

Richard C. Morell, Jr. '86
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
SpeakOut
June 1, 2019
Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

[SOPHIA T.]

KINNE: My name is Sophia Kinne [pronounced KIN-ee]. I'm in Rauner [Special Collections] Library at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. The date is June 1st, 2019, and I'm interviewing—

MORELL: Richard [C.] Morell [Jr.]. I'm in my home in Laramie, Wyoming.

KINNE: Okay. Great. And so, Richard, if you're ready, we'll just get started.

MORELL: Sounds good.

KINNE: Okay. So I'm going to start off with some questions about your early life, and then we'll get into your time at Dartmouth and after, and now.

MORELL: Okay.

KINNE: So can you tell me, where are you from?

MORELL: I'm originally from Denver, Colorado.

KINNE: And what was it like there, growing up?

MORELL: Well, I grew up in suburbs of Denver, and, gosh, it was probably a lot simpler time than it is today. Let's see. I'm the oldest of three kids in my family, and I—well, for me, the big thing was school and getting good grades, obviously.

KINNE: What kind of school did you go to?

MORELL: I went to a public school. I went to public schools all the way, from elementary through—through high school. And when I was—well, I lived in a suburb called Northglenn until I was twelve, and then we—my family moved from Northglenn to what was then known as Littleton. Today it's actually part of

a—of a new city—relatively new city called Centennial. But when I was growing up, it was Littleton, and I went to Littleton public schools. My high school was called Arapahoe High School.

And when I got to high school I felt I pretty much blossomed. I got into extracurricular activities, and I kept maintaining a pretty good grade-point average.

But it was also about that time that I figured out I was gay, and I instinctively knew that I couldn't really tell my family about that because they were Catholic. And when it did come out, it was—it was uncomfortable and rather difficult for me and kind of increased my level of distrust. But I came to Dartmouth kind of afraid [chuckles] that, you know, I would not be able to be myself, and yet I was going there to try to *be* myself, of course.

But over time, I—I had just decided—made the decision to—eventually I came out of the closet and—

I'm sorry, I have a dog here that's just coming up here.

KINNE: No problem.

MORELL: [Chuckles.] But, yeah, so—but, yeah. What else can I say about that?

KINNE: Yeah, you said your parents were Catholic. Was that a significant part of your, like, time growing up?

MORELL: Yeah, I grew up actually thinking I wanted to be a priest.

KINNE: Oh, wow!

MORELL: And that was sort of an amalgam of a lot of different things. At one point, I wanted to be a priest. At another point, I wanted to be a writer and a doctor. And today I'm—I'm still a writer, but, you know, I'm still trying to break into the business, as they say.

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: But—

KINNE: And you said—sorry. Yeah, go ahead.

MORELL: But, yeah, so Catholicism was a big part of my upbringing, and what was interesting was that when I did figure out that I was gay and I went and talked to the priests, they actually accepted me. They didn't bat an eyelash. It seemed like they knew other gay and lesbian people, and they were very caring and accepting of me.

It was my parents that weren't. They actually had to, like, go out of our parish to actually an entirely different faith to try to get somebody that would, like, tell me I was bad. [Chuckles.]

KINNE: Oh, wow!

MORELL: Which was pretty crazy. Yeah, they took me to a Seventh Day Adventist minister, and that was—that wasn't cool. They were trying to railroad me.

KINNE: And this was—

MORELL: On my own, I went to a—mm-hm?

KINNE: Sorry. This was during high school?

MORELL: Yes, it was my senior year.

KINNE: Okay.

MORELL: Yeah, it was—there were some other things that were going on in family life that were difficult, too. My father had lost his job and hadn't told anybody in the family about it. My mother discovered it, and I think that trying to get me to be something else than what I really was, was somehow a distraction from the other things that were happening. But we eventually lost the house, and my parents had to move into an apartment. So it was kind of a rough time in my family.

KINNE: Yeah. Okay. So—and you said, though, at the same time, you were—you were blossoming in school, so—

MORELL: Yeah, yeah, I did.

KINNE: —what kind of—

MORELL: I did really well. I was an AP [advanced placement] kid I did [unintelligible] classes, and I did drama. I was in the marching band and the concert band.

KINNE: What instrument do you play?

MORELL: I played the bassoon and the clarinet.

KINNE: Okay. Cool.

MORELL: And I was on the speech team, and I went to the state speech tournament all three years that I was a student there, Colorado state. And, yeah, so I was—I was also Mr. FBLA [Future Business Leaders of America], and I went to [American Legion Colorado] Boys State. I mean, I did a lot of the stuff that—

KINNE: What was the—what—what was the phrase?

MORELL: Mr. FBLA, Future Business Leaders of America.

KINNE: Oh!

MORELL: That was my—yeah, my high school—my high school. I competed in that with the—with their—that conference. And I was—let's see, what else was I going to say? Yeah, and I went to Colorado Boys State in my junior year. So—yeah, and I—a couple of my colleagues and I got to chair the mock UN [United Nations] assembly that we—they had at the school every year. So I did that my senior year as well.

KINNE: Wow. So it sounds like you were very [chuckles] equipped when going to Dartmouth for your—

MORELL: Yes, I was very active, and—

KINNE: —extracurriculars.

MORELL: Yeah. I just had—I had a lot of fun. High school was fun. I kept—nobody knew that I was gay in high school. I figured it out when I was— probably the second half of my junior year,

and then my senior year, I was reading books and trying to figure out things.

And it sort of showed up in curious ways. I—I found in my advanced placement English class, we were supposed to pick different pieces of literature to write papers about, and I was looking for books that had themes of homosexuality in it. My—my teacher was hip to it [chuckles], but I think she was also in a lesbian relationship with a history teacher for many a year, so—

KINNE: Okay. So were you ever worried that—like, about being at school and kind of figuring it out at the same time, but other people also figuring it out, or was that less of a concern?

MORELL: Well, I was—it was—it was a concern, but it wasn't—because I was going to be graduating soon from school. It was, like, *Well, I'm kind of, like, letting go of all that*. And I actually did tell two people that I was gay. They figured it out, but it turned out that one of them was gay himself, so—we all sort of find each other, which I find really cool. [Both chuckle.] You know, that's how it is. And if you hang in the theater, you're probably going to run into some other gay and lesbian people, probably.

KINNE: Probably. [Chuckles.]

MORELL: So—yeah. Yeah, in the arts and in general. So—but, yeah, I came out—I didn't really fully come out at Dartmouth until after I directed *Bent*. But that was—you know, I felt it was important to do that play in the climate that we had back then.

KINNE: Okay, yeah. We can start talking about Dartmouth, probably.

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: So do you know or do you remember why you chose Dartmouth?

MORELL: You know, it was funny. When I started looking at colleges, Dartmouth was the first one out of the chute, and I—I looked at the brochures, and I liked what I saw. I liked how the brochure kind of made me feel. You know, I know that all

those college brochures are kind of like—they're—they're commercial advertisements for the schools, but because it was the first one, I kind of compared all of the other schools, their materials, to Dartmouth in the back of my head, and I kept coming back to it, going, *I think that's where I want to go*. And I made the decision to apply early decision, and—and I got in, so—but it was my first and only choice.

I did have backup ideas for other schools in case that didn't work out, but Dartmouth was my first choice, and I couldn't really tell you why other than just this intuitive fit. And I will say, from having gone to my college reunion, my twenty-fifth reunion—for a while after I graduated from college, I didn't really think—really understand why I went there, but then when I went to my reunion, I went, *Oh, I fit in with these people*. [Both chuckle.] I have—I have—my mind works in similar ways to people from school, so—and, you know, I've always trusted my intuition.

KINNE: Yeah. I was going to ask if you—when you got to Dartmouth if you—like, if it was, like, what you had expected or if it was different.

MORELL: Well, I tried not to have any expectations. And one of the things that was—was interesting was that because, you know, I was a smart kid and kind of stood out in my high school in some ways, I was just another smart kid on the campus. You know, I wasn't anything special, really. And that was a little humbling. I wasn't, like, the big dog in town anymore.

And then I would hear people talk about what stuff they had studied in their schools, and then, like, *Oh, wow, I feel like I'm way behind!* [Laughs.]

KINNE: I guess some things never change. [Chuckles.] Yeah.

MORELL: [Laughs.] You identify, huh?

KINNE: I do.

Did you do [Dartmouth Outing Club First-Year] Trips when you got to Dartmouth?

MORELL: I did the Freshman Trip. That was—I was overweight when I first got to Dartmouth, so that was a little tough for me. I went on what was called an “easy trip,” but unfortunately our camp leader was, like, this expert hiker, and he kind of left us in the dust. [Laughs.] You know, we were supposed to take a full day to get to our camp, and we—we got there by noon. [Laughs heartily and long.] So it was kind of funny [chuckles], in retrospect. And I was meeting the different people, and it was—it was a good—a good introduction.

I have to tell you something interesting, though. When I got to the airport at Logan [International Airport] and I got off the plane, the two first people that I met—one of them was Beth Robinson [Class of 1986]. I don’t know if you know who she is, but she was the attorney that represented the couple that went on to win the big—I’m trying to remember what exactly it was. I think they were the first lesbian couple to successfully win the right for a civil union, [cross-talk] in Vermont.

KINNE: Oh, wow!

MORELL: Yeah. And—and—

KINNE: So she went on to do that? She hadn’t—that wasn’t—

MORELL: No, she hadn’t—

KINNE: Obviously.

MORELL: Yeah. And so—I mean,—and she came out of the closet after college, and then the second person I got involved with were gays. [Laughs.] The three of us were waiting for the plane. You know, we were joking and calling it New England Scareways back then, Precision Airlines.

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: But, yeah, it was—I mean, it was like a little sign. It was, like, *Well, I’m in the right place*. Yeah, I mean, then I got here and got to Dartmouth and saw the stuff that was *The [Dartmouth] Review*, and I was sort of prepared for it, but I also really wasn’t. And—but—yeah, I was—yeah, I was—that was an interesting thing.

KINNE: So, yeah, you could definitely talk—talk more about that. I was going to ask—

MORELL: Yeah, I—mm-hm.

KINNE: Go ahead. Yeah, just go ahead if you want to talk about it.

MORELL: Well, I remember wanting to reach out to the—the GSA [Gay Student Association] back then, but I was a little afraid to. And I remember also in my freshman orientation that there was a—sort of an ice-breaker thing. With an RA [resident assistant] met with a bunch of us that were in the dorm, and we were given this exercise that had, like, different types of people that—I mean, I remember that one of the names was Dan Dunkham [spelling unconfirmed], because he was, like, “the gay one,” the one that was seen going in and out of meetings of the Gay and Lesbian—the Gay—the Gay Students [sic; Student] Association meeting.

And then there was another person there named Canby Righteous [spelling unconfirmed] and that person was somebody that was strident in their attitudes and opinions. And we were supposed to go through and rate the different individuals, where, you know, we had our greatest and least respect for them. and I didn’t want to put Dan Dunkham the top; I put him, like, number three. But I put that Canby Righteous person at the very bottom. And people were kind of surprised with that. They were like, *Well, I expect people to have strong opinions.*

But I was growing up with people who had strong opinions against *me*, so I was interpreting it kind of like putting myself in, like, the person that would be, like, opposed to, if that makes any sense.

KINNE: Yeah. This was, like, an activity at—on your freshman floor?

MORELL: Yeah. Yeah.

KINNE: Interesting. Did you have UGAs [undergraduate advisers]? Was that the—

MORELL: That's what—UGAs, yeah. That was what they were called. I forgot that, yeah.

KINNE: Yeah. Wow.

Okay, but, so I guess—when you got to Dartmouth, you mentioned you wanted to reach out to the GSA? Were they, like, a—like, a pretty visible group on campus when you got there?

MORELL: They were—no, they weren't. But then somebody from my class, actually, Dartmouth '86, stepped forward to be the chair, and he actually was, to undergo a lot of, you know, attitude and prejudice, but he was doing it because it was the right thing to do. And I actually did meet him. I arranged to meet him when—in the winter term of my sophomore year. And I just said, "You know, if anybody asks why I'm sitting with you, I'm, like, doing a paper." [Laughs.] Because I was, like, nervous. He—he laughed. He understood.

You know, I told him my story about what was going on with my parents. You know, my little crushes that I had on people. I didn't—I didn't really get a chance to express those feelings as much, because I was scared, you know, so I just kind of kept my crushes to myself.

But—but then I watched his example, and I watched other people start to come forward and be more present as members of the GSA, and I did go to meetings in my sophomore—

KINNE: Sophomore year. So that would have been '83?

MORELL: Nineteen eighty-three, Mm-hm—'83, '84. And that was when I directed *Bent*.

KINNE: Okay, so—okay, right. So were you, then,—was—well, I guess—a couple of questions: Was—was this person that you—you met, the '86 who was chair—was he in the, like, the administration of the GSA during the time that the first *Review* article in '84 came out? Was he one of the—the names that was—

- MORELL: Yeah. You mean the one with—where the—where Teresa Polenz [Teresa A. Delany (nee Polenz), Class of 1987] recorded the meeting?
- KINNE: Exactly, yes.
- MORELL: Yeah. Yeah, he was there, and—I mean, I wasn't there, but I—I know—I know the people that were there. And David was there, and I know—and I'm pretty sure [D.] Jay Berkow [Class of 1985] was there, too, because he was the president that year. Because I ran into Jay, like, the day after, and he—he was going to try to flag this—flag Teresa Polenz down in the hallway at the Hop[kins Center for the Arts], but he was a little stressed, of course.
- KINNE: Yeah. Okay, and so you said you directed *Bent*.
- MORELL: Yeah.
- KINNE: When did you start getting into theater at Dartmouth?
- MORELL: I got in right my freshman fall, actually. I got cast in *Inherit the Wind*, and then I did the freshman Cabaret. I was also in the Frost Play Competition [sic; Frost Student Playwriting Competition].
- KINNE: Frost Dodd [sic; Frost and Dodd Student Play Festival]?
- MORELL: Hm?
- KINNE: The Frost Dodd Competition, or was it just Frost then?
- MORELL: Well, it was just Frost back then.
- KINNE: Oh.
- MORELL: The Frost Play Competition, yeah. I was—I was an actor in that. And—and then I was off—I—I—I didn't want to go back home when I was at—at—at college, and it was an interesting thing that I arranged my first eight terms in a row. People thought I was going to graduate early, but I took a year off, my junior year basically, and—but I was also in the summer cabaret. And then I—I kept—I kept with theater

involvement mostly as an actor, but then I got into directing. I directed *Bent*.

KINNE: What year was that?

MORELL: That was '84.

KINNE: Okay, also '84. And how was that experience, directing? Did you find the theater department or—and the people to be pretty supportive and welcoming?

MORELL: They were welcoming about the play, itself. I did run into some issues with the rocks in the rehearsal rooms.

KINNE: The [Dartmouth] Rockapellas?

MORELL: No, no, in—in the play—when I directed it, I only directed the second act. Most of the second act takes place in the concentration camp, and it involves moving rocks back and forth across the stage.

KINNE: Oh, okay. Sorry. Got it.

MORELL: So, like, physical rocks.

KINNE: Mm-hm. Mmm!

MORELL: So we went and got a whole bunch of rocks. And, you know, unfortunately, we didn't think. We were impractical theater kids, and we just put the rocks on the floor in the rehearsal room, and, you know, we created big holes in the linoleum. So, yeah, we kind of alienated the—the tech staff, but—

And then the department professors were a little nervous about us in the cast getting maybe death threats, but that didn't happen. But it was interesting because, you know, we—we had three performances, and then the third performance, we turned away as many people as got into the theater. It was—it was well received.

KINNE: Wow. Was it performed in the Moore Theater?

MORELL: It was performed in the Bentley [Theater].

- KINNE: In the Bentley. Okay. Wow. Okay.
- MORELL: That was the black box theater downstairs.
- KINNE: Yeah, we still—yeah, it's still—still there, still well used.
- MORELL: Nice.
- KINNE: Yeah. It's a beloved space.
- KINNE: It is. For me, too.
- Were you involved with the Dartmouth Players at all?
- MORELL: Yeah. Actually, I was—I think I held an office my senior year. It might have been secretary.
- KINNE: And how—how was that experience? I know—they don't exist anymore, so I was just curious about what your time with them was like.
- MORELL: It was—you know, I don't remember a lot about it. I mean, it was more like a social group. Yeah, I don't remember that the students did very much with that.
- KINNE: Okay. That's okay.
- MORELL: So I don't—yeah, I don't remember that much about it. I did a bunch of other things. I was in the [Dartmouth College] Glee Club, and I was in a frat.
- KINNE: Which frat were you in?
- MORELL: Alpha Theta.
- KINNE: Okay. And how was—how was that? Was that a good community?
- MORELL: Yeah. Actually it was, and it had quite a—quite a nice representation of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] kids.
- KINNE: Yeah. That's—from what I understand, it's had that—that history for a while, or that kind of image, I guess.

- MORELL: Yeah. Yeah, when I was there, it was the—kind of the hip frat.
- KINNE: Did it feel different—like, significantly different from other fraternities, or were they all [cross-talk] kind of different?
- MORELL: Oh, goodness, yeah, yeah, because it was co-ed. Just by that—just that by itself, the energy was quite different than—I felt when I would go to, like, the all-male fraternities or even the sororities, it was a very different vibe.
- KINNE: Could you—yeah. In, like, what way? Just the—
- MORELL: Well, it was looser. It was obviously more accepting. It was—people in the—I'm kind of thinking of the different co-ed fraternities that I was part of at that time. I mean,—I mean, my fraternity but then Phi Psi [sic; Phi Sigma Psi, now Panarchy] and Phi Tau, and I think there was one other one that used to be an all-male fraternity and they changed it to a co-ed. But all of them had this sort of, like,—a more—I don't know, I guess a more—easier sense of camaraderie and community. I mean, maybe I'm being biased, but—
- KINNE: No, I mean it makes sense.
- MORELL: Yeah. Some of the all-male fraternities had a kind of a—I remember Sig Ep [sic; Sigma Phi Epsilon] seemed to have sort of a progressive vibe to it. But [Dartmouth] Beta, of course, was the football frat. And I didn't really know anybody at Alpha Delta, the [*National Lampoon's*] Animal House frat. [Chuckles.]
- KINNE: Right.
- Okay. Well,—oh, I wanted to circle back—I think—so you mentioned that you came out after you directed *Bent*? Or during it? Was it during?
- MORELL: Yeah, I was—I was—I was coming out during it, but I really didn't actually [unintelligible] personally come out until after it was over. It was an empowering experience. And it carried over into the [Dartmouth Players] Summer Rep[ertory] that

year. And the '84 Summer Rep was—was a pretty great experience, too.

It was at that point that I realized that the thing about theater that I found the most attractive was the—the feeling of the community that came together to put on the Summer Rep. That was—that was one of the best experiences of my life.

KINNE: Yeah. Wow. Okay, so that was your—that would have been your sophomore summer, right?

MORELL: Yes, sophomore summer.

KINNE: And I guess—what did I want to ask? I guess—oh, I guess I wanted to ask about *The Review* more a little bit.

MORELL: Sure.

KINNE: Like,—so after the initial 1984 article, I—I was looking at old *Review* articles—

MORELL: Oh, wow!

KINNE: —and I saw there was—yeah. I was looking pretty deep, back in the—the archive and seeing that there was just a lot of articles following that one—like, just them still—like, just dwelling on this incident and saying other stuff that was—felt irrelevant but was just continuing to be printed.

MORELL: One of the things that people kept saying that—to sort of justify that they thought it was funny, and I, of course, never thought that that was funny at all, and—I mean, I think that that's kind of classic authoritarian strategy of, you know, using the—an idea of humor to belittle and degrade. And so—but, yeah, I—

KINNE: So *The Review* was saying it was funny? Like, people in *The Review*—

MORELL: Oh, people—people—people in the dorms would just, like, pick it up and read it and laugh,—

KINNE: Okay.

- MORELL: —you know, and—yeah, that’s—I wasn’t talking about the people on the staff there.
- KINNE: Right. Okay. And so was it a kind of a constant awareness of, like, *The Review*—
- MORELL: Mm-hm.
- KINNE: —and, like, printing stories about the GSA? Or it was just, like, kind of a constant thing, or—
- MORELL: Yeah. And, I mean,—and then there were different places where the attitudes were a little more retrograde. When I was there, there was also another, —I don’t know if this was [unintelligible] your ever heard about, but a few of my friends—a few of the people that later became my friends as part of the GSA attended, like, a couple of mixers to attract potential pledges for Tri-Kap [Kappa Kappa Kappa], which—I don’t know if that fraternity still exists, but during the time that I was there, it started to turn pretty right wing.
- KINNE: It does still exist, yes.
- MORELL: It does still exist. Okay. And it was—there were—there ere people that had been basically told to leave because they were a little too foofy for the place. And—and then there were some people that were depledged. Several people were just—they had been members, and then suddenly the—the leadership decided that they weren’t good enough.
- KINNE: So the understanding—okay, so, like, the understanding on campus—or, I guess, amongst—by you, anyway, was that they were—they were depledged because they were gay, you think?
- MORELL: They were either depledged because they were gay or perceived to be gay. There was one guy who was straight, but he’s—he’s kind of a quiet, kind-hearted person, and he palled around with a couple of the different gay people, so it was guilty by association, I guess.
- KINNE: Wow.
- MORELL: Yeah. So it was just like a purge, basically.

- KINNE: Yeah. Right. And that was around the time that—that Panarchy started? Is that right? Or is that later?
- MORELL: I've heard of Panarchy—
- KINNE: Because I know they had a few—I think they had a few, quote, “purges,” actually, throughout—throughout the years.
- MORELL: [cross-talk] Yeah, yeah. I mean, is Panarchy a—another frat?
- KINNE: Panarchy was, like, a—is a house that kind of started in resistance to Greek life but kind of functions in the same way that a fraternity does.
- MORELL: Oh, that's great. Oh, that's great. There was a place for that, for sure.
- KINNE: It's an interesting space, yeah.
- MORELL: Well, Phi Psi and Alpha Theta were sort of the refuge for that sort of thing back when I was there.
- KINNE: Mm-hm.
- MORELL: And even Phi Tau. You know, they were, like, the nerdy, computer, geeky fraternity, but, you know, there were quite a few LGBT people in that fraternity as well.
- KINNE: Yeah. And so when—also when *The Review*—I mean, you mentioned being scared to talk about crushes and just, like,—
- MORELL: Mm-hm.
- KINNE: —when you arrived to campus, was—was it mostly fear associated with the publishing of *The Review* article, or was there also, like,—
- MORELL: The fear of my family finding out. I mean, I was told that if I came out of the closet, I'd be disowned.
- KINNE: Okay. Wow.

MORELL: I mean,—so that was—I got over that over time. Yeah, that was hanging over my first few months there.

KINNE: And what *did* happen with your family when you eventually did come out?

MORELL: It was a non-event from that point on. But, you know, they—but the—the—the memory of the—of the—the difficulties did cause me, later in my twenties, to stop contact with them for a few years. Yeah. I've been intermittently estranged from my family members. That has to do with other things, in addition to the gay thing.

KINNE: Mm-hm.

MORELL: So, I mean, my fears were related to family as well opprobrium on the campus.

KINNE: Yeah.

All right. Well, we could talk more generally about Dartmouth, I guess. Do you have—were you happy with what you chose to study?

MORELL: Yeah, actually, I was. I started out wanting to do the—like, a double major. I was very ambitious. I wanted to do a double major in English and biology. And then over time, I was taking a lot of drama courses, and I developed my—a passion for playwriting, actually, while I was there, so I—I ended up being a drama major with a modification in German. And I did go on the Foreign Study Program to Berlin in January of '85.

Academically, I—I have to say that I only had maybe two classes out of all the classes that I took that were not as good. One of them was with a professor who found out he didn't get tenure. [Chuckles.] So he kind of didn't care. I felt bad for him, but he was—was lousy.

And then there was a—well, I don't—there was one class that was taught my senior year, and that was taught by a Dartmouth alum who had been a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright. But he kept changing the syllabus. [Chuckles.] I

mean, he first said we were going to do a ten-minute film, and then that became, by the end of the—by halfway through the class, it was going to be a one-minute film. And it was—he was—it was really more just a class to sort of celebrate his achievements, but, you know, I—I—I needed a little bit more structure than what that guy could provide. And I always felt like he was yelling at me. [Laughs.]

KINNE: I see.

MORELL: But it was—yeah, other than that, all of the academic achievement that—I mean, people were serious about studying, and I liked that. And, you know, we all would crank for our papers or—or exams and stuff like that.

KINNE: And how was your experience studying abroad?

MORELL: That was also a lot of fun. Berlin—I was in Berlin before the Wall came down.

KINNE: Oh, that's interesting.

MORELL: Yeah, yeah. And then in the—let's see, so after the Summer Rep, that was the beginning of my year where I wasn't at the school, and during that fall of '84, I lived at home and worked at a department store. And then on my own, I went to, like, consciousness-raising groups at the Colorado Gay and Lesbian [Community] Center—Community Center, and made some contacts.

And somebody that I knew there hooked me up with somebody that lived in Berlin, that was a friend of theirs. And so I got to experience some of the gay bars in Berlin as well.

KINNE: Oh, that's awesome.

MORELL: Yeah, yeah. And that was—

KINNE: So you were able to get involved with, like, the gay and lesbian community even when you—when you went back home for that year?

MORELL: Yeah, yeah. I did that on my own without, like, saying where I was going, you know? And—

KINNE: Sorry.

MORELL: And I just kept my head down and didn't really say much, and hung out with some of my friends from high school that were in town but also tried to make some friends in the gay community in Denver. And that was—sorry, my dog is being very affectionate, but he's [unintelligible].

KINNE: No problem.

MORELL: So—but—yeah, and then I—I was able to go and learn about the gay culture in Berlin, which was—was quite diverse. And I think—I don't—I don't know if this was—I had heard rumors that Depeche Mode, the rock band, was in Berlin. I think that I ended up seeing them dancing at a club there. I might be wrong. Yeah.

KINNE: That's fun.

MORELL: Yeah, it was. It *was* fun.

One of the things that we did do, continuing with theater, was we saw plays, and one of the best plays I ever saw was this— it was an introduction of *Three Sisters* at Die Schaubühne [am Lehniner Plaza], which was a premier theater in all of Germany. And, in fact, that production of *Three Sisters* was so impressive that people in Russia were talking about it for years afterwards.

KINNE: Wow!

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: That's very cool. I think—

MORELL: Do you know the play?

KINNE: I don't know it, no.

MORELL: Oh, okay

KINNE: I think I've heard of it.

MORELL: The *Three Sisters* is about this family. There are three sisters and a brother. And they live on a big estate in rural Russia. And at the beginning of the play, the—the—the estate is serving as a way station for the Russian military, and they're going to be there for basically twenty-one years, because every act takes place seven years later and with the same cast of characters.

And the thing with [Anton] Chekhov is that he writes basically—

KINNE: Oh, it's Chekhov. Okay, yes.

MORELL: Yeah, Chekhov's *Three Sisters*.

KINNE: Mm-hm.

MORELL: If you haven't read *Three Sisters*, it's a beautiful script.

KINNE: Good to know.

MORELL: But the acting was so wonderful, but then on top of it,—well, the four—they took—this particular production took a half an hour between Act 3 and Act 4, and we were, like, "Why is it taking so long?" You know, in the audience. And then the curtain opened—you know, after we all went back to our seats, the curtain opened, and spontaneous applause because they had built the forest on the stage. Act 4 takes place in a forest, and it was really deep. I mean, they actually built—they built the forest! It was—so—I didn't realize the stage was that—that huge.

But—yeah, so we saw—and I saw my first opera in Berlin, *The Barber of Seville*, so just little—little things to remember.

KINNE: Yeah. Well, it sounds awesome.

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: Did you—so I'm thinking how your D-Plan would have gone then. So you were on—but you graduated with your—your class but just were off—

MORELL: Yeah. My D-Plan—my D-Plan ended up being the first eight terms: freshman fall, winter, spring, summer, fall, winter, spring summer. And then I was off the fall, I was in Berlin the winter, off the spring and the summer, and back on for my senior fall, winter and spring.

KINNE: Okay. Okay.

Another thing I was thinking was that, you know, I guess, like, women hadn't been let—like, let into the school until, like, ten years before, I guess?

MORELL: Right. About ten years before.

KINNE: Did that—did that seem like—was that kind of noticeable? Like, what was it like, from your perspective, for—for women on campus, or what was it like at the time with coeducation?

MORELL: That's an interesting question, yeah. I—well, academically have known women all through my life who have been very smart and every bit as capable intellectually as—as men are, so—and, in fact, my—the valedictorian of—actually, it's funny because the—the top two people in my class—there was a man and a woman, and in the term before, the—the last term, the man was, like, one point ahead, but then—then it switched and actually the woman was a point ahead. But then the guy still got to make the valedictorian address. [Laughs.]

KINNE: Oh. Interesting.

MORELL: Yeah. That's—that's how close it was.

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: Yeah, in terms of the—yeah, in terms of the academics, I think that the women were definitely showing themselves as, you know, totally capable, and, you know, they should have been there all the time, in my opinion.

KINNE: And socially? Did it—like, did it seem like there was a large divide in what was, like, considered, I don't know, maybe, like, the social scene for women or men or how they functioned within that kind of Dartmouth culture?

- MORELL: Mmm. Well, I'm trying to remember that specifically.
- KINNE: It's okay if you don't have a specific answer to that.
- MORELL: Yeah, I don't—I don't, really. I know that the women's studies program and then—I can't remember the name of the group. I remember that there was a woman named [Margaret A.] "Meg" Pappano [Class of 1986], who was the chair of, like, a women's—a women's group on campus. But I did see different feminist activities happening, and trying to raise the consciousness levels as much as they could. But then there was, you know, Greek culture, with the—sororities have a different mindset.
- KINNE: Mmm. Okay. Interesting. So sororities were kind of like—I guess that—that's an interesting point. So was the amount of affiliated women, like, equal to the amount of affiliated men, or was it—
- MORELL: I would say that it was a bit less, because I think there were fewer sororities at that time. And, you know, also my—the summer before my senior year, that incident at Alpha Chi Omega, where they had that party, Live Aid: A Tribute to Rock Hudson, which was really tacky.
- KINNE: What was the party? Sorry.
- MORELL: It was called Live Aid: A Tribute to Rock Hudson.
- KINNE: Okay.
- MORELL: That's just wrong.
- KINNE: I don't know if I—I know the reference, actually.
- MORELL: Well, okay, back then—you know what Live Aid was, right? It was a concert—
- KINNE: No, I don't.
- MORELL: Really!
- KINNE: Sorry.

- MORELL: Okay, so I get to do a little history here. Live Aid was this rock concert to raise money and awareness for AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome]. And it was—it was, like, international. If you saw *Bohemian Rhapsody*, you know, Queen performed at the Live Aid venue in [Great] Britain, but there was another Live Aid venue in San Francisco [California], I believe. And I don't remember where the other ones were. I think there were more than just those two. But it was, like, a global thing. And so that was in the consciousness at the time. But then somebody decided to, like, tie that to the fact that Rock Hudson had been diagnosed with AIDS.
- KINNE: Oh, okay.
- MORELL: So it was—it was kind of a slam against Rock Hudson and also, by extension, gay people.
- KINNE: Yeah.
- MORELL: So all of us that had our GSA jock shirts got together and showed up to our party, and we got beer thrown on us for our—for good efforts.
- KINNE: Wow. Okay.
- MORELL: And it turned out that the lead beer thrower was the treasurer of the Interfraternity Council. [Chuckles.]
- KINNE: Oh. Lovely.
- MORELL: Isn't that sweet? Yeah.
- KINNE: Wow! Okay. I was actually—
- MORELL: [Laughs.]
- KINNE: That's a good—I mean, that's not a good story. That's a good story, though, to lead into a question—
- MORELL: No, really.

KINNE: —which was about—like, about—yeah, I guess the awareness of the AIDS crisis on campus or what it was like within the gay community while that was happening—like, to know that that was happening or just, like, the significance of that. But I guess that story, you know, already partly answers that.

MORELL: Yeah. I mean, AIDS was in the awareness there. And, you know, they would say those stupid jokes, like “What does GAY stand for? Got Aids Yet?” That was, yeah, terrible, just mean little things that people could say and do.

And then—gosh, this is a trip down memory lane. Wow. I—I remember that was also a concern because—well, also back then, they had the—like, the precursors for, like, Grindr and things like that. There was this web conference or—I can’t really call it “web,” but it was, like, within the local intranet. I don’t remember what the exact word was that they used for that, but I’m using the terminology that we have for today. But Dartmouth had its own sort of like online community, and they had these conferences: Join ABC, or join XYZ. And you—you know, gay kids could find ways to hook up with each other.

KINNE: Through—it was inter- —like, inter-Dartmouth.

MORELL: Yeah, intra-Dartmouth, yeah. And I—I had a couple of anonymous encounters out, but—and those never satisfied me. I really wanted to have, like a full-on relationship, but I was too scared. And that AIDS thing on top of it kind of made the anonymous aspect of it all frightening, so I was always a little nervous about it because you just don’t know, right?

KINNE: Yeah.

Do you remember what that—I guess I don’t know what I would call it, that—that website or—was—was—

MORELL: Well, I just remember that the command that you would put into one of the group computers that were, like, the different computers—[unintelligible] would be, “Join XYZ” or “Join ABC.”

KINNE: Huh! Okay.

MORELL: But they had—they were—they were different conferences, but that was the word that they used back then.

KINNE: Interesting. Okay.

And you mentioned—okay—

MORELL: You could have, like, entire online conversations with people. I actually came out to some people too—

KINNE: Right.

MORELL: Anonymously. So in some ways, I was doing [unintelligible].

KINNE: And then you could meet up with those people?

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: Okay.

MORELL: And I did meet up. I did have a couple hookups when I was there.

KINNE: Mm-hm. But you never had a relationship, you said, when you were at—at Dartmouth?

MORELL: No.

KINNE: Did you find that—like, were there—were there any relationships, I guess, that were, like, known to more people besides the people in the relationship, I guess?

MORELL: Um,—

KINNE: Were there out relationships, I guess is the question?

MORELL: I didn't really see too many, actually, come to think of it. There were—I saw some people who weren't necessarily a part of the gay community. I always saw, like, you know, two guys together, two gals together. *Are they a couple?* [Chuckles.] In my—I mean, you just didn't ask, cause you—in your head. You wouldn't ask them, "Are you"—bluntly.

But, you know, the thought crossed my mind. It's, like, you never saw one without the other.

KINNE: I see.

MORELL: But, you know, that's—college [unintelligible] people develop fast—fond and fast friendships, too, so that could have been all it was. But I remember—you know, the people that I was in college with—we would kind of grouse about, you know, the—the people that were—you know, they would grouse about their boyfriends, and they weren't very—most of them didn't last very long.

KINNE: Right.

MORELL: It was all transitory, mm-hm.

KINNE: One thing I've been thinking about through all of this—everything you've been talking about is, like, if the col- —did the college ever step into any of this? What was, like, your experience or conception of the college, like, administration wise at the time?

MORELL: Well, I remember that there were a couple of people that were very supportive of the GSA. In fact, our freshman dean was one of those.

KINNE: Was—do you remember the name of that dean?

MORELL: Margaret [Huling] Bonz, B-o-n-z.

KINNE: Okay.

MORELL: Yeah, she was very supportive. And I think there was an affirmative action officer—I think that's what she was, Ngina [pronounced in-GEE (hard G)-nuh] [R.] Lythcott. She was pretty supportive.

Then they provided funding for the GSA. A very small amount. But you know, it was still enough for *The Dartmouth Review* to grouse about the fact that the GSA was being supported at all.

KINNE: Right.

MORELL: But I think that quite a few people were—like, they wanted to be hands off about it and be laissez-faire.

KINNE: As in the—in the administration?

MORELL: Yeah, yeah. Those were the years when David [T.] McLaughlin [Class of 1954; Tuck 1955] was the president. I always had the impression that he was just in over his head. You know, he had been a corporate president before, and then he tried to be president of a college, and he just never got the hang of it.

KINNE: Okay.

Another thing I was thinking about was I feel like a lot of the—I guess the queer community now has kind of expanded to be more encompassing of, like, a lot of different identities—

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: —related to gender and sexuality, and I was wondering if at the time, that that was also, like,—

MORELL: Oh, yeah.

KINNE: Did you know, like, gender queer people as opposed to just queer sexuality or—

MORELL: Yeah, yeah, although, I mean, one person I'm thinking of in particular—he seemed to have a little bit of an edge to him. You know, when he would be femming and stuff. And then there were a couple of other—I remember my—my senior year, there was a young freshman who came in, and he was from one of the islands, like Barbados or Trinidad or one of those. And he wore a skirt. He was wearing a skirt all the time. And I knew quite a few lesbians that seemed to, like, present sort of a—a butch style.

KINNE: Yeah. Yeah. It's just interesting—

MORELL: There was that—yeah.

KINNE: —to hear about those—

MORELL: People playing it. Not as much as they do today, but, yeah, it was still there.

KINNE: Yeah. I feel like it's less visible in the history of people, like.

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: So it's just interesting to hear. But, yeah.

All right. Well, is there anything else specifically—we can always circle back—but, like, specifically about your time at Dartmouth that you feel like you want to touch on?

MORELL: [Chuckles.] The dog is seeing a rabbit in the yard. [unintelligible] really very energetic.

What can I say?

KINNE: Do you have any, like, strong memories or, like, maybe your earliest memories of Dartmouth?

MORELL: My earliest memories? Well, when I first got there, I was just really excited to see what would happen and how things would unfold. And I had an eagerness and an excitement for everything related to the campus. And—and, you know, I tried to keep an optimistic mindset as much as I could.

I lived in a closet single in Brown Hall. Do they still—the Choates [the Choate Cluster] have been—were they demolished?

KINNE: Oh, no, they're still there.

MORELL: They're still there. Okay. Yeah, I lived in—in a closet single my freshman year at Choate Hall—I mean in Brown. And that was—well, part of me wanted a roommate, but part of me was also glad that I didn't have one—and then I got a regular single the next year. And then in my senior year I was in the—I can't remember the name of the dorm, but it was in the River—towards the River Cluster?

KINNE: Mm-hm.

- MORELL: And it was the dorms where they had the foreign study—I got into the German—one of—there was a German men’s dorm room and a German women’s dorm. So we were supposed to speak German all the time, but [chuckles] we kind of didn’t. [Laughs.]
- KINNE: Got it.
- MORELL: It was—yeah, it was—I felt like progress was being made, and by the end of—by my senior year, I was comfortable being out, believe it or not.
- During the incident with the shanties, I was president of the Gay Students [sic; Student] Association at that time, and there was a one-day moratorium called on classes, and during that time, there was a panel that involved several of us that were from different—like, there as a person from, like, I think the Native American group, and there was a person from the [Dartmouth-Hitchcock] Women’s [Health] Resource Center. That’s what it was. And I represented the GSA. And I spoke just about, you know, what it means to be gay at Dartmouth for, like, five minutes.
- KINNE: Wow. This was after the—
- MORELL: People were, like,—the shanties, yeah.
- KINNE: Yeah, so after the—
- MORELL: It was in January.
- KINNE: Yeah.
- MORELL: January of ’86.
- KINNE: Sorry, you were saying, though, that people were—people’s response to your talking?
- MORELL: Yeah. Actually, I found out later that quite a few people were, like, “That gay’s gay? I gotta rethink things.” I mean, I looked like a football player.

- KINNE: Yeah. So there was a perception that—I mean, that makes sense, of course—that people thought a gay person looked and acted a specific way?
- MORELL: Yeah, yeah. They were looking for the stereotype, and then I'm just a guy, you know? I mean, that's the way it is.
- KINNE: How long were you president of the GSA?
- MORELL: Just for that year.
- KINNE: Just for that year.
- MORELL: Yeah, from '85 to '86. I took over from Michael [R.] Williams [Class of 1986], who was president the year before.
- KINNE: Mm-hm. And—all right, so—well, we can come back to Dartmouth if we want to, but—
- MORELL: Okay.
- KINNE: —what did you do post graduation?
- MORELL: I ended up back in Denver for a few years, and—well, I mean, it's kind of interesting. When I got to the school, I kind of assumed that my plans would start to materialize, but they kind of didn't. [Laughs.] And when I left, I found myself back home and having to just find a job and all the rest of that. So I got a job, and I continued to do theater in the Denver theater community. I saw some of my plays produced. I produced plays. I acted in plays. I directed plays and was on the board of a theater.
- And then I moved to Seattle [Washington] when I was twenty-six and did the same thing there. Seattle has a more aggressive theater community, so that was—that was interesting, to be a part of that. And that was also during—I don't know if you remember, or are old enough to know about shows like *Northern Exposure* or *Twin Peaks*, but they were—
- KINNE: Oh, yeah, *Twin Peaks*, I do.

MORELL: Yeah. *Northern Exposure* was actually being filmed there. *Twin Peaks* was kind of sometimes filmed there, filmed in and around there. But it was—Seattle was very attractive to me. It wasn't my city, though, but I kept doing theater. And then—but I kept doing theater.

And then I applied to graduate school and got into New York University's dramatic writing program in 1993, and I went to New York and lived there for twelve years, again doing the same thing, working—I got my degree, but I was working doing theater and writing scripts and trying to break in in that way.

And then—I'm kind of giving you, like, a rough outline of my life.

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: I lived in New York for twelve years. Actually, the biggest thing that I ever did in my life was hitting bottom with sugar and flour. I got to 300 pounds. I found a twelve-step program for food, and I lost 100 pounds, and have been fairly successful at keeping that off for fourteen years. Is that right? Yeah. I had a little bit of a—of a slip with the [Donald J.] Trump election [chuckles], but—my stress levels kind of went up a little bit there, but—yeah.

And then when I got abstinent, I started to feel like New York was a little too energized for me. I was pushing forty at that point, so—one time I took a trip to upstate New York and met this guy. We hit it off, and we had a relationship for five years, but I moved up to Albany and lived there for eight years, before moving on from there.

One thing led to another, and now I'm in Laramie [Wyoming]. I just started—

KINNE: Now you're where? Sorry.

MORELL: In Laramie, Wyoming.

KINNE: Okay.

MORELL: I sort of landed here back in 2013. Kind of afraid of it because this is, you know, where Matthew [W.] Shepard was beaten back in—was that 1999?—and left to die from his injuries.

KINNE: Mm-hm.

MORELL: And so I always thought of this as, like, perhaps a hateful place, but, you know, this is a university town. It's turned out to be pretty accepting.

KINNE: I noticed on your sheet and I wondered if that had been significant in your—in your mind when you moved there, but it's a university town, so it's—it feels—

MORELL: Yeah, there's only one univer- four-year university in Wyoming, the University of Wyoming, which is here in Laramie, and—yeah, it's been pretty cool. Two years ago was their first Pride celebration.

KINNE: Oh, wow.

MORELL: And it's the first city in the state to have passed a non-discrimination [unintelligible].

KINNE: So it's been a good place for you since you've been there?

MORELL: Yeah, it has been. Yeah, it has been. And now I—I'm in another relationship with a loving partner, and he's—he's—he has a position with Trident University [International], and he's—he's Orthodox Jewish [chuckles], and we're—we're—we're both spiritual in different ways. But we support each other that way as well, and we're looking forward to some day—you know, we're talking about getting married eventually.

KINNE: Wow! That's exciting.

MORELL: Yeah.

KINNE: How is your—I guess—yeah, that could—that's interesting that you mentioned spirituality, because I was wondering if—like, did Catholicism remain in any way connected to your [cross-talk] life, or was—?

MORELL: No. Actually, when I got here, there were some different issues that were going on with the—with the Aquinas House [the Catholic Student Center at Dartmouth College]. There were two priests that didn't get along very well, and one of them was gay supportive, and the other was old school. And I watched the gay supportive one just feel like he was turning into a pariah. He eventually left, but after watching that, I was, like, you know, watching the church as an institution was—I didn't want to be a part of it anymore.

KINNE: Okay. Wow.

MORELL: So for a time, I flirted—for a time, I flirted with atheism, but I also picked up the Tarot when I was at Dartmouth, and I'd been studying astrology on my own since I was seven, so—yeah, I'm an autodidact in a lot of different ways, but I picked up more, like,—I guess you can call it New Age-y spirituality, but I've been attracted to paganism for a long time, and that's really where my spiritual path is. Quite a few gay men and lesbians end up on the pagan path.

KINNE: I didn't know that. Interesting.

Okay, but—so there was—

MORELL: There's a book called *Gay Witchcraft* [chuckles] by a New Hampshire—by a New Hampshire witch, believe it or not, Christopher Penczak.

KINNE: I'll have to check it out.

MORELL: [cross-talk; unintelligible]. Yeah.

KINNE: I'll write it down.

So but at AQ—so AQ is still around.

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: And I didn't—I wouldn't have guessed that there had been a time, even, when there was, like, a, I guess, outwardly-supportive-of-gay-students priest. That's interesting that they were kind of pushed out, I guess, as you're describing.

MORELL: Yeah. Yeah. I remember having—I came out to him because I could tell that I could come out to him, and he—he had—we had some—he told me frankly what was going on, and then, you know, he was only there for my freshman year. After that, I don't know what ever happened to Father [Joseph D.] Devlin. But I thought he was a good guy.

KINNE: And had you kind of approached the—the Catholic Students Center, though, or was it more—were they more outwardly approaching to students? How did that happen?

MORELL: It was a little bit of both. There were—it's funny, because one of the people that I had a crush on was—was another Catholic theater guy, and actually he knew how to play the organ. He later came out of the closet. But [chuckles]—I laugh about it now, but I was afraid to tell him I had a crush on him because I thought—I thought he might beat me up. [Laughs heartily.]

KINNE: Oh, dear.

MORELL: Which was ridiculous in retrospect, but that's how skewed I was. [Chuckles.]

KINNE: Well, I guess it was—it was a fear, you know, for real.

MORELL: It was. False evidence appearing real, exactly, mm-hm.

KINNE: Okay. And then—well, that's interesting.

Oh, I wanted to ask, though about—when you—you said you went to the Denver Theatre Company [sic; Denver Center for the Performing Arts Theatre Company]. Was that the Denver Center Theatre Company?

MORELL: Yeah, I was—I was—I was in the Denver theater scene, but I was a member of the Denver Center playwrights workshop for three years.

KINNE: Oh, wow.

MORELL: Never saw any of my work down there, but I saw a couple of my short plays performed. There was—there used to be a

theater called The Changing Scene that did original works, and they had a summer one-act play festival, and two of my plays were performed there.

KINNE: Wow. So you've been playwriting and then screenwriting since.

MORELL: Yeah. And now I'm seeing some positive movement with—one of my plays was a semifinalist in a national competition, and my—my screenplay, *Another Gay Laramie Romance* is a semifinalist in a—a screenwriting competition as well.

KINNE: Wow. Congratulations.

MORELL: So, I mean, I'm trying to make the rounds. But thank you. Yeah.

KINNE: Yeah.

So did you feel like your—I guess your Dartmouth education, I guess specifically being, like, an arts education prepared you well for what you wanted to do?

MORELL: It gave me a grounding. It's—it's funny, though, because when I look back at—well, when I look back at what I wrote at Dartmouth, I have to be honest: I wrote bad crap. [Laughs.] I wrote crappy stuff. And that's okay. You know, that's what it's for, you know, but, you know, when you're in your twenties, if you're writing the hottest, most wonderful thing ever and then, you know, a year later you look at it and go, *God, what a piece of shit!* [Laughs.]

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: But you grew. You grew as an artist.

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: I mean, that's what you do. So—and it's all right. You know, that was what you had to—I had to write to get to—you know, that's—to get to the next stage. At least I wrote something.

KINNE: Right.

MORELL: But I do feel that it prepared me in a lot of ways. It's interesting, because now I've been studying with an online program called ScreenwritingU.com, and part of their thing is to help you—they throw you into the market—you know, where you have to market your scripts for thirty days. And I've learned a lot from that. Kind of wish—it may be too much for undergrads, I mean, but I kind of wish that my NYU experience [unintelligible]. Even at Dartmouth, it would have been interesting to have, like, some lecturing about marketing scripts, sort of the playwright's perspective.

KINNE: I guess—

MORELL: That would be, like, the only thing I'd be deficient in, but in terms of, like, the foundation and the fundamentals, I still go back to Playwriting 1 with Errol [G.] Hill. Was probably one of the best professors I ever—one of the best teachers I've ever had.

KINNE: Wow. Errol—Errol Hill was his name?

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: I feel like I've maybe heard that name before.

MORELL: Yeah. He—he wrote a book called *Shakespeare in Sable* [*A History of Black Shakespearean Actors*]. It was a—he was from the Highlands, from—I believe—I believe he's from Trinidad, and he has this, like, British accent and—but he was—he has a kind of conservative taste, but he was really solid with his theater. And when he was teaching writing—you know, we may not have always agreed with him, all the writing—all the writing students, but I for one wanted to write his play. I wanted to give him the benefit of the doubt, because he was teaching the well-made play, and that's what he had to offer. It provides a good foundation.

KINNE: Right.

MORELL: And [unintelligible].

KINNE: And then your experience at NYU. How—I guess—what was it like going to grad school there after—after Dartmouth, and how was your experience in general?

MORELL: Well, at NYU—my NYU experience was lots more far ranging because I wrote screenplays and plays, and I actually learned how to write TV. And I kind of wish that I had, in retrospect, been a little bit more focused on, like, one thing, but I kind of had to go through that experience, and—but I've picked up a little bit of—I even wrote an interactive concept for a class on writing for interactive media. So there was—they were trying to branch out into a lot of things.

It kind of mirrored my experience, because at Dartmouth I kind of had a lot of eclectic experiences, and that's just kind of who I am. I like to get a wide variety of things. So from that point of view, both schools were very pleasing to me. But, you know, they also kind of played to some of my own—what's the word I'm looking for?—weaknesses, I guess.

And these are things, you know, you learn in retrospect, so—it's kind of hard to compare the two because NYU was also—was New York City and, you know, Dartmouth is rural, and New York City is basically very urban, and—although one of the things that I think was kind of interesting, too, in retrospect was at Dartmouth I—I met a lot of people from different ethnic backgrounds, and that was the same at NYU. There were African-Americans and Latinos and quite a few Jewish people, and I don't remember—I was the only gay man, but there were quite a few lesbians in my class, my graduate class.

KINNE: Of NYU, you mean.

MORELL: At NYU, yeah.

KINNE: Yeah.

Oh, that was one thing I did want to touch on, just about your time at Dartmouth. I—I was looking at kind of like the yearbooks from around then, and there was a significant, like, article about the renaming of the Dartmouth mascot or the changing of the Dartmouth mascot.

- MORELL: Oh, from the Indian to the Green?
- KINNE: Yeah. Was that a prominent conversation during your time, or a prominent issue?
- MORELL: There were—there were those—there were those people that were still, like, wanting to do the Indian, and every once in a while you'd see somebody try to, like, bring out an Indian mascot with themselves, you know, but it's just—you know, people were, like,—say, "That's just so lame. Just get over it."
- KINNE: Right.
- MORELL: It was—it was already kind of like waning by the time I got there. It wasn't as hot as it had been before.
- KINNE: I see. Okay.
- Well, then going back—kind of post grad. Did you stay close—or did you stay in connection with a lot of—with people from Dartmouth? Were you a part of DGALA [Dartmouth Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alumni/ae Association, or Dartmouth LGBTQIA+Alum Association] at all?
- MORELL: I've contributed to DGALA, but I haven't really been that much of a part of it. And I do keep in touch with, like, a couple of Facebook friends. [Stephen A.] "Fester" Carter [Class of 1986] and I are still pretty—pretty close.
- KINNE: Who was that?
- MORELL: Fester Carter. Steve Carter was—but everybody calls him Fester, and that's his Facebook ID, too.
- KINNE: Oh, okay.
- And then you mentioned in your—I guess your initial notes about your twenty-fifth anniversary and how you—and your experiences then.
- MORELL: Well, I wasn't really going to go to my twenty-fifth reunion, but Fester said, "You should go, especially since you're so

close.” I mean, Albany is only, like, two hours away. So I said okay. And, you know, at least I would know Fester. And so Fester showed up there with his partner, and, you know, we—we had a nice time. I went to a couple of events that had to do with the gay and lesbian community there, the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer] community.

And then there was a breakfast with—oh, God, what was—the president—he went on to be at the World Bank [Group]. I can’t remember his name.

KINNE: Oh. Oh! I think he might actually be—

MORELL: He was—

KINNE: —another interviewee. I think I know who you’re talking about.

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: But I don’t remember his name.

MORELL: He was president of the college, and then—but he was—he—he gave a little talk to the gay alumni. And I was sitting at a table—Fester and I were sitting at a table with somebody from the Class of 2001, and she said, “You guys are from the Class of ’86, right?” And we said, “Yeah.” And she said, “Well, I’m from the Class of 2001, and I grew up in Iowa, and I looked at the brochure for Dartmouth, and I said, *That’s where I want to go.* And everybody around me said, ‘You don’t want to go there; it’s a conservative school.’ But I applied, and I got in. I matriculated, and I—I came to the school, and I did not ever have any incident. I—I had girlfriends, and I was out, and there was never any issue, and it was all because of you guys. You pioneered the path for the rest of us, and I want to thank you.”

KINNE: Wow.

MORELL: And I didn’t really, like, tear up at that moment, but then later I thought about what she said, and I just starting bawling on a bench later. [Laughs.] Like, some of my time at Dartmouth actually did mean something.

KINNE: Yeah. Wow.

MORELL: Those were—I mean, I—I—I feel like, you know, I came in with a lot of fear, and I didn't put myself out there as much as, like, a Michael or a [Scipio C.] "David" Garling [Class of 1986] or Sean [P.] O'Hearn [Class of 1986]. Or Fester, even, for that matter. And yet I was a part of it, and I made a contribution, a couple of contributions.

KINNE: Yeah, wow. That's—that's an amazing story. That's really—that must have been great—like, an amazing thing to hear, yeah.

MORELL: It was—it was very gratifying. And as I said, you know, when I went back to that reunion, I realized the way that my mind works is the way a lot of Dartmouth people's minds work, and—you know. I did belong there. Even a part of me wondered if I ever did. But I did. I did.

KINNE: Mm-hm. Yeah. It's interesting that you—you were thinking about the sense of belonging, because I think it's—I think a lot of Dartmouth students struggle with that, especially from a—if they're from a—kind of a marginalized community.

MORELL: Mm-hm.

KINNE: What do you think about the college now? Like, I mean, I don't know what you—if keep up or if you have any feeling about it, but—

MORELL: Well, I—I get concerned—I mean, I'm concerned about the stuff around sexual harassment that's come out recently. And—I mean, I—I had heard creepazoidal stories about—from different campuses, and it saddens me that Dartmouth has its own version of it, but it doesn't surprise me, because it is—there's a lot of patriarchy around the campus, and—I mean, I think that there have been strides, and I feel—well, I—I—at least with the names of the people that graduate and they're—that are part of the DGALA now. I see that there's a lot of racial and ethnic diversity, which is great. Not just, like, a lot of WASPs [White Anglo-Saxon Protestants].

That's something that I have been attuned to, as well as trying to open up the dialogue beyond *him*—you know, that—that stereotype of the ivy-leaguer. That's, like, a privileged white person.

KINNE: Right.

MORELL: When I was at Dartmouth, I was also a member of the Black Underground Theatre Arts Ensemble [sic; Black Underground Theatre Association (BUTA)] for a couple of performances too, and those were fun experiences.

KINNE: Right. What was—had that been around before you got to Dartmouth?

MORELL: Yeah, it was there before I got there.

KINNE: And then you joined in your—when did you join?

MORELL: That was my senior year. And we did some performances that incorporated queer sexuality as well as well as woman's issues, and, of course—

KINNE: Sorry, what was that—that last part? I didn't—I didn't catch the last part there.

MORELL: That there was queer sexuality, women's issues as well as, of course, the African-American experience.

KINNE: Yeah. BUTA has actually just recently restarted.

MORELL: Oh, good. They were defunct.

KINNE: It was—yeah, it was—it was gone for a bit, but then this year, actually, they're bringing it back, so—

MORELL: Oh, that's wonderful.

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: Mm-hm. They did some really powerful stuff back then.

KINNE: Mm-hm.

MORELL: It was fun to be a part of it.

KINNE: Oh, I wanted to ask—I wanted to circle back just quickly to the story about the Live Aid tribute to Rock Hudson party.

MORELL: Mm-hm. Sure.

KINNE: Which—which place was it at, again?

MORELL: Alpha Chi Omega.

KINNE: Which was a sorority?

MORELL: A sorority.

KINNE: It was a sorority, okay.

MORELL: Yeah. It was kind of funny because we all showed up with our—our jock shirts, and people who looked would go: “Gamma Sigma—Oh, my God!” [Laughs.]

KINNE: [Chuckles.]

MORELL: And—and then I saw two—two of the sorority girls see us and go, “[Makes sounds of whispering.]” [Laughs]

KINNE: Wait. What? Sorry, I didn’t catch that at all.

MORELL: Well,—

KINNE: What did they say?

MORELL: It was a couple of—there were a couple of sorority girls who saw us arriving and we overheard them say: “The GSA is here! The GSA is here!”

KINNE: Oh!

MORELL: “Oh, my God, what are they gonna do?”

KINNE: I see.

MORELL: We just joined the group and started dancing, and—

KINNE: Yeah.

MORELL: —you know? Then—somebody decided to throw a beer on me, and then I—I was dancing with David Garling at the time. I just said, “David, somebody threw at beer on me.” He said, “What do you want to do? Keep dancing?” “Sounds good to me.” And so I kept dancing. And then they started throwing beer at the other people, and we just kept going. And then there wasn’t ever—you know, we filed an incident report.

KINNE: And then nothing happened, presumably? Or—

MORELL: Then it came out that the guy that threw the first beer was the Interfraternity Council—he had an office there. I don’t remember if it was treasurer or vice chair or whatever. But he was stripped of that post.

KINNE: Okay.

MORELL: And there was a hearing.

KINNE: Oh, okay.

MORELL: And, you know, I—you know, those of us that were there, we said our experience, and I remember saying, “You know, I just felt like I was back in third grade. Why this again?” And [chuckles]—I think that had an effect, actually.

KINNE: Yeah. And—sorry, I was just—yeah. Okay. That’s interesting. Good [cross-talk] story.

MORELL: The guy was—he would just get stripped of it. And I think he was put on, like, an academic probation. He got a slap on the wrist, but at least we—we said our piece.

KINNE: All right. Well, I’m kind of, I think, running out of questions, but if you—

MORELL: Okay.

KINNE: Are there other things that you’re feeling like are significant parts of your life or experience that—

- MORELL: I can't think of anything right now. I still get the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, and I still look to see if there are people that I know that had—have had some nice experiences to share.
- KINNE: Yeah.
- MORELL: And actually, I was talking to my partner and saying that one day it would be kind of fun to go to a reunion together, see how that goes.
- KINNE: When would your next reunion be?
- MORELL: Let's see, 1986—well, it would probably be 2021.
- KINNE: Okay.
- MORELL: It would be at thirty-five years. I think it would be thirty-five years.
- KINNE: Right. Yeah, that would be fun.
- MORELL: Mm-hm. Yeah.
- KINNE: Okay.
- MORELL: It's always nice to see [Constance E.] "Connie" Britton's [née Womack, Class of 1989] name. She was in—she was a freshman my senior year.
- KINNE: Connie Britton. Is that—
- MORELL: She was on *Nashville*.
- KINNE: Okay, yeah. She was an actor. Oh, wow! She was a freshman when you were there?
- MORELL: Mm-hm. She was a freshman, yeah.
- KINNE: Wow. That's cool.
- MORELL: I assistant directed a production of *A Man's a Man* which she was one of the—she got to play one of the whores. [Laughs.]

Yeah. But—yeah. Yeah, I can't think of anything else right now, but—

KINNE: That's fine.

MORELL: I hope this has been helpful for you.

KINNE: It definitely has. I think we can kind of end the interview, if that's all right. But I—

MORELL: That would be great.

KINNE: I just wanted to say, like, I—it's because I'm—you know, I'll stop the recording now.

Well, so, yeah, thank you for contributing to this, like, project that Rauner is doing.

[End of interview.]