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Dartmouth College Oral History Program
SpeakOut
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Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

MAC NEILL: This is Hugh Mac Neill interviewing John [J.] Ribaldo for the Dartmouth SpeakOut oral history project. Today is Tuesday, March [sic; May] 29, 2018. The time is 1:32 p.m. I'm interviewing John on the phone in the Ticknor room of the Rauner [Special Collections] Library.

So, John, I'd like to start this interview by asking when and where you were born.

RIBAUDO: I was born in Misawa, Japan, June 1958.

MAC NEILL: And do you have any memories from your time living in Japan?

RIBAUDO: No, I was a year old when we left. There were some pictures, but, you know, I don't have any memories of it at all. So—

MAC NEILL: What were your parents doing there?

RIBAUDO: Well, my parents were both from Connecticut, and they met at University of Connecticut and got married. And this was the late fifties, and I think, you know, men were at risk of being drafted for the Korean War, and my father decided he'd rather be an officer than an enlisted person, and so he joined the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corp] program in the [U.S.] Air Force to avoid, again, being conscripted as an enlisted person. Plus I think the ROTC program helps pay your college tuition.

And so they got married, and I think my mother was pregnant, she said, when they were going to Japan. And this was back where she had to take a ship to get to Japan from the West Coast of the United States to get there. And then they were in Japan, and I was born while they were in Japan. And my father was stationed in the Air Force in Misawa, which is I think in the northern island of Japan, but I haven't really looked that up, so—

MAC NEILL: And did your mother work?

RIBAUDO: Not while in Japan. And she I guess was a school teacher—you know, trained to be a school teacher in college, didn't like that, and I think she told me, too, that she actually lived in New York and worked as a secretary for maybe about a year before she got married. And after I was born, she really didn't have any career. I think it was sort of the era of stay-at-home mom, even though she was quite smart, although I think she worked as a bank teller for a brief while, while I was in high school and college, just to have something to do. But, you know, that was just sort of a side kind of a thing. So mostly she was just the stay-at-home mom and ran the household because my father worked long hours, and it was sort of her job to raise the kids and take care of the house, pay the bills, all that kind of stuff.

MAC NEILL: Did you have any siblings?

RIBAUDO: I have three younger brothers, and [William J.] "Bill" is about—not quite two years younger than I am, and [Joseph M.] "Joe" is a few years younger than that, and [Michael P.] "Mike" is a few years younger than that. But I have to admit, you know, their exact spacing always is sort of something I don't keep track of, but anyway, yeah, four boys, so—yeah.

MAC NEILL: Were you close with your family?

RIBAUDO: Was I close to my family? I'm sorry, is that what you're asking?

MAC NEILL: Yes.

RIBAUDO: Yeah, I think we were a fairly close-knit family. I mean, the brothers used to fight because I think especially boys [chuckles] tend to be competitive, but, you know, we still keep in touch with each other after we grew up, and my mother is still alive, and she still sort of organizes some family events. We have a family reunion in Cape Code [Massachusetts] every year, and sometimes I try to go out to Boston [Massachusetts] in April, after the worst of the snowstorms, and sometimes we get together—the brothers get together for that. So I think, you know, we're reasonably

close-knit, although I'm out in California, where my brothers are all in the suburbs of Boston, so I think they're a little bit more, you know, socializing with each other on an informal basis. And they have, you know, kids, and they go to each other's social events kind of a thing. So I think—I don't feel excluded at all, but they're obviously, naturally more, you know, integrated with each other and my mother than I am.

MAC NEILL: And where did your family move after Japan?

RIBAUDO: So we first moved to upstate New York, in Troy, and my father was an accountant. That's what he went to—when he was in college, that's what he studied to be, and he eventually became a CPA, certified public accountant, and he worked for an accounting company I guess in upstate New York.

And then, when we—I was, like, in second grade. We moved to Framingham, Massachusetts, which at that point was just the quintessential American suburb, and so that's where we lived from the second grade till I think, like, about the eighth grade.

And then we moved to Hingham [Massachusetts], which is on the south shore of Boston, and that's sort of a quintessential old New England town that was founded in I think 1642, so it's sort of, I guess, after Plymouth [Massachusetts] decided to have a suburb, they set up Hingham. We lived in the newer part of town, but it was sort of more of a—more of a Colonial, old-style town rather than, you know, Framingham being more of the new suburb kind of a town.

MAC NEILL: And could you say the first suburb you lived in? Did you say Framingham?

RIBAUDO: Oh, Framingham. Yeah, F-r-a-m-i-n-g-h-a-m, Framingham, yeah.

MAC NEILL: Ah. What was the neighborhood like there? You mentioned a quintessential suburban town, but could you tell me—do you remember any of your neighbors?

RIBAUDO: A little bit. My parents still stayed friends with some people that were our neighbors after we left Framingham, so, yeah, there was a couple of people that we were friends with. Our close neighbors—you know, for some reason, we didn't have any problems with them, but we just didn't bond with them, didn't have the long-term friendships. It was more some other people that were just, you know, down the block kind of a thing. Yeah, so there was a couple of families that my parents still kept in touch with. And, you know, whatever surviving spouses, she still sees occasionally, so—yeah, yeah. So we had that.

And in Hingham, you know, again, we had a fair number of families that we were friends with that maybe weren't next door but were, you know, around the block kind of a thing, although there was a couple of people even I still keep in touch with that lived across the street from us in Hingham, so—yeah.

MAC NEILL: Did you get a sense of what they did for work?

RIBAUDO: The neighbors?

MAC NEILL: Mm-hm.

RIBAUDO: Everything from running a music store to being a real estate agent to—one of them, the neighbor across the street was a physician and was my parents'—my father's physician forever, for—you know, for many, many years. And another one of the neighbors across the street became my mother's physician and still is my mother's physician.

And then other people I guess I don't really—can't specifically remember what their, you know, parents did—did for their, you know, jobs, so—

MAC NEILL: And what kind of school did you go to?

RIBAUDO: Went to parochial school in Troy, New York, for kindergarten and first grade and then went to public schools in Framingham and Hingham for the rest of elementary school, junior school—junior high school and high school.

MAC NEILL: And was there a reason why you went to a parochial school in Troy but not in the suburbs of Boston?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. My parents felt that the public schools in Troy weren't very good, so even though they really could, I think, frankly barely afford it, they sent me to parochial school for kindergarten and first grade, but when we moved to the suburbs of Boston there, the public schools were much better, and the parents thought that would be fine. So even though we continued to be raised in the Catholic tradition, we didn't go to parochial school, so—

MAC NEILL: Could you describe, like a normal day for you at school or what that would have been?

RIBAUDO: In, like, high school or—or—I'm not sure—"school" is sort of a general term when you're going from kindergarten to high school and so on.

MAC NEILL: Right. I mean, like, elementary school, kind of early childhood.

RIBAUDO: Okay. Well, you know, I probably remember best when we moved to Framingham. I think when I was in elementary school I went to Potter Road [Elementary] School, P-o-t-t-e-r Road School, and we would just walk to it. And it was just your standard American elementary school. Although I remember Framingham was still sort of a newish suburb, so they were building new schools, and this was a fairly new school.

And I guess another thing I remember—I think it was still in late elementary school—this was during the Vietnam War, and we would be singing protest songs [chuckles] during our school—you know, sort of school meetings or whatever you want to call it, where you have a meeting in the resource room of the school, where all the students get together. And I didn't even really, I think, understand what I was doing, but for some reason, when you ask about that, that's one of my memories of elementary school.

And we had a teacher who had the long blonde hair, so it was just sort of like that quintessential sixties thing and just the—obviously the turmoil our country was in over the

Vietnam War that I am, you know, realizing more these days than in the past, because you watch these documentaries talking about how that really, you know, ripped our country apart, frankly, at that—in that era.

MAC NEILL: You mentioned that you went to parochial school. How religious was your family?

RIBAUDO: We went to church every Sunday, although, interestingly enough, especially when it was the boating season, my father would find the shortest Mass so we could go boating—I mean, go—go to church in proper church clothes—we didn't dress in our boating clothes, unlike some people—and then would get out of the church and go and, you know, do boating, which was a big family activity.

So, I mean, we were fairly religious—I said—like I said most of the time. Would make it to church every Sunday. And I think, you know, back then we Catholics would not eat meat on Friday, so we observed that as well. And we went to CCD school. I think it's—something [Confraternity of] Christian Doctrine. It was basically a way to educate Catholic students that aren't going to a Catholic high school about Catholicism. So I—we did that.

But we weren't really heavily involved with the church otherwise. It wasn't like—I didn't—none of us became altar boys. Or my parents, you know, didn't do the big volunteer work for the church. They would put some money in the basket every week, like everybody else did, but that was sort of the extent of our involvement.

And we got the usual confirmation and first communion, the usual sort of rituals of Catholicism we all, you know, took part in. And even my brothers now are doing that for their kids, so—

MAC NEILL: And how—how engaged were you with the Catholic Church? I mean, I understand that your family was fairly involved, but you individually—how did you feel?

RIBAUDO: Well, you know, I went to Mass, and I think I probably tried to be a good Catholic and sing and stuff like that in the church, unlike everybody else was mumbling. And—but I think, you

know, even back then, I remember when we were in the CCD classes and the teachers would explain to us, you know, with Catholic doctrine—that abortion was wrong and that contraception was also wrong. And even back then, I was one of those people that would just ask the questions that people didn't dare, and I would say something along the lines of, "I can understand why abortion is wrong, but what's wrong with contraception?" And I still didn't get a good answer from the teachers, so when I didn't push it further—but I think that was an example of somebody like me always asking, "Why?" You know, "I understand what you're saying, but please explain why." Even if, you know, it's an uncomfortable question, that's something that I often did, even back then, that I still do now.

MAC NEILL: Did—did either, like, pastors or your parents ever bring up the church's views on homosexuality?

RIBAUDO: Oh, God no. Well, my parents barely even discussed sex. I mean, I can remember—at best vaguely you might have had a birds-and-the-bees talk, but, you know, this was, you know, the era where—I think I remember asking my mother how she became pregnant, and she said she went up to the altar and prayed to God. I mean, this was—[Laughs.] It's funny, thinking about it now, but that's sort of the level of, you know, sex education and how much, you know, I think my family was not unusual in just really not talking about sex at all.

Yeah, so—and certainly—you know, I guess—I don't really remember the church teaching strongly about—against homosexuality then, but I was just sort of not aware—and not aware, you know, frankly, that I was gay or certainly not even, you know, accepting myself that I was gay till probably high school, but, you know, very much in the closet at that point.

And, you know, I think everybody—society knew that it was, quote, "wrong," but—you know, so I was sort of—I think that's, you know, sort of when I became aware that I was attracted to men rather than women. But that was not what most people did, so—

MAC NEILL: And I want to just circle back shortly. You mentioned that your family was involved with the church but not so involved that you became an altar boy or you did extensive volunteer work. Was that normal for the rest of the congregation?

RIBAUDO: I guess all of our friends that I remember—I think most of them had that sort of level of involvement at the church. They weren't, you know, doing big-time involvement in the church, although I think, you know, long after I graduated from college and medical school, even, I think my father and one of the churches—because he's a CPA—helped them out with some of their, you know, finances and stuff like that in terms of, you know, auditing their books and stuff like that.

But, again, we just really weren't heavily involved. But I just don't remember that that was sort of the thing you did. I mean, you followed the rules of Catholicism and went to church and, you know, didn't eat meat on Sunday, that kind of a thing, but, you know, that was about it, really. I think it was just nominal Catholicism, which was the way I describe it, and I think that was, you know, pretty common, at least among, you know, the people that we had contact with when I was growing up.

And I know, for example, even though my father's parents were Catholic, they never went to church, which was interesting because my father went to—to parochial school, and whenever we visited, we would always go to church, but my grandmother—she was busy making Sunday dinner, so she never—she never went to church ever. But, you know—so—yeah.

MAC NEILL: So if your involvement with the Catholic Church was more nominal, what kind of things did you do with your family outside going to church?

RIBAUDO: Oh, I think the biggest activity was boating. We were never big into sports or spectator sports. My father was never into them. But he really enjoyed boating, and he was somebody who did power boating and sailing practically since he was a teenager. And that was our big family activity. And my father, you know, worked hard during the week, but most of the time he had Saturday and Sunday free, and he might do, you know, your basic household chores of—it's the—you know,

the father's job to mow the lawn. But the rest of the time we would be spending on a boat, at least in the—you know, the good time of the year, you know, which is a little bit shorter in New England than other parts of the country. But so those are big family activity we did.

Or we would visit my father's parents, more than my mother's parents—as well, would be the other thing we'd do. And my father's parents lived in New London, Connecticut, so that was only about a two-hour drive once we moved to Massachusetts, so we could visit them. We sometimes visited my mother's parents, but just not as much.

I think part of the attraction of my father's parents is there was also a cottage that they had, which was in Groton, Connecticut, right across the river from New London, and it was right on the water. It was just, you know, a perfect set up. It was not a fancy cottage, but, you know, we had a lot of good family times. And my aunt and uncle lived nearby, and a lot of the other—all of my father's relatives basically lived nearby, so I think that was a big—the cottage in the summer was a big place where everybody gathered and, you know, socialized.

MAC NEILL: You mentioned this briefly, but when did you first realize you were gay?

RIBAUDO: I think probably, like, in junior high school or high school, yeah.

MAC NEILL: Do you have any specific memories around that, or was it kind of just you knew?

RIBAUDO: I just sort of knew, and I would be attracted to looking at pictures of men rather than women when I was looking at advertisements, so I think that was a clue, so—yeah.

MAC NEILL: And did other kids realize you were different?

RIBAUDO: Oh, yeah, yeah, I think—you know, I remember at least one incident where I was sort of mildly harassed and beat up in junior high school by some kids who just sensed I was different and so on. And I told my mother about it. She went to the principal, and that was the end of that, so—so—yeah.

And I think some of it had to do with—

MAC NEILL: If you could—

RIBAUDO: Sorry. Go ahead, so—go ahead, Hugh.

MAC NEILL: No, no. No, continue please.

RIBAUDO: I—I think the other thing just was—you know, I think with boys especially, they socialize around sports, and I was just never into sports at all, and not athletic, and I think that was just part of the being different part that they just didn't like. You know, I didn't talk about sports. I didn't care about sports. I was just interested in getting good grades. And that's sort of the way I was. And so I think that's part of, you know, the different part of, you know, why people sensed you different. But I think, you know, kids often—other people can often tell somebody might be gay before the person, themselves, figures it out.

MAC NEILL: And you mentioned you were studious. Were there other—were there other kids at your school that were also less focused on sports? Did you have friends that—

RIBAUDO: Oh, yeah, there were some other—yeah, yeah, I had some friends that were just more interested in getting good grades and that kind of a thing, although, you know, my memories of friends in junior high school are just sort of vague, as well as even in high school. And I had some friends, but I just haven't really kept in touch with anybody from high school. I haven't gone to any high school reunions. Just either they weren't timed well, or I just really didn't have any interest in seeing people I went to high school with. I just didn't really, you know, have any connection with them that would want to, you know, continue, so—

MAC NEILL: If you could go back to what it was like to be a gay teenager at the time, could you tell me how you felt?

RIBAUDO: Well, you know, I just sort of felt that, on the one hand, society said that, you know, being gay was evil. But I just didn't quite understand, you know, why that was the case. And this was obviously the days before the internet. The

best you could do was look up books in the library, which often had, you know, not very good information in them. But, you know, at least that was some way, because I was—I always was, and still am, somebody where I want to find out about something, I'll find a book about it. Or these days, obviously, just do, you know, do searches on the internet and read about it. And that's often how I learned about things. But, again, there really wasn't much information back then.

And, yeah, so it just—and there certainly was no Gay Students Association in high school, even when I was there. And, you know, I'm trying to remember—there's nobody I knew that was gay in high school, although it's interesting—there was a guy—I can't remember his name right now. It might have been Brad or something like that. I can't remember how we got in contact. It's maybe ten or fifteen years ago. And I found out that he was gay and I went to high school with him, but I considered him somebody I would know, you know, as a—not as a really super-close friend but just somebody I knew in high school that I got along with. But it's not like we even had extensive socializing outside school kind of a thing. So really—I was really, like I said, pretty deeply in the closet, and, you know, pretty much everybody else was, too.

I did, you know, find a woman for a date for the senior prom, of course, but I, you know, just followed what was expected back then, but I wouldn't call her a girlfriend or even like that. She was just somebody I managed to—hadn't been asked to the prom, so I invited her to the prom, and we went to the prom together. But that was about the extent of things, so—

MAC NEILL: Can you recall any of the books that you looked at concerning homosexuality?

RIBAUDO: I can't remember anything specific other than I think there was a book back then called Everything You Wanted to Ask [sic; Know] About Sex* (*But Were Afraid to Ask). And that's about the only thing I can think of. And I think it might have had one chapter about homosexuality, you know, but I think that would be about it, really. Yeah, like I said, those memories of that are sort of a long time ago. As you can imagine, they're sort of not very fresh or—sort of a thing.

- MAC NEILL: Do you—do you recall it being a positive depiction or a negative depiction of homosexuality?
- RIBAUDO: It's so far ago, I can't really remember, and I know this is jumping way forward, but just to say I think the first time I really felt like I was fine with being gay and there was nothing wrong with it is when I moved to the San Francisco Bay area, where it's, you know, a different milieu, and people really didn't really care you were gay; they just cared that you could do your job or whatever, so—
- MAC NEILL: Did you spend a lot of time thinking about your homosexuality, or did you ever worry about being outed in high school?
- RIBAUDO: I guess not in high school, and, you know, even in college, I really, you know, didn't—there was Gay Students Association, but I didn't take part in it at all, so—so I guess—I don't think there was even the term “being outed” [chuckles] back in high school, but, you know, being discovered as gay, whatever terminology they used back then—I guess I didn't worry about it. I wasn't sexually active. I wasn't socializing with anybody that I knew to be gay. And, you know, so I guess I didn't really worry about it. But, like I said, in some other sense, the kids knew I was different and, you know, teased me about it, but—and they might not even understand what it meant to be gay back then; they just knew I was different. And I think, you know, kids tend to be—can be very mean and petty, although I guess sometimes they never grow up. But just somebody who's different from them, and they feel that they're lower on the—you know, the pecking order—they will, you know, basically treat them poorly because they can or they want to, so—
- MAC NEILL: Did you ever seek out gay people at your school, or did you ever attempt to find other gay men or women?
- RIBAUDO: And we're talking about—are we talking about grade school or college or medical school when you say “school”? Just so I know.
- MAC NEILL: Sorry. Still in high school.

RIBAUDO: Still in high school. No, no.

MAC NEILL: Did you ever—yeah.

RIBAUDO: No, didn't try to seek out gay people in high school, because, like I said, I think I was still trying to figure out whether I was gay or not, but I just knew I was different, and, you know, I think I knew I was attracted to men, and that was called a homosexual, and that was a terrible thing, but really didn't try to seek out anybody in high school at all, so—

MAC NEILL: If you could speculate, what do you think were some ways that gay people might have met each other at—at the time?

RIBAUDO: Wow. Yeah. I guess I would say—again, obviously, this was the pre-internet era, and in high school, you know, about the only thing you can think of is you could probably go to a gay bar in Boston, or they had an area in Boston called the Combat Zone [an entertainment district], of all things. And this was where Boston had allowed things like pornographic bookstores and, you know, movie theaters that showed pornographic films. It was sort of, I guess, the equivalent of Times Square area in New York City.

And this would be in the, you know, seventies and later. And I guess that's another place where you could meet gay people. But obviously, if you were—the drinking age was eighteen, and to legally go to a bar you had to be eighteen. But I didn't go into any bars, of any kind, before I was eighteen. But, again, that's a whole lot easier when you're eighteen than the drinking age being twenty-one these days.

MAC NEILL: And so—

RIBAUDO: And—

MAC NEILL: Sorry. Did you—

RIBAUDO: I guess there's also—yeah, yeah. I wasn't aware of them, but I'm now aware there were newsletters for gay and lesbian people that were out then, but obviously you had to know about them to subscribe to them, and obviously this is way before I'd be willing to do something like that, since I

was getting mail at home and I didn't even know of the existence of such a thing, so—

MAC NEILL: So a lot of gay youth going through high school experience either, like, loneliness or sometimes being bullied but a lot of messages kind of—kind of negative messages about their homosexuality. Did you ever feel alone or bullied at the time?

RIBAUDO: Well, like I mentioned, you know, I think there was that one really specific bullying incident I remember, and, you know, I guess I felt I was different. I had some friends, so I guess I didn't feel terrible, but I didn't feel like I was, you know, having a great social life or anything like that. I think I just sort of, you know, focused on my studies and spending time with my family. And a lot of times, if there wasn't anybody, any friends or something like that, I'd go to the library and read, so—

MAC NEILL: You mentioned the Combat Zone in Boston. How aware were you of kind of other urban gay communities at the time, like—like in San Francisco or New York?

RIBAUDO: I really had only awareness of the Combat Zone and really didn't know, you know, where the—where the high concentration areas of gay people were in the U.S. Like I said, I was really pretty much unaware of things. And, again, this was the pre-internet era, so it wasn't easy to find a lot of these things, so—

MAC NEILL: So what did you spend your free time doing in high school?

RIBAUDO: Well, I—I did do some things. I was in, like, the marching band, and then actually I think when we were in Framingham I was part of a community marching band. It was not associated with the school. I guess you could say it was called "private," but it wasn't like it was some really fancy thing. It was basically you had to, I think audition for it, and if you had okay skills—you didn't have to be a virtuoso—you could be part of the band. And so I think that's one of the things I did.

You know, spend time with my family, spend time with some friends. I just liked to read a lot. I think that's naturally what

I've always done. I just like to read, so I think a lot of times, if I didn't have anything else to do, I would read or watch TV.

In high school I did get on the tennis team, not because I had any great love of sports, but I just understood it was one of those things that was good to do to have on your résumé, so when you applied to college they would consider you well—well rounded and would, you know, facilitate admission to a selective college.

So that's sort of what your question was, what did I do other than go to school?

MAC NEILL: Yeah. And what was your experience applying and choosing where to go to college?

RIBAUDO: Well, I was smart. I wasn't the valedictorian of the class, but I think my ranking in high school was, like, number five or six or something like that. And my parents wanted me to go to a great school because they just knew that's how you get ahead in life. And—and, again, the school I went to—Hingham is a fairly affluent inner suburb of Boston. It's not really close, but I think by the map it might be about twenty miles outside of Boston, so it's really sort of in the Boston metro area. And it was, you know, very much upper-middle class, whereas I think Framingham, where we grew up in, was more middle class. And it was just expected that everybody would go to college and a lot of people would go to Ivy League colleges. That was sort of the expected thing to do.

And so I applied to a lot of Ivy League colleges as well as MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], which was part of the I think the Ivy League college system, at least at that point. And I also got a scholarship to go to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which is I think sort of an MIT-like engineering school in New York. And my parents said, "You know, sure, go if you want to. It'll save us some money. But you don't have to go there just to save us money." And so I ended up not selecting that.

And then I think for college I got into Dartmouth and MIT, I think. I can't remember if there was any other place I got into. Yeah.

MAC NEILL: Why did you choose Dartmouth over MIT?

RIBAUDO: I think a couple of things. Number one, I was, you know—I don't know if they used the word "nerd" back then, but I was nerdy enough. My social skills were not all that well developed. I was not an extrovert, and still am not an extrovert. And I felt like Dartmouth would hopefully help me better round out my social skills.

And I think also my mother had this idea that if I went to MIT I was going to still live with them at home, and I think consciously or subconsciously, like most teenagers, you want to separate yourself from your family, and Dartmouth seemed to be just about right: not too far away but not too close, where you could have a separate life, so—

MAC NEILL: Do you remember your first impression of Dartmouth?

RIBAUDO: I don't remember going there for the standard college campus tour. I do remember my first week there. In fact, it was funny: I was generally a healthy kid, but I got I guess they call it walking pneumonia or something like that before we were supposed to go on the Freshman Trips [Dartmouth Outing Club First-Year Trips], so I never went on a Freshman Trip, which was fine. I was never big on camping, so it was probably a lucky accident I didn't do that.

So the first memories of Dartmouth is just my parents dropping me off at school, at Dartmouth and, you know, bringing my stuff into the dorm, and my mother crying because I was the oldest kid to be—you know, out of—the first kid leaving the—the nest, so to speak. And just meeting up with some other students there. And I think that's sort of my first, you know, basic memories of Dartmouth. And they were like me, usually, you know, white, upper-middle-class men and women, who were in the sort of—mostly from the Northeast. I mean, it was very—even though Dartmouth had people from California or international students or people of color and so on, that was—most of the people were sort of like me, so—

But I think, as I mentioned to you, you know, one of the other things I realized is I didn't even know what prep schools

were when I was in high school or went to college, and I was in a triple at Mid Mass[achusetts Hall], the Massachusetts dorm there. And the two—my two roommates were both good friends, roommates, whatever, from Philips Exeter Academy, and we got along fine, but they were obviously, you know, closer friends, and I just didn't realize at all what prep schools were, all that kind of stuff, and that—I don't now the percentage of people from Dartmouth that went to prep school, but I think it was, you know, significant, and so—anyway.

MAC NEILL: Would you say that the normal student was wealthier than you were?

RIBAUDO: It's hard to say, but I would say I was probably about in the median, give or take, but, you know, it's hard to say. You know, there certainly were people that were on scholarships and work-study, and I didn't have that. My parents paid my tuition, and I would work during the summers to pay my, you know, basic expenses of being able to buy pizza here and there, buying clothes or stuff like that, you know. But there were certainly kids that were more wealthy than I was, that would have a car, which was unusual, and stuff like that. So I felt like I was sort of in the—the middle somewhere of—on the wealth index there, so—

MAC NEILL: Did you ever find that to be a barrier for participating in Dartmouth activities?

RIBAUDO: No. You know, anything I needed to buy, I would somehow figure out, you know, how to pay for it. You know, most of the time you'd eat at the dorm, so you wouldn't go out to eat much. And, again, my parents paid, you know, my tuition and room and board. And, you know, probably, off the top of my head, about the only significant expense, which wasn't much, is you'd, you know, spend a few to several hundred dollars on ski equipment. And, you know, I got that, and I had not—we did not snow ski when I was growing up, but that was just sort of one of those things you did at Dartmouth. And you could do it as a—you know, as part of your athletic requirement, and so I learned how to ski and bought ski equipment and went skiing.

I think I even remember occasionally on the weekend would go to Killington [Mountain Resort and Ski Area in Killington, Vermont] to go skiing, which I think was one of the ski resorts that was much better than the [Dartmouth] Skiway because the Skiway, at least back then, was pretty rudimentary. But then, given my skill level, it was fine and certainly convenient.

But—so I guess I really didn't feel like I was financially deprived. I didn't feel like I was, you know, super well off, but I was comfortable. I think I remember buying a stereo towards the end of my college time and having a stereo in my room, which was the standard electronic thing that people bought back then. And it wasn't super elaborate, but it wasn't, you know, you're \$99 dollar special kind of a thing, and could buy records. So, you know, I felt financially comfortable but not to the point where I had a car.

But you really didn't need one at Dartmouth, either, and sometimes when we would go on road trips there would be somebody else was more well-to-do; they were the one that had the car, and we would share—pay—pay for their gas or share the gas. But, yeah, like I said, sort of middle of the road.

MAC NEILL: You mentioned you were studious in grade school and high school. Did that translate to Dartmouth as well?

RIBAUDO: Yeah, pretty much so, although I think, like most people—just about everybody there was probably the top five or ten percent of their high school class, and you suddenly realized you weren't the only smart person in the room anymore. Everybody in the room was pretty damn smart. And it wasn't off-putting to me at all; it just felt comfortable. It was, like, *Okay! There's more people that are like me, where they want to learn* and so on, although I think, as usual, there's always this balance of learning versus having fun at college.

And so—you know, like I said, I just sort of felt like I finally found people that I could fit in with, where if you played a sport, that was fine, but that wasn't the only thing that mattered, and you didn't have to, you know, relate to them through talking about sports and stuff like that, and that there was all these different groups on campus that you could

participate in and, you know, find something that you were interested in.

So, like I mentioned, I was in the band and orchestra in high school, and then I did that in college. And also was on the sailing team and was on the yearbook, the *Aegis*. I don't know if they still call it that. But I think that's how I sort of socialized at the college.

MAC NEILL: Would you say that you fit in pretty well there?

RIBAUDO: I think so. I think so. I mean, I wasn't Mr. Popular, but that's fine. But I didn't feel like at all I was a social outcast. I, you know, made friends in the dorm and, you know, my roommates. I got along fine with them, but they weren't super-close friends. They were just people that, you know, through a lottery you just got put into the room together and you hoped it worked out. I think afterwards, as time went on, some of the people I shared dorm rooms with were my friends, and we picked to want to live together in the dorm room because at least the dorm I was in, Mid Mass, for most of the time was everything was a double or a triple, either with, you know, two other people or one other person.

And that's just—you know, that was considered normal. Even though they had some dorms that had single rooms, I'm not sure how strongly I felt I wanted that, but I never did that, and I certainly didn't have that in the dorm. And I don't remember all the details of the dorm system, but I think it was much easier to stay in the dorm you were than trying to move to a different dorm.

So—yeah, so I felt like I—you know, I fit in pretty much. But, again, I was still very much in the closet but otherwise fit in pretty much. And this was back when Dartmouth had a mandated three-to-one ratio of men to women, and I guess, you know, it was just fairly recent that Dartmouth even allowed women to be, you know, full-time students, as opposed to, I think they had some kind of an exchange program with some of the all-women schools. So even though some people paired off and they were boyfriend-girlfriend, there was a lot of men that didn't have a girlfriend on campus because there weren't enough available to have that kind of a thing.

So, yeah, like I said, I think I pretty much fit in there, yeah.

MAC NEILL: You also—you mentioned that you were in the closet at the time. Could you describe your kind of like what was going through your head at the time in college? Concerning your homosexuality.

RIBAUDO: Yeah. Yeah, it was just—I knew I was gay, but I didn't act on it, although I think in college—yeah, they had this thing called Conference XYZ, which was the closest thing to sort of a chat room. And this was back when computers were—didn't often have a screen; there would just be a printer, an impact printer, sort of like a typewriter kind of a thing, and you would just converse back and forth, and sometimes I would meet gay people on Conference XYZ. But it was mostly just sort of, you know, talking in I think almost sort of a jovial kind of teasing, kind of cheeky kind of way. But I never met anybody in person that way.

But I think that's probably the closest thing I had to contact with gay people in college, although one of my good friends in college—we ended up rooming together during the summer, and only later did we both find out we were gay, even though I think probably in some level we knew it, but we never, you know, admitted it to each other till after I think we socialized when we were in medical school. And even then, I think it was unspoken [chuckles], so—yeah.

MAC NEILL: Do you recall any specific conversations you had using Conference XYZ?

RIBAUDO: No, that was so long ago, but I think it was more along the kind of teasing kind of a thing. And, again, anybody could be on this Conference XYZ, so I think it was just, like I said, the equivalent of a chat room, you know, that I think became more popular later. And this was the day when to have a computer online at Dartmouth, you went to another computing center and used a modem where you—with this acoustic coupler, where you dial a number and you hear the beeps and boops on the phone, and you put the phone into the cups, and then the computer would be on the timesharing system at Dartmouth. So this was, you know, like I said, the very infancy of computing, so—

- MAC NEILL: So I kind of—I want to know more about Conference XYZ. I'm just—it was just like a—a chat room where you talked with people individually, or was it a chat room that had a large number of people that all chatted together?
- RIBAUDO: Yeah. I guess—my memories of it are pretty dim, and I think it was more like everybody chatted together. I don't think you could necessarily go over into, like, a chat room like I remember in the, you know, days of AOL, where you could have a group chat room and then you could go off into private chat rooms. I don't think it was anything like that, but, like I said, my memories of it are fairly dim other than, like I said, I remember it was on this, you know, obviously very antiquated, by modern standards, computer equipment. But that's about all I can remember about it.
- MAC NEILL: So would you say that the conversations you had with the other possible gay people—were they intimate or not—not really?
- RIBAUDO: No, no, I think it was just of like I said, the teasing, jovial kind of cheeky kind of comments, you know. I mean, not negative but positive kind of, you know, joking kind of thing, so—
- MAC NEILL: I also—I'm interested in—in knowing more about your good friend you roomed together, who you later found out was gay. What—what do you think—like, looking back, like, what do you think brought you together? It seems like a pretty big coincidence that both of you ended up being gay.
- RIBAUDO: Well, I think it's probably we just had a shared sensibility and—and, you know, like I said, maybe subconsciously we knew the other person was gay. But, again, we never acted on it or anything like that. There was nothing, you know, at all that would be considered even remotely sexual activity between the two of us. And—but I guess just think we had something in common. We were both Catholic. I think he was from Massachusetts, and we just—I guess you just sort of click. I mean, with some people, you know, whether they're straight or gay, just some people—at least that's my experience—with some people you just immediately bond. There's just something—just like any other human interaction, there's some people that you just click with. They

just—you become great friends because there’s just—you know, for whatever your psychological needs meet each other, so—

MAC NEILL: Could you—could you go into a little bit more detail about what you meant by “shared sensibility”? I understand the—the notion of it, but could you name anything specific about what you enjoyed doing together with him?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. Yeah, I guess it’s sort of hard to say. I guess we would just socialize together, and we had a friend—we were both Catholic, but we had this friend, Debbie, and she was Jewish, and she was the quintessential—as they called it back then—Jewish American’s Princess [sic; Jewish-American Princess]. And we just had, you know, fun together. We socialized together in college. And she had a white [Chevrolet] Camaro, which was about as trite and stereotyped as you’d expect [both chuckle] for a Jewish-American Princess of that era, I mean it was just like I think that you would make—have ever seen the movie *Spaceballs*? It’s a—

MAC NEILL: Mm-hm.

RIBAUDO: It’s a movie that is sort of—I think it’s a Mel Brooks sort of takeoff of *Star Wars*. And one of the things is Princess Leia [a fictional character] is driving a white Camaro, and I think she speaks with a New Jersey accent, but, I mean, it was just that sort of thing, but—and—but anyway, yeah, so I guess we would socialize together. He wasn’t, I would say, my exclusive friend.

And, in fact, I’ve got a good friend from college, who’s straight, who was in my dorm, who was one of my roommates at some point, and I still—whenever I go to Boston, I make a point of meeting him for lunch and stuff like that, so—and—but there’s just some people you just sort of click with, and you just, you know, maintain your friendships with.

That friend that was also gay that went to medical school—he ended up dying of AIDS, and that was really pretty sad, but, you know—and we really hadn’t talked to each other about being gay, but—but yeah.

MAC NEILL: Did you ever—you weren't out, but did you ever interact with other gay people besides chatting on Conference XYZ?

RIBAUDO: Not—not in college. It wasn't really until I was in medical school that I interacted with people that were gay, and that I said I was gay and they were gay. And—and that would be the first time, really, that that happened. And I went to Dartmouth Medical School [now Geisel School of Medicine] and—but I—in the, like, third or fourth year of medical school, you're allowed to take some college courses for credit, so I took a course in human sexuality in that course. And that's where I met somebody else who was gay.

And I guess that's when I started to go to some of the Gay Student Association—or whatever they called it back then—meetings, was really when I was in medical school. And Dartmouth Medical School back then—they were still on the north edge of campus. They hadn't built the big medical center there on the top of the hill in Lebanon. And so it was fairly easy to socialize with Dartmouth College students, even though I was in medical school.

MAC NEILL: So I'd like to ask a similar question that I asked you when we were talking about high school. Even if *you* didn't interact with gay students at the time, did you get a sense of how other gay students might meet each other?

RIBAUDO: Again, there was a Gay Student Association. I think they even had a gay dance at one point, which I didn't go to. And, again, a lot of people had some really, you know, mean and nasty comments about. But I think that was the only way *I* knew of that people could meet on campus. And, again, this was the days before people even having an e-mail address as a way to communicate, you know, other than face to face. And, again, most people didn't even have phones in their dorm rooms. And certainly this was the pre-cell phone era as well, so, I mean, really it was more face-to-face communication.

And I guess, you know, some of the fraternities—they had more of a reputation of being alternative type things, and I assume that's where some gay people would hang out, but it

wasn't something that was explicit at all. So I think it would be the Gay Student Association kind of a thing.

The Collis—Collis Center [for Student Involvement] was I think sort of new when I was there, but, again, I don't think there was any kind of formal place gay people to meet, so—

MAC NEILL: Well, I—I'm sure that you weren't the only closeted person during college. I guess the reason I ask is if there were any—possibly more unofficial or underground networks that were—

RIBAUDO: Yeah. You know, not that I know of. I mean, there's always the story of gay people meeting in bathrooms, but I wasn't even aware of that being a thing, and I don't know if there was any of that going on at Dartmouth, but there probably was. But, yeah, like I said, I was really pretty deeply in the closet in college. And really it was only the last—you know, third or fourth year of medical school that I would consider to say I came out. And even among my fellow medical school students was somewhat—they were somewhat aware that I was gay, and that would have been, like I said, the third and fourth year of medical school, so—

MAC NEILL: And were you affiliated, during your undergrad?

RIBAUDO: Affiliated? I'm not sure what you—

MAC NEILL: Affiliated. Sorry, affiliated with a—with a Greek house during your undergrad.

RIBAUDO: Oh, oh, sure. Yeah, yeah, I—I, you know, "rushed" I guess is the word they used, I think, SAE [Sigma Alpha Epsilon], which was I think above my social standing and did not get into that fraternity. I think that was either the freshman or sophomore year, I guess. I can't remember exactly what the rules were back then.

And then I think the year after that, I joined Tri-Kap, or Kappa Kappa Kappa fraternity. And that was, I think, more of my social milieu. That's where—that's the expected fraternity for people that were in the band or were in the [Dartmouth College] Glee Club or whatever. That was the fraternity that they were expected to join, because I think every fraternity

had its sort of, you know, prototypical member, even though I think they would have some people that weren't the prototypical member. I think Tri-Kap was sort of my milieu, and that's the fraternity I ended up joining, but, like I said, a year later than the standard thing. Yeah.

MAC NEILL: What made you want to rush in the first place?

RIBAUDO: I think it was expected. I think also I'm not an extrovert, and so I really don't make friends easily, and I think the fraternity—you know, in addition to things like the band and stuff like that—was another way to expand your social network. And I can't remember if at all it would be something that would be a good thing on your résumé to get to medical school, but that might have been part of it, too.

And, again, back then, there really wasn't a whole lot of social outlets at college, especially if you didn't have a car. You know, there was a couple of restaurants downtown. There wasn't really any party places. You know, there'd rarely be any kind of a—you know, a campus-wide, you know, straight dance kind of a thing. The—the social life was really pretty much exclusively around the fraternities. And even, I think, the sororities were in their infancies at that point, so it was really if you wanted to socialize anywhere, it was at a fraternity.

And there was obviously, you know, advantages to belong in the fraternity, as opposed to just showing up to the fraternity and hanging out, which, you know, you could do, but, you know, again, that was sort of expected: You would join a fraternity, and that would be, you know, what you would do. And I guess, you know, that's what I did, so—

MAC NEILL: There's been several articles over the last ten to fifteen years about the masculine drinking culture of Dartmouth fraternities. Can you give me your experiences, or can you tell me your experience with fraternity culture during your time at Dartmouth?

RIBAUDO: For sure. Yeah, well, the first thing I remember—this was in Freshman Week, where it was sort of your first week in campus, and, you know, classes hadn't really started. You're sort of getting integrated into the Dartmouth and so on. And

one of the dorm, you know, advisers was this woman whose name was Rock, and you can get the idea: The women that went to Dartmouth back then—they had to be tough as nails, and that was certainly her. And we went to the Fraternity Row, drinking with her, and she got so drunk we had to get her back to the dorm [chuckles] in a shopping cart.

And—and, you know, I grew up—and my father's side of the family was Italian, so it wasn't a big thing to give kids alcohol, so occasionally, at a family dinner, you know, I'd be given a sip of alcohol. I wouldn't even call it a full glass of wine, just kids were having a sip of alcohol, but, you know, we never got enough to even get remotely drunk or even, you know, buzzed.

But, you know, I didn't see alcohol as a big thing, whereas one of the things I noticed when I went to college is that the people that went to public high schools—they lived a fairly unrestricted life before they went to college, and they sort of didn't go wild, whereas the people that went to prep school, I get the feeling like they lived such restricted, regimented lives—they would just go off the deep end once they went to college because nobody was telling them what they shouldn't do.

Yeah, but certainly there is a lot of drinking. There is a lot of—you go to the fraternities, and there was just free alcohol, and, you know, the drinks were extremely strong, and, you know, usually after a couple of drinks I was pretty drunk, you know. And I think there was plenty of drinking to excess.

And, you know, one of the things I remember, too, is sometimes the fraternity parties—they would—if the drinks weren't free, they would sell you a bottle of André champagne, which is this—you know, just really pretty cheap, terrible champagne, for a dollar. And you'd—it's hard to not drink the bottle, but certainly by the next day you'd have a god-awful hangover.

Yeah, so I think—and, again, the drinking age was eighteen, so, you know, the vast majority of people in college were legal drinking age, so there was a lot of heavy drinking and so on. I think probably the only good thing is because there

wasn't driving, at least you didn't have a problem with drunk driving accidents.

But, you know—but I think the drinking culture was pretty strong. You know, certainly I think—you know, I remember the fraternity that I really wanted to join, SAE—there was a lot of heavy drinkers there, and I think some of the people were frankly alcoholics.

And at Tri-Kap there was, you know, people who drank, but it wasn't really a super-hard-party fraternity at that point; it was—you know, I think, like, I guess it had more my speed. There were certainly people who drank, certainly people who drank enough to vomit because they had too much to drink, but I don't remember any super terrible alcohol poisoning incidents that happened there, which I think were pretty common [chuckles] at some of the other fraternities, but—yeah.

MAC NEILL: So there was one incident that would have lined up with your time as an undergrad at Dartmouth, and that was the incident concerning Eric [W.] Stults [Class of 1980]. Are you familiar with him?

RIBAUDO: I knew who he was. I was, again—back then, there was only a thousand students on campus, and, you know, everybody lived on campus, so I knew who he was, but I wasn't friends with him, but I had heard, you know, more through the grapevine than anything else, he was severely beat up and found almost dead in his dorm room, and—but I think that's about all I heard about that. Yeah.

MAC NEILL: What kind of impression did that leave on you?

RIBAUDO: Ah, well, you know, it wasn't exactly a friendly place to be openly gay, certainly, at Dartmouth. And, again, I think, you know, back then you can compare to the standards of what would be considered mainstream society in the late seventies. You know, Dartmouth was a pretty misogynistic place, to say the least. And even though there were people of color—you know, I wouldn't say it was overtly raceless—racist, but it certainly wasn't the most racially harmonious place, you know, compared to what you would think of, you know, some more progressive college back then. So, I

mean, it was pretty much, you know, upper-middle-class, white male bastion.

MAC NEILL: Did you feel safe on campus after hearing about Eric Stults?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. I mean, I wasn't openly gay, so I didn't feel like—and I really don't remember any incidents where I felt I was uncomfortable because somebody thought I was gay in college, or even, frankly, in medical school, when it sort of became out—you know, out that I was gay. I mean, it was really—I didn't feel ever uncomfortable about that.

MAC NEILL: So that seemed to be a change from your experience in—in grade school, where you had mentioned that kids had bullied you because you seemed different.

RIBAUDO: Yeah. Again, I think as I was saying a little bit earlier in an interview, I just sort of felt like I found my people when I came to Dartmouth. You know, it wasn't—there was just a lot of people like me that are smart, that, you know, wanted to do well in school, even though there were obviously some people that didn't and some people that wanted to party hard. I just felt I found my element there. Yeah.

MAC NEILL: Do you remember what people said about the incident, or the impression that other people had about what happened?

RIBAUDO: I think they—you know, again, my memories of that are rather vague, but I think they just all felt it was pretty terrible, but, again, I was not something that I think was openly acknowledged on campus. I mean, to give you an idea of how at least institutionally homophobic Dartmouth College was, is I—I think for the longest time, they wouldn't accept donations that were specifically targeted to assist gay and lesbian students. You know, it was only—I don't know, I can't say when, but maybe in the past, you know, ten or fifteen years did they open up to that. So, I mean, again, institutionally it was a pretty homophobic environment, even though there was the Gay Students Association. I'm not sure even how that existed [chuckles], frankly, back then, but—yeah.

MAC NEILL: Did you feel at home at Dartmouth? Did you feel that you enjoyed your experience as an undergrad?

RIBAUDO: Well, I think my experience there was much, much, much better than, say, high school. And I haven't always gone to reunions, but most of the time I've gone to reunions, so I still feel affiliated to Dartmouth, and I give donations every year, nothing huge, but donations every year to Dartmouth. And same thing to, you know, Dartmouth Medical School. Gone to most but not all of the reunions.

But I feel like I've sort of moved beyond that and that my strongest affiliation to Dartmouth, frankly, probably is the Gay Students Association. I guess the Dartmouth *Green Light* [the official newsletter of the Dartmouth Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alumni/ae Association (DGALA)] is what they call it. I think that's what they call the newsletter. You know, I participate in the membership, you know, dues and that and look at the newsletter.

And I think what was really great is during some of my reunions, that's where I would meet some other gay Dartmouth alumni, either from my class or from other classes. And that was a really strong draw for me for the reunions, to the point where I think there is one reunion where I was just feeling particularly not affiliated with Dartmouth College, because I went to the reunion, but I did not pay for any of the reunion activities, and I didn't go to any of the reunion activities except of the ones that were for the Gay Students Association, where they sort of had this parallel reunion to the Dartmouth reunion.

And I was still able, through their sponsorship, to get a dorm room, you know, because, again, in the reunions, especially if you don't have a car, there is certainly not enough hotel rooms for all the alumni, and so you're in the dorm, so—but, you know, there I would sort of meet my fellow gay Dartmouth alumni. And, again, a lot of them weren't of my class, but some of them were—went to Dartmouth a little bit before or after I went. Or, again, there were some Dartmouth alumni that were from the sixties or early seventies that you would, you know, commune with and, you know, just sort of share stories and stuff like that. So I think that's really my strongest affiliation with, you know, Dartmouth College at this point.

And then I guess Dartmouth's Medical School—there's a fundraiser whose name escapes me right now, but she occasionally makes her fundraising runs through California and we get together for lunch, and she asks me for a donation, and I'll give a donation that's specifically for the gay and lesbian medical students, for them. They sponsor them to go to a conference or something like that.

So I think that's sort of the, you know, my sense of affiliation to Dartmouth College and Dartmouth Medical School. There is, as I've described—and there's a Dartmouth alumni association for Northern California that's fairly active, but I haven't really socialized a lot with that, because a lot of the people I met there—there were some of the people in college that were very nice, and we got along, but I didn't feel any kind of like bond with them that I should socialize with them just because they're Dartmouth—fellow Dartmouth alumni and they're in the Bay Area, even though I know they've had some really great events, where sometimes you'd get a private entrance to a museum, and you could go to some of the museums that are just, you know, total mob scenes if you go there during the day, but if you go there early on a Sunday morning, there's some Dartmouth alumnus that, you know, is associated with the de Young Museum [in San Francisco], and you can go and see exhibits that way. But, I mean, that's the closest thing I've had to, again, Dartmouth College Alumni Association in the Bay Area as well.

MAC NEILL: So when talking to other Dartmouth alumni about their experiences—or other gay Dartmouth alumni about their experiences—

RIBAUDO: Yeah, uh-huh.

MAC NEILL: —on campus during their undergrad, did you get the sense that your experience was a normal one?

RIBAUDO: Yeah, I think pretty much so. Again, I can't remember the last time I went to a reunion, because it's probably been—I think the reunions about every four years, so I think I've missed probably at least one lately. Just been too busy, or the timing wasn't good. So it's probably, you know, taking a wild guess, ten, fifteen years ago. Yeah, I think my

experience was pretty, you know, similar to what theirs was. And I think people were pretty deeply in the closet when I was in college there, so—yeah.

MAC NEILL: So I'd like to move on to talk about your experience in medical school. Whe- —wha- —sorry. Why did you choose Dartmouth Medical School?

RIBAUDO: Well, I applied to a lot of medical schools, and I didn't get into any, and it was—I was to the point where I had actually got a job working at computer—local computer company, and then they called me about a week—Dartmouth called me about a week before classes—Dartmouth Medical School called me about a week before started, and they said, you know, "We have an opening. You know, somebody dropped out. Do you want to come?" And I said, "Can I call you back in, you know, ten minutes?" [Chuckles.] Because it was, like, such a shock.

And so then I did go to Dartmouth Medical School, so—so that's how I got there. And I don't—I applied to other medical schools, but my memory of actually what medical schools I applied to is rather dim, other than Dartmouth, and, you know, that's how I—I got into Dartmouth Medical School, so—

MAC NEILL: You mentioned you also came out during medical school. Can you—can you tell me a little bit about that experience?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. You know, I—I can't remember exactly how things leaked out. I really can't say. It's such a dim memory. But I just think word got out that I was gay, and—and I can't really say, you know, how—who I told or whatever, because, again, I—and maybe it had something to do with me going to the Gay Students Association meetings for Dartmouth undergrads when I was in medical school and, again, taking that human sexuality class. But, again, that's a long time ago now, so my memories of exactly the details of how that happened and when are sort of dim, but—yeah, yeah—

MAC NEILL: Do you remember—

RIBAUDO: —yeah, and I don't know if—sorry. Go ahead.

MAC NEILL: Oh, no, sorry. You continue, please.

RIBAUDO: Yeah, so, you know, again, I was at that fateful meeting where there was a woman from *The Dartmouth Review* that secretly recorded a meeting of the Gay Students Association and, you know, published a transcript of what was said and didn't uniquely identify people but sort of probably said people's initials or something like that. And I don't know if that had anything to do with, you know, people becoming aware that I was gay on campus, so I can't remember, like I said, the exact way it happened. I can't really remember. But, you know, again, that is one of my distinct memories of sort of being outed at Dartmouth Medical School slash College, you know, back then, so—

MAC NEILL: Do you remember people's responses?

RIBAUDO: I don't remember them being overly negative or overly supportive. I think it was, again, just people didn't want to talk about it, you know, because even back—I don't know what people are like as college students now, but, you know, even when you sort of knew that people were having sex, you just didn't talk about it. [Chuckles.]

So, you know, I know, like, one of my good female friends in college, who lived in a dorm and you had your own room, but you would share a bathroom and a kitchen. And, you know, you knew the door was shut, and she had a boyfriend, and they were gone for a couple of hours, and then they would take a shower. You figured they probably had sex, but nobody talked about it, you know, so I think, you know, even back then, at least among the group of friends that I was with, you just really didn't talk about straight sex or gay sex. I mean, you just didn't talk about it. It was just not discussed. [Chuckles.] It was sort of like, you know, people know they're doing it, but they don't talk about it, so—

MAC NEILL: So when you were outed, did that change how you went about your life, or was it kind of more that things stayed the same?

RIBAUDO: I think, you know, pretty much things stayed the same. I didn't lose any friends over it. You know, I think at that point, like I said, I'm pretty sure it was the third or fourth year of

medical school. The first year or so of medical school, I was still living in the dorm that was on the medical school campus, but after that, I was living off campus, and my roommates didn't treat me any differently, although, again, in the third and fourth year, I think I was mostly just living in an apartment in a house, that was sort of a house that was converted to several apartments, with one friend.

But, again, we were on clinical rotation, so sometimes we wouldn't even see each other for a few months because for Dartmouth Medical School, a lot of clinical rotations were not anywhere in the Hanover-Lebanon area. You were actually going to southern parts of New Hampshire or even as far away as Connecticut. Or I even did some of my clinical rotations in medical school in the [U.S.] Navy in California. And so [chuckles] you're really were not even interacting a lot [with] a whole lot of people with class, because—like I said, my memories are dim, but by third or fourth year, you often weren't even taking classes with people a whole lot together, so you really were sort of moving beyond that.

But, again, like I said, I don't think I really had any people that really treated me negatively because it. It's just sort of people knew about it, and, again, they didn't talk about it. But, you know—yeah. So, like I said—so I don't think it was really adverse reaction. I think some of the friends were still sort of shocked that I was gay, but, you know,—because people couldn't imagine people being gay back then, even though they knew it happened. But, you know, I think in the end everybody got over it. It was not a big deal, so—

MAC NEILL: So—but what about internally? Did you feel—did you feel that things had changed once you were outed, and did you—was there a point where you accepted yourself more, or less, or did things stay the same?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. I think I probably accepted myself more but still saw a culture that was very homophobic, but not virulently so that it would affect my ability to advance my career. You know, and that was that.

And then, you know, when I finished medical school I—I moved out to California, San Francisco Bay Area, and my

connection out there was a fellow Dartmouth alumnus, Class of 1968, and, again, for the Gay Students Association he was on a list of gay Dartmouth alumni, and I just wrote him a letter and say, “Hey, I’m moving out to that area. I’d like to meet you.” And he said, you know, “Great. I’d like to meet you. I have an extra bedroom in my home. Why don’t you, you know, stay with us while you’re, you know, looking for an apartment?”

So I did that, and that was sort of my entrée to the San Francisco area gay culture and didn’t realize until I moved there what a mecca, you know, for gay people the San Francisco Bay Area was.

MAC NEILL: Yeah. And I—I’d like to get your—your memories on that soon. I have one more question about—

RIBAUDO: Sure

MAC NEILL: —your time in medical school. Your time in medical school also lines up with the AIDS [acquire immune deficiency syndrome] crisis or the onset of the AIDS crisis. Do you have any memories of either doctors or other medical—other medical students feelings towards AIDS and its proximity to homosexuality?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. It’s an interesting question. You know, I do have a memory of—at Dartmouth Medical School there was one patient with AIDS at the VA [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs] hospital. It’s a VA—White River Junction [Vermont] I think is where it is, which is, you know, close to Dartmouth, and that is where we did rotations. And there was a person there who had AIDS, and this was, you know, I think in its infancy, and probably—you know, it’s probably one of the first cases that I know of that happened in the—you know, the medical community, you know, in the Dartmouth area.

And I don’t remember people being homophobic about it. I think it’s just at that point people weren’t sure how it was spread, and everybody was, you know, worried that they would catch it, but, you know, I don’t really remember a whole lot of homophobic things. And in fact, I remember quite clearly there was this guy who was the—I think he was, like, the resident taking care of patient, and he was the son

of a Dartmouth faculty member. And this was just a wonderful guy, just one of these just—you know, you could aspire to be as good as he is.

And he was just very matter of fact about it. He just said, “I just hope I don’t catch anything,” but he used proper protection, but he was just—like I said, he just treated the patient like every other patient. It was just—you know, just didn’t want to, you know, catch anything from him. And, again, you know, I think that’s something we face as doctors all the time. We take care of people with infections that we can catch, and we try to use proper protective equipment, but I think, you know, again in the infancy of the AIDS epidemic, people wasn’t even—weren’t even sure how it was spread and, you know, were sort of afraid.

But that’s, like I said, I think the only really, you know, thing I can remember about it at Dartmouth. And, again, this was, like, in the third and fourth year, so there’s very little didactic classes at that point. The first and second year, all your sort of teaching classes, and I don’t think, you know, AIDS had really even, you know, gotten into the curriculum then, you know. So, again, it was really sort of the beginning of it. And, again, you know, especially for Dartmouth, you know, even though the AIDS epidemic may have been hitting pretty hard in San Francisco and New York by then, it was really unusual up at Dartmouth for something like that.

MAC NEILL: So at the time or around that time, *The Dartmouth Review* had also been publishing things about the AIDS epidemic that, looking back, can be seen as fairly homophobic. And this also coincides with their outing of a lot of the Gay Students Association—did you get a sense of the campus sentiments around *The Dartmouth Review*? Did you have friends in the organization?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. I didn’t have friends in the organization, and I can’t even say for certain when *The Dartmouth Review* started, whether it was while I was in college in—or medical school. I just think that most people felt that it was part of a sort of retrogressive, you know, sort of—you name it—misogynistic, racist, you know, homophobic, old Dartmouth culture that was fighting the modernization of Dartmouth, including having women on campus, let alone, you know, people of

color or, heaven forbid, gay people. And then it was funded by alumni who just basically wanted to keep the—you know, Dartmouth from evolving.

And, again, I think it was while I was in college there was still the fight over Dartmouth Indian as being the mascot, and, you know, people cheering, “Wah-hoo-wah!” and all this kind of stuff that, you know, just is very obviously, you know, pretty racist, you know, anti-Native American or First Peoples or whatever expression you want to use. You know, back then there was still a lot of that at Dartmouth College—certainly, Dartmouth College when I was there. You know, again, people dressing as Indians and running through the stands and stuff like that. So, I mean, there’s—and I think, you know, not college sponsored sports memorabilia with the Dartmouth Indian on it.

So, I mean, there was still very much that whole thing, again, and, you know, drinking songs, which I don’t really remember, that were, you know, pretty misogynistic and—you know, calling women nicknames that referred to their genitalia and negative connotations. I mean, the Dartmouth culture was pretty backward back then, I think, even compared to what we considered, you know, mainstream, unenlightened culture of the late seventies, so—

MAC NEILL: And so I want to move on to your time in the Bay Area, because it seems that it’s an important part of your life, especially in regards to your homosexuality.

RIBAUDO: Oh, yes, sure. And I just have to—if you could just hold on for a second. I’m just having somebody come into the house here, so I’m just going to put you on hold for just a second, okay?

MAC NEILL: Of course.

[Recording interruption.]

RIBAUDO: Hugh, you still there?

MAC NEILL: Yes. Yes.

RIBAUDO: Oh, hi. Thanks for waiting. I just had—did a bio break and let in the cleaning person who comes in today. Anyway, yeah.

MAC NEILL: Okay.

RIBAUDO: So I think we were talking about moving to the San Francisco Bay Area, sort of what the topic you wanted to talk about, right?

MAC NEILL: Yes. I—I—my question was what brought you there?

RIBAUDO: So after medical school you do an internship and a residency, and I was on a Navy scholarship. They paid for medical school, sort of like the equivalent of ROTC for medical school. And—let's see—oh—and so I applied for internship at a couple of different Navy hospitals, one in San Diego [California], which was my first choice because I'd done a couple of rotations there as a medical student, because part of the Navy scholarship program is they wanted you to do some rotations at a Navy hospital, so they could look at you, you could look at them, get in that kind of a thing.

And I really loved San Diego. It was sort of the quintessential California that you see on TV. And really was aware there was a city called San Francisco but didn't know anything about it, but I also applied for a residency or internship at the Oakland Naval Hospital [Naval Hospital Oakland], and that's where I was selected. That's where the Navy told me I should go. So that's how I ended up in the San Francisco Bay Area.

MAC NEILL: And you mentioned an alumnus who was very significant in your life.

RIBAUDO: Yeah.

MAC NEILL: He was Bob Hagens? Hagen?

RIBAUDO: [Robert F.] "Bob" Havens [Class of 1968], yeah, H-a-v-e-n-s, Bob Havens, yeah. And, again, he was the Dartmouth alumnus who I wrote to and invited me to stay with him while I was looking for an apartment. So I sort of came out here I think on a brief sort of vacation, apartment hunting

expedition before I then moved out here after graduating from medical school, so—yeah. And I’m still friends with him. I don’t socialize with him as much as I used to, but actually I had brunch with him a couple of weeks ago, actually, so—yeah.

MAC NEILL: So what—what made you reach out to him, or how did you all come to know each other?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. So, again, I just wrote to him, and he said, “Stay with me,” and so I said, “Great.” And so I stayed with him and met him, and that was, you know, sort of our—and I guess we just clicked. He’s a—he’s a great guy. I mean, everybody has quirks, including him, but we just sort of, you know, bonded, as I call the word. You know, you just get along with somebody. You understand them, you accept them as they are, you enjoy spending time together kind of a thing. So is that sort of what your question was?

MAC NEILL: Yes. Sorry—I wanted to add that you mentioned that he also had a lover.

RIBAUDO: Yeah.

MAC NEILL: What were your impressions—

RIBAUDO: Yes.

MAC NEILL: —of them together?

RIBAUDO: He was a guy named Tim. He was a nice guy, although they were quite different, but I think they sort of used that as their—you know, the complementary aspect of things, although after a while, they broke up. I can’t remember when. But I guess it was a new concept to me that gay men could live together in long-term relationships. That was sort of a new thing to me, because I think I just sort of knew that, you know, gay men would meet each other in bars and have short-term relationships and that would be it. But the concept of somebody living together long term with somebody, you know, another man was just a—a novel but, you know, great concept. And through him I met other people that were the same thing. They had been together for quite a while. And that was sort of a new thing to me, so—

MAC NEILL: Did you participate at all in gay night life in San Francisco?

RIBAUDO: Yeah, yeah. You know, I would—I'm not much of a bar person, so I'd rarely go to a bar by myself, and yet I really didn't have a whole lot of friends that liked to hang out at bars together, so mostly I tend to socialize with people that I met through this friend Bob and, you know, have dinner with them or go to their house for a party or stuff like that.

And it was through this friend Bob Havens that I met my first long-term boyfriend, Bob Kosloff [archivist note: spelling uncertain]. And—and we moved in together, mmm, I would say about a year after I moved here, so sort of moved in quickly, although he had a—he was living with another man, who was his ex-boyfriend, so I was [chuckles] the one who came in—and even though the relationship was officially over, I guess I could describe myself as “the other man,” to a certain aspect. [Both chuckle.]

But even after I moved in with Bob and the other guy moved out, we remained friends for years afterwards, and he's moved back to Boston, and he's—oh, God!—and I'll—whenever I go to Boston, I try to make sure to visit him, too, so—so—again.

But I think that's the other thing I noticed that I guess is probably true for straight people, but especially for gay people—you know, you live with somebody for a while, whether it's a couple of months, couple of years, couple decades; you break up, you're still friends with them after you break up and see them, so—yeah. But—

MAC NEILL: When you mention that you visit him in Boston, are you referring to Bob or his ex-boyfriend?

RIBAUDO: His ex-boyfriend, whose name is just escaping me right now. There we go: Bruce. Okay. Yeah, so Bruce. So even after, you know, they broke up, sometimes we'd end up having Thanksgivings together. Or even after I broke up with Bob. [Laughs.] So—so I would have, you know, Bob's ex, Bob being my ex, and then my current, you know, husband David [Alexander] before we were married. We would all be having Thanksgiving together, although at the beginning, Dave was

afraid I was going to go back—reject Dave and go back to my lover Bob. But he got over that after a while [chuckles], so—

But I have another friend at college, and he's the same way. He's—he's friends with all of his ex-boyfriends, even if they lived with them for ten years and they broke up, and it was, you know, —you know, not terribly acrimonious, but, you know, your standard, mean breakup. Still, after a while, they still go out to lunch together occasionally you know, so— anyway.

MAC NEILL: How would you characterize, like, gay men in San Francisco at the time?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. Boy, could be pretty much anything. You know, I think the AIDS epidemic certainly was a big issue back then, although I think when I first moved out here they didn't even have the HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] test yet. I think that might have started to be available in, like, '84, '85, I think. I think. But I can't remember exactly, certain, so— but—

And I think there was all this talk about closing the bath houses, but I don't know if it had happened yet, so there was that. I mean, but still the bars were, you know, in full bloom, and people would meet in the bars and socialize and—but I guess the just, you know, really positive, wonderful aspect about it to me is that there *was* a social life beyond the bars, and that—I think it was pretty soon after I moved out here I found out about Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, which, again, back then that was often the code name for gay and lesbian organizations, as “human rights.” And so that was the gay doctors group out here.

And I met other gay doctors through that. And I think it was probably through that I met some gay doctors who worked at the Navy hospital in Oakland, as well as the Letterman Army Hospital in San Francisco, so—and, again, that—so I think it's often, you know, through these sort of friends and social group I would end up meeting other people and becoming friends. And that's sort of how I extended my friendship networks there, and friends of friends, that sort of a thing,

rather than, you know, meeting people in bars and stuff like that, so—

MAC NEILL: So in—in what ways did the Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights interact with the AIDS epidemic?

RIBAUDO: Yeah. From what I understand, some of the members really took it upon [themselves] to write some of the guidelines about safe sex and things like that, sort of the infancy of the epidemic. I certainly wasn't part of that group, but I think that's sort of what they did. And I believe that Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, or BAPHR [pronounced BAF-uhr], just to not have to keep on saying the whole words, just use an acronym—I think they even spawned the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights, APHR [pronounced AF-uhr], which then, over time, became GLMA [pronounced GLAM-uh], Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, which I think they still exist today. Yeah.

But it—it—primarily, I think, before the AIDS epidemic, the BAPHR was a social group, just for gay doctors to get together. And still is that way, although I don't really do much with them now, but certainly back then, it was primarily a social group, although they did—I guess they do some things there. And I think even there was,—once or twice they had a public health fair, just—they had—they had a public health fair, where they did blood pressure screenings and stuff like that in a high school auditorium in San Francisco. And I just remember that because I remember participating in that and being one of the volunteers for that. But, again, it was primarily a social group.

MAC NEILL: So in—when gay men give their accounts of their experiences during the AIDS crisis in San Francisco, they often talk about having to bury their friends and going through fairly traumatic experiences because of the disease. Did you have any of those types of experiences, yourself?

RIBAUDO: Yeah, well, I think—that's a good question. Well—you know, again, my friend in medical school there, John—and the way I found out he was gay is—I can't remember—I ended up calling around and then calling—and speaking to the hospital and find out he's in the hospital, dying of AIDS. I mean, so that was pretty traumatic. And then, you know, his family

called me and say, “He’s dead.” So, I mean, that certainly sunk in.

And then part of the social group I met with Bob Havens— one of the men in the group—he developed AIDS and died. I wasn’t particularly close to him, but he was certainly part of the, you know, close-knit group. And, you know, that impacted me, but not terribly.

And I guess—I’m thinking of—several physicians in BAPHR died of AIDS, but I wasn’t particularly close to them. So I guess I was—you know, I lived in the—I lived in San Francisco—I lived in Oakland for, like, the first six months or so, when I moved to the Bay Area as an intern, and then I moved to San Francisco, living in the edge of The Castro there on Church Street with my first, you know, long-term boyfriend there, Bob. Bob Kosloff, not Bob Havens, the Dartmouth alumnus, just to keep things straight, so to speak.

But then I moved out to Martinez [California] and lived out in Martinez for my residency, and then was I was doing my payback in the Navy hospital, I was living, like, in Albany [California] and Hercules [California]. These are sort of semi-far-flung-out suburbs of San Francisco. So, I sort of was outside of the, you know, epicenter of the epidemic, really, and, you know, was living sort of a life of a, you know, one man living with another kind of experience. And, you know, even though, like most people, I had plenty of sexual partners before I settled down, when I was with my boyfriend, Bob Kosloff, I was faithful to him. We just had sex with each other. And as far as I know, I don’t think he had sex with anybody else.

So, yeah. So I think that’s sort of what happened with me. So I was there and somewhat impacted with it, sort of peripherally—you know, I do remember some patients who had AIDS I took care of at the Navy hospital, and, you know, they couldn’t explicitly say they were gay, either, because if they were gay, they would be kicked out of the Navy, even though they have AIDS. I mean, talk about a real mind-bending experience!

And I think I did have one patient when I was an intern who had AIDS there, although, again, it was even hard to

diagnose it back then because it was basically based on, you know, the end stage of the AIDS illness, where people were developing all these terrible infections because their immune system had been destroyed by AIDS, and that's how you diagnosed them, rather than a blood test or T cell counts or stuff like that, that I think even, you know, lay people understand these days if they're at all medically, you know, knowledgeable about AIDS.

So, yeah, so that—that—you know, I still remember that guy dying. But—but, yeah—but that sort of was my experience of AIDS in my first move out here, really at the height of the epidemic.

MAC NEILL: Did that change your world view at all or how you viewed people with just the amount of—of death that was going on around you?

RIBAUDO: I guess I'm one of those people that's not terribly in touch with my feelings in general, although as I get older I'm getting better at it, so—but, yeah, I mean, I was aware of it. I think it probably impacted me at some level, but I've always sort of lived in the suburbs and sort of was just sort of insulated from a lot of stuff at life. You know, again, growing up in the suburbs of Boston, Dartmouth is sort of, you know, like a suburban type of campus, even though I know it's in a rural area. Otherwise, you could, you know, plant it anywhere in New England and it would fit in as just a suburb of a major city.

And then other than, again, you know, six months in Oakland and, you know, six months living in San Francisco, I lived in the Bay Area suburbs, so I sort of lived this sort of sheltered sort of suburban existence the whole time of my life, so—

MAC NEILL: Were you able to be publicly out in the suburbs with your boyfriend?

RIBAUDO: Well, you know, when I was in the Navy, we weren't officially out, even though, you know, you knew there was some other gay doctors and even gay corpsmen and nurses at the Navy hospital, so I wouldn't have been out at work then because it was still illegal to be gay and be in the military.

When I was a resident, it was, again, out in the suburbs. It was a UC Davis [University of California, Davis]-associated program, and we were in Martinez, which is one of the reasons why I ended up with my boyfriend, Bob Kosloff and lived in Martinez. And I wasn't certainly officially out. And, again, nobody talked about it. But when we had—the residents had parties, somebody would have a house party, they'd say, "Oh, certainly significant others are more than welcome."

And this was—like, I remember, a lady who was, you know, Indian, as in South Asian Indian, and she was just having a house party. So I think, it was again, it was not explicitly spoken, but everybody knew I lived with my boyfriend Bob back then, as a resident. It was just sort of matter of fact. People really didn't think much of it. It was just the way it was.

And, again, I just felt like—you know, other than in the Navy hospital and then after I left the Navy and the Bay Area—now, even in the suburbs, when we lived in Martinez—and this was, like, in 1985—you know, people didn't bat an eyelash. It was just like, "Okay, you're gay. So what?" You know, "What do you do for your job? What do you like to do for fun, for social activities?" You know, that kind of thing. Even some, you know, old—old—old people that you think might be more homophobic—they were just very matter of fact about it, even, like I said, out in Martinez, which was considered a very far-flung suburb back then, so—

MAC NEILL: How did that make you feel? I mean, you—you talked—we've talked a lot about how you weren't out publicly in college—

RIBAUDO: Mm-hm.

MAC NEILL: —and through most of medical school. Like, what—what were you feeling when people were very accept- —at least somewhat accepting of—of you being gay?

RIBAUDO: I thought it was, you know, a very pleasant, you know, in a positive way, mild-blowing experience that I could just be who I was. I didn't have to wear it on my shoulder, but neither did I have to hide it. It was just part of who I was, just

like anything else, so it was not a big deal. And, again, you know, it was sort of like, so—but, you know, tell me of something else rather than, “Oh, my God, you’re gay! I have to disassociate myself from you” or something like that, or shun you or not say hi to you because you’re my neighbor or whatever. I mean, it was just—it was just, “So what?” Just sort of like saying somebody is of a different religion or a different race or something like that. It was just not an issue, so—

MAC NEILL: So moving to the present, can you tell me a little bit about your life today?

RIBAUDO: Yeah, sure. So I live in Hayward, California, one of the suburbs of San Francisco, with my now-husband—now that it’s legal to get married. We’ve been together for I guess almost thirty years, I think about twenty-eight years. And I work as a neurologist for Kaiser Permanente, one of the big staff-model HMOs [health maintenance organizations], out in the—in California. And I’m chief of neurology there.

And I think that’s sort of—and, again, the neighbors—they know we’re gay, but they don’t make a big deal about it. We just get along with each other. We live sort of a quiet existence in the suburbs. We’re not big party people. Don’t go to San Francisco as much as we used to, just as we get older and busier, just not as interested in doing that.

But what else did you want to know about that?

MAC NEILL: I’m also—I mean, I’m interested to know, like, looking back, did you think your undergraduate self could have envisioned where you are now?

RIBAUDO: Oh, God, no! [Chuckles.] But I think the story is—with a lot of stuff—is that even though I’m a planner and like to think about how things would go in the future, I just realize that things happen in life, for me, mostly positive. We just totally end up going in a totally new, different direction that you never even imagined. So, again, I mean, I think it was beyond the pale of anybody thinking there’d even be domestic partnerships, let alone, you know, legal marriage among gays and lesbians across the entire United States. I mean, that is just unbelievable.

I mean, it was just—when people started, you know, doing the lawsuits, the people that were doing them—I think, like, Evan Wolfson, I think is his name, and other people—they thought they were nuts and, if anything, would cause a backlash. And, of course, obviously, there was a lot of cultural backlash in general happening nationally, but, you know, at least for now it's the law of the land.

And, you know, by the same token, when I was at the Navy hospital, I, you know, didn't have any thought about where I'd end up for residency, and the Navy decided that I should do a civilian residency, so at the last minute I scrambled to find a civilian residency, and always with my, you know, boyfriend Bob at that point, I was trying to find something in the San Francisco Bay Area and just lucked out, you know, finding that there was an opening at the UC Davis program.

And then, by the same token, how I got my job at Kaiser Permanente is that one of the doctors at Kaiser Hayward did volunteer work at Highland Hospital, which is one of the county hospitals, in Oakland, that I was rotating at, so I met him that way, and that's how I got my job at Kaiser, basically. I mean, it wasn't an instant kind of a thing, but it was just this sort of in some ways circumstantial, you know, personal connection that leads you—your life into a whole different direction.

MAC NEILL: Do you ever have any regrets about coming out or not coming out in your undergrad at Dartmouth?

RIBAUDO: Ah. I think we often convince ourselves we're satisfied with our lives [chuckles] when we write our personal history, but be that as it may, given the environment, I think—I think I was okay with how things unfolded. I think things were just so virulently homophobic back then that being gay was really, frankly, dangerous, as evidenced by Eric Stults, you know, being gay bashed. I mean, there's no other way to describe what happened to him. And he almost died.

And, you know—and, again, even in medical school, I think things were fairly homophobic in terms of the professors, although that wasn't a constant thing, but I remembered a urology professor making a, you know, negative comment

about what happens if a gay person, you know, gets an erection while you're examining their genitals—you know, kind of a joke. And, you know, it wasn't terrible, but it was just sort of symptomatic of, you know, the homophobia of the medical culture, you know, back then.

Yeah, so I guess I don't have any regrets about how things unfolded, really. I'm just, you know, extremely grateful that, you know, through these personal connections I have, that, you know, my life is where it is now.

MAC NEILL: So my last question for you is what advice would you give to current gay students at Dartmouth?

RIBALDO: Hmm. Good question. You know, I think part of the issue is—is Dartmouth I think has changed, as well as society, although I still get the impression that Dartmouth is, you know, a little bit behind the times compared to society, in terms of advancement. It—so I really don't know how safe an environment it really is to be a gay student at Dartmouth. But certainly know in modern culture it's a lot different, although it's still I think, obviously, difficult. And, you know—and obviously even in some rural parts of California, they're still virulently homophobic.

So I guess I don't have any—I guess the advice would be—and I know it's sort of trite, but it gets better, that campaign, that, you know, to just try to maintain your sense of self, and don't be ashamed of who you are. And, you know, still try to live your life and get a good education so then maybe you can [chuckles] end up someplace where people accept you for who you are. I know maybe that's sort of a negative way to look at it, but I just don't have a sense of how gay accepting Dartmouth College is at this point to say anything other than that.

MAC NEILL: Great. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me.

[End of interview.]