NEW YORK CITY TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

https://www.nyctransoralhistory.org/
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INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

DEZI

Interviewer: Tyler M.

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Transcribed by Vanessa Thompson (volunteer)

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Tyler M: Hello, my name is Tyler M. and I will be having a conversation with Dezi Hendra for the New York City Trans Oral History project, in collaboration with the New York Public Libraries Community Oral History Project. This is an oral history project centered on the experiences of trans identifying people. It is July 11th, 2018 and this is being recorded at my apartment at Sunset Park.

Tyler M: So Dezi, why don't you start by telling me when and where you were born?

Dezi: I was born in Los Gatos, California in 1987. I have not spent a lot of time in Los Gatos tho, but that was the closest hospital to where we lived.

Tyler M: Where did you grow up?

Dezi: Milpitas, it's a small town between San Jose and Fremont.

Tyler M: What was it like growing up there?

Dezi: It was good because we were not like super close to the insanely big city, it was like very suburb, but like easy to get around places and we weren't too far from San Francisco so if we wanted to go to the city we could. But then there was also, up in the hills a little bit of camping areas, and I don't know, it was nice. I particularly like that I grew up before there were cell phones, because I used to like sort of wander after school and my parents couldn't find me until I came home.

Tyler M: So what was your childhood like?

Dezi: I mean that's a question [laughs] Complicated. There were good things and bad things and everything in between. I have two older brothers, so growing up I was always very proud of being a tomboy and all that. But my mom used to try to force me into dresses which I did not care for, unless if she made them by hand, I really liked her handmade dresses. The more elaborate the better. I had one that was like, 5 different pieces, it had bloomers and a petticoat and I think an apron at the top and it was just my favorite for some reason because if I'm going to wear a dress apparently I'm going to wear a dress. But yeah, I used to go to the park near our house all the time, we had trees in our backyard for climbing. Things were mostly normal I'd say. I don't know, is there anything in particular you mean or just a general feeling?

Tyler M: What was your relationship like with your siblings?

Dezi: It was good, I mean...like I have a really good relationship with one of my brothers now, I'm pretty much one of his best friends, he doesn't have a lot of friends, the other brother we don't really talk to very much, he's gotten into a lot of trouble in his life though. He's not what I would very much consider a good person, but he's my brother. Do you want to go into things that tend to have content warnings?

Tyler M: There are content warnings in the beginning so you can feel free to.
Dezi: Okay, I mean so complicated relationship with my brothers. So when I was a kid, so I have older cousins too that were also male, they had very interesting want to explore females bodies and I was their test subject. So I had a very tense relationship with them for a long time but I didn't really understand why, because I was young when everything happened and I wanted to be the center of attention, so I liked that they were paying attention to me but also realized that things should not be happening. So...I don't know, complicated. But I'm also not one to hold onto things. The one brother that we don't like has done things to other people, and so....and some people that I really care about a lot so I don't like him. But the other brother, I don't know, we don't talk about it. But we've managed to have a good relationship now. [Pause] Oh there's one thing, relationship with my brothers. Okay, so I have one brother who's 16 months older than me, and then the other brother is only 3 years older than me, so when we were small children my parents would you know bathe us together, because that's what you do when you have kids. Which was unfortunate when you got to the pooping in the tub stage, but that was not me, and also not part of the story. There was a time where I was about four, when after one said bath I went to my mom and asked her when I was going to grow one, and she had to apparently sit me down and tell me that I was not going too. And I think it upset me quit a bit. But I also blocked out all said sort of sex talks with my parent, I don't remember any of them although they said that they had them. [Pause]

Tyler M: What kind of relationships do you have with the rest of your family at all?

Dezi: I honestly don't have much of a relationship with them anymore. I had a good, close relationship with my parents when I still lived in California, after moving to New York and then after figuring out gender and sexuality things about myself, it's been hard to maintain that relationship. I don't share the same beliefs as them and I've been doing a lot of activism stuff so it's hard to talk to them about anything because they want to know what I'm doing with my life and I don't want to tell them oh I, you know, went to march in the pride parade with the democratic socialists of America, telling that to my republican father probably wouldn't go over very well. So I've managed to maintain having a relationship with them by just not talking about things. I haven't talked to any of my aunts or uncles in ages, and my grandma stopped talking to me after she met Sage, so she'll talk to me when I'm there and if I call her. But apparently after she met Sage she went to my mom and my aunts and was like “what does she thinks she's doing!” and I was like...not your choice so... I mean on one hand I do kind of miss them, and miss having that kind of relationship but also I kinda find it relieving to not have to work at it.

Tyler M: What kind of community have you found that's been able to embrace the things that give your joy [inaudible].

Dezi: The intersection of my community are like queer burners, because I love queer people, I want to collect them all like Pokemon. And I have been, and it's been wonderful and amazing and I love having all these warm, loving people in my life. And not to say that all queer people are loving and warm but the ones that I have are and that's happened mostly in the last year that I've been collecting people that are kind of amazing and super accepting and are like so you think you want to do this thing? Go do it! Do it, do it, do it! You're going to be amazing!
And it's like oh I kind of failed and it sucked, that's awesome! You did a thing, and that's kind of wonderful. The same with burners, so even if their not queer burners which is the intersection of said groups, burners themselves are super accepting, and excitable, and while they can be flighty they're also super supportive, and kind of awesome. There's a lot of motivation and inspiration and artisticness that goes on with burner type people. I'm getting excited because were going to Burning Man again this year and we only have 6 more weeks to finish planning, but we were actually trying to get a couple of people that we met recently to go to burning man with us so were really, really excited. Last year we brought Robin to Burning Man, and she decided to go, got a ticket and everything together in the last two weeks before Burning Man, and this time we got a little bit more time to help these people plan their voyage out there but its still like, I love that we're introducing more people to this world that is unique and insane and amazing. And I want to bring more people, more queer burners.

**Tyler M:** Would you mind telling me more about this one?

**Dezi:** Burning Man? There's no clear cut way to describe Burning Man really. It is an amazing community that is built from nothing. Literally nothing, they build up a whole city in the middle of the desert in Nevada, and each group brings their own whatever. There's a camp that does a 24 hour tea house, there are ones that do bars, or there was one that had a whole kink room set up. There was an oregy dome, there was a thunder dome which was where you have these swings and you fight at each other to see who can knock the other off of their thing first. And there are...pretty much if you can think of it, there's a camp that has it. There's one that last year was called transformation, what they did was they sprayed everyone down with foam, and rinsed everyone off. And if you're in the desert for however many days and you can't take a real shower for that much time, being hosed off, even in a room full of other naked people, is amazing. But yeah it's just kind of amazing. There's art carts that go around on open playa and play music, they are in the shape of weird animals or things, and some of them shoot fire, some of them play loud music, some of them are a big, basically DJ booth that goes somewhere and plants and plays music and everyone comes over and dances. There are art installations all over the place, some of them are very weird, some of them are reoccurring. So there's this tree that goes up every year that's made of some sort of metal and LED lights and the lights are changing color all the time. And some of the art pieces are burned throughout the week, and of course the man and the temple. The temple I don't think people talk about very often, in the standard set up for burning man in the center of the city is the man, and everyone knows that the man burns, but on Sunday night there's the Temple which is just a little bit further out from the city but within the same line as the man, and the temple burns Sunday night. And whereas when the man burns there's all this cheering and raucous partying, and people go out and do insane...have a lot of fun, when the temple burns its silent. And that's because the whole week leading up to the temple burn people will go there and they will put pictures and letters and write on the temple itself, pictures of people that they've lost, pictures of people that they've loved, written words about parts of themselves that they want to leave behind, and when you walk in there, close to the end of the week there's such a powerful energy in there. You can't walk in there, look at anything and not cry. Which is why when they burn it, it's releasing all of that into the universe, up to the heavens, whatever you believe in, or if you don't believe in anything just bursting into flames, then there's another kind of energy that settles over
everyone. Which is kind of a peace, a release, which is why everyone is silent. [pause] [inaudible]

**Tyler M:** I'm just, yeah, needing...that was really powerful. That was really amazing. When was the first time you heard the word trans or came across the idea of gender nonconforming people?

**Dezi:** I don't remember if there was a time before this, I think there probably was, but the first time I remember it sticking in my head was when I was taking a women's studies class in college. I was taking a women's studies class and they had a trans man come in to talk to us and I remember looking at this guy and thinking he's the most amazing person I've ever seen in my entire life. And having a very strong pull towards this person where I really wanted to talk to him and wanted to know more about him, more about his story. And I did go up to him after class and talk to him briefly but not much and not about anything important and I never saw him again. But that was the first time I know I interacted with a transgendered person.

**Tyler M:** What was that experience like for you?

**Dezi:** Delightfully confusing. I remember when he came into the class I was very hung up on gender, on the perception of his gender, trying to figure out what he would have looked like as a woman and you know the things that people go through as they're still figuring things out. And just being like fascinated that he knew for absolute certainty that this is what he wanted, and like this is the path I'm taking and these are the questions people ask me and these are the things I tell them, and these are the things that you shouldn't ask somebody and these are the things that I tell them. And things about top surgery, and bottom surgery, and different...all sorts of things. I remember just being blown away, and overwhelmed, and I'd never really considered that much about gender before and I was fascinated and wanted to know more, but also did not want to be rude.

**Tyler M:** When did you first start questioning gender for yourself?

**Dezi:** So like earnestly started questioning, probably a year and a half ago. But when I started thinking about it then I remembered back to all these different times in my life where I've either fought against gender roles or like part of my own self discovery was realizing in my head that there were frequently times where I viewed myself as male. And like to the point where I would have a crush on a gay guy and logically I knew he wouldn't be attracted to me because I was female, but like part of my brain didn't understand it because I realized that in part of me I viewed myself as not the gender I was presenting. And so I don't know, I look back on my life and that time when I was four and asked my mom when I was going to grow a penis, realizing I wasn't going too and then when my boobs started growing in and I realized that there was nothing I could do about it. Like I never wanted boobs, I refused to wear a bra until I was already a C cup because I didn't want them. And fighting against my conservative family and their view of gender roles where I was forced to learn how to cook things where my brothers weren't. And it was like why aren't you making them do this thing, you should make them do this thing too. Why is it like this? Because your the girl. Why is that a thing, why is that okay? And also like my
oldest brother, he grew his hair really long, and my grandpa would call him Christine. And on one hand that was amusing, but on the other hand it did bug him, but on the other hand he also kind of liked it, so I don't know. There was just... I also kind of always...it's just very confusing. A lot of different points in my life where its just as I started to connect the dots it made a lot more sense. But it wasn't until a year and a half ago I was at a board gaming convention and I had a dream where I was making out with a friend of mine, a female friend, and I was like that's odd. And I had to like come out, or not come out, admit this to Sage. Sage and I weren't dating but like really close, really good friends, and actually no we were almost dating at that point, besides the point, but I had to tell her this, and I realized that in my dream when I realized that I had to tell her this, that the feelings that I was having in my dream were not just in my dream. Not towards this person, like I don't have any feelings towards this person, but I was attracted to her. And in realizing that I was not necessarily straight I then started re-evaluating my idea of my own gender. And that's when I started realizing that there were points in time where I viewed myself as male, I actually thought that I always viewed myself as male, and then realized that that's also not the case. I thought that I always viewed myself as male but because I made myself okay with having breasts and representing femininely that I must...I lost my train of thought. Oh yeah because I got myself to be okay with having those things that it was just that I had forced myself to be okay with it not that I actually was at some points in time. So my understanding of my gender has gone through a few reiterations as I've been figuring it out and I'm sure that it will go through several more but I went from thinking that I was probably internally a guy to realizing that it changes, and that I'm probably more frequently somewhere in the middle in the great gender expanse. But sometimes I'm delightfully feminine and I like it, and that's okay.

**Tyler M:** Can you tell me about your relationship with Sage?

**Dezi:** How much time do we have? [laughs] my relationship with Sage. Sage and I have been on a very interesting journey together. When we started dating, or when we first dated three years ago we were from our own perspectives a cis head couple. And that has very much so changed. But yeah we dated for a few months, and then we stopped dating but continued to hook up, and then when she started dating somebody else we stopped doing that and figured that would be it, we wouldn't even be friends. But instead we became the best of friends, and yeah we became super super close. We continued to have a little bit of physical intimacy like cuddling, but that was purely platonic, like I got to a place of complete and utter only friendship and that was great. After a few months of that we slept together again, and that started up very minimally, and then after a couple months of that Sage caught the feelings, and I was like I'm sorry I don't feel the same. But I figured I might as well poke around inside and see if they were still in there, and about a month later my feelings for her had come back and so we started dating. And in that time we'd been through even more of a roller coaster. There was all the way up to Burning Man last year we were still...Sage was discovering herself and going through transition and figuring out more of who Sage was. And I was still stuck solidly in what we call the shell, I was in my shell. And the shell was like my familiar and societal expectations that I had sort of like encased myself in. Like this is who I'm supposed to be, this is how I'm supposed to support my partner and basically having no life or interest outside of myself. And I was just pretty much all about her which was not great. But we went to Burning Man, and I know its a
huge cliche having a life changing moment at Burning Man but all the way up to, or like in the month or so leading up to Burning Man Sage got to a point where she was definitely going to break up with me. But because we had Burning Man coming up and are plans relied so heavily on one another she wasn't going to do it until after. Makes sense, but still not great. But at Burning Man there was one night where the intoxicants that we were on worked for me but didn't work for her. We lost our friends and she just became super, super miserable. And she was angry and she was frustrated and she was taking it all out on me. And I'm sitting there tripping my face off going I can't even deal with this. We get to a quieter place, get her to leave her bike which is having all sorts of issues, she needs to get it fixed. And I lay down on the hammack that somebody had laid out in front of our friend's tent and I was staring at the stars and watching them dance between each other in the beat of the music. And this was such a beautiful moment that when Sage calls me over to help her with something, something inside me just broke. I was like I can't do this anymore. And we call that the time when my shell shattered because at that point in time Sage, the deadening version of her was rearing its very ugly head, and the person I am now does not like deadening Sage, and the person she is, Sage, does not like my old interaction of myself. So we were at this interesting crossroads, where she was becoming more of herself, I was still fully encased. But then this huge uprearing of deadening came up and I was just like I can't and just burst out, like I can't do this. And it's very, very fortunate that that did happen because that let me become the person that I am. Re-become, because I've been here before, its just I built a shell somewhere in my early 20's and hadn't been able to break back out of it until then. And like a couple days we had a really good talk, and ever since that moment everything has been pretty amazing. It gets better and better all the time. But yeah it's kind of amazing how close we got to missing each other. And as bad as that night was, I'm really glad it happened, because I don't know how much longer I would have stayed in that shell, had she broken up with me without having a chance to break out, then I don't know if I'd have stayed in it my whole life, and also then I wouldn't....we both would have missed out on the amazing relationship we have now.

**Tyler M:** How do you feel that shell was constructed, you said in your 20s?

**Dezi:** Yeah, I think it actually was constructed mainly around the expectations I was facing of being a women, and having this supporting role in life. And what that looks like in relationships and what that looks like in society. So like my parents expected me to behave a certain way and being in a relationships I was expected to, it wasn't even put on me by my partners so I can't say its their fault, and I wouldn't ever say that, but based on like, everything that is sort of shoved at you, down your throat from society, like this is how your supposed to behave in a relationship, this is the way you keep someone in a relationship with you, this is how you show them that you love them, this is how....this is how you woman, it wasn't the right fit for me. So it was built externally to fool the world, to fool myself.

**Tyler M:** How did you feel after your shell broke?

**Dezi:** Liberated. The person I am now, I mean it's a better version that it was then, but its like the same kind of person I was back in like highschool before I cared. I don't know why I suddenly cared what everyone thought of me, but somewhere in there I did. But in high school I didn't
and I was just sort of eclectic and weird, is what most people said, and it was kind of lovely, and I'm a better version of that version of me now.

**Tyler M:** What is it like being in a relationship with someone who may not have a directly similar journey but something parallel to yours?

**Dezi:** It's kind of nice actually because we can commiserate about things together, and we understand...we understand. There's a certain amount of things that cis people, most cis people, I won't say all, don't understand about the trans narrative, and the feelings, and for lack of a better word journey that we take. So its nice that I'm not having to constantly explain, oh this is why this feels weird to me, this is why this is dysphoric. I just say hey, my boobs are dysphoric and she's like I get that, not having boobs is dysphoric for me [laughs]. And I don't know, its nice. Even though I'm not a trans lady, I definitely, definitely understand that perspective. And so, I'm able too...also because I was socialized as female I can also be like hey this is how this happened with me, this is how it happened with me with puberty 1.0 so these things are normal for you, and like, it's kind of nice because I can give her advice and tips and tell her about, you know here are the things that were forced on me but here have them instead. But yeah we can talk about things and it's a greater understanding, so it's not like an emotional burden on the other person to vent about things, to talk about medical things, to ask her to do my injections because like I can't do needles. So it's definitely beneficial. It's really nice, I'm not sure how it works in a non dual trans relationship because I have not tried that.

**Tyler M:** What were your ideas of New York City like before [inaudible]

**Dezi:** So have you seen the TV show *How I Met Your Mother?* Okay so basically it's like, I didn't have a lot of real expectations, I had never visited New York before I moved here. I drove through here once about a year before I moved. And I almost got out of the car once, but realized that where we stopped was on Canal Street and there was no parking or stopping or whatever, so I did not even get out of the car. I moved here with the anticipation of working at...being on broadway. But once I got here and realized how terrible it is to work on Broadway, I didn't actually want to do that. But by the time I realized that I had kind of already fallen in love with the city and started making friends and kind of wanted to see where it went. Like I still do want to do theatre, there's an experimental theatre group called the New York [inaudible] I really want to join them. I auditioned once, but I didn't get in and I was going to audition again this year but when the auditions came around I was just so overwhelmed with other life stuff I ended up having to email them saying I'm really sorry but I can't. And I'm a little bummed about that but I know I made the right decision there. But hopefully eventually. They actually have now a couple non binary people in the cast, so that's really exciting. They had just hired another one in the last round of auditions. They also hired someone with my dead name, so that was a little weird for me [laughs]. But yeah, they're great, weird, mostly queer and I'd love to join them at some point and that seems like a much better group for me to be than Broadway.

**Tyler M:** How do you describe your experience as a non binary person in this climate of mostly binary trans visibility?
Dezi: Frustrating, it's great that there's more visibility for transgendered people, and I do not begrudge the minimal amount of acceptance that binary trans people are getting because it is minimal and its not taking away from me it's just steps in the right direction. I have experienced, I don't know how to phrase it, prejudice, or not really prejudice but I'm not sure transphobia is really the word, but from other trans people against me because I don't appear to be trans. And I am not a binary trans person so they don't necessarily acknowledge that as a real identity, which is unfortunate and weird. It's like if you can view that there is other options that what were given to you the day you were born, like if you see that your gender is not what you were assigned then why can't it be not the only ones that have them assigned so far. Open minded but closed, it doesn't make a lot of sense to me. But also trying to explain being non binary to our HR lady was really, really interesting and weird. I'm not out at work yet but she knows. And I would really like to eventually come out, because I would like to have people actually using my pronouns, because it's a little grating to be called she all the time.

Tyler M: What are your pronouns?

Dezi: They/them. But yeah, at work people don't know so they don't know so they don't know to use anything different, but when I sat down to talk to our HR person about something different but we ended up talking about this, she had a lot of questions and didn't really understand. But kind of, she was like okay yeah you can be transgender, you can be a trans woman, you can be a trans man, so it makes sense there would be other options. So she's kind of getting it, she still doesn't quite get it. But you get that with people who can understand intimately what it's like to be trans. I don't know, I feel like I'm rambling on.

Tyler M: How is it feeling...somewhat feeling not so accepted in certain aspects of trans community?

Dezi: It kind of sucks. I find myself wanting more and more to find ways to present more androgynous and have something about me that shows that I'm not a cis woman. Because until I tell someone that I'm on HRT people just assume that I'm cis, and while their opinions of me don't really matter, it sucks to not have that visibility. Not to have people see me for who I am.

Tyler M: Can you tell me about a time when you felt seen?

Dezi: Not off the top of my head.

Tyler M: [inaudible] I'm sorry. So how did you meet your partner Sage?

Dezi: So when I first moved to New York I wanted to find friends of course, so I started going to a weekly board game meetup because I love board games, so I should meet people who like to play board games, because then we will be friends over board games. And we went too, it's called meek, and we met at a bar, it's right across the street from NYU. And I'd been going for several months, probably almost a year by the time... one day I was in there chatting with people and there was this very loud, very rambunctious person, who was ecstactically talking
about Latkes, and I was like oh your Jewish and what are these Latkes things and she promised me one day she would make me Latkes. And being some random person from board game night I was like whatever, that may or may not ever happen. But she was really cute so I followed up. We planned a day of playing the board game Game of Thrones, which is a 6 hour board game, so it’s a whole day. With a group of mostly my friends, they were like the only friends I had in New York City so far, and at her apartment. And we were playing and it got to a point where someone fucked me over right near the end to the point where I could not win, so I helped her win. Because I was like I'll be damned if you win, so I'll help her win instead. And also I had a crush on her so I was like that might help me. So yeah, after that I stayed to help clean up, and we chatted a really long time and then I got her to agree to go out to lunch with me, just to hang out, and then eventually asked her out on a date which she said no, and [laughs] then we ended up going on a date anyway. And yeah, such is the story of our beginnings, board games.

**Tyler M:** So what was it like...I'm gonna scratch that. I love that story so much. Was Meek the only place that you were seeking friends at the time or were you looking anywhere else for friends?

**Dezi:** It was really the only place I was looking for friends at the time. I found a job within a couple months of moving to the city. And I had kind of like work friend people but not like people I actually hang out with. I didn't actually make any friends until December. I moved to the city in February. I made my first friend, like actual friend in December. His name was Jeff, I made friends with him because he had one of those smart watches on and I just reached over and swiped at it. It was also at board game night so yeah, Jeff became like my best friend, and he introduced me to a few other people who became my friends too. And they were like the core group that I hung out with for a long while, probably a year. And then after I started dating Sage, she introduced me to the inner circle of the board game crew people, and I became friends with them. And interestingly enough we spent a lot of time with these people and were becoming really really good friends with them, and now we hardly hang out with any of them. But that's just because our lives have changed so much recently its just, as much as we love board games, as much as we like those people, they're not the people we want to focus our energy on as much so.

**Tyler M:** What kind of people do you find yourself focusing your energy on?

**Dezi:** The queers. It was about a year ago now that we met our friend Robin. And we actually met her at the Pecks Summer Festival, which is a Burner type festival, and we ended up taking her to Burning Man a couple months later. And from her we've met a bunch of other people from Sage's transition she met a bunch of other trans ladies, so slowly we've just sort of been finding all these wonderful, amazing people in the queer community that we jive with a lot better than we did with anybody that we've met so far.

**Tyler M:** What has your experience been like accessing T?

**Dezi:** It's been pretty easy for me so far actually, I go to Mt. Cyanide, and they have this amazing website called mychart, where you can request your refills directly from there. After my first,
my very first prescription of T, when I went to get it renewed, because my doctor wasn’t available for 6 weeks from my initial appointment, and the prescription was only for 4 weeks of it, I needed to have it extended so that I would still be on it by the time I saw her again. I tried emailing her and got a message back saying that she was out of the office and wasn't going to be in until the day I was supposed to take my next shot. And I was freaking out, and I wasn't set up on mychart yet so I didn't know what to do. And I'm emailing her, I'm emailing the people that she put as the people to contact. I'm calling the hospital and leaving messages with their answering service, and like going oh my gosh, oh my gosh what do I do? And it wasn't until that like Tuesday that I found that the person that I emailed that was from her email response, or auto response, had sent a prescription. Oh, also the pharmacy that I was using had closed, so not only did I need somebody else to send the prescription I needed them to send it to a different pharmacy that they didn't have in their system. But eventually it worked out, that headache was over, I got the next batch of T, and the needles and syringes because that's also a prescription, and since then when I went to my next appointment I made sure to sign up for mychart, and after being on there even though when they sent it to the pharmacy, for some reason the pharmacy didn't get the needs and syringes prescription, all I had to do is go on the website, request that they refill, and they had it within a couple hours. And ever since figuring out and actually signing up for their website service, it's been seamless. I actually just got a new bottles a few days ago and I took my first shot from it this morning. So yeah, that's been a lot less of a headache, once I actually figured out their system. But also with this current batch of Testosterone, my list of prescriptions doesn't have it because I'm not pre-approved for any refills, so I can't just go to the pharmacy and be like hey, refill this thing. But they had the thing for other, so all I had to do is Testosterone, to write it in there, and then my doctor went in and approved it. It was within like two hours of sending that in that my pharmacy texted me saying it was ready to pick up.

**Tyler M:** What are the biggest challenges that you've faced around being trans?

**Dezi:** I mean, probably the visibility for me personally, because if I'm feeling fem and I want to wear fem things, I still feel...I feel like if I'm wearing a dress and if I'm happy to be wearing a dress at that point in time, but I'm telling somebody that I'm trans I feel like I'm lying to them even though I'm not. And then when I'm feeling more masc or if I'm feeling somewhere in the gender expanse and I don't have a way to express it or people can't see it, and I know it's not all about the expression and visibility it's about how you feel about it, but not having that visibility kind of sucks. And like I want to get a breast reduction so I have a little bit more flexibility in that area, because I tried a binder and a binder on my boobs just feels like I'm smuggling a ham and it's very uncomfortable I don't like it, but I feel like if I had smaller breasts then like I could wear a dress and be fine, I could have boobs when I want to have boobs and then I could wear things that could sort of hide them more when I don't feel like it. But trying to figure out that procedure is frustratingly complicated because there's not a lot of understanding of non binary in the medical field especially. To get my insurance to pay for a breast reduction for gender dysphoria reasons is going to be a headache and a half, probably 14 headaches and a half, because if I were a trans guy and getting my breasts completely removed they have a narrative for that. That's something...I mean they're still going to fight it because they don't want to pay, but that's something that has been done, that's something that
they understand, but trying to tell them no, there are other genders besides the two that you currently have on your books, and there are other ways people need to express this through augmentations of some sort its, I don't know, weird, frustrating, annoying. And somewhat unfruitful because I went to see a psychologist type person whatever to write a letter at Mt. Cyanide that this was back in April, and I have not seen the letter yet.

**Tyler M:** Are there any particular spaces in New York City that have been really important to you?

**Dezi:** Spaces like social or physical?

**Tyler M:** Physical spaces.

**Dezi:** I'd say Central Park. I haven't explored a lot of the parks in like Brooklyn or whatever. I know that Prospect Park is supposed to be really good, nice nature-y park. But when I first moved here and before I had friends I would go to Central Park after work and I would go sit on a big rock and read for hours. And while I didn't have friends around me there were a bunch of other people and so I just sort of enjoyed the company of being around people even if I wasn't able to talk to them. I know I could have talked to people but I'm not that kind of social person. And so yeah I would spend a lot of time in Central Park, I explored quite a bit of it. Sage and I actually had our third date at one of the waterfalls in the northern part of Central Park. And we have, actually one of the very first pictures we took together was next to a different waterfall but its along the same river in Central Park. And our very first kiss happened along the reservoir. There was a time when I went there to make wants for an upcoming wizarding LARP with a friend of mine and we found this random place in the middle of the park where there was a tree that was mostly enclosing us and we sat on the ground and we whittled at sticks and we made them into wants.

**Tyler M:** Can you tell me about LARP?

**Dezi:** I mean LARP, live action role play, it hasn't been a super big part of anything for me, it's fun. We did a wizarding LARP last year in the summer, and that was the first time I'd ever LARPed, and it was not a lot of fun for me. Other people had a lot of fun, I had a hard time finding things to do and people to play with, but that's okay you know, you win some you lose some. We did another LARP this year called Event Horizon, where we were basically space pirate. Except I wasn't a space pirate, Sage was a space pirate, I was, the planet that we were on which was New Gear, I was part of the militia, that meant that I was investigating things and tracking down people to arrest. Which was fun, the part that wasn't fun was doing the interviews what's it called? Where you bring them in to....

**Tyler M:** Interrogation.

**Dezi:** That's the word, so when your doing interrogation after bringing them in, because that's a lot of exposition that I don't care about. And I mean it's all player driven, so it's all stuff were making up, but at the same time its like I don't care I want to go out and like catch a thing. So I
would frequently just sort of like leave. Which is fine, if your not interested in doing that thing, you don't do that thing. So...but yeah there were some pretty cool parts. Actually that sort of ties into Burning Man because there was this really amazing person... okay so Event Horizon, amazingly queer. The people that created it, most of them are non binary, awesome. And so the people that are drawn to this, a lot of really amazing, fantastic, a lot of queer people, and a lot of trans people, they had three different dorms, a women's dorm, a men's dorm, and a non gendered dorm. And they didn't care which one you wanted to be in. You could be...identify as a women and stay in the men's dorm. It just had to do with your comfortability. So Sage and I stayed in the non gendered dorm and it was awesome. And so they had this person, Angelo come and make these node things, so he like welded these things and put them together in a way that you then had...it was basically a big puzzle thing. It had three different pieces that were in different parts of the campus area thing that we were at. So the big finale for this game was we had too, well there was this other really big big node thing that a person could sit in. And it was the interface between the planet and us. And so the little nodes were basically to assign who had control over the interface with the planet. And there was a corporation that had control over the planet but we sort of kicked them off. But they still wanted control so they were trying to fight for it, there was another corporation that wanted it and then like the people of New Gear wanted it, so we ended up getting all three nodes, we had to have them all synced to the same command, which we did, and we managed to do that before the time ran out of course. And then one of our people was absorbed into the interface, or into the planets artificial intelligence thing. So it was a lot of fun, but those huge things were made by this person who also goes to Burning Man and makes an art car that goes there. So there was one night during the LARP where I spent several hours talking to him and playing with, he also had the synth machine thing to play music at what was the bar, in game. So I got to play with that for a while. Also lovely people, also very accepting. I'm not surprised that a lot of Burners LARP or a lot of LARPers Burn. It seems like they both draw a lot of the same mentalities.

Tyler M: Are there aspects of either the Burner community or the LARP community or the trans community that you specifically think should be remembered?

Dezi: Be remembered in what way?

Tyler M: Anything that's cemented when you think [inaudible] looking back. Is there anything specific that you'd like to emphasize?

Dezi: Something that is stemming from all these communities is consent. And it's slowly leaking its way into the general population. And I feel like that's something that is really, really important. So then that is emphasized in all of the LARPs that I've ever encountered and something that is being pushed for being the 11th principle of Burning Man. So of course in Burner culture having radical acceptance that's a huge thing, and radical self expression that helps a lot of people in self exploration and expression and all that which is great. And LARP communities are also big on you know, not making assumptions about people. People will play roles with genders that are not obvious. So the default that I go to are, like the pronoun default is they/them. You don't know their pronouns you say that. And that's kind of a great rule of thumb I think because for a lot of people you can't necessarily tell. And I know that you know
the percentage of people on the planet that are trans, it's not a huge percentage but the people that you can't tell, you can't always, you should never assume that you know what someone identifies as. So yeah I think that's probably those things, consent and acceptance and expression, those are the things.

**Tyler M:** If you want people to hear one thing from you, what would it be?

**Dezi:** The only constant in this world is change, so it’s important to embrace who you are in this moment. Whether or not it changes, that's okay.

**Tyler M:** Thank you so much for sitting down with me Dezi, I really appreciate it.

**Dezi:** You’re welcome.