TRANSCRIPT

[PRE INTERVIEW CHITCHAT]

RON DUPRE: ... in the closet for all these years trying to understand themselves, and decide whether or not – y'all know any gay people at all?

ANNIE ZEUMER: Yeah.

RON DUPRE: You said you’re – oh apparently. But you might - I may be telling you things you have heard already, but they have told us, or have told me, part of the problem is that many of them hate themselves. So they’ve got to come to a point where they have to like themselves enough to want to come out to others. So they’ve been in the closet all these years, so they come out to the folks, and the folks go into the closet. Generally the parents aren’t in the closet as long, we were in the closet probably for about a little less than a year – didn’t tell anybody, didn’t... you know.

ANNIE ZEUMER: Did you still talk to your sons at that point?

RON DUPRE: Oh sure. We never had a problem in terms of being cut off, angry with someone that came out – we didn’t disown them to my house, nothing like that. We accepted them, albeit with some personal things. And in terms of gain – are we now actively involved in the talk? Is this part of the talk? Have we started?

ANNIE ZEUMER: Oh, I am recording, yeah.

RON DUPRE: Okay, so you’re recording. So while we were in the closet, what was going on in our married life, my wife and I, what was going on in our married life was there was conflict there. And then we blamed each other. It’s like the death of a child, you blame each other. We ended up marriage counselling, I had to take - I was so depressed about it that I took anti-depressant pills to figure out... We finally went to PFLAG. PFLAG was what helped us realize that there’s really nothing unique about us or about them. Essentially what it boils down to is that it is like, described as a death. Death of all your expectations. I mean, you don’t raise a child anticipating grandchildren necessarily, but you do expect that they will live a - what is generally referred to as the average style. I mean, they’ll get married and have a family, that sort of thing. So all that goes away. Immediately. It does happen in some cases where gays adopted families and that’s okay too. But that did not happen for us. The oldest son has had a series of individual
relationships – monogamous relationships I think, I don’t know – but for some period, like a year or two at least, he didn’t have anybody for him at the time. The second one met his partner here at Rice; he was a previous Rice student. So they started living in an apartment here right off here, off – a block or two off – Sunset Boulevard. And he was – as I said, he was already a graduate, I think he had his MBA already. So when my son graduated from Rice, his partner, who’d been working with what, Anderson, decided he wanted to get his PhD. So he went off to Wisconsin. To Madison, at the time which I think wasn’t very friendly - I don’t know if it is anymore – given the political situation in Wisconsin. But - so he came to me and told me that. He was all broken up and crying and that. He was like, my lover is going away. They’d been together now for about three years. And I was like, go with him. I mean, what’s the choice? You gonna stay here and go to bars and get drunk and having all those do what? And so I thought the logical thing to do was for him to go off with his lover; that should be the thing to do. Whether you’re gay or straight, you know, the important thing is to stay with someone you enjoy being with. And so he did. It was probably the coldest year of his life. Madison is very cold. Anyway. I don’t know that he was ever able to successfully find a job up there, but they finally – for that one year he was there. And then the next fall he started at Harvard Law School. So they lived apart for this next two years I think, while his partner worked on his PhD and Eric was at Harvard.

ANNE ZEUMER: So Eric’s a lawyer now?

RON DURPRE: Yeah, as I said they live in San Francisco and they’ve been together since – probably 25 or 30 years now. Yeah actually they were married in an Episcopal church, which – we were Episcopalians, so. Which is nice, they were able to get married in one of these really quicky things where – I forgot now, California kept fluctuating – you could get married and you couldn’t get married and you –

ANNE ZEUMER: Yeah, the Prop 8?

RON DURPRE: And they got married in the first ones, and had it blessed, as we call it, in the church. And then of course it was reversed, so they were unmarried. So they recently had to get – they got married again. [laugh] That was official.

AMBER TONG: Right. Did you attend both the weddings?
RON DUPRE: We attended the first one. But – that was like 2003, 2004. I just retired, so my wife and I went up and spent some time with them. Is this person coming in?

[MAJOR INTERVIEWER ARRIVED, OFFICIAL START OF INTERVIEW]

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Perfect. Okay. So you guys kind of already talked about where you grew up?

RON DUPRE: No.

ANNIE ZEUMER: No, we just started...

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Okay, so we’ll just start from the general background information so that we can get that real you out there, and kind of flow from there if that’s okay. Can you tell us a little bit about where both of you grew up?

RON DUPRE: My wife and I?

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Your wife and I. Or if you’d feel more comfortable just talking about you –

RON DUPRE: Well you know my name is James Ronald Dupre – just saying that for your recording – and I’m from South Louisiana. Born and raised in – well I was a country boy till I was eleven years old and then we moved to Opelousas, and I graduated from Opelousas High. Then attended school at Lafayette

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Oh Lafayette, that’s nice. I bet you’d – I bet you’d appreciate my dog. Have you heard of a Catahoula leopard dog, the small dog from Louisiana?

RON DUPRE: [chuckle] No, I haven’t heard of that.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: But that’s like a national breed.

RON DUPRE: This is so long ago that there was probably 3,000 students in South. Very small – It’s sort of like Rice I guess, used to be.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: It’s still pretty small, though.
RON DUPRE: Well anyway, my wife is from Houston, and I met her when I came to visit a friend. He was a person I knew in college and he was working over here. So I came over to visit him and spent a week over here. And in a week I got to meet my wife. This friend of mine was a friend of her mother's, not her friend—which was a state situation I won't go into. But she was determined to have absolutely nothing to do with me when she realized this other person, my friend was having me over. Nevertheless, we encounter her—each other—at her mother's apartment, as she was living with her mother at the time. And we started talking there in their apartment. And so, after the first day there, we stayed together I guess probably the entire week, did things together. And then I left and went to New Orleans for a week, where I was working with Exxon. And we communicated a couple times while there and then I came back the third week, picked her up, and brought her-we stayed together again, in Houston for a little while and then we went back to New Orleans and after the third week I proposed to her.

ASHTON GEISENDORFF: Oh I guess you kind of do, that's a “crazy” - I totally believe in that, you know what I'm saying? If you know, you know. I totally support that.

RON DUPRE: Well, coz you understand and this was—well we'll be fifty years on November the 6th.

ASHTON GEISENDORFF: Fifty years? Oh my God this makes me so happy.

RON DUPRE: Anyway. The time we spent together was not going to bar, drinking having a good time; we were just talking. We talked about everything we wanted in life, and how many kids, and what we’re gonna do, this sort of stuff. We were supposed to have four children. And so the first child was premature and died, the second child—of course and then we have three boys. And so she was like she fulfilled her contract. [laugh] She said, I have had my four pregnancies and I'm not having anymore. [laugh] Alright, so that's our personal background I guess.

ASHTON GEISENDORFF: Okay. Well, what would you say is your dominant attitude regarding the LGBT community?

RON DUPRE: Dominant attitude...
**AMBER TONG, ASHTON GEISENDOROFF, ANNIE ZEUMER:** [talking at the same time] Yeah, when you're growing up, what was like your general attitude?

**RON DUPRE:** Oh I didn't know anything about it. I - we- in Opelousas we knew there were people who were different. We knew, you know. People joked about it, particularly about - you know, none of you are boys, you don't know, but we would joke about the fact that if you go to this particular apartment store, the guy when he's trying to measure your pants length, your instep would be trying to fiddle with you. And so, we joke about things like that, but that's about all we knew about it.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF:** So do you think it made you biased at all to getting to know the LGBT community? Or affected the way you looked at it once you did find out about it?

**RON DUPRE:** Possibly. It was not looked upon favorably. It was normally these people who were... something's wrong with those people.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF:** Do you think your experience in the army influenced your perception of the LGBT community at all?

**RON DUPRE:** No.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF:** You don't think so?

**RON DUPRE:** Well, I was in the army security agency, which is intelligence. I was stationed in Germany for two years and while I was there, there was a particular group that we heard of indirectly, that had all been shipped home because it was a homosexual group and - I guess they got caught. And then the funny part was - you know, I was so naive, and so stupid, quite honestly. I played bridge with four guys - I was there for two years, practically every day we played bridge, when we weren't working or going site-seeing and things. And to this day I think two of them were gay. But I never realized it. I mean, I even went on a ten day trip through Italy. They're sleeping together every night. [laugh]

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF:** Hmm, just completely oblivious?

**RON DUPRE:** Yeah, and I would say like, if y'all get tired of sleeping together I
don’t mind sharing a bed, you know, duh. [laugh]

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF**: Casual. They’re like, oh no, we don’t mind.

**RON DUPRE**: Yeah. [laugh] That’s right. They don’t mind sleeping together. [make a face] It’s like, I couldn’t believe I could be so stupid, but I was. It was just beyond me to think that people would be like that. And so – that’s how naive I was.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF**: Hmm, I understand that.

**RON DUPRE**: And there are probably a lot of people like that to this day. That people go around not realizing.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF**: My family is from like, more the South too, and they’re just, it’s not that they don’t accept it, a lot of them are just ignorant to the fact that it still exists. Like it’s more prominent in other areas, so I guess... So you go into the army and go to this different country and you’re like, oh no one in this country is going to be like this. And so it’s just kind of oblivious.

**RON DUPRE**: In Germany – of course Europe is, more accepting than it is here.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF**: Yeah, a lot more sexual.

**RON DUPRE**: We would go out to bars and there would be two guys, you know, holding – not holding, hugging each other and kissing. And the Germans just sort of ignored them. It was just, no big deal.

**AMBER TONG**: Right. So how did you react back then?

**RON DUPRE**: I ignored them.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF**: Just kind of went about?

**RON DUPRE**: Yeah, I guess. It didn’t affect me.

**ASHTON GEISENDOROFF**: Well, if you don’t mind talking about it, we know that two of your sons are gay.
RON DUPRE: Yeah, two oldest.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Would you like to share with us your experience with them coming out? Like, when they came out, how they told you, how you responded – do you feel comfortable talking about that?

RON DUPRE: Sure, I've already started –

ANNIE ZEUMER: We've already talked a little bit about that.

RON DUPRE: I'll go into a little more detail now that you're here. As I said, the oldest one came out first, and he waited till he was a senior in college at A&M. And that's typical of the time; it was probably the early 90s when he came out. And most gays during this time period wanted to be sure that they had their college tuition paid. [chuckle] In case of rejection. I don't blame him for doing that. I mean, I told them, "hey, the important thing is to get your education and then you tell your parents." So he arrived home one day with a stack of books. I wasn't in town, and he told his mother. And then she told me. Our second son was attending Rice here, and so I guess the following weekend he came in for a visit under our agreed terms. [chuckle] [Transcriber's note: during the pre-interview chat, Ron mentioned that his second son originally intended to attend out-of-state universities and agreed to come to Rice only on the condition that his family never contact him. He needs to take the initiative.] And so I just outright asked him, is he gay? He said yes. And my question was, of course, what did I do wrong? Which is a typical parent reaction.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Would you say that you feel sort of guilty? Or just totally confused about it?

RON DUPRE: Oh yes, definitely. Guilty.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: I'm sorry. Did you think this affected your third son at all? Or... being influenced by them? Or did you treat him differently?

RON DUPRE: You see, part of our problem in the family relationship is that we didn't want the third son to know. We wanted him to remain ignorant until he was fifteen or sixteen years old. He was ten years younger than the second son, so he probably was like ten or eleven at the time. And so while my wife and I
were – [choked up] Sorry.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Take your time, totally understand. I know it’s a very sensitive topic.

RON DUPRE: Even after all this time you can see how this affects you. We were on the verge of tears all day long. And couldn’t talk about it. Because we didn’t wanna discuss it in front of Andrew. And so it was like a real strain, that’s why we had marriage counselling and I ended up on anti-depressants. Eventually he was about fifteen when we told him. And his reaction was, I thought we had a normal American family. He never rejected his brothers and accepted them just as we did immediately, but you know, there’s just a great deal of loss equivalent to the trouble of death, in terms of expectations and there were times when I wished they were dead, quite honestly. Because you could then go to the funeral, have the funeral, bury them and go on with your life. You don’t have to tell your friends. [chuckle]

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Would you say that maybe built up some resentment between the boys and you and your wife? Or it just took a little bit of time...

RON DUPRE: Those feelings were never expressed to anyone but you guys here and to a PFLAG small group, which is supposed to remain confidential.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Well, you said that you and your wife had to go see marriage counselling. How would you say that helped – do you think it helped you guys figure out a better way to talk about it, or did you just come to terms with – that you weren’t going to talk about it?

RON DUPRE: No, the marriage counselling didn’t help at all. PFLAG helped. As I told the other two earlier on, after – this was probably March or April when the oldest son came out. And it was December before we decided to consult with anybody. And so we stayed in the closet all this time period. And we knew one other person who got a gay daughter, so we contacted them and they said, we gotta get you to PFLAG immediately. And so in December we called PFLAG’s hotline number, and they said, we’re having a Christmas party. [chuckle] And that was a joke, I said, the last thing on earth we want to do was to go to a Christmas party with a bunch of people you don’t know -“gay” - you know, we had no idea what they are. So, anyway, we said no thank you. It probably was February March
the following year before we got up enough nerve to contact them again. So me and my friend went to a meeting together, and it happened to be – their meetings were held in the Houston Psychological Center, which is a horrible place to have. [chuckle] But anyway. Shortly hereafter this they started meeting in churches.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: So do you think – you heard about this from a friend who had a homosexual daughter; they introduced you to it?

RON DUPRE: Right, the long and short of it was that.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Was it you that just got involved? Or did you wife get involved and go to the meetings as well?

RON DUPRE: No, no, she started going. I was the leader of the gang, so to speak, finding the way. She never went to the Psychological Center, we only went once there and then they moved to a church, and then she started coming.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: And then she started coming?

RON DUPRE: Yes. And then she became more involved or active than I. Because at the time I was still quite troubled about it.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: So we knew that you did a lot of leadership in PFLAG. Can you tell us all about your experience and how you got into a leading role with PFLAG?

RON DUPRE: Well, my wife started on first as I said, and she was on the board for a while and then she simply got tired and dropped out. And so there was a span of a couple or three years where we did nothing. And I felt that I still needed help. I was not in total acceptance of the kids. And so I started attending. As always you start just doing projects and gradually – get and do more and more and more and more – and finally in one of the leadership positions. Not sure if I answered your question.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: No you did, you did. Could you maybe tell us what you felt like was your most effective contribution to the organization? Or maybe to the Houston LBGT community? Either – if it made you, what made you feel you gave the biggest feeling back? Or maybe – what you think helped the LBGT
Ron Dupre: Geez, there's a multitude of questions in there.

Ashton Geisendoroff: It could be a couple, there doesn't have to be one specific.

Ron Dupre: My biggest contribution to PFLAG, I guess, would be being president. I was on and off for three years. And trying to help people who come there looking for help. I was facilitator of small groups for a while, that was not particularly my thing, but you know, everybody has some things that they'd like to do. Also for three years I built the PFLAG float to go down Pride Parade. And even several years thereafter I assisted someone else who had a flat-bed truck – he did it better than I could. I guess my greatest contribution to the GLBT community here in Houston was to go to many different events and occasions, and trying to let these people know that I accepted them as they are. My wife and I joked frequently that we've been to more gay bars than our gay sons. [chuckle] Because we were frequently – we'd enter, enter and do something in the gay community and you get awards, and someone has to go to the awards to get the award. And I was involved in grant-writing, and if you write a – if you request for money and you'd have to go get the check, and those were usually held in gay-friendly places.

Ashton Geisendoroff: Do you think visiting all those places really helped you make your transition into a more open acceptance of your sons?

Ron Dupre: Yes. It's typical; getting to know people makes you – in fact the last thing I really was involved in was Houston Pride, I think that was the name of it. It involved trying to – the Houston Astros had a "gay right" event at the time. So I was involved in the organization that I was able to infatuate 16:11 that thing. And you just – you realize that some of these people are really amazing. Basically good at what they do and who they are and funny and – so. Yeah.

Ashton Geisendoroff: Well, we found an article – sorry, change of pace. We found an article back in 2009 that [discussed dwindling support and] funds of PFLAG, and there was a quote from you saying PFLAG needed to reorganize and refocus. Did you ever successfully go about doing that?
RON DUPRE: No.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: You didn't?

RON DUPRE: I probably was wrong about that. It was probably a statement more of frustration. One reason why I no longer am on the board. We still charged along pretty much the same thing as we've always done. In fact, now though, back when I first got involved we had a lesbian Walmond who was the president, but one of the rules we tried to follow was always to have a straight parent in charge.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: So was it more biased? Do you think with her leading that creating a sort of bias?

RON DUPRE: Well, we were more concerned with the reaction of parents coming to the organization. We wanted them to feel at ease, knowing that it was now a straight parent who was in charge. She was president for a couple of years, and I don't think that she had [5 seconds pause] — I had to say something. Well, she was what is known as a Lipstick lesbian. You know what I'm talking about?

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: I know what you're talking about, yeah.

RON DUPRE: You would never have known she was a lesbian if you had met her and talked with her. She was just a normal person. And she had a daughter, she was a parent, experienced many things, and she was a very good person. And so I don't think she had any impact on the organization as such. And again, this year, for the first time since ??? 01:38, they now have two young men who are in charge and they're both gay. Mainly because the organization is not growing. Parents of those gay children come out to them today don't have as much of a problem as we did twenty years ago, thirty years ago. It's more accepting. But, well I mean don't forget, they still find that 25% of the kids who come out today are put out to the street. If not immediately, shortly thereafter.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: What would you say that your vision was, for PFLAG in general then? Like if you could create your own organization and reformulate it to how you think would be most effective?

RON DUPRE: I don't know that I could improve on the situation now. It does a reasonably good job. The heard of PFLAG is the small groups. And we generally
try to have a speaker, programmed each month and the groups would meet twice a month. The main meeting is on Sunday afternoons at St. Pauls Methodist here on Main Street. And – but – the heart of it is small groups, where people can come and sort of talk about their problems. What you want people to realize is that there’s nothing unique about them or the parents realize there’s nothing wrong with their kids, that they’re not crazy or going to hell or – the typical parent is more concerned about what’s the future of the child. What’s going to happen, will they be able to earn a living, you know. Well, you know, it will come. Job biases will come. I was very active in the scholarship program which PFLAG helped start, trying to raise money and assist GLBT students to go to college. Because typically high school kids, GLBT kids, don’t do very well grade-wise. Because they get so involved in their personal problems that they don’t want to do work. So they don’t qualify for scholarships with other organizations.

ANNIE ZEUMER: Do you have advice for parents? Like when their children first come out to them and they’re feeling a little hesitant, having all those fears that you expressed? What kind of advice would you have for them?

RON DUPRE: Basically that they should realize the child is just – nothing is changed with the child other than the fact that they are attracted to the same sex. They’re still the same child. The parents could understand this just to keep trailing along. It’s not easy raising a child to begin with. I mean, God only knows all of them – a lot of straight kids get into drugs and a lot of problems too. It’s not just gay kids. And so the focus should still be on the well-being of the child, the grades, and attending to their – keeping them on the straightened arrow, so to speak. So many other things get involved, that it’s hard for parents – who ??? 05:16 to know this.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Do you suggest to parents a certain mindset, like trying to jump in and getting involved in your child’s new homosexual lifestyle? Or would you say take as much time as you need, learn to adjust?

RON DUPRE: I would recommend that – my recommendation would be they just cool it. Just remain the same person you have always been. The fact that suddenly you know a little bit more about them shouldn’t – I know it does – but it shouldn’t dramatically affect your attitude towards your child. You shouldn’t suddenly want to become the mother of every gay child. You know, wanna do all the events with them. And let the child lead the parent in terms of how much involvement they
want. They have to sort of lead you in terms of, you know, teenage boys hate for that to be seen around their mothers because they just don't want their mother around. The same thing would be true whether he's gay or straight. You know, I don't about girls, but I presume that there is just a point where you just don't want your mother or your parents around. Even in your activities, you know, just as I said, our second son wanted to move off to some university where we would have no contact with him.

AMBER TONG: So how would you describe your current relationship with your son?

RON DUPRE: I'd say that they're excellent. I can't think of how I could improve other than – you know, they're all, what, 45, 42, 32 now, so they're all adults living their own lives. I don't know how much of an impact I had on their lives, quite honestly. But we still communicate, we're still friends, and they're all happy, so that's what is important.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Do you – do they still come home for big holidays and stuff, do they all do that?

RON DUPRE: Oh sure.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: That's nice. I know you said – sorry, change scenery again. I know you said you're involved with Houston Pride and with the floats, do you still do that?

AMBER TONG: Or Houston other organizations, like –

RON DUPRE: I try to get involved, like with Gleason, and attended a lot of different events, particularly with like GSAs in high schools, lots of high schools. But was never – you know, being involved with PFLAG and with other activities, I never took leadership roles in any of those. While I was at PFLAG, we had one couple who say they wore out their car going around different school board trying to get them to change their guideline to include protective clauses to gay and lesbian children. But, you know, I attended some of them with them but not to the extent that they did.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Okay. Well, we know that you've been involved with
some advertising campaigns for LBGT rights, and we were wondering what you would say the most effective means of promoting the LBGT rights would be. LBGT, sorry.

RON DUPRE: If we could afford it, probably bill boards. I am amazed how many people still don't know that PFLAG even exists. Even with all of our national campaigning and advertising, you go ~ my recommendation for people who know absolutely nothing about the GLBT community would be to go to a gay pride parade. And PFLAG generally received the greatest applause, of any organization. [choked up] Because so many of the kids attending have lost their parents. And you'd be surprised how many come out and said, how I wish my parents were here. And, you know, you have to feel for them. Because I don't care how much hatred there is in the family they still feel – I mean, you still feel for your parents. I can't imagine how angry the parents must be to throw their kids out of the house. I could never have done that. Well, it took a lot of reconciliation in my own mind to accept it, but I never harbored any anst or hatred to the children. The problem was internal. 'Coz I was very conservative, very conservative. Our church is Episcopalian's. The biggest problem is the more conservative the church, the more difficult problem people have with it. Because of the Bible, typical Muslims do, not just Christians. You have to eventually reconcile yourself to how you’re willing to accept God’s word in this area.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: So would you say your children ever felt that you resented them? Or did you keep that more internally...

RON DUPRE: I never resented them. But I never told them how much trouble I was having. We never discussed our personal problems, of accepting them, so to speak.

ANNIE ZEUMER: How were you able to reconcile your faith with – you were saying ??? 11:37 the Bible – you’d have to have a new way of thinking about that?

RON DUPRE: Well, it took a long time. One of the things I did was I continued to go to church every Sunday, and that helped a little bit. But there were many Sundays where I’d have to leave, particularly at certain times during the service because you’d have to make statements of belief, and I couldn’t do that, so I’d just walk out. And the congregation saw that – I was somewhat a leader in the congregation too, so they would see me leaving and they knew that something
was wrong but they never knew. Eventually [4 seconds pause] we had a group called Steven's Men – they were there to do the kind of work that PFLAG small groups did, only they deal with it on an individual basis between members of the congregation. And so the way I came out to the church was after I've been going to PFLAG for a while, PFLAG had a group panel. We had one straight parent, one gay parent, one gay man, one lesbian come out and tell their stories to the people. And we still do this, but it's not 13:10 very much 13:11 is letting all these organizations know that this service is available from PFLAG. So they came out and told their stories and that's how we came out to our church. Most people came to us and said, well we already knew Eric was gay, they was like - [chuckle] and that was somewhat a relief. Hmm, we've had a couple of smite comments, but the most was accepting.

ASHTON GEISENDOFF: Did your sons stay strong in their faith as well?

RON DUPRE: No. No, no. Even though one got married in the church and they still go occasionally I think, but – I was such a pragmatist I insisted that while I was at home they had to go to church every Sunday. There was no question. You don't get up Sunday morning and say, oh are we going to church today? No that was never a question.

ASHTON GEISENDOFF: Again, I am so sorry for being late, oh my God I hauled my butt over here.

ANNIE ZEUMER: You're good to go whenever.

RON DUPRE: Oh don't apologize. The problem for me – the question I have is have I answered your questions sufficiently, and what I had said does it make sense? do you need clarification anywhere?

ASHTON GEISENDOFF: I think we got it all. We pretty much addressed every question on here.

AMBER TONG: Do you have anything else about your being the parent of gay children, or your involvement in PFLAG, or just general comments about the LGBT scene that you'd like to tell us?

RON DUPRE: One of the things you encounter, of course, was that there are some
other organizations that are similar to PFLAG. There are some for married people who have gay spouses. Do you all know this?

ANNIE ZEUMER & ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: [talking at the same time] No, I haven't heard about it at all.

RON DUPRE: There are. I mean, you can quickly find a gay man who's married to a straight woman or straight woman is married to a gay man. So there is all sorts of organizations for those people. I can't remember their names. You have to look on the internet. And then there are organizations for gay parents who have straight kids and their acronym is very similar to PFLAG, only it's like gay parents - [chuckle] The other thing I find so strange about all of this is that these straight parents can't understand why their kids are gay, and likewise, in the other argument, why gay parents can't have straight kids. Why shouldn't they be allowed to adopt The important thing is that not every gay man is a pedophile, you know, or woman. They want to raise kids and have a – do all the things in life that everybody else wants to do. Same aspirations. And, you know, there are so many instances that keep popping in your mind. I could recall one gay man who came to me. I mean he came to me, he had a wife and two small kids and he came to a PFLAG meeting. Only once that I recalled. It was like, “I don’t know how to handle this situation.” And I was like, you know, you have two alternatives. You can stay married or you can get divorced. So if you stay married, you just have to block out all this desires for this other man, just like if a straight guy is married, you’d sort of have to say, “no I'm not gonna go to bed with this other woman, I'm married.” You know, you make a commitment to one woman. He had to do the same thing. Might be more difficult because the feelings aren’t quite the same in terms of man and woman, but that’s just some of the things you encounter. But one of the greatest things about PFLAG is to see these kids who come, who'd almost totally lost, not necessarily wandering on the street, but they get there some kind of way. If not physically at least mentally abused by their families. And then suddenly find that they are not alone in this world, that there are other people like them and there is nothing wrong with them. And they just blossom, you all can’t imagine. You know, it's stuff like someone who's been a drug addict or something I guess, suddenly get off the drugs and just change 100%. In fact I mention this to young kids at PFLAG, who are now presidents or co-presidents, one - his only relative that halfway accepted him was his grandmother; and he ended up in our house at Christmas, coz he had nowhere to go for Christmas. How sad can you believe that is? Now he's one of the co-presidents and is doing
wonderfully. And it’s the other co-president that was been taken to by his parents who were, like me, very conservative, to these “fix ‘em” places to change his gayness. He finally told his parents that, “this isn’t working” and something – got out of that situation. He has a partner; the other person does not have a partner. There are many gays who don’t have partners, just like – you know what I mean - straight people don’t have partners. Is there anything else?

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Do you have –

AMBER TONG: Oh, I have a question. Would you say – among other organizations like HATCH, or like... I don’t know other names, but how’s PFLAG unique among all these organizations?

RON DUPRE: Well, PFLAG is for parents of gay children. Gays are also welcome because they need to be able to know how to communicate with their parents. So that’s why it’s unique. HATCH is for – it’s another very good organization to know about and should get publicity. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals. They’re all meeting in the Montreal Center; and in fact their organizer – or should I say leader – Dem Murphy was at PFLAG this past weekend, telling PFLAG families some – what they’re doing now. But they are now meeting three times a week. And she was saying that there are kids at eleven years old now coming out to their folks. And this is– eleven year olds hadn’t known how to think about sex. Did you? [chuckle] When you think back, that many years ago, gosh, I was so far out in the country. Only sex hereabout was going about the animals in the barn yard. You may have – I walked into my parents one night – and my father yelled at me, “Get out of here!” [chuckle] Oh God, geez, eleven year olds coming out. And honestly I don’t think they know. In my mind there is absolutely no way that they should. Even though they always acknowledge the fact that they’re different, they know that they have something different when they’re three or four or five years old. I’ve had that frequently told to me. I believe they all feel different. I mean there’s just no way that I think another person feels the same way that I do about all the things in life. And we are all unique in that sense. And so I’m not sure that the feeling they proclaim that makes them feel like they’re different – and also I’m different in the sense that I had no sexual feelings at all when I was three and four and five years old.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: I think you answered them all pretty awesome. That’s a great talk.
RON DUPRE: Well thank you.

ANNIE ZEUMER: Thank you.

RON DUPRE: Good luck with your studies.

ASHTON GEISENDOROFF: Thank you, we need it.