

Queer Newark Oral History Project
Interviewee: Angela Raine
Interviewer: Whitney Strub
Date: February 6, 2018
Location: Newark LGBTQ Community Center, Newark, NJ

Whitney Strub: All right. This should pick up pretty well. This is Whitney Strub with the Queer Newark Oral History Project. I'm here with Angie Raine at the Newark LGBTQ community center, shortly to be moved. We're in the old location. It's February 6, 2018.

We're not gonna do a full oral history because you've already done that. What we're gonna do is what I've called a transgender geography of Newark in the, say, 1970s, '80s, and beyond because you've mentioned so many different places to me over the last few years that I want to hear about. I've got some ideas about what I want to ask, but I mean, I can either start or if you want to tell me what is a good starting point, if we're just gonna think geographically.

Angela Raine: Well, you can start. Ask.

Whitney Strub: Well, so my sense is The Doll House played a pretty significant role in your formative years.

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: You talked about this a little in the oral history, but I guess maybe you can tell me more about the Doll House itself and your experiences of it.

Angela Raine: Okay. The Doll House was located on Williams Street and Halsey Street above Sparky J's, which was a jazz nightclub, and I'm not sure, but I believe Ruben Johnson was part owner, but I know he was one of the jazz and blues club owners around.

Whitney Strub: He was the owner of Sparky J's or the Doll House?

Angela Raine: No, he was—actually, he owned Bogies, which is a club in East Orange. The Doll House opened in 1976, and I started working there from the day it opened. Well, prior to it opening, a couple months before, really, I was working there. I was helping finish up the cleaning and stuff.

The Doll House was the first openly gay Newark—gay Newark—Newark gay club that was a disco. We had everyone from the LGBT community coming in from everywhere. I mean, we had people come in from North Jersey, South Jersey, and it was predominantly African American. It was really nice.

Whitney Strub: Can you describe it, physically, what it would be like to walk in?

Angela Raine: When you walked up the stairs and you came through the door, you walked into the bar area. To the right of the bar area was the dance floor, which was a nice size room. It had maybe benches around the—no, it had one bench on the side of the windows. The usual disco lights and all that good stuff, the DJ booth was—everything was floor level. The DJ booth was not above everyone else. Everything was floor level. To the left of the bar area was the lounge area, where we had tables and extra seating and a small bar in there also. One more room over was the—I would say the entertainment room, where we put on shows. We had a stage and everything.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. What kind of music then? Was it all disco?

Angela Raine: Disco. *[Laughter]*. It was a disco, yeah. Once the club got going and we had amateur night, I auditioned for amateur night, and me and a few other people did amateur night, and I became a fixture in the club. I went from performing to waiting tables, and I became one of Bobby White Review 's last member. Actually, I was the very last member.

What else? What else? What else? It was the funniest thing. We did a spinoff of the Playboy Bunnies, and we called ourselves the Doll House Dolls, and we had to have these jet black sheer stockings, the fishnets, and we wore high heels and, basically, a Bunny outfit. We wore what was out then called Danskins. We had on a Danskin with a tail with the cuffs and the ears and the tie. It was funny, but it was nice.

Whitney Strub: That's the outfit for working as a waitress or—

Angela Raine: Waitress, yeah.

Whitney Strub: - I guess that's not—okay. Gotcha. Gotcha. Is that mostly trans women, cisgender women?

Angela Raine: Yeah, it was three of us that were trans women that were doing this. It was me, a Hispanic trans woman named Doris, and another trans woman named Terry.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. What's their story?

Angela Raine: They're dead, I believe. Well, I know Terry is dead. I don't know if Doris is dead, but I believe Doris is dead also.

Whitney Strub: Just old age or something—

Angela Raine: Well, Doris maybe old age, but Terry tragically died.

Whitney Strub: Yeah.

Angela Raine: Okay. The Doll House. It was a lot of fun, and like I said, we had people from the LGBT community from all over come. That's when I actually met a lot more transgender women than I knew back then. I didn't know it was so many.

Whitney Strub: You just met them socially, they would come hang out there?

Angela Raine: Well, the ones that I met before then, people introduced me to, and we was going over to their house. They were going out to clubs and bar—well, basically, bars. I was starting to transition then. They dressed me. We went to a bar, whatever. I hung out with them before I went to the Doll House. When I went to the Doll House, then I met trans women from all over the city, all over the state. They shocked me. *[Laughter]*. They really did.

Whitney Strub: How so?

Angela Raine: Cuz I was young. I was about 15 or 16, and I didn't know about trans women as I do now. Back then, the trans women that I knew before the Doll House, they were, basically, night girls. You didn't see them as women in the daytime, or you didn't see them in the daytime.

The ones that I met after I got to the Doll House were realistic, they were daytime women. I mean, day or night, they were the same person. Everybody's life was fun, but crazy cuz everybody had their own little thing. I just learned a lot. I really did. I learned that we were all not the same because you had tall trans women, you had short trans women. Every makeup of woman there was; it was weird because they looked like women.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: It was shocking to me because there was a few that had great bodies, and I was like, wow, weird and how did that happen? Like I said, there were tall ones, but they all looked great. With me, I was young, just starting out, so I had no sense of fashion, I had no sense of really what it was like to be a woman. I just thought I was a girl. That was as good as it got.

As time went on, I learned these things, and it seemed like time changed quickly from the time the Doll House opened until my real full transition because I learned '77, '78 it was all about designer fashion. You get into the Doll House, if you didn't have on a designer label, you were basically talked about behind your back. It was an experience.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Let me ask you—I mean, I've got a bunch of different kinds of followup—

Angela Raine: Oh, yeah, go. Go ahead.

Whitney Strub: - questions, but what about this? I mean, so were the trans women who would hang out there, were they all straight or would trans women date other women or one another or was it more strictly stratified than that?

Angela Raine: Well, at that time, they were—in today's world, we would actually consider ourselves either a heterosexual trans woman, bisexual trans woman. Back then, we all considered ourselves heterosexual women. Then, there came a point where trans women and trans men wanted children. They would have a child by trans cuz they wouldn't go with a straight woman or a straight man. Some did, but very few lesbians did that. A lot of the—a few of the times the trans women would get into a relationship with a trans man, and they would have a child. It wasn't so much that they were love crazy. Basically, we considered ourselves heterosexual.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Sticking with the Doll House in the late '70s, what would the social dynamic be among trans women, gay men, and cisgender lesbians? Did these groups, everybody get along?

Angela Raine: Oh, it was great. It was great. We hung out. We'd visit each other. It was great. I could go over to a gay man's house, and we could sit around and laugh, joke, and drink or whatever. It would all be in fun. Back then, I had a lot of gay men friends. I've always got along with gay men and lesbians. Trans women, that drove me crazy. It was great.

Whitney Strub: Yeah, okay. I just wanted to get a sense of that. Just two more questions about the Doll House cuz I mean, it's really a fascinating topic, but I also want to cover more ground. Tell me about Bobby White and Paris Smith.

Angela Raine: Bobby White and Dorian Paris were best friends.

Whitney Strub: Dorian Paris and Paris Smith, that's the same guy?

Angela Raine: I believe so. Dorian and Bobby, they had been best friends forever. When Bobby started the Bobby White Review , Paris was right there with him.

Whitney Strub: When did he start that, do you know?

Angela Raine: I don't know. I wasn't around then. *[Laughter]*. They remained friends forever. Bobby had his lover, and Paris was, I guess, in and out of relationships, but all the time that I knew Paris, Paris wasn't in a relationship. They remained best friends, actually, until they both passed away. The weirdest thing about that was when Bobby White passed away, maybe four or five months later, Dorian passed away.

Whitney Strub: When was that?

Angela Raine: Oh, oh—

Whitney Strub: Like ballpark figure. I can't remember. I think I know this, but I don't—

Angela Raine: I have his obituary at home.

Whitney Strub: Actually, I'd love to see that.

Angela Raine: They didn't make anything spectacular out of his obituary. It was the '80s.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Yeah, I mean, I can fact check that another time. No big deal.

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Give me a sense of their personalities.

Angela Raine: They were great. They were fun. They were very business minded. They had great personalities. They were loving people, very loving. It was when I came on the scene, they embraced me, and nowadays, you don't really have too many, I'm gonna say, people in our community that would show positive leadership and teach the young people the better things of being in the community.

I mean, don't get me wrong, they were a good inspiration in my life so far as for me to think outside of the box when it comes to business. I had maybe three or four trans women in my life that actually taught me to be a woman. That's why nowadays it shocks me that people don't know because they did such a great job.

Dorian and Bobby, they were entertainers so they actually taught me more about the entertainment world. When I did entertainment with them or we went out on the road, a lot of times, in the beginning, I was behind the scenes. I was helping with costumes. I was helping with props. I was doing all that. That taught me the professionalism of what goes on backstage.

When Bobby felt that I was prepared to go on stage, which I had already been on stage on numerous occasions, I was comfortable with it. I was very comfortable with it. At that point, with working with the Bobby White Review, I did maybe three or four shows with them outside of the Doll House.

Whitney Strub:

It toured?

Angela Raine:

Yeah.

Whitney Strub:

Where did you go?

Angela Raine:

Oh, we did a couple of shows in Philly, and we did a couple of shows in Paterson.

Whitney Strub:

Do you remember where in Philly? I'm just curious.

Angela Raine:

[*Laughter*]. No.

Whitney Strub:

The Bobby White Review was all trans women or—

Angela Raine:

No. At that time, we had a couple of guys.

Whitney Strub:

Okay. It was mostly—

Angela Raine:

Trans women. The funniest thing was we had a couple of guys. Actually, let me see, one of them did Teddy Pendergrass. Both of them actually did Teddy Pendergrass. They were never on the same show billing. Yeah, we toured a little.

Whitney Strub:

Transgender is not a word they would have used back then.

Angela Raine:

Drag queens. [*Laughter*].

Whitney Strub: I mean, it advertised as, it used that phrase?

Angela Raine: No, actually, the advertisement would have been female impersonators.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay. Okay. Who were the audiences? Gay people, straight people?

Angela Raine: Well, when we did the shows in Philly, we went to gay clubs. When we went to do the shows in Paterson, one of 'em was mixed crowd and the other one was a gay crowd. I would say it was a gay bar. I wouldn't say it was a club. It wasn't really a disco or anything. Yeah.

Whitney Strub: No, that's fascinating. Just one more Doll House question, and then we'll sort of talk about geography—

Angela Raine: No, no. That's okay.

Whitney Strub: Tell me a little about the shows that you guys put on at the Doll House.

Angela Raine: Oh, well, they were—well, when we did the shows in the showroom, it was just you came and I was diverse in females that I liked as singers, so I started off doing Donna Summer and Patti LaBelle. Basically, those were the primary two women. I did Arethra Franklin once.

Whitney Strub: You're singing or you're lip syncing?

Angela Raine: Lip syncing. Back then, I could hold a note. Then, when a lot more stars started doing real hard disco, it was once in a while, we would have the show on the dance floor. Once we did that, I started doing Grace Jones. I was great at Grace Jones. We actually had a lot of fun doing shows really because once in a while, people would be, oh, I want to do something, and Bobby would be like, okay, because it would be an amateur night or something. Believe it or not—you know Pucci Revlon?

Whitney Strub: Yeah, yeah.

Angela Raine: She did Loleatta Holloway. She was great too. Yeah, we had fun doing shows. It was just that, for me, I'm older now so I don't mind the popularity thing, but back then, at 20, 21 years old, I was still like a frightened child. In Doll House, I was okay, I was

comfortable. If I took that persona out of the Doll House cuz I had my hair cut like Grace Jones and I dressed outrageously like her on stage, my thinking wasn't that you can't do that in society. I actually would go out in full makeup, full gear, high heels and everything like Grace Jones, not knowing the ramifications that were coming with it.

I was just telling CeCe Rogers Saturday that I retired at 21 because I went out one night with this guy, we was on the motorcycle, we went out to, I think, Turtle Back Zoo or West Orange somewhere. They had a carnival. We went up there on the motorcycle and with me looking like Grace Jones, and we got there at night, so it's tons of light, and he had on full makeup and all that crap, and I get off the motorcycle and take off the helmet.

First and foremost, I didn't know white people knew Grace Jones. *[Laughter]*. I didn't know that they knew who Grace Jones was. I got off the motorcycle and took off the helmet, and somebody screamed, "It's Grace Jones." We were swarmed, and it was freaking me out. I didn't even get to enjoy this carnival. We ended up getting back on the motorcycle and being escorted out of there cuz it was so frightening, it was like I didn't know that this is her life, this is what she has to go through. It happened to me on Broad Street at Newark.

Whitney Strub: Oh, whoa! Okay. Tell that story.

Angela Raine: I took a cab downtown Newark from where I lived because I was in full gear, it was summertime—

Whitney Strub: You were just going up that way or you were gonna end up at the Doll House?

Angela Raine: No, this was broad daylight. I was going out, and this is—for me, dressing up was my thing. I always had to be dressed. With the haircut—and I wasn't big on wigs—with the haircut, it's summertime, I'm all right, I'm comfortable. I jumped in the cab from where I lived—cuz everybody where I lived, I lived in the projects, everybody knew me there, everybody knew—most of the people in my building and the next one knew I did Grace Jones stuff. For me to come out looking like Grace Jones, it was, "Hey, Angie." It's like, "Hey." I jumped in the cab, and I got off on Broad Street. As a matter of fact, I got off by the, what is it, V-I-M, down by Broad Street, by—

Whitney Strub: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Towards city hall?

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: I got out the cab down there, and I crossed the street, and I was mobbed. It freaked me out because I felt trapped, and there was nowhere to run. Somebody picked me up. I don't know who the hell it was. They got me out of there.

Whitney Strub: People actually thought you were Grace Jones?

Angela Raine: Yeah. I mean, I didn't have—

Whitney Strub: They weren't mobbing you aggressively? There was fans?

Angela Raine: Yeah. It scared me to the point where after that I gave it up.

Whitney Strub: Wow!

Angela Raine: Because I wasn't used—I mean, I was used to a little attention, and sometimes it was negative attention, but this was all positive, but it was just too many damn people. After that, I gave up doing shows, period. I would do it periodically at the Doll House. Other than that, no.

Whitney Strub: Wow! Okay. That is really fascinating. Okay. Let's go back to geography then in downtown Newark. I mean, that was the Doll House, we're roughly behind city hall, I mean, a few blocks north. Tell me, then, where else strikes you as a sort of specifically transgender-oriented place, or where else would trans women go from the Doll House?

Angela Raine: Well, actually, we hit all the clubs around Newark, but like I was saying at the discussion that you actually had to pass and go into these clubs and have fun. There was a little bar on Branford Place. Well, all the clubs around Newark.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Well, which one are you about to think of that—

Angela Raine: I can't remember the name of it. It was on Branford Place. It wasn't that great.

Whitney Strub: Oh, you know what? Actually, sorry, let me back up. There were a couple of shows at the Doll House I wanted to ask you about. Do you remember doing *The Wiz* on roller skates, does that—

Angela Raine: No, that was Bobby White.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay. You remember it, though?

Angela Raine: Yes.

Whitney Strub: Tell me a little about that cuz I'm just fascinated by that moment.

Angela Raine: One of the songs from *The Wiz*, I think it was "Ease on Down the Road," when Bobby did that, he came out on roller skates, and he did the whole song on roller skates, and it was just too funny because nobody had ever seen that done. It was like, "Okay, you're crazy. You're seriously crazy." Yeah, that was the only time that happened. That was funny, though.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Then, Pucci mentioned a sort of musical comedy that might have been improvised called *Is My Family Turning Gay*. Does that ring a bell?

Angela Raine: I may not have been there.

Whitney Strub: Okay. I wasn't sure. I think there was no script. It was just improv, but it's [*cross talk 00:26:58*].

Angela Raine: Yeah. I don't think I was there for that one. It was very seldom that I had days off cuz I worked from Thursday to Sunday. Once in a while, Bobby would give me maybe Friday off. He really didn't want to give me Fridays off, but he would give me a Friday off. At that time, we had free passes to go to all the clubs.

Whitney Strub: Because you worked at the Doll House, you mean?

Angela Raine: Yeah. Even people from Zanzibar, Paradiso, Docks, Shanique's, all the clubs that were in Newark, all their employees have free admission to all the other clubs. I would go to these clubs when I had the day off.

Whitney Strub: You're not necessarily only going to gay clubs because you're not going as a trans woman?

Angela Raine: Yeah, I was going as a trans woman. I mean, I was—

Whitney Strub: What's the language? I mean, would you have said, is passing the word you would use then?

Angela Raine: Uh-huh.

Whitney Strub: I guess what I'm saying is you're not explicitly announcing yourself as a trans woman?

Angela Raine: Mm-mm.

Whitney Strub: In that sense, both gay and straight clubs are where you're hanging out?

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Once you mentioned Paradiso, I wrote down—all I wrote down was you said "glam." I don't know. Does that ring a bell?

Angela Raine: It was very upscale. You had to look like you had some money to get up in there.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Was it a straight club—

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: - a gay club? Oh, okay.

Angela Raine: It was a disco. Actually, the building still stands, and Paradiso is now Newark Emergency Services for Families.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Where is it?

Angela Raine: On Broad Street.

Whitney Strub: Okay. I can't quite picture it.

Angela Raine: Okay. Let me see. You know where the federal building is?

Whitney Strub: Yes.

Angela Raine: A couple of doors down from the federal building on Broad Street.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay. I do know. Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: I think they have an awning up there that says NSEF.

Whitney Strub: Okay. That was Paradiso? Oh, shoot. You know what? Okay. We had just paused because I was interrupted by a call, and I don't remember exactly what we left off on but let me just pick up by

going back to downtown geography. Tell me about your perspective on Murphy's Tavern because that played a central role in—

Angela Raine: Murphy's was a trip.

Whitney Strub: Yeah?

Angela Raine: Yeah. Murphy's was on Edison Place and Mulberry Street.

Whitney Strub: It faced what today is the Prudential Center, is that right?

Angela Raine: Yeah. Okay. Murphy's did not like trans women in there.

Whitney Strub: Yeah? Tell me about that.

Angela Raine: I don't know what it was with the guy that owned it. He just wasn't crazy about trans women being there. The only way that you actually were able to come in is if you really knew somebody that was close to the owner, and the owner knew you, or if they had a drag show. If they had a drag show, they didn't want you seen. They wanted you in the back or you had to leave after the show.

Whitney Strub: Wow! What would happen to a trans woman who showed up on an ordinary night?

Angela Raine: They wouldn't let her in.

Whitney Strub: Would they explain why?

Angela Raine: No.

Whitney Strub: Oh, really? Did they have a bouncer or what?

Angela Raine: No. If it was a night you were paying to get in, they would say that you couldn't come in because you were trans. That wasn't even a word. The way they put it politely was because you were wearing women's clothes.

Whitney Strub: Wow!

Angela Raine: After a while, it was you could come in, but basically, they didn't want you seen. It was you could go in the back and you could dance and have fun, but if you want to sit at the bar, you had to sit at the bar in the back, like segregation. *[Laughter]*.

I did a show there, and I went there a couple of times, but I was never really that comfortable there because the bartenders, they were shady towards me. When they realized some of the people that I knew, it was, okay, we'll accept you and you sit up wherever you want, but we still don't like you because you dress like a woman, you want to be a woman. It's like I don't care. I never really hung out there a lot.

Whitney Strub: Okay. That makes sense.

Angela Raine: When I was doing outreach, they actually wouldn't let me sit by the door or in front of the bar. I had to sit across the street. Yeah. I had to do outreach. First of all, I didn't like sitting still so I would walk from the corner to across the street from the bar entrance, and I would pass out condoms and stuff there. I would never really go in there too tough.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Did that change at all over time or was that something that just—it was sort of trans exclusive all the way through? Cuz it lasted until when, like 2005-ish?

Angela Raine: Until they closed. Yeah, basically. *[Laughter]*. Trans women didn't like going down there because of that.

Whitney Strub: That's interesting.

Angela Raine: Basically, it was a gay men's bar.

Whitney Strub: Okay, right. Not a lot of lesbians there either?

Angela Raine: Not really.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Then, I mean, if we're continuing walking in downtown Newark, then what else jumps out at you as sort of trans either friendly spots or places where trans women would go?

Angela Raine: A lot of 'em hung out on the stroll.

Whitney Strub: Tell me about the stroll. Define it, and then tell me where that was and what it—

Angela Raine: The stroll is the red-light district. The stroll? The stroll is, like I said, the red-light district, and that's where the trans women went to make their money. That was located on West Kinney and Broad.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay.

Angela Raine: Actually, it still be down there, believe it or not, in this area. Then, there was—okay, Broad Street, all the way down here there was another bar. I can't remember the name of this bar. No, that's too close. It's not on your map. Further down to North—

Whitney Strub: Okay. It's north?

Angela Raine: Yeah, right across the street from the Burger King.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Going up toward Broadway?

Angela Raine: Yeah. There was a bar down there. *[Phone ringing]*.

Whitney Strub: Okay. We're back on.

Angela Raine: Let me see.

Whitney Strub: Wait. Let me just ask this. We're down south of downtown on Broad and Kinney through north of downtown on Broad—

Angela Raine: Broadway.

Whitney Strub: - and Broadway. Is the stroll literal, like women are walking back and forth along—

Angela Raine: No, no, no, no. There was a bar. There was a bar on Broadway.

Whitney Strub: Okay. When people say "the stroll," they mean it sort of figuratively, not literally? It's not a walking from point A to point B thing?

Angela Raine: Oh, yeah. Okay, here, Kinney and Broad. Back then, a lot of girls, they stood on Kinney Street on both sides of Broad Street and down where the Chicken Shack is now, down that little street, down Kinney Street, all that area. Mulberry Street on around.

Whitney Strub: Okay. They're strolling in a circle around—

Angela Raine: Right around those couple of blocks.

Whitney Strub: Okay. I see.

Angela Raine: The same thing happened down here on Broadway, Pennsylvania Avenue. Pennsylvania Avenue was basically females.

Whitney Strub: You mean cisgender women?

Angela Raine: Regular biological females.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: Very few trans women went down there because the men, if they found out you were trans, they were violent. At least in the Kinney area, they knew.

Whitney Strub: It's recognized as a trans sex work hub?

Angela Raine: Yeah. The same thing over with the bar on Broadway.

Whitney Strub: Is the bar on Broadway near the Club Baths? Does that ring a bell?

Angela Raine: You know what? There's a—

Whitney Strub: There's a bathhouse up there that I don't know much about.

Angela Raine: There's an Auto Zone or something built where that bar used to be at. It's right across the street from Burger King.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Yeah, I've got a mental image of—

Angela Raine: Okay. As far as all of Newark, trans women lived and were scattered all over Newark, but basically everybody converged downtown Newark. Up until, oh, right, I would say up until I transitioned, the cops, if they felt like locking you up and it wasn't for soliciting or anything, they could lock you up for impersonating a female. Tracey Africa spoke about that a couple of times when she did panel discussions, and I was there, and I knew, and I was like, "Yea, girl." I always said, "Yeah, you know it."

Whitney Strub: Did you get harassed by cops?

Angela Raine: Hmm?

Whitney Strub: Were you harassed by police?

Angela Raine: No, actually, you gotta realize, I was very young, and they just looked at me as another girl walking down the street.

Whitney Strub: Yeah, okay.

Angela Raine: Once that designer phase came around, I really didn't walk because I worked in the club, getting off at 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning, who the hell want to walk anywhere in a pair of high-heeled shoes? Bobby would take me home sometime or maybe a guy that I met at the club would take me home. Actually, I found a boyfriend in Doll House. He took me home a whole lot of days.

Whitney Strub: Yeah? Tell me a little more about the stroll. It's something that's not well documented. I mean, I think I remember you told me once that on Broad and Kinney there was a hotel?

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: I think you said some of your friends may have been killed there?

Angela Raine: The hotel, I think the faces of the building is still there. It burnt down some years ago. Well, actually, less than five years ago, I think. They had changed it into an apartment building, but that hotel, not too many trans women lived there, but they worked in front of it. *[Laughter]*. No. Down here where the baseball stadium is there was the Lincoln Motel, which has Zanzibar's and maybe a block or so over, coming back towards us, there was another hotel called the Benzel.

Whitney Strub: Called the what?

Angela Raine: Benzel.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Like B-E-N-Z-E-L?

Angela Raine: Something like that, yeah. That's where a lot of trans women live. It was a beautiful hotel back yonder when. Then, they was, I guess, thirsty for business so they was letting people—it basically became a welfare hotel. One or two of my friends got killed in there. The weirdest thing is one of 'em, the security guard killed her.

Whitney Strub: Oh, God. What happened?

Angela Raine: She beat up her boyfriend. She was chasing him with a hammer, and the security guard told her to put it down, and she didn't put it down, and he killed her.

Whitney Strub: Wow! Shot her?

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm. Oh, wow! Let me see. That one. What other hotels was it? Those are, basically, the biggest hotels around.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. The other friend that you lost there?

Angela Raine: She caught her man with someone in their room. The weirdest thing, she came through the fire escape, and somehow or another it jumped off and she got stabbed. I can tell you a whole bunch of tragic deaths now, but we won't go there.

Whitney Strub: No?

Angela Raine: Let me see where else? Where else?

Whitney Strub: I have a note from you from a few weeks ago Lincoln Motel and the one next to it, so that's the Benzel was the one?

Angela Raine: Right. Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: Then, I also have written down NJPAC/Mulberry. Is that the same place we're talking about, that before NJPAC existed, there were—

Angela Raine: Oh, there was a street there. Yeah. It was a row of apartment houses. The street wasn't very big, where if you go down McCarter Highway, you make the left up to New Jersey PAC, there was a hill there, and the street went along down that hill into McCarter Highway.

Whitney Strub: Okay. What's the significance of it? I just wrote it down because you had mentioned it once, but I don't remember why I wrote it down.

Angela Raine: Oh, there was trans women, a few trans women lived down that street.

Whitney Strub: Okay.

Angela Raine: Yeah. Actually, unless you knew the area, you didn't know that they were really there. Mulberry Street actually went from over there all the way over to McCarter Highway. From one end of McCarter Highway to the other, but it was a back road.

Whitney Strub: Yeah, it's hard to picture that today.

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: Okay. That's why I wrote that down. Let me see. I've got a few other things written. I think we can probably get through this all.

Angela Raine: Go ahead.

Whitney Strub: You didn't know anything about the Club Baths on Broadway?

Angela Raine: No.

Whitney Strub: Another place you've mentioned once was the Black Box.

Angela Raine: That was on Broad and Market.

Whitney Strub: Which corner?

Angela Raine: Where the GameStop is.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Which is the northwest corner, right?

Angela Raine: Where the GameStop is, the Black Box is.

Whitney Strub: Northeast corner, sorry.

Angela Raine: The Black Box used to be—is it Black Box or Docks? I think that was Docks up there. The Black Box was down on—down below—what is this? Railroad Avenue. Miller Street over here.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: That's when things were changing and then the trans women started just experimenting going different places, but they all still ended up at the Doll House.

Whitney Strub: Black Box was a gay club or not?

Angela Raine: It was a mixed club.

Whitney Strub: Okay.

Angela Raine: A lot of clubs back then like Zanzibar's, Shanique's, Docks, Black Box, all the clubs around Newark, the discos, they actually had gay night. It wasn't a promoted thing, but it was something you knew. If you were a club goer and you frequented Zanzibar, you knew Friday and Saturday—well, you knew Friday was primarily straight, and then you knew that Saturday it was gonna be gay people in there. Basically, it was if I saw you, and I'd be like, "Whit, you going to Zanzibar's Saturday," you'd say, "Oh, you know it's gonna be a lot of gay people there."

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: You know what I'm saying. If you were a cool person, you'd be like, "I don't care. Sure." Yeah, it was an unsaid thing that all the clubs had a gay night.

Whitney Strub: Okay. That makes sense.

Angela Raine: Which made difference with the Doll House because it was a gay club. Every night was a gay night. *[Laughter]*.

Whitney Strub: Docks was on the ground level or upstairs?

Angela Raine: It was upstairs.

Whitney Strub: Okay. That's the same side of the intersection that Sakia Gunn was murdered at, right?

Angela Raine: Yep. Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. It's an interesting kind of confluence.

Angela Raine: Put down Docks so you don't get 'em mixed up.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Yeah. I've just got three more things I was gonna ask you about. One of them is Club 177 or 1-7-7. I don't know what people called it.

Angela Raine: I think it was 1-7-7. Bobby owned that before he owned the Doll House.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay. Okay.

Angela Raine: That was on what is now Martin Luther King Boulevard. It used to be called High Street. It was 77 or 177, I'm not sure. That was before my time also. It was on Clinton Avenue.

Whitney Strub: Okay. It's south of downtown?

Angela Raine: It was by the Father Divine Hotel.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: Around there in that area.

Whitney Strub: You didn't actually hang out there?

Angela Raine: No. I was young, remember. *[Laughter]*.

Whitney Strub: Gotcha.

Angela Raine: I was young at one time.

Whitney Strub: Do you remember—this would have been—you were pretty young. I guess it would have been right around the time you were coming into the scene. There was a guy murdered there. He was a professor actually, I think at—I can't remember where, maybe William Paterson or maybe Seton Hall?

Angela Raine: 177?

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Well, I don't know if he was murdered there, but I think he was picked up by a young guy there and then murdered at his home maybe.

Angela Raine: Oh, God.

Angela Raine: Like 1977 or '78. Does that ring a bell at all?

Angela Raine: I was out then. I was out and about. I can't remember that.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Yeah. I was just curious. I have a couple news clippings about it I can show you sometime. Okay. There are just two more things I was gonna ask. One I don't even, I don't know why I wrote this down, but Jerry Loftin is somebody you've spoken about, I think?

Angela Raine: No. I think Aaron mentioned Jerry.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay. Maybe this is not—Jerry Loftin and Pepsi?

Angela Raine: Oh! Okay. Pepsi, she was 6 foot 1 maybe, light-skinned, beautiful. Lived in her red lipstick. She was a nice person in her own way. She was murdered. She had got a settlement from a car accident or something, and her boyfriend was an active drug user, and she gave him a nice chunk of money, and he went out and blew it. When he came back and asked her for some more money, and she didn't give it to him, he killed her.

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm. Wow!

Angela Raine: Yeah. She was a very nice person. Oh, my God, it's so many. There was transgender sisters. I'm trying to think of—their name just passed my—Arlene and Jerry. They lived on 20th Street and South Orange Avenue. They were beautiful. Body [*inaudible 00:50:43*]. It was so many girls. Unfortunately, a lot of 'em are gone.

Whitney Strub: Yeah.

Angela Raine: Excuse me. Now, a couple of the girls that Pucci used to hang out with, I think two of 'em are gone, my daughter Kelly and Pam. Pam died within the past couple of years. Denise, beautiful, and Janet, beautiful, both of 'em Hispanic. Niecy is maybe five-nine, five-ten, and Janet was about five-two to five-four, they both look real. They could walk through here and if you saw them, because you don't know them, you would think they were just real Hispanic girls walking down the street. They didn't carry themselves like these young girls do now. You would actually think, who are those pretty women? Janet, the last time I seen her, she was in California. She was a hairdresser. Denise did pretty good for herself. She had a sex change. She went to Europe, and she tried modeling over there, and it just didn't work. I don't know what happened with that, I ain't gonna lie. She came back here, and she was in a couple of videos.

Whitney Strub: Oh, yeah?

Angela Raine: The rap singer videos, a couple of some folks videos. Anyway.

Whitney Strub: You don't remember which ones?

Angela Raine: No. The funniest thing is when they found out that she was a trans, a post-op trans woman, they cut her out of the video.

Whitney Strub: Oh, God.

Angela Raine: Yeah. Through editing, they could take—yeah, they took her out the video. For a while, Octavia used to hang out over here with them. They were pretty good people, all of 'em. We had fun together. Actually, me and Niecy used to live two floors from each other. We lived in the Colonnades. Christine Hamlet lived on one floor. Christine, then it was Niecy, then it was me.

I had moved up in the world from the Doll House. I went from the projects to the Colonnades. We all had great times back then. We really did. I danced everywhere I went, no matter. When I worked

at the Doll House, during my breaks I was on the dance floor. *[Laughter]*. If I wasn't at another club, even if I was at another club, I was on the dance floor.

That's how come I liked, at the discussion, I was telling Hippie that he probably saw me and probably paid my ass no attention cuz I was right there dancing everywhere I went. I've always worn braids. You can't mistaken me for nobody else.

Well, back then, I think it was right after I left the Doll House, I started really wearing braids. Other than that, you still saw me, I was always dancing. Those days were good for trans women. The only issue with us was we—not we, they—couldn't keep their hands off each other's men. That's where we had issues at. Me, I didn't have no problem with it because I was too preoccupied, and the only guy that I met that was in relationship with another trans woman, I didn't know. The messed-up part about that was she was my coworker.

Whitney Strub: Oh, man.

Angela Raine: Yeah. Me and him used to be all snugged up in the corner, and we would be kissing and all. We would be talking. Then, one day she approached me and said, "You know that's my husband." I'm like, "Ooh." She wasn't a small girl either. She was like, "Leave him alone." I was like, "No problem." Generally, my preference with men was heterosexual. At this point, I would feel that I was an educator because I would like to deal with heterosexual men that never dealt with a trans woman before.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: That becomes a hazard too because I was actually in a relationship with a man that didn't know. Yeah. When I told him, if I had been close to him, he probably would have beat the shit out of me. Yeah, that could become a hazard too.

Whitney Strub: Yeah, absolutely.

Angela Raine: There have been trans women who have been murdered because the guy didn't know.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Yeah.

Angela Raine: Like I said, I would consider myself an educator because even back then I would tell a guy if he didn't know. Now, it's like I

really don't want to be bothered so I tell 'em anyway, if they want to be bothered. There was that period where I took for granted that they knew because I've always been me. I never put on any kind of airs of any sort. It's like we would talk, we would laugh, joke, or whatever. I took for granted that the guy knew that I was a trans woman. This particular guy I had dated for seven months, and he would say things to me, and I wouldn't get it cuz he would be like, oh, we would have pretty kids. I'm like, yeah, right. I didn't catch onto things like that when he said that cuz I had never slept with him.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay. Yeah. I guess I was wondering if I could ask how you fool—

Angela Raine: I never slept with him.

Whitney Strub: Okay. I guess that makes sense.

Angela Raine: He told me on several occasions that he loved me, he had fallen in love with me. I thought, yeah, I like you too. I think I could fall in love with you. We had conversations.

I was engaged to someone at the time. We went to his house, and—cuz I had been to his house on several occasions. I never slept with him. This particular night we got smashed, and he was like, oh, I really make love to you, this, that, and the third, and he was like, I know you're engaged and I know you don't want to sleep with another man because of him, this, that, and the other, but I really want to make love. He made it real good. As smashed as I was, I came up out of that because at that point I did want to sleep with him. I moved all the way to the door, and then I told him. He was a professional boxer. That's why I had to move. *[Laughter]*.

That's what I'm saying, I always dealt with heterosexual men. His profession was nothing for me cuz I knew I wasn't the type of person you'd want to punch in the face. At that point, I got into it. I told him, and he was more pissed at me because I hadn't told him sooner. Eventually, that night we did make love even though he didn't know what the hell to do. *[Laughter]*. We had a relationship for two years after that.

Whitney Strub: Yeah?

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: The historian in me needs to know when are we talking here? Is this the '80s, '90s?

Angela Raine: Oh, that was the '80s. Yeah. About the mid-'80s.

Whitney Strub: Okay. That's an interesting story.

Angela Raine: I got to turn over.

Whitney Strub: No, I know. I know you've got to run. I don't want to keep you.

Angela Raine: You know what? Let me tell you.

Whitney Strub: Let me just make sure—oh, sorry. Okay. We're back on. I think I covered everything I was gonna ask you about so I guess the only question I have left is, is there anything that we missed—

Angela Raine: Geographical.

Whitney Strub: - as far as just thinking about, again, the kind of geographical spaces of trans life in Newark in the '70s, '80s, '90s, and beyond?

Angela Raine: Over in the south ward, there were trans women over there. They didn't take any crap from nobody. That lived over there. The LGBTQ community couldn't be over there.

Whitney Strub: Okay. Tell me about them. I mean, what did that look like?

Angela Raine: Okay. They had, they got the little street gangs now?

Whitney Strub: Mm-hmm.

Angela Raine: The south ward had one. It was huge. One street gang, and they were called the Wild Bunch. If anybody from the LGBT community that they didn't know was in that ward, they would try to beat them to death. You were always running for your life over there. I never went over there. *[Laughter]*. I didn't go over there. In the west ward, there were a lot of trans women in that area also, but it wasn't as bad as the south ward.

Whitney Strub: Back in the south ward, how did the trans women live with that sort of anti-gay—

Angela Raine: Well, they actually, a lot of 'em grew up in the area. That's how come they were there.

Whitney Strub: Okay. It's because they were local the gang didn't pick on them?

Angela Raine: Yeah, cuz they were from the community, from that part of town.

Whitney Strub: Being trans did not make them a target?

Angela Raine: No.

Whitney Strub: Okay.

Angela Raine: Cuz you gotta think about back then, how they looked at us, okay? A lot of straight people thought we were pedophiles and promiscuous. Okay? With the men in, I would say, period that knew about trans women, it was just a sexual fetish thing to them. Being that they grew up in that area, nine times out of ten, they done slept with somebody or a couple of somebodys within the bunch, so they didn't get picked on or anything. Us outsiders would have caught hell. Okay?

I used to fear for my life, even all the way over to Avon Avenue. Me and my friends, we used to come from Madison Avenue and 17th Street. This was before I transitioned even. We used to go to West Side Park. They used to go in there picking up guys and stuff. I was fearful of the park. First of all, it's dark. *[Laughter]*.

One night we went down to the school on Avon Avenue, and we were just in the playground drinking, and then guys started popping up. It was two of 'em. One of my friends was like, oh, I'm gonna do this, that, and the other with him. Then another one popped up and another one, and it was like, oh, shit. Before we knew it, it was like a line of guys all on the other side of the playground. They were outside the playground, and we were over here. They said, "Get the fags." We went scaling the fence. *[Laughter]*. That's how dangerous it was then, okay, in that area.

The downtown area, cut loose, be free. I mean, you had to be on your guard sometime, but basically, it was cut loose, be free type of thing because when I was hanging out with the girls in the red-light district, they were able to—two of 'em were able to get in the car with two guys, go make their money, and come back. It was like, "Wow!" It's like that? Transgender community downtown Newark really wasn't a bad thing. It was just that, like I told you before, there was a trans woman killed in Military Park.

Whitney Strub: Okay. When was that?

Angela Raine: That was the late '70s, early '80s. I think it was the early '80s.

Whitney Strub: What was the story behind it? Was it somebody you knew?

Angela Raine: I knew her, but not as well as a lot of other people. I knew she carried a hammer. She got beat to death with that hammer in Military Park.

Whitney Strub: Do we know why?

Angela Raine: *[Background noise 01:06:52]* Military Park messing around. The downtown Newark area, actually from Lincoln Park all the way down here to Washington Park, it was a gay hub, but on the down-low. I mean, everybody knew, but it wasn't no thing. Like down this end, that's where the boys were. The boys, the gay guys who'd hang out at Washington Park, all down Halsey Street on Washington. They didn't go to University Avenue, for some reason. They were between Washington and Broadway.

The funniest thing is, like I said, I've always gotten along with gay men. In fun, if I was hanging out with a couple of gay guys and we came down here, it was no thing for me to be down here amongst them cuz we were having fun, they knew me. Any other trans woman would come down here, it would be an issue because then they're like don't come down here with that shit, and all that. No, I don't—and they would all *[inaudible 01:08:12]*. *[Laughter]*.

I think I told you before, with society came divide and conquer, and that's what ended up happening. The division within the LGBT community, it came with clubs going out. When Zanzibar closed, when all the clubs around Newark started closing, that was because the little knotheads with their violence came. Then, trans women were basically scattered at a loss cuz the Doll House was one of the last to close.

Whitney Strub: When did it close?

Angela Raine: Oh, late '80s, yeah. Then everybody started going back to New York. Then, it was just a bunch of everything happening over here. The trans women over here were basically at a loss. If they didn't go to New York, they were on the stroll.

Whitney Strub: The sort of downtown trans scene sort of peaked in the late '70s, early '80s, you'd say?

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: Okay. I just have one quick followup question, and then I can let you go. I'm sorry that it took us back to the sort of morbid details, but just so I understand this. The woman who was murdered in, you said, Military Park—

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm.

Whitney Strub: - with her own hammer, that was—she was on the stroll and that was a john or—is that what you're suggesting or no?

Angela Raine: I don't know. I really don't know.

Whitney Strub: Okay. The details are not clear?

Angela Raine: No, they weren't clear. Even back then, they really weren't clear cuz nobody really hung out at Military Park.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Was that covered in the local press?

Angela Raine: No. You know what? That's the one thing now, and I find it really redundant with Newark, they will, and even in the past, they have actually not covered tragic things like that. Then, when they did, they didn't say anything—they would just say a male dressed as a woman. *[phone ringing]* Come on, really! Excuse me. They didn't cover or make a big thing like they would now.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. I remember that even Eyricka Morgan from the first Queer Newark Symposium in 2011, she was murdered, and the local press did that same thing, they *[cross talk 01:11:17]*.

Angela Raine: *[Cross talk 01:11:20]* Everybody, everybody. My girlfriend Mona she got hit and dragged almost a block. When she died, she died three weeks later, there was nothing said. There was no kind of investigation. It was nothing. This girl up in Military Park and my girlfriend at the Benzel, even this young girl that I used to hang out with during her transition she was murdered.

That was horrible, but there was no press, no investigation about that. They just assumed because of the propaganda they've always heard about us. She was killed in Branch Brook Park. There's a lot of people killed in Branch Brook Park. Oh, God. That was gross. They cut off her—yeah, and put it in her mouth.

Whitney Strub: Oh, God!

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: That's awful. When was that?

Angela Raine: That was the '80s also.

Whitney Strub: Wow.

Angela Raine: There was nothing—I found out that, oh, about a month or two after. Yeah. My best friend Frieda, Frieda is Christine Hamlet's niece. She was murdered on Broadway. These guys was mixing words with her, and they rode around the block, came back, and shot her. I found that out until a week or two after her funeral. I mean, come on, I'm her best friend. You gonna wait? There was a lot of—a few tragic deaths around Newark. It really was. The worst for me was at the hands of Beth Israel Hospital.

Whitney Strub: Yeah?

Angela Raine: Because you gotta realize back then, when the AIDS epidemic started, everybody assumed—

Whitney Strub: Assumed that—

Angela Raine: - that if you were in LGBT community, period, that you had AIDS. This girl named Teresa I know or Aretha, she got sick, she went to the hospital. She went to Beth Israel. They put an IV on her. I don't know what kind of tests they may or may not have done, but they stuck her in a room at the end of the hall next to—

Whitney Strub: Yeah, we're back on if you want to—

Angela Raine: They put her in a room at the end of the hall next to the garbage dumpster and forgot about her. Her family was looking for her for over a week, and they called all the hospitals. They said they didn't have her. They called the police stations. They called the county jails. Then, they started doing a little publicity then with people. They found her dead in the room. It was like, okay, how do you admit somebody, put an IV in their arm, stick 'em in a room next to a garbage dumpster—to me, they just treated her like garbage.

Whitney Strub: Yeah, I know. That's terrible. God!

Angela Raine: She died there. They let her still sit there, not knowing—cuz they was, "Oh, we thought she left."

Whitney Strub: Wow! When was that?

Angela Raine: That was the '80s also, the early '80s. A lot of trans women have—I'm not gonna say a lot, but quite a few trans women have died from tragic deaths. One of the first trans women I met, they found her on the side of 78, and she was stabbed to death. So many! Quite a few of 'em died from the virus. It was this one trans woman, it was so funny, but it's not funny because some of us actually feel and want to live as women so we want to have the SRS surgery. Because no one would do it for her, no one would pay for it to be done, she kind of did it herself.

Whitney Strub: Wow!

Angela Raine: Yeah. They got her to the hospital, and they patched her up. They kinda did what they could do at the time to make it, but they kinda—like they said, "You're nuts."

Whitney Strub: She lived?

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay.

Angela Raine: Mm-hmm. Oh, she was the talk around town. She tried to do it herself. It's like, "Ooh!" It was like even if she took all these drugs and she—ooh, no. There was really back then no such thing as trans men.

Whitney Strub: That's interesting.

Angela Raine: They were butches or lesbians, but nobody really back then considered themselves a man or wanting to be a man. Okay? Nobody, especially in Newark, nobody had a double mastectomy so they wouldn't have breasts and taking testosterone. None of that. None of that was in play.

Whitney Strub: When did that change?

Angela Raine: About the '90s.

Whitney Strub: Oh, okay. Okay.

Angela Raine: About the '90s.

Whitney Strub: How do you explain that?

Angela Raine: Well, you had lesbians and butches that actually felt that they wanted to be men, and they had to find a way of going about transitioning. They figured, well, a trans woman can take hormones or whatever; so can we. That's when a lot of the research and everything started on male hormones for trans men.

Whitney Strub: You think medical and technological advances are what facilitated that?

Angela Raine: Yeah. Well, not really facilitated it. They wanted this, but the technology—

Whitney Strub: Okay. It wasn't possible until then?

Angela Raine: Yeah.

Whitney Strub: Okay. No, that's interesting.

Angela Raine: Because, like I said, back then it was like you were a butch or you were a lesbian. Okay? The *[inaudible 01:19:03]* part for me is as time changed, labels change or whatever, I don't know when is this AG aggressive stuff started. That was new stuff for me. You know about that, right? That was new stuff for me.

Whitney Strub: Yeah.

Angela Raine: Like I said, back then, when I was growing up, there was no really such thing. If you were a butch, you was the male part of a lesbian relationship. If you were just a lesbian, you was the feminine part of the relationship. As time went on, then people started screwing with everybody. It was like a butch was, "Oh, you're a lesbian." It was like, "No, I'm a butch." Then, the female would have to identify herself in a lesbian relationship.

Then, again, the language changed. It was no longer you're a lesbian. You are a femme lesbian. That was you are the feminine part of a lesbian relationship. Crazy. With trans women, it just got out of hand *[Laughter]* because you are heterosexual trans woman like me. You are a bisexual trans woman. You are a lesbian trans woman.

Whitney Strub: I can't remember. You may have talked about this in your first oral history interview, but when did you actually learn the word transgender? When did that come into orbit?

Angela Raine: The '90s, the late '90s.

Whitney Strub: Where did it come from in your experience? How did you pick up the term?

Angela Raine: Well, that was a term label that society used because everybody was transitioning in one form or another. They just said, "Oh, well, you're a transgender. Your gender is transitioning." Then, you have to look at the umbrella of it because now you have, oh, transgender. What part of a transgender are you? I'm a heterosexual pre-op transgender woman. That's a lot. You know? Then, you have post-op, and it's like on and on down to drag queen. Okay?

Now, you have transvestites and transsexual and it's like, really? All this under one umbrella for what? A lot of times a drag queen is just an entertainer. Okay? For years, when I was growing up, that's what you were, a drag queen, whether you were an entertainer or not. You were a drag queen. Then, what are they called? Cross-dressers, they're considered trans also.

Whitney Strub: Right. Right.

Angela Raine: Which is crazy because it—

Whitney Strub: If I'm getting this right, I mean, you embrace the term transgender, but you're also critical of how broad it is?

Angela Raine: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Because it just goes beyond one's sexuality, and for me, I'm a pre-op transsexual, and then, when you go under the umbrella, it's pre-op transgender transsexual heterosexual. It's like, come on. That's a bit much. It's just like how many labels do you just put on me being a woman? A lot of these young girls, they, oh, I'm a trannie. It's like, really? Okay. Well, if that's how you want it, then okay. The major difference between now and then because it's very few clubs for trans women.

Whitney Strub: Right. Right.

Angela Raine: Even in New York.

Whitney Strub: Yeah. Yeah. Totally.

Angela Raine: Really, trans women don't have too many places to go. Then, when we do have someplace to go, then you gotta worry about some of the knothead coming in there acting like fools or the little girls

coming up in there acting like fools. It's like, why can't you just be women and enjoy a nice place and have fun?

Now, they gotta come voguing. They gotta come loud talking. They don't know how to come in and sit at a bar and drink and talk or get up and dance without voguing. It's like, come on. Then, they wonder why there's nowhere for them to go.

Then, for older trans women, like now, I can go down to the Rio or I can go over to Diamonds in the Rough because I'm an older trans woman. I know how to sit my behind down and enjoy an evening without voguing, which I'd probably hurt myself anyway. These younger girls don't know about stuff like that.

Whitney Strub:

Okay. I've gotta ask. Why the hostility to voguing?

Angela Raine:

It's a waste of time and it's destruction on the body.

Whitney Strub:

How so?

Angela Raine:

If you throw yourself on this floor—

Whitney Strub:

Okay. The sort of break-dancing side of it where you're—is that—

Angela Raine:

Very painful looking. *[Laughter]*

Whitney Strub:

Yeah. No, I mean, clearly you and I couldn't pull it off. *[Laughter]*.

Angela Raine:

No, but no. It's like society thinks that that's all we know now is every—if I'm walking down the street and someone looks at me and they realize I'm a trans woman, the first thing they think is I'm gonna bust out and start voguing. No. I don't do that. *[Laughter]*

Whitney Strub:

Okay. Did you always feel that way?

Angela Raine:

No, not really. I thought it was a good form of entertainment for the ballroom, but they've actually taken it from the ballroom floor out into the street.

Whitney Strub:

Gotcha.

Angela Raine:

It's unnecessary. Unless they do something like the electric slide or something like that, they don't know how to dance. I can go to the Lincoln Park Festival and dance up a ball—*[phone ringing]*.

Whitney Strub: Well, I think we're gonna wrap up, but I just want to thank you for doing this. I mean, this is really remarkable and really, I think, fascinating addition to the project. Thank you.

Angela Raine: Yeah. It's enlightening. It's information that a lot of folks may not know.

Whitney Strub: No, absolutely, and I think that's the value of it so I'm gonna stop recording, but obviously, we'll keep talking.

Angela Raine: Yeah.

[End of Audio]