

Bradford R. Hise '94
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
SpeakOut
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ARJUNE: Hi! It's Leanna [Arjune] from the SpeakOut Oral History Project. I am speaking from Novack Café, Room 71. Today I'm speaking with Brad[ford R.] Hise from Oakland, California, and today is Sunday, June 2nd.

And let's go ahead and let's—this interview, as I mentioned before, is for you, Brad, and for, of course, oral history, so we're—feel free to, you know, dive into whatever topics you want. I'll be asking a couple of questions to guide you. And let's go ahead and start talking about your childhood. You mentioned being from the Midwest, and let's talk about, like, you know, your childhood there, your background there, and what eventually led, I guess, to your identity and coming to Dartmouth.

HISE: Okay. So I grew up in a suburb of Minneapolis [Minnesota]. My parents had moved there just before I was born. Both my siblings, my older brother and my older sister, were both born in Washington, D.C. My mother is from Connecticut, and my dad, when he was growing up, spent time going back and forth between Des Moines, Iowa, and the Washington, D.C., area. They met, and they got married in Washington. I'm the third—I'm the third and the youngest of—of their three kids.

Like I said, they moved to Minneapolis right before I was born. I spent a lot of the time, a lot of summers when I was a kid growing up, going back and forth between the Midwest and Connecticut and occasionally to Washington to see my—my paternal grandmother, but mostly to Connecticut to see my maternal grandparents and all my cousins and aunts and uncles who lived in Connecticut.

So I grew up in—you know, in a—in a family that was Midwestern, but we were—you know, had strong connections to the East Coast, and my uncle and my—two of my cousins had gone to Dartmouth. So when I was

growing up, Dartmouth was always kind of in the back of my head as one of the places that I might want to go to college if I was—if it turned out that I was, you know, smart enough and was a good enough student and all that kind of stuff. So it was definitely there in terms of—of something that I was thinking about, growing up.

From a very early age, we—we all took swimming lessons through the Parks and Recreation Department in our suburb, and I remember being a little kid—I was probably—I was probably four or five, and I had—my swimming instructor that summer, for my little, you know, three weeks of swimming lessons three days a week or four days a week or whatever it was, was a—was a guy named Brian. And he was in his twenties. And I remember just being like—just thinking that Brian was the greatest person ever. And he was really great, and he was really awesome.

And, you know, it was just really exciting. And I was really sad when my swimming lessons that summer ended. So for a little kid, an entire year is a really long time, but then next summer, when I went back to the next group of swimming lessons, for the next session of swimming lessons, I was super, super, super excited that Brian was going to be my swim instructor again, because I'd remember—you know, at age—by now I was, what?—five or six or something like that. And I'd remembered him that entire year.

And I think that that was kind of the first inkling that I had that I might not be kind of like a—I don't want to say "normal," but I might not—that there may have been something different about me. Even if I couldn't articulate what it was, I knew at that very young age that the fact that I was very excited to have the same swim instructor two summers in a row was very weird, because it was not just—not—maybe not weird, but it was very unusual.

And it was not just that I—I, liked him as a person and thought he was a great swim instructor; I could tell that there was something more about what the little five- —five- or six-year-old Brad was thinking about this guy.

And it's—it's funny, because many, many years later—I think it was when I was in law school, so probably twenty years

later, when I was home on a—on a winter break, we were at the University of Minnesota for a women's basketball game. And the Minnesota—University of Minnesota Sports Hall of Fame is on the lobby level of this arena that we were in. And I was walking around, and there was a picture of the University of Minnesota men's swim team from 1978 or '77 or whatever year it was. And I can still—I can still pick the guy out in the picture. Like, that's just—

ARJUNE: Oh, wow.

HISE: Yeah. So—so it's totally crazy. I mean, and looking back, like, my very vague memory of this guy is that he was tall, and he had a moustache, and he had a very, very hairy chest, which is very weird for a swimmer, but—and for whatever reason, like, as a little kid that just, like, jumped out at me. And it's just like this abiding memory. So I remember that from being very, very little.

So that's kind of like the first time that I had any kind of inkling that I—that I might be a little bit different. And, of course, being a relatively intelligent person, I was very curious about stuff, so I was the kind of kid who would go to the public library and try to find books on topics that I didn't want to talk to my parents about and didn't want to talk to any, like, adults about. But if I was able to find something in the card catalog at the library, I would just go—pull the book and sit in the stacks and read the book.

So I remember reading all sorts of books—and, again, this is, like, the late seventies into the early to mid-eighties—about homosexuality and all that kind of stuff. And that—back then, a lot of it was very frowned upon and not viewed very positively, so I was reading some really, really horrible stuff at age, you know, twelve, thirteen, fourteen about what it was that I had finally figured out that I was.

And that, of course, was kind of traumatic and not always a great experience, but I was also smart enough to realize that I didn't necessarily think that a lot of it was true, because I knew that there was nothing about myself that could necessarily be changed, because I—I mean, I had identified already that it was entirely natural and normal, the things that I was feeling, that there was not—at least from my

perspective, I didn't think that there was anything unusual about it. It's just who I was.

But that—that was—that was kind of weird to grow up and—and be reading these things and be reading—I don't want to say academic studies, but—but books that were written for adults that took a very negative view of what to me seemed very natural and normal.

Let's see, where—like, where else can I go with this?

ARJUNE: Um—

HISE: I—I—I guess—sorry, Leanna, go ahead.

ARJUNE: No, no, you go ahead.

HISE: So when it—when it came time to apply to colleges, I—you know, I was applying to colleges in the late eighties.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: There was no place that was—and by this point, I was 100 percent, in my own brain,—I knew that I was—I knew that I was gay, and I didn't really—I personally did not have an issue with it. It was—it was—nobody else knew. I hadn't told anybody. I certainly hadn't told my parents. But I knew—I knew that that was something that I was going to have to deal with, and I figured that during college, that's kind of when I would figure things out.

And so there was this weird tension as I was looking at colleges between kind of the—like, the collegiate ideal, where I thought that I wanted to go kind of on an intellectual level versus the places that at that point in time probably would have been good places for me to go.

So on the one hand, I was really interested in going to Dartmouth or to Amherst [College] or to Princeton [University] or, you know, a school like that, where, let's be honest, in late eighties, early nineties, it probably would have been better for me to go to college in a big city. It would have been easier for me to kind of like—to kind of blend in and—and go find myself and go find—figure out what it meant to

be gay if—if—if it were easier to get out and away from the college campus.

But, you know, I didn't really want to go to college in a big city; I wanted to go to college in a small town. I wanted to go to a small residential college, and so there was this weird tension that I knew in my brain that, wasn't really gonna work out. And, of course, at the time that I was applying to Dartmouth, it had a reputation for being extraordinary conservative.

And it was only a few years after *The Dartmouth Review* had—had sent a reporter to the—to the GSA [Gay Student Association] meeting and then published the names of everybody who was there—and because my two cousins, who were just a few years older than I am, had been at Dartmouth during that time, I had heard all about stuff like that.

And one of my cousins was not really active in *The Review*, but he was friends with a lot of those guys, and another one of my cousins was one of the people who had been in the shanties on the [Dartmouth] Green, protesting investment in South Africa, so they—like, I was getting both perspectives from them.

And—and so I kind of knew what I was getting myself into, but for family reasons, and just because it's such a great college, Dartmouth was where I ended up going.

ARJUNE: Okay.

So, I mean, you said no one else knew what your identity—like, prior to college. I guess otherwise, aside from the fact that you knew you were gay, how—how was your childhood otherwise?

HISE: Oh, it was—it was—it was pretty happy. I was—I was—I was one of the kids who everybody liked. I was the person who was al- —when there needed to be a captain or a president or something like that, I was always—I was always the person who was nominated for that. I had a lot of friends, but I didn't really have very many close friends.

ARJUNE: Okay.

HISE: And—I mean, I think probably part of that was because I knew that I had this secret, but that's, you know, psychological retrospection, I guess.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: So who knows—who knows if it's true? I—I ultimately ended up becoming a competitive swimmer, so I spent a lot of time in the swimming pool, which gives you a lot of time to just kind of think as you're swimming back and forth, staring at a black line at the bottom of the pool, which may or may not have been the best thing for me to do, but it was certainly—it—it had its good points, and it had its bad points. But it—it gave me a group of friends, both male and female, that I probably would not have had otherwise, just because, you know, we all spent so much time together in a swimming pool, and we had that in common, and so it was---they—those—those people were my—were my friends, and it wasn't—there were—there were no questions. Everybody just kind of accepted each other for—for who and what they were in the swimming pool, and so we didn't really need to get into other things because I was a pretty decent swimmer, so everybody just was like, "Oh, he's a good swimmer. That's fine." Like, that's just—that was the identity that I had. I was, like, the smart kid who was a good swimmer. So that allowed me to avoid any other kind of identity or having to—to forge any other kind of identity.

ARJUNE: Okay.

So I guess, then, carrying forward into Dartmouth, your first two years, you mentioned, were a lot different from your last two years. Could you, like, just talk about—say, you know, it's your freshman fall. You know, you're just starting to get into the swing of things. How are you feeling? What's going on in your world?

HISE: So freshman fall—I mean, it was overwhelming. I mean, I was a kid who had gone to a big public high school in the Midwest, and suddenly, you know, I'm at this very elite private college, where a very significant portion of the student body had gone to very elite prep schools. And, you

know, my father was a lawyer, and my family was not in any kind of socioeconomic distress at all. Like, we were a fairly affluent family. But I felt like I was, you know, the sweaty working class at Dartmouth in a lot of ways. And, again, my dad was a lawyer. It's not like we—we were very, very affluent. And—and I know that things have changed, but I also know they haven't changed that much.

So we—we were—so it was just very weird to be—to—to not—to be in a position where I—I felt, like, seriously disadvantaged compared to a lot of my classmates, just because they came from such wealthy families and they had gone to such intense, competitive high schools. So that's very overwhelming the first few weeks that you're there.

And then you get to the first set of midterms and the first set of papers that you have to write, and you realize that once you struggle through writing a paper and you—you study for exams and you take your first couple of exams in a blue book and you get your grades back, you realize that if you put in the work, it—you're just as good as those other kids. They may—they may be better prepared to, like, actually sit down and write a paper, or they may—they may—they may be better prepared to deal with the stress of, like, going in and taking an hour-long essay exam, but at the same time, if you do the work, you're just as smart as they are, and you do just as well as they are.

And frankly, in a lot of ways, I felt—by the end of my first term, I felt like I was better prepared than a lot of the prep school kids just because I hadn't had enforced study hours. I hadn't had enforced, you know, seminars at my prep school about how to write papers, about how to prepare for and take essay exams. I had had none of that. So the fact that I was able to—to—to pretty quickly get my feet under- — underneath myself and—and be competitive felt pretty good. So I did—I did reasonably well my first term academically.

But it was a big adjustment to deal with, to deal with the prep school kids. That was a—that was a big deal. And I—I really did not have much time to focus on other things, just because it was—it was so kind of overwhelming and all-consuming, just trying to figure out how I was going to survive, much less succeed in—in an academic environment

where I wasn't quite sure how well I was prepared to—to succeed.

So I didn't really focus on personal stuff all that much that—that first term. My freshman roommate was a guy from Southern California, and he was, like, tremendously, tremendously confident in his ability to—to—to be competitive and to—to do well. And in some ways, that was really, really good for me, to just see how confident Greg was, because, you know, we—we would study a lot together, we ate a lot of meals together—I mean, we did everything that freshman roommates tend to do together, and—and I felt if—you know, Greg was really confident. I felt, like, *Okay, if I do the same amount of work that Greg is doing, then I should be okay because he seems really, really confident in his abilities.*

And that—it actually kind of worked. I think I may have actually done better than he did or freshman fall. I don't—I don't—I honestly don't remember. But—but—but it felt really good to—to—to—to figure out that I actually did belong there, at least academically.

Socially, it was like—it was an entirely different thing. I mean, like most people, I spent my freshman fall hanging out with people from my own dorm, and I didn't really know people in other dorms or in other clusters all that well, just because—well, I lived in the River [Cluster] my freshman year, which was—at that point in time was, like, this entirely different subculture just because it was considered so far away.

And so pretty much all of my friends were people who lived down in the River with me, and—and it was only through—through my classes that I got to know other people. And one class in particular—I took Government 7, which was Introduction to International Relations, or something like that, my freshman fall. And in that class, there was this group of us that—I don't even remember how we started hanging out together, but we started hanging out together. And there were—there were two women and three men, and interestingly enough, the two—the three men all turned out to be gay. Didn't find this out for years. I mean, very strong suspicions but had no idea until many, many years later.

But we started hanging out together. Those were really kind of my first friends outside the Cluster, outside of the River, and it was just because we all happened to be taking this class together. And the class was divided into three or four different topic subjects, and so each subject had two or three weeks of the—of the term. And, you know, there were some sections—the first section was—I can't remember what they were.

I remember that there was one section that was on international economics, which was, for me, horrifying and terrible. I had no idea what was going on. But one of the other guys had taken an economics class in high school, and so he had a little bit of a better sense of how it worked, so he explained that stuff to me.

And there was a very historical section, and I—that was the part that was easiest for me, and so I would work with other people on that. So we called ourselves the “Govy 7 Alliance.” And—and it—it—like, honestly, of this little group of five people, three of them continued to be—were—were three of my closest friends the whole time I was at Dartmouth. And it's just—it was just very fortuitous that we ended up having this class together our freshman fall.

ARJUNE: Nice.

So, I guess, when did you really start to, I guess, get more involved outside of, say, your classes and maybe your smaller friend groups?

HISE: I think probably moving into—into freshman winter is when I started to—probably started to break out of whatever little circle I had created for myself. You know, I don't know if it's still this way, but at the time, we had to take three PE [physical education] credits during the course of our four years.

ARJUNE: Yep.

HISE: And I took—I took one of my—one of my PE credits the—the winter of my freshman—freshman year. And so I met a whole—I met this whole other group of people through that.

And, you know, I—I was finally doing something physical cause I hadn't—I wasn't a good enough swimmer to swim when I was at Dartmouth. Well, actually I was; I just didn't—I started doing it during captain's practices freshman fall, and I just decided that it was—that it was going to take too much time and I wasn't a good enough swimmer where it was going to justify spending that much time to do it.

So I hadn't really done anything physical my entire freshman fall, but freshman winter, when I started—I took a racquetball class, and I met all these—all these new people in the racquetball class. And our instructor was a senior, and he—this was back when freshmen weren't supposed to go to fraternities, ever. Like, we couldn't go into fraternities until I think fall of our sophomore year.

But he invited all the freshmen in his PE class to come to his fraternity whenever, so I started going to—he was in Sig Ep [Sigma Phi Epsilon]. So I started going to Sig Ep all the time, just because my—my racquetball instructor was in Sig Ep. And so that kind of broadened my horizons in very bizarre ways, as well.

And—and that's also the winter when one of my—one of the guys who'd been part of the, quote, "Govy 7 Alliance," unquote—he became friends with—with a couple of guys who were Zete [pronounced ZAYT] [Zeta Psi] at the time, and so Zete used to always do—have parties on Thursday nights. And so that's when I—that's when this—this group of friends that I'd met in—in Government 7—we all started going to Zete together on Thursday nights.

So I suddenly became very, very social that winter with people that I'd met through my PE class and people that I'd met through my Government 7 class in the fall, and I was still hanging out with people in my dorm a lot. And I suddenly became very, very social. And—and that was also quite a change for me because—

[Silence.]

ARJUNE: Hello?

HISE: [No response.]

ARJUNE: Brad?

HISE: [No response.]

ARJUNE: So we're—yeah.

HISE: Okay, so can you hear me?

ARJUNE: Yeah, I can hear you now, yeah. I'm not sure what's going on here. Maybe the sound driver keeps crashing or something, but—okay.

Yeah, so we were talking about Zete, and we were talking about your involvement—this is freshman winter. You were playing racquetball, and You got more involved—

HISE: Yeah.

ARJUNE: Okay.

HISE: Yes. So one of the—one of the things that I neglected to mention when I was talking about the “Govy 7 Alliance” is that for whatever reason, I had found this group of people who were all very, very liberal, not at all what I was expecting to find at Dartmouth. But they were all very liberal, and in particular my friend Allison [spelling unconfirmed], who'd gone to—who was from Washington, D.C. She was very, very liberal, and she talked about how there was a guy in her high school class—she'd gone to—she'd gone to a pretty small prep school in D.C., but she—there was a guy in her high school class who had come out and how her school was very supportive of all of that.

And I don't know if she was telegraphing something to me and the other two guys in our little group of five people, but—but, like, I heard that loud and clear. Like, I realized that this was somebody who was very—who would probably be very supportive if and when I ever wanted to tell her that I was gay, too.

But it was very nice to be in this group of people who seemed to be very liberal and very tolerant and very accepting, which is not quite what I had expected to find. So

I spent just a ton of time hanging out with these people my freshman year.

ARJUNE: Awesome. Yeah.

So, I mean, does this lead to, like, continued involvement post-freshman year, like, with these friends?

HISE: I'm sorry, can you—can you repeat that?

ARJUNE: Yeah, sure. So your “Govy 7 Alliance.”

HISE: Yeah.

ARJUNE: Was this just a freshman year thing, or did this continue beyond freshman year?

HISE: Oh, sure. Okay. So it—it continued beyond freshman year, and it—it kind of expanded. So as we got into sophomore year, we—you know, we all met other people through various different ways, so I spent winter of my sophomore year in Berlin on the German FSP [Foreign Study Program]. And my friend Tim, who was part of the “Govy 7 Alliance,” was supposed to spend freshman spring in—on the—on the French LSA [Language Study Abroad], but he ended up not being able to go, kind of at the last minute. But during all of the orientation stuff to get ready for that, he met another guy named Steve.

And Steve—well, Steve also became a very good friend of mine over time, and Steve is actually, without even realizing it—I mean, he knows it now, but at the time, he didn't realize how pivotal it was, because Steve's best friend was a guy named Ed, and Ed became my very first boyfriend ever. [Chuckles.]

ARJUNE: Okay.

HISE: And I met—and I met Ed through Steve. But anyway, that's getting—that's kind of getting ahead of the story.

But, you know, this—this group of friends that I'd met freshman fall kind of became the center of my group of

friends throughout my—my four years in Hanover [New Hampshire].

And during—during sophomore year, when people started going on leave terms and going abroad and then coming back to school, there were always people kind of from that core group of—of friends that I'd met freshman year who were around, so I always felt like I had friends on campus. And some terms were better than others, but I always felt like I had this group of—this core group of very supportive people on campus.

But I still hadn't told anybody that I was gay. It just—I hadn't quite reached that point of comfort with myself where I felt like, *Okay, I*—even though I knew intellectually that it was totally fine and it was totally normal and it was just how I was, I hadn't reached a point where I felt comfortable enough—I wasn't sure enough with people that—that I was friends with—I hadn't quite reached the point where I felt comfortable to tell them.

ARJUNE: Okay.

Let's backtrack a bit to the FSP in Berlin. How was that? Did that affect, you know, your identity at all or, like, affect, like, just how you felt about, like,—just how was it?

HISE: So I'd been an exchange student in Germany in high school for a year, so I felt very comfortable in Germany. It was kind of like a second home. And my German at that point was really, really good. Most Germans didn't even know that I wasn't German other than my clothing. Like, they—they were always surprised that somebody who looked so American would open his mouth and speak pretty decent German. And they were always—they always thought that—that the reason that I had an accent was just because I was from a part of Germany where they didn't—they were unfamiliar with the accent from whatever part of Germany I was from. They didn't think that my accent was because I wasn't German.

So Germany was very comfortable for me. And I spent a lot—I mean, Berlin is a great city. It's a wonderful city. What was—what was really interesting for me was I had reached a

point where I felt comfortable kind of doing research into—*well, you know, I'm gonna be in a big city for—for ten weeks. Maybe I should try to explore what it's like to be gay when I'm in a big city.*

And I'd done some of the research to do that. And, again, this is all pre-internet, so you had to, like, look at alternative newspapers, all that kind of stuff, to figure this stuff out. So I tried to figure out—I—I did the research to—to, like, figure out where—where gay bars were in Berlin and whether there were gay organizations or things like that.

But I never quite had the courage to go do it on my own. I didn't want to go do it on my own, but there was nobody else in my FSP who I would have felt comfortable saying, "Hey, let's go—let's go to—let's go to the gay bars in Schöneberg." You know, I never felt comfortable doing that.

And also, to be really honest, I was twenty—I was twenty years old, and everything that I read about the gay scene in Berlin was that the gay scene in Berlin was really intense, and it tended to be kind of dark and very leathery, and I was this preppy, upper-middle-class kid from the Midwest, and I was pretty sure, even at that point, that that was—at least at that stage in my life, that that was not my scene. And so I wasn't [chuckles]—I wasn't quite sure, like, what I would—like, what I would do. And even something as basic as—I didn't even know what—what I could wear. Like, if—if I decided to go to a bar, I didn't even know what I could wear.

So I spent a little bit of time in Berlin— like, I went to a couple of coffee shops, and I did things like that, but I never went out in the evenings. I certainly never really met or talked to anybody while I was there, and I certainly didn't go out on a date or—or have sex with anybody.

But the FSP itself was a fantastic experience. And, you know, the one regret that I have is that I wasn't a little bit more brave while I was there. But, you know, there were plenty of other things going on. And we had—we had a very, very close FSP, because it was really small. It was only, like, twelve or thirteen of us.

So we all got to know each other really, really well over the course of the ten weeks. And we were a very, very close group of people, and I felt—again, I felt—very similar to my group of friends back in Hanover. I felt that I had this very nice, very interesting group of friends, and I felt like there were certainly were people that I could have told in that group that I was gay, and they would have had zero problem with it. It was still this kind of—my own hesitancy and my own discomfort that prevented me from doing it.

ARJUNE: So I take it you never went to Friedrichshain, then.
[Chuckles.]

HISE: I—no, I did not. I did not.

ARJUNE: Okay. [Chuckles.] I only mentioned it because I've been to Berlin, myself.

HISE: Okay.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

So I guess, then, back at Dartmouth,—you mentioned meeting Ed.

HISE: Yeah.

ARJUNE: And is this the person you mentioned in your bio who you—friend of a friend—you made out with them and then dated for two years?

HISE: That would—yes, that is—that is Ed.

ARJUNE: Okay. Could you go into a bit more detail on—on that relationship?

HISE: Sure. So sophomore summer, you know,—you—you—you've experienced sophomore summer, and it—it's just like that one class, pretty much only that one class. You meet all sorts of people that you've not met up to that point. And a lot of it is you're finally the meeting friends of friends, the people that you, like, ran into tangentially when you've run into people you know. And it's so small that you're finally actually meeting them.

So over the course of sophomore summer—I—I—I mentioned earlier that I'd become friends with a guy named Steve. And so Steve and I had become friends, and Steve's really good friend from freshman year—they lived on the same—on the same floor as freshmen, was a guy named Ed.

And I had—from the very early stage of my freshman year, I'd known who Ed was, but I didn't know him. And I knew who Ed was because I thought Ed was, like, seriously, like, *the* cutest person I had ever seen in my life. But I did not know him at all.

And then sophomore summer, through Steve, various kind of social groups started hanging out together, so it was not uncommon for Ed and me to end up hanging out together in the same groups of people. And we never really talked to each other when we were in these groups, but—but by the end of sophomore summer, we would at least—when we'd run into each other at Collis [Center for Student Involvement] or at the Hop[kins Center for the Arts] or wherever, we'd at least say "Hi" to each other. And we didn't really become friends, but we at least started acknowledging each other.

But what really—but when things really took off was we got back—I—I was on a leave term junior—junior fall. I got back for—for junior winter, and the very first night that I was back for junior winter, Steve—a really small group of us were hanging out in Steve's room. And Steve was diabetic, so he didn't drink at all, but the rest of us were—were—the rest of us were drinking, you know, just, you know, a couple of beers. It was nothing—it was not a big deal. But the rest of us were drinking, and it was Steve and then my friend Tim from the "Govy 7 Alliance" group—he's how I knew Steve—and then Ed. So it was just the four of us hanging out in a dorm room. That was really the first time that I'd ever really spent very much time hanging out with Ed.

And then two days later,—well, I was a German drill instructor, and so I had early morning drill, and then after drill, I would go have breakfast at the Hop, and so, like, the second or third day of the term, I was at the Hop at, like,

8:45 or whatever, having breakfast before I went to my first class after I had done my drill.

And Ed walked up and said, “Hey, you mind if I have breakfast with you?” So Ed sat down at my table. This is really—other than that one night hanging out in Steve’s dorm room, that was really the first time that Ed and I had ever really spoken. It was certainly the first time that he and I had really spoken one on one. And it became a thing, where for—after that morning, we had breakfast together pretty much every morning.

And over the course of that winter term, we went from having breakfast together every morning, to then making plans to have lunch together every day (because our class schedules were very, very similar), to by about halfway through the term, we were basically having all three meals together every single day. And on weekends we were hanging out together—you know, with part of our—with bigger groups of—of—friends, but we were always hanging out together.

And it was this amazing feeling, like, *Oh, my God, I finally know what it’s like to have a best friend in the world and Oh, my God, he’s so cute. Is he maybe gay?* And I just didn’t—I didn’t really know. I honest to God had absolutely no clue. I thought he might be, but I wasn’t sure. But it was just such a—it was such an amazing feeling to finally have someone that I felt like I connected to on such a personal level, because that’s something I hadn’t really had up to that point, at any—at any point in my life. So it was just—it was just this amazing, amazing feeling of *Oh, my God, this person totally gets me. He totally understands me, and I can say anything to him.* And I’d never had that before.

ARJUNE: Nice.

Wow. And did you all just end up dating, then, until you graduated?

HISE: Yeah, yeah. So what happened is, the—probably about—towards the end of—actually, I can tell you the exact date. It was February 17th, 1993. It was—it was a Wednesday night, and [chuckles]—so my friend Allison, who was part of the “Govy 7 Alliance”—she ended up in Tri Delt [Tri Delta, now

Chi Delta], but she hated being in a sorority, so she would routinely skip Wednesday night meetings just because she hated being in a sorority, and she was trying to dare them to kick her out of the sorority.

So instead of going to Wednesday night meetings, she would just—she and her roommates—one of my—another one of my good friends, a woman named Kathy—she and Kathy would have people over to their room on Wednesday nights to play board games. And, it being Dartmouth, there was also drinking.

So over the course of winter term, I went and played board games with Allison and Kathy on a lot of Wednesday nights. And after the first couple of weeks, Ed started coming too, and then there was a—this Wednesday night where the board game of the evening was Scrabble. And we were playing Scrabble, and, it being Dartmouth, we had somehow ingeniously figured out a way to make Scrabble a drinking game, which I don't even remember what it was, but we'd made Scrabble a drinking game, which I'm sure is not nearly as original as we at the time thought it was, but we were playing Scrabble and drinking.

And we were on teams. And Ed and I were on a team. And I just remember that we were all kind of crowded around—somebody had, like, a trunk as basically a coffee table in their common room, and—and—so the board game was—the board was on this trunk, and we're all—like, probably eight of us who were crowded around this trunk, playing the game. So there was a lot of body contact.

And I remember that night that there was a lot of body contact that I thought seemed kind of unnecessary, and—and it was lingering. And I was, like, *Oh, my God, maybe—maybe there is something. Maybe there is—is something physical.*

And, again, it being the early nineties, we were listening to Madonna's *Immaculate Collection*. And we were listening to this, and I'm thinking—okay, like, there's all this weird body contact with Ed and what's going on, and I'm drinking, and I'm—like, I'm getting just a little—a little drunk.

And after the game ended, Allison, Kathy and some other people were going to go—they—they were going to out that Wednesday night after meetings at fraternities had ended, and I—I never went out after meetings on Wednesdays. I wasn't in a fraternity, so I never—I never went out after meetings.

But they were—they were all going to go out. So Ed—Ed turned to me and he was like—again, this was possibly the most early 1990s thing ever said, but he turned to me and he said, “So I just bought the new Maxi CD single of Madonna’s new single, so you want to come to my room and listen to it?” So I said, “Sure. Why not?”

So we went—we went over to his room, and he put—it was “Deeper and Deeper,” and he put it on repeat in his room, and he was laying on his bed. He had a single, and he was laying on his bed. And it was a tiny single—like, absolutely minuscule single in South Mass[achusetts Hall]. And he was laying on—he was laying on his bed, and I was laying on the couch. And the couch is only, like, four feet away.

And we're just kind of like laying there, staring at each other across these four feet, and finally I was just—I think I'd just had enough context clues and enough—there'd been enough body contact when we'd been playing the board game, and I had just enough alcohol where I was, like, *Dammit! I'm just gonna do it.*

And so I got up, and I went over and I sat next to him on the floor, and I kissed him. And much to my surprise, he kissed me back. Like, there's no objection. He just kissed me back. And I was, like, *Oh, my God, this is the most amazing day of my entire—of my entire life.*

And that was—I mean, that was—that was it. Like, that was—that—all the things that I'd been feeling for my entire junior winter—like, *Is he gay? Does he like me? He's so cute*—all that kind of stuff—like, everything was answered in, like, about ten minutes in his dorm room.

ARJUNE: [Chuckles.] Nice. [Chuckles.]

So—I mean, your friends found out eventually right?

HISE: Yes. And, you know, it was—it was weird because we'd—we'd spent so much time together already that the fact that we were now literally spending pretty much every minute that weren't in class together—it didn't seem unusual to anybody.

So friends found out very slowly. I mean, we didn't really tell anybody. I'd—I'd told one friend before Eddie and I had—had made out that one time. I told one friend, my friend Fiona [spelling unconfirmed] that—that—that I—that I was gay and that I thought Ed was really cute, and—but—but other than that, I don't think anybody really knew. People—people saw us together all the time.

What we didn't realize was that—that at least a lot of our—a lot of our women friends—they knew almost immediately what had happened. Like, they just kind of intuitively figured it out. And—and I remember—you know,—so our friend Steve—his—his—his girlfriend was organizing a birthday dinner for him, and—and she invited us. But I forget why—why we couldn't go, but we couldn't go, and Steve was really—was really kind of, you know,—he was upset that we couldn't go to his birthday dinner.

And—and he—he was—he—he told us later, many years later, actually, at one of our—at one of our reunions, he told me that his—that his girlfriend, who's now his wife,—you know, he was saying—he was saying to his wife Jill—then girlfriend Jill—that he was upset that we couldn't go to the dinner, and he—he was upset that—you know, that if one of us couldn't—if one of us had plans, why the other one couldn't come—come to this dinner.

And—and he said that Jill just looked at him and said, "Well, you haven't figured it out yet? Like, the reason that one can't come without the other is because they are a couple. Like, they are to-gether. They are dating." And he was just—he said that he—he was—like, the thought hadn't even occurred to him.

But it clearly had occurred to a lot of other people, and we thought we were being—like, really secret and that nobody knew, but—but apparently that was not true. I thought I was

being super sneaky when I told my roommate that whenever his girlfriend came up to visit from Brown [University], that I was totally happy sleeping in Ed's room. And he was, like, "Oh, okay, great."

And then years later, again at a reunion, he told me, "Like, I totally knew what was going on. Like, I knew why you were spending—like, why you didn't mind spending time in Ed's room." He's been in Ed's room. He knew how small it was. He—he's, like, "I know—I know why you're—why you don't mind staying in that tiny, tiny room."

But it—yeah, so people—people gradually figured it out, to the point where—so Ed was editor-in-chief of the yearbook, and our friend Kathy was—was one of his editors, as well, and so they stayed in Hanover after we graduated to—to wrap up the yearbook. And they were hanging out one night a couple of weeks after graduation, while they were there working on the yearbook, and Ed said, "Hey, Kathy, there's something I need to tell you." Or, you know, "I have a secret that I want to tell you."

And Kathy looked at him and said, "So the secret you're going to tell me is that Brad's gay, right?" And he said, "Well, that's part of the secret." And she said, "Oh, I already figured out the other part of the secret too." [unintelligible].

ARJUNE: [Laughs.]

HISE: So basically, ev- —not everybody, but the people who knew us best knew that we were gay, and we didn't really have to tell them, and it didn't really change at all how we interacted with people. People were still our friends. It—it didn't really do anything. But I think that's party because we hadn't made a huge production out of it; we just hung out together.

And it was funny because there were—you know, there were times when—there were a few very, very out people at Dartmouth at the time, and we very, very conscientiously [sic] avoided hanging out with them. Like, we were friendly with a few of them, but we avoided hanging out with them because we didn't want to arouse suspicion, because we didn't—like, it was very, very hard to be an openly gay person at Dartmouth in the early 1990s.

And we did not—I mean, probably easier than it was in the early eighties or the early seventies, but it was still not, you know, exactly a garden spot, and we didn't want to attract attention to ourselves, so we, like, made a—made a concerted effort to avoid hanging out with these people.

But I remember there was one year—Sigma Delta was having a big party, and we knew—Ed and I were pretty good friends with a couple of the women in Sigma Delt. And so we were at this party, and suddenly we found ourselves dancing with this whole big group of basically—every known out gay man on campus was dancing in a big circle, and Ed and I were in the middle of the circle, and we just kind of looked at each other, like, “What the hell is going on? This is not at all what we had anticipated.” And we kind of figured out that that meant that everybody else knew what was going on too. So our secret was not really that much of a secret.

ARJUNE: Okay.

HISE: We never really had to tell people because they all just figured it out and they knew.

ARJUNE: Was there anything specific that happened, you know, that made you feel uncomfortable to be open in—at Dartmouth during the time?

HISE: Nothing specifically. I mean, I never heard people—I mean, other than—I mean, people would make homophobic comments or homophobic jokes, and you just kind of got used to it. It was not uncommon in that time frame. And, I mean, I probably made them, too. But there was nothing specific that happened to me, but you heard—you know, we—we—we all heard stories about—about, you know, people who were either gay or perceived as being gay not being welcomed at fraternity parties, or people who were gay or perceived as being gay having things said to them, you know, on campus, either in a dining hall or in the library or in class or something like that.

And so you—I—I wanted to avoid that, just because college is hard enough,—

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: —and being gay was hard enough without having some annoying frat boy say something to you. So if I could avoid provoking that, that was kind of my goal. So I—I made sure that I—that I only went to spaces that I considered safe. And for me, safe spaces were places where—where I had a lot of friends. So basically, my junior and senior year, I went to two fraternities. I went to Bones Gate, and I went to Zete, and that's because I knew people in both houses pretty well.

My freshman roommate, Greg, who I talked about earlier—he—he was in Bones Gate, and then a bunch of—a bunch of guys that I knew were in Zete, and those—those for me were safe spaces because I knew people. And even if they didn't necessarily know that I was gay, I knew that if something happened, that—that I—I knew people in those houses that were going to—that were going to stick up for me if—if something were to happen.

So other than that—I mean, I didn't go anywhere else, and so it was always a struggle to find other things to do to socialize, but—you know.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: Nn-nn.

ARJUNE: Did you ever—were you ever part of the GSX [Gender Sexuality XYZ] at all?

HISE: No, no. It was—it was—it was pretty clear to me, even as a freshman,—it was clear to me as a freshman that it took a degree of moral courage to be involved in that organization that I don't think that I had at that point in time.

ARJUNE: Okay.

HISE: And it took an even greater degree of moral courage to be out at Dartmouth, and I didn't have that moral courage.

ARJUNE: Okay.

HISE: So I was—I—I was willing to kind of lead my closeted life as long as I was—felt safe and felt okay. It—I don't want to say it backfired, but by the time Ed and I started dating and by the time pretty much everybody who was paying attention had figured out that we were not just friends, that we were actually a couple, it—it—it also kind of made me feel awkward around those people because I felt like they had taken the very brave step of being out and open in what was perceived to be a pretty unwelcoming and unfriendly environment. And I didn't have the courage to do that, but I was able to navigate. And I felt like—I almost felt guilty that I was really happy my junior and senior year because I was dating someone, and I had this world where I felt pretty safe, and I felt almost guilty that I had that world and that they were—they were the ones who were being so brave, and I wasn't brave enough to step outside my comfort zone.

ARJUNE: I see. And I guess on that note, then, were you involved at all in, like, the gender-inclusive houses, organiza- —any other, like, organizations on campus, maybe ones where, like, you could have even had been a bit more closeted but still, like, around those areas?

HISE: I mean, I was—I was part of the [Dartmouth College] German Club. I was—I was a German drill instructor. I was very involved in everything in the German department.

ARJUNE: Gotcha.

HISE: And, of course, the fac- —the faculty would have been totally 100 percent fine with it, but—you know.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: And the other—and the other—the other students who were German nerds like I was—they would have been totally fine with it, but, I don't know, some- —something that I—I mean, even to this day, I keep a very—I keep a very clear separation between what I consider my personal life and what I consider my professional life. And so for me, all the German department stuff was my professional life, and my personal life was totally separate.

And it's not that I didn't want people to know about the other things, but to me it was—I wanted to—I didn't want then to really blend or—or merge in with each other. I wanted—I wanted to keep a pretty clear distinction.

ARJUNE: Okay.

Did you study—what did you end up majoring in?

HISE: I was a history major and a minor in German lit.

ARJUNE: Okay. Understood. Cool.

So I guess, then, it's graduation. You ended up going to law school.

HISE: Yeah.

ARJUNE: Did—did things change post grad in law school?

HISE: Yeah. So—so after—after Dartmouth—and it's funny, because Ed—neither Ed nor I really knew what we were going to do after graduation, so it was spring break of our senior year in college, and we were both—we both stayed in Hanover to work on our theses. And we went to see the movie *Reality Bites*, which is, like, the most Gen[eration] X thing ever, is to go see *Reality Bites* spring break of your senior year in college and you have no idea what you're going to do with your life.

We didn't realize at the time what a stereotype we were living, but we were in fact living a stereotype. So we had no idea what we were going to do, and I actually, through the German department, applied for a fellowship to go to the former East Germany and be a teaching assistant in the American studies department at an East German university.

It was a program set up by the [Robert] Bosch Foundation, and it was the second—only the second or third year that the program had existed. And the first couple of years, they'd only accepted applicants from Harvard [University], Yale [University] and Stanford [University]. And then they decided that they were going to expand the program, so this—you know, it was either the second or third year of the program.

They expanded it to include applicants from Dartmouth and Princeton and I think Brown [University].

And—and so I applied for it because—again, I literally had no idea what I was going to do, so this is mid-April I applied for this Bosch Foundation fellowship, and I won the fellowship to go to Germany and be a—again, a teaching assistant in the American studies department.

And I found out that I had been assigned to Humboldt University [of Berlin] in Berlin. So I was going to go back to Berlin, and it was a two-year fellowship. And I was pretty excited about it. I thought it was going to be really, really cool.

And then—and Eddie had no idea what he was going to do after he graduated. And then he wound up getting a job in Boston, in the IT [information technology] department at Bain Consulting [sic; Bain & Company].

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: And—believe it or not—I don't want to say I found the job for him, but I actually—this is back when jobs were advertised in newspapers, and I saw the—I saw the ad in *The Boston Globe*. And was, like, “Hey, Ed, you should apply for this job.” And he ended up applying for it and getting it.

Anyway, so we graduated thinking that Ed was going to move to Boston to do this—for this job—and that I was going to go to—go to Berlin for two years. And, you know, twenty-two, almost twenty-three years old, young love, “Oh, my God, how am I gonna live without you?”—all that kind of stuff. So as it got closer and closer to the time when I was supposed to leave to go to Berlin, I was—I—I found myself thinking, *I can't do this. I just want to—I just want to move to Boston and live with Ed.*

So the problem was giving up a Bosch Foundation fellowship and moving to Boston was kind of a big deal, and I needed to give my parents a rational explanation for what I was going to do.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: So unfortunately, the only rational explanation I could give them was, Well, by the way, I'm moving to Boston because I'm gay and Ed is my boyfriend."

ARJUNE: Ah.

HISE: Which is basically—which is basically the conversation that I ended up having to have with them. And they—I mean, their reaction—they had a number of reactions, but one of the reactions from my mother was, "Are you sure that you want to do this? This is something that you may—you may regret giving up this opportunity. But if you really think that—that you love Ed and it's worthwhile, then you need to do that if that's what you want to do. But think long and hard, because you may regret it."

So, again, being twenty-two, almost twenty-three, I was, like, "Okay, fine." I wrote a letter to the German—to my—my mentor in the German department, and I wrote a letter to the Bosch Foundation, and I turned it down, and I packed all of my stuff up on to an airplane—I was back in Minneapolis by this point, after graduation. And I had packed everything up into suitcases, and I got on an airplane, and I moved to Boston.

And I didn't have a job, and Ed and I lived in a studio apartment, and we ended up—we lived in a studio apartment. Then we moved across the street to a bigger, one-bedroom apartment after I got a job. And then about six months later, we decided that we needed to take some time off from each other. That was actually my decision, because I was realizing that here I was, I was twenty-three years old, I was in a big city, and I was dating the first person that I'd ever actually met and known as a gay person, and that was really kind of weird for me. It's kind of like if you buy the first car that you test drive or you buy the first house that you look at or anything like that.

And he did not really appreciate—he did not really appreciate that analogy, but that's essentially what it was. So I ended up moving into an apartment with my best friend from high school. Who—she'd gone to Wellesley [College] and was living in Boston, so she and I moved into an

apartment together, and Ed and I broke up, and—and I was in Boston for two years, and Ed and I were together for probably the first six months, and then the last eighteen months I was a—I was a single man trying to figure—figure stuff out at age twenty-three, twenty-four.

And then I moved to Chicago [Illinois] to go to law school in the fall of 1996. And my law school experience was radically different from my college experience. I made a point of looking at law schools only in big cities. I made a point of when I arrived at law school—I went to Northwestern [University]—and when I arrived at Northwestern, I made a point of—or I told myself that I was not going to be closeted in law school, that it was too important to me to just be open and honest about myself, and if people didn't like me for that, then they could just go ahead and not like me for that. That was their issue, not mine.

And so once I had met a group of friends and I felt comfortable, they—I started telling people that I was gay. And it was not a problem at all. I had a very, very nice, open, accepting group of friends when I was in law school, and I spent three years as the only openly gay person in my law school class of two hundred people, which was kind of a bizarre ex- —which is kind of a bizarre experience.

But, you know, it was—it was remarkably easy to do, because I was in a big city, and I could go—if I wanted to go out on a Friday night and meet—and hang out with gay people, it was super easy to do because I was in a big city, and all I had to do was walk three blocks and get on the subway, and then twenty minutes later I had to walk three more blocks and I could go to the gay bars in Chicago.

And it was really, really easy for me to be a gay man in Chicago, because I—I didn't feel like—I didn't feel like I was missing out on something in law school by being the only openly gay person in my class, because I had a whole big city that I could easily access, and so it was easier to kind of—to have both—both the law—the law student part of my life and then the gay man part of my life. It was much easier to have them—to have them in sync, just because I wasn't relying on school to be my social life, really.

I mean, I—I had a very active social life in law school, actually probably more active than I had in college, with my law school friends, but I also had this—had a life outside of law school, just going out and meeting people and dating people who were not in any way, shape or form involved in law school. And that was—that was a really good experience for me.

ARJUNE: Awesome.

Let's go back a little bit. You mentioned coming out to your family. Did you come out to your siblings at all?

HISE: Yeah, I—I—I ultimately did. After I came out to my parents, my parents—my parents said, “Okay, well, you need to come out to your sib- —a” I know it's very odd. It feels like a lot of people come out to their siblings before they come out to their parents.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: But after I came out to my parents, my—my—my mother just said, “You need to tell your siblings because your father and I can't—can't keep this secret for you. That's—that's unfair to your siblings. You need to tell them.” And, I mean, I think that that was fair. And I—and I told my siblings, and my siblings—at least from what I've heard and from my conversations with them, neither of them were terribly surprised, and neither of them seemed to have much of a problem with it.

And that includes my older brother, who, earlier in his career, was very involved in politics. And I think at the time that I told him, he was actually executive director of the Republican Party of Wisconsin.

ARJUNE: [Chuckles.]

HISE: —which—but it—it—you know, he—he was totally fine with it. He was absolutely fine with it. Or if he wasn't fine with it, he never—he never said anything to me that would suggest otherwise.

ARJUNE: Okay. Awesome.

So it—it seems like you had a really good separation of, like, you know, professional life and personal life while you were in Chicago.

HISE: Yes.

ARJUNE: Yeah, because it sounds like it's something you really value. I guess, then, that sort of leads into today. You know, you—you say you have a husband now, and, like, how did—I mean, how do you feel the world has changed in the past couple decades or so?

HISE: [Chuckles.] Well, I mean, just the fact that I can say that I have a husband is obviously a sea change. But it's—it's—it's weird, because, I don't know, my husband and I—we met ten years ago, and we've been married for six years. And he—he—he's ten years younger than I am, so I'm forty-seven and he just turned thirty- —he just turned thirty-eight.

ARJUNE: Gotcha.

HISE: And then right after we met, I went to Hanover for my—I guess it would have been my fifteenth reunion, and that was the year that he was—he was just finishing up his internship, so the first year of his post-medical school training. And so he couldn't—he couldn't go with me. But it was funny because I was—you know, I was talking to all these people at—at reunion, and I was kind of mentioning John, and, like, no one batted an eyelash. No one batted an eyelash at all.

And then he came with me four years ago to my twentieth reunion and met everybody, and it seemed totally—totally normal. And, you know, one of the great things about reunions is you go, and even if some of your good friends aren't there, you—you end up having really interesting conversations with people that you weren't friends with in school or, in some instances, you didn't even know at all.

And, you know, I found myself, on one night at reunion four years ago, having an hour-long conversation with this—this rower—this guy who had been a rower in college, and he and I lived on the same floor junior year, and he is just, like, unbelievably hot, and he was still this, like middle-aged

dad—like, super. Like, ridiculously hot. I'm sorry, like that's probably something I shouldn't say in an oral history, but—

ARJUNE: That's fine.

HISE: I found myself having—I found myself having this, like, really, really long, in-depth conversation with him, thinking, *You're such a nice guy, —and in college, I just thought that you were, like, a dumb jock. And here we are, we're having this really great conversation. And, you know, my husband is over there, and I keep pointing him out, and we're talking about things about my husband, and you're having no problems with it, and I know that it's part of the reason that so many people at reunions don't—are so accepting and so tolerant and so just don't even bat an eyelash. That is because the world has changed so much?*

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: If—if only it had been like this when I was in college, college would have been so much better. But I—I am very happy about the fact that I can go back and I can talk to classmates and know—and—and—and—and—and it's—I am—I am just—I am a member of the class, and my marriage and my relationship is just like anybody else's, and nobody really—I never get the sense that there's any kind of judgment or any kind of—any—any—there's just no judgment. And I think that that's not necessarily what I would have expected when I graduated twenty-five years ago.

ARJUNE: How often are you back at Dartmouth?

HISE: I—I go back for my reunions. It's so far away that there's really no other opportunity to go back, and I don't really have a reason to go back other than my reunions. So that's—that's when I go back.

ARJUNE: Okay. And I guess on that note, too, how often do you go to Germany, if at all?

HISE: I—I go to Germany every—I don't know. Let's see, in the nineties I went probably every couple of years. And then as—as career becomes more and more important and you

have less and less time to do stuff like that, it's become less—less—less often.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: John and I were there in 2016. I was there in 2015 for—for about a week. Well, I was in Europe for three weeks, and I spent the last maybe five days in Germany in 2015. And then in 2016 John and I were in Europe for two weeks, and we spent the first week in Germany, and we went to see the host family that I lived with in high school that week. So I'm—I'm in Germany every couple of years. We'll probably not be back in Germany for a while now, but—

ARJUNE: Gotcha.

HISE: But—but thanks to things like WhatsApp and Instagram, I'm—I'm in almost constant contact with my host sister from when I was there in high school.

ARJUNE: That's fantastic.

So, I mean,—are you—like, how'd you get in— are you involved in DGALA [Dartmouth Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alumni/ae Association, or Dartmouth LGBTQIA+Alum Association] at all?

HISE: I mean, I—I'm not involved in the sense that I'm not—I'm not, like, on the board of directors. I'm not involved in planning things. Again, it's—professionally I just don't have the time to really commit to it. I give them money every year.

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: And whenever I'm in Hanover for a reunion, I go to the—go to the breakfast that—that they have at every reunion, but I'm not—I'm not really that involved. I tried going to—DGALA isn't big enough in the [San Francisco] Bay Area to do its own events, but they do all Ivy events, and I tried going to those when I first moved out here, but, again, between work and not generally doing so well in big crowds of people where I don't know people, I—I—they were just—they were challenging for me, and it—I—I—I did the calculus, and it was—they were hard enough to get to because of work, and

if I didn't enjoy them, I wasn't going to make the effort to go to them. They were just hard for me—they were just hard for me to get to. And, again, I don't feel like I do particularly well in large groups of people where I—where I don't know people. So I did the calculus, and it just didn't seem worth it to me, so I haven't—I haven't gone to one of those in probably fifteen years.

ARJUNE: Okay. I guess, then,—if there's anything you could change about, you know, your experiences at Dartmouth or your experiences post—you know, step back into a time machine—what would you change?

HISE: I think—I think I wish that I'd been a little bit braver as an undergraduate. I wish that I'd been—I wish that I'd been more confident in my friends and the kind of people that they were, because I feel like I missed having really, really deep friendships with people because I didn't feel like I could be honest with them. And in retrospect, that turns out not to have been true at all. And I—I kind of feel like I missed out some—some—on some friendships and on some relationships because I was so worried about what they were going to think of me and how they were going to judge me.

And if I'd—if I'd—if I'd realized then that they were—or if I'd—if I'd really thought about—I—I knew that my friends were good people and they were—they were—they were liberal, and they were tolerant, and they probably were going to have no problem with having a gay friend, and I wish—I wish that I'd trusted that more, because, again, like, I feel like by not being honest with them, I missed out on—on having some of the deeper relationships that I maybe could have had if I'd been more honest.

ARJUNE: Gotcha. Okay. So—

HISE: I think—I think—I think there's one other thing that I wish I could change or wish had been a little bit different: I wish that—I wish that—I mean, there are many things about, you know,—I think everybody has many wishes about their first true love and how that relationship goes, but I wish, you know,—I wish that—you know, I wish that that relationship had ended in a different way, because we're not—I mean, we're—we're not really friends anymore, and that's kind of a

tough—that's kind of tough, just because—you know, Ed was not only my—my college boyfriend, he was also, by far, the closest friend that I had when I was at Dartmouth.

And it's—you know, I wish—I wish that I had been mature enough at age twenty-three to end the relationship in a way that would have preserved that friendship. And we tried, and it's just—you know, I—I wasn't mature enough to do that at the time, and that—that's—that's also something of a regret.

And I to this day, like, 100 percent regret turning down the Bosch fellowship because that was, like, the stupidest, most bone-headed thing I've ever done in my life, but that's a whole 'nother story.

ARJUNE: I mean, things worked out okay ultimately in terms of your career, right?

HISE: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. No, like, I—I—I don't really have regrets about my career trajectory, although I'm not sure that I—I—I—had I—had I gone on the Bosch fellowship, I don't think I would have ended up going to law school, and I'm not the world's happiest—I'm not the world's happiest lawyer.

ARJUNE: Okay.

HISE: But—but, again, like, I don't really—I don't—I'm—I'm not—I don't regret the decision that I made to become a lawyer, but I probably would not have been a lawyer had I gone on the Bosch fellowship. I have no idea what I would have done, but I probably would not have gone to law school.

ARJUNE: I see. Okay.

I think that's all I have for you. Is there anything you want to add to this? Because, again, this is, you know, your—your life story essentially.

HISE: Yeah. I think—so a couple of weeks ago, we were having—we were having brunch with a group of friends out here, and I have a—one of our good friends is a guy who went to Yale, and he was roughly my contemporary at Yale. I think he graduated from Yale in, like, '92, maybe, so—but we're—we're—we're roughly time contemporaries.

And I mentioned to him that John and I were going to go to my twenty-fifth reunion and I will be in Hanover in, like, ten days or something like that, for my reunion. Anyway, I mentioned—I mentioned to this—to this friend of mine that we were going to my twenty-fifth reunion, and he said, “Oh, I haven’t been back to Yale since I graduated.”

And I said, “Oh, why is that?” And he said, “Oh, well, you know, I had—I had not such a great experience at Yale as a—you know, as a gay guy that it’s kind of soured me on the place, and I feel like I don’t really fit in there.”

And I found myself saying something to him that I—I was kind of surprised about. And I said, “You know, being gay at Dartmouth was probably no easier than being gay at Yale. In fact, in a lot of ways it was probably harder, just because it’s here in the middle a godforsaken wilderness in a lot of ways.”

ARJUNE: Yeah.

HISE: But it’s very important to me to go back to Hanover and talk to my classmates and be—to be present, because Dartmouth has changed a lot since I graduated, and it’s, from my perspective, changed almost entirely for the better. And I don’t think that people—yeah, I don’t think that students today have experiences quite like the experiences that I had when I was there.” Which is all—which is all great and wonderful and everything.

But it’s important for me to go back because Dartmouth belongs to me just as much as it belongs to the lacrosse-playing frat boy who went to work for Goldman Sachs. And it is just as much my place, and my experience there is just as important a piece of the fabric as the more stereotypical experience there. And it’s important for me that my classmates know that not everybody had the exact same experience and that not everybody has quite the same undying love.

I’m a little bit more ambivalent than I think a lot of people are about Dartmouth and my time there, but it is very important to me for people to see that my experience and my affection

for the institution is just as important and matters just as much as other people's do. And that's—you know, circling back to the conversation that I had with this friend who went to Yale. He—he doesn't feel the same way. Like, he feels like he is totally fine ceding any interests or—or any relationship that his college—to people who had the more stereotypical experiences there.

And that's just not something that I'm willing to do. It's important to me that—that my—that the people I know from Dartmouth understand that—that—even back in the early nineties, there was this incredible diversity of people there and that we all—we all had different experiences and that each of us—the—the institution belongs to each of us, just as much as it belongs to anybody else.

ARJUNE: Thank you. That's—totally understand that message, and I think it's something I think a lot of people need to hear.

Thank you so much for being a part of this. And I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording now.

[End of interview.]