Interview with Jakki Love

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**Baylee:** Create a transcript.

**Jakki:** Yes.

**Baylee:** So, should be recording now.

**Jakki:** Yes. I see that in the upper left corner.

**Baylee:** Okay, cool. I’ve never had to do that. I’ve been in the Zooms where other people recorded, but I’ve never had to record. So, that was... yeah. Um, what’s your major?

**Jakki:** Yeah, so, I am a mass communications major with a focus in media management, promotions and sales. And then, I did my time at theater. So, I do have a theater minor.

**Baylee:** I love that. Is theater like... did you do theater in high school?

**Jakki:** Mm-hmm.

**Baylee:** Like, were you in drama and then, like, now in college, is it big... is it like a big difference?

**Jakki:** Yes. Which I will continue my answer. I actually have to switch over to this router. I have two routers in my apartment. It’s...

**Baylee:** Okay.

**Jakki:** I just want to make sure we won’t have a loss of connection. So, give me one second...

**Baylee:** No problem.

**Jakki:** Alright. I should be back now.

**Baylee:** Yep, I can see you.

**Jakki:** Cool, cool, cool. But yeah, so, um, what was your question? I’m sorry.

**Baylee:** Um, Is it like... is the theater...

**Jakki:** Theater, yes.

**Baylee:** From high school different than college?

**Jakki:** So... Oh definitely. I think that, like, theater as a career was definitely not for me. And I mean, probably as your interview questions go on, I’ll probably answer that anyways about, um... just I thought that I needed, like, a performance outlet and a creative outlet through theater. Like, I was like, "Oh my god, I love doing this, and this is going to be my career forever." And then I said, "No, I hate this." [Laughs] And then I left. Um, yeah, and then I ended up leaving, so now I love it so much better.

**Baylee:** Mass comm is just like... it’s always an amazing degree to have because there’s so many... like, so many things you can do. And I think that’s the best kind of degree, is one that you are not limited.

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, what’s your major in?

**Baylee:** Um, mine’s Psychology. And then, I have a minor in Sociology, which is why we are here today, because I am in The Art of Drag, which is a Sociology course at SIUE. This is like the second year he’s taught it. Um, but...

**Jakki:** It's a [unclear].

**Baylee:** It’s really good. We watch Drag Race on Fridays, and we’re watching Season 9.

**Jakki:** That’s so interesting. Like what other stuff do you watch, other than just, like, Drag Race?

**Baylee:** We watched Paris is Burning. He shows different music videos from different drag queens, like, queens that were on Drag Race and, like, different... like, different videos and...

**Jakki:** Have you seen Party Monster yet?

**Baylee:** Yes, I think so.

**Jakki:** That is Michael Alig and St. James... uh, James St. James talking about the club kids scene back when RuPaul... before RuPaul was famous.

**Baylee:** It sounds familiar. We did, like... that was, like, in the beginning of the semester. We did a lot of, like, Paris is Burning, and, like, looking at RuPaul before and after. And like, it was funny because he referred to him as Charles for the first few classes. And at first, I was like, "Who are we talking about?"

**Jakki:** Yeah. [Laughs].

**Baylee:** [Laughs] 'Cause, like, just... 'cause, like, no one ever calls him Charles.

**Jakki:** Right. RuPaul/Charles. Yeah. I know, it’s so interesting 'cause I feel like Ru is definitely, um, one of the queens that, kind of, use their own name for their drag name, which is, like, who you refer to them as in and out of their character. Is it a character? Is it an extension of them? All the fun questions to [unclear].

**Baylee:** Don’t you do the same? Like isn’t your...?

**Jakki:** No.

**Baylee:** So, what is your real name?

**Jakki:** So, my government name...

**Baylee:** Yes.

**Jakki:** Um, is Jeremy.

**Baylee:** Jeremy. Okay. So, then your drag name is Jakki Love, right?

**Jakki:** Mm-hmm.

**Baylee:** Is that how you pronounce it? Okay. I just love the spelling. I thought it was so cute.

**Jakki:** Yeah, so, um, I don’t know, do you... is there a certain way that you want to start? Or how would you...?

**Baylee:** Oh.

**Jakki:** Sorry. I was like... I feel like the answer, or some of the answers that I’ll have right now, I want to make sure that you are able to... if you have, like, a formula. I don’t want to mess that up.

**Baylee:** For sure. Okay. So, we could start with the first question. When did you first hear about drag, and what was your initial reaction to it? Do you remember the first time?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, I’m a younger person. I’m 22, even though I’ve heard...

**Baylee:** Me too.

**Jakki:** [Unclear] think I’m old. I am younger. I should... I have to tell myself, I’m a younger person. So, I learned about drag, actually, in... okay, side note, how explicit can I talk? 'Cause I wanna make sure that I’m, like... also want to be...

**Baylee:** Honestly, I think you could be as real as you want to be, because the bottom line is that’s how life is, you know? Like, I don’t think that there’s... I don’t think my professor would be happy if I told you to sugar coat things, if that makes sense.

**Jakki:** Cool.

**Baylee:** So, if you want to do you, that’s okay. When I make the transcript, I can always, like, you know, put, not spell out the whole word or something, you know, whatever. So, yeah, it's just...

**Jakki:** So, I learned what drag was as probably not the right age to be looking at this. But I was on YouTube, and I was probably around... oh, I’m so bad with times, probably, like, 10, maybe a little bit younger, maybe a little bit older. I was around that, like, pre-tween/tween age. And Willam, Detox, and Vicky Vox had a song on YouTube called This Boy is a Bottom. And it’s essentially a parody on, um... oh, what song? Alicia Keys. It’s a parody of Alica Keys, This Girl on Fire, and just, like, talking about, like... so, if you’re not familiar, a bottom is a sex position, for the most part, and it’s just like someone who is submissive, and it’s usually someone who... not... I’m sorry. That is not correct. That is not correct. A bottom is just a sex position with you primarily being on the bottom, usually receiving anal.

And in the gay world, bottoms are used as... and this is why I corrected myself, bottoms are used... the word... if you’re, like, coded as a bottom, I feel like it’s more of a like a derogatory term, but like a derogatory term in gay terms. So, it’s like, oh, you’re submissive, like, you’re the girl, you’re the femme, you’re the weak one in the relationship, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And that’s just, like, a gay stigma that you need to get over.

Anyways, not that... point of the question. But I was watching This Boy is a Bottom, and so I was just like... I was like... I saw these people, and I was like, "Wat is this?" like, "Are these women?" Like I didn’t understand it. And then, I saw another clip, um, I believe it was on Tumblr at the time. [Overtalking].

**Baylee:** Oh, good old Tumblr. [Laughs]

**Jakki:** I know. Um, it was on Tumblr, and it was the clip from Drag-U, and it was Raven and Jujubee, and it was that whole clip of, Is that My Ring? So, it was like a little clip of like, uh, Jujubee and Raven going back and forth about how Jujubee stole Raven’s... or Raven stole Jujubee’s ring, but it wasn't actually Juju's ring; it was Raven's ring, but Jujubee wanted the ring, so she pretended that Raven stole it. Funny video. Um, but that is from Drag-U. So, that is how I discovered it as the first part. And I was like, "Oh, okay, I've seen... okay, like, this is new, I'm seeing this for the first time."

And then, when I was older, about my sophomore year, I think it was about my sophomore year of high school, Season 7 of Drag Race was happening, and it was the final three between Violet...spoiler, I guess, uh, Violet, Ginger and Pearl, and, like...

**Baylee:** I’ve seen that one

**Jakki:** Yeah.

**Baylee:** You’re fine, you’re fine. [Laughs]

**Jakki:** [Laughs] Um, my friend, Abby was watching it. And she was like, "Oh, be team..." And I was like, "Okay, I don't know what this means, but sure, we're going to be Team Pearl." And so, I, kind of, watched the... I don't think I watched the finale, but I saw the outcome of who won. And then. what ended up happening is I went back and started watching new seasons. And then, I watched Season 8 live, as it was happening. Um, so that was, kind of, my start with drag as I guess, like, a younger white gay of just like, "Hey, Drag Race, this is fun." Um, so that was, kind of, my introduction to drag

**Baylee:** That music video that you’re talking about, we actually watched in class, and we’ve watched Drag-U too. Because I remember that music video, and as soon as you said that, I was like, "I’ve seen that. I have." {Laughs] It’s a great one. It is.

**Jakki:** Yeah. [Laughs] I mean, as, like, a... yeah. Yes, it’s good... it’s a good one. [Laughs] I'll just keep it at that.

**Baylee:** Also, you don’t have to worry, 'cause my professor’s talked about tops and bottoms in class too. Plus, like, I mean, like, I know anyways 'cause I’m a lesbian, so, shocker. Um...

**Jakki:** I was just like, I also...

**Baylee:** No, I wanted to hear your, your description, no matter what.

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** Like, I wanted to know, because I think it’s always interesting to know what other gays think. Like, I think it’s...

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** Because everybody knows the same terminology, but everyone has a slight variation, if that makes sense

**Jakki:** Right. And I also am just, like... I guess I also am thinking of, like, my editorial side, that I’m like, I like to explain the terms as I’m speaking, 'cause I know, if this is getting published to something, like, obviously, this is code language that we all know, but if someone is reading your work or reading or listening to your work as you’re interviewing me, I just want to just, like... I’m involved in so many damn student organizations that I’m always like, "I have to be this and show this presentation and blah, blah, blah." So, if I am doing too much, please let me know because I...

**Baylee:** No, I love it. I love that you're doing too much. [Laughs] I don’t even think you are. You’re doing fine.

**Jakki:** Good.

**Baylee:** Okay. So, the next ques--

**Jakki:** Yeah. I can also... Yeah, I can also be more personable. Thank you for giving me that pass.

**Baylee:** [Laughs] Uh, the next question is, when did you start performing as a drag artist and why did you start performing?

**Jakki:** Yeah, so, I started in March of... wow, I guess it would be three years now. So, three... about three years ago, my gay little ass was performing at a show called Gender Galleries. And what Gender Galleries primarily is, at the time... now it’s a little bit different this semester because we’re online, but it showcases under 21 performers because, as you know, the art of drag is a very fun art, but it is limited on who can be a part of it, for the most part, I feel like. So, obviously, online and out of the bar, anyone has accessibility to do drag. But if you want to start getting... I feel like if you want to be famous, and if you want to start getting your name out there, you need to perform in a bar. Well, the time of the internet's really tricky.

Um, but before TikTok, it was definitely more... it was harder to get recognition and do drag and to understand what drag is unless you went inside a bar. And drag does not allow for under 21, for whatever reason, for the most part, because drag is a bar scene, and if you’re not 21, you can’t go into a bar.

So, the Gender Galleries gave the opportunity to give under 21, all performers, there’s a priority towards 21 under, but it wasn’t just for them. And it was just like a space for people to do drag. So, I had my first opportunity at Gender Galleries, and I... what... your second question was, why do you continue?

**Baylee:** No. The second question was, why did you start?

**Jakki:** Why did I start? Yeah. So, I started at Gender Galleries, and I... the reason I started is because I had, like, a fascination of drag, like, throughout high school, as I was talking about before. And I was actually a part of Instagram Lip-Sync Races, which was really cringy. Um, it was essentially, like, drag without the theatrics. Like, I don’t know, it was... it was fun to do. But looking back at it, I was like, "I don’t think I’d ever do that." I'd do that... I would do that at the age I was at. So, like, 16 and older, but I would not do that as a 21... like, 19 plus, no.

But, so, I was doing Instagram Lip-Sync Races. So, it was essentially, someone gave you a song, and you record yourself lip-syncing to it. So, I was, like, performing that way. And then, I ended up, like, just watching Drag Race, being, like, a Drag Race super fan, and I was like, "Oh, I don’t know if I ever want to do it, but it’s, like, fun. Like, I, I, kind of, want to try it." And when I was at my home at the time, I didn’t necessarily have the space to, like, explore drag 'cause my family... uh, I wasn’t, like, fully out, nor, like... I was, like, kinda, no... yeah, I wasn’t out when I was living at home, and, you know, I can’t do drag if I'm not even like... they don’t even know that I’m [unclear], how are they gonna know that I, like, want to dress up as another gender, or all that fun stuff.

So, I ended up just going to ISU, continuing with Drag Race. I... my drag mother, uh, Holy Marina, I ended up following her on Instagram and saw that she went to ISU as well. And I said, "Oh my goodness, I’m going there in the fall. I hope to meet you sometime." So, I be-- actually became a fan of someone and then became their friend. And they, kind of, got me into drag and got me booked at Gender Galleries. And ever since then, I just continued going strong.

**Baylee:** Well, that’s nice.

**Jakki:** Yeah.

**Baylee:** I think that...

**Jakki:** [Overtalking] great reminiscing, ah...

**Baylee:** The families are a big part, a big part of everything. Um, okay, so, the next question is, how did your family, friends and other loved ones receive you becoming a drag artist?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, as I said before... so, I actually came out as gay... No. I came out as bisexual because at the time I generally...

**Baylee:** Don’t we all?

**Jakki:** I was going to say, at the time I generally was attracted to women, and it wasn’t like a thing of like, I... you know, kind of, like, the gay scare, where it’s just like, I’m bi now, gay later. Like, I know that is, like, a big stigma that a lot of people have. But I believe that at that time, like, in high school, I wasn’t lying to myself that I did find, like, women attractive. Now, I just don’t.

And I think, aside from the question that you didn’t even ask me, but sexuality in general, I think it’s just like a whole spectrum that needs reevaluation, that, like, you don’t have to just stick to, like, being gay. Like, I think a lot of people are, like, pansexual for the most part, but it’s a societal thing to, like, put labels on to each other and, like, enforce stereotype, blah blah blah. That's a whole 'nother discussion.

**Baylee:** I totally... no, I totally agree with you. Like, I personally don’t really like to put labels on myself for my own sexual identity because I feel like it makes people look at you differently based on it. And that’s not... who I’m with is not who I am, if that makes sense.

**Jakki:** Right. Well, it’s also just like, it’s conforming to a... I don’t know, low key, I think it's a... conforming to a patriarchal ideal that, like, you are certain types and you act a certain way, so, therefore, your sexuality needs to be this. And it’s like, no, it doesn’t. Like, I believe that when people are married to someone for so long and they end up being... end up being gay, it’s like, were they lying to themselves for so many years? Sure. Maybe. Were they not? I don’t know. Sexuality, it can develop, like, it’s a trait that people develop over time. Like, why does that... why is it only certain things that are, like, black and white, but everything else can be fair game? Like, whatever.

Anyways, um, so when I came out as gay, like, I came out to my dad on the phone on National Coming Out Day, and I was like, “I need to tell you some...” I wasn’t crying, but I was like, “I need to tell you something, I’m gay. No, I’m bi.” He was like, “Oh okay, I kind of knew that.” And I said, “Okay, cool.”

**Baylee:** Kind of knew that.

**Jakki:** I was like, "As long as you have that," I was like, "then it’s fair." I’d rather him say, "I...", which, personally, I’m, kind of, like, I don’t really care if people assume, I know it is dangerous to assume, like to say like, “Oh, we already knew,” 'cause it’s like, okay, that’s kind of a slap in the face. But, like, I was really happy when my dad said that, 'cause I was like, I’d rather him respond than that... than be like, "Don’t ever come home."

Um, when I came out... so, I actually came out to my Aunt Leslie first, and she was... she, like, changed the subject, but it wasn’t, like, in a demanding, spiteful way. It was like a, "Okay, it doesn’t change the way I’m going to treat you. Like, let’s just continue talking. It’s not a big deal to me." Um, so, like, part of me was, like, really happy to get that. But then part of me was like, "No, I want to talk about this," like, "No, I want to... let’s talk," like, not just change the subject. I mean, she didn’t fully change the subject, but that’s how that happened, and that was in high school.

And then I just kinda came out to, like, my family here and there. And then, other than that, like, I think my friends kinda knew at a point. I never received any backlash from anyone that was like, “Oh, you’re gay, you’re, um, this, that and the other.” But I will say, when I did come out... come out as a drag queen. When I started doing drag and being more open about it, I did receive a lot of backlash, um, not in a, “You’re getting separated from the family; we’re not talking to you” type of way, but definitely as in like a, “Oh, you want to do that? You sure you want to do that?" Like, "Okay...”

**Baylee:** Like a side-eye?

**Jakki:** [Overtalking]. Yeah. So, um, is one of your questions, how I got my drag name?

**Baylee:** That’s the next question. Where does your drag name come from?

**Jakki:** So, these two will tie into each other. So, I got my drag name, um Jakki Love... I got my drag name from my mother. My mom passed away when I was seven years old, and it was two days right before my birthday. So, I was seven about to turn eight. And her name was Jacque-- I can’t even say her name, Jacqueline, uh, Kim Wilson. Hello, full government, let me give you her Social Security while I'm at it, too. Um, but, yeah, so her name was Jacqueline, and she always had different spellings of the name Jackie. And when... before she passed, she spelled her name J-A-K-K-I. And so, for me, I’ve always, kind of, had, like, my mother’s spirit around, 'cause she was someone who I idolize and still to this day idolize on what she was given to the world and what she gave and who she was. So, for me, I was thinking, like, because drag is, like, the female impersonation of it, I wanted to incorporate her as in, like, another thing to have her next to me.

Now, I’m not, like, a cis male. Like, I identify as a man, but I’m also nonbinary. So, I do identify as they/them. My preferred pronouns are he/they. But I really... I think I’m more on the they side. And so, for me, that’s why I was, like, embracing the femininity 'cause I wasn’t able to fully do that when I was younger. And so, when my dad and my two brothers heard that, they got really mad at me that I decided to choose the name Jakki, 'cause they thought that I was, like, tarnishing her name or turning it into something else and, kind of, having that selfish viewpoint. And I was like, "You know, I hear what you’re saying, but I’m going to have to be the one to say, it’s not about you in this moment. Like, it’s about me and how I choose to live my life and how I choose to embrace a memory of my pa-- of my past mother. So, although you all are very sensitive about the subject, this is how I reclaim the death. This is how I push strong to keep her by my side. Like, I’m sorry that you have your own idea and your own viewpoint of our mom, but this is mine and this is what I want to continue," you know?

So, on that side, it was, like, really negative. Um, they--- my brother, Nick, actually ended up coming to my first drag show.So, it’s definitely not, like, a thing of, they don’t want to see it. It’s a thing that... well, my dad is also very like... about it. Like, he’s been like... he really would be like, "Ooh". But I’ve never had, like, the experience of, like, being beaten or told I’m fucking disgusting and this stuff like that. Like, something I do really appreciate and love about my dad is, like, although he doesn’t get it at first, and he’s very vocal about not getting it at first, he does always come around to understand it.

So, I think it’s still, like, a thing to see me in drag. He doesn’t necessarily want to see me dressed up as, like, a quote-unquote woman, but I, I know that over time he’s going to become more comfortable with it, 'cause he’s already been very comfortable in it... with it. So, at the start, like, it was very like, "Why are you doing this? This is like... this is gross, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And then, I ended up winning a pageant, um, last year. And I was going to co-compete in Texas. And it was really big of him to, like, make a Facebook post saying how proud he is of me, like, as a drag artist. And I was like, "What? That is so, like, full circle."

**Baylee:** That’s so sweet

**Jakki:** And something that is also really crazy is, like, I’m gra-- you know how we’re graduating soon. So, my... we’re having a walking ceremony, and I was... I had the opportunity and the privilege to be fully vaccinated. So, I was like, "I’m [unclear] vaccinated and keeping safe. I might as well go and walk, 'cause they’re having a walking ceremony." So, I’m actually gonna walk in full drag. And that is also, like, a big step because I was like... I know I’m doing it for myself in, like, a selfish way, but, like, I had to let my dad know that is going to happen, and I want him to be there, but, like, you know, I’m going to be in drag, so be prepared for that. And he was like, “I mean, I’m not going to stop you," like, "This is your thing," like, "Okay.” So, I think, coming full circle from that is definitely really special, and I hold to my heart.

Um, as far as, like, my Aunt Leslie, like, she was really supportive and loving. So, my mom has 11 siblings, [laughs] and I was, like, pretty close to, um...

**Baylee:** Whoa!

**Jakki:** So, my Aunt Leslie is my... technically my godmother, and I’m not religious, but I always treated her as, like, a second mother. And so, she lives over in Champaign right now. And, um, so, I’ve always kept her close, and she’s always been supportive of me and loved me and blah, blah, blah. So, like. when I started doing it, like, she was, of course, like, uh, one of the number one fans. And, um, she’s just older. So, she... she would, like, come out to the bars, but it wasn’t, like, her favorite thing 'cause it’s very loud to her and, like, she’s very, like, sound sensitive and very, uh... she’s just older. [Laughs] So, like, she’ll come out and, you know, hang out, come, show her face for, like, an hour, half hour and then head out. And I think that’s more than enough for me quite honestly 'cause it’s like... I mean, as long as you’re there and showing up and... she would also rather, like, take me out to dinner after or, like, take me out to dinner before or, like, take care of me before, just 'cause the events, like, they just get overstimulating. And I, you know, I respect that. But she’s always been there for me and been a supporter.

And, like whenever my, uh, cousin Ray, is giving away stuff, my Aunt Leslie is just like, "You're not there. So, we have some fun stuff you could probably use for your drag." Or, you know, she’s always, like, trying to re-gift things 'cause she has her own, like, philosophy of just, like, reusing, reducing, uh, if someone else can use it, give it off, you know, that kind of idea. So, I was always given stuff that they were getting rid of, but now. it’s always just like, "Oh, I found this, this might be useful for your drag, blah, blah, blah." And she gave me a sewing machine, which I use now and that's just, you know, sew a bunch of outfits and everything.

And, um, yeah, so overall, like, uh, other than, like, the little hesitation from my dad, like, I haven’t had a problem. I, I think my grandparents who are really, really older, like, I was really surprised that they’re not, like, up in arms about it. But they’re also actually, like, a little bit on the, um... keep it... not, like, keep it behind closed doors, but it’s, like, "We’re not just going to address the problems in here, but we’re... we love you, no matter what" type of thing. So, it’s like, even if they disagree with it, they might make some comments here and there, but I’ve never had a problem with, like, my grandparents saying anything like, "What you do is disgusting. What you, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." Now, if they said something behind my back, that’s a different story. Do I think that they have? No. Well, maybe shady comments, but not, like, anything detrimental.

But for the most part, all friends and family that I’ve had, like, very supportive. I never had any friends that weren’t like, "What... why, why would you do this? This is weird. This is this, that and the other," 'cause if they did, I wouldn’t be their friend. Um, I’ve always had supportive friends. And although I always do too much, um, I know, like, they do a lot for me as well. So, um, yeah, no... nothing really bad has happening. And then, that was, kind of, the origin story of my drag name.

Oh, so, I got my drag name, so I can [unclear]. If you’re... if you’re typing this up, it’s going to be for the second question. So, I got my drag name from my mom. I also didn’t want something stupid like Wacky Jakki 'cause then like... drag names need something to roll off the tongue. And I was like, "Oh god, I don’t want to just be Jakki. I want something to, like, incorporate something. And I ended up choosing Jakki Love because it not only represents my love towards her, it’s just like loving what she did, but I think love also is an extension of, like, what I want to give to the world and my love of drag and my love of entertainment and my love of just what I do in my passion. So, when you step out to the... when I step out to the stage and showcase Jakki Love, like, I’m here to just show the love and enthusiasm that I have, but also, literally, sharing the love with the room. And that’s something that I lo-- love, you know? Yeah. I just didn’t want something stupid like Wacky Jakki. Here comes Wacky Jakki on the stage, like, okay...

**Baylee:** Your name is everything. And you could end up getting a name like Alaska, and you don’t even say the other half of your name, because...

**Jakki:** Thunderfuck, yeah.

**Baylee:** Yeah. Like, half the time, Alaska doesn’t even say her full name, so... but, I mean, you know she got that from actually a weed strain..

**Jakki:** Yeah.

**Baylee:** For her name? Yeah. When I heard that I was like, "That’s so funny." Okay, the next question's very long, so if I need to repeat it, just let me know.

**Jakki:** Sounds good.

**Baylee:** There’s a lot of terms and types of styles for drags, from drag queens to drag kings to glamor queens and others... or, no, male impersonators, comedy queens, bearded queens, queer artists, bioqueens and camp queens, among others. Are there particular labels you would like to use to characterize your drag? What kind of drag do you do, and what is your style of drag?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, I always love to critique. So, I’ll say for myself, and then I’ll say for those other labels as well. So, for me, like, I think drag is drag and anyone can have accessibility to it. I identify as a drag queen because I feel like I am more of, like, a female, um... female impersonator, like quote-unquote female impersonator, because, you know, what exactly is a female? Um, so for me, I definitely feel, like, queen, very feminine, very embracing that. So, my style, I always call myself a drag queen. Now, if there is a space for other people who are not drag queens, so, like, male impersonators and stuff like that, I would just call myself a drag artist.

Now, overall, I believe that the labels are good, but also, kind of, bad at the same time. I think there’s some outdated ones. I know you said bioqueen, like, I don’t think that is a term that should be used as much because it’s saying that you’re biologically a female, which leaves out, like, trans people. And it’s like, what exactly is, like, a bioqueen? And so, uh, newer terms that we've started is AFAB or AMAB, so, assigned male at birth, assigned female at birth, just so it gives more of a, um, opportunity just in that, like, you’re biologically a female. Like, what does that even mean? Like... because if it’s a standard of what science says, science says a lot of it is nonbinary. Like, there are nonbinary people, there are intersex people. Like, these types of labels exist, but a lot of the time we choose to ignore them.

And so, a lot of the... I think, overall, we’re all drag artists because the art of drag is just the exaggeration of gender expression. So, I don’t believe you need to be a man, born a man, and you have to do a female impersonation in order to be a drag performer. And you also don’t need to be a man to be a drag queen. Like, there are successful drag queens out there, Creme Fatale, Fay Ludes, um, two of the names that I... come to mind. Um, they’re just, like, AFAB performers or AFAB people who are drag queens.

And then, you have just drag kings who are, like, completely underrepresented. Like, I don’t hear about any of them. Like, and that’s, that’s a problem. Um, I mean, thank goodness, Tenderoni, who is a famous drag king in Chicago, just won Drag Queen of the Year at Alaska’s pageant and really helped with the representation of drag artists all over. And you have Landon Cider who just won Dragula Season 3. And I just think it’s, like, important to understand where these labels come from and understanding how they can develop. Because as time goes on, we realize that everything is evolving, and gender doesn’t need to be just tied to... or drag performance and gender expression should not be tied to sex and your sex organs and stuff like that.

And I feel like that is a lot of the narrative still [unclear] like, "Drag queen, so how does it feel to tuck?" It’s like, "What do you...? you don’t need to tuck to be considered a drag queen." And even with, like, trans, uh, performers like Aurora Sexton, like, she’s fully a drag queen. She happens to be trans, but she’s also a drag queen. Like, she... they don’t need to be, like, labeled, and they don’t need to be excluded from this, that and the other. Like, it is what it is. But that’s my own low philosophy talk about that. I’m a drag artist, drag queen, very femme, hello, royalty, you know, all that selfishness.

**Baylee:** So, you would say that your style is just drag?

**Jakki:** Style, sorry. I always get stuck in tangents. Okay, so my style for me, um, that’s something I’m still discovering. I just know that when I’m in drag, I love to be very pretty and, like, my definition of pretty is not... definitely not what other people’s definition of pretty is. Um, but I think I was, kind of, stunted growing up, not being able to explore my queerness because I just don’t know fashion, so I just don’t know what looks right. Um, but I try to be very... I like the campy comedy side to things. Um, I consider my kind of comedy as, like, a dad pun, like, dad joke humor, and I, kind of, like to explore that in my drag. Um, but if you go on my Instagram, it’s mostly just, like, for the most part, cookie-cutter drag of like, I am feeling pretty in this, and I want to look glamorous. So, I think my style in the future, and if I were to develop with like a skill and unlimited funds, I would love to be just the high glamorous person there is, without, like, the standards of, like, you need a pad, you need to have boobs, you need this, that or the other. And like, I just want to look pretty doing what I want to do.

**Baylee:** Does the type of drag that you do affect your life as a drag artist? So, that’s, sort of, piggybacking off the last question.

**Jakki:** Yeah, um...

**Baylee:** Do you think it limits you to any extent?

**Jakki:** Like... Yeah, I mean, I definitely don’t think so because I’m very open as well. Like, if we’re talking about styles of drag, like, I don’t mind doing something that’s, like, quote-unquote alternative or spooky, or something that is, like, quote-unquote, which I hate this term, critical fish. Like, I don’t like to limit myself in what I can do. Um, if I want to paint myself green or, like, paint myself a certain way, like, I have no problem doing that. Um, it’s just not my specialty, and it’s not something that I would just necessarily do all the time.

I would say, like, personally, I don’t like sticky stuff on my face. So, doing, like, SFX of, like, blood dripping mouth, like, you know, pipe coming out. Like, I could do that for a look. It’s probably not going to be my first choice, just because I hate texture. Um, but I like to keep very open. So, if there is an opportunity for me to have, like, a certain category that they’re looking for of like, we want you to look like a beast, we want you to look like this. Like, I was like, "Okay, let’s see what references I have, and let’s make a look out of that." Um, yeah, I just try to be open. I don’t ever limit myself.

**Baylee:** And I think that that’s the best way to, sort of, look at it, is to try new things. Because if you get really stuck in one sort of idea, then you’re not really... you’re going to be able to, like, not be able to express yourself the way that you’re able to...

**Jakki:** Exactly.

**Baylee:** Just so many different ways. Um, **s**o, who or what has influenced your drag? I would assume your drag mother, obviously, influenced your drag a lot.

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, I have two drag mothers, actually. Um, so Holy Marina definitely helped a lot with my makeup style and, kind of, understanding, like, that glamor side. Um, I would also say, like, my other drag mother, Kitty Banks, has also helped influence a lot of, like, my dance performances and stage presence and understanding, like, how you obtain stage presence. But aside from those two, um, I really love Bob the Drag Queen and Monét X Change.

**Baylee:** The Drag Queen.

**Jakki:** Those two are really... I do keep close to my heart, because when I was still understanding performance styles and understanding my drag, those were the two that I would idolize. Now I was watching Monét before she was in Drag Race, and when I heard that she got on Season 10, it was so iconic. But I definitely do look up to them a lot and have a understanding of how their performance have that [unclear].

And as far as, like, look wise, my boyfriend is also a drag artist. Their name is Tory Chiffon, and I really do idolize what they do with their drag, because they always have a vision. And I feel like, quite honestly, if it was not for my boyfriend, I would not be in the part of my drag career now. Um, they have styled wigs upon wigs for me. They have helped me understand how to sew. They have understand me... like, they just helped teach me how to do drag as they're learning themselves. And I do pay, like, a lot of homage to them because I, I can say strongly, like, I would not... I would not be where I am at without them.

And, um, they always help keep me in line. Like, "Does this look good? Does this help my style? No? Okay, cool." Um, so, they are definitely, kind of, someone who helps push to the looks to keep it a little more elevated. But as far as, like, my own personal point of reference, like, I love like... I don’t really show to my drag, but I love, like, the plants and, like, the bright colors. And, you know, I have watched different, like, animated movies and different anime and just, kind of, having, like, obscure things about it.

Um, I’m a huge gamer, so it’s, like, understanding what types of video games... okay, if this is a green look, this reminds me of computers and stuff, like, binary code, green bina-- Oh, let’s do, like, a cool computer look, having wires and stuff. So, I try to just, kind of, make sure my own point of reference is a little more obscure, but that also goes back into the dad joke thing. Because if I can make a pun out of it and think of it differently... of a category differently than someone else can, like, that’s something that I want to do. Like, how Jan Sport came out in her tool look in tulle with power tools. Like, that’s, kind of, the way that I think of just, like, what is a different way that no one else is going to think of it? And then, when they say it, they’re go—they're either gonna go, "That was smart", or I love the reaction, "Oh, that’s so stupid," you know? Like, kind of, just, like, son of a bitch, like, uh, okay, we’re doing this.

**Baylee:** I think it’s, it’s always very beautiful when you can grow with somebody else and you grow together with your passion, and so, I, I really am jealous for that. [Laughs]

**Jakki:** I know, I definitely... uh, I love what I have and I, I try to not take advantage of it. 'Cause I know a lot of people don’t have it, and it can... I mean, not as quickly, but I mean, realistically, it probably can go at any time.

**Baylee:** I think it’s always... you have to live in the moment, and you have to make sure that you are thankful for everything you have with every day that comes, because you don’t know what tomorrow brings.

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** And you don’t know how much time you have with somebody. And I think a lot of people look at, like, relationships nega-- negatively after they end. But the bottom line is you shared something very personal and very beautiful with that person for a while. And so, it’s not... there’s no reason to look at it negatively.So, the next question is, do you consider your drag political?

**Jakki:** Oh, of course. I feel, like, no matter what people say, drag is political. And although I wish it wasn’t, it is. And I think every time you get into drag, you have the power to say something. And if that’s speaking up for something that’s right, which people should, um, you have the power and the privilege, I wouldn't... um, not everyone, but I would say, you have the power and the privilege when you’re in drag to say something and speak up because, realistically, you’re in drag, like, eyes are set on you, whether you want them to be or not. And it’s just sad that we have to live in a world that, just because I want to put on some makeup and, and some hair, like, I automatically become a political statement. But I believe that’s what it is. So, for me, that’s, like, why in this interview, I become so, like, teachy to you. And I... like, I apologize if I’m trying to come...

**Baylee:** No, no, no.

**Jakki:** [Overtalking] or anything, but this is realistically, like, why I talk the way I do, is because drag has so much power and potential to make something of it. And I feel, like, some people aren’t utilizing it as much as they should be. Like, I don’t know, a lot of gay people don’t like drag queens, but a lot of people idolize them. So, like, we have the power to help make change. Like, I don't know, I, I really do believe that drag is political, and I do try my best. So, every time someone is gonna listen to me, I’m gonna talk about issues that need to be addressed. I also am, like, gonna have a good time. So, not every time I’m gonna be speaking, I’m gonna say like, you know, "We need another stimulus bill." But, like, also, if I have the opportunity and the space to do it, like, I’m gonna speak up.

**Baylee:** I think a lot of it has to go back to what you were saying earlier with gender, because gender is just so political. So, anything destroying the norms surrounded by gender is going to inevitably turn more political in nature.

**Jakki:** Right. And I think, also like, because gen—or because drag is the freedom of expression, of gender expression, like, okay, so then, what is gender expression, and how do we evolve that? And I think that's what comes with the political side of it. It’s, it’s you’re... giving you the opportunity and the space to speak up about stuff that needs to be talked about.

**Baylee:** Um, the next question is sort of a big one. There’s, there's parts to it. The... So, I’ll read it a few times. The initial question is, sort of, like, can you talk about your life as a drag artist? But then, there's subsections, like, are you part of a drag family, which you’ve told me about. How often do you perform? Where do you perform? Um, what goes into getting ready to perform? What are the biggest challenges in doing drag and being a drag artist? And is there any way or anything unique to the drag scene where you live compared to other places in the country or world? Um, also, this one’s a new one, what is the COVID-19 pandemic mean for your life as a drag artist, which you’ve, sort of, talked a little bit about.

**Jakki:** Can you ask the first question of that?

**Baylee:** Yes. So, the first question is, are you a part of a drag family, house, or collective?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, I’m a part of what we call the halfway house, and it consists of myself, Kitty Banks, Holy Marina, and then, Jessie Jones, and then, um, some people who are not in drag or drag artists, um, my friend, Aaron and my friend, Guido. Now, they do have drag personas. Erina Lee Underwood, Teener, Tina Slut. Um, and then, my friend Guido had one. They had to... they couldn’t do drag due to family reasons, Uh, it’s a [unclear] situation. Anyways. Um, but yeah, so they... that’s, kind of, our family, just, kind of, be, what, six of us.

And I know that there... I don’t know, I mean, there’s not, like, a reason that we don’t expand, but I would love to expand the family. And that’s, kind of, just, like, our, kind of, start. We started here in Bloomington-Normal, and the idea behind, like, the halfway house was it wasn’t like a... we’re a household that all look alike. We have, like, our own different styles and different things that we do with our drag. So, it’s not, like, you come to a show, it’s gonna be, "Oh, we’re all, like, high performance, high kickflips" and stuff like that. Like, it’s like you’re gonna get a variety of different genres and whatever. And what was the second question?

**Baylee:** How often do you perform, and where do you perform?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, pre-pandemic, I was performing, probably, like, once or twice a month, depending on it. 'Cause I was a full-time student, so, it wasn’t, like, I could just drop whatever. It was like a weekend thing. And I also worked, too, so it wasn’t, like, so easy. Um, but I performed a couple times here at the bistro, as well as Chicago. I love Chicago a lot more to perform than down here, um, just because, like, the drag is more diverse. The drag is also a lot more competitive in Chicago, so you have to work harder in order to get a booking. Um, but I think, overall, once or twice a month, Chicago or the bistro down here in, uh, Bloomington.

**Baylee:** Okay. The next part is, what goes into getting ready for your performances?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, is that, like, how it takes to get into drag, or I’m already in drag about to go on stage?

**Baylee:** I think they mean, like, getting into drag, like, makeup, and, um, costumes and things like that. And then, also, I mean, like, getting ready to get on stage, like, what do you have to tell yourself? Like, do you... is there, like, something you go through, like a ritual maybe?

**Jakki:** So, I can ans—yeah, I can answer that. Cool. So, getting in drag, just showered, just shaved my face, putting on my moisturizer and I'm getting ready to do the mug. Mug can take an hour and a half to two hours. I have, like, started becoming a little more speedy in it. Um, I know some people... like, Trixie Mattel, she can do her makeup in an hour, Kim Chi can do her makeup...

**Baylee:** I love Trixie. That’s my idol right there. All of Trixie’s videos I watch, um, just... Okay, keep going. Sorry. [Laughs]

**Jakki:** You’re fine. Um, so, like, for me, I would say, like, an hour or two hours doing my makeup. Um, I have done my makeup in an hour and 15 minutes. So, like, it really just depends on, like, how much time I wanna give and, um, how quickly... so, if I have to get ready quick, like, we gotta do... we gotta do things a little quicker. Um, but yeah. So, that’s when I just do my makeup. And then, getting into costumes and stuff takes about 45 minutes to an hour, probably less. I think it takes more time just to make sure my glue is secure or like what is secured... or, my wig is secured, um, because I, kind of, have, like, my own process of just, like, spring got to be putting something on there, letting it sit, letting it soak into the skin, making sure it’s not coming off, bobby pinning it.

Um, I actually have, um, my pads in, like, Spanx shorts. So, I literally just put those on like a pair of shorts, and then you just put on your tights. So, like, that can take, like, 10 minutes. It really doesn’t take too long. So, if my tights are all laid out, I can just put them on and get going.

Um, so I’ll put on my padding, tights, and then, depending on the piece, uh... actually I’ll say it doesn’t take me an hour; it probably takes me around 30 to 45 minutes to get into costume. And it also just depends on what I’m wearing. If it’s something like a dress, you just zip it in... slip it in, zip it on, then we’re fine. I don’t have a problem putting on heels. And then, I would say, the wig can always take a little bit longer. I would say the wig does take about 20 to 30 minutes because you have to let that glue sit and make sure it’s not going anywhere.

Um, so, if I... I have been in shows that, like you need to perform and then immediately go change your outfit.So, like, I have had times where I’ve had to change my outfit in under 20 minutes, full head to toe, not makeup, but full head to toe, everything, in less than, like, 10, 20 minutes. Like, it happens, and you just gotta do it. '

Um, so, I do have, like, that experience. But I’d say overall in drag, I like to give myself about three hours, or... if I have it. You know, it depends on how, how quick I need to get ready. Um, if I know I have a drag show, I like to give myself, honestly, like, five hours, and it’s just, like, if I’m done, then I just get to chill out and just drink water, get to eat, get to do that. If it’s something that I have to get ready quick, um, that’s what I gotta do.

**Baylee:** Okay. So, the next question is, what are the biggest challenges when doing drag and being a drag artist?

**Jakki:** Oh, I’m sorry, I forgot to ask your second question. So, before stage, I just, kind of, hype myself up. I’m like, "I’m going to have fun. This is going to be fun. Like, everybody’s going to laugh. Everybody is going to love you. Like, you got this." I also miss in-person drag so much because I’m... I love my friends and I love watching... like, I have such a love for drag and watching it and watching performances and doing that. So, like, for me, I’m just like, I love to be a hype man and, like, a hype person, if you will, and just like, "You got this, you’re gonna do amazing. Stop fucking doubting yourself. You’re that bitch." Like, "Get the fuck up there, and you’re gonna fucking kill it." And then, they go and kill it. And then, I tell them, "See, told you, bitch."

Um, so I just, like, I think, more importantly for me, although drag has a very selfish and vain self, um, I think it’s also, more importantly, about supporting your queer friends and, you know, if you’re not queer, maybe there’s straight people out there doing it.Like, just support those who are doing it, um, if they deserve the support. I mean, if they’re nasty, rotted, like, don’t give them the time of day. But I genuinely am, like, give the support to those who need it. You know? There’s a lot of doubt on, like, what... and it’s a very selfish game out there. Like, people are gonna have doubts of they’re not gonna be good enough or they’re not gonna be this, that and the other. And it’s like, "Build up your friends, make friends, make this like a fun space. Don’t make this a negative competition. Like, I’m better than you, look at this, this, that and the other." Like, what are we? We’re drag, drag performers. We’re literally putting on costumes to get dollars from people. Like, it’s not that serious.

**Baylee:** Yeah. Like, we’re all here to have fun, good time and express ourselves, like, not to topple over each other for no real...

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** Benefit, I guess, besides, like... you know?

**Jakki:** Yeah. I just say, for the most part, we’re queer people. Like, we’ve already dealt with so much shit in our life. Let’s not add to it.

**Baylee:** Honestly. Like, there’s so much hate from the outside, why create hate on the inside?

**Jakki:** Exactly. And I think also, like, 'cause you were saying that, um... which, I guess is my question is, what is your preferred pronouns?

**Baylee:** Um, she, she/her, I would say.

**Jakki:** She/her? So, you... uh, so, my understanding is you identify as a woman, and you’re a lesbian.

**Baylee:** Mm-hmm.

**Jakk:** Now, I can...

**Baylee:** [Unclear] I... so, I guess... I guess my preferred...

**Jakki:** Or queer, let's say queer.

**Baylee:** Yeah. I mean, I go by, like, fluid. Just... I don’t really like to... 'cause, I mean, I don’t really like to label it, 'cause I feel like if you say you’re bisexual, then there’s, like, the stigma. And if you say you’re...

**Jakki:** Stigma. And that’s where I was about to go with that, is like...

**Baylee:** Yeah. And that's like, where I'm, sort of, at, because, like, I've, I've, sort of, experienced what you've experienced. Let's just... let's just get into this. Um, I've experienced what you've experienced, where my sexuality has changed, you know? Like, there was a time in, in my life where I specifically only liked women. Like, I couldn't feel anything for guys. It wasn't something, like, I did. And then, as I've gotten older, it's, sort of, evolved more and, like, I've been back and forth, but not necessarily in a negative way. And I feel like there's a lot of negativity with that. And even, like, not from the hetero side, but from...

**Jakki:** Yeah, the queer side. That's like...

**Baylee:** From, like, all of the lesbians I was with, who were like, "Oh, you're not a gold star." And I'm like, "Thanks, that makes me feel great." Like, so, that's why I, sort of, just say fluid.

**Jakki:** I honestly identify as queer. And, I mean, as... I guess I can say it like as a gay man, because I don't really find attraction to women, but, like, I just... I think, like, I just always say queer, 'cause it's like... I mean, I know some people think of it as, like, a negative. I, kind of, think we're in the process of reclaiming it. But I just say queer, so just, like, overall encapsulating. But what I was about to say is just about, like, this is how misogynistic the drag world is and how, like, transphobic the drag world is and how, like, exclusive it can be and how... you know, it's just, like, we're, we're all, like, creating a space that we can all feel safe and express who we are.Like, don't make it into a space no one wants to be a part of or a very exclusive space. What's the point?

Like, we made... I mean, like, as a... as drag, um, artists, like... sorry, I was about to sneeze. I feel like, like as drag artists, like, we already are making a space for us to feel safe and, like, separated from, like, a straight world or stuff like that. Like, why, why create a space and then make another separate space for, like, whatever, the white passing, white dominant, cis gay men. It’s stupid. I, I just... that's something that I'm like, "Create the space for everyone."

**Baylee:** And I think there needs to be more people like that, for real. That makes... it's like, you... we've, we've all experienced being left out of a group, and then to be left out of a group that, you know, that you're supposed to be a part of, like, it just... it, it hurts in an all different... all different way.

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** Um, so the next one is, what is the biggest challenges in doing drag and being a drag artist for you?

**Jakki:** Oh, money. Oh, I would say two things. Either getting booked, because sometimes it is just about connection, and it’s just really about, like, who you know and who wants to book you at the time. But I think, more importantly, it is money. People underestimate how expensive drag is. Now, there was... they say it on Drag Race, you don't need money to do drag. I call bullshit on that because you will not be respected unless you look a certain way. Like, sure, you can make stuff out of materials, but that also takes skills. How do you develop that skills? With money. Like, you have to, like, purchase supplies, you have to purchase this, you have to...like, it's not cheap, and I, I think that that frustrates me so much is, like, how, how ignored and how classist drag is and how we don't acknowledge that.

And it's like, I don't know. I'm part of the problem. Like, I can't... I'm not going to say that... I'm not going to sit here and say that, "I'm giving up my drag and lending it to everyone." Like, no, like, I am selfish and stuff like that, but also at the same time, like be mindful of, like, how expensive living is and then how expensive drag is. I think you could do it at any, you know, any money bracket, but the more money you have, the easier it's going to be.

**Baylee:** Yeah. And I mean, even like... so, within our course, there's been... he gave a lecture about, like, showing how much drag artists actually make, and then, like, how much money they have to spend for their look alone. It's, like, over $300 sometimes. And then, like, even with Trixie, there's been videos that I've seen where she's like, "I have to step up my own game within drag now that I am more famous. And, like, there's even more pressure on me because they know I have more money." And I think that that's... like, that's very, you know... okay, what were you going to say?

**Jakki:** No, finish your statement. I keep cutting you off. I apologize.

**Baylee:** No, you’re fine. I, I feel like I do that a lot, and I always get yelled at by people for it. But, like, I feel like there's a lot of things that you can do to, sort of, like... like, Trixie has videos where she does, like, a whole look in, like, um, dollar store makeup and stuff like that. And it's... there's a lot of different ways, but it is, it's very hard. And even if you do know how to make things, what about your sewing machine? What about your materials? What about how you learned how to make those things? It's not just money, it's time and commitment that you also need.

**Jakki:** Well, [overtalking]. I... adding on to that, like, I think something that I always forget about that my boyfriend has to always remind me, your time is money...

**Baylee:** Yes.

**Jakki:** Whether you like to admit that or not. Like, I can spend 30 hours on a piece. I can also spend 30 hours behind the register at Ta-- I also work at Target. I can also spend 30 hours at Target. Like, where am I spending my time and money? And that is something that is, like... time is money. And it's just utilizing yourself the best way possible.

But more importantly, something that people often forget about is drag is never ending. So, a streamer, let's say, because this is something that I've wanted to get involved in. Really, I... it’s like a one-time payment. Like, of course, I [unclear] can always get the new aesthetically pleasing, but it’s like, I need a computer. I need a controller. I need a monitor. I need this. That’s it. If I want a newer monitor, I can buy it. I don’t need it. But I feel like, for drag, because of the social demand of, like, "Oh you already worn that before. You sure you want to wear it again?" Like you have to continuously invest in...

**Baylee:** Okay.

**Jakki:** And it's not something that it's like... but even for yourself, like, you want your wardrobe to expand, you are constantly buying stuff. Makeup expires, you have to purchase makeup. Um, uh, my boyfriend makes a good point. Every time you do your makeup, it is probably worth $100 of makeup. So, say, I want to just practice my makeup, that's probably, like, $100 I'm putting on my face right there. Because I have to put on a little bit of the eyebrow primer. And, you know, I have... I have decently priced products. I, I like the higher quality stuff. So, when I'm swiping on a Stila eyeshadow, guess what? That costs me $38 to purchase alone. And that's just a little bit of glitter on my eyelid. [Overtalking].

**Baylee:** I love those eye shadows. So pretty. I've been wearing them since high school. My teacher in high school showed me them. [Laughs]

**Jakki:** [Unclear] lips and glitters in this little box.

**Baylee:** Oh, yes.

**Jakki:** [Unclear] though. Like, this is just lipsticks and liquid eyeshadows. This is nothing. This is, like, just added. I don't ne--

**Baylee:** That’s more makeup than I have, in general. Like, I don't wear makeup. Like, I wear mascara, and that's, that's... I mean, maybe I'll wear, like, a Kylie lip, maybe once, if I'm feeling classy. That's...

**Jakki:** Okay.

**Baylee:** But that... I think that's more just me and, like, you know how, like, you were talking about didn't like sticky things on your face. Like, I can't... I don't like makeup on my face. And it's just like...

**Jakki:** Girl, tell me about it. I'm a drag queen.

**Baylee:** I don't know how you do it. Like, I don't, I really don't, 'cause, like, I watch videos, and, like, I'm like, "I don't know how people..." Like, I watch even, like, Bailey Sarian. I don't know if you know who that is. But, like, her videos, she... She's true crime. Um, and she does makeup while she does true crime videos and she, like, tells the thing.

**Jakki:** Yeah, she [overtalking].

**Baylee:** So, like, even her makeup is like... I just think... I just feel itchy thinking about having all of that makeup on.

**Jakki:** I will tell you, sometimes I don't want to do... Like, I just don't want to put on makeup. Like, I wish I could just go out there and just, like, naturally look like that. Um, 'cause it's, like... I mean, think of it like this, James Charles made a good point. Although I don't want to support that groomer. Um, he made a good point of, like, "I wish that I can just do a YouTube video. I don't wish that I can... I have to get ready to do a mu—a YouTube video. Like, other people can just go out and blog and talk about their life, but I have to take two hours to get pretty in order for me to start something.

And so, I think, also, like, as a creative, like, that takes money. Like, if you're not earning money from a video or something that took you two hours, it's like, you wasted that two hours of time. I wouldn't say wasted, but, like, you know, that that's your time that you spent on getting ready. And then, if something isn't success-- you know, it's like all that stuff. So, I think, overall, kind of, that idea of just, like, drag is a never-ending cost, and I don't think it's something that people realize that it costs money and it's a continuous money thing.

**Baylee:** Very much continuous. And I think that that's a good point that you're bringing up, because a lot of people don't think about that. Like, even on Drag Race, like, they, they talk about sharing different dresses and, you know, like, "This dress has been passed around to every queen in New York." And, like, they say things like that. But even then. it's like, "Okay, but where did that dress start at? How much was that original dress? And what do you have to do...? 'Cause I know people aren't just handing things out. Like, you have to do favors for them too, like, you, you gave them something in return, because no one's ever, you know... nothing's for free, at least that's what I was always raised.

**Jakki:** All right. And, uh, yeah, it's... it always stems from somewhere, and it's all about, like, I don't know, sharing the wealth. And I think that also has to do with, like, booking people and being more diverse in your... in your bookings. 'Cause it's like, "Don't give the same opportunity to the same person all the time." Like, "There are other people who want to, like, [unclear] their bread and just need, like, that one booking to help them do it. You know what I think? And that's another thing it's just like, how do you even earn your money? Like, luckily for me I have a day job, who I can support myself, but some... a lot of people are out there, especially during the pandemic right now, like... and this is something I can talk to that... is that the next question?

**Baylee:** Um, no, that's the question after that.

**Jakki:** Okay. Then I can wait on that. Um, but it's just like a thing of, like, there are literally starving artists out there, and use your privilege for the best. Don't use it against, like... I think it's just sharing, it's sharing the space, sharing the piece of the pie, you know? And I, I genuinely try to live my best to that because I've been given so many opportunities as a white person. Like, I have this privilege that I was given in my life just because I'm white. Like, I should use the opportunity to give those who, you know, don't have that same equal opportunity, or that often get looked over for the way they looked, or often are ignored for the way they look, like you see me, so, okay, then I'm going to make some noise.

**Baylee:** No, I think that's beautiful. It really is. Is there anything unique about the drag scene where you, um...

**Jakki:** Oh.

**Baylee:** I'm not talking to you, computer. Gosh.

**Jakki:** Um...

**Baylee:** Is there anything unique about the drag scene where you live compared to others... places in the country or world? Sorry, my computer thought I was talking to her.

**Jakki:** Chicago drag scene is on, like, a whole different level that I don't think is comparable to anywhere in the United States.

**Baylee:** Okay. So, this is the question that you had some, some things to say about, uh, what has COVID... What has the COVID-19 pandemic meant for your life as a drag artist?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, it sucks. Like, I was... before the pandemic, like, I just turned 21, and I was waiting, like, I was itching. All my friends turned 21 before me. It was, like, finally becoming my moment. I was gonna... like, I felt like I was gonna shine. And then, it all crumbled. So, uh, before the pandemic started, I won two pageant... or I won a pageant, and then I got second place for a pageant for a state level, and I was supposed to go to Texas and Maine. Um, that did not happen, and I'm here, now, just, here [unclear].

**Baylee:** One side note.Um, before I forget, 'cause you've mentioned this before, is there any way you can email me all of the titles you have won, so I can put it in your bio?

**Jakki:** Hones-- I can just tell it to you. It’s only two titles.

**Baylee:** Okay, okay. Let me write them down.

**Jakki:** Yeah, I was like, I only... I only did two pageants. Um, so, I'm Miss Gay Bloomington 2020.

**Baylee:** Okay. Beautiful title.

**Jakki:** And Miss Gay... what is this title? I'm going to butcher it. It's like Miss Gay USofA Illinois First Alternative. I don't care about... like, I have titles, but, like, I use it in such a joking way. 'Cause I did the pageant, and the only reason why I say it, like, in a joking way, um, is because, like... and this is like an extension of, like, why I didn't really want to talk about that.

**Baylee:** Um, so, the next question is number nine, which we, sort of, talked a little bit about. Um it, it goes into sex, gender identity and gender expression. So, how do you identify in terms of your sex, gender identity and gender expression out of drag? Now, there's four sub parts. Um, we already talked about your pronouns, which is he, he/they, right?

**Jakki:** Mm-hmm.

**Baylee:** And drag influence, uh, has drag influenced your sex and gender identities?

**Jakki:** So, I don't... I think yes, 'cause it has like a liberation side to me, but it's not like a thing of like, "Oh, I did this because of drag." I think that drag gave me the opportunity to grow, and it's an extension of myself. So, I don't ever... like, I don't put it into myself that, like, I'm a different character in and out of drag. 'Cause, like, ye-- technically yes, but, for the most part, like, I like to be who I am in and out of drag. And I feel like drag is just an extension of me to feel glamorous or next level or pretty. And that's, like, why I, like, told my dad, I was like, "I want to graduate in drag." 'Cause it's like, I don't want to graduate looking like this, like suit and tie, like... no, I don't like that. Like, I'd rather look pretty and how... my idea of, like, show stopping is gonna be, 'cause it's my moment. Um, so I think that [overtalking].

**Baylee:** Exactly.

**Jakki:** An extension of who I am, but it's... yeah, drag is an extension of who I am, not a separation of who I am.

**Baylee:** That's greatly... a great [unclear]. Um, has drag influenced how you think about gender? I feel like you had very distinct views on gender before drag, and drag has just very, um... sort of, like, elaborated more on your gender, like, [unclear].

**Jakki:** Yeah. I mean, I think, for myself, like, I'll be blunt, I was transphobic before. Like, I didn't understand it, and I didn't understand, like, gender identity in general. So, drag has given me the opportunity to understand that, like, you don't... like, not... just because you're a drag queen doesn't mean you're trans. And that trans... like, a trans identity and being a drag queen are two completely different things that people often overlook. And I think, just even on, like, a nonbinary side of stuff like that, like, drag is an art form and is an express-- it is an art form. So, it's, like, what it... what people make it out to be.

But aside from that, it's also understanding and detaching people who utilize the art, but also who are just this identity their whole lives. Like, this is not like a performance to them. This is not this, that, and the other. As, like, for me, like, okay, I'm going to put on a wig 'cause I want people to look at me, and I want to lip sync a song. But, like, other people want to put on a wig because that is just, like, how... what embraces them. That is how they want to present themselves. This is what they believe is them. So, like, yeah, I definitely think it has helped me make an understanding of, like, detaching from the toxicity that patriarchal society has on us.

**Baylee:** I mean, even in my short time in the Art of Drag course, like, I feel like my ideas of gender have very much changed. And I've taken a lot of gender studies. And I think that that's one thing that college really provides you with is more outlets to explore yourself in other ways that people can't. Like, for example, you talked about intersex. You know how many people don't know what that is?

**Jakki:** Do you know how many people I have to, like, argue with them to let them know... that stupid argument “Well, it’s science.” Well, science says there's literally nonbinary more, so [overtalking]/

**Baylee:** Yeah. There is an in between. So, like, I, I totally...

**Jakki:** [Overtalking] I'm going to get heated [unclear]. I, fucking, hate when people are like, "Yeah, like, I can see, like, a fish change sex throughout their lives, but people can't do that." Like what, what in nature do you think cuts off people between, like... if it's expressed in the world, what do you... what makes you think that people can't have that? Like, fully cats and dogs and have human mental illness, and you think that, like... and human diseases, you don't think that humans can...? [Overtalking].

**Baylee:** It goes back to what you said earlier about categorization, putting people in boxes. And that's what it is, because in our brains, we need to have it cut and dry. And if it's not cut and dry, then we make it out to be what it's not.

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** And that's, that's all it is, is people wanting it to be straightforward, and being... and to the... to an extent, that is detrimental to our society in general.

**Jakki:** I also love the more that we're talking, my hair is drying. So, I took a shower. As you can see my hair is [overtalking].

**Baylee:** I love it; it's gotten bigger and bigger. No, my hair is exactly like that. Like, my hair is very curly. If my hair was short, it would look spitting image like that. But my hair is actually...

**Jakki:** Yeah, I get my [overtalking] when I dance thickness.

**Baylee:** Yeah, tha—honestly, like, your hair looks exactly like my dad's hair. It's, like, super curly, super thick. And if he gets it, like, cut really short, he has, like, a full-on fro. Like, his is a little bit more curlier than yours, but mine's, like, all the way down my back. So, my curls are more, like, not as tight as they used to be, but, like, if I cut it short, they’re ringlets.

**Jakki:** Yeah, my mom had really tight curls, but my dad, um, my dad just, kind of, had like the... you know, kind of, like, Grease... I mean, not like slick back, but, like, the big poofy hair in, like, Grease musical, you know, that time, like, era. Kind of... he, kind of, has, like, that kind of hair.

**Baylee:** [Laughs] Okay. So, the next one is, have your sex and gender identities influenced your drag? And then that would be the end of the gender identity part of the questions.

**Jakki:** Sorry, I just realized, we're...

**Baylee:** We are actually... um, yeah, we are only halfway through.

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, okay, let's, let's bullet through these ones. So, um, it says that... uh, I think so, like, I, I feel like in drag, like, I'm able to be more comfortable with myself. So, I'm able to express myself and, like, more of a free way. So, like, I can be, like, more sexual if I wanted to. Like, I want to perform Red Light Special by TLC so bad, and it's a very intimate song. Like, I feel like because I idolize, like, these female, um... I shouldn't say female. Because I idolize these women in my life, and I'm like, "Oh, I want to do that for myself too." Like, love Doja Cat at the moment, even though she's an anti-masker and she's [unclear], but, like, um, still want to do, like, choreography...

**Baylee:** That's my best friend.

**Jakki:** And I don't want to, like, be in the club doing her Grammy performances, 'cause that's just what I love. And I think that being queer and being more open with myself allows me to implement that into my art.

**Baylee:** Have you ever seen anybody do Rico Nasty in drag, like a Rico Nasty song, Smack a Bitch?

**Jakki:** So, my, my drag mother, Kitty Banks, you can see on their Instagram, they actually performed F-- uh, FMU. It's not... I mean, it's a Brooke Candy song featuring Rico Nasty, but, um, it's a really good song, and she fucking kills it. Um, no, I haven't really seen anyone do Rico Nasty.

**Baylee:** I feel like that would just be such a powerful song to, like, do on stage.

**Jakki:** Right. I just, like, I would want to, but I'm white, so I don't want to like...

**Baylee:** Yes. And I feel like that's also a big... yeah, I, I get that as well.

**Jakki:** Plus, also, I don't know where you live, but Central Illinois, it's nothing but white people. So, that's also like... I'm like, okay.

**Baylee:** I live... Okay. So, I live in St. Louis, like, the city. So, I live... like, I grew up going to school with people of all different kinds. Like, my school was... I guess most of the time it's primarily white, no matter what, but, like I went to school with, like, Black kids and a lot of Bosnian... Do you know any Bosnians? Yeah. I have a lot of friends that are Bosnian because...

**Jakki:** I... I was gonna say I grew up... where I grew up is, uh, 75% Hispanic. So, I, I actually grew up where I was in the minority.

**Baylee:** I think that... I don't think I'm in a minority, I would say... Like, maybe where I live, I'm in a minority.

**Jakki:** Right. No, I...

**Baylee:** But in St. Louis as a whole, I don't think so. Which honestly, I, sort of, wish I was because I... I don't know how to explain. I'm very... I don't like my race, if that makes sense.

**Jakki:** I know exactly what you mean. I...

**Baylee:** It's very hard to be... No, no one's talking to you, computer. It's very hard to, sort of, be comfortable within your own race, when you know what people have done in the past, and you're, sort of, representing that just by being here.

**Jakki:** Yeah. I definitely understand that. I think that's, like, also why I'm so... I advocate a lot for using my privilege and being very open in speech, because being white has such a power, and you need to utilize it in the best way possible.

**Baylee:** Yeah. I mean. Like... and there's, like... there's so many things that happen that just further solidify that ideal, and within, like, within our lives, as we go about, like, just different experiences. Okay. So, the question 10... So, I guess we have eight questions left.

**Jakki:** Okay.

**Baylee:** So, 10 and 11 are just about your personal story. And then, when we get to 12, it's going to be your ideas about drag. So, more of, like, what do you think drag is and things like that. Um, so 10 is, how has drag impacted or changed you? Subparts are, has drag impacted your confidence as a person when you are out of drag? If so, how? And another subpart is, if you could go back to the time, as in blank before, like. before you were Jakki Love, what advice would you give yourself?

**Jakki:** So, I think the first question is I... I mean, it kinda goes into the subcategory. Like, it gave me a sense of confidence, it gave me a sense of self, and it gave me a sense to belong on this earth because I finally felt comfortable in my own skin. And like I said, I was an actor, so I failed at that and I don't... I wanted to continue to entertain people, but I realized that I could do it in a non-classist, patriarchal, homophobic. You know what I'm saying? Like, although the acting world likes to pretend to be very open; it's not. And I'm very happy that I'm able to share that continually with my drag.

And if I can go back and tell myself something, I would definitely say, "Fix your mug, but more importantly, um, just learn to love yourself right away and build your confidence as soon as you can, because you are beautiful, and you are going to do amazing things, and you're going to have fun along the way. And don't take it so seriously. Don't get so mad at people. Like, just have fun."

**Baylee:** Also, one comment...

**Jakki:** "Worry about yourself, not others." I think that's what I should say, "Worry about yourself. Not others."

**Baylee:** That's what I always say. Um, one other comment that I have to say is, just because you realized that acting isn't for you does not mean you failed.

**Jakki:** Oh, I mean, I... the only reason why I say that I failed is because I got kicked out of the... of the acting program. Now...

**Baylee:** I got kicked out of the speech pathology program at SIUE, and I say that I left on my own volition. It’s what you say. It's what you say.

**Jakki:** Oh, [overtalking]. It was drama-filled. [Unclear]. I know how to sell, but I just say, like, I failed, like, as a [unclear] as an acting major, like, I think I failed. As an actor, I know I can go out and act.

**Baylee:** Yeah, I think...

**Jakki:** That's the thing is, 'cause I know I don't need a degree to go out in the theater. So, I said, "Fuck you," if I want to pick up a script again, I know I can. [Overtalking].

**Baylee:** Yeah. And I think that that's... that's what it is. It's the beauty of acting, is being able to... it's just so versatile, and your position and parts, and there's just so many options.

**Jakki:** [Unclear] at the time in drag, like, this is literally what I’m doing.

**Baylee:** I mean, yeah, honestly.

**Jakki:** Girl, is this really Doja Cat singing to you right now? No, it's Jakki Love doing Say So.

**Baylee:** [Laughs] Okay. So, the last one is, um... I think it's funny that he wrote... because he wrote it like I'm saying this, but I'm not. Okay it says, I'm curious if and how your social identities have impacted your experience in drag, or vice versa how drag has impacted your identities. Can you share about how one or more of your social identities such as gender, race, class, age, geography, religion, size... what’s size mean? Like, body size?

**Jakki:** Yeah.

**Baylee:** Sexuality, disability, etc. and/or the interaction of these social identities have impact your experience within drag and how your drag impacted your experience in these social identities? I specifically want you to talk about your school identity and, like, your educational identity and how that has impacted your drag. Because I feel like that's a very, um, beneficial sort of way to look at it, especially since, you know, we're both 22 and in college, which is more...

**Jakki:** Yeah, I think something that's really annoying with drag is it's high intensity. So, I feel like it's really, really difficult to be a student and a drag performer, because you're either spending your time and money on school or your time and money on drag. And I really think that you, kind of, have to choose one or the other. If you want to be a successful drag queen, you have to choose drag over school, which sucks. Or you take a break, and you go to school and then you come back to drag. Is it doable to do both? Sure. Is it hard? Immensely. Um, that's why I'm so happy to graduate. 'Cause I'm just like, all of these responsibilities are going to be condensed into a job. And now I can just do my job in school... or sorry, my job in drag.

So, as a student, like, it is... it fucking sucks, like, it fucking sucks. Like, I wanted to do much more, but I can't 'cause, like, I have class or I have to, like, be up the next day, or I have to do this, that and the other. So, I think just as a identity, as a student, like, you have to know the balance, and you have to know when too much is too much. And just because you need to focus in on your school, does not mean that you're not taking your drag seriously.

I will also say I feel like my weight and my... I would say my weight and race have definitely helped me be looked at a lot more because, like, being a skinnier person, it's just like... the realistically of, like, skinny privilege is people are gonna think that I look prettier in an outfit than someone else is gonna wear rather... like, the outfit’s ugly, let's be honest. Like, is it... is it...? Do I look good because I'm skinny and white, or do I look good because it's a really great garment with beautiful hair, beautiful makeup? Like, that is what the reality is.

And I think that that is why, like, I just try to be so open with, like, my voice and including people and including problems that are going on because it's like, stop thinking that I can just get a free pass because I'm white. Like, I should not have that. And do I exploit that at times? Honestly, yes. Like, sometimes I don't use my privilege to the best ability. But I think, overall, it's just, like, acknowledging it, and then using it to your best power, because I have power. Like, that's not... that's not like an unknown, that's not like a secretive thing. Like, I have power, and I need to utilize it in the best ways possible.

**Baylee:** So, now we're going to move on to, like, the drag artist's ideas about drag. So, how do you define drag yourself?

**Jakki:** I define drag as the art form of gender expression. Now, my standards of drag is definitely not what other standards of drag are. Um, I sometimes feel like, like, yeah, you could put on a wig and a little bit of eyeliner, call yourself a drag quee,n and go out and perform. Like, will I get upset that you're getting a lot of attention, or you're getting more attention than me? Probably yes, because I put in more work than you. But also, in the other sense, it's like some people take drag as, like, a full-time career, and some people take drag as a hobby. And that's something that I think is often lost, that some people don't take drag as seriously as other people do, and they just want to do it for fun. And that is fine. And I think that drag is just... should be accessible to every... everyone, every shape, size, every color, every race, every, every identity. Like, it should be accessible. Except to Republicans, like, I don't need you in my space. Um, but... [Laughs]

**Baylee:** Thank you, yes. Amen.

**Jakki:** So, you know, just nasty people. But for the most part, like, I just believe that drag is gender of... uh, expression of gender and an extension of gender expression and a love for performance. I mean, how fun was, like, Lip Sync Battles, like, to see Tom Holland doing Umbrella. Like, we all lived for that. Was that drag? I would say so. Like, girl, that was camp. That was camp. That was high-performing blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Like, I, I think that people think that drag, you need to have, like, your eyebrow glued down, a weight down in here, weight there... and you know, and that's just, like, what limits the drag expression. And it's, it's not just that. And I think that we need to change that. So, my idea of it is, go out and perform, have fun. Like, drag can be whatever you want it to be. My drag standards are going to be separate from yours, but if you believe that it's drag, I mean, go ahead.

**Baylee:** The next question is, what do you think is the purpose of drag?

**Jakki:** I believe that... I just think there's so many different things. So, like, obviously, freedom... it's freedom, like it's freedom of understanding who you are, freedom of space, freedom of just having fun. More importantly, I think it's political. And I think it's a way to use your voice to create change. People will listen to you if you look different. People will treat you differently if you look different. Whether or not it's positive or negative, like, that's what's gonna happen. So, I just believe that there are just different ideas of it. And yeah, I, I don’t know. There's not, like, one, one way for me to put it.

**Baylee:** Do you think drag is sexual? Why or why not? If so, how and in what way?

**Jakki:** I feel like it can be, just like any performance. Like, I, I believe that drag is... like, it's an extension of, like, what it is. I believe what Doja Cat is doing is low key drag. Like, she is out there performing, wearing different hair, costumes, makeup. Like, that's not much different than me. No one calls her... Uh, I believe her real name is Amala?

**Baylee:** I have no idea.

**Jakki:** Yeah, I think her real name is Amala. She had an album, about it. It's, like, the... No Car, No Police, that album. The uh... yeah. Amala. Um, she... that’s the album that has Go To Town. Cookie Jar, has, uh, Candy. Has Body Language [unclear].

**Baylee:** Okay.

**Jakki:** It's her old... it's before she... Anyways, so...

**Baylee:** Before she was mainstream. [Laughs]

**Jakki:** Right. Like, no one calls her Amala. No one's out there saying, "Oh my god, that's Onika." Like, no, that's Nicki Minaj. Like that is a... that is an extension of what it is. And that's what I'm doing. I'm just not in the Grammys. I'm not performing multimillion... you know what I'm saying? Like, it's an exaggeration of what I'm doing. And so, um, yeah. What was the question? I'm so sorry.

**Baylee:** [Laughs] Um, do you think drag is sexual? Why or why not?

**Jakki:** So, because of that, because of the exaggeration, I believe that it ca-- it can become sexual. So, like, as I was saying before, I can go out into a club and perform TLC and, like, do, like, a burlesque number. Like, it... drag is whatever you want it to be. And, um, if you want to make it sexual, that's your drag, you can do that. Do I think drag is inherently sexual? No. Um, I think that bodies come in all shapes and sizes. So, like, to accentuate, like, hips and have big boobs and blah, blah, like, the fact that we think of that as sexual right away tells you about what we think about the woman body if you wanna think of drag queens. Like, it's not inherently sexual; people just, kind of, look like that. Some people don't look like that.Like, it, it just is an exaggeration of what we believe bodies look like.

Um, like, if I was to... if I wanted to go have drag queen story hour, and I want to read to kids, am I going to be, like, skinless and blah, blah, blah? I mean, I could, but I don't think that... it doesn't need to be, like, sexualized, and I don't need to be like... jokes that... I don't make these jokes, but, like, other jokes that people make in the bar of, like, squeeze my tit, wa-wa-wa. Like, that can be, like, the sexual side. But, no, I don't think inherently drag is sexual, but I believe that it has a stigma that it is, um, because it is an exaggeration on gender expression and what is gender expression. Like, my boobs look like this. What does a female look like? How do I...? Excuse me. How does a woman look like? How do I make that extra? How do I... you know what I'm saying? Like, that just has to do... you know, girl, fuck the patriarchy. That's what [unclear] is an extension of.

**Baylee:** And yeah, I think it's a lot to do with just gender in general. Like, people assume, like, gender, and then they just link sexuality and all of it together, so much so that they just... they're like, yeah, it is all sexual, everything's sexual. And I think also, like, saying it's sexual is an easier way for people to be more dismissive of the culture. Um, so...

**Jakki:** What's taboo? Like, I mean, we live in a society that, like, sex is can... anything is... everything is hypo-se-- hypersexualized, but no one can talk about what sex is.

**Baylee:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, like...

**Jakki:** Look at an Axe body spray. Like, no one teaches you...

**Baylee:** Yeah.

**Jakki:** Like, they're gonna tell you how to get women. And it's how, like, a six-year-old... “Oh he's a... he's a ladies' man. He's gonna get all the women [unclear].” He doesn't know what he's doing. And on top of that, you can have, like, talk about how you're a womanizer, you’re gonna get men, you're attractive, blah, blah. You can't even, like... they literally call a sex talk, the birds and the bees. What does that say about us? Like, come on now.

**Baylee:** [Overtalking]. I think...

**Jakki:** No one can show a nipple. Women, women can't even go, like, shirtless on a beach without like...

**Baylee:** There needs to be more... less stigma about bodies and just bodies in general. Like, for example, like, with women, you know how many women don't know what goes into childbirth? They don't know what's gonna happen until they get there and that baby is on the way out. Like, there's so many women that are like, "I didn't know that this was gonna happen" and stuff because we don't think it's okay to talk about things like that in our society.

**Jakki:** [Overtalking] it's objectify-- uh, objectifying a vagina, like, a vagina is only supposed to be used for sex. You didn't know that? And so, if it's not, what does a child...? Like, okay, cool. Bring my child, anyways. Can I go and [inaudible] it again? You know, it's, like, it's disgusting that people genuinely believe stuff like that. Or, like, how women can’t even breastfeed in public without being like, “Oh, put your tits away. I, I can't look at that.” Like, [overtalking] were you?

**Baylee:** Like, you were a baby, like, you were a baby. It's like... it's like, you can't look at it now, but you, you want to look at it later in Snapchat, you know what I mean?

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** It's, like, completely... like, we don't want to look at you in this light, but we want... it's sort of like the stigma of, like, guys want a girl who's experienced, but don't want to have a girl who has high body count, if that makes sense. It's sort of like that stigma.

**Jakki:** Exactly.

**Baylee:** Which I... I've heard that, like, literally all the time, and I hate that so much. Um, how do you feel about RuPaul's Drag Race? Which, obviously, I would assume that you like it, but I feel like you might have a little tea to spill.

**Jakki:** I love the show. I am a big fan of drag, and anything showcased at the highest level I am going to watch and enjoy. Do I love the politics involved with the show? Absolutely not. The fans make it toxic. They make the show seem... I mean, the show... I don't know. Um, I think that a lot of the fans ruin the magic that goes into Drag Race because of how toxic it is. I mean, they are treating Kandy Muse right now like complete shit on Twitter for no reason. She didn't do anything. Just loud, proud, Black, doing her thing, big, bigger body size. She's getting hate for what? For being herself?

**Baylee:** How dare her. How dare her be herself.

**Jakki:** But then another white queen can go around yelling and being like, I’m confident, blah, blah, blah, and she gets love and attention. Like, that is disgusting. Like, that... that's the part that annoys me. And something about it is also like reality TV in general, and this show is just an extension of reality TV. But, like, reality TV in general just makes, like... they just make things more toxic than it needs to. And they're fabricating stuff and they... like, Loki can ruin people's lives without... I think it's intentional at times, but they can just, like, ruin people's lives, and that's what I find really disappointing and really sad. But it also can make or break your career, because if you get on Drag Race, guess what, you have the potential to be in another tax bracket.

**Baylee:** And I think, like, when you were exp—like, talking about that drag artist and, like, how they're getting so much hate because of their size and because of their thing, like, even if you look back, like, currently, I'm watching Season 9 with class, Eureka came onstage in Season 9, and she did, like, a white trash thing. And, like, she didn't get a whole bunch of backlash for that. You know what I mean? And, like, things like that, are more okay for, for people that are white to do, than people that are of a color.

**Jakki:** The whole thing, as you'll see that... I don't know what episode you're on, you'll see how much Eureka uses her whiteness to weaponize other people.

**Baylee:** Oh, yeah.

**Jakki:** The Vixen is literally... and this is something that annoys me, people hate The Vixen. For what? She's a proud Black person. And so, she's just trying to showcase and use her side of the space, and she is loud because she has to demand the space. But Eureka can just come in and go, "Wow, I'm big, and I can do this, and I’m country, so you're gonna to love me." It's like, girl, no, like, you’re problematic, and people let you get away with it because you have white tears and white fragility. Like, no.

**Baylee:** And I totally... I did not... like, at the beginning, I liked Eureka. And then, the more I started to, like, understand who Eureka is and, like, how they weaponize their, their color, obviously... like, I, I could even pick up on that in the first few episodes. It's, it's amazing. But we're at the very end, almost, there's like five queens left, I think.

**Jakki:** Right. I mean, you can even... a great example is, like, when, uh... which was so funny, but, uh, when, Aquaria started to... crying in Untucked, and they called her out for her white tears, and she said, "Well, right now, you're painting a narrative that I'm a mean Black person who made a white girl cry, and now I'm going to get hate." And she did. And she called it out on, on, on camera, and they... the fans and then treated her like shit. And it's like, that's, that's what I mean. Like, it is to the pa-- the highest degree, like, on Drag Race showing it. But the reality is that reflection happens in local scenes all the time, and sometimes even worse.

**Baylee:** Yeah, even more so, because it's less checked. There's less... there's less flack for you to tear somebody and destroy them, you know, like...

**Jakki:** Or you [overtalking] if you get punched, I mean, there's a crew that stop you and save you. Like, you can't have that... like, what happens if you get hate crime in a club? Like, [unclear]. And you can't go to the police; the police don't care about you.

**Baylee:** Yeah. I mean, it's, it's disgusting. It really is. Um, if you could change one thing about drag, the drag scene or drag community, what would it be and why?

**Jakki:** I think there needs to be more openness. There needs to be more time to understand of, like, sharing the pie, building people up. But more importantly, there needs to be a lot more room for critique-ness, because the confidence that people have is annoying because you look like...

**Baylee:** Needs to be checked.

**Jakki:** I am sorry, but, like, you look like shit, stop pretending that you are... like, just because you have money, and you have power to book people, does not give you the power... Like, does not make you a good drag artist. And I think that's something that's really important. Because it's like... I mean, you can... like Loki's scene in Drag Race, like, just because you're a bigger name in your scene, doesn't mean that you're good at competitions, or you're good at this. And I think that is something that people need to have is, like, I guess a reality check of just being like, because the scenes and everything is so vain, that it's not just about yourself; it's about the people who make you and the people who build you up. Because drag should be more of a team effort, although you can do everything yourself. Um, it's also depending on who you market towards. People have to like you, people have to do this, that and the other. And I think that more people need to have more patience and more love for each other rather than a, a hostile, comp-- competitive thing all the time.

**Baylee:** Um, so this is the second to last question. Sorry that there's so many.

**Jakki:** You're okay.

**Baylee:** Um, I didn't think... [laughs] it's funny because in his interview... like, in the interview instructions and everything, it's like, yeah, your interview needs to be at least 20 minutes. And I'm like, yeah. [Laughs]. Um, what do you think the... are mi—are misconceptions about having... okay, sorry. What do you think are misconceptions people have about drag? Where does it come from? What do you think would help change that?

**Jakki:** Yeah. So, I think this whole interview thing, I think that patriarchy, as fun... as fun as, like, people make jokes about it, like, it is a serious thing. Like, it is, and no matter where we are, it's going to always be a man-dominated space. And a lot of that just stems from, like, oversexualization, objectification, um, misogyny, this, that, and the other. Like, all of these problems stem from men and cis men. And when you have, like, gay... specifically gay white men in power in these spaces, then they have the influence to im-- uh, the influence to continue that narrative and just be like, "You're, you're a woman. No, you can't do... you're not a drag queen, honey. You're a woman, stay in a woman's place." Like, what? This is a... supposed to be a queer space, a space to involve everyone. Like, you have obviously been shunned. And so, now, what are you going to do? Shun another person because of us...? You know what I'm saying?

So, I think that a lot of the misconceptions just stem from in-- inherited societal things. And it's just, like, a way to change that is to acknowledge it and change who's in power, realistically. It's just share, share the po-- share the cake, you know? Like, I think that's something that I love that is gonna happen in Chicago, is just, like, a lot of the white people are not gonna be in power. Like, they have a Chicago Black, uh, Council that is just, like, designed to support, uplift Black people and... But more importantly, just, like, create the space in a better way.

And honestly, it just, kind of, starts from taking away the power from those who have it now and, um, distribute it in a, a more of an equal way. It doesn't need to be a hier-- hierarchical thing, whatever, like a business thing. So, it doesn't need to... like, queen at the top, and then you control these bars, and you get to book these people, you get to... you know? It's just like... like, I understand businesses need to thrive and make money, but also, at the same time, like at no-- it doesn't need to be at our expense. Like, just make the space good, make the space happy, make it include people. People don't wanna see it, people don't come to the show. Like, I understand that hurts your business, but in an ideal world, oh wow, like, these people should still be showcased. We shouldn't be just, um... we shouldn't be showcasing or doing it for a straight world because that's what makes the money, like, no.

**Baylee:** Yeah. Because... yeah. And I feel like our society, in general, has taken several steps back just in the past four years, that we have to very much overcompensate for now. And we need to get back on track because of that. Um, okay. So, the last one, if you choose one thing you want people to know or learn about drag, what would it be?

**Jakki:** The magic of it. It's such a fun thing. And I really do wish that people would understand that drag comes from struggles of other people, and to pay homage to the people who have struggled so we have the freedom to do what we can do. Um...

**Baylee:** Yeah.

**Jakki:** Let me tell you, I know I keep saying it, wasn't a white man that created gay pride. Marsha P. Johnson. I know, like, she... that's the trans identity, but, you know, like, it was people like her that helped pave the way to help create change. Um, although I think RuPaul is a little whitewash and more of like a businessman, capitalism, but, you know, like, as much as I hate giving him credit, like, he helped pave a way to give us the freedom and space to do it.

**Baylee:** Yeah.

**Jakki:** And I think that... I wish people could understand the magic that it's not just like a oversexualized thing. Oh, you want to be a wom—like, oh, you can't do that. Like, go, go on a pole. Like, no, that's not what I want. I don't want to be a pole dancer. Like, I just want to lip sync and have fun. Like, I'm... I have, like... I just wanna be famous, and I wanna entertain. Like, that's where the magic comes from. It comes from a creative outlet. And I wish people would understand that more.

**Baylee:** I think it... in life it's all about doing what makes you happy, as long as it's not at the expense of others. And that's really... that's what drag is, is it's being able to express yourself and making yourself happy within your expressions, and trying to make other people happy, like you said. Like, you wanna spread love, and that's, that's the whole point of your name, is just to, sort of, venture out and express yourself.

**Jakki:** Right.

**Baylee:** Well, um, those are all of the questions I have, but it's been amazing talking to you.

**Jakki:** Yeah. You as well.