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Interview #8 Abstract and Transcript, 2001

Carrie Noble Kline

Anonymous

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#8

Tape Side I

Carrie Nobel Kline: See how we're doing here.

#8:

CNK: You can use any voice you want.

#8: Now what do you want--?

CNK: OK.

#8: Are you actually going to play this tape for other--?

BREAK

#8: Ground control to pilot. Pilot to ground control. Hi. For the record and posterity I call myself ... and--. OK, go ahead and start with your interview.

CNK: What's your date of birth ... ?

#8: ... 1948.

CNK: Can you--? Can we start by talking about your people and where you were raised?

#8: Well I was actually raised right here in this house that you are sitting in. I was born in Baltimore, but my father died when I was three and my mother moved back in here with her family: her mother and, which would have been my grandmother, and one of her brothers, my uncle, because my grandfather had passed away I believe not too long--.

Well actually he passed away after we came here about 4 or 5 years. So basically it was

my mother, my grandmother, my uncle, and my brother and I were the ones that lived here. I don't think I left anyone out anyway. But--. And my mother never remarried, because she took basically care of her mother and that sort of thing. Do you want to prompt me? I have no idea what you want to hear.

CNK: This is great. Tell me about those people who were around you.

#8: Well my grandmother was very dominating. Well all of this is a little bit of pop psychology on my part after reading about relationships and how they work and stuff like that. But in retrospect she always seemed to be kind of--. I mean I know you are supposed to love your grandmother, and I guess I did, but she was kind of a bully actually, bullied my mother. And of course grandchildren don't necessarily like to listen to their grandparents either. As far as my uncle was concerned, he was like a father to me, except that he didn't feel like he really should be correcting me all the time. So it was He was a male role model, but he wasn't a forceful male role model. Now whether that had anything to do with my gender thing and cross-dressing or not I don't know. I've read so much opinions on how this stuff might work that I don't have any real ideas. Some of what I say may be what I've read somewhere, and some of it may be what I really think on my own. I'm not sure what I think, but anyway.

Even when I was like pre-teens and stuff I used to be fascinated with especially make-up and things like that, and of course being a fat little kid in a redneck community I deliberately went to the opposite extreme and--. Say that I hated it, I didn't like mom's make-up when she wore it, and keep that stuff away from me and all--. You know, everything just opposite that, so no one would know what I really would like to do, have,

or be into. As far as actually being female, I don't know that I really cared one way or another, but I wanted to be free to dress like I wanted to and I knew there was--.

Especially back when I was young there was no way to do it in public at all. I mean now I can do it in public, but I just don't do it around where I live, because face it, it's still a redneck area and people might be a little bit hostile. Now most of the neighbors know about it and a lot of my family I think. I know some of my family does. I don't know what all of the neighbors know about it, but--. Since I don't flaunt it out in public nobody says anything about it. I have an aunt that--. Well I don't know if she's really into it or not, but she gave me some jewelry for Christmas, so that counts a little bit I guess. So she at least is sympathetic. My brother tolerates it. He just doesn't really want to know too much about it, that's all. And I have a couple uncles that I've heard secondhand know about it, but we don't discuss it, so I don't know how they feel about it one way or another. They probably don't really care, but anyway back to--.

Back to my warped childhood, et cetera, et cetera. This feels weird. I know I'm talking into the microphone. I know I should be talking directly to you, but I'm--. I know it's going on tape so I'm just talking and rattling and--.

CNK: Well you'll get used to the mic in a couple minutes probably.

#8: Yeah, but I've used mics all the time on stage, but that's a different story. This is catching my innermost thoughts, et cetera, or supposedly is. So anyway where was I? Back to when I was growing up, like I said I wanted to be into that stuff and--. Like the make-up and the cross-dressing and all that, but didn't have the nerve, so I went the other way. And back when I was younger, and especially when I was in the Service--. I was in

the Navy for four years. I had like the full beard and all of that stuff, so nobody would know what I really wanted, but I'd sometimes I'd still sneak around and use make-up and stuff and hide and do it. That went on for a long time. As a matter of fact until about 8 or 10 years ago when I finally got nerve enough to shave the mustache off and at least in private sneak around and dress as if I were female and--. This is--. I'm trying to collect my thoughts, and my head is rather empty this morning so excuse that.

CNK: That's OK.

#8: Pause it a second. Let me think a minute what I want to say.

PAUSE

#8: So anyway while I was away in college I used to sneak around and wear make-up, and I actually got nerve enough to go out to a thrift store once and bought a wig. I thought that was a big thrill or something. And I lived off campus and--. I think one of, not my roommates, because we all had separate rooms in this little house, but one of the other guys in the house was gay, so I heard. But I didn't know anything about gay or anything like that and. Basically for the record, if anybody wants to know, I think I'm the, except for priests, I'm the last living 52-year-old male virgin in the world. So be that as it may. Came close once, but. Close but no cigar. So anyway enough of that, but on with--.

CNK: Close to having sex with a woman?

#8: Close to having sex with a woman once. I was pretty much willing, but she was one of these people who said, "No, stop" when she didn't want me to stop. So I stopped anyway, and that was the end of it, so. And then years later when I saw her again and I

told her about all this she said, "Well I tried to change you, but it didn't work." And I said, "I was always brought up that 'no' meant 'no.'" So she didn't say anything after that, so it's--. I don't know whether I'm glad I didn't go through with it or sorry I didn't go through with it. But I didn't go through with it, so that's basically irrelevant then isn't it?

CNK: So you wound up in a household with a gay man though and that was--. Was that?

#8: I didn't know him really. Somebody else told him told me he was gay, and he acted a little bit effeminate. And I thought that was interesting, but it wasn't really--. I wanted to look female and act female. It was--. It wasn't that I was particularly, and I still don't think I'm particularly, interested in sex with men. Although to be absolutely honest there was a guy I used to work with at--. At the place I used to work at--. That I work at, that he used to work there, that I had kind of a crush on, because I thought he looked like a burned out rock and roll star. But I don't tell him. I've never told him that, and I don't intend to, because he's my friend as well, and I know he's straight since he has a couple of kids and been married a few times. And besides I don't really think I would want to have sex with him. He's just--. He just is attractive to me. I mean not necessarily--. It's weird.

Here's another tangent I'll get off onto since you're going to edit this and cross-reference it later. Is that sometimes I feel--. I know I'm the same person when I'm dressed male or dressed female, but I feel different. Basically taught and schooled myself to have a different persona. Why I actually feel different--. This doesn't make much

sense the way I'm saying it, or it doesn't to me even, but when I'm being my ... [*name of female persona*] self I try to act and feel as feminine as I can imagine I should be, because it fits the role that I'm trying to be. But when I'm in my male phase mode or whatever, as I am now, in case anybody that's listening to this tape can't see me so they know--. I don't try to be macho, because that would be hypocritical, but I--. When I'm not dressed female I try to act male, in other words male mannerisms and that sort of thing. But when I'm dressed female I try not to get out of the persona even though it's--. It's a persona up to a point. I mean it's persona to the point that I--. It's a protective thing as much as anything else and and I--. Because from all I've read and learned and from some of the ridicule I had in the early times of going out in public where I didn't pass really *all that well*, I learned that I needed to perfect the mannerisms and all that so that--. It was just a protective thing so people wouldn't see through me, and all of that kind of stuff. But and--.

CNK: Do some--. Do male mannerisms or female mannerisms feel more comfortable to you?

#8: Truthfully it doesn't make much difference. I'm comfortable with me being me. Although I would like to dress and live the female role, as far as the sexual part I could care less. I'm not looking for sex partners. There might be fantasies sometimes, but that's it. I'm not--. Like I said earlier I'm a 52 year old virgin, and even if I had a sex change, which I don't think I could afford, I probably would still stay one. So I'll probably die an old maid, or an old bachelor, or whichever gender I happen to die in.

But that's how that goes. Now I'm all confu--. You ask me some questions, because I'm confused at where I've been on this interview and where I'm at.

CNK: Yeah. I'm sorry I interrupted you. You were doing fine.

#8: Well interrupt me some more, because I--. Ask me some questions you want to know.

CNK: I want to know when it first--. You know what it felt like, and tell me the story about the first time that you wanted to wear make-up.

#8: I don't remember. Now this is pop psychology on my part from what I've read and what tried to figure myself out. I don't know if it applies to me or if it doesn't, but being in a family that was basically female dominated--. Well my uncle was--. He was all--. I mean he was totally masculine and all that sort. There was no femininity or anything about that, but he was pretty much, I won't say bossed around by the women in the household, but he wasn't--. He wasn't a dominate figure. So maybe part of it was maybe that all these women have all the power, maybe I want to be one too. I mean look what they get to do and all that stuff, so that could be part of it. But this is just a little pop psychology on my part trying to figure it out. I don't know. I don't know if that's why I was that way, but I do know that when I was pre-teen and maybe early teen I always had this thing about make-up, and if we are going to be totally honest, part of it in the beginning was sexual. I mean I got kick out of doing it, a sexual thrill out of it and. And of course the usual masturbation thing, being dressed up that that had been in to it too. And that's gotten less as the years go by. It's not so much anymore the sexual thrill of it. I just--. It's just something I want. And truthfully I must want it pretty bad or I wouldn't

go to all the extremes that I do to do it and to take all the chances that I do with the usual ridicule and stuff from being in a redneck area, and I've learned to get very good at it so that I don't get much of that. And actually haven't gotten hardly any of it anymore as far as ridicule is concerned. Ask another question.

CNK: So what did that feel like being you then and having, your being interested in make-up and having sort of an alternative life that nobody knew about? What was going on in your head?

#8: Oh I basically thought I was a weird freak. At that time living out in the country I'd never heard of drag queens or anything like that. I was definitely redneck type. I thought I was probably the only one--. Well not the only one, but I thought I was one of few like me. And eventually I--. Well actually what made me open up more to--. Might as well skip ahead several years--. Was oh probably about 10 or 12 years ago I started looking in the library for more information on things. I thought, well maybe I'm not the only person that's like that. Well I knew I wasn't the only person--. I knew I wasn't one of the stereotypical gay guys that go around saying, "Oh hi honey. How are you?" and that kind of stuff with the really effeminate swishy thing, but still being specifically male and you know deliberately sexually trying to attract other gay males in that way. I knew I wasn't like that and wasn't interested in it. I have nothing against people like that, and that's the truth. Some of my friends are gay, or some of my acquaintances. I won't say close friends, because I don't have very many of those around here, but anyway. I went to one of the libraries and started reading up on it and I found a, in a footnote in a, I believe it was a psychology book or something, a--. Some information about a person that had

been publishing a magazine for crossdressers and all that sort of thing. Was called Tapestry. And I forget the person that was the publisher of it, but anyway she had been a life long crossdresser and all of that. So I wrote this person and the--. Actually I don't believe the name of the magazine was Tapestry, it was a different magazine she'd been publishing for a time. So I wrote this person, and she wrote me back a letter saying that that magazine was long gone, and there was a new one out called Tapestry that I might be interested in subscribing to it. Which I ended up doing and they have--. They send all of their stuff in unmarked envelopes and the whole thing for the comfort of the people that are, that don't want people to know about their crossdressing or transgenderism or whatever.

CNK: Do you distinguish the two?

#8: I don't know. I've read so much one way or another, I don't know what I think and what I've read. So it's probably irrelevant what I say basically. I don't know. It could be that one is just a greater degree than the other, I don't know. Of course anything I say on this will be something that I've heard somebody--. Read about somebody else saying, so I don't know if there's much point in me--. As far as me, I don't know, and basically if you really want to know the truth, I don't care. I mean why should I? It's--. I mean maybe my crossdressing, transgenderism started from a desire to emulate what I thought was the power pole or whatever in my family, or I don't know. I suppose that makes sort of sense, right? I mean what I'm saying, the people in my family being, seemingly being female. Maybe, or maybe it's something I was just born to want to be that way. Some people say one way, some say another. I don't know. At any event it started out me

being into make-up and that kind of stuff and then it progressed on and knowing that I wanted to do that and thinking that I would never be able to because of society and the way it was.

As I was saying, I was in the Navy for four years. I didn't want to go. It was during the Vietnam time. I didn't end up seeing any combat or anything. I thought about going to Canada. The one thing I didn't think about was something I probably could have done, but it would have had me ostracized at the time, would have been to tell them that I was gay, and showed up in a dress or something. They would have probably disqualified me at the draft board, but at the time it didn't enter into my mind. I didn't have nerve enough to try to-- I wasn't willing to fly in the face of society's conventions enough to do that at that time. I was afraid to and the, shall we say the social climate wasn't right. I didn't really want the hell beat out of me, if you want to put it in blunt terms. And I didn't want to hurt my family.

As a matter of fact as far as-- I never told my mother about this, although I think she guessed and suspected, because I do remember one time telling me, "I don't care how you dress or what you look like," and I'd never told her anything. And that was the only time she'd ever said anything about it. And that's all she ever said. As far as my uncle was concerned, I don't know if he knew about it or not. I never told him. I do know that toward the end of his life when he was sick and I was taking care of him, he didn't say such nasty things about gays as the typical stereotypical male around here might. So maybe he had guessed at my transgenderism or something and had, was trying not to offend me. I don't know how that worked. But at any rate I never told the two people

that at that time were the most important people in my life anything about it. And whether they actually knew or not, I don't know. My brother tolerates it. He doesn't really like to see it, but he doesn't put me down. He says it's my thing, and that's basically it.

CNK: How did he come to know about it?

#8: I told him. After--. Let's see. Let me try to reorganize, not edit history, but try to make it more sensible form. So anyway--. All through college--. Well in the Service I didn't really try to experiment much. I had a full beard like the guys in the Luden's Brothers cough drop box, and it would've been kind of weird. I did sneak out once to a thrift store and buy this big old ratty wig which I wore in secret a few times, and that gave me a little bit of a thrill, but that's basically all. Didn't do much about that and my--. So really everything was just pretty much a head trip and a fantasy thing except for the sneaking around behind people's back and experimenting with make-up and stuff like that. Even with the full beard I liked the idea of wearing lipstick and things like that. Although I knew it was silly looking, it was something I could get by with, and I could wash it off before anybody saw. So it was sneak around and--. Once in a while, I had relatives that lived in Baltimore, and I'd go down and visit them for a couple weeks, and once in a while when my uncle and my aunt were out shopping or something, I'd sneak in and put on some of her make-up and stuff. And I never told them about anything about that, but. That was just a little aside, in case you wanted to hear it, since you are wanting tidbits of this and that for your--.

CNK: This is great.

#8: It seems awful disorganized to me.

CNK: Don't worry about it.

#8: Well OK. I--. I should have written a synopsis and gone ahead and just said, "Well this is the story of my life in 14 pages."

CNK: There's no such thing as a digression in my work.

#8: OK. Well you know what you're doing, I have no idea. You're holding a microphone. I know about those, and that's about it. So anyway it was pretty much secretive and just a sort of fantasy head trip until I found out there were others like me. And then I got more and more interested in it. Eventually I got nerve enough--. Well the beard went along time ago and I still had a long(...) mustache. Eventually I finally got nerve enough to shave that off, so then I could sneak around and try to actually really look like female as much as I could by then. I forget whether I mail ordered a wig from somewhere. Or actually I got--. I think I got really chicken about it, if I remember right. I was speaking of my aunt and uncle from Baltimore. The first person, other person I believe I told about it was their daughter, my cousin. And at the time she just assumed that I was gay, and so she went out and bought a wig. I was too chicken to go to the wig shop and do it myself, so I would sneak around and--. At first bought or got a hold of a bra somehow and stuffed it with newspapers and stuff so. I was pretty bad looking at first, because I had a really heavy, dark, stubble beard, and it was hard to cover with make-up. So my first few ventures out in public were pretty readable, to be honest about it.

CNK: Where'd you go?

#8: Truthfully I'd be in the car--. I'd go in the car, find a secluded place and change, and just drive around, and then change back and go home. And I had all of the make-up and stuff washed off by the time I did. Sometimes I'd get stared at and laughed at a little bit at first until I got better at it. Then later on, I was saying that my uncle had lived with me and my mother. Well my mother passed away a few years earlier from lung cancer from smoking all the time. This is my insult to smoking. I have to get one on the tape, because I hate such things. So anyway she passed away, and I had taken time off from work, and I stayed right there in her room basically, except to go out to get something to eat, for like nearly a month. So I was pretty much immersed in that. And during that whole time the crossdressing thing was basically out of the picture.

So then when she passed away then a few years later my uncle got sick from well, heart attack basically, and lung cancer too. More smoking. So anyway, him being a disabled veteran from World War II, he had privileges you know through the V.A. hospitals and that sort of thing. So when they couldn't do much more for him at the Clarksburg V.A. Center they sent him up to Pittsburgh to stay. So I would go stay with him all day, but then when they made me leave after visiting hours at night--. I had found out through these magazines and all I'd read about and from people I'd called and talked to that there were crossdressing clubs and bars--. Gay bars, you know, that people, crossdressers and gay people could safely go and all that sort of thing. So I went out in all my finest finery and finally started hitting the bars. Never got into the sexual scene, although I got hit on quite a few times.

First few times I basically got kind of laughed at, but I finally did learn how to present myself pretty well. I'm not saying that people never read me, but I'm getting pretty good at it now. I did feel--. There was this one gay bar that I went to, and I mean this was definitely a gay bar. But all the female impersonators in it basically were drag queens, which means basically they were in it for the, not only for the money and the performance, but they're trying to pick up male sexual partners, which I wasn't. And I wasn't necessarily--. I mean I was fairly well dressed, but I still remember being laughed at in there because, and I thought it was rather hypocritical that a bunch of gay drag queens were laughing at someone who was trying to be female appearing and acting like they were. And I don't know, it just kind of hurt more to have their laughter and disapproval than it did the redneck on the street, because I could give a damn less about what they thought, except for the fact that I was afraid they might beat me up sometime. But I didn't expect to go in a gay bar and, "Oh look at her" and all that stuff. It was like being real catty. Maybe they were trying to be overly stereotypically feminine, how some women are supposedly catty about other women, et cetera. Of course I suppose you know about that a little bit. Or--.

So at any rate that hurt a little bit, but I soon got over that one, and I just didn't care about it. Actually I don't know if I went back to that bar or not. But there was another one that was nice and fun to go to. And even though I'm not a dancer, I got to get out and dance around on the floor and have a good time. One of the strange things, if I digress once, was--. As I was saying this one--. Well these bars mostly were gay bars that crossdressers just sometimes frequented, because it was a safe place to be especially

if you weren't sure you were totally undetectable like you could feel comfortable going in there not worrying about somebody finding out that you were a crossdresser and that you might be ridiculed. It was a safe haven in other words.

But I remember one evening one of the bartenders there was a lesbian lady. And of course I was not interested in picking up anybody and neither was she, but--. The bar was pretty well empty, and they had this big old disco sound system, and they were playing stuff. So I was being my *[name of female persona]* self, and she was just being her typical, normal, ordinary lesbian self, but we danced together and we both--. It seemed weird to both of us. To me, because I was dancing with a woman dressed as a woman and to her, because I was a guy, and she was interested in women. So it was just a strange, strange little digression. I mean it was friendly and nice. It just felt weird to both of us. And I just thought I'd digress a little bit and give you that one too, because it might. I don't know, it just seemed an interesting thing to say.

CNK: Was it--. Was it nice for you two?

#8: Not it wasn't . . . --. Or it wasn't nice it was just--. It was nice to hold somebody, since I don't normally do that, but since I didn't know how to dance she led of course, but that's irrelevant. But it was, it was fun. It just seemed, it just felt strange. I don't know how it would have felt if I had been dressed as a guy dancing with her. I would probably felt more like I was more in my proper role, and it would have been easier to relax I think. Other than that I don't think it would have mattered. I wasn't trying to pick her up, and she wasn't trying to pick me up. We were just both trying--. Just wanted to hold each

other a little bit. And the bars are lonely sometimes. So enough of that digression. It's irrelevant anyway.

CNK: Did you make some friends at the bars or did they--?

#8: Just acquaintances. I mean no one I've kept in really touch with, but I was friends with them while I was there and all that sort of thing. And one time--. During one visit back up there I happened to walk in on a meeting of crossdressers, where they have like they have like clubs in the Pittsburgh area and other places where they will get together like once a month and go somewhere and socialize. All of them dressed--. I think they use the term en-femme, or if that's a correct way of pronouncing the French word, femme. Is that the correct way to say it? Femme? Femme? Dressed as women in other words. And some of them looked pretty convincing, and some didn't. But they were all having a good time, and it--. That's a completely other thing. I'll give you some more information about that, those crossdressing clubs and that sort of thing later. You might be interested in that. But there is no point in giving you an address on the tape when I can give you printed information about them. So.

CNK: What was that like for you though walking into that meeting?

#8: It was--. Well I wasn't a member, and I wasn't a part of it. They made--. They tried--. They made me feel at home, and I felt pretty good about it. But living so far away from Pittsburgh I knew there was no point in trying to join their club, no more often than I go there to visit. So I just was friendly with them while I was there and listened to some of the things that some of those people had to say and listened to some of their adventures and experiences and shared a little bit of mine, and that was it. We just

basically went our separate ways. But it was interesting that I just happened walk in on one of the evenings that they were having a meeting at this bar. So much for that part. So ask me another question. I'm running out of ideas.

CNK: Kind of a sign of hope for you in a way?

#8: Well in a way. It just let me know that there were more people there than--. I mean intellectually I already knew from what I read that there were a lot of us out there, but it was nice to see a whole bunch in one place, to know that. There was a little bit of solidarity to it too.

CNK: Yeah.

#8: OK.

CNK: What's it feel like to be [*name of female persona*]? Who is she?

#8: Oh. Well. I don't know to describe it really. Actually I guess inside I mean my really core personality, I'm still the same person I always was, but this way I can act--. I give myself license to act feminine and do what I consider feminine things and that sort of thing which, regardless of why I want to be that way, I still want to. So--. Hmm--. What does it feel like to be [*name of female persona*]? That is such a good question. I never really considered it very much. Really it doesn't feel much different except for the fact that I can dress and express myself the way I want to. As far as inside, and I don't have to seem to be, well, not macho, but I don't have to do this masculine thing where I always have to feel like I have to--. Oh how do I say it? I think men in this society are expected pretty much to be self sufficient and well, not really, not ask for help, but be more independent than women are. Women are supposed to be able to apparently or

seemingly, from what I have been able to figure out, seemingly depend more on each other and not have to go it alone: "I'm tough" and that kind of stuff, so. I can relax and let other people--. Since I'm basically a very private person and don't, as you might have guessed by now, and don't open up very well--. Actually this interview would have probably gone easier if I had been dressed as *[name of female persona]* rather than this, because the persona I get into, even though I know I'm the same person inside, *[name of female persona]* rattles on. Me not--. Me not being *[name of female persona]*, Mr. X as you might want to call me, is kind of quiet, shy and backward. As a matter of fact if you've noticed I haven't looked you in the eye but about twice, right? OK. If I were dressed as *[name of female persona]* I'd be sitting here moving, talking, looking at you straight in the eye, just like a woman would, because it's something that I give myself liberty to do when I'm dressed like that.

You were wanting to know what it feels like to be *[name of female persona]*. I'm trying to give you ideas on what it is. I mean that is just an example. I--. I feel freer to relate to people that way than I do in my repressed male personality side that you're sitting here looking at. So. Does that give you any insight at all? OK.

CNK: Yeah, that's really helpful.

#8: Ask me another question.

CNK: I wanted to ask you one more question. Then we'll take a break here.

#8: Good, because I'm getting brain drain.

CNK: Yeah. You talked about going up to Pittsburgh and seeing a crossdressing club and being welcomed, but knowing that you were going to be going home to West Virginia, so what was the use. Why do you live where you live?

#8: That doesn't have too much to do with the crossdressing. First off, well let me digress just a little bit, and it might make it a little clearer. I told you that my uncle was up in Pittsburgh, a disabled veteran, and I took care of him during his last days basically, because he was almost like a father to me when I was growing up. So anyway, he left me his veteran's life insurance, which was about 10-12,000 dollars, something like that. It would have been enough to have gotten a sex change operation and gone ahead and done the whole thing, but then I would have probably had to have moved away. Which would have been possibly OK but--. The reason that I didn't do it at the time, there's also--. I don't know if it's a law, but it's customary among the doctors and the people that do such things that you are required to cross-live as a woman or a man if you are going the other way, a woman getting a male change, for at least a year cross-live to prove that you can do it. But being that this was about 7 or 8 years ago, and the social climate was still pretty repressive, as even--. Especially around here I figured there's no way I'm going to get by with living a year crossdressed, especially in this area. I mean for instance, redneck area. Suppose I'm driving down the road crossdressed, get stopped for a speeding ticket, whip out my drivers license, says male, has my male picture. Sheriff Buford here might just haul me off to the local poky, and I can just imagine being thrown in with a bunch of rednecks. They'd have a lot of fun with me while the Sheriff's back was turned. So I thought, well nah. Since the sex change itself--. The only reason I really

care about it one way or another, since I'm not planning on having sexual relations with anybody, would be that it would make me legally free to dress like that all the time, and I wouldn't have to worry about being harassed by the local authorities or anything. Even if I got stopped, well I am a woman. I can prove it. It says so on my driver's license, et cetera, et cetera. And if you have any real questions, send a female deputy, and I'll strip and prove it to her. But that's really the only thing I would gain by a sex change, because like I say, I'm not after sex partners, and it's not basically particularly for sexual thrills. So the only thing I would gain would be the fact that the local law enforcement couldn't harass me. Of course, that wouldn't stop the local rednecks from harassing me once they knew about it. But maybe they wouldn't so much if I actually had the sex change operation. They would pretty much either have to accept it, or at least tolerate it. I mean they can say "Oh, look at the pervert," you know, if they knew--. If I--. If I flaunted it in public they say "Uh oh. That's a damn pervert faggot running around there dressed up in women's clothes." But if I actually had had the operation they'd say, "Well maybe he, maybe he/she is so serious about that, maybe better at least tolerate her [as a] human--." Him, her whatever. I don't know what they would call me, but I don't basically care either. So what was your question again?

CNK: Why you stay in West Virginia?

#8: That has to do with my other interest and passion, which is music. And I still even at my age want to be a rock 'n roll star. So I got all this time and stuff invest--. And where I live I basically own most of it, and I've--. I think I'm basically just afraid to get out and try to make my way as a professional singer. I don't know if I've got what it takes yet,

and I'm working on it. But here I've got my own stage and my own basically venue. I can't seem to find any jobs out in bars here, because everybody is afraid to touch me that I talk to. They think their--. That if people see through me that their bar will be branded as a gay bar. So nobody seems to want to have me as a performer. So I built my own stage, and the hell with them all. If I want to be [*name of female persona*] on my own stage I will and have in several instances, which I'll tell you about after we take our break. The end. Part one.

BREAK

CNK: So we were just out walking around your property.

#8: Doing the grand tour and showing you my sets for my music video and my stage and things like that.

CNK: Yeah.

#8: And all my 10,000 fake fur coats and all the other stuff that's female paraphernalia that doing my music video gives me an excuse to buy all these female things. So there's that. Plus all the neat little nick knacks and little jewelry boxes and things that I can buy and have. And maybe once I finally get my set and stuff organized where it's not just a big pile of clutter, I can start staying in it and pretend that I'm really in the Middle Ages and I'm a princess, when no one's around.

CNK: Is that what you aspire to (...) the period you'd like to be in?

#8: For real, no. Because really under the surface of it--. It's a nice fantasy thing, but back then life was really, even for the upper classes, was brutish, it was--. Well for instance, there was no really medical care like we know it now. For instance, people

think of the castles and stuff. They were drafty old stone houses. It's nice romantic things to have fantasies about, but as far as actually living back then, no I don't think so. It's a fun, a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there.

CNK: Yeah. Well we saw your trailer where you had actually stayed for a little while, and you couldn't see the road from there, and the road couldn't see you.

#8: That was good. That way I could be *[name of female persona]* whenever I wanted to, like all day, and not feel uncomfortable about it.

CNK: What did that mean being *[name of female persona]* then?

#8: Being just as *[name of female persona]*. Excuse me. That's my shorthand for it. I mean I know that I'm--. I'm the same person, like I said, one way or the other, but getting to be dressed like *[name of female persona]* lets me do the more feminine things.

Course on the other hand I've got to the point that I've loosened--. Let myself loosen up enough now that if I need to do something dressed as *[name of female persona]* that's more of a male thing, I just go ahead and do it. I mean whatever I do is what I do, and I hadn't--.

I touched on this briefly earlier, but the place where I work is more or less a one person caretaker job. It's shift work where I work my 10 to 12 hours 3 days a week. Another guy comes in and works opposite me. But generally, unless the boss is around--. And he knows about the *[name of female persona]* crossdressing thing. When I say the *[name of female persona]* thing it's shorthand for my being dressed as *[name of female persona]*, OK? Just for reference there. But anyway he knows about the *[name of female persona]* thing. But I don't do it in front of him at work, because I'm afraid he might feel

he had to say something about it. He doesn't really--. It's my thing. He doesn't think much of it, but he doesn't really condemn me for it. The guy that works opposite of me doesn't really care one way or another. I asked him about it a long time ago when I first admitted that I was crossdressing. He said, "Oh it doesn't ... me." So generally, unless the boss comes around, once I get to work I turn into *[name of female persona]*. I stay *[name of female persona]* until the next day when I leave.

When my relief comes in in the morning about 5:00 o'clock I usually just stick around, go to bed for a while, still *[name of female persona]*, get back up, have breakfast, change and go home or wherever I'm going, and turn back into a pumpkin. Cinderella, the ball's over for the day. Until I get back to work and then--. But I do dress, unless I have company at home, which is rare. Once in a while my uncle from Baltimore will visit, but other than that I hardly ever have any, but I always dress feminine as *[name of female persona]*. To go to bed I sleep like that, and since I don't get to wear make-up as often [as I'd] like, unlike most women I do wear my make-up to bed, because I like to. Makes for messy sheets sometimes, but that's OK. I'm the one that washes them. So those are two little asides there. Little tidbits. So OK, ask.

CNK: Yeah. No that's--.

#8: Ask more.

CNK: So, so why do you wear your make-up to bed?

#8: Because I can. Because I can, and I can't wear it out in public all day. So at least I can wear it more. Plus, as a practical aspect, my lips chap really easy, and I get to wear lipstick all night, and it keeps them soft. If I didn't do that my lips would be so chapped I

couldn't hardly talk right now. Course I know I could be macho and a guy and wear chapstick or something, but that's not as much fun. So I wear the lipstick, because I have a lipstick thing, and the redder the better.

CNK: A lipstick thing?

#8: It's--. I guess in a way it a fetish maybe, a little bit. But I just happen to love lipstick. That was one of the first things I started wearing when I started doing things. Course back when I had a beard the rest of it wouldn't have made much sense, would it? But lipstick, that could go on and off. Usually I could get it all washed off, and I don't think anybody knew. Maybe.

CNK: So you have an outfit then ready for you at work when you get to work?

#8: No, I haul it with me. I have the little tote bag that I've been carrying around for the last 7 or 8 years. *[Name offemale persona]*. *[Name offemale persona]*'s clothes live in the bag and *[name offemale persona]*'s boobs live in the bag, and *[name offemale persona]*'s hair lives in the bag. When I get to work, after I'm pretty sure the coast is clear and the boss is not likely to come up, *[name offemale persona]*'s physical appearance becomes on me. Or *[name offemale persona]* appears, is another way of putting it. It's still me, and I know it's me, and if I talk on the phone obviously--. If the boss calls and wants to ask me a question, it's still just me. I know he knows I'm doing it, but as long as I don't rub it in his face he doesn't say anything.

And I wouldn't dare go down to the main office dressed like that. I don't know if I would get fired, but I don't want to push the envelope. My job is too good and too easy, and I can do so much other things on my own at my job that I don't want to jeopardize it

right now. The job will be ending probably in a few years anyway so, for reasons that have nothing to do with me. I'll be obsoleted by modern equipment basically, so. Why mess up a good thing by pushing the envelope? The only time I've ever been down at the main office crossdressed was one day before Halloween, and that was my excuse. I was going to a Halloween party. So I went in there thoroughly being my *[name of female}* persona. That is the person I'm trying to emulate by the way, for the record, is the rock singer *[name of female persona] of [name of Rock band}*. And try to sound like her too. Sometimes I succeed, sometimes I don't. But I've--. From what times I've performed out in public people seem to think I look, sound pretty realistic. And a lot of times, in most cases, people anymore--. I've gotten to the point where people don't--. People just assume I'm female when I'm out performing as *[name of female persona}*. I don't call myself *[name of Rock star}*. That would be copyright infringement. So I call myself *[name of female persona}*.

NK: Why *[name of Rock star}*?

#8: I don't know. I just basically have this thing about her as far as she's--. I guess she's a fantasy, sort of. She started out as a really big fantasy, like a desire fantasy, but not to the point that I would ever stalk her or anything like that. That's stupid. But as far--. Later I got along--.

Tape Side II

#8: Basically a role model, because of how she dresses, how she looks and how she sings. She's somebody that's easy for me to emulate. And her singing voice is low enough that I it can be in my range. I wouldn't want--. *[shrilly}* I wouldn't want to try

to be Joni Mitchell. I don't think I could quite handle the range. You can erase that part if you like.

CNK: No way. That's staying.

#8: Oh, OK. Well maybe I think then that you might want to hear the *[name of Rock star]* voice on the tape then. *[Sings two lines of song made popular by this Rock star]* And I think that's enough of that on tape. I'm wasting tape. Anyway, now you get an idea. I've worked long and hard to perfect that voice. Many hours into the tape recorder along with her, trying to match my tone with hers. And it's not perfect yet, but I'm getting there. Not that I want it to be exactly the same, or again it would be some kind of copyright infringement. And since I do seriously want to be able to perform as a woman-. When I say, as a woman, I mean at least appearing as a woman and passing myself off as one, even if I don't ever have the sex change operation, which at my age I will call optional, for want of a better word. I could do it if I had the money, which I don't now. But I'm not sure I care that much about it. As I've said earlier, so there is no point in going back into that. So ask me something else before your tape runs out.

CNK: Yeah. So do you dress as a rock star then when you transform at work?

#8: No. I just--. A lot of times at work I just use the clothes that I have, since they're sort of ambiguous. If you--. You notice in person here that the clothes are not necessarily male or female. They're just sloppy jeans and shirts and things like that that could be either one. That's no accident. So at work I usually just--. Off goes the shirt, on goes the boob, back on goes the shirt, on goes the make-up and jewelry and stuff, because it's quicker, if I hear the boss coming, to immediately zip out of it. It takes me three minutes

maybe, instead of running to the bathroom and being in there for five minutes changing while he's wondering why I'm in the bathroom every time he comes up to stop off, which isn't very often. But that's one of the main reasons that I don't bother dressing in fancy dresses and stuff.

Besides I'm--. In my old age I'm getting less and less caring about the glamour look, except for when I'm on stage. I want to look female, and I want to look convincing, but I don't really care about the glittery glamour look for everyday. I wouldn't want to walk down the street in, like I did at first. Probably one of the reasons I got laughed at up in Pittsburgh was running around in a mini-dress when it was 30 degrees. That might have be one of the reasons I got stared at. But anymore I just like to pass myself off as convincingly as possible. I don't--. I try not, at least in public, to wear pants as *[name of female persona}*, because I'm not sure that my movement is good enough, and my hip movements and my swaying is good enough. It's--. I pass off pretty well in a skirt, but I'm afraid in pants that the movement wouldn't be quite convincing enough. I haven't had nerve enough to do it out in public, although I do it all the time at work and don't pay any attention to it there. I really don't care for everyday wear what kind of clothes I wear, as far as that's concerned, but I do love to do the make-up and the jewelry thing. So now you can ask me about my 10,000 earrings and stuff like that.

CNK: Yeah, tell me.

#8: Well I've always had a pierced ear, well I'll say, fetish, I guess it basically is, or was. Although now that I've gotten all the holes that I've got room for there's not much more fetish about it, because there's no more room for anymore, so there--. I have 20 holes in

each ear, most of which I had done and didn't do myself, over a period of about 4 or 5 years. I started out with just a few, and then they expanded and got more and more, and one in my nose, which basically just looks like a freckle or something so don't pay any attention to that. One in my bellybutton which I wear all the time, which I don't really care about except that for the fact that I can. And I can wear it all the time, because nobody can see it.

As far as bodily hair--. Since you're asking all of these questions I'll just go ahead and tell you some of my ugly beauty secrets as it were, or ugly secrets or whatever. For a long time I just shaved. And then I started plucking out my beard, which is a long, painful, and involved process. At first it took me like five hours twice a week to--. This was with tweezers, one or two hairs at a time. Now after about six or seven years I don't have much beard left. It takes me about two hours to--. About once a week. And if you'll notice now I--. This is about a four day growth here, so it's not too noticeable. And since the fact that I am 52 and most it's gray now, that helps camouflage it too. There's no black stubble--. There might be like 3 or 4 black hairs there, but it's not noticeable at all, so. A lot of times now, since I've taken to wearing a hat all the time, and my hair, what's left of it, is long--. A lot of times nowadays, especially when I'm wearing heavy, bulky clothing in the wintertime, people mistake me for female even when I'm not trying to look like *[name of female persona]*. A lot of times I'll go in to buy gas or stop in a store or something, grocery store, it'll be, "Thank you, Ma'am." And I just play along with them and really enjoy myself. And so say to myself as soon as I get out to the car, "Thank you very much." Sometimes people think I'm male, and

sometimes people think I'm female. But it just feels good when they think I'm female, but I don't worry about it. Of course if I'm dressed as *[name of female persona]* and they don't think I'm female, then I get worried about it, so. Make of that what you want.

CNK: That's a little disconcerting huh? When that happens?

#8: Well it's not so much disconcerting, it's a self preservation thing. I'm afraid the rednecks around here will start saying, "Oh, look at the faggot. Let's go beat some fag ass" and stuff like that. So it's still--. There's still that fear in this area after all these years even. And I'm afraid with our new fearless leader we've got, [President George Bush] the whole moral tone of the country is going to be extremely conservative again, and that it's going to get back to the persecution of gay and gay appearing people, and I'm afraid I'm going to have to dig deeper back into the closet. I hope not, but I think that's the way it's headed.

CNK: Have your fears been realized?

#8: You mean about that, or?

CNK: In terms of harassment?

#8: Not really. I've been heckled and laughed at a few times. In one of the Hills stores I think once I overheard somebody in the next aisle saying something about, "We ought to beat that fag up" or something, and I just pretended I didn't hear it and slowly walked toward the door and left. So there is nothing came of that. But that is the only time I've ever had anything that even seemed remotely like a threat. It's just that being laughed at a few times. Although anymore that doesn't seem to happen since I look more feminine

even when I'm not being. I'm sure that a lot of people that see me now in just ordinary life, everyday life, assume I'm gay, if they know I'm male. But I just don't care--.

I just don't pay attention anymore, as long as I'm not deliberately flaunting society's conventions in public like--. Like if I went out right now as a guy, but wearing make-up and jewelry, that would be basically flaunting society's conventions and of what they expect. But now if I'm dressed as *[name of female persona]* and to the hilt and trying to pass myself off, then I'm not trying--. I'm not being threatening to the general public, because I'm--. They either think I'm female or I'm trying to do it so well that they just let it pass, whichever is the case. But if I just--. Like if I slopped on some lipstick and put in my earrings and went outside right now, some of the rednecks around here might think that that wasn't an appropriate thing for a guy to do. So I just don't do it, even though I know earrings are becoming socially acceptable for men. But I just don't have quite the nerve to make that jump yet. May never. But at any rate, that's where I am dressing-wise.

Like I say, the sexuality is irrelevant since it doesn't really enter into it especially anymore since it's not much of a fetish thing anymore. It's just something I want to do mostly. Besides at my age I'm not interested in sex much anymore; the hormones are CNK: So being a perfect *[name of female persona]* or as close as you can get, how much of that is for preservation so that you are not detected, and how much is that that is who you want to be?

#8: That's a very good--. When I figure that out I'll tell you, and that's the truth. I don't know. It's, it's some of both, and I just don't know which is more prevalent. Around

here I'm sure it's a preservation thing. If I'm in a big city it just--. I just feel more secure doing it that way regardless. I still--. I still would rather be able to do the whole thing, the entire look and be able to dress like that all the time. It'd be nice to have real boobs and not--. Course I know real hair is out of the question, because I can't afford a hair transplant, and besides I look like hell as a brunette. I look too masculine as a brunette, so being blonde really makes me look more feminine. So the hair would always be a wig even if I had the sex change operation I'm sure, which is no great crime. Lots of women wear wigs. But if I ever really had the sex change operation and went full time, I think I would have permanent cosmetics and go ahead and have my lips tattooed or whatever they do, so that you don't have, even though I might still wear lipstick. At least I wouldn't ever have to run around without it, so that I would still look totally feminine all the time, although I don't think that I look all that feminine without make-up. I think it's--. OK, interviewer, third person here. Do I look--? What do I look, more feminine or more masculine, sitting here talking to you?

CNK: I don't know. I couldn't say.

#8: Am I ambigenderous or something like that?

CNK: Yeah.

#8: Androgynous I think is the correct term maybe.

CNK: Well here you are, you know. You're wearing a hat, winter hat, and a purple sweatshirt, which I don't see a lot of men around here wearing purple, but--.

#8: That's too bad. And I get by with that, don't I? With a hood even. And I, when I put my hood on, what do you think then? Still androgynous?

CNK: Well the hat helps, because otherwise I might have expected hair in the front.

#8: Right, right. Which is why you never see me without a hat. That and the fact I don't want to get skin cancer for my bald head in the sun.

CNK: So when you're at your most comfortable, and I understand you are dressing like *[name of female persona]*, but are you also trying to use her language and think about what she would say?

#8: I did at first, but not anymore. I think the reason I did it at first was to use her as a model, so that I would act more and sound more feminine and stuff like that, to pull off the, if you will, illusion, so that I can dress and look the way I want. But as far as thinking and feeling inside, I've got friends who are, lot's of friends who are women and they--. When I'm dressed like that they at least seem to be relating to me as a woman. So I try to understand and feel like what they must feel like as women. Although I'll never be pregnant, I'll never have menopause, hot flashes and all that other stuff, but--. And I obviously can't relate to that, but I try to understand and relate to how women feel, how they are treated in this society, how--. It's hard for me to--.

Not being interested in men in general, with maybe one exception, it's hard for me to listen to them say, "Oh what a cute guy" and relate to it. I can accept it and understand it, but as far as really relating to that part, it's difficult for me. And I'm still, as far as--. Even though I don't have sex, I like to look. But I still, in general, would rather look at women. And obviously, I guess if this sheds--. It probably sheds light on it. I'm more attracted to women who like to dress as I like to dress as *[name of female persona]*. In other words women who like to wear lots of make-up and nice long, not necessarily

blonde, but at least long hair, and not necessarily dressed provocatively, but hair and make-up--. I'm more--.

I like the hair and make-up--. When I notice a woman or myself being dressed up, I notice the hair and make-up before I see the boobs, before I see the legs, before I see the body or anything else. It's hair, the make-up, the jewelry first, and then I start looking at the rest of it; that's the icing on the cake for me. That's the thing I'm into. But I mean how people dress is their business, and I don't condemn or put them down or anything like that. But I mean as far as what I like and what I'm attracted to, that's more what I'm attracted to.

And I have some friends who are lesbians, and I guess you'd call them, for want of a better word, the slang words is butch. You know they dress man-ish and stuff like that. And they're my friends, but they're not sexually attracted to me, whereas some of my friends who do dress neatly are sexually attractive, although I have no intentions of even flirting with them, it's just--. We were talking about what's attractive and what isn't, or I was rather. You were listening, I was talking. So how much more tape you got? I don't want to run you out.

CNK: We're doing fine.

#8: OK. So what else? What else do inquiring minds want to know?

CNK: Just--. So do you have friends of alternative gender, you know, lesbians, gays transgendered people? Do you have a community?

#8: No, not around here I don't--. If I were back up in Pittsburgh I could probably look up a few people that I knew, but around here there are a few people I know that are--.

Just one group of--. Well I won't mention names, but a group of female singers that I know and am friends with, and I think a couple of them are gay, and I don't pay any attention to it. That's their thing, so--. But they're just my friends and that's it. Well, my close--. They're not my buddy, buddy friends, but they're like nice close acquaintances that I go out once in a while with and perform and hang out with and have fun and get to be one of the girls, as it were. And they accept me as such while I'm being *[name of female persona]*. And that's one of the things that I really cherish and treasure is that they do do that. Excuse me for being misty.

CNK: Feelings are always acceptable.

#8: We'll I'm not really crying. I'm just thinking about it.

CNK: What about West Virginia cities? Are there opportunities to be *[name of female persona]* there?

#8: Actually as far as being *[name of female persona]*, if I want to go to the trouble of dressing up and going out in public, it's not so much the thrill of it like it used to be in the beginning. But if I want to, once I'm away from home at least 5 or 10 miles where I don't think any of the locals will connect the woman that they see with the local guy that they know, it doesn't bother me anymore. I could go out under cover of darkness. Once I'm about 5 or 10 miles from home, I'm perfectly at home being *[name of female persona]*, or the guy that you are looking at. I mean it doesn't--. But it's not--. There's not a thrill about it anymore. But if I want to, and if it's worth the trouble, and I have a reason to dress up, like to go out in public, I'll do it. But in general I'm so busy with other things I don't really take the time nor have the time.

CNK: But in terms--. I'm sorry.

#8: As you've noticed, all my stuff--. I have more on my mind that just being *[name of female persona]*. You noticed that I'm sure.

CNK: Yeah. Is a place like Morgantown, for example, a possibility for community for you?

#8: You mean for me to actually move there?

CNK: Or have a social life there?

#8: It's so far away, but I probably could.

CNK: But you don't?

#8: I think I'm just as well off being a hermit for right now. I mean a social life is nice, but I don't have time for a lot of it. And I get plenty of opportunities at work and at home by myself to do my crossdressing thing, and I've always been kind of a loner anyway. So the lack of a social life doesn't bother me too much. Although it makes it just that much better like when I can go out with my girl friends in the musical group and do that thing and when I can do it once in a while out in public. That makes it, just makes it that much more enjoyable.

But as far as in my private personal life it--. I'm OK with where I am right now for what I'm doing. It's not really what I'd like to had, but nobody really ever has exactly what they want. But for what I'm trying to do and trying to accomplish right now, I think I'm pretty well off. And I'm a lot more fortunate than a lot of people that want--. That are also crossdressers or transgendered or whatever. A lot of people are in the closet all the time. I mean the only time they can come out is literally when no one's home. That's

how I was in the beginning, and my job is a crossdresser's dream. I mean go to work and become *[name of female persona]*, be my crossdress self if I want to. There are not many people around that can do that, so I'm really fortunate with that, even though it's not a really high paying job. It's almost ideal for what I've got right now. And the only way that I can imagine me really getting out of this situation and moving away right now is if I became a successful singer that could pass myself off as female, that I could do enough of it to make a living at. Then I might consider moving out and just actually doing it all the time and if I got rich enough maybe even having a sex change operation, if I made big bucks, which is not likely. But that is what I'm aiming for.

One of these days, unless I'm too old by that time and go around stooped saying, *[impersonating older woman's voice]* "Well I just had my CD party released last week, dear. Would like to come and see it?" But unless I get to that point, I'm still going to hang in there with my music and still going to be *[name of female persona]* every chance I get and try to be convincing enough not to get beat up or really totally offend anybody and just go on doing what I'm doing I guess. Are there any other things you would like to ask at this time?

CNK: Have you present--. How did you present yourself to your boss then? You said you came out as a crossdresser to your boss?

#8: I told him about it basically, but after he me saw me dress for Halloween I think he had a pretty good idea. I did say on the tape that I went down to the main office party, the place I work, crossdressed before going to a Halloween party one Halloween.

CNK: Yeah.

#8: I think I had told him about it before. He said--. I think his reaction was, "Well as long as it doesn't affect me I don't care." And he usually sounds like this when he talks, so he's a really gruff sounding guy. I'd say he's about ready to retire, but I don't think he will just yet. Anyway I think it's more or less in his case a quality of live and let live, so. I just don't push the envelope at the main office or anything. I don't want to rock the boat too much. The boat's too comfortable the way it is right now.

CNK: I was just interested in, you know, how--. What you tell people, what you told him and the other man you work with and what you told your brother.

#8: It's been so long ago I don't really remember. I don't remember, and that's--. I really don't remember. It's been too long now. I'm just so comfortable with them now and with it, and sometimes when I make an acquaintance with a new woman friend I like to tell her. But I'm really still reticent about telling new male acquaintances in general, because it seems like generally women are more tolerant of this than men are. In general. But it seems also seems like there's a double-edged sword there too, because I have this one friend that I haven't seen for quite a while, but anyway. She was really comfortable with my [*name of female persona*] side, and I even dressed a few times at her house, and she helped me with make-up and stuff. She was really comfortable with that, but she said she wouldn't be comfortable around a lesbian person, or somebody of the female gay persuasion, or somebody cross-dressed female. So I get the impression for a lot of people that like a man would feel threatened by some man dressing as a woman and that some women would feel threatened by a woman's sexuality dressing or being attracted to other women. So I think that there's something of that in there to. That might be an interesting

aside for your tape too. More pop psychology from your local dumb blonde. Take at least four shakers of salt.

CNK: And your neighbors, you say, know? How do they know?

#8: Well.

CNK: What do they know?

#8: My next door neighbor, I just literally flat out told him, because he's a kind of a Bohemian-type soul, and I knew it wouldn't upset him in the least. Somehow my uncle--. One of my other uncles lives up the road from me about two houses away. Someone I don't know, and I could kick their butt if I ever found out, told him. But he's never said anything about it to me. I know he knows, but he doesn't mention it. So we just don't talk about it, and neither do any of my, either of my other--. Does my other uncle that I'm close to or see every once in a while. I have one aunt left that's still living that I'm close to on my mother's side. I don't know very many of my father's relatives, since he died when I was young. Anyway my aunt is really comfortable with it. She even bought me some jewelry one year, which I wear quite often in performance, because it's neat and I like it. Anyway she's comfortable with it. It doesn't bother her any to see me dressed like that or even to know about it.

But I just don't push the envelope too much as far as most of the family is concerned, because even though they don't--. I don't know for sure who all knows and who doesn't, but I just try to not to offend too many people most of the time. Like for instance, I don't normally go over to my--. I don't go over to my brother's house dressed like that, because--. He's never said, "Don't do it," but I can sense his disapproval, so I

just don't rub it in his face. And I know that the concerts that I've done, the benefit things on property, he's come and performed at them. But he always manages to conveniently have an excuse that he needs be home before *[name of female persona]* takes the stage. I think he's seen me perform like that once, and it was a benefit for him at a bar in . . . so he couldn't very handily leave. And I was--. He forgot and called me by my real name, and I was mortified in public, but I don't think anyone heard it. This was a bar in downtown So either nobody heard it or nobody cared. I don't know which the case may be.

But as far as local bars around here, that made me happen to think. I did perform at a couple of them on Halloween, but when I approached the bar owners about performing at other times as *[name of female persona]*, even though I looked pretty convincing and sound pretty convincing, they weren't willing to take the chance on being branded as a gay bar by having me as an entertainer. So I just I built my own stage, and if I want to perform on my own stage I perform on my own stage. Otherwise I guess I'm just pretty much stuck, unless I get to be a big rock and roll star, which is going to be awful difficult if I can't get out and perform. But a girl's got to do what a girl's got to do.

OK.

CNK: You strike me as a person of high moral fiber.

#8: Oh no not fiber. You remember that one, the commercial?

CNK: I figure it's a commercial.

#8: Yeah. Too much fiber in my diet. Moral or otherwise, or immoral, as the case may be. I don't know. I'm just repressed quasi-puritanical behind the whole thing, which

makes it--. I've just decided that I'm going to believe that there's nothing wrong with cross-dressing, and if I start thinking otherwise, the hell with it, I'm not going to think otherwise. It just something, as far as I'm--. Obviously being a virgin I'm not promiscuous or anything, but what other people do as far as their sexual practices and stuff is their business. I don't really know that I agree with it, but as far as I'm concerned it's their right, it's their choice, and it's their decision, and it's their business. So I don't judge them on it either. So. I think I'm enjoying being a professional virgin. You don't count masturbation in that, do you?

CNK: You're doing the counting.

#8: OK. Well if you don't count masturbation I'm a professional virgin, and I have--. I don't do that very often anyway, so. Got to do something to relieve the pressure once in a while. Otherwise I might go crazy and go out and attack somebody and be really weird. No I wouldn't, but it's--.

CNK: What I was getting at is, where do these values come from? I mean the value--. Somebody said, "No" they meant "no," the value--.

#8: Well I was brought up like that. As far as where they came from, I don't know. My mother was--. Well, I won't--. She was sort of strict, but sort of not. I don't really know how to say it, as far as that's concerned. But she taught me to respect other people. I do know that. I remember--. I just happened to think of this. When I was a little kid I remember one time I made a smart remark about some other kid that had glasses. This was before I ended up getting them. I called him four eyes, and she really jumped my shit on that and explained to me why it was wrong to make fun of people because of what

they looked like and stuff like that. So that one stuck with me. And there were other things that I can't think of right now that I'm sure stuck with me on that particular vein of things. So I learned not to be too judgmental, or at least I try to think I'm not. Or even if I do think things sometimes, I keep my mouth shut and keep to myself. That way I don't hurt anybody's feelings by saying the wrong thing.

CNK: She teach you that?

#8: I don't really know. I think a lot of it I picked up on my own.

CNK: But she was pretty careful about how you treated other people?

#8: Like not that I would ever use it anyway but the N word describing African-American people, which is so prevalent around this redneck area. I will not say that word, not even in this interview to illustrate what I'm saying. I think that things like that that are hurtful to other people are wrong. Although I will call our beloved new president a dirty rotten stinking conservative and things like that. But that's only because of what he does, not what he is.

CNK: Yeah. What about your mom? How'd she feel about that N word?

#8: She never used it. Not herself. Some of the rest of the family did, and she just had to let that go, but she taught us not to. Course race relations are always strange, especially in this area. You learn one thing, and then you pick up another set of values from your peers and stuff so--.

I go out of my way to try to be friends and love everybody. And I know intellectually, of course, that there's no difference, but, you know, there's this, these thoughts and this conditioning that comes up in your mind somehow that you don't want,

once in a while. You know, nasty little thoughts, and you just say, "The hell with you," or if you want to be puritanical about it, "Get thee behind me, Satan," or whatever, however you want to express it, but anyway. Everybody has thoughts like that. They only mean anything when you let them take over and use you, so. If I ever start thinking anything that is bigoted or sexist or anything I just say, "The hell with it. That's wrong."

I just go on and forget about it. That's all anybody in this whole world can do. No one's perfect, no one's at--. There's no one, as far as I can tell, in this world that is totally non-prejudiced, non-bigoted in every aspect with everybody. I think that everybody has got a little bit of it. It's part of being human and the way that we're brought up. Maybe not a part of being human, but the way that we've all been conditioned in our society, some worse than others. Some societies are worse than others, but I think that you just get over it and go on and learn better, and learn from your stupidity. Like I learned when I called the little boy four eyes because he had glasses. I learned that was wrong, and I went on. And I don't think about--. I never think about anybody with glasses as four eyes. It's silly. I mean I was a little kid then. I didn't know any better. Now I know better, and I don't even think about it, don't worry about it, don't care about it. So why do we get off on this tangent? Has nothing to do with crossdressing.

CNK: Well, I'm interested in how you made it this far. And I'm interested in whether there were things that your mom taught you that you helped you to be strong, to keep on.

#8: I don't know. I really don't know. Truthfully, and I know this is not good for a person, I've pretty much, since the traumatic death of the way my mother died with her

prolonged cancer and my uncle and that, I pretty much have shut out most of my earlier life. I can remember it if I try to, but I don't try to. I just try to let the past be gone and just go on. That's part of the reason this interview is difficult to do is because I try not to remember a lot of things. I'm having to think about them to remember them. I just keep on keeping on and pushing on.

CNK: Well you seem to have a lot of stamina.

#8: Well I got to. Girl's got to do what a girl's go to do. And I'm--. This is all I'm going to say about this, but at one point I was into kind of a shall we say fundamentalist puritanical church, which I eventually got out of, and that didn't do too much for my reconciling this crossdressing business with that. It took me a long time to just say the hell with some of the things that they thought about that. Not that I'm saying anything against being a Christian or believing like that, but I am against the fanatically overly fundamentalist philosophies that I was into at one point. And I will not go back to that place again. So that's all I basically want to say about that. But there's a little mix of that in there too. About the--. You said something about--. Or I said something about the puritanical thing. There's probably some of that in there too. But that's basically all I want to say about that for any reason to anybody. It's a chapter in my life I closed out. It's--. I'm not going to open that door again. It just--. I just don't think about it.

CNK: Yes.

#8: It's over.

CNK: Most of the people I've interviewed have had chapters in a church that didn't respect them.

#8: Well I don't know if they would have respected me or not, because obviously I never told them.

CNK: Right. None of them did.

#8: Good idea.

CNK: But they had to come to terms with loving themselves after having come through the context of a church like that.

#8: Yeah I guess so.

CNK: Some of them have stayed Christian and some haven't.

#8: Well I still think--. I'm still Christian, but I just don't accept the extremist right wing views of the shall we say fundamentalist type people and the Jerry Falwell types and all that that we have out there. I've--. I will have nothing to do with that anymore. It's out of my life. It's gone.

CNK: How can you still be Christian? How does it fit--? Are the--? Are you accepted in the teachings?

#8: Well, like I said, I didn't really want to go into this, but the only thing I'll say about it--. As far as I'm concerned, Christianity as such to me isn't necessarily believing all--. Every word, chapter, verse, and doctrine. To me it's believing in Christ and the divinity of Christ and all that part of it. The rest of it, as far as I'm concerned, whether it's true or not, was written down by a bunch of fanatical monks about a thousand years ago. So I accept the basic core of it and the divinity of Christ and all of that, and the Trinity. But the rest of it, as far as I'm concerned, they can take their damn conservative doctrine and stick them up their damn conservative asses. So.

taking care of my family when they got old and sick, so. Then it just seems like I started getting stuck here more or less. And even though I swore I wouldn't set down roots, once I inherited the property that I live on that's even more roots. So unless the unlikely but desirable thing would happen that I became a successful quote unquote "rock and roll star," I imagine that I'll end up being stuck right here, with just the occasional side trip out to the more cosmopolitan world where I'm tolerated better or even maybe, unless W [President George W. Bush] and his minions turn this society extremely conservative, maybe some day I'll feel free to just be *[name of female persona]* around here all the time. But that's not happening yet. I don't see it happening right away.

Of course some of what they said I'm sure rubbed off on me. So there might be a little bit of that in the mix as far as that's concerned, but basically, as far as the sexual thing and all that and the virginity, I've always felt that sex outside of marriage was not good, so if I decided I wasn't going to get married, which I did, I decided, well, no marriage, no sex. So it was that simple. And even though I came close one time, as I think I said on the tape earlier, didn't I? I just--. When she said, "No," I figured no meant no, and the hell with it. And if she told me 10 years later, "Well I didn't really mean no," that's too bad. So maybe it was a missed opportunity, or maybe a good thing. Who knows? Actually as contrary as she turned out being, I think it was a good thing in that case. But that's neither here nor there.

CNK: This is great.

#8: Never really wanted to have any kids. I don't have anything against them, but I don't think I'd be up to the task of civilizing them, to tell you the truth. Especially with this certain nephew that I've got. Since he wasn't overly civilized I don't think I could deal with such things. Besides more than one slob in a house is one too many.

CNK: Let's go one other place and that's to being a West Virginian. You've never been anything else so--.

#8: West Virginia is irrelevant to me. I'm sorry. I know that that's heretical in this state, but it is. I'm just here because it's convenient and because, oh I don't know. I'm from here, but that doesn't mean anything. I was in the Service for four years. When I got out I could just as easily have stayed in Hawaii where I got out, or I could have come back here. I just happened to choose to come back here. And then I got into the thing with