose Star and this is Montrose and there was a sequence of events there.

BW: Actually I'll tell you real quick that there was two things that happened. One, in 1975 up in Washington about 30 people from all over the country were brought together to start a gay lobby because we had a task force, but the task force, we can't do everything. We need a lobby, they just lobby. So they had a big meeting here and they actually got a room up at Capital fucking Hill. Frank Kameny chaired it and I took my camera and took pictures of the whole weekend. I still have them. I met two people from D.C., from Houston, Pokey Anderson and Gary Benega. So when I moved to Houston the first two people I called up was Gary and Pokey and had dinner with both of them. Gary had a newspaper at the time called The Prince so I started working for him. And I was going to the Gay Political Caucus and it turned out that I had met Leonard Matlovich in '76 and he and I had gotten to be very good friends and we would talk once a month on the phone. Well when No On 6 happened in California I went to the GPC president and I said, "You know..." I said, "You probably don't know this but I know Leonard Matlovich personally how would you like to get him here for an appearance?" And he said, "Are you shitting me?" I said, "No!" I said, "All I have to do is get on the phone and ask him." He said, "Wow!" So I called up Leonard and he said, "Sure. Just put me in touch with somebody." So I had this chance to show off into my connections. I was so proud of that. Then the next thing I know, first they invited Leonard and suddenly they expanded to a whole weekend and they got Dave Capey, they got Del Lion and Del

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Martin and Phyllis Lyon. They got Troy Perry. So it all mushroomed up simply because I had suggested bringing Leonard here. So that really kind of established me real quick. I just plugged in and then things just what can you say? You know, one thing leads to another.

JG: Very good. So we are in the middle of it. Let's talk about just for a minute. So if you were going to say which kind of organization: political, church, social, bars, or services had the most influence in the Houston community, what would you say and you are in an excellent position to notice this because you have comparison with the Washington community?

BW: Which one has the most?

JG: Had you think, had the most influence on the community?

BW: The bars.

JG: You think the bars? Can you say why you particularly think that?

BW: Relatively few people are political. But people like to drink and they like to have sex. And back in the days when things were different, before the internet and all that and before you really have to cluster together to be with your own. So being in Montrose at the gay bars, and that was before AIDS, and I think back then we all, I felt that way. I felt that I had gone from the worst of all lives to the best of all lives. I had what I call gay vanity. I thought, these straight people are too much. I didn't have any straight friends. Gay people are so fucking cool. Then AIDS came up and oh shit that is exactly what the fundamentals want. We are getting what we deserve. But yeah I think the bars had the biggest influence.

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JG: You mentioned to me when we talked earlier about when you got to Houston and you went into a gay bar I think it might have been The Farm House it was one of the dance bars, early dance bars.

BW: Loading Dock?

JG: Maybe it was and you said that when you walked in you walked around and you said you remember realizing that this could not continue.

BW: That was 1980. It was the Loading Dock and so I had been here two years. It was a leather bar called The Locker when I got here and I think they changed to The Drum. Then they opened up a leather disco right across the street called The Loading Dock and that place was “the place” to go. And they had the hottest music. They had the best D.J. I found out later he was always on meth that’s why the music was so good. But you know usually the guys were stripped down to the waist, you know, dancing out there and it had like a balcony around there and I just remember one night being out there and I think I had a bottle of poppers and I was stepping on these poppers and I just looked down and there at all this. I thought, “It’s like heaven!” I thought, “It just can’t last!” Sure enough! Another thing about the bars, if you take a look at the list of the Pride parade marshals you will notice about the first seven years almost every one of them was a bar owner. What does that tell ya? It was the bars that funded things. I mean they had the... I think they were philanthropic because they wanted to help but also...

JG: It’s capitalism, it’s... they are promoting their businesses.

BW: But the bars I think were actually very generous with the community and came up with a lot of seed money to do things. That to me would be...it had the biggest impact.

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JG: Well and I think it's very arguable that they did their part with AIDS when the AIDS thing had to be dealt with.

BW: The political thing is different. I think of it more like a drill. They got in and did the heavy lifting and they knew exactly how to make things happen politically. But... and back in those days you could actually have a rally and a thousand people would show up but those thousand people was back in the bars. It was very rare that you could get them out. So they had impacts in different ways. If you mean the biggest impact to me I think back then it was the bars. The churches, I went to the churches a few times but it was just cruising grounds for me. It was boring I thought. I mean I was already an atheist so I thought...I just I don't know... I was glad they had a gay church.

BW: Well you know several people have said that they thing the churches were really important and I think just as not, you know not necessarily for some reason because of the South I guess and there is an association of this is a social network, a place to kind of feel home and when they were accepting of gay people and then I look today even at the amount of churches that are in the parade and I'm thinking, there's probably something to ask there about and being in the South too.

BW: Well there is something to it. I... the fact that I am an atheist really changes it for me. I think the majority of people in this country are not tremendously religious but they believe in God.

JG: Yes.

BW: You know they don't believe in all the salvation stuff but they think, "After I die I'm going to see heaven and see grandma and everything." They don't really think about it. I just happen to be too intellectual about it. It just doesn't make sense to me. So but I

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think there are other people that grew up in churches and churches were very important to them, as part of their identity.

JG: Well if they were children in the 50's. I mean think about it that's where.

BW: They were so hurt that they were rejected by their church that they still wanted... I liked, I felt good in the bars and the baths. Those people generally didn't. They wanted to go to church socials and stuff. So they finally found a church where they could get their religion and be accepted and it was real important to them. But you know I even know people that are gay that sing in the choir at First Baptist. I say, "Why?" They say, "Because they've got good music." These people are music majors. I say, "What about all that stuff they are talking about gays?" "I don't know. I never listen to that stuff."

JG: They don't carry the same baggage that you do.

BW: They don't. Like my brother he just simply could have cared less.

JG: Yeah.

BW: He just really didn't give a flying fuck about it. He lived his own life and that was it. He just wanted to keep my parents off his back so he told them whatever they wanted to hear. The only thing he couldn't hide was smoking.

JG: Then he just came down here and did what he wanted to anyway.

BW: I'll never forget my mother used to come down here and visit him and she would always come back with his curtains. He had two sets of curtains and she would take them and air them out for like a week to get all that smoke out. She was, "Even after a week I can't get all that smoke out. I've tried..." My brother was like...

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JG: How wild. Well let's ask a couple more things. So you came in and the bars were the most important part. So what about harassment, were we still in a phase where people were being harassed in bars or had that sort of stopped by the time you got here?

BW: When I got here things were very open. We had a Democratic mayor. He was real young. His name was Fred Hoffines, Jr. Some people think he is gay but I guess he's not. The bars were all very open. Then after a year Jim McConn was a Republican since I got here came in for four years and "snap" like that the back room bars closed, just like that the minute he got elected. As soon as Kathy Whitmeyer was elected boom the back rooms opened back up again. I just missed being arrested because I had gone on vacation to visit my parents. I came back I wanted to go to the Lovett Bar. I drove down and I was about to pull in the parking lot and I looked and they had a police van out there with a red light on it and they were hauling people out.

JG: Really? What year was that?

BW: That would have been probably about '82.

JG: That was the leather bar The Drum?

BW: Yeah. But then I saw things happening. They continually as we...

JG: That would have been in McConn's day?

BW: Yeah but then Ray Hill was always working with the police and they were... we had a lot of political power until they had that damn referendum and none of the gays wanted it. It was actually Anthony Hall who was a straight guy who had not gotten the GPC endorsement because somebody else had gotten it and he really wanted to get it the next time so he thought, "Well I'll get this referendum. I'll pass this thing so they are protected." Well the minute they passed that thing then there was a referendum. We

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went down in flames, 87 to 13. I can still remember Kathy Whitmeyer on TV that night looking embarrassed.

JG: What was the referendum now explain that?

BW: Well he introduced a thing in the counsel and passed that was an employment discrimination thing. The minute that thing passed people of religious right fought it and they said they were going to referendum to get rid of it. 87 to 13 we lost. It was horrifying. And after that we lost so much clout because now you had a quantified number on it. But still gays were as far as a particular area they were able in Montrose, they were able to deliver votes. So like Sheila Jackson Lee I think that used to be her district. Whoever had that district usually, you know, tried real hard to get through to the gays but other people didn't really have to so that really kind of hurt us a lot. But then things have just changed over the years to where I remember it got to be there was, it was a tradition that they always, the cops always raided Mary's the night before the Gay Pride Parade. Somebody even has a type written thing from the Pride Committee and it says on the calendar, you know the night before, "Mary's raid." Sure enough there was a Mary's raid.

JG: Sure enough.

BW: Then finally, some woman I think it was Chief Bradford, the black guy, I think Ray Hill, somebody finally went to him and said, "Do you know what your cops are doing?" He said, "No." And so it stopped. So I don't feel harassed anymore. I've never really been a victim of harassment. I think I was in a bar once where they came in and turned all the lights up and asked for our I.D.'s but then they turned the lights back down

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and went out. They weren't, I don't think they hauled anybody off to jail. But certainly like what I've heard in other cities where people were badly harassed.

JG: Okay what about what would you say about race, class in the gay community?

BW: Raise?

JG: Race.

BW: Race?

JG: Race. Do you... are there noticeable race and class differences in the Houston community and was it worse when you got here. Has it changed or?

BW: I noticed it right away in Washington. The biggest surprise I got was when a gay guy called somebody else a nigger. I saw a good looking black guy and I said, "Boy he's good looking." He said, "You'd go home with a nigger?" I said, "Are you kidding? You actually feel that way?" "Yeah I wouldn't go to bed with a nigger in my life." I thought, "You're gay, you're discriminated against. How could you do that?" In Washington there were times when they would carve people more heavily. They did that here. I think blacks generally tended to go to their own bar. As far as class, this is just from my own experience I think some of the classes I've felt was especially when I first came here was there was the Polo class, you know the guys who all had the Polo shirts and they were good looking and well built and went to the gym and it was sort of like they were unapproachable. It was sort of like, "We are the Gods." And I didn't even bother with those guys because I couldn't get to first base with them. They only, they just tricked with themselves. Then I think there are people who are really rich. Some of them are nice but some of them are just really pretty well into themselves. It's kind of like... and then...

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JG: What about the “A” group. Do you hear reference to the “A” group or had that was that still around in the 80’s or was that sort of the 60’s thing?

BW: Well it was funny because when I did the story on the Diana’s, Charles Seabrook one of his favorite saying was that the “A” group is all in the mind of the “B” group.

JG: That’s what some people say that somebody was in the “A” group said well, “We never called ourselves that. We were only called that by other people.”

BW: I have to put a big question mark on it. I really saw that. When I saw that I thought how am I going to answer that because I’m still trying to get my head straight and say, “Is it me or is it them?” It’s like I’ve always felt intimidated by guys that are really well built. But I’ve tried to go to gyms it’s like five minutes after I’m there I’m just... Other guys go for three hours you know and they’ve got big muscles and I’d love to look like that but I feel like these guys are unapproachable and I know people that, you know, are muscular and they are real nice. Others are just absolute assholes I think.

You know they walk into a bar and they just seem so arrogant. There are some guys that are incredibly good looking but then I found, I’ve met some of them that are incredibly nice. You know I hear this thing about people keep telling me, “Oh those guys that work out so much are just insecure.” I say, “Well they sure don’t look it.” They sure don’t look it when they are in there. They don’t look it when they are in the bar. They don’t look insecure. So I don’t know whether it is in my head or theirs. I kind of tend to, I’m sort of a classless person. I don’t divide people up into classes. But I think there have been times that I have genuinely realized that I just approached somebody and they just literally just walked away from me at a party because it was like, “Who are you to be talking to me?” But as far as race I still think that is still more than you’d like to believe.

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I dated a black guy for a year. I could tell I could tell without getting into all the details where he was discriminated against. Just FYI our mayor used to have a black lover at one point. But I would say that in general it might be getting, there is more interracial mixing with lesbians then there is with a man.

JG: With the guys?

BW: I don't know why because I mean I don't like every black guy there is but if there is a good looking black man, he turns me on just as much as a good looking white guy.

JG: Right. Okay the one thing I want to hit on before we close here is generational differences in the new I think mainly I ask this question because I'm trying to realize if the young people that are so easily able to come out and to come to grips with their sexuality even though many still don't but on the whole I think many more are able to, how different is that for people our age that had so much more difficulty? Does that have an effect now I guess is what I'm asking?

BW: I think it's a different set of problems because like I was really pleased when I went to this rally for the repeal of Prop. 8, because it was basically organized by the 20 to 30 year olds.

JG: Oh!

BW: I just walked out there and it was just walking on air. I thought it was wonderful. Almost all of the speakers were 20 to 30 year olds. They were either in HATCH or they were in high school or they were in college.

JG: So this is a cause that they can rally around?

BW: They still, I've talked to some of them and they say, you know, for all that you hear about how all this progress, that still when you go to school even today you still

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don't want people to think you are a fag. So even though they have the straight/gay alliances and all this, it's still I mean back in my day you absolutely couldn't, you just had to hide it. Now you can be open and then you might be scorned somewhat. It's certainly are not fully embraced. But I also think it is the area you live in, you know how intelligent of the people that you are going to school with. Have they grown up with parents that have taught them not to discriminate? I would never have dreamed when I came out in 1970 of things like gay marriage or gays in the military and yet that's the stuff that is the hot buttons in the news. Back then I just wanted to be able to keep my job as a teacher. I decided I couldn't live with the pressure or being gay bashed. But I think that the new generation has just as much as a challenge it is just different. Actually in a way the one thing they don't have is that when I came out everybody really liked everybody because we were such a small group we had to get along you know. I didn't like S&M but I was in meetings with people that were into S&M so I just learned and wild haired lesbians with afros out to here. Yeah people with piercings in their nose and I just learned to accept all of that because we all had to stick together to try and get the gay agenda, the gay movement moving. And I don't think kids have to do that today. It is sort of like when I interviewed the Dianas and they said back then that they had faux boyfriends and girlfriends because they had to keep up. They couldn't just be a bachelor and an old maid they had to keep up the heterosexual image to keep their jobs. Well certainly they don't have to do that now. So we each have. I didn't have to do that so each generation has to do something different. But I still think they have their share of work to do. As far as generational, if you say generation I do think things are better that

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ageism isn't quite as bad as it used to be except I also think that people today who are 60 don't look like 60 year olds looked like 40 years ago.

JG: That's a good point.

BW: I think, you know somebody said really it's almost like you can take 20 years off of people these days because 60 year olds look like they are 40 and sooner or later we are all going to look old. But when I came here the Briarbatch were the old, they called it the wrinkle room because of the old guys there. I still see if there is discrimination I think it is more against older people. But now we've got groups like SPRY.

JG: Yes.

BW: And there are younger kids who are so much more aware of stuff. They understand what sexism and ageism is and they want to get past it. But then I think there will always be the jet set type that just, I don't know they just have vacuums in their brains. They never think about anything. They just eat, sleep, work, fuck, shit and that's it. They don't make anything of their lives. They don't think deeply. They don't really care about anybody else but themselves.

JG: There's that in any country and any race and any social group.

BW: I don't know how anybody can look out at the world and not think the world doesn't need a lot of help getting better. But I'm currently terribly concerned about this woman that they are trying to stone over in Iran because it is so barbaric. I forced myself to watch a movie that was made two years ago. I just about vomited when it was over because it was so realistic. To see how barbaric that is and one of my best friends said, "Why would you put yourself through that?" I said, "Because it's happening. I can't turn my back on it just because it's brutal and I don't want to deal with it." But in a way

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I almost wish at times I didn't have to be that sensitive to the world that I could just let it go. But nothing...

JG: Kind of turn it off?

BW: It's like Margaret Mead said, there has always been just a handful of people that change the world.

JG: Well do you have any last minute thing you want to add that we haven't touched on? Can you think of anything?

BW: Well I remember when I was talking to my friend Arden Eversmeyer. Do you know Arden?

JG: Yes as a matter of fact.

BW: I interviewed her for a story I did about gay history. Maybe this would be a perfect way to close. So she showed me a lot of her books and told me about the lesbian thing and had a good time. Before I left I said, "Arden, if you were standing before God right now and he said, 'You have a choice start all over again and be gay or not be gay...' what would you pick?" she looked at me and said, "Oh Brandon that's a no brainer!"

JG: I can hear her saying that too!

BW: I'd pick it. I mean to me there's more upside than downside to being gay. I can't imagine. I'm a Kinsey 6, my brother was a Kinsey 6. I have zero sexual interest or emotional interest in women. They are my friends. I think they are pretty when they get dressed. I think they are pretty but I see a naked woman and I'm totally turned off. I see a naked man and I'm totally turned on. It's all I've ever known and I think that was one of the things that made me so sad that my parents couldn't see. I think all they were ever thinking of was some guy having his dick up my ass which is funny because I'm not even

into anal sex. So I think a lot of parents that is all they are thinking about is butts. They think of guys having a dick up their butt. I wanted them to think about those moments when I just was holding somebody close and feeling so tender and warm. I couldn't believe that they would want to deny me that because what else is there in life that is really good if you don't? If you start with love and you built on it? What else, money, fame, all the rest of that? But is that really all that important? I can't imagine being anything but gay. I would choose it in a second.

JG: Great way to close, thank you, thank you!

End of interview.

