

Joe Ippolito
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins
Interviewer

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

September 3, 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 Joe Ippolito -JI

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4

5 AJ: Good morning. My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am with the Tretter Collection, the
6 Transgender Oral History Project, and I am going to be interviewing Joe Ippolito. Today is
7 September 3, 2015, and I'm going to ask Joe if you don't mind introducing yourself, telling us
8 your preferred pronouns, your gender identity and your gender assigned at birth.

9 JI: OK. Hi, I'm Joe Ippolito, my preferred pronouns are he/him. My gender identity, I identify as a
10 trans man, my gender at birth was assigned female – female at birth, assigned female.

11 AJ: Wow, well thank you, Joe. Tell me just a little bit about the earliest memory you have. It
12 doesn't necessarily have to be related to your gender identity, though if it is that's fine. But
13 what's your earliest memory?

14 JI: Of life, interesting question. I'm one of those people, I tend to remember things very in detail
15 throughout my life, almost to a point where it becomes annoying sometimes. Some of the early
16 memories, I think maybe I was about five or six years old, living in a house in north Miami where
17 I was born, and I used to love to play outside. I had a little . . . one of those little . . . well, back
18 then it was a little car but you had to peddle it, it was like a plastic peddle car and I used to
19 peddle that around the neighborhood and it got stolen once. Someone stole it – period, I never
20 got it back and it was heartbreaking. I really identified with this white little peddle car. But,
21 those were good times. I'm lucky to say I had a very . . . growing up in Florida was a nice
22 experience because I was able to be outdoors a lot.

23 AJ: So, where did you go to elementary school?

24 JI: Well, my parents . . . I was born in north Miami but we moved up to an area a little bit north of
25 that called Davie, Florida, which has actually become a fairly popular area to live down there
26 now. At the time when we moved up there, it was considered the boondocks, or however you
27 would call it, because it was out in the middle of nowhere, really closely located to the
28 Everglades, it's all in south Florida. I started elementary school at Davie Elementary School and
29 that's where I went to elementary school for five years and then started a different school,
30 obviously, in middle school. I actually have some pretty good memories of elementary school. I
31 was not a strong student, I had a lot of academic struggles and I was in learning support classes,
32 though I . . . the learning support classes, I remember having pretty good experiences with some
33 of those teachers in those classes. I was an active student, like I loved to be outside and playing
34 games – things like that, but when it came to doing math . . . math, in particular, was not my
35 strong point, so I struggled with that.

36 AJ: Wow, so no challenges around bullying or . . .?

37 JI: Oh yeah, I would get . . . now I went to a school that was predominantly white. The area where I
38 grew up was very segregated. There was a Black community and then there was the white
39 community. My parents were actually . . . why we ended up moving into this area, I haven't the

1 slightest idea. I think that they wanted to buy a little house and it was very cheap at the time,
2 which they did – a little two-bedroom house. They were in north Miami, or Miami, which is a
3 much more diverse area, so then we moved up to this section of the state and it was just very
4 segregated, though my parents were originally all from the northeast – my mother from
5 Brooklyn, my father from Pittsburgh. They grew up in more diverse communities, with a very
6 Jewish background for my mom - she was brought up by people who only spoke Yiddish. My
7 father from a very strong Italian family. My father was a little older.

8 AJ: Ippolito.

9 JI: Ippolito, right.

10 AJ: Can you spell that?

11 JI: It's I-p-p-o-l-i-t-o. And the funny part about that, there's a story. In Italy, and it's a fairly
12 common name in the northeast, now I don't know about out here, but in the northeast there's a
13 lot of Ippolitos. A lot of them own garbage companies, I don't want to associate that with mafia
14 people. To my knowledge, I'm not in relation to any of them. My father's family is pretty much
15 mostly gone, they all pretty much passed away. But one of my father's friends, I remember this
16 when I was a kid, went to Italy and brought back a candy that was a little candy and it was called
17 Ippolito, spelled the same way as my name. There's other ways in which to spell it – one p or
18 people spell it with two l's. So yeah, that was a funny story. My father said, "There's a candy
19 named after our name." So again, don't know if there's any direct relationship to our family.
20 But, you know, growing up in that particular area of the country where, again, it was very
21 segregated, though I came from a family that did not grow up in that kind of an environment
22 and so it was instilled in me to, I guess, as much as possible to be open-minded and accepting
23 though I didn't have many people of color around me at that time to even make friends with,
24 because there wasn't . . . the communities weren't so mixed.

25 AJ: They weren't there.

26 JI: Yeah, which is quite sad in a lot of respects, but it all changed for me when I moved to New York,
27 but that was after college. Mostly changed.

28 AJ: I just want to hear a little more about your home life. Did you have siblings? What were your
29 parents like? What was the home environment like?

30 JI: I grew up a single . . . I was an only child, though my father had another child with his first
31 marriage and she is my sister, who I'm not particularly close with. We like each other a lot but
32 we didn't grow up together. She is about 13 years older than I am. So my father, the interesting
33 part about my growing up experience is my father was 50-years-old when he fathered me, my
34 mother was 26. So I had an older dad, though he was a very attentive father. We'd do a lot of
35 things together – I would watch old TV shows with him. In fact, the Honeymooners and things
36 that kids my age weren't necessarily watching, but because my dad watched them I used to like
37 to watch them. He was a jazz musician as well, my father was a jazz musician – he played piano,
38 and that's where he made his livelihood. He didn't have a formal education or anything, he
39 actually finished high school but he went into music. He was actually quite talented. He taught
40 at the community college, even though he didn't have a degree in music, just because he was a

1 very talented musician and he had some musical bands – all jazz, old school jazz. He hated
2 fusion or anything like that – all old school jazz. So I grew up around that kind of an influence,
3 and he would work nights a lot. My mother, at the time they were married, was a stay-home
4 mom though she was . . . we didn't have much money. I would say at the time, and these
5 classifications have changed now, we were lower middle class, on that low end of the middle
6 class spectrum. I think maybe the household income was \$30,000/year or something at the
7 time. I don't know, this was back in the 1970s. I had all the basics that you needed growing up,
8 not a lot of extras. If I wanted those things I had to wait until the holidays or to a birthday if it
9 was a special item I wanted. But, overall my parents were pretty good parents. They divorced
10 when I was 9 and so my father moved back to north Miami, but that was only 20 minutes really
11 from where I lived, so I saw him pretty much weekly, at least twice a week, and him and I were
12 very close. My mom, she re-married, well she met someone else and re-married when I was 14
13 to my step-father, and they've been married now over 30 years. I grew up . . . it was kind of
14 interesting. I had the Jewish . . . mom's side of the family was Jewish so I did a lot of the Jewish
15 holidays, Passover and things like that; and my father's side was the Catholic Italian, and so I
16 would go and spend Christmas with that side of the family, though I was never baptized because
17 my Jewish grandmother refused, she wouldn't allow it and my Italian grandmother, or I say
18 Catholic grandmother, tried to sneak me off at one point to get baptized and the Jewish
19 grandmother found out about it and it was a whole big deal. So . . .

20 AJ: Were you bat mitzvah-ed or . . . ?

21 JI: No, I had no bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah or whatever the female version of that would be. I went
22 to some as a kid or as a teenager, but no I wasn't really brought up with much religion. My
23 parents were not . . . my father was more religious than my mother, he would go to church, but I
24 was introduced to Jewish culture a lot more than the actual religious aspects of it, in regards to
25 food and the holidays and things like that, which I did enjoy growing up having because it was
26 family time for me, extended family time. I was very close with my grandparents on both sides,
27 so I enjoyed those events – those family events. But, you know, no real religion and currently
28 still just kind of . . . I'm spiritual but I'm not really religious at this point.

29 AJ: OK. So when was the first time that you realized you were not the gender you were assigned at
30 birth?

31 JI: Well, you know, it's interesting, because for me I didn't transition physically until I was 30, so I
32 was a little bit older. But I did come out as a lesbian at about age 24, which, for some, was a
33 little older as well. I did not come out until after college, though I had always had attractions to
34 women and still do, that's my predominant sexual orientation is women.

35 AJ: Is that an orientation, women?

36 JI: It's funny because people say, "Well, what's your sexual orientation?" I said, "Well, I'm
37 attracted to women," because I don't really consider myself . . .

38 AJ: That would make you a heterosexual.

39 JI: I don't really relate to heterosexuality or heteronormativity because I've been queer for so long,
40 so it's hard . . .

1 AJ: OK, so I'm glad we're talking about this.

2 JI: Yeah, it's hard to kind of connect those things. I don't identify with . . .

3 AJ: So your orientation is women, but you don't associate with the term . . .

4 JI: Heterosexual or straight or anything. I identify as queer and I'm attracted to women. If people
5 say, "Well doesn't that make you straight?" And I . . . not really, because again I don't . . . I've
6 lived 25 years or longer as kind of a queer person, if you will. It doesn't . . . heteronormativity
7 doesn't resonate with me. It's not as though I live an extremely queer life in any respects, it's
8 not like I'm walking around with the word queer on my t-shirt all the time. But I just can't relate
9 to those heteronormative ideals and the kind of stereotypical things that go along with that and
10 the gender roles and the expectations, so all those things don't really feel comfortable to me.
11 So, yeah, it's kind of interesting. I often say I'm attracted to women and, of course, that's broad
12 – broadly defined what that looks like, anyone who self-identifies as a woman potentially could
13 be attracted to. So that's kind of my orientation in that respect. But as far as thinking back to
14 one of the first earliest memories, and it's funny because we know that not all trans people
15 necessarily have those earlier memories, some don't realize it until later. I, though, did have
16 those memories very early on. I think as early as five or six I do recall wanting to be a boy, or
17 feeling like a boy, kind of wishing I was. When I got a little bit older than that, dressing up in my
18 step-father's clothing. I would sneak and then pretend . . . I would be in my room and pretend
19 to be a rock star or something in his clothing. Of course, they were so big but . . . maybe when I
20 was eight or nine. I do remember being mis-gendered, interestingly enough, and called a boy at
21 various points in time out in public, because I was very much a tomboy at the time. And while I
22 did have somewhat longer hair, there was periods where I had it a little bit shorter and there's
23 one experience I remember. I was probably around . . . I was young enough to where I was just
24 first learning how to tie shoes, laces on sneakers and things, and my mom and I were out at
25 JCPenney's or one of those stores and she was shoe shopping. I was practicing my shoe tying,
26 untying shoe laces and then tying them, and the guy who worked there said, "Ma'am, can you
27 please tell your son to stop tying these shoes – untying and tying our shoes?" I know that it
28 brought up anxiety for me because, at the time, I was . . . I'm a girl, that's what I'm taught to
29 know. And I think my mom kind of said, "OK, no problem," she didn't really correct his gender
30 because it didn't really matter. He was basically asking that I stop untying and tying shoes. I
31 was messing up his whole department with untying and tying shoes. So there was that mis-
32 gendering in the opposite direction in a weird way at those times. And then I do remember at
33 age . . . maybe 12 or 13, kind of coming out to my mom about being attracted to girls. I
34 definitely had attractions to girls in my school, one of my babysitters, whatever those early
35 physical and even sexual attractions are. And it was even emotional, I definitely felt a different
36 set of emotions towards women than I did towards boys, or men, though I didn't really
37 understand it. I had no exposure to the gay or lesbian community either, it was a pretty
38 conservative area of the country where I was growing up. I knew about gay and lesbian things, I
39 would see it on TV a little bit – whatever existed back then, because this was in the 1970s. And
40 my mom handled it pretty well. She said, "You know, sometimes people have different
41 feelings," and she said, "I don't care what you end up being attracted to, but it's OK to not know
42 or to think that you might have these attractions or not." She kind of didn't diminish it or kind
43 of negate it or anything. I also had crushes on boys a little bit too, but the crushes felt very

- 1 different. The boy crushes felt kind of more stereotypical. I was attracted to the cutest boy in
2 school, just like all the other girls.
- 3 AJ: So did all the other girls as well.
- 4 JI: Right, it wasn't anything special. But the girl who sat next to me in science class, who I would
5 get all giddy for and would wait on bated breath until she came into science class, that was a
6 different kind of attraction. But, in high school and early in college, I had two boyfriends – two
7 primary boyfriends, one in high school and one in college. They were decent guys. I did fall in
8 love with them to the degree that you could fall in love with someone at those ages. But, I
9 didn't realize what I felt for them wasn't the same level of attraction that I feel for women until I
10 started to date women. You don't . . .
- 11 AJ: You don't know what you know until you know.
- 12 JI: I assumed that all women, I identified at the time as a woman, that all women felt similarly
13 towards men as I felt. But then when they would talk about their boyfriends, I'm like, "I don't
14 quite feel that same level of desire." So, it was interesting. It was interesting.
- 15 AJ: So you said you came out as trans at 30.
- 16 JI: At 30.
- 17 AJ: How was that? Tell me about your coming out experience, if you don't mind?
- 18 JI: Sure. I started my physical transition right shortly after that, so by 31 I was on hormones and
19 everything.
- 20 AJ: And what year would you say that was?
- 21 JI: That was in . . . around 2001.
- 22 AJ: OK.
- 23 JI: So I had been living in New York City, where I moved right after college, for eight years. I moved
24 there in 1994 or so. I'd lived there for about a year before I came out as a lesbian. I was there
25 when I came out as a lesbian in New York City. Finally, I just started to acknowledge my
26 attractions to women and came out as a lesbian and ended up moving more and more towards
27 a butch identification in that respect and then feeling like a boy, and then took on whatever the
28 labels at the time were around gender-queer identity. The names and the terminologies
29 change. I don't think they really used gender-queer then, I think it was more like a butch boi, b-
30 o-i, that kind of thing. And kind of lived in that space for a number of years and then started
31 meeting more trans men. I had known many trans women at the time, in the New York City
32 community, but trans men weren't as . . . well, there weren't as many and they weren't as
33 visible, even those who did exist. Towards the tail end of my living in New York City, I started to
34 meet a few trans men who had started transitioning. So I moved to Philadelphia after that, in
35 2001, to go back to get my doctorate degree in psychology and it was at that point . . .
- 36 AJ: Pre-9/11 or Post-9/11?

- 1 JI: It was Pre-9/11. I actually moved there, literally, three months before 9/11, which was
2 interesting because I still had a lot of ties and connections to New York – friends, and I had a
3 girlfriend at the time who lived in New York. It was an interesting experience because I was
4 going back to New York at that time almost weekly and during that time I couldn't go for a
5 while.
- 6 AJ: Sure.
- 7 JI: But yeah, so it was Pre-9/11 and then I just started to look into and explore what transitioning
8 would look like. There weren't, in Philadelphia, at the time there wasn't the Mazzoni Center or
9 any of those places . . .
- 10 AJ: What's the Mazzoni Center?
- 11 JI: The Mazzoni Center is Philadelphia's version of . . . it's an LGBTQ health and wellness center. It's
12 expanded over the years into a full-fledged kind of health and wellness center, they do mental
13 health and physical health. They have a health care center, they do mental health, they do case
14 management, social work, they have a legal department. It's for the LGBTQ community.
- 15 AJ: Do you mind spelling Mazzoni?
- 16 JI: It's M-a-z-z-o-n-i Center. And they are the organization that actually took the Philadelphia Trans
17 Health Conference under their wing and are now the organization that puts that conference on.
18 So they're the organization that does that conference.
- 19 AJ: And that's one of the primary transgender conferences . . .
- 20 JI: In the country, yeah. It has been over the past . . . well, they just reached, I think, their 12th year
21 . . . or 13 years, and it started off real small scale and it has grown to be, I think, there was close
22 to 5,000 people at the last one.
- 23 AJ: Wow.
- 24 JI: Yeah, huge. I was actually a chair of the planning committee for a few years and on the planning
25 committee for many years earlier on in the process of the conference development – from
26 probably around 2003 until actively 2009 or so, and then I stepped away to do other things. So
27 Mazzoni Center is the organization that does that conference, if there's any connection to that
28 that people might associate. So yeah, at the time, though, in Philadelphia there was really one
29 or maybe two doctors, barely, who did any hormone treatment and one of them was
30 predominantly a doctor who kind of started doing it but really was doing work with the HIV
31 community, but he started to acknowledge that there were trans people who wanted hormones
32 so he started to kind of work with that. There wasn't a lot of knowledge about what all this
33 looked like, what hormones . . . you could look and determine what hormones could do but . . .
- 34 AJ: What are the long-term effects and . . .?
- 35 JI: What are the long-term effects? You kind of knew what to expect from the basic things but it
36 wasn't like . . . the research wasn't where it is today and I thank God it is moving forward in that
37 direction so we have a better idea of how to do this stuff for people.

- 1 AJ: Sure.
- 2 JI: But I had met, then, a handful of trans people. There wasn't that many in Philadelphia and I'm
3 sure there wasn't that many in other cities like here at the time. It was a mixed group of trans
4 women and men. I became friends with a racially mixed group, class-wise mixed. We all just
5 kind of formed . . . there was a community formed and at the time anyway it was really about
6 just kind of pushing forward this basic agenda of, "We're here and we want some basic rights."
7 Now, of course, it's broadened in many different directions, which is a great thing. But yeah, my
8 coming out experience, I would say, was pretty . . . honestly it wasn't very difficult. I did lose
9 one job. I was employed at a job for a managed-care company, full-time, and I started
10 transitioning at the onset of when I started that job, and part-way through I was dismissed from
11 the job and there wasn't any clear reason why. I did inform them I was transitioning, there was
12 no work-related reason why. They kind of fudged and made-up a couple things, but it just didn't
13 kind of . . .
- 14 AJ: It didn't fly.
- 15 JI: Didn't fly. But I was actually kind of grateful because after I was dismissed from that job, I was
16 able to collect unemployment for a short time, but then I got the job working for Mazzoni
17 Center, where I worked for six years as a therapist.
- 18 AJ: Oh wow.
- 19 JI: Yeah, I don't know that I would have gotten that job.
- 20 AJ: So it catapulted you?
- 21 JI: Yeah, it was a great opportunity, really. Sometimes what feels like a really bad moment turns
22 into something better because I was able to get connected with the Mazzoni Center and start
23 working in their mental health department and then also get involved with helping organize the
24 conference. And so all these positive things came out of it.
- 25 AJ: So tell us what you do? What do you do, what's your profession?
- 26 JI: What do I do now? Well, my profession . . . I have a masters in social work, I have an
27 undergraduate degree in telecommunications, and a doctorate in psychology, though my
28 primary job or what I make money doing, is working in the mental health field. I am a doctor of
29 psychology, I have yet to take my doctorate-level licensing exam. I plan to do that later this
30 year, actually in the winter. But, I currently work . . . I've worked for years doing psychotherapy
31 under my master's degree. I also currently now work for Allina Health Systems here in
32 Minneapolis/St. Paul and I work as a . . . really, I do crisis assessments in their emergency room
33 departments. I also fill in at times in their IOP, Intensive Outpatient and Partial Programs, and I
34 also have a very small private practice and I've always had a small private practice, even in
35 Philly. Right now I have about five clients. I don't really want to do that full-time. And then I
36 also have been teaching, pretty much every semester for the past five years as an adjunct or, in
37 the case of Metropolitan State, as a community faculty member. So I teach a variety of different
38 classes, some are more specifically psychology oriented or therapy related, and others are more
39 general – like I teach a social psychology class once a year. And so, that kind of supplements my

1 income. I kind of have a few different things that I do for income. As far as community work
2 goes, I do . . . it's run the gamut. I think I initially started getting involved in doing more
3 community work, obviously, in Philadelphia with the conference and then doing a lot of work
4 with the city there initially helping with a lot of needs assessments that they were doing. Also,
5 kind of advocacy work with some of the local organizations there along with some of my
6 colleagues who I was associated with in the Philadelphia area – my trans colleagues. I was on
7 the police liaison committee for a while in New York City around . . . it was an LGBT police liaison
8 committee and there was a few of us on there, kind of . . . like many cities, Philadelphia had a lot
9 of problems with trans people being . . . you know, mistreated by the police, so we formed a
10 committee. I also did a lot of . . . helped organizations kind of enhance their trans programming
11 and get trainings done. So it's just run the gamut. I've also been involved in writing things from
12 time to time, little articles and things like that. Obviously I finished a dissertation which was on
13 trans men and resocialization issues, re-socializing themselves after they start passing and living
14 full-time as men, physically looking as male. So yeah, my activism and advocacy work . . . I
15 consider it more advocacy and organizing work though I have done some grass roots activism.
16 And currently now I'm primarily focusing on . . . I am writing some things and then also the film
17 and art festival, Gender Reel, that I started about five years ago. I have a passion for organizing
18 and when I left the Philadelphia Trans Health Conference, those set of skills were not being
19 utilized and so I thought to myself, "Well what am I going to do?" because I really enjoy that
20 process. It's a whole other set of skills than doing therapy. I'm a big film buff and so I would go
21 to the gay and lesbian film festival in Philadelphia yearly and there was never very many trans
22 films – of course, they'd have one and then they'd have 100 gay men films. It was really
23 problematic and I actually initially approached them about enhancing their programming and
24 was even willing to kind of get involved in that, but they weren't very open to it. They were old
25 school. I think it's changed a lot there now too with that film festival. So I just said, "Well, I'm
26 going to just do my own." It just started that way and kind of manifested into what it is today . .
27 . which I don't even know what it is, it's just kind of going in different directions but I just kind of
28 go with the flow. It seems to be received well in many respects and people seem to enjoy . . .
29 each year we get better and better films too. It means to me that the quality of filmmaking
30 around the issues of transgender and non-conforming people, in terms of the subject matters
31 and the content and also just the style of the filmmaking, is getting better and people are doing
32 more.

33 AJ: What are some of the issues and ideas and concepts that are coming up in the films? Because I
34 know you probably screen a lot of them. Are there any sort of re-occurring themes or some
35 themes that really stand out to you as unique to the transgender narrative?

36 JI: Well what I've noticed is a movement away from kind of documentaries focusing on the physical
37 transition, or that person's physical transition experience and moving more toward more
38 specific things like issues regarding family and being a trans parent or certainly dating or
39 relationships, issues around more specific things related to culture and race and trans issues and
40 the intersectionality of those things. There are still those narratives of a person's personal
41 experience upon transitioning and, of course, we learn a lot from that. But I've noticed a shift
42 away from that, not as many of those types of films – more fiction, stories, plots, story lines that
43 are dealing with trans characters but not necessarily related directly to the trans issue. There

1 was a film we showed a couple of years back, which was a horror film, and it was made by a
2 trans person and it was all . . . the main character was trans and it was like a Zombie apocalypse
3 thing with a trans character as the main character. It's not like they overtly came out as trans in
4 the movie but it was . . . those kinds of things, you're seeing more and more of those kinds of
5 things. That's really important. So yeah, it's evolved a lot in that respect. And then even people
6 doing personal story narratives but not largely only focusing on the trans issue, but focusing on
7 their broader lives and how that intersects with their trans experience. So I've seen a lot of
8 shifts in that way, so that's good to see.

9 AJ: Cool. Just going back to coming out a little bit. I know that you shared that you lost a job, but
10 how did your family and friends in the community that you had already sort of built, how did
11 they deal with your coming out?

12 JI: I am also one of the lucky people who have, for the most part, always had a fair amount of
13 support in that respect. My parents have been very supportive, as best as parents can be – to
14 some degree. Initially it took a little while for my mom to get the pronoun things down, and she
15 still . . . sometimes she'll say he and she in one sentence but she's also 72 and she did live my
16 first 30 years as me as a female and identifying in those pronouns. But it's not meant in any
17 disrespectful way, she fully recognizes that I'm a trans man. She actually has told me that she
18 realizes that I started to come into myself a lot more and just seemed more happy when I finally
19 transitioned. She acknowledged and noticed that. As far as my dad goes, he was around during
20 the first few years of my transition, but he died about three years into my transition. He passed
21 away. He was very open and accepting as well. I was his youngest daughter, so it was
22 interesting. We had a close daughter/father relationship – that relationship didn't change much
23 after I transitioned. We still had that same closeness though he passed away about three years
24 into my transition, he was at that time 83. So he wasn't that . . . because he had fathered me at
25 age 50. Extended family members, like my grandmother, uncles, grandfather – all just . . . they
26 accepted it a little bit easier even than my parents, in a weird way. My grandmother, who also
27 passed away about six years ago, I was very close with, she just made the pronoun transition
28 immediately. Here is this older woman, didn't even . . . the minute I told her just pssht – that
29 was it. It was kind of interesting. So I consider I'm very lucky because I know a lot of trans
30 people don't have that experience. As far as friends go, again pretty lucky in that respect. I
31 really haven't had any friends kind of push me away or tell me I'm a sicko or tell me they don't
32 want to be friends with me anymore. Though there were some transitions in my friendships at
33 the time when I moved from New York to Philly, I didn't start transitioning until I was in Philly,
34 and the friends I had in New York, while I've maintained a couple of friends from there, they
35 were 20-something friends, party friends, people I didn't really have a real strong tie to. There is
36 one person who I'm still very close with from there but we've now known each other for over 20
37 years. In Philly I started to predominantly get involved in trans communities, so most of all my
38 friends from there were queer or trans identified, so that was not an issue. I have a couple of
39 childhood friends and even my friends from high school, all very OK with it. I just saw a friend of
40 mine from high school two weekends ago, she came up here for other things but we had lunch
41 and I hadn't seen her in over 20 years. She didn't ask me . . . we talked briefly about . . . I don't
42 even think we talked about it, we had talked before at various points in time. I just happen to

- 1 have a lot of liberal-minded friends who were not closed-minded or . . . I mean, what they say
2 behind closed doors, I have no idea, but they've never been disrespectful to me upfront.
- 3 AJ: Right. But nobody knows what people say about them behind closed doors, regardless of your
4 orientation or identity, right?
- 5 JI: Yeah, absolutely.
- 6 AJ: So that's kind of how you have to accept life as well.
- 7 JI: The one interesting part is my mother said that she actually found it more challenging for her
8 when I came out as a lesbian than when I came out as a trans man because . . .
- 9 AJ: That's interesting.
- 10 JI: She actually, I guess maybe at that point, she had already gone through one experience, maybe
11 that made it easier.
- 12 AJ: Sure.
- 13 JI: But she just always felt like because of some of the things she acknowledged growing up and the
14 way that I related to things, that it just made more sense to her that I identified as a boy or a . . .
15 so it just made more sense to her logically, in her own mind. So, that was interesting – not that
16 she wasn't accepting of my lesbianism, she was, but she just specifically said that to me so that
17 was kind of interesting.
- 18 AJ: So, talk about romance and love and relationships. You've sort of been hinting at it a little bit.
- 19 JI: Right.
- 20 AJ: But, what's your current relationship status?
- 21 JI: Well, it's interesting, because I'm hoping that when someone watches this film 15 years from
22 now, if they pull it up through the archives or whatever, that dating experiences for trans people
23 will be generally a lot easier – and it's getting easier, I think, with youth culture nowadays. At
24 45, I have found the dating process a little bit more challenging in various ways. I think with the
25 day and age being what it is and everything happening online and you don't meet people in real
26 time, it makes dating in general interesting for everybody. But as a trans person, it's really
27 interesting. I currently am in a new relationship, it's only four months old and things have been
28 going fairly well. I don't know where that will go, or if it will go anywhere. I have had, in my
29 dating experiences since transitioning in 2001, I haven't had very many long-term dating
30 relationships. They've been shorter term, six months or a year. I think the longest one I've had
31 was a year and a half. I don't actually go . . . I tend to take two to three years in-between
32 relationships where I'm single. It's not necessarily by choice but it's just the way it goes.
33 Sometimes it's by choice, sometimes I know I just need a break from relationships. But the
34 stretches sometimes have gone almost too long in the sense that there would be no intimacy in
35 my life for two years and that two or three years gets taxing. I'm not a . . . personally I identify
36 as a demisexual and a sapiosexual, these are new terms that I've come to conclude or learn
37 about.

- 1 AJ: Can you define those terms?
- 2 JI: Well, demisexual, from what I have read . . .
- 3 AJ: D-e-m-i . . .
- 4 JI: D-e-m-i sexual and it sounds like it's weird and bizarre but it's actually just someone who needs
5 to form an emotional connection with someone before they can be sexual with them.
- 6 AJ: Yeah.
- 7 JI: Not necessarily in love, but have some connection.
- 8 AJ: Some connection.
- 9 JI: That's me in a nutshell. I can't have one-night stands, it's just me. I've never been that way. A
10 sapiosexual is someone who also wants to have a mental connection with someone before
11 being sexual.
- 12 AJ: More intellectual.
- 13 JI: Intellectual is a better way of putting it. So for me, I have to have some connection in order to
14 be sexual and so that's why it often is longer periods of time. It's not easy to form those kinds of
15 connections with people. Even if you go out on a coffee date here and there, you kind of know
16 if that connection is there or not earlier on. So, I'm just the kind of person, and I'm not judging
17 anyone who . . . if one-night stands work for you, I'm all for it, it just doesn't work for me.
- 18 AJ: Sure.
- 19 JI: So that has put a damper, at times, on intimacy. People say I'm picky, and perhaps I am picky,
20 but I'm really just picky about wanting to have a connection with someone that goes beyond
21 just a sexual attraction. There has to be something more there. So dating, in general . . . I was
22 married for a short time, legally married – this was back in . . . I was 35, 36 and now I'm 45, so
23 we're talking almost 10 years ago. It was a quick relationship, shouldn't have married her. Did it
24 thinking . . . it seemed like the right thing to do at the time. She had a 4-year-old daughter I was
25 co-parenting, we both wanted it, but the marriage didn't last very long. Within six months it
26 was over, after we actually got married though we had been together for a year before that.
27 And with that went my step-daughter, who I was very close with. She is out of my life now,
28 though they came back into my life a number of years later and I'm friendly with them now,
29 though they live in Connecticut now. But my step-daughter is now in 7th grade and when I was
30 co-parenting her she was 4, so she's like a teenager now. Big girl – it's kind of funny to see. So
31 yeah, I haven't had many relationships since transitioning that have been long-term. I did have
32 a couple of longer-term relationships as a woman with women prior to transitioning, but this is
33 one area of my life that has actually brought a lot of sadness to my life in that I have not had a
34 longer-term relationship with someone who I could actually establish something more . . . I
35 wouldn't say permanent because I have impermanence on my arm for a reason. I don't know
36 that I believe anything . . .
- 37 AJ: Let's see that.

- 1 JI: It's hard with my hairy arms to see it but . . .
- 2 AJ: I'm having a little bit of a challenge.
- 3 JI: I can come up closer . . . see, it's right there. Impermanence. And I do truly believe that nothing
4 lasts forever, it's inevitably always in a state of shifting change – good, bad, or indifferent. But
5 man, you know, it would be nice to have a relationship with someone who I could take a
6 vacation with. I would say even if the relationship lasts four years and then it's over, I would like
7 to have that experience as a trans man at least once in my life before I die. And at 45, I'm
8 beginning to wonder is this going to happen or not? Because as you get older too, it's
9 exhausting to date – it's tiring, you've got to go out there and meet new people, and you're not
10 as social as you used to be in the same kind of ways. I don't go to bars and drink so I'm not out
11 in those kinds of environments. So, you know, prior to meeting the woman I'm dating now, I
12 had kind of accepted the fact that it may not happen for me. I don't know if it's that the
13 universe has not brought this person to me, however you want to look at it, and I kind of just
14 tried to accept that I'm going to grow old alone. That sounds really sad maybe, or sounds really
15 negative, but actually when I kind of accepted that, it helped . . . kind of like a release. I kind of
16 let go of this idea that I'm going to meet someone and grow old with them because I don't know
17 that that will ever happen – not that I wouldn't like to meet someone and again have a more
18 substantial relationship, I don't expect that I'll have a romantic partner when I'm 75 or 80. I may
19 or I may not. I expect, though, to have good friends in my life who I can be around and have
20 stimulating conversations with and support one another the way I have these friends in my life
21 now. I am fortunate to have some very good friends in my life both here and in Philadelphia and
22 other parts of the country, who I feel like are heart friends. I call them heart friends . . . there's
23 heart friends and there's road roads. Heart friends are the friends that stick with you through
24 thick and thin, who you have in your life for years and years; and road friends are those people
25 who come into your life and they have a purpose and they can be great people, but then they go
26 out of your life because you grow apart or you go in different directions. And that's great too,
27 you have to have both because you learn a lot from the road friends.
- 28 AJ: So true.
- 29 JI: Yeah, so that's kind of my status on relationships. I know my experience is a lot different than a
30 lot of other trans men who have had the advantage of being in long-term relationships, though
31 that has not been my experience.
- 32 AJ: I've noticed sort of an uptick, if you will, in trans-attracted relationships. What I mean by that is
33 transgender people relating to each other.
- 34 JI: Trans people with trans people.
- 35 AJ: Right. And so I'm sort of . . . and that has been fairly common for trans women and trans
36 women to connect, but I'm starting to see more trans men who identify as gay connecting. And
37 also, trans men and women who are heterosexual connecting.
- 38 JI: Yeah, I've seen that too.
- 39 AJ: Have you any thoughts about that or have you witnessed that at all?

1 JI: I actually have noticed an increase in that as I've been part of this community. I don't . . . I can
2 only assume that's due to more visibility and more trans people being visible and out and more
3 people transitioning because they realize that this is an option that they can do. I think it's to
4 connect or relate to someone who kind of gets it, provided you're attracted to them and you
5 have those other connections to them, it seems like it would be generally a little bit easier than
6 to sometimes relate to a cis person who may not get it in the same way, so I can totally
7 understand why trans people would date other trans people for that reason. And so, yeah, I've
8 seen it in all different ways. I've seen trans women with trans women, trans men and trans
9 women together, trans men with trans men. So yeah, it's good to see that. You know, what has
10 always bothered me, and I've heard this from people, was when you talk about, for me – when I
11 talk about my sadness around my lack of intimacy or relationship in this way, people will say,
12 “Oh, shouldn't you just be happy you were able to transition?” Well, you know, life has many
13 different facets, that's just one part of life. In order to be a fully, kind of self-actualized, person
14 you need to have a lot of different things and romance and intimacy is one of them. I'm a strong
15 believer that we need to have that in our lives.

16 AJ: Absolutely.

17 JI: Human beings are . . . I'm not saying that there are people who feel like they don't want
18 relationships or who identify as asexual and all that, again it's a self-identification that I respect,
19 but I am a believer that human beings, in general, need connectedness. There is a difference
20 between close friends and romantic intimate connections on that other level.

21 AJ: Absolutely.

22 JI: I always kind of get annoyed when people minimize the importance of that for trans people
23 because we're no different than anyone else, we want to have those things. It isn't enough to
24 just say, “Oh, yeah, I transitioned so that's enough for me. I should be happy with that.” Well, I
25 am happy with that, but I want these other things too, just like trans people want to be gainfully
26 employed and they don't want to have to deal with being oppressed and discriminated against.
27 It's not all just about, “Oh, you had this opportunity to transition, shouldn't you be happy,” and
28 then put up with everything else, it doesn't work that way. I mean, we want to live fully
29 actualized lives and that includes all those domains in life that you need and want to have if at
30 all possible.

31 AJ: Sure. The home, the security, family.

32 JI: Exactly, all the things . . .

33 AJ: 25 kids, the garage.

34 JI: It varies from person to person but yeah, for me, I don't know that I want to have children. I, at
35 one point, wanted to be involved in that and I had a step-daughter who I was kind of co-
36 parenting, and that was great. But now, to get into that with someone, I'm not sure if that's a
37 direction I would go though I would like to have a partner who I could travel with or who I could
38 maybe share a living home with – whatever that looks like, even if it's a nice rental. I don't
39 know, I don't know that I want to buy a house, I don't know if I want to be living in a situation
40 where I'm feeling like I can't move somewhere else if I wanted to. Even if I move with that

1 person, but even still you want to have some of those traditions of more of a relationship that is
2 more substantial – at least, I know I would like to and it has not come to pass at this point.

3 AJ: So, let me ask you this. When you think about the relationship between the L, the G, B, and
4 then the T, what are your thoughts around that? What has been your experience? How does
5 the T fit into the broader LGB movement?

6 JI: Well, it's interesting because I have two schools of thought on that and they contradict each
7 other, in a way. One school of thought is that the trans experience, in and of itself, or the
8 gender non-conforming trans experience, although the gender non-conforming experience is
9 different even to the more traditional trans experience. But if we're just talking about the trans
10 experience, it's very different than the LGB. There are some overlapping similarities, but even
11 so far as coming out and physically transitioning our bodies on hormones, having surgeries if
12 people are able to and have access to having that, it changes our physiology, it changes the way
13 that the medical communities relate to us, so it's a very different experience, while the LGB folks
14 – their bodies generally, if they're cis people, are . . . while there might be some differences in
15 terms of certain things, they're still cis people and so their bodies haven't changed in that
16 respect. So I think there's some stark differences there in terms of the trans experience versus
17 the LGB experience, not just with physical transition but in many aspects of life. So in some
18 respects, I almost feel at times like it needs to be two separate issues, or not issues – two
19 separate communities, two separate things. Then, on the flip side I realize that there's just not
20 enough trans people to do this work on our own, so we need allies and supporters. Even though
21 traditionally the gay and lesbian community has not been overwhelmingly supportive
22 traditionally, it is changing, it's getting better, and, of course, there have always been pockets of
23 people or individuals who have been supportive of the trans community within the L and the G
24 community. So I think while the trans experience is different, not in a good, bad, or indifferent
25 way, just different, we need our allies and supporters, and also in the straight world or the non-
26 trans . . . non-LGB or non-queer world, we need supporters and allies to move this forward. If
27 we can somehow . . . if we can connect or align ourselves with LGB people and organizations
28 who are truly supportive of our movement and want to support this in a genuine way, I think
29 that that's great. Though, we've seen the opposite of that a lot of the time. And also now, it
30 sometimes feels like some groups and organizations are jumping on the trans bandwagon,
31 partially because there might be funds available now suddenly – grants and things like this, and
32 so it's kind of an interesting balance to look at. I have many gay and lesbian friends, mostly
33 lesbian friends. I don't have as many cis male friends, not that I'm not open to it, my
34 communities have been the queer, trans, and kind of gay women communities. I came out of
35 lesbian communities so that's where my communities were.

36 AJ: What do you think should be the agenda for the trans community going forward?

37 JI: Well, that's interesting because we have so many needs. It's so broad and vast, and like I
38 mentioned earlier when we were talking about my early experiences in Philadelphia and how, at
39 the time, there was really just one primary agenda which was just making it so trans people are
40 recognized and we get basic things. And, of course . . .

41 AJ: Basic things like access to health care, employment, housing.

- 1 JI: Access to health care, employment – which is still, obviously, big problems today.
- 2 AJ: Particularly for trans people of color.
- 3 JI: Particularly for trans people of color, for trans women – especially around employment. I think
4 that all of these things are big agendas. And it's interesting because we have a . . . the one thing
5 I could always say about the trans community is we may be very different in our identities, our
6 racial and cultural backgrounds, our class backgrounds, educational experiences, all those
7 things, but we are a tough community. Even though we may have different opinions and
8 sometimes there might be in-fighting, but we are a tough community. We have pushed . . . the
9 trans community has pushed these agendas forward, no one has helped us do this. I feel like
10 there is room for people to be doing this work on many different levels, and that needs to
11 happen. So there needs to be people who are advocating for trans women of color, not just
12 trans women of color advocating for themselves but other people supporting that agenda and
13 that movement. There needs to be people working in the area of sexual violence, there needs
14 to be people working in the area of the stuff happening in the prison system, there needs to be
15 people who are dealing with health care movements across the board, there needs to be people
16 who are supporting trans men and their experience. We need to have all of this and I don't
17 know that I can actually say that there is one primary agenda, it's hard to say. Though I think it
18 goes back to the original agenda, is that we are still in a place, or a position, where a vast
19 majority of trans people, and particularly trans people of color, lives are not safe. They're
20 unemployed or underemployed, underinsured or not insured, and we need to move in a
21 direction where again those things are changing and not continuing to happen. And so if that's
22 the agenda, and that agenda holds true for any trans person – we just want trans people in
23 general to not have to experience those things in the way that they have. And again, while
24 we're starting to build allies or create more ally support, we're still doing this on our own. In
25 fact, I did a film on aging issues, *Growing Old Gracefully*, and . . .
- 26 AJ: What's it called?
- 27 JI: *Growing Old Gracefully: The Transgender Experience*. And I was talking with Jamison Green and
28 I actually interviewed Miss Major and it was Miss Major who said this. She said that at . . . well,
29 when I interviewed her she was 70, so now she's a little older than that, this was a few years
30 ago. As you age, as a trans person as you age, and this is true really of a trans person of any
31 cultural or racial background because our bodies . . . we're more dependent on the health care
32 system as you age. I mean, we can be healthy but we still become more dependent. And also,
33 around nursing home placements and things like that, you're 75, 70 and you're still doing the
34 Trans 101s and you're tired. You don't want to be doing it anymore.
- 35 AJ: Exactly.
- 36 JI: But you still have to advocate for yourself and . . .
- 37 AJ: For your own well-being.
- 38 JI: And no one else there to do it. She was talking about this and she had to do it recently. At the
39 time she was trying to get into an assisted living situation with her father, her father and her
40 wanted to share a space. The trans issue came up and it wasn't even the trans issue that was

1 questioned, it was her lifestyle around the trans issue. For example, her dating lifestyle. They
2 didn't want her going . . . there was restrictions about how late she could stay out and go out.

3 AJ: For a 70-plus-year-old.

4 JI: Yes, in the assisted living program. So she declined acceptance there, but again she had to do
5 the Trans 101 business. So a question is, as our elders age and we have so many trans people
6 who are in that . . . they're in it now, they're living it now, how do we support them? They're
7 tired, they've been doing the 101s in some cases for 20 years. And then we have the youth. I
8 always say man if the youth and the elders could come together, what a great mentorship or
9 something because so many young trans people don't have any support at all and people who
10 understand them and they're homeless and they're out on the streets and they're not able to
11 get jobs. So, it's kind of interesting dichotomy, but I always say the experiences of older trans
12 people and younger trans people are not that much different. It's manifesting in slightly
13 different ways but the oppressions, the discrimination is still all there. For those of us who are
14 in the middle somewhere, we might have it a little easier in some respects, if we are able to gain
15 employment, have a stable living environment, these kinds of things. So, that whole idea of it
16 gets better, well it gets better a little bit for some depending on your age, right? But it doesn't
17 always get better . . . it gets better and may get worse again. Do you know what I mean? As you
18 get older, and I don't want to assume that, but we're not prepared . . . this community is not
19 prepared for the aging trans population – not this community, but the broader society is just not
20 prepared. We're going to have to be mainstreamed into . . . there are these LGBT centers or
21 housing programs and things, like we have one here, The Spirit on Lake," but that can only
22 house but a few, small amount of people and so we are going to have to be mainstreamed into
23 more mainstream nursing homes and assisted living programs. I did so much with the aging
24 population with this film and then the chapter that I wrote for *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves* that
25 just . . . for many years that was my focus a lot, this aging stuff. So, you know, and now one of
26 my focus areas personally has been on intimate partner violence, towards trans men in
27 particular, but again on the broader spectrum only because I had personally had an experience
28 some years ago with a partner who was abusive towards me – mentally, emotionally, and
29 eventually it became physical. I got out of that situation because I had the wherewithal to know
30 it wasn't a good situation for me, although for me it took about eight months to finally be able
31 to move away from that. I say, "Well, gosh, what about the trans person who doesn't have the
32 resources that I have or who still feels so much shame or maybe lower self-esteem because
33 they're not in a good place with their bodies or their transition? What will that experience be
34 like for them?" I started to talk to people and started to get more and more trans men emailing
35 me and disclosing about their experiences of this type of trauma. I was amazed . . . I mean, not
36 amazed but just actually shocked to see that there are more trans men out there than I even
37 thought who were experiencing this. And so, I started the trans masculine abuse project, it's
38 just an online resource at this point and a Facebook page, but people just like having a place to
39 go to read about things. I'll post on there information about intimate partner violence,
40 sometimes more trans related it's hard to find stuff. But it is an issue. I was trying to go forward
41 with doing more with that, I just haven't had a chance to follow-up on it as of late because I'm
42 focusing on the Gender Reel stuff right now.

- 1 AJ: Sure. So to the extent that you feel comfortable, Joe, can you tell me a little bit about medical
2 interventions that you have undergone and what was your experience with the medical
3 profession? Particularly because you are a medical professional yourself.
- 4 JI: Yeah, I work in the mental health field. I am very open in talking about my physical transition.
- 5 AJ: Oh good.
- 6 JI: Obviously I have been on hormones . . . I started hormones in 2001, so I was on hormones for a
7 long time. I went off hormones earlier this year for about five months, but I'm back on
8 hormones again at a lower dose. I have not had a hysterectomy or anything like that. I wanted
9 to give my body a break and also see where it would fall. I was also having some medical stuff
10 going on, things that I wasn't completely sure if it was related to testosterone or not. A lot of
11 fatigue, kind of auto-immune type stuff. I've done a lot of research and I have found that this is
12 not uncommon for trans men, partially because our adrenal system gets flooded with
13 testosterone and it can cause a lot of these symptoms, though there's not a lot of research
14 being done on it. So I went off but I'm back on a low dose of testosterone, because I do like the
15 way it feels and I do like certain aspects of being on it. The only medical surgeries that I have
16 had has been top surgery, in which I had a double mastectomy and nipple graft procedure
17 where I had a male chest constructed, and hormones. I don't intend, personally, to have any
18 lower surgery. First off, the cost for trans men to have that is extremely high, even though there
19 are some insurance companies that pay for it, it's still high. Also, the process can take a long
20 time, it's a series sometimes of five or six surgeries and then the results aren't, a lot of times,
21 what you really ideally want. I, though . . . I'm very comfortable . . . my gender dysphoria below
22 is not . . . I don't have a tremendous amount of gender dysphoria below, I'm very comfortable
23 with my parts, if you will. It did take some time getting used to that, getting comfortable with
24 that. I worked on that within myself just realizing that I had to kind of transcend that because I
25 knew that surgery wasn't going to be an option for me. And it certainly helps when you have
26 partners, sexual partners, who are open and accepting of that, and when you don't, it can be a
27 more challenging thing.
- 28 AJ: Yeah.
- 29 JI: Or, in the case of . . . my experience has been with women, because I date predominantly only
30 women, that have had no experience with anything beyond what they would experience with
31 cis men, or, in some cases, cis women if they were queer and with women but may not have
32 ever been with trans men, and we do have slightly different changes down there. We have . . . it
33 varies from person to person but we get clitoral growth which, in a sense, is like a micro phallus.
34 So, you know, there are some obvious changes that do occur. But, for me, I'm kind of happy
35 where I am with my physical appearance and my physical genitalia and all that. One big huge
36 fear I had was going bald, which is true of a lot of trans men on testosterone. So I made efforts
37 to admittedly prevent that – Rogaine and Propecia and I still do it today.
- 38 AJ: Really?
- 39 JI: Yeah, and I've managed to keep what I have whereas a lot of my trans masculine friends have
40 gone completely bald. They look good bald, I just didn't see myself carrying that bald look. I'm

- 1 vain about my hair. I had great hair prior to transitioning so, you know, I've gone and done
2 anything I can to kind of sustain what I have. I'm hoping it will stay.
- 3 AJ: You sure have a lot of it.
- 4 JI: I've really tried, it was a really important thing to me. So much so, that I would have considered
5 hair transplantation if I had to – although that's very expensive. I actually went for a
6 consultation, which was free, but it's about \$10,000 . . . it would cost me about \$10,000 to have
7 a hair transplant because they charge you per plug, like \$1/plug. You don't realize how many
8 plugs you need to create hair. So yeah, but no further medical surgeries for me in terms of
9 gender-related surgeries. I will most likely stay on hormones at a lower dose – at this point,
10 that's my plan.
- 11 AJ: Wow. Where do you see this community in 50 years?
- 12 JI: I hope to see it evolve to a much different place. I hope to see it mainstreamed in a way where
13 being a trans person is looked at and perceived no differently than any other type of person.
14 You know, I hope to see the dating experiences of trans people a lot easier because of the
15 mainstreaming of the experience. I hope to see that there won't be issues around health care,
16 the disparities that we see just merely because someone is trans, and certainly the
17 intersectionalities between that and race and culture and things like that. I think it will be a
18 much more evolved . . . we'll be in a much more evolved place. I will be, in 50 years I will be in
19 my 90s, so if I'm alive it would be great to see. But I think we're going to start seeing even
20 bigger shifts even sooner than that, maybe 10 or 15 years it will be very different than it is now
21 even. It seems to be happening at a fairly rapid pace, which is good. I do believe that this
22 experience needs to be mainstreamed, I know that. And I'm not saying mainstreamed in that
23 we want to erase . . . for some people they say, "Well, I want to be queer," and I'm not saying
24 we want to erase queerness from this experience if that's important to people, but
25 mainstreamed in a way where a trans person can walk into a doctor's office anywhere or into a
26 hospital anywhere and not be treated in any way differently than a cis person, make sure that
27 they get the same treatment and level of care as a cis person, even though, let's face it, cis
28 people get . . . the health care system is crap to begin with but that's what I would like to hope
29 will be the case and we'll see in the future years to come. I think it will happen, it is happening.
- 30 AJ: It's happening. Anything else you want to share, Joe?
- 31 JI: Just that I'm really glad that you, Andrea, that you're doing this work, that you're going to be
32 documenting these narratives of people, personal stories, because I think it's really important
33 that we have this going forward. Part of the really important part is documenting our history
34 and we've lost a lot of that history, we hadn't had the opportunity to document it over the years
35 in the same way as the gay and lesbian community has. And, of course, some of our history has
36 been co-opted by that gay and lesbian movement, such as Stonewall. I know trans women of
37 color were at Stonewall and have never been given recognition.
- 38 AJ: Including Miss Major.
- 39 JI: Including Miss Major, that is the one person I know directly. So, I think that we are playing
40 make-up for that and hopefully through these narratives, if you talk to some older trans folks,

1 that we'll be able to have that, at least orally, brought into the picture. So I'm just glad that this
2 project is happening and I want to support it in any way I can personally. So, yeah.

3 AJ: Well your contribution today has been major, so we thank you.

4 JI: Well, thank you.

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