

NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Macy Rodman

Interviewer: Aviva Silverman

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Aviva Silverman: Hi! My name is Aviva, and I will be having a conversation with Macy Rodman 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 experiences of trans identifying people. It's May 29, 2020, and this is being recorded on Zoom from the safety of our bedrooms, or--I don't know if you're in your bedroom... [laughter].

Macy Rodman: Yes. I am.

Silverman: Ok. Cute. And can you describe your surroundings since I can see you and no one else can? What's, um...

Rodman: [laughter]

Silverman: How you've staged yourself?

Rodman: So, my room has been really--my room is really noisy. We're on the first floor. So, um, I like have made this kind of makeshift record--like sound booth thing with moving blankets and a shower rod [laughter]. So, it's me in a two by four-foot rectangle, surrounded by moving blankets.

Silverman: [laughter] Thank you. Um, I...

Rodman: [laughter]

Silverman: And have you um, staged--prior to the quarantine--things in your bedroom? Like do you--are you comfortable working from your personal space--or how have you, yeah... used your surroundings in the past, creatively?

Rodman: Well, I mean, I do record a lot from home. I--I do a lot of my, like, process from home. I have never really, uh, ventured out into live performance at home--is a new thing. I guess, it's like the--all the stuff that leads up to the work coming out happens at home, so it's--it is weird to, then have to have it play out here too, but I--it's been okay. You know? I--I definitely miss, I miss being around people, but...

Silverman: Yeah... and do you live with anyone or how--how are you...?

Rodman: Yeah, I'm--I'm really lucky. I, um--me and my roommate get along really well. They're another trans person. They just finished law school--they're going to be a public defender--or they're working for a housing project--so, it's just been really nice to live with someone who like gets the stress of being a trans person. We are able to give each other space, we're like really communicative, um [inaudible]... I've been really lucky in that way.

Silverman: That's amazing. So, I wanted to start with beginning stuff, and I wanted to ask you about where you were brought up--where you were born--if you wanted to talk a little about your family life.

Rodman: Sure. I was born in Juneau, Alaska, um, in 1989 [laughter]. And I grew up there my whole life. I--I moved to New York when I was 19... 18, 19. But yeah, I grew up in Alaska. It was--it's super weird. I just went back for the first time last summer with a friend and most of my family has moved away, but I had totally forgot--I hadn't been there in like ten years--and I had totally forgotten how weird of a place it is. It's just, totally isolated. It's a little like New Hampshire or Vermont in the way--in the way that the people kind of are. It's--there's--there's a hippie contingent and there's a--a Libertarian kind of vibe co-existing. And, uh, it's just a--it's just a really, really weird place.

Silverman: How did your family fit in that matrix?

Rodman: My dad was a construction worker; my mom was a babysitter and then later worked for the state. My dad was, kind of, I guess more on the Libertarian side, kind of, uh, wingnut, white trash, I don't know. They were like that--that kind of fake Christian thing--that happens in, I guess, a lot of households--where it's like they--Christianity is the default. So that's where they landed, but didn't actually care about religion, but ended up putting us in Christian school, subjecting us [laugh] to a lot of church and stuff, but they didn't actually give much of a shit about it. Yeah, I don't know. Yeah, my families' politics were definitely more on the weirdo Libertarian side, I guess.

Silverman: And how did that affect you growing up, having to go to religious school or going to church?

Rodman: Christian school was really weird because we... First of all, it's not a thing [laughter]. When I say Christian school, it's not Catholic school. It was, literally, this church that was, uh, that was--they had a TV show on like local TV. And then they had a couple of trailers set up, where they would teach classes, and then one building. And I swear none of the teachers were accredited. It was, just [laughter] their friends that they got to teach classes. And the science class was all about Jesus. Their--their math class ended up being taught by the gym teacher--whoever was available. It was a weird, weird, weird place and it was all under the guise of it being better than the public school system. Like the education being better. But, yeah, I mean...it like--I went to public school for the first time in high school and I just totally rebelled against all of that and just started doing a bunch of drugs and stuff, I don't know. It just made me totally a-religious and not--just, you know, this is all bullshit kind of thing [laughter].

Silverman: Um, and who... uhh, I'm going to really... can you hear that?

Rodman: Hear what?

Silverman: Oh, you can't hear anything? Ok, sorry. My um [inaudible]... Ok, um, I'll just go on. And who--what kind of friends did you have while you were in those different [laughter] schools?

Rodman: [laughter]

Silverman: Like who were you relating to?

Rodman: Uh, in the Christian school—the--I went there from kindergarten through 8th grade--and I was very femme. I would always get--I would always get made fun of by the--the sport boys or whatever [laughter]. But then, in the 6th or 7th grade, there were two kids that came from another school because they'd been kicked out of so many schools. And they liked Marilyn Manson and like Nine Inch Nails and stuff [laughter]. And so those were my, kind of first, friends and that kind of led me into high school--to who I could relate to there. And I ended up hanging out with, um, people that were into emo music, rock music, hardcore music and um, and drugs. The people I hung out with--we would break into houses and [laughter] steal prescription drugs and just, you know, go--go wild because it was so isolated and there was nothing else to do.

Silverman: Yeah... and when was the--

Rodman: Yeah.

Silverman: And when was the first time that you heard the word--or the term--trans?

Rodman: Heard the term trans? I was in... well, I don't even know if it was like expressed that way directly, but I was in probably, um... Ok, well there's two that I think of immediately. So, when I was little there was this lady who worked at the--a couple of grocery stores around town. And I don't even know what term my mom used. It was probably [laughter] like not right--that inferring that this woman was trans. And I loved her because she was beautiful and always really nice to me and really funny, and talkative. And so that was--I loved her. And loved going to the store to see her. And then later in high school, um, I had this older gay friend who worked at--I worked at a law office as a clerk, and he worked at the sex store down the street. So in between classes--or between school and work--I would go hang out at the sex shop and he showed me Amanda Liqueur. And so, I was amazed at this vision of femininity--New York City, glam, you know, surgery--but it all seemed very--I will never get to that. I love her, but I will--it's so far from where I'm at right now, you know, so...

Silverman: Wow, I love that visual of you being a clerk--like going to this sex shop [both laughter]. That's so cute.

Rodman: Um... [laughter].

Silverman: Were there other gay role models that you had at the time or can remember being like, "Whoa, what is going on over there"?

Rodman: Like in *my* surroundings or like people that I saw in media or whatever?

Silverman: Yeah, in any way that you were absorbing and maybe could reflect on later that that's what that was and how that might have affected the way that you could see yourself?

Rodman: Well, I mean it was all, um... I don't know, I had a really weird relation--... I mean, we all do—when--when we're coming--or we all, you know--at that time it was weird to--it was a weird time for, I guess, gay representation in the media or queer representation in the media, or something. But um, I remember watching *Queer as Folk*. I--I don't know, I guess... Yeah, it was this older gay person. And I'm saying older, probably like 30 and I was 16, showing me who Kylie Minogue was and [laughter] who, Kelis was, and Lil Kim... That kind of stuff I feel like was my education into—you know, what gay people liked, you know [laughter]?

Silverman: And you--you also make music, and so how did you enter that space? Or like—yeah--how did that move through your life?

Rodman: So, my sister is a, like, musical prodigy. She started playing the drums when she was six and then learned how to play every instrument. And so, when I was growing up, I was--it was very--music is *her* thing, music is Ariel's thing. And so, I just--I always loved music, and I always wrote music in my room, but I was like, "Oh, ok, I'm a--I'm a visual artist, designer--that will be my ticket out". And um, it was. I went to--I applied to, and went to, design school. And that's how I got to New York. But, me and my sister would always--I would sing while she played whatever instrument she was practicing. So that was my kind of intro into it, even though I always kind of felt like, I--it would never be what I would do or something. And then when I got to New York and started going to design school and started kind of getting more of a fuller picture of what the fashion industry *is* and what that would entail with working for companies and stuff, I didn't really love it. And so, I was basically just partying a bunch and didn't want to figure out what to do, and in that time, I met people who I--who wanted to make music with me--and made it--we just were super collaborative, just messing around, and I was like, "Oh, actually, this is something that I could at least do for fun. It's really fun". So, that's how I got started in to learning how to write music on a--in a software and learning--getting interested in recording myself and stuff like that.

Silverman: And how would you describe like the social scene you're in now?... Or like...

Rodman: The social--?...

Silverman: Not just social, but the scene in which you play music and perform in. Just like the landscape of what that looks like.

Rodman: Um, I don't know. I mean, it--it's Brooklyn based, I would say [laughter]. It's kind of all over the place. It's like sometimes, well I don't know, I mean, because I'm like--make music, but also do podcasts, comedy adjacent stuff, and make video work and stuff like that, I often play in a couple different kinds of context. So, sometimes it's more art world-y, sometimes it's more punk venue kind of vibes, sometimes it's gay clubs. It's—it's just--I mean, it's all over the place

and I--and that kind of reflects my friend group, too. I guess.

Silverman: Can you talk about your podcasts? Or like introduce us to what's going on there?

Rodman: Sure! Um, so, me and my friend--Theda Hammel--started this podcast. We were—we were going to start making music together, but it never materialized. And we were just laughing too much--so we were like--we want to collaborate on something, let's do—let's try to do a podcast. And it started as just conversational. It's called Nympho Wars [laughter]. The name was supposed to be us talking about sex or what it's like to date as a trans woman, or something like that, but it quickly just morphed into absurd comedy and us doing characters and fully developed radio plays. And incorporating music as well. We would write music for it and stuff like that. So, yeah, I mean, it just all—it kind of happened out of nowhere and we've played some live shows. We've um...

Silverman: Have there been really memorable episodes or--I don't know, people you've talked to? Like something that stands out to you?

Rodman: So, the--the episodes that stand out the most--or that I get talked to about the most--are um--there's one called Kill Drag Race, which is a radio play about my co-host, Theda. Oh, ok, so it starts with me—in bed. I have been totally brainwashed by watching [RuPaul's] Drag Race and I can't stop speaking in Drag Race catchphrases. And Theda comes in and she's like, "I have to save you. I have to get on Drag Race". And Caitlyn Jenner is a recurring character in our show [laughter]--and so Caitlyn is kind of guiding Theda to get to Drag Race, and she's like, "You have to kill but, you have to take down the show". And it's all--because Drag Race famously excludes trans women--it's all challenges that are like, test your masculinity and your manliness. It's totally absurd--totally wacky. Everyone is named after--all the drag queens are named after food. And then the other one is, uh, Murder on the Stupid Bitch Express, and that is [laughter], a play on the Agatha Christie novel. And it's--Theda is trying to solve the murder of Jeffree Star on the Pacific Starload Express, and she runs into a bunch of Youtubers and B list celebrities and it's uh, it's really wacky [laughter].

Silverman: And when you reference these different shows, do you "hate watch" them or do you actually like--how do you deal with the problematic aspects of parts of these? You know, like gay cultural [inaudible], but then also are deeply transphobic?... I think--I think that's a leading question. I'm just--I'm curious about how that sits with you and you're...

Rodman: Oh yeah, are you asking about how I interact with Drag Race or something?

Silverman: Yeah, I guess Drag Race and then maybe even existing in the--or like working within the drag world at large and some of the ways that you encounter, you know, certain um--just like how you—how you live within that and how that's been, for you.

Rodman: Sure, sure, sure. So, with the--the show--with Nympho Wars--the way that we deal with it is--it's more--it's not us so much having a take on it, it's kind of trying to [laughter] push it to

the farthest extent and live within it and investigate it that way. But for myself personally, ingesting that kind of cultural content—I don't know, I mean, I definitely watch it. I watch that show. I consume all of this and I, you know, "hate--hate watch" [laughter], or whatever. But, yeah, I mean, I don't know. It's hard to--It's hard to say I'm not going to—I'm not going to watch drag on TV because I still really like drag. I don't identify as a drag queen. I have done drag in the past, but it's, there's this opportunity to watch talented drag queens on TV that then..., but then there's this fracking transphobic, like, hoes. So, it's like—it is this weird toss up, I don't know.

Silverman: Yeah, it's complicated. Totally... because there's a limited amount of content, obviously, to like access stuff in--on TV.

Rodman: Totally, and with that kind of like production value, you know, it's--I know a lot of people who just--who can't watch it and I completely understand that. I wish--I wish that were me [laughter].

Silverman: Do you feel like some of the social and creative spaces that you in--are in now – Ok sorry, I'm going to refrain this. How do you feel like the social and creative spaces that you contribute to are related to other parts of social movements in history, or political movements in history, in New York? Like, how do you feel connected to, you know, a deeper history of culture?

Rodman: So, I guess, it's like a lot of, um... I don't know, I mean, a lot of the people that I perform with or the--the venues that I have been affiliated with in the past have just been focused more on, um... I don't really know what I'm trying to say here [laughter].

Silverman: No, it's okay. Yeah, I'm just--are there—are there ways that you've been like wow--or in the magnetism of coming to New York, you know, the fantasy of New York, and the dream of New York--what ways have you connected to the reality of what's there and...

Rodman: Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Silverman: ...what things have been like, "Oh, that was kind of a mirage and part of some sort of promise that this would contain it all". Or, I don't know, just the aspects of you actually entering and actualizing into your creative self, in New York.

Rodman: Yeah, um, I guess it—I guess it's been—it's been the idea of coming here, and I moved here, and I was like, "I'm never going to not live in Manhattan". I'm like, I love expensive shit or whatever [laughter], I love being around these rich people, these glam people, whatever. And I mean--this is so generalized--but that--that is kind of what I was, like, loved when I was here--wealth of New York City, or luxury of New York City, or excited to go to Barneys [New York] or something. Now living here for 11 years--what I have gravitated towards--I'm mostly through meeting people through partying and nightlife and stuff--has been people who are interested in community organizing and stuff. And, I don't know, because that--that just seems more sustainable if you—if you can—if you have a community that you can invest in and stick around

with. I don't know.

Silverman: Totally. And what type of organizing, or like what type of people, have you been gravitated towards? You don't have to name them, or you can name them or just you know—just like people that have...

Rodman: No, yeah, I mean, I--I think about Discwoman and Decolonize This Place. I mean, I'm not affiliated with either of those, but they're around and everyone in my general group supports those kinds of organizations--or Boiling Point NYC, artists like Deli Girls, and ZOSA and all these people who are interested in making really great art, but also interested in putting back into the best interest of everybody. I don't know, it's like every--all the—all the artists I admire and love to work with, are--you know, it's nice to see that everybody can come together and put on a show for raising money for Bernie Sanders or something like that. That's never—that's something that I never thought I would be interested in or--or have a—or have a big group of people who are interested in raising money for a presidential candidate, or sending money to individuals who have been incarcerated or stuff like that. That has been really cool to see.

Silverman: Totally. And how do you feel like that's shifted or has maintained itself in quarantine? Do you feel like you're still a part of aspects of that or connected to parts of that now?

Rodman: Yeah, I do, because so much of it is—is like put together via social media anyway. And it's still the same kind of formula where it's the artist--artist bringing awareness via their art and coming together and then people using their resources to just--to help--whatever, you know? That kind of hasn't changed--unlike the venue--if anything, it reminds us that the venue doesn't have to be a big a huge part of the equation. It can be anywhere... or nowhere [laughter].

Silverman: Have other parts of quarantine clarified spaces you want to, or have connected to, that nourish you--or, I don't know--has this—has this time actively made you reframe ways that you want to re-enter social spaces or public spaces, that you--you know, hang out in or perform in?

Rodman: I don't know, I mean it's—it is—it's such a weird time to think about, I've been trying to think about what is realistically going to reopen and what's not going to reopen and that's really scary, but I also know that stuff gets closed all the time. One of my favorite places to see shows was Palisades and that--that got closed a long time ago, and then it was [Orville] Peck and that got shut down and then it's just every--these places move around, so I have no doubt that when this all opens up again, there will be someplace that we'll meet. And--and I mean, it would be great if there was a place that could have more of a hold and that people could know that they could go to and know that they could be safer there, or something like that, but that hasn't super been the reality for a little while. It has been shifting around all the time, you know? Or spaces reveal themselves to not have the best interest of the people that work there or the people that come there, you know? So, it's like, we're always having to reevaluate our relationship to these spaces, and I think that's okay, you know? I don't think that we should have to settle. I mean there's always going to be some kind of compromise. There's no safe space--

there's no all-inclusive space--there's always going to be something that we have to reckon with, but I don't think that—that—I don't think that we should have to sacrifice something if it's important, you know?

Silverman: Definitely. Um... I'm just like looking [laughter] at some of our questions and I was just, uh... one of them is, what are some of the bigger challenges that you face being trans in New York? And I guess that can speak to--I mean, now that we're in this weird quarantine space, but also just more broadly, you know, just being--having lived in New York for the last 10 years or 11 years.

Rodman: Um... what are the biggest challenges of being trans in New York? I mean, I think a lot--New York is definitely one of the easier places to be trans and that's why I live here. Just, as far as medical availability, or whatever—access--and also just the amount of people that either understand what it means to be trans or don't give a shit about [laughter] you being trans, or not actively against you being trans. There's more of those people here. And... I don't know, I mean... a lot of the struggles with being trans are--are internal, and a lot of it has to do with anxiety and fears. I mean, it's based on real fears. It's based on fear of, you know, violence and rejection from society and not being able to get jobs and stuff like that, but the effect of that is anxiety and depression, and stuff. So, I don't know, I have gone through a lot of cycles where certain things are more difficult than other things, and it's all kind of—it's always present, but it—it—it just goes through cycles, I don't know.

Silverman: Yeah, and how--and you don't need to talk about this, but how does—how did it feel to go back to Juneau or how does it feel to visit or be a part of other aspects of your life? Like does it... yeah, just--

Rodman: It's wild. I went back to Juneau and I don't know if it's just because they're not exposed to trans people a lot or something, but—and I, I mean I--I feel like--cause here I'm under--constantly under the—under the impression that everyone knows I'm trans. I'm visibly trans. I'm 6'4", I have a deep voice, like blah, blah, blah. I've never had the--I never thought, I am "passing" here, but in Juneau and in other small towns that I've been to, there is this weird thing where people either don't know that I'm trans or act like they don't know that I'm trans or something. So, I don't know what that's really about. But then talking to trans people in those towns, it's definitely the access to medical care is not there and there's not as much community in those places.

Silverman: Definitely. And what kind of experience have you had with healthcare? Is it...

Rodman: In New York City it's been incredible. I've like--

Silverman: If you could--it's helpful sometimes to name some of the things that have supported you so that people know these resources.

Rodman: Callen Lorde [Community Health Center]. Yeah, Callen-Lorde since the beginning. Since

the beginning of my medical transition, I went to Callen-Lorde--really scared, thinking that I was reading up on trans--like how—how to start [laughter] being trans or whatever—reading up on how one would start transition. I was really scared of hormones, and, you know, didn't know if that was the right thing for me. And I went to Callen-Lorde, and they--I was reading stuff from the 90's that was like, you're going to have to dress up in your preferred gender for 3 months before you [laughter]... you know? And--

Silverman: What kind of sites were you on [laughter]?

Rodman: I was on these like, stuff from the 90's or whatever. Like Transamerica type shit [laughter]. But I went there, and it was so affirming to--from the moment I got there--have the person be like, "No, use the name that you prefer on all your paperwork. Do this all the time. If you want to—if you want to start hormones, you can start today. Do you want to start today?" "Yeah". Gave me a shot. I walked out the door, you know. And, not only that, but they have the resources to--I didn't have Medicaid when I went there. They have someone that walked me through getting Medicaid. Medi...medi...caid?... Medicaid..., uh [laughter]. And um, they have been the resource that I've used to get all of my surgeries that I've gotten, connected me with NYU Langone [Health] and all my surgeons, and basically held my hand--walked me through every single step of the way. And it does get a little frustrating there because there's a high volume of patients--and I know sometimes people can't get in there because there's such a high volume of patients--but they are expanding, and I--yeah, I can't say enough good stuff about Callen-Lorde.

Silverman: That's so beautiful, yeah. And I was wondering what kinds of employment you've had to--to make ends meet while living in New York.

Rodman: It has mostly been bars and restaurants. And when I couldn't keep those jobs--then the grace of friends letting me sleep in their house rent-free and doing little gigs to make money for, you know, food and stuff. Yeah, just pulling the rabbit out of the hat, I guess, it's like... [laughter]. The last five years I have worked at a bar and that really changed my idea of living as a stable adult who could afford rent every month. And--and yeah, I just didn't know what that was about. I--my--So, when I went to school--when I first moved here from Alaska--my mom died, and I got--right before I left--and I got her life insurance money, and my school was paid for and I had some money. And so, I spent it like crazy, took out student loans, spent most of it on coke [laughter], -just uh, just went crazy--didn't really know what realistically living in New York City was like. And then when that ran out, I eventually dropped out of school. I skidded hard and didn't really know what was up and slowly had to figure out how to be responsible with money and learn how difficult it is to find even--find any job that can sustain you here. I've worked at—I've worked at a fabric store in midtown--or a trim store in midtown--and made \$9 an hour and lived with my friend and—and couldn't afford to pay rent while I was working that job. It's—it's really kind of unbelievable to me that I managed to do it this long [laughter].

Silverman: I relate to that, totally [laughter]. It is some sort of weird magic when you're--when it's been this long, and sorting that out, continually.

Rodman: Totally, totally. And I feel it like--As you live in New York longer, you kind of figure out weird little--there's weird little things you can tap into if you're in a bad spot, if you need to get a bunch of money really quick, or something like that. You figure out how to do it a little easier, but it's—it—it's still wild. It's so expensive to live here and [laughter]... I just don't know how--how everyone does it [laughter].

Silverman: Totally. Have there been times where you've wanted to be elsewhere or are you committed to the struggle of, you know, being where you are?

Rodman: I just—I--there are so many pros to living here that I--I can't really think of another place that I would want to be, you know?

Silverman: Can you talk about some of the pros since we're like [laughter] in our weird moment of being like, wait what's going to happen?... I'm just—yeah--what was it that we loved? ... [laughter].

Rodman: I mean, honestly--even in quarantine--it's like... the—you look at other cities—with protests to open up the city again--and you don't really see that in New York. I don't at least. And I know a lot of people who have been kind of creating these little networks where they're trading their stuff to--for people to make work during quarantine and stuff and donating their time to deliver groceries, donating groceries, etc. You know, I can bike to Central Park, I can—it—it--I mean, as much as it is the epicenter, it's also "the devil you know" kind of thing, I don't know. But I—but I mean also it--but it's the community of New York—it's the—the speed of New York, that impatient speed of New York that I need, and when I go other places, I go a little crazy at how slow motion it feels. Um...

Silverman: Do you think you were like that as a child or do you feel like that kind of since developed when you got here--where you're just like, actually I need it now [laughter]?

Rodman: No, I definitely was like that as a kid. I was so impatient. I wanted to go downtown all the time. Downtown Juneau, Alaska is like four blocks. I like [laughter]...

Silverman: What--did you—did you know about any scene there at the time--that had gay people at all--or was that very covert?

Rodman: Not in Juneau. No. I--There was—there was—there--I knew one or two other... maybe five gay kids in the high school, and then I knew the older person--who worked at the porn shop--and that was it. And there wasn't even really much of a music scene there. There were some bands that played at youth group on the weekends [laughter], but... yeah, I don't know. Every--everything that drew me to New York was totally just imagined and I hoped that it was real, you know [laughter]?

Silverman: What people have been most important to you now--or in your life at large?

Rodman: Um... my sister is probably the most important person in my life. She lives in Portland now. She is gay. And it's like--ever since we were kids--we just have this really twin-ish relationship. We're four years apart, but just always had this really deep connection. So, we talk on the phone all the time. But... I—I--I mean I--all the artists that I perform with or see around--all the people that have—all the people that have championed *me* and made me feel good about my art--like JD Samson and Roddy Bottum and Gianna Love and just people who have shown me what it is to lift people up and what that can do for you--those people are really important to me. Um... I know I'm leaving so many people out. Just, I mean, people that take a chance and make you feel included. That--That's so important. And I try to do that for other people.

Silverman: Totally. And how do you describe your music to us? What, yeah--what is it influenced by and what do you—what do you think about when you're making music?

Rodman: I--So lately I've been describing it as post-punk flavored synth-pop and--and I write music about... "blank" [laughter].

Silverman: You don't have to give a formal statement, just for kind of like texture...

Rodman: No, I mean, so, when I first started medical transition, I mean like--I think a lot of young trans people--I was obsessed with--with the--the transition, you know, with the feeling--the adolescent feeling that people talk about--the [inaudible] that people talk about. And, so I wrote a lot of music about that and then my next record I wrote about my mom and my relationship, and I—I don't know, I mean, I try to write about what is fresh on my mind, and I—I do--the one thing that I took from design school was this idea of a cohesive body of work and trying to take the--trying to connect all of the—all the pieces of the work together in some way so it's like, I--I try to reflect the content of the lyrics through the composition of the music. And, I'm also always thinking about the visual aspects of what's going to come out with the music. And--and, so that ties into it too...

Silverman: What are some of the aesthetics that you've been using or playing with?

Rodman: So, the last record was called *Endless Kindness* and it was all about investigating things that have informed where I am now. And so, it was—I—I was really obsessed--or I still am really obsessed with the Eurythmics' album, *Savage*. And, that was Annie Lennox doing all these characters in all the videos and also in the music--during her voice over that plays--and doing really masculine kind of characters, and--and just kind of exploring personas in this way. And so, I was doing that to try to kind of trace what--what lead me to where I was at that album, and so it was these elements of dance music, these elements of punk music, emo--all these disparate elements, trying to tie them all together. And so, for the first music video for the song called, *Greased Up Freak, Part I*, it was just me in a room doing all these different characters that were all—all dressed in black with blond hair--but one was this greaser, motorcycle person, one was a baby, one was a pregnant woman--and trying to visualize these sounds that came out—kind of out of my subconscious or something.

Silverman: Yeah. Do you have—do you connect to--or have a religion or spiritual connection now and is that related to where you like draw your music--or how do you see that?

Rodman: I—when--I mean, when I left Christian school and church and all that, I really bucked against the idea of religion--organized religion--especially Christianity. And--and, I think that did give me kind of a cynicism about—I--I don't know, it—it—it gave me a cynicism about spirituality, in general, but especially, anything that you're told--that someone is telling you to do that's related to spirituality. So, I—I don't know. I'm--have been trying the last five years, I think, I've been trying to just be a little bit more open-minded about spirituality, spiritual practices, and that kind of thing. I don't know, I think even the idea of meditating would have been hard for me--so--awhile go, just because I would—I would be like, "Every--all of it is bullshit, all of this is bullshit". But no, I mean, I don't think that. But, I think it would maybe still be hard for me to connect in a way that someone else is--is telling me to do, just because of my own hang-ups on religion. And so, yeah, I'm still working on breaking that down, but my--my way to access "sad" or tap into subconscious is definitely through writing music. That's the--and performing--that's the way that I am able to let go and tap into something that is--that feels more divine or something, and that's what drew me to performance in the first place--was getting on a stage and feeling that spirit enter me, you know?

Silverman: Mm-hmm. And what have you learned about yourself while performing?

Rodman: In my life, I'm really not very sure of myself. I always second guess everything that I say. Even right now, I'm thinking back on everything I just [inaudible] and I'm like, "God that probably sounds so stupid" [laughter]... but, I get like--while performing, while creating music--I don't know, it feels safe. It feels like--I feel invincible. I feel like I--I can't bail in a way or something. It's... [laughter] I don't know. Because it's the way that I perform, it's not--I'm not a technician, you know? It's—it is very erratic and it's—it's not—it's a lot of improvisation and it's very physical and energetic and so... yeah, I don't know.

Silverman: Totally. I--and I'm so drawn to that. I mean, I really love you as a performer and can see and feel that. I...

Rodman: Oh, thank you.

Silverman: Yeah. I was wondering if you just wanted talk about anything you're excited about now that you're looking at--or making, or thinking about, or talking about--just stuff that's like, you know, in this weird slowed down space--stuff that you're just like, yeah, obsessed with...

Rodman: So, I--I have been thinking a lot about this idea of, I mean--the music that I've been inspired by lately has been this music that when I was younger, I connected to not having any idea of what a club was or what--what that was--Basement Jaxx, Fatboy Slim, Chemical Brothers, William Orbit's work with Madonna--just like, this dance and electronic music that was made at a time where I just had no concept what it was, that has felt really relevant to me right now where I'm at a point where I—I--clubs may as well not exist [laughter], you know? And so--I have never

prioritized writing love songs--or songs about relationships—before, in my music. And right before all this happened, I went through a pretty brutal break-up, and so it was the perfect opportunity to kind of combine those two things. So, I just--I've also never been someone who has been able to write a lot--write really fast and just pump stuff out. So, I--when this all started, I challenged myself to make twenty demos in a month--I think is what the timeline ended up being. And I just wrote really fast--I wrote every day, and yeah, I came out with a lot of work. So, I'm right now refining that, and figuring out what that's going to look like. But that was really thrilling creatively, and I'm really excited about the next album that I put out.

Silverman: That's so amazing. And--and, how can people access your work or see--see the things that you do?

Rodman: So, my music is available on all streaming platforms--Spotify, Apple, and all that. Nympho Wars is available on those, as well. If you want to see my music videos, my YouTube channel is just "Macy Rodman". And... yeah, I think that's about it.

Silverman: That's a lot. Yeah [laughter]. Is there anything else that comes to mind that you would want to share with us?

Rodman: Yeah, I guess I would—I would just--for a young trans artist specifically, cling to the people that like see you and make you feel like, they got a--I had—I had teachers... Diane Dwyer, who is also a performance artist who I still work with, who's still one of my great friends; Bradford Nordeen, who runs this queer art film, um...uh...uh...

Silverman: Series, company... [laughter]?

Rodman: Yeah, I guess—yeah, I guess that--has been a huge supporter of my work over the years. Um... and--fuck, I had one more. Oh, Carla Westcott, who's a designer who saw--who was one of my teachers at Parsons [School of Design] and when I told her that I was dropping out she was like, "Okay, you can drop out, but we have to figure what you're going to do, because...". She said--I remember [laughter] she said, "I'm going to be so pissed if I read in the newspaper about a dead club kid" [laughter], or something like that. And for some reason that just--it was really brutal to hear her say that, but it was incredible to know that someone cared about me and cared about my work even if it wasn't necessarily the work that I was doing around them. So, I--it's hard to find those people, but if you are—if you can find those people, cling to those people. And I think, that—that's all I can attribute to how I am here now, you know?

Silverman: That's so special. Thank you so much. And, just stay on for a second. I'm just going to stop the recording, but thank you.