

Project: 'Queer Lives: Barriers from cradle to elderly care - An Oral History'

Respondent: Stacy Bias

Year of Birth: 1974

Age:

Connection to project: Respondent

Date of Interview: 28/6/2024

Interviewer: Rachel Kelly

Recording Agreement: Yes

Information & Consent: Yes

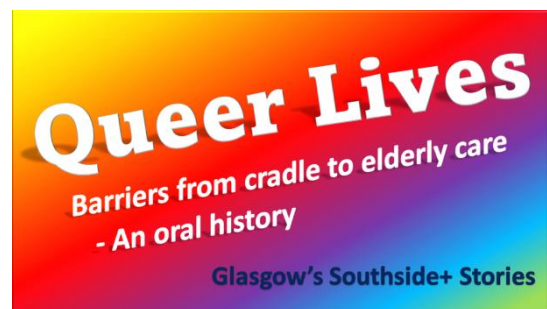
Photographic Images: No

Length of Interview:

Location of Interview: Stacy's home in Glasgow

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)

Glasgow's Southside+ Stories



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.35	Respondent was born in Portland, Oregon and grew up in and around Oregon. She now lives in Glasgow in Scotland.	
1.37	Interviewer asks the respondent if she minds letting us know if she has come out as queer.	
1.41	Respondent states that she came out when she was 19 years old.	
1.54	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has faced any barriers to education in her life due to being queer.	
2.01	Respondent says that that is a complicated question because there are always barriers to access for anyone with any sort of stigmatised identity.	
	<p>"So, I grew up in the 1980s. Which was...I can't speak for over here. But in the states was the height of the satanic panic...Like late '80s early '90s. Sort of the tail end of the Aids crisis...I was in a religious community so I think that I definitely had barriers to... accessing any sort of self-actualising experience [Laughs]. Largely due to just plain old trauma. So, yes. But it's not as straightforward as just being excluded based on my sexual identity. It was more a sort of internal positioning towards self-reliance and self-care...So, I think the whole idea for Nazarenes their primary interest is in the concept of Christian perfection. And the idea that the holy spirit is a literally possessing entity which goes into your spirit. And once you're then filled by the holy spirit you are then in a state they call entire sanctification. Which is a sinless state and they think that if you are guided by the holy spirit then you won't have sinful thought or sinful deed. So, for that reason they don't make a distinction between thought and action, in terms of sin. So, imagine being a closeted queerling going through puberty in a consistently sinful state. It was a total mind fuck (laughs)...I was raised by a narcissistic sociopath who told me when I was a child that Jesus lived in my heart in a little castle. And that every time I told a lie a brick went away. And when all the bricks were gone Jesus would leave my heart and never come back, right. So, Jesus became this sort of Stockholm syndrome character that I was consistently abusing in my heart. And god became this like sky curmudgeon who was like judging my every thought and action. And when I asked how many bricks I had left. My father said three. I was five or six years old. So, I went in primed to believe in this idea of Christian perfection. So by the time I left the church...Seventeen I think. I was pretty broken. I really, really harboured a lot of deep shame. I think that's why my answer to that question is so</p>	2.18-6.25





	complicated because I wasn't ok (laughs) for a good long time."	
6.67	Interviewer asks the respondent what her school education was like.	
6.31	Respondent states that she grew up singing and playing piano. She wanted to become a Christian Musicianary. When she left the church music became pretty complicated for her for that reason. She was half in and half out the closet. Writing Christian music during the week and playing with a band in Seattle at the weekend. She didn't finish her first degree due to this.	
7.28	Interviewer asks if the respondent had people who could support her when she came out as queer.	
7.38	Respondent talks about meeting her first gay person. A male friend at school who she went to yoga class with to avoid high school sports. She did this because she was 'fat'. He had been in a relationship with a Mormon friend of hers and then came out as gay to her.	
	<p>"But, listening to his story [her first gay friend] obviously resonated for me as like a secret queerling. So, we became close friends. And that was when I was seventeen. And we actually moved up to the big city. To Portland together when I started my undergrad. And he moved up for a job. And we lived together for about a year. During which he introduced me to BBS systems. So you know so like, electronic bulletin board systems. So, this is pre-internet...So there was this bulletin board called hot pockets which is where like a bunch of gay boys and a few women as well met to kind of plan dates or just have community really. So he introduced me to it and I was fascinated. So, I got on as like a fag hag right. As his best friend. And joined the community. But then when he went to bed at night I would sneak out. And I had like a second user name that I used to actually talk to people. And it was the first place I ever said out loud. Well, not out loud. Clearly not out loud [Laughs]. But, where I ever admitted to anyone that I was gay. Even my gay friends didn't know for like two years. Because I was still deciding if I should be celibate for the sake of my soul really. That was my plan. Love the sinner hate the sin. I had enough of a justice mind to realise that marginalising and oppressing people was not ok. But, yeah, it took me a good two years to get to a place where I could come out. And actually I moved out of his apartment and in with three right wing Christians. Because I was so scared. Like I was really straddling that line. You know. I was like, oh, this is dangerous. I'm falling. You know. That was the word I kept saying to myself. I'm falling. I'm falling into sin. You know. And I met my first lesbian off of that. Well...we met for coffee. And she was the first person that I ever said out loud that I was gay. And she was just in the process... She was just like, a month or two ahead of me. But she didn't have all of the religious guilt. So, she like took me to the gay book store and like helped me buy books. And there was a book in particular that was reinterpreting bible verses. Well, here's one interpretation that the Christians use. But here's another way that we could look at it. And I thought it was bullshit. I thought- Oh, man you're just justifying it. But it still like gave me critical thinking. So, I think a month or two later I started talking to a woman who would eventually become my first girlfriend...So, we dated like a couple of times and I was also in baptism class. So, I went and got baptised. I locked myself in my room for three days and cried. And then I went and had sex for the first time and locked myself in my room for three days and cried. [Laughs] And then I came out. My gay friends were actually really mad at me for quite a while. But they eventually came round. They actually just didn't understand why I hid it from them. And it was not easy for me at the time to explain. Because how do I explain that I was judging myself without them feeling like I was judging them. But yes, I suppose eventually I did have a</p>	10.21-15.05

	community but it took a minute.”	
15.06	When the respondent came out to her Mum she told her she should be celibate for the sake of her soul. Her Mum came out two years later.	
15.26	Interviewer asks the respondent about the wider community in Portland.	
15.32	Respondent replies that they are super queer but cliquey. Small place very much like Glasgow. It’s very white. Oregon is hugely legislatively racist. Portland a liberal bubble. Mentions Black Lives Matters, The Proud Boys. Anti Fa. Can be an unforgiving place. Always amazing things happening culturally. Lots of homelessness now. Rents and mortgages doubled at least since she lived there.	
19.43	Interviewer asks the respondent when it was that she moved to London.	
19.52	Respondent replies 2011.	
19.55	Interviewer asks the respondent how she found London in terms of queer acceptance in comparison to Portland.	
20.01	Respondent replies that London is a much bigger city that she found quite overwhelming at first. She had undiagnosed ADHD and CPTSD. It took quite a while to adjust. She was a big fish in a small pond. Was activist for queer and body positive rights. You get positive and negative projections from this. In London some of the ‘fat’ activists thought she came to London to take over.	
24.34	Interviewer asks the respondent how long she has been in Glasgow and how she has found it in terms of queer acceptance.	
24.41	Has properly lived in Glasgow for 6 months but has lived there for two years. Has underlying health issues so doesn’t go out much. Wants to make connections where they are natural not necessarily based on identity as it was for her in the past.	
26.40	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has faced any barriers to work or career due to being queer.	
	<p>“With the exception of once being fired because I was gay. In like the early Nineties I would say actually it’s been a benefit (laughs)...So, I was just a couple years out of the closet I think. Maybe even just year out. And I was still in the wearing Pride rings around my neck phase. Do you remember them Like in the nineties they had these rainbow metal rings that people wore. And that straight people hadn’t quite cottoned on to yet. And that queer people were like flagging for each other. So, I was still wearing my Pride rings as like a chocker. Coz, you know. I present femme. And I wanted people to, kind of, claim me...I think I was in the year between when the band didn’t work out. And I was still figuring out what I wanted to do next. So, I was working in like three different shops in the mall. One was called Natural Wonders and the owner was a queer woman...And then I was working at an incense stall in the middle of the mall also run by a lesbian...And then I...It was a sock shop let’s just say that. [Laughs]. So as not to get sued. I don’t think it exists anymore. But, anyway, it was a sock shop. So, I was selling socks. And I was like the top salesman every month. Cause, like, it’s socks. If you come into the store for socks you probably need socks, you’re going to leave with socks. And one of the women that also worked there was getting married. And I wasn’t out in that shop. I just didn’t know. I couldn’t tell what was going on. So, I just kept shtum. And she was getting married. And she invited me. And she knew I had a partner that I had always only ever called my partner. And she was like-‘Oh, bring him.’ And I was like –‘Oh, It’s a her. I would love to come to your wedding but my partner is a her. So, I don’t know how you feel about that. And she was like-‘Oh, Oh, Oh, no, no it’s fine. And the next day I came into work and the literal owner of</p>	26.51-32.11

	<p>the company had caught a flight to come in specifically to fire me. (Laughs)...It was like literally an 8 hour or 12 hour turn around. I mean granted she flew from Seattle. So, that's like three hours by car. So literally it wasn't a challenge for her to get there. But, it was very pointed. And I found out that they're a Mormon owned company. So, they made up some reason. Like, I hadn't taken the bins out properly or something like that. It was...(laughs) And I literally had. But, it was very clearly because of coming out... So, that was a bit gutting. I was fresh out of the closet and I didn't realise that was a thing that happened. I was a bit naïve. Which you wouldn't think I would be being someone who came from such a right wing background. But, I think that I had experienced a little wave of acceptance and I was starting to feel, like, quite optimistic. So, it was a bit gutting but the woman at Natural Wonders just gave me a full time position instead. So, it was literally across the hall. So, I just walked across the hall crying. And she was like-'Right, well. We're not going to have that.' So, it was very sweet."</p>	
	<p>"And in terms of it being...Of queerness being a benefit to my employment. I think that...Well, first of all. Well, queerness is the reason I found the internet. And queerness is the reason I sort of became obsessed with the internet. And I was on IRC, Internet Relay Chat, which was...again precedes the proper Internet as we know it....And there was this channel called Hash tag Les Chat. And there was this woman there Shoey. That was her user name her real name was Karen. And she worked for the Library of Congress. And she was in the process of beginning to digitise some of their archive for this new thing called the Internet. Which I literally...I didn't have a web browser at that point. I'd heard of none of it. And so, she like walked me through the steps of downloading a web browser and going on online. And I was just blown away by the Internet. And I would not stop pestering her with questions. So, she literally sent me to a bookstore. She was like- 'Buy this book, this book. Read them. Do not talk to me again [laughs] until you've read them. And I had a website up the next morning...And the idea of people finding each other was amazing to me as like a small town queer. And so I started this little empire of websites. There was like a dating board. There was a literary webzine. There was guide to gay Portland. There was a few different things. There was like a place where I was making free rainbow backgrounds for websites for people to download. This was like when things were blinking. You know [laughs]. And so, my love and passion for queers and queer community gave me my first real skill that wasn't rooted in religion or music. Something that I could actually make a living from. But, not just make a living from. Make community. Make connection from. So, that skill then gave me my first career job. And that career job gave me what I needed to start building this website called Technodyke.com. It was like a community...Like message boards. But also like a publication. And it was sort of just in the right place at the right time. And it became one of the first and biggest online websites for queer people. Made distinct even more so because we were trans inclusive from the very start. So, it grew very quickly with like two million visitors a month. You know, a membership of thirty thousand. And we were like Out magazine's top site of the year. And we were doing celebrity interviews and all that. It was wild. I had zero expectations of any of that happening. But I think everything that's happened in my life from that point forward I could attribute to that experience. Yeah, so like being queer was really a boon to my existence. It really gave me passion and drive and empathy. And desire for making the world better for queer people."</p>	32.30-37.06
37.10	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has any thoughts on the future of workplace opportunities for queer people.	

37.33	Respondent thinks we are in a strange place now. things are feeling uncomfortably familiar to the era when she came out. Trans people. Queer people in general not safe. Needs heavily invested anti-discrimination law. Optimistically in the future identity not a thing. Not an issue.	
39.08	Interviewer asks the respondent if she thinks the experience of being queer has changed over time in terms of acceptance or otherwise.	
39.24	Stigma is a game of Whack a Mole. Job of the activist to maintain optimism in the face of significant proof to the contrary. Just caught her after the American Presidential debate. Changed for the better for the worse. Gay marriage not simple due to Marriage giving the state more control over relationships.	
42.19	Interviewer asks the respondent if she believes that there is such a thing as an LGBTQI+ community which implies a coherent shared identity based solely on a sexual orientation or gender identity.	
42.47	No. Group of people with a shared facet to them but they certainly don't agree on everything. They do have value as unit. People who hold your history are precious.	
44.18	Interviewer asks the respondent if she thinks that all queer people have similar perspectives towards the various definitions of gender identity.	
44.26	No. Doesn't think they agree on anything. They are closer than a lot of people but no.	
44.36	Interviewer asks the respondent if there are conflicting perspectives among queer people with regards to gender identity legislation.	
44.45	Queer Nihilists. Some people want what everyone else has got. You need both. People who are working to build the world beyond and those who help you through this one.	
45.54	Interviewer asks the respondent what her thoughts are on the current public debates regarding gender identity.	
45.58	Thinks it is devastating that trans people are being scapegoated in the way that they are. Talks about her past experience of people who were anti trans. One thing to have differing opinions but the cruelty is awful. Thinks that justified fears of misogyny are misdirected. Talks about reasons she thinks are behind this. Thinks focus on reproductive aspect of being a woman straight of The Handmaid's Tale.	
52.30	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has faced any healthcare issues due to being queer.	
	"I think early, early on a little bit. Around reproductive health and things like that. But it was more about just discomfoting questions that you had to answer. And navigate like doctor reactions to you. Certainly for me most of my healthcare stuff has been around being fat. And I've a world to say about that. But that's not what this is about so. Certainly the mix of the two is interesting."	52.47-53.18
53.21	Interviewer asks the respondent if she ever thinks about the future as she ages.	
	"Yes, constantly. My partner just turned 55. I'm turning 50. And, you know, we don't have kids. That was by choice. And you know she just was...The flowers on our coffee table are because she just made Professor yesterday. So, you know, we're in a good position financially because she like did a thing and then stuck with it. Whereas I have just jumped from horse to horse to horse my whole...my whole life. So, I didn't have much of a game plan for my retirement... A lot of queers don't... have normative predictable career patterns. So, I am a lucky partner of somebody who did a thing to its completion. So for that reason I think...Assuming she doesn't dump me. We made it fifteen years so I think we're pretty good. But, you know. I think I am relatively protected. But, I know that a lot of queer folks around me really	53.28-55.39

	are not. And I think about that a lot. And you know in the collective queer fantasy of like the elder care home, you know. Like the queer retirement communities...I hope that that actually becomes a thing. I've seen it in places but it's often...Because often it's the gay men that have the resources to do that. Then, I feel like it's not really accessible for a lot of people. Because the capital in the queer community is largely centred there. So, I would love to see more, sort of, grass roots and creative solutions happening. And more DIY guides and community education of how to build a life that you can live with in the world that we have now."	
55.40	Interviewer asks the respondent whereabouts the example of queer care homes are.	
55.51	The respondent replies that the one they know about is in London. A high rise. Is beautiful but unaffordable for most.	
57.25	Respondent talks more about templates for shared living etc. How people with least opportunity left out just now.	
57.42	Interviewer asks the respondent if they can think of any legislation that has brought more rights for queer people.	
57.56	Respondent was active in campaigning for equal marriage in the USA. She thinks that has been a game changer and has offered people more protections. She tries to think of more but says they are all in danger of being undone.	
58.57	Interviewer asks the respondent if she can think of any legislation relating to queer people that has been rolled back or diminished.	
58.05	Respondent replies that she thinks having Roe v Wade overturned has had a knock on effect on queer people's rights. Rolled back funding for health. State level legislation in USA making it illegal to talk about trans topics in schools. Book bans. Talks about similar legislation when she was growing up in Oregon. Lon Mabon tried to push legislation that if homosexuality was mention in school then it would have to mention the words immoral, illegal and abnormal and linked with abhorrent sexual practices. This was 1992. Was her first chance to vote. Not sure what she voted as she was between two worlds at the time. Thinks that what was happening then is starting to happen again.	
102.37	Interviewer asks the respondent her opinion on the barriers to equality for queer people in Scotland/The UK.	
102.46	Respondent replies TERFS. Explains why she thinks this. Thinks they are a small but moneyed group who are having a strong effect. Doesn't think most people think about these things going about their daily lives. Therefore thinks it is definitely a tool that is being used to empower those who already have these opinions. Thinks it's soaking existing hatreds but doesn't think it is building many new ones.	
1.04.23	Interviewer asks the respondent what her hopes are for the future of legislation for queer rights in Scotland.	
104.28	Respondent hopes that the dinosaurs choke and that this is just a cultural moment. Thinks the youth are amazing. Switched on and empathic. She says that maybe she only meets the good ones. Historically after big crisis that the world does go a bit conservative for a while.	
106.25	Interviewer asks the respondent about positive portrayals of queer people in the arts.	
106.35	There are some but she drew a blank.	
106.59	Interviewer asks the respondent if she can give any examples of positive portrayals of queer people in the media.	
107.31	Respondent thinks that queer social media makers representing themselves positively. Moving away from trauma narratives, which is good. Lots of queer joy online. Dancing etc. Non binary goddesses which she likes. Heart	

	beats is a cute little love story where nobody died etc. Sex Education is a great show too. Lived inclusivity as modelled by queer youth. Feels hopeful.	
109.54	Interviewer asks about any negative portrayals of queer people in the arts.	
110.00	Respondent replies anything pre-2023. Even ones produced by queer people. There has also always been queer joy in the arts.	
	Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for her contribution to the project.	
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