

STEPHEN WOODLAND

Clare (C) interviewing Stephen (S)

Extract 1: 00.19 – 3.47

GROWING UP AS A GIRL THINKING I WAS A BOY

S: I was born in Dorset in a village 66 six years ago, so not surrounded by much technology. It was an idyllic childhood in the sense of security and safeness. But I always felt not the same as everybody else to the extent that I thought that I didn't even belong to my parents, erm, because I knew something wasn't right about me and at first I thought "Oh, I haven't got a penis. Oh, that's a bit strange," and I looked at my friends, I was about five or six, and I thought "Ooh! David. When mine grows it's going to be much bigger than yours". I didn't want his ... so I didn't envy his, but I knew when mine would grow, and that went with me for the early stages of my life that something was missing, something was wrong, and I never fitted in with people. I was big, but a lot of people were big, and I got a lot of teasing and I just didn't know how to behave as a girl. Not socially, I didn't feel like a girl. I felt most comfortable with boys and I could relate to boys. So I was expecting this penis to arrive, and it didn't arrive and when I got a little bit older, I was about eight, I remembered one of my aunties, Auntie Daisy, she'd been there when I'd been born. I thought "She'll know if it was me that was born and then I'll find out if..."

C: What do you mean by that?

S: That I thought that something was wrong because I didn't fit in, and this penis hadn't arrived, so in my mind at that age and at that time, I thought maybe I'm not the baby that was born. That something had happened to me, that I ... something had gone wrong with my penis, right, that perhaps there'd been an accident when I was born. And I remember saying to her "Were you there when I was born?" And she looked at me "Yeah" and she said "I was". I said "So, you saw me, yeah? And everything was all right?" "Yes," she said, apart from it was cold, and you know and I was born at home and it was February ... and I thought "That's a bit strange." And in my mind it was "Well, oh that's OK, so it's not that, so it's going to grow."

And so onward through my first eleven, twelve years of life, I didn't fit in with anybody. It wasn't merely a question of teasing, it was a question ... according to the gender I was not a girl. You know, my thoughts were not in any way girl related. I'm not talking about being a tomboy, I'm talking about no ... at all ... nothing feminine, there was nothing feminine about my psyche, you know, and obviously my body hadn't developed so I can remember to this day, God help me, that one day I woke up and I thought "This is it, then. My penis is not going to grow. I guess I'll have to pretend to be a girl then."

Extract 2: 41.30 – 44.02

THE PROCESS OF TRANSITIONING AND THE GENDER IDENTITY CLINIC

So I went back to the doctor and she sent me onto a psychiatrist who had a regular slot in Woking, you know? So that was quite good, and I went to see her and she wanted, really I

said the same as what I said to you, and she said “Absolutely, there’s no doubt in my mind, you are what you are, so I’m going to send you forward to Charing Cross Hospital.” I thought “Oh, lovely! London, back to London again!” And erm ... part of me said “Well, actually this is what I am now, so why have I got to go and prove to somebody that I am?” ‘Cos that’s what it make ... I have to prove who I am to get some kind of treatment to help me live quietly, because I still had a female voice and of course, so much, you know ... and it was quite dangerous, ‘cos you know I was going into men’s loos and it was quite – although I loved that, you know, and I soon learned the etiquette of it and I felt at home in men’s loos although I was a bit uncertain, you know, about going in there, because I was transitioning in my home town, I soon learnt where I go easily and where it was difficult to go.

Erm, so, I got my appointment, oh very, very quickly. From the time I think my doctor saw me in April, and by the time I got to Charing Cross, it was only like September. Very, very quickly. And I got an appointment to see Professor Richard Green, he’s a great sexologist and really *the* expert on transgender. He’s American and came to live and work at Gender Identity Clinic, you know? So I saw him, and then he said OK and then I had to see another psychiatrist at the same clinic, but a different day. Then they get together and work out whether they believe you, you know, they confirm that you are transsexual or transgender, and that was it, yeah. They said ... Professor Green said “Yeah. That’s it, you know, we’ll get you started on the treatment now” and I was “Oh ...” You know what I mean! And he said to me “You must have your name changed and I said “I’ve already done it.” And he laughed. Because I knew what I was. Do you understand? I don’t know how I would have got on if they’d said “You can’t have any treatment.” But I’d already changed my name, because that was me, you know? When I went out, first time, clothes, that was me. It was like putting a last piece in a jigsaw puzzle. That was me.

Extract 3: 53.38 – 55.95

CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL. BEING WHAT I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ALL MY LIFE

‘Cos in a way Charing Cross Hospital was my emotional home, you know? That was the place where ... after all these years I’ve been confirmed that I am me. You know that er ... it’s really quite sad, I still get quite emotional about it. I probably don’t sound it, but I do. It was the place where all those times when I was on my own and sad, trying to work out erm, kind of where I belonged and what I’d done wrong, and why I had never got anywhere, and not achieved what I wanted to achieve, all of that. It was like, it doesn’t matter now, ‘cos this is you. This is you. Erm ... so as I say, in one sense it was like being reborn, but it was a great ... it’s like Mecca for me ... it’s ... or like Westminster Abbey, it’s a bit like *the* place where I knew and I used to feel so full of rightness when I came out. I used to swagger because, and it was ... I used to feel so, so good.

And what I do now, I haven’t done it, in fact I’m due to do it again shortly, is for periods through that time, throughout the time when I was sort of going which I suppose is ... I think I’m probably about eighteen years old now, you know, I’m eighteen years old, and in some ways I *am* eighteen years old, yeah? At certain points I’ll go back the same journey, and I’ll

walk round and they moved the department, so I'll go in the main hospital where it used to be, to the outside place or, you know, the section outside where they are now, and I just walk and I remember how I felt, and that to me is the um ... that's real lump in the throat time for me. You know, and because, although I am now, what I should have been all my life, all my life's gone, do you know what I mean? And I'm struggling now to get whatever God gives me. To be... and behave like I am.