

Monet (Kisha) Martin
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins
Interviewer

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

October 29, 2015



The Transgender Oral History Project of the Upper Midwest will empower individuals to tell their story, while providing students, historians, and the public with a more rich foundation of primary source material about the transgender community. The project is part of the Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota. The archive provides a record of GLBT thought, knowledge and culture for current and future generations and is available to students, researchers and members of the public.

The Transgender Oral History Project will collect up to 400 hours of oral histories involving 200 to 300 individuals over the next three years. Major efforts will be the recruitment of individuals of all ages and experiences, and documenting the work of The Program in Human Sexuality. This project will be led by

Andrea Jenkins, poet, writer, and trans-activist. Andrea brings years of experience working in government, non-profits and LGBT organizations. If you are interested in being involved in this exciting project, please contact Andrea.

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1 Andrea Jenkins -AJ
2 Monet Martin -MM
3
4 AJ: So, hello.
5
6 MM: Hello, how are you?
7
8 AJ: My name is Andrea Jenkins, and I am the Oral Historian for the Tretter Collection Transgender
9 Oral History Project at the University of Minnesota. Today is date is October 29th..... and... 2015.
10 And I am here with Ash Scott. Uhm, and, Ash, why don't you tell us your, uhm, your name,
11 however you prefer to pronounce that, uhm, your preferred pronouns, gender identity, and
12 your gender assigned at birth.
13
14 MM: Mhm.
15
16 AJ: Today is May 18th, 2017. And I am in South Minneapolis, uh, at Spirit of the Lake Apartments.
17 And I'm here today talking with Monet Martin.
18
19 MM: [Laughs].
20
21 AJ: Who also goes by Kisha, but it is Monet today.
22
23 MM: [Laughs].
24
25 AJ: Uhm, Monet, how are you doing?
26
27 MM: I'm doing good today. You know, chilling.
28
29 AJ: Chilling.
30
31 MM: I'm a little nervous, but...
32
33 AJ: A little nervous. That's okay. You're hair looks very beautiful just on camera.
34
35 MM: Oh, thank you.
36
37 AJ: It's working for you baby.
38
39 MM: [Laughs].
40
41 AJ: Uhm, so, uh, Monet, state your name, spell it so we make sure we have everything spelled
42 correctly, uhm, tell me your gender assigned at birth, and your gender as you are today.
43
44 MM: ... are today. Okay. Well, my name is Monet Martin. It's M.O.N.E.T. Martin. M.A.R.T.I.N. Like
45 Martin Laurence...

1
2 AJ: [Laughs].
3
4 MM: ... but it's Monet Martin. Uhm, other than New York City, the Bronx, New York, South Bronx, I
5 used to live in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but I moved up out of here in '97 so don't do the math.
6
7 AJ: [Laughs].
8
9 MM: Uhm, let me see. I was born male...
10
11 AJ: Uhuh.
12
13 MM: ... but now I'm trans... I'm a trans woman...
14
15 AJ: Trans woman.
16
17 MM: ... Ima say. Uhm, and I love it. No.
18
19 AJ: [Laughs]. Let's do it.
20
21 MM: Yeah.
22
23 AJ: So, uhm, Monet, tell me what is your earliest memory in life. Like what's the first thing you
24 remember?
25
26 MM: As me coming out?
27
28 AJ: No, just...
29
30 MM: Oh, just early something, early.
31
32 AJ: As a baby. The first thing you remember.
33
34 MM: Well, I know my mother used to take me and brother to the lake. These little concerts and stuff
35 like that. And me and my brother was, me and my brother, we close, I not gonna say we was but
36 we still is. We close.
37
38 AJ: Close. And can I just ask to speak up just a little bit, make sure my microphone picks it up.
39
40 MM: Oh. Yeah. Me and my brother, we close...
41
42 AJ: Uhuh.
43
44 MM: Uhm, we did a lot of sports growing up.
45
46 AJ: Really?
47

1 MM: When I was a young...
2
3 AJ: Child.
4
5 MM: ... child.
6
7 AJ: Mhm.
8
9 MM: Me and my brother did a lot of sports growing up, you know?
10
11 AJ: Mhm.
12
13 MM: You name a sport, we did it.
14
15 AJ: Really? Basketball? Baseball?
16
17 MM: Basketball, baseball, hockey, soccer... we did it all.
18
19 AJ: Wow. Football?
20
21 MM: Football. I mean, one time, uhm, when I was at my old past age, I was out there playing football
22 with the guys.
23
24 AJ: Yeah.
25
26 MM: And they would be so scared, and, uhm, one of my friends had a puppy, and he let the puppy go
27 inside the game when we were playing football. And that dog started chasing me cause I had the
28 ball. And I didn't see this poll coming, and I ran right into the poll, and I had a big old knot in my
29 head for like a whole...
30
31 AJ: Oh my goodness.
32
33 MM: Mhm. That's a good childhood memory.
34
35 AJ: That's, yeah.
36
37 MM: Yeah. [Laughs].
38
39 AJ: So where did you grow up?
40
41 MM: I grew up half in Minneapolis cause I was 18...
42
43 AJ: Mhm.
44
45 MM: ... lived there until 18 and then I moved up to Connecticut from '97 until 2002. That's when I met
46 my first boyfriend, my first real relationship in 2002. He lived in, uhm, Minneapolis, I mean, he
47 lived in, ugh, sorry, he lived in New York City in Harlem, New York.

1
2 AJ: Okay.
3
4 MM: He was Dominican.
5
6 AJ: Dominican?
7
8 MM: Yeah, that was my first Dominican relationship.
9
10 AJ: Ah.
11
12 MM: I lived with him and his mother, his sisters, his brothers so it was like a total different experience
13 for me. You know?
14
15 AJ: Yeah.
16
17 MM: They welcome you with open arms and everything. I lived with him for like, uh, 8 years. That's a
18 long time.
19
20 AJ: Wow, that's a long time.
21
22 MM: Right. So...
23
24 AJ: Did you learn to speak Spanish?
25
26 MM: I don't know that much but I can kind of understand. I'm not fluent, you know what I'm saying?
27 But I knew his family, sorry. We always, uhm...
28
29 AJ: Where did you guys live? In Inwood?
30
31 MM: No, we lived in Harlem.
32
33 AJ: Harlem.
34
35 MM: Harlem, New York.
36
37 AJ: You said that. [Laughs].
38
39 MM: We lived in Harlem, New York. No, you're fine. We lived in Harlem, New York, and after 8 years
40 of us, of me, of us breaking up...
41
42 AJ: Mhm.
43
44 MM: ... and I guess what brought us back closer was when his mother passed away.
45
46 AJ: Mm.
47

1 MM: So his mother had passed away. I went to the funeral, and still today, even though we're broken
2 up...
3
4 AJ: Uhuh.
5
6 MM: ... still today we still keep in contact like we're still friends.
7
8 AJ: Right.
9
10 MM: So that's a good thing. You know. Whenever I need him I can call him or if he needs me...
11
12 AJ: Uhuh.
13
14 MM: ... he can call me so...
15
16 AJ: Did you go to grade school here in Minnesota?
17
18 MM: Yeah, I went to, uhm, Andersen Elementary.
19
20 AJ: Right around the corner from here.
21
22 MM: Yeah. I went there and for, uhm, junior high school I went to NY.
23
24 AJ: NY.
25
26 MM: It's over north. Something like that. I don't remember. And then for high school I went to South
27 High School.
28
29 AJ: Okay.
30
31 MM: And then once I went to South High School, I got kicked out of there because I was so busy
32 fighting.
33
34 AJ: Oh, okay.
35
36 MM: So I was a little something, a little bad sometime.
37
38 AJ: Right.
39
40 MM: So from there, they kicked me out...
41
42 AJ: What were you getting in fights about or were you out when you were...?
43
44 MM: I was, I'm not gonna, mm, I always had this voice.
45
46 AJ: Uhuh.
47

1 MM: So it kind of made guys curious, but not really, but I was still hanging out with guys. Maybe, I
2 don't remember what it was, but...
3
4 AJ: But people weren't teasing you because...
5
6 MM: Nah, I didn't really get...
7
8 AJ: ... or anything like that.
9
10 MM: Nah, I don't think I really got teased at as a teenager. It's my voice.
11
12 AJ: Really?
13
14 MM: Yeah, my cousins used to be like, "Monet, put some bass in your voice." And I'd be like, "What?
15 This is my voice, but..."
16
17 AJ: Right? [Laughs].
18
19 MM: You know, so. That was like basically it. I didn't like, like gay bash and get chased on the street or
20 like that. I haven't experienced stuff like that.
21
22 AJ: You haven't?
23
24 MM: No, I have not.
25
26 AJ: Right.
27
28 MM: But I have been with a group of transsexuals and some gays that you might find a couple people
29 that wanna act ignorant or something like that.
30
31 AJ: Oh, really?
32
33 MM: But like me just alone...
34
35 AJ: Walking down the street.
36
37 MM: ... or something like that. I haven't been in a predicament like that. And praise god that I don't
38 come up on something like that.
39
40 AJ: Right.
41
42 MM: Uhm.
43
44 AJ: Especially up in Harlem...
45
46 MM: Yeah.
47

1 AJ: ... and the Bronx cause, uhm, I don't know if you've ever heard of...
2
3 MM: I remember somethings in, uhm, New York, plus I was doing, I guess I'm not gonna say all
4 transsexuals but me and some of my click, you know what I'm saying, we used to work on the
5 hoe stroll.
6
7 AJ: Sex work?
8
9 MM: Yeah, sex work. I'm sorry.
10
11 AJ: No.
12
13 MM: Sex work. Sex work out on the street.
14
15 AJ: I mean, I just want, cause some people who may listen to this they may not know what a stroll.
16
17 MM: Oh, okay. Sex work out there in the streets of New York City.
18
19 AJ: Right.
20
21 MM: So, you know, living in Harlem out there in the streets up there working. Not living in the streets
22 but, you know, learning the streets like in Harlem or whatever like that. There's things you do
23 when you're coming up being transgender.
24
25 AJ: Right.
26
27 MM: You know, you have some girls out there that have some jobs but the click that I was in we
28 wasn't really into, we were into that fast money. Money right then and there.
29
30 AJ: Right.
31
32 MM: I have, like, I mean, I have, it's my past though. It's my past [uses air quotes].
33
34 AJ: Right.
35
36 MM: I have robbed, steal, anything like that when I needed to but I did drugs, even though I still do
37 drugs and that's marijuana.
38
39 AJ: Yeah.
40
41 MM: I don't smoke weed... oh, I don't smoke cigarettes.
42
43 AJ: Mhm.
44
45 MM: I don't do that anymore. I've been off of cigarettes for like 6 years, you know. Uhm, but...
46

- 1 AJ: Uhm, what, you know, you say you and your friends, mostly transgender, transsexuals, uhm...
2 what do you think made you guys be involved in sex work? I mean, I have some ideas too but I
3 want to hear from you.
4
- 5 MM: Well, like I said it was fast money and the guys, there was just guys out there, you know. They're
6 just out there, and, you know, they want a piece, not to sound nasty, you know what I'm saying,
7 they want a piece of the...
8
- 9 AJ: Say whatever you want to say.
10
- 11 MM: ... girls. You know, they was paying so it was like why should I go play around with Larry for free
12 and he probably won't be worth it.
13
- 14 AJ: Right.
15
- 16 MM: Not gonna mess with Frank, and he got some dough for me and he still ain't worth it. So it was
17 like let me go, let me go mess with Frank.
18
- 19 AJ: Gotta keep it moving.
20
- 21 MM: Just keep it moving, not to say that I don't like to get things on my own but when I was living
22 with my ex-boyfriend I didn't have to do the sex work.
23
- 24 AJ: Right.
25
- 26 MM: Unless I chose to cause he took care of me, you know, but it was fine. I also had my friends out
27 there, and we're out there hanging out. That kind of draws me out there too.
28
- 29 AJ: Was it hard to find work as a trans person?
30
- 31 MM: Uhm, not really. It's just that what makes it hard for you to find work is if you put the extra work
32 in that you wanted work. You know what I'm saying? If you don't put the work in that you got
33 that mindset that you want a job, it's not gonna stick with you. You know, I had jobs before as
34 who I am today, but it was just that, I guess I haven't found the right job that's gonna keep me
35 motivated into that job. So that would make me. In other words, I'd rather go get the money for
36 free.
37
- 38 AJ: Right.
39
- 40 MM: So...
41
- 42 AJ: Or get the money easily, more easily.
43
- 44 MM: Yes. So, just like.
45
- 46 AJ: Not free.
47

1 MM: Not free. I don't...
2
3 AJ: There's some struggles.
4
5 MM: I've been in some situations before like that out there on the streets, you know what I'm saying.
6 I have, uhm, been raped twice.
7
8 AJ: Oh, no.
9
10 MM: You know what I'm saying? I had this guy, you know, he had, took me into this, uhm, a bigger
11 building and, you know, I don't know what made me go up in there. You know, it was dark. So I
12 was like, it's quick and easy. Go here and get this money cause the money was talking.
13
14 AJ: Right.
15
16 MM: I'm gonna go get it. So I was like in there and he smashes me up, I had to get myself out of that
17 situation so that one. I had one guy, he had, uhm, took me down to, uhm, took me down by the,
18 uhm, river...
19
20 AJ: Mhm.
21
22 MM: ... in Harlem.
23
24 AJ: By the river?
25
26 MM: Yeah. He took me down there. Had put out this knife on me and was like give me your money,
27 suck my penis. If you don't, I'm gonna throw you right in this river.
28
29 AJ: Oh.
30
31 MM: And at that moment it was like, should I fight him because we're both men or should I just give
32 him everything I just made? So it was like really weird so I was like I don't want to be thrown in
33 this river, and I was only like 10 feet away from the river.
34
35 AJ: Wow.
36
37 MM: You know what I'm saying? So it's like...
38
39 AJ: So it's right there.
40
41 MM: Right there. So like I don't want to just lose my life over a couple of dollars.
42
43 AJ: Mhm.
44
45 MM: You know what I'm saying? He's gonna do it or he's not gonna do it so it's like, you know what,
46 you can have it. Once I gave it to him, I just ran off.
47

1 AJ: Mm.
2
3 MM: You know. So that was the situation.
4
5 AJ: Yeah. Cause that's really, that's really what he wanted, right?
6
7 MM: Mhm.
8
9 AJ: I mean he wanted sex, but...
10
11 MM: He wanted my money too.
12
13 AJ: Yeah.
14
15 MM: So I was like, you know what, this, I can make this back in no time so, here you go. Take it.
16
17 AJ: So, when did you first realize, Monet, I'm sorry, that you were...
18
19 MM: Transgender?
20
21 AJ: Yeah.
22
23 MM: Uhm, well, me and my best friend dressed, we was like gay boys...
24
25 AJ: Uhuh.
26
27 MM: ... skipping school.
28
29 AJ: Right.
30
31 MM: Should I say his name?
32
33 AJ: Uh, you can if you want to.
34
35 MM: Well, Johnathan...
36
37 AJ: Uhuh.
38
39 MM: ... me, him, Matt I said he was 13. I was like 15.
40
41 AJ: Okay.
42
43 MM: I was like 15. Something, 15, 16. One of them, but I was young though. And, uhm, once we got
44 together, got hooked up the first day, you couldn't split us apart.
45
46 AJ: What split apart?
47

1 MM: I said, you could not split us apart.
2
3 AJ: Oh, the first day that you met y'all were tight.
4
5 MM: We were stuck together like that [puts hands together].
6
7 AJ: Right.
8
9 MM: And, uhm, we, uhm, like feed off each other. You know, like lets wear these little shorts and let's
10 wear these high tops.
11
12 AJ: Uhuh.
13
14 MM: I just be like alright we're gonna do this. So we would wear stuff like that. And sometimes we
15 would skip school. Tell our parents we were in school and meet up at the 5. That's the 5 bus
16 right there?
17
18 AJ: Yeah, that goes down Chicago.
19
20 MM: Yeah, so we used to meet right there, over there and get on the bus and go right to the Mall of
21 America. Stay at the Mall of America all day. Boys thinking we girls, just running around in the
22 mall. And we know when to go home. Okay, school's out. We need to go home right now. So we
23 come back using the same bus.
24
25 AJ: Mhm.
26
27 MM: Going back home so we would get off. He go home. I go home. They we'd connect right back up
28 that night.
29
30 AJ: Did you guys, like, change clothes once you left the house?
31
32 MM: Mhm. I remember one time. You wanna know an incident? I remember one time I went home. I
33 went to school, and I came home from school cause, you know, parents like to clean the houses
34 up and clean your rooms.
35
36 AJ: Right. Before you do.
37
38 MM: So, mhm. I came home from school, and she had these foam breasts. I used to wear these fake
39 breasts...
40
41 AJ: Right.
42
43 MM: ... as I do drag. I did more than he did, but, you know, we used to do drag. So my mother was
44 like, she was like, "who's are these?" I was like, "Oh, this is my friend's." She was like, "You is
45 lying. Both is yours." I was like, she was like, "Are you dressing up like a girl?" My mother, she
46 was, she was a sweet woman. She wasn't an evil woman.
47

1 AJ: Uhuh.
2
3 MM: It was just something that that was difficult for her, something she had. I'm not saying she had
4 to, you know what I'm saying? Something that, how can I say it? She got used to it. Once it was
5 explained to her by my aunts and uncles and stuff...
6
7 AJ: Mhm.
8
9 MM: ... you know, she understood it but I guess I went around it the wrong way. It just popped out
10 like popcorn.
11
12 AJ: Oh, wow.
13
14 MM: So it was like, what? Kind of, you know what I'm saying? So you know, I can understand my part,
15 but you know I was a child.
16
17 AJ: Is your mother still alive?
18
19 MM: My brother? My mother? No, my mother passed away, uhm, in '97. That what made me move
20 to New York.
21
22 AJ: Moved to New York.
23
24 MM: Mhm. So, but she still come to me. It don't feel like she's passed away cause she talks to me and
25 sometimes I see her in the pictures. I could take a little selfie, once I took a selfie...
26
27 AJ: Right.
28
29 MM: ... there was like this glow in my film right there. So I was like, what is that glow? I thought
30 something was wrong with my thing but...
31
32 AJ: Right.
33
34 MM: ... it was just my mother. You know, so once I, the next day...
35
36 AJ: So you see yourself in the camera, you see your mother.
37
38 MM: Mhm. I see, everybody says, my aunts, my uncles, my cousins, everybody tells me that. I can
39 show you a picture.
40
41 AJ: They see your mom?
42
43 MM: My father, when I first seen my father it was 2014, no, 2004 when I seen my father. He came
44 from Chicago, he and his wife.
45
46 AJ: Mhm.
47

1 MM: And, I was walking. He was like, "I'm at the airport. Come pick me up." So me and my brother go
2 pick him and his wife up at the airport. So they were looking for us. "I'm gonna come and pick
3 you up. I'm gonna come out with the car and come get you to walk to the car." He was like,
4 "Alright, come, come."
5
6 AJ: Right.
7
8 MM: So he was walking. He was like looking. I'm like walked right to him.
9
10 AJ: Uhuh.
11
12 MM: He was like, "Oh, my god" the whole time from that ride to my brother's house cause I was
13 living in New York.
14
15 AJ: Uhuh.
16
17 MM: And he had went to Connecticut with my father. My brother lived in Connecticut all that time.
18 So, he was like, "Oh, my god." You look just like your mother. You look just like your mother.
19
20 AJ: Oh wow.
21
22 MM: You look just like your mother. So I hear that a lot. So it feels good to me.
23
24 AJ: So how does your father feel about you becoming a woman?
25
26 MM: To be honest, he, not to sound like a bitch, he really couldn't say nothing about it cause he
27 didn't...
28
29 AJ: He wasn't there.
30
31 MM: He wasn't there. I mean I didn't talk to him. You know what I'm saying but hey we're Facebook
32 friends so you know?
33
34 AJ: Right. [Laughs]. So he already knew.
35
36 MM: Yeah, he already knew plus I told him I was gay. You know what I'm saying but then once I came
37 hello I had to tell him, hey, I'm a transgender, you know.
38
39 AJ: So, you told, do you still talk to him?
40
41 MM: I still talk to him, I still talk to him. I just went to see him this Christmas.
42
43 AJ: Okay.
44
45 MM: Well, after Christmas I went to go visit him. Stayed there for a couple of days. Ran right back
46 over to my best friend's house.
47

1 AJ: Okay.
2
3 MM: You know, cause it was different for him, you know what I'm saying? On the phone, in pictures
4 and stuff, it's different, but, than reality. It's like kind of weird for him cause he kept being too
5 overprotective of me.
6
7 AJ: Mm.
8
9 MM: And I wasn't used to that.
10
11 AJ: Like you're grown.
12
13 MM: So that ran me right out of there.
14
15 AJ: Right.
16
17 MM: I'm grown. Just go out there and do my own thing. You know what I'm saying, even though I
18 came to Chicago to visit him, I still want to sightsee too.
19
20 AJ: Right.
21
22 MM: I hadn't been there since like 12 years old so things have changed. You know what I'm saying?
23 Men changed. I changed.
24
25 AJ: Okay.
26
27 MM: So, you know, it was like I wanna go out there.
28
29 AJ: Right.
30
31 MM: So he was like, "Oh, I'm watching the corner store. Here, call me back. Are you okay?" I'm like,
32 "I'm fine."
33
34 AJ: Well, Chicago is rough.
35
36 MM: I mean, he live in Englewood. I haven't heard about any...
37
38 AJ: Oh my god. Englewood is like...
39
40 MM: Yes, sorry dad. Let me...
41
42 AJ: Okay.
43
44 MM: So, you know.
45
46 AJ: So that's where, uh, the woman who sings, oh boy, I can't remember, Jennifer Hudson.
47

1 MM: Oh, Jennifer, oh yeah. She was...
2
3 AJ: She lives in Englewood.
4
5 MM: Yeah, that's where her family got killed, right?
6
7 AJ: Right, exactly.
8
9 MM: Mhm.
10
11 AJ: Yeah. It's rough around there.
12
13 MM: But, you know.
14
15 AJ: Living in Chicago...
16
17 MM: I mean, I grew up in New York City.
18
19 AJ: Right, you lived in New York so you're used to it.
20
21 MM: Yeah. So if they're gonna pop a shit, they're gonna pop a shit. Anybody is gonna pop a shit
22 regardless, I mean, not to be cussing, but, you know, if anybody is gonna say something
23 regardless. You just going into the corner store, you going to get a bag of popcorn from the
24 popcorn stand somebody might say something so what you gonna do?
25
26 AJ: Right.
27
28 MM: I'm gonna say something. I don't care.
29
30 AJ: Yeah. [Laughs].
31
32 MM: My dad wasn't bothering me. It was just him protecting me.
33
34 AJ: Right.
35
36 MM: So, I had to understand that.
37
38 AJ: He's just trying to be a dad. He's worried about his little girl.
39
40 MM: And, you know, so it's like kind of different than having, I think if I would have been different, if I
41 was my old way and grown, he probably wouldn't have that much to say.
42
43 AJ: Sure.
44
45 MM: But now that I'm this female, so it's like different for him.
46
47 AJ: Right.

1
2 MM: So I can understand that.
3
4 AJ: I can understand that too. Like does he, buy you Christmas gifts or...
5
6 MM: Uhm, he don't buy me Christmas gifts. I'm gonna get after him on that though.
7
8 AJ: Okay. [Laughs].
9
10 MM: My favorite place is Victoria's Secret but, no, you can just send me a gift card. I can take that.
11
12 AJ: But he's, he's cool though?
13
14 MM: He's fine with it.
15
16 AJ: He houses you, you have dinner...
17
18 MM: Yeah, if I stay more than a night, I stay like 3 or 4 nights so he's comfortable with me. He's cool.
19 We talk, you know what I'm saying? Still to this day.
20
21 AJ: What about your aunts and uncles and brothers and sisters?
22
23 MM: Yeah, I have a brother.
24
25 AJ: Uhuh. You said that.
26
27 MM: Yeah, he's younger than me and I have, uhm...
28
29 AJ: And you guys are still close?
30
31 MM: Yeah. Yeah, I can call him up right now.
32
33 AJ: Okay. He calls you Monet?
34
35 MM: He calls me Monet. No, everybody calls me Kisha.
36
37 AJ: Kisha.
38
39 MM: Okay, Kisha is like, I'm gonna say Kisha is like my boom, boom, boom. Monet is more like when I
40 need warehouse or get my food stamps together. Oh, "Monet." Oh, "Hey, I'm right here."
41 Monet is on everything.
42
43 AJ: Right.
44
45 MM: But Kisha is more like hanging out with my girlfriends and plus they grew up with me so that
46 name is not going anywhere.
47

1 AJ: Right, exactly.
2
3 MM: So, yeah, my brother, he calls me Kisha. I got 2 nephews, 1 niece, and they love me...
4
5 AJ: Uhuh.
6
7 MM: ... like there's no other. And they support me. You know, and their mom and aunts. I have aunts,
8 uncles, cousins, and they all support me and they love me. They don't...
9
10 AJ: The only reason I ask is cause, you know, that so many trans...
11
12 MM: There's so many girls out there, not to be funny, there's so many transgender women, there's
13 some gay guys out there too that as soon as they come out to their family, their family just
14 pretty much [places towel in front of her face].
15
16 AJ: Right.
17
18 MM: You know what I'm saying? That's like, to me that's crazy. Like you should support and love your
19 child for whoever they are, whatever they want to be, whatever they wanna do. You should be
20 there whether you're a parent or not, you know what I'm saying?
21
22 AJ: Right.
23
24 MM: This is somebody that you raised or something. Don't just kick them...
25
26 AJ: To the curb.
27
28 MM: Right. We do have feelings too. You know, we just change our life into something that you don't
29 want us to be and something that you're not comfortable with, you know what I'm saying?
30 When I was, let me tell you something about that part. When my aunt had, uhm, told me that I
31 couldn't come to my grandmother anymore because I was, uhm, transgender, you know what
32 I'm saying? She said I could come, but she wanted me to peel out, and what peel out means is
33 that she wants me to change myself back over to a man...
34
35 AJ: Right.
36
37 MM: ... to attend my grandmother's funeral. You know what I said, I said, "Fuck you. I'm not coming
38 out of anything for anybody just to make anybody happy."
39
40 AJ: Right.
41
42 MM: Because I'm not gonna be happy. I'm gonna feel so uncomfortable. I have breasts and do you
43 want me to put on, dress as a man? Are you crazy? You're not gonna embarrass men like that.
44
45 AJ: Yes.
46

- 1 MM: I'm not gonna stand for that. So that's somethings that some girls need to stand up for
2 themselves when it comes to communities...
3
- 4 AJ: Plus your grandmother, she was...
5
- 6 MM: My grandmother, she, no, she knows me as Kisha. You know what I'm saying? She didn't seen
7 me a lot as soon as I moved to New York City, you know what I'm saying. They lived in Kansas
8 City, Missouri you know what I'm saying? That's where my background comes from.
9
- 10 AJ: Uhuh.
11
- 12 MM: My mother was born and raised, well, she wasn't raised there but...
13
- 14 AJ: But she was born in New York City.
15
- 16 MM: Excuse me, I don't mean to burp, but, yeah. So that's where all my, excuse me, that's where all
17 my cousins are at, you know, is there. So, when she said that it was more like, "Well, fuck you.
18 I'm not gonna go change myself just to make you happy."
19
- 20 AJ: Right.
21
- 22 MM: "And embarrass me in front of all these people." I'm not gonna do that. So this time, my, uhm,
23 my aunt had passed away. Oh, a little emotional, but my aunt had passed away before
24 Thanksgiving. I'm getting emotional, sorry.
25
- 26 AJ: That's okay.
27
- 28 MM: And, uhm, them hormones get you so emotional. You hear me?
29
- 30 AJ: Yes, they do.
31
- 32 MM: And, uhm...
33
- 34 AJ: I understand.
35
- 36 MM: We had made plans and everything for her to come visit me and stuff like that, and she had died
37 like probably like two weeks before.
38
- 39 AJ: Was she real sick or...?
40
- 41 MM: No, she just, it just, my cousin said he came home, and she was, uhm, laying on the floor. I guess
42 she hit her head and passed out or something.
43
- 44 AJ: Oh.
45
- 46 MM: So, that was really emotional to me because we talked every day on the phone, on facetime.
47 And, you know, she used to tell me, oh your hair looks pretty and we had made plans for her to

- 1 come down to see me for Thanksgiving, and I was going up there to Vegas with her. It was like
2 really hard for me, you know what I'm saying? But, you know, and...
3
- 4 AJ: Did you make it to the funeral?
- 5
- 6 MM: Oh, I went to this funeral, you know what I'm saying. So, yes, I went to this funeral.
7
- 8 AJ: Okay.
9
- 10 MM: So, uhm, I had to go because all my cousins and everybody, you know what I'm saying, they was
11 like, "You coming." So, I was like, "I know." I had to come.
12
- 13 AJ: Right.
- 14
- 15 MM: So, the same that told me that she wanted me to transform myself back to being a man or
16 whatever, you know, she accepts me. She accepts me. It took a long time cause she's a Christian
17 woman.
18
- 19 AJ: Right.
- 20
- 21 MM: It took her a little minute but now she understands that this right here is not going nowhere.
22
- 23 AJ: Right.
- 24
- 25 MM: So when she, uhm, time for the funeral, so go to the funeral, so she was, I wouldn't say that, I
26 just sit there and wait for people. So I would just sit there, you know, and she had made these
27 flowers for all the family to wear on their shirts, on their dresses. You know what I'm saying. But
28 I wore me some tight fitting jeans, and, you know, I was still looking like me so I felt
29 comfortable. You know? And, uhm, she had all the boys like little flowers. So I was sitting there
30 waiting patiently, you know. She was like, she walks up on me, and she was like I already know, I
31 already know that you a big flower for the females. So that made me, that made me feel special,
32 you know what I'm saying.
33
- 34 AJ: Yes.
- 35
- 36 MM: Okay, so now she understands then. Took her a couple of years but, yeah, it made me feel
37 special.
38
- 39 AJ: She came around.
- 40
- 41 MM: Yeah. You know what I'm saying? It's hope I feel for some people. It's all about, cause, you
42 know, I'm not gonna say some people push some gays and some trans away. Sometimes it how
43 that person approaches their family.
44
- 45 AJ: Yeah.
- 46
- 47 MM: You know what I'm saying? So.

1
2 AJ: Wow. Uh, you said funerals make you, uh...
3
4 MM: Emotional.
5
6 AJ: Emotional.
7
8 MM: Oh, my god. You see, I'm gonna breakdown.
9
10 AJ: Let me ask you this.
11
12 MM: Mhm.
13
14 AJ: If you don't want to answer, then just don't.
15
16 MM: Let me say something. I'm an open book. So whatever you wanna ask me, shoot for it.
17
18 AJ: What, uhm, what medical interventions have you undergone to become more of yourself?
19
20 MM: Okay, well, uhm.
21
22 AJ: Hormones, we know.
23
24 MM: Yeah, I've been taking those since I was 18.
25
26 AJ: Oh wow.
27
28 MM: You wanna know my real age?
29
30 AJ: How old are you?
31
32 MM: Oh my god. Why did I open my big mouth? I'm 39.
33
34 AJ: 39.
35
36 MM: Yeah. I'll be 40 in August.
37
38 AJ: You look like you're about 24 years old.
39
40 MM: I get that a lot. Mhm. So, I've been taking hormones since I was 18.
41
42 AJ: Your skin is so beautiful.
43
44 MM: Thank you.
45
46 AJ: Them hormones, huh?
47

1 MM: Mhm. I mean it could change. So I was 18 taking hormones. I was going back and forth, back and
2 forth. It was, there was times when, well, I know girl, well I'm not gonna say every girl but most
3 girls, let's say, buy their hormones from the streets.
4
5 AJ: Right.
6
7 MM: You know?
8
9 AJ: A lot.
10
11 MM: Especially living in New York City. There was times when I would go turn me a trick and see that
12 hormone lady walking down the street. I'd be like, "baby stop for me." And it was Jose. I'd like
13 like, "Jose!" She'd be like, "You coming to get this shot, right bitch?" I'd be like, "Yeah, give me
14 like 2 minutes."
15
16 AJ: Okay.
17
18 MM: So she pulls her car over. I get in the car. I give her my little \$40 and boom, boom. They used to
19 be called champagne, but they would be mixed with different hormones up in there. You know
20 what I'm saying. Yeah. And, uhm, I'd come off, and she'd be like, I'd be right there next to the
21 garbage can, right there bending over the garbage can while she's sticking me with the
22 hormones.
23
24 AJ: Oh my goodness.
25
26 MM: Mhm. In the restaurant, whatever. Just give it to me. Let's go. Went to the doctor's and I was
27 like I'm not gonna keep paying for hormones...
28
29 AJ: Uhuh.
30
31 MM: ... for somebody when I could just get my lazy ass up...
32
33 AJ: Mhm.
34
35 MM: ... and go to the doctor...
36
37 AJ: Right.
38
39 MM: ... talk to a doctor.
40
41 AJ: Yeah.
42
43 MM: So once I got my lazy ass up...
44
45 AJ: Okay.
46
47 MM: ... start talking to a doctor.

1
2 AJ: Uhuh.
3
4 MM: And guess what happens? I get my own hormones now.
5
6 AJ: Right.
7
8 MM: So, I've been doing my own hormones. The hormones make me emotional, as you can tell.
9
10 AJ: Boobs?
11
12 MM: Yeah, my breasts are now...
13
14 AJ: That's all from hormones?
15
16 MM: All hormones.
17
18 AJ: No implants?
19
20 MM: No.
21
22 AJ: Oh, okay.
23
24 MM: All hormones. They're a 36 double D.
25
26 AJ: You got it going.
27
28 MM: [Laughs]. I've been castrated.
29
30 AJ: Uhuh. So penectomy.
31
32 MM: Yeah.
33
34 AJ: Yeah.
35
36 MM: You could say that, sorry.
37
38 AJ: The lights just got brighter on you so you're good.
39
40 MM: Oh. [Laughs]. We're getting nasty now. Mhm. Uhm, I had my cheek implants.
41
42 AJ: Uhuh.
43
44 MM: That was under the table, you know what I'm saying, one of the girls in Jersey City.
45
46 AJ: Uhuh.
47

1 MM: She gave me cheek implants in my face.
2
3 AJ: Mhm.
4
5 MM: That was weird for me, you know what I'm saying, but, to be honest, I kind of enjoy it now.
6
7 AJ: Yeah.
8
9 MM: You know what I'm saying? When I first got them done, oh my god, it was so, oh my god, it felt
10 so weird.
11
12 AJ: Did it hurt?
13
14 MM: To be honest, it didn't really hurt. It was just scary cause I'm in the basement on a bed, you
15 know what I'm saying.
16
17 AJ: Right.
18
19 MM: It was like weird.
20
21 AJ: Was this like a pumping party? Have you heard?
22
23 MM: I heard of pumping party, but there was no pumping party. I just called her up and said, "Me and
24 my girl are coming in. She want her, she want her cheeks done. I want my cheeks done. I want
25 my body done." And she was like, "Come on through."
26
27 AJ: She want her bottom done, you said.
28
29 MM: No, her body.
30
31 AJ: her body.
32
33 MM: I ain't get my body done. Just did my face.
34
35 AJ: Yeah.
36
37 MM: That's it. And how I got that, me and my, uhm, ex-boyfriend got into an argument. So he had his
38 drug money and his drugs, and I robbed him.
39
40 AJ: Uhuh.
41
42 MM: You know what I'm saying?
43
44 AJ: Okay.
45
46 MM: So I robbed him, and I took that money and went and got my cheeks done.
47

1 AJ: Was this the Dominican guy you were...
2
3 MM: Mhm. Yeah, and you know what, I still get back in the house, you know. Cause he loves me, you
4 know what I'm saying?
5
6 AJ: Yes.
7
8 MM: He loves me. So did that. So I'm sitting on that little bed thing she got.
9
10 AJ: Mhm.
11
12 MM: I'm sitting there like smiling. And when she come with that needle, oh my god it's too late.
13
14 AJ: Hm.
15
16 MM: It wasn't too late. I probably could have, like, I don't wanna do this no more. I'm sorry. Give me
17 my money back. I could have did it...
18
19 AJ: Yeah.
20
21 MM: ... but let me just, let me just enhance my look a little.
22
23 AJ: Sure.
24
25 MM: So when she did it, oh my god, it was so scary to me. Cause when she said go, she said, "Okay,
26 I'm all done." So when I go to that mirror, and I looked in that mirror my cheeks look like two
27 red apples.
28
29 AJ: Oh wow.
30
31 MM: They were so swollen.
32
33 AJ: Uhuh.
34
35 MM: And the only thing I could say was... you ever seen that show That's So Raven?
36
37 AJ: Yeah, That's So Raven, yes.
38
39 MM: Well she ate that, uhm, she was doing the cookie show with her father.
40
41 AJ: Uhuh.
42
43 MM: And she ate something, and her face swelled up.
44
45 AJ: Right.
46

1 MM: That's how my face looked. I was like, oh my god. I cannot get on this train from Jersey back to
2 New York like this. I'm gonna look so crazy. But I reached for my jacket, I reached for the top. I
3 reached in my jacket and there it was. A ski mask. I put that ski mask on. It was a good thing my
4 friend called on my phone at the time. She was like, "Where you at?" I was like, "All the way in
5 Jersey." "You want me to come get you?" I said, "Please do."
6
7 AJ: Hm.
8
9 MM: So she came and picked us up, and she took me back home. I said, "Listen, I'm not going home. I
10 cannot go home like this."
11
12 AJ: Uhuh.
13
14 MM: "Cause then my ex-boyfriend will be mad at me."
15
16 AJ: Right.
17
18 MM: "Cause I took the money. And then I get my facework done too so he's gonna be really upset
19 with me." It took me like a whole week to go back home cause my face was swelled down. He
20 was calling me up and everything, "When you coming back home? I'm not mad anymore. When
21 you coming back home?" I was like, "I'm not coming back home." Just making up any kind of
22 excuse.
23
24 AJ: Right.
25
26 MM: So he does not see my face.
27
28 AJ: Uhuh.
29
30 MM: So, when I came back home, I came back home, he was like, "What happened to your face?" I
31 was like, "What you mean?" Like trying [laughs] lie.
32
33 AJ: [Laughs].
34
35 MM: He was like, "That's not your face. That's not how your face looked." And his mother, you know,
36 she's losing it. She was like, "Oh my god, Kisha, what happened to your cheeks? You got
37 cheeks."
38
39 AJ: [Laughs].
40
41 MM: I was like, oh my god. I was like...
42
43 AJ: You need goggles.
44
45 MM: Yes, so I just told them. She was like, "Why would you do that? Why would you go get your face
46 done?" The whole thing was, he wasn't really mad...
47

1 AJ: Right.
2
3 MM: ... that I took the money. It was the thing that I got my face done.
4
5 AJ: Mhm.
6
7 MM: So, yeah.
8
9 AJ: Wow. Thank you for sharing that. I appreciate it.
10
11 MM: Mhm.
12
13 AJ: Uhm, now I know we were talking once, and you were telling me that, you know, in New York
14 City that there's lots of resources for, uhm, trans women and trans men who want to have
15 surgery.
16
17 MM: Yeah. I can speak to them. You can use your health insurance.
18
19 AJ: Okay.
20
21 MM: You know, if you have good insurance, it can help you a whole lot in New York City.
22
23 AJ: Right.
24
25 MM: You know what I'm saying? It can get you a facial femme. A facial femme is facework.
26
27 AJ: Right.
28
29 MM: You know what I'm saying? Face surgery.
30
31 AJ: Facial feminization is what they call it.
32
33 MM: Yes, mhm. So there's that and you can get your breasts implants. You can get...
34
35 AJ: Vagina.
36
37 MM: Yeah, a whole sex change. You can do all kind of stuff that you wanna do with your body and
38 things like that that you wanna get done that's gonna make you, that you gonna feel
39 comfortable, that's gonna make you who you are. Your health insurance is gonna help you.
40
41 AJ: Right.
42
43 MM: You know what I'm saying? You put the work in and, and do the work, you can get the work.
44
45 AJ: Mhm.
46
47 MM: I was gonna go and get my breasts done, but then my friends were in my ear...

1
2 AJ: Right.
3
4 MM: ... and ex-boyfriend in my ear, "Oh, why you gonna get your breasts done for? You already got
5 big breasts. You know, you don't need none of that? Why you gonna get it done?" I was like, "I
6 want them to sit higher." They're like, "For what? They're already sitting high. They ain't saggy."
7 I was like, "I don't think I'm gonna do it no more." Then I thought about going to have the whole
8 sex change. I thought about going to take that off, but then I thought about it, and I was like, "I
9 don't think I want it done cause I kind of like looking like a freak and being a freak." I'm not a
10 freak.
11
12 AJ: No, say more about this. This is really important.
13
14 MM: Well, I thought about having a sex change, but then it was just like my mind ain't focused on it
15 cause I am a freak cause this is what god, this is in 2017.
16
17 AJ: Yeah.
18
19 MM: Men like transsexuals.
20
21 AJ: Right.
22
23 MM: You know what I'm saying, so get my sex change is not in my mind anymore.
24
25 AJ: I had a friend tell me a long time ago, uhm, that she regretted getting a full sex change. And not
26 because she regretted being a woman...
27
28 MM: Mhm.
29
30 AJ: ... but she's like now I'm just like every regular woman.
31
32 MM: Yeah.
33
34 AJ: And guys don't really like me.
35
36 MM: I don't wanna, I don't wanna have sex with the same guys that this transsexual or this
37 transsexual, excuse me, or this drag queen is having sex with.
38
39 AJ: Right.
40
41 MM: I want to have sex with a man that don't know my business. You know what I'm saying? I'm not
42 trying to be conceited but you know I can get on that path a little bit.
43
44 AJ: [Laughs].
45
46 MM: It's just like, I don't know. I had a boyfriend. I don't wanna have to go search for dick, excuse my
47 French.

1
2 AJ: Right.
3
4 MM: You know what I'm saying? I want them to come to me.
5
6 AJ: Right.
7
8 MM: And I wanna be like, I wanna be asked if I used to be or I have to tell them since I'm so used to
9 telling.
10
11 AJ: Mhm.
12
13 MM: You know what I'm saying?
14
15 AJ: Sure.
16
17 MM: I'm so used.
18
19 AJ: So you tell guys...
20
21 MM: That's the very, to me that's very important in my life.
22
23 AJ: Okay.
24
25 MM: Me telling a guy. You know what I'm saying?
26
27 AJ: Mhm.
28
29 MM: Not too much a female so the only time I really get into telling them my business really with
30 females is when I've been drinking.
31
32 AJ: Right.
33
34 MM: Once I've been drinking I start talking.
35
36 AJ: Okay. [Laughs].
37
38 MM: So, that comes through but, me, if a guy approaches me, I just tell him right, then, and there,
39 you know what I'm saying, I will be like, let me tell you something, me as a man, I still think
40 about the men cause I still think about the women.
41
42 AJ: Mhm.
43
44 MM: But when it comes to sex, that's when you gotta think about the man, okay. He don't, he don't
45 even know I'm a man so I gotta be like here I go. "Do you know that I'm a transsexual?"
46
47 AJ: Mhm.

1
2 MM: And it's up to them if they're gonna take it or they won't take it. And to be honest with you I
3 don't care if they take it or they don't take it.
4
5 AJ: So what do most guys say?
6
7 MM: When I, when I, when they, I get down. I'm gonna say like, mm, 79-80%...
8
9 AJ: Wow.
10
11 MM: ... is good with me. You know what I'm saying.
12
13 AJ: And then a few guys are not good.
14
15 MM: Are no good. They be like, "You're pretty but, you know, *makes beeping noise*."
16
17 AJ: [Laughs]. Okay.
18
19 MM: Don't leave me.
20
21 AJ: [Laughs].
22
23 MM: That's when they, that's when they like. Damn, that's when I'm thinking in my mind, I wish I had
24 me a pussy.
25
26 AJ: Right.
27
28 MM: But when you do that sometimes, you know what I'm saying, some don't lose your number.
29 They're just hit you up on the low. Be like, "I'm just checking to see how you're doing." Be like,
30 "Who's this?" And they're like, "Well, who is this?" And once you tell them, they're like, "Oh, oh,
31 I forgot I had your number, but, yeah, how you doing?" "I'm doing good." And you tell yourself,
32 "Oh, he just wants some ass."
33
34 AJ: Right.
35
36 MM: He ain't getting no ass from his real woman so he want to come to use me. So once he's trying
37 to use me, I start trying to use them pockets.
38
39 AJ: Okay.
40
41 MM: No one is going to eat me, buy me a cheeseburger, and then shit me out.
42
43 AJ: Oh, that's right.
44
45 MM: You wanna have sex, okay, boom. They me get a little piece of this.
46
47 AJ: Mhm.

1
2 MM: You know what I'm saying? I don't care. I don't give a fuck what it is. I know my real price as a
3 woman. I'm just gonna dig in his pockets. This is what he going to give me.
4
5 AJ: Right.
6
7 MM: You know what I'm saying.
8
9 AJ: Are you in a relationship right now?
10
11 MM: Yeah, I have a boyfriend.
12
13 AJ: Yes.
14
15 MM: He wants to marry me. He's in jail though.
16
17 AJ: Oh.
18
19 MM: But we have a strong connection.
20
21 AJ: Really?
22
23 MM: He's like weird.
24
25 AJ: Have you, did you guys meet since he's been in jail or...?
26
27 MM: It wasn't since he was in jail, but we've been talking. It's weird to me though. You know what I'm
28 saying? I've been knowing him since I was like a drag queen.
29
30 AJ: Okay.
31
32 MM: You know what I'm saying? And I haven't seen him, like I'm seeing you right now...
33
34 AJ: Mhm.
35
36 MM: ... in like 20 something years.
37
38 AJ: Oh really?
39
40 MM: Yeah, but he has like a thousand pictures of me up today.
41
42 AJ: Is that right?
43
44 MM: So he tells me how much I'm beautiful, that he loves me, some form every day.
45
46 AJ: Uhuh.
47

1 MM: It doesn't stop. We talk on the phone every day.
2
3 AJ: Wow.
4
5 MM: I got pictures. He sends me pictures of him of today. He just go takes pictures and send to me.
6
7 AJ: Is it expensive to talk every day?
8
9 MM: It's only 15 cents.
10
11 AJ: Per minute or?
12
13 MM: Yeah, per minute.
14
15 AJ: Okay.
16
17 MM: Mhm. Sometimes I pay like \$30, \$20, \$10 just to call me. I tell him don't put that much money
18 on your phone. And he can call me...
19
20 AJ: Right.
21
22 MM: ... from his cause he has money on his side too.
23
24 AJ: Okay.
25
26 MM: I ain't always gotta use my money.
27
28 AJ: Right.
29
30 MM: He can use his money too.
31
32 AJ: Cause he works.
33
34 MM: Yeah. He works in jail. So I don't always have to use my money. So that's a good thing about
35 him.
36
37 AJ: Mhm.
38
39 MM: He takes everything he can of his own. I don't have to do anything.
40
41 AJ: Okay.
42
43 MM: That's how it works.
44
45 AJ: Does he have his own phone then?
46
47 MM: No, he ain't got his own phone. He has his own tablet. He has his own TV.

1
2 AJ: Uhuh.
3
4 MM: He has since I've been talking to him the last three months, you know what I'm saying, he been
5 working so it's been good for me. I guess he tells me not to put so much money on the phone
6 because he can afford it.
7
8 AJ: He's got his own way.
9
10 MM: Mhm. So I'm supposed to go visit him but I'm, my thing changed. I'm gonna go home.
11
12 AJ: [Laughs].
13
14 MM: So I'm gonna come back down in August but from that time being, cause my business...
15
16 AJ: Cause you're kinda visiting here in Minnesota, right?
17
18 MM: Right.
19
20 AJ: You grew up here. Then you moved to the Bronx.
21
22 MM: New York. Yeah. Connecticut. I went to Connecticut and then New York.
23
24 AJ: Okay.
25
26 MM: But now I just live in New York. I've lived in New York longer than Connecticut.
27
28 AJ: Mm.
29
30 MM: Believe it or now.
31
32 AJ: Wow.
33
34 MM: And...
35
36 AJ: What's life like in the Bronx? Do you like it up there?
37
38 MM: Mm...
39
40 AJ: [Laughs].
41
42 MM: Nobody really likes the Bronx but, you know, fuck it, it's cheaper.
43
44 AJ: Yeah.
45
46 MM: And I love Harlem cause it's so everything is different.
47

1 AJ: Yeah, I think so.
2
3 MM: You know, they have their own different look.
4
5 AJ: Mhm.
6
7 MM: They're own different...
8
9 AJ: Feel.
10
11 MM: Yeah, so I usually hang out in Brooklyn. The last time I've been to Queens was when I went to
12 jail. Uhm, and my ex-boyfriend was going back and forth to jail to go visit him in the jail system.
13 Go visit him out there. They had two beds. One year, he did one year and then down the line
14 another year so it was like I was going to visit.
15
16 AJ: So when you went, you, were you there for a long time or?
17
18 MM: When I went to jail?
19
20 AJ: Uhuh.
21
22 MM: For me?
23
24 AJ: A couple days yeah, for you.
25
26 MM: Uh, no, girl. The longest, okay, you wanna talk about that. We can talk about that. Okay. Uhm, I
27 mean, my first time going to jail ever in New York City was me and my friend. He was a gay guy.
28 We ain't friends no more but we was coming from Connecticut. The metro north and it's only
29 like an hour, two hours on the train.
30
31 AJ: Mhm.
32
33 MM: All around on the train. And we catch a train going to New York and stay in New York all night.
34
35 AJ: Mhm.
36
37 MM: ... and catch the first train back. The first train started running at like 6 in the morning.
38
39 AJ: Right.
40
41 MM: So if you going to New York on that last train, you gotta hang out the whole night. So we was
42 walking down a street in Times Square [laughs], and we just smoking a blunt. Just smoking,
43 walking, smoking and walking. And this white man walks up. He was like put your hand behind
44 your back. I was like, "What?" "Put your hands behind your back." I was like, "No way." He was
45 like, "You're under arrest." I was like, "Oh shit. Like, fuck."
46
47 AJ: Uhuh.

1
2 MM: So took me to jail. I didn't go home but my friend that I was with he went home. But this little
3 fucker have the nerve to come to me while I'm in jail, "Oh, do you have like \$20 I can have to get
4 back on the train?" I was like, "No." Even though I had it. You're going home. I'm not. So you're
5 going to have to get home on your own.
6
7 AJ: Yeah. You guys were smoking crack?
8
9 MM: No, marijuana. Weed.
10
11 AJ: Weed. Okay.
12
13 MM: I have never trusted them in my life and never will touch that. And I say that because when you
14 look at people, you can look at people, when you see people out on the streets looking like that,
15 you don't wanna look like that.
16
17 AJ: Like a zombie.
18
19 MM: Yes, and I don't have time for that. I'd rather have blunts all day, every day.
20
21 AJ: Mhm.
22
23 MM: You know what I'm saying? No matter what, I smoke my blunts every day and drink my wine.
24
25 AJ: Right.
26
27 MM: And that does me just fine. Oh, it was a little rhyme.
28
29 AJ: Yeah. [Laughs].
30
31 MM: But, you know, I'll do that. You know what I'm saying.
32
33 AJ: Roll my blunt. Drink my wine.
34
35 MM: Yeah.
36
37 AJ: I'll be just fine.
38
39 MM: Mhm. I not gonna say I haven't done like... I did cocaine, you know what I'm saying.
40
41 AJ: Mhm.
42
43 MM: That's, I'll do that too every once in a blue, but I haven't touched it in a minute.
44
45 AJ: Yeah.
46
47 MM: It's not every day serious to me. Uhm, but yeah.

1
2 AJ: So you guys, you didn't stay long?
3
4 MM: Oh, yes, I did. So, uhm, we, they told me I had to, oh my god, you see how she looks over there
5 using all those? Uhuh.
6
7 AJ: Mhm.
8
9 MM: So I had my first time going. No, I was in the tombs in New York. I was in the tombs. That's
10 Manhattan, New York.
11
12 AJ: Mhm.
13
14 MM: You ever just go wondering in the street? That's where the big courthouses are at.
15
16 AJ: Oh, okay.
17
18 MM: That's where everybody goes. Superstars, everybody.
19
20 AJ: Oh, wow.
21
22 MM: Yeah, the tombs. And, uhm, I was there for like a month.
23
24 AJ: Oh.
25
26 MM: Yeah, almost a month, yeah, almost a month. I was there for a month going on almost 3 weeks,
27 like a month and three weeks, like a month and a half.
28
29 AJ: Mhm.
30
31 MM: A month and a half, something like that. And I went court. So when I went to court they were
32 like, "Oh, well, we can't send you home because you have a warrant in Kansas City, Missouri."
33 So I was like, "Excuse me?" I forgot all about that.
34
35 AJ: Okay.
36
37 MM: So I was like, "Excuse me? A warrant in Kansas City?" So I thought about it, thought about it,
38 thought about it. I was like, "Oh my god. From the drugs. Cause I was with my cousins, and,
39 uhm, it was like, cause they was selling crack...
40
41 AJ: Mhm.
42
43 MM: ... to the crackheads out there. So we got in the car and my cousin, the police pulled up their car.
44 The police pulled up as we were parking. And my cousin was like, "Oh my god. What do we do?"
45 I said, "Just give it to me. I'm gonna put it in my bag."
46
47 AJ: Mhm.

1
2 MM: I was so nervous. I was like, "Should I swallow it?" I was like, "No, no, don't swallow it." I spit it
3 out, and I put it in my bag. But I wasn't thinking they were gonna check the car.
4
5 AJ: Right.
6
7 MM: You know what I'm saying? I thought he was just gonna pull us over, but he pulled us over. He
8 was like, "I'm gonna check the car." And ding, ding he saw my bag. He opened the bag up. So, he
9 started looking in my bag, and he was like, "Oh, what's this?" I was like, "Uh, it's mine."
10
11 AJ: Oh.
12
13 MM: So I took the blame for my cousin. He didn't say like, "Take the blame."
14
15 AJ: Right but you...
16
17 MM: I was, so I just took the blame. And the whole time I was there my cousin took care of me
18 though the whole time I was there.
19
20 AJ: Hm.
21
22 MM: I was only there for like two weeks.
23
24 AJ: Mhm.
25
26 MM: You know? But, moving forward so when Kansas City came and picked me up I was so mad.
27
28 AJ: Oh so they came to New York to get you.
29
30 MM: Mhm.
31
32 AJ: Oh wow.
33
34 MM: They came and picked me up. So when they came and picked me up, I was like, "Oh my god.
35 What am I gonna do? Like, how am I gonna get back home?" That's all in my head, like how am I
36 gonna get back home from Kansas City, Missouri?
37
38 AJ: Uhuh.
39
40 MM: So they come and pick me up. And they, uhm, it was so embarrassing. They had shackled me
41 from head to toe.
42
43 AJ: Oh no.
44
45 MM: So I had to walk through the airport like [stomps feet back and forth]. So embarrassing. I got on
46 a plane. I was the first one on the plane. It was so embarrassing. Everybody just knew I was a

1 convict. It was just so embarrassing. So when they took me down from the plane, I go to the jail,
2 the first person I see, guess who it is? My cousin.
3
4 AJ: What?
5
6 MM: Yes, so I come in. He calls me by my first name. Ah, ah, I gotchu. I'm not gonna tell you my first
7 name. So he calls me by my first name. So I was like, "Oh, shit. Hey. So the last time I seen you
8 was in jail." So we went home.
9
10 AJ: Uhuh.
11
12 MM: So I did my one of my ex best friends. We ain't friends really no more. Her name is Shakara. She
13 lives in New Haven, Connecticut. And she had paid my way all the way from Kansas City all the
14 way back to home to Connecticut.
15
16 AJ: So they didn't keep you at the court?
17
18 MM: I went to court, and they kicked my ass out. [Laughs]. It was like, "Get out now!" I'm gonna be
19 like, "Oh my god, like this is like 20, I forget what year it was. It was when Puff Daddy and Jay Lo
20 were doing that gunshot...
21
22 AJ: A while ago.
23
24 MM: Yes. So it was like, I could just, they just had me in New York. Nobody came and get me, they
25 just kick me out of courtroom and tell me to go home. Like you serious? So that was my first
26 time ever getting locked up on the east coast. And then from that point came the train, you
27 know what I'm saying? So I remember me and my best friend in Connecticut, her name is
28 Shakara like I said.
29
30 AJ: Shakara?
31
32 MM: Mhm, we used to, uhm...
33
34 AJ: S.A.H... S.H.A...
35
36 MM: Something, oh. I forget her name, but.
37
38 AJ: Q.U.R.A.?
39
40 MM: Oh, no, no Q.
41
42 AJ: Okay.
43
44 MM: But she had, uhm, we had, we used to rob dates, you know what I'm saying. When I'm sitting
45 with them, so it was more like, we had this act going called salt and pepper. You know, she was
46 white. I was black. So we were salt and pepper. So, uhm, the date was like, "Hey, what's up, Salt
47 and Pepper?" We were like, "Yeah." He's like, "What's, uhm, Pepper, I want, tell Salt to come

1 here." So it would be something like that where they want pepper or, it was like scriptural. Or
2 they want both of us. I think it was like, okay, I'm gonna go in to get this money and get the hell
3 up out of here. So she goes in there. I wait like 5 minutes. Let him feel up on her, suck her tities,
4 whatever he was doing to her.

5
6 AJ: Right.

7
8 MM: I wait like 5 minutes. And my thing, I think was pretty much, [knocks on table], "Oh shit, oh
9 that's my girlfriend. Oh, that's my girlfriend." Like that. He would be like, "Okay." And I'd be like,
10 "Oh my god, can I use the bathroom?" And he'd be like, "I told you to ask to use the bathroom."
11 Look this is our scam.

12
13 AJ: Right.

14
15 MM: "Oh my god, could I please use the bathroom?" "Oh, come on in, come on in. Use the
16 bathroom." So I go in the bathroom. I help him in the bathroom. She's sitting on him, sucking his
17 tities, whatever or he might be sucking her dingaling, you know what I'm saying? But he's
18 covered up and can't see nothing.

19
20 AJ: Yeah.

21
22 MM: Come out, robbing him. I'm in his pockets or she's in the pockets or getting credit cards and we
23 out of there. So that's...

24
25 AJ: So y'all aren't beating people up and taking...

26
27 MM: No. It's more like suck tities, suck a, you know what I'm saying? Something like that. It would be
28 a switcheroo thing cause that was our stand, but one time it caught up with us. Alright. And,
29 uhm, we had one credit card. This is my first time being locked up in Connecticut.

30
31 AJ: Uhuh.

32
33 MM: We had the credit card. We go to the, uhm, mall. And, some, we was always buying stuff.
34 Particularly, this particular day it was like sit your ass at home and don't you do nothing. And I'm
35 telling her, I'm saying, I was like, "I want a massage." Excuse me. We're going back and forth. So
36 we kind of, excuse me, looked weird. So I signed it, and the card came back stolen.

37
38 AJ: Mm.

39
40 MM: So when they said it like that, I was like, "Okay, it's time to go." I was walking out of the mall, I
41 was taking, like out of that store, I was taking the credit cards and putting them inside clothes,
42 you know what I'm saying? So they don't catch it on me. So that's what I was doing. So we got
43 out of that store. We was walking, and they kept saying, "Ma'am, ma'am, excuse me, ma'am,
44 ma'am, like excuse me." They kept addressing me, and I just kept, hm, hm, hm.

45
46 AJ: [Laughs].
47

- 1 MM: They came in, [brings hands together]. I was like, "What happened?" It was like, "Well, you
2 know what happened. Your credit card was stolen. Your credit card was stolen." They took me
3 and her to jail. And we had, good thing we was good with the bail bondsmen cause we barely
4 had enough money to bail our asses out. All we had to do was ask for him to come pick us up.
5 He picked us up, and that was it. But we paid him too while we was out, you know what I'm
6 saying. That was a good thing that we didn't stay there anymore. But then one time my own
7 probation officer set me up, and, uhm, she was like, this was my first time going to prison. She
8 had set me up. And she was like, "Oh come on in. We have some paperwork for you to sign." So,
9 you know, I was like, "Oh yeah, coming in now. I'm gonna go sign these papers. And then I'm
10 gonna come back out, and we're gonna go do this."
11
- 12 AJ: Uhuh.
13
- 14 MM: My mind is already focused on what I'm gonna do that day. So I put my new brand new little
15 outfit on, my little Guess outfit, my brand new Airmax Form.
16
- 17 AJ: Uhuh.
18
- 19 MM: So I go see her. She was like, "Hey, how you doing? Come on back. Come on back to my office." I
20 go to her office, the door slams. Bam! I was like, [turns head back]. She was like, "You're under
21 arrest." I was like, "For what?" I forget what I violated for. They took me to, uhm, this prison. It's
22 called Osborne. It's like, probably like 3 hours away...
23
- 24 AJ: Hm.
25
- 26 MM: ... from New Haven, Connecticut, but it's still in Connecticut. It was like up Connecticut by like
27 New London and stuff like that.
28
- 29 AJ: Oh wow.
30
- 31 MM: It was deep up there. I mean so deep the water tasked so different from the city.
32
- 33 AJ: Oh wow.
34
- 35 MM: You know what I'm saying? It was so deep. And that was my first time going to prison. And when
36 I went into those doors, I wanted to take a dookie on myself but I didn't. It was just so scary to
37 go into a prison. So when they open up those, they, uhm, took me to my little cell block I was
38 going to. All, it was like, probably like two o'clock at night or something like that. But all I know is
39 that the doors for me to come into that dorm, all them guys was at the gate like, "Oh, hey, come
40 here. Come up here." I was like, I'm gonna keep to myself.
41
- 42 AJ: You were put in with all the guys?
43
- 44 MM: Mhm, all the guys. They only way they put you in the female jail, if that's gone. You can have tits
45 and everything, you know, you going right to the men's jail.
46
- 47 AJ: So you have to have a sex change.

1
2 MM: You have to have the whole sex change to go to a female cause they still view us as men, you
3 know what I'm saying. They still...
4
5 AJ: How did that feel for you?
6
7 MM: I say one thing, I ain't been back.
8
9 AJ: I know, that's right.
10
11 MM: Mhm. It feels, it feels, first, this is how I look at it. If I don't get myself in trouble I won't worry
12 about that part of society treating me like a man.
13
14 AJ: Mhm.
15
16 MM: You know what I'm saying? Cause that's not who I am today.
17
18 AJ: Right.
19
20 MM: So, it's like when they put you in there with all those men, some people, some gays like it cause
21 they might be horny with the boys. With me I don't think like that, you know what I'm saying?
22 That's not the kind of person I am. I'm here, I was just ready to do my time and go the fuck
23 home.
24
25 AJ: Right.
26
27 MM: I don't got time to be suck your dick for a soup because I'm gonna get that for free so why would
28 I do anything with you? So it's just like...
29
30 AJ: Yeah, exactly.
31
32 MM: I just couldn't see myself...
33
34 AJ: So the guys in jail treat you like a guy?
35
36 MM: [Shakes head no]. Like the woman I was. They treat me like the woman I was cause I was good
37 with them. The only ones that gave me attitude and shit like that was the females see you in.
38 But they respected me, and they called me by my first name.
39
40 AJ: Uhuh.
41
42 MM: Back then my name wasn't changed. So they only call me by my last name.
43
44 AJ: Uhuh.
45
46 MM: So I just respected that, you know what I'm saying. But with some people I just take the bullshit.
47

- 1 AJ: So you didn't get beat up or anything.
2
- 3 MM: Nope. My first time going I almost had that part, but yeah my first time going I was, I went to the
4 CEO, and, uhm, they were telling us that, you know, you gotta take a shower. You need to do
5 this for the night. So I was like, "Oh, okay." Then go get me a towel, and, uhm, I just took my
6 braids out. My hair was red like your shirt. I had my hair red. It was cornrowed, having the braids
7 in the back or whatever. And I was like washing my hands and my hair out so I'm gonna take my
8 hair out. So I go and see, cause on this side it was like two showers.
9
- 10 AJ: Mhm.
11
- 12 MM: So I asked her if I could go to the other side because the side I was on up. Everybody was taking
13 a shower and on the other side it was like locked in, and they couldn't come out. They had to do
14 what they had to do. So when I asked her, she was just like, "You can go do what you wanna do.
15 I don't care." She would just give me that. So I was like, "Okay." So I'm gonna go to the other
16 side where it's quiet. Everybody is over there sleeping so I can go in this shower. I'm gonna be
17 by myself.
18
- 19 AJ: Right.
20
- 21 MM: All I know is I go in there, I wet my hair up, came out into the open, washing the soap off my
22 eyes and my hair, and this guy came and started groping me. And I was like, "Uh-uh. What are
23 you doing? I'm not doing that." I see her walk by. They had to see him go over there walking by
24 swinging his keys. Like, like he ain't gonna come in and stop us or what was going on. So it was
25 like weird. So I know I just got my ass out of there and went back to my cell. I didn't even finish
26 my damn shower.
27
- 28 AJ: Wow.
29
- 30 MM: A couple of days later, uhm, the CEO calls me down to the to, uhm, to the desk, and said, "The
31 captain wants to speak to you." I kind of forgot about the situation so I was like, "For what?" But
32 then I thought about it, and I was like, "Oh. Cause this damn shower situation." So it's a good
33 thing that, I didn't know that it was boy that cleans up the jail.
34
- 35 AJ: Mhm.
36
- 37 MM: So I didn't know that he was watching from, cause they have these cameras like this, and he was
38 watching in the shower through his thing watching what was going on. So it was a good thing
39 that he was a peeping tom on my ass.
40
- 41 AJ: Right. [Laughs]. Cause it kept you from getting in trouble.
42
- 43 MM: Mhm. So, he, the captain wanted to hear my side or whatever so I told him what was going on.
44 So once I told him what was going on and what was [claps hands together], you know, they,
45 uhm, so I go back upstairs and probably like a day or two later they went and got him and took
46 him to the box, to the hole.
47

1 AJ: Hm.
2
3 MM: Mhm. So.
4
5 AJ: Let me ask you this one last question cause we're about to, you know, get to our time. What,
6 what is the most enjoyable thing for you that you appreciate about your life now?
7
8 MM: Living life, and I'm not gonna say I ain't got no worries...
9
10 AJ: Cause everybody on the planet has worries, right?
11
12 MM: Yeah. Living life and waking up every morning knowing that I'm here. Waking up every morning
13 knowing I can call a family member, uhm, call a friend, knowing that I'm here.
14
15 AJ: And being yourself.
16
17 MM: And being myself. That's the good thing for me.
18
19 AJ: That's a beautiful thing.
20
21 MM: Yeah, oh, I'm gonna make myself cry.
22
23 AJ: I know, you got me all emotional.
24
25 MM: Yeah.
26
27 AJ: Wow. Well, Monet, I really appreciate you being willing to share a little bit about your story and
28 your life.
29
30 MM: And I wanna say thank you for letting me open up. Cause this is something new for me. You
31 know, I was nervous. I felt real comfortable talking to you.
32
33 AJ: Oh, thank you.
34
35 MM: So I wanna say thank you too.
36
37 AJ: What do you wanna say to young trans girls coming up nowadays?
38
39 MM: Live your life, and respect yourself. Live your life, and respect yourself.
40
41 AJ: Live your life...
42
43 MM: ... and respect yourself cause nobody is gonna respect you if you don't respect yourself.
44
45 AJ: Alright. Sweet.
46
47 MM: You know, so. Yeah.

- 1
- 2 AJ: Thank you sista. I appreciate it.
- 3
- 4 MM: Your welcome. I appreciate you too.
- 5
- 6 AJ: Until we meet again.
- 7
- 8 MM: You got that right. [Laughs]. Lata.