**Interview with Jade SinClair**

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Interviewer: Okay, cool. All right, so I’m about to give you basically a research participation notification. Just saying that I have permission by interviewing you, just making sure everything is okay and safely. You can read that over if you like. Just wanted to make sure everything’s okay.

Jade Sinclair: Okay. I’m good with this.

Interviewer: Awesome. You say you’re great at talking. Personally, I’m a nervous wreck. So this is something that’s seriously out of my comfort zone, but we will get through it. But again-

Jade Sinclair: It used to be one that was out of mine too, until you go on the stage on a regular basis.

Interviewer: Yeah. Like I said, I really command people that do because it is very bravery. And oh my God, do you do your own makeup?

Jade Sinclair: I do.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Jade Sinclair: I’ll send you some pictures, in case you need them. But I’ll send you some promotional pictures also.

Interviewer: That’s so funny because I went to your Facebook already and got a screenshot. I’m sorry.

Jade Sinclair: That’s fine, go ahead. Yeah.

Interviewer: But basically I was going to start off saying thank you so much for sitting down with me, especially at short notice. You’re awesome for that. I really appreciate your time and your effort. Basically, we just going to go straight into the questions.

Jade Sinclair: Okay, certainly.

Interviewer: It’s like 18 questions.

Jade Sinclair: Okay.

Interviewer: So hopefully it’s okay. Where did you first hear about drag and what was your reaction with it?

Jade Sinclair: So, as I said before, my experience will probably be a little bit different than someone who’s in college today. I’m 49 years old.

Interviewer: Look good.

Jade Sinclair: I’ve been an out gay male, thank you. I’ve been an out gay male since about 1995. So when I first started to go out to what would have been, we called them the gay bars back then, but really they would be LGBTQIA establishments today. I would go out and I encountered for the very first time what was drag, at one of the dance clubs in Springfield, Illinois.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jade Sinclair: And the bar was called New Dimensions, back in the time. And there was some entertainers that I saw in ’95 that are still performing today. Some amazing individuals. But I can honestly say that at that time being a very young gay male, I did not understand drag very much at all. And I had a very cliche response to it and that was, oh my God if I want to be with woman, I’d be with a woman. But that’s because I didn’t really understand the art form of female impersonation. And then I think over time, I began to appreciate it more. I realized that it’s not about sexuality.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: It is more about a performance art. And so then I began to get more interested in it as I saw it more and more, as it was woven into the LGBT community. And in 1997, I think it was, when I was living in Wilmington, Delaware after grad school, I was the president of the pride festival there. And we use, and the entertainers to raise money, to help them with the pride festival. And they thought it would be really fun to have the pride board members who were not drag queens by the way, to do a number in the show. And so I did, and I guess you can say, because the proverbial bug had bit and I really did enjoy it. And I think I enjoyed it so much because I’ve always had a love of theater. I didn’t realize that as a drag entertainer or as a female impersonator, that it really does fulfill that desire to be on stage and be a character on stage.

Interviewer: Wow. That’s very interesting. And you hit a lot of great points. And before I started taking this class, I was not educated at all. So hearing your story in person and learning about it’s like, dang, this is real. The journey is real. So when did you start performing as a drag artist and why did you start performing?

Jade Sinclair: So, it would have been probably around the middle of the year of 1997. And it initially, as I said before, it was just as a fundraiser. But I had a lot of fun being on stage, being in front of a packed audience. And then just having them all applaud and cheer and throw money at you. That money was for charity so people are always inclined to throw a little bit extra when it was for charity.

Jade Sinclair: But that was where I initially got my interest. And at that time, it seemed pretty easy because I sat down in a chair while an established individual did my makeup for me. And then I went and bought clothes and I had to put the clothes on. So it was all different because after I had had that initial interest, I wanted to pursue it more at a more full-time basis. And that meant I had to actually learn how to be a little more self-sufficient. So I had to learn makeup and I had to learn not only how to go out and buy a wig, but then how to make it look presentable on your head because they don’t come necessarily styled.

Interviewer: They don’t. They really don’t.

Jade Sinclair: Yeah. And so then had to find clothes that better suit your body. And then it also moved into buying street clothes, which are fine. But when you’re trying to be a seasoned entertainer on stage, you want to have more show pieces. So then even finding them back in the day was very hard because you have to remember that I did this in 1997, this is pretty much before there was really ever an internet.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: So, a lot of what I bought was going to be from stores so it was really hard. Even learning makeup was like, you couldn’t go to YouTube tutorials because it didn’t exist yet.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: So, you had to play at home or go watch somebody who was already doing it. And then it’s awkward to say, “Hey man, can I watch you do your makeup?”

Interviewer: Right, exactly.

Jade Sinclair: So, it took a lot of trial and error and it very hard. But through the guidance of one of my mentors, I did learn quite a bit about how to sew myself, not very well. I don’t do my own clothes today, but it got by. And then I learned how to put some style in a wig. And then I learned a lot about my makeup. And then when I moved… and Delaware had a very small drag community. It was a very small state. But when I moved to St. Louis in 2001, I’m from Missouri originally, that’s where I think my knowledge and my career really took off because it was a much bigger community here and had a lot more opportunities to learn from a much bigger audience and a lot more established entertainers.

Interviewer: Got it. Oh, that’s awesome. That’s really good. So with this one, I really wanting to know how does your family, friends and other loved ones receive you becoming a drag artist?

Jade Sinclair: In all honesty, for the first several years of my entertainment career, I didn’t really tell them about that side of my life or my lifestyle. I come from a very rural environment, in rural Missouri. And I wasn’t so sure how accepting they would be. I was lucky enough that my parents were farmers and they were pretty open about me being gay to begin with. And it was, I think a small bit of an awkwardness, but then they accepted me pretty readily. So I was very blessed in that regard.

Jade Sinclair: I don’t remember exactly how I told them I did drag, but I did tell them eventually that I did perform on stage and drag. And there’s a local bar about a half hour from my parents’ house and me and some of my, we call my sisters, when we were in Delaware, we rented a van and drove out and we all performed at that bar about a half hour from my family’s house. And my mother, father, and all my sisters were there for the show. So it was a really, really fun, rewarding experience. And we got a picture together and it was also pretty close to their 35th wedding anniversary. So it was real nice.

Interviewer: Oh my gosh, were you nervous?

Jade Sinclair: I was a little bit, but I mean really, I think having my close friends had performed with me. And I think I’d been doing it for probably four years by then. So some of my stage nerves had worn off a little bit. So that automatic side of the show business kind of took over. So it wasn’t too bad.

Interviewer: Okay. That’s really great. Oh my gosh. Where does your drag name come from?

Jade Sinclair: So, this is not a very glamorous story, but when I first knew I was going to perform, I wanted to have a name that I thought was unique and began with a unique letter. And I really liked for some reason names that were gemstones. And in the area there was already a diamond, which is the best gemstone.

Interviewer: Right, exactly.

Jade Sinclair: And I thought oh my God, like Emerald, I thought, and Ruby and Sapphire sounded a little bit old. So then I went with Jade, because it a fresher name. And it started with the J, which is a unique letter. So.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: At that time, it was just one name. I thought it could be like Madonna and Cher, I didn’t need to have a full name. I just need to have one name. So, it was Jade for a while. And then when I did my first pageant for female impersonators-

Interviewer: Oh, you did a pageant?

Jade Sinclair: Yeah. It was probably around 1999 or so. So that’s before my full name, I’m like, oh, I guess I better get the last name. So I went with Sinclair, I thought it sounded a little elegant.

Interviewer: Wow. This is just random question, but when does it get busy? What’s the best days to come here?

Jade Sinclair: The busiest days I think are probably Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. But we do have shows here Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. We only have one night open, it’s Wednesday. So it works well that you come tonight. But we have pretty good shows. I mean, we get a lot of birthdays and bachelorette’s on Fridays and Saturdays. And then Sundays there’s always been a very strong night for our African-American population. So it’s really busy and we have a predominantly black cast that night. And so we got a lot of their followers to come in for that.

Interviewer: Oh. Well, I ain’t going to come Monday. Now that I know so much. The next question is, there are a lot of terms for types of styles of drag from drag queens, drag kings, to glamorous queen, male impersonating, comedy queens, queer queens, bio queens. And I know it’s a lot. I’m so sorry.

Jade Sinclair: That’s fine.

Interviewer: And camp queens, amongst others. Are there particular labels you would use to categorize your drag?

Jade Sinclair: I think in general, I would probably say that my look is a very traditional drag queen. Well, very truthful drag queen or female impersonator. Look, I tend to try and come from trying to copy an elevated, elegant version of what you would see in a strong female persona. So, I have, I guess it’s just pretty traditional drag. You know what I mean? On occasion, I can do more than that. I have created some looks that are very campy, I’ve done some things that are very comedy, but in general, I would say that I am a very traditional pageant drag queen or female impersonator.

Interviewer: Okay. And then it was like points. What kind of drag do you do? And what are your styles? But you already answered that one.

Jade Sinclair: Yeah. I think it’s pretty traditional. I mean, I have a pretty wide repertoire of music, but myself, my favorite musical genre would be like eighties or nineties. But I do a lot of things, even contemporary stuff as well. I try to do things that I think that the audience can have a good time with. I try to keep a very party atmosphere on my show. So I want it to be upbeat and fun. And I want people to be able to go be clapping and singing along and having a good time. It’s supposed to be here, I think we’re here in our shows to not only break down barriers and say that you can really be whatever you want to be. That’s the point of why I do drag, aside from getting my little scratch on my theatrical love. But I find it interesting to walk out and I am a padded queen, which means I wear a breast foams and hip pads.

Jade Sinclair: And I pad my butt as well. So when I walk out, I have a very feminine silhouette. And I have, I think hopefully people think too, very natural looking hair. So I present female onstage and I’ve learned to soften my voice a little bit on the microphone. I know it still sounds male. But I try to give the character. But I love to walk out and have this image. And then sometimes I break character, I’m like, [in a low voice] “Hey, how are you?” I mean, we get a lot of people that have never been, they’re in for their first time. And I think it just puts that duality of it. They see this female, then they realize, oh, this person is a man.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: I mean, we live in a world and you have your degree… my degree is in psychology, by the way. You’re studying psychology and sociology. We are taught from a very young age, whether or not that we know it, how to behave.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: There are so many non-verbal lessons that we’re taught all throughout our youth. And so it’s interesting to be able to break those and help others realize that we don’t have to live up to what society says we should be. We can find ways to be our own selves, our own authentic selves.

Interviewer: Exactly. Yeah. I totally agree with that. Next question. Does the type of drag that you do affect your life as a drag artist? If so, how?

Jade Sinclair: No, I don’t think it… oh, I can say one thing. It doesn’t affect my life, but I do live pretty much a separate lifestyle. I have a day job also, I worked for a large regional bank and I work in a professional role. And I work with a lot of senior leaders who, I mean, they’re focused on the performance of the bank, not about necessarily what we’re doing, our personal lifestyles, but we don’t talk a lot about it. And I just don’t share that side with them.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: But my family and my friends, are all well aware of it. And I meet a lot of my friends here because they’ll still come to shows. They’re like, “Oh, I love watching the show.” So they end up talking to me, become friends outside of it as well.

Interviewer: Exactly. Exactly. Who or what has influenced your drag?

Jade Sinclair: In a professional environment, artists, musical artists have influenced me. I mean, Madonna was a huge influence on me in the late nineties when I was first starting, because she was still a very predominant figure. I’m not sure how familiar you are with Madonna from that timeframe but she also broke a lot of barriers. She stood up for a lot of minorities, if it was the LGBT community, if it was the people of color. She was always vocal for the people that are being suppressed by mainstream society. And so that spoke a lot to me and a lot of the queer community at that day and age. So she was always a strong influence on the character that I tried to be, a strong, feminine role model. Aside from that, my drag mother, which is the person that helped me a lot when I first began with makeup and stuff. Her name was Karen Thomas and she’s from Delaware. She was also a very strong influence on my professional side, how to be professional, because drag is a business and I’m creating a product that I’m trying to market and get sold to bars. So she taught me a lot about how to behave in a professional stage way.

Interviewer: Wow. That’s very true. Actually, I had a quick question. You had said that, do you read people? I was learning about that, I know you said-

Jade Sinclair: To be honest I don’t do that a lot, but I do on occasion though, but usually it is in a very fun way.

Interviewer: I’ve seen a couple of, and I was like, wow, they go in.

Jade Sinclair: I’ve been commented before that my MC style is a lot more laid back and I make people feel really welcome. And I know that reading people is absolutely an art and they can really go in and people can laugh with them, and it’s okay. My way is usually, to be honest, I often tend to target straight white males.

Interviewer: Why?

Jade Sinclair: Just because they are obviously the most uncomfortable in a show all the time. Because they’re the ones that feel like their masculinity is being challenged by being here in a bar, that’s a gay bar, where there’re men performing on stage that they honestly are probably attracted to. It really confuses them quite a bit. So, I do pick on them a little bit, but not that bad.

Interviewer: Not that bad?

Jade Sinclair: Mostly I get them to laugh a little bit and get them to realize that I’m not going to hurt them.

Interviewer: You’re just playing, yeah. We’re all just, it’s all jokes. That’s really funny.

Jade Sinclair: And because those are also the people in society that in reality don’t have to face that type of situation. So I put them in that role.

Interviewer: Exactly. No, seriously. Especially being Caucasian and straight and coming from privilege. So they don’t see any type of-

Jade Sinclair: I hope that when they leave, sorry I didn’t mean to interrupt you.

Interviewer: No, you’re fine.

Jade Sinclair: But when they leave, they hopefully have a little bit more insight about how other people feel and maybe to be a little bit more tolerant and accepting of other people.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think just off topic, but I really think that taking this course was seriously, not only like, oh yeah, we have sympathy, but I feel more connected because we’re all on the same route of trying to basically survive. There’s so many barriers we have to keep knocking down. So many people that’s trying to basically tell us we’re out of lane or we’re out of pocket or… I’m all for, I’m pro Black. I love my Black, the Black Lives Matter movement and when I was protesting last year and I saw how many LGBTQ coming out and helping and burn and stuff. We’re tired and I’m like, oh man, this is outrageous, but not only that, but it was really the bomb and that’s when I was like, I think I want to take a class or something like that, just because I’ve seen their passion. And I really also just like the fact that they were just well put together, but that’s not neither here or there.

Jade Sinclair: That community has had their own and continue to have a lot of the struggles. Much like the Black community. You think that it’s 2021, I mean, Jesus Christ. It’s just crazy to me to think about how much oppression that anyone today still faces in an advanced.

Interviewer: I was just like, especially in New York, I was my teacher, learning about just crazy things about the community that you guys face is just…

Jade Sinclair: Stonewall? Is that the one you learned about?

Interviewer: Was it?

Jade Sinclair: Stonewall was the bar in 1969 where-

Interviewer: I think it probably was.

Jade Sinclair: That was where we-

Interviewer: That was in the 1980s. Oh dang, it was a video we were watching, I forgot, but it was a lot of great information I was receiving. And it was just mind blowing, just seeing that how, at the time, the A’s rape was really high and seeing people would just be walking down a block and just getting beat and not having a place to stay because their parents were so relentless, not accepting it. So they had to find a drag mother.

Jade Sinclair: There was a time where, and I came out much after this, but I’m all aware of it because my… But there was a time when, and people still would say that being gay is a choice. And when I was in college, one of the things that I, that before I was even out that resounded in my head was my psych professor said to me, when she was talking about sexuality, and she said, “I don’t ever recall a time where I decided to be heterosexual. So why would I think that someone who’s homosexual, why is it a choice for them?”

Interviewer: Right. Exactly.

Jade Sinclair: But parents did not understand that. And a lot of religions said that this is terrible you’re going to go to hell. And so yes, people were kicked out of their homes. At a very young age.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s what I was saying, some people saying like 13, that’s crazy.

Jade Sinclair: I can’t even believe that.

Interviewer: Like what?

Jade Sinclair: How can somebody be equipped enough to deal with supporting themselves with no tools at that age.

Interviewer: Exactly. And that’s why I’m just happy that drag mothers took them in. And they found some type of stability.

Jade Sinclair: Did you ever see the show Pose? Did you ever watch that?

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, I love Pose.

Jade Sinclair: It’s about the same time frame.

Interviewer: I think that’s what it was based off of. But I love Pose. I forget her name, the super tall mother who’s over all of them, but she read people funny, too.

Jade Sinclair: She’s a sick bitch.

Interviewer: She is. I was like, oh wow, she’s feisty. But can you talk about what’s your life is like, you kind of did this, but it basically said, are your parents, are you part of a drag family house or any type of organization?

Jade Sinclair: I am a part of a drag family. It was a pretty tight-knit family at the time. It was for my drag mother, Karen Thomas. I don’t have her name by any means, but none of us ever did. But then I moved here and I still have some drag children that I helped when I moved here. And I see children today, when I say children, these are obviously 21, 25 year olds, they’re not really children, but I see newer entertainers who were trying to like find that drag family. And I sometimes feel like the environment today is just changed so much from the nineties and the eighties that I don’t personally think that having that strong drag family is really as important as finding yourself on your own.

Jade Sinclair: Because I think there’s so many tools that are available today. I had to learn from somebody to do make up. Now you can learn on the internet and it’s so much easier to learn, and now you have access to buying things on the internet. You can buy almost anything you need on the internet. So I don’t think that-

Interviewer: The connection.

Jade Sinclair: Exactly, it’s not as it’s still a trade.

Interviewer: It’s not as tense.

Jade Sinclair: It doesn’t have to be as one-on-one learning from somebody, I think you can learn from the internet. You can learn from all… We have so many shows going on in the city, it’s crazy.

Interviewer: So, the relationship is not as close like the bomb, you can’t build.

Jade Sinclair: I don’t think it has to be. I think you could have a more successful career by building your friendships, right, doing by learning from multiple sources.

Interviewer: Right, no, yeah. That’s actually a great point. I didn’t even think of that. How often do you perform and where do you perform? I know that this is the place.

Jade Sinclair: I perform quite a bit. I perform about five nights a week and I also work five days a week. So I have a pretty busy schedule. So I work here on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and then I work at another bar on Sunday in South City, then I work at a bar in Soulard on Monday. So, five nights a week.

Interviewer: Wow. This one is really a good question because I wanted to know this too. What has the COVID-19 pandemic meant for your life as a drag artist?

Jade Sinclair: For me, because I have a day job and I have been able to work from home, it hasn’t impacted my financial situation. It did impact in the beginning of my social situations. I’m used to being out so much because of my shows. And we were shut down, as you may know, for quite a bit, for two months last year. So I sat at home. We, here in this bar, initially when we opened around June, I have to go back now, we were either at 25 or 50% capacity, which we used to have about a hundred people in this room, so now, we can only have 25 to 50. So we pulled up some tables, which still have some of them pulled up. It didn’t impact me a whole lot outside of missing my shows, but I do have many friends that do drag. And some of them only did drag and that was a really hard time for them because they lost their source of income. And this is for college, so probably isn’t a big deal and I’m also not listing any names.

Jade Sinclair: We rely quite a bit on tips and a lot of that tips is unreported income. So you can’t go to the and say… You don’t get unemployment from removing a drag queen. So it was really hard on them. So a lot of them, we did learn some new tips and new techniques. And a lot of my friends did online shows and accepted electronic tips. So they learned how to set up a cam recorder, how to get a backdrop. I said cam recorder, that’s so old, a video camera, how to get a backdrop. So when we went out, we bought things I, myself, I wanted to do a couple of things too, just because I was bored at home. So I’d do Amazon. And I got like whole camera kit with like bright lights and the whole backdrop and-

Interviewer: A whole set up.

Jade Sinclair: Yeah, and we put that in one of my rooms. And we also would record some videos and we would edit them and we would post them online and accept some online tips as well.

Interviewer: Wow. That’s very creative.

Jade Sinclair: It was, it was a fun time for some of us, even though it was very challenging for a lot of us.

Interviewer: No, yeah. Oh, next question. Is there anything unique to drag scenes where you live compared to other places in the country or rural?

Jade Sinclair: I began on the east coast in Delaware, which is a really small state. So drag here compared to Delaware is a lot bigger. It’s a lot more refined and there’s a lot more national attention on the entertainers here. So in Delaware, we didn’t have nearly the pageant community that we have here. So we have some Miss Americas, Miss Gay Americas, that live in the city. We have some Miss Continentals that live in the city. So we have a lot of national entertainers that live in the city. It’s different in that regard. But overall, I can tell you that drag was, in my younger years, a very regional thing. So the Midwest was always known for having very pretty queens on stage.

Jade Sinclair: And I think a lot of it has to do with, if you think about New York, for example, compared to St. Louis, we have a lot more room here. In New York, they have a lot less room and they have a lot… It’s a more expensive footprint to have. So here we can have a dressing room that can be big, where we can all hang clothes and change clothes. And there, they’re like, oh my God, [inaudible 00:26:05] is too expensive, we can’t have… So you don’t have that. So people in New York they’ll come to the show already in drag and they’d probably not change their clothes at all. So it’s going to be about the quality of their entertainment, not necessarily about their wardrobe over everything else. And a lot of people on the coast, east coast and west coast, sing live, and a lot of us in the Midwest lip-sync.

Interviewer: Gotcha.

Jade Sinclair: But also, if you think about that, a lot of the people from New York are also the huge theater community.

Interviewer: The population, yeah.

Jade Sinclair: So, there’s a lot of popular people that are in theater that, while they’re not working, they’re going to be doing some drag. So I think that’s why you get a lot more singing artists out on the coasts, because they’re a larger theater community than you have here in St. Louis.

Interviewer: Gotcha. What are the biggest challenges to doing drag and becoming a drag artist? Did I say that?

Jade Sinclair: Yeah, I think that first of all, the largest one is trying to learn how to… Speaking for myself as a drag queen or a female impersonator, however you want to call that, my obstacle would have been trying to unlearn the masculine mannerisms that I was taught as a child. So it’s how I hold my hands. It’s just how I do things that make things look softer and more feminine, which is taboo. I mean, as a gay man, especially I was taught, I shied away from anything that I thought was feminine because I didn’t want to be beaten up, so I would try to make it rah, so I had to learn a new way to carry myself that fit my personality on stage. But aside from that, I think that there was a lot of things that our community has to overcome.

Jade Sinclair: I think there’s still a stigma around, the media outlets tell you what’s beautiful. And for a man it’s masculine, it’s chiseled this, chiseled that. So a lot of the drag queens, I think, feel inferior to that image. And I think also a lot of people who are trying to find a man to date, see a drag queen as not in that image. They’re like, oh, the whole masc for masc, masculine for masculine. I think we faced a lot of, I don’t want to say criticisms, but what is the word I’m trying to find? I’m sorry.

Interviewer: No, you’re fine.

Jade Sinclair: I know it. I think that drag queens in general face a lot of discrimination from the gay men when they’re trying to find partners. I, myself, don’t have that problem because I’m a striking young man. No, I’m just kidding. No, I’ve had the same partner for like 16 years, so I’m good to go. But I know that a lot of my friends complain that it’s really hard for them to find people to date.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

Jade Sinclair: I think it really is because there’s that stigma around, just like there was a stigma in the eighties and nineties around HIV, there’s still a stigma around, oh, you’re a drag queen. I think part of it is, because people think that we’re full of drama. Part of it is because people think we want to be women. Part of it is because they think we’re all feminine. And that was back, I think, it’s rooted in when we’re children where is just crazy. But think about this, it’s unacceptable for a man to dress like a female, but it’s totally fine for a female to just like a male. And what I mean is if we’re willing to wear pants it’s totally fine. No one bats an eye about that. But if a man would have walked on the street wearing a skirt, it would catch everyone’s attention. It’s because our emphasis on society and they do, society evaluates males over females.

Interviewer: That’s true. That’s very, very true. This one is really cool. What goes into getting ready for a performance?

Jade Sinclair: A lot of fun, actually. When I first started, and I say that because I just have expanded my wardrobe so much over the course of 25 years and also my musical background. But generally speaking, when I first started, it was

Jade Sinclair: And also, my musical background. But generally speaking, when I first started, it was a process where I had to find out, so what song am I feeling now? Okay, I like this song. So then you had the song and then, what am I going to wear? What’s my hair going to be? What’s my makeup going to be? What’s my cosmetics going to be? What’s my costume going to be? Then find the right shoes, and the right jewelry. It was assembling all of this stuff. And then I literally have a bedroom that’s just full of-

Interviewer: I can only imagine.

Jade Sinclair: My bedroom is a closet and it’s stacked full. So I don’t have to go through all that anymore. But honestly getting ready as one of the fun things about drag. I like to be able to come to this bar or wherever I’m going to be working, sit in the dressing room around my peers. If we have five of us in the show, we all see the same room. We all do our makeup, we kiki. We have a good time. It’s just, that’s a lot of fun. I love putting on the makeup. I love watching the transformation in the mirror in front of me.

Interviewer: How long does it take?

Jade Sinclair: Usually I think in general, a new person it takes a lot longer than it does a seasoned or a long-term individual. I recall when I first started with my drag family, we would do a show and the show would be at 10 o’clock and it would be at a bar downtown in Delaware. And so we would arrive at my drag mother’s house. We get there at five o’clock. This is five hours before the show. It’s ridiculous because they sit there and we all would be smoking, we kiki, and then get our makeup on and getting all our stuff. We’d to leave there, leave her house around 8:30 or nine o’clock. So four hours for trying to get ready. But a lot of that wasn’t really, it was having a good time.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: And that was also me doing a show once or twice a month. Now I’m doing five times a week. So it’s just a lot different. Now I get here, it’s six o’clock for an 8:30 show. And I can do my makeup in probably 35 to 40 minutes.

Interviewer: Oh really? That’s impressive. I listened to RuPaul. He said five hours for him.

Jade Sinclair: I think that’s usually people who are just not as… I mean, if you think about, as a female, you probably have a beauty routine. And when you first developed that, that’s putting on your lashes, whatever you’re doing, it took time. And even by putting in contacts, you’d be a struggle when you first do it. But then over time, it’s like pop them right in. It all picks up in time.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Jade Sinclair: So, I can probably be ready from head to toe, which means my hair and my makeup and everything, in about an hour and 10 minutes.

Interviewer: Oh that’s-

Jade Sinclair: If I focused on getting it done.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: But I usually allow about two hours. It also allows me time to go out there and get a drink from the bar.

Interviewer: That’s still not that bad though. It’s actually really good. How do you identify in terms of your sex, gender identity, any gender expression out of drag?

Jade Sinclair: Yeah, I’m pretty traditional. When I grew up in the gay community, in the late nineties, I mean, we always referred to everybody as she. I mean, we called ourselves she. Not necessarily to be… we never thought that we were women by any means at all. I think we just identified a lot more with the women of the world. They were a lot more nurturing, a lot more caring, a lot more supportive than heterosexual men. So I think that’s why we always used the word she to refer to ourselves. Some of my older friends still call me she, even though I’m a boy. If someone were to ask me, what are your pronouns? I’m saying I’m probably he, him.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: But most times, I probably go by she, her, because that’s what I’m presenting. So I go by what I present. But I have a lot of friends that are non-binary or that are trans. So I support all, everyone for who they are.

Interviewer: Right. I didn’t know who my personal and I’m like, okay, well, in articles it says she so that’s what I’ve just been like okay she. I didn’t know myself. But what pronouns do you use in and out of drag?

Jade Sinclair: Yeah, so out of drag it’s usually… I mean, if I were with my family or at work, it’s usually going to be he, him.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: But then a lot of my gay friends will always refer to me as she or as her, which is what I do present as drag.

Interviewer: Yeah. Has drag influenced your sex and gender identity and how?

Jade Sinclair: It hasn’t, but it can be intoxicating. Because I think everybody likes to have some level of attention from people that they find attractive. So for me, I am attracted to men. And so, and a lot of it’s on social because of social media, I get bombarded by men that I don’t know with sexual advances. And sometimes they’re very subtle and sometimes they’re very blunt. And I usually try to tell them pretty bluntly, look, I’m a man. I know my profile looks like a woman, but it says a man. And I think men can just be pigs to begin with.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jade Sinclair: I forgot what the question was now, what was the question again? I’m sorry.

Interviewer: No, you’re fine.

Jade Sinclair: How’s it affected my sex life?

Interviewer: Yes.

Jade Sinclair: Okay. So I said it can be very intoxicating because you get a lot of attention when I’m dressed in this female role, but people have to understand that it’s only an image.

Interviewer: Right.

Jade Sinclair: And I used to joke with people. I say, “Hey, if I go home with you, if I take off my pantyhose, my pads fall out.” That’s not very attractive. I am a man. But people, men are still always in my inbox and I’m always like, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Interviewer: Oh my God. Do girls hit on you as well?

Jade Sinclair: No. Not really.

Interviewer: No? You never get hit on by a girl?

Jade Sinclair: I may have had some women that are lesbians that said I’m really attractive, but they’re usually never as sexually forward as men are.

Interviewer: Wow. Men are… you said they’re pigs, even the ones that try to act like they’re not. Yeah. I don’t like dudes. Has drag influenced how you think about gender?

Jade Sinclair: It has. I think first of all, for me, being gay always made me a lot more considerate of women because I knew I was always removed from that category of the cis, white male or the cis male, so I can see how they would behave. I would see how they would treat me and how they would treat women. So that always made me sympathize a whole lot more with women of our world. But probably was why I was so attracted to drag and that strong, feminine role model.

Jade Sinclair: But I think just in general, I try to have an appreciation for anyone’s experience. And it isn’t even about if they’re gay or if they’re straight or if there are female or if they’re male. I mean, even people of color. I try to treat people the way that I want to be treated.

Interviewer: You should, yeah.

Jade Sinclair: And I know, we will not always agree on a lot of things, but I will respect you as a person. Even if I think you’re an ass, I’m going to respect you as a person.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: I can keep you out of my circle of friendship. My decision is, I control who I hang out with and who I’m friends with, and that’s how I choose to deal with people that I don’t want to be around. I can just choose to walk away.

Interviewer: Right. Well, yeah, that’s actually very true. How has drag impact or changed you?

Jade Sinclair: It’s made me a lot more confident. So you talked about how, talking wasn’t one of your strongest points or whatever.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: So, I think because I knew I was different growing up in the night. I later realized, I thought at one time that maybe my thoughts about boys as a young child, might’ve been a phase.

Interviewer: How old were you when you started to realize you were attracted to guys?

Jade Sinclair: Well, I think I had an interest and wanted to be around them is how… because it wasn’t really about sex in a younger age. But it was like, I wanted to be around them more than I did the girls. And that was probably back in around fourth or fifth grade. I’m going to guess.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jade Sinclair: But it wasn’t really sexual then. But I knew I was a little different and I thought I would outgrow this. And I didn’t date women. And I was even engaged [inaudible 00:37:43] one time. I know. But I think… what’s the question again? I’m getting off track.

Interviewer: No, no, you’re fine. I’m getting off track. No, I actually asked you a question about when did you realize basically, that you were gay?

Jade Sinclair: I knew that I was a little different back then and I thought I would grow out of it. But I guess… there’s a question that I was trying to answer. I’m sorry.

Interviewer: No, you’re fine. Like, what was that? How has drag impacted or changed you?

Jade Sinclair: We read that one.

Interviewer: And how has drag impacted your confidence?

Jade Sinclair: Oh, the confidence. That’s right. Yeah, so anyhow, I think that’s where I was going, I’m sorry.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: Because I think I knew I grew up different from a lot of people and in a very rural environment where I had no positive gay role models because there wasn’t really one. There was no drag race. There was no Will and Grace. It was a lot of things I didn’t have exposure to it at that age. So I always felt very different and I think, as a result, I was a very insecure individual.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Jade Sinclair: And I think I was always a very creative child and my mom would often say that I would always entertain myself. But anyhow, and so I always very quiet and shy and it wasn’t until drag, when I had to get on stage, and when I had to find a way to command the audience and when I had to build up my stage presence, that’s when I began to be a lot more confident as myself on stage. And then that I think has carried over into myself as a person. So I’m a lot more confident now speaking to somebody even though I’m not in drag.

Interviewer: Got it. Great answer. If you could go back in time as blank, what advice would… oh-

Jade Sinclair: [inaudible 00:39:31].

Interviewer: Huh?

Jade Sinclair: Yeah, go ahead.

Interviewer: No. If you could go back in time as a person, what advice would you use as a drag name or give to your younger self?

Jade Sinclair: I think, it’s always a fun question to think about the whole what if? Because if you change your past, then you change who you are today. So I really am happy with who I am. However, I do think that our youth, and even my younger self, needs to be taught that it’s totally okay to be different. And we shouldn’t worry as much about what other people think of you but worry about just the person that you want to be and living up to your own expectations.

Interviewer: That’s really good. I like that a lot.

Jade Sinclair: Thank you.

Interviewer: That’s really sweet. I’m concerned if and how your social identity have impact your experience of drag or vice versa. How drag can impact their identity. Can you share about how one or more of your social identities, such as drag, race, class, age, geography, religion, sex, sexual, disability, et cetera and/or the interaction of the social identity have impacted your experience of drag and/or how drag impact your experience of social identity?

Jade Sinclair: Whew.

Interviewer: It’s like same thing.

Jade Sinclair: That’s a long question, I don’t know if I can answer it.

Interviewer: It really is

Jade Sinclair: Which one was it?

Interviewer: Question number 11.

Jade Sinclair: Number 11. I’m curious if if social identities [inaudible 00:41:12]. So, I don’t think that it’s really impacted my identity. I think it has the potential to do so because for some people… but I’m confident in myself as a cis male, so it doesn’t change who I am or how I identify. It does open up my understanding to what other people go through who may be from a different background than my own. So that’s a positive aspect of it on me. I think that I know of several individuals who would today identify as trans that wouldn’t have earlier and perhaps drag and the experiences of wearing female clothes and what is considered an appropriate way, meaning like drag, and I think it’s been mainstream environment. Drag is considered pretty acceptable now.

Jade Sinclair: So RuPaul’s Drag Race does indeed help expand that knowledge of drag across the world. But trans is still a very taboo topic in a lot of communities.

Interviewer: It is. It is.

Jade Sinclair: And so I think that drag has helped some of them identify their own trans with inside them. And I don’t know how to help make that more acceptable. Meaning like RuPaul’s Drag Race doesn’t do that. There’s no one on there today that is a male to female trans individual.

Interviewer: Right. Why do you think that is?

Jade Sinclair: I don’t know. I know it’s a very controversial topic.

Interviewer: It is.

Jade Sinclair: And a lot of people have tried to cancel RuPaul because of that, because they believe she’s been very discriminatory by not doing that. Not being someone who can connect with her on a personal basis to find out, or with World of Wonder Productions, I can imagine that watching this show… this is just me grasping at straws. I can imagine that you watch that show and quite often they’re backstage and their shirts are off and they’re doing their makeup. I don’t know if that’s a factor because obviously if you’re a person that has breasts, that would be an issue for television production.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: I don’t think that’s really it, that’s just me trying to be-

Interviewer: Or probably because having an advantage. They have the… they don’t have to put as much work in.

Jade Sinclair: That is honestly, there are people in the community that do have that feeling that, that thought behind it. There are some that are very advocates that drag should be a man dressed as a woman.

Interviewer: Which I don’t really agree. Women can be drags too.

Jade Sinclair: But I mean, there are some that have a hard time accepting the trans individuals as drags. But that’s not my position. I know I hear it from a lot of different people. I mean, I hear from all levels. But I mean, we here in this bar specifically, we try to be pretty tolerant. So we have, what’s called our discovery night on Thursdays where we say it’s any new talent. It can be whatever you want it to be. It can be bio queen, hyper queen, drag king. It can be whatever you want to be.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Jade Sinclair: We don’t limit ourselves to one defined art of drag. On Monday nights we have a drag king cast. So we try to be very all inclusive.

Interviewer: That’s really good. All right. We’re getting down to the nitty gritty. How do you define drag?

Jade Sinclair: I think to me, drag would just have to mean, in a general rule that applies to the different types of drag, drag is something that is-

Jade Sinclair: Types of drag. Drag is something that is over the top of what you would see from a character or a personality walking down the street. So for me, it’s going to be I’m going to have longer nails, bigger hair, longer lashes, and a lot more makeup on. And it gets different for a king. It can be, hyper-end and I think it’s whatever, it’s just an elevated level of that personality.

Interviewer: No. Yeah. I agree. What do you think is the purpose of drag?

Interviewer: I guess it’s like the same?

Jade Sinclair: No it’s a good question. because I think that my opinion of that might have changed quite a bit over the years. I think in general, a drag persona is somebody who does get on stage and entertain. All right? So people appreciate that side of it. But I think aside from that, they do have some social responsibility to help push the envelope a little bit and be that Madonna or that Lady Gaga or that somebody else to try and help push our community forward to a more inclusive stance.

Interviewer: Do you think drag is sexual? Why or why not? And if so, how? In what way?

Jade Sinclair: I think often I feel sexual.

Jade Sinclair: I mean, you have to admit when you get all dolled up and you look in the mirror, and you’re like, “Damn, I look good.”

Interviewer: I look good. Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: And so, in that regard it’s like, “Oh yeah.” And I know that I do receive sexual advances from individuals, but for me personally, even though I may feel sexy, this is not a comfortable sexual environment for me, because if you consider the fact that I am a man and I am wearing foam padding on my hips and four pair of dance tights-

Interviewer: Is it heavy?

Jade Sinclair: The padding isn’t heavy, no.

Interviewer: Nothings heavy on you?

Jade Sinclair: No. But I do wear corsets. I cinch up. I do a lot of things to my body to make it look good onstage, but that in itself is uncomfortable. So the idea of trying to be sexual with somebody while I’m up in all that is not at all appealing to me. Plus I have certain parts of my anatomy tucked.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know. Yeah.

Interviewer: How does your husband like feel about… Like did he meet you here or did he meet you at a bar?

Jade Sinclair: We actually met playing softball. So he knows me from my athletic side as a male as well. He used to come to almost all my shows for so many years and would travel with me when I had traveling gigs also. But he has probably not been to one of my shows in well over 10 years.

Interviewer: Oh, wow.

Jade Sinclair: I think because he liked drag in the beginning and he had a lot of respect for some of the artists. And then once I think you get really involved with somebody-

Interviewer: I know.

Jade Sinclair:… who are in the community, then you begin to see some of the dark sides of it. You get to see some of the shady aspects of things and much as you would expect, if someone’s doing well and succeeding, there’s people there that they’re there to try and tear them down. And so he witnessed a lot of that, where people were attacking me, not physically, but verbally and mostly behind my back. And he was very upset by that.

Interviewer: Yeah. That is a lot to take on.

Jade Sinclair: And he couldn’t separate himself from that situation, so he chose to just remove himself from going to shows.

Interviewer: I completely understand that. Like, seriously, he loves you. So what can you do? But you love it. So it’s like-

Jade Sinclair: And he knows that this is a part-time job for me. It’s the job that I really like to do.

Interviewer: Do. Yeah. It was like a good hobby.

Jade Sinclair: Yeah.

Interviewer: I can only imagine that. Yeah. That’s interesting. How do you feel about Ru Paul’s Drag Race? Like, I guess we kind of like discussed that.

Jade Sinclair: I think overall, it is a positive engine in the fact that I think that it does make drag mainstream. I think it doesn’t make what I do mainstream, because there’s a difference between the drag you see on that TV show and what you see here on the weekend. I don’t know if you’ve watched that show that much? Do you watch?

Interviewer: We do. We the whole class.

Jade Sinclair: Right. I have some friends that have been on that show.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Jade Sinclair: And so I watch it and I can kind of like read between the lines a little bit, but then I also have talked to some of them about things. Like when they’re portrayed, when you see them saying a certain thing, I’m like, did you really say that? And they’re like, well, yeah. So that show, it’s entertainment. It’s not reality TV, it’s entertainment TV. So, they record everything that you do and then they can then edit it however they want to create storylines however they see fit. But I think it is good because it does help advance the art form. But again, it’s also a lot of acting challenges.

Interviewer: It is.

Jade Sinclair: And a lot of like singing and stuff, and that’s not really what I do. I mean, I might sing Happy Birthday to you and that’s going to be about it. I’m more of a performance artist. The show’s an hour and a half long, and like three minutes of it is Lip Sync For Your Life. That’s what I do. I lip sync for my life.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jade Sinclair: So, I mean, it does help push the art and it does present some different versions of drag. You have people that are like, You’re the Queen is a little bit kooky, a little bit different. Who wants to be on this season? I don’t know if you’ve watched her other seasons. Like there was this person from Springfield, Missouri that was a little bit artistic. And what was her name? Crystal Meth. She had some exaggerated makeup. So it does show you other types of draggers aside from just like the beauty queen. So it is good in that regard. It’s more like watching Instagram versus watching YouTube.

Interviewer: That’s a good comparison, actually. A very good one.

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

Jade Sinclair: If I could change one thing about the scene, it would be to try and get people to stop trying to tear other people down. And it’s really not even that visible aspect of it, but it is there. And I think it gives us a bad name and I think there’s room for everyone to shine. And if we spend our efforts and our time on our own craft and not trying to tear someone down, then we will also find our way to success.

Interviewer:

Just an off topic. What keeps you humble? Like, so loving? Because everybody does like you know… Because even in a girl community, not in girl, but well, you probably experienced as well, we have hate towards each other. Like we jealous, like we get jealous.

Jade Sinclair: We do.

Interviewer: So, I know that you guys are experiencing the same thing. How do you remain like good-hearted and not like face any type of like-

Jade Sinclair: By never forgetting where I first started. And by hearing those terrible critiques that people would say about me behind my back about, “Oh gosh, he’s a deer in headlights. So she has no stage presence. Oh, she’s a stuttering drag queen.” Just those things that they said about me when I first started and I was like, “Oh my God.”

Interviewer: Did that hurt your feelings?

Jade Sinclair: It did, but I never vocalized it. I internalized that and I used that as a motivator to push me to do better.

Interviewer: Wow. Well, yeah.

Jade Sinclair: And I don’t want to make anybody else feel that way.

Interviewer: Exactly, exactly. That’s probably like the root of it, but I guess there’s mean people and nice people everywhere I guess. What do you think are misconceptions people have about drag and where does it come from? What do you think will help to change it?

Jade Sinclair: I think one of the misconceptions is that a person that performs in drag in general is a person that… I think there’s confusion. Maybe less today because everyone watches Drag Race, I’m not sure, but I think there’s confusion between doing drag and being transgender. And I think a lot of people think that because I dress as a woman, that I want to be a woman, which is not the case at all. And also I think sometimes because we dress more provocatively and more sexually, I shouldn’t say sexually, but we want to be sexy on stage. So I think then there is sometimes a confusion about us trying to be sexual. Does that make sense?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jade Sinclair: I’m not here to seduce somebody. I’m here to have a good time.

Interviewer: Have fun. Right.

Jade Sinclair: But sometimes I think people can misconstrue that because I or others will touch a little bit inappropriately and nothing that I’ve done or aware, should really give them that opinion, but that I’m sure that women have the same problem.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Jade Sinclair: I’m positive that they do. And I guess what we can do about that, how can change that? I think again, that might go back to the reason why I may just sometimes drop my voice and be able to do some guy in the audience and the person who might not have been doing anything, but it just keeps that realization that, “Hey, I may look one way, but I’m really this.”

Interviewer: Okay. Right. Wow. That’s a lot. That’s hard. I’m sorry. You have to go through that.

Jade Sinclair: Oh no, it’s okay. I mean, I know I’m a man. I know how men can be-

Interviewer: Because I’d be one to-

Jade Sinclair: … and men objectify people.

Interviewer: I did learn to do like the 1920s, like being on stage. I forgot the first-

Jade Sinclair: The flappers?

Interviewer: Yes. Type of women, but I thought about just all those people that…you already get into this, on the regular, do you really want that as well? It’s too much pressure so I commend you. Because it’s like, I’m going for work and everybody’s just lusting and just trying to-

Jade Sinclair: Not everybody, but there are people that do that though. And honestly, if you look at my inbox, I mean, not my inbox, [crosstalk 00:54:35] but if you look at like this whole like, I never answer these things, but the whole message requests ARE just full of people that are probably thinking or hitting on me.

Interviewer: DM, yeah.

Jade Sinclair: Oh, well last one, if you choose one thing you want people to know about or learn about drag, what would it be?

Jade Sinclair: I think in general, it’s the transference of the fact that we can all stop focusing upon what society tells us we should look like, should act like, or should be, and just be our true selves and enjoy that. And instead of worrying about what people think about you, just worry about who you are and if you’re living your best self. Sorry. [crosstalk 00:55:17] And if you are achieving your full potential as your authentic self.

Interviewer: Well, I’m going to say thank you so much for sitting with me. You’ve been amazing.

Jade Sinclair: Good, good.

Interviewer: I’m so sorry for asking you so many questions.

Jade Sinclair: Oh, no.

Interviewer: I didn’t mean to pressure.

Jade Sinclair: No, it’s no pressure at all. It’s all good.

Interviewer: But that concludes, I guess you’d call it a podcast or interview with Jade Sinclair.

Jade Sinclair: Yes, very good.

Interviewer: Awesome. Well, you guys can follow her on Facebook as well.

Jade Sinclair: I know, I know, Facebook.

Interviewer: They can follow you on Facebook or Instagram.

Jade Sinclair: I’m also on Instagram. I am.

Interviewer: Well, you could tell them if you want. I had to uphold this on the website.

Jade Sinclair: My Facebook is Jade Sinclair, my Instagram though is –

Interviewer: You guys got to come out, support her and get her a lot of tips.

Jade Sinclair: Oh, I would love that. And then my Instagram, I have to find that. I’m so sorry. I should know that, but I don’t know it off the top of my head. It’s Miss Jade Sinclair on Instagram.

Interviewer: Awesome. Well, thank you so much again, and I will be coming out to one of your performances. So you’ll see me again.

Jade Sinclair: Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you.