

NORTHWEST news

Continued from Page 1

They have different skin color and are a decade and a half apart in age. Still, they are brothers.

They also have a sister, Connie. Josh, Alex and Connie have two female parents, Bonnie and Sara. The women have been together for 23 years.

They now have two grandchildren.

Josh was born to Sara. He calls his other mom Bonnie.

His dad died when he was little. He has two daughters.

Bonnie initially raised Connie with another partner. Later, Bonnie and Sara raised Connie together. Bonnie finally adopted Connie when she turned 18.

Alex came later. He is the baby of the family.

Bonnie is "mom." She had Alex with the donation of "genetic material" from a friend.

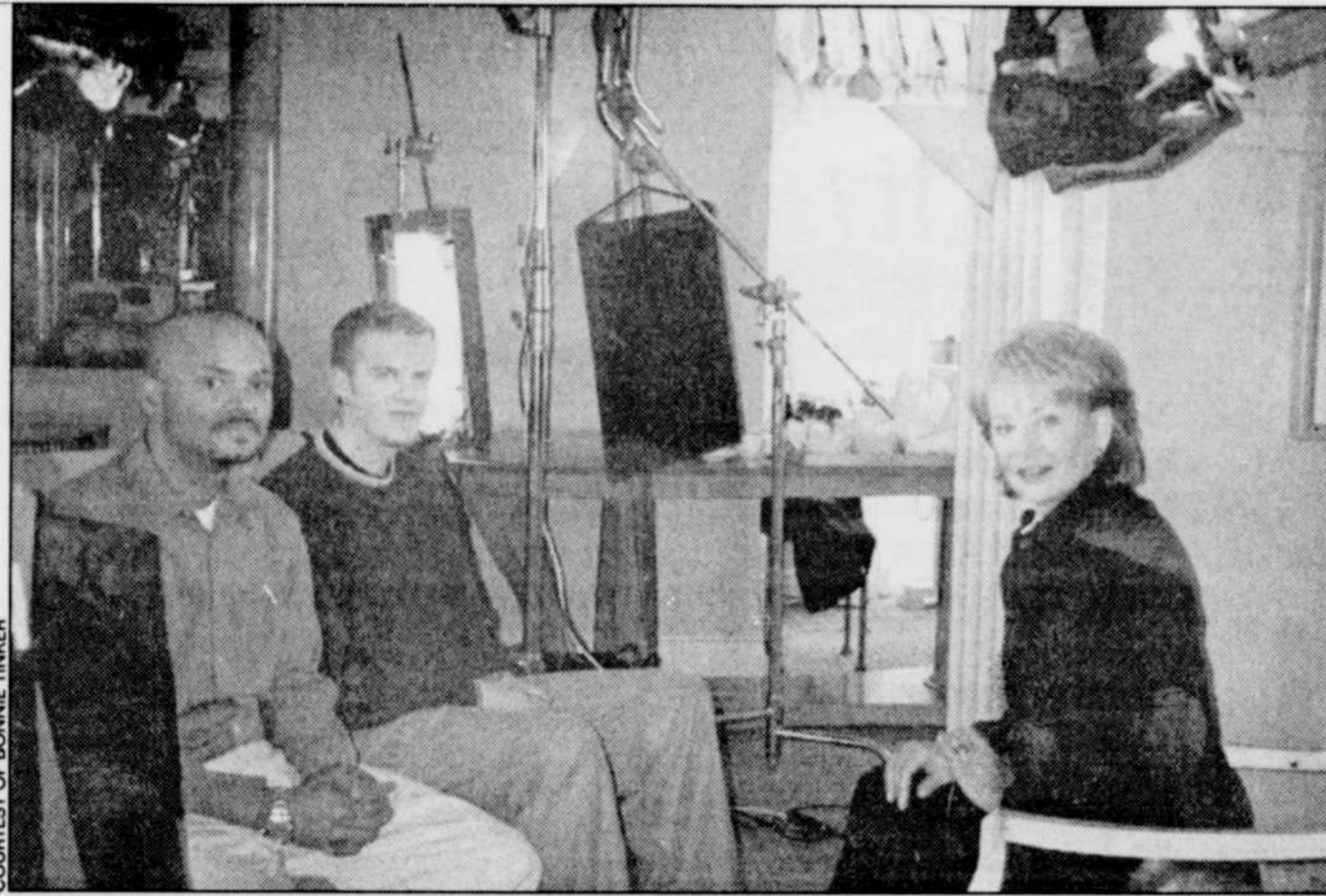
He's "dad." Sara is his "parent."

But Alex says he is equally close to both women. His dad is also his parent, although he doesn't have the same relationship with him that he does with the two women. He has three parents, he says.

Did you know most families in the United States aren't mom, dad and biological children, Bonnie asks with a grin as she explains the ins and outs of how this family came to be.

A production crew of three—complete with camera, sound and an assistant producer—flew to Portland in early September to shoot three days' worth of video of the family. They took footage of the house, Sara's 60th birthday party and Alex bowling with his girlfriend, Shayna, at Hollywood Bowl.

They later visited Alex at school and going out to lunch with friends. They followed Josh jogging and playing tennis with his girlfriend at Alberta



Barbara Walters interviews Josh Graham (left) and Alex Tinker for an upcoming 20/20 exposé

Public Park. Later, the cameras visited him at work.

The moms were interviewed at home. The crew wanted family photographs to help tell the story: framed, baby, youth, with moms and family history pics.

And then the crew caught something historic on videotape when they followed Bonnie and Sara to Portland's City Hall, where the couple joined in the "1,000 Years of Commitment" reception. The women, who have shared more than two decades with each other and their children, finally got a piece of paper from the government acknowledging their relationship—and indirectly their entire family.

A month later, Alex and Josh traveled to New York City to be interviewed by Barbara Walters—the most famous interviewer in the country, if not the world. She talked to them for more than 40 minutes and allowed a couple

of snapshots for souvenirs.

But Walters didn't intimidate Alex. In fact, he didn't seem very impressed.

"Not at all. Nothing new," Alex says about the questions Walters posed. "I don't think there are more questions left to ask. Everyone has pretty much covered the bases."

Alex and Josh are not new to the media. They list features in *U.S. News and World Report* and *Marie Claire* as well as a couple of appearances on the syndicated talk show *Ricki Lake* among their credits.

Connie is shy, though. She agreed to let 20/20 take just one shot of her and did not grant an interview.

Bonnie Tinker is more comfortable talking to the media because she is a longtime gay family advocate. She serves as executive director of Love Makes a Family, a Portland-based nonprofit.

Tinker says many media outlets can't find older kids who will talk about their experience being raised by a same-sex couple. She says 33-year-old Josh might be one of the oldest "kids" raised by lesbians to tell his story.

Tinker thinks this is important, although she always leaves the decision up to her three children. She and Sara hope the experience will promote healing for their kids.

"Each of them has had something that has happened to them," Tinker explains. "They've been hurt in some deep ways."

Tinker also hopes viewers will have a clearer picture of some of the challenges faced both by gay and lesbian parents and their children. She says the media tend to focus on babies and new gay parents who are young and optimistic.

Tinker says many of those having children have the money to build a supportive and protective environment for their children. She says the coverage, which often focuses on celebrities and wealthy gay families, looks easier for children than it really is.

Tinker says protecting kids from homophobia is impossible. "It is a factor you will have to deal with," she warns those optimistic and younger parents.

Sharing the story of being raised by gay parents has value to Alex. He does it because he hopes it will help make life different for kids born to gay parents today.

"In 16 years, I hope this won't be an issue," Alex says. "It will be normal—or way closer to it." **jm**

The 20/20 exposé will air in November or February. Check local listings.

JONATHAN KIPP is a Just Out staff reporter who can be reached at jkipp@teleport.com.

Captain Morgan

— ORIGINAL —
SPICED RUM

Captain Morgan is one of the fine products distributed by Seagram Americas.

Seagram is the first U.S. spirits producer that provides domestic partner benefits. Seagram also protects its employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation, fully supports diversity in the workplace and has a history of defending human rights.

Quality policies.
Quality products.



Enjoy our quality responsibly.

Seagram Americas

PUERTO RICAN RUM WITH SPICE AND OTHER NATURAL FLAVORS
35% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME (70 PROOF)
CAPTAIN MORGAN RUM CO., BALTIMORE, MD

For the Gay Man in your life



Gai & Pied
2544
NE Broadway
(NE Broadway & 26th)
503-331-1125

- Cards
- Video Rentals
- Popular Magazines
- Books & Novelties

WWW.GAIPIED.COM

MARVIN SALLES

Associate Broker

- * Innovative Marketer
- * Experienced Buyer's Agent
- * Attentive Listener

503.320.1271
www.marvinsalles.com

John F. Scott
REAL ESTATE