Transcript of Interview with Dr. Janis Hutchinson on March 30, 2014

0:00

McKenzie Johnson (MJ): So today we are interviewing Dr. Janis Hutchinson. She is a professor at the University of Houston and an active member in the Houston LGBT community. Do you mind introducing yourself a little bit?

Dr. Janis Hutchinson (JH): Ah, yes, well I’ve been in Houston since 84. I came from Kansas, Jayhawkers, University of Kansas, and I’m a medical anthropologist. I look at health and culture of communities, particularly minority communities such as the african american community. I’ve been working, functioning, interacting, in the LGBT community since the early 90s here in Houston. And I’ve been a member of various organizations in Houston, including sisters, from a number of years ago. So, I’ve always been involved somehow in terms of community service, and now we have an organization called U3: Ugima unleashed and unbound, and this is a service community in the LGBT and African American community. We volunteer in different organizations at women’s centers, youth centers, nursing homes. In April we will be collecting shoes for prisoners, at ah, retiring citizens from prison at Saint Johns downtown. So we do various activities there. And my research in the LGBT community is more recent, although I’ve been thinking about it and planning it for about a decade.

MJ: Could you tell us a little bit more about your most recent research?

JH: Ah the most resent, I’m looking at, I’m collecting oral histories in the African American community among African American lesbians. So what I’m doing is I’m looking at older black lesbians who have to be over the age of 45. Because looking at the literature, uhhhh, there is literature out there on lesbians, mainly white and mainly younger women. So when I looked at the literature, and its also mainly California and New York where the research has been done. So this is older black lesbians in the south, which I think will fill a niche there, in terms of our understanding. So thats been an interesting process in terms of recruiting people, interviewing people for this project. And getting a diverse population, that has been a challenge actually.

Seth Lauer (SL): Speaking of getting a diverse population, what sort of ranges do you observe in the women, in terms of sexuality, how they identify gender identity, their race, and anything else thats important. How like, more how they personally identity?
JH: Um well actually its varied because one of my questions is what's more important to you... um how would you identity. And the question deals with you could be a black gay man, a straight man, a white lesbian, a black straight woman, which one of these categories are most important to you? And sometimes women pick black straight man, which was surprising. Often times they pick black lesbian or sometimes they pick just a woman. So its diverse in terms of how people identity. Some people identity more in terms of black lesbian, what does it mean to be a minority within the LGBT community. Others identify more with maleness. And it could be gay male or straight male, in terms of how they function, who they interact with, how they see themselves. So that was kind of interesting, I'm gonna try to delve into that some more.

Clayton Hiebert (CH): How did you recruit people for your study?

JH: How did I recruit people for my study... It has been a snowball effect. So meeting people and then having them refer other people, but the problem there is that you get into cliques. So you get into this group, and you get into this group, but and you know, I'm a professional person, a lot of my friends are professional people. But I don't want... We hope to get a CD and maybe some books out of this. I don't want it to be about just black professional women, I want it to be more diverse than that. And that has been a challenge getting people to participate. And I meet people. So you go to places and you set up an interview and people are reticent to some degree because they aren't sure how its going to be use or maybe how they're gonna look in it. And some people have wanted to edit their recording of it. Which I'm alright with as long as the essence of what they are talking about it still there. Because we want it to be real we want it to be authentic. And we want it to say what you want it to say, what you mean within yourself. And so recruitment is really a challenge because when people in different occupations, maybe people who have been married, been in a heterosexual relationship, and others who have not, getting that kind of diversity. People with children, without children that type of diversity. And a thing that has come out of it also is relationship with mother, parents, how close you are to your family, how did they feel about it when you came out, are you still in contact and interacting, and part of your family? And in general that's true. You know times have changed. And being gay isn't the um... Well when I was younger you just didn't want to say it. You didn't want to be marginalized, it just wasn't acceptable. And when I looked around at the people who were lesbians, I was like that's not me anyway. So you know that was then. This is now. Being gay isn't that issue that it was. I go to, I guess you call them "straight clubs". You know this whole straight/gay is blurring now, and that's a good thing. So we just go and be wherever we want to be and enjoy life. And I meet people everywhere and I'm able to recruit people like that. But you do have to go out to places. You know I'm not a late person, I'm not the cluber that I used to be. But recruitment is important so I go out there in diverse environments and I do that. You can do it, it takes some work, but you can do it.

7:45
SL: What are you eventually hoping to accomplish with your study? What differences are you trying to make, what are you trying to show, I guess in essence?
JH: I'm trying to show an understanding of black lesbians in the 21st century. I'm hoping a hundred years from now there will be a video like this and people are see what it was like to be a black lesbian in 2000, you know 2014. What was going on then? What was going on in their lives? How did their lives change? Because this is a transitional period. You know being gay isn't a big thing and I never thought I would see gay marriage and I'm alive. I'm really happy to be alive now and see the changes that are taking place. So I'm hoping that this will contribute that history to it. So I'm gonna document the women's lives individually so that you can see what their individual lives are like. And also we are going to do something more conceptual, academic, analytical, looking at how they feel about things their interacting with/in the environment, and trying to understand what's going on within this population. So I'm hoping that we'll know more about us. That's what I hope.

9:15
Nicholas Hanson-Holtry (NHH): With that goal in mind have you noticed any differences in the literature that you said has primarily come out of CA and NY, have you found anything new about the population that you are studying here?

JH: Well we still... I'm still interviewing and I've only interviewed about 20 women so far. Sense it is an older population... I haven't really gotten to the analytical part of it yet. And in thinking about them, what I'm seeing that goes along with some of the literature, in terms of like chores, and how people think about dress and appearance how that sort of is a symbol of your role. So we talk about role playing and these kind of stereotypes. And people conform to that kind of thing, that still something that's general out there. So I haven't seen the, other than, cause you know its an older population so that's a difference. And since its an older population one of my questions is who's gonna take care of you as you get older? And what I'm finding is that people don't know. And I think the good thing about this study is that its helping people to think about that. You know what are you gonna do as you get older and we don't know about any LGBT facilities for us, people don't know about that. People don't have the children who's gonna take care of them, they don't have that and it does cause them to pause and think about well what's gonna happen to me when I retire? And also financially how am I going to retire? So people haven't really put the cogs in there. To kind of figure that out, but you know that's the interesting thing about doing research too, and I found this out when I was doing my condom use study. The process of interviewing people makes them think about what they are doing. And so that becomes... The interview can become like an intervention. Its a kind of intervention cause people are thinking now. So I think that's what's happening here too.

NHH: How many women do you hope to interview and how long do you envision this project lasting?
JH: I hope to interview 50 women and I hope to be finished with the interviews by the end of the summer. That's my goal.

SL: Ok so you chose to interview black women who love other women, so what do you see is the intersectionality between race and sexual orientation? Or do you think there is a lot of overlap in the situations... or...

JH: In terms of... I mean race is a constant. And within that constant they love women. And so are you talking about some kind of difference by race? I don't know that I could address that. Or that there would necessarily be a difference that I should assume. I don't know that.

12:45
MJ: Do you think that there is an extra sort of societal stigma placed upon.. so they're African American but also identify as lesbian or gay or however they identify, do you think that adds another level?

JH: Well you know for women, I would say that it probably doesn't add that extra level. For black women.. well because we can do things like hold hands we can do things that seem acceptable. For a back male to be gay, now that's an issue in the black community. That's more of a no no unacceptable gets put down I would think, much more so than a black lesbian. For some reason being a black lesbian is more acceptable than being a black gay man.

NHH: Is there a reason you chose to study black women who love other women as opposed to African American males who identity as gay?

JH: Because I'm a black lesbian! Although I have been pushing my black gay male friends to do a similar study because I think a similar one needs to be done. But you know I can only do so much and I'm trying to do this right now, but I think that is important and I'm still pushing for that. And we need that in particular in Houston, and in the South, because again that's the gap. Everything is east coast/ west coast what about the south?

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0:00
JH: Well you know family is a big issue. And I don't know about it in other areas... but not only their children, but their grandchildren, and you have extended, like I have my nieces and nephews that are coming this summer. So you blend them in with your LGBT family. I have LGBT family here. My family is in Birmingham and Florida, but I have family here in the gay
community, so when they come I’m gonna include my nieces and nephews in my gay family here. You know there’s not going to be any separation or anything like that. And so that’s a huge thing, because our children, our grandchildren, our godchildren, I have godchildren that are like my children, and the fact that I’m a lesbian is basically irrelevant to them. I mean I’m the matriarch of my family in Birmingham and Florida, and everybody is happy with that. So again times have changed.

NH: Is there anything, without getting too personal, that you personally identify with that drove you to become an anthropologist or to do work like this and give back to the community?

JH: Well I grew up in Birmingham during the civil rights period. So I’ve always wanted to try to understand why people think the way they do. Why are they upset with me because I’m black? You know I didn’t understand that. In my own family, in terms of skin color, we’re the rainbow. So what does it mean then... What is racism? I’ve always been a student of racism and try to understand it, and written about it, and those types of things. So that’s been a major focus there, and I think I kind of lost track of your question.

NH: Is there anything about your past, or how you’ve experienced life, or like you just said your family is really important, that made you want to become an anthropologist, or made you want to do work like you’re currently doing? Why is this fulfilling for you?

JH: And I have to go back to the civil rights, I think its because of the experiences I had with racism and segregation. I experienced the colored only water fountains, I experienced the bombings, I was almost at 16th street baptist church that Sunday it was bombed, I had to usher at my church that’s the only reason I wasn’t there. So I think that social justice is always within me, I’m always fighting for it. And so that part of it I think... My mother bought a set of world book encyclopedias, I read all of them, starting with A: Anthropology and Archaeology. So that did contribute, but again understanding people, and a diversity, and loving travel and that type of thing. And within that.. You know I’ve known since I was a child, probably five or six that I was gay, but then at that time it was like immmm no. And then you grow and develop, things change, and I dealt with me, and now I’ve been the happiest. And you know the thing about that, when I came out to my family, my mother asked me, she said well are you happy? I said yes. And she said well I’m happy for you. And with that everything, well you know, once the mother says its ok, and my family they’re umm, I mean they want to take me to bars and introduce me to women I’m like no, ok? So everybody’s fine, they like the fact I’m a professional. And they come to me with their problems, I’m the one who helps people with things. And to the fact that I’m a lesbian does not over ride that I’m Aunt Janis. Thats the big one Aunt Janis.

4:42
SL: Well speaking of family, well lets no. Where do you want to go next? I don’t know.
MJ: Let's talk about your involvement with the banner project.

JH: The banner project? That's no...

MJ: Oh, well that's what we found online, since that little bit of research isn't right.

JH: What is that?

MJ: It said like involved with the Houston LGBT history and presented at... It said you were on the panel for it on the website.

JH: Nooo... I've been going to ARCH, some of the meetings there with Brian, but that's all.

MJ: I guess could you tell us a little bit more about your involvement with ARCH then?

JH: But that's been so limited, because my main involvement there was really doing this oral history project. And they helped me get started in terms of questions and how to do oral history and that type of thing.

NHH: Are there any other organizations in Houston that you enjoy working with on a more frequent basis?

6:00

JH: Ah well, I'm on the board of the Lesbian Health Initiative. And there I chaired the outreach comity for the African American community. We make sure that women come to the health fairs, you know that women really need. Because people are underinsured, and make sure that people know about resources that are available and LHI is helping to get people signed up for the affordable care. That has been a really fulfilling type of interaction as well, mainly because I get to bring people in and expose them to resources, you know we get so much out there and people don't know about it, that they can access and get health care and get a mammogram. One woman came and she hadn't been able to sign up for the Obamacare, and we had someone there to help get her signed up and she was so happy because she had a preexisting condition. She said that this was the first time in her life that she was going to have health insurance. You should have seen the smile on her face. So you know when you do things like that, and help people, or a woman, it comes back positive, and you get her into care immediately. That's fulfilling too. So
yes the Lesbian Health Initiative and U3, that’s the two, and my involvement with the prison ministry, that has been interesting too. And you know I’m out at church too at Saint Johns, I don’t know if you know about Saint Johns. But in our bi-laws we have a nondiscrimination policy for the LGBT, within our bi-laws of the prison ministry. We’re there to help citizens returing from prison and no one cares what your sexual orientation is.

NHH: It seems like community service is a huge part of your life, have you always known that you wanted to serve the world and make the world a better place, or is this something that has developed over time?

8:30
JH: I think when you’re black in the south, in the 60s, you grow up thinking, as they told me, uplift the race. I grew up thinking that I could do that. My father told me that I could do that, so I don’t know that its developed, but its always been there because I’ve always seen the need for change in the world. I do believe that one person can make a difference in somebody’s life, in something, I think that we all can make a difference. I want to contribute to improving people lives and families in our community. We can do better.

NHH: To what extent do you think being a professor ties in with those goals?

JH: I think its all interrelated. Because my teaching, I have courses on race and racism, I bring in... Anything that applies in my course to human variation, of course I talk about sexual orientation things like that. What I do is in educating people is get them to have a different perspective. I’m not trying to change anyone’s mind. I’m trying to get people to think. And as a student who asked a number of racial oriented questions to me one time, on the last day of class he said, you’ve given me a lot to think about. And so I was like ok, I did my job. So thats what I try to do in the classroom, is to expose people to different ideas, and ways of thinking so they can decide for themselves. Cause a lot of times people have misinformation. Or they’ve been limited because they haven’t been exposed to a variety of experiences and interactions so they accept the stereotypes they’ve been told, and so one thing that I like about UH is that it is a diverse population, a diverse student population, and so students come in and they bring their perspectives which is really great too. And so my service, my teaching, they all go together, and I think they’re all about social justice.

11:04
SL: Ok well you’ve talked a lot about sort of changes that you’ve seen over time, like studying those changes and people and getting their perspectives on things. So I guess first how long have you been in Houston?

JH: Since 84.
SL: Since 84, so what sort of changes have you seen in Houston, both in the LGBT community and how it interacts with Houston’s population, how Houston sees itself as a city in relation to the LGBT community?

JH: I think to answer your question, I’ll use UH as an example, because I’ve seen changes on that campus. In 84 LGBT people were invisible, when I first got there. Now you see people walking around holding hands, there the LGBT resource center, there the friends of the LGBT. They had this big event, with a rainbow, everybody had on their t-shirts, gay, straight, everybody there, professors, students, that’s something different there. And so that’s the change I’ve seen in the last five years, and even more recent now, I see transgenders on campus. I had never seen that before and I had been there for almost 30 years. And it’s been the last couple of years that I’ve noticed that. So there’s more acceptance of people, and also people feel comfortable being themselves. So that’s really nice. People are being really authentic. People are being who they are. They’re walking around saying hey this is who I am, this is it. And no one cares, it’s alright, no one goes to... As a matter of fact their support, and me being black and a lesbian, that adds to the diversity of the university, so they see it as a positive. At one point, well I won’t say that... Cut that. (13:16) The university, at least at UH, is a reflection of the city. And they city has changed, and I can see it in the black community in particular. Where like I said, I go to black clubs now and it might be a third gay, and everyone is having fun and talking, and just having fun. So I’ve noticed that transition as well. So yeah I think we are in a transition in many ways.

14:00
SL: Is there anything that you can point to, any events that triggered that sort of transformation, or do you think its sort of something that’s a long process, but yeah I guess is there any specific points in time or events in Houston that you think that helped guide Houston into being a more accepting place?

JH: I don’t know that I think it’s a specific event, but it’s pushed by young people like you all. I think you’re the reason why. You know because you don’t thin like the older people. You don’t have that baggage, and so what I see from the younger people, it’s like yeah that’s my friend, yeah I’m going out with him. And it’s not that baggage stuff that people used to have. So I think with that new. Its younger people that are really out there, at the malls, I see them every place, in different organizations, I know a group that are more masculine black women that meet at different restaurants and they have discussions and things like that. So the young people are just saying like hey I’m living my life. This is who I am. And when young people do that the old people go well yeah I think I will too.

NHH: So if these are improvements that you’ve seen in Houston, using UH as an example case study in regards to how the LGBT community is now more accepted have you noticed anything so how race is accepted now in regards to the past?
JH: Race is now more accepting too, because again the younger people. I think the younger people push everything, because you're thinking differently. You haven't had the past experiences, so you have more of a blank slate. So the younger people are pushing that. I think you get more push back from some of the older people on that in terms of race. But they're loosing out. And they're gonna loose out in the end and I think they know they are gonna loose out in the end, which is why they are pushing so hard. So change in gonna come. its inevitable. I see it, i just want to be around to see more of it.

16:35
NHH: As a professor you have a tremendous ability to interact with young people at UH, do you have any advice for things that we could do to help with all the change that you see and moving forward?

JH: I think be authentic. Be who you are and be open about who you are. I think we just have to live open authentic lives, and if we do that life will change itself, because, you know, we're being who we are. And we're not the demons, the evil one, you know, all these strange stereotypes that people might have. They see that its not real. And even... When I first moved into my neighborhood, some friends of mine told me this would happen, theres these stereotypes, I guess, that gay people have parties each night, you know I don't know, they think we're party animals, something like that. But I mow my lawn I go to work, my neighbors see that, and so I think that, me living my life is advocacy for the LGBT community, in a sense, you know? By being who I am and letting my neighbors see that and, my neighbors are great people. We get along fine. They come over, I go over, so I think just be who you are. In that sense things are going to work out, because right is right, and we're just people living. And I think the same things in terms of race, thats gonna change too. Because people are just living. People get more exposure now, they're interacting. Once you have the interaction and you're familiar with one another, then its not the other. You don't have that other any more because you know them, you're familiar. And that takes away some of the fear that people have cause most things are about love or fear and when people are say racist, I see that as fear, fear of the unknown, fear of something that they think might happen, that probably has never happened, but the fear is there. So when you interact and become familiar with one another, all those fears break down. And thats going to be for race, thats going to be for sexual orientation, thats gonna be for all of those. We just have to be ourselves, be authentic, so that we can be familiar with one another.

19:38
CH: Do you think its always important to disclose your sexuality up front when you meet someone new, or are there situations where you shouldn't?

JH: I feel like I don't need to say it. Heterosexuals don't say I'm heterosexual. I am who I am, why would they need to know my sexual orientation when we are interacting in some other way?
i don’t know that its that important, you know, to a certain extent being a lesbian is just a small part of who I am, cause I’m all this other stuff that I’m doing constantly. That who I love and thats who I’m going to be openly with, but I don’t feel any need to go around and say it to everyone, you know.

NHH: For the first couple weeks of our class, which is about the study of the LGBT community, our professor didn’t disclose to us that he was gay, and then after he did he asked us whether or not the fact that he was gay teaching about gay people gave his authority to speak about that. You’re a professor, do you think the fact that you’re a self identified lesbian gives you more authority in academia to write papers about this, and do this type of research?

JH: I think it would give you more authority, I think so. I don’t usually disclose that in class, although I think... Everyone on campus knows that I’m gay, so i don’t have to go around and say it and I do more discussions of it, you’d say. And I guess that might come in because I bring in examples, so i guess it might come in like that. But I don’t go around saying that I’m black either, but I talk about it.

NHH: Do you think that theres a difference though? Because someone’s gender or race is very outwardly apparent, where as someone’s sexual orientation is usually very concealed, is there a difference in your mind?

JH: Yeah cause you can hide, in terms of your sexual orientation, so that makes a difference I think. But I think it can be used as an asset. I try to use being black as an asset when I do my research, and the same thing in terms of being a lesbian. So yes I think it can be an asset, in terms of finding out what types of questions to ask, recruitment, delving into things. I bounce ideas off of my friends too, you know when I’m thinking about something, so having that group to do that with, its almost like having a focus group that I can do that with any time. I think its an asset.

NHH: With these oral histories that you have been collecting recently, with these older black women here in Houston, have you noticed any who at one point in their lives were hiding? And how thats affected like a trend...

JH: Oh yeah most people were hiding. I think early on in many peoples live, many of us were hiding. Or down playing it, or not dealing with it, maybe thats a better word than hiding. And then as people get older, get exposed to others who are gay too. People come out when they are in college, when they were in the military, thats another thing too. People in the military in the 70s, thats different. So coming out in the military, things like that, become issues.
NHH: So at this point in your life, you’re certainly not hiding anymore, is it ever nerve racking to think that everyone on campus knows that you’re a lesbian, and that you’re a role model to certain people, or this is metacognition, does that ever get to you?

JH: Uhhh... well.... I don’t see it.... It may be like that, but I don’t carry it around with me like that. I just try to be a good teacher and that's the primary. So anything else would just flow from that, and I see where sometimes now people need a role model, I see that sometimes, and I do try to be that. Because it is needed. But I’m not one to have my picture plastered all over campus, you know this is the lesbian professor, no I don’t think that me.

24:33
NHH: Even if its not publicity, is it still a source of pride for you?

JH: Ah, yeah, it is now, you know? Yes it is now, definitely, you know ah I’m proud of who I am, Im the happiest I’ve ever been at this point in my life, so yeah, I’m proud of being black, I’m proud of being a lesbian, I’m proud of being a woman. It took a long time to get here now. I wasn’t always proud. And I was one of those late bloomers, i didn’t come out till my late thirties. Which is another thing that I’ve been finding, people who came out later, versus earlier, and its better to come out earlier, you know you’re life is better, adjustment, everything is better.

SL: Well, lets switch gears, we noticed that you have, I believe five degrees. You have your original bachelors from University of Alabama, and then a masters in anthropology, then you got a masters of philosophy from the University of Kansas, and then eventually a PHD from Kansas in anthropology.

JH: Masters in Alabama in osteology, and then a masters of public health at UT health science center.

SL: Yeah so of all of those, we’re most curious about the masters of public health because it was so long after you finished your school, so long after you got your PHD. What during that time inspired you to go back to school and get a masters of public health?

JH: What inspired me to go back was you do all this research, you collect data, I had done research for the government for a long time, the CDC, the department of labor, we had the youth opportunity program, consulting for NIH and things like that. And so you do the research, you write the papers, you get the articles, and then what? I got to the point, then what? So I know how to reduce teen pregnancy, I know how to reduce the drop out rate, what do I do then? So I went back to get a masters in public health to learn about intervention. How do we bring about change? How do we implement programs? And thats not an easy thing, but we can being to do
that. I guess the service too, I kind of use it in my service. Some of the things, like in U3 we are beginning a mentor program, so I’m using some of the models I learned from public health to do that. So public health was about intervention. It was about bring about change too.

27:45
NHH: Was it important to you that you actually had a degree, a tittle in this area, or was that rather superfluous and you just wanted to learn?

JH: Yeah, it was superfluous. I don’t need any more degrees.

SL: Well maybe we could talk about your involvement in U3 a little more, I guess how it started, how you started being involved with it, and I guess maybe what you do as a part of U3, and what you’re most proud of?

JH: Well I’m proud that we exist. We’ve only been around about, going on two years now, and I’m the president of the organization. We were founded because we didn’t have anything in Houston that was black lesbian service oriented. There are social things out there, they have discussions, but how about a book club? Lets read a book, we don’t have to go to a bar, we can read a book. And we have cultural outings, we went to the hindu temple in Stafford, so we took a group there. We go to plays together, and we had discussions about it before or after, you know, so we do those types of things. And we go into communities, so we went to a nursing home and did women’s hair. And they were just so happy. I don’t know something just when you help someone get a smile on their face, that does it for me. You know just helping people. So thats what U3 does, like I said we are collecting these shoes. I see that the community is really involved in collecting these shoes, I’m gonna have to think about that and why this is such a big one for them, but um I know they are going to be well used. People need them to go to job interviews. People don’t have anything when they get out of prison and who knows what that pair of shoes will do for them in the long run. So yeah, U3 is very important to me. And mainly its here because we don’t have enough service organizations. I mean you can, we need it.

NHH: What does U3 stand for or does it mean anything?

JH: Uh yeah, its three u’s. Ugima is one of the principles of kwanza, about community service, being our brothers and sisters keeper. Our mantra is I am my sisters keeper. So that goes along with that. So its Ugima Unleashed and Unbound, so we just go everywhere and do everything.

30:50
CH: Yeah I have one question, how, I know that there is discrimination still against the LGBT community, but do you notice any divides within the community itself?
JH: In terms of racism?

CH: No in terms of lesbians and gays, bisexuals and transgenders, do you find divided within the community?

NHH: Or it could be in terms of racism, just anything you notice?

JH: Well, of course there's racism, and there's racism in the LGBT community that's something we still need to work on, and in terms of sexual orientation, transgenders are misunderstood. And even I see in the gay community, no one wants to deal with transgenders. They don't understand why they want to have to operate. So I think a lot of education needs to happen within the gay community about that. And also with the bisexuals, the bisexuals are looked down on in the gay community too, so I see that as a divide. Bisexuals, and even more so transgenders. And then you can look at males and females in the gay community and their interactions, and I think that's varied too, and all the people I interact with is males and females together, and I think we interact more in the gay community, males and females, here in Houston, than I've seen in other parts of the country, we do much more, much better, than Atlanta, California, New York.

SL: Well I guess we've talked about the past and the present, for you and for the LGBT community, but what do you see as the future, I'm just gonna leave that open ended.

32:47
JH: The future... I don't know that's up to y'all, really. I see a better world though. I think things are going to be more equal, more balanced. And I think with more travel, more exposure, I always tell people go somewhere. Travel. See people in another part of the world. I think when you travel it makes you a more accepting kind of person because there is more than one way to do things. And there's not necessarily a right way to do things, there can be different ways to get the right result. And I think when you stay in one place you become parochial, and you see your way of doing things as the way of doing things when there can be other ways to do the same thing. So I think with travel, with the internet, I mean you can google it, as a friend of mine says google it, and you can learn almost anything. And Skype in and have friends in China, or something like that. But I am a fierce believer in travel and exposure, and I guess that's the anthropologist in me, because when you interact with people different from yourself in other parts of the world, and you come back to the states, I think it's easier to interact with people different from yourself. And you can break down some of that prejudice and stereotype of okay this is how you're supposed to do it. Well Joe does it this way and they do just fine. Well that's the type of thing I think we need to break down. Is there's not one way to do it, there's many, any they're all alright. So the future I leave it up to you all, and I really look forward to seeing it myself.
NHH: So now that the interview is basically over, is there anything else that you want to tell us, just closing thoughts, or something that we might have over looked, anything else that you think is important?

JH: Are there any other pushes like this in the hispanic community? My concern in collecting the oral histories for black lesbians is that i don’t want us to be left out of the history books, I don’t want us to be left out of the museums. And so I think about the other populations, and thats why I get on the black gay men, if you don’t do something you’re gonna be left out of the history book. Eventually I think in Houston, we are gonna have a LGBT museum. Eventually. I don’t want us to be left out. And I do have concerns for other minority groups, like Hispanics and Asians, are they going to be left out of the museum? Its up to us to make sure that we are in the museum, but I don’t know what they are doing.