

For Archive of Lesbian Oral Testimony

Dorothy Fairbairn

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Questions by Elise Chenier

Elise

Ok, so I'll ask you to begin by. If you could say your, your name, and uh, and and where you were born and anything, any kind of other interesting. Hi I'm Dorothy, whatever. [Laughter] Anything else you want to say.

Dorothy 00; 00; 16-00; 02; 07

Hi, I'm Dorothy. I'm the oldest living dyke in Minnesota. [Laughter] That's still here to talk about and umm. Well I've been in Minnesota for quite some time. But I started off; I was born and raised in Chicago. And uh, grew up on the streets kinda pretty much in Chicago, which is, uh, interesting to say the least. Uh, I knew at a very young age, uh, that there was something different about me. I wasn't just a tomboy, it was more than that. And, uh I remember having crushes on girls when I was like ten, twelve years old and not really realizing what it was about and, uh, uh started to experiment with sex quite young and, uh, with boys enough to know that this is not what I wanted. [Laughter] and so, and so from there umm, my parents moved um, uh to Canada and I was in high school. So I moved to Canada, in Toronto and uh, going to high school there it was a very difficult time for me. Uh I, I by that time definitely knew that there wasn't, that there was something definitely wrong about me. I didn't really know what it was, cause I, I didn't even know that there were other gay people around, and other people that felt this way. I just knew that I did and, uh I remember having relationships. Kinda, high school relationships with girls that we would kiss and make-out, but we'd never talk about it. And, uh, so it was that kind of thing and, and uh. And just having to really struggle with these emotions and not know what to do with them.

Elise

Can you tell me, Dorothy about one of those friendships you had in high school? <Yeah> And can you tell us what year you were born?

Dorothy 00; 02; 17-00; 02; 17

I was born in 1933

Elise

Okay, so this would have been forty-eight you were in high school <yeah> forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven something like that.

Dorothy 00; 02; 24-00; 04; 38

And, I uh, I remember having girlfriends in high school and actually I was part of a sorority and uh, which was really difficult. Uh, because we'd go to, uh skiing parties and stuff like that. There was always sleep over's, uh and it was pretty hard to contain, you know to contain myself from the way I felt. And uh, but there was I was affectionate in a way that probably felt uncomfortable to the other girls. But I didn't realize it, you know this was just how I felt and of course I knew I had a crush and uh, I didn't know why I just thought there was something wrong with me. You know, and then I ran into, uh, after I finished high school, um, I started working downtown and um right on the corner where I lived I met this young man, uh, named Ian, uh who was a neighbour and we got to talking and he just, he told me, he said "I know who" he said "you're gay, you're a dyke" and I said "well what" and he said "come on, I'm a " so he took me downtown and that's when I first realized that there were other people that were like me. And that it wasn't something that, uh, only I had, that there was a whole community that felt this way. So I got

introduced to that, and uh I started going to the gay bars in Toronto. Which at that time, they were really in a bad part of town and uh, and right around that time uh that I had first come out my mom and my brother had gotten married and moved to Edmonton. And my mom and Dad decided that they would go, go up and stay with them, so they decided to sell the house and asked me to find a place. So you can basically say that they kind of abandoned me, left me, which they did. And I of course got into trouble, just as they expected I would [laughter] But I started, uh I started getting into the gay community then and uh.

Elise

When you say you got into trouble, what do you mean?

Dorothy 00; 04; 41-00; 09; 52

Well, then trouble as far as uh like what they would say be my lifestyle. Like going into the Continental bar and hanging around with unsavoury characters was not, you know, considered. I did when I first moved in, uh the apartment I moved in with a woman, uh that umm lived on Wellesley, she was sharing her apartment and she was a straight woman and she had a boyfriend and like I had a room in the back and it just wasn't just the most comfortable situation for me. And then I had met my first girlfriend and uh she was married, she still lived at home and I didn't feel comfortable bringing her back to my room because there was somebody else in the house. We couldn't go to her place, so then I would, you know, I would almost start to find rooms on my own and so we could see each other. Which was really hard for me, it was hard for me to accept because Joan [her girlfriend] was ten years older than I was and I think uh not only was I was attracted to her and fell in love with her. I think it was like I was being rescued by this woman. After my parents had just kinda thrown me away, and uh so that's, that's really how it was in Toronto. And then my mom and dad, after about a year of them being up in Edmonton decided to come and find me. Well, they didn't know where I was, I wasn't keeping in touch with them. So they musta somehow found out where Joan worked, uh, and she worked for a company called Heinzman [?] downtown and uh, so they went on Joan's job and uh asked, demanded that she tell them where I was. And uh to find me, because, or otherwise they were going to call her husband. So she was really threatened and um, my mother was just frantic. So anyway she came and found me and took me to the motel where my mom and dad were staying and they just whisked me off to Minneapolis and that was it. And, so my dad had decided to move his business up here. And we rented houses when we first came up and of course I was devastated, because I had lost touch with the whole community. The gay community that I'd been introduced to and I was in a new city, uh, didn't know anyone didn't have any idea where to go. And then my friend Ian came up, haha, from Toronto with the National Ballet and uh we met, and he showed me where the gay bars were and so then that's how I started out in Minneapolis. And uh, and then of course it was all trying to get away from home, and uh I was certainly old enough. I was going out late at night and my mom was just having a fit cause I was coming in at two and three in the morning, as anybody in their early twenties is going to do, you know. But they, they didn't want to put up with it. So I, I would go and stay in different rooms. Pretty much stay you know, where I could find a place to stay. And uh, and I'd get an apartment, I had jobs. I'd have jobs off and on. I'd work for dentists and uh, uh I always managed to be able to support myself at least and doing something. But um, I did uhh run into some people that and that was just a bunch of people that was running around and uh drinking and you know it was a big deal to cash cheques then and so I remember this one girl saying to me "Uh look, uh Candy's got this bill over at this store. I'm going write you a cheque why don't you just go in and pay for it and then just pay for what the bill is and I'll write you a cheque for more than what the bill is and I'll give you cash." So basically it was a cheque that was written by another person, that was written to me, that I went in and cashed. And then the next thing I know 'bout two or three days after that the police are banging on my door and charging me with forgery in the second and I was put in City Jail for, oh I stayed in there for at least a couple weeks. I was in city

jail and then they transferred me from City Jail over to County Jail. 'Cause my mom and dad wouldn't bail me outta jail and uh during the time I was in city jail I was very fortunate to catch trench mouth off the plastic cups while I was in jail. And uh, and then I went to the county jail and then I came up for sentencing and it was a fifty dollar cheque and uh, um I had a very homophobic probation officer and uh.

Elise

What did you look like at the time? Did you

Dorothy 00;09;56-00;10;09

I was very masculine looking then I had uhh, I was a little heavy, I had short hair. I, I wore boys shoes and boys, pretty much boys clothes. And so I definitely looked really butchy like, like a lesbian did in those days.

Elise

And you didn't think to dress differently for your trial?

Dorothy 00;10;17-00;13;18

That was all the clothes I had, because they didn't let me outta jail. Okay. So I was in jail I went from, from the city jail into the county jail. That's where they held me until my trial came up. And apparently my mom and dad did talk to an attorney or talked to somebody at the probation office and they said "oh don't bother to get her an attorney this is a first offence. Nothing's gonna happen." So they didn't. Well it ended up that they gave me ten years for a fifty dollar cheque, the first year to be spent at the work house. And so then I went to the work house and I was in there and during the time I was there we had to have a pelvic examination by the doctor and so I uh, I ended with gonorrhoea from the uh speculum that the doctor used. Back then they were using metal speculums and he didn't autoclave them. He just had 'em he just has a closed sterilizer. And uh, so I got really sick and by this time they had put me out on [humer, humer?] was where you could out and work during the day and come back at night. And I started to get really sick and I didn't know what was wrong with me. I started this temperature of around a hundred-five, a hundred-six. So they sent me to the hospital and uh they kept questioning and questioning and questioning. Who did I have sex with, how did I get this and I said "Look I'm in jail," but you've had, I said "I have not had sex" I said "I'm a fuckin' queer" [laughs] you know "let me alone I have not had sex." So, when I came back, naturally the workhouse was upset about everything that had happened. They tried to tell me that I 'd probably got gonorrhoea off of the, uh, we had these little douche things that they sit on, bidets <oh> and said that, that's probably how I got it. But no that's not how I got it. So those are some of the things that happened during the time I was in jail. And uh, and during that first year, um, of course, uh you know uh, one thing I knew that I, that I couldn't admit to being lesbian. To being a lesbian because it was going to be worse, uh if I did. So my probation officer kept grilling me, and kept grilling me and I just said I started, I didn't know what I was or this and that and the other thing you know. And there, it was really kinda degrading because they used to have me, make me go and take my showers by myself. They didn't want any other women in there with me, so I was discriminated against. But, actually [gaff] I was real comfortable taking a shower by myself, so it didn't bother me. And I had a

Elise

How did the other prisoners, the other women that were in prison. How did they res-respond to you and weren't, wasn't, was there not other gay women there as well? <umm there were>A bit lesbian culture there?

Dorothy 00;13;33-00;19;38

Gay women, but they didn't dare come out. There was one women, this is mostly back at the work house in those days where people go on drug charges. That's where they went and um, they had a choice of sending me either to Shakopee, uhh, which is an institution or, and I was sentenced to an indeterminate period, *indeterminate period* and, uh, so uh I was lucky that they modified it for me go to the work house and uh just do a year there. And my probation officer, I think realized quite fast that I shouldn't been in jail, you know so she helped me get out and she helped me get a job and uh, and then uh I did get out and I uh, then I got this gonerhea. I was going to work and I had to come back and stay inside and by this time the probation officer had changed and then I finally got out and I was on probation for the next ten years. Well, in that ten years I got involved with a woman and uh, we had an altercation and uh over this other woman and uh we had fights about it, and I'd fought with her two or three times and this [furor?] between us went on for two or three years and umm, I was living on the north side then. I had rented a couple places where I could bring Edith because she had kids and I wanted her to live with me but she kept going back to Joan and um and it was just bitterness between us. We had fights and I didn't try to fight her back. But I can remember her beating the shit out of me. I had a broken nose and I don't know what all. But I felt guilty because that I had, messed with her girlfriend and uh so I felt sad about that and so it was many years before we finally became friends again. And um, and during that period uh, with Edith and I, she finally came over to my apartment one day and I had bought a gun and I told her, you know I been through so many fights that I had an entrance out of the apartment out of the kitchen and another entrance uh, in the in the uh living room right on into the hall. And she was at the kitchen door and she was breaking in, like the many times she used to do, drunk, trying to get Edith to come back and I'd had about enough so I went out in to the hall with no intention of shooting her, but really basically just wanted to show her that I had a gun. And she started walking towards me and I shot, thinking, low shooting down to the floor. Well I had never shot a gun, so I didn't know anything about the recoil, and I hit her in the hip. And uh, I can remember [clears throat] calling the police and the police taking me to jail. And they took Edith with and then they started asking us all these questions about our relationship. And they had me in handcuffs and they had walked me out to the car with a rifle in my back and uh, I remember in the police car I was terrified. I though they are going to beat the shit outta me, I just know it. And uh, as it turned out from my first stay at the work house some of the probation officers remembered me and they got me out right away on bail. And yeah, and because uh this was an incident I got out on bail and isn't it interesting I had five more years added to my probation and that was all. And that was from shooting someone and they only gave me five years. Well because it was a lesbian, they didn't give a shit you know. And I got ten years for writing a fifty dollar cheque that was bad. So that gives you a little example about how, how the um system works and I still think it's a pretty homophobic system. Uh it's changing now; it's only changing because uh, because gay people have fought for their rights and they've been, there's been a lot of discrimination suits [coughs] but it hasn't come easily. There were many of us like, have the scars to prove what it was like. Um there was always fights, uh anytime women went into a bar, uh 'cause we didn't have any bars, even here. Uhhh they were just bars women started to go into and took over and uh, were allowed to stay because they were bringing in, you know, a lot of cash. And so after I got outta jail um I was on probation and got a job and was working, fine, and got into this relationship with Edith and shot her, and went to jail again, and got five more years ,so I was pretty much on probation for fifteen years of my life. And then finally after I got off of probation, umm I finally got a job at Honeywell and uh I spent some twenty odd years working at Honeywell and uh straightened out my life, uh, but my record is still available to anybody who wants to see it and uh, so it, you know it's, it's hindered me in a lot of ways of getting some jobs and it's also kept me here in Minnesota. Where I could have moved you know maybe back to Canada, or, but because I was on probation for fifteen years I was kinda stuck here

Elise

But I remember when we first met the first time a year ago you, you told me you used to take trips back to Toronto. <Yes> yeah.

Dorothy 00; 19;46-00; 19; 48

Yeah, after I got off probation

Elise

Oh, not until after. So you couldn't even leave.

Dorothy 00; 19; 51-00; 22; 26

Un, uh no. And not unless I got permission. If I got, there are a couple a times after on the second term of my probation uh they were pretty lenient with me. Uh you know because he knew I wasn't goin' anywhere and it's one of those things and my probation officer would, you know tell them I'm going up to see my family. This is where I'll be, and this is when, when I'll be back and so, they gave me permission to do that and so it was okay. But I couldn't move up there, uh, you know, to go back to Canada <yeah> and so I kinda eventually ended up staying in Minneapolis. Which I'm not sorry, you know, but at the same time my life was certainly turned upside down by that one event and it does follow you for the rest of your life, umm <yeah> and luckily I got into Honeywell at a time when affirmative action uh, had just gone into effect and they were hiring people, uh with uh records uh and so therefore they had to hire me. So it was a way for me to really legitimize myself again. And working for the government made me ...I was doing and all that stuff, so and I retired from there and it was probably the smartest move I've made. Uh then getting, then finally settling down. It took me until, you know finally I hit forty and decided I wanted to go back to school and so I did. I uh enrolled, I started the menopause, Honeywell and school all at the same [Laughter] So it was quite interesting [laughter] I decided I was goin' go in and become a dependency councillor and so I went to school, I worked second shift at Honeywell and uh, uh of course your on probation for two or three weeks at Honeywell. You can't miss any time whatsoever. So, so I was walking around like a zombie mostly cause I had no sleep [Laughter] somehow got through it. And got my degree. Uh, but never actually practiced it, by the time I finished my degree I was already making so much money at Honeywell I didn't want to leave. So they kinda seduce you that way. [Laughter] So anyway I stayed there and made a lot of friends and retired uh, when I was sixty-five. And uh, that's that part of the story.

Elise

Can you tell me a little more about some of the relationships that you had? You talked a little bit about your relationship with Edith. But I wonder if you can talk to us about, tell us a little bit about um, how you learned to be butch. How you felt about the whole butch/femme thing in the community.

Dorothy 00; 22; 46- 00; 23; 34

Well there wasn't much of a choice <yeah> I mean for me, I was kinda a heavy set women <mhmm> didn't feel particularly feminine. Just fell into the butch role kinda naturally. And my first girlfriend here was a Black woman. And that was Bert, and we lived together for oh about seven years and then um she met someone and broke my heart. And uh, and strangely enough Joanne and Edith were my friends and I went and stayed with them. Uh trying to get myself together after the break-up with Bert. And Edith and I formed this kinda bond. We'd always been friends because we used to double date. You know 'cause we were the only I think gay, lesbian couple that were interracial, uh, uh in that day. Uh

Elise

And what was that like? How did other people?

Dorothy 00; 23; 35- 00; 25; 08

That was different, that was very different. We were, we were definitely in a group of our own. You know, sorta not discriminated against, but, not you know kind of out there. You know in a group of our

own. In other words we weren't in part of the in group because we crossed the line. We crossed the racial line <right> which was big. I do remember when Bert and I tried to move in together, it was really hard to get an apartment. Us both going for it. So I'd have to go in and rent it and move her in, you know. Because it just, uh, there was so much discrimination back then, you know. Not only we were gay, not only was I gay, but I chose to be with a Black women. And which was a double kinda whammy. <mhmm> And then I got into this relationship with Edith and uh, that went on for a while. And I had various relationships after that with different women. But I never got into anything really, really heavy because I had burned, I had been burned too bad and uh, and plus uh you know it was, it was hard. You know, trying to get back. Took me years to get back into the, into the situation because Jo and I, Joanne and I [who owned my shop?] were estranged for about seven years and she would go to the bars so I kinda stayed outta the bars, and hung around on the north side. Because I didn't know what our meeting was going to be like. Uh, but we finally made up and were friends again.

Elise

Sorry when you say you hung around on the North side not being from Minnesota I don't know what that means.

Dorothy 00; 25; 18- 00; 27; 08

The North side is pretty much a Black area, was a Black area then. And I was basically, knew all the people on the north side cause we lived in that area, ? and me. They knew me and so I hung out at the bars up there. And uh, didn't go much into the gay bars, cause there's always that chance of running into Joanne and I don't want to have a confrontation with her. But we finally got together after about seven years, buried the hatchet. And got friends, you know being friends again and stayed friends, until, until she died a few years ago. And uh, it was uh, it was diffi-difficult um, getting over that. Uh, I always felt guilty for years uh to Jo. Jo was the kind of person that uh, anything she'd ask me to do for her, I'd do because I just felt this guilt all my life, you know, and uh, but she died of cancer and she suffered a lot. So I watched her going through cancer. Uh, and I watched another friend of mine die to cancer and uh I've had four friends, that uh, have gone through cancer and uh, have tried all the chemo, all the radiation, all the ho-ha and they all died, and they all were sick after. So, but as a, I am now um hey I'm seventy-seven, feel pretty good. And so, and like I say I think I am the oldest dyke in Minnea-- , in Minnesota I mean at least that's still putting one foot in front of the other. [laughter] I don't know, what else do you want me to talk about?

Elise

Well um, so there's one, you talked a little bit about the time your parents took you <oh that>so can you start telling us when that was <that was> and what happened and where they took you.

Dorothy 00; 27; 18- 00; 29; 40

That was back in the, say, late fifties early sixties and uh I was living on Garfield Avenue and my mom and dad uh realized, uh I had been writing to Joan in Toronto. My mom found the letters of course, put two and two together and so they decided to put me in Blemint (sp?) Hills, which is for the mentally ill and uh and I was, be sent from there, uh, to St. Peter's I think it's called and St. Peter's is an institution for the criminally insane. [Laughs] So, needless to say while I was in Blemint Hills [?] I was pretty scared and uh, didn't know what I, you know I could remember being in my bedroom and these cops coming up and taking me outta the house and take me to this mental institution and then you're evaluated there. You know I talked to several psychiatrists and luckily um they decided to release me. Um, I'll never forget the nice psychiatrist's name was Dr. Aberly[?] and I thank god for him, that he was my psychiatrist. Cause he, um, he told my mom and dad that I was a very well adjusted homosexual and that they needed to go into counselling to learn how to deal with it. [Laughs] So I got free and uh [clears throat] and then after uh while I was on probation, uh one of the things was I couldn't live at home with

my parents. So they realized, uh, I think that there was a, there was definitely something going on with my parents where they wanted me out of that situation and on my own. So I was, um, and it was hard, uh, because I had become dependent and uh and then was abandoned and then picked up again and uh gotten into trouble, but finally, finally got straightened around. Uh, after Bert and I got together I kinda settled into a normal sort of lifestyle. Well normal sort of lifestyle meaning I had a job and a place to live, and clothes to wear, and food to eat. Was supporting myself, and uh

Elise

Well talk to me a little about your, I mean how did you and Bert meet?

Dorothy 00; 29; 42-00; 29; 47

Uh, we met at the bar actually. Uhhh

Elise

Was it a predominately white bar?

Dorothy 00; 29; 51-00; 32; 36

Uh, it was mixed <yeah> it was mixed. It was downtown, it was called The Holland and it was a front bar and a back bar. And there was dancing in the back, and it was predominately for women, but men would go in there. And I remember being at the bar and I met, I had knew this one Black woman through my friend Bev, Lois, and she was with Bert, and so I met Bert and uh, we started to see each other. And just within a couple weeks we were moving in together and we stayed together for, oh, something like oh about seven years I think it was. But it was hard, it was hard because we would, we always ran into discrimination wherever we went. And that was just, just the way it was and uh we could've never moved over into a white neighbourhood then, you know. So it was always a choice of having to move. interestingly enough, the Black community embraced me. You know, so much different than the white community embraces Blacks, so there is that. And uh, and I still um, I have a good friend now uh, that's uh I've known for years. I've known his, his uh sister she is a singer that you might of heard of, S--- W---, she was pretty well known she sang with Duke Ellington <oh really> and she uh, was one of my good friends and um, her brother which I know as Butch has become a minister. [Laughs] And he's got a church over on the North side, which he's talking to me about coming to and so it was nice to visit with him and it was kind of like going way back in the past. Cause I remember Butch as a little kid, me running around on the North side running around with S--- stopping in this place getting high, and stopping in the next place getting high. [Laughs] Just running the North side you know. So it's kinda, that's kinda a piece of my life. But he's a minister and um, because I have been sick my friend asked him to come and see me, which he did, and it was really, really nice to see 'im. I do wanna get out to his church, it's just Sunday's is kinda hard, it's way over on the North side. And um, the north side's hard for me to go back to now, uh, not because it's changed so much, but because so much of my past was so filled with unhappiness while I was there. And that, it tends to bring it back and so I don't really go over to the north side, unless I have to for something. Or if I'm visiting someone, you know.

Elise

Was your relationship with Bev an unhappy one?

Dorothy 00; 32; 38- 00; 37; 45

Not with Bert. <Bert, sorry> We were happy, uh but um I think it was a lot of um what we went through when we were together cause we always had to live on the north side. And then what I went through with Edith, same thing, trying to look for a place to live, and then finally moving. I, I had to move over to the south side because uh my uh parents died. I lost, well first of all, my brother committed suicide and uh so I lost my whole family within three years and uh, he uh. It, it was like that I have misgivings about my brother, I don't know, but from what I could tell, what I remember as my childhood I think my brother might have been gay. And uh, I think that he had the wife and the three kids and the dog and

the house and lived that life and kinda had a nervous breakdown and um very much against my lifestyle. And uh, really, really we didn't communicate, uh he seemed to be too much against it. But from what I member of him, there weren't that many girlfriends in his life. He was an extremely handsome, handsome guy. Very, very uh very meticulous about his appearance and he was in the army. But there was something about 'im and I think when he had this breakdown he was supposed to go and see a psychiatrist and he had the equipment and he didn't go he instead went and shot himself. And I think at that time it may have been he realized that they were going find out about who he was. And he saw what I went through with my parents and so I think it was a shame thing. So many, so many gay people take their life, you know, but I've always had that sense about my brother and uh, even when I talked to my sister-in-law and what their relationship was like. Uh, you know it all smacks of he was gay, you know. But was of course, and, and my nephews and nieces have always suspected it. Uh, my nieces especially. My nephews kinda don't wanna look at it, which I don't blame 'em you know. So we don't talk about it much, but I think they know, they, they have a sense of it and it's not very, it's not uncommon at all, for uh if one sibling is gay that the other one would be too, you know,so, uh, but I think that he, he had a harder time to go because he was the perfect son, he could do no wrong. And uh, my mom and dad actually before he was born they used to talk about him, his nickname was Duke, and they used to say "Well when the Duke arrives" you know, so he was kinda labelled from the time he was a little baby and to him having to be perfect at everything and I was the fuck up, you know. [Laughs] And so, uh, which I was you know and uh partly rebelled because he was favoured and yet had this adoration for 'im, you know. Uh, I still get sad when I think about him dying <yeah> the way he did and uh, and not having a brother all those years. But don't want to talk about that. It's a still sore spot, I don't think families ever get over suicide <no> it's hard, um, but you know that's the way it was back then. I'm sure he felt that it was just too horrible what he would have to face and you know that was, he suffered a business loss but it wasn't so terrible he couldn't have gotten back on his feet. It was uh, it was more than that, much more. So my life then, after my brother died, I had to get it together pretty quick. Ha. As in my mother died, and my dad died within, within three years you know and so that's when my life really had to come together. When I had to take the bull by the horns and really straighten out my life. Cause I had to go out and stay with my parents and go through that whole funeral, which was just, just a horrible thing. They couldn't show 'im cause uh, he'd blown half his head off, you know. So and it was hard for years uh, I never had closure cause during the funeral my mom had a heart attack.

Elise

During the Funeral?

Dorothy 00; 37; 47- 00; 38; 56

And I had to leave, and so I never got, I never got to see my brother buried. And uh [sighs] so it never really was closed for me. I used to imagine a lot of times I'd see him in a crowd, cause he wasn't really dead. But, an interesting thing happened um, when I went back to Chicago to work on this movie [*Don't Mess with Bill*, documentary, dir. Jason ?]. Uh Jason took me back to back to my old neighbourhood, back to my old school that we went to and I felt my brothers presence there so much in that school. And I felt just such peace, it was like I'm so glad your back here doing this, you know. So it's taken a while to work to work through it. But, eh you know the kids have all turned out great. You know he missed, he missed a lot. And not sharing in their lives and uh, what kind of people they've turned into, so anyway.

Elise

I think you know it's an incredible testament to your strength that this event in your life made you realize you needed to take control of your life in a new way because it could easily have gone the exactly other way.

Dorothy 00; 39; 15- 00; 40; 17



Yup, yup exactly, yeah but it was, it was a shock. And uh it shortened my mom and dad's life for sure. <yeah, yeah> um it was such a shock to them and uh, and I remember uh going up religiously for years, uh every Christmas and uh every summer to spend with the kids because I didn't want them to forget their dad. And uh, so I, I maintained kinda a special place with my nieces and nephews you know, they still remember their crazy Aunt Dorothy, you know. [Laughter] And uh, mind you I just talked to my nephew, my nephew is talking about trying to come up here and visit. Uh, I have been going up there pretty regularly but uh it's hard for me to make a trip on my own <yeah> you know, and uh but I'm sure they will come down here. When the time is right.

Elise

When you said he said he came down on his motorcycle once?

Dorothy 00; 40; 21- 00; 41; 21

Yeah, that's my nephew Brian. <yeah> And he's in Edmonton right now <yeah> so. It's hard to say he might, <yeah> you know if he goes on another motorcycle trip. You never know about Brian. <yeah, yeah> But um, so it's kind of like uh they all know. We Skype on a computer so we can see each other and uh, their all concerned, but they've all got their lives you know <yeah>. And it's not like, um, I can go running up there or they can come running down here. It's just kinda like we just gotta keep a handle on it and do whatever we can do when distant you know. I mean I think everybody's life you get to the point if you settled in a city and your relatives live in another city there comes a point when you don't travel anymore to see them and I think we're kind of at that point, so. But I have a lot of family here.

Elise

Umm hmm. And a lot of friends here, <yeah> a lot of community here.

Dorothy 00; 41; 23- 00; 41; 29

Wonderful, wonderful people <yeah> yeah. <that's great> yeah.

Elise

Thank you

Dorothy 00; 41; 32

Your welcome. Thank you.

Elise

One, one thing I, I remember this about, about. I will always think of you this way cause this struck me so much, when we first met and I interviewed you then, twice, was how, I really respect the way you're so emotionally connected with your own life. You're deeply emotionally connected with your own life and your, yourself reflection on the things that changed things for you. You know, the things, the defining things. You know so often times when I interview people about you know, sort of the lesbian past it's the defining moments are coming out of the first kiss and stuff. But, but you see your life in such broader terms <yeah> its never reduced to, when we talk it's never just about the fact that you're a lesbian. [Laughs] <no> and um, I think that's uh, yeah, that's how I think of you as someone who has this incredible self-reflection and so much, uh, emotional depth, you know <thank you> because of that, yeah, well its <life does that to ya> yeah. [Laughter] But you know you're a survivor, I mean we're all survivors in our own history

Dorothy 00; 42; 50-00; 44; 08

Yeah, we certainly are, yeah. <ummm> I think we had to in those days. We did have to survive. I think the lesbians of today, I think they still have a hard time. But, umm I think that they don't have any idea what it used to be like <yeah> you know, I mean to think of it even in high schools now are having proms where, you know same sex proms <yeah> you know, <yeah> I mean my god <yeah> we never had that

happen <yeah> so the gay community has moved pretty far and we've still got a ways to go <yeah> I think the issue of equal rights is, is, is a fight that we've been fighting over something for centuries. If it wasn't for equal rights for gays, it was equal rights for Blacks or you know it's always something <mmhmm> and uh, everybody's, you know we're getting into a world now where we realize we've got diversity and everybody's equal you know, that there is a place for everybody on this earth. We just have to make room for 'em. And sometimes we have to fight to get that room. [laughs] you know, but it's worth the fight <mhmm> It's worth the fight.

Elise

Yeah, even in my own. I mean I came out when I guess I was twenty-one or twenty-two and I'm forty-three now, so twenty years. I mean I remember when I graduated from university and I had a friend who lost her teaching job cause she was a lesbian <yeah> and that would never happen now. <oh no> And twenty years, when your twenty, twenty years seems a like a long time. But when your forty twenty years does not seem like a long time and I'm sure when your seventy-seven twenty years seems like nothing <just a breath> [Laughter] Yeah, that's right. So your right there's been a <a lot of changes> There's been a lot of change but you know um, I'll just turn this, turn this off.

End of DVD