

Cassidy Wall: We were just happy with any story that she had, anything that she remembered. It was awesome to hear from her. And I'm so glad that she connected us with you. All right.

Tamar Carroll: So I have, this is the main device, but I have a backup device just in case. So good morning. My name is Tamar Carroll, and I'm a professor of history here at RIT. And today is December 16, 2024. And I'm here with my research assistant, Cassidy Wall. And we are fortunate to be interviewing Pam Barres today. And Pam, we're going to discuss your time at Kodak and your experiences with the Lambda Network. Is it OK with you if we record this conversation?

Pam Barres: Yes, it is.

TC: OK thank you. So you told us a little bit about yourself already, that you are originally from this area. You grew up here in Rochester.

PB: Yes, I lived here until—well—I was in my mid-20s—I guess, when we moved out. So yeah, I went to John Marshall High School. My father did not work at Kodak. Years ago, my mother had—and but when she worked at Kodak, women's situation in the workplace was considerably different than it is today.

TC: Yeah.

PB: But when she got married they kept it quiet for a while that she was married because she would have lost her job because married women should be home taking care of the house and not at work. And she had a job in the billing, doing some kind of billing. She ran some type of a billing machine, and she was in the office. And she would see George Eastman upon occasion [TC: Wow.] When he would leave and stuff. And then it became OK, and it might have been like the start of the war, I'm not sure when.

PB: I was born in 42, 1942. So sometime before that, it was OK for her to be married and working. It might have been right around when the war was getting ready to be started. I don't know. But then when she became pregnant, again, she had to try to not talk about the fact that she was pregnant until—this is not really what you need to know about. But anyway...

TC: It's interesting.

PB: You got me started. And so then once she started to show, she had to stop working. [TC: Yeah.] And so that was her connection to Kodak.

PB: And I had an uncle that worked at Kodak—I guess uncles that worked at Kodak. And a huge number of people that I knew and grew up with, their father worked at Kodak, and so yeah, Kodak was just all over.

PB: We used to play outside, and we had to be home for supper when that... they used to have a whistle that we could hear because I lived near Aquinas, and Kodak Park was not all that far away. [TC: Yeah.]. And so you'd hear the whistle go off, and that's when I was supposed to be home. I have to go home as soon as the whistle blew at about, I guess, 5 o'clock, [TC: Yeah.] Change of shifts—or 4.30—whatever it was. So Kodak was part of growing up. And I went to John Marshall High School, which was pretty close to Kodak also.

TC: Yeah.

PB: So, um, man, I'm not sure where I'm going with this.

TC: And then, but you said that you didn't necessarily aspire to work at Kodak right away, you went to college first?

PB: Well, I just didn't, you know—yeah, I wasn't a particularly great student. And I'm transgender, as far as back as I can remember, it's probably not a secret based on my voice, but as far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a little girl, or thought I would become a little girl, or somehow was, but nobody else knew it, whatever. And so that was kind of coloring me. I was always there, and I didn't want anybody to know about it. I was scared to death that anybody would find out.

PB: And I don't know, I don't really remember... I guess I would say when I was younger, little, I would say something like that, like, “why can't I wear that pretty party dress to the”—you know—my cousins would have these little dresses with little black patent leather shoes and stuff like that. [TC: Yeah.] Which I now have a pair of them but anyway (*laughs*) and then why couldn't I do that? Well, no, you're a little boy, you don't do that. I don't think I was ever beat up or anything like that. But I got the message that I'm a boy, and I better act like a boy and be a boy, because anything else is not, is not good. And so I would hide from that, and that had an effect on me, I'm sure it did.

PB: And I think I was somewhat immature in school, I know I had to redo the third grade, and because I could not read or spell very well. And I never did learn to spell. The only thing I'm embarrassed about myself, personally, is the fact that I am the world's worst speller. I mean, there's nobody is—I will not stand up in front of a group with a pen. And that was that was kind of a, I wish I had learned to spell better. I learned to read very well, but I learned to read by sight. I was a sight reader, not phonics. They weren't teaching phonics when I was in school, according to my mother. [TC: Yeah.] And so I missed that, that thing and I've learned a little bit of Spanish over the years, and they started with Spanish with phonics. And so I can do some Spanish phonics, but I can't, I'm not particularly great on spelling, the English language, anyway.

PB: And so... I went to—I did not do well in high school other than history. I loved history and any kind of current events. So social studies, I would do very well and the other stuff, not so much. And I took some French and I was terrible.

PB: I was also cutting school when I could, I'd go over the fence... And I did not—this was—then I think it probably still happens, the boys would, you know, we'd play basketball and it was shirts and non-shirts and I didn't want to take off my shirt. And so—and I was—it was all just kind of a weird situation going on. It was complicated to some degree, just in my head anyway, it was complicated.

PB: And—but so I went to high school and did not do well and decided that I—that was it. I wasn't gonna do anything else and my dad was a private investigator and he was an insurance investigator and he worked for a company called Retail Credit, which is now the credit bureau down—as retail is now, begins with an E, one of the credit bureaus. Can't think of the name of it right now. But he went out in his own business with his partner. And at one point I worked for him for a little bit till I went out one night and got drunk with a bunch of my friends. And the next morning he decided I wasn't gonna do that anymore.

PB: And so we, I had a drinking problem. You could drink at 18 and I was drinking a lot at 18. I was actually, yeah, maybe a little bit before 18. And so we, I did, I worked for him for a while and I worked at Loewer's Furniture Store and I cut lettuce at the Star Market and what used to be in Rochester, [TC: Yeah.] in competition with Wegman's and some other, some other not, not particularly good jobs.

PB: And so—and then at one point I—my Uncle Al did get me hooked up with an interview at Kodak for some kind of a job in the factory. And so I went down there and had my interview. Uncle Al was a manager of something, I don't know what, at Kodak, and the guy told me, “well, you know, you've had six jobs this year. I don't think you're somebody that we're gonna hire here at Kodak. You know, if you ever settle down, let me know. But you're not the type of person we want.” So I kept—and then I had a really bad feeling for Kodak. Every time I'd drive by, I'd say, your building's crumbling,

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: The whole place turns to rubble, anyway *(laughs)* . And then I got involved with my spouse, Suzanne. And so I got a little bit more serious. And I did go to MCC and take one, I was there for, I guess, one semester only. I was at a party, again, drinking, and my cousin ran over my foot with his car.

TC: Ohh.

PB: Not intentionally, but he did. And which meant I couldn't—it was a stick, I had a little Sprite sports car and I couldn't shift, and consequently, I couldn't get to school, because I couldn't drive. And so I just had the one semester, the only course I think I completed was economics. And so I had gone to MCC when it was on Alexander Street. It used to be an old high school years ago.

TC: Oh

PB: Down on Alexander near Maine. And actually, it's a high school that my mother went to. That was the old East High School, [TC: Yeah.] way back when, if you've been looking at the history of Rochester. Anyway, so I went there and dropped out after my car—I got hurt, I couldn't drive the car and got a job running a machine at Taylor Instrument Company.

PB: There were a lot of companies, a lot of small companies, or parts of big companies in Rochester at that time. And so I got this job running this machine, and a grinding machine. I made meat thermometers and candy thermometers. They were moving that down. This is when it started. They started with, they were moving down to Tennessee, which was gonna be cheaper labor.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And so they had people that the woman who I was replacing had run this machine for something like, God, I don't know, 15 to 20 years. And her—it was a wooden floor. And her shoes had actually just grooves in the floor

TC: Wow

PB: Where, because it was all this grinding with the metal. [TC: Yeah.] To smooth the solder off, something like that. And so it was very uncomfortable for me to fit in there. But I was able, eventually was able to work that out. So I did that on a part-time basis with the idea that once we got married, I would go back to college. I guess Sue got me thinking I should be serious and maybe not be quite the asshole.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: You can redact that. *(laughs)* That I was at that time. And so, long story short, we got married in 1964. We're still married. We've been married for 60 years.

TC: Oh, congratulations.

CW: Wow

PB: Sue went through a gender change with me, which is not something that most marriages sustain,

TC: Yeah.

PB: To be honest with you—and so she knew just, she knew before we got married, my mother

had found a period of time when I was unemployed, I had somehow got a blue nightgown that when my mother was working at the U of R at the time, actually, and my dad had his own business. So there was nobody home during the day and so I would prance around in my blue nightgown. I took a shower, we had one bathroom in the house, and left it hanging behind the bathroom door—and I used to play chess with my father. And I was number 10 in the city of Rochester as far as chess was concerned.

TC: Wow

CW: Oh, wow.

PB: But there was only 11 people. The only person I beat was my father. So it sounded much better than it was. *(laughs)*

TC: *(laughs)*

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: Anyway, we were playing chess. My mother comes down with this nightgown and I said, it's mine. And my father punched a hole in the wall. And we never played chess again, actually. And so that led me—like—you need to have a conversation with the person you're going to marry. And it probably was a good idea. So we did. And she knew someone that was going to school and studying psychology. So they had some books. And so she looked at this book and books, whatever. I don't really know which ones. And we were dumb, young, and in love and decided we'd give it a go no matter what, see what happens. So we got married October 10th, 1964. And that led me to going back to school with the idea that I was going to be a history major. And I did quite well. I graduated. I did two years in Brockport, or excuse me, at MCC and took some remedial courses in math because I had not done very well in math. I think I took geometry in high school at least twice... So that helped me considerably. And so I did good. I got into Brockport as a history major and I graduated magna cum laude [TC: Wow] from Brockport. But I was also, what, four years older than the other students. But that was okay.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And I thought I was gonna go on and get my master's degree. But as I said earlier, being married, and Sue had a good job as a legal secretary at Kodak. She was very good at shorthand and typing. And so they hired her right out of high school. And so she was doing well. But I didn't think that I didn't, I just decided I was gonna get a job. And I had done a summer job selling vacuum cleaners. And if you want your rug cleaned, I'm here. I do real well. *(laughs)*

TC: *(laughs)*

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: I'm selling Kirby vacuum cleaners, which were extremely expensive. But you could sell it, I think it cost me \$200. And so we said the list price was \$450. But if I could walk out with \$300 in my pocket or anything above the price it would cost me to not have to pay, it was great. So you'd dick her and lie to people.

TC: *(laughs)*

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: It was really really bad. And some things going—Yeah, it's not—vacuum cleaner salesmen are not the most honest people you want to run into.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: But it was a good machine, it just was way overpriced.

TC: *(laughs)*

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: Extremely overpriced. But I sold those, I figured if I can sell that I can sell. And so I ended up selling business systems for Eastman Kodak Company, and which was really Microfilm at that time. And the idea—we had a lot of banks, every time there's a check or any kind of thing, it was being microfilmed. (*Taps table*) And when (*Taps table*) it came in, when it went out (*Taps table*), there was lots of microfilming going on. And at that point they started developing systems to be able to retrieve microfilm images quickly. (*Multiple taps on table*) So there were some where you'd code it. So you could go to a keyboard (*taps table mimicking typing on keyboard*), and like a computer terminal, punch in the number, and it would pop up on the screen. And so we were selling things that were \$40,000, \$50,000, the microfilm machine, some of them \$20,000. And a big system was costing a lot of money. So I was selling good, high-ticket items.

TC: Primarily to banks?

PB: Primarily to banks, but in New York City, brokerage homes, houses,

TC: Oh sure.

PB: Because they used paper stock certificates. (*Papers rustling*) So every time this certificate came into my office, it would go through a microfilm machine. And then I would, it was going to leave, we did what we needed to do with it, and then we'd put it back through a microfilm machine, and it would go to your office, and you would put it through the microfilm machine. And then it would go from there.

PB: So the place I was sent was the place I didn't want to go, which was New York City. I wanted to get out of New York State, but I knew I wouldn't work in a deep cell. I didn't want to go in a cell. But for whatever, however, the Kodak gods decided that New York City was where I belonged. And so I had the Bureau of Queens in New York, and that came with a company car, which was good until you realize there's no place to park in Queens with a company car. *(laughs)*.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: And so I'd get tickets. So you'd have to take someone to lunch that didn't exist. So you'd take the Phantom to the Ghost Lounge was the way of covering your parking tickets. So, and I did reasonably well with that. And then we started selling a machine called Computer Output Microfilming. So it was called KOM, K-O-M, and so it was computer with a K, because it was Kodak.

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: And these were machines that instead of print—so when the, you know, the old computers used to spit out reams of reams of this paper, fully continuously folded paper. *(Two taps on table)* And so we had machines that you could take a stack of that paper and run through without having to rip them apart into individual things that we sold. But then we got this idea of Computer Output Microfilming. Instead of having the data printed to paper, it printed right to film directly. And there was a common concept called microfiche. It was a little like little like index cards but maybe a little bit bigger, like the size of your page. And microfiche—and there was a lot of parts catalogs were on that. And instructions to how to fix your airplane. JFK, if you go down to the hangars in JFK or La Guardia, and because they're in the borough of Queens. [TC: Yeah.] And they would have some of our machines and they would try to read this bad image on the film and decide how to fix the airplane. It's a little scary, don't do that anymore.

TC: *(laughs)*

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: Now the doors just fall off and fall in. *(laughs)* Yeah, if you had microfilm, they'd be able to fix it. So it was very interesting job [TC: Yeah.] I liked it a lot. And I got promoted to actually working in Manhattan. And at one point I had the largest sales quota of anybody in the country. Because I had three accounts, Chase Manhattan Bank, Chemical Bank, and Bank of New York at one point and so there was a lot of film [TC: Yeah.] a lot, a lot of film. So I'd have visions at night, nightmares at night that I would lose one of my film accounts. I had no place to get it back from, if it's gone, if it's gone. So it was a little tense.

TC: Yeah.

PB: But it was an interesting job. And I liked it. And I really did like working in New York City. And Sue also was able to get a job in New York City. She was...she worked for the manager of the facilities and they had opened this new building at 1133 Avenue of the Americas, or 6th Avenue. And so we both worked there. She was down on the 40th floor. She had a nice corner office, you could look down 6th Avenue toward the south or uh lower Manhattan. And I was up on the 42nd floor without much of a view. But that was okay, because I was going out, riding the subways and calling on my customers. And that was good and as computer output microfilming became more and more prevalent, I took training on it. (*Page flip and pen click*) And I ended up being moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Then I moved to Cleveland, Ohio. And then they had a reorganization and I got an opportunity to sell computer output microfilming in the Africa Middle East region.

TC: Oh

PB: And I also had Japan to kind of balance out the dollars. So I moved back, we moved back to Rochester, at which point, at this point we had two girls, two daughters, which we still have, I guess. (*small laugh*) And we bought a home in Pittsburgh. And we had the typical two-story colonial very nice, it was cool, I liked it. And I was still a plain businessman. And I traveled the world on the company's money. And this was good but I'd go for five, six weeks at a time. At one point, myself and another guy were traveling. He had the Africa, or excuse me, I had Africa, Middle East, and Japan and he had the Asia Pacific, including Australia. And we had subsidiary companies in most of the bigger countries. Or distributors, I had a lot of distributors in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, yeah, Saudi Arabia. That was an interesting place, because photography was kind of taboo because if you took a picture, you had to get it developed. And when it was developed, somebody else would see your family, your wife. And so that was not something that these men would want to have happen.

TC: Oh, interesting.

PB: Because they're a very paternalistic society. And the religion, to some degree, their images are not cool. So when Polaroid came out, they made a lot of money. Kodak then came out with an instant camera and they sold it by the truckloads. People going to the Hajj, they would buy cameras to take pictures, because it was a big deal to go to the Hajj if you're a Muslim. And so they made lots of money. So they were also potentially going to make a lot of money by selling computer output microfilming, with our help, obviously, to Aramco, which was the huge conglomerate, but combination of the Arab Saudi Arabia oil and America. So it was big in Houston and big in Saudi Arabia. And so I got to go to Saudi a few times, I got to go to Kodak Iran's first annual, we bought out a distributor for setting up a company. So we were going to sell a lot of computer output microfilming into Iran, because the Shah was modernizing and building. I mean, the only thing I can remember about the trip, well, not the only thing, but one of the things I remember is just the cranes. There were buildings, high-rises, going up all over Tehran when I was there. And so they had an annual picnic in June, and I got to Kodak Iran's first

annual picnic. And the idea was, well, what about, we hear this rumbling going on, this Khomeini guy, oh, that's just some crazy cleric down in the south, not gonna come to anything. Of course, in September, Khomeini rolled into Tehran.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And that was the end of Kodak, Kodak Iran, basically. And at the same time that this was happening, I had a cousin who was like a brother to me. We were the same age. We went to high school together, lived close to John Marshall, and we were very good friends. We were closer than just friends it was my family as well. And he dropped over dead, he was working for Kodak selling blood analyzers and doing very, very well in the Washington DC area. He had some heart problems, which I thought I was getting walking up that hill coming here. *(laughs)* But anyway, anyway, he dropped over dead and I went home from his wake and called the Monroe County Medical Society and said, I need to find a therapist who knows something about transvestism or transsexualism or whatever it is, because I decided I could drop over dead too any day and he was 44.

TC: Oh.

PB: And I was about the same age, I was the same age. And I wouldn't know who I really was. I'd never understand why I felt the way I did. So that got me into a whole different point of view of looking at my life and things. And I cannot say that Sue was happy with it because she was not happy with it. But I found a therapist that helped me considerably who knew Madeline, by the way, quite well, just coincidentally. And so I got very involved in a group called Transvestites Anonymous, TPA. Now with a name like Transvestites Anonymous, you are not particularly anonymous. *(laughs)*

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: And so they had a post office box. And every time I would go to the, I'm actually getting down to where we're at in here. I'm like Trump, I'm just reading it all. I cannot stand that man.

TC: You're a lot more coherent.

PB: And you don't need to redact that. *(laughs)*. Anyway, so I would go to pick up the mail from the post office box. And it was always, there was always a note, large package needed, you'd come to the desk. So I would have to go in my three piece business suit and my vest and my tie. And I'd have to go and say, I need the mail for Transvestites Anonymous. *(laughs)* And they'd all, all of a sudden there'd be two or three people that would come out.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: And look at the freak, *(laughs)* I guess. So that led me to getting more involved. We found,

we formed a group with a different name called CD Network, Cross-Dressing Network. But that could also be, we could be doing finances, talking about CDs, bank CDs, or we could be collecting CD music. So we thought that was safer because these people, they were all men, were deep, deep in the closet.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And if you would meet somebody that you knew they were, you would never, you wouldn't even acknowledge them. We were closeted beyond belief. But I didn't really want to be a cross-dresser. I wanted to be a woman. And I felt that I was a woman, should be a woman. And so, and then I started reading, and there was this thing called, at that time called transsexualism. And one of the first ones was, even back earlier, was... 82 Brain, just clicked in (*Pen click*). Tristine Jorgensen, and was in the 50s, a GI that had gone to Denmark, I think, and had a, really the only operation she actually had, she was castrated. It turns out that it wasn't quite the eye. Now she had some plastic surgery as far as breast augmentation. But that was really it. And then later she had some other surgeries back here in the States. But, and that's kind of what I thought I wanted to do and that was putting strains on the marriage. But we had a group and we, they started having pride parades here in Rochester. And our group was marching in the pride parade. And there were some people from Kodak marching there and a man by the name of David Cosell.

TC: Yeah.

PB: Who was one of the founders of Lambda, as you know. And so David was saying, you know, and I said, well, I work in Kodak. And it was at that point I decided that I was going to be more open about it. And with my, the wig I had, you would never recognize me. I don't think my mother would have recognized me. Maybe she would, but we were gonna be on TV marching. And so one of the first parades was near where the AIDS garden is now. It's the, it went up Highland Avenue and then it ended up at Genesee Valley Park. And so I was, we somehow ended up marching near the Kodak thing. So I was talking to David and he was telling me about blah, blah, blah. And, you know, they got this thing going on in Kodak. We're trying to form this network and you might want to get, you know, and I said, well, I'm in, because, oh, I'm missing an important point.

PB: Because I realized that I was, yeah, okay. I'm not sure how to segue this. When I moved to Rochester and was traveling the world, that job wasn't going to go on forever. And it was a job that you got to keep for four to five years, six years maybe. And then the idea was you'd go back to your, you'd leave the international division and you would go back to your home division or wherever you were from. And so we were from Rochester. We had two grandkids. They were involved with their grandparents. And we really didn't want to leave Rochester again. And there was not a job for me in Rochester working for business systems, markets division at that point. They decided, and I decided that I wasn't going to leave because I could have gone back to the field as a salesman. Maybe I would have got a better job, I'm not sure, but we didn't want to

leave Rochester. So I ended up getting a job in purchasing quite the other side of the desk, so to speak. And I bought nuts and bolts. And so I could walk around, I had to walk around with a little handful of nuts and walk up to, want a screw? *(laughs)*

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: And it was just a icebreaker. But anyway, anyway.

TC: So what year was that, Pat?

PB: Had to be the early 90s. George died in 88. So yeah, this would be in the early 90s. Because in 90, I think when Lambda started, I was not living with Sue. We separated for a while because this was not something she was interested in pursuing necessarily. And that surely didn't want me to tell anybody. And I had, at this point I was getting very involved by going to gay bars. And David would have a lot of parties. I get to meet more people. Met Harry Bronson, who's one of the assemblymen from this area.

TC: Yep

PB A gay man. We're good friends. I think we're good friends. No, we're friends. And so I was going to the gay bars. I was having a great old time. Sue, not so much. And then I formed a group of people that considered themselves to be transsexual, no longer part of the cross-dressing group. And so all this was going on at the same time I was getting involved with Lambda. And I do remember, I think they thought I was a little, well, okay. I never get to do what my job was.

PB: I was in purchasing for a while. And that was okay, but I was working at the Elm Grove plant. And as I said, I bought nuts and bolts. And then I started buying. That was like a two-year job to learn how to be a purchasing person. I took a class from, actually the RIT, in purchasing. And my manager was an adjunct professor teaching the class. So that didn't do me any harm to get an A in the class from my boss's boss, actually.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: And I met this woman from HR, how's this going? And I said, no, it's going fine. But you know, I don't really like working in the factory. They want to look at your briefcase every time you come in and out, and all this kind of stuff. And she said, well, you know, I was just talking to a guy named Bob Tigi. He said, he's interested in somebody that has some traveling experience. I know what you did and would you like to meet with Bob? So I did. And he offered me a job as HR in international human resources, it wasn't called human, it was industrial relations at the time, international. They didn't use the term human resources for a long time. But I ended up in the Latin American region...as a coordinator for human resources for all of the Kodak companies in Latin America. But I did not have the two big manufacturing companies. I didn't

have Kodak Brasileira or Kodak Mexicano. And the guy that I worked with, a guy named Bill Welch, had those two. He also had responsibility for the others, but I did the work, I worked for Bill. And so that was my job. And then Bill took an early retirement program, and then I got the whole region, including the two big manufacturing companies, as well as the smaller marketing companies in Argentina and Uruguay and Colombia and Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

Venezuela's beautiful unfortunately, Venezuela's not a place you wanna go at the moment, but I used to love going up to Caracas, and there was a place, there was this huge mountain, and the hotel was on a mountain next to it, but you looked across this valley, and there was this, it was called the Avalon, and beautiful, beautiful view, and a great hotel, nice pool, nice bar around the pool. It was one of those good places to spend the weekend. And anyway, I gotta focus here again, where am I? Okay, so I had that job.

PB: So I was an HR person, and I was part of the LGBTQ community, and that was starting to happen then. And the word trans that was then coming into play. But at one point, transgender was coined by a person by the name of Virginia Prince, who was a chemist, actually. But the idea was this is someone who wants to live as a woman, but doesn't really wanna have surgery. They just wanna live as a woman. They were just going to be transing, transcending their gender. So, and so that was, that's what that was. But that then, it kind of became, it is now a catch-all. There is no more, you know, no one used the word transvestite, no one used the word transsexual, for trans, and transgender. It used to be transgendered, but they decided, no, there's no E-D on the end, it's just transgender. So, but it was like a 10-year period where people were fighting over what the names were, and which, not only was it confusing people in the community, but no one in the outside world knows what the hell we're talking about.

PB: And now people are changing pronouns, and the LGBT community, to some degree, is our worst enemy, because we're confusing people as to who or what they call us, and what they can call us, and don't get excited about it if you call me the wrong thing, or it's, I think it's become overly balkanized, frankly. Everybody has to have their own little identity. And the idea of LGBTQ is really political power. The more people you've got, the more attention you get from government, and from politicians, particularly. And so, you wanna get together, you don't wanna keep separating, because then you start fighting among yourselves, the lesbians are fighting the gay men, nobody likes the trans, but then the people that are non-binary, where do they fit in? So we're all fighting, and at the same time, we have no power, because we all wanna be de-grouped, and coalitions are really, really important. And so, we go in that direction, then we pull back again, go in direction, you don't need my political thinking here, but.

PB: Anyway, so that's how I got into Lambda. I think they thought I had a bigger HR job than I really had. I was a big fish in a small pond, which was great for me, but I really didn't have any power. But you get to sit in on meetings and learn things about what was going on, I learned that's why I wish I knew a little bit more accounting. But we would go out, and one of the things we did was set the wage scales. So we would go and talk with other Fortune 500, whatever, companies in the area, and if they had an office, a subsidiary company, where I was too, and we'd do salary surveys. So we'd try to find other companies that had accountants, other

companies that had secretaries, whatever, and compare salaries, (*Three lights taps on table*) and then you'd put this all into an algorithm, and we'd come out, and you'd develop a line of salaries, midpoints, and then you'd go, you know, percentage from that to the high and the low of the salaries. And they did it to us, we did it to them, we'd survey each other, and we'd get together twice a year and have great parties. (*laughs*)

TC: (*laughs*)

PB: Normally in Miami, it doesn't even work out that way. But so within Lambda, I was, you know, I was a trans person, and I think I was the only trans person at that time, anyway. And we had some pretty butch women, but anyway (*laughs*). And so they, I guess they wanted to be on the board, because I was HR, I'm from the office, and this and that. So I got on the board, and I'm the one that suggested that we add gender expression and identity into our mission statement. And so that really, I spent a lot of time trying to explain to gays and lesbians as to what transgendered people were, and why I, I was still interested in women, though, truth be told, I'm bisexual, I believe. If Sue was hit by the proverbial bus, I would not just look at other women, I would also look at men for partners, I think. But I am monogamous with Sue, and do not retract that (*laughs*).

TC: (*laughs*)

CW: (*laughs*)

PB: And so I was trying to explain what the hell was, because it's a different concept to get across to people. This is not sexual orientation, it is my gender that is the issue.

CW: Did you feel like people were confused?, Did you feel like people were confused?

PB: Yeah, they didn't fully understand it. I mean, if I want to be a woman, then obviously I want to have sex with men. Okay, so I'm a gay guy, or I'm a drag queen. Well, no, I'm not a drag queen. Drag queen's a whole different kettle of fish. And it's interesting, there were, this is an aside, I guess, because my whole conversation so far has been an aside, but transvestites, cross-dressers, when they get dressed up, they really, I have a lot of engineers who are cross-dressers, and they were very organized in there. They would have little charts. If I'm going to wear this, I'm gonna have this purse, that I'm gonna have on this sweater, or this dress, and I'm gonna have this underwear to go with it, and then this is the shade of makeup I'm going to use. And they'd have little lists of things (*tapping on table*) they would keep like that, and extremely organized. But it's very, very solitary, the whole process that they go through, the 17 shavings that they're doing to make sure they don't have any facial hair. And we're drag queens, they're in a group, and you're sitting here, and I'm sitting here, and you're over there, and we're all putting our makeup on to go for the drag show. So it's more of a community type of thing, where that's just an aside. But there's an interesting difference between cross-dressers and drag queens. Both are men, and both wanna be men, and they both wanna appear, for whatever

reason, as women. And the way they get ready and how it works out is, I think, an interesting study could be done on that.

PB: Anyway, so we decided that we were going to have the fall dinner, or not the fall dinner, that's another organization. We're gonna have the dinner for management, and it was going to be just the top management that we're going to, and the first one, what we were going to. And Mike, he just died, the head of...

TC: Morley?

PB: Morley, right. I worked for two Mikes. Mike Bernard, when I went out. The Latin American region was moving to Miami. I wasn't going to be moving to Miami. And so I got out of, and I was going to transition. And the only place I could, I knew I couldn't do this in Latin America, way too many, it's very machismo. There's no way I could have switched genders and worked and survived in Latin America. This wasn't gonna work. So I got a job in domestic HR. And I worked for Mike Morley, who was HR, was human resources for the whole company. And Mike Bernard, who was head of communications for Kodak, did the advertising and communications. And I described the differences. I would follow Mike Morley out of a burning building. I'd follow Mike Bernard into a burning building. And that was the difference in the two, in their leadership styles, frankly. But, so I was this junior person in HR at the time. But I was also in the Lambda Network. And it was a great cover for me because I wasn't out to Kodak yet. And so, but I could be involved with the Lambda Network because I'm a sensitive HR person, trying to do the right thing to take care of all the members of the Kodak family. So it was a good cover.

PB: And so we had the first meeting. And I went as a guy. And no one had sat at the table I was in. And I think the guy that I was, had the management person that I had at my table, was head of, I think, strategic planning at the time. I don't remember his name. I know we worked way at the top of the tower. I was at his office one time, but I can't think of his name. But he's kind of a stuffy guy, but he seemed okay. He was there. And I think a lot of the top management that was there were not there because they really wanted to be there, but they were there because George Fisher wanted them there. And he was with the program. And so morally it got this thing organized and it was going to happen. And there were other networks going on at the same time. And so they were, you know, okay, they were doing their job. So now we had these people sitting there, mostly, I think there might've been one woman at my table, but I'm not sure. But there were gay people that I knew coming up. And so I would go and tell them privately, oh, you know, by the way, this is my little picture. This is me, you know, I'm really one of you, even though I'm not gonna say that today. But no one came out as being gay when we had a table. Except one guy that worked in a factory, which was, he was probably the one that was gonna be discriminated against more than any of the others. And he's the only person that said it when we went around and introduced ourselves. And I'm gay.

PB: Nobody else said that at all. I just remember that part. It was kind of funny. And in the planning, and I'm sure you've heard this from everybody. I don't know who, Emily, who came up

with Elizabeth Birch? I don't remember being a speaker, but we all were saying, well, gotta make sure that she doesn't talk about this. You wanna talk about domestic? We don't wanna push him. We just wanna get some information. Aren't we nice people? Well, let's not say, don't. You know, we're telling Elizabeth Birch, don't say about this, don't talk about this. And of course she did talk about all of those things. *(laughs)*

TC: *(laughs)*

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: And it worked out really well for us. And when they announced the benefits, domestic partner benefits, I remember we all went up and Emily had champagne and we toasted George Eastman, because the assumption is George Eastman was gay. God knows if he was. There's no way to prove it one way or the other, I don't think. But the assumption, there's a lot of people that thought he must be gay, this guy living with his mother in this big old house, love music, sounds gay to me. *(laughs)*

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: And so we toasted George at the Eastman house with our little champagne glasses that Emily had provided when we did that. And then we continued doing things. We had different, I became, I think I was the co-chair with one of the dinners, at which point I was going to different things. I was not working yet as Pam. I never did work fully as Pam at Kodak, but I was going to social events as Pam. And so I was out to a lot of people, but at work I was still coming to work just as a male. And so when I was working with, we had this, I know the one I'm specifically thinking of was at...begins with an H, Harrow, Harrow East, is where it was. And I was doing all the day-to-day stuff, talking with them as Peter, which was my name. But the day of the event, I showed up as Pam and had explained to them who I was, again, *(laughs)* because I could walk out and back and around and didn't want a number of people to do it, they'd go back to the office and talk to them. And I just remember that was kind of strange. But then I did show up to that as Pam and then I had come out, I had, they had another one of the downsizing events and it fit me. So I took it and I left Kodak in 98. So I don't, in February,

PB: I have no idea what happened to Lambda really after that. And I had, ended up being on the board of the, Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley. And when we fired the, one of our executive directors, I think it was the second one we ever had, I ended up being the interim executive director of the Gay Alliance for nine months. So we gave birth to Rosemary's baby. At that point, he bankrupt us. It was the expression, big hat, no cattle, fit Chuck very well. Talked a great game, but couldn't bring in any money in to pay for the stuff he was spending the money on. But that's it.

PB: I don't have a lot of great memories of Lambda. I just don't. I remember some of the people

very well, but some of those people then also got involved with the Gay Alliance. Like Emily, when I first got on the board and was involved with Lambda, with the Gay Alliance, there were very few people who worked for Kodak on that. And then suddenly, I think once Emily left Kodak, she, maybe she was still working for Kodak, but anyway, she got involved with the Gay Alliance and there was more, and then Catherine got involved with the Gay Alliance. And at that point, I was involved with the Empire State Pride Agenda down in New York City. I got on their board and actually got on the board for the pact as well as the board for the 501C3 and the 501C4. I was on both boards and a member of the pact that we had. So I got less involved in the Gay Alliance and I really totally lost track of Lambda at that point.

TC: Yeah.

PB: I've rambled for a long time, I apologize.

TC: No, this is.

PB: But that's really all I remember.

TC: This has been great. Did you have a question, Cassie?

CW: I think, do you remember when you started working at Kodak, like what year about?

PB: Yeah, yeah. I think I can come up with that without too much difficulty... Oh, 69, yeah. Yeah, I graduated from college in 69, yeah. As I said, I was selling vacuum cleaners and that led me to a couple of interviews and with different companies and I got, it was the best deal I got and they moved us to New York. So we moved to New York in 69, fall of 69, just in time to watch the Mets win the first World Series. Then the Jets, Willie Joe Namath won the Super Bowl that same season, though it was in 70, and then the Knicks won the basketball. It was a great way to move into New York City when all the sports teams were just kicking ass at the White's, the Red Sox, but anyway.

TC: So, Pam, you said that when you were part of TVA and CD, everybody was really deeply closeted.

PB: Yeah.

TC: What was the corporate environment like at Kodak, certainly for transgender people, but also more broadly for LGBT people, like in their?

PB: I think you didn't want anybody to know. People were afraid of what the ramifications would be. There was one woman that I know, woman named Carolyn Grimes, Carolyn Grimes was a trans woman, and when I worked at the office, she would be there, she'd come through with her tray and her clunky high heels, and she'd sit by herself and no one would sit with her, and as I

was proceeding down my merry little way, I thought someday I was gonna go sit with her, but I never had the guts to do it. I talked to her on the phone one time, but I would never get enough of the guts to do it, and then she took one of the early retirements, but everybody made fun of her. I mean it was, oh yeah, there's that it over there, and things like that, and it was very, more of a macho, we would have sales meetings, and there was always obviously slides, I mean like photographic slides, not...

TC: Not PowerPoint.

PB: Not PowerPoint, but it may be PowerPoint, but whenever the show was, it would be actually a 35 millimeter slideshow, and carousel, projectors, that's the word I'm looking for, projectors, but then there would always be a nude, and there would always be a shot of a female nude, "I just want to see if you guys are still awake," there'd be a couple of nude pictures of women that would pop up.

TC: Just casual?

PB: Yeah it was just and it was just no big deal, that's the way just guy thing, I think locker room talk is the euphemism that people are using. So it was a very male oriented, stereotypical type society, Kodak was, and so people were afraid of coming out, and because I know Emily talks about the idea that, you never would, on the weekends you would never talk, and I learned that too, when I was getting so involved in the trans world, that I was involved with, and my gay friends and stuff, that I would not talk about it on my weekends, I would just change the subject, or whatever, or maybe even lie a little bit, but you would never, you didn't want to come out and tell the truth, you just were afraid to, what kind of pictures, that didn't have an impact on me particularly, but you'd have a picture of your loved one on the desk, well your loved one better not be the same gender that you are, so people would just not have any picture, or they'd have a picture of somebody, but people made a family still,

PB: it was just known, bad jokes, you know about the gay, "oh you're the one about the gay guy, blah blah blah whatever", and I'm not sure that people, they were just unaware. I think society generally, I'm not sure these people are mean or nasty, it's just, it was like, my mother always talked about colored people, and my parents were pretty liberal, but it was okay, it was just the way it was, it's too bad it's the way it was, but that was it, and so a lot of people just weren't aware, and never even thought about it, there was anything wrong with it, and so if you would come out and be different, you'd be ostracized to some degree, "oh the fairy over there", you know and that kind of stuff, so being able to bring yourself to work, which was the whole concept of what we were trying to do, with Lambda was, sell the idea that this made business sense, that we'd be more productive, we would be totally involved, we wouldn't be using some of this energy to hide, because if you're always hiding, because I did that for a lot of years, and I had more stomach problems, some of which should be named after me,

CW: *(laughs)*

PB: Because I was nervous, I was always afraid, I was always hiding, and it uses a lot of energy, energy I could have been using, to be a better Kodak employee, if I was more open about it, and that I think holds for all the people in Lambda, and all their LGBT employees at Kodak, because there were some that were openly out, but not too many, not too many at all, and they were identified, people knew that, and "you don't want to be in a dressing room with this dude", there's this idea that gay men are going to attack you, I'm not sure the lesbians were felt the same way, but gay men would be, they'd want to have sex with you, why, I don't know, it makes no sense, but there was a fear almost. [TC: Yeah.] and so yeah, did I answer that?

TC: Yeah, was Lambda welcoming, did you find it a welcoming space, when you started to get involved?

PB: Yeah, no I did, people I still have friends with that I met through Lambda, initially, yeah, some I didn't like, some I did, just like anything else, you've got some people you like better than others, but yeah no, I always, I really did feel that, a lot of people didn't know, I was kind of like, it was, I remember Emily said, "oh your make-up always looks so good, I wish I could do that", Emily you could have fooled me.

TC: Emily said that? *(laughs)*

PB: I mean at that point in time yeah, well I used to dress a little more plainer, than she does now.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: I love it, Emily is, Emily's a good person,

TC: Yeah, she is.

PB: She's a smart person.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And her and Catherine, I say Catherine, that's not the same person, her and Deborah are a great couple, they are definitely a power couple,

TC: Yeah.

PB: Yeah they're very good people, but, yeah, there's just a lot of questions, I think I did a lot of educating, what is this all about, and I think I helped, I know I helped, and I tried, even after I left Kodak, the person that was my assistant in my last job, was very helpful to people that were transitioning, getting their name changed, and things like that, because we worked very hard to

try to get, gender expression and identity, as part of our protected group of people, and never quite, I never quite got there, but I, you know I talk with Morley, and a lot of people, and I got it in Lambda, but I never fully got it into Kodak, and I know it eventually did happen.

TC: Yeah.

PB: I think Marilyn Mizzou Ferris, who was my assistant, was instrumental in working, continuing to push that, and helping trans people, being able to successfully transition, at Kodak, so in some respects we accomplished some stuff there, to get it to go, and then, when 9/11 happened, that was more emphasis to get the state, to come up with, protections for LGBT people, because there were obviously, gay people killed in 9/11, and so they were able to get reparations, for their partners and stuff, Dears Pataki allowed that to happen, and then that started with SONDA, and the Sexual Orientation and Non-Discrimination Act, but that did not include trans people, and that only happened, I was in Florida then, but it happened like five years ago something like that.

TC: The GENDA.

PB: Yeah, GENDA

TC: Yeah.

PB: And I was quite involved in that, and it was pretty obvious, that until the Democrats got control of the Senate, that we weren't going to get it, it wasn't going to happen, Mike Long who's head of the—was head—I don't think he still is but was head of the New York State, conservative party, and you know it was like over his dead body, that that was ever going to pass, and any Republican that would have voted for it, would have been destroyed, and fought, he felt the same way about marriage equality, but that kind of slipped by him somehow, and it finally happened, when the Democrats—the first time the Democrats, when I was involved anyway, got control, we had enough people, that we knew as advocates, that would vote for GENDA, if they would put it on the floor, if they could get it on the floor, and we finally got this call saying it's going to happen, and I was walking at the time, I was doing a lot of walking, for exercise I wasn't working, and by the time I got home, and turned on the radio, the Senate had blown up, because a couple key guys said—they're going to start talking with the Republicans, and then there was some scandals of bribery, and a couple guys left, and then we lost it, and then several years later, we got control of the state Senate again, which were Democrats, and they were able to pass it right away, and I was—and I was in Florida, and that's why I missed all the excitement, and but we were enjoying the sun so.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: I don't have anything else to say.

TC: Okay.

PB: I'll answer any more questions, I'm not sure I'm on topic anymore.

CW: I was wondering at Kodak, were there any like straight people that you knew, or allies that maybe were involved with Lambda, like an amount of them or?

PB: Yeah, I would say Bob Berman was one that I that I knew, Bob is no longer with us.

TC: He was in human resources as well, right?

PB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, he was. Corporate compensation, I think, is what Bob originally was anyway, but he had a good career. S.E. Calhoun is another one, and a lot of the individual HR people were very supportive. Jack, very particular, a guy named Jack Van Giesen, who was the HR to the HR. When I came, when they had a reorganization my—I worked for a woman named Sandy File, I think, and when we got down, there was—I got downgraded, as did huge numbers of people. They get a pay grade to a lot of the levels, and when I got downgraded, I said, fine, but I'm gonna start coming to work as as a woman from now on (*laughs*). And so she went running out of—when we were done, when I left, she ran down the hall of Jack's office, who was the HR for HR at that time, and said, "what do I do now?" (*laughs*) Jack told me later (*laughs*).

TC: (*laughs*)

PB: So, yeah, there was a lot of them. It wasn't, and I'm sure there were others. I mean, really, it started with George Fisher, but I think even Kay Whitmore, in his way of trying to respect all people, I mean, this thing started under Whitmore, and so, you know, he was a Mormon, you know and a leader in his church, in the national church, but which are not, they're not known as wild liberal people, not necessarily supportive of gays, lesbians, LGBTQ at all, but he did his part as an individual, I think, to be supportive, to give of them as due, but Fisher came out with it, and someone said, after the dinner, I don't remember who, I don't know if it was Cindy Martin, or whatever, she was at the right level, it might have been Cindy, that Mrs. Fisher had said something about, "oh, we, we have that," (*ring slams on table*) what is it, variable, and that's not the word, minority in our family, or some such phrase. I've lost the phrase, but, and so, you know, like, there was a reason, maybe, why George was quite as open about it as otherwise, but he was definitely set the tone in the company of time, at least after the dinner, and then Carp was, Dan Carp seemed to be very, very accepting, younger man, good guy.

PB: I was in his office the day he became a full vice president, and he was bemoaning the fact that he had turned 40. "Oh my God",

TC: (*laughs*)

PB: and Dan, I said, "my God, you just became a full vice president of the Eastman Kodak

Company!”

TC: (*laughs*)

PB: “how can you be, how can you be, oh, (*laughs*) my life is over, I've turned 40, Jesus, come on.” (*laughs*).

PB: But so, yeah, it, it, it started at the top, and worked its way down. It became okay to be an ally, and to be out about being an ally, and not okay not to be out of an ally. They started the thing with a pink triangle with a circle, which was an AT&T, actually, thing initially, and so, you know, cool managers would have one of those, and, you know, I mean, I remember having a, a Lambda person come and talk to the group of the of the corporate staff's HR, of which I was a member, because I had corporate staffs at finance, and communications and public affairs, and so, you know, they came and talked about the different networks, and talked about Lambda particularly, and the issue of discrimination, and LGBT people faced it, and I don't think they were using LGBT, but whatever, faced it at Kodak, and so I remember a woman at one of the assistants came in and said, “okay, what kind of minority are you?” (*laughs*). And her name was Cindy Henderlong, and I told her, and she became very supportive of me, and so I, we had a Christmas time dinner that Betty Hardin-Smith, who was my boss, directly at that time, she was out of all corporate staffs, and I decided to go as Pam, that was my first coming out, it was at, we had a dinner at the art gallery, at the room, I can't think of the restaurant name there, and so I had ran around and told people before, or I would have sent some out, some email note out to everybody about, guess who's coming to dinner, and you know, and that was my first coming out, if you will, publicly as Pam to all the Kodak, to my Kodak people that I worked with.

TC: How did that go?

PB: It went okay, because they knew something was coming up, and some of them already knew, and most of the women were, and we had more females than males on the staff, and we did pretty well, did pretty well. One of the guys wasn't quite as thrilled about, wasn't quite as thrilled about, because I had, there was an outside meeting, and I don't even remember what it was, but some HR society that we all belonged to, and so it was going to be in, not Schenectady, [TC: Skaneateles?] but Saratoga.

TC: Oh Saratoga.

PB: and so I was driving Joe, who was a black guy, worked with us, good guy, and talking about, on the way there, and I said, oh, I said, “what do you think of the Lambda Network in marriage, you know, marriage equality?” “Well, I think it's terrible.”

PB: I said, (*starts laughing*) “well, you're not going to be very happy with me this weekend, Joe, because I'm going to be dressed as a woman for the rest of the meeting.” So, but he, you know, he accepted it, not happily, but he accepted it. So, you know—and I think there was a lot of, I

think there was a lot of that, and probably still is [TC: Yeah.]. And there's a lot of people who may be willing to say, okay, but we don't need to go this far, and I think that's part of the Trump resurgent, is, okay, some of this is okay, but you're going too far, people. And that's where it is. I don't know how we get around that. I think just sometimes it's one step forward, half a step back. [TC: Yeah.] I just don't want to be a full two steps back, and that's what I'm worried about.

TC: Yeah. So did you see change over the time that you were involved with Lambda? Like, you know, you said you spent a lot of time educating people, and do you think it resulted in some, you know?

PB: Yeah, I do. No, I do, I do. The fact that we eventually, the company eventually came around to, you know, having policies for people, transitioning and stuff, and I know people that did it successfully.

TC: Yeah.

PB: Yeah, I do. I do think I can take some credit for doing some of that, [TC: Yeah.] or getting it done. I didn't really do it, but setting the stage for allowing it to happen. Let me, a precursor type of thing.

[TC: Yeah.]. And do you think that Kodak's leadership on these issues nationally, like, do you think that played a role in changing attitudes beyond Rochester?

(long pause)

PB: I don't know how much, okay? But yes, yeah, I do, because somebody like Emily got very involved with HRC, and so the big-named companies causing, getting involved caused other big-name companies to also want to get involved. We want to be, to get this, because it was generally, for a long time, it was positive publicity from people that counted to these companies. Maybe not some of the rednecks in Kentucky.

TC: Right.

PB: No, I'm picking at Kentucky. But yeah, no, yeah, so the, as long as Kodak was successful, yes, once Kodak started, once the people realized Kodak wasn't, maybe not quite as successful, but that was Kodak's own damn fault to some degree. I mean, how do you go through a technology change like they did and survive? I don't know, [TC: Yeah.] and everything they tried didn't seem to work, because they were looking for something else that was, had the same, a same product margin as film did, and you know they had digital film. They had digital cameras, they didn't quite know how to put this whole thing together, and it was really, really, really sad to some degree.

TC: Yeah.

PB: But I don't know, I'm not sure. They had such a huge infrastructure in film that I don't know if they ever would have. And the fact that we did it by dribs and drabs prevented Rochester becoming Flint, Michigan, because if, you know, like Flint, Michigan, they just closed down.

TC: Yeah.

PB: Boom, and then that city is left with no base.

TC: Yeah.

PB: and Kodak did it very slowly, probably to its disadvantage in some respects, but it actually helped Rochester, but Rochester needs good-paying jobs so badly. I mean, sad that this inner city's one of the most impoverished places in the country.

TC: Yeah.

PB: But, you know, I could say it could be worse. I'm not sure it could be a lot worse. But it's, I'm amazed by this. I haven't been out here in a long time. I spoke a couple times for Thomas Warfield over at MTA.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And now he's a great guy.

TC: He is a great guy.

PB: Just a great person.

TC: Yeah.

PB: But I, other than that, I haven't been on this campus in a long time.

CW: They do a lot of construction. We've had a lot of that.

TC: Yeah, yeah. Well, Cassie, was there anything else you wanted to ask Pam or while we?

PB: Yeah, I'm yours for a few more minutes if you want.

CW: Yeah, I like our last question. I was gonna ask about your goals in joining Lambda.

PB: You kind of talked on that already a little bit. I don't think I had any goals when I joined it, frankly. But, you know, I'm the type of person that has a big mouth, and so I wanted acceptance.

I mean, I wanted acceptance for trans people, because I was one. And I wanted to be, because I didn't think that I was anything weird. And one of the things that has changed about trans people over the years, I think, it used to be, if you were gonna transition, you had to have therapy. And, or no doctor would touch you. And if you wanted to have, you had to take hormones. You know, you had to be, you had to be three months in therapy. I don't remember, I don't remember exactly what the gatekeeper numbers were anymore, but it was like set up that way. And so, and then, okay, then you could get therapy, or then you could get, you could take hormones. And then if you were going to have sex reassignment surgery, you had to be, what they used to have, the real life test. You had to be on hormones. You had to be living as, whether you're going from male to female, or female to male. You had to be living in that role for at least a year before you could have surgery. And so all this was very laid out.

PB: And now, and that also was very discriminatory against people that didn't have money for therapy. Because that's not free. Or if it's not free, if it's free, it didn't work very much. And you had to have electrolysis, and there was nobody going to pay for that but yourself. Like I have \$10,000 about in my face to get rid of my beard. But it's fairly important if you're going to try to live as a woman, not to have a beard. *(laughs)* I mean, it doesn't—unless you want to be in the circus. But if you didn't have the money, you couldn't afford to do any of those things. Today, you can get help with paying for electrolysis through Medicaid. You can get, you don't have to have a specific amount of anything to do anything. If you want to come to work as a man or a woman, different than what you started out as, you can, you might kiss my, but there's no medical reason why you can't, is what I'm trying to say. The worldwide, whatever it's called... WPASS, World Professional Trans, what the hell would it stand for? I don't know. I cannot, but their guidelines are pretty much just general guidelines and there's no must-haves, except for age. No one's going to operate on minors. This idea that your kid's going to come home from school with a different gender is so ridiculous, it isn't even.

TC: Yeah.

PB: It's not, you can't. But it is easier to do it today. And in some cases, maybe it's too easy. Those of us that have been around longer sometimes think maybe it's too easy. A good friend of mine is a male to female, excuse me, female to male, but no one would know Patrick was ever a woman. I mean, it's, you just, testosterone is such a strong hormone compared to estrogen that, well, the first thing that happens, I mean, my voice, I can't, my voice is, I have a deep masculine voice. But not much I can do about it, frankly. And it's too late for, it's too late for voice therapy in my case, I think. And I just, I don't care anymore. But I am who I am, I'm 82. I'm not, I'm not going to change that much. You get to a certain age, you don't care. And that's kind of where I am, I guess. But Patrick and I were talking, he runs a program for Trillium Health, coordinates all the transgender people. We have over 1,500 people now in the program in Rochester.

TC: Wow

PB: And they get calls every, almost every day from parents that now, if we move to Rochester,

we have trans children. If we move to Rochester, what type of help can my children get? And stuff like that. Leaving places where they're putting in their discriminatory laws against letting kids take blockers. And blockers is a great idea. Because, so what if you go through puberty? Let's say you want to become a woman, and you're now a teenage, almost a teenage boy. Okay, well, once your voice starts to deepen, and your beard starts to grow, you've got, gonna have a lot of issues living as a woman, passing and being a woman. But if you can hold off puberty, hold off those things happening to you, and if you're going the other way. (*Upbeat ringtone plays*)

PB: Stop. (*ringtone stops*) You're much better off. And if it doesn't work, if you decide after a while, no, I don't, I don't want to transition. It's not really for me. Okay, you stop the blockers, and your adolescence will, what am I trying to say?

TC: It will (*unintelligible*) your puberty.

PB: Puberty will happen. So it happens a couple years later, a month later, whatever it is. Is that the end of the world? No. And yes, it can leech some stuff out of your system, but they know that now, so they can give you counter drugs to prevent the damage that the blockers may have. Why you should prevent people from doing that, I do not know. It really doesn't make any sense.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And if you're a woman that wants to live as a man, okay, well, once you start menstruating, once your breasts start to develop, it's going to be a lot harder for you to be a man. So if you can work that out, I didn't say anything wrong with that. But of course, I'm on the inside looking out, I guess. But I don't even know where I was going with this.

TC: People contacting Trillium from places.

PB: To some degree, it's maybe got a little bit too easy. I think some type of, maybe you don't have to have it, but boy, you ought to have it to make sure you really know what you're getting into. And there are people that go back and realize it wasn't for them. But not most, it's rare. But, I don't know if it's rare, but yeah, it's rare. Most people end up being happy, even if economically it's turned out to be a really bad deal for them. And I know some people that it has. But they say, "I'm happier now than I would have been otherwise." So, okay.

TC: Yeah.

CW: I think that transitions into our last question of like, is there anything you would want to tell nowadays people or young people about transitioning in the workplace?

PB: Be sure it's what you want to do. Once you tell one person, other people will know. This

idea that nobody, they won't say. It's pretty hard. It's pretty hard. I really think the most, the key thing is to be, to think it through. I would suggest that anybody that's going to do this, spend some time talking with a therapist. The old expression, the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. It always, oh, it's so much better. If you've got problems with whatever, and you switch your genders, those problems will still be there. This is not going to fix your fear of heights or whatever. *(laughs)* If you're depressed, you may still be somewhat depressed. You're still going to need some help to deal with it. It's just going to be different things that get to depress you. Think it through. And you don't have to be in a hurry. All trans people, once they decide that's what they want to do, we want to do it now. *(lightly smacks table)*. And why didn't it already happen? Patience is not a virtue that people that are trying to change something have. They want to do it right away. We all do. And you have a tendency to read the same books that the therapists read, so you know what the questions are going to be. You know how to answer the questions. Maybe that's not always the smartest thing. Maybe to get some help, make sure it's the right thing, and then go for it, because it's great being who you are and being your true self, and being able to take your true self to places, and that's why it's good for everybody, in my opinion, to do what Lambda did, what Kodak did, is to allow all of their people to bring themselves to the same level to bring themselves to work, to do a job for the organization that they're involved with, whatever that is and wherever it is. Why waste talent? And why waste, why not? And be happy. I'm not a religious person, and I think, if anything, I'm a humanist, and that's not really necessarily religion. But this is it. Be happy. And if that's what makes you happy, then good, be happy. That's my philosophy of life. Do no harm.

CW: Do you think that the therapy helped you deal with some of the negative attitudes during that time as well, or give you tools to?

PB: Oh yeah, no question about it. And I'm back in therapy, actually. My wife had mild cognitive impairment. She's driving me absolutely crazy. *(slight laugh)*. I think she's working on medium.

TC: *(laughs)*

PB: No longer mild. Christmas lace thing has been a disaster. But anyway. Yeah, it's a, I believe in it, yes. Yeah...It's a very selfish thing to do, because you're the star of the show. *(laughs)* You can tell the therapist anything, and they can't tell anybody else. And it can be helpful. It's a place you can vent, [TC: Yeah.] and get some advice that is reasonably objective. So, yeah.

CW: It's a good selfish thing to do.

PB: Huh?

CW: It's a good selfish thing to do.

PB: Yeah, yeah. That's actually, it is selfish, I agree. But it is a good selfish thing to do, yeah. It's helpful. Everybody should have a therapist. If they're available, if they're not available, it's hard

to get in to see people.

TC: Yeah.

PB: And it costs money. And it's all part of our our our superb medical system that we have in this country. Medical delivery system is, why would we have a for-profit system? It just doesn't make any sense.

CW: Yeah.

PB: The only way we can make a profit on the medical insurance system is deny coverage. It seems to me that's counterproductive. What, the reason for having a health system?

CW: Yeah.

PB: Anyway, I'm done.

TC: Thank you so much, Pam.

PB: I've said that several times, but I think I'm done.

TC: No, this was great. Thank you. Thanks so much.

CW: You don't have any more (*iPhone stop recording noise*) questions at all?

TC: (*laughs*) I think we need to listen to Pam saying they're done.

PB: No, I think I am. I think we are. I can't. If you come up with something, you're gonna ask me sometimes.

[RECORDING ENDS]