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Title: LGBT Oral History: Anonymous 001

Date: November 19, 2015

Location: LGBT Oral History – Anonymous - 001

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Interviewee: Anonymous_001

Interviewer: Kathy McCormick

Date: November 19, 2015

Place: Narrator's home in Harrisburg, PA

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Abstract: In this oral history, Anonymous_001 starts off discussing his family life. He states that his family life was not the best but not the worst, however after his mother left and his father developed borderline personality disorder, he decided to find ways to escape reality. He then goes on to say how his sexuality and sex cannot be disconnected from his life. After being exposed to pornography at a young age, he struggled with porn addiction throughout his adolescent and adult life. Porn introduced him to different types of sexuality and it was through porn that he discovered that he is bisexual. He discusses how his struggle with pornography led to misconceptions of what a healthy relationship looked like, as well as what a healthy sexual relationship looked like, with either a man or a woman. Consequently, his porn addiction led him to child pornography when he was 12 years old. His addiction, specifically to child pornography, continued until he was arrested in 2010 for the consumption of child pornography. After being arrested, he was admitted to a center for sexual compulsion and trauma and it was there he was told and accepted that he was addicted to sex. After his rehab was over, he was sentenced to prison for up to five years. He only served 3 ½ years, but it was during his incarceration that he had his first “real” homosexual relationship. He mentions that before this relationship, even though his friends knew he was bisexual, he had been dating a women and only acted on his homosexual desires behind closed doors in secret and through cybersex. This relationship showed him that he could have a healthy homosexual relationship if he wanted to, and that his homosexual urges did not have to be expressed only in secret. Now he is discovering himself again and discovering other people. He warns the younger generation to be careful with what they do on the internet, because the internet is not reality and will never be reality. Reality is trusting people, loving people, and accepting yourself for who you are. He also warns the younger generation that “Living alone is not a way to live and there is no reason for it.” The world is full of good people that will love you and help you, all you have to do is ask.

KM: Okay so now we are technically live. My name is Kathy McCormick, I am a student at Penn State Harrisburg in the doctoral program in an ethnography class, but I am working with the LGBT Center in Harrisburg doing Oral Histories. And I am working with someone who has requested to be anonymous so he's not going to give his name during the interview but if we could please just have you say that you do in fact give us permission to record this history and to share it with others.

A001: Hi there, my name is anonymous and I do give my consent for my story and my narration to be used and shared.

KM: Okay excellent. So let's just go back to the very beginning and talk a little bit about your early family history. Anything you can think to share about that would be fine.

A001: Oh yah, of course. Well, I was born in Strausburg, Pennsylvania, which is in the eastern part of the state. I come from a mixed racial family. I suppose you could say my daddy is white and my mom is from South America. I have an older brother, about a year-and-a-half or two years older. And I was born, I was born and raised in Pennsylvania. Family life, I don't know, I suppose you could say it was unremarkable. Not the worst and not the best, but I don't ever remember needing anything as I was younger, not in the physical sense. And I was more or less comfortable. Some parental discord I guess you could say, I was witness to in that it was certainly uncomfortable, but nothing major. You know I consider myself fortunate that I wasn't abused or severally neglected, perhaps just emotionally to an extent. That would come from my earliest childhood, and as we move on to the middle childhood I suppose it becomes a bit more eventful.

KM: So are you ready to move on to that middle childhood?

A001: Oh yes, of course. If you'll hear it?

KM: Of course.

A001: Yah, know when I think about my sexuality and the LGBT community and what that means for me in my life, it's invariably—I can't disconnect it from sex and from sexuality. And so an early event that colored my life was my brother and I having sex. And so the first time that we had any kind of ... that I was introduced to sex—well, I was, I suppose, around 7 years old, and that would have made my brother 8 or 9. And I was invited to his friend's house where we would watch pornography, and I remember it being a confusing spectacle ... very, very strange events watching this hardcore intense pornography, heterosexual. But at the same time kind of fascinating and interesting, and taboo and risky and exciting. So ... days after this would took place, for a few encounters or episodes, my brother and I wound having sexually contact with each other, um, at home and I know—I suppose you could say it was more or less innocent and I certainly don't blame him. We were in the same age range and I didn't really feel taken advantage of, but it was, ah, impactful, I guess you could say. It left an impression on me. [clears throat] It went on for really not very long, it was only a few instances, but I just remember it being something that was exciting and something I looked forward to and that I wanted to do more, but it just kind of tapered off I guess you could say unceremoniously without really any incident.

Then the next event in my middle childhood that set the tone for my development was my mother leaving, my parents divorcing. So I was awoken one Sunday morning in August of 1998, when I was 10, ah [coughs], to my mother announcing to me that she was leaving, that my father and her would be splitting up. Now this was the culmination of, I suppose you could say, an unhappy marriage. They had fought a lot of times before, she had left, left my father before in the past, and things weren't as happy as they could be, I guess you could say. So it was really difficult for me and for my brother and for my father. My father had already been struggling with some mental health issues. The last time my mother had left he was admitted to a psychiatric

hospital and received a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder, which is marked by issues with trust and explosive bouts of anger and aggression. And so when my mom left for good this time when I was 10, and my brother was 11 or 12, it kind of just I guess you could say crushed my dad and, and, in a way crushed me too. It was just hard to comprehend and swallow that this woman who I loved so dearly would just leave and not really provide much explanation or much comfort or resolution or any kind of plan for what was happening. It was just, “well, I’m leaving, good-bye. I love you very much but I got to go,” and it was more or less just like that. So my dad fell into a good bit of depression and lifted out of that, at times, by great anger, and resentment towards my mother and her new boyfriend, and so from 10 to probably y’know, 16, 17, 18, it was marked by this kind of resentment towards my mother and my dad going through periods of greater depression and [coughs] lesser depression and never really recovering. It was very uncomfortable and I did my best to avoid that kind of negativity and the hurt from the abandonment and that fear of y’know, what’s my dad gonna be like today. And, again I was never a victim of any physical abuse, and I wasn’t threatened, but I didn’t feel really safe with him, or that comfortable. Because it was just unpredictable. Y’know, sometimes he was great and loving, but other times distant or detached or withdrawn or checked out or angry and very unhappy.

So I found that—when I received out first computer in 1990...I guess it was 1997/98 when I was 10, right around the time my mom left—that was a great diversion—and I had always loved video games and escaping into those worlds and entertaining myself in that way. I really never had a problem playing alone and so video games were very effective for me. But the computer was neat, it was new, it was fun, it was a Mac Power PC as I recall. When we got the internet when I was 11 or 12. This was after my mom had left and y’know kind of settling into this life that I had, which wasn’t terrible. I should add that I lived with my grandma, and my grandma was always very loving, and very supportive, and she was the balance to my dad. And she was nothing but a positive force in my life and she really kept us grounded and kept me grounded and feeling safe. But when we got the internet, in probably yeah ‘98/’99, and I was 12 or so, it didn’t take me long to find pornography on the internet. I found this as an escape as well and very effective in kinda relieving any kind of, ah, doubt that I had or uncertainty or need for excitement or something pleasurable, an answer, whatever you might call it. And you know, I had, there’s not filters, there was no monetary software and my dad didn’t go to any lengths to anything like that, so it was just a free for all. I could do whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. Of course this was America Online back then, so y’know I had an hour to do it before I had to get off or y’know the charges would go up and getting online was a challenge sometime, but that’s another story I suppose.

But, starting off with heterosexual pornography on the internet, I quickly found that I preferred homosexual pornography more so. And I found that more exciting and more engaging and I wanted to see that more. Now back then I didn’t really know about Google. I don’t know if they had Google in ‘98, or search engines or ways to find this material. So a lot of this was just trial and error, and for these websites, um, for homosexual porn, gay porn, “boys” was a word that was used a lot. So I would pretty much type in web addresses that I thought would result in

pornography and a lot of searching this way and links to this and that...I'm going on at quite a length here, can I continue?

KM: No, please, absolutely, absolutely continue!

A001: Okay, sure. [laughs] And so ... yeah following these links and following these sites for these homosexual porn sites, and searching for "boys," it wasn't long until I found boys, children on the internet in sexual scenarios on these pornography sites. And so I was 12 years-old when I saw child pornography for the first time. And that was similar to seeing pornography for the first time, confusing and strange and, ah, risky and exciting and interesting and a whole mix of these emotions in one. And of course very arousing too for me. That had a, a real draw to me, so I did my best for the following weeks and months to, to access this material as much as I could, but before long the sites that I was using were taken down and that was the end of my access to child pornography for a time. Now my brother had gotten into smoking marijuana, smoking weed, probably around 13 or 14, and the people he hung out with were into that. And so it wasn't long before I was into that, as he introduced me into getting high. And that proved to be a very effective escape as well. Very stimulating and very kind of dreamy and it made the other kinds of escapes, like video games and other things that I was into, music, much more appealing and I loved it. I loved getting high. My friends and I, when I was 13, we started getting into that, into drugs and smoking weed, and buying drugs, and doing as much as we could to get into that. And so, ah, ... by 13 I had, had these alternate interests that were illegal and secret and, uh, very effective at, I don't know what else to say besides "escape." It was just what worked for me. It kept me I guess feeling safe, like I had some kind of predictability in my life, or something that I could chose, something that I could control. And all the while, maintaining a very pleasant appearance on the outside. I was always very intelligent, and very good with social skills, and polite and good in school, and didn't really cause any problems for the most part.

My pornography usage and sex on the internet took a bit of a different route after I couldn't really find children on the internet anymore and I relied more on what I could find in that regard, which were text stories of children having sex and child pornography in a text format. And so I relied on that kind of material as I moved on to 13 and 14. But that really all took a back seat, including the drugs, when I fell in love. I met my first girlfriend when I was 14 and I was just really enthralled and totally infatuated with this girl who was in my grade. And I found that that was something that I really wanted to pursue and really felt strongly for, more strongly than I have ever felt for anything before and, really, since. And, over time and getting to know her and her friends, she accepted me and she was willing to be with me, and that was very special to me. Ah, I can remember having her in my room for the first time, and holding her hand for the first time at 14 and crying with her and just feeling so special and so accepted—and loved and honored to have this girl, who was willing to be with me. And as I look back at my life now, older, I can appreciate how much I wished to have a woman in my life who loved me and accepted me. And this girl did, and I loved her very much too. And so we were attached for a number of years from the ages of 14 onward, up until university. So as I met this girl and, and got to know her better and wanted to be with her, I wanted to be the best I could. You know what I mean, so I stopped smoking weed, stopped getting high, smoking cigarettes, and my

pornography use—I'm guessing I just didn't have much of an interest in pornography that much anymore because I was so drawn to this girl, but I know that I didn't give it up. I never went cold turkey, with no pornography, that was always a presence in my life. As the years went on and you become more familiar with a person, you lose the infatuation and the love kind of evolves and the relationship evolves, right? So years passed, and my devotion isn't as burning as it once was and so I started getting high again at 16 or 17, and didn't exactly cause a rift in the relationship, but it just wasn't what it was, as it was before. It was something else though and that was okay.

My pornography use got out of hand and evolved when I was 17 and my dad gave me a webcam. He was on Yahoo Messenger and I had a friend who was on Yahoo Messenger and so I didn't really think much of him being on Yahoo Messenger other than maybe trying to meet some people because he had tried to date here and there, very sporadically. But when I found that my friend was on Yahoo Messenger as well, I got a better idea of what goes on Yahoo Messenger. And it turned out that back in 2001/ 2003 Yahoo Messenger was really the Wild West of sex chat rooms and webcam cybersex. So after just the slightest nudge from my friend as to what could happen on here, I discovered for my own that anything you wanted to talk about, view, access, as far as sex and pornography, was there for the taking on Yahoo Messenger in 2003. So now armed with this webcam and unlimited amount of men who were willing to talk about sex with children, provide me with images of sex with children, child pornography, and what's more actual minors, children who were on their webcam, masturbating and exposing themselves on their webcam, the floodgates were, more or less, opened, and [I] rediscovered how much this material appealed to me at 17 and 18 years old. So that became, more or less, a daily pursuit and provided an outlet for my sexual urges, I guess you could say. My girlfriend and I were never really that sexually active, and I felt that she wasn't interested in sex: she didn't really have any kind of sexual desire. She couldn't orgasm, period. And so for me this material on the internet and on the computer, this was what I was entitled to use because I didn't have any other sexual outlet.

I graduated high school, not at the top of my class, but probably y'know a B+, 3. something...3.2, 3.4, and was the vice-president of my class for 3 years where I went to high school. Very popular, very well-liked, very well-regarded. I had plenty of friends, went to the prom, good times, as I said graduated high school, got accepted to Penn State right out of high school and attended my satellite local campus. I entered the Psychology program, although my dad did his best to dissuade me from doing so because, according to him, there is no money in it. There is no money in therapy, in psychology, and please do anything else, take it from me [tape cuts off] I should add that my dad worked as a psychotherapist in a prison, treating sex offenders! He had gotten his degree as an adult and was a practicing psychotherapist when he was working. Now, he didn't have a job consistently after the divorce, maybe for about half the time, the other half the time he was unemployed, but when he did work he worked at prison with sex offenders. But I didn't want to hear it because that's really what I was really interested in. The human condition, and y'know, motivations, and psychology and human behavior—and so that's what I went to study at Penn State. I started at Penn State in 2008.

Um ... at this point, I had never had a relationship with a man. My bisexuality was something that I accepted and understood but never expressed. So I suppose I should back up, ah, in that I knew I was attracted to men when I was 12. I can remember seeing my classmates and being attracted to classmates and admiring certain ah, people I might see on TV or people in musical groups and thinking “that’s an attractive man, that’s an attractive boy.” And that never bothered me. Never, never caused me to feel any different or any defective or strange or odd or that I would be shunned for this. No I suppose I never believed that ... but I never much thought about it, but I did believe it because I never expressed this to any of my friends or family that I had an interest in men or males or that I liked girls and boys. Ah, but to me it was irrelevant, there was no need to bring it up because it was irrelevant. Now the guys who I would see in school, who I would like to get to know better or maybe date, I would never bring it up to them because I believed that it was very [clears throat] unpopular and unaccepted in my school, which is was. Ah, and so I didn’t wish for my social status to be compromised by announcing something as severe as I was attracted to men too. And so while it never caused me any personal discomfort, I did understand that it wasn’t exactly a welcomed gesture in my town, in my growing up, in my circle of friends. I am thankful in a way that I never had any kind of ideas or influence from the outside that I was defective, or that there was something wrong with me, and I suppose I credit that for not having a religious upbringing. Religion never played, ah, any role in my upbringing. I was baptized, and I went to church maybe once or twice, [coughs] but I guess I credit that to my dad who had [laughs]—I don’t know if he had belief in much at all, but Jesus or any other kind of supernatural beings was not included in that. And I thank him for that and I feel that it allowed me to have an open mind and not be restricted in any kind of pre-determined thoughts or prescribed values. And I mention that because I never had any turmoil as to being attracted to men.

But as I’m 18 and I am graduating school, it’s more on my mind. And especially now that I am on the internet with these other men, masturbating on webcam, and potentially meeting all these other people that I could be hooking up with, having sex with, meeting, um, it started to become a little more pressing now, that I’m 18 and wanting to have sex with a man, wanting to have that experience. Um, so I came out to my friends and my girlfriend, just at—it was on Facebook I think, or Myspace. There’s a section in there “what’s your sexual orientation?” So I changed it from “not listed” to “bisexual.” And there was a hubbub over that in the following day where all my friends were like “hey, what’s the hell this about? Are you serious? What are you talking about?” I was like, “yah I like guys, I like girls. That’s pretty much it. I never actually been with a guy,” and that relieved my friends. They were more or less pleased to hear that, that I never crossed the line. But really after a day that was it, nobody really cared after that. And it was maybe a little disappointing ‘cause I was hoping for perhaps more attention, but no they just kind of dropped it and nobody really said anything about it after that so it was no big deal. Now my girlfriend, she was supportive about it, she didn’t want me to cheat on her of course while we were in the relationship, un, and I saw that very differently, being selfish as I was, that “well you are my girlfriend, I love you. I would just be having sex with a man. I wouldn’t necessarily be in a relationship or have any feelings there, I would just be having sex with him,” but she didn’t quite agree. And, looking back on it now, I can see it a little differently, maybe a bit more from her perspective.

So I go to university, still in my home town, still hanging out, getting high with my usual friends, still preoccupied with pornography on the internet and [chuckles] my girlfriend. We were getting a little more distant now because of interests truly are elsewhere, my interests are with getting high and hanging out with my friends and partying on the weekends. As I turned 18 and 19, we started drinking. My home was a bit of a haven, I suppose you could say, safe haven for teenagers hanging out and wanting to get high and get drunk, because there was very little supervision. My grandma was there, but ... and she kind of knew what was going on but she was kind of at the attitude: "You're at the house, you're not hurting anybody, who cares?" And when my dad did live there, because he had moved to Florida for a period and then came back to Pennsylvania for a period, and then moved back to Florida and then back to Pennsylvania, so he was always kind of "is he here this month or is he not?" When he lived there too he kind of was just checked out. He didn't really care what was going on in the attic, he was just watching TV on the first floor. And so yah, we would get drunk on the weekends and have parties and have a grand old time, ah, sitting around smoking cigarettes, smoking cannabis, and getting drunk and wasting time. Ah, but you know it was fun at the time, and at 18 and 19 I wasn't really considering much what I was doing with my life, just what felt good at the time. So that's pretty much how life went up until 20 and the first two years of college go without a hitch and not much accolade or much to really say about it than just streaking by and getting it done. So I started the process of moving to the main campus of Penn State and moving out for the first time, getting my first apartment.

Ah, as, I guess, the novelty of going to college wore off from the first semester. Those last three semesters at the satellite campus before I moved, I was really ... I was getting worse. My habits were accelerating; and my bad decisions were accelerating. I would go to class and I would leave campus immediately, immediately so that I could drive back home as quick as I could and get high, get some pizza, and probably view some pornography, although not always. Usually it was just getting high and playing video games as much as I could before the next class. Sometimes it was only three hours until the next class and I could have stayed there and met some people, got involved in the campus, read in the library. But instead I drove home as quick as I could, got high, played some video games, only to make the half hour drive back, two hours later, so I could attend the next class and get that over with, before I could get back to what was really important: getting high, getting on the internet, and playing video games. And so I kind of knew that this was not the right way to go and that I was really short-changing my life, but I was more concerned with getting high and the physical pleasures of what I was doing. So in a way I look back on it now and I did squander some of the opportunities I had at the university, and to be more involved and do more things for myself, but I made the decisions I made.

When I was 20, I moved to university with my girlfriend. I was honored she moved with me, and with my other good friend. We all moved into a townhouse together off campus and that was a really special time for me. I was finally free of the influence of my father, from any kind of negativity or judgment there or unpredictability, and I finally had my own place. Accountable to no one. And that was really special to me. In addition to that it was just a beautiful area, and at a new university campus with so much going on, so much space, so much diversity, and ... the appeal of something new and of something exciting and something—something new I could get

into. So I really enjoyed living there and having my girlfriend with me ... and it was very nice, but really not much had changed. Y'know, the scenery had changed but I still had my bong, and my pipes, and my drugs, and I still had my computer ... which my dad had bought me a new computer, which was I guess a real solace, a real comfort—when I went to the store and he bought me that computer—because I knew then that I would not have any interruption in my habit, in my pornography usage, in my cybersex, and viewing child pornography. There would be no interruption. In fact, I had a brand new medium to do it in, it was online. So that was really appealing to me because I still hadn't developed a proper sexual relationship with my girlfriend because I was more involved in getting high and using pornography. And so college went by much in the same fashion that my first two years went by: initially being involved in the campus and being excited by the new prospect and then just retreating back to the safety of my cave, of my little hole, in my little apartment, in my little corner of State College, and getting high and isolating and playing video games.

I had my first sexual encounter with, well proper sexual encounter with a man then. Ah, I should, I suppose, add that I had a brief sexual encounter with one of my friends on his 18th birthday, but it was, ah, just very brief, we just had some hand to hand contact, I guess you could say. And that was the first time that I really had any kind of same-sex contact besides with my brother when I was child. And so I appreciated that very much and I enjoyed it very much but half-way through he became very guilty and asked me to stop doing what we were doing because “what would his family think?” And so I thought that was very strange. “Who cares what your family thinks?” was my attitude, but I suppose he had a bit more of a family presence in his life. Anyway that was when I was 18, but I had my first real encounter with a man when I was 20, after finding out about Craig's List. I suppose I found out about Craig's List from some sensationalized news story about someone getting hurt or taken advantage of through a Craig's List ad, which I understand happens, but I also understand that it is much more the exception, not the rule. And so I found out about this website where you can meet--men who wanted to have sex and not really have to work through a relationship or do anything difficult, you can just have sex with them. And so I found that appealing. And I met a much older man through Craig's List who was interested in being with a with somebody ... he didn't really care who it was, he just wanted to be with somebody. And it seemed that our interests aligned a bit, not in the interest in children, but other interests and things we wanted to do with each other. And so one day when I was 20 and my girlfriend was at work I met this man at his hotel and we had sex, we had sexual contact not so much sex, and, ah, after I had climaxed I pretty much ran out of there. Y'know, I threw my clothes back on and didn't literally run, but I was certainly very, very eager to escape and get the hell out and get as far away from this dude as I could because I couldn't ... immediately couldn't stand the smell of him, couldn't stand to be in the same room as this guy.

On the way home just, just great, great grief and regret and remorse over what I had just done because my girlfriend had told me explicitly that “I don't want you doing this. If you do, do this, it's over for us. I'm, I'm ... It's over. You will have cheated on me and that's really all there is to it.” And she had no idea what I was doing and what I had been planning and what I had just done. So driving home now, knowing that I have to go pick her up shortly, y'know, wondering what the hell have I done? Why would I do this? Especially with him, especially with this older

guy who I had no attraction to whatsoever, but who was just available. Why lower myself to this? Why settle for this? But once again I made my decisions and now had to live with them. So of course, as all things do, feelings diminish. So my regret left me, my remorse left me, and my grief and shame wore off as the days went on and the need to share with my girlfriend passed. I felt it wouldn't help her any to confess to her, it would only hurt things. So I decided to lie to her, and y'know, lie by omission, and just continue as if nothing had happened.

Um, I suppose you could say I became more daring with my pornography usage and cyber sexing and talking to minors and committing felonies with child pornography. As the months went on and the semesters concluded and things really took an upswing my girlfriend left to Europe to study abroad, and I was left alone. Albeit with a new other roommate, but he kept to himself, I kept to myself. So I really I had no kind of, ah, restrictions, nothing to keep me in check anymore. And so I spent a lot more time on the computer, a lot more time with cybersex and the need arose in me again to meet a person, a stranger more-or-less for sex. And so this time I met a person, more around my age, who also went to the university and that that was the first time I had sex proper with a man and this experience was certainly more pleasant. I didn't have anymore, any kind of great shame or guilt about it. And this was partly because we got to know each other a bit more and talked before and after the encounter. Ah, but really at its core it was just casual, shallow sex. So I left that encounter feeling alright about it until two days later when I developed some red marks on my face, red sores on my face. It started more or less benevolent, perhaps you could say, or innocent enough looking, but as the days progressed it got worse and worse, and now I have red sores all around my mouth. I've got red sores on my neck, my face is ruined, y'know, in so many words. And what else can I connect it to than this casual sex, this unprotected oral sex that I had with this man. And y'know, the panic and the grief and the incredible shame that I felt having to go to work, having to go to class with this redness all over myself, this crusty red irritation around my mouth and my chin and my neck and on my face and frantically searching on the internet for any kind of relief, remedy, a solution. What can I do? I've got herpes, I've contracted this STD. Y'know, how the hell am I going to tell this to my girlfriend when she gets back from Europe? What am I going to do with myself? I have ruined myself for the rest of my life, I'm only 21.

So after weeks of trying to do it on my own, and fix this on my own, I decide, y'know, "I give up, I gotta go get help." And so I went to the university clinic and I'm seen by the doctor and within 10 seconds he tells me, "You have impetigo." And I'm so relieved to hear this, because he is so casual about it and so definite about it. He just took one look at me and said, "you have impetigo". I said, "would you please explain?" He's like, "Impetigo is a bacterial infection. It's usually contracted by small children but for some reason you contracted it." He's like, "Here, here's some cream!" [laughs] So he gives me a tube of cream and sure enough it clears up within a few days.

KM: Wow.

A001: Yah, so it was a very close encounter with STDs and unprotected sex and taught me a very valuable lesson about the need to use condoms and have safe sex and, ah, to be safe. But it reminds me now that it wasn't my first STD scare. I had an unprotected sexual encounter with a

girl who my brother had invited over before I moved to state college, so I was like 20, and she came over and she performed oral sex on me. It only lasted for a very brief period but I found out afterwards that she was a needle-user and I became very afraid and scared that I just had unprotected sex with a needle-user and maybe I have HIV. And so that was the first instance of me having real panic and uncertainty over what I had just done. Ah, but after getting tested I found out that I was in fact negative and that was a great relief for me. And so during this period of relief and new-found cleanliness, or so I suppose, that's when I met the guy who was my age, that went to school, and had sex with that kid, that guy. He was 18. Then I put myself in the same situation again! Mere weeks later I'm now in another situation where I potentially have an STD, and the incredible shame I felt over that, and the stupidity that I felt over that. So while I was dodged of having herpes, I did in fact contract genital warts from him, HPV. And that was real. So I wound up going to a Planned Parenthood at y'know, age 21 or so and having acid placed on my genitals so that we could burn the warts off. And, uh, y'know, a lot of shame there too and a lot of guilt and embarrassment and remorse and doomsday-ing about how am I ever going to enjoy sex with anybody because I've got, y'know, warts on my penis now. But, y'know, having lived with it for years, uh, I find out now that it is much more common than expected and in fact the warts don't stay. They, uh, many times they go away and I have been fortunate not to have to deal with constant warts. But yah that was an instance of, you know ... I did pay for it. Y'know, I did have unprotected sex with somebody and this is what happens. These things are real and I'm not invincible. I'm not the exception.

So ... my girlfriend came back home and we finished out our degrees. We were getting ready for graduation and it's time to leave because there's really nothing left to do in State College right after you go to school? Not the case. But that was my thinking: it's time to move and I don't need to be here anymore, let's move on. So what I am going to do? Perhaps move out west and make something of myself and get a job, or go to the big city and do something great? No. How about move back home to my old neighborhood and go back and be among my friends who never left the neighborhood, and we can continue partying and getting high and getting drunk and I can have my nice safe little area back. So that's exactly what I had decided to do. My girlfriend decided that she was going to move back home as well and get back on her feet and I guess plan. And I suppose I had this similar idea but, uh, really I just wanted to be safe again and back to my predictable, small life. And so as we were planning with each other that we were going to move back home, I pitched to her that "I think it's time we break up because we've never dated anybody else, it's been seven years now, from 14-22. I don't want to get older and resent you or me for never having dated, never having played the field, never having tried, uh, other things. And so y'know what, I think we should split ways. We'll remain friends of course and maybe we will get back together in the future. But as for now, let's, let's branch out, let's let each grow." And so this is what I told her. But in reality I just wanted to have sex with other people. I didn't want to be chained to this girl and have her holding me back from all the great sex I could be having with other people because she is holding me back. And so without telling her this part of it, of course, she agreed. And she said, "Yah, I think that's a good idea. We probably should do that and let's branch out. I do love you but perhaps it's run its course." Really at this point it had. We weren't the same. And we got into more arguments and I began to resent her and treat her in ways that I would never have believed that I would've spoken to her

when we had first fallen in love. So I cried a lot as the separation approached. Y'know, we had a date, June 3rd, right around there, when our lease was up and we were to move back home. We had a date for our break up, and so this date looming in my head, every day was extremely painful. And I would cry on the bus, I would cry in my car, I would cry going to sleep, I would cry playing videos games after seeing something beautiful and thinking about the loss I'm about to endure and how this woman who does love me is going to leave me and I am going to leave her. And just being very torn up about it, and crying, with my girlfriend. But she never cried. She never cried with me. She felt, for me, and I know she loved me, but I always thought it was strange that she never cried. But I look back on it now and wonder how much of me was getting what I deserved, yah know? What, was I setting up the circumstances that I felt I felt deserved, that I needed to push this woman away, from me, like my mom eliminated herself from my life? Maybe I didn't deserve the love that I knew I had from this girl and so I created a circumstance where I am going to be denied and I am going to be abandoned again.

At any rate we did break up and we did move back home, to the old hometown. My grandma was down the street. And I see her. My friends were around and we started partying again and I was, I had my own apartment this time and I was the grand host to whatever, whenever. I was the only one who had my own place and so I was the master of ceremonies. And y'know, if you wanted to get high let's go to...that's funny, I was about to say my name! [laughs] Lets go over there. Hey we're going to get drunk tonight let's go over here; hey we can go to this guy's place before we set off for the rest of the night. So, you know, I resumed my role of leader of our group of losers. I did get a good job, though. I used my psychology degree and I started working as a TSS and that is a Therapeutic Staff Support. And in this role you are assigned a mentee, which 9 times out of 10 is a child, and in most cases they have behavioral disorders, well in all cases they have behavioral disorders. And I was assigned a child with autism so that I could shadow this kid in school and make sure he is staying on task, staying out of trouble, and forming proper social skills. Now I had gotten this position as a reference from my girlfriend's sister who also had a psychology degree and who recommended to me: "well, hey, I work here and they pay good, and you could use your degree," --which I was insistent upon--that I use my degree. And I said, "yah let's go for it." Now I always say that I did not intend on getting around children, of course I had a fascination with children, I had been viewing child pornography for seven years ...10 years off and on, but I didn't know if that would be entirely accurate. I'm sure that when this girl brought this idea to me that certainly raised interest in my head that "Hey, I could be around kids all day, great!" Did I exactly have plans to abuse a child, I did not, but I'm sure that I did find it exciting at some level.

So I start working at a middle school in the year that I graduated university. I am living at home, in my own apartment and I'm still getting high and I'm assigned a 12-year-old male. And I'm in class with this 12-year-old male every day, Monday through Friday. And It's a really pleasant job; the kid, he's, he's very pleasant and polite. And he has his challenges, he was non-verbal, but he was more or less good functioning. And I felt very good about the role and I took great pleasure being a professional and writing reports and using my degree and the esteem of having a real job that paid great and I'm feeling good. I'm single now and I kind of feel there's some opportunity there to meet new people, although I'm really not making any efforts at doing so.

Being around, uh, children all day was gratifying for me and really not in a sexual way initially, but just in that I appreciated having younger people around me that admired me because, while my client was autistic, the kids that he was working with were not behaviorally challenged, so they liked hanging out or talking to the older guy. “He’s like the cool TSS, he’s funny, he’s personable” and I enjoyed having that kind of attention from this age group. Now of course there was objectification going on there and I couldn’t ... I would be lying to say I could separate my sexual interests in children from these children that were around me, but I didn’t abuse the privilege. I felt anyway—I felt that I could keep those two things separate in my actions, and in my thoughts ... not so much. So I wound up getting fired from the first position when I did overstep boundaries and I wound up texting one of the youngsters and my supervisors found out about that, and it wasn’t sexual texting, but it was a conversation and really there’s really no need for me to be talking to a 12-year-old anyway. But I was released from that first position and went through a period of unemployment where it was very difficult for me, ah, because you know finances and it was really tough having to pay bills and rent and all that with no income.

So I went on unemployment for a good 8 months and went into a bit of a funk, there, especially towards the end. I got into depression and feeling worthless and feeling aimless and useless and knowing that I have such preoccupations and such habits, this pornography use every day and the great shame that goes with every climax, and every ... encounter ... with this material and knowing that it’s wrong and knowing that I’m wrong and I’m abnormal and I’m deviant and that I have to keep this secret and what if people knew and what if people found out. And the purges over the years of swearing I’ll never do this again, deleting everything on my computer and throwing away my webcam, cutting my webcam cord with scissors and throwing it in the trash only to go back to the store days later and get a new webcam or go back on the website, reinstall the program to download more pornography and do the cycle all over again. And the excitement, and then the climax, and the release, and then the shame, and then the dormant period and then the excitement again and repeating this for years. Then knowing I’m doing nothing with myself and getting high, every day, and I’m failing, I’m not using my potential. And I have such gifts and I’m so intelligent and I am young and I’m doing nothing with myself. And just going further into my escapes. And so finally I find a job ... in January of 2010 and I’m back. I’m in the classroom again, I’m a professional again, I’m using my degree, I’m a TSS, I’m helping this youngster. But of course my habit’s as strong as it’s ever been. It’s only gotten worse; it’s never really gotten better. It only really goes in one way until you, until life makes you change I suppose. And so life made me change.

In March 2010 I was at work when I received a phone call from the police and they told me to come home, your house has been broken into. And it was very shady and suspicious from the beginning and I knew something was up. And so I asked some questions: how did they get in? ... and there’s a period of silence as I hear some talking, some in the background, and they come back on and say they broke they door in. Well, what did they take? More conversation, more pause. You need to come back home. Well I’m really not sure... [tape goes out] [laughs] Perhaps we can edit that.

KM: No its okay. I can. Don’t worry.

A001: Thank you! “You need to come back home.”

“Well I don’t see why, my house has been broken into, I’m not sure what I can do. You’re the police and you’re there already.”

“You need to be here.”

And so I make the arrangements to leave work early and I knew that the jig was up. That’s it’s time to face the music and that my house had been broken into, that I was being arrested for my activities on the computer and on the internet. And so I arrived at home and there was a large white van out front and one or two police cars out front and I park in the drive way. And as I climb my stairs there’s a battering ram outside the door, that much they had not been lying about, the door had been broken in. And as I walk into my kitchen there are six or seven police officers walking back and forth and collecting this and that. And getting my drug paraphernalia in a box and taking my computer out to the van. They all kind of stop and look into the doorway, as I appear in the doorway. And then there’s some scrambling to, ah, to interview me and take the first steps with me as to what’s happening. And who’s going to talk to me? What’s going to be said? And I sit down and y’know, I was aware enough to know that the less I say the better. And so I answer some very basic questions, but as it got to anything about sexual material or anything about pornography I told them that I am not comfortable answering any questions, to which one officer was very unhappy with that answer. But, ah, without having any hard evidence of any child pornography or any material like that they arrested me on the grounds of my drug material, which I had a very small amount of marijuana, because I was so broke I didn’t have the money to buy large bags, but I had paraphernalia and sure I was guilty of that. And then mere minutes later they did their forensic search in their van and found plenty of child pornography on my computer.

Now up until this point I had soothed myself and at least cautioned myself that: well, I won’t be caught because I don’t save any of this stuff. Yeah, I’ll download it but I’ll delete it and its gone. Or I’ll just stream it, because, to those who don’t know, this material can easily be found on the internet, on sites where it’s just stream-able, you can press play and you’ll get a video of this illegal material or these photos that you see you just ... y’know you click a thumbnail and there it is. So to my ... naive mind, by accessing it this way, and not downloading and saving it, well it’s not saved on my computer so like I’m not, I’m not trackable. But as I went to the jail, the local jail and holding office, I was...it was explained to me that one of my webcam contacts, who I had been webcamming with the month prior, who I believed was an 18-year-old male from Maine, ah, was actually a New Hampshire state police officer undercover, looking for people like me doing the things that I was doing. And so when I was webcamming with this individual and masturbating on my webcam, ah, exposing myself, ah, this person asked me “what are you looking at?” cuz we had met on a site that had this material on it. And so I wound up transmitting some images of child pornography to this person. So I was arrested in 2010 and I was released a day later after my family bailed me out. And of course, y’know, a huge crisis. And it brings everyone together and my mom comes out of the woodwork. And whereas as she wasn’t really a presence in my life up to that point, now she’s much more active and y’know, I appreciate the support. And I went to re-hab the day ... a few days afterwards, to a drug re-hab to

account for my marijuana use at the advisement of my lawyer, my attorney who said this would be good for your sentencing and it would look good for you to go to rehab and get some mental health treatment. And so I went to that rehab, but it wasn't a good fit. And I went to another rehab in Florida and that wasn't a good fit. But then I finally wound up at a rehab outside of Philadelphia called the Keystone Extended Care Unit and that's a center for sexual compulsion and trauma. And so it was there where I finally found a good fit to talk about everything that I had been doing, and do a lot of soul-searching and a lot of crying and a lot of getting to know myself better. And it was there where I was informed that I'm a sex addict, as they put it. And I had a hard time dealing with that because in my mind who doesn't like sex, who wouldn't be ... who wouldn't have sex all the time if they could? But when they showed me that how much it had an effect on my life and how it's interfered with my life so severely and how I really haven't been able to control it with all the purging and then re-engaging, well I suppose I was a bit more convinced of that.

You know, I, I think should I remember that this is an interview about LGBT and my role in that. And so I suppose my role in that does have a lot to do with secrecy, and I can never say that I was a "proud bisexual man" [end of one hour tape] because I was always doing things very much in private anonymously on the internet. I, when I would have cybersex with these men, I wouldn't show my face. We were just using each other's bodies. I didn't feel comfortable being bisexual openly. I don't think that I had any inner turmoil as I had said previously, but I never was really out. I didn't hide it and my friends knew it, but I was never really out, I never pursued it. And so the draw that I had towards men could never really be separated from the shit I was doing on the internet. And so my ideas about sex and about love and about relationships and about men and women were very warped and very shaped by anonymous cybersex and pornography and exploitation and objectification of children and adults. And so I had a very warped and odd attitude towards sex and relationships and just viewing sex with a man as an end, not a product of a relationship or of building trust with somebody and expression of love. But instead just sex. And could I love a man? I don't know. Could I love a woman? I believed so. But at the time of my arrest I didn't have any kind of leads in that regard. I didn't have a girlfriend; I didn't have a boyfriend. And I would make some minor advances to meet a guy. I would go to like the gay club but I wouldn't stay. I might go to the parking lot and then leave because I wasn't sure and I didn't feel right and I would talk myself out it like "nobody's there anyway. And nobody's there that I would want to meet anyway." So I never really explored that or maybe truly accepted that part of me and wondering "Am I bisexual? Am I gay?" and not wanting to be gay. Knowing that I don't want to be gay. I didn't want to be gay because that would make me apart, that would set me apart, that wouldn't allow me to still be normal in my head. If I was gay and I didn't...and I wasn't able to be with a woman that wasn't normal for me. So I always wanted to keep my foot in that other realm of men and women, of the sexual fetishes with men. I prefer to have sex with a man but I want to fall in love with a woman. So that's like, that's my head, that's my idea, that's my attitude as I am going into prison.

I'll back up to that and tell you a bit about my first boyfriend. I got out of rehab after six weeks. Addressed all of these sexual issues, all these mental health issues and felt great! I felt recharged and I felt optimistic and I felt like I am ready to live a different life. At this point it was still a

state charge against me for the possession of this child pornography and my lawyer assured me that on sentencing day, two days after my release from rehab, “it’s going to be more or less digestible in that you’re probably going to get probation, you might get house arrest, and you might have to serve a few months in prison. You might but I wouldn’t even count on that.” So with this attitude in mind I get to the court house and the municipal court house, just in my little town ... are we doing good on time? Do you have any feedback?

KM: Well we are at an hour in the recording...

A001: wow!

KM: if you can believe it or not. What time is it? That I don’t know.

A001: Right now it is 1:16.

KM: I do have a class that I have to teach but I don’t want that to interfere with this. So I really should kind of leave the area around 1:30 at the latest.

A001: Okay.

KM: Now we could...well you’ve got to be exhausted!

A001: [laughs] almost!

KM: You have been talking for an hour. So we could stop now and pick up another time or we could continue for another 15 minutes. Do you have a preference? Or we could stop here. It’s totally up to here. Certainly an hour and your history y’know is rich with things people can learn from y’know in the future. So I don’t know if ... it’s up to you. This is your history.

A001: Right.

KM: What else would you like to share with the future I guess is kind of the question that I would ask.

A001: I could finish up in 15 minutes, but it would be a rushed version...

KM: I am sorry about that...I am very sorry.

A001: Hey I suppose it’s my fault but I could have asked you initially what are we looking at here. Did you want an hour? Did you want a half hour?

KM: well I was hoping for an hour, so we are good! But I don’t want to cut you off, I don’t want to cut your story off.

A001: Yah well I also don’t want to give you something that’s unmanageable. Who wants to listen to a two-hour story like this?

KM: But it should be a complete story.

A001: Yah. I don’t know I could finish in 15.

KM: Go ahead.

A001: Okay so I get to my sentencing for my state offense. When I sat down with my lawyer in the basement police area with my mom and my aunt and my grandma there and I am informed that there has been a disaster. “That your charges went federal and I am sorry but you are gonna have to do five years minimum in prison. And I am going to do everything I can for you, but that’s just how it’s going to be. You are going to go today and I will be in contact alright?” So, the dread y’know of course that washed over a person or washes over me I should say, I can’t say I can’t speak for anybody else. So there is a great deal of dread. And so began what would become a 3 ½ period of incarceration in the federal system. And I could go on and tell you about the different experiences in prison but y’know, let’s bring it back to my experience as a bisexual man. In prison certainly there is an opportunity for sex and for anonymous sex and getting into those kinds of shenanigans, but I found that when I got to...six institutions later when I got to my “home prison” as they call it, where you will be spending the most of your time, I met a lot of good people, really good people like myself who had a secret life on the internet and who had an education and friends and family and girlfriends and boyfriends but who made the decisions online and who wound up paying for them. I met a man there who was few years older than me and we became very close. And through talking to me and through developing a relationship with me, he became comfortable enough to come out and admit to himself and others that he’s ... I thought that was cool and I was very honored to help him with that and we wound up being together, as close as we could be in prison where you are supervised. You are not allowed to hold hands or hug or be intimate. We did our best, we really did [laughs]. And although prison was a time of pain and of hardships he was a great resource and a great light and a great balm there to me and I felt maybe for the first time what it was like to be more or less like a normal relationship. What’s more, with a man! And I didn’t feel guilty about it I didn’t feel bad about it and we were out and people knew we were together and I truly did love him. I loved him very much. When we had to part ways finally, when it was time for me to move on to another institution it was very emotional and very hard to leave him. And we cried a lot and we were able to kiss in the lobby right before they escorted me out because the corrections officers left the room quickly and we had a teary-eyed kiss and that was very nice.

So I wound up getting out of prison, like I said, 3 ½ years later somewhat recently and relocated to the area and made friends and y’know a lot of doubt on whether I would be able to reintegrate into society and would people accept me having done what I did and having such a label? No everything has been fine; it really has been fine. I really haven’t had any hardships and I’ve been accepted and I’ve made good relationships, but I haven’t been able to have a relationship, a romantic relationship, and I haven’t found that yet, with a man or a woman. And what do I want now? I am still a little ambivalent. What I know I like, though, was the guy in prison, my boyfriend and I know he could make me laugh like nobody else could. And he was just hilarious. I mean like your stomach hurts hilarious from laughing. It’s such a nice thought to have somebody like that again. Who’s like me who can be there for me and love me and make me laugh like that. And I wonder where I can ever find him again. Are people like that out there? I don’t know, but I’d love to try and find out. Can a women do that for me? I don’t...I’m really not sure. And again how much of my bisexuality and wanting to find a girlfriend, which is what I am saying now, I want to find a girlfriend—how much of that is me wanting to prove to the greater world that I’m normal, that I’m still within acceptable limits. That to my Christian...my born

again Christian mom that I'm still acceptable. How much of that is just denial of myself that I really want to be with a man and love a man and have a relationship with a man.

So y'know, you mentioned just a few minutes ago what can others learn? And I suppose through my story if you're a young person I would say be very careful with what you are doing on the internet, and I'm not just saying accessing illegal pornography. I'm saying objectifying people. I'm saying escaping into this idea of sex and lust and what that is and how that pertains to reality because it's really not reality. It's very shallow. And it's not rewarding. And it's dangerous. And I am not just saying for illegal materials and that you're going to get arrested, I'm saying it's going to warp your idea of what love is and what sex is and what a relationship is and how that all fits together. I would say to be honest with yourself, as I would like to say that I am, but perhaps in my actions I am not so sure that I am. And I'm still progressing in that regard as to who I am and what I am and what's acceptable and what's not, but I'm thankful that nowadays that there is no need to be ashamed or live in secret or hide yourself. That I don't know how prevalent discrimination is against LGBT people anymore, I don't see it in my life, I only see acceptance and I find love. I suppose the only the main message is just to trust the world and love those people around you because we do live in a place where there are ... there is so much more good around us than there is bad and there is nothing but opportunity and positivity and life around us, and to focus on that. Don't ever doubt what you can be and what you can do because it's all there for the taking. And you can do whatever you want to do and be whatever you want to be. And regardless of who you love or what you are or what somebody thinks you are. That you are great just the way you. And don't be—I suppose overall, what I've learned in my life: don't be afraid to ask for help. Don't be afraid to trust other people and to coexist with people and live with people and you'll find the remedy to your fear and the remedy to your doubts in other people. Living alone is not the way to live and there is no reason for it because those good and trusting and loving people all around you, right next to you. And thank-you for listening to my story.

KM: Thank-you for telling your story.