* **Please add three line breaks to the start of every subtitle text.**
* **Please ensure all subtitles are left-aligned, not justified, and have one line break between paragraphs.**
* **Please fix typos (corrections highlighted below in yellow).**

**Pat Hagen - Wedding Shoes**

My name is Pat Hagen, and these are my wedding shoes - bought by my lovely wife Sal for my 40th birthday in 1997. We fell in love in the early 80s. We felt like any other couple. We brought up four amazing children, just getting on with our lives. But we kept being reminded that we were not allowed the luxury of “just ordinary”. Clause 28, outlawing the promotion of homosexuality, had recently become law - meaning homophobia was legitimised. The idea that we might one day be married was unthinkable.

But we had a game we played, that was great fun: “What shall we wear when we get married?”. We chose glamorous, unaffordable clothes that we'd never buy, for an event that would never happen. And this is where the shoes come in. Sal made the unthinkable leap of faith and actually bought them for my birthday. We laughed and we laughed at my party, everyone taking turns at wearing them, because they would never really be worn.

10 years passed, our children grew up into remarkable adults, and the shoes sat on the shelf - beautiful, but still unworn. Attitudes softened and we were given the half measures of a civil partnership. We took it gladly, because it was the first chance we'd had to be publicly recognised in over 20 years of being together, and because we love a party! But I couldn't wear the shoes. It wasn't a real wedding.

Eventually, though, the day came. Equal marriage has become a reality and we decided to go for it. So along with our children, their partners, and now several grandchildren; we married at the Bristol Registry Office on the 5th of August, 2015. And I wore the shoes.

**Sharifa - Overalls and Name Sign**

Hello! My name is Sharifa Whitney James. I identify as a Black, queer, polyamorous person. I'm a gender non-conforming woman, an activist, footballer, and most of all, I'm a plant mom. These items are really really dear to me. My name is unique and beautiful. And these dungarees… well they're just very me. They scream “pride, proud, queer”. And I'm very, very, very unapologetically me, all of the time.

**Thomas - 3D Printer**  
  
I've always been a very detail-oriented person, able to keep focused and working on a problem until it was perfect. No need for sleep, food or breaks. I saw this as my superpower. But after a cancer scare, this extreme focus was turned inward.

Suddenly, I would obsess about my body's slightest bumps and asymmetries. I was convinced that I had cancer somewhere, and that the doctors must have missed it. So I had to keep checking for changes and signs. I pushed and prodded until everything hurt - for sure a sign that I was, in fact, dying. I developed severe anxiety and my only break from this anxiety was after seeing my doctor for reassurance, which I would do up to two times a day. One year, three ultrasounds, two X-rays, an MRI and 32 blood tests later, I started therapy - and I was finally diagnosed with OCD. It all started to make sense.

I figured I would try to redirect my obsessions into a new hobby. So I bought a 3D printer. When it arrived, I was too scared to take it out of the box, because I was afraid of scratching it and thereby making it imperfect. Eventually I was able to open it, and put it together. And of course, I did scratch it. It was no longer perfect, but it worked. It printed my first file - a 3D heart - and while it wasn't perfect, it was good enough. It was a great lesson that things don't have to be perfect and that's okay... I'm okay.

**Andy Thompson - Book (Giovanni’s Room)**

Giovanni’s Room by James Baldwin was my first clumsy attempt at age 14 to come out to my family. I would leave the book around the house and hope that someone would spot it, and start a conversation about me being gay. It didn’t work, and no-one ever noticed it. It took me another four years before I finally came out. But the book became my favourite, and it is still the only one I’ve read more than once.

**Lara Lalemi - Teddy Bear**

The teddy bear that I’ve featured today has a little rainbow on the paw. This was sent to me by my best friend Helen for my birthday, and it really represents her support and love and joy for me - especially being one of my chosen family. You need this as within the queer community, often you don’t get the support you need from your internal family - so you find others. And she is one of the people that I love the most in this world. And the teddy bear represents that joy and support that she has given me.

**Jamie Lawson - Candlestick**

I can’t remember exactly when I bought this. I saw it in the window of a charity shop around the corner from my mum’s house and knew I had to own it. They normally travel in pairs, these things, but this one was flying solo.

It’s one of the very few precious objects that I own - I’ve been carrying it around with me for years now, and it’s always one of the first things I unpack when I go somewhere new, and I spend some time finding the perfect place for it, so he can watch over me.

I think dragons are a really fascinating symbol. I think they are full of really exciting queer energy. They connect to ideas of magic, of monsters; they channel powerful, transformative, volcanic, fiery energy; and they can level an entire city if they need to. And they’re guardians as well. This one has been looking out for me for many years, and hopefully for many years to come.

**Ashesi Osibisa - Church Pulpit**

I grew up in a Christian family in Ghana. We went to church for worship, fellowship, and to lift our human spirits. Messages preached from the pulpit lectured us to spread kindness and love to humanity.

On a number of occasions, however, messages preached from the same pulpit would condemn same-sex relationships, and demonise same-sex attraction. Over time, the church pulpit became a bipolar symbol of love and hate, to me. I have same-sex attraction and now believe that the pulpit may be sacred. Ignorant preachers may defile it, sometimes. Love is all I feel in my Creator's presence.

**Patricia Cronin - Marble Statue (Memorial to a Marriage)**

Hello, my name is Patricia Cronin. I’m a New York-based American artist, and I created *Memorial to a Marriage* in 2002 to address two urgent issues near to my heart: the dearth of specific women being honoured in public sculpture, and the prohibition of same-sex marriage.

This over-life-size, Carrara marble statue is the first and only marriage equality monument in the world. Designed as a mortuary sculpture of myself and my now wife, the artist Deborah Kass, we’re recumbent in an entwined embrace on a bed. We share a tilted pillow, and sheets start around our hips and go down, where you see our toes touching. I sculpted this when gay marriage was illegal anywhere and everywhere in the United States.

To simulate a few of the 1200 rights heterosexual marriage affords, same-sex couples then would have to pay a lawyer for legal documents – but they were really only about the end of our lives, such as wills, healthcare proxies, and powers of attorney documents. They’re very depressing, and they only become useful if one of us becomes incapacitated or dies.

So I employed the American neo-classical sculptural form to address a federal failure: prohibiting same-sex couples to wed. The challenge of this work was to strike a balance between a high level of formal execution and pointed political protest; what I couldn’t have in life, I would have forever in death.

I purchased our burial plot in Woodlawn Cemetery in The Bronx, New York, a national historic landmark designed as America’s Père Lachaise Cemetery, the famous one in Paris, and permanently installed the marble sculpture on our future final resting place.

By purchasing my own land, I also addressed the scarcity of real women – as opposed to allegorical female forms – honoured in public monuments. Although the US Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013, making the United States the 29th country in the world out of 195 countries legally recognising same-sex marriage, homosexuality remains illegal and punishable up to death in 27 countries – so it is still a very urgent international human rights issue.

**Jennie Phillips - Microphone**

A karaoke bar in the middle of town, with a heap of equipment bundled into a corner, a bouncy host, and the volume up loud may not be for everyone – especially when the microphone is given out to anyone who asks, regardless of their talent, ability or social skills. But it was in these bars where I got to be myself.

Songs gave me words so I didn't need to find them, and the people who turned up to these shows gave me acceptance in a world that predominantly showed me that who I was and how I thought was different and wrong.

Karaoke is often filled with storytellers who are still finding their own words to express how they feel. Normally it goes unnoticed: silent tributes to fond memories, to lost family members, to broken hearts, tributes to happier days or to brighter futures. On a karaoke stage someone is usually telling their story, and someone else is listening.

My story was one of love and authenticity - pronouns could stay the same, the odd word could be amended, I could play with genders. I could be anyone I wanted to be the moment I took that karaoke microphone. And I chose to be me.

**Rob Eagle - Nail Polishes**

I grew up in a place where gender norms were very strictly policed. In recent years, using nail polish has been a powerful part of my journey in exploring my gender and sexuality. It’s funny how society teaches us from an early age how to associate clothes, accessories or cosmetics with particular genders. So wearing nail polish, for me, is a way of saying “fuck you” to gender norms expected of me, and to embrace who I am beyond binaries.

**Elise Dennison - Dagger**

Why a knife? I had a crush on a character in a popular TV show. She always had a knife on her. It wasn’t until I read an interview and realised that the actress was bi, but in a heterosexual-appearing marriage – that’s when it clicked. When I realised that, yes, I was allowed to be bi, to own it, that it didn’t matter that I’ve been married for over 20 years to a man. I find women attractive, and always have done.

Why a prop knife? I live action role-play. It’s a bit like interactive theatre: it allows me to be different people, to try different things. Romance has been involved in several games, and my character has mirrored my sexuality, choosing partners regardless of gender. I’ve learned a lot about my true self through it – a metaphorical knife, if you like, cutting to the heart of my being.

Why a knife? To cut away at the ridiculous notion that people in heterosexual-seeming relationships are heterosexual. We’re not cured, we’re not playing at it, we’re not teasing. We are real. We haven’t chosen who we love *because* of gender; we have chosen them regardless of it.

I choose a knife as a symbol of battle not yet won, to stand by my fellow soldiers, at your side, with my love.

**Eriol Fox - Bowl of Pronoun Badges**

These are my pronoun badges. I created these badges myself to take with me to different events and community meetings, so that I could have conversations and advocate for the normalisation of pronoun use in social spaces.

As a non-binary person myself, I was constantly being misgendered when people referred to me. It’s exhausting to keep reminding people that make an assumption about your gender identity, constantly saying, “Um no, actually, my pronouns are… different to what you think.” Being misgendered in these ways are like small cuts. They add up until you’re so hurt, you have no energy left to remind people, and it’s hard to recover.

These badges have been all over the world with me to different events. They jingle in my bag as I enter a meeting space, and they’re such a fantastic talking point to help people better have conversations about pronouns and how important they are. The badge templates are online under an open license, so anybody can use them – and I would love for you to use them.

**Edson Burton - Shirt**

I grew up in a town in which things always seemed to be quite binary. It’s a multicultural town, but also conservative – nothing like the breadth of communities and different expressions where you can find your tribe, like in London, or in Bristol where I’ve now made my home. Coming across Prince, especially in the first phases of his career, wearing make-up and suspenders and leather boots, occupying this space of gender crossover, and also very different ranges of masculinities, was like a beacon light.

And so this shirt typifies a little bit of that experience; how I’ve always looked towards or saw Prince as a different way of being, and why I’ve been such a fan of his music, and his playing, in all its multiple forms.

**Ngaio Anyia - Headdress and Staff**

My name’s Ngaio Anyia, and this headdress and staff was taken as part of a look that was created by one of my best friends, Leanne, for an exam of hers. It was all about basing the look on my history and Africa in its entirety, to show all of the amazing things that have come out of Africa and Nigeria.

For this, earth was used on the chest piece to show the earth of Africa and the richness that has come from the motherland. Gold leaf and paint was also used to symbolise all the countries that have continually raped gold from the motherland, on top of many other things. The colours that we used are from the Nigerian flag. Leanne also made traditional tribal markings that are placed on my skin. The headpiece was made from scratch to keep it simple. The whole look was to echo the natural beauty of my heritage and the history behind it. Loads of research was done by Leanne to make sure that every part of this look had a sense of authenticity, that it came from somewhere real and represented me in all that I am in my African culture.

**Draco Bellamy - Torch**

I'm a transgender man and I turn 40 years old this year. I grew up in an era where being queer was actively suppressed. During my time in school and higher education, Section 28 was in force. I didn't even know trans people existed until I was in my early twenties. In my thirties, I realised I might be trans myself. By that time I had spent so long denying it, that suppressing who I was had become second nature. I felt I was trapped in a very dark place with no escape and nobody to turn to, and my thoughts were bleak.

I found strength in the most unexpected of places. I was watching a variety show, in which a Japanese pop artist called Nagase Tomoya was being interviewed. The lights were switched off while he was talking, but he pulled out a torch, said "Screw you, I have my own light," and continued.

Even though it was a throw-away line, it meant a lot to me. That was the moment which prompted me to finally come out as trans, and live my life as my true self. Other people will turn out the lights on you, try to silence you. But as long as we carry torches for ourselves and for each other, we'll never be alone in the dark.

**Antonia Forster - VR headset**

I grew up in a household where it was not safe for me to come out of the closet. Digital spaces and games were my safe haven - fantastic worlds where I could escape, and also meet other people like me.

When I was able to come out as bi and polyamorous, in my late twenties, I received aggressive backlash from some members of my family - including insults, threats and blackmail.

For my own safety, I cut contact with over half my family, and we remain separated to this day. I took comfort in games and digital communities, especially virtual reality.

I loved the idea of building my own worlds so, using online resources, I taught myself to code and became a full-time VR developer.

Virtual reality offers an opportunity to connect with others and to experiment with self-expression in a safe way, especially when your circumstances in the real world may not allow you to do that. I want to build magical worlds, but I also want to use this tech to change the real world for the better.

**~~Antonia Forster - VR headset, option 2:~~** ~~As a teenager, I knew I was queer but it wasn’t safe for me to come out of the closet. Online spaces and games were my safe haven - fantastic worlds where I could escape, and meet other people like me.~~

~~I came out as bi and polyamorous in my late twenties, and some members of my family responded aggresively - including insults, violent threats and blackmail. For my own safety, I cut contact with over half my family, and we remain separated to this day. I took comfort in games and digital communities, especially virtual reality. I loved the idea of building my own worlds so, using online resources, I taught myself to code and became a full-time VR developer.~~

~~VR allows me to connect with others and experiment with self-expression in a safe way, no longer bound by the limits of reality. I want to build magical worlds, but I also want to use this tech to change the real world for the better.~~

**~~Antonia Forster - VR headset, option 2:~~**

~~I came out of the closet as bi and polyamorous in my twenties, and some members of my family responded aggresively - including insults, violent threats and blackmail. For my own safety, I cut contact with over half my family, and we remain separated to this day. We often hear coming out stories where everything goes smoothly, which is great - or sometimes where people struggle at first, but come to accept you later on. I want to add that even if some people never change their mind, and never accept you - you’ll still go on to build a beautiful and happy life.~~

~~So what does that have to do with this headset? During that time, I turned to games and online communities for comfort - especially virtual reality. I wanted to build my own worlds, where I could be whoever I wanted. So I taught myself to code, and became a full-time VR developer. To me this object symbolises that you don’t need everyone to accept you, because you can build your own world - not just virtually, but in real life too - by choosing the people around you, your chosen family, and your life’s direction. The world may try to change you, but you have the power to change the world. And I believe in you.~~