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PROGRAM: AS IT HAPPENS  
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NETWORK / STATION: CBC/CBO  
RESEAU / STATION:

TIME: 6:30 PM  
HEURE:

WOMEN DISMISSED FROM ARMED FORCES BECAUSE OF HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY

CBC: The Canadian Forces Station in Shelburne on Nova Scotia's south shore, is one of Canada's most sensitive military operations, that's where they track the movements of Soviet submarines in the Atlantic. It's also where military officials have decided that lesbianism is an unacceptable security risk. At least five women have been fired from the base after the commander identified what he called a "homosexual clique". Daryl Wood(?) is a former military police officer at Shelburne, she was fired in 1978 for lesbianism.

ELIZABETH GRAY: Daryl Wood, this story must sound familiar to you, the same thing happened to you. Does it...is it more common in the Canadian Forces that people realize?

DARYL WOOD: Um, it's very common. It's a very common phenomena. It happens quite regularly. The...I think the difference between what has happened now and any other time is that there's so many in one group.

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GRAY: Now these women are being described as a potential security risk. Is it not possible that they might be?

WOOD: It's hard to answer that question not knowing the circumstances but whole idea of lesbians being a security risk is absurd when the Forces itself is creating the situation by having regulations that say that lesbians can't be retained or recruited into the military.

GRAY: Not even if they make it quite public that that's their sexual preference?

WOOD: It doesn't matter how public they are. If they make it public, it just makes it easier for them..(inaudible)..

GRAY: What in fact happened in your own case?

WOOD: In my own case it's really difficult to say because when I asked them they would not tell me how they found out or how they knew.

GRAY: Had you always been a lesbian while you were in the Armed Forces?

WOOD: No, I was totally heterosexual before I joined the Forces and I just met someone that I cared very much for and we started having a relationship that lasted three years

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... file we were in the Forces.

GRAY: And were you under surveillance of some sort?

WOOD: Well, I suspect what happened in my case was that my name came up in other investigations and there's a lot of pressure, a lot of coercion that goes on in the Forces, to use a colloquial expression, to squeal on other members of the Forces. As a matter of fact it's written in Canadian Forces administrative orders that if anyone is suspected or you know anyone who you suspect to be a homosexual, then it is your obligation to go to your CO and tell.

GRAY: What can these particular women do now? Is there any appeal process?

WOOD: There's two avenues of approach they can take, neither of which will be...I'm very skeptical that either of them will be very beneficial to them, very beneficial to them.

GRAY: What are they?

WOOD: Well, they can take the road of going through the Human Rights Commission but since it's not included in the Human Rights or the Constitution, that we can't be discriminated against, then that avenue is pretty well closed to them as well. And within the Forces they have what they call a redress of grievance which might get to their CO's level but certainly I've known people

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've taken that road and have gotten absolutely no where.

GRAY: Can you speculate, on the basis of what happened to you, the kind of experience they've been through, the kind of interrogation, what might have happened?

WOOD: Well, I think that it's pretty comparable to what happened with me. I'm getting together an anthology of women's stories who've been released from the Forces and women that I've talked to and explained to me and shared with me their experience, it seems pretty comparable to what I've been through in terms of an interrogation and I do...I keep reiterating that I do use the term very deliberately because it is an interrogation.

GRAY: Well, does it have to go on very long? Can they not just put the question to you and you say yes or no. And what if you say yes, what...

WOOD: I said yes because I had...my lover and I had discussed this and we agreed that we wouldn't fight it, we'd just say yes and keep our pride and our self-esteem by not denying who we were because there's absolutely wrong with who we are. But...and I was held for an entire day and that's from 8...8:30 in the morning until 4, 4:30 in the evening.

GRAY: What sort of questions did they ask you?

WOOD: What sort of questions? Well, very, very intimate

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d totally, what I found totally abnoxious questions. Like, what we did, and how we did it, how many times we did it, who was involved, have I done it with anyone else, has she done it with anyone else and how, you know, just incredible questions.

GRAY: And any questions relating to security?

WOOD: Oh yes, they asked if we revealed anything to a foreign power but it's...I found it quite incredible that we would know anything more than a foreign power would know anyways. I was remustering to be a phys. ed. instructor which, as far as security was concerned, I mean how much information can they gym instructor give to a foreign power?

GRAY: Daryl Wood, thank you very much.

WOOD: Oh, you're quite welcome.

GRAY: Bye-bye.

WOOD: Bye-bye.

CBC: Daryl Wood is a former military police officer at Canadian Forces Station Shelburne, she spoke to us from Halifax.

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