

NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PATTY GONE

Interviewer: Claire Crews

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Transcribed by Daniel Nyounai-Herrera

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Claire Crews: Hello my name is Claire and I will be having a conversation with Patty for the New York City Trans Oral History Project in collaboration with the New York public library's community history project. This is an oral history project centered on the experiences of trans identifying people. It is Saturday, November 9, 2019 and this is being recorded at the New York public library 42nd St. Mid-Manhattan Branch. Hi.

Patty Gone: hello there

Crews: Hello Patty. Thanks for being here

Gone: (Laughter) Of course. Of course. I love midtown Manhattan.

Crews: yeah what's not to love? Let's begin with your name, your age where you were born.

Gone: oh my goodness OK. Let's start with age, great. My name is Patty Gone I'm 36 years old And what was the other one?

Crews: where were you born?

Gone: where I was born. I was born in Harrisburg Pennsylvania in the early 1980s which ended up being very formative to a lot of things that I still work on I would say.

Crews: What was Harrisburg like in the early 1980s?

Gone: yeah, I mean Harrisburg was and maybe still is... It's the capital of Pennsylvania which sometimes people don't know But yeah there's a kind of large like central Pennsylvania kind of like suburban sprawl like around Harrisburg but it's also kind of the largest city inside of what some people call Pennsylvucky which is like the vast expansive Pennsylvania between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia which are like the liberal polls of Pennsylvania and then you have this vast swamp in the middle that's doing kind of other things and so yeah I'm from kind of that region of the country and I would say yeah I spent a lot of time with like my grandmother and like at home and one thing that my mom says she will talk about "oh I never took you and your sister to the pool or we never did these kind of like activities that she did as a kid and I'm like mom that's fine at this point I don't you know like because my sister and I would kind of stay home or we'd stay with my grandmother in The summers or whenever our parents were working I would be there. My dad works in Micro carpentry Stuff and my mom worked for the Navy. And so she was gonna start civilian employee of the Navy from when she was 18 right out of high school until she retired in her kind of like mid 50s.

Crews: Did she travel a lot for that job?

Gone: she was traveling here and there I mean we would've never come with her but yeah she would like I don't know I am member her going to like the Philippines or Virginia or you know like kind of all over and it was like dealing with kind of like military systems like how the Navy

transports goods around the world and like it's very wild to me that the Navy has a place in Canonsburg Pennsylvania that is like a place where so many people work on these projects or at least they did you know I don't know what the situation is now But like that's where she would Drive across the River to work you know five days a week for all that time and yeah like that's come up in various... like that My life was kind of... or like any kind of like comfort that I did have as a kid like came from the government. You know like And even still like my parents are you know They're not like very well paid but like for being from that region or neither of them having college educations you know it's like my mom worked for the Navy for all those years and that's been kind of yeah and I don't know, that's what I got.

Crews: You said you spent summers with your grandmother. Was she also in Harrisburg?

Gone: Yeah

Crews: What were those summers like?

Gone: It would be a lot of us, my sister and I hanging out at that house and doing a lot of, I would watch lots of television. I would watch sports center. I would watch american gladiators. I would watch like the old batman live action and then eventually I would go down into the basement when I was like in my teens and stuff and I would just watch MTV like all day long. (Laughter)

Crews: (Laughter)

Gone: Like I would just, I would have... there was this channel called Vox. I don't know if you've heard of it. I mean it's like long gone at this point but they would like have these like.. You would call in and like request videos and it was like two dollars to call in and request and I did that once or twice. But mostly they would just kind of play these things in between when no one had requested anything. It would just be like little kind of like fifteen/ten second snippets of all those songs. This would be say from like 1995 to 2000 -- I graduated highschool 2001 so like that kind of time period. Like I have an encyclopedic knowledge of pop music from like 1995 to 2001. One of my dad's favorite games to do with me is to like when I'm home or driving around or whatever like is to like play name that tune with me and he'll like put on his like serious like 90's station and just let it go and I will be able to... and once in a while I'll get stumped but I got all of them. (Laughter)

Crews: What was her house like?

Gone: Oh my grandmothers, yeah. My grandmother would never put the air conditioning on so it was always be kind of hot. She would play a lot of solitaire and her biggest things that she would do was she would read Danielle Steel novels or other romance novels and she would watch soap operas in the afternoon. Her favorites were "The Young And The Restless" and "The Bold And Beautiful". And so yeah, there were times when I would be like... I remember being really young and being put down for a nap and being kind of in the backroom but it was kind of all a ranch house and I wouldn't want to sleep and I would walk to the little partition and so she still couldn't

see me and I would stand and through the slats stand and watch "The Young And The Restless". (Laughter) As she was sitting there and then eventually she kind of just like gave in and let me watch with her so there was a number of years where I would watch "The Bold And Beautiful" with her everyday and I knew their characters very well. I knew Ridge Forrester and Forrester Creations and that it's filmed in Los Angeles and it's like a fashion -- they run a fashion company and it's kind of like the family turmoil around that fashion company but yeah. I would watch those and I don't think I realized until maybe much later that I was so -- of how taken I was by them and maybe how formative they were for me as far as just kind of seeing people interact in ways that weren't my little central Pennsylvania Irish Catholic little enclave. And yeah, just the relationship to sensuality. That was my introduction to that kind of stuff.

Crews: But at the time it just kind of like existed in the isolation of her house and maybe was separate from --

Gone: Right.

Crews: your social life, your aesthetics.

Gone: Yeah I wasn't necessarily making -- Like when I would draw, I would do a lot of drawings and I would have her help me make stories and things like that and I would do all the drawings for the stories but they would be like cartoon characters and things, not necessarily you know and like very maybe like agendered. Eventually I started doing more drawings of women when I was going through puberty and stuff I would be making these drawings cause that was my art when I was a kid. I would do drawings. I'd mostly copy disney adventures magazines and the strips of disney cartoons and make my own versions of them. But then characters like Jessica Rabbit or when kind of like -- it's so interesting, cartoons, they're very, I don't know. They're so male or something. Or like the only way that you make a cartoon character into a female cartoon character is to put a bow on their heads or put high heels onto Minnie Mouse or whatever and so when I would encounter women in cartoons that were not that I would be so fascinated but then I wouldn't be able to sit on my grandmas counter and draw them. I would feel very embarrassed to do it so I would in (inaudible).

Crews: And even when you were drawing it sounds like maybe there was some narrative aspect to your illustrations, they were kind of comics or they had lines.

Gone: Yeah, there would be illustrations to stories or even I would play with some friends like my friend down the street. If I played with my sister we would do stuff and this is where say "Painted Dreams" where the characters come from. The figurines that's from when my sister and I used to play -- we'd call it animal town and we would have this gigantic -- I still have the continuum of it. It has my sister's name scroll on it when she was five writing her name on it. I had that container and that's what all those characters are in. And we would pour them out and then we'd put them all into little families and we would have this town. This town we kind of carry on and there would be the cat family and the dinosaur family and the dog family and whatever. Whatever we had and we would make this little functioning society. (Laughter) So then all the figurines in "Painted

Dreams” are those exact figures. I didn’t buy them separately. They are the figures that my sister and I used to play animal town with when we were kids and they all came from you know various Toys R Us and whatever but also McDonald’s and Burger King boxes and Happy Meals and things like that. That’s the source of so many of them and they have “Made In China” scrolled on the bottom of like Donald Duck’s foot and that kind of sh**.

Crews: Yeah, I’m curious about more of the materiality of the world’s you create for “Painted Dreams” and kind of like the notable selections that are in those dioramas or worlds. I wonder how you -- I think it says somewhere that you’re inspired by displays at thrift stores and I’ve always noticed those too -- how like seasonal they are. But I wonder how you go about that type of collection and if it’s a concept or an object that drives that.

Gone: Yeah, I say it’s a combination. I was trying to have as many -- I was trying to be a combination of those figurines which I think are stand ins for fictional characters. You know, I’d try to make the analogue in “Painted Dreams” between those figurines as like little Disney or whatever figurines with the soap opera characters that my grandmother is watching. She and I during those afternoons, if she’s in one room watching soap operas and I’m in the other room with my sister playing with these toys -- we’re kind of engaged in similar activities of just kind of moving and living vicariously through these kind of fictions and so when I’m creating the tablouts it’s a matter of getting that kind of like fictional person element in with those and then a lot of the products are all Procter and Gamble related products and so Procter and Gamble is the one who originally funded soap operas. And so you know, it wasn’t NBC or CBS or whatever like it was originally paid proگرامing around household items and it was a way to sell household items to women. And so there’s Charmin toilet paper in the background, it’s there because that’s entangled in the soap opera world and kind of inextricable to that world for me. It’s always tied to product and a moving of product and it’s creating this massive fictional world but it’s not for some kind of positive thing. It’s created are selling household products and keeping women in their station or something.

Crews: Kind of along those lines, do you feel like you were aware either in your play or just in your perception of the gender dynamics playing out in the soap operas or do you feel like it’s a later daze.

Gone: I feel like it’s coming back to it. I feel like I didn’t maybe realize it at the time or also kind of maybe didn’t even realize that I was taking this stuff in and maybe none of the other boys in my catholic middle school were. You know? That didn’t maybe hit me at the time. It’s kind of only in hindsight that I, you know, when I started to think about the possibility of doing “Painted Dreams” that it kind of hit me as like.. Wait a minute. I was exposed to this. I was exposed to media targeted to a mass female audience and I was exposed that in ways that few men are and had a deep empathy for that in ways that few men have. And it’s really interesting when, very few men come to the screenings, I mean like some friends of mine and stuff like that but screenings of “Painted Dreams”, or the workshops that I’ve done for (inaudible) it’s like predominantly queer people or female identifying people. And when men do come there’s like “Oh I’ve never thought about soap opera’s in that way before. I’ve always just dismissed them as

whatever". And I was like yeah that's the whole frickin point is that this genre that's doing all the work that all of these other genres are. I recently was doing -- I didn't finish it fully come out but I did this installation and I called it "Kitchen Sink Drama" which is like this British kind of well made play genre from the fifties and sixties centered on -- It's kind of like the birth with angry young man stuff. But it's all domestic dramas and so it's interesting to me that... Okay this kitchen sink drama, this angry young man becomes a big deal. The man in the household struggle in like "Ugh this house, I can't" you know, I'm struggling with my wife, I'm struggling with my parents, I'm struggling with whatever" and that wasn't really a big thing before and then when oh woah it's suddenly a big deal when a man does it. But when all of these years and all soap operas are happening and Irna Phillips who I talk about in "Painted Dreams" a lot, the grandmother or godmother of soaps -- she had already been doing this stuff and it's like.. Yeah, I don't know. And just looking at it and knowing that so many men don't see this aspect of it was a way to or a reason to dig into it.

Crews: Maybe just briefly, if folks are listening who haven't seen "Painted Dreams", would you mind describing it briefly so that if somebody doesn't know?

Gone: (Laughter) Sure, no. It's chill, it's chill.

Crews: (Laughter) I realize we're referencing it without context.

Gone: Right, right. Alright so. Go, right now, pause. Hit pause on the (laughter) I have them on Youtube now we'll see if they stay on Youtube for years upon years but yeah, they're available and they are... it's a video art essay, serial video art essay that is about soap operas but is also kind of a soap opera in it's own right. It quotes scenes from "The Bold And The Beautiful" and the new season will quote from others and it thinks about trans identity through maybe the lens of looking at soap operas and what they do.

Crews: What was catholic middle school like and if you go to that catholic high school..?

Gone: Yeah, I went to a catholic school the whole way through kindergarten through highschool.

Crews: How was that?

Gone: I mean, you know, Claire (Laughter) I mean it's interesting cause I wasn't very -- I was rebellious in my own little way but I kind of like went through the motions of a lot of things. I was an altar boy, I was involved in my home stuff, I was kind of like recruited to be a priest at different periods of my life and then felt guilt about not wanting to do that. I was a eucharistic minister in highschool cause they asked the people that are getting decent grades and aren't asswholes. They asked them if you wanna be a euchristic minister and was like (Tentatively) "...Okay". But it wasn't -- I think that catholicism for me is more interesting to me now as ritual and as performance and I think now I use maybe yoga as a ritual and I use the watching of soaps and things like that at night before I go to bed. I talked about this in one of the "Painted Dreams" episodes. As a way of grounding and a way of returning and a way to be able to see one changing

over time once you kind of get into a ritual of something. I've been doing yoga for a number of years now and I can , you know it's so interesting to -- you don't see the change in a day or two. But if I went back to what my body was like three years ago there's significant change. And I think that's similar to things happening in soap operas that day to day there's not much change and people will be like "Oh these things move so slow. How can people even watch these everyday? The plot does not thicken like it is in these shorter series but it's about this slow duration. I found that to be a very interesting metaphor for trans identity too. That there is no you're one gender one day and then you wake up and you're the other gender the other day. It is inevitably a slow progress, slow move that has bits and starts and the plot may double back on itself and move forward again or these sorts of things and I feel like to find soap operas at a time when I was really grappling with trans identity felt very right to me and the metaphor feels very true and still does to me.

Crews: When was that time that soap operas came back and that you were thinking about your trans identity at a beginning point?

Gone: Yeah, I mean I started to feel it the most.. Maybe at the end of.. It was in my early thirties and being exposed to groups when I was living in western Massachusetts that I was not exposed to in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania of course. I was not even exposed to New York City. I was exposed to -- I would be involved in gay male culture in all of these various ways through my twenties. I was in a band. The singer of the band's name was Kelvin and he was gay and he was also my roommate and we also had some.. There was a lot of things happening with them in my twenties but it never felt like my group. And then when I started to encounter more trans identity I was very knocked off my whatever. I was just like oh sh** this is a possibility that I hadn't been able to -- hadn't been presented to me in any way. Then when it was I couldn't go back.

Crews: After highschool did you come to New York?

Gone: I was a (Inaudible) on Long Island and I did my undergrad there. I did it in -- I think because I was scared to move directly to New York City. It's really interesting now. I was looking at NYU and I ended up not applying and I looked at Bard and ended up not applying because of like these places are not me. I'm this middle class middle of the road vanilla person. (Laughter) And I was like I need something that's close to New York City but I don't need these kind of things and what's really fascinating now is when I taught this highschool program in London and they were applying to schools and asking me where I went. They were like "Oh you probably went to NYU or Bard or one of these places" and so it's very interesting to have kind of double back. I don't know, I'm sorry I feel like I lost the thread. (Laughter)

Crews: That's okay. So you're living in Long Island.

Gone: Yeah.

Crews: And then after that did you..

Gone: Yeah, and then I came to the city.

Crews: and then you came to the city?

Gone: Yeah

Crews: What year was that?

Gone: 2006? I moved to New York. Yeah, and I lived with a lot of actors and so..

Crews: Were you doing theatre at the time?

Gone: I went to a few auditions and I was kind of like this is not for me and I just kind of was doing my own writing but not really going anywhere with it or I would publish little short stories here and there. I had this ghost wedding project I did for a minute and I just felt kind of like a voyeur on my actor friend who had this big personality and I would just go out with him and just kind of take it all in.

Crews: Where would you go out in 2006? (Laughter)

Gone: (Laughter) I lived in Harlem at the time so we would often go out in Midtown or my friend Mark knew people. We would go to these clubs you know these like Chelsea clubs and stuff. I mean sometimes I would go to (Inaudible) and these different larger queer dance parties with my friend Mike at different points and so yeah kind of a few different places and I was eventually like what the hell am I doing with these actors on the upper west side. I've got to go Brooklyn so then I came to Brooklyn and changed from there and I got more into poetry and yeah. I was in a band for a little bit. And then... (Laughter)

Crews: What was the band called?

Gone: Oh my god. I don't even remember. Everyone laughs at the band title. "The Argyle Effect".

Crews: Oh! (Laughter) What kind of music was "The Argyle Effect"?

Gone: "The Argyle Effect" was a mix of the Decemberists and Jack White or bluesy kind of stuff. We were compared to "Panic! At The Disco" and I think that was cause my friend (Inaudible) sounded like Andrew Lloyd Webber and I was like what do you mean? I'm not writing these Andrew Lloyd Webber songs but like my friend Kelvin would sing them and he would be this big Freddie Mercury style personality and I would write these weird story songs with these guitar riffs. It was just such a cacophonous wild mix of shit. (Laughter) But we did it for a few years and it was my creative outlet before I started getting more into poetry and that was my performative outlet before I started getting back into theater and films stuff. So, it had its own time.

Crews: Was there a concept that “The Argyle Effect” was named after that you can come up with or was it just...?

Gone: Oh I would love to. Claire, I would love to have this brilliant thing (Inaudible) I mean in California, Garry came up with it and I didn't really like it and I vetoed it but we stuck with it and so yeah I wish I could have a thing for you. But it ended up being was like I would.. Garry and I would write these songs and they would all be characters and so yeah. Even from different eras or there was one song that's from the perspective of.. I wrote this... Oh my god. It's the perspective of someone who lives in central Pennsylvania who only is a man who's very lonely and only goes to porn stores and purchases these videos or just watches these videos and has this deep relationship to this woman Nancy and the song is called “Nancy” and then there's a moment where it flips and he talks to Nancy in the bridge. There's a lot of weird narrative stuff happening and yeah me writing from... Some of the later stuff that we don't have recorded was me writing from the perspective of women. If I could have those recorded and go back to them it would be very interesting but yeah.

Crews: And then you said that you returned or started focusing more on poetry and performance at some point. Did you have a community that helped feed that or facilitate that at the time?

Gone: Yeah I met my friend Gabe and a few other people we would go to poetry readings a lot and so I feel like once that.. And I started taking more (Inaudible) to the poetry project and that really started to open up me getting into dance and getting into avant garde work and I was working as a stagehand at the time on fashion and fancy parties and avant garde dance shows and stuff like that and so I worked at Peak Performances which is in Montclair, New Jersey but the person who runs it worked with Philip Glass on “Einstein On The Beach” and stuff and brings kind of like avant garde stuff from all over the world to there and so I'd be backstage working on that and so that time period like before I went back MFA was very influential to my aesthetic just to me sitting backstage and I'd be in these (Inaudible) shows or I'm moving a television around on stage for half an hour but I'm also just getting this (Inaudible) show deep into my brain or all this kind of genre stuff that I do in “Painted Dreams”, that ended up in my performance comes from being exposed to things during that time period and so it's interesting cause I feel like I come from a place that through that job I was exposed to live performance in a way that maybe people who write lyric essays are not and so it's interesting when I am able to bridge these two things when there's some people doing this performance and then this and they don't meet but I am a person who meets them and so they can kind of influence each other.

Crews: What were some spaces that some of the readings were happening or some of the performances were happening? Sounds like there was maybe separate worlds that the performances that you were exposed to through your job were happening in.

Gone: Yeah.

Crews: I guess either one?

Gone: And then so like where were those?

Crews: Yeah.

Gone: Those kind of venues. I mean at the time it was mostly at Peak Performances but then eventually I'd see things at Bam and at (Inaudible) center and at (Inaudible) art center and at P.S. 122 before it was -- now it's a performance space but it was P.S. 122 and La MaMa and a lot of these dance space. So a lot of these downtown -- I started to realize -- cause in my early twenties I lived with all those actors that wanted to be on Broadway and some of them did end up on Broadway but that was kind of never my thing and so then when I started being exposed to downtown theatre work, yeah, a lot of game stuff changed and at this point I am kind of a member, I'm a tangential member of that community where at the time I was just a stagehand in that community you know.

Crews: Yeah.

Gone: Yeah.

Crews: What kind of work were you making at that time and did that lead to you wanting to go back to school?

Gone: Yeah I feel like I was writing poems, or I was writing kind of very short fiction. When I stopped with the band that all kind of just started going into just text. But also I would be reading it in fairly performative ways or I would be like how can I put music to this or how can I... You know. And slowly that fell away but then, I don't know. New York is very tough. I felt that there was so much performance happening that I couldn't really... There wasn't space for me to do it or something or I had a lot of imposter syndrome or something like that. And so it really wasn't until I left to go to western Massachusetts that I rediscovered just doing performance because I really enjoy doing it. And the stakes were so low in a positive way. Here I'd be like oh my god I need to rent a space, I need to do it downtown, I need to get a certain amount of asses in seats, I need to do all these kind of things but in western Massachusetts I didn't have to do that and there was a group, "The Connecticut River Valley Poets Theatre" that my friend (Inaudible) started running and it was with a bunch of other people like her husband Greg and Stella Corso who ended up being a collaborator in a lot of my other things and a bunch of other people. I joined that theater club, poetry theater club for a while. And then the performance stuff started to happen.

Crews: What was some of the early performances that you were imagining?

Gone: I mean the first thing that I directed... The first full scale thing I directed was called "Fast Five" and it's a verbatim theatre piece which verbatim theatre is like using found text so I was also very into conceptual poetry. Now conceptual poetry is very fraught but at the time I was interested in what it meant to quote in mass and I was very interested in theater groups like "Elevator Repair Service" and "Nature Theatre of Oklahoma" and people who were taking, like

“Elevator Repair Service” would take transcripts from court cases or they’d take “The Great Gatsby” and stage it like that exact text. Or “Nature Theatre of Oklahoma” would take phone calls or recordings like this and verbatim stage this conversation or whatever. And so I got really interested in that kind of stuff and I was recording people and I made this (Inaudible) of the script that was excerpts from “The Fast And The Furious”, “Fast Five” and then the other half of it was pieces of “Fast Five” that existed on the internet in various forms. So reviews of “Fast Five” or these kind of parental things where they give a rating as to how this now engages things for your children, it’s like very first gen or something and I would take text from there and put that in the show. Or like and I cross gender cast not every role but a few of the roles so that.. My friend Ish, she was in the role of Vin Diesel. She is the star of masculinity and so yeah. (Laughter) That’s the first thing that I did and so then that became really.. And people liked it and really came in on it. Were you in western Massachusetts then?

Crews: What year was that?

Gone: This would have been in 2014/2015 but we did it two times. We came back and did it a second time because people were so into it and then we came down here and did it at Dixon Place. Yeah, I don’t know it’s a bunch of poets. And there was these car scenes where I was choreographing dance routines of people in wheelchairs but they’re actually cars and you know so we’re blasting this music and doing these wild dance routines. You can’t see, but I’m rotating my hands around in various ways to indicate the choreography.

Crews: Yes!

Gone: (Laughter) To you listening at home. But yeah, so that was my inroad into... That was the first steps for a lot of things. That was a very interesting move into... Cause that show was kind of about large consumer pop you know and trying to approach that from a small scale and it’s also about gender representation in those films. And “Fast And The Furious” is a soap opera. There’s like eight or nine of them at this point and they carry on (Inaudible) They kind of move through... It’s all around family, just like soap operas are. It’s just, they just have cars instead of fashion houses. Right, they’re just doing these other sorts of things but there’s people who get amnesia, there’s people who die and combat like all the tropes of soap operas also exist in the “Fast And The Furious” franchise. (Laughter)

Crews: I feel like fashion has come up in these different -- in the job that you had, in the soaps, in the “Fast & Furious” and I wonder about just how fashion has been a world for you or...?

Gone: Yeah, I mean I think that clothing. I’ll start with when I was working on these fashion shows, I would show up in my regular... What I would want to wear in my twenties and they would be like “oh just come on in” and then I’d change into the clothes that I would wear to work and hang lights and then it was like “what are you doing here” and I’m like “I’m here to hand the lights” and I think it’s very interesting to me how one wearing different clothing completely changes how... I mean this is very simplistic, right, but how the clothing which you wear completely influences how people take you in and because I’ve run the gamut of you know ways that I’ve

dress across the years and kind of never, when I would be in middle school and highschool never really liked my clothing or never felt that I was always very skinny and I would wear these big jeans and big overblown shirts or whatever and just kind of never would try to hide my body and was always very... either my body would completely disappear or I would really loathe it and want to just cover it up in whatever form and I think that a very important part, or one of the (Inaudible) and I think I talked about this in "Love Life". Did they show an intro of what "Love Life" is? Don't worry about it, okay. I talk about thinking about clothing as one aspect of femininity that I am very interested in and it's just the freedom to be able to wear whatever you want on a given day and I feel that clothing for men only runs, it's a very narrow gamut of possibility where as clothing that is the women's section of the store has so many options available to woman and I would often feel so claustrophobic in my options and then when I would venture outside of those options then I would be like perceived as you know whatever, gay, feminin, you know and I've kind of dealt with that in all sorts of ways throughout the years and so it's like clothing became the way to hide that side of myself, right? And so eventually I'm just like I'm sick of doing that, you know. Like I don't want to disappear into the, I don't f***** flannel and s*** like now I don't touch flannel. (Laughter) Don't get that shit anywhere near me. (Laughter) But if people want to wear flannel, they can wear flannel you know but it's just not -- it doesn't express me or I think that growing up going to malls a lot and I remember going shopping with my mom and hiding amongst the women's dresses and stuff. There would be a ring of them at JC Penny's or whatever and I would crawl underneath and sit in the middle of them when I was super young and feel the different textures and whatever when I'm inside of there and my mom would be like "Patrick where are you?" and I'd be like "I'm here". Well like that's what I wanted to do when I was in JC Penny's. And so yeah, I think I'd like put that down in many many ways for a number of years until I slowly slowly allowed myself to turn it up until the flood gate opened and it was just like now the majority of my clothing would be at least technically.. I mean that whole thing is very fascinating to me. There's a line in "Painted Dreams" where I talk about the difference between male and female clothing and it's like did the shirts just button on the left versus the right and it's just so f***** ridiculous to me. (Laughter) Like that subtle subtle choice just seems to be the perfect metaphor for the ridiculousness of the artificial line between genders and clothing and why certain clothing must be for certain people and not for others.

Crews: Going back to western Masseurhette's a little bit was that the space that you had more queer community and trans community?

Gone: I mean I think it started with Chelsea who I was dating at the time, Chelsea (Last name inaudible). She and a few other women had this group called "Where We Stumble" and part of that group was kind of with this reading group and the reading group was around rape culture and around gender and around kind of all... And then it just kind of ballooned to the whole intersectionality etcetera etcetera. But I think that some of those conversations in that group were some of the things that cracked me in a way that I had not been before and then yeah I feel like western Massachusetts is smaller in a way and in a way that I started, I don't know, like this is kind of... I was just hanging out with lesbians more. (Laughter) And there was one night when we went to my friend Laura's house and did this safo reading and stuff and I was the only -- I identified as Patrick then or whatever and so I was the only male at this safo reading but felt great

and I think that more and more I needed communities that were slowly slowly queer or else I kind of felt, I don't know, and so I slowly created that in Massachusetts and tried cultivate that through running different lecture series and doing/hosting events and casting queer friends in various projects and yeah.

Crews: What was it like to decide to leave western Massachusetts and come back to New York?

Gone: I mean it was tough but I feel like it was also time. I'm so thankful for that place and I feel like it allowed me the space that I think New York never afforded me in my twenties to have a lot of lone contemplation time and exploration time and making all these projects that pushed me into the depths of some of these things where in New York I feel like it's tougher to make these kind of things but I did feel like I needed to, I don't know, some of this downtown theatre stuff where I was like I need to be a member of the New York performing queer community. I need that kind of challenge and so that's what drew me to come down here. I feel like a little bit of that is happening. It's tougher to make work here but you know (Inaudible)

Crews: What are some of the things you're thinking about making, collaborating with other people or?

Gone: I mean yeah the two biggest things that are happening right now are I'm working on -- my friend Jess is -- I was in Jess' show at Dixon Place in August and then Jess is staging another gala. Jess is directing a show at NYU right now and I'm making the sets for it but it's like based on "Beaches" with Bett Midler or that's kind of central to the plot of it and Jess and I have a lot in common with thinking about soaps or thinking about 80's and 90's television culture and so we're kind of working on that together and then I'm trying to do "Painted Dreams" season three and I have the script done and I have a lot of things shot for it and you know... 2020. (Laughter)

Crews: Where do you live? What part of the city do you live in?

Gone: I'm in Bushwick right now and yeah. I like Bushwick, it's pretty far out. It's pretty chill out there which is nicer than (Inaudible) which is a little more cacophonous. I've lived in so many different neighborhoods in Brooklyn over the years but yeah. Deep Bushwick is nice and chill and feels good right now.

Crews: What do you do for jobs right now? I'm sure some of it is creative work.

Gone: Mhm, yeah. I mean I have some money coming in for different little shows and workshops and things that I do and then I teach at two different places right now. At Hofstra on Long Island and at Hunter on the upper east side. Kind of a mix of essay writing and creative non fiction and art appreciation stuff. I have a class where I take students to see theatre and to museums and stuff like that and we talk about it.

Crews: How is it being back at your undergrad stomping grounds?

Gone: It's very funny. (Laughter)

Crews: Has it changed?

Gone: I think it has, I mean yeah. It has and it hasn't. I mean I don't think it's changed all that and so then it's interesting just me and how much I've changed. Right, or something or how much of a fish out of water I felt at the time there and that I've somehow found my way back there and this other.. You know and I'm teaching the version of me that was showing up there at (Inaudible) or whatever. I'm now teaching these classes with freshman so that's kind of like a little bit of a mind f*** and so I'm hoping that I'm pushing them to more difficult faster than I was pushed.

Crews: I'm thinking a little bit about lovelife and about romance novels and about kind of like love in quotes as a theme that runs through your work and I'm not really sure what my question is around it but I wonder what did you love... How do you think about love? Where does love exist in your life right now?

Gone: Oh my goodness Claire. Yeah, I would say... I'll start with love life in that I think it's grounded in... That's another work that's grounded in my grandmother and grounded in... She would literally sit watching a soap and then when the commercial would come on for Charmin toilet paper or whatever dishwasher detergent we'd open up the (Inaudible) book on her lap and read that for three minutes and then soap opera comes back on and she closes it and keeps watching that. She is just consuming those sort of narratives at a rate that is mind boggling to me and a huge portion of the page count of love life is just the list that my grandfather has kept of all the romance novels that she has read and so he goes and, to the library for her and will pick out books and so to make sure that he doesn't pick repeats, he keeps the list in his car in his buick. They're both over ninety at this point and this still happens you know he still goes to the library and get gets book out for her and you know. But yeah I mean she's just read so.. You know, thousands or you have to read the book to see the list. So I'm like what is the accumulation of taking in all of this and I think that... I'm interested in what that is for her and for you know women from central Pennsylvania or like I found this study around women in Ohio but I thought that that's pretty close to central Pennsylvanian women and so you know for me it's like a direct analog to her and yeah I was interested in the effect of those narratives on people over time and I'd say for me, I'm a little bit a step removed from it or something when I was writing that book. I was writing it from more of (Inaudible) I was just as fascinated by the ways in which consumer culture shows up in those books and the only proper nouns are the names of Bergdorf Goodman and Channel and whatever. Those were the only things that get actual... You know they'll go see a movie but they wouldn't tell you the title of the movie. They'll go do whatever but they wouldn't tell... The only specificities are in clothing and so I was interested in how that gets wrapped up into love. I think that the next "Painted Dreams" is going to be about love more directly and maybe will be more personal in how I look at the soaps because I now... I feel like maybe when I started some of these projects I wasn't taking in soaps as much as I am now and so the next phase of this is kind of looking at how the effect it's had on me and my move from kind of like laughing at these things in some way to seeing how much of a hopeless romantic I actually am and haven't really face in various ways you know. I've really put away. What's really weird to me now, because

I'm so love skeptikal is my first girlfriend that I had I would do for valentines day I would put the rose petals out and all that kind of sh** like on my basement at my parents house. I was so like okay this is what I -- I watched a few rom-coms, this is how it goes. I watched "The Notebook" with that first girlfriend and stuff like that was like okay I'm Ryan Gosling.. She you know (Laughter) This is what I have to do and I feel like I learned... Yeah I just take so many of my ques for behavior in so many ways from media consumption and sometimes I feel like at this point I'm removed from that and then maybe I'm actually not. And maybe that skepticism or maybe that person who put those rose petals down is still in me in these various ways. But I think I have a very.. A richer version of what love is and whether that's romantic love or whether that's more kind of queer community love. I feel like that definition for me has really changed in the last few years.

Crews: What does your.. I feel like this is maybe related to queer community but what is your support system like in New York? What is your community like in New York?

Gone: Hm. I mean I have a partner right now and I have, yeah various friend groups that are kind of like scattered about in various ways. And I feel that being back here for a year and a half I'm getting back to the point that I was in wester Massachusetts where I had people who I think are really important to me and stuff like that. In this little year of transition and now it feels like that kind of stuff is feeling richer again but yeah and I think that romantic love has been a part of that. I mean it's very weird to publish a book called "Love Life" and write it when I wasn't really dating anyone. (Laughter) And I wrote "Love Life" when I just got back to New York and I would be riding the train out to the Long Island rail road out to teach at Hofstra and I would just read Danielle Steel on my commute you know like a real (Laughter) whatever I don't even know. You know I think I studied this in love life like I would be reading it and then a bunch of people would get on the train who were all going to like a rager or like an Islanders game, I don't even know. All these men in hockey jerseys and they would surround me and I'd be reading my little Danielle Steel book while the cacophony of them drinking bears out of paper bags and wearing jerseys is surrounding me. Right, and I'm in my Danielle Steel and it's a quote but it's in here. I'm pointing to my head. (Laughter)

Crews: In talking about consumer culture a lot and how that relates to media consumption as well as the consumption of products that these media sources are advertising to us and increasingly so, increasingly specifically so. I guess I wonder how your work maybe is in conversation with other things that are happening right now in the world or how you think about yourself as a political person. I don't know if you think of yourself as a political person.

Gone: No, certainly. I mean I think it's interesting slowly over the course of a few years and feeling more comfortable with transness and being more comfortable with saying that that's me and then I think that... Justin Vivian Bond said something -- I saw them at Joe's Pub and they said something about just walking around in a trans body and maybe not in New York City but yes still in New York City is it's own political statement and I feel like even walking around and wearing a skirt... even the smallest kind of little things I just get eyes in a way or I'm just yeah feel like a little lightning rod on the streets sometimes in various neighborhood and in various contexts. And I

think that I try to bridge these kind of queer communities with these kind of mainstream straight communities and kind of see how they speak to each other or like it really depends on where my audience, who my audience is. I try to really make work that, ideally, I don't know... My friend Stella gave her sister who reads romance novels, she was talking about my book and her sister bought my book and read it. And so people who do not have a take in these kind of things or the people in central Pennsylvania or people in... you know I don't know. One of the wildest experiences I had was going up to a dance performance in rural Maine and I was doing this performance called "The Flag We Love" that was a one person show and I was doing this... when I started to use they/them pronouns I was performing this "The Flag We Love" and there's a moment in it when I put red, white, and blue makeup on onstage or I would strip down to just red, white and blue bikini bottom and these kind of things and I think that I feel that it's very powerful to know that someone who has this background of coming from these kind of like central Pennsylvania roots that kind of get folded, and military stuff, roots that kind of get folded into the right at this point and I mean my dad was more to the right when I was growing up but has now kind of shifted over the course of a number of years and having myself and my sister as his children has slowly shifted but a lot of people in Harrisburg are still... you know it's tough when I got to restaurants and stuff with them my dad is very protective of me or doesn't want people.. He's like I see people looking at you and that makes me uncomfortable and I'm like yeah.. We're navigating how to do that. But how does that relate to mainstream stuff? Yeah, I think that I've gotten some of, yes it's been in real life models for womanhood of course and a lot of it has come from television shows and media and all these different ways and I feel that that's where I got a lot of models for things that I kinda still perform.

Crews: Has your grandmother or your.. Has your family read your book?

Gone: My mom has. My sister is down with my work and reads stuff. Other than that, not really or I don't really know. A few of my cousins follow me on Instagram and stuff like that but yeah it's not something that I talk a whole lot about at Christmas or something (Laughter)

Crews: (Laughter) Yeah.

Gone: Or it's like when I go home for Christmas it's toning it. You know I think that I'm, I don't know. We'll see what happens this year as things continue to shift.

Crews: Where does your sister live?

Gone: She lives in New Hampshire. She got a grad degree at the University Of New Hampshire and so I've been up there a few times. She was down here not too long ago I got to see her. She's very supportive of this, of transness. We have a lot of great conversations about the kind of media stuff that I use in my work and you know she consumed a lot of the same stuff as me or we'd be watching a lot of those MTV together afternoon, upon afternoon, upon afternoon.

Crews: What were some of your favorite videos on MTV? (Laughter)

Gone: Oh my god. So call to my particular ones? Hm.

Crews: Or songs.

Gone: Right I mean I just think of the primary... The second that I need to think about what I like and I think that's for my work too like I actually don't make work about things that I actually like. I feel like I find things that I think are worthy of exploring and that I kind of want to know more about and dig into them and so even music videos from that time period. Yeah, I don't know what I would like the most about them like Green Day, Blink 182 and like those sorts of things. But then you know equally into Mariah Carey and Ricky Martin are (Laughter) Ace Of Base or The Spice Girls or.. And you know and to think that MTV was a place that I could like all of these things I feel like eventually kind of got beaten out of me to like in later highschool when I was like oh okay I'm gonna play guitar and maybe do these other kind of... I need to find a way to put this kind of like femininity that people see in me. Cause I was into the drama and you know all those little plays and I made the television show at my, my senior year I was the host of the television show at my highschool... these kind of things. I would bring these contemporary references in but I feel like there's a point where I was like I need to like Radiohead, I need to like these kind of things in order to project the kind of person that people want me to be rather than an I'm equally interested in Radiohead and The Spice Girls (Laughter) You know which is like something (Inaudible) When I was like sixteen or seventeen I had to start putting The Spice Girls and Alanis Morissette or whoever, had to put that away and just like this other kind of stuff.

Crews: Mhm, be legible and pass. (Laughter)

Gone: Right, but I was also the kid in middle school who would show up to the dance and would know the words to every single song you know. I could rap Mase's part in "Mo Money Mo Problems" or something and that's probably still in my brain (Laughter) You know or I could sing you Jagged Little Pill front to back you know like it's... yeah. It's been so much, I don't know. I don't really have any other languages. It's one of my biggest regrets because I think all the space is filled up with pop songs, lyrics and (Laughter) all of that for so long but I feel like that's really where I found art and that's the visuals for a lot of poetry and stuff is just like -- it's music videos. I didn't go to an art museum until I was twenty two/twenty three. Music videos were that place to find that stuff.

Crews: Well, is there anything else you want to -- any other places you want to go? Anything else that's on your mind?

Gone: Oh my goodness, Claire. I don't know. I think that's what I've got.

Crews: Beautiful!

Gone: Yeah.

Crews: Thank you!

Gone: Yeah, thank you. This has been great.