

## NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

**Yva Las Vegas**

**Interviewer:** Aviva Silverman

**Date of Interview:** July 13th, 2020

**Location of Interview:** Zoom

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**Transcribed by** Raelynn Hernandez (volunteer)

**NYC TOHP Interview Transcript #XXX**

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Narrator first and last name: Hi!

**Yva Las Vegas**

**Aviva Silverman:** Hello, my name is Aviva and I will be having a conversation with Yva Las Vegas from the New York Public City Trans Oral History Project in collaboration with the New York Public Libraries Community Oral History Project. This is a oral history project, centered on the experiences of trans identifying people. It's July 13th, 2020 and it's being recorded on zoom where I'm staying in Red Hook and where are you Yva?

**Yva Las Vegas:** I'm in Richwood.

**Silverman:** Okay. Can you introduce yourself?

**Vegas:** Hello, I'm Yva Las Vegas. I'm a recluse by nature and I love animals and people too and you know, I just love life and cooking and eating and just living.

**Silverman:** That sounds good to me and how has being a recluse manifested in—

**Vegas:** Being a what?

**Silverman:** You just said you were a recluse and how has that been during COVID?

**Vegas:** Actually, initially I was so happy, because now people can live like me and I have a roommate—he's gone now—he just went to take a break, and we were so happy, we were dancing around the house, making amazing meals and really paranoid about other people. Yeah, initially it was really heavy. Even now that I'm used to it sometimes I actually forgot to go out without a mask, and that freaked me out. I started crying and [inaudible] because we were very sick here in January. I came back from Seattle, and I got sick, and the other two roommates got sick. But I got sicker, because I have lung issues kind of stuff (? 1:53). So whatever we had—I dunno—my roommate says that he lost a sense of smell. So maybe we had it. Maybe we didn't. But I take a series of medications that prevent a lot of the secondary effects of COVID. Like the coagulation of the blood in the organs doesn't happen to me, because I take tons of blood thinners and there's something else that I take that has to do with my stomach that also helps. Supposedly you know. But they did give me the cocktail with the steroids and the—I forgot the name of the other thing—something veer and I got better pretty quickly. So it was from probably either a very mild case or something else—another horrible flu—but we were sick for like, a month almost.

**Silverman:** Wow, okay.

**Vegas:** And they, you know, it's like I'm used to everything now. I just go buy stuff, wash it all up. I have a sister who is a doctor and she's so intensely paranoid about everything, because she works in a hospital, and she's not here either. She's in Ecuador and it's horrible there. It's been horrible from the get go. People, dead in the streets. Gigantic mass graves. Well they have one here too, one the islands, they have one too. Where they put the; it's the same thing I believe, where they put the people in jail that don't have anybody to recover their bodies. Another beauty hidden in New York.

**Silverman:** So, to take it back. When and where were you born?

**Vegas:** I was born in Porta La Cruz, Venezuela. In 1963. December 17th, 1963. My parents' anniversary, so my parties were shit. [Laughter] When I was a kid. Until I started to drink. Then they were great cause that's the anniversary party. Hold on, I need to get my dog. He wants to come in.

**Silverman:** That's fine.

**Vegas:** I need to go out the window, hold on. Let me take the headphones off. Hold on one moment. Hold up. [Rustling] I can't believe I can still do that. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** Yeah, you were fast.

**Vegas:** It's like sometimes why can I do that but I can't do all these other things. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** So I was born in Venezuela and I lived in Venezuela until I was 16. We lived in different states. My father was an immigrant from the Canary Islands. Which is not as high class as other Spaniards. You know, they were really treated badly. So, he was the foreign guy. They never, they wouldn't let him stay in the city for long. So he had to move all six kids and my mom all over the country and then they made him the guy that would fight the unions. So basically he was marked with the mark of asshole from the get go. [Laughter] But I was very fortunate that we did see many places and the instrument that I play, I learned how to play—the first time I started playing it I was like six—and the woman who gave me lessons, the state that I lived in, is very famous for that instrument.

**Silverman:** What's her name?

**Vegas:** So I learned from somebody—De Quatro. Like four.

**Silverman:** Yeah, yeah.

**Vegas:** De Quatro. So the woman who gave me lessons was from a small town where they made amazing Quatros. So I was lucky in that way, you know, and I was exposed to different types of folk music. Which is really awesome for me now, because I still have that treasure of folklore. In my memory; even though my memory is getting bad, I still remember a lot of things. Very detailed. Like when I was two I took a shit in front of my house. [Laughter] I still remember that. I remember I was wearing a plaid jumper and I remember that, but no more era—from that epoch.

**Silverman:** Are there certain songs that you've played throughout the years from your childhood?

**Vegas:** Um, the songs that I play, I mean there are songs that I've been playing since I was 6.

**Silverman:** Mmm.

**Vegas:** And uh I—look, the reason why—well, not only did I love singing, but my mom and my dad sang too and they didn't play instruments. So me playing an instrument was kind of like—for them—they wanted me to play with them because they would go serenade people. That was uh, a thing they did, you know in the old times, and the 70's was like the ending of that tradition. So their friends would come home and they'd start drinking, talking and next thing you know they're going to another friend's house to serenade them, so they would come out and you know. So a lot of the songs that I learned initially were very old Chinese songs that both my parents sang. They're called Boletos. Which are slow, you know kinda like [Valo \(7:39\)](#) and they're like love songs, or like unrequited love, you know. That kind of stuff. So I have that intense romanticism when it comes to music for me and when I write too. I kinda write like an old person from that time, the songs and they're all about, you know they're very [Valo](#) like. They're very painful and the loss of love and all that stuff. Um, so, yeah. That's what we're talking about right?

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** How I started playing music. And yeah from the moment my mom heard me singing one time, sitting in a hammock, she said, "The girl can sing!". Now, you know. She's dead and she never got to know me all the changes that I've gone through in terms of my identity but that's how she found out that I sang. From that day on she would sing with me everyday. She would sit with me and sing for hours and she taught me how to harmonize. I think it really helped her mental health too, because my mom had mental illnesses that were never diagnosed and plus PTSD. From, you know, the tragedy of being a woman in the 1950's and later. My dad didn't let her work. Basically didn't let her go out. Things changed and evolved with time. My father also came from extremely sad circumstances. He lived in abject poverty his whole life. His father, he just grew up with his father, and they lived from farm to farm. Where his dad would work. His mom died when he was two. Then his father remarried and that person died in childbirth. They were alone again. Then my dad eventually—my grandfather remarried again and this one died later of cancer. Yeah, he didn't have a mother. He was very poor. There was a lot of physical abuse and verbal abuse. Like my sister—my sister always said something—my dad's life was like a black and white movie, you know. It's like there was nothing there. You had to really look. I can say now, after he's died, and you know I spent some time with him before he died, that, it was a miracle that he actually was able to take care of us. Cause with all the trauma that he had, you know. Men don't have trauma in that culture. They're not supposed to deal with anything and it's okay if they're abusive. It's okay if they're physically abusive. If they drink too much, because that's their out. So I think that both my parents are kinda—were a miracle to be able to not damage us to the extent that we're trashed, you know. There were problems like in a

lot of families, but I have to say that still my family is very—there's that union there that's unbreakable. Even though I don't see them sometimes for decades. I talk to them every day now thanks to the wonders of technology.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** We Whatsapp all day long. Anything! Anything happens and we tell each other. I first experienced that when I went to Venezuela? in 2006, but I've been here since 1980. So all that time I didn't have a family, you know. My family was my partner's family. Then when we broke up, I lost them, because that's the way it is. You completely lose people. Then, in 2006, I noticed that everyone had cell phones too and I noticed that it was a constant calling each other and I was so jealous. I'm like, 'wow'. I mean, it really affected me and I probably acted out of the horrible things, I smoked crack or who knows what. So yeah. Things do evolve and if we have enough love, things can actually be beneficial and soothing and all that other stuff that makes me cry.

**Silverman:** Wow, wow, and what was the political landscape like in Venezuela as a child?

**Vegas:** When I grew up there, we were like—they were a democracy. Extremely corrupt. Extremely divided in classes and there's a lot of colourism there, but the class thing was incredible. Like there was a—the marginalized people they didn't even have—a lot like here. They weren't even counted on the census, they weren't part of society or what the government did things for. I'm sure you're familiar with the Civiles and the people who make their own houses. They have no water and electricity. Actually they eventually get all that stuff on their own. They're better engineers than people who go to school and architects you know. So that being—that was like that my whole life. There was something in me though. Maybe from my communist grandfather—that's another story there—

**Silverman:** I would love to hear about that. [Laughter]

**Vegas:** [Laughter] That I knew from a very young age—I remember questioning God when I was nine. My family, like my mom especially—who was very—she was like a true believer, that never went to church. By the time I was like eleven—or twelve—I had this teacher that was really like, woke me up to like the reality of life. Then I had an amazing history teacher when I was like a sophomore and he was just the best. He was the best. He rode a motorcycle. He was the music teacher too, so we had a band. Then when he came to history, he never taught us with the books that they—he just taught/told us everything he saw. I mean he was black too. So he really— Profesor \*Toledo (14:20) that was his name, is his name. He really affected the way that I saw the world. [and uh] From the time that I remember, there were always protests in the street. I remember when I was in third grade, the school that I went to was next to the high school that my sister and brother went to. [and] High school students have always been in the forefront of protests. High school and university kids. So there was—there's something they do there, that they burn tires. I guess because it's black and it really smells bad. It's like a chemical

weapon that poor people can have, you know. So they were burning tires, the police came and they threw bombs into our school.

**Silverman:** Wow.

**Vegas:** And the other school. The highschool. They threw them in our school. I remember from that. it was—not only was it like a gas, it was like a chemical—we all got Whooping Cough after that. Everybody in the school. It was horrible. I think that's one of the worst things I ever had, you know. So there's always been unrest in Venezuela. There have been years of, like you know, peace, but like once—I left in 1980 so I don't know, I really don't even know the order of the presidents that we had. But there's two of them who were presidents again! There's a law in Venezuela, I don't know if they changed it, after twenty years you can run again. So they had this guy called Carlos Andrés Pérez, who is like the Reagan of Venezuela. He nationalized the oil industry and there was so much money, so much money. That's when a lot of Venezuelans started going to Miami just to go get their nails done. You know, it was that and the dollar was only four thirty bolívares for one dollar. Now it's like eight thousand something. At that time, a lot of people would send their kids to go to school abroad because it wasn't that expensive. In Venezuela, public schools are okay. Like, it depends which one you go to. Some are really good, but there's a lot of striking. There's a lot of no classes. So at that time, after that guy you know, who stole so much money. He would fly above my high school every day to visit his mistress and we all knew. Everybody knew. He had like, supermarkets and pharmacies all over Europe! The guy became a millionaire. So they stole a lot of money. Eventually people get tired, there's unrest and there's protests. Then Chávez [Hugo Chávez] came, like after years later. After that guy, another guy who had been president in 1969, who was senile and cried over everything. He was president and he was really awful. When he was a president in 1969. There was a reason? They called the urban guerrilla and he killed tons of students, you know, over that. Venezuela has never been a fair country, ever. It's never been a fair county. The fact that I went to school with people who didn't have running water and electricity, it says it all. It's like Bernie [Bernie Sanders] says—you know, and AOC [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez]—it's like, “why do we have billionaires and people who are not eating”. So, that was the political scene when I lived there and then when I went back, years later, Chávez was president. [Hugo Chávez] Initially I was excited about it because for me to see everybody in the streets—it's like people came down from the hills, from the favelas. They all came down, everybody was out. It wasn't just white people walking around with blonde hair and clear eyes. It was like, everybody of every color, you know. It's like the demographic, the shape of the populace, changed. It was no longer just the children of Europeans. It was everybody. You know, everybody that was never visible to the people. I saw other changes too. Social changes that were very needed, but the other side of people, they were resentful. They didn't want those poor people walking. You know, you know what I mean, they didn't want that. So they had made this whole narrative about socialism being bad. When in Venezuela right now there's no socialism. There's no revolution. There's a whole bunch of despotic assholes, who won't leave the government and who actually ruined any capability of Venezuela had for itself. They ruined—Chávez started with it. It's like Trump. Very much like Trump. He doesn't hire people who have knowledge or anything. He hires people who are loyal to him. He doesn't care if this guy is not an engineer, he would give them an engineer

job. So like, our oil refineries all stopped getting maintenance. So some of them caught on fire and were destroyed. The rest don't work. So they cannot longer extract oil from the soil in Venezuela. There's no gas in Venezuela even though they're the biggest reserves of oil in the world. Yeah. The politics in Venezuela right now is not politics, it's a dictatorship. On the other hand, I don't agree with the opposition, cause they're what we call 'fachos'. They're facists you know. They ask for help from the European Union, but then since they didn't do anything—cause they can't really do anything! They can't really just go in Venezuela and kill the president! They can't! It's not permitted by the, you know, all the laws ruling the world, the wars and everything. So after they did that, then they went to the most, the horrible, the worst of the worst. They went to Trump and [can't parse the name 20:47] asking for help. It's like to me they, I mean they, I don't agree with that; I just don't believe it. I just saw on TV, the Venezuelians talking to Trump like three days ago and I was nauseated. You know, it's like I wanted to throw up. It was so bad. Then they kept bringing Israel in. Okay, so you are a tasteless racist fuck, but now you are siding with the violent side and the horrible human rights violations. Which happened in Venezuela too by the government. I have a friend that was in jail for two years. They didn't process him anymore or anything because he was a cameraman who had worked with somebody who the government killed. It's just horrible, it's horrible. They finally let him go you know, but he spent two years in jail and the jails there are not like the jails here, even the bad ones. Maybe like Rikers [Rikers Island], I don't know.

**Silverman:** Yeah and what brought you to New York in 1980?

**Vegas:** Well I wanted to come to New York for decades, you know. I lived in Seattle and I had a little, you know whatever happened to me in Seattle. I had my little bit of success. You know, play with the guy from Nirvana. At the same time, Seattle at that time and still, is super white. I always felt like people didn't think I deserved that success. Especially men. They were angry that this dude picked a chubby queer from another country, you know.

**Silverman:** How did you meet? How did that?

**Vegas:** Well I had a friend—I have a friend, her name is Angela Mata. She was kind of a fan of mine, cause I used to play music in the streets for years and I played in these other bands. So she was a fan and she was a photographer. So she started doing photoshoots with me and it turns out she was friends—best friends with Krist's [Krist Novoselic] wife. Then when, if I'm not wrong, I think Kurt [Kurt Cobain] killed himself in April? Somewhere around there, and Krist's birthday, I think it's in May. So he was really depressed and all this stuff, because the money most anything. The wife threw a party and then she hired me to sing with this other friend of mine, Christopher Gonzalez. Nobody sang better with me. He could get inside of my voice and do the most beautiful harmonies. So we went and played. It was, you know, it was one of those moments in your life that you like, "is this really happening?", cause I mean, that was my childhood dream you know? Not just to be a rocker, but to be around all the famous people—shit you think when you're ten. There I was and there were all the guys from all the bands in Seattle were there with him, because they were supporting him through all these things that was happening and they were so nice to me. Next thing I know he called me and said "hey

you wanna jam with me” and he kind of like, kept doing that with me. Eventually I had to tell him, “look, you’re Krist Novoselic from Nirvana and I don’t want to just be your jam partner, cause it’s really making me crazy. We’re writing songs and doing all this stuff and then you have the control over everything. So either you’re going to play with me in a project or”—cause friends you know, we weren’t. We never became really good friends, only when we did drugs. So then we started a band [Sweet 75] and the rest is history. We don’t talk, we haven’t spoken since 2002 or something and he’s a libertarian who thinks that Trump is great. You know, I’m so glad when he did that Twitter thing recently, when he said that Trump [he] hit it out of the park or something when he said that he was going to send thousands and thousands of heavily armed people. Then he had the whole narrative about the vile left people—the radical left. When he said that and people like, totally burned him and roasted him, it was like, oh my god! Yeah! This is such a validation that the guy was not only a controlling freak but a fucking racist too you know. So I guess you get—I get my happiness in tiny increments.

**Silverman:** Totally, and so you were in Seattle and then eventually moved to New York, or how did that—

**Vegas:** Oh, you asked me about New York! Okay, I’m sorry.

**Silverman:** No, it’s fine, I’m happy to hear about that.

**Vegas:** I went to Seattle in 1980 cause we had visited my brother there. My Dad asked me if I liked Seattle University and I said yes. As things happened, my parents didn’t even let me finish high school because I was very outspoken and very realist due to something that they ignored. I was sexually abused by my karate teacher for years and that really changed my life. I became a very aggressive, very angry child and they just assumed that I had bad behavior you know. So my dad especially, they sent me away—they kind of sent me away, at the same time I really wanted to leave, you know. So they sent me in 1980 and I went to Tennessee initially. The worst place of all places. I went to a boarding school there that was, like in its last legs. So they ripped us all off. All the Venezuelians that went there got ripped off. Eventually I went—my brother was in L.A.—I went to L.A.[Los Angeles]. Then I went to Seattle. I stayed in Seattle for twenty five years.

**Silverman:** Wow.

**Vegas:** I tried—I left a few times. I went to L.A. for a while. I went to San Francisco for a while and then I went to Venezuela—then when I finally left in 2005, I wanted to go to Venezuela to stay for a year. You know, I just really needed to leave. I broke up from a bad relationship, all that stuff, but turns out I couldn’t do it. So I went back to San Francisco and then in San Francisco my friend—I said I really want to go to New York. I just—oh! I’m Sorry. Rewind! Before—

**Silverman:** No, go back, yeah.

**Vegas:** Before that— cause I tried to go to New York in 1999. I went to Alaska to fish.

**Viva:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** Cause you know everybody—It's like the weed, "you make a lot of money!". So I went. It turns out the people who are greenhorns, sometimes they get ripped off. They don't pay you.

**Viva:** What does greenhorn mean?

**Vegas:** Greenhorn is like a newbie. A new one. So I was going to go with my roommate. Then my roommate—my roommate's mom hated me. It's like she thought because we were—we had sex, we were like—we did like roommate activities you know. I was much older than him. So she told him she can not go in the boat with you. So they sent me to the other side of the island. I was in Kodiak island. To some friend of theirs. You can—the only way to go there was by tiny plane. So there's no roads or way to get out of there. So I worked in a couple boats. I learned a lot of stuff, I learned how to make—how to sow a seines, you know the nets. I learned how to take apart an engine and put it back together. [Laughter] I learned all that stuff and then I learned the fishing. Then they fired me because I complained about a homophobic movie and then they say to me, "you know, I think you're too small for this job".

**Silverman:** What! Do you remember what the movie was?

**Vegas:** It was something about—Bring It On! Bring It In, or something like that! [Laughter] One of those cheerleader things and there was something about the—calling somebody a dyke or something. Anyway it wasn't—nothing big you know, but they fired me. So anyway when I came back to New York, I didn't have money to come—when I came back to Seattle I didn't have money to go to New York.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** So I spent some horrible—you know, by that point I didn't have a place to live. I mean I had a place to stay, but I didn't have a place of my own. Eventually a friend—I went to San Francisco again, or I went to Venezuela. I moved to—I went to Venezuela and then I ended up in San Francisco. My friend told me, "okay if you pay me—if you pay my apartment I'll give you so much money." I'm like, okay I'll do it. I was so stupid, I told him that's too much money. [Laughter]. But uh, oh there was something else there in between the, coming to Venezuela and going to—so—oh. Somebody made a documentary about me and I hadn't seen it. It was gonna—the reason why I came back from Venezuela was because of that. The movie was uh, the premiere was in a film festival. The Seattle film festival. So I went back to Seattle to see the movie and uh, when I saw it I realized how fucked up that documentary was. I mean, then they would show me performing so of course—but they tried to make me look like I was crazy, they even speeded up my speech. They made it like a mockumentary. It was really horribly painful. You know, so I watched it and then—during the Q and A, they almost killed those guys cause I did have a lot of fans in Seattle. The line was across the block you know. So all those people

were so pissed off from what they'd done, that they took the movie off and the guy never talked to me again. But anyway. Then after that I went to San Francisco. My friend gave me the money and I remember I left on October 12th of 2006. It was raining. I hadn't slept all night and I walked with a gigantic suitcase, three instruments and a big duffle bag to the train. Got to New York that night and my shoulder didn't work anymore. [Laughter] You know, I got my apartment—the room—I got it through MySpace. Then it turns out the guy was a fan of Nirvana and that's why he wanted me to live with him. I lived there for a year. He wasn't good, he was terrible, but you know. I mean, I was paying him five hundred dollars. I thought I could never find anything for five hundred dollars back then.

**Silverman:** What part of the city was it?

**Vegas:** It was right on Bushwick avenue. Bushwick and Kossuth. Then I found out one day—I left, my friend came to get me. My friend who gave me my dog. Told me, “You have a dog here for you. I have a dog for you”, cause I've always had a small little dog you know with me. So I went to get it in Vermont and when I came back there was a party in the house. It was really cool. This goth, punk, black people, it was awesome. Then I started talking—one of the girl's started talking to me. Says “I want to tell you something” and I'm like, “how much rent is he making you pay?”. I say, “I pay like five hundred dollars,” and she said “well the apartment is only six hundred dollars.”

**Silverman:** Oh my god, no.

**Vegas:** “So you're paying most of the rent,” you know. So uh, from that moment on you know, I didn't—it wasn't good anymore. [Laughter] Eventually I moved out and the next house I lived in burned down, you know. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** Wow.

**Vegas:** Uh, you know the grocery on 10—you remember 1087?

**Silverman:** I don't know if I do, but tell me.

**Vegas:** Well uh, you know Amelia Widow? [double check 33:06]

**Silverman:** Yeah, yeah, of course.

**Vegas:** They all lived in this loft on Broadway.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** So I stayed there for a while after my house burned, then I lived everywhere. I finally got here, to this place, about ten years ago. They're gonna pull my dead cold body out of here, I'm

not leaving. You know, the landlord keeps trying to make it difficult for me, but it's like, ["?"]dude I slept on a bench. In the street. I slept in front of cars in the parking garage, so.

**Silverman:** Mmm.

**Vegas:** I mean you can try to make me uncomfortable. Good luck, you know. [Laughter] It's not gonna happen. I do lose my mind though. I do suffer from depression and there's only so much I can take before I break down. But you know what, it's true with time you can heal and you can get better. You can be more ready for the world. I lived many years when I wasn't ready for the world, but I was there. So I did a lot of drugs.

**Silverman:** Mmm, mhm.

**Vegas:** I wrote a lot of good songs too though. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** [Laughter]

**Silverman:** And in terms of identity formation, did you—when did find? [seems like the audio cuts here a tiny bit 34:20] idea of transness or gayness in your life. Were there models or people who influenced—

**Vegas:** I think. Well in Venezuela there were only trans women. Visible. I mean, I did see a lot of trans men, you know. I would see them, but not in the society. In the society, any woman that was going somewhere else or any person born—assigned female—going somewhere else it was just very vilified. Trans women were made fun of. You know, always treated as men with dresses. So I remember since I was—I remember being five years old, before I went to the place where I learned how to play. Uh, we lived in Caracas and I had a little friend—my friends were the owner of the bodega next door, who was Portuguese. José was his name and then some kids that would run around with me around there. I didn't really have a lot of friends. I remember standing in the bodega and I was standing against the wall with one of my feet, you know like folded with my legs. You know, like, like this, you know. I remember I had a button up yellow shirt and little jeans. I kept opening the buttons, one, two, three, and by that point they were like down to like below my nipples. Like, way down you know. I was just sitting there like some nineteen seventies dude. My hair was much—pretty much like this, you know. A girl's like, "girls don't stand like that!" and I'm like, "I'm not a girl." That's my earliest memory of like, feeling and owning that my body wasn't—you know, not that it was wrong, it just that I was not that. I just don't align with that.

**Silverman:** Mmm.

**Vegas:** Never have, you know. It's—when I had boyfriends, I felt more like gay, like I was a gay man. I was very topish with them too, you know and they—[laughter] so—

**Silverman:** And how would you describe your gender?

**Vegas:** I feel that—I don't want to call myself trans because there are people going through this whole—what's it called—whole process, the whole transformation, be it physical or mentally. I just don't fit in the category. I'm not straight, you know. I'm definitely not heterosexual and I'm not cis. You know, I consider myself queer. I consider myself gay, you know I just don't, I don't, I just can't with the gender binary. It's so constrictive and uh, it's just not working anymore. I don't think it works in the world that we live (in). It's just, you're trying to do an old thing for a new thing and it's just not working anymore because it gets in the way of everything. It gets in the way of equality. It gets in the way of—everywhere—yeah. It gets in the way of, like trying to minimize violence. It's horrible for men. It's horrible—lethal for women. You know, so, I don't know what else. I'm older too. So I come from a generation that—I come from the generation that got angry when they added the T to LGBT. A lot of people who are my contemporaries are TERFs! [Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists] Even the ones who don't—are not TERFs, they're TERFy, you know. I come from a generation—well this hasn't changed a whole lot—from the generation where if you went to a gay bar they would say, "this is an established for men by men, bitches get out."

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** Yeah, to me I mean, sometimes white gay men are the pinicle of destruction, of white supremacy, misogyny. Misogyny and white supremacy, they really are up there. So I don't know if that explains a little bit.

**Silverman:** Yeah, it does and what kind of communities were you connecting to when you moved here to new York?

**Vegas:** Oh to New York? I mean, I got hooked up with those kids immediately because at that house that I lived at, was close to this place—I don't know if you remember Goodbye Blue Mondays? It was a place on Broadway. You know, it was like the place where all the white people went.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** So they had music everyday. They had open mic everyday and they had like—yeah, they had musical time, like where all the hipsters went. So the woman that I had told me—I went by Blue Mondays and I think they were looking for somebody. So I went there and they gave me a job immediately. Which was a first in my life. I can never get a job. I think the owner knew who I was from Nirvana. From that whole thing. That has really opened some doors for me and sent me some horrible trips too. But uh they gave me a job and then I met, I don't know if you know Mel.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** Mel Elberg? I don't know if you met Mel and then she took me out and I met them. So immediately there was like a connection with all these queer punks. It was like—it just—I don't know why it took me so long to come to New York, you know. I was telling a friend today, took me so long to come here and I feel home here. I felt at home from the moment I got here. When I got off the J train to the place that I moved in—

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** Just the fact that they were all people of color, I was shaking inside. I mean I can feel it right now, the hair on my face—on my legs standing up. The amount of people of color. Of black people. It just made me feel so excited and then at the same time, felt like I was missing so much and then the first time I woke up here—In the morning—I woke up and I heard the train. Kind of far away, but there was a neighbor playing really loud Techno and another neighbor was playing really loud Salsa and then a rooster started singing! They all sounded like the most amazing mix! Ever! There's so many things that happened to me here like that, you know. It's like, "why wasn't I here before?"—but then I would just drink up that moment. That moment that's happening and how these things make me feel so amazing and yeah. So that's the people I connected with and then soon after that they took me to Ida [Idapalooza]. Which, you know, the first time I went I was like, "oh my god!". Then we did drugs; I don't know what, but then as I went back I realized how racist it was and how problematic it was. How ageist and ableist and all those things, you know. Then I realized, oh my god we're in the south! That's why! [Laughter] There's a chapter of the KKK a mile down the road you know. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** And uh, so yeah. I was actually kicked out of Ida once. Not during the thing, just another time. Yeah, that's what happens when you date white women from the south. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** Yeah and what kind of like, social shifts have you experienced since living in New York? Like, have you seen communities rise up and fall apart like what has changed?

**Vegas:** Oh, well I mean, in a microcosm I guess. Like, that whole—since—I think—I already forgot the name of the law. 1017! [law relating to placement of children] 1017? Yeah. That was a huge social thing happening there. There were shows there. It was very feminist. Then people started moving on and that died you know. I had to find—I mean I'm glad that I still—I remain friends forever, Willow is one of my best friends. Yeah, I mean I've seen those things come and go, like groups—just groups of people. Communities I don't know, because like I said I'm a recluse. I don't really participate that much on things—I have physical problems you know. Pain. I deal with pain and my lungs and all that stuff. So I don't—I'm not as social as I was when I first moved here. When I first moved here, I—because there's so many open mics in New York—I would play five days a week. I made my own CD's. Why, I even have a little bag around here. I used to make my own CD's and put them in brown paper bags and I sold so many—I made a lot of money when I first got here. Selling CD's from my case and just playing every night. Then I

would play in the subway too, because that's the life I had when I was in Seattle. I played basically all day long.

**Silverman:** Whoa.

**Vegas:** So, um, yeah. I mean—shifts. There's been a lot of—there's been of—in New York people come and go. It's not like Seattle where every time I visit, the same people are there.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** I mean, it is a really nice place to live, but it's so white.

**Silverman:** Are there familiar places in New York that you're like, just grateful for? That you return to? That are either establishments or like, just any kind of place that feels like home?

**Vegas:** I mean, it's like the whole place feels like home to me.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** I go to the doctor and I feel home, you know. [Laughter] You know, it's like every time I cross the Williamsburg Bridge, I still get—skip a bit when I see all the—when I see the city. It doesn't. It doesn't get old, you know.

**Silverman:** That's—

**Vegas:** Um, when I first got here, we would always take that Staten Island Ferry. We'd take the Staten Island Ferry and then Bring 40's. Drink them on the other side and then come back really drunk. [Laughter] Um, I love the Cubby Hole.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** I really like Henrietta of the Hudson Henrietta bar [Henrietta Hudson] you know—the place where they have—most everybody is a person of color and that's nice. They play Salsa and I love that, you know.

**Silverman:** Mmm.

**Vegas:** Um, I mean. Places, I don't know. I love this pod right here, my kitchen you know. I've spent so many hours here. Um, I don't know. The parks, I don't know. I've never been a park person or—just the whole city in general. Coming into the city—It's always the same too. When I'm coming into the city from Jersey or the south. It's always like, "ah, I'm home!" So okay, the roofs in Brooklyn you know, are something that—every time I go to my roof I'm like, "I'm so lucky that I can go to this roof" and it's all painted silver you know. [Laughter] It's pretty awesome.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** And watch the pigeons fly. I'm a pigeon person. My dad used to have pigeons. So um, I love the pigeons. I sigh with everybody while the pigeons will—they do horrible things to them??

**Silverman:** Mmm.

**Vegas:** I am that crazy person! [Laughter] That crazy older person with the pigeons! [Laughter]

**Silverman:** I love that. [Laughter]

**Vegas:** I want a t-shirt. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** Yeah! [Laughter]

**Vegas:** [Laughter]

**Silverman:** And what pieces um, like what are some of the hardest parts about coming to this community—[stomping]—city. Like what are some of the things you've had to deal with?

**Vegas:** Coming to the city?

**Silverman:** Just like, living here for so long. Like what are some. . .

**Vegas:** Hmm. I mean, it's so much easier here than anywhere else that I lived in.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** Everything clicked for me when I came here, you know. It's like a lot of the problems that I have with my health right now, come from horrible medical care. In Seattle I would go to the—nobody ever told me you know, after I got disability, they never told me, "you need to get a Primary Care Provider." They never told me that. So I didn't know. So I would go to the emergency room. All those years after all the drugs and everything, I was having high blood pressure and nobody told me.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** When I got here, the year after I had two strokes.

**Silverman:** Wow.

**Vegas:** Because I should have been on medication for that, you know. After that they had to do this surgery. They took a piece of one artery and put it here, because it was so blocked. Obviously I've had arteriosclerosis for years and it went untreated, you know. That directly

connected with Seattle and their racism. So when I came here and all that stuff started clicking, like people actually have more people skills here. There's more people of color and they need us all to keep the economy moving, they cannot gentrify us out because I mean where are we gonna live? In Newark? So there's that part of why it's easier here. Everything is easier here, it's like even going out at night in Seattle was terrifying because the shit happening at night there. Cause white people when they're criminals, they don't care. Cause nothing's going to happen to them when there's a whole other demographic that's being policed. I can go out here anytime. It's like I don't feel scared, you know. The only thing that's difficult here is how hot it gets. It gets way too hot. It's difficult when you don't have a ride to the beach. These are the difficult things for me here. That I can almost say are first world problems, you know.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** I haven't had anything here that really makes it hard for me. I've never—yet—I've been here almost fifteen years and uh—fifteen years? Pretty much. Anyway, I never have had that thing like, "I need to get out of the city." When I get out it's great, but it's not like I need to get out of the city, you know. I do have a pretty charmed life because I learned how to be poor, I don't save money for things that I want because I don't want anything and I can live with the little money that I have and the little bit of money that I make on the side. I live fine here. I couldn't live in Seattle. I couldn't. There's no way to pay rent there. It's more expensive than here.

**Silverman:** What forms of employment have you had?

**Vegas:** Well, I've had a lot of forms of employment.

**Silverman:** Or ones that you can talk about that feel like—

**Vegas:** Oh, I used to clean Bill Gates house and Gary Larson, the guy from The Far Side, I used to clean his house too.

**Silverman:** Uh. [Laughter]

**Vegas:** I did that. I did do house cleaning for a while. That's what they call the Lesbian Circuit you know. You do house cleaning, you make coffee, um.

**Silverman:** Were you talking to them? Were you having conversations with those people?

**Vegas:** Well, I mean. I only saw Bill [Bill Gates] three times. He was never there, you know. He used to wear his pants really high. [Laughter] I did that. I worked for—I did photo—film development in a big lab. I worked for Nintendo. I did social work, I worked for Seattle Rape Relief. For a few years I was the Latino Community Advocate. I would do some times—I had a—I knew a couple of professors in the University of Washington that would hire me to talk to their class about being queer and an artist. Talk about racism and homophobia. Um, what else have I done? I mean I've done all the shit jobs that people do when they're not hired for

anything. You know, it's like I don't have any skills other than singing. I mean I do have skills, but not like—I don't have a diploma. I never finished college. That was another fiasco you know. I went to college and they—even though I spoke english fine, they would never let me take college courses. This one teacher that I had, I think she was like the person who assigned me things. She told me, “well I lived in Costa Rica and I could never be as good as the Costa Ricans. So foreigners here cannot be as good as the Americans. So I cannot give you an A, even though”—and then she tell me, “you don't come to class all the time,” it's like, well I'm working. It's like, “well I cannot give you an A”, so that kinda really turned me off from going to school. I just took—I just took some singing classes, cause I loved the teacher. Some opera stuff and I took a dance class, you know. Then I stopped going to school altogether. I was married at that point.

**Silverman:** Oh, okay.

**Vegas:** My parents—

**Silverman:** How long were you married for?

**Vegas:** My parents—okay, that's another story.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** I went to Venezuela—I had—I went to Seattle and there was this kid. He followed me around and followed me around. I wasn't even attracted to him. Followed him around, but you know when your so young you have sex with somebody and immediatly you're in love, you know. Even if it's the worst sex you've had in your life. So I met him and uh, he moved in with me. He never paid me rent. My parents came to visit me and I had to move him out because they couldn't know that I lived with him. I'm sure they found some of his underwear somewhere and my parents invited him to Venezuela. So first we went for thanksgiving to his mom, who hated me. Very racist. He was part—half white, half Bolivian. His dad was a native Quechua and his mom was white Jewish. She just hated me, you know. It's like—I mean he was young, maybe she thought I was gonna force him to marry me. I wasn't, but my parents did. When I got to Venezuela they told me, “why don't you get married?”. They were totally like brainwashing me and I was like, “no I don't wanna get married.” Then my dad told me, “either you get married or you cannot go back, cause you have a boyfriend.” I'm like, do you think—I didn't couldn't? even tell him “do you think I'm a virgin”, because would have slapped me, you know. But anyway we got married in Venezuela. We stayed there for six months until I was cleared by the FBI and then we came. We came to the United States. That was that. You know, I was married to him for like four years. Then as things happened I ended up in some bathroom having sex with a woman and I told him, “you know, this is just not gonna work out anymore, cause I'd rather do that.” We're friends still though. You know, like—I'm friends with—I'm friends with all my ex's, you know. There's one that I try to avoid, she's a little bit too crazy, but yeah I love them all.

**Silverman:** That's um, miraculous.

**Vegas:** [Laughter] I mean not initially. Some of them there's been like a lot of bitterness, but you know, then you know um. I don't have a family here. So people that I give my love to, I just don't kick them out of my life unless they're really toxic and bad for me.

**Silverman:** Totally, totally. Before we started recording we were talking about Act Up and remembering that moment. I just wanted to return to different parts of gay history and what that was like for you at the time. If you—

**Vegas:** It was exciting!

**Silverman:** Yeah!

**Vegas:** I mean. Act Up was exciting and it was incredibly sad, because my generation lost so many men. So many men. It was tragic. I mean, this pandemic you don't see people in the streets with—carrying IVs and bags and they look like they're from a concentration camp. A man that you saw two days ago—like a week ago and he looked fine. Now he looks like a skeleton. It was that kind of vibe. That kind of fast. It was killing people really fast.

**Silverman:** Hmm.

**Vegas:** It killed my best friend and the horrible thing about that—I mean one of the many horrible things about that—was that he died a week before the cocktail came out. That is saving people. A few people that he had met that were dying actually made it. He didn't make it. Yeah. It was. It was so harsh to watch him die. He was a compulsive liar you know. [Laughter] He lied until the end and I think that that's like—I think that he had dementia too. He was so much. He would have liked towards the end before he—when he was still able to go out and do things. Even though he was very, very thin and he had constant outbreaks of herpes all over his body. He was losing his teeth, you know. But he always thought—[Laughter] he always thought that he had friendships with these famous people. Cause he would write in and they—he would get one of those letters that they sent to the fans, you know. For his last birthday, he rented a room in a restaurant and he sent invitations to all these famous people. So the room was filled with balloons from people like Patti Labelle [Laughter], Ann Wilson. He was a thing or two. He had the most beautiful falsetto. He really sounded like a soprano.

**Silverman:** Wow.

**Vegas:** His name was Eddy, Eddy Bartoli. Uh, it was very sad when he died. I tried to give his ashes to his family and they didn't want it.

**Silverman:** Hmm.

**Vegas:** So, at that point I was in a band with Krist and I toured. I went around the world and around the U.S. So I took—I took like a bag of his ashes with and would throw some in every

stage that I played at. Then eventually, his sister told me, “we would like to have his ashes now.” So I took half.

**Silverman:** Wow.

**Vegas:** I gave them half. You know what they did? They took it and they threw it in the truck of the car. I’m like, “what the fuck!” So, you know I kept taking him places and throwing little ashes of him everywhere. At the end, I threw the last bit in the lake, in Lake Washington. I didn’t know that ashes from a body, it’s almost like a pigment. It’s almost like dry paint. Probably from the bones and stuff. So when you throw it in the water it becomes a gigantic white spot. [Laughter] So, anyway yeah. When you get older, then you start having funny stories about ashes. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** [Laughter]

**Vegas:** I have a friend. [Laughter] I have a friend in Seattle who is a pilot and she would like—a side gig would be like people ask her to dump ashes over Mt. Rainier or Mt. Saint Hellens or whatever. So she said one time—[Coughing]—one time she was with a friend and she told the person to—“okay, open the window a little bit and put your hand out and just hold the bag”, you know. So her friend did it all wrong and all the ashes blew back on them. [Laughter] It’s illegal to do that too, you know. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** That is too much. That is just too much. [Laughter]

**Vegas:** [Laughter]

**Silverman:** What did you learn about yourself through touring and living in all these different places?

**Vegas:** You know that—my tours—I’ve had different bands, you know, but like with that band with the dude from Seattle. That was a very painful time for me because here I was, supposed to be happy. The press trashed me. They, I mean, they just wanted to hate me. They, I mean the only time—when I realized it was all bullshit, was when they said I couldn’t sing, cause I know I can sing. That’s one thing I know I can do and no one is going to tell me otherwise, you know. Then they would give him all the credit for everything. I wrote all the songs. I wrote—I wrote ninety five percent of everything in that band. He wanted fifty percent, I said no. This song, I wrote it in its entirety. That’s my song, not yours. He fucked me so badly with the money too. He took all the deductions when we got our advance. We got an advance of a million and a half and he took all the deductions. Then I got this huge whopping fucking tax, you know, thing that I had to pay. He was an asshole. He’s still an asshole. He was controlling and rude and yeah.

**Silverman:** Mhm.

**Vegas:** You know, It's like I thought we made a record that was really good and we still have fans from that record, but um yeah he just—he was racist you know. He was racist and he told me once, like “well you know, you're queer so I just really don't really know what to talk to you or your partner about.” As if, that's my whole life, you know?

**Silverman:** Totally.

**Vegas:** We're not here trading sex secrets okay? We're just, we can talk about anything.

**Silverman:** Yep.

**Vegas:** You know, I learned—from touring I learned , when you tour, you don't really get to see anything. You go. You wait at the bar. You do soundcheck. You go back to the hotel. You wait until they come and pick you up and then you play. If you're lucky you get to go to sleep, if not you get on the bus and take off.

**Silverman:** Wow.

**Vegas:** So it's like, I did—one tour I did take pictures of every toilet, because that's what I saw.  
[Laughter]

**Silverman:** [Laughter] Okay.

**Vegas:** I did see—I did see some things, you know. It's like we had to drive by the Louvre and the Eiffel tower. So we drove by the factory. There's a factory in the cover of a Pink Floyd album that has, like a factory that's called Animals and we drove by that factory. We went to Christiania. [Freetown, Christiania] Um, that's about it. We watched the Piccadilly Circus, yeah know but not really—we didn't really do anything because we had like one day, maybe two. In France—Paris we did stay a week and that was quite—I did a lot of walking.

**Silverman:** Hmm.

**Vegas:** And uh, I just—it was weird because I was by myself, you know.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** We didn't hang out, you know.

**Silverman:** Yeah and when you say your music—at least in your early life—was drawn from folk music, what other forms of music throughout your life have influenced what you like—

**Vegas:** Well, I mean, it's like when I was a teenager I was really into rock, but not every rock, you know. It's like, my influences were like—I mean rock and more like alternative stuff that is not even alternative. I love Yoko Ono and Nina Hagen and uh I do love Salsa too. So I really like

Rubén Blades, uh Willie Colón, you know. The funny old stars, I grew up with that and I really love it. I play—I sang in some Salsa bands when I was really young too. I wish I could find one here. There's a lot of them here and I'm afraid, people here are so good.

**Silverman:** Mmm.

**Vegas:** Um, yeah rock, like I mean, I told you that teacher that I had, Toledo he taught me—he would play all these rock songs and kind of like musicals too. [Laughter] I remember one time. He would translate in his really bad english all the songs to spanish and then we would do them. They were like, you know, horrible songs like Hotel California, but then I do love karaoke and he did some karaoking. You know, would translate it and then he translated the whole Jesus Christ Superstar. [Laughter] I still have some pictures of us playing music. Yeah, I mean, all kinds of different music have really, really impressed me. Punk music is the only music that doesn't impress me. More like the new, queer punk bands, there's some attraction there. Specially the one, this—oh, what's the name of this band. They do Selena covers. It's a punk band. It's so awesome. Uh, you know who Shomi Noise is? She's a singer and [\[again can't make it out. Something core? 1:05:38\]](#) you know who that is? That's a—she's a painter and she made the tarot cards with all the queer people.

**Silverman:** Oh yeah.

**Vegas:** You know, it's like I said, my memory, it's not even the weed because I haven't smoked today. So, yeah.

**Silverman:** Yeah.

**Vegas:** All types of music has really really, I mean, the music by my parents. My uncle was an amazing, gifted musician too. Um, yeah, I dunno.

**Silverman:** And has um, I mean, when you were playing with Krist from Nirvana and experiencing that level of visibility and then also receiving feedback from the press, did that shape or change the ways you related to music?

**Vegas:** I mean he kind of forced me into doing what I thought people wanted and it's a testament to my musicianship that I was able to do that, you know. Cause I—before that, I played in rock bands, but they weren't like, you know grunge. I hate that word. It's like I would always have in mind all these other bands so I could fit in there.

**Silverman:** Mh-mm.

**Vegas:** Actually, Krist was the one who—he begged me, “please let's do these songs in Spanish,” songs that I sang you know. There's two songs in Spanish on record. One I wrote and the other one is a traditional song. A work song. I remember that was the guy from R.E.M, Peter Buck played mandolin like in Losing My Religion, you know. He plays the mandolin. He played

the mandolin for that song. It did change my—the way I viewed—especially like women in music, it really changed because I toured with Zero-7 and I never saw a band more committed and more made for that. They were like made for this, you know. Like, their personalities. The funniest people I had seen in my life. Just so strong and so badass and funny! So funny!  
[Laughter]

**Silverman:** [Laughter] Wow.

**Vegas:** Yeah, it changed my perception in other things besides the music because the music is always gonna be music, you know. At this point—I literally—at this point I very rarely even play. In fact people ask me to do live things on Facebook and stuff and I've done it maybe twice, but I'm not—I'm not like I used to be. I used to play guitar at least eight hours a day, you know. I was really into it and then I would sing most days, all day. I would sit on my porch and sing, all day. I haven't been doing that, it's like I'm doing other stuff now that's more satisfactory for me, for my mind, my soul, you know, maybe talking to people—

**Silverman:** What sorts of things are those?

**Vegas:** Huh?

**Silverman:** What sort of things—

**Vegas:** Well, because I don't leave my house, I talk to tons of people everyday on the internet. Like people in other countries and people that I've met. I write poetry, you know. Very depressing sometimes, poetry or very angry. There's no happy medium there. [Laughter] I love to cook. I really love to cook. I take pictures of my food. [Laughter] That's [Laughter] That's like the baseline of how I communicate with my family.

**Silverman:** Mh-mm.

**Vegas:** Everything is very pleasant and here's a picture of my breakfast, you know. [Laughter] I don't know, I'm so very self consumed with just my day to day. It's just like my life is so simple now and I really like it.

**Silverman:** Mh-mm.

**Vegas:** I really like it. Before when I had a show out of town, I would get really excited and then I realize, "goddamn now I have to pack."

**Silverman:** Hmm.

**Vegas:** So when I go out, I just take a plane, you know, but now with this virus, I don't know. And since they—well I don't have an American passport, so maybe I could go to Europe, but maybe not because I live here.

**Silverman:** Mh-mm. Yeah and I was just wondering—since you know this is a record of GNC and trans life in New York and all these ways in which people survive and exist through all these echelons of hardship. You know, just like so much hardship of—if there’s something you want to share around—yeah, how you arrived at this place where you are talking about how you are so happy to have this simple way to navigate these days that are extremely fraught. Yeah, any kind of advice would be really beautiful.

**Vegas:** Well I try to tell people, [Laughter] that material things and money really—don’t really gain—don’t really get you anything. You can buy things and maybe you can travel somewhere, but that place is never gonna be yours and these things are eventually gonna be obtuse and no use to them, you know. Me learning how to be really poor, instead of me being upset that I’m poor. I mean, I wish I had more and I would have my fair shake, but me learning to be—to live with nothing, or with just my necessities has made my life so much easier. I think it’s the same as having a tiny house, except that I really hate that movement, you know because [Laughter] it’s only rich people that make those tiny houses. Like, “I can take five months off, I’m only 30, but I don’t have to work,” you know. [Laughter] So it’s like simplifying life really and you know where your priorities are. Like one of my highest priorities is to buy treats for my dog. That’s really important to me, when they’re coming down I know I need to go out. Having a bicycle and not a car, you know. It’s like I ride my bicycle everywhere and it makes me feel free. totally, the whole thing about separating myself from material things really, really has made my life so easy. That’s why I love New York, because I learned how to be poor in Seattle! Then I came here to be where being simple like this is the way to go.

**Silverman:** Does that connect to any kind of like, spiritual place, or how does that—does it align to any kind of larger. . .

**Vegas:** I mean, I think I would call that being spiritual. I mean I’m completely against any kind of, organized religion or any kind of like, “listen to me” kind of stuff, you know. But you know, to me that’s what being spiritual would feel like to me. To be, just like, this will suffice, you know. I don’t need anymore and I don’t want anymore. I don’t even get cravings for food. [Laughter] Okay, not true, not true. When I see a hotdog, I want it. [Laughter]

**Silverman:** And because you’re a musician and you create this document of—you know, your voice through time—do you think about legacy? Is that like a part of some purview of how you, how you, I dunno.

**Vegas:** I mean, I feel like. Sometimes legacy to me, it—maybe I still am not so self assured as I should be, but I do believe that I have a lot of good one-liners, you know. [Laughter] They will go down in history. Um, I hope—yeah—when I was—I had cancer. When I had cancer, I was so terrified. I think that’s when I—that’s probably like the most scared I’ve been in my life. I remember talking to [Emelia \[double check 1:14:18\]](#) and telling her, “I just don’t want to die and leave nothing.” I think she told me, “but you have left something,” you know. I think that, yeah I do think in terms of people from my country, they hold me in a very special place because of all

the things that I am and what I'm not. You know, I have nephews and nieces that I talk to all the time. Talk about politics all day long. [Laughter] I do, I have a lot of young people that have come through my life. I get—I get mother days and father day [Laughter] father days uh things on the internet and I guess don't sit down and think of legacy. I just figure that it's there. There's things that people have of me that they took from me, but the joke is on them, because when I die, other people are gonna have it. Like I've recorded with people and they denied me the recordings. When I went to Germany they kept it all and for whatever reason they want to use it for me or against me. I think that I try to put out there, what has worked for me. Bringing it up as a spiritual thing. What's worked for me, is working really well now, but it's only for me you know. I think that everybody, you have to have the circumstances to want to be able to do this. I got a little confused there.

**Silverman:** Ah, mh-mm.

**Vegas:** I do think of legacy and I think that my legacy will be helpful for people.