

Eli: Hello, and welcome to Queer As Fact, the podcast that brings you queer history from around the world and throughout time. My name is Eli.

Alice: I'm Alice.

Irene: I'm Irene.

E: Today we're talking about the activist, lawyer, priest and poet, Pauli Murray.

[intro music]

E: Before we say anything else, I wanted to just say up-front that I'm going to be referring to Pauli by he/him pronouns. Pauli was assigned female at birth, he never publicly transitioned, and therefore was perceived as a woman for his entire life, but it is nevertheless clear that he identified as a man, and he is quite clear on not liking female titles and things like that being applied to him, so I felt that these pronouns were the most respectful. She/her pronouns are the norm in like, academic or journalistic work on Pauli, though, so I feel like we have to talk about why that discrepancy exists and maybe why people have made the choices that they have. But I feel like you need to know kind of like, the full story of Pauli's life, before we really get into dissecting why people have dealt with his gender identity in a particular way, so we're not going to have that discussion till the end.

A: Okay.

E: The end is a bit further away than it normally is as well, because this is going to be out first two-part episode. Pauli essentially just did way too much in his life to cover in one of our like, normal length episodes, so instead of gutting his biography, we're gonna do the first half today, on April the 15th, and we're gonna finish it in our next episode, on May the 1st. So you really are just gonna have to like, trust me for two weeks here. [laughs]

I: [laughs]

A: That's okay. We can do that.

E: [laughing] Yeah, thank you. So we have some content warnings for this episode. There's at least one time where I'm gonna misgender Pauli in a quote, and I'm gonna use outdated language for African-Americans, such as like, blacks, and Negroes, and coloured people, in the names of organisations or when we say quotes. There's an execution, there's a murder, there's general period-typical racism, and just, you know, the background of this is the like, social, political, economic and legal injustice done to African Americans and women throughout the 20th century.

I also wanted to note at the start that a lot of my sources for this episode was the biography *Jane Crow: The Life of Pauli Murray*, by Rosalind Rosenberg, and aside from that, a lot of Pauli's own letters and writings and things like that. Unfortunately, I didn't have access to all of Pauli's letters, so I'm relying on other scholars' interpretations more than I would like to, but that's how that is.

And I also wanted to thank my friend Phillip, who is a friend of the podcast, and a good man, and who is both American and black and talked to me a lot about the constitution and things. I love you!

I and A: [giggle]

E: 'Kay, so. Pauli Murray was born on November 20th, 1910 - that's the day before my birthday - in Baltimore, to a middle class family. Both of his parents are mixed race, of European, African, and Native American descent. Both of his parents die when he's quite young. His mother Agnes dies of

a cerebral haemorrhage in 1914, when Pauli's three.

A: Oh.

E: In 1905, his father William had had encephalitis, and had resulting mental health issues following that. And he is eventually committed to the Crownsville State Hospital for the Negro Insane, and he is out of Pauli's life essentially from that point. In 1923, he is murdered by a guard.

A: Oh. So how old is Pauli when this happened?

E: He would be probably not quite 13.

A: Okay.

I: Wait, when was he admitted? The father?

E: So he's admitted periodically to various mental institutions even before Agnes died.

I: Alright, yep.

E: And, after Agnes dies, Pauli is taken to live with his aunt, and he doesn't really have a lot of contact with his father after that, even though it's not for a few more years that he's permanently institutionalised.

I: Alright, yep, yep.

E: Pauli is the fourth of six children, but after the death of their mother and the declining mental health of their father, they end up scattered amongst different relatives, and so as I go on, it's gonna seem like Pauli is an only child, but he's not.

I: Okay.

A: Okay.

E: Yes. Pauli is cared for primarily by his aunt, Aunt Pauline, and he lives with other relatives as well, another aunt, Sally, and his grandparents, Cornelia and Robert, in Durham, North Carolina. His grandfather and his uncle were both teachers, so Pauli is in this household where he really learns to value education from a young age, and Pauli is growing up in the segregated Jim Crow South. He describes seeing, quote, "signs literally screaming at me from every side", end quote, reinforcing segregation, so saying things like, "Whites only", and what-not.

A: Mm-hm.

E: In 1896, the case *Plessy v. Ferguson* had confirmed that segregation was constitutional, if segregated facilities were of equal quality, so the "separate but equal" justification, but this was not the reality of life in the South. Pauli grows up going to schools that are far less funded than local white schools, and are generally quite dilapidated and don't have basic supplies.

It's quite rare for black students to progress to high school in the South, but Pauli does. He's very successful academically. He's also very heavily involved in extracurricular activities. He plays basketball, he does debate, he's editor-in-chief of the newspaper, he's president of the literary society, he's secretary of his class, and he also has various jobs throughout high school. He types at an insurance firm, and he does odd jobs at a newspaper.

I: So he's hardcore from day one.

E: He is hardcore from day one, and he is gonna stay hardcore until...

I: The end?

E: Forever, yes. [laughs] I have cut, like, major portions of Pauli's life and major achievements, still, from these two episodes.

I: Okay.

E: Like, I feel like I've cut a greater percentage of the overall whole than I ever have before.

I: [laughs]

A: Okay.

E: So Pauli isn't gonna rest a lot. Pauli is very athletic and very outdoorsy from a young age. He hates cooking and sewing, so his Aunt Pauline allows him to cut and stack wood, and take a paper route instead, to contribute to the family.

A: Mm-hm.

E: His Aunt Pauline calls Pauli, "my little boy-girl", openly to others. In high school he gets a - for the time - considered quite masculine bobbed haircut, and takes the nickname "Paul", which he keeps using into university. So it's the 1920s, women are exploring masculinity, so short hair and masculine nicknames are not abnormal amongst the women who are his age.

A: Mm-hm.

E: But he does wear pants, which isn't yet considered acceptable for women, and won't be for like 50 years.

I: I just kind of like, though, the way his aunt was apparently super chill about this.

E: Yeah, she seems to remain fairly chill about this, which will come up again.

I: That's nice.

E: I quite like Aunt Pauline.

I: Is Pauli named after Aunt Pauline?

E: Yes, but...

I: Okay.

E: At this time Pauli is not called Pauli.

I: Ah, okay.

E: No-one yet calls Pauli that. Sometimes they call him Paul, now, at his own request.

I: Okay, yep.

E: Yes. In 1926, he graduates high school, and moves to New York City. He is fifteen.

A: That's very young to just like, up and move to New York. Like, more normal at the time, but still very young.

I: Also young to graduate high school.

E: Well, in the South, or at least, in the South in black schools in North Carolina, they don't do like, the full years that he's expected to have once he gets to New York City.

I: Ah, okay.

E: So I think essentially, he's done our equivalent of Year 11.

I: Yep.

E: And then, when he gets to New York and wants to go to college he realises that he has to do another year of high school, so he does that, and then he starts university. The work is a lot harder there, and he struggles both mentally and emotionally, but eventually, after studying like, every waking hour, and ruining his health a little bit for the first of many times...

I: Did he ruin his eyesight?

E: He does not ruin his eyesight.

I: [laughs]

E: He does wear glasses later in life, but I don't know when.

I: Because like, gays ruining their eyesight studying is like a theme we've got.

E: It really is. I would guess that's mostly classics people.

I: [laughs] Yeah, true.

E: I think that that's been the case... [laughs] So I think that's one of those things that's like, not exclusive to, but somewhat correlates with like, late 19th century queer men.

I: Yeah, true, true.

E: So yeah, he eventually gets his grades back up to a place where he is happy with them. He really loves New York City. He loves how busy it is. He loves that segregation is less of a thing there. He moves into the Harlem YWCA - so Harlem is, of course, the centre of black life in New York at this time, and he really enjoys that he's like, part of this very thriving black community. Important figures such as artist and civil rights leaders come to the YWCA to speak to people there, so Langston Hughes, for example, visits, and does readings of his work, and judges writing contests.

A: Oh.

E: And he encourages Pauli's early work.

I: Aww.

A: That's good!

E: This is really like, a who's who kind of episode. There's some like, cameos that I'm very excited about later on.

I: Are the Bloomsburys here?

E: No!

[laughter]

E: That's doesn't make sense!

I: Just checking!

A: I feel like we're gonna have a different but similar problem once we get into the Harlem

Renaissance.

E: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Like, we've already, in mentioning Langston Hughes, mentioned one person who we're gonna have to do an episode on.

A: Yup.

E: Yes. I'm really looking forward to that episode. I love Langston Hughes's poetry. He's so good.

A: I don't know if I've read Langston Hughes's poetry.

E: Your life is like, impoverished for it.

A: Okay, well, it'll be enriched.

E: It shall. Pauli always struggles financially throughout his entire life, pretty much. In 1927, after the extra year of high school he has to do, he goes back to Durham for a year to save money, and he works as a janitor, a typist, a reporter and a junior stenographer.

A: Is that four different jobs that he has?

E: Yes, yes.

I: Simultaneously?

E: Some of them overlap, but it's not just like, he gets four jobs and he does four jobs for a year.

I: Okay, that's a relief. [laughs] I was concerned.

E: Yeah. His financial situation of course, isn't helped by the stock market crash of 1929. When he goes back to New York to study, he works at a restaurant for some time, and he's basically surviving off coffee and sandwiches that he can scab off the restaurant. All the waiters at the restaurant will order an extra dish and then take it off the tray before it gets to the table, and hope no-one notices that they've just like, essentially stolen this meal. He eventually loses his job there, and he struggles to find new work, and he works for a little while as a typist. I think it's around this time, but at some point he keeps getting evicted, because he's renting single rooms and his typewriter is keeping people awake.

I: [laughs]

E: He gets hired as a cook for a professional woman, but is fired after he serves her his first meal.

I: I was going to say, he can't cook can he?

E: Nope.

I: We knew this about him. He hated cooking.

E: He hates cooking. He decides that he's gonna have to drop out of school in order to find work somewhere.

A: Aww.

E: But then he hears about a job at a travel agency called Open Road. Many of the jobs in the area will only hire white employees, but Open Road organises travel to the Soviet Union, which had ordered the abolition of what it called "white chauvinism" from the Communist Party, so they wanted to demonstrate that they were totally not racist, and they were looking to hire a black girl.

A: [sigh] Okay.

I: I feel like this is in theory good but could go horribly wrong, I'm not sure.

E: I mean, they're like, looking for someone they can tokenise...

I: Yeah, exactly.

E: ...essentially, so that's...

I: Yeah.

E: He does, despite getting this job, despite, you know, being the right race for what they want, have to pass a phone test to prove he doesn't sound too low class on the phone.

I: Of course, yup.

E: Mm. Pauli meets a man named William Roy Wynn, or Billy, and they evidently become quite close, because they get married on November 30th of 1930.

A: Oh!

I: Okay. Wow. Yes, okay.

A: That was fast.

E: I have not left out much that I know here, frankly. We don't know a lot about this. Pauli quickly concludes that he has made a big mistake. They spend their honeymoon over a weekend in a cheap hotel, and it is an absolute disaster. Pauli publicly attributes it at this time to the fact that they're both very poor, and they're both very young, but a few years later in private notes, he gives the reason that although he wants to be able to play the role of a quote/unquote "normal woman" he cannot bring himself to do it, and he feels very repelled by being in a relationship with a man, and being expected to have sex with a man. And he writes, "Why is it that when men try to make love to me, something in me fights."

A: Mmkay.

E: And he wrestles with what to do about this marriage that he is now in.

I: Is he...attracted to women?

E: Yes. Exclusively.

I: Okay. Just thought I'd check.

E: Yup. Women will come up.

I: [laughs]

E: Pauli had recently made friends with a young journalist called Ted Poston, and they have this kind of like, brotherly relationship where they had a lot of like, backslapping, and like, jokes and things like that, and he concludes that this is the kind of relationship that he wants to have with a man. Like, a friendly relationship, not a romantic relationship.

A: Mm-hm.

E: And his kind of fascination with some men in his life is because he wants to like them, not because he wants to be with them. Shortly after this, Billy leaves town, and Pauli does too,

dropping out of college. He claimed that he'd lost his job, so he had to, but he would later admit it his papers that he'd just been running away from the situation.

A: So, they leave town separately?

E: Yes!

A: Okay. I wasn't sure if you were telling us that like, Billy left town and Pauli was like, "Well I have to follow him.

E: Nooooo.

A: Pauli's like, "Yes, get me out of here"...

I: Pauli leaves town in the exact opposite direction? [laughs]

E: Yeah, [laughs] They are not going to speak again for decades.

A: Okay.

E: He and a friend, Dorothy Hayden, start hitchhiking around, riding on trains, and they dress as two boy scouts in uniform, both with short haircuts, and someone sees Dorothy come out of the women's room, and Pauli come out of the men's room, which he used this whole trip, and thought that they were a man and a woman travelling together, and so called the police.

A: Wait, why are they dressed as boy scouts?

E: I think at this time, two women can't travel around safely.

A: Okay.

I: But it would maybe be fairly normal to see two boy scouts on a trip?

E: Yeah...

A: Ah, yeah. Okay.

E: And Pauli also just like, likes wearing a boy scout's uniform.

I: Okay. [laughs]

A: Where did they get the boy scout uniforms.

E: I don't know!

A: Okay.

E: Yeah, so this woman calls the police and Pauli decides the only way to get out of it is to say, "Look, I'm a woman too, it was all a joke, we're just adventuring around for a book I plan to write. We're just kinda like, pranking people." And they're released from custody, because it's allegedly all in good fun.

A: Okay.

I: All right.

E: Yeah. So, I dunno, I thought that was like, an interesting little anecdote about what gender was like at the time.

A: Yeah...

I: What was the crime, if you call the police because there's a man and a woman travelling together? Does somebody just call the police and go, "This looks kinda sus. I think they're eloping or something?"

E: I'm not sure, like, what law is one the books about this, though.

I: Yeah.

E: But we see this again. He's gonna travel with another woman later, and if they're perceived as a man and a woman, like, they spend night in jail, and stuff like that. I don't know why.

I: Okay...

E: Ah, I think in that later case, there's the issue as well that the woman is white.

I: Ah, all right, yeah, um...

A: Mmkay.

E: I don't know if Dorothy Hayden is white. Anyway, they never write the book that they claim they were gonna write.

A: Were they really ever planning to write this book, or is that just to get them off this charge?

E: I think it was just to get them off this charge, but Pauli is dreaming of becoming a writer. He submits to, and is published in student literary magazines, and then within a few years he's published in an anthology called *Negro*, along with Harlem Renaissance greats, helped by Langston Hughes. So Langston Hughes is here again!

I and A: Hello!

E: Hello Langston! He signs his poetry with various names, like essentially kind of using it as an opportunity to experiment with what names he wants to be called.

A: Mm-hm.

E: He uses Pete, he uses Dude, and he uses Paul. And then he settles eventually on Pauli, and this is the name that he's gonna use publicly for the rest of his life. He thinks that it's this good balance between a name that the world will accept while still reflecting his own feelings, so it's plausibly feminine enough for people not to question it, but it's also plausibly masculine enough that he feels comfortable with it.

A: Okay.

E: Mm.

A: It would've been a strange episode if he chose Dude.

[quiet laughter]

E: He goes back to school after this, and he graduates college in 1933, one of four black students in a class of 232. The Depression is at its peak in 1933, and 25 percent of the country is unemployed.

A: Wow.

E: But in Harlem, 50 percent of its residents are unemployed. I identify with Pauli so much. Just like

this constantly being like, "I can't find work."

A: [laughs]

E: And I was like, I don't even have the excuse of living in the Depression.

A: Oh dear.

I: Yeah. At least you can't feel that bad about yourself when everyone you know is unemployed.

A: You can still feel pretty bad.

E: But not like, *personally*.

A: Yeah.

E: He does get a job at the college switchboard, and he writes poetry when it's quiet there, and then he gets a job driving round America building the subscription base for a civil rights group.

A: Okay.

E: He doesn't really pay any attention to food or sleep, and within a year has ruined his health again.

I: Pauli!

E: Pauli... He's now in danger of TB and it's recommended by a doctor that he goes to a sanitarium.

I: Oh dear.

E: Oh dear. So he goes to Camp TERA, all in capitals, but I'm just gonna say "terror".

I: [laughs]

E: It sounds like a Goosebumps novel!

[laughter]

E: Camp TERA is basically like a summer camp-- stop laughing at the name!

A: It does sound like a Goosebumps novel! You're not wrong.

E: [laughs] Yeah....yes. The camp is basically like a summer camp, so they stay in bunks, and they do hiking and arts and crafts and things. It sounds quite pleasant.

A: That does sound nice.

E: Pauli gains weight back, and he loses his cough that he's had for months now. Eleanor Roosevelt had set Camp TERA up, and 90 others like it in response to the then newly-elected Franklin Roosevelt's similar camps for men.

A: Mmkay.

E: And one day Eleanor Roosevelt came to visit the camp. Pauli felt quite torn politically about the Roosevelts, and so he decided that he would show respect by dressing up more formally for the visit, but that he wouldn't stand when the First Lady came into the room he was sitting in.

A: Okay.

E: So he just sat there and read the paper instead.

A: [laughs]

I: But dressed nicely.

E: But dressed nicely.

I: Yup.

E: The head of the camp, a woman called Miss Mills, became very suspicious of Pauli politically after this. A few weeks later, she discovered a copy of *Das Kapital* in Pauli's cubicle, and accused him of being a "communist organiser".

A: [laughter]

E: Pauli replied that he bought the book for a course in political philosophy, and never even had the time to read it, but Miss Mills wasn't having it, and Pauli's thrown out of the camp after being there for three months.

A: Aww.

E: He's now quite curious about what *Das Kapital* actually says.

I: [laughs]

A: So he genuinely hadn't read *Das Kapital* at this point?

E: No. Pauli is not a communist at this point.

A: [laughter]

E: But now...

I: But at this point, he's like, "Okay, but what's the big deal?"

E: Yeah, so he goes back to New York City and he starts researching communism. He had become somewhat radicalised in college. There was an interest in communism among a lot of the influential black people who were moving in Harlem at this time. He goes to a labour college for a while, which was educating future union leaders, and he works for the Workers' Education Project for a time, which is like, education workers on their rights and things like that; how to form a union, how to go about protesting like, if you weren't being paid correctly, and things like that. He also joined the Communist Party Opposition, which very fervently wants you to know that it is not the Communist Party...

[laughter]

E: ...ah, in order to get a scholarship to go to the college. He becomes very quickly disillusioned with the Communist Party Opposition and with the communist circles he's moving in, in general, however. He dislikes the rejection of religion that they mandate. He objects to the strict doctrine, and essentially being told who he has to vote for, and he was appalled by the trials and executions that were going on in the Soviet Union at that time, so he resigned in 1937.

I: Is Pauli religious, or...?

E: Yeah. Pauli's religious throughout his life. You may have guessed this by the fact that he becomes a priest.

I: [laughing] Oh, yeah, I forget that part.

E: Ah...Yeah, it's quite a background part of his life. It'll come up occasionally, but yeah, he's Episcopalian.

I: Okay.

E: I'm not clarifying what that means. It...has Jesus? He is a Christian. When he comes back to New York from Camp TERA....

[laughter]

A: So he survived his Goosebumps novel?

E: [laughing] He did. Yep. When he comes back to New York from Camp TERA, he also goes to the library and starts researching gender. He's reading the work of people like Magnus Hirschfeld and Havelock Ellis, and he learns the emerging theories of the day about queer people generally, trans people in particular...you know he comes across the idea that everyone is what they call "bisexual" which - doesn't mean what it means today. It means like, partly male and partly female, and it's something that is used to describe both people who we would consider trans today, and also like, queer people of all varieties really, I think.

A: Okay.

E: It gets thrown around a bit.

I: Okay... I guess I'll have something to say next time someone tells me that historically bisexual means "attracted to two and only two genders"...

A: [scoffs]

E: Like, we've touched on before how it's difficult to differentiate like, gay people and trans people in some of this early discourse. Like, Magnus Hirschfeld, I think, or like some of those early like, German sexologists, talk about say like, a gay man, as having "a woman's soul in a man's body", which is like...

I: Yeah.

E: ...that typical bad description of what being trans is today. Yeah, so he's reading all of this like, queer theory stuff basically. Not queer theory in what we would call queer theory, but like, theory about queers.

I: Yeah...

E: He finds the work of Havelock Ellis the most helpful, including his work on differentiating between same-sex attracted people and trans people, and also Havelock Ellis has this suggestion that someone who appears female might have testes somewhere in their body, and that would explain why they felt like a man.

I: Is this...the first time someone's articulated that distinction?

E: Probably not...

I: Okay.

E: Around sort of like, the turn of the 20th century, there's just this like, influx of German and English sexologists who are all having *thoughts*. And I can't place them sequentially in my mind. But like, he might've been? I'd be surprised, though.

I: All right, all right.

E: yeah. I dunno. In my experience, kind of like, efforts to that this was the first person who came up with this idea are never, ever that straightforward.

I: Yeah...

E: He's certainly in the like, vanguard of like, that...

I: Okay. So this is definitely just a fairly new concept still at this time.

E: Yeah, I mean, writing about sexuality and gender in this way is a very new concept.

I: Yeah.

E: We're in the 1930s, just as a reminder.

I: Ah yes. Yeah.

E: And by very new I mean like, fifty years or something, maybe a little bit more... But I'm a classicist!

[laughter]

E: Like, my thesis took place 2700 years ago, so... you know.

[more laughter]

E: Pauli begins to think about taking testosterone. One of the staff members at Camp TERA was a woman called Peggy Holmes. She was a year older than Pauli, and she's been in charge of organising outdoor activities.

A: Mm-hm.

E: And Pauli fell in love with her. They travelled around a bit together after Pauli had left the camp.

A: Mm-hm!

E: And Peggy loves Pauli as well, but she cannot accept Pauli as a man, and in response to this situation, Pauli suffers emotional collapse. In December of 1937, he goes to a psychiatrist, who sends him to the Long Island Rest Home, and they're quite kind of him there, but as will become a pattern in his life, they don't really understand his circumstances, they don't understand what he needs. Medical professionals that Pauli will see in the next few decades either understand Pauli to be a lesbian or to be schizophrenic. And...their opinion is that he needs psychiatric care, either to stop being schizophrenic or a lesbian, or to accept that he's lesbian.

A: Okay...

E: Pauli fundamentally rejects this understanding of his identity. He explicitly does not identify with gay people as a group, and he understands himself to be a heterosexual man seeking a relationship with a heterosexual woman.

A: Mmkay.

E: He...

I: Well that's definitely cleared up the "Is Pauli just a lesbian?" conversation.

E: I'll finish this little bit, and then we'll return to that.

I: Okay.

E: He's unable to access this kind of relationship though, because the women he becomes attracted to don't usually accept him as a man, which caused this immense emotional distress, and he only ever has a few people in his life who he feels understand him, like his Aunt Pauline, who, quote, "accept me pretty much as one of nature's experiments, a girl who should've been a boy, and react to me as if I were a boy". So there are still people on the basis of that who claim that Pauli is a lesbian who has a lot of internalised homophobia. At that point....sure, maybe it's possible, but we can't just keep claiming that directly in contradiction to how someone articulates their own identity.

A: I feel like claiming that is looking for an explanation that is not the most obvious explanation off the evidence in front of us. Like, you have to reject the most obvious explanation in order to be like, "Hey, Pauli was a lesbian."

I: Yeah.

E: Yeah, it's the thing where, by some people's arguments, the more Pauli denies being a lesbian, the more that proves that he was a lesbian, and at that point...

I: You can't win that argument.

E: At that point, trans men don't exist.

I: Yeah.

E: Which....I understand some people wish was the case, but it's not how we do history here, so...

A: Like, what would Pauli have had to say for them to be like, "Okay, fine, Pauli was a trans man"?

E: Exactly. Like, we'll get into this, in two weeks.

I: Presumably... yeah, presumably the answer might be that Pauli would have to speak in absolutely modern terminology about this.

E: Yep. And look, like, I have a list of like, what would it take, at the end of this.

Pauli very much views his feelings as coming from a physical rather than a psychological origin. He believes along Havelock Ellis's theory that he has to have testicles in somewhere in his abdomen, and his psychiatrist is very very sceptical of this, but eventually orders an exam which reveals nothing. His hormone levels are also tested, and fail to turn up any evidence of like, higher testosterone levels than would be normal for something assigned female at birth, or anything like that. Pauli, however, despite this, doesn't give up understanding his feelings to be biological in origin. Or understanding that hormones and surgery are the only things that are able to help him. He requests hormone treatment, and is rejected, and is released from care no closer to finding a solution, and this is gonna repeat itself many many times throughout his life.

A: Okay.

E: So, this understanding that there has to be some kind of physical origin similar to what we would understand as intersex cases today is quite common amongst trans people of this sort of generation. We have this a little bit in the Michael Dillon episode when we talked about Roberta Cowell. She was a trans woman, and she would claim that she'd been intersex as a way of kind of legitimising why she felt like a woman.

A and I: Mm-hm, yep.

E: I don't have a lot more to say on that, just like, it's like a quite a common way of trying to understand that this feeling that doesn't really have a recognised public place yet has validity.

A and I: Yep, yeah.

I: I guess it gives it some kind of like, tangible source? Almost like a straightforward way of explaining it?

E: Yeah... He decides that he's gonna go back to uni, and he applies to the University of North Carolina. The University of North Carolina, at this point, had never accepted a black student, but similar institutions with similar guidelines were being increasingly challenged, and on December the 14th 1938, he receives a rejection letter from the president, saying - from the president of the University, to be clear...

A: [laughs]

E: Saying, "members of your race are not admitted", and he decides that he is going to sue.

I: Reasonable, yeah.

E: So he speaks to the NAACP. The NAACP is the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. It's a civil rights organisation. It's the most prominent, or at least one of the most prominent, civil rights organisations at this time. And he goes and speaks to them about suing the University of North Carolina. However, the NAACP, although it's quite happy to help people sue in cases like this, only wants to support candidates who are free of any characteristic that a conservative judge might not like, in order to increase their chances of succeeding.

A: Okay.

E: So, Thurgood Marshall, who is a lawyer for the NAACP meets with Pauli and points out that there are many things that prevent Pauli from being a perfect candidate, such as the fact that he had previous communist ties, and they do not help him. Pauli's application goes nowhere, and the UNC doesn't admit its first black student until 1951.

Pauli becomes involved with raising funds for the defence of a man named Odell Waller. Now Odell Waller had been charged with shooting his white employer and sentenced to death.

A: Mm-hm.

E: He seems to have been guilty, but like, he's also living in poverty due to economic, political and legal systems that fundamentally exploit and oppress him, so like, that's not really the point.

A: Okay, yep.

E: And Pauli tours around for months with his mother, and becomes a very very polished speaker. Newspapers note this with admiration. One journalist, Ted LeBerthon, had a quote I quite like. I will warn that it, as all newspaper articles in his life, did misgender Pauli, and it read, "Frankly, I thought of Joan of Arc, and wondered if at some more fortuitous time, she might not have been something of a deliverer of her people from bondage, from long-suffered, ghastly indignities." Which is like, quite a lot!

A and I: Yeah!

I: I was going to say, the Joan of Arc analogy is quite a lot.

E: Yeah... Leon Ransom of the NAACP urges Pauli to go to law school after he sees Pauli speak on

Waller's behalf. Despite Pauli's work and the work of many others, including Eleanor Roosevelt, he is executed, however, in 1942.

A: Mm-hm.

E: The execution brings Pauli and Eleanor Roosevelt closer together, and they start having tea together regularly.

A: Oh! Mmkay.

E: They respect each other a lot. They become very close. But they also argue fiercely over many things. Eleanor really strives to temper Pauli's more radical political leanings, and Pauli really strives to get Eleanor to push more actively for civil rights.

I: Is Pauli still a communist? Has he...

E: No.

I: Okay, so it's not just that he left the organisation, it's...

E: No...

I: ...that he's moved on from the ideology.

E: Yeah. Communism is a very small part of Pauli's life, and I have mostly included that because it continuously comes back to haunt him.

I: Ah yep.

E: You know, he's gonna live through the Red Scare and everything, so...

I: Yep.

E: it's gonna become a block to him getting employment and things like that.

A: But his main thing here is about Civil Rights.

E: So he's obviously an advocate for civil rights, and that is radical enough in itself...

I: Yep.

E: ...without being a communists at this time.

A: I like that him and Eleanor Roosevelt are having tea though.

E: Yeah.

A: It's good.

E: They will have like, these massive arguments, and then like, part ways, and then Eleanor will write like, "When are you coming to tea again?"

[laughter]

I: "I miss you, Pauli!"

A: That's good.

E: Pauli would say that Eleanor, quote, "gave me a sense of personal worth", and that she, quote, "warms me with a maternal quality which made me want to strive to walk in her footsteps".

A: Aww. That's nice.

E: Yeah. So they're good friends.

A: Aww. I like that this friendship started with Eleanor coming in to a room and Pauli going, "Nah, I'm just reading the newspaper. I don't care."

E: Yeah.

A: [laughs]

E: Before they're like properly acquainted, he quite often writes to her because he knows that if he writes to the president, the president won't read it.

A: Ah yeah.

E: So he writes to the first lady and is like, "What is this??" and so I think in an early letter to her, he wrote like, "So you won't remember me, but..."

[laughter]

A: I wonder if she did remember him. She might've done.

E: I don't remember, but I think we like, have this on record maybe? I'll have a look. Pauli applies to go to Howard Law in Washington DC. He explicitly went there to essentially cultivate tools for him to be able to fight Jim Crow laws, but it's here instead that he gets what he understands to be his first real experience of what he comes to call "Jane Crow". So Jim Crow laws are racist laws, and he understands Jane Crow as an analogous form of oppression that is instead based on sex.

A: Okay.

E: So he's...talking about sexism.

A: Why is Jim Crow called Jim Crow?

E: From memory, like, Jim Crow was a like...stereotypical like, racist caricature in the South.

A: Okay.

I: Does Pauli when he's talking about Jane Crow...

E: Uh-huh.

I: Is he just talking about sexism generally, or specifically sexism in a black context?

E: He does use it to refer to sexism, full stop, regardless of race, but he also uses this analogous nature of racism and sexism to continue to develop this argument of how black women in particular, because they're face with multiple oppressions, experience more hardship and unique hardships, for being at the intersection of those oppressions.

I: Yeah, okay. Mmkay, yeah.

E: Which given that this is the like, early 1940s is quite a radical line of thinking.

I: Yeah, that was my thought, yeah.

E: Howard is a historically black university, so Pauli doesn't really have to deal with overt racism on campus the way he has had to in many other settings he's been in in his life, but it is the first all male environment he's lived in, so it's the first time he's experienced this really overt wall of

sexism. He's been in communities that are like, fairly mixed, like he's worked in environments that men and women are working in and whatnot, but this is like an all-male environment, where he as someone who is assigned female at birth is very on the outside.

I: Okay.

E: He's very very appalled that men who has come to Howard at least partly because it's this centre of civil rights litigation are so thoughtlessly discriminatory against another group, and the sexism he experiences there really influences him to think about civil rights more broadly as needing to encompass discrimination on the basis of sex as well as on the basis of race.

The sexism that he experiences there is very dismissive. Pauli is, as I've sort of implied, the only person who'd been assigned female at birth in his class, and a professor openly said in front of the class that he didn't know why women came to law school, but since they were there, the men would have to put up with them, and everyone laughs, and Pauli is very shocked and humiliated by this and he wrote that, the professor, quote, "had just guaranteed that I would become the top student in his class".

I: [laughs]

E: I love Pauli.

I: Yeah. Good for you, Pauli. I'm sorry that happened.

E: And he *does* become top of the class. He's the top of his class for the first two years, and at that point, traditionally he would've been made "Chief Justice of the Court of Peers", which is a class president type position. Instead, rather than giving it to Pauli, they just leave the position empty.

A: Aww.

E: In 1943, however, they change their tune. So the war's going on, and the second and third year classes are combined for a class called Bills and Notes, which is just like, notoriously awful.

A: Mm-hm.

E: The previous year, out of the 15 students, nine had failed.

I: Oops, yeah.

E: [laughs] So, the students are forming these little study groups in order to try and cram all this information into their heads, and no one will let Pauli study with them. He ends up tutoring one student, however, who had been ill, and who had missed a lot of work, who no one wanted to study with either. So everyone in the class gets a 70 or below. Billy Jones who he'd tutored got an 85, and Pauli a 95.

I: Everyone's gonna want to be in Pauli's study group now.

A: [laughs]

E: I just... this person is so intelligent.

I: Yeah.

A: You know when you do like, and arts degree, and you're like, "Yeah, nobody ever gets above a 90 on an essay. That just doesn't happen."

I: Pauli's that person that they're holding out the top like 10 percent for.

A: Yeah.

E: And, because of this, they elect him Chief Justice.

A: [laughs]

E: They cannot not at this point.

A: Ah, good.

E: While at Howard, he becomes interested in protesting segregation. So in Washington at this time, there is no law demanding segregation the way there is in southern states, but that doesn't mean that it's illegal.

A: Mmkay.

E: So it's still prevailing, but just by custom instead of by law.

I: Mm.

E: And he and a group of students decide that they are going to stage a sit-in at a nearby restaurant called the Little Palace Cafeteria, which is one of the few white-only establishments near the mostly black community surrounding the university.

A: Mmhm.

E: Pauli acts as a legal advisor and tells them that they have to be very like, dignified and restrained so they don't get arrested for charges of disorderly conduct. They go there in groups of four, five minutes apart, and three of each group will go up to the counter, as for service, be denied service, and then they'd just sit down at tables and take out books and very quietly study. The fourth member of each of these groups waits outside and they form a picket line.

A: Mmkay.

E: The owners call the police, and the police show up, but although they stay to watch for disorderly conduct, they're not doing anything wrong.

I: Yup.

E: So they don't do anything about it. And the owners end up deciding to close their business eight hours early. They keep being picketed, and within 48 hours they begin to serve black customers.

A: Oh. That was so successful.

E: Mm. It was very successful.

I: That worked out.

A: Nice work.

E: Yeah. They do this a couple more times and they remain successful. Pauli is still experiencing periodic breakdowns, and is still searching for a doctor willing to prescribe him testosterone. After the success of the sit-in he experiences one of these breakdowns and he effectively loses three weeks of his life. This includes his final exams for his second year.

A: Oh. Oh no.

E: The school arranges for him to take them later, however, so it's okay.

A: Okay Thank you, that university.

I: Okay

E: Yeah. Thank you Howard. His breakdown had started when, quote “A young sophomore sort of walked into my life without my realizing what was happening to me”. Pauli had told her how he felt, and the other student obviously didn’t reciprocate and this led to there being gossip around campus...

I: Yeah.

E: ...about Pauli. He wrote that he tried to live by society’s standards but that it, quote, “...causes me such inner conflict that at times it’s almost unbearable. The conflict rises up to knock me down at every apex I reach in my career and because of the laws of society do not protect me I’m exposed to any enemy or person who may or may not want to hurt me”. So he’s not having a good time.

A and I: No.

E: While he’s at Howard he also becomes increasingly critical of the civil rights strategy that’s favoured by the faculty there. So essentially you know, we’ve spoken about how under segregation that is viewed to be constitutional if the separate facilities are equal in quality.

A: Yup.

E: And how that’s not the case. And so the favoured strategy is to try and make these facilities equal rather than just attack whether segregation should be happening in the first place.

A: Mm-hmm. Okay.

E: And as we’ve mentioned Pauli also increasingly sees a need to not only attack racism but also sexism. And so he begins to develop this idea about using the 13th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution to attack both segregation and discrimination against women. So, Pauli essentially suggests that when it comes to the so-called separate but equal accommodations of segregation, that they should attack the “separate” rather than the “equal”.

A: Yup.

I: Reasonable.

E: Yup. The first section of the 14th Amendment is known as the Equal Protection Clause and it reads “No state shall make or enforce any law which will abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States. Nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.” And this has been involved in many landmark court cases concerning discrimination. Including that which resulted in marriage equality in 2015 in the United States.

I: Yay.

A: Good.

E: The 13th Amendment essentially just declares that slavery is unconstitutional; I’m not going to read it.

A: Ok, we understand.

I: That’s... that’s a good amendment to have.

E: However the civil rights cases of 1883 had conceded that Congress had the power not only to legislate against slavery but against the badges and incidents of slavery. The court hadn't found that segregation constituted this but Pauli wanted to challenge it. Do you need me to explain what the badges and incidents of slavery are? I have a four line legal definition here and that's what you're getting if you want it.

A: Okay. Maybe read it out just in case.

E: So the definition of badges and incidents of slavery that I found was "public or widespread private action aimed at any racial group or population that has previously been held in slavery or servitude that mimics the law of slavery and has significant potential to lead to the de facto re-enslavement or legal subjugation of the targeted group".

A: Okay

E: So effectively, anything that carries on the discrimination engendered by slavery.

A: So I feel like segregation is definitely covered under that.

E: Pauli Murray would agree.

A: Good.

E: And Pauli argues that segregation and sexist discrimination can both be addressed via these Amendments. Now this I think to us today, seems quite a reasonable argument.

A and I: Yeah.

E: And in part this is a reasonable argument because of Pauli.

I: Yeah.

E: When he suggests it in class he's met with outright mockery and derision. But nevertheless he writes his senior paper on the topic and argues that only through quote "...the complete abolition of all laws and customs designed to enslave the black, to force him into an inferior category, to restrict his movements and his privileges as a human being endowed with inalienable rights could the institution of slavery be destroyed." End quote. Spotswood Robinson, one of the faculty, accepts a bet from Pauli that *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the law that had brought segregation in as a constitutional state would be overturned within 25 years. Pauli thinks it will, Spotswood Robinson thinks it will not.

A: Okay What year are we in?

E: We're in the 40s.

A: Okay.

E: We're in the early to mid 40s.

[laughter]

I: Yeah. Like that's when I thought we were.

E: I mean, do you know when *Plessy v. Ferguson* was overturned.

A: No.

[laughter]

E: So Pauli graduated top of his class of course, and was celebrated by the community. There are articles in newspapers about how good he is.

A: Aww.

E: He wants to do graduate work at Harvard, and for the top of the class at Howard Law it is de facto like, the tradition that they are accepted to Harvard. So he applies and receives a letter back seeing that he is quote "...not of the sex and title to be admitted to Harvard Law School".

A: [*sighs*]

E: If you remember this directly parallels his experience with being rejected from the University of North Carolina on the basis of race. Like, down to the wording.

I: Yeah.

E: President Roosevelt writes to Harvard on Pauli's behalf, but it doesn't make any difference.

A: Oh wow, Okay

E: Yep. Pauli wrote an appeal to Harvard saying quote "I would gladly change my sex to meet your requirements, but since the way to such change has not been revealed to me, I have no recourse but to appeal to you to change your minds on the subject. Are you to tell me that one is as difficult as the other?"

I: That is very snarky and I love that he wrote that he wrote this in reply to his university rejection letter.

E: Yes.

A: Yeah.

E: It's a good quote. Pauli just like goes off, I love it. It's so good. Anyway, in 1945, he instead goes to Berkeley to do a Masters. His supervisor is very very harsh and as Pauli does, he of course over commits himself to classes and extracurriculars and things like that.

I: Does he destroy his health again?

E: Like, not as much as he has in the past, but you know, he's like stressed as all anything.

I: Alright.

E: He's meant to take a class reviewing students for the bar exam, but his supervisor insists that he finish his thesis instead, which he has not yet finished. He does so, and then he studies for and passes the bar alone which is very impressive.

I: Alright. I should just like, put a poster of him above my desk.

E: Yes. He's just so good.

I: He's very intense.

E: So intense. After graduating from Berkeley he moves back to New York and he tries and struggles to find work again as he does despite being the top of his class at Berkeley.

I: Alright.

E: Now the Second World War is over and veterans are returning and the Red Scare is here.

A: Hooray.

E: Which is causing problems for all liberal organisations, aka the organisations that Pauli would work in and that would hire Pauli. He has several brief positions that are all kind of bad, and then he decides that he's going to seek admission to the New York Bar. So he was admitted to the Bar in California but now he's in a different state and he has to do it again.

Admission to the Bar is a lot more difficult in New York. Applicants have to list all of their previous addresses, schools and employers and all organisations they have ever been involved in.

A: That's a lot.

E: Yeah. Complete with paperwork attesting essentially that they'd been a loyal American in each of these roles.

A: Okay

I: Alright.

E: Pauli has lived in 38 homes, he's had 23 jobs and he was a member of the Communist Party Opposition.

I: But was he a loyal American when he was a member of the Communist Party Opposition?

[laughter]

E: I think the American government would argue inherently no. He also had never lived with the man he'd married, so that's going to raise questions.

I: Ah yes.

E: He spends a while trying to find Billy Wynn and then he does and they get a divorce. Pauli also has to submit any aliases he's ever used, any arrest records, any evidence of psychiatric care, and the application process drags on for months and months and months. He gathers 32 letters of recommendation.

A: Oh my god.

E: He passes in a 230 page application which is a record at this time.

A: Wow.

I: I mean, the 38 homes he's lived in would just about do this alone.

A: Yeah.

E: But he is admitted to the Bar.

I: Oh, that was unexpected.

[laughter]

E: The book I read, Rosalind Rosenberg's biography of Pauli I think kind of was like, I think they were just kind of overwhelmed by the sheer amount of paper and were like, "I guess?"

[laughter].

I: Yeah.

E: He starts working as a lawyer, like properly as a lawyer now, but the only clients that really want to deal with him are black women and therefore they're often quite poor. So he's really struggling to get by as a lawyer and to find work, and this is juxtaposed with newspaper articles that are featuring him in lists of successful black female lawyers. He fears that he is never really going to be able to make it, that he's never going to be able to be of use to the civil rights movement.

I: I mean, to be honest, at this time, being a black female lawyer, I mean obviously Pauli is not female but in this context is successful in its own right. To have got here makes you successful almost.

E: Yes. But I don't think that is going to make you feel better when you can't pay the bills.

I: No, that's true.

E: And I think at some point and I think certainly by this time he starts to not think it's his fault but you know, still feel, it's still very demoralising even if you're up against a huge amount of societal oppression to essentially just not be able to succeed in your profession. So this sucks, it sucks.

A: Yeah.

I: Oh yeah absolutely, yes.

E: He does make several big contributions around this time though. In 1948 a woman called Thelma Stevens, who is... are you ready for this?

[laughter]

E: Who is executive secretary of the Women's Division of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church approaches Pauli about a project. Now Thelma had gone to both the NAACP and the ACLU to get a comprehensive guide to segregation laws because she's trying to essentially set up and integrate various operations of the Methodist Church in the South, and they want to know what they can do without breaking the law, because as we've established in some places segregation is mandated by law, and in other places it prevails by custom but you don't have to do it.

A and I: Okay, yeah.

E: And these organisations tell her that no such guide exists. She goes to Pauli then and suggests that Pauli kind of essentially lay out in a pamphlet what is the law and what is custom.

A: Yep.

E: And Pauli says "Okay, what if we do that but with every discrimination law throughout America?"

I: Alright Pauli.

E: And Thelma goes, "Okay" and sends Pauli \$600 to live on for a while and later a little bit more money and Pauli starts working on that full-time. As I said Thelma had hoped for a pamphlet, and Pauli sends her a foot-thick book. The Methodist Church is kind of like, "We fundamentally are not here for this but I guess it exists so we'll publish it now."

[laughter]

E: They publish it. Pauli writes to a friend at the time about this, and says "Aside from my three aunts being ill at the same time and my clients losing their jobs and having no money, things have been going along wonderfully".

A: Oh Pauli.

E: Oh Pauli.

I: Yeah.

A: Your standards are too low.

E: Thurgood Marshall refers to this book as the Bible of civil rights legislators and made sure that all of his staff had it.

A: Ah.

I: That's good yeah.

E: So that's like, more than I'll ever do with my life.

[laughter]

E: And then, the Supreme Court overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which is a landmark case of the civil rights movement in which it was ruled unconstitutional to segregate schools.

A: Ahah! It was less than 25 years.

I: Yes.

E: It was, so he collects on his bet with Spotswood Robinson. Pauli's senior paper, if you remember, that he wrote at Howard on the unconstitutionality of segregation under the 14th Amendment, had helped the NAACP formulate their argument.

A: Oh. That's so good.

E: So.

A: Pauli's done so much.

E: Pauli's done so much.

I: Yeah.

E: We are not yet through the first half.

[laughter]

A: Like, I feel like Pauli has already achieved enough in life that look, "I did good, I'm just going to retire now."

E: Another interesting that he does with this period of his life is, in 1952, he receives a grant to write a family history, which ends up being called *Proud Shoes* and he starts doing research on it.

I: Wait is this his own family?

E: His family history yeah, about his own family.

A: Yeah okay.

E: In the midst of writing this he falls ill and he collapses, and he is diagnosed with a thyroid adenoma, which is essentially a benign tumour on his thyroid and this is surgically removed.

I: Yeah.

E: For years he had suffered from what he described as “great swings of the pendulum. Tremendous overactivity, productivity, followed by physical and emotional collapse like the shutting down of a factory system”. The thyroid adenoma had been partly responsible for this and after this Pauli forever feels calmer and more stable and is able to be more productive.

A: Oh, that’s good.

E: Yes.

I: That was unexpectedly successful for a medical venture in like 1950.

[laughter].

E: He began to hypothesise that his family’s history of mental illness had something to do with thyroid issues, exacerbated of course by the racial and socio-economic conditions of their day-to-day lives.

A: Yep.

E: He looked into his father’s hospital records and found that they contained all of the symptoms of hyperthyroidism. Likewise for his sister, who had been institutionalised for several years, and his other sister had also had a thyroid operation.

A: Okay

E: So that’s a lot to deal with obviously.

A: Yeah.

E: His publisher arranges for him to go on a writing retreat, which sound absolutely idyllic. It’s 25 little cabins, there’s no phones, they have a communal breakfast and dinner but every day at lunchtime a picnic basket appears on the doorstep for them.

I: Aww.

E: And they just have to sit there and write.

A: That sounds so good, let’s go there.

E: James Baldwin...

[laughter]

I: Hello.

E: ...who is then 30ish, works in the studio next to Pauli’s, working on *Giovanni’s Room*...

A: Okay

E: ...which is a very significant 1956 novel about queer men.

I: Yep.

A: Cool.

E: James Baldwin would become so engrossed in his work that he would miss the dinner bell if Pauli didn’t come and get him, and they just spent a lot of time together and they’d go for walks

and hang out and stuff.

A: Aww.

E: He was also queer, I'm not sure if he was gay or bisexual or what, but he was definitely into men, and we don't know if Pauli and James ever talked about their sexualities, their genders, anything like that. But it seems likely that they at least kind of had an inkling about the other.

A: Yeah.

E: Which- this is just so cool.

I: I mean...

E: Like, James Baldwin was here and I was like, "Oh my God imagine if he was writing *Giovanni's Room*!" and I went and looked at the timeline and was like "It would work!" and then I turned the page and the book was like "He was working on *Giovanni's Room*" and I was like, "Ah."

[laughter].

E: I was very happy. Jason and I are going to talk about *Giovanni's Room* one day.

A: Good good.

E: The playwright Helene Hanff is also there. She's best known for *84, Charing Cross Road* - have you read this?

I: No.

A: I've heard of it but I've no idea what it is.

E: It's this delightful collection of letters back and forth between her and a bookstore that was at 84 Charing Cross Road. It's good, I like it.

A: Okay

E: Helene never married, we know virtually nothing about any relationships she might have had. So I just want to be clear that I think in terms of if she's queer or not, we're just going to have to leave that as a question mark, it's possible.

A: Yep.

E: I feel like sometimes we're much like, "so, gay" in a joking way.

[laughter].

I: Yeah.

E: We really don't know, but having said that Pauli wrote of Helene "For so long we've been homeless, wandering, square pegs in round holes, unable to hold steady jobs and be solid citizens, and carrying a load of guilt that we don't function like other people. Get married, have children, go to Europe, give big parties etc etc.". He also wrote that they were thankful quote "...to find a place where our queerness is normal and where our bodies and our souls are considered precious".

A: Aww.

I: Aww.

A: I'm glad this writing retreat is going so well.

E: It's going so well.

I: He's literally just made like a little queer club on writing retreat.

E: Pauli called Helene Butch, and Helene would call Pauli names like love, sugar and cookie.

A and I: Aww.

A: Cookie.

E: Yeah. So family histories aren't really a thing yet in America.

A: Okay

E: They're not an established genre that people are super into.

A: They're such a thing now.

E: Yeah.

[laughter]

E: But Pauli writes one, and a good one. It is essentially one of those works that goes through like a century of American history through talking about a family.

A: Oh yeah.

E: But of course given that it's Pauli it's discussing how a mixed race family contributed to a century of American history. It's dealing with the understandably complicated legacy of being mixed-race in contemporary America. He explores both how his grandfather was proud at being a freed black man who fought in the Civil War and then went on to fight for civil rights and also his grandmother's pride in the white family that she was raised in as her mother was a slave who was raped.

A: Okay.

E: So it's dealing with a lot.

A: Yeah.

E: Like it's dealing with a very complicated history.

I: You said at the start that he was part Native American.

E: Yep.

I: How does that fit in?

E: I don't know. It was mentioned it is a fact about him, and I wasn't going to leave it out, but it's not something that I think ever came up again.

I: But it's not something he talks about in his family history.

E: No, no it's not.

I: Alright yeah.

E: He summarised that, quote "...true emancipation lies in the acceptance of the whole past, and deriving strength from all my roots. In facing up to the degradation as well as the dignity of my ancestors". End quote. Which I just thought was fantastic.

A: Mm.

E: I will never talk about my background on this podcast, but this was just very good to read and think with and I love Pauli so much.

[laughter]

I: He has some very like, modern ideas about race and about sexuality and about gender, like, he said a lot of things that I feel like we're still saying.

E: Yeah. And he is quite ahead of his time. His conceptualisation of this is that being mixed race is a positive condition and that it means essentially that his family can be seen as representative of all families and that he himself can be representative of everyone.

I: Yeah.

E: So he kind of treats himself as an everyman for being mixed-race in the 1950s in America, which is great, given that the everyman figure is generally a white guy.

A: Yeah. The everyman figure is still a white guy.

E: Yeah.

I: That's what I was thinking, a lot of the things he's said are things not only that we're still saying now but are things that sound controversial now.

E: And I mean imagine how much more controversial at the time.

I: Yeah.

E: I think it's the thing where it is very easy to, and we will see later in Pauli's life that people don't really understand how significant his contributions are because some of the things that he says, like sure they're still things that we're still struggling for today, but things like segregation is unequal under the Constitution is obvious but it was radical when Pauli said it.

I: Yeah.

A: And part of the reason it's obvious is because Pauli said it.

E: I love Pauli so much.

A: I can see that.

E: It's like, what a good person, oh my God. Yeah but anyway, *Proud Shoes*. Read it.

A and I: Okay.

A: I will.

E: It's on openlibrary.org

A: I love openlibrary.org with all of me.

[laughter]

A: It gets me through this podcast.

E: Over 1955 the older members of his family start passing away. So Aunt Pauline dies on November 8th of that year.

A and I: Aww.

E: And then *Proud Shoes* is published on the 17th of October 1956. Despite the fact that I think it's great, it did receive mixed reviews because of its depiction of a mixed race family at a time when interracial marriage was still illegal in 28 states.

A: Oh yeah.

E: And he doesn't get very much money from it and continues to struggle financially.

I: Sorry Pauli. You deserved better on that one.

A: You just deserved better.

E: Yeah.

A: Just all the time.

E: After the publication of *Proud Shoes* he gets a job at a law firm and he really struggles with it at first but eventually becomes successful. So we know by this point that Pauli is brilliant intellectually, it's a fact.

A: Yeah.

E: But despite this he does struggle quite a bit to find work not only because like, contemporary America is racist, but as an effect of that there's experience that he is expected to have by this point that he hasn't been able to get.

I: Ah yeah.

E: So like, once you graduate law school it's expected that you'll do this, this and this. And Pauli wasn't able to, and so now when he's trying to get a job, even though he himself was top of his class and is very very intelligent and very driven, he legitimately does not have qualifications that people expect him to have.

A: Yeah, that makes sense.

E: But he's very glad to get a steady job, he works there for several years. But he's disappointed that he isn't furthering the civil rights movement in the work he's doing there. And he's also quite lonely. There aren't very many women working there, and the men who are working there do not really view him as a colleague at this point.

A: Ah yeah.

E: You know, they're not used to sharing an office with anyone other than cisgendered men.

I: Yep.

E: There were briefly other female lawyers who are in the office. One is Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

[laughter]

E: Over the summer of 1958 she did an internship there.

A: Wow.

I: Okay

E: Yeah. This is a who's who guys.

A: Yeah. You really didn't lie, it is.

E: They get along quite well, Pauli and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

[laughter]

E: But they remain just sort of professionally friendly.

A: Okay

E: The only woman who was there for the whole time Pauli was there is Irene Barlow.

A: [gasps] It's you!

I: It's me!

E: It's you! Who thankfully goes by Renee.

I: Oh convenient yeah.

[laughter]

E: Renee is the office manager. She's enormously competent. They discover that they're Episcopalian and they start going to services together.

A: Oh, that's nice.

I: That...sounds like dating.

[laughter]

E: Well, yeah, yes. Because Rosenberg describes them as being life partners. They form a very very close relationship. Renee as I indicated is a very competent person and she's very just kind of collected and together and good at her job. And Pauli is like, quite an intense person who is inclined to be impulsive and so forth, and so Renee really provides this much needed stability to Pauli's life and a relationship that he can really rely on.

A: That's nice.

E: Pauli says that he loved Renee for her quote "steadfastness, her loyalty, her quiet support and the many things she did without my ever knowing it to save me heartache".

A: Aww.

E: It's also like, quite a flexible relationship. They never live together. Renee is caring for her ageing mother, and Pauli has lived with various relatives in recent years in too-small space and just does not want to live with people.

A: Mm. Yep.

E: Renee wrote that their relationship quote "...meshed when necessary and disengaged when it was no longer necessary to act as a unit".

A: Okay

I: This sounds very healthy.

E: It is very healthy. I love them, they love each other, it's good.

I: Yep.

A: Good.

E: We could have a debate about what exactly is happening here but like, they're life partners, it's fine. At one point Pauli is overseas teaching for a little while and he's very very lonely and he misses Renee.

A: Aww.

E: And he writes about having to destroy her letters after he reads them once because people can't find them and read their content.

A: Ooh.

E: So they're in a relationship.

I: Ok, yep.

E: You know, that's enough, we can move on.

A: That's very sad.

E: Yeah. JFK is the President now, and he initiates a commission on the status of women that is tasked with studying all barriers to the full partnership of women in our democracy and providing recommendations as to what should be done about them by the 1st of October 1963. Eleanor Roosevelt asks Pauli to come and be on one of the committees that is a part of the commission. Pauli has been essentially articulating and fighting against sexism since the 1940s, so 20 years ago. But in a much lonelier way than he's ever struggled against racism, you know he's never been part of an organisation or anything like that. So this is the first time that he becomes engaged with an organised group that has the potential for actual change regarding sexism in American society.

A: Okay

I: How does Pauli feel about this as a man, does he feel like he's fighting against sexism for himself or for women as a separate category or for everyone, or?

E: I'm not really clear to be honest. I mean part of it is that regardless of his gender identity this is something that he has to deal with and something that has negatively impacted his life.

I: Ok, yeah obviously.

E: We'll talk a little bit more about it in the second half, but yeah ultimately I don't really have a clear answer and I'm not sure if that's just not something that he really wrote about into many words or it's not something that Rosenberg really thought was worth including if he did write about it in her biography.

I: Yeah.

E: But yeah, we'll talk a little bit about trans stuff later in Pauli's life in the next episode. And maybe we'll come to some decision.

There's current indecision about how best to fight sexism amongst women's groups in America at this time. Some wanted to push for an Equal Rights Amendment which would end legal distinction between women and men.

A: Okay.

E: Others were concerned that this would undermine protective laws that were chiefly affecting

working class women.

A: Oh yeah.

E: Pauli is essentially faced with trying to find a compromise between these two points of view. Pauli doesn't favour the ERA, the Equal Rights Amendment. Because there's feminist division on the topic, it's going to be difficult to create enough of a push to get it to pass. So practically speaking Pauli doesn't think it's really the best option to pursue right now.

A: Yep.

E: The proposed wording is also broad enough that there would be a lot of litigation ensuing on exactly how it could be applied if they did manage to pass it. So there are issues that prominent women's groups are divided on at this point, as we briefly passed over, such as labour laws. But there are also issues that they all agree are discriminatory, such as women not being allowed to serve on juries.

I: Yeah.

E: And Pauli thinks that the best way to further the women's rights movements is to unite around those issues and to essentially pick their battles.

A: Okay

E: And deal with those first.

A: That makes sense.

E: They therefore needed a legal strategy that would allow them to do that and unsurprisingly perhaps, Pauli suggests an expanded understanding of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment in order to do this.

[laughter]

A: Yep.

I: Pauli's favourite Amendment.

E: Pauli's favourite Amendment. He gives a presentation on this topic before the commission and it's generally quite well received, although proponents of either side have issues with specific elements of it.

A: Yep.

E: And he continues to work on developing this argument before it's presented again. It is worth I think saying that the ERA never passes.

A: Okay

E: It remains debated to this day whether or not America needs one. On November 7th 1962 Eleanor Roosevelt died in her home.

A: Aw.

E: Renee drove Pauli to the funeral. Pauli said of her Eleanor "She had filled the landscape of my entire adult life. The only way I knew to serve her was to pour myself into completing the memorandum" which is on the 14th Amendment to fight sexism.

A: Yep.

E: So he continues to develop the proposal for litigation under the 14th Amendment. The activist Esther Peterson wrote "I feel in my bones that you are making history". And the commission concludes that Pauli's strategy is the best strategy they had and put their support behind it.

A: Good good.

E: Finally for this episode, just a little thing that Pauli's been working on.

I: Alright yeah. This won't be a little thing at all.

[laughter]

E: Since just before Eleanor had asked him to be on the commission he had been simultaneously working on a PhD at Yale.

A: Pfffft.

I: Yeah, alright.

[laughter]

A: Oh my God.

E: Yup. His thesis is entitled *Roots of the Racial Crisis: Prologue to Policy* and it explores the roots of racism in America and the continued effects of slavery and Jim Crow laws on the black community. It's this very wide-reaching, very inter-disciplinary text, about 1,300 pages. It's a bit incoherent. He wrote it in two years.

[laughter]

E: At its core it's a good thesis, it's a lot though.

A: Ok, okay. How many pages?

E: 1,300.

I: That is more than a normal PhD Pauli.

E: Yeah I don't know how PhD length is decided at this time at this university, but clearly 1,300 pages was accepted because on the 14th of June 1965 he receives his Doctorate.

A: So he's Doctor Pauli now.

E: Yep. The first black person to do so from Yale.

A: Oh.

E: He's very very proud, and he's overjoyed that he can now use the title Dr instead of Miss or Ms which he both despised.

I: Yay.

E: Yes. So. Doctor. Pauli. Murray.

I: I'm very happy for him.

E: Yes. That is where we're going to end the first of our two parts on Dr Pauli Murray. We hope you're enjoying it so far. You can tune back in on the 1st of May to hear the second half. If you are

horribly offended at the fact we're asking you to listen to two episodes on the one person please email us and let us know and we'll never do it again.

[laughter]

E: In the meantime our next episode will be on the 22nd and Jason and I will be talking about J. Sheridan Le Fanu's 1872 lesbian vampire novella *Carmilla*. It's going to be a good time. In the meantime you can also find us all over social media as Queer as Fact. We're under that name on Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook. You can also find us on iTunes, and if you do listen to us on iTunes we'd really appreciate a review and a rating out of 5 stars. We really can't overstate how helpful it is in helping us reach a wider audience. And if you do send us in a review, then we will read it out on this here podcast.

A: And tell you much we love you.

E: And tell you much we love you individually as a human being, as we are about to do now for gay-llethea. I'm really sorry if that's now how we say your username. They write: "This podcast is absolutely amazing."

[laughter]

A: True. I like it already.

E: "The hosts are hilarious and cover every subject with an amazingly frank but fond manner."

A: Aww.

E: "It's the perfect blend of informality and the celebration of queer individuals in history, and serious factual accounts. The closeness and fondness the hosts share with the people/topics covered makes me slightly afraid they have somehow discovered the secret of Time travel."

A: We do become very familiar with the people we talk about.

E: We do, we do. I was listening to another queer history podcast and they were like "We'd never call people by a first name that would be weird," and I was like, "Ah."

[laughter].

A: Well we call everyone by first name, and sometimes by nicknames.

E: Returning to the review: "If not, the more probable answer, then the amount of detail in their research is fantastic! They really make every figure/event they talk about come to life. I'm usually not a fan of podcast with long episodes but this keeps me listening for every second."

A: Oh that's good.

E: "It brings out the tiny closeted queer history buff of my past. It's such a relief to hear queer individuals talk about our history without the constant disclaimer of "modern labels can't be applied," something I could go on about for hours. "

A: So could we.

E: Well this is a good episode for that! "Even when the issue is mentioned it is not in a seemingly scornful manner that I've seen with other historians. I think this is an amazing resource, especially for those trying to find a reflection of themselves in history. Altogether I'm in love with this podcast and it has brought me a huge amount of joy and satisfaction. Thanks for the amazing work!"

A a d I: Aww.

A: That was so good.

I: We love them too.

E: Yes, we love you and the time travel comment is one of my favourite things we've ever gotten in a review. I don't think you can get much higher praise than that.

A: That is very good.

E: So thank you so much for taking the time to review us and to type that out. We had another one from american-witch, who writes: "Such a great podcast. I personally love learning about queer people that aren't used as nothing but cautionary tales so this podcast was very refreshing. As well as everything being well researched! I just love this so much?"

[laughter]

E: So thank you very much as well.

I: Yay.

A: Good. Very good.

E: Also, you guys all remember, I don't remember what episode this was on, but that time that someone said most of us had good accents.

[laughter]

A: Yeah.

E: So that person has since edited that review to say all people.

A: Oh no.

E: Which our reaction to that definitely wasn't critical, I really genuinely enjoyed that comment. If you don't like any of our accents that's entirely fine, and I'm very sorry if I made you feel at all awkward. Thank you very much for writing to us.

I: Also on the topic of people writing to us or reviewing or sending us things...

[laughter]

I: ...feverwood on Tumblr, wrote us a piece of RPF fanfiction. These two guys haven't read this yet. I'm the only one, I'm going to read it to them, you're hearing their real time reactions to this..

A: This is our greatest dream as podcasters.

I: We've literally discussed this when we were starting, we were like, what if we get famous enough that someone writes fanfiction.

[laughter]

E: But I mean I fully expected this to not happen.

I: Anyway, here we go.

E: I'm so frightened.

A: Same, I'm quite tense.

I: "Alice gingerly traces her fingers across the supple pages..."

[laughter]

E: Go on.

I: "...each word pulsing through her fingertips".

A: This is exactly how it is when I research for an episode.

I: "A wave of forbidden knowledge shivering through her young body".

[laughter]

E: I love this.

A: I love how weirdly erotic the language is.

I: "Sparkling about her synapses bringing pleasure to her smile."

[laughter]

E: Okay. So is Alice the protagonist of this would you say?

I: We all make an appearance.

A: I'm going to compose myself.

I: "Irene pushes her glasses back onto her face as her eyes dart across the page..."

A: They got the glasses wrong.

E: You'll have glasses one day, and then they'll be right.

I: Yeah, when I'm like 40 and I have reading glasses.

E: If anyone ever wants write more fanfiction about us: Alice has glasses, Jason has glasses.

I: We don't have glasses.

E: Irene and Eli don't have glasses.

I: "...her eyes growing bigger as she translates the passion of devotion long denied until now. A soft sigh slips from her lips steaming up her glasses as she curls up with the welcoming tome."

E: This is beautiful.

I: This is so good.

E: There's just so much vocabulary here I love it.

A: I also love that we're researching from paper books, it's much more atmospheric than with "Irene clicked on JSTOR".

E: I mostly work from paper books.

A: I do probably like half and half.

I: "Eli's muscles ripple..."

E: Oh my God!

[laughter]

E: I just pulled a muscle in my side. I'm not kidding, I am in pain. Please continue.

I: "...as he lifts his massive stack of dusty manuscripts..."

A: We were discussing yesterday if you had gotten buff from carrying books around during honours.

E: We had this exact discussion.

I: Well apparently you did, your rippling muscles. "...before placing them neatly on his well lit reading table."

[laughter]

A: For context, we replaced the light in Eli's room three days ago. He hasn't had a light for like six months.

E: You don't have to tell people that! I am an adult.

I: You had a lamp though.

E: I had a lamp. It was atmospheric as hell.

I: There we go. "He reaches deep into his pocket grabbing his thick neon highlighters before whipping them out, ready to take notes."

E: Beautiful, beautiful.

I: "Hamish adjusts his tie as he rushes out..."

A: Yeah Hamish definitely adjusts his tie as he rushes out, that's an accurate description of Hamish preparing for anything.

I: Yeah true. "...tag teaming Jessie as she stands on the library's balcony, backlit by the setting sun, slowly realizing she is now charged to keep them in line."

[laughter]

E: Oh that's excellent.

A: Hi Jessie.

E: I really liked how they worked the rotating cast into this.

A: I like that the library has a balcony. I want a library with a balcony.

I: Where we can lift our dusty tomes and get ripped.

A: Yeah.

E: Well, every hour of work we've put into this has now paid off.

I: Absolutely.

A: Thank you very much feverwood.

E: Thank you so much.

I: We love you. Please, anyone else, if you feel inclined to do that, we would be delighted. It's not

remotely weird.

E: I think the person who wrote that said “at risk of you thinking I’m weird” or something.

A: Yeah, they did.

E: Let me make it clear, there will never be a single inch of judgement over anything you send us.

[laughter]

I: Yeah.

E: We love you. So, so much. Good, good.

A: That was so good.

E: You can also email us directly with any praise or criticism or suggestion that you might have at queerasfact@gmail.com

E: With that, I have been Eli.

A: I’m Alice.

I: I’m Irene.

E: And thank you for listening.