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SPEAKERS

Olivia N

Olivia N 00:03

Today is January 8 2023. I'm Olivia Newsome interviewing Zoey virtually on Zoom. Do I have permission to record this interview? Yes, you do. Do you know you can stop recording at any time? Can you state your name, age and pronouns?

00:21

My name is Marie Medallia. I am 22 years old and my pronouns are she Bay.

Olivia N 00:28

How would you describe yourself?

00:31

I would describe myself as a people person of people love her. I have the gift of gab. And I love it. I am a big sister, and oh, man, I just I'm excited to be here. And like be a person and know what that feels like. And again, experience it in its entirety. Yeah, yeah.

Olivia N 01:06

Can you tell me where you're from? Where you grew up in what your childhood was, like? You mentioned being raised by young parents?

01:12

Oh, yeah. I grew up in a myriad of places. I was born in Queens, and was pretty much grew up on Long Island between a few different households. My parents were 17 when they had me, and they were both like, these non Confirmative 90s punks that just said, Fuck it. Let's like we're gonna have a kid. And I grew up between South Hampstead in Long Island, South Jamaica, Queens, and rockville Center, which are all very like different places, just between my grandparents and great grandparents houses. Yeah, it was an incredibly impactful childhood. When you grow up with your parents.

Olivia N 02:17

Can you talk about what it was like living with your grandparents or different grandparents and moving between houses? And why are you doing that?

02:25

Yeah, um, so because my parents were so young, obviously, they did not have much of their life together. And it was very important that I had more of a communal upbringing, it was necessary. It really didn't take a village to raise me. And I had, yeah, my mom and my dad who were going through college and going to school. It was a goal that they both had, that they accomplished, and which meant that my mom's side of the family and my father's side of the family really stepped up into doing everything that they could in order to make sure that I had a roof over my head. So my mom's side of the family is Colombian and my dad's side of the family is Italian. And Deadside was very warm, very family oriented. Not a lot of conflict. Very easy to be around, I think. And my mom's side of the family. It was like sparks flying are very loud, and very excited people and very opinionated. And like never, there was never enough food you can never it was just getting to grow up with them. Yeah, great grandparents was really cool. Because, you know, there were not a lot of people get to say that they do. So getting to, you know, meet them and hear their voice and like, how they thought they were relative. They were pretty conservative. They were like Roman Catholics from Columbia. So it was like they were not the type to. I mean, they were part of the reason why it was born because they didn't believe in abortion. So yeah, like, and then, I don't know, there are a lot of sacrifices in the human. They made it work.

Olivia N 04:35

What's it like being the eldest sibling um I think

04:47

it's often unnoticed, often unnoticed. I have a tattoo of a big sister, crying over three Kewpie baby heads. cuz I don't know, being me, I think especially being the oldest, oldest daughter holds a bigger weight, especially in my mom's family, because she was also an eldest daughter. My grandmother was also an eldest daughter. And, you know, we all just kind of had to play a role that none of us really asked to play by any means. Whenever somebody asked me about, I like to say that it's like microdosing motherhood. Because, I mean, you quite literally are now taking care of children that you really had no say in. But that you do love with everything in you. And like, I have so much of them have become my identity, regarding who I am, and my place in the world is a big part of it is because I want to make sure that they're, that they're good. And that like you. I want to be the person for you that I didn't have when I was a kid, then that might look different for each of you. But I'm going to do my best to do it. Yeah, it's unforgiving. There's never silence, there's never silence, there's always somebody to clean, there's always a little person banging on the door, you don't get space. I'm lucky that I get to leave my house. Like without whenever I want to, which is nice about them not being my actual kids. But so there's a lot of like, guilt that almost comes with it too.

06:45

Because it's your,

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you don't want to like let your parents down by living your own life. Or you become so used to putting another person obviously, before you. It's like even thinking about this next year and moving on. The idea of moving out of my house and not being able to be with my siblings, like, scares me and like, yeah, it just makes me feel guilty. But that's yeah, so being an older sister is like for me.

Olivia N 07:24

You mentioned briefly, you hinted at gender norms. When you talked about coming from a long line of eldest granddaughter, eldest daughters. Can you talk about the influence of gender norms on your life? Oh, my

07:39

God, I can? Absolutely. I think that from both sides of my family, both my mother and my father's they were

07:53

both Brelade tively, conservative in terms of gender expression, and gender roles. They were always, at least my dad's side was always very, like, open minded. But, um, the way that it existed in the household was still, you know, this is what boys like, and this is how they dress. This is what girls are, and this is what they do, and this is how they act. But I would say a lot more of the conformity in the way that I was affected by it came from my mother's side of the family where it was, you know, women are expected to show up for the family to sacrifice themselves to not wear shorts around the house, you know, to make sure that you're covered at any given point in time. That yeah, you just it was sometimes it less about presentation, because they let me cut my hair really short when I was young, and let me die it and that was definitely my mom, like, not my grandma in the slightest. But like, I think that it was just the expectation of what it means to be. Yeah, to be a woman to be an oldest daughter to be a mom is just a really heavy weight, a really heavy weight of what the pressure of being a woman in that household was just the pressure of being, I don't know, subservient, like but at the same time dominant. So it was a very, like, conflicting message of being this like strong, independent woman who doesn't need anybody. While at the same time watching your mother and grandmother be treated the way that they are by the men in the household. Being told, you know, you have to cover up that you can't be comfortable in your own house like

09:57

it was just just confusing. Well, fucking confusing. Like, which one do you want? Yeah, which one do you want? What do you what do you want to get? And most of the time

10:16

the actions went against actions when again against words a lot, but it was like

10:27

I don't know, maybe we're expected to be like the soft and sweet subservient person and to be nice I think to be nice was a big one was just like be a nice good girl. And like getting out of being a nice good girl in early adulthood that's it's crazy

10:56

yeah, but that's it

Olivia N 11:03

What was it like growing up Latin a you mentioned growing up knowing your mom's side of the family, knowing your Colombian side, can you talk about that

11:17

it was really exciting for me as a kid. Like, it was always something that I took a lot of pride in. A lot of pride, like I saw, my grandmother is just like this. This woman who like she just shouldn't take shit from anybody. Like she really like she did not take shit from anybody yet. You know, had the absolute softest touch when she rubbed your back at night. And she was so she is she still alive? But she is so I think that she's a good definition of, of love. And just like the way that she communicates is, she'll scream at you with love, which is one of the most, you know, as a kid, it's confusing. And when you grow up, you understand like, why, you know, you may be the way that you are because that's how you were spoken to and so on so forth. But um you know, I had a lot of pride in in being Colombian as a child I had a lot of pride in you know, just waking up with my grandmother on Sunday morning and you know, we'd clean the house together and we'd make breakfast and we would, you know, leave telenovelas on the TV in the background and just come back to it. I had no idea what the fuck was going on at any point. But I loved every second of it. Like

12:54

I always felt I always felt valid, like in my household, like, it was just like, no, like, This is who you are. This is what we are. This is wonderful. And like my grandmother, so desperately wanted to teach me Spanish, which is something that is new year's resolution this year. Because, you know, my mom thought it would delay my English and I am the one of the only ones in my family who cannot speak. Which sucks. Because it's such a disconnect from culture and from from where your family is. But no, I don't I think it felt more tangible when I was younger. Because I was living with the source. Yeah. My grandmother was the life of the house. She was the heart of the house. So when I'm with her, I feel the closest to myself. Because of her, and just like, you know, she's like a matriarch like she just make did everything that she set out to do. And I really am proud to be her granddaughter.

Olivia N 14:24

Living with both your grandparents and being in like a house that has well for kids now, but can you talk about how class influenced you growing up?

14:40

I mean, I think that when I reflect on the ways now, that class impacted my childhood, I think that honestly, it was I think that when I was a kid, I felt a lot more isolated. Did at certain points are really when I was like a preteen or teenager, because I lived right next to a rich town. So I went to like the rich town high school, but I didn't live in the rich town. And so I was really angry at my environment most of the time because I was constantly surrounded by kids who got to enjoy themselves, and got to go to like, I don't fucking know, football games and shit. Like they I don't know, they like they just like, but um, you know, I was I started I started working from the time that I was 14

15:51

Almost, I'd say a solid,

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at least 30 hours, like on top of school. Because I didn't want to be home and I had to. Yeah, I had to do that a lot for myself. I didn't have to pay rent when I was a fucking kid. But um, I think the money was always just a focal point. And it was always a cause for concern.

Olivia N 16:20

did the money go to the household? Or was it mostly your money?

16:25

Um, it was split some weeks I was you know, helping out with groceries are diapers. And I mean, other weeks, I had more disposable income just to get me to and from places or make sure that I have my own food. But I was always in charge of my own necessities shampoo, conditioner. We need soap we need things like that, like that was me. And yeah, no, it's just when I was a kid, like it was everybody lived pretty much in one, a one floor house and a basement. And it was like, We all had our own little like, different realities while we were there. But mine was being kind of in and out of, I was always all over the place. Like there there really was never a stable spot until I mean this these past few years. I've been really grateful for it. But I, we lived with my grandmother primarily ended up living with my dad for a little bit. My mom got remarried at some point and then we got kicked out of the house. So we ended up moving back into my grandmother's basement. And we shared a bed with each other for almost all of middle school and like in early high school. So I need

Olivia N 17:58

all of you like all the all your siblings, my mom, just me okay, this you and your mom, okay.

18:04

For my sister was born. Okay, but she was born shortly. Um, but yeah, I mean, like, even that, like, there just wasn't. Anytime I want to have a sleepover with moms joining like, she's, she's one of the girls. But, ya know, we didn't have food on the table, and that was the priority phone table over from the head. Anything else was a want. It was and then even even sometimes. We didn't know if we would make the need or would really have to, like, start borrowing money from people or doing some weird shit. Like somehow it always eventually came. But you know, it was at the expense of, you know, working. You my grandmother working three jobs, my mom doing whatever she can when she can. I took it on like it was just, it was all of us. You know? I just I remember when I was a kid. I was so excited to turn 14 so that I could start working because I did I hated I hated seeing them as stresses. They were like taking care of me. I'm sorry, I just decided to take care of myself and then some. So

Olivia N 19:48

you mentioned working a 30 hour week while being like a full time middle schooler. And

19:54

oh my god. Yeah, no, I was um, I was in ninth grade. So I was in high school. But um, yeah, like at first I was just like working Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and then very quickly. I loved making money. I love making money, I love not being home. I loved being able, and I mean, when I was 15 was when my sister was born. So at that point, I was working for like a year, year and a half. You know, I was just like, excited to be a big sister. And I was happy to contribute when, when I needed to. But yeah, I was working a shit ton when I was really young. And because I knew that, for the first two years of high school would be easy. Like, I was kind of one of those students that like, I could get by pretty well, without studying. And I knew that I'd be able to do that for my freshman and sophomore year of high school. So it was like, Okay, I'm just gonna, like, crank this shit out, work as much as I can get as good of grades as I can to get my GPA up. Because I know that by the time junior and senior year come, I am not going to accept. And I knew that about myself. And so, um, I was right. And pretty much junior and senior year came around, then I just like, almost gave up on school completely. And just worked as much as I could. But all my teachers knew, like my school kind of knew what my situation was, and what was going on and in, my dad just always told me befriend your teachers because they don't want to fail a student they like.

Olivia N 21:54

That's true. So you work during the day.

21:57

I worked at night, so I'd go to school from I guess, like, what's six 7am until two or three? And then I would work anywhere from three or four to about 10 or 11pm.

Olivia N 22:14

What kind of work were you doing? Scraping

22:17

ice cream store?

Olivia N 22:19

Okay. Food Service? Um, yeah, food

22:22

service, and have been in it pretty much since. But yeah, I was just, I was making ice cream for people. This is actually Carvel. It plays a really big role in my queerness. Um, the first time that I saw a person, and I think I'm right at the time identified as a woman, um, I saw them and was like you, your mind. Um, and ended up actually dating them four years later, it was the biggest chase of my life.

Olivia N 23:09

Never ever had that happen to me. preying on that preying on that it's gonna happen. There's a professor. Not my professor, just a professor. And I'm like, it's gonna happen. I think they have to get like married and then divorced first. And then we just find each other later in life. I'm playing the long game 20 years

23:28

from now. The long game is the best game to play.

Olivia N 23:31

It is dragging them? You should. Anyways, can you talk a little bit about? I mean, I guess we already talked about that. So can you talk about who or what influenced you the most growing up?

23:49

My dad, my dad influenced me so much growing up. My mom influenced me a lot too. And that's a whole other thing that I'm grappling with right now. But I think that my initial go to answer is always my dad. Because he was a very big point of

24:09

breaking the norm. I think

24:11

like he was a very feminine man in touch with himself and wasn't afraid to wear pink. And you know, which was just, you know, crazy at the time. He wasn't afraid to wear pink and be in fashion and wear makeup and you know, accessorize. And he was always just, he always looked cool. He always looked cute. And he liked himself. And like he knew that he could laugh at himself because he knew who he was. And I really liked that about him as a kid.

24:47

And, you know, he played he played a very big role in teaching me that there are many, many, many ways to be Ain't no man

25:02

to you know how to be in the world around you is no, just like who he was, I just any other example of a man that I had in my life was not like him he was very different to me at the time. And I played a very large introduction into again queerness like he, he was the person that we went to, yeah, lesbian Christmas parties, which were dope. Um, and he took me to a fashion show that he did where the proceeds were going towards funding aid research. He was always very open with me about talking about sexuality. And talking about gay people, and is like, saying, Yeah, girl, like, it's cool. Like, it's actually not a big deal in the slightest. And a lot of his most of his friends were gay. So, I mean, the thing about him being a young dad, was that I went with him everywhere. If he was going to a party, I was going, like, most of the time I was there. And he couldn't just fucking leave me. So he would take me. And

26:34

yeah, we will go up, we would have so much fun, like we would do this, like polar bear swim every year.

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And, like, his friends from college, like I had an uncle growing up that was nicknamed homo, Chris. And he was like, he was home. Oh, Chris, he was

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an AP. Do you just, um, it was, it was very fun. And they were always very, very loud and proud and embraced who they were. And I really also liked that.

Olivia N 27:20

You kind of hinted at it a little bit, but when did you start thinking about your sexuality? And maybe I don't know if it was different from your surroundings? Because you mentioned your mother was bisexual and the difference that it made going up with queer friendly parents? Why don't you start thinking about your own sexuality in that way?

27:39

Um, I started thinking I know exactly when I was in preschool. When I became yeah, like I was, I was very, very young. And I think part of it, again, with the young parents, they really didn't censor. Much of like, the media that I was consuming. And so from a very young age, like I knew what sex was and what attraction was, and what you know, all these things were and my mom's philosophy was when a child asks a child is ready to know.

28:13

And so we agree with her to so many

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pros and cons. But yeah, so I became very curious about sex very young. about it. The first time I asked about it was like, what sperm? At like, the ripe age of like, six years old. Yeah, but I think I was like, four or five the first time that I ever saw two girls kissed and was like, That's my shit right there. Yeah. Um, and I got a little girlfriend in preschool. And we would just kiss each other like we would fully just like, I I don't even know what to add like, but that was our first introduction was like, Oh, this is what mommies and daddies do. Time to play mommy and daddy. Mama my mom was like, but I knew so young I knew so young and the feeling just never went away. Like it really just it's stuck at least at least for now.

Olivia N 29:32

Had Did you have any like gay friends growing up? And if so, what was that like? And how did you guys find each other?

29:39

Oh, um, yeah, yeah, I did. Um, I mean, I guess. When I was a kid, when I was like, seven, my uncle came out with you. And he was like, we live with each other. And he's only seven or eight years older than me. So he was more like a big brother. You're as opposed to an uncle. But he was like the first gay person in my family that like I knew, and that I hung out with all the time. And that like, it was also my friend. As a child, it wasn't until probably middle school that like, I don't know, we were just kind of, like all these people who like didn't really have a friend group that just formed a friend group.

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So we came from, like, all different nooks and crannies. But at some point, I, I think I was the first person to come out, not only in my friend group, but also in my like school as a young middle school girl.

31:05

When I was like, 11, I chopped off all my hair and shaved half my head and bleached it blonde. Um, it's like, it's time to be a baby Dyk. And I did it. And I think people kind of started to find me afterwards, like, I had my friends. And it did turn out that like a handful of them were also gay. But because I had only ever been exposed to these loud and proud characters, I was allowed and proud. Like,

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I didn't even fucking know what homophobia was like, I didn't know that, like, people hated gay people. I had no idea. I watched a video about it, and just started bawling. And my mom was like, What the fuck is wrong with you? And I was like, Yo, there are people out here that hate gay people. And she was like, Yes. And,

32:12

like, it was just, it was almost, it was almost funny. It was almost funny. Um, but yeah, after I came out, I kind of just got the nickname of tri state lesbian. Because I didn't want I didn't like being in Long Island, I didn't like that the queer space was so small in Long Island that I really, like indulge myself in, in, in the city, in the city in the boroughs. When I was, like, 11, when I came out, 14 When I started working, and my parents with that were like, you have your own money, you can do what you want with it. You want to go into the city, just don't do anything fun. Um, so I started going into the city by myself. Or I started you know, going to visit friends because this is another really important part, but I went to a fucking all girls lesbian. Oh my god, all girls, a Lutheran camp that like everybody was gay there. Everybody was gay there. And I think my parents like kind of knew. But like, that's when I really started to, like, have these little crushes, like, on all the girls around me and all the hot lesbian counselors that like we're so clearly gay. And we would just eat that shit up like it was there was such an imperative part of just like, yeah, seeing all types of lesbians and being attracted to all types of lesbians. And I like that's also where I met some of my best friends to this day. My friend Lizzie. We've been friends for over 10 years now. I was she was one of the first people that I came out to. When I did she inspired me to cut my hair and chop it all off. Only for her to come out as queer to me like eight years later which is really cool. But yeah, I totally lost track of where we started.

Olivia N 34:50

You were just talking about how you met your gay friends. Yeah.

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And yeah, like a lot of my gay friends by coming out And then a lot of them flocked to me. And then I branched out and went elsewhere. So I went to Yeah, the people that I knew that I was like super comfortable with from camp like I would go and that's who I'd say in the city with or stay in Brooklyn with and be introduced to their friends. And then like, you know, it just kind of kept building and wanted to be a matchmaker. So

Olivia N 35:31

let's talk about when exactly toward identifying as a lesbian, very young, right?

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Very young, very young, I would say that, like, I knew I like came out as I guess, not straight when I was 11. But like, when lesbian felt like the perfect title? was when I was 14. Yeah, I was 14, and I started dating the only other gay person at my school. Of course, that's because that's how it goes. And yeah, I just really enjoyed being in a woman loving woman relationship, and was like, Yeah, I am a lesbian. I am a lesbian and it's a beautiful word. And like, you know, because it was just so dirty. Like people would say shit about me being gay or speculate that I was a lesbian and say it as if it was dirty.

Olivia N 36:37

I know what she means

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was like listed like what do you have to say right now means absolutely nothing to me. It means nothing to me. And so I was just decided that I would be the biggest lesbian that I could possibly be. And I was. It was great.

Olivia N 37:06

Have clothing, jewelry, makeup, tattoos, or piercings or body mods help with affirming your identities or your lesbianism in any way? Absolutely.

37:16

I started getting piercings when I was really young, because I couldn't get tattoos yet. So I had almost 30 all in my ears. I like did my nipples when I was 15 and got a dermal.

Olivia N 37:31

What happened? Where did you get your nipple piercing? done at 15? She did. Yeah, of course they did. Yeah. Yeah. I was like, No, I was gonna get St. Marks because like, of course they did. That, of course,

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was fuckin St. Mark's. Um, but yeah, I mean, like, it felt it made me feel so cool. Like, it made me feel so connected to myself. And like, when I think I think at the time, like when I thought of queerness I thought of expression. And I thought, you know, queer was cool. Lesbian was cool. How can I be cool? piercings. Like, that's how it connected for me. And my brain was just like, get the septum, get the double hole, do everything that you possibly can get your tongue get like, and so I did. Um, and it made me stick out and feel cool and like the best way and honestly, when people saw the nose piercings, and the earrings and the the jewelry or the accessory, the fact like

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I would wear

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these platforms every single day of high school.

Olivia N 38:42

Yeah, I used to be like several inches taller every day. I used to wear like out of dress code. Big Ass platform. time because I'm like,

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Are you going to tell me no. That's almost full bag like

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it.

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I dressed to the absolute nines. I got piercings, I dyed my hair. I cut my hair. Like I did everything. To not just like appear queer but it felt so me like it felt so me at the time I just like I loved it. I loved how creative it was. I loved how fun it was.

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I love

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I don't know I think I think at the time to like I love the way that people were surprised by it. Where it was like you haven't seen this before and this is what I grew up with. And like what a fun Introduction This is going to be for you but now I pretty much took all the piercings out grew out my hair completely. Take I'm have many tattoos all over the place. I Um, and so those have kind of become my advice. Is tattoos. Absolutely. I getting here? I can't do it anymore. I don't know. I think I just didn't because it was the only thing I was like, allowed to do.

Olivia N 40:17

Yeah. Like I have like these piercings. I used to have my nipples pierced by to take them out in my belly button, and I had a genital piercing, but that fell over COVID. And I'm like, well

Olivia N 40:34

what's to do was to do literally nothing. Are you going to get pierced this Friday the 13th because you know, there's going up. Here's tattoo, there's going to be a bunch of Friday the 13th flash sales. Yeah, look at it. Look at it. I'm thinking about it. They haven't posted anything yet, obviously, because it's not but I'm sure like in a couple days, they'll start posting Friday the 13th stuff. Like \$100 flash sales

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reading me that because, yeah, it's Friday the 13th You're so smart. Yep.

Olivia N 41:05

Might have a mastermind. Like I'm literally planning I was like, there's a tattoo parlor right near me. I'm just gonna like walk in. It is what I haven't gotten tattooed in forever is what it feels like. I think it's been a year and you need to go. That's how I feel. You're off topic. Okay. Have any forms of art, like photography paintings, like movies, like TV shows, helped you with your lesbianism at any way?

41:35

Oh, my. God, I don't know if I can classify this necessarily. Yet. You know what? No, I will. Um, it Tumblr was so yeah. Like Tumblr, art and gifts and scenes. And like, the I have like it played that played a really big role. In just like, being introduced, I think especially to like queer sex was through Tumblr, and just like people talking about it, or writing about it or showing it some, like, the art that was on the platform of two girls kissing and shit like that. Like, that was a that was so impactful. And I loved it. I was never able to post about it. Like I wrote when I was a kid when I was teenager, but like, I don't know, I didn't give myself a lot of opportunities to tap into like my own creative ventures. I always kept myself a little bit too preoccupied to help myself do it. But now I'm trying. But ya know, Tumblr, Tumblr was a big thing. I really wanted to love Blue is the Warmest Color. I really wanted to love it. And it was just abuse. So, um,

Olivia N 43:11

so like, womp womp.

43:13

Yeah, so that being like, part of the first like, exclusively lesbian media that I was exposed to, I was like, whatever my like that. Like, that sounds really terrible. And yeah, and then like, I also threw that there were just so many, like, almost like lesbian tropes that I was being introduced to that

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which ones Oh, just like U haul

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lesbian.

Olivia N 43:40

And yeah,

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I don't know, you hauling and getting a fucking cat together right away. Yeah. It's essentially just like love bombing.

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But they were like, oh, it's not summer.

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It's just being lesbian. It's not like it's toxic or anything.

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It's just being lesbian. It's just different.

Olivia N 43:58

It's just different because we're lesbians.

44:03

Either should Oh, but like, that's

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what I thought that I was just like, you know, to some degree and like lesbianism is intense. It's intense. But it's worth it. And it's self sacrificial. And it's fun. And it's hot. It is hot and like,

44:28

and scary. Scare me.

44:33

But these are all like my little ideas of what it was as a teenager.

Olivia N 44:42

So you mentioned it briefly, but your first encounters with lesbian sex was maybe indirectly on Tumblr like Tumblr porn.

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Yeah, I'd say Well, actually I on it. I remember the first one to like, again like my parents really didn't monitor they told

Olivia N 44:59

you about out lesbian sex. Yeah, yeah, that makes sense for your parents.

45:04

Like, no, it was honestly,

45:05

it was really cool. Like, when? Yeah, when I was a kid, we were like all watching a movie and I saw like two girls started, like making out and I was like, What are they doing? They're like they're kissing Zoey. Like, that's what they did. Yeah. And then I think when I was like eight or nine, oh my god, this is terrible. My mom, she's a sex enthusiast. Okay, she is like, she likes the fact my mom was fun. And now I can say, Yes, I love that for you. Um, but I use it. I used to get wild.

Olivia N 45:41

Yeah, cuz it's your mom.

45:43

Yeah. But yeah, my mom's bucks. Um, and when I was like eight or nine. We were flipping through the channels and porn came up. And I saw a man going down on a woman. And I had no idea that was an option. I knew what a blow job was at that point, like I knew that women gave men at that point in time. And again, second grade. Second grade was like, word cool. But I didn't know that, like women could receive oral sex. And when I asked my mom, I was like, what was he doing? I was like, wait, what?

46:24

I was like, I

46:25

thought that only boys. Got that. And she looked at me and literally, like, I had never seen her get so fucking stern in my life at that point. She was like, you get that back to? She was like, Absolutely not like, women can absolutely receive oral sex. And was like, get your busy eight, like,

46:50

child and you were like, brah Oh, please.

46:55

And which again, oh, God at the time wildly uncomfortable. But

46:58

when I got older,

47:00

it didn't. Like

47:02

it's the pros and cons. It was a pros and cons.

47:08

Because yeah, like, she was, um, she was very much so an advocate like a sex advocate. And just like, working through the discomfort of it and making it an active conversation and reminding me that there were so many different types of sex. Like, there were so many different types of sex. My dad was just this feminine little punk. My mom was like, Okay, fuck everybody. Like I'm in the good way. Yeah, there was there was really, there wasn't a lot of shame. I think that either of them had with what they were teaching me.

Olivia N 47:56

What about like your first time? Having? Like, your first time having lesbian sex? What was that? Like? Were you super nervous?

48:09

Yeah, yeah. I mean, it was my first time really having sex. I was 14. And that was in my first queer relationship. I'm also just respect, I feel like maybe this will come up later. But most of my past partners have transitioned. So if you hear me referring to them as they I just don't want to use

Olivia N 48:39

their gender them, that would be bad.

48:42

Okay, that would be bad. So. But at the time when I was 14, yes, I was. It was the both of us it was our first queer relationship. And we were both terrified. And we were actually we were being bad and you're sneaking, we're sneaking around. Because we were doing long distance. I had met this person at the camp that I had gone to. And, well, his parents didn't like that he was queer. And I don't think that they liked me as an influence, because I was very proud about it. So I had no shame. I really did it. But like, they would look through our conversations and look through our texts, and, you know, he would send me photos of him and like trying on like, more masculine outfits. And I'd be like, yes, like, do it like you look great. It's wonderful and they hated that they hated that. So because we were long distance because we were 14 there were really, very rarely any opportunities for the both of us to see each other without one of our parents like driving us to go see the other which meant that Uh, you know, time for sex was typically very stressful or secretive. You know, like, a lot of it was done over the phone. And like learning how to make love with your words. And, and touching yourself and like, so when, when I had when we had sex for the first time, we were actually at one of his friend's houses. And his parents didn't know that I was also there at the sleepover, which again, was like a two hour drive away. And like, I lied to my parents and like, told them that this person knit like i Oh, it was a whole thing. But it was just to fuck, it was literally just a fog. And yeah, I remember the both of us just like sneaking into a room at 3am into the guest room. And there was only one lamp on kind of like the lighting in here. When the both of us just like, really shakily, like undressing, and like being seen completely naked for the full time for the first time. And vice versa. And, like the both of us, like being aware of like what to do, but like not knowing how to do it. And like it was a very soft moment is a very soft moment because it was just kind of it really was exploration. Like we had no idea what we were doing, but we just wanted to do it and like show you I love you and yeah, like it was it was honestly really fucking sweet. Like, really happy about it. Oh, yeah, that was like my first my first introduction to queer Sonics.

Olivia N 52:06

Let's talk a little bit about how class informs your interactions with lesbian communities, especially because you seem to like travel pretty far to the city to interact with your queer community in your lesbian community. And then maybe like, class and wealth disparities within the lesbian community, and if you could talk about that.

52:33

I think Well, one thing actually, my ex and I would talk about this a lot where I feel like that class plays a really big role in queerness. In the way that yeah, a lot of people just don't have access to, to the education of, of queer history of queer people have where to go where the sponsor at language to describe experiences. I know that I feel

53:12

incredibly

53:14

educated from like, and like not to say that I am because I have a grasp.

53:20

But God, like I personally feel so insecure.

53:28

So much of the time, when it comes to what I know and what I don't know and what I you know what I've yet to learn and I know that I'm not the only person that feels that way. And I know that there are plenty of people who feel it even heavier or don't but I feel like we're class and queerness intertwine I think also has to do with just you know, your presentation if you're of a if you are of a higher class, if you make a lot more money you can you can dress however the fuck you want. You can do that, you know like in you probably there's a level of safety that you get within doing that. Whereas if you were some like I have a lot of very like strongly thoughts I think on it. Um, whereas at the same time where if you are of lower income or have a lower class, but there is a level of creativity that you break through that is so beautiful to watch. Where I feel like so much of queerness derives from to begin with, and like just kind of finds its way up I think that at this point in time, I think, I

55:16

don't know what else to say right now.

Olivia N 55:21

How does your gender identity inform your interactions with lesbian community yourself described as woman adjacent? And what does that mean to you?

55:31

I think that it's um, I had a conversation with this with my friend recently to where it's almost like being a lesbian almost just feels like its own gender. Sometimes, like in the way where it's like, I'm not a woman, I'm a lesbian. Like, oh, and though it kind of started as like a little bit of a joke, like it had some jokey undertones, the more we got into it, the more it's like, my you know, I'm perceived as a woman, typically, I'm treated as a woman. That's how I was socialized. But I don't necessarily

56:20

feel like one. But I don't not feel like one.

56:24

I feel like a lesbian. Like, I

56:26

feel like that's like the

56:31

what's good, concise way to put it is that like, being a woman, a decent person, I just, I am a lesbian. I feel like a lesbian. I feel like it's, for me, it is different than being a woman. I'm a lesbian. And then even when in even within exploring myself, and whoever I may, date or fall in love with, or fuck, or whatever it is, I feel like I will still continue to be a lesbian, all of that. At least deep down.

Olivia N 57:14

But that makes a lot of sense. Other people have talked about that as well, like lesbian, transgender.

57:20

Can't do it like I

57:23

don't I need somebody to do a study on that or something. Because I'm like,

Olivia N 57:28

No, really. Can you talk a little bit about how before this interview, you mentioned to me how for the first time you might be questioning, you're less committed and need for the first time in your life? How you didn't even know if you qualified for this project in your Can you talk a bit about why you're questioning? What led you to this? And maybe if you're feeling any impending loss of community?

58:03

Um, well, to speak on the last bit. No, I'm not. I don't I'm not scared to lose anything. I don't think I'd Yeah, I feel like I'm

Olivia N 58:18

so engulfed in it,

58:21

that I just could not imagine being out of it, or allowing myself to have any distance with my queerness or with the community that I do have around

58:31

me. But

58:36

recently, as for mentioned, there have been a lot of people that I have dated that have transitioned, and it has absolutely, like, made me really question myself and what I'm attracted to and who I'm attracted to. And, you know, I think that for a long time. I kind of like, I lean towards this, like, genital faced attraction. Where Yeah, I was just like vaginas. I'd like I didn't, those are fine and cool. And those are great. Those are great. But I don't I mean, like there were, there have just been so many people that I have loved and continue to love and continue to be attracted to. That like I wanted to see what else was there. With that, like, I just didn't want to deny myself

59:52

figuring out Yeah, who I'm attracted to

59:56

which is Yeah. Which was kind of, which was really scary. Like, you know, I think, if you had asked me had I, if I would be scared maybe two or three years ago? Yes.

1:00:16

I think so. But at this point I don't know, I just I've also primarily dated people of the same sex for the past like 10 years, pretty much. I've been a serial monogamist since I was 14 and 22 now and single for the first time, almost ever.

1:00:49

which played a really big role, obviously, in exploring my sexuality and exploring people.

1:00:58

And I think that plays a role in my eagerness to kind of discover about myself.

Olivia N 1:01:08

Just a clarifying question, when you said that a lot of your partners have transitioned, do you mean a lot of your partners and identify as trans men? Yes. Okay. Transmit. Okay, got it. Got it. Got it.

1:01:19

So,

Olivia N 1:01:23

what's it like making in meeting lesbians in your city now? Like, how are you making? How did you make your lesbian friends?

1:01:30

Um, how did I make my lesbians friends? Um, well, I was I worked at a coffee shop, where like, it just, I feel like it's just a queer coded place. Um, and I worked there for three years. So I just kind of sniffed everybody out. And decided, like, I just chose them, I

1:01:52

will just be a customer that like I

1:01:55

actually one of my friends, she was my customer for like two or three years kind of major crush on her. I was like, I'm, you're you have to be in my life, like you absolutely have to be in my life. And at some point, just gave her my number. And it was this past year that we finally hung out and like, party together, and she had this huge pride party at her house with all of her friends who were the most incredible, welcoming, joyous group of people I think I've ever been surrounded by. And have continued to be friends and partake in that, and participate in it. But I think, yeah, the coffee shop was honestly

like a really big part of how I met more queer people. Because I yeah, I met my queer friends in high school. A lot of them came out to me, which was really lovely. I found them through camp, continue those relationships continue to go into the city and find people there. And then, yeah, this fucking coffee shop guy literally like, because that's where I met my coworker who's also lesbian. And we kind of had a crush on each other. Of course, and she would tease me all the time about wanting to take me a cubby hole. She was like, You're not 21 You would love this place that I like, it's gonna be so fun. And I was like, okay, like, well, I'm finally 21 I can go now. And so her and her girlfriend ended up taking me to cubby hole for the first time last year, which was very exciting at the time, because it was the first it was like out of COVID this is the first time I had been to a lesbian bar. I met Leah malaria that night. And I was like, wow, life is good. Like somebody wrote a fucking puppy there. I was like, This is what it's about. I was like, I love this shit.

Olivia N 1:04:08

Oh, wait, I actually might know what night you're talking about meeting Leah malaria. That's so funny. I think I saw it on Instagram when it happened. People taking pictures with Lea de Leiria kabhi Yeah, she's there all the time. Yeah, but like that night that's so funny because the pup Wow. That's i It's my goal. I'm like, where are you? How can I be there when you're also there? I don't even like to be like that. But I just want to see them.

1:04:39

We can scout her ID and her she almost came to a party I threw. We Yeah. Yeah. Isn't that crazy? That's she's a unity though. Like she really like she just she just hangs out with us. Like she She's all I know. Young though. Well, that was my first impression of coffee. And so I ended up going back. And that's where I met Sam. Sam was that cubby hole. And I don't know how, but we chose each other. And just decided pretty much from that point out that we were going to be friends. And then we were, and then a few weeks later was pride. So we ended up spending pride together pretty much where I then met a bunch of their queer friends. And I ran into so many, like, it was just a conglomerate. But um, it's felt very, I'm very grateful that it's felt as organic as it has

1:05:49

meeting queer people.

1:05:51

Because I I don't I don't think that that's necessarily the case. For most, but I also, yeah, like, but I don't know, I just

Olivia N 1:06:08

you feel like queer people just find you and lesbians. Just find you.

1:06:13

Oh, um, when I was in high school, yes. Because I was like the person like, it was just like, it's always gay. She knows gay people. gay person. So in high school, yes. I definitely felt like I was somebody who people would go to. Um, now I feel like I equally fine game people to like, we just kind of find each other. My brother Yes, I think that we find each other. Now. Just between like, Instagram plays a really

big role, like just Mutual's and who's reposting who and mutual aid and like, I love you. Bye. Yeah. Now we all just kind of find each other. And I feel like most of the people I surround myself with are like, just all gay. Or like, or queer. And then you just find more. Like, it's just think. Yeah.

Olivia N 1:07:30

So what's cubby your first like, lesbian like space that you've ever been to? As an adult? Yes. And as a kid, as a kid, it was lesbian Chris a lesbian Christmas party? Yeah. Yeah. What lessons basis do you wish existed? What lesbian spaces? Do you wish existed?

1:07:54

Less? Oh, lesbian spaces. Yeah. What lesbian spaces to I think, wish existed, I think sober places, like sober for lesbians. Um, because I know, I feel like generally, a lot of queer people like tend to meet each other going out. And like going to bars and going to clubs and doing drugs and drinking. That is really can be incredibly dangerous for many. So I wish that they were more explicitly so we're spaces. For lesbians.

1:08:37

Hi, I

1:08:39

can see the emergence of like black and brown queer spaces being prioritized. And I think that I like in the way that cubby hole is essentially like a white woman's lesbian bar. I can just wish that there was like another version of that,

Olivia N 1:09:06

like as if there's one coming out. Okay, like,

1:09:09

but like as as a physical space like, yeah,

1:09:11

it's like, I feel like there's like there's so many like

1:09:15

events. We're not a space. There's not like a space.

Olivia N 1:09:18

That was a call.

1:09:21

And I just hope that it's respected as such. Yeah. Because I think that that's one thing where it's like white queer people, especially we tend to, you know, be like, oh, I want it.

Olivia N 1:09:36

Yeah, okay. Um,

1:09:39

which I think just defeats the

Olivia N 1:09:44

purpose.

1:09:48

You know, you have to invite yourself and if you weren't invited, be really fucking mindful. Um, so that's where We

1:10:00

call though where are they putting it? Your God,

Olivia N 1:10:02

I'll send it to you on Instagram. Someone in the oral history mentioned it yesterday. Their name is Jani and they were talking about it. Because they want to, like create more like black lesbian spaces like uptown because they're from Harlem. And they're like all the lesbians bases are in Brooklyn. And Harlem has like a rich queer history and they're like, We need to have stuff in Harlem. I don't What the What do they say? I'm gonna find it. It's the people who created this group called funky reggae house party. And then they're creating like a bar in Brooklyn. Yeah. Like what the fuck is the name Nami I just flipped in my gigantic binder. Yes. Funky reggae house party. Okay, cool. Is what like the funky Friday, whatever. What does lesbian community mean to you?

1:10:56

Oh my god, it's just warm. Like it's just so warm. Like I have had some of the most incredible and loving friendships within lesbianism. Like there is such a respect of each other have just like each other's bodies add space and like I have, like it's intimate. Like, I feel but without it being sexual. Like it just feels like holding each other and really listening to one another and like giving the like giving each other time and giving each other real responses and like actually feeling things with one another and like that's like I like being friends with my friends means like, giving each other massages and pampering one another and crying with each other and surprising each other with coffee and candles and like it just yeah just feels like a loving fucking friendship. But with with most of my friends like it's it's so nice. Just to spoil and be spoiled back in in a myriad of ways. I mean, that's that's how it Yeah, it just feels very warm like it I love it. I love it so much

Olivia N 1:12:44

What does lesbian Joy mean to you? When are you happiest? Oh

1:12:48

my god when am I happiest? Oh my God, I am the happiest when I am dancing with my friends and drinking wine and talking about all the dates that they went on this week. And you know, one of us I don't fucking know like

1:13:16

i don't think i just

1:13:20

when I think of lesbian joy for me and when I am the happiness I always I always go back to like Pride celebrations and having those really like deliberate times to celebrate one another and just to really uplift and love each other like that is when when I'm the happiest when I can give that love and feel that love back and like know that we mean it

Olivia N 1:13:56

is there anything else you want to talk about? Before we stop the recording that leave the zoom but stop the recording?

1:14:04

I'm sorry, anything else? Thanks.

Olivia N 1:14:12

Okay, well, bye. Don't leave

Olivia N 1:14:20

the recording stop. Oh, yeah. Wait, are you sure you want to stop recording? Yeah,