



**Lesbian Elders Oral Herstory
of
Audrey Lockwood**

An Interview
Conducted by
Elizabeth Fox
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Collection: The Lesbian Elders Oral Herstory Project

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Elizabeth Fox 00:03

Wonderful. So thank you for joining me. Today is November 20, 2021 and we are recording an oral history with me, Elizabeth Fox, talking to Audrey Lockwood about her life history. This is a Lesbian Elders Oral Herstory Project interview, a project with the Lesbian Herstory Archives and we are recording from Brooklyn, New York and Los Angeles, California. So yeah, when and where were you born?

Audrey Lockwood 00:31

I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on May 7, 1957.

Elizabeth Fox 00:39

And you were born in the Midwest?

Audrey Lockwood 00:41

I was born in the Midwest. So I'm a typical Midwest kid, very mid century [laughs]—

Elizabeth Fox 00:51

And you also spent some time in New York as a kid, right?

Audrey Lockwood 00:54

We would travel to New York. My mother Eileen was born in Schenectady, New York and my father, George Lockwood, was born in Westerlo, New York, which is a tiny, tiny farming town, not too far from Albany. But we didn't— us kids were all born in Milwaukee because my parents moved to the Midwest. Although we would visit our grandparents in upstate New York frequently and our cousins and we had lots of relatives there that we would visit. But I've never lived in New York.

Elizabeth Fox 01:34

And so what was your family like growing up? Your parents— one's Jewish and one's Catholic?

Audrey Lockwood 01:40

Yeah, my dad's Jewish, my mom's Catholic and that was a big deal. They got married in 1955 and it was tough for them. My mom was very stoic and very polite. You know, kind of a classic woman of that age. But she had this secret, rebellious nature that she shared with me, and I always appreciated her honesty. One thing about my mom and my dad is they were pretty honest people. So we could ask questions; we could debate. We had intellectual freedom and that was really very magical for kids. Our parents trusted us somehow, I don't know why. I mean, don't get me wrong, if we were bad, they got mad or I got sent to my room. My brothers and I were fighting all the time, you know, arguing— the normal things that kids do.

But because of this Jewish-Catholic divide, it was really profound in our family. And my mom—they had to meet with a priest for counseling before a Catholic priest. My dad consented to sign away the rights to the kids; they'd be raised as Catholics. I thought that was amazing that he did that. And the priest made this comment that my mom quoted to me. He said, "oh—" you know, with his little collar, very stuffy— and he said, "mixed marriages hardly ever work." And my mom reported, she sat there and she said, "well, I didn't say this, Audrey, to Father so-and-so, but I was thinking, we'll show you!" And so that's kind of— you know, my dad was kind of the public figure, the demonstrative emotional person and my mom was kind of a stoic, intellectual. So it was kind of, in some respects, a little bit different from the normal quote "mom and pop" where the mother is all bubbly and the father is all stoic. So I think part of it is Jewish culture. I think Jewish men are just more demonstrative than white Anglo Saxon Protestant men. I'm being, you know, overly generalizing here but of that era yes, I'd say that was true.

What else can I say? I started out life in an apartment building. It was a huge apartment building and I was the only kid in the entire building. It was all elderly people, and a young couple and their newborn girl. I had red curly hair. Everybody thought I was Shirley Temple and my parents just let me loose. My earliest memory at age four was going around knocking on doors and saying hi to all the people in the building and I was adopted, you know, maybe as their little grandchild and I was very cute and very gregarious. I mean, it was kind of precocious. It was— one of my pals was the coal man who delivered coal and would go down the chute and I'd go down to talk to him. He told me that popsicles grew on trees. And I— he said, "there's a tree outside where they cut the popsicles that are going to grow." I totally believed this story. You know, it was a magical childhood. It was a lot of freedom. My parents didn't worry about me. I had some other childhood friends. My brother came along. I was born in '57. He was born in '60. So there were the two of us in the apartment building with my parents. And then we moved to the east side of Milwaukee, which was a couple blocks from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, which played a huge role in our life. I walked past the University every day on the way to grade school. So every school I went to, I walked to. In grade school, I'd come home for lunch and my mom would make me lunch and I'd go back to school, so I wasn't in school cafeterias. You know, if I didn't bring a bag— it was just a different world. You knew all the neighbors. The neighbors across the street had seven kids and they were devout Catholics. We were very close to that family. They were just amazing. So it was kind of an exciting, adventurous life. I was in Girl Scouts and loved it. We went camping and...merit badges, uniforms. Even from an early age, I was into this— oh, I want these awards. I want these trophies. It's very baby boomer. You know, I love it when millennials make fun of this. Because they think it's very perplexing and I have a good laugh over it. But it meant something then. I said, "oh, I know you all got awards, you know, you didn't have to be good at anything." We'd have the [mimics siren sound]— you know, and I'm really enjoying this. I actually like being made fun of— okay, boomer! All this stuff. I think it's pretty cool actually to see a whole new group coming up and I never— maybe I'm too indulgent. I'm not a parent. But I think I sort of

play that role a little bit even though I don't know I'm playing it. So it's kind of cool to have that life experience.

I often feel sorry the kids don't have violin lessons. There's no public school orchestras. There's no choirs in the public schools in Los Angeles. No free music. It's disturbing to me that they're missing so much culture. My sixth grade teacher took us to the Milwaukee Symphony. They were rehearsing on the University campus. We walked over to see the Milwaukee Symphony [laughs]— just like we walked to the Milwaukee Symphony. I mean, it's just— now I'm in LA, of course and now it's even more funny. Like, could I walk all the way to the music center from my house? Yes, I could. So music and art and art classes. Teachers that taught us to sing a song about Paul Revere while she played the piano. We made little statues out of clay. We had a flag salute where the flag would go off and we went out on the playground and at the end of the year, they had the flag rolling ceremony where one kid took it down and it was folded up. Every year a different kid, kindergarten through eighth. Usually an eighth grader or a seventh grader got to take the flag down. Near the end, before we moved in seventh grade, I got to take the flag down. It was a big darn deal. I got to hold up the five gold rings cardboard at the Christmas Pageant. I mean, just very endearing cute stuff.

The problems I had in school were... it took me a long time to learn how to read. I didn't learn how to read until I was maybe seven or eight. I couldn't add, subtract, multiply, divide, I couldn't do anything. But I was really good at faking it. I developed this ability to pretend because I was afraid like everybody else knows and I don't, so I memorized it. They had reading at church. I'd watch all the other kids read it and I'd memorize it. Then I raised my hand, "teacher I can read one," and then of course I'd recite it. My mom found out I couldn't read one day and she went ballistic and got flashcards and my mom taught me to read. My cousin taught me to read. I don't know what it was but then suddenly, wham! I learned how to read and I was reading 1000 books, every book in the library. Then I was like, you know, super nerd girl let loose. My father said, "oh, I'll teach ya math. That's easy Audrey" and he'd get out the stock market charts. He'd go, "let's make some money. That's how you're going to learn how to do math. Let's add up fractions. Oh Audrey, that's so easy. What's your favorite company?" You know, obviously Disney and IBM or whatever the stocks of the day were. It was just kind of an interesting attitude that my parents had. So he helped me a lot because I'm not sure— where did my education come from? Where did my knowledge of history come from? All my teachers are so brilliant but I think my parents were so brilliant. So that's lucky, right? You can't choose where you're born. So lucky. Now the older I get, the more I'm astonished at this.

Elizabeth Fox 11:17

Your dad's a journalist?

Audrey Lockwood 11:19

Yeah, my dad was a journalist. Very well known, very prominent. He did a pioneering photojournalism series on water pollution in Wisconsin. It was like early environmentalism. And as a result of that series—I think it was called "Pollution: the Spreading Menace"—it's probably out there on the internet somewhere. It was an incredible series. He hired the photographers. My dad loved photography and hired photographers all the time. I met all these photographers. It was really great. They won the Pulitzer Prize that year in 1967 for meritorious public service and as a result, the state laws of Wisconsin changed to protect water. You know, so it's just stunning. I think my dad was 36. So we have this—we met politicians. I saw George McGovern on Milwaukee primary night. It's just unreal. Authors—it's just, I'd walk up to people and it would turn out to be some ambassador. I would start a question and very formally shake hands. My parents would take me to parties and I would be the only kid walking around talking to all adults. The good part is, I love the adult world and the bad part was we moved to the suburbs. A white upper middle class suburb, not too far from the east side of Milwaukee. You know, kind of on the border right near the lake. Our house was down the street from Lake Michigan. The culture shock of that was really awful. The kids were rotten and I was incorrigible. You know, I was smart. I wasn't going to pretend to be dumb. I obviously couldn't stand frilly femininity. Hated it, hated dresses, hated it, hated it, hated it. No makeup, no garbage, no cheerleading, no fake smiles. I was just contemptuous. Stupid boys who played football. Of course, they were dumb, you know. So it was like a perfect storm for combat, you know?

Elizabeth Fox 13:48

How old were you when you moved to the suburbs?

Audrey Lockwood 13:52

I'm sorry?

Elizabeth Fox 13:53

How old were you when you moved to the suburbs?

Audrey Lockwood 13:54

Let's see. So it was 1970 so maybe 13, I guess, if you want to do the math. But yeah, I think I was 13 and there were some wonderful things. The school was brand new. It was Shorewood Intermediate School. It was a round building. They had cafeterias, they had homerooms. It was culture shock. We used to pick colored leaves and put them in a book for science class in Milwaukee. Now we had test tubes and experiments and I was terrorized in chemistry class. It's like, I didn't know anything. I didn't know the periodic tables. I didn't understand the language. All the kids had, you know, been born and raised in Shorewood so of course, they had this in sixth grade or whatever and I was like the most backward kid. So for the first time, I didn't know what I was doing. It was like shell shock. They teamed me up with a lab partner and I was so dumb, it was unbelievable. I just didn't know what they were talking about so I got a terrible

grade. I think it was a D-. I was almost gonna fail chemistry. I didn't know what to do. My parents had a conference with Mr. Peschel. Our nickname for him was Mr. Special and he was like, a kindly man. I'm not talking about this brutal dictator. But suddenly, he coached me. And it dawned on him that I'm just terrified all the time. He sat me down, "well, let me show you how to do this. I know you can" and suddenly this kindness and sit down, and BAM I got an A in chemistry. So it's just like, I was just so eccentric and kind of difficult to deal with. I'm either very charming or just a horror story and it's a contradictory nature. I don't know what it is. I have no fear of authority. None. And that's a danger, right? Don't you think we should fear authority a little bit? What do you think, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth Fox 16:26

Well, I don't know. I mean you made it to college okay. You made it to University of Iowa. So you clearly had the ability to do school. Maybe it was everything in its place.

Audrey Lockwood 16:36

Yeah. I was a very hard worker. You know, very determined, very competitive. I like shooting baskets at half court and challenging the boys. I love beating the boys at sports, hitting home runs, you know, making fun of them because they couldn't memorize a William Blake poem. I said, "I can shoot a basket at half court. You don't even know who William Blake is." Oh, my God, I was just like "they rule the world? You've got to be kidding me." You know, so it was this early feminism, like pre-feminism. It was like they're inferior! They get to be altar boys? You've got to be kidding me. You know, they're losers!

So Mary Daly had the same insight when she was a child and she saw the boys getting to be altar boys and realized how stupid they were. So I really bonded with the radical feminist philosopher Mary Daly. She was born in Schenectady. Catholic just like my mom, super studious, absolutely brilliant, and had a very similar life experience. I mean different, obviously, radically. Born in 1928. You know, it was just this early feminism. Only you know what happens when you're a kid. When you're 13 and you catch a political ideology, what does that turn you into? The Red Guard! The little kids marching in the children's crusade. My dad brought home— you ready for this? Volume One, number one of *Ms. Magazine*. Talk about dangerous material, you know. So that was kind of trouble.

Eighth grade— kids mean to me. I played in the little chamber music group. Mr. Scott was the conductor, and loved him. I loved the civility of this music program. But I had a lot of culture shock with the kids. Boys wearing long hair, you know, the chaos of hippies. I found it threatening and scary. Not orderly. I was sort of rebellious but also like, let's line the pencils up neatly. It was— don't throw them all on the front lawn.

Elizabeth Fox 19:13

You played violin, am I remembering?

Audrey Lockwood 19:16

I did. I started playing I think when I was in fourth grade and just loved it. It was just great. My mom played piano, we did sing-along. She had sheet music from World War II and my favorite song was "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" and I'd always request that song. My mom would get on the piano and "praise the lord and pass the ammunition and we'll all be free." So I could sing songs from the 1920s from World War II. The neighbors down the street voted for Herbert Hoover. I was shocked. So my Dad says, "go interview them and ask them why they did that." But everybody voted for Roosevelt, you know? No, they didn't. Dad says, "go find out. Knock on the door and say you want to interview them." Just this little kid turned loose on the neighborhood. It's hysterically funny.

High school— not good. Kids: rotten. Just not— the teachers I adored. They were brilliant. It was an elite school. I mean, it was a public school. But one year, it was voted the best high school in the state of Wisconsin. So I'm getting this elite, semi-Ivy League education with these upper middle class kids. And I'm sort of this hybrid of working class and middle class because of my parents. You know, they were working class and then they wanted their kids, you know, to achieve. It was classic 50's. You know, the country was doing very well financially. We have this huge civil rights movement and my parents were very sympathetic to it, just very connected to what was going on. There were shocking things that happened when they blew up the Army Math Research Center in 1970. The Weather Underground did that. We were stunned. They were just shocking— Martin Luther King getting killed. I don't remember Kennedy, JFK, at all. I saw pictures of him in Life Magazine; I had no idea who it was because I couldn't read. So that didn't affect me at all. I was a boomer— that was after Kennedy was assassinated. So there are two types. There's our species that didn't know anything and then there's the older group that launches into where they were when it happened. I don't know if you've been subjected to these stories, but I had to hear 1000s of them. And I just couldn't stand it. Robert F. Kennedy, yes, I knew when that happened. You know, just was— people were scared. There were riots in Milwaukee. Lots of upheaval.

We lived in a somewhat racially integrated neighborhood in Milwaukee. There were a couple of kids from Puerto Rico, there was a Mexican family. I think there was another family that might have been from the Philippines. We had a Japanese American babysitter that I was very close to, Joanne, and I knew her family. So it's like, we had this connection in the neighborhood. But then we moved to the all white suburb and I couldn't handle it. They shipped in Black kids for a special government program called ABC, A Better Chance. I saw those Black kids and the horrible racism. I just was watching it and I just didn't know what to do. I just was— they were picking on me too so there was some type of solidarity. It was sort of this— they saw that I saw or they observed what was going on. It was— well, we couldn't do anything.

I took shop classes. I was the only girl in the shop classes. The boys were awful. And I said, "I'm going to get an A in everything." And they were just stunned. I said, "you can't play violin, you can't quote Shakespeare. I can build a cabinet and do that." You know, that was always my response, belittling them intellectually. But one boy was such a bully. He tried to cut off my arm with a bandsaw. A huge saw— have you seen one of those giant bandsaws? He waited until everybody was way up the other end and went for me and I was fighting for my life, literally. I don't— by some miracle, I hit the stop button, the emergency button and I just thought "this is war." I looked at him and I decided I was gonna go to war. You know, I reported these boys to the vice principal. Nobody paid any attention and I thought, well, I'm just gonna beat him up.

My dad knew something was happening at school but I wouldn't tell. It was humiliating and he goes, "Audrey, let me have a little talk with you." He goes, "Now, you know that we just defeated Germany in World War II right?" And he said, "Now how do you think, what would you do to defeat Germany?" And I said, "well, you have to attack Hitler!" And he says, "Are you going to be nice to Hitler?" And he said, "No. You have to bomb him and attack. That's the only thing that Hitler understands. Right, Audrey?" I go, "Oh, yes, that's the only thing Hitler understands." And that was his permission to go kill him. It was interesting, which I did. I did sneak attacks. He says, "now remember the Japanese in Pearl Harbor? That can be a useful strategy, Audrey" and I thought "ahh! I can sneak down the back stairs and follow them. I can bring a big baseball bat and smash them on the legs and knock them down." Then suddenly, the monster was created. I could do anything I wanted. I got hauled into the vice principal's office, the mother showed up. I was a big evil. I said, "yes, I did shove Michael's hand against the locker." I was very honest in a stoic way. He's looking at me and sexism sometimes helped me. Like he said, "a girl did that?" and then he looked at the report card. She's getting straight A's and you're getting D's and F's, Michael. I was never punished. I would look at them and I would rub my hands together and they got scared. A couple times, I did stick up for some of the Black kids. There was one racist boy and I whacked him on the head. I said "racist!" or something like that before the teacher came in. So it was this pitch battle for four years. Social ostracism was extreme. I was in groups. I mean, I was in the orchestra and played in the musical, the pit orchestra, and traveled and we had contests and I was in the literary magazine. And you know, so it was seemingly this smart little kid with a violin, but the kids were just awful. I had no idea how to deal with them. I couldn't handle the sexism. I just thought, this is ridiculous. I thought "prom, yuck! I'm not gonna go to that!" No football games. They'd have pep rallies but we were allowed to leave if we didn't want to be there. So I'd wait and then I'd leave and I was the only one that walked out. Early on in life, I was like the only one to hit the racist. I was the only girl to smash with a baseball bat. I was the only one. I thought these girls were being picked on and you know, bad things the boys are always doing and I thought why don't they hit back? To this day, I can't figure this out. Why do women sit there and smile? I will never I cannot understand it. I never ever will. I said you're dealing, you're in a war. Put on your armor, you know? This is the

existential question I have. Why aren't women controlling the world? I'll always wonder this. I don't know, I don't have the answer but at least I want to control the world.

Elizabeth Fox 28:24

So if high school was a battle, was college any better?

Audrey Lockwood 28:29

Oh my god, college was heaven.

Elizabeth Fox 28:35

You were at University of Iowa and you met your partner really early on?

Audrey Lockwood 28:40

Excuse me for a second. I'm drinking some water here. The University of Iowa was fantastic. It was like instantly, I'm in this dormitory. I was scared because I was away from home. I was listening to Debussy on my cassette tape player the first night I was there. My roommate mysteriously didn't show up. You know, her stuff was on the bunk bed and everything but nobody was there. I didn't know what to do. So I'm listening to Debussy and sipping tea. My Girl Scout troop gave me a little hot tea maker, a little heating element that I used, and I'm thinking okay here we are. Just listen to La Mer, maybe a bit of Vivaldi thrown in, just sort of contemplating my future. I can remember that moment as if it was yesterday.

Then I started making friends. I just thought I'm the same person and a whole bunch of people seem to like me. I'm unchanged in my eccentricity but everybody loved it. I made friends with graduate students. I started hanging out with engineers from Iran. I made friends with the Iranian Student Association. I felt like a welcome wagon of the foreign students. I felt like I was going to welcome them to America. It was kind of precious. I'd give them a little American flag or— it was just cute. And they really loved it. It was interesting that they were so demonstrative and so not filled with preconceptions. I met a guy from Poland, who was a great musician and sang Polish folk songs and played guitar. We had groups of us singing different songs and I was in the folk dance group. We did folk dances from around the world and it was wonderful. You know, we went to all the movies, all the concerts at the big performing arts center, and I met my future partner Kittredge Cherry. Kittredge, what a name!

She was on my second floor and I loved the name. Kittredge. This is fantastic. And I think it was probably love at first sight, although to me, she was smart. The main thing about women is they have to be smart. They can be beautiful but that means nothing to me if they are dumb. No, no, they have to be intelligent. Law school, good [laughs]— they picked the right person to interview me. I can't stand that stupidity. Hate it and if I get any prejudice, I can't stand stupidity. You know, everybody has bigotry. Hate Black people, hate this, hate that. I can't stand stupid. It's

bad. My partner Kittredge is much more tolerant of people and seems to think that I'm always like too [laughs]— she's civilized, a civilized elite.

Her mother went to school with Jackie Kennedy. So it's, you know, a little bit unreal here. She was majoring in journalism and art history. We took an art history class together. Everything about it was magical. Made lots of friends, met a lot of Japanese students, took a class called Introduction to Oriental Art. Changed my life. Met a graduate student who was teaching— what do they call those? Teachers assistants, TAs, do they still have that? Mrs. Sutherland and we were in her class and it was magic. 19th century literature. She was just this wonderful loving— she took us under our wing. We had our special study group with Mrs. Sutherland to help her get her Ph.D. This is adorable. I had kindly professors. There was something out of Mr. Holland's Opus meets— I don't know all those academic movies that are endearing. Who was that? Peter O'Toole, Mr. Chips. It's that world. I don't know if this exists anymore but— or maybe I created this world? I don't know. You know, we create our reality. Maybe there's something to that. So everything was fine.

Kitt and I graduated and we had a whale of a time trying to find jobs. Oh my god. It was the recession of 1979. It was terrible. We went to— I can't remember the number of interviews the two of us went on. We were having a terrible time and I realized now of course, the economy was terrible. Jimmy Carter, we're on the verge of you know what and I could see it coming. I majored in political science, minored in history, and I thought, uh oh, it was this inkling. This inkling, you know, I can see something's gonna shift here and probably a lot of it was sexism too. You know, they're just not gonna hire women for anything. It's hard to describe. Elizabeth, they would not hire women for anything. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, you know, her favorite story. It's like— and also the other woman, that was the first woman on the Supreme Court. Name is gone at the moment but she couldn't find any work either. Clarence Thomas could not get any jobs at all with the liberals. So a conservative man hired him, you know, just it's— oh my god, there was nothing. There were no women in law school, nothing. There were no women in the symphony orchestras. There were no women solo violinists anywhere on planet earth. No women conductors. I mean, there were none. You know, I'm exaggerating here, obviously.

So then Kitt— my dad gets Kitt a job at a newspaper called *The Quincy Herald-Whig* in Quincy, Illinois and I get a job teaching English in Tokyo, Japan. I go, "let's go!" And Kitt was heartbroken. You know, we were gonna be apart. We wrote fabulous letters endlessly with pictures. We did artistic envelopes. We have all these. It's amazing, this correspondence. And I did really well in Japan. Even though I'm American— wave their arms around, histrionic demeanor, not deferential to authority— somehow the Japanese saw this. They saw the inner me. They saw this sincere person. They saw somebody that just loved people. I didn't really judge people in many ways. I either liked you or I hated you, you know? And the Japanese were polite, endearing, kind, and helpful. It was a nonviolent society.

Elizabeth Fox 36:57

How old were you when you moved?

Audrey Lockwood 36:59

22.

Elizabeth Fox 37:00

That's quite young.

Audrey Lockwood 37:01

22 years old. So I'm learning. I got my dictionary and everybody's trying to help me learn Japanese. And they would always say, oh, [speaking in Japanese] and all I did was say [speaking in Japanese]— and then they immediately would respond with, “your Japanese is so good.” I mean, it was totally condescending. [Speaking in Japanese]— you can use chopsticks? It's like oh my god, of course I can. I learned them when I was a kid with my grandma in the Chinese restaurant. Yeah. So it was very condescending, foreigners were stupid. Let's take care of them, they're the little pat. You know, Americans were very well respected. We still had kind of a good reputation [laughs]— and, you know, I got along with my managers and I worked very hard. I taught businessmen English. It was all Japanese companies— Bank of Tokyo, Toshiba, NEC, and some of the brilliant tech companies. I got along with all the students and they took me out drinking. I didn't realize that the company was paying for all this and I was kind of embarrassed when I found out and I go, “well, I'm not cheating.” I just send my— I'm not using their expensive, oh my god, I'm gonna go to hell. And I have to confess this to the CEO of our company. I thought, oh my God and he looked at me and he said, “Lockwood San, we do it differently in Japan. What language are you speaking when you go out to the sushi place or the yakitori place with the skewered meats, the sake and everything?” And I said, “Well, we're speaking English most of the time because my Japanese isn't very good.” And he said, “so they're getting a free English lesson for two hours. Do you know how much that costs? I'm not going to tell you because that's a company secret.” And I just said, “oh my God, I've got a lot to learn.” Everything was like a hidden revelation.

Temples and art museums and I met, hung out with Japanese gangsters one night, Yakuza, tough with tattoos. I just walked in there and was talking to them and nobody could believe this. My Japanese women friends were shocked, you know, that I would hang out at these disreputable places. Because I had no— whether they were elites, or gangsters, I couldn't tell the difference.

Elizabeth Fox 39:48

So how long were you in Japan for?

Audrey Lockwood 39:54

Six years.

Elizabeth Fox 39:55

Six years and you worked with that feminist group there?

Audrey Lockwood 39:58

Yeah. One of the women that I worked with at Executive Language Schools, right across the street from Tokyo Station, and her name was Anne Blasing. She started IFJ International Feminists of Japan. She said, "we need a feminist group. We need an international feminist group, we got to move in here. We need to get going." She started the newsletter, she founded it, put the ads in *The Japan Times*. You know, feminist meeting. She found the venue, everything. And of course, I worked with her. So come to a meeting! And that was it. You know, it was wonderful. We had women from all over the world. We discussed all these amazing issues. We had activism. Yeah, we went to the airport took photos of these businessmen going on sex tourism tours to embarrass them. You know, anti-pornography, very classic. Little there, we realize how evil pornography would be kind of like just like, oh my god, little did we know. Maybe it's a good thing we didn't know the picture. So we published this magazine. I wrote a lot of articles, I did interviews, we had workshops, we had a lesbian sponsored international feminist conference. I believe that was, what year was that? Maybe 1983. It was the year I took over the newsletter. Anne didn't want to do it anymore. There was a big fight. You know, lesbians always have big fights, right? Have you ever had a big lesbian fight? You haven't lived until you've had one. These are classics from the seventies and man they were [mimics fighting sound].

So one group split off and started another newsletter. So I— Anne got discouraged. They all ganged up on her. It was bad. But I didn't care because I— just like I'll fight back, but she was very stoic, and not confrontational and very fair. She would make a perfect lawyer. She embodied honesty, integrity, and fairness. She was about 10 years older than I was so she was like a mentor. A really good example. You know, when you're young and it's like, do you meet people that practice what they preach? It's special. I was like the number two, you know, and in Japanese, they have this kohai senpai. Senpai means senior and Kohai high means junior. It's structured into Japanese culture. So I fit into that. We started playing the roles, you know, of Japanese culture. It's very interesting. Honne and Tatemae. Honne being your real ideas and Tatemai, your public face. I really responded to these definitions. There was something surely charming about this culture, where you knew where you fit and if you followed the rules, they actually worked. American society was too chaotic for me. Just the social chaos, you don't know what to do.

Elizabeth Fox 43:34

So when you did come back to the US, that would have been 1988.

Audrey Lockwood 43:40

I came back in '85. And guess where we moved?

Elizabeth Fox 43:46

San Francisco [laughs]—

Audrey Lockwood 43:47

And that song, “if you go to San Francisco, be sure to put a flower in your hair.” Okay, you're gonna laugh, but my first week in my new apartment in Japan all by myself, I'm walking down the street and there's all these little shops. Little fish shop and little this shop, you know, these cute little coffee shops that are this big. Everything is micro there and I'm walking down and music is coming out of the loudspeakers. They had music on the public streets sometimes. Very cute. And the song came on of San Francisco. I was walking and listening to this song and I just stood still and looked up, listening to the song, and I knew I was going to move to San Francisco sometime in the future. It was this moment where the future revealed itself.

So, got along with everybody in the neighborhood. Had battles with the Mormon missionaries. They were trying to convert people and I went after them and had the police arrest them for leafleting. They were mad [laughs]— they built the Mormon temple down the street from my house. And I went for a tour before they— when they consecrate it, you can't go in. I know a lot about the Mormons, I find it a fascinating enemy cult that I've studied. So I went on the tour and of course had feminist debates and the Japanese women were like— I said, "you don't want to join this church." They wanted to get me out so that the Japanese women were interested. So I was already subverting them and making their lives miserable. And, you know, I wish they had snow because then I would have made snowballs and thrown it at em. But you know, what can you do? You don't have any weapons in Japan. So you just have to prepare, you know? So then I come back in 1985 and I come back— we traveled to China. Kitt got sick in the hospital. We had to get out of there. It was, oh my God, it was really a month in China and it was tough. I'll never forget that and I learned a lot. It's like you learn a lot. We get an apartment. My cousin lives there and we have no credit rating. No credit card. We paid for everything in cash. We were polite little Japanese and we saved a pile of money. We go to the bank with our big pile of money, just like every well behaved Japanese. They wouldn't take our money because we had no nothing. I had my Wisconsin driver's license, thank God. But it hadn't changed to California. So finally, we begged and pleaded and I brought my passport in and my Wisconsin driver's license, and they relented. Wells Fargo Bank, down the street. They said, “okay, we will take your money.” How nice of them.

I worked with a stockbroker. Even when I was in high school, was very good with stocks. The only women's stockbroker. Just me. I walk in with my briefcase, want to open a brokerage account. You cannot believe this nerd girl, you cannot. So they took my money and we got our money together. We're trying to get jobs, we're trying to figure out, we're going into reverse

culture shock. We moved into a Chinese neighborhood, a little kind of a subset of Chinatown. We felt comfortable there. We just couldn't handle it. Everything was too much of a shock.

I'll give you an example. We'd go into an ice cream parlor. It has millions of flavors, right? Waffle cones and this cone and you know, 20 different ice cream cones. And I go up, I can't even pick. I said, "could you just get me an ice cream cone?" And the guy is looking at me like, lady you're an idiot. You know? I said, "just any, any one will be okay because I can't pick!" You don't have freedom of choice in Japan. They do everything for you chop chop, you know, green tea, everybody drinks it. Coffee with sugar in it, everybody has it. I kept on saying "[speaks in Japanese] please don't put sugar in. No. Tough, like everybody has to deal. In the box lunches, everything's the same. You don't go, is it gluten free or you know? Compare that to America. I mean, even in 1985, oh my god. So everything was like that. Everything.

I started my own company. I decided to do cross cultural training. I developed a course called "How to do Business in Japan." I went to all the community colleges and colleges and sent them resumes and everything and they hired me to do adult education. So I do like a three part seminar, a two hour lecture. I'd have handouts. I made cassette tapes and books to sell. You know, I was like a wheeler dealer, met Silicon Valley executives, Apple Computer, all these people swirling around, but I didn't know what I was doing. I made a course called "The Women in International Business." It was the first course ever taught in the state of California. I interviewed women executives that had worked overseas, interviewed all these bankers, did all this original research. Nothing existed. It was like if nothing exists, you have to find it all yourself. Everything we did as lesbian feminists like nothing exists. We invented— we had a rape crisis center in Tokyo, out of nothing. Women's music industry, just like there was nothing. It's really hard to explain this. It was almost like landing on Pluto with a backpack and maybe some ancient instructions like "be sure to wear your oxygen mask," you know, or something like that. It's just interesting.

So we got very involved in the politics of San Francisco. I campaigned for Nancy Pelosi when she first ran for Congress. You know, I don't know, the symphony, the opera. Went to my first opera. A woman, a lesbian we knew played cello in the opera symphony, opera orchestra. She got us free, cheap tickets. Standing room only to see Pavarotti in La Bohème. That was my first opera, Pavarotti, I mean. It was like this sort of magical world in addition to lots of struggle. You know, lots of sexism, gay men were— we had various confrontations with them. They weren't used— most men in general are not used to radical lesbian feminists. They have never dealt with our species before. They're used to all these deferential women bowing and scraping all over the place and then we show up. You know, when it's like the Praetorian Guard with our spears marching in. We got into a fight with one of the pastors at a church. We had 15 lesbians that are going to show up in his office. He was so— he had another colleague sit in. They're terrified. And I said, "this is what it's like for me every time I go to work. I have to go into a room with all

you guys. Now you get to see what it's like." I wanted them to feel that pain, you know, feel that confrontation. I thought that these men would change but now I know they won't. And that is power. Again, big fight. My colleagues— they said something sexist from a speech at a company gathering and I went off. And the guy comes up to me, he's actually trying to be rather nice to me, even though I'm difficult by then. Red face, enraged, you know, and he still is not afraid so for that he gets points. He said, "well Audrey, that's not a good way to win men over." And suddenly, as if by divine inspiration, I looked at him and I said, "I'm not here to win you over. It's about my self respect. And if somebody says something that is against women, I get to battle him and humiliate him, and speak up and defend myself. I don't care what you think. If I were silent and I let them get away with it, that makes me sick. I don't want your support. I want my self respect" and he was like, he'd never heard this. "No, I don't want any man's help. No, forget it. I'll win these business deals because I'm brilliant. They hire me because I make more money for them. I spend more time with them than you guys do. You've got your clients, I got mine. My game won't work with you."

Elizabeth Fox 53:46

You're doing very well in business at this point. This is—

Audrey Lockwood 53:56

Yeah, we're getting better and better but, a lot of hardship. The apartment rent— I thought we were gonna die. It was like \$800 a month, American dollars and I'm just going "ahhhh!" because we were spending like \$200 a month in Tokyo. I thought we're going to go bankrupt. I mean, we really were very conscious about money. Even though we'd saved up a lot and everything, it's just like, it was very hard. You know, Kitt was having a hard time finding writing jobs, and oh my god, it was like the same old graduate from college routine again. So we kept on having to invent these things. It was very difficult and I still didn't know what I was doing. I thought I've got to get some American business experience. I just— and so I finally found a job with American Mortgages International, which was a gay-owned, believe it or not, executive recruiting company in the mortgage banking industry. Went for an interview, the President was my kind of guy. Just Bob Pittman, lovable, larger than life, brilliant salesman and trainer and I just— this is it!

So it was all these gay guys and two lesbians, me and this other woman. One gay guy that I— Bob Pierce, who was my immediate manager. I loved him. New Yorker. He worked on the *Village Voice* with Jill Johnston. Was the dance critic. I just like— New York guy. I mean, this was like, wow! You know what it's like, you're in New York now. Isn't it heaven? So I adored New York! I read the *Village Voice* when I was seven years old, and she's going, "what?" My dad brought home the *Village Voice* so I had some cachet, you know, you had a wheel and deal.

I got on that phone and they taught me how to make the phone calls, how to recruit mortgage banking people, loan processors, loan servicing, you know, that whole mortgage industry. Then there was one job that was president of a company and we got to recruit a president. We got a big fat commission on the table about it. I thought, I'm gonna get that president. I'm gonna find the president for this bank. And once I get this [grrs]—I'm trying to do Audrey imitations—[grrs] what that looks like. And I thought, I'm gonna—and other guys were gonna do it, but the prize was fine crystal, like some elegant champagne in a lovely basket. Gay men are great, you know, with these baskets and I thought I'm gonna win the prize. You know, once I get my eyes on the prize.

So I got on that phone and I just got everybody and I found the guy. I referred him and he went in for the interview. He was very kind. I think he thought it was very cute that this kid was telling him how to dress for the interview [laughs]— they were nice about it, you know, let's be kind, a little bit. It's ridiculous. He gets in, I prep him on the job, and I did some more research. I gave him more info that I'd somehow gotten, somehow I don't know how I did this. And he got the job! It was like a big party. Bob Pittman said, "okay, everybody off the phones. Audrey got the thing!" It was so exciting. I just felt like now I'm achieving, you know, getting the American way.

I'm like an immigrant, the American way, right? I'm not really American. I'm Japanese, right, as an adult. I don't know how to be an adult in America. I'm an adult in Japan. So you know, things went on and on. I got a job selling coffee machines at a big company and met the president, wheeled and dealt and negotiated a contract and in 90 days: saleswoman of the month. Bam! Copy machines, fax machines, knock on every door. Then I found out that they gave the women the worst sales territories. They gave me the worst neighborhood. The Tenderloin of San Francisco was part of the territory, including Union Square. I didn't know so I knocked on all the doors. Because the hated territory was never prospected and for years, I found all of this business. And these polite sales people in their suits— I always wore my three piece suits, I was very formal. I would knock on the doors and I'd have this ritual formality that is not American, but it definitely got me business and I would make promises like you are going to get the best service. If your copier breaks down, I will make sure that you get the best tech. They're looking at me, oh this kid oh my god, eyes are rolling right? I'd go to the back room and bring a big, big chunk of beer, ice cold beer, usually Heineken and I'd bribe the tech guys. Friday, I'd show up with ice cold beer and "hey tech guys, here's some beer" and I said, "this is a bribe so that you'll serve my customers." I just was so— I didn't have much guile, you know, it was like, "okay, here's a bribe officially" [laughs]— and they go, hey! Nobody else went back and hung out with them. Nobody. Then the guys started catching on and I said, "well, you have to bribe the guys and hang out with them. So they got better and better. I made more and more money and knocked on every door and learned good skills, good training. I had tough managers that were tough, but fair. There are only two women there. All men. My manager was an ex-professional

football player. I thought, oh my god, the enemy. I'm working for the enemy. Brilliant. One of the best managers I ever had. So much for my prejudice against football players. One day he goes "Audrey, I know what you were thinking." He's very smart and he said, "the dumb ones are the fullbacks. The smart football players like me are the wide receivers. So find out if your guy is a wide receiver, then he'll be a good manager. Don't work with those other losers. No, quarterbacks! No Audrey, that's not your style!" He had no idea I didn't know what he was talking about. I was just laughing, you know? So he thought I understood football but I didn't. I said "Perry, I don't know anything about football" and he goes, "oh" with this wounded look. Anyway, very good. Lots of camaraderie. I've been out of the closet in the corporate world, all over the place. Very rare back then in the 80s. So there's a reason I probably didn't get a lot of jobs. But since I didn't know any better, I knocked on every door, right?

Elizabeth Fox 1:02:18

Made it work.

Audrey Lockwood 1:02:20

I didn't know any better. Ignorance is bliss. It truly is. Especially earlier in your law career, remember this, if I can share anything with you, just knock on every door open. Yes, just pretend and you'll get the best job. How's that?

Elizabeth Fox 1:02:36

Well, you're living proof.

Audrey Lockwood 1:02:41

Let's see, what else do I need to tell there?

Elizabeth Fox 1:02:42

Yeah, we're already at about an hour, which is unbelievable. You moved to LA at some point, you were involved the June or maybe you are still

Audrey Lockwood 1:02:52

June Mazer— I moved in 1991. Started up with June Mazer, volunteered, did all kinds of stuff with them. Absolutely wonderful. Got caught in the LA riots in 1992 on a sales call with my boss driving. Wrong place, wrong time. A mob attacked our car with stones and I told him, "get out of here!" I started yelling. I said, "run through that red light. Now go!" So we got out of there and you know, I just felt like— a guy pointed a rifle at my head at about 40 feet away and I thought this is it, I'm gonna die. And what did I do? I just sat there. I sort of looked at him. I just thought well, okay. I can't believe I acted like that. And for some reason, I'll never know why, but he gave me the finger, lowered the gun and told me to get out of there. He decided not to shoot at me and I wondered why that was and because of my hair, you know, sometimes when I grow it out, it

looks like an afro. I mean, it doesn't right now. But if it's longer, it has a totally afro look. And at sundown or dusk from a distance, it might look like a black person, a very light skinned black person. That's the only thing I can think of, my hair saved me. That's my mythical answer. So lots of adventure in Los Angeles. Just a really good move. It was a lot easier for me to wheel and deal here. I didn't really fit in San Francisco. I fit in LA. One of my old San Francisco friends says, "oh Audrey, it's a big Jewish city. They're gonna love you." San Francisco is like Wasp city, you don't fit here and she actually is right. So there's my story. I don't know what else to say. My partner wrote several books. One was a *New York Times* reviewed book called *Womansword* about women and became an author and just did all kinds of stuff. So we do all kinds of stuff. We're still doing all kinds of stuff.

Elizabeth Fox 1:05:17

And what's your connection to the Lesbian Herstory Archives here in New York?

Audrey Lockwood 1:05:21

We found out about you all from Tokyo, Japan and we started doing exchanges. We did exchanges with our newsletters to everybody around the world. I think I had at least 100 feminist lesbian magazines that I did exchanges with, including universities or whatever. So we thought Lesbian Herstory Archives, oh they're a brownstone— you know we don't have these. This place is so great. I think I probably wrote to people there or some people that had been there came to Tokyo. There was all this back and forth of feminists from all over the world showing up in Tokyo. And I thought, wow, this is so great. That's even before I knew about June Mazer but I thought oh, it's too far away. I'll never get there. You know, it's sort of like Shangri-La. Then I saw the movie that you guys made, the documentary about herstory. A couple years ago, I think. It's wonderful or was it a TV series show. But they did a good job and then *Watermelon Woman*. I think that was supposed to be Lesbian Herstory Archives in that cute little film that everybody loves. I don't know what's not to like. I like your populist approach, volunteer run and non hierarchical and all that great lesbian feminist stuff that hardly exists anymore.

But I don't know the world that we're in right now actually. I'm sort of a— I feel like I'm an ancient dinosaur kind of walking down the street and suddenly, wow, here's a skyscraper there. It used to be a forest. Oh my god, what's that? That creature is coming at me. It's a car. Yeah, it's really, it's sort of like Rip Van Winkle. It's just like suddenly things became very different. So I don't really know the answer to anything anymore. So I just ask questions but I have no idea what really is going on. Maybe ignorance is bliss. I don't know. I have a feeling there's a lot of danger out there and I am weary.

Elizabeth Fox 1:07:49

You have a beautiful life. I mean, you've got your partner, your dog [laughs]—

Audrey Lockwood 1:07:58
Dogs, we have two Great Danes.

Elizabeth Fox 1:08:01
Wonderful.

Audrey Lockwood 1:08:02
Now we have a little bitty dog. Now we're like Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas with our little dog, you know? We're more like them than we are anybody that lives today. We're more like women of the 19th century. We're not really 21st century, we're not even 20th century people. We're something else!

Elizabeth Fox 1:08:24
I'm so thankful that we had this time to talk and capture some of your knowledge.

Audrey Lockwood 1:08:29
[unclear] interview. I tried to prepare, but you know—

Elizabeth Fox 1:08:33
No, you were wonderful.

Audrey Lockwood 1:08:35
The give and take was helpful to me. Very helpful.

Elizabeth Fox 1:08:38
Is there anything you want to say before we wrap up?

Audrey Lockwood 1:08:41
Well, I want to just say thank you to everybody at Lesbian Herstory Archives. I just got the book from *Sinister Wisdom* that has your whole history in it. That came two days ago. This is perfect. So I wish you the best of luck on this interview project. Do you want me to recommend other— I've told other lesbians about this. They're all suspicious and want to know what the questions are [laughs]— stop being a lesbian! Yeah, do it!

Elizabeth Fox 1:09:17
Yeah, we can totally connect about that over email.

Audrey Lockwood 1:09:19

Anyway, good luck with all the interviews you're gonna do and law school so I want you to be a great lawyer.

Elizabeth Fox 1:09:28

Definitely. I'll keep your advice in mind: knock on every door.

Audrey Lockwood 1:09:31

Knock on every door, yeah. Yeah, I can hear you. Just remember that. That's it. It's all you got to do.

Elizabeth Fox 1:09:37

I'm gonna stop the recording.

Audrey Lockwood 1:09:38

Okay.