

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

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW #34
COOK, HANNAH (1990-) AB 2011 STAFF**

At U of C: 2008-present

Interviewed: May 20, 2013

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Transcript by: Molly Liu

Length: Clip 1: 08:18; clip 2: 19:21; clip 3: 51:53; total: 1:19:32

Interview (May 20, 2013) at Chicago Riverwalk:

[00:00]

KG: So to start, I'm actually going to ask you the years at UChicago, why you left that blank on your demographic form.

HC: So, I'm an incestuous brat. So I started at U of C in 2008, graduated a year early in 2011—I didn't go to college anywhere else, I just didn't have the money. I then left for six months, came back and started working part-time as a researcher, then transitioned into working full-time at that part-time job, also at the University, also I'm starting law school in the fall, also U of C. [KG: Okay.] So depending on whether you want to count my college years, or the whole time I've been around here, it's sometime between three and five years.

KG: Okay. We're doing alumni, staff, and graduate students, so you're all of them now.

HC: Yeah, I check a lot of boxes for you, which is either very good or very bad.

KG: I'm sure that it's great. I'm sure it's ideal. So the—you're from the South, but you came up here for school?

HC: Yep!

KG: What brought you to Chicago, and UChicago?

HC: So, funny story. So I moved around a lot. As a kid, I lived in Massachusetts, Minnesota, Kentucky, which is where I went to high school, I have family all over the country, and was really sure that I wanted to go back to the East Coast. I wanted to go to Brown. And Louisville is the 14th-largest city in the country. So it's one of those places where college fairs, they go, but there's not really enough people to make it worthwhile for them. So the

whole Ivy+ group, which is any school that doesn't take that many applicants, all came into town on one day, and I was like, we gotta go we gotta go we gotta go, Brown's going to be there! So my father takes me, I'm like, "This is great! Look at the Ivies, look at the non-Ivies," and my father's like, "Look at the number of digits on that price." My father went to SUNY Brockport over the course of two decades to get his degree, so he was used to there being less cost. He doesn't want to pay \$50,000 a year. And U of C guy walked up and "We have merit scholarships." And my mom was like, "Look, look! And there's ivy, and there's craziness, and you could possibly not bankrupt everything we've ever made. How about that, don't you want to go to U of C?" And I was like, "oh, fuck that." But one of his trade-offs, since my father is much more math-inclined than I was: I would apply to U of C, in full faith, for those merit scholarships and also Emory University in Atlanta, which also had a very vigorous merit scholarship program. And if I applied to those two schools and tried my hardest, he would pay the admissions fees to the other schools that I wanted to apply to.

So okay, great, we got this arrangement, we did the college road trip rodeo summer after my junior year of high school. And went to Georgetown and hated it. Went to a bunch of small liberal arts places, hated them. Visited the East Coast schools, didn't like them. On the way home, went to UChicago. And was like, "Hey, people here talk like they read Joss Whedon! Okay! This is great!" Loved it, liked the people I met, liked school, met a lot of people from the theater department that I really liked, and said, "Okay, I'm going to apply to Chicago early, and see if I can maybe go here instead." And you know, by some course of idiocy they let me in, and great, here I come! And I never wound up applying to those other schools. My dad only paid one admissions fee, and it was for here.

KG: I'm sure he was happy with that result.

HC: He was! He was quite pleased.

KG: So you didn't really—it sounds like you didn't really have a concept of the school before you showed up on your visit?

HC: Pretty much, yeah. I had no idea. It was just another place I had to go.

KG: But the nerd culture sort of drew you in?

HC: Yeah, yeah. It was that—everybody was smart, but nice, and weird. And people talked like me, and they totally understood this concept that you were going to be in choir and theater and speak computers, and also read Corporette, and this was totally normal. My god I didn't know that there were 2000 other people like that out there, but if I can be in a class with them, then awesome!

KG: When you got here, did that idea that you had first encountered hold true?

HC: Yeah! Pretty much. Obviously not everyone was an O-Aide or admissions person, and like there are in fact a slightly bigger diversity of people than had originally been

suggested, but really, it was very much sort of what I was expecting, and sort of—got what I came for, I guess.

KG: And then you were probably in the dorms right away, right?

HC: Yep. I was in the first group of, possibly the second group of Blackstoners. When they let first years in. [KG: Oh, really!] Yeah.

KG: How was that?

HC: It was good. It was what I wanted, which in hindsight may or may not have been the best thing. It was very much, and it may still be the loner dorm. And so for me, it was great. I had done camp programs before where you all shared a bathroom and you lived with a million other people, and I hated that crap. So my own room, my own bathroom, it's—you share your bathroom with one person but they have their own room. That was great. And I really liked it. Most of the really close friends my first year and that I still keep in touch with are from my dorm.

KG: Oh, really.

HC: Yeah. I was actually emailing today with a friend of mine who is now in Texas, who was the guy across the hall from me. And possibly because they knew us all, I met two of my best friends in college literally within minutes of showing up at the dorm, because there were three of us, they tell you that our dorms open up at 9 or whatever—three of us, our parents got there at like 7:30 in the morning, because you had to get the good parking space and it was going to be early. Like the doors weren't open and nobody was there yet. Except for the three of us. And so it was me, my friend Skeet, and my friend Ying. All of us, like, very comically aghast. Our parents shoved us out of our minivans and were like, “I think those are other students, go talk to them.” We basically stood in the middle of Blackstone Avenue and were like, “hi. I'm new here, do you go here?” And all of us basically said, “Yes, yes we do.” And I wound up living with both of them during the time that I was in college, and—so in that sense it went very well. I kind of wish that I had stayed in the dorms longer, just because it was one of your principle ways to make friends.

KG: When did you move out?

HC: After my first year.

KG: Oh, okay. So you went straight to apartment living, basically.

HC: Yeah. I moved out of my dorm, actually moved into a sublet for three days, because we got out of class on the 12th and my lease started on the 15th or something, and then moved right into the apartment that I stayed in until I graduated from college.

KG: There's a man playing the trumpet over there.

HC: Yep. And he's not even very good at it.

KG: No. Is there more Riverwalk on the other side of this staircase?

HC: I think there's a little bit of a gap, and then I think so? Wanna go over there?

KG: Maybe he'll give up.

HC: I hope so. He can hear us.

KG: We're not being very encouraging of this man's musical talent. Um. Yeah, okay, maybe we should—

[08:18]

End of Clip 1

Start of Clip 2

[00:00]

KG: So, we were basically talking about you living in Blackstone.

HC: Yep.

KG: Let's see. So I'm surprised that you said that you made a lot of friends there, because I've heard that it's the dorm where no one talks to each other.

HC: It is the dorm where no one talks to each other, but that works for some of us. I think it's more the dorm where you don't have to talk to anyone. I knew—and I'm still somewhat in contact with most of the first-years who started in Blackstone with me. Second-years who were in Blackstone, I think I only ever spoke to five of the twenty, and I'm only in touch with one? Two? One and a half, because I'm only in touch with her because she has a boyfriend who's a friend. But everybody beyond that, and it was mostly third and fourth years there, we never spoke to them. But there's some form of camaraderie there, because we were the first first-years, and there were literally fifteen or twenty of us. So you know, it was like, oh, who's going to be eating at the dorm table? Because this was back when, you know, they had a restricted meal plan. You could be on the freshman meal plan, which was smörgåsbord-meal, and a normal one, which was I think was fifteen meals, and there was a restricted one that was even less than that. Because we had our own kitchens. So you didn't really need a meal plan. It was a tiny-ass fridge and a tiny-ass stove, so sometimes it was nice. But a lot of the upperclassmen didn't really use the dining hall and weren't at the table ever, so it was really just us. It was like living in a house with your fifteen closest friends, because all you ever saw was each other. [KG: Huh.] And you had your own room, but you still saw each other coming and going and all the rest of it.

KG: Yeah, I'm sure. Was there any house culture at that time?

HC: There was plenty of house culture in other houses. Yeah, we didn't really have one. I never scavved, we never really did anything. I didn't actually—we used all of our house funds on a friend's birthday party. She was a—she was actually involved in student life, she was on the COUP board, she did all of this stuff. And yeah, she found out we had like \$4000 at the end of the year. I think we went to—we went to some really schmancy restaurant, and it was like, all right! The first fifty bucks for all of us is subsidized on the house, and our RH chipped in appetizers and you paid for drinks if you were of drinking age. [KG: Wow!] And that was how we used our house budget. [KG: That's amazing.] Yeah! It was great, it was a lot of fun. I think my girlfriend, who at the time moved into the dorm with me—she didn't go to the U of C, but she finished early and moved into the dorm. Not that that ever happened, administration people. For like two weeks at the end of spring quarter she moved in with me. So I think she went, and we paid for her, we just counted her as someone else. Fifteen house residents showed up, and we just counted her as an upperclassman. [KG: Wow.] Yeah, nobody cared because it was, woo! All the money.

KG: That's sort of amazing. I've never heard any stories out of Blackstone before. We actually just had our first Blackstone participants ever for BJ Scav this year. I didn't know you guys existed until this year.

HC: Yeah, nobody really knows we exist. We at one point—midway through our first year, they actually—our student gov rep, who was actually a first-year friend of mine, had to go to student gov and go, “So...” This was the coldest winter on record. The antifreeze was freezing on the buses. We were getting emails from Dean Boyer, like, don't go outside today. I think we actually—we're all huddled around our computers refreshing because there was a chance they would cancel class because of the cold. Not the snow, but because it was just too cold. And there was no bus that even went near Blackstone. You couldn't take the shuttle home, you had to walk every time. [KG: Wow.] Because nobody knew we existed except for us.

KG: Did you meet people outside of Blackstone? Where did you go to socialize other than Blackstone?

HC: I...class. I actually worked a lot. I basically got to campus, and was like, so, money. Money is going to run out. Money has basically already run out from that first tuition payment. You know, I had some scholarship funds but not very much. So I was working three or four jobs for most of college simultaneously, so I was a student caller, I was interning with NSP, I worked in an econ journal from the end of first year until I graduated. I also—I stayed a caller all that time. So most of the other people I knew I met through work. I met the other NSP workers that I took the bus with, other student callers, that kind of thing. Which was not overwhelmingly traditional, but was something out of force of necessity. So I was sort of a wacko in that regard.

KG: Did that leave any time for RSOs for you?

HC: Not really, no. I had been involved in Quiz Bowl, quick recall academic team, whatever you called it at your high school. Here it's College Bowl or Quiz Bowl. I did that for about a quarter and a half my first year, and then just couldn't do it because I was working too many shifts, I was working four or five nights a week for just one job, and then during the day for others. I did a little bit with UT. So—which is actually fun now because I peripherally knew a lot of people in the theater community in Chicago. Because I peripherally knew them through UT, because I would go to shows, I would do one-nighters, I would help with light hangs and sets, whatever else didn't require any actual commitment. I wrote for New Work Week, that kind of thing. I didn't really do anything sustained my first year. My second year I actually got involved with Hillel, the Jewish house, I guess in old folks' terminology on campus, and actually ran an egalitarian chavurah, which is a Jewish prayer group. So after—first year I just sort of worked and made do with my house, and then end of second and third year I was, it was me and the Jews. Really just me and the Jews.

KG: So that sounds like a fairly atypical social life at UChicago.

HC: Yeah, yeah. I was a freak.

KG: Yeah, fair enough. Do you want to talk about—well actually, another question I would have. When you moved out of Blackstone, did your social life change in that you didn't meet people from the dorm anymore?

HC: Yeah. That was one of the harder things, and one of the—if I could have a do-over for college, one of the reasons why I probably would have considered staying or moving dorms but at least sticking around, yeah, that first fall quarter of my second year when I wasn't in the dorm anymore and I wasn't seeing people, but I didn't really have RSOs that I was involved with yet, didn't have a social life out of that—I didn't see a whole lot of people. And then that December, so the end of fall quarter, was when I started to going to Egal, and spending a lot of time with Hillel, and was kind of like, “Help, I'm lost, I haven't spoken to anyone outside of class except to ask them for money or paperwork in three months.” And they were like, “Oh, come here sweetie, we will hug you and feed you and talk to you. Come here and sit down.” I was like, “All right! Here we go. This is what having a life is like.”

KG: Yeah. Did you live fairly close to campus?

HC: Yeah. I actually got closer to campus when I moved off-campus than when I lived on-campus. Which was a lot of fun. Cut my commute time in half. Because instead of walking a mile I was walking about three blocks. Which was nice. Especially given that I was working so often that, you know, walking from the northwest side of campus to the southeast side of campus kind of sucked. So it was nice, and it was nice after I was involved in student life to have my own place. We threw a lot of parties there. Not that we ever did anything that would not be acceptable. [KG: No. Never.] In student center places. But we were a co-undergrad, grad group, and it was nice to cook dinner for

everybody and have everybody over for an extended period of time without worrying about when the janitor needed to close out.

KG: Yeah. Did your—did your sexual identity come into—was that important in your socializing at all?

[09:53]

HC: Um...not really? I had a girlfriend from high school whom I stayed with all through college.

KG: Oh, okay.

HC: So I was never really involved in like the Office of LGBTQ Student Life. I knew about it and I was on the listserv, but because I was working so much, I didn't have a lot of time. I actually peripherally got really involved in the trans community. Because a roommate of mine was really active in Pronoun Hoedown, all the things that were going around there, and sort of wound up with a lot of trans friends. I think I went to pro-hoe three or four times, just to pick stuff up, or everyone I knew was there and we were all going out after, so I would just swing by and drop off the cookies and wait for them to be done. Other than that, and the fact that half my friends liked my girlfriend better than me because she was a much nicer human being than me—yeah, there was sort of a group of us that happened to, you know, be gay and not really be involved in gay student life at all. We actually used to joke that one of my friends, who was an Orthodox Jew and straight, used to have lesbian drinking night at her place, because she just happened to collect us from disparate corners of the university, and like none of us were involved in any of the same things, and none of us were involved in LGBT student life, but we all happened to sleep with women. Except for her—and she was adorable, too. And we would all show up and be like, “oh hi! I've heard of you.” You know. “Who are you with this month?” So there was kind of a core of us and we all knew each other and we all hung out, but there was nothing official about it.

KG: So like a core of non-affiliated lesbians?

HC: Yeah, we were the “we don't do anything gay except in bed” group. But it worked for us.

KG: Yeah, sounds like it. Did your girlfriend also go to UChicago?

HC: No, she went to a small liberal arts school in Lexington, Kentucky. So that was one of the reasons why working was nice, because I used to fly out there. For a while it was every quarter, and then it was more like every month. Then it was somewhat more than every month. You know, because god bless Southwest and United. I used to take—I usually tried to make my classes be just Tuesday/Thursday, because that just worked better for me as a human being. But also it meant that I could take a 6am redeye flight on Friday, get to Lexington by about 9, get to her campus by about 10, and not leave until any time Sunday that Priceline could get me the cheapest. And then I would spend Monday doing

my homework and Tuesday I would go to class.

KG: That sounds like quite a system.

HC: It was a little bit insane. There was a lot of letters and postage, and god thank unlimited cell phone minutes. But yeah, I spent a lot of time in airports in college.

KG: So if you had a girlfriend coming in it sounds like you maybe had your identity sort of figured out by the time you got to college?

HC: Yeah. Yeah, I wasn't out in high school. I never really came out to people from high school. It just became more and more official that I was dating this girl. And everyone just sort of figured it out. And then I got to college and everyone was like, "Oh, hi, are you single?" And I was like, "Oh, hey, no," and then I was out to everyone without having to say anything, because oh look, here's your Facebook profile with you being in a thing with a girl, and pictures of you with a girl, and there's you leaving on Halloween to go see your girlfriend. And it was never really a thing.

KG: Yeah. So you just came out by virtue of dating someone.

HC: Yes, I came out by virtue of showing up with a girlfriend, and that was that. And you know, never really did anything with the bisexual part until after college. I was thoroughly boring.

KG: So the bisexual half of bisexual/lesbian, which is what you wrote on your demographic sheet, was like a later development?

HC: Um. I mean, I always knew I was bi, but it was one of those things where I was in a monogamous relationship with a girl, so what did it matter what else I liked? If I had to check one box I would have checked lesbian. I got a lot of crap from friends who were more like—no offense—high-theory sexuality people who were like, "No no no, lesbian means exclusively for women," and I was like, "no, it means that I date women," and I do, so there's the end of that. I didn't date a guy until I was 22, so, you know. It was just never a thing because I was monogamous with someone, functionally if not in theory. I think technically we were open, but neither of us were really that into seeing other people. We had the option because we were in different states, but neither of us ever exercised it. So I guess it was one of those if a tree falls in a forest things, are you really bisexual? I've gotten various answers on that.

KG: So we'll name this interview, "if a tree falls in the forest, are you really bisexual?" So it sounds like interacting with people as far as your sexuality went was fairly undramatic while you were at the University of Chicago for you?

HC: Yeah, it was, I mean...I'm much more laissez-faire now. Coming from the South, I was one of those people in high school who had—you can set your Facebook settings so that certain people can see certain fields and certain people can't. And like, everyone over 20

in my Facebook could not see that I was in a relationship with a girl. We never made any public declarations or posted on each others' walls with hearts, because we were not out to our parents while we were in college, either of us. I came out after I had moved out and in with her, to my parents, and I'm still not out to my extended family. Despite being on the LGBT alumni board. There are some contradictions in life. I was just usually careful with who I told, so most of my bosses knew.

Except at the student calling center because there was a guy who worked there my first year, and I think my second year, who was sort of a son of a bitch. Said a lot of homophobic things, and a lot of really shitty things, and was friends with the supervisors. [KG: Oh.] And was very good—he was very good at his job. Like, no shit, I have a lot of respect for people who are very good at their jobs, but he was an asshole as a human being. But he was good at his job. He used to make AIDS jokes, he used to make all kinds—yeah, no, he was not okay. At work, so it wasn't like I knew him out of work and he was a dick—no, he was a dick at work. So I was never out there. And never said anything to anyone I worked with at that job about blah blah blah, my girlfriend, blah blah blah lesbian, because—didn't want to deal with that. To the point where I nearly reported hostile work things about this guy, and then was mm, life choices, don't want. Really outside of that job, I would tell people one-on-one, and never had a bad experience. With staff, faculty, students, anybody.

KG: That's great. Except for that terrible guy, it seems like.

HC: Yeah, except for him! But uh...

KG: It's hard to get any sort of action on that if he's friends with everyone who's in charge too.

HC: That was sort of the issue. And it was like, well, do I really want to be the bitch who...? Because there were people who acknowledged that he said some not-okay things, they would have had to fire him. But did I really want to work with all of his friends, and all of these people—he was a fourth-year for most of the time that I worked there, he had worked there for four years, he had interned at the office, like...and he was really good at what he did. I was one of the few people who raised more money than him. So, well, you know, was it worth it? Yeah, if I really wanted to keep working there, probably not a good idea. [KG: Yeah.] I hear he's grown up a little bit since.

KG: That's good! People can change, I guess. [HC: Yeah!] As far as your academics go, what did you study at UChicago?

HC: Political science. Famous—

KG: Why did you...?

HC: Because I still had a little bit of the person who wanted to go to Brown in me, and political science being the field of “take some classes and we'll give you a degree for that”...I came in knowing that I was sort of—

[19:21]

End of Clip 2

Start of Clip 3

[00:00]

KG: Okay, so let's go back to talking about political science.

HC: Political science, the degree that they will just give you for taking class. I was kind of into political stuff. I worked for an alderman my first year, I worked for a congressman after my first year, and I kind of thought that was going to be the way I was going to go. I thought I might minor in bio and sort of do health policy, but I was politically oriented. So kind of went in knowing that I was going to do it, and then decided, yeah, what I wanted to do was take class, and only take things that interested me, and not take any intro sequences, and not do any of that crap. Not at all like Slavic, where you have to take—[KG: Five years of Russian...] Right. You take everything in the prescribed order, and hey, if you miss a class you don't graduate on time. I think even the very minimal distribution requirements, I think three of them I took just, like, by virtue of the classes I wanted. There was one I really didn't want to do, so I got Charles to count a mythology class I took in the classics department as my philosophy credit? And he was always really good about that. Charles was famous, really in both the grad and undergrad department, for signing basically every piece of paper you bothered to fill out. Because they had this, they had this great template that was like, "Name a class. Name what requirement for what degree you are trying to count this for. Write me a three-sentence paragraph about why you think this should happen." So long as you don't write "llama llama llama," he signed it and you were good to go. I counted all sorts of things. I think I used all the credits they would give me, and then some. Because I took things in history and classics and law and all sorts of things that I just thought were cool and apparently Charles did too.

KG: That works!

HC: Yeah. That was one of those.

KG: How did the core work for you if you weren't really into the whole prescribed routes of classes?

HC: I did a lot better academically once I got out of the core. I know a lot of people who did a lot better academically once they got out of the core. I was fine with it honestly because I had a lot of choices. And I also just got really lucky with the professors I had for the most part. And I slacked off a little in core. I took Foundations of Modern Physics for Non-Majors, something horribly rocks-for-jocks-y, that was just seriously, "if you hate science, click here." But the guys who taught it, because it was Bruce and Heinrich Jaeger who taught it, and they were great, and they were hilarious, and Heinrich would bring in chocolate chip cookies to you know, demonstrate energy. He would play an

instrument—it was the flute or something—he would play the flute. But he would fill it up with gas first and then light the gas on fire so that you could see the sound wave. He blew up helium balloons and you would listen to the different loudnesses to hear the different pressures, and hear the different amounts of each gas. But he just blew shit up because he wanted to. And would acknowledge, basically the purpose of this demo was that he wanted to blow something up today.

So, you know, I did things like that. I took all of SOSC with a guy who honestly I was completely academically not compatible with, and honestly I probably would have liked Power a lot better with somebody else. But I loved the guy, he was great, and we were friends, so I took it with him all three quarters. Didn't do so great, but you know, he and I proceeded to talk to each other in Treasure Island for the next—well, 'til now—years of my life. So same thing with my Hum professor, which was like—well, yeah, would I preferred to have not read most of those things? Yes. I am not a classics person. But I'm still in touch with my professor from Hum, and he was very good to me. I actually had to write him an apology when I started applying to grad school—and my mother reminded me of this, I had no idea—he apparently told me my first year that I was going to be an academic, and I may have blown up at him a little bit and told him that he was full of shit, and I knew what I was going to do and I was going to be a political operative, not an elected person but a behind-the-scenes person, I knew what I was going to do, and how dare he? I called my mother and I was just spitting fire, like, how dare this guy, who had known me for what, like, three months, tell me what to do? And then I graduated college and took two years off, and figured out, “Hey, you know what I really want to do? I want to be an academic.” And she goes, “You gotta call that professor from freshman English.” I go, “Ah, I thought you had forgotten about that.” Nope! Emailed him, he's at another university now, was like, “Craig. I'm really sorry for what I said first year, you were right, I was wrong, I'm going to go be an academic.” He wrote me back and said, “Welcome to the fold, glad you joined us eventually.” So you know, there were good people to get me through core.

KG: Yeah. It sounds like you had some pretty good relationships with some of your professors.

HC: Yeah. I had two kinds of professors. One who taught classes I wasn't really into, I didn't think that they could teach very well, I didn't do the reading, and I only went to class with the TA long enough that I could understand what they were talking about. And there were professors that I loved. I was one of those people who were in their office, like, every other week, because I didn't want to write about whatever they assigned, I wanted to write about whatever was more interesting, and couldn't I convince them that I should get to write this paper instead? And usually they said yes. Because would they really want to read a paper—I later became a teacher, and you really don't want to read 30 essays about the same thing, so anyone who wants to write about something different—hell, yes. Do it. Yeah, I—so I left Chicago for a while, taught middle school. I came back and was like, ah, help, help! One of my professors was one of the ones who came through for me, gave me a job as a researcher, which I still do for him out of gratitude. It's not totally my focus area anymore, but I like what I do for him and I adore him. Another professor nearly got

me a job and later wrote me a letter into law school. I just loved professors and totally—had total respect for them, stayed in touch with them, or just wanted nothing to do with them while I was in class, and wanted nothing to do with them afterwards.

KG: Did you take any classes on gender and sexuality while you were here?

HC: I took—so my default answer was going to be no, because I stayed the hell away from anything like that, and really—I'm not a philosophical person. Despite the desire to talk constantly. But outside of the talkativeness, I really, like, one of my favorite classes was one where I learned the stages a nuclear warhead goes through from launch to detonation. Like, I am one of those people. Like, you know—there are things at which I am good, and thinking really hard about political philosophy and what does it really mean to be fill-in-the-blank is not one of them. It's just not my thing. But I did actually take one class that was cross-listed as gender studies, and that was a Sexual Orientation and Law class. [KG: Oh!] Which was one of the few courses that was at the law school, taught by law professors, but was cross-listed as undergrad. [KG: Okay.] So there were fewer hoops to jump through to get in, and he was more responsive to undergraduates as a whole than some of the other law professors. So I actually took that, and had a really, really good experience. Really loved it and did well, god knows how. It was actually one of the things that helped me decide that I wanted to go to UC for law school. Was that I had a really good experience in that and one other law school class that I took, which was about race and law that Dennis Hutchinson teaches. But yeah, really him and Madigan, it was like, yeah, I think I actually kind of like it here. You know, that whole experience was good enough to convince me to stick around for three more years.

KG: Is Madigan the person who taught the Sexual Orientation and Law class?

HC: Yeah, Jim Madigan. He's an adjunct. He actually had a really interesting career. He graduated from the law school, he had an academic-style fellowship at the law school, and he ran Equality Illinois. And I also think does—and is also a professional litigator. He had this great academic-looking career, and then just totally veered off and went private and made money. While also occasionally running a nonprofit. He's a weird guy. He's a really good guy, a really fun guy. And it's always fun when your professor says, “So, I think we have class on Tuesday, unless I'm in New Jersey to litigate something that may overturn this case for Tuesday, so either the case law stands or I'll be back on Thursday and we'll talk about why it may or may not stand.” You know, there you go.

KG: That's sort of amazing.

HC: Yeah, it was a really fun class!

KG: Let's see, did you do any sort of activism while you were in school?

HC: No. No, I just—I wasn't really involved with anything organized enough to be activism. Like, remember Westboro came to town and they were protesting on campus? So I went to the big party that they basically had on the quad to make them go away. I went to that,

and I was actually somewhat involved very far away from campus in the sort of Washington and Maine campaigns for marriage equality while I was in school, but those were sort of like things that I was phonebanking from my own cell phone, and not activism on campus.

[10:28]

KG: Yeah. Did you—let's see. Did you participate in neighborhoods other than Hyde Park? Like social life or anything like that?

HC: Not very much. I do much more so now. At the time I lived in Hyde Park all my time there. Any time I've really lived in Chicago, I've lived—any meaningful amount of time, I've lived in the Hyde Park. I probably spent more time downtown than most of my peers, especially in Blackstone, because I'm a theater nut. And especially over the summers, I spent my summers in Chicago and was working in downtown Chicago at the time. And so I did a lot here, and I was involved a lot in just sort of going to theater, going to music, going to festivals here. And really other than one summer where I—the summer I worked for a congressman, I was up in Austin. Which is basically like the South Side, except geographically not there. But it's a very similar neighborhood to Woodlawn or Englewood, it's probably more like Englewood. But no, I mostly spent my time in Hyde Park and the broader South Side. I interned for the 4th Ward so I was involved in things beyond Hyde Park in that sense, but it was all very South Side-centric.

KG: Okay. And that was work-based, largely.

HC: Right, that was mostly work and working in the community. Walking through it on my way to work.

KG: Do you remember any political or social issues that students in general were interested in at the time?

HC: I mean, obviously marriage equality has been quite the big thing. And whatnot. For that, I mean, I was also in school—don't ask don't tell actually got repealed the year after I was out of college, but you know, it was in the post-Obama, is he or isn't he for don't ask don't tell, what's that going to do. But those were really the two biggest things that were sort of being talked about, marriage equality—and I'm friends with a lot of political lawyers, so do you litigate, do you legislative, what's your angle? We were watching Prop 8 go through its various stages of litigation and existence. There was a lot of that kind of thing.

KG: Yeah, that's an interesting perspective. I don't think most of the students I've talked to have a litigation versus legislation...

HC: Yeah, because I didn't have many friends after first year, a lot of my friends came from class. So a lot of my friends I met, like, all the undergrads who were in Environmental Law and Policy, or Sexual Orientation and the Law, like all of us who were taking these law classes that were mostly for third- and fourth-years as undergrads. Or for law

students. We were all kind of “look at me I'm very precocious, I'm thinking about legal issues like a lawyer” bunch. That gun control—we were all about, wait, wait, I'm thinking like a lawyer.

KG: Let's see. Is there anything else that you want to talk about specifically about your college experience before we do some broader picture about what your life is like?

HC: I know that I'm freakishly atypical. I'm sure there's some value in having weirdos somewhere on file, if nothing else that you can exclude us from future data sets. But I don't think there's all that much.

KG: All right. So as far as the question, “Do you think your experience is typical” goes, probably not?

HC: Not so much. Yeah, I was a freak. You know.

KG: That's okay. Do you think that other LGBT, LGBTQ students at the time that you were there had a similar experience with that?

HC: I think there was definitely a group with us that did, and I was friends with a lot of them. Sort of the quiet queers of us who, you know, had our relationships and we dated and did all those things that counted for us, and did nothing else, nowhere on our resume did it say gay, you know. We were not involved, and we were not active. We could not, you know, name any of the people on the board of Q&A or anything else. We're the minority, but there was a sizable chunk of us. My favorite was that I was going on a work trip, actually. And I just—we sort of all carpooled all in a bunch, and we were all stopping at this hotel. It was two girls and a guy. And you know, I thought he was kind of cute and whatever, and we were talking, and someone said something about, “Well, you know, did he want—did we want him to sleep in a different room, or did he want to sleep in a different room?” And he said, “Oh, well, you know, I think you don't mind me with the girls, given that I'm gay and all,” and I was like, “Ugh, damnit!” It was one of those things where a lot of—a significant portion of us were single. It wasn't an issue, but it never came up, and it wasn't something that we ever did anything with. But I think most students did actually do something with—or at least tried the whole “I'm going to go to an LGBT mixer!” or “I'm going to be in the mentoring program!” or “I'm going to do something where I get to put alphabet soup on my resume!” I was never an alphabet soup person.

KG: Has your perception of U of C changed since you've been gone? I guess you still are in Hyde Park.

HC: Yeah, so in some sense I'm still there. But I don't know. I feel a lot less disdain for it— [KG: Less disdain?] Less disdain, since I left. Because when I got to college, I was very much in a—unless I need someone to fuck, why would I want to be in a discussion group about my identity? I'm like, “I'm sorry, do I really need to walk into an explicitly people-who-want-to-fuck-me mixer? Can I seriously just not walk into a bar and find

somebody?” Come on, really? Where's the straight people mixer? You go and find the theater party or whatever, or you go to sports practice or things that you're interested in other than genitalia, you figure it out. I was very “seriously?” when I was in college. Now that I'm on the LGBT alumni board, I don't say those things anymore. But like actually having both known a lot more people who were involved in queer campus life and are involved in queer campus life and involved in explicitly LGBT activities afterwards, I still don't do much with it, but I do see the value in things like the LGBT mentoring program. And the career counseling—a lot of people on the board have signed up to do career counseling for LGBT students. As a student I never would have done it, because there was just a twinge inside me that I would need special career counseling because I wanted to sleep with women. But now I'm like, hey, screw it, it's free career counseling and you at least have something in common, so fuck it, yeah. You want to send me—would you like to give me free tickets, drink tickets at a bar to meet people where we can at least start with “yes, I do in fact like you”? Sure! Same thing with how I'm slightly, tangentially involved with Howard Brown on the North Side. Do I care that much that it's LGBT services? No. Do I care that they provide really high-quality healthcare for people who are mostly not wealthy and mostly can't get it, high-quality to people who are in uncomfortable situations? Yeah, that's enough to get me to give them money and show up to their benefits and do all the rest of it. So I've mellowed significantly about the alphabet soup and whether or not it matters since.

[19:34]

KG: Do you have any—has your opinion changed about the university in general at all?

HC: Not really, but there wasn't all that much for it to do. I loved it when I was there, loved it loved it loved it. Like, raised six-figure sums for it because I loved it, because I cared about it. I was a volunteer, I interviewed students my first year out of school even when I wasn't working here. I do think of it—when I was there, especially after my first year—my first year was a little rough, but after that I came to the conclusion that it was a really special place. Compared to my friends in other colleges, we were treated pretty well. We were treated like adults and that was nice. We didn't take multiple-choice tests, and that was good. The intern at my office was talking about how she had difficulty with—she really had difficulty in her Buddhism class because there were these really complex concepts and it was really hard to pick the right answer on the multiple-choice test, and I just slammed my head on the desk and was just like, are you kidding me? You're a senior in college, and you take multiple-choice tests?

KG: I feel like UC students would walk out of that test.

HC: Yes, yes, yes, they would! Or they'd just write their answer off to the side.

KG: “Here's a more nuanced answer to this question.”

HC: Right! You know. I have had really since my second year a lot of love for it as a special place with special people. And sort of have continued to feel that way post-graduation—

despite being jealous of all the nice new things opening up that you all get and I don't. When I walk through Logan I'm like, "You son of a bitch! My play was put on in a black-box theater on risers. What is this penthouse thing that you have, and there's a Qdoba, I used to have to go downtown, uphill both ways, to get to a Qdoba." This is—outside of my smidge of envy, which thank god I'm going to grad school because I get to take advantage of all these shiny new things.

KG: Yeah, you could just live in Logan if you want.

HC: That's true! But now that I work as staff, I know all the things that are coming sort of five or ten years down the line that they're fundraising for, and I'm like, oh, no, I want to go to the Harris School after they've made all these improvements, because I've heard the dean talk about their ten-year plan. I want to be here at the end of the ten-year plan, when all the stuff is really good! So yeah, I'm never leaving here. I'm just going to be here forever. They're going to walk in here and be like, "Who's that little old lady in the room?" "God, I don't know, but she's been here longer than professors." "What does she do?" "We have no idea."

KG: If we could just talk briefly about your affiliations with the university after you graduated, that would be great. I'm going to be a little less pointed on these questions because I'm not altogether clear on what you did.

HC: So affiliations, things I did with the university, that stuff?

KG: Yeah, like jobs that you had with the university.

HC: Sure. So I left for six months for Teach for America, that was a song and a dance. I volunteered for the university, that was better than my job. Quit that and went back to Chicago. Worked for Will Howell, who's a professor at the Harris School, so technically I worked Harris as a part-time researcher, which was great, which was a lot of fun, and convinced me that this whole academic thing could be fun and that I wasn't fucking crazy. So I worked there and then about, I don't know, ten months after I had graduated, I moved to Booth downtown full-time doing development. Fundraising mostly—not actual asking for money, but data analytics, while still working as a researcher at Harris. Just the book projects that I worked on in January 2012 are just now getting published, and there's a lot of page proofs, and a lot of things to do, and graphs to check, and "wait there needs to be a paragraph on this that needs to go in and then the chapter will actually be the correct length," that kind of thing.

KG: And Will Howell is someone from your undergrad, right?

HC: Yeah. He taught a seminar class I took my fourth—I used third and fourth year interchangeably, because I was a fourth year, in the sense that I was a graduating senior and I got all these perks, and it was my third year there. So for the record, when I say third year and fourth year I mean the exact same time. It drove my girlfriend, who was also an U of C'er, after college, it drove her nuts. She was like, "Pick one. Either pick a

year you didn't have, or don't use those words.” But I'm like, “but—but I was a third year / fourth year!” She was like, “No, don't do that to yourself.” Anyway, my final year of college I took his class, really liked his class, adored him. He's just an incredibly sweet guy. Very respectful of students, in a way that, you know, not a lot of professors are—they know what they want you to say, and they know what is right, and if you are correct you will say the thing that is right. Will is not like that, and Will—Will is the only professor I've had who will assign an article in lieu of a book, and when asked why—because most professors will write things and publish an article to see if it gets some traction and then turn it into a book, and use the article as a selling point for the book. Like, let me flesh out for 200 more pages the idea that I published in journal of blah blah blah. Will would assign the article and when asked why would say, “Well, the article makes the same point as the book, except it saves you 20 bucks and, like, 15 hours. Why would I not want you to read the article?” And we were like, “Can you teach that you everyone else?” Because the number of times I've been assigned a book that I had to buy, or had to get out of the library and fight 30 other people for, so that I could read 200 pages, so I could get your 2 pages of point, and that was all that you wanted me to get out of it, your thesis, not that you actually wanted me to analyze your argument and your evidence, you just wanted me to know the concept and what you were talking about—seriously, give me your 5-pager that you submitted to your publisher. So, you know. He was very good for that, and we stayed in touch after I left, and spent a lot of time together when I got back.

KG: And that's—Harris is public policy, right? [HC: Yeah.] Sorry, I'm a little bit shaky on the professional schools.

HC: Yeah, Harris is public policy. Will writes primarily on the presidency, and presidential power, and how that gets used. One of our projects right now is looking at Race to the Top as an unprecedented foray into presidential expansion because the president isn't supposed to deal with education. Until the 1960s the federal government had nothing to do with education. That was you and your teacher and your schoolhouse. And your city government and maybe some state taxes funded in. Then we had state standards, but really, federal government, nothing to do with it. And then in the '60s, for some very obvious reasons, we got into this idea that maybe the federal government should have something to do with education and equality. Race and funding for women, all of these big picture concepts. But still, it was very big picture, and Race to the Top was very much like, no, “I want you to adopt this standard and I want you to have a data system that tracks these 24 things, and then...” So it's very different and we've been writing a lot about sort of, how is that different and why is that different and why does that matter? Will also writes a lot about the intersection of presidents and war and power, and how the president gets his way more during war, is that an incentive to go to war, do we only go to war when the president feels like he's popular enough to make it through the war, like, how does that cause and effect work out? That's what I do for him.

Booth is the business school. [KG: Right.] And most of the time there I'm looking at our alumni base, and seeing what a donor looks like, what a really successful person looks like, you know, if someone loves us what signals do they send back to the university. Is it

liking the Facebook page, is it sending us money, is it volunteering? It's sometimes surprising what things are and are not correlated with you loving the university. You know, and also, what do our alumni actually do? Where do they actually live? What are they actually interested in? They've branched out a lot from finance, they actually have a whole new institute on social enterprise, and sort of the for-profit not-for-profit model, so they're doing a lot of, who is in this space already? Do any of our alums do this? Perhaps they want to tell us how it's done / give us their data / let our faculty work for them. I spend a lot of time trying to track people down. Not on a large scale, on an individual level, like how do I email you if I want your nonprofit to have a Booth affair.

KG: But both of those things are sort of different from what you're interested in doing in law school, right?

[29:31]

HC: They are. But they pay in money! Money and benefits, money and benefits are great, don't underestimate.

KG: I can't tell you how little I underestimate money and benefits, as a graduating senior.

HC: No benefits, benefits that kick in before six months. My teaching job I had to be there more than six months before you got benefits, and my god that sucked. Because you can't take any sick time, and you can't go to the doctor. And believe me you will inevitably get really sick and need to go to the doctor and take time off work, but only if you don't have six months, you can't do it. Otherwise you're fine. But...yeah, they're both helpful. They were both choices—I had other job offers that I did not take, some of which made more money, but I am interested in being an academic. I have a couple of research interests, mostly in actually what I wrote my BA on, so security and law, and internet regulation, which is something I wrote about in another class. So the experience I have writing for Will is useful. Not subject matter, but technique. Same with the data analytics that I do here. Predictive modeling—as an alumni base not so helpful, but knowing how to turn on the Excel data access toolpack and create a model, it's helpful. Becoming an expert in Excel is probably going to be handy. Having library access is nice. I'm not going to lie. You're going to miss it.

KG: I know, I know! My heart's already breaking.

HC: CPL is actually not that bad. I actually use the CPL now more than I use the Reg, now that I do have easy access to both. So it was actually a conscious choice, that in my future life plans, it would be really useful if I knew how to do professional research and writing and data analysis. [KG: Yeah, definitely.] So it's not a total waste of my two years. But you know, having an 9 to 5 job is also kind of nice. It's kind of nice. Do it if you can.

KG: Oh, I hope so.

HC: Find something that you can live on, preferably have a discretionary income, and you

have evenings and the weekends off. If at all humanly possible, I have no idea what you're interested in, but do it at least for a while. It's nice. It's nice to be able to go to things and not just be like, "I'd love to go to that, but I can't afford it and I'm working then anyway." That's what I'm working on with my boyfriend right now. It's like, you know what? Why make money, if you don't leave the office until 8 each night and don't get to use it? So, like, I'm going to go to your office and pull you out at 6, and we are going to go to the theater and dinner. That is what is going to happen right now.

KG: Yeah. Oh, can we talk more about law school? What are your hopes for law school? Do you go in with a concentration or something?

HC: No. JDs are one of the few remaining degrees which you just show up, you get the same degree as everybody else. And then you go from there. The nice thing is that it's an unstructured curriculum after your first year, so your first year of law school you literally don't even get to pick your classes. It's like—it's not even like core, you get a printed schedule, like in high school. I'm going to get a printed high school schedule that says that I take Torts at 9am Tuesday, Thursday, Wednesday, there are going to be three sections and I'm not even going to get to pick which one I'm in. It's just going to be the alphabet and how Ann Perry's feeling about me that day and my student ID number or something. But...I'm hyped for it. Again, after first year, it's entirely self-motivated, you pick whatever classes you want. You make your own degree through your classes, so I'm excited for that and think it will be fun. Just do whatever I want again! Because it'll be exactly like college, one year of restricted classes and then I take whatever-the-fuck-I-want class!

KG: That sounds great.

HC: I know, right? That's why everyone I know, even people who are professionals, wants to go back to graduate school. Because we miss class. So that's how that is.

KG: Are you starting in the fall?

HC: Yes, I'm starting in the fall.

KG: So this has been a two-year gap year for you.

HC: Yes. That was sort of always the plan. Got sidetracked for a while and thought the plan wasn't going to happen, but that's how it goes. That's how it is with everything in life—I have a plan! I have a plan! Shit, where's the plan? Then you find it or you fall into a different one. God, really, all the way. But no, the plan when I joined TFA was to do two years, and, you know, get my head back on straight, not be burned out—pfft, because that was a good life choice. For TFA. But that I would be academically not burned out, I would have money, there would be some scholarship money that you get entitled to when you do AmeriCorps, and then I could hop back into academia and I was pretty sure that was going to be law school. Get a JD, clerk, do an academic fellowship, then find somebody who wants to hire me to talk at people and write for a living. Really, god help

whoever makes that call, but I'm hoping that someone will be stupid enough to do it. And so far I've had really good luck with people in Chicago being stupid about me, so yay! Hopefully that'll happen!

KG: So long as it keeps working!

HC: Yeah, really. Really, sometime my luck is going to run out, but so long as I can stay in this city and someone is—I'm going to say, “So, I'm obnoxious and freakishly opinionated and really really loud, I like to talk too much and I'm not very good at most things. But how would you like for me to show up at your doorstep for X years?” And Chicago has been pretty good about saying “oh yeah sure that sounds like fun.” So hopefully it keeps doing that.

KG: That's great! There are some questions about dating after college. If you want to answer those, you can. If you do not care too, that's fine.

HC: I do not care. If you care to ask them, I will give you as many details as you feel are appropriate.

KG: Okay! The first one is what kinds of relationships you had after college?

HC: ...The dating kind?

KG: So you had a girlfriend from high school...

HC: I had a girlfriend from high school until the summer after I graduated. When I was out and working at TFA, which is a very stressful place. She and I figured out that, hey, wow, when you are adults, there are things that really matter. Like what city do you want to live in for the rest of your life? And if your answers are different, then it's a big-ass problem. And you know, if you—if one of you wants to travel around the world. Had I not gone to law school, I seriously would have gone into the state department and would travel while doing policy—I would be a traveling wanderlust and work in political campaigns. If your partner doesn't really want to live very far from their mother so that they can raise their kids and have their family there, that's not a great fit. So we basically hit that stage of adulthood where we were like, “Well, I really really love you, but fuck, this life ain't going to work.” So we split up, and I started dating a friend of mine from college, who was still living in Chicago while I was not, so that was making a not great life choice. I was living a six-hour drive away, which I usually made in about four hours. But who was very good to me, and we were together for a year and a half-ish. Until she and I once again played the life things game, and she's a—we had the whole, “do you want to meet my family?” “I don't really want you to meet my family.” “I really want you to meet my family?” And we were like, oh, crap, what age did you want kids at? Oh, I don't think I can do that. Shit.

And from my experience with other friends, especially lesbian friends, because, you know, lesbians who are all like, “get an apartment have a life!” people, this appears to be

the thing that happens between 22 and 25, you realize that the person you moved in with whom you really adore, one of you is going to be much farther along a line than the other is, and it's not always the same person from relationship to relationship. One of you is going to be like, "so what about those kids," and one of you is going to be like, "oh god not yet, not now. How's 30 for you? 35, maybe?" And your partner's going to be like, "Clock's ticking!" "Clock? Clock? I don't see a clock." But...so I did that. And then there was my boyfriend. Which is, you know, interesting and different.

KG: Where did you meet him?

HC: He was a friend from high school of my ex-girlfriend. So she and I started going out, and he and I started meeting up, and that was a lot of fun. Yeah, I don't know how to date people who aren't my friends. Not sure this is a lesbian thing or a me thing, probably a me thing. But I don't know how to date people I'm not already friends with. I've never actually asked somebody on a date. I've always kind of just been spending all my time with a person and been like, "So, um, all this time that I've been snuggled up around you, how do you feel about that going beyond snuggling?" And the other person goes, "Hey yes!" or "Hell no!" And that's really been how it's gone, really just about every single time.

[40:06]

KG: I know a lot of people who have done that, so it can't just be you.

HC: Yeah, I'm sure that there are others of us out there, but...those people can find each other, and all those people who go to bars and have awkward, "my name is," they can have name tags or something.

KG: I don't know how—I don't know how it can be done.

HC: Yeah, and that's why I've never tried online dating. How incredibly awkward it must be! I am—I do a lot of professional networking, so I know how painful awkward can be. I know how painfully awkward coffees can be, and who are you and what do you do and, like, I can handle that in a professional what do you do sense, I cannot imagine that in an intimate what do you do sense. I think I would turn bright red and faint. [KG: Yeah.] I've never fainted in my life, but I think it's because I've never tried online dating. That's the way cause and effect goes!

KG: Well, unless you have anything more to say about that, I think we can do ending questions, sort of. Do you think that things are different for your generation of students from the preceding, and I guess my generation is the following?

HC: I guess probably? Obviously for older generations, a lot of guys—it's always guys, I'm always one of two women in the LGBT alumni board meeting—so hey, get involved in the LGBT alumni network, swear to god, you'll be like one of three women. But I'll be one of them, and I'll be friendly. But no, obviously Chicago, being both a buttoned-up

awkward place that was not catering for most of its existence to sexuality of any kind—my god, how people managed to be coupled when they're alumni, I don't really understand from my understanding of the university for most of its life. My god, that some of my friends from U of C managed to date each other and get married, I'm sort of surprised, even now. Because we're so much more socially adept than old people. So...still. But there's differences, the whole concept of being out and dating, having services for that. From the university of all places. Is still weird to some people. One person who works planning events for the LGBT alumni said, “So what if I had a speed-dating Valentine's Day thing where people could meet each other and talk? Would people come or would that just be totally weird?” Because I think for older alumni the concept that the university helps you date is just totally weird. But hey, I know people who would totally go. A bunch of twenty-somethings and you have beer, we'll make it work. But, um. So to the older generations, good luck to you and I hope you managed to get laid at some point. I don't know, apparently it is changing. The LGBT alumni network, we got some statistic that one in—it was like 15%, 17%, something absurd, of incoming freshman for next year's class identify as LGBTQ.

KG: Wow, that's amazing!

HC: Yeah, we all like fell out of our chairs. And we're mostly young. We're mostly like grads of the 2000s, to 10s, 11s, 12s. But we're not stodgy old people. Like, we're not. And we were still like, the fuck? What did you all do? I don't even think—I don't even think they asked if people were gay yet when I applied? I think I may have been the last year where they didn't? I know the law school does it now. But I think it was either new the next year or, like, it was there but I didn't answer it.

KG: Yeah, I don't remember this being a question. But I was so closeted when I came to UChicago that maybe it wouldn't have registered.

HC: Yeah, maybe I wouldn't have answered if it would have involved my parents seeing it. I was not out to them until college. But apparently 15% were willing to check the box, print it out, and send it in. So that I think is different. I think it's just a much larger volume of people who are out and coming into college.

And transition to trans issues—we had trans people who were involved in—I'm not involved in the trans community, but I'm one degree away from the trans community for a lot of things, and I think that will be very different for the next five years, even—the next five classes, than when I was there. We did not have gender-neutral housing when I was in housing. You were only allowed to have same-gender-identified roommates. So if you were in the Snitchcock, there were some issues there, which is why most people wound up in places where you had your own room, because that's awkward. If you're in a place where you can only have same-gender roommates, and one of you is a girl and three of you are boys, something's different here. I think the university has done a lot on, not being trans-friendly, but at least un-transphobic. [KG: Yeah.] And doing their best to make there be policies. I've done some work on this, things like, can alumni get their names changed, without showing documentation, legal documentation? The answer is

yes. Actually university policy is that we will call you whatever you want on your mailings, and on your event registrations, and on your name badges, and your emails. To change it on your transcript, there's some legal stuff there, but to change it for what the alumni association calls you or what email address to display as, that they can absolutely do. But most of the staff who work at alumni, I have to train friends of mine because, hey, we have a problem, and you need to find these five people so that they are correctly identified and their emails look right, and you have to go work with IT so it displays right. They're being good about it, it just takes legwork to find people who know and understand that's what you need to do. And I think more and more of our incoming students, they will set your email to be, the display next to your email, as whatever is your preferred name. You know, whether that's being Jamie instead of James, or whether it's a non-gendered name or whatever. So I am hopeful that that will be the new thing. Plus, having a much bigger gay population than we had.

KG: Jesus, 15%!

HC: Yeah, seriously! At that point you can—

KG: Throw a stick and you can find a gay person.

HC: Yeah, at that point you actually have a hope of finding someone you can reliably date! You know? In your first year! Because god, did I know anybody that was out my first year? I had a roommate that had a lot of threesomes. But I think she was straight in her own parts. Yeah, I don't think I knew anybody in Chicago who was actually out other than me, who was a girl, my first year.

KG: Yeah. That doesn't help a lot with dating.

HC: Yeah! Had I been single, I would have been screwed! Or—not screwed.

KG: Yeah, whatever's worse. I was lucky just by virtue that my house that I was in had 5 out people by pick of the draw. Otherwise I never would have met anyone.

HC: Yeah. So apparently that is no longer true. Or at least with this class. Maybe we'll have a much straighter class next year.

KG: Who knows?

HC: We'll keep on having alumni interviewers to find the queer ones.

KG: Tell them that it's great! So why did you decide to be interviewed for the project?

HC: Peer pressure?

KG: Monica said Colleen [Interview #8] sent you to us.

HC: Yeah. So, the fun thing is that I actually told Colleen about the project because the LGBT alumni board—several of them were guinea pigs a year and a half ago when they started this project, and they pushed all of us who were on the board. They were like, “Okay, you all, you are on the website as being on the board. You really have no shame in being interviewed about being gay at the university. Be on the list.” And I was like, “Seriously? The hell you want with me? I’m weird, I’m boring, I have the same experience as the interviewer. The interviewer can have a diary entry.” But I sent it to Colleen and a couple of my other friends. “All right, you were actually involved in queer student life, if they want the perspective of people who led queer student groups.” I sent it to one person on each of the alphabet soup categories. It was like, yeah, you’re my L, you’re my B, you’re my G, you’re my Q, go forth and be interviewed. And all of them came back to me and were like, “Okay. I was interviewed. Did you get interviewed?” And I was like, “Why would they want me?” “They need interviewees.”

KG: Especially—we have so many gay men who respond, and very few lesbians.

HC: Yeah, the LGBT alumni network is like 70% male and our board is 80% male. So...apparently this is a thing. Like, apparently, in the wider gay activism, LGBT anything, apparently 70% of gay organizations, their leaders, their active members, they’re all male. I guess women—there are just stereotypes about lesbians and women and their apartments and their U-Haul that are actually somewhat true, because yeah, most of the lesbians I know are not involved in anything, and I got on the board because a gay male friend was like, “Hey, don’t you want to be on the board?” And it was like, “What? Do you really need women that badly?” He said, “Yes. Young and women.” You know. But after the board all told me that I needed to get interviewed and all my friends whom I had sent to be interviewed, thinking that this was my contribution or whatever, came back and said that I needed to get interviewed, I was like, okay. Here we go. I have been shamed.

KG: Well, I hope it was okay for you.

HC: Oh no, it was fine! I just can’t imagine what’s useful about it. But hey.

KG: The diversity of the archive is important. Is there anything else you want to say before I shut the recorder off?

HC: Nope, good luck.

KG: Okay, awesome.

[51:53]

End of Interview