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## A Conversation with Anonymous (1)

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**GLBTQ Alumni Oral History Project**

**Conversation with Anonymous Participant (1) (late 1980s)**

**April 15, 2015**

**Conducted by Emma Carberry and Heznie Jean-Baptiste**

**Location: Phone**

**Length: 50 minutes**

**Keywords: adoption, career, children, coming out, college, dating, first generation, friendships, identity, labeling, love, parenthood, partners, relationships, sexuality, social class, social norms**

**Transcript:**

Emma: Okay so um, it's April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 5:30. Um, we just had to say that for the recording. Okay, great, thank you.

Heznie: Okay so now the first set of questions are gonna be "Coming to Holy Cross."

Anonymous: Okay.

Heznie: And my first question to you is: how did you decide to come to Holy Cross?

Anonymous: Oh wow, okay. It was a long time ago for me. [Laughter]

Anonymous: Actually, Holy Cross was my dream school. First-generation college grad in my family. But it was a long shot and I didn't really think it would happen. Um, but I applied for it, went for the interview, and on the interview I just fell in love with the school and ended up going there.

Heznie: Oh okay.

Emma: Where did you grow up?

Anonymous: Um, [town], Massachusetts.

Heznie: Okay.

Emma: Oh so you had heard of the school and everything.

Anonymous: Mm-hmm

Emma: Oh cool.

Anonymous: Yep.

Heznie: What was your transition from high school to Holy Cross like?

Anonymous: Um, you know what, for me it was, I wouldn't say it was hard, but my background was a little different than a lot of the other students coming in. I was, number one, I was from public high school. Two, I was the first in my family to go to college. Um, I would say that a lot of the people I hung around with socioeconomically were a little higher than I was. So there were some distinct differences there and I think that some of their schools probably prepared them for academics a little bit better than mine did.

Heznie: Oh okay, that's understandable. Where did you go to high school?

Anonymous: Um [Name of High School].

Heznie: Oh okay.

Emma: Um so you were a student at Holy Cross, is this true, from [range of years]?

Anonymous: Right.

Emma: Um, what was happening in the world then, if you remember?

Anonymous: Oh wow. Um, well the spaceship Challenger blew up, which had had the um schoolteacher on it.

Heznie: Oh wow.

Anonymous: So that was a big event in, uh, I guess that was, I think in, I don't know, it was [redacted phrase].

Emma: I remember... I... I've heard about that.

Heznie: Oh okay yeah.

Anonymous: [Laughter] Yeah I mean we're going back and acting like an old lady!

Heznie and Emma: [Laughter]

Anonymous: President, I think Reagan and Bush were in office at the time.

Heznie and Emma: Okay

Emma: Um.

Anonymous: AIDS was a big public, a big public thing like some of the first famous people were being diagnosed with AIDS, um.

Emma: We were just talking about that in class today, which is funny.

Heznie: Right!

Anonymous: It was funny, like how so?

Emma: Um, well, no it wasn't funny. Sorry, just the coincidence. But we were discussing...

Anonymous: Oh, that it came up with somebody else?

Heznie: Right.

Emma: Yeah, we did... someone did a mini-presentation.

Anonymous: Well it's interesting when I think of all the things that have happened, like you know, it's... yeah, to think back on what was happening.

Emma: Did the, did that global context, do you think have any impact on your experience at Holy Cross?

Anonymous: I would love to be able to tell you yes but I don't think so.

Emma: Right.

Anonymous: I think that, I think one of the benefits to Holy Cross, at the time I would say it was a benefit, is that it's kinda protec- it was kind of protected in a secluded environment...

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: So you got what you wanted in terms of world context and I probably just wasn't... yeah I probably just wasn't, I don't want to say mature enough, but didn't have the mindset in terms of how is world context affecting me, so to speak.

Emma: Yeah.

Heznie: Oh okay.

Emma: Right.

Anonymous: I mean, I'm thinking now like global politics, all of that stuff and, you know, remember that the web wasn't really around and so it was harder to have a, have a global context.

Emma: Right.

Anonymous: You had the 6 o'clock news and the newspapers and stuff but... yeah nothing like

today where you just kind of click on your phone and you know what's happening all the way on the other side of the world.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: Right.

Emma: Yeah. So do you, what was Holy Cross like during that time period? How would you describe it?

Anonymous: Hm. Like in terms of...

Emma: Just the culture, I guess.

Anonymous: In...in what way? The culture? Um, it was pretty homogenous I would say. Uh... it felt like, I wouldn't say everybody was the same but in a lot of ways it didn't feel very diverse.

Heznie: Oh okay.

Anonymous: You know I guess if I had if, I had to say what it was it was probably white, upper middle class, upper class, um... young kids from high school graduating into college. Um and that and that's not a necessarily a bad thing. I mean I think that there was the tradition of, of doing good, trying to change the world and maybe going beyond the thoughts of doing so in a charity way but really supporting people and changing things.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: But it was still, it was still, very, I would say a very homogenous group.

Heznie: Okay.

Emma: Is this, sorry, I...do you, did you think that at the time, like when you were attending, or has that been more of a thing that you've realized when reflecting on it?

Anonymous: Um... I thought it at the time definitely in terms of economics...

Emma: Uh-huh.

Heznie: Uh-huh.

Anonymous: Um... I would probably say that I liked it at the time, I didn't... it felt comfortable to me and, um but now, now I probably would go back and wish that it was a little more expanded, if that makes sense.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Heznie: Okay.

Emma: Definitely.

Anonymous: While I was going through it I probably didn't, I didn't notice it as much as I do with hindsight.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: All right, so the next set of questions are gonna be about coming out and being LGBTQ at Holy Cross. And the first question is, recognizing that coming out isn't a one-time event, when and how did you first come out?

Anonymous: Wow. So, how in the question do you define coming out?

Emma: Well, we've talked about in class just um that obviously you don't just come out once and it's like the end of your life and that's the way it is, but um I guess more of like when it could be coming out to yourself or...

Heznie: Your peers or...

Emma: Yeah or the first time you came out to someone else or... it could be, really you can answer however you want to, or not at all.

Anonymous: Yeah, it's yeah... I mean and I guess that's a hard... that's a hard question for me to answer in terms of when did I first come out, like, when did I actually first call it what it was and come out to myself was the year after, actually, after I graduated from Holy Cross.

Heznie: Oh, okay.

Anonymous: At the end of... I did a year in JVC.

Emma: Oh.

Anonymous: And at the end of... at the end of that year is when, yeah, when I put all the pieces together. Now I think if through my years at Holy Cross I had been exposed to people who were gay and lesbian, I might have put the pieces together sooner.

Emma: Okay.

Heznie: Okay. And you said that you did...

Anonymous: Um but it...

Heznie: ...JVC.

Anonymous: Uh-huh.

Heznie: Where exactly, what, um did you did that...program?

Emma: Heznie's doing...

Anonymous: In [city].

Emma: Oh [city]! Okay.

Heznie: Oh! Okay.

Emma: Heznie's doing JVC.

Anonymous: Who's doing JVC?

Emma: Um! Someone that...

Anonymous: Oh I thought you said somebody was doing JVC.

Emma: Sorry!

Anonymous: No, so yeah... I... yeah I ended up doing JVC. I didn't plan to end in [city]. I actually wanted to go to Alaska or Kentucky.

Heznie: Oh my roommate's actually going to Alaska for JVC.

Anonymous: Oh really?

Heznie: Yeah! Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: What town? Juneau?

Heznie: I don't remember the town but I know that she's going to be working with autistic children.

Emma: Oh!

Anonymous: You know what? That... that is really funny because when I came to [city] for JVC I worked with autistic children.

Heznie: Wow!

Emma: Wow! So many coincidences.

Heznie: I know!

Anonymous: Isn't that? That is very strange.

Heznie: It is!

Anonymous: Yeah... and so after, that's how I landed in [city]. And it was that JVC year that I met my, my partner that I have now and I just kinda got stuck in the Midwest.

Emma: Oh wow.

Heznie: Okay, cool.

Emma: So you did JVC for one year?

Anonymous: Well, I did it for one year but then I went to do a second year because a spot opened up in Appalachia which I really wanted to go to.

Heznie: Oh.

Emma: Uh-huh.

Anonymous: But because, because [partner's name] and I had met and we were just kinda figuring out together that we were a couple, that was just really hard to do it far away.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: Mm-hm.

Anonymous: So after the first couple of months, I left JVC to come back to [city].

Heznie: Oh wow.

Emma: Okay.

Anonymous: Which is really the only time in my life I've ever quit something that I've committed myself to.

Emma: But it was for a good reason.

Anonymous: [Laughter] Yeah, I guess you could say that! [Everyone laughs]

Emma: Um, sorry, so just to clarify you were not...

Anonymous: So when did I first, when did I first come... oh go ahead.

Emma: I was just gonna say, so you were not out during your time at Holy Cross?

Anonymous: I was not out, no.

Heznie: Okay.

Emma: Um, so did, um, so if you weren't out at Holy Cross, do you think there were specific things that kept you from being out?

Anonymous: Oh I think, well I think, one, there were, there's, there were a lot of things that kept me from recognizing that certain relationships and friendships that I had were probably more than that.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: I think it was it was the culture, the culture there was...

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: ... You just are, I don't know how else to explain it but other than you were, you were the good child, you were the good student, you were to grow up and be successful, you were to find your soul mate, well who would be the opposite sex, and you would settle down, get married and have kids and have a good career.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: And that, that was I think, to me the unwritten, the unwritten pressure...

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: ... The unwritten structure, even structure around social events, um, yeah there was no, not that there was any wiggle room or any room for discussion... at least in the circles that I traveled at Holy Cross were... even the discussion of sexuality in general to come out, let alone, you know, are you gay? Are you not gay? Are you straight? Are you bi? Whatever you might be.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: Um, it just never was, it never was even a topic, I know that sounds really strange. It wasn't anything talked about. So the only people that I knew through my college years, for my whole life up and through my college years that were gay, were men and that was it.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Heznie: Oh okay.

Anonymous: So for the whole concept, for that to be available to women was, like, oh really?

Emma: Huh. I never thought about that. Um, okay.

Anonymous: Yeah it makes me look like, kind of like a dummy.

Emma: No! I don't think so, because I feel like even if— there is definitely more of a discussion now— but, I don't know Heznie what you think, but I feel like there's still a pressure at Holy Cross to, you know, live a very traditional life, I don't know, like a get a good career and meet someone.

Heznie: I think so, I think so, I think it's gotten a lot better...

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Heznie: ...Because of all the programs and clubs that we have on campus that encourage, um, people to feel comfortable in their own skin.

Emma: Yeah.

Heznie: But I do kinda feel like there is still a pressure.

Emma: It's still really traditional I think.

Heznie: It really is. It is. I feel like.

Anonymous: Yeah, I mean it was it was, traditional is a good word. It was, I mean I guess basing on what your tradition is, but,

Emma: Right.

Anonymous: It was very traditional and there were very set guidelines on, this is who you were expected to be, and as long as you kind of fit those roles, then, then you were okay.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: And I could feel them strongly when I bounced out of, because my family was blue-collar

Heznie and Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: And there were definitely ways that I acted that were more blue-collar than white-collar, even those differences were very pronounced in that environment.

Emma: Mm-hmm. Definitely.

Heznie: Okay so who was your support system at Holy Cross?

Anonymous: I, you know what, I was really involved in the Chaplains' Office.

Heznie: Okay.

Anonymous: I was a [title redacted].

Emma: Oh.

Anonymous: Um, so I mean I guess I had different support systems, I know that Kim McElaney was a big support to me, some of my friends were. Um I... in an off-campus, um, I don't know what it was, a class? Working with the elderly off-campus, and one of those supervisors was kind of a mentor to me

Emma: Oh was that through like a volunteer program or?

Anonymous: No it was for credit but I'm trying to remember how and why but...

Heznie: Is it the academic internship?

Emma: Maybe.

Heznie: Senior year?

Anonymous: It might have been, and that might be what you call it now. No I don't think it was senior year. I wanna say it was sophomore or junior year.

Heznie: Oh okay it might have been something different maybe a coll- a course at a another...

Emma: Yeah that's so interesting. We don't have really stuff like that anymore.

Heznie: We don't. It's interesting to see how things have changed.

Anonymous: Yeah because like I was doing, I was doing a little bit of case management and stuff.

Emma: Oh.

Anonymous: Is there still like a small studies in gerontology or something?

Emma: No!

Heznie: No, there's not!

Emma: Not unless, it's, I don't think it's in pre-med is it?

Heznie: No, I don't think so.

Anonymous: No, it wasn't pre-med, it was done, yeah, it was either, it might be out of the psychology department, I don't remember now.

Emma: That's so interesting. Yeah we don't have anything like that anymore.

Heznie: Right, we don't.

Anonymous: So, I, so some of my supports I got off-campus.

Heznie: Okay.

Emma: Okay.

Anonymous: I hung out with a lot of guys from W.P.I.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: So I kind of found my different spots [inaudible].

Emma: Hm. Were you um involved in any sports or clubs or campus organizations? You mentioned Campion.

Anonymous: I didn't play sports. I was a Big Sister to three little girls, who, it's funny their, not funny but ironic, their mom was actually dying from complications due to AIDS.

Emma: Oh.

Anonymous: And their nineteen-year-old aunt was taking care of them.

Heznie: Wow.

Anonymous: Yeah, yeah, it was definitely a different, a different life and a different way people were living so that was really good for me to see and to feel like I was actually being helpful...

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Heznie: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: And then like I said I was a [title redacted]...any more.

Heznie: We do.

Emma: We do, yeah.

Heznie: We do.

Anonymous: Yeah, yeah so I was one of those too.

Emma: It's pretty prestigious, I feel like when people are [title redacted].

Heznie: Yeah it is. [Laughter]

Anonymous: Yeah and then I, you know, I did like I said a lot of stuff with the Chaplains' Office.

Emma: Cool. Um, h- if any way, how do you think your involvement with these sorts of groups, um impacted your experience of being LGBTQ at Holy Cross?

Anonymous: I, you know what I think it did the most for me was reinforced how important a sense of integrity is.

Heznie: Mm.

Emma: Mm.

Anonymous: And a sense of who you are and even though Holy Cross sends a different message in terms of being traditional, "this is who we expect you to be," there's always the message that "you're supposed to be you."

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: It just never expanded what you could include for me. But there was always that support that you are loved for who you are. Um so I think that sense of, I think that sense of honesty, I think that sense of integrity, I think all of that was, was built stronger in me and then that enabled me I think, in a lot of ways when I did come out to myself and then eventually to my family and stuff, um just to feel more secure in it.

Heznie: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: And, and for it not to stress me out huge.

Emma: Cool.

Heznie: And if you, and if you could do your Holy Cross experience over, would you do

anything differently?

Anonymous: Um, if I could do it over would I do it differently? Sometimes I think I might have gone pre-med but um...I don't... [Laughter]

Emma: We all kinda wish that I think.

Heznie: I know!

Anonymous: But I was an English major! Really, come on now!

Heznie: Right. [Laughter]

Anonymous: Um, I, I think I would have, I don't want to say tried not to fit in as much but, but maybe maybe just been a little more secure in who I was and not worry so much about what other people thought.

Heznie: Okay, and you mentioned something about um you trying to fit in, could you kind of explain more about that, like how you tried to fit in? Was it being more involved in the clubs and stuff?

Anonymous: Uh, yeah okay, so...it was being involved and stuff but I enjoyed that stuff and I'm an involved kind of person anyway. So I don't, I don't think that that would have changed. Um I think in terms of that that unwritten pressure of who you hang out with, who you date...

Heznie: Mm-okay.

Anonymous: ...How you date, what dating looks like...

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: You know so for two years I had the same boyfriend but it was, looking back on it now it was really more just because of what you're supposed to do.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: And yet, I have, I have, still have wonderful, wonderful friendships with some women at Holy Cross that, had each of us been more aware of what was going on, it, it probably would have gotten to be more than just a friendship.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: Okay.

Emma: Right.

Anonymous: Does that make sense?

Emma: Yeah, definitely.

Heznie: It definitely does.

Emma: And it's funny because our next question was actually "did you have any romantic relationships at Holy Cross" but you kinda just touched on that.

Anonymous: Well, it's kinda like when I came out to myself. My partner and I were probably dating for a year before we really realized we were dating.

Emma: Mm.

Heznie: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: And so I think, in retrospect, if I go back and look at one relationship in particular while I was at Holy Cross, I could probably say the same thing about it.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: But because that was just, it wasn't even even in the realm of options, um even despite, you know, I would say close, sensual contact but not sexual contact...

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: ...Deep relationship, deep spiritual connection...

Heznie: Okay.

Anonymous: ...All of that, you know, I mean if I had choice between that one friend or hanging out with my boyfriend of two years, I would have picked that friend any day.

Heznie: Right.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: Now, of course, now in hindsight I'm like, oh yeah you idiot, that that's because.  
[Laughter]

Anonymous: Um but I, I think that's how tight the parameters were and I think some of that was just uh the decade that it was, I think some of it was the school and you know the lack of diversity.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: Um did that, did I answer the question?

Emma: Oh yeah, definitely!

Heznie: Oh yeah, most definitely.

Emma: Um, if I could just ask, how did you um find the experience with your boyfriend? Was it just like a partnership, or?

Anonymous: How would I define things?

Emma: No, it, well, how did you find the experience of having a boyfriend at Holy Cross? Was that just like kinda the typical thing to do?

Anonymous: Well he didn't go to Holy Cross, so right there it was atypical.

Heznie: Okay.

Anonymous: He um was a student at another school.

Emma: Okay.

Anonymous: Um, I, at the time, I didn't think anything of it because I thought that's what it was.

Heznie and Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: That's what I thought dating and girlfriend/boyfriend stuff was.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: Uh, I'm not sure I know exactly how to answer that question other than, it was just kinda like "okay this is what you're supposed to do, this is how it's supposed to happen," and you just keep going. I didn't really give it a lot of thought, per se.

Emma: Right.

Anonymous: I mean it definitely felt better to be a person with a boyfriend than a person without one.

Heznie: Right.

Emma: Oh. I think that's a perfect way to answer it, sorry.

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: Because, well it gives you status.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: And in the Holy Cross world at the time, it definitely gave you status.

Heznie: I feel like even now it's still the same.

Emma: Really?

Heznie: Yeah I feel like, like I have friends that have boyfriends and they feel like they're doing what they're supposed to do...

Emma: They like made it?

Heznie: Like they made it yeah! Especially...

Anonymous: Yeah they made it!

Heznie: Especially me being a senior, yeah and some of my friends that are in relationships they're like, "finally I've made it," you know what I mean?

Emma: Wow.

Heznie: I think it just depends on...

Anonymous: Yeah, like they're one step ahead.

Heznie: Yeah! I think it all just depends, you don't find that in your...experience?

Emma: I, I just, I don't, I'm like having the... I've had a boyfriend since freshman year and we're like, we're gonna break up at graduation 'cause were like not gonna live near each other at all, sorry this is not about you guys at all but...

Heznie: Aww.

Anonymous: No it's totally interesting though.

Emma: So its just like I think of it as kind of a like, not that I wish I didn't have it, but it's just like something, another thing, you have to deal with I guess. [inaudible]

Anonymous: But see there's the question, so like you asked me, well how did I feel about it, so I think okay, I don't really have any strong emotions about it.

Emma: Mm-hmm.

Anonymous: So why did I stick with this dude for two years?

Emma: Right that's a long time.

Heznie: It is a long time.

Anonymous: Because it was the thing to do.

Heznie: Mm-hmm.

Emma: Right.

Heznie: So did he go to school in Worcester or...

Anonymous: Yeah.

Heznie and Emma: Okay.

Anonymous: Yeah, he was, yeah, and a group of us hung out together.

Heznie: Oh okay.

Emma: Okay that makes sense.

Anonymous: But it really wasn't until I met my partner and we really fell in love that I realized the difference.

Heznie: Right.

Emma: That makes sense.

Anonymous: Like oh, this is what everybody talks about, this makes sense now?

Emma: Yeah.

Heznie: Right.

Emma: Huh. Well, thank you.

Heznie: [Laughter]

Anonymous: Just call me clueless for a few years. But um yeah it's just that I think that that speaks to the tradition and the structure and the time of the decade... it just never was an option. So much so that even during the JVC year when we were together, we, but not together...

Emma: Right

Anonymous: ...We had a lot of lesbian friends who kept saying, "you guys are a couple" and we kept getting so mad at them like, "no we're not!"

Emma: Really?

Heznie: Really?

Anonymous: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's how I think that's how thick, I don't know if you wanna call it the homophobia or...

Emma: Yeah.

Anonymous: ...The fear of all that... we would get furious like no, that's not what's going on here.

Emma: And then did you, you just...

Anonymous: Well then finally there was...

Emma: ...Made a choice or...?

Anonymous: Yeah, well, I mean I don't know how much into detail you want me to get, but I was packing up to leave for Kentucky and [partner's name] had come over...

Emma: Uh-huh.

Anonymous: ...And I was just, we, we were just packing and I looked over and she was crying.

Emma: Oh.

Heznie: Aw.

Anonymous: And I'm like "what's wrong," and then I sat down next to her and that was our first kiss and that was like okay this totally makes sense.

Heznie: Aww!

Emma: That's a beautiful story.

Heznie: It is!

Anonymous: Isn't it a sweet love story?

Emma: Yeah.

Heznie: It is! It is the cutest.

Emma: That's beautiful.

Anonymous: And here we are, almost 25 years later.

Emma: Wow.

Heznie: Oh my gosh.

Emma: That's a great story.

Anonymous: We've adopted three kids and... yeah.

Heznie: Oh my goodness!

Emma: Wow. That's...

Anonymous: See it's... I've met the tradition other than the fact that...

Emma: Right.

Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: ...She's a woman and not a man.

Heznie: Oh my gosh.

Emma: It just, that's just, just the part of when she's, you're gonna move and then, oh it's so beautiful!

Heznie: Oh my gosh, it's like something something out of a movie or something.  
[Laughter]

Emma: Right.

Anonymous: You know it is kinda funny, I don't really tell that story to a whole lot of people but yeah it is something that's kind of out a movie, it's like wow.

Emma: Definitely.

Heznie: Yeah that's so sweet!

Anonymous: Yeah.

Heznie: So did your partner, um, identify as being a part of LGBT before you guys started dating?

Anonymous: No, no.

Heznie: Oh okay, so you guys kinda just figured it out with each other?

Anonymous: Yeah, we're... we're each others' first and only.

Heznie: Oh my gosh, that's so cute. [Laughter]

Emma: That's beautiful. That's so nice.

Anonymous: [Laughter] You two are funny.

Heznie: It is!

Emma: I'm kind of in a sentimental state so... [Laughter]

Emma: Um alright, I guess we should move on then. Um. Sorry.

Anonymous: We can do whatever you want to talk about is fine with me, I don't mind talking about good love stories.

Heznie: Oh my gosh.

Emma: Who doesn't?

Heznie: I know. [laughter]

Emma: Um I guess back to Holy Cross, do you think, um I don't know if you identify with the Jesuit identity, do you think that identity and the environment of Holy Cross affected your view of your sexuality at all? We've talked a lot about Campion and how that is kind of a core source of like community, I guess.

Heznie: A support system for you.

Emma: For people yeah.

Anonymous: What is the source?

Emma: Well, you mentioned Campion.

Heznie: ...Campion and how that was a support system for you at Holy Cross.

Anonymous: Oh is that where you base all of the Chaplains now? Is it Campion?

Emma and Heznie: Yeah, basically.

Anonymous: Yeah okay, that's not where they were based before, it's where the Jesuits lived.

Heznie: Oh really? Where were they?

Anonymous: Yeah, we would use it for certain things, like have certain prayer meetings and prayer groups there, but yeah they were in Hogan.

Heznie: Oh okay, well now they have their own house on campus and they all have offices there.

Anonymous: Oh yeah well I know the house. I know Campion House.

Heznie: Oh okay well that's where they are based. Oh that's different. But I feel like they still have activities in Hogan but their base is in the Campion house, but I do believe that they do have some of events in Hogan.

Anonymous: Yeah there's a lot of changes to campus, like I'll see pictures and stuff in the magazines and I'm like, "Oh that building wasn't there, no that was." I actually think that some of the professor's offices in Beaven used to be dorm rooms.

Emma: I've heard that.

Heznie: I've heard that too.

Heznie: It's just so weird to think about it though.

Emma: Yeah it is weird.

Anonymous: Yeah well it's kind of strange for me too. I'm like oh okay that's weird. But do I think that, I don't think it directly affected how I identify, sexuality-wise. Um more than it gave me a framework to work with. Once I identified it, I had a set way of thinking about things, a set way of exploring things, a certain way to guide me, is this right, is this wrong, that sort of thing. So in that way, I think it probably helped me. But did I apply it specifically? No, because one, I wasn't out to myself, and two, sexuality was never anything that was discussed, even heterosexuality a whole lot, on campus.

Heznie: Oh wow.

Anonymous: Yeah things, times were a lot different.

Emma: It's crazy to think that now we have like a queer theory course and a sociology of LGBTQ course, and like...

Anonymous: Well yeah it floored me, it floored me when I thought I'm like "really? Wow that's great!" So what made you want to take the course?

Emma: I have had Professor Crist a couple times before and I really liked her. And then I was abroad last year in England and I took um... a course there called Constructing Sexuality and that was really interesting to me so then when I found out she had kind of created this course I really wanted to take it.

Anonymous: What about you, Heznie?

Heznie: Um, I took a course called Genders and Sexualities and they talked about different genders and different sexualities in other countries as well as in the U.S. It was an Anthro course and that was really interesting to me and I took it with Professor Rodgers I believe. And that was really interesting to me so I just decided that I wanted to know more about um the LGBT community and so I decided to take this course. I also took a psychology course called Gender Role Development. Um, and I don't know I was just really interested in the content matter of this course so I just...

Anonymous: No I think its great.

Heznie: Yeah most definitely.

Emma: Also I heard that there's like... the Women's and Genders Studies concentration, and I think they might be changing it. Didn't she say that, our professor said something about changing it to like Gender and Sexuality concentration, maybe something like that?

Heznie: Yeah something like that.

Emma: And I think they might be adding a lot of courses.

Heznie: But I definitely have taken quite a few gender, Woman and Genders courses throughout my time at Holy Cross. I've always really enjoyed their kind of subject matter.

Anonymous: That's interesting. Because I think like women-centered courses were just starting to be offered when I was there.

Heznie: Oh wow, like what kind of classes, do you remember?

Anonymous: Definitely not on gender and sexualities, but it was in terms of a woman's perspective. So getting more away from just only the male perspective, but also looking at the women's perspective.

Heznie: Oh ok. I took a course called Women and Early Christianity. Was that kind of course

being offered?

Anonymous: Yeah something like that or Women in Literature, or you know yeah. And I mean that's just the way I remember it, you might go back and research and think oh she really didn't remember school well at all.

Heznie: [Laughter] No, it's alright.

Emma: Well it's funny, I always have to remember that Holy Cross just started admitting women in '72, so it wasn't really that long ago.

Anonymous: Yeah it wasn't that long after that yeah, that I went.

Emma: Um, cool.

Anonymous: I feel like you asked a question and I didn't answer it.

Emma: No you answered.

Heznie: No most definitely, you've answered all the questions we've asked.

Emma: Our next little chunk is called looking back. And then the first question is, based on your experience, what advice would you offer to LGBTQ students who are struggling to come out at Holy Cross? I don't know if you have any.

Anonymous: Yeah I think I would have some advice for that. I think that sexuality is a private thing and it's a personal thing. And not to feel like you have to announce it unless there's a circumstance or a reason. So you know if I were single and I met you in some social situation, I wouldn't necessarily have to announce what my sexuality is. And I think though that a lot of people, who identify other than straight, feel some sort of need or some sort of pressure to say that out loud.

Heznie: So you don't feel like there should be a coming out?

Anonymous: I think that people should choose carefully. Especially at Holy Cross, if it's still traditional. I think people should, if that's what they want to do. I think they should feel just as free to choose carefully as they should feel free to proclaim it to the world.

Heznie: I never thought of it like that.

Emma: Mmhmm, me neither.

Anonymous: And so for me I kind of have this rule that I don't walk around saying "Hey, I'm [name], a lesbian," but if anyone asks me, I answer them honestly. I don't not introduce my family; I mean my boys have two moms. So it's constantly coming out day after day after day, but I am probably just personality-wise, not necessarily a button-wearing, flag-waving, banner-

holding type of person, but shortly after coming out I found a lot of pressure to do that.

Emma: To have like a political presence or...?

Heznie: I do kind of feel like there is a kind of pressure to do that. Even just by taking this course.

Anonymous: Yeah, so my advice would be to know who you are and take the time and know who you are and not just your sexuality, but know in terms of: are you a private person, are you somebody who wants everybody you know to know the first time they meet you. Then there are people who are like that and that's good, that's good for them. But I would say you know you don't have to rush into announcing things. Um, but if you want to then that's great. I think sometimes there's an opposite pressure. So great, now I've come out to myself, I've come out to my friends, and now it's time to join the movement. And I think the movement is very, very important, don't get me wrong. Because we wouldn't move further if people weren't out there doing that. But I do think that there is a lot of quiet strong ways to represent. And so sometimes I think, I hope that [partner's name] and I have done just as much for the movement by living solid peaceful lives of love and integrity and people see that as an example. That "oh yeah this is what non-straight people are like. They are just like us."

Emma: Absolutely, yeah.

Anonymous: So I think that would be my advice. Take a minute and think about it. Don't make yourself do stuff because you're gay that you wouldn't do if you weren't gay. I don't know. That's my pithy words of wisdom for today.

Heznie: That's really good. [laughter]

Emma: Thank you. Um, would you have any advice for seniors who identify as LGBTQ, who are about to make the transition from college life to their professional lives?

Anonymous: I hate to say it, but I think that we're in a time that you want to be careful. Watch what you post on social media, um just be careful. There's a lot of stuff that you put out there that you, can't be taken back. But probably similar, just be thoughtful about it. And know where you're comfortable, and find where you're comfortable. It's hard. I mean I work in a very, for a large urban [redacted name of organization] and I oversee services for kids who are 0 to 5 who have disabilities and mental health issues. And we are a very, our agency and culture is a very traditional African-American community. And so I know at work, in order for parents and families to trust me, I can't be quite as out as I might be in a more liberal environment.

Heznie: And when you say "not as out," what do you mean by that? Like not bringing your family around or...?

Anonymous: Yeah, like, I actually do and it's a struggle I have inside myself in terms of my own integrity. Because I might not bring [partner's name] to a work event, um. Not because I'm ashamed of it, not because I'm not proud of us, but because of the implications that that might

have down the line in terms of me serving and working with kids. But it's also, you know, about the Midwest is a little bit different. It's a little less progressive in some areas. And the culture of the families I work with is much more closed um, and that's who they are. And it's great. I love working in that environment. I have learned a ton. My boys are also African-American. So I have learned tons and that have helped me out so I'm not such a stupid white mom. But it does, the culture that I'm in. So I guess that's what I would say for people that are graduating and getting a job. To look at the culture you are going into.

Emma and Heznie: Right

Anonymous: And even though you shouldn't have to think and act smartly, think and act smartly. You shouldn't have to do it. My boys shouldn't have to be extra polite to police officers, but it's just kind of the way they have to be. Um until things change.

Heznie: Right and did you, by taking this job opportunity, did you think about the context in which you were coming into beforehand? Was that like?

Anonymous: I did. Because here's the interesting thing. Before I took this job, I have been in this job for eleven years now, but before I took it, I was out to everyone and I was in a very open, accepting working environment. And it was a very nice free place to work in and I felt like it was great. But the work wasn't as challenging as I had wanted it to be, I kind of maxed out. And was up for a bigger change and a bigger challenge. But it is definitely one of the things that people warned me about this particular agency's culture. And so I really had to think deep and hard about it and um probably for a long time, I wasn't even out to co-workers, which probably is a decision I regret. Just because I didn't feel true to myself. But um, I don't know but yeah I did think about it, in terms of. Only because people came up to me and were like "[anonymous], you know what kind of environment you're going into don't you?" And I was like, "no, what environment?" [Laughter]. It's a good place and it's a good place for me and it's where I need to be. And I love the kids and families that I work with.

Heznie: Aw, that's so good.

Emma: Sorry, no go ahead, do you see yourself being there, I mean for the foreseeable future? Working in the place you're working and raising your children in the Midwest. Is that your home?

Anonymous: You know I miss the ocean. I miss a lot of things about the northeast. It was never my plan to be here beyond a year.

Emma and Heznie: Oh wow.

Anonymous: Yeah but life takes turns and I guess I have taken decisions more based on my heart than what the plan was and my kids are very entrenched in their activities here. I don't see myself moving in any foreseeable future, but somehow I see myself ending my life back where I started it, but I don't know. I have learned along the way that you can only plan so much. And sometimes if you stick too rigidly to your plan, you miss out on a lot. I will probably always

work in the type of field that I am in. I have got my Master's in Social Work.

Heznie: Oh wow, that's kind of what I wanted to get into after this.

Anonymous: Oh you do?

Emma: Yeah, I was thinking about it too. [Laughter]

Anonymous: That's another whole conversation. [Laughter] It's a very flexible degree, that's for sure. Yeah... so I don't see any big changes in the near future, but you never know. And I've actually lived here now longer than I've lived on the East Coast. I don't know when I started to claim this as home.

Heznie: Wow.

Emma: Yeah, wow. Cool. That's pretty much the end of the questions. Oh we have, sorry, we have one more, do you wanna go.

Heznie: We have one more question and could you share a story about a moment when being LGBTQ, um, impacted an experience that you had at Holy Cross?

Anonymous: Well probably since I didn't know while I was at Holy Cross, I don't really think I have one in terms of how it impacted my experience while I was there.

Emma: That's okay.

Heznie: That's fine.

Anonymous: Yeah, I mean, I mean, I can apply 20/20 hindsight to certain experiences, but not as I was going through them.

Heznie: Ok.

Emma: Do you have any questions for us about any of this, or the process or?

Anonymous: Not really. I mean have you enjoyed it? Like did you guys get enough interviews for all of your classmates, too?

Emma: Well, we only have you to interview. Um.

Anonymous: Yeah but how many kids, how many students are in your class?

Heznie: I think it was nine different interviews.

Emma: Mmhmm. So I think three of them have already been finished.

Heznie: A couple of them are going to be this week and the rest are going to be next week.

Anonymous: And then what do you do afterwards? Do you have to put them together as a whole group?

Emma: Well Heznie and I will transcribe this and then we as a class and they will just come together and we have to fill out metadata, so just basically the approximate graduation year and stuff like that and I think, they'll just the audio and transcriptions will just go up on CrossWorks, anonymized, for the ones.

Anonymous: Right.

Emma: And um yea that's it. I think maybe, Stephanie, our professor will move forward with this kind of stuff in her other classes, but um, for us it's basically just this.

Anonymous: Well that's interesting. Was it kind of strange for you to call somebody and just ask them all those questions?

Emma: I mean I don't know [laughter]. Have you read *Out and About on the Hill*? Have you heard about that?

Anonymous: Yeah a little bit, not much though.

Emma: I think we have a PDF version of it, but it's like a book that was published and it's stories of LGBTQ people who have gone to Holy Cross.

Anonymous: Oh, is that by, um, Nickoloff?

Emma and Heznie: Yes!

Anonymous: Oh, okay he was one of my favorite professors.

Emma: Oh ok. Yeah that's funny. So we read that in class and it was just really interesting to hear these stories of people and was so close to us because we knew all the places they were talking about and everything. So that was sort of like the pre-part of this project.

Anonymous: Well I think it's exciting and I mean it was fun for me to be able to talk about it. Nobody's ever asked me about how those two merged together for me.

Heznie and Emma: Yeah. Right.

Emma: And also I think that the pride club on campus, um, has grown a lot and the faculty and staff also have what they call "Outfront." They have a club as well. So I think and I know Residence Life is also trying to make moves towards being like more trans-inclusive and stuff. So I think the school is trying to, or at least aspects of the school is trying to take more steps to...

Anonymous: Oh well I imagine it would be a struggle because you're always going to be hit against the environment and the culture

Heznie: Right and the administration

Anonymous: And the families in which the students come from.

Emma and Heznie: Right.

Anonymous: You know I have a friend that when she came out to her dad, he pulled a gun out.

Emma and Heznie: Oh wow, oh my god.

Anonymous: Yeah and so I am excited about the amount of growth that has happened there, but I think that's where the Jesuit tradition helps.

Emma and Heznie: Mmhmm. Right.

Emma: It seems to be a little more flexible I guess.

Heznie: It definitely is more flexible, definitely, definitely.

Anonymous: Yeah or just flexible about different things. So where the newcoming, embraced group in the 70s was something and then in the 80s it was something and in the 90s it was something and later on it will be something else. Until we all learn that we are just all human.

Heznie and Emma: Exactly. That's the end goal. I know.

Anonymous: So now do you have a program that will actually do the transcription or do you actually have to listen and type it out?

Heznie and Emma: Yeah we will be listening to the audio and then typing it out.

Anonymous: [Laughter] You should have told me that before and I would have given you like one word answers.

Heznie: No this is actually really perfect.

Emma: And we appreciate it, it's been really. We were really nervous about it, but this has been really enjoyable.

Heznie: Mmhmm.

Anonymous: Well I have to confess, I was really nervous about it too.

Emma: Yeah so we are all on the same page!

Heznie: I believe what was so nerve racking for me is that, you know you're really asking a lot of invasive questions to someone that you don't even know. You know what I mean? It's always a challenge knowing if the person is going to be receptive to your questions or not. You know what I mean? And if, you know, they're going to want to share details or not. And yeah that's what I was nervous about.

Anonymous: Well I would hope by the fact that these people volunteered to do it that they would be willing to. Has anyone ran into anyone that wasn't willing?

Heznie: No, not at all.

Emma: I think the people that have done it thus far have been good. And the fact that, you're right, that they did recruit from like a club that everyone volunteered to do it. So it's not like you're asking anyone who didn't know what they were doing.

Anonymous: But they are personal questions.

Heznie: Yeah absolutely, and that's why I was kind of nervous. Because I am like "I don't even know how I would answer some of these questions," so let alone asking someone else.

Emma: [Laughter] Right, on the phone. And you can't even see each other.

Heznie: Right and you guys have never met.

Anonymous: That might be a better thing.

Emma: That's true, a little less. [Laughter]

Anonymous: That's funny. Well I don't envy you having to transcribe it all onto paper, but I did my time at Holy Cross. [Laughter]

Emma: Right, you've done work I'm sure. But thank you for your openness and being willing to talk to us.

Heznie: Thank you, thank you.

Anonymous: Okay and if you have any follow up questions or anything else, you need to know, you know how to reach me. I'm more than happy to clarify anything that might need to be clarified.

Emma: Could we just ask you if you're willing, we have a couple categories just for like categorization purposes to see if you're willing to self identify in these categories. So it just gender identity?

Anonymous: Female, woman.

Emma: Okay, um sexuality?

Anonymous: I knew you were going to ask that. And you know I really hate the whole concept of having to be pigeon holed into one or the other because I think sexuality is a continuum.

Emma: Right, ok.

Heznie: Most definitely

Emma: I think we think that too, I don't even know why it's on there.

Heznie: Yeah, I know.

Anonymous: I really do feel that way and yet there's not a category for those who believe it's a continuum. So could I tell you if things in my life changed suddenly, would I always be with a woman or maybe a man or I don't know? I can't tell you because I think it's a continuum and I think you fall in love with a person. I don't know necessarily. But I definitely probably more geared towards being attracted to and emotionally, spiritually, all of that by women more so than men.

Emma: We won't put any

Anonymous: There's my long complicated answer.

Emma: It's and that's what it deserves I think.

Heznie: Honestly!

Anonymous: I usually let other people slap their tag on me. So most people would refer to me as lesbian just because that's what makes sense to them and the life that I'm living now.

Emma: Okay what about racial ethnic background?

Anonymous: Um, white.

Emma: And if you wanna identify your current or former occupation?

Anonymous: Yeah you can just say social worker.

Heznie: Ok, Cool.

Emma: Okay thank you so much again for your willingness. Um, and you have our phone number and our professor's phone number if you have any more questions.