Kristyn Scorsone (KS): Hello and welcome to the Queer Newark Oral History podcast. I'm Kristyn Scorsone, your host and a PhD student in American Studies at Rutgers University Newark. This podcast is a part of the Queer Newark Oral History Project, a community-based and community-driven initiative supported by Rutgers Newark. On this episode of the Queer Newark Oral History podcast, we will be speaking to Professor Whitney Strub, historian and director of the Women's and Gender Studies Department at Rutgers Newark. He is also the author of two books, *Perversion for Profit: The Politics of Pornography and the Rise of the New Right* and *Obscenity Rules: Roth vs. the United States and the Long Struggle Over Sexual Expression*. Both books are about the politics of pornography and obscenity. Most recently, Whit was the co-editor of *Porno Chic and the Sex Wars*, which came out in December 2016. And we'll also be speaking with Timothy Stewart-Winter, associate professor and historian at Rutgers Newark. His first book, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* won the 2017 John Boswell Prize for the outstanding book in the field of LGBT history, awarded by the American Historical Association's Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History. He is now working on a new book project that will be a study of morals policing and sexual politics in the 1960s. Whit and Tim are the co-directors of the Queer Newark Oral History Project, along with Christina Strasburger, who is also the administrator for the Rutgers Newark departments of History and African American and African Studies. Whit and Tim, thank you both for doing this.

Whitney Strub (WS): Oh, it's a pleasure. Thanks for having us.

Timothy Stewart-Winter (TSW): Thanks for having us.

KS: So first off, could you each tell me how you got involved in the Queer Newark Oral History Project and, like, what drew you to work on this?

WS: Sure, Whit here. And you know, Tim and I both started at Rutgers Newark at the same time, in the fall of 2010, and right as we got here, Beryl and Darnell Moore and Christina Strasburger were beginning to get the Queer Newark Oral History Project in motion and so we, you know, landed mid-stream right as this was kind of taking shape. And I guess the way I would answer this is just that, you know, this project seemed to work at 2 levels, for me at least. I mean, one was a real interest in and commitment to Newark, and this seemed like a really useful way to get involved in this community that was new to me and to try to contribute to it and the other, you know, was a more kind of academic intellectual angle, which is simply that Newark's history, Newark's queer history, specifically, you know, has really been underdocumented vis-a-vis other major cities like New York or San Francisco or LA or Chicago, and so even just from that, you know, purely kind of intellectual academic angle, this seemed like an exciting project, to dig into this history that hadn't been written, hadn't been very well archived, and that looked different from these other cities in a lot of ways, because Newark was a Black-majority working- class city.

TSW: I would agree with all of that and I think, you know, Darnell, Beryl, and Christina were in the process of sort of figuring out how to launch this program as both a campus-based project but also something that would involve Rutgers students and faculty and staff, but also people in the community and build bridges, kind of see not only what could we learn from, studying Newark, but how could—how could Rutgers give back to Newark and—and kind of offer a way for people to preserve their stories and learn about each other's community histories. I've always been interested in kind of grassroots LGBTQ community based history projects and, you know, queer history or queer and trans history initially was kind of—had to be done outside academic walls because institutions weren't—weren't supportive of doing that work, and I've—I feel like we're lucky to be at Rutgers at this time when there's a sort of convergence of—of the Newark community and campus based interest in doing this work.

WS: Yeah. And I think one other thing I'd maybe add to that, because I also agree with everything Tim just said, is that for me, it was exciting too, because I mean, I was very much trained in a very conventional and traditional way as an historian. In other words, methodology means you go into archives and you look at documents, and that's not the way everybody does history, obviously, nor should it be. But that is, you know, the kind of way that I was trained and so it was really exciting for me too, just to take on this entirely new approach of, you know, talking to people, which sounds so obvious, but, you know, really isn't necessarily that obvious to people who are socialized into this very specific methodology. And you know, I will, you know, confess that, you know, from–from several years removed now, you know, when I first started it, I was a little wary because I had the biases of somebody with this very traditional training of like, you know, "well, I don't know, talking to people is not as historically momentous as, you know, the paper trail and the documents." And you know, I think I was very much wrong to have those doubts and in fact, you know, it's really also opened my eyes up to oral history as a methodology and the various things that, you know, aren't otherwise documented, the ways that people's stories and memories, you know, are so important to the way we create historical memory and narrative because so much of what the people we've interviewed have spoken about, you know, it just has no paper trail. You know, they talk about experiences and places and people that, you know, you're not going to be able to document otherwise. And that also means a lot is lost because of course, we're talking to people who are alive and, you know, there's a shelf life on human existence. And so the, you know, the 1930s, the 1920s, you know, these earlier eras are really, really elusive and that—that is one of the kind of struggles as we've developed the project, I think that we still contend with is how to unearth histories that aren't documented that don't have living subjects.

KS: Right, yeah. And what do you guys think—or actually maybe I should ask Tim this, but what makes Newark's LGBTQ history interesting as compared to other places with more well-known gay histories like Greenwich Village or San Francisco?

TSW: Right. Great question. Greenwich Village and San Francisco are, you know, sort of places we associate culturally with gay life, with gay history, LGBT history as sort of nationally significant, as recognized places tend to be predominantly middle-class white places or spaces, or at least places that have become very kind of exclusive and affluent. Newark's history, I think, does look different because Newark has been, since 1965, a majority-Black city and its neighborhoods and communities are mostly working-class and I think that has meant that the kinds of institutions that are important in Newark are different institutions. There's less—less of a role that corporations maybe have played. The sort of large media outlets that—that kind of dominate in a place like New York City—

KS: Right.

TSW: Aren't present in Newark and instead in Newark, you know, there are–I've been struck by the role of religious communities as central—

KS: How so?

TSW: Well, you know, some of the longest-standing queer institutions in Newark have included, you know, Unity Fellowship Church. You know, there have been communities of Italian Catholic folks that have gravitated towards particular—one of our—a friend of the project, Peter Savastano, has written about the—the way that Italian Catholics have located themselves in the kind of interstices and spaces in between within local church communities. And something like Newark Pride, which is now over a decade old, is really kind of grassroots and do it yourself in its ethos in a way that looks really different from what we tend to think about when we think about big city pride parades and, you know, it's—it's non-commercial, it's—there are lots of kids, there are—it's—it's not as male-dominated, and it's certainly not, you know, not white-dominated the way that—that I was more used to encountering in—in cities like New York or San Francisco. So, and I think there's a way that looking at Newark lets us see the kind of diversity and multiplicity of queer histories that—that don't have the same anchors, don't have the same turning points, key figures, that—that we might see if we looked at the kind of glossy, well-known stories, you know, that—that—that Hollywood tells or that get media play.

KS: Right. Do—did a lot of people come out for Newark Pride?

TSW: Yeah. This year, you mean?

KS: Yeah.

TSW: There were—there were—I'm bad at counting numbers, but it, yeah, the—there were, what, maybe a couple of floats in the parade and then the, you know, the—the BBQ festival lasts pretty much all day in—in Military Park.

KS: That's awesome.

TSW: I would say, you know, at least a thousand people were there.

KS: Wow. Whit, like, how far back does this history go or how far back have you guys uncovered?

WS: Well, so that's a complicated question in the way that, you know, queer history and other marginalized histories are always kind of complicated because it's an uphill struggle against, you know, an archive that often tends to bury or obscure this history. And so, you know, certainly the story goes back as far as Newark does, right? I mean, there have always been gender-nonconforming and, you know, sexually non-normative people everywhere, right, and so, I mean, there's no doubt that Newark has a queer history as old as Newark and probably preceding the formal creation of Newark. On the other hand, that's not much of an answer, right? So, you know, as far as really documented histories go, you know, we have fragments and glimmers of queer histories going back probably to the late 19th century, and you get these examples, and I mean, you know, listeners might not know this, but, you know, Kristyn, you've done really pioneering scholarship yourself in queer Newark history.

KS: Thank you.

WS: And, you know, you've written about things like in the 1920s, Carl Van Vechten, who was a white kind of financial supporter of the Harlem Renaissance, came to Newark to watch Bessie Smith perform. And so I mean, we literally have a queer white man watching a queer Black woman perform in—in Newark in, what, 1926, I think. And, you know, we have a—we have several of those kind of little glimpsed anecdotes, right, of—of a—of a kind of culture beneath the surface that's otherwise very difficult to document, but as far as the sort of concrete historical trail that we can follow goes, you know, a few examples come to mind. I think three things come to mind, and they're all very short because they are kind of glimpses. And so one is the performer, Reese LaRue, whom you've also written about, right, who, you know, was an African American man who performed in very kind of gender-nonconforming outfits, in a very flamboyant way, you know, sort of marked himself as queer without ever being explicitly gay or out in any way and he was a, you know, really visible, popular performer in—in Newark and New York and and even nationally going back to the 1940s, I—I believe. You know, we have Phil Black who was a female impersonator in Newark. Again, another figure that we know almost nothing about except that he had a business card that identified himself as a female impersonator in the 1940s. So there are these histories that, you know, we can just barely grasp at, but they're there. You know, another example comes from Amiri Baraka, who's one of Newark's most famous literary figures and himself a very complicated figure who, you know, in the 1960s was a bohemian in Greenwich Village, writing very queer material, actually, in a lot of his plays, later became a fairly homophobic kind of nationalist and later communist figure in the 1970s and then finally in the 21st century, you know, kind of evolved to—to really support gay rights in—in a very 21st century kind of way. But—but if you read his autobiography, which

came out in the 1980s, the autobiography of Leroy Jones, which was his birth name, you know, he writes about growing up in Newark in the 1940s and he—he includes things like this. And this is just a a really brief excerpt from the book. "Danny, whose brother was gay in those days, when we called them sissies. And that carried a weight then, Jim, he's a sissy. Wow. And the dude did pitch and switch when he walked and his hair was done up Rococo and curled up. His eyes and mouth were pornography." Now that's obviously, you know, Amiri Baraka's prose style there at play. But you know, it—it shows that, you know, queer people were a visible part of the social world that he lived in, you know, in working-class Black Newark in the 40s and there are a few other examples from the book. He had—Danny also had a cousin just a little older than us, who is also "funny, who fanned up and down the street." And—and so, you know, he writes this without really much judgment. You know, this is just sort of observational. He's not necessarily celebrating queerness, but he's also not condemning it. And so it does give you a sense of the kind of social fabric, you know, of working-class Black Newark in the 40s. And then the one other example that comes to my mind is Carl Bean, who later has a disco hit with "I Was Born This Way" in 1977 and becomes the founding archbishop of the National Unity Fellowship Church. In his autobiography *I Was Born This Way*, which is a really fantastic book, by the way, you know, he writes about coming to Newark and living here in the 1950s and 60s and being gay and finding a sort of community even related to the gospel world, you know, African American participants in gospel music, which, you know, had quite a sizable, you know, kind of gay world of its own. And so all of these histories, you know, again, they're—they're somewhat elusive. They're not as detailed and fully fleshed out as we'd like, but they do clearly show that, you know, Newark's queer history goes back decades, despite the fact that Mayor Sharpe James, you know, into the 1990s and even the 21st century, would—would explicitly deny that Newark had a gay world, you know, that was simply not true.

KS: Right. But for—for, like, folks listening that—that aren't historians, like, how—how would you explain how you, like, are able to find evidence of queer history?

WS: That's a good question.

TSW: So I think one thing that we have to kind of constantly do is to try to look in unexpected places for glimpses, right? So Amiri Baraka's autobiography is—is an example. Another example of a kind of artifact of Newark's history that we, you know, took a look at and sort of asked ourselves what might be here that we're missing is the novel *Howard Street* by Nathan Hurd, which came out in 1968 and is kind of a—it was a best selling novel of working-class Black life in postwar Newark, right, in the 50s and 60s and so it turns out that there was a gay bar depicted in the book and the language that's used, we tend to perceive as not particularly sensitive.

KS: Right.

TSW: Or not the words that we would use today. Words like stud, broads, or fags appear in the book. But at the same time you know there's a very clear sense that there are couples that gravitate to this bar, that they are able to find safe space in it, and so, you know, I guess looking where you might not expect, assuming that it could pop up in the, you know, around the edges of other stories, places that look like they're about something else. And then I guess, you know, the other thing is asking people, right, developing networks and Kristyn, you and your work have—have I think been a model of kind of snowball sampling or pursuing, you know, interviewing someone and then sort of saying, "hey, you know, I wonder if that other person you mentioned might have a story that's of interest."

KS: Yeah. Yeah, totally. What do you think are some of the pivotal moments in Newark's queer history?

TSW: Certainly the—the death of Sakia Gunn in 2003, the murder of Sakia Gunn, which which—which happened downtown late at night and led to a lot of organizing by young people. I think—that—that, I think, is kind of the turning point that in terms of politicization of LGBTQ life in Newark, it's out of that moment that you get a whole lot of protests, demands for the city to kind of recognize this community. These protests are led by high school students who were friends of Sakia Gunn's in—in the immediate aftermath of her killing, the targeting of of gender-nonconforming or—or sometimes the term AG or butch—

KS: What's AG, for people that don't know?

TSW: AG is a term—it—well, you probably could give a better answer than I could.

KS: I guess, like, aggressive, right.

TSW: Aggressive. It's a like—it's a style of masculinity, I guess, kind of to—to simplify, you know, of a kind of Black queer masculinity.

KS: Yeah, it's kind of like butch.

TSW: Yeah. So—so Sakia's death is a—is a—things like Newark Pride ultimately come out of that period, that aftermath of 2003. Another moment, you know, there—it—it's—it wasn't necessarily recognized at the time, but in 1967, a Newark bar, Murphy's, which we've, you know, we end up kind of—I think we all wish we could go back to see the inside of Murphy's—Murphy's Tavern, but was one of three establishments in New Jersey that won an important court case at the Supreme Court that affirmed the right of—the right of well-behaved homosexuals to patronize bars in New Jersey. The AIDS crisis is certainly a major turning point. You know, there are a lot of people that we're not able to interview and a lot of people that we do interview whose lives were really changed by that, by the AIDS epidemic, when it emerges in the 1980s.

KS: Are there things that stand out to you, Whit?

WS: I mean, I would agree with all of those. I—I think the only thing I would just add, you know, would be Cory Booker raising the rainbow flag over City Hall in 2007, which, you know, on the one hand, is just a sort of symbolic gesture. It's very easy to write off these gestures, and Booker's a complicated figure. You know, we can talk about that or save it for another time. Whatever you choose, you know, is certainly a very divisive figure and a very complex one. But, you know, he did raise a rainbow flag over a city that had, I think, been associated with homophobia in really problematic and complicated ways. It's not that Newark, you know, didn't have an anti-gay history. Every city in the United States did. And this is something, you know Tim has written about in regard to California, but, you know, there is definitely an historical pattern where Black communities get blamed for homophobia in disproportionate ways. You know, after California passed Proposition 8 in—in 2008, you know, banning same-sex marriage in the Constitution, there were these convenient media narratives that blamed African Americans, which was ridiculous. I mean, the Mormon Church helped fund it.

KS: Right.

WS: White people voted for it, you know, in, you know, in huge numbers.

KS: And they made the language confusing too, right?

WS: You have the Republican Party. Yeah. I mean, in all of these ways, it was a very complicated issue and yet the media rushed to blame Black people. And I think, you know, you see something similar in—in Newark's history, it's perceived as a homophobic city. And, you know, again, it's not that there isn't a homophobia in Newark's history. You know, Amiri Baraka from the 70s through the 90s was very outspoken and very problematic in his sexual politics in regard to women and queer people. You know, Sharpe James as a mayor was at very least insensitive to queer issues, you know, and yet I—I think, you know, and Tim, you may agree or disagree here, but, you know, I don't think Newark was spectacularly anti-gay. It was very conventionally anti-gay, you know, and yet it's perceived in this very racialized way as a dangerous place for, you know, white middle-class people and also queer people and all of that has to do with a very racist history, I think, of associating blackness and homophobia and—and so, you know, because of that, I—I do think Booker raising the rainbow flag, you know, even though it's very easy to brush off as a kind of PR stunt, which is something that, you know, Booker was very good at, I—I do think it was a very important symbolic turning point in Newark's history in sort of, you know, affirming that this is a diverse and inclusive city, even if it has a complicated history and a complicated present.

TSW: Yeah, and Booker also by creating or supporting the creation of the Mayoral Commission on LGBT Issues, I mean, he—he—he affirmed the—that queer people belonged here, LGBTQ people belonged here. And I mean—and Sharpe James, when—when Booker was running for

mayor, Sharp eJames had gay-baited him, had, you know, in addition to kind of accusing him of being the agent of white people and outsiders and so on, but—but yes, the—the ways that Booker affirmed, created a tone, I guess, of—inclusion, I think.

KS: Right—isn't he—

TSW: Are really important.

KS: He also—held off on marrying anybody, right, until gay marriage passed.

TSW: I believe that's right, yeah.

WS: Yeah. Certainly, I don't think anybody's going to accuse Cory Booker being a radical activist on—on these fronts.

KS: Right. Yeah.

WS: And I think, you know, just to sort of—instead of beating around the bush, I mean, just to get to the point about the critiques of Booker.

KS: Right.

WS: I mean, I do think, you know, some of the major critiques of him are about what, you know, a lot of us would call neoliberalism, right?

KS: Okay.

WS: I mean, he's somebody who's, in terms of economic policy, is very friendly to privatization, to, you know, hedge fund capitalists. You know, he worked with Chris Christie on the Facebook money that came to Newark schools and did not benefit Newark's children very much at all. You know, there's a lot of very, I think, legitimate critiques of him from a perspective of political economy and I think there's some suspicion that he uses these social issues to kind of leverage himself so that he can get away with, you know, these frankly pretty conservative economic policies, but all that being said, I think we can have that critique and still acknowledge, like Tim just said, that, you know, that the tone of inclusiveness is itself important. It's not—it's not epiphenomenal. It's not meaningless, you know, it's not trivial, and—and—and so in that sense, you know, it was, I think, momentous and a credit to Booker, even as one might still have a lot of other critiques of him that are totally legitimate.

TSW: I would completely agree. Yeah, I think that's a nice and nuanced way to look at it.

WS: Thanks.

KS: Yeah. For sure. And you mentioned Murphy's before. The—the anniversary is coming up, right?

WS: Yeah, this year, this—this fall will be the 50th anniversary of its New Jersey State Supreme Court victory in 1967, which, you know, like Tim said, is important in a lot of ways, partly because it's a major gay rights victory in New Jersey two years before Stonewall, which, you know, so many people still associate with the birth of gay rights, even though academic historians are constantly railing against that narrative because there was so much gay rights activism going on before Stonewall in 1969.

KS: Yeah. And I know, like, there was other gay clubs in Newark, but it seems like a lot of the people we interview are, like, super fond of Murphy's.

WS: Yeah, it was—I mean, it's a—it was a long-running, you know, kind of community hub in a lot of ways, you know, yeah, it comes up all the time in the interviews we do with people who, you know, not necessarily people who are younger, I mean, because it was no longer there, but, you know, for anybody who's, what, 35-ish or older, it—it definitely comes up as a staple. And I mean, one thing that was interesting about Murphy's too and that, you know, kind of shows how Newark's history, you know, departs from, you know, some—some other kind of what—what sociologists used to call gay ghetto stories of, you know, the communities that were explicitly LGBT, you know, by day, Murphy's wasn't a gay bar. It's not like it had, you know, rainbow flags or anything identifiably, you know, LGBT about it. It was actually a bar that straight business people in downtown Newark would hang out at until after happy hour, basically, when, you know, the commuter crowd that came into Newark for work would—would leave and go home and—and then it would become, you know, a more kind of explicitly and visibly gay bar and—and so, you know, that—that is, I think, a kind of interesting layer to its history.

KS: Yeah. And speaking of Cory Booker's problematic-ness, he—he's the one that gleefully bulldozed Zanzibar, right?

WS: Yeah. Yeah. So yeah, I mean, and that's another example, I think, of a sort of queer-friendly space in Newark that wasn't specifically and only LGBT. And so Zanzibar, which was attached to the Lincoln Motel right near Broad Street Station coming north out of downtown Newark, you know, is another hub. This is a little later. You know, Murphy's is already active in the 1950s, probably even earlier, but Zanzibar pops up in the late 70s and is more of a—a disco club from that era. And yeah, I mean everybody who recalls Zanzibar says, you know, there were plenty of straight people there, but there were also gay people and you know, to a larger degree than in most social spaces in this nation, you know, they got along and coexisted. And so in that sense, it's an important part of queer Newark history, you know, even as it wasn't, you know, a gay bar per se, or a gay disco. And then, yeah, later, you know, the Lincoln Motel really falls into disrepair, and it gets associated with drug dealing and sex work, and it's kind of squalid and so ultimately it's bulldozed. And yeah, Cory Booker is indeed literally driving the bulldozer

that—that pummels it in I think 2007, if I recall. So yeah, I mean, and there are different ways to read that, obviously, I mean a lot of people considered it a good thing that, you know, this—what they perceived as a blight was removed. But it also, you know, very literally erased really important institution of queer Newark history.

KS: Right. Totally. What are—can you speak about some of the oral histories that each of you have done for Queer Newark Oral History Project?

TSW: Sure. I got to interview Darnell Moore.

KS: Oh, wow.

TSW: Who, you know, co-founded the project, was the first mayoral—first head of the Mayoral Commission and was, you know, very politically active across a lot of different issues in Newark and, you know, one of the things that came through for me in—in talking to him is how much he, you know, how—how—and he's also been a kind of nationally prominent figure in the Movement for Black Lives and he was very—he spoke powerfully about his sense that including Black queer lives in—in the larger Movement for Black Lives is—is important to him and is something that he kind of has brought up a lot and again and again and again, and he sees Sakia Gunn as part of the history of kind of anti-violence organizing within—within African American communities. Let's see. I also interviewed Arnie Kantrowitz, who was an undergraduate at Rutgers University Newark in the late 50s and early 60s, and talked about cruising on campus.

KS: Oh yeah?

TSW: And in downtown Newark. He later became a gay liberation activist, wrote a book, a sort of memoir of growing up gay.

KS: And he's from GLAAD, right?

TSW: He—yes, he—he co-founded GLAD, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation in the 1980s.

KS: With Vito Russo?

TSW: during the AIDS crisis with Vito Russo. Yeah, his very close friend. That was a fun interview.

KS: Yeah.

TSW: Do you want to talk about something, Whit?

WS: Yeah, sure. You know, one thing I'll say is that the process that we use for getting the interviews up online is, you know, can be a little arduous because we have a real ethical

commitment to not putting anything up that our interviewers haven't—our interviewees, rather, haven't approved and so a few of the, I think, most exciting interviews that I've done aren't up yet, so I won't speak to those. I'll just say, you know, keep checking out our website.

KS: Right.

WS: Because they'll—they'll pop up fairly soon and there's some really, really exciting stuff in the pipeline. But as far as stuff that is up, I tried to narrow this down. I—I really want to just rattle off everybody I've interviewed—

KS: Yeah.

WS: Because, I mean, one thing you find doing oral histories is that, I mean, everybody is—every single person is really fascinating once you sit down and have them, you know, kind of narrate their lives. I mean, everybody's been through, you know, hardship, everybody has, you know, experienced trauma and and joy and has, you know, really interesting things to add to the historical record. So I mean, it really is, I think, rewarding in so many ways to be able to document these stories, but a few that I jotted down as I—I think kind of standouts. Patreese Johnson is one of the New Jersey Four, as they—they've been labeled, four Black lesbians from Newark who were—were charged in—in ridiculously disproportionately punitive ways in New York City after they fended off a street harasser down in Greenwich Village, where, you know, the real tragic irony is they had gone because you're supposed to feel safe there as a queer person and their whole story is told really, really powerfully in the documentary Out in the Night, so I won't sort of re-narrate that, I'll just recommend that if you haven't seen that film, it's, you know, it's a really important and powerful documentary that just shows the—the anti-gay and racist sentiment in our criminal justice system that just, you know, targeted these four young women really arbitrarily. They just got caught in the crossfire of media sensationalism, racism, and homophobia and—and so the film is, you know, just a really important document. But the film is mostly and rightly, you know, about the criminal justice system and the media and the ways that it targets, you know, young queer Black people, but for the Queer Newark Oral History Project, we've been interviewing them about their lives in Newark to try to, you know, sort of get the other side of the story and—and so you know, I interviewed Patreese when she was here to speak on campus for the screening of the film and I mean, she's just such a—a remarkably resilient person who is, you know, really endured trauma coming from the state and, you know, has—has not only persevered, but has a really radical politics and so interviewing her was fantastic because, I mean, her life story is fascinating and, you know, harrowing at times, hilarious at times. She's a great narrator. But, you know, she's also very critical of not only Cory Booker but also our current mayor, Ras Baraka.

KS: Oh yeah.

WS: You know, she has a really, really compelling kind of leftist queer critique going on that—that, you know, was really, really pretty riveting and I really appreciated that. And a couple more people I've interviewed that I think, you know, just really stood out. Gary Paul Wright, who is the founder and director of the AAOGC, which is the African American Office of Gay Concerns, which has an office almost right across the street from Newark City Hall on Broad Street. You know, Gary Paul is—is kind of, and I think he would agree with this term, I mean, he's like a classical raconteur. He—he has these amazing stories. You know, he was an actor in the 70s performing on stage. He wound up an extra in an Italian movie in the 70s and he just has this, you know, really, really just kind of all over the place, fascinating story. He worked as a—you know. he was a singer-songwriter and a poet.

KS: Wow.

WS: But eventually, you know, because of the AIDS crisis, you know, he found his way to AIDS activism and educational advocacy and prevention work. And, you know, as we know, you know, the healthcare system in the United States is a, you know, contemptible failure when it comes to social justice and, you know, queer people, Black people, low-income people, which, you know, describes a lot of the people affected by the epidemic in Newark, you know, have really been ignored and marginalized both then and now and so the work that Gary Paul does at AAOGC, you know, it's just so crucial and important and, you know, it was really, really great to get his story and he did pioneering work too, in working with transgender outreach in Newark. I mean, he himself is, you know, a cisgender man, but he recognized very early on that reaching trans people as a uniquely vulnerable population was central to, you know, the work that he needed to do. And so it's just an important story that, you know, doesn't get told in a lot of the kind of narratives of AIDS work that dominate kind of the larger memory, which, you know, doesn't look at places like Newark very often and the kind of important work that, you know, the AAOGC does. And then one more example of an interview that I found really fascinating was actually with a straight white man and—Tom Hayden, who was a really important figure in the 1960s radical activist movement that, you know, we call the New Left, you know, he was one of the pioneers of Students for a Democratic Society, which was the big campus activist group of the 60s and the lead author of the Port Huron Statement, which was one of the big manifestos of the 60s. He also came to Newark in 1964 with ERAP, the Education—or Economic Research and Action Project, which set up a chapter in Newark to try to create an interracial movement of the poor. It was a really noble experiment in a lot of ways, I think, and it deserves—deserves a lot of credit. It ultimately, you know, was not as effective as it aspired to be, although it did empower, I think, a generation of Black activists who later became important people, like Jesse Allen, who wound up on City Council in Newark, who was a young Black man who really found himself politicized through the Newark Community Union Project that Hayden led. So it's a big, complicated story, but the important thing for queer history purposes is that he, Hayden, famously co-founded the project with another young white man named Carl Whitman, who was gay and who essentially left Newark, you know, kind of under a cloud of suspicion that was

never quite clear and the kind of word on the street narrative had been that Hayden kicked him out for being gay because he needed to maintain a sort of moral integrity and public reputation of the project. And so a few years ago I interviewed Tom Hayden in his office in Culver City in Los Angeles and it was a really unpleasant interview in a lot of ways, because Hayden was very defensive. He felt under attack. He felt that first Black power activists had sort of critiqued the whiteness of the New Left and then feminists had critiqued the male domination of the New Left and for him, he perceived it as sort of, "well, now these, you know, queer historians are going to attack me for being straight." And you know, I mean, I—I certainly think that Tom Hayden deserves a lot of credit for his work in the 60s and a lot of critique. I think these were not at all misplaced critiques that Black activists and feminists directed. But I will give Hayden credit. He was willing to discuss this even though it—he was not quite willing to say that he threw Whitman out for being gay. He also didn't deny it. He—he—you know, it was essentially this very awkward kind of dance that we did around the subject. And it was a frustrating interview and kind of intimidating because Hayden is this major figure that I, you know, both respect and critique. But then, you know, a few years later, just last year, actually, you know, Tom Hayden passed away and—and so really this interview is the only time I'm aware of that he really talked in any substantive way on the record about Carl Whitman and he did give some interesting details about, you know, everybody knew Carl Whitman had a boyfriend, and they did sleep together physically, you know, while in Newark and—and so, I mean, it's a really interesting interview of queer history from the point of view of a white man who feels sort of under attack for being straight. And so in any case, yeah, I—I think that's—it was a really memorable experience for me.

TSW: And Whitman himself later died from AIDS. So this is, you know, you've unearthed both Hayden's kind of view of how this unfolded, but also details about this—this gay person who never got to narrate his own life history.

WS: Yeah, yeah, no, it's a real loss. I mean, Whitman—Whitman left some papers as far as I can tell, but he doesn't seem to have left, like, his own personal papers from that era that would, you know, if he kept a diary, we don't have it. And so, you know, there's no real way to get full access to his version of the story and so, you know, it is an example, I think, of the methodologies that we sort of need to use in this project, right, which are kind of always—always grasping and always kind of partial, but, you know, trying as best we can to track down, you know, the fragments that we can.

KS: And the AIDS crisis hit Newark pretty hard, right? How did the gay community respond to it?

WS: Well, I would say, you know, with as much kind of coalition-building and power as possible for a very hyper-marginalized population at the time because, you know, Newark was hit very hard by the AIDS epidemic. It was one of, you know, the hardest-hit cities in the United States

and a lot of that has to do with, I think, the inequities that are just built into healthcare and disease in America and so, you know, it wasn't just gay men who were dying of AIDS in the 80s in Newark. I mean, it was really poor people and Black people and, you know, increasingly Latino people. And, you know, again, that's simply because of the deep inequalities that structure, you know, life chances in America. But we do see AIDS activism popping up in Newark by the late 80s. You know, the city is not doing a whole lot, and the city, you know, does not have a lot of resources to begin with, but it certainly isn't deploying them in any noteworthy way toward AIDS. And, you know, for that matter, neither is New York City under mayor, you know, Koch, I think it's worth noting that Newark isn't uniquely negligent here. But people are dying and not much is being done, and by the turn of the late 80s going into the 90s, you know, we do see the People with AIDS Coalition emerge in Newark that, you know, is led by openly gay people but is actually gay and straight membership. I mean, it's really forged out of, I think, urgency and necessity and so, you know, a lot of these kind of social barriers that might otherwise be there are really held in abeyance just because of urgency and—and the group, you know, is able to sort of accomplish a fair amount in terms of forcing the city to address these issues, make them visible, but, you know, it's not able to stem the tide of—of the AIDS crisis in Newark, which does take a—a terrible toll. In fact, I was talking to some older gay men who were around in that era recently, asking them whether anybody had home movies of gay life from the 1970s because, you know, there were so many 8 millimeter, you know, Super 8 cameras circulating and I was like, "well, somebody must have filmed, you know, just a BBQ party or something."

KS: Right.

WS: And—and they both agreed, they were like, "well, probably somebody did." But, you know, so much of that history went out in trash bags as people died and it wasn't preserved and, you know, it was a really kind of harrowing moment both for, you know, the human loss of it and also the loss of history that went with all of those deaths.

KS: And I thought it was interesting how when we had that panel here with James Credle and Peter Savastano and Gwen Davis, right, that's her name, how they were saying how they set up, like, they would, like, collect medicine from people and disperse it to different people that needed it and how they weren't, like, the ambulance weren't picking up people that had—that they suspected had AIDS, so was it—what was the man's name that was also on that panel.

WS: Oh, probably Bernie McAllister.

KS: Not him. There was another guy.

WS: Oh, Patrick.

KS: Patrick. Yeah, how he said he was picking people up, like, he kind of became like a DIY ambulance in a sentence for people here. It's—it's incredible.

TSW: Yeah, the amount of stigma, not just in Newark, but—but in lots of cities and small towns around people with AIDS, around the fear of touching people, just led to—to hideous scenes that, you know, that were—that—that are—are hard to hear about when we interview people.

WS: Yeah, I mean everybody, you know, that you interview who is around in that era lost friends and—and lovers. I mean, that's just a staple of the interviews of that era.

TSW: I think also one thing about AIDS, about media coverage of AIDS, is that, you know, because it was—it was transmitted, HIV was transmitted both sexually and by intravenous drug use, by sharing dirty needles, there—there is a kind of assumption on the part of journalists who come to Newark to look at the AIDS crisis, that in Newark, it's not a gay disease the way that it is in New York and that, you know, in Newark, it's a disease of poverty and addiction, right, and—and I think that that's another kind of layer of struggle that AIDS activists in Newark who were queer sort of had to confront in pushing back against that narrative and—and—and arguing that in fact, these are deeply intertwined crises.

WS: Yeah, that's—that's actually exactly what I've been trying to say, but Tim just said it much better.

KS: Right. And the—the ballroom community here has been pivotal in that also, right, and—

WS: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, the ballroom scene, you know, is both a kind of cultural and social scene, but certainly during that era, you know, doubled in a lot of ways as a kind of family network and also social service infrastructure because so many young people were being thrown out by their families, you know, being denied healthcare or neglected. And so, yeah, the ballroom scene, you know, kind of operates at these multiple levels, right? I mean, one is the—the runways and the performances which are themselves, you know, extremely culturally important and something that I think Newark has a very serious claim to being at the cutting edge of.

KS: Yeah.

WS: But, you know, also, we're doing this work of caretaking and providing beds and, you know, underground medication networks, you know, just in the absence of other institutions doing this, you know, I mean, again, society was just neglecting this suffering, and so the ballroom scene, you know, did such important work, and I think is—is very much remembered and respected for that as well, for the difference it made and—and continues to make, I mean, as a, you know, still—still active and—and thriving and exciting scene. Just this past summer, I went to—this—this very summer, that is, I went to the 35th anniversary celebration of the House of Jordan.

KS: Oh yeah?

WS: And it was—you know, it was at the Robert Treat Hotel and I mean, it was this joyous blowout where, you know, people ranged from being probably in their 60s, I would guess, down to, you know, their—their early 20s and, you know, really this vibrant network of—of people who had come together through the ballroom scene and really supported one another. And it was—it was, you know, really, really a delightful event for anybody who's never been to a ballroom, you know, at the Robert Treat Hotel, they—they still regularly do this in Newark and it's—it's a very accepting community, you know, they—they—they appreciate if you show up and support them.

KS: Yeah, I believe at the Newark Proud Awards this year, James Credle said that he's going to try to bring Fireball back. Which is just like—

WS: Yeah, yeah. Which—which is, you know, I mean, extremely important in the history of both ballroom culture and AIDS activism. I mean, James Credle, who was one of the first out gay sort of authority figures here at Rutgers Newark, as Dean of Students, you know, wrote one of the early federal grants for, you know, sort of gay—gay- and sex-positive AIDS education in Newark, and he won a federal grant that, you know, he used the—the Fireball and the ballroom to—to teach and encourage safe sex in the early 90s, when, you know, a lot of educational efforts were, you know, really being strangled by restrictions that Congress had passed, like the Helms Amendment, which, you know, the anti-gay Republican senator from North Carolina, Jesse Helms, had pushed through Congress with the support of the Democrats, it's worth noting, you know, Republicans and Democrats alike supported this. And it—it cut off federal funding for safer sex education that would be gay-positive and sex-positive, and that led to, you know, this real strangling of the—the—you know, financial support for these important, life-saving programs. And so when James got them off the ground in Newark, it was a real landmark, I think, in 1992. And, you know, he would use things like dildos and put condoms over them and, you know, again, the kind of sex education that's really needed. It's graphic and explicit and clear about how safer sex works rather than, you know, euphemistic or avoiding or moralistic, and, you know, I just think that's an important part of this ballroom history that—that it really fused this, you know, AIDS education effort with a sort of queer celebration and resistance of the ballroom culture itself.

KS: Yeah. So it's really awesome that James Credle just donated so many of his videos too, which we haven't processed yet, but.

WS: Yeah, and—and the historical sex toys.

KS: Right.

WS: The Queer Newark Oral History Project now actually has a collection of historical sex toys that were actually used to—to demonstrate this, which is really fantastic.

KS: Yeah, that's awesome. And for people that don't know the, like, houses are less a physical space than they are more of like a network, right, like a—almost like a fraternity, sorority kind of deal.

WS: Yeah, yeah.

TSW: Yeah, and play the roles that—that families play in—in, or, you know, in all of our lives.

KS: Right.

TSW: Chosen families.

KS: Yeah. And Tim, for your—your recent book that came out this year, Queer Clout, that focuses on—focuses on 1960s Chicago, do you find that Newark's queer history compares to Chicago's in any way, like?

TSW: I think yes, in multiple ways. Certainly the role of—so—so the—the—the fact that the line between politics, activism, and sort of community life is a blurry one and that there are so many activities or projects that—that crisscross, you know, the ballroom scene is a really good example of something that is both community-building, celebratory, festive, and also has a—a kind of real political importance. So my book is about urban gay—gay and lesbian politics, and I think that there are—there are a lot of parallels between Newark and Chicago as cities where Black political empowerment kind of established a—a new kind of city that was receptive to—to organizing by communities needing protection. You know, and there are differences, there are also similarities, but I think, you know, urban America really is—has been where LGBT communities were forged and gained prominence and visibility and power. Not that there weren't also queer communities in—in small towns, but in terms of encountering kind of state power, both in the form of police violence and police brutality, and also kind of demanding protection from the state, I think it's—it's—city government has been a kind of crucial arena, you know, long before the—the Supreme Court or Congress was at all open to to gay lesbian mobilization. I think city government has kind of played a crucial and particularly important role for LGBT history, as for other marginalized histories, over—intersecting histories. So that's what jumps to mind.

KS: And Whit, for your book, you have—or, both books, actually, wrote a lot about pornography and vice and censorship and do you see that in Newark?

WS: Well, it's interesting. I'd say yes, you definitely see the censorship, but not—not in any particularly unique way. You know, up until the 1960s, you know, Newark is really run by white ethnic politics, often Catholic, and so there's a kind of cultural conservatism built in. You see,

you know, Essex County and Newark city government both trying to suppress smut quite, quite frequently in the 60s, and, you know, often it's just, you know, like, a district attorney, when election season's coming up, wants to get some headlines, so he'll do some raids, you know, it doesn't seem like it's necessarily a substantive commitment so much as a kind of, you know, posturing a lot of the time. I mean, one of the interesting things about Newark's broader kind of history of sexuality is a lot of the time, it's actually a more permissive city than New York City, and so when New York shuttered its burlesque houses, a lot of that industry came to Newark. Newark became a burlesque capital in the 1950s. You'd even see in one kind of funny case, a professor at the New School led, which is in New York City, led his students into Newark to go to a burlesque house to sort of sociologically study it and it made it into Time magazine for some bizarre reason.

KS: Wow.

TSW: Wow.

WS: Yeah, yeah—it's—and—and so—and you see the same thing with movies some of the time. New York State actually had a—a fairly heavy-handed censorship board into the 1960s, and so sometimes movies would get censored in New York, but wind up playing in Newark. And—and so, you know, it's a complicated history that's both repressive in some ways with these raids, but also a little more permissive in some ways than even New York, despite, you know, New York having the reputation of being a more, you know, open or decadent or—or, you know, sexually liberal city. But, you know, Newark does have one of the longest running porn theaters in America, the—the Little Theater on Broad Street, which is a really fascinating place, I think, in regard to the histories we're talking about because, you know, it's not exactly a part of gay or lesbian history in Newark per se, but it's part of a kind of different queer history, I think. You know, for people who aren't familiar with porn theaters, historically, a lot of the time, the ones that show straight porn movies are nonetheless, you know, kind of inhabited by men who are having sexual encounters with one another, even though a lot of them don't identify as gay, and that's definitely the culture you see at the Little Theater. And, you know, the—the—the guys that you see there, you know, they're not the guys who are gonna go march in Newark Pride or volunteer at the Community Center necessarily. Some of them do identify as gay. A lot of them don't. But, you know, they're there, you know, filling their needs as they see fit in this way that doesn't necessarily easily map on to the identities that we allow people, and it's a fascinating place. I mean, it's, you know, multiracial, cross-class, you know, you—you don't want to make it sound utopian. It's a very male-dominated space, it's not very friendly to women and, you know, that shouldn't be ignored. But, you know, within the kind of problematic constraints of it, you know, it does afford this kind of queer sexual sphere that really, we don't see that much elsewhere in the United States at this point. I mean, porn theaters have died. New York City has regulated most of them out of existence. You know, in New York, there's only two porn theaters left, and they're both way out in the boroughs, way down in Brooklyn and way out in Queens, the King's

Highway in Brooklyn and the Fair Theater in Queens. And so, you know, I don't know any other city in America that has a downtown porn theater like Newark. And so it does gesture toward this very interesting, very queer sexual history that, you know, Newark has. All that being said, the owner recently passed away and there's a huge "for lease" sign on it now and so I'm fairly sure its days are numbered and, you know, a lot of people, I think, much like the Lincoln Motel getting bulldozed a decade ago, you know, a lot of people will be glad when it's gone. They consider it a blight and sort of scummy or, you know, filthy. But I mean, I think it'll be a real loss to the kind of diverse sexual culture that Newark has when it inevitably does disappear.

KS: Yeah, I never had thought about porn theaters in that sense before, until I had took your class, Tim, and you had us read *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. And yeah, I never thought about it.

TSW: Yeah, the same. The resilience, I think, of places like the Little Theater in, well, I suppose it's more resilient than, as you said, almost any other such place, but, you know, it's a useful reminder that sometimes we speak as though in 2017, all gay people are out, or all people with same sex desire are gay or on the path to being out, right, and—and that's just not true. More—more are probably than ever before, but, you know, desire and practice continue to kind of exist in a—in a much messier kind of relationship to—to identity, identification.

KS: Yeah, and I thought it was interesting too is you had an article recently, Whit, about pornography and not—not being kept in archives and how that's—that's sad because, like, we were talking about, like, you have to look between the lines to find queer history and if you don't keep things, like, even down to, like, pornography, how can you do this work to figure out what, you know, queer people were thinking at a certain time or what they were trying to express.

WS: Oh yeah, no, absolutely. Yeah, the Little Theater, you know, one guy ran it from 1966 until this year. Danny, who just passed away. And—and I did interview him once. He was a straight white man who went up—he was from Newark, actually grew up right where Rutgers Newark is today when it was a working-class Eastern European community. But he wound up living out in the suburbs. And I asked him about the archives. I was like, you know, "are there papers related to the Little Theater? Like, you know, letters you may have received or just any kind of documents?" thinking like an historian.

TSW: The water bill.

WS: Yeah, yeah. But he—and he—and he—he shrugged. He had no interest in it. He had no interest in pornography itself. He just ran the theater as a business and he had no interest in the kind of historical questions I was asking. And he just shrugged and said, "I threw it all out in garbage bags years ago" and my heart just sank. I was like, "oh, what a tragic loss, because that would be such a unique and valuable window." But no, it doesn't exist. And yeah, those are—it is

very rare that—that, you know, the archiving of these kind of marginal places and businesses and cultures.

KS: Would the men that, like, frequent this place that—that are—well, like—like, be, like, they are to have sex with other men, is that—does that relate at all to, like, what you would call trade back in the day or is that a completely different thing?

TSW: Yeah—it's hard to—that's such a good question. Yes, I think it does very much relate to what—what was called trade. For instance, in Chauncey's *Gay New York* in the sense of people who, yeah, who—who have same-sex sex but don't identify as—as gay. I mean, we see this in other same sex social spaces, like prisons and—and elsewhere. You know, the term trade, I think, has a specific kind of gender designation. I—you know, I think the practices of people who are not gay-identified but have same-sex sex have been organized in different ways in different places and times, and I think the Little Theater, I mean, I don't know, you probably know better than I do. What—hat would you—what would happen if you asked folks there?

WS: Well, I—I have. So, yeah, I've—I've actually spent a fair amount of time chatting with folks there and I mean, it's—it's very eclectic. You know, there—there are plenty of just happily out gay guys there who are like, "yeah, I'm here because, you know, I kind of like this, you know, kind of seedy old school pre, you know, phone app hookup culture." You know, there's something enticing and alluring about that to a certain, you know, kind of person, right? I mean, it's kind of dimly lit. There's little creb—nooks and crannies. You know, there—there's an erotic quality to the kind of layout, especially for older folks who may have a memory of kind of cruising cultures of earlier decades. And—and so there's that. But then you know, there are definitely also guys who are either, you know, I—I think we could describe as in the closet, you know, guys who are probably married, outwardly identified as straight, and, you know, who are much less comfortable. They—they're the ones who, you know, they're not going to have a casual conversation. Some guys will be like, "oh, yeah, I'm here for like, yeah, to—to hook up with three guys and then go home" and other guys, you know, will be very much less willing to chat and—and—and then you know, there are people, you know, there are other guys there who are—who are pretty openly trade, who are turning tricks, and, like, you know, not terribly hung up about it, or like, you know, "yeah, I'm, you know, I—I—I get paid" and you know, that's—all three of those levels are all happening, coexisting at once, and, you know, it's—it's a complicated kind of sexual ecosystem, really, but yeah. So I mean, I would say the—the sort of—the old school model of trade that a lot of the time I think people think of as more historical, you know, is still very much there and—and definitely very, very active and—and visible.

KS: And where else, like, besides, you know, the Little Theater, where else in Newark do you associate queer people with or what—what does the community look like now?

WS: Well, I mean, you know, one really important development of the last decade was the opening of the Newark LGBTQ Community Center right on the corner of Halsey and Central

and, you know, that's become kind of a community hub, I think, you know, it's—it's got everything. And—and I—I should note, you know, full disclosure, I'm—I'm on the board of directors so I'm obviously a partisan here and a booster of it, but.

KS: And we all dance at the dance-a-thon every year.

WS: We did, all three of us, yes, were dancers to fundraise for it because it is a very underfunded, you know, institution that's kind of financially perpetually precarious in that, you know, kind of DIY way but it does all kinds of programming, you know, I mean, everything from Monday night is yoga night, open to all, you know, donations accepted but pay as you can, to game night for adults and then also game night for youths, recently the Center showed Moonlight. And there's a—a transgender kind of support and discussion group, there's free counseling for people who need it, there's free Internet access. And—and so, you know, that, I think, is a pretty important development in a lot of ways. It's also, like I said, precarious and, you know, I think it ties into some of the economic issues that are related to queerness in Newark that I think, you know, Tim was alluding to with the AIDS crisis and the ways that you can't just separate out poverty and racial inequality and queerness in—in this city. And so, you know, the gentrification of Newark that's happening right now that everybody's very aware of, that money is flowing into the city and not necessarily in ways that benefit, you know, poor people or working-class people or black people or queer people, you know, is putting the Community Center at risk of displacement. You know, I think there's a widespread expectation that a developer is going to buy the entire block that the Center is on.

KS: Right.

WS: And after that, you know, downtown real estate is becoming cost prohibitive but it's very clear from—from, you know, sort of group sessions that have been held that people need this center to be downtown. They feel safer there. They feel it's more accessible. And so this is, you know, I think going to be one of the struggles of the community is to think through this kind of complicated intersecting lens of, you know, LGBTQ issues as related to economic inequality and what that means in Newark. You know, something that hasn't been handled very well by other cities as they've developed, gentrified, gay neighborhoods like Greenwich Village or Philly's gayborhood or, you know, so many places in San Francisco. It's—it's—it's a challenge that's been very difficult to meet aAnd I think that's going to be one of our struggles in Newark, affordable housing, things like that.

KS: Right. Well, we're just about out of time, but I wanted to also lastly ask either of you, if you have anything you'd like to—to sort of plug or—or where people could find you online.

TSW: You can find me on Twitter.

KS: Yeah.

TSW: My Twitter handle is @timothysw.

WS: So I—I don't tweet. I know I'm old school, but I do blog and one of the things I blog about is movies shot in Newark. Nobody reads this, I have to say, but—but I love finding these movies that were shot in Newark and writing about them. So I—I blog at the ridiculously named Strub Blog. Well, not Strub Blog, more Strublog because there's only one b, strublog at WordPress. So that's probably where you'd find me online.

KS: Can I also plug your cat-related Tumblr?

WS: Of course.

KS: What is it? A cat is never on the wrong side of power?

WS: Well, it's technically omgcatrevolution.tumblr.com, yes, where my friend Hannah and I post pictures of cats from radical cinema.

KS: That's awesome. I guess I wanna plug, Queer Newark has tours now, and we just had two recently, and we're hoping to have, if you're in the area, we're hoping to have another one and then obviously to go to our website and listen to all our oral histories.

WS: Yeah. And one thing I'll just add to that plug, we've got a bunch of stuff that we're kind of planning for the fall, but one thing I'm particularly excited about is Pucci Revlon, who is a local trans woman who has lived in Newark for her entire life and was a major participant in the ballroom scene. In fact, she shows up in the famous documentary Paris is Burning about the New York City ballroom scene. She donated to us about 100 photos that she's taken over the years that document the ballroom scene in—in both Newark and also a few other North Jersey places like Irvington and also New York City and so we've digitized them. You know, it's very exciting because it goes back to the stuff we were talking about, about how there aren't archives, and so we're sort of trying to build this archive of historical images here from within the—the ballroom scene. So I'm pretty excited about that. So look out for that on our website too.

KS: Awesome, yeah, and you can find us on Facebook.

TSW: And our Twitter.

KS: Yeah, and Twitter. Yeah, for sure. Thank you both for doing this.

WS: Oh, thanks for having us.

KS: Thank you.

TSW: Thank you.

KS: The Queer Newark Oral History podcast is produced by me, Kristyn Scorsone. This episode was recorded in the Queer Newark office located in Conklin Hall at Rutgers University in Newark. Our theme music was remixed by DJ JustLove, an amazing local Newark DJ, and is from an original song by K. Sparks. The title is "Music" and you can find more from K. Sparks on freemusicarchive.org. As for DJ JustLove, you can find her on Twitter @DJJustLove and on Facebook. Thank you so much for listening and we'll see you next time.