

4-11-2015

A Conversation with Anonymous (2)

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Recommended Citation

"A Conversation with Anonymous (2)" (2015). *GLBTQ Alumni Oral History Project*. 6.
http://crossworks.holycross.edu/glbqt_alum/6

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GLBTQ Alumni Oral History Project

Conversation with Anonymous Participant (2) (class of 1987)

April 17, 2015

Conducted by Keith Plummer '17 and Nicole Williams '15

Location: phone

Length: 65 minutes

Keywords: activism, college, coming out, dating, friendship, gay men, HIV/AIDS, legal protections, marriage, media, politics, professors, social class, theatre, work, working class

Transcript:

Keith: Massachusetts law, we're going to state the date and time. So, did you hit record?

Nicole: mmhmm.

Keith: So, today is April 17th, 2015. The time is 2:16 PM and you are being recorded.

Anonymous: Ok

Keith: Alright, so do you just want to dive right into the interview?

Anonymous: Sure, go ahead.

Keith: Alright, so it's split into a number of sections. The first section is "coming to Holy Cross." These are going to be questions about your decision to come here and perhaps like certain like aspects of your transition into like the school. So our first question for you is: how did you decide to come to Holy Cross?

Anonymous: I grew up in a working class family, the youngest of 6, but I was the first to go to college. Both sets of my grandparents were immigrants from Poland. My parents graduated from high school but I was the first to go to college. With that familial background, our life was pretty church centered, in fact, my father bought our family home so we could walk to the Catholic school without having to cross the street. I went to a public high school, but I think Catholicism was so ingrained in me that there was just this typical set of colleges we Catholic, boys and girls applied to, in the New England area. And I applied to them all and I chose Holy Cross.

Keith: Alright, you kind of touched upon like a very like Catholic-centric upbringing. Can you describe that at all, like what was that like and how did that like uh, intersect a little bit with your identity?

Anonymous: Well it wasn't a problem. It didn't seem like a problem until a little later on in life. I had a very nice childhood, it was actually, I mean looking back on it now it seems almost storybook. I actually kind of long for those days, that were much slower, the times were slower, the cars were slower, there wasn't all this technology. Um, you know there were still a lot of priests and nuns [laughs]. I think as I grew older the church started to change more and people

started to leave and vocations started to fall off. I wouldn't say we were a...like seriously religious family in that Catholicism impacted our day-to-day lives. I would say we were pretty middle class and my parents were very liberal Democrats. And you know, the worst part of it was that I was an altar boy, and that's it. I mean nothing bad happened [laughter]. I went to a public high school and I'm glad I did that, I'm glad I got a public education. And then Holy Cross was, I mean, you can go to Holy Cross and not be religious. As a Jesuit college, I liked it because I liked having that sense of community and I liked having the Chapel on campus. I actually transferred for a semester away and ended up coming back because I liked Holy Cross better than the other school I went to which was much more diverse.

Keith: Alright, so, you touched upon this a little but what was your transition from high school to Holy Cross like? Would you say there was maybe more aspect of freedom? Or, I don't know, so you were saying you transferred from a public school to a Jesuit Catholic school so I guess it was certainly a little different or, how do you think your transition was?

Anonymous: Um, I don't know. I went from a public high school to Holy Cross and the biggest thing about the transition was that it was my first time away from home. I had friends that went to Catholic high schools that seemed much more rigid and I'm glad I didn't go to a Catholic high school. Um, my transition was hard because I was the first one to move away. I was the youngest, I was very sensitive. I was very quiet, I was very shy and I was very unsure of who I was; I mean I guess you could say closeted but, not even so at the time because I still wasn't clear on what was going on with me.

Keith: Yeah you were still questioning a bit.

Anonymous: There were times in my life, when I wondered that I might be gay. But I didn't have a real, clear understanding of what being gay meant. There were no...you know, I remember having this conversation in the back of the library in high school. I couldn't imagine what gay sex was like, I didn't know what people did. The strongest early experiences of anything gay for me was when I was in high school there was a TV show on called *James at 16* and I remember thinking James was really cute, and feeling really embarrassed about that. And my father got the New York Post every day and I looked in the back and they had ads for the porn theaters. But they were these tiny little black and white ads and it was like basically a guy with his shirt off. And that was my exposure to homoerotic art at the time. Besides the Sears catalog and the underwear models, and I guess GQ, magazines like that. Also, I had a gay English teacher my senior year in high school and it was kind of cool because I was the only male in the class and he used to give me his GQs [laughs]. I can remember blushing a little bit, but saving every one of them [laughs]. So when I went to Holy Cross, the hardest part for me was fitting in with the guys. Um, I was the type of young gay man that had more female friends and my closer friends were girls. But I was well liked by the guys, I just, there was no bond. I see it now that there was probably sexual tension there that I didn't understand or some kind of wall that I didn't understand. There were also a lot of affluent guys and a lot of them were not very nice people. I remember my freshman year, the hall I was on, the sophomores and juniors were just really gross. They just partied a lot, um, the hallway was just all broken glass after the weekend and I remember, I have this vivid memory of the little old lady that would come and

clean on Monday and this lady vacuuming up the glass and the beer bottles and the kids pulling the cord out from the wall on her. I had to make friends elsewhere [laughs]. And I did. I worked, I was on a work study and I worked in in Kimball. I fit in more with the people I worked. Then I joined the choir and I made friends there. And then I did some theatre too. But there were um...

Nicole: So you mentioned that you did choir and a little bit of theatre, were there any other sports or organizations or anything that you were a part of that you felt really supported in?

Anonymous: Supported in what way?

Nicole: I don't know, just that you could be yourself, and you could open up to people and that you made a lot of friends?

Anonymous: In choir or Alternate College Theatre, and in the theatre department.

Keith: Oh, we actually have a Theatre major with us. That's Nicole! She's excited!

Anonymous: What?

Keith: Oh Nicole's a Theatre major involved in ACT right now

Anonymous: Oh that's good. Um, yeah ACT was cool. But um, it was a very, very different time. It was very, um, it was a different world. There was no place really to come out. A common term was 'you're a fag,' 'you're a choir fag,' 'a band fag,' and it was said jokingly as well, and that was worn as a badge of honor. That word was thrown around that way. I don't think it would be accepted, at least I hope not, now a days.

Keith: Interesting, you're saying, it's a badge of honor, do you mean that like uh the artistic people kind of like used that label for like empowering purposes they kind of claimed it, or how did that work?

Anonymous: Right, right we were like the nerds as opposed to the jocks.

Keith: Alright, I see that-that's cool. So would you say that there was like a disconnect between like the 'theaters' and the jocks and you also touched upon that maybe you felt alienated by class divides with meeting lots of affluent people here, so where would you say the main disconnects were?

Anonymous: Yeah, there was a level of society at Holy Cross that was very shallow. For example, I did a lot of service work in high school, and I forget what the service organization at Holy Cross was called because you had to be invited into it, you couldn't just volunteer [laughs].

Keith: Interesting!

Anonymous: Um, so who was invited: the best looking, the most athletic, people with recognizable family names and from families of privilege that first year.

Keith: So people were coming into the college with an amount of like social capital that everyone didn't necessarily possess?

Anonymous: Correct, but that was not the whole school, that was maybe like, I don't know, 10-20% of it and the rest of us were all just going to college.

Keith: So you kind of touched upon this previously, with like you talking about how during your time there weren't many cultural representations of like, you know like LGBTQ identity and stuff like that, so I guess what we're curious about is, what was going on like in the world during your time at Holy Cross? You were a graduate of 1987, were there any significant like events, not just LGBTQ-related but in general that were like formative in your experience or you remember had particular you know salience or can be noted?

Anonymous: AIDS was still very prominent and scary. High school or Holy Cross would not have been hit. What's her name, TV, there was a scandal, um, Linda Evans and the kiss on what show was it, Dynasty? You probably haven't even heard of it. Um, do you know what I'm talking about?

Keith: What were you saying? I'm not sure I'm familiar with it. Did you say someone, Lily Evans?

Anonymous: Alright, Rock Hudson was on a nighttime television soap opera and he kissed one of the lead actresses in one of the episodes and then he came out publicly with AIDS months later. And there was this hysteria that he could have passed it to her by kissing her and he was judged as being terrible for hiding it and for kissing her. But of course she couldn't get it that way and she was very gracious about it. Um and he died soon after that. There was no education at Holy Cross about HIV. Um, obviously condoms weren't made available, I don't know if they are now. Are they?

Keith and Nicole: No

Keith: Condoms still aren't available. You can get uh the birth control pill through an outside vendor if you get like a medical permission. It can't be used for, explicitly for, you know.

Anonymous: Condoms just aren't available? Like there's not a bowl of them?

Keith and Nicole: No

Keith: No, [laughter] some people do protests you know. Last year I think people put cups of condoms around the Hoval, you know to stir things up but, no were still no birth control, it's you know that human naiveté I think it is.

Anonymous: Well, that was life then, later, I got involved in activism. When I was at Holy Cross I was very repressed. I kept it down. I didn't want, because there were no positive examples in the world for me and I couldn't imagine life as a gay man. I didn't know what I would do. Your generations are benefiting a lot more from what older generations have gone through. Older generations before mine that did a lot for me. But you know, gay men and women weren't taught to date the way straight men and women are taught to date. So, there was just a lot of chaos. I think it's starting to settle and people are starting to get it. It's interesting - all my gay friends from Holy Cross - none of us were out. We all came out on Facebook or at reunions. I dated women in college. I thought maybe I needed to be with a woman and that would fix me. So I tried that. And it kind of, it did the opposite; it just confirmed that I was gay. I really felt like I was faking it. So I didn't come out at Holy Cross but as soon as I got out of college and into the working world I came out.

Keith: Were there any close friends you came out to? Or you were completely, uh, not out? Plus you were still trying to figure things out it sounds like up until graduation or so with the?

Anonymous: Well, I remember coming out to a close friend. I moved to New York after college and he was a senior...no, he was, coming to look at grad schools? Maybe he went to look for work in New York or something-it was a few years after college. And I did say 'so you're, you know you're a smart guy right?' and he goes 'yeah' and I said 'so you know I'm gay right' and he goes 'yeah, I kind of figured it.' And that's how we just left it.

Keith: So you kind of talked about like AIDS and how there's a lot of like misinformation. Like was there anything particular to like the Holy Cross climate? Were people like using it as like a LGBTQ like centric disease, like they didn't know, and it was just, I'm wondering if it had like any impact on your,

Anonymous: It was hardly discussed and when it was, I hate to say but I think in homophobic terms. I remember a couple incidences of homophobia. When I was a freshman there was a senior who was...I didn't know him, he lived in Beaven and I lived in Wheeler, and the group of guys from my hall made fun of him. He was tall and thin and pretty feminine. And he, I guess he was out, I never spoke with him, but I thought he had a lot of nerve because what he used to do was when the weather was nice he would bring a lawn chair onto the lawn and he had on the tiniest Speedo bikini and he would sunbathe. And he didn't care obviously what anyone thought. But that was like a huge statement to make at the time, back then. Um but unfortunately the door to his room was defaced with slurs and I think he was assaulted.

Keith: He was what?

Anonymous: He was assaulted, physically.

Keith: Oh assaulted, oh my goodness. So were there any other examples of perhaps like more like gender or sexuality transgressive like actions kind of like that were like kind of visible. Like or is that the main one you recall like of a person that was kind of more, you know?

Anonymous: That was the main one.

Keith: Alright and then so what would you say the impact was?

Anonymous: It actually, it drove me further back into the closet, unfortunately.

Keith: So you were affected by his treatment? Or how did that make you feel? Like you kind of like, you thought it, you did think it was bold that he was like being so visible and out, you know with his actions but I guess like the backlash like, how did it affect you?

Anonymous: I just remember thinking it was terrible and feeling badly for him. I didn't know him and I didn't know anybody who knew him. I didn't know how to approach him in any way to talk to him.

Keith: What would you say the overall campus climate was, like at Holy Cross. Was it normally aggressive? Or if you kept it, if you kept it less visible and you assimilated more was it more ok? Or what was it like? Was it scary?

Anonymous: It was a Catholic jock school [pause]. But it was changing. The professors were challenging students more academically. I don't know enough about the history. But my perception of it is that it's just gotten stronger and stronger since I graduated.

Keith: I would agree with that! It's getting better! No, we got our Drag Night approved so we're excited. It's getting better here you know it just takes time and

Nicole: So you mentioned this, that some of the younger professors were maybe a little more progressive, a little more liberal. Did you find that any of them provided support or a support system or did you have any other people or anything like that?

Keith: Like any particular like spaces you felt welcome or just you know, not just in terms of LGBT identity, but just like you had a support system at Holy Cross and who would you say that would like consist of?

Anonymous: In the Art department or in the Theatre department. It's kind of funny, I was very close with a female art history professor and I took a um, I wanted to create... a film course for myself with another young male theatre professor senior year. When I told her I was going to do the seminar, the one-on-one film seminar she was like 'really?, well be careful because he's kind of a radical.' And I think what she meant was that he was gay. [laughter]

Keith: Interesting! So like there was lots of double-speak going on. Did people not talk about it directly that often?

Anonymous: No. No.

Keith: And what was your interpretation of the class with him do you think he might have been queer?

Anonymous: There were a couple of professors who I knew were gay. Uh, there was one [dept.] professor who was out and the theatre professor although he didn't come out to me. I think he tried to out me a little bit because this one film we watched was about a repressed gay man and he kept asking me these leading questions and I knew what he was doing so I just played the game back with him. And he knew I knew what he was doing so he gave up. Uh, but uh the [position] was openly gay; I think another theatre professor. It was mostly men, I didn't know of any gay women professors that were out. I know a number of priests that we all questioned, but we weren't sure, we were pretty sure though [laughter].

Keith: That's very interesting! Ok, so you did have a number of maybe like you know examples of like queer people having their job, having like a good job or something. But they weren't necessarily open about it. Was it mostly just, you know, gossip, or did anyone explicitly like was open about it?

Anonymous: Correct. Yeah, and they weren't, they weren't talked about, like, they weren't talked about as like the gay professor. You know it was like, the word was an attachment, rather than just another professor in the crowd. It singled them out in kind of a, not a negative, but yeah kind of a judgmental way. I don't think anyone knew how to deal with it back then.

Nicole: And so what were some of the student perceptions of these professors? Do you think they regarded that as a negative connotation and attachment to them?

Anonymous: No, I think that the students that were majors in those departments knew and had very positive relationships with them. They were all excellent professors and umm...extremely professional and very regarded academically, um, you know it was from that 10-20% percent that they got shade.

Keith: I see! Well no, that's nice! I'm glad they were mostly positive! Sounds like yeah, the arts departments were like a safe haven for like queer identity a bit...which is really cool. But yea, I know that was the same at my high school and I guess here a bit, it's still... it's still like that. So um you kind of mentioned how you had some romantic relationships with some women. Can you like...go into detail at all? Were there any like specific experiences that kind of like you know...let you know, "yea I'm definitely gay," or you know, how was that navigating the whole dating scene initially with these women?

Anonymous: My experience was I would develop these really strong crushes on certain women and um I think I got into very deep emotional relationships with them. But there was a part of me that knew most of my sexuality physically was attracted to men. So there was this huge conflict deep inside of me um...because everything kind of worked except...

Keith: Yea, except for the physical

Anonymous: The physical. The sex, but the sex was...the sex worked. I was able to function, but I was honest with myself and I knew I couldn't marry a woman and...and keep that a secret.

Keith: Yes, that makes sense. But you did say that you were like kinda, the emotional did work out. You could develop like a strong emotional connection with a woman, but there was like, there was a disconnect. You always had, I guess like, this idea in the back of your head that you were more attracted to men, or...? Like it sounds like there was thoughts in the back of your head.

Anonymous: What confirmed it was when I started having dreams in that time which was my senior year. For some reason, I don't know if that's Freudian or what [laughter]. Having a dream to me was the clincher that confirmed it [laughter].

Keith: No, that's your unconscious speaking! I get what you're saying, no that would be a telltale sign for me as well.

Anonymous: (inaudible) [laughter]

Keith: No, okay so you would say that it wasn't until senior year that you were more positive of your same sex attractions

Anonymous: Yes, I really tried to convince myself I was straight until senior year. Actually um, my biggest girl crush asked me out to what's it called? Sady Hawkins?

Keith: Oh, Sady, when the girls ask the boys?

Anonymous: Yea

Keith: Okay, this is interesting.

Anonymous: And um, how should I put it, it was a little spring romance, it was nice, but then we graduated so then we went separate ways. But I do remember thinking there's something I have to tell you. And I uh, then I almost did it, but then I couldn't. And she and she was like "wow, fuck like you're scaring me." Um, no no. Well I just...we kind of just...I don't know, it doesn't make sense... she wasn't even, it doesn't even make sense to call her my girlfriend, she was...we dated. After graduation we kept in touch briefly but our lives went different ways.

Keith: You mentioned how uh gay, well same-sex versus hetero couples, dating was framed differently, the expectations or whatever. You said there was like chaos. So what would you say like LGBTQ relationships, how were they framed in your time and what made them particularly like chaotic?

Anonymous: There weren't relationships, it wasn't discussed in school, it wasn't discussed in high school, it wasn't discussed in college. It was still very much a taboo subject. And this was like the mid 80's. The Republican party was, was using gay issues as a red herring. They're still

trying to, but they are gasping their last breath now. And um, so there was this debate going on, but it was really just starting. Like is it okay to be gay? And um...and publicly? And I remember, do you remember the Phil Donahue Show? You probably weren't even born.

Keith: No [laughs].

Anonymous: Phil Donahue had shows with homosexuals on it. And it would say like, you know, "John Doe... Homosexual Man."

Keith: Whoa it sounds eerie! [laughs]

Anonymous: [laughter] And yea it was like... the audience would be these women from Fairfield County, Connecticut gasping in New York. So yea, we're gay, we're part of the gay liberation movement, and so forth... That was probably more in high school and in my youth. And then AIDS was a big thing in high school and college. And that actually brought homosexuality more into the spotlight. Either in a terrible or in a good way, it...it...it took the lives of many people but it also put the spotlight on the gay community, men and women. The women came to the support of the men. But it was so closeted, the way you would meet people was when you would get a phone number off the bathroom wall, and to meet like in the bushes, and... or you had to move to New York or San Francisco and you still weren't raised with this model of like... of like heterosexual dating when you go and have dinner and get to know each other. Sex came first, and you talked later. And that I think contributed a lot to the gay male lifestyle... of the 60's, and 70's, and early 80's. And um some people will argue that that... that was gay men embracing their freedom. Others will argue a mixture of all these things, that there was a lot of anger and rage being released in all the sex and multiple partners that people were having. Um, when people started up, you know there was no model to follow. That's my argument, that's the one I go with. There was no life model and we are just starting to grow in that. Now with...you know, the marriage movement, the marriage movement comes out of this space bringing protections for gays and lesbians and then um marriage is actually the ultimate. Recently, finally, I heard a politician say what good is it, if you can get married one day but be fired the next for being gay? Marriage is legal in some states but we still don't have gay people on the books under their nondiscrimination statutes. So... all of this is going on and at different paces in different states. Connecticut where I'm from, Connecticut was really at the forefront in that area. And did it, in that step-by-step process of obtaining those rights. There was also this big movement to come out. Come out. Come out and the more we will be accepted because people will know that we are here, we are part of people's families. People...people know us, we just have been hidden for long. So there was actually some pressure to come out um for a while. And then celebrities started to do it. And I was so angry at so many celebrities for not coming out. I still am mad at Jodie Foster for taking so long, her coming out speech I think was terrible. In a couple weeks it's going to go to the Supreme Court and we we'll have that... if the Supreme Court approves marriage they are going to have to... all the other rights are going to have to go up.

Keith: Yea so you're wondering where all the support is going to go after we get marriage equality? People are finally going to focus on other issues?

Anonymous: Well they... they have to pass, like they've been... they've been, the politicians have been dodging the issue for years by calling it a state's rights issue. So there are still a lot of states that don't protect gays in employment and housing...um and public accommodations. And that's what these religious discrimination rights and laws are about. And that's all going to have to work its way through the courts cause it's... it's all bullshit. You can't do it, it's not constitutional. Either you have to make it illegal or accept that we're here. Um and they're not, they're not going to make us line up and go into concentration camps. It's over, it's over and that's why the Republicans are breathing their last breath. They are going to try to come at us but...it's actually a very exciting time.

Keith: So you kind of talked about how you were frustrated with certain celebrities that did not necessarily come out, like promptly or whatever. Like if you could do your Holy Cross experience over would you do anything differently? Would you maybe have wanted to like come out and be more visible? Or... is there anything you would want to do differently?

Anonymous: Um...no. Just talking to you the other day, I imagined how it must be nice to be there now at this time and to be able to be open and have a measure of acceptance. Um that wasn't...in my day it wasn't impossible but I was too afraid to do it. Um there was one other person I knew, that guy I talked about, that did it, and he took heat for it. So no I don't have any regrets, I did the best I could...with what was going on at the time. I lived in New York City, I met a lot of older gay men and women and the stories they tell of...dancing at a bar and having the police siren go off and everybody switching to opposite partner couples so they wouldn't be caught and arrested. And a, you know, in country's elsewhere they're still executed for being gay.

Keith: Alright, did you have any same sex romantic or sexual experiences during your time at Holy Cross? Or you were still navigating your identity at that point?

Anonymous: Navigating.

Keith: Alright, and...do you think the Jesuit identity and environment at Holy Cross affected your view on sexuality at all?

Anonymous: No.

Keith: No, not particularly. Did you ever struggle to like, you're talking about how even in mainstream culture and politics there was this like a negative like view of like, you know, gay identity. Did you ever struggle to reconcile like your gayness in a moral sense? Or just like, you know, or did you ever consider it wrong? Or just, how did you feel about it?

Anonymous: I was, I was very confused...because the time when I grew up the argument that um...um a man and a woman make...a baby, felt very strong to me. And so...I, I struggled with it for a very long time until I came to the point where I was just like this is how I am, what I experienced since I was a little kid so it wasn't the way I was raised. So it's just another variation of the human person and now we've found, we have new ways of living.

Keith: Alright, and so when did you initially come out? What was your coming process like? Or you know, is it, is it still a tough area to figure out?

Anonymous: Well I moved to San Diego after I graduated and I... I guess I kind of felt, I felt that I was supposed to get away and live far away. Um, I...I still was not comfortable with it um and I went to a very Christian-like conversion ministry. And this guy came to my apartment and...I remember thinking...this guy is a big tool [laughter] and I took the literature and I read it. And it said, "gay people exist, um God made them that way, but they're called to be celibate." And I said to myself, well if God made them that way, that if you have to be celibate, that means you can't have love. And I said that's bullshit and I went to my first gay bar that night. [laughter]

Keith: Yesss! More power to you!

Anonymous: I met my first boyfriend and um... we were together the entire time I spent in California.

Keith: So that was nice. So what were like gay spaces like back then? Do you see any difference between queer spaces now and queer spaces back then?

Anonymous: Um

Keith: Or are they pretty similar, you know, it's not like we reinvented the wheel in a couple years?

Anonymous: Well it's kind of like the norm now that you can get whatever you want. Um I mean there was a time where the only place to go for gay people was a bar. I don't know...I mean, I wasn't at Stonewall at the time so I don't know what it was like. In my day in New York, Stonewall was a nice clean bar. If you walked down Christopher Street towards the West side, they got seedier as you got closer and closer to the highway. And by seedier I just mean... I mean just more run down, but that's where guys in leather liked to hang out. I don't know, it's their thing. When I lived in Washington D.C. there were beautiful martini bars, but you could also go to a leather bar that's built to look like you know a factory. It's just, it's just people's fetishes, that...I don't know, they get into. I don't think we're very past that point, like when I went back to Connecticut, after about 20 years away, umm there was one gay bar in New Haven. It's still there, my partner and I walked in there. It was like stepping back in time, it's just exactly the way it was when I was younger, when I was afraid to walk in that door. And when I walked in, I was like "ugh, been here, done this." [laughter]

Nicole: So, based on your experiences at Holy Cross and after graduation, what sort of advice would you give an LGBTQ student who's struggling with their identity or struggling to come out at Holy Cross now?

Anonymous: Um...I would try to find...um, how to phrase it...a person that understands difference, some kind of therapist or counselor not just another friend, um...or even friends but I

think it's important to get to a professional eventually. Um, maybe not for all, but I think for most [laughs] just to check in. Yeah, I'm ok with it, um because it's really...it's real...it's um...you know, it's your life and how you live and coming out is a process and you have to get comfortable with yourself in order to love yourself...um all over again. There are theories about gay people, that we adolcesce in our 20's where straight people adolcesce, meaning behaviorally in high school, we do it now in college. Now, maybe now, we are starting to do it at the same time because it's more open and thought of as, as normal and natural. Another thing, when I was growing up the word "unnatural" was used a lot, "it's not natural, it's not natural to be gay."

Keith: Well, no that's very interesting! I still think that perhaps that happens. I went to a Catholic school, small town in Pennsylvania. I didn't necessarily have like a positive queer space to explore my identity so I think some people still adolcesce, but yea, uh there are, I'm sure there are still plenty of places where, you know, you get to just do it at the same time and they don't make a big deal anymore

Anonymous: Yea, there are still people though um, coming out in all times of life. I go to a Unitarian Church now and there's an LGBT group and there's a retired man who just came out. He has white hair, and he lived his whole life with a family and came out in tears. And um... he's so much happier now, but you know he um... he waited his whole life, almost his whole life to do it. The other thing that people often don't think about is the straight person involved with a gay person. Like umm... what's her name, Sarah, oh her sister was on *Little House on the Prairie*... she was on Roseanne... she's an actress and she was quoted as saying gay men should marry women if they want to. And she's a lesbian, married to a woman and I thought what a stupid thing to say. Turn the tables, imagine you are a gay man for a while. The forgotten people, the stories of, of like the ex-husbands and wives of the gay partners who wonder, did I do it? What's wrong with me? Why didn't they tell me sooner? Um, there is a friend of mine from Holy Cross and her husband came out later and she just dropped off the face of the Earth and didn't speak with anybody for a long time. It was sad.

Keith: So based on your experience, what advice would you offer to LGBTQ seniors who are about to transition, you know, from collegiate life to professional life? Do you have any advice about LGBTQ and the workplace?

Anonymous: Um, research the state you're moving to and see what its LGBT laws are. Um, if they don't protect you in employment, um... I personally would become involved in activism to change that, um...it doesn't happen all the time, but I read stories about these Catholic schools firing teachers after they get married because they officially come out. Well, they can only, I'm not sure if they can only do that in states where you are not protected or if they can do it because they are a religious institution. I know that's something that has to be decided legally. And it's ... I really find it, I don't know.... that's, that's a big, big question coming up. Can you fire somebody because they're gay based on your religious beliefs? And that is a big firestorm coming up. So you don't hear about it a lot, but it can happen depending on where you are. And it's very, very competitive, life is very competitive. I lived and worked in New York City and people... people will use anything on you to get a foot up on you in the workplace. [laughs] Be careful what you do on your computer, um look at what you post on Facebook. Um...and uh...try

to stay close to gay women, they're better at forming relationships than the men are. Um, but we don't get along with them very well sometimes either. I don't want to simplify it. Be cautious, be careful, check out the landscape. Times have changed so much, there is so much more opportunity for you to have a better life, at work and be out in some places. Not all places. The tech industry especially is very friendly. Um, you know there is umm, there is so much more legal protection. I really think, in a couple years it's going to be...it's going to be universal in this country. And there are so many gay and lesbian centers now in cities, go to them. Do whatever it takes. Go to your closest community center.

Keith: Alright and we're about to wrap this interview up in a bit. But I guess one question I would like to ask you is, are there any questions we should have asked you, but didn't? Is there anything that, I don't know, you want to shed light on that we never really asked about?

Anonymous: Umm...No...I'm really excited that you are doing this and that Holy Cross seems to be so liberal compared to some of the news I'm seeing. I kind of avoid the news now.

Keith: Alright, and do you have any questions for us?

Anonymous: No. Well, what year are you in?

Keith: I'm a sophomore at Holy Cross and...

Nicole: And I'm a senior

Anonymous: Great, and what are your majors?

Keith: I am a Sociology Major, and a Women's and Gender Studies Concentrator

Nicole: And I am a Theater Major

Anonymous: Excellent. Well I think that's fantastic. I think it's great that this course is there. I wrote the professor a similar note. And um, I hope I didn't ramble too much and I hoped I helped as much as I could.

Keith: No, we appreciate it! You were awesome! Thank you for being so honest and sharing everything! You have a nice day!

Anonymous: Thanks you too, bye.

Keith and Nicole: Bye