

**NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

**ALEXANDRA BURRIS AND EMMY PRITIKIN**

**Interviewer:** Antonio Rodriguez

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**Transcribed by** Aryana Twist

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**Antonio Rodriguez:** Hello, my name is Antonio Rodriguez and I will be having a conversation with Alexandra Burrus and Emmy Pritikin as part of an oral history of Brooklyn TransCore to be included in the New York City Trans Oral History Project. This is an oral history project centered on the experience of trans-identifying people. All right, thank you so much for doing this interview with me. I uh, just so you know what we're working on, I've been doing an oral history of Brooklyn TransCore uh for class projects and for Zine. After this interview, if you want to take a look at the draft scene, I can send that to you if you'd like to take a look. But what I would really love to do is ask you a few questions about your involvement with Brooklyn TransCore. And uh yeah, how's that sound? [pause] Can you hear me? Oh, I can't hear you now. What? [sighs]

**Alexandra Burrus:** Hello? I can hear you now. Yeah. There we go. All right. Hello. Yes, that is totally fine. Fire away.

**Rodriguez:** Great. First, can I get the name as you'd like it to appear in the piece with the correct spelling? And um yeah.

**Burrus:** Yeah. Name is Alexandra Burrus. A-L-E-X-A-N-D-R-A — B-U-R-R-U-S.

**Rodriguez:** And can you tell me a bit about what you do sort of as a creative and yeah, just in general, like an introduction to you as a person?

**Burrus:** Yeah. I am a drag artist in the New York drag scene. I started back in November. I also kind of do film work on the side as like sometimes camera operator, video editor, yada, yada, wherever I can fit in to make some money on the side. And currently I work in a high school, but I am transitioning out of that right now to hopefully pursue drag more full time.

**Rodriguez: Cool.** Awesome. Awesome. So can you tell me a bit about how you found Brooklyn TransCore? What was the first time you heard about it? And then what was the first time you interacted with it?

**Burrus:** Yeah. The first time I heard about Brooklyn TransCore, I was going to a benefit show at our Wicked Lady that the Dilators were putting on. Um, I had a lot of fun at that show. I met a lot of people there and I guess my energy was really radiating to everybody else, including the members of the Dilators, where their main member Sirsha had introduced themselves and told me about Brooklyn TransCore. At the time, I had already been doing some uh, volunteer work with Dave's Lesbian Bar and trying to tap into my queer community a lot more. So when I heard about Brooklyn TransCore, I was like, all right, let me pull up for the meeting. So I came to the meeting that they were having, which their first meeting happened that I was a part of. I believe it happened at, gosh, I can't remember the location. There's been so many. [laughter] I can't remember the location of the first meeting, but uh, I went there just as a participant, just to see what

it's all about. And since then, I've gone to every single meeting that there is. Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Was it a bar, that first place?

**Burris:** Oh, yes. Bar. Metro. Metropolitan. That's where it was.

**Rodriguez:** That's karaoke there, right?

**Burris:** Yeah. Yeah. Queeraoke. We were there. I believe they were doing gender experts that day. Yeah. And then they had karaoke afterwards, and we were just in the back, just talking.

**Rodriguez:** Queeraoke? That's funny.

**Burris:** Uh-huh queeraoke. Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** What's gender experts?

**Burris:** Ah gender experts is an open mic that happens at Metro every Tuesday, except the third Tuesday. And I know a lot of people from Brooklyn TransCore that go there and just go to watch the show or participate. I've been a part of it sometimes.

**Rodriguez:** Cool. You mentioned, what was it? Dave's Lesbian Bar or what is that?

**Burris:** Yeah. Dave's Lesbian Bar. It is a, so it's not actually a bar yet, but they have been raising money over the past two years with pop-up events every month, featuring live queer bands and whatever other thing that they will collaborate with to raise money to open the first lesbian bar in Queens. Ah they reached their goal the end of last year. So hopefully they're going to have an actual brick and mortar place built up by the end of the year. Fingers crossed.

**Rodriguez:** Has there really never been a les-? You know what I'm sorry, what's super funny, I just know your curtains. I have the exact same curtains.

**Burris:** Oh

**Rodriguez:** Literally right here, the exact same curtains.

**Burris:** Oh yeah. Thanks.[laughter]

**Rodriguez:** I'm sorry. Has there really never been a lesbian bar in Queens? That seems unlikely, doesn't it?

**Burris:** Not by my knowledge. If there is one, there ain't one that I know of. And if there was one, ain't nobody told me about it.

**Rodriguez:** For sure. Interesting. So when you found Brooklyn TransCore, was there something about that community that you weren't finding at, for instance, the Dave's Lesbian Bar sort of scene, or the other queer scenes that you found?

**Burris:** Yeah. I mean, I wasn't finding as many punks as I would find at Brooklyn TransCore. A lot, I feel like a lot of the queer scene around is very like-there's a lot of different types of people, but like a lot of it is very like, I don't know, I guess like mainstreamy, clubby, house music type of stuff. And that wasn't really my scene. So, you know, seeing Brooklyn TransCore and what they were doing and the types of shows they were putting on, I was like, this is definitely what I want to be a part of.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, I'm definitely interested in understanding that. Like, what was it about punk specifically in the punk, maybe aesthetic or scene that was more attractive than the conventional spaces?

**Burris:** Yeah, I mean, I feel like in the punk space that 'cause like, growing up, I listened to a lot of like, screamo, hard metal stuff. Um growing up, and I but I never really like went to shows or anything. I didn't have like a community of group of people that I could like be around. I maybe have like one or two friends that were really into it. So when I went to the Brooklyn TransCore shows, um, there was like, honestly, this big, like, communal switch of energy, like everyone is just so kind and like caring and respectful of like who you are, where you've come from, and trying their hardest to like, ensure that a space is safe and be very verbal about it. And that was just something that I very much like- I loved, I really, I really enjoyed it. Like, it felt like one of those spaces where it's like, I might not know anybody here, but like, I know that everybody around here cares about me in some interesting way. So, yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah, definitely. I think that's something that gets echoed a lot. And actually, something that's kind of interesting is when I talked to one of the founders of Brooklyn TransCore, they were saying very similar things about way back in 2007, about how there was like a mainstream uh sort of gay scene. This was before like, queerness really caught on i-i-in person, you know what I mean, as opposed to in theory. And there are gay and lesbian spaces, and they were, they're binary spaces, just really for gays and lesbians, or lesbians, they didn't mix. And, and so finding a queer space and creating a queer space and a trans space was, was part of the original goal. So it is very interesting that you're catching sort of that vibe.

**Burris:** And I'd also on that note, I'd also add that there were a lot of trans people at the Brooklyn TransCore meetings, w- what a surprise, and shows and whatnot. Um and even though like, you know, being in other like queer spaces, I feel like a lot of them, like the mainstream ones are very like, cis gay, male oriented. And it's like, there wasn't a lot of trans overlap, if there were trans people would be a very small group. Whereas when I go to these shows, or be at these meetings, that's like the majority of the people that are there. So

**Rodriguez:** What was it? Do you think you sort of noticed or were attracted to the transness first or the queerness first? [both speaking-unclear]

**Burris:** I would say I was mostly attracted to the transness first, just because I am a trans woman. And I really love having other trans people. Uh and to like- I love having people that can kind of relate to like the things that I'm going through and give me advice on things on a level where they actually like, understand what is happening with me. So that like was a huge difference for me.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. [hums] Okay, so you said that you went to a benefit show. That was your first contact with Brooklyn TransCore. How did you find out about the benefit show?

**Burris:** I found out about the benefit show, uh, after I had went to the first dilator show, which Sirsha, who's like, one of the main people running Brooklyn TransCore, fra-frah-hum, sings in. I was trying to find the right word for that. Um, yeah, and I found that show because my partner, Emmy, they had discovered it from Instagram. There was just like a post for this like, punk show happening under a bridge, and there's going to be skating and stuff. So like, I pulled up right at the end of it. They were there for most of it. But I pulled up at the end when the dilators were performing, and I really loved them. And I wanted to see them perform again. And then that's how I got to the Art With Good Lady show.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah. Were you doing drag before Brooklyn TransCore?

**Burris:** No, I was not. I didn't start doing drag until like, November of last year. And I believe the Brooklyn TransCore meeting I went to was in, I think it was in like, June or July. It was definitely like in this like summertime, like it's a lot warmer. Yeah, so only I started doing drag like months after that.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. Had you been thinking about doing it? Or were they related in some way?

**Burris:** I was thinking about doing it. It wasn't really a related thing. It was kind of like, the drag was kind of something that just kind of fell on to me. I kind of just walked into it. I met someone who was just saw me and was like, you want to do drag, which funny enough, that person I met, also helps. I wouldn't um-uh I wouldn't say organize, but like they come to the Brooklyn TransCore meetings are very close with all the organizers and like helps out there too. So there was like interlap between like the social groups, but I didn't know of that until that.

**Rodriguez:** Hm, Okay, that's interesting. Who was that person?

**Burris:** Hazel, also known as Unintelligible Screaming.

**Rodriguez:** Oh, yeah, I see their name on the flyers, but I've never met them.[pause] One second. Okay, so you said you've been involved with Brooklyn TransCore, I guess now would be about a year, right? Or two years?

**Burris:** Yeah, about a year.

**Rodriguez:** Cool. So during the course of that, had you heard anything about uh how it was founded, or any of the history behind the group?

**Burris:** Ah not really. All I knew was that apparently it had been around for a very long time. I had no idea. Like I've literally never heard of Brooklyn TransCore in my entire life. And usually when I tell people about it, they've never heard of it either. So yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Was it surprising to find nearly a 10, 15 year old organization? Or was that something you expected?

**Burris:** Hell yeah, I was super surprised. Like, 'cause when even when Saoirse first told me about it, it didn't really seem like it was this very big thing. They were kind of just like, yeah, we have this like, uh organization that like, distributes instruments to other trans bands and like support each other and whatnot. And I was just like, cool. So I knew in the first meeting I went to, there was so many people that pulled up like I was not expecting that at all. So yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. Okay, cool. Let's see. I just have a couple of more notes in general, like themes we've been talking about. Um what uh, what, this might not apply to you as much just because you were coming out of COVID and you got involved with them after COVID. But how was the pandemic, you know, the two years of quarantine for you? And was there anything sort of pertinent to Brooklyn TransCore or coming out into post COVID life that's relevant that you'd like to share?

**Burris:** Yeah, I mean, I mean, hell, everything has to fucking do with COVID these goddamn days, you know, even with Brooklyn TransCore. And like, I think one of the things that really gravitated me towards going to the meetings and continuing going to the meetings was that two year gap of like not having any type of community whatsoever. And I mean, during COVID, I was living with my parents still. And then I moved out with my partner, like halfway through that whole lockdown situation. And I was deeply in need of community. It's why I did the Dave's event stuff because I got to meet so many cool people and make some new friends. And then I was just super interested in joining up with Brooklyn TransCore and doing more with them just to fill that void that I had over those past two years.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely. Um what do you think- So now that you're sort of more involved with Brooklyn TransCore, what do you think about the future? Is there anything you're working on that you'd like to work on the group with the group on or what's going on?

**Burris:** Yeah, there's a lot. There's a couple things that I'm really interested in. Like, I know that Brooklyn TransCore is really interested in putting on more like all ages shows. And I am so down for that because like, I didn't get to go to shows when I was a kid, there was nary a show I could go to that was for my age demographic. And even if there was, it was a little hard to get to. Um

and I think that uh, and actually, soon, what's going to be happening soon is we're going to be putting on an all ages show that I am going to be a part of and teaching some of those young kids how to mosh properly. Because for me personally, like, I was never someone who's into like, being in mosh pits or being in that type of scene or whatever, it always looks super dangerous and weird. And I wasn't into it. My partner really encouraged me to get into it at some point. And then I did. And I was very thankful that my first mosh pit that I was in was around queer and trans people. Because again, we all have this kind of collective energy of like, we don't want to hurt each other, we want to have fun and maybe be a little rowdy. But at the end of the day, we want to look out for each other. And I wanted more of that. And since going to all of these Brooklyn TransCore shows, and even shows that aren't Brooklyn TransCore, and seeing how those different uh environments kind of interact, those different mosh pits can interact, some can be really freaking scary. And sometimes some of those shows where it is kind of scary, there might be someone who maybe isn't a fully fledged adult and maybe hasn't been in a pit before and doesn't fully understand the unspoken rules of the pit and whatnot. And I'm just very interested in making those unspoken rules, spoken rules, so that more and more people can get involved in this scene. If it's something that they're interested in doing, they can be a part of it without having to fear for their lives or whatever. So.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah, I think the mosh pit is sort of central to, like, you know about the pillars of hip hop, right? The mosh pit is a pillar of punk identity, right? And I have a lot of thoughts about it and sort of its usefulness. But I would love to hear from your perspective as to why it's an attractive prospect and what are your rules?

**Burrus:** Yeah

**Rodriguez:** Give me the pitch. What do you want to teach them?

**Burrus:** Yeah, totally. Well, I mean, for me, I feel like one of the reasons why I feel like mosh pits are very important is, like, it is this controlled space where you are able to kind of, like, A: present however you fucking wish without any judgment from anybody, and B: also just, like, physically moving with your community in this kind of, like, almost an exercise, almost. Uh it really just, like, gets your adrenaline going, gets your emotions going, gets your feelings out in a more, like, physical way. Sometimes it can be a little more visceral than others, and sometimes it could just be a little more pushy and shovey. And, you know, not all mosh pits are created equal. It really just depends on who's in it. But, like, if I were to- for me, my rules of kind of, like, the mosh pit, the things that I like to see and really hate seeing, first thing is, like, firstly, no drinks in the pit. Don't bring your drinks to the fucking pit. You're going to drop it. It's going to slip. Everyone's going to fall, and then it's a falling hazard, and that's not cool. We don't like that. You should always, if someone falls, you should always pick them up the moment you see someone falls. It should be the goal of the whole group to kind of, like, guide other people away from the

part of the pit where people have fallen. Try to pick them up as best as you possibly can. Be as aware as possible, you know. It's nice to go out and drink a lot, but, you know, sometimes it's nice to also, like, not drink too much, especially if you're planning on throwing your body around at people, because sometimes you might end up vomiting or something, and it's just not a good time for everybody else. Um no karate. No karate. I'm sure there's so—there seems to be people that, like, live and die by that shit, but not me. I don't want to see any spin kicks, no drop kicks, no fucking judo flips or whatever in a mosh pit. It just doesn't—it doesn't belong. Like, I'm all for the pushing and the shoving. It's the active hitting and, like, that stuff I cannot stand. I absolutely cannot stand it. I guess if, like, you and your buddy have, like, a little—you've had a conversation, and you guys are willing to do that to each other, then sure, but you shouldn't be doing that to strangers who you don't know and don't know what they've been through and don't know what they're going through and whatnot. Um and, of course, don't pull people into the pit who don't want to be in the pit. If people are on the outskirts, you don't just grab them and throw them in. Like, they have to willingly go in on their own accord, you know? Um and I guess the last rule onto that would be, if you're not going to be a part of the pit, support the pit. Be around the pit close enough where if someone who is in the pit and is actively engaging in that, maybe their body gets flung and they're going to be going out of the pit, but they still want to be in, you should be there to push them right back in and just keep it going. Because that's ultimately how you stop each other from falling, is by just pushing each other back in. There's just so many bodies going around that it's, like, it's impossible to fall. So, yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, those are solid rules. Solid rules. Yeah, the karate thing—it's funny that you call it karate because I never thought of it as karate, but yeah. I remember when that first started happening back in the day. There was—I went to this show once in, like, 2005, and it was weird because it was, like, in a big open warehouse and they had a wrestling ring set up for some reason.

**Burrus:** Ok

**Rodriguez:** So, the guy was—the singer was like, if you want to mosh, you're down here. If you want to dance- that's what they called it, hardcore dancing, you're up on the stage. And so they created two separate pits for people who wanted to hardcore dance, like the karate thing, and people who wanted to mosh normally. But it's so weird and, like, the only time I've ever seen people get really hurt is when they're doing that, you know, breaking an arm or something.

**Burrus:** Exactly.

**Rodriguez:** It's kind of ridiculous.

**Burrus:** Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** So, yeah, I think—I have a lot of thoughts about the pit and why it's interesting and important, and I think it always comes back to this idea of—it's like this perfect way to process trauma in a safer space. It's not—it's never 100% safe, but it is as safe as—it allows a kind of, like, therapeutic play, you know what I mean, that is impossible to find anywhere else. It is unique in the sense that anyone can come in and do this thing, and uh it sort of—it did not—it defies a lot of societal rules about how we are to physically interact with each other. But you are given your consent when you enter that space, right?

**Burris:** Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** And it's—I don't know, I've wanted to write something over the years about that. Like, the punk scene, the hardcore scene, relationships to trauma and processing trauma. I don't know. Just a thought. I don't know if you have anything to say about that, but.

**Burris:** No, I totally do, because, like, for me, every time I get into a pit, I feel like I am always channeling this, like, negative energy that I've just been, like, holding in and want to release. That's what I love about the mosh pits. It's, like, it's a nice way to get out a lot of aggression uh in a space where everyone is under the same kind of—ideally, where everyone has essentially consented to uh dealing with that. You know, when I'm in the pit, again, I don't do karate or anything, but, you know, I'm pushing people. I'm shoving people. I'm not only trying to process all the shit that I have gone through today, but I am also trying to do it in a way where I'm not necessarily harming anyone specifically, or at least trying to harm them in a way that's, like, very damaging, you know? Because, like, every time I get out of a mosh pit, you know, you're gonna end up with some bruises here and there, you know? But that's all part of the process, I feel. It's like you're quite literally taking your anger out on strangers who are, like, cool with it. So it's, like, kind of cool.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, being about aggression, but not necessarily being about violence.

**Burris:** Yeah, yeah, exactly.

**Rodriguez:** Okay, that's super interesting. All right, let's see. There's a whole section in the current version of the zine about trans day of remembrance. I don't know if you care to share any thoughts about that.

**Burris:** Uh [pause] I would say, I guess, not really. Because to be honest, I didn't even really know trans day of remembrance was a thing until, like, I guess two years ago. I still don't really fully understand, like, the whole vibe of it, aside from just remembering all the trans people we lost, which is, like, totally cool. I do that every fucking day. So, yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Okay, cool. Um, well, honestly, that's it. I don't have any other specific questions for you, and thank you so much for participating. Are there any other thoughts you'd like to share, or any other notes you want to give me?

**Burris:** Um, no, not really. Not really, yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Tell me again about Hazel. How were they involved with the core?

**Burris:** Yeah, um, they are also, I think, friends with Sirsha and other members of the Dilators. And when I met them, because I don't think I saw them at, like, the first meeting that I went to. I think I might have saw them at, like, maybe the second or third meeting that I went to, and that was before that I even started doing drag. So, like, we, like, had seen each other, but, like, never really spoke to each other until I met them at a show that they were doing. Um so I'm not 100% sure how she, like, got that in, but, like, she's in there, and she helps out wherever she can, just like me. Like, I wouldn't say, like, she's an organizer, per se. Just, like, I wouldn't say I'm an organizer. I'm more of just, like, a big fan and volunteer, so.

**Rodriguez:** Okay, cool. Um, awesome. Is your partner around? Do you think they would want to talk as well?

**Burris:** Um, yeah. [talking with partner] Hey, Emmy, would you want to talk about your stuff with Brooklyn TransCore and whatnot? They're chewing on some food right now. But, uh, they're gonna sub in here.

**Rodriguez:** Alright thank you so much.

**Burris:** Yeah, of course.

[pause while Emmy Pritykin enters]

**Emmy Pritykin:** Hi.

**Rodriguez:** Hey there, how are you?

**Emmy Pritykin:** I'm doing good, how are you?

**Rodriguez:** Good. Um, to start off, are you okay with me recording this?

**Pritykin:** Uh, sure.

**Rodriguez:** Cool. Uh, can I get the name you'd like to appear by and the correct spelling?

**Pritykin:** Uh, Emi, E-M-M-Y. Just Emmy? Uh, and last name, P-R-I-T-Y-K-I-N.

**Rodriguez:** Okay, your pronouns?

**Pritykin:** They, them.

**Rodriguez:** And you know what? I'm sorry, I didn't ask Alexandra their pronouns. Could you?

**Pritykin:** Uh, she, her.

**Rodriguez:** [pause] Okay, thank you so much. Um, so Alexandra mentioned that the first time they went to a Brooklyn TransCore show, you found out about it first. How did you find out about it?

**Pritykin:** Um, if I remember correctly, I think it was through this Instagram page called Chaos Calendar, and they would post, like, you could just, like, submit your gig and they would just post it. So I saw it on there and I was like, oh, this is in L.A.C., really close to where I live, and it's, like, in some random area. Um, so I just decided to go.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. What about it attracted you? Is it just that it was a punk show, or?

**Pritykin:** It was a punk show. I've never been to a skate punk show or, like, a generator show, so that was a, I thought that would be cool to experience.

**Rodriguez:** Cool. And, uh, what was your, uh, impression the first time you went to that show?

**Pritykin:** Um, it was, like, a very, I've never, like, I think that was one of the first times I really, like, um, started to get into that community. So I was like, I don't know anyone here, everyone here knows each other, but, like, it seems chill. Um, it was just, it just seemed, like, a good time. It just seemed like, you know, people hanging out, brought a generator, and then just started, like, playing. It was, uh, right outside of this, like, FedEx, like, loading zone. So there would be, like, bands playing and then massive trucks just, like, pulling out of the driveway right behind them.

**Rodriguez:** Um, do you remember who else played?

**Pritykin:** Ooo

**Rodriguez:** Besides Dylators?

**Pritykin:** Unfortunately, I don't remember the band names. I, like, really, I tried to find the flyer for it, but I couldn't find it.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. Yeah. So that was about a year ago, right?

**Pritykin:** That was in June, last June.

**Rodriguez:** Last June, yeah. So what, um, uh, I mean, now that you've had sort of a year of experience with Brooklyn TransCore, what would you say are its defining characteristics for you? Like, what's important about, or what's interesting about this group to you?

**Pritykin:** Yeah, I think they're all about, like, building community, mutual aid, and really just, like, opening up the floor to everyone that shows up to voice their needs. Whether it be, like, needing to find a band member, um needing community support, or just, like, advertising themselves as their artists or what they do. Um it just is a space where people, like, build each other up.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah, definitely. Um, one second. [pause]You're in a band, right?

**Pritykin:** Yes.

**Rodriguez:** Were you in a band before Brooklyn TransCore?

**Pritykin:** I was, but, uh, we hadn't played any shows yet. We were still trying to find band members at that point.

**Rodriguez:** What were they called? The group?

**Pritykin:** The group? Uh, Total Wreck.

**Rodriguez:** And, uh, since getting involved with Brooklyn TransCore, have you done any shows with them, or how has that whole process been going for you?

**Pritykin:** So, I haven't done any shows through Brooklyn TransCore, but they've helped with, like, promoting the shows that we have done. Um, and I've also, like, gone to some meetings and, um, found some drummers to try out through that as well.

**Rodriguez:** Cool. Uh, what do you play?

**Pritykin:** I play bass and I sing.

**Rodriguez:** Are you the lead for the band?

**Pritykin:** Um, that's a good question. [laughter] It's me and my friend Jordan. We both sing and play bass, and some songs I sing on, some songs she sings on, some songs we both sing on, so kind of, we're kind of both lead.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah. And, uh, had you been in bands before that, or that was your first group?

**Pritykin:** Um, I had been in, like, a two-piece kind of thing in high school, but we never played any shows. Um, but this was the first time I had, like, met someone that was, like, as, you know, serious about it and as, like, actually, like, wanted to get to the point of playing shows and, like, making stuff. Um, so yeah, it was technically my first band.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah. Um, I mean, why, why, why a band? What's interesting about it for you? As opposed to anything else, you could be, I don't know, a painter. [laughter]

**Pritykin:** Yeah, it was funny that you mentioned painter because, like, I was gonna go into that, but I think, like, music as a creative outlet is the most freeing for me. Um, I grew up taking like, art classes, drawing classes, and I think there was a lot of things put into my head of, like, what is the right way to make a piece of art. And I had never taken any music classes. I'm self-taught. And I feel like because of that, I don't have this kind of, like, voice in my head of some authority figures saying that what I'm making is wrong. Um, so yeah, it just feels like the most freeing way to express myself and just something that happens naturally. Like, I, being in a band or not, like, I'm gonna write songs about the stuff that I'm feeling and, you know, why not get a group of people and, like, you know, make it good and play for people, you know? Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** What are your songs about so far?

**Pritykin:** A lot of them have to do with, like, gender dysphoria, um, having chronic pain and what that's like living in an ableist, capitalist world. Um, [pause] you know, struggling with, me and Jordan have similar, like, experiences in writing themes, um, about, like, struggling with depression and all of that. So I think those are the main themes of our work so far.

**Rodriguez:** You know, it's interesting. I think you're, you're probably the ninth, eighth or ninth person I've interviewed for this project. And I, I need to check my notes, but I think you're actually the first one to mention gender dysphoria.

**Pritykin:** Really?

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, which is not expected. I just want to do a quick search real quick because that feels not true. Let me see here. [pause] Yeah, you, you're totally the first person to mention it out loud.

**Pritykin:** Interesting.

**Rodriguez:** Which is interesting. Uh, so I know what you mean. I know what that is. Could you describe gender dysphoria to someone- as though, uh, I didn't, as though it was, you explained to someone who had never heard of it.

**Pritykin:** Yeah. Um, I think gender dysphoria for me, like, as a non-binary person might be a little different than, uh, as a trans person who isn't non-binary might explain it. But for me, it just feels like there are parts of my body that I was physically born with or developed over time that just don't align with, um, [pause] who I am. Um, like I'm getting top surgery in a month and a huge reason I'm doing that is because I have a lot of dysphoria about that. And, um, yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah of course. Um, hang on one second. I have a follow-up for you. [pause] Um, before Brooklyn TransCore, had you, um, uh, been interacting with any, any LGBTQ plus groups, any sort of community spaces that, uh, that you found useful or helpful, especially with, i-in

reference to like gender dysphoria, like when did you learn about that? Who did you learn about it from? What was the original idea?

**Pritykin:** Um, well, I think Alex mentioned earlier, um, Dave's Lesbian Bar. I think that was since us moving out, like that's been, that was the first kind of queer community that we found, especially it was like all these events were like down the street from us, um, which was really, really cool. Cause you could just walk around the corner and there was like this, uh, block party of like queer happiness. That was kind of crazy [laughter] to see. Um, but like gender stuff in general, um, I think like a lot of people during the pandemic and quarantine, um, you spend a lot of time thinking about stuff.[laughs] And I think that also just proved to me like gender is performance. And when you're not forced to, when you're pulled out of the like everyday life that was, I guess like 2019, I started to like think about who I was and a lot of feelings about gender. I had pushed down, started to come up because there was no reason for me to hide. I was just like in my room, you know? Um, [pasue] so yeah, I guess that was when I realized I was non-binary and then that also made me realize why I felt the way I did about my body and why I wanted to get top surgery and all of that.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. Was that concept of non-binary gender identity, something you had prior to quarantine or is it something you found during quarantine? Like literally the terminology.

**Pritykin:** Um, I like definitely knew about it, but I think a part of me like, didn't want to look into it because I was like afraid of finding something out about myself. Um, but I definitely like was aware of like what being trans was or being non-binary was.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. And then how did you find, how did you meet Alexandra?

**Pritykin:** Oh, we're going back in time.[laughing] We met, uh, when I was in my, my senior year of high school and she was, I think she just started college at like a mutual friends party.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. Just some random party.

**Pritykin:** Some random party. Um, and we became friends and then after a little while we started dating. Uh, we were very different people back then. Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah. Uh, how old were you in 2019?

**Pritykin:** I was 19.

**Rodriguez:** Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Of course. Very cool. Um, let me just check one more thing. I honestly think, I think that's it. Is there anything you would like to talk about or you'd like to mention in regards to this project?

**Pritykin:** Um, well, I guess I forgot to ask like what the whole project is about in general.

**Rodriguez:** Oh, I should have started with that. So yeah, I, I've been working on an oral history, uh, of Brooklyn TransCore and that includes, uh, I interviewed, uh, some of the founding members, which was 15 years ago in 2007. Uh, most of them are no longer involved in Brooklyn TransCore just because they've moved on to other, other projects, other things. Uh, uh, I interviewed a lot of people, um, in the current group, uh, of organizers. And what's really fascinating is there really is this whole cohort of people who, who after the quarantine came back out and were just, were just like ravenous for community. And so there is this massive new contingent of, of queer youth really who are interested in doing Brooklyn TransCore. So it's really, it's really fascinating, um, seeing it happen. Uh, I've been working with Brooklyn TransCore, uh, since 2014. That's when I first moved into the city, uh, mostly through Punk Island. Brooklyn TransCore was always central to Punk Island. It was one of our central groups. And so I knew that older cohort and I did a lot of work with that older group. Um, so it's very, it's very interesting to see the difference between what, what they were dealing with then and what they're dealing with now. And a lot of ways, um, there's some overlap, but really there's, there's a lot more, um, community and intentionality around queer spaces and trans spaces being centered, as opposed to way back then when there was really only gay and lesbian spaces for gay and lesbian people. And it wasn't for, if you didn't fit, if you were like bisexual or anything else, you know, uh, you were sort of shunned because there was still solidarity around that back then. And, um, so it is, it is very interesting to just hear from people and hear about really how COVID affected them, uh, how they were, how they found Brooklyn TransCore, what they find valuable about Brooklyn TransCore and, um, you know, what they plan on doing in the future, which by the way, what do you plan on doing in the future? Not just with Brooklyn TransCore, but with your own artistic life?

**Pritykin:** Um, I'm kind of trying to figure that out. Um, being in a total wreck has been like the most fulfilling thing that I've done this past year. Um, I would love to just continue that and see where that goes. We keep writing songs, so, you know, um, we're hopefully going to record an album in the winter, at least that, um, I plan on recording a live EP situation in the next month. Um, but other than that, I'm trying to get into color grading as a career. Um, I feel like I'm in kind of a transitional period with career stuff, but that's the goal.

**Rodriguez:** Did you go to school after high school?

**Pritykin:** Yeah, I went to the School of Visual Arts for film.

**Rodriguez:** And you got a degree or no?

**Pritykin:** Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** You got a film degree?

**Pritykin:** Yeah, cinematography.

**Rodriguez:** Okay, cool.

**Pritykin:** Yeah.

**Rodriguez:** Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. One second. All right, cool. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about or go over?

**Pritykin:** Um, no, I think that pretty much covers it. Maybe Alex might have some closing.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, yeah. Thank you so much.

**Pritykin:** Because I know that she's a little more involved with the Brooklyn TransCore organizational stuff.

**Rodriguez:** Thank you so much.

**Pritykin:** Yeah, of course. Thank you for interviewing.

[pause]

**Burris:** I'm back.

**Rodriguez:** Cool. Well, thank you so much. Did you think of anything you wanted to talk about while we were off?

**Burris:** [pause] Oh, something else that I would, I guess, like to say is like something that I'm also very excited for. It's something I just remembered. Um, is a kind of just this, there's a really big, I feel queer punk boom that is happening and has been happening over the past year. Uh and I noticed this specifically, and this also still ties into Dave's Lesbian Bar. It always ties into Dave's Lesbian Bar. Um, I noticed this because, you know, at Dave's Lesbian Bar, they always put on shows and they always allow for bands to be playing. And that was kind of one of the times where I got to see like all queer bands just like playing and rocking out. And I started following them and seeing what they're doing. And I get to see these other like queer bands that are doing all this crazy shit, only to come to learn that like all these bands have like been created within like the past year. Like they're all so new. Uh, and the level of talent is absolutely insane. So I'm like extremely excited to see how that kind of like affects the mainstream in a way. Because a lot of times when I tell people about like the shows I'm going to do, the things that I'm seeing, they're like, oh, well, I guess punk is back now. And I'm like, did it ever leave? Was it ever gone? Like, I don't know. It seems like all these people were around doing stuff. And now we're all just like finally coming together and really expressing ourselves super outwardly. Um and I can also attest a lot of that to the stuff that Hazel on Unintelligible Screaming has been doing, because they are very much an advocate for like putting on shows that are not just drag shows, shows that are both punk shows and drag shows, where you get to see a sick band do some crazy shit, get in the mosh pit, and then like see some really out there drag that isn't the

cookie cutter shit. It's like the future is looking very, very bright for this scene. And I'm like exponentially excited to see where it's going to go. And I'm even more happy to be a part of it. So yeah, that's my last two cents.

**Rodriguez:** Perfect. That's perfect. Thank you so much. And so I just emailed you version one, which is, I did it last semester. And so there's a lot more history stuff. But feel free to take a look. If you see any notes or have any notes, feel free to send them back to me. But I'll be printing out version two. So whatever, really this month is the last month I'll be working on it. So I really want to get a stable version that's printable. And we'll see how many I can print or what I can do. But yeah, keep in touch. And I'm sure I'll see you around soon.

**Burris:** Hell yeah, definitely.

**Rodriguez:** Are you going to be around on uh, I think there's a benefit show, a Punk Island benefit show.

**Burris:** On the 23rd?

**Rodriguez:** Yeah is that? Oh, yeah, that's the one that yes, that one.

**Burris:** Yes, I will be performing. I will be performing at that show.

**Rodriguez:** Oh, really?

**Burris:** Yeah, I will be there.

**Rodriguez:** Yeah, I'll definitely catch. I'm gonna be there selling Punk Island merch,

**Burris:** Hell yeah.

**Rodriguez:** But I'll definitely see you at that. All right, let me stop the recording before we get off.