

Galop and Stonewall Housing Oral History Project

Interviewee: 'Bill' (not his real name)

Interviewer: Keith Steward

Place of Interview:

Date: 26 August 2009

Files: 'B'1 – 19

Key

KS: = Interviewer, Keith Steward

'B': = Interviewee, 'Bill' (not his real name)

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

[5:22 IA] = inaudible section at this time

[Word 5:22] = best guess at word

KS: Alright, I'm just going to ask you a couple of questions. The date is the 26th of August 2009, and I'm Keith Steward, and can you tell us your name and where and when you were born?

'B': [inaudible]. Where I was born, Tralee, South West Ireland in 1968. So I'm 41.

KS: Thank you. And the name of the project is the Stonewall, the Galop project. So there just a couple of questions I want to ask you.

<End of Part 1>

KS: So can you tell us a little bit about your background, your childhood, where you grew up, those sort of things?

'B': I grew up in South West Ireland, on the coast. So it's a small town, rural setting. One of five children. My parents immigrated here and then moved back again for employment, so they moved back to South West Ireland to settle down and have children. And I grew up in that small town for 19 years, and then came here to London in 1988. So I've been here for 21 years. Does that cover it, or do you want more?

KS: Tell us a couple of things you might remember about home, and then what brought you to live here?

'B': It was good, it was a good childhood, it was very Irish <laughs>, very, I suppose, open and you're allowed to be a child, I think, which is quite different I think to a big city. Had some good friends, hung out with them through my teens. Educated by nuns and Christian Brothers, that was an experience! And realised, I suppose, in the context of what we're talking about, I was gay when I was quite young, about ten. So I waited eight and a half years <chuckles> to leave Tralee to come to London to make my own way in life I suppose really, and that was the main reason I left the small town because there was no other gay people in the town when I was young, as I perceived it.

<End of Part 2>

KS: Tell us about when you arrived in London, what was that like? When did you move and give us a sense of that.

'B': And is this anonymised? Is the information anonymised?

KS: It can be.

'B': Moved over in September 1988, didn't know anybody. So I arrived in the city by myself with a suitcase and I think I had 200 quid, and I didn't know what to expect. But I thought I'd take the chance, I've always taken risks I suppose, or chances in my life. And slept rough the first three nights, and then I think I got speaking to somebody along the way and I found this house share and I moved in there. And then I realised there was another friend in London who I could have a crash with. So I went there, but I was kicked out of there the following night because they were squatting, and then ended up sleeping rough again. And then went back to ... I found another house share and signed on, but I got a job straight away, I was quite lucky. And had a regular income after about a month I think so. And yeah, it was quite difficult, but I suppose looking back at it now, with rose tinted glasses on, it was quite good fun as well. But then I suppose the more difficult part then was coming to terms with being Catholic, gay, and marrying that together; I was brought up strict Catholic. And breaking into the gay scene, whatever you take by that kind of thing, and meeting other gay people. So that was quite a stressful situation for a little while, until that resolved itself, so.

<End of Part 3>

KS: Can you tell us a little bit about the sort of places that ... what was the gay scene like then, when you ...

'B': It took me a long time to ... 'cause I lived in Tottenham, just off Tottenham High Road for quite a while, and I lived in Tottenham for quite a few years after that, as it turns out, I quite liked the area, and it was really difficult, well extremely difficult for a small tiny town to a big huge city. And at the time I suppose, I thought London was never ending from one side to the other, and I was used to the country and that was missing. But at the same time I was quite relieved in some strange, bizarre way, to be in London. And there was obviously no internet, there was no press as such, 'cause there was no gay bars and stuff that I knew of within the area that I knew, kind of thing.

And I think one of the house mates was a closeted gay guy, he was also Irish, so I can understand the reason why he was closeted. And I think he was trying to be kind to me in passing, but I suppose, if I look back on it kindly, he said there was a pub in Camden. So I made my way to Camden, worked out the tube stations and found out subsequently it was the Black Cafe <laughs>. And I must have walked past the Black Cafe, god, it must have been 50 times, I must have been there for hours and hours and hours. Went in, had a pint, thought I was going to die, and I felt the whole thing was wrong. And I did that for quite a few trips, quite many trips to Camden <chuckles>. And eventually I did get chatting to somebody and that was my, I suppose, my gay life journey in London, as it was, kind of thing really. So a very, very different place, I think it's ...

And the West End was ... god, I can't remember, was it Compton's ... Compton's old style, and it was quite a bizarre place when you're 18, 19. And

what was the other pub? There was one other pub ... But a lot of it was done around ... I remember thinking back, there was North London Line, and how it was before I first came to visit the North London Line and that user group, and I was a nightmare, an absolute nightmare. I didn't know if I was coming or going. Even though I knew I was gay really young, I didn't fit in, 'cause I think London gay people had a certain privilege I suppose in some ways, there was access and I was very unsure of myself, so. And I think I was an absolute nightmare to be around, at the youth group. So basically I just said, I'll use my own language and go, 'fuck off!' And I left, and I couldn't cope with it at all, and I think just made my own way. It was a slow process, but it was, I suppose, part of the process, kind of thing.

KS: Were there any things or people that helped you with that process?

<End of Part 4>

'B': <Pause> There probably were along the way, but I suppose I didn't have the luxury which, as you say, is a whole different story for a whole different oral history, of that when I was a kid. So I've always, in my own life, gone my own way and made my own decisions and found my own way, because that's how I was brought up, that it wasn't a very supportive <laughs> environment to be in as a child. So that was another factor for me leaving. So when I came here, I've been like that from, I suppose, it's kind of a survival technique to this day, I'm still the way, come across maybe slightly harsh. So there have been, I mean the person that I met in the house and directed me to the Black Cafe and North London Line tried their best, and I look back at that, I was ungrateful, but confused. And I think just gay people that you meet along the way, in the pub when you first come out, and go out to bars and stuff, and I think I've always had my head fairly screwed on, but still looking back now, extremely naive. Yeah, I would say it'd be strangers rather than family. Yeah, maybe my sisters as well, from the family element of it, but that would be cough on my sisters. But I can't think of anyone specifically at the minute.

KS: Were there any ...

<End of Part 5>

... things going on in the general, thinking about politically or socially, around the LGBT community at the time?

'B': A lot of that would have passed me by, because it was a completely alien culture to me and I was more interested in survival kind of thing, than getting involved or being away of it at the time, any kind of political movement or what was current I suppose, then. And the reason I go into work I'm in now, or the work that I was in, was because of my experience of coming to this country, and how other migrants come into London. And there are different communities over the years, and Irish community were one of those communities that were immigrants, who immigrated here for work. So that's kind of generated my interested over the years to become, I suppose in a small way, an activist. But that's, in different ways, tailed off. But no, not at the time, I can't think of anything that springs to mind.

KS: And tell us a little bit about ...

<End of Part 6>

... some of the work that you were doing when you started and that progression into the work that you're doing now.

'B': The first place ... I've done quite a bit of volunteering work and I worked for the Mildmay Trust, I think was ... no I take that back. The first place I did voluntary work was the Terrence Higgins Trust. And the Terrence Higgins Trust was a very different organisation, it was quite a small focused organisation. And I did the health road shows! <Laughs> And it was taking safe sex information and condoms out to clubs and pubs and all that kind of stuff, and we did fresher's fairs and all that kind of stuff. And really, that was part of my access to gay life, I suppose, when I'm trying to make friends and part of something. And I worked with GMFA as well, did some work with them, but that didn't suit my personality, I didn't agree with their approach. So I did that for maybe about a year. And I suppose the one I've enjoyed the most was working at the Mildmay Trust. And HIV and aids at the time was quite ... quite sad. I mean said in terms of how people were left to their own devices I suppose by family and friends and partners and the rest. So I used to take the patients that were dying on the wards, out for trips around the shops in wheelchairs or whatever, and just bring a bit of fun into their lives, or just to the basics, stuff that they needed. And rewarding but sad, because they used to die <chuckles>. So you'd come back as a volunteer the following week, or you've got to know them over a period of months, and they would pass away and you'd ... you'd try and contain that and then give other people your time and all of that.

And the funding changed and all that, and the management changed at the Mildmay Trust, and I ended up in the Neuro Unit, under Neuro Unit at the top of the organisation, the top of the building. So I worked in there for a while and that was quite different, a different challenging experience. And the hardest one I found was I worked for Patrick House, I'm not sure if it's still there.

KS: What is Patrick House?

'B': Patrick House is a dementia unit for people at the end of their lives, more progressed and age related illnesses. So dementia was quite difficult because going from the Mildmay, we had a relationship, even though they passed away. You could communicate, but obviously you couldn't really communicate with the patients in ... or the people, patients is a terrible word, the people in Patrick House. So that was quite, actually that was the most stressful thing I've ever done, volunteer wise.

And then I decided to go back to university because I never really finished my education in Ireland. So I went part time, and it all ties together eventually. I went part time to university for five years and had three jobs, and I ended up in ... one of the jobs was Galop, which was the organisation I worked with. And that's the path really. And I moved from Galop to a very political organisation, which is here, and tried to lead that agenda through Ken's administration. So that's the path.

KS: Tell us how you got involved ...

<End of Part 7>

... with Galop then, how did that connection start?

'B': I think it was because all the voluntary work I'd done, and the experience I'd gained, and I remember the lesbian and gay community were policed in a very different way then, than they are now. And it was quite aggressive, it was quite heavy handed, that's always been, and this was my thoughts. They'd raid places and all that kind of stuff. You'd learn as you'd come to London, all the cruising sites and all of that, and how they were policed and how people were exposed in the press. And I suppose I saw the job advertised and thought I can really do something there with that work.

So I applied and got the job as a caseworker. It was finance, admin and casework, if I remember rightly. And yeah, really enjoyed, it was good. I mean I thought I had something to bring and I feel I did. I think I was there for four years, three years, four years. I think I made quite a good contribution to them.

KS: Tell us a bit about your role, that sort of things that did you and the sort of issues that were around.

'B': I think part of the reason for applying was I went back to college when I was in my 20s for, I think it was four years, four or five years. I trained to be a therapist over a long period of time. And I thought part of casework, part of those skills would feed into the casework, was part of it. So there was something called a helpline and it operated a few nights a week in the organisation which was a tiny office. And people who would call with a range of different policing problems, it could be housing harassment, violence, domestic violence was something that developed along the way and has become a hotter issue now, but it wasn't so hot back then. Harassment, police harassment, and you'd pick the case up, liaise with the different agencies, it could be the council or it could be the police, or the police that you trusted. And there was access to ... there was a management committee made up of various different voluntary sector people. But usually there's always one solicitor, or one person was attached to a solicitor's office, and they'd give you some kind of legal direction around it as well. So really it was advising people, signposting people, in lots of cases trying to resolve their issue.

But I think while I was there, the most common ones were housing harassment or violence. And it was a nice thing, 'cause I think in a lot of the cases around housing harassment we made a real difference, and I think that it did make councils think about their housing policies. And you had the councils in, discussing their policy. So I think it did make a change. And while I was there, I suppose a seminal moment, was the bombings in London in '99, and that went off. And John Grieve asked me to work with him to set up the Independent Advisory Group, 'cause the police didn't know how to cope with the aftermath, didn't know how to cope with the victims of the bombing and they didn't have any understanding of the relationship between different people in the gay community, and how it operated, and how it functioned, and where the support networks were, and how to comfort people. And that was quite sad. I remember going down on the day it happened and that will always stick in my mind as a memory of living here.

So I worked with John Grieve and the Metropolitan Police and set up the Independent Advisory Group.

KS: Can you just tell us who John Grieve is?

'B': Sorry, he was the Assistant Commissioner of the Met at the time.

KS: Okay, what do you remember about the day or the times around that bombing then?

'B': I remember that the bombings happened in Brixton and Brick Lane. I remember having the police in and saying <laughs> that, 'a bomb will be put within the gay community, somewhere in the most obvious places would be Compton Street or somewhere around Compton Street, having the biggest number of gay people at a particular time of the day.' And they said, 'no, no, no, it'll never happen, it's not a priority.' And the bomb went off, I think, within a week of that discussion. And they would not have it that the gay community were a target. And so I felt sad that ... suppose sad and angry, I suppose sad's a bit of an understatement, that they hadn't listened. And it was a different time; I think it was a very different time. It's not perfect now, but it's better than it was then.

And I suppose it was just ... helplessness really, because you can't really cross the police line, you'll get in the way of emergency services. You try to make it known that ... I mean there were a couple of lesbian and gay liaison officers at the time, they were part of the gay police association and they did their bit. They weren't an ideal organisation either, politically. Politically I think it was a gay men's club. I think in some ways it still is. And that was a shame. <Pause> And the reaction to it was slow. I don't know, I just felt helpless I suppose really and <pause> really angry that that could happen.

But it did change policing policy, but it's a shame it took something like that to change policing policy. But I don't think enough reference is made to it even today. I don't think it's accepted as a critical moment I suppose, in lesbian and gay life in London, besides the various murders that took place. But I think it was a very critical time. I don't think enough lessons have been learnt.

KS: Can you tell us then a little bit ...

<End of Part 8>

... [0:01], what was the relationship like the before that bombing, and how did it change after for you and the police?

'B': I think the relationship was ... they were quite flip when people rung up the police stations. There wasn't the community safety unit that included homophobic crime or homophobia as an issue. It was <chuckles> I suppose, racial crime for all it was worth at the time, in terms of response. There was Stephen Lawrence and there was the Soho bombing, to me they were both created a big shift, obviously Stephen Lawrence, to a greater degree than the Soho bombing. But I think you were just dismissed and you were just seen as, it's an issue between friends or they're literally faggots and it's just not an issue, it's not an issue, it's not a pressing priority for the police, there's only five of them in London, they can fight amongst themselves kind of thing.

But I think the response afterwards took ... I'd say it took a good twelve months for the basis to be put in place, some of the basis to be put in place, for it be seen as an issue, for them to see homophobic crime as an issue. Homophobic crime wasn't being recorded by the police, I wouldn't say at all, but certainly not in any kind of consistent way. There were no crime stats, and

if there were stats, they weren't stats that were released to Galop by the police. And it was never, in my opinion, a particularly cooperative relationship, even though you'd know the good officers and bad officers. It was very much, you'd have to pick and choose. Whereas now, the present day, there is lesbian and gay police officers, they say, 'in each London borough.' I've yet to be convinced. And you've places like Emperor State House where there's a central resource, and there's dedicated officers on lesbian and gay issues, or lesbian and gay officers working within that department. And that, in my day, that would be unheard of. So really it was just banging on doors until you got a response a lot of the time. The councils would say, 'not interested,' the police would say, 'not interested.' So it was quite difficult. But I think when you did make a break through, it was quite euphoric because it was quite an achievement. So quite different.

KS: And ...

<End of Part 9>

'B': ... any example of any of those breakthroughs for you that you can share with us?

KS: I think the one that sticks in my mind is this bloke comes through to the helpline and he's having this horrendous ... housing harassment in Hackney. And it was going on for years. And he came on and said, 'Don't get me wrong,' it was backwards and forwards,' and now I'm sick of this,' and he was really angry. And you'd have repeat callers and he was repeat caller. You'd log it all down, build up your case and tell him what to do. And I remember getting on to the ... we tried everything, it was the local MP, which you'll probably guess who that is. And she was initially not interested and I more or less presented him to her, and I said, 'well you get it face to face, this is what's going on,' kind of thing. And I think she was quite taken a back, and she did act and they resolved it.

And how it used to happen when I worked there is if it was homophobic harassment by a neighbour, they'd move the victim, and always leave the perpetrator in their homes. Which is obviously devastating, it's not a solution. And the evicted the perpetrator and I think he lost his tenancy as well. So that's the result. I remember the bloke, he was ringing up and saying, 'oh my god! That's fantastic.' I think it's that particular that will always stick in my mind.

KS: And ...

<End of Part 10>

... for you, what were some of the strengths of Galop at that point, at that time, what was Galop providing for the community and able to do?

'B': I think there was a very ... I mean obviously it was a tiny organisation, I mean it probably still is quite a small organisation. But because you were working in lots of ways, outside the law, or outside the laws that existed then, there was a good bond between people and I think you were definitely there for a common purpose and I think the management committee were quite committed. I think it's a shame, it was really, really difficult to get funding, because of the nature of the organisation. I remember we actually did finally

achieve charitable status, it was an amazing sensation because the Charity Commission didn't want to know. So we put this huge case together, and eventually they caved in and say, 'yeah, you can have charitable status,' blah-blah-blah.

It could've done so much more as an organisation. It always a case of there's no funding. It's the same for a lot of charitable organisations. But I think there were a lot of subjects that are easier to sell than homophobic violence. And it was homophobic violence and the police monitoring project, which never went down particularly well 'cause it seemed a bit like going against the establishment.

I think it was a vital service, but I think you had to be absolutely desperate to contact Galop to be honest, because most people that came through were desperate, desperate for help. And you could only operate because of the funds and all that stuff, which only operated for, I think it was two hours, three nights a week, or something like that, two or three hours, three or four times a week. So it wasn't much. It was hard. I do think staff got burned out a lot, do you know what I mean, they got disillusioned by it and stuff because there was no change and the policing policy wasn't going very far. But I think when I worked there, I think people had a bit more, I don't know, political nous around the slow moving machine that is the Metropolitan service, do you know what I mean? Whereas I think other people that came and went found it really difficult to come up against a brick wall continuously and they found it hard to work with that, but yeah.

KS: And when ...

<End of Part 11>

... when did you start and when did you finish being part of Galop?

'B': <Laughs> I can't remember. Well stayed here eight years, it would've been the very beginning of 2001 I think it was. It could have been '98, to 2001, so four years.

KS: Did you see many, or can you see many changes in terms of the life of the lesbian and gay community over that period time?

'B': Generally yeah. I think ... I don't know. People say, 'it's easier to be gay now.' I don't necessarily agree with that. I think it's more out there, it's more visible, which I think's absolutely fantastic. And I think there are pros to that. I think when I was young and when I first came to London, you'd quite readily get verbally abused and there was nobody to take that kind of thing, you just put up with that and you didn't challenge it, because if you were beaten up, nobody's going to challenge the people that beat you up, kind of thing. You stand your ground when you think the odds are stacked somewhere around runable distance. I think the thing that scares me most now is HIV, I think that's the thing that scares me most now, and about being young. Because when I came to London, I suppose it was a different era. It was all Government campaigned, you will die of aids and the iceberg and all of that business. So you were aware and you were scared and you were conscious about what you were doing, and... I think now, I mean I see stuff around barebacking videos and barebacking sex and this huge percentage of young people who don't really understand the ins and outs of HIV, and don't use

condoms. And that scares me, I think that's a really scare place to be. And I'm never sure whether if I'd rather be in London when I was 18 now, or London when I was 18 then, and I think I'd rather be in London when I was 18 then.

I think it's too ... I mean it's always been, I don't know ... I just think it's become sexually focused, I think the whole thing. Maybe I'm 40, well I'm sounding like a fuddy duddy <chuckles>. But I think that's how it's gone and I think there's a lot for a young lesbian or gay man to cope with. And I think every generation forgets their culture and their roots, which is a shame. But I think there's elements of that that have gone as well, but I hope it doesn't take another bombing to bring it back.

<End of Part 12>

KS: Thinking about your work with Galop, there's a few different bits. What about your work and time with Galop, what would you say were some of the impacts on you personally?

'B': Gave me a deeper political understanding and the political energy to do something, because ... and it was a different focus. I mean a lot of the work I did was around HIV and health, and I think Galop was policing and crime. And it just reaffirmed that I'd chosen the right job. I mean it was, I suppose, being an outsider at the time, or being an outsider as a gay man, and an outsider as an Irish man, I think they're quite separate, and for me they're very distinct and separate things. And I think I just brought that understanding to lots of different people, that had that sense of isolation in one sense or another, and tried to give them, I suppose, a bit of inspiration.

I enjoyed it. I mean there are things I found difficult. I felt it was in some ways, quite contained by the will or the whim of the management committee, and that changed quite regularly as well, and there'd be conflicting views. And there was a lot of demands put on, I suppose, quite lowly paid in some respects <chuckles> officers that give a lot of good will to achieve a lot well beyond their working hours. But it definitely gave me a focus, and I definitely wanted to, I suppose, become more political from working there. And I took that from there to here, and put my neck on the line. Not in a big way like those other activists in London. I may admire what they do, but I don't think they've necessarily represented me and I don't necessarily think they represent a lot of people. But I suppose if they didn't do it, who would, kind of thing. And we have to admire that.

I think it was very grass rootsy and I liked that, I liked that a lot and I've carried that sense of grass roots from Galop to here. And I've tried to engage at that level here when there has been engagement or consultation, that there is still that underlying level of grass roots commitment or knowing where you're from. There are other large organisations in London that I think have become completely swept away with the political lobby, and I think that's a shame. I think what they do is great, in terms of what they achieve. But I think it's such a shame.

When I was at Galop, there was lots and lots of tiny little grass roots agencies going on. You could ring each other up or, 'I need this,' or, 'I need that advice,' or, 'come give us a hand doing the leafleting,' or, 'come to my event, get your mates,' kind of thing. And I think a lot of that is gone now, I think

that's a real shame. Maybe it's me 'cause I'm older, maybe it's there in a different way, and my life's moved on, and I'm not sure.

KS: Can you tell us a bit ... 'cause I don't think I asked you before, we're hearing where you are now, working now?

'B': Sorry, the Greater London Authority. I've worked here for seven and a half years so.

KS: And what about ...

<End of Part 13>

... on that same sort of tack around Galop, what do you think the impact was on the LGBT community of Galop's work?

'B': It was definitely seen as like, I think, one of the key agencies. But it had no advertising budget. So it couldn't advertise itself, it couldn't really advertise its services, and you grabbed whatever you could in terms of freebies, or you do interviews and stuff like that. Again, much more political focus than in some ways it may have now.

I think it was definitely a resource, but I don't know, I think people were grateful ... it sounds really patronising, but grateful there was somebody there, do you know what I mean, at the end of the line. I mean there's organisations, like Switchboard, do a great job as well, and that was in quite a different place when I was working at Galop as well.

Again, I just think that ... I'm assuming, that it still doesn't get government funding, and as an agency it should get government funding. There's still quite a lot of homophobic violence out there, even though the police are recording it. Every time it increases they say, 'it's because more people are willing to report.' Now I've heard that line since I was in Galop all those years ago, so I just think that's rubbish. I think there should be more central funding so they can do much, I suppose, more publicised work.

KS: A couple of things ...

<End of Part 14>

... that you mentioned before, I wouldn't mind asking you a couple more, a bit more, see what you think. You mentioned about the bombs being a seminal moment in terms of changes, any other thoughts around that that you would like to add?

'B': <Pause> I don't know what to add really, it's just that <pause> there's now that whole thing about community, isn't there? <Pause> I think, I suppose in my day on the scene, before the internet become popular, you went out, you knew everyone, you knew most people, they'd nod to you or say hi to you or you'd know from work or you knew from ... or you'd know them from being around, kind of thing. And I'm Irish and I'll chat to anyone really and that's always been my way. I'll have a chat with whoever you are. And I think ... I just think because it wasn't taken seriously. I think in lots of ways that hasn't changed I suppose. I'd like to believe there'd be a bit more interest now. But I think if there were bomb threats again, I think the lesbian and gay community

would be the last community, or one of the last communities where any direct action would be take, or less direct action would be taken, that might be a bit unfair.

I think, I don't know, in some ways, it banded the community together, but in others ways, with that and the developing internet, it destroyed what was there; the community feeling you had I suppose. <Pause> I don't know, just angry really, I was just extremely angry that it happened really, and sad.

KS: Thanks.

<End of Part 15>

KS: And one other thing you mentioned about growing up Catholic? What were the impacts would you say, or has there been an impact on the LGBT community in your experience in London, and the Catholic Church, that relationship?

'B': It hasn't changed; it hasn't changed in my opinion. As I say, I was strict Catholic, which is not the done thing. I think statements by, what is it, the Archbishop of Northern Ireland or wherever he bloody was recently, just saying, 'raising children outside of a relationship with a man and woman is the wrong thing to do, and the rubbish the Pope spouts.' And I think my parents will feel the same way, I mean that they're devoted Catholics, they follow the word of God I suppose, or whoever his representative is on earth at the time. I don't think the church has thawed at all towards lesbian and gay people really. I suppose it's difficult because it's a statement by the church. I mean here, and it's the same in Ireland, it's not the politicians that really have the control I don't think. If they were to concede ... I mean the Anglican Church is in trouble in terms of a schism around homosexuality and the Anglican Church and ordinations. I think ... I don't know, I don't really have a huge view and I just think it's a shame that they're so narrow minded that ... but it's a book of God, do you know what I mean, that's what they're basing the whole argument on. If they change their argument at this point, they'll lose their followers, they'll lose their church and that'll be the end of the faith really. So it's just going to go on for years and years and years. I don't think marriage is ever going to happen in church so <chuckles>.

KS: And just ...

<End of Part 16>

... a couple of questions then just to bring us together. You mentioned a little bit about how you see the community now. But how do you see, or do you know anything about Galop now and what they're doing?

'B': I don't really know a great deal about what they're doing now, because my job here is I have to focus on a lot of different focus areas on a fairly regular basis, and I don't get time to touch base with ... I probably knew more when I worked in the Public Affairs Department, because I started working there and moved out of there about three and a half years ago to work in performance management which is around equalities and community cohesion. But I don't have a sense of that, I probably have more of a sense that the main campaigns at Stonewall or focusing on ... just to keep touch of that for myself. And I have a fairly good understanding of what's happening nationally, and in

Europe. But not on a really individual agency basis in London. But from working there, I've a good sense of probably what they're pursuing in terms of what they're doing then. I wouldn't imagine the focus has changed that much.

KS: And to finish us off ...

<End of Part 17>

... then, just to come back to that question around the police and the LGBT community now, what do you see?

'B': I mean there's been absolutely huge improvements. I mean you've got police officers with lesbian and gay pin on badges and all of that, and it's all great, in the centre of London. It's all fluffy and commercial and there's probably all various different political reasons for that. I think if you live in the outer London boroughs, I think your experience would probably be quite different. I'm absolutely sure it'd be quite different. My understanding is, while there may be lesbian and gay police officers or liaison officers in every borough, I understand that you're nominated for that role, you don't necessary have to be lesbian and gay yourself, but I understand that you're given the role as part of your advancement through the force, and quite a number of officers don't want that. But it's just seen as community relations, and that doesn't bold well really for interacting with people that have experienced domestic violence or whatever it is, trouble with the neighbours.

I don't know, I've mixed reactions. I still think when David Morley was murdered that ... Jody Dobrowski's killers, they were just treated in such different ways. I mean one got sentenced to 28 years, and the others, it wasn't a homophobic murder, and to my eyes, it will always be a homophobic murder. And I think there's a lot to learn. I don't know, is it just the police or was it the judicial systems as well? I mean there might be a recommendation going for the police to pursue one line of action. I think the judicial system's probably much further behind that the police are. I mean the police have done great work, I mean great PR work, around promoting themselves and I suppose at the end of the day they still have a job to do, to catch criminals. And it's much better, a million times better, much better than some other European countries. I mean in Ireland it would be nothing like it is in London, and I'm sure it's the same further up this country. I think the judicial system would find it even difficult to recognise a black man or a woman than identify a lesbian or gay man. So I think they're still years and years behind. Stop and search is a prime example of that, in terms of how people are still policed, but <sigh>.

KS: I was going to say ...

<End of Part 18>

... for the tape as well, David Morley, Jody Dobrowski?

'B': Dobrowski.

KS: And cover a little quick picture of those two cases?

'B': Jody ... I mean oh god, my memory's sketchy now, but Jody Dobrowski was walking through Clapham Common and he was murdered by, I think, it was

two men. And the lasting memory was oh, it was such a sad case, that there was a footprint on the side of his head from when they stamped on his head on the ground. And I can't remember it was The Sun or The Daily Mail pick up, or maybe both, saying that he was in a cruising ground, which I found incredibly insulting, because he's actually walking home from work. They got 28 years, I think, from memory, the sentence was.

And then David Morley was murdered on Hungerford Bridge. I knew him vaguely from the Admiral Duncan, that's where I tend to go for a drink. It's a bit more down to earth <chuckles>. And he was murdered by, I don't know, a group of teenagers in their 20s and stuff, and the judge classified that it wasn't a homophobic murdered. And even though they were sentenced, I was just appalled. I remember I spoke at his memorial service in St Anne's Gardens in Soho. It was just awful, an awful, awful thing. And I still think they find it difficult to classify homophobia. They've got better at race, but how much better?

KS: And just to finish, our last thing, anything you want to say to finish off?

'B': No, I just hope it wasn't too depressing <laughs>. No not really. I think I mean I've enjoyed living here and I think I love London, and I think it's such a great city to live and work in, or to be lesbian and gay in, and I think it's fabulous if you're like that. And I'm looking forward just to seeing how things change. I mean I'm now 40, I'm heading towards the end of my life and I just wondering ... I was curious to see how things will develop when I'm in my 60s and 70s. I mean I suppose, you think back in the '80s and how much things have changed in that, I suppose, that 20, 25 year period. It's amazing. I mean I just hope that social integration of gay people, I don't know if it'll happen in 20 years, but I think it'll definitely be better in 20 years. So that'd be my wish for the future really.

KS: Alright, that's brilliant. Thank you very much Rob.

'B': A pleasure.

<End of Part 19>

<End of recording>