

Qui Dorian Alexander
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins
Interviewer

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

September 11, 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.

Andrea Jenkins
jenki120@umn.edu
(612) 625-4379

1 Andrea Jenkins -AJ
2 Qui Dorian Alexander -QDA
3
4 AJ: So, good morning.
5 QDA: Good morning.
6 AJ: My name is Andrea Jenkins. I am the oral historian for the Transgender Oral History Project at
7 the University of Minnesota Libraries at the Tretter Collection. And, today is September 11. It's
8 a day that is a very deeply emotional day for the United States and, in many ways, I think
9 rightfully so, but I think we give it way more credence than some of the other atrocious
10 tragedies that have happened in the United States, at the hands of the United States even. And
11 so, today is that day. It's a Monday and we're here in south Minneapolis, and I am with Qui
12 Alexander.
13 QDA: Yes.
14 AJ: Qui Alexander.
15 QDA: That's me.
16 AJ: How are you this morning?
17 QDA: I'm great, I'm blessed, glad to be here.
18 AJ: Wow, well, thank you so much. So, please state your name, spell your name so we make sure
19 we have it spelled correctly in our transcripts, state your gender identity today, your gender
20 assigned at birth, and the pronouns that you use.
21 QDA: Cool. My name is Qui Dorian Alexander. That's Q-u-i D-o-r-i-a-n Alexander, A-l-e-x-a-n-d-e-r.
22 AJ: OK.
23 QDA: My gender identity, well I was assigned female at birth, I identify as trans masculine, non-binary
24 FTM if you've got to get specific.
25 AJ: Oh, wow. You all can't see me snapping but you can hear me. I'm snapping because it's all
26 good. I love that.
27 QDA: Oh, my pronouns are he/him and they/them.
28 AJ: OK, awesome. You're a new transplant to Minnesota?
29 QDA: I am.
30 AJ: When did you move here?
31 QDA: I moved here in July, so about two-and-a-half months ago.
32 AJ: Wow.
33 QDA: Yeah, I came out here to do a Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota in Cultural Studies
34 of Education.

- 1 AJ: Oh, look out – smarty pants coming.
- 2 QDA: Something like that. You know, it's funny . . . if you would have, at this time last year, asked me
3 if I was going to go to grad school, I would have been like, "You're crazy, that is never going to
4 happen." So, it's funny how the universe works out.
- 5 AJ: Yeah, no – that's incredible. Doctoral degree, we need more really smart Black masculine-
6 identified non-binary people in our culture, in society, and particularly in our educational
7 system.
- 8 QDA: Oh, yes – yeah.
- 9 AJ: So, gratitude, much gratitude, my friend.
- 10 QDA: Thank you.
- 11 AJ: So, before we get too far down the path and this will answer some of the questions that I have
12 about where you came from before you hit Minneapolis, tell me about your earliest memory in
13 life. What's the first thing you remember?
- 14 QDA: The first thing I remember . . . wow, what a question. My mom was a single mom and it was just
15 me and her for the first 10 years of my life, so my earliest memories are of being in her
16 apartment while she was a college student. I was a kid while she was finishing college. It's
17 interesting, because a lot of my memories as a baby feel . . . I have this weird . . . you know how
18 when wake up . . . when you sleep really hard and you get an eye booger, you get something in
19 your eye and it kind of clouds your eye until you wipe it?
- 20 AJ: Right.
- 21 QDA: A lot of my memories have that cloud.
- 22 AJ: Is that right?
- 23 QDA: Which is a really interesting thing and I remember that it wasn't until I was probably like four or
24 five that I remember that cloud not being there. I think that was when I actually first started to
25 figure out some of my own identity.
- 26 AJ: Really?
- 27 QDA: So, my mother is Puerto Rican and my father is Black and I didn't grow up with my father.
- 28 AJ: Puerto Rican.
- 29 QDA: Yeah. And, I was raised in a very Puerto Rican household that later was, in some ways, kind of
30 anti-Black.
- 31 AJ: Really?
- 32 QDA: In ways that I didn't really start to unpack until when I left. And, I was in preschool at the
33 preschool at my mother's college, and I remember asking her one day, I said, "Mom, I'm lighter
34 than all the Black kids and I'm darker than all the white kids, what does that mean?" And, she

- 1 said, “Don’t worry about that, you’re Puerto Rican.” And, so I thought that meant that I was
2 white and Black, because I was four. So, I was like, “OK.” And, I’m going around telling people,
3 “I’m this . . . da-da-da-da.” And my mom was like, “No, no, no.”
- 4 AJ: You’re just Puerto Rican.
- 5 QDA: Yeah, even though I knew that my father – like the father figure wasn’t my father, and she was
6 like, “You’re Puerto Rican.” And then later, when I was probably 8 or so, she was like, “Well,
7 your dad is Black.” And I was like, “Oh, OK.” But, I really felt like I didn’t have access to Black
8 culture or what it meant to be Black until I left home because I was raised in a really Puerto
9 Rican household – again, my grandmother, she loved me and she was always really good to me,
10 but she did give my mother a really, really hard time when she got pregnant by a Black man.
- 11 AJ: Wow.
- 12 QDA: So, I’m the only Black person in my family; everybody else are the Puerto Ricans and light-
13 skinned Puerto Ricans. So, I’m the darkest person in my family and I’m not very dark. So, it’s
14 interesting walking around with them because I’m clearly othered in the way that I’m the only
15 Black person.
- 16 AJ: It’s interesting that you say that. First of all, let me just check in – do you have family still in
17 Puerto Rico? And, have they made it through Irma and all of that stuff?
- 18 QDA: Yeah. Some of my family is in Naseebo and they seem to be OK, but most of my family lives in
19 the states now. I do have an uncle who is in Florida, I think he’s . . . I have another uncle in
20 North Carolina, so I think he went up to North Carolina to stay with them. But, they seem to be
21 OK. It’s interesting too, because I think I didn’t grow up speaking Spanish, so I think also that . . .
22 there’s a cultural disconnect for me connecting to people back at home in Puerto Rico. I’ve only
23 been once, but I really want to go back as an adult, and as a queer person.
- 24 AJ: Right. I’ve been to Puerto Rico multiple times and I love it. I mean, it’s beautiful, but it also . . .
25 so there is an Afro-based . . . I mean, the first time I went to Puerto Rico was in the early 1990s
26 and I had a Jheri curl and people would come up to me speaking Spanish because they thought .
27 . .
- 28 QDA: You were one of us.
- 29 AJ: Right, exactly. And, folks on the camera can’t see me, but I’m pretty dark. And so, I knew there
30 was sort of a color system but . . .
- 31 QDA: Yeah, it’s interesting – it’s talked about . . .
- 32 AJ: I thought darker Puerto Ricans were embraced but that’s my own weak understanding of that
33 very complex culture.
- 34 QDA: It’s interesting . . . so, I also have . . . I have some family that . . . like my mother was with this
35 guy for a really, really long time, so I was raised with his family. It’s really interesting because his

1 mother is a white Puerto Rican and his father was a Black Puerto Rican – his father was like your
2 complexion.

3 AJ: Right.

4 QDA: They have 10 kids – five of them are white and five of them are Black, but they would never
5 identify like that, they would never say they're white, but they would also never say that they
6 were Black. "We're Puerto Rican – we're just all Puerto Rican, we're different shades, and
7 things like that." So, it's interesting now, like now that we have more language around anti-
8 Blackness and things like that, it's been interesting to have conversations with my cousins who
9 are around my age around how they see themselves in a Black way binary that the Americas . . .
10 or that the United States really pushes. A lot of people who are Puerto Rican feel like they're
11 outside of that. And then the citizenship piece makes it complicated too because, I think, Puerto
12 Ricans are American citizens, a lot of the narratives . . .

13 AJ: Because they are American citizens.

14 QDA: They are, yes – that a lot of the conversations amongst Latinos in this country are about
15 immigration and about documentation and things like that, so Puerto Ricans don't experience
16 that but are still treated as if . . . I can't even count how many times growing up people were
17 like, "So, you're Mexican?" I'm like, "No." I didn't meet anybody Mexican until I went to college
18 because there were no Mexicans where I grew up – you were either Puerto Rican or you were
19 Dominican or Black, or ethnic white people I grew up around.

20 AJ: Sure.

21 QDA: So, it's been interesting to be . . . and my godmother is a Black Puerto Rican and so when . . . and
22 my mom is very light skinned, so when we used to walk around people used to think I was her
23 daughter and not my mom's because I had thick curly hair and she was Black and my mom was a
24 friend. My mother would be so pissed, like, "That's my daughter." Even though I look just like
25 her; I look like a split between my parents.

26 AJ: Is that right? Funny. So, where was this Puerto Rican household that you grew up in?

27 QDA: It was in Buffalo, New York.

28 AJ: Is that right? Wow.

29 QDA: Which is such an interesting place. It's a very working-class town.

30 AJ: Working class, yeah.

31 QDA: Post-industrial. My grandmother came up there to work in a factory.

32 AJ: Kodak.

33 QDA: Yeah, Kodak was up there. She came to work in a factory and had her kids there. My mother
34 was born and raised in Buffalo, she still lives there, she has no interest in leaving.

35 AJ: Yeah, because the industry has declined quite significantly, right?

- 1 QDA: Yeah. And there's . . . gentrification is new and rampant there in a way that I think a lot of
2 people thought that they were immune to, I think, and now gentrification is showing up in a way
3 where people are like, "Oh . . ." I don't go home often, but when I do to see that things are
4 drastically different than the last time I went there.
- 5 AJ: Wow.
- 6 QDA: But, yeah, I grew up in a community of mostly Puerto Ricans and when I was probably . . . so I
7 was an only child for 10 years and then my sister was born when I was around 10, going on 11.
- 8 AJ: Just the one sibling?
- 9 QDA: I have a sister who is 21, a brother who is 20, he'll be 20 this week, and then a little sister who is
10 12.
- 11 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 12 QDA: So, we have . . . my mother was in decades when she . . . so, the brother and sister are back-to-
13 back and then there's 10 years before the next one.
- 14 AJ: Wow.
- 15 QDA: That also gives a lot of richness to our family story.
- 16 AJ: Yeah, she's like, "I'm just going to keep this parenting thing going for as long as I can."
- 17 QDA: My mom really likes babies, she really likes babies but she's like, "They grow up."
- 18 AJ: "So, I need a new one."
- 19 QDA: And she's been working in prenatal work since I can remember. She's been working for the
20 same organization for 20 years, so she's always around babies and health care and things.
- 21 AJ: Cool. What was school like in Buffalo?
- 22 QDA: School was interesting. I went to public schools for middle school and lower school growing up.
23 I went to a magnet school and part of that was because . . . so, I actually grew up speaking
24 Spanish as my first language and then was going to preschool and kindergarten where . . . it was
25 mostly preschool where I was communicating in Spanish and no one knew what I was saying, so
26 I was not eating and peeing on myself, doing these things because I'm trying to communicate to
27 people and people didn't know what to do. So, my mom was like, "OK, we need to just do
28 English then." So, then, as I started to learn English, I just lost all my Spanish and we never . . .
29 my mom was very education focused ever since I was very young and she's really the only
30 person in her family who is really had a lot of . . .
- 31 AJ: College.
- 32 QDA: College, yeah, and she has a masters degree, so she was just like, "You're going to college,
33 you're doing all these things." So, I went to a magnet school, she didn't want me to go to the
34 bilingual school because she didn't think that the academics were good enough.

- 1 AJ: Oh, wow – OK.
- 2 QDA: Yeah, so I went to magnet school.
- 3 AJ: Tiger mom.
- 4 QDA: Yeah, definitely. And, it's funny. I always joke that I don't really have life skills as an adult
5 because my mother was like, "You're going to study." So, it was like . . . so, I was lucky because I
6 was like, "I don't have to do chores, my mom doesn't make me do chores." But, that's because I
7 was always doing something that had to do with . . . and when I got older, by the time I was in
8 7th grade, I was in school six days a week and summer programs, all these types of things. So, I
9 did that and then I joined this program when I was in the 7th grade that was specifically for
10 students of color trying to . . . I guess, kind of address the achievement gap, and so, "We want
11 you to go to private high schools and so we're going to prep you for the things you need."
- 12 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 13 QDA: So, that was actually the first time that I actually got to be in community with other Black folks
14 very closely and kind of learn and live around . . . and have Black mentors who were really
15 invested in my education.
- 16 AJ: Sure.
- 17 QDA: And then I went to a tiny private all girls high school that had 32 girls in my graduating class.
- 18 AJ: No way.
- 19 QDA: Yeah.
- 20 AJ: Yikes.
- 21 QDA: And then I went to a women's college.
- 22 AJ: Which one?
- 23 QDA: I went to Bryn Mawr College.
- 24 AJ: Bryn Mawr. So, now you've mentioned that when the clouds started to clear up in your eyes a
25 little bit, you started to sort of recognize some identity things going on.
- 26 QDA: Yeah.
- 27 AJ: So, how did that play itself out in these sort of all-girl spaces and this sort of new experience of
28 all-Black space?
- 29 QDA: Yeah, well . . .
- 30 AJ: Because, knowing those communities gender identity, alternative gender identities or expanded
31 gender identities, are not always . . . welcomed. I don't know what the word is . . . appreciated.
- 32 QDA: Yeah, so I grew up a mix girl with long hair and light skin.

- 1 AJ: So, you were popular.
- 2 QDA: No, not at all. I was really nerdy and weird and people would always say I was too loud or I was
3 too aggressive or I liked boy things. So, people were like, "What's wrong with you? Because you
4 should be a pretty girl, but you're not." So, I think I got objectified in ways where people were
5 like, "Oh, you're pretty," and then they got to meet me and they were like, "Oh, you act like a
6 dude." So, I didn't . . . and my mother was very anti-man growing up. She was like, "Men are
7 dogs. I told you . . . What are they? 'Men are dogs.'" Like that. She was . . . I think she taught
8 me to be a really strong woman and not have to . . . she was like, "Don't you ever have to
9 depend on a man, you don't have to do that." I think part of that was trying to fix her
10 relationship mistakes and the mistakes she made around men in her life. So, she would try to
11 raise me to be really independent. But, also, inadvertently was really policing my gender. She
12 was really . . . I would want to do boy things and she was like, "No, that's for boys." So, I did
13 ballet when I was younger and she . . . she was like, "You're not allowed to cut your hair." I also
14 wasn't allowed to have boys call the house. In high school, boys would call and she'd be like,
15 "She can't talk to boys." Click.
- 16 AJ: Wow.
- 17 QDA: So, my social life was . . . I never really interacted with men for a long time, like in my teens,
18 because I went to this all-girls school and my mom was like, "You don't need to hang out with
19 boys." And so . . . which was interesting, though, right? Because then I got to hang out with
20 girls all I wanted and my being a queer person was like, "Ahh . . ."
- 21 AJ: So, were you into girls at this point in time?
- 22 QDA: Yeah, definitely so. I think I had this thing where I wasn't sure if I wanted to do somebody or be
23 somebody and so, I think there's been a lot of my life . . . I was just saying to my partner the
24 other day, there's a lot of people in life where you're like, "I think I want to be you, but actually I
25 want to do you," or, "I think I want to do you, but actually I want to be you."
- 26 AJ: Yeah.
- 27 QDA: So, I have these girls that I met and I was like, "Oh, you're so wonderful, I really want to be like
28 you," but it's actually because I like them . . . "I want to do you."
- 29 AJ: I want to be with you.
- 30 QDA: Yeah, exactly. And, my best friend, who is two years older than me and is a Black woman, went
31 away to college when I was in high school and she came back . . . it's actually so funny because
32 she just went home and we talked about this story the other day. I bought her a journal for her
33 birthday. It was a purple journal, because that was her favorite color, and she wrote an entry in
34 the journal where she came out to herself and she realized that she was queer and that she
35 liked women. That's how she told me she was gay, so she was like, "Oh, I want you to read this
36 piece that I've been working on." I was like, "OK," and she gives me the journal. It was basically
37 like, "I'm gay, da-da-da-da." And I was like . . . I think I was 15 or 16 and I was just trying to play
38 it cool and I was like, "Oh, my God." And then I was like, "It's cool, great – cool." And, we would

- 1 have sleepovers whenever she was in town. I just remember sleeping there that night and being
2 like, “This is so weird, this is so weird – she’s gay, what does that mean?” And then two months
3 later, I was like, “I think I’m gay too.”
- 4 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 5 QDA: But being gay in this all-girls school, there were two white women who were gay and they would
6 make out in the hallways and they were kind of weirdos, so it was like . . .
- 7 AJ: So, it was this white thing.
- 8 QDA: Yeah, “I don’t want to be gay because of these girls.” And, she was the only . . .
- 9 AJ: And, you guys didn’t use lesbian language? You were saying gay.
- 10 QDA: I was like, “I’m gay,” and they were like, “We’re lesbians.”
- 11 AJ: That’s very interesting.
- 12 QDA: Yeah, she was the only brown person I knew who was gay and she was . . . she was like, “Well,
13 I’m not a lesbian because I don’t exclusively date women.” And so, I was like, “Oh, I think I’m
14 gay but I think . . . maybe I like boys, but not really.” And then I went to a women’s college and
15 after the first week of women’s college, I was like, “I’m a lesbian.”
- 16 AJ: OK.
- 17 QDA: But, it didn’t last long. I was meeting people who identified as lesbians and I was like, “Oh, but .
18 . I don’t . . .”
- 19 AJ: I don’t really vibe with you – yeah.
- 20 QDA: Yeah, and I met with a woman who . . . she was a Dominican woman, my first year of college and
21 I remember being like, “Wait, you’re gay? There are more brown people who do this gay thing?
22 Oh, shit.” I just had no idea, that blew my brain open. Yeah, it was then that I was like, “OK, I’m
23 queer.” At that time, queer was a word that people used to say that they weren’t exclusively
24 gay, but they weren’t straight. At the time, which now I would think was problematic, but at the
25 time I was like . . . I met my first trans man, probably sometime midway through my freshman
26 year of college, and I was like, “Oh, wow.” I didn’t know that trans people at all existed. I met a
27 trans man who was Korean and I said, “Wow, that’s really cool.” I was like, “Oh, crap.” I
28 remember their name and everything.
- 29 AJ: Who? Do you mind saying? Or – you don’t have to.
- 30 QDA: Their name is Reg Ju, they were a Korean trans guy in New York.
- 31 AJ: OK, I was just wondering do I know this person.
- 32 QDA: They’re in New York and they do a lot of community organizing. At the time, I think they were in
33 college and they were doing Trans 101s and I was like . . . wow, so enamored. I was like, “Well, I
34 think I might be queer because I think I’m into trans men.” It was a thing where I was like, “I’m

- 1 into women and trans men.” So, glad that we’ve evolved past that. That was my intro to
2 queerness and it wasn’t until I met . . .
- 3 AJ: So, you dated a trans man?
- 4 QDA: I didn’t date a trans man until much later, I was dating women. So, I was dating women and I
5 was kind of butch and doing that, and then I went to a conference that was for queer students
6 of color, which blew my mind because I was like, “Wow, everybody here is brown and
7 everybody is queer here.” And, they had these caucuses one night, there was like a women’s
8 caucus, a trans caucus and then they had a men’s caucus that was like an ally caucus – like, how
9 men could be allies to women and trans people. I was like, “You know, I really don’t . . .” My
10 girlfriend at the time was with me and I was like, “I really don’t feel comfortable going to this
11 women’s caucus.” A lot of women were femme and talking about not being read as queer, but I
12 was visibly read as queer because I was masculine. She was like, “Go to the trans cauc room.” I
13 was like, “Huuuuuh, why would I ever do that?”
- 14 AJ: Right?
- 15 QDA: And then I ended up going and there was like six people and my mind was just blown. I met
16 these brown trans people, and the one person I met who was like, “I’m Polly and I have kids and
17 I have like four partners.” At the time I was like, “Whoa, whoa, whoa – too much. Do I have to
18 do all those things if I’m trans?”
- 19 AJ: Errrrr – hit the brakes.
- 20 QDA: Looking back I’m like, “Wow, I actually was exposed to that so much longer,” and it took me so
21 long before I could get to a place where I could explore those identities myself. So, yeah, it was
22 like . . . and then being at a women’s college that was predominantly white, just made it . . . I
23 was always chewing on identity – always, always, always. And, I didn’t really . . . it wasn’t until I
24 had a long-term girlfriend in college and then after that I dated another woman, who was butch,
25 for a while. And then I started dating . . . I started hooking up with other trans guys, and that’s
26 when I kind of . . . I think my gender also shifted there. Yeah, because I think . . .
- 27 AJ: Was there ever a moment when you were just like, “OK, I’m not the gender I was assigned at
28 birth.” Or, I guess there was a moment . . . can you recall that moment?
- 29 QDA: I think it was after being at an all-girls high school and an all-women’s college and realizing that I
30 just wasn’t like the women that I was in space with, even though I loved being in women’s
31 spaces. And so, I was like, “I think I’m gender queer.” But then, also, people weren’t using that
32 word at that time. This was like the early 2000s. Gender queer was kind of an academic-y word
33 and when I was telling it to other brown people, they were like, “What?” So, I was like, “Just
34 kidding, I’m not that.”
- 35 AJ: Because for a long time, I mean, I’ve been out for a while . . . a lot of trans people weren’t even
36 using that language, like trans, particularly what I would say masculine of center women . . . like
37 super butch, like they’re married with kids and the kids call them daddy.

- 1 AJ: But they still are like, “Nope, not trans.”
- 2 QDA: Yup. And, I was around a lot of that.
- 3 AJ: Really? Talk to me about that a little bit.
- 4 QDA: Yeah, because in Philly, it was interesting too. My school was in the suburbs . . .
- 5 AJ: Because that always fascinates me.
- 6 QDA: And I’ve met so many people . . . like if we had that language, “You’d be trans if you had that
7 language in a different time and place.” So, Philly . . . it’s interesting because I think it has a lot
8 of gay and lesbian people and there are lots of queer people, but I find that most of the Black
9 and brown people are gay or lesbian. I was meeting all these studs who were . . . and it was
10 interesting, because I was not hard enough for the studs. They’re like, “No, you’ve got to get rid
11 of this and rid of that.” And, I was never really super butch in that way. I was masculine by
12 default but it felt like I was failing at gender. I wasn’t good at being a girl but I also wasn’t good
13 at being a dude. And so, these super steady people were like, “We’re not trying to mess with
14 you.” And then, all the white people I went to school with were like butches but they were like
15 collared shirt, cargo short . . . like New England butch, which is like . . . that’s not what I look like.
16 And then, I joined this . . . so then when I was like, “I think I might be trans,” like towards the
17 end of college and some of my friends started using male pronouns and I was feeling that out.
18 Then I got invited . . . I met someone who also went to a women’s college who was trans and
19 was doing his masters at Penn and he was doing it on trans men at women’s colleges. So,
20 somehow we got connected and he wanted to interview me. So, we kind of talked about our
21 experiences and he was like, “Oh, I’m in this support group for trans men of color.” And, I
22 started going to that and that’s when I actually got a lot of pressure. It was like, “OK, cool.”
23 “Well, we’re not dykes, we’re not like those studs and butches, we’re men.”
- 24 AJ: Right.
- 25 QDA: I was like, “I don’t feel like I’m in either one of these things.” But, I also felt like I liked the
26 aesthetic of being masculine and I like being read as masculine, and so I felt like I wanted to
27 explore that. But, they were like, “OK, we’re going to get your name changed, we’re going to
28 get you on T, we’re going to get you all these things.” And I was just like, “Who, whoa, whoa.” I
29 hadn’t even changed my name, I was like, “Whoa, I don’t know how I feel about that.” And, I’d
30 tell people, when people are like, “Oh, when you started your medical transition . . .” I was on T
31 for a year before I really figured out why I was on it.
- 32 AJ: Really? OK.
- 33 QDA: I think it was because I wanted my masculinity to be my default and to be respected and to be
34 called he in that way, but not . . . so, I actually felt like the more aesthetically masculine I
35 became the more I could be feminine in my energy in a way that I didn’t have access to before.
- 36 AJ: That’s a phenomenon, right? That happens.

- 1 QDA: So, it was like, “Oh, that’s why I’m on T, not because . . .” And so, I really struggled in the
2 beginning – like, “I don’t know how to be a man. What does it mean to be a man? I have all
3 these negative connotations about men, particularly men of color.” I didn’t grow up with any
4 black or brown men who were positive in my life. So, I really was like, “I really don’t know what
5 to make of this.”
- 6 AJ: So, you had to learn manhood from . . .
- 7 QDA: Yeah, from piecing it together and that felt like am I selling out because I’m learning masculinity
8 from this white context – and then always having to be like, when I met black or brown men,
9 like trying to pass as cis.
- 10 AJ: Right.
- 11 QDA: “Yeah, I’m into that.” Not at all.
- 12 AJ: You had no clue, right.
- 13 QDA: Exactly. So, I think there was that moment where I was like, “Well, I’m not a woman, but am I a
14 man?” I think I obsessed about being a man for a long time and then I think it was actually when
15 I started dating other trans guys that I was like, “Oh, there’s actually lots of variations in that.”
16 And then I realized that it wasn’t actually about . . . I think I identified more with being a fag than
17 I did with being a man.
- 18 AJ: Huh.
- 19 QDA: Which was an interesting thing. I was like, “Wow, if someone would have told me I could grow
20 up to be a gay boy, we would have figured this out really differently.”
- 21 AJ: So, are you back to gay now?
- 22 QDA: Yes.
- 23 AJ: I didn’t hear that in the initial these are my . . . but I didn’t ask you about your sexual identity
24 though really.
- 25 QDA: Yeah. I mean, yes, for all intents and purposes, gay, but if a cis femme or a trans woman was
26 like, “What’s good?” I’d be like, “Great.” I’m definitely pan in that way where I’m attracted to
27 folks of all genders, but I definitely think I have a gay orientation.
- 28 AJ: Gay as culture, not necessarily as practice.
- 29 QDA: Yeah. And my first job out of college was at the gay book store and I was with all these old
30 white gay men and was kind of like, “Well, I don’t know about this gay thing.” I came out as
31 trans and they were hopping over it. And then I got a job at Mazzoni Center, which is the big
32 LGBT non-profit in Philly.
- 33 AJ: Right, exactly.

- 1 QDA: And then, I was around all these Black, gay cis men and I came into my Black queer identity
2 through them. So, then, I was like . . . and they were like, “Oh, you’re trans.” And so, they’d be
3 like, “Oh, you’re different from us because you’re trans,” but all the trans people they knew
4 were in the ball scene. They all were friends with trans women, but all the trans men they met
5 were like, “Oh, somebody in my house is a trans dude.”
- 6 AJ: Because gay culture comes from trans women, right? Let’s be real.
- 7 QDA: Right, so they were like, “Well, we know trans women.”
- 8 AJ: And Black women too, but mostly trans Black women.
- 9 QDA: In a different way - and subverting gender, right?
- 10 AJ: Yeah, exactly.
- 11 QDA: So, then I was going to . . . I had gone to balls a couple times, I was doing organizing with Black
12 gay men and Black Afro-Latino men and so then it was kind of like I followed suit and oh, I
13 should shake my masculinity and my manhood the way that these gay men do – which wasn’t
14 very . . .
- 15 AJ: Masculine.
- 16 QDA: I hung out with a bunch of butch queens, right.
- 17 AJ: Right.
- 18 QDA: So, I was like, “Oh . . .”
- 19 AJ: So, they would “girl” you all the time, right.
- 20 QDA: Yes.
- 21 AJ: And snapping and . . .
- 22 QDA: At first, I was like, “Are you seeing . . . you’re calling me girl.” And, I know a lot of trans men feel
23 really complicated about that. It’s like you’re being called girl but it’s not because they see you
24 as a woman, it’s, “Hey, girl.”
- 25 AJ: That’s the language in the culture – yeah.
- 26 QDA: Exactly. So, I’m being accepted but do you really see me? And then, I started doing it and then
27 other trans people . . . there are some trans people I know who are like, “Ah, ah, ah – don’t call
28 me that.” I was like, “OK, girl.” So, then I started dating other men too and . . . I never hooked
29 up with a cis man until I was probably in my late 20s and was identifying as a guy for a while. I
30 was like a gold star lesbian, never slept with cis dudes. I wasn’t like, “Oh, yes, I’ve got to do this
31 all this time.” I mostly like to date other trans people, so I’m definitely T for T, but . . . these
32 cultural things . . .
- 33 AJ: Haha, I hadn’t heard that before. T for T.

- 1 QDA: T for T. So, these cultures of where I was around kind of shaped how I started to create my
2 identity, which was complicated – it was always shifting. I’ve been thinking about this a lot, I’ve
3 been doing a lot of reading on identity, about how as a language is shift, I think we’ve also
4 perceived our identities in different ways. Now that we have a term for anti-Black racism, I can
5 specifically speak to an experience when it comes to my mother, but I didn’t have words to . . .
6 as a Black person interacting with my non-Black mother in a way that I didn’t have language for
7 or couldn’t talk to her about before. So, I would have to say . . . when I say . . . when I started
8 identifying, I also understand physically when I move through space people read me as a cis
9 man.
- 10 AJ: As a Black cis man.
- 11 QDA: Right, as a Black cis man. And so, even though I don’t necessarily identify as a man in that way, I
12 understand that I have a responsibility of how my body moves through space.
- 13 AJ: Right, that’s your reality.
- 14 QDA: Exactly, right. So, I also have to speak on being a Black man, but when I say that I’m a Black
15 man, my mother is like, “Well, you’re Puerto Rican too.” I was like, “But those things aren’t
16 mutually exclusive,” and now I have the language to talk to her about that but when I was
17 younger it was like it’s one or the other as if Black Puerto Ricans didn’t exist.
- 18 AJ: Right, exactly.
- 19 QDA: Or that like . . . or that Blackness and Latinidad are mutually exclusive, which they’re not. So, it’s
20 interesting to see how . . . even how I talk about my identity has shifted since then. Being in
21 Philly just gave me access to a lot of different people and a lot of different things.
- 22 AJ: I have so many questions. We’re going to start here, because you’ve brought up your medical
23 transition which I really appreciate, but to the extent that you feel comfortable discussing it
24 further, go to that point and stop if you want to, or tell me to fuck off or whatever. But, have
25 you had any other medical interventions beyond testosterone?
- 26 QDA: Yeah, so I’ve had top surgery. I had top surgery last summer actually.
- 27 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 28 QDA: Yeah. I’ve been on T for almost eight years, January it will be eight years.
- 29 AJ: Wow.
- 30 QDA: Again, I kind of got on it because I had pressure from a lot of people and then was like . . . it kind
31 of took a while before I really figured out why I was on it. But, it was . . . I stayed on it for my
32 mental health because I think . . . I got diagnosed with anxiety and depression, minor depressive
33 disorder, in college and I was on anti-depressants and when I started T I stopped my medicine
34 cold turkey, which is not what you’re supposed to do, and started T and realized that I did find a
35 balance. It wasn’t all better, but I was like, “Oh, a lot of my anxiety is about my gender and a lot
36 of my depression is about me not being able to articulate my gender.” And then it was just like -

1 oh, the balance that the hormone offered me gave me more mental clarity. And so, I think my .
 2 . . it's a double-edged sword because part of it is that . . . I have a friend who was telling me, he
 3 was a writer and when he started T, he lost the depth of his writing because he couldn't access
 4 those emotions anymore. And so, I felt like I wasn't in these deep, deep depressions that I had
 5 before, but it wasn't all better. They came . . . the depression was about other things, right. So,
 6 I stayed on T for my mental health.

7 AJ: And, a person of color in America can make you feel anxious.

8 QDA: Make you feel crazy – yeah. So, it's just like . . . yeah, having to be connected with my body in
 9 that way. I have good genes, whatever that means, so I passed immediately – even before,
 10 when I started binding and even before I started T, I got read as a dude. I got read as a really
 11 young dude, but I got read as a dude and then as soon as I started T . . .

12 AJ: Now you've got this beard that makes you this wise dude.

13 QDA: Yeah, and it's funny because I've always had a mustache and I used to shave it when I was a girl.
 14 And then, I started T in January and by March I was like, "No more shaving," by March I had a
 15 full mustache. So, everybody was like, "Whoa." My physical changes happened very, very . . .

16 AJ: Like your body was waiting for these . . .

17 QDA: It was like, "All right, here we go." So, that has always been interesting because I've never had
 18 the period of people reading me as in-between.

19 AJ: In-between. Huh . . . interesting.

20 QDA: So, it's been interesting because I think some people have the, "Oh, I can't figure out your
 21 gender and so that makes me uncomfortable," but I experienced the, "I think I know your
 22 gender and then you tell me something else and you lied to me." So, there's a different danger
 23 that comes from that. And then, for a long time, I was really adamant about not having top
 24 surgery. I used to run a trans support group for young people. I would meet these trans youth
 25 who would be like, "I need surgery or I'm not really trans," and I need these things. And so, for
 26 a long time I was like, "You don't need that to be trans; you can be trans however you are,
 27 without . . . you don't have to have hormones or nothing. You can just be trans," and really was
 28 trying to show that you don't need . . . "I don't have surgery and I have a job and I have
 29 someone who loves me and I have all these things." When I first started . . . when I started
 30 hormones, I told myself that I wouldn't start hormones unless I told my mother. And so, finally,
 31 I kind of went back and forth on it and finally I told her. I called her one day and I was crying –
 32 my mother does not like crying. She's a person who will like . . . she will hang up on me if I start
 33 to cry.

34 AJ: Oh, my goodness.

35 QDA: So, I'm crying and I'm like, "I'm sorry, I'm trying not to cry." And she was like, "What's wrong?"
 36 I said, "I have something to tell you and I don't know how to tell you." And she starts rattling off,
 37 "Are you pregnant?" "Are you in jail, did you get arrested?" "Are you on drugs?" "Do you need
 38 money for an abortion?" "Do you . . ." She was just rattling off the list. "Does someone you

- 1 met . . . did you shoot somebody?" All these crazy things and I'm like, "No." And she's like,
2 "Well, what could you possibly have done that is so bad that you can't tell me?" And I said, "I
3 think I was supposed to be a boy." She said, "You want a sex change?" I said, "I didn't say all
4 that." And then the next question was like, "Well, who is going to love you?" And it was a very
5 earnest question.
- 6 AJ: Yeah, mothers . . . that's where they come from. I think that's . . . if it's not the first thing, they
7 get to it eventually.
- 8 QDA: She was just like, "Who's going to love you? Who's going to employ you?" And then it was like,
9 "Who is going to give you a job?"
- 10 AJ: Right.
- 11 QDA: She was like, "You went to a women's college, how are you going to explain that?" Which has
12 been a whole other thing. So, when I told her, she was just kind of like, "OK." So, because of
13 that, I was really adamantly trying to create a narrative that I have love and I have opportunity
14 and I don't need these things to be trans – I can be trans just as I am. And then, you know, after
15 eight years of binding, my body was like, "I can't take this shit no more."
- 16 AJ: Right, exactly.
- 17 QDA: I'm a yoga teacher and I started doing yoga . . .
- 18 AJ: OK, "I'm free."
- 19 QDA: Basically, yeah – and feeling trapped and starting to do yoga where I'm teaching other people to
20 learn how to breathe and I can't breathe. Yeah, having to practice yoga with a binder on is not
21 fun.
- 22 AJ: Yeah, I can't imagine.
- 23 QDA: It's restricting, you don't get the full breath, and then I was like . . . as I got more in tune with my
24 body, and yoga also helped me connect with my body as a trans person. It's not that I hated my
25 body, like, "Oh, I hate my body," it's not that I hated my chest. It was so easy to disconnect if I
26 wanted to and so yoga was a thing that forced me to be in my body. So, as I was getting deeper
27 into yoga there's a disconnect and I need that.
- 28 AJ: Some congruency.
- 29 QDA: Yeah, so I was like, "I think I want top surgery." And, it happened super fast. I was like, "OK, I
30 think I'm going to . . ." I kind of knew the doctor I wanted to go to because I had a lot of friends
31 who went to him.
- 32 AJ: Sure.
- 33 QDA: I was like, "I think I want to have top surgery," and it was . . . well, this is 2017, so 2016, January
34 of 2016, I wrote down my New Year's things and I said, "I want top surgery by the end of the
35 year." Put it down and so I was like, "OK, I would like to have it during the summer because

- 1 then I can take the summer off from work.” I was like, “OK, I need to raise money.” I attempted
2 to raise the money and then I was like, “Whatever I don’t raise, I’m going to put on a credit card
3 and then I’ll go from there.”
- 4 AJ: Right, you’re just going to do it.
- 5 QDA: I remember it was like at the end of January and I was like, “Four months is not a lot of time to
6 raise \$10,000.” I needed \$9,000 and so I was like . . . I wrote this letter, this heartfelt, “This is
7 where I am, this is what I need.” I put it out there and I made all the money, \$2,000 over my
8 goal in two days.
- 9 AJ: What?
- 10 QDA: Yeah. It was just such a beautiful thing of community and all the work that I had done in Philly,
11 particularly with trans communities over the decade that I lived there, and just feeling so held
12 and appreciated in that moment. I was able to get in then, put the money down in June, went
13 down to Florida, and here we are. But, it was a really rough recovery.
- 14 AJ: Florida is kind of a mecca for trans masculine top surgery.
- 15 QDA: Well, there’s a dude down there and all he does is top surgery all day, every day. That’s all he
16 does. All day, every day – and he has consistent results. I met lots of people who had different
17 types of bodies, different skin types, who were on T, off T, who all had . . .
- 18 AJ: Is he able to maintain like form and nipples.
- 19 QDA: Yeah, I feel really good about my nipples. That was the winner for me, really – the nipples, and
20 just good . . . yeah, I feel really good about my chest. It was probably one of the best doctor
21 experiences I’ve ever had.
- 22 AJ: Wow.
- 23 QDA: Which is wild to me.
- 24 AJ: Yeah.
- 25 QDA: But, it was a really hard recovery and that’s something that I think a lot of people don’t talk
26 about is recovering from surgeries.
- 27 AJ: Sure.
- 28 QDA: And, I had a really, really difficult recovery.
- 29 AJ: I’m sorry to hear that.
- 30 QDA: I mean, it was worth it in the end – it’s not like I regret this decision.
- 31 AJ: No, no – but, it’s the reality of our lives. Right?

- 1 QDA: Yeah, and I think a lot of . . . particularly trans men of color, don't talk about it. I think people
2 disappear for the six-week recovery and then they're like, "I'm back." And, I was just really,
3 really depressed and I was . . . yeah, part of it was . . .
- 4 AJ: Your movement is pretty restricted – you can't do anything . . .
- 5 QDA: You can't do nothing. I could barely pick up a glass of water, I had to drink with straws
6 everywhere. And, just having . . . and, my partner was out here at the time and so his parents
7 live in Florida so we stayed at his family's house for the first week and then he had to go back to
8 Minnesota and I was back with my community, but it was just hard to not have someone there
9 constantly and lots of different people. I felt really held and loved, but at some point, I was like I
10 don't want to see nobody but I also need help to get around. I couldn't open my own front
11 door. It was the heat wave in the middle of the summer . . . so, it was complicated. Part of it, I
12 didn't feel . . . like it wasn't . . . some people are like, "I just wanted them gone." And, I didn't
13 feel that way. So, there was a healing that had to be done.
- 14 AJ: A loss – it's sort of like a . . . yeah, the missing finger.
- 15 QDA: Yeah, a loss. Yeah.
- 16 AJ: Your name – how did you come to your name?
- 17 QDA: So, my name is actually an abbreviation of my given name. My given name is Aquila and it's A-q-
18 u-i-l-a, which is actually a man's name, which is kind of funny. It's in the Bible and it's the story
19 of this guy, Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla, and my mom was like, "I was going to name you Aquila
20 or Priscilla," and I was like, "Thank God, you didn't name me Priscilla." She was like, "I was going
21 to call you Prieska."
- 22 AJ: The queen of the desert.
- 23 QDA: Yeah. I was like, "Oh, geez." Oh, God, what would my life have been like if my name was
24 Priscilla. But, after that damn movie *Aquila and the Bee* came out, everybody was like, "Oh, like
25 *Aquila and the Bee*."
- 26 AJ: Yeah.
- 27 QDA: So, for a while I wanted to keep my name and Qui was a nickname that I grew up with,
28 everybody called me Qui growing up.
- 29 AJ: So, it wasn't a huge traumatic shift?
- 30 QDA: No, no, but it was when my mom was like, "Oh, you're going to go by this?" I think she was
31 surprised that I legally changed my name to Qui. She was just like, "Oh, OK." But then I asked
32 her for input on . . .
- 33 AJ: Has she been calling you Qui?

- 1 QDA: Yeah. She's been very good with . . . much better with my name, because she grew up calling
2 me Qui, as opposed to my pronouns. So, she's finally starting to but for a while she would just
3 use Qui instead of any pronouns.
- 4 AJ: Yeah. I mean, that's the most respectful thing, right? Pronouns, for some reason, is kind of
5 challenging for people . . . it's challenging because a lot of people just want to be assholes but
6 it's also challenging . . . I mean, there have been scientific studies that once you gender a
7 person, and that only takes 30 seconds . . . like you're walking down the street and you're like,
8 "Oh, that's a dude," and then they turn around and it's a woman and . . .
- 9 QDA: And, you're like, "Ahhh, ahhh . . ."
- 10 AJ: Yeah, and, you just don't know how to deal with it.
- 11 QDA: Yeah, definitely.
- 12 AJ: So, I totally get that.
- 13 QDA: My siblings, also, that's why it was complicated too because my youngest sibling was about 5
14 when I . . . so, I didn't see my family for like three years after I started T and part of it was
15 because my mom was like, "I don't know . . ." She was like, "We can talk on the phone but I
16 don't know what to tell other people or blah, blah, blah." And one day, I just showed up. It was
17 Martin Luther King weekend 2012, I got on a bus and showed up at my momma's house without
18 telling her. I was like, "Hello," and she was pissed.
- 19 AJ: Really.
- 20 QDA: Yeah, my siblings were . . .
- 21 AJ: Did she recognize you?
- 22 QDA: Well, she was like, "Who the fuck is that?" I called her and I was like, "You should open the
23 door." And she was like . . . because she don't open the door, so I knew that if I didn't call her
24 she was going to be like, "I'm not expecting nobody." And, she was like, "You better not be
25 outside my fucking door." I was like, "Hello." She was like, "Go upstairs immediately," because
26 she didn't want my younger siblings . . . so, I was probably 25 around there, 25 or 26, so my
27 siblings were like 14, 15, 16, around there, and then the little one was 5 or 6. And so, you know,
28 she was like, "Well, what am I supposed to tell the little one because she keeps asking for
29 somebody who is not going to come back."
- 30 AJ: Yeah.
- 31 QDA: My sister was born my freshman year of college, so we already had a lot of space, a distance.
32 And, kids are so easy with that, so she was awkward for five minutes – she was like, "Hi,"
33 because I had a beard. And then she was like, "This is what I got for Christmas." So, she was
34 over it – and I remember her being like, "Well, you're my sister," and I was like, "No." And she
35 was like, "OK." She was so good with it and she's the one who asks me questions about gender
36 now and things like that.

- 1 AJ: And she's 10 now?
- 2 QDA: She's 12 now.
- 3 AJ: Oh, OK.
- 4 QDA: She just turned 12 and she came out to me as bisexual.
- 5 AJ: Oh, my goodness.
- 6 QDA: Yeah.
- 7 AJ: What about your 21-year-old sibling?
- 8 QDA: Oh, so it's interesting, because she . . . I think, she . . . low-key has a complex about my identity, I
9 think. And, part of it is that when I left for college, I never came back, and when I graduated . . .
10 well, I took some extra time and . . .
- 11 AJ: Like you abandoned her?
- 12 QDA: Yeah. So, I took some extra time in college and so I was supposed to come back and was like,
13 "I'm not, I'm not . . . I can't do this," and so I moved to Philly. I was homeless for a bit and I was
14 like I'd rather be homeless and figure it out than be back in Buffalo.
- 15 AJ: Wow.
- 16 QDA: And, thank God for brown queers giving up their couches and their spaces in their homes. I
17 figured it out, got a job, and got myself together. But, she felt like I had just left and I didn't
18 care, and then my mom was like, "Don't come home." So, she was . . . she just thought that I
19 didn't want to have anything to do with them. So, it wasn't until later that I was like . . . I had to
20 tell my mom, "You have to take responsibility for your role in this and you have to explain to her
21 that you asked me not to come home because she thinks this is my fault." And really, just
22 recently, she's finally like, "OK, I think I'm starting to understand Qui and his identity and I get
23 that it was hard," but she was not trying to have it and she would misgender me and da, da, da.
24 My brother and I are much closer and I think we're a lot more alike. He said to me, "You know,
25 when you were a teenager and you just wanted to sleep all the time, I thought it was because
26 you didn't like us and then I got depressed and I realized what was happening." I was like,
27 "Yup." And, he was like, "I'm sorry." I said, "I'm sorry that I didn't have the language to
28 articulate that."
- 29 AJ: Wow.
- 30 QDA: But, we have . . . we are very different creatures. She also passes as white, so we have very,
31 very different racial experiences. I've had to say to my mom, "You have to, as a light-skinned
32 person, you have to explain to her what racism looks like as a light-skinned, white-passing
33 person because that's not my life."
- 34 AJ: Right.
- 35 QDA: So, it's an interesting gamut.

- 1 AJ: But, family is still there and you guys are working through it?
- 2 QDA: Yeah, we're working through it and my mom is finally coming around. She's met my partner,
3 she's like, "OK, great."
- 4 AJ: What about your chosen family and your love life? What's going on there?
- 5 QDA: Yeah, I feel . . . it's funny, because my partner is also trans and my mom was like, "Oh, you like
6 people like you." I was like, "Sure." I was like, "Yes, I am gay for other trans people, regardless
7 of their gender, I'm gay." Yeah, and I think someone that comes to mind right away is Ignacio
8 Rivera – you know Ignacio.
- 9 AJ: I do, very well.
- 10 QDA: And, I met Ignacio when I was a freshman in college and it was before they were out as trans,
11 and they're a poet and I remember being like, "This amazing poet said that they liked my poem,
12 oh, my God." I think of them because they and their identity gave me, they're also Black Puerto
13 Rican . . .
- 14 AJ: Right.
- 15 QDA: . . . gave me the space to really think about how my trans identity could look. So, they've been
16 an elder in my life – they're not that much older than me, but they've been an elder in my life
17 that's made space and really just learned from them and other trans masculine folks about how
18 to build family. So, I was in Philly for 10 years. My partner and I met at the Brown Boi Project.
- 19 AJ: Yeah, out in Oakland.
- 20 QDA: Yeah, in Oakland.
- 21 AJ: The whole . . .
- 22 QDA: Yeah, we met in that crew and that's where I met Enzi there too. We all met together and . . .
- 23 AJ: It's so amazing. I've interviewed Enzi, I've interviewed Ignacio.
- 24 QDA: Yeah.
- 25 AJ: So, you're part of a . . . your family is here.
- 26 QDA: Yeah, totally.
- 27 AJ: I have not interviewed Cole yet, but a few other people from the Brown Boi Project though.
- 28 QDA: Yeah, some good crew, some good fam. So, we met there . . .
- 29 AJ: Ryan Li Dahlstrom, do you remember Ryan Li?
- 30 QDA: Yeah, I know Ryan Li – yeah, yeah. And, Elliot is one of my best friends – Elliott Fukui. So, you
31 know, just meeting folks and other people along their way. Shay and I have been together for
32 six years.

- 1 AJ: Is that right?
- 2 QDA: OK. Lots of different iterations of ourselves. We were very different when we met. So, it's been
3 such a . . . I feel really grateful because I actually have a lot of other trans people in my life and I
4 think as I've gotten older I realize that a lot of people don't have other trans people in their
5 lives.
- 6 AJ: That's real true.
- 7 QDA: And have felt really isolated because they've been the whole person of trans experience.
- 8 AJ: I would say . . . I mean, I have a lot of . . . I know a lot of trans people, right? But, I think the
9 majority of my world is spent in sort of a straight field, or a cis field.
- 10 QDA: Totally. I think I created a bubble in Philly where all my friends were . . . well, it's funny, because
11 my mom was going to come . . . my little sister lives with disabilities so it's kind of hard to travel
12 with her, but my mom was trying to come while I was recovering from top surgery and I was
13 like, "OK, so, I need to tell you, if you come to Philadelphia, all my friends are gay." She was like,
14 "You exaggerate so much." I was like, "No, no, no – all my friends are gay, and probably 75% of
15 those people are trans, so don't be like, 'Is that person trans?'"
- 16 AJ: Just assume that they are.
- 17 QDA: Exactly. Because she would be like, "Oh, is that person trans? Is that person gay too?"
- 18 AJ: Right.
- 19 QDA: So, I felt really lucky . . .
- 20 AJ: That is hilarious.
- 21 QDA: I would meet other trans people, and that was the other thing too – actually, Ignacio was a big
22 part of me figuring out . . . like dating other trans people. They would have POC kink spaces,
23 that was my first introduction to . . . well, Shay was the first person who introduced me to kink
24 and I was meeting other people and I don't think I would ever have been into that or poly or
25 exploring different ways to be intimate with people if I didn't see other brown people doing it.
26 And so, I realized that I had hooked up with all these other trans dudes and I feel like I ever time
27 I hook up with a new trans dude . . . I feel like I've fucked a lot of trans men.
- 28 AJ: OK.
- 29 QDA: And most of them have not fucked other trans men.
- 30 AJ: Yeah.
- 31 QDA: And, I'm just like . . . it baffles me and I have to remember that I'm . . .
- 32 AJ: Because, that's not a thing.
- 33 QDA: Yeah, it's not a thing. And so, I'm like, "I'm actually extremely lucky because I have so many
34 trans people in my life and I've had intimate experiences with lots of different trans people,"

- 1 which is not the case for a lot of people. So, I think being in Philly has been great. Philly has a
2 trans health conference.
- 3 AJ: That just ended this weekend.
- 4 QDA: That just happened, yeah.
- 5 AJ: And you've been involved with that for a few years.
- 6 QDA: Yeah, for 10 years. This is the first year that I wasn't involved.
- 7 AJ: I want to just mention in this interview that you're answering all of my questions, right down the
8 list – so I love it.
- 9 QDA: Yes.
- 10 AJ: But, you brought up Philly trans health conference, which is one of the largest conferences . . . is
11 it specifically for people of color?
- 12 QDA: It's definitely not specifically for people of color.
- 13 AJ: OK. But, it was sort of created by people of color and it attracts an overwhelming amount of
14 people of color.
- 15 QDA: Yes, definitely.
- 16 AJ: And it's specifically trans.
- 17 QDA: Yes. So, it's for trans people, the people who love them, and the people that provide services
18 for them. It was started by Miss Charlene, who has since passed, who was such a wonderful and
19 amazing elder.
- 20 AJ: Charlene Arcila?
- 21 QDA: Yes. And, so it was her . . .
- 22 AJ: A-r-c-i-l-a.
- 23 QDA: Yes, I believe so. And, she and some other trans folks . . . Ben Stiller, who is a white trans man,
24 who is just a dope organizer, and a couple of . . . a very small crew of trans people realized that
25 they were trans and they were the only trans people they knew and that there were trans
26 people around, but they didn't know how to access services and they didn't know how to access
27 getting hormones or social support. So, they decided to throw this conference as a way for
28 other trans people to meet each other and grow. Eventually, down the line it started to grow
29 and Mazzone was like, "Oh, we're interested in supporting this, i.e., we'll give you money, i.e.,
30 now it's ours."
- 31 AJ: Right.
- 32 QDA: They eventually coopted this conference and we're like, "Now we are the biggest . . ." "Now we
33 have the largest trans conference in the western hemisphere." So, it was definitely started by

- 1 people of color, a Black trans woman . . . the other thing that she was a big part of in Philly was,
2 Philly used to have gender markers on their bus passes.
- 3 AJ: Yeah.
- 4 QDA: And, she sued the transportation company and won.
- 5 AJ: I remember this. Like, why the fuck do you have gender markers on your bus cards?
- 6 QDA: Seriously, seriously. And, it started because someone denied her from getting on the bus. They
7 were like, "That's not your gender da-da-da-da." And, so she sued them, she won, they took
8 them off and it was a huge deal. So, yeah, Philly . . . I think I was really lucky in Philly because
9 one, I always had queer health care. I had queer doctors, queer practitioners, at a queer-
10 focused medical center. So, throughout my health problems or whatever, I was able to have
11 queer people, which is amazing, and have community and have everybody come to you.
- 12 AJ: You worked for the Mazzoni's.
- 13 QDA: And I worked for the Mazzoni's, I worked for the education department. That was my first taste
14 of being a community educator, and that was my title, "Community Educator". I taught sex ed
15 all over Philly. It was really powerful to teach sex ed from a queer, positive lens that was also by
16 a queer brown trans person in public schools.
- 17 AJ: Yeah, that's incredible.
- 18 QDA: That gave me a lot of access to meeting a lot of people. And, people come to Philly from all over
19 the world for that conference so I just got to be in Philly and people came to me. So, I was able
20 to just build really beautiful national networks and local networks.
- 21 AJ: Wow. There's so much to talk about here but, I guess, a couple of questions. What do you think
22 the relationship is between LGB and TGNC?
- 23 QDA: It's complicated, that's the first thing that comes to mind.
- 24 AJ: And, particularly, from a perspective of having walked through many of those acronyms.
- 25 QDA: I think I've been very letter on the acronym. Yeah, I mean, I think . . . when I first was coming
26 out, some of the most transphobic experiences I had were amongst gay people, so that has
27 always been the reality of it.
- 28 AJ: So sad.
- 29 QDA: And, I think the thing that feels complicated about gay or LGB identities is that they're based on
30 gender, like we have these words based on gender because the gender of the person you're
31 dating determines the word that you use.
- 32 AJ: Right, exactly. And, the basis of the discrimination is based on transgressing gender norms.

- 1 QDA: Yes, absolutely. And so, I think that most cis, gay, lesbian, bi folks are very gender essentialists
2 because it's wrapped up in their identity of how they identify in relation to the person that
3 they're dating.
- 4 AJ: Wow, that's fascinating. I hadn't really thought about it in that light.
- 5 QDA: Right, so it's just like, "Oh, you're attached to this because this gives you validity for your thing."
6 And, meeting . . . so, there's that and then also I know a lot of trans people who are straight and
7 very homophobic, so that has been a thing too – being a queer trans person and a trans person
8 who dates other trans people or people my gender or genders similar to mine, has also been an
9 interesting thing because there's this narrative where we've been trying to pull apart, like, "Oh,
10 trans and gay are not the same thing." But then, there are also gay and trans people that
11 people can't wrap their head around that.
- 12 AJ: Yeah, no. One of the hardest coming outs for me was coming out as a lesbian as a Black trans
13 woman. Black trans women ain't trying to hear that, it's strickly dickly and if you fuck with cis
14 women get away from me. That's the reality.
- 15 QDA: Definitely. And that somehow you being a lesbian discredits your gender identity and their
16 gender identity, which has nothing to do with anything.
- 17 AJ: Exactly.
- 18 QDA: Yeah, when I was in that support group that I mentioned, at some point someone was like, "Oh,
19 you doing that faggot shit now?" I was like, "Remember when you all used to be dykes?"
- 20 AJ: Right, exactly – yes.
- 21 QDA: Remember that? So, it would be this weird, "What?" And, I've gotten that from . . .
- 22 AJ: I'm snapping again, y'all.
- 23 QDA: Particularly black and brown trans people that I was around. You know, just . . . and I think the
24 non-binary thing too has created people that are like, "Why don't you just pick one?" Both, cis
25 and binary trans people alike being like, "Why don't you just pick one?" Or, "You not picking
26 one makes it harder for us to live in our truth." So, it's been complicated because the
27 communities are connected but they're not the same. They overlap in ways, but I've had a lot of
28 people . . . and I think part of that is hurt people hurt people. So, I think people, in an attempt
29 to feel validated and to feel seen and who have never had access to power, will hang on to that
30 as much as they can, even if that's at the expense of others. I have experienced transphobia
31 from gay people and queer phobia and homophobia from straight trans people, so it's
32 complicated. I think I tend to try to put myself in specifically queer trans spaces, because I also
33 think that gays and queers are different and I think because a lot of . . . you know, queer is a
34 political identity, I think, for at least me. I think of it as a political identity and not just . . . and
35 it's about my gender and my sexuality and it's about my relationships and the way I build
36 community and my politics. So, I know there are some trans people who are binary and who are
37 straight, or cis gay people who want to have heteronormative lives where they just have their
38 babies and . . .

- 1 AJ: And that's cool.
- 2 QDA: That's cool, and I'm into that. My thing is don't yuck my yum. If that's what you want, cool –
3 you are allowed to have that because we should all have the right to self-determine.
- 4 AJ: Right.
- 5 QDA: But, don't tell me that you can't self-determine because I'm self-determining.
- 6 AJ: Self-determining, right.
- 7 QDA: That doesn't make sense.
- 8 AJ: Yeah, so kind of what I hear you saying is we should keep fighting this battle.
- 9 QDA: Yeah, I think there's a difference . . . I think solidarity is different than what we've been talking
10 about. I think a lot of the LGBT movement is . . . we have to say that we're . . . to create a mass
11 to say that we're legitimate, and I don't think that solidarity works that way . . . adrienne maree
12 brown wrote this book called *Emergent Strategy* that I've been loving.
- 13 AJ: Yeah, I haven't gotten it yet - it's on my list.
- 14 QDA: Oh, my God, it's so good.
- 15 AJ: And, she's a dear friend.
- 16 QDA: Yes, she's amazing. I've been so blessed just to be in her presence and to share with her. We've
17 had some really amazing conversations and in her book she talked about we need critical depth
18 and we think we need critical mass to win, but we actually need critical depth. And that we can
19 be narrow and wide but what happens if we're like . . . if it's shallow and wide, what does it
20 matter unless if we're going deep, we can actually transform some really different things. So,
21 I'm trying to think about that, of like solidarity amongst LGBT folks has to be about depth and
22 critical depth and not necessarily just getting everybody to our club to create validity – because
23 that's still based on patriarchy and heteronormativity. We are valid as we are and we don't
24 need to be the majority to be valid.
- 25 AJ: In the noise, yeah – I love that. So, what do you think . . . I mean, you've touched on it already, I
26 guess – I'm telling you, you're just eight steps ahead of me. But, what do you think the agenda
27 for the Trans GNC community should be? And there's just that same divide and you touched on
28 it a little bit, but gender non-conforming, there are some trans, sort of straight, or binary-
29 identified who are like, "What the hell are these gender non-conforming people doing with the
30 pink hair and . . . they're fucking up our whole bathroom thing."
- 31 QDA: Yeah. I've worked with a . . . there was a Black trans woman that I worked with in Philly who,
32 when we were doing our youth . . . we invited her to work with our youth stuff and she said,
33 "Well, if she's supposed to be a girl, why does she still have her mustache?" And, I was like,
34 "We're talking about 16-year-olds. If she says she's a woman, we're leaving space for her to do
35 that and you're already clocking her and saying, 'You're not fish enough to be here.' Maybe she
36 don't want to do that. You're the elder in this situation."

- 1 AJ: Or maybe she's 16 and can't do that because she's still got to eat and go to sleep at night.
- 2 QDA: Exactly, you going to buy her razors? You going to buy her make-up? You going to do these
3 things? She's trying to survive and so . . . things like that, where people are like, "Oh, well, if
4 you're going to be trans, this is the way it looks."
- 5 AJ: Right.
- 6 QDA: So, I think we need to break down the narrative that there's one way to be trans. I think there's
7 also . . . the race thing comes up a lot. I remember being in a workshop at Trans Health and it
8 was a . . . it was both trans men and trans women and this white trans woman raised her hand
9 and said, "You know, I'm sick of hearing about trans men because they have it so easy, you
10 transition so well, you get male privilege, all these things, blah, blah, blah, blah." And, there was
11 a Black trans man who was holding the space and he's like, "OK, what we're not going to do is
12 have oppression Olympics. The other thing is that I'm a Black man, so my world is actually . . .
13 and you're a white woman, so you might be trans but there's also these other things where
14 we're disproportionately . . ." So, I think that's another thing, too, is that my gender has always
15 been racialized and my racial experience has been very gendered. So, I think, trans people of
16 color have different issues and things that need to be addressed than white trans people do and
17 I think more white trans folks, while it's hard to be trans in this country, that's real. But, there's
18 also white privilege that's able to soften some of those blows in ways that I think people don't
19 even get to realize. And, I think it became really startling to me when I could . . . I never really
20 felt fear as a queer woman because I'd walk down the street and hold my girlfriend's hand and
21 they'd be like, "Oh, you're like us." Especially in Philly – there's a lot of dykes in Philly and
22 people would be like, "Oh, whatever . . . I want to steal your girl." Stupid stuff.
- 23 AJ: Right.
- 24 QDA: But, when I started moving through the world as a dude and dating dudes, I was really worried
25 that I would get gay-bashed and then people would find out that I was trans and then there
26 would be violence from there. I think when you're female assigned, there's fear engrained into
27 you around rape and that if you have a vagina you're always susceptible to rape and so that's an
28 underlying . . . like drilled into people in a way that lives in their bones. And so, I think that
29 there's a lot of things that . . . I remember when people started treating me differently and
30 being really confused at first, and being like, "Why are people talking to me like that?" "Oh,
31 because I'm a man." But, then I would also see how people would cross the street when I would
32 come down the street. In Philly, it was that thing where I would hear white queers be like, "Oh,
33 I just got mugged," but no one ever fucked with me. And part of that was because I was Black
34 and part of that was because of people getting targeted as a response to genderfication. And
35 part of it was that people thought I was going to rob them. So, there's just a different . . . but
36 then, I'm also profiled by police and I'm also seen as aggressive. I just started grad school this
37 past week and I'm thinking about what does it mean to be in a classroom being read as a Black
38 man because the last time I was in a classroom, I was read as a woman and not always read as
39 Black. I went to a women's college where they're like, "Put your voice in there, don't let these
40 men drown you out in class." And now I'm like, "Oh, am I going to take up too much space?"

- 1 AJ: Yeah, you're probably not going to get called on as much or people expecting you to know the
2 answers as much. That's the life of a Black male, but that's also the life of a Black woman too.
- 3 QDA: Yeah, absolutely – right. And, I think that's the thing about being Black is that that changes
4 things in a way. So, I think – all that to say, I think that we need to recognize that . . . I think also
5 there's this thing where people . . . something I've noticed since I moved to Minneapolis is that
6 there's a lot of Black Lives Matter signs everywhere, but every time I'm in a space, there ain't no
7 Black people in there.
- 8 AJ: Wow.
- 9 QDA: So, all these cafes that I go to are like, "Black Lives Matter," but I don't never see Black people in
10 there.
- 11 AJ: Wow, what a fucking observation. I've always said . . . I see all the Black Lives Matter signs but
12 nothing is really changing for Black lives.
- 13 QDA: Yeah.
- 14 AJ: But, you took it deeper.
- 15 QDA: It's like, "That's funny, because I'm the only Black person in here, but you've got this big ol'
16 placard talking about Black Lives Matter."
- 17 AJ: Right.
- 18 QDA: So, that's been a thing where I think people now . . . it's like, people are like, "Well, we have to
19 prioritize trans women of color," but they don't know what that means.
- 20 AJ: Right.
- 21 QDA: It's like the golden ticket to say that you're down.
- 22 AJ: Yeah.
- 23 QDA: "Trans women of color are being murdered," which is real and true and that's a real thing.
- 24 AJ: Absolutely.
- 25 QDA: And, that doesn't mean that your politics are in alignment with Black trans people just because
26 you say that you know that we're getting killed.
- 27 AJ: People say that and then in that same breath, they go take the executive director job of the
28 Trans Women's Organization as a cis white woman.
- 29 QDA: Right. And, I think the other thing is . . .
- 30 AJ: Maybe they're queer, who knows – I don't know, sometimes they're not even that.
- 31 QDA: Totally.
- 32 AJ: I know a Black woman who is running a Black organization, gay organization, and she's straight.

- 1 QDA: See, I can't . . .
- 2 AJ: A national organization, you probably know her too.
- 3 QDA: Wow, yeah – that's a thing.
- 4 AJ: I don't want to fall on her because she's down.
- 5 QDA: That's a thing, that's how it shows up. So, I feel like . . . I think the other thing, too, is that I think
6 by stopping your analysis at the right thing to say, we're not uplifting each other and holding
7 each other accountable in our own communities. And so, I've heard a lot of Black trans men talk
8 about feeling ignored, feeling a race out of narratives, or trans narratives – that whenever we're
9 talking about Black trans people we're only talking about Black trans women. And, it's that hard
10 thing because we're like . . . so, there is a Black trans man who was murdered by his partner
11 recently.
- 12 AJ: Yeah, just last week.
- 13 QDA: Yeah, and I've barely heard anything about it and I know people who knew of him and so that's
14 how I heard about it, but there's this thing where it's like – yeah, people don't talk about Black
15 trans men because people don't think we exist.
- 16 AJ: Right.
- 17 QDA: And, I also know a lot of Black trans men who are stealth, so it's a survival thing.
- 18 AJ: And that complicates things, which is . . . it is, it's a survival deal.
- 19 QDA: Absolutely. And, there's also been a lot of . . . I've also seen a lot of Black trans women have
20 access to power that they've never had before and just hang on for dear life. And then, are
21 shutting down solidarity within our own communities because of their own hurt and they're
22 own trying to access power. So, I'm like what does it mean if someone who is a Black trans
23 woman is hurting other trans people in her community by way of whatever she's doing – the
24 way she's talking to people, the way she's isolating people, blah, blah, blah, blah. But then, all
25 these white people are like, "We're doing the right thing because we're uplifting this person." I
26 kind of feel like it's about how when people wanted Hillary Clinton to be president and I was just
27 like, "OK, just because she might be the first woman president doesn't mean that she's the best
28 woman to be in that job."
- 29 AJ: Right.
- 30 QDA: I think it's actually more important to get a woman . . . like, if Elizabeth Warren ran, I'd be like,
31 "Hey."
- 32 AJ: Yeah.
- 33 QDA: But, Hillary Clinton, there's so many other women politicians who could actually . . . I mean, I
34 would love to see you as the president.
- 35 AJ: OK.

- 1 QDA: That's a different . . .
- 2 AJ: I'm not going down that route.
- 3 QDA: Fair. Like Michelle said, "I don't want that, that was Barack's thing."
- 4 AJ: No, no, no, no – you've got to go live in a house that was built by slaves. I'm not cool on that.
- 5 QDA: For real. So, it's a thing where I think we also should just not limit people to their identities and I
6 think that we need to have to have a more nuanced understanding of our identities within our
7 trans communities, and do a lot of healing work inside of our trans communities – because a lot
8 of people are hurt and a lot of people are trying to survive. When people don't get their basic
9 needs met . . . so, I think part of it is yes, we need to still be fighting for our basic needs to be
10 met because a lot of us don't have that and when we have that, what's next? It doesn't mean
11 that things are over, it doesn't mean that things are better, it means that we have to do
12 something else. So, I just think that we need to be more nuanced in how we treat each other,
13 making space for our different racial experiences, our different gender experiences. I don't
14 think that we need to talk about trans men and trans women in the same way, because we have
15 different experiences. I think it's conflating our experiences and not helpful because I think it
16 doesn't keep trans men accountable for the privileges that they do access and I think it doesn't
17 keep trans women accountable of the ways that they're able to out shadow other people. And,
18 that's not to say . . . and, at the end of the day, I'm always going to do the work to support my
19 trans sisters and understand that they have a different experience than me. I think those things
20 can be done at the same time without erasing trans men. And, I also just think that there's this
21 conflation between trans men and cis men – that we experience masculinity the same way. So,
22 if we say that trans women are socialized as men and so therefore they have access to male
23 privilege, we all know that that's bullshit, so then why would you assume that trans men have
24 the same proximity to masculinity that cis men do?
- 25 AJ: Yeah.
- 26 QDA: We really have to be really critical and nuanced in how we're thinking about these things.
- 27 AJ: I'm so glad you talked about it. I just recently saw . . . because of the murder of the brother, I'm
28 not quite sure where . . . was it in Philadelphia?
- 29 QDA: No, it was . . . I can't remember where it was.
- 30 AJ: But, that sparked this dialogue around invisibility and then Joe Ippolito, who I'm sure you know,
31 went on his sort of long-time rant of trans men don't matter and tired of giving up space and
32 yada, yada, yada, yada . . . so, I'm just really glad to hear your more sort of nuanced perspective
33 and being able to identify some of the realities, so thank you for sharing that.
- 34 QDA: Totally. I think one thing on that last point, I think there's also . . . that's racialized too, right?
35 Because as a white trans man, he also lives a very different life than I do as a Black trans man.
- 36 AJ: Sure.

- 1 QDA: So, I've been hearing other Black trans men really trying to figure it out and really trying to be in
2 conversation with other people because I think that that's the thing – yeah, I know that there
3 are lots of white trans men who have very, very different experiences than me and get to access
4 their masculinity in a different way. So, while yes, trans men do not have visibility the way that
5 trans women do now in our narrative, because this is a very temporal thing, right? We can't act
6 like this has been like that forever.
- 7 AJ: No, not even close.
- 8 QDA: But, it's kind of like what you mentioned before of now we have this . . . visibility is a thing that
9 we think is going to save us and it's not. We also have this really particular idea of what trans is
10 supposed to look like. Don't get into it, I love Tiq Milan, we grew up in the same town, but not
11 all of us look like Tiq.
- 12 AJ: Right, exactly.
- 13 QDA: That man is like 6'3" and beautiful as shit.
- 14 AJ: Buff.
- 15 QDA: Not all of us look like Tiq.
- 16 AJ: Smart as fuck, dapper.
- 17 QDA: Yeah, you know.
- 18 AJ: He's coming to campus.
- 19 QDA: Oh, when?
- 20 AJ: November, I think.
- 21 QDA: Oh, great. And so, it's like not all of us are that. My partner is very femme presenting and I
22 think has also taught me a lot about the ways that I . . . just the advantages of how we move
23 through space and we're read differently, even though we both are Black and Puerto Rican,
24 even though we're both trans masculine, even though we're similar in a lot of ways, we're read
25 really differently because of his presentation and how he gets excluded from trans masculine
26 experiences and spaces because he's feminine identified, but also was not invited into femme
27 spaces because we think femmes are either trans women and cis women. As if, trans men can't
28 be femme or that if you're going to be femme, why wouldn't you just stay a woman. That's not
29 what that means.
- 30 AJ: Right, exactly. Well, I just want to be clear, they have been invited to participate in this process,
31 they have opted, up to this point, not to. But, it's all good.
- 32 QDA: Fair, yeah – totally. They're much more reserved than I am.
- 33 AJ: And that's real. Everybody has that right to self-determination, as you identified earlier. This
34 has been an amazing hour-plus. Is there anything that I haven't had the foresight to ask you
35 that you think is really important to talk about?

- 1 QDA: I don't know. I think we kind of ran the gamut. I gave you my life.
- 2 AJ: We got to a lot of places though, man.
- 3 QDA: Yeah, I think . . .
- 4 AJ: What is . . . what . . . how do I phrase this? What is the most positive aspect of your gender
5 identity today?
- 6 QDA: I think it's . . . I think that it's given me a sense of freedom in ways that . . . well, obviously, it's
7 hard to be a trans person in this country today. Knowing that I can think critically about gender
8 or race, that I don't have to be bound to the things that people say that I'm supposed to, has
9 actually given me a lot of freedom in a way that . . . when you're a kid and you think about what
10 do you want to do when you grow up – you want to be successful, you want to be happy, and
11 really that happiness is being able to be who you are and not feel like you have to live up to
12 somebody else's expectations. I feel like part of being trans has broken some of those chains,
13 you know, in that way of knowing that actually, I know that there are so many ways to do my
14 gender.
- 15 AJ: Right, right.
- 16 QDA: I think that's one of the really positive things about the Trans Health Conference, is that you see
17 so many trans people at once that you're like, "I'm not crazy."
- 18 AJ: Right, exactly. The bowtie boys, the dreadlock kids.
- 19 QDA: Yeah, you see all these iterations and you're like, "I'm not crazy because there's so many
20 different genders here."
- 21 AJ: Right.
- 22 QDA: So, to know that there's actually . . . liberation doesn't live in these places where we say we have
23 to do our gender like this, we have to do our sexuality like this, we have to do that. So, I think
24 being trans has led me to being, like, we can get liberation in our lifetime, that we can create
25 and we can change so that we're not stuck to these things that don't feel good for us and that
26 people have been living outside of those things. So, that has been really positive for me and I
27 feel like that's what I'm looking forward to in the future, to continue to build spaces and grow
28 with other trans folks to just think about how we move through the world differently. I'm a
29 prison abolitionist, so I'm just really interested in thinking about . . .
- 30 AJ: Black and pink.
- 31 QDA: Yeah, you know we talk about mass incarceration and people think we're only talking about cis
32 Black men, when trans people are disproportionately incarcerated.
- 33 AJ: Are super criminalized and incarcerated.
- 34 QDA: Yeah, so thinking about how do we use transformative justice to help us think about things
35 differently. I think, ultimately, that's going to help us in the end, it's going to help Black and

1 brown trans people the most, to lead us towards that. So, I think that's been a positive thing is
2 to find hope and being able to know that there is a way that I don't have to be stuck in this thing
3 that was making me miserable for a long time.

4 AJ: Wow, so powerful. Thank you, Qui.

5 QDA: Thank you.

6 AJ: It's been my absolute pleasure, joy and honor to share space and hear more about your story,
7 but also your perspectives on this broader phenomenon that I think is going to be the shift for
8 the whole world, at some point – and the scales are tipping already. All right, my friend. Peace.

9 QDA: Thank you.

10 AJ: Until we meet again.

11 QDA: Yes. Awesome.