

Rraine Muraski Oral History LGBTQIA+ Interview

Interviewer: Nik Nelson

December 4, 2021

00:00:00.000-00:15:47.240

START

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Nik Nelson: My name is Nik Nelson I use he/they pronouns.

Rraine Muraski: I'm Rraine, I used they, he and she pronouns.

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NN: How has being Out@Stout impacted your academic journey?

RM: I found quite a few friends on the floor, being in- Well, how do I explain this? Lot of people on the floor that I've talked to have been in the same class as me on the people- for the people on the floor currently I have at least two people in my art classes, and I also have another class with our RA (resident advisor) actually. And it's just been really cool like living with people who know your struggles and your schedule and you're just kind of like *I have 15 minutes between classes, you wanna get food buddy?* Yeah, it's just been kind of nice being with people that like same stuff as you, as well as being similar identities to you. Yeah.

00:01:26.040

NN: So just to say a clarifying question, when you referring to the floor, you're referring to the Out@Stout floor?

RM: Yes!

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NN: Have you always lived on the Out@Stout floor? And if you haven't, have you noticed a difference between being on the normal- quote, unquote normal floor versus being on the LGBTQIA+ floor.

RM: Yeah, so I've been on Stout for two years. Well, almost two years, including this year and both years. I have lived on the floor with a few of the same people, although those are a lot of new people. Honestly, I haven't noticed the difference between the two years. Everybody's been pretty chill up here. Yeah, everything is great here honestly.

00:02:28.000

NN: What is your take on the LGBTQIA+ community at Stout?

RM: Honestly, like I'm fairly new to the community. I had been- well, quote unquote, take this with a bit of salt and sarcasm- trapped in a private Catholic High School, so my access to the community was very limited. Being surrounded by it, I've learned so much stuff. Like I finally figured out what my pronouns are being as being in the group. Just like learning, like what neo- and zeo- pronouns are like, I didn't know those existed before I came with Stout. And just learning like what gender really means. Gender is defined by the user, it feels like. Yeah, so it's been really cool to like just see that community and see like how broad it actually is and not like being so niche and like not talked about, you know? Yeah!

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NN: By coming to Stout, can you say that you found a sense of like, quote unquote chosen and family, or a sense of camaraderie among peers?

RM: For sure. I wouldn't go so far to say like as close as like familial connections per say. It's like a different connection than family, I guess, quote unquote, but I definitely feel close to people because of that. Yeah.

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NN: Have you experienced any discrimination so far in your academic setting at Stout?

RM: Not directly, like pointed to me, sometimes people will use the wrong pronouns, especially since last year and earlier this year. I only used they/them exclusively. People don't really ask, and I don't really make like an- I guess, quote unquote, effort to really look a certain way. Like I didn't really wear pronoun pins a whole lot of time. And I kind of just dressed the same way I did, as when I identified as female like I wore like stereotypically female clothing and stuff. So, I don't know it. It wasn't like targeted. It just- People didn't really ask- people, just kind of assumed. The closest thing would be like the protests on campus. That one- that one dude- that one dude. But like directly like to me specifically, I haven't really seen anything.

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NN: So, when you mentioned not directly pointed at you have you noticed or experienced or seen fellow LGBTQIA+ peers be discriminated against?

RM: Yeah, there's been a few times where like professors and stuff have used the wrong pronouns. Or like group leaders have used the wrong pronouns or somebody that I knew that their pronouns were way different, and I've tried to speak up and be like hey, actually this person you've such a such pronouns, it doesn't always go through, though, and like they'll do it again. Unfortunately, I currently have a professor who does that, but yeah, so far it hasn't been any like huge incidents. It's mostly just been like miscommunications or just ignorance. But yeah. A little bit.

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NN: When you try to correct a professor to get them to use the correct pronouns, do you experience any form of backlash to say?

RM: Not really. It's more like an *oops, sorry* or like a *oh* or they just don't acknowledge it. It's never like a negative like don't tell me what to say and what not to say or anything like that.

00:07:07.070

NN: So, remembering a time before you came out and were publicly queer, was there any noticeable difference in how you were treated compared to how you are now?

RM: You mean like before? I came out like was I treated differently than now, like by other people that- that's kind of what you said, right?

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NN: Yeah, so like, do you notice a difference between how your past self is treated do- dif- how- like do you notice a difference between how your present self and your past self were treated?

RM: Not really 'cause again like my being out there's not really a difference between me being in the closet and being out. I pretty much like came out right away and like the people that know know but I'm not like adamant about it like the most, I really do like push my identity on people is like in conversation I might mention it or like if people are like referring to me, I'll be like, hey, these are my pronouns. But like I don't- It's like semi closeted. It's not closeted on purpose I'm just like not very forward about it. The really only different treatment is like my family is a little forgetful sometimes, and like they're good at correcting themselves, but it's like, *oh yeah, you have a new name, you have new pronouns, you're queer, totally didn't forget just now when I was referring to you in conversation haha my bad*. Yeah. It's been interesting, but that's like the biggest thing is like family forgetting and correcting themselves. People in public and strangers like unless I'm waving a giant pride flag around, people don't really bat an eyelash one way or another.

00:09:12.960

NN: Based on how your experiences have been from being out, would you have explored who you are even sooner?

RM: Honestly, probably not. I unfortunately went to school in the environment, especially middle school, where like being transgender was the butt of a joke, honestly, and like transgender people were just like not a thing people were like *oh haha like you're not a woman anymore, you're just like, a just a blob of flesh or whatever*. And it's like that's not what being trans is, and that's not nice to say about someone. And I was very insecure in middle school, so me being open about that topic or even just having the knowledge of that topic was just not a

thing in that environment. I did start exploring early in high school though, just when I figured out I'm probably queer. But I might have explored it, but like the environment I was in, I wouldn't have come out earlier. Yeah.

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NN: Do you think in the time span of you being in middle school and you being in college, have- have people become more accepting towards people of the community/transgender people?

RM: Oh, definitely I also like switched cities going to high school. It wasn't the same school system at all. It was still a private Catholic system as a middle school was, in high school was as well as I mentioned earlier, so it wasn't complete acceptance. But there are a few people that were also kind of in the same situation. They were kind of afraid to come out publicly at school because of the history of LGBT and the church like it definitely improved and like college is basically where I was like *I'm free* and I just like explored everything. Yeah.

00:11:42.940

NN: What is something you wish you knew growing up?

RM: Honestly, I wish I knew that transgender people existed because looking back in my childhood, there were a lot of clues that maybe I wasn't a girl. I mean, this doesn't really count, but the first of being I wore very gender-neutral clothing as a baby into like a small child. I was never really like quote, unquote a girly girl either. Like my best friend was a boy [laughs] we would, do quote, unquote boyish things- I know activities don't have a gender, girls can play with trucks- but like in the environment I was in, like, girls would play with Barbies in the segregated preschool half and I was over with my friend Chloe playing with the Batman figures. [laughs] Like, I very much was like *eh, gender, don't care, just don't steal my socks again Natasha*. Long story we won't get into it, but [laughs] like gender wasn't really an issue for me. I was like I pee sitting down, that's really the majority of anything that's on my mind. I had plenty of guy friends, plenty of girl friends. Gender wasn't really a thing enforced on me so, I wish I would have known like there was a third option. Like- well, there's multiple options, not just third, but like there's the nonbinary umbrella that I wish I knew existed before. Yeah.

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NN: What is something you would like for future queer people to know?

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RM: This might sound corny, but never fear to be queer because you will want to be here. [laughs] No, like when you're in like a tough situation, like I kind of was like high school like coming out was taboo you might get roasted in front of the entire school, but like even in that situation like it's good to find a pocket or like a way out. Like if I didn't have the people at school, I was starting to explore the app Discord where I found a lot of people that share like

the same interests and like I found a lot LGBTQIA+ people on there- That was a mouthful. [laughs] And we just like started talking like that's how I kind of figured out my identity to was talking to some of my people who were in the same Discord server as I was. And just like talking about stuff, learning what neo pronouns were. Yeah, just like finding a quote unquote escape. Like finding someone to talk about it, even if it's just like one person. And then knowing it gets better like you go to college. Your parents aren't there unless they are, which is weird. But like your parents aren't there to like condemn you or like be like very like excruciatingly like what's the word I'm looking for? They're not going to hover over you. You're allowed to explore things and other people that don't know you aren't gonna judge that much. You know? Yeah. Don't be afraid to explore things once you're out of that situation, and you can even like find a little hole to escape through when you are. Don't be afraid to 'cause you're not alone. Yeah. Thumbs up.

00:15:27.980

NN: Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. I would just like to say your quote is pretty good. Don't be afraid to be queer.

RM: Actually, it was “don't fear to be queer 'cause you wanna be here.” Nah, just kidding, but yeah, thank you! Yeah.

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00:15:47.240