

Interview: Bernadette, Scarlet, and Jo
Interviewed by Michael Riordon

Key

[] one word (at most, two) inaudible
[inaudible] several words inaudible; in some cases, two people are talking at the same time
[redacted] word(s) redacted for privacy
[Really] interviewer said “Really”
?duck? sounds like “duck” but it’s not clear
... an interval without speech

[Interview 1 of 3]

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Please introduce yourselves, and tell me your age and how you make your living, more or less, and where.

Interviewee: My name’s Bernadette [redacted]. I live in Plainfield, Pictou county, Nova Scotia, and, I make my living as a community worker at a local women’s centre.

Interviewee #2: My name’s Jo [redacted], I have, we have a farm that I share with Scarlet, and my age is forty-seven.

Interviewer: I should just get spelling, now. [redacted] [Bernadette: Yes it is]-capital D-? [inaudible] Okay. [laughter] Right. And Jo is J-O? [Jo: Yes]

Interviewee #3: I’m Scarlet [redacted], and I’m forty-six and I share a farm with Jo.

Interviewer: Scarlet with two Ts? [Scarlet: One T.] One T. And [redacted]? [Scarlet: [redacted]] Okay. Right. How did each of you come, how or why did each of you come to be living where you are? By what journey?

Jo: How far back do we go? (laughs)

Interviewer: As far back as [].

Scarlet: Jo and I had a farm, just a small holding, in England. And, she was teaching at the university there, and, I was doing a Ph.D. at the time, and we bought a, just a small place, thinking it would be nice to have a field and just an animal or two, and, with eight acres, and then, we were there for about four years, and liked it, and, I was thinking about coming back to Canada at that point, and Jo was looking for a change from university. So, what we worked out is, I would start applying for jobs in Canada, and she would take on farming full time. So, we came and

visited and looked around and liked Nova Scotia, didn't know anybody here, but liked the place, and, as it turned out, I landed a job here, which made a lot of ifs and buts into something very definite and very clear (laughs) [Yes].

Jo: They paid our moving expenses. [laughter]

Interviewer: So, the job came before land, then.

Scarlet: Well, it seemed a place where we could combine both, [Right] so that, Jo could come in as a farmer, and, I would have a job, and we could finance moving, that way, and she would be able to try farming and see how that worked at all. So, it got tied in with immigration, because, she, Do you want to tell this part? This is your life (laughs).

Jo: Yeah. I mean, we had the problem of each of us being a citizen of a different country, and, not having the privilege of being heterosexual, and therefore, you just get married and [inaudible]. So, we had to find a way. And, we decided that I would be the one that went through the immigration procedure. And, there were different ways of doing it, but, the only avenue that was possible was that we set up some sort of business. So, we had to, I'd always wanted to do farming, anyway, and, as a kid I'd worked on farms in the summer, and stuff like that,

Scarlet: That's what you told me, anyway. "I know how to do this." [laughter]

Jo: July and August, I knew farming, yes! So, I applied for citizenship, and, I mean, for landed immigrant status, and, we went from there. And it all, through various, telling different agencies different things, the whole thing came together in the end. And, it was possible for both of us to be able to live in the same country, without the problem of

Interviewer: What was the business? The business was farming?

Jo: The farm, yeah. There were certain

Scarlet: Yeah, categories of immigration, that Jo had to come in as an entrepreneur, which meant, you had to have enough money to set up as a farm and not collect welfare. [Right] So, it was about proving that this was going to be a viable economic set-up.

Interviewer: Farming.

Scarlet: Farming.

Interviewer: Viable! (laughs)

Scarlet: It was not easy convincing anybody of anything. [Right]

Jo: But there were other avenues that were even harder, [Yes] so

Scarlet: But it constrained us to buy a farm that we would not otherwise have bought, because, it had to be one that the Farm Loan Board would approve so that Immigration would approve. And so it had a lot of concrete and a lot of barns and a ?mortgage? So, it took us ... six years to move out this way, and we bought a smaller place, and,

Jo: It's not an agri-business, anymore, I mean, we never wanted an agri-business, but that's what was seen as suitable. [Really] So now we have a lot less concrete and a lot less barns, and

Scarlet: A lot more free-range style of farming.

Interviewer: Now going back a little, [*telephone rings*] you grew up in England, [Jo: Yes] right? And, what were you teaching?

Jo: Social work.

Interviewer: And where?

Jo: University of ?Bradford? I had a tenured position, I'd been there seven years. We were a department which was pretty radical, for, I mean, by all sorts of standards; there were Marxists and feminists and all sorts of variations in between in politics. And, of course, when Margaret Thatcher came along, ours was one of the places that was really [Targeted] []. Yeah. So. So people were really given a very hard time.

Interviewer: How?

Jo: Well, they had a very smart way of cutting staff, which was, they kept moving it down the hierarchy. So, you were put in the position of having a staff meeting that discussed who should go. 'Coz it wasn't the respons- So we ended up having discussions about who was a manager. And. So they turned people against each other. And they started, you know, previously very liberal people who looked fine, politically, once their backs were against the wall, started saying things like, "Well, you know, that's a married woman; she should really go," and, "You don't really need the job," or, "Your politics are not quite right," or, you know, all those sorts of things. I mean, people started drinking themselves to death, and, all kinds of really serious, self-destructive stuff was going on. So, it was quite nice to leave there, [Yes] of course, Canada started going through it since, but

Interviewer: I was going to say, yeah, this is, I have a friend who's in the civil service, and, it's the same; very skillful operators are at work here; they're not stupid. They know their psychology, unfortunately.

Jo: Well, this looked like a country of, I mean, such enormous resources. You know, this is so rich, and yet, there's people who are so poor, also.

Scarlet: Also, it was impossible for us to really set up a farm there, because of land prices. They're just much too great. You really have to inherit there, to be able to be a farmer. You can't, well, we had eight acres, but it was poor land, on top of a hill, and, there's no way you could have any sizeable farm that would make very much of a living.

Interviewer: What was your Ph.D. in?

Scarlet: Sociology.

Interviewer: Did you finish? Is that where you met?

Scarlet: Sexuality and contraception.

Interviewer: Sexuality and contraception. Really! That was your thesis? Why England? How did you

Scarlet: I got married, went over there, and, got divorced and stayed. To make a long story short! (laughs) Met Jo.

Interviewer: In university, somehow.

Jo: We were both students. Scarlet was in a lesbian theatre group, touring the country. So I became a bit of a groupie. And

Interviewer: What was that called, the group?

Scarlet: Country Lesbian Theatre Group. Sounds fun.

Jo: [] fun things about taking off the lesbian lifestyle, I guess, whatever the hell that is. [Yes] About things that one would recognize on the stage. [Yes]

Scarlet: [] things and lesbian lives, theatre by lesbians, for lesbians.

Jo: And then there was a Feminism In Sociology conference for students, we were both students, and ... there was a week-long course, on, to do with feminism, and, there were four people who were meant to be leading workshops, and they decided that, in the interests of equality, two of the people leading workshops would be men. And we said, We're not having men teaching us our feminism. So, a group of us got together, and just ran our own school, for the week. Fortunately the weather was good, so we could meet outdoors. And, a group came out of that,

which was, which we called the Patriarchy Study Group, that, Scarlet and I really got together over that particular issue; this was a political struggle. And good fun.

Interviewer: When you were

Scarlet: Ended up being on the land. (laughs) [laughter] Nothing to do with feminism.

Interviewer: Right. So this impulse to get the farm there, was there anything in your background that would have, I mean, where did you, did you grow up rural? Or

Scarlet: Oh, I grew up in the city, I grew up in Winnipeg. But my mother had lived on a farm, and they moved to the city as soon as possible, to set up a little better, ensure their kids didn't have to work so hard on the farm. She was thoroughly horrified when I then moved back to a farm. [laughter]

Jo: She was on the prairies in the thirties.

Scarlet: Yeah. This was the Depression; much harder.

Jo: But you did learn about wheat at school, right? Being in Manitoba. [laughter]

[0;09;57]

Scarlet: It didn't start as a farm. It started as, It would be nice to have a field, [Yes] to have a little more space. We were living in a terraced house, which is the row of houses, sort of one room on each floor.

Jo: But in Haworth.

Scarlet: In Haworth, yes.

Jo: You know, where the Brontës come from?

Interviewer: Oh, really.

Jo: So there was the tourists bit, and the little cobbled streets and the very, you know, nineteenth century style, and then there was, the working class town which was behind it, that the tourists wouldn't go into. So. [Right]

Scarlet: So we bought this place with eight acres, and we had one cow and one horse, and, dogs and cats, and it grew. Once we started doing it and we decided we liked it, then it grew, and of course, they all have calves and, it's very to 'send' the calves (laughs).

Jo: It's also political issue. I mean that we always felt that, pretty ambivalent about farming, in that, it's, I mean particularly seeing the farms in places like southern

Ontario, these huge, intensive, rearing places, and, [Factories] yeah, animals being treated as, you know, just an industry. Indeed, it's called the animal industry, around here. So I guess it's honest; not very [], but. So, we do see the stuff about how you raise animals, as a political issue. And, how you treat them. On the other hand, you can't say it's animal rights because we do kill them in the end, quite a lot of them. Eighty of our chickens are being killed this morning, and, we'll be selling them in the next few days. But, we hope they've led a better life than they would have done in an intensively reared place. So we've put a lot of effort into learning things about how people do alternative forms of farming, and, try to put those things into practice. So,

Interviewer: We'll come back to those things. Bernadette? How about you? How did you come to be living here?

Bernadette: I fell in love with a woman who lived in this area.

Interviewer: You came from somewhere else? Or

Bernadette: Yes, I lived up in Pugwash. And, how I got to Pugwash was, I had just come back to Canada and sort of the Maritimes after travelling for two years, sort of around the world, and, in that time I realized that I really was a lesbian and I stopped denying it. So, I ended up in Pugwash, where, it was a house full of gay and lesbian people. So, it was a safe house.

Interviewer: Oh. Is that the Harry and Susan you were talking about?

Bernadette: Yes, exactly. [Oh yeah] So, I lived there for three years, sort of surrounded by [] of messages about homosexuality, and. And then, in that time, I met a woman who lived up in this area, and, I moved up here to be with her.

Interviewer: Did she have the place already?

Bernadette: No. We lived down the road, then we moved up here together, and, we bought the place together. And ... I've always wanted to live rurally, but I always sort of moved in and out of the country and the city, back and forth, all through my twenties, and

Interviewer: Which city?

Bernadette: I lived in Vancouver, Edmonton, Halifax, Moncton, so, I spent my twenties doing a lot of moving around. Working, moving, working, and travelling.

Interviewer: As a heterosexual?

Bernadette: Asexual. (laughs)

Interviewer: Asexual. Waiting.

Bernadette: Exactly! (laughs)

Interviewer: A lesbian-in-waiting.

Bernadette: (laughs) Right, exactly! [laughter] So, I always knew I wanted to live rurally, and

Interviewer: But you grew up in the city.

Bernadette: No, not really. I grew up in P.E.I. for the first [Oh!], for the first, sort of, ten years of my life, outside Charlottetown, and then my mother ensured that we always went back to the Island in the summer. So we always went back to our relatives' farms on the Island, to live the rural life, and, be close to the beaches, and, but then we always had to go back to Moncton to live, go to school and stuff. So, I sort of had this dual life, of city and country. But I always liked the country, but I was never sure of how I wanted to make a living there. [Yes] [laughter] Well, I don't make a living in the country. I mean, I drive into town every day to work at the local women's centre.

Interviewer: And town means

Bernadette: New Glasgow.

Jo: How many, what's the population? Ten thousand?

Bernadette: Yes, New Glasgow's about ten thousand people. You take the other surrounding towns, it's a bit more, closer to twenty.

Jo: Supports two shopping malls, I guess would be [inaudible] [laughter].

Scarlet: and one women's centre. [laughter]

Interviewer: Two malls and one women's centre. [laughter]

Bernadette: But I do make, I sort of have a, if I wasn't working at the women's centre I'd still make some of my sort of annual income off the property [], by, I sell chicken and I sell ?pork?, honey, and if I had to live here full-time I would get, I would be raising more pork and more chicken and more bees. But, that's a lot of work. [Yes] It's very physical, and, so, it's kind of nice to have an office job, it's hard on the head but it's easier on the body. [Right]

Interviewer: In fact, you're doing both.

Bernadette: Yes. That's right. I am doing both. Sometimes it feels a bit stretched, yeah. But, I've been fortunate enough to be working primarily on projects, at the women's

centre. So it has a beginning and an end, and, seven or eight months down the road there's a break, so I can spend more time at home.

Interviewer: Projects of what kind?

Bernadette: Well, projects that the women's centre would write a grant to get funding for a particular project, could be, working with [] for women, housing, various issues that deal with women's equality, just

Interviewer: Trying to get ahold of the ever-diminishing ?funding?.

Bernadette: Yes. That's right. Yeah. They just keep nickel-and-diming us. [Yes] So, I sort of had this, I still, sort of, tend to (laughs) live in the country and commute to the, sort of, town or city to make a living. [Right] I guess things haven't changed in twenty, thirty years. (laughs)

Scarlet: I think there are more chickens. [laughter]

Bernadette: Yeah, right. But I don't want to be driving into town, going to work, until I am a senior citizen. I would like to be a little more creative with what I have here, and be able to use the land and, I mean, without breaking my back. So, to devise something where you draw people here, so I can suck their money out of them! (laughs) [laughter] And, I mean, my partner ?Joyce? and I, we talked about [] a cabin or two to rent, and

Voice: It's a beautiful spot.

Scarlet: You have a lot of woods, here. You could [].

Bernadette: There's a lot of potential, here. There's a lot of nice woods back there, and

Interviewer: So when you say 'the land,' what are you describing? How many acres? and

Bernadette: A hundred acres.

Interviewer: Yeah? And, what portion of it is woods, about?

Bernadette: Just about everything except the ?clear? part you see with the orchard and the garden. So, it's primarily woods. So there's good potential. I mean, I heard yesterday on the biggest industry right now comes to tourism, ecotourism, and [Yes], all around me, [] far away, witnessed the clear-cutting and the destruction in the woodlands, and, to just have the woods be woodlands so that creatures can live there, and, it's not being used to plant the new forest, then, I mean, I see this as being an ecosystem that hasn't been touched by big industry.

Jo: Not since the British in the eighteenth century. (laughs)

Bernadette: Right! (laughs)

Interviewer: Really. So you have old-growth forest, then, there. No?

Jo: The British took that.

Bernadette: This was all farmland, actually.

Interviewer: But, in two hundred years. Oh, I see.

Bernadette: No, this was, all of this countryside actually was primarily small farms. [Really] Yeah. A lot of it. But now, of course, with the woodlands, is, they're suppressing the hardwood growth, the natural regeneration. [inaudible] so that they can plant their evergreens [For pulp.], for pulp, yeah.

Jo: Plantations running. I mean, they're not forests any more, so [inaudible]

Bernadette: Yeah. Forest agriculture.

Jo: There was somebody on the CBC once who was talking about, "Oh, we have lots of variety in the forest, as long as we replanted. We have red spruce, we have black spruce, ..." (laughs). [laughter]

Bernadette: Yes, that's right. That's their thinking. [Right.]

Interviewer: We had a notion at our place, one way we could sort of survive was, by having a sort of spa. The idea would be that, in the sort of ecotourism notion is that, people would actually live in the woods, without shelter, and, would sort of forage off the bark, and, would pay a lot, of course, for the experience. [laughter]

Jo: You must have a better climate than we do. We had to go out and count our chickens everyday, too. [laughter] Why have we got a red light flashing on this?

[0;20;00]

Interviewer: The side's running out. It's sort of pre-warning us. ... Okay. Can you tell me something, each of you, about your journey of self-discovery in terms of sexuality? How far back does that go, and, what route does it take, for each of you?

Bernadette: Well, I didn't actually decide that I was comfortable with being a lesbian until I was thirty. But, when I think back to my youth, and, you know, when we have all these adolescent [] and sexual fantasies, it was (laughs) with women, it was always with women. So, it's really interesting to think back to what it was like,

and, to think what it would have been like if society could have been more comfortable with homosexuality.

Jo: It's a long road to get to thirty.

Bernadette: Yes. That's right. It was a lot of confusion in my twenties, and, not being comfortable with wanting to be a lesbian. I was just not comfortable with it. I was, I guess I had my own homophobia [inaudible].

Interviewer: Was the idea of being a lesbian, was it an idea? Or, not rooted in experience? Or, just in fantasy? Or

Bernadette: Well, it was more than that, 'coz I knew lesbian women, and, I knew, not that they talked about it, but, you know, obviously sort of a, "Oh, those two are together," and, you know, and I played a lot of sports, [Ah-hah!] so there was all these jockettes (laughs) [laughter], so, like, I was inundated with lesbians, I mean, you think back, Oh, yes, she was a lesbian, she was a lesbian [Right], the whole frigging team was lesbian. [Yes] So, I was surrounded by strong, lesbian energy, but yet I still did not want that for myself. I still, you know, strong Catholic upbringing, even though I rejected that when I was fourteen, it still sort of has a way of containing you. And ... So, it was actually when I finally sort of went on this two-year journey around the world, and just sort of looked at, looked at a lot of things, not just my sexuality, but, a third-world country and what that looked like, really looked like, in my eyes, so, that two years had a profound effect on me. So I looked at the world very differently. And, maybe I needed to do something like that in order to let go of all this garbage and conditioning and homophobia.

Interviewer: I'm just going to take this out.

[Interview 2 of 3]

[0:00:00]

[17 seconds of silence]

Interviewer: So were you sort of doing, playing the heterosexual game, were you dating?

Bernadette: No, I had nothing to do with men, basically. [Really] Yeah, no, I was just friends. Everyone was just a friend with me, so I didn't put out any kind of feelers, to men or women. No, I was just, I wasn't unhappy being not sexual, I was fine with it. I mean I certainly wasn't interested in men, and I wasn't ready to be with a woman, so I was comfortable with that.

Interviewer: And you knew you were clear about that.

Bernadette: Yeah I was, actually. And it didn't cause me any major discomfort or pain or feeling lonely or isolated or confused, I was okay with that. But I was actually, when I finally decided I wanted to let myself be attracted to a woman, it was very liberating. It was. So maybe, I can see where it was oppressive because I didn't let myself be open to an intimate relationship. So ... I'm loud and proud, now. (laughs) [laughter]

Interviewer: Now, presumably there's some difference

Jo: and only forty-three. [laughter]

Scarlet: Give me another thirteen years. [laughter]

Interviewer: Presumably, that's some distance traveled, from, you didn't at thirty-seven, just sort of shed all the conditioning and everything. You struggled.

Bernadette: Right. Yeah. I think, because we live in such a strong heterosexual society, I think we are all, no matter where we are in our analysis of our homosexuality, you can't help but carry a bit of homophobia with it. [Life-long] Yeah. I think it's still there. [Yeah. How could it not be.] Yeah, how could it not be.

Interviewer: What about, after you'd come out to yourself, as it were, what about, how did you, sort of, come out to the world?

Bernadette: Mostly through friends, and just sort of getting to know the lesbian community more, and, sort of making my friendships within the lesbian community.

Interviewer: It was around here, then? Already?

Bernadette: Yes, that was sort of Halifax, well, where I was at that time was Pugwash, so, there was already that strong, social, homosexual community there, that was, you know, quite networked between Moncton and Tatamagouche and Halifax. It was, it was a real, sort of, bringing together of people, in Pugwash, it was a very busy house in many ways. It was a safe place for us all to meet, and [Sounds wonderful], yeah, it was great. I'm sorry you're not going to meet []. He was very sort of instrumental, I think, in drawing people from the city and the country, being able to be comfortable. There was certainly some heterosexual people there, too, but they were very comfortable with all this homosexuality. [A little oasis.] Yeah, that's right.

Interviewer: Jo? Scarlet? What was your journey like?

Jo: My first lesbian experience was when I was fifteen. So, I always knew I was a lesbian but, it was an, Oh no, I can't be one of those. And, sort of like, people with two heads. It was really scary. [Yes] And, I was, I mean, classically, I was in a boarding school, and, so the relationship happened within the school. And it was

heavily disapproved of. And, there was the possibility of being expelled, and all that stuff. But I was rather good at sports, so, they wanted to keep me because it was important that the team won a few games as well. [Really] Be sort of kept as a player (laughs) [laughter] rather than. So, I never had a heterosexual experience and I was never interested in men. And, I always knew I was a lesbian. The problem was, of course, about the self-hatred. And, really, I didn't, wasn't able to, I didn't try to, I wasn't able to deal with it [telephone rings] until the women's liberation movement. And, once I made contact with that, I realized there were a great number of people around who were just like me. And, so that was enormously liberating on the level of sexuality as well as many other issues. And, I don't know what would have happened without it. I mean, women's liberation, it was very important. So,

Interviewer: So, you didn't encounter the, I have the impression that in, here at least, early in the women's liberation movement, there was a kind of anti-lesbian thing, a sort of desire not be identified too much with lesbians.

Jo: No, I think that's more of a North American experience. I mean, because, I don't think there was a, I don't think there's going to be bourgeois women around. And people who worried about. I mean, the people around me were unemployed. [Right] And you've got temporary jobs, and, you got a job for a bit, and, you were off for a bit, and, [Right] and it was that sort of time as well, whereas, you knew there was another job to go to, sometimes. But, I was in the closet for quite a long time. And, I mean, during that time, I got shot at by the woman's, the woman who I was having a relationship with, her father. And, he also tampered with my car.

Interviewer: Shot at! You mean literally?

Jo: Yes, literally. And having a gun in England is a fairly rare [Yes]. Also scary. And

Interviewer: What were the circumstances?

Jo: Well, he was, I was twenty-two, so he discovered about this relationship and said he was coming after me with a gun, and it was, he knew where I was living, I was living on a houseboat, and, so I was running, and, he only sort of [] a couple of shots and then left, I mean, clearly, it was scary for him too, in some sense. But then he decided the next thing to do was to tamper with my car to make it impossible to start. And, fortunately somebody saw him doing it. So. I had a very old car, that you could just open the hood and. So all he did was stuff a piece of paper in, from the distributor cap, he just, from the top wire, he just put a piece of paper in, the main wire comes in to the distributor cap, put the distributor cap back on, of course nothing happens. So.

Interviewer: What kind of car?

Jo: Sorry?

Interviewer: What kind of car []?

Jo: Oh, it was an Austin van. You could see the ground moving past you as you drove, [laughter] under your feet.

Interviewer: Somebody saw him, and so told you, that he had tampered.

Jo: Yeah. I was at work, and, he came to my place of work to do that. Somebody looked out the window and saw him. And I got sacked from the job, where I was teaching, for being a lesbian. And, was taken in by the police for a time; this was before I came out. So, coming out was really, was not a big deal. And at the time I was coming out, I was working in an organization that was, they were beginning to set up shelters for battered women. So I organized the first, what was called a national conference, which was people from around both the area and the United Kingdom. So people were there from Dublin, Edinburgh and London, and the woman who was the chief character in it, who was by no means the only person who was doing the work, but the one who got the publicity, decided to denounce me at that conference. And, I don't remember what happened, I think it was so horrible. And, afterwards she wrote every single municipality in Britain, to say I was 'from' women's liberation and gay women's liberation. And I thought I'd never get a job again. There was no gay women's liberation organization. It was, I mean, she was just raging. So, that was, by that time it seemed fairly pointless being in the closet. I mean [laughter] I mean, I only lost one more job after that and one job I got because they wanted a trendy issue which happened to be a lesbian, so, you know, it actually became better, coming out.

Interviewer: And what was this with the police?

Jo: Oh, they just decided they didn't like lesbians, and, that, they were just picking people up. I mean, it was no big deal, harassing people. It was in London.

Interviewer: When was that? Sixties?

Jo: Oh god. 1970's. Yeah.

Interviewer: Seventies. Really.

Jo: Yeah. So, I mean, what with the women's liberation movement, and general harassment, you may as well be what you are, [laughter] which is (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) If you're getting arrested for it! Right.

Jo: So, after that it was much better, really. I mean, it was a great improvement.

Interviewer: What about family? I mean, blood family.

[0;09;42]

Jo: My family collapsed. I mean, in terms of psychiatrists, I'd really make a classic lesbian. [laughter] My father died when I, was killed when I was five. My brother left home when I was seven and was a great deal older than me. And my mother said, well, her best education was I was either going to a children's home or I could get you into a boarding school, and I got a scholarship, and, so I was a poor kid, and, so, yeah, by nine, so everything had gone when I was nine. So. My mother is still alive, and it's still a very tense relationship, if you can call it a relationship at all. And I haven't been back to England since I've been here, which is now nine years. But we do plan to go back in the spring; there's no spring in Nova Scotia. [laughter] So, I did, I told my mother I'm coming back, because she said she might live 'til then, and, she would, maybe I would like a family reunion. And, I don't know these people. There's no way I could have a reunion, because, I wouldn't know them in the street. [Yes] So, and because I went to boarding school and I was taught a ... a relationship from the Victorian empire, of a completely different social structure, that your loyalty is to your institution, and to the people from that institution, whether they're older or younger than you, they have a, they have a same sort of family, [Scarlet: Cousin] yeah, same sort of loyalty as family, in that, if somebody arrived on my doorstep saying they came from the same institution as I came from, then, I would have a duty to look after them until they got themselves on their feet, and if I threw myself on somebody else's doorstep, they would have that duty to me, even though they weren't actually family. In fact, it would be more important than family. And I have a cousin, my mother's brother's son, who, he's in England, who I had very nice childhood Christmases with, and I remember these two boys, my two cousins, and, he disappeared somewhere and nobody ever spoke about him, and lived in Brighton, which is a major gay centre in England, on the south coast. And, he recently died, and I hadn't maintained contact with him. And I said, Well, what happened? He was fifty. And, my mother said, "Well, they found him in his apartment, and, he died of malnutrition." Fifty, by malnutrition. He belonged to a vintage car club, he had a job, and, my assumption is he died of AIDS. And my family will not talk about that. And, I knew he'd been ill, 'though nobody had told me how or why, and I said, He'd been ill for some time, hasn't he? And my mother said, "No, nobody expected this." So he was utterly denied. And I pity him. [Sounds like []] So I've been regretting and remembering and. ... It's scary.

Interviewer: So is this family reunion thing going to happen?

Jo: [in a whisper:] Oh, I doubt it. (laughs) But I do have an interesting niece who lives in Geneva. So she's never been to England. My brother's wife is Chinese, so, these kids are very Chinese-looking and get discriminated against in all sorts of ways in England, so she says she wouldn't live amongst the English for anything. [laughter] But she lives in Geneva and speaks Chinese, obviously, or Cantonese, and English and French and, so, we thought we might try to get to Paris, and get

her to come and meet us in Paris. [inaudible] So. (laughs) I don't think any family member would be interested in meeting []. [Right]

Interviewer: Scarlet, how about you?

Scarlet: I seem to be the odd one in the crowd. (laughs) Well, I got married. [How old?] I was twenty-two, and I married a boy I'd been to high school with. And he was, he had a scholarship in England to study, so we went over together. And, just about a week after we got there, we went to Cambridge, and, a woman came to the door and said, "Hi, I'm so-and-so, and, welcome to Cambridge, and, [in an arch voice:] The economists' wives meet regularly for tea on a Tuesday morning." And I was so horrified (laughs) that I'd gone from being this independent person to somebody's wife, that I started, I didn't go to the tea parties, and started going to women's liberation meetings. (laughs) So, my road was different. I was, I got into feminism first.

Interviewer: So, you ostensibly were, or thought of yourself as, heterosexual, when you married.

Scarlet: Yes. Yeah. I mean I'd certainly, had thought about, lesbians or being lesbian or, had a very close girlfriend that I had considered, some way through school but, never had the nerve or the opportunity. And, so it wasn't for several years that I've been, it took me a number of years to come find that route. I got more and more into feminism, and in part, my ideas moved faster than my emotions and my nerve. But I can remember doing things that, on reflection, look like I was well on the way. Like, for instance, I would go to the liberation front meetings with my husband and another couple, because I convinced them that they really ought to support this. And, can remember things about women's consciousness-raising groups for those women who did talk about having relationships with women, and, remember those times clearly. But at that time, at least in Cambridge, the group was not ... there were people that, I've since known, were lesbians or have become lesbians, but they, none of us talked about it, apart from the consciousness-raising group; it was raised; we didn't talk about it in our group, even though it was there. For three years. Yeah. But about three years after that, when I became a lesbian and I started going to lesbian conferences, I saw them there. So. We later talked about, we just, yeah, it just wasn't, there wasn't a clear lesbian network at that time. We were doing things like, "We really ought to have more social times," and, deliberately made an evening session as opposed to (laughs), or a weekend session, but, I wasn't, certainly wasn't very much a part of that. Then, and that was in Cambridge. When I moved to Coventry, then there was a much stronger group of lesbians there. And, I still went to GLF meetings, (laughs) ostensibly in support.

Interviewer: Gay Liberation Front? So, did you sort of decide, then, in an almost theoretical way, that you were lesbian?

Scarlet: No, no. It sort of merged. I was caught up in the relationship I was in, [Ah] and, you know, everything that was going around that, whether we were going to stay together or not stay together, and, [] we were both having other relationships. And, I got out of that, and into a relationship with another man, in fact, and, the first woman I slept with was the partner, the previous partner of the man that I had gotten involved with, [laughter] because, which worked out because, he was still seeing her on some level and be with, I would talk to him, as couples of my husband and him and her, we would spend time together, so I knew her quite well. [inaudible 8 seconds] [laughter] He suggested that, to clear any tension between Janet and myself, that I, she was living in another city, I have to go and visit with her for a weekend, which I did. [laughter] Changed [inaudible]. [laughter] But there was a strong lesbian group there, and they were, so I already knew of the lesbians, who were out and queer and. So I had a ready group to move into.

Interviewer: When you two went through the immigration process, was the fact that you were two women together, was it an issue, or did it come up, or, was it relevant?

Jo: [inaudible]

Interviewer: No. But, so you, how did you

Jo: We, well, it was like going through a fog, because you never knew what was expected of you, [Yes] and what they wanted. And, the immigration people, I'm not sure that they're Canadians at all. I mean, they don't have that friendly, ?me-to-you? style at all, right? They're sort of suspicious of you. [Yes] So, the whole time there was a lot of anxiety around all that. And, we did, one thing was, Scarlet [] working for university and, the status of the university and that stuff, Scarlet wrote a letter saying she would support me, which we still have somewhere, we think we really must [inaudible]

Scarlet: type that, provide her with food and shelter for six months.

Jo: We won't claim welfare or. So, that

Interviewer: Ah-hah. So you were like, what is it, guardian, sort of, or whatever it's called.

Scarlet: Sponsor.

Interviewer: Sponsor, that's it.

Voice: But still, that didn't give you any

[0;20;00]

Scarlet: What happened was, Jo had to apply to Immigration, in England, to start the application there. [The Canadian Immigration] So, she went to the Canadian High

Commission and saw somebody there, for an interview, and, applied to be a farmer. And they, on that route, then they give you six, they say, okay, go over and find the farm, and then come back and we'll discuss whether that's possible. So she got through the first door to say, okay,

Jo: It was the second time we tried; it wasn't the first time.

Scarlet: Well, the first time, you said you were a social worker, and they rejected that. So, the second time, she said

Interviewer: I'm back! I'm a farmer! [laughter]

Voice: and did mention.

Scarlet: and went as an entrepreneur, to say that, so she was coming independently. So, she was given the okay to come and look for a farm, and had a six month's visa, to do that. At the same time, I got a job; we came over together, except when we got to the immigration line with our dog, who was looking like she knew Jo, which we had to do this little number about, "Oh! That's a very friendly dog you have!" (laughs) [laughter] So. But she only had a six month visa, which meant the first year was really hard, because, we didn't know at what point whether she'd get renewed, whether the farm would be okay'd. [Right] I had two years at which to return to England, because I had a right-of-residence there but not citizenship. So, we had two years to decide whether, see whether this was going to work. And in the meantime, she was supposed to go out of the country and, she had six months to find a farm, then she was supposed to go back to England, to do all the paperwork from there, and wait for the okay, and then come back, which meant, you know, I'm here in the first year of farming and, the animals, and, she's supposed to go back and sit somewhere in England and wait. We knew that that would, one, be very hard on us, and two, you know, weren't sure where that kind of paperwork would lead, so we would really try to insure that she could renew this visa. So, it was at the end of that six months that we had to do this sponsorship thing. But, I think, part of what swung it for us was, by the time, by the end of that six months, we had set up a business partnership, so that she was a farmer but she was in business with a Canadian citizen. She had a job and could pay the mortgage.

Jo: But you didn't [] once.

Scarlet: So, and when we went to the Farm Loan Board [] okay to get her immigration through,

Jo: The Farm Loan Board is like the farm credit corporation in the rest of Canada, in Nova Scotia.

Scarlet: So it's their word, whether this is a viable farm or not. So they had [] you had to go through.

Jo: But you had to get the application form. And to get the application form we had to shout at them. I mean, it was one of those things where you're in a situation and you decide, they're going to close the door, so you may as well shout at them because there's nothing else that you can do. So I shouted at this guy, and he went to his filing cabinet and got the form out. It was unbelievable. (laughs) [laughter] I mean, if he hadn't given the form, then, there's no way you can start the process. [Yes]

Scarlet: So the first one we did was refused. And so we went for another farm, and we went through the whole process, and this all takes months.

Interviewer: This is, saying what, to buy a farm?

Scarlet: Yes.

Interviewer: Ah. So you can't do it unless you have money from them; is that?

Jo: Mortgage.

Scarlet: Yes. [inaudible] But also the Immigration wanted somebody to okay the farm, so that they knew, like, the Canadian High Commission [Right] needed somebody to say, This is a viable farm. [Yes] So the Farm Loan Board would be that body, whether they were giving us a loan or not. [So they said No to the first.] So they said No to the first one, so we went and looked at something less expensive, (laughs) that was, still looked like it was an industrial farm. And the second one, the main thing they wanted to know was whether my job was permanent.

Bernadette: Nothing about the farm?

Scarlet: Well, they went through the rigmaroles about, you know, beef doesn't pay, milk doesn't pay, and chickens don't pay, you can't get in, and [inaudible] Well, this farm had an acre and a half of raspberries [inaudible] which they thought maybe women could handle, [laughter] so we made a big deal about that.

Interviewer: Did they actually say that, or did you just presume that's what they were thinking?

Scarlet: We could see it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Read between the lines.

Jo: They thought beef was heavy work. A little too heavy, was beef.

Interviewer: Carrying around. [laughter] [inaudible]

Scarlet: Well, there's a lot of [] in all this [].

Interviewer: Yes, oh yes. So the farm you eventually got was what?

Scarlet: So we got a farm that had four barns, had previously been a pig farm, intensively-reared.

Jo: Horrible. I had nightmares about that pig farm.

Scarlet: Yeah. But we had raspberries and [inaudible] income from that, and mixed, other animals.

Bernadette: How did you, what about your full-time job, because, it wasn't, it was just a position, wasn't it?

Scarlet: It was tenure-track.

Bernadette: Okay.

Interviewer: What was it, and where?

Scarlet: Sociology, teaching, I was teaching Health and Wellness, and Gender Issues, at Dalhousie, []

Interviewer: In Halifax?

Scarlet: Yes.

Interviewer: So you had to commute?

Scarlet: So I had to commute. That was the other problem; we had to get something that was commuting distance. So, the other farm we had was an hour and five minutes on a good day, (laughs) door to door.

Interviewer: And, essentially, you learned as you went?

Jo: Yes. It was a very hard year.

Interviewer: But, presumably, got, the immigration came through, and,

Jo: Well, yes, Immigration came through and the loan came through. Each one said, if, I mean, Immigration said, "If the Farm Loan Board will say Yes, we'll say Yes." And the Farm Loan Board said, "If Immigration says Yes, we'll say Yes." [laughter] So we just went to each of them and said, The other side says Yes. [laughter]

Scarlet: [] They say Yes if you say Yes.

Jo: Right. Which is another way of saying the same thing. So we had to do that. And so they said, Fine. But I still had to leave the country. So one morning we got up at four o'clock, went to Digby, got the ferry across to Saint John, drove down to St. Stephen, I walked across the bridge,

Scarlet: Me and the dogs (laughs) were standing on the side, realizing we haven't brought any passports. [laughter]

Jo: So, Scarlet and 'Bo' and the car left behind, so I walked through the bridge into Calais, I got my passport stamped that I'd been to the U.S., and walked back again across the bridge, right? and then I was a landed immigrant. (laughs)

Scarlet: It was kind of them to do it that way. You're supposed to go back to your country of origin, before getting back in. [Yeah]

Jo: So then we drove home again and [] evening. [laughter]

Scarlet: Oh, and then you had to get the x-rays and all that, to prove you wouldn't be a burden on the health system.

Jo: Which was very nice, actually, I mean, they were, that was, I don't quite understand but that was a free service, and, the Canadian health system. But, they just let me go [inaudible].

Scarlet: But then 'they' checked and a woman came around and I said we really were filing, and,

Jo: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, they did, eh? Immigration did? Really.

Jo: Yeah, Yeah. After a couple of years, and every now and again after that, they wanted to do some survey, but, we just said, go.

Scarlet: We were suddenly, and this is probably entirely coincidental, but, we were on every slip Canada, Statistics Canada survey that was going (laughs) round the neighbourhood, for the first three years. [laughter]

Interviewer #2: So now, have you got citizenship now?

Jo: No. [inaudible] I'm a landed immigrant, and until quite rec-

Interviewer #2: So still

Jo: Well, it would seem fine, until the Liberal government came in, and all that they're whipping up, you know, stuff about immigrants, and, you know, we all go around lying and stealing and, you know, [] people's attitude to you, [Sure] within the community as well. I mean, you just know. So, ... a friend of ours down in Halifax, who has also decided that she really has to do the immigration, I mean the citizenship [inaudible], so we'll, we said this 'winter?', this is our project, and, we both have the forms, and, I said her pressure on me to better get the photograph to send off, and, I mean, theoretically that's not an issue. I mean, once you've been in three years.

Scarlet: Well, you could have had it after three years, but it wasn't seen as necessary until [].

Jo: Yeah, and

Interviewer: You'll have to pledge allegiance to the Queen.

Jo: Well, yeah! [laughter]

Scarlet: She's got to do it before there's a King, right? (laughs)

Jo: Yeah. I mean the whole thing's crazy. I mean, I've always maintained the women's centre should be running its course about, you know, where Saskatchewan ends, and

Scarlet: What river runs through where. (laughs) They give you this little test that you have to [Yes]

Jo: So.

Interviewer: Okay. ... I'd like to ask something now, sort of very generally, about, well, no, specifically, how have you created your social world around here? How has that happened? ... I mean, you said you didn't know anybody when you came here first, right? So how did you ... And you, similarly. You came with a partner, right?

Bernadette: Yes, well,

Interviewer: Did you know any other people around?

Bernadette: Yes,

Interviewer: You did already.

Bernadette: Both homosexual and heterosexual. We were, I mentioned to you before we started the taping here, was that, just because somebody's homosexual doesn't mean you want to be friends with them. [Right] and, so often heterosexual people I feel closer to than a lot of homosexual people. [Really]

[0:30;10]

Interviewer: Is that, so that's your circle?

Bernadette: Well, my circle is, actually, my circle, the people I want to sort of socialize with, and, sort of, eat food with and, is small. But my community where I know, you know, a lot of people in the women's movement and, it's very big. I know a lot of people, in the community and in the province, because of being involved in the women's movement and the women's centre. [Yes] It's a very small province, so, when you're, you become visible just by being involved, [Yes] politically, either environmentally, or, in the women's movement. But, the circle that I wish to, sort of, socialize with is quite small. And, it's primarily lesbian, with some heterosexual people. And, it's just my own personal preference; I don't need a lot of people around me. I like it, I like my quiet time and,

Jo: When is that? [laughter]

Bernadette: I just like to socialize. Well, I had an hour this morning [inaudible] [laughter] when my pump was working, and, you know, just sitting down. [laughter] So, my social circle is a mix, and, it depends on the person, not their sexuality. And, of course, the heterosexual people I socialize with are very gay- and lesbian-positive, of course, it doesn't need to be spoken.

Jo: But sometimes they do try to give you lectures on, you know, how wonderfully liberal they are. [laughter]

Voice: That's your circle.

Bernadette: Yeah, okay. We're talking [] right now, not the other community out there which is the traditional, straight community, that we're all surrounded by. [Yes] That's another issue. [Yeah]

Interviewer: How about you? How did you make, how did you, sort of, make your social world, after you came here?

Jo: Well, we arrived here and, didn't know anybody. And, really didn't want to mix in the university circle, [] I didn't want to speak to anybody from academia. (laughs) I know.

Scarlet: [] one department [].

Jo: Yes, I was very polite, and, we decided we had to be out and therefore, yeah, so people knew that I existed. [Yes] Well, when we came we realized that there hadn't been any, there weren't any lesbian conferences around. And we got together with, Bernadette was one of the people we got together with, to organize the first, that we knew of, lesbian conference, in Nova Scotia. And, we were involved in organizing the next one as well. So we got to know quite a few people that way, and if they're doing something. An easy way of knowing people and just having connections with people, still, through that, from that. So that was a fun thing to do. The second time we tried to do it was having simultaneous translation and signing and, trying to do the work.

Interviewer: Right. The first one was when?

Jo: '86?

Scarlet: '86 I think.

Jo: A long time ago. There was another one in '87.

Interviewer: And where were they? Here?

Jo: Halifax. [] We were, I mean, we were both city women, coming to the country, and, so that's been quite a shock, and, can feel very isolating.

Scarlet: Plus, we were in the country, I mean, we had a small farm in the country, but, we were fifteen minutes from a reasonably-sized town. And, a lot of other lesbians. And I don't think we were quite, prepared is a word, had thought about, space, how space is different in Canada, than England.

Jo: We had public transportation.

Scarlet: Yeah. We had public transportation, we had three major cities within an hour of us, [By train, bus] by train, and even the town that we were in, you know, we had to split the group, we formed two. [Really] So, it was quite different to come and be even just an hour outside of Halifax and feel like, we were far from anything. Also, we were setting up, and busy, I was in a new job, trying to organize the farm, immigration, and, so that was preoccupying.

Jo: Definitely a long learning process, I think, how to make a social life that's in a much smaller place. And, sometimes that's been quite difficult. So

Interviewer: Difficult, how?

Jo: Because you don't know enough people. I mean, because there aren't enough choices. What we were saying before was that, people in the city that you would not necessarily be friends with, you have to have some relationship with of some

sort, in a rural area. You get forced in that position. And now our social life is organized around, partly around farming. And therefore, because, we know the other farmers in the neighbourhood, and, so therefore you see people on a regular basis and meet them, and,

Interviewer: Primarily heterosexual?

Jo: Yes. And [] male-identified. [Really] Yes. So

Scarlet: It's a level of socializing, it's not

Interviewer: It's what?

Scarlet: It's a level of socializing

Jo: Yeah. I wouldn't count ... And you can see that, just by driving past mailboxes, how, you know, you don't see women's names, you just see a series of men's names on mailboxes, [Yes], and indeed if you look in the phone book. [Yes] (laughs) So, there's those sorts of, so we

Scarlet: In the city you can be very selective and get together with people who are very like you, and, split with somebody, there's always somebody else, and, a network of people who, are either doing a particular project or doing, you know, think alike, politically, close to you. And, the country is, you just don't have that kind of, that number of people, so, it's a whole different level. If you have an argument with somebody and they're still there and you still have to live with it (laughs).

Jo: I think what goes on in this lesbian community is a sort of dance, which is, that there are steps of, sometimes people are friendly with some people and sometimes they're friendly with other people. And, people keep, they're not changing partners, they're changing friends. So ... I think that's the way it works. You might argue with that

Scarlet: It's not comfortable.

Jo: No.

Interviewer: Why is that, do you think?

Jo: Why which?

Interviewer: What you just described. Why has that happened?

Jo: The dance? [Yes] That's a good question. I'm not sure I know the answer to that.

Interviewer: I wonder how much it has to do with external pressures, and the way we translate those internally in our own relationships. I think a lot about, and I've talked with people a lot on the road about, just couples, alone, rather than larger circles of people, the strain there can be within relationships when you're in the closet, for example. Very complex internal pressures, because, if you're together in public, and you're, I talked to women, who actually, this is really sad, this woman was crying when she told me this, but, she and her lover, a little place in northern Ontario, had actually split up, because they, they had worked so hard, in public, *not* being identified as lovers, that the stuff they did, the distancing stuff, actually started to work. Now, that was a sort of very spectacular example of what you were talking about happened a lot more subtly. So I wonder about all of that, that, you know, that, the ways that we play out among ourselves, different things that we're taking in all the time. And how can we not.

Bernadette: I think it's, at least in this community where I live, I think it's more personality than it is, sort of internalized oppression. I think it's just personalities, get along, and also, politically, that, person A will do something which conflicts with person B's way of approaching something, and, there's not too much leeway in how to resolve it except to agree to not have much to do with each other.

Interviewer: Which presumably in the city wouldn't matter much, 'coz, there's so many people, like in the sea, you just kind of

Scarlet: Particularly, you've hit upon a political issue. I mean, we had an event occur a year or two ago, which polarized people. Some people came down, this should be done about it, and, some people said, that was entirely wrong. [Right] And it was quite a fundamental split. It just split into, you know, different politics, really, how you handle a problem.

[0;40;20]

Bernadette: I think political splits are a lot more serious than personality splits. I mean, I think we all have sort of a tolerance for, maybe I don't particularly care for this person because, you know, they're not, what they do doesn't interest me very much, or, you know, it's just not the kind of person I'm interested in having a strong friendship with. But I think when it comes to a fundamental political split, it's a lot more serious, and, there's a lot more ramifications.

Interviewer: It's always saddening to me, you know, when a, we've been involved in groups, when we were in the city, that, where there'd be splits, and, it always seemed to me we have so few resources and people to start with, but, it's terrible when splinters happen and, you know, you've heard they're subdivided, and it's just, there's not enough of us for that, I mean, things like, remember the big huge fights in the women's press in Toronto, terrible stuff, because there's so few resources. And I think, Oh, no, don't do that.

Scarlet: But it's essentially important issues. [Yeah] You can't, the only way on some of those things to say we're all together as a community is to ignore what some of those issues are, which I think is worse.

Interviewer: Well, except that I think sometimes, we haven't, well, how would we have learned, that there are ways to go through those things. I mean, people actually do that, and sometimes in my, it happens. And, I think it's just that, I mean, this may be vestigial idealism on my part because I never was very good at it and actually practiced but, [laughter] I still believe that it's something to do with learning how you do that, and, that it is possible. So, what about neighbours? How are you with your neighbours? I mean, you talked a bit about the, sort of, the social, farm-to-farm socializing, and so on. What about the realities of that? How open can you be? What kind of relationships do you have?

Scarlet: You mean, about how people tolerate gay and lesbian?

Interviewer: Yeah, and, what do you have to put up with? When do you bite your tongue? You know, all that kind of

Scarlet: We find people are reasonably tolerant as long as you don't make an issue. So, if you talk about it or hold hands in public, [Yes] you know, but they don't actually try and stop us farming or being there, and, there is some respect for looking after your animals properly, and, so that there are other things that cross that. But, I don't think we've found it as a major, I mean, we're careful who we do spend time with, but,

Interviewer: Do they deal with you as equals?

Jo: They try not to. They will, I mean, if they phone they will ask for somebody specific, whoever answers the phone, [Yes] and, so that's quite hard to deal with. Whoever answers the phone is the person who can deal with this issue. [Yes] So

Interviewer: Is there an assumption that one of you has to be the one who runs it, right?

Jo: Yes. So therefore we have to worry about that; which one of us is being seen.

Scarlet: Who handles the money and who fixes the machinery. [Yes]

Jo: Who runs up to the bank. So, once we've realized somebody's stereotyping one of us, then,

Scarlet: We just switch! (laughs)

Jo: We talk about and decide, okay, then, it's your turn to be the person who's seen on the tractor. [Oh, really! Quite interesting.] Yeah, we do, yeah, quite carefully.

So, we listen to what people are saying and how they're saying it and who they're asking [inaudible].

Interviewer #2: Keep them guessing! [laughter]

Jo: So yeah, we do have to deal with those sorts of issues. I mean, nobody's rude to us. And, if you go to the local store and stuff, then anyone can speak to you. And, as you said, you are judged by how you look after your animals, but also, people are very pleased to see a small farm still existing, 'coz they know these things [], and so, so they want that to happen. And as there seems to be nobody else stupid enough, then, you know (laughs)

Scarlet: They stopped to look at the goats, and they wonder what the hell you're doing with them. (laughs) [laughter]

Interviewer: What are you doing with then? [laughter]

Jo: Let me see: the buck came last week; they're getting []. (laughs)

Interviewer: Tell me a little about the operation. When you say small, how small? How many acres?

Scarlet: It's a hundred and seven acres; it's about half cleared. We have about fourteen, it's come down for the winter but usually about fourteen cows and

Interviewer: For milk?

Scarlet: Milk and meat, mostly. We couldn't get any

Jo: Excess market.

Interviewer: For what?

Scarlet: ?Scofred? seems to be closing down its cream, well, it's now shut its cream quota, which means you have, in the supply management system you have to wait to be allowed to get in to ship cream. [Oh] So we were on the list, third or something, when they closed the door. So we had planned to do that, but we couldn't []. So we raise free-range and organic meat, mostly, chickens, geese, cows, goats. We had sheep for quite some time but we're cutting them back.

Interviewer: These are all for meat, including the goats?

Scarlet: Well, the goats we milk and sell, the males go for meat, and some of the females, for breeding.

Interviewer: Do you sell the milk?

Scarlet: We can't sell the milk, you're not allowed to even give it away.

Interviewer: So what do you do, use it?

Scarlet: We use it to feed lambs and to feed pigs [Oh, really], and, to re-cycle it. Pigs, we have five.

Interviewer: Yeah. So

Scarlet: Certification story? (laughs)

Interviewer: Yeah. How does that work?

Scarlet: We were involved with the Organic Certification crop, the OCA, Crop and [] Association, when it formed in Nova Scotia. But

Jo: We got into an argument there; it's just the way it goes. (laughs) We always end up arguing.

Scarlet: Two arguments. One, which was that it was an American organization and most of the fees that we were paying were going to the States. [Really!] So, that seemed crazy. We thought, Well, the least we could do, a Nova Scotia organization. [Right] And the second was in this grossly male-[] organization (laughs), to the point of which, you know, all these guys would sign the forms as their names and their wives, they were directly doing it but none of them named. [Right] So.

Jo: Just another dispute. (laughs)

Scarlet: We made a scene for a while, then we went away. (laughs)

Jo: But that collapsed, and there's a very strong group, actually based in Halifax, which is the Nova Scotia Organic Growers, who are in contact with [] I think as well, and, that's people looking at how can we get organic food, but also bringing people in like Stuart Hill, and speakers, and they have a newsletter which comes out quarterly, and they've now set up a certification program. So, we did send for the details in the spring, but nobody quite got round to mailing it to us, 'coz, we don't live up the valley, which is mostly where [] based. And, it's wonderful.

Interviewer #2: Janet ?Lockey? ?

Jo: Yes, right. In fact we had a letter from her yesterday, which I haven't opened yet; there you go. Yes, right. She does the mailing, subscriptions and stuff. It's weird in the Mari- Is it the same in the rest of Canada? We talk about the Valley, right, like there's only one. [Yes]

Interviewer #2: Well, when they

Jo: Right. And then there's the Island, which is obvious-, which must be PEI.
[laughter]

Scarlet: ?or? Cape Breton. [laughter]

Interviewer: So,

Jo: It's quite dynamic in Nova Scotia at the moment, and it's, there are a lot of people working on this. What happens with us is that, I mean, we send animals off to slaughter, I mean, killing things is just horrible, and, granted it is a mark of how serious a farmer you are, is whether you can actually kill an animal, and we can't. So

Scarlet: We kill chickens, but it's not

Jo: Yeah. So we do slip there, it's true, but then, we are [inaudible] women, so, yeah, we may have to be a little nurturing. But then, so, but that's quite convenient, because then we get stuff, chickens come back looking like they came from the supermarket. [] go down and collect these chickens and []. So tend to deliver down to Halifax once a month, which gives us an outing. And

[0;50;22]

Interviewer: Delivered to where or what?

Jo: A lot of people, allergies, which is an increasing number of people, people who are concerned about how their food is raised, there's a certain amount of animal welfare stuff but that's not very strong here yet, though I'm sure it'll come.

Scarlet: A number of lesbians.

Jo: Yeah, a few lesbians, correlation []

Interviewer: I mean, you actually make individual deliveries?

Scarlet: Well, we have been; we're now smartening up and getting people to meet us at a central spot. [Really] Just outside a health food store, so that's easier for us.

Jo: So, were able to charge higher prices than we would in Pictou county, nobody has any money, [Right], so. But that's quite nice. I mean, you also get a glimpse into other people's lives, right? Some people are doing interesting things.

Interviewer: And you aren't going through three layers of distribution, which are [Scarlet: No] [] all the money, and

Jo: We've quite deliberately worked away from that.

Scarlet: You can't. I mean, the only way to make it pay at all is [] different things. You can't. Because, nobody could, I mean, [inaudible 3 seconds] (laughs), it wasn't worth picking them. I mean, [] you could get from our local supermarket, unless you could sell them directly. You know. But you couldn't, we couldn't do it all, for the labour, it wasn't worth hiring somebody five dollars an hour, to pick them, 'coz we were getting seventy cents a pound. And that was just picking, that was without everything else that went into it. It was just crazy. [Right] 'Coz that's the price they could get from what they were bringing in from Ontario, so that's the only price they would give us. [inaudible]

Interviewer #2: So, you end up being forced more and more into niches,

Scarlet: Yeah, certainly.

Interviewer #2: like, you take a particular crop that's got a high

Scarlet: It's a crop but it's also, it's, so far, we have access to this, because of the organic and the free range, that people who care about the food that they're getting and don't just want what they can get at the supermarket for a lower price, and, we can afford to give it to them for, that we have that market so far until they bring them in from California.

Interviewer: So, does that mean all your feed and so on has to be organically grown?

Jo: Theoretically it does, or at least a high percentage.

Scarlet: For certification it would. [Right] We're not certified at the moment. But, we can't afford that, because, it would cost us so much to bring in that grain,

Jo: We did advertise. We talked to the co-op and, we advertised and, mainly in Ontario and Quebec, the sustainable newsletter that comes out of Quebec?

Interviewer #2: Animal Farming.

Jo: Yeah. So, to try to get some organic grain, and also something without colouring in it, for feeding the fish, as well, which you can't get, because, the company says there's no demand.

Interviewer: So, [], is the fish killed?

Jo: Well, we just have a few trout in the pond, and we wanted to be able to sell a few, without [], like, to commercial standards, to the people who have gotten their allergies, and, all of us worry more and more about what the hell's coming from

Northumberland straight down here. And, so, but, all of the fish food has [], which is something which gives a pink colouring to the flesh, because trout essentially look like salmon.

Scarlet: You can get a better price for salmon than you can get for trout, so, they'll make it look like salmon so you can charge more. That's the only reason.

Jo: So, the companies say, "Well, you know, people used to take these tablets to make themselves look like [], that they had a suntan." Same stuff.

Scarlet: They all look like lobsters. [laughter]

Interviewer: Really! [inaudible 5 seconds] You end up looking like a salmon! [laughter]

Jo: But, when you talk to the companies, they, as I said, it's all about demand, and we said, But, what are we saying? And so, if you bought, I think it was ten tons, they would charge us more for not putting the colouring in. [inaudible 5 seconds] So we did try advertising, and also advertising for organically-raised grains, because our problem is protein, here, we have a season that's just enough for soybeans, would have been great this year, the year before. [inaudible] So. And we tried to talk to [] about transportation, tried to deal with that, but couldn't. So we grew millet this year, to feed to [], which is okay, but then of course we had such a great dry summer, very good for millet. So

Interviewer: Dry is good for millet?

Jo: Yeah. Well, it comes from Africa, and, I mean, we don't know that much about it, we should know more, but

Scarlet: Dry hot season. [Really]

Jo: Only shallow-rooting. Yeah, grows really well. So [inaudible] interesting too to try and see [inaudible].

Interviewer: And Bernadette, is the part of your living that's based here, you're raising, you said, pigs and

Bernadette: Yeah, mostly because I really care about where my meat comes from. So, mostly it's to raise my own meat, and then, everything else is sort of extra, in excess. And I make a bit of money on it, and, I also use it as a barter, to barter with people.

Interviewer: Oh really. So bartering what, for example?

Bernadette: Labour. A neighbour comes and helps me with some of the construction stuff around here, and, in exchange I [] (laughs)

Interviewer: Like re-building the barn, you mean?

Bernadette: Yeah, things like that, and then the housework too. So we just had this exchange. I mean, in dollar signs, if you'd added up it's about five hundred dollars, six hundred dollars, with the food, in exchange for labour.

Interviewer: You work out dollar values? Is that

Bernadette: Oh yeah, it's a dollar value, but there's no money exchanged. So, I

Interviewer #2: Do you keep records? Like, labour records of how many hours of work and stuff?

Bernadette: That's right, yeah, we do.

Interviewer: You're that clear about it.

Bernadette: We're that clear about it, oh yeah. [That's wise.] Oh, absolutely. Yeah. So, it's my bartering thing, it's, some of its, it's all out here for me to raise, so my animals are raised from the spring to the fall, and, animals for meat for the winter, and, start it all over again in the spring.

Scarlet: And the bees.

Interviewer: And the bees. Honey?

Bernadette: Yes.

Interviewer: How do you do that?

Bernadette: I extract them in September, and put it in jars or buckets, and, [inaudible] it's something to exchange, or, I could make money on.

Jo: An enlarged version of the label, just up above the window here.

Interviewer: Oh, wonderful. [laughter] And these would be lesbian bees, then. [laughter]

Bernadette: Absolutely, yes.

Scarlet: They're all queer!

Jo: Well, 'coz they're all female, aren't they?

Bernadette: Yes, they are. It's a very matriarchal [], it's true. And I also rent my hives out to other berry-growers, so, I make some money [inaudible] off the bees as well. Well, they just need extra bees in the blueberry fields for pollination. [Oh really.]

So, it's a little industry, actually. Most bee-keepers with any number of hives would rent them, in the spring, 'coz you've got apple-growers or [] or to blueberry-growers.

Interviewer #2: Do you leave them in their fields for the season?

Bernadette: Yeah, just for about three weeks.

Interviewer #2: And then you can bring them back?

Bernadette: Oh yes. In June.

Interviewer: Blueberry nectar.

Bernadette: Yes, that's right. Yeah.

Interviewer: It's a great idea.

Bernadette: It is. So, you know, you can make a little money on that.

Jo: Bernadette loads these hives in the back of the truck in the evening when the bees have all come home, right, stuffs up the entrances, puts them on the back of the truck, drives up these totally obscure roads, just miles from anywhere, always uphill, into these blueberry fields, in these totally isolated spots, unloads these bees in the dark, and you trip over everything, [laughter] and then, then, tells you to retreat. [laughter] [voice: Go back! Go back!] And then goes around, of course the bees are pissed off by then, you can hear this [] of anger, coming from all these hives. And then, rushes around ripping all the fronts off so they can get their air back, I mean, for ventilation, and they can get in and out, right? [Yes] comes ripping all these things off, dives into the truck, races back down this mountain [laughter] in the dark, trying to get away from all these bees.

Voice: Sorry, folks, that's quite a drama! [laughter]

Interviewer: And you don't use smoke or

Bernadette: Well, it's like, in the transportation of them, if they're outside the hive and need to be coaxed in, I could smoke them, but, mostly it's cool enough that they'll go in. Yeah, I did use smoke [inaudible].

Interviewer: But when you're going to the blueberry field you just rely on your quick []!
(laughs)

Bernadette: I [] because they, you know, they get lost and confused, and, [Yes] so that way I don't, my loss is very limited. Trick of the trade, Jo. (laughs)

[0;59;30]

Interviewer #2: Do you keep the hives, do you over-winter?

Bernadette: Yes. I over-winter. [inaudible] I double-[] so they're good and strong.

Interviewer: Double what?

Bernadette: Double [].

Interviewer: Do you insulate?

Bernadette: No. What I will do, though, is I wrap [] paper around them to keep the wind from affecting them too []. So, one more thing to do before.

Jo: You can [] them?

Bernadette: Yes.

Jo: Oops! (laughs)

Bernadette: But, back to the sort of the community that I live around, which is the sort of traditional, conventional community. I've always felt very comfortable in this community, not that I've, I mean, they know I'm a lesbian and, I know that I'm ?limited?, and, I don't even *want* to talk to them about it. I mean, so, I don't even feel that ?limited?, but, I mean I know that, one of the limitations are, and I don't want it to be, but I've never felt any strong homophobia coming from my neighbours, I've felt nothing but acceptance. So, it's been okay in that. Never. Not even a peep of concern. If I need them, they'll come right away.

Jo: There's an ethic here.

Interviewer: There's what?

Jo: There is an ethic, here. That, I mean, you have a duty to your neighbours if they're in trouble. And, you know, if we, I mean, it's things like if we have a bonfire, and, people driving past on the road will slow down, 'til they've checked [] it's a fire, and, I don't think it's a care for what we're burning, I think they're just concerned. People would come and help you. And, somebody came calling by sometime when we were loading hay in the summer, so they climbed in to the barn and helped us finish unloading the wagon. And chatted a bit, and then left. So people, you know, do feel they have to do something. And of course you've got to do the same in return. [Yes]

Bernadette: I mean, we all get called upon to, you know, take over a plate of sandwiches, or squares, or, [laughter] what's going on at the local hall down the road.

Jo: We get called for two, 'coz there are two women here. [laughter]

Interviewer: This would be for what?

Scarlet: The most traumatic issue, to work out how many sandwiches to make! (laughs) [inaudible 8 seconds] [] of having been born here, right, you're expected to know these things.

Jo: Yeah, when somebody phoned and asked for a plate of sandwiches, we phoned up a United Church minister we know, a woman who's down in Stewiacke, and asked her advice, 'coz we thought, you know, people around [inaudible], She said, "Well, I haven't done this for a long time; I don't know. (laughs) But I'll ask."

Interviewer: So, what would this be for? What kind of events?

Bernadette: Well, in the past there used to be card parties at the local hall, so, we'd be called upon to do something for the card party. But, this past summer the event was a reunion of the West Branch School, all the people who [Jo: It's no longer a church] that went through the school system in North Branch, it was a big reunion and, so they called upon the whole community to make food.

Jo: They've done a big renovation project on that community hall. So, I mean, there's a revival there. So, people would be called upon, so if you wanted to go and put shingles on and paint and

Bernadette: Yeah, it's all donated time.

Jo: [] making the sandwiches. I mean, now we've organized our, the West Branch International Film Society [laughter] [Really?] which one woman had broadcast from the CBC to mention it exists, [Wow] and said this is like Montreal without the parking problem. So (laughs), once a month we rent the hall, and

Interviewer: And show what kind of

Jo: Well, the problem with the International Film Society is that it doesn't have any equipment. So [laughter], we bring the VCR, somebody else brings a television, and therefore, subtitles would be a problem. So it tends to be the English-speaking world. So, it's been Australia, so far. We've only done two, so far.

Scarlet: Last time we had the AIDS one.

Jo: Oh, that was American, that's right. We had "Sweetie" to start with. And then we had "Longtime Companion."

Interviewer: Oh, yes, Jane Campion.

Scarlet and Bernadette: Yes. Right. That was great.

Jo: So

Interviewer: That was the one I was trying to remember the name of, Sweetie, yeah, Jane Champion's, before Piano.

Scarlet: It's certainly one of the things that a lot of people around here are feeling the need of, of some kind. If there isn't any alternative. [Yes] [inaudible 5 seconds]

Interviewer #2: and they have an alternate cinema that we get to see, very broadly into film, and a *lot* of lesbian and gay films come.

Jo: Right. Yeah, that's great.

Scarlet: There are, you could go down to Halifax but it's two hours so it makes it harder,

Jo: Yeah, I mean there are [inaudible]

Scarlet: two hours down, two hours back. (laughs)

Interviewer #2: You don't do that easily.

Scarlet: No. I mean, we have to feed the animals, go and get back to [] the animals, and.

Interviewer: What effect has the local MP had on your lives?

Bernadette: She's made me very angry, (laughs) not that I'm not an angry woman, but, she's made me more angry than I usually am. Because I'm at the women's centre and we were very visible, because, we were an organization that came out strongly, demanding her resignation, that I feel like I've sort of been in the middle of it all, being, not only being lesbian but being at the women's centre. And the media has come through the women's centre, you know, as the voice of opposition, so we've been sort of inundated with Skoke, maybe, too much of a degree, it's sort of taken over (laughs) the women's centre for almost two weeks.

Interviewer: Which two weeks? Why?

Bernadette: Well, there was the first week when, you know, all of this stuff exploded, [Yes] and we were, there was all this action-reaction sort of stuff.

Jo: It was getting onto the front of the newspapers, and therefore, [inaudible].

Bernadette: Yes. Right. And then we had to counter all this hatefulness kind of thing. And then the following week, and then we were organizing this demonstration, and all

of that happened, and then the following week or ten days after that, there was a whole issue around this flag. Where, this Canadian flag was signed by three thousand people in the community opposing Bill C-41, when actually, the flag was used almost two years ago to raise funds for [] children. So, we got that all exposed and phoned the media back and they came through again, (laughs), so, it was to make sure that the fact that they shot themselves in the foot gets well publicized. So we insured that the media found out about that.

Interviewer: Really! So this flag, ancient flag, was trotted out?

Bernadette: Yeah. [Really!] Yeah, right. [Amazing] One of the, sort of, the other side had this thing called a silent march, opposing Bill C-41, but only five people showed up for the march, so they cancelled the march. But in their media coverage they were signing this flag with three thousand signatures.

Jo: It wasn't even about supporting [].

Bernadette: That's right. It had nothing to do with. So they shot themselves in the foot by having five people and cancelling the march, and they shot themselves in the other foot by having a flag that was, you know, it was dishonest,

Jo: Misdirected.

Bernadette: Misdirected. There you go. So, what Skoke has done is, in some ways she's brought the issue, sort of, in front of the public's eye, when the public really wasn't probably even ready for it or had no inkling that this was going to be, you know, something that they were going to be inundated with. [Yes] So, in some ways it's probably okay. In some ways, yeah, I think probably it's okay, because, I think, I feel that the community out there, is, it is homophobic but it's not hateful. And, that Skoke has gone too far. I heard that so many times, from just sort of the ordinary folk, as I would sort of walk this, go out on the street, leave the women's centre and go out on the street and go to a shop, or, you know, do something [], and then, that's the line I heard a lot, that she's gone too far. So, sure we live in a very homophobic society, and people still sort of have these myths and misunderstand things around homosexuality, but, Skoke has gone too far. So, that was very encouraging. And, maybe the community would never have a chance to say that, if she hadn't done what she has done. [Yes]

Jo: She can, and what ever happened about human rights, about [inaudible], I mean, that's what seems so odd.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Jo: Well, because she's made these statements, about homosexuals, then, ... and then people start, I mean, like on the demonstration there were people opposing that demonstration, and were shouting hateful things. And, I would say that was

evidence that she had stirred up that hatred. That she incited hatred. Yet, there seems to me, I mean, nobody's actually saying human rights.

Bernadette: We did phone the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and, they said that they were looking into it. But we never, we haven't followed up. And it could be that somebody needs to actually put in a complaint.

Jo: It has to be a formal complaint.

Bernadette: It might have to be a formal complaint, to get the gears

Interviewer: Well, I think also that, by and large the way Human Rights commissions work, it has to be a case in which a person can identify an effect on them, like, job or housing or something like that. I'm sure that what they'll say eventually is it's too vague. But these things of course

Scarlet: Yeah, unless it's a specific person, and then you have to prove it wasn't just a personality issue, it was a

[1;10;19]

Interviewer: Exactly. It's very hard to prove [].

Interviewer #2: Michael made contact with a Micmac transvestite who ran for band council,

Voice: Oh yes, yeah.

Interviewer #2: and, they, in approaching, because of all the hurling of insults and hatred spewed at them, approached the human rights commission, and, it wouldn't touch it, because, it wasn't concrete enough for them to deal with a case? So, they in turn approached it with a lawyer and even sued, for, I guess, defamation of character? [Something like that, yes.] So it's, they'll use the legal system rather than

Bernadette: The legal system rather than this tribunal system. And, they're going to be, he's looking at suing the band council?

Interviewer: An individual. I don't think you probably could sue the council. It's funny, these things, they're very, the legalities are very specific. How about you?

Jo: It's made me more careful. When we first came here, I was on a demonstration when Oka was going on. [inaudible 3 seconds] And, I happened to be in a photograph that was in a newspaper. And, a couple of guys came round in a truck, and one of them looked distinctly like our MLA.

Interviewer: Your what?

Jo: Our MLA, our local Nova Scotia representative. [Oh] And, said, do I have a right to be here, basically. Scarlet happened to be there [].

Scarlet: Yeah. I mean, he said, he came along, he said they were looking for some graveyard, and, we tried to show where the graveyard is, but they clearly weren't taking it in or looking around to see which way we were pointing, or anything, and then said to Jo, "Did we just see your picture in the paper? And are you Jo Sutton?" She said Yes. And they said, you know, "Where are you from? And, how long have you been here? And, we'll just stay until we see your papers." And Jo very wisely I think just laughed it off. And said, Oh, yeah, fine, I've got them, yeah, it's no problem. And, they just said, "Uh-huh, uh-huh, well, we'll be watching." [Really]

Jo: And left.

Interviewer #2: That's why I asked about citizenship. Because, that's the only thing that's not revocable, unless you, I don't think you, I'm not sure that

Interviewer: Well, there's a thing that, if it can be proved that you've lied, then you're, that's still standing.

Interviewer #2: Yes.

Jo: So

Scarlet: But, I mean, it was a worry about, and we had a long discussion (laughs) on whether Jo could to go to this demonstration. And having been somebody who's been out for, what, twenty years or something, and would obviously be there, we had a long series of days' conversation about whether she should or shouldn't go.

Jo: I didn't go.

Scarlet: and didn't go, in the end, because there were a lot of people with cameras, and, prior to, and it's not Skoke, but the whole Liberal issue around immigration and all this stuff about people committing crimes and people that shouldn't be in the country, *that* stuff, that's really stirring the hatred. [Yes] So that, for any immigrant, whereas before it was never about having your papers, that one incident, it's not really been an issue and we never thought of

Jo: You don't think Canada's that sort of place.

Scarlet: Yeah. Suddenly we thought, we better not risk this because what happens if you get arrested? What if something happened, what if, whoever came around the last time is looking for you and makes something happen, and, what if somebody's

being hurt, there's no way, you know, and Jo, there's no way she's going to stand there and watch it happen. And therefore she could be arrested, and therefore, would that be an offence which she could be deported for. You know, it suddenly became very real, where it has been very background and not been an issue since, at least, since we got landed.

Jo: Yeah. So, this means that. So the effect of Skoke is to say, Okay, I have to do the next step. We have to actually make sure that the citizenship is organized. [Yes] So. And that's indeed what will happen this week.

Interviewer #2: It's an interesting [].

Scarlet: It's just raised the vulnerability.

Interviewer #2: It's not to do with sexuality *per se*,

Jo: Except it is.

Interviewer #2: in terms of being out, but it, but the consequence of.

Jo: And it makes it very, I mean, it has reverberations in the community itself. I mean, lesbians have said to me, you know, "You don't come from here; you don't have a right to an opinion." [Really] Yeah. And, so therefore makes me a little more careful of those people, in my community.

Interviewer: [inaudible]

Scarlet: Well, exactly. But, you know, if you're vulnerable, then, and that's what you know people are thinking, you know, it's a very uni-cultural area, this.

Jo: Yes.

Interviewer: This, the uni-, the culture not being Micmac, which is, you know, []. (laughs)

Scarlet: Absolutely. But, it's a very, you know, Scottish area. [Yes] And, there's a strong idea that, you know, opinions of people who were born here count, and the people who were come from away are troublemakers coming from afar, [Right] just, you know, the usual stuff, but it's very strong, unlike in a city, where you just can't hold that; I mean, there's so many different people. But it still operates here. When we had that environmental meeting, the issue after [inaudible]

Jo: One of the trouble-makers, right?

Scarlet: Yeah

Interviewer: Of what?

Scarlet: Well, you tell this.

Bernadette: Well, it had to do with opposing of clear-cutting and the whole issue around herbicide spraying. And, well, I'm not too sure where you

Scarlet: My point about it was that, there was, we had this meeting, and, that Bernadette was involved in organizing, around the clear-cutting and herbicides, got the minister up, and, some papers were []. So, the local paper's reporter was there, and her remarks afterwards were that, were simply that, [Jo: In print] in print, was that, people who, you know, had university degrees and come from away should [] making trouble for us nice local folks with jobs.

Jo: Who don't mind a multinational company coming and stripping the forests.

Scarlet: So whether it's true or not isn't so much the point as that that's the attitude that's being stirred up. [Right] So that you know that that's the environment. So, it makes it particularly difficult if, you know, lesbians are using that argument too, and, it's just something that you live with when you go to a place you haven't been born in, and especially in a countryside which has, you know, a strong local population which doesn't move around a lot.

Interviewer: Very similar to where we are; insular. [inaudible four seconds]

Jo: I think you find that in Yorkshire in England too. I mean, where we lived was, I mean, there were only just getting beyond the social rule where men didn't just speak to men. I mean, and, you know, if you met somebody casually. There were men spoke to men and women spoke to women.

Scarlet: And you think about the witches and the

Jo: Yeah, I mean, there was, I mean, this was not to do with this, but, a couple of women moved into a place that had [] and been owned by the church, that wasn't the church, who were interested in spirituality. And the rumour went round the neighbourhood that these were witches buying this place. They had a goddess image, that they put on the mantle. And, the church organized fund-raising so they could buy this building so the two witches couldn't. It was like moving back to the fifteenth century. It was extraordinary. I mean, this was in England, but, I mean, you know, like there's this undercurrent that can just be stirred up.

Scarlet: It doesn't take very much to stir up, which is why the Skoke, I mean, although it's polarizing, it's good in the sense that people coming together to, you know, to protect each other and make a statement about how this is not agreeable, but it all, it does stir that hatred, and you know that it doesn't take much. You know that stuff's sitting there, right? and as long as people aren't too riled they're not going

to deal with it very much, but, if they do get riled ... I found that demonstration scary.

Bernadette: Most people did.

Scarlet: 'Coz you don't usually present yourself to people who are screaming abuse. And it just, you know, pick and choose, (laughs) be careful where you go.

Bernadette: And I know, it was very interesting about the heterosexual people that were there, and there were lots of them, they had never felt hatred like that. They had no idea.

Interviewer: You mean, reasonably progressive or ... heterosexual people who weren't opposing the demonstration.

Bernadette: People who were there in support of Bill C-41 and opposing Skoke's slant. [Yes] And on the other side of the street there were about twenty people who were just yelling horrible things, just hateful, hateful stuff coming across the street. And, these people were really afraid, these straight people, had never been in a position where hatefulness was being directed at them, because they were in a place where it was sort of assumed that everybody there was queer, or, was so associated with queerness that they deserved to be, you know, have this hatred directed at them. [Yes, yes] So they've never been vulnerable like that. I think it was good for them to see how, to be vulnerable, to see it, to experience it. And it was really scary. It was really, I mean, these, awful people, on the other side.

[1;20;46]

Scarlet: The only thing that stopped it from being really scary was that, there, you know, there were about two hundred of us and only about fifty of them. But if the numbers had changed at all, you know, or anybody had started anything, it really would have

Interviewer: This is not, presumably, fifty people who sort of spontaneously came together; this is organized, right? The opposition? It must be. It's not people wandering around, who just sort of coalesced.

Scarlet: They had placards and they were, you know, there was a core of them that were organizing and there were other people that gathered.

Interviewer: So that's from the 'baysiders', presumably. Or, people said, the media said, Skoke supporters, but I even would doubt that. I mean, there are people who aren't particularly interested in anything to do [] federal politics.

Scarlet: Well, they were shouting ... on that issue.

Jo: But there was, I mean, there was the Liberal fellow, Jim Mitchell, chair-*man*? He is the chair-man, right? of the Liberal party, and, I mean in this area. And he was there in support of Skoke. And he's also on the health board?

Bernadette: Yeah, the regional health board.

Jo: There's three of them on it. Which means, he'll be taking a position in terms of AIDS research, treatment, and all that kind of stuff, right? So, all these issues are, I mean, you know where these people stand.

Interviewer: So this is also interesting to know, that she's not so isolated in the Liberal party, is what I'm [] to think. She's not that unusual. It's a more

Scarlet: In the ranks there may be some divisions, but, you know, against opposition, they would back her, [Yes] most of them. [Yes]

Bernadette: Are you saying, the MPs across the country, or, locally?

Scarlet: I think the Liberals have to back her; she's a Member of Parliament, and she's, unless they're going to

Interviewer: The party's going to

Scarlet: Unless they're going to dump her, or unless they're. She is a member of the Liberal party, and, they have to back her.

Jo: Did you watch the NDP voting in Ontario?

Interviewer: Yes.

Scarlet: Absolutely. I mean, that was equally, you know.

Jo: Some of these people make you [].

Scarlet: It's like, when it comes up as an issue, I mean, you mow along and people aren't too bad (laughs), and then, an issue comes up, either you're trying to get some progress, or, if somebody is rallying against, and it suddenly becomes ... hugely insulting, when you thought you were just carrying on and people were being liberal enough to let you be. (laughs) And I feel so upset about the NDP vote, because, I mean, if they hadn't raised it, and people hadn't then had the right to get up and say what shits homosexuals are, (laughs) you know, and how they don't deserve to be families, and all this crap, then, I didn't want to know what they think, and they just get on with their [], right? But, I mean, to get up there and take it to a vote, take a studied vote and decide against, I mean, to me, it's really insulting, it's really hurtful.

Jo: We happen to have, I mean, one of the ways we got to this was that, one of the ways of dealing with isolation is that we had, we could take a technological solution. Or at least road. In that, we bought a satellite dish. Therefore, we get to watch a lot of American television – I must admit, I know more about Bill Clinton than I do about Jean Chretien, but, this, but also that, they have a satellite feed, which is quite fun to watch. You get this channel, which is the feed for the news programs across the country, and every now and then they'd put something out. So what was going on in the Ontario legislature, when it was coming up to this vote, was being broadcast live on the satellite feed. So you got to see what people were saying, and then, who stood up and who was being counted on which side. Way over here in Nova Scotia, we could actually see what was going on at that moment, because it was just a broad thing rather than the little clip that they give you, on prime time. So that was, or whatever it was called at that time. So that was quite fun. Other times you can just sit down and see people looking embarrassed, waiting for the camera to start and everything to roll, which is a lot more fun than many television programs.

Interviewer: Tell me a little about this, I wanted to ask you, when you mentioned earlier about environmental activism, as one of your. Tell me about that particular struggle. [Jo: Of what?] It's, around the Scots mill?

Bernadette: It's, no, it's a little bigger than that, because there's three multinational pulp-and-paper companies in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is really a third world country, in how they're cutting down the, sort of they're clearing the forest, softwoods mixed with hardwoods, sort of, and, so what they're doing is planting plantations of softwoods to feed the three pulp-and-paper mills. And, so that there's a whole cycle of herbicides and pesticides that get used to plant this, the federal government calls is the new forest. Yeah, new forest. So, yeah. All around here. Helicopters, it feels like a war zone. First of August the signs go up,

Interviewer: The signs, saying what?

Bernadette: The signs saying that this[inaudible].

Jo: They're designated for spraying.

Bernadette: Yeah. And it will be sprayed sometime after the first of August, and that could be from the first of August to the end of September.

Jo: Theoretically on a still day when it's not windy, but, they don't seem to care too much, right?

Bernadette: I mean, it's really kind of hard on the head, because you wake up in the morning and, beautiful calm day, and, your first thought is, Oh, they're going to be spraying today.

Scarlet: Right from the helicopters.

Jo: We tend to rush out with a camera after them, which is, when they tend to leave the site and come back when you've gone away again, it's very funny, actually, when you start driving around after them. (laughs)

Scarlet: Chasing.

Interviewer: What are you doing, are you doing something with the photographs?

Jo: They're going to make, I mean, it's just that things like, when it's a little too windy and stuff, I mean, that you're going to try and get a photograph, I mean, and we haven't yet, but when you try to think about you're going to get a photograph of them, you can see the leaves turning open in the spring.

Scarlet: Either the wrong place or the wrong day or.

Jo: Yeah, I mean, you just [Right]

Bernadette: And they've been found to be breaking their own regulations, all the time. There's too many wind speeds and stuff and they've been taken to court and, people, the citizenry that had to come up with the money to challenge these things, and they, they win every time. You know. It's just. People have lost their shirts over challenging these bastards. [Yes]

Scarlet: Well, even after that meeting [] Monsanto [] representatives to the minister the next day, I mean, it was, any little community organization [] there, to stop it.

Bernadette: Any kind of resistance. It doesn't take much for them to get their feathers in a, all ruffled up. [Right]

Jo: You have to go straight to the politicians. I mean, just, you know, they've got them in their pocket.

Bernadette: Yeah.

Interviewer: Lunch. These things are all done up at lunch.

Bernadette: That's right. ... It takes a lot of energy.

Interviewer: Yeah. Is that a sort of ongoing

Bernadette: Yes, it is. Very much ongoing. With the meeting for instance on the second, around the pipeline that they want to, [inaudible] Scot, or, at this point it's being directed in to a settling pond. Now what they want to do is build this one-mile pipe and send it right into the, into the Northumberland Straight. [Really] Oh

yeah. No environmental, that's right, it's no environmental review or anything. So, there's been a group of people from ?Truro? Island and other organizations, and the women's centre is one of the endorsing organizations, to ask for a federal environmental review, because at this point it's just a provincial and, the provincial politicians have no backbone, big industry walks right over them, it's almost like they don't even exist. So there's a big meeting, I don't know if you know about this one (laughs), on Wednesday night, in New Glasgow, so that the groups can express their disapproval and, say stuff that's right now and

[1;28;50]

Jo: So don't buy mussels or lobster from Nova Scotia or PEI, basically. I mean, they're in the process of destroying Northumberland Strait. I mean, what with the bridge at one end and there's a pipeline at the other, I mean, they just don't care. I mean, the first environmental review of the bridge, that is now being constructed between PEI and New Brunswick, came out against it. So what did they do? They set up another environmental review. But it's like

Bernadette: And they would have kept that up until they got approval. [Right]

Jo: Yeah. I mean, it's like that joke on the [] on the CBC this morning about Quebec, right, which, I mean, [inaudible] in saying, you know, how many votes do you have to take before you can

Interviewer: get a yes!

Jo: Yeah. And, so, he said, "Well, you know what we say, if at first you don't secede," [laughter] right? (laughs) And [inaudible], you can set up an environmental review until one says Yes. [Right] You know. Yeah, it is like being in a third world country because the resources aren't being used. I mean, like, you're making furniture? Very few people do that, I mean, the [] chairs, but that's about all. And there's a huge amount of [] beautiful trees here, and incredible resources, I mean, and you just [inaudible] forest?

Interviewer: So the hardwoods are being, are junk, essentially.

Voices: Yeah.

Scarlet: [] sprayed out.

Jo: If the [] really exists. I mean, people said, keep your forests, the maples are going to be so precious.

Scarlet: So the hemlock now [].

Interviewer #2: So they spray defoliants that will affect hardwoods but not the

Bernadette: That's right, that's right, exactly.

Interviewer: Really.

Bernadette: Yeah. It works through the leaves.

Interviewer: A napalm, kind of. Oh, good outlet for Monsanto, too, [inaudible four seconds]

Scarlet: There's already been studies of, you know, it's harmful to fish if it gets in the water, and [inaudible].

Jo: And they spray from a helicopter. You can't [inaudible].

Bernadette: Not to mention, there's a whole ecosystem that supports the forest that's being destroyed, you know? So it's going to be artificial fertilizers, eventually, in order to make these things grow up.

Interviewer #2: Monsanto, again.

Bernadette: Gosh! Look at that! (laughs) We make chemicals [inaudible 6 seconds]. Yeah, exactly. It's all very artificial, too, 'coz if it wasn't for the government subsidizing all of this stuff, it would never happen. The woodlot owner could never afford the sprays, could never afford the trees, could never afford any of this. All the seedlings come from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

Scarlet: And Scot wouldn't pay reasonable prices for the land if they hadn't been given [] crown land and [inaudible].

Jo: And they're not responsible for the clean-up. And no restrictions.

Scarlet: Yeah, and no responsibility. [Right]

Interviewer: So what happens, do you get this jobs-versus-environment thing? The usual

Bernadette: Yeah, that's the big one. Yeah.

Interviewer: So you actually get, as in BC, you get loggers on the other side, saying, "This is how we make our living and jobs," and all that. [inaudible]

Jo: But then, for them it's that same problem, if there's less and less of them working and no work.

Interviewer: Yes. The great irony of it. [inaudible 8 seconds]

Bernadette: Isn't there any limits? You know, it's all done with two or three machines, now.

Jo: And you see them

Interviewer: And the second irony it that

Interviewer #2: [] talking about jobs, either. Bullshit.

Bernadette: No. That's right. Yeah.

Interviewer: But people do buy that. It's very [].

Scarlet: Well, they do, as long as they have the job. [Yes]

Jo: At that meeting at the ?Scotsville? firehall, there were a few loggers in the back row. I mean, there was a big gang of guys who came in who were, sort of, twenty-five, twenty, twenty-five, and, you know, who are still physically fit enough to be able to do that. It's not exactly a long-term career.

Scarlet: [] job, yeah. By thirty, thirty-five, you're not doing it.

Jo: It's heavy work. But there are men saying, I mean, that they're taking smaller and smaller logs. [Yes]

Interviewer: Yes. It's like the fisheries, the same thing, exactly.

Jo: Right, exactly.

Bernadette: The analogy there, all you have to do is look at the fishery to see what's going to happen to the forest industry.

Interviewer: And the other irony of it to me is, there's all this talk about, particularly among fundamentalists, about the children and so on, the future, but this is really writing off the future entirely, isn't it?

Jo: That's right.

Interviewer: Very cavalierly, and no sense, and yet, you think, if there's no other way to speak to the people who are parents, to say, if you could get them to say, Don't you want, don't you care, that your kids will have a?

Jo: [] won't have any pulp in fifty years time. Which, there's no guarantee Scot will still be here. [Or won't be] Yeah.

Scarlet: But people chose not to believe it if they're not living in the area. I mean, the thing about managed woodlots, 'coz a lot of times, people who are living in the city, who ?have? a woodlot, who want it managed or sprayed, because they're not

living there to be sprayed, and they're not. [inaudible] You know. So it's an economic advantage to them and their family. [inaudible] They're not feeling the

Jo: You know, you don't spray your own backyard.

Scarlet: So they choose not to believe because they don't have to believe because they don't have to live it.

Bernadette: Yeah. I've heard a lot of that happening.

Interviewer #2: This is very interesting, the thing about city-country. Like, that, you live in this being you're supplied with all these things that in fact come from the country including Scot paper,

[end of interview]

[No transcript available for Interview 3 of 3]