

*Out/Closeted in the Quadrangles:
A History of LGBTQ Life at the University of Chicago*

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW #36
ANONYMOUS WOMAN (1989-) AB 2012**

At U of C: 2008-2012

*Interviewed: June 6th, 2013
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Transcript by: Molly Liu
Length: 42:55*

Interview (June 6th, 2013) in Harper Memorial Library:

[00:00:00]

AB: So, how did you end up at the University of Chicago?

A: Well, I was between Duke and the University of Chicago. I'm from Florida, so I could have gone to Florida State for more than free, but I wanted to get away from home, and my parents were like, "If you're going to go away, it has to be a really good college." So yeah, it was between those two. I visited Duke, because my brother went there. So I visited Duke, and there was a little Q&A, or a little LGBTQ office there. But the way Duke is is that it's hilly. This little office was at the back of student center, one room, on one of those hill parts where it's on a non-discrete level—it exists in the back but not in the front. I was passing by and I was like, "This is the saddest thing I've seen, I don't think I can go here." So that's what made me decide, even though—yeah.

AB: Did you visit here too?

A: Yeah, I visited here too. Instead of my prom I prospected here, which was cool.

AB: You majored in bio?

A: Yeah, biology with neuroscience.

AB: Did you know you wanted to do that when you were coming in?

A: I knew for sure biology. And probably neuroscience too. I'm still not really sure which part of neuro specialization I want exactly.

AB: I have a friend doing neuroscience at Duke right now, so it's—yeah.

A: That's funny.

AB: Yeah, so did UChicago live up to your expectations of being a worthwhile school?

A: Yeah. Well, I—in terms of my education, I wouldn't say that I didn't have any expectations, but I wasn't—I knew I wasn't going to leave here with a bad education. So I wasn't too worried about that. And my family wasn't really well-versed in college admissions stuff, so it's like, I don't know what's going to happen, whatever happens happens. But in terms of why I turned down Duke to come here, definitely I was flabbergasted by the openness of the Midwest. You know, the Midwest is all like quaint and stuff. I didn't go to the South like in Duke, but it shouldn't be that much better. But I was really surprised by it. Pleasantly surprised.

AB: And you got that during prospie weekend?

A: No, because my parents were around. Which is funny, we drove through, looking for a container store and stuff, we drove through what I know now as Boystown, the North Halsted area. I was like, “Why are there rainbow, like, pillars around? What's going on here?” It was so awkward and mom was like, “ehh,” but no, I just liked it when I came here and figured it out.

AB: So you were already out?

A: Yeah, I was out. I was pushed out in high school, so.

AB: Okay, cool. All right, so where did you live on campus?

A: I lived in Breckinridge, and then I lived in Max, then moved to the Shoreland. Then I lived in I House. So mostly on campus.

AB: Was dorm life good for you?

A: No. No. I didn't like dorm life, I always wanted to have my own apartment, but my parents didn't really see the financial—I don't know, they were like, “If you're in school you should just be in a dorm, what's the big deal?” They just didn't—they didn't see the economic advantage—they didn't see any advantage in me not living in a dorm.

AB: Yeah. Yeah. Was I House any better?

A: I House was better. There aren't any RAs, so it's lot more older kids. You're allowed to have alcohol out because everyone there is older and international. It was interesting. Met a lot of people there.

AB: Yeah, I interviewed someone else who lived in I House. He's obsessed with it, he loved it.

A: Yeah, it's great. There's this one giant kitchen, which sucks, but if you don't really care

what you eat, it's great.

AB: Yeah. So what was your social life like here?

A: I just had a couple good friends. Probably a lot of UChicago kids have a couple good friends that they meet during first year, and they just stick with them. But generally instead of like, instead of—once I figured out Q&A, I think is what it was at the time, I think it's still that now, once you meet everyone that frequents 5710, everyone that works there—I used to be good friends with someone that worked in 5710, someone named [redacted], I think she left a while ago. Once you meet people you just hear about things. And then there's cyclical type kind of social events that you have. And that just becomes the norm, kind of. So I guess my social life was just whatever I can go to with a couple of friends, but then you always meet up with everybody and talk.

AB: So did you usually stay in Hyde Park?

A: Yeah, mostly stayed in Hyde Park. Definitely mostly for apartment parties or things like that, whatever other events. Probably until I was 21, and then I have a car, so we would go up to Boystown, or anywhere else. I spent a lot of my time just floating around Chicago, exploring, as well. We'd go a lot to the South Side for tacos. Went to the North Side for Indian food, stuff like that. And Boystown. Just walk around, look at the gay bars, that was fun. Go into all the sex shops. "I've never seen this before!"

AB: Awesome. Did you go to 5710 a lot?

A: Yeah. Yeah, I used to go a lot at first, when it first—during my first or second year I would go once a week, if not more, for actual events.

AB: Did you do Q&A? Did you also do the Q groups? Did those exist?

A: Yeah. I did Q&A, and I did—I occasionally went to one of the Q groups. I remember I used to go to the Q group when it was called Livid. Livid Lesbians. That's so hilarious. Yeah, I would go to those. Those would be fun to go to. But I found those to be a little more intense in terms of what you could or couldn't say. Which I thought was peculiar. It's like this weird, we're open to everyone but we really care about what you say because there's so much, so many, not labels, but so many names that you have to give to things. It's like you're treading on eggshells, you don't want to say this because it might offend someone, like what does it matter anyway? So I find that really weird. I would stumble on that. Because I'm a blunt person. I would just ask, and then "Oh, that's kind of offensive." I'm sorry.

AB: Yeah. Okay. And how was your academic experience?

A: What do you mean?

AB: Like your classes...

A: I really, really really enjoyed all my classes. I'd say though at once I got past my gen ed I got to really dive into neuroscience, for example. Spent a lot of time doing research. That was a lot of fun. Suddenly my classes weren't just memorizing, they were more reinforcing what I was learning in the lab. That was really fun. And then for my third quarter SOSC—I had taken Self. Was it Self? Yeah, Self, Power, Identity. But I had taken a year off. In my third quarter I took Mind. That was the best class ever. The teacher ended up writing me a recommendation. I would just stay after and chat with him. It was great. So I think definitely, I should have taken more advantage of academics, because I finished my coursework in December, and I didn't take winter or spring quarter classes. Just to save money, but now I kind of regret it. I should have taken more classes. Now I come to campus, I'm all sad about it.

AB: Did you have fun though?

[09:39]

A: Yeah. It was a lot of fun.

AB: Good. Yeah. A lot of people find it really hard to balance social and school.

A: Oh yeah, it's hard. You definitely have to be self-disciplined. I didn't do it so well at first. I don't know, it's a combination of—I learned how to better schedule myself, or I also started learning things that I was really interested in, so it was really easy to sit down for hours and study. Probably would be doing that anyway. Yeah, it is hard though. I actually, I find a lot of students, I found a lot of students who did that really well, and they socialized really well.

AB: Was there a gay apartment when you were here? Gay apartment parties?

A: Yeah, towards the end. I think there was also towards the beginning, but for some reason, I knew pretty much everyone that was gay, but I wasn't in the group. Generally. So I think there was my first two years, but I never really showed until the last two years.

AB: Did you spend most of your time not with queer people?

A: Mm. No. I'd say my time was, much of it was spent with a bunch of different groups. A lot of—like, science major things, and the humanities. There were a bunch of different things.

AB: Cool. And did you find it easy to be out here? Or hard?

A: I think it depended. Just like anywhere, it's hard. Especially college is really hard to gauge because it's like a combination of social and professional. I always—I've always worked in a lab, for example, in the hospital or something, and I always find it—I don't like to come out in those types of settings. If it ever comes to my coworkers' knowledge,

it'll be because of telling a story, I wouldn't come out and say, "Hi, I'm [redacted], I'm gay." I always hated that type of in-your-face kind of coming out, type of—and that's why I generally have the fear that they'll think, "oh, you're going to be really gay now." I'd rather be [redacted] the scientist, [redacted] the doctor, [redacted], all these things, not [redacted] the gay person. That's what I really strive to avoid. Not that I mind it, but I just don't want it to be an important identifier. How many people do you hear say, "Rachael the straight girl"? Zero.

It's a little hard in that way, you don't know, especially since you have kids from all over. You may have a group of friends and you're getting along well, but you don't realize that one's from, like, Kansas, and one's from New York. So you're just like, "I don't know what—who I can tell and what I can divulge." It's not like anything bad will happen, it's...There's no going back from that. I'm always super worried about that. Certainly with my professors or something, I try not to make it an important part of their experience, instructing me. But I think it's pretty open here. Pretty open, easygoing. Yeah.

AB: Did you have any relationships while you were here?

A: Yeah, I did.

AB: Great. Sorry, I'm... Did you take any classes on gender studies or queer stuff?

A: No. I wanted to take the Biology of Gender, but...

AB: Yeah, I've heard that's really good.

A: Mark Osadjan taught that class, but it conflicted with my, one of my required pre-med classes, so I didn't.

AB: I guess, did you get involved with LGBTQ stuff outside of the university at all?

A: Not really. I wasn't that involved. With stuff outside of Hyde Park. It's really hard.

AB: Yeah. I dance. It's been really—I leave Hyde Park like four days a week, and it's like...

A: I used to work in Waukegan, so that took out all my energy from ever leaving Hyde Park. I would just go there and back.

AB: Wow. Was that your first year here?

A: It was like my third and fourth year. I took a year off and I did research for a year, full-time.

AB: In Waukegan? Wow.

A: Yeah. Then they just kept me on part-time status for two years. I actually just got a paper

published yesterday. [AB: Congratulations!] So it was definitely worth it, but commuting just took all my energy from ever leaving Hyde Park.

AB: Wow. That's intense. Cool. What made you decide to take a year off?

A: I was kind of—financial circumstances type things. Yeah. My parents weren't sure I was an investment worth them making anymore, so I was like, okay, I'm going to do some research. That was a little annoying. But.

AB: Did you live in Waukegan that year?

A: No, I lived in Hyde Park. Lived in I-House. No, I lived in Rogers Park. I lived in Rogers Park.

AB: Is that near Andersonville?

A: Yeah, it's the one right under Evanston, on top of Andersonville, yeah.

AB: Yeah, that's a nice area. Did you ever go to Metropolis Coffee?

A: No.

AB: Oh, okay. I love that coffee shop.

A: Wait, where is it?

AB: It's right by the Granville stop.

A: Oh, okay. I know where that is. Hm. Yeah, I don't use the Red Line too much.

AB: Yeah. If you owned a car—I use the Red Line all the time.

A: Yeah, now I use the CTA much more often. I lived in Uptown until around four days ago. So the Red Line is like the vein of the city, I love it.

AB: And now you moved to Pilsen?

A: Yeah.

AB: Do you like it so far?

A: I do! It's an interesting—it's definitely a big change. But I do like it a lot. Apparently there seems to be more fresh produce. But not the genetically pumped kind, where it's pretty and you put it in your fridge and it looks the same for two weeks. No, I think it's real produce. And there's a lot of freshly squeezed orange juice everywhere, so that makes me happy.

AB: Have you kept in touch with people from U of C? Did a lot of you stay in Chicago?

A: Yeah, my roommate graduated from U of C. And my friend couchsurfing also went to U of C. I'm going to school, I'm going to start med school next year with someone who went to U of C.

AB: Are you going to U of C for med school?

A: UIC. Yeah, I keep in touch with a lot of people, a lot of U of C kids. You forged a bond, and really, nobody—of course everyone must say this, but nobody knows what we went through besides us. I don't know, there's nothing like it. Even my brother, who went to Duke, he never had to take physiology as a pre-med, as a bio major.

AB: Really?

A: Yeah. So it's just like—our school does some weird fucking backward things. But you learn to appreciate that. Now they took away the swim test and I'm upset about that. It's like, why did you do that? [AB: Yeah, that was like a defining physical moment—] How are you going to make all of the O week first-years suffer after drinking? How? Running up stairs, running up and down stairs, that's not enough.

AB: I don't even think they're doing that.

A: They got rid of all the physical? That's so sad. Yeah, and they, like—I had to take calculus, formal calculus, with the epsilon-delta proofs, completely outdated—

AB: Don't remind me of that!

A: They don't it at any college, whatever. But now they have biology—math for biology majors! I understand that most of our students that want to go into pre—want to go into medicine, they graduate with a horrible GPA next to our counterparts. I get it, it's awful. But we're much more prepared, and now we're just lowering our standards to other people. It just makes me sad.

AB: Yeah, I think it's hardest for the pre-med people at our school, I'm sure. I'm in the humanities and it's not that hard. Yeah. Did you do any RSOs? I guess Q&A is an RSO.

A: Yeah. And sometimes I was in MeChA. I'm not Mexican though. It was hard to find a Latin-based—

AB: Did OLAS exist then?

A: Yeah, OLAS existed. But they're both like populated by the same people. I don't know. I just, like, didn't want a Mexican group to be—and it's hard, because you're not going to find a Central American group. I did crew though.

AB: Wow, that's intense.

[20:20]

A: That's it. I didn't do much. I was really in the lab a lot. Wasting time a lot too. But, yeah, I think that's pretty much it. I would go to a lot of events, but I was never really part of one RSO.

AB: Did you do any leadership stuff in Q&A?

A: On occasion, for like pride week for example, I'd maybe organize a movie event or something like that. So, I tried a little bit.

AB: Was lesbian poker a thing when you were here?

A: Yeah, that was like the monthly social, cyclical event when I was here.

AB: It was here the first few months I was.

A: Yeah, it died off. Someone has to keep it alive. Yep, definitely. I remember the person that at the end kept it alive was like, "lesbian poker, but no booze, no liquor allowed, and no dancing."

AB: Really? We, like, didn't play any poker, the ones that I went to.

A: You don't play poker at any of them. [AB: It's just drinking.] Yeah, it's just drinking beer, liquor if they allowed it. And talking. Which is nice. And smoking. People smoking outside.

AB: Okay. Cool. How did you—did you go home during the summers?

A: No, I always stayed here and worked. Lab work. My first year did an internship at Northwestern. What did I do my second year? I got my lab job. Then every summer after that.

AB: I'm glad that you got published! I'm glad that it paid off.

A: Yeah, I'm really happy about that. So. I'm going to like frame the publication.

AB: Yeah. That's my goal someday. To get published. Yeah. Do you think your experience was typical of other LGBTQ students?

A: No. I think that a lot of LGBT students, they have a really supportive family, and I think that's really awesome. But I think that's why my experience is totally different. I don't know what it's like to talk to my parents about these things. I don't know how to ask them

for advice—anything related to those things. I can see—my roommate up in Uptown, they're both—well, one of them, their parents are not so supportive, but the other their parents are super supportive. You can see the difference night and day. It's just interesting though.

AB: Yeah. My ex-girlfriend came out to her dad when we were dating, and it was really bad.

A: Yeah. It just makes it difficult to—I get it. I get it. But it's just hard. Not really saying anything. But mostly it's just—those people that you would understand more, i.e. your queer community, if they have a really supportive family, nobody wants to be a Debbie Downer and like really like—so you end up not really having anybody. I don't really like bringing people down, so I just keep it to myself. It's just annoying. I think that when you have a supportive family, you're much more confident to be gay, and I think that's why I'm afraid of my work and stuff like that. I think that experience is different. That whole unsupportive thing, that's why I had to take a year off and stuff like that. And then I had an experience, the administrative reaction to my sexuality. And I just don't think they're well-equipped for that. It's always bittersweet thinking about the U of C, because I loved my experience, but I think the administration has a lot to work on. Stuff like that.

AB: I just talked to Jeff Howard, interviewed him. [Interview #30] The director of LGBTQ student life. I wonder how much he knows about things like that.

A: They're—one of my advisors made a gay joke at my expense. One of my advising sessions. I was like, if I was any more insecure, you'd have a really sad case on your hands. But I don't really care what you have to say. That was rude. You're being really rude right now. But it was like, yeah, don't care. But they do a good job. You know. I think so. I mean, we have 5710. What other school has something like 5710? And it's true that that space makes me feel very safe. It meets its goal.

AB: So when you graduated, you kept your job in Waukegan? Or did you do something else?

A: Yeah, I kept my job until around January, our project ended. She wasn't so much like, “I don't want to hire you,” it was just that there was nothing for me to do. So I applied to MyGuru, which is like a tutoring company. So I tutor for them, a couple hours. I worked at a restaurant for a couple of months, which was really interesting. I genuinely really wanted to just work in a restaurant.

AB: Which restaurant? In Chicago?

A: Yeah, La Madia?

AB: Oh, the pizza place? I worked with Dining Out Chicago, which is a magazine, and one of our clients was...

A: Yeah, I used to work there. Now I'm just tutoring a couple of hours a week. I'm trying to slow down before school starts and enjoy my free time. Which is why sometimes I don't

know what day it is.

[26:56 – 29:00: A and AB talk about dancing]

AB: The salsa scene is more queer than I thought it would be. When I first started I thought it was super heteronormative, but now I'm getting to know everyone's back stories. Yeah.

A: That's really awesome. Yeah, there's a lot of—I find in Chicago there's a lot of pockets of queerness, which I was not at all expecting. I remember one of my biggest issues when I came out is that I didn't know that you could be gay and be a functional member of society. I was like, “Damnit, I wanted to be a doctor, but I have to be homeless now!” or something.

AB: This is when you came out in high school?

A: Yeah, so I was just really bummed. “I can't be a doctor anymore! This sucks!” But neurobiology has a lot of queer people. My first PI, she was like the department of, you know, the head of her lab, and the head of the committee on neurobiology. And she's like, “yeah”—I was working the Latke-Hamantash debate—I guess I would do Jewish stuff too.

[30:19]

AB: There are a lot of queer Jewish people too. At least there are now. That's another thing that was surprising.

A: Yeah, exactly! And my PI was coming in with her partner, and she was like, “Oh, [redacted], this is my partner,” and I was like, “Oh, nice to meet you!” It was just a bonding moment. I don't think she realizes how impactful me meeting her was. It's funny. There are a lot of pockets of queerness in Chicago where you don't expect it. It's nice.

AB: Yeah. I love this city. So much. Do you think you'll ever go back to Florida?

A: I might leave Chicago but it wouldn't be to go back to Florida. It's like a cultural dead zone there.

AB: Yeah. Yeah. A bunch of people I know went to the Miami salsa congress this year, and they were just like, it's weird, the city is very weird.

A: It's very aesthetic. Everyone's trying to look pretty, there's a lot of new cars there, a lot of new houses, a lot of—a lot of well-off people. A lot of plastic surgery, women and men. And people just really concerned about those things. There's like one children's museum. Until age 6, I was here, so Field Museum, MSI—what is this? What kinds of kids are you guys raising? The most exciting thing was the hurricane exhibit, because it was windy, not even because it was that interesting. So yeah, I don't think I'd ever go back to Florida. Probably as a vacation home, but I wouldn't ever live there, live there. Definitely would

not raise a family there.

AB: Did you feel like you were coming home to Chicago?

A: I did! We left, but every summer—we would visit every single winter, and most summers. I loved Chicago.

AB: Did you have some family here?

A: Yeah, we had some family here, which is why I was a little apprehensive about coming here, because my family is very nest-y. They're like, "Oh, you're here, why can't I see you every day now?" But I was like, nope, I definitely can't do North Carolina. And this is a good school. I mean, I expect a lot of great things from it. It did feel like coming back home.

AB: Yeah, I'm from Massachusetts, but I love Chicago.

A: That's so great. I like the space, because it has the best of a city, but you still have some space. I hear stories about the East Coast cities. I've been to Boston and I didn't think it was that small. But I hear about New York and stuff.

AB: Yeah, I'm going to New York this summer for an internship. So we'll see how it goes. Everyone's like, "It's so dirty compared to Chicago!" I'm really scared about, like, rats.

A: Oh god. And it's so little—I was watching The Discovery Channel once, and the rats there build their nests with glass shards, barbed wire. And like, poison in the cement, so that if rats eat through it, they'll die, right? No! These rats ate through all that and they were fine. They were like, "what's up, let's go, let's go."

AB: I'm so scared now.

A: I don't think rats are that bad at all. Yeah. I always see rats when I—when I was at Beauty Bar and I was in the alleyway, I just saw all these rats starting to crawl. Ugh, it was disgusting.

AB: I just turned 21 today. I was scared, I shouldn't say that with the recorder—I was scared to use my fake at real places in certain neighborhoods, because when I'm out dancing no one cares, but I can't use it in the north and stuff like that.

A: Yeah, that's true. I had a fake ID—it even scanned at Target and everything. And I had it taken away at some crappy store on the South Side. It was awful. But I turned 21 a couple of months later, so it was fine. Beauty Bar, you should—Beauty Bar has really good music, which is why I like going there. And occasionally they throw queer parties up there. Yeah, today's FK, Slo-Mo...

AB: Maybe I should go!

- A: I found it funny because here, it was very cyclical, the social events, stuff like that. Once or twice a month, there would be this event, or so and so's throwing this, it's there again. It's very much the same thing. FK is every first Thursday, Slo-Mo is every third Thursday at the Whistler, Chances Dances, second Saturday at the Hideout. I think it's funny that we were living a microcosm of what it was. I don't know what it is in the straight community, but it's funny that there are just these events that everybody flocks to. You go to those places not on those nights and it's just tumbleweed.
- AB: The dance community's kind of the same way, because there's weekly dances and monthly dances.
- A: It's really awesome though, I love—because you end up seeing the same people, kind of. I'm curious now, because I live in Pilsen, so I'm going to this place called The Shrine. It's the first place I've ever been there, so hm, I'm wondering how it'll be different.
- AB: Is it queer?
- A: Yeah. It's like a satellite Slo-Mo—are you familiar with it? Slow Jams for Ho-mos. Is like the long name. But it's called Slo-mos. Slow Jams for Homos and their Allies or whatever. It's like R&B slow jams. It's really nice. Usually they have it at the Whistler. It's in Logan Square. They have really really good cocktails.
- AB: Yeah, I've heard of them for their cocktails.
- A: Yeah, I went there a couple of times just for the cocktails. It's also right next to the Boiler Room, which is another place where you should go. For their deals. But yeah, the cocktails there are really really good. And the bartender—I love him, he's so cute! He's like a cute little gay man. I always go to Slo-mos and one day I didn't see him, so the next time I was like, “Where were you last Slo-mos!” He was like, “Aww! That really gets me right here,” and I was like, “Of course! I've been coming here for years, I have!” So.
- AB: Yeah. I work at the Smart Museum, at the cafe, and the regular customers, I love—that's what I love about working in food service, like front-end, is meeting—you get these relationships with people.
- A: Yeah, I was a host at La Madia, which was a lot of fun. And you learn how to socialize, interact with different types of people. Which is mainly why I did it.
- AB: Yeah. Yeah.
- A: I found that I was more socially awkward when I left U of C than when I started. I wasn't too bad. But everyone feeds each other. “Oh, that's normal, right?” No, we're all just a little awkward. But maybe that's just my experience.
- AB: I'm hoping that the dance scene keeps me from getting too awkward, since I spend so

much time with non-UChicago people. That hopefully that'll save me. But I came in pretty awkward.

A: You don't seem awkward.

AB: Good. Chances are dance helped a lot with that. Did you study abroad when you were here?

A: No, I didn't.

AB: Okay. Because that's always an interesting experience as a queer person. Yeah. And the word "queer," you used it. Do you have a...?

A: The word "lesbian" irks me.

AB: Yeah, it's very...

A: I feel like it's very brusque, and it's very hard on the ears. And the whole idea of the island of Lesbos isn't nice either. So I dunno, I guess, I like "queer," I like "gay." I don't think "gay" is necessarily male-oriented. But some people find "queer" offensive. When I—I took a couple of classes in Rosalind Franklin, which was the school that I worked at. I tried to start a Q&A group, because there wasn't one. And I was going to call it Q&A. But they were like, "You can't use the word queer, it's offensive." A, it's not offensive. B, you're an administration and I'm the queer one, and you're telling me it's offensive when I want to use it. I find it so sad that Waukegan's only like 35 miles away, but it's like a backwards town in a way.

AB: Yeah, I went to my friend's up there, and it's very different.

A: It's very different! I'm like, you guys aren't that far away, I don't know what your excuse is.

AB: Yeah. I remember, one of my parents dropped me off during orientation week, and they had all these tables. And one of them was like the Office of LGBTQ Life, and my dad was like, "Guess what? The Q stands for queer." And like started snickering to himself, because it's—I guess from his generation.

A: Yeah, that's awesome. "Oh, you're queer," I guess that's how it was used. But in U of C, being called weird or whatever, which is what that meant, wouldn't be an insult. "Whoa, I'm weird? Thank you! You just made my day!" So, it's interesting.

[40:22]

AB: Cool. Is there anything else you want to say about your time here?

A: I'm thankful about it. Yeah. I think it was a good enough environment where it was open

enough for me to try to figure out myself, but not so much—not radicalism, but kind of really obtuse examples would really freak me out and make me run for the hills.

AB: Yeah. I grew up near Hampshire College, and it's like this extremely liberal, very gay college. It's...

A: Oh yeah, and I almost went to Smith College.

AB: Oh really? That's the area I'm from.

A: Yeah, because I got a book award from my high school from there. Which I thought was ironic, I thought the administration was just being ironic. Five years later, I'm like huh, oh wow. I almost went to Smith, I visited a friend who was at Smith. It was just a lot.

AB: It's really gay.

A: A lot of those people, I feel like they already figured that stuff out, but for me that would have been my only preoccupation. Because it's so everywhere.

AB: And it's a really small town. I feel like it's hard to have any identity besides gay in a place like that.

A: So that would have been interesting. And it's a dry campus too. At least when I visited, it was dry.

AB: I was about to say. I'm pretty sure that they have parties there.

A: I went to a party, there was just no alcohol. It was very interesting. People hooking up and everything, but there was no alcohol.

AB: That's interesting. I went to a party there that a queer woman from Uruguay was hosting. And there was definitely alcohol I think. Maybe she lived in an apartment or something.

A: I don't know what it was, but it was interesting. I was also 18, so I couldn't demand alcohol. "Where's the booze! I'm an 18-year-old!" You can't do that. But it was a lot of—U of C was a lot of fun.

AB: Cool. Awesome. I don't have any more. So I'll turn this off.

[42:55]

End of Interview