

Project: 'Queer Lives: Barriers from Cradle to Elder Care - An oral history'

Respondent: Dolly Rae

Year of Birth:

Age: 20

Connection to project: Local knowledge

Date of Interview: 07/11/2024

Interviewer: Dr Sue Morrison

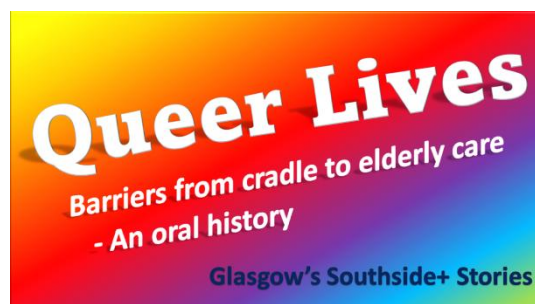
Images: Yes/ No (Number of:)

Length of Interview: 29.09

Location of Interview: The Haven, Wick

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)





Glasgow's Southside+ Stories



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.40-00.43	<i>Because we want to be as inclusive as possible, can I ask if you have any preferred pronouns?</i>	
	"I prefer to be known as she/they."	00.44
00.49	<i>Where do you live now?</i>	
	"Wick."	00.50
01.02	<i>Can I ask about your personal journey with your gender identity?</i>	
	"When I was 6 years old, I realised that I never liked football, basketball, masculine toys. The masculine identity of what boys looked like. I preferred girls as friends, playing with make-up, wearing tiaras. I was very young and that was confusing because I grew up in an environment that was very toxic to myself and one thing I am going to say to my younger self as 20-year-old Dolly now, don't lose your sparkle, you're a star. If they don't agree with who you are, it's not up to them what you are or what they want you to be because ultimately it's your life to live and you're the star and you've got to shine and be the way you want and not the way people try to dictate to you or try to bring you down. It's the trauma of feeling like you're never accepted. If there's any younger people listening or reading this, please know your life will get better because you get your chosen family. Your birth family may not be accepting, but you can create your own family that actually gets you, and just know that you are not alone."	01.03-03.19
03.20	<i>Can I ask who your friends were when you were younger?</i>	
	"Girls who were in the year above me in school. I never really had friends in primary because I wasn't really there to have friends in primary it was more about my education. I have always been knowledge-driven to finding history on people like me. The first L.G.B.T. search history tab was 'Is it wrong for me to want to be a woman?' and the first Google search was 'Being trans at a young age'. It said your journey is totally healthy, you need to make it a personal thing. I saw that article and that made me very thick skinned." The only thing I'll say about family was that as a Roman Catholic in a Christian household I've never got along with them because of me being me. and the clashing in and the trauma that put me through but I'm not going to go into too much detail about that because they don't need to receive any part of my energy but some people know that the trauma I	03.30-05.14

	went through resonates with them and then I can be as open as I feel comfortable with."	
05.15	<i>Could I ask when you first started questioning your gender?</i>	
	"Six months into primary two, I was six/six and a half when I started questioning my gender. When I realised I was trans, I was in second year of high school, aged 13. I told the L.G.B.T. teacher, and I burst into tears, I was then free, I found it liberating and I didn't care if I got backlash for coming out. Do you know why? Because I made some of the best of friends that I had in school and they had my back and I had theirs, even if they weren't L.G.B.T. and were just an ally, they understood me. I was young and carefree without responsibilities because being an adult sucks, it does, there's so much responsibilities and to the kids listening or reading this, don't wish your life away, that was a mistake I made many, many moons ago, and if you just live your life free in the moment, you'll enjoy it more, instead of wishing for something to happen, just enjoy being present and being in the present."	05.20-06.55
06.56	<i>Can I just take you back to your school friends, what did you do, where did you go?</i>	
	"We went to a dance class during lunchtime, competed in regional competitions. It was a nice time of my life because it meant everything to me and without the dance classes I wouldn't be here, I was so grateful and my grandmother used to be a dancer, I called her Nonna because that's Italian for grandmother. She passed away recently at 63 and if Nonna's spirit is listening to this, cheers, thank you for being there for me and I love you. Just know that the grandparents that you have you're only going to have them once and if they seem like they're trying to educate themselves and try and be more accepting, let them take their time, the adult generation came from a different generation but they will get the hang of it after a while. It's not that they don't love you, it's just that they're trying to process it and educate themselves. Just know that nobody's against you you're against yourself in your own mind and you're over-thinking. I think if people listen to me saying that to them, they'll be like yes, I am over-thinking, I'm afraid to come out, I don't know if my family will accept me. They will accept you over time. If they don't accept you straight away, they'll accept you over time."	07.05-09.21
09.29	<i>Do you keep in touch with any of your old school friends?</i>	
	"I lost some of them due to suicide. I've had those feelings myself, but please don't give up because you can be a voice for people who feel like they don't have a voice, you have so much star quality be yourself. To anyone who's listening or reading this, thank you for your bravery in coming out. Another reason is the friends you have in school might not be the friends you have for the rest of your life and people have different paths in life. I've got a best friend who came out the moment I graduated online and she's been my partner for two years and we met through Tik Tok and we met a few times personally. She's always been an inspiration from a trans woman perspective, she's fully transitioned. I underwent two years hormone treatment even though I have an autoimmune disorder which sucks which means it might take a little longer for me to transition."	09.30-11.42
11.43	<i>Do you feel that you've faced any barriers to education?</i>	
	"I was told to use the disabled rest rooms because I was a freak according to some of the teachers. I was the other gender. I was excluded from a lot of like female-based sports. I would've liked to play football but they just said it was a man's sport and I'm not a true man and they said you don't act	11.44-13.50

	<p>like one either. I'm like I know I'm a trans woman but it hurts that you think with your small sexist mind that football is only meant for men. It showed that in my school it had a lot to do in education to evaluate their souls before they get more L.G.B.T. students into that school. Because if you want to go to a school, make sure your parents find a school that's actually safe for you because my parents didn't care enough to do that. I always felt excluded from my family as well. I was the black sheep, just because of my identity. I felt that even some of my siblings didn't get me. My older sister who is 26 was my best friend, we grew up together, she helped me a lot during school because she used to get bullied because of people making stuff up. She was quite clever and people who were egotistical bullied her."</p>	
13.53	<p><i>Did you face any barriers in education for example taking exams and things like that?</i></p>	
	<p>"I wasn't allowed to take any exams in school, I was only allowed to take exams in a public building in my home town with a professional being there, watching over me doing my exams. I didn't pass my exams, possibly due to discrimination I was less focused. But the only regret I have is that I lost my exams and tests. If I had passed every one of them, I would feel a bit more smart. I don't feel smart due to that trauma of my life, constantly bullied at school and all that. People that may know me up here, people that may know me in my life might see that strong side of me that doesn't care about anyone else's opinions but on the inside I really do. I'm vulnerable and I'm hurt by my trauma and I'm still in pain because of it and I also feel like I not only have had barriers in education but also with healthcare as well."</p>	13.56-16.14
16.15	<p><i>Can you tell me about the barriers you've faced in healthcare?</i></p>	
	<p>"I feel that ever since I came out to the healthcare and my pronoun on paperwork is on there and that I'd rather be known as this, they still use my previous name and I've asked them to remove it and I've shown them proof that I've completely abolished that name and have the G.Ps say why should we remove it but said it in a way that was transphobic and there's a lot of transphobia up here. Caithness is not a safe place to be trans. I am doing this interview so people can feel more safe and if this is used for research or a civil rights movement to protect people up here then I want to be a part of people making history. I want to be a part of making life better for trans people. I do want to be an activist for trans people's rights and for people who have a different nationality or culture. If I tell the NHS 24 about my mental health, I feel that I'm not taken seriously that it's all in my head. I want to relieve that trauma, to relieve that stress. One thing I will say is that I've never had any major well-being issues related to bullying, although I have had breakdowns because I have complex PTSD. It took me a long time to get hormones though. I told my G.P. when I was about 14 that I wanted to start hormone treatment then at 18 I started the treatment. That was a painful long hard time for me to wait."</p>	16.16-20.08
20.10	<p><i>Can you tell me about any employment issues you've had?</i></p>	
	<p>"I tried to find work in retail, the food industry, the clothing industry, the bar industry and the drag industry because I'm a former drag queen. Some bars will have a drag queen but it's not that inclusive to a trans drag queen and drag isn't my alter persona it's for entertainment purposes. I think being a trans gender woman and a former drag queen is really powerful, it's really inspirational for people. There's a couple of characters I've created and they've inspired to actually go on with my gender side."</p>	20.11-22.40

22.41	<i>What does the journey entail to become a transgender?</i>	
	<p>“Transgender or transexual, the transgender side of it means that one person’s sex at birth does not align with their gender identity. Transexual is when a transgender is medically transitioning. So, if you’re born as a guy who wants to be a woman because you never felt like a guy, that’s transgender. A transgender woman, a female who is born as female but wants to be a man they would technically be described as trans-masculine or trans male. For the female side of it you get therapy for a few years and there’s a very long waiting list for hormones, so you take hormones and if you want you get breast augmentation SRS and facial reorganisation surgery. That might seem graphic but that’s the lengths that people might go to feel aligned with their identity.</p> <p>Everybody’s experience is different in transitioning. My experience has been nothing of any sort of easy. It’s been hard. I’ve suffered a lot with hormones because I’m on a lower dosage of hormones because due to my physical ills I can’t be on a higher dosage. One thing I will say to those on a higher dosage, you are so lucky. Some people remain on hormones for the rest of their lives, some people opt for surgery. I know a lot of women that will never chase after surgery and I will still always see them as women to me.”</p>	25.47-27.10
27.11	<i>Could I ask outside of your transitioning and education, what did you do for work after school?</i>	
	<p>“I went on benefits because I really didn’t want to put myself in a worse situation for a few years, rather than be open to being vulnerable again and I’m still not ready to find a job, I’m not mentally ready for it. There are people who can’t mentally handle the stress of a job and I wish that people who are not benefits could understand that a little bit more.”</p>	27.19-29.02
29.03	<i>Is there anything else you’d like to add?</i>	
	<p>“Just know that if I can survive through everything I have, I believe you can too.”</p>	29.04-29.07
29.11	<i>Thank you</i>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">     </div>		