

Stuart M. Lewan '79
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
SpeakOut
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Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

[ABIGAIL R.]

MIHALY: My name is [Abby?] Mihaly [pronounced mih-HALL-ee]. I'm interviewing Stuart [M.] Lewan '79, who—as part of the SpeakOut oral history project. I am sitting in Rauner [Special Collections] Library on the Dartmouth [College] campus. It's May 22nd, 2018, at 3 p.m. my time.

Stuart, do you want to introduce where you are?

LEWAN: Sure. This is Stuart Michael Lewan, Class of '79. I am speaking from South Park in San Francisco [California] on May 22nd, 2018.

MIHALY: Wonderful. So I guess to start the interview here, I'd love to just get—hear a little bit about your childhood and growing up, so can you just start off by telling me where you grew up?

LEWAN: Okay. I was born and spent—yeah, through high school and before I came to Dartmouth in Rome, New York, which is a small city in upstate New York, between Utica and Syracuse. Do you want me to talk about more than that?

MIHALY: Great. So—

LEWAN: Okay.

MIHALY: Yeah, I mean, what was—what was the environment a little bit growing up in terms of your family and community there?

LEWAN: All right. Well, my—both my parents were civil service people. My mom was a teacher, who later ended up going to work for the [New York] State Department of Labor, and my dad spent his whole working career in the military, the [U.S.] Department of Defense in one capacity or another. There was a large [U.S.] Air Force base in my hometown that kind of dominated things, Griffiss Air Force Base. It's where they had Woodstock '99. [Laughs.] It was decommissioned, you

know, at the end of the Cold War, but at the time when I was growing up, there were B-52s [Boeing B-52 Stratofortresses] with nuclear weapons, you know, there on the tarmac, you know, revving their engines. That was, like, the dominant sound in the background, were these planes always at the ready to take off in a moment's notice to bomb Russia. And so, yeah, for me growing up there, with [the] Vietnam [War] and the Cold War and, you know, my dad being in uniform and then also as a civilian employee at the Department of Defense, that—that pretty well shaped that part of it.

And then my dad's from—is of Polish heritage, Roman Catholic, so that was another big part of it. My mom converted from I think Methodism to Catholicism, so between the military and—military and, you know, kind of a very conservative Catholicism, that was my—my background. And it's probably not a big surprise, but that whole area is very Trumpy [chuckles] [President Donald J.] Trump supporters these days, the way its evolved.

MIHALY: Interesting.

LEWAN: Yeah.

MIHALY: So I guess the other thing that I'm curious about in terms of you growing up is that the sixties and seventies were obviously a transformative time in the country. What do you think that—or were you aware of anything on the national level in terms of gay rights or other movements that were kind of in the background of your life growing up?

LEWAN: Well, I—very—a lot of gay people in my generation had the same experience growing up. There was an article in *LIFE* magazine. I want to say it was 1968, but it was the first time there was, like, a recognition of gay people sort of on a national publication, where it wasn't, like, perverts in schoolyards or, you know, recognizing that there was this new urban class of gay people who were out and professional and so forth

And I remember being ten or eleven years old, reading that at the time, really before puberty, and just having this resonance, like, you know, that I'm sitting here now sixty years later remembering it. And I've heard many gay people

from my cohort say that they had the same experience. That was the first time that they ever saw in the media, you know, any recognition and that that was the first time the bell went off in their head, like, *Oh, this is something I should pay attention to*. I guess there had been—

MIHALY: Sure.

LEWAN: —some things on TV, but they were all, you know, pretty dark and, you know, clinical and criminological, you know. But I don't remember seeing any of that stuff as a kid, so I don't even know—I think CBS—

MIHALY: Sure. So, I mean—

LEWAN: did something. Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry.

MIHALY: Did you realize at that point that you were gay, or did it take you a little bit longer? At what point did you—

LEWAN: Well,—

MIHALY: —have that process?

LEWAN: Well, I think I knew I was different, and I think I ascribed that to being smart, because I was pretty much always the smartest kid in my class. And I also, you know, related to adults in a lot of ways better than kids. You know, I was the teacher's pet or, you know, the approval seeking, brown nosing, whatever you want to call it—you know, I was that kid. And so I—that's how I differentiated myself,—

MIHALY: Sure.

LEWAN: —and so I didn't specifically think about it as being a gay thing so much as I just knew I was different and, you know, at the risk of, you know, sounding conceited or whatever, I thought it was a good thing. I thought it made me better than other people, and it did kind of imbue me with a sense of destiny, like I had a bigger role to play than just an ordinary person. Like, my—my life was more important. I had a mission kind of a sense from the time I was quite young.

MIHALY: That's really interesting.

Going back to that article, what was the community—like, a general community reaction and family reaction? Was that article talked about?

LEWAN:

No, no, not at all. It was the kind of thing that, you know, you—you—you—you—you know, I—I read in private and, you know, probably would have been more mortified if I thought my parents knew that I was reading it or had read it. You know, it was a time where, you know, as a child, you know, you—your—your differences and uniqueness were not celebrated. It was still very much—at least in my family, you know, the conformity of the fifties was still in full force. You know, you were expected to be a certain way, and if you weren't that way, well, you did your best to hide it. You know—you know, there would be bad consequences for being too different.

As kind of a result of that, I got, particularly when you kind of get into those conflicted teenage years, where all this stuff is emerging, I always had a book in front of me. A book was sort of like my buffer between reality and my internal life, and, you know, we were at a relative's house for dinner on a Sunday afternoon, and, you know, I knew people were going to be talking about stuff that might make me uncomfortable—I'll, you know, just mention that in that day and age, there, you know, was a fair amount of racism with the civil rights movement, a fair amount of, you know, any of the peace, antiwar protesters. They were "Commies" and, you know, hippies. And, you know, there was lot of real negative stuff being put out there toward things that I identified with.

And so my defense, you know, my closet door, if you will, was a book, and I literally would—you know the way you're kind of on your phone today, and, you know, people always seem to be kind of lost in whatever they're doing on their phone, no matter where they are? I was kind of that way with books. You know, if I'm sitting there watching TV [television], I would kind of have a book on my lap, you know, so when my father made some harsh racist or something comment, you know, I could just kind of hide behind the book and pretend I didn't hear it and not have to react to it or interact on it.

MIHALY: Sure. What do you think—how would you characterize your relationship with your parents before college?

LEWAN: You know, my—I—I would say, you know, I was pretty close with my mom because she, you know, had gone to college herself, and her generation—she, you know, had been the first person to go to college and, you know, have a profession—you know, teaching and so forth. And because she wasn't Polish and wasn't Catholic, she kind of had sort of this outsider, convert, wannabe kind of relationship with my father's family that kind of dominated things.

So I—I identified with her a lot, and she was very enmeshed in our—she stopped working when my brothers and I were born, so, you know, she went from being somebody who had her own career, you know, a life, professional life to being a stay-at-home mom, and it didn't make her happy. You know, she was—so she kind of got over-involved in, you know, our schoolwork and PTA [Parent-Teacher Association] and, you know, all that—all that stuff that, you know, it sort of sounds like a good thing, you know, and it certainly was a good thing in many ways, but, you know, it's filling a—a gap where a woman today would have her own career.

You know, my dad was very old school, too, with sort of “no wife of mine is going to work,” because, you know, it reflected poorly on him as a provider if his wife had to work—kind of, you know, that mind-set that's long gone now but was very dominant in those days. So I was very close to her, almost, like I said, enmeshed, overly close.

My dad was kind of the exact opposite. He—you know, this lifetime in the military, kind of bringing himself up by his own bootstraps from a family that really had been devastated by the [Great] Depression. His father died when he was only sixteen, and he became sort of head of his big family of seven brothers and sisters and went to work at that point and enlisted in the military at seventeen, I guess, and was, like, off to Japan, to the occupation after World War II, you know.

So he had a very tough view of the world. And he was aggressive with my brothers and I because he saw the world

as a very hard place, and he thought that my mother had—
was babying us, making us too soft or—

I should mention here that both of my younger brothers are
gay. All three of us are gay. So that may have some role in
the way my father saw us or reacted to us and, you know,
the way my mother did as well, but—

So he was always trying to, like, toughen us up. You know,
so it was brutal at times, actually, with the physical discipline
and the emotional abuse and—and that kind of stuff. It
was—it was hard. It was much later in life before we would
have, you know, a warmth or trust in our relationship. With
him, I was kind of like always on guard because you just
never knew what was going to come at you next.

I can give you one little illustration that kind of gives you a,
paints a picture. I was probably in seventh grade, eighth
grade—

Hello? Are you there?

MIHALY: Yeah, I'm here.

LEWAN: Okay. I'm getting beeping on my line, so it's just not—
nuisance call, I'm sure.

MIHALY: No, you're all set.

LEWAN: I was afraid you dropped out.

MIHALY: No, thanks for—yeah, thanks for sharing. Like, keep going.
Go ahead.

LEWAN: Okay. And one of the ways—you know, my father was really
big on—having grown up on a farm himself and so forth—
was we had lots of chores to do, even though we lived in a
house in the city. So I was supposed to be raking leaves in
the yard. It started raining, so I came in the house and
started reading a book from school, an assigned book, *Kon-
Tiki* [*The Kon-Tiki Expedition: By Raft Across the South
Seas*], I remember. I don't know if you even are aware of
that. Thor Heyerdahl—you know, it was a thing in the sixties.

My father was so enraged that I wasn't raking leaves, that I had stopped because of the rain, and he thought that I was just slacking off, reading this book, that he literally grabbed the book out of my hand and tore it up. You know, it was a school book, and that—that kind of—you know, all the while yelling at me about how, you know, I'll never make it in life and yada yada yada, what a disappointment I am and, you know. So that was—you know, that's a little vignette that kind of describes what it was like growing up with my father.

MIHALY: Yeah, wow!

LEWAN: [Chuckles.]

MIHALY: So I guess—I'm curious now, like, how that transition to Dartmouth worked. Like, was that something that your parents wanted for you, or what was that like in terms of getting to Dartmouth?

LEWAN: Well, it was—it was always clear I was going to go to college. I mean, my mother had gone to college. It had been a big thing for her. And my father didn't go to college. His education was all in the military—you know, technical engineering type stuff but all, you know, in the context of his career in the military. So he didn't really have a concept of what college was.

And my mother had gone to Albany—SUNY [State University of New York] Albany. I guess at that time it was Albany Teacher College or something like that. So she had more of an idea about what it was like. So, yeah, when I—you know, I was getting crazy high scores on my SATs [Scholastic Aptitude Test, now simply SAT]. I was number one in my class. I had practically a 4.0, you know. Especially once, you know, the PSAT [preliminary SAT] scores came back, it was clear I could go pretty much wherever I wanted to school.

And, you know, the guidance counselors at school, you know, were definitely pushing me to aim as high as possible, and that's how I, you know, ended up applying to schools like Dartmouth. I al- —let's see, my second—at that point, when I was graduating high school, I was pretty—what I thought I wanted to do was be a psychiatrist, and so I was

looking at—in those days, there were actually place—schools where you could get—including Dartmouth—a medical degree in six years, because they kind of combined the undergraduate with the medical school, and so that's the reason I went to Dartmouth. And my second school was University of Rochester. My third was Cornell [University] because they had similar programs. I don't think anybody has those programs anymore.

So that's how I ended up settling on Dartmouth, and Dartmouth gave me a—you know, I was the [Dartmouth] Alumni Fund scholar for the class, which mean basically everything was paid for. You know, I'm pretty sure it was all scholarship, no loans, some work study, but it basically wasn't going to cost my parents anything for me to go there.

I had looked at some other schools, Yale [University] and Harvard [University], but my dad in particular—you know, it was the seventies, and cities were—you know, the memory of the riots and stuff in the late sixties was still pretty fresh, and my father just had a real prejudice against anything urban because it was, you know, you know—mostly because of racism. And so, you know, visiting Dartmouth, you know, that looks like a col- —looks like a movie set of, you know, of a college—you know, that was his idea of a college, you know. So that's how I ended up applying early decision there.

MIHALY: Sure.

LEWAN: I should also—one—one—a key factor that's kind of interesting in my, you know, choosing Dartmouth was that the day that I was scheduled to visit the college and do my interview in 1974 was the day that Richard [M.] Nixon resigned the presidency. I think that was August 8th. So because, you know, there's this big national thing going on and—and because we had never actually driven from where I lived in Rome to Hanover [New Hampshire] before, my father thought, based on the mileage, that he knew how long it was going to take to get there in time for my appointments and all that kind of stuff.

Well, you know, you get sucked into this whole historic thing happening on TV with Nixon resigning. My father drastically

under- —because, you know, he had never driven [U.S.] Route 4 across Vermont—you know, it's twisty, turn-y roads where you barely go twenty-five miles an hour, particularly—

MIHALY: Yeah, quite the roads.

LEWAN: —back in those days. So I ended up arriving in Hanover really late. I think my appointment was maybe at, like, one for the tour and so forth, and I think we barely made it there by the time the deans—the admissions office was closing, like, 3:30, whatever. And this was summer term. So in those days, they were just getting started with the four-quarter system, so there was barely anybody on campus. It was, like, empty on campus.

So my visit to Dartmouth, you know, my one chance to really kind of get a feel for what the place is like and how good a fit it would be—I met no Dartmouth students, you know, didn't have a tour and kind of had this kind of squeaker interview, where they just kind of like—you know, they literally—you know, like, out the door to close the office for the day, summer hours. And, you know, well, okay—you know,—you know, “Okay, we'll do this instead of making you spend the night or come back another time” or whatever.

So it was on that basis—that was what I knew of Dartmouth outside of all the hype, and the admissions and this—about—hype that I got from my local alumni and so forth. Had I spent, say, a day on campus with the students from that era, which would have been, you know, Frat Row [Webster Avenue], jock kind of thing—and maybe had a better sense of how socially isolated Hanover was—you know, you can't even imagine what it was like—you know, forget the internet. You know, there wasn't even cable TV. Making a long-distance phone call was still kind of an ordeal. You know, you just—you know, it—you were isolated.

The interstate had, I think—what is it, [Interstate] 91 there that runs up the Connecticut River? I think that had barely been opened at that point in the mid-seventies. So there was a real sense of isolation.

And I really—

MIHALY: Wow, yeah.

LEWAN: —think if I had had a sense of what it was going to be like to be there, I probably would have begged to go someplace else. You know, in my head, I was all about the history of the place and, you know, the academic ranking and the quality of the teaching, and I thought it was going to be all camping and skiing and,—you know, that’s what I thought my career at Dartmouth was going to be like. And it was anything but that [chuckles], so—yeah.

MIHALY: So do you remember what you felt like when you came back in the fall, after that initial visit, as a student?

LEWAN: Oh, yeah.

MIHALY: Do you remember that feeling?

LEWAN: Very much so. My Freshman Trip [Dartmouth Outing Club First-Year Trip] was kind of foreshadowing in that, you know, I had done a fair amount of hiking and camping and so forth in high school in the Adirondacks [the Adirondack Mountains] with friends when I grew up, so I thought I was pretty well, you know, prepared for what was involved. I didn’t go into it thinking it would be a problem.

Well, you know, the people on my trip—I guess it was kind of like a mid-level trip. I imagine they still have them kind of by degree of difficulty or whatever. But I didn’t pick an easy one. I also didn’t pick one—you know, to rock climb up [Mount] Moosilauke or something like that.

But by the I think it was, like, four days—and by the second day, it was pretty clear I was having trouble, you know, keeping up. It was, like, physically more demanding than anything I had done before. And most of the other guys on the trip weren’t having that much of a problem with it. They were, like, cross-country runners and swim team and—you know, they [were] much more physically conditioned than I was.

So it became—you know, right from my very first days there at the college, this sense of *Oh, I’m falling behind. I can’t keep up*—you know, kind of gritting my teeth. *Okay, I’m*

gonna tough this out. It hurts like hell. It feels awful, but, you know, I have—I have to, you know, do it. This is—this is—you know, I have to do it.

And ultimately what happened was—I guess the first few days were all uphill, and then, you know, something else I didn't know from my previous experience hiking was that the downhill was even worse. And on the third day of, like, going downhill, with the repeated shock on my knees and whatever, with—I don't know what it was, a forty-pound pack on my back, I literally—on the fourth day—

MIHALY: Yeah, that's painful.

LEWAN: —yeah, I could not even, you know, get up to walk. So they had to, you know, pull me out—you know, please come pick me up and drive me to Moosilauke, which, I will say, as embarrassing and awful as that was and, you know, kind of made me feel inferior, less than—there was another guy from my hometown in my class—you know, the two of us from our high school went to—went to Dartmouth that year. And he was even worse than me. He and I were actually pretty good friends through high school, and on his trip, he actually got helicoptered out on the second day. In my case, they, you know, walked me out to a road to get picked up. But in his case, he—he was so bad after the second day—and he was somewhat more athletic than I was. He had run track in high school. But, yeah, so at least—I—I—I—as embarrassed as I was, I felt, you know, at least I wasn't as bad as him. [Chuckles.] That was my exp- —you know—

MIHALY: [Laughs.]

LEWAN: —my foreshadowing of my Dartmouth experience. And, it—yeah, it resonates, that—that sense of [sighs] not keeping up and not being—maybe not really belonging there, not really being part of it. You know, that kind of followed me and—and drove me to do some of the things that I think I—you know, in the time and the context of the moment maybe felt like the right thing to do, a good thing to do, but it was—you know, in retrospect you can see it was—I was overcompensating, you know, trying to prove something to myself and other people, and I would have been better off just accepting what was and not—you know, dealing with that instead of trying to

push things and be more than, you know, what I—what I was or what was appropriate.

MIHALY: Yeah. How do you think the newly co-ed nature of the college changed that feeling of being an outsider that you maybe had?

LEWAN: Okay. Well, you know, I—my dorm was Richardson [Hall], which was an all-male bastion, and Woodward [Hall] was a female dorm right behind, so, you know, from—I think that was the first week I was there. We would periodically go and raid the—Woodward, and literally go raging through the halls, screaming in the middle of the night. You know, it was literally a panty raid. You know, if you could find some pieces of girls' clothing or something, you know, and—and snag it and, you know, bring it back to Richardson, that was a prize, you know, that you'd be rewarded with beers for. And it was definitely the kind of thing where the upperclassmen, you know, led the underclassmen—I'm not sure if the upperclassmen actually went into the dorm or if they just kind of stood outside and, you know, directed us to go in and do this, but it was definitely something we did under their direction; it wasn't something we, you know, spontaneously did on—on our own.

And, of course—have you—you must have heard of the song, "Our Cohogs." It was, like, a very insulting song that sang about how ugly Dartmouth women were and unattractive—

MIHALY: Gross.

LEWAN: —so you would go and sing that in front of, you know, Woodward, at, like, two o'clock in the morning. You know, it was—it was tough for women in those days. And coming from a big public high school, where I had always had a lot of girls as, you know, my best friends and had been close to and—you know, this was really bizarre behavior to me that I didn't understand.

And because of this whole thing I had had with my father, with, you know, "You gotta be tough, you gotta be a man, you gotta"—you know, it just—you know, I was very uncomfortable from the very beginning with—with that kind

of thing. I had never been on a sports team or had that kind of male bonding kind of experience. I had male friends. I didn't realize till later in life that pretty much all my male friends from, like, junior high school and high school ended up being gay or bisexual, you know—you know, in their own way they were different, even at that time. We didn't understand it or know what it was, what the difference was, but—so, you know—so that was pretty—

MIHALY: Yeah.

LEWAN: And as a freshman in those days, you know, the alcohol policy was “drink as much as you can, puke, and then drink more.” [Chuckles.] So I think that's how I compensated for this feeling of being out of place and being worried that I wasn't measuring up and that they wouldn't find—you know, find out who I really was, you know. So to go along, you know, I—you know, certainly drank more than I ever had in my life in high school. My—my friends and I—in those days, the drinking age was eighteen, and the laws around it weren't particularly enforced, so, you know, I had been drinking since I was fifteen or sixteen. And, sure, I had gotten drunk and things like that, but it was nothing like what I was exposed to at—at Dartmouth, particularly in Richardson.

And my very first night on campus, we were taken to a frat basement. There were brothers from SAE [Sigma Alpha Epsilon] that were part of the house, and we were—we went to the SAE basement, and we were all forced to drink till we threw up. [Chuckles.] So that—that was my first night on campus.

MIHALY: Wow.

So I'm curious what it was like for gay students at the time, what that environment was like. Was there any prevalence of a gay community?

LEWAN: There—there were gay people there, but it was certainly something that was not generally acknowledged. You know, everyone was in the closet. I didn't really come across the gay community, and—so my work-study job was at Hopkins [Center for the Arts], doing, like, stage management, theater

tech, like light, sound, sets, that kind of thing because I had done some of that in high school—you know, high school productions. So it was through there that I started to pick up that there were—you know, at that point, I—I—I guess—at the end of high school, I did kind of have this realization about being gay.

You know, in adolescence, particularly back around puberty, there had been that certain phase that a lot of people go through where you kind of mess around with, you know, your friends your own age, but it's a phase. It's a thing you go through. And, like, then I, you know, started dating girls and having sex with girls, so, you know, just I thought it was a thing in my past.

And at the end of my senior year, I think it was, I—I had this—it came to me in a dream, literally, this dream about me and my girlfriend having sex, and then into the dream comes my best friend, my male friend, and then the dream—I remember being fascinated by him sexually, and that's where my thoughts—you know, where all my interest went. I was, like, *Forget her, you know, and focus on him*. And when I woke up from that dream, there was just such a sense of resonance or lucidity about it, it's, like, it was at that moment that I realized, *Wow, I really like boys, you know?*

MIHALY: Oh wow.

LEWAN: I didn't think it was exclusive, necessarily, at that point, and I continued for years to come to date women and be bisexual, at least I think till I was around twenty-one or so. But that was the seventies. Everybody was bisexual. You know, David Bowie, Mick Jagger, you know, kind of thing.

So in terms of a commu- —

MIHALY: Yeah. No, that makes a lot of sense, yeah. Go ahead.

LEWAN: In terms of the community, you know, as I became more aware about things, it was—the first person that I explicitly made contact with as a gay person—I think I gave you his name before, [William M.] “Bill” Monsour '77. I—one of my activities was I ran a book exchange that [the William Jewett] Tucker Foundation sponsored. It was in the basement of

College Hall [now the Collis Center for Student Involvement] in the pre-Collis days. And you could—students could—you know, when you're leaving campus or whatever, dump all your books, textbooks, whatever, and then people could come and get them for free, you know, if it was the same textbook that maybe you were using and spare yourself money, or maybe it's just a general interest book.

So at the beginning of every term, we would have this, you know, book—book shop open, book exchange open for—it was only, like, for the first week or two of the term. And it was a great way to meet a bunch of people, you know. And this one guy came in, Bill, that I mentioned, and he said he was looking for books on ballet. And there was just some- — he was just so flamboyant and I—I just knew, you know, *This is what a gay person is*. [Chuckles.] That was the first gay person that I actually recognized as gay, and he was very handsome and sexy, kind of effeminate and over the top by, you know, today's standards.

But, you know, also there was a real warmth to him, a sincerity. And we ended up—you know, so I tried to help him find the books that he wanted, and then, under some pretext, I got his I guess phone number. I want to say phone number, but this is—we certainly didn't have e-mail in those days. Anyway, some kind of contact information was exchanged.

He lived off campus, and within a—it wasn't long. Within a day or two, he called me and invited me to dinner, and he made dinner in his apartment that was—I don't even know what's there today. I'm trying to remember the last time I was in Hanover. There used to be a diner called the Village Green that was in that first block of Main Street, between the Dartmouth Co-op and the [Dartmouth] Green, sort of middle of the block. I can't—I can't even remember what was there the last time I was there.

MIHALY: So wait is this—this is Bill.

LEWAN: Right. So he invited me to his—

MIHALY: This is Bill, who knew—okay, yeah, wonderful.

LEWAN: Yeah, invited me for dinner at his apartment. He played disco music for me the first time I heard it, “Voulez vous coucher avec moi [ce soir]”—you know, it was a 1975—you know, K.C. and the Sunshine Band [sic; Patti LaBelle]. And he—he was a dancer. He showed me how to do the hustle and some of the disco steps. And—and, yeah, we—you know, he swept me off my feet. And, you know, that was the first time that I—as a quote-unquote “adult”—you know, had sex with a man. You know, I had had sex with boys before, back—years before, around puberty, but it really didn’t have the, you know, romantic quality to it or, you know, a relationship quality. But with Bill, it’s like, *Oh, my God, you know? I’m swept off my feet. This is what I’ve been waiting my whole life for*, I said at eighteen [chuckles], you know. So—

MIHALY: So that was your freshman year, then.

LEWAN: Yup, yup, this would be the beginning of winter term, you know, in 1976. I should note that part of this whole reaction I had to Richardson and so forth in my first term there, I was—just got so uncomfortable with that whole situation that I did something that was kind of bizarre, and I don’t think I’ve ever heard of anybody else doing this, but even though at that point I had not actually had sex with a man as an adult, you know, or actually even met another gay person, I kind of blurted out to my roommate, and then it quickly made its way to the whole dorm, that I—I was gay.

And it was—actually, in the context of those days, they were surprisingly, you know, okay about it. But, you know, I think a big part of that was that there was nothing threatening about it. You know, I wasn’t being sexual or—or coming on to people or acting like a gay person or whatever. It’s just, you know, sort of—I think what drove me to it was, you know, you get a bunch of drunk guys together, you know, there’s a certain amount of physical contact and this kind of intimacy, you know, this male bonding thing. And it just, because of the sexual tension that it created in me—I guess that was my way of kind of putting up a wall and saying, “Look, you guys can, you know, get drunk and pat each other’s butts, but, you know, that makes me uncomfortable. I can’t do that.” And that was kind of self-defense, I guess, in doing that. So I actually did—

MIHALY: That's interesting.

LEWAN: Yeah, I did that before I actually—had actually done anything behavior wise, you know, socially that would have—you know, most people would slink around in the shadows and have a bunch of affairs in secret and stuff like that and slowly work themselves up to coming out. And instead, I just kind of exploded out of the closet, even though I had had zero adult gay experience at that point.

MIHALY: Did you feel like your experience in Richardson, like, changed after you, quote-unquote, “came out” to everybody? Did people treat you differently then?

LEWAN: Well, you know, nobody was, you know—you know, hugging me and, you know, patting my butt or, you know, jumping in the shower with me kind of thing like they would do with each other, so, you know, it—it achieved its purpose, you know, in terms of me just trying to put up—establish some boundaries.

But they weren't, at that point—they weren't bad. It was more like, “Oh, well, you're part of the family. You're one of us. And, yeah, it's weird, but”—you know, it really wasn't a problem at that point, because there was no behavior. There was nothing that was making *them* uncomfortable. That came later, when I actually started, you know, dating and having sex and started becoming identified as gay more broadly on campus. *Then* people reacted, you know, because—as long as it was just in the family and kind of private, it wasn't really a problem, but once it became, you know, “Oh, you're hanging out with *him*?” or “*He's* your roommate?” or, you know, that kind of thing, then that's when the homophobia really kicked in. But that was later.

MIHALY: Sure.

So one of the things that you did on campus was found the first gay students support group.

LEWAN: Right.

MIHALY: Can you talk a little bit about the inspiration there?

LEWAN: Okay.

MIHALY: And when that was?

LEWAN: Yeah. So, like I was saying, there *was* sort of this underground, you know, closeted gay community that once, you know, you kind of met somebody and had your entrée—you kind of discovered this whole little underground social world—a lot of it was around the theater department. And so that's how I first, you know, met people.

The only “out” people that I am aware of from that era—there was this one guy, [Lewis P.] “Louie” Lazare [pronouncing it luh-ZAHR], I think maybe was a '76 [sic; Class of 1974], who—they were just, like, blatant freaks. You know, they really—you know, I—I didn't know him personally. I—I didn't—you know, I don't want to sound like I know anything about him outside of what the public image was, but he just—you know, you didn't want to *be* that guy. He was like this sort of damaged freak, pariah—you know, a kind of bizarre appearance. You know, I don't know how much of that was the way he was when he came to Dartmouth, how much of it was a product of the time and reacting to how people treated him, but he was the person you didn't want to be, which basically meant you didn't want to be out. You didn't want people in general to know.

And so that's how things were. In those days, there was no social life on campus except the frats. There was no Collis. There was no—the college didn't sponsor anything socially. The classes really didn't do anything. Everything was frats. So, you know, as the seventies rolled on, with coeducation and a more diverse student group, there were more and more people on campus who weren't really fitting into the frats. You know, there were a lot of women that, you know, had their experience, you know, with the frats and never wanted to go back. There were, you know, black students, Native American students, people maybe, you know, sort of leftist kind of people that didn't want to buy into the whole, you know, preppie, upper-crust kind of attitude of the frats. This is the years—the movie *Animal House* is sort of based on those years at Dartmouth.

MIHALY: Yeah.

LEWAN: So increasingly it became known or a realized awareness that there needed to be something else for people, that you couldn't expect this growing segment of the college to be sitting alone in their dorms, you know, on a Saturday night. And one of the first things—and so Bill, who I mentioned before, Bill Monsour, kind of took the lead in this group called Students for Social Alternatives, SSA. Was one of—was pretty much the first real attempt at organizing activities, non-frat activities.

And one of our—our kind of classic events that we had over a number of years—at least once a term we did—was in the Top of the Hop, we'd have a disco. And there was this one guy from WDCR. His name was Walter [A.] Callender [Class of 1978], a black guy, who had connections—you know, he's an on-air DJ [disk jockey] at the radio station, but—

MIHALY: WDCR?

LEWAN: Yeah. And he was from Boston, and so he had connections with, like, the music scene in Boston, so he had, you know, the big speakers and, you know, like, access to—you know, everything was on vinyl in those days—you know, disco albums. And we had these crazy-ass discos in the Top of the Hop that, you know, were the first [chuckles] kind of that thing happening. And, you know, you go to the frats, it was, like, Beach Boys music, you know? And here was disco.

So black students came out, gay students [unintelligible], kind of more open-minded—you know, white, straight guys would show up just out of curiosity. And, you know, they became very popular. They became a big deal, and—you know, which just kind of, you know, made the point that, you know, there needed to be some formal structure around this. So it was all pretty much—I don't even remem--I think there probably was college—some college funding, a tiny amount at some point, but I think when it started off, it was just kind of pass the hat, make a donation to cover costs.

But the problem with this was, because there were gay people there—it was also open to people from the community, from the Upper Valley, so there were—you

know, some guys from the Upper Valley that were out would also show up at these—at these discos. And so they kind of got a reputation as being a “gay thing,” because that’s what the takeaway was. You know, it was this whole range of students that weren’t really represented in the frats, you know, taking part in this thing, you know, inclusive, as we would say today. But that’s what—you know, if a bunch of frat guys came to check it out, that’s what they would see, was two guys dancing on the floor, and that was their takeaway.

So what ended up happening was these events, as popular as they were, got a reputation for being gay, and at this point, as the SSA was trying to expand to do other kind of activities and, you know—like, it was having a really hard time getting anybody but, quote-unquote, “fringe” people to participate because the reputation was, “Oh, SSA. Well, that’s gay.”

So that was actually the real motivation to form a separate, specifically gay-identified group, was to, you know, have SSA flourish by sort of splitting off this gay identity into a separate group. So that—that’s how that—how that happened, why that happened, was to, you know, allow SSA to—to thrive. It didn’t exactly turn out that way, but that was the thinking behind it.

I think that answered your question.

MIHALY: Okay. So then was—yeah, no, that was great. So did Bill help found that as well, or was that you? Were there other people?

LEWAN: Yes, he—he, Roger Klorese [Class of 1977]. He was a ’77 or ’78. He was one of the initial people. Oh, I’m drawing a blank now. There were—there were a handful of us that were, you know, public, willing to, like, have our names in *The D* [*The Dartmouth*]. And then there were, you know, obviously more that were very closeted, that, you know, didn’t want any—you know, definitely didn’t want their picture in *The D*, or they didn’t want to come to, like, an event in public where they’d be seen. And so there were, you know, literally a handful of us, maybe four or five, six at most, who would go and sit at a table at, you know, registration with the other activities or,

you know, that would represent. The rest stayed in—you know, wanted to stay in the shadows, stay in the closet.

And it goes back to this whole thing that I was saying with Louis Lazare, where to put yourself out there was to make yourself a target and, you know, you weren't helping yourself by doing this in any way, shape or form. I have to admit that me—when I took this on myself, this role, I—I made this assumption that the college, being a Ivy League school and a liberal arts university and the lip service that it paid to social justice, particularly in the Tucker Foundation, which is where a lot of, you know, the SSA and the gay student group—that sort of was our administrative home in the college—was, you know, very social justice oriented.

I just assumed that no matter how the students may react to it, that I could count on the administration to back us up, defend us and make a safe space for us, that they would have our backs, you know. And that was the part that was really difficult. I think I talked—when I talked to you before about the whole Bones Gates [fraternity] thing—but you know, in more ways than I can list here, you know, it was clear there were a lot of people in the administration and the faculty that, you know, didn't want an out gay group. You know, didn't want to acknowledge it, whether it was because they were in the closet themselves or they were just—you know, thought we were sick and didn't deserve any kind of recognition or acceptance.

But, yeah, I quickly was disabused of the idea that I could count on the administration—you know, the dean's office or, you know, the usual parts of the college that govern student life for consistent support. The only place I got that was from the Tucker Foundation. Warner [R.] Traynham [Class of 1957] was the dean of the Tucker Foundation at that time. He was a black minister. And, you know, he—he talked the talk. He—he walked the walk with us. But, you know, dean of the Tucker Foundation—you know, he had some funds and stuff but, you know, didn't really carry a lot of weight, you know, in terms of college governance.

MIHALY: Sure.

LEWAN: So, yeah, kind of left us exposed, kind of hanging out there.

MIHALY: So did your official recognition and funding all come from Tucker then?

LEWAN: Certainly it did initially, but I think when we—in the fall of '77, when we got recognition, I think that meant we were—whatever the official list of activities was, you know, like the Outing Club or *The D* or, you know, whatever that meant in those day, college recognition, that—that made us a group. And we did get I think some funding, but we're talking, you know, a pittance, like enough to, like, pay for—

MIHALY: Yes. [Chuckles.]

LEWAN: —beverages at meetings or something. It's not like we had a huge budget. We—we actually—well, I take that back, because we did have a couple of fairly—or at least one event that cost some amount of money. There was, about that time in history, a professional football player—his name was David [M.] Kopay [pronounced COH-pay]—who had come out and written a book about his history as a closeted gay person playing in the NFL, that was kind of a, you know, celebrity at that time—you know, if you can imagine what celebrities were like, you know, before the internet.

But we did have him come and speak on campus, and, you know, put him up in the Hanover Inn and—and, you know, paid his expenses, and we did have—I can re- —I'm not remembering exactly what it was in the context of, but I do remember paying for other speakers on cam—to come to campus to speak, to try to kind of raise awareness and, you know, that kind of thing. So I guess we did have, you know, more of a budget than I was remembering at first, now that I'm thinking this through. But it certainly wasn't huge. You know, we're talking—these events that I'm talking about were, you know, a few hundred dollars at most, you know. It wasn't much.

MIHALY: Sure.

So in what ways did you feel like the administration didn't support you? Especially I'm curious about, like, the very initial founding. Like, what were some of those hoops to kind of get the group started and off the ground?

LEWAN: Well, like I said, I think our real constituency there was with the Tucker Foundation, and that's what carried the day. And I—you know, me personally—I think I kind of told this story of the Bones Gate incident that happened in January '78, you know, and how there was just this utter—

MIHALY: Yeah, we can get to that in a minute, for sure.

LEWAN: Yeah—utter lack of support from the dean's office or the college judiciary process for what was, you know, blatant violence against a student. Hate, hate—you know, we'd call it a hate crime or hate speech today.

MIHALY: Yeah.

LEWAN: But it was more just resistance. You know, if you wanted—say you wanted to book a room in—you know, for a meeting or something like that, depending on who you spoke to in the faculty or the staff, you know, they'd have excuses why you couldn't book the room, or maybe they would even go so far to mutter something under their breath, you know, about, you know, "Faggots don't belong on campus." You know, I'm not quoting that as a direct quote; I don't remember specifically what was said, but it was clear you weren't welcome, that people thought you didn't belong here, that you were a negative influence on the college.

And that really got—you know, once there was the recognition, official recognition of the group, then that really kind went from muttering and sort of like this attitude, this uneasy sense of things to people being very blatant, you know, in your face about it, like, you know, "I can't believe the college, you know, is, you know, recognizing you" or "[the] college is saying this is okay" or, you know, that kind of thing. You'd get reactions from people.

But, like—

MIHALY: Do—

LEWAN: Go ahead. I was just going to—

MIHALY: No, I was just curious about—

Go ahead, Stuart.

LEWAN: —I was going to mention what we had talked about before in terms of at that point, where I was trying to get an adviser in the government department and, like nobody would be my adviser, for one reason or another, basically because nobody wanted to be publicly identified with the gay student, you know. You know, just—it just seemed like at every turn, being an out gay person was, like, closing doors and blocking things off.

I—I mentioned to you, too, about how I had—you know, at that point, my plan was to go into foreign service, to use my gift with languages and my interest in culture and politics, you know, to have a career in the foreign service. And I just got shut down. You know, like, “Nope, you’ll never get a security clearance. There’s no way the government will ever”—I even got—I was applying for foreign study abroad and was told at certain programs: Just couldn’t do it because I couldn’t get a visa to go to that country because I had—I was publicly identified as—as gay, as homosexual. So—ah!

MIHALY: Yeah. Was there pushback from students surrounding specifically the creation of the support group?

LEWAN: Yes. This is where the gay student groups history kind of gets entwined with *The Dartmouth Review* because once it got out into the alumni channels about the college recognizing a gay group, then you had the outraged alumni. You know, “We can’t—we’re gonna stop donating until you, you know, withdraw recognition. We can’t believe our—our contributions are supporting sin and perversity” and, you know, that kind of stuff.

And just like with the Indian symbol and with coeducation, you know, you’ve got this vocal conservative alumni group, and it kind of creates—there’s a group of students that kind of respond to that and kind of become the—the face of that in the—the student population. And it’s pretty clear there’s connections, whether it’s, you know, father-son, whatever connections or, you know, funding in some way, you know, donations to a particular frat or some kind of group, you know, that was putting money into this thing to back it up.

But it was—you know, there was a group of—just like, you know, there were a bunch of kids that you could count—guys you could count on to show up at every game, you know, in Indian regalia, just because they knew it would piss off the liberals that were trying to get rid of the Indian symbol or the ones that would show up at women's basketball game and sing the Cohog song and insult the women players. You know, the same thing happened, you know, with gay—

If we had—you know, at some point, we ended up having to stop having, like, the discos at the Top of the Hop because of—you know, there were people there just to disrupt, just to, you know, insult people, try to cause trouble. I can't—my memory wants to say, you know—my memory—I'm seeing, like, obnoxious signs, like, you know, "Faggots Go Home" or something like that, but I might be mixing up some memories there. But eventually it just became—it didn't become tenable from a security point of view anymore to have an event in a big, open public space like that, because there was such a reaction against it.

And then that evolved when *The D*, you know, was generally writing, you know, what was considered liberal at the time or accepting at the time, pieces that conservative students thought, like, they were being shut down, and they're—you know, their voi- —you know, just like what you hear on Fox News today, like they're, you know, being suppressed. That's how *The Dartmouth Review* was born.

Well, if *The D* won't print the—you know, the voice of conservative students, then here, we'll do this. So even though you maybe had, you know, thousands of students that, you know, supported *The D* or at least, you know, their opinions were in line with that, maybe ten or twenty conservative students—you know, these conservative alumni and national conservatives like William F. Buckley [Jr.] and so forth threw so much money and publicity and everything into this *Dartmouth Review* to try to make it seem like a—you know, like an equal thing, you know, like, "Oh, look, you know, there's, you know, hundreds of conservative students that are afraid to speak their minds because these liberal, fascist professors, you know, are oppressing them." And, you know, you still hear a lot of that today, even, you know, from the conservative side of things, this, you know,

conservatives are victims. So that's a big part of what the reaction was to it.

And the other part of it was as things evolved, the women's part of it kind of split off. There's been an uneasy alliance between lesbians and gay men, you know, throughout the movement's history, and at some point, the women became much more separatists than the gay men on campus. You know, they had—they lived off campus, they kept a relatively low profile, you know, they kind of—there was kind of an attitude like, "Oh, you know, you, you know, gay guys just want to, you know, get drunk and have sex and party and"—you know. Which was true. And, you know, that's—that's not us. So there was that kind of thing happening.

And then the feminism—you know, it became more of a feminist than a lesbian thing. It would be pretty hard to define where the edges were between that. It all kind of blurred together. But definitely there was—you know, things branched off in that direction, and that kind of, oh probably hampered the—you know, the growth of a gay student group just because of basically—I mean, women—there wasn't parity in those days so there'd be the same number of women as men, but definitely a certain amount of people that might have been supportive of a gay student group, being part of that, were off sort of on this feminist branch of—of things.

I think I'm saying on track here for you.

MIHALY: No, you're doing great. Thank you so much.

Talk a little bit more about membership in—in the early days. Do you remember, like, your first couple of meetings, what kind of membership there was—

LEWAN: Sure.

MIHALY: —and how that grew?

LEWAN: Well, you know [chuckles], it's funny that you say "remember" because my memories are kind of hazy, and a part of that is absolutely no doubt because I was probably—had had a few drinks, maybe smoked some pot before these

things, you know, sort of as a social anxiety, stress kind of thing, just to try to be as chill and relaxed as possible. That was always kind of my public persona. I wasn't so much a firebrand, take to the barricades, you know, kind of guy. I was much more like, "Hey, let's—let's hang out, and let's, you know, appreciate each other. Let's have fun together." You know, that was much more my approach to how I thought this would go, sort of.

And that's what I kind of felt in the context of Dartmouth at that time. That's what people needed, you know, in a 5,000-person Hanover, New Hampshire, you know, we didn't need to be having a protest every week; we just needed friends, connections, you know, places to hang out, ways to meet each other and, you know, have some acceptance.

So that was kind of my focus. And so that's—you know, what I'm remembering off the top of my head is some of the meetings we would—you know, we'd have our meeting, discuss our business, and then it would go off and be a party, you know, to somebody's dorm or apartment off campus and, you know, would end up being, you know, what gay men do when they party. And, yeah, it was—it was fun. That's what—at least at the beginning, that's what I'm remembering of it. But the details are kind of hazy.

MIHALY: Sure. How many people do you think, more or less?

LEWAN: Well, like I said, the group of people that would actually represent publicly was quite small. I doubt it was ever more than five at any given time. The larger, you know, orbit—there was probably, ballpark, maybe twenty, twenty-five people that, you know, were kind of in the closet, or maybe they would show up once in a while for something. You know, maybe you'd be aware of them in some way, but they were still—they were pretty much shunning anything public. Maybe, you know, they might, like—

One of the big things that was going on in gay life then was the Baker Library [Fisher Ames Baker Memorial Library, now Baker-Berry Library] bathrooms. That was—and to some degree, the Hopkins Center, but that's how gay men met for sex. And I think that's the way most gay men, you know, met each other at that point, particularly those that wouldn't come

to something public, like a gay student group meeting or a disco at the Top of the Hop.

And, you know, I don't know how much you need me to go into the whole dynamics of bathroom cruising. You know, you go in the stall, and you —

MIHALY: [Laughs.] However much you would like.

LEWAN: —you know, you just kind of indicate that you were there for more—for another purpose than what most people use the bathroom for. You know, tapping your foot or dropping a little note. You know, in those days there was, you know—I guess there still are, often—you know, there's a gap between the partition, you know, the bathroom stalls.

And then if I say, “glory hole.” Do you know what that is? In some places there'd be a hole people had carved out in the partition, and you could either look at the person in the next stall or in some places you'd actually put your penis through it and have sex through the hole in the partition. But it was, you know, very furtive and shameful. And, you know, being adolescent, horny men, it was irresistible. [Chuckles.] You know, you really could—compulsive, almost, to act out and do that once you found out about it. But, yeah, it wasn't something you were proud of. You know, it was something you were embarrassed about, ashamed of. But that was, you know, the bulk of, you know, what gay life was at that—at that point.

And that included people from the town, the community, even, you know, staff, faculty—you know, that—that was where the real—you know, if you wanted to count the number of gay people in Hanover, you would do much better, you know, counting the number of people going in and out of the bathrooms at Baker than you would, you know, counting the number of people going into a gay student group meeting.

MIHALY: Sure.

So I guess let's—I'd like to come back to the BG incident. Do you mind just describing what happened?

LEWAN: Sure. Okay. So this is January 1978. I think it was right around my twenty-first birthday. At that point, I was dating—I had been dating a girl, a '77, one of the founding sisters of KKG [Kappa Kappa Gamma]. She had graduated, you know, in the spring before we had gone out. Her, you know, her senior year. And it was the seventies, so we had all kinds of kinky, bisexual fun, and it was, you know—it's what you'd expect from—from that era.

And actually, she was there in Hanover because at my actual twenty-first birthday—all this is—I'm—I'm just—it's not really repressed, but it's just one of those things that I don't often connect these dots. But my twenty-first birthday, I ended up—you could—depending on your frame of reference, you could say it was a suicide attempt or it was an overdose, but I was—I lived off campus, above EBAs [Everything But Anchovies].

And we—there was a party. It was loud. It was raucous. It was packed. You know, lots of alcohol, lots of pot, God knows what other drugs. And at that point, Dick's House was [chuckles] kind of famous for, like, dispensing lots of drugs without a lot of oversight. And I'm not remembering exactly why it was that I had some Valium, but back in those days, in the seventies, Valium I don't even think was recognized as addictive or as a problem, really. You know, actually in the seventies, people didn't even consider cocaine addictive. You know, the Studio 54 era.

But what ended up happening was at this party, I ended up taking too much Xanax with all the alcohol I was drinking, and I passed out, blacked out. You know, the ambulance had to be called. I got taken to Dick's House and put under observation. The official story I think was that I had pneumonia or something like that, you know. But it was in fact, you know, kind of a suicide watch. You know, like, they weren't sure what I was going to do, so they wanted to keep me for I think it was about a week.

And my friend, Karen, had come up from New York to kind of take care of me once I got out of Dick's House. So it was in that, you know, context that we went to—she had—she had spent a lot of time at Bones Gate and knew a lot of the brothers there, and we had been there before together, to

things. So we went there not particularly expecting there to be any issue. I mean, yeah, I might have been known as the guy who founded the gay student group on campus, but I also was there with my girlfriend and, you know, had hung out there before without ever having any issue.

But for some reason, that night—you know, this was after the gay student group was founded, and all the publicity and all the stuff starting to happen with the alumni stirring up trouble and trying—giving people kind of—you know, sort of the way Trump has made it okay for people to let all their worst feelings out, the alumni kind of did that in terms of the homophobia.

And that, you know, I just remember somebody pointing at me and yelling, “Oh, you know, it’s the faggot” kind of thing. And then somehow it just turned into, you know, getting—you know, people hitting me and throwing things and—you know. And—and I’m—at this point, I’m not trying to make a point or, you know, do anything other than retreat, you know, as gracefully as I can.

I think when it started, Karen and I were separated so, you know, we were on different sides of the—the basement, and so I was trying to, you know, get her attention or, you know—so maybe I didn’t immediately just run out of there when it started. But it wasn’t like I was resisting or fighting back or, you know—you know, engaging in mutual combat of any sort. I—I, you know, was just trying to gather—you know, it was the middle of winter, so I had a coat, I guess, somewhere, and I was just trying to get my stuff and get out of there with Karen.

But, yeah, I remember being pummeled, knocked down on the floor, and then kind of dragged up the stairs and—we got banged around a lot on the stairs and eventually got dragged out the front door, you know, and kicked really hard, you know, so that I ended—went sprawling in—in the snow bank in front of the house. And, you know, a bunch of people sitting on the front porch, yelling stuff and, you know, continuing to throw bottles and stuff like that.

And I remember [chuckles] this one detail, that I remember one guy came running out, and, like, whatever the door—

cover charge was, you know, throwing the money at me. It's like, "Here, your money's not welcome here." Like, you know, throwing whatever it was, five dollars at me as I laid there in the—on the ground.

And then Karen eventually got—found her way through the crowd and—and came out and helped me get up and—and walk away. You know, it's one of those things where it's just so sudden and so violent that you're just kind of in a state of shock. You know, it seems like a dream. Like, *This really can't be happening*. You know, at the time it's happening, you—you kind of—you see people hitting you and kicking you, and you're aware, you know, of that, but you don't really feel it. It's not like you actually, you know, feel—it's only afterwards that you start feeling the, you know, bruises and, you know, noticing, *Oh, I'm bleeding*, you know, kind of things.

So—so that was on a Saturday night. And by Monday or Tuesday it was, you know, the front page of *The D*, you know, because this whole thing with the gay student group and me was kind of like, you know, guaranteed circulation, you know, for *The D*. You put something about the gays in the paper, well, everybody's going to be reading it and talking about it. So, you know, there it was, the cover story.

And so part of it was I went into this, you know, thinking, *Well, the dean's office will take care of this. You know, they're not going to let them get away with this. You know, it's just so blatant and violated so much of the, you know, honor code and standards of behavior.*

But, you know, after they did their investigation—I can't even remember what the disciplinary committee was called, the adjudication process was called in those days, but the result was, well, there were no witnesses to this, you know, happening, even though there were probably 200 people there. And so the college officially basically denied that it happened and—and took no action.

And in terms of the gay community, people were frightened. They saw what happened to me, and they didn't want to be next. So, for instance, I had a roommate, a gay roommate at the time, living off campus. He, like, moved out real fast.

Most of the other closeted students, you know, just stopped participating—you know, stopped even, you know, saying hi, socializing. You know, nobody, you know, wanted, you know, to be associated with me or with, you know, the gay group at Dartmouth because it clearly was not going to make your life better. So, yeah, so it wasn't long—

MIHALY: Were those brothers—were those brothers reprimanded at all—

LEWAN: No, nothing.

MIHALY: —by BG?

LEWAN: Not that I know of. You know, I think there was probably, yeah, some unofficial warning type stuff, like, you know, “You guys can't keep doing this. You know, next time we'll have to take it more seriously maybe.” But certainly there was not—no public apology or acknowledgement, even, of it. Yeah, so the feeling was just like—I don't know, I just felt really let down by the college. I felt like, *Hey, you know, I— you know, I got*—I started doing what I was doing with SSA and the gay student group to make student life better, to contribute to making the campus a better place, a more well-rounded place, creating more opportunities for, you know, the full range of students, you know. And when push came to shove, when the going got tough, I just felt like there was zero support from the college, from the other students, you know, from people that I considered my friends. And, yeah, I just couldn't—I just couldn't continue then.

And in a matter of a few weeks—you know, it was before—winter term is so short—that was before the end of winter term. I—I left and went to Boston, you know, where I thought I could have—

MIHALY: So that was '78, right?

LEWAN: Yeah, winter of '78. So I must—I think it was February, March. I went on a—the guy I was going to end up working for in Boston [Massachusetts] took me on a trip to Key West [Florida] first. You know, I sort of vaguely remembering that being, like, around spring—spring break. And, you know, by

the end of March, beginning of April, I was settled in Boston, running a gay bath house.

MIHALY: Hmm!

So you were on—was it med leave at that point, technically speaking?

LEWAN: Medley?

MIHALY: Like, medical leave?

LEWAN: Oh, oh, I'm sorry.

MIHALY: —from the school,—

LEWAN: I thought you said medley.

MIHALY: —or had you just pulled out as a student entirely?

LEWAN: Okay. Yeah, I guess—I guess it was a medical leave. Yeah, I guess that's—

MIHALY: Something like that. [Chuckles.]

LEWAN: Yeah, no, throughout my whole—you know, from my first term, I—when I started this process of—of coming out and—and, you know, the sort of depression and anxiety and substance abuse and stuff that all came along with that, I was—I had seen the counselor in Dick's House. His name was Bruce Baker. There were group therapy things that, you know, were for, you know, the students that didn't fit in, you know, for one reason another, whether gay or, you know, women or—you know, the people that didn't fit the mold, you know, the outsiders, you know. There'd be these—one thing was called a human sexuality group, you know, to just go deal with your gender and orientation issues, though in those days we didn't exactly use those terms.

And then there were others—groups that were kind of based around different themes, and then almost all of the people in those groups were also, you know, seeing counselors individually. And that—that's why I, you know, would have had the Valium that I OD'd on, was through that program.

You know, it was, I'm sure, you know, given me for help sleeping or deal with anxiety or something. But the medical leave, you know, would have been, you know, part of—of all that through Dick's House.

And I guess that's one thing I *should* mention, is that I—I gave that maybe a little bit short shrift in—in addition, the Tucker Foundation, Bruce Baker and—I'll remember her name in a minute. There was another Dick's House counselor. Did give the gay community a lot of support. You know, I think at one point virtually everybody from that era that was gay at Dartmouth, you know, saw Bruce Baker. Maybe it was just for a couple of sessions, maybe it was for years, you know, going in for regular sessions, but he helped bring out so many people. And when everything else in the college felt crazy and hostile—you know, he was this, you know, tall, Midwestern guy with a very relaxed manner, just very reassuring kind of dad-like—you know, nice dad-like. And he—he offered a lot of support and sanity for people.

I will also say that in that empathy and sympathy that we desperately needed and that he and some other counselors at Dick's House gave us was an element that wasn't so healthy in that it made us—made it feel like we had an excuse for things. And looking back on it now from my vantage point these many years later, I feel like maybe at some point instead of somebody saying, "There, there now. Yes, all these people are so mean to you. No wonder, you know, you're so upset and it's so hard for you to do your schoolwork" and—you know. Basically making excuses and rationalizing and, you know, creating this very permissive mind-set.

I think the whole idea was they didn't want any suicides, and they, you know—you know, in those days—I don't know if it's still true, but, you know, at Ivy League schools it was almost impossible to flunk out because they thought it would reflect on the school or their admissions process or whatever, so even if you were the worst alcoholic or whatever, gambler, criminal, whatever, your issues were—somehow these colleges would find a way to get you to graduation, you know?

So I think some of that same model was being applied to gay students. But what I'm—what I guess what I'm coming around to saying was instead of treating us equally and saying, like, "Yes, you should have the same opportunities as anybody else and be treated the same as anybody else," they kind of felt more like this kind of like overly-permissive—like, "Well, we'll make all these special allowances for you. You know, you deserve all the special consideration."

In my case, and I think the case of a lot of other students in the same boat, gay or otherwise, was you end up getting incompletes and extensions and, you know, applying for special treatment through the dean's office, just to get you from one semester to the next.

So instead of there being incentive to say, *Well, I gotta buckle down, and, you know, my main focus here is to, you know, graduate and to get an education*, it kind of felt like—I don't know, some—like it was—you were the—you were special in that you weren't—you weren't expected to meet those same standards, like, you know, *How could I possibly go to class and study when, you know, I'm an oppressed gay person?*—you know, kind of thing.

And I don't think that did any of us any favors, to perceive ourselves that way. It kind of reinforced, in some sense, that you're sick, you're weak, you can't really compete, you know. It wasn't really a real pride or equality; it was more like, "Oh, poor you. Your life must be terrible! Here, let me hug you and make you feel better," not "Let's—let's give you the tools you need to succeed in life," you know?

And for me in particular, I—that was not helpful for me in terms of, you know, moving on with my life and progressing, thriving, doing the things that people do as they finish up college and get started in life. It kind of left me in this weird state for way too long of—I don't know—you know, kind of expecting that there was this other route in life other than hard work and achievement and, you know, the same things that everybody else does. But I felt that, *Oh, there must be some path forward here, of being cobbled and recognized for what a special, rare, delicate flower I am, and I'll be appreciated on that basis alone.*

And, you know, when you're a young gay man, and I, you know, was attractive enough, I guess, that I'd get, you know, attention from older men that would want to do me favors and, you know, so forth, it was—you could believe that this was going to work, you know, that there *were* going to be people out there, you know, extending opportunities and doing things for you, treating you special.

But as you get older, you know—and I'm su—women go through this, for sure—you know, you're not quite the hot commodity that you were at twenty-three or whatever. You realize, *Oh, my God! You know, I don't have, you know, the skills, the experience, the wisdom, you know, that other people my age do because I never really had to work very hard for things, or everything was kind of given to me or handed to me.* You know, you could play the victim and, you know, milk it. So, yeah, that—that's—you know, it took me a long time to get that part of my life straightened out.

MIHALY: Yeah. Hmm.

So going back to the first time that—that you had to leave Dartmouth after the BG incident, how long were you gone before you came back?

LEWAN: I came back in the fall of '79, after my class had graduated.

MIHALY: Okay.

LEWAN: So it was about a year and a half.

MIHALY: Oh, okay. And did you feel like—okay, do you feel like the environment had changed at all on campus, or what was your experience coming back?

LEWAN: Well, yeah, it definitely changed, and *I* had changed after a year and a half of living in Boston and being part of the scene there—you know, running a bath house, working in a disco—you know, living basically in a gay ghetto. But what gay students were there were out, as part of the group, were much—much less open. They were much more guarded, much more heads down, you know, whereas people like Bill Monsour and me were—we were much more open, and we were, you know, looking to embrace and to be embraced by

the rest of the school and accepted and just kind of, you know, assumed that if we approached it with good faith and good intentions that we'd be met that way.

You know, the kids a year or two behind us, seeing what happened to us, were much less out there. It was much more of a private, almost back underground kind of thing at that point. Not a lot of public events. Not a lot of activity that would attract attention. There was still a recognized group, and there was still, you know—you know, a spokesman, at least somebody that would give a quote to *The D* about things, but, yeah, it wasn't really a driving force or a movement or whatever. It was kind of a back-to-the-closets kind of a situation.

MIHALY: Okay. Okay. Did you feel more disengaged from the campus community and gay community—

LEWAN: Yeah, completely.

MIHALY: —when you came back that second time?

LEWAN: Completely. The people that were out—you know, because they had been probably, like, freshmen or whatever when what was happening to me happened. They really didn't want much to do with me, and I think part of it might have been, too, they were just afraid that, you know, thought maybe I was coming back and expecting to, you know, just assume the leadership of the group again. I wasn't really seeking that in any way, but I think people might have been afraid that that's what I wanted, so there was kind of a, I don't know, political or ambition kind of resistance to it. I just felt kind of shut out, like people just weren't interested or open to having me around.

You know, my class had graduated, and I had been—most of my friends had been upperclassmen, classes ahead of mine, in any event, so when my class left, I really didn't have a lot of people that I knew on campus anymore. And—and I lived off campus because I just was so uncertain about how it was all going to go. And so that isolated me even more, actually to the point where after the first semester of living off campus, I actually moved back on campus, just hoping that it would make me feel more engaged.

Instead, I ended up, I don't know, just feeling even more alienated because I felt alone in the middle of a crowd. It just, you know, ended up being a very depressive spiral downward, and, you know, those couple of terms that I was living on campus, I just remember being extremely depressed and dysfunctional, not coming out of my room for days. You know, people would be at my door, pounding to see if I was there, if I was okay, and I, you know, wouldn't—wouldn't even want to answer them and would only respond when it got to the point where I thought they were going to, you know, have campus police break down the door or something like that.

You know, it was just a very—I guess I mentioned this when we spoke before. You know, I—I really didn't want to come back. I really wanted to stay in Boston. I had actually been talking to Harvard [University] about transferring there. They were kind of seeing me as like a—a refugee from Dartmouth that looked like that they were more than willing to embrace me with open arms, you know, and—and that's what I wanted.

But my parents, my father in particular, just weren't having it. They just thought being in the city would somehow make me even more gay than I already was, and, you know, there was the whole scholarship thing at Dartmouth, even though I had pretty much blown that at that point by my GPA [grade-point average], you know, being bad because of all the academic issues I was having.

And in any event, it really wasn't my idea to go back to Dartmouth, and I probably—in retrospect, I never should have done it. But my parents talked me into giving it a chance, and really—they weren't going to offer their support for me to do anything else, so that's how I ended up there.

And that probably is part of why I, you know, resisted performing. I'm sure there was a passive-aggressive thing going on. It looks like, "Well, you can force me to come here, but you can't make me, you know, study or succeed." You know, kind of—very self-destructive in that way.

MIHALY:

Okay. Hmm. And you did end leaving a second time,—

LEWAN: Right.

MIHALY: —before graduation.

LEWAN: Right. At that time, I was asked to leave.

MIHALY: So how long were you at the college before?

LEWAN: That was the summer term of 1980. What ended up happening—you know, I went through this period, like I said, where I was really depressed and withdrawn, living in the dorms, and I had met some townspeople. Some of them worked at the Hanover Inn. I think some of them were students that had graduated, so they weren't really students anymore; they were more like townspeople that worked, you know, at the college or whatever.

And we, you know, hung out, often drinking, getting high. It became kind of an issue because it sort of—you know, we all—we were—I think we were all gay. And it was men and women. But there was a certain—you know, we shared a common resentment against the college. And our behavior became increasing flagrant in a sort of passive-aggressive-like way. And you throw alcohol on it, and what went from, you know, say, having drinks together at Hanover Inn or at somebody's house turned into being really drunk, you know like, in the afternoon, sitting on the Green, yelling at people or something like that, you know.

It just became—it turned from just social support and so forth into, you know, this kind of obnoxious, "We're gonna be a presence here. We're gonna force ourselves"—you know. I just remember a lot of time spent, you know, in prominent locations like, you know, on the Green, in front of the Hanover Inn, that intersection there, just hanging out with this group of drunk people, kind of being public messes and, you know, clearly was not, you know, going for Student of the Year award at that point and, you know—

MIHALY: [Chuckles.]

LEWAN: —pretty much—you know, at that point I had accumulated I don't know how many incompletes that I was making no

progress on. And at that point—frankly, it surprised me because the college had cut me so much slack for so long that it really did surprise me. It was a shock, you know, when they said, “Well, you know, we’re suspending you for, you know, lack of progress.” And I don’t know how much of the other behavior stuff was even—I think it was strictly on academic grounds. I don’t think anything else was brought into it.

But, yeah, and that’s—you know, at first it was a shock, and it’s like—and then I realized *Oh, my God! Finally! You know, it’s my ticket out of here* and arranged—within a matter of days, I had a job at the Environmental Protection Agency in [D.C.] and, you know, didn’t really look back. Was excited to move—get back to the city. And one of my best friends lived in Washington, a ’78, and, you know, was going to go and live with him. And it just—yeah, it was embarrassing, shameful way to end that phase of my life at Dartmouth. But, yeah, I was—I was psyched, you know, to—to go to Washington and actually start working and being part of the real world, doing real stuff. Academia just seemed very dead to me at that point.

MIHALY: Yeah. Were you frustrated by the administration during that process?

LEWAN: You know, I’m sure I was at the time. Looking back on it now, I certainly pushed things well beyond any reasonable limit, you know, in this kind of passive-aggressive reaction to what I was going—what was going on with me. Instead of taking responsibility to make the changes I needed to be happy, I just sort of, you know, let myself stay stuck, you know, in a place where I wasn’t happy and blamed my parents, blamed the college, you know, blamed everything else, you know, and throw in a lot of alcohol and pot and whatever other drugs were around, and, you know, it just wasn’t a very healthy situation.

So, yeah, I’m sure I—in that moment, I—I thought it was unfair the college was kicking me out, and I think I mentioned this to you before: One of the other things that made me really frustrated was before I left for Boston in ’78, I had been a policy studies major and had, you know, done a lot of the work for that degree. And then when I came back in

'79, the professor, [Franklin] "Frank" Smallwood [Class of 1951], who had kind of led that interdisciplinary program—he had retired. And so the program went away, which left me kind of back and square one in terms of a major, you know, with my last year.

And so I, you know, tried to, you know, take what credits I had and make a government major out of it, but it kind of meant—you know how academic requirements are. It meant having to go back and take different prerequisites and wait for certain classes to come up on the calendar, have availability, yada, yada, yada. You know, just—whereas I should have been cruising into my senior year, you know, my major pretty well taken care of, maybe a nice research project and, you know, spending lots of time planning on what I was going to do after college, I was scrambling around like a sophomore, trying to, you know, get—you know, get a major organized, a plan to get out of there. And, like I said, there was—I wasn't really being embraced by at that point the government department faculty, you know.

MIHALY: Sure.

LEWAN: So that was—that was part of a sense of being let down by the college.

MIHALY: Sure. All right.

Let's just take a break—

[Recording interruption.]

MIHALY: All right, so we're back on the recording. I'm Abby Mihaly, still interviewing Stuart Lewan here with SpeakOut. It's currently May 28th, 1:05 p.m., and I'm sitting in Rauner [Special Collections] Library. Do you want to introduce yourself, Stuart?

LEWAN: This is Stuart Lewan, Class of '79, on May 28th, Memorial Day, 2018, at my home in San Francisco.

MIHALY: Wonderful.

So we're going to pick up where we left off right with your departure from Dartmouth. I'm—I'm curious a little bit. You mentioned when we talked before how close you were to graduating there, just a couple of credits. Is that right?

LEWAN: Right.

MIHALY: Okay. So—

LEWAN: Yeah, that's correct. I think the actual number is three.

MIHALY: Okay. So did you consider at that point trying to come back and complete those credits or complete credits online or anything like that?

LEWAN: Well, online was definitely not an option then.

MIHALY: Oh, yeah.

LEWAN: [Chuckles.] And because of the history of—you know, I had had a lot of incompletes that I didn't get completed or that were still outstanding, I—I—I had, you know, really spiraled down—

MIHALY: Yeah.

LEWAN: —in terms of my academic performance, so, yeah, I had pretty much burnt that bridge, so it was, you know, "Please go away for a while and don't come back until, you know, there's something's changed." So there was no longer anything to work through. They had—they—you know, looking back on it now, I, you know, think they were more than kind. As a matter of fact, it probably would have been in everyone's best interest for us to have reached this point sooner.

But, yeah, I—I—it—there wasn't really any thought about going back or finishing my degree there until I took the job at Kiewit [Computation Center] in 1984. And it was, you know, a part of my thinking, just based on my mistaken assumption that coming back and working full time that I'd be able to, you know, finish up those credits. And in the interim, I had actually taken classes at University of Pittsburgh when I was living there and then at Syracuse University when I had

moved home with my parents, you know, in an attempt to sort of like pick up the academic thing and, you know, try to find some successful conclusion. But, yeah, neither of those were very successful, either, for various reasons, so—

So, yeah, in answer to your question, I did think about it, but it wasn't until—what?—four years later, when I, you know, came back to take the job at Kiewit.

MIHALY: So were both your classes at Pittsburgh and Syracuse—it was prior to coming back at Kiewit and after working in the EPA for a little while?

LEWAN: Right, right, yeah. I went—I went to Washington at the end of the summer of 1980, and, you know, then there was the election in November, when [James E. “Jimmy”] Carter [Jr.] lost to [Ronald W.] Reagan, and I, you know, was there through Reagan's inauguration in January and then into the first few months of, you know, the Reagan administration.

And it was becoming clear that they were gonna, you know, roll back all the EPA standards and defund our program, and all the, you know, more senior people that worked there were all fleeing the ship and, you know, getting out of there. So when I—I had met someone in—in the interim, and he invited me to come live with him in—in Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania]. It just seemed like the right thing to do, especially in that some of the more senior people that I had worked with at EPA were warning me that since I had been so out in my history, that there was no way that the conservative Reagan administration was going to—you know, I wouldn't have any future in Washington at that point in any kind of federal position, because at that point, you know, they still had the regulations on the books about, you know, being gay is a security threat and you're subject to blackmail.

All that—bad old stuff that you tend to think of as having gone away by that point in history was still very much in effect, and under the Carter administration, you know, they kind of didn't enforce it or they kind of looked the other way. And yet, you know, when the Reagan administration came in, it was clear those kind of things with the—at that time it was called the Moral Majority—Jerry [L.] Falwell [Sr.] was a

big part of Reagan's coalition. Did you hear the echoes of history repeating itself? And, you know—you know, they were gonna maximally enforce those kind of things. So—yeah.

MIHALY: When you were working under Carter—

LEWAN: Go ahead.

MIHALY: Oh, sorry, I was just going to ask you when you were working under Carter, was that a good job? Were you happy when you were in Washington then?

LEWAN: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. No, I mean, it had always been—well, I won't say always, but, you know, at that point in my life, public service, you know, working around politics and government, you know, was what I wanted to do. And then you know, my academic work in policy studies really, you know, did kind of set me up to work in environmental policy. And the project that I was on at EPA was really exciting because it was really innovative, this whole idea of turning pollution and—you know, giving companies credits, monetizing their pollution control efforts and then creating a market so that they could capitalize on that, in other words, creating economic incentives for people to reduce pollution instead of just going at it with making rules and fining people and, you know, that approach.

And, you know, even though Reagan disbanded that whole program then, in 1980—'81, I guess, excuse me, after the election—when [George H. W.] Bush was president in '88, '89, they brought it all back, and at that point the big issue—you probably weren't even born yet—was acid rain, that the coal-fired plants in the Midwest were putting so much sulfur in the air that when it rained, like in, you know, Pennsylvania and New York, New England, the rain was acidic, and it was killing forests. And that's actually—you don't often hear it talked about now in this, you know, whole polarized debate around climate change now, but it was actually a very successful program.

So this thing that I worked on in, you know, in 1980, '81 ended up being a program that—you know, of course, they branded it as a Republican program, even though it started

under Carter. But it actually achieved its goals, and in a matter of a few years, that acid rain problem went away. They created economic incentives for those coal-fired plants in the Midwest to switch to natural gas, and so the rain in New England and upstate New York and Quebec [Canada] and so forth stopped being sulfur—sulfuric acid, and the forests recovered.

So, yeah, so from that perspective, yeah, it was exciting to be part of that, though, you know, obviously I'm a little bitter that we weren't—you know, we couldn't do it at the time that we started it, but, you know, still seeing the same—essentially the same program be effective and proving that our ideas were correct, you know, and were workable. You know, there is some satisfaction in that.

MIHALY: For sure, yeah.

So to bring it back to—to when you came back to Kiewit, so came back to Dartmouth, what motivated you to come back, and where were you living at the time that you made that decision?

LEWAN: Okay. You know, I mentioned that I had moved to Pittsburgh because I had met somebody, and I—we were together for about three years. The situation in Pittsburgh was really bad at that point. The whole country was in pretty rough shape the first few years of Reagan. That's what nobody remembers right now, was that—until this most recent financial collapse in 2008, the biggest economic recession, mini-depression since the 1930s was the first few years of Reagan's presidency, like 1981, '82.

And Pittsburgh in particular was really hit. The steel industry was literally collapsing there, and so it was really, really hard to get a job, really—there just wasn't future there. And so I had moved home with my parents after that relationship was over and had lived there at my parents' house in upstate New York in '82, '84. That's when I tried to, you know, do something at Syracuse University, but it meant, like, driving a long ways to classes and, you know, it was a lot of stress living back with my parents. It just—yeah, it just didn't turn out very well.

And so for a while I was really isolated and didn't really—you know, really depressed. Didn't really reach out or, you know, have much contact, just was kind of miserable.

Oh, I forgot one of the most important things related to the LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] thing, which is kind of our theme here. At that point, from the time that I moved to Pittsburgh to the time that I left is when the whole AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] crisis hit. And, you know, in its early days, like 1981, '82, they really didn't know what was happening. They, you know, called it "gay cancer" or, you know, they just had no clue what was happening. All they knew that was that young, healthy gay men were getting sick and literally dying, looking like old—old, diseased men in a matter of months.

And so as they got more and more information about it, like what factors these people had in common that were getting sick—you know, were they promiscuous? Did they use drugs? Did they, partake—you know, were they active participants in—in the gay life, as it was in the seventies and early eighties? And basically, I checked all the boxes.

So at the time that I moved home with my parents, I was pretty resigned to the fact that I was going to get it and was probably going to be dead soon, and there was nothing anybody was going to be able to do about it. And in those days, there wasn't even a test, because they didn't really understand the retrovirus thing and all that. So you couldn't even—you didn't even know if you had it or not; all you knew was that people *you* knew, friends of friends, whatever, were just disappearing, or if you knew them well enough so that you still had some contact, they were getting sick and dying very quickly.

You know, a lot of my—the people, gay friends that I had in Pittsburgh did start getting sick, and, you know, they would disappear. They'd move home with their parents or they'd end up, you know, being in a hospital full time, just kind of disappear. So that's kind of, you know, the bigger backdrop to what was going on with me at the time.

And, yeah, basically for that year I was at my parents' house, you know, and when I was, you know, trying to get my

academic act together, that was the—sort of the bigger, more overarching thought, was that, *Well, what's the use of any of this? I'm, you know, gonna, you know, be sick and in two or three months I'll be dead, so what's the point?*

So, you know, when that didn't happen, after, I don't know, six or nine months of kind of sitting there waiting for it to happen, you know, I got a little bit more—I started communicating a little more with friends. And one of the people I communicated with was a friend that I, you know, knew from the gay community when I was a student, who had stayed in Hanover after graduation, was working at Kiewit, was a manager at Kiewit. And, you know, he's a very loving, nice, kind man and, you know, understood the situation I was in and said that he had, you know, an opening for, you know, a basically entry-level position in computer operations there at Kiewit and said that, you know, I was qualified, and invited me to come and apply. It wasn't his decision alone, but he did, you know, present me to the decision makers as somebody he could vouch for and, you know, that I'd be a good fit for the job, and so I got hired and, you know, started there in September 1984.

And, like I said, as referenced previously, I took the job, and moved to Hanover with the thought that, you know, *Well, now I'm here. I'm settled. I've got a place to live. I have an income. I'm on my own. You know, my parents don't have to support me. Now I'll, you know, take care of this, you know, academic loose ends and, you know, move on.*

And also a part of the thinking going into this was that the friend that extended himself and hired me—he had—he didn't think he was going to be in his position for very long. He thought he was going to be leaving. He had a—he was very interested in opera, you know, taking—you know, did a lot of voice lessons, he and his partner, and they, you know, were performing a lot and so forth. And they were in touch with people, like in Boston and New York, and they thought that, you know, their career with singing was going to, you know, lead them away from Hanover within a matter of a couple of years.

And, you know, the suggestion was that when he left, I would be in the perfect position to take over his position as a

manager at Kiewit, which, you know, was a pretty good career path at that point.

MIHALY: So then what were the barriers that you found when you got there in terms of not being able to take the classes that you'd hoped to be able to?

LEWAN: Okay, yeah. So, you know, once I got settled in, I made an appointment at the dean's office and went in to talk, you know, about being readmitted, and, you know, figuring out what the plan would be—you know, the shortest distance between where I was and a degree. And that's when I learned that there was this regulation that you could be a full-time employee and, you know, audit classes, but you couldn't be working on—you couldn't be a regular student working on a degree. You know, or you could be a regular student working on your degree, but you couldn't be a full-time member of the college staff. You know, you could only have a student job.

So I kind of got—I was immediately faced with that dilemma, and, you know, because after, you know, the last few years of, you know, not having an income, not working and, you know, being dependent on my family, I felt like the priority had to be, you know, earning a living and, you know, getting some kind of professional career experience.

So I, you know, made the choice to be the employee, and, you know, thought that I'd figure out some way to work on the degree thing. You know, there's almost always a way to make things happen if you're determined—you know, petitioning the right person or, you know,—that's what I figured: There's be some way to resolve this and figure out a way to do it. So that's what happened on that score.

And then taking the job, I—again, when I took it, I didn't—it wasn't clear that there were going to be these stipulations, but one of the stipulations that my friend's manager put on me for the job was he—he had been aware, you know, of my having been, you know, an out campus figure, you know, with, you know, gay politics and so forth—you know, publicity seeking, whatever—I don't know, publicity sought me; I don't know if I was seeking it.

But he basically made a condition of my employment that I not, you know, quote-unquote, “fraternize with students,” you know, having—you know, be part of any of that political stuff. In other words, he just wanted me to come and do my job and then get off campus. So that was another kind of barrier based on my LGBT status to me sort of reintegrating with Dartmouth, and that’s actually, you know, what happened for—for years, at least—well, let’s see, I guess it would be, like, five or six years.

You know, I had—at first, I lived with the friend that hired me, like in a farmhouse down in Hartland, Vermont, about, mmm, twenty miles south of Hanover. And then I had a boyfriend, a local guy, and then we had a place that was in North Pomfret, Vermont, which is almost all the way over near Woodstock [Vermont]. And after he and I broke up, I got a—like, a townhouse in West Leb[anon, Vermont].

So, yeah, it was this weird existence of, you know, here’s my alma mater. I’m going there on campus to work every day, but, you know, I was basically—that condition of employment was that I lived somewhere else and not hang around—you know, maintain this separation between myself and, you know, what was going on on campus.

And that didn’t—

MIHALY: Was—

LEWAN: Oh, okay, go ahead.

MIHALY: No, I’m sorry, go ahead.

LEWAN: Okay. Well, I was going to say that didn’t change until my friend’s manager died. He was a heavy chain smoker. You know, back in those days, people smoked everywhere. You could smoke on a plane. You smoked in your office, you know. And he was a heavy smoker, and he had lung cancer, and within I think three months of the discovery that he had lung cancer, he was dead.

So he was out of the picture, and so those stipulations kind of went by the wayside, and the most clear example of that was that I got put in charge of managing the student

employees at Kiewit. You know, I'm sure—well, you don't have a Kiewit-like facility anymore, but, you know, there were a lot of work-study students that worked both directly—like, doing what we did inside what was called the [Kiewit] Machine Room, where all the mainframes and so forth were. And then there were other student staff that helped sort of on the other side of the glass wall, assisting in—like, there was a big Mac lab that was part of Kiewit, and so there were people that helped students, you know, with printing and, you know, whatever they needed help with up there.

And so I was in charge of the students that, you know, worked in technical services, I guess was the department name. And, yeah, so it was—because I had been a student, you know, I did have a lot in common with them, and, you know, so I kind of went from basically having no contact and you know feeling almost like a leper—you know, like, *Oh, my God, I can't even, you know, speak or reach out or acknowledge students to Oh, wow! Here's—now I have this bunch of kids that work for me* and were really friendly and, you know, they were relating to each other. Some were even gay, you know, and the environment had evolved in the meantime, so everyone wasn't as tragically in the closet as—as they had been.

So, yeah. So that was an evolution. So now we're getting into the end of the eighties at this point. And—I'm trying to remember which step came first. I think what happened was that a lot of the student employees that worked for me were from Phi Tau and from Alpha Theta, and so I, you know, had started spending time mostly at Alpha Theta and getting to know people, because, you know, the Upper Valley. [Chuckles.] There weren't a lot of things for people to do.

You know, you could drive to Boston in two hours, you know, away, to go to a gay bar if you wanted to, but you know, there was—or Bellows Falls, Vermont. There was a gay bar there which was, you know, an hour and a half away.

But someone suggested that I become an honorary member of Alpha Theta, which I did, and it was actually very therapeutic in a way, because after what had happened with the whole Bones Gate incident—you know, when I came back on camera—campus, I have to admit—and this was

certainly part of what [recording glitch; unintelligible] in terms of my lack of success when I came back in '79 and '80, was this whole—I guess now we'd call it post-traumatic stress or—you know, after such an incident like that, I just felt so anxious and triggered by certain—you know, any threat of violence or—you know, that I'd—for the longest time, I couldn't deal, you know, with people that reminded me of what happened at Bones Gate.

So—and just people that had abused me or, you know, treated me poorly for—for being gay in general, which generally meant white, straight men—so this experience of—of being honorary Alpha Theta was actually very healing in that for the first time since I'd been in Hanover again—at this point, you know, it had been going on five or six years that I'd been there—I started feeling more relaxed and open and, like, part of things instead of between the, you know, external rules that were being put on me from the job and then my internal anxiety, you know, issues that were holding me back—I finally started feeling like I belonged again.

And, you know, it was—it was a nice change. And I think that's what led me to make the decision that I would stop working at Kiewit and just, you know, do what I needed to do to finish the work for my degree. I've mentioned the three-credit thing, and actually by the time I got ready to do it—so we're now talking, mmm, eight, nine years from the point where I left in 1980—things had changed enough so from the three credits I would have had to finish a major in policy studies, now it had become a more—a longer path to get—to get a degree in government and going back and doing prerequisites and all that kind of stuff.

So it was going to be at least a few terms, maybe even a year. But it seemed worth it. And roughly at that time, the college was in a sort of a budget-cutting, you know, money-saving mode, so they were offering employees buyouts, you know—you know: Leave your job, you know, no questions asked, and we'll give you X number of dollars kind of thing.

So I took advantage of that and resigned from Kiewit. Actually continued to work there. I became—went from being a full-time employee to being a student employee there. And once I wasn't, you know, a full-time college staff member

anymore, got readmitted and, you know, started taking classes again.

And it was actually—the first term went really well. Got A's and had really good relations with my professors and, you know, was almost like a—like one of the best terms I ever had, you know. It just—I was able to focus on—on the academics, and I really was enjoying it and getting a lot out of it. It just meant so much more to me than, like, when I—my actual undergraduate years in the seventies, when there was just way too much going on, and I had just too much going on personally, working through everything. You know, the academics were not, you know, the top focus.

So this was a great experience to make that transition, and I think—you know, now we're talking about 1991? Yes. Yeah, 1991. This is the fall of '91 that this is happening. So, yeah, I covered some of this territory when we talked before, so I know you need it now on the record, so I'm trying to make sure I don't leave anything out so that this narrative makes sense.

So going into 1992, in January—this is when a pretty tragic event happened. And that was the local guy that I had been going out with for—well, “going out” doesn't—we lived together. We were—you know, it was a partner, a spousal kind of relationship for several years. And we—we had split. It wasn't working. He had some—some serious substance abuse issues and wasn't really getting any better, and, you know, lots of acting-out behavior that was just too crazy for me to deal with anymore. So, you know, we went our separate ways, and, you know, what—there wasn't—it wasn't, like, an ugly breakup. We weren't—you know. We remained friends.

And he had met someone that had been passing through town and ended up becoming involved with him, and they moved to Florida in the fall of '91, and, you know, part of me was kind of relieved, you know, that this set of problems was no longer mine to have to deal with. You know, he was—he was out of the picture.

Well, you know, it may have started before, but, you know, things really—you know, the main event happened there in

January of '92, where he started calling me from Florida and telling me how bad things were with this guy, and they were fighting, and it was—he was scared, and, you know, he was desperate. And he was basically begging me to come down and get him in Florida and—and bring him back to New Hampshire because he was afraid, and he, you know, realized that this guy was crazy and was going to hurt him and there was nothing good was going to come of it.

And, you know, because of the substance abuse issues and all the acting out and stuff, I have to admit I think I took it with a grain of salt. It was, like, “Okay, well, you know, yes, I—yes, you’re unhappy with the situation and you want to come home, but you’re probably dramatizing it and you’re trying to manipulate me, and right now I’m in the middle of, you know, academic term.” But I did at that point, you know, promise him that I would come down on spring break, and if he still wanted to come back, you know, in whatever that was, March, I guess, I would do that. You know, I’d come get him and pack him up and move him back home if that’s what he wanted.

And that kind of seemed like a good solution, and that’s where things were at. Within a week or two is when I got a phone call from his mother. I’m pretty sure it was early on a Sunday morning. And she’s, you know, crying, and—and she told me that, “Max is dead.” And she kept repeating it. You know, “Max is dead.”

I—I—I—it—it didn’t even seem real to me. I remember thinking, *This—you know is this some kind of manipulation? Is this some kind of weird, sick joke?* Because, you know, his parents—you know, they were from the Upper Valley. His father was actually police chief in Enfield [New Hampshire]. You know, conservatives. They weren’t thrilled about having a gay son, and they certainly weren’t thrilled about their gay son having a partner who was—you know, was years older than him.

And, of course, they—you know, and the problems that he was having, they kind of, you know, wanted to blame me for his problems, even though he had his substance abuse problems and all that long before he met me. So, yeah, during the time that he and I were together, it’s not like I was

close with his family. He had one brother that we, you know, had some relationship with, but—

So anyways, you know, she—when she calmed down enough to explain what was—what had happened—you know, this guy in Florida that he had left to live with had killed him, wrapped a phone cord around his neck when they were drunk and high and fighting. And I guess it's not clear that his intent was to kill him, but that's what ended up happening. He ended up dying from strangulation. The guy, you know, did get prosecuted. I think he's probably still in prison in Florida—you know, life sentence, whatever.

And—and—and—I—I sort of—I—I—the closest I ever was to his family was through this whole funeral thing. You know, the body was sent back to New Hampshire, and so I, you know, spent time with the family because I had pictures and writings and stuff that filled in parts of his life that they didn't really know about so much.

And so, you know, it was kind of healing and bonding in a way, you know, but you know, it was very, very sad, and I just couldn't escape the feeling of being responsible in that. If I had acted when he had, you know, been begging me to come to Florida and get him, you know, he'd be alive.

And, you know, from this perspective now, years later, I, you know, understand that I can't hold myself accountable for that, you know, that he put himself in that situation, and, you know, he, you know, had his own two feet, that he could have walked away from it, didn't need me. I wasn't his only option to get out of the situation.

But that did—it did affect me quite deeply, and unfortunately, as part of all that, it made it very hard for me to focus on academics after that had happened in that winter term, and as, I guess, even as a freshman now, you know how quick winter term goes. It's so short that if you, you know, even get three or four days behind, it's going to be a real struggle to catch up, you know, in those—whatever it is, unless they've made it longer. It used to be not even ten weeks, you know—you know, went by really fast.

And so, you know, at the end of winter term, there I was, back in a similar position that I had been in in my past, you know, academic career at Dartmouth, with, you know, incompletes and, you know, basically used—having this medical reason, you know. It was all substantiated. My counselors at Dick's House, you know—you know, were supportive of it and—and so forth, but, you know, for me to take incompletes and, you know, get back on track when I was ready to finish the work for the degree.

But, you know, at that point I had to appear before a committee in the dean's office, and this was the first time I ever went through any kind of adjudication process. I guess it was because of my having been suspended and readmitted and essentially having been on academic probation. And so I had to go, you know, appear before this committee. I think it was faculty.

And it was over, you know, spring break, and I had been home at my parents' in upstate New York and had gotten very sick, pneumonia, really. But I had to go to this thing, so I, you know, drove to Hanover from my parents' house, very sick. And then there was a whole, long number of people, a schedule of people that were appearing before that committee at the dean's office that day. And my case was near the end of the—the calendar. And, you know, each case that they heard, you know, took longer than the amount of time on the calendar, so even though I—I don't know—was maybe supposed to appear at—I don't remember the exact details. Let's say at one or two. Because I was at the end of the calendar, and each of the cases before me was running long, it was getting to be—it was well into the evening, like five, six, seven in the evening. And I'd been sitting there in the—you know, in the lobby outside the dean's office since, you know, the morning, basically. Sick, and, you know—

So by the time I got in there in front of that committee, I was kind of a mess. And one of the people on the committee was clearly unsympathetic and adversarial, and let's just say I didn't feel supported. I kind of went in there thinking it was going to be similar to most of my other experiences in—you know, dealing with dean's office and asking for these accommodations. And this was very different.

This felt a lot more like being on trial and cross examined. And, like I said, I was sick, and I probably didn't represent myself very well and was emotional and probably was—was crying and stressed out. And so when it was over with, it wasn't long afterwards—I don't remember if it was that evening or the next day, but then I heard that the decision was to separate me from the college.

And that was it. Done. You know, I couldn't work there anymore. You know, was—had no—no path to getting a degree there anymore. Just, you know, "Please, you know, get—get out of town," you know. I don't remember if they actually gave me a number of days, but it kind of feels like there was something like that. You know, "You got to"—I think I had, like, oh, housing in the, you know, break housing in a dorm where my stuff was between terms, and so like I had to get that out and move back to my parents' house.

So, yeah, that wasn't a really very good winter and spring —

MIHALY: Yeah.

LEWAN:— —to go from the situation with having my—my friend murdered and then go kind of through this very, you know, un- —intense experience with—dealing with this committee. Again, I think I mentioned this when we talked before, that I—afterwards, one of the people on the committee kind of gave me some of the background about what had happened there and why it felt so different, and that there was—one of the people on the committee was from the—I can't even remember what it—what was it called, Afro-American Studies at the time? You know, the language around race keeps evolving. I'm going to say it was Afro-American Studies at that point.

And she just had a very unsympathetic attitude toward gay people and resented that gay people tried to compare their civil rights struggles with, you know, the struggles of black people to get their civil rights. And, you know, she was just really harsh and unsympathetic to, you know, my—that—that component of my case, the fact that that was one of the—you know, the underlying or driving reasons why I had this,

you know, very troubled history with Dartmouth, academic history with Dartmouth.

And, you know, she basically made the case to the rest of the committee that if I had been, you know, a black kid at the college with the same record of, you know, non-performance academically, I would have been separated. And so on that ground, they, you know, separated me from the college, even though my counselors, doctors from Dick's House had, you know, said, "Hey, this guy's been through a lot. He's really depressed. We anticipate he's going to be better and able to, you know, reengage academically after he has a little time."

So, you know, this was the first time in my whole history at Dartmouth where they didn't take that into account or something else superseded that, so that's how I ended up being separated from the college in March '92.

MIHALY: Okay. So—

LEWAN: —March/April '92.

MIHALY: Okay. Awesome. So yeah, I mean, it sounds like that committee obviously was not supportive towards you. I'm curious, though, you mentioned a little bit before that you kind of felt like the environment had evolved positively in terms of for gay students on campus. Do you feel like you were otherwise—

LEWAN: Yeah.

MIHALY: —supported? Do you feel like you were otherwise supported? And what shifts did you notice there?

LEWAN: Well, I—I think there was a change after the incident with Laura [A.] Ingraham [Class of 1985]. I'm trying to remember when that was—'85, '86, where *The Dartmouth Review* sent a reporter, under, you know, an assumed identity, to a gay student group meeting. You know, she—this reporter went there, claiming to be, you know, a gay student seeking connection, support from the group. Didn't identify herself as a reporter. You know, recorded the meeting, wrote down all the names, and then *The Dartmouth Review*, you know,

published the story with all those names and so forth and, you know, created a lot of problems, that—you know, they had broken the college honor code. They violated people's privacy, you know, but it became one of these big—you know, as things still do these days, like the Milo Yiannopoulos thing that was going on, like, a year ago or some- —you know, these things become big publicity things way outside the campus.

And so that event I think was a big step forward for gay people because when people saw how ugly and vulnerable gay people were, and—and seeing—you know, seeing them abused the way they were in that incident, it did kind of, you know, awaken more consciousness and more empathy in general toward gay students.

And, of course, in the outside world, the whole AIDS thing going on also had been raising people's awareness. You know, before AIDS, I—it's hard for someone like you to understand just how out of the picture it was, that most Americans at that point would claim they didn't know any gay people, that, you know, there were no gay people in their town or where they worked or at their school, because people were so deeply in the closet. You know, gay—you know, they thought gay was, like, a handful of guys in New York and San Francisco and, you know, had absolutely nothing to do with them.

But it was the AIDS crisis that made—as people started getting sick all over the place and, you know, people for the first time were aware of just how pervasive gay people were throughout society. So, you know, especially at the beginning, when people didn't understand what was going on with the disease and they were afraid of it and—and so forth then, it wasn't necessarily a positive thing at first to have people think that you were a disease vector, you know, infecting their community. But once they—it became common knowledge that, you know, couldn't be spread just through, you know, casual contact, that it had to be intimate contact that spread the disease, you know, people were just a lot more aware.

And, of course, all these famous people started dying, you know: Rock Hudson and, you know, people that, you know,

the public saw as these big straight male icons—it turned out they were gay. And it started—you know, it just really changed the public consciousness of who gay people were, how many there were, how spread out everywhere they were.

And—and you know, there was a lot of activism around AIDS, and that's another thing that I can tie in, in that sort of on my way out in '92, in the winter on '92—you know, it had started a little bit before, but I led an effort that was—by this time, Collis existed. I had been on the committee and stuff that got that off the ground. That was originally called Common Ground. And for a while there, I was actually the student rep on the board of trustees, and so I had some influence with the board of trustees there at the end of the eighties, beginning of the nineties, when I returned to the—a student role from being a staff member.

But for Winter Carnival that year, it was a Dr. Seuss theme, and, you know, there was a big—I think it was “The Grinch Who Stole Carnival” was the theme, and there was a big—you know, the big snow sculpture, and in the center of the Green was the Grinch. And so as it turned out, about that same time that Winter Carnival was happening, you've probably heard of the AIDS [Memorial] Quilt that was one of the first really big public expressions of—you know, the people who had died from AIDS, where each person who had died—you know, the survivors made these panels, you know, like the size of a beach towel, that—to commemorate their loved one that died.

And they were, you know, basically very personal, homemade. You know, they had maybe artifacts from the person or symbols of something special or—you know, they were very personal and poignant. And all these panels of these thousands of people had died were put together like a quilt, and I believe the first time it got a big public exhibition was in '87 and I actually went down to Washington and—and was part of that, where they spread the quilt out on the National Mall—you know, between the [U.S.] Capitol Building and the Washington Monument.

And it pretty much took up that whole area there—you know, it was, like—you know, there were streets or paths—paths

between these big panels of the quilt. And thousands—I don't know, maybe millions of people came to see that for the first time and walk through these panels and—and see all these expressions of commemoration and grief and love that those panels represented.

So after that big thing in '87, in order to raise money for, you know, AIDS work, charities, you know, research, they would send parts of the quilt out around the country. You know, the whole thing together was, like I said, huge. It would—covered the national Mall in Washington. But they'd send out a few hundred panels to various part of the country to kind of be the focus for some local event.

And as it turned out, right around Winter Carnival, they were sending it to the Upper Valley, and I—it was in—is Leverone Field House still there?

MIHALY: Mm-hm, yeah.

LEWAN: I think they might have knocked it down and built something else. Oh, okay. I know the sports facilities have changed. So anyways, they did have a few hundred panels that they were going to show in Leverone, spread out, and it was going to be a, you know, fund raiser, you know, for Upper Valley AIDS charities, because by this point, you know, even people in the Upper Valley were sort of coming out of the closet and being somewhat driven by the AIDS thing. So it was a big deal. You know, it was really the first open gay-related public event, you know, ever.

And so for a student, you know, on campus component of that, I had the brilliant idea of hosting a drag ball to—over Winter Carnival to kind of go hand in hand with this exhibition of the quilt. Now, these days, you know, with RuPaul and, you know, everything—I mean, drag seems like it's everywhere, and everybody knows about it. But, you know, back then it was, you know, not something average people thought of or saw very often.

And where I got this idea was if you look back in Dartmouth's history, they would crown a girl—you know, back when it was all male in 1920s and '30s, whatever, and all these women would come into town on trains, you know, for Winter

Carnival, to be dates. They would crown a Queen of the Snows, was her title. In other words, the, like, homecoming queen of Winter Carnival. That was the title, Queen of the Snows.

And coincidentally, if you look back through yearbooks and so forth from this period, you will see that in those days, there was actually a drag component. Of course, it wasn't done with the consciousness that we have today of drag; it was just straight guys who would put on a dress and, you know, pretend to be women, you know, because the college was completely male. I mean, you may have seen, like, in World War II movies, for instance, similar things happened. There were guys, you know, on the front line of battle, you know, just to relieve tension and have some fun, you know, act out—you know, stress relief—would do that. You know, one guy would dress up like a girl and would—then he would dance with the other guys, so they could pretend they were, you know, having a normal date. You know, there was nothing supposedly sexual about it. But, you know, it was just guys having fun kind of thing. It was misogynistic as well, I think, but—

So taking the two things together—the Queen of the Snows tradition and then this tradition of, you know, guys dressing up like girls—we put it together with this Winter Carnival theme called “Carnival Is a Drag,” which featured—the posters, the artwork to publicize it was the Grinch, like in, you know, a wig and makeup and so forth. I'm sure Rauner probably has some of—[laughs]—some stuff from that.

And—and we had big events, you know, at Collis—you know, I think Saturday night of Winter Carnival was a—a drag event, where people came, you know, dressed as the opposite gender, and that we would have a competition, and at the end of the night, a guy in a dress would be crowned Queen of the Snows, you know. And we charged money for it, and that money was, you know, to go to this charity event that was revolving around the AIDS Quilt.

So that was kind of my parting experience with the college. Now, this is—I kind of threw myself into this after my friend's murder, and I'm sure it was probably a factor in getting separated from the college, you know, the thinking being,

“Well, if he could manage to organize this event and you know, pull this off, he should have been able to do his academics.”

But in any event, it was a big success. As a matter of fact, it went on for years afterwards. They had a drag ball in one form or another through the nineties, and I—I don’t know exactly when it died out, but it went on for years, long after I left—you know, every Winter Carnival having this drag ball. And I think at some point it almost became like a frat-y kind of thing, and frats kind of competed to be—who had the best drag? If you can believe all this. [Chuckles.] It’s—it’s truth. I wasn’t there to see it first hand, but, you know, I’d read about it in and hear about it from the people that I still knew there that were students.

So that was kind of my farewell to Dartmouth, was to host the first AIDS fundraiser and [chuckles] drag ball in Hanover. So I guess, you know, even—even on my way out the door, I—you know, the LGBT thing loomed large in my relationship with Dartmouth.

MIHALY: Yeah, that’s wonderful. That’s a great story.

So I guess just, like, moving past Dartmouth, how do you feel like your relationship with the college has changed over the years?

LEWAN: Well, I was very bitter about the, you know, separation. Compared to some of the things in the past, you know, when I’d been having academic trouble, this seemed—because I had—like I said, my first term back, I had done really well. I think I’d gotten A’s in all my classes, and even before that, towards the end of my working at Kiewit, I had audited some classes just to kind of prove I was ready to come back academically and had gotten A’s and all that.

So, you know, coming into this winter term and having to deal with this whole murder and the emotional impact of that, I kind of felt like, *Well, here, this is—this is really a clear-cut case. They should’ve cut me a break on this case.* I’d shown that I was up to doing it. I just—you know, anybody would have had trouble dealing with—with—with things.

So I did leave with a lot of bitterness about it. I really—I just felt like, you know, after ever- —this long, twisted relationship I had with the college, you know, this was the final humiliation—you know, loss of dignity, to be separated when, you know—in 1980, for instance, I—I wasn't really making a good-faith effort. I was there because my parents wanted me to be there, and I—you know, every fiber of my being didn't want to be there, so, you know, getting suspended—that was a relief, you know. I was glad to have an end to a very unhappy situation, whereas in '92, you know, I had this clear path to a degree. I had been doing really well. I was really looking forward to it. And it was, like, my self-esteem and—you know, all this kind of stuff that I'd been carrying around, a lot of pain and shame and guilt—you know, it was—I was getting free of that.

And so this whole sudden and unexpected separation and the finality of it—it's like, Boom! “You're done. Don't call us, you know, again” kind of thing. “Get off the campus in, you know, forty-eight hours.” You know, it hurt, and it really brought a lot of the worst of everything that I had been through at the college back.

And so, yeah, in the immediate aftermath of—of leaving then, I was pretty destroyed. And went back to my parents in upstate New York. And what I had decided to do was move to California. My youngest brother had graduated in '88, I think, from Northeastern [University] and had taken a job out here in the [San Francisco] Bay Area, and I'd come out and visited him I think in '91 and really was taken with—with it. And that—so that was my plan. When I graduated, I was going to come out here.

And, you know, this was before the internet, you know, But still, you know, the relationship I had had with Apple [Inc.] from all those years working at Kiewit—you know, I—the dream was to move out here and work for Apple, and so that was my long-term plan. And I spent some time just kind of healing after a few months at my parents' house, and then I drove across country, by myself, to—out here to California, stay with a friend who was, you know, my first boyfriend from when I was an undergraduate he was a '78 and to stay with him and, you know, kind of got my bearings here and, you know, started applying for jobs.

And within three days of applying for a job at Apple—boom!—I had it. And in October of '92 I started working at Apple. And as luck would have it, this wasn't anything I knew going into this job or wasn't part of me getting it, but once I started, I was in the Mac[intosh] operating system group, and I had been hired to essentially do an inventory. It was a contract job. They didn't actually have an inventory list of all the hardware—you know, all the Macs that they had throughout this system software group, and they needed somebody to come in and compile a database and verify, you know, all the serial numbers and all that.

So that meant basically crawling around every desk in the Mac OS [operating system] group. I don't even know if it was called that in those days, but in—in Cupertino [California]—and as it turned out, a whole lot of people were from Dartmouth. There were—I knew that there were some friends from Alpha Theta, like, that were '91s and '92s, had graduated and come out here for one reason or another.

And then, when I went to—you know, started working at Apple, a lot of people that I didn't necessarily know well—they weren't friends, but they were people I knew from Kiewit—were there, because there was a guy who was—he wasn't a professor, but he—I—maybe he was, maybe he did have a—a—an academic position, but I'm remembering him more as staff at Kiewit, but—anyways, he was the guy that kind of led the student programmers at—at Dartmouth, at Kiewit.

And he had taken a position as a tech lead in the Mac operating system's sec- —division, and so he had hired a bunch of his former students to come work for him. So there was this kind of bizarre—you know, move all the way across the country, kind of trying to put Dartmouth behind me, and I had, you know, friends from Alpha Theta in my personal side of things, and then on the professional side of things, my work day—here were all these people that I used to see at Kiewit.

So that was kind of interesting, how the college followed me. And actually, my friends from Alpha Theta—there were so many of us here, and not just in San Francisco but also in

L.A. [Los Angeles] and around on the West Coast that actually formed an alumni group that we called Calpha Theta [archivist note: spelling uncertain]. And for a number of years—oh, through the mid-nineties, before people started getting married and having babies and moving and so forth, I actually had a pretty regular series of events, getting—get-togethers, you know, at different people's places—you know, here in the Bay Area, sometimes in L.A., you know, but we were getting together regularly. And they were, you know, fun events, you know. I don't know what to compare them to, but, you know, that went on for a while, so that was part of my personal association with the college.

In terms of the college as an institution, you know, I was still very bitter and remote and, you know, it wasn't like I was making big contributions to the alumni fund or anything like that. I just was very bitter about all that.

That started to change, though, as the nineties went on in that, you know, there was—e-mail sort of came into wider acceptance, and it started getting easier to contact people remotely, and especially once the internet came into play and you could actually search and find people. It was before social media, but, you know, there were still ways to access people remotely.

I started getting e-mails from people, and some of this I think may originally have been driven by the alumni, my class reaching out to me for fundraising, and I probably had some—like bitter—bitter things to say to them. And I think that led them to have people call me and say, “Hey, I'm really sorry about what happened to you” or “Hey, I was—you know, I was at Bones Gate that night, and I'll—you know, I'm really sorry I didn't come forward to support you.” You know, I started getting these sort of apologies, you know, people expressing empathy and support.

And so I started feeling better about the college as a whole and started, you know, forgiving the college for what happened. And by the end of the nineties, beginning, you know, in 2000-ish, I was doing pretty well out here by that point and was working for dot-coms and making more money than I ever had in my life. And so I did actually start giving to the college at that point. And, you know, it'll show

up in alumni records that, you know, I gave money and, you know, would, you know, participate with my class, you know, sending them news or whatever.

I never made it to an actual reunion because the people that showed up at the reunions weren't really people that I knew or were close to, so it just didn't sound like fun to go hang out for three or four days in Hanover with, you know, people that I never knew when I was a student.

But, yeah, I—I did feel better about things. And I guess that ultimately culminated with this event that I mentioned to you before about in 2014 they were having the dedication for Triangle House, and, you know, I—I was invited to come and be there for the dedication. And, you know, they'd reached out to a lot of people that had played a role in gay history of—at—at Dartmouth.

So that was—you know, that was nice. That was the first time in a face-to-face big public setting with the sort of the institutional seal of approval that somebody, you know, unequivocally [sic; unequivocally] recognized me for what I had done and achieved and persevered through. You know, there are pictures of me standing there in the middle of this crowd and people giving me a standing ovation. And, you know, it's one of those moments you, you know, will never forget.

And, yeah, so, you know, that pretty much I think is the history of my history with Dartmouth. Not much has changed since then.

I guess the only other thing I'll mention is that in some of those intervening years, sort of like your project, there have been people who have, oh, written a thesis about some aspect of gay history or had done—there was a—one alum that was—that wrote for *The New York Times* that did a piece about gay people in the early days of computing and Kiewit and, you know, sort of the pre-internet online community.

So periodically through this period, you know, sort of like I'm talking to you, people would get in touch and, you know, if you Google me, some of it will come up, you know—you

know, in a—in an article talking about something or in somebody's thesis or—so that kind of stuff.

MIHALY: Sure.

LEWAN: I think that pretty much is—is everything.

MIHALY: What do you hope, when people reach out to you or even, like, SpeakOut, like when you're participating in stuff like this, what do you hope it'll do in the future?

LEWAN: Well, I think the main thing is for people of your generation to understand how different things were and—and that it really wasn't that long ago. I mean, it seems like forever now, given the way things are, you know—that, you know, gay marriage was a thing nationally. But, you know—but, you know, my lifetime—yeah, through the nineties, certainly I didn't even think that was possible in my lifetime. You know, I was living here in San Francisco in 2004 when the mayor started marrying people in City Hall. Kind of, you know, turned out it didn't stand up legally, and it was kind of a political stunt, but, you know, it didn't even seem in the realm of possibility. And here it is, you know, ten years after that, it became it the law of the land coast to coast, whether people liked it or not.

And things like the AIDS crisis. You know, we've had—it's been over twenty years now that there's been effective treatments for it, and it's kind of like, you know, I'm HIV positive; it's, like no big thing. You know, I just take a pill every day. And, yeah, my immune system isn't quite what other people's is, but, you know, my life expectancy is the same, and my day-to-day health is pretty much the same. I'm certainly in better shape than a lot of people my age that, you know, have other health issues.

So that's the main thing, I think, in terms of telling the story, is try to give people an appreciation of how far things have come and how recently it wasn't like this, and hopefully motivate them to defend those rights and support people's rights, because it *can* go backwards. It *can* be taken away, you know? We've seen it in—like, Russia is a good example. You know, in the nineties, right after the Soviet Union fell, you know, they kind of were catching up to the West in terms

of gay rights. And then, you know, when [Vladimir V.] Putin was solidifying his power, he kind of used gay people the way Trump uses immigrants—you know, as a scapegoat, you know, and basically made homophobia the law, you know. You know, just being gay is enough to, you know, get put in jail under—I guess it's on the basis of promoting homosexuality to children, I think is the legal basis, but basically means just acknowledging that you're gay in public or print- —writing something gay that goes out to the public, you know, is grounds to be jailed.

And just like with Trump here, when you got a government doing that, it gives individuals free license to, you know, go out and gay bash people. You know, they know they're not going to face any consequences for violence and so forth. So that's, I guess, part of—a big part of what I want people to understand.

And in a way, I think Trump is—is a wake-up call, sort of like with women and their abortion rights, you know, pro- —pro-choice rights. You know, yeah, that's been the law since 1972 I think was the Supreme Court [of the U.S.'s *Roe v. Wade*] decision. But, you know, we're seeing now, you know, what states are doing in terms of restricting those rights that you kind of think of, *Wow, it's been established law for over forty years*, but it's essentially being rolled back in a lot of places. And you know, they're trying to get enough people on the Supreme Court, so they can actually overturn it and take away a woman's right to choose.

So, yeah, I guess that's a big part of it, is appreciation of all the struggle that it took to get here and vigilance to defend those rights that we've won.

MIHALY: Yeah, vigilance. I think that's really important.

Thank you so much for sharing your story. I think everyone who listens to this will be—just learn so much about the college's history. So thank you so much, Stuart.

LEWAN: Oh, I appreciate the opportunity to tell the story and to kind of have it memorialized. You know, I think—you know, everyone thinks, you know, someday they're going to write a book, you know [chuckles], and, you know, I—I—I do, too,

but whether we actually get to do that bef—and have it be in a form that other people can actually use, who knows if you're going to get that done, you know, in the time you have left?

So this is—it has been good for all the other little things I've done along the way, you know, an article here or a thesis there. This is, you know, the first time I've kind of put the story all out there in kind of—in a hopefully coherent narrative and connected the dots—

MIHALY: Yeah!

LEWAN: —with a broader progress of what's happened with LGBT people and kind of how all that history connected with me personally at Dartmouth or at least with the LGBT community at Dartmouth.

MIHALY: Yeah, no, it's been wonderful.

LEWAN: Thank you.

MIHALY: Yeah, thank you.

[End of interview.]