

Interviewee: Matt Friday

Interviewer: Sarai Blassingame

Date: April 26th, 2019

Location: Study Room at CSUMB Library

Q: OK, OK, so...I am Sarai Blassingame. I am here with Matt Friday. Um, we're in the, uh, I'm the study room in the library here on campus at CSUMB. Um, Matt is in his house, in Oregon, in Eugene. And today is April 26th, 2019. On a Friday.

Friday: [inaudible]

Q: Um, could you tell me your full name and if you know the meaning behind your full name?

Friday: Sure. Matthew John Stuart Friday. Matthew means "gift of god", John, the same, Stuart is like "someone who serves", and Friday is for the North-Angelo Saxon God and Goddess of love, fertility, and magic. [inaudible]

Q: That's really cool. That's really cool!

Friday: [laughter]

Q: Really good.

Friday: Yeah. And uh, even my, the name, uh, Stuart is not spelled the same as Steward, S-t-e-w-a-r-d. It is, my name is spelled S-t-u-a-r-t. The name still, um, still goes through. And of course, the [inaudible] Stuarts, of, in the Stuart royal line, uh, in England, to which, I am in no way related. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

Friday: [laughter]

Q: Yeah, I've never been there either. So...

Q: [inaudible] Um, can you tell me where you were born and where you grew up?

Friday: Sure. I was born in Ottumwa, Iowa. Um, I think I spelled "Ottumwa" with the materials that I sent in. And uh, let's see, that was 1950. December 21st. And I moved quite a bit in my life. Um, before, let's see, by the time I was seventeen, I had gone to 12 years of school, 11 different schools. Uh, let's see. The timeline goes: Iowa, Kansas, Iowa (a different town in Iowa), Madison/Wisconsin, St. Petersburg/Florida, back to Iowa, back to Florida (different town in Florida), then back to that same town in Florida. Then, uh, up to Toronto/Canada, with a couple that was going to adopt me, until I said "no". Back to Florida, and up to California. [inaudible]

Q: Wow. That's a lot of jumping around.

Friday: It was. I lived with 3 different foster families. And uh, let's see...uh, one relative, other than my parents, and then, uh, 2 or 3 different, uh, family friend groups, ya know, units, if you will, they took care of my brothers and myself. Um, the reason for all of that is really, no more remarkable in some ways, than what a number of people go through these days was divorce, right? But, uh, it was aggravated by the fact that my father was diagnosed [inaudible] I guess it must've been about 1955 or 56, as Schizophrenic. And um, he had um, impulses at times, which could be quite dangerous.

[4:15]

Um, for instance, at one point, he shot at a neighbor through the kitchen—in the door, [inaudible]. It turns out, its not a good thing to do. [laughter] And, uh, so, he put into uh, a psychiatric hospital for a while. After that [inaudible], and then, released in, [inaudible] I think it was in Ohio, and then we went back to Ottumwa, back to his parents and my mother's parents [inaudible]. Um, my mother had a problem with depression. And both of them had problems with alcohol. I mean, really, pretty severe problems. And, uh, so, it got in the way of their marriages. And I, in the case of my father, was often an impetus for his violence. Um, one time I was hospitalized 3 weeks. And then, another time, a year later, for another 3 weeks. And, uh, let's see, um, my brothers, it was not quite the same for my brothers, I was the oldest. And so, their living arrangements were always more

stable. I was sort of the one who um, would [inaudible] because being the oldest was one was most likely affected by what was happening. And, uh, it made my [inaudible] life very interesting. By the time I was 18, I want you to know, I was well and truly done with my parents. However, in the meantime, I didn't really give up on them. My father had committed suicide the year before. Uh, and my mother did not want anything to do with me. But I did not give up on her or my 3 younger brothers, who were at that point, looking [inaudible]. And that was in, Pacific Grove. Let's see, uh, my father's suicide, I was in St. Petersburg. My two brothers were living with him at that time, I was on my own in San Francisco. And, uh, after he died, um, they were not taken of by their stepmother, our father's wife. Their problems with alcohol and his suicide was so bad that she drank herself to pretty much oblivion. And now, she get both of my brothers onto a plane—I imagine that my mother and her husband paid for the tickets—give them some sorta [inaudible] euphoria. Uh, 2 and a half months after my father's death, [inaudible] Not in good contact with us. So, and I had no idea she was even living in Monterey, when I was living in San Francisco. Anyway, so, about oh...8 or 9 months after my father's passing, uh, their stepmother died sleeping in bed.

And uh, [inaudible] still in St. Petersburg. So, she was no longer part of our lives in any way. Um, my brother's parents did not try to communicate with us after his passing. With me, [inaudible] and um, um, so [inaudible] a little [of] that.

Q: Hmm.

Friday: That was, So, by the time I was 18, I had been working in a poverty (?) program for 3 summers. The first two summers with the migrant families down in Southern Florida. At the time, it was centered in Baragaton [inaudible] college [inaudible]. Anyway, so that's where the [inaudible] were. And then, we, uh, we went to various migrant camps. Right? to draw students who would be learning um, English, right? By taking subject material in English, including pre-school. Um, the first summer, I was a uh, --we had a swimming pool aid—right? And the second summer, I was a teacher's aid. But I was the only teacher's aid who was inclined to stay with one group of students, 4th, 5th, and early 6th graders, right? Who, had any number of faces, in terms of their educational history, and um, who

had some English, and I had some Spanish. But uh, it was (easy?) to be with them. That's when I was 16. And that was when that family had [inaudible] decided to try and adopt me.

And uh, with the family, they were [inaudible][raw/wrong?]. [inaudible] And I—I decided not to do it for various reasons. But the experience of those two summers have been very important to me. And the third summer was in Monterey County in Salinas, in fact. [inaudible] the [inaudible] project start. Uh, they sent me with my 17th year. [inaudible] I was 17. [inaudible] Before finally turning 18 in September. So, uh, let's see, [inaudible]. I was all over the map, in terms of high school. You can imagine, I would go into high school in Iowa, Florida, and California.

There's no way to know. Er, uh, it was within the 60s, right exactly where I was at. [inaudible] But it was [inaudible]. It was successful [inaudible]. Uh, let's see, the last grade [inaudible] was 8th grade. And, that was in the normal way. 9th grade, I was [inaudible] from exams [inaudible] because of being hospitalized. Throughout 10th, 11th, and 12th, I was all over the map. So, I was taking—10th grade—I was mainly taking 10th grade subjects, right? [inaudible] Extra curriculars for [inaudible]. [inaudible] In order for them to determine where I'd be going next. Part of that was in [inaudible] Iowa and part in Florida, one high school in Florida and then another high school in Florida. [inaudible] foster care. By the way, when I first went into foster care, uh, because it was Florida, I was the one who had to bring my parents to court. So, and I had to be the one who testified against them in court. And that was [inaudible] my father and his wife [inaudible]. So, [inaudible] on the basis of the testimony, my father, his wife, and my own, [inaudible]. Uh, I had a great mentor, who made it possible for me to go work in the migrant camps that first summer. [inaudible] And, as a volunteer, and, the next summer, on my own, and I was living with my father, as were both my brothers and nephew. He had to move to a psychiatric institution again.

[inaudible] So, it was uh, safe now. [inaudible] The drugs [inaudible] were in such that, I couldn't tell you exactly what he had to deal with, in terms of schizophrenia. [inaudible] I'm sure he was a real bright man, [inaudible] and I'm sure, and very creative. As was my mother, by the way. A very, bright, creative woman. And uh, I'm sure it was difficult, it was not easy for him to be a-a, [inaudible] a state where it involved using the drugs, And quite naturally, it couldn't have been easy. His parents often helped us out. We were poor.

[12:45]

Friday: And uh, not gonna miss that one first [inaudible]. I want you to meet Sarai.

Carlson: Hi Sarai!

Q: Hello!

Carlson: You're picture is right down here, you can see what's she's seeing.

Q: [laughter]

Carlson: [laughter]

Friday: [laughter]

Friday: Bruce, by the way, is uh, my walking mitzvah, [inaudible].

Q: [laughter]

Friday: [laughter]

Friday: And, uh, let's see, uh, so, I had already been living in the Haight-Ashbury, when I was 17. Uh, I had hitchhiked across the country. And, uh, and so, then, after being there for 2 and a half months, I found out that my father died. Uh, then, I was gonna go back to Florida. Take care of my two younger brothers. Found out that they had just flown to Monterey, to be with my mother and her husband, when I pulled up a mutual friend of my mother and my [inaudible] in Iowa, and asked her if I could be staying with her, if I could stay with her for a few days, This was like September 22nd, right? It was kinda cold hitchhiking across the country. [inaudible] And she said "sure, that would be fine", but she thought that

my brothers might be with our mother. And [inaudible] that was, she said “in Monterey” and I said “where’s Monterey?” and she said “in California! but I don’t think it’s very far from San Francisco.” And, uh, so, I wound up going to Monterey. [inaudible] About 2 and half months, I think.

My mother was pro-Vietnam War. [inaudible] Anti-Vietnam War. I was very pro-civil rights. She was not. I was [inaudible] anti-Christian. She was pro-Christian.

Q: Uh, tension.

Friday: Yeah, a lot of tension. And it’s not that I was anti-Christian all together. Just that I had seen so much hypocrisy at this point. Right? I really mean, I had gone to a dozen different churches in those years. And, including Southern Baptist. And I had seen that there were a lot of different ways people had of talking about what was supposed to be the same stuff. All the message of love was shared on the world. Right? [inaudible] That’s a very dear message to me. And uh, I saw it got messed with a lot. [laughter]

So, uh, I wound up not staying. And therefore, not finishing high school. [inaudible] I didn’t think I could get into college. Didn’t get to. Um, been a couple of years being a teaching assistant in the psych department at Monterey Peninsula Junior College. And amazing friends, just really, really terrific people, [I spent] seven years traveling around Canada, New Mexico, and the Continental United States, Hawaii, but not Alaska. Looking for any place I thought would be the ideal place to live. Right? That’s how all my political milestones are [inaudible]. And I finally decided that if I was going to find that community, I was going to have to help make it. We have to help make the communities we’re looking for. The communities we want. The communities we would like to live in.

Right? And with that time, I was 24. [inaudible] Going back a few months later from my little brother’s wedding where I had been a best man in Hawaii. And uh, I decided that was enough. I was just going to plant my feet here on the Monterey Peninsula and not keep looking for a place that [inaudible] had to create. And,

um, I did, I started doing any number of things that were important. [inaudible] Ya know, when living in Monterey, I'd been involved in different things, environmental movement, for instance. And, there were some of us who had started a recycling center in Monterey, which was a very big deal, that was about nineteen-seventy.... [inaudible] and uh...[inaudible] for the newsletter for that, uh, I was the editor for the newsletter for that. Uh...[inaudible] And uh, let's see...then I went from that into the human potential movement. The human potential movement was incredibly important in terms of [inaudible] how we communicate heart to heart. Right? Uh, and not letting go of that. Make sure that that was being addressed. That I was being a tuned. [inaudible] Who we were and who were the people where we were talking to. And where we were. And, also giving us a share of vocabulary. Well, 20 years later, it turns out I would be able to use that same vocabulary in working with the NCBI, as we went through their training program. And then uh, became regular facilitators for the organization.

So, all of those things got tied together in some really nice ways. Um, about nineteen-seventy-six—seventy-six, I started working for a low-cost, non-profit daycare program. [inaudible] Uh, funded in part with governmental grants. And, uh, at that time, there were a lot of single mothers. Right? So, having a guy as a teacher was a useful, important thing. I kept working with that organization for 10 years. Almost 10 years. [inaudible] About a year before Bruce and I met, taking off some time um, to make more money as an adult [laughter]. I could possible work as uh, [inaudible] daycare teacher.

I got to know some great people and my sexuality never seemed to be a problem. With anybody. And uh, let's see, [inaudible] I'm just gonna jump forward.

[19:37]

Friday: 1986 comes along and Bruce I need—oh! I know. For a period of 7 or 8 years in there, my [inaudible] I kept a 2-bedroom apartment in Pacific Grove [inaudible] and [inaudible] one of the bedrooms, right? But I uh, the [inaudible] with other people [inaudible] became kind of a, Renaissance Salon. There were people there from all over the world and I am not exaggerating. They would come and stay with me. One of the reasons for that was because one of the first people who got involved with that were [inaudible] became a graduate of Yale. Uh, [inaudible] as an art major. She, put in this sort of, counter-culture newsletter thing that they had [inaudible]. Places where people could stay who were traveling around the world. She introduced my name in residents as one of those places where people could stay. [inaudible] From Russia, and Korea, and England, [inaudible] let's see, [inaudible] just people from all over the place. And uh, some of those people, I have to tell ya, were very, very bright. I learned a lot. I listened. And um, they would pitch in at different times, and depending on their inclinations.

With food or cooking, right? And other times, I would put that stuff together. Including at one point, for somebody who was homeless, he lived in Monterey and asked me if I would do a Thanksgiving feast for a number of his homeless friends. Some of them had psychiatric problems and I said I'd be glad to, if he could put the money up for it. So, he put the money for it.

Q: Wow.

Friday: Yeah. And I fed about 25 people in my home that Thanksgiving. Isn't that an honor?

Q: That's amazing. Its sounds like you saw a lot of different perspectives.

Friday: I did. I did. I'm still incredibly immature. Anyways, so, uh, let's see, oh! One thing I have to come back to, in 1966, I was diagnosed with Emphysema. So, I was in foster care and working on the migrant program, and so that medical

information did not get transferred from one doctor to another. Right? So, I never got appropriate uh, medical care for it, if there's anything they would've done for it anyway. But I don't know what they would've done. Uh, and uh, it turned out in a study that I read, many, many years later, that I was one of fewer than 18,000 people under the age of 25 who had been diagnosed with Emphysema up to that time. Emphysema, as we all know is related to cigarettes, usually, usually, right? But it could be related to other things as well. And in my family, it turns out, there was [inaudible] to it. So, uh, many years later, it would turn out that it had gotten much worse. And that is why you hear me panting into this [laughter] monologue [laughter] now.

Uh, oh yes, going back to 1986.

Friday: So, I had been out of the closet for many years. Ya know? [inaudible]. 10 or 15 years since the early 70s anyway, right? When I had *really* been out of the closet. Now, my mother would ask me when I was 15, whether or not I was having an affair with the husband she was divorcing. [laughter] I had to assure her; I was not. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

Friday: I had not been aware that was something that was on the table. [laughter] And uh, so, when I say "coming out", it's really quite relative. And then, the counter-culture um, bisexuality during that period, was common. And I considered myself bisexual. I had um, a partner for two years. Who was female. And uh, and it wouldn't be until, gosh, it was 73—into 1973, when I would have had a partner in total of almost 2 years, right? Who was same sex. Right? So, and then I had a partner uh, in 76. For 2 years. And, then we broke up 78. And Bruce

and I met in 86 –that period in between there, 76, 78, to 86, ---that was a period of that wonderful salon in Pacific Grove that I was so blessed to be a part of!

[laughter]

[24:52]

Friday: And, uh, let's see, uh, Bruce was coming from San Francisco. He's an identical twin. His twin is also gay. And uh, they were both, they were both raised by death parents along with their oldest, their oldest sister. And uh, so they grew up with sign language. And uh, not, never questioning one another's sexuality. Although, both of them had a very um, a very, um, pronounced same-sex interest. Right? And other guys their age, and no interest whatsoever in girls. So, [inaudible] the same thing with my lover in 1976 to 1978. No interest in girls, right? Although the earlier lover had [inaudible]. So, uh, so, Bruce was living in San Francisco, he was totally "out". And coming to Monterey, he wasn't sure exactly how he wanted to position himself. So, um, he decided not to be entirely out. He was never in the closet right? So not to be entirely "out", like with his bosses, friends, [inaudible] right? There was no reason for it, with the question of his sexuality to come up. Although some of his coworkers, who, by in large, were from Mexico, uh, El Salvador, uh, Guatemala, [inaudible] and those guys, they had a pretty good idea that he was gay because [laughter] some of them would say "Come on, come on, you wanna be with girls, [inaudible] this girl in this magazine right?" And Bruce would tease back "Well look at this guy in this magazine." [laughter] They'd say "Oh, if we could just hook you up with a prostitute, you'd be fine." At one point, Bruce said that to me and I said "Do they understand you're monogamous?" [laughter]. And then, nothing was gonna make him OK to [inaudible] hook up with a prostitute. Anyway, with Bruce, instead of doing that, which wasn't necessary, Bruce, instead of doing that, would say back to them "Ya know, I will get together with a prostitute of your choice if you will get together with a prostitute of my choice. For you." Right? [inaudible] "Oh! No! No! No!" [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

Friday: OK, then let's drop this whole thing. [laughter] So, they still remained best friends. Uh, years and years later, his daughter, for whom we bought baby clothes and everything, right? Uh, would go through high school in Salinas, and would invite us to her wedding. And, very, very sweet.

[27:45]

Right? And he had three kids after that, all boys. Um, for this particular Mexican-American, it was a very proud thing. [laughter] Uh, it was truly something. [inaudible] They were good friends. Anyway, so, they're still our friends, but we never see them anyway. Um [laughter].

Q: Um, you mentioned that you were in San Francisco and Monterey during advocacy. Um, can you compare your experiences in both places?

Friday: During, uh, yeah. Well in San Francisco, in 1967, uh, I was... bi. Right? And, um, ya know, it was just whenever [whoever] you want to get together with, you're gonna get together with. It just wasn't a big deal. Nobody made a big deal about it to me. And I, at the same time, I did know, I did have enough sense to identify that some men were not safe with that, uh, information. Right? That it would be better not to make *that* a part of their friendship—they knowing that I was bi. Not that I had to be in the closet about it. Just not to lead with it in any way. Right? Um, and uh, and they were also part of the counter-culture. Right? But, [inaudible] it wasn't all one single mindset. You know, I mean, not all hippies thought the same thing at the same time. [laughter]

Uh, [inaudible] some of them um, were coming from difficult family circumstances, not unlike myself. And, um, and, uh, some of them um, were not

entirely OK with the whole broad subject of diversity. Right? They didn't know all together, what it would mean. Right? They, they went through the, the opening stages of the civil rights movement of the 50s and 60s, thinking that it really didn't relate to them. Right? I can imagine they brought [inaudible] [laughter].

Uh, for women at that time, being able to, uh, identify the fact of being a sexual being, right? Um, was in itself big. Uh to say that, publicly right? Or to show that publicly, which of course was what the whole counter-culture was about as well. So, for men not to be strictly straight, and for women not to be strictly [inaudible] closeted [inaudible], right? Was a big deal.

Um, and all of us were young. And all of us [laughter] ready to see the world in new terms. Very, very ready to see the world in new terms.

[30:38]

Friday: So, when I left San Francisco at the end of 67, uh, I went back in 68 to see what I thought of it. And, by that time, it had utterly—the Haight Ashbury had been utterly reduced to a drug culture—which I had nothing to do with. So, I didn't spend any time in San Francisco. I would go back maybe, one or two days at a time, for the next several years. But more and more, started going to Berkeley. And Berkeley, is very, the civil rights movement, um, had really taken root. Uh, as far as what was going on in the Bay Area. Um, and, of course its larger because of the university there. Uh, years later we would know one of the leaders of the anti-war movement there, between [inaudible]—who [inaudible] the teacher now—if she is still teaching—up at uh, university uh, in Santa Cruz. Um, anyway, so, with these people, oh, I would also know as it turned out, uh two or three people in the Chicago 7. Included Rennie Davis. The Chicago 7 was this group that was leading the protests against the war in Chicago. It, uh, Democratic convention in 1968.

And, uh, so, um, let's see, [inaudible]. So, 1969, I hitchhiked halfway across Canada. Then halfway across the United States, wound up in Boston, um, and then, went to Woodstock, right? From, from Boston and from there back to California. So, I went through New York—shortly after the Stonewall Riots had happened—it was in uh, actually, it was in mid-July, late-July, right? And I didn't know that they had happened. So, there I was, [laughter] a couple miles away, and, uh, about a month [inaudible] not as much, [inaudible] is 3 weeks, afterward right? Not in a way that it had happened, uh, hadn't' been that close to it. Uh, I would go back to New York [inaudible] it was 10 years later, yeah, about 10 years later. Uh, by that time, it was an entirely open book (block?).

Much of that time, the LGBT community—and when I “T” for “Transgender” here, its really quite relative. Because people didn't' identify by in large as transgender. Right? It might address as, it might [inaudible] instead [inaudible] masculine-lesbian right? Or feminine-gay-man. Right? To tell you the truth, even had separation between gay and lesbian. It didn't happen for a few years yet.

[33:51]

Which is interesting in itself right? During that first period between 1969, I think, 73, we were all just gay. And uh, for myself, uh, I'd “come out” to my friends long since, as bisexual, I “came out” to them all over again as gay. [laughter] And, uh, nobody was surprised. [laughter] And, um, and uh, let's see, and, so, the movement at that point, OK so, I had gone into the Human Potential Movement. And once again, the Human Potential Movement expected you to be true to yourself. Right? Um, at that point in Monterey, there were, I think [inaudible] 2 or 3, right? Everybody went to them. I mean, everybody who's lesbian, or gay man, or whatever, and uh, they were, uh, one of them was a dancing, Barbara, [inaudible] Cage? I think dancing? Maybe not. Maybe not. I wouldn't think of it. [inaudible] And then, there was the other was on, that was right there on uh, what street that goes right through downtown Monterey [inaudible]. Its not Abrego, [inaudible] anyway, the gay bar, was right there on the main street.

Right? Uh, in both of those bars, would get a lot of people from Fort Ord. And uh, a lot of soldiers, right? Who were there doing basic training. And a lot of people welcomed uh, and uh, the [inaudible] Language Institute. Uh, by the time you get into the mid-70s, um, both of those bars had closed. [inaudible] late 70s, 75, 78, to 76, 75 to 76, [inaudible]. There was another bar that had opened up. It was the “After Dark”, uh, where Bruce and I were to meet, [inaudible] in 1986. And uh, there at the “After Dark”, man it was open. I mean it was, it was really open. And a lot of fun. During those days, during the 70s and early 80s, I would accurately have to say, from probably the late 60s to the early 80s, [inaudible] um, in one large sort of, underprivileged segment of society, was pretty (lupin?), right?

Um, and uh, but it depended on several things. As well. Right? And for many of those people, they were still in the closet. If you were in the military, you had to be in the closet. So, you’d be at a gay bar, you’d hope you didn’t see anybody you knew you. If you saw somebody who knew you, the 2 of you would try to figure out was going on with the other right away. [inaudible] And of course, nobody could turn anybody in, without turning themselves in, right? But if things went on, by the time you get into, oh, by the time, we get into the 80s, Bruce and I were doing voter registration in gay bar. And you would ask any gay men if they were registered to vote. And they’d say “Ya know, I don’t know. How would I know?” Have you heard about a uh, a voter pamphlet? [Matt’s response to the gay men at the bar] Right? [inaudible] “I don’t think so.” [response from gay men in the bar] “Have you ever gotten any information about where to go to vote?” [Bruce] “Nope. Never that.” [the gay men at the bar]

[37:28]

Friday: “So, you’re probably not registered to vote. So, do you know if you would identify as Democratic or Republican?” [Matt’s response to the gay men in the bar] “What’s the difference?” [inaudible] Really. Sarai. The idea [inaudible] and here are these young men [inaudible] 20 years after—I’d, I’d been getting involved, started getting involved with the civil rights movement—20 years later!

They don't know if they're Democrat or Republican, they don't know why its important to vote, ta, da, da, da, da. Right? I, it does a lot. And, at first, this would [inaudible] only negate the minority community that it was happening in. [inaudible] That tends to happen in minority communities, from my own experience, [inaudible] people are stomped on so hard, right? That its hard to get up sometimes, and address the world. You know what I mean? And voting is addressing the world.

Q: Hmm...yeah, even today a lot of people don't know how the system works or what they can do to make any changes. It's really hard.

Friday: They don't think it matters. They don't think we'll be able to make any changes. The amount of um, disempowerment, really became extreme I think in the last, oh probably, oh, the last several years. And then, it had gotten turned around lately, of course. With the #MeToo Movement. And, um, uh, the um, Occupy Movement. Um, the thing is, is that, that we all know, is that you have to keep at it. You have to keep at it. Find whatever it is that interests you, right? I mean, really, truly, it could in the arts, or it could be in, in environmentalism, whatever it is, just go ahead, and lean into it. Right? Make something happen in it that's satisfies you, that you have [inaudible] can be touched by the world. You know?

Q: Hmm...

Friday: Uh, so, and then maybe it turns out that you will have touched the world too. Maybe. [inaudible]

Q: [inaudible]

Friday: You know, you have been touched by the world. So, uh, let's see, for the next, well, 19 years, 1986 to 2005, which really turned out to be 20 years if you do the math right way, um, Bruce and I really did a lot of stuff. [inaudible] We did a

lot of stuff. And, uh, and that's where I think your real, um, your [Sarai] real interest comes in. Right? How the movement changed during that time in Monterey—I have to say, ya know, what would, uh, you'd ask a question about it'd change [inaudible]. From 1978, I was in San Francisco for gay pride. There 250 to 500-thousand people. I am not exaggerating. And, uh, um, it went out. It were no secrets. It was a lot of fun. And then, um, and then would be the AIDs epidemic starting...in early 80s, 82, 83. Right? I think it started to shift. And um, Bruce and I got together in 86. We both went and got an HIV-AIDs test done, uh, after, we had known one another about a month. Right? [inaudible] We did it again, 6 months later. Or 7 months later. [inaudible] And, uh, um, [inaudible] we didn't go back to a gay pride—of course, Bruce had been to several—um, we didn't go back to a gay pride in San Francisco, and we didn't go to a gay pride as a couple until, probably 1992. [inaudible] We had both lost many friends. And, we were gonna lose more. And, uh, [inaudible] then, a [inaudible] festival of joy and light and love and ease with one another had turned into a funeral of [inaudible] So, for we're not 250,000 people. Maybe there were 100, 150. And we were [inaudible] at one point [inaudible] it had been 500,000. [inaudible] about a 100 to 50,000 people. We were all crying. [inaudible] during the parade. [inaudible] friends had been...had been full of life. [inaudible] Was before, now marching for the idea of medical treatment that our government had [inaudible] us. [inaudible] 10 years [inaudible]. So, which is unactionable. It's a moral outrage. It was genocide [genocide] [inaudible]. [inaudible] that being gay truly is genetic. It was genocide. And uh, horrible.

While that was happening, there were a number of minority communities that were gay or lesbian, queer, transgender, bisexual, whatever, and a number of a minority group, it's a different experience.

[43:43]

Friday: [inaudible] Uh, being [inaudible] and gay is not the same as being white and gay. Being black and gay is not the same thing as being white and gay. Being

black and gay is not the same as being white and gay. Etc., etc. right? Um, [inaudible] everything is different, because of the cultural pressures that are brought to bare in their particular families. [inaudible] African-American community, [inaudible] 3 or 4 fronts simultaneously. [inaudible] a horrible, horrible slam. And, there were nowhere near enough attention [inaudible] leaving the AIDs epidemic. [inaudible] Minority communities, I should say per-white communities, far less than minority communities, [inaudible] and of those minority communities, probably most, the black communities. Right? Because of how, um, institutionalized and endemic and systematic (systemic?) [inaudible] for African-Americans in our society. [inaudible]

And, uh, so, 95, things started turning around. Uh, during that time, by the way, although, I did some work with AIDs organizations, [inaudible] I, um, I believed uh, for Bruce and myself, [inaudible] very, very, important for us to maintain a sense of [inaudible] continuity and strength, and the LGBT community that was local, right? So, that, people would know we are not just about AIDs. Right? We are not just about disease. Right? We are about how in world we reach out as individuals in the community to take care of one another in the community, ya know what, the main part people in the white community, like, we've gotten that one. Right? Completely forgotten that one. They had not seen any need to reach out to one another to build a sense of community. Right? [inaudible] Might reach out to each other for a little league [slight chuckle/laughter] team, right? Or for, you know, this thing or that, right? But they, because they're white folks, they had taken it for granted. Right? They didn't need to establish community. Isn't this, isn't this a bizarre twist that happens in our world? And then, our culture, which is ya know, [inaudible] a very diverse culture, we get to see it from a number of different perspectives. And a number of different kind of experiential angles. Right? And how its fitting us. A lot of people died, not only of disease, but because of what our society [inaudible] our culture or their family did to them. You know what I mean?

[46:48]

Q: Like hate crimes and just, violence in general?

Friday: No. Um, instead, because your black son would come home, you already knew he was gay. But he would tell you that he has AIDs. And you don't' anything to do with him. You'd say "I told you that was a sin the first time. And now, you're coming back with this disease. We don't want it in our home. We don't want you in our home." You see? And this happened not just in minority families, but also in white families. And because it's a large white population, its happened in a lot of white families. So, [inaudible] mainly the face of AIDs seemed to be gay white men getting sick. And it was only with time, that people came to realize that "Oh my God, there are these other communities that are being obliterated." Black men don't necessarily reach out to other black men that are gay, just because they're gay. Right? It takes work. You have to overcome different oppressions to make that work. Uh, [inaudible] a white guy, ya know, you're "coming out" to someone who's white, it turns out, right away, that you learn "Oh my Gosh, there are different cultures here." There is um, [inaudible] of white, gay men. A feminine gay man. Right? Then there's another gay man who is very butch. Right? And there's another gay man who is very um, [inaudible] and judging gender identification across the spectrum, right? And all of these different communities that are going on. So, all of those communities also had to "come out", once the epidemic got started. Shortly after the epidemic got started because they all had to address how people were being hurt from their own angle. Right?

And, with that, the civil rights movement had to take on um, an old tune, right? One that had been around for about a very long time. How do we take care of one another in the African-American community? In the Korean community, Korean-American community, in the Filipino-American community, because all of these may have strong religious bases, right? And in their strong religious bases, are not being welcoming to [inaudible]. Lesbian, bi, or trans. Even though, they have every reason to be. We were building, we took upon ourselves to build a community. And one of the ways we knew we could do that was by banding with other groups. Um, and just standing there, you know, at the picket line, there were many of those. Not just standing up, and not just marching. And, but also ya

know, if it came time to lick envelopes [laughter], and the stamps, and do mailings for the NAACP, we were there to do it. Yeah? I mean, [inaudible] if it was time to be there to help, the uh, school district, Latinos, uh, Latino-predominant school district in Salinas, ya know? We were there to do it. We helped. We didn't back away. We stood there. We stood forward. And we were always happy to meet people. Right?

And I, I often told people "You have to kinda watch out for me a little bit. I'm always falling in love." [laughter] And uh, I could, [inaudible] not that I would do anything. Just, I, I easily like people. You know? And uh, and Bruce did too even more so than me. Uh, uh, but uh, in the work of building community,

In the work of building community, it was building community all across lines. Right? We couldn't just build one community, without building all communities. We couldn't just build the gay community without also building lesbian community. We couldn't just build those communities without also building the AIDs affected community. We couldn't just do those without also talking with Latinos, we couldn't just do those without making sure that we were standing up with African Americans. Whenever the opportunity arose. Not just sometimes, every time. Those things matter. All of those things matter. We build community. And, in our [inaudible] background, we had forgotten that. Right? So, it takes all of us, in whatever minority groups we're a part of, and to whatever extent, we're willing to hold up our hands and say, "We'll be a part of this." Right? [inaudible] And that may be what finally saves our society. It may be. Right? We'll see.

[52:14]

Friday: 20 years from now...and you're uh, having your children, or your nephews, nieces, and cousins, and so on. And they are saying to you "What did you do? What did you do when you were my age?". [inaudible] And you can say to them "Well, something I did was this.". It'd make all the difference. Between you and

me Sarai, the people who are doing anything are doing everything. And that's true. That more people are doing something now, than there were 20 years ago.

Q: That's a good way of looking at it.

Friday: Yeah. [inaudible] I'm up for another question, if you dare.

Q: Umm...let me check the time.... OK, we're, we have about 30 minutes left. So, we're good.

Friday: OK. So, I should also say that during that time, you know that Bruce and I were doing the voter registration stuff. Right? We started getting uh, involved with more uh, personally involved with local politics as well. And so, as time went on, it turned out that we would gain some leadership credibility in the [inaudible]. Then, in nineteen—[inaudible]—nineteen—76, [inaudible] the Democratic Party hired me—the state Democratic Party—hired me to run a uh, a coordinated campaign [inaudible] uh, uh, somebody went into the assembly, [inaudible] somebody went up for the California Senate, somebody ran for House of Representatives, uh in Washington, somebody running for mayor, somebody running for uh, the Board of Supervisors. All of their campaigns would be included in some minor way. Um, actually, [inaudible] be minor, only for the mayor and Board of Supervisors because, those are um, political offices, right? So, it would only be that they might show up. Right? Some of the people who were volunteering in their campaign would also be the people volunteering and some campaign that was um, that was uh, decidedly Democratic, uh, [inaudible] so, doing that, I got a chance to meet hundreds of people. Um, and, talking to hundreds more. And, uh, and so, um, it, it really helped to in [inaudible] our [inaudible] networking communities, right? And empowering [inaudible]. And, uh, [inaudible] self-involvement, right? So, I got a lot of [inaudible] accomplished doing that stuff, in what I was doing. Before that, [inaudible] confidence, you know, I, [inaudible] [laughter]. I was short, skinny gay man. Right? Not one of the people you look to for leadership.

Q: [laughter]

Friday: [inaudible] Leadership. Over the years. And things gradually added up. Where I could be some kind of leader [Sarai sneezes], knowing that the kind of

leader—bless you baby—knowing the kind of leader I wanted to be, was the kind of leader that would listen to other people. [inaudible] That [inaudible] that was going in a certain direction. Not that it is necessary pliant people [inaudible] that way. Right? Um, but be it able to show what the pros and cons are, that is necessary, to show, um, to um, prove the laws of attraction. [laughter] What could be...what could be achieved. Right? And because [inaudible] much of the leaders for any of these various [inaudible] came up. [inaudible] We came up with a group of maybe a hundred, 150 people. Who were doing *a lot*. [inaudible] in Monterey County. You would meet those same people over and over. You'd put together, uh, uh, a campaign of one issue or another, maybe driving while black or brown, maybe um, maybe its um, getting a driver's license, even though you're not an American citizen. [inaudible] Any of these things, you'd meet the same people, we're all believing the same things, right? But we're all coming forward at different times, take different [inaudible]. That would define the issue. Right? And or provide leadership [inaudible]. And then, those people, would all bring their people too. [inaudible] So, it made an enormous difference in Monterey County.

[57:29]

Friday: Oh, in 19...69, I was living in a second [inaudible] in Pacific Grove. And uh, we had decided that, we really wanted to see Fort Ord become a university. Right? And, we thought it was impossible. We didn't do anything about because we just thought it was plain impossible. Well, there were a lot of other people we didn't know, who were thinking the same thing. And who brought it on the Helen Recker's [inaudible] and who brought it to themselves, who brought themselves [inaudible] in the uh, bay, to show how it could be done. Right? And uh, those people made all the difference in the world. So that, the first year that CSUMB was open, I was able to go college there, that first year. To find out what it was like. [inaudible] To see what [inaudible] all the years before, what had come out of it. And here, you and I are now another 25 years later. [inaudible] [laughter] Well, around 25, I guess. That's kinda exciting, isn't' it? [inaudible] We make a difference. It works.

Q: Yeah, we connected through this university, so, its doing a good job.

Friday: Yeah. [laughter] So, let's see, uh...so then we get to uh, the "Night Imitative", at some point, [inaudible] I think that was around 2001, maybe—came up—and it was uh, it was a very um, unattractive. Maybe it was earlier than that. [inaudible] Anyway, the "Knight Initiative" was um, probably [inaudible] 22, I think it was there, and "Knight" was the name of the uh, representative, uh, let's see...[inaudible] house of representatives. [Inaudible.] Who had brought it forward, he had a gay son. And he had decided that he was going to make this his campaign is to—for a future campaign—because he wasn't having so much of a campaign then, he had to devote all this attention to it—but he did. And uh, it was...it was very destructive. Um, it was taking it into the California, taking this [inaudible] so it was the same thing, it was making the idea that only a different-sex couple could get married, put into the California Constitution. So, uh, [inaudible]. You'll have to, you'll have to check on these, on the history of these OK? So, uh, so, um, I—I think they were the same thing—so, I decided to leave the imitative in Monterey County. It just made sense. OK? Because we were the most uh, sort of public announcement. Um, there were many people at that time who were more public than they had been. Surprisingly, there weren't a lot of people who were ready to be *that* public. Right? Public enough to be on TV and on the newspapers and so on. Um, so, organizing that is a big deal.

[1:01:29]

Friday:

[inaudible] I don't know the number anymore. Who had brought it forward. He had a gay son. And he had decided that he was going to make this his campaign issue for a future campaign, as he wasn't having so much of the campaign then that he had to devote all this attention to it. But he did, and it was... It was very destructive because it was taking it in to the California... It was taking this idea... Yeah so it was the same thing. It was the same thing. It was making the idea that

only a different sex couple could get married put into the California constitution.

You'll have to check on the history of these. Okay? I think that they were the same thing. I decided to lead the initiative in Monterey County. It just made sense, okay, because we were the most public and outspoken. Although there were many people by that time who were more public than they had been, surprisingly there weren't a whole lot of people who were ready to be that public. Right? Public enough to be on TV and in the newspapers, and so on.

Friday:

Organizing that was a big deal. What I had to do, there was also a state organization at the same time, and the state organization was run by a guy I knew, Mike Armstrong, a good guy. He had trained me and many other people to run the coordinated campaign office for the Democrats, right. And we were a few years before that. I knew who he was, and that he credible. But they were putting their campaign in San Francisco and Los Angeles, because that's where you had the biggest center of votes, both gay and lesbian votes, or gay, lesbian, bi, transsexual and queer votes, and folks who were straight who were allies. He had, it was called, there were three media tiers, tier one, tier two, and tier three. San Francisco and Los Angeles were tier one. Sacramento and San Jose were tier two. Monterey was tier three. We would get new advertising, for very, very, very little TV advertising. Very little and tier three doesn't get a whole lot. We would get almost no money for materials. We would have to use the state materials. We would also have to use the state parking points.

Friday:

So the state parking point were fine, but the state had decided to focus altogether on the legal issues involved for gays and lesbians. Because it mattered, right. Which is not an intuitively attractive thing, right? People are hearing the legal stuff, it's just like with civil rights, right? You hear it, you know... But okay so maybe well so you know... Anyway they were not very... As supportive as they needed to be. However, because there was a large group of us coming from a variety of diverse communities, right, we were able to reach a lot of people whose minds had already been changed in part, whereas they might has been sort of

biased against gays, lesbians and so on. Now they weren't. They had a chance to see gays and lesbians in their neighbors, among their family and friends, right? They had seen gays and lesbians in their organization. Gays were no longer somebody you didn't know about who was back behind some curtain someplace.

Friday:

So to make a long story short, I organized tabling, organized public speaking, organized materials for which I paid, a lot. A lot of this money by the way comes out of your own pocket unless you're really good at getting people to put in money. We were able to bring all of those things from [inaudible]. [inaudible] was a big one because we had to have people who spoke Spanish, right, as well as English. And that actually probably was the largest part of our challenge. California politics are organized in a variety of way, including counties and assembly districts and senatorial districts, right. So besides that, there are also these... There were, I think that they're not doing it anymore. These sort of... there was the 27th assembly district democratic committee, for instance, right... This democratic committee was another voice among all the democratic clouds, right, including the county committees which were absolutely the law and necessary in California. It turned out that Monterey County had the 27th assembly district and the 28th assembly district. The 28th assembly district is more Latino. The 27th more western Monterey and not Latino. But because we had to organize for Monterey county, right, we had to have a number of people who could speak to the Spanish community in [inaudible] who were not even coming from our shared assembly district.

The reason that is all matters, is that when it all came out in the end, there were two assembly districts... I think I've got that right... Two assembly districts that defeated the night initiative, right. They were the 27th assembly district, mine, and the Santa Cruz, and we won by virtue of Santa Cruz. Let me assure you, and then the San Francisco assembly district. However, Monterey county, among all the counties in California, which are several, right. Monterey county came in 6th for defeating, very good. That means we were only a little bit behind San Francisco county, a number of counties in Los Angeles, and Sacramento and so on.

So that meant that this organization, done on a local level, made it work. Right? Because we could hear what people needed locally. We knew what people needed locally. Whereas the state campaign was not as tuned in, just couldn't be as tuned into what every county and assembly district specifically needed. They were going to go where the big money was and where the big votes always were.

But you know what, that effort wound up galvanizing a lot of people who otherwise might have stood back, because they could see that this initiative against marriage for same sex couples was really going too far. Right, but also because they had a chance then, over the next several years before same sex... Marriage for same sex couples, I notice I always change that to marriage for same sex couples rather than same sex marriage. The reason for that is because as soon as you say "same sex marriage," it sounds like you're talking about some completely different kind of animal. Right? We're just talking about marriage, it's all marriage. You don't look in a dictionary and it says, this is marriage for one group, this is marriage for [inaudible]. It's all marriage. You don't get to catch some words and not all the words.

Anyway, we don't get the keep all of the words and we only get some. Those people by the time that the vote really came around for California were ready for it. And it had to come around again, right, it had to, it would. Eventually it was successful. So in all of that, here locally, we did not have time to call family and friends to come to our marriage. We did not have time to get together our reception, we didn't have to time to this and that's this and that's this and those, right. We showed up, we got married, we got the certificate, and then we went to the place where several people were going to get the marriage performed. There were half a dozen ministers, a rabbi or two, let's see... There were several people, several different kinds of ministers, right, who uh... There were half a dozen of them who were there at this restaurant, this restaurant large meeting room that was attached to the restaurant, right, where the state organization, basic rights origin and several local groups. Including food and dessert [inaudible] right had

pulled together all this food. All these desserts, cakes and pies and all of these little finger sandwiches, finger foods and all of these decorations, beverages right...

So when Bruce and I walked in we were well known here, but when we walked into that meeting area, right, everybody stood and applauded us. There were maybe like 75-100 people there. All who stood and cheered and whistled and applauded us. It was like walking on clouds. It was amazing. It was amazing. So then the minister... You know you had your pick of who you were going to walk up to right... The minister who we walked up to, it turned out had the last name of Light. L I G H T. He was a Methodist minister. Another one of the churches I had gone to briefly in my youth. He married us with such happiness, such joy in his expression and in his face. And the way he hugged us, and he was from a small Methodist parish in a small rural town out near the country in Oregon. So the movement had reached quite far indeed, since the 1960's.

Q: That's a beautiful story.

Friday:

Thank you. What an honor to have been a part of it. What an incredible honor. Man I see God and God says, "So what did you do?" I said, "Well I didn't just stand on the side and chew gum. But I'll tell yeah there were a lot of people who did a lot more than I did."

Q:

Yeah, unfortunately we only have a few minutes until the library closes and the security is going to throw me out.

Friday:

Yeah, go ahead, it's time for you go then sweetie.

Q:

Yeah unfortunately.

Friday:

I've really enjoyed this, thank you so much.

Q:

Thank you.

Friday:

And forgive me if I've made it more difficult than it was worth.

Q:

I might be able to do a follow-up [interview]. I'm not sure though.

Friday:

Okay. Yeah. Please if you need anything let me know, and like I say, please do forgive me if I've made it more difficult or confusing and tangled than it's worth. I hope that you're able to draw out those different threads into a meaningful weave.

Q:

It's okay my brain works the same way.

Friday:

Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Thank you for coming and sharing your story with me. And thank you for getting all the props out, it was really useful. More than I expected but its really good.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, well just let us know if you need anything handy and we'll bring it up again. You know, we'll leave it up for a day or two if you need to check what you've got on your telephone to see if you need us for any details on that stuff. And then when you need more time just let me know for the stuff.

Q:

Okay. Thank you.

Friday:

Thank you so much for your...

Friday:

You're a wonderful person for doing this project. You really are.

You really all are. You know, I haven't had a chance to ask you what your position is on any of those things because I didn't want that to get in the way of what I was saying. So I am still not asking. Thank you. Thank you for doing it.

Q:

Okay. Thank you.

Friday:

Okay. We'll talk later.

Q:

Okay bye.

Friday:

Bye.