

Drew_Oral_History

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SPEAKERS

Carson Savoie, Drew Hebert

C Carson Savoie 00:01
Okay, we are here January 20. And we are with

D Drew Hebert 00:05
Drew Hebert.

C Carson Savoie 00:06
Okay, so I have some opening questions to start with. First off, how do you identify? And what are your pronouns?

D Drew Hebert 00:13
Um, I identify as a cisgender male, he/him.

C Carson Savoie 00:19
Okay.

D Drew Hebert 00:21
Gay, gay. Let's add that one.

C Carson Savoie 00:26

What is your occupation? Or, you know, what do you do for a living?

D Drew Hebert 00:30

Well, I'm currently in school to become a coast cosmetologist, I'm about to graduate. So hair makeup, those things. And another way to earn a living is through drag.

C Carson Savoie 00:41

Do you think being part of the LGBTQ plus community has had an effect on choosing this?

D Drew Hebert 00:47

Oh, 1,000%. I would not have been put into the sphere of drag, experienced drag. I think as early if I was not LGBTQ, I was not intrigued by those things because of that community. So because of drag, because I saw drag started drag it awoken my like, obsession with hair and makeup. Period. So yes, that's it. Yes.

C Carson Savoie 01:13

When did you discover that you were LGBTQ plus?

D Drew Hebert 01:17

Third grade, I vividly remember it. Okay. So like, you know, whenever you're coming of age, you are like having starting to have crushes on people and starting to be like, Oh, that girl is kind of cute. Or like, I'm obviously not doing that if they're heterosexual man, third grade. But like, I was like, what if I like, Gavins kind of cute. Like, like just said, using a name? That's not his actual name. But like, really? Wow, I have a crush on him. What if I dated Gavin? Or what if I dated that guy? Or what if I dated him? Like, that's kind of intriguing? That like, but I didn't know what gay was then. Like, I had not been exposed to it quite yet. Or LGBTQ. And like, the whole identity and crazy world, that it is of that community within like, whatever. Like a year later, I had like my first boyfriend. Yeah, and then came out in sixth grade.

C Carson Savoie 02:14

So when you're talking about that I mean, how do you think internet exposure has shaped that? Do you think that has?

D Drew Hebert 02:22

Has shaped what?

C Carson Savoie 02:22
Like your progression of coming out? And I suppose -

D Drew Hebert 02:27
Okay, wait, I...Okay, so I think internet, internet is the downfall. And social media is the downfall but also the uplifter of the LGBTQ community. Let me explain. So there are people there, like, people like me, for instance, I grew up in Maurice, Louisiana, and went to a country school. And like, those things were like being gay was not a norm. Nor was it accepted, I guess you could say like, even from like faculty and staff, I felt like that it was still a thing that like they did not want to talk about or even acknowledge. And I personally, like would go on the internet, have a boyfriend that lives in Washington state have this, are they actually who they say they are? Like, are they predators are these things like I think our obsession with trying to find who we are. Because we have no idea we don't, we're like I lacked the Gay experience. Like, I probably talked to a few people that did not say who they thought they were. Like, I think that's a super big downfall. Because it's like it's opening all this negativity, like possible negativity, like someone who's literally trying to use you and might make you an object. And it's so objectifying. It's so putting yourself as a number versus a human being sometimes, but I think it's a super positive thing in other aspects. These it allows people like our community, specifically here in Lafayette, like South Louisiana, there's a lot of us here, but a lot of quiet ones that don't present don't go to the frequent, like the LGBTQ frequented establishments and things because they don't want to be seen that way, which is valid, I think everybody's choice and how they want to present and how they want to exist in the community is valid. But like, it allows them to, like feel comfortable with talking to people else, it allows us to connect with people that live in New York City, Barcelona, all this stuff and like, allow our gay culture to grow in many different ways and figuring out what it actually means and what it should exist like. So it's both good and bad.

C Carson Savoie 04:39
So you mentioned you grew up in Maurice, so you have you always lived in Louisiana?

D Drew Hebert 04:44
Okay, yes. I've never lived outside of Louisiana. I I lived in Maurice. Like that's where I grew up, basically, like in the middle of Maurice and Abbeville. And then, like the second I graduated high school, like Literally the second I moved went to LSU. So I lived in Baton Rouge for a few years. And then wanted to start cosmetology school, I don't know what my drive was, but the little thing in my head was that I had moved back home to Lafayette so that's where we are today.

C Carson Savoie 05:19
Could you describe your upbringing?

D

Drew Hebert 05:22

Okay, this is...my upbringing is extremely like complex, or like LGBTQ. So I grew up Catholic, Catholic household, church on Sunday... church on Sunday. If I acted up in church, you say sorry, to the priest. You are structured strict parents daycare, this like, very, like you don't feel like very, very much. So those people you don't act a certain way. Okay, but at the same time with having that experience, like the Catholic experience of like catechism learning all those things. My mother is like the most accepting Person of the gays. Like, and, that side of the family, like I had a gay uncle didn't know what gay was until later. And like, experienced that. But like, super accepting super, while also remaining super Christian and super Catholic, which I think that that kind of confused me a little bit. Because my family is making me go to catechism making me go to church making me go to this place that often times are not too fond of who I am, and are going to like just question how I present because I presented like, "flamboyant," as people like to categorize us. Like, since birth, the second I could walk I had heels on. It was like a it was a very telling thing. So like I was going to this place to be ostracized and be categorized and feel disgusting about myself. I'm told that I'm a mistake, and I'm a sin. And then I go home and it's like, it's great. Like, it's fine. Now my dad's side of the family. It was a very like, Don't Ask, Don't Tell type of situation. Like they didn't ask. They didn't tell my - the ignorance. I think that they're super ignorant on that side to a lot of it because my father like whenever I told him, I told him, I told them over text message, which is telling he straight up said "I thought you just wanted to be a girl." Okay, so that's obviously just like, that's not what Gay means, because I've heard you, use a slur before. So like, that was that weird experience that weird like, odd thing that I was existing within. My grandfather called me a disappointment, but my grandmother was saying, it's Okay, I still love you. Like, it was a weird back and forth thing for me. But like, while, this is my upbringing, and I'm dealing with all of those different things coming at me. I still remain true to myself. Like I was never that person that like hid my personality or like tried to lower it down for someone else. That was, that's never been me will never be me. And I think that's like a big reason why I look at my upbringing positively even though that there was some negative parts. Because I am a big believer that like, you are only sort of like oppressed and suppressed if you allow yourself to be that's what I think like yes, all these factors were pushing on pushing pushing, but I never wanted to. So I guess I'd never felt that way, if that makes sense. So I think my upbringing was very wild. Very wild, the usual bullying whatever you want to say, the F slur screamed across the gym at me sixth grade people telling me to kill myself seventh grade, all of those things. Like I was saying I just kept on skipping but that's my upbringing.

C

Carson Savoie 08:57

So you mentioned being raised in a Catholic space. Do you consider yourself still religious?

D

Drew Hebert 09:04

Okay, religious is a very strong word to me relig- to be religious is a completely different thing than what I think it is. Personally. I'm I don't consider myself Catholic, Catholic. I consider myself a Christian. I believe that my existence with like God and those things, I think it is positive for me to have a relationship that is private. I don't I don't think that me going sit in a

building and listen to someone tell me what I can read. It's beneficial for me now everybody else who people who are Catholic people who are whatever they believe in whatever works for you works for you. This is just what works for me like I'm one of those believers. So I wouldn't not say that. I can, I think like with my past and religion and like the things that I've heard, I think my viewpoint of religion is kind of like something that I need to reflect on and think about, my viewpoint on someone religious kind of exist with homophobia. I don't know why but that's kind of something that I connect. Maybe I need to venture and think into that.

C Carson Savoie 10:19

Ok, so those are kind of like my openers, I have some some digging deeper questions.

D Drew Hebert 10:24

I dive deep already. Let's see. Give me a shovel girl.

C Carson Savoie 10:27

Can you tell me about any difficulties or hardships you've faced as a Cis Gay man

D Drew Hebert 10:41

This is about to be real problematic. competition, competition, let's talk about this. So South Louisiana, it's a kind of, I think it's ingrained in gay culture a little bit gay LGBTQIA plus culture compete. I think because we have like, it's one of those things where like, Okay, our community is minimized, not minimized. But like, smaller, like, we can all say that our dating pool is on a smaller existence to the heterosexual community fact. And I think a lot of people are putting it into a competitive race, like who can feel the most Instagram followers, who can have the most amount of apps, who like who is better in all these ways? And making like a checklist of like, Who's a better Gay? Like, what makes them a better Gay? Do they have good style? Are they wearing the Nike dunks? Like, do they have money? Money is a very big thing. So I think all of those things like I have struggled with, because I like, I don't want to compete with you like, Okay, for example, me, you can literally take me and snap me over your knee. I'm 5'7" 130 pounds. We're not going far. Like, I'm not a big, big boy. Okay, now we're men. K, because we're gay men. One could be six, three, and jacked. How are you even going to compare us to fitness and competition? Like, like the competition is literally existing as someone's preferences, why are we turning preferences into a checklist of who a gay man is. And that's just how I've seen it. That's my personal experiences. I'm not sure if everyone else can see that, or like, has that experience? Maybe they don't maybe they don't see that at all. But like, Okay, we're gonna bring it up Grindr. Grindr is single handedly the epitome of competition. Even. So, like, I've been on the app before, I don't care. Like I'll say, like, Okay, there's a picture of me, like, all these people are cutting off heads. Like a lot. A lot of people do not post their head. They don't want their face to be put on it. And its body. So you're scrolling through saying who has the nicest body and they get the response from me? Like that's comp- that's disgusting competition. It's objectifying and making people feel awful about themselves. We're human. Why are we dehumanizing our sexuality? Like, why are we making it this big thing. And

that's what I have struggled with as being a Cis Gay man. Because like, I think that the dating realm is a little bit different whenever you get into non binary. And like those realms, I think Cis Gay men is a very specific topic. And you have to keep it specific. Because like a lot of people just their preferences. I don't think preferences are necessarily negative for people, but people don't want to date. Like some people just don't want to date someone who's nonbinary. It's not for them. Some some people just don't want to date someone who's they/them. And that's valid if that's, if that's what how you feel. That's how you feel. So I think that this specific question that you just asked was so, so important, because it literally is competition, I literally struggle with competition because I can't get ripped. So like because I have I don't have a line and washboard abs, I'm immediately counted out as a person.

C

Carson Savoie 14:06

So to build on that because you're making commentary about the LGBTQ plus community. Specifically the Gay communities. What's your perception of the larger queer community Lafayette today?

D

Drew Hebert 14:20

Okay, this is so... this is such a weird question. Because this question is so like experience based that like someone might walk in and have this exact same interview and say that it's the worst community in the world and say that it is this, XYZ. I love it. Okay, when I think that the the gay community in Lafayette it is big enough, where we don't all know each other all the time, but small enough that it still feels safe. Does that make sense? Living in Ba-[ton Rouge] I can only contest like, I'm going I'm going to make a comparison Because I can like I feel like a comparison is a good way to just like, me build my opinion on Lafayette like living in Baton Rouge. That was where my Gay awakening was like, Oh my gosh, I'm not in a country high school anymore. Like, there's gay people everywhere I had the freedom, the sexual freedom, the like, whatever it was. And that's where the competition started. That's where, like, Oh, do you drive an Audi? Do you have a BMW? Where do you work out? Do you want to go like sip this \$400 bottle of wine? Like that's where all of those things like built up in my head? I don't feel bad here. Like, like, if you're not pretty, they weren't putting you in a friend group, in Baton Rouge. I felt like, like, and that to me sickening. But like not any good way. And like here. Yes, like it looks like there's cliques. But I can talk to a brick wall. Like, I feel up to anyone here. Like, I feel like in the gay community, LGBTQ community in general, like, no matter what I look like, no matter what I sound like my color, like anything, they will talk right back and will be open arms to put me in the Snapchat group chat if we got there. And like, it's been like I feel loved here. Like in, in a general sense, like, yes, the dating pool is small, because there's not that many here. But like, the small few that we have here, I feel like actually make it a positive and safe space. And I also think that because the Lafayette gay community isn't super big. We don't have like, Okay, we don't have multiple gay bars, we have one main one. And the one main one kind of pulls us all together. Like we are more united. I feel like here we are more united as a community. Versus like segregating we've, like I've seen like in other cities that I've traveled to, like, oh, this race is the goes to that Gay bar, or this type of Gay goes to this game or this like, that doesn't we can't do that here. So like, I think it makes like our gay community, so many, like gay LGBTQ community, whatever you want to say, so much healthier, because we are forced to exist together.

C Carson Savoie 17:16

Talking about being "forced to exist together," and that there's a lot of positives to it. What do you think is the biggest inter community struggle that we face?

D Drew Hebert 17:32

I think internalized homophobia is extremely large here. Now, I'm not I can't contest to like what it's like elsewhere, because like, I don't know, I won't say that. But here, I think a lot of people struggle with it. But because we're products of our environment here and our environment is not always the most. Like a lot of I can say that like a lot of times I've heard, like, oh, I want to be your, friend. But like, I think Gay is a sin. Okay, so at this point, I'm just a figure piece that you want to add to your life, just to say that I haven't GBF [Gay best friend] Okay, that's strange. So I think I'd built internalized homophobia, people not wanting to come out to their parents, they, they're thinking oh, like they see. They grew up with a wrangler bootcut jeans, with cowboy boots that were alligator that that is what I'm getting. They have to be they there's a lot of struggle with individualism here, sometimes, which I don't know, because whenever you go up to someone, because we have Mardi Gras balls, and like this is this is why I think we struggle with individualism here. We have a Gay Mardi Gras ball here, Apollo. And then we have one not too far. ROU, you it's LGBTQ friendly. And I say gay, but like LGBTQ. They're like prevalent. Well, Okay, you go to the one and I see people like, put their glow on when they put some glitter on. But you see them out and they like, they're like all shy and timid and like they change completely. And I feel like that they're struggling with themselves when they're trying to fit in a box that is Lafayette and sometimes fitting a box, that is Lafayette is not the healthiest option. So I think that's, I think like, just individualism is our biggest struggle here.

C Carson Savoie 19:23

What can you share about your experiences with Queer spaces in Lafayette?

D Drew Hebert 19:26

Um... Did you say experiences or spaces?

C Carson Savoie 19:36

Experiences with Queer spaces.

D Drew Hebert 19:42

I think there's like a general level of what we are what we are going to experience in our queer space. I think that there's like a general knowledge of like, what might what might occur? Like I think we can all concur and say that like, Okay, if I walk into the gay bar, I'm going to see gay men. Period, like in general, like that. So I think that's what all the queer spaces are Here like

we're going to see people dressed a little bit differently because, like, differently, you know, dressing how they want to dress, in Queer spaces. But I think that specific to Lafayette's Queer spaces. I think like this specific Lafayette queer spaces here, they have a homier feeling like, Okay, it's like a Bolt nightclub. Okay, Well, the owners of Bolt, are behind the bar. It's not someone else, right? Like their present. The bartenders are like your friends that you probably had previously in these queer spaces. And I think like, if you walk in, like, here in a queer space, I can walk in alone, and know people. So I think Lafayette's Queer spaces are definitely way like one of the safer experiences that I've had. Because they it's like a Southern barrel feeling like we're making a homier setting, they're not as large, they're not as largely vast in population, and they're kind of unheard of. Like a lot of times when people hear I'm a drag queen. They they like they're like, where are you? Where did you perform? Did you perform like, around the town that's like the only place like, No we have a gay bar downtown, called Bolt. And their like, wait, there's a gay bar here? That's why, like, I think we have a really good hidden, like kind of our little oasis. And maybe they don't want it to be like a hidden oasis. But like, I think that's really safe for where we are in the world. We're in South Louisiana. That's kind of scary. It's kind of scary sometimes for our actual physical safety. So I kind of like I think our queer spaces are very hidden oasis sanctuaries for us.

C Carson Savoie 21:49

You mentioned that you do drag performances, can I ask you about that?

D Drew Hebert 21:52

Yea

C Carson Savoie 21:53

So have you ever, or can you just discuss your experiences performing? And you mentioned Bolt.

D Drew Hebert 22:00

Yes.

C Carson Savoie 22:01

So can you discuss your experience performing there?

D Drew Hebert 22:03

My favorite. It's, it's like, it's actually my favorite place to perform at. First of all, like, the I already knew the queens, like outside of drag. They are super cool people and they're super down to earth, I think it's the most down to earth family bar. Like, like their cast like, like, you

know, I'll name drop, they're on Facebook. Like Roxie C. Black and Kenli Andrews have been there since the beginning of ladies of Bolt. They are there, they have been there. So I think like they build a very good groundwork for like, drag to exist here. Like you can exist in drag here and be Okay. And like, have it. And every time I perform like, tips are good at Bolt, like, people appreciate the art at Bolt. Like the actual owners like they care about the drag hitting their stage, I feel like like they're not just like they want the art to actually be presented properly. And that's what I really like about Bolt. And I have, you know, to say an experience I have at a certain bar. I have been sexually assaulted. I mean, shoved his hands down my tights, because he felt like it was a proper thing because of who drag queens are. What does that mean? I don't know. But keep that energy to yourself. But like bolt like, I know that if anything near that happened at Bolt, the staff all of them would like make a motion, be active and care. But I also know that the patrons of the bar whether I know them or not, would not accept it. And they would take action too. So Bolt, one of my favorite places to perform at.

C Carson Savoie 23:44

a lot of folks kind of expressed the sentiment that drag can kind of bring both the LGBTQ community together but also like just communities outside of that together.

D Drew Hebert 23:55

Yes. Okay. Let me I have a very, very strong opinion about this. And it's probably just because of my specific experiences. Being a young drag queen, I started drag young. So, okay, Gay, like I feel like LGBTQ people. Y'all like we, we look at drag queens as an equal human being who's displaying their art. We know that it is our Queer bar, like protect the Queer art, like that's one of the things that we're worried about right now. And, like, I think that people who exist out of this and they don't really see drag that often and they go to brunch once a year. They're more idolizing. Like, it's more of like, this is a celebrity moment. This person is on a different level than me. And they don't view it as art, they view it as, like how...generalized statement but not everybody thinks this. A man in a wig. That's a lot of people just think of drag in the back of their head and on their back burner. And I think like, yes, drag pulls together communities, but not for the same reasons. It's very different reasons. For different reasons. Repeat the question, to see if I want to add anything.

C Carson Savoie 25:18

Many folks have expressed the sentiment that drag brings together the LGBTQ plus and local community together, do you think this is true? If so, how do you think drag fosters such a tight knit community?

D Drew Hebert 25:29

I wouldn't say tight knit. I wouldn't, I wouldn't. I have performed at brunches and XYZ. There are a lot of people who are homophobic and against queer things like our life, lifestyles and everything, and they will attend a brunch. They will attend a drag brunch, they will hand you that \$5 Bill and then they'll leave there and post something on Facebook with the F-slur Like I

have seen it firsthand. And that is not just me making an assumption about people, I have seen it. And so I think that yes, it could. Drag can bring together communities positively. I think that that is a very good existence it brings together like it does, absolutely does. But I don't think that every single situation that drag is bringing together communities is always positive. Because like I have heard in a drag show, a grown man say look how that "F-A-G" is dressed and pointed at someone else that was at the show. You are at a drag show, Honey, let's be real. So like that, like that. It's not always positive, It's not always. Drag, Uh, yes, we want it to be a safe space for everybody. But with the world we live in, not every space is always going to be safe.

C Carson Savoie 26:53

This is a question specifically about not only your personal experience coming out but like, the idea of coming out, you know? Do you feel that LGBTQ plus individuals are treated differently now? Versus whenever you came out?

D Drew Hebert 27:19

Can we broaden the question a little bit? So I'd say in general, like all LGBTQ from past to now? Why am I trying to change the question, I'm being interviewed. Because I, I don't think I'm old. I don't think I'm old enough to have an accurate representation of a big change or a big existence, like because I'm in my early 20s in 2024. I don't think that my I don't think that my age can represent too much like in that experience. Because I've only been out eight years. Like, I came out like, I think the year before that it was legalized at the Supreme Court. So like, it's not really I don't think, but I can say overall that coming out now. Okay. I'm actually very opinionated on this question. There's different layers that I see in this question. So I see on Facebook see on social media that the toxicity of people saying that being gay, being transgender, is a trend now people are just jumping on this trend. People are just doing all this. And I think that's absolute bullshit. Sorry for the language. But I I genuinely think it is. Because let's say, Okay, maybe now there's just a few laws that might protect us from hate crimes. Maybe there are just a few more people that were listening about our problems before not saying anything, but now they're listening and acting. Maybe there's just like, a few more spaces, where police officers won't rip us out of the space and arrest us and maybe protect us from the oppressor. Maybe it's just safe for the people that were hidden, to now not be hidden. There's no trend in this anymore. It's not a trend. We are not trying if it was a if it was so trendy and so beneficial, and like the world wanted it to be all this trend, do you think that the government would be trying to strip us of some of the rights? No, they'd want to protect it, they'd want more voters. So like, whenever you are thinking about how like the coming out experience has changed. The coming out experience has changed so much that we go from killing someone to like, oh my gosh, I can go to the gay bar and not be terrified. Like that's the rapid change in coming out like, and I think that a lot of people are coming out like and like, Okay, specifically, I'm not a transgender person. But I feel very strongly for them and I support them like, so hard. A lot of people say like, I'm not letting my daughter transition, I'm not letting my son transition...d-d-d-d-d. Valid, If that's your opinion, your opinion is valid. And I'm not going to take your opinion because I want you to respect mine. But Okay...

C Carson Savoie 29:59

We're good.

D

Drew Hebert 30:00

Like you're telling me that all of a sudden, maybe a few doctors who can change changed some laws, said, Hey, I want to provide people with proper health care. So that was going to become trendy. And but oh, now that we're getting proper health care, it's becoming a problem. When the people stopped dying was whenever they stopped caring. That's how I feel. Ok, next question because I will get aggressive.

C

Carson Savoie 30:36

Do you notice a difference in the attitudes of others towards LGBTQ plus women versus LGBTQ plus men?

D

Drew Hebert 30:46

Oh my gosh, oh, my gosh, I have, literally since sixth grade. Ok. Just like from my experiences, Okay. Women, you know, generalized statement, women tend to be less homophobic. Period. Like, women tend to be less homophobic. I feel like because society like, cool. Men, Okay. Men will rip you apart, use all the slurs, use whatever vicious words that they want to use to describe you. But the second that a woman is same sex it's hot. Excuse me, is this not a double standard here? Just because you are not intrigued by a man does not all of a sudden generate your hate for my sexual activity. You aren't, these people are generating hate for us specifically, because what happens in our bedroom? What that got to do with you? What does that, I do not care what you're doing in yours. Why your hate for a gay person. Essentially, being gay means that I am attracted to a man and have sexual relations with a man. You are not mad that I'm attracted to a man you're mad that I'm having sex with a man. So I care about that. You're not in the room. Like that's crazy to me. But oh, a woman? Oh my god, y'all wanna both come with me? dudududuudududu. And like they watch it on like sites that showed the explicit of it. And all these things. So I think that the world definitely treats like women who are attracted to women better than us. And you know, kudos to them go there. I don't think that they are as ostracized as gay men. And you know what, that's just from my experience. I'm only saying this from my experience. And yes, lesbians, lesbians, people who are attracted to other women, the same sex women, like yes, I'm not discrediting any of the negative experience that they could have had, because they are still someone in the LGBTQ community, they are still experiencing some atrocities, like, again, I get it. And I think that they are experiencing something. But I think that they what they experience is a little bit different than what a cisgender gay man will experience.

C

Carson Savoie 32:56

Ok, I have some questions about queer representation in media, is that cool?

D

Drew Hebert 33:01

D Drew Hebert 33:01

Yeah.

C Carson Savoie 33:03

How do you feel that LGBTQ plus history like, our collective history, how do you think that affects the current climate for our community?

D Drew Hebert 33:19

Like in our climate, or like how we're like, like us, like our climate within us, our climate in general, including external factors?

C Carson Savoie 33:28

You can answer both or whichever one you think is better.

D Drew Hebert 33:31

Ok, I'll answer with external factors. Okay. So I think our climate is super crazy, because a lot of people who are not in our community are over sexualizing our community. Yes, so like me as a gay man, a Cis Gay man. Some people automatically throw on the label pedophile. Huh? What does that what does that mean? When did we add that being gay meant I was attracted to kids and wanted to do awful things to children. What? Missing that one. But like, I think that it's just so over sexualized that it's creating a climate within us that we are sexualizing ourselves too much. I think we are taking it and projecting it in some in some ways, and not all of us. And it's not always going to be an all thing. It's I'm saying generalized statements, because, I think it exists. I think so. And I think this is one of the very, very difficult conversations and uncomfortable experiences that we need to talk about. And we need to normalize talking about but we're just not there yet. I think we like all of that the climate within us is that we are pushing and pushing and pushing and pushing to try and get everything that we deserve, and to get equal rights, equal protections like good health care, all this stuff, and that we're forgetting about ourselves a little bit. Like we're forgetting about myself. Me Like, Okay, these people are over over sexualizing, then why not be what they already think of me. I think a lot of people do that. Um, Grindr. I think that is so, ok, Grindr. Like, I'm not innocent in this like, I'm not. Having that people off of Grindr I like I'm not innocent. But like, if you, Okay if I went in my AppStore right now like this is factual whoever's watching this do it. If you type in Grindr you get the second you get to the end right under it it says "Grindr straight" Yeah, people are like trying to figure out what is going on in our climate that it's creating our climate to be crazy. And then like, I think external factors, Okay, these DL [down low] people like, Okay, I don't think I think sexual sexual health is not talked about enough as well in our community. But like, I think our community is way ahead of other communities. Like, Okay, like, for the longest time, we were known as the Gay Related Immune Deficiency, which is now HIV/AIDS. And when we were known that, it only hit us, it was what God was doing to us. That's what people thought for the longest time. And now we're like, Okay, let's say you have it, like your status is positive. You can take medications that alleviate it from being a death sentence. Oh my gosh, we have

preventatives, oh my gosh, someone is finding a vaccine, oh, my gosh, all these things. But like, our climate is still saying that still making us feel weird, and we still feel dirty, so to speak. Like, whenever people are positive, because the external factors because everybody's like, ew, ew, ew, just get- . Like this still exists, because that's very systematic thing that we have to work really hard to change. And our climate is just so crazy. There's so many different, like, levels to us and our community, because there are so many different like experiences. I don't think anyone could adequately say what our climate is. Because, Okay, I'm a gay man. I date men. Okay, Well, we have lesbians, we have bisexuals, we have intersexuals. We have asexuals, we have "transgenders." There are so many of us, so many different things to explore that we can't have a climate. I don't think like a climate was... I just turned that question around and made it crazy. And I'm honestly, just having a thought bubble now. But like, it's it's honestly so... it's really, really sad. I like because I'm a victim of it like how much I sexualized myself and I thought that's all I was good for. Because of like, the predatory things that I had to do because our climate said, like, don't come out whenever you're young. So I was like, wise words of Doja Cat, "cybersex," all I was was a nude in a mirror to a man and I didn't really see his face. Like, that's how I like, like, that's how I view our climate. Sometimes, like we there's stages of our climate. Like now I'm having my big awakening, and I'm super healthy, sexually healthy. I'm trying to do the good things for people trying to like, be a voice for people that don't have voices because they, they like, are so scared to. But like, our climate is like, you have to be a loud one like me, or your, I feel like it's kind of like you have to be one pushing and pushing and pushing and heavily opinionated and screaming on the top of the rooftops, or you're nothing. I've experienced that a lot. I've seen people like degrade, like I've seen on social media, like things like that. Someone degrading someone else's sexuality, because they didn't want to, like openly put their opinion on the internet. Excuse me. Why? Like I thought we were supposed to be uniting here. So I think our climate is just so crazy. Like, I think it's crazy. We all might have the right thing. So we're all going about the right thing in a different way. Like we have the same destination. But we've never talked about the paths that we want to take. To make our climate actually positive. [Checks Phone]

C Carson Savoie 39:21
We're good?

D Drew Hebert 39:22
yeah no, I have work at 4:30

C Carson Savoie 39:26
Do you think representation in media, so TV shows, movies, etc. is important for a young LGBTQ plus person.

D Drew Hebert 39:34
No... [Laughs]. Okay. Wait. That sounded crazy. Yes, and no. I think it's amazing that we are seeing LGBTQ people doing great things. I think it's amazing that some people in congress like are saying like it's Okay. I think it's great that a transgender person was on the ad for a Bud

are saying like, it's okay. I think it's great that a transgender person was on the ad for a Bud Light. Why is it a big deal whose in an ad for Bud Light? I don't know, you know what we're not getting into that. I think it's amazing because I didn't like, a lot of people did not see that a lot of people did not, like I think it's opening up so much of their expression. Because like, whenever you see like, oh my gosh, literally something that just happened, Emmy, RuPaul just got one. Another one for being TV show host, he's clearing them Emmy's, I think it's amazing to see like, because all the cast walks on stage from all the season that would that won it. Okay, Michelle Visage walks on stage. RuPaul's on stage, and you see such a diverse group of people, because people are in the representation and in the media, you can look at one of them and pinpoint, wait I kind of like that. And it makes you start poking and prodding and expressing yourself and makes you start poking and prodding and exploring, because you saw it, so it makes it and not exploring, like sexually, but just exploring like who you are a little bit, I think it's like super beneficial for people to like, for all the representation, for it all to be out there, because it's making people feel like I can do that. It's making us have a little pedestal that we never had before. But like, at the same time, I think it's bad because you see the exact same thing happening. And then you click on comments. And obviously, people have opinions, obviously, they're not always positive. So it's a double edged sword. It depends on how you look at it and how you view it. Like, are you viewing this as powerful? Are you viewing this as like, oh, it's the one in a million chance, and maybe I'll get on there, but people are gonna hate me for it? Depends on how you look at it. But I think it's both... good representation. Okay, that's great, period, Okay.

C

Carson Savoie 41:43

How do you feel about recent political actions taken against LGBTQ people in Louisiana? So when your book bans legislation, sports bans?

D

Drew Hebert 42:02

Okay, we're gonna talk about literature, because that's the one I'm most educated on. I don't really follow sports so much, so I don't really have to much knowledge on that. LGBTQ literature. I think it's literally insane that we are having book bans. Why are like, Okay, this, um, I think this I think, Okay, it's definitely a book that is presenting gay sex and all these things. Someone of below a certain age should not be able to like, Okay, no person who's just learning how to read should be able to go pick up a book and figure out what poppers are. I think that's valid, I think that that is 1,000% valid on their their same points. But I think like, Okay, you, as I, like Shakespeare, if you look into, like, all the old literature acts that we are forced to study and all these things, there's, like, drag queens in it like, there's drag in it and all these things, but like, nobody wants to look at that. You want to look at why he said "thou." Like what? Okay, no like. So I think that's putting bans on certain books, like you are literally harming the education of like, queer youth, like you, like, we need to protect queer rights queer art, queer- because I consider literature art for me, I do. I think literature is absolutely beautiful. I think like, it would be amazing, like, Okay, it's becoming more prevalent, like, I see LGBTQ couples in books now. But I think if like, we weren't trying to suppress them and take them off the shelves and all these things, maybe like, a few more exploring people who are bi curious, gay curious, wouldn't come message an old man online and figure something out. Get what I'm saying? I feel like that it would be a very like they would learn about themselves somewhat like it would answer some of their questions to see like a couple do it to do all these things that we're not seeing. Because like gay couples like, like they like seeing those things would have been so

beneficial for me. Like, I know, I like like me growing up whenever I was first answering my questions like in fourth fifth grade, before I really like got my phone and figured it out online. Like if I would have had like an AR book in my elementary school that just had like a little like romance novel. That was a gay couple not like crazy, not them ripping off their clothes like just like a little innocent one. How would it have changed and educated me it like it would have just made me it would have I think it would have been like it's it would make a world of difference for kids to see who they think they are represented for them from a young age. Because like you look at gay media, like you look at gay travel, like all these things are amazing. I love that we have gay safe spaces to travel with and I love that we have gay cruises all these things cool whatever you're trying to get you to think about, like LGBTQ places, a bunch of them pop up wearing, like jockstraps not jockstraps like Speedos, they have harnesses, all this stuff. So it immediately thinks that this is what I need to be. I think queer literature allows a lot of people to express what they think, their queer experiences, when they look at career experiences. And they're putting it in paper, putting it in movies, and things like that, that a wide range of what the queer experiences and you will be able to see a lot more what the queer community is. Oh, my God, I could talk about that for years. Okay, next.

C

Carson Savoie 45:40

So, um, I have a follow up about that. This question is phrased, "how do you think we got here," which is not to suggest that this hasn't been a problem for, you know, our community for a long time, but I think especially in terms of book bans, you know, that has become a very controversial topic and has become kind of in this 24/7 news cycle. How do you think we got here?

D

Drew Hebert 46:04

How do you think we got here? Am i allowed to get political? Ok, So I think it's kind of wild that people that were born before the 1960s, are allowed to hold public office. And like, major public offices, Oh, Okay. Perfect tie in for this. Okay, so you're telling me a 65 year old woman, and like, Okay, this is this is just going to work for our President, I'm not saying anything about his, like, what we're doing like any of what his administration is doing, it has nothing to do with that. This is just an example because of like, a demographic he fits. So a seventy year old woman cannot go stock shelves at Walmart cannot go work at XYZ, because she is a seventy year old woman who is deemed unfit for proper employment. So you think an 85 year old man, or a seventy year old man too, like he's fit unproper for employment, so let me get even older. And he is proper, properly fit to run millions of people and make decisions for millions of people. And like, all these crazy things, I think that we have gotten here. Because for a second, I think whenever there was like more traditional ideas, like a little bit more traditional ideas. Like yes, church was in state, then certain people pulled in, and the church was removing from state and like, it allowed us to do all these things then our churches get back in the state, where like, it's going against my religious beliefs. So it's doing this, so I can't, so I can't support that. But at the same time, I think it's like, Okay, because they don't want. A lot of these people are like, voting in the sense of like a winner, like how they grew up, like, I was raised, like du-du-du-du-du, and like, that's crazy. Because like, you want to say you were raised like, you were raised whenever like a color or like a person of color, could not be at the same water fountain. And you want to say that like, like, the adequate decision, like you're making a decision based on how you were raised. That's what we're doing. So like, if you want to make a

decision about how we're raised, then you've got to revert it all the way back. Don't be progressive about certain things. Say it with your chest, do what you want to do with your chest and they're doing something with their chest. And it's not good. That's what I'm literally seeing, like a lot of these people are like, and there's a lot of showboating. Now, social media has made showboating happen, where it's like, Oh, my God, I'm going to do this for you. But social media is allowing them to present something and they have hidden motives. They're gonna get Yeah, like, let's say we vote, a great woman in office, first woman president, like, cool. A bunch of men are like, Oh, she's too emotional. Because she's a woman because that's what they think. There's like, no, there's progression of legislation. But there's not progression of people and demographic of people, if that makes like they're trying to make progressive legislation, but like, there's some there's some somewhere like they like I mean, not right now. Obviously, they're trying to literally rip us apart. But like, there was progressive legislation because people were changing and now we're stagnant again. Like there's, there's no more change in people so there's not gonna be change in legislation. I think that goes hand in hand.

C Carson Savoie 46:17

Yea What do you think we can do to combat this?

D Drew Hebert 49:55

I mean, though, like, our literal most powerful thing as a citizen of the United States We can vote. Vote, but voting only goes so far. Whenever Okay, I feel like there's way too many media outlets because it's, I feel like there's there's so many different media outlets that there's so many different opinions being pushed, that is pushing all of our votes in different ways. So it's becoming like, the people who need to band together, like the people who actually have the same ideologies aren't really voting together anymore. And I think like with the media, like so many people are being like, their opinions are becoming so fast, like, perfect example, like, Okay, so let's say some there's one right now off the top of my head, like there's someone in the house or in Congress, that are extremely pro life, but they are extremely pro queer. Okay, Well, that's, I'm not saying that it's like hand in hand, like pro choice people are queer. Like, that's not what I'm saying at all. I'm saying that like, Okay, a lot of like queer women will not vote that way. Because they want their actual healthcare rights. They want their experiences to be protected. They want their, which is valid, I think, like, period, like the feminist queer women who deserve to be protected. They're cut, it's like, it's hard for them to vote because they're voting against themselves either way. Like, they vote for that person. Okay, Well, then, we're kind of stripping my right a little bit like my right to my choice, but then it's going to help me be Queer. Oh, but like, Okay, let's say they're super, like, you get what I'm saying. Like, it's weird, I think there's a lot of vast opinions, because they're trying to accommodate one group and like, they're saying, Oh, I'm super pro queer, because they want to Queer vote, which is getting enormous babe were getting big, were starting to scream on the top of rooftops, but not realizing that like, Okay with their pro life to be like, at the same thing, you're dividing us. You're adding a division to you, and you are literally ripping yourself apart, because like you're picking and choosing, trying to showboat and trying to like, pick and choose and have the biggest wide range of voters. But I promise you, if you're trying to say you're pro life, and Queer you're getting [unintelligible] it's not good. Like it's just not it. Because there's a lot of queer women out there who care about their rights. Okay, next.

C Carson Savoie 52:33

So a part of the research that we did discovered that, you know, in the late 70s, mid 80s, there was like six to seven gay bars all at once. I say gay bars deliberately, you know because they served specifically that part of the community. And now today, we only have one, which is "Bolt." How does that make you feel?

D Drew Hebert 52:57

I think it's like, really, I think it's really different. So I think like, marketing is different. I think that's it. Social media plays a major role in how gay bars are surviving now. Ok? Because back then, like, you weren't really advertising on your sign that you were a gay bar. It was not openly advertised, it was not all over Facebook, it was not all over Instagram that you were a Gay bar that was having drag shows. Okay. It was kind of just like, an underground thing that you just heard about. And you were just going. So I think like, like they were surviving, like, all these multiple bars were surviving. Because like, a lot of people were going not knowing what the bar was, like, they were like, it was just considered a hangout. But like, the insiders, the gays that were going that knew it was the gay bar. Like, they kept it quiet, they were more quiet back then. They were more like, reserved, like, there was not many openly queer people were like, queer men or like non binary people that were wearing crop tops, but are like, passing as men. Do you get what I'm saying? Like not trying to categorize anybody? But like, I think that it's changed a lot where Okay, people feel uncomfortable with how we dress, like some people feel uncomfortable with seeing a man in a crop top, and some short shorts and in heels. Like, that's just what they think. And I think that now whenever, like...that's associated to a gay bar, so a lot of the like, heterosexual community and a lot of the other communities that like, view it that way. Now that that's what's happening and like it's becoming more prevalent in gay bars. Now, like some are having to shut down because they're losing a lot of business because because of the like, stigma on a Gay bar. And now that you can see that it's a Gay bar and it's more relevant and now that they can, now that a bar can go on social media, and say that they are gay bar as their superpower. Now, that's what's the problem a little bit, too. That's what I feel about that.

C Carson Savoie 55:01

So we've been talking a lot about representation, we've dealt with some heavy topics. I would like to kind of switch the tone for a second and talk about pride. To you, what's the best part of being LGBTQ plus?

D Drew Hebert 55:34

Okay, I, I think, I don't know, I think I think we all think of sexuality super different. Like, Okay, yes, I'm LGBTQ plus, yes, I'm a drag group. But that's not all I am. That's how I see it. I think that my representation, I think a gay man, Gay Cis man is getting the most representation. Like I think we're the most like, whenever you think of like LGBTQ community, you think about two men holding hands. Like that's what a lot of people think about. That's immediately where their mind goes to, even though the L's before the G. But like, I think, to answer that, like, What's the best part? I think the time that I'm existing in it, like it doesn't go, I think it goes, I think time

period of when you're existing in it goes hand in hand with how you exist as LGBTQ. Because like, we've existed in so many different spheres, we've existed in so many different ways. That like, Okay, now that I'm in 2024, yes, there's legislature that is against me, yes, there's people that are still against me that's never going to go away. We live in a society that there's always gonna be a hater. But I think I think just the time period, like, I think that's like the best thing, because now I can go to a gay bar and be protected. People didn't have like, a reason, to refer-Stonewall, like that was crazy. If you look up some [] and how crazy that was, I'm not having to fight as hard. I think that's what I like. I like about my LGBTQ experience, most like, I'm not fighting, like I'm fighting, but it's different type of fighting. I'm not fighting for my life at this point. Like, if that makes any sense. Like, I'm not going to jail for having sex with a man at this point. I'm not. I think it's a time period. I know that it doesn't like because LGBTQ I guess the sense of community as well. Like because yes, these I am the majority like, I'm a white man. And like what people are gonna say is like the most privileged in this country. And like, I think because I I do exist in a minority group. Now, like, I think that's my favorite part. Like I have a minority group that I can exist within a completely different atmosphere and completely different experiences than I typically would. There we go. That's a good answer. That's, that's the answer.

C Carson Savoie 57:56

Do you attend to any Pride festivities?

D Drew Hebert 57:59

Yeah, I actually accidentally, two years ago ended up in the New York City Pride Parade. Walking. I have video proof on my Instagram. That was wild that yes, I've done pride Houston. I've been to New Orleans pride. Memorial weekend Pensacola is kind of like a rave like but it's a sense of pride and done pride Lafayette, obviously, pride Baton Rouge is a thing, like, but I think pride festivals exists for a lot of different people in a lot of different ways. Some people go to like support others, which is valid, we need people who are not in our community supporting us that's like the only way we can keep pushing forward. I think we need the loud voices that are not inside our community. So like, pride is like such a big thing for me. Because like yes we get the one month a year. Even though like pride festivals do happen throughout the year. Like like it does, like Atlanta pride I think is in October, which is not Pride Month, but I love attending pride. I think it's a there's a sense of safety to even though like yes I think a lot of people look at it as like, oh my god, like if they wanted to do something against the gay community, like go crazy. Like it would be a Pride festival. But I think that like to, I would like to experience the really negative things about what people would treat me at a Pride festival because the people that just have as much pride as me are standing right next to me. So yes. Period

C Carson Savoie 59:43

Why is Pride important in Louisiana?

D Drew Hebert 1:00:03

I'm trying to think of how it's specific to Louisiana why it's why pride is so important. But I

I'm trying to think of how it's specific to Louisiana, why it is... why pride is so important. But I think like pride is like one of the most generalized things of our community. Like pride is one of like, maybe a couple umbrellas that we can all sit under, and all exist under and all agree that, like, we need to have pride and commitment. So I think in Louisiana, specifically a lot of like, I, like I've experienced internalized homophobia. Don't think that like, I haven't like, it's a thing. But like, I think specifically in Louisiana, I think whenever events happen, things like pride, like it gets everyone talking. I think everyone starts talking, whether it's positive, whether it's negative, I think it stirs up all the homophobes. stirs up all the people that hate the drag queens stirs up every single like corner of this state, unlike some other states, because our state is small in population, and small in square miles. So like, I think, whatever, like a big Pride event, like Southern Decadence, enormous, like amazing prideful event, like the whole state is talking about what's happening in Southern Decadence, and they have their opinion about it. And they're posting... like a lot of people are posting it on Facebook, a lot of people are posting it on [___] because it's like, it's getting a lot of different outlets for us to build traction on and pull and trying to get like our voices heard more. Period, that's why I think it's important.

C Carson Savoie 1:01:35

Ok, we've talked about a lot, so appreciate you doing this. I just have a couple of closing questions before we wrap up.

D Drew Hebert 1:01:42

Okay.

C Carson Savoie 1:01:43

How much would you say you're involved in the LGBTQ plus community?

D Drew Hebert 1:01:49

Extremely. I mean, I am a drag queen so I perform in LGBTQ safe spaces and like I perform in that I kind of only frequent gay bars instead of the non gay bars. I think that's just how I exist now. Majority of my friends are gays are queer people. So I would say extremely, heavily and I watch all the queer shows. I'm in all the Queer group chats and stuff like that. So I would say I am extremely, extremely into it.

C Carson Savoie 1:02:23

In what ways do you find community, and support in your identity?

D Drew Hebert 1:02:32

Honestly, kind of like, like yes my friends, all that stuff like yes they obviously support me because they, they are in the same situation as me in a certain extent, but like my family. Like

that's like, that's probably a very odd answer for this. But like my family is like some of the most supportive people who I have, like, they want to see my drag. They want to like, like, my, my godmother, and my cousin came to Pride with me one time. Like, my mom has been in "Splash" in Baton Rouge and my god, like, yeah, like, I think it's my family, they, and they want me to be Okay, like, boyfriends that I have bring them to Christmas. Oh, my God, they get gifts, they get a stocking. Like, I think my family like, were everywhere else where it's not normal. I can sit and be normal. I think that it's like, where I'm always different everywhere else. I'm not any different to them. And I think that's like the best support that you could have for LGBTQ, we just want like, we don't want to feel like our difference is our weakness. And we just want to exist. Like, you know what, let me not generalize everybody, I just want to exist in a normal setting and live a normal life, just be Gay and [_____].

C Carson Savoie 1:03:48

Where do you see yourself as part of the LGBTQ plus community in the future?

D Drew Hebert 1:03:55

I think doing what I'm doing, like, I don't know how much I mean, like, obviously, I could like spearhead events and do things, pride events, like all those things, like I see myself doing that if we're being honest. But I also like still doing drag, probably like before I retire the wigs, hang them up to dry. But like, I just I see myself like spreading kindness like just making sure that people know that who they are is Okay. That's a big thing. I don't think like we tell each other that enough. Like I think like yeah, like Okay, we exist with like our LGBTQ friends and all this stuff, but we never sit down and have a conversation say hey, are you Okay with who you are? And, and then talk about it and say you are Okay. So I see myself doing that for a lot of people and trying to like push for queer youth to have something that not everybody else has ever had, a decent experience.

C Carson Savoie 1:04:55

You can interpret this next question nationwide, globally, super specific to our communities, statewide, however you think would be best.

D Drew Hebert 1:05:06

Okay

C Carson Savoie 1:05:07

What is your hope for the future of our community?

D Drew Hebert 1:05:19

Okay, I hope for the future of our community, that our pride festivals, like the general public who are not attending them and are not in our community, stop viewing them as protests. That we, that people don't feel like we're protesting anymore. That people don't feel like we're the bad guys. That people will feel like we are just another person, like, celebrating the boudin festival. we're just celebrating being Queer. That's what I hope that because a lot of people like do view pride as like a way of protesting and like, going against the big man, or like the government, whatever, just to not be seen as an enemy, for having pride.

C Carson Savoie 1:06:08

Is there anything that we haven't covered that you would like to include?

D Drew Hebert 1:06:15

I want people to stop putting so much pressure on themselves in the gay community to be loved by others. Because like, I mean, I'm going to say this from personal experience, I have sought out for other people to validate me other men to validate me and like, I think that we need to really sit down and I want the communities like us to talk to other communities, and talk about how we will - like, you know, like those bumper stickers that say coexist, we need to talk about what that actually looks like. Because we are just all saying, let's coexist, how's it happening? So I just want everybody to love and love themselves first, and just find ways we can coexist in a healthy way that we can project in a bigger way. Period.

C Carson Savoie 1:07:13

Thank you so much for sharing and interviewing with us today. We really appreciate it