

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: And today, we are finishing our conversation about the activist, lawyer, priest and poet Pauli Murray.

[intro music plays]

E: Before we get started, we have some content warnings for you. This, of course, includes period typical racism, sexism and transphobia. I'm going to read one quote that misgenders Pauli, as well as quotes that use now-outdated language for African Americans, and we're also going to discuss individual and generational preference regarding those terms a little bit. Apart from that, we're going to briefly touch on the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. , as well as briefly mention violence, once in the context of domestic, and once regarding a threat that Pauli made but never carried out. If any of that sounds like something you'd rather not listen to, feel free to skip this one and join us next time instead.

As you will have noticed from the title, this the second part of two about Pauli Murray. Probably you could get through this okay if you haven't listened to the first half, but I would encourage you to go and listen to that first one if you can. It very much contains the first like, 55 years of this person's life.

Also, just a quick note, as we noted at the beginning of the last one, we are gonna be referring to Pauli with he/him pronouns. We discussed somewhat about his transgender identity in the last episode – so that's another reason to listen to it if you haven't – and we'll go into it in more detail at the end of this one.

To give a quick recap, though, if you can't go and listen to the first episode, or if you've forgotten in the two weeks intervening, we covered Pauli's early life in the segregated American South, and his decision to go to law school, and his early law career. During this time he developed a ground-breaking legal strategy of using the 14th Amendment to challenge racism and sexism. We also discussed his friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt; the writing of his family history, *Proud Shoes*; and his relationship with his life partner, Renee Barlow. When we left off, Pauli had just received his doctorate. Following this he moves back to New York City, and he gets a new dog!

A and I: [laugh]

I: Good.

E: Pauli has had dogs throughout his life...

I: You haven't mentioned any dogs till now!

E: I know. I wanted to mention dogs but frankly I could not justify mentioning... dogs.

I: [laughs] Okay.

A: I'm very impressed with your self-restraint, knowing your love of dogs.

E: I love dogs.

I: Yeah.

E: Alright, I'm mentioning dogs. Let's talk about dogs. So, dogs.

[laughter]

E: He has a friend called Caroline Ware, and she is like, a very impressive labour historian and things like that, but for the purposes of this story, she has a farm on which she keeps a staff of “psychiatric dogs”, where like, people come and spend time with the dogs to feel better.

A: Oh, like therapy dogs?

E: Like, they're not trained therapy dogs or anything like that, they just have a lot of dogs...

I: And...

E: ...and invite their friends to be there and like, hug the dogs.

[laughter]

E: So Pauli goes there sometimes when he's stressed and is like, “Dogs.”

A and I: [laugh]

E: Yes.

I: That was a nice story.

E: Mm. He gets a new dog now. So this dog has two names.

A: Okay.

E: The first is – with hyphens in between – Black-And-White-Together-We-Shall-Overcome. That is...

I: That's very like, one of those Puritan names...

E: Yeah! [laughs]

I: ...but instead for civil rights.

E: Yes! But they did not called the dog that. They called the dog Doc.

I: [laughs]

E: So both Pauli and the dog are Doc now.

A and I: [laugh]

I: That's beautiful.

E: Yes.

I: I'm glad you talked about dogs.

E: Yes.

A: That's just so good. Like, can you imagine picking up like, a little puppy and being like, “What are we gonna name this dog?”

E: I think maybe the dog was black and white.

I: I was gonna say.

A: Yeah.

E: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

E: We have a photo of the dog.

I: Oh good. Put it on the blog.

E: I... obviously. Now that he's back in New York he can regularly see Renee, which makes them both very happy. Despite his many many achievements at this point though, he has no job waiting for him in New York, and he starts applying around and he gets no response.

I: [sighs]

A: I can't believe how much time such a like, hyper-intelligent...

E: Mm.

A: ...and influential man spends just being like "No-one will hire me."

E: Yeah.

A: "Guess I'm poor and like, unemployed."

E: Yes.

I: He's like, revolutionised the civil rights movement, and like, topped his class at Yale?

E: He topped his class at Howard, and then at Berkeley, and then got a PhD from Yale.

I: And now he can't find a job.

E: No.

I: I'm sorry Pauli.

E: Yes.

I: I mean, we all feel you, in this room.

E: Yes.

A: Mm.

I: Except we're not as good.

E: No, we aren't. Collectively we maybe have the brainpower of one Pauli Murray.

[laughter]

I: Yeah.

E: He starts speaking with Betty Friedan about woman's right. Betty Friedan is a very famous feminist figure from this time. She wrote a book called *The Feminine Mystique*, and Pauli puts Betty in contact with various women that he knows through his involvement with the Presidential Commission on the Status of Woman. This includes a woman called Catherine East, who is the central figure in what Betty comes to call the Washington Underground Movement, which is a bunch of woman who work in government and who are able to like, disseminate information about policy and so forth to woman's groups all over the country.

A: Okay.

E: So it's really important in having like, women's rights groups be on top of what's happening...

A: Mmhm.

E: ...in the government, and able to organise against it and so forth. And it's also just really cool that

it's called the Washington Underground Movement.

A: Yeah, that does sound very cool.

E: Yes.

I: Yes.

E: And in talking to the women that Pauli puts her in touch with, Betty Friedan keeps hearing that there needs to be an NAACP for women – a group that can force the government to take women's rights seriously the way the NAACP has the power to force the government to take civil rights battles seriously.

The issue of such a group is discussed in June of 1966, when Pauli attends the 3rd Annual Conference of State Commissions on the Status of Women, and they decide to call it the National Organisation for Women, or NOW.

A: I like the name. Like, it spells out a catchy acronym, but it's also not one of those really contrived ones...

E: Yeah. [laughs]

A: ...like, you really just wanted the acronym.

E: Yes.

I: Yeah. [laughs]

E: Pauli's part of the committee that is dedicated to developing the organisation's framework. Betty Friedan writes a statement of purpose. It's initially skewed toward the needs of white, middle-class professional women, which is a common criticism of Betty Friedan's work.

I: Which is to this day like a common criticism...

E: Mmhm.

I: ...of feminist discourse...

E: Yes.

I: ...generally.

A: Mm.

E: Yes. Pauli however argues for additions to it and word changes that will undermine that somewhat. He's worried that just as the civil rights movement has frequently forgotten women, the whole time he's been involved with it, the burgeoning women's movement will forget minorities such as black women. His revision of Friedan's draft is agreed on, and on the 30th of October 1966, NOW is inaugurated. He does fairly quickly, however, begin to sour on the organisation. Women who supported the ERA began to gain power and therefore NOW shift toward supporting it.

Now the ERA was the Equal Rights Amendment, and if it had passed it would have made it illegal to differentiate between men and women in law. This was very controversial at the time; it remains controversial to this day – but Pauli didn't support it. He thought that his 14th Amendment strategy of using the Equal Protection Clause thereof was better suited to challenging sexist legislation. He was also worried that this shifting focus onto the ERA meant that they were no longer paying attention to a broader range of issues such as race and class.

He attended the 2nd Annual NOW Conference in November of 1967 and he came away from that deeply disillusioned. He felt that he could divide himself, quote “into Negro at one time, woman at

another, and worker at another” and he felt that this what he was being asked to do in this organisation, and he steps away from it.

A: Mmkay. Yep.

E: Yeah, so he doesn't actually do that much with it, but like, he helped found NOW! He just does everything.

I: [laughs]

A: He does everything. He really does.

I: I still just really feel like the way he talks about like, intersectional movements...

E: Mm.

I: ...is very modern.

A: Yeah.

E: I don't wanna at any time really simplify this down to like, Pauli's the only one doing what Pauli's doing, but this is absolutely very radical for its time, sure.

I: Yeah.

E: Yeah. In 1968 Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated.

I: Ah yes.

E: Which is of course devastating to Pauli, as it is to many other people in the civil rights movement.

I: Had Pauli met him? Pauli's met everybody.

E: If they hadn't directly met and had conversations, they at least moved with like a very small degree of separation.

I: Alright, yeah.

E: Mm.

I: They'd been in like, similar circles.

E: Absolutely, yeah.

I: Yeah.

E: Yes. At one of the memorial services for him, the actress Olivia Cole read part of Pauli's poem, *Dark Testament*, and the section reads:

Then let the dream linger on.

Let it be the test of nations,

Let it be the quest of all our days, ...

Until the final man may stand in any place,

And thrust his shoulders to the sky,

Friend and brother to every man.

And this reading led eventually to the publication of Pauli's poems, finally, as the volume *Dark*

Testament, in 1970.

I: Oh!

E: Mm.

A: So how long has Pauli been writing poetry for?

E: Decades. He's published individual poems before...

I: Mmhm.

E: ...in literary magazines and things like that, but he hadn't had a volume published...

A: That's...

E: ...and this kinda, I think, creates a bit more interest.

A: That's good. That's quite exciting for him.

E: Mm. We've talked a little bit about how Pauli, despite having a lot of achievements, really struggles to find work, and he began to feel that he lacked what he called "the ingredients of steady success", but he does receive, finally, in 1968, a job opportunity for a faculty position at Brandeis University.

A: Mm!

E: Following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., black students had begun to demand more black faculty, more black students, more courses including material on African Americans.

A: Mmhm.

E: And so Pauli comes to Brandeis, and he describes his time there as "the most exciting, tormenting, satisfying, embattled, frustrated, and at times triumphant period" end quote, of his life so far.

A: Mmkay.

E: So he's about to have a *time*. [laughs]

I: I'm glad, like, I'm glad that it sounds like it was worthwhile.

E: Yeah. He finds his feet there, but he struggles at first, basically...

I: Yeah.

E: ...is what is about to happen. So Brandeis University has a new program to help more black students enter the university. They would do a year of remedial study and if successful, they could then enrol as freshmen.

A: Yep.

E: However, women weren't eligible for these programs, and Pauli is very critical of that.

A: I see why Pauli is so angry being in both these movements.

E: Yes.

A: Like, when someone's like, "Oh, we really wanna help like, black kids go to university" and also be like, "But.... not women." Like, it just doesn't make sense.

E: No, it doesn't.

I: No.

A: I don't feel like that was a controversial statement, I was just like, I understand and feel the frustration that Pauli must be feeling.

I: Mm.

E: Pauli arrives and has to very quickly develop a class called Law and Social Change, but despite how quickly he develops it, it's still too late to get it published in the course catalogue, and he receives just 14 students by word-of-mouth – which isn't bad.

There's essentially two types of students in this class. Ten of them have very strong academic and political backgrounds – they're seniors and juniors, and they're all white – and four of them...

A: Sorry...

E: Yes?

A: So seniors and juniors are in their... third and fourth...

E: Yes.

A: ...years of study? Okay.

E: Yes.

I: I believe it goes freshman, sophomore, junior, senior.

E: Yeah.

A: Okay.

E: And there are like, three-year degrees and four-year degrees.

A: Okay, yeah.

E: Like, your undergraduate degree is a four-year degree.

A: Okay.

E: Which sounds better. I don't wanna stop studying ever. Anyway.

[laughter]

E: And four of them are black men from the recruitment course who have little to no background with politics at all. And Pauli's quite intimidated by this. He doesn't know how to bridge the gap between....

A: Mmhm.

E: ...these two different groups who have quite different educational needs.

I: This just sounds like it would have been a hard class to teach.

A: Yeah.

E: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

E: Absolutely. He struggles to make the course challenging enough for the seniors and the juniors, but approachable enough for the remedial recruited students, and essentially what he does is he spends the classtime on these open-ended discussions that the class can somewhat control, so they

can take it in the direction that they're comfortable with, and get as in-depth with it as they're able to.

A: Mhm.

E: And then he sets a lot of recommended but not compulsory readings that are quite challenging. So his students can, if they want to, take on that and learn that material as well.

A: That sounds like a pretty good way to handle that.

E: Yeah, it seems to work fairly well. His black students challenge him over his use of the word "Negro". So this is Pauli's preferred word at this time, to refer to African Americans.

A: Yep.

I: This is presumably just a generational difference then? Is this like...

E: Yeah.

I: Yeah, the language has just changed.

E: Yeah, the language is changing. So Pauli's generation created this shift from the word "negro" with a lower-case N to "Negro" with an upper-case N as a way of dignifying what was often a dehumanising term. And Pauli himself when he had been at university had gone through textbooks and crossed out lower-case Ns and written in upper-case ones, as a similar kind of challenging that his students are now doing to him.

A: Mhm.

E: So now the next generation is figuring out how they want to dignify the terminology that refers to them by adopting the word "black", because they see the word "Negro" as having dehumanising connotations, regardless of a capital of a lower letter starting it.

I: Yeah.

E: Yeah.

I: You see that now too often, you'll see people capitalise the B in "Black".

E: Yeah, that's a thing. Pauli hadn't expected to be challenged on this, though, and it really takes him aback. He eventually answers that it's a legitimate word to use, and that many people prefer it, including himself. He sees in this a kind of challenge to his authority that is based partly in the fact that the student views him as a woman.

I: Ohh, yeah. Mm.

E: And so he's very much tries to kind of like assert his authority in reply to this. He ultimately compromises and he uses both words interchangeably. It sometimes becomes a source of levity in the classroom. He writes to Renee and says "Yesterday, I said something about 'Negro,' I mean 'Black' – Mr. Carson, I see you down there at the end of the table looking at me like the angel Gabriel..."

A: [laughs]

E: ...and then apparently everyone laughed.

[laughter]

I: I mean presumably this was just an on-going joke in the class at this point.

E: Yeah. It remained a source of tension as well though. Leonard Carson, who Pauli mentioned in

that letter there would record how many times Pauli used each word to make sure he was being fair.

A and I: [laugh]

A: This was intense!

E: Mm, it was.

I: I mean, I can see how that happens though.

E: Mm.

I: Like I mean I guess we have plenty to say about the word “queer” like, I can definitely see that coming up if you were in a you know, in a lecture or something, where the word “queer” was the one which your lecturer was using – there would be people who would be upset about that.

A: Yeah, we have very similar issues with terminology...

I: Yeah.

A: ...in the queer community today.

I: I can see how that's tension and there's not an obvious solution to it.

A and E: Yeah.

I: Like, Pauli is just as much justified to use his preferred term...

E: ...as Mr. Carson?

I: Yeah.

E: [laughs]

I: As Mr. Carson is. And there's no reason that Pauli should kind of have to move on to the new term....

E: Yeah.

I: ...that doesn't suit him.

A: Yeah, I mean I feel like using both interchangeably is a pretty good compromise.

I: Yeah.

E: Mm. I included it just because I think that it's interesting to take note of that kind of generational shift that's taking...

I and A: Mmhm.

E: ...place at this time. But to return to the success of this particular class, he tries to spend as much individual attention of each student as possible.

I: Mmhm.

E: He holds three times the expected office hours.

A: Wow.

I: Of course he does.

E: Yeah. [laughs]

I: Like, at this point I expect no less of him.

E: [laughs]

A: He sleeps in his office under the desk.

I: Yeah.

A: Look, I'd believe it.

E: He does not. [laughs] He has an apartment. Like a normal person.

[laughter]

A: With Black-and-White... What's he called?

E: Black-And-White-Together-We-Shall-Overcome.

I: That's the one.

E: Or Doc.

A: [laughs]

E: I love him. He overall seems to have largely succeeded with this course – it's quite highly praised. A few of the students said that it was the best course they'd ever taken.

A and I: Aww!

E: However, when it's taught the next semester there's only one black student, and he heard there was a movement to boycott for being insufficiently critical of American society. So again I just wanted to include that to highlight that he and his black students are in just such different times of life, and at just different...

I: Yeah.

E: ...parts of the civil rights movement, that they're quite alienated from each other at this point.

A: Yeah, mmhm.

E: You can see this play out across America with young black budding activists and the older generation as isn't really surprising. For example there are several universities – not, I think Brandeis – where students protest – black students, to be clear – protest wanting segregated dorms.

I: Yeah.

E: And the NAACP condemns this and tells universities that they will sue them if they bring this in because to them, that's just bringing back in segregation, and they're not gonna support that.

A: Yep.

I: Yeah.

A: Even though that is what the students want.

E: Yeah. So it's just that generational changeover.

A: Yeah. Yep.

E: Pauli becomes quite depressed and lonely for a time due to this alienation from the black student body, but he eventually just kind of comes to understand their points of view more, and finds his feet at Brandeis.

A: Oh good.

E: Renee, as you would expect, does a great deal to help him through this time.

A: So Renee is living elsewhere at the moment, but writing letters?

E: Yes.

A: Yep.

E: Renee comes and visits him sometimes, and he describes her visits as healing.

A: Aww.

I: Aww....

A: That's really nice.

I: I hope there's like a family photo of them with the dog.

E: I'm not sure if there is. We'll have a look. Rosenberg noted that they would have been able to go meet at Renee's, but because Renee's mother was there it made intimacy impossible so they'd sometimes rent hotel rooms and then feel bad about wasting the money.

I: Oh yeah, yeah.

A: Hmm...

E: Mmm.

I: What about Pauli's apartment?

E: So for quite a while Pauli's apartment isn't really suitable for having guests over. When he gets there the landlord has a bunch repairs he needs to do that he just puts off doing for ages.

I: Ah, yeah.

A: Mmhm.

E: But eventually he gets the place fit for Renee to come and stay, and then Renee does visit.

By this time there is an establish medical process by which trans people can access hormones. It's not very good, but it exists. Trans women are met with more open scorn by society, but doctors and the public kind of generally doubt the existence of trans men at all, and trans men at this time have a lot more difficulty accessing hormones than trans women do.

A: So is this a kind of "Trans women exist but we're not super into that, and trans man just don't even exist"? Is that the like, very generalised....

E: Yeah.

A: ...summary of what's happening?

E: Yeah.

A: Okay.

E: But despite this difficulty, there is now much more of a possibility of transitioning as a trans man than there was in the 30s and 40s, which is when...

A: Mmhm.

E: ...Pauli was actively trying to do so. And had this been the case in the 30s and 40s, he almost

certainly would have ended up taking hormones.

I: Mm.

E: But now there isn't really any sign – at least not in Rosenberg's book, or that I came across – that he attempted to, or was even writing about it in his diary. We mentioned in the previous episode that Pauli had a thyroid operation....

I: Ah yeah.

E: ...that helped him become a lot more emotionally stable, and he also had Renee's support, and there's also the fact that he is now pursuing a career path that is quite a public one, and that he effectively would not have been able to continue to pursue if he...

A: Mmhm.

I: Transitioned.

E: ...publicly transitioned...

I: Yeah.

E: ...at this point. And if you're as much a public figure as Pauli is, you're publicly transitioning or you're not transitioning. But there's also the fact that at some point Pauli's gender stops being a source of confusion and pain and starts being conceptualised as a source of strength. He has throughout his life seen his ability to fight intersecting oppressions, and to recognise them and to think about how to deal with them, as originating with the fact that he lives at the intersection of all of these different identities.

A and I: Mm.

A: Okay.

E: So he seems to sort of conceptualise it as, you know, just as he's mixed-race, he lives in this kind of intermediary state in terms of gender, and...

I: Yeah.

E: ...you know, he also when he writes about it sometimes throws in that he's left-handed and things like that.

A and I: [laugh]

E: You know, he lives in all of these different social minorities that allow him to do the work he's doing and so he stops conceptualising it so much as this great pain in his life, and more as something that he is using, now....

A: Mmhm!

E: ...and I think also he's just kind of, to some extent, accepted that this is not something that is gonna be feasible in his life...

I: Yeah.

E: ...and he's moving on.

A: Okay.

I: Yeah.

I: It is interesting that kind of he's so involved in like, fights for women's rights and that kind of thing.

E: Mmhm.

I: And it's just interesting the sort of perspective he's coming from there.

E: Mm. I mean, I think that's a PhD, frankly.

I: Yeah. I would just really like to see how he's thinking about this.

E: And we don't seem to have a lot on exactly what he's thinking at this point about it. Pauli remains very very secretive about his queerness. He has a friend, Mary Norris, and Mary also has relationships with women, and she suspected that Renee and Pauli were more than friends, but just because of the time, they never communicated to each other that they were both involved with women, and Mary Norris actually found out after Pauli died, in an encyclopaedia about queer people.

I: Oh really?!

E: And was then disbelieving, and confirmed it with other friends of Pauli's.

A: That would be a weird experience if you were a queer person and always thought your friend was not queer, until like years later when, "Oh, oh, here they are!"

E: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

E: A friend of Pauli's at Brandeis University, another professor also had a... openly lesbian daughter, and he told Pauli that he loved his daughter all the more because she had the courage to be who she was.

A: That's really sweet.

E: And Pauli never took this opening to come out to him or anything like that, and just remained a deeply private person. You know, he's lived through the Red Scare, he's lived through...

I: Yeah.

E: ...most of the 20th century so far.

I: Yeah.

E: And, he periodically thinks that maybe something about his previous like, searching for doctors to help him with his gender identity and things like that has come to public light, and he's very very frightened whenever that's the case. He briefly goes for a government job, that will involve the FBI doing a background check on him, and he puts that off for weeks and weeks and weeks and is very anxious about it.

I: Yeah.

E: When he eventually does it he is rejected, on the basis of...

A: Communism? Or we don't know...

E: Many things, I think, in his past just make him suspect to the government. But he's definitely scared that they will find out about his queerness in particular as well.

A: Mmhm.

E: Sexuality and gender are something that he never speaks about in public, except through like a distancing sociological framework.

A: Yeah, just like talking about like, queer people, never talking about “I am a queer person”, you mean?

E: So he sometimes alludes when he has very like, general speeches about human rights, to kind of like, social minorities and things like that...

A: Oh yeah.

E: ...which was kind of like, low-key meaning, you know, the gays. But he’s never like, “Yeah, the gays, of which I am one.”

[laughter]

E: In 1969, he starts to work on women’s history, one of about half a dozen professors doing so in the United States.

A: Oh wow!

E: And he’s quite unusual in that he’s not focusing on the middle class, white experience. He’s including more than that. He’s including texts by black women. He’s including things about labour movements, stuff like that, and he designs a class that is the foundation for the women’s studies program that is taught at Brandeis today.

A: I guess I knew that women’s history wasn’t really talked about, but like, I don’t think I truly understood how much women’s history wasn’t really talked about.

E: Yeah.

I: I...wrote much on this last year.

A: I mean...

I: I knew much about this... I ran into Pauli, actually, very briefly, reading about like, the origins of women’s history in sort of, the American university circles.

E: Cool. Yeah, the attitude at the time is very much that women don’t have a separate history, and someone talking about...

A: Mm, yup, yup.

E: Kinda how we....talk about trans people now.

[awkward laughter]

E: And, you know, it’s the late 60s and the early 70s. The women’s movement is really picking up.

I and A: Mm, yeah.

E; At this time, there’s a massive output of feminist writings, and Pauli continues to publish about Jane Crow, but now there are more places willing to publish that kind of thing, and there’s more of an interest in it than when he tried to write about this in the 40s. For example, in the 1970s, he published an article about black women in *The Voices of Feminism*, alongside such feminists as Betty Friedan and Mary Daly, and Shirley Chisholm, and his understanding that Jim Crow and Jane Crow are analogous forms of oppression is taken up and embraced by this younger generation of black women.

A: Mmhm.

E: Yeah, which must've been a really...good to see.

A: Yeah, he's been saying this for like, 30 years.

E: Yeah.

I: I guess, yeah, that is one of the blessings of being active in this movement for so long for him.

A: Mm.

I: That he's sort of started to see things that just would take traction when he was first conceptualising them be accepted.

E: Yes. Despite the current momentum that's going on with the women's movement, however, he's lost hope that his 14th Amendment strategy is ever going to be tested in the Supreme Court. However, members of the ACLU are really focusing in on women's rights, and they're looking for a case that they can use to test this strategy, and there's a case in Idaho comes to their attention. The case of *Reed vs. Reed* in 1967. In 1967, 16-year-old Richard Reed had committed suicide, and his mother Sally had wanted to be the administrator of his estate.

A: Mm.

E: His divorced father, Cecil, filed a competing application to be administrator of this estate. Sally describes Cecil as being an abusive man who abandoned her to struggle by on her own as a single mother, but nevertheless the judge gave it Cecil, solely because of an 1874 statute that said that males had to be given priority.

I: [sigh] Wow.

A: What a bad judge.

I: Yeah.

E: Yes.

I: That was literally more than a hundred years before!

E: Sally Reed wasn't having this, and they took it to the district court to challenge it, and they won, but then they took it to the Idaho Supreme Court, and they lost it there, where the court declared that men are better qualified to act as an administrator than are women, and nature herself had established this distinction.

I: I'm so offended right now. I mean, I know this was like a time ago.

E: Like, it was but it wasn't.

I: Yeah... What year are we in now?

E: So this case kind of goes on for like a few years, but we're like, very late 60s, very early 70s.

I: Yeah like, my parents were like, late teenagers at this point?

E: Mm, yeah. It is amazing how recent so many victories for women are. Like, goddamn. The ACLU sees this as a perfect example of arbitrary distinction based on sex, and they decide to offer their legal services to help Sally to take it to the supreme court. Ruth Bader Ginsberg - she's back! - gets involved.

I: Go Ruth, go!

E: Yeah. [laughs] And she writes the brief, so the thing, where they say why they're right.

A: Okay.

E: In writing the brief, Ruth built on Pauli's arguments about sexism being analogous to racism, as well as Pauli's other work including work that he had done with the lawyer Dorothy Kenyon. In writing this, Ruth Bader Ginsberg not only acknowledged that she had relied heavily on the work of Murray and Kenyon, she listed them as co-authors.

I: Aww!

E: Yes. That was good.

A: That's good.

E: Yes, which she did not have to do, but she did.

A: Good on her.

E: And so on November 22nd 1971, the court rules unanimously in Sally's favour--

I: Yay!

E: They declared the distinction between the sexes in this case arbitrary, and therefore in violation of the equal protections clause of the 14th Amendment, and this is the first time that the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that a state law discriminating against women violated the 14th Amendment.

A: It's Pauli's dream.

E: It is Pauli's dream. And because Ruth Bader Ginsberg is very good, Pauli's name is on the brief.

I: Yes.

E: Yaaaaay.

A: That's good.

I: That's good.

E: Yes. So, finally, finally, Pauli's 14th Amendment strategy has been tested and has succeeded.

A: How long ago did Pauli come up with this idea. Like 40 years?

E: Yeah, that much, I think yeah.

I: So now he is satisfied with his career as a lawyer and he's gonna become a priest?

A: Apparently.

E: Well, that's...not quite what causes that shift, unfortunately. Renee's health has been declining, and in January of 1973, it's discovered that she has an inoperable brain tumour. So in February she slips into a coma, and she dies on the 21st. They've been together for 16 years.

A: I'm sorry.

E: I'm sorry we...have to talk about a partner dying like every episode.

A: We do, we do.

E: Pauli organises the funeral at their Episcopal church that they've been going to together. Renee's family and friends sang a song called *We Shall Overcome*, but Pauli recalls not being sure that he would overcome this.

I: Oh...

E: You know, Renee's been, like his...

I: Yeah...

E: ...bedrock for over 15 years now. And so he turns to the faith that they had shared. Everything else just sort of seems trivial to him. He begins to talk about reducing his commitments at the university. He wants to just be alone and to write. And his friends are very very worried about this, and he himself senses that it's dangerous to want to withdraw too much from his responsibilities and from the people around him. But he does think about moving on from Brandeis after five years there, and starts to look to a priesthood. Many sects of Christianity now ordained female priests, but not the Episcopal Church. It's currently a very debated topic if they should start ordaining female priests. Pauli enters a seminary in order to prepare for the priesthood, and hopefully just by the time he finishes, they'll ordain him.

A: So a woman can enter a seminary.

E: Yeah! So a seminary isn't just to prepare people to be a priest. You can become like, a deacon and other...

A: Ah, yeah, yeah.

E: ...lower rungs of the church hierarchy, and those are not barred from women.

A: Okay.

E: You just can't be like a priest and up.

A: Yep.

E: So like, obviously no female priests, no female bishops, etc.

I: Yeah, you can't skip a step.

E: Um, no. So he is accepted to study at the General Theological Seminary in New York. This means that Pauli goes from \$26,000 a year to 6000.

A: Ooh.

E: Which he is gaining from royalties and speaking engagements and one-off classes. I was very very worried about this, and I did a currency converter, and that's still like 25 grand, and I was like, look, I get that's bad, I do, but like...

I: But like, he'll be okay. He's been poorer than this.

E: I'm poorer than this, right now.

I: Yeah. He'll live off that.

E: And he moves into an apartment at the seminary. It's got a little kitchenette, and two rooms, and it's expected that people will use one as a living room, and one as a bedroom. But Pauli by this point, God bless him, has been collecting personal papers for like 60 years, and so he uses one literally as just the filing room for his papers, and the other one as a living room and a bedroom.

A: Is there like a Pauli Murray archive somewhere?

E: Yes.

A: Good, good.

E: It's at Radcliffe. He donates several boxes of his paper already at this time to Radcliffe, but what he kept still was like a floor-to-ceiling. So this is why we can like, really get into Pauli in a way that we can't into a lot of people's lives, because of Pauli's own efforts. So thank you Pauli.

A: Good job, Pauli.

I: I'm gonna be so angry, in my next life as a historian, when I'm trying to research myself and I'm like "Irene, where did you put all your papers?"

E: He quite struggles to adapt to the new way of life at the seminary. He had got to the stage at his life outside of the seminary where he was like, quite respected, he was a professor at a university, and now he's being taught alongside people who are like half his age.

A: Yup.

E: It's also a much more conservative atmosphere than Brandeis had been. Only three of the students are black, ten are women. He struggled as well to find a cassock that would fit him, because he was only five feet tall.

A: Aww...

E: And they were all designed for like, you know, bigger men.

I: He's so small!

E: He's quite small.

A: I mean, I guess all the women in the seminary are having the same problem.

E: He's smaller than your average woman, though. Like five feet is not a normal height for any adult human. It's an unusual height, is all I meant to say. I'm so sorry, I'm not that much taller than that, please don't send us hate mail.

[laughter]

E: He ends up wearing boy's robes, and he refers to himself, jokingly, in his writing as an "E-pixie-palian".

[laughter]

I: Aww.

E: Yes. That'll come up again.

[laughter]

E: I love it.

A: It's not a very good pun, but also a great pun.

I: Yes, yeah. I feel good about that though... Knowing that he was five foot tall makes me that much more impressed that he has academic authority honestly, like in a classroom.

E: Yeah.

A: Mm.

E: At the seminary, he's praised for his academic efforts, to no one's surprise, but he's also seen as being far too argumentative. He essentially seems to think he's conceptualised by his fellow students as like, that person who talks too much in tutorials and doesn't let anyone else speak.

I: Ah yes.

E: To the point that he felt he had to write an open letter apologising to the seminary.

[laughter]

A: Oh dear.

E: Part of this though, is just that, fellow students are seeing an elderly black woman and they're young cis white men, and like, thinking that Pauli's just too assertive for who he is.

A: Yeah.

E: A fellow student accused him of turning people off to black women's rights by being too outspoken.

A: Ah yes.

E: Um, he wrote to him, "You appear to be working for the glory of women, blacks and Pauli Murray, rather than to the Glory of God". In reply Pauli wrote "If you have to live with anger; I have to live with pain. I'll trade you both my pain, my sex, my race and my age - and see how you deport yourself in such circumstances.

I: Yeah. Legit.

E: So, get wrecked. He liked to write criticisms of the community, and then pin them on the community noticeboard for people to read.

I: [laughter]

A: I feel like I would've loved to have been at the seminary with Pauli. He sounds hilarious. Except I never want to be in a seminary in my life...

E: True.

I: But if you have to be in a seminary.

A: Yeah.

E: If an angel comes down to you from on high, and is like "You have to go to a seminary at some time in human history", you'll be like, "I guess I'll do that then".

A: I'll be like, "Cool, it's the New York Theological College in the 70s."

E: And the angel will be like, "Lo," I guess.

[laughter]

A: That's what angels say.

[laughter]

E: Yes. These were generally criticising sexism and racism in the Church, so for example, women were being turned down for faculty position at seminaries like this at the time, because they didn't have experience in faculty positions...

I: Yeah...

E: ...or, in the priesthood. And Pauli wrote that unless the Church deliberately set about changing this, this would literally always be true.

I: It is true.

A: Mm.

E: In 1976, he finishes his coursework. It's not a happy graduation for him though. The battle over ordination is still raging, and he essentially doesn't know what he's meant to do now, so he turns to working on his memoir, and just waits to see how this battle will play out. Pauli doesn't have to wait long, however, because at the Episcopal Church's General Convention in September of 1976, it passes a resolution that no-one should be denied ordination on the basis of sex, effective 1st of January, 1977.

I: Oh, that's nice.

A: Good.

E: On January 8th, 1977, Pauli becomes the first black person to both be assigned female at birth and ordained in the Episcopal Church. [laughs]

I: Weirdly specific.

A: Okay.

I: But yes.

A: So I assume other people who were assigned female at birth get ordained like straight away as soon as it's a thing.

E: Like, the day beforehand or whatever. But he's not really like, no I have to beat them, because they were all his like, friends. There are women I think who are eligible for this who haven't just graduated seminary. Who have been like, deacons and involved in the Church for a long time, and do deserve to go first. Sunlight shone down into the sanctuary, and Pauli took it as a sign that God approved.

All: Aww.

A: Well, I assume God did approve.

E: 15 picketers protested this, but they were weirdly decorous about it. They said they felt that they had to make their thoughts clear, but they didn't want to actually interrupt the ceremony or anything like that, so they made sure to be very quiet.

[laughter]

I: Like, I don't agree with their views, but that was like, quite sweet.

E: Yeah, I thought that too. I was like, well, screw you, that's adorable.

I: Yeah...

[laughter]

E: And Pauli's ordination is much covered in the international news. So now that there are female Episcopal priests, people are wondering what they're meant to call them. And Pauli says, look, just don't call me Mother.

A: You call a male one Father, I guess.

E: Yeah. He eventually ends up using the term "The Reverend Doctor Pauli Murray".

I: Fair.

A: Good.

E: Yup. And the direct address that is appropriate is Doctor Murray. He also described himself as "the pixie priest ... getting into people's hair, raising people's blood pressure"...

A: [laughs]

E: ...which I liked.

A: That sounds accurate.

E: Yes. Pauli's queerness was sometimes an issue within the Church. It was still quite a conservative environment, and it seems to have just been that based on his style of dress, and things like that, that he was to some extent visibly queer.

A: Just things like, he was wearing pants?

E: He was wearing pants all the time now, and that is not yet the norm everywhere, certainly not in the conservative space that he was in now.

A: Yep.

E: But yeah, so sometimes people would just assume that he's a lesbian and things like that. There's discomfort in that.

A: Mm-hm.

E: There's discomfort in his family as well. Pauli heard that the Reverend John Walker, who was soon to be the first black bishop, was talking poorly about him because he understood that Pauli was queer in some way, and Pauli wrote him a letter, and the letter was never sent, probably because it was just like, too overtly taking him to task. It's too long to read out in full, but he does say "I could ... phantasize [sic] about blacking both you're eyes..."

A: Ooh!

E: "I could - and do - remind you that such gossip, if you said it, could make you vulnerable to a civil suit in slander ..."

I: [laughs]

E: Yeah. So he's such like, "You wanna go? I will beat you up and then sue you."

I: [laughs] I'm five foot tall, but...

A: ...I am a lawyer.

E: He goes on to say that he's very interested in the bishop doing well, because Pauli's also black, and he wants one of the first people to be both black and high up in the Church to continue doing well, so presumably he won't actually beat him up.

I: [laughs]

E: He does put three questions to him, however, and the first and the third are crossed out, even in this draft that is never sent. "1. What do you really know about sexuality - heterosexuality, bi sexuality [sic], homosexuality, transsexuality, unisexuality?"

I: What does he mean by unisexuality?

E: I have no idea.

I: Okay.

E: "2. What do you know about the metabolic imbalance? The varieties of approach to mental health? When you become an expert in these matters, you can speak with authority. Otherwise, please keep your mouth shut!"

A: [snorts]

E: “3. God made me as I am. Are you, Bishop of the Church, questioning God’s handiwork?”

I: Fair.

A: I like three.

I: I like them all.

E: I like the part where he said he said he’d sue him.

A: Yeah.

I: [laughs]

E: He never sent this letter, but he kept it on file, which is why we have it.

[laughter]

E: The Church is increasingly friendly to queer people at this time, but nevertheless, if he essentially announced himself to be queer in this way, it would’ve ruined any chance he had of finding work as a priest.

I: Yup.

E: And that’s already fairly dubious, given his age.

A: Mm, yup.

E: He doesn’t succeed in finding a full time position as a priest. He wants to teach as well, but he is quite close to retirement age, and no one’s interested in hiring him for like, a year and a half.

A: Yep, yeah.

E: He decides that he will serve the Church as a writer and a lawyer, and he does do some work as a priest, but filling in when regular priests aren’t available.

A: Mm-hm.

E: So he does services and all that. He preaches at Women’s Day services, he volunteers at a nursing home, and he lectures all over the country and gives occasional classes. Despite all of that, he makes quite little money. He only makes \$750 from his priestly duties over the entirety of 1977.

A: Oh wow, so like, no money.

E: Mm. And \$10,000 overall that year.

I: Okay.

E: In 1978, *Proud Shoes* is reissued, and this is the only big financial success he has after ordination. It’s a big enough financial success that he can buy a really fancy car.

A: Oh, that’s nice!

E: Which is the greatest extravagance of his entire life.

I: [laughs]

E: He buys a 1974 Mercedes.

I: That’s like, a quite new car at this time.

A: Ooh.

E: Yeah, and he a couple of years later, sells it and gets a BMW.

I: [laughs]

A: So apparently this entire time he's just been lusting after fancy cars.

E: Maybe, maybe.

I: Yeah.

E: I was like, "Oh no, I'm gonna have to like, google this car," and then they were like, "It was a Mercedes", and I was like, "Oh no, I know that's a nice car, it's cool."

Pauli continues to do those tasks for several years, until in 1984, at the age of 74 he's diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He's obviously in hospital for a time, but he's taken home. He knows that from here on out, it's a day at a time. And he dies on the 1st of July, 1985, at 74. At this time, he'd been working on the final revisions of his autobiography. As we've said, Pauli documented his life meticulously. He often had multiple journals, one his like, legal practice journal, and another a personal journal, and things like that, and they're extraordinarily detailed. I am so ashamed of everything I've ever done.

[laughter]

I: Yeah, I was gonna say, I'm really sorry to the future historians.

E: Yeah.

A: You have many more years to document fastidiously.

I: Yeah, but am I really gonna like, change dramatically as a person.

A: With that picture of Pauli above your desk...

I: Yeah, perhaps.

A: He'll inspire you.

I: I'll make like a meme. It'll be Pauli Murray's face, and it'll say "Write your..."

A: "Do it for him"?

E: Yeah! [laughs] You made a Simpsons reference! I'm so proud of you!

[laughter]

E: The autobiography is published in 1987 and it's called *Song in a Weary Throat*, which is a line from his poem *Dark Testament*. He was quite reluctant to write about people who were still alive or really about his own like personal feelings at all so it's quite an impersonal biography ultimately. It should also be noted that his sister sanitised his papers after his death.

I: Goddamnit.

A: I hate people who sanitize papers so much.

E: Yeah me too.

I: Like, if you really can't handle it just put them in a box in your attic.

A: Yeah.

E: Yeah, and then eventually years later after you've passed away people can read it.

I: Yeah.

E: So that sucks. But obviously there's still a lot left.

I: Mm.

E: I'm really glad that we could do this episode, it was quite a difficult one to research. But I didn't really know anything about Pauli and Pauli's just done so much and was such an amazing person, so I hope that people have enjoyed this.

I: I encountered Pauli very briefly when I was researching some stuff about the history of women's history and had no idea that he was a trans man.

E: Yeah, so.

I: So.

[laughter]

E: At the beginning of the first episode I said that I was going to use male pronouns because Pauli clearly identified as a man and I thought that was the only respectful way to go about that. At that time I just sort of asked you guys to trust me in my methodology but now you have the information that I have and so would you like to voice any dissent?

I: Look I can't say for certain what would have made Pauli happiest here but I think if we're taking an educated guess at what pronouns Pauli would have preferred, he is going to make him happier. You know, gender is complicated. There's some possibilities there where Pauli would have preferred something different but...

E: Yeah absolutely.

I: Yeah. From where we're standing I think you've made a good call.

E: Whether or not you think male pronouns are right to use, and I'm perfectly happy for listeners to write in and tell us why they disagree, that's fine. But I think there's this kind of general feeling that people just fall back on using she as a neutral choice, and I don't think that that is at all neutral in the circumstance. I think that is just as weighted a decision as choosing to use he.

I: I think what happens here is that people have looked and they've gone, "Well Pauli isn't here to tell us so I'm going with the default" as it were, but yeah in this case, I mean in any case it doesn't really hold up as a default.

E: People do feel like it's an easier neutral path to take, than to kind of confront the experiences and the methodological challenges that using male pronouns and conceptualizing this person as a trans man or just a transmasculine person or what ever you want to do here.

I: Mm.

E: So I mentioned that a lot of my sources came from Rosalind Rosenberg's biography of Pauli, and Rosenberg uses she/her pronouns throughout, but she also has a note on why she chose to do this. And I won't read it to you in full, but she says essentially that she considered using he/him pronouns or even a gender neutral pronoun but she ultimately decided that it was ahistorical, and she gives this reason:

Murray lived in a gender binary culture. To use male pronouns for someone assigned female at birth in a time when that was not culturally possible, or gender neutral pronouns when even to this day no consensus exists on what those pronouns should be, I

concluded, would undercut the immensity of the struggle in which Pauli was engaged and the significance of her contributions.

This deeply upset me.

A: I feel like it's not exactly what she's saying but there's kind of an implication there that we can't use masculine pronouns for somebody who seems to identify as a man or we can't use a gender neutral pronoun when we're not sure or whatever, until we live in a society where that is acceptable. Like saying "Oh we can't use a gender neutral pronoun because there's no accepted gender neutral pronoun..." Well we can't get one of those without..

A and I: *using one of those.*

E: It reminded me of Pauli writing about how if you're not going to give women faculty positions then you can't then claim that women don't have faculty experience.

I: Yeah.

A: I think there's an implication there that if she had chosen to use male pronouns then you as a reader would not have been able to comprehend the struggle Pauli was going through, because you would have been in your head going "oh this is a man and men don't have to deal with this" because you can't comprehend that some men do.

E: Yeah. And first of all, I mean let us know if this was confusing but I trust you listeners.

I: Yeah.

E: And second of all, I think that people just need to get their head around the fact that there have been experiences that men have had in the world that aren't ones we would traditionally expect them to. And some of those are fighting the women's civil rights movement.

A: Yeah.

I: Pauli is very much acting in women's circles and things like that, and I think that comes to that kind of people feeling like for whatever reason they've looked and gone "If he was a man why would he have fought so hard for women's rights?"

E: Yeah.

A: But what you can say to that is there was no or very little, if any space for trans men in any rights movement. Like there was nowhere else for him to go except into women's rights, because that was affected him.

E: I think trans people introduce this entire other narrative of experiences in the world that cis people just don't know how to deal with, and so their decision is to compartmentalise it into him feeling angsty sometimes and then fundamentally write about him as a woman.

It's also worth noting that this isn't something that people aren't aware of, right? So people who write about Pauli generally seem to be aware of the extremity of the gender dysphoria he felt for example. Journal articles and newspaper articles and things like that quite often note this as just an interesting part of his life. So there's a clear awareness about this but there's a distance between this and people being willing to say this person was transgender and this person maybe should have been discussed with male pronouns. And I think that really just betrays a lack of understanding about what being trans is like, because however a trans man is perceived - I get we get into these grey areas where it's complicated to talk about identity, but however a trans man is perceived, he isn't a woman.

I: Yeah.

E: Like, a trans man who doesn't transition, a trans man who is perceived as a woman or who doesn't pass as a cisgender man, does not have the same experiences of the world as a cisgendered woman. He just does not.

I: Yeah absolutely.

A: And I think this is something that comes up in queer spaces today, from a woman's perspective like people saying trans women don't belong in women's spaces because they haven't had the same experiences. People just need to expand their understanding and be like "Well actually they have had a different woman's experiences" just the way like we talked about in this episode a black woman has had a different woman's experience to a white woman, and a trans woman has had a different woman's experience to a cis woman.

E: Yeah.

A: But that doesn't mean it's a man's experience. That just means it's a different experience.

I: I did really like that conception that Pauli had of his gender identity as a source of strength. Like that kind of having a different perspective on it, almost a more nuanced perspective on gender was a source of strength to him in women's rights and that kind of thing.

E: Pauli viewed his intersecting identities as a strength and as a key to his experiences and his opinions and his abilities. This is at the heart of Rosenberg's book about Pauli and to ignore one of these or to downplay one of these does more to undercut recording his contributions than referring to him by male pronouns ever could.

I: Yeah I think I am with you there.

E: It reminded me quite often you hear trans men today or in the recent past talk about how they're glad that they're trans because they feel that it gave them this insight into why feminism is important that they would not directly have and that they really value that experience and I think that that's essentially just shades of the same experience that we're seeing here.

A: Yeah.

E: As someone who has been interacting with various trans communities for over a decade now, there were so many little things that Pauli said that I recognised in people around me, like in descriptions of their own experiences, which was just nice frankly. I love Pauli so much.

[laughter]

E: So much that I read about the Constitution for weeks. And like, I know that I'm coming at this from a particular angle. I know there's been at least one person who's been like "You're biased as hell," and that's true, I'm trying, but I am. So I'm not trying to just say that Pauli has the same experiences as any trans man I've ever met.

I also wanted to touch on the idea that because Pauli lived in another time, it's completely anachronistic to refer to him as trans and that he could not have experienced being trans in the modern sense of the word. Because I see this a lot with trans historical figures and I would really like the people who say this just once to explain to me what they mean by being trans in the modern sense.

I: I also feel like again, like this is the case of Pauli specifically, that just doesn't hold up, like this was quite recent.

E: Yeah. And that's the things, like if we can't agree that Pauli was trans, then we're screwed for talking about people in the 1700s.

I: Yeah.

E: We might as well kind of make this conversation not just about Pauli but about Pauli as an example of trans history in general.

A: Yeah.

E: And I think it's worth asking, what is enough for people in terms of how people identify? Because like Michael Dillon, who is another trans person that we did an episode on, I don't think ever referred to himself as a transgender man but people don't question that and that brings us into the fact that Michael Dillon transitioned and Pauli did not. And we also clearly have this problem today where we understand the validity of someone's trans identity by the medical procedures that they are able to or chose to access.

I: Yeah. Even if we come from that weird perspective where people understand the validity of a trans person's identity by their desire to transition, we still have the evidence that Pauli wanted to and could not.

E: ..wanted to transition, yeah exactly. And the fact that he couldn't highlights the problem with stressing that as the bar in the first place. Because until recently it has been near-impossible to access that and even now it's difficult. You know, I think, we live in Australia today, we probably live in one of the best medical systems to access transgender health care in the world, and like, trust me, it's not easy. It involves a lot of time and money. And like, with Pauli, we have an example of someone who sought medical transition, but again, for much of human history, medical transition in its current form has not existed.

I: Yeah.

E: And so it again, it really limits who we can understand as trans. And I think when you have these standards for who you are counting as trans as a historical figure that are only applicable to the last century if that then your methodology is fundamentally flawed and needs overhauling.

I: Yeah.

E: And I think a lot of the time when people say trans in the modern sense they are returning again to that medical paradigm. But like, to be clear there is not today and nor has there ever been one trans experience. And I realise that that makes it difficult; it's difficult to talk about trans people in history, because being trans, the term transgender is just such a nebulous category. And I understand that that's difficult, but our response to that can't be to like, take anyone except one particular narrative that everyone is comfortable with and cut them out and be like, "No, they're cis."

A: Especially when there is or are so few people who fit with their one supposed narrative. Like if someone's going to say Pauli isn't trans, what historical figures are they going to accept? Like, are they just going to be like "Well there were no trans people that's it we're done here??"

I: I mean, yeah I think that's what they're going to do. They're going to say there were no trans people before 1973 or whatever.

A: Exactly, like what do they want?

E: We touched on it a little bit before, but I think that people really want simple answers of this person writing down in their diary "I cannot tell anyone, but I identify as a transgender man", which frankly to broaden this from Pauli to just trans history isn't something that is going to be available to most people throughout the course of human time.

I: No.

A: I mean even in Pauli's early life that language which would obviously be to us "I am a

transgender man” just wasn’t really there for him to use.

E: Yeah. And Pauli by the end of his life, he uses the term “transsexuality” in a letter and so forth.

I: Yeah, in the letter.

E: But I think it’s worth noting that the terminology that he does have available to him, he does use to articulate the fact that he considers himself to be a man. So he describes himself as a girl who should have been a boy.

I: Yeah.

E: Like, I understand wanting to be cautious there but I think that it’s really symptomatic of the fact that people just aren’t used to trans people being this integral part of the world, where I think that people view being trans as being this really far-fetched thing that they really need to prove.

I: Yeah. And I think the fact that Pauli has neither said “I am a transgender man” or “I’m a lesbian”, and people look and go “Well he’s never said it; it’s not plausible; not a transgender man. A lesbian, clearly.”

E: But I would like to bring this back to as well that this isn’t just about Pauli Murray, as important as Pauli is, this is about how we deal with trans history today, which fundamentally not a lot and not well. I think that all of the problems that people have here is symptomatic of the fact that there just is very little in terms of trans history literature. That trans history as a discipline is very, very nascent still, and so that anyone who wants to write about this has to essentially make major methodological decisions and most people who do this aren’t well-versed in trans issues and don’t have literature to fall back on, and so we end up with bad standards.

I: I do think it will be nice when we reach the point with trans history where people don’t have to always start from the base point of proving to the reader that trans people are real.

A: Yeah prove that trans people are real, prove that this person was a trans person. Now we can do some trans history.

E: I think that we’re pretty much with trans history where we were with gay history in the 1970s.

I: Yeah.

E: And we’re going to catch up. So if anyone wants to fund my Master’s...

[laughter]

E: You know how you get that stereotype sometimes, it’s a bit outdated now but you definitely did get it at one point a few decades ago that like, gay men were very rich because they had two sources of income and no kids.

A: And then they patronised the arts.

E: Yeah. I wish that was true and that like some rich gay couple wanted to adopt me as their queer activist son.

[laughter]

E: I’m looking forward to what we do with trans history over the next couple of decades, and I really hope that we stop trying to define the trans experience by suffering or by transition or by medical authority or by the terminology that is current right now. Because if this is the standard that we’re going to bring to the table of trans history, then we can’t be surprised that we’re not going to find any and there are so many out there and it’s wonderful and we are going to discover it.

A: Yeah.

E: So if you are a trans person go and do history.

[laughter]

A: You know how you said that you were very biased.

I: You are very biased.

E: No really though, your experiences are valuable and you have so much that you can bring to this discipline and we need to do more trans history, and stuff that isn't just straight biographical but also methodological and I can't wait to see what we come up with.

With that, we have been Queer as Fact. That brings us to the end of our first two-parter, I hope that you've enjoyed this. You can find us on social media if somehow you still want more content about us. We're on Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr as Queer as Fact. You can also find us on iTunes as Queer as Fact and if you do listen to us on iTunes please leave us a review and a rating out of five stars. It really, really helps us find a bigger audience and that's what gets us up in the morning. If you do review us on iTunes we will read your comment out and fawn over you shamelessly at some point, and I think we're going to do a little bit of that now.

Ever since I graduated and I stopped getting graded by professors I really need this as a substitute, so thank you so much.

I: So guys, consider giving us a mark out of 100 and maybe a letter grade.

[laughter]

E: So we had a review some time ago, we're a bit backed up, from Wooley Moran, who titled it "Well done!". Wooley Moran wrote:

I've always disliked history...

- so a good start -

...but these folks make it amazingly entertaining in a very queer way!

A: I like that they always disliked history but were willing to give our podcast a go.

E: Yeah thank you very much.

It's all quite informative, and the banter between the presenters is hilarious!

[laughter]

E: We get that comment quite a lot, which is very funny to me.

I: Almost as funny as we are.

E: Amazing.

I love being able to learn about sometimes obscure, sometimes famous queer folk, but the best bit is that there are actually some long-term relationships with very happy endings out there. Thanks for giving us hope and lots of chuckles, too!

I and A: Aww.

E: Like, when we started doing this, we were pleasantly surprised by how many just like, nice happy queer endings existed.

A and I: Yeah.

E: Like, we did not expect that. I think some of the reaction that people give us of like "Oh this

made me feel hopeful” and stuff, we have also got, we just have to edit for 12 hours in there.

[laughter]

I: Yeah.

E: We have another review from MiaRene7, and you can guess which episode this came out just after because it's entitled “Moomin Crowns 4 All”.

A and I: Aww....

A: Our Moomin is sitting here...

E: Yes.

A: ...in our recording studio with us.

E: We put our Moomin next to our microphone every time we record.

[laughter]

E: And they wrote:

I've really enjoyed all the episodes of this podcast- it's fun & informative & wonderful to hear the histories of queer people celebrated! It's so refreshing to hear about the little bits & pieces from the archive of a person's life that are pulled back & interpreted through a lens that doesn't exclude our existence, especially because so often we are denied our own history even when it states us in the face.

I guess that was “stares”, I'm sorry, I normally would have corrected them but I've done this now.

A: That's okay.

E:

This is a charming podcast hosted by a group of people who seem to really care about telling queer histories & I have loved every episode!

All: Awww!

E: We do. We care about queer history...

I: We do.

A: We do.

E: ...almost as much as we care about people who send us nice reviews.

[laughter]

E: We love all individually. So thank you very much. I especially liked the Moomin mention because we can all agree that Moomins are just like, the best thing that has ever come out of this cruel cruel world. [laughs] The last one I'll read to you is entitled “Marvelous!” by Mystery queer.

This podcast is my new favourite.

A: Yes!

E:

It is marvelous, fantastic, amazing, entertaining, informative. Positive adjectives all around!

[laughter]

E: I love this person.

A: That's so good.

E:

I recommend this podcast highly! It's like sitting down and listening to friends tell each other stories about things they are interested in.

A: That's fundamentally what we're doing.

E:

Listen if you like history, if you don't, if you are queer, if you are not, just listen! (Worth your time) I have saved every episode to date! Signed, Mystery Queer Girl

A and I: Aww!

E: Yes.

I: Thank you Mystery Queer.

E: So thank you. We love you. Now we have two more to read, and we'll read those at the end of our next full-length episode, but after we read those two we'll be out. So if you...

I: Please send us more!

E: ...send us more, then we'll read your words on this podcast, and if you just kinda wanna, you know, share some of your haikus with the world, or anything like that.... now's your chance!

I: Yeah.

E: We'll be back on the 8th of May with our second mini episode, where Alice will be letting us know whether or not lesbian sex was never banned in Britain because Queen Victoria didn't believe that it was possible, and you can listen to our next full-length episode on the 15th of May, when Alice will be telling us about male homosexuality in Ancient Rome. Until then, I've been Eli.

A: I'm Alice.

I: I'm Irene.

E: Thank you very much for listening!

[music plays]