

WHEN YOU'RE GOOD TO MAMA:  
AN EXAMINATION OF  
DRAG ON BROADWAY

by  
Dawson Holder

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for Departmental Honors in  
the Department of Interdisciplinary Inquiry

Texas Christian University

Fort Worth, Texas

May 8, 2023

WHEN YOU'RE GOOD TO MAMA:  
AN EXAMINATION OF  
DRAG ON BROADWAY

Project Approved:

Supervising Professor: Harry Parker, BFA

Department of Theatre

Mrs. Jessica Humphrey, BM

Department of Theatre

Dr. Nino Testa, BA

Department of Women & Gender Studies

## ABSTRACT

Combining my interests of theatre and drag, this paper attempts to answer the question, “What issues do drag artists face when cast in traditional musical theatre?” This question is answered through a series of interviews of industry professionals. Though, in the past, drag has not been featured heavily or correctly on stage, audiences are more ready than ever to see drag artistry on Broadway.

## INTRODUCTION

When setting out on this research process, I intended to research a topical question that paired my interests with my academic background. As I considered the realm of theatre and entertainment, I struggled to find a question that had not already been answered. Even so, understanding that the industry is constantly evolving and that there are natural consequences of those evolutions aided in prompting queries in my mind. While there has been much discussion (and even some action) surrounding non-binary and transgender casting on Broadway, drag has emerged into the fold without much discourse as to its repercussions or obstacles preventing further emergence. There are drag roles naturally baked into shows such as *La Cage aux Folles* (Arthur Laurents, 1983) and *Kinky Boots* (Jerry Mitchell, 2013) with Albin and Lola/Simon. More recently, the musical adaptations of *Tootsie* (Scott Ellis, 2019) and *Mrs. Doubtfire* (Jerry Zaks, 2021) have provided two more leading drag characters though their portrayal relies a bit more heavily upon the “man-in-a-dress” trope. There have even been certain roles coined as “drag roles,” with men playing specifically women, such as Edna Turnblad in *Hairspray* (Jack O’Brien, 2002) and Mary Sunshine in *Chicago* (Bob Fosse, 1975). Still, drag artists are rarely cast in most of these roles. Harvey Weinstein originated Edna, a character based upon the drag

queen Divine, and Michael O’Haughey originated Mary Sunshine. Though these are queer men, mostly cisgender straight men whose makeup is done by a Broadway makeup artist fill the same roles today. Questions arise from this reality: why are drag artists not offered these roles? Why are there not more drag roles that fall outside the realm of a punchline? Why, as drag is becoming mainstream, are drag artists still struggling to find work in the entertainment industry outside of their local bars or regional theatres? Ultimately, though, as the prevalence of drag within media increases, drag artists will likely be cast on Broadway as well.

*RuPaul’s Drag Race* star Peppermint donned the role of Pythio in the original Broadway cast of *Head Over Heels* (Michael Mayer, 2018) as the first transgender woman to originate a principal role at this level. J Harrison Ghee, a drag artist and performer, is originating the role of Jerry/Daphne this Broadway season in *Some Like It Hot* (Casey Nicholaw, 2022). Jinkx Monsoon, another *Drag Race* alum (and winner), just finished a run in the star-studded *Chicago* as Matron “Mama” Morton. This marks a transition from the casting of the past and could usher in a new era. An era of Broadway defined by the expansion of the types of roles drag artists can play would be welcome among its more progressive constituents. However, with new eras come new challenges, and transitions, especially in an industry as cumbersome as theatre, could be clunky without proper consideration. Additionally, legislation across the United States is now threatening transgender individuals and drag performers. Tennessee has passed a bill that bans “adult...performances” in public spaces, specifically targeting the LGBTQIA+ community and its proliferation of drag shows. At least fourteen other states have introduced similar bills in their legislature in an attempt to “protect children from drag,” (Burga). Though the bills could be isolated to drag performances specifically, the vagueness of the language allows for discrimination against theatre performances that feature drag artists, or “adult performers,” as

well. And while New York State is unlikely to adopt the same type of legislation, the potential for regional retellings of new works and tours of Broadway productions is always a consideration for those making money in the theatre business. If future regional productions are not an option for a piece because of its inclusion of a drag artist, that musical may not be produced on Broadway in the first place. To prevent at least some of the struggles with theatre-based drag performances that are bound to endure, questions must be asked, and, in this case, an overarching inquiry can suffice: what issues does Broadway face casting drag artists in traditional musical theatre?

### QUESTION

This project started out with the question, “What does the future of Broadway look like with drag queens cast in traditionally female roles?” However, asking this question is like asking, “How would the world look if cancer were cured?” It is far too speculative and specific. Once asking an industry professional the general question, there is not much place for the conversation to go. They cannot predict the future and would likely point toward shows that have already taken wing on the stage. This research is not aiming to detail the history of drag in theatre, so the original question makes a bit of sense. Still, it unintentionally focuses an interviewee’s thoughts on the past.

Then, the question transformed into, “How can, as drag queens enter the market of Broadway, the industry prevent females from being disenfranchised?” This is one of the chief questions that needs to be answered in this inquiry, but it once again hyper-fixates on too narrow a scope. Ensuring that misogyny does not permeate Broadway’s fabric more than it already has while providing a space that is pro-queer as well is a fine line to walk. While this is one of the nuanced issues that arise in casting drag queens on Broadway, focusing on solely this subject

matter in this paper would quickly run out of steam. What both of these questions are trying to get at has more to do with the potential problem areas of casting drag artists in traditional musical theatre. Thus, the question “*What issues do drag artists face cast in musical theatre on Broadway?*” fits the paper much better. Opening up the scope also allows for a greater open-endedness that can lead to less biased conclusions about the industry as a whole.

Even using the word “issues” can have a particularly negative effect on how this paper may be perceived. “Issues” is not insinuating that these are unsolvable problems. Instead, it is recognizing that inherent in every change within the theatre industry are bumps along the road. Transition necessitates growing pains, and this question identifies that potential. If identified, it is quite possible that the industry can transition in a more uniform, less problematic fashion.

### SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Bruno Streck Rodrigues (he/him) drafted a graduate-level research paper at Arizona State University entitled *Conscious Casting: Best Practices for Casting Queer Cisgender and Transfeminine Roles in Musical Theatre*, which deals chiefly with recommendations on how to make performers of all gender identities and sexualities feel more comfortable filling roles that may or may not align with their sex assigned at birth. Using statistics, articles, and interviews to bolster his claims, Rodrigues argues that just as other minorities have recently been afforded better practices in casting, so should the queer community. This paper to follow differs in that it addresses drag artist roles a bit more specifically and widens that scope to even include roles not written for drag artists in the first place. Also, this piece draws on human interviews as opposed to relying upon the interviews of others to gather data and support.

Christian Lewis (they/them) wrote an article for *American Theatre* in 2019 detailing the sexist, transphobic issues rife within *Tootsie* and a follow-up in 2021 regarding *Jagged Little Pill* (Diane Paulus, 2019), *Company* (Marianne Elliott, 2021), and *Mrs. Doubtfire*. They want to examine what these shows on such influential stages are communicating concerning gender and sexuality through casting, writing, and directing. In the original article, they rip *Tootsie*'s creative team to shreds, citing that the entire musical is based on a "man-in-a-dress" gag. Whether this was the creative team's intention or not, Lewis argues that its reliance upon comedy surrounding drag misappropriates the art form in a way that it becomes transphobic. They cite that the musical perpetuates, "bodily humor about genitals or gags about bras, wigs, and heels and how ridiculous it is that Michael would wear them. The musical treats the entire concept of drag and of gender as nothing but a joke."

Moving to the 2021 article, then, Lewis recognizes the misogyny that is still prevalent within Broadway shows, even those that are seemingly trying to move past the binary. While a *Jagged Little Pill* workshop off-Broadway featured a non-binary character Jo, the Broadway transfer induced a gender binary for this individual to allegedly make the show as a whole more palatable for audiences. The critic calls out the production for making such a move and reprimands the production team for ultimately erasing representation on such a large stage. This paper, then, distinguishes itself from these articles in that it is not focused on examining the messages about gender that Broadway shows perpetuate. While this is important, this research is honing in on how, as Lewis' world is coming to fruition more and more, creative teams and performers are accounting for this change.

Michael Paulson (he/him) interviewed a variety of Broadway performers and creatives for a *New York Times* article in September of 2022 to determine their opinions on diverse gender

performance on stage. He recognizes some of the leaps that the industry has taken forward and claims that “Men in dresses are in vogue on Broadway.” He asks these individuals difficult questions about the past, present, and future of musical theatre and whether or not they are willing to move forward in how drag and gender are portrayed currently. One of the most notable elements is that Paulson asks directly about transphobia in *Chicago* (Walter Bobbie, 1996) to Angelica Ross, a trans woman who is portraying Roxie Hart on Broadway. In the article, she expresses her deep discomfort with Mary Sunshine as a role because of the possibility of someone in this day and age thinking it is okay to disrobe her. During *Chicago*, Mary Sunshine is exposed during the major trial as a man in drag as opposed to a woman as thought before. In this character’s physical and metaphorical unmasking, outing a trans identity becomes commonplace. This paper will differ from the Paulson article in that the questions are not so general, and it is academic in nature as opposed to an op-ed piece. Interviews will be conducted similarly to the *Times* article, but there will be new insights by asking a different variety of individuals, some of whom are not necessarily experts within the drag world.

### INTERVIEWEES AND QUESTIONS

While other research has detailed the interviews of others, this paper aims to synthesize thoughts straight from modern industry professionals. It asks questions that need to be answered to avoid, at least assuage, potential threats to the growth of drag artists within theatre. First, one has to determine what types of professionals to speak to. Performers, including but not limited to drag artists, would be useful in gaining perspective into what they think about their present and future circumstances on Broadway. Casting directors are valuable in telling of the trends in theatre casting itself. Producers can aid in a business perspective, contextualizing shows with



drag artists in the grander schema of all shows. As this is an undergraduate project, this is not an exhaustive list of the types of people who may have words to share on the matter, merely a foretaste.

For performers, J Harrison Ghee (he/they) was at the top of the list to interview. He was cast in a MUNY regional production of *Chicago* as Velma Kelly and is set to debut, as aforementioned, as Jerry/Daphne. His experience as someone at the forefront of this movement to cast drag artists is invaluable. Charles Busch (he/him) offered a unique perspective as a drag artist and playwright. His plays and movies have always been subversive yet poignant, and Busch even earned a Tony nomination for *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife* (Lynne Meadow, 2000). Zachary Myers (she/they) recently made her Broadway debut as a swing in *A Strange Loop* (Stephen Brackett, 2022) and was a part of the cast of Dylan Mulvaney's one-night-only show *365 Days of Being a Girl* (2023). Ms. Myers offers an important perspective as a trans woman in a paper full of men's voices. Finally, Taylor Ratliff (he/they), otherwise known as Plasma (she/her), holds a BFA from the University of Oklahoma in Musical Theatre and has since moved to NYC to pursue a career in drag artistry. They host weekly shows and brunches at a variety of queer clubs and bars in Manhattan, always toeing the line between musical theatre and drag.

For casting directors, Benton Whitely, CSA (he/him) has worked as a Broadway casting director for over 12 years and has recently set out on a new journey as the founder of Whitley Theatrical. He is responsible for casting Jinkx Monsoon in *Chicago*, a marked step forward in the world of musical theatre.

For producers, Eric Kuhn (he/him) and Randy Adams (he/him) were interviewed. Eric Kuhn is the producer of *Oklahoma* (Daniel Fish, 2019), *The Inheritance* (Stephen Daldry, 2019),

and *A Strange Loop* (Stephen Brackett, 2022), to name a few; he is committed to bringing queer and innovative theatre into the limelight on Broadway and the West End. Randy Adams is a co-founder of Junkyard Dog Productions and has produced hits such as *Memphis* (Christopher Ashley, 2009) and *Come From Away* (Christopher Ashley, 2017), aiming to always “harness the considerable energy and financial clout of the regional, national and international marketplace, building on established relationships to create producing ‘pipelines’ for new work.”

Questions included in interviews were:

1. What types of roles are drag artists playing today? Are there currently any limits, spoken or unspoken? Should there be any limits?
2. Where do most issues regarding this topic arise from? Appealing to audiences/selling tickets? The production itself? Elsewhere?
3. What about Broadway memorializes this type of evolution in casting more so than a regional or even off-Broadway theatre?
4. What about audiences has changed their appetite for seeing drag queens? Are there any limits to that appetite?
5. What are some questions surrounding this subject matter that casting directors, producers, directors, etc. are not asking themselves right now?
6. What happens when two artists, one of whom is a drag artist and one of whom is a transgender or cisgender woman, are trying out for Juliet? Are there or should there be any considerations in casting other than merit?

These questions all deal with subject matters that each of these groups should think about, not only for this project but also for the future of the musical theatre industry. Even if an

individual has not thought about any of this beforehand, these will spark questions within one's mind to consider further.

Speaking to drag artists, these questions are also warranted:

1. Are there any roles you would want to take on as a drag artist? Are there any you wouldn't be considered for right now?
2. Are there any drag artists you look up to, specifically in this realm of theatre performance?

The other groups of people would not have an answer to these questions, but drag artists will likely have very specific ideas about them already.

As anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation swept the nation, another question began to be relevant:

1. With the anti-drag bills that face many state legislatures, what effect could this have on the potential for future theatre projects with drag artists in them?

### INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS

There were three major themes that defined these interviews:

#### *Disguise vs A Message*

These individuals outlined first and foremost the types of roles that drag artists are taking on today on Broadway. As aforementioned, there is a great variety of roles available to drag artists within the past few decades. Nearly every interviewee recognized Lola of *Kinky Boots* and Edna Turnblad of *Hairspray* as drag parts naturally presented within the musical theatre zeitgeist. Ghee recognized that Mary Sunshine of *Chicago* is extremely disenfranchising toward the trans community; Myers recognized the same effect sourced from *Tootsie* and *Mrs. Doubtfire*, as of late. These caricaturish kinds of parts make it seem as though women are silly

and frivolous in some way, which is a sexist view in the first place. On top of that, singling out trans individuals, while trendy during the 1900s, is quite damaging today. The “man-in-a-dress” trope feeds into the general misconception that trans individuals are just “playing pretend” in wanting to transition. While Dorothy Michaels and Mrs. Doubtfire have been characters that have entertained crowds, the general audience of these pieces digests these stories as ways to cackle at those who don identities that are different from their own. These characters are not taking on these identities in any real way though, they are merely donning them to suit their purposes. With nearly every role aforementioned, these men are disguising themselves in order to achieve some personal goal. In this way, it is making fun of those who truly wish to change their gender expression when it does not reflect their gender identity.

Taylor Ratliff claims that J. Ghee’s performance in *Some Like It Hot* should be the standard instead. Ghee dons a role that emphasizes gender fluidity as a drag artist while floating in the world of traditional musicals. The original 1959 movie starring Marilyn Monroe used drag as a form of disguise; *Sugar* (Gower Champion, 1972) adapted the film for Broadway and did not alter any element of the original story greatly. Both played upon their audiences’ thoughts that a man in a dress is inherently comedic. The part takes this damaging trope and flips it on its head. Jerry/Daphne is no longer the butt-end of a joke but a statement of power. Matthew López and Amber Ruffin, the show’s book writers, humanize Jerry/Daphne in the love story elements of their plot. Though the character does disguise themselves out of a need for survival in the beginning, their drag artistry induces self-reflection about their gender identity. Soon enough, Jerry feels as though Osgood’s love for them as Daphne gives them a reason to accept a dual identity within themselves. When confessing their true non-binary nature to Osgood, their fiancé, he barely bats an eye. Osgood deals with his own dual racial identity and is able to relate to

Jerry/Daphne; this revelation invites audiences of all backgrounds who deal with any facet of intersectionality to connect and accept queerness by extension.

Ghee's source of inspiration for their performance is Billy Porter; both artists underscore drag artistry as a means of worship and channeling of higher power. It is a bit ironic, then, that Ratliff recognizes Lola of *Kinky Boots* as a champion of tolerance while Daphne is a champion of acceptance. This evolution of drag roles even within the past few decades reflects the changing attitudes of audiences and the ability of theatremakers to more skillfully incorporate men playing women or genderqueer individuals. While not every audience member of *Some Like It Hot* is expected to accept all assertions that the piece presents, the show is commercially viable largely because of its strong messages veiled in a spectacular spectacle that Broadway audiences have come to expect. This reality is why shows like *Tootsie* and *Mrs. Doubtfire* should be passed by when considering new pieces to produce on Broadway.

### Anti-Drag Legislation

Some of these interviews took place as early as September of 2022, but the threat of anti-drag legislation has been a reality since the summer. As such, these identity politics always came up in conversation. On March 2, 2023, House Bill 9 was passed in the state of Tennessee that "creates an offense for a person who engages in an adult cabaret performance... in a location where the adult cabaret performance could be viewed by a person who is not an adult." Benton Whitley expressed frustration with the vagueness of this language, and Ratliff pointed out that its vagueness actually makes a great deal of theatre illegal to be performed in Tennessee. Shows such as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *My Fair Lady*, *Chicago*, *Matilda*, *Hairspray*, *Rent*, and *Peter Pan*, to name a few, all feature drag, or "adult," performers (Broadway World). Randy Adams says that as he considers what new works to produce on Broadway, he might take stock of this

reality. Producers and investors try to ensure a life for theatre after a New York run, so, if this kind of legislation continues to spread across the flyover states, a great deal of revenue could be lost in touring and regional production payouts. When looking at two shows, one with drag and one without, then, a musical featuring drag could be passed by. Though Tennessee legislators thought they were preventing merely drag shows in their state, the effect is much more vast. Trans, non-binary, and genderqueer individuals are now at threat of being deemed illegal, whether they are donning a specific theatrical role or merely living their life out in public.

*Audiences are Ready (Mostly)*

When discussing the limits, most interviewees recognized the fact that drag artists are kind of sectioned off into campy character roles. One would be hard-pressed to find a drag queen playing Christine in *Phantom of the Opera* or Fantine in *Les Misérables*, not because drag artists lack the talent to fill these roles but because the conception of them in these roles does not exist. If it does exist, it mostly exists in fringe regional theatre across the United States as opposed to the larger stage of Broadway. Busch pinpointed this feeling in his interview, especially as it relates to his own writing. Though he is known as a drag artist and playwright who dabbles in the extremes, he hesitates when drag artists are cast in his play *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*. It is not because he does not wish for more drag artistry. On the other hand, Busch understands some underlying attitudes within audiences that drag artistry makes a role less “legitimate.” Now, whether or not that is true, that is the perception of the general population. As much as drag artistry has become mainstream, drag queens are still relegated to campier and more matronly roles. Any part that requires an ingenue or a woman with strong acting chops is reserved for cis women. Kuhn and Adams chiefly claim that Broadway is a business first and foremost; everyone is trying to make money. As much as the performers, choreographers, and directors may be

progressive in what they want to see on stage, the producers and investors want to recoup their investments as best as possible. Consequently, they will choose profit over progress most times. This is why it has taken a great deal longer for trans and non-binary artists to be cast in shows. Audiences haven't necessarily had an appetite for it, and, until those realities are normalized, shows will fall short of progressive expectations.

Whitley was able to shed some light on this harsh reality in recounting the casting of Jinkx Monsoon. Shortly after Jinkx had won *RuPaul's Drag Race* Season 5 in 2013, she went out for the role of Roxie Hart on Broadway, and Whitley championed her hard in front of the *Chicago* producers. However, Jinkx is not a particularly skilled dancer, and the producers claimed that they could not cast a drag queen as Roxie because Mary Sunshine was already cast as a drag artist. Too many drag queens on stage would "confuse the audience." When Jinkx won *Drag Race* for a second time in 2022 though, Whitley's casting team set out to cast her as Mama Morton. She had come into her own a bit more as a performer, and the winner had a much larger celebrity presence than the first time around. The producers a little less reluctantly agreed with the casting decision, and *Chicago* profited from Jinkx's presence with its highest-grossing non-holiday weeks ever. In its 27-year-long run, the show achieved \$1.3 million with a drag artist drawing in the crowds (Broadway Business). No, this does not mean that every Broadway audience wants to see drag artistry in every musical. However, this fact combined with J. Ghee's Tony nomination for Best Leading Actor, one of two non-binary artists to achieve nomination in 2023, makes one stop to think that perhaps audiences can digest drag far more easily than they ever have before. That is exciting.

## CONCLUSION

While this paper is not nearly exhaustive of all of the issues that exist in this realm, it is clear from the interviews that the current issues are not enough for Broadway to move forward. One of its shortcomings is the lack of inclusion of drag kings in the discussion of theatrical performance. This was intentional as drag kings' exposure in the general drag community is already limited. Attempting to seek out those individuals in the NYC theatre community then was nearly impossible. Kings are equally as talented as queens, so the hope is that their prevalence will increase in mainstream media and, ultimately, Broadway. Even so, the fact that they are not discussed thoroughly in this paper does not mean they should be included in the conversation in the future.

Though nationwide attitudes and legislation threaten the continuation of drag artistry onstage, there are more drag artists and fans who wish to see drag queens cast in theatre throughout the country. As long as strong performers such as Jinkx Monsoon and J. Ghee exist, drag artists must be cast, even if in protest. The LGBTQIA+ community and its allies are growing louder and stronger every day in spite of silencing attempts by adversaries. Moving drag into the mainstream more and more on Broadway will undoubtedly give generations, young and old, greater open-mindedness regarding what drag artists can do. No longer will they be considered "C-list" performers but recognized as talented as their counterparts. One can become excited about the future as barriers are being torn down almost as quickly as conservative thinkers are trying to throw them up. As younger generations emerge into roles of power in theatre, drag will hopefully be featured more prominently and have a similar effect that Jinkx's presence had on the box office. It follows along the thinking of Matron "Mama" Morton: "When you're good to Mama, Mama's good to you!"



Works Cited

Adams, Randy. Personal interview. Phone call. 24 October 2023.

Busch, Charles. Personal interview. Phone call. 21 February 2023.

BWW, Team. “Ban on Drag Performances Could Prevent Broadway Tours from Coming to Tennessee.” BroadwayWorld.Com, 27 Feb. 2023, [www.broadwayworld.com/article/Ban-On-Drag-Performances-Could-Prevent-Broadway-Tours-From-Coming-To-Tennessee-20230227](http://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Ban-On-Drag-Performances-Could-Prevent-Broadway-Tours-From-Coming-To-Tennessee-20230227).

Ghee, J. Harrison. Personal interview. Zoom. 29 September 2023.

“Grosses.” Broadway Business, [broadwaybusiness.com/grosses/show/chicago](http://broadwaybusiness.com/grosses/show/chicago). Accessed 8 May 2023.

Kuhn, Eric. Personal interview. Zoom. 25 March 2023.

Lewis, Christian. “Gender and Sexuality on Broadway: You Oughta Know Better.” AMERICAN THEATRE, 9 Dec. 2021, [www.americantheatre.org/2021/12/09/gender-and-sexuality-on-broadway-you-oughta-know-better/](http://www.americantheatre.org/2021/12/09/gender-and-sexuality-on-broadway-you-oughta-know-better/).

Lewis, Christian. “The Gender Problem ‘tootsie’ Can’t Dress Up.” AMERICAN THEATRE, 7 May 2019, [www.americantheatre.org/2019/05/07/the-gender-problem-tootsie-cant-dress-up/](http://www.americantheatre.org/2019/05/07/the-gender-problem-tootsie-cant-dress-up/).

Myers, Zachary. Personal interview. Email. 28 March 2023.

Paulson, Michael, and Justin J Wee. "Some like It Not: Are Men in Dresses Still Funny?"  
The New York Times, 9 Sept. 2022,

[www.nytimes.com/2022/09/09/theater/comedy-gender-some-like-it-hot.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/09/theater/comedy-gender-some-like-it-hot.html).

Ratliff, Taylor. Personal interview. Phone call. 7 April 2023.

Rodrigues, Bruno Streck. "Conscious Casting: Best Practices for Casting Queer  
Cismasculine And ..." Bruno Streck Rodrigues, 29 Nov. 2019,  
[brunostreckrodrigues.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Conscious-Casting-Best-Practices-for-Ca  
sting-Queer-Cismasculine-and-Transfeminine-Roles-in-Musical-Theatre-1.pdf](http://brunostreckrodrigues.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Conscious-Casting-Best-Practices-for-Casting-Queer-Cismasculine-and-Transfeminine-Roles-in-Musical-Theatre-1.pdf).

Whitley, Benton. Personal interview. Phone call. 20 April 2023.