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Interviewer: It might be a good idea to kick off is to understand a little bit about your background, a little bit about your childhood, where you grew up, what your family context was like, and then any church background that you may have had at a young age. So, pick any of those starting points and tell us a little bit about your early background.

Mansel: Okay. Well, having been born in 1937 in Lincoln, my parents chose to move down to the South Coast to Eastbourne in 1945, just before the end of the war. Although I was obviously very young at that time, I grew up in what one could consider a Christian middle class household, in that my mother and her aunt, who lived with us almost like a grandmother figure, were definitely pro religious, although my father, who had had experience in the First World War, because I was born fairly late in the marriage, was very much not a believer, but he had no objection at all to the fact that my mother had these Christian beliefs and I would as a child, for instance, go to Sunday school in Lincoln and I was actually confirmed after we got to Eastbourne, but still at a very young age. I think it was about 1947 or 48 when I would have only been 10 or 11.

Interviewer: Okay. And growing up in Eastbourne, how was your childhood? Did you have siblings, did you enjoy your childhood, I mean...?

Mansel: No, I was an only child, so there was no question of siblings. And yes, I enjoyed my childhood. I was always very close to my mother. I found my father a more difficult person because he had a difficult temper, mainly of the sort of the person who would, if really angry, not talk for days as my mother told me though I had less personal experience of this. But I think he was very much a person who, having been in the First World War as a young man, had seen sights and experienced things which distressed him. Indeed, his Lincolnshire regiment, he won some military cross, but an enormous number of the people he fought with died in the war. And I think that he had to cover up a sensitivity by appearing much harder, and because he was a product of his times, he was very much the patriarchal figure who expected in many ways to dominate, even if, as I've said, with things like religion, he was perfectly happy that my mother's beliefs would influence me rather than his.

Interviewer: Thank you. And what about your interests growing up? What did you enjoy doing or kind of what ...?

Mansel: Well, when I was in Eastbourne, I went to a prep school there and then to Eastbourne College. I was very much aware that although I had been taken to see Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in Lincoln as the first film I ever saw, it was not until about 1949, 50 in Eastbourne that I became enormously interested in cinema which has been an abiding interest of mine ever since, and I am in fact now a film critic.

Interviewer: And so, that was, I mean, so, you were how old? About age 13, early teens?

Mansel: So, when I actually first started scribbling with reviews in that period at the end of the 40s, start of the 50s, there were two weekly film magazines, Picture Show and Picture Goer. Picture Goer was considered the better of the two, but they had reviews, both of them, and Picture Goer starred each film and I started in a very, very childish way copying out my own opinions of these. So, the interest in being a critic came from that very early age. And when I went to Eastbourne College, the question even arose about what my career might be and the house master quite sensibly said, "Well, if you're going to be a film critic, you've really got to be a journalist. I don't think that Mansel is tough enough to do that and it wouldn't work". So, in fact, without regretting that too much, I saw that as inevitable, I was quite happy to become a solicitor, which I did, and

it just so transpired after some years of working as a solicitor that things came to a sort of crisis point there with a firm that I was with in London. I'd started practising as a solicitor down in Sussex, but I then moved up to London and although I'd become a partner, it was a firm where I think there were various connivings going on between some partners who wanted a bigger share of the profits and I wasn't the only one who I felt was rather victimised. And I took this opportunity to get out thinking it would only be a short break to enable me to do some writing that I wanted to do. And then in the event I found that with changes in the legal system where scale fees for conveyancing, for instance, had been replaced by charging in terms of the work done, and lots of people had taken their work to country firms rather than in London as a result that these opportunities were not there.

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But by the time I was in London ultimately, but it was not until I was more or less 40, I realised that I was gay, so, I didn't have the problem of saying how am I going to support a family? And I realised then that I could move in the direction of writing, which is what I've done ever since.

Interviewer: Thank you. So, you mentioned there that it was not until that you were 40 until you became aware of your sexuality.

Mansel: Yes.

Interviewer: Could you unpack that a little bit more for us, sort of talk around that and how you got to that point and...?

Mansel: Well, this is where I could go on at great length because it was in 1978 at the Edinburgh Film Festival that my awareness of being gay actually surfaced remarkably late in life. And because I was already writing and had written a couple of books which had not been published but made me feel that in addition to being a critic, I had it in me to write a book. I may have self-consciously been wanting to write another book. And when I realised I was gay, I suddenly saw that this was for me an unusually positive experience.

There were various reasons for that. One was that I had not suspected it at all so that it was not a case of having suppressed some inner knowledge and having tensions to do with that. My parents had by that time both died, so there was no question of what will my parents, what will their reaction be to this if I reveal that I'm gay. And I was old enough at that age to feel that I had hoped for a serious relationship in life. As I say, we were a middle class family. Sex was hardly ever talked about. The change of attitudes and the amount of discussion about sex today compared with then can hardly be exaggerated. And the result was that sex was never mentioned at home, but I always assumed that I would marry and I had met one or two girls and on one occasion I did suddenly think, "Oh there's some reaction here". And as suddenly as it had started, it faded away again and then other people I met, females, who became strong or close platonic friends. But I felt no more than that. And I even went to a marriage bureau to try and get introductions to females that way and met one or two, but nothing was resulting from this.

So that when at last the dawning of awareness came, it was a case of thinking, "Well, although I had never realised it, I had been looking for a partner of the wrong sex," so, that realising I was gay instead of being something which made me say, "This is horrible, this is terrible," meant that I could at long last hope for a possibility of a long lasting relationship which eventually was to come my way. I've been with the same partner now for over 25 years. Thank you.

The other thing to say in that connection is that I think my attitude was helped by the fact of the family background that for whatever reason, and I never raised it with my parents, I was born very late in the marriage and I was in fact an only child in the sense of a living child, but my mother had had a child about a year before I was born, a girl who was born dead. And it had been such a traumatic experience for her that I believe my father said, "Oh, you must never go through this again". But despite him being this firm head of the family, somehow my mother talked him around and then I was born. But it meant that I was an unusually wanted child. And as an unusually wanted child and an only child, I didn't have to in any way take on the sort of image to impress my parents to feel I was wanted or loved. So, the confidence that knowing I was loved and wanted in that way I think enormously affected my character and outlook and gave me a confidence which many gay people obviously lack.

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Interviewer: And what about the dynamic between your awareness or your growing awareness of your sexuality at quite a late stage and your faith? Were you a church goer at the time? Was there any, if you were, were there any issues between the two? Are there any issues now? There's often an issue between faith and sexuality.

Mansel: Yeah, indeed there can be, which I don't think applied to me. But I would not call myself a conventional Christian. Having gone to Sunday school and so on, and being brought up in this tradition, I was very accepting of it and when I wrote the book which has now been published but was actually written at the time of my becoming aware that I was gay covering the years 1978-81, reading it again now one feels it's very much written from a Christian perspective. But nevertheless, when I was still a teenager at school, having an analytical mind which is relevant both to having become a film critic but also to the fact that I was a solicitor for many years, I didn't just accept things about religion. I did actually ponder them. And I can remember thinking quite clearly as a teenager, "What do I think of this?" and I thought, "Well, it's too impossible not to be true". That was a phrase in my mind because I thought, "Well, the fact is that Christ is a figure whose moral comments concern people right up to the present day, and people who may not be Christian at all take them totally seriously and feel that what he had to say has to be considered in moral terms". And that if he was also saying he was the Son of God, it suggests that if he wasn't, he must have been a lunatic, and it did not make sense to me that somebody who was a lunatic would be able to have this insight into human behaviour and morality so that my belief in religion was based on the balance of probabilities. It was not based, as some people I think do feel, that they had some personal experience of God.

This was slightly different from my mother. I mentioned the aunt who was like a grandmother. There was one time when she was very seriously ill and had to have an operation, and I remember my mother telling me how she was in the garage at home in Lincoln and suddenly where at this crisis point she felt something came over her and somehow knew that my aunt was going to be all right and she felt that this was something vouchsafe to her by God. But I never had that sort of experience.

So, it's much more the balance of probabilities that I continue to feel that way, but as life goes on and so many things in life are terrible, you are not totally persuaded on this. I'm pro-religious rather than anti-religious rather than somebody who says, "Oh I know my faith is the real thing and this is absolutely authentic," although one can add the paradox to that, that the whole basis perhaps of the Bible is to say that man needs to be redeemed so that the fact that there is so much horror in the world and so many human beings behave badly seems to me to support the Christian thesis rather more than it does of many humanitarians I know and like who would say, "Oh well, just take away

religion and mankind will behave so much better and everything will be perfect". And I think that's not true.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. That's really interesting. Dawn, do you have any questions?

Interviewer: So, shall we move on to the next part where, so moving on, if you can tell us about how you became involved in representing and campaigning for LGBT issues, so what have you done and why have you done it and when did you decide to become active and become visible?

Mansel: Right. Well, this takes me back again to my late realisation that I was gay. As I say, it had not been suppressed but I think after my parents had died very slowly this awareness was coming to the surface and it was almost as though it had to be a gradual process and with my interest in film, when I was at the Edinburgh Film Festival and I had access to press shows in 1978, I saw a film called Word is Out, which is a marvellous American documentary, which was reissued I think at some specialist screening at the NFT but doesn't seem to be generally available, which is a shame. In this country that is. It's probably available in America. In which a whole lot of gay people talked about their situation. And by the time I saw that film, I thought this is talking about my situation. This is me. And that was the point at which I thought, "Yes, that's the answer, that I am gay". And I immediately, as soon as I realised this, thought about writing a book, even thought up a title, No Drum to Beat, for it, which is the one I eventually used.

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When I got back to London after that obviously one is a bit sort of unsettled having come to this conclusion. But I started looking around and that was the time when Gay News was available in news agents, and I looked there. And I thought, "Well, I don't really know how I go about this," that immediately as somebody who was just approaching 40 at that time, I was thinking, "Well, I'm interested in a serious relationship. How do I get into the gay world in the hope of best finding that a possibility?" And within Gay Times there was a reference to counselling services and I thought because I felt so positive naturally I didn't need to go for counselling. But there was this body mentioned called the Albany Trust, which happened to have an office near the solicitors that I was with as a partner at that time in Westminster. And I went there really just to say, "What ideas have you got about who I might contact?" and that I'd like to make contact with other gay people who have an interest in the arts and so on and share some of my interests because that seemed a reasonable basis to start from.

And the woman there, Margaret Brown, she was I think their most experienced therapist, immediately said to me, "Oh, I think you should come in and see us". So, although I hadn't intended it, I had six sessions with her and she went into my past history, and although at first she seemed to pull the rug from under my feet by saying, "Well, you're saying you're gay, but we've got to find out if you are, aren't you?" And by then I already felt confident before the end of the sixth session, she was saying, "Yes, I'm sure you are gay".

And in terms of finding a way ahead, she'd realised from what I told her that I have Christian beliefs. And she said, "Well, there is this group called GCM which has been going for a little while now, but not that long. But in view of what I've learned of you, I think that would be a good contact". So, she sent me to St Botolph's to speak to Malcolm Johnson, who was a leading figure in that movement at the time. So, I saw him and he suggested initially that I might go to the St K Group, St Katharine's in the East End, which you probably heard of from other people, which was a sort of social set up, again significant of that period in 1978 that they didn't actually say where it was. You had to be taken there and for fear that other east enders might rough people up if they

knew what was going on there, you know, you were told to be limited in what you could say, though I gather now this is no longer the case. So, that's why I'm being as open as I am about that.

But all this gave me some contact with people there and made me feel this is good. And I also contacted the CHE, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, because they had a local branch. I was in Belsize Park at the time living up in London and they had a Hampstead branch, which I went to and went to some of their meetings. And similarly, through GCM and they put me in touch with the Maida Vale group. And I went there a few times. And not long after I'd started going there one of their conveners was moving away and it was suggested we want somebody else and I felt not that experienced, but if it was a co-convener I wouldn't object. So, it started on that basis and then suddenly the person who was going to be my co-convener decided that he'd had second thoughts and it shifted to meetings at my own flat in Belsize Park. So, I actually became convener of the North London group of GCM. And having made contact with GCM as it was at that time rather than LGCM with Richard Kirker as the main secretary, there was work being done on an appeal and an appeal committee. And I would go to Saint Botolph's and help out with some of the things there. So, that's how I became involved with that.

Interviewer: So, it sounds like it was to begin with a social seeking of connection with other people who you could relate to in your situation.

Mansel: Absolutely.

Interviewer: So, how did that then move into the more, well, I guess the active role. What's sort of the history of the being visible, the campaign or the being more active and the moving to being a convener as it were?

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Mansel: Well, I don't think there was any period in which I wasn't open, so to speak. Again, because it had happened the way that it had and I was so confident about my situation, I was somebody, I would say, who in Eastbourne had a limited number of close friends rather than a lot of people you might call friends but you didn't really know that well. And as soon as I realised I was gay, I thought, "Well, I want to be open about this and if I tell my friends, I think that's what I should do. If they accept me as such, then that's appropriate. If they don't for any reason then I think that that's a criticism of their outlook".

So, I found most of the people I really knew well were in fact very accepting of the situation. But that was how that came about. The difference always is that one feels that one doesn't want to foist oneself on other people as a gay person in a way that could be restrictive. And certainly in terms of 1978, because we're going back to those times, that whereas I would tell people who knew me without reservation, I wouldn't certainly have thought at that time or in my involvement, for instance, in the Eastbourne Film Society, which had started in 1955 and I'd been chairman from about 58 and still am, so no one would not go to the Film Society and say to the committee, "Oh, by the way, I'm gay," because that didn't concern them and one wouldn't feel that one was holding back, though if anybody for any reason had said, you know, "I have reason to believe you're gay. Are you?" I think I would have said yes.

On the other hand in London because my life was divided between keeping up my contacts in Eastbourne having moved there when I was only eight that I was still there at weekends and lots of people there and was mainly in London weekdays, in London on the contrary, I felt that one would go to these meetings and taking part in CHE and going to certain CHE meetings and so on.



But the other thing perhaps to say here is that one of the people I met at the St K group, I don't know if he's a person who happened to have been mentioned to you or not, perhaps not, but Fabian Moynihan, who was a social worker who worked at St Botolph's and also worked for Gay Sweatshop. And I found him a very engaging person and he was somebody who felt that his contribution to being gay was to be very open about it, to wear gay badges, to mix with people who, when he was helping on social issues at St Botolph's, would realise that he was gay, but he thought this was a good thing and couldn't be bad. And I thought, "Well, this degree of openness is not for me in promoting myself in public". And that was when I thought, "Well, what I want to do is to write about it because I'm a writer". And that's why I called it No Drum to Beat. I felt, I admired him for having a drum to beat, but he would almost literally go out into the street and bang the drum.

I once went to one Gay Pride march just to see what it was like, but I didn't feel this was particularly my scene. So, the idea of writing about it and hoping to get it published in due course was what was in my mind. And I would have stopped if I thought that I couldn't be positive because I was very much aware this was not self-therapy, that if it had been I didn't think there was any point in publishing it for the general public. And I was so positive that I was quite taken aback at one stage, perhaps a year in, when I suddenly had a sort of reaction, rather like depression or something like that, and had to have some time off work and I thought, "You know, maybe this means I'm going to have to abandon the book". And I hadn't expected this. Happily it passed. I was helped by a female friend in Eastbourne who gave me a week or so in her house with her parents. She was unmarried at the time and a very, very nice woman who sadly died not long ago. And she helped enormously. And once I got over that, I got right back to things and went on with the writing and so on. So, I knew that then the book was worth finishing and so on.

But ironically perhaps in a way, because I wouldn't have thought of it that way, I was just bemused by the fact that I felt so positive and yet had this reaction. I suppose it was a shock to the system and one or two people who read it, and I did have an agent at a time in the 80s for it, did say to me after they'd read it, "Well, it was the fact that your book included this that made us really believe in the honesty of your book," that if it had had nothing like that, it would have been too good to be true or somebody's hiding something. I hadn't seen it quite in those eyes, through those eyes. But I had thought the only value of this book is if it's totally honest. And therefore anything that made me look silly or absurd had to go in as much as I was critical of other people that I met at the time.

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Interviewer: So, what effect do you think this, well, how much did your work impact you and how much do you think your work is impacted, although I've read the book and others and...

Mansel: Well, that's been a rather sad history in some ways. I mean, just to cover one or two odd points from that, the only actual conflict I had was that I did feel when I was writing it that because of the way gay people were regarded in 1978, that being a partner in the firm if I chose to publish a book under my own name, then it was probably only fair to offer to resign if they'd refused to accept it. Fair enough. But I thought, well, certain clients of that firm, which was a very well-known Westminster firm, might, if they read of one of the partners being gay, think, "Oh we disapprove of this," and it would go against the interests of the firm.

But as I say, these other problems in the firm intervened. I had decided that if I wanted to be honest, to publish it under a pseudonym was not an option, that I would have to

do it under my own name. But that was the only sort of conflict I was aware of, and with these other issues, which were nothing to do with being gay that arose, I left the firm and therefore that ceased to be applicable. And I did in the 80s try to get it published. I had a wonderful agent who was a very nice woman whose name I can't forget, even if I say I may need to refer to notes to remember the odd name because she was called Joan Crawford. So, now you know why I remember the name. But she was a delightful woman who liked the book a lot. She thought it was too long and I did slightly cut it down afterwards.

But one of the interesting things in retrospect is that she showed it to a firm called Brilliance Books, and that had two partners, and one was a woman and one was a man, and the man was somebody who had she said to me, "Shall I try Brilliance Books?" I'd have said don't bother. Usually, I said, "Do whatever you think". I was very happy to be guided by her. But the man who called himself Tenebris Light, of all things, wrote pieces in the gay press occasionally and whenever I read anything by him I totally disagreed with his view and I thought well, if anybody's going to hate my book, it's this Tenebris Light, which is why I would have said don't bother. And sure enough, ultimately she came back and said Brilliance Books only publish if both people like it and Tenebris Light didn't want to go ahead. So, that was the end of that. But what was interesting in retrospect was that the woman whom she knew, who she said had liked it, even though she thought it was too long, was somebody who was not yet so well-known who in fact was Jeanette Winterson. So, you know, that was striking to look back on. But she did well in trying other firms for me, but nothing happened.

And just to complete that side of the story, what actually happened was that I had given up hope of having the book published frankly, and in 2013, it was as recent as that, as a member of the Critics Circle, I went to the Cinema Museum because there was a shared anniversary of both of the Critics Circle and of what is now the BBFC, the British Board of Film Classification. And they had an event at the Cinema Museum to mark both occasions. And I hadn't been to the museum, so, I thought, "Oh well, I will go there," and over the lunch that was part of that I got talking to the owner, who I met very briefly many years before and hadn't really remembered he was gay, and issues came up about the Cinema Museum and oh we have lots of people who come here who are gay and have an interest in gay cinema. And he said that actually quite a lot of the younger people are interested in what gay life used to be like. So, quite off the cuff, having not thought about the book for ages, I said, "Well, I happened to have a book about what gay life was like in 1978 to 81, but I've never been able to publish it". And he said, "Oh, I think I know somebody who would be interested". And he put me in touch with Phantom Publishing and I had nothing but praise for them in terms of the way they turned the book out, which looks great, it's beautifully produced, the editor on it was excellent to deal with. But it's a small firm and I was exceedingly disappointed that whatever pressures were behind it that they just failed to publicise it or promote it properly. They got no reviews having promised they'd be in touch with this person and that person. And even an interview that they asked me to do, which lasted about half an hour, they said, "Oh do that for the website," and then they didn't put it up for about a year. I had to harry them, literally a year. And the result is that although the book is out there and I have given a copy to LGCM in the hope it will be reviewed, though it hasn't happened yet, that the sales have been appallingly bad and it's the case of getting it known.

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What I did want to put on record if I can just put it in here at this point and then we'll get back to what other questions on what other things you may want to ask me. I did just want to say in terms of promoting it, because I feel I have to promote my own book, look, that one of the things that was unfortunate about that was that I said to the publisher, "Would you please send a copy to Philip French," who, as you may know, is

one of the most revered film critics who sadly died a few months ago. And I knew him through press screenings and he had taken interest in my film criticism and had seen the annual that I'd regularly contributed to. And I said to the publisher, "Would you please send a copy of No Drum to Beat to Phillip French?" because I thought, well he may not be able to review it, he'd actually retired from film criticism just a month or two before. But I thought, well, he has so many contacts, if he likes it, he would probably say, "Oh, you should approach so and so, they'll review it". But knowing that he had retired and his health was not good, I felt well, I can't pester him. And it was about two months later that I thought, "Well, I can say I hope you received a copy of the book". And to my amazement, he said, "I've received nothing". So, I acquired a copy of the book and sent it to him. And by that time his health was getting even worse. So that in the end it wasn't until about two months before his death last year, I think it was the end of August, that I got an email from him which couldn't have made me happier to combat all this lack of reviews and the disappointing sales which I wrote down what he said in the email and somebody said to me, "Oh you should publicise it," but since my publisher has all the rights, including paperback, and it hasn't sold, I'm sure they won't bring it out in any other edition. And haven't quoted this, even though I told them about it.

But what he actually said in the email was, "Extremely well written, deeply honest, courageous," and that was the one phrase I would disagree with because I think I'm a physical card, but I don't think I'm a moral card, and I think courageous means you're doing some which you have to summon all your strength to do and I didn't have to do that. I was lucky enough not to feel that. But anyway, he said courageous and valuable, not just to someone embarking on a similar journey of personal discovery, but of historical importance for the understanding of our times. And I thought, well, that couldn't have summed up better what I wanted it to be because it was a biography, but it was also about what was happening in-between 1978 and 81, which was a period of changing attitudes to gay issues, all of which were relevant to me and of what was happening to CHE and to GCM at that period. So, knowing that some people might say, "Oh we want the personal story, we're bored by the social history or vice versa," I attempted to do the two. And I thought, well, in 2013, if there is now this historical interest in it, perhaps that makes it more of a good proposition than it was. So, I'm delighted it's out there, but sorry that the sales have been so bad. End of enormous plug. So now back to you in whatever time is left to you.

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: It's all relevant. So, just to sort of draw a few threads to a close and just kind of wrap up what we've been discussing, you briefly mentioned there that the book was an insight into three years or three or four years of the developing gay world, I guess, you were involvement in that.

Mansel: It was from 1978 to 1981, so it's pre-AIDS, but enough was happening in terms of plays or television programmes and general attitudes to gays changing.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, with that in mind, this question is twofold. What are your views of the changes that have occurred for LGBT people over the last 40 years? So, do you have any insights? I mean obviously there a lot has changed, even in my lifetime, a lot has changed. So, what are your views on that? And then what then are your hopes for the next 40 years? What hopes do you have for the LGBT community, whether that's from a faith perspective or just generally?

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Mansel:

Well, I would link the two together I think and say that the book that was published in 2014 was actually the original book as I wrote it in the slightly revised edition from way back. I didn't update it in any way. I thought it's most effective if it's as it was as I felt it at the time. The only new thing I wrote was a very short introduction in which I thanked the publishers for wanting to publish it. But said, of course, some people may say that despite any interest about the historical aspects, and now we're into an era of gay marriage and so on, that a lot of what the book has to say is obsolete. But I said you only have to look around at the number of countries where being gay leads to persecution or worse than just people being badly treated but actually illegal and executed or whatever to know that this is still an issue. And although one is happy about the amount of change that has come about, one feels that it would be unwise to underestimate elements of homophobia that still exist today in this country. So that to that extent I think the hope is still there as when I wrote it.

I also made it clear in the book that what I hoped for was understanding. I did some quotes right at the end of the book. I'm not sure without having the book with me whether it was William Blake or if I'm misquoting on that. But there was some quote I think outside of chapel and in Hampstead which said something on the lines, it's not precise wording, that it's impossible to speak the truth and not be understood. And I felt well in being absolutely honest in this book, I want people to understand what I'm saying and why I think being gay is not something that is immoral or inferior and something that in terms of having respect for others that one wants. But one wants it to be combined with understanding, not people who think well really, I hate these gay people, but I know you can't be so hostile to them now as you could be in the past. So, I think this idea of promoting understanding is something that has to go on.

I was also involved with, for instance, one occasion at the Hampstead CHE, when there was a movement, sorry, not a movement, a discussion, a debate, on the subject of how a valid GCM or LGCM was in terms of the humanists opposing the sort of motion and wanting to suggest that they had all the answers and that anything with religious was hostile. And Richard Kirker was the main speaker and I seconded in terms of supporting the religious view. And I said there that I know that a lot humanists like to think that they have more merit on their side. In fact, I think it's actually easier to view for being gay if you're religious to some extent. If you're not religious, then the existence of whatever the percentage is 10, 20, different statistics have different views of the number of people who are gay, it doesn't actually have any particular relevance or importance, just that that's the statistic.

If, on the other hand, you believe in God and God is the Creator, then as I put it, you have to feel that he was a damned inefficient God if that number of people were created gay when this was something which was in fact an illness or something wrong. And that the fact that such people are, in my estimation, capable of love and affection and can only find it with other gay people is absolute confirmation that that that is a good stance to take and to feel that religion should be supportive of gay people and to give you a sort of *raison d'être* for feeling that the creation of gay people is not just chance but something that in some way was intended. So, that was the sort of argument I took.

Obviously, there are ongoing arguments here, just as one feels even today, the issues in different parts of the church about it mean that these issues however many improvements that have been are not finalised. I think, as I said in the book, writing it all those years ago, I said I don't think that everything will be totally transformed in my lifetime and therefore when you also say to me what is your hope for the future, it's exactly the hope when I wrote the book that I hope that over time, more and more people will gain an understanding of what it means to be gay and what it can mean to be gay and what your outlook is and that if people can be honest and open about it, then they will start to see that their lives are not so different from other peoples, that

their hopes for good in life, to be good people, to have lasting relationships in many, many cases are the same. And I also added at that time, well, if people tend to be anti-gay and point to all the bad things about gay life and the people who would say, "Oh, they're so promiscuous and cottaging and all that," I said, "Well, suppose it was the other way around. If it was the heterosexuals who were say 10%, wouldn't you in fact look at all the infidelity and the divorces and say that this behaviour is appalling and it just shows how bad heterosexuals are?" So, you know, I think equality, in more than one sense of the term, is very much what one is looking for, but from a point of view of understanding.

[0:37:15]

Interviewer: Great.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Interviewer: Well, I think that's a wonderful way to end the interview if, unless you have anything else to ask?

Interviewer: Well, is there anything else that you want to share that you haven't had an opportunity to yet?

Mansel: I think I've said most of the things. As I say, I want to plug the book because it's so little known. So, whether or not it gets a review on the website, if you look up No Drum to Beat, Mansel Stimpson, I hope that somewhere it will still be available although it's a hardback by these days, it's on Amazon, at least, much cheaper. And who knows in the future. But I hope some copies of it will exist.

Interviewer: Great. Well, thank you very much, Mansel, that's been great.

Mansel: Yeah, right, thank you very much. Thank you for giving me your time.

[End of Transcript]