

Interview Code: RJ201321A & RJ201321B

Interviewer: James L

Interviewee: Norman Goldner

Transcriber: Hannah Platt

### **Childhood, Younger-Years & Family (00:02:04 – 00:12:56)**

Norman was born in South London; he has a twin sister who is close with and one older brother who lives in Hong Kong. He lived in Finchley for 25 years and then moved to Edgware. He attended a Church of England primary school.

His mother was a housewife and his father was a food importer and exporter. Norman describes his father as a *'nasty horrible man'* and says he was mentally cruel which resulted in his parents divorce; his father died in 1968 and didn't know Norman was gay. His mother died in 1991 after a long period of illness. Norman comes from an orthodox background; his great grandparents came from Lithuania, Hungary and Germany. Norman says his family are all Zionists and very supportive of Israel.

Norman realized he was gay when he was 8 years old; he was in the changing rooms of the swimming baths with a male friend. He says being gay is his strongest childhood memory, that he wasn't particularly bullied in school and never had a problem with his sexuality.

### **Coming Out (00:12:56 – 00:13:37)**

Norman says his family weren't surprised when he came out, he says some of his cousins aren't particularly keen on his sexuality but that it didn't majorly affect his relationships as many were aware of his sexuality without needing to be told.

END OF INTERVIEW A

### **Coming Out Continued (00:00:00- 00:01:09)**

Norman says he doesn't understand why others have issues with being gay. He says he was always given the independence at school and home to be who he is.

### **Jewishness (00:01:09 – 00:07:12)**

Norman attended Schul every week, he says he likes the community aspect of Judaism and is a member of the United Synagogue now. His Rabbi at Finchley is now the chief rabbi and was liberal and accepting. He says being Jewish is large part of his identity and has played a positive role in his life as he thinks Jews are special and lucky because of what they are taught as children.

### **Equal Marriage Debate (00:07:12 – 00:10:05)**

Norman wasn't in favor of civil partnerships initially but when he saw the happiness they brought he changed his mind. He supports equal marriage but respects that the United Synagogue won't offer them.

### **Relationships (00:10:05 – 00:18:05)**

Norman has had a small number of short-term relationships, he met the love of his life in 1977, and whilst their relationship didn't work out they stayed in contact. He was HIV positive and they travelled to Australia in 1993 and passed away. He was the '*most important man in my life*'. They met in a bar and he felt magnetized towards him, there was a 5 year age difference which caused difficulties, he was not Jewish. Norman never had children.

When Norman worked as a HIV educator at the THT he went through a period of time where he was attending funerals frequently of people he had met and knew, '*some of my best and closest friends*'. He helped to run the inter-faith group at THT and arranged a leaflet named 'Aids and Jewish community' in 1987.

### **Community Work (00:18:05 – 00:34:14)**

Volunteers ran the inter-faith group at THT. Norman began organizing different things for THT such as arranging conferences and the candlelight memorial in Trafalgar Square. The group was very open and receptive to the religion-based work that took place.

Norman was part of the '*Kosher Faggots*' group from when it first started in 1972. It was a gay Jewish group run worldwide. It started as a small piece in the Jewish Chronicle and evolved in to events and coffee evenings at member's houses. Eventually the name changed to the '*Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group*' when more lesbians began to join. There were other groups available at the time but these didn't have a focus around the Jewish religion.

### **The Present & The Past (00:34:14 – 00:53:15)**

Norman feels a lot of young people don't understand the risk of STI's during sex. He says if he were 21 he would likely be in the same situation many young gay people are today where they are unsure whether or not to use a condom.

He thinks that in terms of sex education moving forward it should be based upon 'Sex & Risk' and minimizing the potential to spread STI's among the gay community.

END OF INTERVIEW