



## UNHEARD VOICES

### Stories of LGBT History



## Interview Transcript



**Kendall Bailey** joined the U-S Marine Corps in 2001.

*Five years later he was a sergeant assigned to a recruiting office in Virginia and was considering becoming career military.*

*At StoryCorps, Kendall told his friend, Don Davis, how because of Don't Ask, Don't Tell those plans changed.*

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**Kendall Bailey:** I was at a recruiting event and I had my cell phone. I put it in the little Marine Corps hummer that we had. And one of the other recruiters, a staff sergeant, went through my cell phone and saw some of the text messages that I had to my boyfriend.

The atmosphere at the office just changed from that point on. So I wrote a letter to my commanding officer saying, you know, "I'm gay," and the Sergeant Major basically said, "You're not gay, it's a phase. You need to go through counseling." They sent me home. I couldn't show up for work—"for my safety," which I wasn't really concerned with because I could handle my own.

But when you wanna do something that badly and you've put five years of blood, sweat and tears into it and then all of a sudden it's not really an option for you anymore, it's a hard thing to take. On my discharge paperwork, it says RE4 and that means I am never ever allowed to be in the military again, which sucks. I mean if I could go back, I would.

**Interviewer:** *And how has your family responded?*

**Kendall Bailey:** Well, my family didn't find out I was gay until after I was discharged. I kept playing this role as if I was still in the Marine Corps. My dad and my stepmother decided that something was wrong, so they decided to take a trip out here. At the time, I had a boyfriend and I was like, well, if I'm gonna come out, I guess now is good as time as any to do it. I said I got out of the Marine Corps because I was gay and my dad said, "Uhhh, yeah." That's his answer to everything. I'm like, dad, it's raining out—"Uhhh yeah." So it was assuring, I was happy about that.

And my life changed dramatically when I got out. I'm able to hang out with my boyfriend and hold hands walking down the street. Obviously I'm very disappointed that I can't serve, but my feelings toward the military really didn't change. It's just being equal is something that I think everyone deserves and obviously we have a long way to go.