

Johnna: [00:04](#) I know it's pretty small.

Bunny: [00:07](#) Am I supposed to lean over or what?

Johnna: [00:07](#) You don't have to do anything, actually. We'll just put it in the middle and it picks up sound really well. Okay. So before I start, I just have to tell you, if I ask you any question that you don't want to answer, you can just say, "I don't want to answer that," And we'll move on and you can stop the interview at any time if you don't want to keep doing it. Um, so I'll just say and spell my name and then I'll ask you to say and spell your name. So, my name is Johnna Ossie, J -o-h-n-n-a O-s-s-i-e

Bunny: [00:38](#) I'm Frederica Hart, F-r-e-d-i-c-a H-a-r-t. I'm called Bunny with a- like, like a rabbit.

Johnna: [00:45](#) Awesome. And we are in Ogunquit, Maine. And it's October 6th, 2018.

Bunny: [00:51](#) Correct.

Johnna: [00:51](#) Okay. Can you tell me how old you are?

Bunny: [00:55](#) I'm 88.

Johnna: [00:56](#) When's your birthday?

Bunny: [00:56](#) May 11, 1930. That's when I was born, yup.

Johnna: [00:59](#) And when did you, where did you grow up?

Bunny: [01:01](#) Uh, I grew up for the first nine years in Boston with my grandparents. My mother had multiple sclerosis, certainly, shortly after she, I was born, so we moved, my father moved us in from, to Boston, from the house in Newton Center, Mass. And she died when I was three or four and I, my brother and I, 3 years my senior, stayed with my paternal grandparents Boston until my father remarried when I was nine. We moved back to Newton Center and I grew up there and went to Weeks Junior High and Newton High. And then I went to Bradford Junior College in Bradford, Mass, which I graduated in 1950. I lived in New York City for a while. I lived out of New York City for a while. Uh, I lived in Boston for a while and then I moved up to Ogunquit in, well I came to Ogunquit in 1963 to be publicity director of the Ogunquit Playhouse. And I came

up summers in '63, '64, '65, '66 and I finally thought this is silly. So I just moved up here and have been here ever since.

- Johnna: [02:09](#) Okay. What did you study in college?
- Bunny: [02:12](#) Uh, A lot of history courses. Of course It was only two years, only a two year college. A lot of history. A lot of English.
- Johnna: [02:18](#) Yeah. And when did you, so right after you left college, where was the, where did you go after that?
- Bunny: [02:23](#) I went to New York City.
- Johnna: [02:24](#) And what did you do there?
- Bunny: [02:26](#) Looked for a job. Uh, I, uh, I had been uh, working summers at the Cape Playhouse, a summer theater in Dennison, Massachusetts for several years. I had finally ended up as a union stage manager in, uh, 19 -uh, wait a minute, let me just check. 1950 I got out of college then that was in 1953. Uh, I had been an apprentice at the Cape Playhouse and when I moved to, the summers, and when I moved to New York after graduation in the fall of 1950, I looked for a job and um, didn't find one right away. I discovered that, uh, my experience in theater meant nothing to, to anybody, really. I applied for a job at NBC television because I had good contacts there. And uh, they said, fine. How many words do you type a minute. I said I didn't want to be a secretary.
- Johnna: [03:28](#) Yeah.
- Bunny: [03:28](#) So, it took a while. Odd jobs, off and on, all sorts of odd jobs. Yeah.
- Johnna: [03:33](#) Yeah. How long were you in New York City for?
- Bunny: [03:36](#) Uh, until 1954 when I moved to Brooklyn, New York. Uh, I met a gal named Pat Butler who I had a relationship with and we moved out to her family's house in Brooklyn. And from there and '55 and then I worked as a, the publicity director at the Falmouth playhouse that summer in '54. I'd never done press before and it was very easy because she had booked Helen Hayes for four straight productions, which is not hard as long as I could spell Helen Hayes' name. Um, and uh, then we moved to Cornwall, New York,

which is above West Point and I worked in politics there more, for the most part.

- Johnna: [04:19](#) In politics? What were you doing?
- Bunny: [04:21](#) Orange County Democratic Committee for starting with just being a gopher, and then being in charge of the volunteers in Orange County for various elections.
- Johnna: [04:33](#) How long did you do that for?
- Bunny: [04:34](#) I departed Ms. Butler after eight years and moved back to New York City in 1962, and, uh, picked up my life there.
- Johnna: [04:50](#) Okay.
- Bunny: [04:50](#) And uh, worked with a small public relations firm on the Coca Cola account. My job was to, which is very difficult, was to look at television all day and to see if anybody had a coke bottle, on the soap opera when you opened the refrigerator was it a coke bottle there, that kind of thing.
- Johnna: [05:05](#) Wow.
- Bunny: [05:05](#) Uh, so I did that and uh, and then in, uh, '63, what did I say, the summer of '63 came up here and uh, went back to New York in the fall and worked at the same public relations firm. And, um, finally in 19-, I went to Florida for one, one winter worked in a summer, uh, worked in a winter, winter theater there, doing press. And, uh, finally in 1968 moved up here permanently.
- Johnna: [05:38](#) It sounds like you've always been doing theater. What-when did you first-
- Bunny: [05:39](#) Well, my father was, uh, was involved in theater.
- Johnna: [05:43](#) Okay.
- Bunny: [05:43](#) Uh, my stepmother was an actress, uh, and it just, you know, it fell to me.
- Johnna: [05:49](#) So, you grew up around the theater.
- Bunny: [05:52](#) I grew up around it. I knew enough not to want to be an actor, they don't make money, so.
- Johnna: [05:58](#) You wanted to be behind the scenes.

Bunny: [06:00](#) Yup. I was a union stage manager in 1953, '54, and when I moved to New York, when I went back to New York, um, those are the days when women certainly were not accepted as such, that kind of union stage managing. And the uh, the union stagehands just would give, would give you a terrible time. And I just went, I didn't need it. I wasn't that a powerful a person to put up with it. So that's how I got into press, publicity.

Johnna: [06:29](#) Okay, and is that what you have been doing since then?

Bunny: [06:33](#) Yup. I did it, uh, as I said, at the playhouse. And I also had my own public relations publicity firm which came out of my office here, that's where I made my millions, and did brochures and publicity and advertising for restaurants and motels, hotels, gift shops, anything I could find around here. I was, uh, I could make a living out of it, yup.

Johnna: [06:56](#) So, what inspired you to come to Maine and to Ogunquit?

Bunny: [07:01](#) Well, first was, uh, was a job. I'd never been to Maine even though I lived in Massachusetts. I'd always go to the Cape.

Johnna: [07:10](#) Yeah.

Bunny: [07:10](#) And uh, and John Lane who ran the Playhouse needed a press agent, needed publicity person and as did Rowena Stevens who ran the Pocono Pennsylvania Playhouse. And I made a decision because John Lane liked to get up early and go to bed early, or go to bed in a sense. In other words, stand- the normal day, working into the evening of course because of the, the show's going on, Rowena Stevens liked to stay up all night and sleep half the day and I didn't want to do that. So I picked John Lane in Ogunquit and I loved Maine. It really, I really loved Ogunquit.

Johnna: [07:45](#) So, the first time, you said it was '62 when you first came?

Bunny: [07:49](#) '63,

Johnna: [07:50](#) '63 and you were just coming in the summers and then you decided-

Bunny: [07:56](#) Then I decided in 1968, I just want to get out of New York and I figured I'd met a lot of people here. I'd done jobs for their chamber of Commerce, so I knew all sorts of, uh, business owners and uh, and had, good, good contacts and uh, and I just loved it here. So I moved up here and the

first, until 1972 I lived in apartments. Meanwhile I was uh, had a relationship with Sheila Stone. Uh, and she, uh, she had, she had married. Lived in New Jersey, but she and her husband had a summer home up in Cape Porpoise or Goose Rocks Beach, really. And uh, she, uh, her twin daughters, Donna and Debbie, once they graduated from college in 1972, her son Chris was nine, but she left her husband and moved in here with me with Chris. That was Chris's room in there and I helped raise Chris from the time he was nine years old and I was very close to him as well as to Donna and Debbie. They are my family. Uh, Sheila died 10 years ago from all sorts of things, one of them cancer, lung cancer and uh, uh, I, I was alone for several years and then met someone else named Dorothy Osborne, who's my age, and uh, she, uh, had never been involved with a woman before, but we get along very well. And uh, her husband was, they were divorced many, many years ago and uh, her, I love her daughter and her granddaughter and so everything's very nice.

Johnna: [09:44](#) Great. Can you tell me more about Sheila? How did you two first meet?

Bunny: [09:49](#) Uh, haha, okay. I was with the Playhouse that year, of course that summer, uh, summer of '69. And, uh, the senior designer, uh, had, knew a guy who was a, he had his own, uh, uh, I guess he was called a cosmetologist. Actually, a hairdresser. He had his own business outside of New York City in New Jersey. And they had a summer- He and his wife and family had a summer home in Goose Rocks Beach, and he asked Darryl, the senior designer, if he knew of any, any woman that could, you know, keep, keep his wife happy. He was gay and she was gay.

Johnna: [10:30](#) They both knew that the other one was gay.

Bunny: [10:34](#) Oh yeah. And uh, so he said, yeah, I know, I know somebody, and it was me, and that's how we met.

Johnna: [10:39](#) And you started just, dating or-

Bunny: [10:42](#) Just, you know, I'd go over to her house, her family's house. She lived- her mother, who was a shrew, but nevermind. She, uh, she, uh, lived with, with the kids and lived with Sheila and helped, you know, with the kids and Al, her husband, would come up every couple of weeks and I met him. And uh, and as a matter of fact, well I think about Al,

her husband, they were divorced in um, 1974, I think somewhere around 1974. He rented my house here, that's why I wasn't here. He was renting my house here this summer.

Johnna: [11:17](#)

Oh, wow.

Bunny: [11:18](#)

What comes around goes around or, yeah, he, uh, so he was here during the summer, a lot of which, of the time spent uh, seeing uh, Sheila's twin daughters. Am I going too, am I getting too-

Johnna: [11:34](#)

Nope, you're great.

Bunny: [11:34](#)

Twin daughters, Donna and Debbie. Now Donna and her husband, a retired medical doctor, uh, bought a house in Kennebunk several years ago. And her sister, Debbie, twin sister Debbie, at that point, was divorced and she moved into the house in Kennebunk lived there, until Donna and Johnny decided they wanted to retire up here two years ago from, from uh, California, San Francisco area. And uh, so Debbie, meanwhile had met someone, Bob, and she moved in with him. Everything was fine until she was diagnosed with lung cancer in May, May 3rd of this year. And uh, within weeks it went to her brain and she died in July 17.

Johnna: [12:21](#)

This year.

Bunny: [12:23](#)

And uh, it was rough, it was very rough. She had two daughters, one who lives in Mass with her, her husband and two kids and the other in Colorado. And they've been, you know, everybody was here so, it was very- And Chris came up, of course, from Florida. So, it's been a rough time.

Johnna: [12:42](#)

Yeah, sounds like it's been a-

Bunny: [12:44](#)

Rough summer

Johnna: [12:44](#)

Really rough summer.

Bunny: [12:45](#)

More, more, more so for, especially for Donna. Sisters. Close enough. When you have a twin, you know? Uh, it's rough.

Johnna: [12:52](#)

Yeah. I'm so sorry to hear that.

Bunny: [12:54](#)

So.

Johnna: [12:56](#) Wow. So, were you and Sheila ever married?

Bunny: [12:59](#) No.

Johnna: [12:59](#) No.

Bunny: [13:00](#) No, I - no, I never, that didn't - wasn't, you know, as long as it wasn't any legal probably, you know with, when she was in the hospital. I know, but I, I was, you know, I didn't have to be married to her to be able to sign things for her and so forth.

Johnna: [13:18](#) Right.

New Speaker: [13:18](#) Yup. So we never had an issue about it and it was not- I guess I'm old fashioned, I still have trouble hearing about, when a guy says, my husband and I and a woman says, my wife and I, I still have trouble with that. I don't know, it's just, I, I'm, I'm all for it. Some of my best friends are married. Okay. Jim and Dick and Mike and Ralph and you know, but I still have trouble.

Johnna: [13:41](#) Do you think it's just the time that you grew up in?

Bunny: [13:43](#) Of course it is. It's a generational thing. Yeah, of course it is.

Johnna: [13:46](#) That makes sense.

Bunny: [13:48](#) And then when I first, I don't think I really came out as such, but when I met somebody the first time, which was at the Cape, Gal named Betty White and, uh, realized that this was, this was kind of fun, you know, and uh, I told my stepmother with whom I was sharing an apartment in New York City at the time and she was- of course immediately felt guilty. How could I do this? That she, you know, she felt guilty that she had not done enough to keep me away from this terrible life. And I kept trying to tell her that this was not the case. Uh, partially it could have had a lot, some of which had, had, had to do with my father who was, who was, uh, ended up committing suicide. Was an alcoholic and it was not a good life with him. But, uh, I just, I felt more comfortable with women. I tried to get involved. I got involved with three or four guys, very pleasant. Didn't do a thing for me. So.

Johnna: [14:48](#) What year was it that you first started getting involved with women. Do you remember?

Bunny: [14:52](#) Yeah, oh yeah. It was 19, uh, ok '50. 1951. The summer of '51. Year out of college, yeah.

Johnna: [15:03](#) '51. Do you remember what the social climate was like at that time for LGBTQ people?

Bunny: [15:09](#) I wasn't even conscious of it.

Johnna: [15:11](#) Did you have to be-

Bunny: [15:12](#) The only thing I- being in the theater there were a lot, there were, we called them fairies, alright? Um, that was sort of the extent of my knowledge of the other, of a homosexual.

Johnna: [15:25](#) Did you have any friends that were gay or?

Bunny: [15:28](#) Uh, no. Not then certainly, uh, beyond, uh, some of the actors. I knew that were gay, but not uh, no. Um, not to my knowledge.

Johnna: [15:44](#) Did you feel it- Did you tell your straight friends that you were involved with women?

Bunny: [15:48](#) No.

Johnna: [15:48](#) No. So you had to sort of keep it a secret?

Bunny: [15:51](#) It just didn't come up.

Johnna: [15:52](#) Yeah?

Bunny: [15:52](#) Um, no, I did not.

Johnna: [15:56](#) Yeah. Do you remember when you felt like you could start being more open about it?

Bunny: [16:00](#) Years later.

Johnna: [16:01](#) Like sixties, seventies?

Bunny: [16:04](#) Oh gosh. Well, when, when we, uh, Sheila and I moved in here with Chris, we had to be, we were very careful because we didn't want any, anything to happen with Chris. We didn't want his friends to say - it was enough to have two women living together. Okay. Mother and a friend. But that was it, "my mother and a, and a friend of hers." Uh, so we were very careful. We didn't go to bars. We didn't - and we had all kinds of friends, uh, in fact two or three, uh, three or four gals who were gay were very fond to Chris

and he was a of them, but it didn't come up in conversation. It wasn't until years later after, Sheila died and I went down to visit Chris at one point and uh, we, we had never discussed it. And uh, something came up that he was asking about two friends, Kit and Carrie, who are gay. And he was very fond of them. They live in town and he said, how long have they been together? And I said, gee, almost 50 years. And he said, and how long were you and mom together? It was the first time it'd ever been acknowledged. Now Sheila probably was turning over at that point because she was so careful not to indicate anything and I said, so how did, how would you know, Chris? He said instinctively I knew for a long time, but he said you two were so circumspect that it never, you know, it was not a problem.

- Johnna: [17:31](#) Wow. So even, it was 30 years that you two were together?
- Bunny: [17:36](#) 39 years.
- Johnna: [17:36](#) 39 years. And it, you sort of kept it quiet that whole time.
- Bunny: [17:38](#) Yup. As I said, we had all kinds of friends, straight and gay. And Ogunquit is an unusual town, where everybody from fisherman to artists, theater people to gay, straight and in-between.
- Johnna: [17:51](#) Yeah. Yeah. Ogunquit is a kind of uh, it's an LGBTQ hub of sorts.
- Bunny: [17:58](#) Yes, it is. It is.
- Johnna: [18:00](#) When- was it that way when you first moved here as well?
- Bunny: [18:03](#) Yes, except, um, I remember, uh, one point, I'm trying to think when it was. Sheila was alive, so probably was in the, I'd say late eighties, early nineties. Maybe. We're more and more, uh, especially gay guys were coming up here and, and a lot of more places were opening and some of the, uh, some of the people in the village were a little upset at some of the, it was, it was a different crowd. And I remember the Globe, Boston Globe was doing an article about it and somehow I cannot remember who suggested they see me, but I said, okay. It was a woman reporter and she came over and she'll never hear. And um, she was asking about our feelings about it. We did not. Okay. It was obviously after Chris was away in college which he left here in '83, I think. So this was a late eighties, early nineties. So we had no feeling of worrying about saying what we were. And I

said, I said, it's sort of like, it's, it's snobbery. I said, we don't like this group. They're- the gay guys we knew were, were artistic or uh, I can't say elegant, but they were well bred, if you know what I mean. They, they, they, they didn't. If they went to the bars, they didn't misbehave. And they're more of a, of a stable, I don't know how to explain it, but um, well, we all hated this group coming in, uh.

- Johnna: [19:40](#) 'Cause they were, like, rowdy or-
- Bunny: [19:42](#) Yeah, I just, uh, you know, we didn't want to be another Provincetown, I guess. You know, I don't remember when the article came out. I don't remember whether I even read it or not.
- Johnna: [19:52](#) So if it was late eighties, early nineties, that was during the AIDS epidemic.
- Bunny: [19:57](#) The what?
- Johnna: [19:57](#) That was during the AIDS epidemic. Do you remember-
- Bunny: [20:01](#) Oh god, yes. Uh, you know, I remember losing, losing two or three of my best friends.
- Johnna: [20:08](#) Here in Ogunquit?
- Bunny: [20:09](#) Yeah.
- Johnna: [20:09](#) What was that like?
- Bunny: [20:10](#) Awful.
- Johnna: [20:10](#) Yeah.
- Bunny: [20:12](#) Awful. Uh, awful. Yeah.
- Johnna: [20:16](#) Was there any activism happening here that you remember?
- Bunny: [20:21](#) In what way?
- Johnna: [20:22](#) Protests or-
- Bunny: [20:25](#) No, not to my knowledge.
- Johnna: [20:28](#) Were you doing any like, care work for your friends? Like taking care of them or-

Speaker 2: [20:34](#) No, uh, Peter- well, Peter, especially. I mean, he was, his partner, Michael, is- we had dinner with, that's who I had dinner with last night. We play bridge with he and his and his partner now. Dotty and I were over there, and uh, Peter was, Peter, just was a bad boy. When Mike and Peter and Sheila and I used to travel, we went to Europe several times together and had wonderful times together and Peter was charming and a great guy and he just, uh, was a bad boy at times and he unfortunately paid for it. So we were up at Maine Medical for about 48 hours watching him go. And uh, he's the one I remember in particular, yeah.

Johnna: [21:20](#) Yeah, that sounds like it must have been really hard.

Bunny: [21:22](#) Yeah.

Johnna: [21:24](#) So, you said you and Sheila traveled a lot?

Bunny: [21:27](#) Yup. I'd never traveled before. Uh, I, my- I particularly- I didn't really like flying that much. I really hadn't flown that much, just a couple of times domestically and, and I guess two or three years after we moved in here, she said she loved to travel and she said, I said - She said, how about, you know, going to Europe? I said, is there a bridge we could go over? So, we ended up, uh, she made all the arrangements and we did all our homework and research on it. We ended up flying from Boston to New York to Athens. And I remember my brother, my older brother, was a professor at UMass at that time, met us at Logan, when we left here to go down to Logan and fly to New York and he brought a bottle of champagne, small bottle of champagne, which we shared in the airport and he said, "You're going to be fine. Nothing to it." And it was one of the worst flights I've ever taken. I've taken many, many flights since then. It was- nobody could stand- in the cabin the [inaudible]- Everybody had to stay in their seat, it was so rough.

Johnna: [22:31](#) Oh my gosh.

Bunny: [22:31](#) It was only 45 minutes, but it was terrible. Anyway. Then we got to New York and then, of course, we took the, the flight to Athens, overnight flight to Athens. And I just remember being like this the whole time Sheila was sound asleep. And uh, I tried to look at a movie and couldn't. And then suddenly in the middle of the night, swear to God, the captain's voice came on, "This is your captain," I thought

he was going to tell us we're crashed. We're landing, you know. He said the, the, the score of the last world series game, I think Boston was playing, was such and such, and I'll always remember that. Anyway, we played, we traveled a lot. We traveled with Peter and Mike. We went back to Greece a couple of times. Went to Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria. Uh, France. We went probably seven or eight times.

- Johnna: [23:29](#) Wow. When you traveled, did you feel like you could be out as a couple or were you -
- Bunny: [23:34](#) Yeah. Again, I'm, I suppose so, although I don't remember any great thing of oh, good, we're, we're away from our home town, you know, It just was very natural.
- Johnna: [23:49](#) Yeah.
- Bunny: [23:50](#) I think probably because of the, and I think they felt the same way when we traveled with Mike and Peter, which was not, not exclusively, but you know, extensively, that they had us and we had them as a, you know. Although we naturally, they of course always went and had their room where we had our room, but still was a sort of, you know, boy. Boy, girl, boy, girl kind of thing.
- Johnna: [24:11](#) Right.
- Bunny: [24:12](#) Yup.
- Johnna: [24:12](#) Yeah, that makes sense. Okay. So, you have been in Ogunquit for 40-
- Bunny: [24:21](#) Well, from 19 -year round from 1968. So that's 50 years.
- Johnna: [24:25](#) 50 years now.
- Bunny: [24:26](#) That's right.
- Johnna: [24:27](#) How do you think the community has changed in that time?
- Bunny: [24:30](#) A lot. Uh, some for the good and not so much. We got, we sort of moderated the, the guys coming in. The bar - bar guys. Um, but okay. I also worked at the Barn Gallery, which is a, a big gallery here in town, which also has an extended, extensive uh, program, uh, programs from demonstrations, films, concerts, and that kind of thing. I was, I was the administrator there for, gosh, about 15 years

and uh, uh, we had at that point, over 500 memberships. It was a nonprofit 500 memberships which I solicited for, you know, for, you know, for membership contributions and now I think they have about 75 or 80. Uh, The playhouse was able to, uh, have a season of plays because they had mainly big stars then, too, but actual plays and that finally died. Nobody wanted to go. They want to see a musical, unless it, unless it was a big star. See we lost, became more of a summer resort and than an art colony. Which of course, it started as an art colony, the visual arts. So in that way it's changed. Um, beach crowd, which is fine. I mean, it's a lovely place. Lovely beach. I'm not criticizing it, but it's just changed.

- Johnna: [26:07](#) Yeah.
- Bunny: [26:07](#) But I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. So the traffic of course became horrendous.
- Johnna: [26:13](#) Lot of traffic.
- Bunny: [26:15](#) I mean I was coming up from New York yesterday. I should've known better. I should have come the back way and uh, from just south of the Playhouse into town was a little over a mile it took me 20 minutes, stop and go. That's of course because of the holiday weekend, too. But, um, it still retains enough of the, the love of arts to, uh, um. Well, I never want to move out, obviously at my age I wouldn't anyway.
- Johnna: [26:50](#) Do you think-
- Bunny: [26:53](#) Voluntarily. Yeah.
- Johnna: [26:53](#) Do you think that there's still a lot of LGBTQ people that travel here because they know that it-
- Bunny: [26:59](#) Oh, sure. Oh, sure. Well, you see, when you come into town, all the rainbow flags, whether the, whether the business is gay or not gay run or not, they obviously they say come in. Uh-
- Johnna: [27:13](#) Is that part of the reason that you decided to settle here or it was just a coincidence?
- Bunny: [27:18](#) No, it was just coincidence. Yeah, yeah.
- Johnna: [27:21](#) Do you feel like it's a happy coincidence?

Bunny: [27:24](#) Yeah, pretty much so. Yeah. And I, uh, I don't know. I'm just uh, Sheila and I just sort of, as I say for Chris' sake, but even after he left, you know, he left went, went west to California to go to college. We just were, we had friends who were gay, a lot of friends who were gay, a lot who weren't, but we never went into the uh, we tried a couple of times- there was a restaurant called Clay Hill Farm, uh, and they, uh, twice a year have, have women's nights, one Valentine's Day and one is before Christmas. And it's like, oh, like three or four hundred, uh, lesbians. We went to one of them, we just thought it just was too much. Too much.

Johnna: [28:08](#) Too many.

Bunny: [28:09](#) Too many. I said my, safety in numbers or what? Forget it. So we never want back. Again, maybe it sounds snotty, snooty about it, but it just was, um, uh, we don't know. We didn't feel comfortable dancing together again. Again, It's generational I think.

Johnna: [28:27](#) Yeah. Sounds like you two were maybe more, like, quiet.

Bunny: [28:31](#) Yeah, yeah. Exactly. Yeah.

Bunny: [28:39](#) You want any water or anything?

Johnna: [28:44](#) I'm all set. But feel free to get some.

Bunny: [28:44](#) My allergies [Bunny getting water] Is this jiving with what you know of me already? I mean, is this-

Johnna: [29:16](#) You're doing perfect.

Bunny: [29:16](#) Really? Okay.

Johnna: [29:16](#) All I did was I listened to the other interview and tried to sort of just gather some questions from that. Usually we give people a background information sheet to fill out. We didn't give you one of those, so it's a little bit. Um, let me just look at my questions here and see if I have - if I'm missing anything. Are you still working in the theater or have you stopped?

Bunny: [29:38](#) No, no.

Johnna: [29:38](#) When did you stop?

Bunny: [29:40](#) I'm really [inaudible] retired. I stopped at The Playhouse in 19 - I'm sorry in uh, yeah 1990. And, uh, I continued with the Barn Gallery and I continued with my own, uh, advertising and so forth business here until I also then decided I really want to be completely retired. So I became a, uh, actually, this was about 19. Let me just, let me just think of my dates here. Jeez in that time you think you'd never forget when you retired. At one point I decided I could not do the Playhouse anymore, but I thought I'd give it one more year, but I wanted to make some more money because at that point the Playhouse was only, uh, it only ran 10 weeks of the year and now it's, now it's about 20 weeks. But, uh, there were only four productions, so it was really, you know, five productions. They ran for two weeks. And I thought I can do something else. So I ran, became a desk clerk at the Sparhawk resort right on, on shore road. I worked from seven to noon and then worked at the playhouse from noon until whenever, uh, and I retired from the theater, I think around 1990, 1991. I continued at the Sparhawk and by that time I didn't have a lot of accounts advertising. I had enough and I didn't want too many and in 20 - 2000, uh, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Sheila and I were- at that point, we didn't travel to Europe anymore. We went to, went to Puerto Rico for about three weeks in the winter. Poor Puerto Rico. It's such a pretty place, what happened to it is terrible. And, uh, down there, I just, one day I just felt a lump on my right breast and I didn't tell Sheila because I knew that would, you know, it would ruin the whole vacation if she knew. I could keep it to myself. So I made an appointment to see my doctor when we got back and I did and it was a uh, I had a lumpectomy, uh, a couple months later and uh, chemo for three months and then radiation for six weeks. This was back in 2001. Since then, you know, everything's been fine.

Johnna: [31:56](#) Wow.

Bunny: [31:56](#) Uh, so to answer your question, that's when I finally became retired, except for a couple of accounts I had.

Johnna: [32:06](#) What do you like to do around here now that you're retired?

Bunny: [32:09](#) I do some writing. I'd never done fiction before. I, uh, I'd always done promotion, promotional writing and um, so I do that. I started what, after Sheila died that summer. Well, I did go back to the Sparhawk for, for one summer after she died, just to keep myself out of trouble. And then I started,

uh, doing what we laughingly called the Bunny book. Started with the first- my first line of my Bunny book was "I, I looked my first dog in the eye when I was five." And I told about a dog, a Saint Bernard, named Tawny, and then I just added stuff, you know, too much stuff about my, it's - the Bunny book, what I was doing, what I did.

- Johnna: [32:57](#) That sounds amazing.
- Bunny: [32:58](#) And it was fun and only two, three people have read it and they love it. So it's good.
- Johnna: [33:03](#) Are you still adding to it?
- Bunny: [33:06](#) I've tried to do uh, in a way, yes. Not so much chronologic but other, I mean, trying to work with characters. Not just me. We had an old nursemaid and those were the days when- my grandparents were very well off in Boston. My grandfather was president of the United Fruit Company and they were, they, they were well heeled and I had a nursemaid named Margie until I was nine, and so about a couple of months ago I decided to try and do a thing about Margie, what, what, what happened to Margie after she left me. Just strictly, wonder what happened to Margie. So things like that. Yeah. Yeah.
- Johnna: [33:51](#) Wow. Do you remember just, I know you said you didn't come out, you just sort of started dating women, but when did you first think that might be a lesbian?
- Bunny: [34:04](#) Pretty early on. I hated the word lesbian. It had such a bad connotation.
- Johnna: [34:09](#) You hated it then?
- Bunny: [34:11](#) Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I just thought, no, I still prefer, say being gay. I don't know, there's something about it that, uh, I guess growing up, uh, well as, as, as my stepmother, Pat used to say, why are you this way? You're not, you're not fat and ugly and unattractive. That was sort of, you know, you're like, you're normal. Why do you, why do you do this?
- Johnna: [34:34](#) Right.
- Bunny: [34:35](#) You know. And I remember when I broke up with Pat Butler, who, uh, was rather, never mind, it was just a terrible relationship and I came back to New York and she

said, you see, you see now you'll never get involved with a woman again. I said you divorced my father after a terrible time. Did you ever get involved with men again? Of course, you know, one, one bad experience does not mean that, you know, you should reject everything that you felt was normal, but, so.

- Johnna: [35:07](#) So, when you were younger and you first thought you might be gay, what was that like for you? That would have been in the 40s?
- Bunny: [35:14](#) I guess a combination or a relief that I found something that seemed very natural to me and uh, anxious, a little anxious that this was not accepted.
- Johnna: [35:26](#) Hmm.
- Bunny: [35:27](#) And I always used to feel better when I'd hear somebody, about somebody who was, who was gay. Oftentimes somebody well known, uh, or somebody very, you know, just I felt well if it's alright for them why isn't it alright for me.
- Johnna: [35:43](#) Yeah. Can you think of anyone in particular that was a, a role model or an inspiration to you?
- Bunny: [35:49](#) Not really, no. I mean, a lot of actors, actresses, too. Uh, uh, were gay. No, I don't, I can't- [To the cat] What are you doing? Come on. Good girl.
- Johnna: [36:05](#) You've lived in New England for a long time. Can you think of any events in LGBTQ history? That really-
- Bunny: [36:12](#) I don't like. Let me just say I don't like the Q.
- Johnna: [36:15](#) You don't like the Q.
- Bunny: [36:16](#) You know? Okay. I'm glad you brought. I'm glad you said it because, in, in my day way back, people call us queer. We didn't feel queer at all and so why the LGBT community is now saying, adding Q to it when I spent decades trying to say no, there's nothing queer about it. See, see what I mean.
- Johnna: [36:44](#) Yeah, totally.

Bunny: [36:45](#) Depends on maybe how you, how you define Q, queer, but it's queer is queer. It's, you know. So I'm just wondering why, how the Q got to be.

Johnna: [36:55](#) I think it's probably a generational thing like we were talking about before.

Bunny: [36:59](#) And again, why would somebody want to be called queer?

Johnna: [37:01](#) Because it's, like a reclamation of the word, but I- It totally makes sense to have someone who has had that word used against them wouldn't want to, wouldn't want to use it. Yeah.

Bunny: [37:14](#) That was my, that's my, uh, I don't like it.

Johnna: [37:16](#) I'm glad you said something about it.

Bunny: [37:17](#) So there.

Johnna: [37:20](#) I'm glad you brought it up.

Bunny: [37:21](#) Yeah- what was your question?

Johnna: [37:21](#) My question was, can you think of any events in LGBT history that stand, stand out to you that you remember being like, wow, or something that really shocked you or-

Bunny: [37:35](#) Uh, Stonewall, you know, that- although I wasn't really that conscious of the Stonewall uprising.

Johnna: [37:44](#) Were you in Maine when that happened?

Bunny: [37:46](#) Oh, yeah.

Johnna: [37:47](#) Yeah.

Bunny: [37:49](#) I'm not sure how conscious I was of it. Uh, whether it was after the fact. Gee. Uh. I don't know.

Johnna: [38:06](#) Do you remember hearing about Charlie Howard?

Bunny: [38:09](#) I don't know who Charlie Howard is.

Johnna: [38:11](#) Charlie Howard was a gay boy who was murdered in Bangor.

Bunny: [38:16](#) I'm not aware of that.

Johnna: [38:17](#) It was a long time ago.

Bunny: [38:17](#) Was it along time ago?

Johnna: [38:18](#) Yeah. I'm just wondering if it was something that people talked about around here or not.

Bunny: [38:23](#) I'm not. Yeah. Wherever. Yeah.

Johnna: [38:25](#) Okay. Um, do you have anything that you want to talk about that I have not brought up yet? Or can you think of anything that I haven't brought up?

Bunny: [38:45](#) Um, I probably will think about it after you leave. Isn't that awful. You want to prod me any, any, any.

Johnna: [38:58](#) Let's see I've asked you about coming out, that was important. Do you have any thoughts for younger LGBT people that you'd like to share?

Bunny: [39:12](#) Good luck. I mean that. I mean it's still not a, uh. I shouldn't say- It still is not the, the average. So called- I think it's perfectly normal as far as I'm concerned, but it's not. I don't know, you know, I wouldn't try and uh, uh, give advice to anybody. Uh, I'm just trying to think of anybody much, much younger than I am who I would want to. No.

Johnna: [39:47](#) That's fine. That's, that's totally fair.

Bunny: [39:51](#) I'm not being evasive either. It's just, uh. You know. I have to be honest. If I don't know.

Johnna: [39:59](#) I mean that's fair. No, everyone's just, it's better to not give advice than give fake advice, I think.

Bunny: [40:10](#) I tried giving advice about who to vote for and I don't get much for that. I'm so horrified what's going on in the world. I think probably more than anything, I don't even think about whether it's gay straight or in between. I just think that-what the- I'm so glad I'm- In one sense, I'm my age because I would hate to be much younger and going through more of what we've been going through. Politically, morally, uh, I got so mad at Susan Collins, you know, I finally, when I, I had a tech, emailed her office a couple of times and left a message on their Washington, you know, thing, saying by, imploring her not to vote for, for uh, uh, what's his name?

Johnna: [40:54](#) Kavanaugh.

Bunny: [40:55](#) Kavanaugh. And of course she did yesterday. So I called the Washington DC office again and, you know, leave a message. So I just said, um, that uh, I said, you are no Margaret Chase Smith. I said, you're not even Olympia Snowe and shame on you and I'm a Democrat, but who voted for her, but boy, never again. Uh, that upset me more than any- I mean this, what's going on with, I don't want to get into politics, but Trump and- what is wrong with us?

Johnna: [41:28](#) Yeah. Totally.

Bunny: [41:28](#) And I think I'm more upset about the people who were for him, I hope I'm not stepping on any...

Johnna: [41:35](#) Oh, no.

Bunny: [41:35](#) I'm not, but I mean that awful speech he gave in West Virginia where, wherever he wasn't and started to mock and mimic, uh, Dr Ford and everybody was cheering him. Uh, that bothers me more than anything else. What is happening? What is happening to us?

Johnna: [41:55](#) It's hard to watch.

Bunny: [41:56](#) The civility, the uh, decency, the honesty. Um, well anyway, get off my soapbox there, but that I think I'm more concerned about than gay, straight or what. Uh, uh, as far as women's rights go, I, you know, I'm obviously for women's rights and gay rights, uh, and I don't know what's going to happen.

Johnna: [42:23](#) Is Ogunquit a liberal town?

Bunny: [42:25](#) Oh yeah, yeah. I, uh, work at the polls, I'm the election clerk and uh, I would say, uh, we don't probably, I think we have about 1100 voters, but it's -certainly two thirds are Democrats or so-called Independents.

Johnna: [42:45](#) Right, right.

Bunny: [42:47](#) Yeah.

Johnna: [42:49](#) Can you think of any ways that you've seen that LGBT community change over the years?

Bunny: [42:54](#) Yeah, as I said, I think um, I think with some of the gay guys especially who had, who were around here, they were usually in the arts, those, a lot of them were- a lot of money

and they had a sort of elegance and um, they were intelligent. They were sensitive, uh, they were uh, not, I mean they, they loved their, they loved their drinks, but they didn't hang out in bars and they had just a whole different crowd from, again, generational. And certainly not all the young guys and women who come up here are, are in any way - nothing wrong with them at all. Some of them are, some of them are my best friends, but it's just changed. Again, it's generational. Everything's changed, man. I don't know how old you are, but have you noticed a change in, in the, in the- your generation?

- Johnna: [43:58](#) Certain- I'm 27.
- Bunny: [44:00](#) 27, are you really?
- Johnna: [44:02](#) But - I've definitely in the last 10 years, there's been some big changes for sure. Yeah. Things were different when I was in high school.
- Bunny: [44:07](#) How did you get into, how did you start doing this? And what's your background?
- Johnna: [44:11](#) I go to the University of Southern Maine, where -Wendy is one of my professors, so she just asked me to help her out with her project.
- Bunny: [44:19](#) Oh, good.
- Johnna: [44:19](#) Yeah, it's been great for me. Um, all right. I think I've asked you all the questions that I need to ask you, unless you can think of anything else that we should-
- Bunny: [44:30](#) I wish I could think of something else, as I said I probably will when you leave.
- Johnna: [44:32](#) If you think of anything else-
- Bunny: [44:35](#) Again, I don't know how much more I said when um, what the hell is his name? Ah! Terrible. I had a very nice lunch with him and his sister once, about a year ago. Anyway, uh, I don't know how much more I said in that interview, but uh, perhaps, um, because it was- You do begin, as you get older, you begin to forget some things maybe for, maybe for good reason. So this is what, three or four years ago and he interviewed. Maybe there's more there than I gave you. I don't know.

Johnna: [45:07](#) I think, I think similar, similar content-

Bunny: [45:11](#) Was it? Yup. It wouldn't surprise me.

Johnna: [45:14](#) I- Yeah. If you think of anything else, you can always tell me.

Bunny: [45:17](#) Okay.

Johnna: [45:17](#) And I can just come back. Okay. That's totally fine. I'm happy to, we can just schedule another interview.

Bunny: [45:24](#) Okay, good.

Johnna: [45:24](#) Okay. Okay, great. I'll stop this.