

Richard: This is Gwyn Richard on December 7, 2017, at Wayne State University, with Corporal Danielle Woods, recording for LIS7770, Oral History, for the Walter P. Reuther Library.

Richard: Uhm. Corporal Woods, can you tell me about your earliest memory?

Woods: Earliest memory ever?

Richard: Yes.

Woods: Oh boy. Uhm. *Pause* Being hit by a car *laughs* I was about two or three years old and I don't know why it sticks out to me. But I can remember I was on a Strawberry Shortcake little tricycle, and riding my bike, and somehow...I don't know if I lost control or steered or whatever it was, but my bike went down the driveway, the - you know the entryway you come into the driveway - it went down that way. and I was hit by a car. And it was so crazy that I remember that.

Richard: Uhm can you tell me when and where you were born?

Woods: Detroit Michigan, Hutzel hospital. Is it still Hutzel? I think it's still Hutzel. Yeah.

Richard: And when were you born?

Woods: *Laughs* Friday February 13th, you need the year too?

Richard: *softly* So I can get a baseline

Woods: Okay. 1981.

Richard: What were you like as a child?

Woods: Now that's the funny thing. My sister and I often try and piece it together, because I always say 'what did I used to do?' I remember watching her all the time because she had such a wild and vivid imagination. I was just - I always remember watching her. I know we played school and I was a total book worm. Always reading or looking in a magazine, or trying to find out who, what, where, when why. It didn't matter if affected me, I was just always into it, especially when it came to Hollywood - you know - and all those stars and entertainers. I was very meticulous, so like if my mother bought me a Barbie dream house or something, I would set everything up, even set the dolls in there. And nobody could touch it. Like it was seriously off limits. And it's so funny I can recall that when we would play dolls my friends would always want to wear my dolls' clothes and I'm like, "No way. Your dolls don't have shoes. So you can't wear my outfits, you don't have shoes." And I would never, I wasn't stingy, I was just very particular about my stuff. I can also recall always being into some kind of design. I used to rearrange my room all the time and kinda artsy. My mother would allow for me to take outside sidewalk chalk and I could draw on my walls. Yeah, she would let me draw on my walls, but that's like in elementary and middle school. Then I kinda grew out of that into posters everywhere. My wall was *covered* with posters. Oh my goodness, Salt N Pepper, LL Cool J, Immature, just whoever was happening then - oh that's so funny *laughs* that's so funny.

Richard: And now you're the oldest of your siblings?

Woods: Yes

Richard: And can you talk about what that was like?

Woods: Being the oldest?

Richard: Yes, being the oldest.

Woods: Well, I had to grow up fast. I didn't have your typical...childhood or family dynamic. Both of my parents addicted to drugs. But they were functioning drug addicts. But divorced. So, my mom left my dad when I was two. And at times, you know, if one of them was on a binge, I would stay with the other. And even in those times, it may even be, another - you know another relative. I would say maybe in the 80s - if my mother was kind of on a binge, we would stay with - and this is just my sister and I- my sister that's just under me, we're two years apart. We would stay with her grandmother, who is my sister's dad's mom. She would care for us and she was a school teacher, and her mother. So, we got the grandmother and the great-grandmother, we were staying there. But where ever we were we were loved and there was structure. And my mother, she never abandoned us, she made sure that she sent money, or birthdays, all of that. She was never gone for too long, but she made sure that we were taken care of, that we were in a space. And I think it was when my sister was seven...her dad was in the Marines and he was stationed

over in Japan. I guess things had gotten really bad with my mother's habit and my sister was sent overseas to stay with her dad.

Richard: Oh.

Woods: Yeah. And then I was sent to stay with my dad. Which is still in the city of Detroit. Yeah, he was in Detroit. And the crazy thing was, I would still talk to my mother, all this time we would still talk to her on the phone and she always told us she loved us, and she would see us soon and all of those things. But when I stayed with my dad, if he was on a binge, then I would be with my grandma. My grandma and grandpa and a couple uncles that lived there too. And my aunt - which is my only aunt on my dad's side, my only biological aunt - she lived across the street with her two daughters. So, I was always around family, and like I said, always felt structure. But it was a very adventurous childhood, because I can tell you I didn't miss a beat. Movies, skating, the park. My dad is all of my cousins' favorite uncle, Uncle Darel. "Girl, Uncle Darel, Uncle Darel. Uncle Darel picking us up. Uncle Darel taking us to Belle Isle. Uncle Darel we going to memory lane, trapper's alley." Just everything. And it's so funny, we talk now and he'll say, "Ya'll had no idea like we didn't have it going on like ya'll thought, but it seemed like it." For my dad to pick up me and several of my cousins, at least six or seven of us, and he had a station wagon and we called it the Brown Bomber.

Both laugh

Woods: But he would pick us up and we would go to Top Hat. I don't know if you're familiar with Top Hat, but it's like a White Castle. And they have either 10 cent or 25 cent burgers and he would get like 20 burgers. He'd go to - we called it the Memory Lane - but I think it was Trapper's Alley in the Renaissance Center. And he would get this stupid huge bag *holds arms out wide* of popcorn and then taken us to a penny candy store. I mean, ten bucks. And just *Whirr* just get whatever you want. So not only are we not hungry, we're amped up in candy. You take us to Belle Isle and before the car would even stop, I am darting out, because I am not watching anybody younger than me. I am out of here. I want to play. And you know, we would just have fun. He worked at the main post office down town for a really long time. And *Ha* he taught me to drive. I have been driving since I was 12.

Interviewer laughs

Woods: Like, seriously. And he has always treated me *laughs* like an adult. But I guess that's because I had such a kind of a mature attitude and very take charge and very bossy. And so it was always my one cousin, the two girls that lived across the street from my grandma, Kathy and Karla, and Kathy is the oldest. And Kathy would always try to boss us around, always try to boss us around. We would play school and she would be giving us geometry and we're like, "We're in the third grade. What are these shapes?" But I guess she was teaching from where she was, you know. She would get mad because I would always be the unruly kid in her class. 'You aren't playing right!' 'I don't care. I don't want to play. This is stupid!' We had to really use our imagination over there. My grandmother lived in the Northeast part of Detroit and it's almost like a hidden neighborhood. It's so crazy. Like with the officers that work over in the precinct, when I say, 'Yea if you get a chance, go over and check on my grandma, she lives on Harold Street.' And they're like 'What street? Harold Street? Where is this?' And I'm like 'It's right over. It's right behind Casmere (street).' 'Oooh. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Woods: But we had to really kind of entertain ourselves, because being raised by our grandparents and they not trying to play with you with. And then our uncles were in their younger twenties, early twenties, and trying to do their thing. So, all we had was us. And the games we used to play, the craziness we used to come up with just to have fun - we all sit back and laugh at it now and do a 'remember when' every now and again. But it was fun, we had a - we had a ball. And my dad worked afternoons, so when he would get off of work, usually on the weekends, he would pick us all up. We'd go to his house. Normally it was myself, my cousin Mike, Kathy, Karla, and my other step-sister, Nicole. And my dad had a house on Moenart And the attic was ours. So, we would go up there and make forts and I don't know what the heck we would be playing or doing, and we would be up all night, crafting this community, whatever it was. And probably fall asleep, my dad would always say "Ya'll went to bed at 500 o'clock!" Cause we would just be up. But we would get up Saturday morning, my dad would make these crazy, huge country breakfasts. Like grits, eggs, potatoes, biscuits, ham, bacon sausage - everything. And we would just pig out and watch Saturday morning cartoons and Pee Wee Herman, and get a bath and go play. And that was our thing. Sometimes he would get off of

herman, and get a bath and go play. And that was our thing. Sometimes he would get on of work, I know late, maybe one or two o'clock, and he would wake us up - well if we had fallen asleep he would wake us up. "Come on ya'll! Let's play hide and go seek." And we would play outside. But of course we had rules, you can't go behind anybody's house, you can't go - you know - this and that. We would hide in bushes, and me, I always had to find the ultimate hiding spot, so I'm hiding under cars - which is so dangerous! Right? But when you're a kid and you're just having fun, you don't think about all that, and you've got your dad there, protecting you. It was fun and we would go for walks to the park. And my dad was in the army, so he would teach us little cadences. So, we would be singing them as loud as we would - it's 2 o'clock in the damn morning. And we're just 'the yellow bird with the yellow bill!' Just yelling. But it was all good fun. All good fun.

Richard: Who would you say were your role models growing up?

Woods: Oh. Growing up. Hmm. *Pause* Now as crazy as this would sound, my mom and my dad. Because when they were there, they were perfect. It's so funny. All my friends were scared of my mom. My mother's nickname is Donut. *Laughs* If you knew her, you called her Miss Cook, you know, or Miss Donut, or very well, you'd be like Donut. But she was, or is, a strong woman, a very compassionate woman. She has a heart of gold. And I think anyone would - well I won't say anyone would say about there mother, because I've heard differently, but, just everything you would picture a mom to be. Loving, caring, compassionate, stern. When she said something it was like. God, you know you really had to try and work her, but she would not budge. And that used to make be so mad because I feel like I would always get a punishment when something good was coming up, school dance, or a skating party. I always do something stupid, and couldn't go. *laughs* But she was always strong. And when I look back on it now, I'm like "Wow, you really made something things happen, with little or nothing." And my dad, very charismatic, very witty. My mother would say that they met when she was working as a security guard at the building over at 640 Temple, which is so crazy, because I work on the task force in that same building. Yeah. Yeah. She told me years later. She was working security, and she said my dad was in *Sniffs* school and he would come over there, every day, and flirt with her, write her poetry, sing her a song, just anything. He is very charismatic, you will fall in love with him. And he's also stuck in the 80s, like really, right now. So I'm like "Dad, come on. You gotta come up off of that." And he just, he is stuck. But very romantic, just all of those things that when you're looking to be swept off your feet, that's him. But he was very smart, very smart. Kind of in the middle, my grandmother had fourteen kids, one set of twins, and one girl, the rest all boys.

Richard: On your-

Woods: On my dad's side. And so, he was kind of in the middle. And he graduated from Cass Tech, with honors. (Cass Technical College) And was being sought out by the minor leagues, to play baseball. He was really good. Excuse me. And my grandparents told him he couldn't take it. He couldn't go. "All these kids at home. You gotta help out." And so rather than help out, he was like 'I'm out of here.' And he joined the army. *Both laugh* I was like 'Dang. You joined the army just to get away from home?' *Laughs* So that's what he did. But those, I would really have to say - And even my grandma. My grandma Woods. I have never seen anyone like her, have never met anyone like her. And she is a little tiny thing. And I'm like 'God.' I look at my uncles like 'You gave birth to these big bears?' I mean they're just -. She's just a very strong woman, light - no not light - soft-spoken, a comedian in her own right - she's so funny. But very strong, very strong. She kept order in that house. And my grandpa too. He didn't play. And it's so funny, my cousins and I, we joke about it, like grandpa was so - he WAS mean - but, when you look back, he wasn't mean. He had just - all these kids running around, all the time, non-stop, since he was a youngen. You know what I mean - he and my grandma came up here, and he actually built the house that my aunt and cousins stayed in. And as the neighborhood developed, then they moved across the street. But yea, fourteen kids, and here comes their kids' kids. Like, "Uh. I'm tired of these kids. I need a break. I need a rest." But it was - something about when you started driving. It was like he became nice, or he was a totally different guy. "Yeah, so you're getting your license, huh?. You're driving now." And well, I don't want to jump ahead, because I know, some other questions are coming, but yeah. I think those would be my role models.

Richard: So you see to have had a lot of family around you all the time. Did you ever struggle to find any sort of privacy in the midst of all of that?

No, because I wasn't really a private person. I was always, "What are you doing? What's going on? Can I come in here with you?" And I think that's because I was always around someone so it never - it never even dawned on me.

Richard: So, it made you more of a social person?

Woods: I am such a social butterfly. It is ridiculous. That is so funny. So opposite of my wife.
laughs

Richard: Now, growing up, did you know anyone that identified as gay or lesbian?

Woods: Hmm. So. Interesting. Not necessarily, identify. So, in the black community, even if there is an aunt or an uncle that is 'like that,' you know that is how they would say it. 'She like THAT,' so you know or 'He's like that.' You knew you just didn't talk about it. It wasn't on display. It wasn't hush-hush. It just wasn't talked about. It just was what it was. But very interesting story, when we stayed on Nottingham, and I think I was in - I know I was in elementary school. *Pause* Yeah, I wasn't in middle school - so I was definitely in elementary school. We lived in a two-family flat, and this one particular day we were all kinda of piled up in my mother's room. So, it was my mother, couple of my uncles, my aunts, I think my mother's friend, and my sister. And we're watching tv, just watching a movie, watching tv. And as we're watching the tv, a phone rings. And we're like, "That ain't part of the show." And then you hear "Hello?" "Hey baby, how are you doing?" 'I'm good, what's going on?' And it's two females, having a conversation, but they're lovers. It's the lady upstairs. Somehow, the wiring, or the connection from our cable tv, tapped into their phone line. So, we could hear their phone conversations on the tv. So now we're all like. *Leans in, wide-eyed. Laughs* All in, listening. And they were saying some pretty spicy stuff, and my mother was like "Out! Get out! Ya'll get out of here! We ain't listening to that!" And so that was really, like *whispers* "Oh my God." And then there was - they had a niece, and her name was Monica. I couldn't tell you nothing else, but I don't know why I liked her. I don't know why.

Richard: You said, the neighbors upstairs had a niece?

Woods: Yeah. And we would play when she would come over. But, I liked her. And it was crazy that, to be so young, and even thinking about it now. "What you doing liking girls that young?" But I did, I liked her. Of course, I am not old enough to think of anything sexually, but I liked her, like a girl like a boy or a girl like a boy. I liked her. And I remember we kissed, in a corner, *Laughs* in a living room, we kissed. And I don't know what that was about. I think we were playing house or something, but I remember that. And then I think that was, that was kind of it. We would still play together, it never happened again. We didn't feel that we had done anything wrong. But I remember liking her.

Woods: And there was another girl, and she was a little tomboy-ish, she lived down the street, and her name was Joy. And I remember liking her. But I think I liked her, more so, because she was just so - it was a part of her that was mysterious, but then there was a part of her that was so free. We would ride bikes, all the neighborhood kids. She was the only one who could ride in the street and she could ride with no hands. And I was just so impressed by that. She could turn a corner with no hands. And I was like "God! I want to learn how to do that!" I got a whoopin' behind it too, because my was like "Don't you ride in that street! You don't ride in that street." And my mother - I think she went to the store or something - where she was, she left. And as soon as she bent the corner, Joy was saying "Well I can't teach you how to ride on the sidewalk, because it's uneven, you'll never learn. you'll fall. You have to learn in the street." And so as soon as my mother bent that corner, I was right in that street and I was rolling, and I had it down pat. And I could even do, little zig-zag. And no sooner then I was right about to pull in the driveway on my bike, to show off - my mother rounded that corner and I fell and slide And she got out the car, and wore my ass out. I'm like "God. I got a scratch all up my leg, like a driveway burn, and I get whoopin'." *laughs* But I did - I liked Joy.

Woods: And then I think from there...I can't remember who it was but somebody kind of scolded us, like 'You shouldn't be playing like that.' Because I think we were wrestling on the grass. We were actually playing tag-team wrestling. And there was this boy that lived down the street, I think his name was Phillip, and Phillip was very feminine, very. It would be me, Joy, a different girl named Monica, and Phillip. We would just play, whatever playing. I can't even remember what games we used to play. We used to wrestle all the time, and we would tag-team wrestle. And I always had Phillip on my team, because I'm like 'You're the boy. I don't care if you're girly. You're still a boy. You're stronger!' And uhm. Joy and I were wrestling and I can't remember who

it was but they came out and scolded us. And it was, oh my god, I just felt like "Okay, I can't talk with girls like that. I can't play with girls like that. It is a definite no-no." And so I never did anymore. I kind of used to force myself to like a boy, or if they liked me, I used to go along with it, like whatever. *Laughs*

Richard: Do you remember how old you were, when that incident with Joy and Phillip and ?

Woods: *Pauses* I had to be like...probably around the third or fourth grade. What is that, like eight, nine? I don't know. Somewhere in there, seven, eight, nine.

Richard: Can you tell me about how things were with school? Because you talked about being with your mom, and your dad, and your grandpa, was it - did you transfer schools a lot? Was it pretty consistent?

Woods: No. I went to a lot of schools, but I was promoted from the first to the third grade, very smart. And it's so funny, I've been in a uniform my whole life. Even in my adult life, with police. I've been in a uniform my whole life. *Laughs* I started out with private school, and I was in private school. I went to - nope - even my elementary school, well one of them - we had a dress code so, it was a uniform. *Laughs* Always, always, always in uniform. My elementary school I went to, Katherine B. White (K B White) and that's over when I was staying with my dad. Then when I came back to stay with my mom I went to Stellwagen and graduated from there in the fifth grade. Then I wanted to go to the neighborhood school with all of my friends, which was Rosa Parks. And my mother was like "No, you're going to Our Saviour, the Lutheran school." I'm like "Ugh, *whiny noise* oh oh I don't wanna go there. They wear uniforms." *Laughs* So I had to go to Our Saviour, which was great. Then when high school rolled around - and my mother, she made me so mad. Whatever my friend's parents are doing, with their kids, she'll say *Tsk* "Maybe Danielle need to do that." Because I was always in some kind of program. And I was like 'Ugh' *Whiny noise* 'Why can't I just enjoy my life?'" But you know it all paid off.

Woods: Once I graduated from Our Saviour, I wanted so badly to go to Cass Tech and play basketball, because I was playing basketball at OU (Oakland University) and with the police and stuff, as a kid, through my school. My friends that also went to school with me, their mothers had heard of this business school, called Crockett. My mother got wind of it, "Oh that sound like a great school." So, my mom and dad had this big, huge falling out, because my dad, of course, is a Cass graduate, and that's where I wanted to go. And my mother's like "No, she's going to go to a business school, because she's gonna do this and do that. She don't need to be involved in all those sports, it's just a distraction." And my dad was like "Dani gonna play ball." I used to be tall.

Both laugh

Woods: I used to be tall and then I stopped growing. And I was really good. But my mother put her foot down. "She is going to this business school." My friends from middle school, we would carpool together, and I was just so hurt. Because, you know, you hear rumors about a school before you go, and I'm like "That's where all the pregnant girls go to school! I don't want to go there. They don't even have a school! They go to school at Cobo Hall!" And my 9th grade year, literally, the only thing I learned was algebra. And that's because we had a teacher named Miss Carr. With two R's and she did not like you forget it. She did not play. She was just a little old lady, but she could crack a whip. She was not having it. But all day, the rest of the day, we were just talking, whatever. And then they had us in areas, freshmen, sophomores, juniors, in this big room. It's so stupid. But, whatever, that's how they had it structured. Then *pause* there was an 'incident' and I was booted out of Crockett. And my mother put me in Dominican, which was the only all-girl Catholic high school in Detroit. Yep and she threatened me, she said "I dare you to waste my money." And I knew if I didn't do nothing else, I better not waste my mother's money, because that was a very expensive school. But it was worth it, even as a senior, taking college courses in high school. And it really helped me develop into the woman that I am, and you would think there would be no distractions, because there were no boys, but oh my god. *laughs* The drama at a all-girl high school! That was my first real girlfriend, too, in high school. That was crazy.

Richard: Can you describe that? Your first girlfriend?

Woods: Okay. So. Uhm. I had never...I had kissed girls, but it never was never anything. But this situation - I didn't even know who she was, she was like a star basketball player, on our basketball team. I didn't think nothing of it. I am the type of person, I bring the party to me, or it

comes to me. I don't go seek it out. Wherever I am, that's where the party is. So, you know, I was new to the school, making friends and I don't know. I guess I was just funny or fun, and people just kind of migrated to me. We had a chemistry class together and we had to pair up study buddies. And my study buddy had got kicked out of school for stealing teacher's purses. Yeah, this school, these girls were something else. But she got kicked out for stealing purses. So, I was left without a study buddy. And I guess, I don't know if she just kind of said "Hmm, let me move in on this territory," or what but, we started talking in class and she asked if I wanted to come over and study and I said, "I don't care, whatever." And when I got to her house, my mom dropped me off, and I had my books and everything, we didn't study not one lick. We played basketball in the street, all day, it was her and I and about four guys from her neighborhood. We were all about the same age. We played basketball, all day. And then maybe about 8-9 o'clock we got something to eat and came back, sat on the porch until about 2-3 in the morning, just cracking jokes and laughing. And I'm like "Oh my god," because I'm a straight-A student, and I still like to have fun but I'm like "We didn't study! What! We were supposed to study. My mother's coming to get me, in the morning." She said "No, ask her if you can stay the whole weekend." So, I did and we went in the house and I took a shower, she took a shower and then I'm like "So where am I going to sleep?" And she said "With me." And I was like "Eeeh," *laughs* "no thank you." But we got friendly, and then, I don't know Monday it was just, now we're hanging. If we didn't have a class together we were in the door *making faces* you know how kids are.

Woods: And the crazy thing was and an ex-girlfriend, who - such a small world - I used to play with when I was younger. My mother, when we used to have to stay with my grandmother, which is my mother's mom, for a short stint, on Wilshire. The other young lady, she lived down the street and we would play together. So, in high school - cause I will forget your name as soon as you tell me - but I never forget a face, and when I saw her at school I realized "I know you, I remember you from somewhere, I remember you." And then when I told her, it was fine. But once me and my girlfriend started dating, then she didn't want to talk to me. She would just really - she created a situation that was so bad that we had to have our parents called in, and have a sit down. The principal said "I don't know what's going on, but if I even hear that you all breathed in each other's direction I will kick you out of here and see that you don't get into any other school as second semester seniors." So, it was bad, but the crazy thing is, I didn't do anything. I thought whatever. And I guess maybe it was my girlfriend at the time - a little messy trying to play both sides and telling me one thing, and telling her another. It was really - just everybody used to look at me like - "Why are ya'll together?" Because they would fight, in the bathroom, in the hallways, like literally, fight. And I thought "What is going on here?"

Woods: And now, thinking about it, being in a relationship like that, we would fight. And I didn't know that that was a intimate partner violence type situation. It was just, "You put your hands on me, Imma lay you out. We not gonna play this game." And I forget how it happened, how it even started, but one day she said something to me and I have a really slick mouth. So I said something to her and she didn't like it, and she popped me upside my head. And I was like, "What in the hell?" So I hit her back. And next thing you know we're going at it. Then I would go home and she would call and we would talk it out. And I thought, "This is horrible." But I didn't know anything else, especially with a female. And then I'd get tired of it, and be whatever. But it went on way longer than it should have. It really made a mark on me and so even through high school and then early stages of colleges - we were on and off for almost five-six years, on and off. Finally, I just couldn't do it. Ugh. And then I ran into her, she attended here (Wayne State), she played ball here for a minute and she was going through some situation and she asked if she could stay on my couch for a couple weeks. Now here I am, I have moved on, I am a police officer. I said yes, because I felt bad, because I knew her situation, and even that didn't work out. And I was like "God, there is reason why people are ex's. There is a REASON." That was that with her.

Richard: Now you mentioned going to a Lutheran school and then a Catholic school, were you family big church-goers?

Woods: My grandma on my dad's side, yes. Huge Baptist. But for my mother, it was more so about the education than the religion. And the Catholic school that I went to, we didn't even practice religion. *Laughs* No, you know, they had nuns as teachers and if we had assemblies there was prayer, but there was no hard-core religious classes. We had a couple, but you could

take them or not, they were electives. But in the Lutheran school, yes. We had catechism, we had - I can't remember his name - Father...I can't remember his name, he was a pretty cool guy. We had prayer. We had to go to church. It was all built in, together. So that means that whenever we had a program, it was always done in a church. But I've always brought up and taught about God and praying for your food and thanking Him for everything that you have. Always been brought up like that, always.

Richard: And did you struggle at all to 'come out' amidst a religious community?

Woods: Uhm. Struggling to come out. No...Well I did struggle a little bit, but it wasn't due to religion. It was more the opinions of those closest to me, because I would hear like my aunt talking "Why Danielle hanging around with them little dykes?" And I would think "Oh my god, if you think that of them, what would you think of me?" This is my girlfriend. Back in the day, you tried to use 'best friend' or whatever. "She my play-cousin." "This is my god-sister." But those opinions and side-eyes, I saw them. And it hurt me, so I just tried to use what I thought was right, or the norm, and that was to have a boyfriend.

Richard: So there - had you ever attended church? Did you go to church regularly?

Woods: Uhm. No, not regularly. But every now and then. It wasn't a long time - and this is crazy thing, the church that my family belonged to on my dad's side There were a lot of gay people that went there. A lot. The choir director, and half the choir, and mainly the men, but there was some women as well. But yeah, and that church was actually known for having the most gay members, they had a lot of gay people that go to that church. It didn't matter because they had the best choir, ever. *Laughs* But it was a great church.

Richard: And then, we talked about this in our pre-interview. Have you ever lived, for an extended period of time, outside of Detroit?

Woods: Not really. I lived in Harper Woods and Eastland Village for a hot second. And in Dearborn, for a hot second. But I've worked in Detroit and was always in Detroit. To me it was almost an inconvenience. I liked living in Harper Woods though because it was just like Detroit, because it was right there off the freeway. Just a hop, skip, and a jump, and you're right back in Detroit. But I like living - I think I liked living in the apartment, it was really cute.

Richard: And, what do you think keeps you rooted in the Detroit area? What makes you want to stay here?

Woods: I don't know if it's a familiarity. Or if it's just a love I have for my city. I take pride in being a Detroiter. If ever I go out of town, it's so crazy. You get mad respect from people when they're like "You're from Detroit?" "Yeah I'm from the D. I'm from Detroit." Even people that are like from Monroe and Warren and Roseville, they don't say they're from Roseville or Warren. They say, "I'm from Detroit." You get no credit for being from *laughs* Roseville or Warren. But that's not disrespect to them. It's just something, because we are a different kind of people here. You have to almost laugh at the authenticity and realness *laughs* of the people here. Because even when I worked in the far east side of Detroit, now mind you I was raised on the far east side. Having to lock up your friends or having to go to your friends' parent's house and they acting the fool, and you get a first-hand insight into what in the world. It's crazy, I don't know. I've had my eyes on a couple places, but - although this may sound silly - I just know what it's going to do here. When it comes to weather, it's really hard to take that leap with the craziness that is going on around the world. I would love to see and venture out into new and different surroundings and maybe when I retire I will make that a reality. But right now, I just feel like there's so much to be done here, and you gotta take care of home first.

Richard: So you went to the business school, and then the Dominican school. Did you attend college right after?

Woods: Yep. Oakland University. But I wasn't there long. I went to Oakland University for a little bit and then I came home and you know every parent's rule. "You're not going to be in my house and not do nothing." But the crazy thing is - so I feel as if we are all blessed with a talent, we all are. Now whether or not you utilize it, that's on you. But I am really good with my hands, and I love beauty, and so I had been doing hair since I was seven, and getting paid for it since I was twelve. Just a natural knack for hair and I've tried to have real jobs, as they would say 'real jobs.' I always wanted to work at Footlocker when I was in high school. I wanted to work at Footlocker. I wanted that shirt, and I wanted to just be cool, because it seemed like everybody that worked at Footlocker was cool. But it never really worked out for me in those kinds of jobs. It was hair. And I made an abundant amount of money, like for a kid. Four or five hundred

it was hair. And I made an abundant amount of money, like for a kid. Four or five hundred dollars in a weekend, like I was killing it. And my mother, she supported it. She got me everything, I had curlers - every size - hair products that I'd need. She even bought me a hair cart to have my stove on for my curlers and I had all these drawers for my combs and all of my supplies and materials. I made me a little price list, had it on my wall. And I had a nice size clientele. I was really doing it up. All my friends and then their mothers, and cousins, and sisters, and neighborhood people. I would come home - when I was at Dominican - every Thursday we got out at 1:10pm and Thursdays I would go and get my hair done. Then I would do - depending on what the person wanted - I would do one to two heads on Thursday. Friday I'd do hair all day, when I got home from school. Saturday I'd do hair all day. And then Sunday was my braid day, so if you wanted braids I only did braids on Sundays. Like small braids. So, I was making some nice money. And I'm like, God, if I knew then, what I know now, I would have really been a bit more responsible with my money. But you know, when you're a kid making four or five hundred dollars, I'm going buying polos, Nautica, Tommy Hilfiger. And I'm spending it. Getting my friends. "C'mon ya'll, let's go here." I was always that person.

Richard: So, you went to Oakland for a bit. When was the 'dare' that lead you to becoming a police officer? When was that?

Woods: I can't remember. I know it was fairly nice out, so it had to be maybe, late spring, early summer. I don't know.

Richard: Was this when you were attending Oakland or - ?

Woods: I wasn't. I had came back home.

Richard: Okay

Woods: I had came back home and was just really doing hair, had just really dived into that. And was making some really nice money. Then I got a - I'm not going to call it an odd job - but I got a job at the K-mart, it's not there anymore. It was on 7 Mile and Meyers. Developing film. And boy the stuff you see on those instant cameras. *Laughs* It was kind of in that - it had to be maybe in like '99 sometime. Sometime in '99, because I started the police academy July 31st, 2000. And the process usually takes like, it usually takes six months, but because I had kind of ties to the department, through family, my process might have been a couple months shorter, I don't know. Yes, maybe I'm thinking '99. It would have had to be. Early 2000, maybe.

Richard: How was the dare initiated? How did that -?

Woods: Oh. So...doing my aunt's hair, my uncle was coming in. And they're huge, like Incredible Hulk. "Why are you even that big? Why don't you have a neck? Why can't you put your arms down?" Just muscle bound. And they just looked so defeated, and tired, and lethargic, just beat down. And I'm like "Dang, DPD tearing ya'll up." So we had some back and forth and it was "You can't do it." "What?" *Tilts head* And me, I'm like "Well put your money where you mouth is." And so, my uncle - which I didn't find out until my graduation - for him the bet was I couldn't pass the agility test. And in my mind I couldn't pass the academy. So, I had to show him. but even then, once you get started with this process, you feel like you have to do it. You got police officers calling you, "You need to report at yadda-dah." "What?" You know, if somebody else called me and said that it's like 'Whatever, Ain't nobody coming over there.' But you have a police officer telling you that, you feel like you gotta go. And so I did, and I just went on with the process. And here I am, seventeen years later. And he's now a sergeant. That's so funny.

Richard: Which uncle is this?

Woods: So this is my step-dad's brother.

Richard: And what's his name?

Pause

Woods: I'd rather not say.

Richard: Now, even though you entered the police academy on a dare, you've obviously succeeded in your career field. What do you think, what skills or experiences make you well-suited to police work?

Woods: Whew. So. First of all, we graduated - before you graduate, they give you a wish list, and you can put down your top three places you want to work - precincts. So of course, I put Number Nine, Number Five, and Number Seven, because they're all East Side, I'm familiar with the area. And then when they're reading off the assignments, everybody's going to a precinct. So 'Woods', I'm all the way at the end of the list. And they say, "Housing Support Section" and I said "what

is a Housing? I'm the only one to go? What is that?" So, I was terrified, I don't know what this is. I don't know what's going on. So, I get there and everybody's nice, they tease me really bad, because you still have that academy mentality, and dress. They're senior officers, so they're relaxed. They're all. *Displays a relaxed, calm disposition* And I'm all *Sits up straight, and alert* "Yes, Ma'am. No, Sir. Huh." And then I wear my shoes, and if you work streets you wear work boots. But I had on my blinging academy shoes, like I am prepared to do a detail. And they're like "Girl you gotta get you some boots. You can't police in those. You will break yo leg." And so I was very, very, very fortunate to go to Housing. Because at the precinct, you just dive right in. You are on patrol, you gotta run, you gotta handle it, whether you are working with a senior officer that has five-seven-ten years or two years. You're in it. You gotta handle it. Whereas at Housing, we had a multitude of field training officers. Doug Nichols, is responsible for a lot of the officer I have become. Lisa Porter, Debra Fair. They really taught me a lot. And then my partners. Working with different people, seeing how they police and then developing your own.

Woods: But the good thing about Housing, we didn't get many runs, because we patrol all the public housing. You know, public housing, we don't really say 'projects.' We have the one in Conners (Parkside at Warren/Conner), had the Herman Gardens, the Jeffries, the Brewsters, the Diggs, all of these. Not to mention the high rise, the senior homes. And there's a lot of stuff going on in these places. It taught you how to hunt. And that's what I learned how to do. I learned how to hunt. You can see somebody walking down the street, and just by their body language and their mannerisms, you can tell that they have a gun, that they're touting something. It's just a certain thing you can tell, you can see. And I developed this love for traffic. I don't know what it is. Not necessarily trying to put people in a bind, writing tickets, but I had a cousin that was killed by an unlicensed, uninsured, drunk driver. And it just sits with me to make sure that everybody is doing what they're supposed to do, on the road. And I can smell a stolen car. I can walk right out here, right now, and just probably. *Doo doo doo doo doo doo* And just zero in on a stolen car. That just kind of became my thing. And I had one permanent partner, and we - oh my gosh - we worked so well together. We developed a bond, and just really learned a lot from each other to the point where I knew what she was going to say because she said it, and vis versa. We really were a dynamic duo. She's an Evidence Technician now, and she worked at the Wayne County Morgue even before she came on the job. But she wanted to be a Forensic Tech, so she became a police officer, and she's living out her dream, and we still chat every now and again. But I was very fortunate to go to Housing and Housing was disbanded and we were all filtered to precincts, and I went to Number Nine.

Woods: I had a ball. I had never seen or - I mean half of this stuff, you know, you can't... You know how people say, "You can't make this stuff up?" Or "You really have to be there to see it for yourself." Because you try to tell somebody, and they'll be like "Yeah...Right..." For two neighbors that live in a duplex house - so that's two houses pretty much stuck together - so you share a yard. And for your neighbor's leaves to blow on your grass and you shoot and kill him, because you're tired of their leaves.... You really have to be there to see that. For uh, *laughs* a family fight to break out, where they're calling other family members to come over and you get beat up with a bag of frozen windings. Like you really have to be there, for some of this stuff. It's just crazy. But Number Nine, I learned so much, because there is nothing you will not experience, in Number 9. We have a saying "If you want to be the real police, you need to work at Number Nine," because it's not seasonal. It doesn't stop. It's just *Chu chu chu chu* it's non-stop. And it's a different kind of people that live in Number Nine. But I can relate to them on a lot of different levels. I'm that person that, if you're on 10, I can bring you down to 2, and have you rationally thinking, and "Okay I didn't mean to do that." I have even arrested people and written tickets, and they thanked me. Because I'm kind of a people-person. But you have those that will *Slashing motion with hand* send it right back up, through the roof, like "Oh, now what?" But from Nine, I was sought out to work undercover, because I have a good kind of street-sense and a sassiness and so I went to work at Vice. And boy did I learn, so much, under the direction of my partners at Vice. Especially, Sergeant Lightfoot, AKA Pepper, Peppa. Even now when I see her, she has the brightest smile, and she's just a really awesome, awesome lady. And my partners, I just learned so much from them. It's nothing like having a good crew.

Woods: Then Vice was disbanded. I went back to the precinct. And then I became a field training officer, because when I went back to the precinct, and I'm looking at these new officers I'm like

officer, because when I went back to the precinct, and I'm looking at these new officers I'm like "There is no way you should be messed up and you got barely a year on the job." You're disgruntled, your drive is gone, this, that, blah. You know you got all these bad habits, Imma try and fix this. So, I became a field training officer because I just feel like the work is never done. And so I'm like "Okay, Imma show you how to do it the right way. You develop your own bad habits, but you're going to learn how to do it the right way." And some of the officers I have trained are now lieutenants. Or have just excelled in different parts of their job - working in specialized units, or taskforces, or bureaus and it's just really, really good to see, good to know. And they still utilize some of the tactics that I taught them, so that's really - it feels good. But I've done a lot, even working on different taskforces, doing Vice and Narcotics and Morality. It's so much that you don't see going on right in front of you.

Richard: Richard: Do you know what year you became a field training officer?

Woods: Around maybe 2004? Or 2005? I can actually get that for you. (08/04/2008)

Richard: What do you feel like you struggled with as you started the academy? What was the most difficult to overcome or to learn or to get used to?

Woods: I think it was the Legal. The legal portion of the training. And it wasn't that I didn't understand it. *laughs* We had an attorney that literally, it was like watching paint dry. And it was so hard to take it in and to - you know because not every teacher is going to be exciting and fun or whatever. It was just so dry that I was just so disinterested that my mind would wander and then when it came time to study or take the test, I am barely passing. I'm thinking "Okay I'm not that far removed from school. I'm freaking smart. I know I'm smart. I graduated third in my class. I know I'm smart. This is just like, good God. How are ya'll taking this in? You know?" *Laughs* But that was a major, major struggle for me. Yeah, I couldn't. That Admin, I got it, I got it. The Defensive Tactics and Physical, I got it. That's nothing. But that Legal, that really - I really struggled with that. Gun Range, I got it. But it was that dang Legal. That Legal just really, it's like watching grass grow. And then you have to bear in mind, also this is actually two years of knowledge being crammed into six months. And they've even condensed it even more for now. So it's a lot. You gotta think, at eighteen/nineteen years old, you don't have that mentality of "This is my life. This is my career path. This is what I'm doing." It's more like *Tsk* "Well if I don't pass this one I'll just pass the next one." You know what I mean? Like "Uh, yeah I didn't do so good, but whatever, I'll get the next one." And then you have older people in your class that are like, "Hey this is my LIFE. I'm buckling down. Duh duh duh." So yeah, it was that Legal. That got me.

Richard: And I understand your wife also works, or worked in the police force. Did you meet her at work?

Woods: Mhmm. I did. So, some years ago they had merged a lot of the precincts and she worked at Five and I was at the Ninth precinct, but they merged us together, and we became Eastern District, and she was a clerk at the time. The clerk does a lot of the desk operations, and they do the daily detail, which puts officers in their - you know gives the officers their assignments. And I liked worked in Number Nine, in a specific area, and she kept putting me - *Coughs* excuse me - in Number Five. And so I'm like "Are they doing this on purpose?" So I went and said "Hey, can you stop putting me in Five? I like to work Nine." And she said "Oh, okay. I'm sorry. You know, no problem." And she did, and then I would just notice her. She was very quiet, very reserved, very to herself. She talked to people, but it was always very professional and business. And I was like *whispers* "God, does she ever have any fun? What is going on?" She was just so mysterious to me and that mystery got me locked in. And I would hear people often say the name "Pat Little. Pat Little. Pat Little. Pat Little." And I'm hearing this name and all these great things that this person has done or can help you with, or knows about. But I thought "I know everybody in this precinct and I don't know no Pat Little. Who is Pat Little?" And so then one day I was walking past the desk and somebody said, "Hey Little, duh duh duh duh duh." And she looked up and responded and I was like "THAT'S Pat Little? All this stuff ya'll been - that's her?" Just, all of these things, and I wasn't disappointed, I was just so shocked because to hear all of these things and it's just this little lady right here. And so I started flirting with her. Now I had no idea - *Coughs* excuse me - if she was gay or straight or whatever, up or down, I had no idea. But

Woods: *Takes a drink of water, mumbling* I had no idea, but I didn't care. I just had this little crush and so I would flirt with her. And she would respond. At first, she would just laugh it off

like, whatever. But then she would flirt back a little bit. And she was very sneaky. And she would do stuff like, if I'm sitting here doing a report, she would take my water and then I wouldn't even notice it. And then I would go to *pretends to take water, and then looks around* "Who has my water?!" You know, I'm fussing and cussing at everybody around me and I'll look and she'll be behind the wall. *Pretends to laugh behind hand* You know, she just thought it was funny. So I thought, I gotta get her back. I gotta get her back. And so she was a Union Rep at the time, so I called the front desk and I pretended to be an investigator from Internal Affairs. I told her that she missed an interview and that she was going to be written up and all of this stuff. And she was "I was never notified! And da duh duh duh duh." She's just going at it. And I just thought it was the funniest thing, and I couldn't hold it anymore, and I started laughing. And she goes "Who is this?!" And I was like *high pitched voice* "This is Woods." And I thought it was so funny and she was not laughing. And so I was like, uh oh. And then I felt so bad, so I said "Let me make it up to you. Let me take you out for a drink." And she paused and she said, "Let me call you back." *Looks affronted* "Call me back? You don't call ME back, are you kidding me? You say 'yes.' You don't call me back." And so when she called me back, she said "Yeah, okay, yeah. I'll let you take me out for a drink." So she said, "I know the perfect spot." I said, "Okay we'll go Friday, after work." She said, "Okay, you can follow me." So, the place we're going to, I'm familiar with, but the way that we got there was so out of the way. *laughs* We got there and it was closed. *laughs* So I'm looking at her like "Not only did you drive me twenty minutes out the way but it's closed. Now what" She said "Well my friend's mom has a bar we'll go over here." So we went over there and we had a drink and played the table top electronic games and just really talked and talked and talked and talked. And really got to know each other, for months. And I could appreciate that, because anybody else that was even remotely interested in me it was always small talk and then revolved around sex. And I'm like 'whatever.' But we really got to know each other and I think one day we were talking and I was like, "Are you EVER going to kiss me?" *laughs* I just blurted it out. And this was in maybe 2006, we started dating. And we got married in 2008. So yeah, we met on the job. And everybody just had this - like I said, she's very reserved, very private, very - and I'm a social butterfly, I'm an open-book, I don't care, "What do you want to know? What's going on? Come on." And she is very, "Nobody knows about me. I don't hang out with cops. I don't date cops. I'm really giving you a chance right now." And I'm like "Oh wow." So when people would start *whispers* "Hey are you and Little dating?" I said, "Ask her, why would you ask me that?" They would never ask her. So, they just kinda had to rest with whatever they thought.

Richard: Aw

Both laughs

Richard: Is she retired from the police force now?

Woods: Yes, she retired in 2016, September 2016 from Homicide. And she now works for Wayne County Prosecutor's Office under Kim Worthy.

Richard: Oh okay.

Woods: Yeah. She just can't leave it alone. *laughs* But she's really good at what she does.

Richard: Now can you tell me about that domestic violence incident in 2006, with the other officer that - I guess you had come in on a domestic violence call with two ladies and the officer had made some -

Woods: Yeah. As we were pulling up, there was one female that was very masculine, and as we were pulling up he says, "I wonder which one is the man." And I was just blown away by that comment and because there is an issue of safety, you don't have time to address that right then. So, we handled the run, but right after that I was like "You are an a-hole." You know, and I went and told my boss, that's not cool. And if he felt comfortable saying that to me, I can imagine what he says when he's around a guy, and experiences this kind of call. So, not knowing what to say, what to do, or how to address it, I just went to one of my bosses and was like, "Hey do you think we can have some kind of community relationships for the gay people?" And I didn't even know what to say. And he just responded with "Oooh. Uh. Oh. Well. You know we service everyone. It doesn't matter if you're gay or not. We protect and serve." And he just kind of left it real, flat. But I wasn't satisfied with that and so I let it go for a little bit. Then I came back like "Did you think about it sir? Da duh duh duh." "Oh Dani, I don't know. That's kinda touchy. I don't know. Da duh duh duh duh." "Oh boy, alright." And so I went back a couple more times, and I just kinda saw it wasn't going anywhere.

and I just kinda said it wasn't going any further.

Woods: By me being bounced around, working different units and stuff, I just kind of let it go. And then my wife and I were coming home and I was on a - what was I on? - I was on a taskforce with the County at the time and we were coming home from a trip, and he called me. "Hey what are you doing?" "I'm driving home." He was the Chief of the Police at the time, Chief Godbee. "What are you doing?" "I'm driving home sir, what's going on?" "I just came back from this great training, down in Atlanta. And I think that we could do this here in Detroit." "I said oh yeah? Like what?" "Well they had this LGBT liaison, and I think that you would be the perfect person to do that." *Pauses* "WHAT?! That's the same thing I was talking to you about some years ago!" And we chuckled about it, and he says "So you in?" And I said, "Well, what do I have to do?" And he was like, "I don't know. We'll figure it out, but I think you should do it. I think you can do it." So, I was like, "Okay. I'm gonna do it." And so being part of the community, I was always kind of helping people out, but there was no blue print. There was no go-by to say, 'This is what you need to do' 'This is how you should go about it.' Nope. It was like: figure it out.

Woods: So we had a community meeting and it went okay. It wasn't a lot of community there, lot of media outlets, and some people that were supporting some of the folks involved, but it really wasn't - I guess I could say - manifesting. It really wasn't MOVING. More like 'Here she is: You're LGBT Liaison.' And I said a few words, and that was kind of it. So I came back to work and just goes to show you how things are in divine order. Through this time we're trying to develop some kind of policy that will hold officers accountable if they mistreat a member of the community and a lot of people were involved in that. This is when Charles Pugh was City Council President. So, sitting at this round table with Curtis Lipscomb, who is the Executive director of LGBT Detroit, formerly KICK, John Trimble - I can't think of a lot of people - our law department, city council, other community members - but those two stick out to me, because we worked together then and even now. But developing the policy and then when we had some administrative changes, this whole campaign just got put on the back burner. So, I was gone over on the task force with the County again. And I was like, "Well I guess when we're ready to make it happen again, we'll make it happen." Because I really just didn't know what to do.

Woods: So, we when Chief Craig came in, one of his first orders of business was "Who is representing the LGBT community?" And they dug me up. *laughs* "She's over here!" So I come over and meet with them. And he says "I want you to contact this person, this person, this person, cause I worked with them, I put this person in place when I was in Cin-cin-a-ti. And I've done this and done that." So I said "Okay." I reached out to a couple people, but what they had to offer me didn't really...give me any direction. So, the taskforce I was on went belly up, we were shut down. So, I came back over to Detroit and was working over at Major Crimes. And I'll never forget it, I was talking to my boss and Assistant Chief Dolunt, at the time, came down. He said, "Hey! Woods! That LGBT thing that you're doing. Can you do it from upstairs out of the Chief's office?" I said, "I could probably do it out of the trunk of my car." He said, "Don't be a smart ass." *Laughs* But we had that kind of relationship. But I said "What? Yeah." So he said "Okay, effective Monday, you'll be working upstairs." "Wait...what? It's Thursday? I got to go?" So he said "Yeah, you'll be upstairs." And I was like "Wow, okay."

Woods: So I get to working up there and still I'm like "What do I do? How do I start?" And so I reached out to Equality Michigan and began talking with them, particularly Yvonne Siferd. I tell you she is definitely a saving grace for me, because she taught me a lot and with a lot, I mean "Dani, you have to find what it is - excuse me - what it is that the community wants, and the community needs, from the police. And in turn you have to find out, how the police department can be of a greater service to the community." *Paper rustling* And those things really sat with me as foundation points. So, we did a training, we partnered and did a training and in that training, I was able to translate LGBT to DPD, and translate DPD to LGBT. And it went over pretty good, but was thinking, "This could be so much more." Because Equality Michigan is teaching from a side of LGBT, and although their training was good, it didn't have the impact on a room full of alpha people, or law enforcement.

Woods: So, I went to the drawing board, did a lot of research, and a lot of, everything. And compiled a training, that became Michigan certified in March, that created the LGBT Sensitivity Competency and Awareness Training. It is an 8-hour training, it's not a little blurb. And it gives insight into the culture, some history, terminology, interactions, and then it's molded around

DPD, so our policies that are in place right now, and what the officers are responsible for, and can be held accountable to. It's really good, and with that training, I've been traveling all over Michigan, training other departments, even businesses, and organizations that reach out and say, "We need some training. Do you do it for us?" And I say "Absolutely." And I can curtail it to whoever I am doing the training for, because a lot of places, especially law enforcement, they don't have anything in place, for LGBT. They're finally kind of realizing that 'okay, we can't really leave anybody out.' Even training the U.S. Coastguard, the Detroit chapter, they reached out to me and were asking "Hey we have someone that's transitioning and we don't really know how to explain it to everybody." And you don't want to put the person on front. So it's like, "Hey, can you -?" "Absolutely I can come and help you with that." Because we pick up bits and pieces along the way, we know we know, and we pick up bits and pieces along the way. But no one has ever sat anyone down and said "This is who they are. This is what this is. This is what this means. And this is why." Nobody's ever done that.

Woods: So it's very unique that we have this, and I am grateful to so many people, and definitely to God to put me in this space. Because I tell my wife - I used to tell my wife all the time - I know I'm destined to do something great. I know I am. I just don't know what it is yet. And I thought it was putting a smile on people's face, and making them laugh, because I'm very silly. And I'm just kind of that feel-good person. Like if you're having a down day, come on over, I guarantee when you leave, you're gonna feel better. That's me. You know, just praying on it, praying on it, because I'm a very spiritual person. And having that foundation and then the support of the department, like our partners that know my wife and I are married, it's so much respect, it's so much respect, so much love, and nobody really cares. "Okay? So? And?" We don't make a big deal of it. But there are some people that have not yet reached that comfort, or know themselves enough to say, "I could just be who I am, and not worry about it." Because it's not that easy for everyone. But this department has been so supportive and helping create this kind of platform for Detroit and to carry it to other places where it's like "Detroit is doing their thing over there." Even in the community, community members are very like "We would never in a million years expect to see anything like this." Especially our older LGBT community, they are like "This is mind-blowing."

Richard: I'm familiar with the statistic that Detroit is number one in the nation for violence against transgender women, or had been?

Woods: HAD BEEN.

Richard: Had been.

Woods: Well yeah. We had some unfortunate incidents a couple years ago, yeah a couple years ago, where it was just thing, after thing, after thing, after thing, after thing. And it was like "Oh my god, what is going on?" And under-reporting, mis-gendering, but in trying to grasp a hold of all of that and curtail - because usually people fear what they don't understand. I know that's very cliché, but when you give people insight and understanding, they tend to react differently. People are going to have biases and whether they're explicit or implicit, everybody's got 'em. And it's not always something negative, but we have them. And then there are those that don't agree, don't want to hear it, ain't trying to - not even necessarily conform, but just be rational, and care about people as a whole, and not trying to figure someone out. "Just ask me my dang name, and let's move forward. Why are you worried about how I'm dressed or who I love? What bearing does that have on anything?" Yeah, we had a moment here. We did. We had a moment.

Richard: So, you've talked the most about your work with the police department's and training them. What about your outreach efforts directly with the LGBT community and the Detroit/Detroit Metro area?

Woods: So, I am probably on everybody's speed dial, because I make myself available. Probably too available. *Laughs* But I make myself available to the community to let them know that this is not just lip service. We are really - this is real. I host a community chat every August at Palmer Park, bringing community and law enforcement together and it's like, "Let's lay it out here and let's talk about it, let's get it out here. What do you want? What do you need? What can we do differently?" And this is asking the community. And the community has - they pull no punches, they don't hold back, and they let us know. "Hey this is what we need, this is what we want, this is what boom, boom boom." And we meet somewhere in the middle. I want to work very closely with our LGBT organizations, I sit on the executive board at Affirmations. I am embedded, not just as 'Corporal Dani Woods' also as 'Community Member, Dani.' I am embedded in the

community. And we just recently had a situation where a lady made a video of Facebook and she was outraged at the police response to one of the gay bars here in Detroit. And she posted the video on Saturday (December 2nd) I worked with Equality Michigan, LGBT Detroit, and that bar, the owner and some of the patrons. And we decided "We're going to get this together, because there's a miscommunication somewhere." We had a meeting on Tuesday (December 5th), when I tell you the outcome, she posted another video and was like "I am blown away at the response, and the care that the police department has for the community. I had no idea. What they're doing makes sense." But if you don't know it, you can't - you'll only have a one-sided opinion, but I tell people all the time "There's another side to that coin. There's another side to that coin." And some things are by design, some things are by tactic, some things you just have to be strategic. And she was just really like "Wow."

Woods: I want you to see the videos, if I can inbox them to you. So, you can see where it started, and how it ended. Then we caught another meeting, at the bar, for the owner and his staff, we had last night. (December 6th) And when we left there I was getting hugs. "Wow. We didn't know. This is great. You know what. We could use this. We can do that." You just gotta say something. Because of this negative stigma we still hold on to, Us vs Them, meaning Community vs Law Enforcement, for years and years and years. It's a lot of people still stuck in that. And it's hard for them to move forward, because they still encounter certain situations. And they'll say, "Well Dani... We love YOU. And we like YOU. And we know YOU'RE for us. But THEM and THEY." But I'm like, "Listen. I'm part of Them and They, and we're working to try and reconstruct, but we gotta handle some business communally too." So, the meeting last night, it literally blew me away, and I felt great - everybody left, feeling great. It was like *whispers* "We didn't know." And even as an officer I'm like "Yeah, but we have to talk to each other, and we can't continue to assume or be stuck on what was. Let's focus on what is. And what can be." The outreach is great. I have started saying, recently, "You call, we answer." You call, I'm coming. I can't be everywhere all the time, but I really try and support the community because I need their support as well, to make any kind of change.

Richard: So, we're going start winding this down, what do you see as the most rewarding part of your position right now?

Woods: Oh my gosh. The change of hearts. The change of hearts, because I chair the LGBT Advisory Board, we actually have a Christmas gathering tonight that I'm giving them. A lot of people that are on that - I'll say probably half of the people that are on that board - when I asked for people to sign up, they signed up because they had something to say and they didn't care about what the police -. Uhm, it was just very unfavorable, just a salty police taste in their mouth, but from then until now they are like "I cannot believe how far we've come." So many advocates have risen up out of this whole movement. People coming forward, people turning activist or advocate, people getting involved, people being just present in the movement. So, the change of hearts and minds and the willingness and the commitment to contributing to the change that like the *throws hands up in excitement* it's great. It feels great.

Richard: And with all this in mind, what do you see as your plans for the future, not only for this position, but for yourself?

Woods: Well, be it that I can retire in three years, I'll have a twenty-year career. *Whispers* That is crazy. I'll only be 39, so I haven't - I don't think that my work will be done. So, it's not a surety, but it's there. But opening up a business, because that's what I'm in school for, business management. And even consulting, because we're Detroit. And we're doing big things, but we have a whole nation that needs help. So, I don't know. We'll see.

Richard: Well that's about it. Thank you so much.

Woods: You're welcome so much.