

NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

CHELSEA GOODWIN AND DR. RUSTY MAE MOORE

Interviewer: Nadia Awad

Date of Interview: May 4, 2017

Location of Interview: Home of Chelsea and Rusty in Pine Hill, New York

Transcribed by Colette Arrand

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Nadia Awad: Okay, it's May 4, 2017.

Chelsea Goodwin: Happy Star Wars Day, may the fourth be with you.

Awad: I am in Pine Hill with Chelsea and Rusty May, and I'm here to do an oral history with the New York Trans Oral History Archive, sorry, which seeks to document the lives of trans folks who lived in New York. Alright. Okay, thank you. So we're going to do the interview together, just so you know. Alright. So can you tell me a little bit about where you were born and what that place was like?

Goodwin: I was born in Bangor, Maine. We were supposedly there for one year, I don't remember a bloody thing about it. I grew up in a town called Broadway, New Jersey, which is in Franklin Township in Warren County. If you are driving from Washington to Phillipsburg on Route 57 and blink, you will miss the whole bloody town and that would be jolly good luck for you. That having been said, let's start at the very beginning. I'd like to start with future history and present history, and then we can get into my past history. My name in full is Chelsea Goodwin. I host a radio show on WIOX, 91.3FM in Roxbury, New York, called In Goth We Trust. This very night, as a matter of fact, I'm going to be interviewing one of my favorite bands, A Halo Called Fred. Tomorrow night I will be on stage at the Goblin Market as part of the Steampunk World's Fair in Piscataway, New Jersey at the Embassy Suites and Hotel in Piscataway—and the Radisson Hotel in Piscataway. The Steampunk World's Fair is the largest steampunk event on the west coast, it is part of an organization with which I'm proud to perform from time to time called Jeff Mack Events. Jeff Mack used to bring us an event called Wicked Fair, he now brings us Glimmerdark, Dark Side of the Con, the Steampunk World's Fair, Steampunk in the Catskills, Halloween in the Catskills, the Geeky Kink Event, the Geeky Kink Event New England Edition, and a host of other wonderful fan events for people who are into fantasy, science fiction, weird branches of paganism, kink, polyamory, all sorts of wonderfulness. I occasionally have the privilege of performing at Jeff Mack events as a sort of Mistress of Ceremonies sort of, in tune with all of the bands that I introduce have been on the radio show at least once. So I'm sort of a cross between being a steampunk version of Elvira and a Goth version of the old-time rock and roll shows where you'd have a slate of bands and somebody like Alan Freed or Wolfman Jack or Cousin Brucie or one of the popular DJs of the day introducing and kibitzing with a slate of fans. It's a wonderful life, and that's what I'm doing now. I also have written a series of novels about Lady Silvia Dorchester, who has monogrammed everything, and her partner Dr. Drusilla Styles and her cat Salem in a mythical community known as Pine Hell, where they encounter mad scientists with air ships, vampires, werewolves, the usual thing one encounters in a small town in the Catskills.

Awad: How long have you lived here in Pine Hill?

Goodwin: Since 2008.

Awad: What brought you to Pine Hill specifically?

Goodwin: A 1985 Jeep Wagoner.

Awad: Was there a reason you chose this particular town?

Goodwin: Yes. That's where the dot landed when Rusty was throwing darts at a map of the Catskills.

Awad: And Rusty, what do you do? What's your life now?

Rusty Mae Moore: Well, I retired as a university professor in 2011, when I was 70, and so I've dedicated my life to being retired now. My main thing that I do that's very important, I act as Chelsea's staff so that, you know, whatever Chelsea is trying to do, I try to be helpful, be there, do the little things that have to be done sometimes. And also, I'm involved in the Museum. I'm on the museum board for the town where we live. The town of Sandakan. And I go to the radio show all the time.

Goodwin: You're a part of the show. You're our septuagenarian ninja turtle.

Moore: Yeah right. I mean, I'm on every show, I usually have little spots that usually have some kind of an angle to them. Maybe local history, maybe world history, and other stuff. Aside from that I just kind of drive the car back and forth sometimes.

Awad: So were you a history professor?

Moore: No, I was a professor—well, my PhD is in international economic relations, but I taught, most of the time I taught in a school of business and I would teach things like introduction to international business, graduate course in international business or business in Latin America, business in Europe, international marketing, stuff like that, those courses. So I was like a—I did that for about 33 years at Hofstra University and before that I was at a bunch of other schools too.

Goodwin: How about yourself? Where are you from and what do you do?

Awad: I am mainly an editor and a video producer. I grew up in Florida, yeah, on the Gulf Coast, two hours south of Tampa.

Goodwin: Is that near St. Augustine?

Awad: No, it's much further south. Although St. Augustine is a gorgeous place to visit, I have to say. We have better beaches though.

Goodwin: Do you make it to the Magic Kingdom?

Awad: No, I try to avoid the Magic Kingdom like the plague.

Goodwin: Really? Why? It's the only thing in Florida that appeals to me these days.

Awad: The Magic Kingdom isn't as magical as one might expect. But I do love the beaches. It's gorgeous there. And I like the wildlife too, the gators. Can you tell me a little bit about how you got involved in paganism, I guess, and then golf—golf! Why did I just say golf? Goth communities?

Goodwin: Well these are all very different questions of course. My involvement with paganism or knowing anything about it would be in the years 1979 and 80 I was a sophomore—excuse me, freshman, sophomore? Sophomore at Mt. Claire State University, and I was taking a lot of women's studies courses. One of them was taught by Adelle McCullen who I understand is somewhat famous in some feminist circles of one kind or another. But she introduced us, my wife at the time and myself, to a book by Margot Adler called *Drawing Down the Moon* and started talking about Wicca. I became fascinated with it, as did my wife at the time. We eventually met Margot Adler and a lot of other people, started studying Wicca at a witchcraft and occult store called *Magical Child*.

Awad: Where was that located?

Goodwin: I don't think it any longer exists. It was on 19<sup>th</sup> Street. It was run by a gentleman named Herman Slater, who was one of the authors that was the mythical Simon that wrote the commercial, black paperback version of the *Necronomicon* from the 1970s that you can get. But there were OTO meetings and OTO Temple meeting there. Leo Martello, Israel Regardie, Miriam Weinstin. I mentioned Margot Adler. By hanging out there, we met most of the—oh, how could I forget Isaac Bondswitch? We met most of the leading Wiccan and occult writers of that part of the 70s and 80s. You might remember there was a—well, you actually are far too young to remember, but in the late 1970s and early 80s, there was an explosion of interest in Wicca and witchcraft. There was a woman named Starhawk who wrote a book called *The Spiral Dance* that was a very hippie, very save the environment, very kind of loopy goosey, peace and love approach to Wicca and the occult that appealed to me.

Awad: What about it appealed to you?

Goodwin: Well, for one thing, the same thing that I think appeals to people about the *Da Vinci Code* or any of that, is I'm very attracted to honoring the divine feminine as well as the divine masculine. I believe that the overemphasis on the all-important, almighty father to the extension—to the exclusion of the mother runs contrary to biology, nature, and common sense. And of course magic and witchcraft and the occult always have their appeal. I could trace that, and my interest in Goth culture as well, simply to being a kid. I loved the *Addams Family* from the very first time I saw it at the age of four. [snaps.] A couple of years ago I had the privilege—

Awad: Who was your favorite character on the *Addams Family*, if I might ask?

Goodwin: You know, that goes from episode to episode. I love Cousin It. [Cousin It noise.] I've come to identify increasingly with Grandmama, the older I get. What I love the most about the Addams Family was the delightful romance between Gomez and Morticia, and the older you get and the more you understand all the nuances, they were a perfectly happy, perfectly healthy, Goth, kink, married couple who had loving children and loving relatives like Uncle Fester and Grandmama, and a perfectly healthy family life. And the very fact that their family was centered on a husband and wife who were still passionately in love with one another as much as the Goth clothing in the house and the 31 Packard and everything set them apart from their neighbors, and that drove the humor of the show. The romance at the heart of it.

Awad: I've never heard that reading of the Addams Family, but it makes perfect sense to me, actually.

Goodwin: Well, it's the same reading John Astin gave me of it, so it must be alright.

Awad: Can you tell me, how did you two meet, and when did you meet?

Goodwin: We were both at different times, in her case dating, in my case living with another trans woman who really holds no relevance to this story except that she happened to be the means by which we encountered each other. That was probably the purpose she was meant to serve in our lives. It was love at first sight.

Awad: What year was that?

Goodwin: We'll argue, I say it was late 1990, early 1991 thereabout?

Moore: No, I think it was more like '92.

Goodwin: I'll compromise on late '91.

Moore: Okay, that's fine. No, it was definitely—oh, oh, I was going to say yes, it was love at first sight. I saw Chelsea, I was in the room with this ex-girlfriend of Chelsea that I was dating, and Chelsea came walking in and I had never seen her before and I just—I stood up and I walked four paces across the room and I went, why am I doing this? Why am I walking toward her, you know? But I was afraid of Chelsea at first, so Chelsea can come across really strong. But then, you know, I found out how sweet she is.

Awad: And had you dated another trans woman before?

Moore: Oh, did I, did I, did I, did I? You know, it's like—

Goodwin: Of course you did. That goes back to Brazil.

Moore: When you were coming out as a trans person, a lot—you know, a lot of what you do, you go to clubs and things like that and you pick people up, you know, and it's like you try out sexuality. So I did all that stuff, you know? So I had been with men and women.

Goodwin: And trans hookers in Rio and Sau Paulo.

Moore: Well they were women, too. But Chelsea said I've got to tell my entire sordid past.

Goodwin: Well of course, warts and all, my love. Warts and all.

Moore: Warts and all, yeah. Well, anyway—

Goodwin: Well you want your story to be true. You want it to be accurate. You want it to have all of the history besides.

Moore: So there's a phase in my coming out process, where I was just going to these clubs and things, and they used to have—I don't know whether they were sort of S&M clubs but they welcomed trans people at those clubs.

Awad: Was this in New York?

Moore: In New York, yeah.

Awad: Approximately what years were that?

Moore: Early 90s. Late 80s, early 90s. So there were a lot of men that are cruising there for trans women, because that's a turn on for a lot of men. So I dabbled in that slightly, but it wasn't the greatest thing ever, you know? But it's okay. It gives you confidence if you think—if you're wondering what you look like as a woman, it's nice if you can get a man chasing you down the street or whatever, taking you out and buying you something or something like that.

Awad: Do you relate to that at all, Chelsea? Did you have a similar sort of process?

Goodwin: I've been all the way around the block and stopped at several of the shops along the way.

Awad: Now, this is going to be a very non-linear conversation. I hope you will bear with me. But these days, a lot of trans folks, especially trans youth, connect with other trans people through the internet, through apps, and form relationships that way. Not just trans youth and trans folks in general, but a lot of the information that people have on gender and sexuality is coming through a computer, and I'm just wondering, when you were starting to explore and, you know—how did you find people, like other trans folks? How did you go about exploring that?

Goodwin: Right, well, there was always an advertisement in the back pages of the Village Voice—not the hooker advertisements, the very, very back page—that gave a phone number for something called Metamorphosis. And since I had come to New York with the intent of pursuing what's called transition, I called the number, got referred to a Dr. Leo Wollman, looking for someone who would prescribe hormones and help me do the medical part of the transition. Dr. Wollman was the partner of Dr. Harry Benjamin, who was Christine Jorgenson's doctor, to put this all into an historical perspective, if you will. He had treated thousands of transsexuals, including some of the famous ones I mentioned—Christine Jorgenson, Renee Richards and so forth. I began treatment with him, and the first real contacts I had speaking with and having coffee with and having conversations with were other trans women who were seeking medical treatment from Dr. Wollman. He'd lay out coffee and cake and stuff like the nice, old school Jewish gentleman he was, and while you were waiting for a turn to go see the doctor, we'd have coffee and cake and that, and get to know one another a bit. Prior to that, the first other transsexual I ever met in my life was someone by the first name of Robin, who was a shop girl, putting stock on the shelves and such, at Magical Child, the witchcraft shop I mentioned. Others may disagree with this, but Goth culture, paganism, and the trans community all fit together like peanut butter and jelly. They really do. So anyway, Rusty and I both predate the internet in that. And then there were the clubs. There was a club called Edelweiss and one other one called Sally's. Both were places that tranny chasers, men who were sexually interested in transgender people, would go to pick up dates on a more or less commercial basis. But Sally's in particular also had a stage and shows that were MCed by people like Dorian Corey, Victoria Cruz, a trans woman who called herself Cherry Grove, and all of these are sort of famous names in trans and drag history. There was a film by Jenny Livingstone called Paris Is Burning—I wasn't in that film, but I performed in the same spot and knew all the people that were. I just happened to not have been there when—there were other things going on in my life that I wasn't at that place at that particular point, although I spent much more time there before and after the fact of that film. That's fine. Even now with the Jeff Mock shows and the Steampunk festivals and stuff, as far as performing, and as far as my comic delivery or how I go about introducing acts, and everything I know about MCing a show I owe to two or three people, one of whom obviously as you can tell from my ersatz British accent is Quentin Crisp, but the others are Dorian Corey, I mentioned Cherry Grove, Jesse Torres, the great trans, and as I was called earlier, drag performers of the generation of the Stonewall era. I was a generation later, but they were the people I learned from. Not only about living in this role, but equally importantly about performing.

Awad: And about how old were you when you came to New York and you started performing?

Goodwin: 20s.

Awad: Can you tell me what was one of the most memorable or fun performances that you saw during that time?

Goodwin: You know, that's interesting. There were some good ones. I'm trying to remember even a name. there was this one performer, I never saw anything like it, that dressed up as Shirley Temple and sang The Good Ship Lollypop, which is something that any drag queen might do, but

this was a very large Italian-American person who out of drag and in regular clothes looked like an extra from Goodfellas or one of those mafia movies, and somebody whose name would have been Joey the Rat or Jimmy the Squid or something, so it was so funny and so well done. It was purely a visual gag, you'd have to see it, but.

Awad: And Rusty, for you, when did you first meet other trans women or gender non-conforming folks?

Moore: Um ...

Goodwin: Would that be Sao Paulo?

Moore: Yeah, probably.

Awad: I'm noticing a theme here.

Moore: Well, I used to go—I had a very strong interest in Brazil academically, and I used to be in Brazil, and Sao Paulo happens to be an epicenter of *travestis* ...

Awad: Because of Cardozal? Was he in Brazil? Who was the Marxist who became the libertarian.

Moore: I don't know, I'm not picking up—

Goodwin: We're going back to the 1970s when Brazil was still some kind of cockamamie military dictatorship.

Moore: Yeah, for a time there.

Awad: Right, got it.

Moore: Anyway, the first time I went out on the street was in Brazil. I met these girls talking on the side, and I wasn't talking to them, they were trying to pick me up because I'm wearing a man's suit and everything like that, and I said no, I want to go out on the street, and they were like oh, okay, well come on, let's go, you know? So I went out and bought what I needed for an evening to be a street, and I went on the street and it was cool, because men were attracted to me and that made me feel good. It was an interesting experience. That was a big step for me when I was coming out actually. So, anyway. But you know, back in the States, I started to go to the group meetings they had in Manhattan and went to clubs, also. Sally's, Edelweiss.

Awad: And were you living in New York during this time?

Moore: Well, I lived in New York—I think probably the whole time I was pretty much living in New York. But yeah, I lived in Brooklyn mostly. I lived in Manhattan just for like three years when I was teaching at NYU. I lived on Bleaker.



Goodwin: Long Island comes into there someplace, doesn't it?

Moore: What, New York?

Goodwin: Yeah.

Moore: Yeah, certainly. But I used to, like, I had no social life on Long Island as a trans person ever.

Awad: Is that where you grew up?

Moore: No, it's where I worked at. I taught at Hofstra University.

Goodwin: Oddly enough, a lot of our social life is on Long Island now, because things change.

Moore: Yeah, so—it's a very stressful thing. In my case, I was coming out when I was like, 50. And I had three children by two different wives, and I love my children and I was divorced from both of the wives, but those are a lot of concerns that you have when you're coming out as a trans person, which many people do, and they have a family. It's a whole different thing. Usually I think the kids are pretty accepting of it. Ex-spouses are probably less. But you know, it's not so bad really. So that's really something when you become, at an older age, also, but at the same time you also have more wherewithal financially because you have had jobs and things like that, so you can survive more easily.

Awad: So, can I ask you a little bit about—you know, you fell in love in late 1991. When did you start to live together?

Goodwin: Oh, almost immediately. I started out as a one-night stand and just never bloody left.

Awad: So in true U-Haul fashion.

Goodwin: Yes.

Awad: That's good. May I ask you when, you know, this is the early 90s and you're living in Brooklyn?

Goodwin: Actually, we were living on Long Island, a wretched little town called Bellmore. One night I was walking home from the Long Island Railroad and a group of teenagers threw rocks at me. It was a bit hard, actually.

Awad: I'm sorry. That's, wow. Can you tell me a little bit more about what that town was like, in addition to that awful experience? Can you tell me a little bit about what that town was like in the early 90s?

Goodwin: Well, the way I can—first of all, I won't even say the early 90s. To illustrate my point better, I—couple years ago, no more than three, I do things with the Macabre Faire family. They put on the Macabre Faire Film Festival and other horror and Goth events throughout the year. The Macabre Faire Film Festival has been called Sundance with fangs. It's like the independent horror film festival of record for the US, perhaps for the English-speaking world. There might be something in the UK that's equally prestigious that I'm unaware of, but I think pretty much that's it for the US. And I taught—not taught, I facilitated a panel with Cynthia Bryan Cate, who is the other co-host, along with Rusty, of our radio show, In Goth We Trust, and it was a panel on the vampire community. People who choose to identify as vampires in one way or another, mostly people like myself who are performers who specialize in playing vampire roles as a performer. I'm in the tradition of, well, you mentioned Al Lewis, who is actually a friend of ours from The Muensters. I'm in the tradition of the horror host, people like Zacherle or Elvira or Vampira that show old horror films and do shtick in-between, or introduce Goth bands and do shtick in-between. You get the idea. And that's relevant because at this vampire panel, there was this young woman, about your age, maybe a bit younger, in her 20s. So this would be the same town like 20 years later from when we were living there. And she happened to be of the Indian sub-continent ancestry. I don't want to say she was Indian and find out she was Pakistani or something, I'm not trying to offend, I'm just—the point is, very attractive young woman. Looked like a Bollywood movie star. And she was talking about how all through her junior high and high school career, the other kids bullied her and told her how ugly she was, and I'm talking about literally someone who looks like a Bollywood film star. If they treated her the way they treated her, and they're seeing me coming home from work doing a performance at Sally's and some place and I'm dressed like a cross between Marie Antoinette and the Grim Reaper, they, well, you see what I mean.

Awad: So you're saying they're very provincial, narrow-minded. What communities live in Bellmore? I'm not familiar with it.

Goodwin: I don't want to stereotype. I'd say that we're talking pretty much about blue collar Irish and Italian-American with all that goes with that.

Moore: Well, Bellmore is one of a string of like Merrick, North Merrick, Bellmore on the south shore line of the Long Island Railroad, and I would say it's a middle-class town, but it's a less affluent middle-class town than other Long Island communities are. Like Merrick for example is probably more well to do than Bellmore. Just, they [inaudible] right there. But Long Island, my impression of you as a trans person coming out on Long Island, it's very conservative. You know, it's not that Long Islanders aren't with it. There's a lot of trans people out there, et cetera.

Awad: Like socially conservative?

Moore: Yeah, socially conservative [inaudible]

Goodwin: On the other hand there are things, as I say, the Macabre Faire Film Festival takes place on Long Island in Ronkonkoma at the Clarion Hotel every January. And we belonged to the Copper Cauldron Coven, which was the coven of Lady Venus, who was sort of a popular public figure witch on Long Island, and still is a belting festival every year that draws, you know, tourists and the newspaper comes. Sort of like they do in Salem where it's quite supportive in its own way. It's let's have fun taking pictures of the witches in the funny costumes. You get the idea. It's fairly begin. We also, for example, the history—what's the aviation museum?

Moore: The Cradle of Aviation.

Goodwin: The Cradle of Aviation museum has science fiction and fantasy events. One is called Eternalcon, for example. And the last one I went to a couple of years ago, they had all of the ape suits from the 1970s Planet of the Apes movies.

Awad: Well that's cool.

Goodwin: And they have one of the actual lunar landers, because they were built there on Long Island, so they have the exhibit with the lunar lander on this kind of moonscape, and then they put one of the apes from Planet of the Apes by the ladder of the lunar lander. You know, there are fun events and fun things, if you're in fandom or in subcultures. You know, you find fun subcultures and in the—I almost want to say sort of hip kind of people who are more fun.

Awad: So you lived in—so Bellmore, at least you experienced some of that social conservatism and some of that prejudice in the early 90s. And then did you stay there, or did you then move—

Goodwin: Well then we moved to Brooklyn and bought the house that became known as Transy House.

Moore: 214 16<sup>th</sup> Street. That's the house we bought.

Awad: So was that in Park Slope or Gowanus?

Moore: It's in what was—it was called, or it is called now the South Slope. It's on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, it's beyond 9<sup>th</sup> Street, which used to be the—actually 8<sup>th</sup> Street used to be the breaking line between Park Slope and, you know—

Goodwin: When we moved there, it was a bit of a dodgy neighborhood. There was a very amusing gunfight in front of the house once. There were various actual or would be gangs running about the place. There was a hip-hop studio around the block I actually recorded tracks for some of the musicians down there. I was so close that, you know, I'd get a phone call, uh, can you come put a keyboard solo on—yeah, sure, sure, sure. Just tell me what key it's in. You know? And I'd run down and do whatever they said they wanted for whatever rapper it was and go back about my business.

Awad: So what made you leave the suburban enclave to go to this neighborhood? Why did you pick a house in this neighborhood?

Goodwin: It was near her kids.

Moore: Well my kids were all living in Park Slope basically with their mother and her boyfriend. So I wanted to be closer to there, but I was always oriented toward Park Slope anyway, because we had lived there originally before we moved to Long Island. So you know, I just bought this little old house for not much money—I mean, for Park Slope it was like \$150,000, which is, you know, for a nice little row house that is three stories, so, had some old detail in it. It was all a trashed up house, but it still had a lot of old detail and stuff. It was cool. So we just went there to live. There were actually three of us. Julia Murray also was another one. And then people started to come out of the woodwork. They'd be like, yeah, you have a house and you have room? Can I stay there? You know? It was just like—everybody was wanting to come and live with us because they needed a place to live. It's hard in New York City to get a place to live. Especially for trans people, a lot of them have trouble finding housing. And we were all trans, so there was none of that thing where you know, they would be objectified or harassed or anything like that. So we ended up having a lot of trans people—not a lot, but I mean, we would have eight to 12 or something like that for the next five years or so.

Awad: And this started in 19—

Moore: We bought the house in the summer of 1994. So we always had trans people there. But we didn't have any mission about it. We were just like oh, this is where we live, we share a house. But then when people started to come, then it got kind of like—we never did get very formal about the whole thing, but we sort of took it as a mission to help younger people especially to find some place to live if they didn't have any support. A lot of young people, there are stories where people just load their kid in a car in Texas, drive them to New York City, dump them out in the street and say have a good life. And they'd go back to Texas and that's it, they're supposed to survive as a trans person in New York City. So you know, there's a lot of people who need help in terms of the housing.

Awad: Just to get more of the context, can you tell me, if you recall or no, what resources in terms of health care or housing were there for trans folks?

Goodwin: Okay. Quite simply, at that time, you had some things I understand where they tried to accommodate people under the age of 18, as soon as they aged out of the juvenile system, they were completely on their own. We got a lot of people who had aged out of the juvenile system and still—

Awad: Aged out of foster care?

Goodwin: Yes, exactly. That's what I meant. Foster care. That was a large part of it. There was very little—I mean, what eventually happened, and it became overwhelming and unbearable and

is what eventually destroyed the whole experiment was the homeless shelters, even once they started to exist, were very gender-segregated and no special accommodation made for trans identity. As a matter of fact, when we were talking about SONDA and how I maintained—

Awad: Can you explain, can you tell us what SONDA stands for?

Goodwin: It was the state gay right's law—I forget what the—

Awad: That's okay.

Moore: Sexual Orientation Non-discrimination Act.

Goodwin: There you go.

Awad: Oh, great. Thank you. Sexual Orientation Non-discrimination Act. Thank you.

Goodwin: Even when they passed that in 2012, not only was it not trans-inclusive, those who were involved in making the deal with the Empire State Pride Agenda to not even try for trans inclusion in SONDA and to thwart the efforts of those who did in return for the city-wide law that they did get passed. Even that law originally exempted the homeless shelters. Which meant that every time a social worker got a transgender person and didn't know where to place them, they'd call us or just, without even notifying us, send them to our door, and I'd be working in my office, the doorbell would ring, I'd come downstairs, there'd be some homeless trans person there standing there and I'd be like, oh yes, may I help you? So and so from such and such institution, shelter, organization, or whatever sent me and there they are with their satchel or whatever. And I'm like alright, come in and we'll see what we can do to get you sorted out. Could you go watch some TV or something until my work day is over? This is an office and I'm trying to work here, you know?

Awad: What were you working on at that time while you were doing this collective house?

Goodwin: I was running a telemarketing office. Mostly business to business, so I probably wasn't interrupting your supper.

Awad: Can I ask, how did these homeless shelters and these social workers hear about your house? It doesn't—I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, but it doesn't sound like you bought the house with the intention that it would serve this purpose, necessarily.

Goodwin: What we really had in mind was more of what we have now. There are four trans people living in this house now. You don't see the other two because they're at work doing their jobs. They pay rent. They're friends that we choose to live with and we all get along. We're not just a random collection of people that were sent here because the social workers didn't know what else to do with them. And once they were sent to us, we were too soft to kick them to the curb.

Moore: The thing is that it was—by word of mouth, it spread pretty quickly that there were these trans people in Brooklyn that had their own house, and that some people were staying there. So people just started to, you know, talk to us when we were at a club or something like that, or they would come over to the house and say something. So there was a notoriety you might say. And later on, too, Chelsea was at a CLAGS meeting, was it? And Sylvia Rivera was there.

Goodwin: CLAGS was—I forget what the initials were for [The Center for LGBTQ Studies]—but it was the gay studies thing.

Moore: At CUNY.

Goodwin: At CUNY, right. And Sylvia Rivera was there.

Awad: Was this the first time you met Sylvia Rivera?

Goodwin: For purposes of this conversation let's say it was the first time I had seen her and spoken with her with any real degree of connection. I invited her to check out Transy House. Eventually she ended up living there, and I honestly think that the whole part about Sylvia Rivera living at Transy House has been so well-documented. I don't want to take anything away from Sylvia, but David France just did this film about Marsha and Sylvia and the rest of it. One of the things that actually started to get under my skin a bit is during the 1980s, before Transy House, before I met Rusty, speaking for myself I was in Queer Nation, I was in ACT UP, I was in an organization called the Dyke Action Machine, I was in the Pink Panthers—I was at some protest or some demonstration just about every night of the week. Certainly at least one or two every weekend. And there was a trans woman named Kathy Otter, she was one of the people from ACT UP that did the demonstration at St. Patrick's Cathedral when they dropped the communion wafers on the floor, and oh my god, I'm not Roman Catholic and the whole thing seems silly to me, but apparently that was—

Moore: What year was that?

Goodwin: Oh, I don't know—89, 90, somewhere in there, who can tell? You can find old editions of the New York Native or something, in one of the papers. It's all in there, you can find that stuff. But my point is, there was a lot of activism, and there were quite a few of us trans people who were involved in all of that, and I think maybe it's time to perhaps write a little bit less about the Stonewall era. Say we've pretty much got that covered and start looking at things that happened in the 1980s and trans participation in ACT UP and in Queer Nation.

Awad: Can you tell me a little bit about that? Did ACT UP have much trans participation in your view?

Goodwin: Well I was always there. And I mentioned Kathy Otter, she was very prominent, very involved. There were others. I'm not really ready to come up with a bunch of names at this time,

but they'll come back to me. Kathy Otter is certainly one that's worthy of mention, worthy of name. There were a couple of drag performers, drag queens, who don't identify as trans in the sense that we are, but were important—this was when Lady Bunny started doing Wigstock. I participated in the first few Wigstocks. That whole era of drag performance. I knew RuPaul when she was still called Starrbooty and performing at Wigstock, for example. And there was a Wigstock when, I forget the year, when the Wigstock was attacked by a group of skinheads and there was a riot and the cops started arresting the drag queens and letting the skinheads go, and it got ridiculous. There were things all the time. I mean, Kathy Otter was one of the main, most visible in the Queers Take Back the Night March. I can't remember the exact year, you can look it up. It was like, 88, 89 in there. You're nodding, you've heard of this, of course. Basically, that was how Queer Nation came about was, along with the AIDS epidemic and all the ACT UP demonstrations, there was a ridiculous increase in anti-queer violence across the board. Gay couples, lesbian couples, trans people, we were all getting beat up, all the time. And that March, which ended up being huge, I think Queers Take Back the Night was to the 80s what Stonewall was to the 60s. It was a critical mass moment when we get thousands of queer people in the street, fed up to here, we're not going to take it anymore, ready to go. Queer Nation came out of that, that was the main organization that did come out of that, I think. The Dyke Action Machine, which was a lesbian split-off of Queer Nation—

Awad: What were some of the goals of Queer Nation in the 80s?

Goodwin: Well some of the goals were kind of modest, like we don't want to get beat up when we're out in the street. It sounds like a very modest goal, but it was too much to ask for in the 80s at times. Certainly equality in housing and jobs, not being discriminated against. The usual. It's pretty much the same things that they were rioting for in 1969. Progress had been made, not enough progress, the backlash caused by the AIDS crisis brought about a tremendous increase in anti-gay violence, as did the crack epidemic.

Awad: May I ask, if you can recall, what was your first foray into activism, because it sounds like you were involved with a lot of different groups and a lot of actions and things, and I'm just wondering when it all began for you.

Goodwin: You know, I really can't remember what the first demonstration I was in was. I remember the first pride parade I was in was in about 1979, 80, somewhere in there. When I was at a pagan class at Magical Child on pride day, and after the class it was like, well, let's walk out the street half a block and join the parade with a bunch of witches, which we did. Miriam Weinstine and Margot Adler who I mention before were both marching, so we marched with the witches and I marched every year with the pagan or the witches' contingent for many years. And as far as actual demonstrations, it's hard to remember. For a while it was like, every week we'd be marching somewhere. We're here! We're queer! Whatever the cause of the day was, you know? I remember a couple of them were about queer bashings. I remember being in the first pride march in the Bronx.

Awad: Can you tell me a little bit about what that was like?

Goodwin: Oh, sure. It was a bunch of homies throwing rocks at us. Hard to forget that. There's, like, us marching down the street, a wall of cops between us and these people that were throwing rocks and bottles and garbage at us and telling us we weren't welcome in the Bronx.

Awad: Do you know where in the Bronx? Do you recall where in the Bronx this pride march took place? If you don't, it's okay.

Goodwin: I remember the grand concourse was what—we marched down something called the grand concourse. I'd never been in the Bronx before or since, maybe in that sense we were outside agitators, I suppose. I remember that one just because it was so horrible, you know? I remember a lot of them were funerals for people who were—political funerals for people who had been murdered for being queer. Then we had black armbands with our Queer Nation t-shirts and somebody banging a drum like they do in the Westerns, you know, a funeral march thing. As I said, it was one every week. I remember one where I was—where my girlfriend at the time and I were asked to leave a bar because we kissed in the place, so that Saturday we brought about 100 queer couples in, we're here, we're queer, we're taking over this bar, you know?

Awad: Do you remember which bar it was?

Goodwin: No, it was 30, 40 years ago. Come on.

Awad: You participated in a lot of direct action and a lot of—

Goodwin: Yeah.

Awad: Grassroots work. And then, you know, in sort of the early, mid-90s, you, you know, were involved with this collective, with this home that ended up being basically like a shelter for homeless trans folks.

Goodwin: Essentially that's what it was. We were running an unofficial, informal shelter.

Awad: So it was basically a lot of—it was basically social work in a lot of ways.

Goodwin: It was social work, only I didn't have an MSW and I wasn't getting paid. I was just doing social work all day and all night. And working a day job to support all this, you understand.

Awad: That's a lot. Now, when—given your background in direct action and these forms of protest and resistance, what was your view on, or your perspective on trying to get the state or the city to offer protections for folks on the lines of gender discrimination, et cetera?

Goodwin: You know, things were so much in their infancy, and originally, I don't think that most of the goals were so much goals for legislation as much as more simple goals, like we wanted it safe for people to walk around and not have to worry about being beaten up or being attacked



or being killed, you know, that kind of safety kind of things. There were—we wanted people to be able to, especially trans people, to be able to just walk around and live without having to fear the police. Even though it, by that time was not illegal to be on the street and to be trans, cops would routinely arrest people on suspicion of prostitution if they were a trans woman whether they actually were involved with prostitution or not. And, uh—

Awad: Can you tell me a little bit more by, it was illegal to be trans?

Goodwin: Before 1969, if you were on the street dressed as the opposite gender you were breaking the law and you could be arrested. That stopped being actually enforced particularly after Stonewall in 1969.

Awad: In New York itself.

Goodwin: Right, in New York City. The law itself wasn't repealed, you know, actually officially repealed until 71 or something like that. But between then and my time in the 80s, we weren't breaking the law per se, but the harassment and intimidation on the part of New York's Funniest was unrelenting.

Awad: May I ask, what do you consider—I mean, maybe you can answer this question, maybe not—but what do you consider your biggest accomplishment of that period as an activist? Or at least something you were proud of doing?

Goodwin: Oh, alright. That, the accomplishment, such as it was, I think, was going—fast forward to the SONDA story. We sat through endless meetings with the Empire State Pride Agenda, which in retrospect were a waste of bloody time.

Awad: How come?

Goodwin: Because they weren't about to change their minds and—

Awad: The Empire State Pride Agenda wasn't, or?

Goodwin: Right, they weren't about to support trans-inclusion in SONDA no matter what we said or what we did. Their minds were made up, thank you very much, and we should have been outside protesting them instead of inside having meetings and trying to talk to them. That was one way in which we became sidetracked. But the one thing that did happen at the very end of all that nonsense was, Matt Foreman at the time was the executive director of the Empire State Pride agenda, and he had previously been executive director or grand poobah or whatever the person is that runs things at the Empire—at the Anti-Violence Coalition, which is what he was doing when I first met him, when we were both in Queer Nation together. And in the last few days before the SONDA vote and everything was over, I said to him, Matt, you and I marched hundreds of times, and both of us wearing Queer Nation t-shirts, we're here, we're queer, we're all in this together. We were calling ourselves Queer Nation because we include the lesbians, the

gays, the trans, everybody all in this together. And now that it's time to actually pass legislation we're being excluded from the legislation. And by basically, he saw it and shamed it enough that after it was all over with, and after SONDA had passed without us, he at least made a public apology, left ESPA, and went to the—what's the one that's not the HRC? It's the other—the something Coalition. You know the one I mean.

Awad: Not Human Rights Campaign, it's—

Goodwin: No, the other one. There used to be two. There was the Human Rights Campaign and there was the one I'm talking about.

Awad: Gay Men's Health—no, sorry.

Goodwin: No, no, no, no. This was the National—

Awad: I'm afraid I don't know.

Goodwin: Oh well, it was something Coalition, you know the one I mean. A woman named Vaid—

Awad: Oh, the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force.

Goodwin: Right. So Foreman replaced Ms. Vaid, or is it Vaid? I want to pronounce it correctly.

Awad: Urvashi Viad.

Goodwin: Pronounced Urvashi—

Awad: Urvashi. That's okay.

Goodwin: Urvashi Viad.

Awad: There you go.

Goodwin: As the executive—I knew the woman, I just couldn't pronounce her name, even when I was talking to her. It was embarrassing. Sweet person. But anyway, she was replaced by Matt Foreman, and at that point he apologized publicly for his role in excluding us from SONDA. Expressed his disgust with the whole process that things went down and vowed that the National Lesbian and Gay Taskforce would support trans inclusion in everything. And then of course they practically disappeared as they were outspent by the HRC by hundreds of dollars to one or something. You know, the HRC is just this juggernaut that rolls over everything, but.

Awad: Can you—

Goodwin: So anyway—

Awad: Can you, uh, from your perspective—

Goodwin: May I answer your question?

Awad: Go ahead.

Goodwin: The answer to your question was, I was the proudest of that, at least all of that work I had done when I was in Queer Nation became a chip that I could cash in with Matt Foreman. And that didn't do bloody much, but it was better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick, and it at least validated all of the work and effort I put in because I, again, I feel like a myth developed, starting in the 1990s, that the worth was without form and void, and neither trans activism nor trans people exist until the miraculous, spontaneously generated appearance of the great and powerful Riki Anne Wilchins, and before that there was nothing. And that's malarkey. A lot of us were out there having rocks thrown at us and working really hard at trans activism between Sylvia and Riki Wilchins in this dark age, lost period of history that's not documented because it doesn't suit the agenda from Riki forward in gay academia to slant everything a certain way that fits certain theories. And I don't even have a bloody theory, I'm just saying if not me, other people, whether it be drag queens like Mis Understood or Hedda Lettuce or Lady Bunny, or trans people like myself or Kelly Bishop, who was in all those demonstrations with me, or Kathy Otter, who was more of a kamikaze than I'll ever be. She was right in the front of things, that Queers Take Back the Night, and was one of the St. Patrick Six with ACT UP, and, you know, the contributions of people that were, in Queer, you know, trans people that were in Queer Nation and the other organizations of the time. That shouldn't be overshadowed and lost to history because it was when we were still primarily doing street activism, and before it all became about lobbying and legislative action.

Awad: Can we, uh—

Goodwin: I think we won the street actions and lost at the legislative level anyway. That was—

Awad: So just to make it plain for folks who may not be as versed in this period, in your perspective, in not including trans needs basically in their political work, what was the Empire State Pride Agenda hoping to gain? And other LGBT organizations that followed suit with them?

Goodwin: I think you have to start with two things. One is the HRC.

Awad: The Human Rights Campaign.

Goodwin: The HRC was founded by a group of very wealthy gay men from the state of Texas. There's credible reason to believe some of them were part of the same circle of ultra-conservative gay men who were part of the same social group as people like Clay Shaw, who was the gay man who was named by Jim Garrison as one of the conspirators in the Kennedy Assassination. He's in the movie JFK, as is the character by the last name of Ferrie who was played

by Joe Pesci in that movie. Though that same group of radically anti-communist, radically conservative gay men who incidentally were tied to some of the same circles as that famous homosexual J. Edgar Hoover and his gungsel Clyde Tolsen, that was the group of people that, the same circle out of which the HRC emerged. A good example would be Frank Caminy of the Mattachine Society and his whole problem was that he had been a literal CIA spook who had been fired for being gay. So he was like no, we can be just as conservative and right wing and all-American as everyone else, and the last thing in the world they wanted was any association with gender variance, or anything that would play into what they perceived as a negative stereotype of gay people. And then that goes all the way up to, by the time you get to the 1990s, everything is controlled by the HRC, the Human Rights Campaign, before you say it again, and an extremely transphobic gay senator from Massachusetts named Barney Frank. Whatever else Barney Frank is or isn't, that man just plain has a hate-on towards trans people, like he's convinced that somehow we're a threat to everything that's gay and good in the world. Why, I don't know. Obama moved things forward, by the way. All through the 90s, Hillary was a flat out saying she wouldn't listen to trans anything, because she wouldn't listen to anybody or do anything except whatever Barney Frank said. Mainly because of Frank's ties to Ted Kennedy. And Kennedy, for that matter, was the one that ensured that nothing trans would be included in the Americans for Disabilities Act, for example. He was always anti-trans. Kennedy, I mean.

Awad: Ted Kennedy.

Goodwin: Yes. Well he was the only—

Awad: Just for the—I know that, but just for the record.

Goodwin: Ted Kennedy. To further complicate matters, you can't make this up, Xaviera Hollander, the woman who wrote the book *The Happy Hooker*, has indicated that part of Ted Kennedy's anti-trans attitude comes from his own interest in forced cross-dressing with dominatrixes. That's what she says, I don't take responsibility for it. But Xaviera Hollander has gone on record as having indicated that, just to keep things more interesting. You can—I don't have the imagination to make this stuff up. I'm a science fiction writer, I'm not that. But, so, you know, that's what we've been up against. And honestly, I think that, until Obama, we had more success with street activism, and at the legislative level it's been a very grim picture, and still is. I honestly think that social change comes about first when you actually change society. And the laws change after the fact, when the laws have to be modernized to fit the changes that have already taken place at the cultural level. You don't change the legislation first and then society follows. The only way to succeed is to do it the hard way, which is the other way about. Make the social change first, and then the legislative change will come to codify that rather than relying on using legislation to change society. It's completely backwards from what actually happens.

Awad: Now I'm going to do a little pause on that, and just get a sense of, while Chelsea was doing all this activism and this kind of, you know, and doing classes in pagan spiritualism and this sort of thing in the 80s, can you tell me a little bit about how you were living in the 80s? I know it was different because obviously you have a different life, but—

Moore: In that time at the 80s, throughout the 80s, I was a professor at Hofstra University, teaching international business and marketing. And Latin American studies and things like that. And I had three children. My one daughter was living—my oldest daughter is living in Texas with her mother, but I had two younger children who were living some of the time with me in the 1980s with my family on Long Island in North Bellmore—or North Merrick rather. But you know, so that was a time of quiescence and change going on there. So I didn't start to like, really—as sort of that marriage was breaking up there around the 90s and I was starting to do change, you know, on a gender basis. So it pretty much started at that point for me. You know, but the thing is that you—in my case where I was a professional person in the public eye, giving speeches for the university and everything like that. I didn't want to have a disaster where I was on the front page of a paper or anything like that, so it was a little trickleish to kind of slide through, but when I did come out at the university, they were totally supportive. They said okay, you must have been suffering terribly, what can we do to help you, we really are all for you? So I just showed up one day dressed as a woman and that was it.

Awad: How did you feel when that happened, and also what were your expectations when you showed up that day?

Moore: Well, it's pretty scary. It wasn't the first time I was out, you know, dressed. I'd been out on the street a lot in other places, but not at the university. So going from the parking lot and walking across campus to my office, it was like—I'm thinking holy shit is this hard, you know? It's like—I don't know if anybody ever noticed me along the way because a lot of students didn't know who I was or whatever. But anyway, I got to my office and then I had to go and meet classes, and the classes probably were coached probably by my colleagues that this was going to happen so they were like all on good behavior, and I was a pretty popular professor. So we just went, you know, went along, and everybody started to—students started to call me she before anybody else did. And so it went along.

Awad: Wow. So, at the time, just for clarity, what policies or protections or, you know, if it hadn't—if Hofstra hadn't been supportive of you and the student body hadn't been supportive, what would have been your recourse as a trans professor?

Moore: Well, Hofstra had a pretty forward looking policy toward gender. I mean, not—they weren't expecting to have a crossgender professor, but they were, you know, for women especially, women at Hofstra are very active and they put in a lot of stuff that protected women's rights, you know? When I wrote to my department chairman saying that I was coming out as a woman in the fall, and that I would be teaching as a woman, you know, presenting myself as a woman from then on, I said—and of course Hofstra is—we're lucky at Hofstra because there's so much legislation we have in the—in the rules and regulations of the university that relate to not being gender discriminatory. I just threw that in there to be snarky, but you know, I mean, just to say there is some stuff here that could support me, but I didn't really—but it was really like, everybody was [inaudible] about it. The provost, the deans, the department chairman, my colleagues, the students, it was like, easy, really.

Awad: That's awesome.

Moore: I mean, it was not that easy, but I mean in a sense I had the guts to do it, but it was like, nobody was demonstrating against me or anything, I don't even know what the students said. If they might have—I think that was pretty—I was a pretty popular professor and I think the students were on my side. And they're also students are, you know, young people are with it more so. The younger they get, the more they're with it. That was in the 90s, but still.

Awad: And while all this activism is happening in New York, can you tell me a little bit about—maybe you have a sense, maybe you don't have a sense, but at Hofstra, what was—was there activism around issues like, you know, HIV and LGBT related, like, rights or demands, rather?

Moore: Well, I mean, there was activism. Hofstra generally is not a hugely activist university because a lot of the people commute from New York City or from Long Island. But also, they're pretty cool. The students are, you know, very good, and there is a core of people that are more, that are progressive there and, you know, people are busy though. The students are busy because they're all working, trying to pay the bills, et cetera. But you know, I think that it's a good place in terms of the protection of the rights of students and faculty, in terms of the way the legislation is. Because Hofstra's, while it's a university, it is a relatively—it's a mid-range university and they have a good feeling among the people there. Many people went to schools in the New York area and they've known each other, and they want to be the good—you know, it's hard if you go to a New York school for your PhD, it's hard to get a job in New York City, so Hofstra is an ideal place where you can get a job, so a lot of people cherish being there, and it's, I'd say, a pretty aggressive university.

Goodwin: Part of the time there was a—well, I mean, part of the time I was taking classes at Hofstra in the 90s when I was with Rusty. And at that time there was a, I think they called it lesbian and gay student union or something.

Moore: There is, yeah.

Goodwin: And I joined it, and at the time it, more than anything else, functioned as an Anne Rice fan club, which was perfectly fine, it's just that—

Awad: So you became president? No.

Goodwin: I'm more of a mascot I think. I wasn't the only one wearing a top hat, a cape, and fangs. There was several of the lesbian and gay students doing the same. I think the third book had just come out, and you know or perhaps you don't, how queer people used to be about Anne Rice.

Awad: I mean, I feel like exposure to Anne Rice as a, you know, young person conjured, if I may use that word, some sort of like, queer feeling, proto queer feeling in me, I would say.

Goodwin: Really?

Awad: Yeah, not her as a person, but like, the world that she created.

Goodwin: Right, and it's all about—that's all because of her gay son and how she went uber-protective and uber-supportive and all that. Which is a good thing, mind you. A couple of years ago, maybe three years ago, we were in New Orleans for one of the Anne Rice Vampire Balls, Voltaire and Jill Tracy were the music, and Nathaniel Johnstone were the musical acts. These are all friends of ours that have been on our radio show, and we got to see Anne herself carried out on this, like, throne. And even Voltaire, I don't know, are you familiar with Voltaire?

Awad: A little bit, not totally, not as familiar as you are.

Goodwin: Well you know who Voltaire is, the—

Awad: Yes.

Moore: Quite a charismatic guy.

Goodwin: I think if Goths have a king, it's Voltaire. But you know, one of the funniest human beings on the planet, also one of the sweetest people you'll ever meet. But anyway, even Voltaire was a little intimidated when Anne Rice is like, carried out on this, literally on this throne, and he's supposed to talk to her and sing to her and stuff, and it was like—he said that was the first time even he felt a little above his pay grade, and he's Voltaire, you know?

Awad: He was like, star struck I guess, a little.

Goodwin: A little, yeah.

Awad: Maybe that's an understatement, I don't know. Wow. So can I ask, where did you grow up, actually?

Moore: Oh, I grew up in western Pennsylvania, in a small steel town called Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. It's about 20 miles north of Pittsburgh, the Ohio River goes up north for a while and then it goes south. It was along the Ohio River, and my family, my grandfather and my great uncle sort of migrated there around the 1900s, 1910, stuff like that.

Awad: From where?

Moore: From Central Ohio. New Concord, Ohio. There's a school there called Muskingum College which is deeply embedded in the history of my family. But anyway, so, that was there. My father was an automobile dealer in the 1930s, but he had a bad heart condition all his life and he died when I was—when he was—in 1951, when I was about nine, I guess. So I stayed there, living with my sister, who is two years older than me, and my mother, and I went the last two years of high

school, I went to a private school in Maryland. I'm not sure exactly why they packed me off to a private school because I was a pretty good student, but anyway, I went there. And then I went, I got a really good scholarship to Northwestern University in Chicago, paid all my expenses and everything, so I went to Northwestern for four years. Met my first wife there, got married senior year.

Awad: Can you tell me a little bit about what ideas about gender, I guess, were you exposed to in the Rust Belt in the 50s as a youth, growing up? Or what were some of the ideas that, or messages that you got in that environment?

Moore: I think it's a pretty traditionalist type of background, you know, in the 1940s and 50s in Western Pennsylvania. I think, because my father was dead and my mother was the head of the family, that I got used to a strong woman, you know, calling the shots and doing that sort of thing, and I was always—I've always been really down with women, you know? In being powerful figures and having the right to do anything they want to do, et cetera. So that was just a carryover at that time. And my sister, too, is a strong woman, too. So that was kind of the situation, and I think, it's a rough town. Like a steel town, you know, my family had a small business there and was fairly prosperous and, you know, so I got along okay with people and nobody ever beat me up or anything like that. But I used to play football and everything with them, so it was fun.

Awad: May I ask, if you're—you said your family have kind of deep roots at this college in New Concord, Ohio.

Moore: Yeah.

Awad: Can you tell me a little bit about that, and what brought them to Western Pennsylvania?

Moore: Well, in my family there's like a strong strain of Presbyterianism, or United Presbyterianism, like church-related stuff, and they were oriented toward—

Awad: Like Scottish Presbyterians?

Moore: Yeah, they're sort of, I mean, Scotch Irish is the way they describe themselves, you know? So they were living in this small town in New Concord and they really loved the place, you know? Basically I mean, all my family up to my father's brother, they used to go out there all the time even though they didn't live there. You know, when I was growing up and even away from home, there was this focus back on New Concord, Ohio, and how wonderful it was there in the rural area of Ohio.

Awad: Were they farmers, then? Before then?

Moore: Well they had been farmers, and then they went to, they moved into town. I think they lost their farm or something at some point. But my uncle, my great uncle Paul was like a super businessman, and he moved to the Pittsburgh area. Pittsburgh at that time, like in 1910, 20, that



was like a hot city. That was when the steel industry was new and things were growing, and the industry is still very powerful in Pittsburgh. So my uncle made a lot of money and brought the whole family out there to live in that area.

Awad: And may I just follow up a little bit with you, Chelsea, and you said you grew up mainly in New Jersey?

Goodwin: Not something one would care to admit, but yes.

Awad: Can you tell me a little bit about your town in New Jersey and what growing up was like for you there?

Goodwin: Okay. It, even though it was the 1960s and 70s, it was culturally very much like the 50s. Everything was very conservative, very homophobic, very—you don't think of New Jersey as being redneck, but where I grew up it's very, very redneck. Very conservative and very—

Awad: Kind of narrow, I guess.

Goodwin: Extremely, yes. It's like, since you said you know who Voltaire is, picture any of the—any Voltaire song about New Jersey picked at random, and it was the same for me only 10 years earlier.

Awad: That's a good, that's a very exacting reference. May I ask what your parents did?

Goodwin: My father designed flexible packaging for a company that was originally called Regal Paper and later became Rexam. My mother was your basic 50s-type housewife. My grandparents were also very much presences in my life. My grandfather was a welder, my grandmother was a substitute school teacher.

Awad: And did your grandparents grow up in Jersey as well?

Goodwin: Yeah, well, my mother's side of the family had roots to that part of New Jersey going back to the 1800s at least.

Awad: Wow. And so, when you got to high school, were you still in New Jersey at that point?

Goodwin: Yes. Originally I was in all the special brainy kid classes, the ones where you got, you know, all the college prep classes and you were set a little bit apart and treated like you were special by the teachers and the other kids beat on you, you know the drill.

Awad: And so, and then you came to, just to clarify, you came to New York then after high school in like your—

Goodwin: After high school, after some college, after a lot of things.

Awad: Okay. So, you know, we've covered a lot of different things, obviously. I just want to ask you—

Goodwin: When you asked Rusty, by the way, and the same is true for me, about any awareness of trans anything, the importance of Christine Jorgenson as being the only trans person that was a public figure that you would have heard of or seen on TV or been aware of can't be stressed enough, just how important a figure and a symbol she was when there was nobody else. There was a name you knew.

Awad: How old were you when you came across the name of Christine Jorgenson? Do you recall at all?

Goodwin: Oh, six, seven, something like that.

Awad: Oh wow.

Goodwin: And I was attracted to the idea then.

Moore: I was 11. I remember it distinctly, where I was and who said it.

Awad: Oh wow.

Moore: About talking about her having a sex change, yeah.

Awad: Can you tell me a little bit about that moment? Can you share that story?

Moore: Well, it was just like, wow. I was just flabbergasted, I didn't know that could happen, but I'm thinking wow, Christine Jorgenson had this operation and now she's a woman. And, you know, I didn't think, wow, I want to get that. You know, I was just like, this is, I was just intrigued by it, really. That's all. And focused on it, and I still remember it as I said. I feel like something in me was, like, responding to that, which I wasn't even aware of at all.

Awad: And the same with you, except at a younger age, at age six you were responding.

Goodwin: Yeah. Yeah. I found the idea very appealing somehow.

Awad: So when it comes to your own gender, did you—you felt an affinity for, or a connection with femininity and womanhood from an early age?

Goodwin: Yes.

Awad: Or is that a way—

Goodwin: No, that's fair. That's fair.

Awad: I don't want to mischaracterize it.

Goodwin: Okay, that's fair. You see—

Awad: Or how would you say it in your words? I shouldn't be offering, you know—

Goodwin: Go right ahead. No, that's fair. I think that there's a mixture of things, I think. Gender is very complicated and very fraught, I think. Put it this way, in many ways I consider myself a feminist, and yet for all the talk about all of the various male privileges, let's not forget that I grew up while the Vietnam war was going on, and one of the privileges which came with being male was the privilege of choosing whether you were going to go to Vietnam, Canada, or jail, a privilege that I would happily forego, and I'm sure many others would as well. It wasn't all like—the other thing, I think, that feminist theory frankly misses, is this assumption that male privilege is something that everyone who is born male automatically gets male privilege, and it's no—male privilege is something that comes in a whole competitive, complicated pecking order. It involves success at sports, it involves prowess at fisticuffs, it involves any number of little tasks and little challenges. Manhood always held up as something that one earns, rather than something that is just presented to one at birth. And some of those tests I succeeded at, some of those tests I failed miserably at, and some of them I simply didn't even participate in the effort, because by the time I reached the ages where those particular challenges were presented, I had already pretty much opted out of the entire game. I hope that makes some sense.

Awad: No, it definitely does, and it actually, what you just said, you know, about that and about Christine Jorgenson, tied into what I was going to ask, which is that, you know, it's become something of a truism that we're living in this era of such, like, trans visibility and how important that is, and sort of like—

Goodwin: It seemed that way for awhile, and then Trump assumed power, and now we're all have to recalibrate and say, what exactly is going on, and where exactly are we living? I am not as political as a lot of other people in terms of being primarily concerned with electoral politics and which candidate gets elected. It does matter to me that Obama was the first American president to actually use the word transgender, to actually say I'm a human being. And he was replaced by Trump coming along and saying no you're not. So where are we? I don't know.

Awad: What do you—I guess my final question for both of you is like, what do you hope for for trans people in the future? What do you wish for, given your life experience as activists, as, you know, people who had to like, really struggle through lots of different things accessing community and all this other—what do you wish for for trans folks?

Goodwin: Is it my place to wish for anything to represent all trans folks because I happen to be trans? I would wish that we would all have the same rights, the same opportunities as anybody else, of course. That we all be on an equal playing field. That we not be victims of murder and

violence and assault and that sort of thing. At this point I'm rather selfishly concerned, what I wish for myself is the next part in a television show or a movie, or the next opportunity to perform on stage at a Jeff Mack event, or a Macabre Faire event, or something of that nature. To have the next book I write be the one that gets picked up by more people in the science-fiction and horror-fiction world so that I have a better chance of being picked up by a major publisher, or at least one of the small presses that sells more copies than I'm selling now, that sort of thing, very minor, personal goals.

Awad: What would you—what do you think about this question, or how would you approach it?

Moore: Well I would hope that—I would hope that nobody is discriminated against anywhere because of gender, and that everybody feel free to live the life that they want to live. If, you know, especially from the standpoint of gender, but in general, I just hope that people have that right to do it. And I think that we're moving in that direction. So far I think that under the—in the Obama administration definitely we made a lot of progress, and that, I actually don't feel that Trump in his heart is an anti-trans person, but I think that he could make some problems for us. But I think that ultimately it's going to work out. That there will be more and more acceptance for gender variance, and that anybody can be whatever they are in terms of gender. That's where we should be going.

Goodwin: Probably if there's one thing I wish for the trans community at this point, it's that we can all pee without fear of being arrested. It seems a very humble thing to want.

Awad: I mean, also that hostility and aggression regarding, you know, bathrooms is something that has been going on now for decades, and I think a lot of people don't—aren't aware of how that trope keeps getting—

Goodwin: Well if you remember, or perhaps you don't, in the civil rights era, originally bathrooms were segregated by race. This is nothing new. Also, you have to remember the extreme virulence of the way that a particular malevolent strain of Christian fundamentalism has been allowed to metastasize in this country.

Awad: Yeah. Well, I grew up in Florida.

Goodwin: So you understand.

Awad: I may be a little familiar. Anyway, is there anything else that you would like to add or felt that like, I completely missed?

Goodwin: Yes. In *Goth We Trust* airs every Wednesday and Thursday night, from 10:00 to midnight on WIOX, 91.3FM in Roxbury, New York, and streaming on the web at [WIOXradio.org](http://WIOXradio.org). I hope that people, especially people who are fans of Goth music, will listen.

Awad: Thank you very much. Rusty is there anything else that you would want to add?

Moore: No, I think this has been a very interesting conversation and I hope that people enjoy it. If anybody listens to it in the future when it's embedded in a giant library someplace, set into the wall like in this vision, this movie where there's millions of stories told like this, waiting to be accessed.

Awad: Well, thank you very much. It's been a privilege to talk to you both. Thank you.

Moore: Thank you for coming.