Interview with Ceduxion Carrington

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**Julia:** Okay, it’s recording now. Alright, so we’ll go ahead and get started then.

**Ceduxion:** All right.

**Julia:** When did you first hear about drag, and what was your initial reaction to it?

**Ceduxion:** That is the most unique question I’ve been asked. Um, so I, I halfway came out at the age of 18, [laughing] as in I started telling my friends but not my family. And, uh, I was sneaking off to, um, gay bars in Springfield, Illinois, 'cause at that time you only had to be 18 to get in. So, my first experience at drag show was actually really, really good. Um, I met a drag queen named Crystal Knight from Springfield, and I wasn’t even doing drag at the time, of course, and she thought I was her nephew, I favored her nephew. And she pulled up a picture, and yeah, I really did look like it. So, her heart dropped when she saw me because she thought maybe her nephew was closeted and decided to come to the gay bar.

Um, I didn’t really have, like, an opinion of it. Like, I wasn’t, um... I don’t even know how to really describe it. Um, I didn’t think good or bad of it, but I enjoyed it, you know? And it was me coming out, and I enjoyed the show and I didn’t... at that point in time I never considered it. Um, it was just part of gay culture that I was being exposed to. So, that’s bas-- that’s basically it. But they were... the people that I met that night, they were all very welcoming and legendary to their area.

**Julia:** Excellent, that’s really cool, and that’s funny about the nephew thing.

**Ceduxion:** Oh yeah.

**Julia:** That’s something that would happen to me. [Laughs]

**Ceduxion:** We were almost dead ringers, so she had every right to, like, be worried, for a split second.

**Julia:** Okay. And then, so, when did you start performing as a drag artist, and why did you start performing?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, that’s a good one too. So, as I said, um, I hit the bars when I was 18. And the funny thing is that’s when I started performing, but not as drag. Um, in bigger areas there’s more of a performance venue. So, like, if you’re a male who performs as a male you’re called a, uh, a bioking, as in a biological king or a mister. If you’re a female who performs as a female you’re called a bio-femme or a femme fatal. So, I started out performing as a guy, and I joined that family of the queen who thought I was her nephew. So, I was a Knight before I was Ceduxion Carrington. So, I did, um, three years of that.

And then, of course, the excuse is Halloween. So, one Halloween I got in drag and, uh... and that was even before the career; that was just the first time. And then, after that, my best friend, her drag name is Chanel Carrington, and, uh, I took on Ceduxion Carrington shortly after. Um, the first time that I actually did it was for a same-sex abuse benefit show. And then it just kinda... it didn’t carry on, like, immediately after that. Um, another prominent figure in our community named Anita Mann, she was having a pageant, and she needed one more contestant. And I really wasn’t about the drag life, to be honest. I just, kind of, did it to do it as, like... like I said, the same-sex abuse was my start for it 'cause it was a good cause.

But my Auntie Anita, as we call her, she needed a, um, contestant for her pageant or she would have had to cancel it. And there was, like, pageant promoters from all over coming down to watch this preliminary. So, she asked me to do it, and I was like, "Hell no, I don’t even have drag." Like, I don’t have drag I just did the same-sex benefit show, um, abuse benefit show. That was it. And everything I had that night was loaned to me. So, she was like, "I got you, I will give you all the clothes and things you need, blah, blah, blah. I just need another body because I can’t have a pageant with two contestants. There has to be a winner, a second place, and, basically, a loser." At that time, if you didn’t have at least three contestants, you had to, uh, cancel your pageant. It’s not so much that anymore, but back then, that was kind of a rule.

So, she gave me all of the things that I needed. The categories were, uh, interview, evening gown, and talent. And I’ve always been a dancer or whatever, but long story short, I won the pageant. [Laughs] My first time doing a pageant, my first time really doing high in drag and all that, and I won. Well, she failed to tell me that by winning, it was a preliminary to a bigger pageant. So, um, if I wanted to step down, I had to give back the prize money, and I didn’t want to do that. [Laughs] So, um, that preliminary was to a state title which was called Miss Illinois US of A. And so, I fulfilled my obligations, uh, as the local bar winner, and then we made it to the state pageant and I got third in the state. So, that’s, like, under a year of drag, and I’m competing against veterans, you know, and I got third in state.

Well, from the time that I won the pageant to the time that I actually went to the state pageant, other bar owners or promoters were watching me and then they were asking me to come perform at their bar, which is known as a booking. So, I started traveling the United States. I was in different parts of Iowa every other weekend, and I was in Carbondale and I was in Springfield and I was in Missouri. And so, once that ball got rolling, I just stuck with it. I was like... and my expenses were being... not all of ’em, but some of my expenses were being taken care of. I’m seeing different places and it just... I just stuck with it, and here we are, still. 25, 26 years later.

**Julia:** That’s amazing, I love that story.

**Ceduxion:** That’s a long-ass story.

**Julia:** [Laughs]

**Ceduxion:** That’s actually still... that’s still the short version. [Laughs]

**Julia:** [Laughs] Um, okay, so how did your family, friends, and, like, any other loved ones receive you becoming a drag artist?

**Ceduxion:** Oh man. Well, my mother is hilarious, um, and I’m going to tell just a hair of a backstory. When I was coming out, I was more worried about her opinion of me, because my mother is the kind of lady that goes to church 75 times a week, and I was like, "Oh, here comes the Bible beating, here comes all the stuff." But I’m a mama’s boy, so any hurtful words from my mother would definitely hurt. But she definitely was not that at all. Um, I guess it’s because most coming out stories are horror stories. So, uh, my mom was like, you know, "I love you, you’re my son no matter what." Uh, and then she finished that with, "If anybody has to move out of this house, it will be your dad." So, she had my back, no matter what my father may or may not think. [Laughs] She’s willing to put her husband out for her boy. [Laughs] So, I’ve got a great mom.

Um, so I didn’t tell anybody initially. But you can’t hide things from your mother. I’m on the phone with my mom one day, and we’re chatting, and she’s like... we’re just talking, and she said, "Yeah, I went to the grocery store today, and I picked up some milk and some eggs, couple loaves of bread, I know you do drag, some soda, and some chips." I said, "What did you say?" [Laughing] She said, "I picked up some milk, some eggs, a loaf of bread, I know you do drag, some soda, some chips..." [Laughing] I was rolling. I was like, "How did you find out?" She’s like, "Don’t worry about it." [Laughing]

And then, um, she started going to my shows, the local ones, and she go to... go to my shows at night, and go to church Sunday morning. And, uh, she told her sisters and they started to... they never came, but they wanted to. Um, and then it got out that I did it, and more and more and more my family started attending my shows. Like, so I really didn’t have to tell them. They’re just like, "We want to go." So, I didn’t really have any obstacles.

The funniest one is my brother, is because he’s, he’s probably my biggest... one of my biggest supporters. But he’s a thug. And so, being stereotypical, when he walks in the gay bar everybody, like, clutches their purse and their pearls and their wallets 'cause he’s scary. And, uh, and then when I perform, he gets all gangster and it... and it scares... it scares the audience members. He’ll go, "Yo, that’s my motherfucking brother up there." [Laughs] And it scare—like, the people that who don’t know him, see this dude sagging in his little beanie cap, jumping up and getting all wavy. They’re like, "What’s this guy doing?" But it’s just my brother getting excited 'cause he enjoys the show. And it’s so funny because now he knows what a good show is. Like, he will go to a show with me, um, and be like, "Yo, she needs some help, Bro. Go talk to her," like he knows what... [Laughing] It’s so funny to hear him say that shit but... [Laughs] But yeah, I’ve got... I’ve got a great support system, so I didn’t even have to tell them; they were already on board once I started.

**Julia:** That’s awesome. I love that. Okay. And then, so where does your drag name come from? Like, you talked a little about the Carrington part, but where did you choose, like, your name?

**Ceduxion:** Hilarious. My first drag name was Kiwi. [Laughs] And, uh, there was a drink in the 90s called Fruitopia. I don’t even know if it’s still around. And my favorite flavor was Kiwiberry Ruckus. So, Kiwi was my... Kiwi Ruckus was my first drag name. And then I worked at a retail store called Von Maur, uh, doing security, which was funny, and, uh, I was in the women’s department, and I saw these... this, uh, label of clothing called Ceduxion and it was spelled C-E-D-U-X-I-O-N. Well, tradition in my drag mother’s family is your name has to start with C because we use the, um... I can’t think of the right word. Uh, like Chanel, the label, their emblem is two Cs back to back. So, we use that to represent the house of our family. So, my daughter’s name is Calexus, my other daughter’s name is China, Chalaya. So, as long as we can use the label for Chanel, that’s the word I was looking for, the label for Chanel, the emblem. And it’s not a stickler, you don’t have to have the Cs, but that’s just, kind of, what we do. So, I decided to change my name from Kiwi to Ceduxion 'cause I liked how it was spelled actually.

**Julia:** Yeah, that’s really unique and interesting. Okay. So, there’s a lot of different, like, terms for the types and styles of drag, and then, like, from drag queen to drag king, which you, kind of, touched on a little bit earlier, you know. And then, to glamor queen, male impersonator, comedy queen, bearded queen, you know, queer artist, bioqueen we talked about, camp queen, um, among, like, many others, you know? But are there particular labels that you would use to categorize your drag? And then, like, what kind of drag, like, do you do? What’s your style exactly?

**Ceduxion:** I’ve learned not stay in a box. I’m all over the place. I have never done bearded drag. But that’s just the school that I come from. And it’s hard for older queens to accept bearded drag. Not, not me. I’m not going to lie. At first, I was like, "What is this?" But immediately I dismissed it because drag is expression, and if you want to keep your beard on and do your makeup, that is your expression. Who am I to say that you can’t do that? A lot of older queens do have an issue with that. A lot of older queens have a lot of issues with the drag that’s going on now. But you can’t forget what drag is. It is accenting something that was normal. Like, that’s the whole point of putting on fake lashes. That’s the whole point of drawing your eyebrows to your hairline. Like, it’s accenting something normal. So, however you want to do it is fine.

Um, I’ve dibbled and dabbled in almost all those categories you've named. So, I like to be versatile because there’s always someone in the audience at some point that I’ve never connected with, and I like to try to connect with various people in the audience because our au-- a drag show audience is so diverse. There’s no way you could blanket the type of people that go to a drag show. So, I would like to be known as that performer... I won’t say successfully do other styles, but I attempt to do it, and I work on my craft, and I try to finesse it to make it enjoyable.

**Julia:** And then, just like the... so, how does this really impact, like, your life as a drag artist with you being versatile in your style and your drag?

**Ceduxion:** Um it’s actually always been my life. I just put makeup on. [Laughs] Like, okay, so, I’m going to bring up, like, stereotypes. Being African-American, if I go to a certain bar, and I’m singing lyrics to a song that people probably think that I shouldn’t know. But my mother raised me on country and gospel, and it took me getting older to realize, like, all these country songs I’m singing, my mother introduced me to it. And then, like, my blues, and my soul and R&B is my... and jazz, maybe not really jazz, maybe a touch of jazz, was my father. My brother introduced me to some hip hop and R&B and rap, you know? And we were the only Black... at the time, we were the only Black family in a predominantly white neighborhood, and that’s where I got my rock and roll and my metal and my... like, I have a blend of all of that. And then I did show choir, and that’s probably where my Broadway and my camp came from. Like, drag... like, all I’m doing is putting on makeup and being myself, really, to tell you the truth, like, I just... I have dabbled in everything. I sang, I did choir, did all that stuff.

And I wouldn’t change it for the world because if you can only do one type of thing, you’re limited, and I don’t feel limited. Kind of, like, some actors are typecasted, like Kevin Hart plays the same role all the time. He’s limited. I’m not saying he’s not good at it, but he would never be able to play, like... Uh, I don’t say never, that was rude but, like, people might look at him differently if he played a war veteran or something like that. So, this has always been me, and like I said, I wouldn’t change it for the world.

**Julia:** So, what I’m hearing is, like, in regards to what or who, rather, has influenced your drag, you would say, like, that music really had a big impact because the show choir thing, you know... and like you...- like you just said, like, it’s always been a part of you, you’re just putting on makeup. Um...

**Ceduxion:** Yeah.

**Julia:** So, do you have, like, another way that you want me to, like, word how drag has really influenced your life, or is that a pretty good...?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, music is that, but, like, I’m also a huge nerd. Um, I do cosplay, and I incorporate that into my shows. I’ve been Wonder Woman, I’ve been a female Iron Man, I’ve been a female Spider-Man, I... I don’t know. So, I feel like this is what drag is to me, like, this is what I tell people all the time. Drag is a sum total of my life’s failures. All the things that I aspired and wanted to be when I was younger, I’m able to convey that through drag. I wanted to be an artist. I draw, I make up my own superheroes. Um, that’s how much of a geek I am. And I draw, I mix my music myself, um, I dance. I’ve choreographed numbers for myself and other drag queens. So, like, all the things that I wanted to do was... when I was little. I wanted to be an artist, I wanted to be an architect, I wanted to be an actor, I wanted to be a backup dancer. Um, I get to do all those through my craft. And, like, though I may not be on Hollywood, I still am successfully living my dream, plural dreams, 'cause there was so much I wanted to do. 'Cause, like, when you do drag, you have to sell what you’re giving, so I do monologues, I do parts from movies. So, like, I get to do all those things I wanted to do.

**Julia:** That’s really cool. Thank you. Do you consider drag to be political? And then, why or why not?

**Ceduxion:** As in community-wise, like, political... I mean, to a degree, like, definitely there’s, like, drag politics in pageants, and I’m sure, like, in RuPaul’s Drag Race, I’m sure there’s some politics. Like, I get looked at funny 'cause I’ve never watched a single episode of RuPaul’s Drag Race, and I do drag, and people are like, "Are you kidding me?" And yeah, of course, I’ve seen clips, I’ve seen the memes, um, I know tons of the girls. Like, I knew a lot... I always know who’s on what season or whatever. But there’s so many girls that I met before they’re on there, you know, I just... I don’t watch it. So, I always get in trouble for that. But I’m sure that there... it sounds like things are political, like fan-favorites and sometimes it's... I hear from my friends that's been on a show, things... some things are already predetermined on how the outcomes are gonna be.

**Julia:** Oh...

**Ceduxion:** And you're gonna [overtalking] okay with it. Um, so, definitely that, I’ve seen it in pageants. So, you know, some... I’ve seen girls win pageants based on their name and not give it the effort that they should have, or maybe a new girl did better than a veteran girl, but they don’t want to give it to the new girl. So, it’s... there’s definitely that kind of politics involved.

**Julia:** Okay. Um, and then, how often do you perform and, like, where do you perform, I guess, the most?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, often? Woo! Not much now. Good ole COVID. Um, we’re just now getting the ball rolling. I mean, the most is my Central Illinois being... 'cause that’s where I’m based, so Decatur, Springfield, Champaign, Bloomington, Peoria. The gay bar in Champaign did close after... four years ago, so not so much is there. I call us homeless drag people. We should hold signs saying, "We'll do drag for food," because Champaign had its gay bar for 35 years and, like, literally we don’t... it’s like we don’t know what to do. It’s hard. I mean, we do it at a lot of straight venues or whatever but, like, we don’t have home.

So... but I still travel mostly Central Illinois. There’s a point in time where I was in Indiana every weekend. Um, I was in Iowa at the begin-- a lot in the beginning of my drag career. I’ve been to Texas, I’ve been to Virginia, Missouri, Wisconsin. That’s where actually... I actually won a national title, so I... nobody can take that away from me that I went... kind of, like, a Miss America Pageant, so I went national. And I am known as Gay North America International Supreme. That’s a long title but that’s mine.

Um, so I’m trying to think of where else I’ve been. I’ve traveled quite a few places. Not as much as I like but... but Central Illinois is my home base. Yeah, that’s pretty much... pretty much it that I can think of on the fly.

**Julia:** And then, what all goes into, like, getting ready for a performance? I’m sure there’s tons of things, but if you want to give like a brief overview of all that goes into it, then that would be great.

**Ceduxion:** I can do that. Um, number one in my opinion, is the venue. Um, and that breaks down into whether I’m familiar with the venue or if I’ve never been there before. But if I’m familiar with the venue, I’m familiar with the people so then I tend to know what to bring. And then it depends on the music selection and then the combination of the outfit, the jewelry, and, um, the hair [laughs], and then how much of the performance you want to give. And that sounds kind of bad to say but, like, if it’s a restricted area, I’m not bringing a lot of stuff. Like, some... of course, I... you don’t need me to tell you, some venues are bigger or smaller than the other, some dressing rooms are bigger and smaller. Um, and it also depends on how the show is ran. 'Cause sometimes you have time to do elaborate costumes or sometimes the shows move at such a high pace that you had better be able to throw something on quick and still look nice and maybe request the assistance of someone else, but not a whole lot. But if you got, like, four entertainers between you, then you can do more elaborate costumes. Sometimes... and it depends if they take a break in the show or if it’s a straight through. Yeah. So, those are the things that, uh, that I factor in when getting ready for a show.

**Julia:** And then what are some of the biggest challenges to doing drag and being a drag artist in general?

**Ceduxion:** Right now, just being 44 years old. [Laughs] Uh, I always got ideas and, uh, brainstorming, I always got that going, but executing, executing them is getting a little harder. [Laughs] I’m known as a dancer, the... my high kicks are, are now middle to low kicks. So, [laughing] it’s just getting old. And it kind of sucks, but I always... I compare drag to being in a, uh, professional sport, you know, everybody’s going to be on top for... people are go-- you’re gonna be on top for a while, but then there’s rising stars, and then you get older. So, I mean, you just got to, you know, roll with your time, and when your time sets, do it gracefully or whatever. But I’m still pushing through.

**Julia:** Uh, is there, like, uh, anything unique to the drag scene where, like, you live compared to the other places that you’ve traveled to?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, um, I want to start by saying this, when I travel out of town I expect higher standards, better drag than my area. And it’s not putting down the queens in my area, it’s just like, I’m out of town, I’m ready to be wowed by some out-of-town drag. Um, so I say that’s about a 50/50. There's similarities and then there are differences. Um, the further away you go, the more you see, um, females performing as females, males performing as males. And there’s even pageantry systems to, to those who perform in that manner or that style. But it’s like... it’s 50/50. Sometimes, I see a lot of what I see at home, and sometimes I’ll be like, "Oh, they don’t do that back at home," so...

**Julia:** And then, what has this pandemic, like, meant for your life as a drag artist?

**Ceduxion:** Well, when it initially hit, it was a financial slap in the face because I had so many shows lined up. I perform at all... almost all the major universities in the Central Illinois area, college shows are amazing, and they’re fun, and it’s great energy. Um, and I’ve been doing it for years, like, double-digit years. So, that hurt. Um, but it also gave me time to sit and reflect. I enjoyed the time off when we couldn’t do anything. I did not do anything from my home, I know some girls did. Um, I just... I had my own opinion about that. I just wanted to sit and relax. I don’t feel like that I should... I don't know, like, people missed me, but I didn’t feel like I should do it from my home for the simple fact that, you know, times are hard, so I don’t want to... I... this is my personal opinion, I didn’t want to set up a Venmo and be like, "Tip me while I perform at home." Like, a lot of people are questioning where their next dollar comes from.

Now, what I did do with my drag granddaughters is, like, we performed once on TV... not on TV but, you know what I mean, live on cam, for people’s enjoyment. Like, we didn’t put Venmos up. We did it for the passion of the art to inspire people, to make people be lightened up during times like this, for people who have lost their jobs or can’t work, it's like, "Here, we’re here to give you entertainment. We don’t have our hands out asking for tips. We want you to enjoy what we do." Now, that’s not disrespecting any queen that did put a Venmo up. That’s... that was just my personal feel about it. I, I didn’t feel right doing it. But I also know a lot of queens do drag for a living, and when that pandemic happened, you can’t get unemployment. [Laughs] I had two jobs, so I was able to get unemployment, you know? But people who do drag as their source of income, when the pandemic hit, I understand why they were performing and putting Venmos up because there went their source of income.

**Julia:** Okay. And then, how do you identify in terms of, like, sex, gender identity, and gender expression outside of drag?

**Ceduxion:** Um, like, I have a rotted, rotted eyelash, on, but I identify as transgender. I dress every day. Like, what I do every day... my makeup that I do every day is totally different from my stage makeup. And yes, Marcus is around, just not as often. Um, not necessarily questioning, um, my id-- my identity, but taking my time to make sure. I know people who have went from male to transgen-- transsexual female and then went back to male. So, like, I don’t want to be that person to transition and then undo it. I know somebody who's done that three or four times. [Laughs] Like... and I’m... that’s not my place to say, "What are you going to do?" but, like, that’s got to get expensive.

**Julia:** So, what pronouns do you use in and outside of drag then?

**Ceduxion:** Um, depends on who speaking to me. If it’s someone who doesn’t know me, um, I prefer they say she while I’m a transgender. Um, if I’m not in face, um, definitely he. But people that grew up with, I know sometimes it’s hard, I don’t get bent out of shape about it, you know. It just... it really just depends on who’s talking to me. And I... and if I feel that they’re being disrespectful, I’ll let them know. But I... like I said, I know, some people who, like, I went to high school with, they’re not in the culture, it may be hard for them to adapt, or they only see me as Marcus. And then if, if it gets to be too much, I’ll say, "Hey..." so, I mean, I’m pretty lenient. I know some people are very tight wound about that. Everybody... just everybody’s different.

**Julia:** Um, how did drag influence your sex and gender identity?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, I was very anti. I used to run and take it off soon as I started. [Laughs] Um, then this, this comfort just set in, and that’s about the best way that I can describe it. I just got comfortable. And then, I like to dress... like, the way I dress, I like putting my outfits together better when I’m a female, like, everyday outfits, like my little body dress [unclear], I like all that better than just putting on jeans and a t-shirt or whatever, I don’t know. I don't know, I just... it just, a comfort set in that wasn’t there before, and so I rolled with it. I mean I don’t... I don’t think you should question it. I think if it feels good then do it, you know? That’s the only way you’re going to see.

**Julia:** And then, how did drag influence how you think about gender?

**Ceduxion:** Totally expression. I just had, actually... this sounds funny, but I had this conversation with my Verizon rep. 'cause he was asking about gender identity, and he... and he was talking about his son. And, you know, his son identifies as a boy, but he was like, "I don’t know what I would do if he said, 'Daddy I identify as a girl.'" I said, "Well, then, you just be there for him." I said, "You have lived your life. Times are different now from when you grew up." I said, "It’s about expression. You don’t know how someone feels on the inside. You just know your perception. You see what you believe to [unclear] a little boy and that’s how he should identify. So, you don’t know what’s going on inside." So, I believe drag has allowed people to express not just what people see on the outside, but you get to see who the person is on the inside as well. And I think it has accelerated in the past couple years, and it’s good that people are finally living their lives for themselves instead of, you know, conforming all the time.

**Julia:** And then, how did drag impact and change your life?

**Ceduxion:** I’m sorry, say it again? Yeah...

**Julia:** How has drag impacted or changed your life?

**Ceduxion:** Oh man. I am overwhelmed by how people receive me. Like, I may not be famous with Brad Pitt, but I’m definitely somewhat of a celebrity. And, like, people get excited and run in place and scream and hug me, and I’m like, "It’s just me," like... [Laughs] But, they... like, drag definitely is a form of celebrity, most definitely. Like... so, I mean, I, kind of, was popular... I was popular in high school. Drag has taken that to a whole ‘nother level.

And, like, also, drag has, like... I realize what it does for people. It’s not just entertainment. Case in point, there’s a girl that came up to me couple years ago and said, "I want to thank you," and I was like, "For what?" And she’s like, "Well, you’re one of my favorite drag queens." I said, like, "Thank you." She said, "But I come to every show that you are at." And I said, "I appreciate your support." And she goes, "No, you don’t understand, your entertainment makes me so happy, and when you’re on the microphone, it makes me happy, it makes me laugh." She says, "You provide my escapism."

And I don’t use drugs, and she was addicted to heroin. So, there was a time in Champaign, 'cause we had shows every week, she was coming to Champaign every week to the shows, and that’s how long she was clean. She looked forward to going to the shows. My performance, for whatever reason... and that was the first time I actually had interacted with her. I hadn’t interacted with her previously. But for whatever reason, whatever I did on the microphone, whatever I was doing, kept her from using drugs. And you never would think as a performer that you are doing more for someone than just performing, until they say that. And I’ve had other people come up to me, not as deep as that, and be like, "You know, I was having a bad day, but watching you today got rid of that." So, that’s why I think queens needs to appreciate the art more than just for the money.

**Julia:** Wow, wow. Um, so did drag impact your confidence as a person, uh, and, like, did... like, even when you’re outside of drag, does that still, like, impact your confidence?

**Ceduxion:** I probably would... I don’t want to say boosted it 'cause I never was, like, not confident, but it definitely, I guess, enhanced and boosted at the same time, but I don’t want to seem like that I was a shy or, um, introverted person, 'cause I never was that. Um, but I just... I say if you’re in drag you can get away with more things, for sure. [Laughs] 'Cause people just... like, you slap someone on the butt, and they be like, "Ha, ha, ha," and if I wasn’t in drag, they may not. [Laughing] It might not go over so well. Um, but it definitely makes life more fun. [Phone ringing] Sorry about that.

**Julia:** That’s good. That’s good. Okay. So, if you could go back in time, like, to the beginning of your drag career, what advice would you give your younger self?

**Ceduxion:** Oh god. Oh, well, everything is a learning process. Um, it sounds bad to say, but some of the people I associated with... I think that’s in everybody’s past, whether it’s drag or not. Some people you associated with, you kind of wish you hadn’t. So, like, I definitely would have done... not put so much faith in certain people because there’s a saying that all advice is not good advice. And some people will help you, and some people will help you fail. So, like, you have to question people’s intentions, which is really bad to say, but in retrospect, I see that a lot of people, when I started drag, didn’t have my... didn’t have good intentions. So, I definitely would have dodged that bullet.

**Julia:** So, I’m curious if and how your social identities have impacted your experience of drag, or vice versa, how drag has impacted your identities. Uh, I was wondering if you could share a little about how one or more of your social identities, such as, like, you know, your gender, race, class, age, geography even, religion, sexuality, or anything else, you know, um, and the interaction of the social identities even, have impacted your experience of drag, or how has drag impacted your experience of this social identity? So, I know we talked a little bit about gender, uh, already, but if you want to touch on any of the other identities or [unclear] I didn’t mention.

**Ceduxion:** Um, I mean, I have... like, I get asked like, "What is it like to be..." for lack of a better word, gay?" And I say, "All the ignorances that plague heterosexual society, plague homosexual society." I was like, "Some of the stereotypes are in both societies." Like, so I identify as pansexual, um, and that blows a lot of people’s minds. [Laughs] And, uh, even some other... like, and I get from straight people, and I get it from other LGB--LGB-- ah, LGBT members. And then, my drag granddaughter said something to me, uh, 'cause my drag granddaughter now has a trans man husband. And the only reason that my drag granddaughter has that is because of something I said. And it was because I was like, "Why do I have to limit my menu?" I said, "My menu is determined by my peers, and I don’t like that," I said, "I like what I like, and I don’t like the fact that I have to justify it to anyone."

And... 'cause he was blown away that I was still sleeping with women. And then, after I said that, I don’t know how many years later, he starts dating a trans man, and he comes up to me, he says, "I would have never done this if I would have never heard you say that.” And I say, you only got one chance on this earth, and I’m not even living my life to full capacity, nobody is. But I am glad that I’ve been able to break down the barriers and the walls that have been implemented by society and live my life for myself.

So, I get stereotyped for still being Black, and then as a Black queen, that's stereotype. Like, I get... I don’t know, like, I get judged on if I decide to do Britney Spears. But I tell people, "Music is not label. You think I shouldn’t do Britney Spears because, I guess, she’s not Whitney Houston or whatever." I do whatever music I want to. I don’t have to be in a box. And that drag has... by me being that bold and that loud, other people have kind of... it kinda has helped other people have the smoke clear. I just went through this conversation with my... I have a lot of drag kids, but another granddaughter that was like, "I want to do Jill Scott, but I don’t feel like I should because I’m a skinny white girl." I was like, "Music is for everyone. Nobody says, 'That’s Black people music, that’s white people music.'" "Yeah, but I don’t want people to be mad at me in the audience to think that I..." I was like, "You’re not being disrespectful because you like the song or you like the artist." I said, "If somebo--" I said, [unclear]. But drag is like being a DJ. You’re never going to be able to please everybody in the audience; all you can do is try. There’s always going to be somebody doesn’t like what you do, what will you play, da-da-da. I was like, "Do Jill Scott." So, now they’re going to do Jill Scott.

So, like, there’s just all... all the societal pressures exist within the community, LGBT community as well, I guess people all expect because we’re trying to get others to be open-minded, that there’s not closed-mined people in our community, which there totally is.

**Julia:** So, then, how do you define drag?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, I always say drag is accented. And I tell people. "If you take a pen," and I’ve said this for years, "if you take a pen and put a dot on a piece of paper, and then you put that pen back on that dot, and then move it to the left or the right, all you did was accent that dot, and made it longer. You dragged it. You dragged from one point to another point, and that’s what drag is." It... the minute you put on lashes, the minute you put on a ponytail, you're accenting something from its normal state, and that’s all drag is to me. It's... and... well, that’s all, but, of course, like I said, expression, but that’s how I define it.

And I say, the only time, the only time how your drag matters is if you’re in a competition. Other than that, express yourself. When you enter a competition there’s guidelines, there’s boxes [unclear] check, so then it does matter how you look, perform, convey. But if you’re not doing that, it doesn’t really matter what my opinion is or the next person’s opinion is, express yourself, drag how you want to.

**Julia:** And what do you think the purpose of drag is?

**Ceduxion:** Well, definitely, like I said, expression is number one, but it’s, kind of, have changed over the years. Mentalities have changed. And now, now I feel like... if I’m being honest, I feel like drag has become a commodity. Like, now straight venues are seeing that drag is a cash flow and, um, so now it’s a... it’s a business venture. Um, I’ve said for years that drag is about entertainment not orientation, and I prob-- I think I was the first queen in my hometown to do a drag show not at a designated gay bar and continue to do so across my city. So, I was like, "You guys, Las Vegas figured this out years ago." Las Vegas had drag queens hosting shows and events a long time ago. They weren’t in gay bars. They understand that it was entertainment. Now, the rest of the country is starting to catch on what Las Vegas has been doing for years. So, drag is turned into a business venture as well. Um, but like I said, expression first, most definitely.

**Julia:** Do you think that drag is, like, sexual, um, and if you do, like, how, or really in, like, what way do you think it’s sexual, and also, like, why?

**Ceduxion:** In, in a perfor—uh, depending on your performance, I, like... I mean, if you see a queen perform Rihanna S&M it’s not going to be in a ball gown, you know? So, I mean, I think it depends on the song that you do, but I don’t believe that there is sexual gratification, or that they’re turned on by doing it but... I can’t speak for everyone; I know that I’m not. It’s just basically trying to, I mean, like, do what most of the world does and sell sex, you know? Um, but maybe someone may enjoy it more than just a performance. I... but I can’t say that I’ve met someone who was turned on by it.

**Julia:** So, you mentioned that you’d never seen an episode of RuPaul’s Drag Race but that you have seen clips and you know a lot of the girls. Um, but how do you feel about RuPaul’s Drag Race? I mean, I guess, even though you haven’t seen it, how do you feel about...?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, uh, it’s catch-22. I know, I know, it’s on... if it’s on TV, it’s about ratings. [Laughing] I already know that. Um, I’m not going to say this person’s name, but one of my friends that was on it was kind of hurt because they prompted her to act a certain way, and she became unpopular on the show. And she is 0% not that person that they had her portray on TV. So, I know, I know it’s about ratings. But I feel it’s a... it’s good that it allows drag to enter everyday people’s homes, I guess. But it’s bad because, if you’ve never been around drag, then people are going to assume that that’s how all drag is, you know? So, that’s... it’s a catch-22. [Laughs]

**Julia:** If you could change one thing about, like, drag, or the drag scene, or the community, even, what would it be and why?

**Ceduxion:** Man, I don’t know what I would change. That’s a very good question. I don’t think that I would change anything. I think... I think growth is key, and you have to go through experiences to grow. So, I wouldn’t change 'cause you have... 'cause some of the obstacles we encounter is gonna make us stronger. Uh, but I don’t think I would change anything. Um, yeah. I don’t... I don’t have an answer other than I probably wouldn’t. Like, I appreciate what I have went through with drag. I appreciate the, the barriers that I have knocked down. I wouldn’t want to be easy, because that contributes to... me breaking down those barriers has opened doors for others, you know what I mean? You have to acknowledge the struggle, most definitely.

**Julia:** What do you think are misconceptions that people have about drag?

**Ceduxion:** [Laughs] That all of us are bitches. [Laughs] And then RuPaul’s Drag Race doesn’t help that either. [Laughs] Um, that every drag queen wants to be a woman. And it’s, kind of, popular... like, it’s, kind of, popular now to date a drag queen, but when I started, like... and this is before I even dressed every day, like, if I talked to a guy and then I told him that I did drag, he didn’t want to talk to me. Like, if I talked to a gay guy and say, "Hey, yeah, I do drag," they’d stop talking to me. So, it’s not quite... so, the mentality has changed, so that’s good. But, yeah, I think that’s just a really big misconception that most people assume that you want to be a woman, or that we’re going to be bitchy.

**Julia:** Where do you think that those come from?

**Ceduxion:** Oh, well, stereotypes are in place because there are people out there that fit that mold, and that’s... that’s what's... the stereotype is pushed more than the, the contradictory people, you know what I mean? So, like, I just think that that’s always... just kind of, like, when it came to two men dating, the feminine one was automatically the bottom, and then the masculine was automatically the top. And that’s, kind of, 80s-90s thinking. And then... or if two lesbians dated, and both of them were of a masculine nature, then, then definitely they shouldn’t be together. And that wasn’t just heterosexual society, that was the LGBT society too. But things have changed. But like I said, the world we live in will push stereotypes much, much harder than... they’ll be like, "Hey, not all people are this way," you know? So, I think... I think that’s why, I think that’s why that’s out there.

**Julia:** Mm-hmm. Uh, what do you think would help to change this, like, these stereotypes?

**Ceduxion:** Ah, oh, I always say that about any and everything is life’s experience. Like, you can go on TV and say, "Not all queens are bitchy," but people are going to pay attention to the bitchy queen, 'cause the bitchy queen is going to get the most attention. You can go out there and say you know, "All country people are not racist," but then the racist country guy spouting all the slurs is going to get the most attention versus the guy that saying... that’s talking peace, you know? Um, so life’s experiences, and let’s just hope that people don’t adhere to those stereotypes and meet a queen that’s not bitchy or catty like that.

**Julia:** Mm-hmm. So, last question, uh, if you chose one thing you want people to know about or learn about drag what would it be?

**Ceduxion:** Please appreciate it as an art form 'cause a lot of work goes into it. From picking the songs... from picking the songs, the outfits, the costumes, to, uh... I... like, one of my... one of my biggest hindrances is when I get on stage, I fall into this box, and I, like... and when I perform, I kinda, sorta do the same moves. And then, when the show’s over, and I dance around, I do these moves, and I’ll be like, "Why didn’t I do that during my performance?"

But when you do drag and you’re performing, you have to remember to lip-sync, you have to look for tips, you have to make sure your earring didn’t fall off, you have to make sure that your hair doesn’t fall off. Like, so you got all these things going on while you’re trying to entertain. And then, if you feel a bobby pin get loose or jewelry starting to slip, then you’re like, "Oh, oh, I’m about to lose a earring." So, then you’re trying to keep a calm face on stage and be aware of everything that’s going on with you at the same time. It’s a lot. That is multi-tasking. They say people don’t multitask, but trying to make sure you lip-sync and dance at the same time, get your tips, make sure your hair stays on, and your ear... like, it’s a whole lot. A whole lot. So, definitely, appreciate drag as an art.

**Julia:** Yes, for sure. Well, thank you so much for your time today. Again, I really, really appreciate it. I loved hearing your story and learning all about your drag and your community. Very honored to have spoken to you today.

**Ceduxion:** Thank you. I’m glad we finally got... I’m glad the Zoom went good. [Laughs]

**Julia:** Yeah, me too, me too. Well, have a great rest of your night, and thank you so much.

**Ceduxion:** Thank you. Let me know how it goes, and if you need anything else, just send me an email.

**Julia:** I will. Thank you so much.

**Ceduxion:** Thank you, Julia, have a good day.

**Julia:** Bye.