

Chloe Alexa Landry  
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins  
Interviewer

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



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 Chloe Alexa Landry -CAL

3  
4

5 AJ: My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am the oral historian with the Transgender Oral History Project  
6 at the University of Minnesota. I am here today with Chloe Alexa Landry and we're just going to  
7 spend a little time together talking about your history and your life experience as a transgender  
8 person in the upper Midwest. Chloe, can you tell me your full name, your preferred gender  
9 pronouns – how you prefer people to refer to you, as well as your gender identity, how you see  
10 yourself, and what was your gender assigned at birth?

11

12 CAL: Gender assigned at birth was male and as a little kid, I accepted that until 1943 – three years  
13 old, at that time and my mother comes home with my sister.

14

15 AJ: You were three?

16

17 CAL: I was three.

18

19 AJ: OK.

20

21 CAL: She brings home Pat. Patty was getting diapered one day so she was naked and I came up and  
22 looked at her and when mom came back, I said, "When do I get one of those?" pointing to you  
23 know what.

24

25 AJ: Her vagina?

26

27 CAL: Yes.

28

29 AJ: OK.

30

31 CAL: And whatever mom said, that little three-year-old boy understood never ask this question of an  
32 adult again. My mother wasn't too great at answering questions that didn't scare you and so I  
33 put that aside. Four years later in grade school, we had a very mean nun that became principal  
34 there. She, in turn, took one of the seventh or eighth grade boys that liked playing near the girls  
35 all the time, she dressed him up as a girl – shoes, anklets, barrettes, and everything. And I  
36 thought, "I'm crying because I want to dress like that, why can't I?" And then I saw why. She  
37 was ridiculed by her peers, all the other boys, and when she, I use the term she because she was  
38 looking good, when she came around the corner and the girls saw her, I'd say they were worse  
39 than the boys.

40

41 AJ: Really?

42

43 CAL: Yes.

44

45 AJ: So that traumatized you.

46

1 CAL: That meant that never share this with anybody else. The sad thing is, through my life my best  
2 buddy, I met him on the steps of kindergarten in 1945, he died in 1986 of AIDS, and I've had a  
3 number of other friends that they died in 1986 because of AIDS, but I never got to share it with  
4 them. I was part of the group and never knew it.  
5  
6 AJ: Oh wow. Let me just go back a little bit, because you told me a lot already. Where did you go to  
7 grammar school? Where are you from?  
8  
9 CAL: If you look out that window behind you, it's the city of Minneapolis. We're on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor and  
10 as the crow flies, it's not even a mile from the window here where I grew up – it's on  
11 Washington Street and Broadway in Northeast Minneapolis.  
12  
13 AJ: So you were born and raised in Minneapolis?  
14  
15 CAL: All in Minneapolis, and the school I went to was a Catholic school, it only had four rooms in it  
16 and four teachers for eight grades.  
17  
18 AJ: Wow.  
19  
20 CAL: It was interesting and different.  
21  
22 AJ: Yeah, that's an interesting school. You went to school in 1946?  
23  
24 CAL: I started in 1945-46, and when I started school we were taught in French and English. But by  
25 1947, everything was straight English. All of the schools over in this whole area where ethnic  
26 schools where they . . .  
27  
28 AJ: Can you say the name of the school?  
29  
30 CAL: It was Our Lady of Lourdes or Notre Dame, which is Our Lady in French. The school is gone and  
31 there's a senior high rise . . . high rise, all four floors.  
32  
33 AJ: Oh goodness. What was your home life like? Your mom sort of . . .?  
34  
35 CAL: Mom was . . . let's put it this way, I never could have a conversation with her about feelings.  
36  
37 AJ: Really?  
38  
39 CAL: There's one event . . . we went to a movie back in 1946 or 1947 and it was that priest that  
40 started Boy's Town. That night when we came home, I was crying in the bedroom and she came  
41 in and I shared that . . . the priest and the stuff, it was just sad. And she said, "That's just a  
42 movie, don't do that." But there was . . . as kids, myself and two sisters, could never share our  
43 feelings with her, it was only her feelings that counted. Other than that, my father – he really  
44 took care of me, we were best buddies. And unfortunately he died of chemical poisoning in  
45 1956.  
46

1 AJ: So you were fairly young.  
2  
3 CAL: Two days before my sixteenth birthday.  
4  
5 AJ: Oh boy. So after that you guys lived . . . just mom?  
6  
7 CAL: Just mom.  
8  
9 AJ: Did she remarry?  
10  
11 CAL: Oh God, no. She . . . we'll skip this part.  
12  
13 AJ: OK, that's fine.  
14  
15 CAL: That was things that she did, it was her life. But we did our thing too.  
16  
17 AJ: How many brothers and sisters did you have?  
18  
19 CAL: I have two sisters. They're both younger, we're all . . . we're three years apart to the first sister  
20 and six years apart to the second sister.  
21  
22 AJ: OK, so three years . . .  
23  
24 CAL: And months at the same time.  
25  
26 AJ: How were they growing up?  
27  
28 CAL: We all felt about the same in many things, we jokingly refer back to certain nights and stuff. My  
29 two sisters, they're very different and they . . . my first sister, Pat and I, we get along real well.  
30 There was a time there that we didn't. Right now, her husband passed a couple years ago and I  
31 told her about what I am. I lucked out in that case. My youngest sister, her girlfriend's daughter  
32 is now her son and is a doctor and a lawyer in Hawaii . . .  
33  
34 AJ: Hang on, wait a minute. You just kind of dropped a little bomb in there.  
35  
36 CAL: What was the little bomb?  
37  
38 AJ: You said, "Your sister's daughter is now her son?"  
39  
40 CAL: No, no – not my sister's daughter. My sister's girlfriend's daughter. No, not my sister. Her  
41 daughter and I get along great – that's my niece. And my niece and I talk for hours on the  
42 phone, her mother and I . . . if the conversation lasts three minutes, it's epic.  
43  
44 AJ: So who is this person again that lives in Hawaii?  
45

- 1 CAL: It was the daughter of her girlfriend, she became a trans man and she is now a doctor and a  
2 lawyer in Hawaii.  
3
- 4 AJ: Wow, a doctor and a lawyer.  
5
- 6 CAL: And a lawyer. My sister understood that. My first sister, Pat, she got it because she was an HR  
7 person for some major corporations and she's helped people like me go through the transition  
8 and be introduced into the workforce.  
9
- 10 AJ: This is such a rich conversation, Chloe Alexa, but you did not tell us how you identify.  
11
- 12 CAL: Presently?  
13
- 14 AJ: Yes.  
15
- 16 CAL: All right. Chloe was hidden for years. She dressed, albeit in many cases ashamedly, in wherever  
17 I lived or worked with the door locked and barred. I kept a box of clothes, the box was marked  
18 "Halloween clothes," and I would take them out when nobody was coming around and I had  
19 work to do. I'd get high heels out, all the clothes, dress up, and put a bar on the door and go to  
20 work. I would work all day that way and then take them off and go back home at night.  
21
- 22 AJ: Wow. How long did this go on?  
23
- 24 CAL: That went on up until . . . I went into the VA in 2010, prostate test in October and they said,  
25 "You have cancer." I said, "Great." "And we'll take care of it." A week later there was a second  
26 test for the colon and after I got off the table, the doctor holds up a picture saying, "Do you  
27 know what that is?" I said, "Yes, you've got cancer and it's ASAP, correct?" "Yes." I said, "The  
28 surgical time is already allotted, it's yours." A couple days before Thanksgiving in 2010 they did  
29 the colon surgery and 2011 was the year that Chloe learned how Chloe got to be. Spent the  
30 whole year on chemotherapy so you're not in very good condition to work or do stuff. At that  
31 time, I searched the internet for everything I could find and I read daily on it. I became part of  
32 replying to a number of different groups on there, which I still do.  
33
- 34 AJ: About?  
35
- 36 CAL: About being trans.  
37
- 38 AJ: OK, she finally said it.  
39
- 40 CAL: Yes. In 2011 at the VA, the Veteran's Administration here in Minneapolis, I met a trans lady  
41 before when I was there for some medical stuff and we became friends.  
42
- 43 AJ: Did she work there?  
44
- 45 CAL: She was working there at the time and she was also, like me, a customer. What we did is . . . I  
46 called her up in 2011 and I asked her, "Is the VA doing anything on trans people?" And she said,

1            “Yes, we just started a group.” This would have been February of 2011, I got into the group  
2            shortly after it had started, and in there they ask you, “What’s your name and what pronouns do  
3            you prefer?”  
4  
5        AJ:        Really?  
6  
7        CAL:      Yes.  
8  
9        AJ:        In the group or at the VA?  
10  
11      CAL:      The first day in the group. I said, “Chloe, and female pronouns.” And that started it, Chloe was  
12            finally out.  
13  
14      AJ:        Wow. So, you’ve been living your life as Chloe Alexa since 2011?  
15  
16      CAL:      2011, yes.  
17  
18      AJ:        Before then, was there any emotional drama for you? Did you feel, in any way, depressed or  
19            down or you just lived your life?  
20  
21      CAL:      No, I lived it. And I’ve given a lot of thought to that too. A couple things transpired in there.  
22            Back in 1961 I seriously was looking into transition at that time – physically.  
23  
24      AJ:        In 1961?  
25  
26      CAL:      1961. I had the money to do it, I had the inclination. When I did some research on the surgery,  
27            that’s the part that made me very leery. It was not like it is today. By 1969, I got married in  
28            1969, and that’s when Renee Richards and Lynn Conway went through their surgery, which was  
29            a lot better than 1961. And I thought, “Missed the mark.” I was married 19 years and back a  
30            year or so before I got divorced, I attempted to explain it to my wife what I was, the need for  
31            dressing. We didn’t have the word transgender then, we had some other stuff. She was a nurse  
32            and a professor of nursing at the University of Minnesota. That was one of the leading places  
33            for this at one time.  
34  
35      AJ:        Absolutely. It still is pretty good.  
36  
37      CAL:      It still is, yes. But she cared nothing to find out or do that – just another thing. Of course, we  
38            were never friends. What says a lot about me is the fact that I was always praying, up to the  
39            end, for her to be my friend. She was the woman I was with for 19 years and I’m still looking  
40            that she wants to be my friend? It never happened. But I’ll tell you . . .  
41  
42      AJ:        So you guys don’t talk now at all?  
43  
44      CAL:      We never talked when we were married.  
45  
46      AJ:        Wow, for 19 years.

1  
2 CAL: In the past . . . what, since we got divorced in 1987, we haven't said but a couple paragraphs in  
3 all that time. Her husband is an old neighbor, they were shacking up a year before we got  
4 divorced. But he's still a friend, I talk to him for hours. But for her, we don't talk, there's  
5 nothing really in common. But that goes back to what I didn't know about being trans. The  
6 young people today, they at least understand it. I can remember an event back in 1956, I was  
7 with the class valedictorian of Holy Angels, an all-girls high school here in town, I was sitting in a  
8 brand new 1956 Chev, the hottest car on the road back then, out in the airport parking lot,  
9 which was on 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue – not what everybody knows today. And, I must have asked myself a  
10 couple hundred times that night, "Why cannot you kiss her?" And in a book called, *True Selves*,  
11 the answer is, back in those days if you've got a female brain, women didn't make love to  
12 women. Simple answer. It's sort of how I looked at stuff all through my life. It's from the other  
13 side. I've always thought that I had a female brain too, that came to me in high school.

14  
15 AJ: There is this phenomenon called lesbianism where women do make love to women.

16  
17 CAL: Yes, so when I was having . . . we can put this in there, it doesn't have to be cut, when I was  
18 having sex with my wife, I was the woman – not the man. And that went on all through the  
19 marriage.

20  
21 AJ: She was aware of this?

22  
23 CAL: No.

24  
25 AJ: This was in your own . . . ?

26  
27 CAL: This was me. And that's what has kept me alive and I didn't commit suicide or do anything like  
28 that. I could put myself into the position if I saw a picture of a girl . . . if I saw a beautiful girl on  
29 the street, it wasn't that I wanted to poke her – I wanted to be her. But that way, if you can  
30 fanaticize that you are the part, it was a relief. And then when I did come to my wife at that  
31 time and attempt to explain it, I had also made query to Tri-Ess to see what that was like.

32  
33 AJ: Tri-Ess?

34  
35 CAL: Yes.

36  
37 AJ: Is that an organization?

38  
39 CAL: They have an organization here in town. It's Society for the Second Self. I met with them for  
40 coffee and to me they looked at dressing up, they're transvestites, and when I put the clothes  
41 on, I am comfortable as can be because I'm supposed to be wearing these clothes to begin with.  
42 There's a lady in the building here, she's 87 and a good friend, she says, "Well when you walk  
43 down the street, how do you feel walking in clothes like that?" I said, "Well I get up in the  
44 morning, I put them on and I go out. That's what I'm supposed to be wearing. Why should I  
45 think about it?" It's a feeling that I've always wanted and could never share and then I did it. It  
46 was something I wish I hadn't put off as long.



1  
2 AJ: Did you and your wife have children?  
3  
4 CAL: We have two children – a son that is going to be 45 in one month, and a daughter that is 40  
5 now.  
6  
7 AJ: What's your relationship like with your children?  
8  
9 CAL: I haven't seen my daughter for 25+ years. That was a product of the divorce.  
10  
11 AJ: So her estrangement then was long before you came out?  
12  
13 CAL: Oh, very much so. Her mother shared a lot of stuff with her that was . . .  
14  
15 AJ: Adult stuff between the two of you guys?  
16  
17 CAL: Yes. And that was totally unnecessary. They slept together for years too because . . . the last  
18 five years or something in the house, I'd sleep downstairs on the couch. My son, we get along.  
19 We got along a lot better but he changed. In order to prepare him for my coming out, I sent him  
20 some pre-information about transgender on there. When I sent that to him, that sort of shut  
21 him off complete. What I've learned later on is that he doesn't like surprises from friends of his.  
22 He has two very good, close friends and he's not as close to them the way he's not as close to  
23 me. We all get treated the same, he doesn't share a lot about himself with anybody – me  
24 included. But we still text regularly, we email, and once in a while he stops by and we do coffee.  
25 He does a lot of nice stuff.  
26  
27 AJ: Do you have grandchildren?  
28  
29 CAL: That will never happen because my two children grew up with the screaming me-me's for  
30 parents. There was an ongoing fight monthly and stuff. My son understands what was going  
31 on, my wife – she had an agenda and that was to get back at her mother. She was an abused  
32 child growing up, her mother used to lock her in a closet, and it was the maid that got her out all  
33 the time and took care of her. The maid was called Mommy Elaina and when I moved down to  
34 Columbia with her, my Spanish became really fluent at relative's houses . . .  
35  
36 AJ: You lived in Columbia?  
37  
38 CAL: Oh yes, for over four years.  
39  
40 AJ: Really, which part?  
41  
42 CAL: Bogota, Columbia.  
43  
44 AJ: Bogota, Columbia – what did you do there? What did you guys do there?  
45

1 CAL: I met an American, we had . . . our kids went to the same Montessori school, which was right by  
2 our house. He wanted to start a restaurant making pizza. I said, "I can cook anything." So I  
3 made a pizza for him based on Broadway Pizza.

4  
5 AJ: Oh wow, some of the best pizza in the country and now you took it all the way around the  
6 world.

7  
8 CAL: Yes. I liked it, mine was better. My father-in-law moved the mother-in-law into a nice high rise  
9 apartment house and the old house was empty at the time except for two rental properties  
10 under it. What I did is, I turned the old house into a restaurant for pizza, it was called, "La  
11 Pianola." The player piano. The restaurant came and it started to bring in business, the people  
12 loved the pizza, and the partner took the original 50/50 partnership and it was reduced in a  
13 matter of weeks down to, "You have to earn your way in" as business was increasing. At that  
14 point I thought, "It's time to revert back to the U.S." Which I did. The restaurant died within a  
15 matter of a couple of weeks.

16  
17 AJ: After you left.

18  
19 CAL: They didn't know how to cook the pizza or anything in there. So at that point, I did leave, we  
20 came back here in 1975 and I found out that the one cook that was trained, that I trained how  
21 to make the food, she was sought out by a restaurant person a couple blocks away from my  
22 place. She told him, and showed him, how I made my pizza, the ingredients and stuff. He is a  
23 multi-millionaire. He's the whatever, Cicero's of Columbia. So made real money on pizza.

24  
25 AJ: The godfather of pizza.

26  
27 CAL: The godfather of pizza in Columbia – my pizza but I didn't get a dollar out of it. Everything was  
28 prepared to go on TV, on one of these soap operas and there was a movie . . . there were two  
29 people that were going to make movies that would have used the restaurant. None of that  
30 transpired. But we were back here, I went back to running the movies in the Walker Art Center  
31 and stuff. Over the years I've taught photography, that's what I studied in Germany back in the  
32 1960s, mid-1960s. We traveled around Europe looking in the museums at other people's  
33 artwork.

34  
35 AJ: So you're a photographer?

36  
37 CAL: Yes, I've taught it for a number of years too. I taught photography, still photography, lab work.  
38 I've taught psychology of motion pictures, I've taught the technical side of motion pictures. And  
39 I still teach my favorite subject which is steam and that's how to drive a steam locomotive as a  
40 classroom course. Three courses . . . it started out with four people, twelve people, twenty-four  
41 people in three different runnings I did one year. But the same complaint in all of them, there's  
42 not enough classroom information that they can carry. So I have a PowerPoint presentation  
43 that will take and fill in the gaps and I'll restart the course again.

44  
45 AJ: Where do you teach?

- 1 CAL: Roosevelt is one school that I taught at, but I teach for the Minneapolis Public School system. I  
2 did teach when I worked at the Walker, and there, that was motion pictures. We taught . . . the  
3 guys that made Fargo?  
4
- 5 AJ: Yeah, the Coen brothers.  
6
- 7 CAL: The Coen brothers, they were students at that time, at the Walker, for the course that we ran.  
8
- 9 AJ: Oh my goodness. So you taught the Coen brothers?  
10
- 11 CAL: Yes, I was one of the people. During that class session, we ran it for three years, I was picked  
12 best teacher all three years. What they did for was, for me, it was kind of ironic, we usually ran  
13 about 200-some kids in there, 225, and whenever a teacher gave a lecture and stuff and they  
14 had a Q&A, the kids would partially leave, only a few would stay, the teachers would leave.  
15 When I gave a class, none of the students left, the teachers left, I gave my lecture, the Q&A  
16 started, and it was constant questions. The teachers would come in screaming, "The busses are  
17 here, we have to leave now." They didn't want to leave. We had a good thing going and I  
18 enjoyed it. It's the one thing, whatever I teach it's something that I really enjoy and it comes  
19 across.  
20
- 21 AJ: I am really interested in your . . . you said you went to the VA, so that means you were in the  
22 military.  
23
- 24 CAL: Yes, ma'am.  
25
- 26 AJ: Tell me about your service of this country, and thank you for your service to this country.  
27
- 28 CAL: You're welcome. It was interesting because I didn't have any money at the time, "So, I'll go in  
29 the Air Force." I went in, they put me in electronics, I have a problem with that in the fact that  
30 when I get on to a problem and I can't figure it out, I don't go out for help and it bugs me – it  
31 kind of causes a depression. So, down there, I went to school in Biloxi, Mississippi.  
32
- 33 AJ: Biloxi, Mississippi, right on the Gulf.  
34
- 35 CAL: Yes. And I failed the course – twice, it means you're out of the school.  
36
- 37 AJ: Oh wow.  
38
- 39 CAL: And when I met the board for the second time, the captain on the board . . . captain or major,  
40 was my squadron commander. I explained to him it was just something I couldn't do. The next  
41 day I was called into his office back at the building and he told me, he said, "I know you know  
42 the subject because we've seen you put so many of our students through the school, I'm not  
43 going to ask you why you failed it but I wish you luck in your new profession." So as punishment  
44 they put you into the medics, I was put in a class of food inspectors, I came out of 45 people in  
45 the class in the top four, I got to pick the air base that I wanted to go to, and on the base the  
46 sergeant there was constantly after me to study for tests after six months. I told him, I said, "It's

1           taken care of.” I passed it with the highest score in the Air Force, that’s one job I did know but I  
2           wasn’t smart enough to keep doing it after I got out. I could have retired at 55 with a big salary,  
3           but I wouldn’t be here probably. But I enjoyed . . . what I did in my life, I enjoyed all of the  
4           things.

5  
6   AJ:       So you were aware of your gender identity while you were in the military.

7  
8   CAL:     Oh yes.

9  
10   AJ:      How did you deal with it?

11  
12   CAL:     Surreptitiously. I had a room . . . we had adapted two rooms in the office as bedrooms for the  
13           two of us that worked in the office. It was actually an abandoned old hospital from World War  
14           II. The new hospital was across the street in brick and mortar whereas this one was wood from  
15           the time. And in there, you could walk around for blocks, literally. I’d get dressed up and just  
16           walk around in there. There was no one that could come through if they were out doing their  
17           thing.

18  
19   AJ:       So you had a stash of clothes . . .

20  
21   CAL:     I had a stash of clothes then and everything. You’re very creative when you’re a trans person.

22  
23   AJ:       This is true.

24  
25   CAL:     I didn’t mix that much with . . . actually with kids when I was growing up or with guys in the Air  
26           Force. They would go out to drink and I met more wives with black eyes, running into  
27           doorknobs, of course.

28  
29   AJ:       Running into what?

30  
31   CAL:     Doorknobs.

32  
33   AJ:       I don’t quite understand.

34  
35   CAL:     The theory is that if they’re running on the floor they hit their eye into the doorknob, that’s why  
36           it’s black.

37  
38   AJ:       So you met more wives with black eyes, you said?

39  
40   CAL:     Black eyes, not with the color eyes, with black eyes.

41  
42   AJ:       OK.

43  
44   CAL:     And I thought, “That is the lamest excuse I have ever heard.”

45  
46   AJ:       Wow. So there was a lot of domestic violence happening?

1  
2 CAL: Domestic violence and drinking and I thought, "I don't want to do that." This whole  
3 neighborhood over here is Polish and Ukrainian. They drink. They'll drink most everybody else  
4 under the table, they're the only people I will drink with. The Ukies were all college people in  
5 there and we get into philosophical discussions, even after they'd lock the doors we'd still be  
6 there. We'd leave at 2 or better. It's just . . . and when I went to Europe, I never drank beer in  
7 the service either. We went to Europe, or I did, and my friends in Europe were all Ukrainian at  
8 that time too. So one night I get over there, I'm living in the girl's dorm and Iggy comes over and  
9 he says, "You're drinking beer tonight because you're in Germany." And from that night on, he  
10 gave me the best beer and I was turned on.  
11  
12 AJ: So you like beer?  
13  
14 CAL: I like strong dark beers, yes. Champagne is my preferred choice, but I'd drink hard liquor years  
15 ago just with friends but it was never a favorite.  
16  
17 AJ: So since you've been out, Chloe Alexa, what have been some of the challenges that you've faced  
18 in your life as a transgender person – a transgender woman?  
19  
20 CAL: Actually, life has been very good in the fact that I'm not hiding what I look like or anything from  
21 anybody. I'm pretty well accepted on the busses or train. I get into some good discussions and  
22 we had a real great one one night coming here on the bus. People didn't know anything about  
23 it, they were talking about it on the bus, and I said, "I'll give you an answer."  
24  
25 AJ: So they were just having a conversation about transgender people and you chimed in?  
26  
27 CAL: I said, "Excuse me but I'll give you the answer."  
28  
29 AJ: Were they being respectful, were they . . . ?  
30  
31 CAL: Oh very. The only people that are not respectful are people that are not very educated –  
32 ignorant would be the word for it. Other than that, we've had some great conversations. Why  
33 wouldn't they be great?  
34  
35 AJ: So you live in a senior high rise now?  
36  
37 CAL: Senior high rise now.  
38  
39 AJ: How is that?  
40  
41 CAL: It's been very interesting here. Only two problems in the building – the first one was moving in,  
42 there was a guy and he kept looking at my breasts – they really attracted him. And he would  
43 make comments. Well, he made the fourth comment. I stopped, turned, came back and told  
44 him succinctly, "If you say one more word, ever, about my breasts, we're going to go see the  
45 manager and you'll be gone." And that was at 9am and at 5 that night he met me at the mailbox  
46 and apologized. The other one is a lady in here from a race that demands respect. She calls me

1 an it and last Sunday she started doing it numerous times to people on an elevator that she was  
2 riding on, you could hear here again with the it word. The manager knows about it and they're  
3 dealing with it.

4  
5 AJ: Why was she referring to you in the first place?

6  
7 CAL: That's a very good question but what it comes down to is what she said on that Sunday, it has to  
8 do with many of the Black people in the building are very religious, very Christian. Most  
9 Christians follow what the Catholic Church states and the Catholic Church got information from  
10 a man, a psychologist retired from Johns Hopkins University, his name was Paul McHugh.

11  
12 AJ: Paul McHugh?

13  
14 CAL: McHugh, yeah. M-c-H-u-g-h.

15  
16 AJ: OK.

17  
18 CAL: He hates trans people. He worked with John Money, who really altered the intersex people  
19 causing a friend of mine a very long life in the wrong gender. In doing the thing that he did, he  
20 told the last Pope that we don't need any medical medication for altering our bodies, like  
21 hormones, and we definitely don't need surgery. His peers rebuke him for that because it's  
22 1970 thinking, which has no place in this century.

23  
24 AJ: Absolutely.

25  
26 CAL: He has gone through a lot of stuff that way, anything he says – which the Wall Street Journal  
27 wrote an article, it's all a bunch of 1970 stuff, not honest.

28  
29 AJ: So speaking of hormones. To the extent that you are comfortable, tell me about any medical  
30 interventions you have had. Hormones? Surgery?

31  
32 CAL: Hormones. You know what happens when we get hormones. Starting in grade school I had  
33 pronounced breasts already.

34  
35 AJ: Really?

36  
37 CAL: Yes. In high school, if the team . . . when they played shirts and skins, that scared the heck out  
38 of me because if they were to have called me for skins I would have died right on the spot.  
39 Because once in a while when you're in the shower the guys would make mention or something  
40 like that, and it was embarrassing to me. But in the Air Force, either you're in first and out first  
41 or last in and out last. I watch it, but four years ago when I was at the VA, we have an  
42 endocrinologist that's one of the world's leading people in that – she and her husband, a Greek  
43 lady, and she started the program there and they asked, "Do you want to be part of that?" And  
44 I said, "Definitely." Because another doctor had told me, prior to the colon surgery, that the  
45 prostate can be handled with a shot of estrogen. Estrogen gives you boobs, it also controls the  
46 prostate. That's now known because from the prostate group, they in turn have been giving me

1 a shot in the left hip, six months later in the right hip for two years . . . three years. The last time  
2 we had a visit we held off on the shot to see if the estrogen held it in place because there's no  
3 testosterone in me at all anymore – strictly estrogen. It does hold the prostate in the perfect  
4 place for it so we're letting it go, no more shots. Three years-plus on hormones.  
5  
6 AJ: All right.  
7  
8 CAL: You keep moving the patch around.  
9  
10 AJ: Oh so you use a transdermal estradiol.  
11  
12 CAL: Yes, estradiol.  
13  
14 AJ: Wonderful. What's the effects like for you? Are there any emotional effects? Have the physical  
15 effects been the way you hoped them to be?  
16  
17 CAL: I've cried since I was a little kid, like telling you about that movie. I really can cry now a lot  
18 easier.  
19  
20 AJ: So there's a lot of emotional stuff?  
21  
22 CAL: That's much easier now. I don't know what else, but when you're a trans person growing up  
23 and you've got the wrong brain for the body you're in, you're very aware of when you drink my  
24 little finger is always up and I have to remember that because every once in a while, "Hey, why  
25 do you hold your little finger that way?" I don't know why but I do that. I walk like that quite a  
26 bit and I always held back on that. There's a lot of things you're aware of that you do not want  
27 to do feminine things because it gives yourself away to other people. Now, I don't have to think  
28 about it anymore – finally.  
29  
30 AJ: Finally. Has there been a specific moment or a specific person that had an impact on your  
31 decision to live your life openly?  
32  
33 CAL: Yes.  
34  
35 AJ: Who?  
36  
37 CAL: Sonya. Sonya was a lady that I met at the VA with the group. The first meeting I went to, she  
38 was young – she was only 28 or 29 at the time, and she dressed very well, her presence was very  
39 good, and I asked her for tea after the meeting. And from that day on, she's out in Vermont  
40 now, and we still talk. She impressed me that if she can come out, I can come out too. She was  
41 more than helpful – not only to me but to a number of other people in the group. That was  
42 something, because that was the first time I met people like me, was going to the meeting that  
43 day. We're all the same – we're different but yet same stories match in certain ways.  
44  
45 AJ: That's very true.  
46

- 1 CAL: It was freeing, actually, is what it was, for the first time to meet people that were exactly like  
2 you.  
3
- 4 AJ: So there's a big group at the VA? How many people would you say?  
5
- 6 CAL: We have 19 altogether. The lady leading it knew nothing about it and she shouldn't have been  
7 there. Of the 19 people in the group, only three "graduated" from the group and they were her  
8 favorites. But the rest of us were blatantly kicked out. I called her on it because we came up  
9 and at the end she kicked one of the people out of the group . . .  
10
- 11 AJ: So was it only a transgender group or was it an LGBT group?  
12
- 13 CAL: No, it was strictly transgender. It said on the thing, "Transgender Support Group," but after she  
14 kicked a person out, I got on the internet and I found out what a group really was consisted of  
15 and that it was a therapy group and not a support group. So I called her on it, I got kicked out,  
16 other friends got kicked out for other reasons. But they were not a legitimate reason for a  
17 support group, for their group – yes, she can kick us out. But it never was a support group.  
18
- 19 AJ: So you don't go to the VA for those . . .  
20
- 21 CAL: No, we only did that for not even a full year because we were all gone by the end of the year.  
22
- 23 AJ: But you still get your medical . . .?  
24
- 25 CAL: Oh yes. I hurt myself when I was in the service, so I am service connected.  
26
- 27 AJ: And the service, how do the doctors treat you there? Nurses and . . .?  
28
- 29 CAL: My doctor, she is great. I am the first trans person she has ever met, we go through the medical  
30 stuff fairly quick, then we talk about clothes and other things.  
31
- 32 AJ: So she's become a friend?  
33
- 34 CAL: She's become a very good friend. And all of the staff in the clinic that I go to, they really watch  
35 over me there. Walk in the door, "Hi Chloe." Everybody will come and say that. People look,  
36 but it's just . . . it's myself and another friend, he's intersexed – he comes in there. Both of us  
37 are treated really special because we're friendly with everybody.  
38
- 39 AJ: Yes, that goes a long way. That goes a very long way. Let's talk a little bit about relationships  
40 and love. Are you in a relationship right now?  
41
- 42 CAL: No. The relationships . . . I'll go back to the beginning, the first one. Being that I'm trans and  
43 have a female brain, having relationships was kind of difficult through high school. I was friendly  
44 with all women, I'm very comfortable with women. There was a lady here, she was going to  
45 marry a classmate's uncle, 20 years older than she is. We were at a party one night and I never  
46 had anybody play footsie with me under the table. She did and she came over to my lab at the



- 1 time, where I had one side that I lived in and the other side I had the business. She said, "Come  
2 on, we're going to do it." And we did. Now if I were to ask a person when, in your life, is the  
3 happiest moment and where is the saddest moment and did they ever transpire at the same  
4 time – yes!
- 5
- 6 AJ: So it was the happiest moment for you and the saddest moment.
- 7
- 8 CAL: The happiest and the saddest, because . . .
- 9
- 10 AJ: What made it sad?
- 11
- 12 CAL: To feel what it's like to be in a woman is the happiest, the saddest is that I'll never experience  
13 that. And that was all in one moment.
- 14
- 15 AJ: Wow.
- 16
- 17 CAL: Other than that, I'd meet girls and I got married because she was foreign and she wanted to  
18 marry me – what the heck? What she really did on there was, again, with my brain not wanting  
19 to rock the boat in any relationship, I always acquiesced to whatever their desires were. Over  
20 here on Central Avenue where it meets Hennepin and 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE, we were turning the corner  
21 from Central Avenue onto 5<sup>th</sup> Street and in the turn she was saying, "I think we'll go home to  
22 Bogota for Christmas, we'll get engaged, and then we'll go back and get married in March." My  
23 answer was OK, and I kept driving down the street. So it was not a big deal but that was the  
24 start. We were married 19 years. After the divorce, I thought, "Will I ever have a relationship  
25 again?" Oh yes – every weekend. Friends used to joke, "You're never alone on weekends, are  
26 you?" No.
- 27
- 28 AJ: Were these women or men?
- 29
- 30 CAL: Oh, with women. I am really a lesbian, no way the other way. I have friends that they do like  
31 guys, that's not my style. I've always loved women. The fun part is pleasing them. And I've got  
32 lesbian girlfriends, we grew up together – she's the same age I am and she has a partner out in  
33 California.
- 34
- 35 AJ: Do you consider yourself a part of the LGBT community? Do you have friends who are gay and  
36 lesbian and bisexual?
- 37
- 38 CAL: Very much so. Even before they knew I was a part of the group, I was a part of the group  
39 because most of the people around town that repair pipe organs, they're gay or many gay  
40 friends. Yeah, the first time I was with a group, we were down at the IDS top floor restaurant  
41 and sitting at the bar waiting for a table. There must have been about 12 of us there that night,  
42 and a guy came up and sat next to me and put his hand on my knee and said . . . I can't  
43 remember what he said, but I didn't touch him or anything. I looked at him and said, "You  
44 know, that's not my choice but I really appreciate the compliment." And he excused himself. It  
45 was very nice. All I ever heard about guys doing that was when you were in the Air Force, if I  
46 met a gay guy like that he'd beat the crap out of me. I don't know why people would want to do

1 that but they did. My best buddy, Todd, that I met on the steps of kindergarten, I didn't know  
2 he was gay until I was 30 years old. It didn't matter to me if people were different. My high  
3 school friends, I would say most of them were gay and never knowing it, never asked. They  
4 dyed their hair pink for certain stuff and green for Irish day. I just thought that's kind of neat – I  
5 still do. And there's a group in town, the organ people, one of the guys in there I still kid him all  
6 the time, "When are you going to start dying your hair again?" But the theatre up the street  
7 here is owned by a gay gentleman and Tom and I have been friends for 40-some years.

8  
9 AJ: Is that right? OK.

10  
11 CAL: And when you go up there, it's a lot of gay people.

12  
13 AJ: So you have a deep connection to the gay, queer community?

14  
15 CAL: Oh very much so, it's been that way since my twenties – or high school actually.

16  
17 AJ: What do you think the relationship is between the L, the G, the B, and then the T? Does it really  
18 fit?

19  
20 CAL: There are separations amongst all of them, but I think we all belong together because . . . OK,  
21 myself, I'm a lesbian trans woman so I'm still part of the group. The T part and the L part.  
22 Hopefully someday I'm going to find a partner in there so that Chloe can share her life with  
23 somebody else that appreciates Chloe.

24  
25 AJ: I hope that for you too, Chloe. Do you think there's an agenda for the transgender community?  
26 You tell me that you've done a lot of reading and researching and writing on the internet, what  
27 do you think the agenda is for the transgender community?

28  
29 CAL: I'm really wondering myself because what I would like to see and what Ms. Jenner didn't . . . in  
30 any of her things did she tell people about our brain and how we became trans?

31  
32 AJ: Caitlin Jenner?

33  
34 CAL: Caitlin, yes.

35  
36 AJ: I don't think she did, I didn't see any of that kind of information.

37  
38 CAL: That's the thing. Whenever I talk to people I ask them how do you think we became  
39 transgender. Most people don't have an answer for it outside of choice. Unfortunately, the  
40 Christian group, it's a forbidden thing by their religion, therefore it's got to be bad and so forth.

41  
42 AJ: What do you think the answer is?

43  
44 CAL: Hey, it's a birth anomaly. We're born that way, it happened with hormones in the mother's  
45 womb, it's just something that happens – just like heart difficulties, blindness, deafness,  
46 whatever – cleft palette. I always compare it with that when I reply. It's just I would like to see

1 people come out and explain that and I'm dealing with one church that I occasionally go to. I  
 2 don't go much now because I don't have transportation over there.  
 3  
 4 AJ: Which church?  
 5  
 6 CAL: It's Unity, it's about by Courage Center.  
 7  
 8 AJ: Oh yeah, I've been there.  
 9  
 10 CAL: Very nice. The minister there is gay, his partner is there too, very nice people. I voted for him  
 11 when it came time to choose him.  
 12  
 13 AJ: Oh wow.  
 14  
 15 CAL: And there's a lot of gay . . . the lady that plays the piano, Lori, she's definitely there.  
 16  
 17 AJ: Lori Dokken?  
 18  
 19 CAL: Yes. And a number of other women are. So, hey we all feel comfortable there – who cares?  
 20  
 21 AJ: Yes, I've gone there. It's a comfortable feeling.  
 22  
 23 CAL: Yes, it is – very.  
 24  
 25 AJ: Have you ever worked or volunteered for any LGBT organizations?  
 26  
 27 CAL: Yes. I go over to the capital when they need people.  
 28  
 29 AJ: Oh, with OutFront Minnesota?  
 30  
 31 CAL: Yes, you've got to meet your senator and stuff – yes.  
 32  
 33 AJ: So lobby day.  
 34  
 35 CAL: Oh yes. I'm there.  
 36  
 37 AJ: So you were a part of the marriage equality movement?  
 38  
 39 CAL: Yes, I was there and a bunch of other friends I met there too.  
 40  
 41 AJ: So there is some political activism in your life?  
 42  
 43 CAL: Oh yes. The idea is to be me as me because people will see what we are. They know we're  
 44 different, if they've got a question I'll answer it just like I'll answer yours.  
 45  
 46 AJ: So visibility is an important thing for you?

1  
2 CAL: Very important, yes. That's the one thing . . . now, being that there's more of us out, and Bruce  
3 Jenner becoming Caitlyn, more people are aware of it. Some have questions, a lot are afraid to  
4 ask.  
5  
6 AJ: Do you think Caitlin is a good thing for the community? Coming out was a good thing?  
7  
8 CAL: I think it's a good thing, yes. It's brought more to the front so . . . the women of color make the  
9 biggest dent to me. The two ladies on there, well actually there's more than two – there's about  
10 four that I'm really familiar with. Caitlin really did it because she's white and she's got a name  
11 and history.  
12  
13 AJ: You mentioned women of color and I'm not sure if you're aware of this but so far in 2015, 21  
14 transgender women of color, almost all of them Black . . .  
15  
16 CAL: There's more.  
17  
18 AJ: There's more, you're probably absolutely right. Why is this happening? What do you think  
19 about this? How do you feel about it?  
20  
21 CAL: If you look . . . I just wrote one this morning, a reply, in the fact that in three countries . . . you  
22 have Christians, the two most Christian countries in the world are Brazil, Mexico, and the United  
23 States. If you take Brazil, they've killed over 95 trans women this year, so far.  
24  
25 AJ: Oh my God.  
26  
27 CAL: If you get to Mexico, they've killed over 55 trans women this year. We've killed something like  
28 27 in the U.S. It's the macho man person, they feel they're doing a service by getting rid of us.  
29 To me, the more people know that we were born this way, it was not a choice – although it  
30 would be a good one, because it's really nice. When you really feel yourself, you feel the beauty  
31 of it.  
32  
33 AJ: So you think it's religion and . . . patriarchy?  
34  
35 CAL: It's religion that gets . . .  
36  
37 AJ: Patriarchy, transphobia.  
38  
39 CAL: Right. And why it's there is strictly because of ignorance. I've called the Pope a killer, the  
40 present one, because he is killing people because of that.  
41  
42 AJ: Because of not accepting . . .  
43  
44 CAL: Not accepting us because of religious grounds. And the religion does everything to hide that it's  
45 not a choice or stuff in there. But I think the more people get to know us and talk about us . . . it

1           went from . . . what was it? A very small number of people knew a trans person compared with  
2           a gay and now the trans group is rising, more people know us.  
3  
4   AJ:     We are very much becoming much more visible.  
5  
6   CAL:   Hopefully – yes.  
7  
8   AJ:     And very recently too.  
9  
10   CAL:   Yes.  
11  
12   AJ:     It's been very recent, but very high profile. Laverne Cox, Janet Mock, all of these famous people  
13           who are out there in the world.  
14  
15   CAL:   Candace Cain, which people . . . she came and people forgot about her.  
16  
17   AJ:     Yeah, she's been around for quite a while but now that she's dating Caitlin Jenner, I think people  
18           know a little bit about her now. They're dating, you know?  
19  
20   CAL:   Oh, they'd make a cute couple.  
21  
22   AJ:     Well, I am just thrilled with this conversation, Chloe. I guess, one last thing. Has your gender  
23           identity had an impact on your professional life at all?  
24  
25   CAL:   Not really.  
26  
27   AJ:     You didn't really come out until you were retired.  
28  
29   CAL:   Right. Most of my friends that I deal with and stuff, they accept it. Some have a hard time with  
30           the name because they've known me for 50-some years as another person.  
31  
32   AJ:     Right, exactly. Which is understandable.  
33  
34   CAL:   Yes. When I say it's Chloe calling, they know who it is. Other friends? They flipped immediately  
35           to Chloe. A kid that I grew up with, our fathers grew up together and we grew up together, he  
36           calls me Chloe. A girlfriend that lived across the alley, she lives in Miami, she calls me CA.  
37  
38   AJ:     I can work with that.  
39  
40   CAL:   Me too. It's kind of interesting, I like the nicknames they're coming up with.  
41  
42   AJ:     Is there anything else you think that I didn't ask you about that you want to talk about?  
43  
44   CAL:   I don't know. If you come up with some new questions, I'm open. All I know is that the journey  
45           was hidden for too long and once you finally come out, it's just . . . I'm relaxed. And moving into  
46           this building, I've really become relaxed with it. I've got other friends that are going through

1 different stages, they're coming out and being themselves, I'm there for anybody to give them a  
2 hand with it. I know a few people in the group, they're kind of one-sided because . . . the one  
3 thing I don't like to see is when people transition, some of us will go for the full surgery . . . the  
4 name should be gender confirmation surgery and not sex reassignment. But gender  
5 confirmation is really nailing it right down to what it should be.

6  
7 AJ: Absolutely.

8  
9 CAL: And there's a bunch of us that, for many reasons, if I were to put a bikini on, we'd have . . . we  
10 could paint a road map with all the surgeries. I thought, God I see some of these beautiful  
11 women out there, they can do it and they look great. Me, it's all . . . about six or seven surgeries  
12 in there. But it just . . . it's really relaxed to be yourself after all of that time. I wouldn't trade it.  
13 I wish I would have come out earlier and now I'm really . . . Jazz is the best thing that's ever  
14 happened to the young kids.

15  
16 AJ: So Jazz, tell me a little bit . . . some of the people watching this may not know who Jazz is.

17  
18 CAL: Jazz, when you look back in history, was a young girl that came out when she was about two  
19 years old to her family and told them she was a girl, not a boy. Now she has a TV program, she's  
20 14-years-old, and she is doing a great . . .

21  
22 AJ: I think she was on Oprah when she was eight.

23  
24 CAL: Yes, she was on . . . what's that other lady – the older woman on CBS or something?

25  
26 AJ: Sally Jessie . . .

27  
28 CAL: Not Sally, but . . . a famous woman for interviewing people.

29  
30 AJ: Barbara Walters.

31  
32 CAL: Barbara Walters – yes, even younger there. And Oprah – she was very good, she's a good  
33 speaker when she comes out. Nicole Maines is one from Maine, she won a \$75,000 suit against  
34 the Maine School Board because she was not allowed to go in the correct bathroom.

35  
36 AJ: What's her name?

37  
38 CAL: I think it's . . . there's Coy Mathis and a girl named Maines. I can't remember her name, she is  
39 going to be on a TV program coming . . . or it's past already. But her father stood behind her  
40 and when they went to court, on the east coast, the lawyers stood behind her, the psychologist  
41 stood behind, and state people stood behind her, doctors stood behind her. They sued the  
42 school and they won. There's another one in Colorado, I think that could have been Coy. She, in  
43 turn, they sued the school down there and they won also. It's for use of the correct bathroom.  
44 And now there's a senator in Wisconsin that wants to cut that off again. And there's even one  
45 here in Minnesota that wants to pull our rights to go into the bathroom. It won't stop me, I'll  
46 still go.

1  
2 AJ: Yeah, it's kind of a human thing that everybody has got to do.  
3  
4 CAL: We all have to go and I have been going for four years and I will never go back the other way.  
5 It's been an interesting morning.  
6  
7 AJ: There you go. Well, Chloe Alexa, thank you so much for this wonderful conversation. You are  
8 delightful, you are beautiful, I love the sparkle in your eye – it's really quite something. You  
9 seem very happy.  
10  
11 CAL: Yes I am, for the first real time in my life, to be me.  
12  
13 AJ: Thank you.  
14  
15 CAL: You're welcome.  
16