

NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

MOUNTAIN

Interviewer: Aviva Silverman

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NYC TOHP Interview Transcript #103

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Aviva Silverman: Hello. My name is Aviva Silverman, and I will be having a conversation with Mountain 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 on the experience of trans-identifying people. It is December 29th, 2018 and this is being recorded in my apartment on Broome Street in Chinatown. Hi.

Mountain: Hi.

Silverman: Could you tell me your name, and your age if you want to?

Mountain: Yeah. My name's Mountain, and I'm 29.

Silverman: Um, and what gender pronouns do you use?

Mountain: I use they and them, although sometimes she and her is also good.

Silverman: Mm hm. And how would you describe your gender?

Mountain: Um, it's kind of subject to change pretty frequently, it seems, but I'm nonbinary, and more recently trying to be more specific with what that is. And so I'm thinking agender is probably accurate for me. A term that I've like made up and actually sounds more accurate than anything is gender agnostic [laughs], so that works for me. And I'm also intersex. And that's it, I guess. That's my list.

Silverman: I think we'll just start with the beginning, so where were you born?

Mountain: I was born in Baltimore, Maryland.

Silverman: Um, and what do you—if you can remember, what was your first memory?

Mountain: I remember moving out of a house, probably when I was like two years old. Like I just remember a big carpet being rolled up.

Silverman: Hm. And where were you going?

Mountain: We were moving to just the neighborhood that I grew up in, that I actually remember growing up in, which is a place called Stoneleigh.

Silverman: And what was your family like? What was your family background like?

Mountain: Um, in terms of...?

Silverman: I don't know. Just things that kind of identify, like, your childhood or the way that you kind of like formed through being in a family unit?

Mountain: Mm. Well, we are white and definitely, compared to most, affluent. I guess, is upper middle-class like a thing? Because that's I think what I've been telling myself we are, but it might just be that we're upper-class. And I grew up in an area with a lot of like white liberals, which my family is included in. And, um...my folks definitely valued education and like acceptance of their children. So I did not have a very strict childhood, which was I think good for me.

Silverman: Was there any kind of like religious background?

Mountain: Oh, no, actually not. I mean, sort of like de facto Christian holidays and stuff, but we never went to church.

Silverman: Mm hm.

Mountain: Never had any parental conversations about God or even spirituality so much. Although some of my relatives are more Christian, and so I would go to church on occasion with them, but...

Silverman: And do you feel like their lack of like strictness or the ways in which they allowed you to kind of explore helped you find certain facets of your identity?

Mountain: Yeah, definitely. I mean, I was so lucky that my folks were extremely accepting of me being as fruity as I was growing up, and they just like really encouraged that. Like, they would buy me Barbie dolls, which—growing up ostensibly male—I never experienced any friction about with my family. [backup alert from truck.] And yeah, I just liked all like “girl things,” you know, like in quotes. Not that I was perceiving them that way necessarily, I just liked pretty things and like, you know, when you go to McDonald's for a Happy Meal it's called the “girl toy” or whatever. So like that side of toys, but I guess I liked a lot of stuff. It wasn't purely like feminine-branded toys. But yeah, my folks never discouraged that in me, and that pretty much was consistent for a really long time, and then maybe in high school sort of started—or actually, in middle school, there started to be more like gendered parental intervention of some kind.

Silverman: Can you remember any of those, or...?

Mountain: When I was in middle school—well, leading up to that, sort of in line with what I was just saying about my parents encouraging the way I wanted to present myself and whatnot—I had almost, I had just tons of friends who were girls. Like, normally I would be in social groups that were comprised of girls, and as well as boys too, but definitely always involved with girls. And when I was in middle school, my mom started to get very threatened by this—and I only found this out much later, because she never openly discussed this with me—but she was very scared that I was going to start experimenting sexually and get one of these friends of mine

pregnant. And so it, like, really changed how I was treated, sort of. And part of that was also me growing up and like being a little more rebellious in certain ways, but my mom suddenly imposed a lot of strictness around me hanging out with my friends and stuff and I really did not understand why. And then it was years later where I found out that it was entirely this fear of hers of me getting someone pregnant, which was like so far from anything that was going to go on. It was just the people I felt comfortable with and like wanted to surround myself with.

Silverman: What was your earliest memory of a trans person?

Mountain: Um...I don't know if I knew they were trans, but definitely when I was maybe eleven, I'm gonna guess, like kind of discovering pornography for the first time with AltaVista image search. Like, having parental search on, but like figuring out the words you can use where sometimes the image results come up with still like dirty pictures. And I remember there being some trans women who appeared in some of that pornography, and me fully not understanding what the scenario was. Like, um...I think it sort of coalesced [laughs], you know, kind of, after that point. But the first person I can remember who I was told was a trans person was in middle school. One of my friends' brothers, he transitioned. And at the time, I was thinking it was like a Jamie Lee Curtis, like, having undescended gonads type of thing, like the whole like intersex panic that was surrounding this myth around Jamie Lee Curtis, which I guess I had some access to. But yeah, thinking like, "Oh. He found out he was a boy. So they must have found like testicles inside of him or something. Like, medically." Like, I don't think I fully understood that it was—had to do more with an emotional, um, identifying. So, I wonder how maybe my framework of myself would've been different if it was fleshed out, like the conversation was fleshed out a little bit more at that time.

Silverman: And was, what was your experience of being intersex at the time? Or like learning about that?

Mountain: Yeah, well I didn't know that I was intersex until a few years ago, and the way that it was sort of told to me was just that I had a deformity that was mild enough that my parents didn't have the doctors correct it when I was born. Which was something that was fielded at the time, and I feel very grateful that my parents did not have the doctors perform a gender-aligning surgery of some kind. Um, but I was sort of like told growing up that like, "Oh, well, you know, once you're older, you can get this fixed. If you want." And I knew what it was called. It was called hypospadias. And so I would do like Google searches for hypospadias, and it would just be like all, like all of the results would be about the corrective surgery. So, it would be like pages and pages of images of just dissected penises. Like, flayed and being rearranged, all of it very like medical and kind of bloody. And so only a few years ago—like maybe five years ago, when I was doing a little more deeper research and I was coming into my transness—did I find out that hypospadias is sort of like a contested form of intersexuality where, like...a lot of doct—the medical, the way the medical society frames it is as a deformity of male genitalia. And part of that, like when you compare it to the ways that other intersex conditions are addressed in medicine, has a lot to do with just like protecting the...like, protecting masculinity. Like often people who are deemed intersex are—would, in conventional normative frameworks, be female-

identified or assigned female at birth. I guess there's the term coercively, assigned coercively at birth. So those people would probably be [car horn] coercively assigned female at birth. And so there's some thought of this form of intersexuality [car horn] that I have as being, like, not allowed into the intersex conversation because it's like they're able to frame it in this way where it's just like protecting of like male, um...I guess it's part of male fragility of some kind, you know. So, like, I didn't have access to any of the conversations around intersexuality until very late [car horn]. And I kind of still have a lot more to explore with that, because I'm not involved in any kind of, like, intersex community [car horns], or it's not an open conversation really. I don't know necessarily how to identify because it is sort of something that's like "mild," in air quotes, and in medicine is not considered intersex, so part of me is like, "I don't know if this is mine to claim," or something. But um, I think it definitely has shaped my perception of myself in the way that I kind of just was introduced to my own body as something that was like wrong and needed to be corrected. And that's very much in line with a lot of intersex people's upbringing and whatnot.

Silverman: And how do you feel like the internet helped influence your access or ability to understand all these things? Like yeah, how's it shaped and either helped or hurt—

Mountain: Mm hm.

Silverman: —the way that you process all this information?

Mountain: Well, none of this was really conversations that I was able to have in person. Certainly growing up, I didn't really talk to my mom too much about like, um, gender or physical presentation, all those things. So like sort of exploratory Googling or AltaVista-ing, whatever—web search, exploratory web search was like really necessary for just being introduced into some of those concepts, but without having any kind of helpful framework, um—like one that would be attached to a trans community or intersex community, you know, groups of people who have been able to flesh out a narrative to be an empowering one—it was kind of [car horn] confusing. [Car horn] But I'm sort of rambling a bit, I'm losing—

Silverman: Oh, it's totally fine.

Mountain: Cool.

Silverman: I'm interested in the ways in which you describe, yeah, coming to know your relationship to being intersex with words like, "it's mild," or "I don't know if I can claim it," and I'm wondering if that's related to some sort of shame or anxiety—

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: —around, just around that identification at large, or just not being able to find the right people or people that identify as such—

Mountain: Yeah.

Silverman: —to then kind of like explore what their relationship to that, too.

Mountain: I mean, I definitely had a lot of shame when I was growing up and into high school around it, like not knowing that some claim it as an intersex identifier. And I think finding out that it is within intersexuality makes me feel a lot less shame around it. It's just something that isn't really an active conversation, as I've seen it. And I don't have...I don't always feel the, like, you know, sometimes I, okay...I don't know how to start those conversations. So if I'm not hearing them going on, it's like hard to necessarily interact with that whole, whole stuff.

Silverman: Do you feel like you are aligned with a certain trans or queer community in which you can share certain aspects of these questions or ways to relate?

Mountain: Um...yeah, I mean, I think there's a sort of general fluency with a lot of the folks who I'm surrounded with, and so it's less of a leap. Yeah.

Silverman: Can you describe what folks you're related to in a community you're a part of?

Mountain: [Laughs] Yeah, I mean, um...I think what I would consider community would be sort of a little more incidental than maybe what I—the community that I'm within is more incidental than something that sounds like coherent and singular [car horn] like “community.” Like, it has to do with just the folks in New York who I've grown friendly with introducing me to more people, and there being like kind of general kinship around having sort of divergence from normative gender or even just normative perspective about the world.

Silverman: And what was New York like when you first moved here?

Mountain: Um, well I only moved here in March of this year, so I'm still kind of learning what New York is like, but it feels good to be here. I like that there are people that I can access if I were to take the initiative to. It's nice that there does seem to be a really fleshed-out community of people and I'm sort of still learning my place within it and how to most comfortably, um, insert myself into things that I feel like I want to be a part of.

Silverman: Yeah.

Mountain: And I like that New York has just a tremendous amount of diversity, so there isn't...I rarely feel like I'm the first trans person that someone's seeing. Like, I think that most people just are unbothered by like not understanding necessarily everything that's going on around them. Whereas I was living in Philadelphia for ten years before moving to New York, and there was a much more, like, provincial [car horn] sort of attitude where if someone didn't understand your deal—or at least some people who didn't understand your deal—would like make it your problem. Like they would yell at you in the street, like...[laughs].

Silverman: What was the queer scene like in Philly?

Mountain: Um, in Philadelphia there's like, you know, disparate queer scenes, as I'm sure is the case in many cities. The one that I was involved in and was also a big point of entry for understanding my identity as a trans person was the Radical Faeries, who I was introduced—I was introduced to that community, which, that is a community I would consider like coherent and like, even though it's...whatever, there's like a way that it is outlined, you know. And so the Radical Faeries I was introduced to from a boyfriend of mine after we had broken up. And I was smoking a lot of pot at that time, and it was like a lot of pot consumption in the Radical Faeries, so I think that was probably a really big deciding factor as to how much I was involved. And I started dating someone from the Faerie community, and would just participate in different community things like dinners and events and stuff like that. But that's only one of the queer communities in Philadelphia, and that one's like definitely really problematic.

Silverman: What are some of the problems?

Mountain: I think that the Radical Faeries being a group that was started in the '70s by cisgender gay men as a separatist gay male group has lingered. Like, that origin continues to in some ways govern who has the biggest influence in the community—in Philadelphia, at least. And I'm sure that if I was interacting with the Faeries at a different, like, now, or you know two years prior, it would've been different. But the folks who kind of were putting in the work to make this community happen were also pretty limited in their identities. Like, it was primarily middle-aged white men who comprised like the governing roles of the Radical Faeries. And what made it challenging just to feel sort of fully accepted into it is that they preached like a “radical acceptance”—also in air quotes—but one that didn't include them providing any protections or, like, addressing head-on types of adversity and sexism or racism, or any of those things. And actually trying—like, there was a time where I was really trying to involve myself in ways in that community that did, that would orient it towards what I considered radical acceptance—which would include different avenues to address racism, sexism, etcetera—and me trying to start those conversations was considered, like, really not acceptable. And so I was sort of like ostracized from this community for trying to...incite positive, or what to me seemed like positive change. So I just like peaced out, I guess.

Silverman: Have there been any other groups since that have felt like politically or, yeah, like easier to kind of initiate those conversations with in a way that—

Mountain: Hm.

Silverman: —yeah, made room or space for the ways that you feel—

Mountain: Mm hm.

Silverman: —yeah, politically or like emotionally?

Mountain: I think operating on a smaller scale, like just one to one with friends, and you know small, really small friend groups and circles has felt a lot more manageable and comfortable. But that hasn't really been the same type of change that I felt was needed in the Faerie community for me to feel comfortable being part of it, since with the friend groups I'm in now there isn't really like, there's no unifying identity or named events, like "Faerie Brunch" or something. You know, there isn't the same type of boundaries to it, so it hasn't felt like necessarily the same—it hasn't at least been as obvious the ways that it's like lacking in making those boundaries more porous.

Silverman: And to kind of swerve—

Mountain: Yeah, yeah.

Silverman: I wanted to ask you about the evolution of your creative life.

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: Like, yeah, I don't know, ways in which you've kind of started somewhere, and like where—what you're doing now.

Mountain: Mm hm. Yeah. Um, I...did art from a very young age and was encouraged in art-making by my parents really enthusiastically. I, you know, was signed up for art classes and was just praised a lot in my art-making. And I suppose in some ways I did have sort of, like, abilities with art that were a little bit beyond my age, so it was something I was good at, and was—it was like a point of pride for myself that I was good at art. And something I liked, so I continued doing art in different capacities and I ultimately went to an art magnet high school in Maryland, transferring from a private middle school that I had been going to. Which was a...like, the ideology of the school—or no, I shouldn't put it that way. The tastes of the school, like the types of art that were privileged and encouraged and taught were figure-based, like, representational figure-based painting for the most part, and so I sort of like adopted that as being the art that I valued most as well. And that continued into the college that I went to, which was a place in Philadelphia called Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Art, which is extremely traditional. And like, I was drinking the Kool-Aid for traditional figure-painting for the first two years that I went there, and then sort of tried to diverge for my junior and senior year. And graduating [car horn] was discouraging. I felt like after trying to shift from, shift to a different type of art-making, I wasn't successful at it in the same way that—being praised for doing something that the school valued, doing it well—really made it challenging to continue in art practice after graduating. And the art that I'm doing now has more to do with the doodling that I was doing in school than it does so much with the art that I did as my coursework. Um, it also kind of emerged out of this period of my life where I was hanging out with Faeries and smoking a lot of weed. And, um, just like started developing a more rigorous drawing practice for myself, which has been really positive for me to explore and elaborate on for the past, like, I guess four or five years. You know, it also kind of lines up with me coming into my transness, starting this art practice, so there's sort of like a coherence with my life that began like five years ago up 'til now. And um, now I continue

doing the drawing practice that—and it's sort of, the way I'm applying it into physical work is through tattooing, which is something that has been very positive as a trans person, to be able to sort of manage my own money-making that way and like interact with people in a way that feels comfortable and safe. And also, giving tattoos to a lot of trans people, thankfully, and like providing an alternative to some forms of tattooing that are more discouraging or threatening for people of different identities. So, yeah, I guess that's what I'm involved in now [laughs].

Silverman: Hm. [Break in recording.] Um, we're back. So, I was just thinking about body modification—

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: —since tattooing is this like super permanent way to kind of committing to a way of shaping and thinking about, yeah, yourself.

Mountain: Yeah.

Silverman: And I wanted to know more about your relationship to that—

Mountain: Hm.

Silverman: —and ways that you...that you imagine, I don't know, using these tools to kind of like self-actualize.

Mountain: Right, yeah. That's a good way of putting it. Uh, it definitely feels good to be able to alter your body in ways that you don't have to go through a medical gatekeeping process or a particular type of trans narrative that suggests the type of changes that are more affirming than others, like feminizing surgery or masculinizing surgery. And as someone who is agender those kinds of things not always making the most sense. So being able to just change your body and kind of like set the terms of that yourself, for me has been really positive. And I think like the more tattoos I get, the more at home it feels to be in my body. And I think I've heard the same from some of the folks that I've tattooed as well [Silverman coughs], so it's nice to also kind of help folks like access that type of thing.

Silverman: Do you have any plans for future tattoos right now?

Mountain: Well, I'm hoping to learn how to use a tattoo gun because I've just been doing stick and poke, and using the tattoo gun would kind of like solve certain problems that I have with that, but I think I'm just gonna practice on my leg and have it be kind of scribbly.

Silverman: [Coughing. Break in recording.] And we're back. So, you're gonna practice on your leg.

Mountain: Yeah.

Silverman: And do you feel—what types of relationships do you form when you tattoo someone else?

Mountain: Um...I mean, I've been really lucky in that most of the folks who I've tattooed have at the very least been quite pleasant. I have not been in a scenario where it felt like, um, like challenging to be around someone. Because the process of tattooing is pretty long for me—like each tattoo will take between three and six hours, so it's like enough time to be with someone—and I definitely feel glad that it hasn't been hard to do that. And the conversation that occurs, it sort of, you know, ranges just like polite to being more friendly or more like, like establishing a type of kinship. Certainly with trans folks who I tattoo there can be some more interesting and personally meaningful conversations. Um, so...

Silverman: Is there some, something you could share that like struck you in creating this kind of intimate work with someone?

Mountain: Mm hm. Um...I don't know, maybe not [laughs]. I think that it's less meaningful than other relationships that I have, because it's—they are sort of purely work relationships, and it does feel like being at work. In ways that I like, but not...it doesn't usually feel like the type of intimacy that I would achieve with, like, if I was tattooing friends or something. So maybe that's another way of framing it is that it's really, I really love giving friends tattoos because then that...you know, being able to give a tattoo to someone who's in your life and seeing the tattoos over and over and having that person trust you enough to let you change their body and put your art on them feels so meaningful to me with friends. Um, and it doesn't really feel the same with folks who just, you know, hire me to put tattoos on them. I mean, I still like doing it. So.

Silverman: Do you feel like in your, these spaces that you've created in New York to connect with friends and bond in particular ways, that you can express the full gamut of your politics or the way that you orient yourself around what you're feeling? Or do you feel like there's only ways that you can access that through online spaces or through other spaces?

Mountain: Mm. I think living in New York has been part of a larger attempt of mine to just be more present in my life in general. I think that's something that I continue to need to work on and I don't really feel like I'm there yet. I think a lot of the way that I spend my time has to do with isolation and avoidance, still. I say that because in Philadelphia that was something I kind of struggled with a lot. And moving to New York was sort of an attempt to insert myself into my life a little bit more. And it's like on its way, but I don't necessarily know if I've achieved a type of comfort and openness in any particular space where I can access, like, my politics and life and things like that. And similarly, online I don't think it's super facilitating of that either. Like, I think a lot of my ways of being online now have more to do with avoidance than exploration.

Silverman: And what would presence look like for you?

Mountain: Mm I don't know. I mean, I think like...that's become the task to figure out. And I don't know it yet.

Silverman: Um, here's a question from the list. Can you tell me of a time when you felt seen?

Mountain: Right, yeah, I read this question in the email that you had sent with them.

Silverman: [Laughs] What did it make you feel?

Mountain: Um, it...it's hard to think of something. I mean, I think like it's never going to be complete—like complete, you know, coherence and presence and [car horn] sense of place and comfort and all those things—because, you know, I feel certain types of...like, I feel seen in certain ways. Like when, for example, I'm around my mom, just having had like a mostly open relationship with her for a long time and being able to have frank conversations about things since being an adult, it feels like she knows my personality more than anyone else. But also because she's not like within a trans community— she's like a cis straight lady in her 60s—so there's going to be particular subtleties of my identity that are not going to, is not something we can really get into. And that's—I mean, I guess subtleties is not the right word. There's different, like, currents of my identity that is going to be always understood to some degree with the way I relate to my mom, but just in terms of like knowing one, someone knowing me, I definitely feel like a different type of being seen by my mom, which is, you know, still really wonderful despite there being these other um...lack of fluency with certain things. And then sort of similarly, I think like with friends there are ways that those currents that are perhaps challenging for my mom to see are really simple for friends to get, and possibly that's because they experience similar things or just they're, you know, more aware of the world, of those parts of the world. But I think, uh, it's rare to find friends for me where there isn't sort of like a layer of social distance of some kind, or at least the window of those things opening is more infrequent or something.

Silverman: And did feelings of like isolation and, as you say, avoidance come from becoming more aware of your transness? Or like how...

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: ...did, yeah, that develop? Did [inaudible] was aligned with that?

Mountain: Yeah. I mean, I came into my transness at a point where it was time to be an adult. Like, I had graduated from college like, like a year before and uh...sort of it was like the moment to land on your feet as a person, as opposed to being within school institutions and things like that. And realizing that I was trans sort of like made that task so much harder, and I really like kind of refused to land on my feet for a while. And part of that was influenced by just sort of like a fear of misunder—being misunderstood, like discomfort in being in public spaces, and not knowing how I fit into like a larger world around me. And yeah, it's been like a slow process to try and integrate myself into the world. Which, I feel really proud of myself for having effected a lot of change, because I came from like a pretty isolated place a few years ago. Like, marijuana

was really challenging for me to stop and was a huge part of my self-isolating. And I was able, but I was able to stop and I was able to, you know, spend my time differently, which like for a while did not seem as possible. Um, and yeah, like there are these ways that I can recognize that, like, stuff feels possible and good. And part of that is coming, like being comfortable with my identity as a trans person. Like, more and more.

Silverman: And have you found other like tools or ways to kind of call yourself out of these moments of isolation?

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: Like, through any kind of like meditative practice, or...

Mountain: Hm. Um, I think I've developed some routines that definitely feel helpful.

Silverman: Could you share any of them?

Mountain: [Laughing] Just like, skin care routines and you know, just like brushing your teeth every day. Like, that type of thing, it's just like extremely simple. Go to bed at a particular time, wake up at a particular time, brush your teeth, wash your face—like, basically exactly what parents tell you to do growing up. Like, following those things make me feel a lot more capable of existing in the world for whatever reason.

Silverman: And do you feel like you lost some sort of sense of self-care prior to that?

Mountain: Yeah, I think so. Those things did not come, like, so naturally to me, like self-care, yeah. And it's been really instrumental to just recognize how that stuff is important and put the effort into it. And like I still fall out of that all the time, but it's sort of like, if I'm like in a bad place, if I just focus on those small things, even if I'm only doing one of them or something, usually [car horn] one leads to another and it kind of builds up into feeling more capable as a person [laughs].

Silverman: And I guess because we're a day before the new year—

Mountain: Uh huh.

Silverman: —does the new year give you anxiety, or does it give you some sort of surge of energy?

Mountain: Mm. I really like the new year. Like, as a holiday. Um...like I think it feels like an opportunity to insert something different and new. And, yeah, we'll see what the new year holds [laughs].

Silverman: Do you have any like hope, like whatever, what people commit to themselves as changing or doing?

Mountain: Mm, mm hm. Um, I don't know. I've sort of been trying to think about that. I think it'd be nice to have a stronger sense of myself, just in general. Like I'm not sure I know what my values are. Like I know that I'm operating on some principles and codes, but I don't really know what they are necessarily. So I would love to find out more. Just like be a little more honest and realistic with myself about things, um, and come to those core values and things like that, seems like it would be a good next step. [Car horn.]

Silverman: Do you feel like you have a more ambiguous relationship to values because of the way your parents were less—

Mountain: Maybe,

Silverman: —restrictive, or controlling?

Mountain: Yeah. I mean, that could be it [laughs].

Silverman: And there was no sense of like tension or, I don't know, ethical code that they had that you've had to kind of like develop against?

Mountain: Right. Um yeah, that's also true. Yeah, it's very interesting when I find out about friends' parents who are very political and you know, like, introduce them to types of protest and political narratives at a younger age, because that's just very foreign to me. My folks were really apolitical. I mean, they were you know generally liberal and generally democratic, but not in ways that really became like rigorous in the way that it seems like some folks participate with politics. So yeah, I think part of it is like the ambiguity of that understanding [sirens], like has to do with it just being more incidental in my upbringing as opposed to something deliberate or reactionary or things like that.

Silverman: Do you participate at all, like, in the democratic—

Mountain: Hm.

Silverman: —like, electoral way, or whatever?

Mountain: Um, I mean I vote [laughs]. But I don't really have a rich political involvement in my life, and um...there have been moments where I've tried to establish some type of political life, and it's been challenging because of the ways that being in public has been hard for me for a while. Yeah, it's just hard to feel like integrated into things. And I think that possibly is like a struggle that other trans people have is like, if you're trans and you want to be involved in particular political conversations that aren't about gender or about transness, you have to bridge that gap of like your identity diverging [car horn] from the normative when you're trying to like become socially engaged and involved. And I think for some that's like not a problem, and they figure it out, you know, or it just like is un—does not faze them. But for me it's like pretty challenging to feel comfortable in those situations.

Silverman: Yeah. Um...I guess, we'll just ask some general wrapping-up questions?

Mountain: Cool.

Silverman: Like, if there's something I didn't ask that is coming to mind that you'd like to share.

Mountain: Hm.

Silverman: In this particular kind of like time capsule of capturing where you're at in your...

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: ...you know, I don't want to call journey, but experience of evolving into a self that...is many selves at many times.

Mountain: Hm. I don't know.

Silverman: Um...

Mountain: I mean, that's nice to just have you frame it as something, though. Like, that's helpful. I enjoy that.

Silverman: Yeah, I think this archive is interesting because of the ways in which you can return to this.

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: And see the difference.

Mountain: Mm.

Silverman: Or feel the ways that you felt at a particular time.

Mountain: Mm hm.

Silverman: Um, and I guess if there's anyone else that might be interested in participating, I'd be interested to know.

Mountain: Uh, yeah, I guess I'll think about it [laughs].

Silverman: Yeah, let me know.

Mountain: Ask around.

Silverman: Thank you.

Mountain: Yeah. Thank you, Aviva.