

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Now, Una, can you tell me a little bit about your background?

Una: Yes. I was born to a family with a British father who was an intelligence agent for Britain, but had grown up in Russia, St Petrograd, at a time when the Tsar was still reigning. That was my father. And I was also, born to my mother, whose original name was Hilda Evelyn Pediani and Hilda Evelyn Pediani was born to an Italian family. She was born a Temple of an English family of the Archbishop of Canterbury, but a second cousin to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to Frederick Temple. And her father was a doctor and he was a doctor in Constantinople. So, my mother and my father met - no, no, my grandmother. I'll have to start again.

Interviewer: No, no, we're fine.

Una: My grandmother was born, was a British lady born to the Temple family, a second cousin to Archbishop Frederick Temple who was at the time Archbishop of Canterbury. And his brother was a doctor, Octavius, and that doctor was a doctor to the Sultan of, well, to a very important person in Constantinople. So, my mother was a young woman in Constantinople - my grandmother was a young woman in Constantinople and she met Frederick Pediani, who was an Italian, a tobacco merchant at the time, and they eloped. Off! The family promptly disowned my mother completely.

Interviewer: Oh, my goodness.

Una: And they went to Russia where they settled down and they had seven children. My grandmother never spoke any language except English, but my grandfather, Pediani, spoke many, many languages.

Now they had seven children and the seventh and last one was Hilda Evelyn Pediani. That was my mother. And she grew up in St Petrograd in Russia at the time when the Tsar was still reigning. And then in 1918, when the Tsar was deposed, she and her family fled because they had been involved in supporting the White Russians. My father was working as an intelligence agent and my mother was working as his courier. And they were both working for the British intelligence at the time. My father spoke many, many languages, and he was very fluent and also very capable of assuming many different personalities. And they worked with great dedication at that time for the British government.

But in 1918, when the Tsar was killed and the Soviet government came into power with Lenin, they had to, my mother's family, had to flee. So, they fled. My mother came to England because the British government helped her to come to England, and my father came back to England at the same time by different routes. They didn't marry at that time. My father was already... he was already married and he had two children. So, my mother lived, because her father had never educated her. So, in those days, young ladies were brilliant in social attributes. They were expected to marry well, they were expected to keep house for their husbands, but they were not expected to have any kind of working profession. And so, she was very skilled in needlework. She was a beautiful seamstress. She was very skilled in music. She was very skilled in many languages and she was extremely elegant and very beautiful. I thought she was the most beautiful woman in the world. She had dark hair. She looked very Italian. She was everything that I, as I was growing up, was not. I was an awkward child.

Interviewer: Were you the firstborn?

Una: I was the only child of the marriage. And that was conceived in Rome in 1925 out of wedlock. And as I say, my father was already married, but there was an enormous upheaval in those days because a child born out of wedlock to a single mother was going to have a very, very difficult life. And so was the mother. It was still a terrible thing to happen to a young woman.

[0:06:17]

Interviewer: I can imagine, yeah.

Una: So, my father was forced by his family and a very important lady called Mrs Doughty-Wylie, who had been married to the Gallipoli hero, Lieutenant Colonel Doughty-Wylie, who won the VC in Gallipoli. And she took charge and forced my father to divorce his wife and to marry my mother in 19, before I was born, in 1925, about four months before I was born. So, it was that kind of a marriage.

Now, my father had continued his intelligence work upon his coming back to England. So, he was working with Sidney Reilly who was another political spy. And both of them were very keen on the White Russians. They were very supportive of the White Russians who were overthrown totally and a lot of them were killed by the Leninist Russians and by the Trotskyites.

So, he continued with his work right the way through. But he hadn't got any understanding of what it meant to be a father. So, he managed to beget children in quantity probably. But he wasn't a faithful husband and my mother couldn't cope with his infidelities.

Now, when I was 18 months, he left her and he went to the lady who had been his lover during his first marriage, and he went to her and he eventually married her. So, my mother was affronted by his desertion of her and she told him to get out. But Dad left us, like his first family, who was a Catholic family, of a mother and two children, two girl children. That left them in penury. Both lots of family were in penury. He never supported either my step sisters or myself and my mother at all financially. And the result was that they, my step sisters, my half-sisters, grew up knowing that I was alive, but I grew up without any information that they were alive at all and without any knowledge of them.

So, for the first six years of my life I prayed to God, first 11 years of my life, I prayed to God that my mother and my father would come together again because I loved, I heard stories about my father, I invented stories about my father, and I told these stories at school. And of course, they weren't true. So, my mother found out and she was extremely cross because I was telling stories about my father who was a hero and flew over the Sahara Desert and did all sorts of wonderful things.

Interviewer: Did you have a kind of religious base? A church background at all?

Una: No, no, oh no, no, no, no. But yes, well, I did because my mother was an atheist. All her family were also atheist. But she had grown up in Russia and the national religion was Orthodoxy. So, the whole family, her father was a Roman Catholic raised by Jesuits, and he was an atheist as well. Her sisters were of atheistic principles. But my mother was a kind of peasant who believed in, she always made the sign of the cross on my forehead. She would always take me to the Orthodox Easter services. We would always maintain all the rituals leading up to Easter in the émigré community that she lived in in Hampstead Heath when I was a very little girl. Now my mother was working as a basement sweatshop sewing. And that's what she did for a living in an émigré community of Russian aristocrats who had been forced to leave Russia, come to

England and via Paris, many of them, and were living in great poverty. So, she and I were living in great poverty in Hampstead Garden Suburb. And she worked at whatever she could get, but she had no education so it was always cheap jobs. My mother hated my father, and I have to say that I acquired, I hated my father as a result of her.

She didn't talk very much to me about my father except to say he was a scoundrel.

Interviewer: And what did love -

Una: And a drunkard.

Interviewer: Yeah. (Laughter) And what did you love doing? Well, what were your kind of interests and passions as a little girl and as you grew up?

[0:12:52]

Una: Survival and adoring my mother. Totally committed to my mother and totally against my father. That's how I grew up.

Interviewer: Did you like school? Did you enjoy school at all?

Una: Well, you see, I was growing up in the 1930s. Now my father's sister, my Auntie Marguerite, was very cross with her brother for leaving my mother's family. And they were the best friends, they were two very great friends. So, my mother had been out to India for my Auntie's birth, and she had a child that was three years older than I. So, it was my cousin Marguerite. So, I was brought up more or less with Marguerite who was three years older than I by my Auntie. Whenever my mother was ill or couldn't work or fell on hard times. So, I would be sent off to Auntie Marguerite who lived in East Sussex. And that's how I grew up. And I also grew up in a Russian émigré community that spoke Russian, observed all the Orthodox rituals, whether they believed it was cultural, it was cultural for us, it kept all the fast for Lent. We kept everything. It was a very religious upbringing. But it was by accident as it were.

And I always remembered -

Interviewer: Okay, sorry about that interruption.

Una: So, I always remember the mystery and the smell of incense and the candles and the great, deep baritone voices of Archbishop Bloom who was at Ennismore Gardens at the time. And he would say, "Христос воскрес," and we would all shout, "Он действительно воскрес," "He is risen indeed". So, yes, I did, was steeped in that kind of mystical religion at a very, very early age.

But then the war came. And prior to the war, my mother and I, we used to go out to Latvia where my grandmother was living and where her elder sister was living, Mabel. And Auntie Mabel was a very, very strong older sister in the family and she was married to a German. Protestant and they had three children, all boys, all Nazis. All fought in the Second World War.

Interviewer: All Nazis?

Una: As Nazis, yes. And two of them were killed on the Russian front and one of them was taken prisoner on the Russian front. So, I adored my cousins. I used to go every year and the last year we went was 1938 and it was then that I saw the Jewish people in Berlin being treated very badly, made to wear armbands, excluded from schools, called filthy Jews. Their shops and they work shattered. So, I saw that and I heard Hitler giving

a speech at the Berchtesgaden. Now, he had done a lot for the German people and the German people loved him. So, he brought them out of poverty and he had helped them to survive years and years of misery after the Second World War because of the penalties that the German people had to pay to the Allies.

So that was the last time. And I heard Hitler shouting at the Berchtesgaden on that occasion. I've never forgotten his voice. He was very, very shrill and virulent.

So, then we came back from that and the war started in 1939, and I was with my Auntie Marguerite in East Sussex when the war started and the sirens went. And so, after that she and her husband, who was an Air Vice Marshal in the Air Force, went out to Egypt with this very strong friend, (inaudible 0:17:49) Doughty-Wylie, and they spent the war in Egypt. He died of bacterial endocarditis. But the wife and her daughter, Marguerite, my cousin, stayed in Egypt and Marguerite was in the in the Air Force as well. She married an Air Force man in the end and had three children. And then they emigrated to Australia.

But I grew up knowing that my three cousins whom I adored, my enemies, and not knowing what was happening to them. And so, the war for me was a terrible struggle between loving the enemy and this is when I became, during the war, I did become very religious myself because I knew I had to love my father and I knew I had to love my... I loved my cousins, but they were enemies. And that's really the first time I got to know God, not because of the church at all. I didn't go to church at that time. But I was on a playing field, and I remember it very well. And I just felt there was this thing called love that could teach me to love my enemies. And that's how I fell in love with God. I fell in love with God but I didn't know anything about Jesus. I didn't know anything about the church. And because I was at a school in Great Malvern at the time, in secondary school, and I was very clever. That was the thing that got both me and my mother out of... education, education, education.

[0:19:50]

So, somehow she amassed the money, or my Auntie paid for me to go to school. I think my Auntie paid for me. I got a very good education. And there was a confirmation service. So, the headmistress said, "Well, do you want to be confirmed?" So, we all said yes. And that's why I got confirmed in Great Malvern Priory church at the age of 15 during the war. And I began to go to church. But I didn't last very long, didn't last very long. But the mystical bit, the mystery, that lasted, you see.

So, the next time I got religious was, then I dropped out as you do. And the next time was when I went to Cambridge. And I got a scholarship to go to Cambridge and I ended up at Girton College. I was a medical student by that time. And we were working on dead bodies. In those days we had to dissect the whole of the dead body. And it so happened that a very, very evangelical proselytising medical student was on the same body and she talked incessantly about Jesus and about confession and about knowing Jesus. And I hated her with profound hatred.

(Laughter)

And I was even less likely to become religious. However, we were at, it's ridiculous how I got converted. We were at dinner at Girton and it was formal dinner, so formal dinners were preceded by grace, and formal dinners were occasions when you had conversations over a long, a prolonged session at dinner. And somebody said to me, who was a Catholic, "Oh, Anglicans don't go to confession". "Yes, they do," I said. She said, "Do you go to confession?" "Yes," I said. It was a lie. I was so ashamed of telling a lie, the one thing my mother, my mother really, really brought me up so strictly. You

didn't lie. You didn't steal. You didn't take things. If I did anything that was wrong, she would immediately take me back to the teacher and I had to confess it. So, I was morally schooled in a very religious way, although we were not religious at all.

Well, anyway, that was it. I then had to go to confession because I realised I told a lie, so to make it better, I went to confession and that's how I got converted. I didn't know anything. So, I was 19 years old and I fell in.

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: Would you like to take a break? Would you like to take a break?

Una: Yes.

Interviewer: Because I think we just need to. Okay.

We've just had a little break and Una was in her early adultery years, I mean, adult years.

Una: Yes. Well, I got converted by a Franciscan friar and he taught me everything that I then drank in, lock, stock and barrel, about his form of the Anglican church, which was high Anglican. He was a wonderful priest, living in Cambridge, and chaplain and vicar of St Bene't's Church and I got drawn into St Bene't's Church and I became a very ardent Anglo Catholic. So ardent that I wanted to become a nun. Now, I was halfway through my medical studies and I was persuaded not to become a nun at that time. So, I went down to London, qualified, did everything that I was told to do. I was very obedient in those days.

[0:24:26]

And when I qualified, I was on at the London Hospital as a medical practitioner. I was one of three women who were taken in by force to the London Hospital by the government because they felt that women should have the opportunity of becoming doctors in all the medical colleges. And so that's why they forced it in 1948.

So, there were only three of us. We had a hard time because we were women and we were excluded from all sorts of things. We weren't allowed to use the common room, we weren't allowed to use this, we weren't allowed to do that. We were not allowed to take senior posts. We were not allowed to go dining. So, this is how I became much more involved in the feeling of inequality between women and men and began to resist inequality between women and men because I didn't see why women shouldn't advance in medicine as well as the men should advance in medicine.

I was also a socialist at the time because the National Health Service was coming in and I was passionately keen on the National Health Service. But the consultants, of course, were very, very resistant. So, I wrote an article for the Daily Express about my passion for the National Health Service and how important it was going to be. And I got vilified by, I got hauled up and nearly dismissed.

Interviewer: Oh, my goodness.

Una: And it was very, very difficult for me to continue. But I became a rebel, a rebel socialist, a rebel woman who didn't see why she shouldn't advance in medicine and an outspoken feminist at that time.

Interviewer: You were very young, I mean you were just...

Una: I was very young. And I was very fluent in many ways as well. I was outspoken as people who are young are outspoken. And everybody else was right and I was wrong and I was right.

(Laughter)

So, eventually, it was a very sad thing. I went to see the neurosurgeon, I wanted to become a brain surgeon. I went to see him. And he said to me, "Yes, you have the brains to become a neurosurgeon, but you are the woman, and I have to tell you that if you take up this profession you will not be able to marry. You will have to remain single and otherwise you..." And I thought, "Well, if I have to remain single, I might as well go and be a nun and be a medical missionary". So, that's what I did. I went and joined a religious order and I went to Africa as a missionary.

Interviewer: To Africa?

Una: Africa. I went to Africa as a missionary.

Interviewer: Which part of Africa?

Una: Liberia, right up against the Angolan border. There was already SWAPO that was, there was war and on the Angolan border and we were right out in the middle of the war. I was a very... I was not an evangelical missionary. I was a kind of just trying to live a Christian life of love in the middle of two ongoing wars and in the middle of the most appalling deprivation because the men used to go off to the copper mines. No, wait a minute. That was Namibia. That was the first thing. It was a very, there was also a very strong Muslim contingent and there was a very strong American input into Firestone. And the Firestone people were in charge of the monetary state in Liberia.

So, anyway, I fell out with them. My kind of doctrine was intensely idealistic. And because I was a woman, the women of Liberia, I could go and help them to give birth. Now, there was a disease called cervical stenosis that shut the cervix up and many of them died giving birth. And I could do Caesarean sections So, I did Caesarean sections. I could do anything below the waist. You didn't have anaesthetics for anything above the waist. And most of my clients were gentlemen with huge hydroceles which they brought to me in wheelbarrows. And also -

[0:30:23]

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: With huge?

Una: Hydroceles. Great big fluid collections around, hydroceles and hernias were the big thing that I operated on because I could do all those below the waist. But the women, I went into their birthing place with them and I saw them die. So, I didn't, that I delivered I remember 12 Caesarean sections. I said to the order that I was serving that if ever I was recalled to England, I need you to sterilise these women because they would die if they had another child. And the order didn't hear that. And they recalled me because I was a troublemaker. There was no doubt about that. I was much more on the side of the Africans than I was on the side of the American overlords.

The leader of the mission, who was an American monk, was called to America, called from America to Africa to settle the dispute, and he settled the dispute by sending me home. And then I fell ill because I was so upset about the women. And I was ill for six

weeks. And he escorted me home. And to cut a long story short, we fell in love and eventually we married. Of course, that was the worst possible thing to do for a nun and an American monk to get married.

(Laughter)

And he got dismissed from his order and...

Interviewer: Una, was this Anglican? Was he an Anglican order?

Una: Yeah, he was American Episcopal Church. He was a monk. He was a superior of this outfit, an American monk. Very, very, very well-known, very, very well respected member of the Society of the Holy Cross. So, he got dismissed and excommunicated and all the rest of it, and I got dismissed from being a junior. I was a junior nun. So, I got dismissed. So, there we were. We'd written to them to say we were going to get married and we came back to England and we waited for three weeks and we got married in a registry office. And on the day that we were married we had no work. We had nothing. Absolutely nothing. It was quite extraordinary. And the other friend and the doctor and I started to work as a medical doctor at that time. My husband couldn't earn any money and didn't know anything except being a priest. He got a job. Several jobs.

[Buzz on recording obscuring sound]

So, from that time on, I was the [buzzing] -

Interviewer: The breadwinner?

Una: The breadwinner in the family and my husband was the homemaker. And we adored each other. I have to say it was an extremely happy marriage. And we worked to recover. I then started going into general practice. When we came back, the second, we went out again to another African country, to Namibia, which was a desert country, with enormous quantities of illness because there the men were all taken off the reserve and put to work in the copper mines. It was the second one. I got it muddled up, so you'll have to sort it out.

Interviewer: Did you go, when you went back to Namibia with Leo, did you go -

Una: With the religious society, with the United Society for the Propagation of the -

[0:34:54]

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: USPG. It's now something else, yes.

Una: Yes. Yes, we did. It's now got -

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: And how long were you there?

Una: Only 18 months. Again, I got into trouble because I was too much on the side of the of the African people and apartheid was awful. It was awful. There was a post office. A large part of the post office was for six white people living and working on the reserve. And the Africans had a tiny little one where they had to queue up for days to be able to

get anything. And they had to walk on the other side of the road and they were treated so badly. And so, I...

Interviewer: So, you made trouble again.

Una: I made trouble again. And we got flung out. The answer was that we got flung out. So, we were back in England. And at that stage I went into general practice because there was no, I couldn't. I wasn't a qualified surgeon. I was just a surgeon because I had to be a surgeon. So, when we came back to England it was 1961. And I got a job with a Christian doctor at a place called St Paul's Wood Hill. And she wanted a Christian doctor because up the road was a communist practice and she was wholly anti-communist. And of course, I was a passionate socialist, but that didn't matter because I was a Christian. She took me in as her assistant. And then Dr Bonhaught her name was, and then she retired and I took over her practice. I practised medicine by myself for several years. But then it was unsustainable.

And so, I joined the communist practice, which was also a Catholic practice because there was a communist in it and there were Catholics in it. And this is when I became this, by this time, it was 1960 something, 67, 68. And because I was in one part, I had a surgery in one part of the place and they had a surgery some distance away. But the Catholic practice, which was also some distance away, and the communist practice, they didn't have the kind of... they had rules and the rules were exclusive. So, patients began to come to me from all over the place that the Catholics who were refused abortions would come down to me because I wasn't refusing abortions. I was very anti-abortion, but I wasn't refusing abortions if I thought that they had a legitimate reason for them. And so, this was in 1967 when the David Steel Act came in. And also -

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: Was it Wolfenden? No. What was it called? It doesn't really matter.

Una: Steel. It was Steel's Bill. The abortion, yes. The one that was brought in in 1967. So, that was happening. And therefore, I found myself involved with women in great hardships and also we were having backstreet abortions galore. We were having deaths from backstreet abortions. We were having everything happening in that practice and very poor. I was working with very, very poor working -

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: Where were you?

Una: St Paul's Wood Hill, which was an overspill where they moved everybody from Bermondsey and Battersea and South London out in massive blocks to a new housing estate and put them there in a situation where there were very few advantages at all. And it was on a big, big housing estate. And I was a Christian doctor, some of my friends were Jewish socialist doctors, some of my partners were Jewish socialist doctors. One was an out and out communist and he believed that he could, he believed in euthanasia. I mean it was a very mixed bag of doctors. But I was taking patients from the Catholic surgery down to see me.

[0:40:31]

I was also getting a lot of gay people who were coming to see me because... they were coming to see me because they were terrified of being exposed. Some of them were threatened, blackmailed. Some of them were put in prison. And at that time, I still thought of homosexuality as a medical condition. And I couldn't sustain that because I



saw love. And so again I started working, that was how I started working for the change in the law. And this is how I got drawn in to both the feminist things because of the abortions and because the women left on their own are treated very, very, very badly by their husband.

And then in 1972, the government of the day, Conservative government, decided to bring in the giving of family allowances from the mother to the father. And I was by that time working in an extremely, I joined the other practice, I was working in a very, very deprived area. And again, I was a very devout Christian as well of my own kind of course. Not...

(Laughter)

And so, I rang up 20 organisations, women's organisations, to ask them if they would support a march. And they all said no, they wouldn't go with the bra burners and those nasty, horrible, filthy lesbians. And I didn't know what a, I hardly knew, I did know what a lesbian was, but I mean, you know, I didn't have that kind of - I didn't have that language at all.

So, I was cross. And my health visitor and I were both cross. And we decided to go on the march. And we went on the march. And there I met other Christians who were on the march and who were respectable middle-aged women and married and church people and everything. I couldn't believe it. But that was when I really began to speak up.

Now, I had during those years when I was encountering massive, massive social and political fallouts from my patients who were becoming ill through what society was doing both to homosexuals and to women. I realised I didn't know enough, so I had taken the long course in psychiatry and I'd also taken a long course in order to try to be a woman minister because I thought that having those two things, and of course it was terribly difficult, because I found that as a woman I was nothing in the church. I was a respectable doctor with authority, but I was nothing in the church, and I wasn't going to be able to be ordained. And nobody who was a woman was going to be put in any kind of responsibility in the church anyway.

And as a medical doctor, I found that my homosexual patients were treated so appallingly. I did a study in psychiatry for God's sake. So actually, when I qualified, when I undertook these two disciplines to try and learn more about my patients, that is why I took those courses, and to do more. I became involved in the political social thing. And it was on behalf of women that I stood for Parliament in 1972 in a very conservative liberal marginal seat of Sutton.

And by this time, I was working in a different, I'd left, in order to get qualified, I'd left and gone to work in a psychiatric hospital to get my psychiatric training and I had left one practice and I was working for another practice which was largely a Christian practice. And they were a lovely Christian practice, absolutely. Methodist. Socially very, very... they didn't believe what I believed, but...

Interviewer: But supportive, were they supportive?

Una: Yeah, they were supportive of me. They just thought I was crazy, but they were supportive of me and I was a good doctor. And I was a partner, not a full partner, I was never a full partner because that didn't happen in those days. But I was a partner.

[0:46:29]

Interviewer: When, if you can remember, when did you see your, I think probably almost universal feeling that homosexuality was a medical condition. When did you see it shift, begin to shift?

Una: Oh, it shifted. It shifted because I was on a... it shifted at that time when I was already very much involved in supporting homosexuals and in supporting the David Steel bill to...

Interviewer: The abortion bill, yeah.

Una: The David Steele bill. But then the other bill, the decriminalisation.

Interviewer: Of homosexuality. Was it Wolfenden? I can't remember the name of the chap, but don't worry because I'll find out.

Una: Yes. Well, when the decriminalisation bill was going through, I was meeting homosexual patients who are put in no way think were disturbed. We were still recommending that dreadful treatment.

Interviewer: Oh ECT? Electric convulsive?

Una: Not ECT. No, no.

Interviewer: Oh, I know, behavioural, the kind of...

Una: Giving them, making them vomit.

Interviewer: Oh dear. Yeah.

Una: Yes. They were still doing that. Well, I began to see homosexuals who were not, who were in loving relationships. I began to see them in faithful relationships.

Interviewer: Aversion therapy. It was something, yeah.

Una: Yes. Aversion therapy. I was seeing Christians, masses of Christians in long-term partnerships.

Interviewer: Okay, good, good.

Una: Who were in faithful, long-term relationships, who were patently loving. I was meeting lesbian people. Because I was working for the women I was involved with lesbian women who were also working to change for the Act. The 1975 Act. So, this is what brought me into the company of people who were not my patients but you were actively engaged in political work, were not sick in any way and were living in relationships which I could plainly see were healthy, loving relationships. And so, for me the two things went together.

Now the ordination people were extremely angry with me for being loving towards the homosexuals. And they asked me to stop and I wouldn't stop.

Interviewer: I didn't know that.

Una: Oh yes. My husband and I had a long conversation about whether we could stop. At that time there were two, knew that quite a lot of the people who were supporting me as Christians were also lesbian or gay. And of course, some of the gay people were terrible towards the women in those days.

Interviewer: Oh, definitely, yeah.

[0:50:15]

Una: So, I was experiencing hostility from the homosexual community and I was experiencing hostility from my own heterosexual community that wanted ordination but did not want homosexuals, those nasty people. I couldn't do it. So, of course, I was in trouble on all sides and really that was what, that's how I started the Christian Parity Group which was for partnership between men and women and was open to everyone whatever their gender.

Interviewer: Very important, very important.

Una: So, this is how I started Christian Parity and it was always, it was always, always people who were persecuted simply on account of their genders and their sexuality. And I stuck to that. But it brought me into great trouble.

Interviewer: And it bore fruit because you know? It bore fruit.

Una: Yes. That's how I met Richard Kirker. Yeah, that's how I met Richard Kirker, that's how I met lesbian, gay, transgendered people. I was also working with transgendered people which nobody at that time was working with. So, I was helping them too.

Interviewer: It's brilliant.

Una: Yeah. So, it all came into one whole thing that people who were persecuted simply because, not because they were mentally deranged or ill or in any other way, but simply because they were transgendered or they were living in ways that were unacceptable to society. And so, I suppose seeing more and more families that were consisting sometimes a very irregular situation, sometimes people living in triple situations where there was a husband and wife, and then there was a lover and then there were two women and a male or three women, you know.

Interviewer: So, how has all that work, all those years of dedication and standing up against the tide, how has that impacted on you and on the people you love do you think? Well, even the people...

Una: Oh, it was terrible because people became ill in the course of, you had to be very, very strong. You had to have a lot of support. I got all my support from outside the church. I used to go back time and time again crying because I hadn't managed to stand up and speak in a company dominated by men. And I went back to them and said, "I can't do it". And they said, "Well, you know, go back and try again". And it was my secular lesbian and gay friends who actually helped me through. The lesbians particularly, who helped me through that stage. But then when I began to stand up, it was very lonely. I got very, very despondent. I got depression. I got... it was a terrible time. And I remember my husband saying to one of the women who wanted ordination, Diana McClatchey, it's all very well, but why are you letting Una do all the speaking and nobody else is helping? So, that's how Women in Media, not the Women in Media, that's how -

Interviewer: Christian Parity?

Una: No, no, no, no. That is how the Anglican Group for the Ordination of Women became MOW. The Movement for the Ordination of Women.

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: Yes, I remember that. Yeah.

Una: That was in 1974. And of course, they would have nothing to do with me because I was a ginger group. So, I had the Christian Parity Group.

Interviewer: I never knew that. I never knew that MOW, I was on the founding committee for MOW sitting in Church House. I had no idea. Because we were in Christian Parity Group.

[0:55:09]

Una: No, no. But we agreed that I would be, I mean, it was Christine Howard and I had kind of worked it out that I was at the ginger group and she was going to be the respectable group. And Monica Furlong came in as the leader of the respectable group.

Interviewer: I just remember that I was so delighted when you asked me to design the funny money.

Una: Yes, that's right.

Interviewer: And I still have that wonderful Eve with a snake and you know?

Una: That's right.

Interviewer: The money and two women are ordained and that was you, that was your inspiration.

Una: Yes, I remember that too. So, yes. So, you know, it was I think, I mean, I suppose it was my faith that kept me going. I had a very deep belief in the rightness of what I was doing. And my husband by this time, who had started as a complete anti-feminist, when I said I wanted, I felt women could be ordained and that I might have a vocation myself, it was 11 years before I spoke again, 11 years. He was so scornful. I had enormous struggles. And enormous struggles between my love for my children who were suffering.

Interviewer: Just a minute.

Una: Sorry, that's -

Interviewer: Good. Good to go.

Una: But I did begin to gather friends and people who felt as I felt. And the movement towards the ordination of women, they were doing the education work, I was doing the ginger work, and we had an understanding between us that that combination of publicity combined with the educational work would ultimately result in a good outcome. It did result in a good outcome in that women were appointed to the diaconate and I did not join the diaconate at that time because I wanted to remain lay in order to continue to do the publicity work.

But when my husband died and I moved to Wales, I had to become a deacon because I couldn't work for the church in Wales without being a deacon. So, I became a deacon, continued my work. I wasn't ordained until three years after the women in England were ordained and I didn't go to England to get myself ordained. And I earned the respect of the Welsh church for not going to England.

So, when eventually Rowan Williams decided that he would ordain me against my better judgement in those days.

Interviewer: Was that 1995?

Una: Yeah, that was 19, no, 1997, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1997, I was ordained as a priest in the Welsh church. And I've remained a priest in the Welsh church ever since. I don't exercise my priesthood now because I gave it up to become a Roman Catholic in solidarity with the Roman Catholic women who are denied any voice in the church whatsoever and who are treated despicably. And I still work with a number of women who have a very strong vocation but can't fulfil it. And one of the things I learned when I was not ordained was how to be a minister without any authority. And because I learned how to be a minister without any authority, when I became a Roman Catholic and left all kinds of authority and became in their eyes a lay person, I have loved it. And I'm happy where I am. I'm completely fulfilled. I don't exercise the priesthood in any obvious, visible or concrete way. But I believe that I am a priest of the Church of God, though not of any institutional church, and I am still a rebel.

[0:59:47]

Interviewer: Hear hear.

Una: And still supportive of and I feel I'm in the right place. I live in a very hostile environment in the Catholic Church. My own particular branch of it. And I live in a very hostile place where homosexuals are still looked down upon. But it's all right.

Interviewer: What are your hopes for the future regarding, specifically regarding LGBT?

Una: The hopes for LGBT people is that we will be accepted as full human beings in partnership and in marriage and in every possible way. I think it is the church's attitude towards homosexuality is appalling. And I fight it tooth and nail.

Interviewer: Come the day.

Una: Come the day.

Interviewer: Thank you so much, Una.

Una: And it will happen.

Interviewer: It will happen. God bless. Thank you.

[End of Transcript]