

## Oral History Transcript

OH # UA-016-04

Narrator: Susan Frawley

Interviewer(s): Olivia Beschorner and Esemery Collins

Date: October 24, 2024

00:00:09 OB: Hello. My name is Olivia Beschorner. Today is Thursday, October 24, 2024. It is 340 in the afternoon. My partner, Esi Collins and I are conducting this interview in the Meriam Library Podcast studio in Chico, California. We are here today with Susan Frawley. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this oral history project. I want to remind you that this may be published as a part of the oral history Archives project for Dr. Gloria Lopez in our ethnic studies and methodologies class at California State University Chico. I need your permission to publish this in its transcript, either in part or in its entirety. Do I have your consent to record this interview?

SF: Yes, you do.

00:00:47

OB: Oh– [Esi's phone begins ringing, she struggles to turn it off]. All right. Sorry about that. We're going to start off with some basic info. Could we get your pronouns from you?

SF: She/her.

OB: All right.

00:00:59

EC: And how long have you been on campus?

SF: I've been here ten years.

00:01:04

EC: Alright– um, why did you choose to come to Chico?

SF: Oh, I didn't choose to come to Chico. We talked about that in the pre-interview. I came to Oroville because there was a job and I needed a job, and that was as an archaeologist for the US Forest Service. And then I saw how beautiful Chico was and we decided to move to the town of Chico and stay, and that was actually 14 years ago.

00:01:33

EC: Wow. Where are you originally from?

SF: Salinas, California.

00:01:39

EC: What do you do on campus for the most part?

SF: I am faculty in the Multicultural and Gender Studies Department. I teach Queer and Trans studies, and this year, I'm also a faculty fellow for the Office of Equity Diversity and Inclusion.

00:01:56

OB: And where did you attend school originally? You have quite a few degrees, where are they all from?

SF: My first one is from State University of New York Albany. That's my Geology degree. The second one, my Anthropology degree, my anthropology Bachelor's is from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. And my masters, my masters of Philosophy in Archaeology and Paleoanthropology is from the Australian National University.

00:02:31

EC: Wow. Who would you say have been the most influential people in your life?

SF: My mom. I mean, I think a lot of people say that, right? Because my mom was like, do whatever, go, run away to Europe, travel to Europe, travel here, travel there. You'll figure out what you want to do when you want to do it. Now, the first time I went to college, I dropped out 'cause I just wasn't finding the right fit for me. I started as a theater major. No, that really wasn't me, right? And so she was supportive of my dropping out of college. She was supportive of my messing around for a long time, and she was extremely supportive of my going back to college and getting my degrees. She's also extremely supportive of my being gay. Just did not matter to her whatsoever. And so my mom, honestly, I mean, there are other people you can't have just one person influence you in your life, but it was really my mom that mattered more than anything else.

OB: That's really sweet.

EC: Yeah.

00:03:43

OB: And then you so you mentioned you started originally going to school for theater, is that one of your main interest in hobbies or what do you like to do outside of work?

SF: It used to be. I mean, I did just go to Ashland last year, right? So to go see a play.

EC: Oh the Shakespeare thing?

00:04:09

SF: Yeah, the Shakespeare Festival. I still love theater. I really love movies because, you know, they're much more accessible. In fact, I teach queer and trans film. So I watch a lot of movies and I play a lot of video games, [laughs] which is terrible. But because it's just you got to have time to relax and turn it off. You do. Right. But then when I'm not doing those two things, you usually find me with some kind of LGBTQ history book in my hand. Right?

00:04:35

EC: All right. And sort of related to that. What are some details about yourself that you believe are relevant to the topic we're discussing today?

SF: Well, I came out in 1983. So I've been out for 41 years. And I mean OUT-out for 41 years. I never went back in, right? Yeah. And like, you can't see me in this recording, but I'm wearing a suit. And so I always kid people like, "Oh, they don't know I'm out." And people are like, Yes, they do [all laugh]. They do. You can't go back in, right? And so, in that time, when I originally came out, I came out. I was going to college at UC Stanislaus CSU, I'm sorry, CSU Stanislaus, but it wasn't a university yet. That was when the CSUs were still colleges. And Turlock is a small, conservative farming town. And then I came out just like bursting the closet doors open and just kind of screaming, "I'm gay!" *And started the first gay student club on campus.*

EC/OB: Wow. Wow.

SF: And demanded equal rights for gay people. And I've been an activist ever since [laughs].

00:06:03

EC: Alright. And that actually is a perfect segue into our next question is, do you feel as though you're an activist, although you pretty much already answered that, and how might you define activism?

SF: You know, activism is a hard thing to define because it's different for all different people. For some people and especially right now with the election coming up. Activism, for some people, is just casting a vote for someone that believes the same thing they do, right? And that's activism. It's quiet. Some people are not brave. You do not have to be brave, you do not have to yell and scream from the rooftops to be an activist. It's *anyone* that makes *any* effort to make a change in this world. There are activists that might feel completely opposite to what I feel, but they're still activists for their causes. Anyone that does anything in my estimation, my estimation is an activist. It can be something as simple, as I said, as just a quiet vote, or it can be people like me that like to get up and march up and down the street and scream and yell. Right? [laughs] And then also, I'm an activist every day that I'm here on this campus, because teaching queer and trans studies to people is activism because activism is about knowledge as well.

00:07:33

EC: And you work with GSEC [Gender & Sexuality Equality Coalition] and the Pride Club on campus, right?

SF: I do. Mostly for GSEC, because GSEC is a student run organization, and it's pretty much students that do everything. I will show up to their events, but I do a lot of the trainings for the interns. And so, you know, that way they are knowledgeable about LGBTQ things. And then for Pride, I am an advisor. Right, to help them out, with things.

00:08:02

EC: How long have you been working with them?

SF: I've been an advisor for Pride for two years now. I was kind of an unofficial advisor before. You know, I would just hang out [laughs]. But now I'm official. And I've— I've always been associated in some way shape or form with GSEC since I've been here for ten years.

00:08:26

EC: Can you tell us more about these organize—[stutters] organizations? Like what they do and who is a part of them, basically?

SF: Well, Pride, I'll start with that one. The thing, actually, I will start with this information on both of them. They're both 50-years-old.

OB: Wow.

SF: They've been here a long time, much longer than any of us, right. There's nobody still working on campus that was here when they started. GSEC started out as the Women's Center and then it became more inclusive. It's a student run organization . It's run by

students for students, and they are a combination of putting on events, doing trainings, right, to make students more knowledgeable about LGBTQ people and women's issues. And then, also, they still do some activism and protesting, it depends on the situation. That's always a hard thing to do in Chico because it's not the city, where there's always something going on and some march to attend to and stuff. A lot of the GSEC interns were involved in the what do they call it the Women's March. Yeah. I think a couple of GSEC folks started that here in Chico. And so when there's things to do, they're very much involved. Pride is just a club. Club, It's a club. It's more of a social type event. They don't really put on— they put on more social type things, like get-togethers, game nights, things like that. But I was doing research on Pride and from what I can tell, they are the fourth— the fourth— LGBTQ campus club in— to ever form. And they are as far as I could tell, the oldest one still that's just a pure club in California. They were the second one in California, but the first one's not a club anymore? It's kind of morphed. I think they're actually the student— student club, LGBTQ student club in California. They're one of the oldest in the nation.

EC: Wow. I did not know that.

OB: I also didn't know that. That's really cool.

EC: And for posterity, at this point in time, the people that should know that have not answered my email [all laugh].

00:11:05

OB: So GSEC used to be a lot more active like, activists in our community, but they still work with other places in our community. You know, like Stonewall and Catalyst, but how do those all work together here in the Chico Community and Butte area?

SF: Well, because Stonewall is a community organization, and their goal is to have a safe space for LGBTQ people. Their main focus lately has been with queer and trans youth, which is really important because now in 2024, there are a lot more queer and trans youth than there were 20 or 30 years ago, when you had a much more adult type of focus for Stonewall. Queer and Trans youth, even though college students don't like to think of them that way, they are still technically queer and trans youth. And so GSEC and Stonewall work very close together. If there is— like Stonewall puts on Trans Day of Remembrance. They put on the Trans Awareness Week. They put on a lot of events specific— especially around the trans community, they put on Pride, and GSEC has always worked really closely with Stonewall, especially around those trans events. I know a lot of people that have interned both with GSEC and with Catalyst, which is the domestic violence organization. I know that advisors for GSEC as well as any of us that are involved with GSEC, like to make sure that there's that community involvement because it's not just about what's happening on campus, it's what's happening in Chico or happening in the state. And so, Stonewall is a little bit more clued into what's happening around town, and so they work really closely together.

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EC: And we kind of mentioned this earlier, but GSEC was more of, like, activist, a lot more, like, hot, more, you know, spicy, more present. But it's kind of died down. It's gotten a lot more muted. Can you provide some insight on how or why you believe this happened?

SF: Uh, the world [laughs]. The world, right? I think the reason behind that, believe it or not, is what we're doing right here, social media and the internet. Because you could take— instead of when I was young, there was no social media, there was no internet. If you wanted to be an activist, you had to go to a meeting and everybody would be like, Yeah, Yeah. RAH, you know, down with the man. You know, you had to go to a meeting. Then they would have events, and they would have protests. You could protest and have events of meetings digitally now, right? And I don't think it's as muted as it might seem. I think it's just that there's a lot less live action because a lot of the protesting, a lot of the organizing, a lot of everything that goes on goes on online now, you know, on the Internet and digitally. And so I think it just might look that way because— and it is Chico. There's just not a lot to go out and protest. I think another thing is, even though it might seem like a desperate time for LGBTQ folks right now. It's not our best time. Not with all the legislation that's going on in the hate and everything, but it's a lot better than it used to be. And so there's a lot less to protest.

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EC: So looking at the archives for the GSEC, when we were doing that, we noticed, they had a lot, like, higher funding and a lot more involvement in the 90's and part of that is what you kind of talked about just now, but they had a much higher budget than they do now. And what do you think is the reason for that?

SF: There's two reasons. One is nobody has as much money now. Right? Yeah. So nobody has as much money. There's not as much funding for anything. The other thing is that— and I don't know a lot, I don't know details and I am not giving names, because those people are still alive— a few of the interns for GSEC were not the most, how should I say this, didn't have the best negotiation and people skills. And protesting and making the world a better place, a change is all extremely important, but you also have to work with people in order to make those things happen. And they made some people in AS [Associated Students] unhappy.

00:16:08

OB: We were also in the archives looking at the 2003 Penis Registry.

SF: [Laughing] What? Oh, my God, that's so cool. What is that?

EC: Let me— let me pull that up.

SF: That's before my time.

00:16:26

OB: Yes. This is when GSEC was still the Women's Center. And there had been a lot of sexual assaults, rapes, talks about consent on campus, like during that time. And the Women's Center put together this campaign basically called, like, Penis Registry. It was

informing people about consent at the bare minimum, but you would have to take a test to get your penis registered or licensed, and it caused a pretty big uproar around campus.

EC: Oh, yeah. I'm pulling up right now.

SF: It's like the Safe Zone training for LGBTQ people, you get a sticker. I wonder if they got little stickers.

OB: They got these little cards that you paste your face on.

SF: "My penis is registered!"

OB: That's— that's actually exactly what it said!

00:17:12

SF: That does remind me that they also still do Take Back the Night too.

OB/EC: Oh, they do?

SF: Yes. They do. It's GSEC that puts on Take Back the Night. And they do a magnificent job of it. But that's hilarious, tell me more. So people got mad?

00:17:30

OB/EC: Very. Oh yeah. Very upset.

EC: Here's the article [pulls up photo of newspaper cutout].

OB: Multiple newspaper articles writing back and forth.

SF: That's what college students do.

EC: [Reading from article] "Penis Registry not okay by all."

00:17:42

SF: [Laughs] But that's what college students do— is fun stuff like that. And you know, it got people talking, didn't it?

OB: It did get people talking.

SF: It got people talking. Sometimes you got to be outrageous.

00:17:53

OB: The goal was to get male involve— like male voices involved in what's typically like a female or queer community, like, conversation.

SF: And it probably did.

OB: I think it probably did!

SF: Right?

EC: For sure.

00:18:08

SF: I'm wondering how many women were, like, on campus going. "Show me your card." Right? Meet a guy at the bar and like, "I need to see your card." But then they would talk about it, because men don't talk about abuse. Men don't talk about these things. Most men don't even realize that we carry our keys between our fingers to go to our cars at night, right? I saw a thing on social media and it was a list of "fall is here, ladies," and it's getting darker earlier, and it was a list of all these things you can't do now. And that's the way I saw it as a list of things you cannot do now, because it's getting dark, because you're female. And I'm— my thought was, why is it this way? Why should we

even have to deal with these things, right? Instead of saying, “Oh, it's fall, you can't do these things,” we need to make it so these things don't happen, right? And the only way that's going to happen is if we educate men because men don't know that we have to be careful about lighting or that we carry our keys in our fingers or that we have to look in the backseat of our car before. They don't know any of that. They don't know anything. So I bet you that Penis Registry helped them learn some things. Because you probably had to learn some things to get your card, right?

OB: Yeah, they had to take consent tests.

00:19:37

EC: Oh, there's a recent Herpes outbreak on campus, too, by the way.

SF: There's always a outbreak of something on campus.

EC: But anyway! Moving on, you've mentioned that community involvement is hard in Chico. You mentioned that in the pre-interview and you just a little bit about it just recently. But can you go deeper on that and provide some examples?

00:19:57

SF: Like, community...

EC: Community involvement, like, not just on campus, but within Chico itself, and Butte County, maybe.

00:20:06

SF: Well, Chico is a little teeny, tiny blue dot in a red county. By that fact, I mean, is that Chico is a liberal spot in a conservative county because it is where the university is. And so wherever you have a university, you're going to have a much more liberal outlook. And so Chico itself is quite liberal, even though we still have a conservative city council, at least for the moment until the election. But I will be honest and I'm not trying to be political, but we do know that the conservative political party is not that welcoming to LGBTQ folks or to liberal folks or to migrants or to any of those things. And I will be honest four years ago during the election when they had the Trump parades. Do you know what I'm talking about? The old Kmart [closed Kmart location in Chico], the old Kmart parking lot is huge. And that's what—I was on a bike ride and we came around the corner. I was like, “what is that?” And it was hundreds of pickup trucks with Trump flags. And they're taking pictures of their kids and everything. Yeah. Right? But then they drove around Chico, and they did it numerous times. I do know they've done it at least once this election. But it's intimidating. It is. Come on. You got to be honest. I mean, it's like, are you going to go stand on a corner going, “honk for gay people”. When you have seen hundreds of trucks going by supporting a candidate that is not pro-women, that is not pro-LGBTQ. It's hard. It's hard. And it's just been, it's harder to protest since violence has become more endemic in our society. I never was afraid that anyone was going to beat me up when I protested, you know, except once, but that was in another country. And [laughs] so I was never afraid anyone was going to beat me up for going out and having an opinion and supporting my opinion publicly. That has changed in the last eight years.

And I think it's a lot more frightening for people that are more liberal to go out and protest because we're afraid we're gonna get harmed. Mm hm. And it's hard in Chico.

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OB: Do you think that's also changed on campus as well with just like the recent changes on free speech space and all of the changes that have been made, I think, particularly based on Gaza, but do you think that that will change coming the election?

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SF: I don't know. But I do know that, campus is still a safe space. To protest, and people shouldn't be afraid to protest on campus. Now, I am not completely versed in these new changes as much as some other people, but I can tell you that my union is not happy about them because they feel like they are restricting freedom of speech for not just students, but for professors as well. And so I think you still have all the freedom you want. You just have to go and take it. And as long as you follow their guidelines, they're not stopping you from protesting. They're just kind of putting you in a box and saying, protest in this box. Yeah. which I still think is...

EC: It's better than nothing.

00:24:01

SF: It's wrong. Well. It's not just "better than nothing." Freedom of speech is freedom of speech. And that means you should have it everywhere you go, not just in a box. Now, that also means that people you may not agree with also have freedom of speech. And I remember when I was young, when I was your age, the ACLU defending the Klu Klux Klan because their freedom of speech had been impeded. And the ACLU is like, "we stand for freedom of speech." That means we stand for everybody's freedom of speech, and I'm the same way. I may not agree with it. But as long as it's not hate speech and it's not violent, everybody has the right to it. They're trying to restrict it, right? And in my own personal opinion I don't like the new rules because I think that they restrict it, but it doesn't stop it. You still have it. You still have it.

00:24:57

EC: Yeah. How can we, like people our age and on the campus and in the community like make a positive change in that regard?

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SF: In regard to the new rules?

EC: Not just the new rules, but also, you know, advocate for organizations like GSEC, and stuff like that.

00:25:17

SF: You have a voice. We're doing it right now. You have a voice? You have a vote, you have a voice. You know how to write letters, right? You know? You can vote. And a lot of people, like I said, it's a silent way to protest and be an activist. Like, for example, all those— after Roe V Wade was overturned. All those states where women went out and made those silent votes and put abortion back in the books in those states, right? That was



activism. You have a voice, and that means that you can talk to each other. You can talk in your classes, you can talk online. You can talk on your Instagram, you can, and this is the thing, you can write letters. You can write letters to the editor of the paper. You can write letters to groups, you can write letters to politicians. Activism doesn't necessarily mean standing on a street corner. Right? You have a voice, and all you have to do is use it. And the more of us that use it, that's how you get change. Look, gay people can get married. Do you think that just happened? No, it didn't. It didn't just happen. It happened because people wrote to their representative saying, we want this. *People started petitions. People started, put laws in motion*, you know, I mean, it's— anybody in California can get something on the ballot. You just have to propose it, fill out the paperwork, and then get signatures. Anybody can do it. It's not just for the politicians. And so anybody can go and do it. You just have to find the time and the energy and do it.

00:27:09

EC: Based on your experiences, obviously, you've been in the community for a really long time. But what changes both within the queer community and the attitude around it, like, have you seen, if any, and is there any noticeable progress?

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SF: The queer community is getting tighter because we're being attacked, right? I've seen— I'm old enough to remember when lesbians and gay men just didn't even notice each other's existence, because we had nothing in common. [laughs around the table] Except the same bar, you know. But whenever we are attacked, we tighten up and we tighten forces. And so the same now is that in the sense that I think up until recently that the L, the G, and the B, and the Q didn't necessarily care what happened to the T. But seeing how horribly trans folks and intersex folks and non binary folks are being attacked right now, I think we're closing ranks. And I see a lot more people caring about trans people and fighting for trans people because the reason that they're being attacked is they're an easy target, and they're one that's not understood by a lot of people. “Oh.” You know, they don't understand because they've never met one— they have, they just don't know it. And so we're closing ranks. There's a lot more defense of the trans folks right now, we're fighting back just like we always have, and we're not going to stop fighting back. I've seen it when it was good and I've seen it when it was bad and right now it's kinda bad. But it doesn't stay that way because people fight. Anytime it gets bad, people fight back. That's all you can do.

00:29:10

OB: Do you think that the unity in the queer community helps promote visibility and access to queer youth, especially this like unity around trans and non binary and intersex people, do you think that looking forward to the future, that can do a lot more for those growing up trans and non binary?

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SF: Yeah. I mean, I remember I was in my 20s when I met my first trans person. And I was like, Oh, my God, I know. I've known about them, but I've never *seen* one. Now the visibility is so much more amazing because you're getting trans people in mainstream media. And honestly, you know, they say no news or what do they say? "Bad publicity is still publicity." That's the quote. "Bad publicity is still publicity." When they're attacking us, Okay? When you're watching— I don't know about you, you're probably too busy now— but I love football. And when I'm watching football on Sunday and that horrific Trump ad comes on attacking trans people, \$19,000,000 for that commercial. Attacking trans people and saying, "Kamala Harris wants to, you know, transition everybody." That's, you know, the gist of it. That's not what the commercial says. But at the end, it says, "Kamala Harris. She's for they/them, not you." Right? And it's like, Oh, my God, right? So one of the trans people in there is suing him because they did not give their consent. But you know what? People watching football are seeing trans people. And talking and they're talking about trans people, and it is, oh, my God, how horrible. I don't think that that's the message that is exactly getting across from that commercial. I think the message that's getting across is "Wow, this guy's really mean."

EC: Yeah.

00:31:18

SF: Right? And so like I said, You know, bad publicity is still publicity. And so people are talking about trans people. People are aware of trans people. I listen to conservative radio. And again, it's like, one of the hosts was like, "Yes, but do you agree with trans free transgender surgeries for immigrants?", or that's not exactly how I put it. But I'm like in the car go. "Yes! Yes, I do!" Right. [laughs] So they're talking about it. And even if some of the speech is hateful and hate speech, it's getting other people talking about it. And visibility has always been the number one thing to get change for the LGBTQ community? Number one.

00:32:01

EC: So with all your activism and other stuff that you do, what would you say is that your main goal in your work when you're doing that? Is it education? Is it involvement? Is it like inspiration? What would you say?

00:32:17

SF: It's understanding. 'Kay? Because I have queer students in my classes. They already know about that. They may not know the information I'm going to give them because I know a lot about queer history, and they may not have seen something or known about something. So we do a lot of talk about that. But there's a lot of heterosexual and cisgender folks in my classes, too. And I want them to walk away understanding, understanding that we're all just people when it comes down to it. And especially in California, I don't think a lot of people realize that we have been discriminated against for almost 2000 years. 1,700 years that we've faced discrimination, and we're still not done with it yet. And I don't think they realize how bad it can actually get for queer people,

right? I'm an anthropologist. And when I teach anthropology classes, it's the same thing. It may not be the subject is LGBTQ folks, but all I want my students to walk away with is after I show them variety that they can walk away with tolerance for different kinds of people in this world because there are— nobody— we're not all little cookie cutters. There's no such thing, right? I just want people to be understanding.

00:33:48

EC: Do you have a target audience for that or is it just anyone who listen?

00:33:51

SF: [laughs] Anyone who will listen? I'm just like, it's not just my students. You know, I'm older and I hang out with a group of older lesbians. And when we first started hanging out, I got the whole. "Oh, I don't understand they/them. I don't— oh, it's so hard" And I'm like well, yeah, okay. Let's— let's deal with that right now and that comment doesn't come up anymore because they understand. And because even though I use she/her pronouns, I'm non-binary, they had to deal with that because they're like living in their old lady worlds, and I'm like, you know what? The whole world isn't just how it was 20, 30, 40 years ago. You get to stay up to date with how it is now. Yeah, I'm non-binary. Yeah, you got to learn to use they/them with people that use they/them. I mean, even in my social life, they've had to deal with... Some of these women, Oh, my gosh, were activists in the 70s. They're older than *me*. But they've still had to realize that they can't just sit in that bubble that the world changes.

EC: That's a good point.

00:35:10

OB: Do you think that I mean, you say they're, they're shoot, sorry. They're in a bubble. Do you think that everyone kind of exists in their own bubble? And do you think those bubbles merge?

00:35:23

SF: We all exist in a bubble. Absolutely. Every single one of us, me included, yes, and the bubbles merge. I'm always telling people you are not the center of anyone's universe, but your own. Right? Not even your partners. I know sadly, sadly [laughs]. They're still the center of their universe because they're living inside there, right? You're second or third or whatever, right? I'm like fourth. It's my partner's daughter, and then our cats, and then me [laughs] right. But you're not the center of anyone's universe, except your own. And yeah, they merge because we're social creatures. You know, so we're all living in— you've watched bubbles. You know how bubbles they stick together, and then they can merge, and then they can go back to being. You know, I never thought about it until just now. That's actually a really good analogy of bubbles, of bubbles, you know, sticking together and merging and going back to being so— yeah, that's a great little analogy on how people are. Oh, good. Thank you. I'm going to remember that.

00:36:41

OB: Do you think that Chico I mean, if we're still in the analogy of bubbles, you've got Chico in a bubble, and then you've got California in a bubble, and then you've got America in a bubble. Do you think that they have been changing independently of themselves, or do you think that America has overgone a change and then California and then Chico or vice versa?

00:37:00

SF: California is its own little bubble. It has to deal with changes in federal law. But one of the things about our country is that states have a lot of autonomy. California is its own little separate universe, and it doesn't really matter that much— I mean, it does. But say someone really conservative was elected president and they made conservative changes to federal law. There are times when it doesn't change anything in California because you're protected under California law. Now, I mean, you know, it depends. That's the thing is states rights. Is states can, you know, states can either decide to go with federal law or they can just be themselves. And California is its own bubble. Now, but Butte County wants to be its own bubble, but it can't. Okay? Because in this country, really the entity with the most power is the state. And California is very liberal, and it's not going to change anytime soon.

00:38:26

EC: So speaking of politics, we talked about this a little bit earlier, but with the current political climate in the US, do you feel like taking activist/advocate role is becoming more important? And more specifically, what is your perspective on the upcoming election?

00:38:

SF: You can't see my face, right. Oh, my God, yes, it's, it's so important. I mean, it's always important. It's always important because we have to advocate for each other, and that's something I heard on the radio the other day, okay? So in relation to the second half of your question, is that during World War Two, when there were people that were not accepting of people that were different from them in Germany, they went after those people, and they treated them very badly to be you know, to understate that. But I heard someone on the radio the other day saying something and echoed a poem from the 1940s by Reverend Martin Niemöller. And that is, basically, if you don't stand up for other people, the people that want to make life miserable for people that are different from them will eventually come for you. And so she was echoing that, maybe not even knowing the poem. She was like, we have to stand up for people because, honestly and again, I'm only speaking for myself from what I can see here is that if the Republicans are elected, they will make life miserable for anyone who, they will make life miserable for people that are immigrants, whether they're here legally or not. What that means is that if you have skin color that is darker, a lot of people will automatically assume that you are an immigrant, whether your family's been born in this country for 300 years or not, and you're like eighth generation, whatever, they will just make assumptions about you and

make your life miserable. And if we don't speak up for those people, and if we don't speak up for the trans people and we don't speak up for all the LGBTQ people and we don't speak up for all the people that are targeted. Eventually they come for you. What she was saying was, is she was saying "They're coming for the immigrants. They're coming for the LGBTQ people. Eventually, they're going to come for all women." The announcer said, "They already are." She was like, we have to speak up for these people even if we don't have anything in common with them because otherwise, otherwise we're screwed. They will just come for anyone who does not fit their philosophy. And the Republican Party candidate has openly said that's exactly what he's going to do. Some people are laughing it off and saying, Yeah, yeah, right, right. No, he has said that's exactly what he's going to do. When he's elected, and he's a very literal person, and he means it.

EC: I mean, there's the whole like Project 2025?

SF: Yes. It's frightening. Okay. It's frightening.

EC: I mean, if anyone's read Handmaids Tale, you know.

00:42:06

SF: Yeah. Well, that's exactly what happened. Okay. When I was born, I'm adopted, when I was born in 1963, abortion was not legal. That's the only reason I'm here today. Because my mother had four kids and got pregnant out of wedlock. And if she had had a choice, she would not have kept me. But it makes me mad that she didn't have a choice. Okay, great. I'm here. Whatever. The world would have still gone on without me in it. You know, it's like. Maybe I would have been born someone else. You know? Who knows? I don't know all that the esoteric of that, but she did not have a choice. And so I was abandoned at birth. Okay? And they talk about, Oh, the lives of the babies. Well, you know, when I was born, they had orphanages. They don't have them now. So, where are they all going to go?

EC: Exactly.

00:43:10

SF: So yeah, the Handmaid's Tale is particularly frightening to me.

00:43:14

EC: There was a really good show adaptation of it that I watched. It was excellent.

SF: It was good, it was so good.

OB: I feel like I'm missing out, I haven't seen it.

SF: You haven't watched it?

00:43:23

OB: I haven't watched it. I read the books a little too young to understand it.

00:43:27

SF: Ugh, yeah. Because that book I read the book like 40 years ago, and I was like, Oh, my God [laughs]. It's on Hulu. There you go. It's so good. Oh, my God.

00:43:39

EC: And so kind of left this part out, but do you feel at all optimistic about, you know, the future like the very inevitable or imminent future?

00:43:52

SF: Always. Okay. Absolutely. I'm always optimistic. Now, I'm not saying I don't get tired. And I'm not saying we all don't get tired. I think and they've been talking a lot about this lately, like everybody conservative and liberal, is tired. This is like the one of the longest presidential campaign in history. They've been campaigning for two years, and everyone's tired.

00:44:17

OB: You can only have so many landmark elections.

00:44:23

SF: And it's stressful and it's tiring, but it will get better. Mm hmm. It will get better, and I'm always hopeful. You have to be hopeful. Look, there was— you know, it used to be against the law to be gay. It's not now. I grew up not being able to get married. I'm married. I'm married now. I don't have a ring because we didn't buy one yet but I'm married now. I'm still getting used to it. I've only been married a month. Even though I've been with my partner for 14 year— thank you— because we were like, Oh, it's real. You know. And we can get married. There was the AIDS crisis and everybody died. I lived through that. That was probably the lowest of the low in my entire life.

00:45:06

EC: I read something about someone who lived through that time. Mentioned he went to a funeral almost every week.

00:45:13

SF: Yes, we did. So I lived through it too. I was your age during the AIDS epidemic. Okay, so it was really nasty, and I lived through it. And so I look at that and I look at LGBTQ history, and it is not a straight line. History isn't a straight line. Your rights aren't a straight line, and you always have to fight for them. But you know what? I'm very optimistic. Okay? Oh, my gosh. I honestly think that we're going to have for the community a positive election, and I think that people are not really, I mean, we've seen all this hate hate in the last few years. I don't think people are actually that hateful. You know, I think they've been allowed to be hateful and they haven't been corrected on their behavior. But I don't think people are that hateful. And I think when they have a role model that's hateful, go away, that things are going to change.

EC: That's a good point.

00:46:20

OB: I mean, that adds to the question of true visibility for all people. Even if it's not necessarily the things you want to see visible, it's still visible beliefs, and I think it's probably important to have a visible figure of what people don't like.

00:46:26

SF: Is it? I'm so tired. I'm so tired of it, you know.

OB: But then I mean, you have community unity?

00:47:03

SF: Great. I was on a train in Germany about 30 years ago, and the only other person in the car was a German- an older German woman who had been an English teacher and she was so excited to speak English. And we talked for quite some time and I got to the point where I felt really comfortable with her and I said, what was it like to be on your side during World War II? And she's just an ordinary German citizen. She said, you know, times were really tough. We didn't have enough to eat, but she said it was also one of the best times because they had to be a community. They had to work together. They had to tighten up. They had this solidarity because without it they were going to starve to death. And so she remembers and she told me about all the horrible things that happened to her as just, you know, not starving to death. Her husband was in a prison camp, not a German one, a Russian one because he was a soldier. But she talked about how they all worked together to survive. And so she was able to take something positive away from that. So yeah, you know, there are positive things to when things are bad and you have to work together.

00:48:10

EC: All right. Well, what is the message that you want to give to the generations to come? Like, is there anything off the top of your head you want to cover that we didn't ask you about, or is it just like something final that you want to say?

00:48:24

SF: Well, I think we covered everything. I think the thing I want to say is don't ever stop hoping and don't ever stop believing because things are it's just not things are not linear. Things are not linear and change happens. Change is inevitable, right? So if things are really bad, just remember they're not going to stay that way. But they will if you don't get out and do something about it. Okay? So you want change, you have to make it happen. So change happens. Things are not linear, but you can not just sit and wait for the change to happen. You have to do it yourself, right?

00:49:10

EC: Oh, I have the Penis Registry poster for you. Finally found it [pulls up photo of Penis Registry promotional poster].

00:49:20

SF: Oh my god. Oh, it was a Take Back the Night- part of the Take Back the Night.

00:49:28

EC: Yeah. But there were multiple posters.

00:49:30

SF: That is the coolest thing.

EC: Yeah, I think we should bring that one back.

00:49:33

SF: I think so, too. And then, of course, people can complain about it. But you know what? That makes it even more fun.

00:49:38

OB: Conversation about it is the fun part.

SF: Yeah, right?

00:49:46

EC: Alright, do we have any more questions we didn't go over?

OB: I don't think so. Do you have any questions for us?

SF: No.

EC: All right.

SF: This has been fun.

OB: Yes. Thank you so much!