

Queer Newark Oral History Project
Interviewee: Angela Raine
Interviewer: Anna Alves
Date: October 20, 2016
Location: Newark LGBTQ Community Center

Anna Alves: Okay. Today is Thursday, October 20, 2016. My name is Anna Alves, and I'm here with my colleague Lorna Ebner, and we are interviewing Angela Raine at the LGBTQ Community Center on 11 Halsey Street for the Queer Newark Oral History Project. Okay, so the first question I have for you is very basic. When and where were you born?

Angela Raine: I was born here in Newark, New Jersey at Harris and Harrison Martland Hospital 1962.

Anna Alves: Who raised you? Did you grow in one place or household or several?

Angela Raine: My mother raised me, along with my baby sister, but I have five siblings. My father and my mother separated when I was young, but he was still in my life for a while. I've lived in Newark all my life, just not in one particular place.

Anna Alves: What's the first time that you remember moving?

Angela Raine: Oh, I was very young. We used to live on Wicker Street off of Martin Street in Newark, and we moved to Littleton Avenue. That was the first I can remember.

Anna Alves: When you say very young, you think you're like toddler, maybe like five or six?

Angela Raine: Maybe about five or six.

Anna Alves: Five or six, and then when was the next time you moved after that?

Angela Raine: Preteen.

Anna Alves: Preteen, and where in Newark did you go at that point?

Angela Raine: We moved a couple places at that point [laughing]. Well, I could basically tell you a couple places where we lived. Hillside Avenue, 8th Street, and Prince Street when I was a teenager.

Anna Alves: After that, that was like, maybe, when ya'll settled in for a while?

Angela Raine: No. For a little while, we were there. Yeah, just for a little while.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: From there to there. Then we moved to Fairmont Avenue. After that, I was on my own, basically.

Anna Alves: In Newark?

Angela Raine: In Newark.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: You mentioned that your mother raised you and you're one of five siblings.

Angela Raine: Six.

Anna Alves: Six siblings, so you were one with five siblings. Where were you in the birth order?

Angela Raine: The last one.

Anna Alves: You're the youngest.

Angela Raine: Hell, yeah. [Laughing] baby. Yes, the last one.

Anna Alves: Did anyone else join or leave the household as you got older, like in childhood or teenager, extended family?

Angela Raine: Well, my oldest sister, she left. She started havin' kids. Then my next older sister, she left to go to school at Rutgers down in Cook Campus, New Brunswick. Then my baby sister, she moved out. My oldest brother was in and out. Then there was just me and my next oldest brother, and he was in and out, too. [Laughing], and he's gonna stay out.

Anna Alves: It was mostly the six siblings and your mom, for the most part.

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm, and my stepfather—and him.

Anna Alves: Your stepfather.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, he was good. He was good.

Anna Alves: When did your stepfather join the household?

Angela Raine: Oh, boy. When I was young. Yeah. I was around preteen, about 11, 12, somewhere around in there.

Anna Alves: Do you recall any events that were transitions or turning points in your early life?

Angela Raine: Far as?

Anna Alves: Hmm?

Angela Raine: Far as?

Anna Alves: As far as things like memories that were impactful or particular experiences—

Angela Raine: Good or bad? [Laughing]. Rather not talk about the bad. There's a whole ton of those. **[00:05:00]**

Male Voice 1: Excuse me, ladies. Nice to meet you.
[Laughing]

Anna Alves: Nice to meet you, too.

Male Voice 1: Nice to see you.

Angela Raine: Yeah, I had okay childhood. Really, it was not more bad than good so far as events with family and whatever. Basically, I had a good childhood. Teenage years was great.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: Wanna share some of those stories about your teenage years? What was so great about them?

Angela Raine: Well, I actually started getting away from my neighborhood, my family, hangin' out, partyin', and stuff at a very early age—12. Yes, sneakin' out. It wasn't nothin' spectacular, but it was fun for me. I had a group of friends I hung out with. William, David, Curtis—I'm forgetting someone.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: We stayed close for years.

Anna Alves: Were they from your neighborhood or one of the neighborhoods that—

Angela Raine: Well, they were from my community, yeah, and they were all gay. This is me starting to find myself.

Anna Alves: How did you meet them?

Angela Raine: Someone that was supposed to be a friend of mine, who turned out to kick my back out, introduced me to them, and that friendship went south, so then it was just us four. Actually, we've stayed friends all these years, and me and William are closer than everyone else. David passed away some years ago. Curtis went on his marry way. He still lives in Newark, though. He's still around. William lives in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

Anna Alves: What was it about the group that you felt bonded with them about?

Angela Raine: Fun.

Anna Alves: Yeah?

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. What were some of the things you did for fun?

Angela Raine: We went to clubs. We did a lotta drinkin' and druggin'—

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: - and went to clubs, and we hung out at each other's house. Yeah, it was always good times with us. As we got older and things got to be more serious, we stood by each other.

Anna Alves: What was it about the relationships that have been able to stay bonded through now? You said some of them went away.

Angela Raine: One died. Curtis went on about his way.

Anna Alves: The ones that you stayed close to, what is it about those friendships that you think has kept you bonded?

Angela Raine: We're like family. We really look out for each other. If they need me, they know they can call me. If I need them, I know I can call them. Even though they're in Pennsylvania, there's no problem with us to get to each other when we need each other.

Anna Alves: That's always good to have in your life.

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm. Go ahead.

Anna Alves: Oh. Were there adults in your life besides your mother that might've shaped your childhood or adolescence?

Angela Raine: My mother, hmm. [Laughing]. My baby sister, she really looked out for me. My oldest brother, here and there when he was around, I guess. He was also lookin' out for me.

Anna Alves: How many years old was he?

Angela Raine: Oh, had to be over 12—10 or 12 years older.

Anna Alves: Much older. How many years separated are you and your baby sister?

Angela Raine: About six years.

Anna Alves: Six years, but your baby sister was older than you, but you call her your baby sister, or she's your baby sister?

Angela Raine: No, I call her my baby sister. Really, I generally call her my baby sister or my little sister. She's short.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: Cuz I know you're the youngest. That's why I'm like, "Oh, that must be what you call her," but she's not really your baby sister.

Angela Raine: Yeah, cuz she's short. [Laughing]. She's like 5'2", 5'4". I'm 5'9".

Anna Alves: Was she the closest of your siblings to you?

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Anna Alves: Did you feel the closest with her?

Angela Raine: **[00:10:00]** Yeah.

Anna Alves: Is that still the case to this day?

Angela Raine: Yeah. We try to keep our family close—her more so than me.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. I don't know if we went over this, but is everybody still sort of around the area? I can't remember if you'd mentioned that. I know you mentioned one had gone Rutgers—

Angela Raine: Oh, that nut case. [Laughing] [coughing] she lives by Berkeley Heights somewhere with her husband. My baby sister and my next older sister, they're still in Newark. My brother lives somewhere up that way, too. My oldest brother passed away almost a year ago.

Anna Alves: Was he local at the time or—

Angela Raine: No, he was in South Carolina.

Anna Alves: He was in South Carolina.

Angela Raine: Yeah, with my mother.

Anna Alves: What schools [laughing] did you attend as you were growing up?

Angela Raine: I went to Woodcliff, and I went to Camden Street. Then I went to Camden Middle. Then I went to Clinton Place. Then I went to Westside, which I hated, and then I went to the Central High school.

Anna Alves: Okay. Were those other ones in the middle, were those middle schools, or were those also high schools?

Angela Raine: Clinton Place was a middle school.

Anna Alves: Okay, so Central High School was the only high school you went to.

Angela Raine: Westside High School.

Anna Alves: Oh, Westside High School.

Angela Raine: And Central.

Anna Alves: And Central. Which years did you go to each?

Angela Raine: I have no clue. I was so smashed. [Laughing]. Really, I was drunk.

Anna Alves: That's why it's sometimes good to do the interview cuz you're like, "Okay, let's see if we can remember."

Angela Raine: Yeah. Oh, boy, '74. I think '74 to '75 I went to Westside, and '76 I went to Central.

Anna Alves: That was the last high school you went to.

Angela Raine: Yeah, Central.

Anna Alves: Did you go to school after that as well, or did you—

Angela Raine: No.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: - was that it for you [laughing]?

Angela Raine: Well, first of all, they kicked me out.

Anna Alves: What was that experience like?

Angela Raine: Well, you gotta understand, at that time, administration wouldn't take the word of the stupid, okay? The vice principal calls me a derogatory name, and we got kinda scrambled up in the hallway. I ended up out, so my mother refused to take me back to miss work. That was it for high school.

Anna Alves: That's when you went out on your own?

Angela Raine: Kind of, sort of. After being kicked out of high school, I went to work in the nightclub, and during that time and experience, that's when I started my transition.

Anna Alves: What were you doin' at the nightclub?

Angela Raine: Janitorial work.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Actually, before then, I went to job corps. That was really short lived. Got kicked outta there, too. I had a very bad temper—not temper, but my attitude towards authority wasn't—like any other adolescent. Yeah, went to work at the nightclub. Started off doing janitorial work, and it was a gay club. It was called the Dollhouse, which was owned by Bobby White.

Anna Alves: Was that here in Newark?

Angela Raine: Yeah, it was at the other end of Halsey Street at William Street. At the Dollhouse, I started doin' janitorial work. Then they had amateur night in the beginning for people to lip sing or whatever, and I got into doin' shows. I was very good at lip singing. Then Bobby hired me to wait on tables cuz I had just started transition. I did shows, I waited on tables, and I did small tour with Bobby White. He inducted me into the Bobby White review, which was like a show review for transgender people, or should I say LGBT people because we had [00:15:00] guys that worked with us also. At 21, it was retirement time for me. Yeah, I worked at the club for 16 to 21.

Anna Alves: Oh, wow. That's a long time.

Angela Raine: Yeah, and it was retirement time because I found my niche in entertainment of lip singing, which was Grace Jones at the time, and to stay in character, I cut my hair. I did the makeup, the clothes, the heels, and everything, and being like that in the daytime was not nice cuz you get mocked by people, and that scared me, so it was time to retire from that.

Anna Alves: What did you do after that?

Angela Raine: Oh, boy, I tried goin' to school.

Anna Alves: You went to Rutgers as well?

Angela Raine: No, I went to Essex County College for about—god knows how long. I just did menial jobs. Yeah, and then I got into the seedy life of the streets and drinkin'. It was bad relationships and all that kinda comes together. You have a bad relationship, you drink. You do drugs. I didn't know, at the time, what was goin' on, so that's how I ended up. After the last bad relationship, I kinda got my head screwed on tight.

Anna Alves: What was it about that particular relationship that made you decide to—

Angela Raine: The fear of murder, jail.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: That'll do it.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, but after that last bad relationship, I got clean. I became a hypochondriac. Then I just started tryin' to find my way back onto the right track. After then, clean for a year, maybe a little longer, I met my husband who wasn't clean, but very sweet person on the inside. He would never show it to other people. Been with him 18 years, and—

Anna Alves: How did you meet, or is it something that—is it a story you'd like to share?

Angela Raine: Well, a lotta my friends passed away. I lost three generations of friends. One of my girlfriends, he was in a relationship with him. They were drinkin' and druggin', and a year after I got clean, she told me that she had cancer. Me tryin' to Captain Save a Hoe, I'm tellin' her, "Oh, you need to stop smokin' and stop doin' drugs," and she's like, "I'm an adult. I'm gonna do what I wanna do. If I have to do this until the day I die because I want to, that's what I'm gonna do." Eventually, she died, and my husband was a loner type person. He didn't really have friends. He just had people that he used with, and I decided I'm goin' to be your friend. I invited him over for dinner. Actually, I took my girlfriend's cat cuz they didn't want her on the street cuz she was a house cat, so I took the cat. I invited him over for dinner. I would call him if the cat wouldn't come out to eat. I needed him for the cat.

Anna Alves: Right, cuz the cat needed him.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, so it ended up bein' a package deal.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Through bein' friends with him and havin' the cat, we ended up seein' each other, and I was tryin' to get him to stop messin' around. We would go out together and have fun. [0020:00] He asked me to marry him one day. He was a nonconventional. I was into workin' out and tryin' to stay in shape. Like I said, I became a hypochondriac, so I was eating healthy, working out, trying to stay fit and healthy, and he liked to work out, too. We were workin' out together, and it was like, one day, he just came out all of a sudden, "If I asked you to marry me, would you?" I told him, "I gotta think about this."

Anna Alves: You were on the workout machines [laughing]?

Angela Raine: I had some kinda steppin' machine my sister had gave me [laughing]. It was like a treadmill—very old school [laughing] —

during the time that were dating, I didn't like where he was living, so I invited him to move in with me. Then we got the workout bench and the weights and all that crap, and he asked me "If I asked you to marry me, would you?" I told him, "I gotta think about it," cuz he was still messin' around, and so, do I really wanna get into this? A couple weeks later, we were workin' out, I just said, "Yeah." He was like, "Yeah, what?"

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, marry—

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: You know, it was just like, "This is how you asked me. This is how I'm answer you." [Laughing]. He was like, "Yeah, what?" I was like, "Yes, I would marry you," and he was like really, really happy, and I took his happy ass to the jewelry store. Anyway, a year later, we were married. Cut this out the tape.

Anna Alves: You'll get to look at the transcript.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: A year from the first time we slept together, we got married. I'm talkin' really slept—

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Cuz he couldn't understand why I picked this particular day for us. I told him, "This is the first time that we—" He was like, "Ew, you remember that?"

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I'm like, "Yeah."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, we were married July 11th.

Anna Alves: What was the wedding like?

Angela Raine: Oh, it was beautiful. We had a big wedding, even though we couldn't have the nicest wedding. We got married in Branchburg Park—

Anna Alves: Oh, beautiful.

Angela Raine: - over the bridge. I had bridesmaids, groomsmen, \$7,000.00 gown. Yeah. The gown was the most expensive thing. That cost more than the wedding.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Really, it did.

Anna Alves: Was it one of those designer gowns?

Angela Raine: I don't know. It's still in my closet.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, we got married on the bridge in Branchburg Park over the lake. We had a reception at the VFW hall, and everything was like—we paid less than, I would say, \$5,000.00 for the whole wedding.

Anna Alves: Oh, wow. Your dress was—

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I invited my mother to be there at the wedding, and she was like, “No,”—she went down south after the [unintelligible 00:23:18], which hurt my feelings cuz I wanna get a limo and buy her dress and the whole nine, but she went down south, so a friend of mine who was a driver of some sort, he had a white Cadillac with royal blue leather interior, which was the colors for my wedding.

Anna Alves: Nice, yeah.

Angela Raine: As a wedding gift, he drove us.

Anna Alves: Oh, that's beautiful.

Angela Raine: It was just crazy. It was fun. It was crazy. Three years after we got married, my husband got locked up, and that was almost, I'd say, seven years that we were apart. Really, we weren't. I saw him in the beginning of every week and every two weeks. When he came home, he got clean. He's been clean almost eight years, nine years—somethin' like that, and he's one of the writers for my magazine. I got him into writing, so he's one of the writers for the

magazine. During that time, I became a housewife after he came home. While he was away, though, I became an outreach worker and a case manager. Even now, I still do night outreach in the red-light district for the transgender [00:25:00] girls. I took a little sabbatical to be with him and here I is.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Now, I'm back on track. I'm really striving to do more with my life. I'd say, back in May, May 19th or 20th, I got my high school diploma, and right after that, I went into a home health aide course. I finished that in August. They still haven't sent me my temporary license for that, and celebrated ten years with the magazine. We had a nice little party here. I'm working on the next issue, which is due in a couple of weeks.

Anna Alves: Do you wanna talk a little bit about the origin of the magazine and how it came to be?

Angela Raine: Depression. [Laughing]. No, honestly, that's what happened. I was havin' problems at my job, and I was getting depressed. Workin' on a computer was new to me. Well, not very new, but fairly new, and I decided to type up of my feelings because there was so much goin' through my head. The issues that transgender women have, the issues I was having with what I was feelin' cuz my husband was away—all these emotions and thoughts was goin' through my head, so I decided to type them up. It was so much stuff I had did, and I'm like, "Okay, now, what am I gonna do with it?" A friend of mine, who passed away some years ago, name Shelton Jackson, he had just did a book of poetry, and I went to him. I told him, "I got all this stuff, and I don't know what to do with it," and he was like, "Well, why don't you just write a book?" Then I told him, I said, "Well, this stuff isn't just like a one-shot deal. This is ongoin' stuff in a transgender's life, and I wanna continue to write." He was like, "Well, do a newsletter," so I'm like, "No."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: “I’m not gonna do all this work and give it away for free,” so I told him, “I really wanna just write a magazine.” He said, “Well, write a magazine.” He said that he would help me in any way he can, and on my 11th issue, I asked him to work on it, and before he could finish, he passed away. That tore me up. I didn’t come out with the 11th issue. I took the work from the 11th issue and put it in the 12th issue and dedicated it to him. Oh, boy, ya’ll are gonna have me all cryin’ and stuff. [Laughing]. After that, it was like I just continued to write on transgender issues. Then I had to put more stuff in cuz transgender issues didn’t really take up too many pages, so it was like, “Okay, I like to cook. Let’s throw some recipes and stuff in there.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: “I like to stay healthy. Throw some healthy stuff in there. I like to wear makeup and get dressed up a lot.” I don’t cuz I have nowhere to go, but let’s throw some vanity up in there.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: A friend of mine, Aaron Frasier who I went to high school with, I found out he was a poet. Let’s throw some poetry up in here. He’s been really consistently givin’ me poetry, and I’m publishin’ his poetry. A lotta transgenders have been murdered over the years, and that got to me, so I started writing a column on, **[00:30:00]** why are we misunderstood? Transgender Deaths, that’s what it’s called. Transgender Deaths: Why Are We Misunderstood? I write on the transgender that’s been killed. Everything came about because of depression. I was depressed about my husband. I wrote one poem. Ten years, one poem. In my very first issue, I had a poem called Why Me, Why Not Me. I tried to incorporate my family, but—

Anna Alves: When you say incorporate, do you mean as content or as other writers?

Angela Raine: As other writers, as people I can go to for help with anything. Like I said, my sister, she's all over the place with school, so I thought that, maybe, she could help me with health and wellness. That was a bust. [Laughing]. My brother, he wrote something for one of the issues, and I would try to get him to write more for me, and he started, "Oh, you gotta pay me." I was like, "Oh, never mind."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I don't make enough to pay people, so it was like, "Oh, never mind." My baby sister's my biggest cheerleader. She's my biggest cheerleader. Anything that deals with the magazine, she's like, "Okay." It's like, "All right."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, I tried to get my family involved, but it's so much insane stuff with them, so I just said, "Well, never mind." My husband, I had no problem because the magazine has choose sexually detailed stories. That's why I consider it an adult magazine because of the contents of the stories, but it's a lot of information in there, and if people can get past the stories, they get to the information. My stories were consistent with transgenders, and I needed other stories—

Anna Alves: Other content.

Angela Raine: Yeah, well, other stories so far as other transgender love stories. I asked my husband to write, and he wrote—put it like this. His imagination is a mess. [Laughing]. Yeah, for him, there's no boundaries.

Anna Alves: That's helpful as a writer, though. [Laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah, well.

Anna Alves: [Laughing] imaginations are helpful [laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah. Actually, with a couple more stories from him, I could actually do a layout for his own book of stories because he done wrote...

Anna Alves: He produces a lot?

Angela Raine: Oh, boy. He did. Men on men, women on women, fat ones, skinny ones, short ones. No boundaries. Only thing I told him with his stories is to stay away from religion and politics. Last thing I need is a politician sayin', "We don't do that."

Anna Alves: Do you publish it through a publishing house? Is it a print journal, or do you put it online?

Angela Raine: I publish it myself.

Anna Alves: Printed, though, yes?

Angela Raine: No, I publish it myself. I take it to a printer.

Anna Alves: Got you. You know how there's print and there's online, so I guess I was tryin' to figure out, is it a print that you actually—

Angela Raine: If I put it online, it'd be a lot [unintelligible 00:34:23] —

Anna Alves: That's why I was like—cuz you know how people have E-zines, but this sounds like an actual print magazine.

Angela Raine: Yeah, it is.

Anna Alves: That's what I was tryin' to get at.

Angela Raine: Yeah, it's one of those bedsides.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Under the mattress with teenagers.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, I do, basically, almost a lot. I do the layout.

Anna Alves: That's a lot.

Angela Raine: I do the layout. I write stories, articles. I try to get writers. I do my own distribution.

Anna Alves: Yeah, I was gonna ask about distributions. Where do you usually distribute? [00:35:00]

Angela Raine: Well, AAOGC, African American Office of Gay Concern, they buy a few issues, and if someone picks up and reads it there—

Anna Alves: Then they'll have to subscribe?

Angela Raine: Yeah. I let people know when I'm here that if they want to come down and purchase, they can and different events.

Anna Alves: That's awesome.

Angela Raine: Yeah, I did good for Pride.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I'm tryin' to get rid of my old issues cuz I was purchasing too many and wasn't selling enough, so I got stuck with a lot of them.

Anna Alves: Back issues [laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah, so for Pride, I had sold back issues and current issues. I did pretty good with that. I had a handful of my back issues left, thank god. One of my best issues was issue seven.

Anna Alves: What was it about issue seven that you feel was the best of what you can offer in the magazine?

Angela Raine: Well, the cover was great. Cover was beautiful. Show you that in a minute. The story. I did a transgender love story with a tragic ending, and it sent everyone up in arms. Everybody that bought it—

Anna Alves: That's good.

Angela Raine: [Laughing] —it was they were—

Anna Alves: Provocative story is good [laughing].

Angela Raine: They were really pissed with me cuz I killed the main character off.

Anna Alves: That's usually [laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah, and at that time, my husband was away, and I get a call from him, and he's like, "Why'd you do that?" I'm thinkin', "What did I do wrong?" I'm like, "What?" Cuz I wanna know what I did wrong. He was like, "Why did you kill her?"

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Really?

Anna Alves: You know that means that your character resonated. People are that invested.

Angela Raine: Yeah, and people that bought that issue, when I ran into them, they were like, “You were so wrong. Why’d you do that?” I’m like, “Okay, here we go again.” At a point, it was like, “Here we go again. What is it?” That was the best issue. I totally sold out.

Anna Alves: It’s a story that people felt. [Laughing], yeah.

Angela Raine: Totally sold out, and—

Anna Alves: Is the collection of the issues being archived anywhere?

Angela Raine: No.

Anna Alves: Okay, you should think about that [laughing].

Angela Raine: Actually, I wanted to take some of them to the library—

Anna Alves: Yeah, that might be a good idea.

Angela Raine: - because they have a LGBT something like that at the library. It was so crazy, but it was the best issue. I sold out, totally. I still have people like, “I want that issue.” I’m like, “I am not gonna order [laughing] 50 more issues for you to have an issue.” My best friend William, him and his sister—like I said, we’re like family. Robin, she has every issue printed. If someone want—

Anna Alves: She has the archive.

Angela Raine: Yeah. [Laughing]. She has every issue from the first one till now.

Anna Alves: How many issues total have been published?

Angela Raine: Eighteen.

Anna Alves: Eighteen, cuz it’s quarterly?

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Anna Alves: What are the quarters? Is that every three months?

Angela Raine: Every three months.

Anna Alves: Every three months.

Angela Raine: That’s why I have like two weeks.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, but it's quarterly. I would have to hang myself if it was any more than that cuz I don't have a lotta people. Some magazines have staffs and people. I don't have staffs and people, so it's like tryin' to get a magazine every month, that would kill me. My brain don't function like that.

Anna Alves: Yeah, that's a lot.

Angela Raine: Yeah, so, like I said, this last issue—actually, I had it started. Really, I had started the last issue like a few months before, and because this is a process to get back into writing and publishing, I had that ready to go. Pick it up and put it down, and by the time pride rolled around this year, it was basically finished, so I just finished it, ran to the printer, and got it out.

Anna Alves: How many copies do you usually publish at a time? What does your printing run in general?

Angela Raine: Fifty.

Anna Alves: Fifty.

Angela Raine: Well, the last issue, I ordered 50. Then I ordered 50 more.

[00:40:00]

Anna Alves: Because people wanted that issue.

Angela Raine: No, because of the party, anniversary party.

Anna Alves: Oh, special events, yeah.

Angela Raine: Yeah, and I figured I sell 50 tickets. I have 50 issues. Everybody got a issue when they showed up. Half the proceeds, I donated here to the center.

Anna Alves: Nice. Awe.

Angela Raine: Yeah, so 50 people didn't show up, so I got stuck.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I got stuck with some more magazine.

Anna Alves: Back issues. [Laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah, but I run into some people who want magazines, so I try to carry some in the car, and I have some home. This girl down in

Princeton University, when I catch her, I'm gonna strangle her. She hasn't sent me my money yet. Yeah, I just try to keep things movin' because, like I said, I feel like—at first, when all this came about with the magazine, it was just something to clear my mind and take a lot off my conscious. Like I was tellin' her earlier, I didn't realize I was makin' history. Then when the thought of me makin' history came about, it was like, 'Oh, wow. I'm a part of Newark's history.'

Anna Alves: Yes, you are.

Angela Raine: As time went on in the past year or two, I started realizin' not only am I part of Newark's history, I'm a part of New Jersey's history. Like, "Wow, New Jersey history," and it feels—

Anna Alves: You're documenting, too. You're documenting that history, too, in your magazine [laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah, and it's like it's a good feeling cuz some people grow up and they say they want to leave their mark. They wanna feel like they've done something with their life, and they want to be documented in history or whatever, and I actually started realizing and understanding that I've actually made history here in Newark in New Jersey cuz there's no other African American transgender woman who's published her own magazine in Newark or New Jersey. [Cross talk 00:42:57].

Anna Alves: That's why I asked about archives. [Laughing]. I was like, "Is this archived anywhere?" [Laughing].

Angela Raine: Nope.

Anna Alves: It probably will be soon.

Angela Raine: Well, actually, just a little. I did a interview in 2006, which, actually, was online, an online interview.

Anna Alves: Who was it with, and what—

Angela Raine: Can't remember.

Anna Alves: Was it a radio interview or a—

Angela Raine: No, it was printed up online.

Anna Alves: Oh, okay, okay.

Angela Raine: Yeah, that was in 2006.

Anna Alves: Do you remember who—I should write that down. Do you remember who interviewed you?

Angela Raine: Nope.

Anna Alves: Was it with a particular paper or magazine?

Angela Raine: It was E something. It was a online magazine.

Anna Alves: Okay.

Angela Raine: Yeah, probably, if you look La'Raine Magazine up or Angela Raine, you might find it.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: The weirdest thing is, a few years back, I was in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and this guy was like, “How you doin’, La'Raine?” My first thought is like, “My name is not La'Raine, okay? Just that quick, when he said—I was like, “Oh, hi.” I remembered, “Oh, the magazine. That’s how he knows me.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: It’s things like that that make me feel good, when people recognize me because of the magazine. One question you didn’t ask was how I come up with that name.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: Well, I was about to ask that just now cuz I’m like—go ahead and let us know. How did you come up with that name?

Angela Raine: When I decided to do the magazine, I didn’t have a name, and Angela Raine is actually [00:45:00] from—everybody call me Angie. As you get older, you just like, “That’s a kid’s name,” so I said, “Call me Angela.” I was engaged to someone years ago who AKA was Raine. Yeah, and when you in love, you take on his time. It’s like, “I want your name,” and I took on his AKA, so it was Angela Raine. I’m like, “Okay, I like that. I’m gonna stick

with that. That's my name now." When it came time to name the magazine, I was with this guy, we were walkin' around Manhattan—very nice, very handsome, very nice, and we walked around Manhattan all night talkin'. I got over to New York early in the evenin', like 7:00, and we walked around, and we talked until like 4:00 in the mornin'—all evening, all night, he couldn't get it right. He just couldn't get it right. It was like, "My name is—," when I introduced myself, "My name is Angela Raine," and all night, he kept callin' me Angela La'raine, and I'm correcting him like, "No, it's Angela Raine." He's like, "Okay," and we talked, talked, talked, talked. If I said somethin' he agreed with or we laughed about it or whatever, he would say, "Yeah, Angela La'raine." I'm like, "Oh, god. Here we go again. It's constant." By the time the night was over—might as well say that morning—when I got on the train to come home, I couldn't let it go. I just couldn't let it go. It was like, "This fool kept callin' me Angela La'raine all night." It pisses you off when somebody can't get your name right. It's like, "Oh, okay," and I didn't have the name for the magazine, so I'm like, "Okay, Angela Raine, my writer's name. Magazine, La'raine." It was like, "Okay, I have a name for the magazine now."

Anna Alves: Oh, that's great [laughing].

Angela Raine: If this guy walked up to me right now I could not tell you—

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: It gave you the name for the magazine.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, right. If he was to walk up to me and say, "Angela La'raine," I'd be like, "Oh, that's you."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: That's you.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I could not remember his name. I knew he was cute. That was it, and he couldn't get my name right, so that's how the name came about.

Anna Alves: That's a great story [laughing].

Angela Raine: That's it. people had asked me after that. "How'd you come up with that name?" I was like, "That's a good story."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: If I had his name or his number, I could at least call him and say, "Thank you," but all night, from 8:00 to 4:00 in the mornin', anything, it was like, "Angela La'raine, do you like to—," it's like, "Oh, god, yes, I do like." Yeah, that's how it came about that.

Anna Alves: You mentioned earlier, when you were talking to your husband about things to write and not write about, that not to write about politics or religion, but in terms of religion, has religion played a role at all in your life? If so, what kind of role has it played?

Angela Raine: I grew up Baptist. I was never baptized. Big sinner. [Laughing]. To this day, I haven't been baptized or christened. Religion does play a big part in my life because—my husband said I was a bible to him, let me tell you, because I find comfort in prayer. I used to go to church on a daily basis. I don't know where that fell off. I do believe that there is a being more powerful than me, but if it was up to me every day, it wasn't gonna happen a long, long time ago. No, I do have a strong belief in religion.

Anna Alves: Is it a spirituality or a practicing—

Angela Raine: A little bit of both.

Anna Alves: A little bit.

Angela Raine: Yeah. [00:50:00] I don't practice as much, but my husband—like I said, my husband actually—I was a bible to him. He would call me and tell me what's goin' on with him. I'd say, "Well, God will be there on your side. God will help you through." He'd be like, "Really? We're starting that?" It's like, "Well, you have to believe

in something, someone.” My faith is strong, but I don’t like to write about it, that or politics because that’s the worst argument you could have with people, and it’s like, “I don’t wanna talk about it.” People are like, “But do you—,” “No, I don’t wanna talk about it.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: “Let’s not even go down that road.” I’ve had older people to wanna talk religion. I’m like, “I don’t talk about religion.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: “Well, why not?” “Because. No, because you gonna say the wrong thing, and I don’t wanna get into with you cuz my mouth is worse than a drunk sailor when I get there,” so we don’t talk about politics or religion. Politics, not that great. There’s no perfect politics, so we don’t even go down that road. Actually, last night, I watched most of the debate. I just wanted to see them fools actin’ up, really. Donald Trump, I just wanted to see him act up. Other than that, no. I’ll do my duty.

I’ll vote, but I just don’t get into it because I’m a activist, a lobbyist, and that stuff get outta hand to a point. I’ve sat in on a subcommittee hearing before ENDA which is the equal person—I forgot what it stands for, ENDA. It’s actually nondiscrimination against transgenders, which was a mess. I really wasn’t too tuned in at a point because the late Donald Payne was a congressman from New Jersey. He actually fell asleep during it.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: Oh, my god.

Angela Raine: It was just too distractin’ watchin’ this man [coughing], “Really?”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: It was really distracting.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: We met all the senators, and a lotta the conversations with them, dependin' on who you were with—I forgot which one it was. He had the bushiest eyebrows.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: His eyebrows was like this thick.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Then he had the nerve to standin' over me, and all I could see is his eyebrows.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: My god. He has got the bushiest eyebrows.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: He's gray. It's like, "Wow, really?"

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, I do lobbyin' and stuff. I try to get with the activism part of it. [Unintelligible name 00:54:14], I think that's how you pronounce her name, she's really big in the democratic committee stuff. She drags me around every so often. It's like, "Really, really? Really?"

Anna Alves: Where does she drag you to?

Angela Raine: To the subcommittee hearing. It was another meeting I went to down in D.C. with her. Like I said, I just can't with these people. On TV, it's like, "Oh, okay," but when you see it in person, it's like, "Really?" [Laughing]. You got more wrinkles than I don't know what. [Laughing]. Come on.

Anna Alves: It's all makeup [laughing].

Angela Raine: **[00:55:00]** We did a lobbying and, I probably shouldn't tell you this. Anyway, a lot of transgender went that are in the political ring for rallying and lobbying, activism. Yeah, so [unintelligible 00:55:28] [laughing]. They are. They are [unintelligible 00:55:38]. Anyway, I'll say they're older. Anyway, and the younger ones, I feel like I'm put in the middle, so it's like I'm just there to support

and do what needs to be done. I don't like the activism part with marchin' and all that because making a public spectacle of yourself when there's no need to be. Society know we're here, so why must we go through all this? I understand the fight. I'm a part of it, but sometimes, it can be too much. I just stick to La'raine Magazine and find interesting things to write about that every day society don't know or understand, like I was tellin' you earlier. I was tellin' her that, society has labeled us so many things that we're not. We were laughin' about it because, at one point, society said that we were pedophiles. It's like, "No, we're not. I don't wanna babysit nobody kids." I really don't want none of my own either. I did at one point. I did. I wanted a bunch of kids cuz I love kids, but that was then. Now, I got the reality of it. with kids, you can't go nowhere. You can't do nothin' unless you draggin' them, and it's like, "No." Then you're aggravated. It's like, "Do your homework. Go to bed. Come eat dinner." No. No, I can't.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine:

Society labeled us pedophiles. They said that we're promiscuous. They don't understand that these young girls that are out here in this transitioning or has transitioned, they don't have family support. They don't have financial support. They don't have employment support, so it's hard for a transgender woman out here in society, so there's not much for you to do other than become sex workers, unless they struggle like I've been tryin' to do for god knows how long. This crap about transgender women turning men out. What is that? Really, what is that? I've never turned a man out that I know of.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine:

It's like, "Oh, you're known for turnin' men out." It's like, "Ewe, what is that?"

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Either they come because they're curious or this is what they like. Turnin' them out, what is that? [Laughing]. The things that society have labeled us, a lotta times, it's not true. They just don't understand us. My everyday life, I live as my life as a woman. I carry myself as a woman. I don't need to run around here and have a flame blowin' outta my behind. For what? What woman you know does that to show her femininity? It's so much that society has to learn from us. They think that we're all florists and beauticians. I'm allergic to flowers, okay?

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I tried the beautician thing, too, and it's all right. [01:00:00] It's just that that's not what I wanted. I didn't know what I wanted cuz I liked doin' hair, but I know that that's not what I really wanted. My outlet is writing.

[Extraneous conversation 01:00:14 – 01:00:30]

Angela Raine: Yeah, my outlet is writing. I'm really tryin' to break outta the housewife phase. Oh, he drivin' me nuts, and then where I live, I don't like. I have a one bedroom apartment, and I'm used to bein' in this townhouse, so it's like I gotta get outta this. My outlet is to do the magazine, but I find that I can't get any work done at home. I try to do what I can at home, but I try to bring my work out with me. Actually, I took everything outta my briefcase last night, and I put it down because I said, "I'm gonna do some writing. I'm gonna do some writing," and I had like two weeks to go. Like I told you, I'm a Uber driver now. Boy, is that history makin' in New Jersey. First transgender Uber driver. Home health aide. I'm tryin' to just fill my life up right now, and the magazine is real filling. It's just that I can't get no work done in this place. [Laughing]. Really, I need a bigger apartment, a house, or somethin'. My husband's like, "I don't wanna move back to Newark," and I'm like, "Okay." We live in Linden, which is—we live in a apartment

complex[laughing]. It really is so suburban. It really is. [Laughing]
It's all right. In Newark, in East Orange, Orange, these places here,
it's kind of scary for me to walk around and to the store at night.
Out there, at 1:00 in the mornin', I'm off to the store. There's
nobody out there but me.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: It's like, "Wow." I just realized last week that the real funny thing
is that I actually... I live five blocks, four blocks from the gas
station. I walked to the store at 1:00 in the mornin' to get a pack of
cigarettes. I didn't have to worry about somebody jumpin' out the
bushes. It's like, "Wow, it's suburbia."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Wow. This is home for me, Newark.

Anna Alves: Yeah. Well, that's a good segue into the next section, which is
questions around Newark. Unless, did I miss anything or wanted to
add any follow ups? What is your earliest memory of Newark?

Angela Raine: There is no early memory. [Laughing]. I lived here all my life.
Dependin' on what part of my life you're talkin' about because
when I was a kid, it was just like Newark was fun for me, even
though I really didn't go anywhere because my mother wouldn't
let me do a lot, and so I was like 10, 11 years old. It was like, "You
better not get off this block." My friends from their streets, they
had to come on my block to hang out with me. My mom was like,
"If you go off this block, I'll kill you, and I was like God, I didn't
do nothin'."

Anna Alves: What kind of things did you do on the block with the other kids?

Angela Raine: Nothin'. [Laughing]. Nothin'. Ride up and down—when I learned
to ride a bike and got a bike, ride up and down the block. Nothin',
really. Sit on the porch and talk. Oh, god, I'm so much older than
you two. [Laughing]. Four-thirty, we had to be on the porch—
actually, in the house. Durin' the summer, it's still daylight at 4:30.

My baby sister, she was like, “Well, god, can’t they [01:05:00] even just sit on the porch. It’s still daylight.” My mom was like, “You better not leave off that porch.” It’s like, 4:30 in the afternoon, you’re on the porch. You can’t go anywhere.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: As soon as you step off that last step, “I see you.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Just like, “God.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Let me see. I was small. I actually took a picture of the ex-mayor of New Jersey. He’s dead now.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Kenneth Gibson. Yeah, because his office is on South [unintelligible 01:05:42] and 6th Street. My earliest, yeah. Now, preteen, teenagers, I was out. [Laughing]. I was out. I was at everybody’s block. I was hangin’ out with everybody. Then I got introduced to my friends, and it was like, “Oh, we goin’ to the club. We goin’ to—,” it was like, “I can’t go.” “Oh, god.” It was like, “Okay, maybe so,” It was the sneaking out time. Actually, at that time, we used to hang out at the Howard Bar, which was on Springfield Avenue. That was one of the big bars on Springfield Avenue that we’d go hang out there. I’d try to be nonchalant, and I seen—cuz I was like 12, 13.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I’d say, about that time, I was just doin’ a lotta hangin’ out. Then one of my friends introduced me to a couple strangers, and they were like “Oh, you’re cute. You should let us put you on some makeup,” and they got me good and smashed.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Really, I was smashed, and they did the makeup, the hair, and then when they finished, they put the mirror in front of me. I was like,

“Who is that?” I didn’t even know me. I was like, “Oh, my god, that’s me?” They was like, “Yeah, that’s you.” I was like, “Oh, I’m pretty.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I started hangin’ out in Newark., transitioning, and once in a while, I went to New York to a couple places there. I started transitioning between 16 and 17, so somewhere in between 16 and 17, I was doin’ a lotta hangin’ out in New York. I hung out so much people thought I lived there, really. My mother was ready to kill me because, back then, we carried duffel bags. I had like two, three days of clothes, shoes, underwear—everything in this duffel bag—and I would go out, hang out in New York. We met somebody, me and my friends. They would get us a hotel room and sleep with somebody over here. It’s like, “Okay,” so we all piled in this hotel room while you go in there and do what you gotta do. Or get the hotel room, you go in and do what you’re gonna do. He leaves, and then we’re all pilin’ in there.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: That went on for like a year and a half, two years. [Laughing]

Anna Alves: Oh, wow.

Angela Raine: Oh, god, I was so mixed up. I’m gonna tell you where I mixed up. I hid my age for years. I was 16 for five years. Actually, everybody bought it.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I think everybody found out my real age when I turned 21, and I was like 16 for years. It was like, “How old are you?” “16.” It’s like, “Oh.” [Laughing]. I didn’t carry IDs cuz it was like, “Oh, we have to believe you.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: When I turned 21 and me and my friends went out to celebrate my birthday, I took my ID because I was 16 for so long, he wouldn’t

believe me. I even had people go and get me drinks. I was like 19 [coughing]. I would go to the bar cuz I had kinda looked my age, but then I didn't. My 21st birthday, I took my ID and me and my friends went out, [01:10:00] and we went to a club where everybody in the club knew that I was 16 [laughing]. Bartender, "You're 16. You ain't gonna be able to drink. We'll [unintelligible 01:10:10]." "Okay." We went to this club, and I'm 21. I went up to the bar, and I'm like, "I want a rum and coke," and he's like, "Angie, you know we can't serve you no rum and coke." I was like, "Why you can't? I'm 21?"

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: "Last week, you were 16."

Anna Alves: Last week.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: "Last week, you were 16, and you're 21?" "Look, here's my ID," and he's like, "You are 21. You lyin'."

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: It's too funny. My friends was like, "You really just turnin' 21?" I was like, "Yeah." "What? We thought you were 16?" "Oh, well, you get older, you hide your age." I'm like—

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Really?

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I was 21 for years, too.

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: I kept a couple ages.

Angela Raine: Yeah.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, I was 21 until I was about 25.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, up till I turned 40, I was like five years younger. Like 25 till I was 30. I was 30 till I was 35. My husband knew. He was like, “You are not 35. You are not 30.” It’s like, “Can I be 30?” I got married when I was like 32, and he was like, “You are not 30.” “Shut up and mind your business. I’m 30.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I’d say after 35, it didn’t faze people cuz nobody knew how old I really was. I really didn’t give it up either. [Laughing]. The only time I gave up my age is like the milestone years. I turn 50, “I’m 50 years old now.” “You’re what?”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: “Yes, 50.” I might be 50 for another couple years.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Anna Alves: How has Newark changed since some of those early memories?

Angela Raine: Newark was a mess. Newark’s politics have always been a mess. I believe that, still, in the books you can get arrested for dressin’ like a woman. Yeah, I had to be very careful back in the ‘70s, even though we were being more exposed to society, that was a reason for the cops to lock you up. “Oh, you’re dressed like a woman. You’re not supposed to be dressed like a woman.” It’s like, “I got boobs. What about that?” Yeah, I transitioned like 1977. It was still ... What? [laughing].

Anna Alves: It’s a hard time to transition.

Angela Raine: Yeah, it was a mess, but I really didn’t go through a lot. I’ve always carried myself like a young woman, so I didn’t get a lotta static that a lotta trans people may have got. I saw it from lookin’ in from the outside when, really, I was on the inside, but people didn’t know. Over the years, people didn’t really know. They were curious with me. “What are you?” Like, “Mind your business.” Newark, the violence has gotten a bit less because—well, it’s

pickin' back up now, but between the '80s and new millennium, it had calmed down a little because the '70s and part of the '80s, a lotta transgenders were killed then. They just didn't put it out there as that—it's like a young man found. It's like, "That man had titties. Really?" Now, the news, actually, still see us as men, guys—whatever, and unless we're someone like [01:15:00] — what is this girl's name? Anyway, she's in the Rocky Horror Picture Show.

Anna Alves: Oh, I know who you're talkin' about. She was just on—

Angela Raine: She just to be on Orange is the New Black.

Anna Alves: Yeah, yeah.

Anna Alves: Laverne Cox?

Anna Alves: Laverne, yeah, there you go.

Angela Raine: Laverne Cox. If you're little hip—if you're a Lorraine—

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: Now, you're gettin' her name wrong.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Lorraine, if you're like Lorraine Cox, and you're really out there like that and something was to happen to you, they're not gonna call you a man. They would actually say transgender woman who starred in whatever, but for us that are not in spotlight like this, they'll just label us as a man. Yeah, and that's what they did in Newark for years. Oh, how has Newark changed since I've moved.

Anna Alves: Has it changed in ways that, maybe, people might not have noticed or wouldn't be able to see unless they really grew up around Newark?

Angela Raine: No. [Laughing]. No, you notice everything. Livin' in Newark, growin' up in Newark, you notice everything. Sometimes before I see things and people don't actually believe that it's gonna come about cuz, when they built Society Hill, I told people, "They're not

buildin' that for us poor folk," and they were like, "Oh, yes, they are, we gonna—" I was like, "Okay, you wait for that one," and Society Hill will stay just that. I foreseen the hospital cuz, like I said, I was born in Martland Harrison Hospital, which is now Rutgers. I told people when they were startin' to build UMDNJ, that's our new hospital, and it's not gonna be Martland anymore. "Oh, no, it's not." Well, UMDNJ, okay? What I didn't see comin' was the stores closin' and changin' downtown Newark. That I didn't see until—oh, I'm hungry. Shut up.

Anna Alves: [Unintelligible 01:17:32].

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Uh-oh.

Anna Alves: Looks like a couch.

Angela Raine: When Hanes and Bamberger's and Woolworth closed—ya'll don't remember those.

Anna Alves: I remember Woolworth.

Angela Raine: Really?

Anna Alves: Mm-hmm. There was a Woolworth in Sacramento for the longest time.

Angela Raine: [Unintelligible 01:17:50] Sacramento.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, actually, Woolworth was on Corner, Broad, and Market. Yeah, they had two inches as you come in on Market Street and come out on the Broad Street side. When those stores closed, then I seen the change comin' about, and it was like, "It's not gonna be good." For a while, it wasn't. Now, it's like Newark is comin' back up, and I tell people, "Don't get comfortable." They're like, "Oh, they're buildin' Newark back up for us." I'm like, "Yeah, okay." That us is rich, right?

Anna Alves: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Angela Raine: Well, but Newark has gone through its ups and downs and a lot better for now.

Anna Alves: Yeah. Are there particular things you like or find appealing about living in Newark, especially?

[Laughing]

Anna Alves: Let me think about that [laughing].

Angela Raine: No, actually, like anyone else that lives outside Newark, I love to be here cuz everything's here and the convenience of movin' about because, where I live now, the last bus is like 10:30.

Anna Alves: Oh, wow. That's early.

Angela Raine: Yeah. I know the last one to drop you off where I live is 10:30. The one goin' out is, maybe, 11:00. Then there's the train. That's it. You're not on that 12:00 somethin', you're stuck. I swear I'm gonna have a ticket—I forgot. I totally forgot I'm parked right on the street. I am so gonna get a ticket.

Anna Alves: Do you need to—

Angela Raine: What time is it? I don't—

Anna Alves: Around 4:45.

Anna Alves: 4:44. [01:20:00] Do you want me to stop it real quick and—

Angela Raine: Yeah, let me just go check.

Anna Alves: Okay, so we stopped on this question around what you might find appealing about living in Newark. On the flipside of that, what do you find most difficult or frustrating about living in Newark?

Angela Raine: There's not really that much to be frustrated with in Newark. Nothin' more than any other city, like the traffic and all that. Sometimes the people.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. In what way?

Angela Raine: A lotta black men make, have derogatory things to say about us, or Hispanic, but other than that, it's really nothing cuz, like I said, we're in more mainstream society now, so we can walk down the

street, but then it's still those one in ten that you have to watch out for. [Coughing], excuse me. Where I'm at now, I don't worry about it. [Laughing]. I'm in my car most of the time.

Anna Alves: Yeah. What's your perspectives on Newark's connection or relationship to nearby cities or towns or suburbs?

Angela Raine: What do you mean by that?

Anna Alves: I guess, how do you see its connection to other—in relation to, say, New York City or in relation to other parts of New Jersey or in relation to something like Jersey City or Harrison?

Angela Raine: So far as LGBT community?

Anna Alves: No, just Newark in general and/or the LGBTQ community in Newark. Although, the next question after that is gonna be specific to LGBTQ community, but it can be either for this question.

Angela Raine: Not much of a connection. Newark is more open now. The one in ten is what makes the difference, but Newark is more open to everything now. Newark would be kinda like a New York. The people, the downtown area, especially.

Anna Alves: What about downtown has become more like New York, in your eyes?

Angela Raine: Well, it's more—how can I put it—more diverse. It's more expensive.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: Yeah, that's about as good as it gets.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. Do you find that Newark is offering some of the things that, maybe, people used to just go to New York for, and what would some of those things be?

Angela Raine: Entertainment. I would say sports, but we only have the Prudential Center so, more or less, entertainment. We got New Jersey PAC, we got Symphony Hall, and you got the Prudential Center. There's a lot more entertainment for people in Newark than havin' to go outside Newark.

Anna Alves: Getting back to the LGBTQ community, what places in Newark do you associate with that community?

Angela Raine: What places?

Anna Alves: Mm-hmm, like places to go or places that folks tend to want to hang out.

Angela Raine: I don't get out much. [Laughing]. There's a few places that I've heard of around Newark that are LGBTQ. I've just never been to them. What else? I don't know. That's about it. Other than the same mainstream stuff, that's about it.

Anna Alves: Were you ever involved in the house scene when you were coming up in the city? Just a very little bit? In what ways?

Angela Raine: I worked in the House of Divine [01:25:00] with Aaron Frasier, our poet—

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: - who was the mother of the house and owner, and I walked in a couple of balls, not many. There wasn't many.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. Was that when you were very, very young, or when you were 21 for a while or [laughing]?

Angela Raine: Yeah, I was around my 20s. [Laughing]. I actually won one trophy.

Anna Alves: Nice. What was the trophy for?

Angela Raine: It was for body, either body or [unintelligible 01:25:42]. Gays were a winner every time. [Laughing]. A winner every time.

Anna Alves: You're like, "I don't need a trophy," [laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah, won one trophy. That was another early retirement for me.

Anna Alves: You tried it, and then you're like, "Okay."

Angela Raine: It didn't work out. [Laughing]. No, it didn't work out because everybody start goin' through silicone works. It was like, "I'm not fillin' my body up with that," so [unintelligible 01:26:23] that big.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. You're like, "It's okay."

Angela Raine: I can live without it. that trophy ain't gonna make a difference, and as far as I'm concerned now, it still doesn't make a difference.

These young girls don't understand, outside of the ballroom, there's life. What are you gonna do? You can't go to a job tellin' them that you're a grand prize winner. They want education, job experience, or experience, period. Yeah, I had to leave that room real quick.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: [Car horns honking in background]. That's Newark. [Laughing]. Unnecessary nonsense.

Anna Alves: Now, we're moving into the section around LGBTQ identity. How would you describe your sexual orientation or gender identity?

Angela Raine: I'm a heterosexual woman. Easy to identify.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. How did you first become aware of that aspect of yourself?

Angela Raine: Didn't like gay men, didn't like women, didn't like lesbians.

Anna Alves: [Laughing], so that's who I am.

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I think, yeah, straight.

Anna Alves: How did other people in your life become aware of it?

Angela Raine: I told them. What? What was I gonna say? [Laughing]. Not tell everybody? In the beginning, I just thought, "Oh, I'm gay." Everybody was like, "Okay, we kinda figured that part out," but as I got older and I realized I don't carry myself like a gay man. I carry myself as a woman or young girl, and then I slowly—when I started transitioning, I just explained to everybody, "I'm a woman." They say, "You're not a woman." It's like, "Okay, I'm not a woman. I'm a transgender." [Laughing]. Actually, back then, it was like—I've been called so many things over the years. I don't what I am. It was like, "Oh, you're a drag queen?" I was like, "Yeah, I'm a drag queen," [laughing]. Then, years later, it's like drag queens just do shows, and it's like "Okay." Then it was like, "You're transsexual." "No, no. You're transvestite." I was like,

“Okay, I’ll accept that. I’m a transvestite.” Then it was like, “No, you’re not a transvestite.” It’s like, “Why not?” Because transvestites and crossdressers are in the same realm. It was like, “Okay, I’m not a transvestite.” [Laughing]. “You’re a transsexual.” I’m like, “Okay, that sounds better.” [Laughing]. Then I had to get the definition of, what is a transsexual for me? It was like, “You live and carry yourself as a woman, and you live as a woman.” I was like, “Okay, that’s me.” Then it came pre-op or post-op, and I was like, “What?”

Anna Alves: You’re like, “Why do you keep putting the terms on me?”

Angela Raine: [Laughing]. Come on, now. How many things do I have to be? Come to find out, I’m pre-op transsexual because I haven’t had the reassignment. I’m like, “I can live with that.”

[Laughing]

Angela Raine: I can live with that. [01:30:00] Yeah, post op ain’t happenin’.
[Laughing]. It ain’t happenin’, no.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. You’re like, “I don’t need it.” [Laughing].

Angela Raine: If it breaks, then, okay, it’s broke. [Laughing]. You know what I’m sayin’?

Anna Alves: Yeah, [laughing]. How have your racial or religious identities impacted your identity, if they have?

Angela Raine: No, depends on what aspect because African American people, you’re an abomination. It’s like, “Bite me.” Everyone knows it’s like, “Really?” It’s like, “Okay, whatever.” The impact of being African American and pre-op transsexual is really a mess because unless somebody get to know you, they gonna roll with the society norm of pre-op trans. It’s like, you don’t wanna get to know me, that’s your issue. I’m the same person. I just live my life as a woman, and people don’t get that. It’s like, “Oh, you’re an abomination. No, this, that, and the other,” it’s like, “Shut up.” [Laughing]. “Really? Get away from me.” [Laughing]. African

Americans (a) felt the depression and this suppression of us throughout history, it makes a big difference in our life today. It's like, "You're an idiot. You're an idiot." Those people from our past that are history, that are dead and stinkin', if not, they bones or dust, okay? That was their struggle. We have our own struggle. We have to learn to accept not just our black community, but every aspect of it—gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trisexuals. They don't get it, so it's a big impact, but in a sense, it's not because I care less. I have to live my life and do what I need to do for me. I don't have time to be mindin' nobody else business. [Laughing]. Really. That's the impact on that.

Anna Alves: How has this particular identity made your life different from the way it would be if you didn't have this identity?

Angela Raine: Oh, I would really feel oppressed and suppressed because I like bein' me. I enjoy my life freely. If I hadn't transitioned, I would really feel like I'm hiding, that I need to be fearful of any and everything I do—people I talk to, what I say, where I go. I don't need to put on like that. I got enough of that crap from my family.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. How were they about—if you care to share the stories around—how were they around your transition now and how you are now?

Angela Raine: Then, hard for them to accept. Now, they suck it up. [Laughing]. After 30 some years, what do you want? If it ain't changed between then and now, give it up.

Anna Alves: Were particular siblings more—I don't know what the word would be like.

Angela Raine: Aggravating?

Anna Alves: Yeah.

Angela Raine: Annoying.

Anna Alves: [Laughing] than others, I guess [laughing].

Angela Raine: My next older sister.

Anna Alves: It was harder for her to—

Angela Raine: It wasn't that hard. She was a bitch. Don't put that in there.

Anna Alves: [Laughing] you can always strike it out.

Angela Raine: Yeah. She's one of those people that bend to the norm of what men are like. It's just imprinted in her brain, and it's like, "You're an idiot." Yeah, she was the only one outta all my brothers and sisters that has been a pain in my behind. My older brother, [01:35:00] it took him a minute to catch on with the pronouns and stuff. He always saw me as bein' it, and I could actually tell when he was warming up to the fact that, "You have another sister."

He was very protective of me with the boyfriends. He was very protective of me to go out in late hours of the night. "Don't go nowhere. You know what time it is?" It was like, "Eh, mind your business." My older brother, that's when I saw him warming up to the fact that, "You got another sister." My next oldest brother, it took him, not long to accept it, it was just that he felt his masculinity threatened. It was like, "Boy, please." [Laughing]. "Just cuz I'm a woman don't mean you are. Shut up." My baby sister, no problem. First time she seen me in hair and heels or whatever, I was her sister. My older sister, took her a minute. She was caught between old school and catchin' up.

Anna Alves: She had to adjust, then.

Angela Raine: Hmm?

Anna Alves: She had to adjust, in a sense?

Angela Raine: In a sense, yeah, because she was born like the '50s, so the crap she had to deal with durin' the '50s and '60s, it was like—but everybody else in my family, they was cool with it. My grandfather, first time he saw me, he said, "That's my granddaughter." I felt so proud, I felt so proud. Years later when he

seen me, shocked him who I was. My grandfather was like 90 somethin' years old, so he hadn't seen me in a long time. He saw me, he was like, "Get outta here." [Laughing]. He was really shocked.

Anna Alves: Is your grandfather your mother's father?

Angela Raine: Yeah. [Laughing]. He had done totally forgot about me and the fact that I transitioned.

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. That must've been a funny [laughing].

Angela Raine: It was hysterical. My husband was sittin' next to me. [Laughing]. I told him, "I'm Angie, your youngest granddaughter," and he's like "Angie?" I was like, "Yeah, [unintelligible 01:37:51]." He was like, "[Unintelligible 01:37:53]." Then I went over and whispered in his ear, and he's like, "Get outta here." [Laughing]. Too funny. [Laughing] like 93, somethin' like that [coughing].

Anna Alves: [Laughing]. My last question is more about looking forward. What are some of your goals or plans for the near future?

Angela Raine: Be a successful businesswoman. I would say be a better wife, but [laughing]. Be a better businesswoman, to achieve as much as I can, to let people know that I'm here, and this is how life is and educate people on not just the transgender community, but the LGBT community, and I know I'm not gonna win no awards for writing—not those stories—but I'm tryin' to look forward to a better future because I felt I had to struggle all my life. Sometimes I didn't; sometimes I did. Right now, the struggle for me is to help the community and go outside of Newark and educate and just try to let the transgender newbies that are coming up now know that there's more to life than just the red-light district. We can do anything we wanna do or set our minds to. I just look forward to a brighter future. [01:40:00] [Unintelligible 01:40:05]. Just be a part of history outside of New Jersey because—there are dozens of drag [unintelligible 01:40:25] [laughing]. Dozen transgender women

have written books, and they've gotten a little bit of nationwide fame because of their books, but most of them are autobiographies. It's like, "Okay, you done did that. Now, what you gonna do? You gonna do the talk show circuit, the speaking engagement circuits on your life? That's all you have to talk about?" I wanna do that and then some. I don't wanna just go on the talk show circuit or speakin' engagement circuit and talk about my life. I wanna talk about the magazine, what's in the magazine, what the magazine is about—everything but my life at that point because, after all said and done, and I'm ready to buy the dirt form, then I can write my autobiography. I got so much to put in it. Yeah.

Anna Alves: Do you have any plans to expand La'Raine?

Angela Raine: I want to.

Anna Alves: If you had a dream vision of the magazine, how could you see it being the best that it could be if you had the resources?

Angela Raine: A bit more mainstream, really, with my face plastered everywhere.

Anna Alves: Like O Magazine—

Angela Raine: Yeah, right?

Anna Alves: - with you on the cover.

Angela Raine: I'm on all the covers. [Laughing] make one cover, but, yeah, I would like to expand the magazine. Actually, I would like to have a couple of my stories made into, maybe, short films or somethin' like that because they're pretty good.

Anna Alves: Yeah, I bet.

Angela Raine: The one that I told you about, my best seller. I love that one.

Anna Alves: That definitely needs to be the first one.

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Anna Alves: Issue number 7.

Angela Raine: Okay? Find it. I was thinkin' about havin' it be reprinted anyway. Yeah, I would like to expand the magazine. I would like to have some of the stories done into a screenplay and, basically, have it

nationwide, but I don't want people to look at it as a Playboy or a Larry Flint type thing.

Anna Alves: Right, although, people do talk about Playboy having good articles [laughing].

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Anna Alves: There is that.

Angela Raine: The pictures gonna rule that. [Laughing]. Once you got past the pictures, you were [laughing]. See, that's why, in my magazine, it's just the stories. You might find a comic strip type picture to go with the story, but you don't find any nasty stuff, other than words. No, because—

Anna Alves: It's all literary.

Angela Raine: Yeah, because when you write stories like that and you start puttin' in those pictures, those sexual pictures, it's considered pornography, and that's not me. Yeah, I do want to expand, do better, but then I would need a business degree for that.

Anna Alves: That'll be part of your future plans to be a better businesswoman.

Angela Raine: Yeah. Actually, I wanna go back to school, and I was thinkin' about I really wanna go for sociology. I wanna be a case worker or a case manager or somethin' like that. It's a tossup between my magazine and buildin' my business compared to bein' a case worker. I might go to school for business [unintelligible 01:44:50] [laughing]. Yeah.

Anna Alves: Well, thank you very much for sharing your stories with us today.

Angela Raine: No problem. Now—

-END OF AUDIO [01:45:02]