

NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

ALYSSA PARIAH

Interviewer: Michelle Esther O'Brien

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Transcribed by Ali Block and Maggie Rose

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Michelle O'Brien: Hello my name is Michelle O'Brien and I will be having a conversation with Alyssa Pariah for the New York City Trans Oral History Project in collaboration with the New York Public Library's community oral history project. This is an oral history project centered from the experiences of trans identifying people. It is January 16th, 2018 and this is being recorded at the NYU Department of Sociology. Hello Alyssa.

Alyssa Pariah: Hello Michelle.

O'Brien: How are you today?

Pariah: Good thanks.

O'Brien: Where were you born?

Pariah: Freehold, NJ

O'Brien: Do you um, at um, One of my fellow colleagues the question he always asks is "What was your first memory growing up?"

Pariah: Tattling on my dad at preschool for being an abusive, sadistic fuck.

O'Brien: Wow.

Pariah: Yeah, whoa, good, good question.

O'Brien: What do you remember from that, doing that?

Pariah: The fallout, mostly, learning that you're not supposed to tell, when your families in trouble because maybe, up. KinderCare doesn't particularly care about the wellbeing of poor families. Yeah.

O'Brien: Whoa.

Pariah: Yeah.

O'Brien: Ah, Tell me a little but about your family when you were growing up, your household and you lived there and what they were like.

Pariah: It must have not been long after my tattling on my dad that my mom, ah, took me and ran away so that we could stay alive, and it was she and I, until I was 5 and then she had my little sister and then it was three of us and sometimes one of my mom's friends or boyfriends, yeah there was usually someone staying with us, even though we could have gotten kicked off of section 8 for that, Ha, but somebody was usually staying with us.

O'Brien: Did child protective services get involved around your father for when you told on him?

Pariah: My father and my mother, uh I suppose I was always on their radar, because my dad didn't show up when I was born, so he's not on my birth certificate, I don't have pictures of me in the hospital, which is still like I suppose a point of embarrassment for my mom and regret and then there were also trace amounts of like some drugs, um when they did like I guess a drug test or something on my me when I was born and they immediately alerted Child Protective Services and then I went to plenty of like mandatory counseling and check in's with school guidance counselor's all through elementary school through graduating high school yeah but I never got, never got taken away which is good, like even when my mom went to jail, um as my grandmother, her mother was able to step up and I knew how to be quiet and not tell people about what was happening in my house and im sure that first memory, that I didn't know was my first memory and now I do, um I suppose that taught me to like conceal family stuff.

O'Brien: When you were a small child do you know how your parents got by?

Pariah: Um...I don't know what my, well actually I do know, my dad, haha, my dad found white women to support him haha, and then, ok I guess um and then I rarely saw him, I always hated to have to see him. My mom usually kept some sort of minimum wage job, um she was a waitress, she was a cab dispatcher, she was like a medical assistant, assistant like vaguely in the medical field like doing like very menial tasks, um being underpaid for it so those where the most of the jobs that she did, um until after I was an adult when she got her GED and then took some college classes and got her certification to be a drug and alcohol counselor,

O'Brien: Oh wow.

Pariah: and that's what she does now.

O'Brien: In New Jersey?

Pariah: No, she's in Florida

O'Brien: Oh wow. That's cool, Um, so when your mom ran away did she change towns? Did she, where did you end up? Was your situation similar?

Pariah: Yeah, we, it was a pretty close, townships in New Jersey are like not like that hard to get from one place to another, uh he was, he didn't know where we were for some time, even though we were not very far, I don't think as we were hopping around from place to place. But he didn't know where we lived and he never came around. And I know that because I was always really afraid that he would.

O'Brien: What are some things you remember about what you were like as a child?

Pariah: I knew too much, oh god! I knew way too much, um...I remember talking to other kids, when they would talk to me, cause I was a Pariah back then, um and I remember thinking "all these kids are really stupid and they don't know anything" and how is it that I know and like perceive and understand deeply everything around me and they don't, ugh so that, that um defined a lot of my childhood. And its given me the idea in my adulthood that I'm just now letting go of that I don't like children cause I didn't like them when I was a child and then in my early adulthood I would sort of say that flip idly, um because I thought people may think its charming for me to say "I haven't liked kids since I was a kid" and that being like a thing I would say on repeat, um and lowkey I think it was a way for me to evade a reality that I probably will never have kids, so like trying to preemptively assert to myself that this is not something in my future so I should be sure to assert that its not something that I want anyways. Which is a thing that I do across the board.

O'Brien: Interesting

Pariah: Yeah

O'Brien: What were the towns you were like, schools you were at, what was it like racially?

Pariah: um, mostly black and Puerto Rican, and some...uh white Italians that's mostly it.

O'Brien: And was your family Puerto Rican?

Pariah: Uh huh, my mom's Puerto Rican

O'Brien: So tell me a little about being a teenager

Pariah: Harassment, abuse, humiliation, feeling trapped, um, scared then bitter, it was just all bad. I went from my first day of middle school right so like 12 or 11 going into 12 in 6th grade. Before I made it to the home room, it was like I just walked into the building for the first time since like the tour we would go on, before we went to the school, like the first day, before I even made it to home room and I went into the front doors, and it was very crowded because everyone would be held outside, so standing around, couldn't just go into the school, cause you know when your in a poor school they treat you like its jail right so like I would then later learn that there are other schools in other towns that kids go in and go on, they go wherever they want, they use whatever facilities they like, no no no. We were like outside, sometimes in the hot, sometimes in the cold, until the very moment that we were all let in then we had 4 minutes to go where ever we had to go, if we didn't get there on time we'd go to detention, you would go to detention you would have to serve, there would be like a person mapping and keeping track of every session you'd go to, how many that you had, and it didn't occur to me at the time, but then when I would later politicize, oh they were preparing us for prison, great, cool, alright, anyway. Um, so before I made it to homeroom, and like bolted, when to the right, went to the first stairwell, went up the stairwell, it was like a two flight stairwell, and I wasn't sure if I was going in exactly the right direction, so I called out to someone who I knew, since I was a toddler, by the way, and went to

preschool with, his name was Manny, Manny Navarro, and I yelled out to him, "Hey Manny, is this where we were supposed to be going? Is this the class we were supposed to go to?" And I assumed that, that was like a fine thing to ask, and it was fine for me to ask it and there was nothing wrong with that until, um a group of boys heard me, registered what I said and immediately mocked me and called me a fag for the way that I was talking. And I was like "oh...this is gonna be bad, and not just that this is gonna be bad but that it's gonna be bad because I can't get it together, right, so like all the years before when I was in elementary school, which um I felt like the protection of all of my women teachers who would affirm me and thought that my personality was cute and charming and when someone would like try to come for me they would push back and not let that happen and would discipline the boys, but suddenly I'm like vulnerable and in this middle school that is like mixed with other schools and the teachers care less, cause now we're using the period system so I felt very vulnerable and it occurred to me that these kids could all jump me, they could push me down the stairs, everyone would see, no one around came to my defense, neither did Manny, By the way, whom at that point I must have known for like 7 or 8 years, ok Manny I see how it is. So it absolutely set the tone. So like one day if I ever ya know write my book, that would be like a very formative chapter that you know, people will quote and like remember, that would color the next 6 years, from 6 to 12 and that's exactly how that would play out, continuing being Pariah.

O'Brien: So you were harassed and bullied a lot?

Pariah: A lot, a lot lot.

O'Brien: And that was mostly in the context of you being read as a

Pariah: A fag

O'Brien: A fag

Pariah: Yeah, I knew full well, always that my personality was off-putting to a lot of people and sometimes it was directly told to me that people don't like the way that you're acting is bad, you need to do something about that and in other context it wasn't told directly to me it was directed to my mom, who people perceived as being neglectful and um, not demanding that I be around my dad or my uncles or my boy cousins or play sports because she was mostly hands off frankly because of her problem with drugs but outside of that just didn't police me, like she was fine with me, so I felt some protection from her and also felt like I needed to defend her against attacks where people would criticize her parenting but using the lens of my gender performance or failure right, to criticize her, to say like "Obviously Michelle, (my mom's name is Michelle) Obviously Michelle there's something wrong because look at how he's acting, you're not making interventions he's gonna grow up and this is gonna be a problem for the rest of his life, if you don't do something about it" and that was like a constant, so I always knew but now that's being colored with violence and the threat of violence the constant threat of violence, like all these kids wanted to jump me and no one around will do anything about it, which is where a lot of my anger and bitterness would come from because I had a lot of girlfriends who I knew from dance and

choir and drama and helping them with their homework right and all of the things talking about music and movies and like all the fun stuff that is associated with vivacious queer, faggy boys, right, that they would see that I was being harassed and threatened and they wouldn't intervene also colored how I would perceive my potential for relationships with people always, I didn't know that at the time but its very clear even if you like me, even if you get a kick out of me and have some sort of relationship with me, if you see that I'm hurting and you don't do anything about it, I'm never gonna really feel close to you. So, I struggle with closeness.

O'Brien: What kind of care would you have needed that, if you could go back and care for yourself, protect yourself in that time?

Pariah: Some fearless role models maybe, somebody that I could have seen, that would have affirmed me in ways that I very clearly felt attacked, somebody who maybe had their life together, who is respected, who has a house and a car and a job, its just rare, but ok. Who would have been like "Oh no, your great, there's nothing wrong with how you are, at all and the people who are doing this to you are suffering themselves and want you to share in their suffering. And try to see the bigger picture, maybe that would stress to me the sort of impermanence of my situation which is hard for me to grasp at the time despite the intelligence that I'm asserting to myself years later. I think maybe that could have helped, because I remember watching Richard Bay, Jerry Springer, Ricky Lake on TV and I would see transsexuals some of them were really beautiful but none of them were respected, none of them were being affirmed, they were all being humiliated, whether or not they were beautiful, but the beautiful ones were treated a bit better and that would go on to color how I would understand transitioning and that the best thing I could hope for was to be beautiful and hopefully undetectable in order to have a shot at a good life. I imagine that if that was not my only exposure to people sort of breaking gender then I imagine...(inaudible).

O'Brien: So how did you get out of this nightmare of not having, no one having your back?

Pariah: Graduating high school, I was so angry at my high school graduation, I was so, I didn't want to go, I had a lot of absences my junior and senior year because I used to cut school and either stay in bed all day or take the train and go to the city and hang out with the girls, so my junior year of high school I had 46 absences and my senior year I had 61 absences and they were like 180 school days, the only reason that I was able to graduate was 1, because my grades were fine, the school expected very little academically so it was not difficult for me to pass and there were some sympathetic people who saw what I was going through, especially the detention, I wanna call him a warden or guard but he was a teacher, he saw what it looked like when I would go into the detention room and there was a detention room in my school that was open an hour before school, four hours after school, eight hours on Saturday and eight hours on Sunday, like whoa, they really were getting us ready for being incarcerated. He saw what it looked like when I would go in there and that not only was I unhappy because nobody's happy in detention, but its actually is causing a disturbance because the boys in there cant help themselves but to attack me and of course looking back because those like few boys were like looking at this gender breaking queen and I'm sure I was either erupting something inside of them because ya know

they wanted to break gender themselves or they wanted to break into my ass and fuck me and in some cases that would prove to be true...but we can want. So actually the teacher that ran the detention room would just mark me down for being in detention, and being caught up because with this school you have to do 4 hours of detention for missing a day of school and that would be on top of all other sort of infractions that would incur and I certainly would because of my bad attitude and my causing my own problem which is what the administrator, what's his name?...I guess its better not to say names anyway, uh an administer, oh I do remember his name now, I'm not gonna say it, an administrator said that to me, without apology, "well look at the way that you act and talk and dress, how could you expect us to protect you or to do anything for you or to hold these kids accountable, you bring it on yourself. And that same administrator, another day, he had seen me in the hallway, going to the bathroom and I didn't have a hall pass, it was also one of my problems, I was very offended at the idea that I needed to get a bathroom pass, why should I have to raise my hand and get your permission to go to the bathroom, I know when I have to go to the bathroom, but there where administrators monitoring the hallways who would write you up if you didn't have a bathroom pass also, Hello...getting us ready for jail, like what is wrong with these people, so that would happen and if you were in the hallway without a pass then you would get written up for detention and you'd have to serve an hour in detention for being in the hallway and this is the norm, so I see him, well he sees me in the hallway as I'm on my way, by the way to the single stall bathroom that the cafeteria staff would let me use because they felt bad for me because I couldn't go to the bathroom because I knew what would be waiting for me if I went to the bathroom and somebody saw me, in some boys bathroom and some body saw me, so they let me use their bathroom which is a single stall with a lock and they would let me come and use their bathroom which sometimes was far away from the classroom that I was in, so sometimes id be in the hallway for more time than necessary so like bathroom was a problem for me in high school but anyway so I hear as I turn the corner and I guess he thinks I'm out of ear shot he says to a person that's walking around with him like one of the security guards that we had, um "the next Rupaul" right and this "Ha Ha Ha" and this is an administrators this is someone that's charged with my safety or something so I was just very angry by the time I finished high school I was so angry at everything, I was angry at the administration, I was angry at my classmates, I was angry at my mom for making me go to the graduation, I felt like she was making it about her, I didn't want to take pictures, I knew that my pictures would be used against me later, which is why if I ever get to any sort of level of notoriety or like I don't know...get arrested and people do like a GOFUNDME and it gets out and the right person sees it and then they want to humiliate me they will not be able to find my yearbook pictures because I knew that I was not gonna look like a little confused brick forever, so I didn't take pictures, and I feel real fucking good about that so, I also didn't want to go to graduation for that same reason, she made me go to graduation, I didn't feel good about it. I didn't like the graduation, I was very happy to leave and never come back, it still is a place that when I go back and I'm in a car going past it I get (inaudible) so bad and I need to like take a benzo, um because it was just such a traumatic place for me. So, to this day I only speak to one, count it, one person from high school my one friend James Saunders. Who I love dearly, 13 years we're friends now, he the only person who ill speak to other people speak to him when they see him and say "Oh Alyssa was is so great, we see her activisms that she's doing and she's pretty and tell her we said hi and we should all hang out" and I told him many, many times, don't even entertain the idea, don't even tell me when they

said it, I don't wanna know I don't wanna speak to any of those people I'm pissed they saw what I was going through, they didn't do anything, fuck everybody, So I'm 31 its been 13 years since, I'm still very, very bitter and not ready to let it go.

O'Brien: On your most fabulous days, your very best in high school, what did you look like?

Pariah: Um, My curls were poppin, um I used to use Ampro protein gel and my curls were crispy but defined as fuck, and I had on my tight jeans and my tight shirt and my colorful colors and all the money that I had so fuck you very much so I'm gonna wear what I wanna wear once I started making my own money I'm like "I am not spending my own money on boy clothes, No. I begrudgingly accepted them when someone else was buying them for me or they were being given to me but I'm making my own money, I'm buying what I want. And I remember having a head band that I would make out a t-shirt just by cutting the bottom of t-shirt so it'd kind of roll quickly and tie it around my head and make it really tight at the back and then taking very meticulous care to how my baby hairs looked fucking beautiful and

O'Brien: This is mid 90s'?

Pariah: No 2005 when I graduated and hopefully my acne wouldn't be so bad at that time, I remember using the whipped foundation from Maybelline which at that time was like understood as being revolutionary in the makeup world, because of the consistency of it, it was like a mousse. So just kind of cake that on and my bad skin wouldn't show through cause at the time I had really, really, really bad acne, my face is flawless now thank you very much estrogen but back then it was really, really, I had horrible, horrible acne. So hopefully I would be having a good complexion day too and that was when I was looking the best.

O'Brien: So, what did you do when you graduated?

Pariah: Certainly never looked back, cut off all those people didn't speak to them, but I had my eyes on trying to leave New Jersey which is like a thing, right for queer and trans people in New Jersey I would later learn, that's also similar for people from Connecticut and long island but its like this zeroing in on the city, I wanna be in the city, this is the only place that I've been too that people are like me, that the way that I talk, walk, dress, act is not an issue.

O'Brien: Did you seek queer people when you were.

Pariah: oh Yeah, yeah. I'm pretty sure the big part of the reason I went from being sad, ashamed, and fearful to being bitter, angry and rebellious which is also bad but it felt better at the time

O'Brien: It's a huge step

Pariah: It was because I used to go to the LGBT center on 13th street for the Yes program, Youth Enrichment Services, have a very sharp critique of the LGBT center now. But back then it was very important and I was happy to be in the program of a bunch of queer, trans teenagers and I came

every weekend for the Saturday group where it was just the support group, really sort of dressed in extracurricular clothes to make us feel like less than, something other than the prize people we all knew that we were, like bad at whatever schools we went to unless you were lucky enough to go to HMI or the Harvey Milk High School which I wanted to go to so bad

O'Brien: Say what HMI is?

Pariah: Oh The Harvey Milk Institute which is like the after school program at the Harvey Milk High School which is, I don't know if its still open, at least back then it was the one LGBT high school I think in the country definitely that we knew of and I wanted to go there if I lived at the top, top of the Bronx or like all the way out on Carnarce I technically could at least apply to go even if it would take me hours to get to school but I couldn't do it cause I'm in New Jersey no matter how close you live in Jersey if you can spit on the George Washington Bridge, It doesn't matter, its New Jersey and you cannot go to Harvey Milk High School and I was so pissed about that and I bent my family into letting me come and live with them in the city so that I could apply and go there and it never happened and I was very angry, I became very angry because I had gained access to some people who thought that I was ok and who were like me and I didn't want to not be around that if I could help it, which is why I would skip school, come to the city and why I would end up being so bitter and angry toward the people who I felt like didn't have my back because ive been exposed to people who did have my back.

O'Brien: What years were you in the YES Program at the LGBT Center?

Pariah: From 2003 to 2006

O'Brien: So, in your last part of high school and afterwards?

Pariah: It was great, we get to camp, I didn't do any of the camp, like the woods parts but it was nice, it was nice we ate pretty good food and had a lot of discussion and got to Kiki, we had mini balls and our one romance thank you very much my first yeah, yeah it was great, I loved YES.

O'Brien: What were the key Kiki balls like?

Pariah: People who were too young and too naughty for the ball scene so you could go to a Kiki or Kiki function and it was less shady no body gets chopped your not walking for money none of the girls have their tities yet or any surg (surgery) so you don't feel shamed for not having work done, it was just less at stake, there's no predatory behavior by older people who prey on kids which is a thing sorry ballroom community do better, so yeah that was why the Kiki balls were a lot of fun.

O'Brien: What did, what was fun about them?

Pariah: Showing off, being fab, having your friends there, cheering you on, being in competition, winning if you can win. And then afterwards people, putting there money together to go to the

diner and get food, taking everybody or taking over the diner, people like gagging, were like all these horrendously queer kids, oh my god, if anybody saw us, I guess they would be so disturbed, "oh no these young kids, there throwing their lives away," ya know, I imagine that would be there impression. But I was just having a good time.

O'Brien: Would you dance?

Pariah: Yeah, (inaudible) it was cute, we had a good time.

O'Brien: So you graduated, knew about the city, how...

Pariah: I would come up all the time, try to find sugar daddies to take care of me so that I could either move in with them or have them finance my life so that I could live there and had real bad experiences doing that, anytime that I would begin to happen and something bad would happen and would send me flying back to New Jersey crying, men are trash, God I don't know what else to say, would learn very quickly that the influx of men suddenly who are like looking at me sexually, which was not a feature before because no boys in my school would dare step to me then so I didn't have the experience of flirting, dating, talking about boys, that was just not something that was available to me, but then right suddenly there all these tranny chasers, sorry that's a bad term but trans amorous men oh my god I'm not here for trans amorous movement,

O'Brien: You can call them chasers

Pariah: Yeah fucking chasers, terrible oh my god, suddenly they're like washing me with complements and buying me things, offering me money in order to have access to blowing me or whatever it is and they were just awful, all of them, and low key, looking back its some shit but a lot of them loved how young I was which is gross as fuck.

O'Brien: Awful for their mistreatment of you or awful in a lot of ways?

Pariah: The predatory in so many ways and I suppose the most egregious, looking back now is like that they were not just seeking out trans girls that hadn't been (inaudible) or surged, or they'd be more functional but they really liked the young ones, the ones that would hang out at the pier. Cause they couldn't get into a club yet, right so why wouldn't you go to the club or cruise around the club where you know the adults girls are at, your driving around the pier and the church, the church was this free, I don't know what church it was, but its like up the street from the pier, I don't know if they still do this program but back then they did this program where they would take in queer kids

O'Brien: The neutral zone?

Pariah: No the neutral zone was on 33rd by Penn Station I used to go there a lot too, but no this was a church and we just called it "The Church" and we would go there in the evenings on the weekends and I think it was an effort to try to feed us because low key a lot of us legit were

hungry and food insecure and homeless, my god, so we wouldn't be out on the pier we wouldn't be walking on Christopher street back and forth to west fourth and back which is what you do, so we'd go in there and eat and do arts and crafts vogue, the boys who felt real would go play basketball, put on plays, we were able to put on makeup if we wanted to, so anyway this is where some of the chasers would go because they knew that's where you go and just looking back like oh my god yeah, I see predatory assholes that probably should be fucking guillotined like I would do it myself if I knew that they were doing the same thing now.

O'Brien: I can't imagine they're not

Pariah: I can't imagine they're not

O'Brien: So, a lot of shitty people in high school, and then shitty tranny chasers after high school,

Pariah: Uh huh

O'Brien: Did you have friends at this time?

Pariah: Yeah oh yeah I had great, great girlfriends that I'm still friendly with I'm not very close to them anymore because divergence once I would come to activism and organizing I sort of like parted from the life but it was very important for me at the time to definitively and very consciously leave the queer kids scene, right around the pier and the center and the church and neutral zone and the KiKi scene and then go and play with the big girls, who post on craigslist, who go on tour, go get pumped, go to Mexico and get surg and now I'm playing with the big girls and that was a very important shift that, looking back seems seamless and easy but at the time I was very scared actually and even though I would meet friends then who I needed that time was rife with a lot of problems.

O'Brien: Tell me about, uh, you listed off what big girls would do and I could guess what all those are.

Pariah: Yeah

O'Brien: You listed Craigslist, go to Mexico City?

Pariah: No, Guadalajara, Dr. Sunny.

O'Brien: And get pumped, Surg? Get surgery.

Pariah: Get surgery. Yeah cosmetic surgery for feminization. Your face, your body, whatever it is. Pumped with silicon injections, yes very dangerous. Wouldn't recommend. Would do again, if I'm honest. Now that lifestyle and those circles of girls, before I would be inducted into, we knew who they were. We knew them like, I don't know, like people who follow sports know the players. We were like the naughty queer kids who didn't have any connections to get into clubs. Couldn't

even really feed ourselves and feel fab a go to a bar. We would get kicked out of Starbucks, ya know after x amount of time when whichever one of us had enough money to actually get a coffee. It was bad, we were not fabulous. We were like the low rung like half of us didn't even have clean clothes. It was really bad. It's such a reflection of disgusting society. Anyway, we knew who the girls were. We just called them the girls, we knew who we were actually talking about. Trans women who had their surg who looked lovely, who we knew were sex workers but whatever they had money right? They had their work done, they lived a comparatively better life than we did. So, some of us would end up going into that scene, that circle, and some of us would not. And, they call them generations which is so bizarre. But they refer to, sort of like a set of time, it's not twenty years, it's like a year of when you and the sort of young naughty girls who are just starting hormones, maybe not, playing in drags full time, maybe not, making a little bit of money turning tricks, maybe not. Not committed not really in the life. Then within a span of a year or so, all of y'all would sort of then go into the scene, maybe you get a mother. I have a mother, Nicoletta Extravaganza, darling, I love Nicola. I know I'm not close to you like I used to be but I love you and I'm thankful. You know you'll find one that will take you under her wing and teach you the ropes. The ropes are not pretty but it's what you have to do. And I did it. So, that would become my lifestyle and would be my lifestyle for some time until I was able to get all my work done and obviously be on 'mones and change my name and have an apartment. Like have my look and my life relatively together. And I did, and I'm Alyssa, fuck you. I'm beautiful, I know it, you know it. so, thank you to the lifestyle but I was very happy to leave it.

O'Brien: Tell me about some of the girls that inspired you during that time.

Pariah: Yeah so most of the girls were Nicoletta's friends, like other girls in the house of Extravaganza. Destiny (inaudible), hey auntie. Alexandra, Jazelle, I remember at that time Amaya Mizrahi who is now on a TV show. Congratulations Amaya! I don't know if you'll ever listen to the Trans Oral History Report but like WHOA! she was a ballroom girl who everyone thought was like a bad bitch and they were all of these rumors swirling around her. She was like this ethereal goddess who low key a lot of people were very jealous of because somehow, she got all her money and got all her work and she was REAL. She snatched all the trophies at every ball. Everybody thought that she was the shit. And she was, and she still is! Congratulations Amaya! People really liked Jazelle, Body, Jessica Body, the were trans gentle to the scene. They were not in it, but they were notable, transsexuals of note. They were really, really beautiful and seemed to have their shit together. Had men drooling over them, had plenty money. Looking back, like obviously that's not the ideal lifestyle but so what? At the time it seemed like goals.

O'Brien: Tell me about house Extravaganza and what your relationship to it was. What it was like.

Pariah: Yeah, so, it's a legendary ballroom house from the eighties that helped to make the scene more famous. I shudder to say her name, oh my god. There was a house beat with a remix over it and I don't know who it was, but she said over and over again "if Madonna calls I'm not here." Like a (making a electronic beat sound) beat and if you didn't know what they were talking about, What they were talking about is Madonna appropriating ballroom culture making arguably millions of dollars off of it and then being like "ok, I'm done." And the scene is as marginal as

ever, the people are in as much poverty as ever. Its hard to get venues because clubs feel like you're the wrong element and want to avoid you and the kind of people that you are and it's crap! Its bullshit! But Madonna is garbage, sorry. I know a lot of white gays love and not just white gays, queer, trans POC's love her too but I despise Madonna.

O'Brien: Anything else you want to share about House Extravaganza or that sort of period of your life with the girls?

Pariah: No. But it'll be out. I'm glad I would end up getting into activism instead. It pulled me away from that and god bless everybody in the House of Extravaganza. God bless everybody in the ballroom scene. I hope everybody is happy and safe.

O'Brien: So, what were some of your fist encounters with activism?

Pariah: Ok, this is um., ok. Technically it was way back when, during my yes days because there was an organization that popped up. Well I don't know if it popped up, I'm sure there was a lot more planning than that, an organization called Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment, FIERCE. So, now looking back I can identify what actually happened. It was group of queers, trans POC who had worked for non-profit organizations before who were probably dominated by horrible white gays and they wanted to start something AND not just that but adults who were much older than them. They wanted to start something that was specifically targeted for queer and trans young people of color and they did it. And I was happy to go to whatever rallies and meetings that they would have and wanted to relate to it and the people that were in it who I perceived to be really strong, really smart, really tuned into something that I didn't really quite have the tools to grasp and wield myself. If it feels like those are the people who are like highly educated. I imagined that they had college degrees or are on track for that, like had resumes and could get a real job. So, I really revered them and then not long after that I would go to the Audrey Lord Project with Maya Vazquez. Maya, I love you. I hope you do one of these Trans Oral Projects if you haven't already. Get Maya Vazquez who is like policy diva, programming diva. People know Maya because she was in the foster system was a ward of the state. Which is a category even of the kids who we all knew because some of us, still lived with our families. As fucked up as our families were, we still lived with them. Some of them were wards of the state and lived in group homes and would not be fostered because people do not want black and brown queens as their foster children. Surprise, surprise. So, a lot of them had an even harder go of it then the rest of us. One of my best friends was one of them she used to come and stay with me sometimes. She would get special permission from her group home to come stay with me and she would stay with me as long as she could and my mom loved her and was very nice and I saw her recently, Sonar, and it was so hard because she was homeless and she had some kind of mental break, not really in reality all the time and Fuck it was hard. So, Maya was also one of those kids but she was able to make it out because she would go into the non-profit world and get a little non-profit job and learn this, learn that, and not a lot time she would be drafting policies and she was brilliant and her main thing was jail support for the girls who would get locked for prostitution more than not. And she knew that, they wouldn't have any body come and advocate for them and even if they did the girls didn't really know what to do.

So, you might go there and try to put money on the books or find out when she's getting out find out the T like what you need to know but not really know and Maya is like "no, this is who you call, this is what you're going to want to do once you get there. You're going to want to take notes. Who did you talk to? What did they say? You follow up, let them know you're going to follow up." She's sharp she's so on it, right? So, she developed the Trans Justice Community School at the Audrey Lorde Project and I got recruited to it. And, we learned how to do that part of the work like I talked about but some fundamentals of advocacy and just the structures of the non-profit that we can navigate in order to not be so marginalized, have some kind of a shot like getting our lives together and also generally learning how to dismantle shame and try to love yourself somehow. So, it was good AND I was the valedictorian for lack of a better word of the first ever Trans Justice Community School at the Audrey Lord Project. Thank you, goodnight. Because I ate it all up and would go home, read everything write about it and be so ready for the discussion. The other girls would be like "Alyssa relax" but I was like so happy about it and loved every minute of it. I would stay in the network and keep coming around Trans Justice meetings. Yes, it's activism but its not the activism that I would come to know and love and that came October 2011 with Occupy Wallstreet. Oh My God! Ok, I live in Jersey City, in the hood, my lifestyle was not great but that's ok, it was mine. So, I would have to take the train over to the World Trade Center, before that MONSTROCITY that is there now was built. If anybody goes over there, that mall that they have there is like dystopian. It makes me feel like I am not on this planet. It is so disgusting. It has these grand high ceilings, bright white walls and lights, entire hallways of LED televisions TALKING to you, expensive boutiques all sort of open air connected to the subway station which is DIRTY and disgusting. And there are plenty of security maintaining the perimeter to make sure that no unsavory people come into the nice area. It is so gross. Anyway, wow, in 2011 it wasn't built yet. I would have to go from the world trade center path station to go across town to get on the train to do whatever I was doing at the time. I was being an assistant to a producer who had a production company called Complete World Domination, where Laverne Cox was an associate producer. Hey Laverne, love you girl! You're the shit! Congratulations, you deserve everything. Don't forget about the rest of us. She was an associate producer and I knew that she was trying to get into acting. She had these roles that she talked about how happy she was with because before *Orange is the New Black* I think most of Laverne's roles were like transsexual hooker #4. Laverne, that is not a slight to you. You deserve better, you are an amazing actor, we all know it now. But back then, and even still now, they aren't looking for a trans woman for serious roles. Anyway, she is working here and I am just doing whatever kind of assisting stuff I can do. I have to take the train in order to get up there. It was in Grammar City, so in order to get there, I would go past Zucotti and all of these people are out there and usually you'll see protests. Well, I guess not you because you are an activist too but you the collective you. When you see a protest in the street in New York City, you're like, "whatever, I have things to do" and put on your headphones and you get where you need to go where they won't get in your way. Which was my experience before then. Frankly, sorry. No, they were out there, they had tents, they were not leaving. AND the had a drum circle that was good! They had people who were not activists or tourists, maybe tourists or whoever they went around the steps where at the top of the steps was the drum circle was, the good drum circle. They were probably like African people because they were really, very, very good. And I'm feeling it like from the rumbas coming out, like popping out of my veins. So, I am over there, stood there, went in someone I don't know who

you are, I know you're an angel, was like "oh, you want to see the camp? Come inside." And I had already seen it during the day time a few times and didn't think much of it but this was a Friday night in October and it was good. It was mild outside, I know it was mild outside cuz I took my shirt off. Give me a moment, it wasn't scandalous. So, I'm like "yeah, I'll go in" so I go into Scotty Park and they have stations all throughout. They have a library, a kitchen, they have a deck area and they had an arts and crafts area where you can make signs and there was spray paint that was all noxious and gummy and sticking together, but it was good. And I'm like, "no, I don't want to make a sign" but I would just take my shirt off put her on the ground and they had an Occupy Wallstreet stencil and I was like "fuck it" and I would spray paint "Occupy Wallstreet" on my tank top. I had that maroon tank top all year and I lost that baby in Florida, oh god. It was very special to me. I went back, and they were like 'oh you should come back, we have the general assembly on Saturday. You should come back and hang out and you'll like it. Basically, we are just demanding to hold this space until the government makes better decisions and doesn't bail out banks and destroy peoples' lives. We're just going to stay her until then." I was like, "oh, sounds alright. Ok, I will." Came back and experienced People's Mic for the first time. Just like, in it and I didn't exactly know what it was, and I just hear all these people screaming around me, and its like, oh fuck, something in my spine fuckin' shook and I'm like, "oh! This is it!" I am supposed to be here and that day I went home with a sore throat and couldn't talk the next day. I was yelling and screaming, it felt so good. "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out!" Fuck, like, all the poverty I had experienced my WHOLE life, right? The dirt that I had to do in my adult life to make a meager living, was not my fault, OH MY GOD! Bells ringing, right? I was convinced, without ever thinking about it, the reason that I'm poor is because, the adults around me ain't shit. Because I chose to be a transsexual, so I can't get a job, tricks are horrible. So that's why I'm poor. No, those occupy protestors, all the critique that I have for them years later, were like "no, it's the system." Right? And I'm like, "yeah it is." Yeah! If they didn't bail out the banks, if there was no tarp, Obama, who I loved and felt was great, until then. I hate you Obama. Ok, right? I mean, if there was no tarp, would we have a perfect society? HELL NO, we would still have capitalism. But, the banks would have failed, something would have Had to give. No, instead they gave banks billions of dollars to stay doing what they continued to do, UNCHANGED and its only gotten worse. It is so infuriating; the fury has never left me. I'm so pissed about capitalism. This is torture! Everybody on this planet, everybody is being tortured because of a few mother fuckers. Right? That are holding the rest of us hostage. We will not go anywhere. We will not do better. We'll DIE! We are going to fucking die! All of us! Because they're like "nope." This is a problem and they have layers and layers and layers of people who cosign it. This is so fucked up. yeah, we got big problems. So, now I'm like real mad about it. So, I'm like, "oh, ok so this is my life now." Justg, here I am. I'll just, I'll be an agitator forever. Until they fucking take me home, whatever.

O'Brien: Tell me about being involved in Occupy Wall Street.

Pariah: Yeah! So, I didn't have a big role. I didn't take up leadership or anything like that. I just, would soak it all in, scream at every action. Make a point to talk to people on the outside cuz you remember, people would walk around the park but wouldn't go in. People would talk about it, they would talk about it in the media all the time, oh my god. They would talk about it really badly in the media and I was very upset about that. That even Jon Stewart, who at the time, god forgive

me. I thought was brilliant, UGH! I'm barfing, Jon Stewart is so bad. Alright, we learn and we grow. I thought he was so smart and I watched *The Daily Show* every night and I had it on DVR and I felt like "I'm educated." Right? Because I get everything that he is talking about. But then would talk badly about Occupy too. He was like, I don't know, the best of all the commentators and all the news people, I thought. And he would talk badly about it too, "these people don't know what they want. Look at all of these people with desperate interests at Occupy" and they would show people from different sections of the left and different organizations and different causes and be like, "these people don't know what they want! They're not making concrete demands." I was very, I felt hurt by that and betrayed in a way. And then not after I would learn, oh, he's a fucking shitty liberal. And that was when I would learn the difference between liberalism and being a revolutionary. And I'm like, "oh, he's committed to the system maintaining" and he probably wants there to be more fair treatment and ease some of the chaos but also thinks that some of the people who are fighting against it are misinformed and laughs at them. And get his audience to laugh at them! I'm like, "oh shit" looking back, right? If Jon Stewart would not have done that, if he would have affirmed them, if he would have taken some time to thoughtfully engage and then would present that thoughtful engagement to the people who followed him, and there were a lot. It wasn't just people in his crowd obviously but everybody who watched. Right? I remember learning at the time, colleges and universities across the country would have nightly watching events, where people would come and just watch *The Daily Show* together, right. On top of all the people who would watch all over, if he would have thoughtfully engaged and affirmed Occupy, that might, maybe maybe, right? Have had a tangible effect on how people perceived it and then who would support it. Who would go to it. Who would see, the banks bailout not just a bad legislation, right? Cuz he admitted to that. But like, no! but something that needs to be militantly fought against until they relent. Well we'd be, well actually well maybe this is a stretch, like it would be a different world. It wouldn't be a utopia. But it would be different, really different. So fuck you Jon Stewart! Ok.

O'Brien: So how did you learn what being a revolutionary is?

Pariah: So, there were people from sections of the left that were there, and they had varying ideas, not much changes. Oh god these people can't get it together. It's ok, it's ok. It's not ok. I'll move on. Watching their debates with each other, right? So, trying to perceive what they were arguing, I had no idea what it was that they were talking about. They were talking about strategy, history, theory, and at the time I wasn't confident to even say anything. So, I just stayed away cuz they are talking about stuff that I am just not knowledgeable about. BUT, I can read, I can try to learn what it is they're talking about. So, I got a fucking communist manifesto. OH MY GOD! OK! Got it! That's how I felt at the time. Since then, no, we must always study and learn. But, at the time (inaudible) DUH! I didn't see it. They, in 2011 and in 2018, they seek to conceal themselves with (inaudible). What they want is what everybody wants. Of course, we have wage labor. That's how people live. Of course, there will always be homeless people. Some people don't like to work. Right? These are the widely accepted ideas of our society. Poverty is absolutely normalized. Even bisections of the left, if you want to call them that, that, there is not every day, everywhere, massive protest about anybody being homeless fucks me up! It fucks me up. So like Marx is explaining to me why it is this way. And not just why it is this way but how it is that it

maintains itself through ideology. Ok, so I see what's in front of us now and it's going to take a collective struggle in order to transform it and it's going to mean talking to people who don't already agree with you, becoming GOOD at it. Right? In order to change their minds. Being courageous yourself, in order to show people that they can do it too. Dedicate yourself to collective projects that center having an outsized effect on a layer of people that don't already have the ideas that we have. Studying always history in theory and what's happening now, relating them always. Coming up with solid analysis to point a way forward. To learn how to argue. Hopefully, without being a fucking asshole which is frankly a big part of the left's problem, and I mean the left, not liberals but I'm sorry. Yes, we can disagree! Yeah, absolutely! Every revolution has failed so we should be able to say, "this failed this way. I disagree, I think it failed that way." Some people say, "no it never failed at all," y'all are, ok anyway. That's cool but actually what I keep saying, "do y'all realize that when you talk to each other you're actually being really fucking disrespectful and it's disingenuous to say we should be able to have comradely debate. Because they said this in the common term. Yeah I get that but we're not there and the people have actually really sensitive egos. YOU have a really sensitive ego and when people disrespect you, you assassinate their character, assassinate their comrades' wives. Well not literally, I know what's going to happen, good luck taking me out I don't want to be taken out too early. Ya know, you know like try and take down their whole organizations of every comrade that they have, Pariah @ 1 hour 20 Minutes

Pariah: Like, impugn their intelligence, right? Like not engage with them in a way that is – I'm trying not to say comradely but like in a way that is – that takes into consideration that they are committed anti-capitalist too. Right? Like to go straight from we're on the same sides to, actually you're a counter revolutionary, you're trying to lead the working class down the wrong path, and you need to be stopped. Your, actually – Your whole analysis is wrong and you shouldn't be able to organize and your organization should not function – I'm like... Y'all are just awful. So much of the left is just like, really shitty men who... are... egomaniacs, and care more about taking one and other down waging the success of struggle. It's really hard. 'Cause I still have to deal with them. 'Cause I'm not taking with the idea of pushing out problematic people, like I respect people who make that their work. It just doesn't seem like a good use of my skills. So... I just continue to work with people who, I'm just like, [whispers] "you're a fucking asshole", because that's all we got right now.

O'Brien: So, you're at Occupy...

Pariah: Oh, yeah.

O'Brien: You're hearing debates between leftists...

Pariah: Mm-hmm

O'Brien: You've thought hard about what they're saying, you've read the communist manifesto, you became a socialist revolutionary, and then did you, get recruited? Did you get involved in something?

Pariah: Yeah, so [sighs] I left Jersey City, I caught a pretty decent sugar daddy in Florida, and I did Occupy down there too. I was in Tampa, Florida, and there was an Occupy there as well. In fact, I think it has the superlative of being the longest running Occupy that maintained their encampment the longest. And a funny thing about that is the reason they did, is because, low-key – Sorry Tampa, Love y'all - their park was not actually public, it was privately owned by a guy who owned a strip club, or a string of strip clubs and for some reason, was like, sympathetic to Occupy, and let them stay there. They had decided to give up their original occupation, which was at a public park, in a busy downtown place, and they decided to go to this park that was privately owned that was in the hood, not in the face of the bankers, and they were able to maintain it for a long time. But anyways – So THEN, that fell apart because Chase [inaudible] has fucking shitty people – [sarcasm] shock – Left there, went around tried to make some money here and there, I tried to get my next round of surgery money, so I did a lot of dirt to make it. That would end up taking me to Portland, Oregon of all places, and that was where I met Jamie Partridge, retired NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers), Jamie tells me: "Don't say the unions acronym, because people don't care about unions, so you have to say what it is and what they do." They are the outside mail carriers. And Jamie is retired from that union, but still is in the National Leadership for the movement to save the post office, so if you like the post office, if you think we should have a post office, send Jamie a "thank you", cause his work is very important to the maintenance of the post office. The Post Master General, by the way, who is supposed to be responsible for the management of the post office, is VERY happy to sell it off. We have some problems there. So I met Jamie Partridge, walking down the street and he was tabling, talking, shopping, "Hey! What do you think about Socialism?" And he was surprised when I was like, "Yeah, we need it desperately!" He was like, "Oh, really!" He immediately plies me with so much that is happening in the city, and I would later find out that this was exactly the right person to meet because, yes, he has his fingers on the pulse of, just about all organizing on the left in Portland. He's not in the leadership, but he's fucking there. So he's like: Oh, come to this meeting, meet these people, there's an action on this day and this day and this day, AND this day, please stay in touch with me because all this stuff is happening" – He gave me a lot to read and digest and I did and I stayed in touch with him, THANK GOD. Because then he would teach me how to organize other people. So at Occupy, yeah I participated, I screamed, got laryngitis, regularly, and would give flyers to people who were walking around [inaudible park name] Park, but I didn't participate in any of the outside stuff where people would try to bring in people – I didn't just feel very confident, but between that time and maybe a year later, I had done enough reading and research that I felt confident and it was during that time that I am a socialist revolutionary, capitalism MUST fall. This is not tenable, not only is it a bad economic system, then realizing, Oh, the reason we're able to have racism maintain itself is because of the inequities that are pushed. It's so hard for people to have any kind of solidarity because frankly, sorry, a lot of working class white people are deeply racist, even though it's not actually in your interest, but here you are, thinking that you're better than me because of my skin color. You are so misguided. [Stutters] And then on the other end, there are people who fight for racial justice, who are not necessarily anti-capitalist, because some of them believe very much in their ability to be able to become rich themselves and some of them think that that's the way for us to be able to have a more just society and be able to erase the foundations of racism, and enough of us are able to get enough

money to create and maintain institutions that take care of our own. Then, maybe we'll be able to uplift, and some of the other ones are like no, white people are the devil, white people are problematic, they can't be worked with, and oh god. All of this (inaudible word) all around. We have to figure out a way to cut through this to be able to argue for solidarity so that we can at least have a shot at striking a blow. Because right now, I'm like, despite the fact that sometimes you're in the left, you get excited if you have a good protest, you got a good campaign going, you're like "we're winning!" But then I step out of it, and I talk to somebody who's not an activist, which for some of us is not a lot of people, cause we really situate ourselves in our circles and stay there forever. Even if I just call my mother, and I'm listening to her life, and I'm like, I'm not having as much of an affect as I think I am [laughter]. No, we're real far away from that we have so much work to do. But Jamie Partridge would introduce me to Teresa Raiford. Who is the founder and lead organizer of Don't Shoot Portland, which is the Black Lives Matter Group that operates in Portland, Oregon. Teresa is also a foster kid, went through a lot, learned about policy, learned about programming, tried to go through the channels of non-profit this, consulting that, Urban League, NAACP, all the things. Not anymore [laughs]. She has a very sharp analysis of gatekeepers, of poverty pimps, because she spent her time dedicating herself and draining herself, because she really believed in these black leaders and then she learned about audits, she learned about grants, foundations, executive boards, and the refusal to engage in any kind of illegal activity like protests, right? So she stopped that and when the Black Lives Matter hashtag became a movement after Ferguson, she's like [snaps] BOOM, takes off, and the movement more broadly takes off and she's leading thousands of people into struggle and Jamie introduced me to her. Cause they had already known each other for years. [Imitating Jamie] "This is a good fit for you", and I'm like, watching her cause I had already been to a few of these protests, and [inaudible], watching the movement, seeing other cities too, and I'm following people, and watching all this happen and [exhales] I'm getting excited! Cities all over, right? This is really something. The police are not going to be able to do this anymore, god if only, how naïve I was, but at the time I'm like, the cops are not going to be able to do what they do anymore because people are waking up, people all around are saying "Black Lives Matter" and we know what they're talking about, even those there are these people saying "all lives matter", reactionary fucks, the movement is on the move and growing and getting in new cities all the time. The next time a cop kills somebody, everybody is paying attention, and we're doing another action on that day, and there are even some grand juries that don't acquit, like okay if we keep pushing this is going to break and I'm very excited about it. Okay. So, I met her, began to talk to her and she immediately was like: Well come on! Let's go! Come to the front with me! Take this bull horn, let's lead this march!" I'm like, I'm not quite ready for that, I just want to support, I just wanted to chat, and she's like: No! Come on!" Then I had to, be honest, right, and some of my old trauma was coming up, and I'm like listen: I know that most people think trans people are disgusting and revolting and don't want us around, so is there something else I can do? And the look that she gave me was this genuine confusion and concern, and she was heartbroken to hear me say that. She was like, "What do you mean? I've seen you" – Cause she had seen me do other activism stuff and she's like, "you're good! You know what you're doing! We need you! Like really we need you cause there were some people, for anybody who was in any Black Lives Matter groupings, you know that there were people who had all different kinds of ideas and strategies of what they were putting forward, there was all sorts of fighting and it was very much a battle

in a lot of cities and even in a National networks that would end up leading to some splits and reformations and things like that – anyway. So she’s like, “No! Actually, we need you, there’s problems happening and you need to be here. And if anybody says anything to you, just tell me and they’re fucking out, like we’re going to handle them, we’re going to fuck them up!” And it opened up because there are people who, think I’m alright, and think I’m worthy AND think that I can be strong! What? So, I’m like okay, I am yours, what would you like me to do, and I now know how to table at events, speak in public, definitely know how to lead a protest, try to evade the police, use a bull horn... TRY to preserve my voice, not quite good at that yet, I get laryngitis at every action, STILL. If there are any voice coaches see this, get in touch with me and teach me how not to do this, cause I scream – protests are better than any therapy session ever. I know that it’s transference [laughs] I’ve accepted that. I have some friends that psycho analyze me and they’re like, “I’m glad that you are an activist, and that you are committed to social justice, but please know that your fury that you have is being fueled by your trauma that you’re not addressing”, and I’m like, okay I can hear that. So now I’m conscious of that, maybe that will change something in my life, but I can say that that is true, so when I get out into the streets, and the protest is actually heating up, and the people are angry and it’s militant and there’s some path for it, it doesn’t have to be clear or correct, SOMETHING is brewing and [screams] fucking everything in me comes out, and it feels good in the moment and usually I’m pretty exhausted afterwards, and really fall and [inaudible] really depressed, but the high is intense, it’s very very intense. So, Teressa is actually doing a protest candidacy against the mayor of Portland who is [sigh] god, complicit is not the word – He made a bunch of - offhand promises, I don’t know if they were promises but said some things, that might’ve been vaguely interpreted as: we’re going to reel in the police, a little bit”. That’s like, not saying a lot but that’s what he ran on and many people say that that’s why he got elected. His name is Ted Wheeler, by the way. So, when he came in, and didn’t do that but actually like [yells] TURNED IT UP and was like not only are we not committed to reeling in the police, we’re going to unleash them even more. So, “get ready”, was the implication. So, she’s actually going to be protesting against him in 2022/2020. She was also arrested, her arrest was very public, because it was targeted, they targeted her out at a protest and snatched her up, locked her up, and there are a lot of legal things around that, we ended up taking it – [laughs] “we” like I was in it – She took it to trial with her lawyer and didn’t take a plea deal, after it was over. Won the case, which is rare, and will be used as precedent going forward, thank god, and is going to sue the city, now, and maybe will get a hefty sum. [laughs] Maybe will be infused with not being so fucking broke anymore and having to be our allies for money. (inaudible) But long story short, these two people are like my political parents, Jamie Patridge and Teressa I love y’all so much, thank you for teaching me how to organize, I will continue to do it and hopefully ... [inaudible]

O'Brien: You’ve mentioned several ways that gender/trans experience has connected to you, a revolutionary – You talked about being accepted as a leader, and you talked about the rage that comes out and the rage about your father? And your past? That the way that that comes out in protest, can you say more about what you bring as a trans person to the revolutionary war?

Pariah: Ah, I [pauses] hope that if nothing else, and I’m okay if nothing else, I hope that many things can come out of it, BUT I hope if nothing else, I hope that other trans kids will see me

somehow and be like, “that’s a fucking badass, and I want to be a badass!” BECAUSE a thing that happens is many trans people who we might call political leaders, not mentioning names... but you know, if you’re hurt by this maybe I am talking to you. They actually are non-profit organization employees, and not organizers of protests. Even if that organization has a good mission statement, it doesn’t affect the material reality that these organizations CAN NOT advocate for civil disobedience and militant protest in the face of state repression. It’s just not going to happen – it can’t happen, because they won’t get funded. There are some foundations that will just write you off, if you have been arrested, if you participate in protest that get out of hand, if your material that you put out are calling for things they just deem unacceptable, right? They can give you the money or not, so EVEN if it’s not in the print, it has a conservatizing effect on maybe not even the activists who I’m talking about, the girls that are non-profits that maybe just do facilitating, outreach, administration stuff, not talking about you, cause it’s the executive board, or maybe the executive director, that decides what gets put out and how much they can advocate or not for their organizations to participate in what actions. So, one of the things that I’ve heard many times and is very frustrating to me is... After people in a meeting say: Oh! What we should do is go to city hall”, for example, “call out this person who is in charge of this policy and go do a direct action. Bring signs, call our allies and sit in and not leave until we get what we want.” That’s good, that’s GREAT [laughs] and obvious, by the way. The facilitator will pause, and someone will come in and stop and say, “we cannot do that”. And this is what they’ll say – this is so insidious and dishonest – “We can’t do that, because the members of our community and the people who we’re responsible for and come to our organization who are most at risk by state violence” – Which is true, by the way, but very maternalistically will say - “And therefore, we cannot advocate that they participate in this”. Oh, that’s evil. It’s so messed up. Because I know I’m not so special that my upbringing and the kind of life that I’ve lived makes me so furious. I know that so many girls, and not just girls but also cismen, ciswomen, non-binary people, trans men – [inaudible] – People who experience oppression, oppressed people. People who are targeted for state violence across the board. YES, we’re targeted across the board, YES, we’ve experienced these degraded, humiliating lies, BUT to assert that because that’s true, we can’t be at risk, is like a special kind of sneaky, insidious, conservatizing bullshit. Because no. I know what it will likely translate to is when the action heats up, if we were to go to city hall and confront a counselor about some shitty thing they did that affected us, that affected our lives, in a very direct way and It was clear to everyone who was there. Actually, if the cops did come, if it did get hot, if it WAS a frenzy moment with media and lights flashing, like if it was BOILING I bet you the people who would step up and be most loyal to you [inaudible] would just wake up and go into a blackout moment, that I’m sorry, is often what it takes to get what we need. [inaudible muffled sentences] All because of a funder who would not give the organization that money. I got a problem with that, I got a big problem with that.

O'Brien: Have you, since your politicization in this way, tried to do trans organizing or aid the girls you used to know?

Pariah: Only to the level of organizing a trans pride outside of gay pride without the police, and with an explicit, in Portland and an explicit anti-capitalist line. And that was a great honor, and then a vigil for a call to action that came from the Black Lives Matter network in 2015, I want to

say August 25th 2015, When they put out a call to action, after another black trans woman, sex worker, was murdered and... the case was not pursued. She was misgendered, and the press, people don't feel bad for her, people humiliate her in death, "who gives a fuck" ...

O'Brien: Do you want to say her name?

Pariah: India Clark [pauses]. Alicia Garca, Opal (inaudible lists other names, spelling unsure), do a very good job of calling out transphobia in the black racial justice movement abroadly, not just the Black Lives Matter movement for black lives, but just use their platform to always affirm trans people. For that I will always be grateful. Because when they put out this call, they receive pushback, and they continue to receive pushback for their explicit pro trans politics. In fact, Alicia and Patrice I think are married or in relationships with trans identified people. So, they've got some skin in the game, right? They love deeply trans people. So they put out a call, and I realize that it wasn't going to happen on its own, so I'm like, okay let's do it. Talk to Teressa and talk to Lyles McFarland – Hey Lyles! – Who was the leader of Portland Trans Unity, and brought everybody to the table and said: Okay this is going to be an emergency vigil because it needs to happen quickly, so people who have resources to this or that thing, made it happen and we had a successful vigil that we called, Say Her Name, that day, and that was one of the most important moments ever for me and for that picture that someone, I'm trying to remember her name, La Stephanie is her photography name, took a really beautiful picture at the end of the rally. And I'll talk about the rally, and why it was special, took a really beautiful picture of everybody on these steps in city center Pioneer Square, and that picture still is my background picture on Facebook and I look at it every day and this beautiful lit light boards that Portland jobs of justice – shout out to Portland Jobs of Justice and the whole Jobs of Justice network – They made, they're like blackboards with LED lights inside of it so it says "Say Her Name" in the background, it's really really beautiful and to have Black Lives Matter Signs and trans flags everywhere is really really nice. It was very special. What made special, that vigil special, cause I have been to a lot of for, another transsexual slain, which is what the girls used to say, which is say it unjust, which is like, so dark, that it's so normal, for the girls to just get killed and we hear about it, that when we hear about it as a kiki aside, we say "another transsexual slain" that's unjust. That's fucking tragic. So, I'd been to a lot of vigils and some better than others, but this one was a collective vigil for all of the trans people that have been murdered in 2015 in the U.S up to that day, and it was 22. Most of them are black. And most of them are sex workers. And most of them should not have to be sex workers. We asked people who have the capacity to do research to find out about them, what they care about, what they did, who loved them, what did they say about them. So that it's not just a generic reading of a name, age, location, like "who the fuck is she" – what did she care about, what was her potential, you know? WHO KILLED HER? Right? Like if we can even find that out, who did it? So we're not passively like using the passive voice, to say a transwoman, like who killed 'em and what happened to 'em. HIM. I don't think of them who killed them have been women. Men, who are chasers, who do know their T, are the ones who kill them. This idea that they get murdered for "tricking" a man is a god damned myth. It is a myth. I have a video about this, go to Youtube.com/AlyssaPariah and find it. It's called "She tricked Me: A Myth that Kills", because it DOES. People just deeply – it goes back to Richard Bay, and Ricki Lake and Jerry Springer, because if that is the only exposure that people have to trans life, and for many people,

it is. If the topic is "My girlfriend is a man!" [mocking screams and claps] Well, that's what people know about us. So if a trans woman gets killed, it's because she lied, Jerry Springer told me that's what happens. I'm telling you, it does not happen. I don't know any trans woman who have any difficulty getting fucked. NONE. None, none. All the girls get laid if they want to get laid. They can have any kind of sex with whoever they want. Sorry, sorry, maybe your father, maybe your brother, maybe your SON is the one, assuming [laughs] maybe your mother, maybe your daughter maybe your sister. Like, I'm sorry, it's just not a problem for a trans woman to get laid. People want so badly to believe that because they perceive us as being gross, so they would like to think that nobody would want that. Anyway, the people who kill us are people who already want this, already had it, and can't deal with the shame. So, these men are murdering trans woman are sometimes are even their girlfriends, and at the very least, they were tricks for them. And they can't deal with it. [Sighs] So this vigil featured that as a reality, and was very special to me, and my involvement in the Black Lives Matter and racial justice more broadly, that it can be so explicitly fused with trans politics is... cathartic. It helps me to know my value in the movement. Outside of the tokenization that I sometimes feel when I am working with other organizations. I never that that what's going on when I am doing racial justice or trans justice work.

O'Brien: Some of the work from Black Lives Matter that I've seen, particularly in Toronto but to some extent in New York and other places, I think is the most trans inclusive organizing I've ever seen outside of [inaudible name]. It's been pretty, pretty amazing.

Pariah: Yes, thank you, I love it. I feel very welcome, very unimpeded. Which is not a thing I typically experience in my life, I feel very impeded always, but not when I doing these things.

O'Brien: Shall we have a break?

Pariah: Okay! [Break]

O'Brien: So, you were living in Portland, getting involved in "Don't Shoot: Portland" and getting really inspired by a couple people [inaudible]. What happened with that? What kind of work did you do next?

Pariah: So, I should say "Don't Shoot: Portland" come from, you know what we know as the last words of Mike Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri. He had his hands up and told the officer: My hands are up, don't shoot." I think he was on his knees when he said it, and Aaron Wilson just blew him away. And got away with it. So that's how we got the name, "Don't Shoot: Portland", or how Teresa came up with the name "Don't Shoot: Portland", hands up, don't shoot, just in case there's any confusion. So, after that I would go into the leadership of 15 Now, so 15 Now is a project of people in socialist alternative, that has a different strategy for winning a \$15 minimum wage than the mostly the Service Employees National Union, the SCIU strategy that operates under the name Fight for 15. We would all say we're all fighting for 15, so there must be some sort of room to exercise different tactics in order to get it. On that note I should say, that the cities that have been successful especially the first one, [inaudible] cities had 15 Now, that was in the forefront of their movement was raising minimum wage. So, I was in 15 Now: Oregon,

which if anyone is saying: Oh why not 15 Now Portland?" Well, some states what is called preemption, makes is so that cities and municipalities, counties or whatever, cannot have any sort of say in any given area of legislation. In this case that means wages. So no cities in Oregon can choose to raise their minimum wages or make any sort of legislation around wage expectations from bosses in their city. That cannot happen, the Oregon legislature has voted and instituted that as a policy and law. So even though the vast majority of activists in the Fight for 15 in Oregon, were in Portland, and indeed most of the political organizing happening in Oregon is in Portland, and indeed most of the population in Oregon is in Portland. That was not something we could do, we could not go to the city council and demand that. We had to go to Salem, which is the capital of Oregon, and demand it at the state level, and make a functional coalition with other cities in Oregon, and we did. Ultimately, we were thwarted by a coalition that called themselves "Raise the Wage" coalition and you can Google who was in that. Many non-profit organizations and labor unions signed on to it and it was alternative legislation to the 15 Now Bill that we were petitioning for, a big part of our work was petitioning. We had to get tens of thousands of signatures from people in order to get 15 Now put on the Ballot. In Oregon they can vote on Ballot initiatives, not all states have this. In Oregon they have Ballot initiatives, so that means when people go to the polls, actually in Oregon they do mail in voting, but when people vote in Oregon, not only do they vote for people to be put into elected positions, but they can also vote on initiatives. Some of those initiatives have fought harder than others in order to get onto the ballot. So our fight was very difficult, especially when the people we imagined would be our allies, and our allies would, actually some of them were, rescinded their support and put behind the "Raise the Wage" coalition in which at the time was arguing for a slower Faison and a lower amount. They wanted \$13.50 as an end goal and it would take a longer amount of time to get there. And we only imagined that there would be even more carve outs by those leaders as time went on, and there was pushback from certain public officials, elected officials who were expressing concerns for one reason or another. And we knew that that would be detrimental because the people who were in the leadership of 15 Now, most of them are revolutionary socialist, not just in socialist alternative. In fact Jamie Partridge, my mentor, is a member of the International Socialist Organization and he was the chief petitioner. We were very ideologically committed to 15, because 15 is THE NUMBER that is capturing the imagination of working class people across the country and in Canada too. So, we knew that when and if people would come to us and water down parts of our legislation, we just simply would NOT do it. We are not interested in that part of writing that in any, sort of, Bill or petition for the Ballot. The "Raise the Wage" Coalition ended up being... triumphant, at least in the arena in Salem. On the day that the legislature was meeting about this, we had an occupation of the Governor's office, her name is Kate Brown. And very angrily, loudly, shut down the business in the state capitol that day, and the legislatures locked themselves into the chamber [laughs] where they were discussing. They couldn't even carry on their meeting because even though the wall were very thick, they could still hear us outside. There were some of us who were banging on the marble walls with our shoes and screaming and it was an important moment. I should say thought that Oregon now is the first and only state in the country that has a tiered wage system based on population density. It's very convoluted and it is convoluted because the struggle for raising the wage in more highly populated areas where we were able to successfully organize, would not accept a lower minimum wage than what people were fighting for. I imagine that they understood that they could not just

keep the wage where it was. It had to go up because of the organizing that was happening. But in other places, where there was little to no organizing happening, and actually it is the chamber of commerce in those areas that are very, very powerful, those places have the lowest minimum wage in Oregon, and then there's a three-tiered system, both in wage and the incrimination of that time. So after that experience, and that defeat, I must be honest, (inaudible) even though I learned a lot and that experience helped to consolidate new comrades and fighters for justice in Oregon, ultimately we did not get what we wanted. Oregon will not have a \$15 minimum wage based on the Bill that was signed in to law. But after that I joined Socialist Alternative and then would go on to fight 15 in Minneapolis where I worked for the Ginger Jentzen campaign, she ran for city council and also did not win BUT, she was the executive director of 15 Now Minneapolis and they won. Minneapolis is on track to getting \$15 an hour. In which, they actually beat back their preemption, they were successful in fighting their preemption so Minnesota no longer has it so people cannot fight for wages in certain cities and municipalities in Minnesota. So Minneapolis is on track to getting \$15 an hour. So, Ginger Jentzen, we are very thankful to you, and all of the comrades that help make that possible, especially Robin Wonsley who was in the leadership there, a very powerful black woman who I think the world of, so: Hey Robin!

O'Brien: How did you end up in Portland?

Pariah: Hurricane Sandy had hit the Jersey Shore really badly, and it was where I was living at the time. I knew that I could make a lot of money there, and I was saving up for some surgery that I wanted to get done, done. I could not make all the money that I needed to get, in order to get what I wanted, because the apartment complex that I was living in was evacuated and then later condemned, so I wasn't sure where I was going to go next. I knew that I did not want to spend my time and energy and money on getting an apartment in Jersey, I've had an aversion to Jersey forever, I don't want to live there. I hope there are no people listening to this that love New Jersey and take offense to this, it's just not where I want to be. Every time I go to New Jersey I get depressed [laughs].

O'Brien: Everyone gets a pass in complaining about the city where they grew up. You know where I'm from?

Pariah: [Laughs] Oregon?

O'Brien: Oregon. You'll rarely hear me say good things about Oregon. [Laughs]

Pariah: Fair. I get it, I get it. There are a lot of problems there, that's for sure. So, I had a friend who wanted to go there because she knew that Working America, which is a project of the FAL and CIO, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organization, which is sort of, a "big tent" labor union, that other labor unions affiliate to. You can Google the ins and outs of that and the history of it, especially when the AFL and the CIO merged and I won't go on [laughs], but it's -

O'Brien: -not so good for socialists

Pariah: Yeah, it's riveting. Okay, so they have a program called Working America, where they will send out people to do any number of projects in order for them to advance, and my friend wanted to get a job doing that there and felt like she had a good shot in making it happen. So she said: "I want to go, you should come with me," and I thought, okay that will be great, I'm going to save up this money, get this work done, heal, and then yeah we can go up there. Hurricane Sandy said: "No, bitch, you're going to figure out what you're doing right now." So, I called her up and talked to her about it and she said, "you know maybe what you should do is, go out there, get a place and I will come out there when I've got my shit together." Well. She never came. And I was surprised to learn that I do very well when I'm in a new place where no one knows me, and I have a clean slate – I've never had anything like that before, and this was in 2012. But I did like it, I did very well with it and I would go on to thrive, and that's where I would go on to meet Jamie and Teressa and begin to really see my potential as an agitator, activist, organizer, revolutionary badass and I am!

O'Brien: And in Minneapolis, did you cross paths with any of the trans organizing that's been going on down there? I hear things from a couple city council members –

Pariah: Mm-hmm, Yes! Incredible! I didn't do any organizing with their campaigns, I was a full-timer with the Ginger Jentzen campaign, so 8+ hours a day, door knocking, phone banking, tabling, going to events, just trying to get the word out and to secure votes. I didn't get to experience a lot of the organizing happening in Minneapolis and outside of that, but I'm open to going back. It was good, I have some incredible comrades there who I know and love forever, so I'm open to going back. NOT RIGHT NOW, it is January, it is like into single digits if not below zero there so I'll see y'all in the Spring [laughs].

O'Brien: I was there between Christmas and New Years [laughs]. So, have you spent time in New York since all that? I mean, Hurricane Sandy was five years ago, have you spent time in New York during those five years?

Pariah: Yes, so I came back in, well I don't want to bog people down with dates, but the summer of 2016, went back to Jersey, damnit, to help my little sister, who has two kids, and was just having a hard time, and felt if she just had some help babysitting, just taking care of the kids, then she would be able to get herself where she needed to be. I just did it. I packed up my stuff and I left and I thought, if I want to come back I'll come back, and I wanted to go live somewhere else and see how it is somewhere else. SO I went back to Jersey and helped out, as much as I could for as long as I could. And when that was done, love you... I just went to my girlfriend's house in Brooklyn, in Bushwick and stayed with her and then got very active in the Socialist Alternative branch in Bushwick and did some really good organizing with the new sanctuary movement while we were there. Especially holding Mayor De Blasio's feet to the fire, we were dogging him at his gym on Saturday mornings, because despite his very lovely words, I don't doubt that he loves immigrants. He had the ability to dump all of the data and the NYCID program made it so that people who might be undocumented have access to an ID so they can access services and all of

their data didn't necessarily have to stay in a central location anymore once they already had the IDs. We KNOW there are people on the right who wanted to get access to that, and we can only imagine why. I believe it is likely because they wanted to access their data, to identify who is undocumented, where they live, where they can find them, and maybe to send ICE to go and to pick them up and put them through an immigration process. He had every opportunity, from what I understand there's actually on his shoulders, he could've put in the order to dump the data and no one would be able to get it after that, and he decided not to. I'm questioning why that is, more than that, there are more than 30 infractions that if someone gets arrested for, that ICE actually CAN get involved. So we know that one of the tactics that ICE is using across the country is to essentially hound city and account jails and just wait for somebody to come out, who they can identify as being undocumented and they can put through a deportation process. What we know that there are only one or two infractions, including murder, that you would then have to report the information to the federal government that they would be able to have access to their records, but they don't need to have 30 that we then would need to turn over that information because then ICE does have access to them. So, to me, that undermines what a "sanctuary city means". Because if the police – and okay, Mayor De Blasio even acknowledges this to a degree – the police do have problems with racial disparities. They, more often than not, seek out, arrest, detain people of color. Black and brown people, many of them who are from immigrant communities, well then that does mean that those people may be getting arrested, detained and booked by the NYPD for something that maybe they didn't do, or that they're being targeted by the police for, so, shouldn't it mean that we bring down the number of crimes that require us to turn over the information about their arrest, so the federal government, ICE will then have access? I think so. So that was some of the stuff that I was working on in the Socialist Alternative when I was here.

O'Brien: The new sanctuary movement, the director, Robby? Was he detained by ICE?

Pariah: So, of the people, the new sanctuary movement, spoke at an SEIU, service employee's international union, local 11 99, most people see healthcare workers, most people see Haitian women and there was a rally on Martin Luther King Jr. Day that explicitly called out President Trump, and I identified him as a racist which is not something I think should be shrugged off for a large union to call an action that is so political. This was not related to a workplace issue, this was not a picket at a union busting shop. This was an action against our racist president and they were calling him a racist. One of the speakers that were there also from the new sanctuary movement and talked about Robby's case. And he is absolutely being targeted because he is an activist. They want him out because not only is he saying: We want a sanctuary city, but pointing out how it is that we are failing at sanctuary, and protecting the immigrant community and who are our friends who are neighbors and loved ones who were failing in the city, in New York City, AND he's calling on people to intervene and be active in a militant way that doesn't not operate along the same lines of respectability that you often see with people who do advocacy and non-profit work. Robby calls on us to be courageous and to put ourselves all the way out there in order to transform the system that we have right now that is KILLING people. It goes to say that he's being targeted for this and ICE absolutely wants him out because he is that important to the movement. So, I hope that everybody listening will follow that example, and entertain the idea

of militant protest that goes outside of the bounds of legal protest that has been laid out for us, because that's probably not going to get us what it is that we need.

O'Brien: What is like being back in New York again, now that you've returned the last few weeks?

Pariah: I feel really bad that I am not getting in touch with my old friends, I see y'all, I love y'all, I want the best for everybody, but there's an emotional block there, I even saw Destiny – Hey Destiny, I love you – In Chelsea and talked to her for a little while, and made, sort of vague plans to get together and I didn't do it. And I'm not sure exactly what that block is there, but it's probably something around shame, that I have not yet unpacked and that I feel like I flew away from the scene and the lifestyle and I just really don't want to go back because I don't like how much it hurt me. I felt like I escaped, and I know that my friends are not representations of that, they did not cause me pain. It definitely was the tricks, like 100%.

O'Brien: What would enable you to reconnect to your old friends? Could you imagine in the future being ready to and what that would be like?

Pariah: Yeah, I suppose if I was in a better financial situation, I might. I wonder if some of my aversion is because... I'm not too proud to go back to sex work, I just really don't want to. And being that I'm still dealing with poverty, if I were to get back close to them again, I'm almost sure that I would just – [sucking noise] – go right back to it. Or be more confronted with it, and I just don't want to do that right now.

O'Brien: How have you been supporting yourself when you are not out doing tricks?

Pariah: I still see some men that I know and do like, webcam stuff. I get paid for the, on again off again, not very regular gate to do some kind of public speaking, or inclusivity training. But I've not mastered the art of putting myself out there for hire, for that kind of work. So, I'm just not sure, how to do it in a sustainable way. Not now, but I hope to soon.

O'Brien: Do you have a sense to where your life might be going next?

Pariah: I'm going to see some friends in other cities and see what kind of trouble I can get into while I'm there. And very consciously meet people and make connections and see if there might be something that sticks. I know if Teresa Raiford's campaign is able to really get kicked into gear and I say "get kicked into gear" as if I don't know how to – I think what will happen is that I will work for that campaign again, and I'll be able to do it in hopefully a more sustainable way, so that I can support myself. But I'm just not sure.

O'Brien: Do you have a vision of where trans movements may be going, or trans people on the left?

Pariah: Oh dear... No. No, I don't see a forecast. I will support, especially, trans resistance that takes state repression very seriously, and wants to do campaign work or movement work that is

outside of talks and panels and policy stuff with the HRC. Like, I hope that this is not being read as derision, I'm so thrilled if any of the girls, or if any trans identifying person finds work, and finds work with an organization that affirms them, and empowers them to build community. I'm very, very happy for that. I think it is at least worth being critical – and that's not to say to be cynical and be negative, but to be critical about what it is that will affect the kind of change that we want to see. I know that there are many people, some of them are my good friends, some of them I read everything that they write, I follow their work – they believe that if enough people change their mind, and correct their backward thinking, then a social cultural change will come. With enough of a push and I don't decry that strategy. I'm happy that there are people who care enough to try to change hearts and minds. For me, I am more drawn towards movements that take seriously in bringing new layers of people, that want to engage the masses to push against oppression very directly. That's just where my skillset is, and I just hope so much that that is something more trans people want to do and do. So, shout out to all of the girls that are doing that, especially, I'll say Erin Lang with Get Equal. Get Equal was out in D.C fighting for a clean dream act and Jenny San Gutierrez with La Familia in L.A. who is famous for yelling down President Obama, I love her, and never stopped her street activism since then. I hope that there is more and more of that. More and more of a direct-action orientation, and a very serious consideration of organizing people for grassroots community fightback against oppression broadly, and also specifically in terms of the policies, even at the local level that disproportionately impact trans people. And politicizing the inequality that hits us the hardest. So it's not necessarily that we need a bathroom bill in order for us to experience oppression against us as trans people, but what about labor laws? What about deferens to the boss? To decide what hiring and firing looks like. That is very deeply a trans issue. And I would love to see more organizing around the issues that will affect our ability to just make a living. Because remember so many of us are living in poverty, that if we can fight for economic justice, and engage more trans people to fight for it, in order to improve our lives and to build solidarity with cis people as well, I think we'd really, really be onto something. In terms of moving away of mostly moral and moralistic arguments, to ones that are much more rooted in material reality and our capacity to be able to survive in order to fightback against this really disgusting system.

O'Brien: You mention that bosses being able to decide hiring and firing being a trans issue, can you explain that?

Pariah: Oh – What some people might call neoliberalism, I'm sure we don't have enough time to unpack what that is, I will say, an umbrella way to understand it would be a rollback of games that were made in social movements including the civil rights and black power era, the gay power movement and certainly the fights with dedicated revolutionaries that would end up giving way to deal. And a way it's easy for me to understand or a way for me to understand and explain is a way to do all of the games that those movements achieved. A feature of it would be what they call "A Bosses Offensive" which is a way for people who are big and small business owners, capitalist, bourgeoisie if you're political, to be able to not just break unions, but to implement any number of changes at the workplace that make it more difficult for employees at the workplace to express agency, and to expect a decent standard of living and a certain amount of respect on the job. And one of those features is to be able to be very picky about who gets hired

on and what you can expect from them, how they should look, act, dress, on the job and the ability to hire or fire them based on your perception of how well they would be able to do at that job. Which, if un-interrogated, that might seem like a perfectly fine thing, if your goal is to make money, and you know that trans people are reviled, you might not want to hire a trans person because they may make it more difficult for you to be profitable. If we're being really crude here, well maybe that's true. Doesn't that bring up bigger questions? About profitability? And bosses having the final say? And who is employable and who isn't? And if we're for self-determination of all genders, doesn't that mean we're going to have to pose a challenge eventually? To the very system that allows for bosses to be the arbiters in terms of who gets to be employed and thereby who gets to live in a house and eat food. I hope it raises a bunch of questions.

O'Brien: What else would you like to share in this interview?

Pariah: I would like to share, an affirmation, to all people, that are fighting back against the system regardless of your tendency, thank you for your work. I hope that you do not get discouraged, I hope that you take very seriously, solidarity with people who are not like you. Both in identity and in ideology, to link with people with the same interest to fightback against oppression as you do, and that you can find ways to work together, to be effective, to win what it is that we desperately need and deserve. All of us.

O'Brien: Beautiful, thank you so much Alyssa.

Pariah: You're welcome.