

Josh: It is November 20th, 23rd, 2021. We are at USM's Glickman library and I'm Josh Allen, j-o-s-h a-l-l-e-n.

Rachel: I'm Rachel Shanks, r-a-c-h-e-l s-h-a-n-k-s.

TC: I'm Travis Clough, t-r-a-v-i-s c-l-o-u-g-h.

Josh: Alright, so I'm just going to remind you that you can refuse any answer at any time. You can stop the interview at any time if need be. If you need a break, just let us know we can stop that and then you can take a break. This is going to be between 60 and 90 minutes. If it ends up going further than that, we can request a follow up interview or you can request to be added to the list for next semester's SOC 301 class.

TC: Okay.

Josh: And the last question is, how old are you? Or just the decade you were born in, if you prefer that.

TC: I am 44, I was born in the seventies.

Josh: All right, we can start. Rachel's going to be asking most of the questions here. I'll be just taking notes.

TC: Sure.

Rachel: So, first two questions are the same as we just asked you. What is your name and could you spell it and how old you are.

TC: Okay. Travis Clough, t-r-a-v-i-s and Clough is c-l-o-u-g-h and I'm 44.

Rachel: Awesome, and what pronouns do you use?

TC: He and him.

Rachel: What words do you use to describe yourself in terms of sexuality?

TC: I identify as queer.

Rachel: Where were you born and where did you grow up?

44 years old

He/Him pronouns

Identifies as queer

TC: I was born in Augusta, Maine, and I grew up in several towns, but fourth grade through the end was Bucksport.

Rachel: Do you have any siblings? And did you have both parents present?

TC: Yes, both parents were present and I have two siblings. I'm the middle child and one lives in England now and the other lives in Philly.

Rachel: What is your relationship to your family as an adult?

TC: It's much different from when I was a kid. As an adult, I feel like I... and as the middle kid, I feel like this is very typical and I'm the kid that's home or I've been trying to get home for 20 years, I'm finally home and I literally just got off the phone with my mother. I'm ready to go up there. Would never move back there. But I like my parents very much, I love them very much and I know that they adore me as well. And so it's... it's very good.

Rachel: Is there any specific reason why you wouldn't move back home?

TC: As a queer person, I don't live in small community.

Rachel: Did you have any close friends growing up?

TC: Yes. They kind of shifted around, I guess. Like I kind of had this gaggle of female friends in junior high. And then as I kind of came into myself at a sort of more broad reach of friends. And then there was like a gaggle of guys I would hang out with because I became a skater and we would just play video games and skate. And then eventually I, yeah, like in high school I

happened to join the drama club because that's the only place you find other people like you. And of course, the word queer didn't exist yet. I mean, it existed decades before, you know, it was like a really derogatory thing, but people weren't saying that word in either direction, bad or good. But yes, so we found each other. A few of us did end up becoming queer, ironically, and this is a very small town, but yeah.

Rachel: Are you still close with any of them now?

Born in Augusta, raised in Bucksport

Two siblings
Middle child

Never move back to Bucksport

Doesn't like small communities

A lot of female friends

Skater/ skater friends

Drama club

TC: Yes. Well, actually, that leads me to moving back home. My first boyfriend. He ended up actually being gay too. Of course, I was a girl at the time. He passed away. We were tight right to the end and he had a heart attack at 41. He was living in Bangor at the time and I moved home because it was finally like I've been trying to get home for 20 years and now it's like, people die. And I just wasn't ready for it. And I wasn't ready for my parents to just die or anyone else to die without me being here, like home where I've been wanting to come back to. And it was like that thing where I had been like waiting for the sign of the moment and that was the moment. So I've been home. I got here right before the pandemic. So yes, I was. And so I actually... We have a sort of group of friends. We were all from the drama club, and the band geeks. And we were all really tight. But my friend Tony was... he was my core like he was my person. But that group of friends is still going and we have threads together and every once in a while we'll grab a beer or something. So it is really neat to still have connections to high school.

Rachel: Did you mean Tony in band or drama club too?

TC: It was drama club, yeah.

Rachel: Oh, awesome. So did those friendships change at all when you first came out?

TC: Uhm, not really, not because of the coming out. I think it's a typical story. I think what ended up happening is some of us went to college and some of us stayed behind and some of us changed and got married right away and had kids. So there was a lot of those kinds of things, a lot of splintering, if you will. But actually I would say Tony's death was really almost like a

movie. It just, like, brought us back together so that there has been some reconnection, but yeah, it was changes, sure.

Rachel: Are most of your friends part of the LGBT community or heterosexual or a mix?

TC: At this point in my life, almost 100% people that I am friends with are either queer or were queer at one point and now married to somebody cis and het. Every once in a while, I'm like, "Oh, that's really interesting", but it's also the world that I've created and it's the world I want to exist in. And, you know, again, it's not that I have anything against penis. It's just that that's what my world is, you know? Of course, I carry

First boyfriend
Ended up gay too
BF passed away

Moved home because of death

Tony was core person

Tony's death brought friends together

100% of friends LGBTQ

on friendly at work or whatever. But I would say, yeah, my intimate, close relationships, 100% everyone's queer.

Rachel: So what does friendship mean to you?

TC: Friendship for me is... is deep. So I used to consider myself having three best friends and one from each walk of life, meaning Tony from high school and then my first college girlfriend and we're still friends and then my life in Boston and I'm still, I still have two of them. And the thing about those two and would have been about the three is that I know I'll be with them to the end of my life. Whereas, I mean, I'm married now. This is on the record, but like partners come and go in a way but friendships for me, you know, I will be with them to the end. I saw one of the questions like, do you consider friends family, and so yes, in a way, yeah. I don't... my siblings aren't really in my life. I don't have children. You know, once my parents are gone, it's kind of it. And, you know, my friends are absolutely my family. So yeah, I... I believe in friendship more than I believe in romantic relationships. Even though I'm in one and I love him dearly. And I want it to last a long time. But I don't know, that's the thing. But I know 100% like two other best friends until, as long as we're still alive. They will be in my life and they will be my connections, my rocks, yeah.

Rachel: And you mentioned Boston as part of your life, can you tell us a little about that?

TC: Yeah. So I graduated from Farmington in 2000 and the internet was barely even alive yet. I remember people like, an email address, and I was like, "what the hell is that?". And I also remember people being

like, yeah, the Internet you can look things up and I'm like, "like what?" What do you do? So I remember looking up like Burton snowboards because that was the only thing I could think to look up and I think they might have had a webpage by then, but anyways, I was like, get me the hell out of Maine, I'm so ready for the city, I want to play. I was playing a ton of like acoustic music by then, but I wanted to be in punk bands. So yeah, I moved to Boston, my ex-girlfriend and I, who, she's my bestie. She lives here now in Portland. She's the one that has a husband now. But we moved to Boston to get out of Maine and we did that through getting to that Americorps program. Like I got a vista job, she got an Americorps job. So we both got jobs in the Boston

Friends are for life

Siblings not in life

Believes in friendships more than relationships

Graduated from Farmington in 2000

Burton Snowboards

Moved to Boston

Americorps

area. And that was kind of like how we got to Boston. And then I ended up living there for many, many years.

Rachel: So when did you realize your gender identity was queer or trans?

TC: Well, I think if you go way, way back, there was definitely thoughts and feelings as like a really young kid of like, it's actually because I had a younger brother, and my parents just let me be who I wanted to be. So I was really fortunate in that department. I didn't... I didn't really get like why I wasn't born a dude. But then again, at some point with my parents supporting me, they're like cool, you want BMX, we're going to get you BMX. Like I was nurtured in a way that like my gender wasn't a problem. But then at some point it became a problem, I would say around seventh grade, and also I remember I went to a women's basketball game and everyone had short hair. And I was an athlete, of course. And their hair wasn't getting in their face, of course, I play basketball and I was like, "oh my God, you can play sports without hair getting in your face!". So I was like Mom, can I please cut it off and they're like, absolutely. And it wasn't a political thing, it wasn't anything other than I just don't want my hair in my face. I could play sports better, right? And so I cut my hair off and ever since I cut my hair off, probably since like sixth grade people were like, "you're weird". But seventh grade was like, you're fucking wierd, like you're a freak. Like, what are you? Also, I was a giant. I grew really tall. I'm 5'-10" now and I don't know when I became 5'-10", but pretty early. And so that's also pretty hefty. And again, I was a skater, so yeah, I got teased and tormented a lot. So, but again, there was never like, "well, I wonder if I'm trans", that word did not even exist. I mean, sure there were some

front runners as pioneers. But that was not an option or even a thought. And then by high school, I kept my short hair and my style, if you will. And I started dating Tony, but even when I had a boyfriend, people would be walking down the halls and they'd be like, "dyke". And I'd be like, "but I have a boyfriend". I don't get it, you know. So, and that's the other thing about my journey is that I was never attracted to women. I was always attracted to men. And so that became extra, extra confusing because on the outside, I got it. I did look like a dyke, but if I was a woman and I was a lesbian, that would mean I would need to be attracted to women and I wasn't. And so I didn't get it. So, just to make it extra confusing, I actually have two gay aunts. And so I didn't

Feelings of queer as young kid

Short hair

Grew tall

Called dyke even with boyfriend

Not attracted to women

know that they were gay growing up, but I knew that I wanted to be like them. One of them drove a motorcycle and was the hockey goalie. He did all the cool things that I thought were really cool. But they were officially... you know, they have female partners. But it wasn't until college and, I remember there's a bunch of really great queer movies from the nineties. And I was watching one of them. And it was like, this is the closest thing I can see. And again, you know, again, not having Internet stuff yet. There was this like a little baby butch and it was like, well, I'm, I'm just gonna do this and then I found myself attracted to other butches. And, so that was kind of like how I sort of entered the queer world, I guess. And then later through a series of girlfriends and again, not really into what I was doing. I was, yes, I'm attracted to them but I couldn't figure it out. I was like a baby dike living in Boston and playing in all these punk bands. I was in this dyke band and this other person would come in and she would like to sleep with men on the weekends. And I was like, "I don't get how that works". Like if you're a dyke, how do you think? Like I don't get it because it wasn't the fluidity we have now or it was like oh, because I thought like once you, once you cross that line, there's no more, you can't like go back and forth or whatever. So that kind of like really blew my mind and then eventually I came out as trans and that kind of changed everything.

Rachel: So when you first came out, who did you come out to and when did you come out?

TC: When I first came out as a dyke, I came out to my mom and that was in the late nineties. And again, because she had two gay sisters, I thought she'd be super excited. Like, I wasn't like preparing some melodramatic speech. I was like, "Mom,

guess what? I'm gay, I'm so stoked! This girl is so cute!". And she had such a disappointed sound in her voice. And I was kinda confused by it. And she was like, Oh, I just I just thought you'd have kids one day and even then I was like, "Oh geez Mom, you know, I think gay people can still have kids and all that business. But I really took that to heart. I really, my mother's opinion mattered a lot to me, still does. I ended up breaking up with that girlfriend and moved to Colorado and then fucked a whole bunch of dudes. And I was like, "I'm not gay, look how not gay I am". And I mean, again though I actually, I'm really attracted to men, so that is actually what I wanted to do, but I needed to get away from that gay identity. But then I moved back to Farmington and I

Movie with baby dyke

Attracted to butches

Boston in punk bands

Came out as dyke to Mom
Gay aunts

Disappointed Mom

Moved to Colorado

Attracted to Men

met my second girlfriend who's now a really great buddy of mine, we're still friends and he transitioned too. We started dating and that's again, when I was like, "that's it. I know I'm queer". And so this time I just called my Dad and I was like, "Dad I'm gay" or something and he's like, "that's okay. I don't care". And I was like, "okay cool, tell Mom, because I already did that. I already tried telling mom and she was not into it". So that was how I came out as queer. But coming out as trans was slightly different. I think I had been hinting around that I wanted to start exploring this, just kind of dropping hints to my mom and she was like... I don't... she just couldn't hear it. It was like really. And again, she had all these role models of masculine women in her life, including me, like I had grown up masculine and she told her sisters, her sister's called me. They were like, "I used to want to be a man and I don't want to be a man now, I think you're going to regret it". This is back in 2003. Anyways, I ended up starting T without telling my parents because I didn't... I knew how strongly their influence was on me. And so I didn't end up telling them until after I had started so that I knew that I would start.

Josh: So it had been some years between coming out as a lesbian and then coming out as trans?

TC: Yeah. I would say '98-ish was when I came out as a lesbian. And I did identify as a lesbian, lesbian and dyke and I don't know if people use those words anymore actually. But like I always feel weird about saying it because I'm like, is that an outdated term but I'm like, that's how I identify it. And then yeah, I came out as trans in 2003.

Rachel: Is that when you started T also?

(34:12) TC: Yes. Yeah. But it was kind of a nonlinear transition. So actually there was a... maybe a third coming out because I... after two years of T and I was living in Boston, I got my birth certificate in Maine changed and I don't know if they had just never done this before because now their policies are different. But at the time they just gave me a whole new birth certificate that said my name was gone and it said male and it said Travis and male and when they sent that to me I was two years into my transition. And this was like the last document. Everything was changed. I'd spent years, I had surgery, you know, money like all this. And I got that. And I felt like I had been erased from the planet. And also I'm one of those trans people that's not ashamed about my
Second girlfriend

Dad didn't care about him being gay

Dropping hints about being trans

Aunts did not want to transition

Came out as lesbian in '98

Came out as trans in '03

Started T in '03

Birth certificate changed

past. Like I know some people don't like pictures or any of that. Like that's who I was. I don't have any of that. Like, I'm actually really proud of me and how I got here. And so to have... Elizabeth was my birth name, to have Elizabeth completely erased, felt like I was gone. And I fell apart and I ended up stop taking T. I had my birth certificate retracted, I had everything changed back and now my birth certificate instead of Travis, or instead of Elizabeth it now says Travis with a line through it with Elizabeth. And I had tried to change... like ask them will you just please just make a nice copy that just says Elizabeth for my mother was into genealogy. And they're like, no, this is our policy. But again, the first time they gave it to me, it's not like Elizabeth was crossed out and Travis was put, it was just like, Travis. Travis was born male on this date and month. It never happened. And so and that's still a thing that when I think about it every once in a while, I'll write to the office and be like, Can we just... although it's extra confusing now because I did end up changing my name back to Travis. So my documents are kind of a mess. It's been a long journey, but yeah, I started T... So there was a three-year period where I stopped transitioning and I was just like in a really funky period. And I also felt like I had lost my siblings at that point because they were not interested in another brother or being involved. And they have since... it's so long ago, they don't care anymore. So again, it's not like they're in my life really, but if I contact them, they will contact me. Like my sister called me today for the first time, probably ever in years. But it's because my mom got sick. So that's why my sister called me. But that's a very rare occurrence. So I thought by stopping transition, I would get them back and at some point I realized that's not going to happen, so I continued my transition.

Rachel: And you said you went to Colorado for a little bit?

TC: Yeah.

Rachel: Was that before or after Boston?

TC: Colorado was for nine months in the late 90s. So it was my junior year and it was a National Student Exchange and I was a big snowboarder and I just checked out where I could get a cheap season pass. I went to Gunnison which is next to Crested Butte for nine months. And it was incredible. Yeah, it was a great opportunity. And I think maybe this program still exists, but you pay the same tuition? I paid Farmington tuition

Erased identity
Retracted birth certificate

Against policy to change birth certificate twice

Writes to office every once in a while

Lost siblings because of T

Mom got sick

Moved to Colorado in late 90's
National Student Exchange

but was able to go there. And it was so cool and I actually wanted to transfer there because they had an outdoor program in Farmington, didn't, they do now though, but they didn't at the time. And I'm really into outdoor stuff. But ultimately, I'm always brought back to Maine and I'm a very homesick person and Maine is my... I always come back.

Rachel: So did you come out to your friends at a specific point and how did they react with that?

TC: Let's see. I think by the time I came out as a dyke, I think they all were like, yeah, that's cool. We get it, and by then. There was like seven of us and our little pod or a little high-school tied. Two of them are gay dudes. So me coming out as a dyke was no big deal because they already were out as well. And as trans I mean, again, they were all supported. My high school friends were all supportive. Yeah, there really wasn't that much resistance there. I think maybe, you know, a hard time with pronouns and stuff like that. But the longest time, I didn't really care. I just wanted them to love me. I wasn't going to get finicky about that. And when I was living in Boston when I transitioned. There was a lot of... not a ton, but I had a group of friends that were trans. So I was... for me it was just part of joining or continuing to join this community. Yeah, I felt really well supported.

Rachel: So you first came out as a dyke or lesbian and then trans. Which one was more challenging for you, or were they both the same?

TC: Well, coming out as a dyke was really hard because of that resistance I got from my Mom. It was really confusing. And let's say... it had been 10 years later. I probably

would've had visual pictures of trans folks or even just known that people transition and that was a thing that I could do. So that might have made my journey to who I am slightly less bumpy. But, so again, though, because of the communities I've had in my family, there's never been that much resistance. But work was a different thing. I transitioned at work and I was working at Boston University at the time. And for the most part I worked in an office that was like, yeah, nobody was transitioning at least at BU yet. Yeah. It was 2003 and we made this plan. So I'm just going to take T for like three or four months, actually it was August and then Christmas vacation when everyone took the week off, I was going to come back as Travis. So it was kind of a plan I had made with

my colleagues and I later found out that there was, I don't know, like the dean was, she probably shouldn't have told me this, but the dean was not down with it and wanted me to leave. Of course, even then they wouldn't have been able to legally get me to go. But he was pretty uncomfortable with it. And I think the really hard part was the de-transition at work. So I had... I was still at BU two years later when I was freaked out and I was like, I can't do this anymore. So to be at work and be like I have to I actually quit my job. I ended up quitting. I just couldn't deal with it. So I would say that the gender back and forth in the mid 2000s was harder than the gay stuff.

Josh: Do you think that would have been easier with like, the Internet, or be more of a thing where you would have more of a support network?

TC: I mean, yeah. Like now you can Google de-transition and people have written books about it. Yes. Then there was a Yahoo group I found with like five people in it and it was like not even active then. So there wasn't... I felt really, really, really alone and also I was working at Fenway in Boston and this was like an up and coming like queer health center. And they're probably so excited about all the trans people they've got going through it. Now here comes a trans person being like, I need you to like redact this letter, like rewrite this letter because I need my documents back. And they're probably, I mean, I remember the looks on their face were like, this is really weird. I'm confused, like this going on. And also scary because these doctors have signed off on all these things, you know, because you're demanding like, I'm this gender. And then for two years later come back and be like, no, I lied, I'm not, I'm not, I'm freaking out. And then again, you know, to come back again and be

like no, no, no, I was just freaking out. And so that part's been really hard.

Rachel: So your identity as a lesbian in college led you to perform in an all-queer band, so how did that come together?

TC: Well, you know, I was thinking about I had been in a lot of bands and they've all been queer, except my high school bands. So I was in high school band. Well yeah, in college yeah, I started playing guitar when I was 14 but by the time I got to college, I really gravitated towards acoustic music. I was really into folk music at the time. My, again, my friends were other dykes and lesbians and there was another guitar

player, and she was also a really good singer. And then there's this other really good singer. I'm not a singer. And so the three of us started playing Indigo Girls covers. And then people were like super stoked on it. So we decided to name ourselves and do more covers. And then we just started doing like a whole bunch of Indigo Girl covers. And we played like a coffee shop down in Farmington. And once I think we all traveled to like Waterville and played outside somewhere and our friends like followed us. But we didn't have any like, real gigs at that point that, that being in a particular. But that's the band I have a VHS tape of that Wendy was like, "Oh, you should, you should get this transferred." So I'm going to find somebody that I can get that transferred. Because I think that'd be like a really fun there will be yeah. I think it's, I think it's 1999. It's in the student center at UMF, and it's just teeming with 90's queers. And a lot of them I still know today. So it's really tender just to have that.

Josh: So you mentioned UMF was where it was where all the lesbians or dykes went and that's why you decided to go there? Was that, I guess, rumor true when you got there? Was there a supportive community for that?

TC: I mean, there was a community I didn't know. I mean, Farmington was bigger than my town. So in hindsight, I've lived in San Francisco, I've lived in all these cities now. It's like, oh my God, and I thought Farmington was a big city at that point, I think there was more than one street light, there was a Reny's. And we had a 24-hour diner. This is a big improvement from Bucksport. But yeah, there was a queer group there. Again, the word queer was not being used, but it was like things called The Gay and Straight People's Educational Alliance was the name that was used in

public, changed eventually, but yeah, there was a gaggle of folks and I don't know how or why Farmington became that way. But there were a few reasons I went to Farmington and that was probably one of them. But the other was because it was next to Sugarloaf and I didn't want to go to college. I just wanted to snowboard. But my parents were like, "You have to go to college". So I went to college. I went there so I could just snowboard and it just worked itself out. It ended up being a really good place for me.

Rachel: And you said you were in a couple of other bands too, how did those come about?

TC: I'm always in bands. I love playing music with people. So anytime I live anywhere. So, when I moved to Portland, I was like, I'm getting a band. So I was in a bunch of bands out there and when I moved to Boston, actually that was the most fun when I moved to Boston. Before then, I was all acoustic, like, loved folk music. But somebody had given me a tape of this band called Teen Thrash. And they were four dykes from Portland, Oregon. Of course, I'd end up being a party to them later in life, but at the time I didn't know that. And they were, it's a punk band, and it was all these queer women. And I had never heard anything like this. You know, of course I'm like into all the other like, heavy punk stuff. But like queers, I had never. So this is still my favorite band of all time. They barely recorded any stuff. They ended up breaking up in like 2000, I got to see them on a reunion tour in Portland, Oregon, still my favorite band, but I had never heard anything like this. And I was like, "I want to be in a punk band". So when I moved to Boston, Craigslist was thriving. And I answered some ads and ended up in some weird situations. But finally ended up in a band called Porn Built. And it was a noise punk dyke band. And we had a bunch of shows. It was kind of a circuit of like queer bands in the early 2000s. Of course, everyone's dating one another too. And we would just play these shows around Boston and these were really great times of my life playing in those punk bands. And I was a guitar player for a while, but then our drummer quit. So I became a drummer. And that was really fun, and unexpected as well. But it's like what you'd expect, like super late at night on a Tuesday, free beers, maybe people smoking outside or maybe actually inside.

Josh: That's the best music though.

TC: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it was a time. So yes, that was kinda the first like queer like punk band I guess I was in. Yeah.

Rachel: So were you self-consciously a queer band or were you guys just like you guys were just the band? That's all you thought of it as.

TC: No, I'd say we were specifically a queer band. I don't know if they would call us that. They probably just call this like a female band because we were all female. Like not that we were written up in the like, I think we were written up once, but mostly about how terrible we were, which made us so proud. So funny. Yeah, we were compared to like, a train wreck. But it's all good we were a trainwreck. So yeah, but

we were we were all queer identifying and actually one of my bandmates was a trans woman and I did not know that until somebody outed her to me, like probably a year into it. And that's when I, she was probably the first trans woman I had met and personally had hung out with significantly. And I was like, Oh my God, that person's trans. And so I had met a trans dude like years earlier. But this was really close contact and I think it started to get the gears turning of like what was possible. And also that I had no idea. You don't have the thing. Rachel: You said you performed in Boston a little bit. And what kind of audiences did you draw in? Like punk audiences or like other queer people?

TC: Queers.

Rachel: Really?

TC: Yeah. I mean, and that's, you know, I would go to other queer shows too whether you like the music or not yet. But yeah, queers would come to our shows and maybe, maybe some other people that just like knew of a certain club. You know, and they were like, cool, I'm going to go to the mid-late tonight and see who's playing. But I would say, for the most part, it was a circuit of queer people and that's the thing, that's why I moved to Boston, was to be in a sea of so many queers that, that can support that kind of community. Like if you're playing, you know, a couple of times a week and you can go to different places and see different people on their, you know, and they're all queer and you're just like God. And that's why for years I was like "I'll never move back to Maine" because even when I fantasized about it, I was always like I'll move back to Portland. But then I would come up and party every once in a while they go to sticks or like whatever queer bars

were around. But then be like there's just not enough people. It's not yet, Not yet. And then until eventually up here, but I'm in my 40s now. So I was in my 20s then and I was like, No, no, no, I need, I need so many queers. And actually Portland, Maine now is actually super-duper queer. It's just, it's, it's great.

Rachel: So were there a lot of other queer bands in Boston or when you were in Maine or anything like that?

TC: No other bands in Maine that I knew of. But again, the internet didn't exist. So like, you know, even though we were

in Farmington and maybe people at UMO. But we would never have known that, right? Unless you like travelled to UMO about we actually we did play a punk show once at UMO. And then like hung out at this funny, gay bar and oh the spectrum, the spectrum and Bangor. But we wouldn't have known that because they were just, we just didn't have that connection the way that the Internet connects things. So I had no idea. But, not that I know of it in terms of Maine. But in Boston, yeah. Like my, my bestie who still lives in Boston. She was in a band called "Secret Cock". So they were in a band and then there was, you know, "Chelsea on Fire". There were all these but yeah, they were all these, you know, I had a girlfriend who was in a band called "The Kitty Kill". There was a bunch of bands, you know, probably five or six. Or maybe there's like a punk band and maybe like one queer person and we would still go see that. But there was enough again to keep a community going and thriving or it felt like that to me.

Rachel: And how did that band end? Was it a falling out or was it like a mutual agreement?

TC: It was, yeah, it was a falling out. We played together for two or three years. There was some internal drama that kind of kills most bands. I think there was even, yeah, there was like a crush they went wrong. It was kind of a thing and we broke up. And I don't remember. I wasn't a part of that drama, so I can't fully remember the specifics of it, but it was like a guitar player was in love with a singer and they didn't love them back and, you know, all this. And then we just went our separate ways. And every once in a while we'd be like, yeah, reunion tour, you know, even like a year later, like reunion. That never happened.

And even today, like, I don't even know if it could happen. I can't play drums anymore. I've tried and tried out for other bands. I'm like, I'm a drummer and I'm like No, no. I guess I'm not, I'll stick to the guitar. But, yeah, it... it just, it just kind of ended one day. And then the other bands, they were also kind of breaking up. It was like, this natural... I don't know what this word is, but this time lapse, it was just time for a new chapter, I guess, in Boston for kind of everybody.

Rachel: And you said you started playing guitar at 14. What's inspiring you to start doing that?

TC: I was obsessed with this song called "Silent Lucidity" by Queensryke. Are you familiar with Queensryke? 90's heavy metal band. And it's very acoustic driven. A lot of people compared to like Pink Floyd's sound. And has this finger picking and this driving fingerpicking. And it just was, I was obsessed with his song. Just listen to it on repeat. I had a cassette single, just repeat. And then for my birthday that summer, my brother got me a magazine and you know I used to buy a lot of heavy metal magazines, and Queensrike was on the cover. But it just so happened that it was a guitar magazine and Queensrike was on the cover and inside was the tablature for "Sound Lucidity". And if you're familiar with tablature, it tells you exactly which fret on which string the play. And like most dads, they have like a, you know, dusky guitar that's never been touched in 30 years in the closet. So I pulled it out. I don't know how I tuned it. I probably didn't, but I figured out those first opening notes to enough that my parents were like, "What the hell?" Because no one is musical in my family, and I showed enough like interest and drive that my parents paid a senior in high school boy to come over once a week. We pay them \$5 and then feed them dinner and he'd give me guitar lessons.

Josh: What a deal.

TC: Yeah. Looking back, it's hilarious, five dollars. And he would spend a couple hours with me and he just started teaching me guitar and through teaching me heavy metal songs like we would learn like Metallica and Skid Row, I would learn new chords. And that's how it became a guitar player. And so, yeah, I was just obsessed with heavy metal and music. And also as a kid that just all sorts of undiagnosed shit. Gender shit. I was dyslexic, ADD or ADHD. All this stuff. And

all of a sudden I have this thing and I can create a thing. And also I just felt so suffocated in my life and my town, you know, all these things, right? Definitely not getting the support I needed as a young person. And all of a sudden I had a guitar. And then it just so happened that around the same time, a friend of mine, she was also 14. She picked up the bass. So together we were in lots of bands. And so we started finding boys to play with because nobody else in our small little high school, nobody, no other female people at least played electric instruments. So then we joined forces and we played in lots of little like we were like Nirvana cover bands basically. In high school. Yeah.

Rachel: Last question is, is there anything looking back on all that you've talked about, is there anything that you would change or anything that really stands out for you that you would never change?

TC: About which part?

Rachel: Like in general, moving, coming out, any of that.

TC: I feel like, I mean, there's a few things. I regret not being able to spend some time with Tony before he died. Enough. My high school friends and I also just kind of believe in the power of the universe, bringing in different directions. And that was when it was supposed to happen and then... there's nothing I can do about it. Of course, I really don't dwell on it. But there is a sort of sadness there that now that I'm in Maine like, like, wouldn't it be amazing if I could just see him and then I think the thing that affected me the most, just mental health wise, was the de-transition and having some support around that. I remember my therapist at the time telling me to slow down. And I was... I was terrified for my life for some reason. I was going, I mean, looking back in hindsight, I was going through a mental health crisis. And I was scared, just terrified, and I don't know what kind of support would have helped me to just feel safe so that I didn't need to go through what I went through because it ended up taking three years for me to get back to a place where I felt safe again. So that's something that I wish that I could have done differently. And again, maybe it's just, that's just part of my gender story and I needed... I needed to do that to figure out how to. I don't know. It's more about myself, I guess.

Rachel: Before we end the interview, is there anything else you want to talk about or go over?

Josh: Tell us about sisters.

TC: Sisters?

Josh: Yes.

TC: I'll tell you about Sisters. So back in Farmington when I was coming out as a dyke and I had some elders dykes around me, they would be like "All right, we're going to Portland." We would drive for hours, round trip for hours, which at the time seemed like nothing. Because what else, I mean, it was

actually the most exciting thing in the world. So we would like, sometimes we came down on Wednesdays because it was free pool night. But then the ironic thing about that is it nobody was fucking there because it was a Wednesday. Their would be like the same bartender who never her name is Jackie and she was super Butch and had like Frosted tips and really spiky hair. And also my bandmate tried to sneak alcohol in and she got busted and Jackie got pissed. I remember we were there and Jackie was very angry at us. And so that was really scary. And I didn't not sneak that alcohol in and I, to this day I would never, you do not sneak alcohol into a bar. But so that was like a fun kind of thing also, I had my first one night stand at Sisters.

Rachel: Really?

TC: Yeah. It was an awkward, weird night, but it was the kind of thing where again, I'm like "I'm a dyke", right? I think I am. And yes, somebody who started, you know, I, I'm really easy to butter up. So somebody was just like, "Can I buy you a beer?". And I was like "yeah" and they bought me a beer and we ended up, I went home with her and kinda had my first like true like lesbian sex that night. And I was like, yeah, I don't get it. But I didn't, again, I didn't think it was about my identity. I just thought it was about me like I, or maybe that person wasn't right or I wasn't right or something was weird about it or I don't know. Plus it was a one night stand. But the funny part about that night was somebody came up to us and they were like, "Oh, did you find your piglet?" And I was like, "What does that mean?" But this person that was hanging out with me had just put out a personal ad and I guess they put out a personal ad saying something about being a soft butch looking for their piglet person or their Poo. And I'm like, "Oh

my God, this is so embarrassing". So I guess I was that soft butch that they were looking for. But also speaking to the times because those personal ads would've been on the back of like, you know, some newspaper, somewhere, right? And you know, sadly, sister's closed before I was really an adult. I must have been like 21. I'd never had a fake ID, so... and I'm pretty sure there were 18. We add some fun nights there. And there was a basketball hoop up back and shoot hoops. And there's a giant dream catcher on the wall which now would be so inappropriate. But it was really special and cool. And also because I had that experience in college when I moved to Boston, I was like "where are the dyke bars?".

Josh: Really?

TC: Yeah, in Boston. They don't actually have a dedicated dyke bar even then. Yeah, they have bars where lots of queers will go on a certain night, but it's not nothing like Sisters. And Sisters was really unique. And there actually were only really a handful, even that around the country, that were like, dedicated, like women's space. Which is pretty unique and I don't know if any even still exist. There probably is one or two. Like even the Lexington in San Francisco, which was like the longest running, like dyke bar, that closed. This would be a decade ago at this point, which is, I mean, that was packed right up until the end. People up the streets. I don't even know why it was in the mission. It was a change in community culture, but yes Sisters. I have a beer koozie from CSR, so yeah, it's half torn apart and it says like "Sisters: Late summer of '98". It's like a prized possession of mine. Yeah. It only comes out during special times.

Josh: That's cool.

TC: Yeah.

Josh: What kind of music are you still into? Same metals still or does it vary more?

TC: Actually, yeah. One band I did forget to tell. So I got really into concordancing. In Boston. I was in a queer contra dance band and we recall "The Homestead Family Band". So overall, I always really had a love for acoustic music and I play the banjo now as well. But I love punk music and I started to look for and 90s cover band right before the pandemic hit like on queer change. And then of course everything fell apart. And now that, you know, things are kind of going back to normal, I'm like, okay, I'm ready.

Who's it going to be? I want to be in a band so bad. I love playing music and it's really not even about.. Like I can't even stay up that late. So if I play a punk show you have to start at six o'clock which I feel like there's enough people in my life who would go to a 6 o'clock show because ten o'clock is just way too late, you know. So yeah, it's really both. I love old time music and I love, like, classic folk music. And I love a good catchy Green Day breath. So it really varies.

Josh: So music was always a huge party of your life?

TC: A huge part. Absolutely. Yeah, a yeah. It's honestly fallen out. Part of, like, I'm not a solo musician. I'm a musician to make music with other people and with the pandemic, it really killed that. And I'm going to have just moved here. So normally when I move to a city, I, like, find my therapist and then find who I'm gonna play music with. And I found my therapist. And then I started to find people to play music with, but then it fell apart. And that number, even that April of 2020, I asked this person I was playing music with, "Can we just sit outside and play?" and they were just, they were like, "I'm sorry, I'm just too scared". I couldn't believe it. And honestly, I haven't played that much music since and it's breaking me a little bit and I keep trying to think of ways to get it back. So being, like, starting a band, being in a band like that's the kind of thing, exactly the thing. I want and need to continue to play music with other people. And as far as I know, I don't know of any queer bands in Portland right now. If there was, I would be at every single show. If there are shows. I don't know. So I think that there's a real place for it. Like I think people would be excited about it. So maybe.

Josh: Is the queer community what brought you back to Portland? Or was it for other reasons?

TC: Well, Portland. Let's see. So my best friend, who was my college girlfriend, she lives here. But also I never considered living anywhere in Maine but Portland. And that's because I need city life after. And it's funny because I'm an outdoorsy person. I camp, most of my summer is in a tent or a hammock. So I'm a very outdoorsy person and I've just become really accustomed to if I want Pad Thai, I can get Pad Thai. When I'm visiting my mother, like, food options...

It's terrible. Getting bored and I'm also a vegetarian. So, like, finding something with tofu is next to impossible. So yeah, I just, I, I just I'm drawn to city life at this point and every once in a while, I'm like," Oh yeah, maybe the queer commun thing" because queers love to talk about living on communs together and I'm all for it. But I just need to be in a community of it.

Josh: So an outdoorsy person, but a city person.

TC: So yeah, totally Well and now Maine's perfect because I can just drive to, I mean, I lived in Oregon for six years and then it's also a good place for it because in an hour you're on a

giant glaciated peak. So it's both good places for mountains and queers.

Josh: What has been your favorite place to live? If you have one.

TC: If I have one that's not attached to, like, my heart, basically, Oregon is such an incredible place.

Josh: Any specific reason?

TC: Well, I also really like to bike. And so the city is laid out in such an amazing way. The food's incredible. There were four movie theaters I could choose from that played second run movies like Ford Alan movies. Co-ops are great. And again, you get in an hour, you're on Mount Hood or Columbia River Gorge or two hours you're on the Oregon Coast, which always reminded me of Maine, but like slightly different. And so I started the surf out there actually. And now I surf here, which is great. But I just miss it and I miss Oregon. And I, even then, wanted there to be some sort of like Portland to Portland tunnel. And I had a job for many, many years working for a queer outdoor organization. So I was flying back and forth and so I was able to come to Maine a lot, but if I had a normal job, I would not have been able to spend so much time, but it was just after my friend died. I needed to come home. And I'm actually just recently and I'm like, "Oh my God, I need to go to Oregon". Like it's just, I've just been missing it really badly. So it's an incredible place if you ever go.

Josh: Is there anything you would change about the queer community here?

TC: Here? It almost feels not even fair for me to make comments on it because , again,

I got here and, like, ready to enter key queer community and it just shut down.

Josh: Because of COVID?

TC: Because of COVID. Yeah. And I have my very small little Queer Group and I ended up marrying one of them like, we got involved, but that's not how we, you know, we were all just like a group of guys that were like surfing together. And I love them and this whole group of people, it's great. But as a queer community as a whole, I don't even know. You

know, like, I went to Blackstone's for like trans night like once before shit got shut down and was like, "Oh, this is cute". I joined the mug club and like and I haven't been back sense. And my partner doesn't drink and queer bands, I don't know. Like what would it look like? Like, what does queer community look like, right for me right now in Portland and right now it's potlucks with my friends, which I adore and love. But as a community as a whole, I feel like I'm not that connected to it. And that makes me sad because I'm so used to it. And also maybe it's like, "well maybe I'm just aging" and so it's just handy to start feeling differently about it. But it seems like it's a great community. It'd be neat if there were bands.

Josh: Because of COVID kinda screwing it.

TC: Yeah, it did.

Josh:I can see where that's tough.

TC: But I don't know if there were any bands before that, you know, so and I'm also, I'm one of those people that love us activities. So I'm used to being like, "okay, if you want something to happen, you have to just create it yourself". And so now I'm kind of in that mode. And so I like sit around like, "I wish there was like a queer pickleball group" And I'm like, "Okay, well that means I need to start it" because it doesn't exist so like what can I start? And so I'm in the starting phases now. I'm starting like offer like queer sewing classes and so I like starting different things as like things are not open. Yeah, and staying active in the community is really important to me. And so I'm hoping I can start to create a community because I want to be a part of it. That's why I want to create these spaces.

Josh:There was a, I'm remembering it now, you had mentioned the Venture Out project.

TC: Yeah.

josh:What's that all about?

TC: So the Venture Out project, It's still going. It's a queer and trans outdoor organization based in North Hampton. And I got involved with it right at the very beginning, and I had just moved to Oregon and I volunteered to be a backpacking

instructor and my boss and I hit it off really well. And six months later he called me and was like, "Do you want to be my office manager remotely back in Oregon?" And I was like, "Absolutely". So the program grew to be in New England, but also in the Pacific Northwest because I was there. So we were able to have programming on both sides of the country. It was great. I did it for... well in the end almost six years. And again, to move back right before the pandemic and the pandemic just kind of shut everything down. So we were just kinda really dormant. And at that point I was, I think I was like, "I did not, I'm not one of those people that loved remote work". I know a lot of people that do and I suffered greatly like I was always used to being remote but I was used to, like, going to, like, a work space. So I have a work space in downtown Portland. I'm used to, like, going out and being around people as an extrovert. You do that right? And that killed me. And so I quit because I needed to go back into work. So I've since done some other things, but yeah, I left that position almost a year ago now.

Josh: So being in the outdoors was always instrumental in your upbringing, I'm assuming. So, that's been a thing for you.

TC: Yeah, it's interesting. I did an interview once about sort of my outdoor journey. As of, kind of, I don't know, I was kind of an out of shape kid, but we lived next to Acadia and my dad, every once in a while, he'd try to get the family together. But we were, as a family, terrible. Everyone was screaming and crying. So he would take me out and then eventually he got me the AMC ME Mountain Guide. And I just was like, "I'm going to hike every mountain in Acadia". And for some weird reason, my body can just hike mountains. And even at the height of, like, not being in shape, I still, just

something, I just can hike mountains. It's this weird thing my body can do. And also being outside, at that time, I was harassed almost on a daily basis. So, you know, in high school. So being in the woods and the mountains, it felt really safe.

Josh: So is that like a way for you to literally escape? Is that how it started? Or were you always just into the outdoors?

TC: I think that's kind of how it started. But then there was this other piece of it was that I was a skater in the natural transition once snowboarding became kind of like popular

enough so, you know, like my brother and I got snowboards and I saved up all my babysitting money and got a used one and we'd ride it at Herman, up near Bangor. I don't even know if it's open anymore. And I became really good and I was just obsessed. You know, it's the kind of thing where you'd snowboard all day and then you'd go home and read the magazines and just like the thing where you think about your sport all the time. I just had visions of snowboarding and that's and that's what drove me to go to Farmington at that. And I had never even actually skied at the big mountains. I was, I only had access to small mountains. And I remember my parents didn't buy me a lot of things, but I remember when I went to college, they bought me a pair of snowboarding boots. So at that point I had just been snowboarding and Sirells and, and I felt like it was such I mean, I think I probably don't remember, but for me it was such a big deal. But I was like, "Here, we support your weird sport that you do" because again, I didn't come from a family of skiers. This was a thing that I ventured out on my own and discovered. So I think becoming that mountain sport then turned into like meeting other people and then starting to backpack and I started to mountain bike and then you just, you know, it's like the gate, yeah.. And then you just start doing them all and then you just...

Josh: Do you still board today?

TC: I do. Yeah. I broke my arm pretty seriously ten years ago. So I... my board stays on the ground. Yeah. Yeah. I used to do tricks and shred.

Josh: Do you have a favorite place to go to?

TC: I mean, my heart says Sugarloaf.

Josh: Yeah.

TC: I mean, in terms of Maine, but that's because of Farmington and now it's just the snow is, just not.. I mean, even in the nineties, I only got into the snowfields once, you know I used to ski the trees up there. And I don't know, I went to Saddleback last year and we had a few days, but powder is just not... Colorado's really good.

Josh: You're skiing on ice out here.

TC: Yeah. It's just yeah, if I'm going to spend money, I want to go to Colorado.

Josh: Well, if you lived in Oregon too, that's probably... what Mount Hood.

TC: Yeah. I mean, it's... yeah.

Josh: That's really cool.

TC: So there's like a nostalgicness to the Sugarloaf that I love but snow wise, it's not really...

Josh: Yeah. That's awesome.

TC: Yeah.

Josh: Do you have anything else?

Rachel: I think I'm good. Anything you want to add before we end?

TC: No. I think I'm good.

Rachel: Awesome. Thank you.

TC: Yeah.

Rachel: Thank you for doing this with us.

TC: Yeah. No problem.

Josh: So we're done here. If there's anything you want to talk about we can. But otherwise. Yeah. We're done with the recording now, actually.