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Interview #5 Abstract and Transcript, 2001

Carrie Noble Kline

Anonymous

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0:00 Family Background. Family furniture business and floor covering. Mother was musician - 22 instruments.

2:00 Aging parents w/health problems.

2:24 Childhood. Father was research chemist. Moved family to [large city out of WV] when he was 6.

3:30 Family returns to [WV city] in 1947. Father traveled a great deal in region. Mostly home on weekends.

4: 15 Mother worked in office but played organ in church.

5:00 Father opened business here in 1973.

5:30 Demola member in youth. On school yearbook staff. Was most social of 3 children. Raised in Victorian background. More conservative than Jerry Falwell.

7:00 Left church at age of 17 to Presbyterian Church with active youth group. 38 members. Traveled and did many activities. Raised in Edgewood. Neighbors were millionaires. Jewish neighbors. Clothiers. Business people. Kids were all college bound. Everyone worked, had good quality of life. Progressive thinkers.

11:00 Parents' personalities. Mother was gentle. Father had violent nature. Would haul off and hit you. Mother never questioned him.

12: 15 Work ethic - went to school or work no matter how sick.

13- Parents traveled a lot with us.

14- We always went to Florida for winter. Took school assignments with us. Once learned multiplication tables traveling.

15- Father has Alzheimer's Disease.

15:30 Was normal child up into adulthood. Married at 23. Wife's father owned business. Had to sign prenuptial agreement. Were responsible for ourselves. Married in 1963. Divorced in 1974.

17- Was then dating.

18- Met a man downtown while window-shopping. He invited me home. That was my introduction. I had gone to houses of prostitution, but found men could take care of my needs.

- 19:50 It progressed from there, but I kept a low profile.
- 20: 10 Met a man-had reciprocal sex, lived with him for 8 months. Other lovers.
- 21- Had relationship that lasted five years. Have been single since. Victorian background has been a problem. I am strictly monogamous and can't deal with lovers who come and go.
- 22- Have male roommate for whom I care. His mom is lesbian friend. Boy won't cook for himself.
- 23-Have summer camp, but want condo in Fla. Will keep apartment. Will make for problems in caring for "son." He wonders what his handicap is. Can't tell time.
- 25- When I was growing up we never questioned our faith. Mother's church work kept us involved. They didn't believe in dancing. But as a teen I wanted to dance. Found youth group.
- 27- My divorce was shock to mother. I disgraced the family. Within a year I was leaning toward gay life. If I was ever suicidal, it was then. One night at parent's dinner table *60 Minutes* was featuring program on gays. Father said, "If I had a kid like that I'd have him committed."
- 28:50 Mother firmly asked the question. Father didn't know. Later at a family funeral I met cousins with different "life styles". Mother said, "All these years you said it came from my side of the family."
- 31- Active in 2 churches now. Do phone counseling. Help with maintenance at Methodist Church.
- 32: 15 Working on "green spaces" program citywide. But I'm not a political activist.
- 33- If anyone asks me if I'm gay I always say yes. But sexuality is personal.
- 34- My father would have a problem with my being public with my issues.
- 34:30 I had gay people working in my office-we were all accepted.
- 35: 15 Early exposure to gay lifestyles. In highschool there were 3 or 4 gays, but didn't know then. 1 committed suicide in 1960.
- 36:15 In 1975, I met some people who were friends of his.
- 37- Maybe I had tendencies, but they were repressed by Victorian rearing.
- 37:30 You really don't choose. You just are.

38- Bisexuals. Some people can do both but I never could. A lot of them "play the line." Describes couple with "open" marriage where he entertained men.

40:40 Social worker approach to counseling young gays.

40:45 Strength to be who you are. Parents had stable, if dysfunctional marriage - we were always brought up to face problems. God doesn't create junk. So I want to be the best I can.

42 - Training as social worker helped me figure out a lot. I don't dwell on bad, except as a stepping stone to growth. There's nothing about my life I'd change. I've enjoyed it. And there's more I want to do.

44- Have many interests. Love to camp and fish, garden a little. Makes chow-chow to fix w/beans. Makes jams & jellies. Many interests.

46- Travel plans. Parents traveled.

48: 13 Gay purge. Mother hid newspapers. I was close to 40 before I understood it. A policeman began to monitor clientele at Tavern. Prominent people involved. Decided to expose all this, so he went to newspaper. Mayor and police chief were fired, many charged with sodomy. All gays left during the night. Many doctors, lawyers, and politicians left. Some came back in later years.

53: 13 Older generation became closeted as a result. Younger gays never faced purge and are much more open.

54- [City in WV] as a whole has been ok.

54:30 Letter in mailbox from neighbor when we moved in. "No funny stuff." Later she fell on ice and needed help. I helped her and later she baked me a cake and became one of the best neighbors you could ask for.

56: 15 Subsequent neighbors - man worked for my brothers. They turned out to be good neighbors. New neighbors from California moved in on other side. "You'll really like them, they're your kind."

58- I've always lived quietly - no wild parties. My sexuality has never been much of an issue. People pretty well accept you.

1:00:00 Discusses dynamics of marriage. She was very spoiled. Had it not been so we might have stayed married.

1:00 Lived next to her parents. She accused me of being "just like my father."

1:03 On discovering I was gay.

1:06 Older gay couple at church - pretty closeted.

1:07 I came out during the sexual revolution. I rode the circuit of being token gay.

1:09 Increasing liberality over past 25 years. Pendulum swings back and forth. We're heading into more conservative era. We'll see more discrimination, more hate crimes.

1: 10: 15 Much of this is a spin off of religion. It's rooted in old Hebrew law.

1: 12:30 You're hearing more condemnations from the pulpits. In next 20 years we'll see time of intolerance. Churches contribute heavily to prejudice and persecution.

1: 14:30 Discussion of environment.

1:16:00 I never voted a straight ticket.

1:16:30 Under Bush we will see more repression.