

Galop and Stonewall Housing Oral History Project

Interviewee: Emma Grant

Interviewer: Philip Cowell

Place of Interview: Galop Head Office in London.

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Files: EG1-4

Key

EG: = Interviewee, Emma Grant

PC: = Interviewer, Philip Cowell

[time e.g. 5:22] = inaudible word at this time

[5:22 1A] = inaudible section at this time

Word 5:22 = best guess at word

PC: Can you please tell me your name and where and when you were born?

EG: Yeah, my name is Emma Grant. I was born on the 28th of October 1979 in Lambeth Borough, South London.

PC: Fantastic! Thank you very much Emma, and to open up our conversation, could you please tell me a bit about your background?

EG: Background, like I said, born and bred in South London, Balham area specifically. Born there to Irish parents. I was brought up, went to school there, still live there now, so not really that exciting.

PC: What about school?

EG: School, yeah, again, school in Balham primary school, then moved onto Wimbeldon actually at a later date. From Wimbeldon I went to college in Twickenham, Richmond Adult College, then went to work cause I didn't want to be in education anymore. That lasted about two years before I realised I did want to go back into a fulltime education and went to East London University to study Gender and Media studies.

I left there. I was working continuously throughout in various retail jobs and, yeah, just carried on in retail when I finished. I got to a certain stage where I was stuck in a bit of a rut, or I definitely felt that way and I went on a short trip, quit my job, went on a short trip, which went on for about six months and I just didn't come back and in that time I researched volunteer work, which led me basically get in... When I returned I had an interview here and became a two-day a week volunteer for Galop, which continued for about nine/ten months.

PC: You said lots of things there, thank you. So, for example, when you left school you did two years, was it working?

EG: Yeah.

PC: What kind of stuff were you doing?

EG: I worked as a sales assistant at Selfridges in central London and it was good fun. Recently I was in contact with a couple of people from there still and

that's like nine years later so, yeah, and I had good fun, but also a lot of realisation. I knew I wanted to go to uni, but it took me that long to realise how badly I wanted to go back and get out of that, which is surprising because then obviously when I finished university, it took me a bit longer because I was in fulltime work, but I still ended up in retail. It was a little bit of a disappointment, but then I had a degree so I was a bit happier in myself, but I knew I wanted to do more than that.

PC: Can you tell us more about your degree?

EG: I did Gender and Media studies.

PC: OK. Where was that?

EG: Docklands Campus East of London University. It was the only university to offer a gender degree as opposed to a women studies degree and I wanted to go into more equal footing, looking at genders specifically and around sexuality and stuff like that and gender roles, gender norms, societies, expectations of people with certain genders and trans sexuality etc. So I think coming to Galop was lucky because they were a place that I found that needed volunteers, but I think it was also very good for me as well because they do a lot stuff around trans, a little bit, some stuff around trans gender issues as well, which can be quite segregated within the LGB community. Some have a T, some don't have a T, some cater, some don't and, yeah, so it was very good for me, anyway, in terms of my degree.

PC: So were trans gender issues a specialism for you doing your degree?

EG: No, but it was stuff that when you looked at feminist issues and gender norms, when you looked at the trans gender community, it was showing that it was all learned behaviour more so than natural. It's kind of the nature-nurture debate and so I personally did use a lot of trans gender stuff to prove certain points in essays and stuff like that, so proving that it was nurture not nature, so it was good for me. <Laughs>

PC: And you volunteered directly after your degree or you volunteered...?

EG: No, I was working for... I think I worked for about two years.

PC: What was that? What were you doing?

EG: I was managing a shop. <Laughs> So before I went into the degree I was just a sales assistant, but then, yeah, I ended up managing a shop. I was on less money actually than I was when I was at Selfridges, but, yeah, that's by the by. Yeah, just managing the shop.

PC: What was the shop? That sounds interesting.

EG: It was like an urban fashion wear called High Jinx. It's not around anymore, they got made, they went into liquidation actually. We sold stuff like Bench, which you get a lot more now, Fenchurch, Mecca, lots of hip hopping type baggy jeans, but then lots of trendy, I'd say middle age, middle class wear as well, kind of skatery, but not real skaters, just to look cool/casual urban wear I think. So yeah, and then that got closed down and then I went to work for the

science museum for a year running their mail order department. It was the worst job I ever had.

It was good that I didn't get on there so well because that prompted me to hand in my notice and then left me with the ability to go away. It was basically a weekend meeting up with a couple of friends in Berlin and I've got a friend in Berlin and I just didn't come back and then I moved on to Denmark for another friend for a few months.

PC: So this is the six months you were away?

EG: Yeah, so I was Berlin for three months.

PC: That sounds interesting. Tell us about that then?

EG: Just chilling out, brilliant city.

PC: And which year was this? When was this now?

EG: This would have been two and a half years ago, so it would have been January '07, yeah, I think so, '07 or '08, I'm not sure, it's all blurred, like loads of stuff seems to have happened since then. Yeah, so then did that, after I went to Berlin I knew that I had to go back at some point, so I just helped out with her, she was doing her masters my friend and she's got an eight-year-old kid, so I helped with that while she finished up doing that. It was really good timing all and all. I stayed at home with the kid, on the Internet and looking for stuff to do and offering myself in voluntary roles.

It was the only way I could really see doing it and I think Galop are probably one, if not the only one, that came back and offered me an interview, so I jumped at the job. So when I got back I think about a week later I was down here being interviewed by Phil. He said he needed to do CRB. I was happy to do any work they wanted to throw my way, leaflet packing and whatever. I was happy to just do something and I was signing on when I got back as well, so it was good to have something to do and to work towards, and yeah, it was really good.

PC: Just to be clear you weren't doing voluntary work in Berlin, you were just, you were helping your friend?

EG: Berlin, no, she was just... I suppose I was dog sitting there. I was just chilling out, getting my head together. I think it was the only time really that maybe apart from a school holiday or something that I really had any time to myself. London is so busy. I think you always find something to do. There's always someone to go out with, whereas I was just chilling. We went out, we did some stuff but the way of life is different.

My mate was working a normal nine to five job, but she still won't go to bed till two o'clock in the morning. She'd come back from work, would sit down, have some food. It was all very civilised <Laughs> and then we'd maybe still go out like ten o'clock at night to this place, I don't even know what you'd call it, I suppose a youth club, but it wasn't a youth club because we were old. It was a place where people went. It was a space, an open space where people could go and it funded itself, had a fairly cheap bar. All the money got ploughed back in, but everyone that worked there or did stuff there were

volunteers as well. It was a space that they'd created, that they wanted to upkeep for other people, some music and computer stuff and like minded people would chat, so we spent a fair bit of time there, but I didn't speak much German, any German and in Berlin not everyone speaks English, so a lot of my time in my own head.

PC: So you went to that space quite a lot?

EG: Yeah, because it was very cheap. I didn't really feel like doing anything heavy. I've never actually been to a Berlin nightclub. I think mainly because my friend is not really into that. She's more of a chilled out hippy chick.

PC: And what about during the day, did you have to entertain the eight year old?

EG: That was in Denmark. I took the dog for a walk. I'd sleep all day.

PC: So Berlin was dog sitting and Denmark...

EG: Child sitting.

<Laughter>

PC: Well, how did you go from Berlin to Denmark? What was the link?

EG: I have a friend in Denmark.

PC: Just by chance?

EG: My friend in Denmark was like, 'Oh! You've spent all this time with Cat, why don't you come and visit me,' and I went OK and it just went from there. It was seriously just that I could do whatever I wanted.

PC: Had you travelled much before?

EG: Yeah, I'd been to Berlin quite a few times. I knew my way around the city anyway. I knew where certain places were. No, it was good.

PC: So then you came...?

EG: Just did stuff.

PC: Then you came back here and you volunteered for...?

EG: Well, I came back already with the interview, knowing that I had somewhere forward, somewhere to progress to. In my head I needed something, maybe it was the being out of education for two years, I don't know, maybe there was this weird space, but yeah, so volunteering in here, learning something was an education, so I was good with that, so I came here.

PC: And we'll talk about that a bit more, but did you, have you since coming back from Denmark have you been working as well...?

EG: Yeah, from working here, part of working here and doing the help line got me my current job, which I've now been in for a year and a half.

PC: Great. Do tell us a bit more about that, is that's alright?

EG: Yeah. I now work, since leaving Galop because my contract, my original contract was weekends and evenings and by this point I had another part time job at the sex shop down the road. So doing those I didn't have enough time really to do any volunteering here. I did evenings and weekends and worked at the shop up until March of this year actually, so that was nearly, yeah, I got the job in January so a year and three months I was doing both of those and it was quite tough going.

I didn't see friends or anything, only on special occasions when I could take the time off, cause my annual allowance wasn't good and I had to work every weekend and I can't stress that enough, it was every weekend for a year and three months, apart from the ones that I could take off as annual leave, so it was pretty hard going, but it was something that I wanted so much, just to get out of retail and have this work experience as well as my voluntary experience to allow me to progress and move on and, so, yeah, but then they changed the way that they work, the missing people charity in March/April and they scaled down, but I was one of the lucky ones that got the new position. They opened up the role, so we weren't just dealing with missing people and the families of missing people.

They are now dealing with the other two of their help lines, which is the runaway help line service, which if the people are away or that have run away from home under the age of 18, and the message home service, which is for adults that are away from home or want to get a message to their family because maybe they don't know where they are and maybe they didn't feel that they were able to speak to them directly at that time. So now we do all three, three help lines and the phones for the police for them to call because that's a separate number and the email enquiries. You name it we do it all.

PC: it must be quite tough work emotionally?

EG: It can be, yeah. I had a girl on the phone the other night who, it did turn out that it was testing and it wasn't true, but she told me that she'd been stabbed and she was bleeding out on the phone box and then went quiet on the line and couldn't tell me where she was and I had to end the call because there was nothing coming from the other end and I thought, well, all I can hope is that someone notices that there's a girl bleeding out on the phone box, so I had to end the call. I was shouting down the line to try and wake this girl up, try and make some noise so maybe someone else can... Anyway I ended the call and about five minutes later she phoned back. It was the exact same person with a different story and I was like OK, that's good, and I think people can tend to get quite frustrated when people do that.

But people do and she did sound young anyway and you don't know what's happened in their life really to make them feel that they want to do it. It's not like there was laughter and giggling because that's very obvious and of course kids do it, I did that. <Laughs. I haven't got a problem with it, but really how much, what's gone on in her life that maybe that's the only attention she gets. I'm the only person who maybe sounds like they care about her, so I can't really begrudge people that do it.

I was glad she phoned back straight away though as another person because then I knew that she hadn't bled out and I was like, Ah! That's OK then. That's alright, I don't have to worry about this girl somewhere. She said she was six months pregnant, and I was like Oh! My Gosh! But, yes, it can be demanding.

PC: You could worry quite a lot in a way in this job, but I presume you have to at some level...

EG: Yeah, well, yeah, you can always talk through it with other members of staff, even when you're doing night shift you're always on with someone else. We have someone that comes in, I can't remember what they call it, external supervision, so you always have an opportunity to speak to someone in confidence about how you're feeling about certain things, but majority of the time you can speak to your line manager.

It's quite easy to do that, but I think as time's gone on I've learnt how to deal with it myself and as far as basically what you are able to do from the other end of a phone, you can only do your best and OK even if it was true and she was bleeding out on the phone box, she's gone silent, collapsed, I still can't do anything. I can't get the call traced because we can't do that from our phone system. All I can do is phone the police, but even they can't do anything because ours is a national help line, so she could have been anywhere, so it would have been, what could the police do, tell everyone in the whole country, officers to look in phone boxes for a possible... it's just not feasible.

PC: How many calls would you, you said testing, that was a testing call, how many calls would you get that might be like that, I mean as a percentage really?

EG: A percentage on the runaway help line would be 90% of calls are testing. I'm talking about people just hanging up and laughing, that kind of non genuine calls I suppose, but yeah, I'd say even as high as 95 sometimes, some days a 100% it's just testing.

PC: Cause like you say there might be a reason for them, they are using the service at some level, but you don't know what, and they might use it in the future genuinely.

EG: Exactly, if they're aware of it even though they are testing it, that's the kind of word we're told to call it. <Laughs> We don't always call it that word when we're just talking to our colleagues in the privacy of a nightshift <Laughs> but yeah, generally, yeah, exactly they need to know because they're kids, they're going to do that. Like I said earlier I did that. I think everyone to a certain degree has done that, but you just go, 'OK, call us back if you need our help,' and just end the call. Then if they do need you at some point they won't be afraid to call up.

PC: And tell me about your organisation, how big is it? I mean I presume it's much bigger than Galop?

EG: Yeah, it's...

PC: We'll go back to Galop obviously in terms of your involvement then, but just a...

EG: Missing people now even though they've got three national through phone numbers, they are only really a medium sized charity. I think the income is somewhere like two million a year, so it hasn't got really that much income, hence why all the changes. I mean our workloads since the changes as we call it are quite immense. I mean they got rid of a whole department and cut

down the services to half and we've taken on a lot of the publicity stuff that they had to get rid of, but if it means the help lines are open then it's a good thing. I kept my job so I'm OK. <Laughs> In terms of me, on a personal level, I kept it. I think there were probably some people that weren't that great, but...

PC: And how many people do you work with when you're on a shift?

EG: When I'm on a shift, if I'm on a day shift it's usually two team leaders, possibly three, one other member of the services, service supervisor, myself and could be anywhere up to about four volunteers, so volunteers as well, but on a nightshift it's only one other person.

PC: Now, you mentioned the sex shop.

EG: Oh! Yes.

PC: We have to talk about that.

EG: OK. I actually got that job because I was doing my voluntary work here, so yeah, I got back from Denmark, I got my CRB check from Galop. I was here two days a week, so Tuesdays and Wednesdays I would come here, day shift and obviously, yeah, I was getting, I was signing on and as we all know the money is rubbish. So I was walking up to the train station one day and I saw this shop that I didn't know whether it was just closing down or maybe just opening up and I stuck my head through and it was a sex shop. <Laughs> and I was like, it doesn't bother me, yeah, and started working there on a part time basis around Galop, so yeah, and I just did that two or three days a week worked here, so I was very Angel-based for all that time.

PC: How many people worked there?

EG: It was the, I think it was the owner, me and some other bloke.

PC: Did you enjoy working? Was it an enjoyable place to work?

EG: Yes it was. <Laughs> As you can imagine it was quite fun, quite an eye opener, not as many dirty old men as I thought. It was LGBT friendly. We had a gay and lesbian section. It definitely could have been better, but we didn't... It was mainly gay men. We didn't get that many lesbians in. We did sell quite a few strap ons though, just bits and pieces <Laughs> There was stuff that I'd never seen before, but I'd like to think I've got quite an open mind for stuff. It was only really the porn that put me up the straight white porn that was like, barely 18, stuff like that, I'm just like, barely 18, it really says what you want, doesn't it, and they looked younger than 18 or at least they were made up in white cotton pants, but then that goes back to my feminists stuff that I already know.

I think in terms of being a feminist, I think that was maybe not such a great move and I don't maybe get so many people if I talk about it, that they can get quite angry that maybe I've worked somewhere like that because they feel I've condoned certain types of pornography. It was very, it was actually mainly couples and gay men that we got in, but they're still over 18 DVD's. I get a lot of hostility from certain people that don't agree I should have worked somewhere like that and that I was condoning it, and I can totally see their

point. I mean I wasn't stopping anyone from buying it, but I still, I don't know, I don't know what to make of it sometimes.

PC: It's a tricky debate, isn't it?

EG: Yeah, I mean I can't, I still learnt more about the people that went to them shops and certain amount of women that bought that same porn, but we also had Granny Fuck series, and it was very strange to... I mean I totally agreed with the Granny Fuck series more because they have a lot of experienced, a lot older women who can make that choice to do something like that on video, whereas I think the barely 18's when they're meant to be just 18 and I don't think an 18 year old can really make a decision like that, even though they can vote and this that and the other, I think that's too difficult a decision, but yeah, I've got my own opinions on all of it. I could go on for days, but I think it's definitely something I might be able to use later in life if I do a masters or something, if and when I decide to do that and what I decide to do it on, but yeah, life experience means a lot.

PC: And did you get to know any of the customers? Were there any regulars?

EG: Yes, there were loads of regulars. We used to sell something called Viapro, which was a herbal viagra, which has now been taken off the shelves because apparently it does actually contain viagra, but it was very, very popular. We sold that to a lot of guys, usually for their female exploits, lots of gay men as well of course for Friday's. I mean it would be unbelievable the amount you'd sell, poppers and herbal viagras and the little queens coming in going, 'Oooh! Hello darling' and we'd be like, 'Yeah, I know what you want, here you go.'

PC: Something for the weekend.

EG: Yeah, exactly.

PC: <Laughs>

EG: 'How many bottles would you like' 'Ooh, I'm going out both nights ...' And of course the new poppers that came in had a different lid, so you used to get lots of people hurting their nose, be telling people, 'Oh! Be sure to put something over it and don't hurt your nose, and don't get too drunk.'
<Laughs>

PC: So it sounds like you were caring in a way?

EG: Yeah. I think so. Women, we had a lot of older women and people that never got a vibrator before and I'd be like, well, this, this, this, try and talk about vaginas and soft surfaces and hard surfaces just quite frankly because at the end of the day I work here, I'm not going to be that prudish about it. You can say, you can stick it anywhere, either hole, [24:12] <Laughs> It was quite good. Some people would be more shocked than others. Others would be like, 'Right, wicked I'm going to get this one' and then they'd come in for weeks afterwards and buy pretty much everything, but yeah, I mean with toys it's each to their own, you can't just go in and expect to buy the one straight away that's right for you, you have to test and try.

PC: It sounds like talking frankly is something that you made a career out of, or you're making a career out of, being just frank with people, having honest open conversations whether it's on your help line or in the sex shop, but it probably does link in quite nicely to your involvement with Galop, so let's go back there, if that's alright.

EG: OK.

PC: Can you tell me more about your work at Galop, when you started as a volunteer and what you've done?

EG: Galop, yes, I started, it would have been May '07, yeah, May '07, got my CRB through, came in and it was literally, I mean bless him, I don't know if they really know what to do with someone because I was offering two days a week. I don't think they'd ever had anyone to do that amount of time. I realised quite quickly that they had so much work to do, all their work and all their time was really used up because of the amount of funding, mainly because of being LGBT I think to a certain degree as well the funding being a little bit less than you would have got and I think my first couple of weeks were just chatting to Phil.

Phil Greasley at the time was the head of services and so I was a volunteer, I was under his care, yeah, just packing flyers and chatting to him about what was in them, annual reports, not something that I would really have known about and something that's quite dull, but it's interesting to know, you find out once when someone says annual report you don't have to ask any questions, you know what it is. They know you know what it is and then you can carry on. So, yeah, packing stuff like that, finding out about the history. I mean it was I think, if I remember correctly, it used to be LAGER. I think it came out of a charity and Phil Greasley was I think very much a part of that. So, yeah, there was LAGER and, yes, the Galop came out of that. I can't really remember what LAGER did, but I'm sure he gave me some leaflets.

Yeah, I mean it was very chatty, but you were doing something with your time as well. It gave me an insight into office life I suppose cause you can be chatty and I think the workplace that I was used to, working in retail such a difference, I mean completely different, a bit less chat in the office to be fair because all you did all day was chat and constantly do stuff, but yeah, that was really interesting. Found out the stuff that they would do, like London Pride, they do their stall and, well, found out that Galop had a help line number. I didn't know that they had one when I first started. I knew what it did, but I knew most of the web based stuff.

Phil I think, we then started after I did like lots of packing of files and chatting, then I started reading through cases, so cases that had been passed through us on third party reporting, so yeah, basically Galop would take third party reports of homophobic crimes and report them to the police. Main reason I think like what I can grasp, the main reason being was to put the homophobic crime statistics higher so that more was done about them. Great, that's what needs to be done, it does happen a lot and I obviously know that from working here.

So yeah, I read, I started reading through loads of reports and just found out hideous things that people would go through just because of their sexual orientation, and some of them would even come from, I think there was one

case that I actually vaguely remember and the guy was with his girlfriend on a train, but because he looked, I think he was an Emo boy or something they said, so he had a little bit of long hair and I think his nails were painted and he got abused on a train with these other people. They called him a queer and a gay and a this, that and the other and then chasing him and basically pushing him and the girlfriend off the train at one point, not when it was moving, just pushed him off the train, but I think he did report it to the police, but he came through to us as well.

Obviously this is quite a rare incidence, well, it is a homophobic crime. 'They didn't know that I wasn't gay, but they thought I was and that's what they were willing to do to someone.' So he came through to us as well and I was like, 'Yeah, so you should,' but he obviously still must have felt really angry about it and I think it's quite difficult if you get attacked on the train it's under the jurisdiction of the British transport police, so if you reported that to the Met police they probably would tell him to go back to London transport police and I won't know how to get in contact with them to report it, if they would even take it very seriously, it's difficult so, yeah, putting the statistics up some more is done.

Yeah, going through cases and then eventually I was taking calls on the help line. They had their call times on the Internet, which were like four hours on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday I think, but their policy was if the phone rang someone was able to take it, that they would take that call and it was ringing one day and they went, 'Why don't you answer it' and I did and that apparently was one of their regular callers. It wasn't a bad, it was someone who'd phoned in quite a lot with a lot of homophobic crime, but it was maybe like someone looked at him funny in the street and he would see that as a homophobic crime.

But yeah, I mean he was still very pleasant. He knew the drill, so he knew that I would take a report, tell him what would happen with it and then he would go on his merry way and I didn't know what else to do so I just took the report and I was like and they were like, 'Oh! Yeah, he calls quite a lot' and they said 'Yeah, we just always take the report,' and depending on what it is, he apparently he has called in with certain things that are very much crime worthy, but that one maybe not so much, so I don't know if we can actually do anything with that, so yeah, you just take it as it comes and then see what happens.

They were like, If you don't know what to do just ask him, say, 'I'm not sure,' put him on hold and ask someone. I was like OK cause I don't know, I suppose I didn't panic that much when I took the first call, but I suppose after it going, 'Oh! What if they had said this and Oh! My Gosh.' So yeah, I mean reading it is very different to having someone at the end of the phone, so yeah, did that, sorted out this library that we're sitting in now. I don't know, that was a very, very long time ago, put it in order and make sure all the books are up to date, so it's very much what someone working in the place would do and doing stuff that hopefully I took some of the crappy jobs that needed to be done off their hands so they didn't have to worry about it, which is what volunteers are for.

PC: Who met that help line work, did you get training before you took that first call or in a way was that first call the training?

EG: I think the first call was the training.

PC: Yeah.

EG: I think there must have been, there's definitely non-structured training. I'd looked at the forms, I knew what to do and I think it was just a case of going through it. I mean the training that I got later on for the new place that I worked was a lot more structured and it was a lot more, they made you a lot more afraid really of what you could have got. I remember my first call at Galop that was very stressful and looking back on it I think I dealt with it really well. A guy phoned up and he was a male escort. He agreed to I think a job he said, I was like OK and he sounded very, very distressed, and he said, yeah, and it went over and above what I wanted and what I was happy to do.

Obviously I knew that we weren't the right people to come to with this straight away. He obviously needed some more help. I asked him if he felt like going to the doctor and stuff like that, but he didn't seem very interested. Also, asked him if he had enough credit on his phone because our help line is not free. It's only a local 0208/0207 number, so I wanted to make sure that I didn't lose him on the call and he was wherever he was, just in fear and stuff like this, but it had happened the night before so he wasn't in the situation at that moment and just from doing the whole chatting and talking to people I knew that there was a project in Earls Court, which had a 24-hour help line number for male homosexual escorts.

So I did a referral. Actually I phoned them up and got them to contact him back to see if they could maybe see what they could do. I wasn't a 100% sure what the service itself could do, but I knew that they would be better suited at that time to talk to him about it, which obviously then I got trained to do later on and I was like Oh! I've already done this and I didn't even realise. So yeah, there was no, there wasn't any structured training, but I'm sure there was as far as, there were no bits of paper to tick. It was just going through stuff, which I think it fed in without me really realising it.

PC: Would you have been listening to people who were doing the help line? Is the help line run from this office?

EG: Yeah.

PC: OK, so you would have overheard calls being dealt with I suppose as well would have been part of the training?

EG: Yeah. It would have been, but we didn't have a listen in, so I wouldn't have been able to pick up another line and listen to both sides, but everyone here obviously you were not dealing with any kind of crisis, that's not what we're here for to deal with any kind of crisis intervention, so it's not as stressful as...

PC: It's reporting, isn't it?

EG: It's a third part reporting, so that's why it has the ability to doing it online, so there'd been reports that would come through on the Internet as well already filled in and I would just take that and add it to some statistics and I would type it all up neatly and file it all away in the right bits and pieces and make sure it got off to the police and all kind of office-y admin-y stuff, but the stuff that actually you're doing.

PC: Again, quite emotional in a way. I mean potentially it could be quite upsetting?

EG: Oh! Yeah, I used to get really angry.

PC: Angry, yeah.

EG: I used to get really angry. That's another thing that you have to learn to deal with I suppose. Angry, you'd get some reports where they would have been to the police as the first point of call and the police would have, and it would be all documented in the reports to ask how they behaved towards them because of their sexual orientation and then you could tell if that was the case, although you shouldn't be making judgements, but yeah, it made me really angry because I thought, well, I wouldn't want myself or any of my friends or family to be treated like that and they're the police, they're not meant to be doing that, that's not their job. Angry, yeah, pretty much angry most of the time. <laughs> I was like Oooh! If only I got my hands on them.

PC: And so how did you deal with that anger? Going home with the anger, how did you...?

EG: Pretty much how I deal with it now at this work, probably be like, 'Oh! This is disgusting,' just say it out loud to someone and they'd be like, 'Oh! No,' but at least they've seen the sense to... Basically people could easily talk me out of it, but anger is dealt with anyway. You just think, well, one of the reasons I'm here is to try and help with that and we can only do as much as we can do and put the word out. I told a lot of my friends about Galop. I had the cards and every time I saw, even if I was out having a drink and someone would say something I'd be like, 'You know you should phone up Galop' and just try and a lot of people may have...

I think when speaking to people and telling people they should phone up, there'd be like, 'What's the point' and I'd be like, 'The statistics go up therefore the government will have to pay more money into it and more training into it.' They'd be like, 'Oh! OK,' yeah, even though they would be pretty much knowing that nothing would be able to happen for their specific crime, that actually it's for the greater good at the end of the day, not shutting up about it, report to the police no matter how, how you don't think they're going to do anything about it, it may well be that they're not, but if you tick the box, it's a sad reality that we have to live with, tick the box and as far as I know the training in the Met police has probably gone up and the awareness, laws have come because of it, so Wai! Hey! We'll get there in the end.

PC: So when you were working there for two days a week volunteering, were you always on the... Once you'd been trained as it were in help line, were you doing that all the time then, from then on or did you...?

EG: It was pretty sparse the amount of calls to be honest. Yeah, pretty much if the phone rang because I was aware that that was the phone pretty much, but it was never as busy as the help line that I'm doing now. At the moment it can be constantly hanging up answering, hanging up answering, but, no, it was never really busy at Galop. People would also leave messages on the Galop answering machine, but that was never something that I really would deal with, but some people if they reported a crime and, this wouldn't be done by me, but if Phil picked up on something, they could actually get compensation from the police on how they were dealt with by the police.

So if Phil thought that there was, it was warranted and as long as the call wasn't anonymous because a lot of them would be anonymous because they wouldn't want to put their name. I think I had a call from an older gentleman once who didn't want to give his name and address because I felt that he might have been married with kids and it was a bit of a cottaging thing, but he still wanted to report it, which I thought was very, I don't know what the word is, it was good that he knew that it would matter with him reporting it and he didn't want it to happen and it was quite a selfless thing to do.

PC: Yeah, he could see the greater good.

EG: Yeah, so it was a fairly selfless thing and his name and address I suppose didn't really matter. I think it was Hampton Heath. I think it was something that happened in Hampton Heath and he was just like, if there is a predator out there, I don't want to leave it unreported so that it happens to someone else.

PC: Did he report to the police first?

EG: No, he came straight to us.

PC: And do you then tell the police? Would you then have a link?

EG: Yeah. The police would be informed straight away. Obviously then it's up to the police what they would do about it, but you never know that someone else hasn't reported similar things and that just adds to their evidence that something's happened and to investigate it further, so that's always the kind of hope.

PC: And would you personally be reporting to the police?

EG: I think a lot of it got emailed through.

PC: So email, yeah.

EG: Yeah, added an email through and they would have to...

PC: So they would have someone up there who would be in charge of receiving that email?

EG: Yeah, I'm not sure, I don't think that was maybe something that I did to be perfectly honest, but yeah, that was the whole point was to get it, but I don't know whether it would have gone to the individual boroughs police or maybe there was a central kind of LGB department that would then send it out, but it would definitely would have gone to the right boroughs eventually and the right areas to investigate or just to be aware of anyway depending on the severity of it.

But, yeah, we used to get compensation from the Met police as well for some people. Again that was fairly rare, but we went through some of them cases as well, treated despicably by the emergency services.

PC: Can you elaborate on that in terms of I mean without obviously revealing any names and things like that?

EG: Oh! I don't know any names, no. I think there was just a case, again someone had been like really beaten up for being with their partner and holding hands and I think the officer, they'd come in covered in blood to the local police station, I'm pretty sure it was in Soho, so they'd probably gone to Charing Cross police station or somewhere of the like, bleeding, but not so badly they needed assistance straight away. This is happened and they've gone, 'Oh! Did you have to be holding hands.' Isn't that just drawing attention, that kind of attitude from central London as well. Maybe in some small town in Scotland you could kind of understand that they would be like that, but that they shouldn't, so yeah, that and, yeah, into people where they've been injured, yeah, stuff like that. I think that was probably maybe one of the lighter ones. I'm sure there've been police where they've been very harsh.

I think maybe there was even a case where someone was severely beaten up for being gay and the police arrested the gay guy. I mean it beggar's belief. <Laughs> I don't even know why they would have even done that, but it did look like they were just being homophobic and it was obvious that the other party, when they had it investigated that the other party wasn't, they got 15,000 pounds compensation so, yeah, whether 15 grand, I'm sure if you ask the person they would have rather that the police just acted accordingly and unprejudiced in the first place and the 15 grand would be of no consequence really, but yeah, I'm sure 15 grand the officers would have been reprimanded in some way and maybe a bit more training put back into that borough's ... <laughs> I don't know, whatever they have to do, so their compulsory training. (Ha ha ha)

PC: So you've got loads of skills working here?

EG: Yeah, definitely.

PC: You've got archiving skills.

EG: Yeah.

PC: Active listening skills.

EG: It all went on my CV and it totally got me the job. Absolutely totally got me the job. I mean I wouldn't have been able to, I wouldn't be where I am now without working here and I totally know that.

PC: Well, that moves in very nicely to the impact of Galop's work on you, which is something I want to talk about now, but also more generally as well, the impact of Galop's work on yourself, but also the LGBT community as a whole, moving outwards like that. I mean what do you think the impact's been over the last 25 years?

EG: I mean having somewhere to go to in the first place is always recognising that there's someone there, if you wanted, even if you don't necessarily use it, knowing that someone's there. I think the police have had leaflets that they handed out and I found them in bars and it says, 'report homophobic hate crime to us,' You go on the web page and it doesn't work. It hasn't worked since I was at Galop and they've still got leaflets in bars and stuff and it's like, well, so it's just this false promise, whereas Galop isn't. There is someone here at the times where it says it will be and people you can talk to about stuff and, yeah, just having someone there.

I mean people can go straight to the police, but if they don't want to then they can come here, whereas before they wouldn't have had anywhere to go. It would have kept well within the communities, created a lot of fear or retaliation as it does do sometimes. I think it has changed, maybe not changed the attitude of the police, but I think whatever the personal preferences of the police, I think to a certain degree they know that they can't say certain things, which in the long term is better. I mean it might not change that person's opinion, but how it's dealt with person to person, so ... it's exciting.

PC: <Laughs> So was it exciting being part of that?

EG: Yeah.

PC: Like a movement, it's like a movement, isn't it?

EG: Yeah, still a lot of anger. I used to, I think I started a project as well because we get a lot of calls from outside London, but we weren't funded to do anything outside London. We had no contact with outside London boroughs, so there was nothing we could do, but obviously we were still on the Internet so people could still come through to us, but yeah, so they'd read that and think that we might be able to do something and it was fine to call, but then it'd be like, well, I don't know where you'd go, so I started a little project to get together information of other places all around the country, so I was going counties, yeah, I did counties and then broke it down into areas.

I don't know how effective it was, but I spent months doing it. Yeah, and obviously then I found out that in some areas there was loads of things. I think I remember there was Lincoln, obviously Brighton you're sorted, not so much of a problem in Brighton if you need some help or some support in the LGBT community it's fine. Devon and Cornwall weren't even that bad, but if you got to Scotland and it was ridiculous, outside of Edinburgh Oh! My goodness! Nothing.

So then I would call up, I think in the police, all police were meant to have, especially in their constabulary they're meant to have an LGBT officer, a designated officer who would be there for LGBT community and for the police if the officers then themselves had any questions. So there was meant to be this thing they would have, for a lot of them I would phone up each constabulary and find out what the LGBT officer was called and whether they'd send a contact number just to have it. 'LGBT who,' I got a lot of, especially in the smaller...

PC: As a joke or seriously?

EG: No, they didn't know what LGBT was. You could tell maybe some of them were in their 80's.

<Voices overlap>

PC: I mean could you empathise in a way with them or did you just find that they're out of touch?

EG: Yeah, just out of touch, but yeah, I suppose there is a certain amount of empathy. I mean if there's a small town and there isn't any people, any LGBT

orientation out in the LGBT community, then how are they going to know, how can you learn, but I think it's probably improved even in the last two years.

PC: But how would you respond? Would you then explain...?

EG: Oh! Yeah. Well, some of them would be like, 'Oh! OK, I'm not too sure.' I suppose being confronted with someone not being shy about saying gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans gender community. I said that was probably quite fun. You knew when there was like the certain smaller areas and you could tell maybe by the way that they answered the phone maybe in a very, 'Hello Strathclyde, how can I help you.' That was Irish. <Laughs> But the very regional accents and it was obviously it was them in the police station at the time, no major crimes ever happened, they were pretty much not going to know and I suppose, yeah, they've had no experience of it.

It was probably a bit more worrying when you had... Nottingham, I don't know if that was specifically one, but say something as big as Nottingham city or a big town anyway and they'd be like, 'What,' so when it was bigger communities where there was going to be obviously a section there, an out section there and they didn't know that was probably the scariest ...

PC: Definitely, yeah.

EG: But dealing with the police and when they could a bit ... they were quite... I don't know, a bit defensive and a bit Ooh! Didn't want to deal with it, that's quite bad because in my new job of missing people we do talk to the police quite a lot and the police are lovely when you're talking about missing people, but then they're not so nice when you're talking about, just wanting to know the number for who their LGBT officer is, so yeah, that was quite an eye opener.

I suppose I wasn't really surprised by it, but there'll be a few people out there that probably would have spoken about some girl that phoned up today asking us about the LGBT officer. 'Do you know what that is, whether it's the gays, the lesbians, something called bisexuals and trans gender is.' I can imagine it was a hot topic for a couple of weeks. <Laughs> Not just something on Eastenders, but yeah, maybe even if I got one person to understand then that was fine.

PC: This was almost like a national Galop project potentially. I mean it was groundwork for that, wasn't it?

EG: Yeah.

PC: You said you weren't sure if it was very effective...

<Voices overlap>

EG: I finished it as I got my job there. It was a basis anyway, it would have been a start if they wanted to build on it. The thing is being in London and being very small and having minimal funding, people that work here couldn't be expected to undergo something like that, cause then you're taking them away from the work that you're getting funding for, I don't think they will be able to justify it.

PC: But I suppose if you could get other funding streams for a national Galop project, that would be great?

EG: Yeah. I wouldn't know, the funding side of things goes over my head.

PC: Yeah, because it's quite tricky.

EG: I did do some funding stuff here, but that was just sending out letters, going through the independent donor's book, something like this....

PC: Something like that, yeah.

EG: And picking some and reading the description of what they give to, and then sending out letters, but I don't think they ever got one positive response back. There was none in there that ever mentioned LGBT at all. So youth, I mean children, sick animals and old people was basically it, but you can only try, send a letter out, you never know, so I did lots of that.

PC: So you did archiving, fundraising.

EG: Fundraising.

PC: Help lines

EG: Did outreach work, we did Brighton Pride, giving out the flyers ...

PC: Oh! Brilliant, yeah, so that as an example, is that like a weekend's work? Would you work with a team, with everyone here or was it just a few of you?

EG: Brighton Pride?

PC: Yeah.

EG: I just rocked up on the morning.

PC: Yeah.

EG: Yeah, just got given a pile of flyers.

PC: Fantastic!

EG: And I went out, but I think the majority was saying 'If this happens, let us know,' and then this is the reason and blah, blah, blah and people would be like OK, not really much you can, as long as your spiel is good enough and you've ticked all the boxes, there isn't that much interaction really that you can have with someone along those lines. Putting the word out, that's what you need.

PC: Any dancing on our float? Were you dancing on a Galop float?

EG: No. We didn't get a float I'm afraid. They weren't big enough. No ... maybe next time.

PC: That's kind of, yeah, I mean that's marketing, isn't it? You'd call that marketing?

EG: Yes.

PC: Face to face.

EG: I don't know if you had to pay for the stand. We shared it with Stonewall next door I think.

PC: Stonewall Housing?

EG: Yeah, Stonewall Housing, but yeah, I'm not sure, you can never really be sure how much that really drums up, and different people go to the gay festival for different reasons, drinking being one of them, dancing being the other, not much else, sitting in a few stalls and being vaguely interested, yeah.

PC: What's that idea, if you get to one person then you get 24 people or something like that, because they will automatically tell people.

<Voices overlap>

EG: Word of mouth.

PC: So you're...

EG: Which I think you've got a lot of in the LGBT community definitely, so it depends if you get the right person, some people are like Oh! It depends what their attitude is, but yeah, as long as people are thinking and it's in there somewhere and that's half of it. Like with most things I can physically only do so much, apart from waiting for someone to get beaten up and then afterwards running over to them and going, 'You can call Galop,' but in theory Galop should not really exist because the police should be doing enough.

I mean Galop obviously do other stuff anyway, which is great, but the main kind of thing that they do shouldn't be necessarily and unfortunately it is very much so.

PC: So it seems in terms of the impact of Galops' work on the LGBT community, as a whole, you might say it's something to do with as a community the fact that it's there is just really important, just that you know where you can go to.

EG: There's someone there that's doing that side of things as well. None of my gay or lesbian friends volunteer for a gay or lesbian charity, which annoys me. <Laughs> but that's not what they do, that's not their thing, none of them are in the kind of charity voluntary sector anyway and it is somewhere that I wanted to go, but yeah, it's inclusive for everyone. Yeah, they all know about it now, I made sure of that, and I think someone did tell someone about it who ended up calling in, so that was good, but can you imagine if everyone did report homophobic, I mean the phones would be ringing of the hook unfortunately, I'm sure they would, they'd have their work cut out.

PC: So that must be just to do with the lack of funds to really get the message out then, something to do with that, do you think?

EG: I mean there has been people that I've met, when I said I volunteered here they have heard of it already, but it's been in the back of their head. Again Internet is a great thing, isn't it? I heard about this... what's that? Dad a da

dah, there it is! Yeah, it's probably the younger ones, the younger people that have just started out that I worry about the most. You get some people that are like, well the police should be dealing with it and some probably have an OK experience of the police as it stands, so they wouldn't feel it's necessary, it's down to individual preference, but yeah, it's been, in the community anyway, it's definitely important.

PC: Do you think the police proactively market as it were Galop?

EG: I think, again I think that would be individual. I think that would be rare <Laughs> fairly rare, I wouldn't know, there used to be someone who worked there, I forgot her name, and she used to work with the police, but yeah, I think her experiences of the polices were quite mixed as well. Like how I found out when I did a lot of calling really in effect, found to be very mixed, I think it's still, I think we're still quite surprised at the reaction of some officers being that we're in the 21st century. They were still a bit repressed, 'What! You don't know what a gay is' I think you're a bit rubbish! Don't you watch tele?

PC: So you used to call for the police?

EG: Yeah, well I'd phone them up and say, 'Can I have the number for your LGBT officer.'

PC: Ah! This is when you were doing that, yeah. That's interesting.

EG: Yeah. I would have been quite interested in phoning up and saying I want to report a homophobic, but then you can't do that, apparently it's unethical. <Laughs> I would have like to have done that, but then who would I report to.

<Voices overlap>

PC: You can't really do mystery shopping.

EG: No.<Laughs>

PC: OK, well thank you very much for that. Let's talk finally about the changes that you've witnessed for the LGBT community in general? So this is thinking much more broadly now so over your whole existence if you were to summarise perhaps the way you see, the way that the LGBT community has changed in the last 25 years?

EG: OK.

PC: And then you could specifically think about policing as well and Galop within that? Really just a reflection on, obviously I know you were a kid during the 80's, but I'm sure with your gender, your studies and all that sort of thing, you have a pretty good overview of the last 25-30 years. I mean I don't know if you've got ... you might not have direct thoughts on that, but if you do that would be interesting?

EG: I don't know, that my personal experience of LGBT anyway is obviously personal. I mean that's how it has to start, and then branching out and I think women's experiences are very different to the male experience, and the college, when I went to college everyone was bisexual, boys and girls, but only in the specific place that I hung out and I was like OK. At school being

called a lesbian when I didn't know what it meant, that was quite strange and then finding out and going OK, that's not so bad, why are they calling me that, I'm sure there's worse things they could call me.

But that was like primary school, so that was because they'd obviously just learnt the word and they've learnt it to be a bad thing and I was like, 'Mum, what's a lesbian,' 'Oh! It's a woman that loves another woman,' I was like, 'Oh! OK, no I don't understand, no, don't get it.' Obviously my learning then of the word was not in a horrible way. It doesn't say my parents are anti anything, there're a bit not fussed really, they're like well as long as it doesn't happen under our roof.

Yeah, I don't know, I started going to pride when I was 16, mainly because it was on Clapham Common and my mum was like, 'What are you going to do that for?' and I was like, 'It's just down the road' and I was going with my friends and it was very good fun, that was probably the bestest fun in the world. I met Jimmy Somerville, it was marvellous. But I think that was probably when pride was at its peak or at least just beginning. It had so much sponsorship and that was obviously in my teen years, I don't know what it was like before.

PC: This is sort of mid 90's now, isn't it?

EG: Yes, this would have been '96, so it would have been going maybe for about three years, but I mean it was huge. It was donation only, I think give two pounds, I think they were lucky to get that, free bottles of oasis and that drink had just come out, so I mean the amount of freebies was ridiculous. So obviously they knew that there was a pink pound, I think this is around about the same time as the discussion on the pink pound and the pink paper had maybe just started up.

This is just stuff that I kind of vaguely remember. The pink paper at 16 wasn't something I would have picked up and read. It always looked very dull, but we did used to have it in the library and years later at university I used to then get it for research stuff cause it's free, it helps. It was fairly male, again it was very male orientated and I think the first '96 pride they had femme to femme, which were a three piece lesbian band, but I don't know, I don't think anyone was convinced that they were actually lesbians.

So, yeah, I don't know, so yeah I think definitely the experience of being a woman is very different because it's just different, isn't it? It's not out there, you don't see it as much, or the lesbians you do see are straightified for the male viewer, the straight male viewer as well and my other experience, the butch dike, you're a feminists, you're not actually a lesbian, you're a feminist. Again, Germaine Greer has been pulled out of the hat so many times, 'No you don't have to be a bull dike to be a feminist, look at Germaine Greer,' lots of 'What, who?' But pull out a picture I used to carry in my wallet, you know that kind of thing <laughs> bloody feminists! <Laughs>

'Feminists are lesbians, people have [5:10 IA] <Laughs> So yeah. I suppose the popularisation and the cashing in on the male gay community was happening, probably been happening for quite a while, but my experience on a big scale would have been around about then. I didn't know if Galop was there, but I reckon maybe Galop or what predates Galop, LAGER may well have been there. There were definitely kind of community stores there, but I

was not in the frame of mind to be looking into those kinds of things yet, it was all about the fun, but they would have people that would have gone that would have been into it. I don't remember there being any violence at all. I don't remember any, doesn't say that there wasn't.

PC: This was the '90's, isn't it, which in comparison to the '80's must have just been such a contrast.

EG: Yeah, a lot freer, but no one's ever bothered. I mean I wasn't brought up to be bothered about it, so I was never bothered, but then I didn't really identify, I was just me. So I was like this is where the fun is, this is where my friends are, this is where I'm going, so yeah. It was very out there, but now it's just like I still think it applies a gay man on TV and the actual lesbian, I think there's only that Rhona, Rhona Philips or something, the comedian, and Pat Butcher, she just proves a point to some people, doesn't it? Kept very much more under wraps I think the women.

PC: Interesting the letter, the L is at the beginning of the little four-letter acronym, when you think maybe actually...

EG: Oh! I've obviously thought that's probably just because...

PC: It sounds better, doesn't it, I mean it trips of the tongue better.

EG: GLBT.

PC: GLBT maybe is more in terms of just the way that there is so much concentration on in terms of our culture...

EG: On the gay man.

PC: Yeah.

EG: Oh! No I think it was probably very deliberately done that way. 'Oh! Let's put the lesbians first because let's face it they don't get that much.'

PC: Ladies first still applies.

EG: Oh! Gosh! Yeah. Oh! No now I'm angry again. <Laughs>

PC: It's quite interesting that the T is at the end, you know what I mean.

EG: Ah! But I think the LGB has been longstanding and still applies that the T is kind of whacked on the end for some charities, others not and some community projects. It's not always visible or it's not always inclusive of that, but then that's a very small proportion of the community as well, so you can't... And there's very specific, there's always very different specific issues involved around what person of the trans gender, trans sexual community are going through that will differ from someone that doesn't have any physical...

Everyone's got physical body image problems, I don't mean that, but people don't want to change or identify with a different gender, so if someone wants to dress differently, which I think it probably does apply, but as not as strongly as gender change. So I think they do need their own groups, but they're still obviously somewhere like Galop that can incorporate it because it is a hate

crime at the end of the day, so it still applies, but yeah, there's others that you wouldn't, I don't think you'd be able to apply without, you'd need a separate charity for some.

I'm trying to think, I mean Stonewall would be LGBT because that would apply. It's maybe the more charity sector, when it comes to maybe just the community groups discussing how your experiences have been going and dealing with them would be different for the trans gender community. I don't think they would necessarily have to open up their group to someone because the issues would be far too different.

PC: Yeah.

EG: Difficult and I think some LGBT people get a bit annoyed with the T part because they think it shouldn't be lumbered, well, lumbered being maybe a word that other people have used, lumbered in with LGBT just because it's gender issues and different.

PC: What about the word queer?

EG: Oh! All the different words that have been reclaimed as well since...

PC: What do you think about that word?

EG: It was a word that my mum used when I was young, but again not in a bad way, so I identify OK with queer, when people use it, 'Oh! A bit queer,' but my mum used it in the original way as well, like with gay meaning happy, I think when I was very young she may well have used gay.

PC: So queer as in strange and gay as in happy.

EG: Yeah. The word basis, I mean I never liked, I was taught to not like poof, but now my mate's happy to be called poof. He quite likes it from his friends, but he gets very offended if someone he doesn't know calls him a poof. He needs to know that it's his close friends and if it's maybe a friend of a friend or someone at a party that goes, 'Oh! You old poof' he might think it would be very, depending on how they said it and how often they said it. I think some people might be, 'Oh! He doesn't mind the word poof' and they use it to say it out a lot.

PC: So it's kind of about intimacy somehow that you can use that if you're intimate with someone.

EG: To a certain level with them.

PC: Then you're allowed to use that word.

EG: Yeah, I mean I wouldn't say to him all the time and in all situations, but if he was being particularly silly like childishly silly I would probably then go, 'Oh! You daft poof, what are you doing,' because it would be appropriate for that kind of silliness, but if he was telling me something serious about work I wouldn't call him, 'You divvy poof' or something, it would be, well, it wouldn't apply, would it, I wouldn't be referring to his homosexual status when he was talking about work, it just wouldn't fit in.

I'd be like, 'You're a bit of a worrier mate,' but not 'You're a bit of a worrying poof' because it doesn't need to said, does it, but yeah, all my friends have always been OK with the term dike and I was at uni once and we were discussing exactly the word dike and queer, poof and re-appropriation of it and I was like Oh! You know dike and they were like, do you think that maybe, it really opened my eyes hence I still remember it was early stages and I was like, 'No, I don't see anything wrong with the word dike, no one I know has a problem with it and then after the class this older woman she was early '30's at the time, she was like, 'Hi! My name is Michelle. I'm a lesbian who doesn't like the use of the word dike' and I went, 'Oh! My Gosh really why not.' I was like 'Oh! My name is Emma and why' I couldn't understand because obviously a dike is like what, not a barge but it's a barrier in water, a dike.

PC: It is, isn't it? Water goes...

EG: It's something to do with that, isn't it.

PC: There are sides to it.

EM: It's got a dike in the water or something, I don't know, why these words queer meaning peculiar and gay meaning... funny how they were then used, and dike, I don't even know where it comes from.

PC: One to look up isn't it, I mean the history of words, it's fascinating.

EG: Yeah, the re-appropriation of certain ones and just the discussion of it generally. I mean it must have been discussed for so long. I mean the n word for a person of colour as well now is quite well, is probably a little bit more in the full front than the word dike and queer and it's gone that way, isn't it? I don't know, it's a word, but I still wouldn't be comfortable. I'd be like, yeah, it's a word, dike fine, poof fine, but I wouldn't say the n word because it's not for me to say.

PC: Interesting. I mean that's really interesting that you started talking about the LGBT community as a whole, and the changes. I mean you focused quite a lot there about language, thinking the way that's a really good way of looking at it in a way that we've got, there are lots & lots of words to describe, lots & lots of different ways that people feel about themselves and their sexuality and all that sort of thing and actually that's probably a good thing maybe...

EG: Yeah.

PC: ... and obviously there are some tensions, some people don't like to be called poof by some people and some people don't mind and all that sort to thing, so in a way it sounds like it's... And in a kind of democratisation, that's what it feels like.

EG: Yeah, and I think there's a lot of truth in 'sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me,' although a lot of the time they can be very hurtful, but if a random person in the street was to go 'F*** This that and the other, what they felt was a bad word you'd be like 'You're alright mate' take that power away, and then be like, yeah OK, see you and if all they want to do is shout horrible words then it's better than breaking your bones. It's still bad, but again you're not going to change their mind, are you? You're not going to change a racists persons mind overnight, so let them be, hateful

people that they obviously are and then try and not let it affect you as much as you can really.

I mean I'm sure if you're faced with it, the older generation that maybe were faced with it on a daily basis it would conjure up all types of history for them, maybe not necessarily for the poofs of the younger generation that have reclaimed the word and they don't see it as hateful, therefore they don't take it as hateful, there's a lot of alleviation in those terms as well, it's personal preference.

PC: Obviously if sticks and stones do break your bones at least Galop is there.

EG: Galop are here, so you can report it to them definitely and maybe if you were treated badly by the police. I think that if you were to call up it would be something that was picked up on, especially if bones were broken and hospitalisation was needed then I think definitely if you are operating the phones you would look into it a bit further to see why you were coming to Galop after all that had happened because obviously it was a violent attack, the hospital should have called someone out. Look into it further, see if there's other things that people are not doing or falling down upon or anywhere else that improvements can be made and you can only ask people that are actually going through it at the time.

Sometimes it can be frustrating just being on the other end of a phone though. I'd quite like to be a police officer, be an LGBT officer and actually go out there, but then I'm sure that would be just as frustrating. You do what you can do.

PC: Emma, what are you passionate about, what's your passion?

EG: Feminism, Equality, yes. The plight of unequal parties, that goes across women, children, I suppose now, I've never really liked the idea of working with children, but they are unequal and they can be treated pretty badly as we've known from lots of media stuff that's been going on. LGB community definitely, black communities, Hispanic, just everyone really, but yeah, so that's what I think I'm going to, I'm looking for a new volunteer position to go a bit further, but I think maybe the women part of the unequal societies.

A lot of the ethnic groups as well have their own women involved. Like in the LGB community they'd have people working for them that are from the LGB community, again because it does make it equal and it will always be the middle class white straight man that will be at the top. If the money is there, so you have to be, there has to be positive discrimination and I mean I'm not in the best place, I'm white female, so I'm not in the best place to agree with it because it will go against me at times.

But I think my LGBT time at Galop has gone in my favour. I think it might have ticked a box or two at the charity I'm now at. Obviously I can't be a 100% sure, but when I was hired it was myself and another woman who was Muslim and wore a headscarf, there was only one other black person in the whole of the charity. It's based in Mortlake so I think there might have been a bit of positive discrimination there as well, but again you don't know, do you, so we'll see.

PC: Emma, we're very lucky to have you in the world sorting us out. Sorting our un-equalities.

EG: I'll get better.

PC: Thank you so much for talking to me today.

EG: No problem.

<End of recording>