

Xaundra Nawa  
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins  
Interviewer

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

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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.

Andrea Jenkins

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1     Andrea Jenkins           -AJ  
2     Xaundra Nawa           -XN  
3  
4  
5     AJ:     So hello.  
6  
7     XN:     Hello.  
8  
9     AJ:     So good afternoon. My name is Andrea Jenkins, and I am the oral historian for The Transgender  
10            Oral History Project at the Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota Libraries. Today is  
11            August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Uhm, twelve years ago today Hurricane Katrina...  
12  
13    XN:     Wow, that was twelve years ago.  
14  
15    AJ:     ... landed on, uhm...  
16  
17    XN:     Louisiana.  
18  
19    AJ:     New Orleans, Louisiana. It was a very sad, sad day for America, particularly for black America.  
20  
21    XN:     Mhm.  
22  
23    AJ:     And, uhm, I just want to acknowledge that sort of the same thing is happening in Houston right  
24            now.  
25  
26    XN:     Yeah.  
27  
28    AJ:     Just send out some love and some peace and some blessings to those folks but I am here today  
29            with Xaundra Nawa?  
30  
31    XN:     [Laughs].  
32  
33    AJ:     What's good Xaundra?  
34  
35    XN:     Oh, you know, just here, just living. [Laughs].  
36  
37    AJ:     Living, living life. So let me ask you a few questions. Can you state your name and spell your  
38            name so that we make sure we have it correctly?  
39  
40    XN:     Yeah. Uhm, my name is Xaundra Nawa, uh, X.A.U.N.D.R.A. And then N.A.W.A.  
41  
42    AJ:     Xaundra Nawa. Uhm, what is your gender identity as you claim it today, your gender assigned at  
43            birth, and the pronouns that you use?  
44  
45    XN:     Uh, so my gender identity is fluid demi girl. Uhm, my assigned gender at birth was male. And my  
46            pronouns are she/her or they/them. It really depends on the day.  
47

1 AJ: Hm. Uh, fluid demi girl. Explain that for me.  
2  
3 XN: Uhm, so when I first came out as gender divergent, I, what...  
4  
5 AJ: Gender divergent. Wow. You coming up with all these new terms for me today. I love it.  
6  
7 XN: [Laughs]. As trans, you know, whatever.  
8  
9 AJ: Yeah, no, I love it. No, we need this new language so thank you for...  
10  
11 XN: Mhm. Oh, yeah, well, uhm, yeah, when I was first coming out as gender divergent what I was,  
12 what, what made me even think about that was, wasn't the fact that I was a woman. It was that  
13 I hated being a man.  
14  
15 AJ: Wow.  
16  
17 XN: I, you know, uhm, and the only other example I had of anything else I could be, you know, was a  
18 woman.  
19  
20 AJ: Mhm.  
21  
22 XN: And I would watch all these youtube videos about other trans women doing transition. You  
23 know, my eyes just blew up and so that was like the example that I wanted to follow.  
24  
25 AJ: Sure.  
26  
27 XN: But then once I, you know, started to step into myself, I started to realize that there are  
28 somedays when I don't feel all that super feminine.  
29  
30 AJ: Mhm.  
31  
32 XN: But I'm still not in any way a man.  
33  
34 AJ: Right.  
35  
36 XN: Uhm, but there wasn't really a word for me to describe that.  
37  
38 AJ: Mhm.  
39  
40 XN: I just, you know, so, uhm, but once I, you know, started getting into like the Tumblr community  
41 or like Facebook trans groups, I started to see, uhm, non-binary people but it was still really just  
42 a theoretical thing in my mind, uhm, until I met, who is now my partner at a party and they're  
43 non-binary. And we got to talking and just meeting more and more non-binary people I felt like I  
44 had a lot more in common with them than I did with, uhm, just strictly trans women. Uhm,  
45 although I do find a lot of identity in womanhood. I just don't always identify as a woman.  
46  
47 AJ: Sure.

1  
2 XN: So that's why I use fluid demi girl.  
3  
4 AJ: Fluid demi girl. And you said the person who you met is now your partner or not your partner.  
5  
6 XN: Yeah. No, they are my partner now.  
7  
8 AJ: Okay. Alright. Wonderful. Good. Good, good, good. Uhm, so, uhm, Xaundra, what is the first  
9 thing you remember in life? Like what's your first memory?  
10  
11 XN: My first memory?  
12  
13 AJ: Yeah.  
14  
15 XN: I remember I nightmare I had when I was a child. [Laughs].  
16  
17 AJ: Really?  
18  
19 XN: Yeah, I think I was like three cause I don't remember haven't siblings but also I had to be old  
20 enough to be cognizant. Uhm, I was in my crib, and I had gotten out of my crib and then I walked  
21 into the living room from my room, and I looked back and I had got this like feeling of dread, and  
22 then I saw this leg with a stockings and high heel just standing out, and I was like, "What is  
23 that?" And I went to go check and the leg wasn't there. And...  
24  
25 AJ: This was the dream?  
26  
27 XN: This is the dream. Yes. Uhm, but ever since then, uhm, whenever I go to sleep I have this feeling  
28 of dread that something bad is going to happen. [Laughs]. And ever since then I guess I've had  
29 night terrors.  
30  
31 AJ: Really?  
32  
33 XN: Yeah.  
34  
35 AJ: Your entire life?  
36  
37 XN: Yeah.  
38  
39 AJ: Oh really.  
40  
41 XN: Yeah.  
42  
43 AJ: Sorry that happens. That's not always a good thing for sleep anyway.  
44  
45 XN: Nope. So I kind of, I'm kind of a vampire cause I'm nocturnal.  
46  
47 AJ: Oh wow.

1  
2 XN: Yeah.  
3  
4 AJ: And you sleep during the day? Is that it?  
5  
6 XN: It's easier to sleep during the day. It's not always conducive to the schedule or, you know, the  
7 job or whatnot but it's a lot easier to sleep during the day.  
8  
9 AJ: Oh wow. Well, hopefully you can work through some of that.  
10  
11 XN: [Laughs]. Yeah, I mean...  
12  
13 AJ: Cause sleep is important.  
14  
15 XN: It's true. I mean, I'm an adult now so I can handle it but...  
16  
17 AJ: Yeah.  
18  
19 XN: You know, it's just...  
20  
21 AJ: And you still have the night...  
22  
23 XN: Uhm, every once in a while. Very rarely now. I'm able to not be afraid of sleeping nowadays.  
24  
25 AJ: Sure.  
26  
27 XN: But every once in a while, usually when I'm very, very, very tired, and then my body just like kind  
28 of shuts down and it will go to that state by itself.  
29  
30 AJ: Yeah. That's kind of what bodies do. [Laughs].  
31  
32 XN: Mhm.  
33  
34 AJ: Uh, you mentioned that you thought this, this, uhm, dream that you had happened post, I mean  
35 pre-siblings.  
36  
37 XN: Yeah.  
38  
39 AJ: So how many siblings do you have?  
40  
41 XN: I have two siblings.  
42  
43 AJ: Yeah.  
44  
45 XN: Uhm, they're both my brothers. Uhm, I'm the oldest child and my middle brother, Kenan, he is  
46 about, uh, six— no, a year and a half younger than me.  
47

1 AJ: Uhuh.  
2  
3 XN: And then my other brother is six months... is a year and a half younger than him.  
4  
5 AJ: Mhm.  
6  
7 XN: I can't remember exactly how spread out we are.  
8  
9 AJ: But you're the oldest.  
10  
11 XN: I am the oldest. I am.  
12  
13 AJ: Uhm, what was life like growing up? Where did you grow up?  
14  
15 XN: I grew up... I was born in Minneapolis.  
16  
17 AJ: Mhm.  
18  
19 XN: Uhm, I grew up, we lived in our own house for about four years and then, uhm, we lost that  
20 house since we had to move in with our grandparents. Uhm, so then we grew up in the house  
21 for four years, uhm, where we lived with, I think it was twelve other people.  
22  
23 AJ: Wow.  
24  
25 XN: Or maybe it was twelve people total.  
26  
27 AJ: Mhm.  
28  
29 XN: Uhm, we all lived in this basement room, uhm, five of us. And then my dad during Y2K, uhm, got  
30 a job in, uhm, what do you call that, uh, computer engineering.  
31  
32 AJ: Mhm.  
33  
34 XN: Uhm, and made a lot of buck and we were able to move up to the suburbs. So when I was, I  
35 think I was seven. Seven? Yeah, I was seven. We moved out to the suburbs, uh, Cottage Grove.  
36  
37 AJ: Oh wow.  
38  
39 XN: And then I lived there for the next fifteen years. Uhm, and then, yeah. And then I got kicked out.  
40 [Laughs]. And now I live here.  
41  
42 AJ: Cottage Grove.  
43  
44 XN: Yeah.  
45  
46 AJ: What was it like as a black family... I'm assuming your parents are both black.  
47

- 1 XN: Yeah, they're both black. Uhm, it was interesting. Uhm, I... you know it was weird cause I wasn't  
2 even cognizant really of racism back then.  
3
- 4 AJ: Mhm.  
5
- 6 XN: I think maybe my parents did that intentionally because they didn't want me to grow up with  
7 having to, you know, worry about certain things that maybe they did.  
8
- 9 AJ: Mhm.  
10
- 11 XN: Uhm, but it was also weird too. I mean, there were times where I would, I was just biking home  
12 from a friend's house and a white truck would come by me and slow down and be like, "Hey,  
13 nigga," you know. [Laughs].  
14
- 15 AJ: Wow.  
16
- 17 XN: And then just speed off. Uhm, you know, there were, there were times where I wasn't even  
18 really sure it was racism but it was like kids just thought that they could just say whatever they  
19 wanted because racism was dead and if, if I had any other feelings about that then that was my  
20 problem.  
21
- 22 AJ: Hm.  
23
- 24 XN: So, I think I learned to internalize some racism, uhm, because none of my feelings or viewpoints  
25 were corroborated by my environment. We were like one of, I think, three black families when  
26 we moved there. We didn't really know any of them.  
27
- 28 AJ: Hm.  
29
- 30 XN: So it was interesting. I remember my favorite, I think it was the second or third day we had  
31 moved there. Uhm, one of the neighborhood kids had invited us over and we were just standing  
32 there in the garage, and he was like, "Wait a minute. Just wait. I wanna come back." And he  
33 went inside the house and then came out with a shotgun and just like, chh chh. [Laughs]. Aimed  
34 it at us.  
35
- 36 AJ: No way.  
37
- 38 XN: But it wasn't loaded. Uhm, but yeah that was like one of the scariest moments in my life. Like  
39 where I come from you don't do that. You don't just aim guns at people like it's, you know, like  
40 you're just playing with dolls. That's not cool.  
41
- 42 AJ: Yeah, no. [Laughs]. Wow.  
43
- 44 XN: Yeah.  
45
- 46 AJ: Oh my god. That's horrific.  
47



1 XN: Yeah, but I mean those are, those are the, the things that stick with me after like...  
2  
3 AJ: And you guys are like seven, eight years old?  
4  
5 XN: Yeah.  
6  
7 AJ: [Laughs].  
8  
9 XN: Mhm, I was seven or eight. I can't remember exactly how old I was at the time but it was, I was  
10 either seven or eight.  
11  
12 AJ: Were you having thoughts, issues, concerns, ideas about your...  
13  
14 XN: About my gender?  
15  
16 AJ: gender at all?  
17  
18 XN: Uhm, I think it's always been something in the back of my head but it was, as a, you know,  
19 growing up as a black boy, uhm, you're not allowed to explore that.  
20  
21 AJ: Mhm.  
22  
23 XN: You know, that's not even supposed to be a like a thought in your head let alone a desire.  
24  
25 AJ: Sure.  
26  
27 XN: You know? Uhm, so I think, I know when I was like five I remember seeing girls with like those  
28 frilly socks. [Laughs].  
29  
30 AJ: Mhm.  
31  
32 XN: I used to think they were cute. And I was like why can't I wear those? I never verbalized that  
33 question.  
34  
35 AJ: Right.  
36  
37 XN: I was thought that was weird, uh, or I know that they would think that was weird.  
38  
39 AJ: Mhm.  
40  
41 XN: I'm not trying to, you know, uhm, uhm, but there was a, I guess there was, there was one little  
42 alarm bell when I was like six or seven. I told my dad that, "You guys are all holograms, aren't  
43 you? Aliens are controlling you all, and I'm just, I'm the only real person here, aren't i?"  
44 [Laughs].  
45  
46 AJ: [Laughs].  
47

1 XN: You know, and I'm like, I look back on that now and wow. Was I aware? Was I just, I don't know,  
2 I don't know, uhm...  
3  
4 AJ: Do you remember what your dad's response was?  
5  
6 XN: He was hurt. He was hurt. He was like, "You don't think I love you? You know, you don't think  
7 I'm real?"  
8  
9 AJ: Huh.  
10  
11 XN: Uhm, and so, I, I digress. I didn't want to like, you know, hurt my parents. You know? I didn't  
12 want to make them think differently of me.  
13  
14 AJ: Mhm.  
15  
16 XN: Uhm, so I think there was a bunch of sentimental messages that I, that I got as a child that told  
17 me that you can't even entertain those ideas that you're different than, uhm, how they perceive  
18 you. Uhm, and so that was locked away for a while. Uhm, but there was one time when I was  
19 about twelve in Cottage Grove.  
20  
21 AJ: Mhm.  
22  
23 XN: My, uhm, uh, my, my little, my youngest brother's friend invited us all over to hang out, and his  
24 mother thought it would be fun if we all cross-dressed and took pictures.  
25  
26 AJ: Really? [Laughs].  
27  
28 XN: Uhm, and I was the first one to raise my hand and be like, uhm, actually our parents would kill  
29 us if we did that so we can't do that. She was like, "Oh, yeah, we gotta! It'll be fun. Michael does  
30 it all the time. It's good."  
31  
32 AJ: Okay. [Laughs]. Oh wow.  
33  
34 XN: It was like, yeah! [Laughs]. It was like, uhm, okay. Yeah, I guess we'll just do this and then, and  
35 then never speak of this again. Uhm. [Laughs].  
36  
37 AJ: And she had clothes for all of you guys?  
38  
39 XN: Yeah, she had clothes and wigs and stuff. And I was like okay, so put on this, this, uh, this black  
40 floral dress.  
41  
42 AJ: Mhm.  
43  
44 XN: Uhm, and then I put on this, this like short curly black wig, and I put it on and I looked in the  
45 mirror, and I just kind of froze and then she said, "You look like your mom." And for the first  
46 time in my life this, this like dissonance just all of a sudden harmonized.  
47

1 AJ: Mhm.  
2  
3 XN: And I never felt like that at peace before, you know? And then quickly like that I had to rip it off  
4 because like no you can't do this. No, you can't feel like that. That's no. No.  
5  
6 AJ: Oh, wow.  
7  
8 XN: No, no, no. Maybe white boys can do that but you can't do that. [Laughs]. You know? Uhm.  
9  
10 AJ: So have you seen Michael since this, uh...  
11  
12 XN: Uh... I mean...  
13  
14 AJ: Is Michael still cross dressing is my question?  
15  
16 XN: I don't believe so, no. I think Michael is just a hetero cis white dude that went to a Math and  
17 Science Academy later and whatnot.  
18  
19 AJ: Okay.  
20  
21 XN: But not me. [Laughs].  
22  
23 AJ: Wow. That is interesting, uhm, that this would be just a fun activity for a sleepover.  
24  
25 XN: Yeah. [Laughs].  
26  
27 AJ: Or I don't even know if it's a sleepover.  
28  
29 XN: No, it was just like a, like we went over to hang out for a couple of hours during the middle of  
30 the day. It was like lunchtime.  
31  
32 AJ: Mhm.  
33  
34 XN: And then right after that I just ran back home cause we lived right across the street.  
35  
36 AJ: Sure. Huh. Wow. Uhm, so that was like the first time that you sent this sort of dissonance  
37 harmonized. I love that phrase.  
38  
39 XN: Oh thanks.  
40  
41 AJ: But then you were like, "No, no, no, no. This can't be happening."  
42  
43 XN: Mhm.  
44  
45 AJ: When did you first realize that you were gender divergent?  
46  
47 XN: [Laughs]. Uhm, I think that was the first clue that I was cognizant of.

1  
2 AJ: Mhm.  
3  
4 XN: Uhm, but that definitely wasn't like the straw that broke the horse's back.  
5  
6 AJ: Mhm.  
7  
8 XN: Uhm.  
9  
10 AJ: It was not the defining moment.  
11  
12 XN: Yeah. Yeah.  
13  
14 AJ: Okay.  
15  
16 XN: It was just the first. Uhm, I... I found myself sometimes I would... Our... We had three bathrooms  
17 in our house in Cottage Grove. Uhm, sometimes both my... We had one downstairs that was a  
18 half bathroom and then we had one upstairs that was our bathroom and then my parents had a  
19 bathroom in their room. Uhm, and so like so would... sometimes the bathroom downstairs  
20 would be taken and sometimes our bathroom would be taken and I would really need to use the  
21 bathroom so I would just go into my parents bathroom. Uhm, and while I was using the  
22 bathroom sometimes I would see that their hamper was full, and then sometimes I would see  
23 my mom's clothes were on the top and sometimes I would wonder, "Hm, what would I look like  
24 in those?" And sometimes I would just put them on.  
25  
26 AJ: Sure.  
27  
28 XN: You know? Uhm, and I would look in the mirror and I couldn't stop looking, you know? It was  
29 like, like I couldn't pull away. Uhm, and, and so that would happen periodically. It wasn't like  
30 every day. It wasn't even every week. It was just every once in a while that would happen. Uhm,  
31 but it would start to happen more and more frequently, uhm, until [sighs] I think I was a senior  
32 in high school taking Spanish I the second time [laughs], and my teacher, uh, this was the first  
33 time I ever met an openly queer person.  
34  
35 AJ: Okay.  
36  
37 XN: Uhm, he was an open gay man, and, uh, he, I think he needed to grade papers or something one  
38 day so he, uh, decided to hire a speaker and the speaker happened to be an LGBT spokesperson  
39 that would talk about the issues in the community or at least define what LGBT means...  
40  
41 AJ: Mhm.  
42  
43 XN: ... at an introductory level for some kids.  
44  
45 AJ: Sure.  
46

1 XN: Uhm, and of course I was just throwing jokes left and right cause it all made me uncomfortable.  
2 [Laughs].  
3  
4 AJ: Right.  
5  
6 XN: Uhm, but then as soon as she said that, uh, "Could you imagine what it would feel like to wake  
7 up everyday like you're living in the wrong body?" And now that's an antiquated phrase.  
8  
9 AJ: Right.  
10  
11 XN: Uhm, but that was the first time I had ever heard those types of feelings verbalized like outside  
12 of my head.  
13  
14 AJ: Sure.  
15  
16 XN: You know? And that was the first indication that I might not just be crazy that maybe there is  
17 something different, you know?  
18  
19 AJ: Mm. Mhm.  
20  
21 XN: Uhm. [Laughs]. And I like started to being like shaking, and I couldn't stop shaking, and, uhm,  
22 she had us write down an anonymous question at the end of the seminar and all I could write  
23 was, "I think I'm gay." Cause, you know, I, I could conceptualize by that point somebody being  
24 gay. That, that you can at least hide from people and still enjoy...  
25  
26 AJ: Right. Yes.  
27  
28 XN: ... being trans.  
29  
30 AJ: Yeah.  
31  
32 XN: But that was, nope! Nope! [Laughs].  
33  
34 AJ: Not gonna happen.  
35  
36 XN: Yeah. Uhm, but then, you know, that was my entry point into just being able to be more  
37 effeminate.  
38  
39 AJ: Mhm.  
40  
41 XN: Uhm, cause once I started to just express myself as like gay man, I was able to, to not feel so  
42 restricted in like wearing nail polish or like having effeminate mannerisms or talking in a higher  
43 voice. And then from there it just kind of grew into this, "No, I'm just, I'm just, I'm just a fucking  
44 girl. [Laughs].  
45  
46 AJ: So did you ever identify publicly as gay?  
47

1 XN: Yeah.  
2  
3 AJ: Yeah?  
4  
5 XN: That was my first coming out was bisexual and then gay. Uhm, what it really was was like I, I  
6 only, I didn't even really like men. I liked the way that I felt when I was with a man...  
7  
8 AJ: Right.  
9  
10 XN: ... cause I felt way more feminine, you know?  
11  
12 AJ: Yes. Wow. That's a great descriptor actually. Mhm. Uhm, but you are bi or what is your gen—  
13 what's your sexual orientation?  
14  
15 XN: Uhm, my sexuality, it's still a working title.  
16  
17 AJ: Yeah.  
18  
19 XN: I like pansexual or femme sexual.  
20  
21 AJ: Femme sexual.  
22  
23 XN: Yeah, mainly because like everybody has like a chance with me, I guess.  
24  
25 AJ: Mhm.  
26  
27 XN: Uhm, and gender isn't even really the deciding factor in whether or not I find you attractive. It's  
28 more just, physically there's, you know, traits. I like people that wear makeup. I like punky  
29 haircuts. Uhm, but at the end of the day if you open your mouth and, and you talk about Trump  
30 being a great person, I'm not really attracted to you, you know?  
31  
32 AJ: Yeah.  
33  
34 XN: If you, if you, uhm, can't—  
35  
36 AJ: What if you talk about Donald Trump being a nice person and you are attracted to that person?  
37 What would you do in that situation? Cause that could happen.  
38  
39 XN: I, I mean, there's physical attraction but then there's like intellectual attraction too, you know?  
40 And physical attraction isn't really the end all, be all for me. I don't know.  
41  
42 AJ: True.  
43  
44 XN: I lose the sexual attraction once...  
45  
46 AJ: But saying I like Donald Trump is really only one aspect of one's personality.  
47

1 XN: Mhm.  
2  
3 AJ: You could have everything else like in place.  
4  
5 XN: Yeah.  
6  
7 AJ: For you that's a, that's a...  
8  
9 XN: A deal breaker. [Laughs].  
10  
11 AJ: A deal breaker. Got it. I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna go fishing down that hole any longer.  
12  
13 XN: No, it's all good.  
14  
15 AJ: No, uhm, when did you start to express your feminine, your more decidedly femme, uh, girl  
16 reality?  
17  
18 XN: So when I was twenty I tried to kill myself.  
19  
20 AJ: Mm.  
21  
22 XN: Uhm, and it kind of came out of...  
23  
24 AJ: Glad you're still here.  
25  
26 XN: Yeah, me too. [Laughs]. Me too. It, it was, it kind of came out of nowhere. I didn't even realize  
27 that I was depressed.  
28  
29 AJ: Uhuh.  
30  
31 XN: I think mental health in the black community is not really addressed as much as it should be.  
32  
33 AJ: Agree.  
34  
35 XN: Uhm, and, you know, all the signs were there. I wouldn't shower. I would stay in my room all  
36 day. Didn't really have many friends. I wouldn't go outside. Uhm, and I'd always be tired. But,  
37 uhm, I, I found one thing that really got my rocks off is drinking. [Laughs].  
38  
39 AJ: Mm.  
40  
41 XN: And my...  
42  
43 AJ: Self-medication.  
44  
45 XN: Yeah.  
46  
47 AJ: Yeah.

1  
2 XN: Yeah. Uhm, it just happened to be one day where I was having this conversation in my head with  
3 my dad. I had been doing that more and more often. Uhm, cause I knew I just couldn't have  
4 these conversations in real life. And I was trying to like work out a way in which this could  
5 actually end well, and I just couldn't have a conversation with my dad even in my head. And it's,  
6 I started to just like hear voices outside of myself, and my friend just happened to text me right  
7 during that, "Hey, wanna get drunk," and like, "Yes!" [Laughs].  
8  
9 AJ: Wow.  
10  
11 XN: And, uhm, they came over. Uhm, we went for a walk, and I took eight shots in like two minutes.  
12  
13 AJ: [Whistles].  
14  
15 XN: And just got wasted. And all of my inner thoughts just kind of came out. I was like, "Dude, just  
16 fucking kill me now. Just do it now. Please, please, please. Blah, blah, blah." You know? Uhm,  
17 yeah, long story short got out of the hospital and, uhm, decided... bef... while I was in that  
18 moment, the reason why I stopped doing that was I decided if I'm going to live I'm going to live a  
19 life worth living.  
20  
21 AJ: Mhm.  
22  
23 XN: Uhm, and so from that point on I couldn't live at home anymore. I had to, I moved out and lived  
24 with my grandmother for a little while. Uhm, and just being in an environment that was more  
25 accepting or conducive to exploring yourself was, was kind of the push that I needed, uhm, just  
26 to feel comfortable doing that. And so I was working at Ragstock, and it was kind of stealing  
27 clothes at the time. [Laughs].  
28  
29 AJ: [Laughs].  
30  
31 XN: Uh, cause I couldn't afford to like get an entirely new wardrobe.  
32  
33 AJ: Right.  
34  
35 XN: Also it was embarrassing to go and shop for clothes when you look like one thing but you wanna  
36 look like another thing.  
37  
38 AJ: Sure.  
39  
40 XN: Uhm, so, yeah, I was, I would, I would just buy new clothes and I was kind of just... or I would  
41 steal my clothes, and I was just developing my own...  
42  
43 AJ: Good new clothes.  
44  
45 XN: Good new clothes. Acquire them. [Laughs].  
46  
47 AJ: [Laughs].



1  
2 XN: And so I developed a style, wardrobe, and, uhm, just kind of, just kind of grew, uhm, until I had  
3 moved back home and I was just kind of like living halftime.  
4  
5 AJ: To Cottage Grove?  
6  
7 XN: Yeah.  
8  
9 AJ: Okay.  
10  
11 XN: Uhm, I was kind of living halftime, uhm, when, when my parents would go to sleep and then I  
12 could feel okay being in the clothes. Uhm, and then I was in beauty school, and I, so I would pack  
13 my clothes in my backpack and then would go to, go to school and then in the bathroom change  
14 for like a half an hour, put on my makeup and...  
15  
16 AJ: Oh wow.  
17  
18 XN: ... and then come out and I'm Xaundra.  
19  
20 AJ: What school did you go to?  
21  
22 XN: I went to Regency Beauty School. Uh, didn't finish. I decided I didn't like to have the power to  
23 tell somebody whether or not they look good or not. I was like, "This is exactly what the world  
24 has done to me." And I haven't like resolved why I would want to do that to somebody else so...  
25  
26 AJ: Wow. Good for you.  
27  
28 XN: Thanks.  
29  
30 AJ: A lot of people really relish that opportunity.  
31  
32 XN: And I don't, I don't knock it. I'm like yeah, if you wanna do that, that's great. It is a great  
33 profession but I, it's not right for me.  
34  
35 AJ: Yeah. I just know I couldn't be like putting my hands in...  
36  
37 XN: People hair?  
38  
39 AJ: ... in people's hair, all up in their face, and all of that stuff. I do think it's a great career. It's not  
40 for me. [Laughs].  
41  
42 XN: Yeah.  
43  
44 AJ: Uhm, wow, so you moved kind of back in with your parents...  
45  
46 XN: Mhm.  
47

1 AJ: ... even though they were having all of these...  
2  
3 XN: Yeah.  
4  
5 AJ: ... uhm, difficult times...  
6  
7 XN: Yeah.  
8  
9 AJ: ... trying to deal with the reality of who you are.  
10  
11 XN: Just trying to cope. Yeah.  
12  
13 AJ: How did that work out?  
14  
15 XN: Uhm, well, the reason I even moved back in in the first place was, uh, after, after living with my  
16 grandmother and then having to go live with my great grandmother. And then I tried to go out  
17 on my own. Uh, I stayed in this house with, it was a cool house but also there was just a lot of, a  
18 lot of drugs going around.  
19  
20 AJ: Mhm.  
21  
22 XN: Uhm, and I, uh, they, uhm, like they would, they would have these impromptu parties. They  
23 would, they would be like 3 A.M., and I was about to go to bed. And all of a sudden bring home  
24 the entire bar. [Laughs].  
25  
26 AJ: Oh wow.  
27  
28 XN: And decided to sell beers for \$3 out of our home bar.  
29  
30 AJ: Uhuh.  
31  
32 XN: And so instead of going to bed I end up doing a whole gram of coke and end up in someone  
33 else's house, and then I'm like, "Ah, oh my god!"  
34  
35 AJ: Oh, wow.  
36  
37 XN: And then, I don't know, I lost my job, you know, eventually.  
38  
39 AJ: Yeah.  
40  
41 XN: Yeah, couldn't pay rent and like, "Mom, can I come back home?"  
42  
43 AJ: [Laughs].  
44  
45 XN: Went running back. Uhm, so, you know, they of course put down the law, they were like,  
46 "There's gonna be rules as long as you're in this house." And like, "Okay, yeah I can follow  
47 them." Couldn't follow them.

1  
2 AJ: [Laughs].  
3  
4 XN: Uhm, and led to... They were, they had been wanting to move to California for like years.  
5  
6 AJ: Uhuh.  
7  
8 XN: And finally they were going to do that. And then, uh, I don't know, I think I had like a Freudian  
9 slip and I just got drunk and got in a car accident with our, our car.  
10  
11 AJ: Oh, yikes.  
12  
13 XN: And then they used that as an excuse to kick me out the next day or the next three days. And  
14 then... so when I saw my dad next like three months later he was like, "Yeah, I knew you were  
15 trans. It's just, uh, that was one of the reasons we had to get you out of here." You know?  
16  
17 AJ: Really?  
18  
19 XN: Yeah. Uhm. [Laughs].  
20  
21 AJ: So the initial excuse was you wrecked the car.  
22  
23 XN: Yeah.  
24  
25 AJ: So you gotta go.  
26  
27 XN: Mhm.  
28  
29 AJ: But then he came clean and said...  
30  
31 XN: Mhm.  
32  
33 AJ: Did you ever, was there ever a formal coming out or what did you say when he was like, "Yeah, I  
34 knew you were trans." Like, what was your response?  
35  
36 XN: Uh, after he said that I just didn't say anything.  
37  
38 AJ: Mhm.  
39  
40 XN: I couldn't say anything. I didn't realize, I didn't feel like, that, I didn't want to dignify that with a  
41 response.  
42  
43 AJ: Sure.  
44  
45 XN: I didn't say anything.  
46  
47 AJ: Wow. What's your relationship with your folks like now?

1  
2 XN: It's—  
3  
4 AJ: Did they move to California?  
5  
6 XN: Yeah, they moved to California. Uhm, it's a lot better now. Uhm, the, the first year my mom  
7 came back and, uh, she wanted to, to have lunch with me. And then I went to the car and tried  
8 to open the door, and it was locked. And then I just waited for a moment and then tried to open  
9 the door again and it was still locked.  
10  
11 AJ: Mhm.  
12  
13 XN: And I looked in there. [Laughs]. And I opened it again, finally was open and I sat down. Mom was  
14 like, "So we have to have a talk. I thought I was haven't lunch with my son." I was like, "Oh,  
15 okay." And I got out of the car, closed the door, and texted, "I love you. Have a good trip."  
16  
17 AJ: Wow.  
18  
19 XN: And then I didn't talk to her again until the next year when she was ready to have lunch with her  
20 daughter. Uhm, but she's, you know, she just kind of refrained from using my name or my  
21 pronouns. Uhm, and then it's kind of been a running tradition over the last three years. Uhm,  
22 she comes back in the summer and then we will have lunch or breakfast.  
23  
24 AJ: Mhm.  
25  
26 XN: Uhm, still doesn't use my name or my pronouns but I think she's realized that she just want to  
27 have a relationship with her child. And, you know, I don't want to just throw away my  
28 relationship with my parents so...  
29  
30 AJ: Right.  
31  
32 XN: You know? Working through it.  
33  
34 AJ: So you work through it. You deal. Uhm, that's tough.  
35  
36 XN: Yeah.  
37  
38 AJ: Uhm, how are other people in your family? Are they supportive?  
39  
40 XN: Uhm, I feel...  
41  
42 AJ: You lived with your grandmother and great grandmother. Were they...  
43  
44 XN: Yeah.  
45  
46 AJ: ... aware of your identity or are they aware of your identity?  
47

1 XN: Yeah. My grandmother was the first person I came out to in person...  
 2  
 3 AJ: Mm.  
 4  
 5 XN: ... about any sort of queerness.  
 6  
 7 AJ: Mhm.  
 8  
 9 XN: Uhm, and then that day she hooked me up with other queer people.  
 10  
 11 AJ: Would you, would you think your grandmother would be, uh, did you say her name on camera?  
 12  
 13 XN: Mhm. Oh, no, I don't believe so. I think she would be cool.  
 14  
 15 AJ: Who's your grandma?  
 16  
 17 XN: Carolyn Holbrooke. [Laughs].  
 18  
 19 AJ: Yeah. One of my mentors is just, I don't know how to describe her, inspiration, uhm.  
 20  
 21 XN: She's an amazing person. For reals. I, I can honestly say I don't know where I would be...  
 22  
 23 AJ: Literary icon in the 'Twin Cities for sure. Yeah. But, uhm, my esteem went up for her two  
 24 hundred times more when she introduced me to you. Uhm, like wow.  
 25  
 26 XN: Huh.  
 27  
 28 AJ: You have the love of your grandmother in your life, and that's really special.  
 29  
 30 XN: Yeah.  
 31  
 32 AJ: Uhm, so she... you, she's the first person you came out to?  
 33  
 34 XN: Mhm. Uhm, and that whole side of the family is cool with me. I go to Christmas and  
 35 Thanksgiving, and I help people move in.  
 36  
 37 AJ: Uhuh.  
 38  
 39 XN: Sometimes we go on little lunch dates, you know.  
 40  
 41 AJ: Uhuh.  
 42  
 43 XN: That side of the family is dope.  
 44  
 45 AJ: It's family, right?  
 46  
 47 XN: Yeah.

1  
2 AJ: That's what families do.  
3  
4 XN: Yeah. And the other side of the family, it's not that they don't tolerate me. I just kind of shied  
5 away.  
6  
7 AJ: Don't want to be tolerated.  
8  
9 XN: Yeah.  
10  
11 AJ: [Laughs].  
12  
13 XN: Yeah, uhm, there's, there's people that reach out to me outside and I just haven't given it a  
14 chance, I guess.  
15  
16 AJ: Mhm.  
17  
18 XN: Uhm, I don't know why I can't really logicize why...  
19  
20 AJ: And this is your mom's side?  
21  
22 XN: Yeah. It's my mom's side.  
23  
24 AJ: Yeah.  
25  
26 XN: Uhm, I guess it's mostly because like they, their church of God and Christ and like my  
27 grandfather is a bishop, and it's just weird. I have a very negative connotation with religion and  
28 stuff.  
29  
30 AJ: Sure.  
31  
32 XN: Uhm, so, I don't know, working through that I guess.  
33  
34 AJ: Mhm. Mhm. What about your brothers? Do they...  
35  
36 XN: [Laughs]. My, one of them, I added one of them on Facebook. Uhm, but he's still pretty  
37 transphobic. The other one won't even add me on Facebook. Uhm, they still call me their  
38 brother. They still use my deadname like...  
39  
40 AJ: Oh boy.  
41  
42 XN: So I don't, I don't foster that relationship too much either.  
43  
44 AJ: Mhm.  
45  
46 XN: I would like to but also at what cost, you know?  
47

- 1 AJ: Yeah. Uhm, so what challenges have you experienced, uh, Xaundra, since you've decided to  
2 express your, uhm, truer, truer identity?  
3
- 4 XN: Uhm, as a result of that or?  
5
- 6 AJ: Yeah.  
7
- 8 XN: Uhm, well.  
9
- 10 AJ: I mean, I know the family stuff is, you talked about that and that's been a bit of a challenge.  
11
- 12 XN: Yeah. Uhm, well, I guess, you know, I did get kicked out because of that.  
13
- 14 AJ: Mhm.  
15
- 16 XN: Uhm, and that led to [laughs] a lot of things. Uhm, like I said I learned by the age of nineteen  
17 how to self-medicate with just alcohol. Uhm, and then when I tried to step out on my own I  
18 found, you know, harder stuff. Uhm, and I thought I learned from that. Uhm, but, uh, I, once I  
19 stepped out on my own I didn't really have anywhere to go. Uhm, and I moved in with a person  
20 and then we started dating and then [laughs] found this person liked to use but this was also the  
21 first person that ever told me that they loved me.  
22
- 23 AJ: Hm.  
24
- 25 XN: Uhm, and so I was kind of caught between do I, I have nowhere else to go. Uhm, and also this  
26 person clearly cares about me. Uhm, and also this is a thing that I like to do, I've found that, that  
27 I like to do so I might as well, uhm, but, uh, that quickly, quickly turned into a horrible situation.  
28 Uhm, we were, we were using one night and she, the man that was, uhm, uh, supplying us, uh,  
29 just kind of put on porn and then just kind of pushed her head down into his groin, and I was too  
30 high to realize what was going on, uhm, or do anything about it. Uhm, and the next day she was,  
31 when we got home she, she was like blood in the toilet and I, uh, you know, I, it was just not a  
32 good situation. And I decided that I'm not doing that stuff anymore, not doing that. Just...  
33
- 34 AJ: Mhm.  
35
- 36 XN: Meh. I don't need that. You don't need that, and I love you but if you're going to keep doing this  
37 I have to go. You know? Uhm, and she chose drugs, and...  
38
- 39 AJ: So was she raped? Is that what you're...  
40
- 41 XN: Yes. Yeah. Uhm, and, uh, you know, so it was, it was hard to like see this person that I like love...  
42
- 43 AJ: Mhm.  
44
- 45 XN: ... you know, go through these types of things. Like that wasn't necessarily the first time, uhm,  
46 and I'm not even sure that it was the last. You know?  
47

1 AJ: Mhm.  
2  
3 XN: Uhm, but go through those things to, to just make sure that she has booze and smokes every  
4 day. You know? Uhm, and, and at the personal cost of, of trying to just show her that, "I will stay  
5 with you. I will stay with you." You know? Just trying to show her that she could actually have  
6 somebody worth substance in her life. Uhm, and then just decide that I have to go. Like I felt like  
7 I was failing somebody but I know that I had to do that if I was gonna survive.  
8  
9 AJ: Sure.  
10  
11 XN: You know? Uhm, it was just...  
12  
13 AJ: What about with employment and school?  
14  
15 XN: Oh, yeah. Uh...  
16  
17 AJ: Police and... other parts of life?  
18  
19 XN: Police, the, when I, when I got into that accident, uhm, [laughs] I, you know, I was in a wig and,  
20 uh, all that stuff...  
21  
22 AJ: Mhm.  
23  
24 XN: They immediately confiscated my wig, and, and my, my jacket and stuff to make sure that I  
25 looked like myself in, in the mugshot.  
26  
27 AJ: Oh wow.  
28  
29 XN: Uhm, and then they just kind of stuck me in a room for, I don't even know how long, uh, until  
30 the morning time. Uhm, I guess that was for my own protection or something. Uhm, you know,  
31 at school there wasn't any like real discrimination. Of course none of the other girls could like,  
32 there, they didn't really know how to, uh, come at me or whatnot.  
33  
34 AJ: Mhm.  
35  
36 XN: Uhm, but, I mean, I navigated that fine. I actually found my best friend through school.  
37  
38 AJ: Okay.  
39  
40 XN: She, she [laughs], the first day that she came to school I was like putting on my makeup in the  
41 breakroom, and then she just came and sat down and watched me put on makeup and I was  
42 like, "I'm a diva. I'm not gonna be phased by this so whatever." [Laughs]. And now we still talk,  
43 and we're great friends.  
44  
45 AJ: That's awesome. That was gonna be my next question is, uhm, uhm, what have been some of  
46 the more positive aspects...  
47



1 XN: Uhm, just finding my community.  
2  
3 AJ: Yeah.  
4  
5 XN: Uhm, you know, being able to be myself in front of people is like an intoxicating experience that  
6 I don't think that I really had before.  
7  
8 AJ: Right.  
9  
10 XN: You know? I always felt like I was hiding something from people. And it's like, I don't, I don't  
11 necessarily feel like I have to tell everyone I know who I am or certain things about me. Like  
12 that's privileged information.  
13  
14 AJ: Exactly.  
15  
16 XN: But also too it's like tiring to have to actively hide.  
17  
18 AJ: Yes.  
19  
20 XN: You know?  
21  
22 AJ: It's exhausting.  
23  
24 XN: Exhausting, yeah, for sure. Uhm, but yeah, it's, it's really cool to have community now.  
25  
26 AJ: Mhm.  
27  
28 XN: I get invites to parties every once, every week or so.  
29  
30 AJ: Uhuh.  
31  
32 XN: You know, I don't like to go to them because I don't necessarily want to partake in [laughs] what  
33 might be going down there but...  
34  
35 AJ: Right, right.  
36  
37 XN: ... it's cool to just have people around just to know that...  
38  
39 AJ: Yeah.  
40  
41 XN: ... people are listening and people are seeing and people are watching and people are  
42 appreciating me, you know.  
43  
44 AJ: Xaundra, have you, uhm, and you don't have to answer this question if you don't want to or you  
45 can only answer it to the extent that you feel comfortable.  
46  
47 XN: Okay.

1  
2 AJ: Uhm, have you, uhm, undergone any medical, uhm, procedures.  
3  
4 XN: I've been on HRT once, uhm, and then it was too expensive.  
5  
6 AJ: Mhm.  
7  
8 XN: Uhm, they would up the dosage and then... or they didn't even up the dosage the first time. The  
9 first time it was like \$15 and then the next time it was like \$40 and it was for the same dosage.  
10  
11 AJ: Mhm.  
12  
13 XN: And then they upped the dosage, and it was like \$76 dollars.  
14  
15 AJ: Oh wow.  
16  
17 XN: And at the time I was making like \$600 in a month. And I just couldn't really swing it.  
18  
19 AJ: Yeah.  
20  
21 XN: Uhm.  
22  
23 AJ: Was this through medical or this...?  
24  
25 XN: I had medical insurance but it was, I guess it was like elective.  
26  
27 AJ: Mhm.  
28  
29 XN: Or something.  
30  
31 AJ: Oh wow.  
32  
33 XN: Uhm, and I couldn't...  
34  
35 AJ: So you were getting your HRT at a doctor?  
36  
37 XN: Yeah, yes, yes.  
38  
39 AJ: Wow. Uhm, cause, I mean, you know, there's some clinics and some places that you can check  
40 out around town that maybe be able to...  
41  
42 XN: Do it at a more affordable...?  
43  
44 AJ: Yeah. Like, uhm, Family Tree Clinic in St. Paul or...  
45  
46 XN: Okay. I mean...  
47

1 AJ: Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition.  
2  
3 XN: Yeah, I, I know that these organizations exist but that first time kind of scared me away.  
4  
5 AJ: Sure.  
6  
7 XN: I'm like I would rather learn how to live with myself with my own head than, than have to rely  
8 on medical transition if, if there, cause, I mean, I run into situations where I don't have to job,  
9 and I can't afford it.  
10  
11 AJ: Yeah.  
12  
13 XN: I don't, I don't want to run into that situation again.  
14  
15 AJ: Yeah, no, I get it. I totally get it. I'm just sharing what's, you know, some of the stuff that might  
16 be useful or helpful, and we can talk about it a little bit more if you want to but, uhm, who, who  
17 is the first trans person you've ever met?  
18  
19 XN: First trans person I've ever met... Uhh, who was the first trans person I've ever met? I know so  
20 many now.  
21  
22 AJ: [Laughs].  
23  
24 XN: You might be the first trans person I've ever met...  
25  
26 AJ: Oh wow.  
27  
28 XN: ... that I know of.  
29  
30 AJ: Right, exactly cause some, there's a lot of trans people in the world but you don't know that  
31 they're trans, right?  
32  
33 XN: Yeah. Uh, I think you actually were.  
34  
35 AJ: Is that right?  
36  
37 XN: Mhm. Yup. We had lunch at, uh, that Japanese place.  
38  
39 AJ: Uh... Zenbox.  
40  
41 XN: Yeah. Mhm. They close at like 2 P.M. [Laughs].  
42  
43 AJ: Yeah.  
44  
45 XN: Yeah, I think you were the first one.  
46  
47 AJ: Is that right? Wow.

1  
2 XN: Mhm.  
3  
4 AJ: Well, uhm, you have definitely, uhm, grown a lot more confidence since then. [Laughs].  
5  
6 XN: Thank you.  
7  
8 AJ: [Laughs].  
9  
10 XN: Thank you. I think so.  
11  
12 AJ: Uhm, so tell me about love and relationships. I mean, you have a little bit. You know, you're...  
13  
14 XN: Uhm.  
15  
16 AJ: ... you're into the person, not the gender.  
17  
18 XN: Mhm.  
19  
20 AJ: Right? But are you in a relationship right now?  
21  
22 XN: I am. Uhm, my partner and I are very happy. We're also polyamorous.  
23  
24 AJ: Okay.  
25  
26 XN: Uhm, though I only have one partner. They have multiple.  
27  
28 AJ: Mhm.  
29  
30 XN: Uhm, I mean, we, you know, we go on dates every once in a while, and we just happened to end  
31 up in the same place multiple times. [Laughs]. It's actually how we met was, was, was at a party  
32 that neither of us actually remembers. We both have been able to lace the details together.  
33  
34 AJ: Got it.  
35  
36 XN: Uhm, and they, I mean, I always thought they were cute but then once I started to see like  
37 they're Facebook posts and how like radical they are an stuff it was like, "Okay, I, I kind of really  
38 dig this person." [Laughs].  
39  
40 AJ: Really feel this person.  
41  
42 XN: Yeah.  
43  
44 AJ: Uhm, what's it like being in a polyamorous relationship?  
45  
46 XN: You know, uhm, I definitely had to unlearn and learn some new things. Uhm, uh, jealousy is, you  
47 know, a threat to any relationship.

1  
2 AJ: Mhm.  
3  
4 XN: Uhm, but I also had to learn... I had this like underlying feeling that like I can't ever be enough  
5 for someone. You know? My first girlfriend how that ended, uh, just, just end, ended in  
6 horribleness, and, uhm, and then with this new person that I had just nearly fallen in love with  
7 and then they told me they were polyamorous. And I'm like, "Oh, okay. I mean, that's fine."  
8  
9 AJ: Mhm.  
10  
11 XN: "But also why can't I just be enough for somebody?" [Laughs].  
12  
13 AJ: [Laughs].  
14  
15 XN: You know?  
16  
17 AJ: Right.  
18  
19 XN: Uhm, but I, I learned that it's, you know, it's, it wasn't even about me. It's, that's how they love,  
20 you know? Their heart is too big to just contain one other partner.  
21  
22 AJ: [Laughs]. Yeah. [Laughs].  
23  
24 XN: Uhm, so I feel a lot more secure in our relationship.  
25  
26 AJ: Do you guys live together?  
27  
28 XN: No, we don't live together.  
29  
30 AJ: Okay.  
31  
32 XN: Uhm, yeah.  
33  
34 AJ: But it works out?  
35  
36 XN: Yeah. Definitely.  
37  
38 AJ: Mhm.  
39  
40 XN: Definitely. I'm still very much in love. It's been two years now.  
41  
42 AJ: Wow. Do you guys have like written sort of rules of behavior?  
43  
44 XN: Oh, uhm, no we don't have like an actual like code of ethics. We just kind of like believe the  
45 same things, and, uhm, just...  
46  
47 AJ: Do you talk a lot around relationships? Do you communicate a lot?

1  
2 XN: Mhm, yeah, they tell me about their other partners. Uhm, they tell me about what they're  
3 comfortable with or not comfortable with, uhm, as far as like sex or, uhm, dates. Uhm, they,  
4 they're ideal relationship is that they don't even want to have primary or secondary partners.  
5 Uhm, everybody is just an equal partner to them.  
6  
7 AJ: Hm.  
8  
9 XN: Uhm, yeah.  
10  
11 AJ: How does your partner identify?  
12  
13 XN: They're trans non-binary, uhm, genderqueer. They don't really have, I think that is just their  
14 label, just non-binary.  
15  
16 AJ: Non-binary.  
17  
18 XN: Mhm.  
19  
20 AJ: Cool. Uhm, have you ever had any situations where people have been just really, uhm, either  
21 completely rude and unhelpful or like super helpful relative to your gender identity?  
22  
23 XN: Uhm, I mean, of course. There's times where I was walking down the street on Lake St., and I'll  
24 walk by three dudes and [laughs] they're just like, "Get your nasty ass out of my face before I  
25 slap your ass or something," you know?  
26  
27 AJ: Really?  
28  
29 XN: And I'm not even looking at these dudes. I'm not even trying to do anything. You know? I try to  
30 avoid eye contact...  
31  
32 AJ: Right.  
33  
34 XN: ... so that I don't, uhm...  
35  
36 AJ: Elicit those kinds of responses.  
37  
38 XN: Yeah. There's been times where I was like, I'll be walking down Hennepin downtown, and like  
39 two dudes just like stop walking and then like stand on either side and wait for me to pass. You  
40 know? And just catcall. In the moment I don't respond to their like, "Ain't nothing but a man ass  
41 bitch anyways," or something, you know?  
42  
43 AJ: Wow.  
44  
45 XN: Or like, uh, I've been riding the bus on East, uh, in East St. Paul, and two old drunk ladies were  
46 like, "We know you suck dick." [Laughs]. And like...  
47

1 AJ: [Laughs]. I know you suck dick too. [Laughs].  
2  
3 XN: [Laughs]. You know, like what the fuck? Like where do they come from? Like it's like...  
4  
5 AJ: Everybody loves dick. It's a show on HBO. You should watch it sometime. [Laughs].  
6  
7 XN: [Laughs]. God.  
8  
9 AJ: Oh wow.  
10  
11 XN: Uhm, but then again, I mean, they're, there is also times, uhm, where my, my trans friends know  
12 what it's like out there, you know? They, they know the kind of adversity you're up against out  
13 there. So like I have a job interview after this, and I got that because a friend of mine put it in  
14 the Queer Exchange, and they were looking for queer, trans, POCs to also apply to the job cause  
15 they're looking for people and they also want to, you know, extend opportunities to people that  
16 are denied to them usually.  
17  
18 AJ: Sure.  
19  
20 XN: You know? Uhm, I have, you know, a lot of friends that, that stick their necks out for me, and,  
21 and help me out and like, that, that will just like walk with me to the gas station at night just  
22 cause I just don't want to just go alone.  
23  
24 AJ: Mhm.  
25  
26 XN: You know? Uhm, so yeah, there's definitely negatives but I also have, you know, a network of  
27 people that are also...  
28  
29 AJ: Positive.  
30  
31 XN: Yeah.  
32  
33 AJ: Absolutely. Cool. Have you ever worked for or volunteered at a Trans or LGBT organization  
34 before?  
35  
36 XN: Uhm, I wanted to work with, uhm, the Trans Youth Support Network, TYSN...  
37  
38 AJ: Uhuh.  
39  
40 XN: ... once upon a time.  
41  
42 AJ: Yeah.  
43  
44 XN: And then it just...  
45  
46 AJ: I remember telling you about that group, I think.  
47

1 XN: Oh, okay. Maybe you were the one that told me but it didn't work out. Uhm, I haven't actually  
2 done any formal...  
3  
4 AJ: I think they disbanded like two weeks after. [Laughs].  
5  
6 XN: Yeah.  
7  
8 AJ: Yeah, they were having a lot of hard times.  
9  
10 XN: Mhm, uhm, since then I haven't really done, uh, any formal, formal work with, with anybody.  
11  
12 AJ: Mhm.  
13  
14 XN: I, I would be open to it, I think. Uhm, I don't know, I just haven't.  
15  
16 AJ: Yeah.  
17  
18 XN: I gotta figure me out. [Laughs].  
19  
20 AJ: No. That's real. That's what's up. Yeah. How long have you been out?  
21  
22 XN: I think it's been a little over four years now.  
23  
24 AJ: Right? What do you think the future is for the transgender community?  
25  
26 XN: For the trans community? For which community? [Laughs]. Which part of, uhm, I mean, I think  
27 it's looking up. Uhm, I know when I was growing up there was no Laverne Cox.  
28  
29 AJ: Mhm.  
30  
31 XN: Uhm, there was also no Caitlyn Jenner.  
32  
33 AJ: [Laughs].  
34  
35 XN: Uhm, you know, there was no Janet Mock, uhm, you know, when, when people would say  
36 demeaning things...  
37  
38 AJ: There was an Andrea Jenkins, I'm just saying. [Laughs].  
39  
40 XN: Oh! Okay. I didn't know of you. [Laughs]. You were the first trans person I met.  
41  
42 AJ: I, there you go. [Laughs].  
43  
44 XN: Uhm, uh, but yeah, I mean, now a days a hear like the, uh, that kids can go to school and, and,  
45 and be respected by their identities and stuff.  
46  
47 AJ: Yeah.



1  
2 XN: And I'm like...  
3  
4 AJ: Absolutely.  
5  
6 XN: ... that, that's something that changed in my very short lifetime.  
7  
8 AJ: Mhm.  
9  
10 XN: You know? So I'm just like... I think it's looking up. I think it's looking up. But, and I think the  
11 reason why we're in the, where we are right now is cause the, the dawn gets darkest just before  
12 the... however you say that.  
13  
14 AJ: Just before the... yeah. The night is darkest just before the dawn.  
15  
16 XN: The night is darkest just before the dawn. Yes. Yes. You know?  
17  
18 AJ: Well, it's pretty dark right now. The sun better hurry up and come up. [Laughs].  
19  
20 XN: It's pretty midnight. And, uh, yeah. Sun's gotta come up sometime.  
21  
22 AJ: Wow, Xaundra, I'm so thrilled that you were willing to sit down and talk with me today...  
23  
24 XN: Thank you for having me.  
25  
26 AJ: ... about your life and your loves and your ups and your downs. Uhm, is there anything that you  
27 want to say that I didn't ask you?  
28  
29 XN: Hm. Uhm... to all the little trans girls out there just keep on holding on. Just keep on holding on  
30 please. Doesn't have to be the end yet, you know?  
31  
32 AJ: Wow. So beautiful.  
33  
34 XN: [Laughs].  
35  
36 AJ: Thank you, Xaundra.  
37  
38 XN: Thank you, Andrea.  
39  
40 AJ: Until we meet again.  
41  
42 XN: For sure.  
43  
44 AJ: Peace.  
45  
46 XN: Peace.