

PhD-student-led podcast : Crossing Waves

Juno Roche transcript

[Sea waves sound]

[Podcast tune sounds]

Ana: Welcome to the first-ever episode of Crossing Waves, a podcast on gender and sexuality. My name is Ana and I'm joined by fellow PhD student and co-host Matt.

Matt: Hi, Ana.

Ana: Hi, Matt. Crossing Waves is a podcast featuring discussions of gender and sexuality research, writing, and activism. So Matt, what do we have for our first episode?

Matt: So Ana, we have a recording of Juno Roche, who is a writer and activist, and they came and spoke at the University of Brighton back in October 2019 about their new book *Trans Power*. This is a recording from before the pandemic. They're in conversation with H. Howitt, who is a PhD student at this university. It was a really nice event. Where space was given to conversations that I think have important implications for those of us who are researching gender.

Ana: Oh, sounds really, really interesting. Can you tell us a bit more about Juno and H?

Matt: Yes, Juno has written a trilogy of amazing books, *Queer Sex*, *Trans Power*, and *Gender Explorers*; the most recent one that came out last year. This was recorded just after *Trans Power* had come out. Juno is being interviewed by H who is a PhD researcher at the University of Brighton and is researching the sex practices of trans people. The recording begins with H and Juno in conversation. Then there is a reading of an extract from *Trans Power*, and then there's a Q&A from members of the audience. There is a content warning for little swearing and Juno also references being sexually assaulted as a child when they read the extract from the book. It really was an honour and a privilege to listen to the two of them in conversation.

Ana: Wow. Okay. That sounds like a lot to take in. I'm also really eager to read about H's research, but thank you for that and let's listen to H in conversation with Juno Roche.

[applause]

H. Howitt: First of all, can I just say thank you to Brighton University for hosting this again. Brighton is really important to me as a place in the sense of this is where I discovered that I had a brain really. This is where I really, I didn't know that before. We were talking before coming here and I come from a very working-class South London

family, where there was one set of books in the whole house. They were from the book club and they weren't to be read. They were an ornament, so you daren't touch them because if you did, you'd be told, "Don't fucking touch them, you'll mess them up." I didn't have any access to books so I didn't understand books at all.

At Brighton, I learned-- I came here and I did a degree in Critical Fine Art Practice. I discovered philosophy at the same time that I became HIV positive. That's just-- I'm not saying that to go, "Oh my God" I'm not, it's just that is my life. I discovered, and I learned to process my HIV-ness through the lens of philosophy through kind of... *[unintelligible]* was very fashionable then here. Lots of people were thinking about what it meant for something to be simulated from something that never was, it was very weird to have this thing called HIV that apparently was going to kill me, but didn't kill me, but was going to kill me. I was just having to grapple with death and do a degree.

Brighton really kind of saved me, saved my arse. I've never forgotten the power of this place and the power of coming back there. A huge thank you from me to all of you for all the people that have arranged it, it means an awful lot to me. Don't be nervy, because it's just a lovely sofa that we're sitting on.

Juno: Yes, it is nice.

H: It's like the front room to me, this place. Maybe I can echo, the reason I feel nervous is because this means so much to me, this work, this book has completely touched me. It's so vital and it's so important. Brighton is also a place where I came, I had no idea I was going to be able to do a PhD. I had my own background. I broke all the way down in Brighton. That's one of the things I want to say to you guys is like some of the stuff that we might talk about might feel a bit edgy. I'll do my best to do content warning so maybe Juno will do that too, but please, please, please, just if you feel like you need to step out the room or whatever, just please go, okay to do that because I'm going to be asking Juno some questions, occasionally having to reel her back in from the tangent, and then we're going to throw it open to you. Juno will do some readings. Yes, one of which I really want to do is a bit edgy, but I really want you to do it because it's so beautiful. Then what we're going to do the Q&A just slightly differently. We're just going to take a few minutes. This is inspired by Eve Tuck the Indigenous girl in Ontario.

Just to break the silence so everyone can have a little chat, you can get something off your chest if you've been thinking something. If you've got a half-baked question you're not quite sure how it's going to come out, you can just turn to the person or pair next to you and just get it and then we'll open the floor and we'll have the conversation with all of us.

Juno: So Queer sex, it started with this journey that you went on to try and-- we wanted a kiss and the cuddle, right? You were looking for intimacy. At the end of that book, you said you had a sense of failure like you'd failed at falling in love or being in love, or something like that. Then in *Trans Power*, it feels like we go on the continuation of that journey with you. It's so tender and there's a transition that happened, where I read you where you take that lens of searching for intimacy out there, that kiss and that cuddle, and you turn it in towards yourself. This is a bit of a spoiler, but at the end of the book, it's, you under your olive tree in Spain having a wank, having an orgasm, that's the point though. That to me, is like that's a really powerful transition from out

there to in here, and it's like that transition feels to me, analogous of the whole manifesto of *Trans Power*, but I know you didn't want to write a manifesto. I know you just wanted to get.... but you have written a manifesto, and--

Juno: The really weird thing is somebody wrote back. I was interviewed by a magazine and it's Hack Magazine, and they've got like a big headline which says, "Juno writes new trans manifesto," I think, "I never fucking said I was doing that."

H: Well, you did do it. You did it.

Juno: I literally never said I wasn't going--

H: You might not have meant to but you did.

Juno: For me, the thing is that trans bodies are set up to fail. That's the nature of trans bodies because they're produced by patriarchy. They kind of have a really misogynistic process but if you go back to the very short history of trans-ness in relation to surgical. The surgical has pathologized... trans.

H: [crosstalk] trans.

Juno: Yes, [crosstalk]. We can do that thing where we go, trans people have always existed and that bullshit. We can do that if we want, but it's bullshit in relation to this process that is really killing us now. If you look at the processes, it's a process that's set up to fail because for me it was a cis-- white middle-aged cis doctor who said to me on the way, "I'm just going to do the skinny jeans."

[laughter]

Juno: Skinny jeans? Quite frankly.

H: Yes, that's it.

Juno: you can change genitals but not your skinny jeans.

H: That's the transition, right? You're saying I'm absolutely done with measuring myself against these kinds of cis ideas that were never ours, they were never our reference points [crosstalk] look inside for my...

Juno: Well, I think more than that, I just got... the thing is the precariousness of transness is that it's so precarious to try and occupy something that is defined as real. How do you occupy looking real? On the way down to surgery, my surgeon said to me, "Don't worry, I'll make you look real." My head is full of philosophy and I just think, "Stop the fucking surgery. I need to get off" because in a sense if I'm just going to look real, I've still got to do work.

I've had to do work my whole life to try and be a boy, now I'm still going to have to do work so I'm going to be in the hinterlands between being broken, because that's what society-- that's the pathologization of transness is that it's a broken state in relation to gender. Gender is posited as being this workable thing, which it's not, it's a broken model of how we would divide and look at humans. Transness is a broken version of

that, but, "We're going to not make you mended, we're just going to make you look as real as we can to the unbroken state." I bought into that.

When I had surgery, I genuinely did think, I was saying in *Queer Sex*, I did think I would lay back, open my legs and a cis man would climb on top and fuck my brains out. That's what I thought. I'm not trying to be shocking. I did think that because I'd had years and years. Because I am HIV positive. I was told for about 10 years, I couldn't have surgery because it was elective, people that are HIV couldn't have elective surgery. I had a lot of time to think and wait for this mythical vagina to happen. I think it's that thing that after surgery, I couldn't occupy it. I couldn't-- this is a really short life. The one thing that you can try and do well is to try and be comfortable in your body. That word, comfort, forget the thing of passing or transitioning and all that, those words are almost too complex to apply to something which should be this simple human thing of just being comfortable.

H: That's one of the consequences of this complete shift. This complete paradigm shift is like, what is the framework where you find comfort? If that's binary transition and heterosexual relationships, if that's normative, then great, that's your thing, but it opens up all these different options. It gives us choice and it changes the questions that we ask.

Juno: I think for me, that is-- What I realized by the end of *Queer Sex*, I felt quite empowered enough to say, "Actually, we can be binary if we want to be, but we have to be aware of the political context that we're being binary in." We have to be aware that we're adding to something which is destroying many more people than it's giving life to, as long as we're aware of that, then we can be binary. Trans people are divided up into masculinizing and feminizing. Those are our two routes that we're told we should follow. That's why for me now, I say somebody said to me, "Are you trans fem?" I go, "No, just leave fem out of it. Leave woman out of it, just say trans," that's a better, more empty place to start for me.

The thing is, is that we can carry on doing that, we can become, we can have all the surgeries we want and be completely feminine and feminized and we can drift and we can pass, but we have to be aware of what we're adding to. We, as trans people, have a responsibility, we have a political, almost like an ecological responsibility to understand about our place within this system.

We can't do it, we can't just say, "No, I have to transition." We can't do that, but we also have to be aware that actually, 80% of all trans people that aren't living in countries with an NHS will never have any surgery. We're throwing 80% of people under a bus, so it instantly becomes an issue of capitalism. We know that patriarchy and capitalism sit at this little nub together, coexisting and producing Donald Trump. We are at a really fucked up crossroads. It's not like we can't sit back and say, "We can do all this." I agree, we can be whatever we want to be, but we have to have a political awareness of what we're doing and how that frames us, but also how it frames-- When I was growing up as a kid, people always said about my mum, "Oh, she's got a handsome face, your mum."

She spent her whole life with people saying-- or people will say just, "Is your mum a lesbian really?" "Is your mum a lesbian?" "Your mum's a bit butch, isn't she?" My mum ran perhaps down road... she had to be a bit-- She has been capable of whatever

looking after herself and doing something. It was like, we have to be aware that the impact that our role has on my mum, because we don't exist in a vacuum, transness can't exist in a vacuum.

If we want to grow and embed ourselves as a really empowered community, that's why for me in *Trans Power*, I can no longer go-- I say that I don't have a vagina, I have an upcycled cup and balls, that resembles the vagina and it does. Is alchemy, it's brilliant, is fucking based knowledge, it's all of that stuff, but that's my truth. If I occupy that skin properly and really then I can have some power in it.

If I'm going, "It's a vagina, it's just like all other vaginas," because that's people do. That's the kind of thing, that's the cul-de-sac that trans people get pushed into it. It's just like, if you take a part-- if you do an anatomical drawing and took it apart, a cup looks like a vagina anyway, it's like, "Why are we doing? We don't need to." We just need to say, "I'm trans and I've got a beautiful trans body." Part of that, is it saying that actually, I can have the genital configuration that I want. The trouble is, is that we need to get surgeons to get better at demarcating pleasure in all of that because they don't do that...

H: Yes, and asking the right questions.

Juno: -asking the right questions.

H: I think the two interesting liberatory points that what you were just saying, One, is trans people are not the sole people on the planet who have dysphoria or dissatisfaction with their genitals. If we let go of this idea of assimilation and of, "I was in the wrong body but now I'm in the right body, because I've had this, this, and this," and you don't want to tell anyone about that anything's wrong with it. Cis people don't have that, cis people do not have the experience of perfectly functioning genitals that they love, so it does that as one thing.

The other is that it allows us to start asking questions about pleasure and about function, which at the moment, we're supposed to be these simpering, "So grateful for the GIC. Thank you so much for my treatment." We didn't get to say-- we're not talking about some of the trans complications which we desperately need to talk about, but we're so fearful of saying, "Testosterone has meant that I have vaginal tears and I can't be fisted anymore." That's a real problem here. In case someone whips away from us and the treatment we have so fought for.

Juno: On a really basic level, I remember doing some research, a clitoris is 13,000 times more sensate than a cock head. When they create a trans clitoris, like what they would call my clit. I always think of it being like quite a comedy clip though in a way, because so little attention to detail has gone into it. What they do is that they take the cock and then they whittle it down. They don't literally whittle it down like a piece of wood. They take something which already is 13,000 times less sensate than a clitoris and then they pop it back through the skin in this weird way. They say, "That's where your pleasure is." It was already 13,000 times less sensate than a clitoris. Now, literally, somebody could lay on top and fuck me for days and I would make lasagne. I could cook, I could paint the room.

[audience laughter]

Juno: In a sense, the very basic thing is that I just starting to shape a new, new book, which is called, *the Non Debate of the Transgina*, which is looking at the debates and non-debates around it. Pleasure just not centred, no one talks about this stuff. I want to say to surgeons, "When you do this operation, what is it you imagine that you're creating?"

Are you creating a vagina? Are you creating your idea of a vagina? Are you just doing an operation? This is an extension of your career, and you're really good at urology and therefore you've gone to this expert saviour place of saving because--"

H: Can you talk about the experience that you had with the surgeons and the erectile tissue? Are you happy to talk about it because I found that--?

Juno: Yes. The main kind of thing is, is that it looks real. It looks pretty, and there's this notion of this perfect pussy. Historically, the average age that trans women would transition was in their mid-40s. If you think about how society thinks about women in their mid-40s, basically, they've already written them off in relation to sex, they don't see them as being sexual beings. That's a trope that actually is embedded in the NHS. How they then treat trans women is that these doctors, mainly cis-male, straight, would-be saviours. When I had my surgery, this is quite a few years ago now, there were two surgeons and you were even known as a Thomas' Tart or a Bell Ringer Babe. People would sit in wards and put-- I was like, "I've always been this way." I was like, "I like to fuck. I'm like anyone's babe unless they pay me." Even then I'm not their babe, I'm just pretending, that intimacy is I'm pretending.

We would step into that role where they would be saved and we'd become one of their almost their kind of children. It was like this really weird, is this paternalistic patriarchal really damaging thing. When I started to say-- I suppose about five years ago, I interviewed lots of trans women because I was writing lots of articles luckily for newspapers and stuff about vaginas, which is amazing really. The word that came up again, and again, was, "I feel like I'm broken. I feel like I broke my vagina. I felt like they gave me a chance and I broke my vagina."

To get onto the erectile tissue, so what they do is that they take a cock, they do some magic, turn it inside out, do this, tie some knots, do some stitches, take some cock and ball skin and then they take what's left of the penis, put it up behind what has now become your this space above your vaginal cavity. They obviously leave some of the erectile tissue, but they don't really care, because they're only interested in it looking real. Five days after surgery, they come round and I'm not knocking that, by the way, I love my genitals, but these are trans genitals and they're fucking fantastic. They do look quite a lot like a vagina, but they also look quite a lot on close inspection, like trans genitals, which I love. This isn't about regret or, "Don't do it." or anything, it's not about that. It's about something, it's about inhabiting yourself.

H: Yes, that's what this conversation does, I will bring you back to the erectile tissue. It allows us to have this nuanced conversation. I feel like reading the book and reading the interviews and hearing you talk now, these are the conversations that we would have if no one was listening. I'm lucky enough to live with a majority trans queer people in a coop. Sometimes we have this joke about, I start a sentence, it's like, "Oh, don't tell biological centralists, but dah, dah, dah, dah."

These are the trans things that we want to talk to them about. You can't say it for fear someone's going use it as ammunition but it's so important that you're saying, "Simultaneously, I absolutely love my vagina and they've left this erectile tissue." They went to get rid of it, right?

Juno: First of all, so I didn't understand it. First of all, no one tells you that they're going to leave it. The first time that I get aroused after surgery, quite a long time after surgery, it has to be said, it gets completely hard and literally, the vagina snaps shut. It's like a fairy tale, it's just like a moralistic fairy tale.

[laughter]

Juno: I feel like I'm trapped inside somewhere, it's like, When is the boulder going to roll away?" No one told me, so I went to see my surgeon. They were like, "Oh, well, we could remove it." I remember thinking, "Yes, but actually now, if you just tell me what it is and why it's there and how it's there," because I get erectile tissue. I had a cock for a long time. Am I the only one that's not ashamed to talk about that? Because if I don't talk about that, if I don't talk about the 30-odd years of testosterone running through my body, if I don't talk about how that shaped my shoulders and means that although I've got tits they look small because here's quite big because that's testosterone. You see trans women just beating themselves up because they want bigger hips than shoulders and they look to pay for that. We can do that but it's really punishing.

For me it was that thing of going, "Well, no, actually let me work with the erectile--" because the erectile tissue I understand, so I can masturbate with erectile tissue but I keep on rubbing this clitoral thing, I talk about it like-- I wrote an article for *Bitch* magazine last year where I said it was a bit like I go diving for a pearl and I'm swimming around endlessly going, "Just work, work" because there's no feeling there. I could feel like I was broken or I could feel like I need to re-frame my own body. I'm just surprised that more people aren't doing it. I'm quite happy because it means I earn a decent living from writing books about it.

[laughter]

Juno: I'm surprised that more of us aren't angry. I'm in my mid-50s now, I know I don't look it but you know you say that.

[laughter]

Juno: There comes a point when you say that and people just go, "Hmm, yes." Shit, there wasn't a gasp.

[laughter]

H: "Do the gasp."

Juno: She still thinks that really. I'm forgetting what I was saying now.

H: Let's go back to sex though because that was good.

Juno: Okay.

H: We're doing all right for time. That has been the conversation that we haven't been allowed to have because when we're fighting for a seat at the table, with realness and with assimilation and with, "Look, it looks just like a real..." or whatever, we fail to make space for the questions around, "What does this body do? What does it want? Where is pleasure and where is comfort?"

Juno: That's because, in a sense, that they don't expect-- and this is where it's structural. This is where the NHS part of it is really structural because we have to somehow wrestle control of it. There's a thing, until very recently I was a trustee of the Sophia Forum which is a charity that represents and looks after the needs of women living with HIV, so I get to see a lot of stuff from Public Health England about health care full-stop. It's a really sexist, misogynistic practice; all of it.

That's why women in HIV-- I went to a public reveal a couple of years ago when there was a big drop in gay men in HIV. I sat in the room- and it was a big fanfare thing where there was a big drop in gay men- and I sat there and there were all these other lines that were completely static and had been static since the early 2000s. I stood up and said, "Listen, I think I'm in the wrong room." They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I need the room with the other lines because this is just the room for young gay men, principally young, white, gay men between 18 and 25, so this is a room about privilege." The NHS is broken anyway so we need to wrestle back control of it so it's us saying what we want and how we want it.

They don't think we will ever be kissed by anyone. I'm sure that if I said to surgeons, "What do you think that you're making when you create, out of a cock and balls, you create a vagina, or what you are saying is a vagina-" I'm happy if people want to use that word I'm not trying to police any words, by the way, but, "-what is it you think you're making? Because I don't think you're creating anything that you think is capable of intimacy." For me, the "intimacy" word more than sex because sex is about this notion of intimacy, about coming together. I think what it is is that they don't think for a second, because they have been allowed to get away with it because historically, most trans people that transitioned were in their mid-40s.

H: Well it was seen as if an improper embodiment of trans if you went to a GIC in the '60s or '70s and said that you were interested in arousal, that you had arousal then that was seen as an improper-- and you didn't have to be seen as--

Juno: Treated as [crosstalk]. Yes, absolutely. Listen, when I went there--

H: Thinking of Sandy Stone's *The Empire Strikes Back*, she talked about this beautiful metaphor of "wringing the turkey's neck" which she says is like the secret, secret tradition that trans women, on the night before surgery, it's their last wank. If admitted to doing that, you admitted that arousal and orgasm was important to you.

Juno: It's a really weird thing. There's this whole mental mind fuck. If you are a trans woman and you transition in your mid-30s and you've had 30 years of a dick, so you've had 30 years of being able to wank quite easily. Literally, I'm not trying to stereotype men, for all the men in the room, but there's a notion of being able to just take out your cock and just wank easily and you will have done and will have also been taught that that was okay to do. That that's what you should do or could do, and that's fine, and that's what boys do. Then all of a sudden, that gets completely taken away. I have

interviewed lots of trans women for whom that's been a shock, that's been such a shock that they've never come back from because they didn't understand that actually, that was going to go and that was going to be-- because you can't occupy reality, you can't occupy looking real. You can a bit. If you want to go out to a party and it's a fancy dress party and you dress up as Karl Marx- I mean you can a bit, do that thing- but you can't live a life based on trying to occupy reality. If you've had 30 years of banging out easy wanks and all of a sudden you can't find any pleasure at all-- actually if, like me, because I thought, "No, I'm a woman now, I have a vagina, I'm not ever going to touch my bottom again." I'm going to use the polite word there, my bottom.

[giggles]

Juno: "Because you know that I don't do that, I'm going to be vanilla, I'm never going to have kinky sex again because no, I'm going to be vanilla. I'm just going to lie back, missionary position, someone's going to whatever and I'm going to gasp," and I'll fall back like a languid kitten."

[laughter]

Juno: I thought that's what's going to happen. There's this kind of real shock but in a way, we've got to grab it back. I'm dead proud of these books, I'm really proud of them, but I'm also like, "Somehow I've got through." I remember writing a piece for *The Independent* that opened with, "I looked down at my cunt and she looked back at me and said, 'What the fuck are you doing?'" I wrote that in *The Independent* and I just thought, "I've been paid for it,"-

[laughter]

Juno: -and somehow these have got through. In a way, it's a great thing. I've just finished a new book and in the new book that- I don't know- comes out next year or the year after--

H: Is this with the youngies?

Juno: With the youngies, sorry. I really wanted to go around and interview the youngest people I could find in the country who were transitioning, who had transitioned, whatever that means, whatever that means for them, and what they think. The thing that gives me great hope is that quite a few of them said things to me like, "You know my greatest fear isn't about TERFs." They don't care about TERFs, they just see grown-ups arguing in this kind of thing. They're like, "What are they doing?"

Ironically, a lot of them don't care about hormone blockers either. Not a single one of them talked to me about hormone blockers. This is just a cry of help but I have been saying this for the last seven years, please stop using suicide statistics about us because they're grossly inaccurate because we just don't know. Any researcher worth their salt will know that if you ask a group of people an anonymous question about, "Have you ever felt suicidal?" who in the room hasn't felt suicidal at one point? We're labelled constantly as being this incredibly broken point of contact. "Broken, they're suicidal, they don't want this, it doesn't matter, just make them look real, and then they'll go away." When I spoke to the kids, a lot of the things that the kids said which gave me such hope for the future was that a couple of them said, "My main worry is

that I've told people I'm trans and I hope they don't make me stick to it if I don't want to."

H: Yes.

Audience: Yes.

Juno: I thought, "God, they're getting there. Keep on doing what we're doing because it's getting there," because actually for them, it's like, "No, this isn't a static point."

H: Yes, and there is also the disillusion between the cis-trans binary which, thank God, is slowly dissolving before our only eyes-

Juno: It's completely melting.

H: -because then cis people also have that "Oh God, I have to be this person."

Juno: Yes, you don't have to be this.

H: Maybe between 28 and 30, it is something different.

Juno: Because this isn't just about trans people and cisgender but I genuinely think that the trans, whatever it is, the phenomenon, the set of circumstances around trans, has the capacity to really challenge patriarchal structures that inform healthcare, education, housing, architecture. It has the capacity to start to really interrupt that and become transgressive, which for me is the only power in the word 'trans' is in that word, the feeling of it being transgressive.

H: Yes, it shines a light on so much of what's wrong with...

Juno: There was a great piece of work that was done when I was a teacher years ago. When I was a teacher, I worked in a gang school, we had huge problems of bullying in the toilets and I did lots of research at the time because it was always important for me to get a broader picture. There was great research that was done in America where they asked, I think it was 10- and 11-year-old boys, what part of the school they hated most and they hated shared urinals because they were approaching puberty and they hated shared urinals because it meant that they had to get their genitals out in front of all the other boys, and then the hierarchy would develop. What's happening in schools now, most schools that are built now have gender-neutral toilets. This shit isn't just happening, so don't let people think that trans exists in a vacuum. No, fuck that, this is changing masses of stuff. Not just trans though, sorry. [crosstalk].

H: No, no. Don't ever apologize, it's so nice. You want to get a good Q&A and I want to get you to read. Are you up for it?

Juno: Yes, what do you want me to read?

H: I think, I really want to read that bit but is it-- [crosstalk] can we?

Juno: I think the thing to do-- You do what you want to do.

H: No, but let me just say. With the link-- Juno's just like, "Fuck talking about suicide. We're not just mental health cases; you know it." I'm thinking, "Okay, but I really want to talk about mental health to have you read a page of your mental health."

Juno: The thing is this is like an experience. This is like uneasy for both of us. I'm really happy for you to shake this.

H: I really want to go there. I just will say that this, for me, the stuff around trans and sex, obviously, it's so fucking radical and it has the potential to deal with huge change. I think it's doing that, exactly what you're saying, broader than just in our trans lives. For me, the thing that totally rocked me to my core in this book is the way that you do vulnerability. Talk about a particular, I know mental health is such a weird umbrella term for it, but you do something that I feel taps into a shared human experience, like a ubiquitous indecorous experience. I feel like if we start talking about that stuff more, a lot of the other structural stuff we're having. I want you to begin part of this book because it's just destroyed me.

Juno: What part of the book is it?

H: I'll show you.

[laughter]

H: Yes, it's just this bit. Look, take that...

Juno: Oh okay, can I take it? Oh, it's slipped out.

H: There is content for an assault on a child, which is Juno, but it's not graphic it's mentioned of. If that is not nice for someone then please feel like it's okay to go.

Juno: I'd say, just to put it in context, that when I got to the end of this chapter. This chapter is about one of my very dear friends, Michael, who I interviewed in book one. I felt very bad because this had come up in this chapter because the interviews that I frame just by the journey to and from the interview. What comes up for me comes up and so this came up, but I realized Michael is a dear friend so I felt safe enough for this to come up here.

"Talking with Michael about dicks and orgasms over breakfast feels perfect, my idea of a great day. Their brain, their consciousness, and their sense of self; I love. I find it truly glorious that we met through a book, my book, admittedly, but still a book. Chance or fate? I love how that shit happens. Michael talks about their masculine soul. They operate very much on that level of consciousness and this space entails going beyond the realms of comfort and uncomfortable to a space as pragmatically ethereal. It's little wonder to me that everything between us feels easy apart from kissing. We haven't kissed. We've talked about kissing, but we haven't kissed. I don't think we will now, but I love that they are in my life and I love being a part of theirs. In a quid pro quo, it feels like a very worthy exchange. I like that this morning, it feels like they're interviewed me. It was fun. They always push me to extend my line of thinking beyond my comfort place, to a place where it tests the idea. They're really good at that.

They have all the qualities that you would want to find in a friend or lover. They're definite upfront, caring, and resolutely honest about my good points and my crap.

There is no holding back. I love the companionship we are developing; it matters, especially for older people and even more for older trans folk. We need community. I'm aware when I'm in Spain in the mountains, that I far too often feel like one of one.

They've been talking about setting up more self-pleasure groups, perhaps from for the over 50s. I still struggle to be in that shared space of singular self-pleasuring. I'm not sure why. I think I still have huge hang-ups about getting something right, and not looking silly, which is silly considering the number of people that know everything about my life, my past, and my genitals through my writing. On many levels, I'm completely open and travel with confidence, but I still really suffer from the idea that I'll get something wrong and parts of the sky might fall in.

I suppose I feel safest in my writing, it feels like home. It feels like a form of cathartic meandering towards a sanctuary. Michael seems shy and perhaps more comfortable in small groups of people, but they push their body and their sense of their body to places where they can discover new sensations and are comfortable exploring that with others. It's very much on their own terms. They have very good boundaries. Maybe that said, maybe I still don't trust I have good boundaries. Maybe that's why I imagine that I'm getting it wrong. By getting it wrong, I might spill out into the world and look silly. It's such a strange and uncomfortable paradox to live with.

As a sex worker, I sucked cock in phone boxes. It was the '80s and '90s and phone boxes were still vital. I sucked cock and I knew that sometimes people could see, I didn't flinch. As a sex worker, I engaged in group sex, group shows. I performed scenes and acted out others' fantasies, I didn't flinch. Yet the thought of being vulnerable in a room full of people of like-minded people terrifies me. That's it, isn't it? I interpret the more dangerous one as being safe and the safer space is being more vulnerable. That fucks my mind up, I have to admit.

Earlier this year, Michael came to visit me in Spain. It was spring and it was warm. They taught me yoga every day for a week in my courtyard and I'd cook them food in return. I felt safe trying to balance the mood more organically in front of them. By the end of the week, I would play the week's teaching back to them in one session. I felt safe, it mattered to me. Throughout my life, I've often felt body vulnerable and constantly tried to find truth in the feelings associated with my body. Experimenting with BDSM throughout my 20s and 30s enabled me to realize that I do have limits. As a sub, that was incredibly important, but letting go and being vulnerable has always felt like a step too far. It doesn't have to be sexual vulnerability, but the fragility I, or my mind associates with getting something wrong, not being able to follow clear instructions, feeling like I need to do everything perfectly.

I was once on holiday in Morocco with a lover and they became exasperated with me and said, "Just let go for fuck's sake. Let go and stop caring what other people think of you?" We were walking out of the hotel, along the beach to the start of what I remember as mountains. He said to me, "Just shout loudly here. Say anything you want. No one can hear you, just go." To make matters worse. He demonstrated how to let go and shout with lungs full of air. He took an overly showy breath in, and then boomed out a series of words, as loud as he possibly could, and then laughed and said, "See how easy it is?" I felt silly, diminished by his ability to let go. I couldn't do it until this day, here in the mountains around my home. I still practice and I still feel like I get it wrong. My voice never hits loud. I muffle myself even though there is no one

for miles around to hear me. I'm forever trying to please or not to displease an invisible being that sits on my shoulder.

Perhaps all those times that knowingly or inadvertently, I exposed myself and my body to risk and harm did matter. Maybe it's their voices, their interactions still with me and imprinted on my body. Maybe collectively, they are the voices that I contend with. The ones that tell me I'm silly, undeserving, and clumsy. I can countenance that, I can. I was sexually assaulted by a man when I was 14 years old. I was waiting at a bus stop to go home after a local drama lesson at a drama and dance club. It was a Saturday afternoon. The lesson was always the Saturday morning. I was too shy for both drum or dance, but everyone thought it would be good for me to bring me out of my shell. My shell, though, was a suffocating misalignment of my gender, but how were they to know? I couldn't tell them. We didn't have the words back then. My shell was actually my protection.

In the lessons first drama, then dance, I stood at the back of the room, hoping and praying that I wouldn't get picked to perform. I could just about cope with acting as an inanimate object, like a tree. In a school play once I was cast as a loaf of bread.

[laughter]

Or trying to follow the rudimentary steps of a dance routine at the back but if called to the front I froze, I just froze. At the bus stop, I must've looked like the nervous teenager I was. He told me that the buses weren't working, that the drivers were on strike, but that he would help me out by giving me a lift home if I needed it. "Do you live close?" He said. He was older. He looked like a grandfather. We never had grandfathers in our family. They were both dead.

Grandparents are painted by the world as being safe. I thought his car would be a safe space. I go into the pale green Cortina with Bose seats. I got in, he abused me. He told me as he held me down that I was a quick learner. He dropped me off at a petrol station far from my home and I stood very still. For a long time, I stood very still, and then I remained quiet even in the desert of Morocco with a partner I trusted, I remained quiet. I never want to write about that again, ever, but words happen. These words just happened. Michael has said to me, from the beginning of our friendship, that I could come along to one of the self-pleasure groups. I've never had the courage to say that although I sucked cock in a phone box on the street in Euston for money in front of strangers and felt nothing, the thought of being vulnerable in a safe space with like-minded people terrifies me. I've said it now, I feel vulnerable and very happy that this chapter is over."

[applause]

Juno: I think it's really important. I think, for me the reason why I-- One, you're the writer that you are, you just write what you write, you don't have a choice-- well, I don't have a choice in that. I'm getting better at shaping that, I'm writing a book of essays at the moment and I feel like I'm beginning to extend things and pull things out. You write the stuff you write. I feel like, it's really important to-- I remember when I started to do the work I do and people would stand up, I remember talking at a TUC conference and there was one of me on stage and I was trying to talk about rights for trans people at work. There were-- TUC, back then, was all middle-aged, northern white men, it was.

They all started to stamp their feet on the floor to shut me up. They were like, "It's just one of you. There's no one-- It's just one of you, you represent less than-" I remember, you got it actually- "you represent, less than 0.003% of the population of our unions so get off the stage." I remember thinking, "God, they just don't see me as being a human. They don't see me as being a person." I felt honoured that people in my books, talk to me and give me their honesty about stuff. I feel like what I do around those interviews is just to talk my truth.

H: It's so honest, it just feels the complete transparent-- To me, it was like, "This is what I would want to say if I could just totally take off all that you've just said."

Juno: It's a working-class thing. I never feel like I'm good. I never truly believe anyone's going to buy my book. I'm completely amazed that is happening. I'm not saying that for any effect. As a working-class person, I feel like I'm fake, I can't write, I can't spell I can't shape the sentence. My agent said to me, "You're the only working-class person I represent." She wasn't saying that to put me down. She was just being honest with me. I think in a sense, it becomes easier to tell your truth because, in a way, I don't know that anyone's ever going to read it.

H: Thank you so much for reading it. I reckon we should move on to Q&A, but would you like to do a short reading from the introduction before we do that?

Juno: No, I don't think so. I think the thing is, buy the book. Part of the reason why I've interviewed people so this is a trilogy really, *Queer Sex*, *Trans Power*, and then the last one is called *Born Epic*, which hopefully will be out next year or the year after. The only reason I interviewed so many people is that when I started to do this work, I would contact somebody like The Independent and say, "I've got an idea for piece," and they said, "No, we've written out-- we've written a trans piece this year." What trans people did who were successful was to never put the ladder down, they'd whip the ladder up really quickly because they believe that thing of like only one trans person in, exactly the same with race, with women, with working-class women, writers, trying to find them, it's like few and far between. What I wanted to do is include as many people as possible. The stories in here, there's so much that you're going to get from Michael, from Travis Alabanza, 22 years old, and already so elegant in them in their thinking.

H: There's so much joy. That's what's so nice about how all these stories are always rich with joy and pleasure and the sheer exuberance and loveliness of trans. That's what's so nice about it. There's a fit. That was a very sad bit, but there's so much roaring laughter and warmth and joy in it.

Juno: I write a lot about my house in Spain. I was told it, especially as working-class trans, HIV. I shouldn't even be alive, let alone have an aspirational life, my life is aspirational. I'm mortgage-free, I've got a beautiful house in Spain and I'm mortgage-free. Celebrate that. I said about that, not because I think it makes me look anything at all, but because actually, it matters because we've been told that we wouldn't even have careers, when I was a teacher and I was marched off the premises because I wanted to transition, I did some research after that because I was always that kind of person. I wanted to find out what was happening to other trans people.

I did some research that I gave to the NUT because they didn't have any at all at that time. I found out that at least 82%- and it was more than that, but I lowered it down because I felt like the true picture was horrific- at least 82% of all trans people had lost their jobs, the day that their school had found out they were trans. They'd been marched off the premises.

I remember interviewing one person who'd waited until they were in their 60s to transition because their kids had been at that school and then they didn't want to transition when their kids have left that school because their kids have gone to university and still have friends at that school. Then they didn't want to transition when their kids had left university because they were going to get married and be in the community. They waited until they was in their 60s to transition, told the school and the school told me, "You can sit at the school in the back room, you can have no contact with children again," and they lost everything. When I talked to them, they were sitting in a bedsit, that the children hadn't spoken to them anymore. They'd gone through a terrible divorce. Of course, I was fucking angry.

A lot of the stuff I do is-- it's not-- this isn't-- I never ever dreamt I'd be a writer, I never had any aspirations. I never thought, Oh, I'm going to write an article and then write a book." I didn't have any of that, working-class people don't do that. We're just told that we should be lucky enough to earn a monthly or weekly wage, and pay the bills. I never imagined that this would be the case. There's a purpose to this in that we need to do the work collectively, to now reshape stuff and you all, anyone in the room that is trans or not trans, we need to start asking better questions because we're at a pivotal point in history, where we've got Trump and a whole succession of other Trumps and they've normalized the work, "He grabs pussy." We have tended to normalize it because they have a women's march in America where they wore pussy hats. We had to normalize it rather than going, "This is really fucked up." We've got to now do gender, we've got to do gender in and reframe it completely. Find the book.

[laughter]

H: All right. Questions. We've got a lovely Matt with the roving mic and then I think I've got to turn my mic off.

Matt: Hello, June.

Audience member 1: Hello. Hi, Juno, thank you very much for your ever-inspiring talk. Got lovely students here with me studying queer writing. In a couple of weeks' time, we'll be reading from *Queer Sex* and hopefully from *Trans Power*. I'm trying to formulate a question. We have been having all these debates about trans representation in fiction film, their voice speaking for trans people who is represented, and we're really grateful for having your book so please keep on writing. We have to teach them and really lucky to have them. We'll be discussing this alongside of My Generation project which is again, really, really important.

I'm just wondering about obviously, you talked about the whole structural problem in the NHS with the surgeon. Have you ever talked to surgeons about what they're doing? What they think they're doing, because again, for surgery to change, and to take account, pleasure, and comfort, and really listen to trans people undergoing surgery will take a lot to change. Also, if we talk about this country, maybe that space can be

opened up, I know it's probably difficult, but for example, from where I come from, which is Serbia, if trans people are having surgery, you will have to either have a hysterectomy or be sterilized so there is no choice even taking away from that right. Again, this also speaks back to pleasure.

Juno: It's a long-term thing, isn't it? In the sense, trans surgery is a product and a structural product of capitalism. Why am I saying that? Well, because in most countries, it's private. A few people make a lot of money out of it. They can bring forward the notion of expertise, which men do. There was a piece of research a while ago where they interview... they go to consultants; male consultants and female consultants, and the female consultants on average, you pay 25% less. The issue is bigger than just trans people.

When I interviewed young people, they were less concerned, the kind of remit or the kind of boundaries that they see for this thing that we might call gender is much broader. What will happen? The two things that are working side by side, so in this country, in the UK, there have been two surgeons forevermore, for the past however many years it is. Working one day a week in the NHS, and four days a week or three days a week privately. Again, I'm just going to try and keep this really short, but I am convoluted, that's what I do. I'm not going to apologize for it because it all matters.

Five days after surgery, so you have surgery and they create a cavity with cock and ball skin and they pack that out because obviously, they have to pack it out otherwise if you create a cavity in the body, it wants to close up, it wants to heal. They pack that out with packing. Then five days after surgery, a nurse coming round and they take this stuff out. It's yards of it, literally, I'm not exaggerating. It goes on and on and you think-- it's enough for curtains for a whole house.

[laughter]

Like vaginal cavity curtains. It just goes on and on. Not long after, the surgeon comes round with a single-use plastic speculum and does a depth test. They push it as far in as they can, into your cavity, to tell you how much depth you've got. Let's just look at that. There's two things about that. One, there's no sensation in there, because it's the external cock and ball skin that has been stitched together, so there's no sensation in there. It's also just had all this packing out so it's as baggy as it's ever going to be. Quite frankly, he could have jumped up there.

[laughter]

Enough though it's a single-use plastic speculum. I'm not joking, it's as baggy as it was going to be. There's no whatever. I remember at the time, I started to cry and I'm not really a crier, but I started to cry because to me it was like, "Oh God, this feels like every other man that's fucking me in the arse and you're not even paying." I'm not trying to devalue my body. That's just my history. I remember at that point thinking, "God, this is like the feminist." The parts of me that are beginning to understand feminism and beginning to understand what it means to have my body infiltrated in this way, structurally, because everyone else is clapping and going, "Oh, you're 6 inches of depth," and all I think is, "There's not a single sensation in there. This isn't about me, is it? This has got nothing to do with me." To bring it back to your point is that the young people that I interviewed for the book that comes out next year, I hope they

have a whole different set of things so that capitalist model is going to fall apart because they're going to be out of a job, because what they're doing only suited people that wouldn't answer back.

Sometimes you won't deal with it well and allow yourself that, be kind to yourself, and try and work out. It's the same as you saying to me about cowardice and coming out, it's about trying to be comfortable. The one thing that we own in this world, because even if you own a house, it's still bricks and still, it can fall down, it can be taken away. It can be... The one thing that we own is this body. It's a very fragile state, but we own it. The one thing that we should be entitled to do is to be comfortable in it, with a cock or a cunt, or a combination of both or neither, or whatever it is, we owe ourselves that comfort, so process anger in a way that enables you to feel comfortable, because I think if you feel comfortable because I certainly do, I feel really pleased with myself having read that bit of the chapter because I feel like I created a bit of poetic space about not being able to shell. I think it's that processing thing. That's what I would say. Thank you for a lovely question.

Audience Member 2: Hello, I found it really interesting, you said about writing what you write. You mentioned not having a voice. We studied *Trumpet* by Jackie Kay, who's in my opinion, it's a brilliant book that's written by cis author. We had a big debate about the ethics of that. I'm not asking you to answer, but just your personal opinion on how cis people represent trans stories and whether they're right there or whether that's a progression?

Juno: First of all, for me, it might be really useful if you would tell me what you think.

[laughter]

H: Can you tell they're a teacher?

[laughter]

Juno: Just in a sense-- just a really short thing. Do you think it's appropriation or not, or do you think it's fine?

Audience Member 2: I'm not 100% in all honesty. I feel definitely with *Trumpet*, I think the intention of it was-- obviously, it was published in 1998 and at the time trans voices weren't being represented at all. It's really well researched and it came from trying to give trans people a voice, I think, as that goes forward, I'm sure that, writers like myself write trans stories we're kind of stealing that because it's not our lived experience. I don't think I have the answer, I'm not 100% how I feel about it really.

Juno: I think you contextualized it really nicely in the sense that you talked about 1998. What I would say is because I'm old enough to remember 1998 and being fledged in trans in 1998, so what I would say is that, but what it was was in '98, so trans people weren't humans. They weren't seen as being human. Exactly the same as women's sexuality wasn't seen as being something that really needed to be embodied by women. A whole bunch of things, was it in the '70s, it was still legal for a man to rape his wife. History changes, but most of the way that history changes is that the people that should be talking their own histories, get the chance to talk their own histories.

What I would say now is that I'm not sure that anyone that's cis-- No, let me rephrase that. I'm not sure that there is anyone that's cis. I think that cis is a mood concern. I think that if we were all just accepted, that we were trans, and that trans at its most basic just means that we own gender, it doesn't own and perform us. We actually perform it sometimes in Judith Butler's terms, we perform it to reiterate who we are and where we are, and sometimes we perform it to be very definite about where we want to be the next day. I think that if we just moved away from that and we stopped dividing out trans because all trans people do is say, "You know what? This thing called gender is not working for me in the way that it works for you over there, and I'm going to do something about it."

All we do is take a set of circumstances and events because that's what trans is. It's a set of colliding events and circumstances and bumping into different things, different jobs, different emotions, cowardice, bravery, fear, and we make it become something else. I would say that if a cis person wants to write about transness, don't externalize it to write about somebody that exists outside of you, write about your own transness because we are all trans. Cis is the thing that doesn't really exist because that's the thing that has created Trump. Trump is an icon-- well, he's not even an icon, he's like a bit of iconography about what happens when patriarchy just believes itself.

[laughter]

Juno: Also, Trump is so-- I said to someone the other day. What I love about Trump is that if somebody takes the piss out of the size of Trump's hands, it flaws him, because that's how fragile it is. You know he's doing that thing? He's trying to be real on a grand level, admitted, so he's doesn't bring me there. That's why he does those things, I mean why does he keep tweeting? Because he's just trying to be real. We live in an age where you can go, "I'm going to blow the whole world up." Like when *Queer Sex* came out last year, I would get people sending me tweets online, or reviews to say, "You're sick" and, "You're fucked up," and, "You should do this." That's what people do on Twitter. They try and become real. They try and make their-- I think if you were going to write about trans, I'm happy for you to do that. I might one day write about being cis for a laugh.

[laughter]

Juno: I think that if you are going to write about transness, then do by looking inwards, and I think that might be really interesting because I bet you'll find some transness in you. It might not be about your genitals, it might be about how you feel comfortable in the role that whenever you go into-- remember going to school and people would say, "You do this," and, "You can't do that." It might be about any number of things but transness, is really just transgressing borders and sometimes they're obvious, sometimes they're genitals. Even then, we have been fed the lie that transness is all about genitals because that's what a surgeon decided in 1913, whatever it was, the way that you create a woman is to make and outie and innie, that's as basic as it was. Then you learn to... I remember when I started to transition all those years ago, people would give me advice about how to walk, how to talk. I even got people that would ring me after I go around their house for dinner, they'd say, "Listen, we're just ringing. We've just been having a chat. We feel like if you really want to be a real woman, you should probably eat slower and less." I didn't realize I was becoming a sparrow.

[laughter]

Juno: What the fuck is this? What is this notion of-- I think that that stuff would have happened to all of us in here. That's not a common experience to trans people. At the moment, gender is being still being divided down. Gender that that works; that's a lie, and gender that's broken; and that's a lie. Broken was trans and works was non-trans. We call it cis now and we shouldn't really because that still divides it. We, as trans people, should refuse to do that. We should say, "No, you're trans, look for your own transness," rather than doing the work for them because we do do the work for them. I think that would be-- I'd love to see your writing. If you wrote something about your own transness, that would be very interesting. I hope that answers your question because I think that's the most contemporary way of trying to answer that question.

Audience Member 2: Was the most contemporary... thank you very much.

[applause]

H: We've got time for one more question I think.

Audience Member 3: I was thinking about this earlier about what we've just been talking about really that leads into it I think. You were talking about, Juno, how the young people and the children keep on talking to you about a thing that they most want to grapple-- almost grappling with is what if they change their mind, or what if they want to do something differently in the future, and H, I think you briefly mentioned something about between 28 and 30, you do this, and then you do something else. Maybe I have a vested interest, but how do we get there? [chuckles]

Juno: I think that we get there by resisting the current set of debates that swirl around social media. Whenever people talk about young people, they talk about hormone blockers because there's this intensity and again, I think it's still top down. I also got the chance to interview lots of parents who are really-- One parent described themselves as being like a meerkat and that they were constantly on alert. They were constantly terrified for their child and that that's how they felt. I think what we've got to do is to fight some of the desires to pin this down. That's not to say that people won't have hormone blockers. That's not to say that. Quite frankly, I knew that at eight [chuckles]. I definitely did know at eight. It wasn't like a-- I think that what we've got to do is to get rid of some of the language that we've started to inhabit, so the language of de-transition because then we're inhabiting the A to B. Let's get rid of some of that language and just talk about it in terms of fluidity. All that transness really means is that we're taking this thing called gender and saying that I want to change it.

Maybe we should contextualize that always by saying, "Just for today. It might be for next week. It might be for the week after-- I'm actually going to do something with my genitals because my genitals, as they are now, I'm really happy with a cock and balls now refashioned. It's beautiful. It is. It's like a piece of furniture that's been upcycled and you go, "Gosh, I didn't realize I liked it, but now I really love it in the front room. It looks-- my body works now." We just need to extend the language, so changing the language that we use because the language that "we" use, and we've been taught to use- because I'm not demonizing trans people- we've been taught that we'll only be successful if we pass and blend and disappear into, and then what we're getting access to, that's not about trans equality. This is about us being allowed access to

patriarchal norm. That's all it is, so we have to fight that and we have to kind of fight for reframing the space that we want to occupy. I sometimes get lovely young kind of people saying, "Oh, Juno--" I've got like young gay men coming up to me and saying, "Oh, don't worry, I've got your back," and I think, "You know what? I was sucking cock for money before you were born."

[laughter]

Juno: "I'm not being crude, I really do not need you to have my back. I need you to look within yourself and see how much of this applies to you." Or, "I need you to look and see if you would countenance having an intimate relationship with a transman. I need you to do that kind of nuanced work." We need to change the language. We will only change the language when we all get a bit more confident and say, "You know what? This is a great trans life." I did a talk a while ago and somebody came up to me afterwards and said, I can't believe that they've said this, they said-- I was signing books. I think I seem like I'm quite happy and quite whatever, I don't seem sad. They come up and they said, "Oh, I can't think of anything worse than being born in the wrong body."

[laughter]

Juno: I looked at him and I just thought, "I can."

[laughter]

Juno: Actually, I can think of an awful lot worse. "That's coming up and saying something completely inappropriate because you're obviously not tuned into being in the space that you're in."

[laughter]

Juno: I think that we've got to get better at going, "You know what? We can be arrogant on our own terms. We can be cocky on our own terms. We can be confident. We can feel beautiful on our own terms" because trans people are innately beautiful. Often, schools will have this as their motto. They'll say, "Be the best that you can be. Dream and then become." [chuckles] That's what we teach kids but somehow for trans people, we haven't gone, "Fuck me. We're the ones that are doing this." Why are we being talked about on television, in the newspapers, like we're second-class citizens? No. Let's reframe it.

The only thing that I hope-- I kind of said this line and then when I read it, it felt like I was going to die and I'm not for a long time. I said this thing, that I feel that the only thing, the value of me is to try and create a bit more space before I go. That is the value of my work, my writing, my talking, whatever it is so that we can begin to occupy this space and go, "No. We're actually the bee's knees." Everyone else is really curtailed and straight-jacketed by gender. We can do something different with it."

Then if we choose to change-- I didn't always call my genitals an upcycled cock and balls. I love it now, I didn't. I went, "Vagina, vagina, vagina," but before then, punters would say, "Can I call it your lady clit?" It's like it's gone through any number of different realities. They've all been made real by language, by words. We need to realize, as

trans people, that we have ownership of the English language or of any language of words, and that we can shape them to be what we need them to be.

We don't have to do that in our position. We don't have to go, "Yes, but we're real. Real. We look real. Please accept us. Yes, we're all going to kill ourselves." I'm not saying that some of that isn't true. I'm not saying that. I was a drug addict for 10 years. Quite frankly, being a junkie is like a slow track to suicide, but we can reframe it now. That's what I think. Everyone should start doing that. That's what I think.

H: Thank you. Keep writing!

[applause]

Matt: So thank you for listening and I hope you tune in again for the next episode. Thank you, Ana, for being with me to listen to that.

Ana: Thank you, Matt, as well. Thank you to Georgia Mills for helping us with the editing, and also thank you to the Centre of Transforming Sexuality and Gender. Thank you. See you next time.

[closing music sounds]