

Raymond Rea  
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.

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- 1    Andrea Jenkins            -AJ  
2    Raymond Rea            -RR  
3
- 4    AJ:     So, good afternoon. My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am the oral historian for the Transgender  
5            Oral History Project at the Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota. Today is October  
6            16, 2016. I am in Moorhead, Minnesota. It's a Sunday afternoon, it's a beautiful day, and I'm  
7            here with Raymond Rea. Am I pronouncing your name correctly?
- 8    RR:     Yes.
- 9    AJ:     How are you doing, Raymond?
- 10   RR:     I'm good. I'm very pleased to be with you here.
- 11   AJ:     Wonderful. Can you just state your name, spell it, tell me your gender as you describe it today  
12            and your gender assigned at birth, as well as the pronouns you use?
- 13   RR:     OK, so my name is Raymond Rea. My last name is spelled R-e-a. Do you need me to spell  
14            Raymond?
- 15   AJ:     I think we can figure out Raymond.
- 16   RR:     My gender assigned at birth was female, my gender as I see it now is male. I use he/him/his  
17            pronouns and I'm forgetting . . . there was one other thing that you wanted me to say.
- 18   AJ:     I actually think that that was it.
- 19   RR:     That's it, OK.
- 20   AJ:     So, you identify as male.
- 21   RR:     Yes.
- 22   AJ:     Do you ever include trans?
- 23   RR:     Oh, no – totally, yes. I didn't realize that that was an option.
- 24   AJ:     Yeah.
- 25   RR:     So, yes.
- 26   AJ:     It's all an option, Raymond, whatever you want to tell me is great.
- 27   RR:     I identify more as trans male than as male.
- 28   AJ:     OK.
- 29   RR:     I also identify as queer.
- 30   AJ:     OK, all right.

- 1 RR: Yeah, and since . . . it's funny, because in San Francisco, I was very much just trans male solidly.  
2 But since being here in Fargo/Moorhead, I feel like I've just started to see myself as more gender  
3 fluid or gender queer because what's male and female here is so narrow.
- 4 AJ: Right.
- 5 RR: Especially what's male is so incredibly narrow. What gender behavior is expected from men  
6 here is just . . .
- 7 AJ: Like, some examples.
- 8 RR: Well, OK – so, I'll give you the reverse example. Outside of running an LGBT film festival, which  
9 means that I'm almost always seen as a gay man, I'm seen as gay because of a couple other  
10 things. I'm almost always seen as gay because I have cats and because I garden. So, even those  
11 two things kind of mean that I'm not traditional.
- 12 AJ: You're not performing male gender appropriately.
- 13 RR: Right, I don't hunt, I don't own a gun.
- 14 AJ: Do you own a gun? I was just going to ask do you own a gun.
- 15 RR: I don't own a gun.
- 16 AJ: I know the culture here is pretty much conceal and carry.
- 17 RR: Oh, totally. I'm weird in other ways too, and bigger ways. I don't have a wife, I've been single  
18 my whole life. I don't have children – at my age, I'm supposed to have grandchildren in  
19 Fargo/Moorhead. I don't have grandchildren, I don't have adult children who are in college – I  
20 just have no kids. I've been single my entire life.
- 21 AJ: Really?
- 22 RR: Yeah. I don't drink, that's a huge thing that makes me different here.
- 23 AJ: That's a huge abnormality for male behavior in Moorhead, Minnesota.
- 24 RR: And even female behavior. So, that puts me on the outside. I'm not Christian, so that puts me  
25 on the outside in a huge way in this community.
- 26 AJ: It's interesting . . . what you're describing brings to mind how identity is sort of shaped by our  
27 environment. I mean, you mentioned San Francisco – and you lived in San Francisco for quite  
28 some time, right?
- 29 RR: Yes, for 18 years.
- 30 AJ: For 18 years, OK. That you were sort of more identified as just a trans man and now here, you  
31 identify more as male. But, that maleness is also seen as sort of transgressing what the gender  
32 norms are in this particular community.

- 1 RR: Very much so.
- 2 AJ: Yeah. So, I don't generally start out in that sort of heady theoretical space, I usually just try to  
3 get to some real basic stuff, like tell me what your first memory is in life.
- 4 RR: Wow. OK, so my first memory actually is of lying down in the back of a station wagon when I  
5 was really little and watching the snow fall outside the station wagon, knowing that my family  
6 was driving somewhere in a blizzard.
- 7 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 8 RR: So, I talked to my mom about that at some point and she was like, "Well, that's probably when  
9 we moved from upstate New York to Massachusetts because we moved in the middle of a  
10 blizzard and you were three."
- 11 AJ: Wow.
- 12 RR: Yeah, so that's . . .
- 13 AJ: That's your very first memory. Wow.
- 14 RR: Yes.
- 15 AJ: So, you were born in Syracuse, then?
- 16 RR: Yes, I was born in a city in Upstate, New York.
- 17 AJ: And then, at three you guys moved to Massachusetts. What part?
- 18 RR: From my understanding, we were kind of . . . my dad thought that he was going to be  
19 transferred to Florida. He worked for General Electric.
- 20 AJ: GE.
- 21 RR: For GE, and they were going to transfer him to Florida, but on going to Florida they drove to  
22 Massachusetts and they just liked it and they found a house there and just decided to kind of  
23 settle there.
- 24 AJ: Really? Did he leave his job?
- 25 RR: He got a new job, so he started working for Raytheon, which is a defense department  
26 contractor. He worked for them for the rest of his life.
- 27 AJ: Yeah, they were kind of . . . they had some competition with GE a little bit, didn't they?  
28 Raytheon?
- 29 RR: I guess. I mean, he was . . . because they were a defense department contractor, I think he was  
30 pretty secretive about his work.
- 31 AJ: Pretty secretive about his work, yeah – that makes sense, I guess. So, what part of Mass.?

- 1 RR: Concord, Massachusetts – Boston area, about 20 miles outside of Boston.
- 2 AJ: Oh, wow. How long did you live there?
- 3 RR: Until I was 18.
- 4 AJ: Is that right? So, you grew up in Boston?
- 5 RR: I grew up in the Boston area.
- 6 AJ: Boston area.
- 7 RR: I didn't grow up in Boston.
- 8 AJ: OK.
- 9 RR: Nobody in Boston would say I grew up in Boston.
- 10 AJ: Oh, I get it now.
- 11 RR: But, yeah, I grew up in a Boston suburb basically.
- 12 AJ: It's kind of like I grew up in Chicago and people who live in Naperville and then they go away  
13 and try to claim Chicago as home and the Chicagoans are like, "No, no, no, no – no, that's the  
14 suburbs."
- 15 RR: Exactly.
- 16 AJ: So, you grew up in the suburbs of Boston. What was that like?
- 17 RR: It was a different world. So, when I was growing up in Concord it was pretty much a small town.  
18 There was a Woolworth's downtown, there were two pharmacies that were run by two  
19 different families. Now, I could . . . it's again, a situation like San Francisco where there's no way  
20 I could afford to live in the town that I grew up in.
- 21 AJ: Yeah, Boston is pretty expensive and the surrounding suburbs . . . I can imagine.
- 22 RR: Yeah, so that area has just become a total bedroom community for Boston. People have these  
23 big expensive houses and they drive in to Boston each day and then drive back out.
- 24 AJ: Sure.
- 25 RR: So, they're not invested in the town as much as I think it was when I was growing up.
- 26 AJ: OK.
- 27 RR: Yeah, it's just really different.
- 28 AJ: They don't see it as a town as much as when you were growing up.
- 29 RR: Yeah. They don't see it as . . . Concord has a lot of stuff to it. It's where the American revolution  
30 began, it's where the shot heard around the world was fired.

- 1 AJ: Is that right? So, it's a very historic area.
- 2 RR: It's historic, and it also had this whole history of authorship – you know, Thoreau lived there and  
3 camped out at Walden Pond, which is in Concord.
- 4 AJ: Oh, I didn't know that.
- 5 RR: So, Ralph Waldo Emerson was there, Hawthorne . . . so, there's this whole history of writing and  
6 authorship. If you go into the Concord Public Library, it's got busts all around it of Thoreau,  
7 Emerson, Hawthorne and, when I was growing up, I thought that that was just normal.
- 8 AJ: Right.
- 9 RR: Every public library you went into had all these authors.
- 10 AJ: Yeah.
- 11 RR: But, it turns out that that is very different.
- 12 AJ: Yes, very different.
- 13 RR: And, it was always kind of middle class and upper middle class in Concord, but now it's like  
14 upper middle class to extremely wealthy in Concord.
- 15 AJ: Wow.
- 16 RR: I think there's some people who are middle class or working class in Concord, but that's not . . .  
17 that's not the norm.
- 18 AJ: Sure. Did you . . . how did you experience school in that community?
- 19 RR: Well, it was just public school. Everybody was the same, it was just . . . I mean, I loved Concord  
20 Public School. It was just a bunch of kids. We used to just ride our bicycles to school. It was  
21 actually kind of rural there in Concord at that point. There were working farms down the road.  
22 We didn't really live in the center of Concord, so we didn't live in the historic, more wealthy,  
23 part of Concord. There were farms down the road, we were friends with people who were  
24 farming – there were farm stands, there were ponds we could swim in, there were rivers we  
25 could swim in. So, I just grew up with a lot of beautiful . . . I still miss New England, especially at  
26 this time of the year.
- 27 AJ: Yeah, this is the time that everybody really falls in love.
- 28 RR: I'm so homesick at this time of the year, especially here because the trees all turn yellow, but  
29 they don't turn orange or red.
- 30 AJ: Is that right?
- 31 RR: I've never seen one tree in Fargo/Moorhead be really bright red.
- 32 AJ: Bright red, huh.

- 1 RR: Are they like that in Minneapolis?
- 2 AJ: They are. There are long streaks that are just a bright red canopy and then oranges mixed in  
3 and . . . it hasn't happened yet this year. I'm kind of anticipating a pretty beautiful foliage, as it  
4 were. I think a little further north where, maybe . . . I don't know, the lakes. There's a lot of  
5 lakes around Moorhead, there are more rivers.
- 6 RR: They're all east, so east of here. So, Moorhead, as far as I can figure out, which having been  
7 here not forever, so east of here is Minnesota, lots of lakes, and then Fargo/Moorhead seems to  
8 be like this kind of very definite dividing line, and I've seen pictures of Moorhead from the 1900s  
9 and there were none of these trees here. So, all these trees were planted. This area used to be  
10 more plains, the same way that Fargo was always plains.
- 11 AJ: Right.
- 12 RR: And, Fargo and points west, are all plains. At this point, of course, it's all been developed, but  
13 sometimes I really think it would have been great to come here in that era and see what the  
14 plains really looked like because . . . yeah, because now it's just been so developed and I'm sure  
15 it was really beautiful – this whole area. But, now it's just ugly track housing.
- 16 AJ: Yeah, no comment. Hey, listen, so just back to growing in Concord, you said school was really,  
17 really a cool experience. Did you recognize your gender expression at that point in time?
- 18 RR: Are you talking about elementary school or junior high or high school?
- 19 AJ: In your early years. What were you like? Were you a tomboy?
- 20 RR: I guess officially I was kind of a tomboy. My mom always . . . and I've worn pretty much the  
21 same clothes my whole life.
- 22 AJ: Is that right? So, male inspired.
- 23 RR: T-shirts and jeans, except on Easter where my mom would kind of stuff me into a dress.
- 24 AJ: Oh, really. OK.
- 25 RR: But, you know, for the most part I wore t-shirts and jeans and was outside a lot. This was also  
26 the era where kids just ran around all over the neighborhood and parents weren't helicopter  
27 parents.
- 28 AJ: What year? When was this?
- 29 RR: I was 0-10 in the 1960s. So, it's pretty simple for me because I was born on a decade. But, yeah,  
30 we just ran all over the neighborhood and played kickball and played a lot of just using our  
31 imagination – just playing imaginary games like out in the woods. We really didn't have a lot of .  
32 . .
- 33 AJ: Hide 'n seek, tag.



- 1 RR: Or, you know, pirates or fantasy characters of some kind. But, we didn't . . . our parents just let  
2 us go.
- 3 AJ: Did you play with mostly boys, girls?
- 4 RR: Mostly girls, mostly girls. But, I think from 0-junior high probably, I just saw myself as kind of  
5 non-sexed.
- 6 AJ: Just a kid.
- 7 RR: Just a kid, yes. I didn't really think of myself as male or female at all. And then, in junior high I  
8 was hanging out with this group of girls and we were all working to adapt a favorite book of ours  
9 into a play. So, we had all taken on these characters in the book and because we were still kids,  
10 really, we kind of lived these characters when we were around each other. So, the character I  
11 had taken on was an adult man in the book. I was really happy in that character. So, that was  
12 kind of the first time that I was like, "OK, so there's something . . ."
- 13 AJ: There's something going on here, huh.
- 14 RR: Yes.
- 15 AJ: And that was, you said, junior high – so 11, 12?
- 16 RR: Eleven, 12, 13.
- 17 AJ: Yeah, wow. When did you realize that you liked to be with women?
- 18 RR: Oh, well, that was suppressed for so long. I think I also knew it in puberty. I had someone who  
19 was ostensibly my best friend, Lainey Porter her name was. I would go over to her house and  
20 we would smoke a little weed – I don't know if I can say that.
- 21 AJ: Hey, you can say whatever you want to say.
- 22 RR: I would just gaze at her, just look at her. She didn't think anything was going on aside from us  
23 just being . . . and, to be honest, I didn't think anything was going on aside from us just being  
24 friends.
- 25 AJ: Friends, yeah.
- 26 RR: But, in high school – like when I hit puberty, I just got really, really miserable. I have memories  
27 of just lying on the floor and crying.
- 28 AJ: Oh, boy.
- 29 RR: I knew, kind of, then that I didn't . . . then I thought well I just really don't like guys.
- 30 AJ: OK, wow.

- 1 RR: So, I just hung out with a whole group of girls. But then that kind of changed again when I went  
2 off to college. So, from 18 to about 24, I started doing a lot, a lot of drugs and alcohol. I was  
3 trying to be a straight woman.
- 4 AJ: Where did you go to college?
- 5 RR: What's that?
- 6 AJ: Where did you go to college?
- 7 RR: Oh, the University of Michigan for two years, in Ann Arbor. And then, actually I dropped out  
8 after my sophomore year and I moved to New York City and I just got a job and was working in  
9 New York City. I went one summer session to NYU, which has a world-class film department,  
10 and I was kind of on the verge . . . so, my cinematography teacher said that he would help me  
11 get into NYU but then he got called away to Hollywood to shoot something, so I ended up just  
12 working. And then, after about a year of living in New York City, I decided I wanted to go out to  
13 San Francisco. So, that's when I first went out to San Francisco, was when I was 21 – in January  
14 of 1981. So, that was an interesting time to be in San Francisco because it was just three years  
15 after the Harvey Milk and George Moscone assassinations.
- 16 AJ: It was just the start of the AIDS epidemic.
- 17 RR: Yes, yes.
- 18 AJ: I think one of the first cases happened in the early 1980s – 1981, 1982 . . . somewhere in there.
- 19 RR: Yes, and I was actually in the original kind of punk community there, in the punk/new wave  
20 community. So, there was . . . so, in the late 1970s, early 1980s, the punk community was very  
21 accepting of queer people. It was just accepting of anybody who was kind of a freak of any kind,  
22 or who was being seen as a freak of any kind.
- 23 AJ: OK.
- 24 RR: And then, in the early 1980s, it seemed like that was when all these skinheads came in and  
25 that's when skinheads and punks started graffitiing that people with AIDS should die – around  
26 San Francisco. There was a lot of homophobia . . . well, among the skinheads. But there was  
27 still a whole bunch of people in the punk community who hated skinheads. It was interesting, it  
28 was a really interesting time.
- 29 AJ: So, when you say you were in the punk community, were you a punk rock fan, were you a  
30 musician?
- 31 RR: I was a bartender at a really local San Francisco club called The Sound of Music.
- 32 AJ: The Sound of Music.
- 33 RR: The Sound of Music. It used to be . . . before it was a punk club, it was a drag club. So, they  
34 used to . . . it was probably about two times as big as this living room, it was a tiny place. It was

- 1 all painted black, the floor was sticky – it hadn't been washed, and there was a bar and the  
2 music was so loud that bartending . . . we served one kind of beer, Budweiser, and then we  
3 served hard liquor. So, a lot of the time, bartending consisted of someone coming up to the bar  
4 and going like, "1, 2, 3 . . ." which was just about how many beers they wanted.
- 5 AJ: Right.
- 6 RR: Because you couldn't actually hear them over the music. The music was so loud.
- 7 AJ: Wow.
- 8 RR: But that was . . . again, that club was so local. It wasn't even as big as the Mabuhay Gardens or  
9 the Broadway – all these clubs that kind of more famous punk bands started at. The Sound of  
10 Music was really a place where anybody could play – and they did.
- 11 AJ: Wow – and they did.
- 12 RR: And they did. It was very . . . people would what was then called slam dancing then later on it  
13 was called moshing, but it was very . . . the way that we would slam dance, it was very congenial  
14 in a lot of ways.
- 15 AJ: Not violent.
- 16 RR: Not violent. So then, these kids would come in from the suburbs, so then I was in a different  
17 relationship to the suburbs, and these kids would come in from the suburbs and they had read  
18 magazines or something about punk, so they would get really hostile in terms of slamming. So,  
19 if somebody did that, we would just take them down.
- 20 AJ: Wow.
- 21 RR: Just kind of gang up on them – we would really slam them down. But, you know, again it wasn't  
22 really violent.
- 23 AJ: Right.
- 24 RR: It was just . . . there was a time there where, I think, punk got really codified and got really  
25 commercialized. It started out being anti-commercial and being very much about . . .
- 26 AJ: Anti-establishment.
- 27 RR: And anti-society and now there is Hot Topic and these stores that you can . . . national chains  
28 that you can buy your punk look at.
- 29 AJ: Yeah.
- 30 RR: I mean, punk is still pretty, I think, local. That was one of the tenets of punk rock was to be local,  
31 to work within your local community and part of that was kind of having to be OK with people  
32 locally because, if you weren't – if you were just an asshole locally, then people would know  
33 about it.

- 1 AJ: Sure. Was that . . . so the punk scene, was it all queer inclusive? You kind of alluded to the fact  
2 that everybody was there, but . . .
- 3 RR: At first it was, at first in the late 1970s or . . . not all of it, but a lot of it was queer inclusive.
- 4 AJ: Were you queer at the time?
- 5 RR: No. I was officially trying to be straight, a straight woman.
- 6 AJ: Yeah.
- 7 RR: Although I always had these best female friends.
- 8 AJ: That you . . .
- 9 RR: Yeah. So, I was drinking a lot. I never . . . I don't think I had sex as a straight woman once  
10 without being really fucked up.
- 11 AJ: And mostly with guys.
- 12 RR: With guys, yeah.
- 13 AJ: When did you realize that you were not the gender you were assigned at birth? How did that  
14 come to be?
- 15 RR: So, that was much later. Because, again, I just didn't even know that that was a possibility.
- 16 AJ: Really? Even in San Francisco?
- 17 RR: Yeah, which was interesting because, in some ways, I thought I was very cutting edge and yet I  
18 was sheltered in a lot of ways within the straight community. I even remember one day, I lived  
19 south of Market and I had been . . . I walked everywhere, I had no car. I had been north of  
20 Market, so I walked and Market Street was blocked off for a parade and I was just pissed off. I  
21 was like, "Oh, God, this fucking parade."
- 22 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 23 RR: Well, it turned out that that was Gay Pride and I didn't even know that that . . .
- 24 AJ: Was going on.
- 25 RR: It was just blocking my street. And now that I look back on that, I'm like, "OK, that was Gay  
26 Pride." So, that . . . it's possible, in San Francisco, to be outside of the GLBT community.
- 27 AJ: Gay culture.
- 28 RR: Yes.
- 29 AJ: Yeah.
- 30 RR: Especially back then. So, yeah.

- 1 AJ: Yeah, it's kind of hard to imagine but I know it to be true, I'm sure it's true.
- 2 RR: Yeah, I had a lot of gay friends. In 1981, in San Francisco, I just didn't . . . I don't know what to  
3 say about that. I was just so stuffing myself down in so many ways. I remember at one point  
4 this female person came out from New York City and she was a filmmaker and she was going to  
5 take me into the East Bay to meet up with another documentary filmmaker. Somehow, I had  
6 heard that she was a lesbian. So, in my brain, in my imagination, I was so sure that she was  
7 going to come on to me and she didn't come on to me.
- 8 AJ: Right.
- 9 RR: And, I was just like, "What's going on?" And then, I was like, "Oh, she thinks I'm straight,  
10 because I actually have a boyfriend."
- 11 AJ: Right.
- 12 RR: So, she's assuming that I'm straight so she's not hitting on me. So, then I was like . . . I also had  
13 that stupid straight person idea that all gay and lesbians would just automatically hit on me.
- 14 AJ: Yeah.
- 15 RR: So, I was pretty ignorant at a certain point.
- 16 AJ: Wow. When did you figure it out? When did that happen?
- 17 RR: The trans stuff?
- 18 AJ: Yeah. Well, I guess either one – whichever came first, because sometimes accepting yourself as  
19 same gender loving then opens up space for you to then think about trans identity.
- 20 RR: Totally, yeah. So, I had kind of a slow fade into thinking of myself as a trans man. It wasn't  
21 overnight, it wasn't something . . . it certainly wasn't something where I came out young.
- 22 AJ: Yeah.
- 23 RR: I thought of myself as a trans man first, I think, when I was around 35 or 36 years old. But,  
24 before that . . . before that time, I had been a very masculine woman, for a while. And, was  
25 largely perceived as a butch woman. And, so how I came out as attracted to women is a whole  
26 other story. I mean, that's just as soon as . . . I hit a really low bottom with drugs and alcohol, so  
27 the second that I got sober is the second that I had to admit to myself that I was attracted to  
28 women. And those two things happened like that . . . yeah, I just had to get real on some level.  
29 And then, 12 years later, basically, I came out as a trans guy and that was just . . . I hit kind of  
30 another point where I had to get real with myself and it had . . . I mean, butch never . . . I was  
31 never really butch. People even said that about me. They were like, "Well, you know, you're  
32 not really butch." And I was like, "Yeah, I know, but I'm just really masculine." So, at the time,  
33 that was what was perceived as being a masculine female person, was that you automatically  
34 had to be butch. But, in many other ways, I just didn't fit that description.

- 1 AJ: Yeah, I'm assuming you liked gardening and . . .
- 2 RR: And theatre, I didn't like sports. I liked art, filmmaking. I can't fix anything, I can't do  
3 construction, I can't . . . just in so many ways, I didn't fit that butch stereotype. Also, I think,  
4 honestly, because I dealt with sexism and misogyny when I was still trying to force myself into  
5 this box of being a straight woman, that I never really liked some, not all of the ways, in which  
6 some butch women treated some femme woman . . . you know, I just didn't like it.
- 7 AJ: I think butch identity, it's fair to say, sort of feeds off of sort of toxic masculinity identity.
- 8 RR: In some ways, yeah.
- 9 AJ: You know, and a lot of that behavior sort of gets carried over into butch identity.
- 10 RR: I think butch will always be a little bit different because . . . I mean, now I know a lot of butch  
11 women who I see as not being male at all.
- 12 AJ: Right, they're avowed feminists, right.
- 13 RR: Right. But, back then it was kind of like the second wave of butch femme. It was the late 1980s,  
14 early 1990s so there was a lot of it going around and it was very . . . like you had to be one or the  
15 other. It was very binary. I think, honestly . . . I wasn't like an androgynous dyke either, but I  
16 was just not . . . I just felt like I didn't completely fit into butch femme, even though I was often  
17 seen as butch.
- 18 AJ: Wow. Has there been any . . . and please answer this to the extent that you feel comfortable,  
19 Raymond, but what medical interventions have you undergone as a part of your transition?
- 20 RR: OK. Actually, the first thing that happened to me is that I had a hysterectomy, but I had a  
21 hysterectomy in 1997 for medical reasons. So, I was . . .
- 22 AJ: So, it wasn't fully related to your gender identity?
- 23 RR: Well, I knew that I was about to start testosterone, but I also was pre-cancerous, so . . .
- 24 AJ: So, you needed to deal with it.
- 25 RR: I needed to get that out. Yeah. So, I did. I didn't have insurance at the time, I was a graduate  
26 student. So, luckily for me I was in San Francisco because San Francisco actually has a free care  
27 system of medicine.
- 28 AJ: Oh, really.
- 29 RR: Which isn't . . . I had two surgeries at San Francisco General Hospital, which is a free care  
30 hospital that's also kind of a nightmare to be there. The night after I'd had a hysterectomy I  
31 spent in the hospital and I had a care button to press and I would press it and nobody would  
32 come.
- 33 AJ: Oh, wow.

- 1 RR: That's just lack of staffing. The second . . . I'm not even going to go into that, I'm sorry – it's just  
2 a tangent. But anyway, I had the hysterectomy first in San Francisco General and then I had top  
3 surgery the next April – not in San Francisco General.
- 4 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 5 RR: That I paid for out of student loans.
- 6 AJ: Really? Wow, you were committed.
- 7 RR: I don't know if I should say that online because I've actually . . . or, on camera.
- 8 AJ: I don't think it's going to . . . I mean, you can use your loan money for whatever you want to,  
9 right – it's a loan.
- 10 RR: Yeah.
- 11 AJ: You've got to pay it back.
- 12 RR: Exactly – I'm still paying it back. So, those are the only two surgeries that I've had. And then,  
13 I've been on hormones since 1997. So, yeah, those are the three things that I've done. As far as  
14 lower surgery, I really . . . because I have student loans, I still have kind of a . . . I'm still paying  
15 back my student loans from graduate school. I put myself through graduate school on student  
16 loans in one of the most expensive cities to live in. So, I still have student loans, I'm still paying  
17 them back. So, for that reason, I can't really . . . I have a mortgage now so I cannot really take  
18 on the costs of lower surgery for FTMs. Plus, as I'm sure you've heard before, those surgeries  
19 are just so imperfect.
- 20 AJ: Right.
- 21 RR: I'm just not really wild about the idea of somebody going at that part of my body with a knife.
- 22 AJ: Yeah, it makes perfect sense.
- 23 RR: So, for all those reasons I have not had lower surgery.
- 24 AJ: And that doesn't define your masculinity, I'm assuming.
- 25 RR: Oh, not at all – not at all. And, I think that used to be more common in the trans male  
26 community, now I see a lot more trans guys, or even people who identify as gender queer, who  
27 have bottom surgery right away – it's very important to them.
- 28 AJ: Sure.
- 29 RR: I think that used to be a little bit different at the time that I was transitioning. So, now people,  
30 trans men, really . . . as far as I can tell and from what I've heard, people just don't feel like  
31 they're male unless they've had lower surgery.
- 32 AJ: Really – wow.

- 1 RR: Some people. And, I've just never felt that way. I feel like . . . I've had partners, as a trans guy,  
2 and it just seems like not so much here in Fargo/Moorhead, because here is probably about 30  
3 years behind the times as far as San Francisco was like. When I was in San Francisco and I had  
4 partners, what I would hear and what they would say is like, "Well, you know, you're male, Ray,  
5 so any body parts you have are going to be male body parts." And, I believed that. But, here in  
6 Fargo/Moorhead, it's just not like that. I mean, I've had a very hard time, even like an  
7 impossible time, being able to date here.
- 8 AJ: Really? Wow. Even within the queer community?
- 9 RR: Oh, yeah – like even within . . . so, again, back in San Francisco, there had . . . I mean, for many,  
10 many years, probably since the mid-1990s, there had been kind of an acknowledged dating  
11 community between femme women and FTMs – it was just acknowledged that that might be  
12 something that would happen. Here, you know, that's off the books.
- 13 AJ: Really?
- 14 RR: Yeah, people who are lesbian here would never consider dating an FTM.
- 15 AJ: Is that right? No way.
- 16 RR: Well, unless . . . there was one guy here who was dating a femme woman, but they were both  
17 from Minneapolis.
- 18 AJ: OK.
- 19 RR: So, Minneapolis is different.
- 20 AJ: In Minneapolis, it's like . . . trans men . . . you should come to Minneapolis if you want to date.  
21 Trans guys are like the hot ticket, man – I'm telling you.
- 22 RR: Well, off the record, I'm trying to figure that out. I'm trying to figure out how to meet  
23 somebody long distance.
- 24 AJ: Sure, yeah.
- 25 RR: Who is in Minneapolis or . . .
- 26 AJ: There's this little thing called the internet, Raymond.
- 27 RR: I don't know where to look on the internet. If you have a source, you should tell me about this  
28 because I don't know how to . . .
- 29 AJ: [www.iwantadate](http://www.iwantadate) – that's pretty much all you've got to do, my friend.
- 30 RR: But, I mean, match.com, all that stuff, here in Fargo/Moorhead . . .
- 31 AJ: Is so heteronormative.
- 32 RR: Horrible.



- 1 AJ: Yeah, I'm teasing you – totally. I even think gay men are even more into trans guys down in the  
2 Twin Cities.
- 3 RR: Oh, in Minneapolis?
- 4 AJ: Yeah. And, all around the country, really.
- 5 RR: That happened in San Francisco.
- 6 AJ: I know San Francisco was notorious for gay men and trans guys hooking up and partnering and  
7 all of that stuff.
- 8 RR: Oh, yeah.
- 9 AJ: That was the in thing to do.
- 10 RR: Oh, yeah. I mean, I went to a few, just flat out, workshops . . . ostensibly they were workshops  
11 but . . .
- 12 AJ: Right, but they were just . . .
- 13 RR: They would be huge cruise sites.
- 14 AJ: Right.
- 15 RR: "Let's talk about gay men and trans guys," and then people would show up and just check each  
16 other out.
- 17 AJ: Right.
- 18 RR: So, that was . . .
- 19 AJ: That's not happening here in Fargo.
- 20 RR: That's not happening here – no, no. Very sad.
- 21 AJ: That's unfortunate, but you know, times are a changing. They just gave Bob Dylan the Noble  
22 Peace Prize or Nobel Literature Prize, so anything is possible. So, I've been kind of interested . . .  
23 you mentioned that you've been single all your life is what I think you said.
- 24 RR: Well, not single – but not married.
- 25 AJ: Not married, OK.
- 26 RR: I've been in a lot of relationships.
- 27 AJ: You've been in a lot of relationships, OK. I was just trying to confirm.
- 28 RR: Yeah, sorry.
- 29 AJ: Because single has a different . . . single has differently connotated over time, right?

- 1 RR: Yes.
- 2 AJ: But, you just have never been married.
- 3 RR: I've never been married.
- 4 AJ: Who are you in relationship with? Are you in a relationship right now? I guess you said, no
- 5 you're not.
- 6 RR: No, I'm not in a relationship right now. I've mostly . . . well, mostly since 1984, I've dated a
- 7 woman. I had a couple of serious relationships in there. I had one relationship that lasted about
- 8 three years in San Francisco right as I was coming out as trans and in my first year on hormones.
- 9 And, she and I were actually engaged for a while and then it broke up and . . . so that, at least,
- 10 partly broke up because I did transition or, I should say, because she knew me in my first year of
- 11 transition which is very intense.
- 12 AJ: Yeah, that's a tough time to be in a relationship.
- 13 RR: It is a tough time and you're going through so many changes, you get very selfish in a lot of
- 14 ways. You're always looking at your own body for changes. I think she actually felt . . . I know
- 15 this, because she said this to me, that I was kind of getting all this good exciting stuff in my life
- 16 and she wasn't. So, she felt like she was getting . . . she was comparing to the two of us a lot,
- 17 which really, I wish she hadn't been doing.
- 18 AJ: That's kind of selfish too.
- 19 RR: Exactly. I actually wrote a play that had a lot of her and me in it, a couple characters.
- 20 AJ: Really?
- 21 RR: Yeah, I just went up for a four-week . . . that's another thing that I'm hoping to talk to
- 22 Minneapolis about, because it was produced here and I'd like to introduce it to some theatres in
- 23 Minneapolis.
- 24 AJ: It was produced here in Fargo.
- 25 RR: Yeah, there's kind of a political theatre here, believe it or not.
- 26 AJ: What's it called?
- 27 RR: It's called *The Sweet New* and it's . . .
- 28 AJ: S-u-i-t-e or . . .?
- 29 RR: No, S-w-e-e-t. *The Sweet New*.
- 30 AJ: N-e-w. OK.
- 31 RR: Yeah, and it's . . . again, this is a total tangent, so I don't know if you want me to go down this.
- 32 AJ: That's fine.

- 1 RR: It's loosely based on my father's side of the family. So, my grandfather immigrated from Italy  
2 and he was interned as an Italian American during World War II. And then my father changed  
3 his name from an Italian name into a more American-sounding name. And then, in my  
4 generation, of course, it was a sex change. So, it's just about change in three generations of the  
5 family.
- 6 AJ: Oh, yeah, that's fascinating.
- 7 RR: And compares immigration to sexual change.
- 8 AJ: I want to introduce you to some people that you should talk to about producing your play.
- 9 RR: OK, cool.
- 10 AJ: Congratulations, so let's talk a little bit about your career. You're a . . .
- 11 RR: Can I take a quick bathroom break? Do you have time to do that?
- 12 AJ: We have time . . . it gets kind of weird when you stop the tape, but we'll do that. So, yeah.
- 13 RR: I'm sorry.
- 14 AJ: No, no, no – go.
- 15 RR: I'm sorry.
- 16 (pause)
- 17 AJ: So, when we trailed off I was asking you about your work, the work that you do. You mentioned  
18 this playwriting and you are a professor in cinema . . .
- 19 RR: I'm a professor in . . . we have a film department up here at Minnesota State University-  
20 Moorhead that's actually, as far as I know, the only real film department in the entire MnSCU  
21 system.
- 22 AJ: Oh, wow. OK.
- 23 RR: It's a good film program and I teach on the production side of things, which means that I teach a  
24 lot of different classes but they're mostly all about how to make movies. So, how to operate  
25 cameras, how to use different film rules and film tools and how to break film rules and film  
26 tools.
- 27 AJ: Right.
- 28 RR: How to organize pre-production and how to create a schedule, how to create a budget, how to  
29 work film cameras, how to work digital video cameras. I also, sometimes, teach film history  
30 classes as well. I teach a class that I've developed, which is an LGBT film history class. I've  
31 taught other . . . I taught a documentary class at one point, I've taught other classes that are  
32 more about analyzing movies than watching movies than about making movies.

- 1 AJ: Sure. So, you've covered sort of both sides of the spectrum – content and production.
- 2 RR: Yeah, although I'm more on the production side.
- 3 AJ: You've been involved in a lot of film festivals?
- 4 RR: Oh, yeah. I mean, I've had films screened all over the country and all over the world.
- 5 AJ: So, you are a filmmaker as well.
- 6 RR: I'm a filmmaker, yes.
- 7 AJ: OK, you left that out.
- 8 RR: Sorry. That's how one gets a job as being a film professor. You have to . . .
- 9 AJ: You have to have made some films, right.
- 10 RR: You have to have a track record as a director.
- 11 AJ: How many films have you made?
- 12 RR: A lot, I can't completely count at this point. I started making film work in the early 1980s. I  
13 made a couple of really short films back then and then there was a gap of time and I started  
14 making video work again in . . . like the early 1990s. When I was back in San Francisco, I went to  
15 graduate school, as I said, so there I was just on this edge of time where people were still  
16 working in film and digital video was just coming in at that point.
- 17 AJ: Sure.
- 18 RR: So, I made films . . . at least three or five films, that are films in a can. And then, since then I've  
19 been working on digital video.
- 20 AJ: Digital video. Wow. Any full-length features?
- 21 RR: I made . . . well, I made *The Sweet New* into a feature, back in San Francisco. So, I originally  
22 wrote *The Sweet New* a while ago, but it only went to about a 60-minute length, which is not  
23 quite feature length, but it's also not short length.
- 24 AJ: It's in that liminal space.
- 25 RR: Well, so nobody was able to program it because film festivals leave spaces for features and they  
26 have mixed short programs, but actually if you make a 60-minute film it will be very, very hard  
27 to program.
- 28 AJ: Difficult . . . wow.
- 29 RR: And, so I didn't . . .
- 30 AJ: You either need 85 minutes or 10 minutes, huh?

- 1 RR: Exactly. So, that was a drawback to making that film. It did get programmed, I mean it did  
2 screen – especially in one film festival called New Italian Cinema in New York that I was really  
3 happy about because other filmmakers in that film festival like Steve Buscemi and other pretty  
4 big names.
- 5 AJ: Can you say the title of the festival again?
- 6 RR: I think it was called New Italian . . .
- 7 AJ: Oh, New Italian. OK.
- 8 RR: I can't remember if it was New Italian or New Italian American.
- 9 AJ: Because it was your film, *The Sweet New*, sort of tells a story of these Italian immigrants and the  
10 name changes and the gender changes. Wow.
- 11 RR: Yeah, but it's much more . . . I mean, my film is Italian American, it's not Italian.
- 12 AJ: Right, yeah. Wow, that's a fascinating career. So, filmmaking, teaching, instructing and, I  
13 suspect, probably working on film sets that weren't necessarily your own films, right?
- 14 RR: Yes. So, that happened . . .
- 15 AJ: It's hard to make money as a filmmaker.
- 16 RR: No, it is. Actually, one of the . . . if you want to make your own work and really have control  
17 over it, you basically have to have some other kind of supporting career.
- 18 AJ: Sure.
- 19 RR: Like being a professor. That's one of, I think, the best ways you can support a filmmaking habit,  
20 but if you're going to end up . . . you can also end up as a technician or a crew member who  
21 makes a living off of making film, but then quite often you are not going to be making your own  
22 work.
- 23 AJ: Because you don't have the time.
- 24 RR: And money.
- 25 AJ: And the resources, yeah.
- 26 RR: So, I think everybody when they start out in film thinks that they're going to beat the odds and  
27 that they're going to be one of the probably 1.5% of people in film who make a living as  
28 filmmaker solely and who are getting to make their own content. But, you know, for the rest of  
29 us, for most of us, you either have to go one route or the other – like, you're either a crew  
30 person who works on other people's films or you take a stand and are an independent  
31 filmmaker and have some kind of support.
- 32 AJ: Some other source of income.

- 1 RR: Right. Now, some people do both, some people crew on people's film and that is their support  
2 for making their own work so it's not completely binary like that.
- 3 AJ: Exclusive – yeah. But, I imagine if you're working on a film set all day, it's kind of hard to go  
4 home and write a screenplay and . . .
- 5 RR: Yeah, except that a lot of . . .
- 6 AJ: And find the time to shoot your own film because the prime time for shooting is when you're at  
7 work.
- 8 RR: But, that's the good thing about that situation is that film crewing is mostly, even in California, is  
9 . . . what's the word I'm looking for? It's sporadic, right. So, it's like three weeks, 16-hour days,  
10 and then you have a break.
- 11 AJ: Then you have a nice little break in-between, yeah.
- 12 RR: Yeah. So, sometimes people are able to do both.
- 13 AJ: Awesome. What's it like being a trans person in the film . . . broadly, the film industry, which  
14 includes teaching and crewing and filmmaking and presenting at conferences. Are there a lot of  
15 trans people in this space?
- 16 RR: Yeah, there are now. It didn't used to be that way when I first transitioned. Even in San  
17 Francisco when I first transitioned, it was . . . I mean, when Christopher started Tranny Fest . . .
- 18 AJ: Christopher Lee?
- 19 RR: Christopher Lee, yes, who is a friend of mine. I mean, he was pulling in films from all over the  
20 world, but there just weren't that many local trans guys who were making film work. And, even  
21 . . . so, even when I started the Fargo/Moorhead LGBT Film Fest, which I started about eight  
22 years ago, so the first couple of years of that film festival, I would actually seek out transgender  
23 films from people I knew across the country who were making transgender work and I would  
24 kind of deliberately solicit them and say, "I'd really like you to submit your film."
- 25 AJ: Submit, right.
- 26 RR: But, now, you know, in the past couple of years, we just have a regular call for submissions  
27 through these online sites.
- 28 AJ: And, you don't have to do go digging people up and all of this stuff.
- 29 RR: No. And, we get way more trans films than we can program. So, there's a lot of people making  
30 trans work quite . . .
- 31 AJ: Is it good? I mean, is it any good?
- 32 RR: Some of it is – yeah, some of it is not. I mean, we're still getting . . . like this year, we're still  
33 getting these films that are kind of all about the transition story. Like, "Oh, I was born a girl and

- 1 I felt like I was male and then I came out.” To me, those stories are very dated. We’ve seen a  
2 million of them – we saw a million of them in 1999.
- 3 AJ: Right.
- 4 RR: So, now when we’re getting those stories, I just feel like, “Come on.” It’s kind of like the way I  
5 think the gay and lesbian community was in the 1970s about coming out stories – everybody  
6 was making work about coming out. And then after a certain point, the gay and lesbian  
7 community started to make other types of work.
- 8 AJ: Yeah.
- 9 RR: So, that also has happened in some corners of the trans filmmaking community.
- 10 AJ: Yeah, there’s some good stuff – like *Tangerine*, for example.
- 11 RR: Yup. And also, there’s some really independent filmmakers . . . I’m going to forget names right  
12 now, but people . . . the guy who make *Still Black* and he made that in the late 1990s. I don’t  
13 know why I’m forgetting his name, I’m so sorry. But, he made this kind of groundbreaking work  
14 in the 1990s and is still making work – actually, I think he’s teaching now, I think he’s a professor  
15 now.
- 16 AJ: OK.
- 17 RR: Jake Graf in the UK has made a lot of really smart work; I’m really a big fan of his. I’m so  
18 embarrassed I’m forgetting people’s names. There’s another filmmaker who is in San Francisco  
19 who made something called *Maggots and Men*, which was just this kind of brilliant takeoff on  
20 early Soviet cinema, only with gender-queer people. That was funny when it was being shot in  
21 San Francisco because a lot of trans people were kind of consumed to be in the film. Only,  
22 even back then – and this was probably in the early ‘00s in San Francisco, so people like me who  
23 were just kind of straight-up transsexual people were beginning, or already seen, as kind of old  
24 guard or old school and the gender-queer community was really blossoming in San Francisco at  
25 the time.
- 26 AJ: Sure.
- 27 RR: So, *Maggots and Men* was all about being gender queer. But, it was all set in this kind of Soviet  
28 style black and white cinema.
- 29 AJ: Ahh, interesting.
- 30 RR: So, when they brought me on to be in the film, they were like, “Oh, you’re going to be like, you  
31 know, the Soviet guard that’s shooting down all these young gender-queer people.”
- 32 AJ: Oh, my goodness.
- 33 RR: So, it was very much like that – very much like living out the life in San Francisco within this  
34 movie.

- 1 AJ: Life imitating art, as it were.
- 2 RR: Yes.
- 3 AJ: What's your opinions around cis people playing trans roles in Hollywood? That's a big topic  
4 that's going on now.
- 5 RR: It's a big topic, yeah. Actually, I see a lot of different sides to that argument. On one hand, I  
6 really agree with a lot of what the trans acting community has said, which is, "Why can't you  
7 actually cast trans people to play trans characters?" But on the other hand . . .
- 8 AJ: Because we have lack of opportunities as it is.
- 9 RR: There's a lack of opportunities and I think, if I can say this, I think there are also people who are  
10 transgender actors who don't want to be pigeonholed and who want to be able to play any role.
- 11 AJ: Any role, right.
- 12 RR: And they feel like if they come out, many of them are stealth, so they feel like if they come out  
13 as being transgender that from then on they will only be able to play transgender roles and  
14 they will not be cast as other types of roles. So, I think there is kind of both sides of the  
15 argument on the acting side of things.
- 16 AJ: That particular point does not get brought up very often.
- 17 RR: It doesn't get brought up and I think that it's a good point.
- 18 AJ: I think it's an excellent point.
- 19 RR: And, those people are not having a voice in the argument because they are stealth.
- 20 AJ: Because they would have to come out, right.
- 21 RR: So, that's something that I think people . . . and, that happened to the gay community a while  
22 back, like in the late 1960s, early 1970s, where, especially men – you know, if a male actor was  
23 willing to play a gay male character back then, it would just end his career, he would no longer  
24 be able to play straight men. That's not the case now. I mean, with gay identity, plenty of gay  
25 men have straight parts so that's a little bit more malleable, but the thing about trans parts now  
26 . . . I don't think people totally want to be pigeonholed. There are not enough transgender parts  
27 to really make only . . .
- 28 AJ: Right, if you've only got transgender parts, unless you're Laverne Cox, you probably are not  
29 going to get a whole bunch of work.
- 30 RR: Exactly, yes.
- 31 AJ: Interesting. Wow. Well, you know, you've talked a lot about some of the organizations and the  
32 work that you've been involved in, do you consider yourself an advocate or an activist at all for



1 transgender equality? And, if so, how does that play out? Is your art a part of that activism in  
2 your own opinion?

3 RR: Well, here's the deal. Again, the difference, for me, the difference between San Francisco and  
4 here is that when I was back in San Francisco, I was not really an activist, I was not really an  
5 advocate.

6 AJ: You were just an artist making art in a . . .

7 RR: I was just an artist, yeah. I actually would tell people that – I would say, "I'm an artist, not an  
8 activist."

9 AJ: Right.

10 RR: But here, like since I've moved here, I would say that here I've become an advocate and an  
11 activist because I needed to.

12 AJ: Sure.

13 RR: And, also because . . . if I could say this, because I saw that other people needed me too.

14 AJ: Yes – you can absolutely say that.

15 RR: Because I see young trans people in my classroom, I see young people of other stripes of queer  
16 in my classroom, and so I needed to not only come out as being trans but also within the  
17 community, I'm almost completely visible at this point, which, in San Francisco, I wasn't. I was  
18 just stealth. But here, I started this whole film festival, I've been on the media, I've been on  
19 panels.

20 AJ: And, what's the film festival called?

21 RR: It's called the . . . well the acronym is the FMLGBT Film Festival, so the Fargo/Moorhead LGBT  
22 Film Festival.

23 AJ: Oh, wow.

24 RR: And that was started in . . . the first one was in 2009. Actually, when I first got here in the fall of  
25 2008, I just started this queer film series on campus. I wasn't getting paid for it, I just needed to  
26 do something to survive. So, we just met every Wednesday night and watched movies and  
27 talked about them. So, that's what the festival grew out of.

28 AJ: And blossomed from there.

29 RR: Yes.

30 AJ: About how many people does it attract every year?

31 RR: Well, it attracted more in its first or second year than it's attracting now. I think this thing  
32 happens in Fargo where when something new comes up, everybody kind of flocks to it and then  
33 if it sticks around for a while, people will stop coming to it as much. There's this kind of love of

- 1 newness here, which is interesting because this place is so conservative. So, what it really loves  
2 is, in terms of people, this kind of stick-to-itiveness, this whole idea that in my first couple of  
3 years here people really mistrusted that I was going to stay here.
- 4 AJ: Sure.
- 5 RR: They were like, "You're going to be gone so we're not even going to get to know you." So, now  
6 after. . . over five years later, people do know me a little bit better. But, there's this whole idea  
7 that people who stick around, that last, and the things that last, are the things that people  
8 should know about. But, then there's also this whole appreciation where something new comes  
9 in, as far as events go, people will go see a new event but they won't necessarily see something  
10 that happens regularly every year.
- 11 AJ: Right.
- 12 RR: Yes.
- 13 AJ: Yeah, those fickle people.
- 14 RR: Yes.
- 15 AJ: Raymond, I think this is probably the last question, I'm wondering . . . well, maybe not the exact  
16 last question, let's make it a two-part question. What is the relationship between the L, the G,  
17 the B, and the T? Should that acronym continue to exist? And then, what is your vision of the  
18 future of the trans movement in the next 50 years?
- 19 RR: 50 years?
- 20 AJ: Fifty – 5-0.
- 21 RR: OK, so the first question . . . I think we all live in separate worlds. I think the L, the G, the B and  
22 the T, I think we are very separate from each other and . . . I mean, I experienced that even in  
23 San Francisco. But, here, what I'm finding here locally is that the . . . there's a very, kind of  
24 homonormative group here among gay men and especially lesbians.
- 25 AJ: Yeah.
- 26 RR: Lesbians are super homonormative here. There's a whole kind of thing about lesbians marrying  
27 and having kids and setting up the white picket fence.
- 28 AJ: Kids, and teaching in schools.
- 29 RR: Sending their kids to schools – how they're just completely assimilated, like the only thing that  
30 makes them different is their sexual orientation.
- 31 AJ: Right.
- 32 RR: They will actually tell you that, they'll tell you, "We're just like you." Which, to me, is kind of  
33 shocking. I don't want to be just like straight people.

- 1 AJ: Right.
- 2 RR: Even though I am.
- 3 AJ: I had on a t-shirt yesterday that says, "The first Pride was a riot." It was not a picnic with your  
4 three kids and the dog.
- 5 RR: Exactly, exactly – yeah. And, that also has happened in the arts where now there is so much,  
6 not in film festivals so much but here, in other ways, there's a lot of kind of GLBT art where the  
7 slogan, "Love is love," is just kind of plastered all over everything. And, "Love is Love," is a very  
8 lovely motto, but basically what it's saying is that our love is just like your love, so love is love.
- 9 AJ: Yeah. I'm running out of film . . . oh, man, it's so bad.
- 10 RR: Oh, OK.
- 11 AJ: But, we've still got audio, so let's keep going.
- 12 RR: OK. So, anyway, there is a lot of assimilation here among the . . . I would say more so the  
13 lesbians, a little bit less so the gay men. And then, bisexuality is assimilated, if you're female –  
14 not so much if you're male.
- 15 AJ: Yeah.
- 16 RR: And then the trans community here feels very outside the whole mix, I think. I see that light is  
17 blinking at me.
- 18 AJ: Yeah. It's full.
- 19 RR: OK. Sorry about that, I talked way too much.
- 20 AJ: No, you're good.
- 21 RR: Should I keep talking?
- 22 AJ: Yes, please.
- 23 RR: So, I know that the trans community feels very outside of the mix here (audio stops).