

Alanna Larrivee: So, it is March 31st, 2017, we're at University of Southern Maine with Barry Manson. My name is Alanna Larrivee

Emma Wynne Hill: I am Emma Wynne Hill e-m-m-a w-y-n-n-e h-i-l-l

A: Alanna a-l-a-n-n-a, Larrivee l-a-r-r-i-v-e-e, and if you could state and spell you name please...

Barry Manson: Barry Manson, B-a-r-r-y m-a-n-s-o-n

E: Beautiful, thank you very much! Did you have some questions to start us off?

A: Yeah, if you'd like, if you could start with when and where you were born.

B: I was born in Skowhegan Maine in 1947, it will be my birthday um... Thursday.

A+E: Happy birthday!

B: Thank you

A: Could you tell us a little bit about growing up in Skowhegan?

B: Well I didn't really grow up in Skowhegan, we left Skowhegan in I think 1953, my father got a promotion. he worked for Sampson's supermarket, and we moved to Rumford. And that's where I grew up.

E: What was it like?

B: I couldn't wait to get out of there! (laughter) 1965, I graduated, and I was gone.

E: And where'd you go?

B: I went to Florida for a year to the university of Tampa, hated Florida, and came back and went to Ricker college in Houlton. Its closed now, it closed in 1976 or 78, I can't remember.

E: And then you had on your list that New York was an important place for you, did you live there after that?

B: Well I actually lived in Connecticut first... I left Ricker in 1969, still had a year to go but I was done for now, and went to live in West Berkley Connecticut and then in Middleton Connecticut. I had a boyfriend at Ricker, he lived in Middletown, we thought maybe we should live together at his parents' house... it wasn't the best thing in the end. And then I had 2 best friends who were, one was from new jersey, one was from Westchester county in New York. And they both worked at the Public Theatre, and also part of the public theatre was at the Delacour theater in central park, where they did Shakespeare in the park every summer. And I remember I used to go there as frequently as possible to see the productions (whispers: because I got in for free!), and they were, there were stars in it! Like Al Pacino, Martin Sheen, Judy Collins was in one that I saw. And I would go do like the last performance because there would be a party afterwards. And going to those you know, fancy New York apartment and staying out until like 3 in the

morning. In New York, you get out at 3 and like... people are all over the place! Coming from Rumford, it was a culture shock. But a very pleasant one for me.

A: Did you feel like you really belonged in that scene? Did it make sense to you?

B: Yeah, it did.

E: And how long were you there for?

B: Mostly just for that summer of 69, but my friends continued to work in public theatre, and even when I moved to Portland in the end of 1969... after my car died, I had a little Volkswagen, I would hitchhike to New York city every weekend and go to the theatre and stay with my friends, it was fun. And also in New York at that time, it's when stonewall happened, and my friend from new jersey was involved with the gay movement in New York. I can't even remember what it was called. It was an old firehouse that they turned into a gay club, well it was a meeting place. And I think they did even have a disco there, but it was where they had their offices. So, I was peripherally part of that.

E: Did you know folks who were at stonewall?

B: My friend was new jersey, he was doing something at that firehouse building, and they had just heard that the drag queens had started a big fight with the police, saying that we're not going to take this anymore. And he went down, but by the time he got there it was pretty much... the police were hauling everybody away. He had a peripheral bit. And I was one time removed. (laughter)

E: You were basically there (laughter)

B: I was basically there, I could tell you I was and you would never know (laughter)

E: So at that point you moved back to Maine, and you've been here since?

B: Yes! Except now we're in Waterboro. We left Portland in 1983, so I was here from 69 to 83. Lived over on middle street where the EastEnder is. We had the second and third floors of the building where the EastEnder is, but the second floor was our apartment, and then we also got the 3rd floor eventually. Had to clean it up, it was uninhabitable, and we didn't have a fire escape. But we, we got that done, so.

E: I'm imagining what it would cost to live right there now and thinking about...

B: You know what it cost us? 80 bucks a month.

E: You can barely get a sandwich for 80 bucks! (laughter)

B: Then when we got the second floor it went up to 120.

E: So you've seen some quite significant changes.

B: Yeah, Jordan's meats was across the street, and now it's... whatever, I don't even know what it is... I think it's a vacant lot now.

E: So, were you involved in the theater and arts in Portland?

B: No, I was in the restaurant business, which started when I was... my parents had moved to auburn, and when I came home from school I worked in a pizzeria in Lewiston. that was my first restaurant experience, and they didn't want me to go back to school, they said "just stay with us, and we'll pay you more" but, I went back to school. But even at school I worked in the cafeteria.

E: It stuck.

B: Yeah, my father had a grocery store, and I worked at his grocery store from when I was in the 3rd grade until all the way through high school. I was in 3rd grade working there! I'd walk down after school in Rumford, it was no big deal (joking aside: I had to walk a mile!). Because I was the smallest person, on Saturdays before they closed, that's when in the meat department there were butchers, and you didn't have prepackaged meat, you did it all yourself. And they would make me go into the meat case, you know the windows, and go underneath and clean all the water out (laughter). Which I really didn't mind. because it would have been way more difficult for them, because they were all big guys, and I was just this little kid. I think I got \$.50 for doing that!

E: You could almost rent an apartment for that (laughter).

B: So, I've been involved in the restaurant business from then until now. Still go to the theater and concerts and stuff. And that summer of 69 when I was in Connecticut, I also went to Woodstock. That was something. And we went to the Newport Jazz Festival too that summer. And we were taking lots of LSD because the guy I was living with was a dealer so I didn't have to pay for it. Do I really want that going into the file? I don't even care! I'm glad I did it! It's not like I did it every day.

E: So when did you come out?

B: It's hard to say... it's hard to say I was ever 'in'. Uh, let's see. I'd say probably when I was around 12, in the 6th grade. I had a serious boyfriend relationship. He didn't want to tell anybody, but I told everybody. So, I'd say it was about then. I don't think I ever went up to my parents and said "I have a boyfriend". But I think... you know, my mother and I were always very close, and I always assumed she knew, because if... sometimes if I hadn't seen him for a while, she'd go "did you and Micky have a fight" and I go "No, no just doing something else..." So.

E: Did that conversation eventually happen with your parents?

B: I don't think if it ever happened like that. But um, my siblings certainly all knew, and I'm just they found out, that, well, like I said my mother was pretty hip to what was going on, and my

father, he wasn't around a lot, he was always traveling. And, yeah, I don't know. It never was a... in fact, my father was uneasy if we talked about it. As I got older, my sister has a son whose gay, and he would, you know talk about it, ask my questions and stuff. And my father would say "I don't want to talk about it, I don't want you guys talking about this". But he would leave, go the other room or something. That was that.

E: Did... you said you were excited to leave Rumford when you did, was that related to your sexuality or other people's relationship to it? Or was it just small town... ready to get out of the small town?

B: Yes, more than 50% yes to that. Yes. Rumford was a hard town, a papermill town. Always stunk. The snow was always black because of the soot. It's a cancer cluster now, and small minds. So, yeah, I was more than happy to get out of there. And when I left to go to Tampa Florida to go to school, my parents moved to Lisbon Falls. And they were there for, I don't know, a couple years, and then they moved to auburn. And it was more... more, what's the word, not citified, certainly, but more... less closeminded. Except in Lewiston, people in Lewiston... with their Christian... Paul Madore, and what's the name of that group... oh god they're still around... Michael Heath

E: Oh, that were protesting people immigrating in?

E: I don't know... now Carol Cosby and Jasper Wyman, they were against gay rights of any sort. And then Jasper Wyman had this protégé Michael Heath, and he's still out there, still around. And Paul Madore up in Lewiston, is a big anti-gay person. I remember going to a rally in Lewiston for equal rights. And he was right there, you know. They don't even know what they're talking about half the time. We used to go up to Augusta, to, for the judicial hearings, when they were discussing equal rights, I think I went to 6 or 7 of them. and it was amazing to me, you know they have a 'pro' and 'con' and they take one and then take the other one, and before they start they always say 'if there is any name calling or other kind of disparagement, you'll be ejected', and this one guy got up and he just went off! "they go around sucking up every disease, they're sick and they're twisted", and finally he got gavelled and they threw him out, but there were people going "yeah!!!" And there was this man sitting next to my boyfriend and I, this old country bumpkin, and he was going "those faggots, they shouldn't even be around, they shouldn't be allowed to live". And he was surrounded by lesbians, never even had a clue, because he was only concerned about faggots. Some of those meetings got kind of out of hand, too, I thought. Besides being confronted with that kind of hate, it's very discomforting.

E: We made a timeline last semester of gay rights in Maine, and a lot of it was all the number of times that the equal rights thing came up.

B: "Special rights"

E: Right, and reading through some of the transcripts and the things that the opposition was saying was just disgusting, I can't imagine being in that room.

B: But we soldiered on!

A: You said that you went to 6 or 7 of those hearings, was that something that you really enjoyed to go to, or was that something that you felt more compelled to?

B: Compelled to. It wasn't really that enjoyable. Yeah, compelled. I was part of the thing in Portland, too. What was it called? Equality Maine. Oh, I was also at the initial meeting of the Maine gay political alliance, which became Equality Maine. It was up in Augusta and Dale McCormick, who became state treasurer I believe? She was the first... we elected her the first president of the MLGPA that went on to become other things. And, so, I've been right at the forefront.

E: What did that look like in those years? Obviously going to those hearings and stuff, were there a lot of protests? What did that campaign look like?

B: Yeah, there were a lot of protests. I remember marching in Portland several different times, and I even remember when Take Back the Night started. Are you familiar with that movement? Well two of my roommates that I lived with on Middle Street, down there 47 Middle, were lesbians, and they helped organize the first one, and we all joined them because they were our sisters, you know. And we went to the first two or three, and then they didn't want men in it anymore. There was a bunch of, I call them radical lesbians for lack of a better term. And they were saying that like if they decided to have a pregnancy, if they found out that they were going to be delivering a boy they would abort it. And I said "this is some fuckin' heavy duty shit here." And they wouldn't let us come. They wouldn't let us come to the Take Back the Night marches anymore. And I remember one night there was some, was it one of those Take Back the Night? But there was a gay bar on the corner of High Street and Cumberland Avenue, Roland's Tavern, and I remember rolling by there, and we were yelling, because there were people in the windows watching us go by, and I remember yelling "out of the bars and into the streets!" Not one person came out. I was so disappointed. But, you know, back then, too, a lot of people didn't want people to know. In fact, at Roland's Tavern there was a kind of a backroom where people danced to a juke box, I think it was, and there was. The bartender out in the front room, if someone came in they didn't recognize, he would put this red light on in the back room, so we'd push all the tables back and make it look like we were just sitting there having a beer.

E: Do you remember when that shifted? Or what it looked like when that was no longer the way that things worked?

B: In the 70s. Yeah. In Portland, because Portland's so liberal, it was easier to... I can't imagine going back to Lewiston at the time. Because it was still not bad... so being in Portland you were kind of on a little island of sanity. And liberalism.

E: Was Roland's the one... did that end up burning down?

B: Yes. And the Phoenix burned down, too. that was on Milk St. around the corner from Roland's. It had been a church. Yeah, it burned.

E: Do you remember other bars? Was the bar scene a big deal for you? Did you spend much time there?

B: Well it was the only place to go to meet people or be with friends. You know. In the late 80s there was a place on middle street called the Oasis, I think it had been an old bait building. Huge ceilings and marble poles and stuff. And it was a mixed club, gay and straight, but it was never an issue, it was just, everybody was dancing, drinking, having a good time. And that was, for me that was revelatory, too. All these people that I knew who weren't gay, and we were always partying together all the time. That was, I wish I could remember exactly, 70 something, 74, 75... I can't think of what's there now, the buildings still there, but I can't remember what's there now. And there was also a restaurant attached to it.

E: We're talking with this project about doing a mini-series called 'bar stories' that would just be having people come in and talk about the gay bar scene in Portland. With Styxx closing, just wanting to kind of document that history a little bit. And all the other bars that have closed.

B: Yeah, I don't know this one, and I only heard of it, down by Anderson street. Well I think there was a bar down there called Avies, a-v-i-e-s, and it was, everybody said "oh that's the lesbian bar" and, uh, not being a lesbian, I never went there to explore.

E: I never heard of that one.

B: And then there was... the Little Tap House, that used to be right when I first came to Portland that was Creamos. And across the street there where that parking lot is now, that was where the bus station was, the greyhound bus station, and there was a Deering Ice Cream in there and, Creamos was kind of like a closeted gay hang out. And then down in the old port, on Union Street, that goes from The Nickelodeon down to commercial street, there was a bar called One Way, that was a gay bar, that was fun. And then down, if you continue down Middle Street, before you get onto Pearl Street, there was a bar called, it had been Mul's Irish Tavern for a while, and then it became Sylvia's or something, it was a woman's name. And that was a dance club for 2 or 3 years. And then where Brian Boru is used to be a gay bar called Cycles, kind of a leather bar, used to call them ladies in leather, because they weren't very butch, but they thought they were pretty tough. So, I'm trying to think... Cybil's, that was the name of it, not Sylvia's. That was Oasis... Across the street from Oasis there was Jim's bar and grill, it was a dive bar, but it welcomed everybody. And we would go in there and smoke pot in there back in the 70s, it was very, uh, I don't know what you'd call it... open. They played real good jazz and I think sometimes. In fact, you know that place Blue up on Congress Street? That was Jim's Bar and Grill, it had a resurgence. So back in the day we would go to the Oasis and then go across the street to Jim's Bar and Grill and then we'd walk down to Cybil's. And there were all night clubs, lots of all night clubs, and I don't think there are any anymore. There was one where Styxx was, and, that fire escape that goes up to like the second floor... that was an all-night

club... I can't remember the name of it right now. Backstreet, that's what it was called. And there was one on Danforth street, I can't remember... there was one on York Street, there was one on Portland Street, there was one on... oh, India street, too, had one, an all-night club. There were lots of them.

E: And they could sell booze all night long?

B: It was kind of a private club, you had to like be a member, wink wink, nudge, nudge. I didn't really frequent the all-night clubs, there was one on Commercial Street, too. Because I'm an early go to bed person, because I was always getting up early. One of my roommates called me "Our Lady of Perpetual Employment" (laughter) because I worked like all the time. I always had a job and my other roommates, not so much.

E: The restaurant business will keep you busy!

B: Yeah.

E: And so were the gay bars pretty, were they either a gay bar or a lesbian bar? Or were there some that were like mixed in that way?

B: They were all mixed at the time. Sisters was the first one that I remember, on pleasant street. Oh, and then Avies, I don't have any... just a memory.

E: And I know there was Somewhere and Somewhere Else'

B: That was an all-night club, Michaels all night club, and then it was Spring Street Gym, a gay bar, and then it was Somewhere, and then wasn't it Over the Rainbow or something for a minute, it had several incarnations. And now it's Flask.

E: Is it the same building as Flask? Interesting.

B: Interesting!

E: I would love to do a timeline someday of the different gay bars in Portland.

B: If you figure at one time there were like 4... and now it's just Blackstone's.

E: Yeah, and Flask.

B: Yeah, that's kind of.

E: So, we touched one activism a little bit, and the Maine Gay Activist Alliance is what turned into Equality Maine, is that right?

B: It's made a couple of transitions of names. I think it was first called, Pine State Alliance or something, and then it was MLGPA, and then it was something else. but you know, I was there when it first become and organization in Augusta.

A: Did you do mostly the legislative type of work? or what was your role?

B: Support. I was a support. Never too much for, I don't know what the word is, being the administrator, the administrative capacity. I was always happy to donate, donate some time, or make food, I did that a lot.

E: That's important in any organization. You mentioned that you'd be interested in talk about HIV and AIDS, do you want to talk about that a little bit?

B: Yeah, I don't know exactly what to talk about, I had so many friends that I lost during that whole time. And I never became part of ACT UP, even though it always interested me, because I was not that in your face, like they were, But I did support them, with money and other things. I remember one time in New York when it was the anniversary of Stonewall, what year was that? The 30th anniversary or something, and the gay games were in New York and the gay pride parade, we marched in the parade. And I remember the radical faeries were just in front of us, and they were marching naked down the street, and there were people from that church in Westboro. That fucking guy, what's his name? He's dead I think, whatever, minister. They were all over the place with their signs. And one of those radical faeries stopped the parade. And the police say 'you've got to keep moving', 'not until you kick those people out of here.' And he does 'well they have a right to be here' and he goes 'I'm not moving., we're not moving'. And the parade stopped for a while until they did kick those people. At least get out up front. And the parade continued. I thought that was pretty amazing. And marched in Boston, marched in Washington, marched in New York, Portland. Put a lot of miles in marching.

E: Do you remember what the community response was? Within the gay community, how people sort of rallied around each other to care for each other in that time... or was it still not a thing that was really spoken about in the community?

B: I don't remember there being a time when it wasn't spoken about really. I remember a time when it was called gay cancer, when it first started, and no one really knew what it was. As I remember it, in Portland anyway, everyone seemed to care for each other. it was a horrible time, losing a lot of friends.

E: One thing that I've heard a lot with kind of the cross over between the gay and lesbian scenes, was that time period, a lot of lesbians moving into support roles as well...just the community changing a little bit in that way.

B: Yeah. Maybe that was when... the Take Back the Night thing was early, before the AIDS crisis, and I think after it become clear what was going on, that people were dying from, you know, using dirty needles or unsafe sex, I think that most of my lesbian friends did kind of, they were friends... they were our friends. Some of them, I mean we were roommates, we all lived together. We had kind of a commune I think over on middle street. Like a told you we had the 2nd and 3rd floor. And in the 7 years I was there I had over 30 roommates in that time. We used to call it the Hippy Hotel. We also called it Via Mentalis- The Crazy House (laughter). So, it

was, and we were very welcoming, we didn't ask many questions, got ripped off a couple of times. But, yeah, I think it was, it might have been a turning point, that the lesbians that we knew became less radical, less separatists. And more, we're all in this together type of thing.

E: So, we talked a little bit about... I did want to ask you, under your 'public figures' thing you noted environmentalists. Do you want to talk a little bit about who those people were or why they were important to you?

B: Um, well, I don't know, I still am, you know. I belong to the Environmental Defense Fund, and the Wilderness Society. Because, I mean, we only have this one place, right? This fucking president right now. And that man he put in charge of the Environmental Protection Agency. And just the other day he said that this pesticide that hurts women and children especially, he said 'oh it's ok', he put that back on the OK list. And the healthcare thing we tried to do, it's like they're so mean spirited, and then the freedom caucus who didn't want him to do this. They don't want anybody to have healthcare. I just don't... what is it that I'm not seeing that they see? I don't get it!

A: Its counterintuitive.

B: It's so counterintuitive! And you always think, well they're all in Congress, they get this great healthcare. I heard one of them the other day say 'it's not that great'. Yeah, fuck you! I don't believe you for a minute. It's got to be, and it's for the rest of their lives! I don't know, just, it blows my mind.

E: It's an interesting time to be witnessing I think.

B: Right now... you must love Rachel Maddow, I LOVE Rachel Maddow. The stuff she was saying last night about that guy Nunez, and now they've identified these three guys who gave up information. And one of them is on the security council, and they were talking about him last night, they said he has a bachelor's degree from some college, he has no training in this, and he is the head of a department! He shouldn't even be there!

E: It's surreal.

B: And what Trumps been in there like 90 days, and it's been scandal after scandal after scandal...

E: What do you think is going to happen? Do you have predictions?

B: I can't see any good coming out of it.

A: Have you ever seen anything like this?

B: Never, never, it's surreal. I watch the elections, you know, I stay up late. And I get to see the tide turning, and I'm going, I've got to go to bed. And then when I woke up the next morning and saw that he had got elected, of course that's not popular vote. And then the whole thing

about 'lock her up', that guy Mike Flynn that he had to fire. He was the one who was doing that 'lock her up' stuff, and if you see in the new lately where he wants to testify if he can get immunity and he said on Hillary and her people "if you want immunity you must have done something wrong."

A: It's so strange, every single day.

B: Yes! And you know, his poll numbers are like 35% favorable or something, but he's got this 35%- they'll never leave him, ever. When he was running and he made fun of that poor reporter, and grabbing a woman's pussy, I mean, the whole... everything that he said and these fucking people that are CHRISTIAN, and they think that's ok?! it's beyond shocking, it's like we're in an alternate universe. It just. I don't know, my friend Vance he keeps going "I'm glad I'm the age I am because if I had to live through any more of this I don't know if I'd make it!" I say "well you've still got time!". it's just unbelievable. but for you young people, it's really scary (laughter). It's amazing. It's almost like they came from another universe, maybe they're aliens.

E: Maybe they'll just beam up one day, and we'll be done with them, just head out.

B: Ugh, I'm ready for that to happen. I'll push the button.

E: Do you feel like... I think it's very hard to tell what's going to happen, like how much power they're actually going to have, are you concerned about gay rights right now?

B: Yes. Yes. Because Mike Pence was into that conversion therapy. It's amazing to me, and here, we always thought, they always told us that Ivanka and Jared Kushner would be like the voice of reason because they were democrats. But she is his spawn, I don't know. I don't think you can, certainly can't rely on that. Especially the people he's put around him, Steve Bannon and the... When Hillary talked about the deplorables who support him, and of course Trump took it to mean all of his supporters. But it's clear that David Duke and some of those other white supremacists, they're deplorables! They're hateful, hateful people that would just as soon see us dead, that's frightening. I don't know, it's so bizarre that it's hard to make any kinds of predications, because there's no precedent. It's too, it's too gone, too otherworldly. I have to take a break, I'm a news junky. But sometimes I have to take a break. It's like no, this can't be happening.

E: I have thought a couple of times that it's a really weird performance art piece, and they'll be like 'SCENE!'.
B: CUT! Oh, that would be wonderful.

E: Let's see what else have we got here. Is there stuff that you want to talk about that we haven't covered yet? Things that you'd just like to be documented?

B: Nothing that's popping into my head. But if I think of something should I let you know? Because I really can't think of anything else. I remember I got drafted and I had to go to the draft board here in Portland, and uh, when I told them that I was gay, they kind of had this kid

around them... and they kind of tested me... I had to go to the bathroom, and the kid followed me in and wanted me to suck his dick or something, and I'm going "no", and he goes, "well I thought you were gay", and I go "well yeah, but no", and I'm sure that they did that to try and trap me or something. And I remember that that was so bizarre to me. Because he was friends with these soldiers. And he was young, probably like 17 or 18. And it just was like... I don't know, that just popped into my mind. I had totally forgotten about that. I was like 'no'. And I used to see him around town, too. And he... he was, I think he was crazy, he was different.

E: So, when you told them you were gay...

B: I got, not demoted, but it was, deferment. And I was okay with that, I wasn't going to no Vietnam. I had friends dying in Vietnam, too, and it was such a stupid war, they didn't want us there. That's when poor Jane Fonda got her "Hanoi Jane" thing, because she knew they didn't want us there either, and she was helping those people. And I guess now she has a website where she sells all kinds of 'Hanoi Jane' memorabilia.

E: I'm not familiar with that

B: Oh yeah, she went over the Vietnam and was helping out the people that were being, dying over there, the natives, and they hated her, they called her Hanoi Jane and boycotted her movies and whatever. Now she wears it like a badge. That was a different time, too, the whole Vietnam war thing. Yeah.

E: Did you have friends that went to war that were gay? Or do you think that people generally were happy not to go, and outed themselves?

B: You know thinking about it right now, I can't think of anybody I knew that was gay that went to Vietnam. But, I just don't know. I remember reading a story about the USS Constitution, I guess it was an aircraft carrier or something, and there were a bunch of gay men on that boat, and they used to put on these little shows, and they called themselves the Connie Girls, for the Constitution, the Connie Girls. And somebody one time said to them... they were headed to Vietnam, and somebody said them one time "don't you think you guys should tone this down a little bit?", they said "No, why, what are you going to do, send us to Vietnam?" They were already out there. Gay soldiers, that were just going to do their thing no matter what. The Connie Girls, I remember that story.

E: Do you have anything else you wanted to touch on (to a).

A: This is back, closer to the beginning, but you talked about how after you moved to Portland you hitchhiked back to New York almost every weekend? What was that like?

B: You know, it was always an adventure, it was fun. I never really ever got a really bad ride. I got in a lot of times when, you know, someone would stop and you'd go to get in and they'd peel off, you know. That happened more than once. And one time I got picked up by these guys, they were Latino guys on their way to a soccer game in New York and they were so drunk.

I asked them to let me out at the next exit, because I was just fearful for my life. They didn't speak hardly any English, and they weren't, certainly weren't asking me if I was a medico or something, you know. but They were just so drunk, I had to get out of the car. But it was always... 90% of the time it was really nice people, and nice rides. It was fun, like I said for me it was an adventure. The first time I went to New York I drove because I had my little Volkswagen. I had never been to New York city before, and like I said I had my friend Kimberly who lived in Mount Vernon and worked in New York and it was just amazing to me how big it was, how tall it was, and how it never stopped! you know people would come out of a show at 2 o'clock in the morning, and they'd go out to eat! It was like afternoon for them. It was pretty exciting, I think that's why I kept going. And I had other friends down there, too. And one kids mother said to him one time "you know, I really like your friend, but his luggage is always a grocery bag, is that all he has?". She was going to give me a suitcase of something, but I said "No, it's fine, the grocery bag serves me fine". And then I got a little pug dog, a little rescue dog, and she would go with me, too, go hitchhiking. And this one woman I remember in Connecticut, she picked me up and she goes "I just have to tell you, if you didn't have that dog I would never have picked you up. Anybody has a dog like that they've got to be a good person." She was a good traveler.

E: What was her name?

B: Gertrude. She was already... the woman who had to give her up had already named her, she had named her after Gertrude Stein. And my grandmother's name was Gertrude, and my grandma always thought I named her after her. It was fun, always an adventure, and I never felt like I was taking my life in my own hands. people were different then. wasn't so much hate around. You know being a stoned-out hippy all the time with really long hair, and bell bottoms, and everybody just thought 'harmless, he's harmless. The hippy with the cute dog. (laughter)

E: I'm tempted to ask you about watching this shift in Portland happening. That probably is enough for a whole other interview though, but it's just so fascinating how much it has changed in one lifetime, even in the last 10 years or 5 years its changed dramatically.

B: I was here when urban renewal was going on and whole neighborhoods were disappearing, like Franklin Street arterial. Yeah, it's amazing to me now, when I think about what Portland was like when I moved here in 1969 and what it is now. it's unbelievable, even unrecognizable.

E: I've heard stories of Munjoy Hill being the slums and things like that...

B: Oh, yeah, it was the only place... I've lived in so many places in Portland, and Munjoy Hill was never one of those places. I always would avoid Munjoy hill because everyone said "you don't want to go up there". But you know, it was, I'm sure it was ok. And it was... I never lived in, well I lived in the Western Prom for about a year. And that was the closest I ever got to a kind of highfalutin neighborhood. I was always in the, Sherman street and Grant Street and Middle Street and Danforth Street.

E: And you moved out to Waterboro in 1983?

B: Yup.

E: Why did you do that?

B: Oh because I always wanted to live in the country, and we found this house in Waterboro, we'd actually taken a wrong turn and it was an old farmhouse built in 1830 that had been empty for 8 years, but somebody had already fixed it up and a family was living there and there were 4 of us and we bought it, it was like \$60,000, it was 6 acres of land. Then one of my roommates left, he wanted to buy his own place. And then the second one left because he had already bought a building in Portland and he was buying 2 more. And then so it was just me and my boyfriend bought it from the other two, and we still live there. Since 83. We got married a couple of years ago.

E: Congratulations!

B: Thank you! It ain't easy. We still have 2 pugs and a cat and some Geese. We used to have chickens but a racoon got all the chickens. I have two beehives, which I haven't really been able to check on them yet, see if they made it through the winter, and I don't know, it's hard. Because when you open it up and there's like 60,000 angry bees around you, it's intimidating, even if you've got your suit on. But I was hoping I could find a mentor to... more hands on, rather than getting it from books. But I haven't had much success with that. I remember even on craigslist several years ago, I asked if there were any gay beekeepers out there, on 'Strictly Platonic', everybody thought it was some kind of weird sex ad, everybody was going 'I don't know exactly what you mean by this'. And I put it under 'strictly platonic' not 'man looking for man', so I thought it would be clear right from the beginning that I'm just networking. I'm networking. Just to see if there are any gay beekeepers out there. SO, I never did that again. There's a York County Beekeepers, have meeting sin Sanford I don't know once a month. I keep thinking I should do it, but its always at 7 o'clock at night, right when I'm ready to have dinner or watch TV or not go out, so I haven't done it. And I feel bad. I saw this article the other day about this guy that said he didn't want to be a behavior anymore, he wanted to be a beekeeper, and I'm like 'ok, that sounds good!'. And I even read this book called the Zen of Beekeeping, which I thought was going to be my revelation. And it was for a minute. So, I don't know what I'm going to do this year, I don't know.

E: Do you get much honey from them?

B: You know I have 2 other friends that are doing it, and I always got the most honey of the 3 of us. And I don't know if its cause of where I live or cause of there their beehives are. We don't use any pesticides. We have a garden, don't use any... use all compost and it's all organic. I don't know if that was part of it, I have no idea. Even last year, I got quite a bit, but I think... the whole thing about beekeeping is they like you to take the hives apart at least once a week and check to see how everything is, and I just always find that so disruptive to the hive, and I keep thinking there's got to be a better way, I just haven't found it yet.

E: I know there are systems now...

B: Are you talking about a flow hive? I have one, it does work good, it works good once you get the hang of it. And of course, if you read the directions it helps, but I'm not one of those people.

E: Who had time for that? You have bees to keep.

B: But I did finally read it, because it wasn't working so good. I'm going I can't get any honey out of this thing. I almost thought in my mind before I started beekeeping that that's all you do, you put the bees in and then you turn a thing and then the honey comes out. It ain't like that. Except it is with a flow hive, but they still want you to go in and check for the queen is the big thing, find the queen, make sure she's there and doing her thing. But it's just a whole thing about tearing the hive apart every time. It just doesn't seem right to me. But it's the way it's done, so, we'll see. Mondays supposed to be a nice day, I'll find out then if my bees made it. I remember one year we were living down on Middle Street and on my birthday April 6th we had so much snow that they closed Portland called in the national guard to help plow, that's how much snow we had in April of 1978 or something. We were skiing up to the restaurant up the street (laughter).

E: Well, do you have anything else? I think we've exhausted our list unless you have other stuff.

B: Can't think of anything else.

E: Feel free if things do come up that you just want...

B: If things do come up I should write it down, I'm not real good at that, I'll forget the details or something.

E: Well get a little list and give us a call! If we do end up doing the bar stories thing, is that something you'd be interested in?

B: Sure, I remember most of them!

E: Great! I think it'll be a fun little project.