

Tiq Milan
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins
Interviewer

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

November 2, 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 Tiq Milan -TM
3
4
5 AJ: So, hello. My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am the oral historian for the Transgender Oral
6 History Project at the Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota. Today is November 2,
7 2017. I am on the campus of the University of Minnesota and I am here today with the
8 infamous, the legendary, the ominous Tiq Milan.
9 TM: Yes, thank you, thank you.
10 AJ: Good afternoon, Tiq. How are you?
11 TM: Good. I'm good, I'm good. I'm happy to be here.
12 AJ: Thank you so much for being willing to participate in this project.
13 TM: Of course.
14 AJ: I'm deeply honored and I'm just going to start out with a couple of questions for identification
15 purposes.
16 TM: Sure.
17 AJ: Can you state your name, spell your name so that we make sure we get it spelled right – as you
18 said, this is for posterity?
19 TM: That's right.
20 AJ: So we want to make sure we have that correct. Can you state your gender as you define it today
21 and your gender assigned at birth, and the pronouns that you use?
22 TM: Sure. My name is Tiq Milan and that's spelled T-i-q M-i-l-a-n. I identify as a trans man, I was
23 assigned female at birth, and . . . what was the other question?
24 AJ: And pronouns?
25 TM: Pronouns – he/him.
26 AJ: He/him. Plain and simple.
27 TM: Real simple.
28 AJ: Let's just keep it real 100. I love it, I love it. Wow, Tiq. We have been in a lot of spaces together
29 . . .
30 TM: So much that I thought you lived in New York City.
31 AJ: Right, yes.
32 TM: I'm like, "When did she move to Minnesota?"
33 AJ: "When did she move to Minnesota?" No, I've been living here for quite some time. But, I'm
34 thrilled to get the opportunity to come out to New York City and go out and do some good work

- 1 and be around good people like yourself. But, just to kind of get us going, get your memory
2 bank flowing, tell me about the first thing you remember in life, Tiq?
- 3 TM: Oh, my gosh.
- 4 AJ: Your first memory. And, it doesn't have to be about your gender identity, although if it is, that's
5 cool because a lot of trans people that is kind of one of their first memories.
- 6 TM: Yeah, yeah. So, one of my first memories . . . I guess, I'll start . . . as I'm writing my book, I
7 started with this first memory of when I was like six or seven years old and I'd just learned how
8 to ride a bike without my training wheels.
- 9 AJ: Right, so you're flying.
- 10 TM: Right, I'm flying, and I used to love riding my bike. And, my mother bought me a Strawberry
11 Shortcake bicycle and it was . . .
- 12 AJ: With the banana seat and . . .
- 13 TM: Girl, it had the pink banana seat and the big things – the handle bars like this, the U-shape, and
14 the pink tassels. It was . . . you know, strawberry stickers all over it. And, my mom was so proud
15 of that bike, she was so proud of that bike. I took one look at that bicycle and I didn't know I
16 was a boy, but I knew there wasn't a chance in hell I was riding that bike.
- 17 AJ: Wow.
- 18 TM: I knew I wasn't going to ride that bike anywhere. And so, I was just like, "Ahh, thanks." I told
19 her I didn't want it. My dad took it back and he bought me a boy bike, a boy Huffy bike, and it
20 had the coaster brakes and it was black and it had an orange racing stripe on it and my mother
21 got me some noisemakers for the spokes. That was my first memory, and I think it sticks out to
22 me, particularly as I'm doing all this writing, because I think that was the first time I was really
23 affirmed in my gender even though neither me nor my parents didn't have the language. This
24 was mid-1980s and this was a Black family in Buffalo, New York, a working-class family. We
25 weren't talking about trans, we weren't talking about any of those things.
- 26 AJ: There was no language.
- 27 TM: There was no language for that then, but that's how I was affirmed very, very early on. I think
28 that's one of my first memories.
- 29 AJ: That's a great story.
- 30 TM: Yes, that's one of my first memories.
- 31 AJ: And you loved that black bike.
- 32 TM: I loved that bike, I rode that bike into the ground, until I popped the tire. And then my dad
33 came over to the house and he told me he taught me how to fix a flat tire. He was like,
34 "Because you can learn this yourself if you're riding your bike all over the place."
- 35 AJ: Right.

- 1 TM: I could only ride it up and down the block. I couldn't leave the block but I would go up and
2 down that block like 50 times.
- 3 AJ: Oh, my goodness.
- 4 TM: But yeah, that was one of my first memories.
- 5 AJ: Wow, that is an awesome story. Thank you for sharing that. So, you grew up in Buffalo?
- 6 TM: Buffalo, New York, yes.
- 7 AJ: What was that like?
- 8 TM: You know, growing up in Buffalo was cool. Now that I go back home and visit, my parents
9 bought that house back in 1976, that I grew up in. So, I stayed in one house my entire life.
- 10 AJ: Is that right?
- 11 TM: Then my mother, she moved – got her a big condo out in the suburbs before she passed away.
12 My sister bought the house from my mom, so now my sister is there with her five children.
- 13 AJ: Oh, so the house is still in your family?
- 14 TM: The house is still in the family. Now I go back and I realize that we were really living in the hood.
15 But, I didn't realize that growing up. I think when you're growing up and you may not have
16 everything, but if you're full of love and your needs are met, you don't realize what you don't
17 have. I didn't realize that my neighborhood wasn't great, I didn't realize that my house wasn't
18 the most beautiful house – it was home.
- 19 AJ: Right.
- 20 TM: Now, I go back and I'm like, "Whoa, this is real. It's real over here." But, growing up in Buffalo
21 was really cool. I really love my family; my whole family is there. My father's side of the family
22 is huge, tons of little cousins, I've got three older sisters. I had a pretty good childhood, actually.
23 I really did. I really did.
- 24 AJ: Yeah.
- 25 TM: I really did.
- 26 AJ: Working class?
- 27 TM: Working class – yeah. My mom was a nurse and my father was a mechanic. My parents were
28 split up, they probably divorced when I was three, but my father was always really active. My
29 mother always said . . . my parents always said they got along better once they split.
- 30 AJ: That happens.
- 31 TM: My dad would come over for dinner, he'd call my mom and they'd talk on the phone.
- 32 AJ: Right.

- 1 TM: My father was always very active, but he was never in the house. He actually lived around the
2 corner.
- 3 AJ: Is that right?
- 4 TM: Yeah, he lived two blocks away.
- 5 AJ: So, you spent a lot of time with your dad?
- 6 TM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Back and forth, back and forth. Now, since my mom has passed, me and my
7 father are really close. He's really tried to step up to be both parents, which I really appreciate.
- 8 AJ: And you had three sisters?
- 9 TM: I've got three sisters, three older sisters. Yes. I'm the baby.
- 10 AJ: Yeah, did they pick on your . . .? Did they bully you? Were they cool with you?
- 11 TM: My sisters are so much . . . way older than me. I'm 37 and my oldest sister is 56.
- 12 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 13 TM: So, she was already out of the house by the time . . . my two oldest sisters are 56 and 52. They
14 were already out of the house. Then, my next sister in line is only . . . she's eight years older
15 than me. So, yeah, there was some bullying a little bit, but she was so much older than me. She
16 would definitely pick on me and stuff like that, but we were always really close. She just treated
17 me like a big sister.
- 18 AJ: And, protected you, I'm sure.
- 19 TM: Super protective, she was protective – you know what I'm saying? So, yeah, it was good.
- 20 AJ: Cool – cool, cool, cool. What was school like? You went to a public school?
- 21 TM: I went to a private school my entire life.
- 22 AJ: Private school, really?
- 23 TM: Private Catholic school my entire life. I went to this program . . .
- 24 AJ: A religious school?
- 25 TM: Yeah, it was a Catholic school. St. Joe's for all of elementary school and then I went to an all-girl
26 private school, Nardin Academy.
- 27 AJ: Wow. What's it called?
- 28 TM: Nardin.
- 29 AJ: How do you spell that?
- 30 TM: N-a-r-d-i-n.
- 31 AJ: OK.

- 1 TM: Nardin Academy, it's one of the top schools in New York State, all girls. There was 11 Black girls
2 in the entire school.
- 3 AJ: What??
- 4 TM: Of like 600, and there was four of us in my graduating class. It was a really expensive school, but
5 I went to a program called Buffalo Prep, and Qui was talking about this. We were in a program
6 called Buffalo Prep that took really gifted and smart black and brown kids and put us in a
7 supplementary educational program. So, 7th and 8th grade, I went to school and then on
8 Tuesdays and Thursdays, I went to that school from 4-7 and then on Saturdays, I went to school
9 all day from 8-3, and then over the summers, I went to school M-F as if I was in regular school to
10 get us prepared for the rigorousness of . . .
- 11 AJ: College.
- 12 TM: Yeah, for college, and to go on to these prep schools, these college prep schools. So, that's
13 where I went to school and, you know, because I was such a tomboy as a child, but then when I
14 got to high school, 13-14 years old, I sprang up and people started to think I was pretty and then
15 Nardin Academy was really focused on developing womanhood and femininity. And again, at
16 that time, I didn't have any kind of questions around my gender identity, I just was and it was
17 just like I had to put aside those masculine ways in order to make my way through those next
18 four years. So, I did the feminine thing, I was a model. I did it, and I was good at it, but it wasn't
19 anything that I was really invested in.
- 20 AJ: Sure.
- 21 TM: It wasn't anything I really loved. Now, I only took it so far. I never wore make-up, I never
22 carried a purse, I wouldn't get my nails done. I was like, "That's too much, you're going too far."
23 But, I did it and high school was great. I played basketball all through high school, I played
24 volleyball all through high school.
- 25 AJ: Were you good?
- 26 TM: I was very good, I was very good. Actually, I went to college with a full D1 basketball
27 scholarship.
- 28 AJ: Is that right?
- 29 TM: I did, yes, to Niagara University. But, they were really racist – they were very, very racist and
30 they kind of crushed that dream. I was really on my way to the WNBA. The WNBA debuted in
31 1998, and that was when I was first entering college and everybody was like, "You got it, you're
32 going to get through these four years and you're going to go pro."
- 33 AJ: You were that good.
- 34 TM: Yeah, I was all-city, all-state, all-high, all-American. I was third team All-American.
- 35 AJ: Did you guys win championships and stuff when you were in high school?

- 1 TM: Yeah, yeah. We won county championships, city championships, we made it to state
2 championships and we had to play against Christ the King High School in New York City and
3 that's when Shamika Holdsclaw was playing. I was a freshman and she was a senior and that
4 school, they were beating us by like 30 points, and so I was just a freshman on the varsity team
5 at the time, so I wasn't really getting any playing time. I damn sure wasn't going to play in this
6 really important game. I remember, they put me in the game and we were getting beat by 30
7 points, and they still had all their starters in the game – Shamika was in the game, and I had to
8 guard her. She just dragged me all the way to the half-court line. And, then I ended up getting a
9 full ride to Niagara University and they treated me really badly there.
- 10 AJ: Is that right?
- 11 TM: Treated me really badly. Like yesterday in my talk, I said I don't watch sports anymore and I
12 think that's what did it for me.
- 13 AJ: That crushed it.
- 14 TM: That crushed it. I haven't watched a basketball game since.
- 15 AJ: Is that right?
- 16 TM: Yeah, yeah – it's kind of like one of those dreams deferred.
- 17 AJ: Racism.
- 18 TM: Yeah, racism, and it really crushed my dreams, it really did. They were really bad to me. I was
19 the only Black kid on the team and then it was in the MAAC Conference, M-A-A-C, not the M-A-C
20 and that conference, there weren't a lot of Black kids on any of those teams.
- 21 AJ: Right, exactly.
- 22 TM: It was hard. So, it wasn't just that, just coaches . . . the coach treated me badly, just being on
23 campus – the campus was lily white, and violent. I had bananas thrown at me and I was like, "I
24 don't have to stay here for this," and I was out.
- 25 AJ: Oh, no, no – I'm out.
- 26 TM: I said, "I can go get an education elsewhere." And that was the end of my hoop dreams.
- 27 AJ: Yeah, wow. That's a tough story.
- 28 TM: Yeah, yeah.
- 29 AJ: But, all during this time, no real thoughts around gender?
- 30 TM: Not around gender, but around sexuality though.
- 31 AJ: Sexuality, OK.
- 32 TM: I came out at 14.
- 33 AJ: Is that right?

- 1 TM: I came out at 14 as a lesbian. I sat my mom down . . . my sister got pregnant at 15, so my
2 mother was just so scared that I was going to get . . . so, I sat her down and I was like, "Look . . .
3 listen, I'm not pregnant, but I think I'm gay." She didn't take it well for a minute, but she got
4 over it. She got over it and she became one of my biggest supporters. So, you know, I came out
5 at 14, was really in queer community, and I think back to gender, I just remember being really
6 feminine and attracting a lot of masculine women, and just knowing that masculinity wasn't
7 something that I was attracted to but was something that I kind of wanted. I couldn't
8 understand what that was. I was like, "I don't want your masculinity on me, but I think I want to
9 embody it in a particular way."
- 10 AJ: Yeah.
- 11 TM: So, it started to creep in slowly. That's what I talk to people about – like gender identity.
- 12 AJ: So, you dated masculine women?
- 13 TM: I didn't, I didn't like them.
- 14 AJ: OK.
- 15 TM: That's the thing, they really liked me but I was like, "I don't like y'all. I'm not attracted to your
16 masculinity in that way." So, that was when I was in high school, so when I graduated high
17 school in 1998, my high school graduation was the last time I wore any feminine clothes at all. It
18 was like as soon as that was over, I knew that I didn't have to do it anymore, I was becoming a
19 young adult and I could just go back into a place that felt comfortable for me. And, that's when I
20 really started to develop my masculinity again and I was really only into feminine folks. But
21 yeah, when I talk about gender identity and that process, it is an evolution. I know for me it was
22 an evolution, it was a slow evolution. It was always there, even from the time I got that
23 Strawberry Shortcake bicycle. It was always something that was there, it was a gradual thing. It
24 wasn't like a moment where there was a blip, it wasn't a reaction to any kind of trauma. All the
25 times people try to say that trans people are the result of some trauma, and a lot of us
26 experience a lot of trauma, but that doesn't make us trans, that doesn't make us queer. And, it
27 wasn't that for me, it was just really a slow evolution and then by the time I got to New York
28 City, I was butch, I was king of the butches. You weren't going to tell me nothing. And, it just
29 kind of evolved from there.
- 30 AJ: Oh, wow.
- 31 TM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 32 AJ: So, how many identities have you sort of embodied throughout your life? You came out at 14 as
33 a lesbian . . . and then 18, you was butch.
- 34 TM: First I came out and said, "I think I'm bisexual," just because I wasn't sexually active yet so . . .
- 35 AJ: Yeah, so it was like boys, girls . . .
- 36 TM: Yeah, so I tried both and at first, I was having sex with all these boys. I tried it and I was like, "I
37 hate this." And then I was like, "Well, maybe that's the wrong one." OK, screw it – do it again.

- 1 So, “No, I really hate this. I don’t want to do it with these guys anymore.” Then, I discovered
2 women and, “Ahhh.”
- 3 AJ: You had an Oprah moment.
- 4 TM: So, I’m thinking . . . there was a quick moment where I was bisexual, lesbian for a long time. I
5 don’t think I ever identified as feminine. I don’t think that that was something I would ever say,
6 I think it’s just what it was. Then I was being a stud, as a youngster, and then butch, and then I
7 came into my trans masculinity where I am now.
- 8 AJ: Wow, OK.
- 9 TM: Definitely a journey across the spectrum. Yeah.
- 10 AJ: So, you came out to your mom, she wasn’t really feeling it but she came around.
- 11 TM: She did, she came around. Yeah.
- 12 AJ: When did you come out as trans?
- 13 TM: I came out as trans 10 years ago, 2007.
- 14 AJ: OK.
- 15 TM: That’s when I first took my shot. Oh, you know what? That’s not true. I started taking T in
16 2007. I didn’t come out until 2010, when I had to have my top surgery. I wasn’t telling anybody.
17 I was on T . . . what I was doing, you know, when you take testosterone you take one cc every
18 two weeks. But, I was really scared to do that because I was like, “I don’t know what these
19 changes are going to look like, I’m not ready for my family to know,” so I was doing a quarter –
20 like .3 of a cc every week, just so I could go really, really slow, just give me some time. And what
21 I understood early on was that this transition was something everybody had to make. So, I
22 didn’t want to just pop up at home with a full beard, you know what I mean?
- 23 AJ: Right, it’s not like you’re just transitioning, it’s everybody around you is transitioning.
- 24 TM: Everybody does. My parents have to get used to having a son now – they had four daughters,
25 and now they only got three.
- 26 AJ: They got three, right.
- 27 TM: You know what I’m saying? So, that was hard for me. I didn’t come out and tell anybody until I
28 had gotten top surgery because having major surgery and didn’t want to tell my mother, but
29 had to because she was a nurse, and then my mother was always my ally, my front line of
30 protection. I let her tell everybody. I never told my dad I had surgery, because he didn’t need to
31 know that.
- 32 AJ: Right, right.
- 33 TM: Yeah, so I think that’s when I kind of first just came out. I had some awkward moments, some
34 really awkward questions, but my mother was such an ally to me, I think, that she really was my
35 buffer. She really made it known that she was not going to allow anybody to disrespect me and

- 1 mistreat me, even if they didn't understand . . . even if she didn't understand it. Because, she
2 was like, "I'm not . . . this is my child, we're not playing those games."
- 3 AJ: Not having that.
- 4 TM: Yeah, so yeah it was a gradual thing. But now, I'm completely out and . . . I saw my aunt the
5 other day and she was like, "I don't even . . . I don't even remember, you're just such a young
6 man now, you're so awesome, it's like I don't even remember the person that you used to be."
7 And, I guess, that's cool but it's also the person that I used to be has a huge influence on the
8 man that I am now. And that's . . . I think I'm really grounded in that.
- 9 AJ: You know, I want to ask you this question too, because you brought it up and sort of framed it,
10 your aunt is like, "I don't even remember who you are." But, in many ways, I feel like I really
11 haven't changed that much.
- 12 TM: Me neither. You still got the same brain.
- 13 AJ: I'm still . . .
- 14 TM: The same person, right? Yeah.
- 15 AJ: Right, yeah. And, I'm just wondering your take on that.
- 16 TM: I feel the same way. I still think the same, I still feel the same, I'm still me. My name has
17 changed and my pronouns changed.
- 18 AJ: But you look different.
- 19 TM: I look different. But, my spirit and my intellect and my mind and my integrity and the person
20 that I am, is still the same. It's like . . . how can I look at it as an analogy. It's like who you are at
21 your core and your spirit is like the sun. So, say this is the sun, and then when you give who you
22 are, this is the race of your sun to somebody else. So, say, prior to my transition, say that our
23 body is like a stained-glass window . . . so, at one point in my life, this stain glass window was
24 orange, and so when you got all of me, it came out and these rays came out like orange, but
25 now it's blue. So, now, you're still getting me, but now it just looks blue.
- 26 AJ: A different filter, yeah.
- 27 TM: It's just a different filter, but it's still me.
- 28 AJ: Right, exactly.
- 29 TM: That's how it feels, it hasn't changed my brain and my heart – same person, same person.
- 30 AJ: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for expounding on that a little bit. Relationship with your family
31 now – how is it?
- 32 TM: It's great. My family is awesome. My family . . . they really, like I said, we had some awkward
33 moments and some weird conversations because, again, everybody had to transition. Shit, I had
34 some awkward moments with myself.
- 35 AJ: Yeah.

- 1 TM: Some awkward conversations with myself as I was transitioning. But they're great. I have . . .
2 how many? I have 11 nieces and nephews and most of them are under . . . I have four who are
3 grown and the rest of them are under the age of 8, and all they know is Uncle Tiq. They call me
4 Uncle Tiq Tiq. They love Uncle Tiq Tiq. I'm saying, my sisters – they love their little brother. My
5 father is really happy about having this father/son thing. He's doing that whole thing, which is
6 great. My family really has been really . . . and even my 90-year-old grandma, Madea, she's
7 great.
- 8 AJ: Madea.
- 9 TM: Yeah, Madea is awesome.
- 10 AJ: That's what I call my grandma.
- 11 TM: You call her Madea – yeah. Madea knows what's up. Madea is telling me, "We knew people
12 like you growing up, it's nothing." It took her a bit to get her pronouns together, sometimes
13 she'll still say, "Hey, girl . . . oh, no." She'll do this, "Oh, no." I'll give her a big hug and she'll
14 apologize.
- 15 AJ: Yeah, but she's still grandma.
- 16 TM: I have a huge family, a lot of extended family that I haven't seen – my dad always wants me to
17 come to his family reunion and I'm like, "Man, listen, I ain't seen these folks since I was little and
18 then I've got to make all these explanations and I don't want you to feel awkward. So, I'm cool
19 with just the folks that I'm cool with." But people haven't skipped a beat, everybody has been
20 really good.
- 21 AJ: That's beautiful, that's beautiful.
- 22 TM: Yeah, it's been good.
- 23 AJ: Which, as I've been doing these interviews, Tiq, a lot of times in white families, they're not
24 getting that kind of reception.
- 25 TM: I know, I know. And there's this misconception that Black families are more homophobic and
26 transphobic than white – and it's not. As a matter of fact, I was reading . . . there was a study
27 that came out, I think it was a couple of years ago – and it could have been the Anti-Violence
28 Project, talking about violence against trans people, the statistics. And, it was saying statistically
29 transgender people who are thrown away by their families, that don't have family support, are
30 more likely to become victims of violence, are more likely to engage in sex work, and all these
31 things which we already know. Right?
- 32 AJ: Sure.
- 33 TM: But, it also said that what they found was . . . the people who were a part of the survey, most of
34 the Black people that were part of the survey, actually had that family support.
- 35 AJ: Right.

- 1 TM: And, a lot of people aren't talking about that. Now, not to say that none of us don't, because a
2 lot of us don't.
- 3 AJ: A lot of us don't.
- 4 TM: I worked with LGBT youth for a long time and lots of trans Black youth and so many kids, were
5 thrown away by their families, but I also know a lot who weren't. I was working at Harvey Milk
6 High School and I had four trans girls whose parents were involved, who were there, were like,
7 "We just want my child to be OK, keep them safe." I am not an anomaly.
- 8 AJ: Yeah.
- 9 TM: And, I think that's important for people to know.
- 10 AJ: That's true, that's real. Who was the first trans person you ever met?
- 11 TM: The first trans person I ever met . . . what was his name? Oh, what was his name? This white
12 trans guy . . . oh, I can't remember his name. But anyway, let me tell you a story. So, when I
13 moved to New York City, I moved to New York City to go to grad school. That didn't work out
14 because I got caught up in the New York lifestyle. I was bartending and drinking and drugging, I
15 was doing a lot. I was bartending at this lesbian bar called Meow Mix.
- 16 AJ: What? I've been there.
- 17 TM: Yeah, it's down in East Village, or lower eastside rather. And, all of a sudden, his name . . . this
18 trans guy, a white trans guy, came in there. I didn't know he was trans and he was handing out
19 flyers for his top surgery. Now mind you, this was probably 2004 or 2005, before I had started
20 any hormones or anything. I was like, "Top surgery, what the hell is that? I never even heard of
21 such – what is that?" They was like, "Oh, he's getting his breasts removed." I was like, "He,
22 who?"
- 23 AJ: Right . . . this guy.
- 24 TM: "This man with the full beard?" And they're like, "Yeah, he's transgender, he's transsexual, he's
25 a trans man." I had no . . . I think that was the moment where I realized that it was possible. I
26 remember at that time, I wasn't necessarily depressed, but I was confused. I'm in this butch
27 body and this identity, but something don't feel right, something feels like it's missing. I'm not
28 happy – what is it? I'm not happy with me. And, I couldn't figure out what it was and then I saw
29 him and at this time I didn't have any etiquette, I didn't know. I asked him all the wrong
30 questions. What his name used to be, if he had a penis. I asked all of the wrong questions, but
31 he was really gracious and he answered all of them for me. He was the first trans person that I
32 ever met. And it stuck with me. I remember from that day on, I couldn't stop thinking about it, I
33 couldn't stop thinking about it. I was like, "Wow."
- 34 AJ: So, he had a significant impact?
- 35 TM: You know, he's still my friend on Facebook. I should probably hit him up and let him know. Yup,
36 yup – I'll never forget that. He was the first person I met and that kind of just sparked. It
37 literally was like a light bulb went off, like, "Oh, shit."

- 1 AJ: Like, "This is a reality."
- 2 TM: This is a reality, this could be my reality. I could do this, I could be a man. And I said, "Wow, do I
3 really want to be a man?" I'm going back and forth . . . so, I went back and forth for a few years.
4 That happened in 2004 and like I said I didn't take my first shot until 2007. I really was taking
5 that time to figure out what is this and is this something that I want to do? But he was the first
6 person that I met.
- 7 AJ: So, Tiq, let me ask you this, and please answer this question to the extent that you want to, and
8 if you don't want to answer it, that's cool too.
- 9 TM: Sure.
- 10 AJ: But, you've already talked about it a little bit, but I'm just curious what medical interventions, if
11 any, have you undertaken in your gender journey?
- 12 TM: Yeah. I'm on T. I've been on T now for 10 years and I've had top surgery, a double mastectomy
13 and chest reconstruction.
- 14 AJ: Sure.
- 15 TM: And, the other surgery I want to have is I want to have a hysterectomy. I was trying to get it last
16 year . . . I was trying to get it last year and I got denied. I wasn't trans enough. First, let me tell
17 you, I went to a medical clinic in New York City where they have a trans . . .
- 18 AJ: They didn't . . . you're a man. I would think that they would . . .
- 19 TM: The insurance denied me. Even after my doctor was like, "Tiq has been under my care for
20 almost 10 years, he's been on T since 2007, he lives his life as a man 100%." And they still
21 denied me. And the messed-up part about it was that I went to a trans-specific clinic at a
22 hospital. I don't want to name any names, but a hospital in New York City. It felt really bad
23 because I had to sit in front of these two white cis men and have this conversation to prove to
24 them that I'm trans enough to get this surgery.
- 25 AJ: Right.
- 26 TM: And the doctor was asking me really inappropriate questions. He asked me how big my breasts
27 were before I had surgery.
- 28 AJ: What? Why does that matter?
- 29 TM: I told him, "Why does that even matter?" I told him I went to an all-girls school and he asked
30 me if I had to wear like a little plaid skirt and I was like, "Dude?"
- 31 AJ: Get the fuck out of here.
- 32 TM: He was really, really inappropriate. I think I ended up getting him fired . . . good for him.
- 33 AJ: Wow.
- 34 TM: I complained to everybody about it, because I don't play that shit. It's like . . . it's me, 37-years-
35 old, a leader in the community who does this work, who is really well versed in this work. It's
- The Transgender Oral History Project

- 1 one thing for you to do that to me, but what happens to a young kid who comes here who
2 doesn't have the same level of confidence that I do.
- 3 AJ: Exactly.
- 4 TM: Or, it doesn't have to be a young person – any person who is there who doesn't have the same
5 support or confidence or platform that I do and you ask these really abusive questions, you
6 could really fuck somebody up. Can I curse?
- 7 AJ: It's your video.
- 8 TM: You can really fuck somebody up, so I made it a point to let everybody know what happened.
9 So, I was trying to get my hysto last year and it got denied. The thing about me getting a
10 hysterectomy, honestly, the only reason I wanted to get it is because my mother died of cancer,
11 my grandmother died of cancer, and my aunt died of cancer. Cancer runs in my family.
- 12 AJ: There is a medical history . . .
- 13 TM: Of cancer in my family.
- 14 AJ: Yeah.
- 15 TM: And, there's not a lot of information about what the long-term effects of being on a synthetic
16 hormone has on your body, particularly on your reproductive system that you're not using.
17 Right? So, I don't get a cycle anymore, my reproductive organs are atrophied, they're not doing
18 what they were made to do. So, like take it all out. If I didn't have a reason to be worried about
19 cancer and things like that, I wouldn't care.
- 20 AJ: Right.
- 21 TM: I wouldn't care. So, for me, it wasn't even about having this surgery as a gender-affirming
22 surgery, it was medical. If I wasn't transgender, I would have had it.
- 23 AJ: You would have had it – yeah.
- 24 TM: That just speaks volumes about how we're not given adequate care because we're trans. I was
25 trying to tell them, "I know I'm doing this trans-specific thing, but this has . . . me getting a
26 hysterectomy has nothing to do with me being trans, this is about my overall health and me
27 wanting my longevity because I have a history of cancer in my family." So, that was really
28 messed up, so I'm going to try again this year to get it – or next year.
- 29 AJ: How did they justify denying it?
- 30 TM: You know, I don't even remember. I still have the letter . . . if I had my bag I could show it to
31 you, I have it in my bag. But, yeah, they sent me . . . my insurance sent me a letter saying that
32 they were denying me coverage and that they didn't think that it was necessary for me to get it
33 – that it was necessary for my identity. I was like, "It's not for my identity, this is for my body.
34 I'm a trans person and I have other medical needs outside of my transition specifically."
- 35 AJ: Yeah, that's like Angelina Jolie. She . . .

- 1 TM: Got her breasts removed.
- 2 AJ: . . . got the breasts removed because of a history of cancer in her family.
- 3 TM: Yeah, and actually that's how I was able to get mine done because, at the time, in 2010, when I
4 got my surgery done, a lot of people weren't getting it covered and the doctor . . . it's wild, it's
5 two women doctors who are just allies to trans people and they were kind of doing it on the
6 low, and what they did – the one doctor, she had a group of trans guys come in and she did like
7 a group thing. She was like, "I'm doing these surgeries for these folks, I feel like you need it, but
8 this is what you do – stay female on your insurance." I explained that I have a history of breast
9 cancer in my family and showed them my documentation, I had to go get certain tests done, and
10 then I was able to get that done as a preventative measure for cancer.
- 11 AJ: Right.
- 12 TM: So, that was how I was able to get my surgery covered. And then the next one I really wanted to
13 get it for those reasons. So, they didn't do it. So, that's the only surgery stuff I've had is top
14 surgery and I'm on T. I want to get my hysto as soon as possible, and I'm not electing to get
15 bottom surgery. It's just not that deep for me. I can sit and pee, that's totally fine.
- 16 AJ: Oh, man. Thank you for sharing that.
- 17 TM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 18 AJ: Talk to me about love and relationships.
- 19 TM: Love and relationships.
- 20 AJ: Has being trans made it a problem?
- 21 TM: You know . . .
- 22 AJ: You are an extremely handsome young man.
- 23 TM: Thank you, thank you.
- 24 AJ: I can't imagine you having problems dating, but I am trans identified myself and . . .
- 25 TM: It can be hard.
- 26 AJ: It can be hard.
- 27 TM: You know, honestly, yeah, I'm married right now, which is great.
- 28 AJ: Congratulations.
- 29 TM: Thank you. I've been married almost four years. My wife is cis gender, queer identified – great.
30 We've got a baby coming.
- 31 AJ: And, you guys are expecting.
- 32 TM: Two more months.

- 1 AJ: Congratulations!
- 2 TM: My baby's going to be here in two months. My wife is seven months pregnant, which is
3 awesome. So, love and relationships . . . for me, it's been OK, I think, because I've been in queer
4 community since I was a kid. I came out when I was 14, so we're talking 23 years. I was raised
5 in queer community. They brought me up, I was brought up by a bunch of drag queens and
6 butches and femmes. These people raised me. I've always been in community, and particularly
7 community in New York City where I spent all of my 20s. People watched me grow, so I think . . .
8 I just had a community I could call on, particularly in lesbian community. When I transitioned, I
9 really did lose . . . I did lose connection to the lesbian community.
- 10 AJ: You did?
- 11 TM: I did. And, I think, rightfully so. I think it's important for women, whether they are cis or trans,
12 whether they are gay or straight, to have exclusive spaces. I'm a man now. Not only am I a
13 man, but I'm a binary man, a masculine man. I didn't think it was right for me to be up in the
14 girl's clubs. I don't think that's my space anymore. So, there was a period of loneliness and then
15 I think my first relationship . . . I was really into my trans identity and I was with this woman,
16 while I had my top surgery I was with her, when I changed my name. She was lesbian identified
17 and she loved me, but she was a lesbian and we broke up. She was like, "I love you but . . ."
- 18 AJ: "I ain't really feeling guys."
- 19 TM: She was like, "I'm a lesbian, I don't think I can do this."
- 20 AJ: Right.
- 21 TM: That was hard, that was really, really hard. It was really, really hard and I called my mother
22 crying. My mother cried, she was heartbroken for me. I think that was her biggest concern was
23 who was going to love my child. She was like, "You're such an amazing person, is it going to be
24 too much of this for the lesbians and you're not enough of this for the straight girls." But then,
25 we started queer people and queerness, and so there's space here.
- 26 AJ: Yeah.
- 27 TM: So, yeah, it was hard for a minute, but what I did was . . . I really just committed myself to
28 saying, "I'm not . . . first of all, I'm not going to pursue anybody that don't want me. I'm not out
29 here . . . I'm not straight." I always like to tell people, "I know I may look cis gender or I may look
30 straight, but I am not. I do not want to be straight." Because straight . . . I think it's more than a
31 sexuality, it's also a culture. I like queer culture, these are my people. This is my community,
32 these are my people. I'm trans and I'm proud to be trans and I only want to deal with women
33 who will understand that. I only want to deal with women who are queer identified and who
34 can say specifically, "I am queer and I am attracted to transgender people. I am attracted to
35 trans men, I'm just not . . . I am not in this to be anybody's experiment, I'm not in this to be
36 doing Trans 101, I do that for a living, I don't want to do that at home."
- 37 AJ: Right, yeah.

- 1 TM: So, once I really placed those boundaries around myself and said these are the kind of standards
2 that I have, and really started to focus inward on me being my best self, then I noticed that the
3 type of people who I wanted were coming into my circle.
- 4 AJ: So, things started opening up.
- 5 TM: Opening up. There's this book called *Calling in the One*, which is really great. It talks about
- 6 AJ: *Calling in* . . .
- 7 TM: *Calling in the One*. And it's really about finding love in your life, a big part of that is you finding
8 love within yourself first. Get grounded in who you are, set you some standards – like this is
9 what I want from my life, I am ready for these type of people to come in and then start it
10 happening. You know, so I dated lots of girls here and there, and then I've been with my wife
11 now for four years. So, it's been good. It's been good – but, it's scary. The times that I have . . .
12 I'm a serial monogamous, I stay boo'd up. But, the times that I have been single as a trans
13 person, has been kind of scary. I remember I did some online dating. I met a couple girls online
14 at one point and they were . . . I'd tell them I was trans and then crickets.
- 15 AJ: Right.
- 16 TM: They would just disappear. I thought, "OK." They were like, "You are what? Good night." But I
17 was like, "OK, it's cool, it's cool. Let me stay in my community, let me meet people here." So,
18 it's been all right, it's been all right. But, it's really because I am really grounded in queer
19 community and this is where I create family, this is where I create love, and it's been good.
- 20 AJ: Yeah, you alluded to this a couple of times but you were here in Minneapolis . . .
- 21 TM: Two years ago.
- 22 AJ: Ahh, two years ago. What did you do then?
- 23 TM: It was cold. It was January, 2015, and I was up here . . . or was it three years ago. When did . . .
24 this was to do a media training with CeCe.
- 25 AJ: OK.
- 26 TM: So, CeCe . . .
- 27 AJ: CeCe's been out for almost three years now.
- 28 TM: OK, so this was 2014 then, because my mother was still alive and my mother died that year, that
29 summer . . . my mom was alive then. So, yeah, the last I was here was January, 2014, and it was
30 to do a media training with CeCe McDonald, because this was around the time that her film was
31 coming out. That was great, I met some good people. I didn't go nowhere, I stayed in the hotel.
- 32 AJ: I know, that's . . .
- 33 TM: And, I ordered some food – freezing.
- 34 AJ: Yeah, it was pretty cold. So, you're here this time to be a keynote speaker at the University of
35 Minnesota.

- 1 TM: Yes, I was invited to come again this year to give a talk for your Power & Privilege series.
- 2 AJ: Right.
- 3 TM: Which is really great. There was a nice turnout, it was a good talk, I had a good time yesterday.
4 One thing about . . . I mean, I made fun of Minnesota because it's so cold, Minneapolis because
5 it's so cold, but the people here are really nice. And even though I was here a few years ago,
6 everybody was so nice and people seemed to be really open and open-hearted and open-
7 minded.
- 8 AJ: What did you talk about?
- 9 TM: My talk the other day?
- 10 AJ: Yeah.
- 11 TM: So, the talk I gave was called, "Redefining Masculinity." And, it's about my journey across
12 gender, but it's also about the process of creating an organic masculinity. As I've been on this
13 journey, what I've realized about masculinity is that I think it's . . . particularly cis gender or
14 heterosexuality masculinity, which is always, what was always before I admitted it, was where I
15 was looking to get my ques on masculinity. It felt like it was repressed, it was kind of sad, kind
16 of sociopathic in various ways – you know what I'm saying? And, so I really had to scrap that, "I
17 don't want to be like y'all, I don't want to be a man like you. I need to figure out how to be a
18 man like me." What does it look like for me to be a binary masculine queer identified Black
19 trans man who's not an asshole? What does that look like? So, that's what I talked about
20 yesterday, what that journey has been for me. And it's been something that's been really
21 intentional and really deliberate. So, I want to . . . I've been in queer spaces, particularly white
22 queer spaces, where people have felt like my presence as a Black masculine man, you know I'm
23 six feet tall and I'm masculine in various ways, I wasn't queer enough. And, it's like I'm not going
24 to play down my masculinity or play up a feminine energy that doesn't feel natural to me to
25 make you feel comfortable. So, what does that look like? How can I be in my skin and then my
26 masculinity? And, I'm not about making other people feel comfortable, but it's just about . . .
27 just being my authentic self.
- 28 AJ: Being authentic.
- 29 TM: And doing something that's organic. Like, creating masculinity that is not reactionary, creating
30 masculinity that's coming from my spirit, that's tethered to who I am in a very deep, deep way.
31 So, that's what I was talking about yesterday.
- 32 AJ: I really appreciated your talk and it highlighted a lot of issues. I really appreciated the section on
33 street harassment that cis gender and trans women face on a daily basis and how that impacts
34 people's psyches and yeah, the whole section about every guy feels like it's his right, but then
35 multiply that times 80 guys a day.
- 36 TM: It drives women crazy and we wonder why they snap. My wife comes home having an attitude,
37 she's like, "Yo, 10 dudes just tried to talk to me in two blocks."
- 38 AJ: Right.

- 1 TM: "I'm just trying to go to the grocery store. Leave me the fuck alone."
- 2 AJ: Exactly.
- 3 TM: That's what I'm saying – cis men are just such a disappointment. It's like, "Why are you doing
4 this? Why are you . . .?" If you want to get into this whole heterosexist idea about you want to
5 be the head of the household, the head of the family, leaders of the free world, but you can't
6 control yourself, my brother? You talk about women and femme people who we are supposed
7 to protect, you're supposed to love, but you're going to tear her down because she doesn't
8 want you? There's this level of entitlement around masculinity, I think, that's just sick and it's
9 not allowing women the freedom to be their own autonomous selves.
- 10 AJ: Yeah.
- 11 TM: And not making space to having really valuable friendships with women, I think, is just a
12 detriment to their own humanity. So, I definitely don't want to be like these guys.
- 13 AJ: Tiq, have you ever worked for or volunteered with any LGBT organizations before?
- 14 TM: Oh, yeah. I think I've probably worked at every major LGBT organization in New York. Let me
15 see, I worked at Lambda Legal, I worked at GLAAD, I worked at the Hetrick-Martin Institute, I
16 worked at the Bronx Community Pride Center, I'm on the board for the National Anti-Violence
17 Project, I've done some work with GLSEN. I've done it all.
- 18 AJ: Wow, OK.
- 19 TM: I've really honed my skills in the non-profit world.
- 20 AJ: You're a media communications writer, consultant.
- 21 TM: Yeah, yeah – media communications consultant, strategic media consultant, journalist, I can be
22 all of that stuff.
- 23 AJ: What publications have you written for?
- 24 TM: I've written for *Buzz Feed*, the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, *CNN.com*, I've done some work for
25 MTV, *Rolling Stone*, *Source Magazine*, *Vibe Magazine*, *Quartz.com* . . . who else? *Huffington*
26 *Post* . . . yeah, all of them.
- 27 AJ: All of them.
- 28 TM: Yeah, it's a hustle. I'm a freelancer. I'm pitching stories everywhere, "Who wants me to write?
29 Here's an idea – pay me."
- 30 AJ: And now you're working on your memoir.
- 31 TM: I'm working on my memoir, which is *Man of My Design: A Self-Determined Life*. And, the
32 memoir is my journey.
- 33 AJ: *Man of My Design*.

- 1 TM: *Man of My Design: A Self-Determined Life*. And, it's my story of my journey through gender, but
2 it's also the process of coming into my most authentic self. For the book . . . I don't want people
3 to read my book and think that this is something that's just for trans folks. I definitely want it to
4 be for my people, but I also want cis gender folks and straight folks to be able to look at this
5 book and be able to see my journey as a trans person and our journey as trans people as a
6 model of possibility to become your best self. Because that's what we have done, we've made
7 all kinds of sacrifices, we've done what people think is impossible – to live in our truth.
- 8 AJ: We've done what we thought was impossible.
- 9 TM: Exactly, exactly – we sure did. Look at us. Anything is possible. If you can see it in your mind,
10 you can hold it in your hand. I saw the man that I wanted to be right here and I brought it into
11 fruition, so I can do anything – and so can you. I think that that journey is important, and I think
12 that that journey is important for everybody.
- 13 AJ: Yeah. Do you have a publisher? Do you have a book deal?
- 14 TM: I don't. I have an agent, I have a literary agent, I got my book proposal in and I'm sure she's got
15 some edits for me. So, I'm going to edit this out and we're going to look out for some
16 publishers. But, I have some friends at some publishing . . .
- 17 AJ: So, your first manuscript is done?
- 18 TM: No, no, no – the manuscript isn't done, the proposal is done.
- 19 AJ: The proposal is done.
- 20 TM: Right now, I have an outline of about 19 chapters, but I only have five written. So, I have five
21 chapters written, I'm still outlining and working on the rest. But, I have five complete chapters
22 done and the book proposal . . . the book proposal is like 70 pages.
- 23 AJ: Yeah, wow.
- 24 TM: Because you've got to do the overview and then you've got to do the chapter outline and then
25 the breakdown and then the sample chapters and the marketing thing and the comparative and
26 competitive titles. It's a lot. So, I've got all of that done and I'm waiting for that to come back
27 and while that's happening, I'm just busting out these chapters – writing and writing and
28 writing. So, I'm hoping to have the manuscript done within three months, I think I can get it
29 done in three months. But then, it's just a matter of once you get the manuscript done, then
30 you've got to get it back and probably do it all over again – you know, you've got to do the edits.
31 So, like I said, my agent has it . . .
- 32 AJ: Yeah, people think writing a book is easy, man.
- 33 TM: Writing a book is torture, it's hell. It's awful . . . it's awful, it's awful. There's nothing easy about
34 it. But, anything easy ain't really worth having. So, I'm up for the challenge. So, I think it's going
35 to be a good book and I think I'm going to find a publisher, I think there's a space for it.
- 36 AJ: Right.

- 1 TM: I honestly think there's a space for it.
- 2 AJ: There's not . . . well, there's certainly not enough Black trans stories that are able to transition
3 or . . . transcend is the word I'm looking for, trans identity. Right?
- 4 TM: Yeah, yeah. And, that's my goal.
- 5 AJ: And that's your goal, to be more of a human-interest story for all humans.
- 6 TM: For all human beings, yeah – that's what I want. And then, I already have a second book in mind
7 . . . write that, and then the second book I want to be more like talking . . . taking that idea of
8 self-actualization and expanding on it. Like something like a self-help kind of situation.
- 9 AJ: Well, I'll be glad when you write this book about organic . . .
- 10 TM: Organic masculinity.
- 11 AJ: . . . masculinity.
- 12 TM: Yeah.
- 13 AJ: Because, man, we need that.
- 14 TM: We need that, we need that.
- 15 AJ: We really need that.
- 16 TM: We really do, because men are out here showing their asses.
- 17 AJ: Wow. Where do you see the trans community . . . no, let me ask you this question, because
18 you've worked with damn near every LGBT organization in New York City.
- 19 TM: All the majors, yeah. I sure have.
- 20 AJ: What is the relationship between the L, the G, the B and the T?
- 21 TM: You know, I think it's getting better. I do think it's getting better. I do remember a time where
22 it was just gay and lesbian and people weren't even checking for trans folks. And, the only
23 reason it's getting better is because of us. It's always the most marginalized folks that have to
24 bring the privileged folks kicking and screaming to a place where you understand our humanity.
25 And, we've done that and these larger organizations that I've been a part of, I have seen a shift
26 in their focus. A large part of the reason the shift in the focus is happening is because marriage
27 equality already took off. Marriage equality took off, all the resources were pooled into that, we
28 have that so what's the next thing? Trans people. So, I see that happening, which I think is
29 great on an organizational level, it's not perfect. I think the non-profit model itself is flawed in
30 many ways. But, I see it getting better. Trans people, we are taking up a lot of space. There are
31 people like you and myself and people who have really been the voices of trans people who
32 have been really unapologetic in our transness and in our journey and just really saying . . . we
33 are demanding that you see us and that you pay attention to us. And, it's happening and it's so
34 great to have trans people out here in pop culture. We've got Laverne out here doing her thing

- 1 and Brian Michael Smith who just came out. He's been acting for years and no one knew he was
2 trans until recently when he had a trans character on *Queen Sugar*. So, he's out.
- 3 AJ: Who is this?
- 4 TM: His name is Brian Michael Smith. He was on . . . have you ever seen *Queen Sugar*?
- 5 AJ: I have only seen one episode.
- 6 TM: Me too. I won't lie, me too, and it's such an amazing show. But anyway, I had read for this part
7 . . . but anyway, Brian Michael Smith is a Black trans guy. He's been on *Law and Order*, he's
8 been on a bunch of commercials, he was on *Chicago PD*, and no one knew he was trans. The
9 only person that knew he was trans . . .
- 10 AJ: I've seen a lot of *Chicago PD*.
- 11 TM: Yeah, he was just on there. No one knew he was trans and then a character came up on *Queen*
12 *Sugar* for a Black trans man character. He used that character to come out. So, now he's out
13 and since then he's really been taking off. He's got a bunch of new things happening. I'm seeing
14 lots of trans folks on TV. And, the more people start to see our narratives in pop culture, while
15 that's happening in tandem with us still doing this work with advocacy and legislatively and
16 grass roots stuff, when these things kind of come together, we're going to see . . . I think that
17 we're going to see a cultural shift toward something that is going to be more inclusive for trans
18 people.
- 19 AJ: There's a little backlash going on right now.
- 20 TM: Yeah, yeah, there's backlash, but that's the thing. The backlash is going to come – that's how
21 the pendulum swings. We have all this visibility, all this visibility, it's going to swing back to this
22 backlash – it's going to happen. And then, eventually, it's just going to do this. I just saw
23 another Black trans woman was murdered in Georgia – a 25-year-old girl named Candace. They
24 found her body today, she had been dead for three days. Twenty-fifth trans woman to be
25 murdered this year.
- 26 AJ: Rest in peace, my sister.
- 27 TM: Rest in peace – and that's happening, and that's going to happen, we're still going to have to
28 continue to fight. But, I think things are going to get better, I really do believe that.
- 29 AJ: Wow.
- 30 TM: Yeah.
- 31 AJ: Where do you see the trans community 50 years from now?
- 32 TM: Whoo, 50 years from now? I wonder if I'll still be around . . . just hobbling around in my old age.
33 I think 50 years from now, I think that if we keep doing the work that we're doing and on the
34 trajectory that we are going, I think that we are going to create a real solid space for us and not .
35 . . . I think we are going to be the ones that are going to bust open this idea of a gender binary. I
36 think we going to be the ones that are going to say, "You know what? The gender binary

- 1 actually is a myth and there's a spectrum, there's a kaleidoscope of genders, and we are going
2 to make sure that you see that." I'm hoping that we have another name. Like I was saying
3 yesterday in my talk, transness is a qualifier to gender because we have no name. I think we're
4 going to name ourselves in the next 50 years. We're talking two and a half generations, we're
5 going to name ourselves and we're going to cement our place here. I think . . . I really think that
6 in 50 years you're going to have trans people, you're going to have fucking cyborgs and shit. I
7 think that there is going to be a place here because humanity is going to get more and more
8 complicated as we careen into the future and particularly with this merger with people and
9 technology. We're going to have our place.
- 10 AJ: Wow.
- 11 TM: Absolutely.
- 12 AJ: I love it.
- 13 TM: Yeah.
- 14 AJ: Tiq, this has been an amazing hour, thank you so much.
- 15 TM: Yeah, this is so much fun. This is a lot of fun.
- 16 AJ: Is there anything that you want to share that I didn't have the insight or the foresight or the
17 wisdom to ask.
- 18 TM: No, I think we really . . . I think we really hit all of it. I guess moving forward we should ground
19 ourselves in the fact that even though we are trans people and we've dealt with a lot of hurt and
20 trauma and sacrifice, that cannot be the crux of how we define ourselves. We are not just our
21 resilience to get over trauma, we are not just our strength to see it through. We are brilliant, we
22 are ancient, we are the future, we should be celebrated, we should be looked at as models of
23 possibility. We are more than our struggles. I think it's important for people to know that
24 diversity and inclusion is the seed of innovation and that's why we're so dope, because we are
25 diversity and inclusion. We are, I think, the future.
- 26 AJ: The living embodiment of it, right?
- 27 TM: We are the living embodiment of it. The way that we create space for people, the way we love. I
28 know people . . . and, we were talking about this earlier, about how you met so many people –
29 like 75 different gender identities.
- 30 AJ: Right, exactly – yes.
- 31 TM: And that's just like . . . everybody is just like, yeah. You like it, I love it – come on, who are you?
32 Who do you love? What do you want to look like? How do you represent yourself? That's the
33 future and I think we have to ground ourselves in that – who we are. We are given blueprints to
34 what a future of diversity and inclusion and love is supposed to look like and we are of
35 abundance and we're not scarce.
- 36 AJ: Wow.

- 1 TM: And, we should expect people to look at us for leadership.
- 2 AJ: Yeah. Y'all can't see this but I'm giving Tiq a standing ovation right now. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 3 Thank you so much.
- 4 TM: Thank you, this was awesome.
- 5 AJ: It's been a pleasure and until we meet again, my friend.
- 6 TM: Until we meet again, yes.
- 7 AJ: Peace.
- 8 TM: Yes.