

Kya Concepcion
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins
Interviewer

The Transgender Oral History Project
Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies
University of Minnesota

October 24, 2017



The Transgender Oral History Project of the Upper Midwest will empower individuals to tell their story, while providing students, historians, and the public with a more rich foundation of primary source material about the transgender community. The project is part of the Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota. The archive provides a record of GLBT thought, knowledge and culture for current and future generations and is available to students, researchers and members of the public.

The Transgender Oral History Project will collect up to 400 hours of oral histories involving 200 to 300 individuals over the next three years. Major efforts will be the recruitment of individuals of all ages and experiences, and documenting the work of The Program in Human Sexuality. This project will be led by

Andrea Jenkins, poet, writer, and trans-activist. Andrea brings years of experience working in government, non-profits and LGBT organizations. If you are interested in being involved in this exciting project, please contact Andrea.

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1 Andrea Jenkins -AJ
2 Kya Concepcion -KC
3
4 AJ: So, hello.
5 KC: Hello.
6 AJ: My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am the oral historian for the Transgender Oral History Project
7 at the University of Minnesota Tretter Collection in the Anderson Libraries. Today is October 24,
8 2017.
9 KC: That's funny, because I signed the paper October 22nd – see where I'm at.
10 AJ: Well, let's make sure we change that – because today is the 24th. I am here today with Kya
11 Concepcion. How you doing today, Kya?
12 KC: I'm hanging in here.
13 AJ: You're hanging in here.
14 KC: Yeah, I'm loving this weather – one day at a time.
15 AJ: It's a beautiful fall day.
16 KC: It is, finally.
17 AJ: So, Kya, can you answer a few questions for me - state your name, spell it so that we make sure
18 we spell it correctly, state your gender as you define it today, your gender assigned at birth, and
19 your pronouns.
20 KC: Yeah. My name is Kya Concepcion. That's Kya, K-y-a; last name is Spanish, it's C-o-n-c-e-p-c-i-o-
21 n. People always try to put a T in there. The next question was my gender identity, I am a trans
22 femme, non-binary tomboy.
23 AJ: OK.
24 KC: I was assigned male at birth, which is something that never quite fit. I also have an intersex
25 condition but I try to separate that out from my trans issues because I think that people will try
26 to use my identity as an intersex person as an excuse for why I'm trans, and that's not why I'm
27 trans.
28 AJ: OK. Wow. What pronouns?
29 KC: Oh, yeah – she/her professionally, because it's easier for people, but I prefer they/them.
30 AJ: OK. Very good. Well, I know we've been trying to get this interview together for a little while,
31 so I'm really thrilled that we are here today. So, Kya, tell me about your earliest memory in life.
32 What's the first thing you remember?
33 KC: Oh, my goodness. So, I have a condition – it's complex, it's wrapped around complex trauma.
34 So, my earliest memories start when I was about 11 or 12. I was actually told that . . . I believed
35 this was normal until I had a roommate who was telling me about memories about being two

- 1 and/or three and I was just like, “No one remembers when they were two or three.” And so,
2 then I began to ask questions and then when I got to college, I finally found a therapist who was
3 like, “No, that’s not correct – you should have memories earlier than that.” And we’ve been
4 doing work to kind of uncover some of those memories and to see why those memories were
5 kind of packed away like they were.
- 6 AJ: Sure.
- 7 KC: There’s a thing called given memories and my earliest given memory, this is going to be funny
8 because this is totally relevant, my earliest given memory, which is stories that people tell you
9 throughout your life and they become memories, is apparently when I was five, I was watching
10 *Mahogany*, I don’t know if you know *Mahogany* – Diana Ross.
- 11 AJ: I know *Mahogany* – yes.
- 12 KC: Apparently I pointed at the screen and said, “When I grow up, I’m going to be Mahogany. And
13 so . . .
- 14 AJ: “Do you know where you’re going to, do you like the things that life is showing you.”
- 15 KC: Most of the time when you say Mahogany, people are like, “The color?” I’m like, “No, the movie
16 – Diana Ross.”
- 17 AJ: So, you wanted to be Diana Ross or you wanted to be Mahogany?
- 18 KC: I wanted to be Diana Ross as Mahogany.
- 19 AJ: She was a fashion designer?
- 20 KC: She was a fashion designer/model. And Billie Dee Williams was in it. Yeah. I still own it.
- 21 AJ: Yeah. So, that was a given memory.
- 22 KC: That was a given memory – yes.
- 23 AJ: Did they tell you how people reacted to that confirmation?
- 24 KC: My mom was a little protective during her sober periods and so she really didn’t . . . she just kind
25 of brushed it off but I had cousins and stuff that would continue to pick at me because I said
26 that, through most of my childhood – up until my earliest memories.
- 27 AJ: Where did you grow up?
- 28 KC: I grew up in rural Georgia.
- 29 AJ: Is that right?
- 30 KC: Yeah.
- 31 AJ: Oh, wow – a southern girl.
- 32 KC: Yeah.

- 1 AJ: Wow, so you had bullying happening.
- 2 KC: Oh, absolutely.
- 3 AJ: At an early . . . you said your cousins and . . . did you have siblings?
- 4 KC: I did – I have a host of siblings. Maternally, I have two siblings and paternally I have nine
5 siblings.
- 6 AJ: Oh, wow – you do have a host of siblings. Did you live with your siblings growing up?
- 7 KC: My maternal siblings, yes.
- 8 AJ: OK. And, how were they? Were they protective? Were they bullying . . .?
- 9 KC: Both of my maternal siblings have been, as I look back at my childhood – my childhood was a
10 very complicated time for me, both of my siblings were two of my best friends, they protected
11 me when they could – when they knew what was happening. Me and my sister have gotten into
12 fights everywhere from the church to a moving van to Six Flags, but that was always between us
13 and if anyone ever tried to get in-between us, unless it was our mother, then they were liable to
14 get . . . they were likely to get beat up too.
- 15 AJ: But, you guys' drama was just regular old sibling . . .
- 16 KC: Yeah, just sibling drama. Anyone else messed with me that wasn't her, she had a problem with
17 it. She was older than I was – about seven years.
- 18 AJ: So, what was home environment like in rural Georgia? How rural?
- 19 KC: So . . .
- 20 AJ: I see Marietta is on your . . .
- 21 KC: Yeah, so I was born in Marietta, which isn't very rural.
- 22 AJ: Yeah, that's just right outside of Atlanta, right?
- 23 KC: Just north of Atlanta, yes. And then we moved to a little town called Villa Rica, Georgia, when I
24 was about four or five.
- 25 AJ: How do you spell that?
- 26 KC: V-i-l-l-a and then another word is R-i-c-a. It means city of gold, and that's like maybe 30 minutes
27 . . .
- 28 AJ: Villa Rica.
- 29 KC: Villa Rica – yeah. It's like 30 minutes to Alabama. I grew up with a mother who was a crack
30 cocaine addict.
- 31 AJ: I'm sorry.

1 KC: Yup. And a father who was absent. My mother, though, I wouldn't say . . . my mother wasn't
2 physically abusive unless you used profanity when speaking to her. But, she was high a lot of
3 the time, so neglect would happen. Through therapy, I've realized that a lot of the trauma that I
4 was putting up and that I was compartmentalizing is what we call it, was sexual abuse from
5 people that would come to smoke crack with her, sexual abuse from cousins, the same cousins
6 that would bully and pick at me and call me girly boy and all of this kind of stuff. I've had
7 cousins spit on me, I've been sexually assaulted by cousins. This all happened . . . yeah, this all
8 happened growing up in rural Georgia until I was 14. And then I left home and I haven't been
9 back – I ran away at 14 and haven't been back. I had a heart-to-heart with my sister a few years
10 ago where she asked me why I never told her what was happening. When you're a child of
11 abuse, one of the things they condition you to do is not to talk about it. So, it was one of those
12 kind of things.

13 AJ: Sure. Well, you know, I'm really . . . well, I guess what I want to just say is let me know if you
14 don't want to answer any of these questions because it is no mandate that you have to answer
15 any of these questions.

16 KC: Absolutely.

17 AJ: All right. So, you left home at 14.

18 KC: I did.

19 AJ: You haven't been back.

20 KC: No – to visit, I go back and visit. My mom and I have done a lot of work . . . it was only recently
21 that my mom was able to look at me and to apologize . . . to even admit the neglect and
22 apologize about the neglect.

23 AJ: Sure.

24 KC: And then to start to open up about her own trauma, which suddenly kind of put things in
25 perspective. I have an amazing therapist who helped me figure out that I could be angry at my
26 mother and still love my mother – that those two things weren't separated.

27 AJ: Sure.

28 KC: And so now recently, in the past year or so, my mom started to participate in me working on my
29 recovery through what I went through. I actually felt a little remorse for my mom that she
30 didn't have access to the tools that I have access to so that I could do that kind of work and
31 recover. So, yeah.

32 AJ: Sure. So, there is a relationship with your family now?

33 KC: My maternal family. My paternal father told me I was dead.

34 AJ: Oh, boy.

35 KC: Yeah.

36 AJ: So, you've had some challenges.

- 1 KC: Yeah.
- 2 AJ: When you left home at 14, where did you go?
- 3 KC: So, I left home at 14 and I kind of bounced around from couch to couch. And then, I met a
4 prostitute who, I won't say her name but she was amazing, and she taught me the trade.
- 5 AJ: Yeah.
- 6 KC: And she taught me that regardless of what heterosexual cis men say, the proclivity of a 14-year-
7 old barely gendered person or boy was something that was a commodity and she taught me
8 that my body was a commodity and that if I was going to live on the streets how to use that
9 commodity. She was my sex educator, she taught me how to live on the streets, she taught me
10 everything I knew about selling drugs, about selling my body. She taught me that I was in
11 control of that situation, she taught me what consent looked like, she taught me how to say no,
12 she taught me the best ways to de-escalate incidents that could turn into physical abuse or even
13 rate, though I didn't dodge them all the time. I feel like I dodged a lot of them because of the
14 information that she gave me and I spent the next two years living and working with her.
- 15 AJ: Wow. In Atlanta?
- 16 KC: No, this was rural Georgia – you'd be surprised . . .
- 17 AJ: Still in rural Georgia.
- 18 KC: You'd be surprised the things that happen in rural Georgia – yeah.
- 19 AJ: Wow. I mean, I have had some experience in the deep rural south, but . . . yeah, that's quite
20 interesting. So, what happened with school? Did you go to high school?
- 21 KC: No, I didn't go to high school – at all. About the time I left home, I tried to maintain some type
22 of schooling but it just interfered with trying to make sure I had a place to sleep. By the time I
23 was 15, I was a cocaine addict and so, you know, these things just got in the way. I had to
24 support . . . you know, making sure I had somewhere to sleep, I had to support a cocaine
25 addiction, I had to support . . . I don't want to . . . pimp is not the word I would use to describe
26 her, but she was definitely someone I had to answer to, be accountable to about my time and
27 where I was, and if I was making money and why I wasn't making money.
- 28 AJ: This was your mentor?
- 29 KC: My mentor, yeah – because bills had to be paid and I was living there.
- 30 AJ: So, she would get some of the money that you were making?
- 31 KC: Oh, yeah – most definitely. And so, school just kind of . . . it didn't all just happen at once, it just
32 kind of . . .
- 33 AJ: Trailed off.
- 34 KC: Yeah, trailed off and then suddenly I wasn't . . .
- 35 AJ: Six months later you were like, "Hmmm, not going back."

- 1 KC: Yeah, I wasn't going to school. School just wasn't on my radar at that point in time in my life.
- 2 AJ: Before we got started you mentioned that you're going to be a part of the Humphrey School of
3 Public Policy so you must have gotten some education somewhere along the line.
- 4 KC: I am. Yeah, so when I turned 17 I had a really bad incident with way too much cocaine and I
5 looked up and I saw my life and I was like, "No, this isn't going to be it." I was about to turn 18
6 and I had a really good friend whose mom let me sleep on the couch and after about two,
7 maybe three, months, I was getting ready to leave because I felt like I'd overstayed my welcome
8 and she was like, "Where you going?" I was like, "I've got to find somewhere to go." And she
9 was like, "No, you're here now." And so, I started studying for my SAT and if you get a 1350, I
10 think the scale is different now but back then if you got a 1350 on your SAT, they don't care how
11 much high school you have, they'll figure out a way to get you into school. So, I did a post-
12 secondary option and then I started the turbulent years called college.
- 13 AJ: Wow. You just bypassed high school and went straight to college.
- 14 KC: I bypassed high school and went straight to college, and college was a disaster. It was a difficult
15 time in my life.
- 16 AJ: Where did you go?
- 17 KC: I went to the University of West Georgia, which is a small campus in rural Georgia. It's actually
18 not so small anymore, it has one of the best humanistic psychology programs in the country
19 though. I got a degree in English and not that, but yeah.
- 20 AJ: So, you did get a degree?
- 21 KC: I did – I got a college degree.
- 22 AJ: It was disastrous but . . .
- 23 KC: It took a long time, but I did. By the time I had entered college, it was the same time that I
24 entered the club scene, the rave scene. Before I knew it, I would become a meth addict and so I
25 would fight with meth addiction for the next 13 years and somewhere in there, I would get a
26 degree.
- 27 AJ: OK. How are you dealing with chemicals these days?
- 28 KC: Yeah - no, sobriety . . . I can't imagine . . . I look back at that person and the things that person
29 did and who that person was, I have no desire to . . . it almost took my life. Meth addiction
30 literally almost killed me and so I had to wake up and was like, "I can't live my life this way."
31 And so, I packed my bags and I moved to Minnesota.
- 32 AJ: Wow. Did you come here for treatment?
- 33 KC: No.
- 34 AJ: Many people do – this is sort of the land of 10,000 treatment centers.

- 1 KC: This is true. I had two friends that lived in Rochester and I had a horrible experience . . .
2 probably located somewhere in my childhood when I dated men, I had these series of
3 progressively abusive partners until the last one who almost killed me. I would spend three days
4 in the hospital with a cracked rib, or fractured rib, and internal bleeding and then they would
5 send me . . . from there, when they got that wrapped up, they would send me to a treatment
6 center. There's not that much they can do about fractured ribs but let them heal . . .
- 7 AJ: Right, yeah – you've just got to deal with the pain.
- 8 KC: Yeah. And then they stopped the internal bleeding and then they sent me to a treatment facility
9 and I stayed there for a week and I kind of woke up and was like, "I can't do this." So, I left there
10 and I went and stayed with my best friend and her three beautiful children and after about a
11 month there, I was sitting outside and she came outside and she was like, "Don't you think it's
12 time." I was like, "Yeah, it's time." I packed my bags and moved to Minnesota – gave
13 everything I had away except for my clothes and my computer and I moved to Minnesota.
- 14 AJ: And you've been able to stay sober?
- 15 KC: Other than some drinking or when I'm in California, you know – because California is California
16 and pot is legal in California.
- 17 AJ: That's true . . . it is true. It's legal and I hear that it's really good.
- 18 KC: It is – it's really good.
- 19 AJ: Wow. Boy, I'm looking at my questions and . . . you've covered quite a number of them. But,
20 when was the first time, Kya, you realized that you were not the gender you were assigned at
21 birth?
- 22 KC: When I left home at 14. I was sure at that point . . . at that point I was sure. I remember my
23 sister catching me in her skirts, I think a lot of people have been through that. She never gave
24 me up either – I have to commend her for that, she never . . .
- 25 AJ: She never ratted you out.
- 26 KC: She never ratted me out, she never gave me up – but she would catch me in her skirts and that
27 kind of stuff. But, she never would say or do anything about it – just, "Take my clothes off."
28 But, when I left home and I started . . . I know it seems like a weird topic, but from the time I left
29 home I started buying my own panties and I've been wearing panties ever since.
- 30 AJ: I'm trans too, Kya – this is not a weird topic.
- 31 KC: I've never stood up to pee – standing up to pee has always just been a very weird thing. Part of
32 me thinks it's because I was socialized in a house full of women and so growing up, another
33 story that they tell me, is that the bathroom door didn't close and so I would always push it
34 open . . . I followed my sister as long as I had a sister, and I would always push the bathroom
35 door open right between the crawling and starting to walk stage and my mom walked in the
36 bathroom apparently and I was trying to climb up on the toilet to sit down and she went and

- 1 bought me a potty and that was the end of that. But, she could never get me to stand up and
2 pee, I would always just sit down. This was me mimicking my sister, obviously.
- 3 AJ: Sure.
- 4 KC: But, so much of me is me mimicking my sister – she’s one of my heroes in my life. But, when I
5 moved out, I knew, but because of where I lived at in Georgia, I kind of kept it to myself. I think
6 I’ve been everything – I’ve been a straight boy, a gay boy, I’ve been a lesbian, I’ve been . . . you
7 know, I’ve been just all the things. I’ve been so many things in my lifetime.
- 8 AJ: How do you identify your sexuality now?
- 9 KC: I think . . . I know I’m pan, I know I’m pansexual. I just have a hard time with cis gender men
10 because of past trauma.
- 11 AJ: What does pansexual mean? Do you have sex with pans . . .?
- 12 KC: I have a pan tattooed on me – no, I really do. No, so that means that I date all genders – just
13 across the board. I think that bisexual has a binary language to it and gender exists beyond just
14 binary to me. And so, I don’t want anyone to feel excluded when I say I date other humans – so,
15 yeah, I date humans.
- 16 AJ: Wow, cool. Are you in a relationship now?
- 17 KC: I am.
- 18 AJ: Yeah.
- 19 KC: Yeah.
- 20 AJ: How is that going?
- 21 KC: It’s interesting. They’re amazing. I never thought someone could complement me so well.
22 They’re very compassionate and loving and patient and understanding. They’re my partner –
23 it’s us against the world, we kind of see it that way. But the weirdest part to me is that I’ve
24 dated a lot of people in my life and most of them have been white people and under those
25 circumstances, most of their parents have been like, “We don’t want that . . .” and just implant
26 whatever you want there, “. . . in our house” or, “. . . with our kid.” My partners parents now
27 are like, “Tell Kya to call me mom.” Or, “Is Kya coming over for dinner?” I’m like . . .
- 28 AJ: What’s going on here, right?
- 29 KC: “They do know I’m Black, right? They do know I’m trans, right?” So, that’s been interesting
30 having a family and not just a partner that accepts me for who I am, but also having a family that
31 accepts me for who I am.
- 32 AJ: That’s incredible – that’s great. How long have you guys been together?
- 33 KC: We dated a year and a half ago, it didn’t work out. They had a situation and needed somewhere
34 to stay about two months ago, three months ago, and so I was like, “You can come and stay with

- 1 me until you figure stuff out.” And then we were like, “You’re never leaving, are you?” They
2 were like, “No, no.” So, we’re engaged now.
- 3 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 4 KC: Yeah, we’re going to get married.
- 5 AJ: Congratulations.
- 6 KC: Yeah, thank you.
- 7 AJ: What have been some of the positive aspects of expressing your true gender identity, Kya?
- 8 KC: It’s been liberating. So, it took me so long to come to what is my true gender identity
9 expression. First, I had to push through the linguistics of language and what did language mean,
10 what did male and female mean and did those apply to me, and then all of the things that we do
11 to transition to who we think we want to be or who we want to be. And then finally getting to a
12 place where what mattered was who I am and being happy with who I am. And so, it’s been
13 liberating. It feels good to walk around in a body that I’m satisfied with – as a non-binary
14 person, I’m very excited to have this genderless kind of . . . this genderless body. I’m finally
15 happy with this voice of mine that can kind of throw people off sometimes. I’m so excited that I
16 can spend 30 minutes putting on make-up and turn heads if I want to, or I can not do that and
17 throw something on baggy and get the exact opposite reaction from someone that saw me
18 yesterday – who cut an eye at me and now they’re just kind of like, “What’s going on here?”
- 19 AJ: Right.
- 20 KC: I think the biggest accomplishment for me was when passing stopped mattering – where the
21 idea of passing didn’t make sense to me, this coded idea of what a woman is or what a woman
22 looks like . . . when all of that kind of washed away from me and I was like that’s not . . . that’s
23 been made up by colonialism and western civilization – this idea of what a woman is and looks
24 like and isn’t accurate at all. So, yeah - that made me happy.
- 25 AJ: Wow, very happy. And you’ve talked a little bit about this, but what have been some of the
26 challenges since you’ve begun to express your true gender identity?
- 27 KC: Loss of family, loss of friends. My best friend for 12 years, we’d been best friends for 12 years,
28 we traveled all over the country together and did all of these amazing things together. I had
29 heard what they had to say about transgender people and I knew it was going to happen, but it
30 still hurt. I came out as trans and they just couldn’t do it. My father telling me that I was dead,
31 even though he was never there – he was the absentee father, but somehow him telling me that
32 I was dead hurt really bad. The fighting with my mother who can respect me but can’t explain
33 to the family they need to respect me. The loss of jobs . . . I have lost . . . the story of the Black
34 trans girl, you know what I mean? Recently I’ve lost jobs and so . . . I come from such poverty
35 that part of my post-trauma, part of my complex-trauma, is fear of being homeless because I’ve
36 been homeless, it’s fear of being poor because I’ve been poor, and so losing jobs and knowing
37 that it’s because you’re trans and you’re Black . . . you know what I mean? And then there’s this
38 stark moment that I feel like every Black transgender woman, specifically, has – and no matter

- 1 what I say about being trans femme tomboy, non-binary, I am inherent to Black femaleness. It's
2 part of who I am.
- 3 AJ: That definition that you defined . . . to most people is like Chinese algebra, they have no idea
4 what you're talking about when they just see you as a Black woman or a Black trans woman –
5 maybe.
- 6 KC: Yeah, yeah. So, I'm inherent . . . and it's a beautiful inheritance. My heroes are these beautiful
7 Black strong trans women. If you ask me, one of the most beautiful things in the world are
8 these beautiful strong Black trans women, but, at the same time, I think every now and then I
9 can kind of sit up straight and I realize that the worst thing in the world to be is a Black trans
10 woman and I have to remember that.
- 11 AJ: Why do you say that?
- 12 KC: Well, because they're killing us, because they do hate us, because . . . the statistics say the
13 numbers argue very clearly that we make . . . the majority of us don't make \$30,000 a year.
- 14 AJ: \$10,000/year.
- 15 KC: Yeah, and here I am amongst them again trying to figure out what to do to get back to where I
16 was while maintaining my identity. In this country especially, but in most of the English-
17 speaking world specifically, the worst thing to be is Black and the only thing worse than that is to
18 be a Black woman and the only thing worse than that to be is a Black trans woman. And that's
19 the truth and that's the narrative that I hope that we're trying to change, the narrative that I
20 hope we're fighting against, but I'm constantly reminded . . . just like my last job, chances that
21 they would have given someone who wasn't Black and trans, they'd have written them up or
22 said, "Hey, you can't do that." I had all the letters from all my doctors saying, "These things are
23 going to happen because of this," and they still just let me go.
- 24 AJ: Wow, I'm so sorry.
- 25 KC: Yeah, I've been here before.
- 26 AJ: It's a tough journey, this transgender road that we're on.
- 27 KC: It is. But, you know what I do? And I hope that everyone . . . if I could just say one thing to
28 every single Black person, Black woman, and Black trans person – Black trans person, Black trans
29 woman specifically, I think about what my great-great-great grandmother went through, I think
30 about what her granddaughter went through and what her granddaughter went through. My
31 mom was born in Georgia in 1945 – you know what I mean? I think about what my mother
32 went through. My paternal grandmother who is half indigenous was born in Georgia in 1930
33 and I think about what she went through. As I think about the history of trauma that we've
34 went through, I wish that I was exempt but I'm not. But, I have this history of endurance and
35 strength. We're taught . . . we're taught by academic Indo-European history to be ashamed of
36 our past because they're ashamed of our past, they're ashamed of what we went through –
37 what they did to us.
- 38 AJ: What they did.

- 1 KC: What they did to us, yeah. And they want us to carry that shame with them or feel sorry for
2 them, but once you really start looking at Black history and once you really start understanding
3 Black history in its totality, I mean past these shores going back to the Marley tribe, to the
4 Egyptians to Zaire to west African kingdoms, and you look at this beautiful rich history that we
5 had and you even look at the trans-Atlantic slave trade that brought us here and what we've
6 been through here – products of rape culture, just the truth of it, when you really look at it. I
7 mean, as a people, we have a beautiful story and we're a beautiful people and that's why they
8 hate us. Our endurance is something that they can't silence, be it the Black Panthers, be it Black
9 Lives Matter. We won't give up our blackness – if we would just give up our blackness, I think it
10 would make them very, very happy, but we won't do that.
- 11 AJ: No, we can't. I don't know how you'd do that.
- 12 KC: Yeah, yeah.
- 13 AJ: It's sort of imprinted on our skin.
- 14 KC: Yeah, yeah.
- 15 AJ: Even if you don't want to be Black, when you walk down the street they're going to label you
16 Black.
- 17 KC: Yeah, but what kind of power is involved when you want to be Black? When you look and you
18 say, "I'm Black and I'm beautiful." I think it was James Baldwin who said that in that term Black
19 power is something that scares them to their core. That's so real to me because we see white
20 power everywhere – white power is the dominant thing around us, especially in places like
21 Minnesota and the Upper Midwest and United States.
- 22 AJ: Ahh, in the world.
- 23 KC: OK, let's be real – in the world. But one cry of Black power scares them their absolute core, it
24 shakes them that there could be this identity of Black power that might rise up and challenge
25 their dominance and their comfort and their privilege of white power. And what does Black
26 power really mean? It just means the right to determine our selves, but that scares them to
27 death.
- 28 AJ: Self-determination. Kya, let me ask you this, and please, to the extent that you are comfortable
29 answer it or not . . .
- 30 KC: OK.
- 31 AJ: Have you undergone any medical interventions as a part of your transition?
- 32 KC: I have. Yes, I've had vaginoplastia.
- 33 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 34 KC: Yeah, vaginal-reconstructive surgery. I've also had some work done because of intersex, I'm not
35 too comfortable talking about what I had to have done because I'm intersex. My goal was to be
36 genderless, but I wanted a vaginal canal so I got that. It was a tough experience, it wasn't easy .

- 1 . . it wasn't an easy road to walk, but I'm very happy with it. I sought out one of the best
2 surgeons in the country and I fought with my company. I think that a lot of times we're so in a
3 rush to have that procedure done that we don't seek out the best person to do it. My surgeon
4 had a history in pelvic floor reconstruction, she had trained under one of the best aesthetists in
5 the country and she was also a urologist. And so, two of those things – I wasn't worried about
6 an aesthetist, I was worried about someone who had a history in pelvic floor reconstruction and
7 who was a urologist because I want to be able to pee and my pelvic floor is important. So, the
8 third one was just kind of a give me – but, yeah. I had it done this year, earlier in May.
- 9 AJ: So, when you said it was a tough experience – physically tough or emotionally? Or . . .?
- 10 KC: Emotionally it was amazing, at first, but I did have an incident with oxycodone and I had to have
11 some intervention there – the pain medications were real and she was handing them out just a
12 little bit too freely. I did mention beforehand, "Hey, I have this history of addiction, can we be
13 careful?"
- 14 AJ: Keep this to a minimum.
- 15 KC: Yeah, and she didn't – she put it to a maximum and it wasn't until I got here and fortunately, I
16 see who I think is the best endocrinologist and OGBYN in the state of Minnesota here, who kind
17 of stepped in and was like, "OK, we're going to get you off of this and back to where you need to
18 be at."
- 19 AJ: So, you were living in Rochester for a long time.
- 20 KC: I lived in Rochester for three weeks and I was like, "I've got to go – I've got to go." I found a job
21 in Minneapolis and I moved to Rochester October 1st and I was living in St. Paul by November
22 12th.
- 23 AJ: I'm sorry, that's . . . I thought maybe you stuck it out in Rochester for a while.
- 24 KC: No, nope – I'm an urban girl. I literally went from living in Seoul, to Atlanta, to Rochester – it
25 just doesn't work.
- 26 AJ: Seoul, South Korea?
- 27 KC: Korea – yeah.
- 28 AJ: Really? What was going on there?
- 29 KC: So, I got hired by the Ministry of Education to work on curriculum development for English
30 teaching and then I also trained and taught English teachers.
- 31 AJ: Oh, really. Wow.
- 32 KC: Yeah, and then I got to work at a school and teach these amazing, rambunctious middle school
33 girls too who were just life giving.
- 34 AJ: That's pretty fascinating.
- 35 KC: Yeah.

- 1 AJ: So, you're a world traveler, you've got a passport. What about your documents? Are they all
2 sort of matched up with your gender identity?
- 3 KC: Yes, every single last one of them. Which is really interesting, because Georgia has different
4 guidelines than Minnesota and so the woman at the Department of Vital Records could have
5 been like, "No, this doesn't meet our guidelines," but the judge issued . . . the judge was like,
6 "I'm going to try and issue this document," telling Georgia to change my certificate because all
7 the criteria had been met, and the woman was like, "I got you . . ." And I was like, "But, you do
8 understand . . ." And my friend next to me was like, "Shut up, she said, 'she got you'." I was
9 like, "OK, let me be quiet." But yeah, for my birth certificate – yes.
- 10 AJ: That's good, that really is an important thing.
- 11 KC: It is.
- 12 AJ: That's one of the most dangerous things for trans people is not having identification that
13 matches their gender identity.
- 14 KC: Yes, and I try to talk to anybody that I know who is having issues getting documents changed on
15 what they can and cannot do about that.
- 16 AJ: Oh, that's awesome. Yeah. Looking back over your decision to express your true gender
17 identity, is there anything that you would do differently or change?
- 18 KC: Started sooner.
- 19 AJ: Yeah.
- 20 KC: I would have started a lot sooner than I did. I didn't start because of a series of abusive partners
21 who just were not hearing it. I'd have probably started when I was about . . . if I could have
22 started, it would have been about when I was 26, but I was with a partner who was Mormon
23 and was just not hearing it – he just wasn't.
- 24 AJ: A Mormon partner.
- 25 KC: Yeah, he was Mormon.
- 26 AJ: A practicing Mormon?
- 27 KC: No, his parents were Mormon so he grew up indoctrinated with these Mormon ideals. The first
28 time he told me he loved me, he also told me he hated me in the same sentence.
- 29 AJ: (laughs) I'm sorry.
- 30 KC: It's OK, it's OK.
- 31 AJ: I'm so sorry.
- 32 KC: It's OK. He would also almost take my life right before I left for Minnesota.
- 33 AJ: Oh, boy. "I love you, I hate you."

- 1 KC: Yeah. He said, "I hate you for making me fall in love with you." Those were his words. I was
2 just like, "OK."
- 3 AJ: Sounds like some *Brokeback Mountain* . . .
- 4 KC: I laugh now, but looking back, bless my therapist I'm able to laugh now, but it was just years of
5 just torment – just abusive torment. He hated me because I was Black, he hated me because, in
6 his mind, we were in a same-sex relationship, he hated me because he couldn't let go of me, he
7 hated me because I tried to get away from him. There was a six-month period of time where he
8 took my car from me and he took me to work, called me at lunch to make sure I didn't go
9 anywhere, and then came and got me from work. I should have known then. I had an amazing
10 roommate who heard the abuse happening and knew that he couldn't do anything – that if he
11 did anything that I would push him away. That mentality, that wanting to be loved, that wanting
12 to be like . . . you know, that seeking out.
- 13 AJ: Domination.
- 14 KC: Yeah, from this white middle class person, wanting that person to love me was more important
15 than the abuse that he put me through – and truly almost killed me.
- 16 AJ: Wow. Have there been times when someone has been really helpful or really destructive to you
17 regarding . . . like in medical settings, criminal justice settings or educational settings?
- 18 KC: I've been very fortunate in that I've had amazing doctors the entire way through and as far as
19 my transition goes, once I started my transition, it's been pretty . . . I haven't found myself in a
20 situation to where I've been incarcerated or medical situations that could be questioned. I
21 pretty much stay in the same medical system, I won't go to a doctor that's not in this medical
22 setting and they all . . . they pull me up, they see who I am. For someone who has been through
23 so much before transition happened, since transition happened, I've been very, very fortunate.
24 The only horrible thing . . . the only horrible, horrible thing is I'm purchasing a car and . . .
- 25 AJ: Right now?
- 26 KC: Yes, and when I call to make my car payment, the girl I was working with I was like, "Listen, I got
27 all my documents changed, I'm changing my name, this is what it is, I'm transitioning," whatever
28 – blah, blah, blah. And she was like, "OK, cool." So, she noted on my account, "Call me Kya, this
29 is what's going on." She left the company and someone else came in and they absolutely refuse
30 to recognize my name, even though it's legal and they're just like, "No, that's not happening,
31 you're just going to be LaDonald, that's just what it is and you're going to be he/him." And I'm
32 just like, "I give you money to treat me like this?" "I give you money to treat me like this?"
- 33 AJ: So, you could just abscond with the car then if they think you're a completely different person.
- 34 KC: I know, I know, I know. And, to the point, where I've had to talk to his boss and now his boss is
35 the only person that handles when I call in to make payments or deals with me period.
36 Somehow, I don't know how – which is why I'm not devastated about losing my job recently,
37 I've been able to navigate through this white, middle class world we live in with a certain
38 amount of acceptance.

- 1 AJ: You're very intelligent and I think that goes a long way.
- 2 KC: I hope that's what's going on. Even now, when I get ready to look for another job, I'm just like . .
3 . I would have panicked two or three years ago, but I'm like, "No, I'll find a job, I'll get the bills
4 paid." I just really have to be real with myself and realize that I'm going back to school next fall
5 so whatever job I get . . . I really think I'm going to get a job to where I don't have to . . . just go
6 work at Macys or something. Something like . . .
- 7 AJ: Where you don't have to think or use your emotional labor all the time.
- 8 KC: Exactly. And people who work at Macys earn an honest living – absolutely. I want to go earn an
9 honest living with them.
- 10 AJ: Yes. Well, the holiday seasons are upon us and I'm sure Macys and Target and FedEx and UPS
11 and all of those places will be hiring thousands of people.
- 12 KC: I'm like, "Why don't I do that instead of . . ." Wherever I go to next, as soon as the end of the
13 summer hits next summer, I'm going to quit so I can go back to school. I've done everything else
14 wrong in my life – I didn't do high school, I messed college completely up, I am going to
15 annihilate this public policy program. I am going to come out of this program with a degree that
16 I want and then I'm going to go work in the global south for a little while – I am all about it.
- 17 AJ: Well, the global south – that could be southeast Asia.
- 18 KC: Yeah, it could be.
- 19 AJ: Right.
- 20 KC: It could be. I think I want to go home though. I guess I shouldn't say home . . .
- 21 AJ: So, you . . . the rural south.
- 22 KC: I want to go to Africa.
- 23 AJ: Oh, OK.
- 24 KC: I want to go home, home, home.
- 25 AJ: All right, that's global south too. So, when is the first time you ever met a trans-identified or
26 gender-queer person?
- 27 KC: I was 15 and I was dating someone who insisted they were a girl and I insisted that they were a
28 girl and so . . . yeah, and then as soon as they would turn 18, they would take all the proper
29 steps to do that, to solidify that.
- 30 AJ: Oh, so you dated the first trans person you met.
- 31 KC: Yeah.
- 32 AJ: How was that? Are you guys still friends?
- 33 KC: Yes, we're still friends, we still talk. They look amazing.

- 1 AJ: Did they know you were . . . ?
- 2 KC: No, they had no clue.
- 3 AJ: So, you didn't share that when you were a youngster?
- 4 KC: No.
- 5 AJ: Wow.
- 6 KC: I think it would have challenged their identity and that's why I didn't. They see themselves as a
7 heterosexual female and so if I had come out . . .
- 8 AJ: Got it.
- 9 KC: I wouldn't want to challenge their identity of themselves.
- 10 AJ: Oh, bless your heart.
- 11 KC: Yeah.
- 12 AJ: Denying your own gender identity for the sake of someone else. Wow, all right – that's cool.
13 What, in your opinion, Kya . . . you know what, first, before I get to that question which is a little
14 political, how did you come to your name?
- 15 KC: OK, so – my name should have been Scout, that's just point blank, but I blanked on it when I was
16 deciding my name. So, my name . . . my birth name, I don't mind sharing my birth name, is
17 LaDonald Concepcion Cousin.
- 18 AJ: Cousin.
- 19 KC: Yes. My mom worked hard on that, so I do have this very political belief around us carrying
20 slave names and I always knew, since I knew what a slave name was since the first time I heard
21 James Baldwin talk about how our names go back to a bill of sale that belongs to some white
22 person that used to own our ancestors, I was like, "That's my slave name, I have to get rid of
23 that name." And so, what I did was suddenly Kya just popped into my head and I would figure
24 out where I got it from later, but Kya just popped into my head and I was like, "It fits, I like it."
25 So, I chopped off my last name and got rid of it and I moved my middle name to my last name, I
26 moved my first name to my middle name and then I added Kya. It wasn't until about six months
27 after I did that, I went back to watch one of my favorite animes and there's a character that they
28 mention once who I'm very connected to because I love her children in the anime, and her
29 name is Kya. I was like, "Well, that's where my name came from – that makes sense." So, yeah.
- 30 AJ: Kya Concepcion. And your . . . you describe yourself as mixed race?
- 31 KC: Yes. My mom is half white, which is a long, complicated story. She is one of 11 children, she's
32 the oldest and she had a different father than the rest of them. So, my mom is half white. If
33 you ever mention that or her father to her, you will be asked to leave her house in a not so nice
34 way. She absolutely . . .
- 35 AJ: OK, I won't do that.

- 1 KC: She absolutely . . . she told us from a very young age. She did tell all of her children the truth,
2 that story, but she told us all that the world only ever saw her as, her words, as a negro, so why
3 did it even matter who this man was. She hates him, she met him, I think, twice in her life and
4 she wasn't very satisfied with him either time. My grandma worked for him, so it's one of those
5 . . . you know, 1945, William Faulkner kind of like . . . one of those stories.
- 6 AJ: The domestic help.
- 7 KC: Yeah, yeah.
- 8 AJ: That I visit at night when the wifey goes to bed – that kind of thing.
- 9 KC: Yeah, one of those things. My grandma was a maid and then my father . . . I knew my great-
10 grandmother, she was an amazing woman, she was a midwife. She's full-blooded Cherokee and
11 there's this story that they tell us about her crossing the color line to be with a man who was
12 half-Native and half-Black and what that looked like, and that was a very complicated story in
13 rural Georgia in the . . . what? It had to be before 1930 – so like, turn of the century rural
14 Georgia, so indigenous people obviously having this marginalized space but the idea that an
15 indigenous person would mingle with someone who has Black blood in them was just past
16 taboo. And so, and then there's my grandma if you ever got to see her, she's just this beautiful,
17 beautiful woman, who absolutely hates white people. When you think about what she went
18 through, being born in 1930, part-Black, part-indigenous, you kind of . . . I don't want to say
19 forgive her for that, but you have to understand where she's coming from, do you know what I
20 mean? Yeah, so it also has to kind of make sense when you look at it.
- 21 AJ: Do you identify with Native culture at all?
- 22 KC: My extent of identifying with Native culture was . . . so, my maternal grandparents and my
23 mother and I live like here and then around the corner and up the hill a little bit, there's a little
24 gravel dirt road, because we didn't have paved roads . . . right, I'm that old, but my paternal
25 grandparents lived . . . as horrible as my father was to me, just shitty, his parents were amazing
26 to me. Having a crack cocaine addict for a mother, being so poor that . . . we were literally so
27 poor that we lived in a trailer that had plastic on the windows and we shat in a bucket that we
28 had to take out into the woods to throw out – that's how poor my mother's situation was, while
29 she pursued her crack cocaine habit. But, my father's parents, treated me like I was just their
30 grandchild. My paternal grandmother hated my mother, who was 12 years older than my father
31 . . . just a whole complicated whatever, but they always treated me like I was just one of theirs.
32 So, on Sundays, I would go with them and I had two choices – I could either go to church with
33 them or I could go hang out with my grandmother's mother, who was a full-blooded indigenous
34 woman, across the street. And so, I mean, let me see . . . the old pipe smoking indigenous
35 woman across the street or the minister? I'm going to go hang out with grandma. So, my
36 Native experience is one of . . . the story of a dislocated indigenous woman who crossed the
37 color line to marry someone who was mostly Black, but who had some indigenous blood in him
38 and listening to her tell me . . . I just remember listening to her tell me about how there was no
39 God in that building over there, that if I wanted to know who God was and where God was . . .
- 40 AJ: Come talk to her.

- 1 KC: Yeah, we'd go sit outside in the yard and we would do things like garden, she would teach me
2 how to cook, and she would just talk to me about . . . just give me histories of what it was like
3 growing up like she did in the rural south. She was this beautiful woman and I just remember
4 thinking one day I hope I'm that beautiful, one day I hope that I can somehow . . . and not just
5 physical beauty either, she was just majestic. She was just majestic. They just recently named
6 the street that she lived on, between the church and her house, they just named it after her.
- 7 AJ: Oh, wow – that's incredible.
- 8 KC: Yeah. And she was also a midwife. My paternal great-grandmother actually gave birth to my
9 mother and my brother, she delivered them both – my oldest brother.
- 10 AJ: Wow.
- 11 KC: So, yeah.
- 12 AJ: Kya, have you ever worked for or volunteered with any LGBT organizations or non-profits?
- 13 KC: I've done a lot of volunteer work, none of it has been directly with the LGBT community. I would
14 like to, especially coming in on this year and I'm getting ready to ask for money for my public
15 policy degree. But, I've done a little volunteer work with Isuroon. I guess I have.
- 16 AJ: Isuroon is a Somali food . . . social service.
- 17 KC: It's this organization . . . yeah, giving independence to Somali women. I've done volunteer work
18 with Gender Justice, which I'm super excited about the work that they do.
- 19 AJ: And they're not trans specific.
- 20 KC: No, no – but they're gender . . . yeah.
- 21 AJ: But they do work with trans people.
- 22 KC: Yeah, they're working on my case right now.
- 23 AJ: Oh, that's your attorney . . .
- 24 KC: That's my attorney.
- 25 AJ: All right. So, you think you're going to see some good results.
- 26 KC: I hope so – especially since I don't have a job. But no, I'll find a job, I'm not worried about that.
27 I would like to get more involved with the community around here. Sometimes it seems so
28 fragile though – like, it will seem like there's these good initiatives that happen and they're well
29 intended and then before I can jump on board or get involved, they kind of just fizzle apart,
30 which is kind of . . .
- 31 AJ: The resources for black and brown queer organizations are very minimal.
- 32 KC: That's capitalism at its best, which is one of the things that I want to start taking a look at in
33 graduate school – why is this . . . we live in one of the most racially disproportionate states in
34 the country, we made number two, right? Right behind Wisconsin.

- 1 AJ: You're absolutely right, which is right next door. And then North Dakota and South Dakota . . .
2 so, you've got to wonder, is it . . . it's more systemic than a lot of people think.
- 3 KC: Yeah, and we always think about it being in the south too, but the difference between . . . racism
4 here and racism in the south are different. A racist in the south will identify themselves as a
5 racist and let you know, "I'm a racist." Up here, they won't do that and down there, because
6 there's so many black and brown people . . . in Georgia, we had to deal with the race issue
7 because it wasn't going to go away. I don't think that was the case up here, so I'm a little
8 disappointed in that, I guess.
- 9 AJ: Yeah, no – I think that's a very apt analysis. What do you think the relationship is between the L,
10 the G, the B and the T?
- 11 KC: I just said this the other day. I was arguing with someone and they were asking, "Why does this
12 acronym have to be so long and blah, blah, blah?" I was like, "You know what? You can
13 honestly take the L, the G, and the B, and push it aside and leave me with the Q, the I, the A.
14 You can leave my T over here with all of these . . ." I think that we . . . pre-Trump, I'm going to
15 go pre-Trump, pre-Trump era, I think we had this moment where the G and the L and, to some
16 extent, the B, were suddenly normalized.
- 17 AJ: Yeah.
- 18 KC: And they were like, "We're done. We can get married, we got all . . . so who cares about . . ."
19 And they literally dumped . . .
- 20 AJ: Those weirdo B, trans, and queer.
- 21 KC: Yeah, yeah. "I don't even know what I or A means." And so, I think this fracture happened and
22 so . . . but as an intersectionist, and I am, I'm an intersectionist and I . . .
- 23 AJ: What does that mean?
- 24 KC: So, first of all I give props to Audre Lorde for coining it forth in an essay, a one-page essay, but I
25 believe that all oppressions stem from the same place and what's white supremacy and I believe
26 that anything that oppresses one of us, oppresses all of us and I believe all of these identities . . .
27 I have plenty of lesbian, trans women friends and I have plenty of gay, trans masculine friends. I
28 have plenty of asexual friends that identify as gay romantic or plenty of intersex folks that go
29 one way or the other or all ways. So, as our identities all cross at these intersections, we need
30 to realize that something that oppresses one of us . . . I think that a lot of the G and the B people
31 believe that the fight is over, don't understand it if they can come for my rights they can also
32 come for your rights.
- 33 AJ: Well, they do now.
- 34 KC: Yeah, I mean Trump . . .
- 35 AJ: They had that little illusion or delusion for a moment but I'm pretty sure they have been
36 snapped out of it . . .
- 37 KC: I hope so.

- 1 AJ: Those 53% of white women too, I hope, because they're coming for them too.
- 2 KC: Yeah, and when I say intersectionist, I mean . . . I'm talking about any oppressed group of people
3 . . . if we would all ban together as oppressed groups of people, we could change . . .
- 4 AJ: Do you mean like if disabled people, women, and . . .
- 5 KC: Yeah, and trans people . . .
- 6 AJ: Trans people and . . .
- 7 KC: And black and brown people and Asian people and yeah . . .
- 8 AJ: Undocumented immigrants.
- 9 KC: And undocumented immigrants - yes.
- 10 AJ: If they all came together.
- 11 KC: And banned together and was like . . . oppression is oppression and all oppression stems from
12 the same place, so when you oppress one of us, you're threatening to oppress all of us and
13 we're going to stand up against that. I think that that would be a moment to where we would
14 really stand up and say, "Whatever power," and it would scare that structure.
- 15 AJ: People power.
- 16 KC: Yeah – people power, marginalized people power. Us against the margins standing up and
17 realizing that we're not so marginalized as the system would have us believe. I hope the G and
18 the B and the L decide to come back. I guess they have, maybe, decided to come back and then
19 sit at the table again with us again and realize that Audre Lorde was right, all oppression comes
20 from the same place – it really does, and it's out for the same thing and that's to establish
21 yourself as dominant. I believe that the system of oppression, even oppresses white cis men, to
22 a certain degree.
- 23 AJ: Oh, it does.
- 24 KC: Yeah.
- 25 AJ: It absolutely does. You can't sleep at night very comfortably doing the kind of things, tweeting
26 the kind of things that some people tweet or marching . . . you just cannot tell me that being
27 destructive to humanity does not impact your own . . . in fact, you have to abandon your
28 humanity to be able to do those things.
- 29 KC: And being told if you don't do that, that you're not manly or if you don't do that, they're going
30 to come and take away what's yours. One of my favorite quotes is these lazy people are after
31 your jobs. How does that even make sense?
- 32 AJ: Right – they're lazy, but if you lose your job then they're going to get to work. Right.
- 33 KC: Yeah, yeah. And, this idea of normalcy, I saw this great image of this cis white guy . . .
- 34 AJ: (laughing). I'm sorry, that was hilarious . . . lazy people are coming for your job.

- 1 KC: They want your job.
- 2 AJ: Wow.
- 3 KC: I saw this image of this white guy – full beard, cis guy, he’s holding up this sign . . . you
4 remember the, “I need feminism” sign? His sign said, “I need feminism because I’m tired of
5 feeling guilty every time my girlfriend pulls her strap on out to use on me.” Exactly. Exactly.
6 This idea of manliness that they’re all expected to pretend like they . . . you know, achieve, and
7 these are the same people that are watching transgender porn and people go, “Well, no, that’s
8 not true.” There’s no way that a multi-billion-dollar industry like the trans-sex industry could
9 survive if heterosexual white man weren’t consuming it.
- 10 AJ: You mean all trans women aren’t watching it?
- 11 KC: I mean, I am. I don’t know about you, but there’s not enough of us to create a multi-billion-
12 dollar industry.
- 13 AJ: Yeah, I think it’s only 1.4 million trans-identified, and that’s not all women.
- 14 KC: Yeah, right. There’s definitely not enough to support . . .
- 15 AJ: 1.4 million in the entire country.
- 16 KC: I think I know them all.
- 17 AJ: I know half of them. What do you think the agenda for the trans community should be going
18 forward, Kya?
- 19 KC: I want to break gender – I want to break it.
- 20 AJ: Just break it in half. Or make it four parts – there’s no binary.
- 21 KC: I’ve been reading Eli Clare, I don’t know if you know who Eli Clare is . . .
- 22 AJ: I do. I interviewed Eli Clare for this project.
- 23 KC: Did you? Oh, my God, I met Eli Clare and my life was changed – like my whole worldview was
24 changed.
- 25 AJ: Disability Justice.
- 26 KC: Oh, my God. And, one of the things that he said, I think it was in *Brilliant Imperfection*, he said,
27 “I hope for a day before I die, that we can exist in a space beyond gender.” And, I guess that’s
28 what I hope – to where your identity, to how you like . . . the outward model that you put on for
29 the world isn’t based on gender and/or race. One of the things that I tell people, when I’m
30 talking to white people and they try to understand what it’s like to be Black and trans, especially
31 when they’re white and cis, I challenge them to wake up and when they’re looking in the mirror
32 to brush their teeth every morning, to remind themselves that they’re white and they’re cis and
33 to tell me how long they can do that and most of them make it two or three days and what they
34 don’t realize is that as a Black trans woman, every time I look in the mirror I have to

- 1 acknowledge that. And, to exist in a world where I don't have to acknowledge that, that is my
2 dream.
- 3 AJ: Wow, that's powerful – that's very powerful.
- 4 KC: Here's hoping – one day.
- 5 AJ: Kya, this has been a fascinating hour. Oh, my goodness.
- 6 KC: Has it been an hour? Wow.
- 7 AJ: It's actually been over an hour.
- 8 KC: Oh, wow.
- 9 AJ: But . . .
- 10 KC: Thank you.
- 11 AJ: I'm thoroughly intrigued and absolutely grateful. Is there any question that I didn't ask that you
12 feel a burning desire to address and, I guess, I did ask you this already, "What do you think the
13 agenda for the trans community should be going forward?" but, where do you think the trans
14 community will be in 50 years?
- 15 KC: Fifty years, the trans community? So, I have a friend who is pregnant and whenever someone
16 genders the baby, she goes, "Nope, don't know yet." And they go, "Are you going to find out?"
17 She's like, "Yeah, when the baby tells me." And so . . .
- 18 AJ: So, they could be six.
- 19 KC: Yeah.
- 20 AJ: "Hey, mom, I'm a boy."
- 21 KC: Yeah, and she amazes me because she's like, "They, I don't know yet and I won't know until they
22 tell me." And so, I think one of the most powerful things about being trans, I think to me, do
23 you remember when you got to pick your name?
- 24 AJ: Yeah.
- 25 KC: That was powerful, it was this constructive change that you got to make. When that type of
26 power is endowed upon us to get to decide our gender without anyone being like, "OK." Scott
27 Turner Schofield said, "Believe the child." I guess, I hope that in 50 years we'll listen to and
28 believe the child.
- 29 AJ: Wow. On that note, I don't want to ask any more questions – that's powerful. Thank you, my
30 dear.
- 31 KC: Thank you so much.
- 32 AJ: Peace. Until we meet again, my friend.
- 33 KC: And I'm sure we will soon.