

Imm1_moe_transcript_001

Wed, May 10, 2023 7:08PM • 1:24:09

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

lesbian, people, queer, feel, tumblr, mom, remember, watching, church, growing, discourse, big, bit, black, gay, life, nigerian, lived, met, degree

SPEAKERS

Olivia N

Olivia N 00:02

Today is January 30 2023. I'm Olivia Newsome interviewing Monique here virtually on Zoom. Do I have permission to record this interview? Yes. Do you know you can stop recording at any time?

00:17

Yes.

Olivia N 00:18

Can you say your name agent pronouns?

00:21

Money 21 years old, they them or she her pronouns?

00:27

How would you describe yourself?

00:32

Like identity? Or?

Olivia N 00:34

Um, so honestly, depends on whatever you feel like some people have been talking about their hobbies and personal interests. Whatever feels comfortable to you.

00:45

Um, okay, yeah, I guess I would describe myself as a black writer. Because I think those are the things that are like, at the core, a black queer writer, but I also think there's like, a conversation to be had about like blackness and queerness being very, very linked, but blah, blah, blah. I think that being black, being queer and being a writer are like, the cores of my being. So yeah, I think that's how I describe myself.

Olivia N 01:19

Can you tell me where you're from? Where you grew up? And what your childhood was like?

01:24

Um, yeah, I I went to I was born in New Jersey, to two parents, who are both Nigerian immigrants. And like Central Jersey, neither there's some discourse as to whether or not central Georgia Jersey exists, but that's where I lived.

01:47

And then I moved to central Georgia. When I was eight or nine, the year before, third grade. Yeah. And I grew up there was sort of like, if people asked me when people ask me where I'm from, I usually will just say, Georgia. It's like, where I spent the most time. But yeah, I My childhood was, I guess, as normal. It's a normal childhood. I don't know. It's hard to like, save or discard that, like the abstract. I grew up with two siblings, an older brother and an older sister. And we lived in a suburb. And it was very, like, standard growing up in a suburb, I went to public school. All things considered, it was pretty chill.

02:48

What's your relationship like with your parents? I'm complex.

02:54

I'm not that close with my dad. I'm very close with my mom. I was raised by my mom. Like, and my grandma. Yeah, I think like, so she's like, get older, the relationship gets more complex, because obviously, my personality starts to diverge more from like theirs. But I think me and my mom are like, pretty close. I always joke that she's like, my best friend. We don't agree on everything. And she doesn't know like everything about me. But the things that like we do talk about are like, very in line. We're very, very similar people, which I think is like, the route of when we get along and when we don't get along.

Olivia N 03:40

Can you talk a little bit about what school was like for you?

03:48

Um, yeah, it was. It was fine. I went to public schools. What do you think? I didn't think was that unique of an experience until I came to NYU and I met so many people who like, have all gone to private schools or like college prep academies, and I went to like, very standard public school. Yeah, I don't know things are fairly normal. It's in the South. It was in kind of a smaller town. I lived in like a medium ish sized town, but I went to school in a neighboring town that was a bit smaller. And yeah, it was very like, conservative. But there was also like, a nice like community aspect to it because like, because it was a small area. Like everyone knew everyone, which is kind of sweet. But yeah, I don't know. Growing up. I was like dealing with the fact that I was like a new kid in that neighborhood. And then I have obviously with the being queer, but like not knowing what that meant, because it was like, before I figured out what was going on. I think same with being like neurodivergent And, and that a lot of my

earlier years recovered by like, feeling different and not knowing what that meant. But I think ultimately like, it's a pleasant childhood. There are parts of it that seem very idyllic when I look back on it like people riding bikes in the cul de sac at the end of my street and like Elliman just like that. Yeah, sorry, the question was about school, and I went off topic.

Olivia N 05:29

You're totally fine. So, can you talk a bit more about neurodivergent? See, and yourself and what that meant for you growing up, you spoke about there was just always this like, other or different that you felt?

05:45

I think the way that I related to people. And I don't know, I think it's kind of like, you hear so much about people who were like in gifted and how all of them end up just being like neurodivergent. And like, burnt out later. And I like as soon as I got to my new elementary school, I remember like, at Open House, we like met the gifted teacher and my mom was like, oh, Monique will be joining us soon. And like, literally had not been to a single classes just meeting this woman. So I think a lot of my personality was like, very much colored by that and shaped and yeah, that was just like very central to how I my self conception at that time. And I think that that was definitely there were some red flags there. With how how obsessed I was with being like really good at things. And the way I would fall apart if I wasn't good at anything, because like, that was like it. That was myself. That was the only thing that I could see myself as like being good at or feeling in control of was like the fact that I can make good grades. I was always just like a weird kid. Like, I hyper fixated on like, a lot of things. And it's funny because my mom and my little all my family members would always say that we're like, oh, yeah, many because just like she's just a little different. Like, yeah, yeah, she is

Olivia N 07:13

we us from the black immigrant parents who are like, Oh, my kids just, you know, just a little different. Like, Mom, I read the dog encyclopedia, every day, for years,

07:29

trying to when I started reading the dictionary,

Olivia N 07:33

because I by entry, that was fun as well.

07:35

I saw a kealan the bee. And we had like, a few weeks in my house, or my mom would randomly just like ask us to spell things. And like, we're not trained. I I'm not Akela. But I like then I was like, Okay, well, now I need to like make learning words. My thing is when I started reading the dictionary, and everyone was like, oh, man, it's just a little quirky. She's unique. But yeah, I think it's just like, all the little things like that, that were very big when I was growing up. And like, that's on like the front end of it, I think on the unfun end of it, it's that like, when you don't realize that you're just kind of like a little wired differently. You can't make accommodations for yourself. And so you just feel broken. Which is like, obviously rough. And that like I always felt like my brain work differently from other people. And I

couldn't figure out why. Yeah, I don't know. And it's like, now when I think about those things, I'm like, Well, I can just like I'm building my own life. So I can build it in a way that is like accessible and like accommodates my needs. But when you're a kid, you don't have the power to do that. So you have like, your unique needs in a world that does not meet you where you are.

Olivia N 08:59

So can you talk a little bit more about what it was like growing up with Christian parents or in a Christian household?

09:15

Um, yeah. So I'm just growing up like, we went to church, like every Sunday or most Sundays. I'm like, everyone in my family is religious. It was just kind of a very normal, like, I don't really, like especially when I was younger, I didn't really I don't know. I think it's because it was so ingrained in like, my family identity that I didn't have any thing else to compare it to. And at that age, I think like, I'm talking like, is like up until I was like 10 or 12. Or, yeah, like elementary school. It was like very innocuous things in church where I would just go on there. And you know, we did our thing, they read the Bible I learned like the stories. But I was also like, I would get so I was, this is honestly probably related to like being there in a virtual but I would get like so anxious and each one was separated from my mom. So I hated going to the kids church, because it was like me and my siblings, they were in like a different group because they're older than me. And I was like, I don't know any of these people. I do not want to be. So I after I moved to Georgia, we ended up like, at the church, we went to the air, we all just would be in the adult section. We also wouldn't go like all the time all the time. But yeah, like my family, we would like pray like every morning before school, and then every night before bed. And like devotional books, or like, we would read them together as a family, but then they also had like, some that were like my own and I had like a kids Bible. And all that jazz. Yeah, but it was like very normal. And I think especially because where I lived, when I moved to Georgia, like everyone that was Christian. When I lived in New Jersey, there was like a good amount more like, like, diversity and belief. But in Georgia, it was like everyone was Christian to the point where I was like, You were then critiques on the denomination of Christianity that you like adhere to. So like, everyone was like a Baptist or Methodist in my neighborhood, and I didn't know what either of those words meant. So I was like, Oh, okay. They didn't really know what that what that does. And I was like, I don't know, like, I believe in Jesus. And that's kind of enough for them, I guess. Which is also such a funny thing to say because Jesus is just like a person. I'm like, not the one that anyways.

Olivia N 12:00

I believe in this one guy. Yeah, that never so many things about growing up religious, are a little bit funny, a little bit giggly. When you look at it now. So what church were you in? Like? Were you in like a like a Nigerian Christian church? Like, did you have like a Nigerian community in Georgia? where you

12:22

were? I did not actually. And I think, yeah, we went to like a very white church. And like every church that I had been to, like, when I lived in New Jersey, as well, they were just like non denominational churches. And they had like a white guy at the head, and a bunch of white people in the middle. And the Church in New Jersey was like, a little bit more diverse, but it was also like a mega church, which I

did not find out until after we left. And my mom was like, oh, yeah, they like put it on TV and stuff, too. And I was like, what, what were we doing? But we went to in Georgia was like, just a smaller community church. But it was a white church, because the black churches were all like ame churches, and we didn't like following specific denominations. And we kind of were just chilling there. There were like Nigerians in my and like the region, but not necessarily in my like, my specific community. Like in my school, like I wasn't the only Nigerian kid in the link neighboring counties, there were a few more and we have like, these there's like a Nigerian family a few. And my church that we became a kind of family friends with. But the church itself was not like Nigerian. And I think that's also something the colored like, I don't know, like the liberalism of like growing up in the States when you have my parents who didn't because my mom has always been like, your chick, she's like, a very progressive progressive for like a Nigerian, and like, she's not like that regressive politically, but like, compared to her peers, she really is. And so like, she didn't really like the super strict like, like super long service kind of churches, like she was always Not That Kind of Girl. Like when we would be in church, about halfway through service is happening all the time when I was growing up. She would like scribble on like, the program or whatever. And she would just put like, lunch question mark, and put like two restaurants on it, and like pass it down to like me and my siblings, so we could like circle which one we wanted to go to. So that was the by

Olivia N 14:44

I mean, that's a good vibe to have Honestly. Honestly, honestly, and also the white churches and a lot earlier. Yeah, they do. I didn't go to white churches until I was an adult. When I had to, like go Wow, y'all are done. Church would only end early when it was Sunday Night Football.

15:04

That is so funny. No, because I would hear about that. And like our pastor at our church would make jokes about that, where he'd be like, okay, it'd be the Methodist to lunch.

Olivia N 15:15

God, God, so can you talk about race? And how race affected you growing up? You mentioned how you were like, mostly at a white church? Like, was that true for like, a lot of your surroundings? Like, how did what was it like growing up black?

15:33

Um, so just trying to think where did I think it was? Like, it was just, um, I think, where I went to where I grew up, like in Georgia, it was.

15:54

I think that was the first time that I felt like very conscious of the fact that I was like, that I was black. And like, because I remember walking into when I lived in New Jersey, it was very, very diverse school I went to, and I remember entering my first class in third grade. And that there were only like three black people, including me in the room. And I was like, so shocked by that. And like little things like that, and I think, because I was just like, I was in the South. I realized that like, this was like, a thing that people like, considered. And then on top of that, I was Nigerian. And so there was often the feeling of like, like, to black for the white people, but like, not really black enough for the black people, because I'm

Nigerian. But then because I was born in America. I'm not like Nigerian enough for the Africans. And like, obviously, all of that is linked back to race. But yeah, I think like, for the most part, I was kind of just trying to figure things out. Like when I first got there trying to make like any friends. When I was in, like, fifth grade, I mean, like, when my really good friends was black. And then from there when I like, engage with people, but I think also because I was just kind of weird. I didn't ever feel like superduper accepted about the black people in my school. Like I talked to them. And it wasn't like, like, I wasn't like, ostracized. But I didn't feel like a lot of the people. I don't know. I think it's just like, I think it's a lot linked to the fact that I was like, nerdy number one and two, I was African. So I didn't have that much in common with a lot of, like, popular black people in my school. Especially coming from like, in the city. It's kind of like an inner city vibe. Some a lot of them didn't, I lived in like a suburb. So I was like, obviously, like, there's just like, the difference of like, race that like ethnicity class that we're all kind of at play. But yeah.

Olivia N 18:01

So there's a really interesting tension between blackness neurodivergent see popularity and, and fitting in. So would you say, like, so growing up, if you were in school, you were just aware of race as a concept. Like you were just like, it was just a thing that you were aware of? And it didn't like did you did it interact with any of your day to day, like, alien? Black? Or no,

18:35

I'm honestly, like, I think in a passive sense, but not in like a very, like, active way that I was considering it all the time. Like, I think, in the passive sense in that, like, I knew how I was being perceived. And like, as I got older, but I think that like, my, like, the school that I went to, and the area I was in, it was pretty evenly like black and white. Okay. Which I'm like, I feel lucky for, because I remember like, in my school that like people who weren't black or white, or like, I could probably count on my hands how many people who like weren't, so I didn't feel like other for being black. I just felt though that there was a there was a clear distinction, like, I don't know, like the way like when you're in Milan, German or the black kids are sitting together like that.

Olivia N 19:27

That makes sense. So, can you talk about what influenced you or who influenced you the most growing up

19:39

and what way

Olivia N 19:42

um, in any way that you want so some people have been talking about maybe social media like fanfiction tumblers. So people have been talking about the influence that they're that they're like, grandmother had with relation to like culture and like immigration and some people have been Talking about like historical moments that influenced them like, like some of the Brown, like lesbians have been talking about the impact of 911 and surveillance on their life. So there's like different, it depends on what you want to talk about. Like I've had conversations 45 minute conversations about like, super Hoolock fandom. And then I've also had other conversations about, like the importance of immigrant

mothers or their immigrant mom. It honestly depends on whatever you feel like might have influenced you.

20:39

Okay, give me a second to think.

Olivia N 20:40

Yeah, no problem.

20:50

No, I first thought, when you said that was like Rico nasty. Just because like, I don't know, lately, I've been thinking a lot about her. But I think in the last like, since I was in like middle school, I like, felt so seen by her. Like, I think it's like the idea of seeing like, an alternative black girl, which is somebody that I didn't see that much. And I think also like, speaks to something that I was feeling with regard to like, not feeling black enough. And then I saw her and I was like, oh my god, I love that she is just like, doing whatever the fuck she wants. Yeah, no, that was like, really inspiring to me. And I think genuinely there, like, kind of started like a shift in my self perception and the way that I like to show up for myself, and that I'm like, like, now I think when I get dressed every day, I'm like, I hope that 13 year old Monique, like, as she saw me, she would think I'm so fucking cool. And like, as long as I feel that way, when I get ready for the day, I'm like, I'm content. And I think like, I do credit that to some degree to like, getting into Rico and like, her entire attitude. Something else that came up for me was when you're talking about Tumblr, because I think Tumblr influenced a lot. A lot of things about me and like good and bad ways. But I remember when I was in like middle school, and Amandla Stenberg was on Tumblr. It's like before people like knew that she was on Tumblr. And so like, she was still talking to us. And I remember like, sending in like, I had the biggest crush on her, like the biggest crush and I loved like her and like all the other little like arco girlies, from that era. And I think that was like, also around the time that I was like, realizing I was like, queer, and I was like, oh my god, like, look at them. And so that was a big thing. Because I was on Tumblr for like, from when I was like, 12, I think, which is like, I think definitely like stunted my growth a little bit. Like, I would be I don't know, I lost at least two years. Being on tumblr about Yang. I think also though, it like did help me like figure some things out as far as being queer because I could see all these other queer people talking about it online. But it also I think, exacerbated some mental illness, things. But when like, cute, wholesome thing that happened on Tumblr, it was me and one of my friends that I made, we met each other at church camp. And then we and then we both decided that we were like, we like we're both on Tumblr, and we talked about it, but we didn't follow each other. And then we were like, Okay, you can follow my Tumblr. And then like, on each of these tumblers realize that we're both queer. And that was like, very sweet and like, we're still friends now and they got gay married last year, so yeah, I know. And so that is like a cute little like, Tumblr moment and a church moment.

Olivia N 24:06

So which parts are like where are you in like, fandom? Tumblr? Like, what were you doing in Tumblr?

24:12

I was everywhere. I was doing too much. Um, I was like, big on fandoms which ones I was like, big into like bands like I was really into romance. And like, every band like around there like I had a fan page on Instagram.

Olivia N 24:28

Okay, like 21 pilot.

24:31

I liked them. I like my chemical romance pierce the veil like Verizon, like all I was really into the like, YouTubers back then. Like, Tyler Oakley, like in the peak of his day like I was there. And I love like him and Trey Sivan back and choice. Devine was a YouTuber.

Olivia N 24:54

Yes, same number what when he released when he released blue neighborhood Shep

25:00

No, I stopped when he released like Happy Little Pill. Yes. i Yeah, I was there.

Olivia N 25:07

And the three part movie like the three part like music video series.

25:11

No, I Yes, I crowd alone.

Olivia N 25:14

Like, la Happy Little Pill taking you away like

25:22

I was I remember. I don't know if you heard his like The Fault in Our Stars Song Dog. And I like

Olivia N 25:32

this isn't there? It's not embarrassing, but I sent an email to John and

Olivia N 25:43

say it again he sent an email to John Green.

25:46

Yeah. Asking if he could put that song in the movie. Like before I came out I was like, I don't know if you've heard of this song, but it's like still getting it's like perfect for your film. And I was like, I don't know if you have any influence, but if you do, he did not respond. But you know,

Olivia N 26:02

that's actually really cute. Okay, so you were on fandom. You were like in fandoms. But like mostly like bands.

26:13

I was into like, I was into like, literally everything. I was really big on Percy Jackson, Harry Potter da. I got into like, Lord of the Rings briefly. I don't know if you know Carmilla is

Olivia N 26:26

Yeah, I know what Carmilla is. Okay,

26:29

I may watched Carmela the first time and that like blew my mind. Like, blew my mind. I was also like, really big on YouTube. Like, in general. Like I watched like a lot of YouTubers and like, loved all of the girlies I watched a bunch of like makeup YouTubers back in the day. Yeah, I don't know. It's like, like, I think to some degree I still I'm still like a YouTube girly. But not in like an influencer way. Like now I just watched like 30 minute video essays but like, back then I used to love like every like YouTuber kind of influencer. Or the gay ones I watched, like a lot of them. Like all of our lesbian couples.

Olivia N 27:16

Okay, so you also were on which led like xueyuan lesbian YouTube?

27:20

Yes. And not deep enough. Not like black lesbian, YouTube. I was like with all the white girls.

Olivia N 27:25

Yeah, that's okay. That's understandable. They were easier to find.

27:29

No, they were and like all the black ones. Like you have to be like hi fam or a stud? Yeah,

Olivia N 27:34

there's no in between, like yourself. And you had to be multitalented to you couldn't just be black and a lesbian on YouTube. Like the white lesbians were white and lesbian. You had to like be a fashion designer, like the fashion has to

27:47

be light skinned. But the Carly's weren't ready for that conversation.

Olivia N 27:51

Wah wah. laughter the quote, that's, that's what that's a conversation for another day. Forgive me today. But I have more questions about your Tumblr experience. Were you posting? Were you blogging? Or were you just re blogging?

28:06

I was blogging and Oh, you

Olivia N 28:08

were writing? Okay. What were you talking about?

28:12

I was like, so this was around the time when I was like figuring out that I was gay. Because I think that like Tumblr, definitely, like, expedite that process. And so I was just kind of like live tweeting my self discovery on Tumblr. And I would be so like, I would be posting on Tumblr, and then I would be terrified that people would like find it. But I would like still be like writing. And like using straight up like identifiable information.

Olivia N 28:39

Don't really care that much. If you identify yourself online.

28:42

No, but I bet at that time, I thought that I was gonna like run for office or something in the future. And I was like, Oh my God, what if I'm running for president and they find that I was like, depressed in sixth grade. And that was like, such a fear of mine. But I was like, also like, Well, I would literally die if I didn't use Tumblr, so I guess that's the risk I have.

Olivia N 29:06

So you're on Tumblr from like, 2011 2014.

29:10

I was on Tumblr until like, Oh, before until like mid High School. So like until like,

Olivia N 29:16

2017. Yeah. Okay, I can place the Tumblr you are on based off of the way you're talking about it. I'm not a Tumblr historian, but I feel like I might be after all of these oral histories.

29:30

No, heyday like the period that I was. Like I was that's when I was in it. Like, every day I was on tumblr and

Olivia N 29:37

tell you're mentally ill like based off of it. I was like being on Tumblr in 2011 is ridiculous.

29:43

No, it's like when I look back. I'm like, This is why we need internet safety. Because my mom didn't know what I was up to. She was like, oh, like, I don't know. I guess like, She's a kid. And I'm on on Tumblr, like discovering my sexuality getting into discourse. I wasn't like ever like, into discourse like myself, because I was scared of people like Daxing. Me,

Olivia N 30:11

but they like release your IP address.

30:15

But I love to watch the discourse. And like, I would like a few posts.

Olivia N 30:21

What kind of discourse were you seeing?

30:23

I'm seeing the queer discourse, which is why I feel like I get like deja vu when I see tick tock sometimes. Yeah. Like, I remember the discourse on like, who was allowed to use what pronouns what it meant to be trans what it meant to be non binary. Who can use the D slur? What do you think that people are still talking about like today? But like, which is why I feel so like, I don't know, like, go outside. I remember saw posts in there. Like, in real life, lesbians and bisexual women aren't arguing about who can say, Derek, they're kissing. And I was like, that's so real, like me, like, exist in real life. But I was around for, for all that. I remember seeing, like, my favorite thing, and then just all kind of a guilty pleasure of mine. Was I love when there was like, a big like a call up post. Like when if someone like got called. And it'd be like someone, I had no clue who they were. But I would read the entire column post with like, the links, because people were so thorough with their columns. And so they'd have like, links to supporting evidence. And I would be there and I would read the entire thing. And I mean, it's crazy. And then just like, look at the comments to see like, what people are saying about it, like, what everyone else knows is going on. Yeah, and so definitely like brain rock, but it did also put me on to some good music.

Olivia N 31:55

So as So would you say that discourse was the worst half of Tumblr that you were on? But you also mentioned that Tumblr was bad for your mental health? So can you talk about that a bit more,

32:04

I think to where it was bathroom, mental health, and like, partially discourse, partially because like, there's obviously the proliferation of like, pro eating disorder stuff on Tumblr, and like, people were like, using other people's bodies as like, inspo, and all that jazz. Um, I think my words, one of my big things was like, I would see so many people who are like talking, like literally like live tweeting their breakdowns talking about how they are like suicidal, and they want to die and etc, etc. And like, reading that, and absorbing that kind of information at age 12 is not good for your development. Because I think like the things that I was feeling, like when I was feeling depressed, and then I would see other people posting about it, and I'm like, Okay, so I'm just hopeless. And then also it like, kind of makes it into it almost like commodifies your suffering, because you can post about it. So then there's like, why would I get better if I can post about how much my life sucks and make myself the victim? So I think that was like the worst, which is also part of why I stopped using it so much, because they couldn't recognize I was like, not like, not healthy. And I wasn't like desiring to become healthy. Because like, there was nothing telling me that I should. So

Olivia N 33:29

can you talk a little bit more about your view, and you realize, can you talk a little bit more about when you realize your sexuality was different from what was around you? So did you go on to Tumblr, and then start questioning your sexuality? Or did you or were you questioning and then on Tumblr, like that kind of conversation?

33:52

I was questioning before. I remember like, when I was like, in like, fourth grade, like seeing women and like, you know, getting like little fluttery and I remember also like, not like I didn't have crushes on men, like I remember, like, their boys in my classes who I was, like, really close friends with. And people told me that I like should have a crush on them. They would assume that I liked this person, because we were good friends. And I was like, Oh, this is what a crush is and just been like it's your best friend. But it wasn't till I was like, older and I was like, Oh, we're not talking with the same thing. Like when you guys say like you're having a crush on someone. Like we're just not saying the same thing where they're like, Oh, you like so and so. And I was like, yeah, that's my boy. Um, but yeah, I remember when I got older and like, just like seeing girls and shows and movies and realizing that like, I don't know, like, I don't know exactly like, what, when it clicked. But I do remember when I like realized that like, I think I had like a crush on girls. And I like felt really bad about it. Um, I remember like telling myself like, oh, well, it's okay. Like everyone just thinks that girls are like really pretty has crushes on them as long as you don't do anything. To them. That's what I was like. And for a while, and I think like, I was still kind of feeling that when I got on Tumblr, and was like investigating, I was also grappling with the fat like, the fact that I knew I liked women, but I wasn't sure if I liked men. And so I was like, do I What is this mean? Blah, blah. But I initially got on Tumblr, like fourth random stuff, like that's why I made the account and then it just like ended up falling into gay stuff.

Olivia N 35:43

Yeah. So do you remember what some of your earliest exposures to lesbianism were? Like? Was it Carmilla

35:54

earliest exposure to lesbian? Um, it might have been an I might be wrong, but I My first thought was Jennifer's Body. I don't know if that was like first but it was definitely early because I remember seeing Megan Fox and and and decipher the kiss, and like looking away. Because I was like, Oh, my God, I should not be seeing this. But no, literally like, like, but I was like, oh, man, you guys saw that. That and also Black Swan, which I just shouldn't have seen as young as I did. But I remember the like tech scene with Mila Kunis and Natalie Portman. And that was like, Whoa, girls can do that. Yeah, I think those were like early exposures. And then like, probably as like, I remember seeing like, not lesbians, but like gay men, and things. But I remember when I was younger, I always seen that as like a joke as like a punch line and things. I remember very clearly when we were watching some movie, like my family. And there was like this man on there who was like, supposed to be like a gay character. And then like, when my mom saying I think he's GA, why don't you just spelled it out? And I was like, what does that mean? Because I was thinking it was like an acronym. So I'm like, trying to figure out what GA Y stands for. And so I later when I was like, Oh, okay.

Olivia N 37:30

So can you talk a little bit about when you started identifying as a lesbian? And how did you end up arriving at lesbian? Yeah,

37:42

I started identifying as a lesbian when I was in my sophomore year of high school. I remember I was like, 15. Because I remember, like, for a while thinking, or at least telling myself that I was bi even though I knew I didn't really. I didn't like men. But I think I liked the attention that I received for men. But yeah, and then I started talking to this girl, and I was the first time I'd done that. Because I like, I like didn't date in high school, either. So I think that's like the other thing is that I wasn't dating men. So it wasn't like I had anything to compare it to, like, I wasn't dating men and feeling like it was wrong, because I just wasn't dating period. But I remember when I was like, younger, and I like, had talked to like a couple of guys. And like, it was mostly for the attention. And then like, ever follicles get into real then I would cut it off. But I remember talking to this girl. And like that was the first time they told someone that I like like, women because then I like ended up telling my friends after talking to her for like a couple of months. But yeah, I think that like talking to her and like, that was like awesome on my first kiss. And I was like, Yeah, I don't think I like guys. Like, I think that like, I'm like pretty sure that like, I don't want to do that. Um, so it was that it was like, talking to this girl. And like reflecting throughout that whole period, because like, I remember, I was like, even if like things don't work out with her. Like, I don't think I would want to date a guy. So

Olivia N 39:27

can you talk about like, if identifying as a lesbian or a dyke ever felt ever felt really scary to you like did you struggle with like you're talking about how babies you're dealing with some calm pet and feeling like you like the attention that you got from men but didn't like personally identifying as a lesbian feel scary in any ways?

39:53

Um, yeah. It really did. I don't know it's hard to talk about because I don't want to Uh, I always had I don't want to like feed into any like by phobic kind of stereotypical sign. But I like for a while I like identified as by but it was definitely because I was scared of identifying as a lesbian because I was like, as long as I still like, man, that means that I could marry a man, which means I don't have to up into my life. Because it's very scared obviously coming from like a very fairly traditional like home and my parents were immigrants. And my entire family is like all Christians. And so I was like, I can't like, like women. So when I was like, younger, and I like realized that I was like, attracted to women. I remember feeling security in the fact that I was like, Well, I don't have to be with them. Like, I can feel attracted to them as long as like, I still end up marrying a man like, even if I like women, I can always just like, ignore that and go for a man. Yeah, and so like, I think when I realized that I didn't like that I didn't like men. It was it was like scary in some regards. But it was also kind of freeing, I think, to like, it's like, you're like trying to put like a square peg in a round hole. And then you finally like, Stop doing that. So yeah, I don't know, like, it was like, relieving to some degree to not keep trying to, like, make up things to like, tell myself. Like, I didn't know that was part of why I was ending up in like, the queer discourse on Tumblr was like, trying to search for a label. Because that was around the time people were using, like labels for the most like minutiae of like every experience ever. And there was like a new sexuality

for like, everything. And I remember like really leaning into those things, because I was searching for any way to avoid calling myself a lesbian.

41:58

Where I was like, No, I'm like, into, I don't remember what like actually, and romantically attracted to women, but like, I would never be in like a relationship with one. Like, those are different things. Yeah,

42:20

and I think it was like, once I realized that, like, once I when I stopped thinking about like, because it was a given that I understood that I was attracted to women. And so the question then was, like, am I?

42:41

Can you repeat the last part? Yeah, sorry. said that, like, I knew I was attracted to women. So that wasn't really in question anymore. It was kind of like in question of like, one, like, what am I going to do about this? If anything into like, if I'm only attracted to women, then like, that opens up a new can of worms. Like if I don't know, like, had a choice in the matter.

Olivia N 43:10

So can you talk a little bit about if you believe in coming out? And if you've come out multiple times before? And does the phrase coming into your identity resonate with you more?

43:23

I'm sure it's a belief and coming out, like, I don't know, I use obviously, we live in like a society where, like, being the majority of people are streaming this. So I don't know that I, I don't think you should have to come out. Obviously, I think that it's a very personal thing. But I also understand the like, the the affirmation that can come with it, I guess. Like, I think in some ways, it's like, it's symbolic more than anything else. And that, like, you're opening a door into the rest of your life. And so I think, like, in a lot of ways, it can be very powerful. But I like also, I don't know, like I was just thinking about back in like, 2012 YouTube, when everyone posts like, they're like coming out videos. I remember watching engrade Nielsen's video that was called I'm gay, and like her red lipstick in the cover. And I'm really that was like one of the first ones that I'd seen. And yeah, like, I remember being like, on the edge of my seat watching that. And like, to that degree, I remember thinking like, Wow, it's so powerful to like, say this. But now, honestly, I think I think coming out only really made me I don't know if it's gonna take, I don't think it really matters for anyone who's not a public figure. Because when you're a public figure, it makes sense to do that. Especially if you've been like previously perceived as being streamed. If you been in relationships that are like straight presencing. Although obviously, it's like no one owes you their sexuality. But I think like, it makes more sense to me to come out in that respect. Like if you are coming out and you're like, oh, I want to inspire people bla bla, then an individual level. That means that like, I came out to my family. But and that was I think, like, I don't know, thinking about this, I think that. Okay, as far as coming out, I think that on a personal level, I understand. And I don't understand that public coming out unless you're a public figure. Because I used to think of it all the time about like, when I would like, make like an Instagram posting, I was gay. And then I was like, Oh, I don't have to do that. Like, I am just like a person. And I can just like, exist as a person. Um, but yeah, I came up to my siblings. A couple of years ago now. Um, it went very mediocre. And then it came out to my mom,

like, a couple of months ago. And that one was like, rough for my siblings was like, fine. It was like, whatever. They didn't give me like any reaction and I wanted like a positive one. And they were like, Okay. Message. But, um, and then I gave it to my mom when she was like, a lot harder and a lot more complex. I wrote a play about two lesbians. And then my mom came to see the play, because she was like, Oh, my God, my daughter's first play. And so I was like, well thought, can I have to tell her what it's about? So I wrote her like a letter before and I came up to her and I told her I'm like, Well, in this plays about lesbians. So like, surprise into I'm a lesbian. So like, surprise. Um, yeah, I know, it was like is, it's kind of funny in hindsight. Like, in the moment, it was like a lot. Like it was a lot. But in hindsight, what's funny is I wrote this letter for my mom. And I was like, super duper nervous, because I knew she was coming out horrible. I was obviously just hurt. I show up at her hotel, and then she like, opens the door, and I am so nervous. Like, I literally stopped outside the hotel is like doing breathing exercises to calm myself down. I go up there, and then like, I knock and she's like, grinning at me. And I'm like, the fuck is she smiling about, then I walk. And like, to the side, and like, she steps aside, and both my siblings are there, because they also flew out to like, surprise me to come and see my play, which is very sweet. But also, my mom had just read this letter of me coming out while they were sitting in the room, because they were all waiting for me.

47:55

So like, it is, it's, I can laugh about it now. But in the moment, I was like, What the fuck is going on? Um, yeah, in hindsight, though, I do think that that was like the best case scenario because they were there to kind of like, they already knew. So they could be like, they're, they'll kind of like, soften whatever responses she was gonna have, so that she could have like, an appropriate one to talk to me. Um, but it is very funny in hindsight, because, like, I just keep an eye on getting her reading the letter and then like, sitting, like, in like, the couches in the hotel room, like, should we go or? Um, so yeah, I've come up more than once. Um, when I came to NYU, and my big things was, I was like, because I was not out in the high school. And I wanted to be able to, like, be gay in public at NYU. And I was like, I'm moving so far from this from my home. I don't know anyone here. It's like, it was very freeing to be able to just like, come out from the jump, and then I wouldn't have to come out to people. Because I just like everyone who met me, like, knew I was gay. Which was very nice and very, like, freeing. I really appreciated that and I was able to use as like, my time here to like, get comfortable with that identity. And like meet other people that identity because I was in such a big city. I don't know I don't think you ever stopped coming up because like, obviously, and like the little ways of like, when I meet people at a party, and I mentioned in passing that I'm a lesbian that is like coming out. But as far as like the big ones that are like emotional and stuff. Like I think you come out as many times as you want to. Because I think like like, I think that I've expended the emotional energy that I have. Only coming out to my mom and anyone else. It's like, I mean, if I got through coming up to my mom, I think I can get through whatever else

50:00

Didn't your mom take it? She was very surprised.

50:03

She's like, still in the current, like denial phase. Um, but I, like have faith, she'll come around eventually. I think, like, I was never worried that she like, wouldn't love me or anything like that, which I feel very

lucky for. And she even said after she read it, she was like, I hope you don't think that like makes me love you any less. And which was like, obviously very sweet to hear. But it was still like, because it's like, I think our parents have like, a image and a vision for your lives. And coming out upsets that even like, if you have the most woke parents ever coming out does upset that in some ways, and I don't have the most woke parents ever. So I think like, um, yeah, I don't know, she like struggled with it. She was like, I because my mom was like, the kind of kind of Christian who believes that being gay isn't a choice, but you have a choice on whether or not you can act, you act on it. So she was like, I believe you that you like women, like exclusively, but I think that you should open yourself up to the idea of like, dating or marrying a man. And I was like, on. Um, I'm not. But you know, I think it's fresh ish for her. And we're still like, closed and we still talk and like, like, most days, just like not about that.

Olivia N 51:27

So can you talk about if your views on marriage have changed before and after you identified as a lesbian?

51:37

I'm not quite I have like, always wanted to get married. And honestly, I think it used to scare me before I mean, I this lesbian because it was like, like something that I knew I would have to do. But I didn't want to because I was like imagining marrying a man and like it scared me. And I think like for a while. It scared me a lot. Because I think like to some degree like weddings freaked me out more than like the idea of marriage. Like I love the idea of being married but having a wedding with terrifies me. And I think that's definitely because of being queer, at least to some degree. I Nigerian culture and like EBO culture, a big thing. It's like you have your traditional wedding and like, like, go back to Nigeria, and you have it. And so I was always like, anxious about that like, period, because it was just kind of like a lot. And then I was extra anxious because I was like, well, they're not gonna let me do it if I'm a lesbian. Which was like, interesting, because it was kind of like, relieving, because I didn't want to do it. But then like, sad because of the reason that I would like, not wanting to do something is different from not being allowed to do something. But yeah, I don't know. Like, I think what I imagined for my views on marriage didn't really change. But I think what I imagined for myself is changed. They use think about like, how you probably end up having like a big wedding because I have a big family and that they would all want to be there, etc, etc. And now I'm like, I will probably have a fairly small wedding. Which I think is okay, because it's about being married.

Olivia N 53:20

So have clothing, like makeup, tattoos, piercings, or other body mods assisted with affirming your identity or your lesbianism in any way?

53:30

I'd say. So I think like, like, every time I get a tattoo, I feel like I look more like myself. I yeah, I don't know. I like always wanted tattoos and piercings when I was younger. I remember because I grew up in New Jersey a little bit. All like the moms having nose rings. And I was like, Okay, well, like I'm obsessed with this. And I got my nose during when I was like, when I think when he turned 20 or something like that. Or 19 I got the nose ring. And when I got my septum pierced, like, middle of the pandemic. And then I started getting tattoos when I turned 20 And yeah, I don't know I like I love to like look at myself

in the mirror with it and I like may think it does some something to distinguish yourself from like my child self, kind of in line with what I was saying before about like about wanting to look cool to my 13 year old self. Like when I looked at myself in the mirror and I see like, with like tattoos and piercings and I'm like, Oh yeah, like 13 year old money could see me and be like, Oh, she's so cool. And also like, would be so surprised at the life that I'm living.

Olivia N 54:49

What about art, like have any forms of like movies or films or TV shows or other art helped you with your You're lesbianism? And this is the two part question where you can talk about the art making process. And then maybe art in media you've consumed?

55:09

Yeah, I um so as far as like, media and stuff I consume, I think, yes, like, seeing things that like, reflect my experience or are similar to my experience in any way have always been helpful. I'm trying to think of like some specific things that I've seen in recent years reading, like anything by like Audrey Lorde. And Bell Hooks has been kind of a very inspiring, I'm been reading a lot about, like, different views on queerness. And like, I don't know, the definition of it. And I think thinking about like, queer theory has been, like learning about queer theory has been very helpful as I've gotten older. And like, understanding my identity, and I think that like, understanding things, helps you move past like, no intellectualizing. It has been helpful in some ways to like, move past from the amorphous, like, what am I what is going on? But I think in terms of in terms of like creating art. Yeah, I think that the process has been helpful, in some ways, because it's like putting words to experiences. And I've always felt very grounded and like being able to write things. Like in the play that I wrote, before coming out to my mom, I think that a lot of things in it, like, the abuse is pretty personal. And a lot of ways because I think in like the impersonal, like, a lot of just like, having an experience that is very uniquely gay, and like, being able to express that and have other people like resonate with it. I think that the community found in creation is also very helpful. Not like I create things like sometimes for myself, but also to share and seeing who it resonates with when they share it is also helpful.

Olivia N 57:16

So now, we're going to talk a little bit about lesbian sex. So what were your first encounters with lesbian sex? Like directly and then indirectly as well?

57:26

What do you mean indirectly or directly?

Olivia N 57:28

Indirectly would be porn? Thoughts about lesbian sex that you like heard? Maybe, like understandings of lesbian sex, and then directly would be you having like, lesbian sex or queer sex?

57:44

Yeah, okay. indirectly. I don't know. That's probably like Natalie Portman and Mila Kunis and Black Swan. Um, and then like porn. And I think directly, um, what year was this? Summer, like, sophomore

year of college. Like a girl I met at a party that like made out with and then later, we hung out, and I ended up having sex with her. And then I wrote a poem about it.

58:18

And it's funny, because we're still friends. Like now, like, We just hung out, like a few days ago. But that was like, the first time and I remember. Um, I mean, the way this kind of relates to the art thing, but the musical Fun Home, you know, that musical Erwinia changing my major song about like, what she has sex with the girl for the first time. And I think part of me want to do it just because I was like, I want to do it. Like just to, like, have the experience and the part of it was like, in the moment, blah, blah, blah. But I think somebody might like that song. Like, does really, it didn't really resonate. I think, like, every song in Fun Home like resonates so deeply to me. And like, as I'm like, living my life as a lesbian, and I get to, like, check off another box from been home, or like, things resonate in like a different way. And I'm like, Man, that's crazy. Like, I don't know, like, lesbian aren't speaking to lesbian life. So

Olivia N 59:22

how old were you when you first saw lesbian

59:24

porn? Like, two young? Like, probably like, like, 11 or something? How did you find it? I don't even remember. I feel like I think I just like I'm trying to remember. Because I think I like was exposed to porn or like a young age, like late I think I literally Googled sex one time and like,

59:46

Oh, yeah. Um,

59:51

but yeah, and then when I as I got like, older I remember like watching lesbian porn, because I felt like it was better than me like being a lesbian in real life. then I would feel so guilty about it. Like, whenever I would watch it, I would like pray afterwards and like ask God for forgiveness for watching lesbian porn. But like, I would do it again. Um, but yeah, I think like, and it was all like, main stream like, like, like Pornhub style porn, like it wasn't ever like, in the amateur like people actually in love. I do remember though, when to remember when this was. But I remember one time when I was watching porn and I found this video and it was like these two women who were like, I've actually lesbians in love. And like, actually like having a moment. Because I remember like watching it. And like, being like, oh my god, this is like, so beautiful. And like, I don't know, like even now and I think like after, like having had sex. Now, like, that's like, the closest thing I've ever seen anything to like the weebill as being sex, like, actually, it's like, it was just something that was so intimate to the point where I was like, I feel like I shouldn't be watching this. So can you talk?

Olivia N 1:01:16

We're gonna talk a little bit now about, like, stretch. Okay, he's a little bit now about your influences and like, lesbianism and different aspects of your identity. So can you talk about how race informs your interactions with lesbian community? And if you have an understanding of how race informs your

gender? Race? You don't have to answer that part. I think a race impacts your gender instead of informed.

1:01:52

I think like race impacts and forms like, all these things, like just because it's kind of inseparable from who I am. So it's always my interactions with people and things. I think, as far as like, it's kind of in line with the media thing that we were talking about. But how many, like the mainstream lesbians are all like, lighter, or white, or American or British, like they're never like, I didn't see like queer people who like looked like Mira had similar experiences to me. And I think like, what we see obviously reflects what we experience and stuff. So what we see in the media is honestly reflected in like, real life, and I think coming to New York. Yeah, I know, like, I came here, and I was like, Okay, I'm going to be like, gay, like, in real life. Now. I'm going to like bars. And like, they only talk to, like white lesbians only talk to other white lesbian. Or when you go to like, the lesbian bars, period, and there's like, three black people there. Excuse me. Um, so I guess in that way, it was like, I think I'm secure enough now where it doesn't, like, bother me. Like, it doesn't like, like, I'm not like terribly, like, hurt by these things. But I guess adds like a some sort of weariness, because like, you don't feel like has seen as you could do. So,

Olivia N 1:03:25

can you talk about how being neurodivergent informs your interactions with lesbian community?

1:03:32

Um, I don't know. I don't know that how it does. I think a lot of my experiences, like, I would say, like, I've only been like, like an outlet fan since I was like, since I moved to New York, like four years ago. And in that time, I've also been like, I feel like all of my friends and people I interact with are neurodivergent. So I don't know what like a non neurodivergent lesbian community looks like because all the lesbian saying that we're also narrative

Olivia N 1:04:08

I can give some examples maybe. Yeah. So sometimes, it depends on how you view it. So you have like you would say that in your community, your lesbian community is a neurodivergent community and you don't know how you guys operate. You don't know how to operate any differently to your like, neurodiverse lesbian community. Um, you can maybe some people have been talking about sensory issues about going into bars and going out to nightclubs, talking about issues, maintaining connections. Dealing with like mental illness. Yeah, those kinds of questions.

1:04:42

Yeah, um, yeah, I think when like, I don't like nightclubs. I feel like I keep meeting people who don't love nightlife. Which is interesting because of how like tethered it seems to be to the queer community and the queer experience, but it is like isolated from Especially like can't handle being there. I think that the the way if you want my life was linked to both race and narrative or, or divergence and that like, I feel like uncomfortable being with the only black person at the bar. And then also it's overstimulating. Yeah, as far as like communication and thing, I think I have a hard time with like rejection sensitivity and with I don't know, like impulse control and like emotional regulation. And so those are things that are hard and

like starting out relationships. Yeah, no, I, I'm a very like all or nothing kind of person. And jumping into things headfirst at a time when like, it might be easier to like, ease your way into things as fucked up some of my relationships. Or, like, vice versa, where I'm like, moving like very, very slow. Because of other things going on. I don't know, just like little things. I don't think it's like, I think it like impacts my interactions in some ways, obviously. Um, but I do feel like lucky to know a lot of neurodivergent love bands.

Olivia N 1:06:16

Did you guys find each other?

1:06:19

Um, I think it's like, I just like meet people. And then later I find out that they're lesbians. Because I think we just like attract each other. Like, what am I like, really close friends we met during like, our first week at NYU, because we were neighbors. We didn't actually meet because we were neighbors. We met someone else introduced us. And then we realized that we were literally next door neighbors in our dorm. But yeah, and then like, she came out to me as a lesbian at the end of that year, which is very sweet. Yeah, I think like most of the lesbians that I've met, have been just either randomly, like at parties or things like that.

1:06:57

And on Tinder and then, like a lot of them ended up being my friends after we went on a date.

Olivia N 1:07:06

So can you talk a little bit about gender and how gender how your gender identity informs your interactions with lesbian community and what it's like being a non binary lesbian?

1:07:17

Um I think in New York, it doesn't do that much mix. I think like a lot of people I meet are more understanding. To some degree. I think it's like, a little awkward, I guess, like saying pronouns. Like, I think that's like, the biggest thing to me is like, in some spaces, like if I asked you what their pronouns and they look at me, they like, do like a double take. And I'm like, oh, sorry, I was trying to be respectful. That and I think also and like, I think it's nice to have conversations about like these things with people. And I think to some degree, it's like, when you like, if I say, Oh, I use they them pronouns. And then like, someone, like, kind of makes a face and I'm like, okay. But anything like for the most part, I feel like I'm trying to think of like, I think, to some degree, like gender non conforming, and these are ignored within the lesbian community. Anything in the sense that a lot of people don't. I think a lot of people don't like respect these identities. Like I think to some degree, a lot of times if you meet someone and you say something like that, they're just like, Okay, well, you just want to be special by like saying this, rather than like, it actually like the words that you use reflecting the trueness or the fullness of your experience.

Olivia N 1:08:55

So does your Can you talk about maybe your immigrant status, your former immigrant status or the immigrant status of your loved ones and how it affects your abilities to develop or engage with lesbian community in any way?

1:09:08

Yeah, I am. I was born in the States. Both my parents are citizens. They emigrated in like, the late 80s, early 90s. And I think some new grades just like I didn't know anything about like, where people growing up because I just like did not talk about it. And my household. You Yeah, and so I like didn't know about queer people or anything like that. But I also didn't know anything about like, like, I never, I didn't know any queer Nigerians, which was like, something that I've been thinking about a lot recently and trying to like, find queer Africans to like, community with but I think that having both of my parents being immigrants did impact me and not like I don't know if similar to how it impacts like other aspects of my life in that, like, I do feel different for being an immigrant. And it's, I feel like you don't hear as much about queer immigrants or queer, like children of immigrants or anything like that, because those, I think that think for like an immigrant parent, you're already up against so many things when you enter a new country, that you don't want another thing to make you look different. And so I think that like having, like any variance in your gender, or sexuality, or like, anything like that, seem is discouraged by immigrant parents because it feels like another target. And so like, to that degree, I understand it, but it also did, like, I think about my ability to like, engage with my own lesbianism and also in communities lesbians, because I didn't want that to like, in some way, reflect on my parents.

Olivia N 1:11:10

So have you ever felt any isolation or disconnection from the broader queer community? And be queer spaces that aren't lesbian? Or maybe sis spaces or spaces with lots of white clears or white lesbian? Yeah.

1:11:31

I think I'm, like all of the above, I think, being in like, non lesbian spaces, like, a lot of times, it's, I don't know, I think it's because sometimes when you like when you go out, like, it's like, what the function of going out is for you. Sometimes it's like, oh, I want to go and like flirt with people, but there's like, no women who like women there because we're going to this place and it's like, only white gay man. And like, even, like, like I mentioned earlier, like at the lesbian bars, them being mostly white. And like, noting that like, and a lot of these places, the white people will only speak to other white people. And so you feel very isolated as like a black person in that crowd. So yeah, I guess those are some ways I've felt or experienced isolation.

Olivia N 1:12:24

So what is your lesbian community? Like?

1:12:29

Um, what is my lesbian community?

Olivia N 1:12:35

Who's in it? What do you guys do? How did you find each other?

1:12:40

I wouldn't say it that big of a lesbian community, to be honest. Doesn't have to be huge. I think that I all bloodstream say, now I've met and like, pretty organic ways. And I feel like we all like met. And then we realized that we were both less that we were all like, I don't think that we like, we didn't like me and like a lesbian space or anything like that. Yeah, like, um, a lot of a few of my close friends are like my friend that I met at church camp, who's a lesbian? bunch of my friends at NYU, are if not lesbians, they're like queer women. I was always talking. I was realizing that like, a lot of them are queer women, but I feel like only like a handful are lesbians, which is interesting. Yeah, like people I met in classes at NYU. And it looked like mostly it. It's like people I met at NYU, either classes or just like hanging out and like common spaces, etc.

Olivia N 1:13:36

What do you guys do for fun?

1:13:40

We hang out, we watch movies, we smoke weed in the park, and we talk. My friend always likes to joke about how like, our lives are like the L word because all the lesbians are like linked by like a couple of degrees of separation. Yeah. So yeah, I don't know. We just kind of like hanging out. My friend and I went to this L word screening at Henrietta Hudson. And I heard about that funding because we got there and then we ran into like another lesbian that I know. Who like hadn't met my friend who'd met like the friend that I was with like, one other time before, like another lesbian event that I invited them both to

1:14:21

so that was kind of funny. Let's be an event.

1:14:25

Actually not even a lesbian event. The other one was literally like I think Lucy Dacres concert so it was a lesbian event. A lesbian?

Olivia N 1:14:35

I know what you mean.

1:14:38

Um, but yeah, so yeah, we go to concerts together. And that's mainly it like I think like most of what we do is like, go to little events, take each other on like little dates and smoke a lot of weed. So

Olivia N 1:14:59

what was your first visit like to a lesbian related place or event?

1:15:05

Um that's really related place I guess like my first like to like a place that's like designated as such because I went to Henrietta Hudson for my 21st birthday. Um, and I'm not expected I expected it to be

like, I don't know, just like lesbian heaven. And it was not quite lesbian happen, but I did have fun. I one thing that was very sweet that I remember it was the bartender, not the bartenders the bouncers were these two like butch lesbians that night, and they were married. And they told me that and I started crying.

Olivia N 1:15:51

I was sorry. God, if you're like Jesus Christ, not again.

1:15:59

Um, but they mentioned. They mentioned how like, her daughter went to college, and like Philadelphia, it was your daughter. And I was like, yeah, that's my wife over there. And I'm like, your way. And they called us out. They were gonna like, they were planning to throw like graduation party for their daughter at Henrietta's. And they were like, gonna rent out the space for a night. And I thought that was so sweet. And every time I see like, middle aged lesbians, I get like, very emotional. So I did cry. I went to cubby hole for the first time, like, in like December. And there were two there was like a middle aged butch lesbian, like standing near a table and I started to cry. It's not even nice. I was just talking to a friend and I was like,

Olivia N 1:16:51

terrorizing all these elders with your tears.

1:16:55

Yeah, truly.

1:17:02

I don't think yeah, I guess that's like, it fit my expectations. Who would agree? Like I don't know, like, what I necessarily expected. Like, I remember, like, in the bar, like a lot of people were dancing. I remember seeing like, these two really tall girls who were like making out like, all night, but they were both like really tall. So they were like ahead above like everyone else that you could like, see them from like, anywhere in the room. And I was like, I feel like dirty for like the fact that I keep seeing them. Like, I'm not trying to stare but you guys are very visible.

1:17:35

Which is, I think kind of what I expected. But yeah, we had a good time. Um, they played like Paramore.

1:17:44

I remember there was like, there was like a guy, DJ who wasn't that good. And like, the music was like, whatever. And then they got rid of him. And they brought in this like, this, like, lesbian like capital owl, like. And she had like really short hair, just like a dyke. And then she started DJing. And everyone is having a great time. Good. So,

Olivia N 1:18:07

what does identifying as a lesbian mean to you?

1:18:12

Um, to me, it means that like, I'm not attracted to men. I, I think, I think especially like, when I think about the fluidity of gender, I like, because I'm attractive to like to women and like, just not men. And I think like, that's kind of what the identity means to me. Um, um, some ways I always like, I feel like my gender is also a lesbian. Because I feel like it's very much like, linked to, because it's the way they think it's a Judith Butler, who's like, gender is a performance. And like, my performance of gender is linked to my attraction to women, I think. Yeah. So

Olivia N 1:19:04

what does lesbian community mean to you? Like, what does it mean to have a community of lesbians that you can rely on? And no, I'm, um, I mean,

1:19:18

I don't know because I wouldn't. Like as I'm talking, I feel like I don't have like really that much of a lesbian community. And I think like, I don't know, the way that I would describe it is kind of, like you said, like, a group of people that you know, and I think it's like, when you really on that aspect of your identity. I think especially in a world and in a society where it's like, being lesbian. It's like shunned and a lot of ways. It's meaningful to have a girl who understand specifically what you're experiencing, or what your identity is and all that, like, related

Olivia N 1:20:00

So when you're making friends and seeking out community, do you intentionally look for lesbians? Or?

1:20:06

Um, I don't? I don't think so. I literally didn't use do I do kind of now because I like, I think now I am a little bit pickier about like, who I'm friends with, like how I find community because like, I have kind of a core group of friends. entitled, like, I'm like, explicitly like searching for lesbians. But I think I am explicitly searching for queer

Olivia N 1:20:32

people. So what lesbian spaces do you wish existed? Um

1:20:44

Do I wish existed?

1:20:52

I

1:20:59

don't know. I'm like, I was like, I'm feeling I feel like I wish spaces like, like, I think a lot of the places that I like wish existed do exist, I'm just not in them.

Olivia N 1:21:11

But like, are you not in them?

1:21:13

I'm like, not like looking for them. Because I think like, as far as like, space I wish existed, I wish there were places for like black lesbians, which like, should exist, or just not like as prevalent spaces for white lesbians. Or like places that are like, toward it is touted as like neutral, but are really just based for white lesbian. I'm similarly like, places that don't rely on like substances and drinking and partying for you to be there. I know there's people talking about like queer cafes, and like they do exist. But like, I don't know, I think things like that, like, more than like, one queer Cafe per state

1:21:57

would be nice. Yeah, I don't know, like places like that, where it's like,

1:22:03

there's this coffee shop My sister told me about in Miami, where like, they'll things like you're not supposed to use any electronics inside so that you talk to people. And I feel like something like that, for like queer for like lesbian would be so nice. Or like you walk in there and like, you just like, get to talk to people.

Olivia N 1:22:25

So when are you happiest? As a lesbian? What does lesbian Joy mean to you?

1:22:31

I'm happiest as a lesbian. I think when I'm hanging out with other lesbians. And like, I watched Excuse me. I watched the movie crush with my friend with like Rowan Blanchard and Ollie Cabo. And I think that was the entirety of watching that movie. It was like lesbian joy for us. It was me and my and one of my other lesbian friends. And we watched it and we were having like a ball watching that movie. And I think like a banjo is like, almost like when we were like both I think it's because this is a movie like about queer people made clearly by queer people. And so we're watching this movie about like lesbians and we're making all these like little like inside lesbian jokes and it was like it was very cute to like feel like we got like our like the corny like teen rom com that I wish I had when I was like 15 and to get it done and also feeling like affirmed and aspects of like being a lesbian because it was like it was so nice because it wasn't a story about coming out.

Olivia N 1:23:44

So is there anything else you want to talk about before we stop the recording?

1:23:50

I'm not on the top of my head. Well, thank you. Thank you glad to be a part of this. As far as the things I'm turning in, I have like