

Kevin

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Transcript

Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

November 21, 2011

VOICE RECORDING

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TIFFANY BARBOUR

Okay, my name is Tiffany Barbour, and it is Monday, November 21st at five o'clock, and I'm interviewing Kevin (*redacted*).

KEVIN

Kevin (*redacted*).

TIFFANY BARBOUR

I'm sorry.

KEVIN

That's okay. (*Redacted*).

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Okay. And okay, first question: so, Kevin, how do you identify in your community?

KEVIN

I identify as gay.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Okay.

KEVIN

So, if anybody asks. (*Both laugh*).

TIFFANY BARBOUR

And, a little bit of background about yourself. Where did you grow up?

KEVIN

I grew up in the Los Angeles area. I was born in Canoga Park but raised in L.A. proper.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

And do you have brothers and sisters? Or how is your family dynamic? Are your parents still married or--?

KEVIN

I have one sister, and my parents are divorced. They divorced when I was two, so I never really knew them as married. But my sister, she lives up here now too. In fact, my whole family has at some point lived in Boise. Just kind of strange because we weren't really close growing up, so it's kind of odd that, at different times, we all ended up moving here. But yeah, so we're all here now.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Do you like it here?

KEVIN

I do, yeah, I do. I like it a lot, yeah.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

And how long have you been here?

KEVIN

There's a period of time between like 2000 and 2003 where I sort of moved around a lot, and I traveled a lot, and I came to Idaho in that time. And then when I was younger, I came here once for like a year.

So, I've kind of been back and forth. But living full-time in Boise since 2003. But I had been to Idaho for short periods of time before that, with my dad when I was younger, and then like I said, bouncing around traveling and stuff.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Cool, okay. And so, you're out to your community, I assume?

KEVIN

Yeah, yeah.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

For the most part?

KEVIN

Sure. Yeah, yeah. I got nothing to hide. *(Both laugh)*.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

That's good. Did you have a religious background when you were growing up at all or?

KEVIN

No. I think all of us in the west are Christians. We sort of have Christian morals, even if we're not explicitly or practicing. And so, in that way I guess my moral foundation probably came from the Christian moral foundation, like most people in the U.S.

But when I was in junior high and high school, I was estranged from my parents, and so for a while in there I definitely did join a youth group and hung out with some religious kids. But I just needed a family, so that's kind of what it was. But I never have been a believer, so to speak, or a devout practitioner of any religion.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Were you estranged from your parents because of complications of coming out or?

KEVIN

Oh, no. No. They just were really young when they had kids. My mother was 15 when she had my sister and 17 when she had me. So, they were young, and because of that they weren't done having their youthful years. They were trying to do all the things that young kids do while they had infants and toddlers.

So, because of that, we weren't raised very well. But as soon as we could get out of the house and do our own thing, we kind of were wanting to do that. And my parents, they were fine with that. Yeah, they were sort of out of touch. We didn't all really come back together as friends or as family again until we were in our 20s. So yeah.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah. So in that dynamic was it-- How old were you when you actually realized that you were gay? Or knew that you were attracted to males?

KEVIN

I think the best answer for that is that I've known I was gay as long as I've known what sex was, you know what I mean? I think it's really rare that somebody tells you, like, "Oh, and then I had this realization that I was gay," and they're like in their 20s or something.

I think most times people sort of live in rational ignorance of it and choose to not know. (*Laughs*). But I can't say what anybody else's life is obviously, but it's just such a fundamental part of a person.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

An essence you just feel like this is who you are?

KEVIN

Exactly. You just feel attracted to certain people and not to others.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, you never questioned it? It was always just who you are, or did you have girlfriends growing up? Yeah, you kind of led that hegemonic lifestyle, of just kind of doing what you're supposed to do, or thinking that's how it was supposed to be.

KEVIN

Yeah. Or you know, when you're a kid you think maybe everybody feels this way. Like, maybe everybody's kind of going through this. So, you just kind of fall into the social norm and see what's going to happen, and roll the dice. And so, for me, I definitely always knew I was different.

I always suspected that I was different, but I still dated girls because it's preservation. Today kids come out, I think, in junior high and in high school, and the environment is more conducive to that, but it wasn't for me, and I was also really self-conscious anyway. So, I didn't want to bring any attention to myself.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Bring extra baggage or anything. Not that it's baggage, but for a child it might be something that's really hard.

KEVIN

And especially if you're an effeminate child. I was always a very effeminate young man. And being effeminate already, and then trying to date girls. *(Laughs)*.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

How was that? What was your experience like?

KEVIN

Well, you know, girls love gay guys. *(Laughs)*.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

But did they know you were gay?

KEVIN

No, of course not.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

I mean, that's the thing, right?

KEVIN

Maybe they suspected, yeah. But I didn't have sex until I was gay, until I was out of the closet. You know what I mean? I never had girlfriends that I had sexual relations with because--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You've never been with a woman before then?

KEVIN

Not sexually, no. And when I was in high school and I dated a girl, we were both in Youth Group together, so it was awesome because I never had to-- *(laughs)* --go there.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

It was more like a best friend kind of relationship?

KEVIN

It was. And of course, we were known as boyfriend and girlfriend, or whatever. But if you're not having sex, what's really the thing that separates people who are intimate partners, or lovers, or girlfriend-boyfriend, married, from those close friends? Sex is really the thing.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You said you didn't have sex until you were out.

KEVIN

So 21.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

21, okay. What was that, was it with a partner? Was it kind of a sporadic: "this is what I'm going to do right now"? I mean, did that help you come out? Or I guess what led to that?

KEVIN

Well, sex usually comes out of situations, when you're that age and you're sort of drinking in a bar, or whatever, and you meet some people. My first boyfriend, it wasn't like a random hookup or something, where I didn't know the guy. We had started seeing each other, and then he knew that I had never had sex.

So, we waited for a while because he knew I just needed some time. And then our relationship developed sexually, and we stayed together for six or eight months, and then we broke up, like you do when you're 20, 21. So, yeah. I would say he was my boyfriend. I definitely wasn't a stranger.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Okay, so it wasn't like a coming out. I know a lot of people have coming out stories that involve sex at the same time. Like they were involved--

KEVIN

Oh, right. I see what you mean. They were they were pushed out. (*laughs*)

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Kind of, yeah. Someone hit on them, and they just, you know, "Oh okay, this feels good," and then they decided they were gay or something. So I just was wondering if that was the--

KEVIN

No, I think that I wasn't going to have sex till I was ready to come out, until I was ready to be gay socially. I wasn't ready to have sex until I didn't want to hide anything. I already felt like I was hiding something for so long, so I didn't want to hide anything else.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So how old were you when you officially came out?

KEVIN

Well, the story goes like this: my family had moved to Lewiston, Idaho. And I went to my last year of high school there, and then I decided-- I'm trying to figure out this geography. How did this go? I moved around so much when I was a kid, and especially at that time, so I kind of get the order mixed up sometimes.

But I had decided that I was going to come out, but I lived in Lewiston, and I was in a youth group with all these crazy conservative kids, and so I wasn't going to come out there. What was I going to do in Lewiston as a gay person?

It was boring. So I moved away. I decided to go to Florida because I was a dancer, and I wanted to work for Disney. So I just sort of went there and lived a big gay dream, and came out of the closet, and got a boyfriend, and worked at Disney, and--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Came out with Mickey Mouse.

KEVIN

Came out with Mickey Mouse. Right. It was just, you know, the happiest place on earth. But it was funny because in Florida I didn't have sex. I had a boyfriend there, but I wasn't ready. We made out and stuff, and we screwed around, and we had oral sex a little bit. But I wasn't ready to go there, and so it never happened in our relationship.

I ended up coming back to Idaho, then I met somebody in Idaho. Up in Pullman, Washington, actually. And then that was my first sexual relationship. But I sort of needed that primer, and so that's kind of what Florida was for me. That year was kind of like, just go somewhere else to do this. (*Laughs*). Get out of the closet.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Get away.

KEVIN

Exactly, be somebody new.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, is there a big gay community down in Florida? You said you were a dancer, so you got a job with Disney, or were you kind of like researching--?

KEVIN

No, I got a job with Disney. I mean, there's gay people everywhere, and every community has a gay community. It just may be more subversive. Social pressures tend to push gay people into dark places, and the greater those social pressures are, or the more homogeneous the whole community is, the deeper those places tend to be for gay people.

In communities where there's lots of different kinds of people, gays tend to be more integrated. So to answer your question, is there a big gay community, well there's gay communities everywhere. You throw a rock, you're going to hit one of us at some point. In Florida, though, I just really wanted to work at Disney.

It was just a great job, and the audition was really hard. I didn't make the first one, but I made it the second time I auditioned. And it just felt like an accomplishment for me as an artist. I don't know what took me there.

There's a school there. I went to film school there, too, so maybe it was that. It's weird, I don't know, something just pulled me. It's very far away from Idaho. (*Laughs*). Maybe that's what it was.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

For sure. Okay, so along with the whole lines of the gay community, is there a place that you feel the most comfortable here in the Boise? You know, in the gay community, or are there places that you avoid more often than not? In terms of Boise.

KEVIN

Well, I think all people, gay or straight, or whatever you are -- not just sexually; maybe your race, or your religious background, or your political views -- people congregate in groups. They find people that are like them and hang out with them.

I'm not sure if you're alluding to, like, do I feel unsafe anywhere. I don't feel unsafe anywhere. I would never avoid somewhere for fear that I might get beat up or something, you know what I mean? And in terms of level of comfortability, what I do, I work with food, and I work with drinks, and I work in the service business, and worked in restaurants for 15 years, and I own two of them.

So, I'm really particular about the kinds of environments I'm in, because it's what I do for a living. So, if you said, "How do you identify as a professional?" I identify more as a service worker and an epicurean than I identify as a gay person.

So, if I went to a city, the first places I would look to go would not be gay places, they would be one of the best restaurants, because that's my identity. I didn't realize until talking to you about this, but that is definitely true about me.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

That's your first and foremost--

KEVIN

Definitely. Yeah, atmosphere, good drinks, good food, is the service good? How does the place feel? Does that have a reputation? That's who I am first. So, I don't hang out at gay bars, really.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, in the restaurant community, have you had any problems with anyone, from customers to delivery drivers delivering your stuff, any problems with anybody knowing that you're gay? Or maybe making comments, or even workers or anything like that?

KEVIN

Not that I know of. Maybe someone might when I turn my back.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Disgruntles employees. (*Laughs*).

KEVIN

Yeah, exactly. Doing what I do, and anybody who manages human beings, you piss people off. And so I'm sure I pissed people off, and they may have been tempted to be like, you know, "What a fag. Dumb fag," or something. But I don't think it's a hateful.

It's just choosing the thing to pick on me about, because you're mad at me about something else. Do you know what I'm saying? But I've never had anybody say something hateful to me, or, I think, refused to do business with me because I'm gay. Do you know what I mean? That's never really happened. Not since I was in junior high. (*Laughs*).

TIFFANY BARBOUR

What happened in junior high?

KEVIN

Well, you know kids are terrible. Kids are just mean. So kids were very mean to me in junior high because I wanted to be a professional jump-roper when I was growing up. I was just so effeminate.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Well, who doesn't? (*Laughs*).

KEVIN

Yeah. Hello, it would be a great line of work. I just was such a feminine young man, and so because of that, kids were terrible to me.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, you've found you've kind of come into yourself? And just really haven't had any problems with--?

KEVIN

No, I don't think so. Shit, I mean, I don't think so.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

What about family? Is there any family members that have been--?

KEVIN

Not really. You know, growing up the way that I grew up, you don't grow up as a white kid in wats with parents who are teenagers and worry about your sexual orientation. What you worry about is survival. You really do. You think, "Am I going to fucking eat tomorrow?"

I was concerned because, growing up, a lot of times we didn't live in houses, we lived in campgrounds. We were homeless for years on end, at times. When you grow up in that environment, nothing matters that is beyond the basic human needs of survival. And so, I think my sister and I were both that way. We were just, you know, can we get to school?

Can we eat? Do we have somewhere to sleep? And that sounds like a sad story, but it's really not. Everybody has their way that they got to where they are, and that's just part of my journey. So it's been really good for me.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

For sure. So, obviously you're really passionate about food, and dining, and drinking, and all that kind of stuff. Do you think that that has any influence on the way you present yourself? I guess... What am I trying to say? Are you embarrassed, like if someone came in and... Not a good question? I don't know.

KEVIN

No, you're fine. You can ask it.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

I'm wondering if you have any like... You had said that you are a restaurateur first and foremost, so do you think that, not identifying as being a gay man, is there any correlation, because the industry, or just because... Do you get what I'm trying to say?

KEVIN

I think maybe I do. If what you're asking is if... Well, let me just say this. My identity as a food person, it comes from my interests and my passions in life. Now, a lot of gay people are interested in things like food and drink and culture and art. It's part of the same gene that makes us gay. *(Laughs)* And don't ever let somebody tell you that that's not true.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

(Laughs). The gay gene?

KEVIN

Yeah. I mean, the reality is stereotypes are stereotypes for a reason. Maybe not all gay people are interested in food and fashion culture and art, but a statistically significant proportion of gay people are. Gay men are. It's just in us, and so I think because of that, that thing in me, that interest--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

There's a correlation, I guess, or something?

KEVIN

Probably. But my point was that, did I identify as an epicurean like I said, or whatever -- as a food person, as a restaurateur -- that comes from my interest in food, and my interest in dining and service and hospitality. It doesn't have anything to do with me disidentifying as a gay person. Does that make sense?

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah.

KEVIN

It doesn't matter to me, frankly. It doesn't matter to me. I want what everybody else wants. I just want to live my life, and be successful, and keep good company. And I have. I don't know. Kids that are raised in environments where they have to worry about being gay, being gay becomes the center of their identity.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah. I think it sounds like you had a pretty healthy self-image of yourself, and so you don't have to identify as--

KEVIN

Perhaps not, and maybe I don't. I'm really insecure about other things. I think I'm a very self-conscious person, and I'm really strangely anti-social at times, and that probably comes from just being raised in chaos. And so, maybe I'm missing sort of fundamental developmental things that kids get in a normal upbringing.

I think there are flaws to my identity, and flaws to sort of my self-image and my self-esteem, but they're not related to anybody's telling me, like, you're going to go to hell for being gay. And kids that are raised in that, it's really sad.

And then, when they do come out and they're, "Okay with it," quote, then it's the center of who they are, and it drives their life. But your sexual orientation is just one part of you. I guess for me, my interest in my career -- as a professional, as a capitalist, as a career person -- that's just more important to me. So, I don't know. I guess.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Have you been influenced by art or music? Or you said you're a dancer, did that help you to kind of come into your own? Is there a song that you heard, to help you come out or to live your life as you are right now?

KEVIN

Yeah, maybe. I was always a creative kid, and I think I always wanted to make things that looked pretty or said something. But no. When I went to Florida, it was a conscious choice.

It was a conscious choice to go there, come out of the closet, see how it went, and see if I could come back home as a gay person and be okay with it. A lot of it was just kind of a test. It wasn't an epiphany moment. It really was a choice. I made--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You knew what you were doing.

KEVIN

I made a choice -- Yes, exactly -- to go and test the waters.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Five thousand miles away.

KEVIN

Exactly. Just get out and get far away, and see how it goes. It was very sort of clinical, and that was my approach, and that's what I thought would work the best, and that's just kind of how I am. So yeah.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You said you have a partner right now, Right? Do you guys live together or--?

KEVIN

We don't live together, no. No, we have separate apartments. Or, I have a house on the Bench, and he has an apartment. We've only been together for like nine months, but we've talked about the next step.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

How do you feel about marriage and kids? I mean, do you want that? Do you want to get married and have kids and--?

KEVIN

Yeah, well I think the term -- this is semantics -- the term marriage is a little bit loaded for gay people because we're not allowed to get married, and even if we were allowed to get married, then part of me wonders, well, what is the institution?

Why does it matter on the legal level? Or like, why is there this legislative process that defines who can get married, and why are there incentives for people to get married? I mean--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Tax breaks--

KEVIN

All this stuff, why is that there? It comes from a time in our country where it was really important for people to pair up, have kids, and set up house. Well, we're not really in that position today, in the world. In fact, it'd be probably better if more people were single and not having children, in reality.

So, that makes me ask the question, like why is the government, why are we doing that anyway? I guess it's good. Stability in a culture is good, and people can pair up and raise children, and spread values and create patriotism, then I guess it is good for the country. But I don't know. I want kind of a weird like... On the fence about marriage, really.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah. You think you'd feel that way if you were heterosexual?

KEVIN

I think I would, but I think being gay makes us think about that kind of stuff because we can't get married. Straight people just go off and get married, and they just throw it around and get married. Gay people, we can't. We can't make those foolish choices in Vegas. And so we have to think about these things.

We're forced into some intellectualism about it. And so, I think if straight people thought more about marriage, like what is it and why is it, maybe they would choose not to get the government involved in the process. Because that's really what it is. It's a religious and political union. It's strange.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah, for sure it is. So, a lot of people have commitment ceremonies. Would you be willing to do something like that?

KEVIN

I would be inclined to, because I like ritual, and I like the idea of throwing an event. That's just how I am. (*Laughs*). I would like to throw an event, and have a nice wedding, and throw a beautiful dinner, and call it whatever we want to call it. My partner, though, he's not like that at all. In fact, I think he's patently opposed to marriage.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Any sort of way, shape or form?

KEVIN

Yeah, he's kind of weird like that. But I think if we were together for years or something, and if I said to him, "This is what I want. I want to have a big party, and I want us to say some vows in front of our friends, and commit to each other before we're going to have kids," or something, he would do it. I don't think he would tell me no. But it's not important to him at all.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You mentioned that you kind of told him about this interview. How did he feel about that?

KEVIN

Oh, like I was saying, I get interviewed a lot, mostly for work things, and I talk with the press a lot. And so, I think we just kind of skipped over it-- (*laughs*) --frankly. It's just another thing that I'm doing, and I didn't really know a lot about what it was, and I didn't really have time to look into it or anything.

And James, like I said, James is also our friend. So, James had mentioned he's interviewing another friend of ours, Odell, for his interview. So, we talked about that a little bit. But no, I don't think he feels one way or another about it.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Do you guys have different stories on coming out? And I mean, not even him. I think one person in class said, "You get a bunch of gay people together, and coming out stories are going to happen." So, I'm sure you've heard a lot of other people's stories, and do you feel fortunate the way yours played out, or do you feel like--?

KEVIN

Yeah, well... I would say I feel fortunate that I was raised in a way where everything I had, I worked for. And fundamental things. Like, I feel fortunate that I was raised and taught that, if you're going to make it, you have to work, and you have to be strong.

And if a byproduct of that is that my sexual orientation didn't really have to be an issue, or didn't really have to be thought about, if that's a byproduct of that process, then that's great too. But I don't feel fortunate.

People say sometimes, when they hear my story about how I was raised, like, "Wow, that's really amazing, because you're successful today and you have a lot." And I think, yeah, but there's a positive correlation between those things. I would not be who I am, I think, if it weren't for being raised the way that I was.

So, I feel very fortunate in that way, but it has nothing to do with my gayness. Does that make sense? And I'm not sure if I totally agree that if you get gay people in a room, you'll hear coming out stories.

I think if you have young gay people in a room that are raised by conservative people that taught them that they're going to go to hell, and they had to deal with it, and they worked it out, and they came out, then those kinds of people will talk about the coming out story like crazy, because it's a big deal in their lives.

And it's a psychological hurdle that they really had to get over, and they're probably going to be screwed up for the rest of their lives, having this little thing inside them that says, "You're going to hell. God hates you."

But people that don't deal with that stuff, I don't think we have coming out stories, because it just happens. As you come of age and you start to have sex, it just happens. I know that none of my friends that I hang out with talk about their coming out stories.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Really?

KEVIN

No. (*Laughs*). Of my gay friends. Probably 10% of my friends are gay, and yeah, the rest are probably straight. But Philip's story is pretty straightforward: he was raised catholic and he's still pretty conservative. He doesn't view his sexual orientation as having morality, though, it's just what it is to him.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

And this is your boyfriend?

KEVIN

Philip, yeah. I think his family always knew he was gay, because moms always know is the reality of it, in my experience. Moms can always tell. And so, when he came out it, I don't think that they were weird or banishing about it. And he was always very successful. He's always been a really successful person. So, they're just happy, I think, that he's happy.

So yeah, I don't want to say it's not a big deal, because it is a big deal. The reality of it in this country is that people suffer, and it's very sad, but I also think that we can't pander. We cannot pander to people who are carrying that psychological negativity about their sexual orientation. We have to teach them to get over it. To fucking move on. And get some therapy and make a choice.

And I know it's hard and we're all different. I don't know what it feels like to be psychologically damaged by somebody telling you you're going to hell your whole life. That's really sad. But at the same time, I just think we need to just let people exist, not talk so much about it. (*Laughs*). Maybe.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

On those notes, do you think education at a really young age -- in the schools -- do you think that that would help?

KEVIN

I think it's crucial. I mean, I think it's crucial. And I think sex education, when it starts, and the appropriate age for when it starts, is a debatable topic too, but we need to include things about, not everybody's the same. Some people like to have sex with the same sex, some people like to have sex with both sexes, some people like to have sex with the opposite sex.

Most people have sex with the opposite sex because of procreative urges. So, we should talk about this stuff. But I think it's also images that children see. I think that 10% of the images that kids see should feature gay people, because 10% of the population is probably gay.

So, I think if kids are raised seeing both of these images, and being told that it's normal and not strange and subversive, the problem will fix itself. If you go to like Belgium or something, you'll see advertisements featuring gay people that aren't in explicitly gay neighborhoods, or in gay bars.

They're just normal advertisements. I think that's really important for kids to understand, so they don't grow up to be bigots. They need to see that there's people of different colors and different religions and... So, yeah.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah. So, I know you had an interesting family growing up, but you also mentioned you were in youth groups. And were they religious youth groups or--? I mean, did you not have that one woman, one man that just marinated in your head? Or, did you just kind of see past it?

KEVIN

Yeah, it's a good question. I was older. By the time I took off from my family and kind of hooked up with some of those other Jesus freak kids, I was like 15 or 16, and I was old enough to call a spade a spade. I had become very cynical and very critical, growing up on the streets of LA, I had become quick to sort of call bullshit.

So no, I didn't suffer from any of that. I always knew I wasn't a real believer. I always knew I wasn't like them. But that's the function of the Church. The Church doesn't pay taxes, and the reason they don't pay taxes is because they're supposed to be doing good works and helping people.

And so I didn't really feel bad about it, because the Church helped me and gave me a family, and helped me stay on the right track in a time when I might have really gone astray. You know, that's their function.

So, even though I was not really a believer, and wasn't going to become one of them and start tithing and evangelizing, I felt like it was a really good stage in my life. But yeah, I never believed.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Have you ever seen these "pray the gay away" things, or anything, how do you feel about... I mean obviously-- (*Stammers*).

KEVIN

Yeah. It's normal--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You just think it's a joke, or do you think people really believe that it is a sin to be gay?

KEVIN

Absolutely they believe it. In the same way Love vs. Virginia, I think, was the case that legalized interracial marriage in the 70s. That wasn't that long ago, in this country, that we believed it was wrong for people of different races to marry. So yes, people believe, but it's normal. The majority will always fear the minority, always.

The majority will always try to explain and diminish and erase the minority. That's normal in nature. So, it's natural, I think. It's natural that western religions would try to tune out the minority. It is sad. It's really sad

There's big correlations between teen suicide and homosexuality, and those conversion therapies where they take you in, like to a forest camp, and bunker all these boys up in a room together. (*Laughs*). They're not praying in there.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Have you seen that movie, *But I'm A Cheerleader*?

KEVIN

Yes, I have, yeah. And that makes a joke out of it. And to me, you said like, "Is it a joke to you?" Well, it's not a joke to me. It's very real. And these people really think that they're going to get rid of it, and--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Be healed or something?

KEVIN

Yeah. Be healed, be cleansed, or have it cast out of them or something. And the saddest part about that is that, what are supposed to be rational adults who are leaders and examples, are the ones telling these kids. And that is just really disappointing to me. But we're a flawed species.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Living here in Idaho, we're a pretty conservative state. Are you passionate about politics here? I mean, especially being a business owner and in downtown, which I know is a little bit more liberal than some other areas around here. But you said you lived in rural Idaho, as well, or--

KEVIN

I lived in Lewiston for a little while.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Lewiston. Okay, yeah. So, small town.

KEVIN

Oh yeah. And yeah, it smells. Ugh. About politics, I'm not really passionate. I follow politics because I think it's interesting, but it's a stage like anything else. And I'm interested in policy. I have a degree in economics, and I've always been interested in policy, and what policy can do to shape the aggregate behaviors of people.

How can we sort of coach people to behave better, without taking away their freedom? And so, I'm interested in policy, and I have an opinion about a lot of policies, but I'm not a political person, really. I don't get involved in politics. And you know in downtown Boise, there's sort of little political things, like bus lanes and parking rules.

And I get passionate about these things because they affect my business. And I do think if I were going to volunteer for an organization, I would volunteer for an organization that works to legalize gay marriage, because I do think that equal rights are important. Not that I necessarily think I would get married, or that I believe in the institution of marriage, period.

But I do think that the answer is not to just get rid of marriage entirely. It's always going to be in our culture. So, the answer is equal rights. And I don't have the passion to devote my life to that cause, but I think if I were going to volunteer for an organization, that's probably what I would do.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

To help the Boise community.

KEVIN

Yeah. Or just to raise funds to lobby, or whatever. The political process is all about power and who influences which lawmaker, and as we win battles as gay people, like with Don't Ask, Don't Tell, and DOMA now coming before the senate, these things happen because a bunch of groups get together by raising money, and lobbying senators, and pushing these people to get these bills on the floor.

It's just money and politics, that's all it is. Most people you'll find in the U.S. actually agree that gay marriage should be legal. Most people, right? It's just getting it on the floor. And so, I think that's important, to raise money and add your voice.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So-- Go ahead.

KEVIN

No, that's all.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, I know you believe in all these rights for people and stuff, but is there any other thing that you would... Or being gay, do you feel like besides being discriminated, you know, "I can't get married," or you know, maybe you if you want to adopt a kid, you might not be on the first list. Is there any other discriminations that you've dealt with along the way, or?

KEVIN

No. Since I haven't wanted to adopt kids yet, and since I haven't wanted to get married yet, I haven't felt any of those.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You don't ever feel like you've ever been--

KEVIN

I don't. I feel like in junior high, kids were mean to me because I was really feminine. *(Laughs)*. But I don't feel like, as an adult, the quality of my life has been diminished because I'm gay. I haven't even noticed it. Other people in my life talk to me about it more than I ever think about it.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Like me? *(Both laugh)*.

KEVIN

And that's fine, that's okay. It makes me unique, and that's kind of fun. It's fun to be unique, you know? Maybe that's strange. I'm interested to hear what, in your stories, what people say. They say they feel like they have been discriminated against, or the quality of their life has been diminished a little bit, because of certain rights they don't have. But yeah, I just don't feel that way. At all.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Is it because, you think, you're a white male. You've just kind of--

KEVIN

Yeah. You're absolutely right about that.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You've been able to--

KEVIN

I'm a passable white male. That's definitely part of it, and I think--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You're on the top of the food chain, basically.

KEVIN

Yes. Yeah, and it's sad to have to say that that's probably the reason, but that's probably the reason. Something else is, Philip, my boyfriend, works in insurance. He sells insurance for Allstate. He manages a team of sales-people at a car dealership, so he works in a very straight, heteronormative world. He was born and raised as a Catholic in Wendell, Idaho.

So, this kid's coming from a very heteronormative environment. He's not closeted at work, but he doesn't have pictures of me on his desk or anything. And he always says to me, like, I'll say, "Well, why don't you like talk to your co-workers about me? Why don't you invite me to things at work?" or whatever, and, "Why don't you be out about me? Are you ashamed of me?" because it bugs me.

And he says to me, like, "Your life is different than my life. You work in bars and restaurants, and you work in the business of entertaining people." So of course, if you're gay, it makes sense, and none of your co-workers or your people that do business with you are going to be going to change the way they deal with you because you're gay.

But in his line of work, it could happen. His bosses are Mormon, the business is a Mormon business, so it would affect the quality of his life. But in what I do--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

If you chose a different route for yourself, I might feel--

KEVIN

I might feel. You're right. That's totally true. I might. It could be a lot of what led me to this industry. Who knows, who knows.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You also seem pretty confident. I mean, I know you said you had insecurities, but everybody does. But sitting here talking to you, you seem like a pretty confident person that knows himself. So, do you think, you know, when you can see that someone's confident, you're less likely to challenge that person--

KEVIN

Right, to try to push them or be mean or--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Mm-hmm.

KEVIN

Yeah, that could be it. I'm 30. You spend your 20s basically trying to figure out who you're comfortable with being before the world, and who you're comfortable presenting yourself as to the world. So I think I feel like I'm at an age where I better fucking get it.

I better be confident and okay with myself by now. I'm 30 years old. So yeah, that's probably part of it. It probably is my personality, too. If I sold insurance in a car dealership, I probably would still be totally out and talking about my boyfriend. I probably would be, actually.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Because that's who you are?

KEVIN

It's just who I am. It's just who I am. So, that's a good point. I wasn't raised Catholic.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Have you guys gotten in fights about this?

KEVIN

One. We got a one fight about it. We had to have a fight about it, though.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Is it because you're offended? Because you're out, and you think, "It's so easy, this is how my life is, why" -- like you said -- "why can't I go to the work function with you," or something?

KEVIN

It was because I felt like he didn't love me. But I needed to hear his perspective. I needed to see him struggle with it, and say, like, "This is hard for me. It sucks, but this is the reality of it." What happened was I bought a car in May, and I bought the car from his lot. And the guy who sold me the car has become kind of a friend of mine. He comes to the restaurant now. He's a really fun guy.

And he works with Phil, and I had told him when he was in here once, “Yeah, don't tell Phil, but I got him these really nice sunglasses for his birthday. But when you see him, make sure you compliment him on his sunglasses, because I want him to know that he looks good in them,” not even thinking I'm outing Phil to his co-worker.

Never once occurred to me that his co-worker might not know he's gay. But I totally outed him to his co-worker.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Oh, so the guy didn't know at all?

KEVIN

I think he had a suspicion, but he didn't know.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Just confirmed it.

KEVIN

And Phil, it really hurt his feelings that I would throw him under the bus like that, that I wouldn't just understand the position he's in and just let him manage it the way he has to. But he never told me that it hurt his feelings about it. But it hurt my feelings that Dino -- this guy's name is Dino -- it hurt my feelings that he hadn't told Dino about me.

So we both were coming from different places. So finally, we were drinking, we got in a fight about it. I just said, you know, “I think you're ashamed of me.” And he said, “I think you don't fucking understand my life, and it's not fair.”

And we're both right. I've been in this situation, you know what I mean? So, we had to have one fight about it, and we'll never fight about it again because I understand the position he's in now. And he understands what I need, I think.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Has this been the first relationship that you've been in that your partner has not been totally out to people in his community? Have your past relationships, everybody's known, and you can all...

KEVIN

I've been with some closeted guys.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Really?

KEVIN

Yeah. But this relationship is the healthiest relationship I've ever been in. I feel more like Philip is the first guy that I've been with that I really feel like we'll be together for a long time. And we're figuring it out, and we're a good match, and I'm in a place where I'm comfortable saying that I'm going to be with somebody for a while. So, this relationship is different in a lot of ways.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, you think the closeted relationships before, it didn't bother you as much because it was more of a fling kind of thing?

KEVIN

Yeah. More of a fling, or it was kind of a novelty to me to be with the guy that nobody knew was gay, because it's sort of like--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

A secret relationship.

KEVIN

Kind of, yeah. I don't know. Just sort of a weird, young obsession. I think a lot of gay guys like the idea of being with straight men. I don't know why. Something psychological. And like, I don't think we're actively recruiting.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You mean straight men as like, a relationship you were in, they were straight into their community but gay with you? Or like--

KEVIN

Like, everybody wants what they can't have.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Oh, okay. Yeah.

KEVIN

So, in the same way that you hear a lot of straight women say, like, "Oh, why are all gay guys so hot?" A lot of gay guys sit around and look at straight men, and they'll be like, "Oh my god, straight guys are so hot." It's just a condition of wanting what you can't have, kind of liking what's different from you.

Of course, the political media tries to say that we're out recruiting people, which is totally not true, so I don't want to say that. But I do think that most gay guys look at straight men and find them really attractive because there's something different.

It's kind of forbidden fruit, and you can't have it. And so, I think when I was with closeted guys a few times, it was partly that, just youthful obsession with what's strange and different.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

(Laughs). So, you mentioned recruiting anybody. But I mean, not that--

KEVIN

It's politically charged.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah, yeah. But have you ever, I guess, recruited anybody or turned someone? Like maybe hit on a straight man that didn't know that he was gay yet? Or I mean, I know you don't believe in that--

KEVIN

Yeah. It just doesn't happen.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

But have you ever-- (*Laughs*).

KEVIN

It just doesn't happen. People know they're gay.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You're just gay or you're not?

KEVIN

People know they're gay. They may be in deep denial, but they know. It's just not something about yourself that you couldn't know. I have a friend who's an ER doctor in San Francisco, who was with women most of his life, and came out when he was like 30. But he knew the whole time he was with women that he wanted to be with men. And his wife-- he was actually with a girl for like 7 years.

I think they were married, though. I forget. But she knew too, and they had sex with men together. But he was always with women in relationships. And then when he was 30, he started dating guys, and now he's gay. He doesn't date women at all, or have sex with women at all, right now. I mean, he's a really strange case.

That's really rare, I think, that somebody is so comfortable and open with her sexuality that they're going to be with women for a while, because they kind of like having sex with women, but they really want to be with dudes, and so they have sex with dudes sometimes in their relationship.

They have an agreement that they can have three ways sometimes. And then at 30 or 35, he switches, and now he's with guys, and that is really strange. But I think even he knew. He knew.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

The whole time that it--

KEVIN

Yeah, he knew.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, do you think--

KEVIN

No, you can't recruit. It's not possible. (*Laughs*).

TIFFANY BARBOUR

It's not possible. So, well then--

KEVIN

You can help somebody come out.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Well, then the issue of bisexuality comes up. Do you believe in that or do you believe in--

KEVIN

Yeah.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, like this man for instance. Do you think he was bisexual, or do you think he was always gay?

KEVIN

It depends on how you define sexual orientations. Do you define it by how a person's behaving in that moment, or do you define it by their true desires? So, if you say somebody's gay, they're actually gay. Oh, this person's really, actually gay. Maybe what you mean is, like, they're living as a straight person, but they desire to be with men, and so that's what makes them gay is their desire.

Or do you define their sexual orientation by how they're behaving in that moment? If right now in their life they're having sex with women for the most part, I define that person as straight, regardless of what they wish that they were. They might know that in reality they're gay, but they're hiding or whatever. It just depends on how you define it.

These things get kind of muddled. So, if a person lives their life and they're having sex with women for a really long time, and then they're having sex with both as they figure it out, and then they're having sex with men, then you might say, well, they were straight for a while, then they were bi, and then they were gay. I think that's fine, too.

So, I think to answer your question, do I believe in bisexuality? Absolutely. I think that most people would be a little bit bi if their social norms would allow them psychologically to go there. Social norms polarize us, so that a young boy who's 10 years old, who has a feeling about another guy once in a while, probably will be polarized into being a gay person.

And when he comes of age sexually, he'll come out of the closet as a gay person, when maybe there was something in him that he would want to have sex with women. But he'll never go there because we're so polarized about that topic.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

One or the other, kind of.

KEVIN

Yeah. That's a little bit unfortunate. People should be more fluid, I think, if they want to be. They should be able to go through periods of time when they are in a relationship with a woman for a long time and then switch around. I don't know.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, what advice would you give someone then? Like, let's say a middle schooler, because that's when you had the toughest time, right? When you felt like you, not necessarily-- Because you weren't out, so not necessarily... You just were effeminate, right? And so, what advice, or how would you say, "It gets better," like the campaign? Or, I mean, is that how you--

KEVIN

Yeah. I really do think that campaign is really awesome, because that's the truth. It does get better. It does get better.

And I guess my advice to somebody, if they were listening to this and they were in the closet, and they're like you know 12 or 13, those really hard years, I guess my advice would be to find a friend who is your age, who you know won't care and who will love you just the same, and just be really close with that person and tell them everything.

But find a companion that you can trust. It's all about having friends. I wish that I would have had friends, at that age, that I could have told my secrets to.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, you didn't have any--

KEVIN

But I didn't have anybody.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Kept it all inside.

KEVIN

Yeah. I think that was really damaging. I think that was really damaging, and I think it's the reason I didn't have a successful relationship until I was 30 years old. (*Laughs*). I needed somebody that I could trust, and I think kids today, they really need that.

Even in the most rural, dumb little towns, a kid can find somebody that they can trust. And you just got to find that. You got to find that one person.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

To be able to talk to. Would you suggest, then, joining support groups? As in, on the religious level, like you did? I mean, do you think that--

KEVIN

Well, I think you have to have a robust sense of morality--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

State of mind, to be able to kind of see, like you said, see right through it.

KEVIN

Yeah. It sounds so cruel, because I think religion is really important in a culture, and I would never say like, "Christians are fucking up our world." I think religion is really important for a lot of people. It's not for me, but I'm not programmed that way.

So, I would say don't join a youth group unless you have a very robust sense of morality, and you know that you're okay, because you don't want to get programmed into thinking you should change, and try to deprogram yourself, deprogram out the gay or whatever.

So, I would say don't do that, because most of those groups will try to convince you that you're going to go to hell unless you convert. It's really hard to take the good from the bad. You have to have a very robust sense of who you are, I think. I wouldn't even say join a gay group. Those gay youth groups and the gay clubs at school, I wouldn't say do that.

Don't even do that. Find one person, and if you're a gay kid, and you can find a straight guy, who's okay with you being a gay kid, to come out to and to talk with, I think the male companionship, as another male, that's really important. I think the kids that join these gay youth groups, they ghettoize themselves even further, and they don't have perspective about the world.

Then they look at everybody as gay or potentially gay because all their friends are gay. I don't think that's right. It's not representative of the world we live in, and it's further ghettoizing, it's further sheltering these kids. But if you're not ready to come out, you need to find one person, I would say.

Try to have a group of friends that's gay people and a lot of straight people, to keep the mix that's representative of the rest of the world. I'm kind of babbling, but that's what I wish I would have done at that age. I wish I would have become really good friends with a cool straight guy who would have been okay with me just being gay.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Who would have taken you under his wing?

KEVIN

Yeah, would have been okay with me being gay, and then would have given me some credibility with people because he was popular or whatever. And most times, looking back on it, there's plenty of those guys that I just was in awe of that would have happily taken me under their wing, I think. I just didn't have the confidence.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

To befriend them.

KEVIN

To befriend them, yeah.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So, recently in the Boise school district and Meridian school district, they have groups, like choir groups and different social groups in the school. They have recently stopped funding all of them because people want to start a gay or lesbian group. Have you heard about this at all?

KEVIN

I haven't, but that's not surprising.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

I know you're just hearing about it now, but do you have any feelings about it, where basically they're taking away everything, because people don't want this one group?

KEVIN

Yeah, it's such total bullshit. It's just conservative fucking bullshit And like I said, religion has a place in our culture. It's really important. But where it doesn't fucking belong is in the government. It doesn't belong in the legislative process. The government is supposed to protect people.

That's why we organize and pay taxes, so the government can have a national defense system that protects us from foreign attack, can make roads for us, can build a social safety net, if somebody gets hurt or somehow incapacitated, doesn't have to be homeless.

That's what the government's fucking for. And public education is paid for by gay people. 10% gay people. So, 10% of the fucking clubs should be gay. *(Both laugh)*.

Because 10% of us are gay. It's really fucking frustrating to me that all the clubs are, you know. I also think we shouldn't ghettoize kids and have them have a gay club. But if they want to have a gay club, they should be able to. It's 10% of the population. I don't know, it's just frustrating.

That's really frustrating to me, because I just think it's another example of the majority of people being Christian. And so, the majority sort of has this tyranny over the minority, and now they're going to pull away all the clubs just because the majority of people are Christian and don't agree with gays assembling.

That's just ridiculous. I think it's so sad. I think we should be much more advanced than that, but apparently we're not. I would say to those people, leave public schools. Go to a charter school. Leave the fucking public school, because that's backwards.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

For sure. In speaking of Boise and our community, you know we have a few gay clubs around here, but you said you don't frequent them very much, you kind of stay in your own--

KEVIN

What do you mean? Clubs like gay bars?

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah. Gay bars.

KEVIN

Oh, I was at one last night. I just wasn't sure if you meant like a social club or whatever. I mean, I was at a gay bar last night because they had karaoke, and some of the people that I were with wanted to go do karaoke.

But no, I don't necessarily go to gay bars because they're gay. Sometimes it's fun to hang out with a bunch of gay guys, so we go to a gay bar. But yeah. And actually, now that I think about it, the two the two gay bars in town are non-smoking, which is more important to me--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Which is Balcony--

KEVIN

And Lucky Dog.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

And Lucky Dog. Are those the only two left, or?

KEVIN

Well, there's one called Pitchers and Pints, and I'm not sure. I think it is gay. It's gay, and they're all non-smoking. See, this makes a big difference to me. I used to hang out with Neurolux, and I loved it. But cigarette smoke bugs me so much now that I only go to non-smoking bars. And it's weird because the 3 gay bars are all non-smoking--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So you don't even think of it as a gay bar, you just think, "People can't smoke there, so that's a good thing."

KEVIN

"Let's go there." And I'm with gay people, so we kind of think of those places because we're all gay people together. Like my boyfriend obviously is gay, and my roommate's gay. But last night when I was at the Balcony, I was at the Balcony with a bunch of my co-workers, so it wasn't even a gay outing.

We just ended up there because there was karaoke, we knew it was going to be kind of quiet, we didn't want to be around a bunch of people. But you know, I would never go to a straight meat market bar, like the Bistro on 6th and Main. I just would never go there. I'm not sure if it's because I'm gay or if it's because I'm just too old for that.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

(Laughs). A little bit of both?

KEVIN

Yeah, maybe it's a little bit of both. Exactly. Maybe it's a little bit of both. So maybe, yeah, I do go to gay bars more than straight bars. I hang out here more than anywhere.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah. Do you think that Boise can be a little bit more advanced on that level? I mean, it sounds like you've lived living in a lot of different places. Do you feel like we are kind of lagging on being up to par on being socially accepting to more gay bars or things?

KEVIN

I don't think so. I don't think so.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You feel comfortable? You feel like it's good?

KEVIN

Yeah. I mean. I would say this. So, there's 3 gay bars downtown, and that's 10% of probably 30 bars. So there's probably 30 bars in total downtown, and 3 of them are gay. That makes sense.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So you don't feel like we need to do any more?

KEVIN

I don't think so. Gay bars are fun. If you're with a bunch of gay guys, gay bars are fun because you can kiss your boyfriend and not feel like somebody's going to look at you cross. But we're not PDA people anyway. My boyfriend and I, it's not like we make out at the gay bar.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You don't need to go there to be able to make out.

KEVIN

Exactly, yeah. Exactly. We don't really have public displays of affection anyway. But it's kind of fun to go out with the gay guys, and joke around, and hang out with some drag queens. That's kind of fun.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Do you feel like any of your gay friends get upset about, like, we need more? We need more Pride parades and drag shows and that kind of stuff?

KEVIN

Maybe they do, maybe they do. I think most gay people that bitch about the gay scene here are single, and they just think it's really hard to find a boyfriend. And let me tell you, it is.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Is it hard?

KEVIN

It is hard to date here. If you're 30 years old and you want to date somebody who's not a total fucking loser, or some young kid who's like fresh out of out of the closet, and think thinks he's going to hell because he's an ex-Mormon, oh my god, it's really hard. It's hard to date here.

One of my closest friends who's gay is going to move away next year because he's like 34 -- or 33; he's going to be 34 next year -- and it's like, there's nobody for him to date here. And I understand that. I understand that.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Is it because it is such a small community? It's like, you know that person, they already dated that person, or, I don't want to date him because they're young.

KEVIN

Right, the kids come out of the closet from these little towns around, and they move here as it's the city, but they're so screwed up in the head. And of course, when you're first coming out it's like being a 16-year-old girl discovering your sexuality. But you can also drink. (*Laughs*). And that changes shit.

So they screw their way through town, and they're just kind of figuring things out, and then when they get awesome, they don't want to be here anymore, because they've burnt all the bridges, and they're all fighting, and there's drama because they screwed their way through their 20s, and then they move away to some bigger city.

Now that they're awesome, they move away. And they come back here to raise a family when they're like 45 or 50. There's a real lack of 30- to 45-year-old people that are legit in this town, have their shit together and have a job and a car or a house.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Really?

KEVIN

Yeah, I think so. I mean, I'm here because my business is here. I would move--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You'd be gone.

KEVIN

I would probably move, yeah. If I were single at this age, and didn't have a business, I would be like, I want to have a boyfriend.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Do you feel like the gay community is a little bit more promiscuous than--

KEVIN

Mm-hmm.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

You think so?

KEVIN

Yeah, I think so. I think so. I mean, think about it like this. I think that will change as we see gays more as children, and kids can come out when everybody else comes out. As a straight girl, when did you come out? 15 or 16. You come of age, start dating a boy maybe.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Oh yeah, like when did I first have sex?

KEVIN

Yeah, like when did you have your first boyfriend?

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Oh yeah, like 13-14.

KEVIN

And you're like holding hands.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah.

KEVIN

Okay, if young gay boys could be 13 or 14 and have their first boyfriend, and be holding hands, they wouldn't be slutting it up when they're 21, as much.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Because they feel like they've missed out on these 5 or 6 years before, where they couldn't do anything.

KEVIN

Absolutely. They missed that fundamental time in high school where they can date and make out and hold hands and go steady or whatever. They miss all of that, and then they go to college, and maybe they start to kind of come out of the closet, but they're still behind.

They get their first kiss and it affects them, and they have all these hormones and it's really emotional, and they're experiencing that as a person who's 18, 19, 20 years old, that most kids are experiencing that when they're like 14 or 15. So they're behind already. Then you throw alcohol into the equation--

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Not living with mom and dad anymore.

KEVIN

Not living with your parents, there's nobody to go to explain these things to you, and now you can drink so you can make some really bad choices. Oh, yeah. So yes, the gay community is more promiscuous for sure, because they're working all those things out as adults.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

They were repressed at a younger age.

KEVIN

Yeah, they're working it out as adults and not as kids.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Are you aware of, is there safe sex being practiced or--? Or have you ever had to deal with any of that kind of stuff?

KEVIN

Yeah, I've had an STD a couple times. And you know, I had a boyfriend for about a year who was HIV positive, but you know we were obviously safe, we used condoms. But people make choices.

They make choices, and so, if they choose to not use condoms, they need to deal with the consequences of it. But I do think that because of AIDS -- and it really is a gay disease -- and because of that, you've got to use condoms.

You just have to protect yourself and not spread that disease, because we've got to get it under control. AIDS would be under control if people would just fucking wear condoms for a whole generation.

For 20 years, if everybody wore a condom, it would work its way out of the species. It's only a problem because people still share needles and don't use condoms, and if you are going to use heroin and you just choose to use clean needles, always, and if you would just wear condoms when you're having sex.

But Philip and I are monogamous, so we don't use condoms. But if we ever opened up our relationship, I would demand that we use condoms.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Start using them?

KEVIN

Yeah, because I don't want to be catching somebody else's shit.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So you had a partner that was HIV positive. Did you know that going into the relationship?

KEVIN

Nuh-uh.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

So you found out after dating this person for a little while?

KEVIN

Mm-hmm.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

I hope he would have told you. Did he tell you?

KEVIN

I had to ask him. It was so fucked up.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

He didn't even, like, you had already had sex, and then he told you?

KEVIN

Yeah. We had sex, and I was like-- Oh, sorry. *(Long pause)*

We had had sex, but we had used condoms, obviously. And he had said to me -- we had been dating for like six weeks -- and he had said to me, "Okay, I'm going to my doctor appointment today." And I'm like, "Oh yeah? What for?" or whatever. And he's like, "Because I'm sick."

TIFFANY BARBOUR

And did you know immediately?

KEVIN

I knew immediately. I just knew immediately, the way he said it, I was like, "You son of a bitch And I flew off the handle. I think I hit him. I think I hit him. I was so pissed. I just could not believe that somebody would do that to me.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Was it here in Boise?

KEVIN

Mm-hmm.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

How old were you?

KEVIN

I was 23, 24 -- 23 or 24. But what I learned was, in his mind, he's like, well, it's hard to contract HIV. It's really hard. But you don't know that. When you're not armed with the information, you think it's really easy to get, and so I was furious. And I still think he should have told me, obviously. Right? You should still tell.

But his reason for not telling was that he knows that nothing we've done, we could not have possibly contracted it. He knew that because we were so safe. But I didn't know that. With the way the media is, and the way people share information about HIV, you think you can get it if you step on some spit on the ground, or something.

But you totally can't. If you're contracting HIV, you're really trying. It's not easy to contract. So anyway. But it broke us up. We didn't last for more than a few months after that because I was just so betrayed and angry.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

And then obviously you've been tested since then. Was it nerve-wracking going to get the test?

KEVIN

Oh my god. I was already convinced. I was convinced. Oh my god, I was convinced that I had AIDS. And I was so ready to now have to have that be my thing in life. So that was a total wake-up call.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Wake-up call as in, so then you were a little bit more conscious about using condoms or--?

KEVIN

No, because we used condoms. I just was more conscious about, like, people can be that way. People can fucking lie to you. (*Laughs*). That is screwed up. But yeah. I mean, it's not as... Everybody has their shit that they do that's evil.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Yeah, that's interesting. Well, this has been great. We're getting down to our time, so I really appreciate you talking to me.

KEVIN

I hope you have enough.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

I think I do. I think we're good. So, I'm just going to hit stop. Oh, let me ask you a quick question again.

KEVIN

Yeah, sure.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Okay. Can you just tell me your full name again, and your age?

KEVIN

It's Kevin (*redacted*), (*redacted*), and I'm 30 years old. Is that all?

TIFFANY BARBOUR

(*Pauses*). Yeah.

KEVIN

Okay. (*Laughs*).

TIFFANY BARBOUR

That sounds good. All right. Thank you.

KEVIN

Yes, of course.

TIFFANY BARBOUR

Okay, thanks so much.

END OF TRANSCRIPT.