

Interview: Jim
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
?duck? sounds like “duck” but it’s not clear

Interviewer: Tell me your name, your age, and, where we are and how you make your living.

Interviewee: [laughter] My name is Jim [redacted], I’m forty-seven years old. Lived here all my life. And, I make my living as a sawmill operator.

Interviewer: In Glovertown.

Jim: Newfoundland.

Interviewer: Tell me, Jim, how, or why, did you come to be living here?

Jim: I was born here, went to school here, did my work here, and ... fell in love here. (laughs)

Interviewer: Did you ever live away?

Jim: Yes, well, you might call it away, still in Newfoundland, but I took off ?grading? schools in Gander and Stephenville.

Interviewer: You said you were born here. That’s ‘coz your father and grandfather and so on had worked here?

Jim: Yes. Yes. [Doing what?] Carpenter work. [Builders?] Builders, yes. Boat builders. [Boat builders!] For fishery on [], and different fishing all over the coast. They were also finishing carpenters, as well. [For houses?] Houses and cabinets. [Ah yes]

Interviewer: Can you tell me something about your, your, the process of coming to terms with your sexuality. How far back does that go, in your life?

Jim: About [] teens. Yes. I thought there was something wrong with me. You know. So, I began to drink, and drink, and drink. Now I got two things wrong with me! I’m gay, and I’m an alcoholic! (laughs)

Interviewer: You thought there was something wrong with you?

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: 'Coz you were different?

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: So, how did you, did you know you were gay? Or, did you just think you were different?

Jim: Well, I ... well, ... how shall I put this ... My sexual preference was ... a guy like myself, right? I was going to school, and, I wanted to do to [sic] it to practice and whatnot, get beyond the school and, do what comes natural. You know?

Interviewer: But, were afraid to? Or

Jim: I did it. I've done it, you know? But still, for all this, I thought there was something different. But as I grew a little older, like, late teens ... I knew I was gay and, I was in the closet ... and it really hurt being in the closet, I'll tell you that. It was something else.

Interviewer: So how did you do the closet? Were you dating girls?

Jim: Oh, god, I married one.

Interviewer: Oh, you did. Really.

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: How old were you when you married?

Jim: Thirty-two. But we didn't have any children, we had a large dog. [laughter] Looked something like [].

Interviewer: Why did you marry, do you think? Was there pressure on you? ... Did people keep asking you why you weren't married?

Jim: I don't know how to answer that. I was going with her brother at the same time. (laughs) [Oh, really. Really.] Yes.

Interviewer: She didn't know that, presumably.

Jim: No, but she caught us. The same night we got married, she caught us.

Interviewer: No. Really? (laughs)

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: Geez. What happened?

Jim: She caught us giving a blow job to each other. (laughs)

Interviewer #2: At your house? Like, in your house?

Jim: Yes. The same night we got married. (laughs)

Interviewer: What happened? What did she do?

Jim: She took my cowboy boot, hit me on the side, about almost killed me. (laughs) And she let it go and let it go, for a year. Finally she couldn't stick it any more, but she knew I was gay, right? so she walked out. Thank god for small miracles.

Interviewer: Is she still around here?

Jim: Bathurst, New Brunswick.

Interviewer #2: Was she from here?

Jim: She was from Pasadena on the west coast.

Interviewer: And what about, what happened to the brother?

Jim: He's in Gander Bay right now, married. With two, two or three kids.

Interviewer: And what about you? So you were sort of ... alone again, then?

Jim: Yes, I'm, you might say, I'm promiscuous. Going out with every Tom, Dick and Harry, mostly the Dicks, though. [laughter] And

Interviewer: Do you have to go away from here to find partners?

Jim: No, through my ... articles I've written in the Gaezette, I've a lot of pen pals all across Canada and the States. [Really.] Yes. I've writers from everywhere. In St. John's, and, [] of course through a support group. And I knew some friends in there that knew gays and that, see, so, we got to know each other that way. One come out a while back, we lived together for a while, right? And that's what this article in September's edition of the Gaezette was written about. Yeah.

Interviewer: But going backwards a little bit, now. You said you were, you were drinking for a long time, because of, just, the pressure, and?

Jim: Yeah. I was in the closet and I wanted to get out, really, wanting to be out of the closet. I'd drink and drink. ... I know, being gay is nothing to be ashamed of. But being an alcoholic is, if you're not planning to do anything about it. But I am. So I'm in AA.

Interviewer: Here? Is there a group here?

Jim: Yes. But, there's one thing I'd like to do, I mean, I cannot speak my mind. Can I speak, you don't care what I talk about?

Interviewer: No.

Jim: I cannot speak my mind to a group of eight or six individuals, on the problems that has been bothering me, other than alcohol. Right? [Yeah] ... I mean, I'm, I'm a homosexual. And a lot of things has been bothering me. Now, you know, most everybody got problems, right? And, I don't feel great, to bring up a topic, as gay or lesbian, lifestyles, into a AA meeting, a regular AA meeting. So, I been trying to put together, I got pamphlets from IAC, the International Advisory Council, and, I got it from the gay book, into the States. And they're going to supply me with pamphlets and things to start up a gay and lesbian group, AA, in Glovertown. [Oh, really.] Yes.

Interviewer #2: Oh, that would be great.

Jim: Yes, it would. I also got letters from Cape Breton, from a gay and lesbian AA group.

Interviewer: So, so does that mean, you're not the only person around here who's gay? Or, who might use such a group?

Jim: Well, I know of one more. You only wants two for make this to work, right? [Right] You wants two, right? One, you can't do it. You wants two. I know of one other, like myself.

Interviewer: Who's come out to you?

Jim: Oh, yes. Definitely, yes. As you know, this is a small, narrow-minded town. [Yeah] And in small towns, people talk. But, I don't give a damn. I'm out, and I'm open about it, and I don't give a damn who knows, you see?

Interviewer: How did you get to be proud? I mean, how did you find that? Or, where?

Jim: Well, as I came out of the closet ... I came out with a bang. I'll explain later. And, what I read in the papers and different things, I'm proud to be gay, I really am, because, I did not choose this lifestyle. It was inherited. You could say that. And, I'm proud to be what I am. There's no two ways about it. You know?

Interviewer: But how did you get to that? I mean, that's quite a distance, to move from

Jim: Yeah, it's a good question to ask. I don't know how to answer that, really. ... How did I get to be proud? Well,

Interviewer #2: Do you read a lot?

Jim: Very. Yeah, a lot, yes.

Interviewer: Like, what do you mean, gay literature and

[0;09;55]

Jim: Yes, I get it from the Red Herring in Halifax. [Ah] And, I go to the library sometimes and try to find books with the gay lifestyle or something, whatnot, into it, right? the gay text, and [inaudible 3 seconds], [Right] very little, in fact, I've been trying to get gay ... how shall I say, gay stuff from different places, to try to get it into the high school library instead of, because, the public library in this place is in the elementary school, so you cannot put gay literature into, right? So you put it in the high school, no.

Interviewer: You've been able to?

Jim: No, I've been trying to. Yet, so far, you know, I'm, ?I haven't been? up to the school to speak about it, this year. You know.

Interviewer: When you say, you came out with a bang, what did you mean by coming out; to yourself? Or, what did you mean by that?

Jim: Well, I was, [] full house. See, people that knew me as a gay person, I was in the closet. Got a big mouth, some of them have. And they told different people. When I was going over to this guy's house, a friend of mine, looked at me, Oh, look at this young fellow! (laughs) Oh, they laughed. He said, Geez, gentlemen, too young for you; leave this boy alone. Or something, whatever, something like that. Whatnot. (laughs) Right? [Yeah] And. So I said, I'm out now, I might as well, might as well stay out, I got to stay out now. And, I will only hurt myself more if I try to sneak back in the closet. I said, I'm not gay to be [], I'm out now, and, I'm

staying out. I want to be out, and I want to be proud of who I am. That's what I meant by that.

Interviewer: And how did, what kind of reaction did you get?

Jim: Oh my god. Oh boy. ... Well, people, a lot of people, said that, another fucking gay in this town. That sort of thing. My mother is a deeply religious person of the Pentecost faith. She understood, but my father still can't, because he's, he's back in the dark ages anyway. But my mother ... my mother can understand. I have brothers and sisters ... I have one sister who don't understand and one brother who don't understand but they are of the Pentecost faith. And the rest of my brothers and sisters are proud of me the same as ... you know, like they should, right? My brothers, as siblings go.

Interviewer: So you were saying about your mother, that even though she's Pentecostal, she's accepting you?

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: Was that a struggle? Or

Jim: I don't know, not really, I suppose. Because she's my mother, she's going to love me anyway, right? Yes. And also

Interviewer: What did you do? Did you go to them and talk to them? Or, how did you do that?

Jim: Yes, I did.

Interviewer: All together? All of them together?

Jim: No, no, no. See, my mother had an idea, anyway. And, my brother ... I have a lot of friends in the Pentecostals, ex-friends you might say because ... they reject me. Used to be around together as friends, a few years ago, before I was out of the closet. Now I came out of the closet, they rejected me. Pentecost faith. And ... So, I didn't know what to do. I was going through this Gazette thing, and I found a Safe Harbour Community Church in Halifax. I got the number, and I called Darlene Young, the Reverend Darlene Young, talked with me for a while, and she sent me some articles from the church, ... and, homosexuality [] is not a sin or a sickness. Right? So I got all this together and showed my mother; she never made a comment whatsoever. She said, It's your life. You know? So she understood.

Interviewer: And from your father, what? Silence? or

Jim: Yeah, silence. And my brother Graham, now he's a, ... not an archeologist, what do you call him? Anyway, works in Calgary in data, computer, right? He can almost be a minister, a Pentecost minister, but he's not. But I mean, he's, saved or converted, like, all that, and so is my sister. She's a nurse in Grand Falls Hospital. She rejects me completely, so does my brother Graham.

Interviewer: What, they don't talk to you?

Jim: They talks to me, only when they got to. See? But it doesn't bother me, I don't give a shit, I don't give a damn. You know. It's the way I am, right?

Interviewer #2: Did you come out after, you said that you got married, there. It was like after your wife left that you came out?

Jim: Yes. ... No. Yes, I did. When you say it that way. I was in the closet with her brother when I got married. I was in the closet, of course, right? But I was still having sex, with boys, right? Still do. ... I'm promiscuous.

Interviewer: Around here.

Jim: Yes. And all over the place. [And they're all] My boyfriend's coming [] now. Wanting to talk. [He's coming where?] Coming to see me about, something, might never see him again.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah? Where does he live?

Jim: Eastport.

Interviewer: Is that far away?

Jim: About eleven, twelve miles from here, 'round that way. ... He's married. With a kid, adopted kid. Right? But his wife knows that he's bisexual, see? [Really.] Yes.

Interviewer: So you're sharing him.

Jim: Yeah, I'd rather him alone though, to tell you the truth. [Right]

Interviewer: So you, you've gathered to yourself all kinds of material and newspapers and books, and

Jim: Yes. I even got The Big Gay Book and I know places in the States where to obtain a lot of information. You know. And, oh yes, I was going to tell you that, I've done, last spring, I wrote to ?MSAs?, MPs, Justice Minister

Allan Rock, I was talking to his friend Svend Robinson a couple of times on the phone, to try to get sexual orientation in the Human Rights Code. And I got many more to, even addresses, in the provincial government. Well, I've been writing a lot of letters, and getting response back, sending them to ?EGALE? in St. John's, and GLAS in Corner Brook, that's another support group, and ... Doing things for, it's for our benefit, yours, Brian's, as well as myself, you know. So why shouldn't we have equal rights, right?

Interviewer: Good for you.

Interviewer: Do you get responses?

Jim: Yes. I was talking to Robinson twice on the phone. Yes.

Interviewer: Did you write something in the Gaezette about, do I remember this right, about holding hands with somebody on the street, or something?

Jim: Yeah, that was in the September edition.

Interviewer: What was that? How did you

Jim: You forgot, now, did you?

Interviewer: Well, the thing is, I'd like to hear it in your own, well not your own, the other was your own words too, but just, to re-create it for me, if you will.

Jim: I got the Gaezette on the table. Gaezette. Well, after my working day is ended, I was working on the saw [], see, I'm like, my partner was in [] Cove. He said, I'd like to go for a walk. I said, Sure, go for a walk. He says, You and I, going on a walk. Sure. There was a cow [inaudible] I'd ever seen, a big crowd, tires, [], everywhere. Cars going by, [] the road, and stuff. Him and I, [] out, proud as anybody else, right, took a, he had his arm around me, walking down on the road. People passed us and looked at us and gawked out through the windows and giggled and whispered and shouted obscene [] at us, and, what the fuck, I didn't give a damn, you know? He's no more than my partner, right? And, I remember ... going on the road and, there's a big deep ditch there, you see? This fellow come up the road, in a truck, pick-up truck, and he looked at us, and he looked at us, and he passed and he slowed down, looked at us in the rear view mirror, and when he did he turned the wheel, she went blaze up in the air, went wheels up in the ditch! [laughter] He angrily got out, ... called at me, really, "Who in the fuck do you think you are? In New York City or somewhere?" I said, No, I said, On the road, which is more that I can say for you. (laughs) [laughter] And a crowd gathered, you see, a lot of laughter and whatnot, right? And, I think [] ... And, the crowd there ...

By the milling crowd, as I said, on the Gaezette, I think we got more accepted by the milling crowd, because of this incident. We all come together, you see? And if I go down the road now, I mean, there'd be no more to it than that. Because of a gay friend of mine. You know? This .. it was a laughing (laugh) When you saw it, he couldn't get up no other way. I laughed, I almost died (laughs). My partner about passed out. Some guys milling around here, guys and women there, laughed and laughed, you know? Not laughed *at* us, but laughed *with* us. [Right, right.] Right?

[0;21;35]

Interviewer #2: Wonderful.

Jim: There's another one written, now, for the Gaezette, that you see there.

Interviewer: Is it a copy of what you've written?

Jim: Yes. And I don't know if you guys get the Gaezette, any?

Interviewer #2: No. Never seen it 'til, well, actually, seen one copy before. But

Jim: I'm going to read that, now. Do you want me to read that, now, on that recorder? [Sure] Do you want me to read it?

Interviewer: I can, well, I actually do, yeah. If you don't mind? Sure. [inaudible about 10 seconds]

Jim: This is written from the heart, by the way. [Yeah] ... A few short years ago I triumphantly emerged from my dark closet, where I secretly harboured many of my inner thoughts, feelings, conquests, and secrets. They started to blossom, and a right time to be aired. And declared myself openly gay, and of course, fair game to the public, who are so ill-informed and ignorant about such issues to vent their [] and contempt. As a result, some of my lifelong friends and neighbours have thrown up their hands in despair, and turned against me. And if I was a certain type of person, I could easily have taken the easy way out. But such is not the case.

Jim (continuing): The names that they throw out to me, cat-calls and stupid remarks stick to me like water on a duck's back. As an openly gay and proud person, many of the teenagers find that I do not hurt or scare easily. It takes more than stupid remarks to even bother this bag of bones, because I take their intended abuse with a smirk, and a devil-may-care situation. Otherwise, if I became angry and vent my frustration by cursing on them, I sure find out in a hurry that I would be provoking them to taunt me further. Although this is the nineties, and some people are changing their old, traditional inner feelings and turmoil that persist a score or so years ago

toward gays and lesbians and the lifestyle we lead, I personally am grateful, and think it is a sign of prosperity and progress, and a plus in a rapidly changing world. But of course, there are always some such people who are just as much in the dark ages as they were five hundred years ago. These dominant and misguided firm believers, staunch in their religious faith and their trust in the Bible, will not detour or give an inch, get away. In this town, religious beliefs is a strong influence to ?cautious? as well as the denominational school system. Therefore, discrimination and prejudice against gays and lesbians is acceptable. This, as I see it, is a damned crime. I think that the churches of the denominational education system plays much too big a role deciding on how the children who attend our schools should be taught. If the education system and learning institutions were operated by government, in my view, there would be much less prejudice and discrimination in our societies today. My opinion is that, as far as I'm concerned, these self-righteous religious fanatics can stick their beliefs and customs way up where the sun does not shine. As to myself, I [inaudible] and being happy, proud and gay, and above circumstances. And to hell with the dominating narrow minds of society.

Interviewers: Well. Great. Yeah. Really good.

Interviewer: So you've sent that to the Gaezette? Or you're going to?

Jim: I did. And see, articles, that's where I get a lot of responses, from all over Canada, and the States as well.

Interviewer: People write to you.

Jim: Yes. I, well, I get, I went to the mailbox one day, and, bunch of letters (laughs). [Yeah?] Yeah.

Interviewer: Do the people at the post office say anything about it?

Jim: Well, there's a lady picks up the mail at the post office, and brings it down here, puts it in different boxes, eh? [Yes] We got, I got a box, my own personal box, right? She has said to me, "Oh, you've got some mail." (laughs) You know? And I, I got a couple of dyke friends, into Lunenburg County, writing me for, that was through one of the letters, you could say, you know, one of the articles in the Gazette. We've been writing to each other for the last three years. [Really.] Yes. I got a couple of gay friends into Halifax, and a couple more into Sydney, my god, all over the place. Yeah, it's only Nova Scotia alone, you see?

Interviewer: How about in Newfoundland?

Jim: Yes, I got. [Yeah?] And I got others. I'm involved in support group, St. John's. But I've yet to go to a meeting because I'm always too busy working. [Here] Yes. But I'm going to take a week off pretty soon and go to St. John's.

Interviewer: Good. It's a long drive, too.

Jim: Yes, it is. My lady friend, though, is not prejudiced or discriminate against. We're really good friends, right? She wanting to go, too, but she wanted to go to a gay bar. [laughter] Yeah. But, she's not gay, but she's just, you know, she's a really good friend.

Interviewer: So, the partner that you, you ... that thing that happened on the road with, that's the same guy you're involved with now?

Jim: No.

Interviewer: Oh. This is another partner. [coughs] That was somebody who lived with you for a while?

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: What happened? Where

Jim: Well, don't laugh at this, for god's sake. (laughs) I don't care if you do or not. He had medical problems. He had a stone in his kidney. I was afraid to suck too hard for like I'd choke on it. [laughter] That had to be said. No kidding. He returned to St. John's and (laughs), he returned to St. John's and, to see the doctor and get an operation. I haven't talked to him since. He didn't phone, so he's probably got another partner. I don't know.

Interviewer: Did he come here to live with you?

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: From St. John's?

Jim: Yes. [Really.] Yes.

Interviewer: So you met there? Or

Jim: We met through ... I got a bunch of different friends in St. John's. It's one of the friends that, him and this guy, him and my ex-partner was good friends, you see? And, my friend that used to live here, went to St. John's to live. And, he phoned my one night, and, got me talking back and forth with this guy, right? So, that's how we met, right? By phone.

Interviewer: When you talk about, in the article for Gaezette, about, some of your former friends and neighbours having turned their backs on you, and so on, what do they actually do that, what have they, how do they, do they just not talk to you?

[0;30;00]

Jim: I'll give you a little instance. I was really good friends with my next-door neighbours. The two were World War II veterans. Man and wife. You see? And they lived next door to me. And they went away. Now, their son is gay, you see? But they didn't know. They knew I was gay and proud. They went away to South Carolina in about a month and a half ago, see, and, they was went there for three weeks and come back. Anyway, to make my long story short, their son was thirty-eight years old, we were, we had an affair going for, going on for ten years or so, give or take a year or so, right? And [inaudible]. And, one night, was having a few beer in the house, and I was [], I'm scared to talk about that, right? in the house. And [Your house?] Yeah. And one of my lady friends come in, she's a very illiterate person, by the way, she wanting to go to [], I said, I'm not taking the truck now, I said, I'd had a few drinks, I'm not trusting anything, right? So she got a taxi, went to the club. And I ?didn't? tell her, she said she wanted to come in, and I'm, Damn, why'd you get to wait to that. And just as she left, my ... flirt really before I was ?fair? to come in, and, when he come in through the door he kissed me, right? put his hand on my crotch, and, I knew what he wanted right away. So, like a damn fool I went to bed and forgot to lock the damned door. (laughs) Jesus. Mara come back from the club. And I had the radio on, rock music on. And we're having some fun on the bed, laughing, fooling, carrying on, like you would, right? (laughs) Laugh and tease, and Mara started to laugh and giggle in the doorway of the bedroom. Boy oh boy, caught us right in the act. I didn't mind that, her to catch us in the act. Like I said, she's very illiterate and very ... you'll get my drift []. Within two or three days, everybody in town knew it. You know. I chastised her over that, I'll tell you that.

Interviewer: How did you know that everybody knew? How did it get back to you?

Jim: How did it get back to me? Cindy, that's my partner's sister lives right next door to me, same yard in fact. I went to see Dave, doing with the fish, a lure or something from [], right? Cindy was there. She's ?yelling? to me, I mean, she didn't know that her brother was gay. And, she's ?yelling? at me for making him gay. In her view. Making him gay. You know? That sort of thing. And, she went and told her parents, and her parents ... I figure them for a little more sense than to live off Cindy's thinking, you see?

Jim (continuing): Well, anyway, they haven't spoke to me since, and no more has Cindy and Joe, the next-door neighbours. And Dave has been chastised, he lives with his mother and father, his parents, and he has been chastised not to come over to the house any more. That sort of thing, right? All because the lady friend had to open her big mouth and blab it to the gossipers in the club. [Right] You know? It's a very mean thing to do, as far as I'm concerned. [Yeah] I mean, what goes on behind my closed doors is my private business, isn't it? [Should be.] Yes.

Interviewer: How old is he? The guy?

Jim: Thirty-eight.

Interviewer: So he's a little old to be taking orders from his parents, though, eh?

Jim: Yeah, but he's

Interviewer: Does he live at home?

Jim: He lives with his parents, yes. And, whatever they say, go, of course. [Yes] You know. Yes, he's a little bit old, right.

Interviewer: Sounds like he needs to get out of there.

Jim: Yeah, and, I was talking to a friend of mine, there, the guy I was telling you about, Brian, that did, up Thunder Bay, did cabinet work? Ronald. Ron come to the house there a couple of days ago. I mentioned my former partner, that, just what this controversy's about. And, he said, "You know, Jim? Dave is going to have a nervous breakdown." I said, What makes you think that? "Well he's twitching and thinking, moving back and forth." I said, Yeah. Ron knew about the situation I was telling you about, the controversy? He knew about that. He said, "Dave got a lot on his mind." Dave is [] blame me for getting Dave out of the closet, which he didn't want to come out. [] after telling a lot of people that we go to bed together. Right?

Interviewer: Who did that?

Jim: My, this fellow we have, the controversy's about? You know, after telling a lot of people that we go to bed together. So, it looks like he wants to come out, but yet, he's afraid of his parents and his sisters, right? But the other sister, across the road, she's a well-educated person, she's a school teacher, and her husband is a retired school teacher, they understand me. [inaudible] because, they're not narrow. They're straight but they're not narrow, you know? Unlike the illiterate sister, the one that [] to me, see?

Don't know anything. Only spite. Red-haired spite, that's what she is!
(laughs) You know. I don't mean that by you, excuse me. [laughter] Now,
don't get me wrong, okay? That's off the record. [Right] (laughs) I didn't
mean nothing by that.

Interviewer: No, I understand. Yeah, a person like that can spread a lot of poison.

Jim: Oh man. Yeah, that's true, it can. And that's half the reason I guess a lot of
people don't come out of the closet, a case like this, you know. And they
go through a lot of turmoil, getting inside of them. No wonder they have a
nervous breakdown.

Interviewer: Or kill themselves.

Jim: Yeah, commit suicide. Right. That's a lot of

Interviewer: Or drink. Or whatever.

Jim: Drink, yes. That's what made me drink, I was in the closet.

Interviewer: It's a terrible thing, the closet.

Jim: Very.

Interviewer: Do you work on your own? Do you have anybody working for you? How
does that work?

Jim: Yes, we have people working. We have cutters in the woods. And, I
operate the sawmill with a younger fellow as a tail-sawyer.

Interviewer: As a what?

Jim: Tail-sawyer on the other end of the logs [Oh, Yeah]. But, I'm the principal
player there because, I look at the log to tell what it's going to make. I
look here and there, I know exactly right away, after working the last few
years, I know, I'm not bullshitting, I'm not bragging, after so many years
you get to know anyway, right?

Interviewer #2: What kind of wood do you normally, what's the typical wood that
you're cutting?

Jim: Black spruce. Balsam fir. But, this order we got is for everything, juniper
and aspen, rather. Everything like that.

Interviewer: Juniper!

Jim: Yes, that's what they call a 'nuisance' timber. Right?

Interviewer: Yeah. And somebody's asked for it for lumber?

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: Is that the tree that you see all around, that's yellow, now?

Jim: Yes. And, autumn, needles will fall off. [Yeah]

Interviewer: We wondered if that was what we call tamarack.

Jim: It is. Same thing. Yes.

Interviewer: So what about this, you were saying before about Fredericton. What's that about?

Jim: It is a saw repair school, training to be able to repair circular saws, band saws, planing knives. But I've been around metals, see, you've got to know your metals, to combine together when you make a saw, to make it be hardened by a kiln or oven, and, mill it, be all combined together, you got nice strength off your saw. And once you've got, well, like every saw, I'll just give you mine in particular, mine's a thirty-four inch diameter saw, she got twelve teeth in her, eight and a quarter inches apart. If I set her at rpms of ... let's say five hundred, she goes, the regular rpms is nine-sixty, if I set her at five hundred, she'll wobble, she won't come out right, which means, perpendicular to the, you know, but, once she gets up to nine-sixty rpm she's as true as a bill. There's no waver in the saw whatsoever, you understand my point? [Yeah] Of course, you would know that too. Because, you're in business, right?

[0:40:03]

Interviewer: So you haven't decided whether you're going to do that or not.

Jim: I'm only going to do that *if* the work slows down, or if we can't get enough logs to fill the orders, see? But right now, I'm up to me neck in work. Right up to me neck. I'm flat out, well, I took two days off just to help a RCMP officer friend of mine, Sargent 'Roddick?', he'd be on [inaudible 5 seconds], I didn't got a clue, anyway. And, I get in there and I, well, I did know a little bit, let me say; he put the start on one end of the roof, put the shingles on, and really, you're supposed to start in the middle. Yes. []

Interviewer: You are? We didn't.

Interviewer #2: What kind of shingles, are they wood shingles?

Jim: No

Interviewer #2: Are they asphalt?

Jim: Asphalt. Yes. Thirty-nine and a quarter, that's the standard size now for metric? [Yeah] Maybe now the standard. Used to be thirty-six, right? Now they're thirty-nine and a quarter.

Interviewer: So this RCMP guy, he must know you're gay, and he doesn't

Jim: Yes, all my AA friend - I shouldn't have said that.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Jim: That's anonymous, okay? (laughs) He, I'm sorry. Okay.

Interviewer: Well as long as [] end that, I won't use that.

Jim: No, please don't. All my friends like that, I've got a lot of friends, like I was saying, and they're narrow; they're straight but they're narrow.

Interviewer: Straight but not narrow?

Jim: Yes. A lot of friends are. This RCMP officer and his wife, they understand. In fact, yesterday, she was talking about, we was having dinner [] building the house, talking about eating fruits and stuff like that, right? The more fruit (laughs) you eat, the less chance you get cancer. According to that, I said, 'Mary?', I said, I got no problems, I'm the biggest fruit in the bay! (laughs) [laughter] And he just about passed out, of course. (laughs) Got a sense of humour.

Interviewer: Oh god yes. So, what about you, are you religious at all?

Jim: Definitely not.

Interviewer: No?

Jim: No.

Interviewer: You were brought up, though. Were you brought up Pentecostal?

Jim: Yes, I was brought up Pentecostal, yes, and I quickly changed. Yes, after I got out of the closet, they rejected me and, I pay United Church, now. And they accepts, they begin to accept homosexual and lesbian.

Interviewer: "Pay." What do you mean, you make financial contributions to it?

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh. But you don't go.

Jim: No. They get to put paint on a seat with my financial contribution; I don't go up there to wear it off. [laughter] No way. No, I don't attend much there.

Interviewer: What is it that keeps you here?

Jim: My work. My work, only. I really wanted to leave last year, this spring, I was wanting to leave, and, see about this saw repair bit. But, when I was thinking about leaving, I landed this big, this huge contract. So now, we got, my partner and I, that's my business partner, we got three fellows in the woods, we're going to hire on two more next week, and, ... myself, and we got a tail-sawyer, someone at the end of the logs, see? And Bruce is my business partner, he sometimes saws with me, and he sometimes goes in the woods and cuts, eh? And sometimes he gets a contract somewhere else, he's a contractor, right? Building contractor.

Interviewer: So, you're saying, it's this big contract that's keeping you.

Jim: Yes. Before that, see, the work was really slack on the mill, really slack, I could not make a living near that at this. So I figured I'd go and do something for myself, that ... well, I'm partly used to, because, instead of taking my big saw up to the shop and [] fixed, I'd do it myself. You know? When I take her off, going through the trouble, rigmarole, of taking her off and putting her back on again, going to cost me a hundred and fifty dollars to get her fixed, so I'm going to do it myself. What's the point of it? [Sure] And, I'm really interested in things, too, see? This kind of a repair thing, right? [Making things work.] Yes.

Interviewer: If you did go to Fredericton

Jim: Well, I couldn't make my marriage work the same.

Interviewer: Your what?

Jim: I couldn't make my marriage work. (laughs)

Interviewer: If you did go to Fredericton, would you come back?

Jim: I don't know. 'Coz I mean, I would stick with my partner, he would run the sawmill after I'm gone, you see? And if there's any changes, like a lot of work, I'd probably come back. But other than that, I would do my trade ... and probably tour the Maritime provinces at the different sawmills to apply my trade. You know?

Interviewer: Did you ever want to live a city?

Jim: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: But

Jim: No work there, the type that I'm used to. [Right]

Interviewer #2: Yeah, like, millwork is usually outside of cities.

Jim: Yes. And in St. John's you've, anywhere, any city, if you get a job it's usually in a, in an office or something. Geez, I never 'lived' in an office. I'm so used to working outdoors with my hands ... and, knowing how to do it, this sort of thing, I wouldn't want a job at anything else, you see? And in regards to fixing saws and

Interviewer #2: Absolutely beautiful.

Jim: Yeah?

Interviewer: Yeah, both the west coast and the east. ... Have you been to the, in St. John's, have you been to the new Alley, or the, the clubs there?

Jim: Alley Club.

Interviewer: You've been?

Jim: Yes, I've been there a couple of times. Yes.

Interviewer: What'd you think of it?

Jim: Oh, great. [Yeah?] I was only there during the daytime one time, and another time I was in at night, but, there was nothing going on, it was in the middle part of the week or something. It was in the wintertime, too, eh? [Oh!] She's, my lady friend, now wanting to go next weekend or something, to Zone Sixteen on Water Street? [Yes] And, ... I wants to go in, and also, I want to check with NGALE, my support group, talk to the boys, see what's happening. [Good idea] Yeah.

Interviewer: So, the support group. If you haven't been to any meetings, what, do you talk sometimes on the phone?

Jim: Yes, we correspond back and forth. [Oh, you do.] Yes, and also like when I write to different MPs, the replies I receive, I send them to the support group. [Right] You know. I talked to Brian ?Bankford? on the phone, and it's been, some of the boys from the, that's the members, write me too, the minutes of the meeting and whatnot, right? ... So, I think the more support groups there are, the better for us. [Oh yes] I'm also a friend of ?GALE? into Halifax. Yes.

Interviewer #2: There's another group in ... []?

Jim: GLAS. That's Gay Lesbian Support. Yes. [Right] The phone number there is 6-3-4-1-0-6-6.

Interviewer #2: They run a phone line.

Jim: Hmm?

Interviewer #2: They run a phone line?

Jim: Yes. You can get them at, from seven-thirty Newfoundland time, ... to nine o'clock, or ten o'clock, on Thursday evenings. I figured I'd leave that in there because, you never know, you might [] talk to them. ... And the one in St. John's is an eight hundred number. 1-800-5-6-3-1-5-7-5. That's the Newfoundland Labrador AIDS Committee but you still get Brian.

Interviewer #2: Oh right.

Interviewer: Around here, with AIDS or HIV, do you know anybody around here who's

Jim: No, I only know [Who's], no, I know a couple in St. John's, is all.

Interviewer: Do you know of anybody who's, who's had to leave here 'coz they were gay? or lesbian? Or

Jim: I know one person who, he didn't leave here because he was gay, he didn't live here because he couldn't find anything to do. [Oh, right] Went to St. John's, right?

Interviewer: That's as big a concern, isn't it? Lack of work.

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: That's the fisheries in trouble.

Jim: Yes. And there's a funny thing, like, someone telling me the other day, You guys are doing good; at least you're [inaudible], most people [inaudible].

Interviewer #2: This is largely a fishing community?

Jim: Uh

[0;50;30]

Interviewer #2: What's the main economic base of Glovertown?

Jim: Lumber.

Interviewer: Lumber, is it. Oh.

Jim: Yes. Saw-lumber. ... And of course, there is some fishing activities, but, now, what Brian told me, everything, with the fisheries and all that, there's not much going on. But it brings in, last couple of years ago, capelin, they process capelin here, right? But there's not much going on this year, capelin didn't come in, they landed in Halifax, but they never landed in their life before (laughs).

Interviewer: I heard. Yeah. People just waited and waited.

Jim: Right. Yeah. So there'll be a lot of people on welfare this year, more-so than ever before, on account of this. And we guys are paying for it [], aren't we.

Interviewer: People who are lucky enough to have work.

Jim: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you given up on your father, pretty well?

Jim: No, no. My mother, I suppose, I don't know what's going on out at the other house, my parents' house.

Interviewer: That's right next door, eh?

Jim: Yes. They can, take me as I am, or, I don't really give a damn, you know. Doesn't bother me.

Interviewer: You've never been close?

Jim: No, never.

Interviewer: When we came looking for you on, when was that, Friday?

Interviewer #2: Friday.

Jim: I got your note.

Interviewer: Yeah. I couldn't, we, I couldn't find, I had your address, but I couldn't find the number. So I went to the, there was nobody in the next house, and I went two houses down, and, so I, we sort of guessed, Well maybe that's, it's two-twenty-nine, we sort of guessed, Well maybe that's two-twenty-nine. So I went and I saw this guy in the yard and I asked him if he was Jim Gench. He said, Two houses down, so, I went there. And then, we were going to drive away, and, he came running! He came *running* down the road, this guy, and he said, Wait, wait. He said, His father lives next door. So, I went over there but there was nobody there. That would've been interesting, if you'd been there. [laughter]

Jim: You wouldn't, 'til I knew you were, sure. [No] You wouldn't

Interviewer: No. I was just saying. (laughs)

Jim: There's not of anyone's business who you are. You know, that's, that's your own business. Right. [Right] Although, now, see, we're on the sawmill, ?even? two guys come round (laughs) the house today, looking for lumber, even, getting me to work on a Sunday, you know? And that, I'm against it, but, Sundays, like to relax after working all week, see? [It'd be nice.] And, well, every day this fellow was coming to the house, or, because I run the business here, it's my job to know or find out for to tell him what he's wanting to know, this sort of thing, right? Like, how many feet a log makes, and this sort of thing. Someone wanting to buy lumber, even when I comes in and gets in the tub, after a hard day's work, fellows come knocking on the door! [Really] Oh my god (laughs).

Interviewer #2: You invite him in?

Jim: Well, if he's cute-looking I would (laughs). [laughter] Yeah, if he's a good-looker. We're hiring on the phone next week, oh my god, he's a real, beautiful hunk, boy.

Interviewer: Yeah? You're hiring him?

Jim: Yeah. Yeah, I'd like to hire him, all right (laughs). Yeah (laughs). I don't know if he'd dare, not if he knows [] likes him. [Yeah?] You know. Gee, what a figure, what a beautiful, ... good-looker.

Interviewer: Well, it'll be interesting to see what works out. Maybe I should check with you in a couple of weeks (laughs).

Jim: What?

Interviewer: Maybe I should check with you in a couple of weeks, see what happens.

Jim: Sure. We could write each other. Sure. You going back to Ontario, on your way back, are you?

Interviewer: Yeah. We'll be still about a week and a half on the road. We're going, tomorrow we'll drive to, tonight we're going to Gander, tomorrow we'll drive to Port-aux-Basques and catch the boat early. [Jim: Yes] And then we're going to Pictou county in Nova Scotia. You know about Roseanne Skoke?

Jim: Yeah, I know about Roseanne Sko-garbage.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jim: The bitch. I got to say it. Got into with Svend Robinson, didn't she? [Right] Gee, fuckin' bitch. Excuse my language but I'm done. I gets really roaring mad at something like this.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that's where she's based. And. So I'm going to go see some lesbians there, mostly. And, then we're going on to PEI for [Jim: Yes] a few days, [Jim: Yes] and then up to north shore New Brunswick and then we go home. [Jim: Oh yeah] We will have been a month on the road.

Jim: Well, boys, I hope you enjoy your tour, I really do.

Interviewer: Yeah. Covered a lot of ground. Is there anything else about this, that you think is important, that we haven't touched on?

Jim: I think you've covered, I think you've covered all the bases. [Yeah?] I think you did. And then some (laughs).

Interviewer: Anything about living gay out, out here?

Jim: Well, if you read my article in the Gaezette, September issue [Right], you would know. I mean [Okay]. I only have one copy and I can't give it out,

because, there's [No, I've got one at home.]. In fact, one of the singers was in the house today for some lumber,

Interviewer: One of the who?

Jim: One of the local singers [Oh yes], I'm sure [] retired, now, either [inaudible], right? Name is George ?Rozel?. Ever heard of him? [No] And he also got a brother by the name of Bobby Evans. He sings on the ferry that goes across Port-aux-Basques near Sydney. [Oh really] Yes. And, see, they're all singers, really. I think he's, if you can't make nothing else, making a singer, wasn't he? (laughs) Like my father always said, If you can't make nothing of a man, you can make a Pentecostal of him. (laughs) [laughter] [inaudible] and whatever (laughs).

Interviewer: Are the Pentecostals quite powerful around here?

Jim: The most prominent religious faith. [Really.] Yes.

Interviewer: They run the school?

Jim: Denominational. You know that Roman Catholic, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventists.

Interviewer: Those are all different schools?

Jim: No, they're all inter-joined into [] school, school, you see? [Oh, I see] It's still denominational education, as my article states.

Interviewer: Yeah. Pentecostals have the most

Jim: Yes, yes. But like I said, on that note there, the way I think is that ... if the government was running the schools instead of the denominational, you know, there wouldn't be so much discrimination. [It's true.] That's my opinion, you know.

Interviewer: They seem to be losing their nerve. We heard about a week

Jim: That's all right, too. We wants to lose their nerve, wants to lose more than that. Must lose their lives. Anyway, [].

Interviewer: All right.

Jim: I hope you, I hope I satisfied your curiosity.

Interviewer: Oh, you did, yes.

Jim: And [inaudible] for you?

[end of interview]