

Sergei Miller Oral History LGBTQIA+ Interview

Interviewer: Nik Nelson

December 6, 2021

00:00:00.000-00:13:03.140

START

00:00:00.000

00:00:12.040

Nik Nelson: I'm Nik Nelson and my pronouns are he/they.

Sergei Miller: My name is Sergei Miller; my pronouns are he/him.

00:00:31.400

NN: How has being Out@Stout impacted your academic journey?

SM: Overall, I have experienced very little backlash in my academic journey. I have gotten a few weird glances just for being a part of the LGBT community openly. Especially when there were some very negative rallies that occurred at our campus. Beyond that, it's been very welcoming, very accepting.

00:01:07.790

NN: And by the negative rallies you're referring to, the hateful preacher that showed up to campus earlier this semester?

SM: Yes, I am.

00:01:22.610

NN: What is your take on the LGBTQIA+ community at Stout?

SM: I think that they are very accepting very open overall. I've met with a lot of them personally and with that it really is opened my eyes to being able to just interact with other people that are also within the same community as me. Back in my home, I had very few people that were also LGBTQIA, so being able to talk to people that are like me is very nice. It's very accommodating.

00:02:08.260

NN: To kind of build off of that, have you noticed a sense of solace/comradery amongst fellow queer students?

SM: I would say yeah, they, they all are very look- they all look out for each other from me. Personally, I am not a part of the trans community, but I still fully support the protests and movements within the trans community even though I obviously am not. So yeah, I'd say they are.

00:02:48.070

NN: Have you experienced any discrimination in your academic settings at Scout- at Stout?

SM: Teachers, no I have not. I have not had any professors that have been rude to me purely because of my sexuality. I have had a few students that either refuse to work with me or are flat out just mean to me because I'm pretty openly gay.

00:03:35.160

NN: Is that also- going back- going back to what you said earlier about the rude glances. Is that a combination of both that and what you just said?

SM: I would say yes, that is.

00:03:53.500

NN: Remembering a time before you came out as openly queer, was there any noticeable difference in how you were treated compared to how you are currently?

SM: Within my inner circle of friends there was very little change. With a lot of the people within my immediately- immediate family, they did treat me quite differently and still do a few of them refuse to talk to me purely because of my sexual orientation. It is a little disheartening, but I've been able to move on and live with it. I would rather be me than still be in the closet.

00:04:36.890

NN: They treated you differently, how exactly have they treated you differently, would you say?

SM: I'm not going to go into too many specifics, but my close relatives, have pretty much refused to talk to me at family gatherings. Or if they do talk to me, then it's for extremely brief periods of time and it gives a very negative emotion towards me. They don't feel I wouldn't say comfortable around me, but they definitely. Don't want to be with me? They don't want to associate with me.

00:05:22.650

NN: Do you think that uncomfortableness around queer people is due to how they were raised or do to like political reasons or any specific social reasons?

SM: I would say especially for my family it's more of their political alignment than necessarily how they were raised, but I would also- Say that part of it is because of how they were raised. My mother side of the family is very Christian fundamentalist so, seeing anyone as gay or LGBTQIA is a very bad thing in their eyes.

NN: That is a very valid topics you brought up.

SM: To continuing off that, I would say for political reasons, I know that my dad's family members don't like talking to me because they don't support abortion. I do. And I wouldn't say that's necessarily specifically queer related. But I would say that because of my open sexuality that they do put some of that same blame on me.

00:06:55.490

NN: So, it's- so you're saying it's sort of like a mixing of oil and water. So, like saying because you're queer, you were then associated with liberal ideologies such as abortion and human rights.

SM: I would say that definitely on abortion they are seeing a negative connotation with the LGBT community based off of how their political party sees it and are immediately associating me with their hatred for the other party.

00:07:32.910

NN: Based on how your experiences have been from being out, would you have explored who you are even sooner?

SM: I came out at a very early age so it would be very difficult for me to have fully been able to explore my queerness I came out when I was about 12 I think so I- I think that's pretty early or maybe it's right on time, I don't know, but I think at that point in the developmental stage of just humans in general, being able to explore at that age is very healthy and I don't think exploring earlier than that would have- I don't wouldn't say it would be beneficial, but it would have definitely- I would have gotten strange glances. Like *oh, your 6-year-old son is gay, huh? That's a little weird.*

00:08:35.120

NN: So, since you mentioned that you think 12 is pretty early for exploring who you are, would you rather have explored it later in your life?

SM: I think when I was around that age, I felt very- fairly comfortable exploring my sexuality. I do know a few other people that didn't feel as comfortable being openly Q, queer. [laughs] And

I do think that for some people they just don't feel ready until they are at an older age. I just personally was able to, and I'm very grateful for my parents.

00:09:24.420

NN: Growing up, what is something you wish that you knew? [pause] Like growing up, say, you just need something about you that you wish you knew growing up like-

SM: [laughs] There- there would definitely be a few relationships in high school that I would have avoided a lot more adamantly. I also kind of had- no, it's definitely just high school relationships that I had that I wish I could have gotten out of because they were not who I thought they were.

00:10:14.260

NN: When you are referring to high school relationships, are you meaning like relationships between teachers or relationships between peers/friends? You're like what kind of- or is it you and admin or what kind of high school relationship?

SM: So, I have had a few teachers in high school that were very- I wouldn't say openly anti-LGBTQIA+ but they definitely implied it. My health teacher, for example, won't say his name, graded me extremely harshly because I was a openly queer at the time and then there were also friends that I had, that, UM, more or less at the end of my high school career, I saw kind of their true nature and even if they said they respected me as who I was, it was very blatant at the end of my relationship that they did not care.

00:11:20.230

NN: Thanks for elaborating. What is something you would want future queer people to know?

SM: I would say always evaluate your situation and make educated moves based off of how you think people will treat you. I do think that it is- that it should be more accepted to come out whenever but obviously not everyone is on the same progressive page as other families. So, if you think that you will be rejected by your parents purely based off of their political alignment or how they were raised, or how they're trying to raise you, I would say wait. Find the right time, bring up, not necessarily that you're queer, but bring up the idea of your sexuality. Try and do it subtly, just be very careful, I'd say on your own situation, because again, if you know that you're going to be rejected, you're going to be, let's say, at an extreme homeless or persecuted based off of your sexuality, hold off until you feel comfortable and are surrounded by people that will accept you.

NN: That is a very great thing that future career people should know. Thank you for taking the time for this interview.

SM: No problem.

END

00:13:03.140