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Kim Davis part 1

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Kim Davis part one

Interviewer: So, we want to cover a bit of biographical information here. Do you care to tell me where you were born and you grew up?

Davis: I was born right here in Rowan county. Born and raised here. Actually, 12 of my 13 years of school, Kindergarten to the 11th grade was spent right here, at the Breckenridge training school, at the University. And, then, I was the first graduating class at the new high school that they built in 1983, so...

Interviewer: What was Morehead like when you were growing up?

Davis: Different than it is today. I can remember when there was an "Old Melony's" down town. The downtown was a very vibrant place. A very friendly place. You know, all the outskirts were still farms and family... family land, owned. I remember you know, because, where I went to school up at the college, I remember, you know, it being a friendly place to everybody. Because, I had to walk down the college boulevard every day to get to my Mom's office. So, I remember that it was a different time than what today is.

Interviewer: When you mentioned walking down the college boulevard... I remember some of it myself. Compared to now, how would you say Morehead has changed?

Davis: You know, I think there is a lot of difference, socially, for the simple fact that there is no shame in people's game anymore. I guess that's the best way to put it. I mean, you know, back then a person's preferences were something they kept private. It was a private matter and it was something that was kept that way. It was sacred. And it was not necessarily secret, but it wasn't flashed out there in the open for everybody to see. And what I am talking about is that we always knew when we were there on the college that there were homosexuals up there. But it was not paraded around. It was respectful and it was kept, you know... so that little kids didn't see it and wonder "what in the world was that?" Because that's what we would have said, "Why are those people like that? Why are they doing that?" But, I think the culture now has kind of buffered people to the point where nothing shocks people any more. And that shock value has left and I don't know if that's because they've taken God out of everything. They are taking God out of the schools. They are taking him out of government. They're trying to take him out of the church. They are trying to take him out of every walk of life that we have. And I think when you remove God, that moral compass that kids learn in Sunday-schools and in church and in their homes and through school, by watching their elders. You know, you are supposed to learn from your elders. You are supposed to learn good from your elders. You are not supposed to learn perversion and wickedness and so for me I think that the shame has been thrown out. People are justifying their actions and thinking that things are okay. If it feels good, do it. That's the mantra that is being pushed. If it feels good, do it. The humanism of it all you know is you are your own god. You do what feels good to you and makes you feel good. And I see that with our society today, here. You know, we are in a small town. You wouldn't think a small town like that would have such a polarizing effect on the youth and the people in general. But it does.

Interviewer: Do you think, along that vein, that one particular group or at one particular time, can you trace or think of exactly when or how it happened, this change?

Davis: I think it has been a very gradual, like a snowballing effect. And that's like a lot of people think that it's okay as long as it does not affect me and my three or but what they don't realize is the detriment that this new societal view of marriage and...it is set out to destroy our families...it is set out to destroy the American family as we know it today and this is just tip of the iceberg. You know, it's a Pandora's box and it is for me it's a scary thing...I'll probably have to work long and hard hours to make sure my children never go to a public school where they teach core curriculum. I mean it is scary. I don't want my kids, my grandchildren knowing that. I don't want them being exposed to that kind of stuff. And so, I will do, you know, and I think it'll only get worse. Before it gets better.

Interviewer: Do you think there's one particular group that brought about this change?

Davis: Sure. The LGBTQ whatever they are now, you know. They are adding just little initials on all the time. Just pulling more and more people in. They have pushed and they are a very organized group you know. They are very organized. They are very methodical. They are very, I don't wanna say pushy, but they are very progressive in what they want to accomplish and you know the current president that we have. He embraced that and he has tried to change everything. Not just marriage, but our military. It's a joke. For me it is a joke.

Interviewer: Changing gears just a little bit, do you care to tell me about your parents?

Davis: My parents, they are practicing Catholics. I was not raised Catholic. I was never actually, I remember going to Church with them one time as an adult. But when I was younger, I never went to church. My parents never took me to Church, I wasn't raised in church... I always believed in God. Knew who God was, and that was just innate. I guess it was just born in me that I knew. I don't really ever recall questioning who God was or if He existed or if He was real. I knew he was. Because I could see. His creation proves that to me, alone. But, we never went to Church. It was never a word that we really even spoke, just to be honest.

Interviewer: Do you care to elaborate on some of your childhood experiences?

Davis: As far as?

Interviewer: Anything you wanna tell about, really. It is pretty much open, I mean.

Davis: I was raised with one brother. We had lots of cousins and we would spend every Sunday at my Mamaw's. She would fix dinner. I remember them as one of the best days in my life with my grandmother, my Papaw. Mamaw always cooked so good. She had beautiful long hair. She would allow me to comb it. We used to tear rags and braid, you know, would braid rags in her hair. She would do mine because at that time my hair was real long also. You know I remember school. Had a lot of good memories from school. There was a lot of, you know the Breckenridge training center was, had a lot of, it was a training for teachers at the college. We met a lot of good people. But I remember my teachers all the way up through. My first-grade teacher was

Shirley Blair. My second-grade teacher was Bernice Jackson. My third-grade teacher was Jessie Meingram. My fourth-grade teacher was Sue Wells. My fifth-grade teacher was Dreema Price. My sixth-grade teacher was Mary Jordan. You know, Lois Wong. I remember them and that they impacted my life. They just instilled a lot of good study habits and just good solid teaching from school. I remember that. I used to baby sit a lot and started working when I was about 16, when I got my license. And, it was just pretty much normal childhood.

Interviewer: You mentioned your grandmother and her hair and that she had really long hair. Was that a religious thing for her, or Bible-based?

Davis: You know that was a time when that's what women did. You know I never saw my grandmother in a pair of pants. I never knew that she ever had cut her hair. Her hair was down past her calf-muscles. So, she had a lot of hair and she always wore it up real pretty in a bun. I was always amazed how she could twist it and put it up in that bun. And she never even looked in the mirror and she made this little crease in her hair, like a little roll, you know, in her hair. It always looked so pretty. I just loved it and she would sit in a chair and it would drag the floor. And I would brush it. And it was so fun, I remember so well. It was so pretty.

Interviewer: Sound like a really good memory. So, you have already told us where you went to school. I am amazed at your memory with all those teachers. I don't think I could do that myself. Let's talk a little bit about your current occupation. Your mother was a clerk.

Davis: (smiling) She was.

Interviewer: And your son is a deputy.

Davis: (smiling) He is.

Interviewer: Does being clerk mean anything to your family? It seems like...

Davis: (cutting in) Well, it was my mother's life. It was the only job she has ever had. She started working as a senior in high school under Miss (didn't catch the first name) Elam, who was the clerk prior to her. My mother loved her job. I mean, she literally loved it. She enjoyed every aspect of it. And it has changed. It has morphed into such a much easier job now, with technology and computerization and stuff like that. Used to, they had to handwrite every registration that was issued. And used to, everybody came in February and March and got their registration, so you could imagine the line out the courthouse. I remember coming from school and they would be lined out the doorway, down around that ramp and around and making a circle around the full courthouse and they would have to wait in line. And they wrote, handwrote every single one of them, or typed them. So, for her, she ushered in the new era of technology and she did a wonderful job at it. She computerized all of our records, digitized them, imaged them. And she was one of the first to actually have imaged record where you did not have to pull a book out to look at a record. And that was something she was very very proud of. I myself never really thought of working at the county clerk's office. I actually went and got a nursing degree and was nursing, and I had a miscarriage in August of '87 and then, I got pregnant again three months later. And then I had the premature birth of my son, Clifton, he would be 28 this year. On March

29th, he was 22 ½ weeks. I didn't really have the desire to go back to nursing. And I was about to grieve myself to death. I was, you know, just really struggling. Didn't, at the time, you know, questioning God—why would God take my child? I wanted to be such a good mommy and there were so many people having babies, throwing them into trashcans and dumpsters and that kind of stuff. And so, I was kinda wallowing in my own sorrow and mourning. And my mother called me one day and she said “What are you doing?” It was a Tuesday. I said I'm fixing to go to the cemetery. I went there every Tuesday for a lot of months. She said “Why don't you come help me?” She said “I need some help. I am backed up in filing. I could use some help.” I said well okay. I will for a little while. I started filing for \$7 an hour, lowest, lowest, I came in at the dirt level. And so I got the filing done and I said I am outta here, Mom. It was the end of the month. And she said “Well, won't you stick around? I could use some help with this.” So, she just kinda lured me in and kept me. But it healed me. You know, it helped me heal. So, then I realized I caught on pretty quick and I was pretty good at it and could work people in and out real quick. Just really caught on to everything about the whole process. And that ended up being 26 years' worth, over 26, almost 27 years' worth by the time I took office and 5 months being 27 years that I worked for her. And enjoyed every minute of it. I got to be with my best friend every day. It was good. So, with Nathan being here, you know he took a pay-cut to come work for me. He left AT&T to come work for me. It was good.

Interviewer: We can pause.

Davis: You're fine.

Interviewer: What church did you attend?

Davis: Right now, I go to Rock Solid Apostolic Church. It's a wonderful, it's a young church, we're only 5 years old. We've got a building fund. Purchasing some land. Gotta have a bigger building. If we build the building, God will fill it. I have no worries there. But, I am excited about that. We have a young pastor who is Holy Ghost filled, had the Holy Ghost for about 19 years and he is on fire for God. Our church is a reflection of him and his desire to please God. We have a wonderful church, lot of brothers and sisters, who really have a lot of outreach. He pastors not only our church, but there was another apostolic church over in Elliot County. Their pastor left and they had nobody. They called him, and wanted to know if he could come preach a little while for them so they could, you know, hear the word. So, he started going over there and they asked him to be their pastor. So, he is the pastor of Lytton Apostolic Church over in Elliot County and he is our pastor. And he also jokes, you know we have Monday night Bible study and preaching at the jail for the women and the men, So he says he is the pastor at Solid Rock, Solid Block, and Lytton Apostolic Churches (laughs). That is kind of funny, you know. But, there is such a need out there. There's a lot of hungry people out there, needing something different than what they're getting from this world, and so I feel a duty. I go every Monday night and have since October of 2013 to the jail. Talk to the ladies there. Bring them the word of God. We have just seen God change lives and move on hearts and stuff. You know, those ladies are the best part of my Monday. So, it's good.

Interviewer: How did your participation in the religious community change as you have gotten older?

Davis: Well. Like I said, I wasn't raised in Church. And so, I am a very late bloomer. And I just, you know, when God dealt with me, I know the word of God says you should love him with all your heart, mind... so, all your might. So, that's what I wanted to do. And I made a vow to him that I would love him with my whole heart, mind, body, and soul, every ounce of strength. Every ounce of might that I had. Because I wanna make heaven my home. So anything, that I can do to help in the community is what I want to do. I have been invited to go talk to ladies' meetings. I have done that. I went up to Chicago and talked to 6,000 Romanian Pentecostals. That was a wonderful experience. Those are wonderful, wonderful people. I am so blessed to have known and met them. And I think I probably I am a better person for knowing them and meeting them. For being in fellowship with them. It is remarkable that how people are just looking for somebody to give them a word of encouragement and to let them know that, hey, you can do this. And I think it's important that if you're asked or you're called to do that, you know, I think everybody should not be afraid to exercise their faith. How is your faith ever gonna grow if you do not exercise it? You have to step out and you have to trust God and that's what I think happened with me during this whole situation. I was at that point where I was not in control. And I had just totally and fully had to rely on God for everything. And I think that it made me a much stronger Christian, a much stronger person, you know. More determined to live for God than ever.

Interviewer: One more question before we move on to the whole, you know, the....

Davis: (Smiling) Saga?

Interviewer: ...the subject. You mentioned that you grew up not going to Church. That your parents were Catholic but you did not actually go to Church. But you talk about where you go to church. Do you care to tell me how you became a Christian, or how you became Apostolic? Where it all started? Do you mind?

Davis: Well, for me, my Mother-in-law was a godly woman. She was diagnosed with cancer in it would be October of 2010. She (pause) went very quickly. So, she died on January 23rd of 2011. Now mind you, before my husband and I had went to Church together and we had repented and been baptized in Jesus' name. Both of us filled with the Holy Ghost. But we were that rocky soil that the word of God, that seed fell on. We bloomed really quick and then the cares of the world and everything kinda just choked us out. And so, we had been on a backsliding state for like eight years. So, when his mother passed, she told me, before she died, I remember I was going in and checking on her. She said "I am worried about my boys." My husband has a younger brother. And I said, Joe and I are, we had divorced and we had remarried. And, I told her, I said "Joe and I are back together," and I said we'll be good, I promise. And so, she died on the 23rd of the January about 6 o' clock in the morning. It was on a Sunday. And so, all the family was in and we knew that the one thing that would give Mommy some joy was the knowledge that her whole family had went to church, together, to worship. Like I said, she was a godly woman, a God-fearing woman, very humble and meek, and just a wonderful role model. So that night when we went to Church, I went in my pants and I had my short hair, just looking very worldly. And, preacher was preaching. And, man, the word of God just pricked my heart. I had no intentions of bending a knee or crying or doing anything because I was at that state where I was just, I really

didn't care. There was a whole lotta hurt there. But when God pulls at your heart, you have no control. And I surrendered. I knelt right there in that pew where I was at and I just cried and told God I was so sorry. I just... I felt that truly this was the last time God would ever pull at my heart. I wanted to do it right. So, we started going to church. I had a real nice wedding set on. My husband had the ring made for me. And I told him, I said I wanted to sell these rings and give it to the, we had a family camp that we were going to and I said you know, I wanna sell them and give them to it. I wanted to make good on my word to God because He's been so good to me. He kept me through everything. You know, while I was out of church I actually heard Him call my name. He called me Kimberley. He had called me by my full name. God is so faithful. When we're not faithful to him, He is always faithful to us and He does not quit on anybody. Everybody is redeemable. *Everybody* is redeemable. And that's what, I want people to know that. It's bit by bit. That's how our walk is—bit by bit. You know—you don't come to God. It's not like a lightning bolt. We went to the jail and baptized a man and woman last night, before Bible study. I told him ... he said he was worried that nothing was gonna change... I told him if you're waiting for a lightning bolt to hit you, I said don't expect that. I said, but God would change you from the inside out. And I said he works slow and it is bit by bit, piece by piece. For me, I can't imagine not having that assurance of knowing that my God is on the throne and He know my name, you know. He's in control of everything. And for me the Apostolic faith, that's that Apostles' doctrine, that they preach—repentance, baptism in Jesus' name and the filling with the Holy Ghost. And it's just, I love it. There is nothing more out there that gives me joy and that stirs me like that message does, you know, that salvation.

Interviewer: One more question about that and I promise we will go on.

Davis: You're fine.

Interviewer: You mentioned your husband and you went to that church. Was that in 2011?

Davis: That was January 23rd, 2011.

Interviewer: Did your husband also, that night, go?

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: So, let's move on to a different subject.

Davis: Sure.

Interviewer: The whole Supreme Court decision, and really why we are here. How did you first react to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on same-sex marriage?

Davis: Well, I had been preparing for quite a while. Of course, you know, I was a first year clerk. And the first meeting that I went to at the clerk's association in January. I got put on a committee. It was a committee to discuss what we, as the county clerk's association, were gonna do about the issuance of same-sex marriage licenses if that possibility came up. There was 5 of us I believe on the committee. And we had vowed...we met and we had determined that we

would pick a day and that every day we would fast and pray about the situation together as a unit because there's power in unity, like minds. We decided that that's what we would do. I remember coming back, and it's ironic that on January 23rd of 2015, I wrote every legislature that we have in our state, representatives, senators, and, wrote them a letter asking them to get something on the legislative floor then, in the January of 2015, so if this did come up those of us who had conscientious objections would not be forced to partake in that or to decide whether it's either our job or you know, our religion. Which one are you gonna choose? I got one response and that was after the fact that they said they agreed with me. But that didn't do us much good because the time for legislation had already passed by the time, you know. Of course, we have a TV out here for the customers to watch while they're waiting in line and stuff, just to kind of occupy the time. And I remember I was sitting in my office. My desk was over there. And I remember sitting in my office and I heard everyone go "Ah!" And I walked out and it was streaming across, that the Obergefell decision was 5 to 4 in favor. And I thought, oh man, here it goes. Here it goes. Here it comes, here it comes, it's coming. And so, I came back here and I sat down and I immediately got a call from our newspaper. The newspaper said "Have you got the mandate yet from the governor?" I said no, I don't have anything from him. They said we have got a copy of it and we will send it to you.

Interview: So, this was immediately after it was broadcast on television?

Davis: Yeah, it was maybe, I say immediately but I'm thinking maybe 15 minutes afterwards. I'm getting calls already.

Interviewer: Within the hour.

Davis: And so, they emailed me over a copy of it. And then a short while later I get the email from the Governor. And I am thinking (laughs), this is not gonna work. This is not gonna be good. And then I get a call from the NPR, Chuck Morales, my friend. We talk off the record a little bit and then he interviews me. And I tell him, I said, you know, I said lip service is cheap, Chuck! We can claim to be Christians all we want. We can flap our gums and we can talk the talk but when it comes to it, when the rubber meets the road, you got to walk the walk. I said because, I said this is where the chaff and the wheat are separated. Those that claim to be will go and they'll do what the world is doing. They will conform to the world. But, I have been transformed, by the renewing of my mind and my spirit. I cannot. You know I cannot. The word of God says we are to separate. We are a peculiar people. We are to be separated, like Abram was separated from his family when he walked out for the promise that God had given him. He didn't know where he was going. But he trusted God enough to know. God said everywhere you place your foot, that's yours, it's yours. You know, I had to come to that kind of situation too. If I loved God and trusted Him, and He is my savior, He is my everything. He is my provider. He is my waymaker. He is my defender. He is my everything. And, I had to just give it to Him and leave it there. And so, Chuck and I talked and I said that I am not gonna be issuing license to anybody—gay or straight because I did not wanna discriminate. And they need to get our law fixed before we do anything. And, so he appreciated that and we quit the interview and then the phone calls started coming, "we wanna come in and get a license," and I said we don't have any license because they had to revamp the whole marriage license. So, you know and finally they came in. And finally, people started coming in face to face, and the confrontations started.

Interviewer: How long did that take?

Davis: Oh! It did not take long. I was sued by July 2nd, I believe. And the decision came down on the 26th of June. I was already sued by the ACLU on July 2nd. So, it did not take long for stuff to start. And, man, it was a whirlwind!

Interviewer: Did you expect the decision to go that way?

Davis: I was praying and believing. I was asking for God's will. And I did not. I don't ever wanna inject my will, of what I want, what I think is right because I don't know. I don't see down the road what's happening. But you know I pray for God's will. If it's his will for it to not be then so be it. But if it's his will for it to happen the way it did then I would take that and accept it and move on because I knew that God had a greater plan in the midst of it all. So, for me, anything that happens, I know that God's in control and I know that He knows the end result is gonna be worth it. So, you know, I was, I can say I was disappointed. And I was hurt. I felt that a couple of the justices should have recused themselves since they had actually participated in and advocated for same-sex marriages and performed same-sex marriages in other states. But, you know, and I was disappointed in that, and of course there's the 28 days that they have to come back and rebuttal the decision, none of the parties that were involved did that. So, we were just kinda stuck out there at the mercy of, we were just, we were given a mandate that was very inappropriate, I thought, and very unfair, from our governor.

I: What went through your decision to not issue marriage licenses?

R: Well, you know, I love all people. I love, I have no animosity or hate or anything for anybody. I love the people that came in here. I love the people that sued me. They have a soul and they are worthy of love from me, as a person that loves God and knows God. So, for me, I did not want to discriminate. I didn't want to be, I just thought it was better if we didn't issue license at all until they got the whole license scheme straightened up. Because, for me, to issue one and not issue the other, I thought would have been, and I know this is gonna sound silly, like a smack in the face to the gay couples. "Well, you're gonna issue to the straights, why won't you issue to me?" You know. And I didn't want to be that way. I wanted them to, I didn't want to discriminate, you know? Because I love them. It's not, and people probably don't understand. They probably look at me, because I've been called a hypocrite, I've been called a bigot, I've been called a Nazi, I've been called Hitler, I've been called a lot of things from A to Z. You can pick one and I've probably been called it. But that doesn't make me them. You know, that doesn't make it so. And I didn't want to get to the place in my life and in my walk with God where I would hate a sin and discriminate against the person that was sinful. You know, I've prayed for years, Sherry, for God to give me eyes of compassion, to look past the sin and the scars and the affliction and infirmity and to see, to look past all that outward stuff and to see what was of true value of a person, and that's the soul. And if one person came to know God through all of this, it was worth everything. Everything. So, that was my thinking. You know, I had to look past myself, past my comfort, and past me personally and just look forward under what man found through all of this. And that may be somebody come to know God.

I: When did you decide you weren't going to issue them?

R: Back in January. When I took office. I knew from the very beginning that was just something I could not, could not do, couldn't be a party to.

I: Do you mind telling me why?

R: Well, on the top of the old marriage license there was an authorization and the statue reasoned it was an authorization from the county clerk authorizing the person who was gonna solemnize that marriage that these people met the qualifications. Well, if I sign that or if I issue the license, I am giving authority for a couple who is not God's, that's not how God intended marriage to be. In his word, he set out that it was between a man and a woman. And if I can't stand on the word of God, not that I defend it, because his word needs no defending, but if I can't stand on the word of God and my principles, then I'm not much of a Christian. So, you know, for me, it's just, it never was an option. It just, I couldn't go there. But I feel through everything that happened, that there was a good result, a good end result in it all, for people of faith like me who hold a position like this, that we can still do our job and not have to worry about being, you know, sued or thrown out or whatever.

I: So, you just didn't want your name on it, is that...

R: Well, that was the authority, and if I give authority, I'm being a partaker of that. And being a partaker of that sin, because, the Bible states, in both the Old and the New Testament, that homosexuality is a sin. I mean, we are all flesh and we are born in a sinful nature because of our flesh, but the Lord wants you to turn and flee from those sinful ways and turn to Him because He is an all-sufficient, everything kinda God. And so, if I had partook in that, I would have been just as guilty as they were. I would have been condoning it. I would have been given an authority in it and I would've been the authorizing person with my signature, my name on it, and I didn't want that. I didn't want any part of that. For me, it was a heaven or hell kinda decision.

I: I know you mentioned before the law came down that there was a committee that you all got together as county clerks.

R: It was.

I: Was there anyone else that you invited in or met with about, consulted about this decision, such as a pastor or preacher, family?

R: I definitely sought Godly counsel from my pastor. I talked to my mother and my father. My mother supported me wholeheartedly. My father said that he thought that while he thought that what I was doing was right, he thought I was doing it the wrong way. My pastor was very supportive, just he offered godly counsel. And for me, my pastor's younger than I am but he is a very seasoned, old soul, and he's very learned in the word of God. And it is just entrenched and ingrained in every fiber of his body. And so, I appreciate his knowledge and his wisdom, as young as he is, he's only 38, but he has much wisdom. Much Godly wisdom. And so, I leaned heavily on him for support. He was always back a step because he didn't want to be in the

limelight or have all that kinda stuff. I mean, we even had to meet in secret for our church because of the media. So, it wasn't just me going through it all, it was our church and so, and that was kinda hard. I didn't want to bring them into all of this because this was ultimately, you know, my decision and everything about it was me. I take all and full responsibility for the choices I made with God's counsel too.

I: Why did you choose not to issue licenses? You've already answered this question, sorry.

R: You're fine.

I: What did you think about the protest?

R: Well, when this was all going on, like I said, my desk was over there by my windows. I had people, I shut my shades, I had to put up shades in my office because there was people with cameras trying to take pictures of me everywhere. I mean, I went to the bathroom and they'd follow me. I would be working, they were trying to snap pictures and stuff and I just wanted to come do my job and just do it. And there was people with bullhorns about two feet outside my windows. Right here. Screaming "do your job! Do your job!" They were yelling some other little chant, like a cheer or something. It was about "gay or straight, black or white, marriage is a civil right" or something like that. But that was all with bullhorns about two feet out in front of my window. And while I was sitting here working. So, I just turned my music up that much louder, had my door closed, I just turned my music up and just listened, you know, to worship music while I was working. And then, of course, they would come in the office, you know, when people would come in they would follow them and try to, there was some heated contention there a lot of times. Not so much with me, but with protestors on either side. And, now I didn't want anybody to get hurt or to have their feelings hurt or anything like that. I just, it was really weird because I mean, there was people on the sidewalk out there marching up and down, honking horns and just, and then you had people, both sides. I mean it was just, you know, I tried to just keep my blinds closed and not look at it. Kinda like out of sight, out of mind. So, some of the most heated times was when, like a couple would come in and there was a couple that came from California, San Francisco, flew all the way out here to get a license. They knew I wouldn't issue them a license. And so, came all the way out here and then of course, the LGBTQ side came in and then the Christians, the people that were supporting me came in, and then it was just a, they had their signs and one side was yelling, this side was yelling, and they were trying to get louder. And you know, the media was there and it was just a, you know, it's a wonder we even was able to do business. But actually, we had a really good year last year (laughs). Through the midst of it all, it was pretty impressive. I was thankful, you know. But I just, even some of the protestors, it was hot. It was like 90 degrees. I offered them water. On the other side, I offered them water. We've got a water cooler in here. I told them if you need, if you get hot, you need water, come in, fill your cups up or whatever, you come in, freshen up, sit down. We had benches out there, they could cool off. I don't want anybody passing out or getting a heatstroke from protesting me! I would feel so guilty for that! So, I offered them water and cool air.

I: How soon after the decision came down from the Supreme Court did the protestors arrive right outside your office?

R: Well, once they heard that I wasn't issuing them and I got sued, they were right out there. It was the next week.

I: Oh, within a week?

R: Oh yeah.

I: Did you expect the amount of backlash that you received?

R: I never really gave it a thought, because to me this was just something that I had to do. And it didn't really effect my decision. A lot of people, one thing that I remember was a Scripture in second Timothy 1:7 it says "God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." And that is the Scripture that kept me. And I kept on thinking, you know, Paul said "What can man do to me? He may take my life but he cannot touch my immortal soul." And that's where my value is, is my soul. So, I kept on thinking, you know, man can take my life but he can't touch my soul. And what can man do? He can throw me in jail but he can't take my soul. So that was where I was. I never gave a minute's thought about what the other side was gonna do, what they had intended on doing to me. I couldn't think about that. You know, because that would be a detractor. And I had to stay focused and I had to keep my eye on God. That's why I don't do social media or I didn't watch the news, didn't watch any of the interviews, didn't read any of the stuff they wrote about me, which was some nasty stuff. And the media wondered why I wouldn't give interviews. Well, they're nasty! They were nasty to me. They were very biased and very one-sided and I'm not gonna subject myself to that. I had no intention on doing that. I didn't care what they thought. What they thought did not matter because my God knows my name. and it is just, I mean, that's where I live.

I: What was the environment like? Did you ever feel unsafe?

R: Oh my, yes. Because I received many death threats. Death threats here at the office. I had an ex-Marine call and say he was gonna come in with a machine gun and mow every one of us down. I received death threats over email. I received death threats over the phone. We've had people come in and just be mean and nasty. We had to get the sheriff's office to kinda stand at the door. I had to change the way I come to work, the way I went home. I had to change where I parked, what I drove, when I came, what time, when I left. We had to change our home phone number. It was a very volatile time. The threats were nonstop. The lashing out and the venom spewed toward me was, I mean, I blushed just reading some of the stuff. Just think "eww" you know. And I've received things in the mail that were ungodly.

I: Personal mail or...

R: Mail here. Received things that were ungodly. Just, you know, you look and think "oh." So, but I can tell you this: the bad mail that I received, as far as media mail. Mail coming in from the mail carrier and UPS and everything else like that would go into about a one by box. Okay, that's all the bad mail I've received. The good mail that I received would fill up half of this office on the ground. You know, it was amazing. I've got it all at home. Just the outpouring of support in those mails. When I went to jail, I mean, I got boxes and boxes and boxes. They had never seen

so much mail in their lives. Thousands of letters. We had to go back twice to pick up after I got out, to pick up mail. Just the encouragement that people were giving me, knowing that they were praying for me, was just amazing. Because I know that those prayers stirred God, and that He heard every single one of them. And He was looking down saying “You see that one there? That’s my girl.” You know, I can just imagine that, you know, “She’s mine. And look, she’s standing.” And I just, I knew that no matter what the bad was, that the good definitely just outweighed it a thousand to one.

I: So, you actually felt more support than protest?

R: Most definitely, for me. Of course, I always look at things on a positive thing. I’m a very optimistic person. I always, someone can say “oh, well they’re a bad person, they did this to me, they did that to me, how can you treat them good?” Well, I mean, they treat me good. So, I’m gonna treat, you know, until you wrong me I don’t have any reason to not treat you that way. So, I just, I try to look at everything very optimistically and think that, you know, God’s in control. Just playing everything out and He knows how it’s gonna end. Just trust in that it’s all gonna be good.

I: We’re gonna move on to the lawsuits. Do you mind telling me a little bit about the lawsuits and battles you were involved in?

R: Well, there was four people that joined together on the original suit from July 2nd and I never actually waited on any of them except the one, the Fernandez and Holloway, I believe. I renewed their, one of their tags and then they wanted a marriage license and I told them I wasn’t issuing. That was a heterosexual couple. But they never came in. they came back in and got their license but they never got married. Anyway, through all of that, it went through Judge Benning’s court and into the, and of course I went to jail because he issued an order for me to issue the license and I rejected that. He put me in jail. And that was God’s will too. Listen, God’s timing is impeccable. I had been under severe pressure. And I was still coming to work and still having a good time working and stuff. But the pressure was immense. And I slept good. You know, I never lost any sleep through all this. I just really had a sense of peace. When I got put in jail, that was some of the most peaceful time that I had spent in a long time. Because I could read the word of God all day long. I could sing. I could pray. I could do Bible studies. And you know, what was so funny, the people there at the jail, they have like criminals that are there for like, periods of 10 years or more. Hardened criminals. And they told one of the ladies that’s up at the front desk, they said “you tell Miss Davis we’re praying for her.” You know, I’m praying for those people in that jail and those people in that jail were praying for me. So, you know, I just, you know, God works in all for the good. He didn’t say it would always be good, but He works it for the good. And that was exactly what He was doing.

Well, let me think, those four originally, that’s the ACLU lawsuit and then there was two individual couples that also sued me and they joined into that suit. And eventually, the sixth circuit dismissed all three of the cases that were against me without cost being awarded to anybody. And because the new law, the Senate Bill 216, took everything that I had been asking, it was exactly what I asked for. It was the accommodation I asked for from the very beginning from our past governor. But he refused. He said you just have to fight it out in court. I mean, those were his words. Fight it out in court. When they dismissed that, then it remanded back

down to Judge Benning, and he dismissed, but now they're still suing me for money. For core costs, attorney fees, pain and suffering, punitive damages. I don't know exactly what all else.

I: What was your game plan?

R: My game plan was to trust God, be obedient, and just do what He asked me to do. That was it. I'm not one that has to lay out a whole big schedule of things to do because I'm not a very good scheduling person. But my whole game plan was to simple love God, listen to Him, and be obedient. Because through that obedience comes the blessings of God and I wanted those.

I: Were you confident in the outcome?

R: I am confident in my God. I laid it to Him. Listen, this is something that a lot of people don't understand is the Lord says that perfect love casteth out all fear. And so, when you have no fear holding you back, and you can give something that is so big, like this was, and still is, I can give it to Him and I never pick it back up. I don't worry about this stuff. I can't sweat the small stuff because I gotta make heaven my home, for one. But He says cast all your fears on Him. Cast everything on Him. You know, we're not supposed to pack this stuff around with us. That's why people get depressed or oppressed and they commit suicide is because they take all their stuff with them. And they don't understand that there's a God in heaven who wants all that. Who wants to take all that from them so that they can have that peace and joy and they don't have that heaviness pressing them down and keeping them to where they feel like they have no right to even be living or they shouldn't be doing this. You know, and that's what I wanted people to understand.

Someone asked me one day, they said "how can you come to work every day with a smile on your face, singing," and you know, I walk in singing, whistling, I whistle here all day long. I sing. And they said "how can you have that?" and I said "Listen. My God has given me a peace in my soul and a joy in my heart that no devil in hell can take away from me." I said, "Now, I can give it away, bit by bit, piece by piece if I choose to. But it's mine. And my God gave it to me. So, I'm clinging to it." And so, it doesn't matter what goes on around me. Doesn't matter what happens. He's still a mighty God and He's still in control, so I trust Him. I have to trust Him and believe that all is well and it's gonna be that way and that His purpose will be fulfilled. You know, I want God's will in my life more than anything. I want His will to be evident. You know, the word of God says we're to be salt and light. And salt and light do one thing. They effect everything they come in contact with. And that's what I wanna be. I wanna be salt and light. I want everybody that I come in contact to know that there is a God in heaven that loves them, that they don't have to die in their sins, that they don't have to be miserable, that they don't have to be oppressed and just in a dark place in their life. So, you know, the word of God says we're not to hide our light under a bushel. Under a bushel basket. We're to let it shine. And I want to do that. That's my game plan. I want my light to shine and I want the whole world to see it. You know, I want somebody that maybe never even thought about God or maybe even didn't even know that there was a God in heaven that loved them. I want them to know that there is one and that He's real and He's alive and on the throne.

I: How far were you willing to take the fight?

R: Listen, I had weighed this cost out a long time ago. I, for me, and you know, I went to jail and that was no problem because I was prepared to do that. I would die for my God. You know, I will not...He says if you're ashamed of me, I'll be ashamed of you. I don't ever want there to be an ounce of shame in my game. They can have no shame in theirs, but the same token, I'm having no shame in my game. And you know, my God's a mighty God, and he's bigger than any devil they'll ever love or conjure up or bow to or whatever. And so, I just, for me, I had weighed the cost. I knew what I was willing to pay. And it's okay. You know, I have to consider it all a joy, Sherry, when you think of being a vessel. A chosen vessel, at that. That God, you know, I was placed here, because I did not want to run for office. I wanted to retire with my mother, you know. That was the thing, that was the plan. We'd always talked about we're gonna walk out together. Leave it all behind.

I: Tell me a little bit about that. We'll go back just...

R: People started coming in like two years before the election, asking me "oh you know, are you gonna run?" And I said "No, it's just too far in advance." I said, you know, "I'm thinking about retiring. That's really what I wanna do because I have grandbabies and all kinds of stuff." And they said "you have to run, you're the only one that knows, if you're mom doesn't run," you know, "You have to run." And so, I just kinda blew them off, and about March of 2014, there was a preacher that came to the church. An Evangelist. And he preached Christians taking back their community. And I thought oh, Lord. You know, I'm just sitting here thinking God, really you know I don't want to do this. I'm quarreling and arguing with the Lord because, for me, I told him, I said you know, I said I'll go knock on doors, I'll go visit nursing homes, hospitals, whatever you want God. Just let me walk away. I said I'll do anything you want me to. And He knew I would. And He just kept on pressing me. People would come in asking, "You gotta run, Kim. You gotta run." So finally, I had sought God and I had prayed and really praying for a no. It's what I was praying for. But sometimes God doesn't give us, you know, the answer that we want. He gives us an answer but maybe not the one that we want in our flesh. And so finally, I said okay, I'm gonna ask my pastor. So, I asked my pastor. He said "sounds like a good idea to me." And I looked at him and I said "Thanks a lot. Thanks a lot." So, I told him, I said "if you want me to run and if this is what you want," I said, "then you have to make it happen." Because I'm not a politician. I'm not politically correct and I just don't have time to do all this. I mean, I was working 60 hours a week. I don't have time to lecture. I don't have time to go out and knock on doors and do all that stuff. I just didn't. And my mother was sick, she had hurt her back. So, I was having to do her work and my work and take care of everything. It was just 60 hours a week was what I was averaging. So, God surely made it happen. I won the primary election by 23 votes. I was a registered Democrat at the time. Won the general election and then took office. And then bam, here we go. And a lot of people have said, you know, this is like the story of Esther. You were put here for such a time as this. And you know, I would never compare myself to one of the Biblical heroines, I feel, because she saved a whole group of people, the Jews, you know. She was a Jewess. And so, but I just have to know that God did place me here and it was His will that I would be here and I know it was for this purpose.
Can we take a break?

I: Yes