

Interviewee: Trey Greene
Interviewer: Shonte Clement
Date: November 19, 2018
Location: Transcend Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina
Transcribed by Shonte Clement 12/2018

SC: Just to start off, how would you like to be referred, and how would you like us to contact you?

TG: My name is Trey Greene, my pronouns are him and his, and you can contact me by email or—What do you want me to put on the...?

SC: That's fine. Email or—

TG: Yeah, email's the easiest way to contact me.

SC: Okay. So, these are just my notes and my questions that I'm gonna ask. It's nothing important. Can you tell me about yourself just in general?

TG: Well, I am a therapist. That's kind of my main role right now. I am also the Executive Director of Transend Charlotte, which serves transgender adults in the area. Also, primary my therapy clients are transgender, probably about 90-95% of my clients are gender diverse in some way. I am transgender myself. I transitioned...I'm thirty-five now, and I transitioned at age twenty-eight. I was assigned female at birth, and now identify as transmasculine.

01:10

SC: Would you mind telling me about how you came into this position?

TG: Well, what started it, I guess, was when my internship when I went back to get my masters degree. My first internship was with Time Out Youth, and they serve LGBTQ youth, and I was just kind of getting used to the community at that point. I grew up in Wilkes County, which is very rural, very Bible Belt, basically like the 1950s in every respect. So, didn't have a lot of connections in the community, and that's one reason I think it took me so long to do my medical transition. When I finally started hormones and everything, that was when I finally felt strong enough to go back to school, and I ended up in this position as an intern here. While I was in graduate school, me and a friend started doing support groups and that kind of thing for trans adults. That turned into founding a non-profit, which I didn't really plan to do but now it just is. It was really HB2 [the Bathroom Bill in NC] and everything had come around too, so with the timing of it so a lot of people ending up coming forward and needing support. So, kind of ended up being Executive Director of Transcend, and again was hired back on with TOY as their staff therapist after I was licensed.

2:40

SC: You mentioned that you were from North Carolina, and you grew up in a really rural area. Can you tell me about what it was like growing up in that rural area?

TG: So, I grew up in Roaring River, North Carolina, which is about halfway between Winston and Boone. It's the middle of nowhere. My dad was a Southern Baptist deacon. I grew up very much involved in the church, and my church was one of those where being lesbian or gay was the worst thing you could possibly be. Being trans was not something anybody even talked about. So, it was a lot of confusion for me growing up, and a lot of—I was very dedicated to the church growing up, and all of a sudden realizing when I was a teenager, “Hey, wait I'm attracted to girls,” and “Oh, wait. I don't identify as a girl.” What does all of that mean? So, it was really hard, because there wasn't a lot of kind of open support, especially where I'm from. I mean it's getting better in areas like Charlotte, but just in the South in general...I mean just little things. Everything is so...very, very gendered, and things I remember people arguing about growing up. Like, my mom was a housewife and she didn't work, and all she did was stay home and take care of the kids and cook and clean and that kind of thing. That was kind of the culture of everybody around that area. So, kind of challenging...I'm not a girl. If I was a girl, I don't want to do *that*. It was just a lot of different things like environmentally that kind of...like I said it was almost like living back in the 1950s, and trying to figure out what is this that I'm dealing with that nobody around me understands.

04:29

SC: No, I totally...Yeah, I'm from South Carolina, so I get it.

TG: I gotcha.

SC: So, can you tell me about the people in your life or...?

TG: So, I am married. I've been married a little over a year, so my wife Scarlett is probably the main person in my life. My family is still in my life. It took them kind of a really long time to come around. They always kind of had it from the perspective of—Well, when I was growing up my parents both really hated LGBT people. But when my mom, she kind of recognized that I liked girls before I did. Like, I was talking about all my friends, and she was like, “You don't like them *that way*, do you?” She never would say lesbian or gay. It was just like *that way*. “You're not *that way*?” So, eventually came out to her that I liked girls, and she was—She was very upset. She didn't understand, but her perspective was always “I love you. I don't agree with it, but I'm always gonna love you.” I was never in a situation where they were gonna kick me out, or anything, which is what I see a lot with the kids here. That they're still dealing with that. That there's a lot of risk of being literally disowned by their family. I never had to deal with that, but my mom has come a really long way. And actually said to me the other day on the phone, and said “I think you would have died if you didn't transition,” which was a really huge thing for her to be able to say. So, they're still in my life. I have lots of friends in Charlotte. I have a really strong community here of a lot of different trans people, a lot of people outside the community as well. Just people have been amazingly supportive, I feel like, since I moved to Charlotte, and was finally able to be myself. I've really finally been able to build the connections I never could before when I was living as somebody that I wasn't.

06:30

SC: Yeah no, that great. To be honest, I had all these questions, but then you were like completely honest. I was like “Well, we're just gonna go right to the heart of it.” I remembered

you mentioned something about—actually I want to go back to what you said about growing up in the church. Did that kind of interact with you discovering that you have the possibility of being trans, or not really identifying with being the girl and gender roles of that time. So, can you talk about that more or...?

TG: Absolutely. That was probably for a long time, that was the number one thing I feel like keeping me from being who I was because, like I said, I was that kid that took my Bible to school trying to convert people and praying with kids at recess. My family was just really, really religious, and I fought it for a really long time because I was just told if you're anything like that then God hates you, basically. So, it was really a long process for me of kind of realizing, "No, that not's what I really believe about God. That's not really what I believe spiritually. This is just who I am." So, it was again literally...like I remember the first time I was in therapy in my early 20s. Like, that was the first time I had actually met somebody that was like, "I don't go to church." Like, there are people that don't believe this. That was just mind-blowing for me, I was like "Oh, I actually have a choice. There's other options out there. There's people that don't believe exactly this way." That was, again, that was one of the biggest barriers I think in figuring out who I was kind of navigating what does this mean for what I believe, and why I'm here and all of that.

08:28

SC: I remember you said something about when you took on this internship after HB2 happened, you see that the community needed a space to come to, and I remember seeing on your website—the Transcend Charlotte website—that it's a safe, but trauma informed space. So, can you talk about how that came about, or just elaborate more on that?

TG: So, aside from working with gender stuff, trauma survivors is kind of my other area of passion, especially working with survivors of sexual assault. And it's so common in this community. The stats for sexual assault in particular are about 50-66% of trans people will have experienced sexual assault, which is really, really high. Then from what we know about sexual assault reporting rates, it's probably higher than that. And from what I've seen from the people that I work with it just seems like mostly everybody has experienced something somewhere. So having that space, because I feel like there's so many layers of different people that are coming in. People are experiencing violence. People are experiencing homelessness. People are having to do survival sex work. Like, there's so much trauma and stuff that's coming in. That's one of the most important things about Transcend is making sure that we're aware that people are coming in with a lot more than just gender stuff. I feel like there's a lot of—there's a lot of organizations that do trauma work and a lot of organizations that do LGBT work, but there's not necessarily organizations that focus on both. I feel like it's really imperative that we do focus on both, because it's so prominent in this community, especially in this community. Especially with trans women of color, it's even more common among people of color. It's just really important to me that people are coming in and getting that supportive space where they can—That was kind of when I founded Transcend. What I wanted for people was not only to have a space where they can be who they are, but they can tell their stories whatever they are, they can—No matter who they are, what they've experienced, what they believe, they can have a space to come and talk about that and connect with other people, and be accepted for exactly who they are.

10:39

SC: I don't really know how to word this question, but is there a significance to that? Like, do you especially want to do that *in* North Carolina or in the cultural South.

TG: I feel like, yeah there is. I actually moved out to LA for a year, because I just wanted to get completely away from the South and find like an area...opposite of all the judgement and kind of stuff here. What I found in being out there, I mean there was definitely work to do out there, but I feel like I was really called back to be in the South. To be like, "This is where more stuff needs to happen. This is where there's less people who are understanding of who trans people are, who LGB people are. There's a lot more need for the education, and a lot more need for the supportive space." So, there was a part of me that when I was out there that was like, "I feel like I'm needed back in North Carolina more than I'm needed here. To do this work." So, that was really a big part of coming back here, feeling like I can do more good here, really.

SC: Speaking of the kind of work you do in this area, I looked on your website and you have support groups for LGBTQ-identifying individuals as well as separate support groups for their partners and family members. So, can you tell me a little bit about that?

TG: Yeah so, we very quickly—There's other organizations like PFLAG that does stuff with parents of youth, but we found when we started doing the group there were a lot of loved ones coming in struggling. We started it with kind of a focus on partners, but we've also got a lot of parents of adult trans people that are struggling. One of the biggest factors in people doing well is that they have people in their life that kind of understand who they are and are able to support that. So, when we have a partner or a parent who's coming in like, "I don't understand, but I want to understand." That's a really good space where they can say whatever they need to say, and they can kind of process that grief because it is a grieving process. Even for my family, they had known me for twenty-eight years as their daughter and then all of a sudden "I'm not. I need you to use this different name. I need you to start saying he and him." I was my mom's only girl, and she always wanted a girl. So, it was really hard for her to let go of that. That I wasn't going to do all the things she imagined me doing. We really kind of emphasize that of having other people they can talk to about that grief process, that they can talk to about "I really don't get it. Why do they have to do this, and why do they..." There's a lot of things that people are—People get angry about why their loved ones are transitioning, or why they're a lot of the times saying 'why they put themselves' in that position. But it's really important to have that space where they can process that away from their loved one, and be able to figure out how to be more supportive and how they can figure out how to create a safer space at home. Especially with kids we see a lot of stats on it that the suicide rate is very, very high, but if the parents are supportive it cuts it down by a fourth...to a fourth of that level I think. The same thing with adults. If you just have one person in your life that is supportive it can completely change everything. It's really important that we provide that support, not only to people that are transitioning but to the people around them.

14:14

SC: Who do you see mostly coming into these support groups, or either the main support groups or the family support groups?

TG: What do you mean by who?

SC: Just people from the community. Like, are they from Charlotte or?

TG: We get people from a lot of people from Charlotte, we also get people that are traveling three or four hours to come to group. Like, we've had people from way down in South Carolina, we've had people from close to Virginia come. Really, transportation is an issue for a lot of people and it's hard because there's not a lot of organizations like Transcend. I feel like there's a lot of advocacy organizations that are doing more of the political work, but there's not a lot of people on the ground doing direct service. We do get people from all over, we get people that come in for the first time that have never gone to a meeting about transitioning, we have people that have been transitioned for twenty years. It really varies, and we've served everybody from—well know we serve down to eleven with our TransCloset. We used to be eighteen and up, but for that service in particular we partner with TOY and the youth can come in and access the clothing as well. As far as our adults, we service everybody from eighteen to eighty-three. Like, we've had an eighty-three year old trans woman that worked with us before. We've had a really wide range. We tend to get people more on the younger side, between probably eighteen to thirty-five. We get people from all different ethnic backgrounds, people from all different religions, people from different political views. That kind of thing. It's part of the challenge really of creating that open space, because we've tried not to be—of course, there's things like transgender-wise we've tried to be politically aligned with, but we also want to create that space. I remember we especially had some issues when the Charlotte Uprising and stuff was happening, because we had a lot of people in the group that were involved with Charlotte Uprising but we also had a person in the group who was a police officer. There was conflict there, and how do we create this safe space for everybody when people have different views and people have different backgrounds. It's really important to us to make an open space where everybody can feel safe.

SC: Can you talk about Charlotte Uprising for people who may not know.

TG: So, Charlotte Uprising happened when there was a man Keith Lamont Scott was shot by a police officer, and there was an uprising about how it was another unjust shooting of a Black man. They had people in Charlotte marching for I can't remember how long it went on. For weeks, it felt like. Another person was shot during the uprising, because there was a police standoff with people that were down there protesting. It was just—it got really ugly. It's really sad that, I don't know. Like I said, in the trans community people of color experience so much more violence. There's already this...when you see like trans women experience it more than anybody, and you see a trans woman, police officers are often—maybe see that person as potentially a sex worker. A lot of these women have been kind of forced into that position. I've worked with...When I first started out doing therapy one of the first several people I worked with was a lady that had been assaulted. She was now saying, "I'm not gonna eat or have a roof over my head if I don't have sex with this person." There's just always these kind of assumptions about who people are based on how they look, and I feel like it kind of just goes along with everything that we've been talking about. I support Black Lives Matter, I support all that movement, I support any and everywhere where the minorities are being oppressed and that's where we kind of...and again it's hard because we have people in the group that are more conservative, who are police officers, and those kinds of things. It's just, again, creating that safe

space for everybody is so important, and recognizing that as a social worker there's so many systemic issues that we need to be working on. There's so much! Especially, right now that's happening in this political environment. It's just so many people that are suffering, and that's kind of the biggest thing I wanted because that's what it comes down to with trans people. Like, we don't know why people are born trans, we don't know why but we've tried to treat it in other ways. In the past, people have tried to suppress it, people have tried to do everything, and the only thing that has been shown to make people feel better is for them to be able to be who they are and just move forward in a healthy way. It's just, again, I think compassion is finding ways that we can reduce that for everybody.

19:33

SC: Speaking on the political climate, and having all of these fraught spaces in the South that conflict with being different and an individual of the cultural South. What are some of the things that you've noticed people come in for in relation to the spaces they inhabit.

TG: Like I said, a lot of people are facing homelessness either because their family have kicked them out. We find that for whatever reason for people of color, they tend to have a harder time getting acceptance. With Latino and Latina transgender people there's much more of that machismo. It's very separate between male and female in their culture, and with people that are Black there's—In the South, especially, I feel like there's so much of this religion component in Black families that plays a part in it. There's such an expectation of Black men to be a certain way that plays a part of it, and we just find that, for whatever reason, there's all these different barriers that come up for people and they're having to fight with. One of my closest friends he was talking about when he was transitioning—and it was the first time I had ever thought about it but I've heard it several times from clients since then—but was talking about he was assigned female at birth, and part of what he was scared of “If I transition, I'm gonna be a Black man in America,” and what does that mean. There's just all these different layers of what people are going through, and it's just all over the board. Like, substance use, mental health things, like everything seems to be higher in this community and I think it's all from the level of stress that comes with being different, especially in the South.

21:41

SC: In this community, or in the Charlotte community, do you find that Transcend Charlotte gets a lot of support from the community or does it feel like it's kind of striving on its own? How does that...?

TG: I feel like we've gotten a lot support. When we first started we met with pretty much any organization that we could that was already doing work in the community. Like, “What are you doing? What's not happening? How can we support what you're doing,” because I feel like there's always been kind of a divide in Charlotte between different organizations that are fighting for money, or because of political differences, or those kinds of things, and we wanted to really bring everybody together because I feel like we're stronger when we all kind of come together with what we can provide. We received amazing support, like we wouldn't be here—like I said, I didn't plan to start a non-profit we just ended up having all these...I feel like at our first meeting, there were four of us and by our third meeting, it was our third or fourth meeting, we had like twenty-five people. So, it was very quick that clients were coming in, and HB2 happened right

after we had started. And then the community just kind of gathered around us to really support what we were doing, like Bank of America, Wells Fargo, different people have all come in to support what we're doing, like, "How can we help? How can we be there," the hospital systems. All of them are working to try to make—how can we make these spaces safer. I get reached out to all the time by people in the community that either want to donate and support, or they want us to come in like "help us be better with the trans community". So, I feel like it's shifting all the time. I feel like it's just getting better. There's of course a backlash from people that don't agree, as there always is with any kind of human rights issue. But I feel like overall we've been very well supported by the community.

23:38

SC: On your website, I also remember that you provide workshops to community service providers and businesses and organizations. Can you expound on that?

TG: Yeah so, we do everything from LGBT 101 and Trans 101 to I do workshops with therapists working with trauma survivors that are trans. We've done the National Sexual Assault Conference. We've done A Call To Men where they work with men to end sexual violence. I don't know if you've heard of them or not. We've done...like with the hospital systems, with Planned Parenthood, with pretty much anyone that will allow us to come in and create more safe spaces. It's nice to have a support group here where it's safe, but it's better to have more places out in the community where people can go and just live there lives and not have to worry about being trans. I don't know what else to say about that...

SC: No, that's good...That was also interesting that the community is supportive, but I was wondering how well do you feel like Charlotte aligns with the cultural South. Does it seem like a pocket metropolis?

TG: I feel like there's good and bad about Charlotte. It's definitely in North Carolina I feel like it's one of the pockets of places where there's more acceptance, but Charlotte is not at the top of the cities that are accepting either. There's a lot of work to do, but there's a lot of insulation here. I feel like there are options here that aren't like where I grew up. There's no way to be trans where I grew up, and be accepted. It's just...and especially I feel like for me I have a lot of privileged in that I pass as male. Like, people don't generally look at me and think anything, but it's the people that are kind of struggling with passing who maybe don't want to do hormones, who can't do hormones, people that are non-binary, and it's much harder for trans-women to pass because once you've had testosterone in your system you generally have to have surgery to get some of the facial features—Like, that's the first thing that cues us when we look at somebody, like "That's a man. That's a woman." When you've had testosterone in your system you get the brow ridge, and you get those masculine features that don't necessarily go away once you go on female hormones. Whereas, when you go on testosterone...like I looked very female before, and you go on testosterone and it does change your face, it does deepen your voice. Estrogen won't bring your voice up. Estrogen won't take away those masculine features. So for trans women, a lot of times if they want to pass for female in this society there's a lot more requirement for surgery kind of thing. Generally, the one that they need most is like facial-feminization surgery, and that can be 40-60,000 dollars and insurance is like, "That's a cosmetic procedure," and won't touch it. Again, when you're seeing about this image they have in the

media of man in a dress, it's usually just a transwoman who can't—doesn't have 60,000 dollars lying around to have this surgery, and that's just one of the surgeries. Because then she still has her voice to deal with, she still has bottom surgery, if she wants to have gender confirmation surgery. There's so many things that kind of go into that, and I feel like in the South there's even more kind of judgement around some of those things. I feel like when I lived in California or when I've been up North, there's a lot more openness. People don't tend to point and say...and there's not as much...I don't know if it's a religious thing, or just a political thing. I don't know, but in the South there's a lot more of a tendency to be like, "Oh, look at that person." You're supposed to fit into a certain mold, and if you don't fit into that then you're ostracized. There's violence committed against you. It's all these things that tend to happen.

27:54

SC: Does that kind of go into the purpose of TransCloset so you can assuage those kind of differences? So they can at least have access to the clothes that make them closer to their ideal selves?

TG: Well, part of that is one: cost wise. Like, I was a broke college student when I transitioned, and that's where we got the idea for the TransCloset because I had a friend that was transitioning from male to female and she had all her male clothes, and she was like "I don't want them. If you need them for your transition," so I went over and tried on everything that I could take. I said I was a broke college student, so that really helped me. It's expensive to buy a new wardrobe. So, one thing they have free clothing they can come get, and people can donate, people in the community and people outside of the community can donate anything they're not using. The other thing, it's a safe space for them to try on things because going out and navigating dressing rooms and that kind of thing in public, especially again for trans women. I feel like there's less judgement if you're a transguy or a transmasculine person. Like, if you're feminine and walking around in the guys section people won't stare at you, as much as if you're somebody that was assigned male at birth and you're walking around picking up dresses. Looking at makeup and that sort of thing. Like, that can be really terrifying for women. It's a space where they can navigate that, and also the other thing is if you've been socialized as male like navigating makeup and navigating women's clothing—Like it's much more complicated than just figuring out how do I want to look, how do I want to dress. So, we have a lady that works with us, and she's a transwoman. She passed for years before she did any kind of medical treatment, and she's a stylist, so she can work with them. Like, "what kind of look do you want," like "what do you want to try?" She can help them, like, teach them to do makeup, teach them how to do hair, and all those kinds of things so they feel more comfortable. For everybody the goal is not to pass. For some people, especially in the non-binary community, I feel like they're like "No, I want to challenge that gender is...gender is not a binary. Gender is not male or female, and I'm gonna walk out with facial hair and a dress and people are just gonna have to deal with it." So, for some people it's "I want to challenge that with my look," or some people it's "I wanna pass." So, whatever their goal is, it's a space where they can explore that and not have to worry about people judging them. Also there's some people that come here for group that aren't out anywhere else. So, they can come here and change into an outfit they're more comfortable in, and for people that are questioning can see if they feel good once they're wearing a dress, once they're wearing a suit, or pants or however that looks. They can try on things, and be able to be here in the space and see how they feel.

SC: Definitely. Not that I've ever thought about it, but it would feel very intimidating to go into the section that isn't yours, especially if you're like a male-to-female and all these things about the Bathroom Bill, and going into dressing rooms people don't think you belong in. I would definitely be...intimidating.

TG: Yeah, and I've had friends that had the police called on them and it didn't matter which restroom they went in. I have an older friend, he's in his fifties, and he's never had any medical treatment for gender dysphoria, but he's like "I'm my dad from the waist up, and my mom from the waist down." And he's like, "I've had the police called on me in both bathrooms." He's like, "It depends on who's looking at me." So, he's scared to go to the bathroom at all in public. He's in his fifties, so he's got maybe an hour or two before he has to worry about finding a bathroom, and going back home, and how dehumanizing is that that he can't just have a safe place to go to the bathroom. That's where I was for a while before I first started transitioning, because of course there was that period where I just started T and it depended on who was looking at. Some people still saw me as female and some people were starting to see me as male, but you never know who you're going to run into in the bathroom so you never know which one to go into. That's where a lot of people, again, if you don't have the privilege that your passing or you don't want to be passing, and if you're in that ambiguous area that people are uncomfortable with then you have to deal with those kinds of things. Like, "Where am I going to be safest?"

SC: Definitely. People don't usually talk about going into either bathroom and feeling scared of going into any bathroom, even if it does fit with the assigned gender that you are, or assigned sex.

TG: Yeah, I remember after HB2 passed there was a lady, and this happened to multiple people but she's always the one that I think about, but she went into—I think it was a Burger King—and she was not passing. She was wearing feminine clothing, but you could tell she was assigned male. So, she went to the bathroom, and she was like "Okay, people look at me and they see a guy, but I'm wearing a dress. If I go into the men's bathroom, what's going to happen to me?" So, she said "I think I feel safer in the women's bathroom," but at that point it's illegal for her to go into the woman's bathroom because she didn't have her ID changed, which takes surgery and is a whole other thing. So, she says "I think I'll feel safer in the women's bathroom," goes into the women's bathroom, and then there were three women that assaulted her in the women's bathroom and chased her out of there. And she's like, "I can't call the police because they'll arrest me for having been in there." So for a lot of people, there's not a safe place for them to go, and that's the really sad part that people aren't seeing. That these are human beings, and they've been going to the bathroom with you forever. Like, they didn't just start going to the bathroom yesterday. And there's never been a case that I know of where any of the things that they fear that have happened, and it doesn't...Usually in the sexual assault thing like really, really bothers me, because trans women are one of the most discriminated against groups in the world. And for a guy, or anyone that wants to sexually assault someone, to say that they're going to put on a dress so as not to draw attention to themselves... Like it doesn't make any sense to me. Like, the sign is not—If someone wants to sexually assault somebody, the sign is not "Oh, it's for women only. I guess, I'm not going to." It doesn't make any sense. It just bothers me because, like I said, the sexual assault stats for trans people...those are the spaces where those happen for trans people. In those gendered spaces, and there's more of them than we realize. I feel like before I

transitioned, I didn't realize how many there were. Like, it was everything you do, especially back in university. Like, if you're dealing with dorms, or sports teams, or...there's so much stuff that's gendered. You just have to worry about everything when you go out. Like, whether you're going to be safe or not.

SC: Sorry, I have to collect my thoughts. Yeah, that was really... I think you answered most of my questions actually. With Transcend Charlotte, I guess, receiving a lot of support, where do you want to see this organization go in the coming years? Of if there's any improvements you want to make. Just things you want to expound, or expand, on.

TG: Yeah, I mean, there's so many directions that we've talked about. One of the things we've been trying to get in place is the therapy piece, because there is a barrier for a lot of people. Because with the way that it's set up now, a lot of people have to have therapy before they can be able to start their transition. Or because of the trauma, and because of all the things, they need therapy, and if you've got poverty being so high in this community. I think trans people are tens times as more likely than a non-trans person to experience extreme poverty, or making less than 10,000 dollars a year. So, you've got people that live in poverty, that are homeless, that don't have insurance that are coming in that are needing therapy that can't afford it. So, that's one of the things we've been focused on, and how can we integrate that into this? I mean, we'd love to have eventually, you know, kind of like Time Out Youth does. Kind of like an adult version of that with Transcend Charlotte. Right now, we're just kind of focusing on the programs that we have, what we can do, and trying to get—again I think therapy is one of the next things that have always been on my list, because I feel like that's one of the things that's most needed. I mean we try to refer out to providers, but, again, there's limitations there if you have people that are dealing with homelessness and poverty. There's not a lot of options there. It can be really limiting.

SC: From all this information, I really appreciate it. I feel like—I was surprised because you were so open, so I was like “I have to rearrange my questions. Now we're talking about different things.”

TG: I'm sorry I feel like I'm jumping all over the place.

SC: No, it's okay! I enjoyed it, because it didn't have to be awkward. But no, I really appreciate your openness, and I really off—well not off the record. I just really appreciate what you're doing here, because I have trans friends—and I'm literally crying—but it's just...I can't...like there's so much support that I want to have, but I'm just not qualified to offer that kind of support. I'm just empathetic by nature, so it's just really good to see this in this area. Even if it is in one of those metropolitan pockets of the South, but I really just do appreciate it. As someone in the LGBT community—because I'm bi—so, just closing questions. Sorry I'm tearing up...Is there anything you want to see from the Athenaeum Press, because we're doing this project on trans voices in the South. What kind of impacts do you want to see our project—or even just the shape of the project. What would you want it to look like.

TG: I think just getting more voices out there, especially the people that don't get to speak as much. I feel like we don't have enough people of color, I feel like we don't have enough people

that are in that ambiguous space with passing, from the non-binary community. Like, with the people we do have, it's great that we have some people in the media now that are trans but most of the people we have are Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner, and people that have the means to pass in a way that makes society much more comfortable with them in public than maybe the other people that are struggling with, like I said, homeless and poverty and can't even think about dealing with the physical aspects that people might expect them to. And, like, with HB2, they said, "Well it's inclusive because if you change your ID, you can be in that bathroom," but in North Carolina you have to have surgery to change that, which is not an option for everybody or it's not something everybody wants. So, you may have someone that looks very masculine that has female gender marker and vice versa. Just having people be more aware, I think. And let people tell you who they are. That's the other thing that I wanted to mention about the South. The ma'am and sir thing. We need to kill the ma'am and sir, because I feel like that's the first thing that people hear when they walk in the door of most places. It's hard to explain to somebody that's not trans how it feel when somebody is like...and maybe it's not. Maybe you just thinking if you walked in somewhere, and they said, "How are you doing, sir". How would you feel about yourself. Like, "What did I do?"

SC: Actually that's so interesting, because I was always raised to say ma'am and sir to be respectful, and then in that instance it just doesn't even completely acknowledge that some people don't even like being called ma'am or sir.

TG: Yeah, I feel like most—a lot of women don't being like called ma'am anyway.

SC: Yeah, they don't like being called ma'am! I usually—I used to work in retail, and I would always call people Miss if I could obviously tell, and I would just try to be as gender-neutral as possible when they were...I was trying to be aware, but I don't know if I was good at it. I was in high school, so I wasn't as knowledgeable as I am now. Usually, I try to be as respectful and just call them by their name. It was definitely interesting.

TG: Yeah, I would love to see it modeled more, because up North...they don't say ma'am and sir up North, and they're still respectful. There's ways to do it without kind of automatically gendering the person. Or at least, give people an opportunity to tell you what they prefer.

SC: Is there anything else that you want to say or touch on that I didn't ask about that you just really want to include?

TG: Not that I can think of. I'm sure there is, but...

SC: No, definitely. I kind of just threw it in so. I'm definitely—thank you so much agreeing to this interview. I feel like I got a lot out of it, and I'm crying right now but that's just because I'm emotional. I really appreciate it. That's all I have for you today, so thank you for meeting with me.

TG: Absolutely!