

NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

SONIA MARTINEZ

Interviewer: Anna Keyes

Date of Interview: April 11, 2018

Location of Interview: Carla Roldos' apartment in Chelsea

Transcribed by Melissa Kirchoffer-Talbot

NYC TOHP Interview Transcript #090

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Anna

Keyes: Hello, my name is Anna Keyes and I will be having a conversation with Sonia Martinez for the New York City Trans Oral History Project in collaboration with the New York Public Library's Oral History Project. This is an oral history project centered on the experiences of trans identifying people. It is April 11, 2018 and this is being recorded in Manhattan and, to begin, can you tell me your name and age?

Sonia

Martinez: My name is Sonia Martinez I am actually 71 years old.

Keyes: You don't... you don't look 71.

Martinez: I don't look it but I am [chuckle]

Keyes: [laughs] What are your pronouns?

Martinez: My what? My [inaudible]?

Keyes: Your, uh, pronouns.

Martinez: My pronouns, oh, I'm, I'm a lady, my pronoun is Miss or Misses.

Keyes: Hmm hmmm. How would you describe your gender?

Martinez: My gender actually is female.

Keyes: Hmm hmmm. Can you tell me when and where you were born?

Martinez: I was born in Puerto Rico, in a place called Cataño, which is right across from San Juan and you actually have to get a boat to go to my place where I live.

Keyes: Do you have family still there?

Martinez: I got family still there, yes, I got my uncles, I got nephews and, uh, cousins, and I got a little family there.

Keyes: How are they doing?

Martinez: They're doing fine at this moment, they had a hard time, um, because of the hurricane, but now they're doing fine.

Keyes: I'm glad to hear that. So, can you tell me about an early encounter you had with the trans community?

Martinez: Well, uh, many years ago when I was about 13 I'd had an encounter with the community that was coming up at that time and I used to live across this building where all these gay people and trans ladies too were living there and I used to sneak away from my mother to go across to where they were hanging because this is the way I felt but, being that I was so young, they would push me away or try not to have me in the crowd because they were afraid they would get busted or the police will come and put them in jail so that was some of my early childhood.

Keyes: And where were you at this time?

Martinez: Well I was living in Brooklyn in a street called Pacific Street, right off 4th Avenue.

Keyes: 4th Avenue?

Martinez: That's Parks Slope.

Keyes: Ah, that's Parks Slope.

Martinez: Hmm hmmm.

Keyes: Can you tell me a bit more about, um, this house you're talking about?

Martinez: Okay this house where I was talking about. I remember there was this one that I always especially remember her, her name was Maria, she was always dressed as a woman and I, um, I identified myself with her and I always wanted to be around her and then, um, they all lived in different, different apartments and they would have their little parties, and they would have their drag parties and I would always try to sneak in and catch a view and see what was going on.

Keyes: Can you remind me of what year this was?

Martinez: Oh my God! That was, I think that was about in the 50s, late 50s, something like that.

Keyes: Do you remember these parties at all?

Martinez: I remember these parties, of course I remember—I remember very well.

Keyes: Please, tell me more—

Martinez: Well, I used to, um, go there because I identified myself with them at that time, so I used to sneak away from my mother and, at that age, I started to collect woman clothing. And I would put it on, hidden, hiding from my grandmother and my mother and, uh, until one day my mother found it out, found the clothes and she says who this belong to and I said that belongs to me. So, I got dressed at night and for the first time she saw me dressed as a girl and then, it was very hard for her but she began to, to get used to it and... But these parties that these girls had, at that time, they were having these little parties that you would pay 50 cents or 25 cents and go in the party and you would have to buy the beer, the liquor there and they would do their little shows inside the apartments because they were not allowed to walk the street that way, at that time. So I was, I grew up in a very difficult time.

Keyes: Ya... Ya, Can you... can you tell me what terminology do you think—um, well we'd say trans women now—what terminology do you think they used at that time, in the 50s to identify themselves?

Martinez: Well, um, at that time they were called transvestite. There were no such... they would say... of course there was always the girls cause Christine Jergensen had a sex change in 1952 and there were a lot of the girls coming out at that time but the terminology then, if you were, uh,

they would either consider you a crossdresser or they would consider you a transvestite because, at that time, I never had heard transsexual, you know? They would say sex change and, um, but I never heard, at that time, the word transsexual like I hear now. Cause before that wasn't the way it was, every, every time the people would see you, they would, you would either have to be one or the other or you would dress as a man or you were either a woman. It's not like now that you see all the guys, guys with guys and, you know, and like that but before you would have to be a femme and the other would have to be the butch so... it has come along.

Keyes: Hmmm hmmm. Yeah, I'm interested in hearing more, maybe a little bit more about Maria but also, maybe if you can tell me if, um... do you feel like at this time this community kinda took you under their wing or not?

Martinez: Oh, yeah! They did take me under their wing and when I began to, to, when I was about 13—maybe 14—then at that time I, uh, I... they took me under their wing and they would always be looking, you know like, take care of me and made sure I was never in danger. So I always remember them in that sense. And I especially remember a friend of mine, that her name was Constantida so I remember that, at that time, when I was growing up I said, oh my God, all these girls they want... instead of... there was no such things as hormones at that time. There were hormones but they were not, you know, largely recognized [phone rings and inaudible voices in the background]... so what the girls would do...

Keyes: We're going to pause for one second.

Martinez: [inaudible] It's my husband. [speaking Spanish] Miguel, estoy haciendo la interview, mi amorito, ok?

Keyes: So you were saying about hormones?

Martinez: So I remember at that time that some of the girls that wanted to have breasts, they would inject oil like with an oil, Mazola oil on their breast. So I remember my friend, I said to my friend, I want to have breasts too, I was about 14 already or 15 and, um, she said you do, I say yea, ya, Constantida—her name was Constantida this lady and she said okay so she sat me on this chair and she pulled out this big syringe and she filled it with oil and, my God, she injected me with it—

Keyes: [gasping/laughing]

Martinez: And I screamed and I said aaaaaahhh, ah my God that hurted so much and I said to her can you do this one tomorrow, but she said no, we've got to finish it today—

Keyes: [laughter]

Martinez: So I was in pain...

Keyes: Oh.

Martinez: But I wanted to have breasts—

Keyes: Yeah...

Martinez: That was my first experience with having breasts and feeling female. So I said, oh my God, so that went on and then Maria took me under her wings and then at that time they had like a little gay community and they would all meet in certain places and different houses so I would always be going around with the girls.

Keyes: Was this mostly in Brooklyn?

Martinez: In Brooklyn, yes, I grew up in Brooklyn and Park Slope, so this was in Park Slope.

Keyes: Hmmm hmm. So you were saying it was mostly... it didn't exist too much in the public spaces, it was mostly houses?

Martinez: It was mostly houses and there were, of course there were many also in the area was most of the girls at that time like nowadays, today, some of the trans... transgender growing up mostly they all go into prostitution so, around where I grew up, there was this... this area where the girls would go to this club, this club called Cookie and they will go there and they will make their money hustling in the street which was 4th Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, um, Lafayette Place, all that area was very much, much prostitution at that area at that time.

Keyes: And, um, I'm kind of curious when... you said earlier that, maybe walking on the street like between the houses that you'd congregate in wasn't as much of a thing, so did you... would people—

Martinez: If you walked down the street and they would, the police will see you and they will find out you're a guy, they would take you to jail. They would take you to jail for just being in the corner and having your eyebrows painted, at that time. So it was very hard.

Keyes: Can you tell me any experiences you may have had?

Martinez: Oh I had experiences, well when I was, after getting a little feminine, everything, I started coming to 42nd Street and I would meet most of the girls that were hanging out at that time and, um, there was this place called Bickford's and Horn and Hardat and all that and if you be seated inside the restaurant and you were painted, or wore lipstick, and the police will see that you are a guy, they would go in, make you leave the food, and they would take you to jail.

Keyes: Wow.

Martinez: At that time.

Keyes: And, when did that start changing?

Martinez: Well I think that started changing after the 60s and the 70s because, um, it was really hard to walk down the street and if you, if you dressed as a girl you would have to wear men under, underclothes because if you get caught and you're fully in drags, they would put you in jail just, sometimes they would put you in jail just for being in the corner hanging out, at that time.

Keyes: Wow.

Martinez: And especially if they see you flaunting or you were, you know, carrying on too much, they would put you in jail.

Keyes: Hmmm hmm. And can you tell me when, you know... [sighs] like obviously Stonewall comes to mind as far as a moment of resistance in New York—

Martinez: [Inaudible]

Keyes: Stonewall?

Martinez: Hmnm hm. I went to the Stonewall—as a matter of fact I'd used to hang out there with my friend, um... oh my God... so many names. But I used to hang out in the Stonewall then I used to go there and I, uh, I had a friend of mine that she passed, Lola, that I think she was there that night of the raiding and, yeah, I have many experiences in the Stonewall.

Keyes: Hmmm hmm. Can you tell me more about spaces like Stonewall and what it meant to you to maybe find place where... to congregate—

Martinez: Well, at that time, it was places that you would go hang out. There was a lot of little clubs that you would... and we used to hang out and, at that time, there were the Club 82 where people would go see impers... um, female impersonator shows and they had this Jewel's Catch One there at that time and this is when I was growing up but now everything has changed, everything is more open. Before, everything was more secluded or it would have to be in places where people would know about, where you where we would know about, but the regular people wouldn't know about. So it was really hard at that time when I was growing up. But now I'm glad that everything got all, you know, ... and, I, I, I kept on going and then I discovered hormones and I started taking hormones at a very early age—

Keyes: What year do you think?

Martinez: Oh my God, this was in the sixties, in the sixties-late sixties... seventies

Keyes: How old were you then?

Martinez: Oh my God!

Keyes: [Laughter]

Martinez: I was about in my twenties or teen years and I started taking my hormones. I discovered hormones with Dr. Stern that a lot of the older girls know about him.

Keyes: Where was Dr. Stern located?

Martinez: Dr. Stern was around 72nd Street and I used to go to him and there were a few doctors that would be giving the hormones and then we would buy them also in the street because they were going around, you know, you would be in the bar and they would go in the bar and sell you hormone shot and you would do it right there in the bar. So that was the way we got the hormones at that time.

Keyes: I want to hear a little bit more about Dr. Stern, like what was the process to get an appointment with him?

Martinez: Well, at that time, the girls, we used to walk in, it wasn't like we needed an appointment. We used to go to a doctor and we would explain to them we wanted hormones and they would put us on... they would give us hormones and they would, um, give us either the pills and they would give us...we used to have the German shots which were called Progenols at that time and a lot of the girls, most of the older girls—the ones that started, they used to go to Dr. Stern and most of the time we would buy them black market in the bars.

Keyes: And I've heard, I've heard other people say like it was a lot more stronger then. Do you think so?

Martinez: Well the hormones at that time were much, uh, to me, I feel they were stronger, I was, we was doing the German hormones, the Progenols, like I said, and they were strong—we used to think they were stronger, I think they were stronger because the ones we do now are not as strong, you have to be on it for quite a while before you see the results you want.

Keyes: What do you think about that?

Martinez: About the hormones?

Keyes: Well I guess for me I'm like, I kinda wish I had, you know, existed at this time when they were stronger but also, like, I don't know, I just, it's just, it's a thought that I have sometimes—

Martinez: Well, I, I feel that, um, everything takes time. Before the hormones, all the girls we were padded and all that then came along the silicone a few uh many years ago, then we all started doing a little bit of silicone on the cheeks, on the hips, on the tits, and a lot of the girls got problems with it but, if you take hormones, and you do the right thing, it, it will work, this now, like the ones we had then, they all... I, I think the only difference is that we were taking, we were not taking, before we were calling the hormones Progenols, um, the estrogen which are the ones now but before they had different names, you know?

Keyes: So just to go back a little bit, um, can you tell... so you kind of started around, telling me about when you were around thirteen or fourteen. Can you tell me more about your earlier childhood and when, around what time you came to New York?

Martinez: Well, when we came to... well, when I was growing up I was growing up in Puerto Rico and my grandmother, which, I was living with 'cause my mother had married her, um, her second husband and she was living with him but I was living with my grandmother. So my grandmother says she was coming to New York and they decided to leave me with my aunt. I stood with my aunt and I went to school I did my Communion, everything, living with my aunt in Puerto Rico but, one time, there was this movie star that was doing pictures and she was dancing and everything so my aunt saw me dancing like this, and I was putting on clothes, you know, and doing like I was this girl. So my aunt said oh no, this is not gonna happen here so she sent me to New York to be with my grandmother.

Keyes: Oh, wow...

Martinez: So, that's why I came, I was sent to New York to stay with my grandmother because she didn't, she didn't want to have me growing up as a little girl there.

Keyes: Wow. And.... What...

Martinez: I was about nine, nine, eight... nine... when they sent me here—

Keyes: And it was when, cause she saw you dancing?

Martinez: Cause she saw me dancing and she, I was carrying on very feminine and, um, in the school the kids would make fun of you and all that so, you know, she said she wasn't having it. So they sent me here, to my grandmother and here as I was growing up I discovered that there, that I wasn't the only one different—that there were many other people like me, so you know, I started to hanging out with the, with the girls.

Keyes: Yeah, um... how do you feel about that? Like, about your aunt's decision?

Martinez: About?

Keyes: Like, do you... do you ever think like what would it have been if I stayed, like...

Martinez: Like if I would have stayed in Puerto Rico?

Keyes: Hmm hmmm.

Martinez: I don't know... I really don't think about it now but it wouldn't have, I really don't think that it wouldn't have been different, I would have been the same person. I, I wouldn't have changed, I wouldn't change anything—

Keyes: So can you tell me a bit more about like economically, like your class background growing up or your religious background?

Martinez: Well, my religious background is I'm Catholic, my grandmother's Catholic, my family was mostly Catholic but as I grow a little older most of my family are Jehovah Witness, they're, uh, Pentecostal but I'm still Catholic, that's my, my religion and, um, I feel like that I'm very, very religious. I'm a religious person.

Keyes: What did your family do for work back in Puerto Rico?

Martinez: For work?

Keyes: Hmmm hmm.

Martinez: Well, my uncle, my fam—my, my, actually when I was growing up, the woman were actually the woman of the house and the men were the ones working, that was at that time. But you know my grandmother was a very hard worker. When she came to this country she was working in this factory and I, I used to go and help her in the factory where she worked, when I was young.

Keyes: Can you tell me a little more about that?

Martinez: Well, like she, when, uh—

Keyes: Like what factory was she at?

Martinez: She was in this, they would make house clothes and, um, I used to go there and help her and—cause I would sort out the, the clothes while she was, while she sew I would sort them out and put them where they belong and I used to help her in where she worked, that was in Atlantic Avenue and, um, she was working, she was she was my mother, my grandmother was a very hard worker.

Keyes: And, what was your relationship with her like growing up?

Martinez: Oh, she was my mother because that, my mother was married to somebody and she was in Puerto Rico, and I was living with my grandmother so she was the mother I knew.

Keyes: So what kind of relationship do you feel you now have with your family of origin?

Martinez: Well, I have only one sister right now and my nephews and that, and my cousins, because my, my brother and my sister passed, my mother passed, my grandmother passed, they're all gone and, um, but I have a relationship with my sister and my family. We talk and I let them know about me and they let, let me know about them, and we tell each other we love, I love you and they tell me I love you and I tell them I love you.

Keyes: Do you feel that, you've been able to maybe embody the mother, the maternal, like the motherliness of your grandmother that she gave to you?

Martinez: Yeah, I think I very much feel like a mother sometimes, especially to my sister because she's younger than me and she's the only sister I got left so I feel very motherly sometimes to her.

Keyes: What's her name?

Martinez: Her, my sister's name is Marilyn.

Keyes: Marylin. And where does Marilyn live?

Martinez: She lives in Park Slope.

Keyes: Oh, okay. Do you see each other often?

Martinez: Yea, we see each other once in a while but we call each other every day.

Keyes: Oh, that's really special—

Martinez: Every day. Sometimes two or three times a day.

Keyes: Wow.

Martinez: Yeah...

Keyes: Is she like your best friend?

Martinez: Yea, she's like my best friend and I tell her everything about me and she tells me everything about her.

Keyes: That's, that's really wonderful.

Martinez: And even though she's Christian we talk to each other like she's not from church, we talk like regular people.

Keyes: So... what, you said you came here around nine, um, what's your earliest memory of New York City?

Martinez: Of New York City? Oh my God! When I came here I remember it was cold...

Keyes: [chuckling]

Martinez: And I was used to the warm weather and, my God, I remember once, in the fifties... my God I remember one day I was, my God I was going to, to, to starting school here in Brooklyn in PS 29 and it was snowing so much and so bad, that I said, oh my God this is the worst. That I remember that it used to snow so much then and very cold. Now, I don't feel like it's so cold like before. Before it used to be very cold.

Keyes: You were saying that, back in Puerto Rico, that you were like getting made fun of in school a little bit—

Martinez: Yeah.

Keyes: Or people were teasing you.

Martinez: Hmmm hmm.

Keyes: What was it then like in New York City?

Martinez: Well, I did get a little teasing too, in New York City, especially when I was in Junior high school cause, of course, I wanted to go to school, I wanted to go to school dressed as a girl and my mother used to get very upset about it, but I used to always manage to change my, tie my shirt around my waist and put on my little pants and go to school and sometimes there were the

teachers would call my grandmother to come and pick me up because they wouldn't allow me in the school like that, because of the fun of the other kids. So, you know, I had that hard time too.

Keyes: But you didn't let it stop you.

Martinez: It didn't, I didn't let it stop me. I was me and I just wanted to be me.

Keyes: I, I honestly wish I had the courage, um... Maybe it's cause I'm from New Jersey but I... nobody, like, I didn't know what a trans person was I was from the suburbs, you know, so...

Martinez: Hmmm.

Keyes: ... very closed off and conservative so it was only once I went to college that—

Martinez: Yeah, but I went to school, I went to PS 29, I went to junior high school 142 in Brooklyn, I went to Lafayette High School on Benson Avenue I also did a few years, um I think one year in John Jay on 7th Avenue in Park Slope and I did, I didn't finish school because I'd, um, before I finished school, I met this guy, I was very young, and I met this guy and I liked this guy so much and he liked, he liked me so much he says you know what, why don't you come and stay with me. I was so young, and I didn't, and my grandmother said where are you going, I said no I'm just gonna visit him and things like that. Anyway, we became lovers and from, from being in high school, before I graduated, I started living with him and I left home with this guy and I left home with this guy but then I got involved in the drugs and, um, which I regret, but I did get involved with the drugs until my grandmother passed and I said no, no more this is... I never went back to any kind of drugs and I says thank God. But I had my hard times.

Keyes: Where did you live with him?

Martinez: In Brooklyn?

Keyes: Hmmm hmm.

Martinez: In Brooklyn I lived on 5th Avenue, right off Berkeley, um, that's where I grew up in Brooklyn, 5th Avenue Park Slope.

Keyes: How long were you with him?

Martinez: With this guy oh my God I lived with him for about thirteen years.

Keyes: Wow.

Martinez: Hmm hmmm.

Keyes: And, can I ask how you got out of it?

Martinez: How I got out of it... Well, I was living with him... one night I said to this guy I don't want to be with you anymore and uh, oh my God, I was at home, I decided to go out, I went out I met this guy, this guy came over to stay to my house and we were in the house and, all of a sudden, he knocks on the door because I wasn't with him and I said I don't want to be with you anymore and all this [background noise]—anyway the guy left and what happened was that, when the other guy left, he came back knocked on my door and he says well if you're not gonna be with me you're not gonna be with nobody. And, when I said that, when he said that he went to the kitchen he pulled out a knife and, when I saw he was coming to me, I turned around and he stabbed me in my back.

Keyes: [gasps]

Martinez: So, I was taken to the hospital and I was almost paralyzed because it got me by my spinal cord, so what happened I... I survived it. Anyway I finally came home and I say I have to move away. So I moved away, he found me again and I had to move and that's when I moved to the Bronx—that was about thirty-something years ago—

Keyes: Wow.... I'm... Sorry...

Martinez: [low chuckles] Yes.

Keyes: That's a lot...

Martinez: Yes, that's how, that's why I'm in the Bronx or else I would have been in Brooklyn. But he gave me [inaudible] the blues.

Keyes: And did, like, any, did he get any repercussion like for assaulting you like almost killing you?

Martinez: No, no, no I didn't press charges at that time...

Keyes: Ah, I see.

Martinez: Which is crazy, the police asked me I said no, no I don't, I don't know who did it—

Keyes: I see.

Martinez: Anyway. So, I was young and, you know, you feel, you feel like you're in love so madly in love and so I didn't want to press charges. But then I moved here to the Bronx and, um, no—first, before that, when I finally... I tried to get away from him, I went to live with a friend of mine and she was, she was a sex change she had a sex change the same place where Gina did it, and um, and I met this guy and he said what would you like to do, what would you like right now to do? I was staying with my girlfriend and this was supposed to be her, her boyfriend. Anyway, he,

he met me and he liked me and whatnot so I said I would like to do my breasts so he paid for my breasts—that was in the 80s, early 80s—and, um, instead... no, I had my breasts done in I think it was 78, 79. So I had my first silicone breasts at that time and I got away and I move to here, to the Bronx and then I stayed in 149th in the Bronx and I started living there and I started mixing with the crowd and I never went back to Brooklyn, I stayed in the Bronx.

Keyes: And, did, you never saw him again?

Martinez: I never saw him again and then there was one day I was walking down the block and somebody called me and they called me to tell me he died. And, he, he died and that was it. I went to the funeral to pay my respect because he was with some girl so I said pay my respect and I went there and I said see you tried to kill me but it was your turn. So, I kept on living and I stay in the Bronx, then I met this guy and, um—that was in the 80s, 81, 80some, 81, yeah, I think it was in 81—I met him in 1970 I met him in the 80s because he went to jail in 81. Anyway, I met this guy when I was, when I had just moved to the Bronx and I was wanting to survive, I'd, uh, first I went to live in the city then I met him in, in, in a club called Edelweiss in, in New York City. So he said to me you know you need a better place cause I was staying in this cheap hotel and he said you need a better place so he moved me to the Bronx he got me an apartment to the Bronx. Well, nevertheless I used to go out with him and a lot of my girlfriends met him and everything like that but, one day, he said to me he was going out to do something and I would have never thought that what he did was he went to rob a bank and I said oh my God and I never knew until that day, when the police came in and they arrested him in my house for the Brinks job. So I said oh my God I was with him, living with him having all these people come into my house Joanne Chesimard all these Black Panthers coming to my house, um Joe and [inaudible], and I didn't know who I was dealing with. So he was put in jail and then he passed, in, in jail and they wanted to put me in jail for 25 years but it never happened because I wasn't part of it, it was just to me it felt like I was the innocent bystander because I met him under a different name and different person. I didn't meet him as the person they make him to be, but anyway that, that's how I came to the Bronx.

Keyes: What was... could you... you don't have to have to tell me about him I was wondering what his name was?

Martinez: His name?

Keyes: Hmm hmmm.

Martinez: His name? This person's name was Donald Weems.

Keyes: And you're saying he... he was a member of Black Panther?

Martinez: Hmmm, yes.

Keyes: So, um, to kind of look more broadly, I kind of want to know, you know you've mentioned your sister and your grandmother and Maria and, um, I'm wondering who would have been the most important people in your life.

Martinez: Who are the most important people in my life? Right now? Or then?

Keyes: Or, over, if you could look at your entire life—

Martinez: Oh, I could mention a few. The most important people in my life was my grandmother of course and my aunt and, um, my sister that passed and I think they have been the most most, most important people in my life. Yes. And, uh, a friend that I had, her name was Maria too, and they were the most important people in my life. And now the person that I'm with.

Keyes: And how did you meet—is it Miguel?

Martinez: Yes, Miguel, well Miguel... I was living with somebody and we broke up and, um... I one day went out to the beach and I met Miguel, invited me for a drink and I said okay let's go have a drink we did have a drink then these friends of mine couple of gay came over and he says you like them and I says no I'm different so he says what do you mean you're different and I says well I'm different. So anyway he got curious—

Keyes: [chucking]

Martinez: And we decide... he had broken up with his wife and I had broken up with my lover at the time so we were like in the rebound and we met, we clicked and then he came over that night with me, we had a few drinks and the next day he came back and the third day he came back, and the fourth day I went to his job and I went to his place where he was staying and I said oh my God you don't have to live like this you know so he says well so can I move in with you and I said okay and it's been thirteen years—

Keyes: How long?

Martinez: Thirteen—

Keyes: Oh, wow.

Martinez: That we've been living together and, uh, as man and wife and as a regular couple and... just a year ago I said Miguel after thirteen so much so much I think I am going to have my sex change. So I started to do all the planning and I called the clinic and everything and I said I'm going through all the changes and, um, after so many years I.... the doctor called me and said well you'll be ready for the surgery I said yes, for Nov... it was for November but then they said we have to do electrolysis so I said okay so they sent me to the electrolysis and last December I finally did change my sex.

Keyes: Congratulations.

Martinez: And I became a female which I always was. That was the only thing that needed adjusting so I finally did it and I think I finally after so many years of living as the woman I was, I finally find myself the woman I am today after so much hard work of going through so much changes and all my childhood and looking for that woman that I wanted to be and looking for a man that would accept me as the woman I wanted to be which, all of the men I had in my life accepted me as the woman, but this time I wanted to accept me myself as the woman I wanted to be. So I finally feel complete. I look at myself in the mirror and I say oh my God I'm complete. I don't have to hide anything anymore and I don't have to be afraid anymore. So that's how I finally realize that I'm really Sonia, that I'm really the woman that I want too be and, uh, and if I did it, anybody could.

Keyes: Can you tell me more about what communities you're a part of now and in the past and—you were saying a little bit about your history with the community in Brooklyn but I maybe wanted to learn a little bit more about the community you found in the Bronx and the community you find today.

Martinez: The gay community or the transsexual community?

Keyes: Maybe more so the trans community.

Martinez: Okay. The trans community—well I guess the trans community everywhere—some of us stick together, some don't, some of us have that part where we always looking to see what the other one is doing so we would do it too and I have had, I have a lot of good friends I have friends that we know each other for forty years, forty-five years and we have known each other for all our lives, you know, so with the trans community I have always enjoyed but me myself I have lived more with the, uh, heterosexual community than with the trans community.

Keyes: I see. Would you say you were a part of any scenes when you were—

Martinez: Of the who?

Keyes: Any scenes like the ball scene or, um, um, I'm not sure... let me rephrase this question. You know what we can skip that actually. And also, you know, I need to go to the bathroom so I just want to pause for a second. [pause] ... Um, what kind of relationships have you had with other trans or non-binary people over time?

Martinez: Non-violent?

Keyes: Um, sorry, like gender nonconforming... just people... I'll just rephrase that. What kind of relationships have you had with other trans people over time?

Martinez: Oh I have... my relationship with all the trans people have been fine, I haven't had no trouble with trans I never had no, no kind of conflict with the girls. Maybe once in a while one of them gets a little or gets angry at you for maybe—you know that sometimes we say little stupid things like, and sometimes they get shady or like that big things no I've never had problems with the girls.

Keyes: How do you think the trans community has changed over time?

Martinez: Oh it has changed immensely. The trans community has changed immensely because now there's more more chances for the girls and more help for the girls, you know, especially for the young ones, you know, cause now everything is mostly for the young girls and, um, as a matter of fact the other day I was, I was, I have a friend from Columbia and they opened this house which is dedicated for the older transgender girls, for sex change girls, for transgender girls who are no sex change, for transgender girls, but here in New York, it's it's there's a lot of help now for the girls especially for us that want to transition.

Keyes: Were you saying that house is in Columbia?

Martinez: In Columbia, I was, I was reading a friend of mine sent sent some information to me about that they open this house like you know like they have this this building for the older for the young for the old people and for senior citizens and like that well they actually opened a building for the transsexual community where if you don't have where to stay they give you an apartment... [phone rings] ... or you have an apartment [phone continues to ring] No I don't want to talk to him, he'll call me later... inaudible]

Keyes: [Laughter]

Martinez: That was in Columbia that my friend of mine send me that I said my God why don't they do this here maybe there's so many I think, especially in Puerto Rico I saw this I have this friend of mine, um, she was actually one of the first, um, show trans [phone rings again] Oh! He keeps on calling me.

Keyes: Ah, do you want to take it really quick?

Martinez: No, I'm gonna, I'm gonna, I'm gonna tell them I'll call them later.

Keyes: Okay, no worries.

Martinez: Wait a minute... Mira, Giancarlo I'm in the street I'm doing something call me later, okay? [interlocuter speaks] Call me later. Okay. [Talking to Keyes] He's autistic, this is, this is my husband's nephew... Anyway and I said oh my God they should uh... oh I was telling about my one friend from Puerto Rico that she I went to her house last year and, in Puerto Rico, and she was the first trans that she used to do the shows, um, um, female impersonator and anyway I went to her house to visit her and it was so... so over so overwhelming to me that she didn't have

no help and she was all she had gotten hit by a car and she didn't have no help and she didn't have nobody coming to see her like, like here they have visiting nurses services and all that I said oh my God they don't do this for this person and she finally passed last year and I said oh my God why can't they have a place where if you're transgender and, um, because, every year we have at least the, the help we could go to any hospital or we could have you know help but, especially for people who feel this way that they feel like female but they're actually in their male body. So I said I think they should have a place where they most of these older girls go to, right... that's, that's my feeling. But I feel I would the transgender community has come, has come a lot of help but, like I said, the help is mostly for the young girls.

Keyes: And, how does that feel?

Martinez: Feel to me?

Keyes: Hmmm hmm.

Martinez: It doesn't make me no different because I admire many of the girls that are coming up that are so beautiful but uh I also, like I said, I would like to see because there is a lot of the girls like I have a friend of mine—she's much ol... she's, she's older too—and she worked for a little bit and everything but I was talking to her the other day and she was telling me I'm here going through depression and all that and I said oh my God don't you have some, somebody to come see you, come visit you, you know like they actually do for for these people that they have these senior services that come and bring your meal and things like that so I said why don't you try to find people that help you like this? So, you know, I said maybe they should do this in the trans community to try to, to, you know, to help the senior girls.

Keyes: Can you tell me any memorable memories you've had of other trans people here?

Martinez: Oh, I have... I have so many, I have so many things I have done with the girls, that we have gone out we have gone to parties we—

Keyes: Any such... yeah, tell me, tell me more.

Martinez: We have gone to parties where we... well, many years ago, um, the girls were, the parties were a little different—now the girls they had the parties and they carry on and all this but, um, one thing I always remember is when you—the girls we sit down and we chat and we talk and we tell each other, you know, how we feel and we have no... well, me in my case I don't conceal nothing from my friends I have nothing to hide but there's still a lot of the girls that are so into themselves, you know, that they don't [phone rings]...say what they, what they feel or what they want and, um, and I've seen a lot of gir—guys that are actually feel like a woman and they're afraid to come out, you know, so I said well now it's easy now you're more accepted as a trans girl as a transgender as whatever you want to be. Cause nowadays you could be whoever you want to be, you know, so I said it has come a long way and most—a lot... my memories I had very very beautiful memories with my friends.

Keyes: And, does anything like... can you tell me in detail one of those memories? I'd just love to hear more because, yeah—

Martinez: But... in which sense? How... how do I remember that?

Keyes: Yeah, just like maybe one night or one... one time with a friend that you've never forgotten.

Martinez: [Pauses] Oh my God. Like me and her? One time we went to a party together—

Keyes: You and... Gina?

Martinez: Me and Gina. And, and we came out of the party I think it was about six o'clock in the morning it was, it was like... and we were, we were near my house, well from where we were coming we wasn't that close we had to go across the park so we were laughing so much my God because we kept on hearing roosters so I said Gina my God do you hear roosters?

Keyes: [Laughter]

Martinez: She said oh yeah roosters but we're not in Puerto Rico—

Keyes: [Laughter]

Martinez: —we are in New York and it was snowing, it was snowing and we were actually crossing a park with all the snow. We have shared a lot of memories.

Keyes: Tell me more, this is good—

Martinez: We walked across that park and we came home and we just died laughing...

Keyes: [Laughter]

Martinez: ... and laughing and laughing. Then another time we were we went out we were partying so much we went in to the park and I was painting lashes on a frog.

Keyes: [Laughter]

Martinez: On a... oh my God we had we have, I had so many good things that I have enjoyed with my friends.

Keyes: Yeah.

Martinez: Many many memories.

Keyes: Now, um, not to get negative but... Are there any at the reverse end of that? Are there any like really negative moments that you remember with your, with the girls that stuck out to you?

Martinez: Well... I had... I have a friend well they never really hurt me like you know purposefully, my friends, I... she just stopped talking to me because she don't talk to this one and she expected me not to talk to her so I said I cannot do that you're my friend and she's my friend whatever happens between you both, it's your problem not mine. So you know she stopped talking to me and I said that's so negative I don't, I don't have to stop talking to somebody because you don't talk to them. I think that's about one of the most negative things I have encountered but other than that I haven't really had you know like verbally or fight or, or any kind, that encounter. Not even not even for a person of course I also ask my friends to respect me just like I'm gonna respect them, you know, but negativity I don't allow it. I don't allow it.

Keyes: Um, so, again going back to like Maria and those early days in Park Slope, um, do you feel like you've had any other inter, intergenerational relationships with trans people like older trans people that also took you under their wing or younger trans people that you now feel like you're motherly towards—

Martinez: Yeah, yeah, I have a lot of the girls that call me Mom, I have, I have one that calls me grandma and all that and I don't feel bad about anything like that—as a matter of fact I accept it and, um, a lot of the girls do call me Ma, they say Mom, you know, cause this is the way the girls if you're older they call you mommy and you know and things like that so I have encountered that.

Keyes: Do you, do you like that?

Martinez: I like—I like it because I, I could give advice to somebody about this, you know? My friend as a matter of fact, I have a friend of mine that she calls me mom she's going on the, she's having a sex change tomorrow and I'm gonna go see her and she, uh, like she looks up to me ... about the stuff that you went through last month, let me know about this about that, I said you have to expect this, expect that, expect this, you know. But I have a few girls that look up to me, I think.

Keyes: Yeah... I imagine that feels special like you're passing down something.

Martinez: Well in a way yes but like I say I'd, um, I'm a part of the trans community and I wish I could get more involved with the trans community I always wanted that but I live with, I live with my, my actual husband, he loves all my friends cause he loves my friends but like he's not into the community cause he's, he, he was a Christian man he was from church he was married to this woman and um until he met me and, like, I don't get as involved as I want to because of him because some of these programs they they actually they have this groups and they're always late. You know actually the groups for the girls group is actually sometimes at four o'clock, five o'clock,

six o'clock you know, so that's the only reason why I don't get involved all the time. But when it's a group that I feel like I should go to I do go and try to get involved with the community and find out what it's all about. I do.

Keyes: Yes, um, so do you feel like your understanding of your gender has changed over time at all?

Martinez: My gender?

Keyes: Yes.

Martinez: My... me? Me.

Keyes: Yeah, how you feel about yourself—has it changed over time?

Martinez: I... I love myself, for me, I've always loved myself especially [phone tings] and my gender which was actually changed, um I don't, I feel like any other—to me—I feel like any other person. I don't feel any... any stranger than anybody else I feel like... like this is my gender, I'm a, I'm a female and that's the only gender I always recognize since I was a child.

Keyes: How do you feel like New York City has changed over the time that you've lived here?

Martinez: New York City has changed a lot. New York City has changed incredibly a lot.

Keyes: And what does that... what does that... how does that feel to you?

Martinez: Well it feels good to me, it feels good to me because I see every... uh, including people are more acceptable of the transgender community than before, you know, so it has grown a lot.

Keyes: Is there anything you feel like that you miss about the trans... how the trans community used to be and function?

Martinez: Well, before I think we had more places to go to you know, like like hanging out clubs and things like that I think we had a lot of fabulous little clubs but now it's very a lot of clubs are missing there's not many places for the girls to go to and, uh, I guess everybody is making their own life, you know, and everybody's looking for what they want. So, New York City to me it's fine and it has changed a lot.

Keyes: What's your favorite thing about New York City?

Martinez: The diversity. The diversity of people, the diversity of the communities you know that's my favorite part.

Keyes: And what's the hardest part about living here?

Martinez: The hardest part about here it's paying that rent. [Laughter]

Keyes: [Laughter] Yeah.

Martinez: Paying rent and... and trying to survive and the crime rate that has gone up a little bit and that and you know sometime actually... sometimes actually people and, like myself, sometimes we get a little scary to go out at night, you know, because everything has... everything has gotten so a little rude.

Keyes: Can you tell me more about that?

Martinez: Well it's like—I see it this way, I watch the news and, uh, my boyfriend watches the news I have no choice but you see the crime rate going up you see... um... I don't mind people smoking grass, I don't mind people doing whatever they want but what I do mind is that the lack of respect, you know, there's a lot of lack of respect from people in the street for other individuals.

Keyes: And you feel like it's gotten worse?

Martinez: Huh?

Keyes: You feel like it's gotten worse?

Martinez: I feel like it's gotten a little worse, yes.

Keyes: Like people respect the girls less?

Martinez: It's not that respect—I am going to tell you a story. The other day my friend was in the train and she calls me and she says I just had a big argument I said what happened she said I was in the train I was minding my own business this guy sat across from me I... just looked at him I move—I turn my eyes and all of a sudden this man is up in my face calling me a man. I said why, I said why would he.. she says no because he came and called me a man and say this and say that, and I said that's disrespectful and she, and she almost cried because she says now that I'm a woman—because she's a sex change—now that I'm a woman I get this from this person, you know, so it hurt her and I said there's disrespectful people in the street.

Keyes: Yeah.

Martinez: So I told her I says you know what you just can't pay no mind you keep on walking you walk away from these people because if you start fighting they could hurt you so, you know... but this happens to a lot of people.

Keyes: It happens to me a lot [small laughter] I'm also, you know, I'm I haven't been out for long but it's hard for sure, um, and it gets to you, you know.

Martinez: It gets to you, it gets to you. One time it happened to me too one time but it wasn't... they didn't come to me. I was I was looking out my window and from my window I could look across to the other side and there was this little young girl so the little young girl comes out of the house one day I was coming down from my house—this was years ago—and she comes to me and she says you're a guy right, you're a man and I say why you asking me that she said my mommy said—

Keyes: [gasps]

Martinez: ... you were a man so I said you know it's strange how these people are telling these little kids about other people, you know, they shouldn't do this that's why these little kids grow up and be disrespectful you know so I went I was going to go to her and give her a piece of my mind but then I said it's not worth it. But then she moved away and I never had that problem.

Keyes: Yes. [Exclaims] I personally really hate that too.

Martinez: Yeah, yeah.

Keyes: ... the parent—

Martinez: It happened—

Keyes: The influence...

Martinez: Hmmm hmm.

Keyes: So, um, are there any, you know, you've talked about some clubs—

Martinez: Hmmm hmm.

Keyes: In your entire time here are there any particular places or spaces that you've had, that have been most important to you?

Martinez: Well one of the places where I used to go to was called Las Collida years ago but that place closed now.

Keyes: Where was that?

Martinez: That was on 39th Street and 8th Avenue, 8th Avenue? Yeah, 8th Avenue more on 8th Avenue than 9th Avenue ... and we used to go there and the Gilded Grape which is many many

years ago all these places where all the trans girls we all could meet and dance and party and meet guys and all that. But you know most of these places are closed down.

Keyes: Do you have any memories from Gilded Grape or, um, what was the other place you mentioned?

Martinez: There there was, I used to go to Las Collida, Gilded Grape, um, Grapevine, um Casa Dario, La Flor, Hombres, oh my God there was a lot of place we used to go to.

Keyes: Does any particular night in any one of these places stick out to you?

Martinez: Everyone night was, every night was a night to remember.

Keyes: Ah [Laughter]

Martinez: Hmm hmmm. So every night we had great times and then we had the 220 which closed up too, we had Sally's which were, which are unforgettable to many of us.

Keyes: I've heard about Sally's, yeah.

Martinez: It's unforgettable, Sally's where all the girls used to meet.

Keyes: Ugh, ha, I wished I could have experienced it.

Martinez: Yeah, they were wonderful you never forget it once you go in there you will be there every night we used to go there every night. It wasn't a day we wouldn't go.

Keyes: Ha, it makes me so jealous. [laughs] Um, are there any aspects of the trans community that, either in the past or in the present that you really want remembered?

Martinez: That I want to remember?

Keyes: Yeah that you want other people to remember because I feel like maybe our history isn't told enough.

Martinez: Well I said—a lot of my friends ask me, straight people, um, why do I said um the trans community we all grow up we all have our family, we all want to be accepted you know and one of the things I always said is that the first thing you have to learn is respect so other people can respect you, you know because, um, many years ago if somebody see you and you were a guy and you were kissing with another guy that was, the people would think it was very disrespectful they would go crazy, oh my God look at my kids here, you know. Now it's more acceptable but I wish that people would remember the trans community for what they have brought cause there's a lot of trans people who have, who belong to the art who are painters who have done great things for the people, you know, but a lot of people just don't remember this, you know,

they always remember, do you remember, uh, Elizabeth Taylor you remember this one but you don't remember Coco Chanel you don't remember this other one but there's other people you know and especially now I remember when Christine Jergensen changed her sex in 1952 even in Puerto Rico they created a song about her. So now that's what people don't remember you know all these things all the things what the girls went through to get to this point you know. I remember all this because I said oh my God when I—one of the first Maria... I remember I think I was about thirteen or fourteen when I met her and I saw her come in and you know with her little boots and her dog and all that and the other people told me she's had sex change and I said, she's—that's what I want to be and I always lived with that in my head and now, after I finally did it, I said well Maria, here's to you [chuckles] and I remember her and I was remembering when I went to the surgery I was remembering, I was remember her.

Keyes: And she gave you that first oil shot, was that her?

Martinez: Yeah she gave me that, that push at that time. What a... this is, this is me. This is me. And I, and I did, I have done pretty well I have lived my life I have lived with my boyfriend now he's a very good man he and he's very supportive and he's always there for me.

Keyes: I would like to ask, um, what kinds of employment have you had over time?

Martinez: Well I... when I worked I was working in a sugar—no, not in a sugar in a candy factory [phone rings] many years ago, oh many many years ago and then [phone keeps on ringing] when I met George I wasn't working at that time, but what happened... when he went to jail I was left very nervous and, uh, I wasn't working so he said you not working you're not doing anything to support you—he was supporting me, anyway... and then when he finally got taken to jail I was left with all the bills I had to go to welfare and everything like this and, uh, had to work but then I think maybe it was a blessing maybe it has been a hold me back because all the men that I have had in my life they have always given me everything to this day my husband is here to support me you know so when I, I worked for a few years and I was working in the candy and I was working in different factories and, uh, I went to, to the unemployment and I went to Social Security and Social Security says you didn't work long enough so we are gonna give—when my mother passed I was, uh, out of control I became very nervous because when my mother died we went to bury her and then after we had buried her a year later they called us from the cemetery that we have to pull her back out—

Keyes: [gasps]

Martinez: And we put her in another grave—

Keyes: [gasps]

Martinez: So this was very disturbing to me so it broke me down and especially when I had to go see that when they were going to pull her and I said I can sit over here and they took her out of the thing and they said that the back could, could break in half—

Keyes: [gasps]

Martinez: So that really really blew me off—

Keyes: Oh my God.

Martinez: And I went in to um, a major depression then.

Keyes: Wow.

Martinez: So, that the doctor sent me to the SSI and I had to go beyond the SSI and they um said that I was like a major depression recurrent so now, today, I'm on SSI right now but my husband is the one that's taking most of everything so you know I think I feel very, maybe, maybe I've been blessed by always having somebody who was there for me and to this day I, I feel accomplished I have an apartment, I have a home, I have everything I need and I have somebody that there's with me and I also have a dog. [laughs]

Keyes: [Laughs] What's your dog's name?

Martinez: So that's what I've been doing for the past twenty years now.

Keyes: Can I ask if you've, have you ever been homeless?

Martinez: What?

Keyes: Have you ever been homeless?

Martinez: Homeless? I've never been homeless in that sense, like homeless-homeless I've always had a place—since I moved away from home I always kept a little room or an apartment that was, I always said no, it's a shelt—my home is very important to me, I always had to keep my home.

Keyes: Um, I just need to go back for just a second. I wanted to ask um how do you cope with your depression?

Martinez: Well, I'm going to say this my, my doctor actually prescribes Zoloft to me and, um I take it, some on and off but I don't [phone rings] I try to cope with my depression by doing something you know when I feel like I'm going to get depressed or something like that I go out I go to the park I run I walk I try to not let it overcome me because I went through with my mother, what happened with my mother so I tried not to let it—the doctor gives me my pills for my anxiety and things like that but other than that I just try to cope, you know, day to day.

Keyes: You mentioned you got surgery recently.

Martinez: Hmmm hmm.

Keyes: How did you cover the cost for that?

Martinez: Well, I, the insurance has the grant or something like that that was granted for the girls, for the trans gender girls who wanted sex reassignment surgery so when I applied for this I went to all my doctors, I went with letters from all my doctors, I went to, to Mt. Sinai and I talked to to the clinic and I asked them, I told them what I wanted and one of the things I asked the doctor was have you ever done somebody my age. So he said we've done it older—at that time they had done somebody older than me—so she said he said we've done somebody older than you and I said well I would like to do it. So I did everything that I had to do and my insurance covered the cost.

Keyes: Wow.

Martinez: Of my surgery and my vagina is working very well.

Keyes: [Laughter] I'm glad to hear that.

Martinez: [Laughter] And, uh, it's very real and it looks and everything is very there.

Keyes: Good [chuckling]

Martinez: So I'm grateful for that because I recover well and I was in the hospital like most of the girls they stay for four or five days. I only stay there—I don't count the day of the surgery because that was the day of the surgery, but I was let out of the hospital the next day.

Keyes: Wow.

Martinez: You know so I recover well.

Keyes: That's great.

Martinez: So you know. But a lot of, some of the girls that I know some of them had a problem but thank God I have had none, no problem at all.

Keyes: I'm glad to hear that. Have you ever gone to other service providers like, um, GMHC or Housing Works have you gone to some of these places?

Martinez: I went one, one time with her but, didn't they move I think they moved... and so I never went back and then the last time I used to go to this program that was on um, what was the name of the street... Westchester, yeah, Westchester. Remember that, when we—

Keyes: The [inaudible] Callen-Lorde?

Martinez: Yeah, so they had this program that it's called Next, Next, Hurtneck Care I think. Anyway I used to go there they use to have a little group there but then they didn't do it no more, so you know, and like I said sometimes you want to go to these groups but they're always so late. So I haven't been until the other day that I went to that banquet and before that I went to the other one. Other than that—

Keyes: Oh no sorry, you went to the Osborne Association.

Martinez: Yeah, the Osborne Association, yeah so we went to those, I went there with Gina and I said I wish I had this... you know I know there's some here in the city but most of them are, like I said most of them are more for the HIV people.

Keyes: Yes.

Martinez: You know. So that's what happened they, they have these groups, they're mostly for HIV.

Keyes: I see.

Martinez: You know some of the girls are positive and some of the girls go there but there's also some of the girls that are not, you know, so I think they should, um... if you are HIV, you're HIV positive if you are not you're not you know but it's like in order for us to be in the group we have to be with that, with that group too, you understand, so.

Keyes: Right. I understand.

Martinez: So most of these groups that's what they're all about lately, you know, you go there but most of them are for that.

Keyes: Hmmmm hmm. Um, in other ways, what have been some important sources of support for you over the years would you say mostly your family?

Martinez: My family—

Keyes: And your loved ones?

Martinez: My friends, my friends.

Keyes: Yes.

Martinez: My girlfriends, yes.

Keyes: Have you ever had, have you ever experienced, um... like intense loneliness here or do you feel that your friendships like with the girls and your girlfriends has always helped you?

Martinez: Yea, my girlfriends have always been—I have a few a lot of friends that have been there for me when I have needed, um, you know somebody to talk to or somebody that I that I could say you know help me with this. I have, I have a lot of good friends.

Keyes: Yes.

Martinez: Thanks God I have a lot of good friends.

Keyes: So... to kind of wrap up, um, if you wanted people to hear one thing from you, what would it be?

Martinez: If I wanted people to know to—

Keyes: To hear like what's one thing you have, one thing you have that you want to say to people, like if you only had one thing to say to people like maybe life advice, you know, what would it be?

Martinez: Just be yourself. Just be yourself, be happy with yourself this is one of my favorite sayings that I always tell my girlfriends I say the most important thing in life is to be happy with yourself, please yourself, and always think about yourself because if you don't think of yourself nobody else is, you know, so I always tell my girlfriends that I said be happy with yourself and be content with yourself and do whatever you want if you want to change your sex if you want to be a male if you want to be female whatever you want to be but be happy.

Keyes: Yes.

Martinez: Accept, you know, yourself.

Keyes: If you wanted to be remembered for one thing, what would it be?

Martinez: I did it my way. [laughs]

Keyes: [laughs]

Martinez: I did it my way.

Keyes: Ya—

Martinez: Yeah I, I'd... A lot of my girlfriends changed very young I had the chance to do it too but I never did it and I said it took me a long time but I did it, you know. But I'm here and I'm living

and I'm enjoying life and I walk down the street like any other woman and I, I live the life of any other woman. I have no kind of regrets, none.

Keyes: Is there anything else you might wanna add?

Martinez: No, I just, like I said I just want to... to maybe see the trans girls you know be more... have more... you know it's not about for us to do something about ourselves, not about anybody else but caring for ourselves like if you see somebody you know like the young girls have this— and I experienced this myself, one day I went into the bar and I, I was with somebody I don't remember who it was but I know I heard this young girl why is that lady, why is that older lady doing in the bar of the young girls. I said oh my God why is she calling me old and they're calling us old but because we're here in the bar, you know, and I said you know maybe it's time for the girls, it doesn't matter whether you're young or old, just give yourself the respect. That's what I feel. The respect is the most important thing.

Keyes: Thank you so much for talking with me today.

Martinez: Okay thank you, uh, Anna, right?

Keyes: Yes.

Martinez: Thank you so much for having me.

Keyes: Of course.