

Erica Fields
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins
Interviewer

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

September 8, 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.

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

1 Andrea Jenkins -AJ

2 Erica Fields -EF

3

4

5 AJ: Hello, my name is Andrea Jenkins and this is the Transgender Oral History Project at the Tretter
6 Collection at the University of Minnesota. Today's date is September 8, 2015, and I'm here with
7 Erica and I'm going to ask if you would mind stating your full name, your preferred gender
8 pronouns, your gender identity, and your gender assigned at birth.

9

10 EF: My name is Erica Fields. I identify as female. I go by pronouns of she and her and my gender
11 assigned at birth was male.

12

13 AJ: Erica, can you tell me about your earliest memory?

14

15 EF: Of being trans?

16

17 AJ: Earliest memory, period.

18

19 EF: Interestingly enough I always, as a child, had a dream about being in a crib in a hospital and my
20 parents and my siblings were leaving and I was having to stay behind. I always thought it was a
21 dream, but when I was 14 months old I had my appendix taken out and I'm convinced now that
22 this really was a memory and that it was because I was so young that it kind of translated itself
23 as a dream.

24

25 AJ: Wow, that's fascinating. You healed well, apparently.

26

27 EF: Oh yes, I survived.

28

29 AJ: Tell me a little bit about your home environment – your siblings and . . . ?

30

31 EF: Growing up?

32

33 AJ: Yeah, where did you grow up/

34

35 EF: We grew up in Edina. My parents adopted all four of us, they couldn't have children. My
36 mother was on the board of Catholic Charities and they decided to build a family through
37 adoption. I was the third of four, I had an older sister, an older brother, and then a younger
38 sister. We had a pretty good . . . it was a good home life. We were raised Catholic and went to a
39 Catholic grade school with the nuns. In fact, I remember before the nuns got rid of their habits,
40 they had the whole habit and all you could see was their face and when I was in 2nd or 3rd grade I
41 kept thinking, "I wonder what's behind that? Is there hair?" That was really funny. But no, we
42 had a really good home life. My parents really kind of . . . they were pretty open about our
43 background as adopted kids. We celebrated an adoption anniversary every year – it was called
44 our Chosen Day.

45

46 AJ: For each child?

1
2 EF: For all four of us together.
3
4 AJ: All four – OK.
5
6 EF: It was all four on the oldest adoption anniversary – so it's October 16th. We'd get dressed up
7 and we'd have a small gift, nothing fancy but it was really heartfelt, and then we'd go out to
8 dinner. It was really fun.
9
10 AJ: Very nice. Are your parents still alive now?
11
12 EF: No, my mother passed away in 1999 and my father passed away in 2008.
13
14 AJ: So you went to a Catholic school?
15
16 EF: Yes.
17
18 AJ: Which are known to be pretty strict institutions. What was that experience like for you?
19
20 EF: In hindsight, and it's quite some time ago now, I enjoyed it. I had friends, I always got in trouble.
21 My daughter went to the same school and when she was in kindergarten, we were meeting with
22 the kindergarten teacher and I was looking around the room, which happened to be where I had
23 gone to 1st grade and 8th grade, they switched the rooms. And I told the teacher, I said, "I think
24 I've washed every window in this place at least once because of all my detention."
25
26 AJ: Oh boy. So they were pretty tough on you?
27
28 EF: Yeah, but you know it was . . . we had a really good group of nuns, they were very, very open,
29 they were focused on education. They weren't as tough as . . . probably in the 1950s.
30
31 AJ: Sure. Did you experience any bullying or any teasing as a kid?
32
33 EF: I got a lot of teasing because I was a little bit different. I didn't really fully understand . . . I knew
34 that this was a part of me but I had no idea what it was. I had plenty of friends but I always felt
35 like I wasn't really a part of any group. So, there was some teasing. I got along with everybody
36 but yeah, there was some teasing. It wasn't bullying, per se, I don't think.
37
38 AJ: Tell me about the first time that you realized that you were not the gender you were assigned at
39 birth?
40
41 EF: I don't know the exact age but it was probably about eight or ten years old. I would go into my
42 mother's room when she was at bridge club or something and I would go in her drawers and pull
43 out her clothes and just get dressed. I just had this feeling that why can't I be wearing these
44 clothes, why can't I be a girl? At around the same time I'd be at school and all the girls had the
45 uniforms . . . well, we all had the uniforms but I just loved the girl's little jumpers and I just . . . I
46 wanted to go in the girl's room and I wanted to be with the girls. Again, this is in the early to

1 mid-1960s, I had nowhere to turn. I couldn't understand it. The feelings were there but . . . my
2 parents caught me, probably when I was about 12 or 13. I had taken a pair of panties from my
3 cousin's house, brought them home and I would wear them – I'd hide them under my bed and
4 my mother found them and wanted to know what was going on and whose were they. I just
5 denied anything until it went away. And then when they finally quit asking, I knew at that
6 moment that I really had to bury this. I didn't know what it was, of course being raised in that
7 kind of a background I thought it was wrong, I felt guilty, I felt like it was something I had to be
8 ashamed of, and yet it was always there. It was hard sometimes to think about it.

9
10 AJ: When did you discover the language for how you were feeling?

11
12 EF: You know, when I was probably in junior high I heard about Christine Jorgensen. I was too
13 nervous to go to the movie – there was a movie, it was kind of a B movie, it wasn't that great. I
14 didn't want to go because I just assumed everyone would look and say, "Ah-ha, I know why that
15 person is at this movie." And so I was aware of what it was and I kind of had this inkling that
16 might be something that is part of me, but it wasn't until really when Renee Richards, and that
17 was right around . . . toward the end of my college years, but when she was being vilified for
18 being this transsexual tennis player, I read *Time Magazine* and it was like "snap", "that's me."
19 And I just knew and really, really finally understood that was me. But, I was scared to death. I
20 just assumed there's no way I could do what she did, she lost everything – she lost family, she
21 lost friends. I thought I'll deal with it – and I dealt with it with drugs and alcohol. Fortunately, it
22 was in the early 1970s at that time and when I was in college casual use of drugs was pretty
23 prominent – and they weren't as powerful back then, it wasn't like what you have today. So it
24 was easy for me to mask my feelings, and clothing was somewhat less restrictive.

25
26 AJ: In the 1970s, yeah.

27
28 EF: Puffy sleeves and . . .

29
30 AJ: Long hair, bell bottoms.

31
32 EF: Exactly. So there was kind of this gender-bending attitude within the culture at that time, so
33 that probably helped.

34
35 AJ: At least around clothes.

36
37 EF: Yes, right – right.

38
39 AJ: Where did you go to college?

40
41 EF: I went to Gonzaga University, which is in Spokane, Washington. I actually had a really wonderful
42 experience there. I spent my junior year in Italy, it was a junior-year abroad program that I was
43 really, really excited to do – it was fun.

44
45 AJ: You say Gonzay-ga, some people say Gonzaga.

1 EF: It's like you say tomay-to and I say tomato.
2
3 AJ: Exactly.
4
5 EF: I don't know why . . . I think there is probably no proper way of saying it, but I call it Gonzay-ga.
6
7 AJ: They've actually won a couple of . . .
8
9 EF: Tournaments – yeah, they've done well.
10
11 AJ: NCAA basketball championships over the years.
12
13 EF: Yeah. They're always good in basketball – actually, they had a really good baseball team too.
14 But I was a theatre major and they had a really neat theatre program. I think, again, that was
15 something that helped me really cope with things because I got lost into the world of the
16 theatre.
17
18 AJ: And you can play make believe and . . .
19
20 EF: And I did when I was a kid. We would have make believe and think we were on a deserted
21 island and I would wear the dress, I would be the mother or the female. So yeah.
22
23 AJ: That's interesting.
24
25 EF: I honed my acting skills at a young age.
26
27 AJ: I want to be sure we talk about your acting career in a little bit. What terms do you use to
28 describe yourself now and has that changed over time?
29
30 EF: How do you mean?
31
32 AJ: So in terms of do you define yourself as a transsexual, a gender queer woman, a . . .?
33
34 EF: Well, you know, it's interesting. You know Leigh Smythe?
35
36 AJ: I do.
37
38 EF: A very good friend of mine as well. Leigh and I had a lot of conversations about this.
39
40 AJ: She spells her name L-e-i-g-h.
41
42 EF: Leigh – yes.
43
44 AJ: Smythe.
45

- 1 EF: And Leigh and I came up with the idea, because I identify as a woman, but I also am proud of my
2 transgender history. So she says, "Maybe what we should do when we describe who we are to
3 people is say, 'I am a woman with transgender history.'" Which is a nice way of putting it
4 because if you've moved beyond . . . and that's one of the issues that you see in the trans
5 community is it is a transitory, transitional thing – there are now a lot of people, younger people
6 today, stay in that middle ground or they have a real fluid gender identity.
7
- 8 AJ: Sure.
9
- 10 EF: But I think people my age and older people, we went from one gender to another and so that's a
11 way of expressing it. But I'm very proud of the fact that I transitioned and became who I am.
12
- 13 AJ: So, a woman of transgender history.
14
- 15 EF: Yes.
16
- 17 AJ: OK. I've heard a lot of people talk about a woman or man of transgender experience, so that's
18 very similar.
19
- 20 EF: Yeah.
21
- 22 AJ: What challenges have you faced since expressing your true gender identity?
23
- 24 EF: Well, being older, I started my transition at 53 . . .
25
- 26 AJ: Had you ever come out to anybody prior to that?
27
- 28 EF: Actually I had told one psychologist. I went to therapy in the 1990s, probably 1992 or 1993, and
29 it was the first time I had mentioned wearing women's clothes and the therapist was, "Well,
30 you're probably . . . you're needing something in your life and you can pick positive things or
31 negative things, and you're filling your cup with something negative and you need to find
32 something positive to fill your cup with." I thought, "Oh, OK." And you listen to a shrink and so I
33 made the assumption that this is something I can figure out how to alleviate.
34
- 35 AJ: Sure.
36
- 37 EF: So, within a year or so I met my second wife – we fell in love and all of a sudden the feelings
38 went away and I thought, "You know, that shrink knew what he was talking about." And then
39 within a couple of years of marriage, all of those feelings started coming back. That kind of
40 started this spiral downward for me of, you know, do I really even want to survive? Do I even
41 really want to worry about this anymore or think about . . .? I kept it very, very quiet and I only
42 dressed when I was out of town. But I wasn't careful anymore. My habits to try and alleviate
43 the feelings were pretty negative. So my second wife discovered my secret but I had never told
44 anyone. She found a pair of panties in my home office. I called her from a business trip to let
45 her know I'd checked in OK and she said, "You know, I found these in your office and they're not
46 mine, they're not our daughter's, my step-daughter's, whose are they?" And I'm totally

1 expecting that she thought I would say they're some other woman's. I have no idea where it
2 came from, but I just said, "They're mine." And it was like with that, this huge weight . . . I don't
3 mean to be cliché but there was like this sense of relief that even though, from that point on, I
4 had a long road to go, there was such a sense . . .

5
6 AJ: That you took the first step.

7
8 EF: Yeah, exactly. And she was pretty . . . I know she was taken aback, and we'd had a rocky
9 marriage and a lot of it was, in hindsight, my secret. She sensed that there was something I was
10 keeping from her and, for me, it was something I'd kept from everybody all my life.

11
12 AJ: Even yourself maybe.

13
14 EF: Yes, many times. There was periods of time that I would not think about it, deny it and try and
15 purge it. But yeah, I didn't tell anyone and no one else really knew other than my ex – she
16 discovered it.

17
18 AJ: How long did you guys stay together after that?

19
20 EF: Not long. We were already kind of rocky and I think she had already tried to figure out an exit
21 strategy. I could sense just in the way she was . . . she didn't want to go on business trips with
22 me anymore if it was something where couples went. The marriage was not going to last
23 anyway and this became . . . actually, about six months – or not even that. That was in
24 November of 2007. In July or August 2007, she walked into my home office and I was watching
25 some pornography, it was trans pornography, and it freaked her out. And, of course, she's really
26 laying into me and I'm going back to my old habit of trying to deny it until it goes away and
27 finally I just blurted out, "I want to be her." And she stopped and walked out. That's when
28 things really . . . we'd had a rocky marriage most of the marriage because of the secret and
29 everything, but that's when I really started to sense that she was trying to figure out how to get
30 out, so this was her out. We divorced two years later . . . we started the process, we went
31 through mediation and then we had a lawyer draft everything up. Like a lot of people in our
32 situation, I gave her everything – I was very, very generous because I felt that I caused this and
33 I'd given her a vow of being her husband and here I am now becoming myself. So, you know, in
34 a way I look back and think I fell into that trap of . . .

35
36 AJ: Guilty . . .

37
38 EF: Yeah, feeling guilty and just saying, "Whatever you want, I'm never going to need it anyway."
39 That was probably the toughest period. Plus, my family – my father was old, he was 88 or 89
40 years old – in fact, he died in June of 2008, about seven months after I had come out. So I told
41 my ex, I said, "Look . . ." and she wasn't close with my family at all. I said, "I don't care if you tell
42 your family, I don't care if you tell your friends or you try to lean on them for support," because
43 she needed support. I said, "Stay away from the business and stay away from my family."
44 Because without the business, you're in trouble too – so just stay away from it. And she had no
45 problem – she wasn't really close to any of that. It worked well for a while, even through my
46 dad's funeral she didn't say anything and I presented as a male. But then she . . . she went down

1 to a dock where we used to have a boat years ago and there was a guy at the dock from Cenex
2 Harvest States that I used to work with and she was talking to the dock owner and he said, "I
3 hear you're getting divorced, what's going on?" She told him that I was transitioning. And when
4 she left, he made to this guy's boat and said, "You're never going to believe what I heard about
5 Fields." Told him and . . . I'm an international grain trader, I trade in Europe, I trade in Canada, I
6 trade in Mexico – within days, it's on three continents. I'm hearing stuff back from Europe,
7 "Hey, what's going on with you?" I had some time I wanted to try . . . I was working on a really
8 delicate plan to transition without losing my business.

9
10 AJ: Sure.

11
12 EF: And this kind of accelerated it by about six months. But it worked out, things worked out.

13
14 AJ: Wow. So you're an international business person, self-employed.

15
16 EF: Yes.

17
18 AJ: Tell us a little bit about your business.

19
20 EF: Everyone loves what I do. We sell rye, which is a small grain – they make rye bread out of it, but
21 they also make whiskey out of it and we sell rye to the distilleries to make whiskey. My clients
22 include Jim Beam, Jack Daniels, Sazerac, Wild Turkey – pretty much all of the distilleries in
23 Kentucky that use rye buy it from us.

24
25 AJ: Sour mash.

26
27 EF: Sour mash – yes. It's fun, and I've loved getting to understand this industry for 40 years. My
28 father was involved in it before me and my daughter came in in 2009 and that was . . . I'm so
29 lucky and even though everyone says, "What a well thought out plan," we were punting. I had
30 had about a year of open contracts and I had that amount of time to figure out how in the hell I
31 was going to get my customers and everyone else to deal with this, or understand it. So my
32 daughter, I came out to her in mid- to late-2007, like at Christmas time. Early the next year she
33 said, "Well what are you going to do with the business?" I said, "You know, I have absolutely no
34 idea, this is all new. I'm already trying to figure it out." And she said . . . she was recently out of
35 college, she'd worked for EcoLab for about three years, and she said, "Well, why don't I come to
36 work for you?" I thought, "Wow." She was late twenties at the time – 28 or 29, and we
37 developed this plan – my business partners would provide all our financing, they'd wanted me
38 to have a succession plan for a number of years anyway. So I went to them and said, "Hey, my
39 daughter wants to come into the business," and they said, "Oh great, this is perfect." So we
40 sent her down there for some training for about six months and then I took her around to meet
41 all of the customers and, again, presenting as male, and then we elevated her to be the manager
42 of sales. So she was the face of the company and would go on the trips. I would talk to people
43 on the phone all the time, and I managed the risk, I bought the grain. After the fiasco with the
44 guy with the boat, my partners found out and I explained to them what was going on and the
45 whole plan. They thought it was a good plan. So we pulled it off and within eight months, nine

- 1 months, I had come out to everyone. I wrote a letter, I modified it for each person, and there
2 wasn't any pushback at all.
3
- 4 AJ: What was the general tone of the letter?
5
- 6 EF: Basically it explained . . . most of these people I knew as friends, we had intimate relationships.
7
- 8 AJ: Colleagues.
9
- 10 EF: Right. And so I could be very personal with them and what I basically said was, you know, I need
11 you to understand something that I'm going through and I said that I'm transgender and that I'm
12 transitioning to the gender that I feel I should have been born as. I did quote some statistics and
13 some information, I really went through the National Center for Transgender Equality site and
14 the HRC because a lot of these companies are on the HRC equality list so I kind of had
15 handicapped all of the customers to figure out - OK, who is going to be receptive, who do I have
16 to be really careful with, and it turned out all of them were pretty . . . because they were into
17 retail. So they're very high up on the HRC rating.
18
- 19 AJ: Equality index, I think they call it.
20
- 21 EF: Right, exactly. But what was nice is I knew that they had that attitude in a corporate setting so
22 as a supplier they would be a little bit more open. The good old boy network was pretty much
23 gone, there was only a couple of people left – and actually one of the people that we dealt with,
24 I came out to with a letter, but I never really saw him again. Cara, my daughter, dealt with him.
25 He was a real southern redneck and I just think he couldn't handle it – but we did the business.
26
- 27 AJ: You didn't lose the business.
28
- 29 EF: No, so that was really good. So that's . . . it's a great business and it's provided a lot. I'm able to
30 use it as a platform now for really . . . I don't vocally go out and push any kind of an agenda, but
31 all of these people who I interact with, they see me, they see a trans woman who is successful,
32 who is very comfortable in her own skin, who interacts very, very naturally with all of them. So
33 it gives them an opportunity to feel comfortable with a trans woman. So when they're in a
34 situation where there's another trans woman, it's kind of that silent education. I feel good
35 about how that's worked.
36
- 37 AJ: Yeah, I think visibility is a really important aspect of keeping our movement going forward.
38
- 39 EF: And not hiding. Exactly. I don't hide. I don't wear it on my sleeve, because no one likes that no
40 matter what it is.
41
- 42 AJ: Right, exactly.
43
- 44 EF: But I never hide it and I never hold it back.
45

- 1 AJ: Tell me a little bit about your daughter. She came in and took over your business. Is she your
2 biological daughter?
3
- 4 EF: Yes, I was married twice. The first marriage resulted in three children – a daughter, the oldest,
5 and then two sons.
6
- 7 AJ: So she's OK with it, how are your sons?
8
- 9 EF: They're actually quite good. My middle son, the oldest boy, when I first told him . . . they're all
10 pretty liberal, and actually my daughter when I came out to her, she said, "Well, you know, you
11 and mom raised us with a pretty open mind about diversity so this is what you get." And I
12 thought, "Well, I guess I did all right." But my son, he was very touching – he said, "Look,
13 intellectually I can get my arms around it, but emotionally it's going to take me some time." And
14 we had, at this table, because he lived about three blocks away at the time, he'd come over and
15 we'd have dinner and after two hours of talking and debating and arguing and tears flying . . . it
16 was very, very emotionally challenging for both of us, but we worked through it. I think we
17 came away with a much stronger relationship and he was just over at our house about two
18 weeks ago for dinner and it was fantastic. And the youngest son, he's a musician, he's going to
19 school out in New York, he plays cello. He's in a crowd that's pretty open, diverse, and
20 everything else. So, it didn't really seem to bother him that much. We're pretty close.
21
- 22 AJ: Oh good. So your children relationships are still pretty much all intact?
23
- 24 EF: Yeah, I lost one – my stepdaughter. We had a good thing going and I lost contact with her for
25 about eight months. I don't know what was going on – I kept sending her notes and Christmas
26 and birthdays and everything else, actually I just got a letter this weekend. She said in the letter
27 that she forgives me and that she's found the Lord, she's kind of a born-again Christian, and she
28 feels that she can't move forward with her life unless she deals with her anger and everything
29 over what I went through. Which is odd, because for the three or four years that she was going
30 to college, which I was giving her the support for, she was great. She and her boyfriend would
31 come over for dinner, we got along great. So I'm a little puzzled . . .
32
- 33 AJ: Since you had been out?
34
- 35 EF: Oh yeah, I was living as Erica. And she was wonderful, she was very supportive. She met
36 Patience – she was here for our wedding, we got married in this condo and all four of the kids
37 were here. I don't know. She moved back to Omaha where her mother was and where her
38 cousins and everything and I know that there was a lot of anger in that family . . .
39
- 40 AJ: Bitterness, yeah.
41
- 42 EF: And so I think she just took it on. But I trust someday she'll be back because she's got a good
43 heart, she's beautiful. I still love her.
44
- 45 AJ: Absolutely. What have been some of the more positive aspects of expressing your true gender
46 identity?

1
2 EF: Well actually everything has been relatively positive. I've been very fortunate. My family has
3 been good. I think, for me . . . well, I wrote a piece, I think you heard it – Jaime Ann did it in the
4 Naked I called *Congruity*.

5
6 AJ: *Congruity*?

7
8 EF: Yes. It was about my experience, shortly after my SRS surgery, when all of a sudden I was having
9 dinner with Ellie Krug. Ellie and I were having dinner over at Loring Café, which was packed, and
10 all my life when I was in a crowd I just felt edgy . . . I was afraid I was going to knock things over
11 and I'd bump people, I just always had that feeling. Well, I went to the women's room and I
12 came back, and when I came back and sat down I realized for the first time in my life I was able
13 to walk through this crowd and not even think about . . . all of a sudden I was just in sync. And
14 so the positive thing for me was really in here. I went through a lot of the processes to really
15 confirm my gender, but at the end of the day it was really about feeling comfortable as myself. I
16 feel very comfortable about who I am now. So, that's probably the most broad positive thing.

17
18 AJ: That's fascinating. I'm glad you mentioned Ellen Krug and her new book, *Getting to Ellen*.

19
20 EF: Yeah, that was really . . . it was fun to read because a good section of that was when I knew her
21 when we were hanging out together so it was really fun to read. I got to know her brother
22 pretty well and he's prominent in the book and a really, really wonderful guy. So yeah, that was
23 really fun. She focused on the book and literally fell off the face of the earth for a while because
24 she was so focused. So I hadn't seen her for a couple of years when the book came out and
25 we've since gotten together two or three times for lunch. She's a wonderful person. And I
26 guess activism, I mean I was always a very active person. I voted in ten presidential elections. I
27 was 18 the year 18-year-olds were given the right to vote, which was exciting.

28
29 AJ: What year was that?

30
31 EF: 1972. And so I voted for McGovern, that was my first election and he got creamed by Nixon.
32 But I looked at when the Obama re-election came up a few years ago, I have voted in 10
33 elections – I voted for four Republicans, four Democrats, and two Independents. I can't believe
34 it. I was going back and going, "Oh my God, it's right down the middle."

35
36 AJ: You went right down the middle.

37
38 EF: And I didn't vote for any of the real biggies like Reagan or Clinton, I didn't vote for either of
39 them. But I was somewhat active in college but now I've really found a voice in the trans
40 community. I'm involved in a number of organizations.

41
42 AJ: Really? Which ones?

43
44 EF: Yeah, there's Gender Justice.

45
46 AJ: Gender Justice, OK.

1
2 EF: And that is a non-profit, they do mainly . . . it's not focused on LGBT but they do a lot of LGBT
3 work. They were very involved in the passage of WESA, the Women's Employment and Security
4 Act, here in the state of Minnesota. And they've represented several trans people, the woman
5 who was working at Northwest Bible College or whatever, who they wanted to fire because she
6 had transitioned, they were representing her. They represented a number of . . .
7
8 AJ: Wasn't there a Deluxe Checking case?
9
10 EF: Yes, and I think they were involved in that one as well.
11
12 AJ: So Gender Justice.
13
14 EF: And then I'm on the board of Quorum. Quorum is the Twin Cities GLBT Chamber of Commerce
15 and I've really enjoyed that – and working with the NGLCC, which is the National Gay Lesbian
16 Chamber of Commerce.
17
18 AJ: NGLCC?
19
20 EF: NGLCC, right.
21
22 AJ: OK. And it's the National Gay Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.
23
24 EF: Yes. And they certify GLBT-owned businesses, so we got certified and a lot of our customers are
25 now able to plug us in their diverse supplier.
26
27 AJ: There you go – a win-win for everybody.
28
29 EF: Absolutely, it's cool. So I've really found a voice, and then probably the greatest thing is getting
30 married again. I met a woman, Patience. We were friends for a number of years before we
31 really got together. I met her after I had come out but before I finished my transition. And all of
32 a sudden we found ourselves in a position where we were now kind of a friend-date with
33 another friend, and we fell in love. It was the first relationship I've ever had where there was no
34 secret.
35
36 AJ: No secret – you could be your full self.
37
38 EF: Yeah, I was totally honest. Totally. And it felt so good. It's been an amazing relationship. We
39 spend almost all our time together. We travel together. She had a career as a marketing person
40 for the Star Tribune, she was an independent contractor. And when the Strib, and all other
41 newspapers, were struggling, she hadn't had a contract for a while. So I just said, "Well, why
42 don't we just be together and you can come . . ." She helps me out quite a bit. In fact, she's
43 going to do some lists for us here after harvest this year. So she stayed busy a little bit with
44 that, but just being together has been great.
45
46 AJ: Wow, that is wonderful – congratulations.

1
2 EF: Thank you. We got married on August 22nd of 2013.
3
4 AJ: So a couple years now – you just had an anniversary actually.
5
6 EF: We did, yes.
7
8 AJ: Happy anniversary.
9
10 EF: Thank you.
11
12 AJ: So you talked about this a little bit, but let's hear a little bit about the medical interventions that
13 you've undergone – if you're comfortable.
14
15 EF: Sure, sure. As you know, I was involved in a film. So basically everyone gets a chance to see
16 more of me than I did.
17
18 AJ: *Trans*, the movie.
19
20 EF: *Trans*, the movie – it's a beautiful film, it really is.
21
22 AJ: It is.
23
24 EF: It chronicles the lives of a number of trans people, but I . . . it's interesting because when I first
25 started going to therapy, my ex asked how far I was going to go and I honestly didn't know. I
26 said, "I have no idea." I didn't know at that time that I would go to the lengths that I did to
27 become myself, or if I needed to. I just didn't know. For the first time I think I was approaching
28 something with a clean slate – without a projection of, "OK, here's going to be my path." It was
29 like, "Let's see what happens and when I come to a point where I feel comfortable and I stay
30 there or whether I keep going." I continued on and once I got on hormone replacement therapy
31 in 2008, the sense of relief, the sense of comfort, of being relaxed and fulfilled really, really
32 grew. And that's when I knew that I needed to go further and ultimately become physically a
33 woman. I found a great surgeon. I decided on Christine McGinn, out in New Hope,
34 Pennsylvania.
35
36 AJ: How do you spell her last name?
37
38 EF: M-c-G-i-n-n. She's actually a trans woman herself.
39
40 AJ: Oh wow.
41
42 EF: But what I liked about her is she's very, very proactive from a medical standpoint. The
43 preparation for surgery was very intense and I was at an age where I felt my risks were higher
44 than if I were younger, so I wanted to make sure I had someone that was focused on the
45 preparation. I quit smoking long before, I smoked a little, but I quit smoking completely about a
46 year before surgery – or eight months, I guess. I quit drinking for about a month before, she

1 said, "I want you off alcohol for a month," and then she had a real structured regiment going in
2 and then her follow-up was amazing. I went out there three times afterwards, the last time was
3 an annual. But she was really neat. Before she transitioned she'd been a flight surgeon cleared
4 for a shuttle flight. I don't think she ever went on it but she was cleared.

5
6 AJ: Oh wow, like NASA.

7
8 EF: Yeah. She's an interesting person. She's in the film, so if you get a chance . . . well, I gave you a
9 copy.

10
11 AJ: I have a copy of the film, absolutely.

12
13 EF: Anyway, it was interesting because when I woke up after the surgery, I'm pretty drugged up but
14 I really felt like something had happened. I just felt really, really good about everything. The
15 following year I . . . I waited for another year to have breast enhancement because I wanted to
16 make sure the hormones had done pretty much all they could because I didn't want to overdo
17 it. It happens. So, yeah – I went through everything and I'm really glad I did. I really feel now,
18 like physically I'm where I should have been to begin with.

19
20 AJ: That's awesome, thank you for sharing that. It's so personal but I appreciate your willingness.
21 Has there been a specific person that had an impact on you related to your gender identity? I
22 know you talked about Renee Richards a little bit.

23
24 EF: Yeah.

25
26 AJ: But there was a long period between knowing who Renee Richards was and finally coming out.

27
28 EF: You know, the first time that I went out in public as myself was in 2008 I went to the Chicago Be-
29 All, which was a conference that then occurred every . . . I think it was right after Memorial Day,
30 the week after.

31
32 AJ: So that's a trans-specific conference?

33
34 EF: Yes. When it started it was mainly cross dressers and trans folks, but at that time a lot of the
35 people that were going out were basically cross dressers, many of whom were trans as well but
36 they didn't really . . .

37
38 AJ: They weren't identifying at that point.

39
40 EF: Right. So kind of the premise of the conference was . . . there were a lot of vendors that sold
41 everything from breast forms to different hip things – you name it.

42
43 AJ: Hair extensions and larger shoes for . . .

44
45 EF: Oh yeah. But I went down there and I had never been out in public as myself – ever. So I drove
46 down to Chicago and I check into the hotel the night before and I'm in my room and I'm just

1 kind of hanging out. The next morning I get dressed and I'm nervous as hell. I've got a wig on
2 and I walk out of my room and I walk to the elevators and I push the button. As I push the
3 button I hear a bunch of commotion coming down the hall – it's a whole bunch of construction
4 workers, because they were doing renovations, and I was scared to death. I ran back to my
5 room and I went in and my heart was going crazy and I was like, "Oh, I can't do this, I can't do
6 this." Finally, I went down the back stairs and I went down and all of a sudden I'm in a room
7 with a whole bunch of mes – a lot of people just like me. I ended up meeting four or five
8 women and we hung out. I went to five Be-Alls and they were always there and we would get
9 together and it was really fun. A few of them actually came up here. I did Kate Bornstein's
10 show, "Hidden Agenda," a few years ago and two of the women I got to know at the Be-All came
11 up to see it. In fact, right after I get back from my trip, one of the women is coming up here and
12 we're going to have a weekend together – it will be fun.

13
14 AJ: Oh nice.

15
16 EF: So influence was probably those women who had been there before. Actually most of them
17 were cross dressers and still identify as cross dressers, but it was really kind of that special first
18 time out and really starting to feel comfortable as yourself. So that's a big influence. After I
19 came out and started therapy and was beginning my transition, I read a lot. Julia Serano, Kate
20 Bornstein, Jenny Boylan – you know, pretty much everything you could.

21
22 AJ: Right. All the critical trans feminist thinkers.

23
24 EF: Yes. In fact it was really kind of neat because Kate Bornstein's book, *Gender . . . what is it?*

25
26 AJ: Outlaws.

27
28 EF: Yes, *Gender Outlaws*. In the middle of it is a play called, "Hidden Agender" and I was so excited
29 and lucky to get a chance to play the role that was based on her in a production of it here
30 locally.

31
32 AJ: Wow, that's wonderful.

33
34 EF: Yeah, it was really neat.

35
36 AJ: So you're an actress?

37
38 EF: Yes, that was a great segue. Yes, I've been a theatre person since I was in high school.

39
40 AJ: In high school – what are some other productions that you've been a part of – both pre-
41 transition and post-?

42
43 EF: Well I've been very fortunate to have played a lot of my dream roles. Probably one of the best
44 was in 2005 I played George in *Of Mice and Men* and it was an amazing, amazing cast, one of the
45 best productions I've been in. I played Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. I played Anselme,
46 the miser, in *The Miser*.

1
2 AJ: So you've been getting lead roles.

3
4 EF: I had lead roles, a lot of lead roles. And I've directed a lot. I did a lot of children's shows that I
5 directed. So I've had a lot of fun with it.

6
7 AJ: Were these professional theatre companies?

8
9 EF: Some of them were and some of them weren't. The one that I did *Of Mice and Men* was called
10 The Phipps and it's in Hudson. It's on a par with . . . they get great, great directors from the
11 Twin Cities and they get a lot of good actors from the Twin Cities.

12
13 AJ: Sure.

14
15 EF: They don't pay their actors but it's considered a professional quality theatre. But, I get paid to
16 direct over there. So I had a really good experience and a pretty good resume. When I started
17 transitioning I thought, "OK, that's it." And that last year . . .

18
19 AJ: No roles for trans women.

20
21 EF: Exactly. I'd go from being at an age, as a male, where all the roles are just being handed to you,
22 to being a middle-aged, overweight woman who can't even find a part. But that's when I met
23 Claire Avitabile. They were doing the original *Naked I* and I was in my therapist's office and I
24 saw a post card for it and said, "What's that?" She said, "Oh, it's a play that they're going to be
25 doing, you might want to look at it." So I grabbed a post card and I saw it and I thought, "Wow,
26 I've got to go." So I ended up buying tickets for two performances and one of them Ellen Krug
27 and I went to together. It was at the Old Bedlam Theatre, which was a bar – in fact, ironically, it
28 used to be called Knickerbockers . . .

29
30 AJ: I remember.

31
32 EF: And the owner of Knickerbockers was an incredibly close friend of mine, we used to work
33 together, and I helped him build that deck up on the top back in the 1980s.

34
35 AJ: Yeah, the sun roof deck.

36
37 EF: Yeah, we had a lot of parties there. But anyway, it was the Bedlam Theatre at this point. So
38 Claire was doing tickets, she was doing everything and I introduced myself and we hit it off and
39 talked. The show was absolutely amazing and I thought, "God, maybe there is life after
40 transition in the theatre." And Claire came to me about a year later, eight months later, and
41 said, "We're doing a production and I'd like you to audition." So I auditioned and I was lucky
42 enough to get cast in *Anon*, which was a really acclaimed production. There were 10 women
43 who did monologues as a part of a support group for partners of sex addicts. So I had one of the
44 monologues. Two things came out of it. One was the first chance to be a woman on the stage;
45 the second was an incredibly close relationship with 10 or 11 women, 12 women. We had a
46 slumber party towards the end of the run and I went and it was my first slumber party.

1
2 AJ: That was your first slumber party.
3
4 EF: Yeah. And they all knew it and they made it real special. We had a ball. We all sat around and
5 we drank beer, we just had fun, ate popcorn, watched stupid movies.
6
7 AJ: Did you do your nails?
8
9 EF: No, we didn't do our nails, but it was really, really fun. So I got these experiences through that
10 and then I was also part of an actor's studio run by Lev Mailer called Lev Mailer's Actors Studio.
11
12 AJ: Lev? L-e-v?
13
14 EF: Yes. He was a pretty well-known actor in LA. He was actually the secretary of the Screen Actor's
15 Guild and he ran some studios out there. He was a well-known character in a couple of episodes
16 of the original *Star Trek*, he was in *Hogan's Heroes*, he was in a lot of those old shows. He
17 started in New York but his wife was from Wisconsin, so when he retired he came back here and
18 started teaching. I was in his studio for about four years before I transitioned and then when I
19 transitioned, I asked if I could come back to the studio, because I had quit for a while, and they
20 were all excited to have me back. So I went back for about three years and Lev was really cool.
21 He said, "You know what? I'm going to give you some scenes to do with some of the classic
22 characters, women characters, in shows, in plays, and give you an opportunity to kind of stretch
23 and learn these. Hedda Gabler . . . I can't remember the rest of them. Hedda was probably one
24 of the best parts I played. Just amazing parts. He said, "Look, this is an opportunity for you to
25 grow as a woman as well."
26
27 AJ: Exactly.
28
29 EF: From that experience, because my biggest fear was I was going to have to re-learn acting skills
30 because I was now a woman and I had always been a man before.
31
32 AJ: Sure.
33
34 EF: What I found out was my performances were totally honest, there was a filter that was no
35 longer there. Everything I had done before, even if it was some of my best work, in essence was
36 a woman playing a man and now I was a woman . . .
37
38 AJ: Now that shield was down.
39
40 EF: Yeah. Some of my studio mates, we'd do a scene and they'd come up and say, "Wow, that's the
41 best stuff we've ever seen you do." And that's because it was coming from here and there
42 wasn't a filter anymore.
43
44 AJ: Wow.
45
46 EF: I know, it was a really interesting revelation.

1
2 AJ: That's incredible.
3
4 EF: I've done six shows since transition. A lot of them are trans women but they've been really,
5 really good shows and fun shows to do.
6
7 AJ: We actually got to do one together.
8
9 EF: Well you and I got to do . . . I got to do your piece in Pink and Blue in the second Naked I, which
10 was so much fun.
11
12 AJ: I'm very proud of that piece and was very moved by your performance in that.
13
14 EF: And Zealot, we had so much putting it together. Zealot's got such a spirit and we connected
15 really well on stage so that was fun.
16
17 AJ: It was an honor to have you play that role, so thank you.
18
19 EF: Thank you.
20
21 AJ: Tell me a little bit about what do you think the relationship between the L, the G, and the B is to
22 the T community, in your own experience. You talked a lot, like Quorum – it's a gay, lesbian
23 organization and Gender Justice doesn't really have . . . so I'm just curious, what do you think
24 about the relationship between those communities?
25
26 EF: My experience has been positive with gays and lesbians. I'm married to a woman and she has
27 been very confirming of my gender as a woman and my sexual identity, or orientation, as
28 lesbian.
29
30 AJ: So you identify as a lesbian?
31
32 EF: I identify as lesbian so I have kind of a connection within the lesbian community. But I also
33 recognize, and my wife . . . my wife got shunned to a great extent by the lesbian community.
34 Not a horrible shunning but the sense of separation because a lot of people in the lesbian
35 community don't view us trans women as women.
36
37 AJ: Sure.
38
39 EF: My experience with gay men, because I knew a lot of them before transitioning, has been pretty
40 good. But I think there's . . . because we're an identity and not an orientation, I guess you might
41 want to say, there is a difference. In certain respects, like marriage equality, that really didn't
42 have . . . other than gay and lesbian trans people, it didn't have a lot to do with trans people.
43 Don't Ask Don't Tell was the same thing, although now they're allowing openly trans people to
44 serve in the military. But yeah, I think there's a little bit of a disconnect. I started transitioning
45 and started understanding the trans community after a lot of the stuff that had gone down

- 1 before with the HRC and everything else. In fact, prior to my transitioning, in 2007 when I came
2 out, I had never actually met a trans person.
3
- 4 AJ: Wow.
5
- 6 EF: Right, so here I am . . .
7
- 8 AJ: You were brand new in the world.
9
- 10 EF: Exactly. So I was aware and, of course, I was watching these really, really . . . now I look back
11 and I think it's so exploitive, whatever that word is – excuse me, but the trans porn and all of
12 that. But I watched a lot of that because it allowed me to really see people like me. But I think
13 the LGB have, I think they've come a long way, but I think there's still that sense that they're
14 different. I get along just great with the people at Quarum, again part of it is because I'm a
15 business person – it's a business person's thing. So the orientation is there only because of our
16 attempts to try and create . . .
17
- 18 AJ: It's less important than the business relationships.
19
- 20 EF: Right, exactly. I went to the HRC dinner a few years back in Washington and we had a trans
21 table, Amanda Simpson was at it - she's a really good friend of one of my friends out east. So it
22 was a . . .
23
- 24 AJ: She works at HRC?
25
- 26 EF: No, she had just been named undersecretary of commerce.
27
- 28 AJ: Yes.
29
- 30 EF: I'd met Amanda because she was on the board of NCTE for a number of years and I'd met her
31 through Mara Keisling, because I was fairly active in the NCTE for a few years and Marcus
32 Waterbury, who is a local trans guy, was the chairperson. And so, we had this table and I think
33 there were two or three trans tables, as it were. We got along with everybody but there's this
34 separation. It's kind of like when you go to a picnic, a family picnic, and this family is over here
35 and this family is over here and yeah, they play wiffle ball together but then they go back to
36 their little table and have their meal.
37
- 38 AJ: Yeah . . . no, I think that's a very apt description. Do you think there is a transgender agenda? A
39 hidden agenda . . . no, I'm just kidding. Do you think there's a trans agenda and if not, should
40 there be?
41
- 42 EF: I don't think there is. I think the transgender community has really come together in trying to
43 work towards equality, but I don't see it as an agenda per se. I personally don't really like the
44 word agenda because it . . . I think for people who are attempting to try and educate about a
45 community, the word agenda is a negative. I think you hear about, "Oh, it's a gay agenda." If
46 truth be told, yes – everybody has an agenda, but the reality, I think, for the trans community is

1 that we've been able to learn a little bit by those who have gone before us. I do think the trans
2 community tends to be a little bit overly sensitive. I understand why, but I'm not sure it really
3 serves us well because I think having spent most of my time with straight people, mainly
4 business people, they don't like things being pushed . . . they won't turn around and say, "Ah,
5 you know what? Yeah, they're right." What they're going to do is push back. So I think having
6 certain kinds of activism, I think are counterproductive. I think Caitlyn Jenner is . . . I think her
7 heart is in the right place. She's going to stumble, but I think she's really focused on trying to do
8 a good thing. She's surrounded herself with some very, very solid advisors, including Jenny
9 Boylan. I think LaVerne Cox has done a tremendous amount of good things for the trans
10 community. Janet Mock . . . there's so many people out there that are doing really good things,
11 but I don't see it as an agenda. I see it more as an attempt to bring awareness to our
12 community.

13
14 AJ: Yeah. I'm glad you mentioned Caitlyn. The narrative that's around Caitlyn is that she was able
15 to come out and sort of actually have surgeries and sort of transformation prior to coming out,
16 which is not the reality for a lot of trans people.

17
18 EF: Most of us.

19
20 AJ: You're right, most transgender people. What do you think about that narrative and are you
21 concerned that because . . . I mean, Caitlyn is now the most famous transgender person in the
22 world?

23
24 EF: Yeah.

25
26 AJ: Do you think that that does damage to the image? Now everybody thinks that if you're trans
27 then you have to have had all of this surgery, that you have to have done all of these things?

28
29 EF: Well yeah, I can understand that. Actually I've got a real interesting story about Caitlyn. In
30 1976, I graduated from college and during the summer my family – my parents, my sister, and I,
31 were able to go, we were invited to Montreal for the Olympics and I spent about two weeks in
32 Montreal. I went to see every single one of Bruce Jenner's events. I have pictures that I took . . .

33
34 AJ: Wow, all ten.

35
36 EF: All ten and I have pictures of him on the podium getting the medal.

37
38 AJ: Oh boy.

39
40 EF: Yeah. I really enjoyed that, he was a real hero. So I've always . . .

41
42 AJ: Did you get to meet Bruce?

43
44 EF: No, I didn't - I wish. He was just a real hero and I always looked up to him. So from that day
45 forward, I just really admired him. I think what people lose sight of with Caitlyn Jenner is
46 regardless of her being trans, here is someone that has been in the spotlight, was named

1 Athlete of the Year back in 1976, and had to deal with that all then. This obviously, this is a real
2 good test for people in the community and people outside the community, to see the reactions
3 to someone this famous coming out and being themselves. I haven't really followed . . . I
4 haven't seen her E show. I did listen to her acceptance speech at the ESPYs.

5
6 AJ: It was a great speech.

7
8 EF: It was beautiful. I believe her heart is in the right place, I think she will stumble like anybody.

9
10 AJ: Yeah, this is a tough road.

11
12 EF: The problem is she's under a microscope and anything that happens that . . . this is more a
13 judgment not on her, it's a judgment on all of us – everyone of us . . .

14
15 AJ: On our society and our culture.

16
17 EF: To see how they treat her, even the people in the trans community and how they treat her. It
18 gives us in the trans community an opportunity to embrace someone this famous and accept
19 them as a sister – and I hope we do. I hope that she does some good for the community, but it's
20 not about the community – it's about that person, that individual, and their journey. Of course
21 it's different, but all of our journeys have been different. I get worried that Caitlyn is going to
22 get hurt and going to be taken advantage of from a lot of different angles, but I have faith
23 because she was so amazing in 1976 – I mean, it was absolutely amazing to watch that and to
24 read about it.

25
26 AJ: She's a pretty strong girl – she'll be OK, I think.

27
28 EF: She could come out on top and really make all of us proud. And she can enlighten some people
29 hopefully.

30
31 AJ: I just felt bad to know the sort of pain of feeling different from your physical reality and having
32 to walk around with that for 65 years – that is a very long time.

33
34 EF: I did 53.

35
36 AJ: You're just stuck in so much pain. I'm glad she's out for no other reason than now she can live
37 her true life.

38
39 EF: You understand that and I understand that, and people in the trans community – if there's a
40 common thread for all of us I think it is that pain that we felt during the time before we could
41 actually be ourselves. I felt the same way and I know you did.

42
43 AJ: Absolutely.

44
45 EF: You were a successful person prior to transitioning.

1 AJ: Yes, I had a fairly successful life.
2
3 EF: You lived the life, I did the same thing – and everything thought I was this guy. So Jenner is just
4 that much more in the spotlight and had that much brighter of a previous life.
5
6 AJ: A celebrity trans.
7
8 EF: And that might have made it harder.
9
10 AJ: I'm sure it did. So there's the celebrity trans and then there's the issue of transgender women
11 of color and so far in 2015, 20 transgender women of color have been murdered this year.
12
13 EF: Wow.
14
15 AJ: Any thoughts about those issues at all, Erica?
16
17 EF: Just as trans people tell people outside the community, you can empathize, you can sympathize,
18 you can support, but you can't understand because you're not one. I was very, very fortunate as
19 a kid to have grown up with parents that were very open and my experience with African
20 Americans, with Black people, was started at a young age and I always felt comfortable. But, I
21 don't know the experience. I've had really wonderful intellectual conversations with friends of
22 mine about what it's like to feel profiled, about what it's like to not have privilege. I've got a
23 little bit of that experience becoming a woman after being a male, but I do empathize and I do
24 feel that trans people of color have got a huge burden, or a huge obstacle to overcome. I don't
25 know . . . I don't know what I can do other than be very supportive, but I think the whole idea
26 that all of these murders occur, and a lot of it is because I think, not just because they're of
27 color, but they're at a socio-economic level that puts them in danger to begin with.
28
29 AJ: Sure. Yes.
30
31 EF: And then you throw on top of that, the people that they're interacting with who are dangerous
32 anyway, have less of a skill set or an ability to deal with a trans person. So I just think there are
33 so many things that kind of snowball in that situation.
34
35 AJ: Yeah, lots of factors.
36
37 EF: Yeah.
38
39 AJ: And chief amongst them being trans like that . . . there's still a lot of discrimination, harassment,
40 just because you're transgender. And then as a person of color with, like you mentioned, the
41 lower socio-economic backgrounds – all those issues come into play as well.
42
43 EF: I think that's something that we as a trans community should really dig . . . I mean all of us, not
44 just trans people of color, but all of the trans community should try and figure out a way to help
45 and to create less risk for them.
46

1 AJ: Opportunities, housing, education.
2
3 EF: Bingo. And I think education is the biggest thing. But yeah, I've been involved with Reclaim a
4 little bit on this mentorship, as you have, and I'm so excited about the program because you've
5 got all of these trans youth that really need people that they can look to and say, "Well, here's a
6 trans person that's doing this in their life and this in their life." I was on the board of MTHC for a
7 few years . . .
8
9 AJ: What's MTHC?
10
11 EF: Minnesota Trans Health Coalition – you know what it is, but I need to tell them.
12
13 AJ: We need to tell the people, yes.
14
15 EF: Right. The Minnesota Trans Health Coalition was a great organization and they dealt a lot with
16 trans people of color, I think they dealt a lot with trans youth that were being marginalized not
17 only in their lives but also in their living conditions and everything else. And there needs to be a
18 lot more done. We need more Reclaims, we need more outfits like that.
19
20 AJ: We've got a lot of work to do.
21
22 EF: Yeah.
23
24 AJ: Wow, this has been just a joy to sit here and learn more about your life. We've known each
25 other a couple of years now, but you know, very rarely do you get a chance to really sit down
26 and have an in-depth conversation. Is there anything else that you are burning to share with me
27 or with potential viewers? And maybe let me phrase it to you like this, where do you see the
28 transgender community in 50 years?
29
30 EF: I think that the transgender community is going to be integrated into society on almost every
31 level because we are much more open and willing to help transgender youth feel comfortable
32 and good about being who they are. I think that is a huge thing. It wasn't there for me, wasn't
33 there for you.
34
35 AJ: Sure, not at all.
36
37 EF: It wasn't there for Caitlyn.
38
39 AJ: No.
40
41 EF: So I think we'll end up being dinosaurs. I don't think you'll see 55 year-olds or 53 year-olds, as in
42 my case, transitions because as youth they'll be . . .
43
44 AJ: They're coming out at 6.
45

- 1 EF: Yeah, which I think is wonderful. I think the challenge there is to get the general population to
2 understand and accept it and not think it's something that shouldn't be done. But I think the
3 trans community will become less of a novelty as it is today and more of a mainstream group of
4 people, similar to what's going on in the gay and lesbian community. That's my hope.
5
- 6 AJ: So you're optimistic.
7
- 8 EF: Yeah, I really am. I've always been pretty optimistic. And you know what? It's all about being
9 your true self – seriously. And there's nothing better than being honest with yourself and being
10 in sync.
11
- 12 AJ: Wow, that's says it all. Thank you, Erica.
13
- 14 EF: You're welcome – thank you.