

Pride TO – Black, Queer and Trans Excellence Podcast: S2E2

King

LENGTH – 34:19

SPEAKERS: Hollywood Jade, King

Hollywood Jade 0:00

You're listening to pride Toronto's black, queer and trans excellence podcast, where we honor and celebrate the black experience through the lens of the LGBTQ+ community with honest conversations about embracing Black joy. I'm your host Hollywood Jade. (Music plays)

Hollywood Jade 0:29

Coucou bonsoir. Welcome back to the Toronto Pride black, queer and trans excellence podcast. I am so happy to be back for season two as your host once again my name is Hollywood Jade. My pronouns are he, him, and sometimes cis depending on who I'm talking to and the context of the conversation. My guests today, I am happy to get to know more personally and more intimately because I've only ever really interacted in passing with this guest. My guest is a relatively, at least new to me fixture on the ballroom scene and my guests is King who is a proud black, transgender, safe consumption slash harm reduction advocate, a business owner, a recording artist slash songwriter who's born in Toronto and raised in Brampton, how unfortunate for you....hahaha...I'd like to welcome King into the conversation; King, how are you doing?

King 1:34

I'm great. Thanks. So happy to be here. How are you?

Hollywood Jade 1:37

I'm great. See what the people listening don't know is that King has one of the most infectiously beautiful smiles on the planet Earth. Like it's, it's like ridiculously radiant so I'm like smiling from ear to ear...hahaha

King 1:52

Oh, thank you so much...haha

Hollywood Jade 1:55

How are you doing? How are things going for you?

King 1:57

Good, good, good. I've just recently been making new music so, I'm just focusing on that right now. But I'm good. I'm just I'm happy. Good and happy. I've just reached my five year almost on T-now, yeah. So goin on testosterone for five years. I'm just Yeah, happy and liv'in and feelin great..

Hollywood Jade 2:16

Oh my gosh. So I had no idea that you were also a recording artist, because like I mentioned in my brief intro is that I only, you only came to my awareness this summer, this past summer at the balls at the underpass with the TKBA so I want to give you the opportunity to tell us a little bit about your story and how you got to where you're at right now.

King 2:44

Yeah. Okay, so I was born in Toronto. And then my mom moved us to Brampton, like when I was really young, so like before I even started school. So I went to school in Brampton, and grew up there and my life was pretty okay, up until ummm I came out...haha. Then it kind of just went south from there um...

Hollywood Jade 3:06

How old were you when you came out?

King 3:08

I initially came out, well I was outed, like my mom found a conversation on my Facebook page. Like, back in the day. I was probably like, I don't know, like 10. She found a conversation on my Facebook page. And I was like...

Hollywood Jade 3:22

Oh, wow.

King 3:23

Yeah. Like I was young. And it was just like me saying, oh, yeah, you know, like, I kind of like this one girl, but like, I don't know, to like one of my friends from school, and then she kind of taid it. But like, I knew something was different, like within our relationship and then a few years later, I would say probably now I was like 13 or 14, I was like, yeah, this is not for me. And I just like told my mom I was like, yeah, so I think I like girls? Um well, I'm sure I like girls and I also, I'm not a girl.

Hollywood Jade 3:54

Wait so you told, you told your mother?

King 3:57

Yes. My Christian Jamaican mother.

Hollywood Jade 3:59

Ooh, child. See, I was gonna ask but you already got there. Okay, so you told your Caribbean, Jamaican, religious mother that not only are you attracted to women or interested in women, but you also don't feel like you identify as a woman. Correct? Child... how did that go?...haha..

King 4:20

She said "no, you don't, you're confused."...hahaha

Hollywood Jade 4:26

Hahaha...I love that you can, I love that you can laugh and find humor in this because like and not to make this about anybody else cause this is about you. But like, I know that that conversation probably wouldn't have gone over as well as yours apparently she said no child, you're confused.

King 4:46

Oh, no, it went terribly. You can find humor in it now. We didn't speak for like two years. My mother and I like, we had, we were fighting like every single day after that point, because it was just like, um, I'm pretty sure I know who I am. Like I laugh about it and now because my mother and I are amazing, like we talk every single day, we have a great relationship. But it wasn't always like this. Like, at the beginning, it was just more so like, I don't understand why you can't respect me. And she was like, I don't understand why you can't respect, like, you can't respect where I'm coming. And I was just like, but I can't understand how; but me though, you know what I mean? Like, but I'm just my myself like, I'm just your kid, like, you know what I mean? And she's just like, Yeah, but like...

Hollywood Jade 5:27

Yeah

King 5:27

You know?...haha

Hollywood Jade 5:29

I do because this is a conversation I had recently what, when, what it is, is, when you become a parent, you have all of these goals and expectations and things that you projected on to your child. And when they don't live up to that expectation, or they go against what you desire, or deemed best for them, quote, unquote, then how do you pivot from there? You know what I mean? And that's, that's beautiful that your mom and you have found a way to pivot and for her to have come to accept and understand that, what you told her when you were 13 and 14 was factual, you know.

King 6:08

Right, right. It's like I told you that 13/14 and I'm 23. It's been 10 years, like, you're gonna have to get over it at some point, which is basically what I told her, I said, you're gonna have to get over it at some point. And if you can't get over it, then we can't live amicably. And that's okay. I can leave, like, so I left home when I was 18, like, fairly young. And we just didn't speak for like, two years ago, I spoke to my grandmother, my sister, and they would tell my mother about me. And that would be it. Like, that would just be our conversations. And then I think it took like one conversation, we had one really bad Christmas, I went down for Christmas. And it went south and I had to like, like, call an Uber. Like she lives in Barrie. And I lived in Toronto at the time.

King 6:09

See, I was gonna say you went back to Brampton...hahaha

King 6:39

Barrie!...haha...Oh no I didn't drive and I was in Barrie. And it was just it went, there was a terrible, it was terrible. We didn't speak for a while. And it was after that point, I was just like, Okay, well, we don't have to live together but we have to respect each other. You know what I mean? Like, so, if I'm gonna be in your life, you have to respect me. And that's just is what it is. And yeah, from that point on, it was just like, yeah, she just saw me as an adult. I was like, Okay, well, this is just a person that I'm going to have to respect or they will not be in my life. And that's that. And I was just like, yeah, I love you, mom but if you will not respect me, I will not come around because my mental health is worth is worth it.

Hollywood Jade 7:37

Yeah, I love you. But I love me more.

King 7:39

Right?

Hollywood Jade 7:39

And, and at that point, at this point, in particular, in your journey, that's a very powerful thing to know and understand. Because sometimes it takes people a lot longer to put those boundaries in place and understand that like, yes, you've, you've given me life, but now it's my decisions, how I live that life, you know, and, and yeah, it's either you you respect it, or you don't get to be a part of it.

King 8:06

Right? Cuz it's like, I know what, what's going over here, going on over here as phat. Right? So like, if you want to be part of it, like, you could be part of it. But if you don't want to, that's okay. But like, if I stay here and try to appease the both of us, guess what, I'll be dead. So, I'm gonna leave, and then we can work things out and we did. So sometimes it just takes distance, like you just don't, you just can't live with some people. And that's okay.

Hollywood Jade 8:31

Listen, I understand. Sometimes we you have to take that step back, or that step away for yourself in order to find and figure out exactly who you are without the limitations of somebody else's projection for you?

King 8:46

Precisely.

Hollywood Jade 8:47

That's so good. And like you're so aware of that at such a young age. But I mean, I guess if at 10 years old, you were telling somebody that you think you like this girl like that awareness, seems to be something that came to you very early on.

King 9:03

Yeah, like, I just never had the words for what I was feeling. But I was just like, umm, this is not how I end up. Like, I know, I was I knew I was being gas lit at home. I was like, I'm, guys, I'm telling you, this is not how I feel like if I were to go to a doctor and told them like, my knee hurts, they wouldn't tell me no, your head just hurts no, I'm TELLING you my knee hurts. I'm here feeling it?..haha.. I don't know, like, what you're feeling, but it's not when I'm feeling it. So..

Hollywood Jade 9:28

No, that's good. That's so interesting. So I have a question when, when you became aware that you were attracted to women, how far apart was that awareness that you didn't necessarily identify as one?

King 9:45

It was like, simultaneously happening like at the same time, so I was like, these are all the things that I like about women, but I don't like those things for me. Like, I like that they do this. I like that this happens. I like that they look this way, but I don't want to look that way. I want to look like that. I want to act like this. And this is how I, this is how I want to present. I don't want to present like that. But I like that. And then as I was growing up more so into high school, just like, let me look at everybody...haha... I'm like, i like everybody, but I'm definitely not a girl and I tell you that for free. But like, yeah, like, my sexuality just changed over time. It just like, as I got more comfortable with myself, my sexuality decided to flip as well too and change and get more open. Which was also beautiful, as well, too. But it was all congruent. I was just like, I know that I'm not a woman. And I know that I like women. And I know that I also like men, but I'm pretty sure I'm a man. Yeah, that's just how that went on in my mind until like, university.

Hollywood Jade 10:45

I love this, like this, this, I, I, one of the things that I genuinely, genuinely need to applaud your generation and the generations that are coming is like, I figured out early on that I was different. I didn't know like you, stuff, I didn't know what, what the difference was or how to put it into words. But I still allowed other people to dictate and tell me what was for me, because I figured that, you know, somebody older must know better, but you guys are the opposite. You're like "No, no, no, I, I get it its all clear, it's all clear inside of me" and looking at you and listening to you talk I, I feel it and I believe it and there's, you guys are have skipped over the step of proving it to yourself so then you can prove it to others. Like you're literally just like, "This is me, accepted it."

King 11:38

Right

Hollywood Jade 11:38

And, and that is to be applauded. And that is to be celebrated because joy is coming to you guys in your generation a lot quicker and a lot faster than it did it to my generation. You know, like, I have friends who are my age and older who are just now finding liberation in living in their truth and accepting their, their full truth. And it genuinely feels like you have already done that.

King 12:05

Honestly, it's took a while to cuz it was like I knew from a young age but being told and living in a household where I was like, no, no, no and then going to church every single Wednesday to Friday for youth and Sunday. I go three days a week and them telling me also what's wrong, it's like, I battled myself for many years. I did not I didn't even start transitioning until I think it was like halfway through first year of university. I started taking testosterone. I was...

Hollywood Jade 12:31

You say that like it's late. Like you say that, like it's late...haha.

King 12:35

The think is like, like for me it was so late. I was like, this is this is like the earliest part of my life. But like I knew people, like I'm like, in my generation whow were taking testosterone since they were like 11. Like, 10...

Hollywood Jade 12:46

Really?

King 12:47

Like yes! They would be like on hormone blockers like the whole shebang, yeah like, it was like, very...

Hollywood Jade 12:53

How though?

King 12:53

Like, so they would talk to their parents and then their parents would accept them cause they were white and...

Hollywood Jade 12:58

Cool.

King 12:59

Yeah, yeah annd they were rich and their pants were just like, "yeah, that's what you want, cool" and...

Hollywood Jade 13:06

But I also feel like and hear me out cause, I also feel like 10 and 12 is too young. Your body hasn't even developed yet. Like you don't know yourself in your skin yet. So for you to already be blocking things, and again, I might, this might be an unpopular opinion, but I just feel like, there's still so much development and growth happening even just physically within you at that age, that feels really early to introduce these things. Because what if like not to say, but I know, I know, people who have thought and felt strongly about one thing but as they mature into themselves, their opinions about those things have shifted, right,

King 13:54

Right, which is exactly why people get on blockers. So it's not the exact same as taking like testosterone or estrogen you'd get on hormone blockers so it just stops puberty from happening. So it pauses puberty. So in your gestation period, while you think about "is this actually what I want?," you don't have to suffer through going through a whole puberty because I had to suffer through having a period and going through all of that shit. It was terrible. And I went through that since I was 12 all the way up until I was like 18-19 When I started testosterone and after the effects of testosterone kicked in. And for some people that's extremely traumatizing, like some kids actually kill themselves. So like blockers I would say is like the best thing you can do if you don't really know. You just block whatever's happening right now. It's completely healthy, if done under the guidelines of a doctor and endocrinologist somebody who knows what they're doing. Definitely, I would say seek medical professional help before jumping into doing anything but yeah blockers is the best way to do it. Like hormone replacement therapy is irreversible but hormone blockers are reversible. So if you stop taking them, you, your will your body will just continue back as normal. So that's the same thing as some, some people can do transition like your, my voice will never go back but if I were to just stop taking testosterone within a few months, my period will come back. Like things will just start going back to normal. Like, yeah.

Hollywood Jade 15:07

I'm screaming! You better be out here hipping me the game. Come on now.

King 15:11

No, yeah,

Hollywood Jade 15:12

Okay.

King 15:13

Yeah, so like for kids to like start on hormone blockers is there's nothing bad, nothing bad with that. I think like, if you really are questioning and you don't know, hormone blockers are best because you're not going to grow facial hair. Like for a lot of women, trans women, like you start growing facial hair, like how young like, and you know that you don't want this happening. Like you're like, I don't know why, but like this on my face makes me so uncomfortable. And you know how much 1000s of dollars it takes to get rid of facial hair after, after you've like reached full puberty and it's growing out of your face. Like that's just like \$5,000 every single

time for like five sessions. You go get a few sessions of laser. I don't even know how much laser is but it's expensive? It's like \$3,000...

Hollywood Jade 15:52

Wow..

King 15:52

For facial laser. And you know, you don't need it...

Hollywood Jade 15:52

Come on knowledge, come on knowledge...

Hollywood Jade 15:57

Okay.

King 15:58

Mm hmm.

Hollywood Jade 15:58

All right. Okay. Well, there it is, just like that. And, but that's what is so important I think about these conversations is like, I have always known that, not always known, once I came became aware of my attraction to men, I never doubted whether or not I identified as a man so that that was never something that crossed my mind. So this is information and knowledge that you're giving me that I was completely unaware of. So thank you.

King 16:31

Yeah, no problem.

Hollywood Jade 16:32

And that's what's so great about these conversations is it's like it's bringing awareness to people and generations that might not have like, I couldn't imagine being in elementary school and somebody deciding that they didn't identify as the gender that they are, they don't feel like themselves in the gender that they were born into. Like, this is all stuff that was introduced to me later in life, right. And even when it was introduced to me later, like there was still so much confusion, and so much mixed messages around what was going on. But you just you just hit me to a whole other way of thinking about it. And and I love that. So thank you. I thank you. And I applaud you for that.

Hollywood Jade 17:12

Yeah, I want to talk a little bit about you in the ballroom scene. Like how did that whole thing come about?

King 17:20

Yeah so when I moved to Toronto, I was I didn't even know anybody. Like, I moved here for school, mostly like I went to University of Guelph Humber Etobicoke, so I just lived in Etobicoke and I was like, Okay, well, now moving back to Brampton because like, I don't really know anybody there. And why would I?

Hollywood Jade 17:37

And its Brampton...

King 17:38

It's Brampton. Like, why would...

Hollywood Jade 17:40

I need to stop hating on Brampton because people in Brampton are gonna come for me...

King 17:42

You know, I love, they have some good spots, and like, I love it there. But that's why I hate on it so much, because I love it so much like but no, like, I had to leave Brampton and I had a bunch of like, high school friends from back there and stuff. But I was like, I'm an adult now, I kind of need to like, see what gwaan like in Toronto. So when I moved out here, Mother Nine, reached out to me and was like, "Hey, do you know about ballroom?" but prior to this actually, Mother Maldita, we grew up together. So like I've known her forever.

Hollywood Jade 17:43

Oh, wow!

King 17:44

Yeah, I've known her forever. And she was like, "You know what, like, you would do really well like in ballroom" and I was like, "I am scared. So I'm going to say no," because at this time, I was just just starting my transition. Like it was probably like one maybe two years on T and I'm like no, like, I'm not very comfortable with myself this yet. So like probably and it took years and like I still I would go to balls. Like I would go and spectate all the time, but like I just never walked and then it was it took for, yeah, Mother Nine and I reached out to me, she was like, "Do you want more out of life? Like what are you...?" and I was like, yeah...hahaha.

Hollywood Jade 18:45

Haha...Do you want more out of life; of course I do...haha...

King 18:47

Literally! Like, that's just how that conversation went it was like "do you want, like, a family?" And I was like, you know what...

Hollywood Jade 18:52

Oh, you you got sold the hard pitch..hahaha

King 18:56

I was like, Yeah, let me come see what's going on over here?

Hollywood Jade 19:00

I desire more, I desire a family...haha

King 19:02

Let me see what's going on over here? And I went to one practice and I was hooked. I think Damn! I love this. I don't know any of you. But, this is literally the same night I met Jasmine to like, she was just like, do you want to come over after too and we all just went, I went with these people I'd never met before in my entire life to go hang out after after practice. Never met them just yeah, let me jump in a car with these random people. I've never met...

Hollywood Jade 19:26

Radom strangers...

King 19:26

Yeah, with these strangers, and I just trusted them with my life...haha...And I started...

Hollywood Jade 19:28

I laugh but I've been there multiple times but those have turned into lifelong friends and people who have your back and and that's the family that you are a part of, that's the ballroom family so...

King 19:44

Yes, the House of Louboutin. So I've joined that house in the summer, and I walked my first ball at the Bentway. I walked Realness, tag team realness with my, one of my house brothers. And we won. And that was the first time I've ever walked a ball. And won so I was like, oh damn, this is really cool. Like, let me keep doing this and then I walked into face after that because I walked realness for that ball. And after I walked into face I was like, I love this.

King 19:48

I found, you found your calling. Cause its good face y'all. Yes, I wish that this was a video that y'all could see because it's a good face. And and King shows up and everyone's like, Ah, damn..hahaha

King 20:28

Haha...thank you!...Oh my gosh,

Hollywood Jade 20:29

All the face girls are pressed!...hahaha...

King 20:30

Hahaha...oh my gosh...haha...Like there's some amazing face girls like in Toronto too. And like, even watching, like, I think what really made me fall in love with ballroom was just watching the clips from the States. Like, and just watching the mainstream balls. I was watching like the legends like Brian Omni, and like just oh my god, like, you know what, let me just Yeah, yeah, I just I just get so I get so hooked I was just like I, just love it.

Hollywood Jade 20:54

I love I love that. And I think it's really important that yes, to pay homage and respect to the States but also that there's a whole culture here being cultivated and being built.

King 21:06

Right, right.

Hollywood Jade 21:07

And it's great seeing young, fresh new blood and talent pouring into the ballroom scene here. How important is your ballroom family to your progression and your growth and your acceptance of self?

King 21:23

Very. I did not honestly before ballroom I didn't know how handsome I was to be honest.

Hollywood Jade 21:28

Whooo! That is a lie and a fairy tale..haha...

King 21:31

I can promise you! I did not, I did not - public speaking was not for me. I could not speak publicly I did not know, I really, like my social skills were extremely low. I could not read body language at all, to save my life. Like when I tell you it's the social skills that I learned from my family is integral like,

Hollywood Jade 21:51

Wow...

King 21:52

I can't even explain; I don't even know where I would be, to be honest right now without my ballroom family.

Hollywood Jade 21:58

Wow. I love that. And I I love that message, especially for young people who like yourself might have to leave home at an early age and are looking for a place and a sense of belonging that you have found not just that but people who've helped motivate and so so much greatness into you. Because like, look, I would have never guessed that you had an issue with public speaking. You know, or that you didn't realize how damn handsome you are?

King 22:28

No clue. I did not know. Like, for the longest time, I was just like, I don't like how this looks on my face. I don't like how I sound I don't like how I present I don't like there was just so many things. Like, I'm was so insecure. And they were just like, um...

Hollywood Jade 22:45

Yeah, you're a crazy person.

King 22:46

Yeah (both laugh.) Just like, literally a year of them be like you're a crazy person who's like, you know what?...haha....

Hollywood Jade 22:53

Y'all can y'all can just be saying this for the sake of saying it and they're not. They're absolutely accurate. And I, on a personal note, love the representation of a transgender individual with beautiful chocolatey skin. Like I love it, because it's not something that I think is very common, at least to my knowledge, I don't see a lot of transgendered dark skinned men. And it's, it's really nice to see the diverse representation of the trans community showing up in the ballroom community and being celebrated in a way that it is celebrated.

King 23:36

Right. Like, I've never seen so many trans people in my life. And that's...

Hollywood Jade 23:42

Wow!

King 23:43

I was like, yeah, the like, I've never in my life seen so many people who look exactly like, I was like, oh my god, there are trans men who look like me. Like, I've never seen a black trans man in my life until I moved to Toronto. Like...

Hollywood Jade 23:57

Wow.

King 23:57

I was like, Oh, my God, like, this is just different. Like, I didn't even know we existed out here...haha... And it's very integral to like, show like dark skin, kids like, Yo, like, it's this is attainable for everybody. Like it's okay to leave your house like I know but it's okay. Like

Hollywood Jade 24:16

Yeah! And it gets, it gets easier and easier the more representation and the more of us that are out here, standing proudly in in all of it. You know what I mean? No matter no matter what your your personal life preferences and choices are, it's like, there's this other thing that bond's us and it's lovely, lovely, lovely to see. And that's just a personal, my personal shout out and

every time I see you walk and then you stand and then you smile, and I'm like, Yeah guys, this is this is it because even the stigma of quote unquote masculinity and how it presents commonly doesn't come with a beautiful smile, you know, and, and you you showing up and standing, and then you, smile, it's so good. It's really good. It's really, really great to see it's really, really great to see. I want to talk a bit about something that I learned about you in reading your bio is like you are an artist, and you are a singer and a songwriter. So tell me about your music.

King 25:22

Yes. Um, so I'm a rapper. Um, so I do not sing...haha...it's okay..haha

Hollywood Jade 25:28

Ok, recording artist, recording artist.

King 25:31

A lot of people think that I that I sing and they listen to my music, and they're like, Wait..ahaha... I thought you were going to sing? Like, no, actually, I cannot. But yeah, I rap...haha...I do hip hop. I started writing music forever writing music forever. But I never recorded anything or put anything out up until like, I think it was last year during like, the pandemic was just like, You know what, like, why not?

Hollywood Jade 25:54

What do I got to lose child? Ha!

King 25:56

Why not? Like, why not? It's like, I have a phone that I had, like, my mom had bought me for like podcasts and video recordings and stuff for like years ago, like when I was in high school and my son like dusted it off and I was like, Okay, well, let me just put this up here. I started to record more and more at home and I started doing some demos. And then one of my friends from high school is a producer and he had a studio. So I went to his studio and I put down a couple of tracks and I liked it. I was like, damn, I actually really liked this. I'm like, how my voice sounded on it and I record, I released three songs on SoundCloud and my first ever single release today on Spotify and Apple Music. It's called Peter Pan. You can listen to it on SoundCloud too, but it's about..

Hollywood Jade 26:41

Wait did you say you released your first song on Spotify today.

King 26:44

Yeah, it dropped today.

Hollywood Jade 26:46

Oh my gosh, congratulations!

King 26:47

Thank you so much! Haha

Hollywood Jade 26:49

That was so that was so casual and just so cool. You're like "Yeah, you know, no big deal"...hahaha

King 26:59

Haha...The three we're out on SoundCloud for about a month now about two months now I had three songs out. Peter Pan, Grape Vine and Bounce. Those are 3 songs I put out. Um one, Peter Pan I put out October at the end of October, but I just released it on Apple Music, SoundCloud and hopefully it's up because you know, with a united masters and distro kits sometimes like they say it's out but you don't really know if its actually out..haha... and then I'm pretty sure there was an issue with uploading one of the songs. So we'll see either today or the 24th...

Hollywood Jade 27:33

By the time this airs, it'll be out. It'll, it'll be out.

Unknown Speaker 27:37

By the time this airs there will be probably three songs out on all of the streaming platforms. Cause all these songs are out right now, but it's just on SoundCloud.

Hollywood Jade 27:47

All right. We're not we're not, listen! Everything and everyone starts somewhere, okay. I, how this whole podcast came to be when I was doing mine on Instagram. And then they reached out to me to do some during Pride. And then they liked the three that I did for pride. So they're like, let's get a Spotify thing happening. So it all it all starts somewhere. And everybody needs to go and follow you on Spotify. What's your name on Spotify?

King 28:17

Yeah, so it's King.https. So you know, like the web link https - its king.https just like my Instagram.

Hollywood Jade 28:25

There you go. See, go and support Peter Pan and what other songs have been released by the time that air?...haha...

King 28:25

Yes!

Hollywood Jade 28:33

Cause we doin' it right! Absolutely. So what are your aspirations with your music? Like what is what is your, in your perfect world, like in Kings universe.

King 28:43

Right. In my perfect world, I would just be doing music full time. Like I would just be writing music every day. And I would like to perform but I don't know if that's like the first thing in my mind. I like, I think I would like to be a songwriter first and write for people. But like, a lot of the things I do perform like a lot of the songs that like hit home, like a lot of my personal songs, I will perform myself but in the, in my ideal world, I would like to write for people, like be a ghost writer. That's my ideal.

Hollywood Jade 29:11

I mean, I know lots of artists who started off as writers and then have progressed into eventually performing. You know, one of my great favorite artists is Neo, and he started off as a songwriter, you know, and then was like, "But wait, I can do this."

King 29:26

Right.

Hollywood Jade 29:26

So you know, it's possible. It is possible. And I don't I don't think your house will let you stay just being a songwriter. They be like "no child the world needs to see this face." (Both laugh)

King 29:37

They already asking like, so visuals, what do we do with visuals?

Hollywood Jade 29:41

See.

Hollywood Jae 29:42

Yeah, so I want to talk a bit about your safe consumption slash harm reduction advocacy. So explain to everybody who might not understand what that is and then tell me how you got involved in it and why it's so important to you.

King 29:59

Right? So I started with safe consumption, work and work around harm, harm reduction closer towards the beginning of the pandemic. I've always been a big, big, big, big, big head on restorative justice. So for me, like we know people are going to consume, right? It's how do we do this safely, and how to limit the amount of risk to community as possible. You know, when my friends told me, they would go out and party like I party with some of my friends and I had an adverse reaction with one of my friends to one of the party substances that they were using. This was years ago, like before the pandemic. And that really is what got me into like, No, we got to like test every year, we test everything. And if you kind of can't afford to get the test kit, bring it to my house, I'll test it for like, and so that's when it became part of my business. So I started selling bongs, and like glass pieces and pipes and stuff like that during the beginning of the pandemic, just because I like glassware, and like the paraphernalia and stuff like that. So I started selling that and started cleaning bongs and stuff like that. And I was like, You know what, like, you can drop off any substance you had, I'll test it for you anonymously and give it

back to you. And then I started with sharps disposal. If you have any sharps that you have, that you cannot dispose of, like, you can drop them off in the mailbox and like a container, and I'll drop and I will dispose of them for you. And then we started going into Naloxone administration training. So through my business, I've been able to work with a few companies and work with a few people in how to safely administer Naloxone to somebody who might be experiencing an overdose. So I've been when I was in university, I was working with Cood Life fitness centers, so I was getting my CPRC training. And I decided to extend my knowledge and further my knowledge, so I got like discounts with, through them with Canfit-Pro. So I'm certified to teach CPR. CPRC and yeah, all of that, so because of my through my certifications, and I, I renew them every year, so in the event that there is anything that pops up in front of me I am able to assist.

Hollywood Jade 32:06

Could be of service.

King 32:08

Yeah. So for me, it was mostly just seeing from the experience of with my friend, is what pushed me toward doing it more just anybody who wants anything, you want resources, yeah, you want to try a drug, like, that's cool. But maybe let's do it and do it form. So I'm not going to tell you, "Oh, this is bad. Like you shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that." I'm going to give you as many resources as you as I have in my disposal for you to make an informed decision if this is something that you want to and how to...

Hollywood Jade 32:32

I love that I love that. I think also to like drug culture, especially now like it is a part of the community is a part of our world. It is a part of multiple communities. But I love that you're advocating for safe consumption. You know what I mean? I feel like my philosophy has always been anything in moderation is okay. You know what I mean? As long as you know yourself and, and a lot of young people don't know themselves, and they're just out here willy nilly trying and experimenting with things and not having the safety of knowing like, okay, yes, I might want to try this thing but can I trust the source from which I've gotten it because not everybody has pure intentions, you know, so thank you. I thank you for that. I really, really thank you for that. And and I think it's it's an important part of what is going to ultimately be you're I hate using the word brand because it sounds so much like marketing dollars, but it just it paints a more fuller picture to me of who you are not just as a figurehead in the ballroom scene, or as a fixture in the ballroom scene, but also as an individual. I want to thank you so much for being here and being my guest today. Thank you for sharing so openly about your journey and your transitional process. I want everyone to please go check King out on all social media platforms and make sure you go and follow King on Spotify. Instagram is @king.https same as on Spotify. Thank you for being here. Until next time, peace, love and hair grease.