

## Oral History Interview: Carter Heyward 2

Interviewee: Carter Heyward

Interviewer: Heather White

Date: July 21, 2019

Heather W. This is Heather White talking to Carter Heyward here at...

Carter H. The Stables of Las Praderas right outside Brevard, North Carolina. We also call it Sugarbrush Farm. Anyhow, it's a little horse farm.

Heather W. So our last conversation we had just started talking about your ordination and your involvement in the movement for women's ordination in the Episcopal Church. And I think one of the things that I guess we could start with was how complicated it was between the different leaders in the Episcopal Church at the time, so not just the conservative leaders, but even Paul Moore and Bishop DeWitt, right, who was the person who ordained you.

Carter H. Yes. It's a little—*[laughs]*—to use a contemporary analogy it's not unlike what's happening with the Democrats, today, I think, people who want to move faster, people who are saying no-no-no, it's politically inexpedient to move faster because if we do it's going to alienate so many people. And I'm serious, that is exactly what was being said then with the people, women, seeking ordination as well as many other people who were liberal on the issue of women priests, who did not object at all, and in fact really wanted women's ordination, but thought that any kind of disruptive

activity would alienate more people than it would win over, and that until we won over most Episcopalians we were not going to be winning anyhow.

So really, it was very similar to what Nancy Pelosi is saying versus AOC today, which is interesting to me, because—and I take heart for the fact that I think, looking back, one of the things we could say we learned from this, I believe, is that it took both movements somehow in tension. And it's a difficult tension to bear because almost everybody's on one side or the other, and then you think, you know, what are those other fools thinking, or what's their problem, and you just really get so aggravated.

And yet when you look back it's like oh, well, there was some purpose to that tension between the more let's go a little slower people, including women deacons seeking ordination, and let's move faster, because the leaders of both movements spoke for and to a lot of people, and so a lot of people were being somehow kept in the loop and brought along at their own pace.

Heather W. So the 11 of you who went forward for ordination, were there... There was a larger group of women who were deacons, some of whom chose not to.

Carter H. Not to go. This number is—I'm tossing out the figure because it comes to mind, I think it's obviously approximate—40 women deacons at the time, 11 of whom decided to go forward. Some of the women deacons were women who were older women who had been ordained deaconesses

decades earlier who had no desire whatsoever to be priests. But many of the 40, I'm sure at least half of them, were women like ourselves who were seeking ordination to the priesthood. And some of those deaconesses were, too, but I don't think the majority were.

Heather W. Wow. And so some of those women deacons or deaconesses would have been connected to the deaconess movement in the...?

Carter H. Mm-hmm.

Heather W. Yeah, that would have been a really interesting transition from an earlier form of women's leadership to different—

Carter H. Mm-hmm. I wish I could think of some by name at this point. Because then there was another group that kind of crossed both of those boundaries, and those were the women who were the nuns, Anglican nuns, who, some of them young women or young-ish women like ourselves, like some of us, who decided to be priests. And actually, the Sister Angela in here was a nun who was ordained a priest in Australia when it became possible. So you had deaconesses, and then you had nuns, and then you had women like myself who had been laywomen who decided to try to become ordained.

Heather W. Do you remember any conversations with some of those women?

Carter H. Mm-hmm.

Heather W. There must have been some anger.

Carter H. Yes. One such woman, a famous woman in her own right, and a wonderful woman with whom I just disagreed strategically, was Pauli Murray. Remember Pauli Murray was the first African American woman to be ordained. She was, at the time, older than most of us. I guess Pauli was...Pauli would be about the same age that Alison Cheek is now, which would be early 90s, maybe even older. Pauli might be 100 if she were still alive. But she was an older sort of middle aged woman, single, a lawyer. Had been a buddy of Eleanor Roosevelt and had been super involved in civil rights, and wanted to be involved in women's rights because she had no doubt that this was the right thing to do.

And the other person that has cited her as a hero of theirs is Ruth Bader Ginsburg, so she was really, Pauli Murray was well positioned as a justice maker in her own right, but she thought we were trying to move fast. And I remember, she and I were both in the Diocese of New York, and we were together in some kind of a—maybe it was a diocesan convention or some kind of diocesan meeting prior to the ordination of women in Philadelphia, but leading up to it, and Pauli... I was saying I think we have to go ahead or else there's nothing...we have to break this... We've got to create new momentum and we have to do this.

And she said you younger women just don't understand, you don't have patience. She said it takes patience to get anything done, and in time this will happen. There's no question women's ordination will come if you just go slowly. That's the way it comes. And I said I don't think you're right

about this. I think that it's not going to come until women do something to really disrupt the movement, I said, because unlike civil rights and other movements that have also taken a while, there have also been disruptions. It's not like things had just been lala and suddenly civil rights was in our hands. But things happen, and people do get angry, and people do get alienated, but it wakes people up. And Pauli said, well, you may be right, but it seems to me that you're so young. And I was like 27, 28 at the time. And if she was 45 or 50 at the time, that's...they had an age perspective there, too.

But I remember that and similar conversations, the gist of them, with other women who did wait, who... What I don't remember—and this is good—I don't remember anybody, including Pauli Murray, or I'm thinking of Barbara Schlachter, who has since died, but was a wonderful woman, ordained a deacon with me in 1973, who decided not to go forward, but she came to the ordination and was very supportive. Carol Anderson, in the Diocese of New York, also decided not to go forward, but she was very supportive.

So that's one really good thing that grew out of that movement, is the solidarity of women who made different choices, even though we probably all had anger and feelings of some frustration, and it's too bad we don't have 30 of us instead of 11. I'm sure that, I mean, I'm sure I must have felt that along the way, and that some of us were saying that to

each other, but I don't remember any sense of betrayal or sort of dissing from women who were making the other decision, just disagreement.

In the case of Pauli Murray it was a strategy disagreement. In the case of Barbara Schlachter and Carol Anderson, these were vocational priorities and matters. Carol had a good job at that time working, and didn't want to lose it. And her rector had said that she couldn't stay on there if she got ordained, so she had to make a choice. And Barbara, I think, was in a somewhat similar situation somewhere.

Heather W. So sort of extrapolating, was it then that those of you who were part of the 11, was it a combination of strategy and was it also true that folks didn't have as much to lose or...?

Carter H. Well, yes. I think... Well, I don't know. The latter, that would definitely have felt true to me because my vocation and profession, as I understood them to be unfolding, had never been to become a parish priest. I had always wanted to teach. That is always, from college on. Once I realized that religion was going to be my field I thought, well, I'm going to be teaching religion in some kind of university or college or something.

And so being ordained to the priesthood was something that seemed to me to fit me. I mean, I really loved the sacraments. I really had enjoyed this since I was a teenager. And I really did believe that, in the religious language, God was calling me to the priesthood. I'm not sure I ever put it quite that way. But it was just a sense of where I belonged in the universe.

Some of the others really did, I think, want very much to be parish priests among the Philadelphia 11, and so in getting ordained this way they were risking sacrificing that vocation because it did not occur to any of us—I mean, I think all of us knew the church was not going to like this, at least not at first, and therefore vocational options would really become very few and far between for all 11 of us, so there were a few, I think, who were risking a lot more than I myself was in terms of vocation.

Heather W. There's a lot to come back on on that. Could you tell me a little about the ordination itself? And I'll tell you I've also talked to Neale Secor, so I know that he was involved, but I've only heard pieces of it from his perspective here, so I'd be interested in hearing more from you about why he might have been willing to serve in that role and how that whole configuration came about, like how did the ordination ceremony or the ordination itself come about.

Carter H. Well, I'm glad you've talked to Neale because Neale was actually the rector of the church that was sponsoring me as well as Emily Hewitt. There were two of us from his church. And he was my clergy presenter, actually. And Betty Mosley, who was the wife of Bishop Brooke Mosley, was my lay presenter at the time. And St. Mary's Manhattanville, which is on the northwest edge of Harlem, was the parish that Emily and I came from where Neale was the rector. Do you know Manhattan and the churches at all?

Heather W. Some of them.

Carter H. This is a small, largely...it was a very mixed race parish, largely black, really, and some Hispanic and some white folks there. And Emily and I had both been deacons in that parish, and both of us had worked there while we were seminarians at Union Seminary, which is right up the street, as seminary interns, so we both had a pretty long history at that church, so at least three or four years old. And we had a lot of strong support, including, obviously, from Neale Secor and his wife Christine, too, who I think maybe was Emily Hewitt's lay presenter. So the Secors were very involved in this, because at the time Neale was married to Christine, and they were wonderful.

A lot of the people there were supporting us, but a lot were not. And it was interesting because the people who at St. Mary's Manhattanville who tended to have misgivings not just about the Philadelphia ordination, but about women's ordination in general, were African American Episcopalians whose position was that the priest really is a father. The black community—I mean, I remember a couple of the African American women in the church saying we have to have the priest be a father figure because our kids have no other father figures, and this business about women priests makes no sense to our family structures because Father Secor, you know, it's really important that he is a man.

And that perspective was not really pervasive among black people in the Episcopal Church, but it certainly was articulated by some, and by several strong women themselves at St. Mary's Manhattanville. Well, we sort of



listened, tried to listen as empathically and respectfully as possible and say we just, you know, we really hear that and yet there's got to be a place in God's realm for women to serve God at the altar, too, and a parish like St. Mary's Manhattanville does not need to call a woman priest if they don't want to, or they could always—we didn't say this, but this is, of course, what wound up happening in the future—call a woman priest assistant, where you still have a father who's the head.

Well, that's not an argument many of us would have tried to make because it's so second class, buying into a really dysfunctional version of what family is, at least through white eyes, and through white cultural experience. But that was me.

But St. Mary's Manhattanville was represented in full force at the Philadelphia ordination with both Secors being Emily's and my presenters, and people from the parish coming. And I honestly don't remember whether any of the black leaders from the parish came or not. I remember that Neale was saying he was very excited so many people had come.

Heather W. What was the process of getting the church's support, or how much of that was the rector and how much of it did you have to talk to the vestry?

Carter H. Yes. Neale—and now I'd just be reconstructing on the basis of what must have been true because I don't remember that process exactly. But I do know that all 11 of us had gone through our local parishes and had been—maybe there was one exception. Katrina Swanson, who was from the Diocese of West Missouri, may not have gotten any support, because that

was a really reactionary diocese. But the other ten of us were from dioceses like New York or Minnesota, Rochester, Central New York, places where liberal bishops and liberal congregations had had us there in the first place as deacons, and so the parishes were, on the whole, supportive structurally, so that Neale Secor would have taken Emily's and my request that would have gone to him to the vestry, and they would have said yes, and then that would have gone to the standing committee. And in the case of New York, the standing committee said yes. And it was the bishop, Paul Moore, who decided I can't do it at this time.

Heather W. That's interesting.

Carter H. Mm-hmm. And the bishop, you know, I'm sure, Paul Moore, renowned for his justice stands, and he had been convinced by somebody that it would be counterproductive. So his big line was I think women's ordination needs to proceed, I wish that I could participate, but I feel like it would hurt the cause. That's almost verbatim. It would hurt the cause, and so I can't do it.

Heather W. So when the ordination went forward—I've also seen things that make it sound like Moore, in some ways, saw this as a kind of betrayal of him.

Carter H. By Paul Moore?

Heather W. Yeah.

Carter H. And I guess by us, but mm-hmm. I don't think it really dawned on any of our bishops, including Paul Moore, that we would actually go through

with an ordination because I don't think it occurred to him there would actually be bishops who would be willing to do it. And Paul Moore and Bob DeWitt were very good friends and had been all along in the House of Bishops. And I know this from Bob DeWitt, with whom I... I was extremely close to Bob DeWitt and was visiting with him in his retirement community shortly before he died back in 2003, and we were talking about this very thing.

And he said that basically Paul Moore went to his grave still not having reconciled with Bob DeWitt and that they had had a couple of conversations as they'd gotten to be older men and had retired, and both of them had acknowledged that they really cared about each other, so it was not this hateful thing. It was not filled with hate and alienation, but it was just, Bob said, it really did make us pull away from each other and we never really came back together.

Heather W. The thing that's so surprising to me about that is that in my perception Paul Moore took a similar stance when he agreed to ordain Ellen Barrett.

Carter H. Mm-hmm. Well, and that was later. My perception of Paul Moore—and I wasn't a close friend of Paul Moore like Bob DeWitt was, but I really liked him and he really liked me, and that all changed after the Philadelphia ordination. I mean, it was never...never again did we have what I would have considered it was a friendship in the making, and that just stopped. And we were still cordial to each other, but he really... I

don't know whether he felt betrayed by the three women from his diocese or whether he was just...he just couldn't believe it.

And I think he would have said why couldn't you wait. And probably after all I've done for you all to get you in the—and he seemed to have a lot invested in wanting to be the bishop to ordain us, and we didn't wait for him. And his daughter, Honor Moore—you know, he had nine kids, and the oldest daughter Honor has talked to me over the years about this, and she was saying my father was just... She thinks he never really got over it, that he kind of knew he had done...he knew he should have done it. But he never said that, but that was her sense, that he knew that he ought to have done it. He knew that all of his daughters wanted it done. I mean, everybody was thinking what is your problem, Dad?

And so I imagine by the time Ellen Barrett came along, which was several years later, he knew that he needed to do something and not use those same excuses. That would be my perception. Plus the fact, as you may—you know that Paul himself wound up being gay at the end of his life, at least, and so it may have been that—who knows, this is total speculation—that he himself had a clearer, more empathic understanding of what gay people, and in Ellen's case a lesbian woman, would be going through than a bunch of women.

He knew that I was at least, because I had talked to him, he knew that I was at least bisexual and probably largely lesbian at the time of the Philadelphia ordination. That didn't bother him. But I was not getting

ordained as a lesbian. I was getting ordained as a woman because of the timing and history. And so I think that was maybe less compelling to him than what was going on with gay men and lesbians.

Heather W. Sure. And yeah, it just...he knew that there were already homosexuals, right, who were ordained and serving as priests, but there certainly weren't women who were ordained and serving as priests.

Carter H. That's right. So this was, it really was a bigger shock. And history bore that out because as much fuss as the ordination of Ellen Barrett created, and then, of course, the consecration later of Gene Robinson, women's ordination was really systemically more of an earthquake than the ordination of gay and lesbian bishops and priests because people had already been there, you're right. And because, yeah, because half of them are men, I mean, so that half, like... And male priests, gay or straight, are not as disruptive to what in the world the natural order of God is at the altar as having a woman there, lesbian or straight.

Heather W. When you were ordained, were there simultaneous conversations about the ordination of gay people?

Carter H. No. No. I mean... Among us, among the women ourselves, we had talked about, for example, about all the objections people might come up with inside the service—does anybody know any reason why not—and that it was conceivable somebody would say yes, I know that two of these women are lesbians, or all of these women are lesbians, which is not true, but, I mean, people could have said that, and some did afterwards,

actually. And what would our position be, particularly those of us who were lesbian.

And the 11 of us had, at some point—and I don't think we had a meeting about this—but somehow we all had concluded that we would not let ourselves be divided around the issue of sexuality, and what that meant was that we would just all say it's sort of none of your business, or so what, or we're not discussing that, if somebody asked about us or somebody else. And to this day those 11 women were really faithful to that. Nobody ever used that as something against the others because all of us really were, by people who just hated us and who hated what had happened, we were dismissed as a bunch of radical, man hating dykes.

Heather W. Of course.

Carter H. Because why else would we act like this? And we learned to laugh it off. And Sue Hiatt, with whom I roomed, shared a house at EDS for our first year there in 1975, she was not lesbian, but she was happy enough to say she was if she had to, to be in solidarity with me, or to say, when she did, when some reporter called our home back in '75 or '76 and said is Carter...are you and Carter lovers, are you and Carter in a lesbian relationship or something like that, and she said, you know, Carter and I don't discuss that. And to homophobic ears that sounds like yes.

Heather W. Mm-hmm, right.

Carter H. To neutral ears that sounds like we don't discuss it. But that was how gutsy Sue was, you know what I mean? So she was letting herself be assumed about, and others did, too. So that was always a really wonderful—I use that when I talk, to this day, to groups of students and other people about what solidarity is, how we stand with each other, particularly when somebody's being bad-mouthed or somebody's being called names, that allowing ourselves to be called the same names is one way of standing with people.

Heather W. And what I'm hearing with that is that the ordination of women sort of surfaced a conversation about the ordination of homosexuals, I'll use the generic.

Carter H. That's right. And as in the larger society, feminism as a largely women's movement is linked historically to the LGBTQ liberation matters now. I mean, if you look back and you see not only the interfacing of the people involved in these movements, but some of the strongest opponents and proponents of women's ordination in the Episcopal Church were gay men. And this is a generalization, but if I can make a generalization it would be that the men, the gay men who had really come to terms with the fact that they were gay and were proud were great on women's ordination. The closeted gay men who were hiding back and did not want anybody to even notice really were not at all enthusiastic about women's ordination and were some of our worst opponents. And that was definitely true in the Diocese of New York. There were a lot of closeted guys there, and they

were about back as far in the closet as men could get, and they just wanted all issues of gender and sexuality to disappear.

Heather W. They—I mean, I’m thinking of Paul Moore, too—there’s... It’s almost like creating a scandal was something that they had disciplined themselves to never do.

Carter H. To never do. And never to even be noticed. There was a man named Grant Gallup who was a gay priest from Chicago who was wonderful on women’s ordination. And ironically I got to know Grant when he and I, in the early ‘80s—this was after the Philadelphia ordination by almost a decade—but we were in Nicaragua together doing work, trying to do solidarity work with the people of Central America.

But Grant was a very openly gay priest from Chicago, older than me maybe by ten years, and he had said, once we got to know each other, he said you know what I said in Chicago, Carter, he said half the priests—because Chicago was a very anti women’s ordination diocese for a long time, certainly all the way through the Philadelphia ordination and through the ’76 convention, where women were accepted as priests. But in Chicago priests were not coming along, partly because Bishop Montgomery, the bishop of Chicago, was himself a closet case. And so we sort of knew that because of people like Grant Gallup, who told us that.

And he said I have said to my own bishop and to my gay brothers who are priests that they can be anti women’s ordination as long as they live, as far as I’m concerned, but they cannot come out publicly and work against



women's ordination because we are so closely connected, all of us, in terms of sex and gender justice matters, and if they do, I will out them.

Heather W. Wow.

Carter H. He said I don't believe in outing people normally, but if they are hurting other people and they're coming after my sisters, then I will gladly say you cannot shoot them from inside the closet, you've got to come out. If you're going to be anti women's ordination, you're going to have to be out. And I thought that was quite a wonderful strategy, you know what I mean?

Heather W. Yeah.

Carter H. And I think Grant—I know Grant was not alone. I mean, Louie Crew—you know Louie, of course.

Heather W. Mm-hmm.

Carter H. Well, of course he's not a priest, but he was super great on the issue of both women's ordination and, as we know, one of the prime movers in terms of LGBT ordination and marriage.

Heather W. Right. Well, and now I'm thinking. So it was...Integrity was 1974.

Carter H. Mm-hmm.

Heather W. And there would have been New Yorkers in particular sort of organizing around gay ministries that early.

Carter H. And I don't think many—speaking for myself, but I think also for other women priests of that early generation—I don't think many of us were involved too much in Integrity. I belonged to it from very early on, but I belonged to it more as a supporter than I did... Because I didn't come out until '79. The years around Philadelphia and between '74 and '79 I was doing everything I could to support Integrity, and I think just about all the—I don't know whether other women priests were members of it or not, but I know that everybody was supportive in whatever ways they felt they could be. But I don't think many of us were really involved in any sort of public linking ourselves up with gay matters in those early years of women's ordination.

But by the time Ellen—so that Ellen Barrett's ordination, Ellen had been very supportive of the Philadelphia ordination, and she was at General Seminary when I was at Union, so we knew each other and liked each other very much. So when the shit hit the fan around her, that's really when it became apparent to me that I needed to get out of the closet. And closets, as I'm sure you know, are sort of, they're relatively open or closed, because it had been already open for all of my good friends. I mean, people had known that I was lesbian for years, but... And then it had been used as a bludgeon to beat us up with after Philadelphia, and I had never denied it, but I had also never come out and said, well, yes indeed, here I am, gay and proud.

And by '79 it had become apparent to me, both because of Ellen Barrett's ordination and because by that time I had been teaching at EDS for about four years in 1979, and so many of my students, female and male, were in the process of wrestling with issues of sexuality. And often they were bisexual, or lesbian, or gay, and were trying to figure out how to be out, if at all, to whom to be out, could they tell their bishops, what would this mean if they wanted to be parish priests, could they stay silent, stay in the closet with any integrity, all these really important questions. And there I was a young professor trying to be as useful as possible in these conversations, but not until '79 believing that I could say, you know, this is an issue for me, too, so let me be out with you now and we can talk about it.

But in '79 that changed because I realized I wanted to be able to be totally out, to be able to be a mentor to students who needed to ask those same questions, and also wanted to be in solidarity with Ellen Barrett, and also knew that this was the issue, now that women's ordination was a fait accompli. Not everybody liked it. There would still be dioceses that would hold out for decades to come, but most Episcopal dioceses were on board and women could more or less get ordained in most dioceses by 1979, so it was time to turn to gay issues.

And, as a theologian and as a professor, I was having a heyday trying to help make these sex-gender connections, because it was so obvious to me that these two movements were just like that. I mean, they're almost the

same movement because it's all about power, and it's all about women, and who—even issues around gay stuff are really, so often, about women, particularly gay males. It's like the feminine, the whole butch-femme thing is a male-female thing. And then when you're talking about God, and images of God and whatever, it's all right there together all wrapped up in one. And so as a theologian I was having a wonderful time by the early '80s helping unravel the spool of gender-sexual stuff.

Heather W. Yeah, and just listening to you, too, that the... It seems obvious to me that those are, of course, totally interconnected. But what you were just describing sort of on the ground is there were all kinds of ways that the women's ordination and Integrity kind of conversations around sexual orientation were working...I don't think at odds, but were not necessarily aligned. So that might have included gay people in the closet who were against—gay men in the closet who were against women's ordination. But that's also like women being accused—women being ordained being accused of being lesbian, so that you had every incentive—

Carter H. That's right. And—

Heather W. —to not even touch this issue.

Carter H. That's right. And some women, not many, but there were some women who were anti gay.

Heather W. Right.

Carter H. Who were getting ordained, ordained women, more conservative socially in terms of the social issues as well as theologically, usually, in this case, who believed that homosexuality was a sin and was wrong, and were kind of scandalized by the likes of me, and certainly by gay men. So that was also an interesting thing. That was not as large, as thick a thread, as heavy a thread as the women who were themselves lesbian, and gay men who were anti women, as well as gay men like Louie and Grant who were out, who were standing, had been standing with women since the early '70s, since both Integrity and the Women's Caucus had been born. And the Women's Caucus was late '60s or early '70, 1970, I guess, after the Houston convention. So yeah.

And then again in history, Heather, you look back and you—I mean, from a historical perspective the connections are so obvious. And the movements. It's really like a single movement. It's just a flow that comes on through having to do with sex, gender, power, and privilege, you know, who really has the privilege in the church, even to this day. And certainly the—and this brings us back to the present political moment—certainly barriers, lots of barriers have been broken by women of all sexual persuasions, and gay men, and our allies, and yet—and we've had a woman presiding bishop, we now have an African American presiding bishop, both of them fine on LGBT issues.

And yet—I mean, I have no statistics to support this—but I know our local parish here, St. Phillip's, is a wonderful parish in many ways, but they

have a significant holdout of people who would just as soon there not be women priests, at least not at St. Phillip's, and certainly not as the head priest, and people who are very uncomfortable with gays and lesbian clergy and leadership, although there are now two lesbian women priests working as associates in that parish who are retired, who don't need the money. I mean, they're there as volunteer priests. And the rector is great about all of this. But there are people who... And then there are people—and this is fascinating to me, and I know you know this dynamic—people who will say, oh, these people are fine, you know, these particular lesbian priests are wonderful, we have no problem with them. It's just we don't want lesbians and gay men here in the priesthood.

Heather W. Right.

Carter H. You know what I mean? So we've got these—

Heather W. Yes. The generic category is scary.

Carter H. The generic, that's right.

Heather W. We know them. They're okay.

Carter H. Don't send us any gay names when it comes to who might be the rector of this church, but we love Ann and Judith.

Heather W. Yes, yes, yes. Yes.

Carter H. And there's a lot of that in the Episcopal Church. It would be totally fascinating, and nothing would surprise me, given the elections of Katharine Jefferts Schori and Michael Curry, if the next presiding bishop

were a gay man. It would surprise me a little bit more if it were a lesbian woman, but it would not completely...I would not faint in astonishment. Because you look at the consecration of Gene Robinson, and you look at... I mean, who would think the Episcopal Church would have an African American presiding bishop or a woman presiding bishop as quickly as it did?

Heather W. Right.

Carter H. Particularly very liberal people.

Heather W. So I'd like to loop back to the relatively open or closed closet doors. And this sort of connects back to things happening at parishes that didn't necessarily... So recently I've been looking through some of the records of Holy Apostles Church.

Carter H. In New York?

Heather W. In New York, yeah. This is a good idea.

Carter H. That's the cherry scone there.

Heather W. I think cherry's a good idea. In Chelsea.

Carter H. Yeah.

Heather W. And their priest was performing same—he was calling them services of friendship—in the early '70s. And that was where Ellen Barrett was, too. So there was all this stuff happening in local parishes that was controversial, but relatively okay, sort of in the limits of... And there were definitely conversations with the bishop, with Paul Moore, about not

having the press involved. So there was a consciousness or a worry about creating scandal, getting the press involved. But on a local level I'm still surprised at how much openness around sexuality and open—I mean, sexuality I think even more so. Those issues were intertwined.

Carter H. Mm-hmm. I had forgotten this, but now that you mention it, in 1973 I was ordained a deacon in a regular, in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine by Paul Moore, in June of '73. And...

Heather W. This is good.

Carter H. This is good, isn't it? But anyhow, I... And within a week or two, I think, as I recall within a week or two I did a blessing of a lesbian couple whom I had known at Union Seminary, which is where I still was. And I called the bishop's office, not to ask permission, but to say this is what I was going to do. I was like a two-week-old deacon. And Paul Moore was away somewhere, but Bishop Stuart Wetmore, who was the suffragan bishop, got back to me.

And I'll never, ever forget the gist of the conversation because he said, well—he had kind of a raspy voice, like mmm—but he said well, let's see, he said, you know, we bless horses, and we bless houseboats, and we bless bicycle races, and we bless all manner and means of whatever, so I see no reason whatsoever why you cannot bless a lesbian couple.

Heather W. [*Laughs.*]

Carter H. So.



Heather W. Wow.

Carter H. 1973 in the Diocese of New York. But he also said, you know, let's keep it out of the newspapers, and I don't want the *New York Times* reporting on this, so, you know, we don't want it to be on the front of *Time* magazine and things like that. But he was very jolly about it, and I thought isn't that fascinating?

But that's the Diocese of New York. That would never have happened in '73 in the Diocese of North Carolina, the Raleigh diocese. Though with Michael Curry as the Bishop of North Carolina, as he was, as you know, it certainly could have happened prior to 2015, you know, prior to the legalization of gay and lesbian marriage. I'm sure Curry—again, I have no statistics on this—but I can't imagine that he did not say okay to people having gay blessings in the church.

Heather W. Yeah, but '73.

Carter H. Yeah, '70—it's a long time ago. We're talking about almost 50 years.

Heather W. And for him to have a ready response to that. And I'm sure that had come up before.

Carter H. Mm-hmm. And a very logical, reasonable response. I mean, some people said to me afterwards weren't you offended to be compared to racehorses and...? I said, well no, I mean, you know, I think... In fact I was very moved by it. I mean, I didn't hear him for a minute comparing us to horses

and dogs and whatever. Not that in my case it would make any difference whatsoever if he did.

Heather W. Horses are lovely.

Carter H. They are great. But I appreciated that he had obviously thought of it and had an analogy, and was right on. The church blesses whatever, why not bless loving relationships? If you're not hung up on sexuality. If you're not worried about the sex part of this, then what's the problem?

Heather W. And at that point they would have also known, of course, that there were priests who were gay.

Carter H. Oh, God.

Heather W. Were there any who weren't gay? No.

Carter H. In some dioceses, like Chicago, that was... And New York had a big cluster of gay priests. I know St. Mary the Virgin and some of these really... up on north Manhattan Church of the Ascension, where Fred Williams... Fred Williams, an African American Anglo-Catholic also gay, also at first opposed to women's ordination, but then when he came around, sometime after Philadelphia he came around to being an advocate, and he was quite strong in his advocacy. And he himself was gay, and I think he was pretty open.

I think in the Diocese of New York you could be open at least up to a point, because everybody knew that Fred Williams was gay, and he was very highly respected. But then he—these people, they were so interesting.

He was open. Here he is this black Anglo-Catholic gay priest who was a stickler for rules and law and order in the church.

Heather W. I mean, that is a certain kind of stereotype.

Carter H. It is. But he... And I guess that's why he wasn't in favor of Philadelphia in the first place, but then he became okay on that. But then he would not... Many of us who were ordained in Philadelphia were way slipperier and more open around rubrics and rules and whatever when it came to the Eucharist, when it came to anything, and he was not. I mean, if you went to do something at his church you had to wear your stole the right way, you could not change a single word, you could not ever pray to our father and mother, because mother is not in the prayer book, things like that. So he was very much a man of the book. But he was openly gay and was fine about gays.

Heather W. Right. And was open to an extent that people knew about it. But, I mean, even as you named his name, I've never heard his name before. I'm also not Episcopalian. So he's not one who, I'll say, I would know his name if there had been a newspaper article about him being gay, right?

Carter H. About him, yeah. No, he was not...there was nothing showy or—well, there was in the services. He was a very dramatic, flamboyant character in his vestments. As some of my gay male friends like Grant Gallup and another great friend of mine, Victor Schramm, who was my generation of gay men, who went to Fred's church, actually, was on the staff there, but he talked about how often—this gets into sort of the postmodernism of

performance, of gender as performance, and of how gay men priests were often performers when they were celebrating the Eucharist, and that it really was like a big...sort of a drag show.

And in fact Grant, Louie, Victor and others would say, you know, and so you've got these closet queens who would be up there performing for all of their life, worth, on Sunday morning, whereas Saturday night they had been off in leather bars also performing, but in a very different mode. But that sort of like life went from one kind of performance to another. But everything had its place. And if you were performing a liturgy, you had to do it perfectly.

And that's where Fred Williams would have certainly been an icon of liturgical perfection. I just remember that when I was at Union Seminary, how seminarians were working there as seminarian interns, and talking about the officiousness of Fred Williams' expectations about what did and did not go down in the liturgies. And all of this is all tied up somehow with sex and gender and performance, and in and out of closets.

I once thought that, you know, one of the things about women priests that is so disruptive to all of this is that it's like it must be so much fun to be a closeted gay male priest, say, in 1965 or 1970, and to be able to strut around and do your thing and not have there be any questions asked about anybody's gender or sexuality, because it's all this wonderful fun, and it can be very beautiful, and you have gorgeous music, and you have incense, and you have these beautiful, flowing vestments that are really

defiled, in a way, if women are wearing them, because women can't play these games.

Heather W. Well, and it makes me wonder. So how would someone like—it was Fred Williams, you said?

Carter H. Mm-hmm.

Heather W. Pass scrutiny, to some extent so he...I mean, I don't know that he didn't, but he wouldn't have, presumably, reporters calling him up to ask him if he was gay, right, that there was something...there was somehow that his sexuality could pass, right? But a bunch of women who take on that role, regardless of what signals they're perceived to be sending out in the world, or I guess the signal they're perceived to be sending out in the world is that they must be lesbians. So interesting.

Carter H. It is interesting.

Heather W. And reporters are calling up trying to dig out that story.

Carter H. I think a lot of it has to do with just the historic nature of the Catholic priesthood, which spills over into the Anglo-Catholic priesthood, this performance motif being so strong, and that so gay or straight, men can really get into that, and play with it. And the whole notion of vestments, and these long, flowy things. You know how Presbyterian ministers wear these black robes with a, maybe sometimes with a stole. Most other, except for Roman Catholics, who also are very showy with their

vestments, you know, Anglicans are just right out there when it comes to being performance queens, if they're men, whether they're gay or straight.

And I think often even straight, Anglo-Catholic straight men who are sort of into the same kind of thing, maybe—I would need to think of examples—but I think it's really more of a historic motif of liturgy as performance, and as beauty, and as art, and how attractive that is to those men and women, but particularly men who are... Where that somehow is an acceptable place to do this, to sort of act like this and to sort of...

Literally there's a guy at the cathedral, Eddie West was the Canon to the Ordinary to Paul Moore. This is like the assistant in liturgical things. And he literally would swish around in kind of the "La Cage aux Folles" motif of, you know, taking his arm and throwing out his chasuble as he pranced around the... And people would laugh. I mean, people from Union Seminary, which is not an Episcopal seminary, where there are a lot of Quakers and other people. But you'd go there for an ordination and you'd see Canon West there with his kind of dancing around Paul Moore, you know.

And I think Victor, my friend Victor Schramm would say, you know, gay men knew it immediately. You know, a gay man recognizes another gay man a mile away if he's acting like that. A person who comes into the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for a liturgical experience is not necessarily going to associate any of that with sexuality. But it's like

going to the Metropolitan Opera and watching “Ahhhh!” Everybody just floating around, and swishing, and singing, and carrying on.

So it’s like an art form, and it transcends sexuality, or people don’t think about sexuality, per se, in that moment when they get in there. But if you called attention to it, if somebody has come out and has, in a homophobic church and world has said I am gay, or this is my husband, then it’s a different matter, because then, if you’re not, if you’re one of the audience sitting there, then you have to decide, well, is this okay with me or not.

You know, this would be one thing on a Broadway stage. This is another thing in church.

Heather W. It just amazes me, though at how, I mean, open, closed, it’s sort of like is it an inch and a half? I mean, because there’s a part of that, I mean, what you described, prancing around the sanctuary, that is a totally open expression, or at least a way of expressing sexuality, but something about naming it and calling it sexuality—

Carter H. Makes it...

Heather W. —makes it shift.

Carter H. It does. And maybe that’s just the power of language, too, the power of consciousness, the power of how all of us maybe go through life with, to some degree, unconscious of a lot until somebody, until we, using the new term, until we get “woke,” then suddenly like oh my god, this is what’s been happening all along, or this, I wonder if this is what this means, or

oh, I never had a clue that St. Mary the Virgin was filled with all these gay men who were floating around all the time.

You know, the people I thought I was going there—this is not me because I didn't go to that church, but I can easily imagine people saying I just love Anglo-Catholic liturgy, I love incense, I love the smells and bells, I love the music, I love plainsong, and I love chants, I love...I think vestments are beautiful, and these men are so sort of into it, and they're so sort of filled with grace, and they know what they're doing, and they've done it beautifully, and they keep doing the same thing again and again, and I feel so comfortable in there. I mean, that's the kind of thing I've heard people say about churches like that. And the sexuality is just a non-issue until somebody makes it an issue, and then suddenly you have to decide. And so it's...yeah.

And so like St. Mary the Virgin, those priests were also very adamantly opposed to women's ordination for the longest time. There was one there named John Paul Boyer who was about my age, maybe a little older, but he was a priest at St. Mary the Virgin at the time of the Philadelphia ordination, and he was just appalled by not just Philadelphia, but by women's ordination. And much later he came around to being an advocate, but that was after he came out, because he was, I mean... He at least thought he was closeted. I never knew anybody who thought he was closeted.

Heather W. I was going to ask what coming out meant for him.



Carter H. Well, I think, again, he probably joined Integrity and began speaking out as a gay priest. You know, I mean, I think maybe after...I think maybe it was after Gene was consecrated, so it was way later.

Heather W. Wow. Right.

Carter H. I believe. I don't think he came out much before then, or if he did it would have been in the '90s, but not the '70s or '80s. And there was the Bishop of Maine, Fred Wolf, who was just death on women's ordination, and especially on the Philadelphia 11. And you could—have you talked with anybody about the letter he wrote to us?

Heather W. Huh-uh.

Carter H. Bishop Wolf. Oh, this was both shocking and...it's so shocking it's almost funny, but it's also got a tragic dimension to it. After the Philadelphia ordination, when the presiding bishop called a special meeting of the heads of the nine provinces, the nine bishops who were heads of the United States provinces, Bishop Wolf was the head of Province 1, which is New England. And Bishop Noland was the Bishop over Louisiana, and he was the head of Province 4, which is the Southeast. And they were all meeting in New York City, and Bishop Noland's plane crashed landing in New York City and everybody was killed, which was a very tragic and sad thing.

So Bishop Wolf, in a combination of rage and grief, wrote the Philadelphia 11 and the bishops who had ordained us a letter basically

saying you see what you've done? If you had not done what you did, Bishop Noland would be alive today, but basically saying, not in so many words, but it had the feel of his blood is on your hands, you know, you see what you have wrought by doing this terrible thing. So many, many—and then one of us, Emily Hewitt, said, and I'm not sure she ever did this, but she was so—she is so quick witted—she told me at the time, she said I'm going to Xerox that letter we got and send a copy of it back to him with a note saying, “Dear Bishop Wolf, you should know that some yoyo has gotten hold of your letterhead.” She said that's how it feels. And that is how it felt. But anyhow, we had different responses to him.

But years later he came out as gay. He came out also as alcoholic and in recovery. Before he retired he called me, and I think it's because I was at EDS, and that was still close to him in that diocese, and asked if he could take me to lunch. And so we went to lunch at this restaurant, the Harvest Restaurant in Cambridge, and he said I just want to apologize for that letter that I wrote. He said that has haunted me ever since, and I hope that this will not be in my obituary when I die because it is definitely the moment I am most ashamed of.

And we didn't really talk about his being gay, but he had come out very—he was out by then. And maybe we did acknowledge each other's shared gayness, but I don't remember that. But what I remember was the conversation about the letter. And I also remember suggesting that he actually write all of us, write all the women who were still alive an

apology because it would mean so much to the people. And he said he would, but I don't think he did. But anyhow.

But that was a sad moment. But also I'm telling you the story because he came out, and when he came out he was different on the issue of sex and gender and women's ordination. And that somehow liberated him to change his mind.

Heather W. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Interesting. The other place...I mean, I'm also... The other place where closeted gay priests would have—I'm trying to—I don't even know what the language is. It's not even like just express their sexuality. But it seems like it would have, in some ways, have been a very comfortable closet, I guess would be the way that I would say it, and—

Carter H. Because nobody ever looked in.

Heather W. No one ever looked in, and there was plenty of room to... This is my perception, at least, is there was plenty of room to sort of have a social world within that closet with many other similarly situated other men.

Carter H. It's like an underground culture entirely, and people knew each other from one city to the next, and seminarians knew which older priests they could go to and which ones not to go to in terms of counsel or to be told where the clubs were or whatever. Yeah.

Heather W. I mean, that's... So this is the—I've seen evidence of that, but to have it put so frankly is pretty amazing. So there would have been a sort of underground culture of sociability for closeted gay priests.

Carter H. I think that's exactly right. And it's interesting, Heather, because I have found myself thinking about this from time to time in the light of the Roman Catholic sex abuse scandals and thinking I wonder why it's so different. Not that there's no abuse in the Episcopal Church, because surely there is, but it's not been the scandal, and it's not been to the degree in the Roman Catholic Church. And I think...I don't know. I think it has something to do with the Episcopal Anglican Church being further along in the realm of sexuality, and not having demonized sexuality the way it has been historically in the Catholic Church, which we also inherited, but have managed to work ourselves through quite a bit.

And also there being that culture, for gay priests, at least, where the abuse of children would never have even come up because they had each other. I mean, this would not have been at all, I think... I think celibacy—there's no celibacy requirement in the Episcopal Church, and I think therefore the freedom to do, to be sexual, even if it's hidden and underground, is really different than thinking you should be celibate, period.

Heather W. Sure, right.

Carter H. Because I've always thought that in terms of the sex abuse stuff that a lot of it has to do with repressed, pent up sexuality that has no outlet, that they have also, that it's gone generation to generation, and boys have been abused, and they become men who are abusive, and on it goes, the vicious circle. Whereas that has not been the same in the Episcopal world.

Heather W. Yeah. I mean, it sounds in some ways as if there were sort of avenues to facilitate gay sexuality, even though that's also disciplined and kept quiet.

Carter H. Yeah, you don't talk about it. And I think the Diocese of Chicago was just a wonderful case study. I mean, for somebody to do a real study of that diocese someday would be fascinating in relationship to this question because I think Bishop Montgomery was not the first or only gay bishop they had. And I think that that culture of closeted gay priests, male priests, was extraordinarily strong in the Diocese of Chicago, and had been for several generations at least. And again, that's something that I picked up from Grant Gallup. I mean, it was like a men's club that you belong to and everybody knows who you are. And within the club you can do anything you want to, but you just don't ever tell.

Heather W. Right.

Carter H. And there is no counterpart. I mean, there's nothing analogous among women, I think, women priests and women... You know, partly because we have very different experiences of sexuality, but also we've had a very different history in the church, and a different history in the priesthood, and it's just sort of a...it's more of a non-issue for us, I think, personally. It's just like this is like looking at an interesting historical artifact or something, wow, it's this, you know.

Heather W. I've wondered about the deaconess movement as something that might have been...

Carter H. Might have been analogous?

Heather W. Analogous. But I don't know.

Carter H. I don't know, either.

Heather W. I mean, I think, even just thinking about the networks and the sort of social circles of gay men, it adds a dynamic to the opposition to women's ordination because women's ordination sort of sexualizes the position of the priest.

Carter H. It does.

Heather W. And puts their sexuality under question.

Carter H. That's right. Shines a different kind of light on it.

Heather W. Mm-hmm.

Carter H. And what's interesting is that although a case can be made for it shining a more positive light on their sexuality, it didn't...that's not their experience of it. They don't want that light shone on it because it's... Maybe part of it is that the sexuality is so transgressive. I mean, there is a kind of beauty and power in being transgressive, and you don't want to be normalized. I mean, I think that's part of hidden sexuality, too, in that gay male culture, or at least that would be my guess as to what's going on a little bit, is that just leave well enough alone. Do not disturb this. Everything is just fine, beautiful, hunky-dory as it is, go away. There's a woman named Margo Guernsey—do you know Margo?—who's doing this film on the Philadelphia 11.

Heather W. I knew that...okay, Margo Guernsey.

Carter H. Margo Guernsey. And she's raised quite a bit of money to do this. And she sent out a clip of the film to the Philadelphia 11, the survivors of us, a month or so ago. And she's got a lot of the raw footage from 1974 and 1975, which is all sort of black and white and grainy, but it's really interesting. And in one she is interviewing the opponents to women's ordination, and one of them is this guy, a priest. He's in his black and white, you know, uniform, and he's standing there smoking a cigarette and he's saying, "Oh," he said, "I think of these 11 little priestesses." That in itself was a clue. Eleven little priestesses like little Indians all in a row, he says.

Heather W. Oh, no.

Carter H. And he takes a drag on his cigarette and he says, "I just wish they'd go away." And kind of flips his hand out, and you think... There's an image right there of what we're talking about. I just wish they'd...I wish they'd disappear. I mean, it was like, you know, he wasn't saying, you know, I wish they'd be killed or whatever, but I just wish that they'd just...I just wish this would go away.

Heather W. I mean, it almost sounds like he's camping, right, sort of deliberately, but at the same time he couldn't...what would it have meant for someone like to be conscious of themselves as kind of behaving in a campy way? I don't even know.

Carter H. That's a very fascinating thing to see 50 years later. I was like...

Heather W. Yeah.

Carter H. Because that was exactly what I experienced a lot of these guys to be like. Just please go away. You're just making our lives way harder.

Heather W. Huh. Making our lives way harder. Hm. I was thinking of New York as a similar... Paul Moore wasn't the first—I've been told Paul Moore was also not the first gay bishop.

Carter H. Of New York?

Heather W. Of New York.

Carter H. I don't know. Oh, well, I do know. Walter Dennis.

Heather W. Walter Dennis, sure.

Carter H. Well, he was a suffragan bishop. I don't know about diocesan bishops. But Walter Dennis was certainly gay. And I don't know Paul Moore's predecessors.

Heather W. I know, but I've forgotten. And it was his predecessor that is at least rumored to have been gay.

Carter H. It certainly could well be. Well, the whole thing, the sexuality has been such a realm of dysfunction over the decades, and people simply have not been allowed to be themselves. I mean, Paul Moore, I think Paul Moore was just a stellar human being. I love Paul Moore despite our falling out. He will...I will always love and appreciate him for the things he did do.



And when I heard that he was gay and had been sort of retired, but quietly so, I was very sorry, not that he was gay, but that somehow he had felt the need not to be open and not to ever show that.

And when I had first known him, when he first accepted me as an ordinand in that diocese, I knew that his marriage was in some trouble because his wife Jenny was pretty open about that. But there was never a word about anybody's sexuality, it was all about her hating to be married to a bishop, which I heard from other wives of other bishops, so which made sense, too, that these bishops were giving their lives to the church instead of to their families kind of thing. And then Jenny Moore died of cancer about the time of our ordination as deacons. That's why Bishop Wetmore had to talk to me instead of Bishop Moore, because Jenny Moore had just died, I think. And then Paul Moore married, he remarried, and married a younger woman, a wife of somebody, a friend of theirs, so it never had crossed my mind that Paul Moore was gay. And apparently he just didn't feel like he could be.

And then, of course, it was scandalous that he had been involved with a seminarian at General Seminary. This is how it all came out in the open. And this was seen as abuse of power. And I don't even know about that. I mean, I think we have...there's been so much to-do in the last three or four decades about power imbalances, and abuse of power, and to me that really is very murky. I don't know. I've never been willing to completely buy in on this notion that...first of all that there is ever equal power, and

secondly that to have a sexual relationship with somebody that you have met at a power-over situation is inherently abusive. Maybe it's because too many of my own parents' generation men married secretaries, and it's like who cares? You know, it's like sexual abuse is a horrible thing, but abuse of power does not necessarily mean sexual abuse.

Heather W. Well, I've thought a bit, and in that case in particular, that if Paul Moore was coming from a context where other priests were sort of your dating pool, that was how the closet worked, and a generation where coming out was sort of brought in a different way of connecting around sexuality. So I'm not...I don't even yet know sort of how to articulate that difference of perspective, but I could imagine, I could see from that how sort of coming out also changes—and this is also change over time—changes the dynamic of who is eligible and respectable as a sexual partner and as a mate, that Paul Moore would have been coming from a different time in that way.

Heather W. Mm-hmm. And in anybody's lives what constitutes sexual abuse? I think I misspoke a minute ago. I didn't mean to say power abuse is not necessarily sexual abuse. Power abuse is abusive, whether it's sexual or not. But imbalances of power is what I'm trying to say, any kind of an imbalance of power is not inherently abusive if it's sexualized. But what makes it abusive or what makes it okay in any of our lives? Not whether we're priests, bishops, gay or straight. What makes a relationship really okay? And I think the lines are a lot more blurred and porous than all these

rules about never dating somebody who's been in your parish, or never dating somebody who's been a patient or whatever. These kinds of things make no sense to me in the abstract because there are too many instances of people in history who've just been fine in these kinds of relationships.

Heather W. And here's the other piece of that is that I guess the... I think it was...there were, those kinds of relationships were normalized, to some extent. But it does make me wonder and think about—here we might be fully in conjecture-land, right, speculation—is thinking about the dynamics of gay male sociability in the Episcopal Church and how much there might have been sort of relationships of power, and even the potential for abuse of older and more authoritative kind of priests, and bishops, and diocesan officials with younger seminarians and priests, and how much that might have been part of that world as well.

Carter H. Right.

Heather W. So it's—

Carter H. Yes. Could well have been. And could still be. I mean, who knows what's happening even as we speak? But yeah, I think... But because when a church or any organization is unable to allow open conversations about sexuality, then that's just a setup for abusive relationships to somehow go underground and be tolerated until they're not because nobody, you can't... If you're a person in that system you don't have permission to try to sort this kind of thing out, so you don't. So you just live and you do

what you do, and you don't really get to talk about with anybody to figure out is this okay or not, and why not, or how so.

And that's what we really need more of in life, period, is that... It flies under the rubric of transparency these days. And it's not, to my knowledge, a tell all, or we just babble about our lives all the time, but it really is a how can I be transparent in my life in a way that makes a difference in a positive way to the people around me, or to my students, or to my parishioners, or to my neighbors or anybody else. What is their business and what is not, this kind of thing.

Heather W. The next question I want to ask you is about your decision to come out.

Carter H. Yeah, okay. Let's make sure that this is...

Heather W. Somebody coming around the corner.

Carter H. We'll see. This may get interrupted briefly.

Heather W. Mm-hmm.

Carter H. If it's my sister coming to let Cooper say goodbye to the horses we'll just wave to them and let them go say goodbye to them.

Heather W. All right.

Carter H. Oh, well. My decision to come out. Well, I've already said it was a combination of Ellen Barrett's being ordained in 1977 and my realization that she, as a sister priest, she ought not to be left standing out there by herself. And the response to ordination on the part, from some people being that my god, this is the most astonishing and terrible thing that's

ever happened in the church, and how hypocritical and ridiculous it was, given what we've just been talking about, that there have been gay male priests since forever being ordained, and that yes, indeed, there were other lesbians who had already been ordained, and I was one of them, and therefore it was time for people who could to start coming out and saying me, too, you know, so if you're going to go after her you have to come after me.

We had learned that from the Philadelphia ordination, the more the better. If there had just been one of us at Philadelphia we could have been picked off just like that—[snaps fingers]—but with 11, it's very destabilizing for people who want to undercut your movement because there are too many of you. It's like you pop up everywhere. So we needed that with gay people, too. And we already had some bold, outspoken gay men, but we didn't have any other lesbians who were out at that time, at least not in the priesthood. So that was one reason.

Teaching in seminary. I was at EDS by then and really did feel like it was time for me to be able to be a mentor at a different level, to be able to discuss honestly my sexuality in the contexts that were appropriate for that. And to be...to align myself with what was clearly an up and coming movement in the Episcopal Church for gay ordination and eventually gay marriage. So that's really why I came out.

And I chose sort of a double vehicle at the time to be publishing of two articles in June of 1979. One was "The Witness" magazine and one was in

“Christianity in Crisis.” And I very purposely chose two very different pieces. The one in “The Witness” was actually the transcript of an earlier talk I had given.

Heather W. Where was that talk?

Carter H. It was at the Church of the Good Shepherd or the Church of... It was in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts—no. It was in Massachusetts. Chestnut Hill? Gosh, I’ve forgotten. It was in a church, an Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Massachusetts at some conference on sexuality back in 1977, where I had been the pro-gay speaker, and Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse, who was a psychiatrist, a Jungian analyst, and an anti-women’s ordination person during the Philadelphia ordination, but had since been ordained herself, later, but she was very anti gay. So she’s one of the women I was talking about who was very much opposed to gay stuff. And so she had been an anti-gay speaker, I had been a pro-gay speaker at a symposium on gay people or something. I forget the topic.

But anyhow, my talk I published in “The Witness” magazine, and in that talk I come out as bisexual and I portray sexuality to be something very fluid, very sort of Kinsey-like, that we really are all sort of floating around and somewhere in this continuum, and that very few of us are sort of stuck at one place or another, and that that’s a great thing, I think, sort of the flow of sexual energy and our eroticism is a wonderful thing, and a sacred thing. So that was that piece.

And then the other piece published at the same time in “Christianity in Crisis” was I come out as a lesbian, flat out, and I say basically this—I’m not sure I said in the article that this is a political choice, but that’s what it was, that because it’s time to stand up and be counted I need to say clearly so people cannot pretend I’m not saying what I’m saying, is kind of I...is I am lesbian. Don’t tell me I’m not. Don’t tell me, well, actually you’re bisexual, or actually you don’t know who you are or whatever, because I’m telling you this is who I am.

So I published these things simultaneously. They are both present in my book “Our Passion For Justice.” And I told Paul Moore. I told my bishop. I told Harvey Guthrie, who was at the time the dean and president of EDS, where I was working, and I told my parents so that none of them would be caught off guard if this became a big issue. And I didn’t know whether it would or not because we had just been through the Philadelphia ordination as this big issue five years earlier and I figured this might be just a, you know, a flash in the pan and be gone.

And it kind of was in my life. It was like people who really did not like the idea that there were lesbian priests didn’t like women priests much either, usually, and therefore they had already either left the church or had already expressed their displeasure with women priests in general, and sometimes with me in particular. But my parents, Harvey and Paul all said that’s great, that’s fine. Paul Moore wrote my parents this beautiful letter in which he—which was really interesting, given the fact that he and I had

hardly spoken in five years. But he said I...he wrote to Mary Ann and Bob Heyward, my parents, and said he was writing them both as my bishop, but also as the father of a lesbian, Honor.

Heather W. Right, Honor.

Carter H. And he said I just, you know, want you to know how much I admire Carter and think of her, and I always have, and it's like my own daughter Honor, who's the same age as Carter, which is true. And Carter and Honor are both women of integrity, and they're bold and outspoken, and I admire them so much. But I just want you to know that you're not alone, you know, that there are lots of parents out there of daughters like Honor and Carter, and we need to be proud of them. And it was a beautiful letter.

Heather W. Wow.

Carter H. Yeah. It was a beautiful letter. And my parents, from that moment on, they adored Paul Moore. I mean, they had always liked him fine because they knew he was a good guy. But they just thought that was the most wonderful gesture. Which it really was, because he didn't have to do that. I didn't ask him to. He just did.

And Harvey Guthrie was wonderful, and he was the dean of EDS, he said that's great, you know. And he had known that I was lesbian, so I wasn't coming out to him, but he was saying he'd be fine with it being a public issue and felt very able to fight that struggle if it came to his door, which of course it did because increasingly people at EDS came out.



And my parents had to really struggle with it, but they wound up being fine. My dad died five years later, so he didn't have a long, long time left to really wrestle with it. But I think it was easier for him anyhow than it was for my mother, partly because I'm a daughter. I mean, I think... I'm not sure he would have had quite as much ease dealing with a gay son. But maybe I'm... But he—and yeah, my parents were both very kind and both justice loving people, so they did try to find ways of being supportive of anybody they could, and particularly their own kids. So that was fine.

And so there I was then out. And that did then give me the freedom as a professional, both as a lesbian and as a professor, and a speaker and a writer, to wrestle with issues of sex and gender for the rest of my life, up to now. [*Laughs.*]

Heather W. [*Laughs.*]

Carter H. I guess, you know.

Heather W. Still going.

Carter H. Still going, right.

Heather W. The detail of one of the publications naming yourself as bisexual and the other naming yourself as a lesbian, and what I heard you say was that coming out as a—or identifying yourself as a lesbian was sort of a more definite.

Carter H. Yes.

Heather W. And I'm interested—so what...was there—I'm just going to make a guess. My guess would be that naming yourself as bisexual could be like everybody's inherently bisexual, and so—

Carter H. Yes, it could have been. It was in a way my saying—I don't know whether I said this or not, I'll have to reread—but it was sort of saying we're all, sort of like Freud did, we're all sort of polymorphously perverse. But what I'm trying to say in this article is that I know that, I'm aware of that. I experience that in my body self, that I have an eroticism that could conceivably move in either direction, if we're going to be sort of bipolar about this, men or women. And I think it's great. It's an energy to be lifted up and acknowledged as part of God's power in our lives.

And the other one was well, but then you come down somewhere, so it was kind of a both/and. And later in my life I went back to those articles in, I think in my book "She Flies On," which is my most recent book, and say actually, the earlier article, the bisexual article, is more theologically profound to me, because I think that's so true of creation itself. Not just of me, but of all creation. We are in movement, we are in flux, and we are...there's an interesting—trying to keep our balance as we go through life.

And part of keeping our balance is needing then to name ourselves, and name our sexualities, and name our partners, and to have integrity, and also to stay sane. I mean, we're not just open and we're not amoebas when it comes to consciousness and decision-making. But neither are most of

our sexualities kind of fixed fast, even—I mean, I think particularly women in our society, but for men, too, that there’s a kind of fluidity that is often present where a man can be largely gay, but can sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, experience some heterosexual energy and be drawn to a woman. And certainly with women, so many of my generation of women who are now lesbian were married to men and had happy enough marriages, and maybe even happy enough sex lives, but who, for whatever reasons, either the marriages ended, the man died, they got divorced or whatever, and then the next partner was a woman.

So what does that mean about their sexuality? Is there not a fluidity in there? And I think most would say yeah, there actually is. And sometimes now it goes the other way. I know a young woman priest in Asheville right now who seemed quite happily partnered with a woman, and they had a child together, and then they got divorced, and now one of the women is with a man and one is with a woman. And they both seem the same as ever.

Heather W. And then when you chose to name yourself as a lesbian, I mean, what I heard you, sort of politically that seemed like the more radical position.

Carter H. Yes. At the time it seemed that way because it seemed that...it felt, in 1979 and the early ‘80s that if well-meaning, loving, caring people who were trying to wrestle with these issues, if they could find a way out they would not agree that yes, you’re lesbian. If they could say well, actually, she’s even said she’s bisexual, and that means she probably will, when she

meets the right man, she'll probably get married and have children or whatever. I mean, that was kind of the way of thinking. So that if you said actually, I am lesbian, and that means that I am in all likelihood going to be spending my life with women, or with having a woman partner, that's very different than saying well, anything's possible.

Heather W. So bisexuality is sort of culturally, at that point, you worried this could possibly include socially acceptable heterosexuality.

Carter H. That's right.

Heather W. And by naming yourself as a lesbian you're saying like no-no-no—

Carter H. Actually, no.

Heather W. —this is the way it goes.

Carter H. That's right.

Heather W. There's almost a...I'm trying to... Would it have made sense at that point to say—I mean, because some of the later, or maybe even at the same time, the way of insisting that gay and lesbian sexualities were okay were to talk about not having a choice. Did you ever worry about that?

Carter H. I didn't worry about it. I was pretty clear in those days, probably much clearer than I am now, that women, at least, lesbian women, largely did seem to have a choice. And I didn't know what to make of gay men saying they were born that way and they just didn't have a choice. I'd think well, if you say so. I mean, that was kind of where I was with that. But that did not at all ring true to my experience of myself.

And it didn't seem like...it didn't feel like me when I was in my heterosexual mode, which I had been earlier in my life a bit, that I was somehow not really me, or that I had not found myself. Naming of myself as lesbian did, in 1979, seem like a focused, conscious, political choice that I'm taking a stand here. And most of my women friends who were themselves coming out were saying the same kind of thing. It was like sure we have a choice. I mean, we could be straight and many of us have been, but we are with each other now.

And that was way different for the men in our lives, the gay men who were saying well, I've known since I was five years old. And I think it's bound to have a lot to do with how men and women are socialized sexually. I would guess it has at least as much, if not more, to do with culture than with...with nurture than with nature. Because I do think Freud was probably pretty right when he said that it's along a continuum—Kinsey. Kinsey and Freud saying it's a continuum, you know, 10 to zero, and that most people are somewhere in the middle, but many people are also at either end. That made much more sense to me than there being people who were just born gay and people born straight.

Heather W. Right, right, right. Right. Definitely.

Carter H. Can I just say one more thing about that?

Heather W. Yeah, go for it.

Carter H. Because now, in this historical moment—[laughs]—when I cannot even begin to keep up with all the different gender and sexual categories, and it's like I would need to have a glossary here in front of me even to have an intelligent discussion about cisgender and all the many variants of being gay or straight, or male or female, or neither or both, or they or him or her or whatever, you know, now it really seems to me that this kind of big world of sexual identities and gender identities has opened wide up, and we are a far cry from people being gay or straight or male or female, which is the way we were back in 1979.

Heather W. Right. And, I mean, even around bisexuality the sort of push now is to make bisexuality or pansexuality sort of visible. And the frustration is that bisexual folks sort of get lumped into either straight or gay.

Carter H. Yeah, and can roll in either direction and...yeah.

Heather W. Yeah, different world now. The question I wanted to ask was to loop back to what you mentioned in our earlier conversation about from your childhood the incident of sexual abuse that you said sort of later came up when you came out as lesbian for your parents' difficulty in accepting you as lesbian. And if you want to talk about the—you didn't talk at that point about how that came back, but if that is something you'd be able to talk about.

Carter H. Well, it only came back very fleetingly because it was very clear to me and still is that that incident of sexual abuse when I was about five years old by the yard man at our house here in Hendersonville... I mean, you

know, how can I say that it didn't have anything to do with it? I don't know for sure because we're all who we are because of many, many, many, many forces that we don't entirely recognize. But all I know is that first of all I did not experience that as, the being sexually touched by this man as abusive in a kind of hurtful way. It was weird. I didn't like it very much, but I wasn't being raped. I wasn't being tortured, or mutilated, or having something horrible happen to me. I just didn't understand what was going on.

And the more shocking dimensions of that experience for me were the reactions of the white men to the fact that he was black and the threatening to kill one more "nigger," is the word that got used again and again as he was being shot at by the sheriff. He was not shot, but the guy was shooting over his head. And that, to me, was the most horrific thing, and therefore what had happened to me, I knew obviously something... obviously it had meant something really bad because all of this wouldn't have been happening, but I really wasn't sure quite why it was as bad as it was.

And I don't think my body self connected it at all to me sexually because it was only kind of peripherally so. It was kind of I was touching him, and he... I remember touching his penis and thinking "yuck" more than him touching me. I'm not even sure whether he did or did not touch me. He must have because that's... my mother says that's—and I don't remember this—but she says that's what I told her Jeff did to me when she was washing between my legs. So he must have touched me. But I certainly

don't remember being hurt. But it was certainly weird. And so maybe it did affect me, but I don't think it had anything to do with my being gay or straight.

Heather W. Oh, sure.

Carter H. And my parents, I don't think...I think they were trying to figure this out. They didn't understand anything about why anybody would be a lesbian, least of all their daughter. Had they done—the same thing you hear again and again from parents—had they done something wrong? What was the matter here? Had they not noticed something? Had it been what Jeff did? So, you know. But I think they kind of quickly let that go because it so obviously had not made much of a mark on me.

Heather W. Right. Right.

Carter H. And so...indeed. I mean, I would say, you know, both of my parents, rest in peace, are gone, but I would certainly, if we were still talking about these things, and talking about them particularly in relationship to younger people now, I would say that at least as important as anything that ever happened like that would have been the gender role dynamics that I experienced as a teenager, and sort of the hateful bullying kinds of things that happened to kids in the eighth grade and whatever. Nothing terribly dramatic in my life, but getting your feelings hurt because you're never chosen to dance with the boys or whatever, it's like what am I? Does anybody like me? I mean, those kinds of feelings way more than what poor old Jeff did back then. And that's become very clear to me in my



older age and when I'm talking to my nieces and nephews about life and what they can expect, and what they should and shouldn't take to heart.

Heather W. And that does make it hard for mothers to accept daughters as a different kind of woman than them.

Carter H. That's right. That's right. That's right.

Heather W. Yeah.

Carter H. That's right, but I think my mother was—my mother died at 94 ten years ago, but I think had—she was really on this steep learning curve at the time of her death, and she was so, like she was so into the Barack Obama campaign, and never in a gazillion years would she have imagined she'd be voting for a black man even ten or 15 years earlier, I'm sure. But she was enthusiastically for Barack Obama, and she died the next year.

But she was also fascinated—I mean, she had come around totally to accepting my sexuality. And had she been a woman of a different generation, with different choices and different options, she herself could have been lesbian or bisexual or whatever. She had a good marriage. I think she and my father really did cherish each other. So I don't think either one of them ever probably experienced anything other than their own relationship with each other. But my mother was increasingly, I think, open to any possibility for anybody as long as they were happy and not hurting people. And that was really, it was a joy to see her coming into this. And she would have said it was because of me and my friends and all

that she was hearing and seeing in the world helping her realize it was a way bigger place with more options than she had ever known.

Heather W. Yeah. And she, at that point did your parents continue to live in North Carolina?

Carter H. Yes. They lived in North Carolina all their lives. But they... You know, there were many great things about my parents, but among the great things was that neither of them ever quit learning and growing and changing. My mother outlived my father by 25 years, but even he in his relatively shorter life was growing and changing. In fact there is one story I'll tell you about the ordination of me as a deacon that involves my father that is one of my—I've thought a lot about it recently for a number of reasons—but it's one of my very favorite stories.

My parents came to New York for my ordination as a deacon in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, which is where Paul Moore officiated. And after the ordination they, my roommates at Union Seminary and my parents, had a party for me in the apartment I shared with two other women. And champagne was flowing, and my father was feeling very good on the champagne. And this was in June of 1973, and Secretariat, the great racehorse, had just won. Did I tell you this story?

Heather W. Huh-uh.

Carter H. Well, this is a great story. Secretariat had just won the Triple Crown, so his picture was on the front of "Time" magazine as the world's greatest

horse, of course. And so my father says I want to make a toast to my daughter. And he reached down and picks up this magazine and he said, everybody look at this great racehorse. This is Secretariat. This horse just won the Triple Crown, he said. And he said I want to make a toast to Carter right now because she's a lot like this racehorse Secretariat. And I thought oh my god—

Heather W. Where is this going?

Carter H. —where is this going? And he said, you know, he said, back in Charlotte the boys in my office and I were talking about this great horse, and most of my buddies were saying that this horse ought to be retired so that he could start breeding. And he said, and I said to them, I said this horse should be allowed to race. And he said I say this about my Carter. He said, some people are born to breed. He said others are born to race. And he said Carter has just rounded another bend in her life. That's my dad in 1973. Is that not something?

Heather W. That's amazing.

Carter H. I just love that story. It's like who knew, right? Now that was before he knew I was lesbian. But it was like whoa-ho. But a man who would say that, of course, wouldn't have been—

Heather W. [*Laughs.*] Breeders, for reference, that's another thing. [*Laughs.*]

Carter H. [*Laughs.*] But eventually the man who would say that, had he lived long enough, would have come around to really being a strongly supportive gay

advocate for me and for the world. I mean, he would have been great. And he's just this sweet, kind Southern gentleman who worked for Esso, Exxon as a salesman, so he was not wildly educated or anything else. And he and my mother were both Christians, but not Bible thumping. There was nothing fundamentalist or even very evangelical about them. They both just believed that... The core religious value they would have both said would be kindness, love, or as translated into kindness, but also were strong justice advocates. So...so yeah. So I feel like I was extremely lucky in terms of having these particular parents.

And they also, I was their first child, and I think they would say, if they were both sitting here with us, which they probably are in their own way, that they really learned so much from my life. I mean, they had this really kind of odd, but in a good way odd kind of daughter, who kept doing things that nobody would ever would have expected, but why not? And that they were seeing this as a real gift and not as a burden. And if anything, they were worried for me.

I mean, my father's big sort of volley of concern when I came out to him and Mom as a lesbian was who will take care of you when you get older? And I said, well, Daddy, you know, women tend to outlive men anyhow, and most husbands are dead before their wives. He was a case in point. I said I'll be all right. There will be somebody around. And he said oh, okay. I mean, it was like maybe you're right about that.

Heather W. Were they worried about you not having children?

Carter H. No, I don't think so. I never, ever had any sense that somehow...that I had any responsibility to have children or that I would necessarily need children to have a fulfilled life for myself, much less for them. And my father died before there were any grandchildren at all in our family. And my mother loved her grandchildren. If my sister comes here with the little boy, the little boy's father is my sister's son and would be my parents' grandchild. The little boy would be their great-grandchild.

And my mother died before Cooper was born, but she adored his father and his father's sister, so she loved the grandchildren. And my father would have, too, but he died a week before Rob, the boy's father, was born. Like they somehow passed in the cosmos, one coming, one going. So they named Rob after our father, Bob.

Heather W. Thank you.

Carter H. Yeah.

Heather W. I can stop this. I think this feels...we've talked a lot.

Carter H. It feels that we've come—

Heather W. It feels like we at least need a break.

Carter H. Yeah. Yeah, we do.

Heather W. Unless there's something else you want to say at the moment.

Carter H. No.

Heather W. Okay.

Carter H. And if there is anything else that you do want to talk about we really can do this by phone.

Heather W. Yes.

Carter H. So we just have to set a time and figure out how to do it. It's intense, isn't it?

Heather W. It is intense.

Carter H. Very intense.

Heather W. Yeah. What I was going to say is especially to talk about—I'm doing a lot of work on sorting out what was going on around a lot of the stuff we were talking about in New York and sort of the closet, and the half open closet and all of that.

Carter H. It's fascinating. I haven't thought about this in so long.

Heather W. So you really helped me think through that stuff.

Carter H. Well, that's good because this is not something I normally think about on a Sunday morning. [*Laughs.*] Although one thing you should know, and I don't know whether this has any place in the written record, but no reason why it shouldn't. But I've joined the Unitarian Church. I don't intend to leave the Episcopal Church. I've decided that you can be both. And I don't know how my bishop would feel about that. But I've joined this Unitarian Church here in Brevard because it really feeds my spirit.

And I'm so tired, quite frankly—and this is about sex and gender, too—I am tired of having female images and power left out of liturgies. I think

there's, particularly a complete generation or two after the ordination of women there's no excuse for that, that this nonsense about the father, son and spirit without any acknowledgement that woman power, or mother, sister, daughter is right there, too, if you're going to use human images for God. And I don't care that the historic creed talks about a father and a son. That is...the historic creed talks about a lot of things that nobody believes in anymore.

So, you know, I'm just...when I go to have my own spirit fed, then I need to go to someplace that is really affirming who we are in our fullness. And I'll still work some for the Episcopal Church preaching, teaching, whatever as I can, if called upon, but I am not going to spend any more time going to Episcopal worship and being left out. And there's no excuse for it. We have hundreds, if not thousands, of pages of liturgies that are very beautifully inclusive that women and men have worked on since the 1970s that are right there at the church's fingertips that they just won't use because they're not part of the prayer book. Well, it's like well...

Heather W. The prayer book has changed. It even did.

Carter H. Yeah, it did. But it needs to keep changing. No, that was not part of it. They just will not give up on this... And talking to several bishops over the years, men and women bishops, I've said, you know, why not put things like the Nicene Creed into an appendix in the prayer book as a historical document and have somebody do an analysis of what it meant

then, and why it's listed as a historical document rather than as a centerpiece of Christian worship when nobody believes it.

Heather W. Right, right, right. And I hear that difference. Most recently I went to Sunday services at Holy Apostles, which, as of—this was maybe three weeks ago—still uses the Nicene Creed. But if you listen to what people are actually saying—I mean, so what's printed in the bulletin and what's being said formally at the pulpit is the conventional masculine names of God, but I hear like father and mother, she, she, I mean, from the people—

Carter H. That's right. And that's what I do—

Heather W. —in the pews.

Carter H. —when I do go to worship, that's right. But, you know, and—

Heather W. But having that be formally part of the liturgy is a different thing.

Carter H. Right. But someday maybe that'll happen.

Heather W. Mm-hmm.

Carter H. Because as you know, so many young people are leaving, and not just because of that, but, I mean, that's just an...that kind of shows ways in which the church is not even attempting to keep up with the people in terms of... And it's not a matter of being contemporary, because it doesn't need to... I think some of the older language is beautiful. That need not be disposed of. It's just that you need to have something added there. And with an explanation as to why. I mean, it doesn't come out of nowhere.

Heather W. Right. Right.



Carter H. Well, okay.

Heather W. Thank you.

Carter H. Thank you, Heather.

01:49:32 [*End of recording.*]