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Interviewee: Joanne Carroll

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: Friday November 18, 2016

Place: Joanne's home in Lancaster

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Abstract:

Joanne Carrol was born in Alberta Canada in 1940 as John Carroll. She spent the first 60 years of her life as a man, marrying twice and having two children. She worked a number of jobs throughout the country, primarily in the Air Force but also in hotel management and security. She transitioned in the 90s at around 60 years old, moved with her mother to Lancaster, and got heavily involved in trans advocacy throughout all of Pennsylvania as the president of TransCentral PA. In this interview, Joanne discusses a number of subjects relating to her experiences as a trans woman, including mental health, the transition process, and her experiences in coming out as trans to her family and friends. She also discusses issues of race, politics, white and male privilege, the current political climate (as of November 2016), and the importance of faith in her life.

BL: [My name is Barry Loveland] and I am here with Emily Armando who is our videographer today and we are here on behalf of the LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania History Project. Today is Friday November 18, and we are here for an oral history interview with Joanne Carroll. This interview is taking place at her home in Lancaster. And Joanne do we have your permission to record the interview today?

JC: Absolutely.

BL: Great. Well, why don't we start at the beginning? Why don't you tell us your – when you were born and where you were born.

JC: Well first of all, we start off my father had a gleam in his eye – no not really [laughter]. I was born in Calgary, Alberta Canada on December 9, 1940--that makes me close to 76 as I'm sitting here. Rather uneventful birth and early childhood except that when I was four or five I knew something. Didn't know what that was. A child of four or five barely has the language to describe what their favorite food is, much less be able to tell somebody, especially back in those days, that something just didn't match up. I became acutely aware of that during a Christmas event that we had at my great aunt's house. I was there with my girl cousins. And they were all dressed in pinafores and Mary Jane's and I was wearing a vest, a bowtie, and some clunky old Rogan's; they were opening dolls and tea sets and I got cannons and tractors, and as much as a four-year-old mind can process that, somehow that didn't seem right. But again, how was I supposed to explain that to anybody. Besides which I grew up in a very strong, Baptist home. Things about sex, and gender and stuff just really weren't things you talked about. But as I reflect back on those early days of my childhood, there was two other little girls in the neighborhood that were my fast friends. I mean, we were BFFs to use the parlance of today... and we did everything together. We played dolls, we did tea parties, we did all the things any three little girls would do. We walked to school hand in hand. We were inseparable. When one of

us wasn't in the mix, we felt like maybe like almost like an arm was off. So that's how tight the three of us were. There were some smelly little urchins down the street that they called boys... individually we didn't want anything to do with them. I certainly didn't, and I know Reba and Caroline didn't either. So if it was either – if the boys wanted us to play it was either all three of us or none of us. That obviously [coughs] excuse me, was my first introduction to bullying because I took a lot of heat from those boys because I would never play with them. “How come you don't play with us, you always play with those girls, you big sissy!” “I just like them better, leave me alone.” But inseparable in every way, we walked to school together, we walked hand-in-hand, I mean we hung out - we tried to make sure we got on the same dodgeball teams, I mean we did everything together.

When I was seven we moved to the United States. My father was born in Africa, my mother was born in Wisconsin, and of course I was born in Canada, and my dad decided that there was greater opportunities in the US. And so without my vote of consent [chuckles], they decided to move to, to Minnesota. Daddy didn't have a job yet, and we didn't have a place to live, so we stayed at my grandfather's farm, which was out in central Wisconsin – central Western Wisconsin. And it came time for school to start, and so I ended up going to the same two room school that my mother went to... in fact in second grade I sat in the same desk she did for second grade. Which is kind of interesting, but here I am this little bitty nothing of a kid with a Canadian accent, no physical skills that I could claim. And I got bullied more. I'm not going to say that the community was incestive, but there was relations there between one another, that they these were kids that had grown up with each other all their lives and family groupings and whatever else, and I was a total outsider, so they hid my jacket or they took my lunch or they did everything and the teachers got pretty upset with that because they were always having to find my belongings wherever they were hidden because I couldn't climb trees, I didn't know how to do that, nor did I want to. So they got tired of fetching my things. Finally, in, oh after about two months in that school Daddy got a job and found a place in Saint Paul [Minnesota], and we moved there. To tell you the bullying got any better, I'd be lying to you. I continued to get picked on, not by everybody, obviously the girls didn't pick on me because I made friends with them, but most of the boys did, in fact the kid across the street used to beat me up every day after school, every day. I think he was studying for the Olympics, because he needed a punching bag and his parents couldn't afford one. It was a very – I wouldn't tell you it was middle class, it was either lower middle class or even below that, it was quite a melting pot. And in fact, to give you quality of life, we had the city dump about a block and a half from where we lived, so that give you a picture of the kind of area it was. So I started – I went back into second grade, and of course my troubles kept on. And pretty much it was uneventful until I was about twelve. Christine Jorgenson went to Denmark as George and came back as Christine, and all the sudden some lights clicked on and I went “Oh, somebody else must be dealing with the same stuff, and there must be a way to fix this.” Again, still didn't have the language to communicate that to anybody, nor did I really feel comfortable doing that because of the environment I was in. For those that see this video at some time that are people of faith will recognize what I say when I accepted Christ when I was ten, baptized at twelve, and Daddy molested me at thirteen. That didn't make me think anything differently about myself, but it made me mad at God. Because having been brought up in a very religious experience, and always being told that God loves you, and all the sudden the person who leads you to faith, and then God, saying He is the God of Love - that didn't work out for me. And so, basically I yelled at God for fifty years.

And that comes to another part of the story. At about that same time, twelve or thirteen, I realized that if I was going to survive in the world, I had to become much like the other kids that I knew. And so I became the most macho punk you ever wanted to see. I was a good actor. If there was Academy Awards Emmy Awards and Tony's for a kid on the street, I'm your girl, I needed those. Because everyone thought I was just as much of a punk as the guys I hung with. You know, leather jackets, the rolled up blue jeans, smoking on the corner telling dirty jokes, doing all the things that the tough guys do. The upside is that as long as I hung with them, nobody messed with me because they were my peeps, they were my tribe. And nobody messed with them so nobody messed with me. So I got through high school, and after high school joined the Air Force. I had gone a semester of college and ran out of money, and the only jobs that were available were cashiers and grocery stores because it was right after Korea. And they wanted people that were not "4A," in other words fully draft eligible, took many of the decent jobs, and the idea of a career move as a cashier in a grocery store wasn't on my list, so I thought, well, I'll go in into the Air Force and take advantage of the GI bill – and never left. I was in the Air Force for twenty years after that.

BL: Were you stationed in different places, or...?

JC: Pretty much, I went to basic training in , Texas. I left there and went to Gunner Airforce Base Alabama, Montgomery, Alabama and went through technical school. And I was in a – first of all I was a medic. Second of all I was in a category called veterinary technician, and that sounds kind of confusing, it makes you think we were running animal clinics, but that wasn't it, we were doing food inspection and sanitation, they'll check public health issues, anything that was a communicable disease that could've been transmitted from animals to man, that was within our area of looking at. Plus like I said we inspected foods and the places they prepared them. From there I went to Duluth, Minnesota which was my first base, 160 miles from home. I was there from sixty to sixty-three. Went back to tech school for technician training, higher level training. And got a chance to go back there again in a relatively short period of time as an instructor, and I was the youngest instructor they ever had at Gunner Air Force base, in that school. I was there for until 1965, I survived two calls to Vietnam during that time. The third time was a charm I guess and I got tapped to go to Thailand. When I was in Thailand I was in an organization that was called the Air Commandos, which is basically the same thing as now-a-days Special Ops, and one of the things we were doing there was working in counter insurgency operations in Northeast Thailand, trying to pass new village pacification (recording 1, 09:31), trying to help the Thai people understand their government cared about them, and so we were involved in a variety of projects out in the backcountry. I could tell you more than that but I'd have to go get my gun [chuckles] – that's a joke. In all seriousness though some of that, some of the stuff we did was classified, and I don't know if the classifications on that have ever been lifted, so I can't go into detail, but what more of a macho thing to do to prove yourself than be in the Special Operations, woo! So I left there, came back to the United States to Sheppard Air Force Base. The school that I had was teaching in had moved to Wichita Falls, Texas and I went there. And basically was in ----- from sixty seven to seventy-three. I did take a break in service for a few months but stayed on active duty reserve and came back in and then from there went to Athens, Greece for three years and then finished out my career at the Air Force Academy. And twenty-one years total service.

BL: In all that time, did you feel like you were just totally like in the closet about your transgender feelings or—

JC: Of course. I can honestly tell you, Barry, that in every moment of my life from the time I became aware of what the condition might've been, I went to bed praying "God let me wake up fixed or make it go away." One of the two. I can't remember honest—in all fairness I can't tell you I remember a night that I didn't do that. So yeah it was with me every step, but I had a job to do. When I was staying at Duluth, I had met a woman and gotten married; we had two daughters together. She was an alcoholic and I'd stayed for as long as I could bear it but then I realized 'Okay pretty soon these kids are gonna be off and gone out of the home and I'm gonna be stuck with an alcoholic, I can't do that.' Plus the fact I was struggling more and more with my authentic self and when we separated and ultimately divorced, then I was seeking gender counseling at that time. But then—

BL: About what time period—

JC: That would've been 1980.

BL: Oh okay.

JC: But then my good friend denial came back, and I met another woman who I fell madly in love with, or at least I thought I did, and I thought "Ah, maybe it's just a matter of having the right person in your life, then this will go away." And two years in the marriage I recognized the fact that it was a flawed concept. We were together for, also for seventeen years. First marriage was seventeen years and a week, and the second marriage was seventeen years and two weeks. At least I got seven days better on the second one out. [Laughs] In anyhow, we were married and I had four stepchildren with her, and then we adopted a baby who happened to be the progeny of my youngest step-daughter who got pregnant as a sophomore in high school. And as a family issue and a personal issue I don't support abortion, but by the same token I don't support the idea of legislating that on anybody, it's a personal matter. In our particular case, we wanted to keep the baby, the kid that did the dirty deed wanted an abortion and we said no we can't do that. Probably the best thing I ever did, because it gave me a chance to have that experience of dealing with a baby, and in some ways I have to say vicariously I sort of felt like I was a second mommy to that little baby. In fact in a lot of ways she and I are even closer than my two biological daughters, and anybody that tells them I'll shoot (smiles) because I actually love the three of them to death. They're very accepting, they love me just the way I am. My stepdaughters will tell you they are the people they are today because of the influence I had in their life. So I wouldn't change anything because I am the product of all of my experiences, but it took me until age 59 to finally make the move and do what I needed to do. Let's see, where are we at now. [Laughs] It's a lot of ground to cover in a short period of time.

BL: Well after you got out of the military, what did you do at that point?

JC: Well, what I—when I got out of the Air Force, when I retired at the Air Force Academy, I moved to Durango, Colorado. And I was living with another woman for a while and started going to school at Fort Lewis College. I was—my undergrad is polysci, political science, with a split minor in accounting and business. The objective was to get a Master's in public administration and go into city county government, that was kind of what was on my radar. So I went to Fort Lewis College, did that and that's when I met my second wife. I was working at the time part-time in a small hundred-room Quality Inn, working as a night auditor, working eleven to seven, and I'm going to school mornings and sleeping in the afternoons. And because it was a small hotel I could do the night audit in almost nothing flat, and I had the balance of the evening

to either take a nap or do my homework. Usually the nap won out. I have a photographic memory which helps me get through a lot of things because when I see it, it sticks. Plus I read really really fast, too--I read about a thousand words a minute with about a 70-80% comprehension so I can blow through something really quick. So, did that for a period of time until the second ex of mine got married, we got married, and then living there with the two step daughters full-time. They would come home from school about the same time I was getting ready to take my evening snooze and that was not working and so I was 90% of exhausted most of the time so. Basically I stopped working and worked in construction for a while then worked in a boutique which was owned by her parents for a couple of years. And that was a huge torment cause here was all these beautiful clothes and I couldn't wear any of them. Cause I couldn't be me and do that, just wasn't gonna be on the radar. So we lived in Durango [Colorado] for a period of time. There was some issues with her ex in terms of the care he had for his two sons—she had four kids, and so we went to court, didn't do well there, the judge and the guys at, her ex's attorneys came from the same law firm to start with, so politically we lost that argument so we decided to move to Canada. Went there for six months, lived there with my great aunt and then we'd already moved our belongings to Great Falls, Montana, which was just close enough to the Canadian border that if we got the clearance to immigrate into Canada, it wouldn't have been that big of a jump. You'd think having been born in Canada I could've immigrated back easily, but the problem was that as of January 1st of 1947, Canada passed a law to declare Canadian citizenship for the first time, they never had before then. And when they created Canadian citizenship, when my dad naturalized, then I lost my claim to the dual status I had through my father and my mother, and so I would've had to gone through the same process that any other immigrant or boat person would've gone through. Had to apply to Parliament which would've been about an 18-month process, well there's only so far you can survive on just retired pay. We needed to do more than that, I had child support to pay from my first marriage. And so we came back to Montana and I worked in military clubs for a while. I was an assistant manager in an NCO [non-commissioned officer] club at Malmstrom [Montana] Air Force Base for a couple of years. My dad got really sick with a heart attack after a couple of years so we thought "well we'll go back to Minnesota and we'll be a support system for him." Worst move we could've made. The school district we picked was in the suburbs, we thought okay, we thought in the central city the girls have a better chance, the two stepdaughters at that point. It turned out to be the third worst school district in all metropolitan Minneapolis-St. Paul [Minnesota] for drugs. They were dealing drugs out of the lockers on either side of my girls and it just-we ended up going back to Montana and then I got back in the hotel business. Started—worked one night as a night auditor and it was an old, what we call a Rack System, and the owner was there, he was actually functioning as the general manager and I said "you're getting ripped off." He said "how do you know?" and I said "This is like a sieve anybody could," and he said "show me how," and I told him. "You think you can fix it?" I said "well I can't make it bulletproof but I can make a difference" and he said "okay" he said "come back and see me tomorrow." So I was night auditor in that hotel for one night and the next day I was front desk manager. [Laughs] But obviously I wanted to do more than that, I knew I had greater capabilities. Having been a supervisor in the military, and, so I knew the pathway to being a general manager you had to go through sales, well, there was a couple of girls that had been in sales directors in that property that left for husband and boyfriend reasons, and they needed somebody with stability and I guess they thought I looked like it, so. I became the director of sales for that property and eventually worked my way up to GM [general manager], and worked

as a hotel general manager there and in Idaho, and in Layton Utah, and in Texas, and in Scottsbluff, Nebraska where—which is where I transitioned. And my first girl job was here in Lancaster [PA] as a director of sales at what was then the Brunswick before it bankrupted right after 9/11. And then worked for a time too as director of sales at the, what was then the Holiday Inn up at New Cumberland [PA]. So.

BL: So take us back sort of to—

JC: Take me back to where you need to fill in, I don't care. [Laughs]

BL: Let's go back to where you kind of got to the point where you decided that "I've gotta do something, I can't just continue life as a man."

JC: Okay. Obviously, those of us that are transgender women can pretty much lay our lives on top of one another, and with nuance of difference, they're gonna appear much the same. Early onset of the feelings, furtive moments of trying to grasp that authentic self by dressing in the clothes that make you feel the most comfortable, and it isn't about the clothes, it's about feeling comfortable because what you see is—you're supporting what you feel. So it isn't a matter of cross-dressing as a fetish it's a question of being able to look in a mirror and being semi-satisfied with what you see. So, all through that later years from Idaho on, in fact even before then, I was capturing—

BL: What date?

JC: Holy hell. Early- to mid-90s. Let me back up. I told you about Christine Jorgensen. Well, obviously, anybody who is wrestling with something is gonna, if they have any kind of intelligence at all they're gonna do some due diligence. And I went on a quest of due diligence trying to find every scrap of information I could. The only thing that was out for the longest time was Rene Richard's book *Second Serve*, she was an ophthalmologist that transitioned. And there was a British army officer named Jan Morris, Army Air Force officer named Jan Morris who wrote a book called *Conundrum*. And those were the only two pieces that I seemed to be able to find any place cause they were biographical. In terms of technical materials there was, there was just a dearth. Nothing. In the military we go temporary duty a lot of places, every time I went somewhere, I went to a city library tour through their credit card catalogue looking for any scrap that was out there. And that sounds like a very tough way to go about it but then again Emily we didn't have Google back then. Today you can put 'transgender' into your Google and you can get 100 million responses on what that's about. Some that you don't want to really look at but also a whole lot in there that are informative. So it really wasn't until '92 when the internet started to come alive, when Al Gore invented it. [Laughs] That's a joke. The internet came alive in '92 and back in the day, you may even recall this Barry they had this thing called a BBS, the Bulletin Board System. And it was a very rudimentary chat program. You could communicate with people--and this is gonna be something that some of your viewers aren't even gonna know--but it was basically DOS-based [disk-operating system]; it was really crude. But you can find communities of different types. I found a trans community cause I finally figured out what the terminology was. Back then the term was transsexual, by the way I find that term abhorrent because it conflates gender and sex, and they are not related. So nonetheless I found this chatroom that had other people like me in it and obviously we had an opportunity to communicate and share feelings share experience and whatever. I made a really solid connection with a woman in Maine who was a number of years older than me who was already on transition path and of course that helped me greatly in terms of

looking, you know, out into the future as to maybe what were some of the things that I was going to need to do. I started hormone therapy in 1997. I was, let's see or was it earlier than that? No maybe '96 or '97, one of the two. I had come across a gender counselor in Salt Lake City [Utah] that I was in: Pocatello at the time, in Idaho. And it was a couple hour shot to go down to Salt Lake City and I found this guy and we talked and he recommended me for a hormone replacement therapy and also recommended me to an internist that was, had about 20 and one other trans women that he was treating at the time. So I started on hormones at some point in '97. Those moments I had trying to live in at least a few authentic moments were very oppressive, because all it did for me was make me more aware of the fact that this was not me. One of the statistics that exists until proven otherwise is that about 40% of this community either contemplates or attempts suicide. I did four times. On three of the trips that was going back and forth to Denver [Colorado] cause I had cadre of friends there and could be my authentic self and those moments I started heading toward bridge abutments. And every time I pulled away at the last minute because I just all of a sudden realized being a paraplegic and trans was not gonna work out together because being a paraplegic would prevent me from being authentic. The fourth time I was in Nebraska and to be quite frank the reason it was, that I contemplated it at that moment was because I was going through such a hard time with my second ex. She was having such a struggle and I felt like I was putting her through so much. I had the barrel of my 357 was in my mouth and I was getting ready to pull the trigger and I looked down and saw my dog looking up at me saying "mommy what are you doing?" and I realized there was nobody else around that would've heard the shot. I would've been laying there for god knows how long and my dog would be there all by herself. And she basically saved my life. So I've looked at suicide four times. That's the level of desperation I think that comes in. So very often people say "god it must've been a really a courageous thing to do." No. Courage has nothing to do with it. Desperation and the desire to survive is what it is. If it was courage it was—courage is what you do when you're having to look at gunfire. [Laughs] Desperation is what you do when you can't see any other way out. So it started on hormones in '97 I was still, like I said, struggling through all that. It was even after being on hormones that I was contemplating suicide because not that—granted we've made strides today, but the climate still isn't acceptable for somebody to be trans. And we still face a lot of biases and prejudices. We have no protections in Pennsylvania as of this date. People can be fired for being trans or for being married to the same-sex partner. So we've got a ways to go yet. And under the current national political climate, god knows where we're going, but that's maybe an issue for another conversation. But coming back to my journey, the desperation to be authentic was there and had pretty much come to a head in Idaho, I decided I finally had to tell my second wife what was going on. We hadn't slept together in a number of, since the time that the baby was born. And she had been through a very sexually abusive first marriage and so sex was not high on her list. It wasn't high on mine either cause I never really did have much of a libido, but in those times when I did—when we did have coitus it would be a situation where I had to pretend I was a female in order to enjoy it. And that's not fair to a partner that you have to use some kind of a contrivance in your mind in order to make that work, so. We hadn't been together in the same bed since 1989 at that point, this was '97, so almost eight years at that point. So when I first—[computer in back says "you've got mail"] when I first came out to her, it was a matter of relief for her. Because all of a sudden that burden was off of her. And so that moment of relief was short-lived because like three days into it she realized wait if we stay together people are gonna think I'm a le—she's a le—you know she was gonna—people were gonna think she was a lesbian. And she wasn't quite down with that concept. So we separated for a while. I stayed in Idaho she went to Texas and eventually

I went down there and by that time the hormones were starting to soften my features to some degree, starting to get a little bit of sensitivity in my breast tissue. There was a lot of things that were kind of moving forward and one day my ex said to me, she said “you know I think you need to tell your mother what’s going on.” I went “oh god.” My dad had passed away several years prior; he passed away in ’92 I think it was. Let me think, yeah about ’91 or ’92. And knowing that mom was a really strong Baptist caused me some pause and I said “you think so?” and she said “yeah she said she thinks you’re going through some kind of a male menopause,” and I went “well that’s not it,” she said “I know.” So I went and talked to her and I couldn’t have found somebody that was more supportive. Mom said “gee, why didn’t you tell me about this before,” and I said “mom you don’t understand, there’s guilt that comes with this,” she says “honey why would you feel guilty about something you were obviously born with.” And I lost it. There was not enough facial tissue in the house at that moment. Cause I think I went through two boxes cause I cried so much cause I just couldn’t believe that this woman could accept me like that. And later on I asked her, I said “mom how was it so easy for you to accept me?” and she says “you’re my child. What else would I do?” She said “if you thought it would’ve been any other way,” she says “you sell me short.” I said “I’m sorry.” And I cried again. But mom and I had always had a good relationship cause I told you already that in life how much I was bullied. The safest place I had was with her. So I stayed at home with her all the time, I learned to cook, I learned to sew, I learned to can, I learned to do all the things that other little girls do. She tried to teach me crocheting and knitting. When you have ADHD, or no ADD actually I wasn’t hyper, although there are some people that might argue that, but when you have ADD doing routine tasks is enough to make you go stir crazy. You wanna kill me, put me in a factory, make me put widgets on gizmos and just go ahead and get the coffin ready cause I’ll die. [smiles] So knitting and crocheting were the only two girl skills that I never really mastered and don’t want to even today. But anything else, I just felt, I took to it like duck to water, so. Can we shut this off for a minute? I gotta get a drink, I’m dry.

BL: Sure.

[video 1 ends]

JC: Where were we? [Laughs]

BL: [Laughs] Good question.

JC: Where were we?

BL: Well you—

JC: I was talking about my mom, I guess.

BL: Yes.

JC: As I said, in a little bit ago I was safest with her. But we were always close, incredibly close. She came to live with me when I was in Nebraska which was where I transitioned. After I told her that I was already working in a hotel in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, a little town of 21,000 people. Most of them were rednecks and those that weren’t got up in the morning and slapped the back their neck to match everybody else’s color. So it wasn’t the greatest place to transition but nonetheless I did. The hotel I was managing, the owner and I had agreed to disagree. When I was hired he promised he would put some money into the property to bring it up to match what else was in that community and never made good on his promise but yet expected the hotel to—excuse me—to

succeed. And I kept telling him “unless you wanna bring this thing up to the level everybody else is, cause it’s the dog in the, in the show, you’re not gonna, I can’t do that, I’m not a miracle worker.” And so we finally agreed to disagree. I got a severance and on the 14th of February 2001 we departed company. I got, I think about one or two months’ severance but it was enough to make the break. Well, my boy name was John, and on the 14th of February 2001 John went into a box and he was never seen again, and Joanne stepped out boldly into her life. Later on the 14th and fully on the 15th of February 2001. And what an exciting day that was. And mom was right there with me to see the transition from her son to her daughter. And I have to tell you there is a cute story that goes with that. While we were living in Nebraska, mother was going to a very conservative fundamental, non-denominational church. And I had attended with her once and had met a friend of hers. And [laughs] she—usually ... I found the excuse of still not being totally happy with god and had failed to find my place in the church at that point, and about two months into transition ...?and we met this woman in the grocery store. And mom and this woman are exchanging pleasantries, I forget the woman’s name now, but they were talking back and forth. After they’d exchanged pleasantries the woman turns and says “who’s this?” And my mom says “well that’s my daughter Joanne.” She says “oh my goodness, well I knew you had a son named John I didn’t know you had a daughter named Joanne,” she says “well they’re the same person, and I like her better.” [Laughs] So that was the level of acceptance I had from my mother; she actually I think liked her daughter better than she ever liked her son and she loved her son, so that’s the level of support I had from her.

BL: And you didn’t have any siblings, right?

JC: No, I was an only child. Mom and dad had tried to have a child after me, and mom almost died, she had a miscarriage in the seventh month and almost hemorrhaged to death. And I think she had to have like four pints of blood just to survive and so it was really touch and go. So but she survived and that brings me to another thing, that is how I came by my second name. Joanne I chose because obviously John and Joanne, from a male female standpoint they’re interchangeable in terms of their meanings. My second name is Maureen. And my mom asked me one time she said “why did you pick that?” and I said “mom you always told me that if I had had a sister or if I had been born female my name would’ve been or her name would’ve been Maureen. So in honor of you and daddy that’s why I picked that second name,” and then she cried. [Laughs] So that’s how I came by my names. Mom moved with me from Nebraska to here for my first girl job. In fact, I’ve lived in this apartment longer than I’ve lived anywhere in my life I’ve lived her now almost sixteen years. But she came here and she ended, her life ended here. And she was 92 or 93 I guess when we came, and she passed 20 hours short of 102. And I got to be a part of the last ten years of her life which I have to tell you was probably the best ten years. [chokes up] The last fifteen months she was fully bed-ridden. She was having trouble with congestive heart failure. Any time she tried to move or transition from a seated to a standing position she’d, the blood would go and I’d have to resuscitate her. I resuscitated her seven time while we lived here. So after the seventh one I said “mom you’re going to bed.” A friend of ours helped with a hospital-type bed. And when you take care of somebody at that level you take care of them from top to bottom. And I do mean bottom. And about three or four months before she passed she said “honey I’m so glad you’re a girl,” and I went “okay,” she said “if you were a boy giving me this level of care people would think it was creepy.” [Laughs] So that was the relationship mom and I had. It was always special, we laughed together, we cried together, we prayed together. I had come back to faith fully. I tell people I’m a transgender woman but I’m unapologetically a Christian and I don’t think those two

are dichotomous at all. I can have strong faith and be who I am authentically because I am fearfully and wonderfully made by Him, and those work for me.

BL: Did you end up having any surgeries as part of your transition? [She picks up a cup of coffee and takes a sip.]

JC: You know that's a question that most every one of us gets. Not everybody has surgery because it isn't about the parts, it's about what's on the inside that counts. And that sounds like I'm avoiding the question, and I'm not cause I'll answer it in a moment but surgery is not, is secondary. There's a lot of trans women that go through facial surgeries. I happen to, if you look over to the corner of that organ you'll see similarity between my mom and I. We look quite a bit alike, everyone told me that before I transitioned, I never bought it until we had a couple of pictures taken together later and I thought "holy crap, they're right." [Laughs] So I didn't ever have to have facial surgery. There's a cute anecdote I'll share with you. When I was in Nebraska working in that hotel, most of the staff knew. I wasn't making any secrets, maybe that's one of the things, the owner finally decided he don't need to have a transgender person managing my hotel. I don't care, it doesn't matter, it worked out. [Laughs] But anyhow, I got to know to girls that worked at the Scottsbluff newspaper pretty well, cause they'd come, I'd place advertising with them for the different things we were doing at the hotel. And my director of sales and my catering director, knew them very well we hung out as three girlfriends most of the time, and so they had already told them about me and they said "by the way do you have any pictures?" and I said "oh yeah I do," so I showed a picture one time and they were like holy crap. So I transitioned; well one of the things that you needed to do after you transitioned is get a name change, and so, one of the byproducts of that and it's the same almost in every state and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania it's the same, but you have to publish a notice that you're gonna do that in the newspaper. And so I was in, I had just filed a court ca—filed my petition to the court and was at the newspaper filing my classified ad and the newspaper office there was a big—*huge* room, I mean really just huge, and was wide open, there was no petitions, no nothing, was just one of those work spaces where everybody was out in the open and the two girls from advertising spied me. And all of a sudden they went "Joanne, yay!" And they come running across the room and it was hug hug hug, you know that's great you know talking and greeting each other. And they looked down and they saw my, my bust line and they said "are those yours?" and I said "well mostly." And they said, cause at that time I was wearing inserts to kinda, cause obviously the estrogens hadn't done their full job yet, and so I said, they said "well have you ever considered a boob job?" I said "well you know I really gave that some thought," but I said "in my sixties the idea of having perky boobs like Pam Anderson Lee just doesn't seem to make sense. So if I had that done I'd have to put saggy ones in." And then the three of us started laughing and the woman behind the counter literally fell out of her chair. And so here's four of us right up there in the very front of this newspaper office cracking up and [leans forward] everybody's like what in the world is going on over there? They couldn't figure it out but we just had the greatest roar it was amazing. So I mean that's a long story—so I didn't have a boob job. I saw a position or surgeon that does gender confirmation surgery and consulted with her and she told me if I wasn't gonna do it by the time I was 70 that maybe I should have second thoughts. And the reason for it is because it's so invasive that it can be a huge surgical risk. And I'd been celibate for 29 years and I don't have a sex drive of any kind. To me sex is messy. Somebody has to clean up after it's over with; so I'm not down with that idea, so I just kind of never did that because I'm comfortable in my skin and that's all that matters I don't have to think about my genitalia unless by some reason I walk naked past a full-length mirror and I hurry up and turn my

eyes away as soon as I see that. Cause it still troubles me that it's there but the fact that I had been, was a full time caregiver for my mother from 2003 on meant that I retired at 63. Had I been able to work for another four or five years I probably could've amassed the capital necessary to do it. Am I putting that on my mom? No. Because the experience with her was way far out ways whether or not I'd ever have surgery. So. But again the thing I have to leave with you, Barry, and that is surgery isn't the issue. It's all about having what's between your ears match how you feel and you live that and I think I live that pretty well. At least I hope I do.

BL: And when you came to Central Pennsylvania, did you start connecting then with the community right away? Or did you, with the LGBT—

JC: Only to a limited amount. I did go to, mom and I did go to a few, back in those days it was called Renaissance, but it's now Trans-Central PA which I'm now president of. I went to a couple of meetings and mom went with. Of course any place I took her she was the darling of the show, everybody loved mom. [Laughs] But when we came here, we came here in June and around the...Oh I guess...Mid-to-late summer we started shopping for a church home and went to a number of them and I won't call any of them by name but some of them just were just scare shows. But we went to a Baptist church that had some really good music and of course we were always, I was grown up in a Baptist church mom had always been a part of the Baptist church and so we went there. And cause they had this great Christmas music show and the music was just amazing. And so we started attending there, and one thing led to another and essentially we were in that church for eleven years. And I was living a life called stealth, which means that if anybody in that church knew they were polite enough not to say anything. And I was certainly polite enough not to challenge their biblical world-view. We were comfortable there, mom was happy there, we made good friends there, I was active in a number of ministries in that church. And we were both there until mom no longer could attend, but I was still going after that. I was involved in two different ministries there. I was in a divorce and separation recovery program and also working with a faith-based twelve-step addiction recovery program, actively in both. In both cases I think both of them helped me grow as a Christian, because I was able to more solidly connect with my faith-roots and support all the things that I knew were scriptural, but when mother passed Trans-Central PA was in the process of going through some transitions itself and no longer did I feel like I was obliged to stay there at that church so I started shopping around and now I go to First Reform UCC down in downtown Lancaster which is an open and affirming church and we have pretty much the full array of the LGBT community that goes to that church and I'm very comfortable there, and in fact I'm a vice—I'm one of the officers on the leadership team. So my faith is important to me. I read my Bible and pray every day. I'm not saying that in a braggadocious way it's just that it has that much meaning for me. Because my strength comes from Him. All the things that I do at 75 almost 76, I'm empowered to do because He gives me the strength to do it. I'm incredibly busy, as you well know because you see me about every place you go. But to give you an idea my car outside there has right now has topped 28,000miles since August a year ago. That's quite a lot. 25,000 of it's been advocacy and activism on behalf of this community. And I don't say that to be braggadocious but just to give you some idea of the scope of the work we're doing. There's very few areas of the commonwealth I haven't been to. Because there are people that are hurting, there are people in this community that are dying, some at their own hand, others because they're being murdered. In fact Sunday coming up now on November 20th we're gonna have the Transgender Day of Remembrance on the state capitol steps. And this particular year, unless the number changes, between now and Sunday, we're at 23 trans people that were murdered this last year.

Simply because they were trans. And what makes this year kind of unusual is that this year we have three trans men that were killed, also the one person who, the term that a lot of people use, like gender-expansive, gender non-binary, meaning that they don't necessarily identify as male, they don't necessarily identify as female, they're somewhere in a paradigm between the two genders. Which is four people, that takes you down to 19, and that means that the rest are all trans females, one of which is white, and I think that one was a domestic abuse case if I remember, I'd have to look at that, but 18 of them were women of color. And that points to another problem that the community faces, and adds fuel to my activism fire. 15-18% or higher of this community is unemployed in a national economy that sees about a 4.9% unemployment rate. If you happen to be black and trans, it exceeds 20% and higher. So in most—a lot of cases these are young, black women that are forced to do sex trade in order to have a place to eat and something to—a place to stay and something to eat. So they're a by-product necessarily of the economic pressure that we're under. But nonetheless it doesn't—why they were there or whatever, it doesn't justify the fact that somebody just killed them because they were transgender. So it's for those people that I do my work. It's for the people that can't speak that I do the work I do. I've had a very lucky life as a trans person. I have no complaints, everything has come together for me perfectly. I haven't faced unemployment, unless it was having to do with just normal employment issues. I've never been homeless. Being retired and on social security means I have an income so that means I'm not in that category. So basically my life is lucky, but I speak for those that are unlucky. I have a very good friend over towards Philadelphia [Pennsylvania] who has a Master's degree in structural design and the best job she has right now is working as a clerk in a Barnes and Noble. I have another friend of mine that's on the west coast, she has a PHD in economics, she's slinging burgers in a Burger King. A huge percentage of this community is under-employed, working below the poverty line, usually at 10,000 dollars a year or less. I don't know about you but I don't know how you make 10,000 dollars a year and live. So it's for those voices that I do what I do. It's for all of them that I believe that I have a calling to make a difference. If I'm successful at all it's based on what I call the starfish theory, and if you're not familiar with the story there's a little boy on a beach picks up a starfish and he throws it in the water, and this old man says "sonny what are you doing," he says "I'm saving a starfish." He says "yeah but look at how many there are, you can't save them all," he says "no, but I saved that one." And that's the way I approach it. If I can make a difference for one life, or change one mind, in a given day, then I've hit an objective. Also, the LGBT community has been incredibly ostracized by the church and there's a place in church for LGBT persons. And I take my direction biblically from the first chapter of John, I mean the ninth chapter of John, the first three verses. The way the verses transpire is, is that Jesus heals a man who was blind from birth. And the disciples asked him and said, "Lord who sinned, the man or his parents, he was born blind?" And Christ says "no one sinned, this happened that God might be glorified." And I take that as my marching order because I think I'm trans because I'm meant to carry a message: that don't let what people tell you make a difference in your faith. There's a church that will welcome you and go there and listen for God's speaking, cause He still speaks.

BL: So, when you started getting more involved with Trans Central PA, obviously you must've started with getting more involved and then—

JC: Well I was still known, cause I'd been to enough meetings, people still knew who I was, I had enough of a presence with them the trans community, even if it was on the down low that people knew who I was. The vacancy occurred in the presidency of Trans Central and I was asked to step up and I said yes about four years ago. And Heaven, going like a steam engine ever since, thank

goodness. But you know, given—it's given me a cause in at my age, gives me something to get up for every day.

BL: And so you do a lot of traveling around the state on behalf of the group and on behalf of your own personal interests I guess and speaking out and so forth. What kinds of events or what kinds of things do you—

LC: Well yesterday I was at the diversity forum at Widener Law [Harrisburg, PA], run by the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association]. In that particular environment the topic for this quarter is employment and diversity in employment. Yesterday they asked me to talk about the barriers faced by trans people in the employment category: what can you do to make a difference? How can you eliminate the bias in the process? And I spoke to all three of those points and I also talked about how important having a very proactive diversity statement was that incor—that included gender identity and gender expression. So that's just an example. Coming up next week, I'd have to refer to my calendar for sure but one of the things that we're doing on Tuesday—oh I know what it is, Monday we have a meeting of the governor's LGBT work group chaired by Rachel Levine, that meets on Monday. Tuesday I go to the Department of Corrections headquarters in Mechanicsburg [Pennsylvania]. We were asked by the DOC [Department of Corrections] earlier in the year to become part of a support system for the transgender inmates in the Commonwealth. The number, I haven't fully grasped yet, but when I first signed, when I first agreed that we were interested, they told me there was like 150 that were trans-identified. That number may not be that big, it may be somewhere between 120 and 150, I don't know where exactly. Regardless, that's pretty substantial, and it's an all—like an outgrowth of a thing called the Prison Rape Elimination Act which was adopted during the Bush Administration in 2004. Trying to make prisons a more safe place for people, period, because the high level of sexual abuse and sexual assault that's occurred. And obviously people in this, this part of the community trans people are very much at risk in that kind of a circumstance. So one of the things they asked us to do is how can we go about creating a support system, so what we have is a video conference process, and right now we're only in ten of the 26 correctional facilities, but we have 55 inmates online with us when we're online. So basically we're providing a support group for 55 incarcerated. And the very first session was kind of like herding cats, [laughs] but little bit by little bit we've gained some sense of order and they now know how the dynamics work and now it's becoming much easier. This next time, which will be Tuesday, one of the things we're gonna do there is let it be a matter of mutual support, let them affirm each other and we'll just sit there and kind of guide the conversation toward that end. The past it's been us answering questions and trying to do things like that, but that's challenging work and it's exciting work. Last weekend, well I'll give you an idea of what happened last week--and this is typical, I want you to understand. Wednesday I went to the Gay Lesbian Chamber of Commerce mixer, left there early and picked up the policy director for Equality PA Kell Wilkinson and we drove up to Danville, because at 7:15 in the morning we were pursuing a grand rounds presentation to Geisinger Health in Danville. We finished that, blasted back to Harrisburg for a 1:30 meeting at the Department of Health because out of that governor's LGBT work group we've created a trans sub-group that meets, talks strictly about trans issues and so we had to make it back for that one. So I came home, packed another bag, got a little bit of rest, and then Friday took off for Newark for the director of our Family and Youth Program that we went to a conference for on Saturday, we left there at five came back for our TransCentral PA meeting Saturday night. Had to be back by—should've been back by 7:30 the meeting starts at 8:30 but I didn't roll in until 8:15 and only because she was blowing down the road at about 80

miles an hour did I make it by then, so. That's, in some cases is very typical. So, if it wasn't for my iPhone and the fact that I can keep track of a schedule I'd be really in big trouble. So anyway, that gives you some level of what we're doing. And that's not uncommon. Here recently we just did the Out on Briton, at Dickinson. And I could only stay for a certain level of time cause I had to get back to Harrisburg for another meeting, I think that was set to go until 6:30, I went wheels up at—six, I think it was—I went wheels up at 5:30 cause I had a meeting back in Harrisburg at seven, so. That's my life. Personally, yesterday I had a—I had that yesterday morning, yesterday afternoon to kind of chill. I've had this morning a chance to get my laundry caught up, do a little bit of housecleaning just to get ready for visitors, and but the day's kinda myself, and tomorrow I'm kinda doing the finishing touches for Transgender Day of Remembrance on Sunday. Sunday morning we're doing one—about a ten-minute thing in my own church, and then at five o'clock tomorrow night we'll be on the capitol steps, memorializing those 23 people that got killed this year. And then I have a meeting on Monday with a thing on Tuesday and Wednesday I leave for cousins over in New Jersey for Thanksgiving, so. I got a full life. Praise God.

BL: So, tell me about the conference. Keystone Conference. When was your first conference that you attended and—

JC: This will be our ninth year. And it's, the growth's been incremental. It started because we recognized there was a need within the Susquehanna Valley to bring people in so that we could learn more about ourselves and our community. We had 125 people just around Pennsylvania that came to that very first one. Well, all of a sudden the word got out, and the next thing you know we were in the conference business. The second year we had 250 people. Third year we had 300. The next year we had 350. The year after that we jumped to just under 400. This last year in March of 2016 we had 700 people attend. And 2017, our ninth year, who knows what the number's gonna be. But the notoriety of it and the quality of it is, I think is speaking for itself. We have a website that supports it, and as of last week, I haven't looked at it this week but we had just under 60 thousand hits from 140 different countries, including places like Iraq and some of the places you wouldn't even suspect--Communist China is the fourth heaviest hit we've had. So, I would tell you we're international in scope: out of the 700 last year, we had all 50 states represented, half a Canada, and 12 foreign countries. We've had people come from as far away as South Africa to attend. So that's exciting. The nature of the conference is strictly transgender in nature, obviously. With a variety of workshops available. In prior years we've had as many as 130 apply for workshops and only approved 70 cause that's all the spots we have, so we had to really winnow the field quite a bit and get down to what's really the balance. We just opened the workshop application process about a week ago so I don't know—I haven't looked to see what we're at yet but I know we have a few on board already. In the last few years I've been responsible for the sponsors. I'm one of three co-chairs. Jeanine Ruhsam who was our president up until I took over, she takes care of arranging for all the keynote speakers because we have one on Thursday, Friday, Saturday noon, and Saturday night at our gala, and she arranges for that. Kristy, my vice-president and one of the co-chairs does most of the background work. She's the wizard behind the curtain, and I do all the work with the sponsors. So, and that's a huge piece of work. So, yeah it's a great conference, we're excited about it, and it's more—it's more work than I almost care to talk about, but the fact that this last year 700 people could come and be a part of it, when you look back and see the numbers and what the growth's been, that's the exciting part of it. So we're one of the biggest that's out there. Philly Trans Heath is big, they had like 45 hundred for a couple of years now, but it's free. They have some huge corporate sponsors that help them put that on and that one

really got started for other reasons. It got started as an outreach into the HIV community to start with, and as it grew they found that the trans population was as HIV affected as was the gay community. And so they incorporated and made it Philly Trans Health, and so really they talk to the entire LGBT community about health issues. [coughs] Excuse me. We talk about, in our conference we do some of the health issues, but a lot of it's more about making the transition process work, the gender confirmation surgeons come in and talk about the procedures that they use to make mind and body match and all of that, both for trans men and trans women; therapists come in and talk about what they do. We have a track for family and kids, and this last year was the first year we had a track for physicians to come in and learn a little bit about how trans medicine's supposed to go. And we're gonna do that again this year. This year we'll have, I've been promised that Pennsylvania Medical Society will give a CME [Continuing Medical Education] credit for that one. Plus we also offer for therapists continuing education credits through Bryan Mawr. So, we're covering a lot of people with that conference. Let me tell you a little about Trans Central itself. The mission statement says that Trans Central PA as an organization is committed to providing care and support for transgender identified persons, their families, their friends, and allies, along with providing advocacy on behalf of the community and conducting educational programming for businesses, schools, both primary and secondary and post-secondary, and businesses and government and whatever. So it's the second two things of that that I probably spend most of my time doing is the advocacy and education process. Our support groups, we have anywhere from 40 to 50 in the room when we meet. We've had membership as high as a couple of hundred, we have a mailing list of about six thousand, including Daryl Metcalfe, if you know who I mean. And that's because Brian Sims put him on our mailing list. [Laughs] I don't know if you know who Daryl Metcalfe is, he's from Lake Butler PA, and he is about as anti-LGBT as you're gonna get. In fact I think he told us a couple of years ago when the Fairness Act hit, how it was placed with the government committee he says "this will never see the light of day as long as I'm chairman" -- so that's the kind of person we're dealing with, he gets our newsletters too. [Laughs] Love it.

BL: Do you have any questions that have occurred to you?

??: Actually, I did have, like this might be for later, but I was just curious like your reaction or thoughts about the political climate now. I know that might be a little bit later but—

JC: How much time do we got left? [Laughs] Well, I've been a, I was a Republican for most of the years of my life, until 2004. And you may not, you're obviously not old enough to know this but a young senator, state senator from Illinois delivered the keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, and I fell in love with him. His name was Barack Obama. And so when he announced for president in 2008, the 2008 presidency, I was all over it. Just because, as Martin Luther King once said: don't show me the color of a man's skin but the contents of his character. And to me it was about the contents of Barack Obama's character that really drew me to him, and it was at that point that I shucked the Republican Party in 2004 and became a progressive. Which more or less corresponded more closely with what I feel inside anyway. But back in the day I always used to justify being a Republican by saying, "I'm a social liberal but a fiscal conservative." And the dichotomy was a struggle all the time, trying to balance that with the candidates that were out there. So I've come out a number of times in my life. [Laughs] But I worked on both the 2008 and 2012 Obama campaigns. When Hillary announced this year, to me it was a given, the opportunity to be a part of something that could be as mind-blowing as the first female president, really struck me between, right in the heart, I ran and was lucky enough to be a

delegate for Hillary at the National Convention, and so to say that I was invested in this election is maybe an understatement. When the results became widely known last Wednesday my heart was broken. My cousin, who I'm as close to as about anybody on the planet, she and I are about like sisters, called me at 8:30 and I couldn't talk because the tears flowed too easily. And I said "I'm sorry but I can't talk right now." So she, we talked later in the day, by that time I'd had a chance to do three different Facebook threads and kind of gotten some of the emotion out that way, but I think your question was larger than that bit of a story. It's gonna be difficult for any of us sitting here right now to look in a crystal ball and look in and see what's gonna happen on January 21st and beyond. To say that the potential for something ugly is out there, I think that's, that's a given. We just don't know what it's gonna look like. Rachel Levine used a motto of the New England Patriots the other day at our meeting and said that their motto is "bend but don't break." And I think that's a good message for us, and that is we need to bend with it and see what's going on, I carry the football analogy a little further, and if you know anything about football I compare it to being on offense and defense. And through the Obama Administration I think we've been on offense, I think we've made some great gains for the community. But now we've kicked to ball to the other team, and so now we have to go on defense, but there's one interesting thing about football. You can't operate on defense until the offense runs a play. Until they line up in the line of scrimmage and call the signals, we don't know what we're supposed to do yet. So, we just kind of have to be calm and wait to see what happens. It doesn't mean we're not gonna be not diligent, it just means that we're gonna pay attention and see what happens. Am I worried? Well, heck yeah, who wouldn't be that's a part of this community. The history of some of the people that Trump is looking at plus some of his own statements, except in his acceptance speech he said "I'm gonna be a great friend of the LGBT community." Well... There's some things you don't do to friends. [laughs] So, we're just gonna have to keep an eye on it, but I'm definitely worried. And there's certainly a high level of angst in the LGBT community. I think to a large degree, marriage equality is fairly safe, at least for a time until they can figure out a new way to structure the language. Because if you look at how Obergefell passed, it was a 5-4 split, with the chief justice adding his vote to the mix. Scalia died, whoever's gonna replace him, the best it can get to is still gonna be a 5-4 split, so any effort I think to take away marriage equality I think is gonna find that same 5-4 split, unless Ruth Bader Ginsberg decides to retire in which case the bets are off. But I don't think any of them that have had a position on marriage equality are gonna change their minds between now and whenever, so I think that part of it's safe. What they can do to the rest of the community, well they can obviously never pass the Equal – the Equality Amendment which has been sitting in Congress for a while which would guarantee full rights of citizenship to the LGBT community and guarantee non-discrimination on behalf of all of us. Which means you could not discriminate against us because we're married to a same-sex partner or fire us simply because we're transgender. There is an upside, however, and that is that there's 37 communities in the Commonwealth that do have protections in place. As long as you're in the territorial boundaries of those communities ... Lancaster City has a non-discrimination ordinance, as far as the borders of Lancaster City are concerned. Where we're sitting right now is East Hempfield Township. And it ain't happening out here. So if I were to move into the city I'd be protected but to stay here, not so much. So and I think that's the history across a lot of places in the Commonwealth that there are pockets where there is safety even without a statewide Fairness Act to take the place. I'm worried, I'm concerned.

BL: Do many of those communities include gender equality at this point?

JC: Yeah, all of them have it, fully-inclusive non-discrimination. Yeah. There's a few that do have some limits, don't move to Hazelton by the way. From everything I understand it's the most anti-LGBT town in the Commonwealth, so.

BL: Anti-immigrant, too.

JC: And anti—well they're against almost everything. Except nice white people that are Christians.

BL: And straight. [Laughs]

JC: What?

BL: And straight.

JC: Straight as a string. But you know what sometimes strings are bent, who knows what that means. [Sips coffee] But you know, in every single challenge, there's opportunity. I think one of the biggest raps on the Democratic Party is that we've never developed a strong bench. And what I mean by that is some of the players that we have have not been strong candidates to start with. We throw people into the mix that are not necessarily the best possible—we threw a good one in the 16th district this year with Christina Hartman, probably one of the brightest and most amazing young women to even seek federal office that this Commonwealth has seen and she was turned away by Lloyd Smucker. [Coughs] Excuse me I had to cough. And then the last, between now and 2018 we need to build the bench. We need to go out there and find those people that are not only just extremely well-qualified but have a, just a wrenching in their gut to do something important. And then work our butts off. To get them elected. 2020 will be the census. That will realign a lot of things. But if we do our work in 2018 and gain some seats in some of the state races, maybe we can turn away some of the gerrymandering that's out there. There's one district, I think it's in Alabama or Mississippi, that there's a pocket here [hold one hand up above head] and a pocket here [holds other hand up lower] joined by an interstate. Now if that doesn't fly in the face of what, how a district's supposed to be identified, I don't know how you call that. That is strictly set up to have two Republican pockets keeping a safe seat. That's ludicrous. I think, now we're getting all the way into this political philosophy but you started it. [Laughs] I think the idea of breaking apart states and communities by demographics is wrong. I think we should just go by natural geographics and let the chips fall where they may. I'm also beginning to get to feel more strongly about doing away with the Electoral College. I was, I had been a supporter of it for a long time, but my views are changing. If you look at the fact of Wyoming's population, they get three electoral votes, and a state with so many millions of people gets what, 55? If it was based on proportionality, California would have hundreds of Electoral College votes. So the Electoral College was probably important at one point in time and it makes sense because you don't want to give the huge metropolitan areas in a country more of a say than other areas. But let's face it. The vast amount of populations are concentrated in those areas, so therefore, what's more representative? I really don't give a crap whether or not Montana, and you know I lived there, has any significance from an electoral standpoint. Go ahead and expand your borders. Go ahead and grow your population and get up there where it makes a difference. But if you've been to some of the places in Montana, it ain't gonna happen. There's places in Montana where if you see an antelope you'll see one out in the middle of nowhere crying because he's all alone. It's that desolate. And same way in Wyoming. But the Electoral College has probably seen its day. Because we've been screwed as Democrats twice now. Because we've lost Al Gore because of the Electoral College and now we've lost

Hillary because of it. And both cases we had the popular vote but the Electoral College went the other way. So. But we did get Barack Obama. And now I hate term limits. [Laughs] I wish he could serve forever, I just love the man. I think he's been in, and the relationship he and Joe Biden have is just, it is just so, they're like brothers, it's so special. I also have a big stance on Civil Rights issues. I told you before I went to school—and how are we doing on time Barry, we good?

BL: We're okay.

JC: Okay. I went to school, a military tech school, in Montgomery [Alabama]. Well, I was in Montgomery when Rosa Parks rode the bus. I was in Montgomery when Martin Luther King and others crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. I was in Alabama when things like—and I use the word n-knocking, I won't use the word I'll just use that abbreviation—where white men would get in a car with a broomstick and drive along and hit people with a broomstick as they drove along. I've seen whites-only restrooms. I've seen whites-only drinking fountains. When I was first in Alabama for tech school, we were allowed to go into town once in a while, but only if we were in uniform. And there were five of us that were really good friends. Four of us were white, one was black. And the first time we went into the city of Montgomery, the only way we had to get there—nobody had cars, we weren't allowed to have cars—had to be by city bus. And so the five of us lined up at the bus stop to climb on board in military uniform and we proceeded to sit down and the bus driver wouldn't move. He says "he's gotta go sit in the back," and the four of us stood up and said "we're wearing the same uniform. We can sit where we want." And he said "no. He's gotta sit in the back." And we said "okay, we'll sit in the back too." And there was a bunch of white people on the bus that turned around and looked at us like "what are you?" You know, we were in the American military. Race had no matter to us. So we got down into downtown Montgomery and we saw the whites-only bathrooms and the whites-only fountains. Obviously it meant we couldn't go in the same restaurant together. So even when we, the four of us joined him and went to a black restaurant, we were even looked at as being strange. So I mean I've seen racial prejudice up close and personal. So that changes my outlook on life quite a bit. And now being a part of a minority, I really get it. There is so much oppression by people and we need to overcome all of that. It breaks my heart for people to think that we're in a post-racial society. We're not. And I see evidence of that, and we'll talk about that on Sunday when 18 of 23 people were black that got murdered.

BL: Any, do you have anything else to add?

JC: Oh let's see, I've covered about the waterfront? I don't know. Let's see, let me think. Turn it off for a minute.

[video 2 ends]

JC: One of the things that comes up for people is what is the transition process like. Well it's pretty much governed by an organization called the WPATH, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, and it's an outgrowth of a thing that existed a few years ago called the Harry Benjamin Standards, Harry Benjamin was an early researcher in the community. But WPATH now recommends that if you're gonna transition you need to seek counseling by a qualified counselor to determine whether or not you're a good candidate to go on hormone replacement therapy. The guidelines also say that once on hormone replacement therapy, that you should not be eligible for confirmation surgery until you've lived at least a year in your authentic gender. I was going to say chosen gender but we don't choose it, it chooses us. So you have to live a year in that life before—theoretically before that happens, not everybody follows WPATH but

that's essentially the path. So in my own particular case I went, it's called social change medical change and surgical change or transition. I've been through medical change and social change but not surgical change. And I'm comfortable with that. One of the things [Laughs] that I get asked "well why did you decide to become a woman?" Well it's a quick answer for that, I didn't decide to become a woman. I realized that if I kept trying to live as a guy it was going to kill me. And that, I've already decided that wasn't the way I wanted to go. But what's interesting is all of a sudden you become really aware of what white male privilege looks like. And it exists. And Emily, as a female you know exactly what I'm talking about. White guys can go about any place they want to go and nobody thinks twice about it. If you're black and male, you have a little bit of it but not the same as if you're a white male. If you're a white female or a black female, man you are down the pecking order. A friend of mine and several of us girls were out here about a month or so ago for dinner and I don't know which one of us brought it up first but we started talking about white male privilege and he went "what are you talking about?" And I swear to god it took us 45 minutes to communicate to him what white male privilege was and when we finally done, he sort of had the gist of it, but I figured it out really early when I got exposed to what chauvinism looked like, when all of a sudden because I was a female I didn't have any status anymore. And it didn't feel good. Now, I was never a misogynist in my life which is obvious, not unless it was another alpha female because that's where I've always had my struggles, you know where I've had to work with another alpha female it's never been pretty, one of us or the other always fought about something. But the first couple times I had to go through a chauvinistic experience I went "wow! That's really different! I get it, I understand that." So white people have a privilege. White males have extra privilege. And you're nodding your head Barry cause you think—I think you know what I'm talking about. Yeah. So those are some interesting parts of this dynamic.

BL: In the employment that you had here, you mentioned kind of briefly that you had your first girl job in Lancaster, did you face any issues with that or were people pretty accepting?

JC: No because I didn't interview as a trans woman.

BL: Okay.

JC: I interviewed as a woman.

BL: Okay.

JC: To me, it was not an issue. I mean in my mind, I've always been female. Unless I'm deliberately advocating or educating on behalf of the community, it's not a matter of discussion. I'm not gonna go outside and wear a sign and say "hi I'm trans." No more than you're gonna walk around with a sign that says "hey I'm gay." Or whatever you're, however you identify I guess we never talked about that. Or you're not gonna go out and wear a sign say "I'm an ally." That isn't what we do. We just go out and live our lives. Well, it wasn't necessary. All of the male jobs that I had, the ones that counted anyway, the people I had worked for or with knew fully that I was transgender, they knew fully that I was anticipating transition, and they all signed up to be references. So when they got a call, "Oh, I've known Joanne for XX time, she's wonderful," or whatever I'm not gonna put words in their mouth they obviously chose their own words but obviously that was all prepared. Everything I did, all my documentation was pretty much... I had driver's license that was female I had social security card that showed me as a female, my military ID says female, so I mean it really wasn't, it wasn't an issue. I applied as a female and got hired as a female. In every job I've taken, it's been as a female, it's not been as a transgender female.

Because why do I have to wear that. Emily is a cis-gendered female, she was born female, she identifies as female, everything that she thinks is female. Well she doesn't have to be declarative about that when she goes to apply for school or for a job. Why in the world should I or any other trans person? All we want to do is be considered for our own individual merits, and that was one of the messages that I gave at that the diversity forum yesterday. Why does it have to be any different? Look for the one person who's got the most qualifications and looks like it's the best fit for the job because of their personality, because of their experience, because of their resume, whatever! Trans has nothing to do with it, so that's ..., I was fortunate in that respect because that was the way I approached it. Now, I was also fortunate to have something that a lot of people refer to as passing privilege. Here I'm sitting with no makeup and I can walk about any place in the world and nobody's gonna think any differently. But there are some people in this community that the very best they're ever gonna look is like a guy in a dress, and I feel badly for them. I mean I'm just lucky that I've got my mother's genes and look a lot like her, which brings me to well I never wanted to used to go out of the house without make up on cause I thought I'm gonna get read sure as the world so I better have a face on. I mean I wouldn't even take the dogs for a walk unless I put on make up cause I thought that's the first give-away. Then when I started having eye allergies to about every eye product I was using I went [pfft], I don't care anymore. Besides my name and story's been plastered all over the Commonwealth, it's not like I'm fooling anybody anymore. But I—nobody thinks a thing about it. I get ma'am-ed I get doors open for me I get people deferring to me because I'm female, you know. Those men that have any kind of degree of decorum at all. So the only place I get a problem is sometimes on the phone because of my voice, which is a far departure from the one I used to have. Interestingly enough I used to be, I used to sing base. I had a multimedia company for a while and used to do a lot of, did advertising and all of that kind of stuff, including radio voice-overs. Just a minute, I gotta have some, I gotta wet my throat first. [takes sip of water] And I'll use WKRP cause that's the first calls I—[in deeper voice] Hi you're listening to WKRP in Cincinnati. [return to normal voice] Now is that a difference between here and there? [Laughs] Yeah, but I had to train this voice, because when you're female you talk differently. You're voice modulates, it goes up and down. Guys are incredibly monotone. Plus the fact that they're sloppy in their speech, they slur a lot don't they? We're a little more precise in how we speak the language. We don't speak in clipped tones we enunciate the words. True? Guys don't do that. Hey whatcha doin. [in deeper voice] Hey whatchu doin. [return to normal voice] Or whatever. Whereas we say what are you doing, you know, we enunciate. And a guy would say maybe he gets melodic when he's putting a hustle on a girl but in just general conversation you don't normally do that. And plus I think we're more expressive with our hand movements and things too. Unless the guy's Italian and then all the bets are off, and that's not meant as a racial slur against anybody it's just, anything, whatever, so.

BL: Okay, anything else that you can think of?

JC: I can't think of another thing, I probably will the minute you guys are out the door, but—

BL: Well we want to—

JC: I guess, I guess one of the things I'd like people to come away with and that is that one of the things that I have on my Facebook page, and that's the trans colors, the transgender emblem and a Bible. And it says, and you may have seen my Facebook page, it says these are not mutually exclusive. For anybody that reads or looks at this from the LGBT community I think the importance that I say is that there's a place in faith for you. If you were born as a person of faith,

don't walk away because the knuckle draggers are telling you to, okay? There are plenty of churches out there that'll welcome you with open arms and will love to have you. If faith is important to you, don't let people tell you it isn't. I'm just now getting in it once again in the book of Galatians. And I'll give you the backstory. Galatians was a letter written to a little province which is now in Turkey called Galatia. And what was happening was there was a rift that was occurring between Paul and some of the other apostles about whether or not, if you accepted Christ and made him savior, you also had to be circumcised, if you're gonna be a Christian you had to be circumcised because that was the Jewish tradition. And Paul makes a thing unequivocally clear that circumcision has no value. Because God doesn't measure the body, he measures the heart. And he tells us to live in the spirit not in the spirit of the law. Now, too many within the modern Christian church look at the Old Testament in the Bible as like, almost like a menu in a Chinese restaurant. You get to pick one from column A and one from column B. And Paul refutes that he says if you're gonna take one from column A and column B, you gotta take one from every one of them and live by those—by that code. Which means if you think it's wrong to be gay, then you better not be wearing polyester and cotton together, or you better not be eating pork or lobster. So I mean there's all kinds of rules in there, you don't get to pick and choose which ones. But Paul takes us off the hook in the book of Galatians, he says you're not required to live in the law, you're required to live in two things: love God and love one another. And Christ himself said those were the two most important commandments. And if we do that, if the modern Christian church does that, we'll go a much further way than we are today. The modern Christian church is its own worst enemy. They've pushed more people away simply because Christ himself said when I'm lifted up I'll draw all men to me, he didn't say I wanna push anybody away. He associated with lepers and prostitutes and money changers and all kind of associated bad people, [lifts fingers up in quotations] "bad people," and was criticized. That's not what a Christian's supposed to be like. And so I'm—my word to the LGBT community is don't let those who would throw a Chinese menu at you drive you away from where you've grown up with faith. There's a place for you. [Smiles] Now I think I'm done.

BL: [Laughs] Well thank you so much for joining us today.

JC: My pleasure.

BL: Welcoming us into your home and we appreciate the opportunity to...

JC: Well I do too. Obviously the more times you get to tell a story the better it is for the community. Because it's awfully hard to hate somebody whose story you know. And I think that's one of the key points of this whole project of the community, of the LGBT Center, and that's the more stories that are out there, the greater sense of understanding exists. And so it was a pleasure, thank you.