

NORTHWEST LESBIAN AND GAY  
HISTORY MUSEUM PROJECT

*A project of Gay Community Social Services*

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Narrator's Name and Address:

ZACHARY M SABER

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*Zachary M. Saber*  
Narrator's Signature

2/7/01  
Date

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**Oral History Project:**

**Zachary Saber images**



SaberZachery1  
photo by Marina Weisenbach  
JPEG file  
also available in TIFF format



SaberZachery2  
photo by Marina Weisenbach  
JPEG file  
also available in TIFF format

**Zachary Saber**

Interviewed 2/7/01 by Ruth Pettis and Chris Blehler

**SIDE 1 of 4:**

0 — born 1955, Glendale, AZ; name change due to TS transition; grew up in Navy family; to Bremerton 1970; schooling; family; aware of gender identity early on; hearing "queer"  
 5 — messages from adults; tomboy; often perceived as male; parents' reactions; wanted to be army officer; coping w. reality, teen years  
 10 — joined Air Force; Vietnam, "worst hell!" of his life; gay friends in childhood, relatives; no info from library; dating call girl @ 16  
 15 — meeting her, cont.; learned to be a "good butch"; the "Numbers Club" [1222 address?]  
 20 — rules for butches, femme was in control; making love; class aspects; public behavior; money  
 25 — "brutes"; people of color he knew, talking about race; taboos; job @ commissary; personal freedom; mother abusive

[TAPE RUNS OUT]

**SIDE 2 of 4:**

0 — fights back, dad intervenes; mom's attitude, dad away; butch/femme not flexible; financial support; vocabulary  
 5 — Ruth's query re androgynous women; chose Air Force; Vietnam; other lesbians in military  
 10 — military, cont.; often investigated; her C.O. supportive; dated CO's daughter; made sergeant; flight simulation training  
 15 — kicked out in '75, threats against family; JAG attorney's advice; discharge  
 20 — leadership school; harassment; discharge; education; jobs; feelings re discharge; life after discharge  
 25 — to San Diego; "collecting kids," meaning of that; dealing w. depression; didn't have to seek gay places; buying Sappho's (taVERN) @ 24 (1979); guys

[TAPE RUNS OUT]

**SIDE 3 of 4:**

0 — harassment of S&M people, others; contrast w. EastLink; codes for alcohol-free people  
 5 — what he learned from Sappho's; women & victimization; contrast w. Wildrose; choices, accountability  
 10 — Aquarian Foundation, spirituality; drugs, burnout, Sappho's closed, lawsuit; managing the Crypt; leather and S&M community  
 15 — cont.; took the shame out of it; similar stores; store's social function  
 20 — Chris' query re change from private orientation; decision for sex-change  
 25 — effect on partner; feeling right; Ingersoll/Benjamin standards; being himself; needed surgery anyway, talk w. God

[TAPE RUNS OUT]

**SIDE 4 of 4:**

0 — surgery, hormones, name change; Ingersoll [Gender Center], benefits of the program; "heterosexual queer"; selecting name  
 5 — name, cont.; effect of hormones; ambivalence of lesbian identity/community; appeal of FMs to lesbians  
 10 — women's responsibility re male attitudes/personalities; hormones' effects  
 15 — genital reconstruction; Ruth's query re danger, men's rest rooms, Ruth's query re old-school butches  
 20 — butches label/stigma, difference in meaning; massage practice, clients; others' reactions to name; physical changes  
 25 — reactions, name, cont.; re-connecting w. relatives; "it's been awesome"; DMV reaction

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NWLGHMP Oral History Project  
TRANSCRIPT

Interview with: Zachary Saber

**Interview date:** February 7, 2001

**Interviewed for NWLGHMP by:** Ruth Pettis and Chris Beahler

**Transcribed by:** Susan Crandall

**Total number of tapes:** 2

**Sound quality:** good

**Restrictions:** none

**Basic biographical information**

**Year of birth:** 1955

**Place of birth:** Glendale, Arizona

**Ethnic origin:** White

**Occupation:** Massage Therapist; former owner of Sappho's Tavern; former manager of The Crypt

**Puget Sound area resident:** since 1970

**Topics:** transition as a female-to-male transsexual (FtM); growing up in a military family; Air Force career and discharge for being a lesbian; butch/femme lesbian culture in the 1970s and expectations for butch partners; managing a lesbian tavern and leather sex store; negative aspects of bar ownership and clientele; observations on the S&M community; circumstances leading to the decision to begin transition; Ingersoll Gender Center; choice of name; results of hormone therapy; reflections on gender and identity.



Supported by the  
King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission  
Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue

### Interview with Zachary Saber

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Sound quality: good

vocal emphasis in *italics*; phonetic guesses in [brackets]

SIDE 1 of 4

Ruth: It's February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001. My name is Ruth Pettis, and this is an oral history for the Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project. I'm talking today with Zachary Saber, and Chris Beahler is also here, who might ask some questions also. So I will start off. Zach, by telling me when you were born – the date when you were born.

Zachary: Oh, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1955.

Ruth: Okay, and where was that?

Zachary: Glendale, Arizona

Ruth: Okay. I want to start off by saying that you recently changed your name to Zachary –

### Zachary: Connect

Ruth Saber

### Zachary: Correct

### Ruth: From what?

Zachary: December 13<sup>th</sup> last year, from Deanna Gay Marulli.

Ruth: Okay, and do you want to say a little bit about why?

Zachary: My transition – transitioning. I'm a transsexual, female to male. I am now post-op, as far as all the surgeries I'm going for. I'm not doing genital reassignment, so now it's just the hurry-up-and-wait game, waiting for the testosterone to finish doing its thing.

Ruth: Right. I want to come back to that later.

Zachary: Sure

Ruth: I have a *lot* of questions to ask you about that.

Zachary: Sure

Ruth: But I kind of want to take this a little bit chronologically, to ask you a little bit about what it was like when you were growing up. Did you grow up in the Glendale area?

Zachary: No. I grew up in Navy housing, bases throughout all of southern California -- my dad was enlisted military -- and wound up moving to Bremerton in 1970, where I went to high school, finished high school. So we moved about twice a year.

Ruth: Wow. And mostly in this country, or elsewhere?

Zachary: Yes, always up and down the I-5 corridor.

Ruth: Wow.

Chris: Did you go to military schools?

Zachary: Sometimes.

Chris: Or did you go to civilian?

Zachary: Sometimes. I think I probably had a better education than most people, because they did have very high quality schools in California. On the bases, they had great schools. So we may have moved a lot, but we were given always great, great places and educations to rely on. Plus great experiences, because of all the people around us from all over. A lot of times we were the minority, you know, so you learned a lot about different cultures and attitudes. It didn't leave you room to grow up being narrow-minded or even ambiguous. You actually cared, and actually could become involved in what was going on.

Ruth: Chris had a similar experience, didn't you?

Chris: I grew up in the Army, so --

Zachary: Uh-huh.

Chris: I think I would agree with what you just said.

Zachary: Yeah.

Chris: I was nodding my head like this.

Zachary: I would not have changed those experiences for anything in the world.

Chris: Yeah.

Zachary: I really wouldn't.

Ruth: When you said we were the minority, who is the "we" there?

Zachary: White people, being so-called white.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: Yeah, because often my neighbors were -- I mean, I grew up a lot of times just seven miles north of the Tijuana border. Our neighbors were Mexican or of Mexican descent, Filipinos, Japanese, Korean -- you know, the whole works, so people from everywhere.

Ruth: Was there any general, like, generational differences between you and your parents?

Zachary: No. In fact, my mom had me three weeks after she turned 16, so my mother and father are both very young. They're still married. Three of us kids. I'm the oldest, but, you know, I'm gay. They disowned me, so – [laughs]

Ruth: Okay. Well, maybe I'll ask you some things about that.

Zachary: Sure.

Ruth: Tell me how you first became aware of sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender things. You had told me that it happened when you were a kid.

Zachary: I knew when I was a little tiny kid. I was very young when I knew I was going to grow up and have a wife and children. Everyone kept saying, "No, you're going to have a husband. You'll *have* children." "No, no, no, no, [laughs] no, no. I'm going to have a wife and children. That's not my job to have the children. I go to work, and I take care of the family." I was eight years old the first time I heard the word "queer." And I was – wow, I do totally remember it. I was at home for lunch. I was going back to school. I walked outside. A little boy, running down the hill, yelling, "Queer!" I had never heard the word in my life.

Ruth: Was he yelling –

Zachary: And I was suddenly violently ill. No, he's just a kid. You know, he's my age – maybe a little bit older, maybe 10 or 12.

Ruth: Was he yelling at you?

Zachary: No, he was just yelling at random. He's just being a kid. He's being an idiot. But I knew it was me. I knew that's what I was, and that made me sick to my stomach.

Ruth: Wow.

Zachary: I literally turned right back around and went back in. I was just *green*. I never stayed home. I couldn't – there's no way I could go to school. I couldn't understand how he could possibly know something I didn't know. I was 10 when they told me, "No, you are not going to grow up and be a boy!" It's like, you got to be joking! I was really distressed over that one. But obviously I didn't, at least not in the sense that we all thought. From there on, it was just a fact of, that I knew I was lesbian. I knew I liked girls, and I knew I wasn't allowed to say anything. That was just kind of the way it was.

Ruth: Can you remember in particular any kinds of things that gave you that message – reactions by other people or anything that you heard?

Zachary: That gave me the message that I couldn't discuss it?

Ruth: Gave you the message of what it was and why you couldn't discuss it.

Zachary: No, I can't. I heard a couple of statements made about people that they had met along the way that were -- "some fag," to quote.

Ruth: "They" being?

Zachary: "They" being the adults in my life.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: I can't say that anyone ever set me down and said, "Look, this is wrong," etc. But I do know that, as I grew older, it became more involved in conversation, and it was made quite clear that it was unacceptable, not to be tolerated, that it *wasn't* okay. In my teens, of course, I had friends who were gay and that was okay, because that was them. So there was always the mixed message and the double-edged sword.

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: So it was okay for them, but not for us.

Ruth: So were you a tomboy? Did you play boys' games?

Zachary: Oh, absolutely! I played with all the boys. We had private boys clubs, and no girls were allowed. Their parents would go, "But Deanna's in the group." It was like, "But we don't allow girls. What do you mean?" "So what, Deanna's in?" It was never a girl; it was just me.

Ruth: So you think you were probably perceived as boyish?

Zachary: Most of my life, yeah. I'd say over even half my *adult* life I've passed as male without ever trying. When I tried, it's "Okay, cool, no problem," so --

Ruth: Okay. Something you just said prompted a question with me that's already slipped away from my mind. If it comes back, I'll deal with it.

Zachary: Okay.

Ruth: Okay.

Chris: So, were your parents -- how did they --? I mean, you were a -- they considered you a tomboy? Is that what they --?

Zachary: Yeah, when I was a little kid, my mom bought me -- because I came out. It was Christmas, and here's this big wedding doll, sitting underneath the tree. And I went, "*Whoa, Mom! Look what Santa brought you!*" [*'Cause I'm three?*], you know. And she got really angry. That's *my* doll, and I'm supposed to be a girl. I'm supposed to *play* with this. You know, I had guns. My dad stayed up all night long, building a garage and a dollhouse. I had them totally torn apart in an hour and completely rebuilt, turning it into one big house we could actually sit in -- three kids being we. It just infuriated them, but that's how I always was.

Chris: So, did you have brothers or sisters?

Zachary: Two brothers.

Chris: Two brothers.

Zachary: Both younger.

Chris: So did you -- were you pretty close?

Zachary: Yeah, we were. We all played together a lot. We weren't allowed to leave our rooms in the morning, so we'd go play in each other's rooms. We were all -- we grew up very tight. My being gay was a non-issue to them. Became an issue later, but was a total non-issue. They knew -- we were all just the kids, and that's the way it was, and that was fine.

Ruth: What did you want to be when you grew up, besides [being?] a daddy?

Zachary: Are you ready? I wanted to be in the Army. I wanted to be an officer, and I wanted to travel all around the world and come home to my wife and kids.

Ruth: When you were -- after 10, when they started telling you that that couldn't happen, and as you started to realize that, what did you have to go through mentally or psychologically to -- how did you try to reconcile yourself to what the reality was going to look like?

Zachary: I think I probably suffered the same sexual identity crises that all kids go through, as far as my mental attitude of how I dealt with it. The denial -- "There's no way, there's no way." You try to figure out what would be -- a girl be like, and I couldn't even go there. I had boyfriends, but only in the sense that they were my buds and my friends and we did a lot of things together. I'm 45, and I've still never had sex with a man, and I don't intend on changing that now. Mostly, I think, it's -- I can remember various times in life where I would literally visualize: what did I have to do to survive, to turn 18, to get out of that house, so I could actually live the life I'm supposed to live? And I would do what was necessary. That meant you go to school. Don't date. Go to school. I played tennis. I played tennis for the college, for the Air Force, for the high school. I ran around with my friends. I pulled decent enough grades -- nothing big, no big deal. I went to the college part-time and took classes. I worked. I did anything to stay busy, just to make the time go. Then I joined the Air Force. And I actually joined the Air Force, going, "Okay, I can live on my own now, but maybe they'll teach me how to be straight." And "straight" never included having sex. It made me real clear with that. It never had anything to do about having sex. It had to do with maybe I could pass for straight now. Maybe I can be normal like everybody else. Okay, yeah, wrong! Not happening, okay?

Chris: So, straight as a man, or straight as a woman?

Zachary: I don't know. I really couldn't tell you at this point. I just honestly felt there would be better, stronger, more positive role models in the Air Force than anywhere else I would be able to visualize in my mind, and I still think I was right. I think it was one of the best things I ever did. I'm a Vietnam veteran. I only spent a three-week stint over there, and it was the worst hell I've ever experienced in my life. And any person who's ever come back who did a full tour, oh my God, I don't know how they ever survived! I really don't. It taught me how to be an *adult*, regardless of whether I was male or female. It taught me how to be *responsible*. It taught me how to live *my* life and

how to make choices, regardless of my sexuality or my sexual identity. Those were all things that are really irrelevant when it comes to just being who you are. Those are just other incidentals, I think. So it was a very good thing for me.

Ruth: Let me back up just a moment. You said you had gay friends while you were still young?

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: In school, during your school years?

Zachary: Right.

Ruth: How did you meet them?

Zachary: Actually through a neighbor. One of them was a hairstylist. We lived in Claremont in southern California, and he was from England. He was a hairstylist. He's the first person who ever plucked my eyebrows and showed me how I could dress like this without having to look too much like a she. I mean, we never used the words. It was just, "We're going to educate you." It was very cool. I really liked him.

Ruth: Wow. About how old were you at this time?

Zachary: I was 14.

Ruth: And you deliberately sought out his contact, or did this just happen in your life?

Zachary: No, I was actually sent over to go over and housesit for them while they were gone, and I met him. He was staying with them. Then my mom sent me back to have him do my hair. So it's like, "Okay. Cool!" So, no, I never sought people out. I know, growing up, one of my relatives was a lesbian. I never got to meet her. She died of cancer. In fact, I've only in the past month am meeting blood relatives of mine – family, aunts and cousins – that I've not met in well over 30, 40 years. My family was very good at alienating family, so they're just now entering my life. I'm getting to learn a lot about other relatives. There was a young man who was gay. When I was a – not even born – my parents, my mom was very young. She and her sister would hang out in the house, and he'd come over and he'd play the piano. They wouldn't let the kids around him, because in those days they still believed being gay was a pedophile, at least in their house. But, I mean, I don't know who he was. I just know he was a cousin.

Ruth: Did you ever try to seek out information about being gay or anything like that?

Zachary: I went to the library all the time. I read all the time.

Ruth: What did you find when you were there?

Zachary: Nothing, and what I did find was more along the lines of adult reading that made very little sense. Very little information. It just literally came down to, I guess, realizing that there's no way I can be the only one. I didn't buy that for a minute. You could read Playboy and any other kind of sex magazine or adult magazine, and you knew damn good and well there were lots of people having sex with other people, especially women. At least that's how my mind saw it at the time, okay? So I knew I wasn't the only one, and I knew, sooner or later, I would become an adult and I would be able to go places. There had to be *some* place. I would create this place in my brain, in my

mind, and that's how I would survive until I could turn 18 and get out. I got lucky. I got out at 17. But when I was 16, I would [bring ?] the ferry to Seattle. I had actually met a woman over here that I would say I dated, I was involved with. She was at least a decade older than me. She was a call girl. I would come over about every other weekend -- come stay a number of hours and hang out with her. Met some very famous performers and artists of the time that also identified as lesbian or gay or bisexual. So I had quite an education and a great opportunity just to be around very nice people. It was very good.

Ruth: Tell me how you met this woman.

Zachary: I met her at the store. I think she hustled me. She picked me up. [laughs] She actually leaned over my shoulder. She was quite -- she's not very tall, very small and petite. She was standing on something and leaned over my shoulder and whispered. I didn't quite hear her, but whatever it was that I did hear was like, "Oh!" That kind of perks your interest, you know, because there was some innuendo to it, although I couldn't tell you what it was. I turned around, and she went, "Oh my God, you're not very old." I said, "I'm old enough." I'm 5' 10". I was 5' 10" then, okay? She goes, "Are you at least 18?" I said, "Oh, yeah!" I was 16. She says, "Come walk with me?" I said, "Sure. Let me lock up my bike," because I always rode a 10-speed. So I locked my bike up and we went walking. I don't know. How do you lead to things, you know? I think she leaned over at some point and gave me a kiss, and I liked it and kissed her back and -- yeah.

Ruth: When you say you met some performers, were you talking about drag artists or--?

Zachary: No, I'm talking actual, honest-to-God recording stars of the 70s that were -- yeah.

Ruth: Okay. What did you learn from them, at the tender age of 16?

Zachary: I learned about being a very -- a good butch. How to open doors. How to treat a woman a properly. How to be respectful. How to help her with her coat and her door without seeming overbearing. How to stand patiently and wait. How to pick a restaurant. How to behave. How to have manners. How to go dress. How to ask questions.

Ruth: Was this all really active tutoring, or was it just something you were picking up?

Zachary: It was just something I was picking up, being around these people. Then there were two women in my life that were very actively involved in what they called my education.

Ruth: Did -- how much older? You just said the woman was 10 years older.

Zachary: At least 10 years older, yeah.

Ruth: Okay. Among the others who were part of this crowd, what were they --?

Zachary: At least that age or older.

Ruth: Did any of them tell stories about what being gay was like for them?

Zachary: No.

Ruth: Or lesbian, what that was like?

Zachary: No, no, it was never discussed, except that it was one of those -- "It is getting better. It gets better all the time. It gets easier. Some day we'll actually have laws." It was always, "Don't you forget. You get out there, and you do what you can to be out. You never be ashamed of having to stand up and do what is right." But it was never actually set down and discussed. A number of them traveled and went to Europe quite frequently. They would discuss places they had gone to there -- the women in the spas and the lesbians. They would use various terms for the women, you know. Rather than "height-weight proportionate," you had your women who were "Rubesque," and you had your women that were your Twiggys of the day, and stuff like that. It was just very fun.

Ruth: Were they -- did any of them go to any of the -- this was all Seattle now that you were --?

Zachary: Yeah. There was one bar that they would take me to. They always called it the Numbers Club, and I wouldn't know what to call it. I know that, when we walked in, you thought you'd walked in to somebody's very luxurious, lavishly-furnished living room -- overstuffed sofas and chairs and couches. You walked back, and there was a nice counter with some stools. It was like an L shape. So you could go off to your left, and here's this very large spacious room. It was pretty dark. Most of it were comfortable chairs, positioned around tables, a nice bar -- bartender would come out, a waitress would come out. And that is where we'd go most frequently for dinners, for drinks.

Ruth: What part of town was this?

Zachary: Right downtown, I want to say it was like at "222 -- Something," but I'm not positive. 1222?<sup>1</sup>

Ruth: It wasn't the [Mocambo]?

Zachary: No.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: No. There was no dancing. It was very quiet. It very much reminded you of the -- like the Harvard Library attitude, where you walked in and it was very calm. You could smoke your cigar and have your drink. That's pretty much what it was like.

Ruth: When you said "Harvard Library," you're talking about --

Zachary: The university? No, it's out --

Ruth: You're talking about Harvard University?

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Okay. Did you have experience with the Harvard Library?

Zachary: No, I saw it on TV. I went, "You know that reminds me a lot of the same attitude."

Ruth: Okay. I just wanted to clarify, we're talking about Harvard and not something here that was called Harvard then, because I know there was some sort of Harvard, club up on Harvard Avenue up on the hill, so I want to make

sure what we were talking about. Is there anything you can tell me about what was appropriate for a butch to be and do?

Zachary: At that time?

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: The big thing that was always [in force? enforced?] was to make sure you treated the lady like a lady. Show her respect. Women were not expected to carry things in. They weren't expected to open their doors. They were in control, by all means. You know, [we?] were raised to be well taught -- the woman is in control. There were attitudes associated with it about -- oh God, I almost want to say that you were expected -- no, that wouldn't sound right. It was as though you were being trained to be a gentleman -- very definitely a gentleman -- and you are treating ladies as gentleladies.

Ruth: Did anyone take you aside and give you any specific advice, whisper in your ear about things you should or shouldn't do?

Zachary: Always understand that she will always believe she is right. Let her believe it, even when you know she is not.

Ruth: That's from another butch?

Zachary: Uh-huh.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: And flat out, when it comes to making love, your only priority is her. As long as you keep that in mind, you will always do well, and you will always pay attention. And I've always found that to be true. That was always a biggie, about paying close attention, and understanding, as butches, you were not to put your own drive in there at all. That was not her responsibility, unless she chose to be a part of that. Don't expect her to be. A butch -- I guess I can understand why so many people at that time came out, being considered stone cold.

Ruth: I was wondering, was there any time when anyone encouraged you, or that you got the message that your own gratification was also important?

Zachary: No. No, your own gratification was your own business to be dealt with separately.

Ruth: I'm seeing such a contrast between what we as women think of as guy socialization, which is how to score, as opposed to what you're talking about.

Chris: Right, yeah.

Zachary: That's just how we were raised. That's how I was taught.

Ruth: Was there any -- was there a contrast between what you were learning in this setting and how you had observed your parents interacting?

Zachary: Well, yeah. How my parents interacted was that my mom's job was to satisfy Dad and keep him happy and content. It was an exact opposite. Absolutely. But my parents would never have been considered upper class or gentlemen or gentleladies either.

Chris: That's one thing I was wondering about, because it sounded like these women were –

Zachary: A lot of class. They had a lot of money, and they weren't afraid to spend it. Absolutely.

Chris: So I wonder if that – I'm sure it impacted what the scene was, because you also had the class stuff in there.

Zachary: That could very well be. Yeah, that would make sense. That would make sense. You didn't go places that just anyone would go. You certainly didn't go showing any public forms of affection. They were always very subtle. Whether it was through phrases or through specific types of touch, but you would never – they would never have been caught dead in my bar, okay?

Chris: Yeah.

Ruth: You're talking about Sappho's.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Later on.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: I want to ask you – since these were people who had some money. You're 16, or maybe just a little over at this point.

Zachary: I was 16, yeah.

Ruth: Were they paying your way?

Zachary: I actually had a job where I had money. No, my girlfriend normally would slide money into my pocket. Her belief was I didn't have to have the money. *She* made the money. But I should always make sure it was me who was seen spending the money and never her. So she would always put two, three, four hundred dollars in my pocket if we went out.

Ruth: So were you learning things about how a whole different class behaves?

Zachary: I guess. I never thought of it.

Ruth: I'm just wondering.

Zachary: I just never thought of it. That, to me, was all there was. I had nothing else to compare it to, as far as a gay society went. I grew up believing gay people were better educated, higher educated, had better attitudes, were more open-minded, didn't have time to be racist or sexist. They weren't prejudicial towards the gay men that they ran around with. They were very much interactive with each other. If anyone was catty and bitchy, it was the guys! So I

was very appalled later in life to run around with a lot of gay women and find out there are a lot of bitches out there! I mean that as a generalization, okay, so -- [laughter]

Ruth: [I'll point that out. ?] [laughter]

Chris: But none of these women, you wouldn't consider any of these women bitches at that time.

Zachary: Now I would look at them, and I would think, "You catty, obnoxious, pompous, arrogant..."

Chris: Oh, really?

Zachary: Yeah, yeah, but I didn't know anything then.

Chris: Yeah.

Zachary: I really didn't. This was my -- this is how people behaved. Now, this was not the butch women.

Chris: Right.

Zachary: Okay?

Chris: Yeah.

Zachary: But then, you know, in retrospect, a lot of those butch women could have probably been just in the same boat I was in, you know? I don't know.

Ruth: You mentioned that they didn't have time to be prejudiced. Did you ever have any conversations about race? And were there people of color in this group or around these people?

Zachary: Yes, but they were men, not women.

Ruth: Anyone in particular? Without -- you don't have to name names, but can you just, like, [hard to hear] memories?

Zachary: There was a black -- a black male. There was an Asian male. There were a couple of very light-skinned biracial, but they would have been Asian-white women.

Ruth: We're talking now about probably the late '60s?

Zachary: No, I'm talking actually early '70s, '71.

Ruth: Early '70s. Okay, so it was much later than, say, when the civil rights movement was happening. I was wondering what kind of conversations people had about those kind of issues, that you were in.

Zachary: I remember a couple of the guys discussing their involvement during the civil rights. We would talk about things that would come up -- maybe part of the news -- and they would relate it back to some active -- So I know that one of them was physically and actively involved in the mid-'60s. But, you know, again, it was always treated almost blasé-ly. They were there. That was a fact of life. There were things to be done. They did what they had to do, and, thank you, God, but, to quote, "If they don't want to get [their?] goddamn asses out of the south where it

sucks, then they're going to stay down there and they're going to pay the goddamn price." That was not my saying that, okay? I'm not verbatim quoting; I'm [additude ?] quoting.

Ruth: When you say "they," are you talking about black people?

Zachary: I assumed that's what he talked about. My mind looks at it, and I feel that same way about anyone who's a minority. If they choose stay in an environment where they're going to be constantly suppressed, there is nothing I can do! You know? That's their choice.

Ruth: Before I leave this topic, I wanted to find out if there was any -- if you can recall any social taboos or things that wasn't cool to do.

Zachary: Do not touch in public. Do not use terms of endearment.

Ruth: In public.

Zachary: There were a number of people: do not use their real names. Yeah, in public, right. When getting in cars, let the driver get the car door. If the driver doesn't get it, then it was my job to get it. Don't ever let her open that door.

Ruth: Did you ever hear people being talked about as if they had been ostracized because they had done something that wasn't cool?

Zachary: Yes. Yes. A woman had freaked out and gotten very upset and made a public *scene* over feeling that she was being jilted. They were all totally, totally disgusted at her behavior and her attitude.

Ruth: Why do you think that was? Because she was calling public attention to herself?

Zachary: Right. Right. Right.

Ruth: Blowing everyone's cover?

Zachary: Well, no, it wasn't about *them*. It was the idiocy of behaving that way in public. She knew that she -- I guess, she was supposed to have known that, obviously, this woman had found a new girlfriend, and what was she making a scene about? What did she hope to create? What was she hoping to do?

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: That was what made no sense. It's one of those -- You know, you go away. That's just what you do. You don't make a scene.

Ruth: Did you observe any physical fights among women?

Zachary: No.

Ruth: I'm asking, because some women -- I guess I kind of refer to "women of the old school," sort of pre-Stonewall lesbians, talk about the Madison Tavern as this -- both as a place where it was a haven to go but also, apparently, it was famous for some of its fights. I was just wondering if you stumbled on any of that.

Zachary: No. No. No.

Ruth: Okay.

Chris: What kind of job were you working at that point?

Zachary: I worked – I was in high school, so I wasn't doing a whole lot. I actually worked at the commissary on the base over in Bremerton.

Chris: Oh, you did?

Zachary: Yeah.

Chris: So you were busy. You were going to high school –

Zachary: Yeah, that's why I only went over about one – every other weekend.

Chris: So it pretty much stayed that. You didn't increase. You didn't start coming over more.

Zachary: I would come over a couple of week nights occasionally. I would say I was going to a concert, something like that. Catch the ferry, come over, maybe have dinner, turn around and go back.

Chris: So what was your relationship with your family like right then? Was it pretty strained?

Zachary: No worse than it ever had been before. I was pretty independent and capable of coming and going. I wasn't being asked where I was going; no one ever asked.

Chris: So you just came and [went??]?

Zachary: I didn't get in trouble or anything, so no one really gave a damn.

Ruth: So they didn't know all that you were up to at that point?

Zachary: Oh, no, they never knew *anything* I was up to. But then, they never knew when I had a game. They never knew when I had a match. They never knew anything. They never had much interest. I grew up with no – I mean, I grew up knowing that they really didn't want anything to do with me. I grew up knowing all my life that my mother felt it was my fault that her life was ruined.

Chris: Because of who you were?

Zachary: Because I was born. My mother was extremely abusive. I grew up being beat quite often. Her favorite time was to wait until I was asleep. She liked to come in with wire coat hangers and my dad's thin leather belt. There was no love lost. I was a blue baby when I was born. I grew up hearing until I was 15 that she should have just let me die. My father finally heard her.

[SIDE 1 ENDS ABRUPTLY]

SIDE 2 of 4

Ruth: It probably didn't catch the last thing you had said, so if you want to recap that incident.

Zachary: Oh, yeah, my mom had made some threatening remark. My dad was asleep on the sofa, and she had once again done her, you know, hit me type thing. "I should have let you die when you were born." I very calmly [pounded?] her head, put her head through a wall.

Ruth: What was your father -?

Zachary: {!?] said, you know, "If you ever hit me again, I'm going to kill you." My dad pulled me off of her, said, "Go to your room." It was never discussed, and that was the last time it ever came up.

Ruth: Was yours the type of family that, if there was a problem, people just kind of pretended it wasn't there and not talk about it?

Zachary: Yeah, absolutely.

Chris: How did they feel about your brothers? Your mother, how did you feel about your brothers? Was she also -

Zachary: They were fine. They were boys. They weren't the ones - no, they were younger. They didn't make her get married; I did. It's my fault. I was independent. I didn't need her; therefore, I'm bad. They needed her. So she really didn't care where I was. It was okay with her that I was gone.

Chris: Your dad - did your dad care?

Zachary: My dad was gone all the time. Being in the Navy, he was always overseas. So until I was 17, I didn't really know him very well. And at that point, don't tell me I can't go do something. I don't even know who the hell you are! So that was the understanding.

Chris: So time to get out of there, huh?

Zachary: Yeah, so I did. January of 1973, man, I was out of there!

Chris: Yeah.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Among the people that you would hang out with, I wanted to find out how flexible or not were the butch/femme roles.

Zachary: They were not flexible.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: I was in my mid-20s before I ever heard the phrase, "Butch in the streets, femme in the sheets," because that was certainly not my experience. I would have to say, based on the people that I knew, that was not the case. Yet, here I am at 45, and I can see how people could reinterpret that, and maybe it was!

Ruth: What do you mean by reinterpret that?

Zachary: Well, the women were definitely in control. The women - the femmes - were definitely in control. They had the say-so. Some of them could be very aggressive and very assertive in all sorts of ways. So as butches, we

knew our place. There were a couple of the butches there that were obviously "the" provider. They were obviously the ones that made the life possible for the women that they were with, but you still knew that, sexually, the femmes were still the ones calling the shots.

Ruth: I'm going to ask you another question that you almost partially answered, because I get different answers to this, depending on who I talk to, was: did the butch -- were the butches also economically the providers, or was that reversed?

Zachary: That's why I say, I'm sure there were a few that were in the same boat as me, that were younger than their partners. My girlfriend was a call girl. She made a lot of money. She worked out of the Towers down here. She paid a doorman. She paid a cabdriver. She paid a lot of money out, and she knew that I certainly didn't make -- I was a student. She knew I was a student. I can only assume that a couple of the other people were, too.

Ruth: I ask this because, when I talk to some people, they think the pattern was replicated among straight couples -- is that the butch worked -- provided for the femme. And then other --

Zachary: I --

Ruth: I'll finish what I'm saying. And other people observing this -- observed that the butch women sometimes were so obvious that they had a hard time getting jobs, and needed to be supported economically. So I was wondering if you had seen any patterns one way or the other.

Zachary: No, this was not a group where these people were so obvious when they were in public, no. No, these were well-educated -- some of these people were really well known. Like I said, they would have parties, and people would show up that were quite famous that no one would have known. So, no, I would not say that was the group.

Ruth: Okay. What kinds of terminology did you use, in terms of words like "gay," "lesbian," "dyke"? What -- did you -- how did you describe those?

Zachary: We did not use the phrase "dyke." It was "gay" or "lesbian."

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: And "gay" was men *and* women; it wasn't just men. So even the phrase "lesbian" was not used as frequently; it primarily was "gay." Then, it wasn't that it came up very often, because you had couples, and you had names and specifics, as opposed to the "these" and the "thems" and the generalities. You know, you were going to dinner with Joan and Dravus. You were going to have cocktails with Jennifer and whomever was coming with Jennifer. So it wasn't with "the girls" or "the lesbians" or "the dykes." That was never part of --

Ruth: So you were referred to specifically by peoples' names.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: One other area that I'd kind of like to explore a little bit is, when I hear about butch/femme roles – I came out into a slightly later period of time when butch/femme roles were being kind of devalued. So I never had to make any kind of choices like that. But since I've always been sort of tomboyish and androgynous, but never physically imposing, I've always wondered, if I had to make that choice, how would I have fit in as a sort of androgynous personality? Did you notice women like that? And how did they –?

Zachary: I noticed that later on, yeah. [Until?] I hit my mid-20s, I was seeing that. It had never occurred to me that androgyny was an option. I was not obvious until later in life. You know, I was in the Air Force. I wore a uniform. I had restrictions and things I needed to abide by and show respect for. I was a student, getting my degrees. I was busy. So later – I didn't become obvious until I opened my bar! Until then, I still wore a bra and all those things constantly, and dressed in slacks and shirts. Didn't wear dresses – nothing like that. But it would only be obvious if I chose to tell you.

Ruth: I'm just wondering, because I've always had kind of – in terms of expression of masculinity/femininity for me – I've always felt myself somewhere in the middle. So I was wondering, in an earlier time, what would have been allowed for me to be in that society you're talking about, where the roles are?

Zachary: I don't know. I don't think I ever made a choice. I just always was. That's just the way it was, and that's the way it was going to be. I didn't *want* to be the girl. I didn't *want* to be passive. I didn't want – no, none of that was okay with me. So I don't know. I really don't.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: There were people that I would look at, and I'd go, "That's butch? Oh! Okay."

Ruth: What would give you that impression?

Zachary: They just didn't strike me as very butchy. I'm looking at all of that in my mind, because I actually have a person in my mind that I'm visualizing as I say this. Not the physique, not the attitude, not the carriage – nothing was what I would have associated with at that time as being butch. And yet, at the same time, I rode a 10-speed every day. I rode an average of about 50 miles a day, so I was very fit. Played tennis. I don't think anyone would have ever looked at me, when I went to school, and thought of me as male, by any means. Yet I could go put on my slacks and a shirt and look fine, and very definitely know that I was butch. So, you know, it's all in your own perception.

Ruth: Yeah. Tell me about your decision to go into the military. Why did you choose the Air Force? You started to talk about –

Zachary: I chose the Air Force because it was the best, first of all. They had higher requirements, higher standards, and I really wanted that. I pretty much always held myself *to* that. I went in in '73, so it was a couple of years before Vietnam ended. My dad had done three tours already. I wanted to go to college. I had an option and an opportunity for a partial scholarship to go out to Walla Walla, and I had no desire to be on their debate team or major in English, and that's what I thought they were offering me.

Ruth: When you say "they," you're talking about?

Zachary: The people at the college, at the university.

Ruth: Oh, okay, so this was separate from the --

Zachary: So I went into the Air Force so I could afford to go to school.

Ruth: Okay. And your dad had done three tours of Vietnam?

Zachary: My dad did, yeah.

Ruth: Okay. Well, tell me what your Vietnam experience was like?

Zachary: I don't want to.

Ruth: Oh, okay.

Zachary: It wasn't fun. It wasn't a good place to be. It took me about 10 years after getting back to come to terms with all that.

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: Yeah, yeah.

Ruth: During your time in the military, did you meet other lesbians?

Zachary: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ruth: What was it like for them?

Zachary: That was pretty funny. I was in tech school, actually, before I met anyone that actually -- I had said nothing to anyone. I'd *done* nothing. I was *doing* nothing. I was *involved* with no one. I'm just going through the motions, doing what you have to do. And I had begun smoking. Everyone around me had always smoked, and I had not. So I had begun smoking in Basic: "Excuse me." I walked up to 'em. "Do you have a light by any chance?" She stopped and she says, "Yeah, I carry matches just for assholes like you." Well, you know, we became best friends -- truly did, truly did. We became best friends for years and years following that. Became roommates that same day. Decided to go ahead and share a room. She identified as straight, and she was informing me, "Hey, I got another friend who's queer, too. You got to come meet her." "What do you mean, 'queer, too?'" Well, you know, in my mind, [she's ? / is just ?] going, "Well, okay, that's cool."

Chris: So you said you became roommates. Was that like a --?

Zachary: No, they let us -- they let us move around in the dorm. We could --

Chris: You could choose.

Zachary: Yeah.

Chris: Okay. All right. I got you.

Zachary: We were not lovers or anything like that. We were just roommates.

Ruth: Did you have two to a room?

Zachary: We had three to a room.

Ruth: Okay.

Chris: So she had a gay friend that she –

Zachary: Yeah, lived up on another floor, because that's by – it was by, I think – I don't remember how they had us classified or categorized, but I was in the first floor, and her friend was up on the third floor, so, on the other side. So we went over there. And that was my second day at tech school. From that point on, everyone I ran around with was gay or associated with being gay or lesbian or bisexual or something.

Ruth: How well known was it that these women were gay?

Zachary: Apparently it was well known, because I was watching people get kicked out all the time. Of course, when you're 18, you're immune to all this; you can do what you like. So I saw a lot of that, too! All it took was one person saying your name and saying that they *thought* you were gay for you to be investigated. I was investigated an average of every six months. It was really ridiculous.

Ruth: What was that like?

Zachary: It was hard. It was very hard. I wasn't *doing* anything. I wasn't *seeing* anyone. I would come home and find my barracks ransacked. I would – finally called in my first sergeant from the barracks, called me off of my job, had me come back while they tear through my room to search it. "What are you looking for? What do you want? I'll tell you where it is!" Anything that would associate me with being gay they wanted to find. So I knew, whatever I do, keep it off base and keep it out of uniform. I began dating a woman that I met off base. I met her through some members of the original ALPS<sup>2</sup> groups.

Chris: So where was this?

Zachary: Tacoma.

Chris: Tacoma.

Zachary: At one point, she said, "I'm going to come on base and pick you up. I'm going to take you to my parents' house for dinner." Her parents knew she was gay. "Okay, that's cool." So she picked me up on base, and we drove, and we didn't *leave* the base. I'm going, "We going to the back gate? I think they're closed." We went to officers' housing to her dad's. I was pretty shocked because her mom and dad were there, and her dad was my commanding officer. He was very supportive. He had no issue around it at all. He had no problem with his daughter being gay, and no problem with me being gay. We didn't [sit there ?] – Again, you didn't display publicly. You didn't behave that way. But we had many nice dinners, and I would get called into his office suddenly from work just to [hang out?]. He'd stand behind me and rub my shoulders and say, "Marulli, how you doing? I need you to go to

Oklahoma." "I don't want to go to Oklahoma." He says, "I know you don't, but I really need you there. I need a TDY.<sup>3</sup> I need a sergeant over there that can handle -- do some training. I hate to ask you."

Ruth: What was that word you used before?

Zachary: Huh?

Ruth: What was that word you used?

Zachary: Marulli. He even called me by my last name.

Ruth: And when he said, I need a "something."

Zachary: "I need you to go. I need a sergeant." I was a sergeant [later on ?]. So we were good friends, even after his daughter and I quit seeing each other. You know, it was no problem.

Chris: He didn't have a problem with you not being an officer.

Zachary: No.

Chris: Dating his daughter?

Zachary: No, I was taking college classes, too. So was his daughter. As he put it, he knew that, if I would stay in, I would become an officer. And that was the goal. It just never happened.

Chris: So how long did it take you to become a sergeant? That's --

Zachary: 18 months.

Chris: That's pretty high up there.

Zachary: Uh-huh. I had four commendations by the time I was in just over a year.

Chris: Wow.

Zachary: Yeah. I was flight line. I was jet engine mechanic. I was one of the first people to have my own crew. I was line qualified, flight qualified, all that kind of fun stuff. I don't think I was that great of a mechanic, but I had a lot of fun. My commander liked having his own mechanic on *his* plane. I was the mechanic for the base commander's plane.

Ruth: Did you get to do any flying?

Zachary: Yeah, went everywhere, if I wanted to. Yeah, get in the planes and go.

Ruth: Did you fly the planes?

Zachary: No, I would crash us if I flew the plane.

Ruth: Okay, I was just wondering if that --

Zachary: No, we would use simulators. I could -- I was run qualified. I could set the plane up on the back up and various things to assist. I could taxi the plane. So you go on the simulator, and I could take off and fly, but I was not

very good at it, and I could never land. So, literally, when it was my turn to fly, it was, "Well, we're going to go meet at the Denny's [and then we're done here?], and then we'll go get drunk," because we'd all be dead. So that's how we'd, you know — it was my turn.

Ruth: So you'd have a simulation.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: All right. So does the Air Force — did you get out of it what you had set out to?

Zachary: No, I got kicked out December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1975 for being gay. Back from Vietnam, I was working test cell. Hated it. Didn't like it at all.

Chris: Working where?

Zachary: Test cell. It's one of the sections for jet engines where they bring the tests into — it's just this huge room where it's all hooked up and tested. I still was doing nothing. I still had not done anything to break the laws. Again, I was off base. I actually fell madly, head-over-heels in love with a woman and was married to her at the Metropolitan Community Church in Seattle. They had stationed her overseas, so she was gone. They called me in — they being the OSI — called me in and let me know that, if I didn't turn myself in for being gay, they were going to kick out my father and my brother. My brother was in the Marines at the time. I said, "Kick them out for what?" They said, "Kick them out for associating with a known homosexual." I said, "Who would that be?" And they said, "You." And they were basing that just on hearsay from a couple of other people that had been brought in.

So I sat down with the military attorney and said, "Now what do I do?" I couldn't handle any more investigations. Every time I turned around — my parents lived in Bremerton. I would go home, and they would follow me. They'd be parked across the street. My mom would ask me, "What is this? Who are these?" I'd have to walk out and say, "Look, you know where I'm at. You know I can't pull out of the driveway without being seen. Could you move your car up there at least, you know, so it's not so obvious?" It would just piss them off. We would hear them tapping into our phones on base. We could hear it when they would tap in, so we would say all kinds of things to set them up. "Okay, well, you come on over here tonight when you get off work." Thirty minutes after this person supposedly got off work, they'd be coming into my room. I'm sound asleep, of course, by myself. They'd be claiming they saw a man in my room through the windows. "The blinds are closed. You didn't see a goddamn thing." But that's how they would write it off, and that's how they would excuse it. They'd come in at all hours. I just wanted — that was it. I was tired. I'd had it. I didn't feel that there was ever going to be a chance to win this, to make it okay. And I really didn't know what else to do.

So my JAG<sup>4</sup> attorney explained to me what phraseology I had to use, and I had to go to my commander and say, "Since joining the military, it has come to my attention that I am probably lesbian or homosexual. Per the articles of—" whatever it was—"you must discharge me accordingly." And my commander went, "Why? I don't care." I said,

"No, but the OSI does. You have to kick me out." "I don't want to kick you out!" "Okay, but, you know, they're going to make you kick me out, okay?"

And I went about my business. Pretty soon I got called in a couple of days later. "You're right. We got to kick you out." "I told you that!" "Can you prove you're gay?" "Well, no, I'm not! What do you want from me?" "Well, you've got to prove you're gay." I said, "I don't have to do any such thing! Your OSI is claiming I'm gay. They're the ones making the accusations!" It took about, I think, four months, and finally it just – I had a number of officers pulling and saying, "No, this is really absurd. This is ridiculous." I just – I was very tired. I really just didn't have the tools to know what to do, what my options were. I certainly didn't have any kind of legal representation, giving me better options. So I decided – finally decided I had nothing to lose. I said, "I want to see it in writing. I want a contract in front of my face, that if I go ahead and get out of the military, you will leave my father and my brothers alone. You will let them do their time in the military without *ever* harassing them about me." "Well, we can't do that." I said, "Then, fuck you, I'm staying." And I had it in writing the next day. So I put that in a safe, and I hung on to that, and about five days later, I was discharged. I didn't know what kind of discharge I was going to get. My commander called me in and said, "What do you think?" I said, "I think I'm entitled to an honorable discharge."

Oh, I know what happened. I was in leadership school – NCO<sup>3</sup> leadership school, and there was some major problems happening up in my department. It was all men. They were really hostile that there was a woman in charge, and here I am in leadership school. This is pissing them off. None of my crew – All of my crew were women, by the way. They put all the women in one section. They would not give [them? me?] any time off. They were breaking all the rules of conduct. I'm working and all these things that require – and here I am in leadership school, learning what the laws are. So I called down and talked to one of my girls and said, "Here's what you're going to do. You're all going to walk off. You're going to go home. You're not going to come back to work until *I* call you. I don't care *who* calls you." And I made sure. I mean, I looked at the letter of the law. I got advice, the whole works. I made sure everything they were doing was legal. These – their husbands were being sent home; they had no work. They were being kept at work to do *all* the work. This lieutenant that we had was really an asshole. When I got back, I put in for a request to see my commander. My lieutenant denied it. I handed in another chit, and he turned it up in front of my face and just tore it – threw it in the trash and said, "No way."

Ruth: Now, what was the significance of this request?

Zachary: This request caused me to go AWOL, because I wanted to see my commander to find out why my women were being harassed, why was *I* being harassed, what was going on. This lieutenant would not let me get to the commander.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: So I went AWOL for three days. Then I went back and turned myself in, because, when they arrest you, they have to take you before your commander! So that was the only thing on my record when I got discharged. That was the only thing that was there. They said, "Well, we're going to use that as grounds for giving you an

undesirable." I said, "Then I'll see you in court, and I'll fight you." This is during the time period – 1975 – I forgot who the gentleman was who was getting kicked out of the Army, and he was pushing it about being gay.

Chris: Matlovich?<sup>6</sup>

Zachary: Yes, and I had to promise not to do that, I said, "Then you give me my full honorable discharge, full benefits," and they did." So I lived up to my end; they haven't lived up to theirs. The records are all sealed. I can't get to them. So it's just the way it goes.

Ruth: So you ended up getting the education benefits and everything like that?

Zachary: Yeah, by then I had taken a ton of classes. I took a lot of challenge courses. During that time period, you didn't have to sit in classes so often. You had to read, do the books, do the work, pass the test. So I came out of it pretty well on my way to finishing my degree, so I finished it within a year of getting out, as a civilian, doing some extension courses, some classwork in the university down in San Diego.

Chris: What kind of degree?

Zachary: Engineering. Then I went and started taking business classes. So I would take a couple of classes a quarter while I worked. So by the time that engineering became computerized, I hated it. Really hated it, so I left. That's when I opened Sappho's.

Chris: So when you were going to school, you were working as an engineer?

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: You talked about a place in Kent where you got a job?

Zachary: Yeah, I worked for Flow Systems in Kent as a design engineer for a while. I worked for a lot of places, but primarily for them.

Ruth: So is there anything else you'd like to say about leaving the military, how you thought about it at the time?

Zachary: Yeah, I resented it. I missed it. I would have done 20 years easy. I loved being in the military. I really loved it. It really became the – one of those things that, you know, you can't go back and undo. You can't go change it. There's nothing you can do. You're not given the opportunity. These idiots get something buried up their asses, and they go for it so deep, that they roll over anything that gets in their way. There's no sense used – none. I was well-trained, good at my job, good at what I did. I loved doing it. Leave me alone, and let me do my job!

Ruth: Did you get the sense that other people were basing their careers on their ability to hound other people that, by definition, were –

Zachary: I got the opinion that other women that were lesbians that were higher up in rank definitely railroaded us in order to save their own asses. You bet. Absolutely. Absolutely. But, you know, you got to understand – you got a bunch of kids! We're all 18 year old kids. Even in Vietnam, the average age was 19. All of the adults are sitting back here on their hands. They're sending the kids off to do all this, and then we're the ones getting kicked out,

when we have over-lived our expediency or our necessity. That's our military, and that's what we've allowed it to become. And it's gotten progressively worse since then.

Chris: So when you actually left the military -- because you said that had been your dream when you were a kid was to --

Zachary: Yeah, be in the military.

Chris: Be in the military and have a wife and kids. So at that point --

Zachary: I was very depressed.

Chris: Yeah.

Zachary: Yeah. December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1975 at 2 p.m., I left that base as a civilian for the first time in my entire life. I was only 20 years old! I worked part-time in a bar down in Tacoma -- a gay bar, Foxes, [DJ's?] with Jean. She liked to collect young kids -- not for sex or anything like that. She just liked to collect young kids who were fans -- that kind of thing.

Ruth: Say that again?

Zachary: Just for fans, you know, just support. She liked to collect kids.

Ruth: This is your partner?

Zachary: *No, no*, this is the woman who owned Foxes.

Chris: A gay bar.

Zachary: A gay bar in Tacoma.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: I worked at it when I got out. So then I went back to San Diego and lived with my mom and dad for a few months while I went back to school. Took a bunch of drafting classes and classes I needed to get that had to do hands on -- had to be, that I hadn't been able to take before.

Ruth: Just so that it's clear, so that nobody misinterprets this tape later, who might not have anything to do with us -- when you say she collected kids for fans, to be her fans.

Zachary: Yeah, just --

Ruth: Could you elaborate on just kind of --

Zachary: Yeah, she just collected kids. I mean, people that were my age, young kids -- 19, 20, 21-year-olds. She liked having a lot of people around her who liked her. That's all.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: She was never a bad person. She was never a bad person. I don't care -- things I'd heard over the years about her, that was not my experience with her. I found her to be a kind, caring person.

Ruth: You had heard negative things about her?

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: But she was kind and caring. It wasn't -- it was never about sex. It was never about anything like that. So she was a good person, as far as I'm concerned.

Ruth: You said you -- you know, I assume you would have been very depressed when you left the military. What kind of things did you do to deal with that?

Zachary: I moved back to San Diego. I was drinking too much, but not getting drunk. But I had been drinking most of my life. My mom would buy me wine when I was a kid, so it was not a big deal. But what I did is I did what I always did -- I studied. I went back to school. I went out. I went for walks. I would go hang out at the [Islandia? pronounced "I-landia"]. There was a bar up on Islandia in San Diego where they had some great live bands. I'd go sit and listen, and that is what I did. I turned 21 and bought a house.

Ruth: Were you seeking out lesbian communities about this time?

Zachary: No.

Ruth: No.

Zachary: But I never did. I never did. I never went looking for -- I take that back. One time we went to Chicago just to find a gay bar.

Chris: Chicago?

Zachary: Yeah, while we were stationed in [Chinook?], going to tech school. So we drove up to Chicago. I had a car, and I drove right to a gay bar. So it always became the big standard joke, was that there was something to be found -- I could always find it, which I always could, and I was never looking! It was just always there! But, yeah, the [Ms. ?] Club in San Diego -- took us right to it. Every other weekend, when we were in tech school, we would go some place new. We would fly somewhere. So we flew to New York for four days, stuff like that. We had our times. We'd get back just in time to fall into formation and go to classes. So, you know, we were 18 years old. We could do that.

Chris: So it seems to me like you -- a couple times now -- one was when you were still at home, and you were -- and it was a pretty miserable existence -- and then when you got out of the Army. It seems like -- I mean, those were pretty adverse situations. And then your reaction has been -- it just seems like, to me, your reaction has been kind of upbeat and just kind of going -- I mean, people do crazy things. Like, I don't get the sense that you were drinking out of control or --

Zachary: No, I wasn't. No, I think I'm pretty good at knowing that, regardless of what goes on, you can find something good. It wasn't the end of my life! It just meant something new had to start. I spent a month not knowing *what* to do, knowing I had started an education, that I wasn't done and I wasn't sure. I was drawing unemployment. That's when I went back down and [enlisted ?], took more classes, and went back to school and started again. You know, just keep going! That's what you did. That's what we were *raised* to do. You just kept going. So I did.

Chris: Not everybody does that.

Zachary: I know they don't. And it catches up to you later in life – it does catch up. You have to deal with the step that you keep thinking you put behind you.

Chris: Right.

Zachary: Yeah.

Chris: Yeah. It doesn't just go off your –

Zachary: No, we think it does, but it doesn't. Exactly.

Ruth: Well, I would like to find out how you came to own Sappho's – your decision to do that.

Zachary: My girlfriend was a bartender at a bar. I forget the name of it. It was a gay bar that hadn't – wasn't open long. Downtown, either on 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> or something. I had seen it in the SGN,<sup>7</sup> and I thought, "I'll go check it out." I was living in Kent. So I went up to this bar. One of the women who was a bartender there and I started dating. We wound up, actually, in a relationship for seven and a half years. I wanted a place to go dance, and all we had was Eastlake. I made good money. With a person who had initially involved themselves with us, who later became uninvolved, we opened Sappho's. We bought a space up on the Hill, and wound up opening Sappho's.

Chris: Do you remember what year that was?

Zachary: I was 24. 1979. It was June of 1979 that we opened on a full moon. We figured if we could open on that and survive, we could survive anything. It was in Gemini. I turned 25 a month later. My girlfriend threw me a party right there at the bar with all these people I'd never met in my life. So, yeah, I remember.

Ruth: Was this before the Rose opened?

Zachary: Oh, yeah, the Rose came later.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: The Rose came much later.

Ruth: I remember visiting Sappho's, probably was the very early '80s, mid '80s.

Zachary: Yeah, we were there until I was 29, 29 and a half. New Year's Eve, January. But that's why we opened. I wanted a place to go. It was a woman's bar, but men were to be welcomed. We had a male that helped us do all the work to open, all the work to remodel. We had women who came in and harassed him that, literally, I would throw

them out. I wouldn't tolerate it. When there got to be too many guys coming in, it's like, "Guys, got to get you — you got plenty of bars to go to. We need space for the women." The guys were really cool about —

[SIDE 2 ENDS ABRUPTLY]

**SIDE 3 of 4**

Ruth: The tape had run out while you were talking, so just to recap that — you had a guy working there, and you would not tolerate any harassment —

Zachary: Right.

Ruth: From other women.

Zachary: Right. We also didn't tolerate any harassment to our S&M community. Didn't understand it. Didn't know any much about it, but, you know, they were there of their own free volition. Women that were with them wore all those chains by their own choice, and we understood that. So the people that would raise hell with them and harass them, we wouldn't tolerate that either. It wasn't okay.

Ruth: What kind of things did you see as harassment? How did that express itself?

Zachary: Well, it became violent.

Ruth: Really.

Zachary: My man — he would be in the bar, in the bathroom, and they would climb over the stall and pour beer over his head. Harass him. Grab him. Throw him around. I got in fights with a few of them. My employees had to pull me off one because I was about to put my boot right through her face, and my entire goal was to hurt her very badly. The women that would go — for instance, a woman came in with her girlfriend. Her girlfriend was on a collar and chain. It was *my* first experience with it. But obviously the woman on the collar and chain sure didn't care — she was having a good time. She wasn't there out of force. Anyone could see that. This woman just got up in arms and in her face and yelling and screaming and carrying on, and started shoving and pushing, so I had to grab her from behind, and say, "Look, whatever they're doing is none of your business. You keep it up, I'll throw you out." She says, "You wouldn't fucking dare!" "Bye!" Literally, I just picked her up and threw her out. We had — women who bitched and complained because of Halloween — we would dare to put up masks on the walls that would denote a witch. How dare us look at women that way! I was like, "What women? It's a *witch*! It's not women in general, for Christ's sakes, you know? How do you know that *broom* over there isn't a girl in disguise?" Come on! They would become *so* ridiculously carried away with their imagery and their choice of how they choose to — I mean, the eternal victims. I can just see it to this day. I'm sure they're still roaming around.

Ruth: Are we talking about the clash of cultures now between —

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: What is known as lesbian/feminism and —

Zachary: There you go. That was eye-openers for me, because, like I said, most of them that I'd ever been around, you just -- you didn't have time for that. That was absurd. I still find it absurd.

Ruth: You said earlier, "All we had was Eastlake." I wanted to go back and find out, what did you want to do different from what the Eastlake was doing?

Zachary: Eastlake-East was not where I wanted to go.

Ruth: Why was that?

Zachary: I didn't care for the music, the attitude. I didn't care for the ambience or lack of. I didn't care for it at all. Period. We wanted a place where we could go where it was brighter, not so dank, even though we had our dark moments and were quite cavernous. It was a disco. You were there to dance. But I wanted a place that was more social, and we were.

Ruth: Yeah, I remember it as having kind of a long, narrow space where there were tables where one sat --

Zachary: Right.

Ruth: And then there was another room --

Zachary: Right.

Ruth: Adjoining where there was a dance floor.

Zachary: We tried to give it a place that had plenty of flow, so people could walk through and they could still come in. We had people who put themselves on a list where they would not be served alcohol; they wanted to be clean. We totally supported that. My employees knew, "If you served them, I'll fire you." So if they walked up -- we had codes. We had codes. For example, one of our women set this up. "If I order a beer, I want a Coke, and if I order a wine, I want a 7-Up." Okay. And that was our code. "If I say a Bud Light, I want a Diet Coke." You know, this kind of thing. And that was how we did it. They could walk up. If their name -- and they had to tell you their name was on the list, because otherwise you don't know. But our list grew. It was quite substantial. These women couldn't get served. One woman came over, yelling and screaming, "They served me! Oh my God, they served me!" And my waitress says, "No, but she wasn't there." They just ordered a bunch of stuff for the table and she delivered it. But she came and brought it back up, so it was pretty fun.

Ruth: Explain a little bit for people who -- of another time, when they're listening to this -- why women would want this code set up.

Zachary: Because they don't want to be ostracized. You don't want to be harassed. They're trying to stay clean and sober, and yet still trying to fit in. And we're a *bar*. We did not push beer and wine. We had coffee all the time. We had tons of waters and we had soft drinks. We had no problem. No one was forced to spend a bunch of money, which is probably why we had to close, because we could never make enough money to stay open. We totally respected their desire to stay clean. So by having this code, they were able to walk up and order just like anyone else and no one could hassle them. If someone sitting at the bar said, "Hey, I'd like to order her a beer." "Okay." And

we'd get them what they *drink*, because that's what you're basically saying when someone would say, "I'd like to order her a --" "Why don't you order her a Bud?" "I'll get her a Bud." "Okay." But we'd still serve her what she drank.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: And there was always -- that respect was to be shown at all times.

Chris: So you're saying that list grew.

Zachary: There were about 25 people on that list. Yeah. Pretty substantial.

Chris: Yeah. I remember some really good times there. I thought it was a --

Zachary: Yeah, I thought we had fun. We grew and grew. We kept improving and doing everything we could to constantly grow, so the money certainly went back into it. We had a lot of fun.

Ruth: Did you learn anything from that experience that you hadn't expected to?

Zachary: I could write a book about the experiences! Oh, yeah! I was totally unprepared for anything that occurred there. Absolutely.

Ruth: Can you -- do you remember anything? Anything stand out?

Zachary: Well, yeah, just, as I said, even just the one incident with the people that came in with the leash in the S&M community, and realizing that -- I had never had any experience with this community. I had no knowledge of them, but, in my mind, this was about their choice, and that had to be respected. I learned that I was very disappointed in women in general -- too many women who are willing to run around and be walked on. And they justify it -- well, they grew up that way. I don't give a damn how you grew up! You're an adult now; make some choices. So it really saddens me, because I still have that philosophy: You're an adult now; make some choices. So that was very disheartening to see a lot of that.

Ruth: Can you think of anything specific -- without naming names or anything, can you recall anything that -- specific incidents to which you had that reaction?

Zachary: Yeah, women that would rebound relationship to relationship, week to week, always looking for someone that would continue to beat them and victimize them and hurt them and cause them pain, so they could always mope around and justify having to drink and be drunk.

Ruth: Were you in a role as a bartender, listening to people's stories?

Zachary: Right. Right. It was really sad to hear this constantly. It was really terrifying to watch women come in -- very nicely dressed. Were obviously very well educated. Have really great jobs. And watch them week after week sit there and get so goddamned drunk that they didn't know what they were doing, saying, or how they were behaving. And to have to go pour them into a car to take them home because -- no, it was very sad to see. And it was very disheartening to own a bar and realize that --

The Rose catered to a younger group. Still do. We didn't. We catered to an older crowd. So we had the younger people there, too, but it saddened me to look at these people who had such amazing potential as role models – as openly lesbian people. They could have served such *fine* role models for the kids coming up and the people behind us, the people around us, our community that was accepting us – this straight environment we lived in – and they chose to write 'em off, always being drunk or high. That was really amazing to me, that they would continue to make those choices. Realizing that many people – it was my first experience, obviously, with moving so much. It was my first experience at actually thinking I had made friends, just to find out that they really weren't. That saddens me even to this day to see these people. They're still hanging out in a bar, and they're still down there doing what they were doing, and I think it's really sad. So those were eye-openers for me – things that people had probably learned earlier in life, that I just didn't.

Ruth: You come back, in your talking, fairly often to the expression of "people making choices." It sounds like you've got a very solid philosophy of, "We make our own choices. We act as our own agents in the world."

Zachary: We have to, yes.

Ruth: Have you always –?

Zachary: Always.

Ruth: It sounds like you may have always had this –

Zachary: Always, yes.

Ruth: – philosophy.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Do you think that came out of being part of a military family, or was that something – other sources, do you think, added to that?

Zachary: I would say, added to it. Yes, growing up – very definitely I learned to be very accountable for what I did. I had to be very responsible and resourceful. If you're willing to take the pat on the back, you better be willing to take the blame and responsibility for what you've done or not done. When I was young, when I got out of the Air Force, I joined a religious group, the Aquarian Foundation – a metaphysically based group. Very intent on making sure we understand it is about choice and responsibility and self-accountability. And I – that is something I have always carried with me. Spiritually, I still think that our spirituality is our primary goal of what we're doing here. Until we learn that our primary focus, following that, is to learn to take care of ourselves – what good are you at taking care of other people if you can't take care of you? So it pays to have a good attitude, and it pays to be as positive as you can. You can get *mad*. You can get *angry*. You can *vent*. You can let it *out*. But you still have to stop and reevaluate and look and find the best of it and keep moving forward. You can't just sit there and bury your head. That's what I've always seen a lot of. I don't surround myself with people like that. The people in my life and my friends, I would say, are very strong and very capable. And I would say that, when any of us find ourselves in a phase of wanting to bury our heads, we're right there to pull your head right out and say, "Okay, let's go." So we're real good

at that, and I'm very proud of that fact. I have really good people in my life. We can argue. We can debate. We can get into it. We don't ever have to agree. But the point is we will always be honest with each other and discuss what's up, and that's what's important to me.

Ruth: So tell me about the decision to -- do you have any more questions about Sappho's?

Chris: Uh-uh.

Ruth: Tell me about your decision to stop doing that. How did that come about?

Zachary: Drugs and burn-out.

Ruth: Uh-huh.

Zachary: I was tired --

Ruth: Drugs as a part of --

Zachary: My own drugs. I was using coke the last nine months that we were open. And really coming to some serious terms, as I said, of realizing people are *not* friends; they're just alcoholics, drinkers, druggies, whatever -- a big barrage of mixture there. My partner and I had split up. She wanted to be bought out. I had a buyer -- Brass Connection, Ken and Greg.

Ruth: Your partner in the business, was she also --

Zachary: She was also my life partner, yeah.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: Ken and Greg from the Brass Connection had offered to buy my bar. My friends would come in and say, "Oh, my God, please don't do that! Please let So-and-so invest!" I'm -- you know, I didn't want to, and I went ahead and did it. Again, we're back to choices. I made some really bad choice and let this happen. Turned out her daddy was the head owner of a major corporation who was *livid* that his daughter would allow herself to be affiliated with a queer association who -- he really rode herd on her all of her life.

Ruth: This is the person who bought the business?

Zachary: Yeah, who bought in. So he forced us to close. He forced us into closure. There was nothing else I could do. I didn't have the money to fight. My attorney, Nancy [surname redacted], who wrote up all the contracts to do all this, decided to pull a disappearing act. She split -- totally left. Deserted her partner, deserted her business, abandoned everything, took off with some woman she met on a river rafting trip.

Chris: I remember that.

Zachary: And because she wasn't around, I had absolutely nothing I could utilize or fall back or rely on.

Ruth: So there was a lawsuit going on?

Zachary: Yeah, I got sued. I got sued. Yeah, I had to file bankruptcy.

Ruth: Wow.

Zachary: I had to close. I was forced to close, and that was very definitely – definitely attributable to Nancy [surname redacted].

Ruth: What grounds were they basing the lawsuit on?

Zachary: That I used drugs to entice his daughter to involve herself in the business, that I lied to her about what it would be. I had always made it clear to her, "You only make money if you're going to work. If you're not going to work, you're wasting your time." She insisted it's what she wanted to do. So, anyway, it was her word against mine. She had the money and the expensive, \$300-an-hour attorneys. There was nothing I could do. There really wasn't. I knew when I went – "Okay, okay, let her do it." Bad choice. I should just never have done it, but I did. So it cost me a lot of money. I continued to pay her. I paid her for 20 years – the money she'd invested. Yeah, she wanted a lot of interest. A lot of people that were her friends – anyway, she burned a lot of people by really doing whatever she had to do to kiss her daddy's ass.

Chris: Is [he? she?] still around?

Zachary: I don't know. I don't care. She never grew up. She never became herself. She never became her own person, so I don't care.

Chris: Yeah, hmm.

Ruth: So you told me you also managed the Crypt.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Okay, how did you get involved with that?

Zachary: I was bored.

Ruth: Uh-huh. Say what the Crypt is.

Zachary: The Crypt is *the* premier leather sex store of Seattle, owned by Crypto Technologies. They own a number of stores throughout the western United States. They are the largest leather manufacturer – leather *clothing* manufacturer in the United States.

Ruth: So they manufacture as well as sell?

Zachary: Oh, yeah! All that leather clothing they sell? They make.

Ruth: Okay, how did you get involved with –?

Zachary: They ran an ad in the newspaper, hiring, when they wanted a manager. I was bored, so I went down and applied, and they hired me. But I had a lot of managerial experience. I had managed grocery stores and other retail outlets. So I went to work for them. I would come home every day with, "Oh, my God! Do you know what I learned today?" [laughter] My partner would look at me and go, "Honey, what product knowledge did you bring home today?" I think that is one of the most awesome experiences I've ever had in my life, was managing that store.

Ruth: So was this your introduction to the leather and S&M community?

Zachary: No. I grew up very much abused. I grew up very beaten. I'd had other introductions and experiences along the way, but never as a community. So with my bar, it was my first introduction to there actually being an organized community. So, I should have clarified that. I was fully aware of the existence and the procedures and the roles and all those kinds of things, but not – I had never actually *seen* it in public. And didn't know they had this whole group. I personally think that, when Lamar and JC were at the top of this group, this was a much better organized group, that they were much tighter, that they had better roles, better constrictions, better restrictions, better responsibilities than they have ever had since they stepped down. I think now it's become nothing more than a group of people that are just bored and hanging out. I don't know. I don't know what they're doing now.

Ruth: Is this an organized group? Does it have a name?

Zachary: I don't know.

Ruth: Oh, okay. I was wondering if you were talking about a formal organization.

Zachary: Well, they had specific rules towards participating within that community – rules of play, rules of understanding how they did things, that were enforced within their own community. And there was a lot of respect for them for what they did there. And I saw that all fall by the wayside, and I thought that was really sad, because it was very good.

Ruth: Did you come to identify with this community and think yourself part of it, or were you an observer only?

Zachary: In San Francisco, I was involved with a woman for a while – that was definitely a big part of our lives. It got to be something I didn't want to be a part of my life, so it hasn't been in the past 10, 11 years. What it did was it educated me in the areas where I had absolutely no knowledge, no experience, and maybe even, in some cases, had a lot of fears around. It allowed me to confront all of those and look at them and realize, and really come to realize – men are not the complete assholes we make them out to be. We say it because we've heard it for so long. We repeat it, and we make it real, even though the men in my life never were assholes anyway! Okay? So it was one of those places of realizing that everyone's pretty much on equal grounds. I don't care if you're gay, straight, bi, black, white, male, female – everyone's pretty much on equal grounds. Yet, as long as you're living with integrity and you're working in an environment like that, it doesn't have to be seedy, dark, and hidden away, and ashamed. So one of the first things I did when I went in was paint, cleaned the shelves, put in a lot of lighting, take out all the gels, and quit making it dark, and took away the shame.

Ruth: Take out all of the what?

Zachary: All the darkness.

Ruth: Oh, okay.

Zachary: Took out all the gels that were in the lights that dimmed them.

Ruth: Gels. Oh, okay. That's what they're called?

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Gels? Okay.

Zachary: Sheets of different colored plastics that --

Ruth: Oh, I see.

Zachary: Took them all down. Brightened the place up. Dusted everything. Cleaned everything off. Rearranged and reflowed, and it totally changed the entire atmosphere. [hard to hear]

Ruth: How did the owners feel about that?

Zachary: They loved it.

Ruth: How -- why, if they liked it, had they let it be --?

Zachary: Because I don't think -- well, to this day, the same person is running all the designs in the stores that was running it then, and he doesn't know what he's doing, to be honest. He used to run paints. That's how he does things. I rearranged, completely cleaned up the flow, and quadrupled the sales. People aren't ashamed to come in and buy. They will come in and they will spend. We got to where we had moms who would come up and say, "Look, I want to bring my son in, because you've got some really cool belts that I know he would love." Can't put him in. He's not over age. So she would go in and pick out the different belts and bring them out to him so he could try them on to see which ones he liked, because they weren't ashamed any more. We had things set up in such a way that you had to go to a specific section to actually see what it was, but it wasn't hidden. Does that make sense?

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: It was just in the flow.

Chris: Right.

Ruth: I want to explore this -- the fact that a person had to be legal age, an adult --

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Is that because it's classified as, like, an adult bookstore?

Zachary: Yeah, yeah, it's a sex store. Adult bookstore. Absolutely. Yeah.

Chris: Are you still there? Is that what you're doing?

Zachary: No, I -- no, no. I was there for a couple of years is all.

Chris: How long ago?

Zachary: I left five years ago.

Chris: Okay.

Zachary: So, I turned 40 there!

Ruth: Do you know of any -- are there any other stores around like that, before or since?

Zachary: Before -- yeah. There was Fantasy's downtown.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: Of course, the Toys in Babeland is now a softer version -- just sex toys. They don't have all the paraphernalia and all the excess that we had. Yeah, there's a lot of stores -- R&R over in Bellevue.

Ruth: I mention this question because when we were interviewing the people from the Seattle Counseling Service -- When it got started in the very late '60s, early '70s, because there was so few other resources around for gay people, a lot of people would go into the counseling centers, not necessarily for therapy, but just because they wanted to connect with a community.

Zachary: Sure.

Ruth: It was like a drop-in center instead of, by default -- until the Gay Community Center got started, it was like a -- by default, a drop-in center. I am imagining, with this type of store, with leather and S&M emphasis, did it serve that kind of function for people who weren't necessarily coming to shop but they just wanted to find out what was out there?

Zachary: Absolutely.

Ruth: It did?

Zachary: Yeah, because if you want to find out about where gay bars are, you go to the sex store, you know. Okay? You're going to have books. You're going to have magazines. People will figure out -- we would get phone calls. "I'm new in town. I want to go dance. Where would I go?"

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: "What do you guys call us for?" "You're the sex store! Who else would I call?!" [laughter] People would say, "Well, I would have called a cab, but they won't answer my question." You know, cabdrivers -- that's what we used to do. We used to check with cabdrivers. So that happened a lot, yeah. Absolutely. We would have people call from other cities and want to know, "Look, I'm going to be out there around the time period of -- what's going to be going on back there then?" "We look like a resource center?" But, basically, yeah, we had a lot of that. It was pretty funny. We spent a lot of time laughing.

Chris: I have a question for you that is about -- because it seems like, when you were in the military, that you were a pretty private person, that you didn't go out looking for gay community. Then all of a sudden, you're running a woman's bar --

Zachary: That's pretty remarkable.

Chris: And you're running a leather store.

Zachary: I had no intentions of running it. When we first opened it, I was going to keep on staying in engineering and hire a manager to run it. Then the last minute terms of conditions of our getting it were that I had to leave my job and work at the bar full time.

Chris: So how did it feel to be such a public lesbian at that point? I mean, what was that --? I worked at the Rose for a number of years. I found it -- I mean, it's really different to be working at a place where, you know --

Zachary: I owned the largest woman-owned woman's bar on the West Coast. I would go to dinner somewhere, and people would know me. What I found were all these people who claimed they knew me. No, they knew who I was -- "That doesn't mean you know me. No, you're not my friend. I know you drink Rainier. That doesn't make you my friend." So that would go on a lot. People who were real sure I would run -- I would run into people everywhere. To this day, I run into people.

Chris: But how did you -- so how did you feel about that? Do you wish that that wasn't happening? Did you wish for --?

Zachary: No, because I still stayed very private. I am still like that to this day, and I was then. It would be, going to work was going on stage. You went in, and you did what you had to do. When it was time to leave, you went home, and I would go home. I had a few people I socialized with, and that was just the way it was.

Ruth: Tell me about your tran -- your decision to make a transition now. How long had that been building up that you thought about that?

Zachary: All my life.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: But I actually always thought I would never do it. I really thought I would never do it. I really thought I had an obligation to always remain a lesbian, to always be in a female body, because that's what I had chosen. What I realized is, how can it be what you chose? You chose it, dang it. You've done everything you can possibly do. It's time to change. I found myself really criticizing everyone I knew who was making this transition. Some of them I still feel are too young to have made the choice. They never gave themselves a chance to live. I think it's too bad for them, but, you know, that's none of my business, to be honest.

Ruth: When you say they're too young, what age group are you talking about?

Zachary: There's a lot of kids out there that are less than 23 years of age. They just -- most of these kids, a lot of them, are still living at home. They've never even had a job or a career. They haven't done anything. It's like, "Come on, get out and get a life first, and then make a choice." But more and more what I realized is, trying to be a woman and always trying to make it okay was *draining* me. I got real tired of it. And I turned 45. I was in Montana. I'm sitting on a horse, and all I could think of is, "I'm not doing this any more. I'm 45 years old. I've got 40 years of life, and goddamn it, I want to live my life. I'm done with this." Came back to Seattle. Maureen had been in San Jose -- that's my partner, was my partner. I said, "You know, we need to split up. Got some choices to make here, some things I need to do, and as a couple, it's not going to happen. It won't work. This isn't working. We got

different goals, different things." We've been friends over 20 years, okay? We've been together – it'll be 11 years next month. What we decided is that our friendship means more to us than anything else, and, therefore, we will salvage our friendship and salvage our business partnership, and we will learn, with new boundaries, to be two single people who can function together as really good buds. So that's what we've been doing. Then we were talking about people transitioning. I sat there, and I said, "So what if I told you I'm considering transitioning?" "No, no, no, no, no." "Maureen, I decided I'm doing it. I'm not thinking about it any more; I'm doing it." You know, as soon as I said that, she got really quiet, and I thought, "Here we go." And she went, "Well, you know I'll support you doing this. This is what you need to do." All of a sudden, I felt 50 pounds lighter. All of a sudden, I knew that I could hear all these doors opening in my head. I knew that I had just made the most right decision and choice I've ever made in my life. And it felt awesome. I called the next day and made an appointment at the Ingersoll Clinic to see somebody. My belief was that I respect the Benjamin standards, and I will abide by them.

Chris: Can you say what those are, the Benjamin standards?

Zachary: The Benjamin standards are the standards required to do a legitimate transition in a very safe and healthy way, compared to other options. Fewer chances of serious depressions or problems following, because they require living as the opposite sex, counseling, getting assistance. There's a whole program. I decided I would definitely follow that. Since I had lived over half my life as a man, always being mistaken as a man – in San Francisco, the Bay Area, for five years, most of the time it was always, "Sir, yada, yada." It was nothing new. When I walked in to see the counselor, he just laughed. He goes, "Oh my God, you're already three-quarters of the way there." [laughter] Yeah, right. I've taken every test in the book – okay, every test he could dish out to me, and as he puts it, "You could spend your entire life just as you are and be fine." I said, "Well, yeah, I could, but this isn't about that. It's about my choosing to live as a man." And it's not about choosing to live as a man; it's choosing to live in a body that looks the way it does in my head, so that, when I look in the mirror, I see *me* looking back. Instead, all these years, I look in the mirror and I'm going, "Who is this person looking back at me?" And that's been the big dilemma. All of my life, that's been the big dilemma.

Chris: What does that feel like, to look in the mirror and not recognize or not feel like what you're [hard to hear]?

Zachary: You find yourself staying very agitated and angry most of the time. You find yourself feeling very much at odds and very, very much like you don't fit in. You feel very much – you're ostracizing your *self* constantly. Constantly second-guessing myself. Constantly reevaluating my motivation or – why did I do that, or how do I dress, or what do I do here? You're constantly questioning. There's never that opportunity to just sit there and be happy being you. The happiest I ever got to be being me was in San Francisco with my partner who let me just be *me*. When I felt very, very masculine, it was perfectly okay to be *masculine*. I didn't have to put it aside to behave like some predetermined course, of a lesbian. What I realized, when I made this decision – I should let you know – I had found out that I had quite a lot of tumors across my uterus, my ovaries, and in my chest. That is what actually got me thinking about this, realizing, "I'm 45, and they're going to give me a complete hysterectomy." Breast cancer everywhere in the family. "I'm going to have to lose my breasts," which has been my big dilemma. You don't go in and do voluntary surgery. You just don't do that. And I realized the universe has said, "Go be 'he' now. Go be who

you are now, because, see, we're making this happen for you." I had this awesome dream. I have a total belief and faith in God to this day, and it becomes stronger all the time. God and I had this great conversation. The gist of it was, "I gave you an ability to make choices, so make a choice. This is your body. If you want to change it, change it. You guys with your analogies with your cars, and you change them, and you hop them up and you soup them up, and you trade them in, you get a new one. Well, *change it!* It's just your *vehicle*. That's all it is! What counts is your soul, so go live your life." I woke up laughing. I woke up in such an *amazing* state that all I could think of is, "I'm going to do this." So the surgeries are what propelled me into being conscious about wanting to make this choice, so I did. I decided that, since my surgeons had said, "We need to do this and we need to do that." Well, okay, so here I came.

Chris: [And it worked?]

Zachary: Yeah. I can honestly see – my surgery was November 8<sup>th</sup>.

[SIDE 3 ENDS ABRUPTLY]

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Ruth: Okay, let's back up a little bit. Your surgery was in November.

Zachary: November 8<sup>th</sup>, so three months tomorrow. I had, in one surgery, one day, two surgeons, complete hysterectomy, bilateral prophylactic mastectomies. They found tumors in my left breast, left lymph, and lots of them in my uterus, ovaries, so they did every – they removed everything.

Ruth: And normally FTM's would not go through quite as drastic a surgery.

Zachary: Exactly. They wouldn't have – a lot of them don't even have hysterectomies.

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: Like I said, the universe definitely provided and said, "Yes, you are. Go be you." They made this very possible. My insurance picked up most of this, because this is stuff I had to have *done*. It's physically required. So deciding to transition after the surgery was just kind of icing. So I didn't begin taking hormone replacement until after my surgery, so I've only been on hormones just less than 3 months.

Ruth: So is that unusual?

Zachary: Yes. Usually you're on hormones a number of months before you go in for surgery.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: I changed my name legally, December 13<sup>th</sup>. December 14<sup>th</sup>, I went down and got my new driver's license with my new name. December 20<sup>th</sup>, the state of Washington recognized me legally as a male, even though I will never have genital surgery. I will not do it. Why give up the best of what the women have to offer? Why give up multiples just so you can go stand and pee and have something that doesn't work? I don't have penis envy, never have. Besides, you know, you can always go *buy* the ones you want, the sizes you want. Why bother?

Ruth: I was reading an interview, I think it was The Weekly or The Stranger, where one FtM said, "I've got plenty of—I don't have penis envy, because I've got plenty of it in the drawer."

Zachary: Exactly.

Ruth: It doesn't get you pregnant and won't give you a disease.

Zachary: Exactly. Throw them in the wash, clean them up, no problem. Got nothing. You can just choose and do what you want. Exactly. Yeah.

Ruth: Did you say — did you use the phrase a minute ago, "Why give up multiples?"

Zachary: Multiple orgasms.

Ruth: Oh, okay. I wanted to clarify that.

Zachary: Yeah, guys get to stand up; we get to have more than one. [laughter]

Ruth: Okay. Tell me what kind of services Ingersoll provided.

Zachary: Ingersoll has been awesome. They have great counselors, great people who are really willing to work with you in any way they can. They give testing. They look at you and evaluate you to see where you are emotionally, mentally, physically, materially. I think it's sad that a lot of people when they say, "You're not ready," decide to push the envelope, bypass the program, go to some medical doctor who writes them a prescription and sends them off on the way, with no information and no news. They have no ideas about the side effects of testosterone, as it were. It's very hard on your heart, your kidney and liver. Men do die at a younger age for a reason, okay? So you do have to know what you're getting into. It helps to be obviously stable — know where you're going, what you're doing, how you're living. How are you going to identify? I had to sit there and realize I have identified as a lesbian all of my life. I'm 45 years old! Since I was 8 years old and heard "queer," I have identified as queer or lesbian. Now I'm legitimately labeled heterosexual, and that strikes me as very odd. How can that possibly be? So I'm a "heterosexual queer," is the label I prefer to utilize. Because I am perceived as a male and I date women, that makes me heterosexual. I have no penis. I am still a woman; therefore, I am still a dyke; therefore, I am a heterosexual queer. That's how I feel about it.

Ingersoll has allowed and worked with this identification. They work really well at working at names. How do you use your name? Where did your name come from? Most people select androgynous names; I did not. Maureen and I sat there one day, looking at names, and we had great fun. We picked all these things, and she was having a great time. She says, "The perfect name — Christian Gender. If you're going to fuck with peoples' heads, let's have some fun!" I cracked up. I thought, "Oh, how funny!" But I was sitting there, and I said, "You know, the realities are, if I was going to get to be anybody, I'd be Zachary." Every light in me just went off. It's like someone plugged me in, and I went, "What do I mean, if I can be anybody? I can! I get to pick my own name." I can be anyone I wanted to be. "I'm going to be Zachary." I was going to keep "M" as my middle initial. Maureen and her family have called me Marulli for years as a term of endearment — my last name. So I was going to keep "M."

And my last name I picked as Saber. And I picked that, based on a friend of mine's story about a sword. He's from Ireland. He had this beautiful Celtic lilt as he's telling you all about "the wielding of sword, and how strong and brave and masculine they are, and yet how feminine they are because of their beauty." But a saber, a woman can lift and use to fight and defend herself, whereas most women could not lift a sword, okay? A saber can also be wielded just as easily by a man. A saber is more beautifully balanced. It will balance in your hand, whereas a sword is very bottom-heavy, very hefty. I mean, the saber struck me as being the perfect balance of the warrior and the nurturer. I felt that that's what I've achieved in becoming female to male and maintaining my female identity along with that. So, to me, it represents *who* I am and *what* I am. Then I decided, instead of just a middle initial, I would take my last name as my middle name. So I became Zachary Marulli Saber, and I think it's a really awesome name. I'm real happy with it.

Ruth: When did you start the hormone therapy?

Zachary: November 16<sup>th</sup>.

Ruth: What have you been learning about yourself as a result?

Zachary: Oh! [laughs]

Ruth: What observations have you made about your personality, as a result of --?

Zachary: I'm much calmer.

Ruth: Really?

Zachary: Absolutely. Much calmer. Much more comfortable. Much more at ease -- both with myself and with other people. The breasts are gone, okay? I don't have the pretty chest the boys get when they go in to have plastic surgery. My chest is really quite messed up, because I did have tumors and I had it cut for that. Over the next three months, that will change. But there's a lot of scarring; that's going to have to be constantly worked on. So I noticed that, when I look in the mirror, it's still a whole lot more of me of what I see than what I ever saw before, even though it's not pretty. It's okay!

I notice difference in energy patterns. It's difficult to fall asleep before midnight, for example, and I still want to be up early. I can look forward to working out now. There's more energy to want to go and do that. I find myself being much less emotionally attached to crap that I don't have to be attached to. It's easier to look at it for what it really is. I think that more women should be on testosterone; I really do. Not massive amounts, you know, but they really should be. You have the obvious physical side effects that, I think, a lot of people are not aware of. I am writing a book about it, with pictures and other people's input and the whole nine yards. But, when you research this, you find there's a lot of information for male to female, and there's very little information female to male. It's considered an easier process, even though it's a less *thorough* process. I think what they don't realize, it's not easy to -- it's not that easy of a process. You're going from being a lesbian -- part of a minority where your security and your entire safety and everything is built around a lesbian community, and you're having to walk away from that by identifying as a male, but wanting to maintain your status and your friends.

Ruth: Right.

Zachary: And your friends are looking at you like you've deceived them, you've copped out. And you have to be patient with them, because you have to let them see you're still who you are. You're still who you've always been; you're just happier being you now. It's only your cover that has changed. It's an ongoing educational process.

People say, "Oh my God, you're a freak! Straight women won't want you because you don't have a dick, and gay women don't want to be with" - Man, got news for you all. Wrong! This is not how it works. Both wrong on both counts. There are a whole lot of people out there who are absolutely elated at the fact that there are many more FtMs surfacing, because they do want the masculine energy and the masculine look, but still have the woman involved in being sexual with them and being a part of their life.

Ruth: A friend of mine, after the conference that was at Seattle Central College -

Zachary: Yeah, [hard to hear]

Ruth: A few years ago -

Zachary: Oh, okay, a different one.

Ruth: Yeah. It was an FtM conference, and she said it was a very attractive idea because it's - virility without the misogyny.

Zachary: Right. Yeah, the other thing you learn is that, you know, if you were an asshole as a woman and you go on testosterone, yes, you are still going to be an asshole. There's no getting around it. But I think what a lot of people around *me* are learning, testosterone did not make that man a jerk; the woman who raised him did. Women really do need to start taking some accountability for how they're raising their kids. When you quit raising your child to think he's entitled, he'll quit acting like he's entitled. If you teach your daughters that way, the same thing. But I think we have to own up and look at what we've created, because we *have* created this.

Ruth: You're singling out mothers in particular and not fathers, or -?

Zachary: Fathers - got to be honest, most fathers don't spend a hell of a lot of time influencing the kids one way or the other. They were mostly influenced by their moms. So, yeah, moms are getting the brunt of it, because moms still insist on being the primary caregiver and still insist on being the one who *takes* the kids if they divorce, thinking they're the best parent. So as long as women want that responsibility, they're going to have to own up for what that entails. So that's how I'm looking at it. Plus I think women are smarter! Women have more ability and more capacity to be more nurturing and more aware. Men tend to be more aloof and removed. You can't count on men to raise kids. Sorry. I know it's sexist, okay? I really do know it. But women are much better equipped. Women can multi-task. Women are smarter. They're more capable.

Ruth: I'm just wondering if these attitudes you're talking about and you're labeling sexist, are these coming with the hormones, or are these -?

Zachary: No, this is how I've always felt about it.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: No, there's nothing new there, no.

Ruth: I was wondering, when I asked you -- also when I asked you what are you observing about the changes in yourself, have you learned anything about what components of masculinity, femininity are -- what we commonly think of as maleness and femaleness -- are kind of due to our chemistry?

Zachary: Hmm. I think I understand what you're asking, but not yet. I've only been on hormones three months. Ask me in three months.

Ruth: Yeah. I'll also ask the question a different way, and maybe you can tell me in three months.

Zachary: Okay.

Ruth: When I was talk[ing] -- I had a conversation once with someone who was going from male to female. She said that, as she started estrogen, she -- her personality changed into -- [intended: from] someone who always used to tailgate other drivers and always had to take the quickest route to get -- I mean, very goal-oriented, always had to get from here to there in the quickest possible way -- and that she changed [from? into?] someone who was much more laid back, able to let others be on the highway with her, and could stop and smell the flowers, so to speak, enjoying what was --

Zachary: So that's how she was before the estrogen. I mean, before --

Ruth: She was a very goal-directed fast-paced person who always wanted to get from here to there in the quickest possible way.

Zachary: That's when she was on testosterone.

Ruth: Impatient with other people [hard to hear].

Zachary: Then when she went to estrogen?

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: Wow! That's unusual. Estrogen usually keys people up.

Ruth: Does it?

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: Yeah. Women are much more manic and much more capable, much more high-strung. Men tend to be much more laid back. I don't know how much of that is because of the way they were -- I don't know.

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: But I can say for me, yeah, I've become much more calm. Not as loud. But I think I learned, too, that a lot of the loudness was the male trying to come out, and always feeling so subdued, so buried in there. And now that I just get to be me, it's okay. But, again, ask me in three months.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: I don't know! It's only been, going on – so. Your first three months on testosterone, you're changing very core things. You're changing lipid levels and skin textures and coarseness in hair, and those things I notice. So we're still watching things as they come out, and still watching to see where they're going.

Chris: So can we do this again in three months?

Zachary: Sure.

Chris: That'd be great.

Zachary: Sure, we can do it again in three months and focus on the transition of what's occurred. Sure.

Chris: That'd be great.

Zachary: Absolutely. That'd be great.

Chris: A work in progress.

Zachary: Yeah. It's a two-year transition. We're only three months into it. So, yeah, we'll watch and we'll see what goes on. Absolutely.

Chris: Sounds great.

Ruth: When I interviewed Marsha Botzer, who's the director of Ingersoll, she talked about accompanying some of the male to female people to Denver where they were getting their surgery. She would take videos and all that kind of stuff. She said it was like accompanying people on a mythic journey, going into Hades or the cave or whatever the symbol was, and coming out of it transformed.

Zachary: Yeah, for men, they can do some pretty awesome stuff. There's a website. Michael, up in – I think it's Vancouver – had a penis erected using his forearm. The pictures and stuff that are there provide – show the entire thing. Everything's dated per the day. It was a 60-day process. What it didn't tell you, and you had to go back and do a lot of reading, was that there were a lot of surgeries involved in creating a urethra that would allow this to function and be attached to it. So a lot of money, a lot of surgery, a lot of healing. And what you come out of it realizing is, you stand there and you've got this penis that you can now urinate through.

[pause]

Ruth: You're looking as –

Zachary: You know, it's not an extension of your clitoris. You might hope that maybe it has enough function to – you know, your clitoris grows when you do testosterone, because your clitoris really is – I mean, it's your penis. So we really do have dicks; they're just small. And as we transition, they grow. They may get to be as big as about

three inches. And they become hard, but they don't get hard enough to ever be the same. So when you create a penis, you have to take into account the clitoris that's existing. You don't get to turn it into it. People do -- they expand them. They inject fat cells, and they do these things to make them tender. But you never truly wind up with this really wonderfully functioning organ, but you can stand up and pee. Okay.

Ruth: The expression on your face, like "Big deal."

Zachary: I have actually created a contraption that will allow women to stand up and pee very comfortably. I'm looking for a specific glue right now. I have people actually looking for it. So once I find it, this is going to be designed in a number of different ways, and I am very much going to try to sell it to one of the silicone-based companies that makes dildos and toys, because they could make this relatively inexpensively and sell it for a lot, because it works. We'll be able to stand up and urinate, and no one would know the difference.

Ruth: Since you made the transition -- starting to do things like go to -- use men's restrooms and everything --

Zachary: Yes.

Ruth: Does -- I imagine there must be a certain amount of danger in that. Do you sense it that way?

Zachary: I don't think so, because I did for years. Literally, when men go into a bathroom they go in to pee. They don't give a damn. They're not standing there -- Women go into bathrooms and look. Men don't. No one cares. If you're not going to go and call attention to yourself, they're not going to pay attention to you. Most men's restrooms have stalls. If they don't, you're not going to go there. If you can stand and pee, no one's going to notice that what you're holding is not real, because, unless they're gay, they're probably not going to check you out. Eyes diverted elsewhere, you know. Want to clear the bathroom? "Hey, nice dick!" They're all gone. Let's get real! [laughter] So, no, I don't think anything of it.

Ruth: Okay.

Zachary: But, then, look at the average FtM in the city of Seattle. They're pretty small. I'm 5'10".

Ruth: Right.

Zachary: I pass pretty easily, and then I've also spent more years passing. To me, it's just no big deal. The big deal is women's bathrooms usually smell pretty nice. You have all those colognes and perfumes. Men's rooms don't. It's sad. It really is. I like to find those unisex bathrooms because, you know, girls smell good.

Ruth: Do you have any thoughts at this point -- and I might ask you again as we go along and do other interviews -- what the overlap is, if any, between traditional butches (women of the old school, pre-Stonewall, women identified as butches) and people who now consider themselves transgender? Do you think there was just a lot of butches who might really have been transgender had the option been available?

Zachary: Absolutely. Absolutely. Twenty-five years ago, when I first looked into it, the chances of having a successful transition were pretty scary. Very expensive.

Ruth: You knew you could do it 25 years ago.

Zachary: Yeah, absolutely.

Ruth: Even then you were thinking about it.

Zachary: Absolutely. I know a few people who did it. Did it very well. I know a few people who tried to do it, did it very terribly.

Ruth: From that time period?

Zachary: Yes.

Ruth: Uh-huh. What happened to the ones who didn't --?

Zachary: A lot of people wound up taking testosterone inappropriately. They took pills and things that were very hard on their bodies. Finally they had terrible, terrible adverse reactions to it, so they can't take it now. They don't have any assistance. Or they had real butcher jobs of surgery. I was very careful in interviewing my surgeons. I knew it had to be done, based on the tumors, and I was very honest with my surgeons. I got to pick *wonderful* surgeons. I had a great team. I had a year of planning for this, because of what had to be done. Knowing that I had these tumors growing, and I had to find insurance and wait for the time periods to be up and the whole nine yards, so I got to plan. A lot of these people ran out and jumped real fast, and I think that's part of the age. You know, when you're 20 years old, you're in a hurry, want to do it now! I'm 45. I'm ready for change. Come on! I'm tired of being bloated. I'm bloated from this hysterectomy and it's pissing me off. I came out of surgery 18 pounds lighter than when I went in, but 8 inches bigger around. I'm *still* agitated. Go away! It isn't okay!

But I think, too, that being a butch woman in our society is the most difficult label to live to, and live by. You're ostracized by your own gay community. You have a lot of very, very -- a lot of the women in our community have very low self esteem, who strive just to be androgynous and blend in. They just -- they don't want to rock the boat. They don't want to challenge. We had to do a lot of challenging. Seattle was the first city to defeat Anita. Remember that?<sup>8</sup> I was part of that! I got to proudly be a part of that and go down to the Market and get things signed and stand there and get people -- And, you know, you struggled hard for your identity to be a butch woman and our community, to this day, just has no clue of what that entails. I hear kids, "Well, I'm butch today, because I wore my overalls."

Ruth: [hard to hear] different definitions of what it [hard to hear]

Zachary: You hear it today -- different things -- These people still -- they drag their feet day to day. It depends on what they are and how they're dressed? Excuse me? So I would say that really good butches -- yeah, it's a dying breed, because it's just too fucking hard. Maureen looked at me and got very angry with me. She says, "You're copping out. You're giving in." I said, "Yeah, what if I am? So what? This is my life! I want to enjoy it and laugh more, and I don't get to in the way I really want to." Now I do. Now people can look at me and go, "Oh, my God, you know, *she*," because they want to be whatever. But then, I can go to other people who know nothing and they think nothing of it. I'm just some average Joe Blow who blends in and doesn't stand out any more. I'm not the sore thumb any more. I was always the sore thumb that you could tell from three blocks away was a fucking dyke

walking down the street. Now, no one notices me! I am so anonymous. All of my clients know what I'm doing – every one of them. I do body work. I do one-on-one. These people are very vulnerable. They're on my table. I do myofascial work; it's very deep.

Ruth: This is licensed massage practice?

Zachary: Yeah, it's very personal work. I love what I do, and every one of my clients knows. All my new clients know, because one of my friends who refers them, "Got to go see Marulli. She'll fix you." I keep going, "Larry, honey." He goes, "I know, I know, you're a he now, but I forget." "You got to start remembering." So when they come to me, they look at me, and they're like, "She??" So I explain to them what's going on. First of all, I would never deceive my client. I am asking them to trust me, so I have to be honest with them. So I only just had my first client that came to me as Zachary, who has no idea, who came to me-as-Zachary. That's my first experience at anyone in my life that doesn't know the story. It's pretty cool to just be accepted for being me without any pretense or, "Whoa," none of those things. So I'm looking forward to more of that. But that doesn't mean I want to lose any of my history or my identity of where I've been either. Let me make that clear. I want to blend.

Ruth: It sounds like we've got quite a few topics we can explore in a few months.

Zachary: Yeah.

Ruth: Six months or a year or whatever.

Zachary: Yeah, as we go. Keep checking it out. You bet!

Ruth: Sure.

Chris: Does anybody have trouble calling you Zachary?

Zachary: Yeah, my partner, Maureen, is actually moving out of our home – my dearest friend. She hates calling me Zachary. She likes calling me Marulli. I have other people who go, "Oh my God, you're so much more a Zachary than you ever were a Deanna." "I think so, too. Thank you very much." Yet I have clients who, "Hey, Zach, when I make out the check to you –" and they'll write Deanna – "If I make it to Deanna, can you still cash it??" [laughs] You know, *habits*. What I learned through Ingersoll is, you know, when people have been in your life, your family, it takes about two years to adjust, so be patient. I keep telling my clients, "Both of my names are on my checkbook. It says Deanna Gay Marulli and Zachary M. Saber are both on my checkbook, because it's me." I have ID's for both. My bank knows what I've done. They'll take my checks; that's okay.

Ruth: A one person joint account!

Zachary: Yeah, exactly. It just takes time. The more I change, the more I grow. I have to shave. I shave my mustache. The last thing to grow is the sideburns and stuff. As that changes more, as more bulk comes on, more muscle comes on, it'll become more obvious. It'll become easier as we go. I mean, I don't look at all that different now than I did, so it's okay. It's understandable.

Chris: It's just like sometimes when people have a hard time calling someone -- it's more than just -- there's just something about the resistance.

Zachary: Some people are very resistant. I've got good friends that do not want to call me Zachary. They're angry with me for doing this. My best friend is very angry. My best friend's a black woman, a lieutenant on the fire department. We went to lunch -- she and her partner and I -- and she flat out said, "I don't have room in my life for a straight white male." I said, "Who's a straight white male?" She says, "You!" I said, "Bullshit, I'm already in your life. I got my spot. Until I fuck up and turn into some asshole, you don't have a right to toss me out." Her fear is that I will become a bigot. Her fear is that, becoming part of the so-called *elite* portion of our world, that I'll take on their attitudes, that I'll become prejudiced, that I'll *become* a bigot, that I'll *become* sexist, racist, whatever. I said, "Wait a fucking minute! You're the sexist, racist one of our group." She goes, "That's true." I said, "Don't blame it on me! How long have you known me? Twenty-some years! I am not changing. I am not going to become like them. Until I do, you got room for me." So that's where we stand. But she won't call me Zach; she calls me Marulli. We're the M&M's -- Marulli and Maureen -- which we've called ourselves for years. That's no problem. And that's okay, because, you know, it takes time.

Chris: So you can let people have the time they need?

Zachary: Of course! Absolutely. I kept my name. I kept it for a reason. There is identity there, and it is part of who I am. My family, I'm sure, loves the fact that it's no longer the same name as *theirs*. One of the first things my brother did, "So you changed your name. You're not a Marulli any more, right?" I said, "No, I'm not a Marulli any more, but I did keep the name." "But it's not your last name." "No, it's not."

One of the awesome things that has come about with this is that -- my mom and her sister were adopted, so my grandparents who adopted them I love, actually loved all my life, all their lives. But they were very alienated. *We* were always very alienated from her birth family. As I grew older, that was fine with me. My [mind?] goes, "Well, they were never around. Screw them! What do I need them around for?" What I've found out is that none of them have tried to be around. So since doing my transition, my mom's sister got through to my brother -- my youngest brother's also gay -- and said, "I would like to reach Deanna, Zach." So I got this letter, giving me this lecture about how I should try harder to get along with my family, to understand and not be angry with them over things as a child. I sent a note back, saying, "I have no problems with them as a child. My problem with them is as an adult. They don't want anything to do with me." My father said at a restaurant and told me I was an abomination, that he could not accept me in his life.

Ruth: Was that over your being a lesbian, or being a transgender?

Zachary: Yeah, being a lesbian. He said, "If this was my son," -- he'd met Maureen -- "If this were my son, I'd be very proud of him. But as my daughter, I can't tolerate this." We haven't talked in four years. And what she found out was that it was true. My family really had walked away. They wanted nothing to do with me. She's never heard me say a bad thing about them. Tonight, telling you about getting beat, is the first time I've opened my mouth, okay? Because I don't. That's just the way it goes. It's just a fact. It's just their behavior. This is how it was, and

that's kind of what I've come to terms with. But I've met my aunt. I've met my mom's other half-sister. I've met a couple of cousins. They all know I'm transsexual. They all know I'm female-to-male. They have had a few questions. At first, they had none, and I finally went, "Look, we can't keep having conversations, because you're avoiding asking." "Well, we don't want to ostracize you. We don't want you to reject us." I said, "I'm not going to reject you. Ask me anything you want, but be honest with me. That's all I ask for. Just have some honest communication. How can I get to know you if you won't be you?" She goes, "I hate what you've done! It's against the Bible!" I said, "No, it's not." "Well, it would be!" I said, "But it's not." So we had this involved conversation, and we both agreed that we have two different viewpoints. I think my perspective of God is much healthier than hers.

Ruth: This is your mother's half-sister?

Zachary: Yeah, the same dad. Yeah, same dad. So this has been remarkable, that since I have become Zachary, I have gained family, blood family, that I had never had in my life --

Chris: That's pretty ironic, huh?

Zachary: -- as Deanna. Yeah, yeah, it is. These are people who go, "God, we really wanted to be around, but your mom's awfully volatile." I'm thinking, "Yeah, no shit." But I haven't had that conversation with them either, nor do I want to. There's just no *reason* to. But I don't expect this is something they're ever going to get a hold of or have to deal with, or anyone's going to go confronting them on it, because this is not what that's about, so --

Ruth: People will have to be looking specifically for [gay?] material.

Zachary: Right.

Ruth: So they come looking for [hard to hear].

Zachary: Right. Exactly. So it was been wonderful. It's just been, again, about the best thing I've ever done. It's been quite awesome. Got my licenses changed and everything changed for my new name.

Ruth: What was the reaction of people at the license bureau where you got your name changed?

Zachary: DMV?

Ruth: Yeah.

Zachary: No problem.

Ruth: [hard to hear]

Zachary: You know -- the statistics show that, annually, one in every thirty thousand men transitions? One in every hundred thousand women changes. I think because it's easier for women to cross-dress and pass than it is for men, so a lot of women just never do anything to do with surgery or anything else.

Chris: They just play the saxophone.

Zachary: Right. [laughter] Write books. Stay at home. Work on cars. Paint, plumber, carpentry, yes, all the standard things.

Chris: Join the military. Go to war.

Zachary: Yeah, yeah. So they're high numbers. When I went up to DMV up here on Aurora, I went in and I said, "I need to change my name." "Okay." She looked at it. She goes, "Cool name." I said, "Thank you." She goes, "I can't change the sex on it, because you haven't gotten that approved through the state yet." I said, "Okay." She goes, "Here, I'll get you an address though." So --

[SIDE 4 ENDS ABRUPTLY]

Notes:

1. perhaps the "922," at 922 3rd Ave. (1969-1975), although the interior description doesn't match that of the Madison/Riverboat tavern, of earlier and later years at that location.
2. ALPS: social organization, originally "Association of Lesbian Professionals," and later "Associated Lesbians of Puget Sound"
3. military slang for "temporary duty" assignment
4. JAG: Judge Advocate General, a member of the military justice branch, who serves as a legal advisor
5. non-commissioned officer
6. Technical Sergeant Leonard Matlovich (1943-1988), the first U.S. gay service member to purposely out himself to challenge the military ban on gays (Wikipedia)
7. Seattle Gay News
8. referring to the anti-gay "Save Our Children" campaign in Dade County, Florida, championed by singer Anita Bryant. It inspired a series of ordinance campaigns in other cities that rolled back gay rights, until November 7, 1978 when similar efforts were defeated in Seattle (Initiative 13) and in a statewide California vote ( Briggs Initiative).