

Interview – Corey Jo Lloyd

Interviewee: Corey Jo Lloyd

Interviewer: Cecelia Parks

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Location: Corey Jo's home in Charlottesville, VA

Length: 1:10:48

START OF RECORDING

Cecelia Parks (CP): Okay, so this is Cecelia Parks. I'm here with Corey Jo Lloyd. It is Thursday, October 18, 2022, and we're going to get started. Oh, I meant to do this before we turned the microphone on; this is not anything serious. What words do you use to refer to yourself?

Corey Jo Lloyd (CL): Oh, that's a good question!

CP: Yeah, and then what words do you use to refer - like do you say like, "The gay community", "The queer community, "The LGBTQ community," just sort of curious what words you use.

CL: I use all of those words depending on context.

CP: Okay.

CL: I mostly refer to myself as a lesbian. I also sometimes refer to myself as queer, depending on who I'm talking to, but also who I want to align myself with.

CP: Yeah.

CL: I sometimes feel like being the age that I am and being white and femme, that saying, "I'm part of the queer community" can maybe extend a little of that safety to other

people. But then also sometimes I'm like--I want to be in a larger umbrella than just "lesbian." I also will depending--I also feel like the word "queer" can be a little loaded for some people so sometimes I definitely use LGBT blah blah blah all of those things. I also sometimes use "gay." So I use all of them. That's a long way of saying, "I use all of them." That's the long way of being like, "I use all of them depending on who I'm talking to and what I want to convey."

CP: That makes sense. Yeah, some people--the "queer" word--"queer" is like really isn't great for them.

CL: Yeah.

CP: Okay, cool. So tell me about where you grew up.

CL: I grew up here, in Charlottesville. My dad's a UVA professor; my mom was also involved in education. They're nice Charlottesville middle class liberal white people. So I had this sort of bubble of safety around me. I grew up knowing gay people; my parents who had friends that were out to us at least, so this would have been the '80s. I don't know that they were--how publicly they were out but I knew that they were gay. I never got a specific like "don't talk about this" lecture. So I grew up knowing that gay people existed.

And in fact my dad's advisor--this is not about Charlottesville, but it's sort of important to how I feel like I--my whole coming out process--my dad's advisor when he was getting his PhD was a professor at the university he went to in Oregon and she had gotten kicked out of Reed in the 1960s for being gay and moved to San Francisco. So she's this you know, out lesbian that I knew literally since I was born, and there's a big part of me that feels like I owe this debt to her. That she, on this small scale with my

family but also on this larger scale, made my life just a little bit easier. Her name was Barb. She just died a couple months ago. But yeah, can you imagine getting kicked out of Reed for being gay? Isn't that like the weirdest? Like that's how much things have changed in a pretty short period of time.

CP: Yeah, absolutely. So when did you move to Charlottesville? Like when did your family move to Charlottesville?

CL: We moved to Charlottesville in 1978 when I was almost four. So I've effectively grown up here even though I wasn't actually born here. And I went to public elementary schools; I went to Tandem before it was a Friends school, so back in the late '80s and early '90s. I came out in high school when I was in eleventh grade.

[CL's dog is loudly chewing a bone in the background. CP turns the recorder off to deal with the dog, then turns the recorder back on.]

CP: Okay, so you were saying that you came out in eleventh grade in high school.

CL: I came out in high school, yeah. And at that--in my high school at that point, Tandem was really teeny then. There were eighteen of us in my graduating class. And when I was in eleventh grade, I was one of two people at school who self-identified as gay. It was me and this other girl Alex, who was a year older than I was and she transferred here from a school in Richmond. And it was reasonably like you know, I'm still friends with a bunch of my friends in high school and I remember this like the big like "Oh," like my high school girlfriend and I being like, "Well, we should tell people," and feeling like it was a big deal and everybody was pretty chill. There were some people who weren't specifically my friends who I felt like they treated me sort of weirdly but who knows if that's my--like we weren't particularly friends anyway so who knows what

their...but I never had to deal with any like misery around that. I don't have horror stories around coming out, which I'm really grateful for. My brushes with homophobia on a personal level have been really minimal. So that was high school. I did not go to college. I stayed here and started working at Live Arts and also working at the Montessori school and have been here ever since.

CP: So at that point in time, you're in high school, you come out, you have a girlfriend, were you--did you like know other queer folks in Charlottesville and if so how did you connect with them?

CL: I didn't specifically. There were--I had like you know my high school friends--entertainingly out of my class of eighteen, three of us now identify as gay, which I just find sort of hilarious, and who--the people I've lost touch with, who knows what they're doing. I mostly just hung out with my friends. And I was you know, doing work at Live Arts, so I was part of like that early-to-mid '90s art scene downtown and there were a lot of gay people involved in that. They were all reasonably older than I was, because I was still pretty young. But I don't feel like I had a specific--at that early on, I don't feel like I had a specific like, "oh here's my queer community."

I did--there was a phase in there...I was very much the baby of this group where there was a group of women who like I was the youngest, Fran was the oldest, she's my mama's age, and sort of the midrange age of these people, they had all gone to UVA together and were either in--had just finished undergrad or were finishing up grad school or almost finishing up grad school. And we used to all hang out. But they were enough older than me that they would like--they would go to the club more than I would. I didn't like I didn't go to the gay club very often, mostly because I was also teaching and had to

be up at the crack of dawn. But we would go--you know, like we would go to Eastern Standard, which then became Escape, and then I would go home and go to bed [laughs]. But there was definitely this sort of like feeling of like, "Here's this pack of us gay girls" and we would vacation together and that sort of thing. Actually, one of them was the one I was thinking I should hook you up with.

So I feel like most of my community of people at that point, for most of my twenties, was really through theatre. And there were a lot of gay people there, just in general. You were talking about sort of like pockets of communities in Charlottesville, there were a lot of pockets that bumped against each other in Live Arts. And we--actually I told this story at a workshop I did in Nashville for a Montessori conference this spring--the person who is the artistic director at Live Arts who's a good friend of mine approached me in the mid-'90s? I don't remember the exact year because the Cville--which was the only weekly paper at that point - was going to do an issue on being gay in Charlottesville. Which they never ended up doing. And they wanted to interview people and so John asked did I want to be interviewed for that. I think I must have been like 21 or 22?

And I was like, "Yeah I totally do," and then I was like, "Well I guess I have to come out at work if I'm going to do that, if I'm going to be splashed all over the paper". I mean it was the '90s and we were--still are a small southern town and I work in early childhood education and I could very easily have lost my job. So I figured I should come out at work before it was all over the newspaper, which it then ended up not happening, but that was my motivation for coming out to my--like in a large way at work.

I had come out to one or two people at my preschool but prior to that, I hadn't

been sort of officially out at work. And that has been so easy and so like that we as a school are really supportive of each other. And that's--I'm now an administrator at school and it's been--like my background is being super supported by the people who run the school and I want to be able to extend that. I actually interviewed someone who disclosed to me that she's trans and was like, "Before we go any further I need to tell you this." I was like, "Okay. Like let me tell you the story of how I came out at this job." Like this is where--you should be able to work wherever you want to work and we want to make this a safe place for people to work. So like I mean--I haven't ever had a specific queer community at school. I do keep trying to hire queer people at school [laughs]. And have had some success with that, which is great. I feel like I've utterly lost my train of thought there with like where I was...I don't know that I had an actual through line to that [laughs].

CP: Well, so I'm really curious actually about you mention this sort of early-to-mid '90s art scene in Charlottesville and how there were a lot of queer people involved in that. So could you talk a little bit more about that? What did the art scene look like? What kinds of things were happening at that point in time?

CL: Oh, okay. I mean it was theatre, specifically, that was what I was involved in. And then there was music and visual arts peripherally. It was when there were a lot of like small galleries popping up downtown that were not quite as rich as what's happening downtown now. And there was a lot of empty storefronts and there was music happening sort of all over the place, and it wasn't that it was specifically a queer scene. But there were queer people involved. And there was the gay scene at Eastern Standard that then turned into Escafe, and when Doug and Sean bought that and turned it into--when they

bought Eastern Standard and turned it into Escafe, it was much more specifically like, "Okay, now this is like the sort of--it's not officially a gay bar but kind of." And then the club was across the street, which is this sort of hilarious aside that you'd be at Eastern Standard or at Escafe and be like, "Are you going across the street?" Meaning when it closed, are you going to 216, which is what that bar was for most of my like early adulthood.

And at school we would also say "going across the street" because we had two different buildings across the parking lot, so you would be like, "Where are so-and-so's shoes?" "Oh they're across the street." So it was two parts of my life that had this particular phrase that meant something very specific to a very specific community. So that was all happening but like I was also--I mean I was a super old lady at 25 and so I was often like, "I'm going to go have some drinks after a show, and then I'm going home" so I wasn't out late at night all the time.

CP: Okay. All right. Yeah.

CL: So...yeah, the arts scene downtown. It's funny, I don't think of it like...I think of it as this sort of like youthful golden period of my life and of this particular part of Charlottesville, which maybe everybody thinks about their early twenties if it's not terrible? I don't know. But it was--my portion of it wasn't specifically queer. I did know gay people through there; it's the theatre, there's a lot of gay people. And there was--you know there was definitely that like those--having Escafe and the club like anchor that end of the downtown mall in the evenings when it wasn't nearly as busy as it is now. Like there would be nobody out. There would be people at Escafe, there would be people at Miller's, there would be people at the C&O and that was about it. Like it just wasn't busy.

Which was really nice [laughs]. Probably not great for the people who owned businesses down there, but it was nice...a nice place to hang out.

But it was like I--at that point most of my social life was through the theatre. And sometimes you'd be out and see people and there was a lot of sort of mixing and matching across like back and forth across the street. And I think that was around...somebody else would know this better than I do, but that was around the time that what was when I was young--really young--the Silver Fox and then that became Triangles and then turned into Club 216, that's when it became private, was somewhere there in the '90s.

CP: I can get the dates.

CL: Yeah. I would actually love to know the dates.

CP: I'll look it up.

CL: Like sometime in my twenties that happened! [laughs] And it became even less like there--there was a way in which that made it even less accessible to me because it was so much an after-hours club and I was just always had to be up and patient at 6:00 in the morning [laughs].

CP: So tell me about Escafe. What was Escafe like?

CL: I mean it was a bar, and you usually knew a bunch of the people in there and it was like...it was like you knew the--my friend Doug was the bartender and like there were...it was like you always saw somebody you knew. But that was the case for most of the bars in Charlottesville at that point because it was so small. And maybe it is now for people who go places again, which I don't really do very much. There was...you know there were always things happening, we would go there after shows and like, depending on how many of us there were we would sit at the big table in the back that doesn't

exist...it's so hard to visualize it now since it's the Whiskey Jar and it looks so different. When the Whiskey Jar was being built I made some crack to my friend who was who owns it and was like, "Oh yeah, you have to immortalize these bathrooms because everyone in Charlottesville has made out in these bathrooms." Which is kind of how it is! I'm sure it's a little like that now, though making out is probably different.

So that's my sort of memory of that early '90s--I moved here, to Starr Hill, in 2002. I was just older and not out as much. And there's a different era of people I was hanging out with at that point. Once I met--what is the sort of time frame on that? There was a group of people that I was friends with who were more sort of amorphously queer as opposed to just lesbians or just like you know gay cis men. And they were predominantly UVA students who were in grad school. How did I get to be friends with them? Through--a little bit through my then-girlfriend, who didn't live in Charlottesville but her--this is such a like lesbian throughline to this. She and I dated but she dated somebody when they were in--one summer. And that person had just graduated from college and was figuring out what she was going to do and needed a place to live. And I rent rooms in my house. And Zora was like, "Oh, she should come rent a room from you!" And I was like, "Cool, great." And we got along famously and had a really nice time living together.

And around that same time, I had also met my friend and my really dear friend Jeanette who I'm going to be staying with next month up in New York through Friendster. [laughs] And she lived in Charlottesville and was here for grad school. And she was at UVA doing a PhD in philosophy and had friends through I guess like some queer student groups or something? I'll have to ask her. And so I became friends with

them and Leigh, my roommate, started dating one of them, and there was just this sort of small-ish group of us who would do things together. And we would often be sitting on my porch and they're all super dear. I'm sort of vaguely in touch with most of them at this point.

But I remember--so Jeanette moved back--Jeanette was from New York, moved back to New York, and I remember her saying to me at some point, she was like, "That was the most--that like group of us hanging out on your porch and occasionally going out and doing things was one of the best queer communities I've ever had." Which was such a nice thing to hear, that sort of like--to me that idea of you have to have a safe place. And I know that whole "safe space" thing is so overused at this point, but you have to have a place where you feel like you can be out. And to be able to know that pockets of that exist. Like if I'm doing that, if me and my friends in our mid-thirties have that, that must exist other places for other people. And how do you talk about it so that people know that that exist or think they can make it themselves so that we can sort of continue this like--my dad's advisor being out created some safety for me, so how can I do that for other people? I hope. Which is not specifically about like being gay in Charlottesville, but it's my fantasy world of "couldn't it all be better?"

CP: Yeah. So you talk about sort of how this friend group came together almost--or a little bit organically.

CL: Mm-hmm.

CP: It sounds like it just kind of happened. I'm curious how you met this group of older lesbians that you were talking about that you kind of ran around with in your twenties.

CL: Oh yeah. We could call them the "elder gays."

CP: [Laughs]

CL: Some of them would like that and some of them would probably hate that.

Through Live Arts. One of them was one of the founding members of Live Arts and her then-girlfriend, she was running a--this is all pre-social media. I remember Fran was vaguely irritated by this. So her then-girlfriend Kathy was running a women's group. Like sort of--I mean, essentially trying to create some sort of like active you know like I'm going to intentionally create a community. And she would do--oh my God, I wish I could remember what all the things were, it was so long ago, she would do like these like weekly dinners? Something? At their house in Belmont. And she advertised it on WTJU and I remember Fran being like "my phone number"--because it was a house phone, like nobody had cell phones, it was just like, here's--it was a 979 number--"my phone number's on the radio! Why is she doing that?"

So there was--you know, but so I occasionally went to those things, but this was more of a sort of like--like this was more like, "Oh these people were already friends, one of them was trying to do this other thing." I knew one of them from Live Arts, and then sort of became part of all that. I haven't done a lot of like, "Oh there's an established group and I'm going to go be part of it." For better or for worse. I mean like I've done stuff like that once or twice. Like I went--my friend Edna, who was part of that group of lesbians I was friends with in the early '90s had me go with her to--she was the one who was getting a PhD in history at that point--she had me go with her to some--

[InstaPot goes off in the background; recorder is turned off and back on]

CL: It's over now. [laughs] So oh my gosh, what was I saying? Now I've utterly

forgotten. Something about Edna.

CP: You weren't part of established groups...

CL: That established groups...oh, Edna took me to--

CP: Yeah.

CL: Some UVA group that is old enough that--you know, in the LGBTQ, the "Q" was for "questioning." Like the word "queer" had not been reclaimed in that particular--in the way that that was the "Q" in there. Actually I should show you this hilarious bloopers clip that my friend Theresa did when she and this guy she was working on a movie with, Tajir, tried to spit out all the right letters. It's hilarious. [laughs] And explain what they meant and argued over them. It was very funny.

So like Edna took me to that, being like "Oh, this is like--you can like--here's a great way to meet more gay people." And I was like "Okay" and I just--like I was--a, they were all UVA students and I wasn't a UVA student, so we didn't have like that sort of class--like going to classes and that sort of thing in common. But I've just never like that whole sort of like, I've never had a lot of luck I think--not like I'm like, "Oh they're terrible", but I've just like, that's not how I've made friends or created community, it's always been a little more like, "Here's things that I'm already working on," and then I've become friends with the people in it, and if they're gay, then that's great.

I mean, that said, it is really the--when we've had other queer people working at school, I was--like the first--like I hire--one of my first jobs, one of the first people I hired was this young gay girl. She was super sweet. And at some point partway through the year I was saying to her like "I hadn't realized how nice it is to have another queer person on staff." Like that, you know, and I'd been working in this really supportive, great

environment. But it is really--yeah, it is really nice to work with other gay people.

[laughs]

CP: Absolutely. So I have a couple of follow-up questions from that.

CL: Mm-hmm.

CP: Can you talk a little bit more about your experience with the Montessori school. Like teaching there? Yeah.

CL: I have some good stories from that.

[clock chimes in the background]

CL: So it's funny, like I just did this workshop in Nashville for the big national Montessori conference where my Montessori mentor who's like this seventy-some year old out lesbian--and I did a workshop about being out in education in general and Montessori specifically. So I have all the stories ready [laughs] from working on all of that. So I--when I first came out at school, I had been working there for two years and I had decided that I really--it was just a job, initially, but I had decided that I really liked the work, I liked the age group I was working with, and I really liked the teacher whose assistant I was. And I was like, "Well if I want to work with her next year, then I want to come out to her." Because that feels like the right thing to do and I've spent a year with her; I think she'll be fine.

So we went to dinner at Escafe and I told her that I was a lesbian and she said [laughs] she said, "Oh my God, I'm so glad you're not quitting!" [laughs] She thought I'd taken her out to dinner to be like, "I'm quitting! I can't work here anymore!" [laughs] And then she thanked me very earnestly and she's still a really dear friend of mine. So that--like I've always--I've never been--I've always felt like I had at least one person's support

there.

And then as I was saying earlier that I came out to my then-boss a couple of years later with the thought of this article coming out or this issue of *C-ville* coming out and she again--she was like, "Thank you for telling me and you know feeling safe to share this." I don't think she said "safe" because we didn't use that word as much as then. She did say--and it was something about the way that she--this is my like lesson for straight people--something about the way that she asked it and her tone and her general humility made it really feel good to me. She asked if it was okay if she had questions any time in the future if she could ask me. And I was like you know, I clearly talk a lot and am happy to talk about being gay and I was like, "Sure!" Also I'm twenty-whatever, I must know everything!

And so the sort of like--the follow-up, the epilogue to that story is that several years later, maybe even like a decade later (I've worked there for a really long time), she came to me in my classroom and had an alumni--like UVA's alumni magazine in her hand and she was like, "So here's this letter to the editor that a gay person wrote. And it uses the word 'queer'. And I thought that that was a bad word. That people shouldn't say that." And you know, this was--I mean--let's see, how--this was--it was at least ten years ago from now. So it's like the--that was ten years ago, that was a long time ago in the world of queers being in--visible in the way we are now. You know, so I was like, "This is a fascinating conversation," and like we talked about it. You know I was like, "I use that word sometimes but not all the time and you probably shouldn't use that word but like let's look at what he's saying; this is so interesting."

So we're standing--you know, she'd come into the classroom and I'd followed her

into her office because we were doing like--sort of had to do some other stuff and a parent walked in while we were having this conversation. Middle-of-the-road suburban parent. Like not--you know, there's definitely parents where we would have been--where I would have been like, "Oh, let's keep having this conversation." But here I am, talking to my boss, and this parent walks in and I shut my mouth. Because I was like, "This is what you do." Like, I should--you know, this isn't--we're not talking about school, also we're talking about being gay. And who knows what that's all about. And Lindsey, my boss, doesn't even really miss a beat but turns to this parent and goes, "We're talking about if it's okay to use the word 'queer' or not, what do you think?" In just this tone of like, "Why would this be a thing we wouldn't talk about?" And she had the power in that situation! You know, she was the boss of the--she was the big administrator of the school. And she just essentially laid it out that it was okay to be who I was and that it was okay to talk about who I was in this way that was just--I was--the poor parent was like "Um, I don't know?" [laughs] It was really kind of hilarious.

But so yeah, so that's, like that--I feel like that--the same person, Lindsey, my boss--I tried to get pregnant for a really long time. And with no success. Or I did get pregnant, didn't have any children. And the very first sperm shipment I ever got was supposed to arrive the first week of school, and it needs to be signed for and it has to stay cold and all of those things and it was--since it was like the first week of school, there's no--I can't leave the classroom. There's no like stepping out to like sign for things. And so I had said to Lindsey like, "Will you do this?" And I was like, you know, because you're all full of hope that first time and I was like, "Will you get a picture of the FedEx guy because won't that be funny?" She forgot to get the picture--somebody else--somebody

rang the bell, the Fed Ex guy rang the bell, somebody else answered it, signed for the package, not knowing what it was, came back in and was like, "Oh this is for Corey" and Lindsey was like, "Oh my god!" And like grabbed her camera and ran down the road to get a picture of the truck. [laughs]

So that's been my experience being out at school, which has been--I mean I wouldn't--I don't know what my life would be like if I had not been able to be out at work in the way that I am in the community that I am. And the--you know, I think it's also allowed us to be really clear about "this is the kind of community our school is." I mean now I'm speaking as like my administrator self. I'm like, "This is who we are. This is the school that we want--we want to be. And if you don't want to do that, this isn't the school for you. If you've got problems with who people are, regardless of you know like sexuality, gender, race, whatever, don't come do this with us. Because we're going to tell your kid that they can be whoever they want." [laughs]

CP: So you started as a teacher's assistant and then a teacher and then an administrator?

CL: I'm still teaching as well, because we're short-staffed.

CP: And you work with the little kids?

CL: My Montessori training is birth to three.

CP: Okay. So what draws you to that age group?

CL: To toddlers? I just like them! I mean it was like, that was one of the positions that was open as an assistant and I was sort of like, "They're cute!" And then I was like "Oh, they're so much more than cute. They're--toddlers are amazing."

CP: All right. So do you feel like the culture of your Montessori school is like

that's typical of Montessori schools or do you feel like the school that you're at is kind of an outlier?

CL: Of course we're special! [laughs] That's my hope. I don't know. It was being at this conference in Nashville in this past March--so, you know, 2022. Our workshop was packed. And there were people talking about like you know like, "I want to have books about queer families in my classroom but I'm afraid to ask my administration." And you know, you--they're saying--they're not saying, "I'm not allowed to," they're saying, "I'm afraid to ask." Which is--those are two different things. But so yeah, I don't--I would like for that to be the case. That everybody all Montessori schools are like that, but I don't know. Montessori's--you know, it's culturally more diverse than people in Charlottesville think it is. I mean there's religious Montessori schools, there's public Montessori schools, there's public Montessori schools that are going to have to bow to whatever's happening in their district. I mean, to me, that is the whole basis of Montessori, is that respect for other humans and so therefore this should be the culture of all Montessori schools, but I don't know that I can say that. I would like that to be the case. I think is maybe how I should put that.

CP: Yeah, that's totally fair. Just to sort of put some sort of points in time, what year did you start working at the Montessori school?

CL: '94.

CP: Okay. So you have been there for a--

CL: I've been there for a really long time.

CP: Quite some time.

CL: I mean, I essentially grew up there.

CP: Yeah. Yeah, yeah yeah. That makes sense. So, shifting gears a little bit. UVA has come up as you're talking. You know, your dad was a professor at UVA, you know you sort of have known students at UVA, you've gone to stuff there. One thing I'm really curious about is sort of how you see the relationship between UVA and Charlottesville, particularly as it relates to the queer community or queer folks in Charlottesville.

CL: Oh, that's interesting.

CP: Like is there--do you feel like there's overlap? Do you feel like they're two separate worlds? Like...

CL: I think that's changed in some ways.

CP: Yeah.

CL: I mean, to sort of make it briefly a little more about the arts community--

CP: Yeah.

CL: In a--there used to be like two--Tricia, Kristin, Betsy--like three, let's say three people who had--who were at UVA who were coming to Live Arts to do things back when Live Arts was--'93-'94. And now there's a huge amount of overlap between those. Like the kids from UVA come down to Live Arts to do work all the time. They didn't used to. I mean it--I always sort of feel like the trolley did exactly what Charlottesville wanted the trolley to do. That it brought UVA and its money downtown. I mean that's what we got told when they put the trolley in. That this is going to bring students downtown and it will revitalize the businesses downtown because they have money. Yeah, I think it's done that.

Like it's just so--UVA has sort of spread down Main Street. I don't know. It's a funny--that if you take out the university then Charlottesville's just a little sleepy southern

town. But you put the university in and oh, there's more culture, oh there's more art, oh there's people who come here and like it and stay. But then there's also that like well there's--who works for UVA and how much are they paid and where do they live? Yeah. And I don't know how to like--how to dissect all of that. If that makes sense. But I do, you know, I think there is a level at which having a large university with the--in a small town makes for a more cosmopolitan? I feel like that's really not the right word. It makes some--it makes Charlottesville not just a tiny little southern town.

But I could like--I wish I had better ways to phrase that. I think there's probably people who could say it better than I could. So maybe you know--maybe it is easier to be out. I mean it definitely is easier for me to be out because I had this you know like my family's this upper middle-class good liberal parents, so my--that made that easier for me. So in that sense, UVA has made--has had a big effect on my life in that way. Yeah, that is really interesting. I have talked about it a lot, that's funny.

CP: I mean it's just sort of hard--I'm just so curious in how the--like some people, in some things you get the sort of sense that like UVA and Charlottesville don't overlap at all. That UVA students, UVA faculty and staff like kind of do their own thing and don't--you know there's a really rigid divide between the townies and not.

CL: Yeah, and I think that--yeah.

CP: And so I'm sort of curious--for some people, that's really not the case. So I'm sort of curious--it seems like there is some overlap in your case.

CL: Yeah. I think there's definitely some overlap in my life. Which you know I think in part is Live Arts and they were always trying to be like, "Oh hey let's like--there's this wealth of talent, let's you know or people (maybe not talent), let's see what we can do

with that." But then there is this definite like, "Oh won't they just stay like over there," [laughs] and not come down here and bother us! But I feel like that's--I mean that's like what I was saying, like that's changed hugely in my adult lifetime.

[train background noise]

CL: That you know, there's--that it's--I feel like my friend Tricia who went to UVA and was like one of the people who worked at Live Arts while going to UVA, that she was like, "Oh, I would tell people I was going downtown and they were like 'what? Why? Why would you go down there?'" Because there just wasn't like--UVA kids just didn't do that much. And I feel like they do a lot more now. There's a lot more restaurants and bars than there used to be. [laughs]

CP: Yeah, that absolutely helps. Do you feel like that's the case for students mostly? Or you know, do you see UVA faculty and staff sort of mingling?

CL: I think faculty definitely mingles more with the like at least the scene downtown. I mean there's the really weird divide between faculty and staff and that's...yeah. Like I really don't even have the words to talk about that. I wish that I did. I should probably read more about it. But yeah, I don't know.

CP: Yeah.

CL: That's an interesting...I mean I also get a lot of overlap with school.

CP: That's right.

CL: And I'm sort of thinking about like, "Oh, I do home visits for the kids in my class; like where do I go?" And there's definitely years where I'm downtown a lot. And I know that these people are UVA professors. Yeah, I don't know--it's--I don't know the answer to that question.

CP: Yeah, that's totally fair.

CL: But I think it's a fascinating question.

CP: That's totally fair.

CL: Are you going to ask other people that question too?

CP: Yes. [laughs]

CL: I want to know what other people say. [laughs]

CP: Yeah. Absolutely. So you talked a little bit about sort of how the community you had in your twenties and the community that you had in your thirties. What does that look like in the last like decade or so? Like do you feel like you're part of a queer community in Charlottesville now?

CL: I do, a little bit. I feel like it's a little more like I'm sort of have my fingers in a bunch of different queer communities. I mean there's--there's, you know some people at work who I kind of laughingly refer to as the "queer youth" because one of them called me a queer elder and I was very excited. [laughs] It's like I've been waiting my entire life to be called that! But they definitely like you know, so I'll like text them and be like, "What's this thing? Tell me about this thing. I don't understand this." [laughs] But then there's also like you know I'm super tight with Debra and Meridith. Yeah, I don't--I mean, it's funny like I--I'm friends with a lot of straight people. Which you know, maybe is purely numbers or--yeah, I'm always super psyched to meet other gay people.

CP: Fair enough. Me too. [laughs] Oh, I just had a thought and it went directly out of my head. So this has sort of kind of come up in our conversation a little bit, but you know one thing, especially since--in the last five years since August 11th and 12th, thinking about race is a huge issue when we're thinking about Charlottesville sort of now

and obviously going back centuries. So what is your experience with that like either in the queer community or not within the queer community. Like do you see people mixing? Do you sense prejudices? I don't know.

CL: I sense a lot of prejudices. [laughs]

CP: Well, fair enough. [laughs]

CL: [laughs] That was an easy one!

CP: Yeah.

CL: That's a really--that's a hard thing to talk about. I mean not in like it's hard to talk about because it's hard to talk about racism particularly as a white person who's benefited from that system but it's also like--again, like I don't know that I necessarily have the words to talk about it. Yeah, I mean, it's there's a--I feel like there's been--I've been aware of intense racial tensions in Charlottesville sort of like my--most of my adult life. And I think--

CP: So what did that look like? Like how did you know? What kinds of things did you see or hear that sort of led you to that impression?

CL: I don't know, that's a good question. What gave me that sort of sense? I mean, watching how quickly--in some ways, watching how quickly downtown how white it became. And that that was just fast, that there was no like issues around housing weren't addressed. That suddenly housing is exponentially expensive and there's not anything being done around that. I mean I say that being--you know having being a white person having bought a house in a historic black neighborhood twenty years ago, well aware of my, [laughs] well, I'm somewhat aware of my role in all of that. I don't--I mean there's this part of me that wants to be like, "Race in Charlottesville is so complicated!" But it's

not. It's just like it's just a fucked up situation. And is as fucked up as it is anywhere else and then has this layer of that we had a terrorist attack here and that brought into--sort of brought it into sharp relief and oh no, everybody's so shocked because we listen to NPR and how in the world could we have racism here? We all shop at the Whole Foods! Yeah, I realize I'm not answering this question at all, I'm just like--

CP: No, that's fine.

CL: --being irritated. Yeah, I don't, you know, I don't think there's a lot of--you know--I don't see a lot of like mixing of social groups across race. That's--you know, to use school as an example, we are a predominantly white school. And I have families come to me and say you know like I have Black families and color and say like, "This is the impression of Montessori," and I'm like, "Yeah, that is unfortunately real. Here's you know like, we have books, we have pictures, I try to prioritize putting people of color in positions of power in our school, like you know here's these things we're trying to do," but it's not you know, it's not changing anything overnight. May not even be changing--I mean, I hope it's changing things but yeah. It's like, "Racism is so complicated in Charlottesville." No, it's not, it's fucking simple. It's this awful system that is continually perpetuated in really obvious ways like housing and these really subtle ways of like you know what are you know, what do you do when you walk by someone who doesn't look like you? Or if somebody comes and asks you for money, what's your immediate reaction? Yeah. I don't know. It's a lot.

CP: Yeah, so what--it is a lot. And that was a very big question that I asked you to answer. So I'm curious about sort of zooming in a little bit. So when you think about like you know you're going to Escafe, you're going to Eastern Standard, maybe when you

went to 216--

CL: The few times! [laughs]

CP: You know, those sort of predominantly queer spaces, or even in just like somebody's house, were those spaces kind of integrated? Like what was the vibe in those kinds of situations? Spaces that were kind of intentionally queer for lack of a better word.

CL: The ones that I was at--and this is like where I feel like you should talk to Theresa and you should talk to Toni--were predominantly white. There would be a couple of Black people. A--you know, a couple of--so my mother's family is from Mexico originally and I somewhat identify as Latina but I pass so extremely as a white person and I live in the South and my father's family is from the South and he is white and so it's like I always have a couple of people who are people of color and we have this joke about like if I'm the brownest person in the room, there's a problem. Like something needs to--like we need to address what's going on.

So you know, there might have been other--and when I was in these predominantly queer spaces, there would be a handful of Black people and maybe some other people like me who would be like, "Oh, I'm aware of race in a way that maybe you're not if you are you know entirely identify as white." But yeah, there wasn't--there wasn't a lot of racial integration in these spaces. Particularly in that like you know across what I think of as like the line in the South between Black and white. But there's you know, there were probably all sorts of things happening that I had no idea about because I'm this little white girl and you know, nobody's inviting me to those because I'm a little white girl.

CP: Yeah, that makes sense. I mean, that's sort of the impression that I'm getting

from everything is that there's a lot of pockets of people who are all doing their own thing, that if you didn't know about what was happening in that group--

CL: Right, you weren't--yeah--

CP: That you would never be involved in that. I am curious to sort of go back on that question a little bit of like, what--were there other spaces that you and your friend groups frequented? Obviously there were Escafe, 216, those kinds of places, what other spaces did you all gather in?

CL: Live Arts.

CP: Yeah, you talked about that.

CL: I mean, there was a lot--like, we would do productions and then people would hang out afterwards if we didn't go somewhere. I mean, you know, I was at Miller's some of the time, I was at the C&O some of the time. And like in that era, that was kind of it. Like it wasn't like there was some I don't know some kind of arcade or pool hall or whatever that we went to. But I think--you know, but I think those like--I feel like people hung out at Rapture. I just never did. And that was later. Yeah, I don't know. There might be some other...like, I'm so fascinated...I totally want to hear all of these million and one interviews you're doing.

CP: [laughs]

CL: Being like--

CP: Well, eventually--

CL: Because I have just my own tiny like you know perspective. Oh, the dog might go crazy with the UPS truck. Let's find out.

CP: Well, we'll find out.

CL: So far she's being good.

CP: Yeah. [laughs]

CL: She doesn't lose her mind over it. Yeah, so that like--it was those sorts of--you know, it was like I was in my twenties and we're out at bars, and I'm in my thirties and we're--I mean we also hung out at my house a lot for various things. And you know, then I'm in my thirties and I'm living here and people are here and I mean that's more sort of what happens now then...I mean the pandemic having gotten in the way of all of that when I only hang out with one or two people at a time.

CP: Yeah. Were there places that you wouldn't go? That had like a bad reputation in town?

CL: No? I mean I think--that's more of a like--the reason for that is that I have this illusion of safety and I had a pretty insular world. I'm sure--like I would imagine--I am desperate to know what other people are saying about all of these questions! Where are these--like yeah, were there places that I went that other people didn't feel safe or were there places that I didn't know about that other people wouldn't have gone to. Yeah. No, but I you know--I didn't want to go plenty of places that weren't where I went because I don't like going new places. But I didn't--that wasn't a like, "Oh, I feel like I'm in danger," that's more of a like, "I don't like to go see people who I don't know and meet new people and go to a new thing." [Laughs] I just want to do all the familiar things.

CP: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Mmmmm. Are you willing to talk about your experience in Charlottesville trying to get pregnant?

CL: Yeah.

CP: Okay. Can you tell me what that was like? Anything, everything you want to

talk about.

CL: Yeah. I actually--I was not ever--I've never done an oral history but I was interviewed for somebody's book about infertility--infertility and loss in the LGBTQ community.

CP: Okay.

CL: So, I tried to get pregnant for pretty much my whole thirties--all of my thirties. There's no child in this house. I never actually had a child. I had four--I'm going to give you the sort of like CliffsNotes and then you can ask questions if you want. I'm very--like in the same way that I'm very willing to talk about being out, I'm very willing to talk about infertility because I think it's something--and because I can without feeling utterly miserable and I think it's a thing people need to know about. So I tried to get pregnant for most of my thirties. I had four miscarriages that I know about. I ran through pretty much all of the infertility interventions that can be done aside from surrogacy. I bought sperm from gayspermbank.com. I bought sperm from the place in Fairfax. I got sperm from somebody a friend introduced me to. I got sperm from one of my best friends. I got embryos from some friends who live in New York. No, I got sperm from them. I didn't get embryos from them. I got embryos from someone else I knew.

Yeah, none of it worked. It sucked. It was really expensive. It pretty much broke me for a chunk of time. I had a--I got involved in what I thought was going to be a really good, long-term relationship and then it ended and then I had my second miscarriage and that really broke me. I had friends who gave me \$20,000 for IVF. I had friends who would show up when I was sitting on the stairs crying. I had friends show up and like rub my back while I sat on the toilet bleeding from a miscarriage. So it was this like awful,

awful, awful thing for a really long time. And yet, I had all these people around me helping me in this way--like I had--I feel like I know who it was but one of the doctors I went to go see--

CP: [coughs]

CL: --was in my like second round of trying IVF that I switched hospitals--said that she had run into someone on the train from DC who told her they were going to pay \$500 towards my second IVF. And I think I know who it was but that person didn't want me to know. I mean it was just like people just fucking rallied. It was really amazing. And now, I'm actually pretty happy not having children. [laughs] I mean I love the children at school and I definitely have like pangs of sadness or bitterness or all of that, but you know, like I tweaked my schedule so that I had yesterday and today off, and I can do whatever I want with it. Like I can sit here with you and not worry about what's happening other than with the dog, who we just locked in another room, which you can't do with a child! [laughs] So it was you know, it was intense and hard and terrible and it's over and I'm okay. Which feels pretty great. I wouldn't have said that seven or eight years ago.

CP: So, time period, this was like 2000s? 2010s? Like...

CL: This is like 2--I was--like it was probably--I think I started in--oh, I kind of love that I can't remember the dates. Right as school was starting because Lindsey chased the FedEx truck.

CP: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

CL: Probably like 2004?

CP: Okay, yeah. My math is catching up.

CL: Yeah. I mean I could look that all up if you want to know.

CP: Just sort of a general timeline. Like trying to think about what...

CL: I was barely--I was about to turn thirty.

CP: Okay.

CL: So, yeah. So, 2004. And it--and, you know, it wasn't like when I say like, "I spent my thirties trying to get pregnant," there were definite breaks in there. Because I had--you know, you go into something and think, "Oh, this is going to be easy. Like people just have babies, right?" I mean, like, you know, I was--I did sex ed in the '90s. All we got told was like you know like, "You're going to get pregnant! You're going to get pregnant!" But I didn't. Or I did and it wouldn't work. But I went in with this like, "I'm, this is going to work, this is going to be so easy, I'm going to time this to the school year," because it's not like I'm rich and you know, at that point I was single and doing it so it's like--it's not like I can be like, "Well, I'll stay home and somebody else will pay the mortgage," or "Somebody else will stay home and I'll go to school." So you know, I had this like--so there were definitely breaks in there. And then I would run out of money and want to try again or like run out of patience and take a minute. So it wasn't like I did twelve cycles a year for ten years. Which would have been really bad. [laughs]

CP: So were, you know, when you went to doctors or hospitals in Charlottesville as a lesbian who was trying to get pregnant, sometimes with a partner, sometimes unpartnered, what was that experience like?

CL: It was great. I--the first--so I was just ordering sperm and getting it delivered to school or to my house at first and would just like you know, use the syringe up in my bedroom. And then when it still wasn't working and I started going to see an

endocrinologist, the first person I saw was Dr. Evans, who's this like you know your stereotype little old white man doctor. And so you're kind of like, "Oh God, what?" But some friends of mind had seen him and had said how amazing he was, and you know I was like, "What's he going to do to me if I tell him I'm gay? I'm going to come out." And he was just like, "Okay. Cool." And he was willing--by the time this is public, I'm sure this won't come back to haunt him because he was sort of old-ish back then. He was very willing to trash talk the red tape of the UVA medical system and figure out ways to work around it when I was using a known donor, which at that point--and maybe this is still the case--as I understand it, the FDA would not have wanted me to use sperm that didn't come from someone who was I not married to. Yeah.

[Corey Jo's dog Gertie howls in the background. The recorder is turned off and back on again.]

CL: Good timing on the dog barking.

CP: Yeah. We were talking about problems with the known donor.

CL: Okay. Yeah. So Dr. Evans was just willing to be like, we're just going to slide this all on through, and the...the person who was running the andrology lab at UVA at that point, which was brand new, I'm pretty sure was gay. And I'm--and you know what, I should ask my friend who was my known donor, because he was also gay and he would have--I should be like, "Was that--" oh God, I don't remember his name--but he was like a little older than me, a little of that like white guy campy, just really read as gay. So the--so that was here at UVA.

And then I started, then I was going to do IVF, and which is the big--I don't know how much you know about infertility stuff, so I was doing IUI, which is intra-uterine

insemination, where they just take sperm and wash it--hence the need for the andrology clinic--and then use a catheter that they thread up your cervix and shoot it directly into your uterus. And the idea is that it gets closer to where it needs to be. And straight people--straight couples do that too, if they're having trouble conceiving. And then IVF is the next step, and that's the like petri dish, and you make a baby in the petri dish and all of that. And the agreement that my doctor had to do IVF, because there wasn't a lab at UVA at that point, was with this private clinic in Richmond.

And I came out to him and he was great--Dr. Steingold, he was hilarious--but he was just like, "We're a private clinic, FDA says no, we won't do it. You can't use a known donor." And it was just like this, "Nope. We won't do that at all." Like it just put this like very clear line down, which is when I started buying sperm again. It had gone up in price! Very expensive. So my--you know, and he was like utterly--I was partnered at that point, he was--on a non-systemic very level, I have never run into any problems at all. But there's these larger systems at play, and you know, not everybody is willing to stick their neck out the way Dr. Evans here was.

So I really haven't--you know, like I started trying to get pregnant when I was single, I was seeing Dr. Evans through all of it, and then you know, became serious enough with my then-partner that she started going to appointments with me. And the very first one, he just like immediately wrapped her into the conversation in this way that--like I remember writing about it and being like, "This shouldn't be remarkable that he did this." Because it wasn't a remarkable experience. Like he just did it in this way that it was not remarkable, and yet it's remarkable at that point in time that--so that would have been like 2009. Which again, I keep sort of being like, "Oh right, that was amazing

that he did that."

And now that would be--like the--what made me look up the Martha Jefferson's-- or not the--the one that's over closer to Martha Jefferson. They have a huge section on their webpage about LGBTQ family-making now, which nobody was doing when I was-- like nobody was advertising that they were doing that. So that's been a huge--like I can't remember what made me look that up. Oh, because I had to go get a mammogram and it was on the same floor that I had done my second round of IVF, which was a very unpleasant flashback. So I looked up to see where they were now. But yeah, that's really-- that's really changed.

The sperm bank that I initially bought sperm from, which their URL was "gayspermbank.com", which was half the reason I bought from them because I was like, "That's an amazing name." Rainbow Fertility, Rainbow Family? Something--it was out of San Francisco. Oh my god, what was the guy's name? He had started it because, in the same way I assume that like the Red Cross won't take blood from gay men, none of the sperm banks would take sperm from gay men, and he was like, "Well, that's dumb. Like I can run tests and make sure that nobody's going to get sick from this sperm, so let's do that." And I think--I don't know if that's been lifted for sperm banks or not, but it's just like that was the tenor of what was happening. Like, gay family-making was definitely happening and there was like I had a huge internet community of mostly lesbians trying to get pregnant with donor sperm. But nobody was like--no fertility clinics were advertising that they were doing that...openly. Like clearly a lot of them were, but yeah. I mean that's just been a huge--a huge change in like just the past what? Ten--ten years?

CP: So you went gayspermbank.com and also a place in Fairfax? Was that a

different sperm bank?

CL: That was--I think it was Fairfax. I can't really remember.

CP: Yeah.

CL: Yeah. And I think it was--I don't remember. There were--at that point, there were only three--like two or three sperm banks in the country. And part of going to Fairfax was cheaper shipping.

CP: Yeah. Half the cost. I didn't know there were only two or three in the country.

CL: Well, it was--that was a long time ago. I think there's a bunch more now.

CP: No, I know.

CL: Or maybe there were only two or three that people I knew were talking about using. So yeah, so then I switched, and there was you know like, there was no--there was--I was doing all of that online and there was not--so I didn't come out but there was no--you know, that was just not part of that experience at all. Like the sperm buying experience at all.

CP: Yeah, that makes--that makes a lot of sense. Is there anything else you want to share about that experience? I mean, you've shared a lot but is there anything else?

CL: I don't think so. I mean, if you have other questions I'm happy to answer them. I do think a lot of it's changed--like a lot of the stuff has changed. Like I was talking to somebody and they were saying like, "I'm going to do such-and-such." And I was like, "Oh, wow. That wasn't even part of--" not that I think the science is all that different, I just think like the protocol's changed. Yeah. Yeah, it was a huge part--I mean that was--when I talk about, "Oh, this is what I was doing in my thirties," you know, like, "Oh I don't like this--like I don't go--" It really--like that was what I was doing, was

trying to get pregnant for a really long time. So I wasn't out and doing--you know, I was here, with sperm, trying to-- [laughs].

CP: Yeah, that makes--that absolutely makes a lot of sense.

CL: Or needles and bottles of synthetic hormones. [laughs] It was a time! I can give myself shots real good now.

CP: Great? Okay. I think we're sort of heading towards the end of my list of questions. What do you think people don't know about queer life in Charlottesville that they should?

CL: I don't know! That's--I mean, there's this part of me that is and continues to be in my like insulated world that is like, "You can--" I didn't ever leave. I stayed here and I made this particular kind of life for myself. And I realize that there's a lot that went into that that is you know other people can't necessarily--don't have access to. But I think it's worth if you have any like any level of your own safety to--and, you know, are emotionally capable of making a space for yourself or for someone else--to do that.

You know, this--I mean, when I was in high school and was thinking about going to college, I was like, "Oh, I could meet more gay people." And then I didn't, but I still have like--I have like multiple strong queer communities here, even if they're small or-- but I also know that's not the place for everybody. Like I'm like, "You should you know-- you can make your own!" But also for some people they can't. I was just able to. And that's worked out really well for me. But I don't know, what is the secret...

Oh here's a thing about queer Charlottesville I want people to know! [Laughs] That I find sort of charming and is--well, I guess I'm talking about myself this entire interview, but before Cville Pride existed--Cville Pride made a fuss about when they like-

-when I first started hearing about them or seeing them on Twitter, they were like, "We're the first--you know, we're going to have the first gay pride, we're going to have the first gay pride!" And my memory of the first gay pride, which I really wonder if there's people older than me or people in the Black community who have a different memory of gay pride, is that there was some pride group when the October that I turned 21 who held a gay pride march on the downtown mall on my birthday. And I invited my family to come. That was what I wanted to do for my birthday. So my folks came, all my cousins--like three of my cousins and their children and their partners lived here and we were about a third of the march. And I was just like--I could not have been happier.

CP: Somebody--one of the other folks that Cville Pride had interviewed had like mentioned like a march?

CL: Mm-hmm.

CP: Like, "Oh, there was a group and there was a march," but they just mentioned it in passing.

CL: I mean, my family was a third of it. [Laughs] It wasn't very big!

CP: Well, what other kind of people were--was there like a group that organized it? Like do you remember how--

CL: There was a group that organized it, and I don't remember. I mean, it was the year I was 21, so it was a while ago. My cousin was on their dad's shoulders and they're trans now. I mean like--like I remember--my memory of it is, "Oh my gosh, there's a pride march. Oh my gosh, it's on my birthday. Look, my--look how lucky I am that my whole family is so excited." Not like, "Okay, this is what you--?" They were like, "Really? Let's do that!" Like they were super psyched. So there's the thing. Like, which is

part of why I was so excited to do this project with you. It's so easy to lose those little bits of stories, particularly when you're saying, there's these multiple pockets of communities and the narrative becomes, "Well, Cville Pride was the first." Well but maybe it wasn't. Let's not lose sight of that.

That there--you know, there have been gay people holding it the fuck down here for hundreds hundreds hundreds of years. Like to you know that sort of--and I think that's such an important thing to remember. Because that gives us this sort of like "Oh, I've got some power behind me. I can tell my story. I can come out." I can--that I can create me or you or whoever can create this sort of like, "Okay, the path has been smoothed for me like this; okay, how can I do this for someone else?" And if we lose those stories, then we don't have that power behind us. It's harder to continue to keep going and to make a--make things easier for people coming after us.

CP: Are there other sort of things that you've heard about? Along those lines, like are there stories that you've heard from other people in the community like other queer people about I don't know, other marches, events, like--one of the nice things about oral history is that we can do these like "twice-told stories," you know--

CL: Yeah. Yeah.

CP: Get the gossip written down as--

CL: Right. I mean, because that's like--gossip is powerful. It's really--

CP: Yeah! [laughs]

CL: It's why people call it gossip and say it's just for women, because it's got a lot of power to it.

CP: Yeah.

CL: Gotta deaden that somehow. I don't. Which makes me a little bit sad. Like I wish that I knew more about that. Like what was happening with--so when I--one of the shows we did at Live Arts was La Cage [aux Folles] and it was full of drag queens, clearly. Like the--a bunch of the drag community of Charlottesville was there. And like there's this part of me that's like, "Oh, I missed this huge opportunity to hear stories from them about what their lives were like." So yeah, I'm super psyched you're doing this. And no, I wish I had more like secondhand stories to tell you. [Laughs] But I can't wait to hear more of like--

CP: Yeah. Hopefully we'll get more from other folks as well, which is why...yeah, just gotta talk to more people.

CL: Yeah.

CP: Is there anything else you'd like to share for the historical record that you haven't yet?

CL: For the historical record? That's so exciting! No. I don't think so. I'm really glad this is happening.

CP: Great, well I really appreciate you doing this. It means a lot.

[The recorder is turned off, then back on again when casual conversation between CP and CL revealed more information that CL wanted to record. Gertie, CL's dog, has been let out and is part of the conversation from here on.]

CP: Yeah, so the Silver Fox and Triangles like, you know, we talked to--Cville Pride talked to Joani Schatzman and they talked to Mike Fitzgerald, who was Clyde [Cooper]'s partner.

CL: Yeah.

CP: And they sort of talk about that process but not the like--what those spaces actually looked like.

CL: So my...yeah. I only went in to--it was Triangles, I think it had been recently renamed Triangles--once when I was like just out of high school. And it was like, you know, dark bar, I was too young to actually be in that bar, you know, all of those things. I was there with my high school girlfriend and that was a hot mess of a relationship. But it had--it had louvered fencing up--you know, to like ceiling height on the patio between the patio and Water Street, and this--my understanding, from whoever, was that that was because people used to throw things as they drove by. And so that was there so that people could sit outside and not have shit thrown at them. And that--you know, I think about that and there's like that's--there's gotta be pictures.

Like that is a thing too--like when you said that thing about the National Guard, like that is a thing to not forget. That even--you know, like that doesn't--that wouldn't happen in Charlottesville now. Well, look at the other things that have happened in Charlottesville very recently. But also to like, if we forget about those things and don't mark that they aren't happening anymore, even though there is other violence still happening, then--I mean, that's just like we shouldn't forget that. So yeah, the Silver Fox and Triangles had this like super tall louvered fence--there was like a low wall, and then this super tall louvered fencing. And then like there was some sort of like trellis over it.

[Laughs at Gertie]

CP: [To Gertie:] Baby. No.

CL: Gertie, be good.

CP: [To Gertie:] I'll scratch you; you just can't put my arm in your mouth.

CL: You can't--don't be bitey, Gertie. Oh, Gertrude. Good lord. [Laughs]

CP: Oh, what a baby. Yeah, that's so interesting. That has not come up at all.

CL: Yeah, I mean--like I would kind of want to ask--so this is filtered through you know, twenty-plus years of memory plus me being really young and only like very peripherally part of that scene because I was so young. So I'd be like--what would Joani say about that? What would my girlfriend from high school say about that? Actually, she would probably love to talk to you. Yeah, I don't--but that's that sort of like "What are the like--what are these marked changes and how do we like--" Yes, Cville Pride's got this thing that they're going to talk about, but what was happening in you know, in this particular bar in the '80s? What was happening in somebody's living room in the '40s? What was--you know, what are all those things?

CP: Yeah. So have you been to the like Cville Pride festival? Like the festival that Cville Pride does?

CL: Yeah. Occasionally. I don't like a crowd very much. Gertie.

CP: [To Gertie:] You have to stop biting my hand, though.

CL: Here, give her this. [To Gertie:] You can eat that. She's like, but you are more delicious than a toy!

CP: [Laughter and incomprehensible talk to Gertie] Yeah. That's kind of the--

CL: Yeah. I mean it's just like--it's--I--this sounds sort of shitty because it is like-- it is such a change and it's great in some ways. It seems like it's a festival for straight people to go to to feel good about themselves. That's my horrible--that's my super snotty shitty take on it. [laughs]

CP: That's actually--that's such a--that's so interesting because you know, there--

that's--

CL: It's not just that. It's lots of good things too.

CP: No, but like there's--like every single person remarks like, "Oh, like there's a lot of straight people." But it's like there's like completely different--like for some people it's like, "Oh, my god all these straight people coming out, like they're being so affirming, like this is amazing," and then--

CL: Right. I mean it's--

CP: There's some people who are like--

CL: My big and good part of me things of it that way. My small, petty self is like, "Can we just have one thing?"

CP: Yeah, exactly. Like, but then it's like--is it really still--

CL: I always see a bunch of kids from school there, and I'm like, "Oh this is great. This is great for these children to have--like I had that on a very small not-public scale. And that's part of why coming out has been so easy for me. So great, that more children--but I'm also like, "Can't we just have one thing? Can I just have one thing? Just one?"

CP: Yeah.

CL: But also, yay, there's a pride event in Charlottesville. Also it's in September, why isn't it in June? [laughs]

CP: [Laughs] Yeah, that makes sense.

CL: Meridith and I were gonna have a table of bitter les--for Black Lives Matter. We were sitting on the porch, she was staying here all the time, we were sitting on the porch the morning of Pride and like at like 10:00 she sits like straight up like on the like--with her cup of coffee in her hand she goes, "Oh shit, I'm supposed to be doing security at

Pride!" Because Black Lives Matter was doing security for Pride! [laughs]

CP: Yeah.

CL: That one [after August 11/12, 2017] was fun. Because that one felt a celebration. That one felt like we--we have overcome something horrible but otherwise I feel like they're sort of a big thing with balloons for straight people. Yeah. Which is better than, you know, being harmed? And great for those kids, yeah.

CP: Yeah. Exactly. Well, now that you mention it, do you see a lot of overlap--I mean there's like a million activist groups in Charlottesville, right?

CL: Yeah.

CP: Do you see sort of overlap, that kind of thing, Black Lives Matter doing security for Pride, and you know sort of other groups getting involved, is that something that sort of happens commonly?

CL: I feel like that was happening a lot during the summer of 2017 and a little bit after that. I am also like now very removed from the activist--I mean not like, "Ew, activist," but I'm like for my own self-preservation I'm doing other things. Also, trying to run a school during COVID has been a lot more than I expected it to be. I think there was a lot of overlap that summer. And I don't think there's as much as there was. But also I'm not as involved, so I'm not seeing it in the same like I'm not on the inside to see like, "Oh, that person is part of this group and this group and now they're doing this other thing." But yeah, I just don't think there's quite--I mean, that was, you know, like it was a horrible, horrible time and all of these people came together and figured out how to work together in a way that you know, was full of its own stressors and drama but also did a pretty fucking good job of having it be really terrible but could have been a lot more

terrible.

CP: Yeah, yeah. That makes a lot of sense.

END OF RECORDING