

Fall 9-28-2009

Juliana Sabine and Kathrine Kline Oral History Interview

Juliana Sabine

Kathrine Kline

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Recommended Citation

Sabine, Juliana and Kline, Kathrine, "Juliana Sabine and Kathrine Kline Oral History Interview" (2009).
LGBTQ+ Oral History Project. 13.
https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/lgbtq_oh/13

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LGBT Oral History Project
Oral History Program
Florida Studies Center
University of South Florida, Tampa Library

Digital Object Identifier: L34-00009
Interviewees: Juliana Sabine (JS), Katherine Kline (KK)
Interviewer: Jessica Merrick (JM)
Interview date: March 5, 2009
Interview location: Undisclosed
Transcribed by: Jessica Merrick
Transcription date: March 18, 2009 – April 2, 2009
Audit Edit by: Christine Toth
Audit Edit date: June 30, 2009 – August 6, 2009
Final Edit by: Mary Beth Isaacson
Final Edit date: September 16, 2009 – September 28, 2009

[Transcriber's note: The following changes have been made at the request of the Interviewer: pseudonyms are used throughout the Interview, the use of ellipses indicates that material has been removed, names of persons not directly connected with the Interview have been replaced with pseudonyms, some identifying geographical details have been removed.]

Jessica Merrick: Today is March fifth, and I'm talking with Juliana Sabine and Katherine Kline.

Katherine Kline: All right, so this is Katherine. So, how did I grow up? Um—fast? (laughs) Let's see. (sighs) I was born in New York City. I lived most of my life in New Rochelle, which is a suburb of New York City.

I graduated high school there, went to college in Washington D.C. Never went back to New York; I just liked Washington so much. I got my master's degree at the same college, stayed there and worked as a teacher for ten years.

During that time I met Juliana, which was wonderful.

I went to work, then, for the federal government. I retired from the federal government in 2003 and now I'm just a consultant, work when I want or need the money.

Sexuality-wise, I knew at age twelve that I was gay. But we took "the class" in sixth grade—which I think they now do in fourth or fifth grade—that tells you about all that kind of stuff. And one of the things they said in my class was that it's normal to go through a period of having an attraction for same-sex. So, I just kept waiting to grow out of that, because it was just a phase. And then, I never grew out of it.

My parents found out when I was in high school, sent me to a psychiatrist to see if they could fix it. And obviously, it's not fixable in that way. I tried to do what they wanted, and date boys and stuff, but I hated it. So, by the time I was a junior I had given that up, and I guess I officially came out as a senior in college. It was a very strange feeling to have to actually say it out loud, because the words then were not "lesbian." It was "queer." And that, of course, doesn't have a good connotation.

But that was who I was, and so I just played the games socially and at work to make sure I didn't stick out or stand out too far. I do think I'm different from a lot of people in some ways, so I will find another way to stick out I'm sure. But I didn't want it to be that because of job security. I was teaching school. I didn't want to be fired for that.

The older I got—I think my last two bosses in the federal government both knew, and they were very supportive and very cool about it. The company that I work for now knows—I've never tried to hide it. And Juliana's always invited to whatever events. But, I wouldn't go if I was her, because you don't know the people, and it's all work people. So, she has not joined me, except for when I was thinking about getting ready to sign a contract with them. One of the principals of the company took us both out to dinner and talked to both of us about the whole idea of becoming self-employed, as opposed to an employee of their company. So, I am self-employed.

So, is that it in three minutes? Basically, my life.

I met Juliana at age—I think we were both twenty-six. We were young, and it was just wonderful. Thirty-three years later, here we are, and to me, it's just a freaking miracle—(laughs) that we've made it this far. It's grand.

(to Juliana) Your turn. (laughs)

Juliana Sabine: All right. I grew up in the Washington, D.C. area. I was born in Washington, D.C., and then we moved out to a suburb, Falls Church. There were four children in my family; I was the oldest. We all lived in a little teeny house that was just about as big as this house, and we had my cousin there. So there were seven of us in a little teeny-weeny house.

KK: One bathroom.

JS: (laughs) Oh, yeah. I went to college at Radford [University] in Virginia and then waited until I was fifty to go back to George Mason University for my master's degree. I worked in Arlington County for all thirty of my years, and as soon as they gave me a chance to get out, I got out. It was time.

Teaching school and teaching elementary school in my county was a wonderful thing. They supported same-sex partnerships. But, the state of Virginia was not particularly good about that. So, I was closeted through my whole teaching career.

If there was one thing in my life that I would do, it would have been to come out sooner. It took twenty years after Katherine and I had been together before I told my mom, and that was in a critical crisis situation where I knew that I was going to have to have her with me. That's the only reason why I came out to my mom. I never came out to my dad. Part of the reason was he was the one that was the critical situation. (laughs) After those twenty years—

So—I've lost my train of thought, which happens a lot. (laughs)

JM: When I was here before, did I meet your mom?

JS: My mom, yeah.

JM: She seemed like a tough one.

JS: Well, she's an, um—I don't know, growing up with [my mom]— I was the oldest and so I was the one that got all the—you know, your ducks stay in a row and the one they wanted to get married and—oh, I forgot about that. (laughs) Yeah, that little part of it.

KK: That little part.

JS: I got married in the seventies [1970s], the late seventies [1970s], to my elementary school sweetheart. We lasted for less than a year. Part of that, though, was—I couldn't—I found from the moment, well, I didn't find right then. I knew all the clues. I found that I couldn't trust him.

And it wasn't long after that that we met. 'Cause we hadn't even met prior to that, right, or even during that, even though I was doing sports. But yeah, we got married. So, of course, grandchildren were supposed to be on the way. And that, thankfully—well, I don't know if “thankfully” is a good word, because I think children add so much to people's lives. I really believe it's all part of the cycle, and all of that. Katherine disagrees with me in a lot of ways with that.

But we got divorced about three years ago when he decided to remarry. (laughs)

JM: Wow!

KK: Yeah!

JS: Well, I decided, you know, I was not going to pay for it. (all laugh) And he moved out to California and I had seen him—we'd seen each other over the years. He'd come into town and we'd meet and chat. Because we have history, you know. It's not like I hate him or anything, it's just I can't trust him. (laughs)

But, [my mom] was hoping for children, and continued to say that long into our relationship, that she wanted children. (laughs)

KK: We kept presenting her with her grand-dogs. (laughs)

JS: Her grand-dogs! (all laugh) She never took the hint. But now she knows, and she actually—she absolutely loves Katherine. She just—every single time I talk to her on the telephone, it's, "All right now, say 'hi' to [the dogs], and give Katherine a kiss and a hug." And I go in and give Katherine a kiss and a hug! And that's about that.

But that's my life in a nutshell. I'm very fortunate I have friends that I grew up with, that I've maintain contact with, from school—from elementary years—well, elementary years, yeah, (...) Anyway, only a few from the elementary years, but especially from high school through college that we remain in contact with, and actually socialize with them.

So, I'm very grounded that way. I still am in contact with my brothers, of course my mom, since you met her.

JM: It must be such a relief to have that out of the way, and to have her, like, really so much in your life.

JS: Say that again?

JM: I said, it must be such a huge relief to be able to have that, share with your mom.

KK: Out on the table.

JS: Oh. You know, it's funny. My sister (...) was—she and I grew up in the same room together all the way through high school. We had trundle beds because the room was so small. So, we were close. We were always together. We hated each other! (laughs) No, but that's a lot of time together. We didn't really hate each other! (to sister) "(...), I'm just kidding!"

She is the first one I told about Katherine, and she would cover for us. Mom—I think mom knew all along. I don't think that there was a question that Mom didn't know. She—

JM: Just never spoke about it?

JS: We didn't talk about it, and [my sister] would always say, "Well, Juliana's taking another shower," or, "She's just run up to [somewhere]," and then she would call us and say. And this happened for over a year when we first got together. After that, we moved together, and then (...) moved in with us. So, it was kind of a funny little get-together on that.

But she was—I always felt good about at least one person in the family knowing. And when Mom had to know, my father was ill—but also what had happened was—this was weird. I had been teaching for, like—what do you figure, it was twenty-five years?

Twenty-five years, and probably ten or fifteen years in the same school. And an old student—one afternoon I heard the back door, the gym door, open and I heard someone walking across the floor. I thought, Well, gee, I wonder what this is? And in walks this child, an ex-student of mine. I just remember it so vividly. And she walks in, and she had never come to visit me before and didn't after that. Well, we saw her at various functions after that. She looked at me and she said, "My gaydar¹ is up, Ms. Sabine." And it took my breath away. And she said, "Are you gay?"

Now, (laughs) when adults say things to you, usually they take this circular kind of path around so you can kind of step into the next circle and away from the question. But she was very focused, very direct, and very straightforward, right in my face. My life kind of flashed in front of me. (laughs) Because if you're not true—here I've never told anybody, and really hadn't talked about it out loud. We always had a large circle of friends, but they were also closeted.

So, I looked at [the student] and I said, "Yes, I am." And I realized at that point—here I had this teenage kid who's going through whatever she was going through. She was going through a time where she thought she was a lesbian. And she just seemed like she wanted to talk.

JM: Yeah.

JS: Just wanted to talk. So, we chatted for a long, long period of time.

But as soon as she left, my life changed. That's when—you were saying there must have been a sense of relief. The sense of relief came after talking to her. Because then I knew, okay, what will she do with this information? Because, you know, kids can be nasty. And she was an unusual child. But I decided, Well, I have to tell Mom. I have to let Mom know, for multiple reasons now. It's not just one! I always have to have two reasons (laughs) for the crisis stuff. So, that's when I told Mom.

Yes. It has been a sense of relief. (laughs) The other day—it continues to surprise Katherine. Because once that happened, I don't have qualms about it. If somebody asks, I say, "Well, this is my partner." And if they want to talk more, fine. And if they don't, that's fine too. But I don't want them to think—we were in dog training the other day and they said, "So, you have two dogs, and do you train them together?" And I said, "Well, yes, they're both my dogs, and they're her dogs, too, because she's my partner." And Katherine goes, "Again?" (all laugh)

KK: I don't think she needed all that!

JS: But she—

KK: Yeah, what do you say? They live together, because we live together. (all laugh)

¹ Gaydar is a play on words: gay radar. Gaydar is the ability of being able to detect homosexual people.

JS: Have I covered the question?

JM: Yeah, definitely.

JS: But yes, the critical point came—that cathartic moment came when that child asked that direct, very—can't sidestep question where I had to either be true to myself or lie. You know, before I was able to, like I say—

KK: Evade.

JS: —evade.

JM: Right. So, it sounds like it wasn't even about being public at work, but it was more about a shift you had with yourself.

JS: Well, the shift came after, see. I think the shift came after. I think my internal need to be out had not surfaced yet, mainly because I taught in an elementary school. Parents become very upset, even now. I'm always with children, so I didn't have a need to be out.

But being true to the—if that child needed something, that's part of the demands, the confines, of what I perceived my job as a teacher, is to be as truthful with them as I could be about things. I always took that part very seriously. I had never been asked that before! (laughs)

KK: Not so directly.

JS: Yes. It was very good for me, because it released a lot of what I needed to release. I became open with one brother, who was in the area, very shortly after that. My other brother—he wasn't living immediately in the area, and I don't know, we're not as close. Even though now we're closer than ever before; I spoke with him just today. But anyway—

KK: He is not as accepting of anything that's different, or anyone that's different.

JS: Yes, any kind of difference. If you put on a little weight, he would make fun of things like that. So, it's not like there's a toleration level that I felt comfortable with him. But I came out with him anyway later; it just wasn't as quick.

KK: Yeah. It's so amazing to me that people can know that Jim and Bob live together, and that they wouldn't think that Jim and Bob are probably a couple! Just to so many people, it doesn't occur to them to think about that.

JS: Which is nice. You know, there's a sweetness about life sometimes where people don't assume that, 'cause we have friends who have lived together longer than we've been together, and they aren't gay. They're just—

KK: So they say.

JS: Well, that's what she says. But I tend to believe they have a very, very close emotional relationship, but that they haven't—if being a lesbian includes the physical act, I don't believe that they've—making love, I don't think that they've done that. I'll just put it that way. (laughs)

JM: If it's not too personal, is that what it means to you?

JS: I guess originally, probably so. I think that as I have evolved as a person—I don't know, really. I'd have to really think about that. That's interesting. In some ways, yes, I think that that's—no, that's not being a lesbian. I don't know. I'd have to really, really think about that. I really haven't thought about it in terms of definitions. I don't think the word “democracy”—define it. Uh-huh! But being a lesbian, it always was incorporated in it for me, in terms of the way that I thought of myself.

KK: I think of it as a sexual preference. Would you prefer to have sex with a man or a woman? Would you prefer to spend the rest of your life with a man or a woman? And for a long time, Juliana said if anything ever happened to us, she didn't want to close off 50 percent of the population that she might meet.

JS: Well, I still wouldn't.

KK: Oh, you still wouldn't? I thought you had changed your mind.

JS: No, I still wouldn't want to close that off. Because, I mean, why limit yourself? If I could find a man who allowed me the freedoms in terms of the way that my mind works, yeah. No, I can't see cutting myself off from 50 percent of the population. I just can't see it! I don't think that I would look intensely. (laughs)

KK: Yeah. I would—well, first of all, I hope that nothing happens between us, but—

JS: Well, yeah. I didn't bring it up! (laughs)

KK: I don't think that I would change horses now, you know?

JS: (laughs) Well, thank ye, thank ye!

KK: (all laugh) I don't mean—I wasn't calling you a horse! I just wouldn't change horses in midstream now.

JS: I'm just teasing.

KK: Okay. Yeah, I've been this way my whole life, and it feels right. It never felt right being with a man. It just didn't feel right.

JS: Well, you are right for me. That's what I know for now.

KK: That's a good thing.

JS: Well, I know, but if everything changes—then that's what I know now. Okay.
(laughs)

KK: And she went through—because she was just separated from her husband when we started to get to know one another, she went through the same sort of emotional wrangling with the whole idea of saying “I'm a lesbian” out loud to yourself that I went through when I was twenty.

JS: To yourself.

KK: Well, when I was twenty and it was official. Then I knew it was official. Before, it was still a phase (laughs) that maybe I would have grown out of. But Juliana went all through that just—'cause that's a big decision to make, that I'm going to get involved with a woman for the first time in my life. That was big.

JS: Yeah, but it was nice.

KK: Well, yeah, it was nice. Because you made the right choice! (all laugh) If you had made a different choice—

JS: We always wondered how we found each other. I don't—we just felt very, very fortunate. Very lucky.

KK: We met playing basketball, adult basketball. Not on the same team, even. Our two teams scrimmaged against one another. So, we got to be friends. I had a play day at my school. On a Saturday they let me use the gym, and we played badminton and jumped on the trampoline and just had a good time, and then went back to my apartment for French bread pizza—you know, Velveeta [processed cheese] and tomato sauce, real fancy. (all laugh)

JS: She wooed me. (laughs)

KK: Yeah, and so we started to get to know one another better after that. And I was definitely—they didn't have anything called gaydar at that point. It was just what you felt. And I felt like I was getting a vibe from her, but since she had just left her husband, I didn't know what that all meant. I didn't know how to act, really.

JS: So, she cooked me dinner.

KK: Well, the first part was that at that night at the play day.

JS: That's true.

KK: At my apartment, we were just like—I mean every time we looked at each other it was like, “Ooh.” (all laugh)

JS: That’s true!

KK: And so people had left, and I was supposed to go to a party with one of the gals, and I said, “Oh, I’m not going to go.” And then her oldest friend from high school—I thought she would never leave, but she finally left. Because she was also interested in Juliana and hadn’t officially— (all laugh)

JS: No. I don’t think anybody else in the group, other than (...). We were just women playing sports at that point, (laughs) except for Katherine (laughs) and (...).

KK: Because I had—I knew. So that night, after everyone had finally left, I sat down with her and I said, “We need to have a talk, because I don’t understand exactly what you’re doing.” So, I told her I was gay.

JS: Oh, well. Yeah, that little talk.

KK: Yeah, that was the talk. And I didn’t know what she was or why I was getting that “ooh” feeling. And not long after that, she spent the night and never went home.

JS: Just moved in! (laughs)

KK: She slept in my Bullwinkle J. Moose² t-shirt, which I still have. (laughs) And that’s why her sister—’cause she was living with her sister at that point. Her sister covered for us so many times—because her mom would call and say, “Can I speak to Juliana?” “She just stepped out. I think she went to get gas.” And so, she would call our house and my apartment, and Juliana would call her mom to keep the story straight.

That was a time of exploration for you, for sure, and it was all good for me. We really did get lucky. We’re very different.

JS: Yes, we are.

KK: And you know, people don’t stay the same, although in my head I’m still twenty-six. Sometimes when I bend over to pick something up, then I know I’m not twenty-six anymore. Juliana has definitely grown and changed, and I have a little—

JS: Yeah.

KK: But the trick is to grow and change together, because it would be so easy for both of us—because we have different interests—to go off and do our own thing.

² Bullwinkle J. Moose is a character from the 1959-1964 animated television series *The Bullwinkle Show*.

JS: Which we do.

KK: Which we do a lot, yeah, because we have different interests. And that's fine. But you can grow apart real easily. And I know Juliana has said this to me ten thousand times, "I thought after twenty years or twenty-five years, we shouldn't have to manipulate our relationship. We should be on cruise control at this point because we love each other. We shouldn't have to continue to work on the relationship." But oh, no—that's not the way it works! (laughs) And thank heavens. I mean—she pushes.

(dog barks)

I'm not one who likes to talk about differences that we have, different ideas and things like that. So, it's hard to get me to sit down and talk about stuff. Not like this.

JS: Yeah, I was going to say this is amazing that she's doing this! (laughs)

KK: Oh, it is? Well, okay. But she pushes it, you know? "We have to talk about this. We have to sit down." And she's right! So we do, and then, of course, I'm whining and moaning and groaning the whole way! But I'm getting better.

JS: Well, you are now, in the last what, how many hundred years? (all laugh)

KK: How long have you been here? (all laugh)

JS: She's getting better and better! Can't wait till you leave! (laughs) No, I'm just teasing about that, because we don't have anything to talk about. We talked about it all, almost. (laughs)

KK: Yeah.

JM: So, that's the trick, huh? Lots of communication?

JS: Well, yeah. You really do have to have one person. If both of you aren't going to do it, then the other person has to have a full-time job of working through it. Not everything is easy. It's not easy being green. Just living with someone is not easy. Every day is different and new, and there's always a challenge.

KK: I can't tell you, it must have taken me at least twenty-five years to understand how Juliana thinks about things.

JS: Because she never wanted to. (all laugh)

KK: Well, no, I just didn't get it. Because we'd be talking about something and Juliana would say, "Well, if this was happening to me—" And of course my reaction is, "Well, this isn't about you. This is about—I'm just telling you something that happened at work

today.” It took a long time before I realized that she has to take it in and internalize it, and then talk about it the way she would have approached it before she can give a direct response to what I said. She goes through all that.

JS: I do.

JM: I do that a lot, too.

KK: So, I didn’t get that. So, my initial response is, “It’s not about you. I don’t even understand why you’re doing that.”

JS: That was very frustrating.

KK: It was frustrating for both of us, because she only knew that way to digest things. I didn’t have the patience.

JS: And all Katherine really wanted me to do was listen and say, “That’s right, darling.” (laughs)

KK: “That’s nice, dear.”

JS: Yeah, (laughs) “That’s nice, dear.” Because usually, you already have your answer. You don’t really want me to help. But when you do want me to think through it, you really like my approach. (laughs)

KK: Well, it just gives another perspective. Well, I do; I appreciate it because it’s a different perspective, because we think about things so differently.

JS: Oh, completely differently. And it’s good, because she reels me in. Sometimes when I’m doing that process, I just get carried away! (laughs) Well, I like it! For me, if you had to characterize the two of us, Katherine’s about the destination; I’m about the journey. I want to know it, see it, feel it, smell it. I want to be a part of it. But she wants to get there. (laughs) And I don’t mind that. I like the idea that someone—I need that.

KK: ’Cause you would never get there, that’s the thing. (all laugh)

JS: (mimicking) “Oh, look at this four leaf clover! Oh, look!”

KK: You might not be quite that bad. Listen, if you’re not going to enjoy it in the whole way, then why do it? I don’t go to a party to have a bad time. We just have a different way of looking at the world. The good news is we kind of balance each other with that. It’s a good thing. She would say, “Get Over It, Bitch!”

KK: G-O-I-B.

JM: (laughs)

JS: G.O.I.B. That's what she would—at first, I didn't like it. This was twenty-five years ago.

KK: Oh, no, it was much more recent than that. (laughs)

JS: Oh, no, no, it's been going on that full time! (laughs) But now, I say it to her, to be honest with you. Because she gets caught up in—

KK: Some stupid thing. People say, “Oh, I've mellowed over the years.” And I keep waiting for that to happen! (JS laughs) Little things still annoy the poop out of me. And so, I do get caught on things.

JS: Yes, you do.

KK: So, yeah, she does—

JS: But now, I get to say it. But what I'm saying is that when she would say, “G.O.I.B.” I'm thinking, “Oh. Okay,” and it would kind of reel me in really fast. This time I don't have to enjoy the journey. (laughs) I should rethink how I'm approaching whatever it is. So, she helps me with that. I do appreciate that. I really do. (laughs)

KK: It's been interesting; a learning process all the way.

JS: Well, she had to go to—you went to some class, a set of classes through the government. And it was for these high-ranking people. But what they wanted to do was—these people were focused on end result and that was it, right?

KK: Mm-hm.

JS: End result. And the essence of the program was: the way you get a good end result is by one, taking care of yourself, your physical self; [two] taking care of the people that work for you; [three] thinking about the different ways that people think. And she was sitting in this “different ways people think” thing, and she went, “That's Juliana!” She called me and told me about it. And I thought, “Yeah.”

KK: It's what I've been trying to tell you for the last I don't know, how many years.

JS: I never got to the end.

KK: Right before I retired from the government—and this was unfortunate for the government—they sent me to this class, like Juliana said. It was a month-long residential thing in Charlottesville, Virginia. They were trying to make good leaders of the people who attended. So, it was like my last block to check before getting the next promotion. And then the next month, I found out I could retire early, so I went, after they spent ten

thousand dollars on me. But I got a lot of out of that program. It was pretty amazing. It's mind, body, soul; it's everything.

The other thing I learned, besides Juliana, is that I'm so Type-A³. Beyond help, beyond help! Because they offered a counselor you could go talk to. And I did—shoot, it's a resource, I'm going to use it! And she said, "I don't even know how I could help you." (laughs)

JM: That's not what you want to hear!

KK: Well, no, really.

JS: She's (inaudible).

KK: I don't have a relax mode. I don't have that. If there's a half an hour, I'm going to find something to do in that half an hour and make use of that time. So, it's good to know that there's a reason for that, I guess. (laughs)

And that's why it's about the destination. Get me there. And I want to be there and then come home. And just a shopping trip would be an example. Going to Wal-Mart, I would walk in, get what I need, I'm done. I'll meet you at the cash—

JM: Everybody does that at Wal-Mart, I think.

JS: Not me!

JM: Oh, really? (all laugh)

JS: (mimicking) "Oh, what's here? What's here?"

KK: She wants to look around. And if she's in that look around mode, then I don't go, because it drives me crazy. I'll be waiting.

But anyway, I digress. It was a very interesting class, and you really learn a lot about yourself.

JS: It was. That was the best thing she did in our entire time together. Go away to school— (laughs)

KK: Yes.

JS: —to learn about yourself. Which was really—

KK: Interesting. It was.

³ Referring to the Type A and Type B personality theory. People with Type A personalities are supposed to be high-achieving, impatient, competitive, obsessed with work, et cetera.

JS: Now, what did we—what else? (laughs) I know we just have gone—

KK: Are we to question two yet? (all laugh)

JS: Sorry.

JM: No, this is great! This is all really good, too. Don't rush or apologize.

So, I guess I'll just start asking more questions about the neighborhood and your first impressions of it. I was wondering where you lived before you moved here? What was it like there, and were there any open couples or, I guess, even individuals, where you were at? Did you feel supported at all where you used to live?

JS: We were very fortunate, like I said, from day one. Katherine had a circle of friends that were lesbians and they did multiple things together. So, I was included in that group, as you can be initially. But that's also evolved. And though we've maintained contact with most of those people, they moved out of the area. But a lot of my friends from high school (laughs) happen to be lesbians as well. We still do things with those people, and have always felt relatively accepted. We go to the Pride marches—not often when I was working, because all I could see was my face on the *Washington Post*. (laughs)

KK: On the six o'clock news, and her father would have a coronary.

JS: My father would have a coronary, yeah. Let's see—before moving here, yes. I loved my life, my friends, yes; my family.

KK: But I will say we've been in the same house in Virginia for almost twenty-four years, and over the time that we've been there, there are several neighbors that have been there as long, or nearly as long, as we have. And when we first moved in, the first day we moved there the woman next door asked if we were a couple. And I was shocked.

JS: And I said something to the effect of—'cause this was my standard answer—"Gee. You know, if those types of rumors got out, you could cost someone their job." (laughs) And so, she didn't ask us again, but she knew.

KK: She knew.

JS: Yeah. And we still maintain contact; she moved to Arkansas. We still hear from her at least every Christmas, if not more.

KK: Yeah. And because of what happened with that student, Juliana—

JS: It changed everything.

KK: —has said things to several neighbors, and they're totally cool about it. I don't know if they're purposely being polite.

JS: I don't think so. I think (...)—I think each of our neighbors has had the opportunity to know us as individuals first, and then we've been invited for dinners as a couple at least a couple of times.

KK: But I would say, we grew up in the sixties [1960s]. We were working in the seventies [1970s], our first jobs. And nobody was out. It was just not cool to be out.

JS: It wasn't that it wasn't cool; it wasn't accepted to be out.

KK: Right. And so, we did what we had to do, whether it was in the neighborhood or wherever it was. But things have really changed, due to younger generations coming behind us and being much more liberated. Because times are changing, and you can be.

Finding this community—Juliana just found it on the Internet; she just went searching—and we came down here and looked. And then we looked around some other places that were like fifty-five [years of age] and over type places, and we kept coming back here. I think we came back here two more times after our first visit because we were just so drawn to the community.

JS: Well, just the thought that you could hold hands if you wanted to. Or hug. Or, like, when she leaves on her trips, I can go out to the car and give her a kiss when she's leaving. Or the little things that are everyday life for the people across the street in Virginia. We don't have that option. So, we have that option here. And that portion of the community having been developed that embraces that.

Yes, I knew as soon as we drove in, drove around. We asked the guy across the street, "Could I just come in and look at your house?" because I didn't know what the houses were like, and didn't know anything about them. And he explained that there are three different types of models, and showed us his entire house. He was very nice about it. Because we knew it was a gay community, I knew that he had a partner. [His partner] wasn't home at the time, it was just (...), but it was one of those things where he was, "Yeah, come on!" No big deal.

KK: Very welcoming. And I think one of the most attractive parts of this community is that you're not just buying a house, you're buying a community, because there are so many social gatherings.

And there's some people who don't participate at all in anything. There's one man—I think I've only seen him three times, ever. That's their choice, though. They could go if they wanted to. Almost everybody at some point in the year has an event where everyone's invited. And it really is wonderful.

We're like some of the youngest people here. A lot of the people are in their seventies or eighties. But I just think it's wonderful. It's relaxing. This may be one of your later questions—it also has a small-town thing where everybody knows what everybody else is doing and with whom.

JM: Do you mean just here in the neighborhood or in the town in general?

KK: In the neighborhood, in our community, yeah. The beauty of it is that where we were we should be, in terms of being with other older gays.

But that piece about everybody knowing your business—when I leave and come back everyone says, “Well, how was your trip?” I mean, everyone! Everybody talks. It's kind of nice. But my sister came to visit last winter and she said, “Oh, this would drive me crazy.” Because you know, you look out the window: “Oh, there goes so-and-so.” It's just—you can't help it! There you are, there they are. And so everybody knows. If you're a private person, like my sister is very private, it would just make you crazy.

So, that part of it, and getting involved in the little internal-squabble type things, you know. This group of people wants this to happen, and this group of people would never even think of that. It's like a microcosm of a small town. We're not even a town; we're just a community of forty homes or something. So, we have that feel. To me, it's not a turn-off. I think to other people it might be a turn-off. I kind of like it.

JS: I like it. I don't know that I'm crazy about it being so, you know—everything's so visual. Everybody knows truly—like when Katherine went away. “Well, when will Katherine be back?” Or, “I heard you had a cold,” and Katherine may have mentioned it to them.

KK: So, they feel compelled to invite her over for dinner—

JS: When she's not here.

KK: And she's, like, thinking, “Damn! I have five minutes to myself!” (all laugh)

JS: I don't have to worry about what Katherine wants to do, or entertain her, or anything! This is good! (laughs) And then everybody wants—and they're being very sweet, mind you; it's very, very dear.

JM: Sometimes just a little bit too much.

JS: Yeah. If you grow up in a metropolis, a metropolitan area—you're just kind of an entity that kind of moves around. Like on our block at home, we knew faces. It took us a while wanting to know names. And then, to get to actually know them, it took years.

Here, because we have the most important facet of our lives that's been closeted for so long, there's an instant open space that seems like it allows you to become friends and

neighbors and everything that can go along with it—and not-so-neighbors—very quickly. It's very compressed. One, we don't have that much time left. (laughs) By the time you get here, this is a retirement area! (laughs) So, you've kind of given up a lot of those restrictions that you placed on yourself early on in relationships. So, you concentrate on—there are only a couple of folks, I'll put it that way—how's that?

KK: That's polite.

JS: No, it's only a couple that I got to know a little too fast, a little too quickly. And it would have been better to take more time, because—it just would have been. (laughs)

But, other than that—I love everyone. I love that we can just do a third of a mile in fifteen minutes, or less than fifteen minutes, with the dogs. And sometimes it's over an hour because people come out to chat. And that's how all of the communication happens, because we do move around in the community. It doesn't look like it.

JM: I noticed that—those people out walking their dogs.

JS: Yeah. And people come out their houses, bring dog biscuits, so that—not just so that they can meet the dogs, they want to know how your day is going. So, a dog walk can take to ten minutes to an hour.

JM: Difficult to plan for sometimes though.

JS: Mm-hm. It's quite something.

KK: Yes. Another thing that people have just done, not in the community plans or anything; like (...) and (...), who you met. (...) had a heart attack, and (...) didn't know what to do. And it took three or four days before he finally called an ambulance, and he had to be talked into that.

Once we knew—because they're so private—once we knew that they were going through this, everybody said, “We're going to fix dinner for you.” And every couple of nights someone would take them a complete meal. And they were just overwhelmed by the kindness—which they probably would have experienced if they had been more social. But that was their choice to stay to themselves, and they have friends outside of the community that they do things with.

And now, we've done that since we've been here a couple of different times, just helping each other out. And we're some of the only people that walk the whole development. The people that live in the back part just do that loop. But when one of them is sick, a couple of other people jump in and come and walk their dogs for them. Make sure that they have what they need, you know? So it's a very caring, kind community that—even where we are in Virginia, I don't know that people would go to that extent.

And part of it, I think, is stage in life. When we first moved into that house, we were both working full time. And when you're working and whatever you're doing, you're busy. You're busy all the time. You don't have time to stop and chat with the neighbors. Here, not everyone's retired, but probably 75 percent of the people are retired. So, they have the time to come out and just chat.

JM: So true. I don't even know who my neighbors are.

KK: Right, exactly!

JM: I moved in two weeks ago, and nobody came out with a cake or anything.

KK: Oh!

JM: No, I mean, you don't expect anything, especially—

JS: Not anymore.

JM: —because it's an apartment complex. I think those are different, too.

JS: Mm. Yeah. Mm-hm.

JS: It's a change in stage in life.

One of the things that was built into the community that helped us get to know people was that you're supposed to ask someone within the community to be your house-buddy. So if you're out of the area, one, you then have to kind of find somebody that you're going to link up with. Once you find those people or that person, then they have your keys. So if—like, when we're in the D.C. area; since we're moving down here, I'm trying to get used to saying, "This is home." And so, when we're in the D.C. area, if something happens, then our house-buddy can come in let the air conditioner guy come in, or the electrician, or whatever has to happen, happen.

Just a small incident was last time we left. We left, and one of us had left the freezer door open on the refrigerator. Everything just melted and—

KK: Stunk.

JS: Yeah. And we were having this gentleman come in, who also lives in the community, come in to start building some things for us, the cabinetry. And he—

JM: Oh, nice. Someone here built that?

JS: Yes. From IKEA. Isn't that lovely?

JM: Oh! Yeah.

JS: He took pieces, parts, and just put it together.

KK: He's amazing.

JS: It was really amazing. We got to watch most of that go up.

He, in turn, called us to let us know. But through the community network, which was within minutes, probably, our house-buddy knew, came down and she, thankfully—after he had frozen the stuff, he closed the door so the stuff refroze—and she pulled it out and put it in a bag. And then before she went away, one of the other neighbors came in and threw it in the trash so it didn't stink up the trashcan. (whispers) It was horrible! Oh, my goodness! But thank God we had a house-buddy! We were very fortunate about that.

KK: So that, you know ties you again—

JS: —to another person in the community.

JM: Everybody here has a house-buddy, just about? Yeah?

KK: Yeah.

JS: Yeah. No. Not just about, everyone does.

JM: Wow. Do they tell you when you move in you should do it?

KK: Yes, and we have a directory that has all the residents. It has your birthday, your anniversary.

JS: We get to have our anniversary published.

JM: How sweet. That's really neat.

KK: And it says who your house-buddy is, so that if you're away and someone else sees oh, a tree fell over, then they know who to call, who's your house-buddy, so they can do whatever has to be done.

Last summer, a huge—we were here in July, and after we left, a huge tree limb off one of those—what do you call them? Live oaks?

JS: Live oak trees.

KK: —came down. It was huge! I mean, nobody could have lifted it. So, they had to get the lawn service guys to come in and saw up the pieces and take it out. But they did!

JS: They took pictures of it.

KK: Oh, yeah, they e-mailed us a picture. (laugh)

JS: And (...), our neighbor next door—well, we're very fortunate with our neighbors. We are very, very fortunate. But the guys—both of these sets of guys are so private. They really, really are. But they've been very welcoming to us. We've been very fortunate with our neighbors. We're very extraordinarily lucky.

This group of guys on this little neighborhood here, where there are only five of us, five women. So, we kind of get together and do some things. But you know, we get together with the guys in the back, actually, more—the girls in the back.

KK: Yeah, there are more women back there.

JM: And there are sometimes events for women and sometimes events for men?

JS: Yeah, sometimes. But then sometimes the back area does things by themselves. Rarely do we as a group up here, because this is the older section. Some of these people have been here since the beginning. There are good parts about that, and then there are bad parts, because they want it to stay true to what the mission statement was. And it's been ten years and things have evolved. It's time to make some changes.

JM: What kind of things do you think have evolved?

JS: Well, just the one instance that I would point out would be the rent. Is that how you are?

KK: Mm-hm.

JS: When you purchase in the front area, you're purchasing—it's a condo. It's supposed to be a condo, but you're also purchasing the land that's under the ground. But within our condo docs, they also said that we can't rent out these areas for some reason or other. The main reason that homeowners state is that they don't want it to go to pot—you know, want to get really junky homeowners in here.

KK: Plus, they want to make sure—because we could rent it to anyone. It might not be a gay person.

JM: Right.

JS: See, I wouldn't consider renting it not to a gay person.

KK: But that's the potential thing, and that's one of the reasons they don't want to change that. But the market is such that—

JS: We have three houses, four houses, within our community right now that have—well, three of them are in foreclosure, right? Which is sad. I mean, how horrible is that? And had those people had the option of renting, even if it was to straight people—

KK: They wouldn't have lost their homes.

JS: They wouldn't have lost their homes, yeah.

JM: Do you think that would have been okay, though, or would it have changed the community too much?

JS: Well, the community is going to change. And yes, I know I wouldn't want this not to stay a gay and lesbian only community. I want it to be marketed that way. I don't want that to be a private part of it. So, people if they moved in to rent, they would have to know. Because we have to live together, you know, in a lot of ways.

But if it's the difference between the people that I hold as friends losing their house, and allowing straight people to change the dynamics of our community, I guess I'd want to go with what they want. If they want to rent, then I would say that they should have that option—personally.

KK: Yeah. Now, in the back area, they can rent, and they can screen the renters.

JS: But, they also—through their process; don't own the land that's underneath of their duplexes. It's an usual kind of setup.

KK: Yeah, it's weird. And of course, for a long time there was the front guys, and they were all buds and the people in the back were considered extras. And there wasn't a push to sort of draw the community together.

JS: To join. So, we were two separate areas in its own way. But that's evolving, too.

KK: That's changing. We're starting to be more of a single community. But that's because of the people who are making sure to be inclusive.

JS: Yeah.

KK: If you invite people over, it's everybody. Those people who don't choose to participate, that's fine. But at least they have the option.

JS: What they do is invite their own—the people who don't go to the all-inclusive things. And we want to belong. We came here because we wanted to be part of a community.

KK: So, it works for us. The other people that are here who just keep to themselves, I have to ask myself, "If all you wanted to do was sit inside your house and not associate with anyone, why did you bother to move here? What was the point?"

JS: Because that's what they want. As far as I'm concerned, that's all you need to know.

JM: That's very different from what drew you here, which was this sense of community, it sounds like.

JS: Yeah. It's interesting. And people come from just all walks of life. So many different—it's really quite interesting. The stories you hear here. You hear some good stories.

KK: Yeah, I think I told you at the party we have two former nuns. Pat [Landry] is one of them, who you're going to talk to; and then Rebecca [Heart], who you met at the party.

JM: I don't think Pat even mentioned that! (laughs)

KK: She has a picture. Get her to show it to you. She has a picture of herself in a [nun's] habit.

Okay, did we answer your question? (laughs)

JM: Yeah. Do you mind we pause for second?

KK: Sure.

pause in recording

JM: March fifth, part two. Talking with Juliana Sabine and Katherine Kline.

So, how would you describe the neighborhood as a whole, in terms of the kind of people who live here?

JS: I would say interesting, and as vibrant as we can be at this stage in the game. (laughs) Open. Willing to try anything. I mean, many of us are starting sporting activities—you know, kayaking. We never had access to that type of thing. Some miss the mountains and riding their bikes in the mountains, and different things like that. But finding different—open for anything is pretty much the way I'm seeing it right now.

KK: It's interesting. There have been—I don't know if this is exactly right, but at least that I know of—three residents who have passed away. One, (...)’s partner before we came here, but then one gentleman who lived by himself. And then at the end of the street, (...) passed away about a year and a half ago. And so, it brings you right back to—feet on the ground reality that this is a retirement community. As people age and/or become ill, we're going to lose residents.

You experience that—maybe not you because you're so young—but most of us have lost our parents. Juliana's lucky to still have her mom around. And so, you're going through

that with your peers now for the first time, which is really tough, I think. Again, community members rally to support the partner who's left, or whatever the situation might be. To just be there, whether it's to take them to the doctor, go to the store, bring food, whatever. People are right there to do it, so the community's exceptionally supportive.

Rebecca, who was a nurse, is one of those people who has an ability to reach out to everyone in a way that's good for that person. I think it's wonderful. And she's the first one there. "How can I help you?" It's just been a really good community feeling because of that.

JS: Oh, because of that, and the potlucks. Each time you go it's another little piece that you—it's a big puzzle, the community. Each time you make those contacts, you add another piece, either about a person or a couple, or however you want to look at the entire picture.

We're still learning. It just takes time. Everything takes time. It's amazing how quickly we have grown to know people here. We don't know everything about them. Everybody comes without a past until they want to talk about it, which is kind of nice. Most of us are kind of—even Katherine, Type-A—is relatively laid back. You know, relative of when you were.

KK: You know, we have a bigger house in Virginia. If I see something, I have to do something about it. I'm either out scooping poop or I'm dusting. I'm doing something.

JS: As a result, I don't have to do any of those things.

JM: (laughs)

KK: Yes.

JS: (laughs) Well, actually, that's not true.

KK: There's just less of that to do here, because the house is so small. Although, I do sweep the floor about four hundred times a day.

JS: Yes, she does. (laughs)

JM: I hope I didn't bring in too much, uh— (laughs)

JS: Please! These guys [dogs] are little dust magnets!

KK: They bring it in. Paw prints everywhere.

I think it's a wonderful community. I don't know, because I don't have the experience, if

we would have felt the same if we moved into a different small community that was an over fifty-five.

JS: Yeah. It really could be the much same type of attitude, you know?

KK: Everyone's relatively at the same stage in their life and their work life and their children if—'cause a lot of people here are parents and grandparents. Just like any other community. That part to me is interesting, too. You know, it took you how many years to figure this out? (laughs) What your true preference is.

JS: Yeah, but still. Sometimes it takes time. Social norms are killers. They're so repressive in terms of how you really want to feel, or be, or whatever. If you're not within—between the lines—

JM: I think it's also, maybe—sometimes, you know, you'll talk to people, and they say that, "Well, I wanted a family," and that's the way that they're able to do that. So it's unfortunate, because it's set up like you can have a family or you can have, you know, a loving relationship. Hopefully, that's something that—I hope that it's changing. It seems that it is. We talked about this with your mom. Just that there's more options now, which I think—which I'm really grateful for. But I know it's still difficult.

KK: Not in Florida, but I guess in other states you can adopt a child. Or make your own, whatever. We know some people who have either adopted children or have had their own through artificial insemination. Times are changing, and you can have it all, I think. It's just how much you can handle in your life.

JM: Right. Yeah, but definitely still difficult, cause it's not just about the insemination or the adoption process—that would be difficult, but also the school and teachers and everything.

KK: "Jessica has two mommies," sort of thing.

JS: Isn't that an actual book?

JM: Oh, I don't know. It could be.

JS: Somebody has two mommies.⁴ (laughs)

I'll never forget when I was—gosh, it had to have been fifteen years ago. I was working at Key Elementary School [Washington D.C.]. They had coerced me into being the coach for this little girls' soccer team. Six-year-olds, who want go out in the field and look at the—

KK: Buttercups!

⁴ *Heather Has Two Mommies*, a children's book written by Leslea Newman and published in 1989.

JS: —buttercups. (mimicking) “Look, Miss Sabine!” (all laugh) You know, they could care less about following the ball around, but their dads want them to get out and play soccer.

So, I’m out there, and here comes [one student]’s mom. “It’s about time they have a women’s coach.” And then come to find out, [that student] has two moms! (laughs) It was an interesting time. That was, like, fifteen years ago. It’s an interesting thing, how you have to have the people who are out there in the beginning. And that was a good thing. That was a wonderful thing. I immediately felt a little warmer towards that child. (laughs)

But around here—your question was how we feel about this community, right? That was the last question you asked us. And I feel wonderful about it. I don’t think—even though I do feel as though it’s a microcosm, and sometimes it gets in the way with my head, because I hate knowing other things that really I don’t need to know about other people.

JM: You just mean sort of like gossip and that sort of thing?

JS: I don’t like that at all. But it happens, and when it happens, I let it go. But that part aside, I love it. I love being around men and not having to worry about the men hitting on me. I’m sure you’re the same way about it.

KK: Yeah, because they’re so much fun.

JS: Oh, these guys! Yeah, we very, very much enjoy our neighbors. The guys in the back, we have some very youthful fellows—younger than we are—around about. They’ve been very sweet about going to Ybor City (JM laughs) and doing different things together. I don’t know what they’re doing, but I know I’m just enjoying the friendship.

The fact that we’re thrown into this place, we allowed ourselves to be placed in this place. We’ve chosen this place, and we’re accepting it. And I don’t need to know anything bad about anybody here. You know? (laughs) I don’t want to know anything. I don’t want any of that to go along with it. It’s going to, and that’s okay, and I’ll deal with it as it happens. But I like this community.

KK: When we first came here, we decided to have an open house, because we only knew the gals down the street, Abigail [Carr] and Matilda, because they moved in about the same time we did. When we first started coming down, we hadn’t really moved in totally, but we’re here a lot more than we were back then. So, we didn’t know who was here, because in the summertime a lot of people are gone. They do six months here and six months somewhere else. So, we just went around and put the invitation in everyone’s mailbox.

JM: Oh, that’s great!

KK: And people came! And we were so happy that they came, but I guess if you offer free food and wine, people show up! (all laugh)

JS: Somebody's gonna show up! It could get in the wrong hands, though! (laughs)

KK: After that, a couple of different couples had dinners for us so we could meet people who weren't here during the summer. So, I felt—I think we both felt welcomed right away.

JS: From the start.

KK: Which—you know, you were saying with your apartment, you don't know who your neighbors are. And that's very typical. And so, we have much more than that here, which is really wonderful.

JS: And part of that, like you said, has to do with our age. It just has to do with the fact that it is a retirement community. Aging folk.

KK: In Virginia one of our neighbors—all three of their kids are in college now. So, their home life is more settled. And in fact, she and her husband have joked with each other, "Oh, my God. Now we have to talk to each other!" (KK and JS laugh) There's no kids to buffer. And they're just kidding because they're a really cute couple. But now they have the time to come stand in the middle of the street and chat for ten or fifteen minutes, where before, they were taking this one here and that one there. Stage of life; what you have time for.

This is just wonderful. Almost any time of any day you can knock on someone's door, as you did when you first came in, and, "Come on in! Sit down! Let's talk!"

JM: I was really lucky that worked out! (all laugh)

KK: That was very brave.

JS: Yeah, that was.

JM: I felt really funny about it. I didn't know if that was okay to do.

JS: Well, here, yeah.

KK: I think just knocking on someone's door when you don't know them is pretty scary, because I'm basically a shy person. So, that you did that and found out, "Oh, come on in. Yeah, sure sit down."

JM: I was really nervous. I thought you could have easily said, "What are you doing? You're upsetting our dogs! Get out of here!" (laughs)

JS: Everything upsets our dogs. But you didn't know that. (laughs)

KK: You were amazing.

JS: Yes, you were.

JM: Thanks.

KK: It turned out to all have been a good thing. I mean, what a nice way to lay the groundwork for what you wanted to do: see first if the people are going to be willing to even talk to you.

JM: Or, if you think it could, you know? Because I talked to people who felt like, "Yeah this is really important," and, "Yeah, we're happy to." I felt that there was a need and a want on your end, too. It wasn't just me saying, "I think this is really important," because I think it's important for you and important for me. I feel like it's really—I feel really good about doing it, and I want to do a really good job. It's a project we're building together.

KK: Right. You're the next generation—or maybe the second generation—carrying the torch that, "Hey, we're just like everyone else!" You know?

I'll never forget—this goes outside of your question again, but Maria Shriver did a thing on T.V.—where I don't know if it was *20/20* or one of those shows—where she went up to Boston [Massachusetts] and interviewed several gay couples, men and women. Some had kids, some didn't. And she would go and spend the day with them. And they went to the supermarket; they went to the dry cleaners—

JM: What, you mean they're normal? (laughs)

KK: Exactly! They mowed the lawn. And she said, "You know, I didn't know what to expect. This is kind of boring." (laughs) And they said, "Well, yeah! It's just normal everyday stuff that everyone does. That's what we do! You know, in the bedroom it might be a little different, but otherwise, we're just normal people. We do normal things." But people don't realize that. And it almost takes—I found this at work—people really need to know you and know that you're okay, you can carry your weight; you're not some weirdo. Like my nephew, when he finally came out he had a t-shirt: "I'm here, I'm queer, get used to it!" And he wore that to work! Oh, my God, I would never have done that.

JM: Where does he work that he can wear t-shirts? (laughs)

JS: Yeah, exactly!

KK: He works the midnight to 8:00 AM shift at a credit union. So there was like nobody there, and he could do that.

But it's you guys coming along behind us. Yes, the people in our generation have laid the groundwork for some of the social movements and changes in the laws and things like that, but you guys have to pick up where we leave off, because a lot of people—especially the older people here—are not going to go picket. They're not going to have a demonstration or a sit-in. I think a lot of us would, because we're still—we still feel that strongly and want to do it for ourselves and for the people coming behind us.

But you hear too many stories, still, about suicides because, "I feel different. I know I'm not like everyone else. My family can't accept me." We don't want that. Having this community is just so wonderful. It's just amazing.

Unfortunately, the housing crisis has put a crimp in us finishing building our development. The same thing has happened for RainbowVision,⁵ another—I think, isn't that Billie Jean King;⁶ she's behind that?

JM: I've heard about that, but I'm not sure.

KK: Yeah. I know one other gay community—I don't know which one, 'cause I didn't follow it up and read about it—but they've gone bankrupt because of the housing crisis, not because there aren't people that want to live in those communities. It's just an unfortunate coincidence. So, only a handful—what two or three or four gay communities in the whole country, and that's really sad. There are certainly more people than that.

But then we had two guys, one of the houses that has gone into foreclosure. They moved to be closer to one's job, and they live in a normal community. So, they gave up this gay community feeling for practical reasons.

JM: Unfortunately, it's set up such that this can't be practical for some people, because there aren't enough of them. So, I think, it's a simple solution. It's about getting people on board and that sort of thing. Sorry for interjecting.

JS: No, no. You're right. I want to go back to the way you were thinking about people feeling—the kids feeling like they have to do. I feel as though it's just kind of change. It just happens, and then there becomes a sense of entitlement because if you don't know the history that goes before, and you're where you are, and you're doing what you need to do—I don't think the picketing and all, what you were saying, necessarily has to happen as often and as openly, because I feel as though there's a change. It's moving. It's change and the nature of change that is the impetus at this point.

I don't think that there's going to be—this is just personal, this has no documented reasoning, but I believe change is here. It's going to continue. I don't think that people

⁵ RainbowVision Properties, Inc. is a corporation that develops LGBT-oriented retirement communities.

⁶ King is associated with the Billie Jean King Fitness Centers, which are part of RainbowVision's Santa Fe and Palm Springs communities.

are going to have to get out there. I mean, Prop 8⁷ today is being voted on, right? [Kenneth] Starr is trying to stop—to negate all of the marriages—⁸

KK: That took place in California.

JS: —that took place in California. Isn't today the actual day? You know, you can get out, but you can't change—I believe that there's so much embeddedness in a religious way of life. Until that part gets woven into, and people start realizing that yes, religion's there for a reason and it's a spiritual thing, and you need to become raptured by that part of you, but not condemn others because they aren't caught up in your rapture. That type of change needs to happen more now, and that's more personalized. And those kind of segments of our society—I don't know for sure, but that's really distressing to me. I believe we are a religion motivated, structured, focused society. Everything that we do, whether we realize it or not, has come from some religious thing that's embedded so deeply in our brains. We can't stop ourselves. (laughs) That's really ugly.

JM: Remind me when, maybe later when we're just chatting, to talk to you about—you've heard of what's called the Protestant work ethic?⁹

JS: Mm-hm.

JM: Yeah. Then you know a little about it. Well, I thought it was fascinating. It's something I only recently learned, just the idea that—so, back in—it wasn't Protestantism, it was (inaudible)? Do you know the name of the original religion? I can't think of it.¹⁰

KK: No, I don't.

JM: There was, like, a sect of Christianity in Europe where, you know, people are dying of the bubonic plague, and things like that—and everyone's thinking, How do you find meaning in your life when everyone's dying? How we can be good? How can we be saved? People were really eager to have this question answered. So at that time, what the preachers were telling people was, Well, I guess if you're rich, that probably means God likes you. So, if you're making money, then that means you're preordained; you're saved. Probably money would be—he wouldn't just give money to people; nobody really has

⁷ Proposition 8 was a California ballot proposition on the November 4, 2008 election that eliminated same-sex couples' right to marry, which the California Supreme Court had allowed earlier that year. The proposition passed and became effective on November 5, 2008.

⁸ JS is referring to *Strauss v. Horton*, a lawsuit challenging Proposition 8. Kenneth Starr represented the proposition's supporters. Oral arguments were heard on March 5, 2009, but the court did not render its decision until May 26, 2009. Proposition 8 was upheld, but the 18,000 marriages already performed remain valid. The day the verdict was issued, proposition opponents filed *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, a federal case which will go to trial in January 2009.

⁹ JM is referring to a concept from Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

¹⁰ Calvinism, which is a theological system that had a major effect on the Protestant Reformation. JM goes on to describe the Calvinist concept of predestination.

money. So, probably having money is a good thing. Some people were working hard at that because they felt like, Oh, this shows me that God has looked out for me.

KK: Provides.

JM: So then it was a different sort of—it wasn't working for the big house, a fancy car, or that, it was working to just say, Oh, I have success; this means I have a sense of security. And over time, you know, that's completely changed, and shifted, and warped into, like, this capitalistic work ethic, which is we have been working towards, traditionally, these things that we felt—at one time it was salvation, and now it's warped into the—you know, it's the—

KK: Material—

JM: The “something” just before that, you know what I mean? It's split the common factor.

KK: Yeah. One of the points Juliana was trying to make was the feeling of entitlement.

JS: Oh, yeah, there's that.

KK: I don't think there's anyone our age—and that's probably a bad generalization—who feels—

JS: We were already entitled. Each generation has a bulk of entitlement that's packed into either their family or society. So, we just have huge stacks of entitlement. But, go ahead.

KK: Okay, but that's not where I was going.

JS: But you were saying that you didn't think that your generation—

KK: I don't think that people our age and older feel an entitlement for marriage, let's say. We feel socially that we should have the same rights as heterosexual couples, in terms of—if I'm in intensive care, Juliana's not a family member, so she can't get in to see me. Those are the current hospital rules, although some hospitals are really good about that sort of stuff. But I think the younger kids coming up feel that they're entitled to all those rights which people have been trying to get for at least forty years, just the recognition that you are a couple, and as a couple you should have the right to—when I die, I want Juliana to have everything, not my brother and my sister, because she's my significant other.

So, there's a—is that sort of what you were trying to say? There are a lot of things that the younger generations didn't have to fight for—like the Gay-Straight Alliance club in your high school, for example. That would never have happened back when we went to high school. But now, kids are still pushing for it. It's not in every school, but it's one of those things that's become a common practice.

JM: Do you think it's good that it's being pushed for? Or when you say entitlement, do you sort of feel that people aren't respectful and not noticing the work that it took previously?

KK: I think that's part of it, that they feel like they should have that right. I still feel like—and I don't know if this is right or wrong—I still feel like we're a minority, and we're not the average, everyday person. We're what, 10 percent or less of the population? And we need to be respectful of the fact that not everyone's good with that, with knowing that you're homosexual and that's the lifestyle that you lead; it makes other people uncomfortable.

I know from my nephew's perspective, "Too bad, too sad. You can't deal with it, this is who I am. I'm not going to try to be somebody different for you or anyone else." You know? I don't know if I'm expressing it really well, but—

JM: I think so. It sounds to me like you're talking about the dichotomized strategies. On one end, there's people who, rather than being closeted or ashamed or anything, they're sort of maybe in-your-face. And then on the other hand, there's the [people who] don't want to upset anyone, and maybe even err on the side of hurting themselves by being private.

KK: Yes. Yes.

JM: I think those are definitely laid out as completely polarized options for what we have available within public discourse.

KK: Right, and everyone is somewhere on that continuum of out-ness or not out-ness.

JM: Where do you think you guys fall on that continuum, and do you think it's shifted since you've moved here?

JS: It hasn't shifted since we moved here, but it's—on the continuum? I'd say that we're—for being old farts, we're doing okay.

KK: We're pretty open with everyone. I think for me—and I've expressed this for longer in years than Juliana has—it's hard for me to be a friend, really a friend, if the other person doesn't know who I really am. And so, I let people know who I was or what I was way before she did. But now, as a couple—and I agree, it has nothing to do with us being here; this was just an amazing find—but over time, we're individually and as a couple much more comfortable about who we are. And—go ahead.

JS: I will just say that in the beginning, we could have cared less. It didn't—(laughs) I mean, I didn't even care in the beginning, when—

KK: To be out, you mean?

JS: Well, we were very open in the beginning. It's very hard not to touch each other and to be—want to go places and all of that. But then we realized it was for the long term, I think, and it was just one of those things that was kind of: “Hm. It's real.” This isn't, you know, just going to be for a year or two or three. So, it became—I kind of receded, because—

JM: That's interesting—

JS: Yeah.

JS: —that it's not linear, it's not that you become more comfortable and blossoming over time—

JS: No.

JM: —that it's made you even more conservative.

JS: I did, and it was more protecting of what I considered my life's job and how my family felt about things. So, yes—I think when we first got together, when love blossoms, there's just no way you can contain it, I don't think. I really think it's a wonderful, wonderful thing. It's something that you fall back on, too, which is even better.

But when the reality sets in, and you realize this is for the long term, yes, I did. I pulled back. I was less willing for her to go out and say, “Well, hello. I'm Katherine and I'm gay.” (laughs) “I'm a lesbian.” No, I wasn't real thrilled about that. She would be more open about things like that. “Could we kind of settle? Let's make this so that both of us are comfortable.”

KK: (mimicking) “Who did you tell today?”

JS: Well, yeah, and that's what I would ask her. “Okay, so, tell me how your day went.” (laughs)

KK: And now I don't have to do it, because she does it.

JS: Cause I do it, yeah. And then, what happened when I told you about that experience with the child and then my family crisis, things just kind of fell into place. As soon as I let my parents know—excuse me, my mother know—I have not turned back since then, as far as my comfort about myself and who I care about and who I love. No, I don't have a problem with that at this point in my life. But yes, there was.

JM: I'm just curious. When you do find yourself telling people, what kinds of words do you use? Do you say, “I'm gay?” Do you say, “I'm a lesbian?” Do you have a preference?

JS: I don't say "queer." I never liked that word. I usually say, "This is my partner and we've been together for thirty-three years," or thirty years or twenty years or whatever it was at the time. I usually refer to Katherine as my partner. I do not say "lesbian," usually. I do not say "gay."

It usually—the only reason I tell someone is because they've asked me a question. I don't just, (mimicking) "Well, hi! This is my 'friend,' Katherine! She is my partner! I do love her!" No, I don't go right into it. She's usually my partner and I usually state the number of years, and that's that. And usually their mouths drop open and go, "Oh! Well, I guess you are friends!" (laughs) or something like that.

KK: (mimicking) "I guess you are close."

JS: Yeah, that's what that lady said. (mimicking) "I guess you are close!" (laughs)

KK: At the school.

JS: She was real cute about it. I mean, she was real cute. I've never had a bad, you know—I haven't had someone shoot fire at me, or get a nasty note afterwards. And I never really care whether I'm going to or not, to be honest with you, at this stage.

KK: I don't use the word "lesbian." During the time that I was in my teens and twenties, it was a bad word. It had a bad connotation. Just like "queer."

JS: Mm-hm.

JM: Right.

KK: "Lesbo."

JS: See, I didn't even know "lesbian" till Katherine and I got together. I didn't.

KK: And then, we have one friend whose mother thinks she's Lebanese.

JS: Yeah, she's Lebanese. (all laugh)

KK: Can't get the word right. "Lebanese." I tend to use the word "gay," because that was the word that was accepted way back then.

JS: And we know that's changed.

KK: And now we know that the men prefer to be called "gay" and the women prefer to be called "lesbians."

JS: Is that still the way? See, I don't know.

JM: I mean, the terms are hard to keep up with. I think to some extent—you know, you were talking about how painful it was to hear words like “queer.” Now, some people have taken on that word and sort of felt they can appropriate the meaning and change it for themselves, and they say “queer” in a way that’s empowering to them.

JS: Ah.

JM: And I’ve heard all kinds of words, people wanting to describe themselves.

JS: Okay, but like what?

JM: You know, like you’ll hear “boi,” like b-o-i: a more masculine woman.

KK: “Dyke” is the term.

JM: “Dyke.” Gosh, now I can’t—I don’t know, there’s just so many.

KK: “Boi.” See, I didn’t know that.

JS: Yeah, that’s good to know.

JM: It’s interesting. It may be generational.

KK: And the same with, almost, gender identity. I think back in the fifties [1950s] and the sixties [1960s], there were a lot of couples—men and women—who felt like one had to take on the persona of the male, and the other took on the persona of the female.

JS: But that’s changed a lot.

KK: Well, it has changed a lot—

JS: Thank goodness.

KK: —but there’s still people who do that. You’ll see—maybe you’ve seen in person; I tend to see it in a magazine. You know, one in a dress—whether it’s male or female, one in a dress, and one in a suit. And I never felt that way. I never felt like I wanted to—

JS: You just always wanted to be the suit!

KK: Well, yeah. (JS and KK laugh) I wanted to be a boy because there were so many advantages, like you could pee standing up.

JM: (laughs)

KK: Or outside.

JS: See, you do have gender identity!

KK: But I don't think I ever dressed in male clothing all the time.

JS: I wouldn't (inaudible).

KK: I dress to be comfortable. And whether I'm more masculine or more feminine, I only have what I have to work with. So, you know, I just dress to be comfortable.

JM: Right.

KK: And other people who we've known over the years have that gender—that role—not gender, but role identity, I think.

JS: Yeah, that was quite the thing. That's the way that group was.

KK: Yeah.

JM: They talk about how in the fifties [1950s] as part of, you know, the gay bar culture definitely developed into a butch/fem thing, where the people could recognize each other and a certain type of partner and that sort of thing.

JS: Is that right?

JM: And they talked about how it's waned, but then—I mean, I know a lot of couples that fit that stereotype.

JS: Well, and see, I don't see—

JM: I think it may be coming back. I don't know.

JS: Everything old is new. There you go. Nothing new under the sun.

KK: We have evolved—and it started off pretty early in our relationship—into, like, who does the cooking and who does the outside stuff. She's cooking, I'm outside.

JS: I don't like the heat. It had nothing to do with me being female or not. I never did it at home; my sister did it. (laughs)

KK: Right. And I enjoy cooking, but not every night. And I'm not that good at it, as Juliana can attest.

JS: No, you're very good at it. She can do it.

KK: I don't mind doing the dishes, and she doesn't like to do the dishes.

JS: I don't mind doing the dishes.

KK: So, we just—over time, you just get into a habit.

JS: A rhythm.

KK: Yeah.

JM: But you don't think that that expresses any sort of a gendered—you don't know that that's—

KK: I don't associate it that way. Yeah, I don't feel that way about it.

JS: But society does.

KK: Some people may.

JS: Society does, you know. And that's okay if they want to say that, but it doesn't matter.

KK: I dated, very briefly before I met Juliana, (JS laughs) a woman who was proud of being recognized as a male when she went to work each day: the way she dressed, the way she spoke.

JS: Who was this? Do you remember her name?

KK: Her name was (...), I think. And she lived up on Long Island—(in accent) “Long Island.” And she was getting ready to be in a Mr. Universe¹¹ contest, and we parted ways. That was just beyond what I was ready for at that time. And in a lot of ways, I don't get it. I try to understand it, but it's just like men who do drag. I try to understand it.

JS: But you find that interesting.

KK: I'm fascinated by it, and I love to see it. But I don't understand what's in their head that makes them feel they have to do that, you know? It's like being born in the wrong body. I never felt that. I just felt like it would be so much easier to be a boy.

JM: For practical reasons, not necessarily because you wanted to be. Right.

KK: Right. I remember many times—and I've told Juliana this—I would stand in the bathroom and comb my hair the way my brother's hair was combed, just to see what it would look like. But I would never—I shouldn't say “never.” I don't think I would ever be attracted to a woman who was a dyke.

¹¹ A bodybuilding competition. There are several events called Mr. Universe, which are associated with particular bodybuilding federations.

JM: Were you at that time, though, when you were dating her?

JS: Yeah.

KK: No.

JS: You weren't? Why were you dating her?

KK: It was just something to do.

JS: Oh, okay.

KK: At that point in my life, I was just kind of floating around.

JM: I think there's also something about recognizability. When you're not sure who you can talk to, if there's somebody who's obviously gay—

KK: Well, that's true. I think a lot of us—and I'm including myself—you wouldn't know unless you asked, or had the conversation, because we just—and that was our generation, just try to fit in. You know?

So, my nephew, like I said—he's older than you; he's thirty-seven. He doesn't feel the need to assimilate. People have to accept him the way he is. And for the most part it's worked for him. He's very effeminate, although he's not into cooking, or decorating, or any of those things. He's kind of a plaid shirt kind of guy. But there's no question once you talk to him, like you said, that he's gay. So, you would—like you just said, you would know right away. If you're also gay, he would be a good one to talk to.

JM: It's interesting, because I feel like we probably get a lot of advantages. I'm saying "we," because it seems like—I mean, people probably, you said, don't identify you right away as, "Oh, you guys are definitely gay," right?

KK: Right.

JM: You have to explain it. And so, I feel it's interesting. I have the same situation where I probably look straight to most people.

KK: You did to us when you came in. (laughs)

JM: It's interesting to me, because a lot of times it's nice. You don't have to worry about it.

JS: It's relaxed.

JM: But then, other times I feel really bummed out about it, because I think that I'm not recognized. If I go to a bar, a gay bar, and people ask me what I'm doing there, I just—okay.

KK: Huh.

JM: It depends on the situation you're in. I feel like I am constantly coming out to people. Not because I want to be, but because I think there's a greater need because of the way I look or don't look, whatever it might be.

KK: Just so they know who you are. And you know.

JM: To be understood. You know? But not that I—I don't know that I always feel it's always I something that I need to. Like, I would do it in a way where maybe you'd described, you know, (inaudible) I don't know if that feels like that to me. But it's more—you probably know it needs to be, because people make that assumption. “Oh, did your boyfriend—” you know. “Well, my girlfriend—” That kind of thing.

JS: “How many children do you have?” We get that all the time.

KK: Mm-hm. And grandchildren, at this point.

JS: Especially when we're at [the gym]. (laughs) All the girls down there.

KK: Yeah, and there are people that we meet that we wonder, because they seem to be by themselves.

JS: We don't wonder. She wonders.

KK: Oh, I wonder. She could care less. Because I'd like to approach them and talk to them. There's a woman at the dog park who made it a point several times to talk to one or both of us, because we almost never stand together. And she finally came to a point where she mentioned her partner, [a woman]. So, it'd be nice to just get that over with and be able to talk to people openly. But again, there's a comfort factor, and need to know, like you said. How many people really need to know?

JM: There's something really—and maybe it's also because of my age. (...) And so, maybe it's just that, but there is something that—I am really, maybe, relieved when I feel like I've been recognized by somebody. Like, you know, someone gives me the look? You know, just a look, and they know. And it's like, (sighs) “Okay!”

JS: A little more comfortable.

JM: And I don't know. I know that women who look more masculine must have a tougher time with it, because people are giving them different kinds of looks all the time, and they can't choose whether or not to come out.

JS: Oh, yeah. That is a strong woman. I would say.

KK: Right, we—

JS: And the men who have chosen—or who see themselves—in a more feminine side, it's tough. That's got to be rough. And I just love it. See, you don't understand it. I don't understand it. But I just think it's a wonderful thing when you live your life the way you need to live it. So, I don't need to understand it. I need to support it in as many ways as I can.

KK: But we've known people who—if you could have bet, you would've bet all your money that they're gay, because of the way they look or the way they talk or act. And they're not.

JS: I know. Katherine will say, “Oh, yeah!” And I'll say, “Oh, I don't know.” And I've been right as many times as she's been right. So, you really can't tell, especially, with women our age. We grow whiskers, we— (laughs)

KK: Start to look like a man.

JS: Everybody cuts their hair! (laughs)

KK: Yeah. But it was interesting, the point that you made. How do you recognize one another? It's like we should all have a pin or something.

JS: What, a pink triangle¹²?

KK: Yeah, like they did in [Nazi] Germany. Because you don't know. And does it matter? It matters to me if you want to be a friend—really a friend, not just an acquaintance. So, it just makes it easier.

JS: See, I find it harder. Like, right now is the best time—well, it was the best time in my life, I'll put it that way—to make friends, to make real friends. When you're living close, when you're young and you're just doing, and you're finding all of the interests that you enjoy, and you find people who enjoy those same things. And that's how I've maintained friends through my life. I don't see myself as making a whole—I mean, we're friendly down here. And this is a really wonderful community. But unless something dramatic happens, I don't think you have the opportunity to really become friends.

You know, when you're growing up, (laughs) there's a crisis every minute for some of your friends. And you just learn so much about each other then. Right now, I have old friends and I have new people that I'm getting to know. But it could take forever at this

¹² The pink triangle was one of the Nazi concentration camp badges, used to identify homosexual male prisoners. It is also used as a gay pride symbol.

age, because we've become so cloaked with our feelings and with our heart. You know? It gets only broken too many times.

JM: It sounds like maybe you're saying for you, being gay is a less salient issue when it comes to making a friendship. It's more about the other conditions.

JS: Exactly. Yes. It does happen, though. (laughs) Well, not all of my close friends are gay—lesbians. It has more to do with time spent than what the person feels about themselves sexually or their sexuality.

JM: Do you think you'd be as happy, then, in another community that was small like this, same set up, but 90 percent straight couples? Would you feel comfortable?

JS: No, and I'll tell you why: it's because of the wild card, the straight men who believe that they are studs of the world. I find it very uncomfortable to be in a situation where sexuality—even though I could still be attracted to people in our community here—I'm not really, but nobody hits on each other here. And I find it very distracting for men to do that. I really do. So, straight men—and my brothers (laughs) that they think that they're—they can have—

KK: Their brains are otherwise located. (laughs)

JS: Whatever it is. No, they just have this masculine thing that—there is a need in some instances to, you know, get to know people in a way that's different from becoming a friend. So I don't think that I would appreciate an over fifty-five community as much, even if they had the same buddy system. I don't think that I would be as friendly.

KK: Yeah. It's interesting. I read a study of how men relate to women, particularly in the workplace. And if they can't reach you on that sexual level, they don't know how to talk to you. So if they can't flirt or whatever it is they do—which I'm just—I totally ignore them—they're uncomfortable. So it takes, I think, a man with a certain attitude: confident enough in himself not to be upset that I'm not lusting after him. You know what I mean?

JM: Yeah. You probably found with your jobs and experience that you had to set the tone, by being maybe overly—like, erring on the side of not being as friendly? I think that's what I end up doing in the workplace, especially if I'm working in a restaurant or something. I'll be a real friendly person, but then if it's a guy, then I assume—maybe incorrectly, maybe that's conceited, but I assume that they like me, and I'll be more standoffish. But otherwise, I'd like to be their buddy or something.

JS: Well, and that's uncomfortable. It's not all men. I hate to make that generalization. But I find in mixed company that there are just different ways of communicating, and I don't have that skill! (laughs) I mean, I have the skill, but I don't want to have to use the skill to move around in that type of environment in my relaxed time. If I were going to go to a potluck dinner and I was going to have to worry about Jane's husband coming over and talking a little too much, Jane gets upset, and you know. I find that to be—

KK: So that part of it is nice. And also—

JS: So, no, I wouldn't like that type of community.

KK: Most of the people here—I'm guessing, what, three-quarters, probably?—are couples, not singles. There are several singles, but they're mostly couples who have been together at least—I think eleven years is probably the shortest amount of time that I can think of. But there are people who have been together longer than we have. Like the guys—they've been together forty years. I mean, how amazing is that?

JS: And they sit in that garage, and talk and talk and talk.

KK: Totally engrossed in each other's conversations.

JS: It's just amazing. We—? No! (laughs)

KK: Not to that extent.

JS: No. (laughs)

KK: I take that as another layer of security. Either that or we're too old for anybody to be after us. (laughs) There's probably some of that too!

JS: No! I don't know that—and we are really just going on past gatherings like that. Who knows? Things may have changed. But, I don't know.

KK: Well, I think it's stage of life, because the people that I knew when I met Juliana were all, like, ten years older than I.

JS: And pretty—oh, the women, you mean?

KK: Yes.

JS: Okay. This was wild!

KK: I was in my twenties, they were in their thirties. And they were trading partners back and forth.

JS: And they only had this one little circle of friends.

JM: Not much has changed.

JS: Oh, really? Oh, gosh. (laughs)

KK: And so, we're more settled, again, where we are in our lives.

JS: But with that circle of friends, I've got to say this: we would go to the Christmas party. We would go to different things, but we didn't socialize with them that much. It was just that we knew if we needed something, there was always somebody there. A couple of them we'd do things with. But we would go to the Christmas party, knock-knock up on the door. The last year I'd seen So-and-so with So-and-so. And Katherine knew this group. I didn't really know them.

JM: So every year, they'd— [swap partners]? (laughs)

JS: Yeah! (laughs) And inside of this circle! And I was stunned, absolutely stunned. But what it did was—it just was like you were looking through this pinhole and that was the circle of friends in terms of the world.

KK: And they traded—two couples absolutely traded partners. That just freaked me out. (laughs) But none of that goes on [in this community]. I mean, we're just—

JS: That we know of!

KK: We're past that.

JS: I don't want to know about it if it does go on! (laughs)

KK: Yeah, I guess that's true, too. So, that's another nice part about the community. Everyone's settled and calm.

JM: I have to say it's really nice to see that. Because I think, even though I feel solid and grounded and all that, I feel like my friends are just doing that whole crazy circle thing.

JS: But it happens. It happens.

JM: So it's nice to see that for the most part, people here seem happy and together forever.

KK: Yeah. I'd say we're really lucky.

JS: Well, when you're young, I guess that's the best time if you're going to do those kinds of things. (inaudible) I never did it, so I don't know. (laughs) But that was that.

JM: Gosh, I think I got off tangent!

JS: We do that.

JM: (laughs) So, you said that you looked this up online, right? Can you tell me what you—did you do just like a Google search, or—?

JS: Yeah. I did “over fifty-five gay communities.” That’s all I did.

JM: At that time, were there others yet? Or was this the only one that popped up?

JS: This was the only one. We were coming to Florida, and so I wanted to see if there was something down here. And it said that it was the oldest [gay retirement community], and I like historic stuff. (laughs)

JM: All of a decade old! (laughs)

JS: Yeah! All of ten years old! (laughs) We happened to be coming to the—

pause in recording

JS: I just did the Google search. We were going to be down here with friends. We were staying at [nearby location]. We knew we wanted to look because this is a lifelong dream of Katherine’s, to live in Florida. For me to have found this community was a wonderful thing. So we came, and like we said before, we looked. We left—didn’t we buy right then?

KK: Yeah, well, we came back, like, three times.

JS: During that weekend, though. It was just during the weekend, before we left. We had made our purchase. We were sold. And no, we never checked. There are apparently a number of smaller communities—or maybe larger. I don’t know whether they’re larger or smaller.

KK: One in Arizona.

JS: No, there’s one down in Florida, just south of us.

JM: There’s an all women’s community.

JS: Yeah, which I would be interested in just checking out. But I don’t know that I’d want to move, because I like it [here]. The only thing I don’t like about here is that, though it’s diverse in that we have males and females and that’s a good thing, we have—this is just a white community. White. But what you do is you’re drawn to what you’re comfortable with, too, I suppose. And our community at home, it’s an eclectic community. It’s very diverse in culture. And probably (laughs) there are more lesbians than we know there. But it’s more culturally diverse. I would even like that, if that were possible. I don’t even know if that is.

KK: We, uh, will probably not stay here—but not because of the community, because we both love the community. This is not my dream house. I want a pool.

JS: And if they had a pool here, a community pool, she would be okay with that. But not in a—well, yeah—

KK: That'd be better.

JS: —a regular community. You said before, and I'm only saying this because you said, "If there was a community [pool] on the property here for just us," our community, then she would like that. We can have a—anyway. Good. I don't need to say that.

KK: So we want to stay close by, probably [nearby city]. We want to be near [the beach] because we both just love it. So, it wouldn't be because of the community that we'd be leaving us, it's because this is just not what we have always called our terminal house—the last house, hopefully, that we will be in and we'll stay there until we kick it [die].

JM: How do you feel about maybe living in an all women's community? Is that something you might like?

KK: I didn't know there was one. That's kind of interesting.

JM: The one that I know of in Fort Myers is called Carefree Boulevard.

KK: Oh, yes, I do know about that!

JM: But I don't know if they'd have bigger houses, or probably smaller houses than here.

KK: Yeah, because most people don't want to deal with the outside stuff.

JS: Well, and most of us aren't well off. I mean, we're not well off. Women in general don't make that much money to be able to have big gorgeous houses and such.

KK: Well, it's not so much big, it's just layout and pool.

JS: Yeah, for me, it's design.

KK: But we have here very well educated—several residents have their doctorates, were doctors. Two ladies down the street are both physicians. So in that way, it's not very diverse—but I don't—as long as people are nice, I don't really care about that stuff. It's not that big a deal. But just to have the house that we both have always planned on having, that could change—

JS: No, it's in the place. It's not the house, it's in the place, because you definitely want a pool. And so we both committed to that, and we committed to moving down here.
(laughs)

KK: That was big.

JS: That was huge!

KK: Juliana likes the change of seasons.

JS: Yes, I really like the D.C. area. Anyway—

JM: I thought yesterday was chilly. Too much Floridian in me!

JS: (laughs) Oh, gosh. See, I love it when it when it gets chilly here down here. We have to have—you know now it has to be very functional. That's for me. But for her, she has to have that pool placed in the sun. You're going to have to have more sun; that's all there is to it.

KK: We have such big trees we have no sun.

JS: But that was because I wanted it, cause in the summertime it gets so hot here.

KK: So, you never know. We may end up just right here.

JS: If they got a pool, I think you would.

KK: It's a possibility, because, we like the people so much. If we lived a few miles away, we would still want to keep in touch with the people here.

JS: Yes, with a number of the people here.

KK: We'd still consider them our friends, because they're just such a wonderful group of people.

JS: Because we're retired, and we're more flexible. Like yesterday. We'd been trying for months to get together with this couple of women, and we've decided that the time that we can get together is for breakfast, and it's on a day when they're both off. And so, we can be really flexible. But we ended up yesterday spending half a day! We went over to [nearby location]; there's a place called (...)'. It's a real eclectic little place, maybe two hundred yards off the beach. And [we] just ended up walking down the beach and getting to know them so much better. You know, that's the way that you develop a friendship. You got to do the time. (laughs) You got to do the time.

JM: Jailer's philosophy! (all laugh)

JS: That's right. That's the way I get linked into you.

KK: We spent—like, Juliana walked with one a mile down, and then we changed partners and I walked, so that we could both talk to each of them. It was really nice.

JS: They're both so different. I'm just taken with both of them, just simply because they're just different. Just different.

KK: One of them's a little shy, I think it's fair to say. And so, when there's a community event, she will never be there.

JS: Well, rarely. Sometimes.

KK: She just—she knows she's going to be uncomfortable, so she just doesn't put herself in that situation. So, her partner's there by herself. But I think it's good, because it works for them.

JS: It's all part of it. Yeah.

KK: You know? It's not—because I've done this to Juliana, “If you don't go, I'm not going to go.”

JS: Yeah. Ooh!

KK: She gets the big guilt trip.

JS: And I go and have a good time, usually. Because, you know, older child, you just want to please. (laughs) But I get to a point where I resent it, yeah, (laughs) so I don't go. We've gotten to a point now where I—because there are so many activities.

JM: Really? How often would you say?

JS: Well, they come in bunches. We just had the little Mardi Gras thing. Well, next week there's gonna be St. Patrick's Day. Each time that there's one event, or a holiday or anniversary or something, then there's another event. And it gets put on the calendar. The calendar usually only has the main events that invite everybody. But when it's individual events, then you may have—like every Friday night, we go to—we don't go to it, but Katherine will go most of the time. They have movie night.

KK: Rebecca, that just came. It's just Netflix¹³, but you know.

JS: You sit and you enjoy it. You chat beforehand; you have a drink, or a cola, or whatever you feel like having, and just get to know people better. It's part of doing the time. “You've got to do the time, Juliana!” before I get to know them that well.

KK: Yeah, so there are times when I'll go and she won't go.

JS: But that was tough. You really, really, really fought that. You've gotten to where—

¹³ Netflix is an online DVD rental service.

KK: Getting over it.

JS: You're getting better.

JM: Do you think it's harder then making friends with single people here?

JS: I don't know, cause once you get there, you're separate. You know? So, although you know that you're there individually—but, no, I don't think so, because there's so many gatherings and times when you get together that you just—

KK: You're just part of the group.

JS: It's an acceptance. Like Rebecca, she's always there. She is always there. And I never think about who's together and who's single. I'm just glad to see everybody. Because when I do go, I go to have a good time.

KK: There's one guy who's single who doesn't go to everything. He only goes where—and we're one of the lucky people who if we have something, he'll come. But—

JS: He goes with the guy things, too. He'll do the guy things. He has his own little group, and then he'll go to bigger things. He's busy though; he works.

KK: He's the assistant house manager at (...), so, he works in the evenings, obviously. So, he's home during the day, but—

JS: He's been hysterical to get to know. Just thinking about him makes me smile!
(laughs)

KK: He used to do drag in his younger days. And he has these series of four prints on canvas on his wall. And I thought it was Marilyn Monroe. It was him!

JS: When he was in his show.

KK: They photographed it and used Photoshop—different colors.

JS: Andy Warhol, kind of.¹⁴

JM: Oh, neat!

KK: Yeah. And, it's him.

JS: (laughs) He's a mess!

Well, darling, I know you have more to do with your day.

¹⁴ Referring to Andy Warhol's painting *Marilyn Diptych*, which features fifty images of Marilyn Monroe based on a single photograph.

JM: Yeah, I'm sorry I've taken up all your time!

JS: Oh, it's not for us!

KK: No, we just want to make sure you get through all your questions.

JM: I was wondering—this is one of my last questions. How do you sort of—because in Florida, you can't—I don't think you can make a law saying this is gay or lesbian only, right?

KK: Correct.

JM: How do you keep the spirit of the—how do you keep it a mostly gay and lesbian community? Do people get to vote on who gets to move in, or is it just—?

KK: A couple of interesting things have happened. But when we came to visit— (dog growls) That's gonna be fun when you do the transcriptions.

When you come to look at the houses, (...), who has been the realtor, tells you it's a gay community. Obviously, if it's two men or two women he doesn't have that conversation, but they will ask, "Are there straight people here?"

And there are two—well, one's gone into foreclosure, but there's one married couple that lives in the back. And they're just as happy as they can be, because everybody's so nice. So, the people who are obviously a married couple, he has to inform that, you know, most of the people here are gay, and if you are considering buying a home here, you need to be all right with that. Some people are, and some people aren't.

So that's how it's done, because you're right: you cannot legally restrict it to only gays.

JM: Do you know if there was anybody when [the realtor] had that conversation and they asked were there any straight couples and he says, "Yeah, there's a couple, one or two," do you think there was anybody who didn't move here because of that?

JS: That I don't know.

KK: He would know that more than we would know that. I'm not aware of a case of that happening. I know that people have driven through the neighborhood and they have no clue. And so, they may call him and come back, or something, and then you never hear from them again.

JS: Yeah, he may do it on the phone. That's the first contact they have, and that makes it a lot easier. It's not face to face. He's not saying he's gay. He might give them the Website, because that would make it a little easier. (laughs)

KK: Some of the pictures. When we first came here, all I could think was, “Why would a straight couple want to live here?” And the one house that is now in foreclosure, their son is gay. So, it wasn’t a stretch for them to be here. The other couple is younger, and they just want to—

JS: They’re not younger.

KK: They’re not younger?

JS: No. They just look younger.

KK: They do. (JS laughs) And they’re fine with it. They’re comfortable.

JS: They come to some of the gatherings. Not all of them, just some of them.

KK: And everybody’s fine with it. They’re just nice people.

JS: But, if they [straight people] choose to move in, then fine. Just like with the rental thing—that’s a big deal to me. I really think that that’s an imposition on somebody’s standing in the community, just basis, because they don’t have enough money to be able to handle it. If we could tweak it in one way—politics, but— I’d be fine with that.

KK: Yeah. People don’t realize that once a house goes into foreclosure, everybody’s home value goes down. So, it could have been prevented, at least with one couple down the street. They requested in writing for permission to rent. You know, we have two different homeowners associations; us and the people in the back are separate. The people up here are the people who have been here since the beginning and they said, “Absolutely not. No rentals.” So, that’s unfortunate.

JS: Yes, it was.

KK: As far as do they have to request anything in writing—two gentlemen have put a contract on the house that’s foreclosed. They actually did write a letter to the community asking to please be accepted. And we were like, “Well, how soon can you be here?” (laughs) You know? And they’re two men; it was a gay couple. But they felt that they wanted to introduce themselves, I guess, and—

JS: And their dogs.

KK: And their dogs, yes.

JS: We were not asked to write a letter asking for acceptance. Ours happened like overnight. “Bing-ba-bing! Chh!” We were here!

KK: We aren’t sure. And I’m on the board of directors for the trust. And we aren’t sure why they wrote that letter, or if they were asked to write it by [realtor].

JS: And that could have happened. It could be part of the stuff—that's another thing to ask [the realtor], because we don't know that.

JM: Actually, I haven't been able to really talk to him. I called him the one time, and he told me to just try to talk with (...). I don't know what he wanted to do with it. So, I don't know.

KK: He's kind of in a funky place as the realtor and nothing selling. He's seriously going to get back in the job market and try to get a full-time job, because he made almost no money last year. That's really tough.

JS: Right. And his partner's not well. There are lots of reasons why he might not want to.

KK: They're like thirty years difference in age between the two of them.

JM: Wow.

KK: Yeah. That's big.

JS: I think that he tends—you know, some of the guys here—in terms of community, I will say that the guys that were here in the beginning—the ones that started it, the ones that had the block parties and everything—they haven't been as accepting of having women in the community. That's one reason why we felt so good about the boys—the guys on each side—being so wonderful with us. They've just been dear. I mean, I can't even say it differently—just dear.

KK: Yeah. A lot of the people just wanted the boys that were here in the beginning. Because it was different.

JS: They still do.

KK: When we weren't here, it was different.

JS: The new people are asking for things to transition, like the rent thing. And they didn't want that to happen; they want it to be the way it was. The scary thing is, nothing's the way it was, whether you want it to be or not. (laughs)

So anyway, we don't know about the letters. We don't know what recommendations were made or anything like that to any board before we got here. We know we didn't do any of it.

JM: That's pretty much all my questions. Is there anything I haven't asked or mentioned that you wanted to talk about?

JS: Let's see—

JM: Funny thing is that with how many questions I had, you've covered them all just in conversation. (laughs)

JS: Yeah.

JM: (inaudible)

KK: Mm-hm. (all laugh)

JS: We meander. We tend to meander—

JM: That's good. And that's the best way to do it!

JS: Yeah, and it comes out. There was something that I thought was kind of—

KK: You said something about the aging in place?

JS: Well, we were told when we moved here that there was supposed to be a facility and aging in place was going to be a big push. That has since come into light that it is not going to really happen. They put in for governmental—what are those things called?

KK: Nonprofit. Nonprofit organization status.

JS: And have received it, or some form of it—something about it. But there's been no action. Part of that's because the vote went out, and most of the people did not want a facility here that dealt with the entire surroundings—[nearby city], [nearby city] area—strictly for gays. And I don't even know exactly what it is, other than maybe ambulances all the time.

KK: Well, it was because we didn't feel like we wanted to build something that was used by other people with our resources.

JM: Right.

JS: Well, and when we purchased, they told us that it was for our community.

JM: And then later, they wanted to add the whole—

JS: Right. And that's the only way that we could do the non-profit, for it to become more of a global thing. I mean, maybe it will change; maybe all that will change.

KK: Part of the survey was, "If there was an assisted living place, would you use it?" And most of the people said no. They would just as soon stay in their houses.

JS: Yeah. And so if there could be an area where people were assisted but it wasn't a nursing home situation. But they would go from that place out and assist in the community, or people could be taken to that place and cared for during the day and then brought back to their homes. So, aging in place is huge, I would say, in terms of the way that—I can't even think of anyone that's against it.

KK: Right. Part of the original thought was gay men in particular do not want to be placed in a nursing home scenario because the nurses, male or female, all assume they're HIV positive and they treat them differently and won't touch them. So, that's such indignity.

JM: Absolutely.

KK: So, that was part of the original thinking, that there would be a graduated care facility. However much care you needed, you could get. But then when—since we purchased, they did that and Rebecca did it—sent out the questionnaire: “Would you use it?” And most of the people said no, which means—let's say you build a twenty bed facility—

JS: You've got to keep the beds filled.

KK: We might use two or three of them.

JM: Okay.

KK: And who's going to fill the rest of them, in terms of staffing and medical support? So, I think they have gotten the 5013c¹⁵ or something, nonprofit designation. But there's no money to build anything like that, and it would be a long time coming.

JS: Right. And most of the people that are here would like a facility, but something that would assist them to stay where they are, instead of having to go out in a nursing home situation. Anyway, that's that.

KK: I think that's the only other thing that we didn't talk about before; that was part of the original plan for the community, to have that assistance if needed. We've had two of the people who passed away, went from here to hospice.

JS: Hospice is wonderful. It doesn't matter who you are. Are you familiar?

KK: Do you know about it?

JM: Is that the in-home? I'm not sure.

KK: No.

¹⁵ 501(c)(3), a particular type of tax exempt organization.

JS: You can have in-home hospice care, but when you get really so unwell, you have to go into one of their facilities.

JM: Oh, okay.

JS: It is nursing home-ish, but they accept anyone that—you have to have—the doctor has to have said that you only have six months. Now, you can—it can extend forever, for—well, however long. But the doctor has to say that you have six months left. And then they will give you in-home care, but there comes a point in care that the nurses can only do if they're in actually a bed in different places, you know.

KK: Like (...) at the end of the street. He had a nurse coming two or three times a week. But he got to a place where they couldn't manage his pain.

JS: Right.

KK: Well, he had cancer. So, he stood it as long as he could stand it, and then he went into hospice. They just made him comfortable.

JM: That's great.

JS: They were wonderful.

KK: Yeah, they're just amazing. The stuff that they see every day is stuff that we see once every few years—to try to deal with it. It's a wonderful way to exit. You're not in a hospital, you're with your friends and your family, and you're not in pain. And it's a wonderful thing. And that's, of course, along the lines of what that assisted facility was supposed to provide: the next level of care that a partner couldn't give. Because, you know, we're both getting older.

A couple of the guys in the back, one has—his legs are really bad because of diabetes. And his partner, at eighty-three, is having to do laundry all the time to just keep up with things. It's exhausting for the well partner.

JS: The caregiver.

KK: Yeah, the caregiver. Whatever. Well, on that happy note!

JS: Yeah! (laughs)

JM: Okay, do you have any question for me?

JS: I'm going to! (laughs) But I don't know what they are right now.

JM: Definitely feel free to call or e-mail.

JS: How do you feel about social networking, like Facebook or Twitter or whatever?

JM: (laughs) I was expecting a serious question!

JS: No, no, no! (laughs) What do you think about that? 'Cause you know, I have students, like I said before, and I'm finding out that some of them are gay, and I'm thinking to myself, "Well, I guess they really don't care." Everybody knows.

JM: Because they put it on their Facebook.

JS: Yeah, put it on their Facebook. "I'm married to [another woman]." And I'm thinking to myself, "Well, [former student]? Check it out! You go, girl!" And so, you have the level of—whatever; however you want the world to perceive you.

JM: I'm not sure. I mean, maybe this is true or not for those people, but I know some people just put it up as, like, a joke with their friends when they're really not married.

JS: Ah. Okay.

JM: So it might be something like that. But I do some people who are out completely on Facebook. I'm not, because I teach, and so I'm not sure about—if—I guess maybe—I don't know. Maybe I start from the middle of the road when you talk about the continuum, because I don't—when I'm out, you know, if we're out at a restaurant or something, I'm not going to act differently than I would at home. And so, you know, like, we're affectionate and stuff like that. I'm not going—and I've been out at dinner and then at the end of the night the person who gave us the check says, "Oh, you're my teacher, by the way, for [a specific class]." So, it's kind of like, Okay. Like a little bit of a—

JS: (laughs) Oh! (makes sound effect)

JM: But it's one of those things that it's gonna come up, and I'm prepared for that, sort of. And I know that'll happen, and they probably—and I mean, if anybody has any idea about what's going on when I lecture, it's usually something that's about "being gay," usually. You know, if I talk about the family, I'm going to talk about okay, how is this idea of the family very heteronormative, and who are we leaving out in the way we define family? Who does that leave out? When we talk about sex, we talk about birth control, say, if you're heterosexually active, blah-blah-blah.

You know what I mean? I say things that if you were paying attention it'd be obvious. But I don't know that students are that aware, especially if they're straight; they're probably just like, "Oh, okay, she's being sensitive." You know what I mean? So, I'm not out on Facebook. And also part of that is that I have—well, part of that, a big part of that is that I'm friends with my great-grandpa on Facebook, friends with some of my cousins, and family members that I'm not out to, either.

JS: I'm not asking—

JM: Yeah, I know—

JS: But I see what you mean.

JM: I feel like I should be.

JS: I see what you mean. And some people do use it as a joke. Like my nephew is—oh, Lord. Well, anyway, he's on Facebook, and he's one of the reasons why I wanted to be on there. I wish I could think he was teasing (laughs) about a lot of the stuff that he puts on it.

JM: Yeah. I actually looked for you, but there were like—I don't know, twenty—

JS: Eight hundred. (laughs)

JM: So, I didn't know who was who anymore.

JS: Let's see. My picture now is a small little person under [the] Strawberry Fields¹⁶ sign in New York. (laughs)

JM: I'll have to check back. I did look, though. (laughs)

JS: Let's see. How else could you look it up? Let's see.

KK: Can you look by e-mail address?

JM: Probably.

JS: Yeah, you could probably by e-mail with us. Yeah. [My former place of employment.] But anyway, I don't really have anything on there that says—I know Katherine and I are on there in some of my profile photos, but I haven't been open. I'm not open out there. My nephew and my niece know. My whole family knows.

JM: It's interesting. It would be—I mean, I have lots of pictures of (...), too, but it's not on the "In a Relationship" list. It doesn't say "Interested in women." But it would be the ultimate coming out, 'cause, I mean, everybody from high school would know.

JS: That's right. Oh, yeah. Yeah, baby!

JM: That would probably be the most public way to do it, if you were wanting to send a message.

JS: Well, that social networking's a little scary. I mean, I really think it is.

¹⁶ Probably referring to the John Lennon memorial in Central Park.

JM: Sometimes it gets out of hand.

JS: It is. I mean, I think it is. I think—(jokingly) “I think that e-mail is evil.” I mean, Katherine has dug herself into so many holes.

KK: Death by e-mail.

JS: Death by—I call it death by e-mail. I mean, honest to goodness! It’s like—

JM: (laughs) What do you mean?

KK: (laughs) Because the way I say things is the way I think about things. I’m very straight line. I’m not going to beat around the bush if I’m going to say something. And so—

JS: She’s gotten better about that, I will say, and e-mail has pretty much done that. I’d like to think I’ve had some— (laughs)

KK: Yeah. And, you know, there’s some things where before I’ve felt like I need to say that to that person. Well, not really. Because it’s not gonna change; it’s not gonna help. So, I have gotten better about it.

JM: See, you have mellowed out! (laughs)

JS: She has that, thank goodness!

KK: Who’d have thunk?

JS: Oh, there you go! (laughs)

KK: Yeah. So, I try to be more careful. And that’s one of the reasons I haven’t gotten on Facebook, because—and I’m so surprised that Juliana is, because she’s in a way a much more private person than I am.

JS: I am. And you’ll see it in the—because I really don’t—there’s very little information. If somebody from [my former school] wants to find me, or Radford College, yeah. And if they happen to remember my name, you know, all that stuff, they can find me. But other than that, I think it’s very generic.

JM: Yeah, and it is, I think, also problematic, because it’s really legally ambiguous. So, you know, if you have something in an e-mail, that could be used in court, right? If you say something racist about an employee that you fired later, that’ll be used. That sort of thing. Facebook—I don’t know if there’s ever been a trial about Facebook, and so people don’t—and also—wait! There was something I read recently. Facebook just had to—

they were trying to say that they own the identities of people on there. The people just got their identities back on Facebook.

JS: Yes. As a matter of fact, right now there's a little caveat at the top that just says—"If you want to be involved in whatever the rules and regulation changes are," is what generally says. Click on whatever it is. Because, yeah, they are having—and it is public. Everything about it is public. I mean, if someone sends you a picture—if you get tagged in a picture, let me say, your name is mentioned. You have access—even though you don't know that person, you can get access to all of the pictures in their photo album, which I find very unusual. 'Cause visually, I find that very, very unusual. Like, every time (...) makes those little videos for (...)—this is my friend down in Fort Myers—everybody can see that.

KK: Yeah, she does a little—'cause she has one of those PCs [personal computers] with—or a Mac [Macintosh]—with a camera in it. She makes a little video for her grandson.

JS: Which is sweet. But—

KK: But then Juliana listened to it last night.

JM: (laughs)

JS: Well, of course I did. There's [my friend]. I'm gonna listen to it. And I know it's gonna be sweet.

JM: And the thing about pictures, too, is you can untag yourself so that it doesn't show up on your profile, but you can't get rid of the pictures.

JS: No!

JM: If there's a picture of you don't want public—

JS: But you can untag. I didn't realize that.

JM: You can untag.

JS: That's good to know.

And there are—each time that I go in, I find something different, and I find that type of socializing is—it's something that will be some—we're talking about—earlier on, what was it that I call it? Entitlement. Entitlement. That's a wealth of knowledge that you have. I really use it for very selfish purposes. I'm like a voyeur with my students, my ex-students that I've wanted to keep in contact with that then made contact with me. And my niece and nephew, and now, my family! Actually, my family in Maryland and all over the place, and so that's the only way I really keep in—

JM: It's really (inaudible).

JS: It's an impressive set up, but it's scary how much information is out there. And for people who don't use computers a lot—I think that we're not up on the cutting-edge stuff, but we're pretty knowledgeable about how dangerous it is to have any personal information on the Internet at all. So, yes, it was a big deal for me to get on.

I think I found you [on Facebook], because there are a few Jessica Merricks.

JM: Did you send me a [friend] request or something?

JS: No. I didn't want to—

KK: She's just sneaking around.

JS: Yeah. I'm just sneaking around! (laughs) Well, looks like you put in my name, and I can put in your name. We had said before—

JM: I would, if I knew which one was you! (laughs)

JS: Yeah! Well, you only had a couple of pictures, and you had said you had a girlfriend. So, I thought—and I don't even know why I had the time. I was just on Facebook. It was just—

JM: That's what you do, you waste time on Facebook. (laughs)

JS: Yeah. And it is a lot of wasted time. But it's kind of cute. And like with my little nephew—little nephew! He's twenty-one. I just—it's breaking my heart! I'm gonna have to have this really, crazy discussion with my brother about him, because he's still living with my brother, and ask if there's something that we can do as a family to help him. But he [the nephew] puts it right out there.

JM: It's scary.

JS: To me, it's really scary.

JM: I know definitely certain employers, before they would look at somebody [to hire], they'd look at their Facebook and make sure they're responsible, that they're not saying, "Oh, I'm hung over today." People write stuff like that.

KK: I know!

JS: I know, but that's nothing compared to [my nephew]! I'm thinking to myself, "...!" And in the Face—the way that you put yourself out there, I dunno. So, I worry about that.

JM: Yeah.

JS: Information. Well, anyway. Like, finding this—

JM: (inaudible) but they have to be smart about it.

JS: But they can't be smart about it, because they don't really understand it. I mean, even [my nephew], who should be—he came up in an age where he had to use a computer—is still not on the edge where he should know and understand what he's putting out there.

KK: Or for his family to see.

JS: Well, it doesn't matter for his family—I mean—

KK: Not to mention the cops, if they catch up with him.

JS: Well, yeah.

JM: Oh, that kind of stuff, too.

KK: He has a couple of pictures of “payday,” where he's taking all these—and he's not working—where he's gotten all this—a thousand dollars. So, what do you think he's selling to get that money? It's not too much rocket science to figure it out.

JM: Jeez.

JS: Yeah. But anyway, just the idea of Facebook, it can be used in so many different ways. It depends on the person's thoughts and intentions and needs, and where you start in terms of what you understand about the privacy issue. I mean, I'm just stunned at how much is out there. I agree with you.

And in terms of the continuum, yes. The more we've talked, the more I realize I really am right in the middle. I like just being a person. (laughs) It just so happens that I happen to be—

JM: There's a lot of little things to negotiate with. Lots of different people on a daily basis, it depends on contacts—it's more complicated than “yes” or “no.”

JS: Absolutely.

KK: It's like people thinking that we made a choice. We chose to live this life.

JS: Well, I may have. See, I'm not sure where I am on that. That's another discussion, but I'm not sure where I am on that. I think you're attracted to what you're attracted to.

KK: And you can chose to—especially the more religious people, I suppose—could

chose to live what they consider to be the right life, which may be to deny their sexuality. Sure. You can make that choice, and you'll be miserable, most likely. Or, you'll be like Juliana would be: find a way to make it work for you.

JS: Oh, yeah.

KK: So, I guess you can think of it in a number of different ways, but I just knew that this was what I am, what I had to be. I'm not gonna—

JS: So, I'm in the middle of the continuum, you're— (laughs)

KK: Yeah. I guess I'm farther along than you are. (laughs)

JS: Yeah, that's my girl. We knew that, yeah. (laughs)

KK: Okay, and if you find you have other questions for us—

JM: Yeah.

JS: Or you want something—

end of interview