

Johanna (V.O.)

WHEN I WAS YOUNG I PLAYED WITH BARBIES. AND DOLLS, LIKE I COLLECTED DOLLS.

Johanna (O.S.)

THEY WERE LIKE MY IMAGINARY FRIENDS, YOU KNOW LIKE I DIDN'T HAVE IMAGINARY FRIENDS I HAD DOLLS.

Johanna (V.O.)

I WOULD ROLE-PLAY AND TALK AND...

Johanna (O.S.)

...LIKE I WOULD BE THE GIRL AND SOMEBODY WOULD BE THE BOY...

Johanna (V.O.)

...NOBODY ACTUALLY KNOWS THAT. WHEN I WAS GETTING OLDER, I KNEW I LIKED BOYS. BUT I ALSO KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE...

Johanna (O.S.)

...I JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHAT YET. BIOLOGICALLY I'M A BOY BUT, I'M GONNA BE A GIRL, LIKE I'M A GIRL. I WAS JUST BORN AS A BOY.

TITLE CARD: BECOMING JOHANNA

TITLE CARD: THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Johanna (O.S.)

SOME OLD PHOTOS...

TITLE CARD: THE YOUTH AND GENDER MEDIA PROJECT PRESENTS

Johanna (O.S.)

...THIS WAS MY FAVORITE BACKPACK TOO WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. IT WAS BLUE. AND HERE'S ONE WITH ME IN A SUIT AND HOW UNCOMFORTABLE I WAS, WEARING IT.

TITLE CARD: A FILM BY JONATHAN SKURNIK

Johanna (V.O.)

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I WAS REALLY CLOSE WITH MY MOTHER AND MY SISTER, SO I JUST FELT LIKE I WAS ONE OF THE OTHER GIRLS AND...

Johanna (O.S.)

...I REMEMBER PLAYING WITH MY SISTER AND SHARING OUTFITS...

Johanna (V.O.)

...AND I THINK THAT'S WHEN I STARTED REALIZING AS I GOT OLDER THAT THIS IS WHO I AM AND...

Johanna (O.S.)

...I'M NOT ONE OF THE BOYS AND I'M NOT THEM AND I'M NOT A BROTHER.

Johanna (V.O.)

MY MOM WAS A LITTLE BIT MORE ON THE LENIENT SIDE AND UNDERSTANDING.

Johanna (O.S.)

WHENEVER I WAS PLAYING WITH DOLLS LIKE SHE WOULDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT IT. SHE WOULD NEVER LIKE, JUDGE ME FOR IT...

Johanna (V.O.)

...THEN WHEN I GOT OLDER SHE...

Johanna (O.S.)

...STARTED DISAPPROVING ABOUT IT.

Saray (O.S.)

"MOM" "WHAT" "I THINK I'M GAY."

Johanna (O.S.)

I REMEMBER THAT.

Saray (O.S.)

AND I, AND I, AND I ANSWERED "NO YOU'RE NOT."

Johanna (O.S.)

I REMEMBER THAT TOO.

Saray (O.S.)

I SAID NO YOU'RE NOT, YOU'RE CONFUSED.

Saray (V.O.)

I WAS BORN IN GUATEMALA, FROM A FAMILY WITH FOURTEEN KIDS. WHEN WE GET PREGNANT WE ALWAYS SAY...

Saray (O.S.)

...ARE YOU GONNA HAVE A BOY OR YOU GONNA HAVE A GIRL, Y'KNOW? BUT WE DIDN'T CHOOSE. THAT'S WHY IT'S HARD.

Saray (V.O.)

I STARTED SEEING THE BEHAVIOR.

Saray (O.S.)

I WAS THINKING THAT UMM MAYBE IT WAS MY FAULT. NOW I KNOW THAT IT'S NOT MY FAULT, Y'KNOW THINGS HAPPENS.

Saray (V.O.)

I WAS CALLING A DIFFERENT NAME IT WAS LIKE...

Saray (O.S.)

...“AH MOM THAT'S NOT MY NAME...”

Saray (V.O.)

...LIKE I WANTED TO CALL HER JOHANNA BUT I COULDN'T. IT WAS HARD FOR ME...

Saray (O.S.)

...I WAS UNPREPARED.

Bamby Salcedo (V.O.)

LET ME JUST GIVE YOU A LITTLE HISTORY OF WHAT ANGELS OF CHANGE IS. IT'S THIS BEAUTIFUL CALENDAR, AND THEN THE RUNWAY SHOW...

Bamby Salcedo (O.S.)

...YOU WILL BE UH WALKING THE RUNWAY TO RAISE FUNDS FOR OUR TRANSGENDER CLINIC HERE WITH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LOS ANGELES.

Johanna (V.O.)

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IS JUST A VERY, I FEEL LIKE, SAFE PLACE FOR ME TO BE AND BE SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE THAT ARE LIKE ME. SEEING HOW COMFORTABLE THEY WERE WITH EACH OTHER, OR THEMSELVES UH THAT REALLY RUBBED OFF ON ME.

Bamby Salcedo (V.O.)

SO THE IDEA IS FOR EACH OF YOU TO WORK WITH THE FASHION STUDENT...

Bamby Salcedo (O.S.)

...TO WORK ON WHAT IS YOUR STYLE...

Bamby Salcedo (V.O.)

...HOW YOU WANT THE WORLD TO SEE YOU.

Fashion Student (V.O.)

SHE'S PRETTY SHY BUT I WANTED TO BRING, Y'KNOW, THE BEAUTY OUT IN IT AND MAKE HER JUST LIKE FABULOUS LIKE A...

Fashion Student (O.S.)

...CLASSIC CHANEL KIND OF A LOOK...

Fashion Student (V.O.)

...I WANT PEOPLE TO JUST BE THEMSELVES, BE TRUE TO THEMSELVES AND BE...

Fashion Student (O.S.)

BEAUTIFUL WITH THAT, LIKE BE COMFORTABLE IN YOUR OWN SKIN.

Saray (V.O.)

THE FIRST TIME I SAW JOHANNA WEARING A BLOUSE AND LIPSTICK, I REMEMBER THAT I...

Saray (O.S.)

...STEPPED FAR AWAY AND I WAS LIKE "OH MY GOD."

Friend (O.S.)

OH MY GOD LOOK AT HER! OH MY GOD.

Saray (V.O.)

FIRST CAME ALL THE PRAYERS AND THEN ALL THE THERAPISTS THAT WE VISITED.

Johanna (V.O.)

THERE WEREN'T MANY.

Saray (O.S.)

NO WE WENT TO DIFFERENT THERAPISTS.

Johanna (V.O.)

I ACTUALLY REALLY TRIED TO HAVE TALKS WITH YOU BUT...

Johanna (O.S.)

...THAT NEVER SEEMED TO WORK.

Johanna (V.O.)

I JUST WANTED TO SOMEHOW...

Johanna (O.S.)

...MAKE YOU KINDA GET OR GET HOW I'M FEELING.

Saray (V.O.)

SOMETIMES IF I WAS LAYING DOWN IN BED AND SHE CAME AND SAY...

Saray (O.S.)

..."OH YOU SO UGLY YOU SO WRINKLED YOU SO FAT Y'KNOW YOUR BREATH STINK" I SAY GET AWAY FROM ME THEN IF...

Johanna (O.S.)

OK WELL YOUR BREATH DOES STINK IN THE MORNING.

Saray (O.S.)

...YEAH SHE SAY THAT. WOAH.

Saray (V.O.)

BEING DISRESPECTFUL TO ME, THAT WAS NOT GOING TO...

Saray (O.S.)

...CHANGE ME TO AGREE.

Johanna (V.O.)

I ALWAYS START OFF GOOD AT EACH SCHOOL I GO BUT THEN...

Johanna (O.S.)

...ISSUES START POPPING UP.

Saray (V.O.)

JOHANNA WAS USING THE GIRL'S BATHROOM AND THEY GO IT AND YOU KNOW, THAT'S WHY HE WAS SUSPENDED- SHE WAS SUSPENDED.

Johanna (V.O.)

THEY TOLD ME THAT I CANNOT BE GOING TO THE GIRL'S BATHROOM. AND I WAS REALLY UPSET CAUSE THEY KEPT TELLING ME THAT "YOU'RE MAKING A SCENE" THEY'RE TELLING ME THAT, I'M MAKING A SCENE. THERE WAS NO SCENE BEFORE THEY GOT THERE. THE PRINCIPAL TOLD ME TO "GET UP OR...

Johanna (O.S.)

...I'M GONNA CALL SECURITY." AND I WAS LIKE "NO YOU CAN GO FUCK YOURSELF."

Saray (V.O.)

THE POLICE OFFICER CALLED ME AROUND THREE, AND I WAS WORKING. THE POLICE SAID "I HAVE YOUR KID HERE FROM BIRMINGHAM" AND I WAS LIKE...

Saray (O.S.)

...SO FED UP WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS I SAID "WELL JUST PUT HER THERE."

Johanna (V.O.)

BECAUSE OF THAT I GOT A TICKET AND I HAD TO...

Johanna (O.S.)

...GO TO COURT.

Runway Model

CALIENTE! THAT'S HOT.

Johanna (O.S.)

DO I REALLY NEED IT IN MY NECK? I DON'T HAVE SCRUFFLE! I'M JUST KIDDING. WHATEVER YOU CALL IT.

Johanna (V.O.)

I'VE BEEN ON HORMONES FOR TWO MONTHS...

Johanna (O.S.)

...IT'S BEEN GOING GOOD, LIKE I DON'T KNOW IF I HAVE TO EXPLAIN ALL THAT DO I? DO I REALLY? OH. WELL MY SKIN GOT NICER.

Bamby Salcedo (O.S.)

COMO ESTAMOS! BUENOS NOCHES! HOW ARE YOU DOING?

Backstage Man (O.S.)

MODELS! THREE MINUTES!...

Backstage Man (V.O.)

...THREE MINUTES!

Johanna (V.O.)

SHE'S NOT COMING, MY MOM'S NOT COMING. SHE SENT ME TO THE MENTAL...

Johanna (O.S.)

...HOSPITAL. DUNH DUNH DUNHHH!...

Saray (O.S.)

NO, NO.

Johanna (O.S.)

I WANNA TELL THAT ONE, CAUSE THAT ONE WAS SEVERE. IT WAS BAD!...

Johanna (V.O.)

...THAT WAS HORRIBLE! I WAS THERE FOR THREE DAYS. THEY WERE NOT TRANSGENDER-FRIENDLY THERE...

Johanna (O.S.)

THEY ACTUALLY FORCED ME TO TAKE SOME PILLS...

Johanna (V.O.)

...ONCE I TAKE THE PILL, ARE THEY GONNA HAVE TO RESTRAIN ME TO TAKE IT?

Saray (V.O.)

I DID THINGS THAT THE THERAPIST TOLD ME TO DO...

Saray (O.S.)

...AS A PARENT...

Johanna (O.S.)

YEAH BUT YOU'RE THE PARENT...

Saray (O.S.)

...BECAUSE WASN'T IT MY RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE YOU WERE OK...

Johanna (O.S.)

...YOU'RE THE PARENT YEAH, IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY...YEAH WHICH YOU SHOULD'VE HANDLED.

Saray (V.O.)

WELL I COULDN'T HANDLE IT. ONE DAY I WENT TO CHURCH AND I JUST KNEELED DOWN AND PRAYED, AND I, AND I TALKED TO THE LORD AND I SAY YOU KNOW...

Saray (O.S.)

...I CAN'T DO IT ANYMORE YOU KNOW, I JUST CAN'T DO IT. I'M, I WAS TIRED OF ALL THIS SITUATION. AND UM, SO I THINK THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME IS GOD.

Johanna (V.O.)

DO YOU THINK YOUR GOD'S GONNA CHANGE ME?

Saray (V.O.)

HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS.

Johanna (V.O.)

ARE YOU HOPING THAT HE CHANGES ME?

Saray (V.O.)

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.

Johanna (O.S.)

IT IS. I WANT YOU TO ANSWER.

Saray (O.S.)

YOU KNOW ALL MY EXPECTATIONS TO GOD ARE IN MY HEART.

Johanna (V.O.)

IF THERE WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE IF I COULD CHANGE BACK, I KNOW SHE WOULD LOVE THAT TO HAPPEN.

Saray (O.S.)

AFTER JOHANNA TURNS EIGHTEEN, SHE GOING TO BE AN ADULT AND IT DOESN'T MATTER IF I AGREE OR WE DON'T AGREE.

Johanna (V.O.)

WE WERE ARGUING OVER WHO GETS TO WATCH WHAT ON A TV. IT WAS OVER SOMETHING LIKE SUPER-PETTY AND THE LAST STRAW WAS WHEN SHE PUT HER HANDS ON ME. THIS HOUSEHOLD IS JUST NOT A GOOD THING FOR ME.

TITLE CARD: JOHANNA'S FOSTER HOME

Johanna (V.O.)

THESE ARE THE PICTURES OF MY FAMILY MEMBERS THAT I LIVE WITH NOW.

Milagros Villalobos (V.O.)

THEY TOLD ME THEY HAVE A GIRL AND SHE'S GONNA BE TRANSGENDER.

Milagros Villalobos (O.S.)

AND I TELL THEM I DON'T MIND. BUT WHEN THEY TOLD ME I WAS THINKING ABOUT ANOTHER KIND OF GIRL.

Milagros Villalobos (V.O.)

BUT WHEN I SAW JOHANNA, MY GOD I WAS THINKING SHE WAS A LITTLE STRAIGHT GIRL.

Milagros Villalobos (O.S.)

I'M ACCEPTING ANY PEOPLE. MY SON, HE'S GAY AND I LOVE HIM THE WAY HE IS. AND I DON'T CARE ABOUT IT BECAUSE JUST GOD IS THE ONE WHO KNOWS WHY THEY'RE CREATED LIKE THAT.

Johanna (O.S.)

IT FEELS MORE, LIKE I HAVE A FAMILY I GUESS.

Johanna (V.O.)

SHE BOUGHT ME UNDERWEAR. IT'S JUST LITTLE THINGS LIKE THAT, OR LIKE DRESSES...

Johanna (O.S.)

...THAT RED DRESS RIGHT THERE...

Johanna (V.O.)

...AND THAT JEWELRY. THE RED HEART. THEY'RE JUST TREATING ME LIKE, YOU KNOW,...

Johanna (O.S.)

...LIKE ME. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT.

Belen Benitez (O.S.)

IT'S JOHANNA'S BIRTHDAY! SO WE'RE CELEBRATING HER EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY...

Belen Benitez (V.O.)

...SHE'S HAVING A POOL PARTY.

Johanna (V.O.)

SHE WANTED ME TO HAVE A BIRTHDAY PARTY, SO SHE SAID TO BRING SOME FRIENDS.

Milagros Villalobos (O.S.)

ALL MY FAMILY'S GOING TO BE HERE.

George Villalobos (O.S.)

HEY GUYS I'M GEORGE!

George Villalobos (V.O.)

I CAME OUT WHEN I WAS FOURTEEN. THAT'S WHY THEY'RE VERY ACCEPTING.

George Villalobos (O.S.)

SO WHEN JOHANNA CAME, THEY ALREADY HAD THE MENTALITY THAT IT'S JUST JOHANNA.

George Villalobos (V.O.)

WE SEE JOHANNA AS HER PERSONALITY.

George Villalobos (O.S.)

GOD GAVE US ANOTHER SISTER SO IT'S GREAT.

Belen Benitez (V.O.)

I THINK THE FIRST TIME WE REALLY ALLOWED HER TO KNOW LIKE...

Belen Benitez (O.S.)

...HEY YOU KNOW, YOU'RE FAMILY, SO DON'T, WE DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE, AND...

Belen Benitez (V.O.)

...SHE BLENDED REALLY WELL WITH THE FAMILY AND SO I THINK THAT WILL HELP ALL OF US.

Johanna (V.O.)

THEY'RE REALLY NICE PEOPLE...

Johanna (O.S.)

...BUT, BUT NOTHING THESE ARE NICE PEOPLE NEVERMIND.

Johanna (O.S.)

HELLO?

Johanna (V.O.)

THE LAST TIME I TALKED TO MY MOM WAS, I THINK TWO MONTHS AGO. WELL EVEN THEN, IT WAS JUST REALLY SMALL TALK...

Johanna (O.S.)

...I WOULD REACH OUT TO HER AND CALL HER AND ASK IF SHE WANTED TO DO SOMETHING, LIKE ON THE WEEKENDS AND THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN...

Johanna (V.O.)

...I DIDN'T EVEN GET A HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON MY BIRTHDAY I WAS LIKE "OK WHATEVER."

Belen Benitez (O.S.)

ONE, TWO THREE...

CROWD OF FAMILY/FRIENDS SING HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Johanna (V.O.)

SO THIS IS MY FORM.

Johanna (O.S.)

THIS IS A LEGAL NAME CHANGE FORM. MY MOM ACTUALLY SIGNED THIS...

Johanna (V.O.)

...BUT I FEEL LIKE AFTER SHE DID THAT, LIKE THAT'S WHEN SHE REALLY STOPPED TALKING TO ME. IT'S MORE LIKE SHE SIGNED IT...

Johanna (O.S.)

...TO GET RID OF ME I GUESS. SO I DON'T KNOW. IT SEEMED THAT WAY.

CROWD FINISHES SINGING HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Chris Tanaka (V.O.)

WHICHEVER ONE OF YOU IS CALLED, THE CASTLE EXERCISE. STEP ONE IS YOU NEED TO READ THESE TO YOURSELVES...

Chris Tanaka (O.S.)

AFTERWARDS WE'RE GONNA BE HAVING A DISCUSSION.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL IS A SCHOOL THAT SERVES STUDENTS THAT ARE AT HIGH RISK...

Deb Smith (O.S.)

...OF DROPPING OUT AND NOT BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR TRADITIONAL SCHOOL.

Johanna (O.S.)

SO WE'RE COMPARING AND CONTRASTING AND WE HAVE TO WRITE ABOUT IT RIGHT?

Chris Tanaka (V.O.)

NOW IT'S ON YOU. WE'RE WILLING TO WORK WITH YOU...

Chris Tanaka (O.S.)

...WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO TO GET YOURSELF THAT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA?

Chris Tanaka (O.S.)

ALRIGHT, GO GET EM.

Johanna (V.O.)

I WOULD SAY LIKE A MONTH WAS WHEN I DID PRETTY GOOD. AND THEN AFTER THAT I WAS JUST BAD.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

WE WENT THROUGH SOME REALLY ROUGH TIMES DURING THAT PERIOD.

Johanna (V.O.)

I WAS REALLY JUST BUTTING HEADS WITH EVERYONE, I WAS JUST I DON'T LIKE THESE STUDENTS I DON'T LIKE THESE NEW TEACHERS, I DON'T LIKE ANYBODY AND WHATEVER THEY'D ASK ME TO DO I'D DO THE OPPOSITE.

Chris Tanaka (V.O.)

SHE WAS TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS A DAY OR TWO LATE.

Johanna (V.O.)

I WAS LIKE "NOPE I DON'T CARE" AND "FUCK YOU."

Deb Smith (V.O.)

SHE WOULD NOT EVEN INTERACT WITH ME IN ANY WAY EXCEPT PROFANITY.

Deb Smith (O.S.)

THOSE WERE THE ONLY WORDS SHE EVER SAID TO ME COMING INTO SCHOOL, GOING OUT OF SCHOOL.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

I WAS NO LONGER A PRINCIPAL, BUT NOW I SAW IT SHIFT TO WHERE I WAS LIKE...

Deb Smith (O.S.)

...THE PARENT. AND THE AUTHORITARIAN PARENT THAT "YOU WILL ABIDE BY THE RULES AND THIS IS YOUR CURFEW, AND YOU WILL DO THIS.

Johanna (V.O.)

THERE WAS LIKE THIS LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH DEB. SHE CLAMPED DOWN AS FAR AS ME GETTING MY HEAD OUT OF MY ASS.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

AND IT ACTUALLY RELIEVED A LOT OF THE STRESS BECAUSE NOW IT'S CLEAR, THIS IS WHAT'S EXPECTED, SO THERE WAS KIND OF A PEACE,...

Deb Smith (O.S.)

...A WHITE FLAG, A TRUCE CALLED.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPEN FOR JOHANNA, AVENUES AND DOORS THAT ARE IN THE COMMUNITY. BECAUSE I AM A PART OF THAT COMMUNITY, IT IS EASY FOR ME TO GIVE HER ACCESS TO DIFFERENT KINDS OF YOUTH FORUMS, THINGS THAT THE LA GAY AND LESBIAN CENTER IS OFFERING...

Man at Meeting (O.S.)

MAYBE YOU'LL BE A LITTLE LESS SHY NEXT YEAR.

Johanna (O.S.)

MAYBE.

Johanna (V.O.)

WHENEVER DEB TOOK ME TO ANYTHING THAT WAS LIKE COMMUNITY-BASED, LIKE I ENJOY THAT. IT'S VERY NICE TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE THAT ARE PEERS AND ARE GOING THROUGH WHAT I'M GOING THROUGH.

Chris Tanaka (V.O.)

SHE'S IMPROVED...

Chris Tanaka (O.S.)

...NOW ASSIGNMENTS ARE MUCH BETTER....

Chris Tanaka (V.O.)

...I SEE HER WORKING ON SCHOLARSHIPS, I SEE HER WRITING THINGS. THERE'S A DRAMATIC CHANGE.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

SHE'S GONNA BE FINE. AND SHE'S GONNA MAKE IT...

Deb Smith (O.S.)

WE'RE GONNA MAKE SURE OF THAT.

Johanna (V.O.)

TODAY IS MOTHER'S DAY. I NEED TO GET DEB SOMETHING AND I NEED TO GET LILY SOMETHING.

Johanna (O.S.)

OR I COULD JUST GET MYSELF A GIFT, AND GET STAR WARS. LOOK AT IT! "I AM YOUR FATHER." I'M REALLY NERDY WHEN IT COMES TO THINGS I LIKE...OK SO WE'RE GONNA TRY TO FIND SOMETHING FOR LILY, MY NEW MOM. THERE'S JUST SO CUTE.

Johanna (V.O.)

I NEED HELP FINDING SOMETHING FOR DEB. SHE'S MY PRINCIPAL THAT I'VE KNOWN FOR A COUPLE YEARS...

Johanna (O.S.)

...ALMOST LIKE MY WHOLE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS.

Johanna (V.O.)

...THAT'S THE CUTEST THING EVER...

Johanna (V.O.)

I'M SORRY FOR (gestures to crying face.) OK SO "MOTHERS HELP US TO SPREAD OUR WINGS AND FLY."

Jonathan (V.O.)

HOW COME YOU'RE NOT BUYING A GIFT FOR YOUR BIO MOM?

Johanna (O.S.)

WELL THE THING IS, I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'M GONNA SEE HER AND, I DON'T KNOW.

Johanna (V.O.)

I'M JUST REALIZING LIKE MY LIFE IS MOVING FORWARD AND I'M IN A REALLY GOOD PLACE. IF I WERE TO STAY WITH MY MOM...

Johanna (O.S.)

I DON'T THINK ALL THE POSITIVE THINGS I'M DOING RIGHT NOW WOULD'VE HAPPENED. OR THEY WOULD'VE HAPPENED BUT LATER ON IN LIFE.

TIMECODE 17:14

Deb Smith (O.S.)

SO YOU WANNA SEE WHAT I GOT THIS YEAR FOR MOTHER'S DAY? SHE WROTE "OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS, YOU WATCHED MY GROWTH..."

Deb Smith (V.O.)

...YOU'VE SEEN ME THROUGH DIFFICULT TRIBULATIONS. ONE OF MY HOPES IN LIFE WILL BE TO...

Deb Smith (O.S.)

...ONE DAY BE ABLE TO REPAY YOU FOR YOUR LOVE AND PATIENCE. ALTHOUGH I DON'T SAY IT MUCH, I LOVE YOU AND HOPE YOU'LL STAY IN MY LIFE AS LIFE GOES ON, LOVE JOHANNA." AND I CRIED AND I'M NOT GONNA CRY NOW, AND JOHANNA WAS CRYING. YEAH, SO IT WAS VERY SPECIAL.

Johanna (V.O.)

WONDER WOMAN, SHE WAS PROBABLY LIKE MY FAVORITE DC CHARACTER.

Johanna (O.S.)

I STARTED READING HER COMICS, ON HER STORYLINE...

Johanna (V.O.)

...EVEN THOUGH NOW LIKE HER STORYLINE IS ALWAYS BACK AND FORTH WHETHER SHE'S PRINCESS DIANNA AND SOMETHING ELSE OR LIKE EVERYBODY-SOMEONE KNOWS HER IDENTITY AND SOMETIMES SHE HAS A SECRET IDENTITY WHICH...

Johanna (O.S.)

...WHEN I WAS STILL JONATHAN I, I ALWAYS LOOKED TO CHARACTERS IN WOMEN'S COMIC BOOKS IN WHAT WOMENS I LIKE WHO ARE INSPIRING LIKE WONDERWOMAN OR CHARACTERS FROM MARVEL UNIVERSE THAT ARE STRONG LIKE, STRONG WOMEN WITH LIKE A BACKBONE, CHARACTER, PERSONALITY, EVERYTHING AND OF COURSE...

Johanna (V.O.)

...BEAUTIFUL SO FOR ME SHE WAS LIKE THE EPITOME OF PERFECTION AND WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD LOOK LIKE.

Johanna (O.S.)

HI

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

HI! HOW ARE YOU?

Johanna (O.S.)

GOOD!

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

SO NICE TO MEET YOU!

Johanna (O.S.)

NICE TO MEET YOU!

Dr. Marci Bowers (V.O.)

WE'VE DONE ABOUT A THOUSAND OF THESE SURGERIES SINCE...

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

...TWO-THOUSAND THREE. I THI-UH, AS FAR AS I KNOW I BELIEVE WE DO THE MOST IN NORTH AMERICA...

Johanna (V.O.)

I'M TRYING TO GET, LIKE SOMEHOW SAVE MONEY, OR SOMEHOW FIND A NICE DOCTOR OR SOMETHING YOU KNOW CAUSE I ACTUALLY WANT MY SURGERY.

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

...PATIENTS WHOSE FAMILIES DON'T ACCEPT THEM THEY SAY RELIGIOUS REASONS FOR THAT.

Johanna (O.S.)

YEAH THAT WAS ACTUALLY WHAT HER CASE. THAT WAS WHAT SHE USED.

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

SHE SAID THAT?

Johanna (O.S.)

MMMHHMM. I HAD LIKE A LITTLE MINIATURE EXORCISM

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

WELL TO ME, WHAT PRAY THE GAY AWAY OR SOMETHING?

Johanna (O.S.)

YEAH SOMETHING LIKE THAT. I WAS IN MY BED AND I WOKE AND THERE WERE LIKE CHURCH PEOPLE ALL AROUND ME.

Dr. Marci Bowers (V.O.)

YOU-YOU'RE A GIFTED CHILD NOT A- Y'KNOW. YOU'RE, YOU'RE EXCEPTIONAL...

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

...YOU HAVE PARTS OF BOTH THAT YOU CAN OFFER FREELY TO THE WORLD...

Dr. Marci Bowers (V.O.)

...IT'S EMPOWERING TO BE...

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

...TRANSGENDER.

Johanna (V.O.)

I'M LEARNING THAT NOW.

Dr. Marci Bowers (V.O.)

THE KIDS...

Dr. Marci Bowers (O.S.)

...THAT DO REALLY WELL THROUGH TRANSITION, THE VAST MAJORITY ARE SUPPORTED BY THEIR FAMILIES. WHEN YOU PULL FAMILY SUPPORT AWAY IT'S REALLY REALLY DIFFICULT.

Dr. Marci Bowers (V.O.)

YOU'RE GOING AGAINST ALL THE ODDS.

Johanna (O.S.)

YEAH.

Dr. Marci Bowers (V.O.)

IT'S A LONG ROAD BUT YOU, YOU'RE GONNA DO WELL.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

IN THE LAST FOUR MONTHS, THERE WAS THIS STRESS THAT CAME ABOUT AGAIN. CONFLICT STARTED COMING UP ACROSS THE CAMPUS WITH TEACHERS.

Johanna (V.O.)

I WAS HAVING A REALLY STRESSFUL TIME, I WAS HAVING LIKE SO MANY PEOPLE TRYING TO CONTROL ME I WAS LIKE "NO FUCK ALL OF YOU."

Deb Smith (O.S.)

SHE HAS TO GIVE ME HER P.E. ASSIGNMENT...

Deb Smith (V.O.)

...DOES SHE HAVE IT HERE?

Johanna (O.S.)

I HAVE TO THANK SMITH FOR THE BAGS UNDER MY EYES...

Johanna (V.O.)

...THAT WAS MY LAST REQUIREMENT TO FINISH, WAS A NINE-PAGE ESSAY...

Johanna (O.S.)

...YEAH NOT COOL.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

OK SO YOU ALL UNDERSTAND THE ROSE CEREMONY AND YOU'RE...

Deb Smith (O.S.)

...HOLDING YOUR OWN ROSE?

Johanna (V.O.)

I WAS LATE TO MY OWN GRADUATION. I FORGOT THINGS.

Johanna (O.S.)

HERE'S YOUR P.E. ASSIGNMENT.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

SHE FOUGHT VERY HARD TO NOT LET ME HELP HER.

Deb Smith (O.S.)

THANK YOU!

Deb Smith (V.O.)

AND I STILL WON.

Deb Smith (O.S.)

YOU'RE A PAIN IN MY ARSE! AND IT'S OVER NOW. YAY. YAY!

Deb Smith (O.S.)

I WON THAT ONE. I WON THAT ROUND!

Teacher (O.S.)

YOU'RE GONNA GET A ROSE, AND YOU'RE GONNA WRITE YOUR NOTE AND YOU'RE GONNA GIVE IT TO WHOEVER YOU WANT.

Johanna (V.O.)

OH YOU MISSED IT I WON THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS...

Johanna (O.S.)

...SCHOLARSHIP. YEAH, ROLLING IN THE DOUGH.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

I ADMIRE HER COURAGE TO NOT TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER.

Teacher (V.O.)

THANK YOU TO ALL THE PARENTS FOR COMING...

Teacher (O.S.)

...AND SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENTS.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

SHE IS NOT GONNA ACCEPT THAT THE WORLD IS NOT GONNA ACCEPT HER.

Deb Smith (O.S.)

THE WORLD IS GONNA ACCEPT HER AND SHE'S GONNA DO IT REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE WORLD DOES.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

I JUST CHERISH THAT ABOUT HER.

Deb Smith (V.O.)

GRADUATES FIND YOUR...

Deb Smith (O.S.)

...FAMILY MEMBER THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HONOR TODAY.

Milagros Villalobos (V.O.)

WOW. I WAS WAITING FOR THIS DAY. AND I'M SO HAPPY NOW. I THOUGHT THIS DAY IS NEVER COMING...

Milagros Villalobos (O.S.)

...BUT SHE'S MADE IT. NOW SHE'S A LADY. A BEAUTIFUL LADY.

Johanna (V.O.)

I AM EXCITED FOR THE NEXT STEP. I'M KINDA LIKE IN AWE RIGHT NOW.

TITLE CARD: TWO YEARS LATER

Jo Olson (V.O.)

HELLO! HI BEAUTIFUL HOW YOU BEEN?

Johanna (V.O.)

I'VE BEEN GOOD. I MOVED INTO A NEW PLACE...

Johanna (O.S.)

EVERYTHING'S GOING GREAT SO FAR, STILL DATING THE SAME GUY.

Jo Olson (V.O.)

THAT'S GREAT.

Jo Olson (O.S.)

WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND SURGERY?

Johanna (O.S.)

I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE PROCEDURE IS, IT JUST FEELS LIKE SUPER TEDIOUS...

Jo Olson (V.O.)

HAVING WATCHED HER OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS REALLY GO FROM A VERY SORT-OF SCARED LOST INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS REALLY FIGHTING FOR HER LIFE, SHE WAS FIGHTING WITH HER FAMILY, THE PEOPLE CLOSEST TO HER. THE PEOPLE WHO WE ALL COME TO HOPE ARE OUR BIGGEST ALLIES AND MANY TIMES ARE NOT.

Jo Olson (V.O.)

HOW'S STUFF GOING WITH YOUR FAMILY?

Johanna (O.S.)

UH EVERY NOW AND THEN I GET IN CONTACT WITH MY LITTLE SISTER...

Jo Olson (V.O.)

YEAH?

Johanna (O.S.)

...AND I KNOW WHERE EVERYONE'S SLIGHTLY AT IN THEIR LIFE AS FAR AS LIKE SIBLINGS, BUT THERE'S NO CONTACT REALLY. THERE'S REALLY NO CONTACT WITH MY MOM EITHER. I DON'T SEE THE POINT IN GOING BACK TO TALKING TO SOMEONE THAT DOESN'T YOU KNOW, DIDN'T ACCEPT IT OR DOESN'T ACCEPT IT OR DOESN'T ACKNOWLEDGE IT, DOESN'T WANNA TALK ABOUT IT. SO MAYBE I'M JUST NOT FULLY OPEN TO, Y'KNOW, REKINDLING SOME TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH HER.

Jo Olson (V.O.)

THIS IS A TESTAMENT TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS HUMAN IS THAT "I WILL GO THROUGH ALL THAT TO BE THE PERSON THAT I AM AND TO WALK IN THE WORLD AUTHENTICALLY."

Johanna (V.O.)

SOMETHING I REALIZED IS I CAN'T CHANGE MY MOM. AND DOWN THE ROAD IF I WANT HER IN MY LIFE I'M GONNA, I'M GONNA HAVE TO ACCEPT HER. BUT, I'M HAPPY WITH WHAT I HAVE NOW. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO SHOW THAT THERE'S TRANS KIDS WHO CAN ACTUALLY MAKE IT. AND I WANT TO PROVE THAT I CAN MAKE IT.