

Read Message **Back to: Inbox From:** Rodasch@aol.com
Date: 2001/12/03 Mon PM 05:31:51 EST
To: Andrew_Frushman@brown.edu
Subject: Re: Interview Round 2???

andrew - here are my comments & corrections - bob schwartz

1966 (**i'd say more like 1968**) was the year that the drug of choice (**at brown**) changed from beer to pot. I was in 10th grade (**not true - 1966 was the year i graduated from high school and started brown, not the year i was in 10th grade - what i think i said was that when i was in 10th & 11th grade, the vietnam war began to heat up, and i was not yet politically aware of things to the point where i had yet begun to oppose america's involvement in that war**) and it was really before the Vietnam war had begun to heat up. . . I was 17 and didn't know any better. The civil rights movement was something that we all heard about, but I can't say that I fully understood it. I was growing up in the North which basically meant that you heard the term Negroes, (not blacks or African Americans) and not some other term that was used in the South, but that I'd rather not say. This was really a time that you were either in favor of lynchings or in favor of civil rights. (**the point i was trying to make here was that while i would not say i "got it" on the Vietnam issue, i DID feel that i was aware of the relevant civil rights and racial politics issues in America**)

That first gay liberation meeting happened only one year after Stonewall. (**in fact, NOT even one full year after stonewall - instead, that first gay meeting at brown happened DURING the year following stonewall, perhaps as early as the FALL semester of the 1969-1970 school year, and perhaps (as you said above) during the SPRING semester - i'm not sure i remember which**)

I very clearly remember the black student walk out, the feeling of many (**but certainly not all, and certainly not those who were progressive on racial issues**) on campus was "those uppity Negroes", I think that they made up about 4% of the students and they wanted something like 12%. They just marched out and people thought, "How could they be turning their backs on this great opportunity that we have provided for them." We (members of the Brown community?) really didn't realize what it was all about. (**not true - depends on who "we" were - some of us did realize what it was all about, and some did not - i feel as if the more progressive**

folks at brown DID get it - i think the administration was probably embarrassed, at least at some level, at least in terms of relations with alumni/ae, but i think most of the student body did understand the issues and did support the black student walkout)

I have to give you a sense of what Brown was like in the late 60s when I was there because it was very different from what you see there now. In my freshman year there were 600 males and 200 females, there was no medical school. Instead there was a 6 year medical prep program that eventually evolved into the med school.

Now in 2000 there were about 16,000 applicants to Brown and 13,000 of them are eminently qualified. **(remember, these are NOT numbers that i suggest are today's real numbers; these are only numbers i invented for the purpose of the illustration, out of my head)** Admissions is just a different process. When I was there, there were very few applicants from the inner city. (affirmative action in CA?) The admissions process now is more about designing a freshman class.

There was a feeling on campus that the blacks were uppity, wearing their hair funny, etc. **(NO NO NO - god, no - this is not what i said, and it is not what i meant - i am describing here ONLY the feelings of the relatively few who did NOT support the walkout - this was NOT the general feeling of the campus)**

I had grown up in New York City and thought that all gays were like Truman Capote or Tennessee Williams. Intellectual, etc. **(and effeminate, fruity, high-voiced)** My mom was always very liberal about people like that until she found out that "her son was one of those people."

There was a recent New York Times article (on the front of the Magazine Section) that talked about couples. It showed a few different examples of "couples" and the cover was this "transy" couple. On the inside one of the other "couples" it showed was some little 6 year old boy giving a girl a flower. 8 year olds just haven't begun to even think about that. Even though we have made some progress in terms of the content, there is still a strong message of heterosexualization that gets shoved down the throats of young kids.

When I was 8 years old I had crushes on male models or Leave it to Beaver's brother or Lassie's Boy. . . Then when

I was starting to get older and my dick was not getting hard over what it "should" be. . . Of course there's the kind of thing when you're at camp and you sneak off and suck somebody's dick. I think that I really started to figure "it" (my sexual orientation/identity?) out though because in school when they had those things where you vote for people in the class, I could always pick who would win the cutest boy, but not the cutest girl. . . just couldn't quite figure that out.

Somewhere along the line, I knew I was a homosexual. I mean I wasn't about to say out loud that I was gay. . . but I was aware that there was an identity issue. (What it is not sure?) But I have got to get back to what I started out by talking about because it was seeing the black men and women grapple with this. Things like black men wearing a mustache, kinky hair, just embracing their "blackness". . . they were doing a lot of things that if a white guy tried, he just wouldn't get away with it. And this was important to me and my development, as a white spectator seeing identity politics for the first time.

The Gay Liberation meeting though [in 1970] **(might have been 1969)** I missed it . . . (I was probably delivering m. . .?) **(this is not really relevant to Stonewall - i merely mentioned that during the summer of 1969, i had a summer job in new york city as a letter carrier with the postal service)** Stonewall was basically unknown/unheard of on campus.

Somehow I got the sports gene not the one for color coordination. I was way into the Jets, Mets, Knicks. Although I did make it to Woodstock. As far as a gay role model, I didn't need Tennessee Williams, I needed Greg Louganis, I needed Martina Navratilova.

I knew but I can't really remember why/how I knew about the group. I knew that there were people standing up saying that they were homosexuals and they weren't going to take any shit. I didn't go. . . As I remember most of the people who did go presented themselves as sympathetic allies, like the whites supported the blacks the straights supported the gays, like the men supported the feminists. A whole bunch of couples showed up. . . **(like, even if someone were really gay, he or she would attend that first meeting with a companion of the opposite sex - what we would call a "beard" in the context of gay male culture)**

There were some people who I was friends with on sort of a

tertiary level **(not then, but now - the names i give are names of people with whom i was not close then, but of whom i know now)** who might have been there Warren Podas **(Potas)** and Fritz Lieber are gay, also Larry Jurist **(Jurrist)** '70. But Who the Hell was out??? I don't know. The ones who were noticeable.

. . if you were out it was seen as a "weakness". Kate Borenstein **(Bornstein)** (Albert?) wrote a book called Gender Outlaw with some very radical thoughts. She talks about how detrimental it is and what an obstacle it is to the trans movement that one of the criteria of success is whether you have achieved the ability to pass and something similar was true back then (for Gays and Lesbians?).

I thought it was an impossible situation, I mean I was on the Hockey Team (as the manager) and had entr   (entree ?) to a locker room. My friends have been great and many of my hockey friends have been great and some of the most supportive (of my Brown Alumni friends?). It took me a long time to realize that I was the only one who ever slammed a door in my face, but having said that. . .

I never made it to the Gay Liberation meeting. Once a year or so, I'd stand in front of a mirror and say, "I am a homosexual," and I would run from it. There was a New York Times article I think it was March 8th of 1971 where Merle Miller (an author) was on the cover of the Sunday Magazine section. The gist of the article was something like "I am a homosexual" and somehow I knew that it was about me. . .

And yet, I had a girlfriend and we were having sex, how did this disconnect exist? By my 22nd birthday I knew my story, but I wouldn't admit it to myself.

Barbara [my girlfriend] and I left for Europe after graduation, and we came back and were living in a commune. (She then moved to Texas?) **(not true - i was the one who spent the summer living in texas - barbara moved elsewhere)** In the summer of '73 I came out and told Barbara, who said, (well, now a lot of things make sense?) and she told me to read 6 books.

So I went to the public library of Mamaroneck (my home town) and it was amazing. They had all six. Things like Dennis Altman - Society and the Healthy Homosexual, Mark Hoffman, **(Martin Hoffman, if i remember correctly)**

Karla Jay, Alan **(Allen?)** Young. I remember the Dennis Altman book was a slim orange paperback. **(not true - it was the Hoffman book that was the slim orange paperback)** That  ™s the great thing about this little public library was that right there in my home town these books had been waiting. I got my hands on all the

available books, and there were very few gay-positive books in print. . . I mean, we're talking about the early 1970s.

In New York City there was a gay Jewish organization called (Simchas Torah?) **(Congregation Beth Simchat Torah - a gay synagogue)** and I got somewhat involved in that. But I did not step right into gay pride, not the "I'm here, I'm queer". I still saw/conceptualized being gay as a limiting, debilitating condition. The gay pride literature started to get out the message of not being diseased; it was the literature that said we are members of a repressed **(OPpressed, not REpressed - we were members of an oppressed minority)** minority. That I could understand **(THAT, I could understand!)** I already had the context of the Black kids at Brown. I realized that I had the gay version of kinky hair, big lips, dark skin, and all of the things associated with blackness. Things that I had been taught to be ashamed of actually were a badge of pride. It also made sense in context of my Jewishness. So I finally came out to myself in 1973.

In '73 I wrote letters to the editor and started wearing gay pride buttons and was out to all of my friends. I came out to my parents in '74. By '77 I was at Law School, out of the closet and all over the place.

What made it possible for me was gaining a radical consciousness, books in the library and Gay Pride Literature. In 1978 I had a lover. In 1979 I was at the march in Washington, DC. I wrote a letter to the Brown Alumni Monthly some time in the mid/late 70s that engendered some response. A few years later I wrote again in response to some particular issue and that got lots of response, which developed into a mailing list. One weekend, I think that it was Homecoming weekend we had a meeting of gay alumni; there might have been 15 people there, but it felt like a lot, we had a tent! Some of the people who might have been there were Dean Michelle **(Dee Michel)** '74, Bill Barnard **(Barnert)**, Bud Moulton '32 or '33.

Once I had done that, I was out there, I was on the record. With Neil **(Neal? - not sure of spelling)** Miller '68, who (was?) editor of the Gay community news in Boston, we poked the administration and have wanted Brown to be a safe place. I wanted it to be a more supportive and accepting environment than when I was there as an undergrad. I was in the top 1% of my high school and a complete washout at Brown; a 2. GPA. I snuck into law school

barely due to a great recommendation and was back in the top 3% of my class. My college years were largely lost to internalized homophobia. At Brown I was not capable of engaging, there was no form of mentoring or potential support for my sexual orientation. By two years out of college and two years into law school I was back on track.

The letters that I wrote were somewhere in between 1975 and 1982 (I recently lost them in a fire that I had here at my house, but I feel like it was **around that** time). In particular the first might have been between 1976 and 1979 and the second perhaps 1980? The person who really made sure that the letters got placed was my friend Janet (Jan?) Phillips who was my classmate and the editor (**janet was not the editor of BAM, but she was on the editorial staff - not sure what her job title was**); She unfortunately died just before our 30th reunion. It was the second letter that really "got gay".

Another book to check out is Dan Wough (**Woog**) - Gay's in Sports.

[At Brown] The good thing was that people were coming out. There was an increased consciousness at the institution. Barbara Tannenbaum is another person to talk to about this, she was at Brown since at least 1970 or 71 and was always a great liberal. . . I had my last class with her in the English department.

Gary Speer (at Wesleyan) who was "more of a whore than I am" was so full of life. He was out and didn't care. He was a member of the first post stonewall generation. The new generation wakes up out of the closet with no shame. Speer was roommates at Wesleyan of my law partner Paul Binkley. They were part of the 1st post-stonewall generation.

But at Brown, before about 1966 you have jocks drinking beers. '66 is the last of the old classes. This is the beginning of 4-5 years of rapid change. Once the war gets going, even the jocks grow their hair, by the class of '68, these are people who experienced the Beatles while in high school. By '69-'70 everyone was smoking pot. Of course there were a few hard-hat-wearing, confederate-flag-waving shitheads.

In the '70s Brown went through some financial tough times. Heffner was terrible, put the place down the toilet. Hornig was a sort of caretaker. Swearer turns things around. In the

'70s they were diving into the endowment. Gregorian was incredible. If you don't have a firm financial foundation, to hell with need blind if you can't turn the lights on.

But back to the Black Student walk out. When I was young, the term quota meant the maximum number of Jews that were allowed in. Then by Reagan in the 80's the word quota means the minimum number of under-qualified blacks that you had to let in. **(HELP!! - this is not MY feeling - these are words that i am putting in the mouths of others, that i am putting in the mouths of the opponents of things i believe in)** When Barbara's father was at Andover and was applying to Yale, the Headmaster wrote him a letter of recommendation that had the beginning of the sentence, "Even though he is a Jew. . . " (Charlie Strauss, Jay Berwanger. . . was a quota Jew?)

(Now these S.O.B.'s rant about quota's. But if anyone other than Thurgood Marshall had retired, it would not have been Clarence Thomas. The process of rising up to the Supreme Court is much more complicated. Because no one else retired during George Bush's term, Ken Starr was left stranded. Clinton (the upstart) gets elected and there is no way that he is going to put in Ken Starr and so he feels like he had his Supreme Court seat stolen, which is a source of bitterness.?)

I remember seeing Cream play there last US concert in Providence the night that Nixon was elected. I was smoking dope, but the band was too stoned to stand. After about 35 minutes they dragged off the stage.

Brown started some progressive change but was really shamed into it or blackmailed when the Black students walked out.

Ira Magaziner was the head of the Student Government and he was one of the great peace makers going back and forth between the black students and the administration. If you are looking for someone to talk to about inclusion and inclusiveness, you should talk to him.

John Salinger would also be a great source. He comes from an old Brown family and was a conscientious objector, was in the Peace Corps in Morocco.

I don't even know the names of who would have had the courage to stand up at a Gay Liberation Meeting. Jude

(Bill?) Ciccolella '69-70? Was he there? (He was a football/actor professional? Try to reach him. Hollywood agent/actors equity? Prepared to acknowledge). . . could tell you what the fuck went on. . .

I stayed away from that meeting. . .

not a bad job, but not complete and not totally accurate - much of the feeling is missing, and much is incomplete - should we do this again, from the beginning, this time with a tape recorder? - i feel that some of what i said, which was INTENDED to be my version of the words or feelings of people with whose positions i disagreed (that is, i was putting words in their mouths which described MY opinion about what THEIR opinions were or might have been), shows up in the above "transcript" as if it were MY words, thoughts, feelings, or beliefs, when in fact they are not - that is something i'm concerned about - i don't want people thinking some of those ugly thoughts or positions are the way i feel, or felt - we can talk some more about this stuff later

The following is a follow up interview with Robert (Bob) Schwartz who graduated from Brown University in the class of 1970. Although he recalls hearing about the first Gay Liberation meeting occurring [at some point in the spring semester of 1970] he describes himself as being "deeply closeted at the time" and did not attend. He later became more active and wrote a number of letters to the Brown Alumni Monthly publication and helped organize some of the first GALA (Gay and Lesbian Alumni) gatherings. This interview was conducted on December 6, 2001 from 2:30pm-4pm.

These are not direct quotes, but summarize/give highlights of the Interview. I recommend listening to the interview in its entirety, so as to avoid taking anything out of context. Times are noted in the number of minutes along the left hand margin. Times after the flip to the other side of the tape are from that point on.

BS: Venting about overnight mail delivery.

AF: Did you get to look over some of the materials that I collected and sent down?

BS: Another article/letter that wasn't originally included?

3m

AF: When did the original organizing of Gay Liberation org occur?

BS: First meeting 69-70 academic year. Member of class of '70, but left Brown in '71.

6m

AF: Projo article.

BS: Anne Fausto on the Faculty now, response to the article. Have any of the letter writers come out?

8m

AF: First letter 1976, not much response? GALA ad?

BS: Response to the GALA ad. No one reads the letters?

10m

AF: How did you get to the point to be able to write that letter in 1976?

BS: Personal development in relation to the Brown community. Other people's angry letters to the BAM. Brown a formative experience, where I became a grown up. My academics stunk. I made great friends. Came back to reunions. When I came out, and became activist, to family, and people I knew at Brown. If Brown acted in a way, that was unwise, I would write a letter. Inclusion of the what prompted his first letter. Related to black students. "We are not here to be anyone's experience." How welcome were whites in courses based on "black" issues. (14m) A course on Black Autobiography and have to write it

as well. Did it mean No whites in this class. Infuriating and the requirement was lifted. Irony of who was teaching the course. In 1970-71 year. Someone expressed that the course might feel safer for Blacks without self-censorship due to presence of whites. "We are not here to be anyone's experience." Is something that stuck with me. By 1976, gay issues were openly being discussed. Harvey Milk, equal employment issues. In the article they used the words "out of the closet. Homosexual issues were a part of the discourse on the campus, but were not being reflected in the BAM. He felt that the BAM should be confronted about the way that they had handled this. I wanted to put that issue right out there. I was pleasantly surprised that it was published (friend Jan Phillips)

AF: Article about the Renn Mentoring Program? Your experience, would it have been beneficial?

BS: These type of programs can be beneficial. Part of what is so important is students self-identifying. It no longer is the issue that people feel like "they are the only ones" Friends were accepting and supportive to me when I came out. I learned through books worth reading. Going to places where there were gay people who were good role models and mentors. I got lucky to make it through my teens. If I were coming up now, things might have been very different. Many students are going to self-identify during their college experience.

20m

AF: The role of the University?

BS: Need an open and publicized non-discrimination policy. I remember when the issue came up. Why must Brown wait till after Harvard and Princeton do it first. Two things I need to amend in the original interview. "Heffner brought the place into the toilet" were not my words! A lot of the tone (and content), was not really mine. I was trying to give examples of what other people might say. Issues of what was said and how it was intended. Could be taken out of context

30m

AF: The intended purpose of these materials is to provide a jumping off point for more research into how Brown deals with Gay people.

BS: I'm not worried about it. The other article might have been August '80 - March '83 while I was living in Norfolk.

AF: Brief note that Brown is doing a good job covering gay issues. Do you still think that Brown is doing a good job? BAM 100 people.

BS: It didn't bother me. I don't want a Brown alumnus to be in their just for being gay. I can't think of someone who is a Brown alumnus who is an active enough leader in the Brown community. John Lee Beatty is there for being one of the top set designers on Broadway not for being a homosexual. Fritz Pollard is an example; it would be relevant to mention that he the first black all American. Because part of that is historical. If Greg Louganis were a Brown alumnus, it had better be mentioned that he is gay.

35m

AF: Do you generally feel that the Brown community is inclusive?

BS: This month's Brown Alumni Monthly. Class notes. 10 years ago, guys in the 70s, 80s, 90s. Single guys dying single in San Fransisco, sometimes it didn't say. I like to read the class notes. Two guys adopting a child.

AF: Dan Savage. The Kid: What happened after my boyfriend and I decided to get pregnant.

BS: Class of '86. Ted Lefebvre he and his partner welcomed the arrival of their twin boys. Mentioned in passing, two guys doing the adoption. It is really cool to see it

40m

AF: Classes from before the 60s.

BS: . Class of '73 Joel Goldstein, will be celebrating years with his partner. I wanted to a be a little more "in-your-facey". I mentioned a year or two ago who I hung out with at the Gay Softball World Series. I just wanted it to be part of the everyday. Two people from different Tribes getting along and then some day you'll have a gay kid and it'll be ok because you knew someone. Another class note.

43m

AF: Incorporating it into the landscape

BS: More gay friendly on campus, than you could tell from the BAM. To be a leader by living openly, not by carrying a banner. By having Gay alumni function be part of homecoming and have that sort of info in the alumni packet. Third world, Afam alumni the same. Let it be there, if you don't want to.

45m

AF: Involvement with GALA?

BS: A few letters. Letter from the early 80s, 15 people wrote him a letter. Organized a reception that took place at Homecoming weekend. Afforded the facility at Pembroke Field House. Used to have concerts there. I saw the Yardbirds in front of the Ratty. I saw Cream later in '78. Yardbirds and the Shangri-La's. James Taylor, Peter Paul and Mary. I felt proud as hell, I was one of the main organizers. I was just about the oldest one, but Bud Moulton '33 might have been there. I don't know if he is still alive. Some of the younger guys got AIDS and died. We wanted to keep it going and have an Alumni group. William Barnard, he was the guy that coordinated it. He was Boston and close to the scene. Also Sand Fransisco, Boston, New York. . .etc. Very soon there after I just became someone on the mailing list. There have been great Gay and Lesbian receptions at each of the recent reunions that I have attended.

50m

AF: Each year?

BS: All alumni gathering. As it happened, 12 members of the class of 1970 showed up, impressive. I've always felt that Gay people underrepresent themselves at reunions.

AF: Any sort of Gay Alumni Bulletin?

BS: Every couple of years. Not through the Alumni/Development department.

(TAPE FLIP)

BS: A lesbian woman who I met at the Soft ball world series and at an Alumni event. Krista Champion was a Basketball coach in Worcester. I think that it is good to have a gay alumni network, but I feel that it is pretty undeveloped at Brown. I go back to Brown for my 5 year reunions, but my world does not revolve around my Brown contacts. When I get together we relate based on what I am doing today. I don't necessarily go to Brown club of Georgia. If it was the Brown Gay club I'm not sure that I would attend that either. I want to hang out with a wide variety of people. I want there to continue to be an gay alumni organization so that it can put some pressure on the university. I do not want to be a separatist. He has been part of organizing a new synagogue in Atlanta. "I never wanted to be in a gay synagogue, I wanted to be Gay in a synagogue." I feel similar about Brown. It is meaningful for me to go to a Brown gay alumni event at commencement.

8m

AF: Keeping the University on its toes? What kinds of things could gay alumni pressure the University?

BS: Gay Studies, people difficult to get tenure? Tone down/alter the focus of your research. Brown U. travelers, what if the leader of the tour, should the leader bring his partner? What about an openly gay person who is an athlete; segregated in the locker room. Athletes who engage in homophobic bashing/harassment, compare to racial/sexual assault. (14m) Someone wants to donate money to generate \$ to generate center on gender studies. All you want is for lesbian and gay people at Brown (let there sexual orientation be irrelevant to the work that they are doing).

15m

AF: Cataloguing in the Archives. No system/listing for Gay issues.

BS: The Hay Library.

AF: History in the Brown Archives. What should be added or saved?

BS: Unbelievably difficult to find original sources. No one thought that it would be something worth cataloguing for future academic research. It only appeared a few places in indexes if at all. Abnormal Psych at Brown; Homosexuality treated as aberrant, illness, disciplinary issue etc. Wouldn't show up in print. Couldn't really picture how to collect event that issue.

20m

BS: The Glory of their Times - Lawrence Ritter. On the death of Ty Cobb. He traveled around the country gathering stories of baseball because no one thought that they were important. Baseball cards. Where is the Homosexual experience of pre-1960s.

23m

AF: Other names/people?

BS: Littler. The big Brown scandal the year before I showed up were Heterosexual sex scandals. Dr. Roswell Johnson was a Physician who was head of Health Services (died recently). He was willing to prescribe birth control pills to unmarried female undergraduates. A revolutionary act, put Brown in the New York Times.

26m

BS: Parietals were a big issue. Could have people over of the opposite sex, but had to have a book in the door. People would put a matchbook in it and a tie on the doorknob. Pembroke Girls had to sign out. Debate over if one who didn't sign out. Big campus debate in '66,'67,'68. The cutting edge issue was the right of heterosexual people to engage in heterosexual activity. When the homos came in demanding the right not to be despised. When I finally stopped running from being gay, one of the things that enabled me to get through was that I had already had been exposed to all of that in the rhetoric of black issues. Not identity politics; identity issues. The issues about claiming your identity were all over there in the context of racial and feminist issue, once I was willing to admit that I was gay, there was already a framework within which I could plug in what was going on with me. Also being a jew, I knew how to be a minority in the world.

35m

BS: Being a jew to me, resonates on a lot of issues. My family. Grew up in New York.

AF: Thank you.

BS: Thanks for mailing this. I had forgotten about all this stuff; the GALA ad. We had a GALA ad because of everything that happened in the early 80's. 8/80-3/83. Those were some days. One of the follow up letters from Warren Potas. Lever Standig. Is also the person who wrote me the recommendation that got me into Law School. He was a faculty advisor to the Hockey team.