

LGBT Podcast Transcript

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Announcer/Schumacher: *Welcome to UW—Madison’s Campus Voices. Our mission is to capture, present, and preserve some of the strongest historical stories and memories of UW—Madison through the people who lived them. Campus Voices, a project of the UW—Madison Archives & Records Management Services, consists of presenting extant archival material in 21st century publishable formats. The following clips have been selected from a collection of over 25 interviews that comprise the UW Oral History Program’s series on the Madison LGBT community from 1960 to the present. Alongside these clips, our historical consultant, Scott Seyforth, will be providing narration. These audio and visual resources were created in collaboration by Molly Khan—a graduate student in the library sciences program—and myself, Kristen Schumacher, an undergraduate here at UW. This project is funded in part by a grant from the New Harvest Foundation, Incorporated, and we would like to thank them for their outstanding generosity.*

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[NOTHING TO HIDE]: In 1962 I sat at the Campus Security Desk at the University of Wisconsin and waited for the man behind the desk to stop shuffling his papers. Finally he raised his head and stared at me. I am sure you don’t know why you were called in today he said. Your wrong I said, I do know, you are conducting a purge of homosexuals on campus. What he shouted who told you that? We all promised right here in this office not to say a word, you see this man was already beginning to disintegrate. Well someone broke his promise I said, it’s not purge he said it’s an investigation.

[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 1, 1962: The campus gay purge, as told by Lewis Bosworth and UW- Alum and author George Stambolian in a episode of a cable access television program “Nothing to Hide.”

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] Throughout 1962 the Department of Protection and Security and the Dean of Men’s office conducted a full scale investigation of gay men at UW-Madison. They called in men they thought to be gay and they told them to name other men who were gay. And by coercing these gay male students to provide names of other gay men, they compiled a list of over 200 gay men on campus.

[LEWIS BOSWORTH] I was at home in my apartment one day in 1962 as a sophomore I believe, and the phone rang. And it was one of my grad student friends speaking to me in French, which was perfectly OK, but not usual. And he explained to me that there was this purge going on behalf of the university to rid the university of gay male students. There was a dean of men, Ted Zillman was his name, who decided to take one or two young men, undergraduate men, into his office and question them about their sexual behavior.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] The Dean of Men at the time believed that graduating gay men into the world avowed gay men, openly gay men into the world was a blemish on the institution, and he wanted to weed out potential gay graduates that he believed would reflect badly on Madison.

[LEWIS BOSWORTH] And since I was ignoring them, a detective from the University police at the time came to my place of employment, which happened to have been the University of Wisconsin hospital, and literally had my nursing supervisor pull me out of an operating room into the

corridor and threatened me with not appearing before university officials as requested. And so I finally gave in. And I did go to the Dean of Men's office

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] So at that time you didn't need to actually do anything to be kicked out, you just had to be gay, you had to say you were gay, you had to claim being gay.

[NOTHING TO HIDE] I have affidavit here, signed affidavits from five men who said they had sexual relations with you. They are lying I said. You know who these people are? They are homosexuals he yelled, and they do terrible things. Such as what? Awful things, disgusting things he said. Give me an example I said. Well they write things on the walls in men's rooms, when he said that I almost collapsed, well they write things on the walls of men's rooms. I thought football players did that I said. Are you a homosexual he asked? No. You are lying, he said. Then I am just like all the others I said.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] If the man admitted he was gay, the University would call his parents, take away his scholarship, and expel him. And the purge led to an investigation of other faculty and staff, and other Dean's on campus. It became quite a big deal. And, it ruined a lot of people's careers, it ruined your ability to transfer to another school, they wouldn't provide a recommendation for you to be admitted to another school. And so for a lot of people it cut off their ability to be a professional.

[LEWIS BOSWORTH] So the downside of my experience with that, one of the downsides, was I had been accepted to a program abroad, a junior year abroad program. And I had received, as a result of having been accepted to the very first year that program, a tuition remission scholarship, which meant that I could pay in-state tuition instead of out-of-state tuition because I was technically from out-of-state. Well, they reneged on that. They took away the scholarship. So my parents did in fact have to pay out-of-state tuition for the year that I was abroad.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] It went on through 1963 and only started to stop partly through the investigation of the counseling service, and director of the counseling service at the time, who stepped in to say that the purge was causing more harm to the University community than good. They were seeing an uptick of men who were having a lot of emotional problems because of the way they were being harassed by the University.

[NOTHING TO HIDE]: Yes, but what sticks in one's craw, is that I lied to save myself, I did not lie to incriminate others as some people did, I lied to save myself and I succeeded. It was thanks to the fact that I was prepared that I had the presence of mind to do that. At the time it seemed like the only way to do it, but don't forget that the only way that we could survive in those days was by lying and was by secrecy. And as the years passed that began to grate on me more and more. And it grates on you to such a point, that when the day comes when you decide I am not going to lie again, you see, you remember that moment of self denial. And I say now I will never do that again, I will never ever do that again.

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[PAT CALCHINA] So, when you came here, did you know people?

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] No.

[PAT CALCHINA] Other people? So how did you go about--

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] Well, this is the largest city next to Dane.

[PAT CALCHINA] Right. But how did you go about--

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] And it's not that big of a city. Well--

[PAT CALCHINA] --finding a community?

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] For me, it was. I went to the gay bars.

[PAT CALCHINA] Ok..ok

[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 2 the 1960's: The emergence of Madison's bar culture, as told by DJ Wipperfurth and Lewis Bosworth.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] Well, you know, it used to be in the '60s and in the '50s that there were no gay bars. There was no place to go that would allow you to be gay. There were a few bars that would tolerate, that allowed gay men, largely gay men, there were not a lot of bars that would allow lesbians to gather in the or that lesbians gathered in town in the '50s and '60s. But like the 602 club, which is now Wando's, used to be, you know had an arrangement where the gay men would gather at the bar, actually at the bar, at the front of the bar itself, at the front of the establishment, and the tables in the back were for the straight clientele. And then there were other bars that became gay after like 11 o'clock at night. Places like the Velvet Swing and other bars

[PAT CALCHINA] Ok, tell me about that. What was that like? And any bars that you can--

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] Well, they weren't really gay bars, except-- well, the Velvet Swing was a gay bar, and so was the Pirate Ship. The Pirate Ship was later, though. The Velvet Swing was at first.

[PAT CALCHINA] And so were they primarily gay bars or were they straight--

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] They were men's bars.

[PAT CALCHINA] OK, they were men's bars.

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] Men's gay bars. And women always congregated in the back around the pool tables, back then, pinball machines, stuff like that. We had our little group meetings there and we did our thing. Three Bells, it was called. It was a straight bar on University Avenue, in the 800 block, which would have been Park and University, right by humanities building, across the street from where humanities is now. And it's where all the gay fly boys would come, from [UNINTELLIGIBLE] down to the Three Bells. And lesbians, we sometimes used to meet in this one back corner of the bar, where there was these booths, and we'd be there, and the fly boys would be in the other side of the bar in this back corner, and the rest of the bar was straight, college students.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] After the gay liberation movement started in 1969 the gay community really wanting a place that would allow them to be who they were actually went and approached the Pirate Ship which was there was a bar, which is up on the block that now is the Overture Center,

But it was called the Pirate Ship and it had a big mural of a Pirate Ship and it was, it had netting, and it was decorated like a Pirate Ship. And the gay community approached the Pirate Ship and asked if they could congregate at the Pirate Ship, and the Pirate Ship agreed.

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] Patty Rupp she had the boys over at the Pirate Ship. So then we had the Three Bells, the Velvet Swing, the Pirate Ship, and the Stop Lite. So this town, for as small as it is, it's always had a lot of places for gay people to go, because we were always welcome in straight bars. We got tired of this business all the time of going where the men drank. And Nancy Trotter-- she decided one day, up there-- Jack McManus owned this little bar on the corner of Butler and Wilson Street. He's a famous criminal lawyer here in town. And all the lawyers would go there and have sandwiches for lunch and stuff and what have you. When the courts closed, the lawyers would go out either out to eat, to fancy restaurants or fancier bars, and the place would be dead all night. So she started-- she was a lesbian. She started inviting us gals down to the bar. So we kind of took it over. And then the attorneys started to tease Jack about, they said, you know what, you got all them girls hanging around down there, but they aren't our kind of girls, Jack. What's going on down there at that bar of yours? And he'd say, oh, the girls got-- they always called us girls-- oh, the girls got to have someplace to go. He didn't give a damn. Besides, all of a sudden, this little bar-- he had so much money he could care less if it made money. But all of a sudden, it started making money at night, too. What he told Nancy one time, he says, since you invited all the girls down here, he said, this isn't a tax write-off anymore.

[PAT CALCHINA] Oh, for losses.

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] Yeah. He was doing business from 10:00 in the morning all the way through bar time.

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[SCOTT SEYFORTH] But the trouble was there was nowhere to dance. So the gay community was still frustrated because they didn't have a place where you can really be that way other people got to be, because who doesn't like to dance. And, so a man by the name of Rodney Scheel in 1972 at the age of 21 opened a bar called the Back Door. It was at 46 North Park Street, just right two blocks from where we are sitting. It was the first exclusively gay bar in the Madison's history. It was the first bar owned and operated by a gay person for the gay community. It was a bar and a dance club, and a home away from home for many of the newly liberated gay men and women and their friends of that era

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] And then I got a job part time. The Back Door opened. The Back Door was wonderful.

[PAT CALCHINA] I remember that bar.

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] Rodney didn't have a place-- Rodney Scheel-- he didn't have a place where he could dance with his lover, Warren Olson. So he opened the Back Door. And then this college bar that was across the street-- I forget the name of the damn place, the bartenders would get them liquored up and they'd say, get them all liquored up and riled up and they'd come over to beat up the queers. So they'd come down-- you literally had to come down the back stairs, down the back door. And I'd be tending bar down there, and they'd come in there and they'd start raising hell. And oddly enough-- Meika Alberici,

she's just this really small woman. She's lucky if she's 100 pounds wet. And when the shit would hit the fan, the men would sit in their little booths, scared as hell, and the women would come and watch my back. And here's little Meika swinging a pool cue. I got your back, DJ! I got your back! She was right in there. And then, of course, there was always Phil. He was about 6'5". He was this tall, slender drag queen. He would always be up with us when fighting. And I remember one time, he had one of these characters. They'd fired an ashtray or a beer bottle or something at the mirror behind the bar and broke it. And they were yelling obscenities at all us and stuff. And Phil come flying out of his stool and he slammed him up against the wall, and he kind of picked him up off the ground a little bit. And he said, you know, there's nothing worse than an angry queen. Have you ever been hit with a high heel? I'll never forget that. I don't know why I remembered now, but I'll never forget it. By then, police were more educated. They'd come down and they'd say, what's going on? And I'd say, it's the kids from across the street, again. They were yelling and we got into fights. And they never arrested any of us. And these kids would get really ang-- oh, they hit us. Or, they did this. Or she hit me with a pool cue. Or she-- which she did, Meika.

[PAT CALCHINA] But they never arrested any of you-- But they arrest the kids?

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] None of us.

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] Because they said, you came down here to hassle these people and you need to leave them alone. We're sick of coming here for this. And you're going to jail.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] Describe The Back Door, entering The Back Door

[LEWIS BOSWORTH] Well, when you entered The Back Door via the back door, the first thing you came upon was a baby grand piano in a little, coat-room kind of place, a very small location physically. And then you go down some steps where the bar, the main bar was, and a couple restrooms. And it wasn't a large place physically. But it was accessible and popular

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[SCOTT SEYFORTH] You know, there were few bars that were welcoming to the Madison lesbian community in the 1970's. You know, the Stop Light and the Cosmo Club and Your Place were straight bars that had a Lesbian following. But in 1973 a group of lesbians approached Rodney Scheel about having a dedicated Lesbian Night at the Back Door and Rodney agreed. And then Thursday nights throughout the '70s then became Women's Night at the Back Door which was a big tradition during that era.

[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 3: Rodney Scheel and the famous Hotel Washington as told by Lewis Bosworth, Alix Popp and Martha Olson.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] So Rodney operates the Back Door through the '70s and in 1975 he buys the property that is Hotel Washington, that becomes Hotel Washington, and the first thing that he runs there he continues a café that is open on the main floor, a eatery there, and he renames it the Hot L Café after a 70's show that was on at the time called the The Hot L of Baltimore, which was about a café in Baltimore. This television show was important to the gay community at the time because it was the first television show on network tv that had a recurring gay character.

And then he goes about over the course of the next, well, until he dies, completely re-inventing the inside of this building as, into multiple venues, it becomes a complex, kind of a remarkable complex unlike anyplace in Madison, unlike anyplace almost anywhere. After the Hot L the next thing that they open is a bar in the basement called the Barber's closet. It was located down an exterior stairwell, and then you went through a door into a small room that appeared to go nowhere, like you were trapped, but if you looked you could open a secret panel through which you entered the actual Barber's Closet.

[ALIX OLSON AND MARTHA POPP] that great door that you would open up. That was a very romantic place, it was where you went for a serious date.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] And then in '79 they continued renovating the inside of this place, then he opens in the basement another bar called Rods. It is in the basement of the building, in the parlance of its day it was a leather levi bar. He ended up creating a big outdoor patio in the back of the bar that was very popular in the summer. And then they had a big dance floor in the back room and another room that showed adult male videos. It became a very popular destination for men throughout Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. And then they went up and completely gutted several of the top two floors and took out everything. And then built in the big empty cavern of a space a big dance bar

[LEWIS BOSWORTH] Then he opened another part of our history certainly, what was called-- I'm also aghast at the fact that people call things something, and the name sticks, even though it's completely meaningless. For example, Rodney decided on the third floor of his hotel building, he would opening a new bar. And til the day the building burned down, it was still called The New Bar. The New Bar. And it was a dancing place, and many people may remember it. So I and my late partner used to hang out there. And we would watch Jeopardy, one of our favorite things. And so we had Rod's in the basement. And then we had The New Bar, which remained The New Bar. And then behind Rod's in the basement, we had The Back Bar. So there were actually three places in the building that could have been decidedly called gay bars.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] they had a music venue in a bar on the first floor in the back called Club du Wash that hosted different bands every night of the week. They had a micro cafe, a micro bar, they had an espresso bar, they had 10 permanent rooms for residents and, they kept some of the hotel rooms and they had 22 hotel rooms for guests because people would come in from around the state, people would come up from Chicago. It was a destination. Hotel Washington burned to the ground in a fire on February 18, 1996. And that's what happened. I think the report was that someone emptied a cigarette, into a trash can, you know cigarette butts into a trash can. And that was the end of the Hotel Wash. Rodney Schell died of AIDS in 1990 and his brother took over the running of the, the management of the bar. And there were efforts when it burnt down in 1996 to have it rebuilt but it just never came to fruition.

[ALIX OLSON] What we decided to do was, Martha actually had this idea, we went down there one day after everything was out and it was just a pile of rubble and someone had hung a flag, someone had brought it up from Chicago, wasn't that the story

[MARTHA POPP] Well we had it when we had the things at Brittingham Park, remember they used to bring it out for Pride

[ALIX OLSON] The Big one

[MARTHA POPP] Yeah the big one, and then they would throw it up and down when they used to have the purse run, the

[ALIX OLSON] The high heels

[MARTHA POPP] The relays

[ALIX OLSON] So we saw this and she said,

[MARTHA POPP] Someone draped it over

[ALIX OLSON] She said, we really need to memorialize this somehow, and so we ended up taking a photograph of it and then we had a thousand posters printed off of that photograph

[PAT CALCHINA] Oh, you were the ones that did that, ok

[ALIX OLSON] Yeah, we took it down to a place in McFarland that printed it for us

[MARTHA OLSON] Wells Printing, we decided we would have it as a fund raiser, so that if anything ever came back from the ashes of that we wanted there to be a meeting place, actually we were hoping it would be for teens and young people, we thought that would be the most important thing that they would have a place to go and to meet in the city that would be safe and would be fun and social

[ALIX OLSON] We sold all of them except for one, we had one left

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[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 4: Creating a women's space in the 1970's: Lysistrata opens in 1977, as told by DJ Wipperfurth, Liz Lenzke, Alix Popp, and Martha Olson.

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] We all were sitting around, commiserating that the only places we had to go is bars. And a lot of times I'd say, but whose fault is that? That's ours. We don't do anything about it. Then the lesbian potlucks started out of all that stuff. Some women got that idea and started that, and started having it transferred around to different homes and stuff. And then Catherine put together the works to put together Lysistrata.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] Lysistrata was a gathering place for the Madison feminist community and it offered a multi-purpose space for socializing, entertainment, and meeting. Events at Lysistrata included poetry readings candidate's receptions, issue debates, films, lectures, dances, benefits for local women's causes. And there was food, it was a restaurant, and a wonderful restaurant. The food was delicious and it was healthy. It has the first salad bar in Madison the first Madison take back the night march was planned at Lysistrata in 1978. Lysistrata was a place where women made friends, and lovers, and change in their community. It was a women's restaurant, bar, and performance space that was developed by the Lysistrata cooperative whose board included Carla Dubinski, a lawyer in town, Kay Clarenbach, one of the founders of the national organization for women and a professor on campus, Ruth Bayer, who was a professor on campus, Katherine Rouse, and Andrea Mosedeling, Janet Brewer

[LINDA LENZKE] Thursday night was women's night at Lysistrata. And then frequently, that was a definite night that I'd go dancing every Thursday. And often on the weekends. Lysistrata, at that time, was positioned as a feminist restaurant and bar collective and appealed to a wider community of men and women, but I hung out there a lot. And it was a wonderful environment. It was beautiful. Light wood, lots of windows. It was at a time where the police and fire departments were recruiting women. A lot of the women who

hung out at Lysistrata were the first recruiting classes for police cadets and the fire department. And a lot of different women's organizations had their meetings at Lysistrata. So it was really a place to go to meet the community of women in Madison. And it had, definitely, more of a political bend to it. There were other women's bars and gay bars in Madison at the time, but Lysistrata was really more-- it still maintained its feminist definition.

[MARTHA POPP] And there were certain days and nights, I can't remember, where you would dress up. Remember Mary Bennett and a bunch of us dressed up to be waitresses one night in some kind of vintage costumes. There were so many activities from there it really was the hub

[ALIX OLSON] It was, it was great. Some nights I would cocktail waitress out at the tables when they would have the fancy dress up stuff like what you were talking about other times it was just straight bartending. Ed Durken, who was then the Fire Chief would come in all the time and Gene Parks I would always serve Gene gin, because that was his drink, it was just like this incredible place where people came. It was like when you first come to town people go to room to sort of get hooked up, well people came to Lysistrata for the same reason.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] And again, a fire destroyed Lysistrata and 4 other adjoining businesses on February 8, 1982 and left the local feminist community bereft. Arson investigators concluded the blaze was intentionally set, but no suspect was ever arrested. Press reports at the time suspect, the building was connected to 4 other businesses, press reports at the time suspect it was one of the other business owners of one of those other businesses that set the fire. So it was not intentionally trying to burn down Lysistrata, but maybe trying to burn down a different business.

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[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 5: Activist movements begin. As told by DJ Wipperforth, Kathleen Nichols, and clips from the cable access television program "Nothing to Hide."

[KATHLEEN NICHOLS] it was still the tail end of the anti-war movement. So you also have to backdrop this into what else is going on on campus. Becomes Madison really was one of the most radical campuses in North America. And so we were also really present in the other anti-war and civil rights struggles that were going on at that time. So while I'm sort of talking about what we were doing, it was all happening in a climate that was nothing short of fervid. One of the funnier days was the day we liberated the Red Gym. The Red Gym was still a gym and had a big old swimming pool in the middle. And it was actually a very popular cruising spot for boys because men got to swim nude in the pool. But we, ardent feminists, were having none of this guys have a swimming pool and the girls do not have a swimming pool. So a clutch of us, including the extremely highly-regarded Professor Bleier, we went running into the Red Gym in bathing suits. And there's a pool full of naked guys. And the guys all jump out of the pool and run away. Of course, if they just remained in the pool, nothing would have been hanging in the wind. But oh my god, the pool empties. We had just busted the all-male club. So that was one of the funnier days.

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] And then we started to get involved in other things-- Take Back the Night marches and things like that, and women's issues that were important, really important.

[PAT CALCHINA] What about--

[DJ WIPPERFURTH] And then you'd get these crazy women, sometimes, that'd just get nuts, because us lesbians felt the same way they did. They just were bananas. Driving me nuts. We said, oh, how could they say-- this one woman, one time, said, oh, what do you lesbians know about Take Back the Night? And I thought, I'm a woman. That's all I need to know. Not all of them were like that, just a few crackerjacks. Things started to get convoluted, started to get strange between-- but then that calmed down after they got to know us a little better. And then we started to have our own activists, like Barbara Lightner and Margot-- oh, I forget their names, now. None of them live here anymore. Patty Dudley and some of these women that would work really incessantly hard to get a lot of this stuff changed and turned around and stuff, et cetera and what have you. And then people like Sue Goldwomon would bring about "Her Infinite Variety," the radio show, and have women's music. And a lot of times it'd be lesbians that sing their songs for women, women towards women, and all that stuff started to blossom more. And then the heterosexual community started to calm down and not think we shouldn't be a part of whatever.

[KATHLEEN NICHOLS] OK. So now in the beginning of the '80s-- and it's just before AIDS hits the Midwest doesn't have a name yet, and even in New York. There was this spate of just hideous homophobic movies. Cruising with Al Pacino and Windows with Elizabeth Montgomery and Talia Shire as her innocent victim. And so we're organizing pickets and protests of Cruising and Windows. And there was a theater, the Four Square Theater. And so this demonstration was happening at the Four Square Theater. And the boys really did get rowdy. And so Barbara and I are canoodling on the couch, and the 10 o'clock news comes on. And it's saying that there have been arrests. I really come from the Sol Lewinsky school of organizing, that if you get two people or three people or four people arrested in a political demonstration, you must get 20 people arrested. So I spent the next day calling around to Lesbian Switchboard, and the Rape Crisis Center, and battered women's shelter, and Karla Dobinski's law office, or getting women-- and guys, but mostly women-- who will agree to protest the movie at the East Towne Theater. Because we closed down Four Square, so it's only being shown at East Towne. And so we go to East Towne, so we're locked arms, and we're organizing, and we have legal observers. And we are planning on getting about 40 people arrested. But then Attorney General Jim Doyle agrees with the request of the owners of East Towne properties that we get charged not with ordinance violation trespassing, but we get charged with a class D or E felony under the state trespassing provision. And so a number of the people who were intending to get arrested who were in law school or pre-med-- a felony conviction will prevent them. And so a whole lot of folks get up and leave, but so we still have a relatively substantial group. So we lock arms, and so we each go limp, and we have to all be carried out. And I can still recall the female police officer making sure my skirt was down over my knees. And we get put in the Black Maria and taken off to the Hoosegal I

mean, literally, we were singing Holly Near songs, and we're pounding against the sides of the van.

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[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 6: The AIDS epidemic and the Madison AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power [ACT UP] as told using clips from the cable access television show "Nothing to Hide" and by Steve Starkey.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] Right, well the first confirmed case of AIDS was reported in Wisconsin in August of 1983. And the Madison AIDS support group gets off the ground in 1984 lead by Chaz Pope and it starts as an off campus group. They meet at the Gay Center and in November of 1984. And that is sort of the beginning of the community response to the AIDS pandemic.

[STEVE STARKEY] Another well known gay organization that I was a part of was called Galvanize. And that was a pride march, it was the organization that put on the pride march. I think they started organizing in '88 um, people around the country there were other gay marches that were happening, gay parades that were happening. And so there was enough of a community at that point that people, various people, and groups and organizations said we should have a march. And the first effort was really big, and it was a whole week long thing. And they did it in conjunction with, maybe it was AIDS network, one of the AIDS organizations in town, and I remember they brought the quilt. So they did it at Camp Randall and they had a huge section of the quilt on the floor, and people, and that was when the AIDS quilt had first been made and was touring the country and so it was kind of a big deal that it was having here. So there were several events during the whole week long series of activities and then culminating with the march

[NOTHING TO HIDE]: One of the reasons why it is so important for AIDS patients to be aware as they can be about the disease is because early on, like in New York, AIDS patients and their support groups, they would go to support group and someone would be missing and they would find out that the person had died. Well then they found out what kind of treatment they were on, what kind of experimentation the Medical profession was doing with them. By being aware of the disease and the current treatments for it, the AIDS patients themselves had started monitoring their own care and had the doctors stop doing some of the things that were killing AIDS patients. So early on AIDS patients a lot of times died from the effects of the treatment, and it was not until AIDS patients got together to start comparing their treatments that they discovered this. And that is why it is important for people with AIDS to know as much as they can about the disease.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] The form of the issues of the local ACT UP chapter took up are different than issues you see other ACT UP chapters focusing on. Because some of the kinds of things ACT UP in other cities having to fight for we didn't have to fight for. A lot of its focus was on the department of corrections, early on there was a death of 2 prisoners with AIDS that were in single cell isolation. They boycotted and picketed a local Christian daycare for refusing to take a child whose mother had AIDS. Dan Savage was one of the driving forces of the Madison ACT UP Chapter. He was not a student here, he was an employee at the Four Star Video at the time. When a Doctor in the state prison system ordered nutritional supplements for a prisoner with AIDS, the prison only delivered the prisoner an extra peanut butter and jelly sandwich every day. That was the sort of thing that they fought. So, for instance, Dan Savage's response was to make sure a peanut butter and jelly sandwich was delivered to the office of Governor Tommy Thompson

everyday for a year. They did a fly over of the Waupun Prison where they dropped condoms into the yard where the prisoner's have their free time.

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[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 7: 1982, Wisconsin becomes the first state to ban employment and housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. As told by David Clarenbach, Dan Curd, James Yeadon, and Kathleen Nichols.

[DAVID CLARENBACH] Laws unto themselves cannot change social perspectives and public view towards our community. The laws are a vehicle from which social change can take place. I don't think one can occur without the other, but with respect to this gay rights law, you have to understand that there was no realistic prospect for any state to pass a gay rights law.

[DAVID CURD] When I started work for David, he had already, which I am sure you already know, he had already introduced the gay rights bill before, and he'd introduced what he referred to as the consenting adults bill. Because homosexuality, the physical act, was illegal in Wisconsin, along with cohabitation, and fornication they were actually in the statutes at being illegal. And when I joined him, he was progressively getting closer to passing the consenting adults bill. But there had been no really concerted effort to forward the gay rights bill, because somehow it was thought the consenting adults would have to be passed first. You would have to decriminalize the act before you could ban discrimination.

[DAVID CLARENBACH] It was my view to use public pressure to accomplish the following objective: to get 50 votes in the Assembly, 17 votes in the Senate, and the signature of one Governor. I was not trying to get public opinion, although public pressure certainly was useful. But I didn't want the pollsters to get to the 51 percentile rate before we can make things happen. I was not going to wait until there were perfectly organized pressure groups within the gay and lesbian community, or within the Republican Party, or within the white religious perspectives, although all of those were essential to the process of getting the bill passed. My objective and the contribution that I could make towards the broader goal of social acceptance was to get this bill passed.

[KATHLEEN NICHOLS] At Sunday's press conference, "Representative David Clarenbach, D, of Madison, urged those present to take a half an hour every week to write to a legislator or kick in an extra five bucks to keep the anti-discrimination effort going. Clarenbach said the Sexual Privacy Bill was introduced two years ago, and was now held up in committee because of parliamentary technicality, but we might get it past next session. "Alderman James Yeadon, District 8, said the city's Anti-Discrimination Ordinance in effect since May of 1975 didn't raise one word of opposition when it was first brought up, but he couldn't tell if, in the wake of present, trends there might be an effort to repeal."

[DAVID CURD]: Another legislature whose name was Dismas Becker showed up in David's office with his constituent named Leon Rouse. Leon had a lot of connections with people like Archbishop Weakland in Milwaukee, and the Episcopalian bishop,. But anyway, Leon on his own had gone and had a gay anti-discrimination bill drafted with the LRB, Legislative Reference Bureau. And he came up with Dismas and had this bill. And it was a different bill than David had drafted. It worked a little differently. And of course he wanted someone to look at it and they looked at it, and it was actually a much simplified version. It just took all the statutes that had to do with discrimination and added sexual

orientation to it. At some point, there were discussions about who he had gotten support from, and it became apparent, the strategy developed. And I think it's the key to why it passed. Up until that time, any sort of gay rights bills, when they were debated, they were fiascos. But suddenly, having all these religious people - and we went on and got more - because in Madison, because it's a very liberal community. But we found out, even the head of the American Baptist Conference, which is thought of as being conservative, was supporting us. Because they considered it a human rights issue, a civil rights issue. Also, surprisingly, it turned out there were people in the legislature who surprisingly we found were supporters of the bill on both sides of the aisle. I think that really took us aback. And once it passed one house Drefus said if it passed the other he would sign it.

[KATHLEEN NICHOLS] I can't overstate how much everything who is queer in the world owes to David for being a skilled politician who completely understood how to mass political capital and being completely willing to spend it on what both coasts said couldn't possibly happen here. We were, in fact, actively discouraged by the antecedent organization to HRC from attempting to pass a gay rights law here, because surely we would fail and that would set the movement back

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[JOE ELDER] The place I connected on campus was hearing about the ROTC unit and the fact that it is now under fire because they refuse to admit gays and lesbians. As soon as I found out that they did was being discriminated on the ground, It was too hypocritical. We have a state that does not discriminate, we have a city that doesn't discriminate, we have a campus that does not discriminate. And then we have these three federally funded organizations with all the stature and reputation that they have that do.

[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 8: Faculty and students take on discrimination in the ROTC. As told by Joe Elder, and Jim Steakley.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] Two students at UW-Milwaukee Eric Jourenburg and Leon Rouse asked their school to adhere to the spirit of the new law by suspending participation in the ROTC program if that program continued to violate the terms of the statute. And they got the Milwaukee faculty senate to consider a motion but it was not passed

[JIM STEAKLEY] We created an organization called UW Faculty against discrimination in University programs. There was, the main person that we behind all of this was of course the undergraduate was Rick Villasenor. And Joe Elder in the sociology department was heading it up, and it was extremely useful because of his Quaker background he had always had a kind of pronounced position on the military, and also had a social activism that came from his background and the church background and everything. So he was a highly respected professor here on campus, well-known, who was a perfect person to head up our UW-Faculty against discrimination. And so we started off by getting a petition, we looked at the UW rules, Rick Villasenor looked at the rules and found out it is possible to call a meeting of the faculty to deliberate on an issue by getting the signatures of, don't hold me to this I would have to read the old newspaper clippings in The Cardinal on this, 10 percent of the faculty, or something like that, a certain percentage of the faculty has to sign a petition to do that. So we drafted a petition and took it around and networked as best we could through our Gay symposium group and through the different departments and everything, and got together all of our needed signatures

[JOE ELDER] So beginning in essentially the spring of '89 we got together the necessary votes and the decision was that there would be an all faculty meeting the next fall which was indeed held on

December 4th 1989 and the vote had to be whether the faculty would press the Board of Regents to terminate the University contract with the Army and Air Force ROTC programs if those programs did not end discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation by May of 1993

[JIM STEAKLEY] On December 4, 1989 we had the first meeting of the full faculty since the Vietnam war era. It took place at the Stock Pavillion, right over there. That was a building that I had not been in up to that time. We needed a big space to put all those people together. It was wow, it was like amazing, because you had the ROTC supporters that wanted to keep the gay people out, people in uniform like crazy speaking, and the officers from ROTC, and the university lawyers, and then they got the Student group represented by David, well anyway, our campus group the 10 percent society, they wanted to have a student representative speak, the president of that. So they had all these presenters, all these speakers, well it was historical you know, you can look it up online, by a vote of 386 to 248 the meeting of the faculty asked the board of regents to dismantle its contract with the ROTC.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] And at a meeting of the Board of Regents on February 1990 Donna Shalala who was then our Chancellor, and Assistant President Kenneth Shaw recommended keep ROTC on campus. And the Regents voted to do that 13 to 3. But they agreed to lobby the Wisconsin Congressional Delegation to demand that the policy be changed at the federal level, and the University actually appointed a task force with other colleagues and universities to but pressure in Washington to change the policy.

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[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 9: Madison starts the movement

[JIM STEAKLEY] Well, you know we made national news with that and also these petitions and demonstrations and so on were getting to be on the national news and the UW Madison was kind of the first one out of the gate on this thing but it spread sort of in a wildfire fashion to certain campuses where there were similar protests going on including at Harvard so it was beginning to be discussed apropos of this nominee Keagan for the Supreme Court who took a position on that committee with Joe Elder as Chair also met with Wisconsin Congressman Less Aspin.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] Students on campus were so upset at the Regents decision that continued to try to force the issue. In April 1990 they occupied Bascom for five days demanding that the Chancellor and the Assistant President sign a disclaimer to be but on all University Orientation materials noting the contradiction between U.S. System Policy State Law and the ROTC policy. And after 4 days with little positive response from the administration, they decided to ramp up their message and they also occupied the Board of Regents Room at the top of Van Hise, on the 18th floor of Van Hise. Well, that was the final straw for campus administration and they broke up the Van Hise sit-in after 10 hours and the police came in and they arrested 40 students while a crowd of 300 chanted outside of Van Hise while these students were taken away.

[JIM STEAKLEY] Both Shalala and Aspin left Wisconsin in '93 to join the Clinton Cabinet. And she was the Secretary of Health and Human Services and he was the Secretary of Defense. So Aspin was the person who basically together with Clinton who worked out the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy. So this was also forged out of this, it was kind of a concession to the grass roots movement, about the status of gays in the military.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] It was national news, and the student activism that followed was national news. It touched off an explosion of media coverage, and it created subsequent activism on other campuses around country throughout 1990. In November of 1991, for example, the national

association of colleges and universities released a statement endorsing efforts to change the ROTC policy, because all the 148 schools in the association had passed resolutions requesting ROTC to change its policy. And now you are into the election cycle for the 1992 presidential candidate. And for the first time ever a Presidential Candidate has to take a stand on how they feel about gays serving openly in the military. George Herbert Walker Bush says he doesn't believe in that. And Bill Clinton runs for the presidency saying the first thing he will do in office is sign an executive order overturning that policy. Well he ends up not doing that, and we have almost another 20 years of activism, and that policy ended, you know, on September 20, 2011. And that Mass movement started here

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[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] Chapter 10: A new type of meeting place- the founding of the LGBT campus center. As told by Alnisa Allgood.

[ALNISA ALLGOOD] We decided to hitch a ride with her. She dropped us off in Madison and that was pretty much it. We didn't even have a place to stay.

[JASONE ORNE] Wow. How'd that work out? What'd y'all do?

[ALNISA ALLGOOD] I mean, it was fine. We got here, we came to a Ten Percent Society Meeting I think like that night. I mean, it was the summer so we weren't super worried about it. We were just like, it's the summer. But actually we ended up staying in the Ten Percent Society offices, the ones in the junky old buildings that are going to be ripped out sometime soon, for a couple weeks, actually, I think, until we found some place to live and whatnot. And that's actually how the campus center got started, to be perfectly honest. And it was just kind of one of those things. It was just like, well, Dean Rouse and Jan Sheppard, they pretty much had indicated that you could go through the Board of Regents, which what everybody was doing and they were fighting and fighting, year after year. Or you could just go through student segregated fee. Pretty much a month later I contacted Jana Sheppard with a couple page plan outlining the process and all of the other stuff, and we got approval maybe two or three months after that. And we just had to wait for the next fiscal year for everything to kick in. So it was relatively easy to do. It's just that people were so focused in on one course of action that they just didn't step back to look to see what the other options were.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] I think the campus, the LGB, and it was originally called the LGB, Campus Centered opened in Thursday September 10, 1992 at 336 W. Dayton, which is in the Capitol Center Complex. It was one of those first floor storefronts in the Capitol Center Complex that students were able to rent out. They could not get space on campus to create this, so they rented space off campus. It featured a lending library, a speaker's bureau, and support groups, a myriad of events for the community.

[ALNISA ALLGOOD] Yeah we did a lot of stuff. I mean obviously we initiated a number of support groups. Like we had Bi Shy Why I think there was a transgender group. Then there was a coming out group, I definitely did not do that. I actually am fairly supportive of people coming out, but at the same time it's like, yeah, after Penn State I was like, I will never do another coming out group. I'm like, I do not have the proper mentality for it. But there were a couple of really good people who led the coming out group. And we set up the space as a meeting space. We really wanted to get people to start using the space immediately. So it was a meeting space for some groups that had already existed and were trying to find regular meeting space around town.

[SCOTT SEYFORTH] It continued as a student organization that had received yearly funding through the ASM of its time, and continued to be run by students. There are problems with not having continual funding but having to get your funding every year. And they had continual lease problems. People kept canceling their lease, and they kept moving around so their lease was canceled at Capitol Center so they moved into an 8' x 8' office in Memorial Union in the spring of 1995, and in the fall of '95 they moved into the Community Housing and Services Building at 306 N. Brooks Street, which was the old YWCA on N. Brooks and then in the fall of '97 they moved into a space on State Street, above what was then Corn Bloom Shoe Store, at 406 W. Gilman and then that lease got canceled, and then they finally got into the second floor space in Memorial Union in the fall of 1998, which was the space that they have been in until their recent move 2 weeks ago to the Red Gym. And so eventually in 2003 they transitioned from a student organization funded mainly by student segregated fees to a unit of the Dean of Students Office with a paid full time staff member.

[KRISTEN SCHUMACHER] This concludes our collection of highlights from the Madison LGBT Oral History Project: 1960's-Present. We've only been able to share a fraction of the rich stories found in the collection, and there are many more still being told. If you would like to find out more about these topics, and many others, please contact the Oral History Program, or browse the interview collections at archives.library.wisc.edu. Once again we would like to thank our oral history narrators, our historical consultant Scott Seyforth, and the New Harvest Foundation for making this project possible. Thank you.