Title
Celine Marie-Pascale: Out in the Redwoods, Documenting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 1965-2003

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Interviewer, Charlotte Jolliffe: I interviewed Celine-Marie Pascale the first time on the 14th of February 2002 in her office at College Eight on the UCSC campus. The second interview took place in the same office on the 1st of March 2002. I am a third-year psychology major. In summer 2001, I came out as a lesbian, and so I brought my experiences with queer issues and some personal struggles into the interview. Having a close relationship with a bisexual woman myself, and hearing her explain the difficulties she dealt with which I did not, sparked an interest in me to interview Celine in order to gain more insight into bisexual experiences.—Charlotte Jolliffe

Jolliffe: Celine, where were you born?

Pascale: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Jolliffe: When were you born?

Pascale: 1956.
Jolliffe: Can you tell me about yourself and your family?

Pascale: I’m one of four kids—three brothers, no sisters. I’ve got a younger brother and two older brothers. My parents didn’t have a high school education. My father sold tractor trailers for a living. He died when I was quite young, and my mother went to work. She supported the family by working as a nurse’s aid graveyard shift in a state psychiatric hospital. Minimum wage job. We grew up in a really segregated white neighborhood.

Jolliffe: Both your parents were white?

Pascale: Yes, my mother was German and my father was Italian. And there were times when she didn’t think of him as white, quite. There’s a lot of family stress about “Italianess” and who was really Italian and how we were not going to be Italian.

Jolliffe: Were they Catholic?

Pascale: My mother was an ex-nun. She came from a really poor German family where the thing to do with daughters was to send them to the convent when you couldn’t afford to support them. So she and her sister ended up in a convent, but my mother was not a nunly type and left. My dad was really not religious. So we were very religious for awhile, and then after my father had a really tragic illness my mother turned her back on the Church and we were raised sort of as agnostics.

Jolliffe: When did you come to Santa Cruz?

Pascale: It must have been 1982, the year of the flood.

Jolliffe: The year of the flood. What flood was this?

Pascale: It rained every day for months; February and March were solid rains and all of Smith Grade Road washed out up in Bonny Doon. I was living up there at the time.

Jolliffe: You weren’t going to UCSC at the time?

Pascale: No.

Jolliffe: So, in your bio it said that you identify as bisexual. Some people have issues with identity labels. Do you want to comment on that?
Pascale: [laughter] Do I have issues with labels? I think that labels are really important as political organizing tools. Labels are a way in which we represent ourselves to the world. They’re the way the world represents us back, and so there are limitations and strengths to them.

In the bi community a lot of people would say, “I don’t like labels. I just do whatever.” Some of that is a really important political stance. Some of that is a totally apolitical stance. I think a lot of it is internalized biphobia. So, I don’t have an issue with labels in general. I have had a really hard time owning the label of bisexual.

Jolliffe: When did you come out as bisexual?

Pascale: Well, it depends on how you define coming out. If it’s about taking the label, not until 1990. If it’s about behavior, then 1975. [laughter] A little bit of a gap. It was a terrifying thing. In 1974, I met a lesbian for the first time and it terrified me. Then in 1975 and 1976, I came out. I got into a couple of relationships with women, and I thought at that time that I was a lesbian. I came out as a lesbian. I came out to my family as a lesbian, well, one of my brothers. I was a lesbian. I moved into that wholeheartedly. And I lost a lot of friends. It was very traumatic. I was in college at the time, and my roommates started locking their bedroom doors at night and bundling up their bathrobes when they went to the shower because I became an “unsafe” person.

After a year and a half of dating women, I met a guy and I really liked him and chased him. We got into a relationship, and I thought, oh, well, I don’t know what that was about. Was I just messed up? Or maybe it was a fluke. I couldn’t understand my own behavior. But I was now with this guy. I lost my whole lesbian community, all my networks of friends. I lost them. It was like my whole life defoliated again. So years later this relationship ends, and I’m in a relationship with a woman, and my life defoliates again. That process, from the time I came out, just repeated over and over. It was extremely painful to have to lose my friends, to lose my community every time a new lover came into my life. Not every time, but when genders switched.

Jolliffe: When you first came out as a lesbian there was no GLBT community. Was it basically GL, would you say?
Pascale: When I came out there really wasn’t a lot of community. I was living in New Jersey at the time, and when I moved to Cambridge I got involved with Daughters of Bilitis.

Jolliffe: What kind of group was that?

Pascale: It’s a really old lesbian group, one of those from back in the dark ages. The whole concept of communities and queerness was really different then. I had never heard the word bisexual. I just never heard it. You were straight or you were a lesbian. That’s how it was.

Jolliffe: When did you first hear about bisexuality?

Pascale: I guess in the late-1980s. I had dropped out of the dominant culture for about five years. I totally dropped out. When I came back, bisexuality was something I encountered for the first time. It might have been talked about before then, but not to my knowledge. But I didn’t pick it up as a label for myself, because I’d never heard about bisexuality except as a hateful thing, that bisexuals were unreliable. You know the whole drill about...

Jolliffe: What do you mean?

Pascale: The stereotype that I encountered around bisexuality was that bisexuals couldn’t make up their mind, that they weren’t trustworthy, that they somehow weren’t mature; that they were just unreliable, unsafe and to be spurned. I think I understand why that is, some reasons for it, but...

Jolliffe: Could you elaborate about why you think that stereotype came to be?

Pascale: Bisexuality is a really unsettling kind of category. Even recently, this movie, A Beautiful Mind… Have you seen that movie? Powerful movie. John Nash was bi, but they don’t put that in the movie, because it’s easier for this culture to deal with schizophrenia, paranoia and delusions, then to deal with bisexuality. It’s a really terrifying topic to people. I think there was the notion that “naturally” everyone was going to be women and men, and “naturally” all women and men were going to be heterosexual and we...
were going to reproduce. People who didn’t fit that were perverts. They were the lesbians and the gay men. So queer identities were “perverted” versions of heterosexuality. Then when the gay movement came up it’s like, “Oh no, we’re natural too. This is our biology. We can’t help it. This is who I am.” The gay movement made a lot of valuable political progress by saying, “There is no choice in our sexuality. You wouldn’t discriminate against somebody because of their race or because of their gender. You shouldn’t discriminate because of their sexuality. There’s not a matter of choice here.” But as soon as you start talking about bisexuels, then you talk about—well, there is a choice. I certainly have a choice. So how do you make that same argument? You can’t. Civil rights for gay and lesbian people were gained by the argument that they don’t “choose” same-sex relationships any more than heterosexuals “choose” opposite-sex relationships. It is a compelling logic as a legal argument, and clearly true for many people. It took a lot of time and sacrifice to gain any civil rights. Enormous sacrifice. And part of that struggle meant staying in close communities, drawing lines about who was safe and who was not. Literally, people’s survival depended on knowing who was on what side of that line. And then a group of people, all of whom benefitted from these struggles, began to say, “Wait a minute, you know, I have a choice. I can choose same-sex or opposite-sex partners.” Well, you can see the problems—the argument for civil rights gets threatened, and the notion of community, the place of personal safety, gets threatened.

**Jolliffe:** Did the GLBT movement or the civil rights movement influence your coming out at all?

**Pascale:** Coming out which time? [laughter]

**Jolliffe:** As a lesbian at first.

**Pascale:** What influenced me coming out as a lesbian was meeting a couple of women I absolutely adored. I admired them so much. I was dating a man, and his two best friends, Crystal and Dana, were a lesbian couple. The four of us spent an enormous amount of time together. They were just magnificent people, and opened the world to me in a way I had never seen before. It was beautiful. So it wasn’t a sense of politics, but it was a sense of possibilities. They embraced a world I had never met before, where there was poetry and acting and music and so much creativity. It was an incredible thing, this beautiful freedom and intimacy that was just wild.
Jolliffe: So when you came out, did you learn most about the homosexual community through actually being immersed in it, or through other mediums like books or media?

Pascale: There weren’t books that I remember. What I remember was this incredible afternoon when Crystal came running over to my apartment with a Cris Williamson album that had just come out. Cris Williamson was a lesbian and this was the first “lesbian music” we had ever heard. There was this recording and we listened to it. We used to listen to it at her house over and over and over. I don’t know if you remember the very first Cris Williamson album; it’s going back quite a ways. And her dad used to walk through, and he couldn’t understand why all these girls were laughing like that. “Look at all those girls giggling on that record,” he’d say. We’d just laugh, because it was like, there it was, a whole group of lesbians! That was sort of our—not exactly a manifesto—but it was our window on the world at that time.

There was Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich. And so through poetry… But there wasn’t any kind of movement that I was connected to. There may have been at other places, but not in the world I was in.

Jolliffe: When you came out to California, did you find that there was a larger community? Or a community at all?

Pascale: When I went to Cambridge there was a community. In Cambridge it was Daughters of Bilitis. There were women’s bars, and there was a whole life. There were lots of things going on. So that was terrific for a while, until I thought I went back into the closet. I was in the closet; I was out of the closet. When I decided to come out in 1990 as a bisexual, I had been just distraught, feeling like I was either going to have to say, “I’m totally schizophrenic about my sexuality,” or, “I’m bi.” It was terrifying to think of calling myself bi because lesbians hated bi people; straight people hated bi people. And there weren’t any bi people. So it was like, wow, what am I going to do?

There was a conference in San Francisco in 1990. It was, I think, the “Fifth International Conference of Bisexuals.” That was phenomenal. I went to that, and it was so weird, Charlotte. It was like I recognized everybody in the room. It was the first time I’d ever been in a room full of people where I felt like they were like me. So that was a really big turning point. I came back to Santa Cruz from that and started organizing a bi discussion group. I was all fired up.
Jolliffe: What was that group called?

Pascale: We started out just being a bi discussion group. Lani Kaahumanu had just written *Bi Any Other Name*. There were a number of really good bi books that came out at that time. So we had started calling ourselves “Bi the Way” at some point. I’m not sure when that happened. It was the first bisexual discussion group in Santa Cruz. We worked with Mindy Storch, who was at the GL [Center], well, what was it called then? I don’t know. Whatever the queer center was called downtown at that time. I guess it was the Gay and Lesbian Center, because we had this big old fight with them to get ourselves included as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual. Mischa Adams was part of that, and a woman by the name of Lissa, and a lot of [other] people. The Center said, “Okay, we can do this. We’ll make it the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Center.” Then the trans community was like, “Well, wait a minute. What about us?” Some trans people had started coming to the bi discussion group. It was a women’s group. Some women went, “Oh, well you can’t come in here because you’re not women. You might be bisexual, but you’re not real women.” Ignorance has many forms. So this big fight started, and kind of tore apart things. Eventually the Center downtown became the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Center. It’s kind of amazing to watch that level of fear get played out. Even as we, as a bi community, were trying (I don’t want to say to force inclusion, but it kind of felt like that sometimes.) to gain acceptance within the queer community, a lot of us were perfectly willing to disenfranchise other people from belonging at the same time. It was that process which got fought out in person and in letters to the editor in a [women’s] newspaper at the time called *Matrix*. It always came down to, “What side of the fence are you going to be on? When they come for us, what side of the fence will you be on?”

Jolliffe: Did your sexual identity influence your decision to go into sociology?

Pascale: No. I think more my class identity did.

Jolliffe: Do you identify as a feminist?

Pascale: Oh, yes.

Jolliffe: I know that in the mid- to late-1970s there was a sort of a schism in the lesbian community between lesbian feminists and feminist lesbians. Are you aware of that?
Pascale: I’m not sure how you’re intending to define it. But there were lots of schisms. It always surprised me to find lesbians who were not feminist, because I came out as a lesbian through feminism. There were definitely a lot of lesbians who were not feminist. And there were a lot of feminists who were really afraid of lesbians. Is that what you’re referring to?

Jolliffe: Yes.

Pascale: That sense of being like, “Oh, well we’re really glad you’re here, but please don’t stay.”

Jolliffe: So you were influenced to come out through feminism. Did you find that a lot of people you knew had been influenced by that feminist movement as well?

Pascale: That was the way I traveled. That was my life. One of the things I did in college was to work on a rape crisis hotline. That was what we did. You were a lesbian; you were a feminist—you did stuff like that. Now it seems a little different. It wasn’t something you even thought about doing. It was like the lifeline to staying alive was working for women, because the situation for women was (I think it is still) grim in lots of profound ways. At the time those ways didn’t seem so submerged as they often do now.

Jolliffe: Can you elaborate more on what it meant to be a lesbian at that time?

Pascale: There were consciousness-raising groups where women got together and talked about their lives and we got (I’ll never forget this), little plastic speculums, and all tore off our pants and sat down with mirrors and speculums and looked at our cervixes. It was a really profound exploration of what it meant to be a woman in this culture, that was physical, emotional, mental. There really wasn’t class or race consciousness at all, but there was, in this very white group of women, a lot of gender consciousness. Coming to recognize how our lives had been disenfranchised by the dominant male power structure meant that as we were learning about this, we were working in battered women’s shelters and rape crisis centers. It was like instead of going to movies... I don’t think I ever went to a movie in college. I worked a lot. There was work and school, but then my social life wasn’t about going to concerts or to movies; it was about working in a rape crisis center, or going to museums.

Jolliffe: Did you ever burn your bra? [laughter]
Pascale: No. [laughter] No, but I did stop wearing bras for a while.

Jolliffe: As a political statement?

Pascale: Well, more as a fashion statement really. I was so young then. I was in high school and part of the burning the bra meant that you could wear halters and things like that. My mother totally freaked out. If I didn’t have enough respect for myself to wear a bra, she would lock me in my room until I learned to have enough respect. So it was one of those types of struggles for us. My mother was incredibly independent—a ferocious woman in some ways. But when it came to not shaving... I can remember her parading me around in front of the neighbors. “Can you believe this? She won’t shave her armpits.” It was very shocking to the generation ahead of us. We were starting to not take for granted the things that had always...

Jolliffe: So you came to Santa Cruz in the 1980s?

Pascale: Yes.

Jolliffe: I know you were or are involved with the Diversity Center.

Pascale: Well, really, only marginally. I send checks. That kind of thing. Graduate school and Buddhism were pretty much all I could handle. Now that I’m two months out of graduate school, I don’t have my sea legs. I don’t feel like I have my life back. So, I’m not an active participant at the moment.

Jolliffe: I also heard that you write.

Pascale: Yes. I have essays in Sinister Wisdom and Puerta del Sol, literary quarterlies.

Jolliffe: What were the themes of your work?

Pascale: One is about being Italian-American. Another on whiteness. Stuff on homelessness. A lot of stuff on poverty. Issues of gender, race and class. I’ve written some stuff for Z Magazine.

Jolliffe: I saw that you contributed to the Lavender Reader.

Pascale: Oh, yes. I used to be the News/Notes editor. That was so fun. It was a great job because I gathered news from all around the world about gay and lesbian, bisexual and
transgendered communities. I learned a lot. I loved being able to put together a column, to take those pieces and organize them in a way that somebody else could be moved by.

**Jolliffe:** Where would you get your information?

**Pascale:** I’d get on the computer and search. It was early graduate school. I wanted to contribute to my community while I was in graduate school. I also volunteered with Triangle Speakers for awhile.

**Jolliffe:** When you were talking about bisexuality, you were also talking about labels and their political significance. You said that you “have a choice.” I wanted to ask you, what does it mean to have a choice in a world that says sexuality isn’t a choice?

**Pascale:** I want to qualify it in one sense. I don’t think anyone really has a choice about the exact person we fall in love with. We have a choice in who we see as potential lovers, how we go about creating this known universe of possible people we would date. There’s some choice in there. Tall person. Short person. Person of the same race. Person of the same class. Person of the same sex. There’s like this whole thing that we kind of can choose from. For me, gender isn’t a determining factor.

**Jolliffe:** When you came out as a lesbian, the first time, it wasn’t a sense of politics, it was a sense of possibility. Does that mean that when you were younger that you didn’t have feelings of attraction to girls, and you just sort of discovered it later on?

**Pascale:** I don’t know. I can look back and interpret my whole past to explain my present, but if I had a different present I’d probably look back and explain my past differently. So, I can’t say for certain. I didn’t have a lot of close friendships as a child, but the ones I had were with girls. I don’t know. I wouldn’t have put it in sexual terms. I didn’t know that such a thing existed. I had one very tight friendship with a girl when I was young, and it was a really erotic friendship with a lot of juice for me. But I didn’t even consider that I was a lesbian because I didn’t know that such a thing existed.

The first time I heard the word *lesbian* was when my father was getting hauled off by the police for having tried to murder my mother. When they said, “Why did you do this?” he said, “Well, I had to. She’s a lesbian.” I said, “Wow, mom, what’s a lesbian?” My mom said, “Well, it’s a woman who likes women.” I said “Oh, am I a lesbian?” She’s like “NO!” [laughter] “You’re not a lesbian and I’m not a lesbian. Your father is crazy.” And
that’s the last I ever heard of it. I didn’t understand quite what that meant. The whole experience was so devastating that it wasn’t the point that stayed in my mind.

Years later I went to college and met a woman who was rumored to be a lesbian. She was the residential assistant in our dorm. I was totally infatuated with her and terrified by her. She was the person that I didn’t want to talk to, I didn’t want to be alone with, but I watched all of the time.

**Jolliffe:** Now fast forward a bit to 1990. I think at this point you had taken on the label of bisexual. I want you to tell me a little more about the “Fifth International Conference of Bisexuals” that you went to in San Francisco.

**Pascale:** An extraordinary event. It was huge, first of all, which was very surprising to me. I think there were five hundred people there. It was the first time that I walked into a place and felt my body completely relax. Somehow everybody there was like me. That’s a really hard thing to explain. I couldn’t tell you why because so many of them were so really not like me. I think it was my first experience of being in an environment that was not biphobic, where I didn’t have to explain anything to anybody about how or why I loved. That was so incredibly liberating. Whatever I wanted to do was fine. I didn’t have to pretend like I never had a boyfriend, that I had never had a girlfriend, that I didn’t care who my next lover was. It was liberating. There were tons and tons of workshops that were going on. It was my first introduction to connecting all the dots in a certain way. I made some close friends in the trans community. I had never hung out with trans people before, hadn’t thought about it very much. It gave me something that I didn’t want to lose again. When I came back from that conference it was—got to be some place for us in Santa Cruz. This has to happen because I can’t go back in that box. It was quite radicalizing in that way—liberating.

**Jolliffe:** So when you came back to Santa Cruz, is that when you started the discussion group?

**Pascale:** Yes. That’s when I so stupidly put my home phone number on flyers.

**Jolliffe:** Wait, tell me about that.

**Pascale:** Well, I wanted to get a bi discussion group going. How could I do that? I didn’t know. So I talked to people. I found another woman who was interested in doing it. We
started putting up flyers for a discussion group, but we needed a contact, right? So I put my phone number on the flyers for more information. Seemed so logical at the time. Then some guy took that number and harassed me on the phone for three months. I worked from home. So I’d be in the middle of a business call with somebody in New York talking about their book, and I had call waiting, and I’d pick up the incoming call and there was this guy doing all this totally biphobic stuff, harassing me. It was very distressing. But it was a very good experience with the Santa Cruz police, much to my surprise.

That group got off the ground and it was wonderful. There are so many different ways that people can be bi. If you say that you’re a lesbian that sort of looks one way. There may be lots of different variations at home. But when you say you’re bi that doesn’t necessarily tell you a lot. There are bi people in same-sex relationships, in opposite-sex relationships. There are a lot of non-monogamous ones as well. There are lots of bi people for whom creative families, broad families, are really important—multiple spouses and multiple sets of kids. Very creative kinds of ways of being in the world. My style of being bi is the least inventive, serial monogamy, basically, a little wildness in younger years. I’ve been in a relationship with the same woman for the last ten or eleven years and I’m really happy that I have a lifetime commitment with her.

Jolliffe: So getting back to your experiences in Santa Cruz. Can you talk to me about your experiences with homophobia and/or biphobia?

Pascale: I don’t come up against homophobia that much in my day today. [My partner] Mercedes and I have been spit on in Santa Cruz.

Jolliffe: When was this?

Pascale: A while back. We were walking down the street holding hands and a truckload of guys came by and spat on us. In the early-1990s. Things like that. Or when tourists come into town and suddenly it’s not Santa Cruz anymore. Since everybody’s from some place else and then homophobia comes up. You get weird looks. Looks of disgust and disdain. That sort of thing. Certainly our parents and families have a lot of homophobia. I don’t experience biphobia in my family. I experience homophobia. Mercedes’s family has been really terrifically supportive. They had some homophobia to overcome to get to that place. They were willing to do that. I guess there is a fair amount of homophobia I come up against in relationships. Not so much of the drive-by yelling and stuff.
I have a life that’s kind of carved out. I do what I’m comfortable doing. I really wanted to do this dance class. So Mercedes and I did a dance class that was Cajun Zydeco. Well, we were the only same-sex couple in the whole place, and there was a lot of homophobia there. I was always on the men’s side because I was the lead. I just insisted on being there, on being out, on getting the language changed, because I wanted that dance class! I felt entitled to be there. It was harder, I think, for Mercedes. They came around. We were like the hottest couple in the dance class so that made it easier. All the women wanted me to lead for them. We laughed about that. But then afterwards there were all these concerts where people were going to dance. That’s really not a welcoming crowd. Wherever we went we encountered a lot of homophobia. So it was like, oh, okay, maybe we won’t be doing the Cajun Zydeco thing. Homophobia is everywhere. I live my life in the way that it doesn’t bother me every day. I don’t go Cajun Zydeco dancing. In my day-to-day life, the homophobia that I experience is really limited. My day-to-day life is circumscribed by that larger homophobic world. All those things I don’t do, don’t even think of doing, because of the amount of homophobia…

Jolliffe: Have you come out as bisexual?

Pascale: That’s a whole different story. [laughter]

Jolliffe: Well, tell it.

Pascale: Usually I’ve come out as queer. I try to sort out what’s going on. I come out as queer, or I come out by talking about my partner who is a woman, so then people assume that I am a lesbian. It’s a lesbian relationship. You know, ten years in a lesbian relationship it feels like, okay, I can do that. In the class that I’m teaching now I came out as bi. It feels really important to me to come out as bi, and it’s way more scary than coming out as a lesbian. I can do the lesbian thing like [snaps her fingers] or queer—that’s easy for me. I still have internalized biphobia.

I felt really entitled to be there in the Zydeco class, but I haven’t felt so entitled in lesbian spaces even though my partner is a lesbian. You know that joke that was very popular: “I’m not a lesbian, but my girlfriend is.” Ha, ha, ha, ha. Well, the only way that’s funny is if bi people don’t exist. The biphobia and homophobia that comes from queer people is really different from the biphobia that comes from straight people. But it matters more to me among gay people, because it’s my community. It’s where I identify. The biphobia that I get from straight people is not the painful stuff that I internalize. Biphobia from
straight people looks like, “Oh, isn’t that a kinky thing? Wouldn’t it be fun to get it on with two women?” It’s just like one more way to degrade women and their sexuality.

But biphobia among the queer community is about not belonging, not being a safe person, not being part of my own community. When the discussion group came out for bisexual women, there was a letter to the editor in Matrix that just shredded bi women. “Indecisive, don’t know themselves, not trustworthy, not part of our community.” So there was a whole volley of letters to the editor, back and forth, about how bi women were not welcome.

For me, there was also that thing about not looking like a lesbian even when I identified as one. I came out as a lesbian way back when there was a look—the flannel shirt, the jeans, and the sneakers. Or a sweatshirt and jeans and sneakers. There was a whole demeanor which I was always too much of a sissy to take up. My mother was very butch. My mother wore a flannel shirt, white tube socks. She used to wear battery-operated socks to go hunting. Batteries would keep your feet warm. She was really a very butch woman. I grew up wanting to be the opposite of that. So I have always looked more “straight.” So that sort of fed into the whole thing; showing up at bars it’s like, oh, I look like a straight woman. I didn’t look gay.

Jolliffe: Was there a concept of “lipstick lesbian” in the late-1970s?

Pascale: No, that came with... I can’t remember the woman’s name who started the lipstick lesbian thing? Do you remember her name? She wrote a book...She was really popular in the 1990s. Big head of curly hair. Wore lots of make-up. Did this whole lipstick lesbian thing. [Joanne Loulan—editor.]

Jolliffe: Did you ever think, oh, that might be what I am?

Pascale: No. Because I’ve never been a fru-fru kind of woman. I never did the hair and the make-up and that kind of stuff. If my choice is lipstick or flannel shirt, I’m not there in either place.

Jolliffe: I want to talk to you about how your sexuality may have affected your sense of spirituality.

Pascale: Well, it’s really hard to participate in a religion, to worship a god that will condemn you to hell for being who you are. Even as a child, Christianity fell apart for
me. It fell apart for me before I had a sense of my sexuality. I always had a very deep spiritual commitment but not toward religion. I was involved in Sufism.

[This next section of the tape was inaudible—Editor]

**Jolliffe:** And then after Sufism was it Buddhism that you came into?

**Pascale:** No. I had a really bad ending to Sufism—a rape. I decided that after that I was done with spiritual teachers and that spirituality would be my own. Sometime later I got into a relationship with a man who was a third generation ceremonial leader from Taos Pueblo. We traveled around doing Native American ceremonies. When that relationship ended, that whole way of life went with the relationship. Being in a romantic relationship with this man gave me what felt like a more honest entrée into it. After that I really didn’t know how to be there in a way that had integrity. I took up a serious meditation practice. What had been an on-and-off meditation practice became a daily commitment to meditation. I did that some years before I found Buddhism.

**Jolliffe:** What year was that?

**Pascale:** When I started the meditation? I can’t remember. 1992? It’s kind of a blur. I got a miserable medical diagnosis. I had a bunch of immune problems. When I started trying to find ways to create health instead of fight disease, I really started to meditate. Eventually that led me to Mahayana Buddhism, which is my practice. That’s where my heart is.

**Jolliffe:** Is there anything else you want to add? Maybe what it means to be bisexual, or what you would like people to know thirty years from now about your time in the present.

**Pascale:** Thirty years from now. That’s not so long. I’ll be seventy-seven. I’d like to hang around and give them my two cents in person.