



Scripts.com

# Major!

By Unknown

What do we want?

Justice!

When do we want it?

Now!

What do we want?

Justice!

When do we want it?

Now!

What do we want?

Justice!

I think she's so many people's  
only safety net.

There's been times where  
I went hungry and she  
brought over food for me,  
you know, she would go  
to the store and buy food.

And I could call Miss Major  
and she always picked up  
the phone when I called,  
no matter what time it is.

We get to call her things  
like sage, right?

Wise.

Even though she's cussing  
folks out and spitting tacks.

I know mama  
she's a dirty little vixen.  
She really is.

She plays innocent  
but she's not.

Not by the least.

She's a phenomenal woman.

When she was in her 30s  
and her in 20s  
she was advocating  
for transgender rights.

And to this day  
she still does that.

Major's told me she really  
doesn't care whether  
you call her he, or she.

She's a mother, she's a father,  
she's a grandmother,

a grandfather.  
She's a little bit of everything  
and she's really doesn't care.  
Her methods and her legacy  
is frightening  
to the powers that be.  
She is our leader!  
She is showing us  
how to do this work,  
so thank you so much Miss Major.  
I don't know why  
I'm still here.  
I guess I still have stuff  
to complain about,  
bitch about, and try to change  
as much as humanly possible.  
And wake people up  
to who my community is.  
We have to look out  
for one another  
because we're all we've got.  
The rest of the world  
really doesn't give a shit  
whether we live or die.  
And the thing is,  
when the dust settles,  
I want a whole bunch  
of transgender girls  
to stand up and say  
I'm still fucking here.  
I met Angela Davis years ago,  
so I'm excited to talk  
with her again on  
an even more personal level  
since this is for the TGIJP.  
So I think it's going  
to be really exciting.  
This brunch, I'm so nervous.  
But I can't afford  
to be nervous  
or they're drive me  
really crazy.  
These Mama.  
So I have to... uh, no.

But that one is really pretty.  
Those make too much noise.  
No.  
These are my girls,  
they work with me,  
they're my daughters.  
They're Janetta and Melenie.  
So it's been good.  
They got here a little bit  
earlier than I was expecting,  
so we've been running around,  
puttering ever since then.  
Hand me the pill thing  
up on the top shelf.  
Oh god these damn pills.  
These are for my heart  
and my kidney because  
I'm a transplant person.  
I got a new kidney in '08  
from a dear friend of mine  
from Los Angeles, Thom.  
And so now  
I'm on these forever.  
But that's okay,  
as long as we have you forever.  
She had one of those  
Batman Cadillacs with  
the fly wings in the back,  
and we all went out to eat  
and she takes off on Howard  
and 6th Street  
like a bat out of hell.  
And we're just flying down  
the street, and I'm like  
oh my God, so Shania said  
"Hold on girl!  
Mammy be driving!"  
I think a lot of people have  
a lot to say about  
how Major drives.  
My current take on it is  
I try to close my eyes  
as much as possible...  
although she has slowed down

a little bit some.  
But prayer is really  
what I've found is  
the most successful thing  
in dealing with her driving.  
Hey Beck!  
Hi Mama's driving right now.  
OK, are you on your way  
there too?  
OK we'll see you soon.  
OK, love you sweetie.  
No driving and talking  
on your phone!  
Hi everybody,  
I'm Melenie Eleneke, I'm one  
of the Program Coordinators  
at TGI Justice.  
And my name is Janetta Johnson,  
I'm one of the Program  
Coordinators at TGI Justice.  
And I'm going to talk  
a little bit about  
what we do at TGI Justice.  
We do political education,  
we empower transgender people,  
gender queer, gender variant,  
intersex people to advocate  
for their selves  
within the criminal  
justice system.  
Our mail nights are  
a couple times a month,  
we get people to come over  
and help us read the mail  
and then answer it  
and send them what they need.  
Mail night was primarily set up  
to just send information  
and resources.  
We've become a surrogate family  
to a lot of people in prison.  
You know, they constantly  
when they write us  
they're like "hi family,

how are things going,  
give everybody  
in the office a hug."  
And no matter what we send them  
they always respond back  
and say thank you.  
Even just one sentence,  
hi how are you, means a lot  
to the girls that are in there,  
that doesn't get anything  
from their family.  
The work TGI does is  
very important because  
no body else does it.  
The girls in prison,  
the boys in prison,  
they take a lot of shit.  
You know, they take shit  
from the corrupt guards,  
they take shit from the inmates,  
they take shit from every angle  
and it's nice to have  
somebody in your corner.  
And ladies and gentlemen,  
it is my esteemed and privileged  
honor to introduce Angela Davis.  
So, good afternoon everyone.  
It is really wonderful  
to be here at this gathering,  
and when I was asked to  
participate I said absolutely.  
Because this is one  
of the most important  
organizations in the country  
that addresses issues  
of trans women in prison,  
largely trans women of color,  
but that of course  
is the disproportionate  
there's a disproportionate  
number of trans women  
of color behind bars.  
But in the process,  
shedding light on so many

aspects of the prison system  
and the p  
that we would otherwise  
not be aware of.  
We're at the office at TGIJP,  
Transgender Gender Variant  
and Intersex Justice Project.  
Well what we do is that  
we work on trying to get rid  
of the abuses and the suffering  
that transgender women  
of color go through  
in the prison system.  
It started with Alex Lee,  
he saw and noticed the abuses  
that were going on when  
he was going to law school,  
and then he started TIP  
and then from that it evolved  
into this, as things  
went on and changed.  
I came along pretty early  
and just worked with him a lot.  
When he left I became  
the executive director.  
So the exciting thing  
for us was,  
we were the first Black  
transgender ran organization  
that was involved  
with social justice.  
Don't many trans women  
once they're released  
from prison actually come  
into an agency that advocates  
for prisoners.  
So it's a challenge trying  
to get people involved.  
But Major is very persistent.  
Very nagging.  
And every time she see you:  
Queen!  
We need to talk girl.  
I know you just got out,

you're trying to get  
your life together,  
stuff's going on for you  
and all that, but you need  
to come back over here,  
help read some of these letters,  
talk to some people  
who are still there.  
So prisons are basically  
a concentrated torture situation  
for a lot of trans women.  
I was ridiculed.  
I was raped by the inmates  
and the officers  
who worked the penitentiary.  
If other inmates see  
the prison  
then they feel like  
its carte blanche that  
they can disrespect us too.  
People will pass you around,  
people will buy you  
and sell you, without  
you even knowing it.  
I myself, I've never been  
to prison, but I've been  
in jail a few times.  
And once that doors slams,  
it's open season,  
you know you're a marked person.  
They don't want to give you  
your hormones if you're  
a transgender woman.  
They don't want to keep you  
away from the people  
who want to rape us  
because we're easy prey.  
So, numerically I think  
there are more people  
who fall under the umbrella  
of gender variant or gender  
non-conforming who are actually  
sitting in prison  
or jail because



their gender presentation,  
their gender identity  
makes it hard for them  
to participate  
in legal economy activities.  
When you can't get a legal job,  
you have to turn to street  
economics in order to survive.  
You still have to survive.  
We have to be housed and fed  
and clothed.  
I think there's this  
huge myth  
and rapists, and people  
to be scared of" and it's  
our brothers, our sisters,  
our aunties  
and it's everyone in between.  
If rehabilitation or ability  
to succeed in this world  
is really your goal,  
then our people could be  
much better taken care of  
in differ  
The number of people  
incarcerated in the U.S.  
has increased 500%  
in the past 30 years.  
And so people are being  
literally criminalized,  
made criminals  
for how they're surviving.  
And we have to look at what  
kind of society sets people up  
and says "Well, you don't  
have what you need,  
you didn't pull yourself up  
by your bootstraps  
so we're gonna  
punish you for it.  
And whatever you do,  
you're kind of gonna do wrong."  
A lot of the girls and the guys  
are put in solitary confinement.

Transgender women end up  
in the SHU solely based  
on the fact that  
they are transgender  
and a lot of times the officers  
just don't want to deal with us.  
So if there's any problems  
that come up,  
the simple solution for them  
is just to put us in the SHU  
and call it  
for our own protection.  
I'm signing the petition  
to show support for  
the people in Pelican Bay  
in the SHU with their hunger  
strike for their five demands,  
which are reasonable demands  
considering the shit  
that they have to go through.  
And then be a part  
of everybody's making sure  
that they stop this shit  
that they're doing  
to these people and so,  
that's what I'm about to do now.  
One of our members who  
has been in the SHU since  
her incarceration in  
the federal prison up in Oregon,  
and the atrocities and stuff  
that are happening up at  
Pelican Bay are going on in most  
of the prisons in the country.  
Even when I was in the SHU  
for that very short period  
of time, I was being harassed  
and sexually violated  
by one person, and then  
basically I had to not complain  
about anything because  
if I would have complained  
about anything they would have  
kept me in the SHU

for my safety.

The courts already gave you  
a sentence, but it's almost  
like each guard and each warden,  
they have their own sentence  
that they want to put on you,  
to further marginalize you  
and disenfranchise you  
and take away your value  
and your worth.

In the SHU you don't have  
access to  
you don't have access  
to any rehabilitation,  
any educational opportunities.

The meals are cold.

It's very cold in the SHU.

They're damp.

There's moisture  
all over the walls.

You get one blanket  
and one sheet and one pillowcase  
and it's extremely cold,  
you have t

So many people have  
different mental health issues,  
and it's like you got to  
get used to all these screams  
and yells and cries for help.

And it's just like,  
you'll go crazy in there.

You'll go crazy in there.

I was at a prison where I was  
the only transgender person,  
and I can remember

a lot of times calling  
Mammy because I was just  
having such a difficult time  
and sometimes I just needed  
to hear her voice to give me  
the strength to move forward  
from one step to the other.

So I often called her  
and she supported me 100%.

Since I've been out  
she's been there for me 100%,  
she immediately  
got me involved in TGIJP.  
Major walk  
and it is what it is and do  
what you  
So she relates  
and she understands  
and she just accepts.  
It's what every family  
should be.  
It's the definition  
of unconditional love,  
no matter what.  
Coming from Africa  
and being broken and so forth,  
Miss Major, she gave me hope.  
She showed me how to be a lady.  
She showed me how to dress.  
From people calling me  
a football player now  
they call me look  
at that sexy bitch.  
I'm a product of TGI Justice.  
And now when I write  
the children that are in jails  
and prison and they read  
my story and see I did  
three years in immigration  
prison and I did one year  
in San Quentin.  
And I made it through.  
I've seen her sit up there  
and buy money orders, and  
put money on people's books,  
go see them.  
I'm like, you don't  
even know these people!  
Yes I do, they're trans,  
and they're in jail.  
That's enough.  
And that spend a mile  
in my shoes, fuck my shoes.

Wear my dress, my wig,  
my hair, my perfume,  
and then go out there.  
And after you get beat up  
a couple of times  
and you come back here  
to catch your breath,  
you may not even be safe  
in your own home because  
the motherfucker you sleeping  
with didn't get high yet  
and he's gonna kick  
your ass because  
you don't have enough money.  
We need to make  
the girls feel safe.  
Especially TGIJP, because  
we understand what it's like,  
we have three girls  
who are helping me to run this  
who just got out of prison.  
And we're trying  
to help other girls,  
to get them in that position.  
Because it is so empowering  
to stand on your own two feet  
with nobody holding you,  
and there you are.  
You know what I mean,  
godammit that's  
the most wonderful thing  
you can think of.  
I was born in Chicago Illinois  
in 194mmmm.  
My mother's name was  
Edgar Mae Griffin-Gracy.  
My father's name was  
Leroy Rudolph Gracy.  
They called my father Honey,  
that was his name.  
And my mother,  
most people called her Lulu.  
On my birth certificate,  
it's Major Gracy.

And I took on Griffin  
because that was  
my mother's maiden name.  
And I wanted her to be  
a part of who I was.  
So I'd heard that  
in Latin countries  
you had both names, so I thought  
oh okay, that will work for me!  
And then I liked the way  
it sounded,  
Major Griffin-Gracy,  
that's so cool.  
So that's how I wound up  
back at being Miss Major.  
I don't remember what year  
it was, but I'm 73.  
I've had six  
different birthdays,  
all of them in October,  
all around the 25th,  
the only thing that changed  
is the year, from 40 to 49,  
so somewhere in there  
is an age I'm actually at.  
And who cares, you know?  
So what the hell.  
My sister and I were really  
close, she passed away.  
And I was very close to my mom  
even though she couldn't  
understand my  
transitioning stuff.  
I remember going back  
after I'd been on hormones  
and had breasts growing,  
and flashed her  
and she fainted!  
I was so surprised I stood there  
looking at her going  
"Oh my gosh!  
She fainted!  
What am I supposed to do?"  
So of course my dad came

and threw me out,  
which was highly  
understandable.  
The theory was  
that it's a phase.  
I'm going to grow out of it,  
as I turned 40  
and then 50.  
It's a phase.  
He's gonna grow out of it.  
I woulda wondered --  
I would get tired  
of telling myself that,  
you know what I mean.  
But they held onto that  
until mother passed away.  
She still was sure that  
next year was gonna be the year  
I became the man  
I was supposed to be.  
And it was so hard explaining  
to her, I am the man  
I'm supposed to be.  
I'm lovely.  
My sister couldn't handle it  
at all, Cookie was  
five years younger than me.  
And it was just  
so much trauma for her.  
And when I would send  
pictures back I'd send them  
to my sister to see  
how I was doing in New York  
and what I looked like  
and what was going on.  
And it was just  
so heartbreaking  
when she burned  
all those pictures.  
And my mother never got over it.  
She had like three boxes  
full of pictures.  
And every holiday, well  
we're gonna put them in a book.

No one ever bought a book,  
and they never left the box.  
So Cookie told mother  
one year that she was  
going to do it for her.  
Mother got all excited  
and Cookie came back  
and put a bunch of ashes  
in front of my mother  
on her table.  
Mother goes  
Well, what is this?"  
"Oh, those are your pictures."  
And she turned around  
and walked out.  
So, that was between them.  
I had my own issues  
with my folks.  
It be what it be.  
Cookie killed herself  
when she was 26.  
In Peoria, Illinois.  
It was pretty devastating,  
there was nothing I could do  
to help her or save her.  
And I would have liked to.  
My dad made a mistake  
of telling me one day that,  
"Well, she took  
the easy way out."  
That's not easy.  
I'm sorry.  
You can say that  
all you fucking want to.  
That is not an easy thing to do.  
Because I think there's  
an innate thing in us  
to want to live,  
see the next day.  
Oh my transition,  
it was years in the making.  
It's not something that  
just happens overnight.  
You think about these things,



you have these feelings  
that you just can't shake,  
you just  
I happened to be of course  
at home, my mother  
and dad were out.  
And I went through my mother's  
closet and put on one  
of the little dresses  
that would fit,  
and was flitting  
around the house.  
And then I ventured  
into the backyard, and then  
I went to the garage door,  
stood by the door panting,  
that I'd come to the garage  
and someone might have seen me,  
and then I ran back  
into the house and stuff.  
And it wasn't until I met  
this older queen in Chicago,  
her name was Kitty,  
and she dressed me up  
and showed me how to  
put on make up and stuff.  
And it was kind of like  
the movie with Natalie Wood,  
the Gypsy movie where  
she gets  
and she's so surprised  
how pretty she was.  
I'm a pretty girl Mama.  
That's exactly  
what happened to me, you know.  
When Kitty was through with me  
and I looked at myself  
in the mirror, I was  
absolutel  
It was like "there's Major!  
Where the hell have you been?"  
Being transgender women,  
and being transgender women  
of color, and coming out

in the late '60s and early '70s,  
there was a landscape  
already out there, the landscape  
itself was not healthy at all,  
there was the street, there was  
the clubs, there was the stage,  
and there were pageants.  
And then coming from home,  
whether we were put out,  
whether we left, whether  
we were treated violently,  
or however, this is  
what we brought  
to our new environment.  
And many, many trans women  
of color  
I ended up leaving home at 18,  
I was given \$200, a car,  
and told to never come back  
unless I come home  
and be a man in public  
and be a girl inside the house.  
Well, I can't do that,  
I have to be me 24/7.  
So I've been disowned,  
cut off, and I've been alone,  
I've done a lot of things,  
nefarious things,  
that I am not proud of.  
But nor would I have changed  
if I could go back in time  
and change.  
I would not change it  
because it helped me grow  
and become who I am today.  
If my family loved me,  
I wouldn't have  
probably been a prostitute.  
I wouldn't have probably been  
a booster going  
in stores stealing to survive.  
I probably wouldn't mess  
with this dope dealer  
or this pimp, or something,

because they were the only one  
that wasn't ashamed  
to show me love in public.  
So, I got to live me  
though for now.  
And this is who I am,  
and this is who I'm going to be.  
You don't get  
a chance to choose.  
That's true, it chooses you.  
I tried to tell my mother that,  
who was a therapist.  
And also a gangsta.  
Don't pick on us therapists!  
And also a gangsta.  
And she used to wake me up  
in the middle of the night  
with a gun to my head  
and say y  
Oh that was my father,  
did they know each other?  
And she would say you know  
I could kill you right now,  
you know they kill Black boys,  
you know I could say  
you were breaking in.  
And I'd be like!  
I was thrown out to the wolves.  
And a lot of children  
committed s  
My father wanted me  
to be his son, oh poor thing.  
And he was a career Navy man.  
And he loved putting  
a gun to my head.  
And at first it was  
I'll kill you and kill myself.  
And then when I turned around  
14, 15, he went into this  
"I'll kill you  
and do the time."  
And I thought now wait a minute  
something's changed right there.  
You get to live,

something's happened.  
When Major came around,  
they called her Mama Major.  
She was a, just  
a warm welcoming Mama.  
I seen a couple of the girls  
and a few other people  
either call her Granny or Mom.  
So I asked her, I said  
do you mind if I call you Mom?  
And she said no I don't sweetie,  
so I started calling her mom.  
One of the reasons that  
I call Mis  
when you're around  
Miss Major, she will stop  
the whole world to look at you  
and to really see you.  
And she is able to see  
the pain that you carry  
and the joy that you carry,  
and there can be like  
5,000 phones ringing  
and a foundation officer  
that's like waiting,  
and she's gonna be like  
ok you need to wait, because  
I'm taking care of this person.  
You just want to fold  
in her arms and sit there  
for 30 years because  
you feel safe there  
and you feel seen there  
and beautiful.  
And I think, our people  
don't get to feel that a lot.  
And I would be so tired,  
and I d tell Mama put  
my bags in the trunk of your car  
because I got no place to stay,  
and Miss Major would take me  
to the New Pacific  
and rent a hotel there  
and say sleep miss thing.

From there I knew  
that someone cared.  
And whoever this woman was  
I knew that was my mother  
and I asked her to please  
be my mother.  
And Mama, anyone who is  
really close to her  
and who loves her and she loves  
and chooses, she's very  
dysfunctional with us.  
All of us.  
And so if she's not,  
if she doesn't give you grief  
or jabs at you or whatever,  
you don't mean as much to her  
as someone that she does jab  
and play around with,  
and you know, Mama how she is.  
"I'm gonna do no matter what,"  
you know.  
So, it's very special for me.  
I said I need someone  
to walk on this journey with me.  
And she said, I don't want  
no more children,  
I've got enough gay children.  
I said well I don't need  
no mama, I do need a grandmama,  
because I already had  
a gay mother.  
And so she said, Ok,  
just don't treat me  
like no grandmama,  
I'm not old and shit.  
But I'll be your granny.  
And so a relationship  
ensued from there.  
I don't call Miss Major mama  
but I do call her  
the Anna Wintour of TGIJP,  
because she's our  
editor in chief.  
And in the way that the editor

of Vogue is so clear  
on her purpose, Miss Major is  
really clear on her purpose,  
which is to love all of us  
and to fight for all of us.  
And she's really powerful  
and clear in that purpose.  
She's been very instrumental  
in keeping me focused on  
school, obtaining the necessary  
certifications and knowledge  
and training to do  
this work that I'm doing.  
And she never wants to hear  
the words "I can't."  
Because you can.  
Like when I first got  
kicked out of college,  
I was just stunned.  
I thought, wait a minute --  
don't they need a minority?  
I graduated early,  
I graduated at 16.  
I wanted to get out  
of Chicag  
'cause I had an aunt  
who lived there.  
They had the white boys  
of doom in Minnesota.  
Corn-fed, thick, tall.  
Oh I thought going there  
I would just be  
the queen of the ball, child.  
A Black girl with  
all these white boys around?  
It'll be wonderful.  
So I was there, I was unpacking  
my stuff and I only took  
a couple of dresses --  
one little pair of shoes,  
two wigs for evening  
when I would zip out.  
My roommate found that stuff  
when I was in one of my classes

and when I came back my stuff  
was sitting on my bed.  
So I said "What,  
you wear dresses?"  
He said, "No, I was looking  
for something and I found those,  
and whose are those?"  
"Well, they're mine, stupid,  
they're in my closet,  
they're mine."  
So he told everybody on  
our floor that I wore dresses.  
The cute boys  
didn't pay it any attention.  
They said, "Well,  
if you do that, do you cook?"  
"Yeah, I can cook."  
"Oh, well you know there s  
a kitchen at the far end."  
So I fixed breakfasts  
and lunches and you know  
"I have some soup  
and sandwiches in my room."  
The dorm patron or whatever  
the hell he was,  
he came in my room telling me,  
"Well, you know this shit's  
gotta go --  
we're not having this here."  
And you can't tell me  
what to do.  
I'm grown.  
I don't know  
what you're issue is.  
And so I went to class,  
came back like a week later,  
they had all my stuff packed up,  
had it by the door --  
and a little note on it.  
"It was really nice having  
you here and the experience  
of meeting you was  
really different.  
Bye."

And off I had to go.  
It's so funny to think of  
what I missed, if I could have  
gone, what could I have done?  
Could I have still held  
onto my transgender self  
and still done something?  
You know.  
So now when I see one  
of the girls and they say,  
"Oh, well I'm late.  
I gotta go to class."  
Inside I dance around  
like Snoopy in summertime.  
Hey!  
Yeah, godammit!  
You going to school!  
And I was trying to figure out  
what I wanted to do with  
my life, I had no experience,  
I had no job experience,  
and I wanted a career.  
So Major said, well you know  
what I want some implants,  
I want a new pair of implants.  
So I'm going to go  
to City College  
to the financial aid office  
to get a loan and get surgery,  
come go with me.  
I was like oh my god  
I'm not going anywhere, because  
believe it or not I was so,  
so afraid  
because of the harassment I had  
experienced all my entire life.  
But I went,  
because Major was with me.  
Major was walking next to me.  
And we walked throughout  
the whole campus, financial aid,  
the classrooms, the parking lot,  
and then we left.  
Long story short, Major



did not go to City College.  
I went to City College.  
And I realized some years later  
that she had walked me  
through that process  
for my being comfortable.  
And that was one of the first  
times that she was really  
so, so supportive of me.  
New York was wonderful.  
New York was the place  
to be at that time.  
Everything was changing,  
people's attitude  
about stuff was different.  
Women were starting  
to burn their bras.  
One of the best things that  
I really enjoyed  
about the '60s, was hookin'.  
Hookin' was fabulous  
in New York then.  
You know, the girls would be  
walking down the middle  
of the street flipping grapes  
and catching them  
and you know, licking on hotdogs  
and stuff at the corner.  
And the tricks were  
just everywhere.  
It was fabulous.  
And you made good money,  
which was  
My generation went through  
a time of we'll be out hooking,  
you can only go out in  
any amount of safety  
between midnight and 3:30 AM,  
that was it.  
And then you had to learn,  
after you  
and wear the right dress  
and find shoes that  
you were comfortable in,

how to run in them,  
change clothes, leap over cars,  
pop up on the next corner  
with a new wig, another dress  
and a different pair of shoes,  
and watch the police  
run by chasing you.  
That took work!  
I'm sorry, that's a job!  
I got involved with a couple  
of drag shows back then,  
the Jewelbox Revue  
and the Powder Puff Review.  
And they would go on  
what's ca  
and perform, and it would be  
25 men and  
And the only woman  
in the whole little company  
was this g  
who was the male MC.  
And I was a sh  
I knew Mal really well.  
And she was their first  
Black major act.  
And when Mal and I worked  
together to try to  
get together an act, they said  
they didn't want two Black girls  
as major acts in the show.  
We couldn't go  
to the theaters painted.  
We had to go looking like men.  
And we had to paint there,  
so that meant getting  
there three hours earlier  
than the show.  
And then we couldn't leave done.  
The young queens like myself,  
a couple of the dancers,  
"Miss thing,  
I can paint at home.  
I don't need to be painting  
there around all the musty old

white motherfucking queens."  
God, Stonewall was  
a wonderful place to be in.  
Because all of the things  
that you need to be around  
or see was there.  
There was older gentlemen  
there who were tricks  
and going to pay you money.  
There was trade there,  
you know boys that hooked over  
on Broadway or on 5th Avenue  
and would come there  
to spend their little bit  
of money and stuff.  
There were other girls there,  
there was an atmosphere  
of enjoying who we were,  
you know, in our space.  
And one of the things  
I remember about that day was,  
I think they had just  
buried Judy Garland that day.  
And all I can remember  
about that is,  
she had a casket full of lilies  
that just brought you to tears  
when you saw it on TV.  
Why it was on TV I have no idea.  
Stonewall wasn't on TV  
and that should have been.  
And what happened was  
that night, it was just  
a matter of they used to do  
that to us all the time.  
Just come into the bar,  
and the lights would go on  
and everybody would  
just stream out.  
Nothing ever really had  
to get said, because  
you knew just what had  
to happen, you knew that's  
what the routine was.

And it was just a night that,  
it simply  
wasn't going to happen.  
It's just, it's a feeling  
that you get,  
like when you go to a movie  
and see something together  
and everybody ahs  
and gasps at the same time?  
That's the feeling,  
you just knew, everyone just  
looked at one another  
and sat down.  
Not leaving,  
not going anywhere.  
You know the girls,  
we can put up with some stuff,  
you know,  
but I guess it was just like  
at that time, we were done.  
Can't take any more,  
this has got to stop here.  
After that, you heard  
well someone threw a shoe,  
someone threw a beer bottle  
or whatever have you.  
I don't know who threw what,  
and it doesn't matter.  
All that mattered was  
we were bustin' the cops' ass.  
And when the community  
at large got involved,  
all of a sudden it was  
white gay guys who had did this,  
and lesbians, and oh there  
might have been  
a drag queen or two there.  
Really?  
When we frequented that bar,  
you know what I mean,  
and hung out there.  
Across the street is  
this little park.  
The most disappointing thing

for me is in this park,  
they have statues  
to commemorate Stonewall.  
Two lesbians, two gay guys.  
And I'm sure the gay guys  
are trying to molest  
each other on the bench,  
and the lesbians are talking  
about moving in  
and getting a new cat.  
No transgender woman,  
and there should be one,  
and she should be flying in  
and getting ready to land.  
Where are we when we were  
such a part of this?  
Where's the respect  
for the folks  
that have gone through this?  
Like Sylvia Rivera  
and Marsha Johnson, you know  
fuck me, it's just,  
there were other people there  
who had a voice before  
this happened, who was  
trying to make things better.  
Girls of color.  
Friends, you know.  
And they just berated them  
and talked about them like  
they were drug addicts  
and alcoholics.  
And in going through this,  
they pulle  
I understand that it was  
important that I was  
in Stonewall because  
I'm one of the last Black girls  
who were there  
that's still alive.  
That to me is  
a pretty amazing thing.  
But the thing is for me,  
it's not what I did,

it's what I do now.  
It's who I help now.  
How I train my energies to keep  
the agency I work for going.  
You know, because there's  
girls in prison who need  
to hear from us, who need  
to know that somebody out here  
gives a damn  
whether they live or die.  
I want things better for the,  
for everybody.  
Not just my community,  
I want thi  
And if they would accept  
my community just  
for who they are, it would  
be better for everybody.  
We're the last bastion  
that you can talk about  
and ridicule and throw things  
at and beat up and it's okay.  
You know some of my girls  
have been attacked  
by four and five boys,  
and my girls went to jail,  
the boys went home.  
You know, how dare they  
make that assumption?  
We may not have started  
anything, you know?  
And if we happen to win  
that battle when they fight us,  
oh then we get a charge.  
Assault to commit murder.  
He started this shit!  
But they don't think about it.  
The legal system is off,  
the justice system is off,  
the police are off.  
I mean, California has  
some really great laws, yay.  
They have some laws  
that really want to protect

my trans community, yay.

Do the police read those laws?

No.

If they do something against  
a transgender person,  
are there any repercussions  
for what they've done?

No.

But for me, if you tap that  
wallet that they have,  
they'll stop fucking  
with my community.

If they gotta pay 'cause  
they did  
they're not going  
to do it anymore.

They're not going to do it  
in prison, they're not going  
to do it when they arrest us,  
they're not going  
to do it in jail.

They're going to leave us  
alone because they know  
that we have some power.

Right now we don't  
have any power.

We don't have any power.

I've had some negative  
experiences with the police  
department in San Francisco  
where I had to sue them.

I was not on paperwork  
I had given up my number,  
and I had changed my life around  
and I was in love with this guy  
and he pulled a robbery  
in my building, and some guy  
seen him from behind  
and the police came to my house,  
and when they went  
to put handcuffs on him,  
I told them  
it wasn't him, it was me.  
I ended up going back,

and that's how I got  
my second number.  
But during that course,  
while I was fighting the case,  
the deputies that worked  
there repeatedly raped me  
for several months until  
I got tired and I decided  
to tell someone about it.  
They had to move me because  
they were afraid of retaliation  
from inside of  
the police department because  
this officer was well known  
and well liked.  
I took numerous  
lie detector tests  
and passed and everything.  
And we ended up  
settling out of court.  
And that's how I ended up  
implementing transgender  
sensitivity training  
inside of the jailhouses,  
that was part of my settlement  
and that was the most important  
part of my settlement  
with the Sheriff's Department.  
One of the things I love about  
my community is we're  
a pretty tough fucking  
bunch of cookies,  
you know what I mean.  
We take the abuse that  
we get in the street  
from people and what goes on  
in our personal lives,  
from people that we think  
are going to love us anyway,  
like family, you know,  
and we still survive.  
So, in my heart I hope that,  
I'm sorry.  
That when the dust settles,



my girls will be okay.  
I was in New York  
for Stonewall.  
I was in Danemmora  
and Sing Sing, and after  
the Attica Riots,  
I got sent to Attica.  
Spent all my time in there  
in a cell getting to meet  
the guys who pulled  
this thing off, and listened  
and watched all the abuses  
they were putting  
those people through.  
They don't need an excuse,  
they just run through us.  
They run through our families,  
they run through our society,  
they run through who we are.  
I got arrested for  
robbing a john in New York,  
and then was sent upstate.  
I wound up going  
to Sing Sing first.  
I got out on parole, I went  
and stayed with some friends,  
and I shaved, of course.  
Got a little light foundation,  
and colored my hair,  
arched my eyebrows,  
and lightly dusted,  
I don't t  
but I lightly dusted,  
and I went into parole  
and they said that I was trying  
to change my appearance  
in order to abscond from parole.  
And violated me  
right there on the spot.  
Then they sent me to Dannemora,  
which has a mental hospital  
on one side of the wall,  
prison on the other.  
Well they sent me to

the mental hospital first.  
I had platinum blonde hair,  
about two inches long.  
My breasts had been developing  
because I'd been on hormones  
for years, and I thought  
I was the hottest young thing  
since white sliced bread.  
Got in there, and they,  
ooh, did their best  
to break my spirit.  
They shaved me completely bald.  
They shaved off my eyebrows,  
they made me walk through  
the prison naked, you know.  
It was so uh, it was so hard.  
On September 12, 1971,  
there was an uprising  
by prison inmates of  
the Attic  
which was a maximum-security  
prison located  
in western New York.  
It ended with the bloodiest  
prison confrontation  
in American history.  
For five days, thirteen hundred  
prisoners rebelled,  
took over the prison,  
and held forty guards hostage.  
They made a list of demands,  
the prisoners,  
including improvements in  
living co  
and training opportunities  
and centered into negotiations  
with state officials.  
The negotiations failed  
and state police  
and National Guard troops  
seized the prison.  
In the course of taking it  
over they killed  
forty-three individuals,

including ten of the hostages.  
I met Black and the guys  
who were from Attica  
who had got the riots  
started when they sent them  
to Dannemora to the hole  
where they had been housing me.  
That's when I got to meet them  
and talk with them,  
and developed some  
very lasting  
and good relationships  
with them.  
They opened my eyes  
to different things that were  
going on  
as to how I was helping  
the system to survive  
and not helping  
my community survive.  
I was just talking to Miss Major  
a few minutes ago  
and I noticed in the bio  
that she became politicized  
in Attica and I said  
I didn't realize that.  
And then we started talking  
and she was pointing out  
that Black, Big Black,  
Frank Smith was  
the one who really encouraged  
her to think about  
all of these issues  
in a much broader way.  
And so I said well, of course,  
it makes so much sense.  
We're all connected, aren't we?  
Yes dear?  
Hi Miss Major, in Attica,  
your acceptance, Frank BB Smith,  
was my stepfather.  
Oh how wonderful!  
So you're like the first  
trans person outside

of him accepting me,  
that I probably heard  
a story about him.  
Listen, I'm thinking about  
driving up so you  
and I can go see Black's...  
When?  
I'd like for you to  
take me to his grave.  
I want to give him my respect  
and let him know that I met you.  
Oh, yeah.  
He was such an important  
part of my life.  
By the time my mother  
got with him, he was  
already doing law work,  
he had got out of  
That was after Attica.  
Yeah, that was after Attica.  
I had been hearing about her  
for years, but I had never  
actually had the experience  
of meeting her, one,  
but ever hearing  
this story about Attica.  
All I knew was Frank  
was monumental  
in this whole riot thing.  
But that's as far as it went.  
Frank had never told me,  
he just said,  
"I had a friend  
who was like you,  
and believe it or not,  
I was locked up."  
And it wa  
'cause I ran away --  
he came and got me; actually,  
he found me, don't ask me how.  
But he found me, and he  
sat me down and he explained,  
"You're a girl."  
And I went, "Huh?"

and he said, "Well,  
you can't tell your mother this,  
but that's what's  
going on inside you.  
And you want to live this,  
that's why you're doing  
certain things your mother  
doesn't agree to.  
Like wearing her clothes,  
like wearing her heels."  
None of it made sense to me,  
he kind of put  
that picture together,  
and got me back into the house.  
But somehow him telling  
my mother how much stuff  
he had went through in Attica  
all related to Miss Major.  
Yeah.  
And their friendship wasn't  
something that was sexual,  
it was a real friendship.  
I don't know, maybe it was.  
Yeah, no -- we just talked --  
You see, I had to  
jump back and look --  
You never know up in Attica.  
Yeah, we talked a lot,  
because he's the one  
who made me politically aware  
of all the shit that was  
going on, and what I can do  
to get my girls together  
to go through it.  
So while he did what  
he was doing with  
the Five-Percenter  
and the Muslims;  
I was working with  
the transgender girls in prison.  
And we were together,  
he was really  
a wonderful, wonderful man.  
How were they with

the transgender girls in prison?  
Shady as fucking shit.  
So, normal.  
At first, when I met Major,  
he basically was a loner.  
He did not trust  
many people at all.  
He always thought  
that somebody was after him,  
or somebody had a hidden agenda.  
But little by little,  
he began to open up.  
I was doing drag shows,  
and it was with this group,  
and one of the guys in the group  
introduced me to Debbie,  
and then Debbie and I slowly  
became really close friends,  
and then we started  
hanging out and stuff.  
Major always tried to build up  
my self-esteem,  
as a young, Black woman.  
Major did a lot of shows.  
He was with a group  
called The Cherries.  
And I use  
putting on the makeup.  
As a matter of fact,  
I think that's where I learned  
how to apply makeup myself.  
It was what I would call  
a really cool relationship  
that developed  
into so much more.  
It developed into camaraderie,  
and then it developed into love,  
and several years later,  
I would say a good  
five years later, we decided  
there should be something  
of both of us in this world.  
And we decided it was time  
that we moved in together,

and we started a life together.  
At the time I had never slept  
with any women at all.  
And we were just sitting  
one day looking out the window  
at the Hudson, and  
the sailboats on it and stuff.  
I was holding her,  
and something came up  
and she started crying,  
I told her not to cry,  
I kissed her on the cheek,  
and bingo.  
You know.  
So it wasn't  
as horrible as I had  
heard it was going to be,  
so I was like, oh,  
this isn't as bad as  
they told me, child  
I'm going again.  
And the outcome was  
we had a beautiful,  
bouncing baby boy in 1978.  
And we still co-parent.  
Now, Chri  
but whenever there is  
something going on in his life,  
Major and I, we talk about it.  
This is what parents do.  
No matter whether you are  
transgendered or straight,  
bisexual, no matter what.  
You have responsibilities.  
And Major has always met  
his responsibilities  
when it comes to being a father.  
Major is an excellent father.  
Yeah,  
he's just the light of my life.  
And he was born heavy.  
You know how babies are  
all wrinkly and skinny and ugly  
and they go "oh they're

so cute," they look like  
little rodents, you know  
what I mean? Ew!  
Christopher was a baybee,  
and his face was all smooth  
and lovely and kissable,  
it was just so wonderful.  
I mean who expected me  
to have a child, you know?  
That was just  
the most amazing thing going.  
And I lost a lot of  
girlfriends in New York,  
when I told them  
that Debbie was pregnant.  
They just thought as if  
I had slapped them  
in the face or something,  
you know what I mean.  
We moved out here to California,  
He handled flying so cool.  
I got the kind of carriage  
for him w  
And so people, if they  
looked they would see  
I had breasts and a baby.  
And a beard.  
And was in a man's suit.  
Debbie moved out here,  
we stayed together for a while,  
and then it just didn't work,  
you know, and so she went  
back East to New York.  
And she left Christopher  
with me.  
You know, and I felt  
so honore  
So we drove there together,  
all three of us.  
And I stayed until she got  
an apartment and stuff there.  
Then I came back out here  
to California and then  
when I got back out here



I thought okay, raising a baby  
is going to be hard, you know,  
I may know what to do  
but maybe I should see  
what other people are  
doing to help me do this.  
There was a group for fathers  
who were raising their children.  
So I went to go to this group.  
Hmm.

Needless to say I did not  
only not get in,  
but two or three of them  
came out t  
It's like wait a minute,  
so I have tits,  
what is your issue?  
Christopher was always  
really confident, "that's  
my daddy" even though  
people would see a woman.  
I feel like she's like  
deeply genderqueer in this way  
that someone will be like,  
you're a woman,  
and she ll be like  
I'm a wonder woman,  
wonder what kind of woman I am.  
She's happy to be with  
her full beard and a dress.  
She just wants to be herself  
and be seen as herself.  
Daddy's ju  
I mean he runs the house,  
he talks a lot.  
He rules with his voice  
and not with his fist.  
I got a lot of love  
when I was a kid.  
I was definitely the most  
loved kid, like ever.  
So the last time you were  
in a room with your mom  
and your dad

at the same time was...

About 23 years ago --

no, too many.

23?

Yeah.

23 years ago. Yeah, a long time.

It s been a while.

Yes.

It was not good.

We were in a diner somewhere

here in New York and I mean

I don't remember much

of the conversation.

At that time I was 12.

I know there were not nice words

happening and I mostly

tuned most of it out.

Most of my troubles

today have absolutely nothing

to do with my father.

So I'm blessed.

I'm here for daddy's

building dedication.

I think it's a huge honor

and it's nice to know

that he's gonna be

immortalized in a building.

It's like, he's a building.

Yeah.

That's my dad.

Yeah.

You know the building

around the corner?

We're gonna sit

at the welcome table,

we're gonna sit

at the welcome table

one of these days

hallelujah

We're gonna sit

at the welcome table

we're gonna sit

at the welcome table

one of these days

We're gonna thank  
and honor our elders  
We're gonna thank  
and honor our elders  
we're gonna thank  
and honor our elders  
one of these days  
We at the Miss Major Jay Toole  
Building for Social Justice  
know exac  
Jay is here for people  
who have disabilities.  
Who have HIV and AIDS.  
Jay is her  
people living  
on the streets  
or homeless shelters.  
Jay is here for queer people  
of color, trans and gender  
non-conforming people navigating  
the prison industrial complex.  
I was homeless, you know,  
and I was in my box  
and this thought would  
go through my mind:  
I'm gonna die in a box.  
No one's gonna know who I was.  
No one's gonna know  
I was on this earth.  
And then one fucking queer  
put their hand out to me,  
and here I am.  
Major, we have a fucking  
building named after us.  
Isn't that like amazing?  
Me and Major talked  
in San Francisco a week  
and a half ago  
and we tried to figure out  
how long we've known each other,  
and it seems like it's 1964  
Wooo!  
...that we met.  
You know,

we go back a little ways.  
I love this building.  
Our doors stay open,  
we help whoever walks through.  
And to be in the same space  
with Major.  
I love my community.  
You saved my life.  
Now go out  
and save somebody else's.  
This is absolutely  
a wonderful thing  
that this is not a memorial.  
I'm actually alive  
to pay attention to this  
and I just want to say  
that I hope each and every one  
of you when you leave here  
and anyone says 'oh,  
I'm here about the GLBT...'  
no, no, no motherfucker.  
T comes first.  
I want you all to know  
that I love and care about  
all of my Black sisters  
out there whether  
I know them or not,  
whether they know me or not,  
I hope they hear about me,  
I hope they come here  
and get some services  
because this is the building  
to get the fucking services at.  
I love you Jay for all  
the years we've known each other  
and this is only the beginning.  
You all must continue  
fighting for us because  
I'm getting tired.  
My heels cannot take it.  
I'm in flats come  
to think about it.  
So hang in there.  
Thank you so very, very much

from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you

When I first met Major  
the kind of work she was  
doing was

we were all at that stage  
at that point.

And it's kind of there that  
I noticed the struggles  
that she had, she really,  
the prejudice to try to find  
work was just, very blatant,  
and very obvious.

Major always seemed to  
find people who, or actually  
these people would find her,  
who were kind of struggling  
with their own self-identity.  
And she always seemed to have  
people like that as roommates.

She'd alw

of new folks and she would  
teach them, build them up,  
show them how to paint,  
show them that they really  
are valuable, and that  
they're more than their past,  
and then send them back out  
in the world and we'd  
see them all over.

Usually in San Diego performing,  
you know one minute  
they're practically  
a street kid,  
and then next moment,  
after a month or two  
with Major's tutelage,  
they're now performing  
with local drag troupes  
and making a living.

Ok, well that was the end of  
the second show, but we have,  
an encore performance,  
a third show.

Please child, we're gonna  
close the bar!  
Be with you in just a minute,  
hope you enjoy the show.  
I'm Major  
All right girl.  
She was elected as the head  
of a food delivery program,  
for people with AIDS.  
They would have a contest  
for a spokesperson.  
And the people, the guys in  
the community elected Major,  
but the corporation itself  
did not think she was  
a fit aesthetic for  
the organization, and she rode  
in the gay pride parade  
that year, and they put her  
in the back of the float.  
And that was so painful  
to see her.  
But she sat there on the back  
of the float  
with this enormous petticoat on.  
And her son to the next of her.  
Everybody just waved  
and waved and waved to her,  
you know, that was so empowering  
to see, that no matter  
what she was faced  
with she came out on top.  
She had a significant other  
for many years, Joe Bob,  
in San Diego.  
And when he passed, she got  
the Veteran's Hospital  
to create  
which was a big deal  
at the time, for like  
a Veteran's Hospital  
to really recognize that some  
of the veterans were dying  
of AIDS at the time.

The idea for this garden  
originated in March  
of this year when we lost one  
of our patients,  
Joe Bob Michael.  
And his friend Major  
and I talked about,  
it would be nice to have  
some kind of living memorial  
to remember the patients that  
we knew and had loved and lost.  
And to me that was like,  
oh my god  
she's a trans person,  
and she's six foot five,  
and she's walking in her truth.  
How wonderful that is.  
And it gave me strength  
to wish more for myself.  
Major has had three  
major loves in her life.  
She had Joe Bob back  
in San Diego, and she was  
his caregiver for many years  
before he passed.  
Shannon she was with for  
I think at  
Shannon actually lived  
with Major and her parents in  
the Menlo Park house while  
she was ta  
And unfortunately he struggled  
with drugs and some other issues  
and he committed suicide  
at that house in Menlo Park.  
He hung himself in  
the garage, and unfortunately  
Major came home and found him.  
And then I met Beck,  
and he just caressed my heart  
and took all my pain away.  
I don't know  
if I would have made these  
last 10 years without him,

you know?  
I think Major is the only person  
I have been so deeply  
in love with.  
And it was kind of  
a slow build-up.  
There was a big age gap,  
and I thought oh lord Major!  
I got to know Beck,  
and there really was  
a beautiful love there.  
Major had really good game,  
I think, like she really let me  
initiate a lot, like I knew  
she was really interested in me,  
but she also never really  
called me, and over time I would  
just call her every night  
and I ve  
or seen her everyday  
probably for almost 8 years.  
I think s  
of sensing  
her own hotness in the world.  
And so she used to come  
to my apartment and she would  
try to do this walk for me  
that she felt was so sexy.  
And she was on dialysis,  
her balance was off  
so she d literally be bumping  
into walls as she did  
this sexy walk coming to me.  
And it was just so endearing.  
Major really was the one  
to break up with me.  
I really want to have a family  
and I think eventually  
she was like you're not happy  
and I think you should go out  
and find someone who's younger  
and live your life  
and get to do the things  
I've already gotten to do.



So I eventually moved out  
and everyone told me  
that we would need  
more space from each other,  
we would need some sort  
of break, but we just  
never got that. I don't think  
we ever really needed it.  
And we just love each other  
so deeply and want to talk  
to each other all the time,  
and we just are huge emotional  
and material support  
for each other.  
We're like two lesbians,  
we share a dog, he has her  
a week, I have her a week...  
I hope that she'll live  
a long time  
and I think about having a home  
where she will also be there  
and having a partner  
and a family that will  
see her a  
I just kind of feel like  
we're a package deal  
and I think it's a pretty  
good package you know.  
Nobody knew that we existed.  
And they really didn't give  
a damn how we were treated.  
So we had to humanize  
ourselves to people to let  
service providers and  
governmental entities know  
that we're not just  
these glamour dolls  
or these mentally  
confused people  
or these white academicians  
who coincidentally contracted  
HIV or just happened  
to become homeless.  
That we were suffering.

And just as they demonstrated  
a sense of urgency about  
white gay men, they needed  
to get up and demonstrate  
that same sense of urgency  
about transgender people.  
Whether you understood  
who we we  
We'll get to that in the 2000 s.  
You don't need to understand us.  
You need to respond.  
And, my work with Major  
was about saying to people,  
now here's how  
you're going to do it.  
You're going to put us on  
your community planning groups  
and you're going  
to listen to us!  
You are going to share power  
next to these freaks of nature  
that you're  
not comfortable with.  
You're just going to have  
to be unc  
Major was in charge of  
the transgender drop-in center  
and she was a health educator.  
And of course, Major was  
known and loved by everyone.  
And if there was any problem,  
particularly with  
any of the women in  
the trans community,  
she was their go-to person,  
it was Mama,  
Miss Major, you know.  
I met Major in the Tenderloin  
doing street outreach  
for HIV positive,  
mostly homeless folks.  
We often noticed that  
a lot of the people  
who could benefit

from services were not coming.  
They were in the street  
and they were not necessarily  
comfortable coming  
into an agency.  
So we decided we should,  
we should go out.  
About three times a week  
we would park a van someplace  
and set up chairs  
on the sidewalk  
and hand out condoms  
and bleach and syringes,  
and offer HIV testing.  
So we kind of made it up  
as we went, there was  
very little direction,  
it was mostly from the funders  
and the City, they were  
it was mostly don't do that.  
This doesn't fit in the program  
or the contract  
or the funding stream.  
And what I really love  
about Major is that that just  
doesn't matter at all.  
You just do something that  
needs to be  
people either get it  
or they don't  
and funding comes  
or it doesn't.  
These street clinics,  
they didn't really start  
until Major arrived.  
And she would always be late.  
And people would sometimes  
stop and talk to us.  
But it didn't start  
happening until  
some really big vehicle came.  
She would pull in and open  
her window and start cursing  
that there wasn't any parking

and that we weren't in  
the right place and you know,  
she'd let us have it  
from the very beginning.  
And that's when clinic  
would start, that's when  
the girls would come  
and then we'd be on our way.  
It's an indictment  
when you're with Major,  
if you really know Major  
and what she's done.  
It makes you ask yourself  
now what am I doing?  
What am I doing again?  
Do I just want to be pretty?  
Do I just want to conform?  
What would I do if I really  
used my life as  
an instrument of social change?  
She deserves to be recognized  
for what she does  
in our community.  
And it's just not  
here in San Francisco  
that she advocates.  
She's up, at her age  
that woman moves around  
like a 22 year old girl.  
When she really should be  
sitting down.  
I've seen her sick and tired,  
legs hurting, legs swollen.  
Her eyes hurting where  
she can barely see.  
But she gets up  
and she's there.  
She's spe  
and I'm  
girl why are you there?  
Aren't you sick?  
Yes I am  
This is our lives,  
we live this each and every day,

and imagine having  
to leave your house and worry  
every day if you're going  
to get back home because  
of someone else's bullshit.  
We have to stop it,  
we can stop it,  
you must stop it.  
Because I would love  
for the dust to settle,  
and all the transgender girls  
and guys in this world  
stand up and go  
I'm still fucking here!  
It was really challenging  
these last couple of years  
because she's had  
insurmountable health issues  
where it appeared  
that the end may be  
near for her.  
We had known each other for  
probably at least  
18 years if not more.  
I found out that she needed  
a kidney, you know,  
with all the issues  
that she had.  
And of course I offered.  
Major s a very,  
very dear friend of mine.  
I lost my left eye to cancer,  
and Miss Major lost her  
right eye, so we used  
to joke about walking up  
and down the street,  
so she would be my left eye  
and I would be her right eye.  
But you know,  
we have to keep on going,  
we have to keep on going.  
And Major instilled  
that in me, never give up,  
no matter what,

never give up.  
Whoo, I wanna see  
80, 90, and 100.  
Now once I get there,  
I'm good to go.  
Willard Scott's gonna go,  
and Miss Major is 100 today!  
Yes! I can go now.  
One trans woman  
on Willard Scott's mouth.  
You know what I mean?  
I still feel 35.  
And I can't do the things  
I used to do at 35,  
but I can still chase the boys  
I like to have  
and still do the things  
I need to do, and still have  
good, enjoyable,  
long-lasting, wonderful sex.  
Just cause there's snow  
on the roof honey don't mean  
that the fireplace is out.  
Adjusting to being older  
and going through all the shit  
that you have to go through  
just to survive,  
have medical coverage, eat,  
live somewhere decent,  
get around  
and about comfortably,  
negotiate through society  
and be okay.  
They don't tell you  
that it's gonna be  
hard as fucking hell.  
For someone who's taught us  
so much and has survived  
this long and who's not  
done it for personal glory  
or money.  
And like, a bitch  
is broke you know.  
She hasn't built up a nice 401K.

How do we think about  
our mandates to take care  
of our elders who have  
taken such good care of us.  
And if Miss Major has  
a building named after her,  
she damned well better have  
a place to live.  
How do we make sure  
that the rest of her life  
is as comfortable  
as she's made us powerful.  
I want her to be taken care of,  
and to you know, to not have  
to worry about things.  
And to have people to lean on.  
I think in our communities  
that's one of the saddest things  
is the isolation  
and the loneliness of aging.  
I feel very fortunate to be  
a 71 year-old proud  
transgender woman, hoorah.  
And it would be really nice  
if I had some girlfriends  
my age for us to sit  
and talk about the bullshit  
that they tried to pull  
on us back in 69, 65, 62.  
For me, when somebody dies,  
I always feel that  
if it's someone that shouldn't  
have died at the time  
that a part of me  
died with them.  
Just because no matter  
what you believe,  
we're all a part of each other.  
Period.  
How many of you know  
you're a vessel full of power?  
Can we get this  
turned down some?  
Is it possible?

Cause I'm loud anyway.  
You can hear me?  
Yes!  
Ok.  
I am troubled  
but not distressed  
Perplexed,  
but not in despair  
I'm a vessel full of power  
I've got a treasure  
none can compare  
Persecuted,  
but not forsaken  
Cast down,  
but not destroyed  
I'm a vessel  
Hallelujah!  
full of power  
I've got a treasure,  
from the Lord  
The loss of any girl is  
just really, really rough.  
And then to realize  
that it doesn't have to be  
murdered or beaten up  
because someone disapproves  
of who they are,  
but through neglect and uncaring  
and doctors who don't  
really take care of us.  
It's kind of like a societal  
killing spree, indirectly.  
That they just feel as if  
well whatever they do to us,  
we deserve,  
we've asked for this.  
It builds and adds up.  
If you let it, it will  
carry you away,  
so you have to just figure out  
what your sense of grieving is,  
and then work with it,  
and keep them in your heart,  
cherish the memories



that you do have.  
And if it's sad and you need  
to cry then go through  
whatever it is, and then  
get up that next day,  
get your shit together  
and go out there  
and just be who you are  
because that will make somebody  
pay for what they've done  
to the girls  
who aren't here  
to do that anymore.  
You have to go forward for them,  
is what I try to do.  
Keep going forward, because  
we've got to make a difference.  
Let your light shine bright  
Don't ever give up the fight  
you chose to be,  
so why not be free?  
Yeah, I'm not from  
San Francisco, and coming  
into this space  
as Celebrity Grand Marshal.  
Sure, yeah, yeah.  
How would you advise me  
for the five minutes  
that I do have to speak?  
What would you advise me  
to say as someone  
who is from here,  
what do you think that  
these people need to hear?  
They need to know that  
we have substance,  
we have meaning,  
that this is only  
a step forward.  
This isn't the change  
that we deserve yet.  
In this congratulatory thing  
that you're giving me,  
realize that it is not

where it needs to be,  
where we're going to push it  
to be and the community's  
going to help us all get there.  
No girl is gonna be left behind,  
and we're not throwin'  
any bitches under the bus.  
And you all are so powerful  
and articulate  
and marvelous and wonderful.  
And true spirits and souls,  
you know.  
Just knowing that you exist  
is such a blessing  
for me, personally.  
So... I love you all so much.  
Thanks, baby.  
Thank you so much.  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Celebrity Grand Marshal,  
Janet Mock!  
Make a round of applause  
for her.  
Forty-five years ago today,  
our forbearers, gays  
and lesbians, low-income queers,  
homeless youth, fly drag queens,  
and fierce trans women  
fought to live  
their lives openly, safely,  
and without restrictions.  
Legend says that in 1969  
Marsha P. Johnson threw  
a Molotov cocktail into  
the crowd kicking off  
the Stonewall Uprising.  
Others say it was actually  
Sylvia Rivera throwing  
a brick at the police  
that served as a catalyst  
for our liberation.  
Regardless, it was  
unapologetic trans people  
who helped ignite our movement

forty-five years ago  
and I am proud  
to be a product  
of their resilience,  
their fearlessness  
and their brilliance.  
Yesterday I was lucky enough  
to share an afternoon  
with Miss Major Griffin-Gracy.  
I sat at her side  
and realized that  
she was and has always  
been the answer.  
It was Miss Major who told me  
to never forget  
that I am trans just as much  
as I am Black,  
just as much as I am a woman.  
It was Miss Major who taught me  
to center my sisters in my work.  
She has always centered us,  
those of us most forgotten  
by LGBT movement leaders.  
For decades Miss Major,  
with little resources,  
no pay or accolades has  
taken care  
our sisters working  
on the streets, our sisters  
searching for mothers.  
She is the blueprint  
for our liberation  
and has ensured that  
the path that I walk on,  
that we all walk on is  
less rocky because she exists.  
We must never forget that  
Stonewall was not a parade;  
it was a police riot.  
We must never forget  
that whole communities  
of low-income trans  
and queer folk were fighting  
for their lives that night.

Our siblings are still  
fighting HIV/AIDS,  
our sisters are still  
banished to the darkness  
of street corners, our people  
are still being locked away  
and hunted down.

We must remember.

We must remember.

We must remember.

The memories of this day,  
of all of you standing here  
will serve as an enduring  
reminder of our legacy  
of resilience, of where  
we are now and how far  
we must move  
and journey together.

Hey.

OK, first and foremost,  
Ma Major, you know  
there's nothing but love.

I'm here as a Black trans woman.

I'm still fucking here.

What.

I'm still here.

I'm still here

Through it all,

I'm still fucking here.

I'm still here!

I'm still fucking here.

I'm still fucking here.

I'm still fucking here.

The dust hasn't settled...

but I'm still here.

I'm still fucking here.

I'm still fucking here.

Trans Latinas!

Aquí estamos!

I am still here.

I'm still freaking here.

I'm still fucking here.

I'm still fucking here.

And I'm not going

any fucking where.  
We're still fucking here!  
I'm still fucking here.  
Right here.  
Seguimos de la lucha.  
I am still here.  
I'm still fucking here.  
I'm still fucking here.  
I'm still fucking here girls.  
I am still fucking here.  
I'm still fucking here.  
I'm still fucking here,  
we here together!  
Thank you!  
That's a lot of trouble.  
Hello, you don't know me  
But you hate me a lot  
Cuz I lost my fear  
I forgot  
Cuz you still have that fear  
In your heart  
Still I love you  
No matter how we fought  
Maybe I'm stupid  
Maybe I'm dumb  
But I know that  
I'm not the only one  
Someday we'll see  
The error of our ways  
And we'll smile yeah  
We'll laugh it all away  
Til that day  
You can say what you want  
Still I love you  
Yes I love you  
Still I love you  
Yes I love you  
Still I love you  
Welcome to this place  
That I found in a dream  
Where our hearts  
Are bursting at the seams  
Where the light  
That we shine never dies

And our souls  
Have learned how to fly  
No such thing  
As a fear of the dark  
And our hearts  
Are outside of the box  
And our love  
Yes, our love  
Lights the way  
And I know that  
We'll be there someday  
Maybe I'm stupid  
Maybe I'm dumb  
But I know that  
I'm not the only one  
Someday we'll see  
The error of our ways  
And we'll smile yeah  
We'll laugh it all away  
Til that day  
You can say what you want  
Still I love you  
Yes I love you  
Still I love you  
Yes I love you  
Still I love you  
Welcome  
Light the way  
Light the way  
Light the way  
Light the way  
Light the way  
Light the way  
Light the way  
Light the way  
Light the way