

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

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW #19
BACHUS, DEAN (1973 -) JD 2004**

At U of C: 2001-2003

Interviewed: March 16, 2013 (1 session)

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Transcript by: Molly Liu

Length: 01:30:38

Interview (March 16, 2013) with Dean Bachus at his home, Chicago, IL.

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ML: If you could just start by telling us how you came to the University of Chicago?

DB: Sure. I went there to go to the law school. I had been living in Chicago already. I'd been a musician in the area. I was living up north, I was affiliated with that other university in Chicago. I was with Northwestern, but I was not a student there. I had a faculty position, but adjunct, so a very minor position. I was there in music department as a cellist. I was thinking about going to law school, really open to going to law school anywhere, was ready to move if that was good for me, but when looking at law schools discovered that right down the street, so to speak, Chicago was a good fit for me. So...the law school was my draw to the University of Chicago.

ML: I didn't know that you played the cello! It's a beautiful instrument.

DB: It is. It was a fun career to do for a little while, but I was ready to retire, so to speak.

ML: Why were you ready? What informed your decision?

DB: It's a good question. Being a musician, especially an instrumentalist—maybe the best way to think about it is like being an athlete, or a dancer. It's hard work and talent and it's also your body. For example, I could never be running back for the Chicago Bears because I am the size I am and sports work the way they work. It's the same for dancers and to a certain extent musicians. There were things that were just not going to improve about that life. My career was where it was. It was a great way to grow up, and I did it to the point that it was going to be what it was, and my life was a certain way at that point in time. And there were things about my body that weren't going to change. It got to the point where I could do something else and have no regrets. Law school was something that had always intrigued me, and it was always there. As a undergrad, I had a degree in

music but also in mathematics. But by the end of undergrad, I suspected that the other thing I might be interested in was law school. And you could major in whatever and go to law school. For me I finished that math degree and that was my other degree in addition to music, and I kept on going with music to figure out what it was all about until I got to a point when I decided that it was time to do something else.

ML: What specifically drew you to the UChicago Law School?

DB: What drew me to the law school is different than what might draw me to the law school today. The law school has a great reputation, so that was a big part of it. That time, interestingly enough, was also the same time that I was coming to terms with my own sexuality, but that was not a draw. I'll be honest and can't say that I went to the University of Chicago because it was a great place for LGBT student life. Because it wasn't really a part of my radar yet. It was just because it was a great institution, it seemed like a place that was a good fit for me law-school-wise. Its reputation to the outside world at the time that I picked up on was that it was a place for serious study. People who didn't want to go to school just to learn the law trade. It was a carry-over from the rest of its reputation as a place that was a bit more academically rigorous than others. A place where—this is speaking about what drew me there at the time as a student—they market themselves as a place for ideas and I was intrigued by that. If I was going to be an attorney, I figured that I could figure out the attorney stuff later. If I was going to be in law school, I might as well get a chance to grapple with the broader ideas. That was a draw for me. It was a good fit for me. It felt like a place that was a bit more diverse as far as what drew us there. I'm not someone who went to an Ivy League school and had a degree in political science and interned at—you know, I didn't have all that stuff on my resume. So it seemed like a place that somebody who was a little bit quirky like me could still fit in comfortably.

ML: You mentioned—if you don't mind me asking, you mentioned figuring out your sexuality at the time that you went to law school. Can you talk a little bit about what you were figuring out at the time?

DB: Yeah, I was a little bit of an outsider. I'm curious about what your survey is and who you're talking to—but for me, it was not a big part of my life at the University of Chicago until towards the end. I didn't consciously go there—well, it's hard to say what you were thinking at the time. But at the time, it wasn't like I went there thinking “I'm also at this crossroads in my life, where I'm figuring out my sexuality.” But in hindsight, it was, I guess. When I was going there, I didn't check the box saying that I was an LGBT student. That was not part of the admissions process, not part of what was on my radar as I was choosing a law school. When I got there, also wasn't involved. It was only three years. I think I had come to a point where I wasn't going to lie about anything, but I wasn't quite at the point where I was going to announce to the world anything. Because the way that I rolled in was that I was a single person. That was my first two years of law school. Then my third year of law school I started dating somebody—dating a man. That's what really became part of my law school life, but it was the end of law school and there was already this—not tradition, but maybe a habit? Essentially for two years I had an identity that was

not an LGBT identity. And so my third year I kept that identity in law school, which in hindsight I little bit regret. But my gay life and my dates and in many ways a lot of my friends were from outside the school. And so that third year I just kept them separate. But it wasn't soon thereafter that it quickly became a part of my life, especially after I graduated. After I graduated, I happened to stay in Chicago, again not necessarily on purpose, but I got a job there and it was a good fit for me, which I still actually have now, nine years later. It quickly went from there. I went from that to going to my employer and we were at the time just starting up an LGBT affinity group with my law firm. I'm not even sure I can remember how it came about, but we quickly figured out who the others were there. I felt no reason to be nervous or closeted or scared, so I became very involved in that LGBT affinity group in my employer. Even from there it would have been a couple of years later, but I also found myself a really involved person in the LGBT alumni network at the University of Chicago. Now I'm on the board of that organization and have been essentially since it was founded. It's funny that my LGBT identity is probably more as an alum than it was a student. Not probably—definitely! As an alum, I'm now involved on the board, I was involved in our fundraising campaign last year, we had a target of \$25,000 which we met, which was very satisfying. Just getting involved there. So now I'm somebody who is involved as an alum, but not someone who was involved as a student. But I think there are a lot of people in our alumni network who are like that, who are happy to be involved as alums even though we're at different places in our lives than we were as students.

ML: What was the draw for you to get involved as an alum, even though you weren't quite as involved as a student?

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DB: What was the draw? No, it's great to see things like that. It was just where I was in life. At point in time, it wasn't a big deal. Being at the university was a great experience for me, even though it wasn't an LGBT experience for me, it was a great part of my education, it was a great part of my occupation. Being involved as an alum in something that just had an innate appeal for me. The outlet was through the LGBT network. That really intrigued me to connect with other alums who were a part of this affinity group. And just thinking about what—that connection in itself, the social connection, the alumni connection, the business connections, and the idea of that being a way that I could get involved with an LGBT group on campus, even though I wasn't involved when I was a student. Seemed like a nice way to be involved, and to be involved in a targeted way, involved in a category that was important, which was the LGBT.

ML: Could you talk a little bit more about what the LGBT alumni network does at the law school?

DB: Yeah. For the law school, or just the university in general?

ML: The university in general—or whichever.

DB: Sure. The alumni group arose three or four years ago. Essentially the alumni office had a budget and an idea to assemble these so-called affinity groups. LGBT's not the other one. As I'm sure you know there are lots of other affinity groups. But we seem to do the most so far, which is nice. Our affinity is as LGBT, so our disciplines are incredibly widespread. We've got the law school, we have the medical—our mailing list is almost a thousand people. So we've got law school people, medical school people, business school people. It's a loose amalgamation of different disciplines, not just a law school thing. It's about the university in general. It's broader than my experience, which was just the law school. What we're doing these days is that we're in our fourth year now, I want to say? But the kinds of things we do is to try to put on programming in the Chicago area. For example, most recently we had a talk on the history of a very famous law case that led to the Supreme Court striking down sodomy laws.

ML: This is *Lawrence vs. Texas*? Oh yeah, I saw the event. I wish I could have gone.

DB: The event was the backstory. In a lot of cases, legal cases, in particular the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* stands for sodomy laws being broken down. Or the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* stands for desegregation in schools. They stand for something, but very quickly, we forget that Lawrence was a person. Or Brown was a person. To legal history and legal precedent, the facts become kind of irrelevant. Like this case stands for the principle of sodomy laws being broken down, or this case stands for desegregation. But the actual people involved quickly get forgotten. Even Brown was now, right now, because I have forgotten. So the event was the backstory of *Lawrence v. Texas*. These people were Lawrence and the person that he was involved with, and this was sort of the backstory. The speaker was someone who researched that actual case and was thinking about the actual facts and the story and the actual incident that led to this becoming a very significant case for these plaintiffs who were not actually looking to change the law. These were not activists. The people who were involved were not ideal citizens.

ML: Yeah, I've heard that the story behind it was pretty complicated.

DB: It was. Lawrence was the name of one of the plaintiffs. They were not a couple, they were not having sex, they probably never engaged in any kind of sexual activity. Certainly doubtful that anyone was engaging in sexual activity that night they were arrested. They were people who didn't have the cleanest of histories. They weren't people who were looking to make any kind of statement, but they were people who were arrested by police officers who probably didn't have a good reason to arrest them. But it was not in a great neighborhood and not under great circumstances, and so they arrested them anyway, and the only real claim that they had against them were violation of sodomy laws. These laws existed on the books for years and years and years. Nobody was arrested, they weren't really enforced. They were enforced depending on the situation. Two people who may have been up to no good, but weren't necessarily obviously wrong, so they were actually arrested on this charge. People aren't arrested on this charge very often. So what they needed as a plaintiff was someone who was actually arrested on this law before you can sue the law as unconstitutional. They were arrested under—they weren't protestors, they weren't deliberately trying to get arrested. They were even

dubious plaintiffs, they didn't want to have the—but through a lot of historical accident and happenstance, this case kept going and kept going, people on the outside LGBT movement picked up on it, and so these initially unwilling plaintiffs became the names on this case that now says that sodomy laws are unconstitutional.

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ML: Do you think that the legal landscape for challenges that are LGBT-related, related to LGBT activism, has changed a lot? I don't know too much, but it seems that plaintiffs are more consciously chosen.

DB: As a legal standpoint, for better or for worse, what people look to is the history of civil rights cases. A movement that consciously tried to navigate the courts by finding appropriate plaintiffs at appropriate times at appropriate venues to try to set precedent and make little winds that set up precedent that could lead to bigger and bigger winds as a part of a wider strategy. I think that it was—well, successful is a loaded word. But that was a process that worked well for them. I think LGBT folks have looked at that—and I'm sure that there's a long tradition even before that—but looked at that tradition and followed the same plan: how can we strategically set up cases and strategically get small winds so that in the larger picture we can build up precedents? But I think it's different from the civil rights movement as well. I'm going to mess up the statistics. But I think at the time of *Brown v. Board of Education* and civil rights cases, they were really asking the courts to do something that was contrary to public opinion. There was not clear public support, there was not clear majority support, if you were taking polls. One thing that's different now is that the LGBT movement is not trying to get too far ahead of themselves in the courts. Maybe “tries” is too conscious of a word. But part of the strategic plan is to not go too soon, to wait for public support to come, so that you'll be more confident that you might get a win. But now we have two Supreme Court cases, and some people are concerned that maybe it's a little too soon. Because if you do something too soon...

ML: It'll be struck down prematurely and be inscribed in the history books.

DB: Or if you lose you get some kind of backlash. You have to be careful what you wish for. You don't want to set something up and then lose your case. It's making some people nervous now, and it's hard to predict what's going to happen.

ML: Still, this is an exciting time for LGBT rights, for sure. Is it an interesting position that you're in, being able to observe this from a more informed legal standpoint? I don't know what sort of law you practice.

DB: Yeah, that's a good question. I'm not a litigator, but I went to law school and you study a lot of litigation in law school. I'm a business attorney, so the actual details of legal analysis is not as close to my heart than generally from law school. But it is interesting. There are people from my firm who are more involved than me in some of the case writing, some of the pro bono work. But it is an exciting time. It is an exciting time. We also have a potential marriage vote coming up. Though I don't know what's going on with

that. Have you heard what's happened recently with that?

ML: I heard that it passed one of the chambers.

DB: Yeah, it passed the Senate and it was up before the House. The last three or four weeks I've kept hearing "oh, it's going to go for a vote, it's going to go for a vote," but it's been three or four weeks later, so I'm not quite sure what's going on. But it is exciting. It is exciting.

ML: To go back to a rather earlier point, it's interesting that you mention that when you first started law school, you primarily viewed yourself as a single person, not necessarily as a gay person. How aware were you at the time that you were attracted to men? Were you aware of that?

DB: I was aware of that. It's hard to—there are some people who say that you always know that you're gay. I think there's some truth to that. In my mind, either it was never that black and white—I mean, you kind of always know. But I'm not sure I believe that it's that black and white. So I was aware of it. But I wasn't focused on it. In hindsight, it's hard to look back. I have this theory that once you think a certain way, or once you evolve to a certain type of thinking, it's hard to remember honestly how you used to think. How I think now is so clearly how I think now. It's hard to think about back then. Probably for me, it wasn't though as a single person my identity was not as a gay person. My identity was I am a developing person, and I'm going to law school, or I'm going to be a musician, or that I had certain kinds of professional ambitions, and I had certain kinds of goals for myself. And gay or straight, I think I was someone who willingly let relationships not be part of my life. In hindsight, was that driven in part by a fear of confronting it? It's hard to say.

But it's not just that I was gay. It's that I grew up in Iowa, I come from my parents who hadn't gone to college, I grew up with a certain kind of mentality that school and work and ambition and being smarter and being better and working harder was how you were going to get to somewhere, out of Iowa. So that overshadowed my mind, where I was at the time. For better or for worse, I was in this mode that I'm going to figure out what I'm going to do. You see people in high school who get married young and have a kid and it holds them back. It's not an LGBT issue, it's that I'm not going to be that type of person who gets held back or who is too scared to leave the comfort of what was local and familiar. So in many ways in law school, that's where my head was. It wasn't that I wasn't gay or that I was gay or that I was straight or not straight. There was an awareness of that, but no matter what it was, the issue was that I need to figure out where I want to be in life, and how I'm going to get there, and how I'm going to navigate school and how to navigate early career and how to build that record of professional ambition. That was overshadowing gay or straight. That's where it was. There was even an openness to myself that it was that I'm just not there yet. First I'm going to do X, which was school, career, and then when I'm in a place where I'm comfortable with that, I'll start to explore relationships. I'm not sure that's necessarily an LGBT thing, but to the extent that there was a little bit of trepidation in exploring the LGBT side of things, it made it easier to

stay focused on where this career thing was going. I don't know if I was hiding or running from anything sexuality-wise as I was hiding from relationships and settling down and getting held back from what were my ambitions for school.

ML: And that's definitely not an LGBT-specific thing, right? It's just a thing.

DB: I don't think so at all. There are people who have the theory that—I have lots of theories, many of which may be wrong and many of which evolve.

ML: We're from UChicago, right?

DB: Yeah, we love theories! But there's a theory that—I'm going to forget the word, it's like the red velvet theory. But there's a school of thought that says that there's a kind of LGBT person who compensated for not wanting to confront their LGBT-ness by working really hard and establishing success in a very overt way. Like, I'm going to be a very successful businessperson, or I'm going to be a very successful fashion designer. There's a theory that implies that these people were driven to work very hard because they were too scared to think about this other stuff. And so one of my theories that I'm a little sensitive to is that in a certain way, I could be viewed as that sort of person. But I don't know it would be honest to say that I was driven to do X, Y, and Z because I was scared to confront. I think it's a little too easy. I think it's a mix of things: where I grew up, my background. I think there are straight people like this too, who for whatever reason are focused on this path of figuring out what I want to do and where I fit in with the world, and relationships, sexual relationships, are something that are put off to the side for a little while.

ML: Can you talk a little bit more about your background? Like, did you really want to get out of Iowa? What was it like to grow up there?

DB: I think it's with the whole once you think a certain way, it's hard to remember how you used to think. But for me, I grew up in Iowa, in the Quad Cities. I was not poor, but very middle-class. But Iowa middle-class, which means in Chicago that you can't pay your bills. But in Iowa, we were very comfortable. My parents didn't probably save a lot of money for retirement, if any. But we went to school, we were involved in activities, I was given music lessons, though I was quickly given scholarships for lessons, so I grew up in a simple—simple isn't the right word. Growing up in Iowa, in the Quad Cities, which is not far from here. It's two and a half hours to the west of here.

ML: Geographically, maybe, but culturally...

DB: I guess the census bureau would say that area is around 300,000 people. I didn't go to a tiny high school, there were around 500 people in my graduating class. So it wasn't a small high school. But it was close enough to Chicago that I knew what I was missing, a little bit of what I was missing. There were things to do there, I learned how to play the cello. There are regions in the country where you can't do that, there isn't anyone to teach you how to do that. So there was enough going on there that I could learn, but maybe not enough going on there that I was in the middle of what was going on. So between cello-

wise and wanting to be in a big city or wanting to go somewhere fancy, because—my parents had grown up farmers. My grandparents were farmers. My mother did eventually go to college—she's a teacher. But there was an awareness, post-puberty, in high school that there was an exciting world out there and that I was going to go get it. I don't know how city kids grow up. But I assumed that everything else was more exciting than my life. Now in hindsight, I realize that I did not grow up in the boonies. I went to a real high school, I had a real academic experience. There are some people who'll say that, “oh, I'm from Cody, Wyoming,” and that's—there was enough going on there that there were kids who pushed themselves in a rigorous educational background. But at the time, I wanted to work hard and get out of there to where all the cool stuff happens. Because there was this implication that in this remote--which wasn't that remote—that in this remote, Iowa part of the country, I'm missing out on the cool stuff. I think there was, as a high school kid, which was the last time I really lived there, the next step is college, then you go onto freedom! And big exciting things. Even though in your head, you don't think it through—like, what is a big exciting thing? What does that mean? But there's this implication that you go to a fancy school and then you go to a fancy city and then you get a fancy job and then, oh, I'm not in Iowa anymore. But you don't necessarily think about what that means. I think that was part of my upbringing as well. I guess artistically, cello-wise, there weren't that many other musician kids at my level, so it was also an excitement to go out and be around other musicians. That was a sparse population. My general high school life was not a sparse population, but my musical life was a sparse population. There was an excitement to go where that stuff was happening, where other students are, where there are musical events.

[00:29:26]

ML: Where exactly did you go for undergrad?

DB: University of Iowa. There were two places I went to undergrad. I started off in a college not too far from where I grew up, Augustana College. I didn't know a lot about college, and we didn't have any money for college. This was 1991, so this was before schools—well, this is my impression, anyway. But nowadays, there are a lot of programs, and a lot of special things to bring kids from nontraditional backgrounds in. At the time, if they existed, I didn't know anything about them. I was just a kid who didn't know anything about college. Tried my best—there was no internet, I couldn't Google stuff—I mean, you try your best to figure out college and where's the money coming from, but people around you are fighting you. “Don't apply to that school, you can't afford there, you can't afford that.” That's not very encouraging. But when you don't know any better, it's a lot of noise. As a cellist I was studying cello, my teacher who taught me as I was growing up, her job was a professor, faculty member, at Augustana College, which, since it wasn't far from where I grew up, was where I took cello lessons. For better or for worse, that was a path that was marked out. I think my teacher might not have had my best interests in mind, it might not have been on purpose, but I was a really good student for her to have in college, that was encouraged. And my parents wanted to keep me close by, I'm not sure they necessarily had the best thing in mind for me. So I ended up going to college living at home still, which was not a good fit for me. I was very excited in high school, like we

were talking before, about being with other cellists, being with other musicians, getting out of town, and now I'm still in town. And that was not a happy time. It was not a good fit for me. At the time I didn't know what else to do. It was affordable. In hindsight, I appreciate that. It's kind of cool to think that I finished undergrad with my background with no loans, and basically no cost. But there wasn't a whole lot—it wasn't like I had a lot of choices. And this was a choice that was economically free, Augustana.

But after two years, it was just not a good fit, I needed to be out on my own. So I transferred. Went through the process again with a little bit more knowledge, and I ended up going to the University of Iowa. Which also the path that was—this one was free. It wasn't that far away, but it was far enough away that I wasn't at home anymore. So my undergrad experience was, in the scheme of things, not that significant compared to a more typical person. But I never quite felt like I was where I should be. But I was in places where I became a great cellist, I got a great education, I got a great educational record out of it. In the summertime, I went to music schools where there were other kids like me, so I had an infusion of that, and that made coming home to Iowa a little tougher. More experiences, these kids were going home to music schools, to their colleges, and I'm coming back home to Iowa. It wasn't a very social time because I never quite felt like I fit in. I probably felt overqualified, I probably was overqualified. But yet I made the most experience—I made a lot of that experience by being overqualified, by being in a leadership position I really could do the best musical experiences that were there. I had a chance to participate in whatever there was to participate in. And I had a degree in mathematics as well. At a more challenging school, it probably would have been tougher to be as successful in both, just practically speaking—I wouldn't have had the time to do both. But at the University of Iowa, I could still be a really good student in math but still practice four hours a day. Or I could practice four hours a day and be given great opportunities, but still fit in some math stuff. Neither one of those had to take over my life. I appreciate that in hindsight. And I enjoyed my studies. It was a nice chance to do that. But socially it wasn't a big part of my life.

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ML: It seems that you had some time between graduating undergrad and going to law school. Did you move to Chicago right after graduation?

DB: I went to graduate school just for music in Western Illinois. I had been going, starting in the middle of undergrad—it's one of those stories where you don't appreciate what you had growing up until you're gone, so to speak. But I grew up in a small town where there was a lot musically around me that was sixty or a hundred miles away from the Quad Cities, and my parents didn't know enough to drive me those sixty miles. But the University of Iowa, which is only sixty miles away, had a lot in that area. Iowa City, the area had a lot of kids who were very good musicians, who I kind of knew. And Western Illinois, which was only about a hundred miles south of the Quad Cities, also had a lot going on musically. At Western Illinois was a woman who I knew was a phenomenal cello teacher. And she also taught in Chicago, and that's a four or five hour commute. Every weekend she went to Chicago. And I was talking before about Chicago kids were

doing all this cool stuff, there was all this musical stuff going on—and one of their teachers was just two hours south of me. So she was always there, I always knew that she was a good teacher, but when it came time to looking at colleges, it's not the most academically rigorous college, and remember that I had a teacher who was even more local, and had her own interests influencing her a little.

So there was this great teacher who was not far away, and so that when I started college after high school, the Quad Cities has a professional symphony, and it paid. Not a lot, but enough to pay for my college. It was a good orchestra. Even at the time I knew it was a good orchestra, but in hindsight I can really appreciate that it was a good orchestra. We had a great conductor at the time, and the adults that came there, you had University of Iowa faculty members, you had Western Illinois faculty members, and you had Augustana faculty members—you had this area that was about hundred miles around which didn't have a lot going on, but if you just pick up a chunk of the map and draw a circle a hundred miles around, you're going to find some really good musicians who are there for one reason or another. An orchestra's not too many people. This orchestra was a draw for that whole area, and it was a good level of playing. That was a great experience for me. But this teacher from Western Illinois was also in that orchestra. So even starting from age 18, starting orchestra, now I'm seeing her every day, always a little scared to talk to her, but reading the papers about her students and really—I just knew that for all these years she had all these great students. It's weird to think back and think that I was sort of there. Getting a little bit older and knowing that she was there—in the summertime she also taught at the Meadowmount School of Music in upstate New York, and that's where a lot of really great students went in the summertime. So I worked up enough nerve between—I mean, I knew she was in the orchestra, and my teacher was also in the orchestra. My Augustana teacher was in the orchestra, and my University of Iowa teacher was also in the orchestra. When I went from Augustana to the University of Iowa, I was still in the orchestra, so it was a little tense that I was still in the orchestra, but my Iowa teacher was there, and this third teacher, the one who was just this really, really great pedagogue teacher, and I—I guess I made the most out of my resources. I managed to get enrolled in her summer program, so I met her there. That was in the middle of my undergrad. And I got a full scholarship too, I was a counselor, it was like \$3000-4000. I was only paying \$300 in fees. But I was a counselor there. It paid my bills. In hindsight, I just sort of asked. It was fun, I was a counselor in a camp before, so I had some experience. So it was free. I met her through that.

For masters, now I'm going to Western. All those people in the Quad City orchestra, all around me. But she was a very good teacher. And so by the time I got to graduate school, Western Illinois is not an academic powerhouse, it's also in the middle of nowhere. But she was a great teacher, and in combination with going to Meadowmount, just to study with her full time. Since I had finished undergrad, I had this degree from Iowa, which was a good degree, I'd finished this academic degree, so I had this resource for the future, I was like, let's do this music thing, let's see how far I can go. I knew that she was a teacher who could take me there. So I went to graduate school—I could have seen it when I was six years old, she was there the whole time. But she was a great influence on me. So did that for two years. And through her connections, through Meadowmount,

heard of a job opportunity at Northwestern teaching pre-college age kids, pedagogy class for the college kids, relatively new job, paid the bills, got me to Chicago. I did that for four years. I was teaching at Northwestern to pay out my bills, but I was in a local orchestra, did freelancing—it was enough to pay my bills. For four years, I did that before I realized that there—I'd hit this point where this was all that there was going to be. I didn't want to be an academic, I didn't want to go back and get a PhD, which is called a DMA, doctorate of musical studies. I thought that maybe I wanted to get a doctoral degree, but as I was around there I sort of realized that maybe this is not the best path for me.

ML: Was it a difficult transition? Moving from—it seems that you were really dedicated to music, moving from that to law school.

[00:41:19]

DB: It wasn't a difficult transition because I didn't transition much. It's almost like law school was my day job, and I still had the same friends, and I still did a lot of gigging, playing at parties and so on, because I was in law school and now I had loans. It was worth it. But now I had loans, but everything was the same on the side—I still lived in Chicago, I still had the same connections. So it wasn't a difficult transition because a lot of things were still the same. When I look back, I missed a little bit of an opportunity to have more of a connection in my law school life. But I enjoyed my social life. So it wasn't a difficult transition. I was also older, so I had a bit more perspective on what I wanted to do. When you don't know what you're going to do with a law degree, you want to get the best grades possible and the best rank possible. There's a certain value in that and that's part of what drove me as an undergrad. As a law school student person, I knew what I wanted from law school. I was at law school because it was a great connection, it was going to be a great academic experience, and it was going to lead to great opportunities which I would figure out later. But just as far as being there, how well I did was less of a focus. I did fine, but it was less of a stress than some other law students. I didn't spend 13 hours a day doing law stuff because I knew that wasn't going to change anything for what I wanted to do. So I was able to be in a position where I could enjoy the good parts of law school and not the stressful parts of law school.

ML: You're actually the first person I've interviewed from the law school, so I really have no idea—what is the social atmosphere of the law school like? What were you missing out on?

DB: In many ways, it's people coming together only for three years. Undergrad is four years, and where people are—there's a lot of social stuff that you get out of four years. In law school, a lot of people are older, so it feels more temporary, and this is a group of around 200 people in my class, it could have been 195. But much smaller than my high school, undergrad. Good people, a small group of people coming together for what they know to be a brief period of time. Not even three years, three school years—three nine-month periods. Because you all disappear for the summertime and do internships, so it's 27 months that you're really there. It's a group of people who come from all over the place,

it's very selective, a very good school, and so they promptly go all over the place. So you're in this thing for a very short period of time, and so the social life is really what you make of it. There were people in my class who probably to this day are very close because they made a very tight connection, they spent a lot of time together. For me, I would have enjoyed that, but I had my friends from outside of law school. It was a little bit of the LGBT barrier. If I had been as integrated then as I was now, there would have been more of a comfort to integrate in with the university, but that's just not where I was. I did not feel unwelcome, there were people in the school I knew and liked. It wasn't that I didn't participate because I sensed any kind of resistance. I just didn't participate because I wasn't quite there yet. But that might have led to me being more shy.

[Tea break: 00:45:25 – 00:47:34]

DB: Yeah, so to go back to that question, there were a lot of interesting people who today I would connect with in a certain way, but I really wasn't socially confident yet, that wasn't where I was in life. Sometimes I think back and think about what it would have been to connect more with the people while they were there—it could have been a nice opportunity. But that wasn't quite where I was.

ML: What was the LGBT community at the law school like, insofar that you were aware of it?

DB: It was relatively small. At least the active ones. There was a group called Outlaw, it was an organization, it had speakers.

ML: Such a great name.

DB: Yeah, lots of law schools, their LGBT groups are called Outlaw. It's not just unique to our law school. They were involved, they had speakers, they had talks. Law school things are these student groups and they bring people in as speakers for talks. So they were as active as anyone. It was a little bit—it was considered small for a law school, and for better or for worse there was a reputation at the time that UChicago was considered a conservative place. And so I think that some people...

ML: Is that a fair reputation?

DB: I don't think so. Probably it was a fair reputation for a law school. UChicago was a little less liberal, but this is all relatively speaking. If like the range from liberal to conservative is like this [makes a spectrum with his hands] for all law schools, let's assume that UChicago is one of the most right of the law schools. Which I don't think so, since it's not a religious institution, but let's assume that it's one of the more conservative, right-leaning law schools. But this is the perspective of the world in general. This range is over here [marks off a tiny range on the left side]. So it's still—when you talk about law school, there's nothing conservative about any law school, unless you're talking about a religious institution. The kinds of things they had—law and economics, which is an area of legal theory, is considered a conservative economic policy or principle, it's not an activist philosophy. But to say that the students who come are more conservative is not fair. I

think the students who come are less likely to be...“I want to go to law school because I want to change the world for X reason.” People who come there are—I’m going to say this in a little bit of a biased way. But the people who come there, come there just to grapple with complicated and interesting ideas, not necessarily seeking a certain outcome. I think you’re more likely to enjoy a place like the University of Chicago if you’re not coming there to reinforce principles you have in mind. I like that part of it, actually. Now myself, as an LGBT person, have to be considered liberal in general. But I think that a more traditional activist-minded LGBT young person might go to a school with an LGBT center that is working for outcome X, Y, and Z. Maybe there is now, but there wasn’t an agenda-based program. You couldn’t go there to study under a school of social activism that’s a subsidiary under the university law school. There’s not that clear of an agenda there.

ML: You mentioned that in your last year of law school, you entered a relationship. Can you talk about how that happened and how your identity shifted?

DB: Well, I met somebody. It’s hard to remember exactly where I was, but I was in a place where I knew I was an LGBT person. But I wasn’t going to be that until I met somebody, until I dated somebody. For some people, expressing their sexuality might be something like on the side. For me, I didn’t want to express my sexuality in the absence of a relationship. I keep saying this a lot—but for me, I wasn’t going to be comfortable exploring that until I was in a relationship. Which is probably not the best idea. You should probably learn a little bit about yourself, and then enter a relationship. I was actually kind of ready to meet someone. That was me waiting to express my sexuality. I feel kind of bad for that person in hindsight, because here they are dating somebody who’s new and maybe not so comfortable. But he wasn’t either.

ML: I mean, everyone has their first relationship where they have no idea what to do.

DB: Straight people have that too! It’s part of life. So for me it was a first relationship, and he was a little bit closeted too, so it was kind of easy for me. It wasn’t like I was suddenly being challenged to take on this public dating persona. We could kind of quietly do it ourselves. We actually met during my second year of law school, I said it wrong the first time. We lived together my third year of law school, but we met at the beginning of my second year of law school.

ML: Was he also a law school student, or was he from outside?

DB: He was somebody who was an adjunct there. So he was in the law school—I was not in his class—teaching a class. He was there, teaching on a temporary basis. He was friends with a student I’d known as well, so I met him through that and quickly figured out who he was. As someone who was a temporary adjunct, he was very willing to also be quiet, and so I was also willing to be kind of quiet as we were figuring things out. He was only there for a semester, then he went away. Then he came back my third year of law school and got a full year, one year, teaching at Northwestern. That’s when we actually lived together, my third year of law school. Which is kind of quick, but it wasn’t a bad thing.

ML: Did your identity shift from being a single person to, I don't know—did you think of yourself more consciously as being gay as a result of being in that relationship?

DB: I think I did. I think probably I was more comfortable with it than it seemed, since we were—also, gay or straight, here was a relationship where this person was here for a one-year job in Northwestern, so at the end of the year he might not even be here, he's got to go where the work is. Lots of people have that problem when they're dating. Especially when they're in college and graduating and might have to go to different places. And I was graduating from law school. So there was an awareness that there was a limit to the future of this that's unknown. It could keep going, but—he was from a different country, so he couldn't even stay in the country if he didn't have a job. So there was an awareness of that but not a full integration because I was still in a place in life that was temporary. It wasn't like—I was a law student, so it wasn't like five years from now I would still be a law student. You knew that it was expiring. So there was part of that. It wasn't quite integrated yet. And I didn't tell my family yet. I told people that he was my roommate. Although I think some people started to figure it out. And part of it, a lot of it was that it was this relationship, and I told you that I wasn't comfortable expressing my sexuality outside of a relationship—so now I'm in this relationship where I was expressing my sexuality, but this relationship had a deadline. I was going to graduate, he was going to have to get another job.

ML: So it was more of an unstable part of your identity?

DB: That's right. It was an unstable—not in a bad way. I was still in school, so it was not settled yet. We were not a very public couple, except for some of his friends. It was only if people had to know, it wasn't our style to introduce ourselves as a couple. But then when his job ended, he did not get another job, so I ended up staying in Chicago and he ended up going back to his country. That's when I really started dating. Because I wanted to start dating, and you can't really date when you're living with—you can't date, well you can date, but underground dating is not somewhere where you could find people like me. I was always a relationship-oriented person. That's when I started to integrate it more because practically speaking, I'd had this one-year relationship where I had worked through whatever issues I had to work through, so to speak. So now I was just trying to figure out dating at that point in life. It was much more integrated—you know, I had a job where it was fine, I was at a university where it was fine, I was in a city where it was fine. I was certainly set up very comfortably that I could start to explore these things after graduation.

ML: So it could be stable for you then? If you found something, it could be more permanent than when you were a student.

[00:58:01]

DB: That's right. Because I had a job, I was interested in dating people who also had jobs. You also just have to learn about dating because now I'm a little behind. Not a gay thing or a

straight thing, but that now I was...oh, what was it? Thirty years old. My goodness. So a little bit of catching up, making the same kinds of mistakes that people make in dating, gay and straight. But continuing to date and learn. Had a lot of three- and six-month relationships. But you date and learn. I think I've been similarly integrated since then. My family quickly learned when I got a job.

ML: What was their reaction? Did they have a reaction when you came out?

DB: It was fine. My story does not include drama of outcast, which I think I'm fortunate for. It's not like my parents are bleeding heart liberals, but I'm fortunate that my story is not one where there was drama and intrigue. Their reaction was fine. Better than that—not only fine. But even if the reaction wasn't fine, it wouldn't have been that relevant to me. I guess I have an independent streak. My siblings and my parents—my siblings being of the same generation were even more supportive. My parents were fine, but remember that they were farmers. My parents kind of almost—they're not musicians either, I just did these really cool things, and they were like, “Oh, that's great!” The biggest way they didn't help me was in college, they didn't realize that there was this great teacher two hours south of me that could really help me, like starting when I was ten years old. The biggest fault of my parents, which is not a bad thing, they just didn't know any better. It's not like they ever held me back, they just didn't know how to find outlets or actively seek outlets. As a result—and this is probably a good thing—even if they were disapproving, it would have been fine. I'm not the kind of person for whom that relationship was that significant anyway. That sounds harsh, doesn't it? Like it takes a village to raise a kid, right? I had a great village. My parents were part of it, but they weren't all of it. Of course musicians, that world, my quote adopted world, my social world, they were all fine. Growing up in the music world, they tend to be more liberal. So drama was not part of it, not part of my story, which I'm thankful for. Not a lot of people can say that.

ML: What has your life been like since you left the law school? Do you still play music, do you like your job, how did you meet your current partner?

DB: I still do a lot of music stuff. I've always done music in Chicago, though in the last couple of years I've done less things. That's a little bit by choice. But I still practice. I'm on the board of the Civitas music group, comprising of some members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, so I'm involved in that way. As a board member, as a lawyer and professional, it's nice to be involved in that way. It's nice being in Chicago, since I'm still around the stuff that I was around when I was a full time cellist. That makes it easy. I know which concert series to go to, I know where things happen, I can go and see things, I know where I can go and be involved if I have time. People who know me and say, “Oh, we'd love to have you come play for us!” Things like that. I've been essentially—I still have the same job that I got when I was an intern. I've gotten to a place in life where nine years isn't a lot of time. But it's been nine years getting myself through my job, I'm now a partner, but a junior partner. I have some job stability now. That was selling my job like any career person, that's a lot of work. But I've been making friends throughout these nine years. I feel like this is the phase of my life where the friends that I've met are the friends that I'll have forever, you know? For some people that happens in high school, for some

people that happens in college. For me, it happened when I knew that I was somewhere that I wanted to be, long-term. Granted, I had been in the Quad Cities and Chicago, but I didn't know that. Next year I could have been here, or here. A little bit of a "Why make strong connections? I'll be gone next year." So in the last nine years, there's been a chance where I've made my long-term friends, where I had time to date, where I made my dating mistakes. Just typical dating stuff. Social life has been a bigger part of my life than it was before. Because now I have the job. All that stuff before, that ambition about getting the job—now I have the job. I met my current partner, we've been together—it'll be three years this summer, so now it's been two and half years. That means that we met in 2010. 2010, I started working in 2004. Six years of dating, or making social connections, and now for the last three years I've been in a stable relationship and my social network has grown as a result of that.

[01:04:22]

ML: Have you enjoyed being in the Midwest for pretty much your entire life?

DB: Yeah, I do. Do you mean geographically in Chicago? I lived in New York for one summer, for three months. It was fun. It was a mix of things. It was my current job and my current employer, just out of our New York office. A lot of my coworkers were in the New York office, so for about a year or two beforehand there was a lot of talk that it might be good for me to spend a summer there, maybe move there. One of those things that since so much of my coworkers who did what I did in the New York firm, I thought that maybe I was missing out. It was a career move and career exploration. I'll just go for three months, get a temporary apartment. It was a nice time, I wasn't in a relationship at the time, so it was like, "You know what? This is a summer where I can do that. Why don't I just do it?" It was fun. It was a bit of a test. Even before I went there, I knew that I probably wouldn't move there, I probably wouldn't need to move there. But being there for three months I really realized that my job doesn't have to be there. I didn't know that going in, but once I was there, I realized that my job was the same, I might as well keep on doing it from Chicago, which is a place I like and where my friends are. So I've been in Chicago now for—you remember that I was at Northwestern for four years, then law school for three years, and now my job for nine years. I have been here for a while, but I've had different chapters: my musician chapter, my law school chapter, my current chapter.

ML: Your life has changed, but the city has not.

DB: Yeah, exactly. And with each of those changes, I was ready to have it change. Even though it did stay the same, it wasn't like there was much continuity, it was like a whole new life. When I interviewed for law firms, I interviewed all over the country—maybe I'll move. When I applied for law school, I applied all over the country. It kept on working out that there were good things in Chicago. It is a big city, there are a lot of things happening. It's probably not surprising that I found things to do here.

ML: After law school, have you lived in the South Loop since then? This is a beautiful

apartment.

DB: Thank you. This is actually—my partner and I bought a house, so we're moving soon. I actually lived here my third year of law school when I was living with the person I was dating at the time, who was only here for a year. We lived here, we rented this place. Isn't that crazy? But we rented it from someone we knew who had bought it as an investment. So we rented it, and I ended up getting a job in Kirkland and staying in Chicago. So I ended up staying here, since now that I had a job I could afford to rent by myself. A year or two after living here after that, the woman who I had been renting from was like, "Oh, would you like to buy it?" So I ended up buying it. I've lived here for...I moved here in the fall of 2003, so it's been 10 years. But we bought a house, we signed a contract in January, or maybe it was February? January. It's under construction still, so we won't be moving until July. I won't quite make it to 10 full years here. That'll be kind of fun.

ML: Where the house?

DB: The house is...It's a cool house. The address is 1925 West Superior. It's a tear-down. It's near Chicago and Damen. I don't know if you're familiar with that area—it's on the south end of Wicker Park. To call it Wicker Park is not honest.

ML: I do think I know what you're talking about. It's a cool location!

DB: It's a cool location. Because Wicker Park and Bucktown themselves are apartments and condos. There aren't too many single-family homes. But if you go down far enough south—we are on 1925 West Superior, a block which is just east of Damen. And Superior is just one block south of Chicago. Chicago and Damen is kind of a little bit of a hot spot. Busy streets. So you just go up a few blocks on Damen and you hit North Avenue, which is like downtown border of Wicker Park and Bucktown. You go east on Chicago and you hit a Blue Line train stop and can go to work. It's only two and half miles to my office in the Loop. It's nice to have a house. We have a dog, and my partner likes houses, he'd never lived in an apartment before, moved here from the suburbs. And so I'm cool with a house. It's a house that's not a house neighborhood, it's still an urban neighborhood. We were happy to find that kind of blend.

ML: That's really exciting! Space for the dog to run around.

DB: It is really exciting. A little backyard. But it's still a yard. Cool house. They had started building it even before we put an offer on it. They've put the foundations down now, we're picking out cabinet colors. It's not a custom house, we didn't hire an architect to design the house, we bought the house. Based upon a pattern that was already started. So the walls and the doors and windows are all where they are. But by getting in early we got a chance to—the builders are like, "All these cabinets are in our budget, but we have all these colors and choices, which one do you want?" That kind of thing. And if we want to upgrade some things, we can. We're still in the middle of all these details now.

ML: Looking back, how has your time at the University of Chicago fit into the rest of your

life?

DB: You've heard my story about how undergrad was a small part, divided into two years. Graduate school in Western Illinois was very much about music, and that was a big part of my music education. But all three of those schools I was a visitor too, a little bit. When I look back at where I give money to, the boards I'm involved in, Chicago is the place I was at the longest—I was only ever at anywhere else for two years—and it was professionally a great place. I wouldn't have the job I have now if not for UChicago. Lawyers from all over the country whom I work with on a regular basis are from a small group of schools, one of which is the University of Chicago. So I work with a lot of alums, whether I know it or not. UChicago was great for my professional life because...I almost said “badge of honor,” but that's not what I meant.

ML: It is an incredible law school.

DB: Yeah, it's a great—it's great for a resume, it's partly that that otherwise I wouldn't have the job I have now, the same job still. But I also know that if I were to switch jobs, it would continue to be a great asset. So I certainly value that. The education itself is fun, the asset of having a law degree from there is something that I hugely appreciate. I do, and I did even when I went there. Socially, the social ramification of my law school education don't carry through as much as the professional ramifications.

ML: Although you do know a fair number of people from being involved in the alumni network, right?

DB: Yes, although not law school people. A lot of my—socially and professionally, the alumni network is something that I'm very involved with. I guess I was answering the question more in terms of the law school, the people I went to law school with. But this alumni network is also big.

ML: What place does it have in your life, this alumni network?

[01:12:47]

DB: What place does it have in my life? That's a good question, I'll have to think about it. I'm on two boards now. One board's a music board. The alumni group is my school board. We're growing, the talks we do are great, socially the stuff we do is great. I would like it to keep growing more. Where that organization is right now in my life is very important to me, but I want it to be more. It's so—it's almost like I fear we're going to hit a sophomore slump. Since we were so successful and growing, and now I don't want habit and lethargy, which are strong impediments to—you know, we're so excited the first couple of years. I'm worried that we're going to cruise or not keep innovating, so to speak, keep on finding new ways to connect to our people, keep trying new events to connect to people. I don't want us to lose the involvement with the people who are involved, and I don't want the people who are involved to be the only ones, I want there to be more people to be involved. The alumni network is important but it's not that big

yet. I would love it to be an even bigger part of my life. Because I think it has great potential. But for that alumni network, we need to not get comfortable. I think we're doing a good job with that. But that's right now where I am with that organization. We have good leadership, we're doing well, but I want to make sure that we don't get too comfortable. I don't want that to happen. The other board too, we're also a young organization, we just had a meeting this morning. But whatever we do, we have to not get comfortable. And same with the LGBT alumni group.

ML: Where do you see the LGBT alumni group going? If you imagine it being everything you want it to be, what is that?

DB: I think there are a lot of LGBT alum who don't participate yet. I would love it if it were a network where somebody who wants to find a job—where it's big enough and it's useful enough where you can be like, “Oh, hey, I'm thinking about being a lawyer, who can I talk to to be a part of that?” I'm not part of another alumni network, but my impression of general networks is that it's where you meet people, where you make career connections, where you make social connections. It's a network. Like when you're in college, your network is other college students; professionally, your network is people you work with at your job. You might have a small job. I would love it if there were enough people that it was just a regular thing to participate in, where you were constantly interacting with people who are from a very diverse group of professionals and alums in general. Whereas my fear is that it's the same 30 people. I don't think it's there, but that's my fear. There are some people who will be very involved, there are some people who will be only a little involved, but there will be a lot of LGBT people who will be at least a little bit involved. We're doing a good job of that. What I would envision it to be would be more like a regular, like a broad UChicago organization, just a subset of that. But I say that a little tongue-in-cheek because I don't participate in the broader UChicago alumni groups, so I have no idea what they do. But that would be my wish for that: that it's big and diverse and people participate, and it's place where if you're young, you can find something to do, if you're old, you can find something to do. Something with a lot of occupations—right now we have a lot of lawyers. That's not great. So that's what I envision it to be. I envision it to be things that I can't think of. That it'll be surprising and new and constantly growing. New ways to find important connections. But we're still young, so I don't worry too much about it.

ML: Do you think your experience at the University of Chicago has been typical for people who are LGBT?

DB: I think maybe my experience was less integrated than a typical LGBT person. I a little bit regret this sometimes. But I didn't have an LGBT life at the school. Some people have story where coming to terms with their sexuality and evolving to that point is a big part of, was integral to their education. I think that my education was what it was, and my social life was a little bit outside of law school, and my LGBT life developed just towards the end of law school and was very separate. So I think that was a little bit atypical.

ML: Do you think that things are different now for people at the law school?

DB: Yes. It wasn't that long ago that I was there. But I do think it's true that even in the last ten years—I started law school twelve years ago, in 2001—in the last ten years, things have changed for gay people. Now there are high school kids, there are high school organizations, LGBT alumni groups. So that's a difference. I think that law school has changed a long with everything else. I have not been involved in the law school Outlaw program, besides people who come in and interview for my law firm. So I'm a little bit aware of what's going on down there. I think it's changing along with the rest of the world, but I'm not someone who knows what's going on there right now. I think also probably the university itself has done a good job marketing itself as not so conservative. I mean, you're a third-year?

ML: I'm a fourth-year.

DB: You know, even when I was applying in 2001, the law school and the undergrad college reputation bled over. There were these t-shirts that you could buy from the undergraduates that said, "Where fun comes to die."

ML: Yup, we still have those.

DB: That's...I don't think that's doing the university the best service. It was cute at the time and it's part of the history and tradition of the university, but...

ML: It's not the best marketing slogan? [laughs]

DB: Yeah, it's not the best marketing, and I don't think it's true! It's also—there's certainly an aspect of that. But I don't want the school to overpride itself on that.

ML: Masochism shouldn't be one of our selling points?

DB: Yeah. There's almost this certain component of this university—I was talking to one of my friends, he's the dean of the graduate school at Northwestern. There's a...how did he say it? He said it well. He's an English person by background, so he says lots of things very well. But he says there's this certain ethos of hard work that's artificial. And I don't think that's good for the university in the long run. I think that to market that we're about ideas and about working a little harder is good. But this kind of ethos of hard work and sacrifice and masochism, as if that's the goal—I don't think that's a good thing. And I don't think it's a good thing in general. But that's not a great fit for LGBT people in general, maybe? Or it might scare them away and I don't think we should scare them away. And so I think some things are changing now. I've heard that the university is trying to back away from the "Where fun comes to die" ethos, and I support that.

[01:22:24]

ML: Yeah, it's funny. The undergraduate experience at least has gone through a lot of rebranding in the years that I've been here. Things are changing a lot. When I applied, it

was one-in-three people who got in, and now it's one-in-ten.

DB: They've really taken off.

ML: I think it's part of the way that we're pretentious. We're better because we work harder and we suffer, and it's a little bit weird.

DB: And that needs to continue to evolve too, because I worry...we're doing well now, right? But in the long-term, getting from one-in-three to one-in-ten, part of that is because of this rebranding, and yes, it's okay to do an activity. You don't have to study all day long. That's the direction that I'd like the university of keep exploring. You have an identity and I think that's good. In my mind, that identity is exploring ideas and the core curriculum and the identity of rigorous exploration of ideas, not just reinforcement of preexisting ideas, but causing yourself to stretch yourself and your thinking—I think that's a great part of your identity. If they can continue to explore that without having to have the “Where fun comes to die” part of it...

ML: Like, it doesn't need to be that hard and miserable to have that kind of intellectual rigor?

DB: Yeah. I agree. For LGBT people in particular, I think that—I don't have these stats, but assume that the reputation is that they've had a smaller number of LGBT people in recent history let's call it. To the extent that there is that reputation, I think that part of it is that an LGBT person isn't going to be that thrilled by an institution where fun comes to die.

ML: That might be true. Like, “I haven't had that much fun in high school.”

DB: Yeah. For me—well, there are different kinds of people who are LGBT. But say that you're an LGBT person in high school where he or she knows that they are LGBT. That was not me in high school. But that person who knows it, and you're looking out at schools where I can really fit in and find somewhere that's comfortable, and you see a place that prides itself on suffering and masochism, I can see someone saying that I did enough of that in high school. Like having to live this boring sort of life. Not to say that Chicago is a boring sort of life. But let's say I want to go somewhere where they go out of my way to make me feel like I fit in. Not that UChicago doesn't do that, but I can imagine that this ethos of masochism and suffering repelling someone who's like, “Well, I've suffered enough. I want to move on from this life. I was born here, couldn't change that. But now I want to pick a place where I don't have to suffer.”

ML: That's fair. From the extremely sample size of the interviews I've done here, it seems that the people who came here specifically to be LGBT have been more dissatisfied. But the people who have come here because they really enjoy that intellectual life, because they really want to be super-nerdy, have really enjoyed being at the University of Chicago. So I guess it's just which part of your identity draws you to the place.

DB: I think it could be both. That sounds kind of cheesy, but I do think it can be both. Where fun comes to die is just not the best idea. There are so many—that statement is symbolic

of so many things.

ML: [laughs] Well, we say it affectionately.

DB: It's just not—ideas and intellectually getting out of your comfort zone, intellectually pushing yourself doesn't have to mean suffering. I mean, I get that grades are important nowadays in this competition—it's that way everywhere, so I know that undergrad will be part of that. But I'd like to see that the university is exploring that, and I think it'll make it better for LGBT people.

ML: Yeah. Well, I think that's all the questions I have. Is there anything else that you want to tell this oral history project?

DB: No, I don't think so. But tell me, what are your goals of this project?

ML: The museum exhibit is the real complete thing we have planned. I think it's going up in early 2015, which is a little while from now. Basically make a really good museum exhibit on what it has been like to be queer on campus. I think the hope is that having this oral archive of all sorts of LGBT people who has passed through UChicago, the hope is that they'll be of interest to people who want to research this sort of thing. The scope is limited, but it is a very enjoyable sort of project.

DB: As you can tell, my story is not about being very LGBT on campus. It was very separate. Which I suppose is a good example to have in the archives.

ML: You are an LGBT person.

DB: Yeah, and I went to the University of Chicago. These two things are true. I feel like my story doesn't contain a lot of life on campus.

[00:58:08]

ML: Well, that's good. The people whom we've done interviews with tend to be people who were really LGBT on campus. But that's not the experience of a lot of people, and to have the diversity of many experiences is good.

DB: Yeah. Well, anything else for me?

ML: One more thing: so we're always scavenging around for memorabilia. Do you happen to have any newspaper clippings that might be of interest to us?

DB: I don't. I don't. It's probably because I wasn't so participatory.

ML: Or any other people you think we should talk to?

DB: My alumni network is the best group of people to keep poking.

ML: I do think that our initial announcement was to the alumni group. How did you hear about this?

DB: I did hear about it through the alumni group. You know who might be a good person to reach out to? One of my coworkers went to the University of Chicago law school. She was very involved in LGBT life on campus in the law school. She's like the contrast to me. We ended up working the same law firm. She was like, "Wait, you're gay? After all that stuff at school..."

ML: Did you guys just not meet at school?

DB: We did, we know each other. It was small class. I just wasn't at that place in my life there. Her name's Amy Crawford, she's also an attorney at Kirkland. She would be a great resource because she has a very different story from me. Even though she's at Kirkland, so professionally, the outcome is the same. She would be a very different person. She has a female view, and she was very involved in the law school LGBT stuff. So she should be someone to nudge, since I'm sure she's be willing if she hasn't already signed up.

ML: That's pretty much it. Thank you!

[01:30:38]

End of Interview