Dana J. “Tom” Bevan ’69
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SpeakOut
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[DESPINA B. “DEPY”]

KARALIS: Hello. My name is [Despina B.] “Depy” [pronounced DEP-ee] Karalis, and I am the interviewer for SpeakOut. Today is December 7th [2018], 2:07 p.m., and I’m calling from Hanover, New Hampshire, at Dartmouth College.

BEVAN: Hi. I’m Tom Bevan, otherwise known as Dana [J.] Bevan, and I’m within Atlanta, and that’s where I am today.

KARALIS: Wonderful. Let’s start our interview. If you can start for me—like, start talk- —like, what was—where did you grow up?

BEVAN: I grew up out in the wilds of south Jersey, southern New Jersey, which most people don’t think there are wilds, but it’s pretty countrified, and actually I lived on a fish and wildlife management area [the New Jersey Wildlife Management Area], so it was even more—more out in the country. And the area was—still is—close to Delaware Bay and Cape May down in the southern part.

KARALIS: Was it—who was part of the family? How was it living there with them?

BEVAN: Well, I was out in the country. My father was the game—fish and game manager. My mother taught school and—she started teaching school again when I went to kindergarten. Took a couple of years off while I was—while she delivered me. And so she commuted into town, which was about eight miles away. And there weren’t very many people around where we lived. A few, but not—not a lot of people.

KARALIS: Did you—

BEVAN: So—yeah, go ahead.

KARALIS: So was it hard finding friends, then, when you were young,—

BEVAN: Absolutely.

KARALIS: —since it was—everybody was so far? Yeah.

BEVAN: Everybody was in town, and I had no way of getting in town except when my mother would go or my father would go. And, you know, I had cousins in town that—you know, so like every time we saw each other, one of us got stitches for something or other because we were so exuberant about seeing one another. But, yeah, it was pretty—pretty lonely. There were occasional times when I had a neighbor that would—or neighbors that I could play with when I was a kid.

KARALIS: So did—does that mean that you grew very close to your parents?

BEVAN: Not overly close, although I spent lots of time with them. I had to. I mean, eventually my mother enrolled me in school, actually the school where she was teaching, and so I would go in the car with her every morning and come back every night, so—which took a bit of time. So, yeah, I spent a lot of time with my parents.

KARALIS: What were they like? What—what are their names? What were they like? What did they do, other—

BEVAN: Okay. My father was Edward G. Bevan, and he—you can still see his name on a map of the area where we lived, the public hunting and fishing grounds, and it has his name on it. If you go to Google Earth or one of those, you'll see his name. And he was kind of—he—he was different, because he—when he was a kid, he had scarlet fever and osteomyelitis, which shortened one of his legs, but he—which didn't slow him down. I mean, he took great pride that he could, you know, walk as far as anybody and do whatever. But he was always concerned that he wasn't going to—that the—that the infection would come back and—which eventually it did when he was fifty-eight.

And he would—part of his job was he had a, you know, a pickup truck that went all around the fish and wildlife management area, and I would go, usually Saturday mornings with him, because actually he had to work a half day Saturday, and so I went with him to watch what he did. It was mainly setting up crops and areas where animals could

live, which were used for game—things like deer and—and small game.

My mother was a elementary school teacher, and she had—well, they both had lived through the [Great] Depression, so they were very conservative about finances and—and so on. And I wouldn't say we were rich. We had—both of them had good incomes for the time, and they both managed to—between the two of them, sent me to Dartmouth. They paid all the tuition, which is kind of amazing, considering what college costs these days.

So, let's see, what else can I tell you about them? My father was kind of reserved, and, you know, he—he liked sports, although he couldn't play sports, but he did teach me, you know, how to throw a baseball, how to play football and that sort of thing.

And my mother had red hair, and she was—she would sometimes get angry, not at me so much but at, you know, various issues. And he would always calm her down, and that's kind of—you know, they were a good pair.

KARALIS: Could you also tell me a little bit about you when you were young, living with your family?

BEVAN: Well, let's see, I was big for my age, and I was a little bit precocious, plus I had my mother, who was a teacher, and so she taught me how to read by the time I was four or five. And I was pretty active, running all over—all over the countryside.

And probably what you want to hear is the story of, you know, one day I went to my mother and told her that I was a girl, and not a boy. And that was—she, in her best schoolteacher unflappability, told me that—that that couldn't be because I was born a male and a male had certain—males had certain responsibilities, that I had to grow up and have a family and be in the military and be in—and get good grades in school.

And it was partly—although it was never said, but my father never could serve in the military because of his—because of his problem, but—so she said, "You couldn't—you can't do

that." So I went off, trying to digest that, I guess. At some time, you know, came back at her about it.

I should explain that I was living in the countryside, and we used to get magazines, so all the relatives, you know, second hand, and—because we were so isolated. And those—those are real paper magazines, you know, like *Life* and *Look* and *Time* and what have you. And one day I saw—well, it was all over lots of them. It was Christine Jorgensen, who was a transsexual, who had gotten operated on and taken hormones and had just come back from her operations in Denmark. And she was kind of the Caitlyn [M.] Jenner [formerly W. Bruce Jenner] of her day and became a celebrity and did things on stage and became very well known. So—you know, so I came back at my mother and said, "Well, look at her. She can—you know, she changed. She can be a girl, although she was born a male."

So to that, she said, "Well, if you—you can't do that. You have to hide that because if you—if it becomes known, they'll put you in the state mental hospital," which in our case was Ancora, New Jersey, "and you'll never see your friends again, and you'll never be able to play with them, and you won't see your family again." Which was kind of a—kind of severe.

And she said, "Well, when you're an adult later in life, you can decide whether you want to do that." So she didn't deny that it was possible, but—so for the next, oh, forty-five years or so, I lived in the closet as a cross-dresser. And more about that later, I guess.

KARALIS: How old were you when you first realized that you were a girl?

BEVAN: It was when I was four or five. It was the Christmas before my fifth birthday, because I actually have a picture of it that's on one of my books. And I remember vividly that—about being very happy having a pink little balloon that said, "Merry Christmas" and—and feeling good about that. So that's about one—and I learned later that that's kind of normal. Most kids realize they're trans by—starting at four and going to seven, although some don't come out till much later.

KARALIS: What—what do you think was it that made you realize?

BEVAN: For me, it was that I just—you know, I—I knew all about—or I thought I knew, but I know—knew quite a bit about gender behavior. I could see it all around me. And I just didn't think I fit in the masculine gender. I felt like—like I fit better in the feminine gender, which was confusing, to say the least.

KARALIS: How—how did you go through school, like elementary and middle school, high school—

BEVAN: Mm-hm, sure.

KARALIS: —with that on your mind?

BEVAN: Well, it was all very secretive, and I got into a bit of trouble on kindergarten because I didn't like being separated from the girls, and—but after that, I was really deep in the closet and didn't really cross-dress unless I was at home and my parents weren't there. So a bit like [W.] Bruce Jenner [now Caitlyn M. Jenner], I kept very careful note of where the—where I'd gotten clothes and other things from, and before they got home, I would put them all back where they came from, so it was all in the—in the closet.

But meanwhile, I did pretty well in school and—and played football and did enough to get into Dartmouth, and so I was headed for doing all the things my mother told me to do [chuckles], that I was expected to—to do, although she really didn't harp on them, but they never really left my mind.

So when I got to Dartmouth, it was—I wanted to ski, and I wanted to do rock climbing and that sort of thing, so I enlisted in ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] and—and probably overdid it my freshman year. I was skiing something like four days a week, which didn't do real good things for my grades.

So in ROTC I was playing football and—but I didn't really have a very good social life. It was pretty lonely. But I wanted—I wanted to be able to test myself and get—get as far away from my family and friends as I could to see—to isolate kind of who I was and what I was.

And so I did that, and eventually things picked up for me, and I got even—I got good grades and graduated about where I wanted to be, and had some fun along the way. But the—the loneliness of not really fitting in to either the masculine or the—well, the feminine culture wasn't there because it was still all male. I didn't really feel like I fit in there, so—

But I had a few dates. I probably can count them on two hands. Yeah, so it wasn't very many. And there—there was one girls that, you know, I dated more towards—when I was a senior, and eventually we got married.

KARALIS: Wow. If—

BEVAN: But, you know—go ahead.

KARALIS: Keep—you can keep going. I'll ask after.

BEVAN: Oh. I was going to say, so that's the third piece, you know, of having—being in the military, getting good grades, getting an education, raising a family. And, but—but all the while, I—you know, whenever I could, I'd be cross-dressing in—in private.

So—so I went to graduate school. The [U.S.] Army deferred me to go to graduate school, partly because the Vietnam War was winding down by then and they probably didn't need me, but also because they needed psychologists in the military to do research of various kinds.

KARALIS: If I can backtrack just a little bit,—

BEVAN: Sure.

KARALIS: Like, I want to go back to high school and just ask, like, why football? And what—what was the high school like, because that's the time that most kids go through puberty and sexuality starts budding, and more understandings—for other people—their understanding of gender happens during that time because of—

BEVAN: Right.

KARALIS: —social/cultural pressures, yeah.

BEVAN: Well, I'll go back even a little further than that, because I had a pretty good boy soprano voice, and I was selected to sing the eighth grade song that—that they'd selected—and a patriotic song, I should say. And I was selected as the soloist. And I just made it through graduation before my voice changed, and, you know, kind of in my head I knew about puberty, but I didn't realize it was going to happen. [Both chuckle.] And that was a—you know, that sent me reeling. So two weeks later, after the—after eighth grade graduation, I was a baritone and never really sang much after that.

So things were starting to change, and—but my—I guess my thought patterns were that I was still a woman, still a girl and that this body was,—you know, a male body was there. And sometimes I would take it for a spin to see, you know, what it was like, you know, to play football or hike or—or do physical things. But it was—I always—always felt out of—out of place, out of—that wasn't really me.

So—so in high school—the other thing that started happening in high school is I started—I knew I was trans, although the word hadn't been invented yet or had only just been invented, and I wouldn't have—to know about it. And so I divided—I had two sets of friends. I had a set of friends on the football team, and I had a set of friends who I was, you know, in the homogeneous groupings of the—of the college prep kids. And I don't think either of them knew about the other. I mean, there were a few overlaps, but, you know, I—I kind of did that in my—deliberately, so that people—I couldn't get close to someone long enough that they would find out that I was—what—what I was really thinking. And that contributed to the—to the isolation.

I actually—when I was in high school, I actually wrote a poem about it, and—and I was on the school paper at the time, and I didn't really want to get it published, but unbeknownst to me, the—the teacher who ran the paper published it, and it was all about loneliness and—I mean, I'm sure it was—you know, lots of teenage kids go through that as well, but—there was nothing trans about it; it was just

being lonely and after everybody goes home and what that's like.

But—so she published it in the paper, and some—some—one of my high school classmates actually dug it up for me a couple of years ago, so I still have it. But when my football coach saw it, it was—he hit the roof and—because he wasn't having anybody on his football team being sensitive about such things, and—but in the process, he talked—actually talked to my other teachers and—and found out that I had pretty good grades, so he started proposing me to various schools around the country. I mean, I wasn't that good a football player, but I had pretty good grades, and I was second in my class, tied for second in my class. And so that was a factor. I mean, I think I had college coaches coming to encourage me to go to various schools, Dartmouth being one of them.

KARALIS: How did you decide on Dartmouth?

BEVAN: Well, as I said earlier and I'll elaborate on it as—I wanted to get as far away from high school and home and—as possible because I really wasn't sure where all this was going, and I didn't want to be back in the same mental traps that—and physical traps that were involved there, and I wanted to find my own way.

And—but the—you know, and partly I thought that all that masculinity might cure me. And it didn't. Nor has it ever, for anyone.

KARALIS: It must—that loneliness and that pressure that you felt, that you had to conform or, quote unquote, "cure yourself"—that must have been really hard to experience through high school and college. It's a big thing to weigh on someone's mind.

BEVAN: Yeah, and, you know, I would get—my peers would, you know,—"encourage me" is not the right word; they would chide me for not—not having a date or not engaging in various things and—or not even being cognizant that I was supposed to go—you know, like, I was in a fraternity, and I missed the fraternity picture because I was totally out to lunch about, you know, that I needed to go do that. So that

was a little—a little strange. But considering I was playing football and doing all these other things, I had a pretty good cover story that—that maybe I was a little strange, but I was still masculine.

KARALIS: What was Dartmouth's football like in comparison to high school and, like, maybe the rest of the people that you saw around?

BEVAN: It was different. In a lot of ways, although Coach [Robert L. "Bob"] Blackman won a whole bunch of stuff as the coach and Dartmouth did pretty well—in a lot of ways, it was less advanced than my high school coaching and kind of dirty. There were plays that—that Blackman put in which were—today are banned. You know, you've heard—you probably haven't heard of, but there's a thing—there's a penalty called the chop block, where one person stands up, one of the defenders, and the other one goes for his knees, which is responsible for a lot of knee injuries. So it's now illegal almost everywhere. But that was one of his standard blocking patterns.

And he did some other things which I—which I didn't agree with ethic—ethically. But—so—and [chuckles] we had just started getting those plastic helmets, and so they taught us how to stick the helmet in the middle of the player for blocking and tackling, which was not the technique as I learned in high school. And now actually Dartmouth—the coach at Dartmouth and other places are going back to that tackling technique, where you don't lead with your head because they've—you know, because we know about concussion problems now.

So to some extent it was regress—but it was—certainly the players were much better, and it was very well organized. And some parts of it I enjoyed. But some of the remainder stuff, I don't particularly—I didn't particularly agree with the coach about.

Now, one of the things that I—I just finished my fiftieth year class reunion blurb, and one of the things that they were interested in me talking about was my father and his foreman from back in New Jersey had taught me how to be a single-wing center, which means that there's a direct snap

back to somebody in the backfield. The quarterback doesn't get the ball. There is no quarterback. And in that kind of football pattern, the center has to be a lot more skilled and lead runners and—and—and do lots of things that they don't do in the—in the split T, which is now what we have today.

But—and—and the single-wing was dying out at the time. You know, most colleges and high schools were stopping to use it. However, our biggest rival when I was a freshman was Princeton [University], and they were still using it. So I got invited—Princeton was the last game of the season, and it was to determine the Ivy [League] title as well, as it turns out, the Lambert Trophy, which is the Trophy for the best team in the East.

And so they invited me to come practice with the varsity because I could—you know, I knew this black art of being a single-wing center. So that was kind of fun.

And one of the things that happened was that we were in the field house, and there were no goal posts in the field house, of course, and they said—they blew the whistle, and they said "We're gonna kick field goals now." And I'm saying, *Well, okay.* [Chuckles.] *That's fine by me. I know what to do with a field goal.* You know, I snap the ball, prepare to get pummeled and—by the people on the other side of the line.

And so I snapped the ball back, and nobody touched me. And, in fact, I initiated contact with the person in front of me, and then—and hit him, and they blew the whistle then. They said, "No, no, you're not supposed to do that." And what they were doing was they were building a pyramid for one of the players—I think it was Sam Hawkins [sic; Samuel M. "Sam" Hawken, Class of 1968]—who was a safety at the time, to come run up and jump on the backs of these people who were right across the line from me and try to block the field goal.

The back story to that is that at the time, they were just introducing soccer-style kickers, and they had—and Princeton had one that set all kinds of records, and they needed a weapon to—to deal with that. So it was kind of—so I knew what was coming when the game started. I didn't get

to go to the game, of course, but I knew what was going to happen beforehand, but I couldn't tell anybody.

But—so that was an interesting experience. But I can't say that the rest of my career playing football was as enjoyable. But—for the reasons I just gave you.

So—so playing football was interesting. I got to go see some places I'd never seen before, and—but I was glad it was over.

KARALIS: [Chuckles.]

BEVAN: And let's see—and so in ROTC, we—they had a summer camp between junior and senior year, where it's essentially boot camp except you learn a whole—you're supposed to learn a whole bunch about the Army in this case. So I got really high grades on the final exam, but—after this eight-week boot camp, but I was not what you call a leader.

And so when we got back to campus, they didn't make me an important officer. I became essentially the treasurer of the—of the ROTC detachment, and—whose only responsibility was to put on a—the ROTC Military Ball. But that suited me fine because that's—that was fun.

And—oh, so you're probably going to ask me about my fraternity life.

KARALIS: Also, if you can tell me what year you started at Dartmouth, just so I can have that context.

BEVAN: Oh, okay. I started in '65 and graduated in '69, and—can we take a break while I get some water?

KARALIS: Yeah, of course.

BEVAN: Okay, I'll be right back.

KARALIS: Yeah.

[Recording interruption.]

KARALIS: I'm recording again.

Thank you for, like, sharing so much already.

BEVAN: Well, hopefully I can help.

KARALIS: Right. If you could tell me more about which fraternity you were in, why you joined it, what was it like?

BEVAN: [Laughs.] Well, my—it's all very interesting. [J. Christian] "Chris" Miller [Class of 1963], who was one of my fraternity brothers, four years before me, or five years before me, wrote *Animal House*, and my fraternity is still trying to live that down. But [chuckles]—well, I basically joined it because, you know, I had no—I mean, you had—back then there was no way to have a social life without being in a fraternity, or it was very difficult. And my roommate and guys down the hall all joined, and those were kind of the people I knew. And, you know, they seemed nice enough.

And, of course, the—Chris Miller got a lot of that stuff wrong, a composite of all of the—all the things that went on in fraternity life during that era, not at our house.

KARALIS: Which fraternity is this, again?

BEVAN: This was—it started out being Alpha Delta Phi, and we went local while I was there, and—because we were—we didn't—we felt like we were struggling enough financially that we couldn't afford to send money to some national that we weren't—you know, they weren't giving us any support financially or otherwise. So we went local.

And I actually had to write the pledge manual. But—so it was –I guess to try to compare it to other places, it was—other fraternities—I mean, there were a couple of fraternities which we really hard-core drugs at the time—you know, in the sixties—that did happen. We weren't like that. There was a lot of beer drinking going on. And we weren't—you know, we weren't the Big Men on Campus, and—but we just had a lot of fun together at various times.

So—I won't tell you all the fraternity stories, because they're pretty juvenile, but—

KARALIS: I would like to hear at least one or two, if you would love—if you would like to share one.

BEVAN: Oh. [Chuckles.]

KARALIS: [Giggles.] No—no pressure, though.

BEVAN: No pressure, huh? Well, let's see. What's the most benign one I can think of? Well, we used to go on—we used to go on road trips because there were no women there. And we would go to Skidmore [College] occasionally. And so we had this one trip where the Skidmore girls—well, we—we started driving, and there's a highway called the [Adirondack] Northway, which you get on to go down to Skidmore once you're in New York State.

And so we found the first bar off of the—off of the Northway and had a few drinks, and then the girls down at Skidmore were kind of antsy about all that, so they came up and joined us. [Both chuckle.] And so we hit every bar off of the Northway till we got to Saratoga Springs [New York], which was—that was kind of the date, actually. But—so that was—there was a lot of bonding going on with the Skidmore girls that way.

That's the most benign one I can tell you.

KARALIS: I appreciate it.

BEVAN: So the other thing that was going on campus was—remember, I'm in ROTC—was the antiwar demonstrations and—and talk. You know, I was there when they took over the administration building. And one of my fraternity brothers actually was in there. But I could see then that something was changing about the academic—something changed after that that—the—there was a—I don't know what—a mentality or a—I wouldn't say it was far left, but it was certainly that the faculty was going to control things and that the—and they egged on these demonstrators. And then, of course, they abandoned them afterwards. So—so that was kind of—that was disconcerting. And I didn't think too much of it at the time, but today I might.

And then I went on to Princeton for graduate work, and they firebombed the ROTC building there, although I wasn't in—although I didn't have to go to ROTC there. And here I am, as a second lieutenant on a campus with all this protesting going on, and so I tried to hunker down as best I could, grow my hair out long and—and ride through it all.

But I could see then, even at Princeton, that there was a lot—there was a change, a mindset change away from academics, away from learning to politi- —political things. And as I can see that on campus these days, although I don't go on campus that much, that seems to have taken hold on a lot of—a lot of campuses.

KARALIS: Did you feel—like, since you were in ROTC, did you feel personally unsafe because of the demonstrations? Were the students negative towards other students that were in the ROTC?

BEVAN: I wouldn't—well, not at Dartmouth, but they certainly were at Princeton. Mostly there was—the attitude was, "Well, we don't wanna mess with those guys because it would be—it—it would be bad for our cause, because we're not really opposed to them, we're opposed to the war."

And—but—yeah, so one of the things I had to do when I was a graduate school was, to keep my deferment, to keep from going in the Army, going on active duty, was to go to my department chairman, who was a guy named Leon Cayman, and had him sign this paper saying that I was making appropriate progress towards getting a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy]. And Leon Cayman had a background where he was then at Harvard [University] and was a member of a communist cell, so I hear, and he—he left and went to Canada, eventually did McMaster [University] and became a department chair up there.

And so I was—every time I went to go do it, I didn't know what he was—you know, which side of the war he was on and how he felt about me being, you know, here I am now, a first lieutenant in the Army, and I didn't ask him until the last time he had to sign the paper, and after he signed the paper, I asked him how he felt about all that, and he said, "Well, I'm just glad to keep somebody else out of Vietnam."

So it's kind of the same way now. I mean, most people are not opposed to the military people, they're just opposed to wars and conflicts that are unnecessary. And Vietnam certainly was one.

KARALIS: What *was* your stance on Vietnam?

BEVAN: Well, at first I was—first I was in favor of it because I was a Cold War warrior, you know? I could see that we had these struggles and—with the Soviet Union—and that didn't—never went away. But after a while, I came around to thinking that this is—this is just a—not the place to fight, and it's not the way to do it and—because it's not—you know, if you want—if you want to win a war, you pick the battlefield where you have the best chance of winning, and Vietnam certainly was not that. So towards the end, I was very much opposed to being there.

KARALIS: Just to talk a little bit more about ROTC, was a big reason why you were a part of it—like what you were saying, that your mom wanted you to join the military and be part of that?

BEVAN: Yeah, and at the time, you had to make a decision of, you know, whether you get drafted out of college or whether you go into the military, so I—and I—and I enjoyed it. I mean, I enjoyed skiing and doing all the things that they did. And I learned a lot, which, when we get to my later life, held me in good stead. But, you know, if I had to do it again, I probably would do it because it was a good learning experience.

KARALIS: I'm—I'm glad that you found some—like, you found it positive, and you got good skills out of it.

BEVAN: Mm-hm. Yeah. And I should say that, you know, in the movie *Animal House* they make a mockery of the ROTC detachment, and [chuckles]—and the ROTC attachment was across the street from my fraternity, so I'm sure that's where he got his—got his ideas from.

KARALIS: The ROTC and the frat life did not contradict each other or interfere?

BEVAN: No. I wasn't the only one in my fraternity in the detachment, so, you know, that never was a problem.

KARALIS: Other than that part of your Dartmouth experience, what were—you—you talked a little bit, briefly, about how the culture around classes changed, or, like, education has changed. What were the classes like then? What was the thing that interested you the most?

BEVAN: I was just interested—well, psychology certainly, but, I mean, I would just go to listen to other—other lecturers. There were some great lecturers on campus, and when I was—when I visited for the first time, they took me into a physics lecture, and it was given by this guy named [Francis W.] Sears, who wrote the book—the classic physics book for many years was *Sears and Zemansky* [*Sears and Zemansky's University Physics*], and I actually heard him lecture. And he was—he was great. Admittedly, he was lecturing on something that I wasn't [chuckles]—that I knew *something* about, but—you know. And there were other people: Jeffrey [P.] Hart and other people on campus, outside of psychology, that—they were—that I really enjoyed.

But most of the psychologists were great. My—I wouldn't call him my idol, but—yeah, I guess I could—was [W. Lawrence] "Lawry" Gulick, who was the department chair. And he was a no-BS scientist. And, you know, this was not soft underbelly psychology; this was pick an [unintelligible] in the year and try to understand how people perceive things. And—and that's the kind of—that's the kind of thing I wanted to do.

So, yeah—so there were—who were the other ones? Oh, C. Rogers Elliot, your friendly teacher/scholar for the term, who taught PSYC 10 [Psychology 10] for years and years. He was great.

And I have to say most all the professors were—were—in the psych department were great. But it just seemed to me, both there and at—at Princeton, that the faculty and the student bodies were all headed in a political direction and not in an intellectual direction.

KARALIS: You prefer the intellectual?

BEVAN: Well, that's what I—when I got there, there was a guy named John—John Sloan Dickey [Class of 1929], who said, "Our business here is learning." And I believed that, and I think that's what school should be about. You got time enough to go do politics later.

So—there was something else I was going to tell you about. It'll come back to me.

But—so I went on to graduate school and eventually went into the military for—well, they didn't need me. That was part of it. So I volunteered, actually, for a second time to stay in the military and got a position at a chemical warfence [sic]—defense lab and did some pharmacology work there. So—

Well, I should say in graduate school—yeah—that—that—the other thing that I should say is that I wanted to do research on transgender things, but—and I started heading in that direction, and the faculty told me that wasn't appropriate because nobody was giving money—research money out for studying transgender people. And to some extent, that's still the same today.

So in graduate school I got into feeding and drinking behavior, which there's always—always interest in because of obesity and that sort of thing. So—but, you know, I was trained as a physiological psychologist, and that lasted for—I did a bit of that, but then the lab animals got the better of me, and I got asthma, and I had—I had to start working with people, of all things. And—so I became a human factors psychologist and worked on mainly military projects to relate computers to people and vice versa.

KARALIS: Was there any research at all on being transgender or that sort of thing that you were able to find, or did that desire stay with you, to do more research on it?

BEVAN: Oh, yeah, it stayed with me. There was not very much in the literature. There was—you know, there were only occasional books that I could find in libraries. Most of the libraries, if they had books, they weren't in the stacks; they'd been stolen or the librarians kept them under the desk. But there was very—precious little information. And what there was,

was pathological, that you know, transgender people were diseased somehow, had a behavior disorder.

And that continued pretty much until, oh, when did I get to Virginia? Nineteen seventy-six, I guess. And I found a couple of books in the library, at the—at the Arlington Public Library, actually, that—one was called *Conundrum*, and it was by a woman named Jan Morris, and she's kind of an idol of mine. And she, as a—well, she transitioned, and—but that's not all she was.

She was a very famous travel writer, and one of her claims to fame was when the queen, Queen Elizabeth II, got coronated, which was back in '52, maybe? Thereabouts. And he was with the [Edmund P.] Hillary expedition that had scaled Mount Everest, and he—he and his guides literally ran to the telegraph station to make sure that that announcement was made on her coronation day. And so at least kind of famous for that, she is.

And she got back to England and continued writing and eventually went to Casablanca [Morocco] and got general plastic surgery to make her into a female. And at the time, the British law required her to divorce her wife, and they'd already had three children, I believe. And—but—so they did that, but they stayed together, and it's now been—they're still together, actually.

KARALIS: Wow.

BEVAN: And when it became possible for them to get re- —well, I guess they had civil unions first. When it became possible for them to get a civil union, they got a civil union. And so they've lived together since then. And she was recently—about two years ago, she was offered—well, whatever the equivalent of a knighthood is. I guess it's a damehood or something, and—by the queen, and she didn't know whether to take it because she's a Welch nationalist, and didn't know whether she wanted to do that. [Chuckles.]

And part of the reason she's, you know, a—you know, an idol for me is that I'm Welch, too. Bevan is a Welch name. So she did go get her damehood, whatever you call that, an OBE [Most Excellent Order of the British Empire] or

something, and shook the queen's hand. And the queen was kind of confused as to who Jan Morris was, but I'm sure somebody explained it to her after a while.

So—so that—that was one book, and I still have a copy of it, and I still quote from it because it was very well written

And then there was another book by a psychologist and his wife on—on—on transsexuals. But those are the only two books I found until about 1976, '78. If you look in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, it's all pathological, and it was mentioned once in the—I was all ears about it—in the Abnormal Psych course I took at Dartmouth. And the only thing I got out of that was, is that it occurred in other places I the world, which to me indicated that it might be biological.

So, yeah, until I'd say really the turn of this century, there really hasn't been a whole lot of science going on about transgender people, and—but since then, I've been rushing to read everything I can get my hands on.

KARALIS: That's awesome. I—I hope more science comes out and people actually fund important research.

BEVAN: Well, one example is it's—it's not happening, and it's going to get worse. One example is we really need a full DNA scan of transgender versus non-transgender people to try to look for markers, genetic markers that differentiate the two. And recently, this world-class consortium of geneticists applied for an NIH [National Institutes of Health] grant, and they were turned down. So most of the research isn't about basic research, about causation or—it's mostly about things like HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and—and whatnot.

But there is some research that goes on in foreign countries. They're less puritanical than we are. And so there has been some progress, notably in Holland (the Netherlands) and the UK [United Kingdom] and in Australia and a few other places. But it's all done off the cuff. It's not fund- —it's not big, funded research like we really need.

KARALIS: And you think it's important that we have this understanding.

BEVAN: I do. There's some people who don't think that or are afraid of that understanding. I'm not afraid. I *want* to know what it's all about—you know, why I am the way I am. There are other peo- —there are some people who are afraid that if we find, say, DNA markers that—you know, that—and you can—that—and you can do designer babies these days with the genes that you want, that transgender people will be excluded and won't—won't be around anymore.

And then there are others who say, "Well, if you had a DNA test, then people will know who are the pathological people and who aren't. So there's—there's some fear about that. I'm not afraid of that. I'd rather know than not know.

KARALIS: When—so—so now you have embraced and accepted that you are trans, and you're doing amazing things with it, but when you were—which I want to ask you about a little bit later, but when you were at Dartmouth, I imagine since you came in hoping, quote unquote, "to cure yourself," that it must have been very—very difficult to deal with those feelings and the knowledge that you're a woman and an all-male school.

BEVAN: Yeah, it was, and there—well, and there wasn't much [unintelligible] that cross-dress, frankly. And—but that helped me be—I would say that helped me be sure that I was trans and—because I was so isolated and depressed and lonely. And so it was clear to me from that experience that—that I needed to do something differently or—but I didn't do it later until 1990 or so, but—when I started coming out, but I had other things to do in the meantime, so—like, win the Cold War [both chuckle softly] or at least contribute to it ending.

KARALIS: Priorities.

BEVAN: Yeah. And, you know, by now I had two kids, and they needed—they needed a soccer coach, and somewhere in there I squeezed in fourteen years of football officiating, so imagine if they had known that there was this transgender person in knickers officiating football games or coaching soccer, for that matter. So that was all done, you know, in secrecy.

KARALIS: So you continued cross-dressing as much as you could.

BEVAN: No, well—the first cross-dresser I ever met in—probably 1992, and—at the first support group meeting I went to. And I never—I'm sure I had met some but didn't know it. But, you know, I had no community. I had no one to talk to about it. Oh, yeah, I'm in the military, and you can't go see shrinks about being trans or you—or you'll be thrown out. And if you—later on, when I was doing military work, you'd lose your job because you were trans, if you went to a shrink. Or your security clearance, which is the same as losing your job.

So it wasn't until—I couldn't really see a mental health person until they relaxed their standards to say, well, if you're tak- —if you're having trouble with your marriage, you can go see a shrink. And so I took advantage of that. I wasn't having trouble with my marriage at the time, but I did need to see a shrink. And she didn't care, you know, why I was there. But that helped me a bunch. So, yeah—so it was a long, dark, secretive pathway for all those years.

KARALIS: How did you find any chances to cross-dress since you—at Dartmouth it must have been difficult, and then you were at grad school and you were married.

BEVAN: Yeah. Well, I did find occasional, you know, times. And at some point in my marriage, my wife was going—she was going to graduate school and was commuting to—well, we lived in—we lived in—in Maryland. She was going to [John] Hopkins [University], so she would be—she was going to University of Maryland—that's right. So she would be gone for two or three days at a time when she was doing her graduate study, so I had some time then.

But, yeah, it was—it was hard to—to do that. Later on, when I was, you know, working as the consultant for the [U.S.] Department of Defense [DoD], I used to keep two—I used to keep an extra suitcase in the car, which was filled with feminine paraphernalia, and when I'd get to where I was going, I had at least a few hours of—of relaxation and feeling authentic.

So it was—it was possible to do that a little bit, and—although frustrating sometimes. I found that if I didn't cross-

dress, I would ju-—you know, I would just be on edge. It would—it took about six weeks, but by the end of six weeks, if I hadn't cross-dressed, I was beside myself, I guess is the way to put it.

So—so somewhere along in there I switched wives, and my second wife didn't care that I was a cross-dresser, either before or after I married her, so that got—that got a little easier, too.

KARALIS: So, then, let's—let me ask you more about grad school and why you decided to go to Princeton and study—continue studying psychology and getting a Ph.D. and how your wife and children played into that.

BEVAN: The reason I went to Princeton was that Lawry Gulick had gone to Princeton and had done some really good work in hearing, and physiological work on how the ear works and how we hear, and I wanted to go—actually, his major professor was still there when I was there. So that was the primary reason I went there.

I didn't have children or a wife until about halfway through graduate school, and then I got married, and then it was, like, eight or nine years later that we had kids. It was not instant, for whatever reason. But, you know, despite the urging of both sides of the family, we had not produced kids. [Both chuckle.] But eventually we did and made everybody happy, at least for a time.

KARALIS: Grad school is busy.

BEVAN: Yeah. Yeah.

KARALIS: How was Princeton different from Dartmouth?

BEVAN: How was it different? The social structure was a little different, but I can't say that it was *that* different. And the student body was about the same, as far as I could tell. There were more graduate schools—you know, engineering and the—you know, it had a big engineering school and physics things going on, a lot more research going on than at Dartmouth. And that's still the case. Which means less opportunities to go work with people who were—I don't want

to slight the Dartmouth faculty, but, you know, people who have large grants and are doing large science mean that you get to do large science, too. So—so that—those were some of the differences.

And I could—I think that Princeton resisted the political—the political trap for the faculty and students a little longer, but they were pretty close.

KARALIS: What was—I—I just want to hear just a little bit more about your research and your Ph.D., like, thesis, dissertation or whatnot. I—I—it just sounds very interesting, the little bit that you mentioned.

BEVAN: Well, I was interested in, you know, brain mechanisms, physiological mechanisms that underlay your life, feeding and drinking behavior. And at the time, I was—one of the things we were trying to explore was if you stimulate an animal in various parts of the hypothalamus, the lower part of the brain, that you could induce them to eat and drink and that they would press a bar to get more and more stimulation there.

And what we didn't realize then, but subsequently, is we were tapping into the dopamine system, which mediates the pleasure of consummation of behavior. In this case, it was eating and drinking behavior, but there were people doing—down the hall, doing sexual behavior in rats and doing—dealing with other kinds of behaviors.

And—so—yeah, so I enjoyed doing that. I got to do a bunch of brain surgery, and that continued while I was in the military.

KARALIS: What was your—your social life like in Princeton?

BEVAN: Well, we had—I had a wife by then, and we had friends, graduate student friends and—that we could go to and, you know, have social events with, so it was a little less isolated. And my—and I lived closer to home in southern New Jersey, so I could go down there occasionally and see all my relatives. So it was less isolated, it was less lonely, and I had a wife, a companion. And—I mean, I think we could have done a lot more in terms of when New York City is right

down the road, you know, you can do a lot more in terms of culture and so on. But we kind of stayed to ourselves.

KARALIS: Just because that's who you are as people? Or—

BEVAN: Yeah, I think so. I mean, I think so. And I was busy. You know, I was working like a dog. And my wife was working. She was working in a bank, and, so a big night out was to drive [chuckles]—was to drive to Trenton, New Jersey, where the gas prices were—I remember one time they were down around eighteen cents a gallon, and the difference between the gas price in Princeton and the gas price in Trenton was enough for us to go to McDonald's and have dinner, so [chuckles]—so it was pretty simple stuff.

KARALIS: Were there any—like, how you were talking about professors at Dartmouth that were amazing and helped you out in your undergrad—were there any professors that you worked with or that you met in Princeton that—

BEVAN: Mm-hm. Yeah, my—I guess my idol there was a guy named Julian Jaynes, who had a somewhat checkered psychology career, and we got to be great friends. We would go—go out to eat and out to drink with one another, and we played tennis together. And he had—he knew all—he knew everybody in psychology. He knew the history, at least in the United States and, to some extent, [Great] Britain. He knew them all. And—and that kind of demystified some of the—some of the things that I found out in psychology, that they were just, you know, regular people.

And he had—there's now a Julian Jaynes Society of people who—he published a fairly popular book on consciousness [*The Origin of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*] that I got to read before he published it, but—and he always tried to keep me oriented toward psychology as opposed to—as opposed to other, you know, things that would distract from—I mean, I could have done pharmacology, for example, but—you know, that was more understood than the basic understanding of behavior.

KARALIS: That's where your passion is.

BEVAN: Yeah. And he—you know, so I learned a great deal from him. He—and although I'm not a member of the Julian Jaynes Society, I—they've never invited me, as far as I know—but, yeah, I was heavily influenced by him. Actually, I quoted him in some of my books on being transgender and—where—typically because of the consciousness part of—you know, there's this old issue about whether being transgender is a lifestyle choice and, you know, if it's a conscious choice or not. And we explored all of that in terms of consciousness and choice and so on.

And the simple answer is choice isn't conscious, and there—there's psychology that show that, so, you know, it's not true that transgender people make a conscious choice; they just know what fits them best.

KARALIS: Yeah. During that time, what—what years were you in grad school?

BEVAN: From '69 to '73, and then I went into the military from '73 to '76.

KARALIS: How—and that's when you were working to end the Cold War?

BEVAN: Yeah, some of it, yeah. I didn't get into the real nitty-gritty until after I got out of the military, but we were working on—at the time, there was a lot of worry about chemical warfare use and—there still is. So from time to time, I had to use some of that knowledge.

But when I got out of the military, I started working for DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency]. You know what DARPA is? DARPA is—DARPA *did* invent the internet (as opposed to [Albert A.] "Al" Gore [Jr.]). [Both chuckle.] And it—it is an agency that—that's high-risk, high-payoff technology, like stealth technology and smart weapons and all—all kinds of innovations that are radical.

And then I started also working for—at the same time, I was doing work for the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and the Defense Intelligence Agency, so—and they were interested in high-tech things as well. One of the projects I got involved in there was trying to give intelligence analysts access to

their what we would call e-mail today. They called it “cable traffic” then. Literally, they had to go down in the basement and pull up these reams and reams of paper with cable traffic on them from places all around the world and try to make sense out of it. So we gave them a system for getting that digitally.

And then I got into working with aircraft and remote sensing and some of the more exotic things that were a part of winning the Cold War.

KARALIS: What was it like working with those agencies?

BEVAN: Well, it was a little weird. [Laughs.] It was—it was different. I mean, here I am, a graduate student, and I’m thrown right into, you know, high-tech kinds of things. And I was a psychologist, not an engineer or a physicist, so I had to learn a lot of engineering and physics and biology, and try to relate that to people.

Yeah, so I got into a lot of that because, for example, people would come up with new kinds of sensors that would make pictures. You’ve probably seen some of them. And so the question is: Before you buy a sensor to hang on an airplane, you got to show that it’s actually useful. So I did a lot of work, utility work to convince sponsors that it was worthwhile building those—those kinds of new sensorship technology.

And then I got into—surprisingly, stealth airplanes and stealth other things need to have eyes, so they have radars, and they have, you know, other kinds of sensors, so I got into the business of dealing with sensors on board those kinds of exotic aircraft.

KARALIS: That’s very—that’s really cool [chuckles] that—the things that you were involved in.

BEVAN: Oh, it gets better. [Laughs.] Go ahead. I’m sorry.

KARALIS: No. No, tell me more. I want to hear. [Chuckles.]

BEVAN: Well, eventually I got into the—the culmination of my Cold War career was trying to deal—trying to find—or be able to find mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles, and that

required a whole bunch of sensors and a whole bunch of technology development. And I ended up managing all—a lot of that. And we eventually—that was the last thing in the Cold War, was to demonstrate to the Russians that they couldn't protect those—those mobile missiles.

So—I have a friend who—when I first met him, he was a major in the [U.S.] Air Force, and now he's a two-star general in the Air Force. Whenever—whenever I see him, he always introduces me as the guy who ended the Cold War, and I always introduce him as the guy who ended the Cold War. So—which was satisfying.

But that led to—that led to me coming out, because I no longer had an obligation to—to continue to do some of the things I was doing, and I had to find other—other things to do that were meaningful. And I tried a few of those, but eventually—one of the things that I was missing was not being authentic with myself, and so about that time was when I started going to support groups and—and learning—meeting other people, learning about being transgender, however I could.

And so starting in 2005, I had the opportunity to teach biopsychology for a person—for a professor who was on a sabbatical, and I actually found some—in the process of getting my lecture notes together, I actually found some—some research on—biological research on being transgender. I haven't looked back. You know, I've been hard up against it, so—so now I'm in my fourth book of trying to summarize all that.

And, you know, somehow I got elected to the [chuckles]—my—one of my current jobs, which is as—on the Board of Directors of USPATH [U.S. Professional Association for Transgender Health], which is involved in setting standards of care for transgender people. So—I'm sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself probably.

KARALIS: No, no, no. It's your interview. It goes wherever you want it.

BEVAN: Okay.

KARALIS: But how was—how was coming out?

BEVAN: Well, I did a bunch of work in secrecy, going to support groups at first, and—but actually, I—I for so long had learned the, from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that, you know, cross-dressing was pathological and therefore I was pathological. And so the first support group I met was actually a BDSM [Bondage/Discipline, Dominance/Submission, and Sadism/Masochism] support group. Because I figured I would fit right in there because I'm a pervert and they're perverts, too.

But it turns out they're not perverted; they're much—they're quite rational. And while they tolerated me cross-dressing, they didn't really much care about that. And I didn't really much care about BDSM. But I did get a lead to a transgender support group from that and—and gradually, you know, spent more time doing that and reading and so forth.

And then at some point, when I was—when I was able to talk to a psychologist because of my security clearance—because my security clearance forbade that. I learned a lot more, and I learned a lot more about myself and what I wanted to do. And so—for—for a while I—once I moved to Atlanta—the time in between there and now—we haven't discussed where I was, but I was in D.C., of course, working at DARPA and CIA.

And so after I moved to Atlanta, I found a really—a good mental health professional, who's now retired, Virginia Earhart, and she was the first really knowledgeable person that I met who was a medical health professional. So she helped me a great deal. And at some point, she said, "Well, you know, you're kind of down in the dumps and depressed and frustrated, and, you know, I think you ought to try some—some low-level hormones, some, you know, estradiol."

And so she sent me to this endocrinologist, and the endocrinologist had misunderstood the instruction [chuckles] and instead of getting the low dose of estradiol, I got the full dose of hormone therapy drugs—hormones and drugs, that—almost six months—six weeks later, I get totally panicked, because my body was changing. I mean, the first

thing that sort of changes is—are your nipples, and while I knew lots of biology, I didn't know that your breast grew from the nipples out, so that really freaked me.

And so I went off the hormones, which I wasn't supposed to do. And the next time I saw my—my counselor, Virginia, she said, "Well, how's it going?" And I said, "Well, I went off it." You know, and she hit the ceiling. And she called the endocrinologist, and *she* hit the ceiling, because you're not supposed to casually go on and off medications like that, particularly those kind of medications.

And so I got—I got a chew-out from the endocrinologist, and she started me on lower doses, but eventually I got back up to where I was before. I mean, it just—it made me feel good. It made me feel like I was doing something for myself and that—you know, finally, after all those years, I was doing something that made me feel authentic and relaxed and happy. And so—so then that was how many years ago? Ten years ago? And so I've been on hormone therapy ever since.

KARALIS: And you're happy.

BEVAN: Yeah. I mean, I could give you all kinds of pharmacological and other explanations, but the hormones just seem to be right for me and for other people as well. And, you know, my body has changed. And I've got through some other procedures. But it's all—it all makes me happy at the bottom line. And so I can tell you about some of those, but you probably have other questions to ask first.

KARALIS: I would—I would love to ask about those, but, like you said, first: How—how did your wife and children, your first wife and children react?

BEVAN: Oh. Well,—

KARALIS: Also, when was it that you started coming out?

BEVAN: Let's see, I got divorced in '98, and—but I actually started going to support groups probably '92, right after the Berlin Wall fell, and—whenever that was, '91, '92. And the—the breakup of my first marriage wasn't about being transgender;

it was—we just, you know, got—grew apart. And my—and one child laughed at it, and the other one threw a fit on the floor. [Chuckles.] But at that point, they—you know, I hadn't told them or anybody told them that I was trans.

There came a time, though, when, after I wrote my first book, I sent them a copy and wrote them a long letter, and—they're both health professionals now. One's an ob-gyn [obstetrician-gynecologist]; the other one is a nurse anesthesiologist. So I imagine they've seen a few transgender people in their education and practice. And they've reacted pretty well to it. They haven't—you know, I'm discussing with one of them what hair color I should dye my hair and stuff like that. So—so it—I didn't have a problem with that, although I didn't—you know, I wasn't forthcoming for a long time.

KARALIS: And how did you meet your second wife?

BEVAN: I met my second wife—she was a lawyer from the company I was working for, and we had gotten into a—we had bid a contract with a small business, and after the small bus- —after the proposal won, the small business dumped my company, and—which is a violation of DoD procurement rules. And so they—my wife at that point had just opened up a private complex business litigation business here in Atlanta, and they were the go-to people for those kinds of things. And so that's where I met her.

And then later, probably two or three years later, after I got separated, I met her again in the [Ronald] Reagan [Washington National] Airport, and we started dating. So—so that's—that's what happened there. But it was never—I told her on the second date that I was trans. She didn't care.

KARALIS: What made you feel so forthcoming this time around, to be able to be so open and share that?

BEVAN: Oh. I don't know. [Both chuckle.] Part of it is it's all in my biography. You know, anybody can read about it that's got fifteen dollars and can buy the book. But—so there's no secret about any of that now. And, you know, I'm happy to share that with anybody that's interested.

The important thing—one of the important things for me was that my second wife, you know, was accepting of me being trans, and we never had any problem with that at all. But that's—I got to say that my experiences of that may be unusual.

KARALIS: Why is it unusual?

BEVAN: A lot of—there are a lot of people, either married or courting or whatever, that don't want anything to do with trans people as mates or spouses and, you know, don't want to date them, feel awkward around them. And that's a big problem for transgender individuals: How do they maintain a social life. And actually, I'm in a study of that right now, at the University of Washington. And so that's one—one of the core problems that transgender people face, even though they go through all the other stuff.

So—I can tell you about the other stuff if you want me to.

KARALIS: Do you—yeah. Yes please.

BEVAN: So I've had electrolysis. I've had all the hair taken off my face, and some other places, and—which consists of them sticking a needle next to the hair follicle and putting electrical current through it to kill the hair follicle. One hair at a time. And so it takes a while.

And in August I had breast enhancement surgery, so I now can wear dresses and things that I couldn't wear before without some difficulty. And so I'm—I have some plans for the future, but it's going to take me a while to get ready for the next set of operations.

KARALIS: What is the next step?

BEVAN: Well, I have to—there are couple of things I need to do to be able to get transgender genital plastic surgery, which is otherwise known as "bottom surgery." And if you watch [*I Am*] *Jazz* on TV, you'll know about one of them, which is doctors won't operate on you unless you're down to a particular body mass index. Essentially, you have to lose a whole bunch of weight, and that's going to take some time.

And the other is I have more electrolysis to go before the surgery. So I'm going to do that, and then there's a thing called facial feminization surgery. There are a lot of procedures that I could have done there, but I think I'm going to just restrict the ones to—to deal with age rather than feminization. You know, like, I have bags under my eyes, like all seventy-one-year-old people do. So—so that's—you know, that's not going to happen until second or third quarter of next year.

KARALIS: It—it sounds very expensive.

BEVAN: It's very expensive, and it's very painful, and you don't do it casually. And for that matter, getting breasts was pretty painful, too, not to mention the electrolysis pain—being painful. But—so—you know, despite what people say, you don't go do this stuff casually or without being afraid of what you're going to—what's going to happen to you.

So—but fortunately, I have some people here that support me, and—and—well, they're all trans, mostly trans. And so we have a pretty good community here. And—

What else did I do? Oh, I just got back from Argentina. [Chuckles.]

KARALIS: That's cool.

BEVAN: To go to the WPATH, which is the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. They had their annual—every two-year convention down there, and it's all science. And, man, that's—like, I ate all that up. It was, you know, just what—it was perfect. And I'm still revising my book to deal with some of the things I learned there.

KARALIS: That sounds great. Is it in different places every year, you said?

BEVAN: Yeah. Last time—well, let's see, there are two organizations. WPATH—last one was in I want to say Amsterdam [The Netherlands], and the one before that I think was in Thailand. Or maybe it's the other way around.

And then there's this new organization, which is part of WPATH, which is just for the United States, and we've had a meeting so far in L.A. [Los Angeles, California] last year. And next year the meeting is in [Washington] D.C. And I'm part of the planning committee for how to get to—how to—how to interact with various communities—

KARALIS: How did you get involved?

BEVAN: —for that event. How did I get involved with that?

KARALIS: Yeah.

BEVAN: I volunteered, I guess. I never expected that, you know, they would—I would be elected. It was—it was—it was an open election, so—of the 800 or so people on—well, there's more than that there now. There's maybe 600—1,600 people. But I got votes, so I got voted into office. It's the first political thing I ever won.

So at anyway, so I'm trying to figure out who makes for good speakers and how to avoid political traps and trying to involve the black community and the VA [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs]—the veterans and the military and a whole bunch of other communities that we need to interface with.

KARALIS: I imagine keeping politics out, because of everything that's happening in politics right now, will be difficult.

BEVAN: Yes. And even, say, a welcoming speech by a city official could be, you know—could be a political event rather than just, "Hey, we're glad you're here." Yeah, so I've been trying to find—I wouldn't say fortunately, but there *are* Republicans whose—who had transgender kids or transgender grandkids, and the Democrats seem to be supportive, so I'm trying to get some kind of balance between them. But it would be crazy to be in D.C. and not have—you know, not involve some of the people there.

KARALIS: What—like, because—I—I don't know much about Georgia, but I know that it's in the South, and—[Both chuckle.] What—what is it like being trans in Georgia?

BEVAN: Well, Atlanta is kind of an island. There's—if you go forty miles in either direction, you're in hostile territory as far as LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] people are concerned. But there are a lot in downtown and surrounding areas of Atlanta. So there are people here who—I mean, I think there are more here—I forget my statistics, but the concentration here is more than many other cities, whether in the South or North.

So—so there are places to go and events to go to, and there are—I mean, it used to be you just had support groups that you could go to and—not in every town, but in some towns. But now that's been superseded because there are—there are meet-ups, for example,—there are two or three organizations that have transgender meet-ups. There's—there is a support group I'm a member of that's run by the Methodist Church in Decatur [Georgia], and—surprisingly, because Methodists are—their official position is they're against transgender people. So the local people are gracious enough to host our support group, and they're very supportive. What it usually takes is that—and in this case, was there's someone with a transgender son who's in the church and sees a need for providing that kind of support, so—

And then there are a bunch of professional transgender people that I hang out with. We have lunch every Wednesday, and we go to the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. And so business wise, we pretty much are accepted, I would say. I mean, there are some people who—like, for example, I was in a—an office suite where I rented an office, you know, and there are other businesses there, and they wouldn't let me go to the bathroom that I was supposed to go to. So I left. You know, if they don't want my business, I'll take it elsewhere. And they said that if I used the ladies room, that it would ruin their business. So—so there are people like that, you know, here.

But—and—and I hang out with a lot of tech people, and a lot of younger tech people, and they're very accepting and don't really care much whether you're trans or not, so—but, like I said, if you go in any direction for more than a few miles, you're—you're liable to run into rejection, I guess is the best way to put it.

KARALIS: Why live in Georgia?

BEVAN: Because my wife lives in Georgia, my current wife. I moved down here to be with her, and I started working at Georgia Tech [Georgia institute of Technology]. And she's now in assisted living. She has Alzheimer's [disease], and I live across the street from her and go see her just about every day. But—so—you know, so that's why I'm in Atlanta. That's why I'm in Georgia, because she looked for a job where I was in Washington, and I looked for a job in Atlanta, and I landed the job first in Atlanta, so here I am.

And—but I have friends here now, I'm—so I'm—I'm—I'm doing okay. So if I had my 'druthers, I don't know that I would live in Atlanta because of the political problems, but I'm happy for now.

KARALIS: Are you—are you still working at Georgia Tech?

BEVAN: No, I left Georgia Tech in 2005. That same two-star general I talked about—his name is Glen [D.] Shaffer—spirited me away from Georgia Tech to go start a research and development activity in his company. And we took—we took that company to—well, they call it mergers and acquisitions. We sold off that company to a larger company.

And then I went to another company, and that got sold off. And so now I'm just running my own business. But—so I'm in the private sector, pretty much. While I get invited to go over to Georgia Tech and Emory [University] and other places, that's not where I—not where I hang out.

In the last two or three years, I've been working on artificial intelligence systems—you know, why would a psychologist do a thing like that? Well, it turns out the brain already has an intelligence system, and there's lots to learn from it, and there's a lot you can take from biological systems and apply it to computer systems. So I've been doing some artificial intelligence research, under contract with—with the Army.

KARALIS: Never left the Army.

BEVAN: Well, not—I've worked for the Army and the Air Force, a little bit for the [U.S.] Navy, some for the Marines [U.S. Marine Corps], CIA and DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency]—

Oh, I didn't tell you this: The other thing I did was I went to Ukraine for three years. I shuttled back and forth. I started the first nonprofit research institute in Ukraine, which was to deal with Chernobyl [the catastrophic nuclear power plant disaster] and the environmental insults that the Soviets left. So I actually had an apartment—when you see the—when you see downtown Kiev, I had an apartment right near there and—and worked off and on for three years. And the institute is still alive and well, although I'm not part of it anymore. So that was my first experience out of the—behind the Iron Curtain. How's that?

KARALIS: Have you worked in other places abroad?

BEVAN: Not—not consistently. I did a bunch of work for the Air Force in Germany because one of the—one of the airplanes they fly that collects data—it used to have a data link to what came down in Germany. But it's gone now because, you know, like all good airplanes, they all have WiFi. [Both chuckle.] So—but I did spend a little time in Germany and a little time in the U.K., on joint technology projects.

KARALIS: So what else are you doing to fill up your time?

BEVAN: [Laughs.]

KARALIS: [Chuckles.] I mean, that's very busy, artificial intelligence, but—

BEVAN: Well, when I—after I get this book written, which is due the 22nd of February—the current book is for providers. It's for doctors and psychologists on how to treat transgender people.

Once I get this one done, I'm going to write fiction, either—and/or either books and/or script, because changing people's—and changing the culture, their attitudes towards transgender people requires art. It requires getting them to feel differently. And I can't do that so much with science. Although science is very inspirational to me, it's not

inspirational to a lot of other people, so I've been taking some script-writing courses and been dabbling a little bit with—with fiction. So—so that's probably what I'll do until my publisher calls me up and says, "Have we got a book for you to write!" At least that—that's my current plan.

KARALIS: Art inspires people, and we do need a lot more books by—and—by trans authors with trans characters.

BEVAN: And the goal is to—the goal is to write things that aren't full of transgender tropes, that are—you know, that are the obligatory putting on makeup and the obligatory dressing scenes and all that stuff, because that's not what transgender people are all about. But the moviemakers like that because it's lascivious, I guess. So—but, you know, I want people to feel the right things about transgender people.

KARALIS: See them—trans people as people, not just a trope.

BEVAN: Right. Exactly so. And—although they come in all—I mean, part of the problem is capturing what a transgender person is like, because they're all different. [Both chuckles.] You know, they're all different. They're—the genes that make us transgender don't respect any demographic or—or—or any geographical region, so they're quite different. But what I want to do is try to capture the—the insights that they get from being transgender.

KARALIS: Mm-hm. Hmm. So what would you tell maybe, like, a college student or a grad student that is trans but is in the closet? Do you have any recommendations for them?

BEVAN: Knowing what I know today, I would say, you know, "Come out as soon as possible." I mean, if I had done that when I was a student or a graduate student—not that—in my era, I might have gone to the loony bin, but today, you know, I would say, you know, "Go see somebody who's an expert in being transgender—you know, a mental health expert." But there aren't a whole lot of them. Trying to find them might require some digging, but the best place to do that is to go to your local PFLAG [originally Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays; now Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays]. Have you ever heard of PFLAG?

KARALIS: No.

BEVAN: They used to—it was originally for parents of gay and lesbian kids, but now it's very heavily populated by parents of transgender kids, and so they can tell you who are the right providers to go to. Or—or most any transgender support group can tell you. But I would say, "Just don't delay because the longer it goes, the—the harder it is to come out and be authentic."

KARALIS: Mm-hm. Transitioning, I imagine, is also a very hard choice for many trans individuals.

BEVAN: Right. And—and the whole family transitions with you, so it's what you got to remember, that your mother and father and siblings will all be influenced, and some of them will react well, and some of them won't, and some of them won't react will and later come to accept you. But most of the people that you know now will accept you, because they've known you before you came out. But it's not easy, I wouldn't say, but living in the closet is not the place to be.

KARALIS: It's hard to keep a such big secret.

BEVAN: Oh, there's a book by—what's her name?—by [Anita E.] Kelly that—called *The Psychology of Secrets*, and she goes into all the things that happen to you, both physiologically and psychologically when you have to keep a secret. And they're not good. And then if you give it to somebody else, tell the secret to somebody else, then they're—they have all that problem, too. So, you know, it's better to live openly if you can.

KARALIS: Do you think things are better now, that people will be more accepting and families will be more accepting?

BEVAN: Yeah, I think they are. I think there's enough information out there now that—and what it is—what happens is that all it takes for you to have a trans relative, and then they're—you know, the number of transgender people is probably about one or two percent of the population, yet every one of those people has parents and siblings and relatives and friends, so the numbers aren't really one or two percent; they're much

higher than that. And so it's—acceptance and tolerance are growing, although they could be quashed. But some people are willing to risk that.

KARALIS: Hopefully, things will keep getting better.

BEVAN: I think so. I always have to write in the last chapter of the book about what the future—they always want to know what's going to happen in the future, and clearly in the near term, younger people don't care that you're transgender, you know, and they're the future, right?

But, on the other hand, they don't—they don't pay much attention to gender, either, so we may see a weakening of a gender system, along with greater acceptance of gender diversity—

KARALIS: So I have one last question.

BEVAN: Mm-hm.

KARALIS: Why volunteer to do SpeakOut? Why do you hope you will get out of it or the people listening will get out of it?

BEVAN: Well, I think—I'm going to my fiftieth reunion, right? In June. I think people need to know about—you know, that there are transgender people there and we survived, and there are probably more now, and you—you know, you just got to deal with it. I mean, transgender people are real people, and they're going to be in your student body and your faculty and hopefully in your administration. And, you know, you need to tolerate and accept them.

And we don't want to go back, is the other thing. I mean, things were—I probably glossed over what it was like back then, but it was really bad when I was growing up. But it's gotten a lot better.

KARALIS: If—I said "one last question," but one last question.

BEVAN: Yeah.

KARALIS: If you could elaborate a little bit more on what it was like back then, because a lot of young people don't know.

BEVAN: Well, as I was being born, the—let's see, how do I say this? There's good news and bad news about psychiatry. The good news is that they try to do something to help trans people, even back into the thirties. The bad news is that in order to do that, they had to pathologize us—in other words, make us so that people believe that we're pathological or diseased or whatever.

And as I was growing up, it really *was* the case that I would have gone to a loony bin. And at the time, they were doing things—they were doing unmentionable psychiatric treatments to not just transgender people but other people as well, usually to depressed people as well, and—including brain surgery and electric shock and lots of other stuff. It was really bad, and we—we can't go back to that.

And we can't—and even up until a few years ago, there was a lot of pathological—pathologization, if that's a word, of transgender people for fun and profit by the various communities, more like they didn't know any better. And I think some of them are coming around to—you know, to know that transgender people won't stand for that. You know, we've—we're—we're competent people in a lot of different ways, and they're in deep trouble if they—if they come after us.

KARALIS: You're not going to take it lying down.

BEVAN: Pard' me?

KARALIS: You're not just going to lay down and allow them to walk all over you.

BEVAN: No, no. No, when the litany of—recent litany of—of bad things happening to transgender people by the government started, I said, you know, "We're just not gonna stand for it. There's gonna be blood on the street if this continues." And that may still happen. We're not going to put up with this.

KARALIS: Any last thoughts that you would like to share?

BEVAN: No, I think that's about it. I think—I think people just need to know what it was like back then and how it's different now,

and both good and bad. I mean, I think things are much better for LGBT people, but they're not so good for—not as good on campus for—for free- —freedom of thought and intelligent conversation.

KARALIS: More conversations, real conversations should be had.

BEVAN: Right. As opposed to, "You're a bad person. I'm not gonna talk to you," which goes on all the time. So—although I've been—I've been lucky because that's only been—I've only peripherally had to deal with that. And next September, all the academics are going to descent on D.C. for a meeting, and I'm supposed to plan part of it, so it'll be fun.

KARALIS: I hope you have fun and you—you speak your mind and they listen.

BEVAN: Yeah. And I wanted to thank you for your questions and your consideration and your interest. And I hope we can—if you're still interested in the subject, I can feed you more information, or if you're interested in other subjects that are related, I can help you.

KARALIS: I would—I would love that. I think that would be amazing.

I'm going to sign off for the interview, but if you can stay on the phone just a little bit more,—

BEVAN: Okay.

KARALIS: —I would like to talk to you.

Okay. Well, thank you very much for your interview and your time, and for the vulnerability and the honesty.

BEVAN: Well, thank you.

[End of interview.]