

Audio recorded: November, 2, 2017

Transcribed by: Eleni Andris

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:00:00) This is Eleni Andris. I'm here with Karin Allen. It is November 2nd at 1:06PM and we are at the Webber Public Library. So, Karin, how about—tell me a little about where you come from.

KARIN ALLEN:

I was born and raised in St. Louis, lived in North St. Louis by Chain of Rocks Park, went to Riverview Gardens High School. When I was twenty-one I moved out, moved to the city.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:00:38:00) How would you describe your childhood?

KARIN ALLEN:

Different. My parents divorced. My father abandoned us. My mother passed away when I was twenty-four, on Christmas Eve morning.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:01:02:00) How would you describe your parents influence on you—kind of, growing up?

KARIN ALLEN:

My dad, I don't think he had any influence on me, because I just remember him being mean. My mom [pause] didn't live long enough, I guess, to influence me. If she did, she left me the kindness.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:01:29:00) Who would you then say were the most influential figures in your early life and through, kind of, your adolescence? Who were your influential figures?

KARIN ALLEN:

My mom, my grandma, my older sister.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:01:43:00) Could you tell me a little bit about your grandma and your older sister?

KARIN ALLEN:

Oh, my grandma was something else! She was a pistol. But I loved her dearly. She was just a fun, silly old woman that took no sh—crap from anybody [laughs]. Sandy—Sandy—has been like a mother. She is older than me, only by a few years, but bit more like a mother. And we just kind of got reconnected again, at no fault of hers, in the past eight years, six years.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:02:27:00) Who of those people that you just mentioned would you say you're most like?

KARIN ALLEN:

Sandy.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:02:33:00) Sandy? In what ways?

KARIN ALLEN:

We're Allen girls. We have the same mannerism [sic], for the most part. Same temper. And same silly wit.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:02:50:00) What were some defining experiences for you growing up?

KARIN ALLEN:

My mother dying of cancer when I was twenty-four, me calling my dad to tell him my mom died and he said he didn't give a beep [sic]. And then me trying to get ahold of my brother to tell him my grandmother died, so I had to through the operator to get ahold of my dad and he told the operator he didn't have a daughter named Karin. So that kind of ended that feeling from my father. My grandma dying—just having to be on my own a lot, until I met Pat.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:03:42:00) Could you tell me a little bit about Pat?

KARIN ALLEN:

Pat was—when I met her I was twenty-seven, she was forty-four. She was a strong-willed person, but we grew to a family. She had two children, but before Pat and I [sic] she was with a woman named Georgia. Georgia had a child, one-year-old, and her name was Heather. They were together for seven years. And Pat and Georgia raised Heather, she was seven years old, and then I came in the picture in 19—January 1984. I was twenty-seven. She was forty-four. One of the things that Pat told me that I have never forgotten was, too many people break up, and when there's children involved, they also break up with them. So when it came to Georgia's daughter Heather, that Pat raised for seven years, I was told that it was none of my business, and that she would *do* and *stay* in Heather's life (00:05:00:00).

Heather and I didn't get along very well at first, but as she got older things were fine. As time goes by, Heather was an adult herself and she was married [sic]. She had three children—three girls: Jade, Reja, and Mya. So as life goes on, her and her husband [sic] broke up because Heather was getting mentally ill, and, she had knee surgery and she was taking pain pills which—she became very addicted which causes—caused her to be

bipolar. Then, as that went on, she became [pauses] borderline personality, she was—they said she had borderline personality disorder. So, she got even worse and worse and worse and, eight years ago, she committed suicide.

Now the girls were, at that time, fifteen, eleven, and four, so they went to live with their grandma after all was said and done and Heather was buried, but the girls didn't want to live with their biological grandmother—they wanted to come live with Pat and me. Now we'd been in their lives since they were born. So, we got the father involved, and he had to go get a lot of things taken care of in Illinois because of what Heather had done—against him—and he finally got full custody of all his kids. We moved them down here August, the last day of August, eight years ago, and they have been with the family ever since. Now mind you, I'm not biologically related to any of these girls. I am just what they call Aunt Karin, who's been in their lives since day one.

Back to Pat's family. Pat's daughter had a child and her name's Jessica. Now, I've been in Jessica's life for thirty-two years, kind of helped raise her, more or less. Her mother got ill, hit her head, had a blood clot, and had to have surgery. Since then she's been in a nursing home and that's been going on—ten years I think? Something like that. So Jessica has been under my belt too. So Pat and I raised all these kids. Pat lived only two years after the girls [pause] moved in. Six years ago, Pat passed away from complications of COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease], so I had been the one raising all four kids, more or less. Jessica's helped me out tremendously because she was an adult, and they—I am their Aunt Karin. Now Jessica, the oldest, had—she has a new life, she has a family started. Jade, one of the girls, the oldest girl, she has a life, she has a son. Now their kids call me grandma—actually they call me K, and my partner now, she call—they call them—call her T.

Okay, after Pat passed away we lived on South Grand. It wasn't a good neighborhood. I had met Tammy two years after Pat passed away—we've been together four years. We legally got married May 20th, 2017. But when I met Tammy, we were friends first, and so she knew all about the kids, how they're a part of my life. She knows everything that I could ever think of to tell her. And, she still wanted to stay with me [laughs]. So anyway, we got out of Grand because the neighborhood was getting bad. We moved to a house in Affton. All the kids lived there with us. Well, I guess the older one Jessica, she has her own family, she bought a house all on her own, and she's—an adult now, doing her life. And Jade lives in an apartment with her boyfriend and her son. And I had the two younger girls living with me. One is in college, but home right now, and the other one's only thirteen years old.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:09:54:00) So, what was it—that—what was it that (00:10:00:00) made you stay, if that makes sense, once Pat passed away? I mean, I know that you knew the kids and obviously had developed a relationship with them, but, that's kind of like a next level of dedication to a group of people. I mean, they had older sisters, they had family members that could have taken them on. What was it about your connection with them that, you decided, you—

KARIN ALLEN:

—purely love. You don't have to be blood. You do what you have to do, what is necessary. These kids, these kids were still young when Pat passed away—we also fought hard to keep them, get them, get them down here because they did not want to live with their grandmother. Jessica—Jessica was like my own kid. I've seen her, well all of them, from day one, and just watch them grow [sic] and taught them and played with them, and, I just love them, and I would not, any way—in any way abandon these children. And what Pat said to me about Heather is how I feel about my girls.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:11:13:00) So, you didn't have any siblings growing up? Correct, or—did you have any siblings when you were growing up?

KARIN ALLEN:

I had two sisters and a brother.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:11:26:00) Oh, oh you mentioned. So, do you think anything about your relationship, like your family ties growing up kind of shaped the way that you value family? Did that kind of carry over into how you view your girls in any way?

KARIN ALLEN:

I think so, I think it did. You know, before I got with Pat my older sister had two children—who I loved dearly, don't get to see them enough but they're grown adults and have their own lives. My one sister, her name is Kim. She's a troubled one. I don't know if she's still alive. I have no way of contacting her. But when I was with Pat, we took her daughter in for a time because she was—she was away, and we took care of her, so I think it's just—I think it's natural for me. I have no biological children, so I just think this is natural.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:12:28:00) Can I ask you—a little bit, going back a little bit about Pat?

KARIN ALLEN:

Sure.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:12:34:00) So, how and when did you meet Pat?

KARIN ALLEN:

It was in January 1984. I walked into a bar called Kitty Kat Klub, it's a gay bar, and she was there. And I had seen her a couple times before when she was still with Georgia, but she wasn't, at that particular time. And so, from that day, we just started dating and I moved in and we were together twenty-seven years, till she passed away.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:13:07:00) So, would you say that it was kind of an immediate connection?

KARIN ALLEN:
I think so. Mhm. I really think so.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:13:15:00) And you didn't know—you knew of her before?

KARIN ALLEN:
I knew of her before, from someone I hung around with, yeah. She was a manager of a baseball team.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:13:28:00) Did you frequent the St. Louis gay bar scene regularly, like what was your relationship with that scene?

KARIN ALLEN:
I basically just went to the Kitty Kat Klub. It was a small, family-oriented, great place to be. I loved it. I didn't really go to a lot of bars—actually I didn't know there was bars [sic] like that out, even when I was in my twenties. But, you know, I went to just—you just love Kitty Kat Klub.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:14:03:00) How did you discover it?

KARIN ALLEN:
You know, I can't remember. I think—a friend of mine went there. I think that's how I—I started going there.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:14:18:00) Did you have a lot of friends that would also go there with you once you started going, like did you kind of develop any sort of community within the Kitty Kat Klub?

KARIN ALLEN:
Once I started going I knew a few people, but I got to know a lot when I would go in there with Pat. I knew her friends. I got to know all of them. And I'm still friends with a lot of them.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:14:42:00) They're all still kind of in St. Louis?

KARIN ALLEN:

Yep. They're all in St. Louis. And I—we go out and hang around and—all the time.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:14:52:00) Are any of your kind of old stomping grounds still around—or have you found that—I know that a lot of especially lesbian bars (00:15:00:00) have kind of closed down.

KARIN ALLEN:

The Kitty Kat closed down. But I had stopped going. Pat and I stopped going there—out for a long time. We kind of had a family life because of Jessica, so we just stopped going out a lot. We would on occasions. But now we go to a place called Hummel's on Broadway. It's owned by a woman, Dawn Hummel. And that's where we go. All of us. We just go down there and a friend of ours DJs, so we go there and just party with them when they do it, and it's like couple times a month.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:15:38:00) Do you go with Tammy?

KARIN ALLEN:

Well, of course.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:15:44:00) Were you ever around the Central West End, because I know that that was kind of a—a popular destination?

KARIN ALLEN:

I was. For about, maybe, a year and a half I would go down there a lot, when I was with another friend. [laughs]

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:16:05:00) So you and Pat kind of formed this instant connection and then what was it that, I guess, not persuaded you to move in with her but, how did your relationship sort of develop from meeting at a bar—

KARIN ALLEN:

Haven't you heard that lesbians U-Haul it really quick [sic]? [inaudibly laughs]

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:16:28:00) [Inaudibly laughs] So the stereotype—what you're saying is that the stereotype in certain cases is true?

KARIN ALLEN:

[Laughs] Yes, it is true. I moved in with her, a couple weeks later. We went to Arizona for a while, and never left.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:16:45:00) Oh, so you—you guys moved to Arizona?

KARIN ALLEN:

No no no. I moved in with her. We took a trip to Arizona to where her parents were.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:16:54:00) Oh, and so you met her parents?

KARIN ALLEN:

Yes.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:16:56:00) What was that like?

KARIN ALLEN:

Her mother was an old Italian woman, her father was an old German man, you know, kind of nerve-racking but I was young so I could deal with it.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:17:12:00) They sound like, on paper, that they would be pretty conservative, kind of hard asses—

KARIN ALLEN:

[Both talking at once] Mhm.

ELENI ANDRIS:

—would you say that that was—

KARIN ALLEN:

[Both talking at once] I would say that.

ELENI ANDRIS:

—accurate.

KARIN ALLEN:

Yeah.

ELENI ANDRIS:

But that didn't deter you—

KARIN ALLEN:

No.

ELENI ANDRIS:

At all?

KARIN ALLEN:
No.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:17:20:00) And then you guys moved back, or you went back to St. Louis?

KARIN ALLEN:
Yeah, we came back—we only went out there for a couple weeks to visit, and we came back to St. Louis. Teri, Pat's daughter, had Jessica and we kind of made it to where we were just home-bound [sic], with Jessica, taking care of her because her mom at the time worked really hard, a couple jobs—and, she was just our life.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:17:47:00) So what was it like specifically raising Jessica?

KARIN ALLEN:
[Sighs] I was the soft-hearted one. I would get in trouble for letting her get away with too much. Pat was more strict than I was. Pat and I would get into a few arguments over Jessica because I thought Pat was a little rough, and—but Jessica and I—I was, back then, I was young and vibrant. I was her playmate. We played, we did everything. I'd come home from work and did a special whistle in the hallway. She would hear me—Karin's home, and run downstairs.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:18:31:00) Were there any major challenges, specifically related to raising Jessica, that you remember?

KARIN ALLEN:
[Sighs] Mostly, hmm. I got accused, a couple of times, for stealing her away from her mom.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:18:50:00) By who [sic]?

KARIN ALLEN:
By her mom.

ELENI ANDRIS:
By her mom.

KARIN ALLEN:
Yes. And I told her that I didn't have to steal her, that she gave her away. So, it was challenges [sic], but I would—I wouldn't change it.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Would you say that—so—what kind of time period, years-wise, was Jessica growing up then? Was that—

KARIN ALLEN:

—She was born in [pauses] eighty-five—1985.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:19:13:00) So, would you say that it was more difficult co-parenting with a partner at that time period, in 1985 as oppose to now, kind of raising younger girls? Is it easier to be romantically involved with a partner now and raising kids then it was in 1985?

KARIN ALLEN:

I think it all depends on the people. It depends on your age, what—and just how you were raised, maybe? I think it—we didn't really have a problem raising Jessica, (00:20:00:00) all three of us. I guess that I was the softer one, so I didn't really discipline her much. She was a good kid. She always laughs that she was raised under a rock, because I am the more scared one for the children. I don't—wouldn't let her do anything [laughs]—spend the night anywhere, yeah, ride her bike anywhere. She didn't know how to ride a bike for the longest time—that would be because of me. And, actually where we lived there was no place for her to. So, I just think it depends on the two people.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:20:35:00) So—you know—did you ever—do you have any memories of like running into like specific, I don't know if—discrimination isn't maybe—maybe that's a strong word, but any time that you felt, essentially, disrespected—

KARIN ALLEN:

The only time I ever felt disrespected was [pauses] after the—the marriage laws went through that the LGBT could marry, legally. Tammy and I were at Walmart, and we had a full cart, overflowing full of groceries. Kids can eat. And two men walked by, and he said [sic] Judgement Day is coming. I didn't quite catch it. He said a little more, but I can't remember. I didn't quite catch it, and then Tammy explained to me that we were going to be judged because we were gay, and it immediately pissed me off. I said, turn the truck around, take me back to him. I have a mouth on me, and a temper. She said no. That is the only time I have ever felt discriminated against.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Wow.

KARIN ALLEN:

Mhm.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:21:54:00) So, I guess, tell me then, so after Jessica, who's the next oldest?

KARIN ALLEN:
No, she is the oldest.

ELENI ANDRIS:
After—I mean, the youngest—who comes after Jessica—

KARIN ALLEN:
Jade.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:22:11:00) Jade. Okay, so Jade comes into the picture, then, at what point?

KARIN ALLEN:
Jade came in the picture—Jade is twenty-two, Jessica is—so they're ten years apart. Jessica was ten when Jade was born. Jessica used to play with Jade like it was her baby doll. And Jade and Jessica were so close when they were little.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:22:35:00) Even though they were ten years apart?

KARIN ALLEN:
Yeah. Jessica wanted to play mommy a lot, you know, and it was all about Jade. Until they get to a certain age, and then all kids are a little, you know, assholes. [laughs]

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:22:52:00) What was it like raising Jade as compared to raising Jessica, or just by herself?

KARIN ALLEN:
Jade had a hell of a childhood. Her mother and dad were [pauses] excellent parents. Heather would always—her house was always clean. The girls were—we're talking about Jade—Jade was always clean, always well-mannered. It took a while for Heather to get there, but when she did, it was—Jade was like a little doll. But as she grew up, like a lot of kids, they get their attitude [sic]. But Jade went through hell with her mother when her mother got sick. Her mother [pauses and sighs] tried to get her in trouble, which actually got Jade in trouble. No, that came out wrong. Heather tried to get Jade in trouble, would let her go in her room drinking and smoking and all that stuff, and then Heather turned on her, and tried to get her in trouble with the law.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:24:08:00) What was—what was kind of her—what was the incentive to do that? Why would Heather do that?

KARIN ALLEN:

At this particular time I think Heather was just being a nasty, mean person, and she told Jade that her mother sent her to rehab so she's going to send her to rehab. Georgia was, I don't know how to put this nicely, was a whack job. It was all about Georgia. Heather got in the way, so how she did Heather is how Heather did Jade. But Jade also received the brunt of Heather's illness, and Heather was very mean to Jade, very mean. So, getting Jade at fifteen, [00:25:00:00] it was difficult.

Jade was, I mean she loved us, don't get me wrong, she loved us and she knew it was the best, but when she'd go through her little spells and then she'd just try to push to see how far she could go, and as long as Pat was alive she knew that that wasn't going to go very far. And even myself I wouldn't let her—she tried to act out a few of times and she got grounded for it. And then she kind of settled down, and it all became life to all of us, normal, you know. One of the—next child in line, Reja, I think she was feeling her oats one day and told me, you're not my mother. I said, no, I'm not but you're still—do what I tell you to and don't play those games with me cause it doesn't work. Mya was too young, so.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:25:58:00) Did you feel, I know this is probably a taboo question for anybody who plays a motherly figure to anybody, but did you ever have like a stronger bond with one of the girls over another? Not necessarily that you love one more, but just that you feel more connected to any of the girls in any way?

KARIN ALLEN:

Jessica.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Jessica.

KARIN ALLEN:

Jessica and I had this strong bond. We don't see eye to eye because she is oh so much of her grandmother in her. But Jessica and I have this strong bond. We always have. Jade and I [pause] we have a [pause], how do I put this, a love-hate? It's always love, don't get me wrong, I love that kid even though I want to strangle her. But, she is more—she's a lot like Pat too, Jesus Christ. I'm not going to win on this. And Pat's not her biological grandmother. But she's a strong-willed person, so we have a lot of run-ins. Reja [pause], Reja was just absolutely adorable when she was growing up. She never met a stranger—I love and like you, is what she would say. And Mya and I were never really that close because Jade and Reja were close to me, and Pat always wanted one of them to get close to her.

So, when Mya was born, Mya was a very shy child, would never spend time with us unless her mother did. So, when she would come down I would just simply go away in another room or something and let Pat have time with Maya. So Mya and Pat grew a bond, and as Pat was getting sicker, Mya would tell me she's babysitting her, you know, they would lay in bed together with oxygen masks on. Mya's wasn't hooked up

obviously. But yeah, they had a strong bond. Now, I have a strong bond with the grandbabies. Yeah, the girls are adults, well two of them. One's in college and, ditsy as she is, she's a good kid. Mya, on the other hand, is twice as ditsy and, ugh, can't wait till she gets older [laughs].

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:28:28:00) Remind me, how old is Mya?

KARIN ALLEN:
Mya's thirteen.

ELENI ANDRIS:
Mya's thirteen.

KARIN ALLEN:
Mhm.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:28:33:00) So, what's it like, kind of raising a pre-teen/teenage girl, because I know that that's—what are—

KARIN ALLEN:
Ask your mom.

ELENI ANDRIS:
[Both talking at once]—yeah tell me about it.

KARIN ALLEN:
Ask your mom how it was! It's hard. You know I'm a—I may not be strict, but I have really weird rules. I'm afraid of other people in this world because there's so many weird, strange, disgusting people. So, when we moved to the house we're in in Affton, I wouldn't let Mya ride her bike. And if she did she could only go up two houses and back. And I was always told about that by Jessica, Karin let her ride her bike. No! I kind of eased up on that. She wants to go for walks with her friends, it's like you call me when you leave, you call me when you get to where you're going, you call me when you get home. I'm just overly protective. And, she's a smart-mouth, sloppy—what's the word—rude. She's everything a thirteen-year-old, you can imagine, is.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:29:40:00) Have you seen any of yourself kind of rub off—rub off on any of the girls? Do you—when you look at them—

KARIN ALLEN:
I kind of wish I could but no, I don't see that. I don't see the softness. I am—I get mad easy, but [00:30:00:00] the softness in me and how I care, I don't really see that from any

of them. I mean, they care about their kids and themselves and their boyfriends, but I don't see [pause] me rubbing—me rubbed off on any of them.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:30:21:00) Why do you—why do you think the softness, particularly? Do you think that has anything, anything to do with like any parts of their pasts or their upbringings or do you think that just—

KARIN ALLEN:

No, I was always a sucker. I always had a soft heart. I would cry at everything, and it drove me crazy. But let me tell you something, if you're like that and you hit menopause, boy, that shit sure changes. You turn into a bitch. And I loved it [laughs].

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:30:57:00) So—but do you think that, there's a reason that the girls don't really possess that softness that you can think of, or is that just kind of inherent to who they are?

KARIN ALLEN:

I just think it's who they are. I don't think that [pauses]—who they are and who they were raised by, well then Jessica should be nice. You know, I think a lot of it has to do with their upbringing, even though it wasn't for a very long time. You know, I think it's just who they are. I don't think that soft-hearted, my feelings get hurt really easy—all the boring, disgusting stuff I go through.

ELENI ANDRIS:

The girls that have kids—

KARIN ALLEN:

Mhm.

ELENI ANDRIS:

—Do you see them raising their kids in any way that mirrors the way that you raised them? Do you have any like “aha” moments like—

KARIN ALLEN:

I do.

ELENI ANDRIS:

—like that's what I told you?

KARIN ALLEN:

Do you know—have you ever watched a mother feeding a child and they always open their mouth when the child takes a bite? They always made fun of me for that. Well they do it. And I just laugh. I laugh. And they tell me, my kid's not going to do this, and when they let them do it it's like, exactly. What'd you tell me? Okay. That kind of stuff, yes. I

think it's funny. Jessica's, I would say if any of them, Jessica's a *little* like me in *that*. But raising their kids, they have strict rules. [Whispers] And sometimes grandma don't follow them.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:32:34:00) So, tell me about your grandbabies.

KARIN ALLEN:

Okay. Liam is the oldest. He's three. Oh my god. It's a—it was a house full of women always. And then here comes a little boy. Boys were rough to raise. They're mean. They can be little sh*ts. But oh my god, he was so cute, and I just love him to death. And then we have Crew. Crew's Jessica's. He's two, and boy does he have a hell of a personality. He is just—he can be so loving and so honoring, well they both can be. And when you get the loving moments it's like, you just eat it up. You know, I just—I didn't want to be called grandma cause I'm old as it is and I thought ew, but you know, I like being called grandma. And Crew's going to have a brother and sister soon, this month actually. So I get to be a grandma again!

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:33:39:00) What is it about “grandma” that you like?

KARIN ALLEN:

Hmm—[laughs] cause I don't have to raise them [laughs]. No, I do babysit them, though. I babysit the boys because they're not in school full-time on Wednesday and Friday. Yeah. Wednesday and Friday. And, you know, grandmas can spoil them. The parents don't like it but it's like, I know, grandma gets to do such wonderful things and send them back to you.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:34:10:00) Do you find yourself being as protective of them as you were with the girls—

KARIN ALLEN:

Yes.

ELENI ANDRIS:

—growing up?

KARIN ALLEN:

Definitely. Especially with them being boys. And the way this world is now, and these kids that are out on the street that have no respect, that treat females like—yes.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:34:38:00) So, if you could—if you could raise your grandbaby boys, how would you raise them in this world today as boys, as men, in terms of like how they interact with women, because you raised a whole family of women at first.

KARIN ALLEN:

They have to learn that—respect. They would be raised to learn a lot of respect, [00:35:00:00] and to have respect and to show respect, [sighs] and to be kind, and good, and honest. And it starts at home. And, yes, I would raise them to be kind, gentle men.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:35:25:00) Do you think that's challenging in—in today's world?

KARIN ALLEN:

It is, but they're young enough, and, you know, Jessica and Jade both, the moms, they both teach them to be polite. You know, T and K will be sitting down and one of the boys will come up and say, get up I want that chair! [Laughs] We just, because we're used to it, we just get up. You know, the moms are there it's like, would you please get up, may I please have that chair? And they will repeat it. You know, and you got to teach young boys that respect is number one—is the number one priority, so they don't turn out like these little assholes in this world today. I will not—I don't care if I'm on a cane, if I see them treating a woman wrong, I will hit them with my cane. I *despise* men like that. And it's not because I'm gay, it's because I just despise *people* like that. We teach them not to be bullies, because I despise bullies. We teach them not to be racist. For one, their grandparents are gay. Two, Liam—his mother and his two aunts, they're all mixed, so you can't really be racist against—when you come from a diverse family, and that's what we are, we're a diverse family. So, I teach them not to be bullies, my personal, as I do now. And not to be racist.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:37:06:00) Did you ever have any difficulties growing up raising the girls in terms of like, experiencing any sort of either racism or like, I don't know, any—any sort of kind of like maliciousness?

KARIN ALLEN:

You know what, no.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Never?

KARIN ALLEN:

The kids, when they were growing up—no. Jade doesn't look like she's mixed, but she is. Reja and Mya look pretty mixed. But no, they've never come back [sic] and said somebody's said—well they used to make fun of Jade, and I don't know if they were being malicious, that she's a white girl trying to be a black girl. But she does—her father, her biological father, is half black. Her adopted father, that's Rob. No. And she just tells them whatever. And my kids are very good about the fact that they bring up how they don't like gay people and that they will stand up and they will say what they have to say about it because they don't like people like that either.

ELENI ANDRIS:
Has that happened before?

KARIN ALLEN:
It has. To Jade. I mean she would tell all her boyfriends that her aunt and grandma are gay, and then she tries and explain [sic] the whole long story—you know, we just stopped doing that to everybody. And Reja does the same thing. And Mya—actually, I'm proud of Mya, too, because she just doesn't care what people think, as far as it goes that I'm gay, that they live with gay people.

ELENI ANDRIS:
And is that because—did you ever have a formal conversation with them about it, or is it just from observing you—

KARIN ALLEN:
[Both talking at once]—No—

ELENI ANDRIS:
—and loving you?

KARIN ALLEN:
The three girls, their biological grandmother told them, which the mother was upset about it [sic] because that was her place to tell them, but that's how Georgia is. And so, they were young when they were told. So, it's just kind of like, you know, they just grew up with it so—and so is Jessica. Jessica's not as open about it, you know, it's like people don't need to know everything. But, she has no problem with it.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:39:24:00) So, kind of stepping back a little bit, I'm really curious to know how Tammy plays into this whole picture? So, I want to know about your specific relationship with Tammy and then about her relationship with the family and the kids.

KARIN ALLEN:
I met Tammy at a birthday party in a bar. [laughs]

ELENI ANDRIS:
Was it at the Kitty Kat Klub?

KARIN ALLEN:
[Laughs] No.

KARIN ALLEN:
No. Kitty Kat Klub's been closed for like twenty years. No this was [pauses]
[00:40:00:00] a bar in Illinois, I can't think of the name of it. Anyway, we were there. She was there, I was there for a mutual friend now's birthday party. And, I met her. I thought she was cute, but you know, I just—I was just coming back out again around

people after Pat had died so I didn't really know—I wanted to wait a year after Pat died. But anyway, we were going to a mutual friend's house for a birthday party, so we started texting each other with that. And we went to the party and then, once—she lived in Kansas, once we came back, Tammy and I just kept talking. And I'd invite her over for morning coffee or night coffee, depends on what shift she was working, and that's kind of how we got together. And, when we were getting ready to move, she asked me, well, what about me? And I just looked at her, I said, do you want to move with us? She goes, well, yes. So okay, cool. But then, before that, we were starting to date, she had asked Jessica, Pat's biological granddaughter, if it was okay—if she was comfortable with that.

ELENI ANDRIS:
With?

KARIN ALLEN:
Us dating.

ELENI ANDRIS:
Okay.

KARIN ALLEN:
And, Jessica said yes. And Jessica informed me that if we break up, Tammy was staying and I was leaving [laughs]. My kids like Tammy. And that is really a *big* plus, big plus.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:41:32:00) What was it about Tammy that you initially liked about her?

KARIN ALLEN:
Her looks.

ELENI ANDRIS:
Her looks. [laughs]

KARIN ALLEN:
Her crooked little smile, her cocky smile. And then once I got to know her, she's just such a nice, nice, nice person. She—she treats me [pauses] as part of the relationship, instead of—I feel like I'm—I finally feel like I'm part of something as far as her and I go. I'm not just the, here do this, do that, do this. That's a different long story. And, she is just, she's so kind. I don't know how else to—she's just got a good heart, and she's kind, and she helps me when I get to a point of [sighs]—when my anger gets the best of me or when my emotions does [sic], she knows how to pull me back down and calm me down.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(00:42:44:00) When was it—when was it when you first realized that you were in love with her?

KARIN ALLEN:

[Sighs] It wasn't—I think the more we had coffee together and talking to her I knew then there was something special about her, and I started to fall for her not really realizing that, but I knew I wanted to keep seeing more of her. I wanted her to be around more. I wanted to be around her more. And it just grew from there. And I knew she was someone special for me. Something I had waited a long time for.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:43:26:00) You may have kind of been alluding to this, but how would you say she was different than Pat, and how—yeah.

KARIN ALLEN:

[Sighs] Pat had her good ways, good things about her, a lot. But Pat was mean. She was verbally abusive, and she was kind of like an old dyke, old-school dyke. You know, it's her way. And I was naïve, and I was young, but Pat was mean. I chose to stay. I loved her. I wanted her to love me the way I loved her. But I don't think she did. I wanted to be a part of her life, just not a figure in it. Yeah. And Tammy's not that way at all. I am part of her life. I am part of a relationship. I don't have to ask permission to do something. It took a while. I would ask her, hey, I want to get my nails done do you mind? She'd text back, really Karin? Oh, I'm still here, it's taking longer. It's okay, Karin. You know, so, it's—it took me a while to get over, but I still do some of those (00:45:00:00) things, you know, do you mind if?, is it okay? That's just—twenty-seven years of a relationship, that just becomes part of you.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:45:13:00) In what ways would you say, then, that Tammy has rubbed off on you, in kind of, however you interpret that?

KARIN ALLEN:

I would say I'm calmer but I'm not [laughs]. I honest to God have someone that I can actually lean on and get the help I need, when I need it, me personally. You know, I don't have this thing which I wish I could talk to her. I can talk to her about anything. And she will pretty much tell me, well, she does tell me the truth. She doesn't sugarcoat things, which is good, but she's just so kind in anything she does. If I have a problem, I go to her. If I'm crying and I go to her, she'll—she can, what's the word—realize—not realize, [whispers] hell's that word, ugh, I hate being old—sh*t, now I forgot what I was going to say. Well anyways, she's just—she's good for me.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:46:28:00) What would you say, then—so, ok, shifting to the kids, how does she fit into that—that story?

KARIN ALLEN:

They can—are—they're respect for her—they like Tammy, they really do. That's all I can say about that. They like her. She knew what she was getting into [laughs] you know, when she started coming over for coffee and stuff, you know, all the kids. Tammy has

seen me at my worst, and she's seen me at my best. So, she's seen the kids at their worst and at their best. So, they like her. They have their own repour together. And that's good. You know, they'll ask me something before they ask Tammy, of course, because they're more comfortable with it and it's like, [laughs] ask Tammy yourself. You know, so, it's a good thing.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:47:32:00) Can you elaborate a little on like how Tammy's picked you up at some of your lows but also been there with you through some of your highs?

KARIN ALLEN:

When I met Tammy, Pat had been dead two years. We—she would sneak into the graveyard with me, the cemetery, and I would sit there and I would just cry about the twenty-seven years—the good, the bad, the ugly. She has taught me that I'm allowed to be me, that I do have a right to be a *part* of a relationship. When I'm down she'll—she'll just give me the encouraging words, a simple hug, a simple kiss. Something that I can feel her letting me know it's okay. Go through what you got to, but here's this, you know. So, she's just, she's good for me. She's the relationship I have wanted my entire life, well, not when I was a kid but, my adult life. I wanted to be a part of a relationship, not just owned.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:48:58:00) So, do you and Tammy now have joint friends? What's your community dynamic like?

KARIN ALLEN:

Yes, we have joint friends. We have the Illinois friends, which are people that she raised or grew up with and hung around. Then we have the St. Louis friends which are people that I had known but Pat and I stopped associating with for a long time. But once Pat passed away, they all were still there. They were still there. And, they got me involved in their lives again. You know, they welcomed me back. And so Tammy knows them and through them we've all made new friends. So yeah, we—she calls them the St. Louis people her friends, I call the Illinois people my friends. So, they are good friends. We have some good friends.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:49:51:00) What do you guys do with your friends?

KARIN ALLEN:

Drink. Party. [Laughs] Go out to eat. We celebrate birthdays. [00:50:00:00] Whenever there's a birthday, if it's on the zero or the five, they get a present. If it's just one of the other numbers, we just go out and have a party. You know, we go to the bar, we drink, oh god do we drink. One of our friends, like I said, is a DJ. She'll spin—well they don't spin records no more [sic]—she'll plug in her iPod, or whatever the heck it is [laughs], and we'll just dance, we'll laugh, we'll have a good time.

ELENI ANDRIS:

I think I asked you this before but where is it that you guys go now then, if—

KARIN ALLEN:

Hummel's.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Hummel's, okay.

KARIN ALLEN:

We go to Hummel's. It's a local hole in the wall. It's on Broadway. They've done some nice updates on it. It's kind of that cozy feeling. Never be a Kitty Kat, but it's a cozy feeling. We just go into a corner there and we just—all of us are there, and yeah.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:51:00:00) What kind of people besides—well one, is it a gay bar?

KARIN ALLEN:

Yes.

ELENI ANDRIS:

And two, what's the age range and demographic spread of it—is it all kinds of people, or is it—

KARIN ALLEN:

It's all kinds of people. It's a gay bar. There are from the young to the very old. Let's see, we have eighty-year old Betty—which—I think you may know her, down to like a twenty-one, you know, so it's all different ages. The Illinois people have come over there. We all—the ones that normally go there are from either St. Charles, St. Peters, the city, the county, St. Louis, but yeah, so. It's a diversity. We've made some friends just from being down there, some really cool people.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:51:53:00) Have you noticed, either back in the day or today, that the lesbian bar scene has been kind of like—either like—it's been like white/black or well-integrated? Is it more distinct? How's that look?

KARIN ALLEN:

Oh shit, I never think of things like that. Now the Kitty Kat Klub is pretty white. Hummel's—there's black people that come in there. I don't look at it that way. You know, I just look at it as a bunch of people having fun. I don't—I don't really see color in people. I mean I can tell—obviously I can tell them—they're darker than me—but I don't judge people on their color. I judge them on their demeanor. And when they have good demeanor I just don't see it—I just don't see color. I just see humans. But Hummel's has

a few that I know of that come in there. They might come in there during the week, too, that we don't see. Probably Attitudes and other bars like that have more of a diversity in there. I know Hummel's has a lot of guys and a lot of girls and you know, straights that go in there.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:53:13:00) Do you notice a difference between bars that are exclusively lesbian bars and all-female spaces versus gay/lesbian mixed?

KARIN ALLEN:

God, that is such a weird thing—the gay and lesbians. [Whispers] We're all gay. Back in the day, the guy bars, women didn't go in to them because they didn't like women, and they didn't come into lesbian bars. Now it's pretty much, you know, they go wherever they want. I don't really think there's a strictly—I mean there's men bars [sic] but women go into them. And there's most—the population in this bar are women, men go into it. You know, so I think they've eased up a little bit on, oh we can't associate with—with each other, which is another thing that drove me crazy.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:54:04:00) Would you say most of your friends now, then, are part of the—the larger gay community? Are most of your—are most of your friends—

KARIN ALLEN:

My friends, my older friends, have paved the way for people like me, people under— younger than me—to be who they are today. I think it's not as frowned upon in the basic public eye. Forget your religious groups because—that's another story, and we won't go there. But in your general public, it's not as bad as it used to be. People don't hide it like they used to. People don't have to hide it. It's more accepted.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:54:56:00) Do you ever view—you've referenced your friends (00:55:00:00) being kind of like trailblazers in—in certain ways. Do you ever view yourself that way? Do you ever think back and think, wow I've—

KARIN ALLEN:

No.

ELENI ANDRIS:

—paved the way—why not?

KARIN ALLEN:

Because when I came out, I kept it hidden for a long, long time. Even when I was with Pat I did. I didn't tell anyone I was gay because I was afraid of the backlash that I would get. Once menopause hit—again, thank you menopause—I don't give a shit of what anyone thinks of me [sic]. You don't like me, that's your problem. You need to get to know me first, and then make that decision. I'm a little rough on the edges, I—but I just

don't care anymore. You know, people should be allowed to be who they are. And if you don't like it then stay away from them. Don't insult them. Don't hurt—bully them. Just stay away, and let them be who they are. We're not hurting anybody. I've never hurt anybody—I never would. It's my life, like it or leave it. Same thing I feel about me—you don't like me, too bad.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:56:08:00) Does Tammy view it similarly? What's her stance on it?

KARIN ALLEN:

You would have to probably ask her, but I think she's pretty much the same. I mean we don't go out and broadcast that we're gay. We don't go walking, holding hands. That's why when this person said something to us at the Walmart, it's probably because we had short hair, and we're, you know, whatever. We don't broadcast it. I don't have to wear shoes that have the gay flag on it. I don't have to wear earrings. I just don't think that's proper, myself. I don't have to flaunt it. I am who I am. I know who I am. But I don't need to go up to Joe Blow and say, look we're gay! I just don't see that. There's a time and place for everything, even for heterosexuals. And to show it in public is just one thing that is not necessary.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:56:58:00) Do you see a difference in—in like public displays of affection then—would you—do you think—if you were with a man would you feel more comfortable holding his hand or is it just your general stance on public displays of affection?

KARIN ALLEN:

I think it's my general stance on it. I mean, I wouldn't feel uncomfortable holding Tammy's hand *anywhere*, or a man's hand *anywhere*. It's just, I don't look at it—I think public—PDA, is that what they call it, is sometimes just really uncalled for. I mean I would never go in the middle of Shop N' Save and make out with Tammy, but I would never go in the middle of Shop N' Save and make out with Joe Blow, either. I just don't—it's just—I'm old—it's just, not right. Things are just not right. But holding her hand, we just never do it. Wouldn't bother me at all, unless somebody says something, yeah. My mouth would start then.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:57:59:00) Have you ever retaliated against somebody, verbally or physically, who's said anything to you?

KARIN ALLEN:

No.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Never?

KARIN ALLEN:

No. If I would retaliate to anybody it would be verbally, you know. Because I don't like—what's the word—oh god, here we go again, what's the word—I'll forget what I was talking about—I don't like people who are [pauses] hypocrites. You know, you read the bible—oh god here I go. I'll make this one short. You read the bible and then you want to thump it on somebody else. You believe every damn word the bible says. And gay people are going to hell because somebody in the bible says it was not right. You know, you should look at it that way and think, but God loves all his kids so, you know. But I'm not a religious person anymore, used to be but I'm not. And how can religious people say that we're going to hell when they're being bigots? Their church is supposed to be teaching them love everybody, love your neighbor, blah blah blah, except for gay people. I just, yeah. It's not right, and I just would probably tell someone to go f*ck themselves [laughs].

ELENI ANDRIS:

(00:59:35:00) Can I ask you to elaborate a little bit about your relationship with religion, kind of throughout your life?

KARIN ALLEN:

I was very religious. We went—my dad forced us to go to church and Sunday school, and all that basic crap. And I always believed there was a God, and a Jesus. And as I get old—got older—I would hear other people talking, you know. I had this one customer—used to clean houses—I had this one customer [1:00:00:00] and we were talking religious. Now he's Jewish, which, okay, whatever, we all [sic] supposed to pray to the same God, they just didn't believe in Jesus. But he had made some points out about it because he studied religion. And, the more I thought about it the more it's like, hmm, well isn't that true. And the older I got—God, and once Pat died, it kind of just like, you know, there's supposed to be a God [pause] and she died. And it's not that she died—it's that—why did I have to go through all this bullshit from her until she died, until the moment she went into a coma?

Yeah, I just don't think there is one. And I don't think there's somebody that created us. I don't think that there's one person that—the bible for instance, let's say—the bible was supposed to be written by Jesus' disciples. Well, the bible was written 400 years after Christ died, by men, has been translated and rewritten and rewritten thousands of times. I think it's a guide. I don't think God had anything to do with it. I don't think God—okay, let me back up. Dinosaurs are supposed to be *billions* of years old, but then here we are. God was supposed to create us 2017 years ago, well, and then created the first man, woman? Well, what happened to the cavemen? What happened to all these things that were *billions* of years ago? Who created them? These are the questions I come up with. Alright, I think. I don't think the bible is nothing [sic] but a bunch of men telling you how we're supposed to act. Women are lowest—well shit—according to men, according to the bible, even if you read it. Yeah. So, I just don't really have much faith.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:02:18:00) Did you ever raise your kids religiously then, or not at all?

KARIN ALLEN:
No.

ELENI ANDRIS:
So—

KARIN ALLEN:
The girls, the three girls [pause] weren't, okay even though their grandmother was supposedly really religious. They went to church and crap like that once in a while. Now Jessica didn't go to church, but Pat was real Catholic and told me one time, I can't be with somebody who doesn't believe in God. Well, you know, whatever. And Jessica was baptized. Now Jessica has a faith and she wants her son raised in that. I don't preach to him, but I also don't tell him my feelings about it. That's got to be his choice and his mother's choice. Once he gets older, he can make his decision. Just like religion was forced on me, as a kid, and I believed—I believed that there was this power—higher power that if I did something wrong, He was going to see me and I was going to hell. Earth is hell—okay. Heaven is death. Or, I should say death is heaven. So, I just [laughs]—I'm not going to sit there and tell them there isn't. If they ask I'll just simply tell them they have to talk to their mom—talk to your parents. Well, what do you think? I think it's good for you to have some base—what am I going to say? It's a joke?

ELENI ANDRIS:
(01:03:48:00) Would Tammy, do you think, fall on that side too?

KARIN ALLEN:
Hmm, I don't think so. I really don't know because we don't talk about it. She knows how I feel, but we really don't talk about religion, so I can't—I really don't know. I don't know if she believes in God or if she doesn't. I don't know how she feels about it—it's just, I'm more open now—damn menopause—I'm more open about not believing, but I also will say I used to—I used to, every night when Pat was in a coma, say the Lord's prayer. For her. Mhm. Yeah.

ELENI ANDRIS:
(01:04:30:00) So, what do you and Tammy talk about, say over dinner, if you guys were just out to dinner by yourselves?

KARIN ALLEN:
[Laughs] You would think we are the boringest people you've ever met. Tammy and I do not talk a lot. We are both very quiet people. We'll talk about a job, we'll talk about the kids, we'll talk about what—what happened on the news, you know stuff like that. But Tammy and I can sit for an hour and not say a word—just—we're just there together. She was [1:05:00:00] not real talkative when I used to—when we were “friends”, and even when we started going, I told her everything I could possibly think to tell her so that nothing would ever be a surprise to her. She knew everything that I could possibly think of to tell her about myself, my good things, my bad things, my horrible things, my things that we just don't talk about, you know, cause I wanted—it's a new relationship, I had a

new chance at love, and I just wanted her to know I felt that compelled in the way I felt about her that I wanted her to know everything I could possibly tell—think for me to tell her.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:05:44:00) vAre there any stories about her that I haven't touched on that you think you like, are valuable about your relationship, about her?

KARIN ALLEN:

I like the story she tells me about growing up. Her mom was a single mother. Her mom and dad didn't get a divorce for a long time, but he was in the service. Tammy never seen [sic] his dad—her dad—maybe once or twice when she was an infant. He was always out of the picture, so that she was raised by her aunt and uncle, which later, growing up, they called them grandma and grandpa because it was a child that got confused by calling them this or that, you know, so they started [sic]. Just, the stories that she tells me about her relationship with her grandpa and her uncles and how, I think it was her uncle, it could've been her grandpa, I'm not sure. One of them took her to the store and called her sir, and her uncle/grandpa looked at the man and said, man are you stupid? Have you seen the knockers on her? [Laughs, whispers] Tammy's got big boobs. Tammy said she wanted to shrink down to nothing [laughs] of embarrassment [laughs]. I love that story [laughs]. And then grandpa would take off driving, take them and give the kids a couple ice creams while they go have a couple beers [sic], and shhh, you don't tell grandma, you know, stuff like that I love—I would have loved—I would have loved to grown [sic] up with her, in the farm life, in small towns, and—

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:07:30:00) As compared—because your upbringing was more urban, you would say?

KARIN ALLEN:

—Yeah, I grew up in North St. Louis, lived there till I was twenty-one, then moved to the city. I like the city. I like where I live now. It's quiet, it's close to everything. I loved Glasgow Village. To raise a child in Glasgow Village now would be priceless, but back then you weren't afraid of people, you didn't have all these horrible stories, you trusted people, people were kind, you knew everybody on your block. It was a very—it was a perfect place to grow up as a kid. You can't find that now.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:08:19:00) Do you ever now wish that you and Tammy and/or the kids could just kind of move out to the farm—

KARIN ALLEN:

—Yeah.

ELENI ANDRIS:

—to rural land?

KARIN ALLEN:

I do. I wish I could. Tammy's still working. She doesn't get to retire for a couple years. But I do I wish—not maybe rural, rural, not to where I have to drive thirty minutes to find a grocery store, but a small town with land. My biggest dream is I want to own a farm and take all the unwanted animals and all the unwanted kids and have them all on this farm. They could work, take care of the animals, and they'd all be loved. That's my dream. That's what—it's not going to happen, but that's something I would love to do.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:09:10:00) That's beautiful actually. So you think that's completely out of the picture—you don't have any aspirations of actually implementing that?

KARIN ALLEN;

[Laughs] No.

ELENI ANDRIS:

No plans?

KARIN ALLEN:

No, cause the older I get the more I don't like kids. No [laughs] I don't have as much patience, but that would be something I would love—hmm, maybe forget the kids, get the animals, have my kids come out. But, I don't know. I don't know what we're going to do. I think we may just stay where we're at as long as we can manage—I don't want to have to go into an old folks home, ew.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:09:51:00) Is there anything, I guess, about your kids, well, yeah, are there any stories about your kids that I also haven't really prodded that [1:10:00:00] you think are—

KARIN ALLEN:

—Hmm let's see. What are some of—what are some of the stupid things they've done? Oh God, I wish I could think of them. And I can't. Sucks getting old. Your memory kind of plays tricks on you. There's [sic] funny stories but I can't think of them [laughs].

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:10:23:00) And then what about—what about for your life—have I not touched on anything that you think is like really important, or just something that you like about yourself or a story about yourself that I haven't really touched on at all?

KARIN ALLEN:

The only thing I can say that I like about myself is that I do care. Sometimes too much, and that can cause problems, but I do care. And I wouldn't change it for anything—I mean there's a few parts but you take the good with the bad. And if I did change it I wouldn't have my kids. And for people just remember it's not the kids fault, what the

parents do. Kids need love, and you don't have to be blood. Blood is not always thicker. So, if you ever need a step-mommy, you know how to get ahold of me.

[Laughs] No, I want my kids to grow up good. They don't have to be wealthy, just to be good, honest, nice people. And remember that there's—they may come into a situation where there's [sic] kids that need love, that blood's not thicker. You love them, and you raise them, and I've done the best I can. They're on their own now—well a couple of them are on their own now—so you hope what you've done for them [pauses]—I can't think of the word—[whispers] God damn—I hope that what I've done rubs off on them in some way. And just be kind to people. There's no need to be ugly. Too much of that going around. And take no shit from no one.

ELENI ANDRIS:

That was really well said.

KARIN ALLEN:

Thank you.

ELENI ANDRIS:

(01:12:31:00) Do you have anything else you want to say?

KARIN ALLEN:

No. Thank you, and you're kind. I like you.

ELENI ANDRIS:

I like you too. This was really great, Karin.

KARIN ALLEN:

Anytime.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Thank you so much. Thank you for everything.

KARIN ALLEN:

You know where I live, you can always stop by, say hi Karin! How old are you?

ELENI ANDRIS:

I'm 21.

KARIN ALLEN:

Oh see, we can take you out to a lesbian bar.

ELENI ANDRIS:

I might take you up on that one.

KARIN ALLEN:

Hey, you want to get to know how—what we do? The 4th, this Saturday! What are you—
what are you doing?

ELENI ANDRIS:

I don't know if—I don't know if I have any plans! What are you thinking?

KARIN ALLEN:

Well if you don't you can come down to the lesbian bar! Hummel's on Broadway!

ELENI ANDRIS:

I'd—yeah—yeah, we can talk. We'll chat about it!

KARIN ALLEN:

We'll all be there! Everybody I've talked about, [whispers] except for my kids, will be
there.

ELENI ANDRIS:

Awesome! Awesome! Sounds good! Awesome, Karin! Thank you so much!

KARIN ALLEN:

Thank you.

[end of interview]

Term Index:

Webber Public Library- location of the interview

North St. Louis- where Karin grew up

Chain of Rocks Park- landmark which Karin references

Riverview Gardens High School- Karin's alma mater

Sandy- Karin's sister

Pat- Karin's ex-partner

Georgia- Pat's ex-partner

Heather- Georgia's child

Jade- Heather's first daughter

Reja- Heather's second daughter

Maya- Heather's third daughter

Jessica- Pat's daughter's child

South Grand- where the family moved after Pat passed away

Tammy- Karin's current partner

Affton- part of St. Louis where Karin currently resides

Kim- one of Karin's sister

Kitty Kat Klub- lesbian bar

Hummel's Pub- gay bar on Broadway

Dawn Hummel- owner of Hummel's pub

Teri- Pat's daughter

St. Charles- where people who normally go to Hummel's come from

St. Peters-where people who normally go to Hummel's come from

Attitudes- gay bar in the Grove