

Renata Garcia and Jennicet Gutierrez
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins
Interviewer

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

October 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 Renata Garcia -RG
3 Jennicet Gutierrez -JG
4

5

6 AJ: My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am the oral historian with the Transgender Oral History Project
7 at the University of Minnesota, the Tretter Collection in the Anderson Library. Today is
8 Saturday, October 3rd. It's a beautiful fall evening and I am here with Ms. Renata Garcia.

9

10 RG: Yes, thank you for inviting me.

11

12 AJ: And Ms. Jennicet Gutierrez.

13

14 JG: Correct. Thank you for having me.

15

16 AJ: Yeah, what a joy, what a pleasure, what an honor to get to talk to you ladies this evening. I want
17 to just start by having you guys repeat your names and just say what's your preferred gender
18 pronouns, what was your gender assigned at birth, and . . . yeah, that would be perfect. Just so
19 everybody on camera can know who you guys are, who's who. I said your names but they don't
20 really know who is who – so let us know.

21

22 JG: My name is Jennicet Gutierrez, that's spelled J-e-n-n-i-c-e-t, my last name is G-u-t-i-e-r-r-e-z as in
23 zebra. My preferred gender pronouns are she/her/hers and I was assigned male at birth.

24

25 AJ: OK, thank you.

26

27 RG: Wow, that's a lot of words. My name is Renata Garcia and my name is R-e-n-a-t-a Garcia, G-a-r-
28 c-i-a. I prefer her, I prefer she, I prefer female. I prefer Miss, Ma'am, lady, of course. And I was
29 birthed as a male.

30

31 AJ: All right. Wow. So, this is my first interviewing two people together and so I just want to make
32 sure that as we are talking that people say their names so that our transcriber can know who is
33 talking. But, let's start with you, Renata, what is your earliest memory?

34

35 RG: Earliest memory about me being a human being or me being a transgender?

36

37 AJ: Being a human being.

38

39 RG: OK, I had to go back when I was probably three or four and I was in kindergarten. I always look
40 to older guys and when I was four I thought it was normal and the other kids were like always
41 see the same people, I would see it. I didn't know then that I was . . . back there you could call
42 me a gay boy, I guess, and that would be my earliest memories.

43

44 AJ: Oh, wow. What about you Jennicet?

45

1 JG: This is Jennicet. My earliest memory would be probably, I want to say also around three years
2 old. I grew up with a single mom but I have this vivid memory of my father that wanted to see
3 us and I remember he hugged me and knew that my mom had made a decision not to be with
4 him because he happened to be married and my mom didn't know, so it was a really, very
5 heavy, emotional memory that I have and in a way, I knew that I wasn't going to be able to see
6 him again. So it was a very . . .

7

8 AJ: At three years old?

9

10 JG: At three years old, I remember. It was like a dream but it was like I knew that he was my father
11 and it was kind of embracing me as a human and for me to be conscious of my existence but at
12 the same time it was like a goodbye. So it was really emotional but I would say that that would
13 be the earliest memory I have.

14

15 AJ: Wow. Where did you grow up?

16

17 JG: Again Jennicet, and I grew up in Mexico. I was born in Tuxpan, that's T-u-x-p-a-n, in the state of
18 Jalisco, Mexico – it's kind of southwest of Mexico and that's where I grew up.

19

20 AJ: There's a lot of families that are from Jalisco here in the Twin Cities. It seems like it's a pretty
21 popular connection. So, what about you Renata? Where did you grow up?

22

23 RG: I grew up in Mexico also, in a very small farmer's town called Axochiapan, it's A-x-o-c-h-i-a-p-a-n,
24 Morelos, that's the state and also it's in Mexico, the country. Also I'm coming from a single
25 mom, she had to raise six children, she was busy, she don't have TV back then. So, yeah. I
26 crossed illegally when I was 16-years-old to the United States. I come straight from Axochiapan
27 to Minneapolis, Minnesota – well, not Minneapolis but it was Burnsville.

28

29 AJ: OK, so Minnesota.

30

31 RG: It was Minnesota, yes.

32

33 AJ: What about you Jennicet?

34

35 JG: I came to the U.S. when I was 15 and again, Jennice speaking. I crossed the border without
36 documentation as well and we settled in L.A., Los Angeles.

37

38 AJ: Los Angeles – and is that where you currently live?

39

40 JG: I currently live in Los Angeles, California, correct.

41

42 AJ: I see. Is this your first time in the Midwest or have you been to Minneapolis before?

43

44 JG: No, this is my first time.

45

46 AJ: What do you think of Minneapolis?

47

- 1 JG: Minnesota is a beautiful state and then Minneapolis is a beautiful city. I think I came at a good
2 time before the really winter storm hits town. I'm enjoying it, it's a beautiful city, very warm
3 people that I have encountered so far. I'm only here for a few days so it's really hard to draw
4 conclusions, but based on this day obviously I am having fun.
5
- 6 AJ: I think the thing that sort of marks a city is the relationships that you have with people there. As
7 long as you're having a good time with friends or family or whatever, it's always good.
8
- 9 RG: Yes, or with guys.
10
- 11 AJ: Or with guys, guys I think qualify as friends. What was your home life? Both of you talked about
12 being raised in a single-parent household, single moms. What was home life like? What was
13 school life like? Whoever wants to start.
14
- 15 RG: Do you want to go first?
16
- 17 JG: I can start, this is Jennicet speaking. Growing up in Mexico, I want to say that I had a pretty
18 good childhood. I grew up with a single mother and did elementary school and junior high and
19 when I finished junior high that's when I came to the U.S. But I do have some . . . that's when I
20 started to explore who I was, my sexual orientation, my gender identity. But it was a process
21 that took time, but pretty much in junior high is when I started to kind of open up about who I
22 was and once I started to open up. Going back to my childhood I used to be very social, my
23 mom would always have a very difficult time – like, "Where is Jennicet? What is she doing?" I
24 was always with friends playing or visiting the neighbors and stuff. But then in junior high I
25 started to explore my sexual orientation more openly and it started to create a little tension
26 between friends because the stigma that is attached to sexuality in general and then when you
27 start to show inclinations of having an attraction for the same sex, the word started spreading
28 around and friends kind of started to step away from you. I had . . .
29
- 30 AJ: Did you experience any bullying or just really mean behavior?
31
- 32 JG: Yeah, I absolutely did. Bullying was an issue and I remember I had a crush on a boy that I shared
33 this story and it kind of left a mark on my body because I started to express feelings for him and
34 I was telling friends, very naïve – thinking that it was normal, but it got to him, he got really
35 upset, and he started kind of harassing me and making fun of me and started using derogatory
36 terms, like, "If you really are gay then you need to stop talking to me, don't be spreading rumors
37 because . . ." or whatever. I continued to express my feelings and one day he just . . . it was at
38 the fair, we were in the plaza area, and he was walking and grabbed a brick and came right to
39 me and threw it at my face. I was able to turn my head and you can see a scar here – it almost
40 hit me on the left eye. I remember just bleeding and so scared, so I went to my mom and she
41 was like, "What happened?" I didn't want to disclose so much details and then she sent my
42 older brother to take me to the hospital. But yeah, it's part of . . . it's really messed up that we
43 have to go through that with bullying being such a big issue in our community.
44
- 45 AJ: And the violence.
46

- 1 JF: And the violence that we have to face, exactly. So opening up, hopefully these will educate
2 people that we are entitled to be who we are and it's just as normal as anybody else to express
3 these feelings. It's important for me to open up and share this experience.
4
- 5 AJ: I'm so grateful. Renata, did you experience any violence or bullying when you were in school?
6
- 7 RG: Well, back in the 1980s when I was in kindergarten and then in school, bullying was very present
8 the whole time and not only at the school, it was also in the streets and also it was at home with
9 older brothers or whatever.
10
- 11 AJ: And that was here in Minnesota?
12
- 13 RG: In Mexico. But, I'm a very, very strong person, at least that's what I believe. When I was back
14 there, I was very girly – when I was in Mexico. Super girly. So for me when someone asks me
15 what age you come out of the closet, I say I never was in the closet, I only was out of the closet.
16 I was very, very girly all the time. But I was very strong. I don't know if he has to because my
17 mom, she was working the whole time so she could bring some food to the table, but I learned
18 how to protect myself at an early age and when someone says something, depending on who
19 coming from, I will do something about it – like if it was someone who really cared about me
20 and says something, I probably will be upset. But if it's someone just in the street who called
21 me names – like a faggot or those words that you hear all the time when you're a teen boy or
22 whatever, that never bothered me. I don't know if it's because I wasn't viewed as a faggot or I
23 don't know if it was because the person who said it meant nothing to me. So, yeah, bullying was
24 present the whole time but to be honest with you guys, it never bothered me at all – to this day,
25 I still . . . I think if you accept people to bullying you, then you will be a victim about it. But if you
26 picture yourself and you put your courage in front of them, and you show you no fear, they will
27 not do anything to you. That's the way I see it.
28
- 29 AJ: That's powerful.
30
- 31 RG: Yeah, and when I say that I am a very strong person, that's what I like to believe. It doesn't
32 affect me who wants to affect me, so it can't affect me and you can't offend me.
33
- 34 AJ: I love it. So you said you were just girly all your life.
35
- 36 RG: Yes, oh my gosh – super girly.
37
- 38 AJ: When was the first time that you recognized that you were not the gender you were assigned at
39 birth?
40
- 41 RG: Well thank you for asking that question because that's really funny. Like I said, I came from a
42 single mom but I was not living with my mom. I was living with my grandparents.
43
- 44 AJ: OK – so a mother and a father . . . I mean, a grandmother and a grandfather.
45
- 46 RG: Yes, grandparents. And also my aunts would take care of me.
47
- 48 AJ: So there were other children from your mother's family there?

- 1
2 RG: No, I was the only child. It was my grandparent's house, and in Mexico if you are not married,
3 you are allowed to live with your parents.
4
- 5 AJ: So your aunts were living there?
6
- 7 RG: Yeah. My mom, she married to a guy and she moved to the next city and I decide at the age of
8 two . . . I decide at the age of two to stay living with my grandparents and my two aunts. So, I
9 was in kindergarten when I was two and then I was in pre-school and I was the only one, I was
10 the only child, so I was spoiled all over. With my grandmother, with my grandfather, with my
11 two aunts, I was super spoiled, super pampered, if I wanted something I get it all the time. So,
12 how did I know I was not who I think I was? Well, one day I was . . . I don't know how to say this
13 in English, maybe she can help me. I was in 1st grade, or elementary school, and I had this really
14 handsome teacher – very handsome. And I was like, "Hmm, I want to kiss him." At the age of
15 six, can you believe it? So I was like, "I want to kiss him." And I pretend . . .
16
- 17 AJ: The teacher?
18
- 19 RG: The teacher, yes. So I pretend that my ankle was hurt so he could look at it. So when he was on
20 his knees, that's when I kissed him.
21
- 22 AJ: You kissed him?
23
- 24 RG: Yeah. And he was like, "What are you doing?" I'm like . . . now I'm laughing, I can't believe I
25 said this, but I said, "I'm in love with you." At the age of six.
26
- 27 AJ: Oh my gosh, 'I'm in love with you'.
28
- 29 RG: Yes. That's what I said. He was really shocked – I mean, six years old and it's a boy, a gay boy –
30 very girly. I didn't know I was a gay boy, first of all, and I don't think . . . maybe now they know,
31 but first of all when I was there at six, you don't know internet, you don't know sexual things,
32 you don't know this or . . . I mean, if you go to school they show you, they teach you about
33 sexual things but when you are probably 10 or 11, 12, or 13, not at the age of 6. So it was a big
34 deal in this school. So that's what happened.
35
- 36 AJ: Jennicet, when is the first time you realized you were not the gender you were assigned at
37 birth?
38
- 39 JG: Again, this is Jennicet speaking, I believe ever since I remember. I shared my first memory
40 earlier, I think ever since I've been conscious of my existence I've always knew that the assigned
41 sex that was given to me didn't connect with my gender identity. It's been at a very early age.
42 I've always felt, like Renata was explaining, I think I first had a very strong attraction for the
43 same sex. And then I started to feel a very strong identification with the opposite sex and I
44 remember being . . . most of the time I would go, also, with my grandparent's home because my
45 mom had to work and I would put on my mom's dresses or my grandma's dresses and heels and
46 I would run around the house. So I was already starting to connect with my gender identity.
47 Also when I used to see the novellas, the soap operas, or on Sundays there was this show, kind
48 of an entertainment show – music talent show and stuff, and I used to always look at the

1 women singers and always felt this very identification with them and I wanted to express that
2 fully. My first time I really, really dressed up was probably when I was eight years old. I went to
3 a neighbor's house and they actually put nylons, they put heels, a dress and a wig. I remember .
4 ..

5
6 AJ: Make-up? Did you do make-up?

7
8 JG: Yeah. They did make-up also, and that's when I started to feel that this is really who I am. I felt
9 very comfortable, I felt this joy and I was extremely happy knowing that for so many other
10 people that was so abnormal or controversial – to me that was very liberating. They even took a
11 photo and they showed that, I was so happy about it. They gave me the picture and I showed
12 that photo to an older friend of mine who was open about his sexual orientation and identified
13 as a gay man. I thought I could share this with him, right? This very intimate, personal photo.
14 And he turned around and told my sister, so my sister was really upset

15
16 AJ: So he outed you?

17
18 JG: Yeah, and then she told my mom and they were really furious about that, that I dressed up as a
19 woman and I was so young. They pretty much told me, "Don't ever go to the house anymore."
20 Right.

21
22 AJ: But, of course, you went.

23
24 JG: Yeah, of course I went there, I continued to go there and I became really close friends with this
25 kind of housekeeper that used to work at the house, a really good friend of mine. I've always
26 felt my brain has always identified with females, I've always felt as female, I believe that all my
27 thoughts and emotions are more feminine than masculine and that's how I came to terms
28 knowing that I was transgender but obviously it took more time, it took a lot of processing to
29 come into fully living as a woman and that's where I am now.

30
31 AJ: This is Andrea. Renata, what challenges have you faced since you began to express your true
32 gender identity?

33
34 RG: This is Renata speaking, like I said before I am a very strong person. So really, I don't want to
35 sound selfish, but there's really no challenge there.

36
37 AJ: Good, that's a beautiful thing.

38
39 RG: I escaped from my home with a . . . I was living with my mom and she was not treating me the
40 way I want to be treated. Now I understand the way she was, she was a single mom, Mexico is
41 very Catholic . . .

42
43 AJ: Very?

44
45 RG: Catholic.

46
47 AJ: Catholic?

48

- 1 RG: Yes. So having a gay boy in a house, especially me very, very super girly, it was . . .
- 2
- 3 AJ: It was a hardship.
- 4
- 5 RG: It was not an issue for me, but it was an issue for her and for my brothers and my sister. Not for
- 6 me. Now I understand why she was really hard on me and told me bad things and called me bad
- 7 names and everything. Now that I'm adult I understand that. That was her way to protect me. I
- 8 think she was not the only one, I think a lot of Mexican's moms are the same way. They don't
- 9 have the education – obviously if you don't have education, you don't know how to deal with . .
- 10 . excuse me for this, I don't want to keep saying, "gay boy," I want to keep saying, "transgender
- 11 woman." So they don't know how to deal with a transgender woman, especially when I was
- 12 that age. She was mistreating me, she was calling me bad names. Back at that time I was not
- 13 very happy about it and then I didn't feel that I belonged to that place. So I ran away when I was
- 14 16 and I crossed the border, that's when I crossed the border illegally and came to Minnesota.
- 15 But yeah, probably that was the big challenge, have someone to helping me to pay my trip to
- 16 come from Mexico to Minneapolis and other than that it's not . . . the big challenge probably has
- 17 been to try to learn another language and trying to find a job.
- 18
- 19 AJ: So the challenge of just being an immigrant. That's not necessarily related to your gender
- 20 identity.
- 21
- 22 RG: Exactly. I always knew who I was, all the time.
- 23
- 24 AJ: So do you have more challenges, do you think, as being a brown Latina woman in culture and
- 25 society than being a trans women? And that's either one of you.
- 26
- 27 RG: Thank you for asking that question, this is Renata speaking again. Yeah, I would say that it's
- 28 more challenging that I have no documentation and be brown and I speak English. I can deal
- 29 with people telling me bad names, like faggot, like queer, or, "Are you a man or are you a
- 30 woman?" I can deal with that but I cannot deal with going somewhere and I apply for a job and
- 31 say, "Oh I'm sorry, you don't have a social security, you are not allowed to work." So for me, yes
- 32 – it's more challenging being an immigrant.
- 33
- 34 AJ: What do you think, Jennicet?
- 35
- 36 JG: This is Jennicet. I will say as far as with my gender identity, and I identify as a trans woman, one
- 37 of the biggest challenges I had to face was internal – the psychological, challenging the gender
- 38 binary. Coming up, like Renata was sharing, coming up from Mexico, very Catholic, very
- 39 machismo culture, very traditional in a sense, right? Like if you're born male you're supposed to
- 40 grow up and take care of . . . find a girl to marry, take care of her, have children, and continue
- 41 with the blood – with the last name. I think that's one of the biggest challenges that I had to
- 42 face myself first, like knowing that I had to challenge this gender norm and then dealing with the
- 43 family, dealing with religion, and breaking the stigma and letting them know at the end of the
- 44 day we're all human beings so we deserve to be happy. So that's just one of the challenges that
- 45 I had to overcome and once I kind of became, and knew, that I was transgender and started to
- 46 process, which it could have taken less time, to be honest, and faced the challenges within
- 47 myself and with the family, with work and all those other things that come once you start . . .
- 48

- 1 AJ: So how old were you when you came out?
2
- 3 JG: To . . . ?
4
- 5 AJ: Yourself – because you said that was the biggest challenge.
6
- 7 JG: Because of the things that I explained – the stigma, the machismo, the culture, religion, I always
8 internalized things. So I never formally opened up and came out to them, I think I was forced
9 out through the photo that my friend did, and then in LA one time my brother had a car and I
10 was driving the car and I remember I went out the night before and the tire was really messed
11 up and I put my wig, my heels, everything in the trunk and I was like, “Can you fix it?” I was so
12 tired I wanted to go to sleep. So he comes back within five minutes and he’s just like, “I just
13 found this in the car, do they belong to you?” I was so kind of embarrassed about it and I just
14 denied it and he continued to pressure me, “It’s OK if it’s yours, just tell me the truth.” And he
15 was crying. So then my mom comes in and, “What’s going on?” And I think at that moment is
16 when I said, “Yes.” My mom asked me . . .
17
- 18 AJ: Point blank.
19
- 20 JG: Yeah, “Are you homosexual?” I was like, “Yes, I like men, leave me alone, I’m so tired.”
21
- 22 RG: I just want to go back to sleep.
23
- 24 JG: Yes, basically that’s what I said, “Let me go to sleep.” Letting them know that my sexual
25 orientation was heavily attracted to the same sex and then still kind of dressing up on the
26 weekends but without them really seeing me because I was embarrassed, I was shy, I felt that
27 they didn’t support me or that they were . . . I remember also one time I was at the mall with
28 some gay friends and my sister saw me and then she came to the house and she said, “Oh, I saw
29 Jennicet out there with some friends, how embarrassing. What are people going to say?” So
30 you start to kind of . . . all those comments, it kind of drew me back in, like I didn’t feel ready to
31 say, “Yes!” until three years ago. I just said, “I couldn’t take it anymore, I feel depressed, I’m
32 unhappy, and I just have to live my life authentically and that is as a transgender woman.”
33
- 34 AJ: So you’ve been openly out as a trans person for the last three years?
35
- 36 JG: Correct.
37
- 38 AJ: What’s your relationship with your family now, Jennicet?
39
- 40 JG: OK, Jennicet speaking, now it’s more understanding, they’re more supportive. My brothers and
41 sisters are behind me and they do believe that they’re doing their part to educate themselves on
42 the transgender community on how they can best support me 100%. I told my mom, my
43 brothers and sisters, they all know and I said, “That’s my responsibility, now you have to tell the
44 children – that this is who I am and respect me.”
45
- 46 AJ: So they had work to do, you gave them a job.
47

- 1 JG: Yeah, so they're working with that, they seem to be very proud of what I have accomplished in
2 my activism. The only thing my mom is always concerned, because again I guess she realizes
3 that at one point she didn't understand and she rejected this identity and that other people are
4 going to do the same but they're going to go over the line and hurt us, because they won't
5 accept it or embrace it.
6
- 7 AJ: That's a real fear, right?
8
- 9 JG: That we can get beat up or even murdered. She sees the news and sees the violence that we
10 are facing and she gets really in a worry – that now finally I embrace my daughter but I don't
11 want someone else to take her life away. So that's how I feel. They are coming around and
12 really . . . I do feel the love now from my mom and my brothers and sisters and I do believe that
13 they support, and mostly importantly, I believe that they are a part of me.
14
- 15 AJ: That's awesome. Is there any relationship between you and your family now, Renata?
16
- 17 RG: Yes. This is Renata speaking, and back a little bit where she was saying about her mom worried
18 about she was a parent taken away, that's when I said my mom, back in the time that she was
19 really hard on me and she called me names, she don't know how to deal with me and she don't
20 have to deal with a transgender woman in her house. So the only way she believes or she thinks
21 she was doing good and the only way she can protect me, as I said, do not act the way you act
22 because people will hurt you in the streets. So I do now understand that . . . she said it not
23 because she don't love me, I understand that she said it because she wanted to protect me like
24 her mom, that she's worried that she's going to be beaten or she's going to be murdered or
25 she'll get taken away for some reason. So, now I understand. My relationship with my mom,
26 with my brothers and sisters, my nieces and nephews and uncles – my grandparents, it's
27 spectacular, it's great.
28
- 29 AJ: Oh my goodness.
30
- 31 RG: My nephews call me "Auntie" and my nieces called me "Aunt". My brothers call me sister and
32 my sisters call me "Hermana".
33
- 34 AJ: What is that?
35
- 36 RG: Hermana? Sister.
37
- 38 AJ: Sister. Ohhhh.
39
- 40 RG: Yeah, so she is like my hermana and we talk, we text. I'm very grateful – I'm very, very grateful
41 that my family is part of me and by my side all the time. I just went to my sister-in-law the other
42 day, to her house, and I took Jennicet with me, to eat mole.
43
- 44 AJ: Ahh, mole – chocolate.
45
- 46 RG: Yes. And my niece, she's five, and she called me "Aunt", I'm her aunt, she never says anything
47 or asks any questions. My nephew, the one I have . . . one of the olders that are here in

- 1 Minneapolis, only a couple blocks away from here, he was not home but also he is like, “Hi Tia,
2 how are you?” “Goodbye Tia,” or, “Nice to see you Tia.” So it’s very nice, I’m very grateful.
3
- 4 AJ: It probably helps to get accepted by your family because you guys are both very beautiful so I’m
5 sure that plays a role in family’s acceptance. It’s sad, but it’s true. I’m really interested though .
6 . . you guys talked about how family is a really important aspect now of your lives and has
7 played a role, that’s why you left home. It’s also now provided the support that helps you get
8 through and I know that the transgender report a couple years ago, *Injustice at Every Turn* by
9 the National Center for Trans Equality and the Task Force on LGBT Rights, they talked about how
10 family acceptance is really a critical aspect of helping trans identified and gender non-
11 conforming people sustain themselves in this culture and society. I’m wondering, what are
12 some of the positive aspects that you have experienced since you have begun to express your
13 true gender identity?
14
- 15 JG: This is Jennicet. I believe that one of the positives is the re-assurance that we are worthy of
16 living, that we do have the critical support coming. But that support, it didn’t just happen
17 overnight. It was a process that they had to come to terms. They already knew I was dressing
18 up but I wasn’t facing it with them, so I was rejecting myself and they were rejecting that part of
19 my identity. It took years, it wasn’t just like, “Well, OK, you want to be a woman – or you
20 identify as transgender, we’re behind you.” At first there was some resistance and I think they
21 were mostly concerned with the children, but one of the positive things about this . . . society, in
22 general, attacks children. What kind of message are we giving the children? But one of the
23 positive things I remember when I first came to a family reunion for Thanksgiving three years
24 ago as Jennicet and the children were the most receptive of Jennicet.
25
- 26 AJ: I love it.
27
- 28 JG: Up to this point they haven’t mis-gendered me and it is the adults that have an issue, obviously
29 because they knew the other person. But I think that’s one of the most positive things that has
30 come out after we worked it through and me really living my life as a woman and being myself.
31 I think that the children are behind me and, like you mentioned earlier, unfortunately we have
32 to force ourselves sometimes into the gender binary, but we do it because we know how much
33 discrimination exists and we know how much violence there is and that’s unfortunate, it
34 shouldn’t have to be that way. If we were in a more safe environment perhaps we wouldn’t
35 have to transition all the way, and some don’t want to – like gender non-conforming people.
36 But it’s just that reality that we are facing. Yeah, now I can honestly say that they are very
37 supportive and it has been . . . it’s ups and downs, but I remember that my niece said, “You
38 know, I am very proud of you and I will love you Tia.” So they’re being very . . . it’s the younger
39 generation that really are coming to terms with giving that space and the respect that we all
40 deserve.
41
- 42 AJ: That’s true. Renata, what are some of the positive things that you have experienced since you
43 began expressing your true gender identity?
44
- 45 RG: This is Renata speaking again. Like I said, I was very super girly my whole life. I’m sorry I keep
46 saying that . . .
47
- 48 AJ: Hey, it’s who you are Renata.

1
2 RG: You know, I totally understand Jennicet, that she was struggling with coming out or accepting
3 who she was, and I totally understand other people – because she’s not the only one who is
4 struggling with that.
5
6 AJ: No.
7
8 RG: But at the end of the day, what I always told people even before they come out to the family but
9 they come out to their friends – like you have friends, “Oh, she is Andrea, I’m going to talk to
10 her,” Or, “Hi Jennicet.” You told your friend, “I am this,” but you didn’t tell your family because
11 you have fear, you’re shy.
12
13 AJ: You want that love, you don’t want to be rejected.
14
15 RG: Exactly. So what I always told that people is, “You know, come here.” So I tell them, and as you
16 can see, I have many mirrors in my place. So I take them and . . .
17
18 JG: I’m counting them.
19
20 AJ: There are lots of mirrors here.
21
22 JG: I’m looking around counting them.
23
24 RG: And I take them and I put it there and I say, “Who do you see?” I ask them, “Who do you see?”
25 And they’re like, “I see me.” “Yes, but who do you really see there?” And they’re like, “I don’t
26 see anything else.” “OK, well then, nobody else will see anything else then. If you see yourself
27 as a transgender woman and you accept it that you’re a transgender woman, other people will
28 too.” Because at the end of the day, that’s the only thing that you’re waiting for – they knew
29 you are, they totally knew you are and probably they knew you were dressing up the night
30 before when you go out to the club because had to steal the eyeliner here and they knew you
31 dress up but maybe sometimes they don’t want to say anything because they don’t want to hurt
32 you or they don’t want to make you uncomfortable. They’re waiting for you to open up with
33 them so they can say, “We knew that, that’s OK.” That’s happened. So if you don’t accept
34 yourself you never will be accepted by anybody else.
35
36 AJ: Oh my goodness, so powerful.
37
38 RG: Exactly. At the end of the day, I think the challenge of positive things being who I am is that I
39 can help others to be who they are.
40
41 AJ: Oh wow, I love it. Man – talk about activism. Jennicet, you made history earlier this year during
42 Gay History Month – like Pride Month. You were invited to the White House as a part of the
43 LGBT celebration gala . . . reception, is what they called it, right?
44
45 JG: Yes.
46
47 AJ: At the White House and everybody was there in their finery and great mood, the President was
48 serving snacks and cocktails – beer and wine, I assume, but it looked like people were having a

1 good time. He was there with the Vice President and I'm sure a lot of Secret Service people.
2 You interrupted his speech and you talked about the plight of undocumented immigrants of
3 transgender experience being held at detention centers. A lot of people were upset that you did
4 that. Talk to me about that moment, that moment that you felt compelled . . . I think, at least
5 that's how it sounded, because you were persistent, respectful – but very persistent in your
6 questioning. Tell us about that.
7

8 JG: This is Jennicet. Again, I came out as a trans woman three years ago. I went into activism
9 November of 2014, that was my very first direct participation in the community and saying,
10 "This is what I want to do." I was finding myself, finding my voice, and finding my passion. So
11 being involved in different demonstrations throughout LA, mostly to raise awareness of the
12 violence that we are facing as a transgender community in the United States. But then a
13 reporter asked me, with the interruption, what of the two identities do you make a priority? Is
14 it the transgender or the undocumented aspect? And I was like, "You know, I don't think I can
15 prioritize one or the other, to me they intersect and they are part of who I am as a person and
16 they both equally should be balanced." Yeah, being undocumented, it's completely new
17 challenges that we face in this country, like Renata was saying - the lack of social security or the
18 lack of work employment. So now we're looking at the transgender identity and in our
19 countries it's not as open as it has become here in the U.S. now, so we're facing a lot of violence.
20 So what do we do? We flee to come to the U.S., to seek political asylum, and then what
21 happens? We get turned over to the detention centers and this is an issue that our
22 organization, FAMILIA Trans Queer Liberation Movement, has been working for the last three
23 years or so . . . maybe two or three.
24

25 AJ: Trans Latina . . . ?
26

27 JG: It's FAMILIA Trans Queer Liberation Movement.
28

29 AJ: Wow, OK. Thank you for slowing that down a little bit because my transcriber has to catch all of
30 this.
31

32 JG: So basically being active in the community, it kind of earned me the ticket to go to the White
33 House.
34

35 AJ: Yeah, you worked for it.
36

37 JG: Like you mentioned, it's Pride Month throughout the nation, different cities celebrate Pride
38 events and that celebration, it's because a transgender women of color and gender non-
39 conforming people in 1969 in New York City, they say we can't take any more of the treatment
40 that the police brutality was giving us, so that celebration came because people were sending a
41 message to the state that we're not going to tolerate any kind of state-sanctioned violence. So
42 just being in that moment, to me, and then knowing that undocumented LGBTQ trans and queer
43 people, immigrants, are in these detention centers facing a lot of abuse by immigration officials
44 and by other people detained. So knowing about the issue, talking to trans women who were in
45 there and sharing their stories, their experiences, FAMILIA got behind Nicoll, which Free Nicoll
46 became probably one of the first national campaigns that started to bring awareness at a
47 national level. When I heard of her case and how difficult she was treated, I just . . . when I was
48 in this room, I just knew that I couldn't celebrate while our brothers and sisters are suffering. So

1 we need that space . . . yeah, it's very intimidating knowing that there are other activists,
2 organizers – pretty much the elite, you could say the mainstream LGBTQ and everyone is so
3 happy, let's talk about progress, "We're making so much progress in our movement, in our
4 struggles basically." But, to me, I just kept thinking about my own personal challenges as
5 undocumented and what if I end up in a detention center, right? They're going to put me
6 through this abuse that shouldn't be accepted by anyone, it's inhumane the conditions that are
7 faced inside these detention centers. So to me that was a moment that I had to speak up and
8 when President Obama came out, I guess, and started greeting everyone and within a minute of
9 the introduction, he just continued to praise the community and how much progress we're
10 making and I was like, "How can we really celebrate and speak of progress when the ones that
11 really want the progress are suffering?" So, to me, that was a moment to say, "President
12 Obama, release all LGBTQ detainees in detention centers." But not only that, I was also telling
13 President Obama that I was tired of the violence that we're facing as a transgender community,
14 I'm tired of the transphobia, I'm tired of the violence in general.

15
16 AJ: Sure.

17
18 JG: I was criticized harshly the first two days for being disrespectful, how dare I do that to the
19 President at the White House? And I think the interesting part of it was because the marriage
20 decision was coming out and people were just like, "Oh, yes, he's going to praise maybe . . ."

21
22 AJ: It was the very next day, right?

23
24 JG: Maybe anticipate what the outcome might be, people were like in this celebration mood and I
25 was like, "How can we do that?" So to me, it was critical and it was highly necessary to interrupt
26 the President to bring this issue to the front lines, that our community is facing as we speak and
27 some are inside these detention centers.

28
29 AJ: Being President is a pretty tough job and you know going in that you're going to get a lot of
30 criticism from people every day, all day – from the left, the right, from the people in the middle,
31 every decision is going to be questioned and you're going to get called on it. Renata, you're
32 quite an activist yourself, what sort of organizations, what issues, what concerns, what work are
33 you doing to sort of promote transgender equality.

34
35 RG: Hello, this is Renata speaking again. To tell you the truth, Andrea, and to be honest with myself,
36 I think I can call myself an activist but I haven't done anything as an activist.

37
38 AJ: OK. I disagree with that but I'm just going to listen.

39
40 RG: That's what I believe. I don't know if you . . . you have done an amazing job as an activist with
41 the Black Lives Matter and Bamby Salcedo is being recognized all over for her job and
42 everything. And I think you guys are here and I'm here, I don't think I have . . . I do care about
43 my people, I do care about . . . I don't want them to hurt and I want them to be OK, but I don't
44 think I've done anything, to be honest, as an activist person. I don't know if it's because I don't
45 have the tools to do that. I don't know . . . well, I know you, but we never had the opportunity
46 to see and talk and see about what can we do for the transgender community in Minneapolis.
47 The only reason I can call myself activist is because I care about other people, not just
48 transgender people, just people in general.

1
2 AJ: People in general, absolutely. I'm a humanist but this is not about me, this is about you guys.
3
4 JG: I'm going to interrupt Renata and jump in.
5
6 RG: How dare you.
7
8 JG: This is Jennicet. I do believe that she is an activist and she has done stuff for the community.
9
10 AJ: Absolutely.
11
12 JG: I met her through Bamby and she is a member of Trans Latina Coalition, founded by Bamby. She
13 has been involved in creating the calendar, Creating Change . . . Angels of Change. She's been
14 involved, like reaching out and participating. There's another event called Garras, kind of like
15 wardrobe, it is like a fashion show that we raise funds for the community.
16
17 AJ: What's it called? I'm sorry.
18
19 JG: G-a-r-r-a-s. It's an annual event, it's a fundraiser, where Bamby organizes and brings different
20 designers with the LGBTQ community, mostly Latino/Latinas and they bring the models, mostly
21 trans people, and the funds are for their organization. So she's been involved. And then when
22 Casey Haggard was murdered in Fresno a couple of months ago, she was at the gathering that
23 Bamby put together for the organization and we had a demonstration. We blocked the
24 intersections and she was taking photos.
25
26 AJ: In Fresno?
27
28 JG: No, in LA. Casey Haggard was murdered in Fresno by a driver . . . cut her throat, it's on video –
29 it's horrible. But she was there taking photos, so perhaps . . .
30
31 AJ: So was that . . . oh she was the 19th trans person . . .
32
33 JG: I believe the 19th this year alone.
34
35 AJ: Yes, I remember reading about this story and watching – yes.
36
37 JG: But Renata was taking photos, she was chanting with us and blocking the intersection. So
38 maybe comparing yourself with others it wasn't the best thing to do but you are doing your
39 work.
40
41 AJ: Well I know she is, which is why I asked.
42
43 JG: You are doing important work and any kind of little contribution to the movement – you are.
44
45 AJ: Let me just say that walking down the street every day and living your life as an out trans
46 women of color is a political act and it is an act of activism, taking care of yourself is a
47 revolutionary act, being alive and being active in this community is advocacy. So thank you,
48 Renata.

1
2 RG: Oh, thank you, thank you for pointing that out. Once again, this is Renata speaking. Once again
3 maybe I am a transgender woman but in my unconscious, I'm not a transgender woman.
4
5 AJ: I understand, I hear you, I believe you.
6
7 RG: I take Jennicet downtown and I show her where I work and I show her the skyways and this is
8 where I have coffee and this is where I have breakfast and this and that. Maybe I feel selfish but
9 I am not consider myself with . . . with the sociology, I do not consider myself as a transgender
10 woman. I live myself 24/7 as just another female, as a woman. So, the way you said it is really
11 nice and now that I realize that, "Oh my God, totally, it's true." It is. But I'm so used to things . .
12 . back in my early days they always said, "Ma'am, can I help you with this?" "Ma'am, can I take
13 your order?" "Have a nice day, thank you ma'am." I'm so used to that. Sometimes, just in
14 those moments, I forgot who I am as a transgender woman and I just become as a female,
15 another real woman.
16
17 AJ: You're Renata.
18
19 RG: Exactly. Yeah, I have done things like Jennicet mentioned and I'm sure you know some other
20 things, but I haven't done anything to do history like her, like Bamby, like other transgender
21 women in the world. And I want to be one of those persons.
22
23 AJ: You are, darling.
24
25 RG: I want to be one of those persons who really make change, who really . . . it's huge to compare
26 myself to him, but Luther King, for example.
27
28 AJ: Which one?
29
30 RG: Luther King.
31
32 AJ: Martin Luther King?
33
34 RG: Martin Luther King.
35
36 AJ: OK.
37
38 RG: He really made history, he's in the history in the United States forever. We have a day to
39 remember him all the time, every year. I want to do something that big. The things I have done,
40 yeah they're important and maybe it's my little granito to contribute to the community, but I
41 want more.
42
43 AJ: Renata, to the extent that you feel comfortable, tell me about any medical interventions that
44 you have undergone during your gender transition.
45
46 RG: Well I have done a couple things. One is obviously my breasts . . .
47
48 AJ: Obviously . . .

1
2 RG: It's not obvious?
3
4 AJ: How obvious is it?
5
6 RG: Is not 36C enough? But also, another couple of things I have done with my body that I'm not
7 proud and I'm not very happy about and I want to talk to you in private. But that's the only two
8 things that I have done on my body – surgery to be more female, to go more with my
9 completion to be more physically accepted.
10
11 AJ: So no medical prescribed hormones or . . . ?
12
13 RG: Oh yeah, yeah. I thought you said plastic surgeries.
14
15 AJ: Well medical interventions – the doctor gives you hormones, that's a medical . . .
16
17 RG: I have been doing hormones for a while. I stopped it for a while. The last hormones I took was
18 probably 2008 and I didn't take hormones for years until recently, like six months ago.
19
20 AJ: What made you stop? I'm interested because . . .
21
22 RG: OK, I knew a girl from Los Angeles, I met her in New York in an interview too. We became very
23 good friends and she introduced me to this doctor in LA. And she explained me the hormones,
24 the treatment he was doing to her. I was amazed about it. I was like, "Wow, I want that."
25
26 AJ: You were excited.
27
28 RG: I was very excited. The process of the treatment is two years and he said after you take that
29 treatment for two years, every four months, you are technically OK to not take hormones any
30 more but you can do every year. So go back to LA for two years every four months is really
31 expensive.
32
33 AJ: Yes.
34
35 RG: So when I was done with my two years treatment, I said, "Well he said I don't need it, if I want
36 to I can come back every year, but I don't have the money to do that because it's kind of
37 expensive." So that was the reason to stop. But now I have a chance to go back for some
38 events for the Coalition, I'm a part of it now, and I said, "Well, since I'm going there and he's
39 there . . ."
40
41 AJ: You might get more treatments.
42
43 RG: Well, why not – to be more female.
44
45 AJ: Jennicet, to the extent that you feel comfortable, if you don't want to say anything and be like,
46 "Move on to the next question, Andrea," have you experienced any medical interventions
47 during your transition?
48

- 1 JG: This is Jennicet, and yes I have. But before disclosing what I have done I do want to point out a
2 critical issue that I believe that you need to listen. When I started to transition, I was obviously
3 meeting other trans women in Los Angeles, and then you know desperately that you want to
4 start hormone treatment.
5
- 6 AJ: Because the women in Los Angeles are just drop-dead gorgeous.
7
- 8 JG: Yeah, they're beautiful.
9
- 10 AJ: Hips and cheekbones and . . .
11
- 12 JG: I think we're all beautiful to be honest. But, yeah . . .
13
- 14 AJ: But LA is hip level, let's get real here. All women, period, in Los Angeles there is a standard that
15 people live by.
16
- 17 JG: Yeah, I saw that beauty and I always wanted to emulate them and be like them. So you start
18 talking to them and they tell you . . . it's kind of like an underground kind of deal because, like
19 she said, it's expensive and many of us, as being undocumented, don't have access to health
20 care, don't have access to a physician, and it's very rare to find a physician that really
21 understands the transgender community and can give you the proper medication to start, right?
22 So, I started to ask around and then they're like, "Oh, you can go to this lady and she'll give you
23 medication." So that's how I started taking hormones. And I would do it . . . I was kind of at
24 home taking it and I remember people telling me, "Take it with milk too." Like this Mexican
25 hormone, "Oh, this one is better. If you take it with milk you get breasts faster." Things like
26 that.
27
- 28 AJ: Was it true? Did it work?
29
- 30 JG: Yes, it did. And then you start to see results and then you started to feel more identified, finally
31 connecting yourself with your identity, and you continue to take hormones and injections once a
32 month. You have to find your way and connect with someone who has done it longer. So I
33 started that and then also I did my breast augmentation. I did my hairline, lowered it . . . yeah. I
34 haven't been on hormones for a while but because I was in LA I was going to this clinic that all
35 you had to prove, kind of where you lived, and any kind of income that you were bringing and if
36 you earned X amount you were qualified to receive under a medical physician's supervision. But
37 because the funds were so limited, you kind of had to prove like your social security to make
38 sure you continue on the program for free, otherwise you were not getting for free and then
39 you had to pay out of pocket. So, I stopped for awhile and my mom went to Tijuana not too
40 long ago and she brought me some, she brought the injections and also pills.
41
- 42 AJ: Tijuana.
43
- 44 JG: Yeah. I have some that I'll start taking them soon. But that's pretty much where I'm at at the
45 moment.
46
- 47 AJ: What do you guys think about . . . I know Los Angeles, and I know you spent a lot of time in Los
48 Angeles, Renata, and you live there, Jennicet. So, like street hormones – that's a part of the

- 1 everyday life of trans women in America, but in Los Angeles. Are you guys aware of this issue
2 where people are having injections of illegal hormones or unsafe hormones? What do you think
3 about that issue?
4
- 5 RG: This is Renata speaking, and my personal experience . . . I don't want to hold back, but those
6 street hormones, like Jennicet said earlier, underground hormones, that's where . . . I don't
7 know about the other communities, but the Latino communities they're like, like what she was
8 saying, "Oh this is better, this is where this or this is where that." I took those a couple months
9 but they were not working for me, not because they were not doing anything physically, they
10 were doing something mentally.
11
- 12 AJ: Emotionally.
13
- 14 RG: Emotionally – I'm sorry, yes.
15
- 16 AJ: Well, mentally but emotionally.
17
- 18 RG: Emotionally. So I stopped taking those and that's when I met this girl and I went to Los Angeles
19 with the doctor and the hormones that I'm taking for him, they're amazing. There is no
20 emotional . . . with the street hormones, sometimes people will get depressed and sometimes
21 people eat too much, some people will be so crabby all the time. You cannot say any jokes
22 because they're like, "Arrrrr." They're really crabby all the time. So that affect you emotionally,
23 so that was the real reason I would not recommend those. But the ones that I'm taking from LA
24 from this doctor, oh my God – amazing. Amazing, amazing, amazing.
25
- 26 AJ: Wow. Thank you both for your honesty around that question. I just want to be real clear, being
27 trans is not dictated by the medical interventions that we've had, right? I understand that, but it
28 is a part of being trans. I think it's an important question, it's a question that a lot of people get
29 offended by or want to gloss over, but . . . thanks for your honesty.
30
- 31 JG: This is Jennicet. I agree with you, it shouldn't determine your trans identity, right? But it is part
32 of the process, it's part of the transition, and like we were explaining it's a reality for many in the
33 trans Latinas who lack access to a physician so you have to start asking other girls and they're
34 like, "Oh, you can go with this person and get some," or, "I can get some for you and you take
35 them like this." So you don't really have the supervision, so it is a serial issue. I currently don't
36 know how many in LA are doing it that way, but I know there is a good number of them and I
37 just wanted to bring it out so your audience knows that this is something that we are facing.
38
- 39 AJ: Yeah, girls are dying from that.
40
- 41 RG: This is Renata speaking once again. I told you earlier I would like to speak with your privately
42 about something, but girls are not dying for hormones, girls are dying for injections . . . it's
43 supposed to be something really good to make your hips up and your butt up and look more
44 girly. They're not hormones . . . I don't know . . .
45
- 46 AJ: Silicone.
47
- 48 JG: Silicone injections.

1
2 RG: It's supposed to be silicone injections but the person who is doing it, that person don't care
3 about you.
4
5 AJ: Right.
6
7 RG: That person only cares about the money you are going to pay for that. So she said, "It's really
8 good, I've done whoever's . . . I done Jennicet's body, I done Andrea's body, I done Jennifer
9 Lopez' body and it works. It's really good. It cost this." So you believe that person because you
10 are so hungry to have a female body and you believe that person. But whatever she's injecting
11 you, it's not silicone, that's for sure. And that's the reason a lot of us are dying, not the
12 hormones.
13
14 AJ: Not the hormones, you're right. I mis-stated that.
15
16 RG: The hormones don't really kill you, like I said they make you crabby or angry or hungry – I don't
17 know what other, oh you get fat, I guess. But they're . . .
18
19 AJ: Crying all the time.
20
21 RG: Crying all the time – yes. "Oh my gosh, a fly is dying."
22
23 AJ: It's true.
24
25 RG: Yes, girls are dying for other . . . how can I say this? Bad decisions. Girls, we are dying for bad
26 decisions and because we are not informed – that's the reason. Yeah, maybe she done
27 something like silicone injections and it's great, but that is not going to be the same for you
28 because everybody is different.
29
30 AJ: Sure.
31
32 RG: So whatever your body can accept, we have different genes, it's not going to accept for me the
33 same.
34
35 AJ: I'm just now noticing your earrings, those are stunning.
36
37 RG: Oh thank you – you have good taste.
38
39 AJ: You just pulled your hair back and they just popped out – like whoa!
40
41 RG: Thank you, Andrea.
42
43 AJ: Just beautiful. So, you guys both talked about a really influential person in this transgender
44 movement that is really doing just powerful and outstanding work, but I'm going to ask you this
45 question anyway. Has there been a specific moment, person, organization that has had a
46 significant impact on you related to your gender identity?
47

- 1 JG: This is Jennicet. For me, personally, I want to probably give credit to the organization I'm part
2 of, FAMILIA Trans Queer Liberation Movement, because I believe they gave me the opportunity
3 to every struggle that I was holding inside me, everything I internalized, and that I was carrying,
4 that I was so ashamed of – being trans, being undocumented. I think they saw something in me
5 and believed in me and I think Jorge Gutierrez, who is the founder with Isa Noyola, another
6 amazing activist.
7
- 8 AJ: Jorge . . . ?
9
- 10 JG: Gutierrez and then Isa Noyola, another amazing activist from the Bay area. I think that was
11 definitely . . .
12
- 13 AJ: How do you spell Isa's last name?
14
- 15 JG: It's N-o-y-o-l-a. And I think they really got me out of my comfort zone in a sense of who I am
16 and what makes Jennicet the person she is now. And part of that was the opportunity to going
17 to the White House with GetEQUAL, another organization. And I also want to thank personally,
18 Angela Peoples, who she works for GetEQUAL, because she was the only soul voice in this action
19 that she joined me as I was being escorted out. So I think, again going . . .
20
- 21 AJ: Angela Peoples?
22
- 23 JG: Right. She's in DC and she works with GetEQUAL. I think that moment at the White House is
24 when I really embraced fully who I am as a person, I embraced fully myself as a human being,
25 and I think by challenging President Obama I regained the dignity of my community.
26
- 27 AJ: Wow, that's awesome. Love and relationships.
28
- 29 RG: What else, right?
30
- 31 AJ: Are you in a relationship right now, Renata?
32
- 33 RG: No. This is Renata speaking and I'm single. I'm not planning to get married or have a baby for a
34 while, so if any guys are seeing this . . . I'm single. She's married though. No, just kidding.
35
- 36 AJ: What's your sexual orientation?
37
- 38 RG: My sexual orientation is straight – transgender woman, straight. I like guys, preferably tall,
39 masculine, white guys – hairy ones will be welcome. That's my sexual orientation.
40
- 41 AJ: All right. That's cool. Have you been in a relationship, Renata?
42
- 43 RG: There have been very few. One last for about eight years and the other . . .
44
- 45 AJ: Eight years?
46

- 1 RG: Eight years, and we're still talking, we're friends. He's married now. The other one was . . . at
2 the end it was not really good, it ended up messy and kind of bad. But they're still good people,
3 I talk to them.
4
- 5 AJ: Good. Jennicet?
6
- 7 JG: Yes.
8
- 9 AJ: Yes . . . yes, to everything.
10
- 11 JG: Yes Andrea.
12
- 13 RG: I'm going to . . . if you notice, she was like all the time saying, "Oh, Jennicet speaking," and then
14 she'd give the speech. You ask what the relationship is like and she forgot about Jennicet this . .
15 . she was like, "Yes."
16
- 17 JG: Good observation. No, this is Jennicet.
18
- 19 RG: See, now she's going back.
20
- 21 JG: I'm currently dating my partner, we've been together for a few months. We met a little over a
22 year ago on Facebook and he is an activist. We both seem to find a connection that we're
23 getting to know each other. It's a little challenging because it's a long distance relationship, but
24 we are finding ways to make it work. I consider my sexual orientation, I would say, is
25 heterosexual and I'm attracted to men.
26
- 27 RG: But that's not what you told me earlier, girl. I'm just kidding – sorry!
28
- 29 JG: No, but I mean it's just the beauty . . . I think this is one topic that is so important that we, as a
30 community, discuss, that we are worthy of being in a relationship and we are worthy of loving
31 someone and that someone loving us back.
32
- 33 AJ: Right.
34
- 35 JG: Because many times we are told we are never going to find anybody, nobody is going to really
36 be embracing of who we are as a woman of trans experience, that we're meant to be alone for
37 the rest of our lives. And that's one of the things that my partner is kind of working and
38 organizing his community of men who are attracted to trans women.
39
- 40 AJ: Oh really? My friend, Tona Brown, is trying to put together a panel about men of trans attracted
41 experience she calls them.
42
- 43 JG: Maybe we should connect them, or maybe they already were part of . . .
44
- 45 AJ: He's in Chicago? What's his . . . well maybe don't tell me.
46
- 47 JG: I'll give you his information. I will, but I believe that it is so important for us to have this
48 discussion. I think one of the things as a community we overly emphasize in the struggles and

1 the challenges and the violence so much, and there is this piece that is missing in the
2 conversations.
3

4 AJ: Well I think a part of . . . OK, this is my opinion.
5

6 JG: Yes.
7

8 AJ: Some of the violence that we experience, a lot of the violence that we experience, comes from
9 these trans attracted men.
10

11 JG: I agree, I agree. And that's why it's important for your friend that you mentioned and my
12 partner to counter that and kind of deke why is it that that is happening. And know that we are
13 again worthy of loving someone and someone loving us back. It's work to be done but I can only
14 say that I am happy to be in the relationship and I will continue to open my heart up and take
15 risks.
16

17 AJ: Wonderful. Love is a beautiful thing.
18

19 RG: This is Renata speaking. Every time we talk about relationships and every time a guy
20 approaches you and he is attracted to you and he wants to do something with you, and he said
21 this and he said that and that, I don't know how to explain it but most of the guys up there,
22 they're really insecure about being in a relationship with a t-girl. One of the huge reasons is the
23 family, the friends, they're . . . maybe it's like a guy deal with . . . and I'm sorry if I put you as
24 simple, but extremely . . . like you, if you were in a closet and then you come out, maybe it's
25 kind of something for them to struggle with and deal with and hard to accept to who they are
26 and who they want to be with. But at the end of the day, they are the ones to deal with. If you
27 are attracted to me and you have those issues, at the end of the day it's your problem, it's not
28 my problem. I deal a long time ago with my . . .
29

30 AJ: I deal, right.
31

32 RG: Exactly.
33

34 AJ: So do your work guys.
35

36 RG: Exactly. Do your work. Is it really worth it? Not really take care, but is it really worth it to put
37 them over your family or your friends, first then you – who you want and who you desire first?
38

39 AJ: Right.
40

41 RG: Because when I was dealing with my issues that, once again, I do believe I never have anyone, I
42 was like, "This is who I am and if you don't want me or you don't accept me, it's too bad for you,
43 or it's too bad for you guys – but this is who I am. Thanks, God." At the end of the day, like
44 now, I'm very happy and like her I have very supportive family, very great friends, and if you
45 want to be with a transgender . . . I don't say necessarily you want to be with me, but if you
46 want to be with another transgender woman, you have to be the one to deal with it.
47

- 1 AJ: Wow, powerful answers. You guys are so amazing. I love this interview. What do you think
2 about Caitlyn? She's one word now – one name.
3
- 4 RG: I don't know if you will love it or hate it to say this on camera . . .
5
- 6 AJ: Just say whatever you think.
7
- 8 RG: OK. In my own words, and I'm speaking for myself the way I see things, and I don't know
9 because I think that I have a sixth sense, I'm rarely wrong most of the times, but I think she is a
10 joke. She is not a joke for us, for the transgender community, because once again I do not
11 consider myself a transgender – that's who I am, but I'm not going to sit there every day the way
12 I live my life as a transgender woman. I think she is a joke for herself, that's what I believe. And
13 if you, Caitlyn, happen to see this once or ever, I'm sorry. And if you want to ask me why I do
14 believe that, please contact me – this is Renata Garcia and you can find me on Facebook. I'm
15 sorry. I think . . .
16
- 17 AJ: Why do you say she is a joke? Why? I'm OK with your answer, just what are you basing that
18 on? It's hard to . . . you've been a woman all your life, so it's been a little easier for you – no
19 challenges, but for some people, man, and clearly for this woman, she waited until she was 65
20 years old – that's a lot of pain to bottle up inside.
21
- 22 RG: Why do you wait until 65? That would be my first question.
23
- 24 AJ: It's scary, Renata – it's scary girl.
25
- 26 RG: I don't want to judge her, to be honest with you, and if I say something I feel like I'm judging her
27 and I'm nobody to judge anybody.
28
- 29 AJ: I'm just asking. I mean . . . I'm going to leave it at what you said and I'm certainly not trying to
30 defend her. I just want to hear you guy's opinion.
31
- 32 RG: Talking about her, I'm sorry this is Renata speaking once again, it would be a lot of hours of
33 video, I guess. And to be honest with you, I don't know who she was. I didn't know she had this
34 medal, gold medal. I didn't know that.
35
- 36 AJ: You didn't know about the Olympics.
37
- 38 RG: I didn't know she was part of the Kardashians. I don't know anything about that, to be honest
39 with you. I heard about her when she was . . . before coming out . . . what is her name?
40
- 41 AJ: Caitlyn.
42
- 43 RG: Caitlyn. They were talking in the media and on TV shows about . . . and then I'm sort of like,
44 "Oh, OK" and then two weeks later she was completely a woman.
45
- 46 AJ: I know.
47

- 1 RG: To be honest with you Andrea, I don't want to judge her because I'm nobody to judge anybody.
2 In one word, what I believe and what I think of who she is, I'm sorry to say that but yeah, I think
3 she's a joke.
4
- 5 AJ: OK. What do you think, Jennicet?
6
- 7 JG: This is Jennicet. Do we really need to talk about her?
8
- 9 RG: She's being more kindly.
10
- 11 JG: I'm just listening. No, in all honestly I embraced her as a trans woman, I am a trans woman it
12 would be very hypocritical or I would be stabbing myself if I kind of reject her and things like
13 that. But I do believe that I, Jennicet, as an activist and as a organizer with my organization and
14 as a trans woman, I don't represent the community. That's what becomes a little problematic
15 for me because now all of a sudden she has a huge platform and people . . . which could be a
16 good thing, right? But then people start drawing generalizations and believe that she represents
17 the entire community.
18
- 19 RG: And she does not.
20
- 21 JG: Yeah, and I don't represent. I speak for my own experience, and she can speak for her own
22 experience, but obviously there is a huge bridge between us, right? Her coming from whatever
23 her journey is to get to the point where she is, it's a huge difference from my own personal
24 experience. I just don't want to spend so much time on her life because I believe that we have
25 so many more serious issues that we have to discuss. We are fighting to survive and she will
26 never have to worry about that because she is well off and we aren't. So to me it's just like . . .
27 can we just . . . know that she's part of the community, that she has acknowledged her privilege
28 and things like that, but it seems to me, like Renata mentioned, knowing that she's part of the
29 Kardashians and people already love them or hate them, it's like a business family, it's an
30 entertainment family – our lives are not entertainment, for nobody's pleasure. We are fighting
31 for our lives, this is serious life and death situations we're dealing with.
32
- 33 AJ: Absolutely.
34
- 35 JG: That's all I want to say.
36
- 37 AJ: OK. You know, Jennicet you brought up some of the real issues that, particularly trans women
38 of color – Latina, African American, Asian-Pacific Islander women face, Native American women
39 in coming out, issues around homelessness and educational opportunities, employment
40 opportunities, all of these things that are huge barriers for people. Can you talk about that?
41 And maybe what's the relationship to those issues and some of the violence that trans women
42 of color are experiencing, in your opinion?
43
- 44 JG: Yes. This is Jennicet. In my opinion, the violence that we face if we don't have access to, first,
45 the very foundation of the family support, I think it kind of contributes to the violence. I think
46 that Renata and I express a lot of very supportive families now in our lives, but then we also
47 have to acknowledge the reality for many of our sisters whose families completely won't give
48 them a chance to lead their lives openly and they just turn their backs on them and kick them

1 out of the house and will never reconcile with them for the rest of their lives. It's a reality that
2 happens to some of us, or maybe many of us. And, once we get out on the street and struggling
3 to survive and don't have access to unemployment because of discrimination, like myself
4 because of the lack of documentation to be able to contribute to society, which basically doesn't
5 provide an income, doesn't provide health insurance, so these are challenges that we have to
6 rely on sometimes, like we discussed earlier, these men who seem to be attracted to us but then
7 turn around and hurt us.

8
9 AJ: Right.

10
11 JG: And that results in violence against us. So, I think those are the really hard, difficult issues that
12 we have to really focusing on and shift things around. Like going back to the interruption, I
13 didn't think it was all about me or Jennicet and how am I going to personally benefit. I think this
14 is about a community that, for many years, has been told to shut up basically, "Whatever issues
15 you're dealing with, you're in this country without any documentation, you have no voice in the
16 discussions." So, it's a real challenge – it's a real challenge and that's why myself, coming in and
17 really challenging the system here, I'm put in a position where I am learning so much myself and
18 finding more ways how can I connect with my community, how can I reach out and truly make a
19 difference in our lives and move on. Like I was mentioning at a panel last week, I am beyond
20 how we have sex behind doors, I am beyond what's between our legs. Here we are talking
21 about real challenges that we're facing and those challenges, for many of us, could be life or
22 death.

23
24 AJ: What do you guys think about the relationship between the L, the G, the B, and the T?

25
26 RG: I'm sorry, can you repeat that question please?

27
28 AJ: Sure. What do you think the relationship is between the T and the rest of the LGB community?
29 So the gays, the lesbians, the bisexuals? Is there a relationship with the T? Does that whole
30 thing belong together? Or is it a forced marriage? Rocky marriage? What are your thoughts
31 about that?

32
33 JG: This is Jennicet. I believe that the T has always faced so many challenges within the rest of the
34 group – the L, the B, the G, right?

35
36 AJ: Yes.

37
38 JG: And I think someone had a video of Sylvia Rivera in 1969, when she went to this Pride event,
39 took on the stage and she was booed, she was silenced, and then here 40 years later, here is a
40 trans woman of color with this group of people that are part of the community. I think that one
41 moment, those two minutes of the interruption took place, it kind of demonstrated the division
42 that exists and with our community, the trans community. I think there was an issue of . . . I
43 could potentially say racism, there was an issue of classism, there was an issue of patriarchy.
44 So I think that moment unearthed more things for the community to really, "Hmmm, what's
45 really happening here? Are we really part of the T, are we behind them? Are we going to
46 prioritize other issues that are going to benefit just a few and everybody else can find their
47 way?" And if that is it, we are lucky to survive because . . . you know. I believe that we do have
48 a serial issue there and some people have even started to say that the T needs to be moved. We

- 1 have to organize ourselves because obviously they are not listening to us. That was very clearly
2 shown in the video where they're just trying to boot me and that's a sad reality because I
3 believe that in order for us, as a community, that we are so marginalized and oppressed, if we
4 leave the most marginalized and the most oppressed behind then what kind of progress as we
5 celebrating? So, there.
6
- 7 AJ: It's interesting that two Latina sisters sort of have this parallel struggle, if you will, some 40 years
8 apart. That's very, very fascinating.
9
- 10 RG: Hello, this is Renata. Back to the question, you know sometimes, and this answer has nothing to
11 do with your question, but I think it's that simple about what I want to try to say. Some people
12 said – or some transgender woman said, "Oh, I'm having a boyfriend and he want to date me
13 and he want to marry me." And sometimes we said, as Latinas, we said . . . and this transgender
14 woman said, "Oh, I have this boyfriend and he never cheated on me and this and that." And it
15 happens to be that the guy is married and he is cheating the girl he is married. If he is cheating
16 on who he is married, he promise to God – to the ears of God, that he is going to be loyal his
17 whole life, he is cheating with you, what do you expect? So back to the question you were
18 asking about the GTB, at the end of the day we are all human beings and sometimes between
19 straight people or heterosexual people, sometimes they are killing each other. What do you
20 expect being a transgender woman? Or being a lesbian woman?
21
- 22 AJ: So that's just kind of the way it is?
23
- 24 RG: Exactly. Totally. So, yeah, back to what I was saying earlier, in my own experience I know some
25 transgender woman had to face discrimination in this, but back to my own experience I haven't
26 done any here in Minneapolis. I have found more discrimination when I travel to other states,
27 not in Minneapolis. But I do hear . . . I'm undocumented, I'm immigrant, and I'm transgender of
28 color, and I never had that discrimination. I don't know if it's because I'm so confident in me or
29 maybe because I'm so, "This is me and if you don't accept me, fuck off, I don't really care about
30 your opinion, I don't care what you said about me, I don't care if you judge me – this is me." But
31 I do know about a Black woman and she's an entertainer, she works at the Gay 90s. She has a
32 job, I don't know where, and she was discriminated in her job.
33
- 34 AJ: Sure, it happens – every day.
35
- 36 RG: Or maybe they do, maybe they do discriminate, but they don't do it in my face.
37
- 38 AJ: Well as long as they don't do it in my face.
39
- 40 RG: Exactly, I'm OK with it.
41
- 42 AJ: Absolutely. Where do you see the trans community in the next 50 years?
43
- 44 JG: In the next 50? This is Jennicet. I hope that we come together as trans people and find ways to
45 truly break through this violence, this discrimination, this harassment that we're facing in many
46 sectors of society throughout the United States and that we really embrace, not only the trans . .
47 . I think sometimes we also have to acknowledge the gender non-conforming people to be part
48 of the umbrella and how can we ourselves raise up to the challenge and truly say, "Wow, this

- 1 happened 50 years ago, look how far we've come now." It's a lot of work but it is my hope that
2 we can truly, truly make progress and then say we are here and let's celebrate without anyone
3 being left behind. Because obviously some of us are getting left behind.
4
- 5 AJ: Yeah.
6
- 7 RG: This is Renata speaking once again. I think our community is being progress, it's being doing
8 huge difference from long time ago until now. Before I hear stories about how white people
9 was mistreated – white people, not just Black people, white people too just because they were
10 gay. And they were doing this events underground and police would come and how they
11 virtually were attacked, compared to this day we are in a glory. I don't want to say we because
12 that's not the correct answer. I haven't suffered anything compared to them. I struggled with
13 my family and my country but that's another story, but as a community – back to the 50s, to the
14 60s, to the 80s, we are in heaven, we have very good . . . how can I say this? Treatment, I guess,
15 compared to back then and I'm faithful and I'm hoping . . . go 50 years from now, these days we
16 have a Black president, I do believe, and I'm hoping you're recording this, because I do truly
17 believe that in 50 years we are going to have a transgender woman as a President of the United
18 States.
19
- 20 AJ: OK, I'm just going to pull in real tight to you, and I want you to repeat that!
21
- 22 RG: OK, this is Renata speaking, and we are in 2015 and we have a Black president. In 50 years I'm
23 really hoping that we are going to have a transgender woman President of the United States.
24
- 25 AJ: Mic drop! Interview over. The last word has been spoken. I really, honestly, just want to thank
26 you ladies so much for your wisdom, for your energy, for your passion, for your beauty on
27 camera – you look amazing.
28
- 29 JG: Thank you.
30
- 31 AJ: And just for taking the time to sit down this evening and share a little bit about your journeys.
32 Thank you so much, from the bottom of my heart.
33
- 34 RG: Everything for our community and if this is going to help someone, I'm more than happy to do it
35 one more time or any other time you want me to be on camera. Thank you for inviting me. This
36 is Renata speaking, thank you for making me part of this. Thank you for helping the community
37 to make the change – and let's keep working.
38
- 39 AJ: You're welcome.
40
- 41 JG: This is Jennicet and I want to say you're very welcome, but at the same time I also want to say
42 thank you for including our voices as we are both trans women of color, immigrants in this
43 country. I think we have a different perspective from the mainstream community and just
44 without a hesitation we said yes because we want to be part of the history that we are making
45 and hopefully people can connect, they can relate, and see that this work is so critical and is so
46 important. So I just want to say that it was an honor being in Minnesota, that we were able to
47 connect, and have Renata on board. I think the more voices, the more people have to talk
48 about and discuss and how can we work as a community. I just want to say I'm very honored to

1 have met you in person and being with this amazing friend of mine who is really fighting every
2 day here on the east coast and just saying, "This is who we are, we are in every city, we are a
3 community." It was an honor.

4
5 AJ: Well thank you both very much.

6
7 RG: Thank you.