

Danika Ragnhild  
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins  
Interviewer

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

February 17, 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    Danika Ragnhild        -DR  
3  
4    AJ:        So, hello.  
5    DR:        Hello.  
6  
7    AJ:        My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am the oral historian for the Transgender Oral History Project  
8                at the University of Minnesota. Today is February 17, 2017. It's . . .  
9  
10   DR:        Beautiful.  
11   AJ:        An unusually beautiful day for February.  
12   DR:        Although it bodes not well for the global climate.  
13   AJ:        Yeah, I don't think so.  
14   DR:        It's kind of nice today.  
15   AJ:        Yeah, 62 degrees was the high, I think.  
16   DR:        Wow, I didn't even look it up. I just knew I overdressed earlier.  
17   AJ:        So, I'm here today in south Minneapolis with Danika Ragnhild.  
18   DR:        Yup.  
19   AJ:        And so, how are you doing today, Danika?  
20   DR:        Well, I'm tired.  
21   AJ:        Yeah?  
22   DR:        Yeah, a lot of my friends tell me that's kind of my default state.  
23   AJ:        Well, it is Friday, it's the end of the week.  
24   DR:        It's been a long week, we had a lot of people out sick at work.  
25   AJ:        Oh, wow.  
26   DR:        Yeah, the norovirus totally hit our staff pretty hard.  
27   AJ:        Yikes. And you have managed to side step that?  
28   DR:        No, I totally got sick earlier, but mine was last week and I'm past . . . what's that, where I'm  
29                infectious to other people.  
30   AJ:        Oh, OK. All right. So, Danika – state your name, spell your name so that we're sure that we  
31                have it spelled correctly and I want you to state it so that we make sure we have the correct  
32                pronunciation.

- 1 DR: Cool.
- 2 AJ: Tell me your gender identity today - as you claim it, the gender you were assigned at birth.
- 3 DR: Sure.
- 4 AJ: And, also what pronouns you use.
- 5 DR: Nice. So, my full name is Tyler Danika Ragnhild. I never actually changed my first name, I just  
6 changed my middle name to Danika.
- 7 AJ: Wow.
- 8 DR: So, that's T-y-l-e-r D-a-n-i-k-a R-a-g-n-h-i-l-d, so Danika Ragnhild is what I go by. I identify as a  
9 trans woman, trans feminine – some days a little gender queer. I'm not afraid of my . . . I kind of  
10 like my facial hair.
- 11 AJ: Yeah?
- 12 DR: I've got a little bit of chest hair. I don't mind it. My partners always get excited about it so it's  
13 hard to feel like shame when they are associated with so much love.
- 14 AJ: Excited . . . like in a good way?
- 15 DR: Yeah. Like, "Oooh."
- 16 AJ: "Oooh, sexy."
- 17 DR: I didn't expect to every like somebody running their fingers through my chest hair and if you  
18 would have talked to me maybe even like five years ago I would have been like, "Nooo."
- 19 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 20 DR: But yeah, a lot of support. So, on with the list – she/her pronouns and assigned male at birth.
- 21 AJ: Yeah.
- 22 DR: Fucked up, didn't they?
- 23 AJ: Yeah, that clearly, based on your identity today, was not the right assignment. Danika, tell me  
24 what is the first thing you remember in life. What's your earliest memory?
- 25 DR: My earliest memory, I was about two and a half and I remember when my sister was being born  
26 and going to the hospital and just being excited. It was definitely my first encounter with new  
27 life in the world and that was awesome as a kid.
- 28 AJ: So, you remember when your sister was born?
- 29 DR: Yeah, yeah. I was two and a half – I think. Two and a half - yes. Just barely I can remember  
30 walking in. I can remember the brown sheets, it was in Crookston, Minnesota.
- 31 AJ: That was going to be my next question.
- 32 DR: Which is northwestern, rural Minnesota. Yeah, brown sheets.

- 1 AJ: There's a U of M . . .
- 2 DR: Yeah, U of M-Crookston, I think. I think I had a lot of excitement around it and that's kind of  
3 what it is. Although they say the more you review a memory the less accurate it is, so who  
4 knows what I'm remembering now.
- 5 AJ: What was growing up in Crookston like?
- 6 DR: Well, I grew up mostly in Detroit Lakes and then on a farm in North Dakota.
- 7 AJ: OK.
- 8 DR: So, those were just sort of the nearest hospitals that could handle having a kid.
- 9 AJ: Oh, so you were born in Crookston but you didn't . . .
- 10 DR: That was my sister, right? I was actually born in Thief River Falls.
- 11 AJ: This is getting complicated.
- 12 DR: Yeah, we lived in Red Lake Falls when I was really little – I think until I was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, then we  
13 moved.
- 14 AJ: Are there actually falls in these cities called "falls"?
- 15 DR: There are – yeah, I mean they're not like . . . they're on sort of the level of Minnehaha Falls, so  
16 they're nice but they're not like, "Whoa!".
- 17 AJ: Not like Niagara Falls or anything?
- 18 DR: No – or I've been to some water falls in Oregon that were really breathtaking – just huge and  
19 you could walk under them. I guess you can kind of do that with Minnehaha Falls . . . I think.  
20 Naaaa.
- 21 AJ: Sort of, not really.
- 22 DR: No.
- 23 AJ: You can stand pretty close and get wet but . . . and people do walk down there, but it's pretty  
24 slippery. I don't know.
- 25 DR: I've always wanted to do the meditate under a falls thing. Any-who, growing up where I grew  
26 up, though, total shit.
- 27 AJ: OK, why do you say that?
- 28 DR: I had a lot of traditional rural experiences. I got attacked a lot for a long time until I got better at  
29 fighting.
- 30 AJ: Attacked? Why?

- 1 DR: I don't know. People just . . . I don't know. I'm also autistic and so I like to think it's a  
2 combination . . . when I came out as trans, kind of everybody's reaction, who knew me my  
3 whole life, was like, "Ahhh, that was the one – I knew it wasn't just gay." They were like . . .
- 4 AJ: Really?
- 5 DR: "Yeah, there was always just something off," is how they would say it. Yeah, I've never been  
6 very good at hiding things. Like some people are real good at being stealth and . . . I don't know.
- 7 AJ: Concealing their sort of true identity and all of that.
- 8 DR: Right. And I was just never very good at masking it. I don't think I ever understood . . .
- 9 AJ: So, as a kid you think you were harassed around your gender?
- 10 DR: Gender and disability and . . . a lot of people really, the way people would kind of phrase it is  
11 they were just really disturbed by the way that I behaved, I guess. And then also my . . . I had a  
12 really abusive father.
- 13 AJ: Wow, I'm sorry.
- 14 DR: Yeah.
- 15 AJ: Physically abusive?
- 16 DR: Yeah, not sexually – but he'd beat me. We owned a farm, well that we inherited, that was my  
17 grandparents' farm and my great-grandparents' farm, and he would take me out there for a  
18 week or so at a time and we would work . . . we had a strawberry field, a total of 484 acres, but  
19 the strawberry field was only once acre. I kind of did everything for that, or a lot of the stuff.
- 20 AJ: For the strawberries?
- 21 DR: Yeah, the strawberries, and eventually we had an alfalfa field. It wasn't a main source of income  
22 or anything, it was just sort of my dad's dream project, and that was definitely where he was the  
23 most violent and where all of it sort of coalesced. I imagine I was probably also not entirely  
24 without my hand, not in the abuse but just kind of getting in fights with people and not really  
25 understanding how to connect with people. It's weird because I don't think I understood for a  
26 long time . . . like I understood that I was queer. On there, I say I've been out for 18/9-10 years  
27 because I did when I was 12, I came out to my dad.
- 28 AJ: Really?
- 29 DR: Yeah.
- 30 AJ: To your abusive dad?
- 31 DR: Yeah, big fucking mistake.
- 32 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 33 DR: Yeah, went right back . . . we were talking about Wendy Carlos, the composer who did the music  
34 for *The Shining* and has a famous album, *The Well-Tempered Synthesizer*, which . . .

- 1 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 2 DR: Yeah, did a bunch of Kubrick films and was a trans woman.
- 3 AJ: Stanley Kubrick – when you say Kubrick films?
- 4 DR: Yeah, Stanley Kubrick – whatever, I don't know. I'm not really that into film, but I like her music  
5 and my dad was . . .
- 6 AJ: And she's trans?
- 7 DR: She's trans.
- 8 AJ: What's her name – Wendy . . .?
- 9 DR: Wendy Carlos.
- 10 AJ: Wendy Carlos. How did you know that she was trans?
- 11 DR: Well, because my dad has a weird hypocritical liberal thing where he's like OK with it over there,  
12 but the second it's in his house, he's like, "No, you're lying, you're making it up – it's not true,  
13 it's not real."
- 14 AJ: Wow, OK.
- 15 DR: Yeah, so when I was 12 I told him . . . I remember we were driving to the farm, so we were about  
16 a half hour west of Grand Forks and I told him and he just basically was like, "No, you're not."  
17 Then I got really angry, it's kind of clichéd but I always think of the . . . there was definitely . . . he  
18 didn't only beat me when he drank but it was definitely more scary, which was also something I  
19 didn't . . . I was like, "Oh, the Jamison is out, I think I'm going to go maybe wander out in the  
20 field." Yeah, so . . . yeah.
- 21 AJ: Was your mom around?
- 22 DR: Yeah. I think I hid it pretty well. I did eventually confront my family about it, asked my mom . . .  
23 when I was coming to terms with it, I really wondered and had always believed that he was also  
24 beating my mom and my sister, which was not true – which is good, really.
- 25 AJ: Yeah, that's good but . . .
- 26 DR: So, when I told them they were like . . . they reacted with a lot of disbelief. They did come  
27 around eventually, that was after I'd moved out and had been living on my own for a while.
- 28 AJ: So, you did have an intact family.
- 29 DR: Yeah.
- 30 AJ: But . . .
- 31 DR: Yeah, just an angry father.
- 32 AJ: Angry dad. And you guys would kind of spend time away on the farm.

- 1 DR: Yeah, and he'd take me out of class sometimes to go . . . he worked as a farm business  
2 management instructor.
- 3 AJ: Which kind?
- 4 DR: Farm business management instructor.
- 5 AJ: OK, wow.
- 6 DR: Which means basically he taught accounting to farmers and helped them think of their farm as a  
7 business. So, I'd go on trips with him and stuff. It turned out there were a lot of things that my  
8 mom didn't know – like that I was being taken out of class because when my grandfather died,  
9 which was my father's father, my dad actually took me out of class to go up and . . . because my  
10 grandfather was in a coma for two weeks before we just sort of pulled the plug, and my dad  
11 took me out of class, we drove up to Grand Forks, which is where he was staying. That was  
12 definitely the most vulnerable I ever saw my father and learned a lot of things about him and my  
13 mom didn't even know that that had happened.
- 14 AJ: Wow.
- 15 DR: While my father still denies the physical abuse, he was like, "Yeah, that happened." So that was  
16 sort of a breakthrough for my mother and my sister about them believing that there was a lot  
17 more to what was happening to . . . to put it vaguely, the relationship that I had with my father.  
18 There was a lot they didn't know about.
- 19 AJ: Wow. So, you were kind of bullied in school, but you said, "Up until you learned how to fight  
20 back." So, when was that?
- 21 DR: Probably junior year of high school. After a while I just got pretty good at fighting. Everything  
22 kind of died down to threats. At that point, when somebody threatened to get in a fight with  
23 me, I would just be like, "Well, if you're going to do it, do it."
- 24 AJ: Yeah, bring it on.
- 25 DR: Yeah. I don't relish this but I'm not going to change your mind with words so you can do it if  
26 you're going to go it – which, hilariously, actually works very well at getting people to not want  
27 to hit you if you're just like, "Yeah, I guess if you're going to hit me, you're going to hit me."
- 28 AJ: Where were you living then?
- 29 DR: That was Detroit Lakes.
- 30 AJ: Detroit Lakes, so a small town.
- 31 DR: Small town – population 7,000 and some.
- 32 AJ: Is there more than one high school there?
- 33 DR: No, just one high school. Really bad at the time about LGBT support.
- 34 AJ: Have they gotten better?



- 1 DR: They did – literally two years, I think, after I graduated. There was this teacher who I loved, Mrs.  
2 Trout, and she was a lesbian woman.
- 3 AJ: Mrs. Trout.
- 4 DR: I know, what a great name for a lesbian. And she taught math and she was very good at it. She  
5 taught the AP track and had a huge percentage of people who would pass the AP Calculus test.
- 6 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 7 DR: Yeah, so it was a huge asset to the school and they knew it. Like I said, a couple of years after I  
8 graduated, I'm pretty sure it was two, a kid said something like . . . called her a carpet muncher  
9 or something in front of an entire class.
- 10 AJ: Wow.
- 11 DR: And probably along with some other slurs and explicatives and the school expelled him for three  
12 months and within two months of that, tons of kids came out. They formed a GSA because it  
13 was the first time . . . the school had never taken a stance on it, which is really just passive  
14 support of the oppressive.
- 15 AJ: Right.
- 16 DR: And yeah, I guess it's a lot better now. I know the town has also grown in population a lot, so I  
17 wonder if that had a positive effect. Or, if it was just maybe shifting culture, I don't really know.
- 18 AJ: Do you go back to Detroit Lakes at all?
- 19 DR: No.
- 20 AJ: Is your family still there?
- 21 DR: Yeah, I make them visit me here.
- 22 AJ: Oh, really? So, you are connected to your family?
- 23 DR: Yeah, well it was important to me . . . so, when I came out again, that was . . .
- 24 AJ: So, you came out at 12; dad freaked out.
- 25 DR: Said no, yeah.
- 26 AJ: And you kind of went back into the closet. When did you come out again?
- 27 DR: Yeah, so I was 21. I had just met my spouse, who I'm married to now. We were . . .
- 28 AJ: What's your spouse's name?
- 29 DR: Ah, Rayegene.
- 30 AJ: Rayegene.
- 31 DR: Yeah, and they identify as non-binary, which is great.

- 1 AJ: Cool, that works out.
- 2 DR: Yeah. And, it was like a couple of months into dating and I was like . . . I just felt like they would  
3 be totally comfortable with me as a woman or as a man and I was like, "You know, if you want I  
4 could be a girl." And, they were like, "I mean it doesn't really matter to me either way."
- 5 AJ: Oh, wow – OK.
- 6 DR: Yeah, we both have never identified strongly with any sexuality – just because gender doesn't  
7 play a huge role when we're attracted to people – physically or emotionally. And so, it was like,  
8 "Yes," and they were like, "Well, I don't really care." "Well, then I think I'm going to . . ." and  
9 then it was just really fast. I was like . . . I was looking at all the girl's clothes, I changed my  
10 pronouns, picked the name Danika really quickly.
- 11 AJ: Yeah, how did you come across that name?
- 12 DR: Danika was actually the name of this girl that I knew in high school who I just adored and really  
13 looked up to.
- 14 AJ: So, you had a crush on her?
- 15 DR: A bit of a crush, a bit of . . . do you want to be them or do you want to fuck them?
- 16 AJ: Yeah, right.
- 17 DR: Both. And it made me . . . yeah, had always been really kind to me. I didn't really have a ton of  
18 friends in high school – shocking after my story up to this point. But, I had always liked the  
19 name. She spelled it with a "k" and so I chose it – then it was mine. There's been times when  
20 I've been like, "Oh, should I change it – there's cooler names." But, for me, I decided to just . . .
- 21 AJ: It's a pretty cool name, Danika.
- 22 DR: Yeah. I don't mind the idea of being . . . like you don't have to love your name all the time,  
23 right? Some people do and that's fine, and some people do and they need to change their name  
24 a lot and I think that's OK too. But, for me, I like defining it rather than it defining me. So, I just  
25 tried to . . . I use it to actualize my identity.
- 26 AJ: Wow, that's cool. So, 21, you came out to your partner at the time, and to the world I suppose.
- 27 DR: Yeah, just to everybody – class.
- 28 AJ: You bought all these women's clothes, you wore them only at home or did you . . . ?
- 29 DR: No, I was out in public. I was taking a theatre class at the time and everyone was like, "So when  
30 are you going to do . . . like you've gotten really into that role, when are you going to do the  
31 performance?" I was like, "Well, I guess gender is performative but . . ."
- 32 AJ: But this is not a show that I'm rehearsing for.
- 33 DR: Right, this show is for me. Yeah, I had just really went for it – told all my friends. I had some  
34 really good friends who are still friends now who I talked to and I was like, "So, I've got this plan,  
35 I'm a woman is the plan." And they were all like, "Oh, yeah – yes, of course." And then I was

- 1           like, "Great." And again, it's just my experience – I feel validated in that, I don't think a person  
2           needs to feel validated, but it was good. And so then . . . I was in college.
- 3   AJ:     It helps to have the support of your friends.
- 4   DR:     Yeah.
- 5   AJ:     Where did you go to college?
- 6   DR:     So I was at the University of Minnesota.
- 7   AJ:     Twin Cities?
- 8   DR:     Yes.
- 9   AJ:     OK.
- 10   DR:    And then I transferred to Columbia College Chicago.
- 11   AJ:     Oh, wow.
- 12   DR:     Where I got a degree in playwriting.
- 13   AJ:     Is that right?
- 14   DR:     Yes.
- 15   AJ:     Cool. Right down on Michigan Avenue, huh?
- 16   DR:     Yes, it is. It's a weird college but I . . .
- 17   AJ:     I grew up in Chicago so I'm pretty familiar with Columbia. It's a great school, it's a good school.
- 18   DR:     I liked it. It was a good place to sort of grow into myself. There was a lot of sort of stifling and a  
19           lot of things that were held back, while I'm sure there were plenty of things that are problematic  
20           about their LGBT student . . . whatever. I don't know what it's called – do you know what I'm  
21           talking about? Like college GSA thing. They were pretty good for me, not that I got super  
22           heavily involved.
- 23   AJ:     Were they good on trans issues?
- 24   DR:     I think so. They were good about pronouns. It's hard . . . I think it's hard to be good.
- 25   AJ:     But you were out when you went to Columbia.
- 26   DR:     Yeah, I was out. I showed up and I was like, "Yeah, I'm a girl." That's the way I also got  
27           connected to the Center on Halsted and what's the . . .
- 28   AJ:     Howard Brown.
- 29   DR:     Howard Brown is where I did HRT. I'm not on HRT anymore.
- 30   AJ:     But you have done hormonal replacement therapy?

- 1 DR: Yes. All I ever had was just estrogen because, for whatever reason, when I take estrogen my  
2 testosterone just plummets really hard and my estrogen spikes up really hard, so it's actually . . .  
3 it's something that I had the worst side effect. Not the worst, people have probably had worse,  
4 but it made a lot of my tissue, like skin really thin.
- 5 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 6 DR: And what that meant . . . and this is kind of gross, every time I took a poop, I bleed a ton  
7 because it would just rip.
- 8 AJ: Oh, no – really?
- 9 DR: Yeah. And I wasn't even doing . . . like I've never been . . . I've always had kind of a strong sense  
10 of ownership over my genitals, so I was always pretty happy with the nerves that are there and  
11 just using them for whatever they can do. So, I never got into anal, so I wasn't even doing anal –  
12 I was just fucking . . . every time I'd take a shit, I'd just like, "Ahhh."
- 13 AJ: That's like every day.
- 14 DR: That's like every day, it is. It stops being every day when you know that's what it's going to be  
15 like, which isn't healthy. But I got a lot of changes on my body. I got my tits, which I like. They  
16 grew and made me happy.
- 17 AJ: The boobies.
- 18 DR: And, it was good – but then I just decided that I didn't . . . I was happy.
- 19 AJ: You didn't want to bleed every time you took a shit.
- 20 DR: I didn't want to bleed every time I took a shit; right - my body was in a pretty good place. I think  
21 I'll probably once or twice or three times, who knows, do it again in my life. I don't know. It  
22 kind of depends on where the science is, right? I feel like you've got to make a lot of . . . it's a lot  
23 of tough decisions when it comes to your body and medical decisions.
- 24 AJ: It is, it is. I think some people think trans people just sort of wake up and say . . .
- 25 DR: Have a checklist.
- 26 AJ: "Hey, I'm going to be a guy," or, "I'm going to be a girl," but I think people really take seriously  
27 the changes that their bodies have to go through.
- 28 DR: Yeah, one thing I struggled with a lot is I really prefer, and this isn't a huge struggle, but just in  
29 terms of visual identity and what I want to look like, is I love short hair. I've been cutting my  
30 own hair for probably 14 years, and I love short hair, but I did grow it out to be more passable.
- 31 AJ: Yeah, I remember it was blonde . . .
- 32 DR: Yeah, all sorts of colors.
- 33 AJ: . . . and it was long, like a little bob kind of thing going on.

- 1 DR: Yeah, and before that it was actually the longest it was – it was actually down to about here,  
2 which was long for me. But I’m glad to have short hair again now. It feels like . . . this is the  
3 shortest I’ve been since probably before I came out.
- 4 AJ: When did you go this short?
- 5 DR: Oh, just a couple days ago.
- 6 AJ: That’s what . . . I’m like, “When I saw Danika last week, the hair . . .”
- 7 DR: Much longer.
- 8 AJ: When you jumped out of the car, I’m like, “Hmmm, something’s different.”
- 9 DR: Yeah, I cut my own hair, like I said. It’s really cathartic.
- 10 AJ: Yeah? I don’t think I’ve ever done that.
- 11 DR: Oh, my God. It’s like a huge . . . a lot of people I know who cut their own hair feel this way, but I  
12 don’t know if it would be this way for everybody but for me it’s this huge release of emotion. I  
13 kind of just . . . I always do it on a night where I’m feeling really stressed but calm enough to . . .
- 14 AJ: Not destroy your hair.
- 15 DR: Yeah, to not do something stupid. I know what I’m doing, I’m not super drunk or something  
16 dumb. It was actually at the school I work at, I was talking to one of our social workers and I’m  
17 telling him about how cathartic it is and we’re like, “It’s kind of like . . .” It’s a really problematic  
18 comparsion but it’s kind of like a healthy way of cutting yourself. It’s when you can’t do a ton  
19 because you run out of hair. You’re not damaging yourself but that huge release of emotion. I  
20 don’t know, it works for me.
- 21 AJ: Wow, like a snake mulching its skin in some way.
- 22 DR: Yeah. And like . . . I don’t know, you’re taking . . .
- 23 AJ: Renewal.
- 24 DR: Renewal is definitely a part of it, the feeling of ownership and control – even a small amount of  
25 control over your body. It’s just nice, I don’t know.
- 26 AJ: What have been some of the positive aspects of your transition?
- 27 DR: I mean, my whole life is just better. I always felt like a powerful cognitive dissonance when I was  
28 in the closet. I couldn’t look in the mirror. I still struggle with it, but now I can. In fact, today I  
29 took a bunch of selfies.
- 30 AJ: Really?
- 31 DR: Yeah, because I was like . . . I needed to take a step forward.
- 32 AJ: Well you got this new haircut, you’ve got to get used to who you are now.

- 1 DR: Yeah, right. And I kind of wanted to see it on my Facebook page. I haven't put up a photo yet,  
2 but so a sense of self, well-being. Sex has always been really important to me and I feel like  
3 before I could never have enjoyable sex – it was just stressful sex, that it needed to happen and  
4 now it's just . . .
- 5 AJ: Like angry sex.
- 6 DR: Yeah.
- 7 AJ: Not revenge sex though.
- 8 DR: No, not the fun kind of anger sex – when you hate yourself . . . yeah. Also, I feel like I always  
9 wanted to be with people who wanted to be with me. Do you know what I mean? So, I couldn't  
10 be with Rayegene without transitioning, or at least starting the process. It's like a lifetime of  
11 process. I would look at these people who I wanted to date really badly and I would be like,  
12 "But the person you want to date is who I really am, not the fake . . . the façade that I was  
13 wearing." Right? So I wanted to be with people who were queer and who wanted to be with  
14 queer people and I wanted to . . . and so now I can and it works and it's amazing.
- 15 AJ: But now you're married.
- 16 DR: Yeah, we're poly though so I still . . .
- 17 AJ: Oh, you're poly?
- 18 DR: Yeah, yeah.
- 19 AJ: Talk to me about that. What's that like?
- 20 DR: Oh, it's fun.
- 21 AJ: Is it like a formal . . . everybody has got two partners or is it informal where you just meet  
22 somebody and you call up your spouse and say, "Hey, I met this person and I kind of want to do  
23 them."
- 24 DR: Right. I basically . . . Rayegene and I are sooo close. We are . . . we communicate about  
25 everything and we communicate really well about it, and so actually Rayegene is like, "I don't  
26 care, if you meet somebody, you meet somebody." I don't even need to call. I would, because  
27 I'd want to be like, "Rayegene, I met somebody." But, yeah – so it's very kind of informal. I've  
28 always, when they talk about different structures of poly relationships, I've always been like,  
29 "Man, which structure do I want?" The one that works – I don't know what that's going to be.
- 30 AJ: That's the best kind, I guess.
- 31 DR: Right. Like I figure if I dated anybody . . . and I don't have – well, I have one partner who is like .  
32 . . we've been seeing each other for three years now.
- 33 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 34 DR: That's pretty good, we're getting close.
- 35 AJ: How long have you been married to Rayegene?

- 1 DR: A year and a half. So, we've been together for nine and a half years – met in college when we  
2 were both real young so we sort of were like, "Let's go slow because this can't be serious,  
3 right?" And then three years and one move to Chicago later, we were like, "OK, this is pretty  
4 serious."
- 5 AJ: So Rayegene moved to Chicago with you?
- 6 DR: Yeah.
- 7 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 8 DR: I know, right?
- 9 AJ: That's serious.
- 10 DR: I know, right? It was crazy too. Chicago sucked because we were so poor. I'm sex-positive and  
11 I'm pro-sex worker, but going into sex work because you feel like it's the only job you can get is  
12 really hard on a person.
- 13 AJ: Yeah, that sucks.
- 14 DR: And I felt like . . . so I was a dom and did coming stuff and that was like . . .
- 15 AJ: What's coming? Oh, the camera.
- 16 DR: Camera – yeah. Web cam, whatever.
- 17 AJ: Web cam, yeah.
- 18 DR: Cam4.com, that's the website.
- 19 AJ: OK. Cam4.com.
- 20 DR: The dungeon that I worked at was The Continuum.
- 21 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 22 DR: Yeah, we were downtown and I'm pretty sure we even had cops on the payroll. They were  
23 fancy shit. We had everything in there.
- 24 AJ: Really?
- 25 DR: It was kind of cool.
- 26 AJ: Wow, so if you were doing that, even though you felt like that was the only job you could get,  
27 you were probably making some pretty decent money.
- 28 DR: If I had stuck with it longer. I just would get really stressed about it. So, I kind of quit and then .  
29 . .
- 30 AJ: So, did you wear leathers and heels and black patent . . .
- 31 DR: Oh, yeah. Well, I mean . . . not as much leather because Rayegene was vegan at the time, but  
32 black everything – and fake leather. All the clothing was custom made at home. We'd just go to

- 1 the thrift store and be like, “Oh, this black shirt which looks plain and dumb, but these cuts here  
2 and then we’re going to . . .” We would cut a shirt in half, down this and do ribbons and all sorts  
3 of fun stuff.
- 4 AJ: Oh, my goodness. Fun. Wow.
- 5 DR: Yeah, that was . . .
- 6 AJ: DIY Dom.
- 7 DR: That’s right.
- 8 AJ: DIY . . . what did I say? DIY. DIY. Yeah.
- 9 DR: Do it yourself – yeah, DIY Dom.
- 10 AJ: I love that.
- 11 DR: Yeah, right.
- 12 AJ: Are there dominatrix clubs here in Minneapolis?
- 13 DR: Yeah, I don’t participate in them that much. I recently cut out that life. There are so many  
14 people who were interested – it was like, “Oh my God.” Oh yeah, that’s another thing I wanted  
15 to say about us being poly, our relationship is so comfortable, I don’t have . . . like I have one  
16 friend who is amazing, and she is poly and she has three partners and she’s always dating new  
17 people. She pours tons of energy into it and I don’t have that much energy.
- 18 AJ: Yeah, it’s work, man.
- 19 DR: It is a lot of work.
- 20 AJ: I got one partner and it’s like . . . it wears me out. You’ve got to go to dinner and you’ve got to  
21 go to plays, you’ve got to . . .
- 22 DR: Check-in if they need extra emotional support you’ve got to be there.
- 23 AJ: Go on walks, right – yeah. You’ve got to be there when they’re sick.
- 24 DR: Yeah, exactly. And then just things that you love to do take up a lot of time, things that are just  
25 nice – you want to have a nice Sunday afternoon if you’re not going on a date that Sunday  
26 afternoon with somebody else.
- 27 AJ: It’s all work.
- 28 DR: Yup.
- 29 AJ: And then you multiply that times . . .
- 30 DR: Two, three, four. Oh, my God – yeah.
- 31 AJ: Because I suspect that in poly relationships, I mean people expect the same things out of a  
32 relationship – primarily.



- 1 DR: Sure. And I always try to be . . . I'm very upfront and straight forward about . . . I like to be  
2 supportive, I want to be supportive, but the time that I have is not infinite.
- 3 AJ: My work, I've got a primary partner.
- 4 DR: Yeah, I've got a full-time job, I've got a primary partner, I have a great group of friends now.
- 5 AJ: You used to be engaged in theatre, are you still involved in theatre?
- 6 DR: Yeah, I still do that some. Last spring, I did *Charm*, which was at Mixed Blood, which was about .  
7 . .
- 8 AJ: Mama Gloria.
- 9 DR: Yes, of course. And I did the sound design, so I was in all the sound . . .
- 10 AJ: Oh, is that right? Because I was thinking you weren't on stage.
- 11 DR: No.
- 12 AJ: You did the sound design.
- 13 DR: Only just as long as they convinced me to be on stage.
- 14 AJ: That had to be a tough gig because there was a lot of sound in that show.
- 15 DR: I'm glad to hear that. I love it. I am a workaholic too. If I start a job, I just throw myself into it  
16 so hard. I think working is my passion.
- 17 AJ: Wow, what did you think of that show?
- 18 DR: It was fun. There was a lot of . . . I was really glad . . . there was a lot of talk about who we were  
19 going to cast for Mama Gloria and we ended up going with authentic casting, which is always, I  
20 think, a weird way of . . .
- 21 AJ: So, a Black trans woman.
- 22 DR: Yes, playing a Black trans woman.
- 23 AJ: Yes.
- 24 DR: Which I fought really hard for.
- 25 AJ: This was at Mixed Blood Theatre, right?
- 26 DR: Yeah, Mixed Blood Theatre, and I think they do a relatively good job.
- 27 AJ: Yeah, they try.
- 28 DR: They try.
- 29 AJ: Which some theatre companies don't even . . . they don't even think about it or discuss it or  
30 anything.

- 1 DR: At all. And some didn't and I now hear do, sorry that's a different . . . I don't know if you know  
2 what theatre company I'm talking about?
- 3 AJ: OK.
- 4 DR: But, yeah – yeah. So, there was a lot of discussion. It's weird to feel like saying push back  
5 against that, but I know there was talk of even after the show was going of being like, "Oh, we'll  
6 just put Harry Waters, Jr.," and I'm like, "It's not the same thing, he's a man – he's a guy, he's so  
7 much a dude." It's not the same. Because I do think there's something to be said about non-  
8 binary people playing people who don't identify as non-binary and trans. But when someone is  
9 just cis and playing a trans role, especially of the opposite identification – that's nonsense.
- 10 AJ: What have been some of the challenges since you've come out, Danika?
- 11 DR: Work, getting a decent job – getting a job that I feel good about and I'm passionate about.
- 12 AJ: But you're not doming anymore, you don't have to do sex work for a living?
- 13 DR: Yeah, right. So, things have been good. I have the best job I've ever had. I work at a school, I  
14 earn \$18/hour. I fought really hard for the \$18/hour and it's funny because sometimes I talk to  
15 people and they're like, "You know, that's not that much money." I'm like, "It is for me."
- 16 AJ: "It's the best job I've ever had."
- 17 DR: I don't know, maybe not for you but for a trans woman with a disability, it feels pretty good.  
18 And we don't have to worry about food, I'm not stealing . . . when we were in Chicago, I was  
19 stealing almost all our food towards the end.
- 20 AJ: Oh my goodness, wow.
- 21 DR: Yeah, from Trader Joe's because fuck them.
- 22 AJ: Trader Joe's – fuck them.
- 23 DR: I'm like, "They'll never stop me." I remember when I was doing stuff at TYSN when I first moved  
24 to Minneapolis and I was talking to Toni Foxx about that and she was like, "Oh, you've got to  
25 teach me to steal." "Ohhh, I don't know how to teach." I want to, but honestly if you're white  
26 you just grab it and then you walk out the door with purpose and then people don't . . . I don't  
27 know, it's probably a little trickier than that but . . .
- 28 AJ: Well, I think being a white person . . .
- 29 DR: It's helpful if you need to steal.
- 30 AJ: People just don't think you're going to walk out of the store with the food.
- 31 DR: Absolutely.
- 32 AJ: Whereas, they think a Black person – immediately as you walk in the door, that's your motive  
33 and so they follow you around.
- 34 DR: Yeah, it's dumb.

- 1 AJ: Would you take prepared food or non-prepared food? I'm just curious now.
- 2 DR: Yeah, yeah. So, we were good at making things from scratch.
- 3 AJ: Because Trader Joe's, they have some prepared food, not a lot. They're not like Whole Foods or  
4 ...
- 5 DR: So, a lot of unprepared food because we liked cooking. And when you're poor and you don't  
6 have any work, one thing we did ...
- 7 AJ: Cooking was like entertainment.
- 8 DR: It feels great, yeah. And you can make a lot better food than you can buy, and you can ... like if  
9 you're stealing all the spices – so easy. Anything in a jar this big doesn't even register on the ...  
10 like stealing a frozen pizza is kind of scary because it's huge and you're like ... if someone is  
11 watching ... I don't know, no one ever stopped me but I always said if somebody did, I'd be like,  
12 "Oh, I just got a call and I've got to run and I forgot I had it in my hand," which I'm sure they  
13 would have let me go. I would have been like, "Oh my God, just take this, I need to go – I have a  
14 thing, I don't want to tell you about it because it's family related." That was in my head what I  
15 would say, but it never even came to ...
- 16 AJ: Never even came close to that – wow.
- 17 DR: Yeah.
- 18 AJ: So, work has been a challenge. What about institutions like Columbia and the medical industry?
- 19 DR: Oh, God, I struggle with ...
- 20 AJ: Police departments and that kind of stuff.
- 21 DR: Yeah, I could not get help about my butt.
- 22 AJ: Really?
- 23 DR: Yeah.
- 24 AJ: You're fucking bleeding from your ass and nobody would help?
- 25 DR: Well, they'd just be, "Oh, just stop receiving anal sex." I'd be like, "I don't. I'm not going to do  
26 that if I'm bleeding from my ass." I always felt like it just ... there was no communicating, I just  
27 didn't know how to communicate to doctors at all.
- 28 AJ: But that's not your fault.
- 29 DR: Right.
- 30 AJ: You should just be able to go to the doctor and say, "Hey, I'm having this problem," and then  
31 they should be able to communicate with you.
- 32 DR: My ass is bleeding every time I poop, yeah. You would think, you would hope. I don't know.
- 33 AJ: Do you think that had to do with your gender?

- 1 DR: I think it did, and again I do think disability . . . I think intersectional things.
- 2 AJ: So, wow, you keep coming back to this. So, what are the challenges of being sort of gender non-  
3 conforming or transgender and disabilities. What's that intersection like for you?
- 4 DR: Well, so my disability is autism and then technically I've been diagnosed with chronic post-  
5 traumatic stress disorder, which is also a struggle.
- 6 AJ: From the . . . ?
- 7 DR: Childhood abuse and . . . yeah. I've kind of figured out that he was most violent actually when I  
8 was between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, so I was very small through a lot of the bruising and all that.  
9 Although it didn't end until I moved out, really. And so, yeah, that's very hard. It makes it hard  
10 to think clearly and . . .
- 11 AJ: Do you think his abusiveness was around gender?
- 12 DR: I don't know.
- 13 AJ: Or the autism seemingly was engaged and sort of intersected with that too?
- 14 DR: His brothers and sisters, my aunts and uncles, have indicated that probably his mother was very  
15 violent with him and . . . in fact, when I first told them about it they were shocked and they were  
16 like, "No, because his mom . . ." But I guess that's not terribly uncommon. I don't know. I try  
17 not to over think it because I don't want to feel like . . .
- 18 AJ: I don't want you to push you into any really tough or negative spaces.
- 19 DR: I think it's hard to say . . . I think it's hard to say they're not connected, kind of in that sense that  
20 if a thing is true, then it's connected to the other true things in your life. So, it forms . . . because  
21 I'm just me, I'm just me – I'm my own singular continuity, so there's no . . . they can't not  
22 interact, right? And I certainly felt like a lot of the people who were violent to me then, besides  
23 my father, I thought that was related. I think they . . . and maybe it was only just a sense that  
24 this person was different, therefore weaker. I know when I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade I got in a bunch of  
25 fights with my friends because they started that talk about, "I can beat you up." And I'd be like,  
26 "I don't think you can." And they'd get mad about it because I'd be just like, "Yeah, I don't think  
27 so." And then we would get in a fight. I imagine I must have been a really hard kid to deal with,  
28 especially now working with kids. I can't imagine . . . I also don't think there's anything – I don't  
29 think any teacher or anybody could have – because you think about, "Could somebody have  
30 saved me and I'm like . . .?" I don't know. In the end, you have to save yourself and I believe I  
31 did.
- 32 AJ: I'm so happy. Danika, who was the first transgender person you ever met?
- 33 DR: Oh, in person. Oh . . . fuck, what's his name? He moved to . . . the Bay area. I don't even  
34 remember his name . . . Nick.
- 35 AJ: Nick?

- 1 DR: Yeah, I don't know his last name but he was just . . . my aunt owns the Blue Moon Coffee Café,  
2 Lisa Berg is my aunt.
- 3 AJ: Oh, cool. Yeah, Lisa Berg.
- 4 DR: Yeah, she's great. And I was hanging out with her and this guy, Nick, who is a trans guy showed  
5 up and was hanging out with Lisa for a while and gave me a ride home and I just will never  
6 forget when I got out of the car, I was like, "I get it," is what I said to him. I didn't even really . . .  
7 I couldn't form my thoughts into, "I'm trans," because I had a lot of sort of negative emotions  
8 around it. This was about a year before I met Rayegene and I was just like, "I get it." That's  
9 what I told him. And I imagine he must have been like, "Oh, this cis person who doesn't know  
10 shit is telling me that they get what it means to be trans," but what I was really saying to myself  
11 was, "I see me in you."
- 12 AJ: Yes.
- 13 DR: That was . . . man, I was elated for a week after meeting him.
- 14 AJ: Really?
- 15 DR: Yes, so happy.
- 16 AJ: And you and Nick never became friends or anything.
- 17 DR: No, nope. I guess he's . . . I don't know if this is totally true, but a couple of people I know who  
18 have known him are like, "No, he's an asshole and he's abusive to his partners." And I'm like,  
19 "Fuck, really?" And they're like, "Yeah." I'm like, "Whoa, OK, I guess I'm glad we . . ." But yeah,  
20 yeah. So, that was the first trans person I ever met.
- 21 AJ: That's a pretty awesome story.
- 22 DR: That's not necessarily true because you . . .
- 23 AJ: You just never know, but that was the first person who you identified as . . .
- 24 DR: Like who was out – and yeah.
- 25 AJ: No, you never know.
- 26 DR: You never know.
- 27 AJ: You absolutely do not.
- 28 DR: Some people like their stealth and they're good at it.
- 29 AJ: Right. What do you think the relationship is between the L, the G, the B and the T?
- 30 DR: I think it's a negotiation.
- 31 AJ: You do a lot of volunteering and work within LGBT communities.
- 32 DR: I like to think . . . a lot of people know me in the community, I'd like to think I'm a notable Twin  
33 Cities queer.

- 1 AJ: You are.
- 2 DR: Thank you.
- 3 AJ: What organizations have you been connected to?
- 4 DR: Well TYSN is the one that I will forever miss.
- 5 AJ: Yeah, I miss TYSN.
- 6 DR: Oh, my God. I wish it would have worked out.
- 7 AJ: It had a 10-year run.
- 8 DR: Yeah, just what we were trying to do at the end . . . I thought that putting trans women of color  
9 in leadership positions . . .
- 10 AJ: And young people.
- 11 DR: Yeah, young people. I still see Rehema around.
- 12 AJ: Yeah, Rehema – exactly.
- 13 DR: So, that . . .
- 14 AJ: CeCe was engaged in TYSN.
- 15 DR: Yeah – yeah.
- 16 AJ: And even though she went to jail, but TYSN was very much engaged in her struggle and  
17 supporting her in jail and . . .
- 18 DR: A lot of the . . . well, didn't Billy . . . Billy picked her up.
- 19 AJ: Billy Navarro – yeah.
- 20 DR: Yup, picked her up from the . . .
- 21 AJ: With Laverne Cox and . . .
- 22 DR: So, then the Exchange – Rare Productions, I'll do anything to support them. We talked about  
23 RECLAIM, I think, before the camera was rolling. I bounce around a lot.
- 24 AJ: So, kind of volunteering.
- 25 DR: Volunteering or . . . yeah, theatre things. I don't know if you want . . .
- 26 AJ: Twenty Percent Theatre.
- 27 DR: If you can call them . . . remember, Clare, for years, was saying that, "No, no, they're a feminist  
28 theatre, not an LGBT theatre."
- 29 AJ: This is true, I remember that. You're right.

- 1 DR: I think that that has changed, and I think for the better is my . . . I sort of . . . I don't know. I  
2 think in the queer community we have to be careful about . . . I think there's a lot of older  
3 people dating younger people and we need to be careful, right?
- 4 AJ: Oh, say more about that. Am I missing something?
- 5 DR: I don't know, I'm not . . . so, . . .
- 6 AJ: I mean, if it's consensual.
- 7 DR: Yeah.
- 8 AJ: Are you talking underage?
- 9 DR: Well, OK. Clare was dating just-out trans guys who are 18; she's like 30, 31, 32 at the time.
- 10 AJ: Oh, wow, OK.
- 11 DR: They're . . . these trans guys were working . . . first of all, she did not identify as anything but a  
12 lesbian, which I feel like . . . OK, I'll accept that, sexuality is complicated – whatever. Identities,  
13 words . . . OK, but then a lot of them were working for her for very little money – not even close  
14 to . . . and basically she was, I felt, using her position as artistic executive director at 20% to  
15 coerce these young trans guys into sex. I don't think she thought of it that way, but I think that's  
16 what was happening. I've talked to people who went through that with her. I always try to . . .  
17 I'm always like, "It's not for me to tell you if you've been sexually harassed or abused or  
18 assaulted."
- 19 AJ: Misused.
- 20 DR: Misused, yes. It's not my place, but I think if you feel that way that that's valid and also if you  
21 feel like it's more complicated than that, then that's valid too. You should just know that you're  
22 valid in however you feel about it and that being in a position of power economically and  
23 artistically, and then therefore culturally and in the community, is a dangerous path and  
24 coercion is insidious. A lot of people who are . . . I mean, we have this very rape-y culture in  
25 America and people don't always know they're sexually assaulting somebody when they do it.
- 26 AJ: Wow.
- 27 DR: And so, I pushed back. I kind of ruffled . . . also, I was with the group of people who were saying  
28 that it's ridiculous that 20% had been around for so long without a single Black female. If they  
29 are just a feminist playwright . . . or feminist theatre company and no Black women playwrights,  
30 no Black women directors – and they were just celebrating their 10-year anniversary at the time,  
31 and I was like, "That's insane, that's so dumb." I worked there briefly, actually as their . . .  
32 what's it called, Literary Manager, so I was reading all the plays and I was like . . . so many of  
33 them, I was like, "This is so racist, we just can't fucking do this play." And they were good white  
34 feminist plays or they were good white LGBT plays. I just was like, "We can't do them." I know  
35 there's been changes since, right? I haven't heard or seen . . . and I don't know, of Clare  
36 engaging in this power dynamic and relationships like that. I have heard that they have had

- 1           since then, Black female playwrights and Black female directors, which is good. But I also kind of  
2           think that I spoiled that bridge by pushing . . . I was just not . . .
- 3   AJ:     So, you're an agitator.
- 4   DR:     I am an agitator.
- 5   AJ:     So, I started out by asking, you know, what do you think the relationship is between the LGB and  
6           T community.
- 7   DR:     Yeah, so negotiation – never good enough. But, you know, still good things happen. I think it's  
8           easy to . . . it's funny, I was talking with my spouse the other day because we were at the  
9           RECLAIM thing and it's really easy to get along with white cis gay men right now.
- 10   AJ:    OK.
- 11   DR:    It's just like, "Well, we're all against Trump."
- 12   AJ:    Right.
- 13   DR:    Right, and that's . . . he's just so bad for all of us, we're not fighting over who is getting . . .
- 14   AJ:    Who is more oppressed?
- 15   DR:    Yeah, or who gets the platform. We're like, "No, we've just got to not let him do all the evil shit  
16           he wants to do, we've got to keep our marriages legal, we've got to keep . . ." So, that's very  
17           unifying and so I feel like . . .
- 18   AJ:    So, things are coalescing a little bit more now?
- 19   DR:    I think we're pulling together strong at the moment. I do feel like intersectionality in terms of  
20           visibility is really good, compared to what it has been – at least when I was younger, in my early  
21           20s. I think it doesn't . . . I think trans people and the L and the G is still really hard. I think  
22           there's still a lot of lesbians that who are like, "I'll sleep with a trans guy, but not a trans  
23           woman." I feel like that's bullshit. And I can't speak as much towards whether trans guys feel  
24           that way with gay men, but I have heard it repeated by some people, at least.
- 25   AJ:    What?
- 26   DR:    Just trans guys being . . . some cis gay men just being like, "Oh, I'll sleep with a trans woman."  
27           But I haven't heard that as much at all.
- 28   AJ:    My experience is they don't sleep with trans women.
- 29   DR:    Or any trans anybody, is what I've heard. Exactly, yeah.
- 30   AJ:    Yeah, exactly. But there is this sort of . . . a lot of trans guys are really into gay men, I guess  
31           they're hooking up – I don't know.
- 32   DR:    Probably. I've always been a big believer in the theory that everybody is always hooking up all  
33           the time.
- 34   AJ:    And we just don't know about it.



- 1 DR: Yeah, what was it . . . I know it's a different kind of subject, but the guy . . . why am I forgetting  
2 his name? The professor who did the big study?
- 3 AJ: Masters?
- 4 DR: No, looking at just a genetic . . . what people's genetic racial sort of make-up was . . . not racial,  
5 but geographic history, and was like . . . why can't I remember? I'm totally spacing, but he was  
6 clearly . . . he was a Black man. I swear . . . damn it. I haven't talked about him in years, but he  
7 was like, "Look, when the lights are off, people will . . ." There's all these lines that we draw in-  
8 between but everybody is fucking everybody.
- 9 AJ: Wow, I wonder who this guy is.
- 10 DR: Rayegene would remember.
- 11 AJ: You don't have to . . .
- 12 DR: Oh, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
- 13 AJ: That's what I was going to say but . . .
- 14 DR: Yeah, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. I have his name right, don't I?
- 15 AJ: Right, yeah – Henry Louis Gates.
- 16 DR: Yeah, he was like the . . . I guess a doctor, right?
- 17 AJ: He's a doctor, yes. Professor or doctor. Ph.D.
- 18 DR: I have a friend who has a doctorate in computer science and his name is literally Dr. Steven Guy,  
19 Dr. Guy – which I think is . . . any who . . . he's at the U of M, he's great. Yeah, he was like,  
20 "when the lights go out, everybody fucks." I think that that's probably actually sort of the truth  
21 of sort of the L and the G feeling like publicly declaring that trans people – no, but I think when  
22 the lights go off and you're like, "Oh, it's genitals, let's play with them."
- 23 AJ: Where do you think the trans and gender non-conforming community is going to be 50 years  
24 from now?
- 25 DR: Oh, man, I don't know at all. I really . . . if I could have . . . I know it's really silly, but one thing  
26 that I hope is that we can grow, from our own DNA, genitals and get them . . .
- 27 AJ: That's a real thing.
- 28 DR: That's a real thing – it's coming.
- 29 AJ: Genetic engineering.
- 30 DR: Yeah, the technology is kind of there.
- 31 AJ: Growth hormones and all that kind of stuff.
- 32 DR: Yeah, taking stem cells and growing . . . so maybe you want like a little dingus and you just take  
33 your DNA and they'll grow you one that's just a perfect genetic match. One of the sad stories

- 1           that we have is . . . now I'm forgetting her name, but I think it was in the early 1900s got a  
2           uterus transplanted but refused to get it taken out.
- 3   AJ:     The woman from *The Danish Girl*.
- 4   DR:     Yeah, who died from that, right?
- 5   AJ:     Yes, Lili . . .
- 6   DR:     All I can think is Potter which is not even close.
- 7   AJ:     No, her name was Lili something.
- 8   DR:     Yeah. So, that's sad, and it kind of . . . like a lot of doctors after that that I know, used that as an  
9           excuse to totally refuse, in general, giving trans women uteruses to have babies with. I have a  
10          friend who, and I don't want to have kids, but I would maybe take a vagina.
- 11   AJ:     Are you thinking about that? Is that a thing on your list of . . .?
- 12   DR:     I don't know. It's so hard to . . . surgery is a nightmare in many ways, no matter who . . . I mean,  
13          any type.
- 14   AJ:     Right, gall bladder or . . .
- 15   DR:     Appendectomy – that's a pretty safe one but even so you wouldn't want to do it unless you had  
16          to.
- 17   AJ:     Exactly.
- 18   DR:     So, it's hard to always feel like you know . . . it's like you were saying, right now you identify as . .  
19          . and it's like, "Right now I identify as somebody who is happy with their cock." I like using it and  
20          I have a lot of fun with it and we argue sometimes, but it's like a friend – like maybe . . .
- 21   AJ:     You argue with your cock sometimes?
- 22   DR:     Metaphorically.
- 23   AJ:     OK.
- 24   DR:     Do you know what you mean? Why? Why? I want a vulva.
- 25   AJ:     I got ya.
- 26   DR:     But it's good enough for now. That said, like I said, if somebody was like, "Listen you could get a  
27          different set of genitals transplanted, with no fear of rejection," and . . .
- 28   AJ:     Made up from your own DNA and you're in.
- 29   DR:     And it's safe and it's cheap – man, in a heartbeat. Like here . . . so here's a pill, you just take the  
30          pill, it's going to take 24-hours until your cock is going to fall off and a beautiful vagina  
31          underneath. I'd be like, "Let's do it." In fact, if the pill was \$1 and if, in fact, I could do that I  
32          might even still go back and forth – why not.

- 1 AJ: Ahhh, the matrix – the red pill, the blue pill
- 2 DR: Yeah.
- 3 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 4 DR: And, yeah, like I said with hormones, I'm not on them now and I'm happy with not being on  
5 them now. I'm happy I was on them, I'm not sure I won't go back on them sometimes.
- 6 AJ: Yeah.
- 7 DR: Yeah.
- 8 AJ: Wow. This has been a fascinating conversation, Danika.
- 9 DR: Thank you.
- 10 AJ: Are there things that you really feel like is important or you want to talk about that I didn't ask  
11 you about?
- 12 DR: I mean the thing that I always want to . . . the one thing that I want to tell every trans person,  
13 young or old or at any point, is you've just got to figure . . . and I think you would probably  
14 agree, you've just got to figure out where you're at now. You can't know who you're going to be  
15 or who you need to be until you can be . . . you can feel out how you feel about now. I really  
16 think that's the most important thing about being trans – man, it's your body and also like all  
17 bodies kind of suck and all bodies are kind of great. There's people with worse problems who  
18 are cis with their bodies, that are you just fighting it . . . it's not a disease, you know what I  
19 mean? So there's harder things to deal with and not that it's a comparison but it's just your  
20 body and your mind and you've got to . . . being trans is not about fulfilling . . . I really believe  
21 that you are always, when you're trans you're always in transition.
- 22 AJ: Wow, that's a powerful statement actually.
- 23 DR: Right? It's kind of scary. Don't you want to just be done . . . nah, it's who you are, it's a journey.
- 24 AJ: It's a journey.
- 25 DR: So, that's my one thing that I would just end it with.
- 26 AJ: Oh, wow. Thank you so much, Danika.
- 27 DR: Thank you.
- 28 AJ: It's been a joy and until we meet again.
- 29 DR: Yeah, and I'm sure we will.
- 30 AJ: We absolutely will. Thank you.
- 31 DR: Thank you.