

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Name: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon**

**Dylan**

**00:00:01:07**

The way that I first got into music, looking back at it now, goes hand in hand with my my life story of being a trans guy, actually. I think when I was a kid, I knew intrinsically like who I was. I knew that I was a little boy, um, because I was struggling with my identity. And when I wrote music and when I was performing music, it kind of felt like my identity didn't really matter anymore, especially when I would play the songs that I'd written to friends and to people. It was like they were just listening to this soul.

**Liam**

**00:00:38:11**

Hello and welcome to Pridecast. This is a podcast about all things LGBTQ+ brought to you by ITV. During the show, we chat about being proud to be LGBTQ+ today we speak to people from across the community to find out where they are on their journey and where they're headed. We'll also keep you updated on the latest LGBTQ+ news and the things that matter to you. This is the ITV Pridecast.

**Liam**

**00:01:10:22**

Right. Well, joining me to co-host this episode of the ITV Pridecast is Jo Lewis, one of the co-chairs of the ITV Pride network. Jo, nice to see you again on the pride cast. How are you doing?

**Jo**

**00:01:22:18**

Hi, Liam. I'm really good. Thank you. Happy to be here again.

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**Dylan**

**00:01:25:10**

Good to hear. Good to hear. Well, we have got an incredible guest coming up. Uh, it's a guy called Dylan Holloway who has just recently won a show on the BBC called Project Icon. And your team at MultiStory have been really, really pivotal in terms of getting it off the ground and, uh, and producing the show. And. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about what you've been doing on the show.

**Jo**

**00:01:48:05**

Um, yeah, it's a great series. Um, it's a BBC Three series, so I'm not sure. Um, anyone that's listening as ITV Studios, we consist of lots of different labels, um, or making various types of productions. Um, MultiStory have um, we produced Project Icon and it's for the BBC. So that's, that's kind of how that works. Um, we actually started, um, working on this behind the scenes in January 2022. So it's been a journey, um, myself and, um, and a couple of people in the department and my line manager, Helen, um, and we had a task team in London, um, started thinking about very early on, like I say, how we would go about making a beast of a show like this. So we, um, started working on this. We started looking at how on earth we would, um, create this beast of a project. Where to begin? They wanted it to be in Manchester because Manchester is just the best city. No. I'm joking. I suppose we're trying to get, like, cities outside of London on the map as well. Um, um, it's. And yeah, we just basically started, um, searching for locations, and the task team were putting together some potential challenges. Um, and, yeah, I spent a lot of time, um, because I'm one of the production managers, and I suppose, um, there's very it's only our department consists of only, like, a sort of like a few staff people, not too many short, a small number of production managers. We don't tend to have locations, teams and things like that. Um, myself and another production manager in the department, we're just, like, going around the streets of Manchester, trying to find places to film. Um, we spent a long time searching. I must have gone to about 50 places. Just, it was tricky because we were filming in November and December, and we needed it for, like, four weeks

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solidly. Um, so around that time, what we were looking for initially changed a lot. We were looking for, like, sort of like, um, we wanted it to feel like a creative hub kind of environment, um, where people could, like, be playing the guitar in one corner or having a catchup in the kitchen and the other corner. And then we kind of decided, actually, it needed to be more like an event space, um, and ideally with recording studios. So it was quite it was the brief was quite um, it was, it was, we ended up seeing a lot of places that I never even knew existed in Manchester, to be honest. Um, we found a studios, which is where we ended up filming. Um, in the end, they, um, were amazing, um, which we call Project Icon Studios, but actually it's Blueprint Studios in Salford who've had some amazing, amazing names in there. Um, I think in episode one they talk about how Justin Timberlake, and I think even Jason Derulo himself has been as, as worked from there. So it was um, it was a great place to, to, to be. Um, and the guys that work there were really, really helpful. They had recording studios in the lower ground, like in the ground floors, and then the top space was like a big event space, and it just worked really, really well. So, um, yeah, we filmed the series there. Um, the series consists of ten, um, ten members of cast. Um, and then we've got the three judges. So we've got Jason Derulo, Becky Hill and Frank Harris. Um, we had a couple of guest judges that came in as well. Um, yeah, it was a really great series, and I, like I say, I kind of helped initially for a few months finding the locations, and then I went off in the summer, started on a different show. Um, and then when I came back, filming basically was starting, so I kind of jumped straight in. I was looking after mainly the talent. Um, so I was like working with the talent, really, um, making sure they were getting to and from the studios, okay, making sure they were getting to and from London. Okay. Because a couple of the challenges were based in London. Uh, we worked with the cast as well, the casting teams on that one, and it was just a really a very unique experience. Like the team was very bonded. Um, but we all sort of we really enjoyed it because it's different to, um, anything that I've done before. Um, and it was a great experience.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Liam**

**00:05:34:24**

For anyone that's seeing the show. You kind of, um, it's very different to what we would, you know, kind of classed as a talent show that we're so used to in the UK. It's not like an X-Factor. It's not like a Britain's Got Talent. It's it's very different. And and actually it's, it's really given a freshness to this kind of genre.

**Jo**

**00:05:52:13**

Yeah. I think um, I mean there's quite a lot of these kind of like reality type shows that are doing really, really well. Um, so I can see why BBC Three, um, you know, they want something like fresh and music related, especially the, the side of things, which is sort of more the social media side because I think a large part of. This was. We want to find a performer. We don't. It's not about. It's obviously they've got some musical talents. Um, and be great at writing lyrics and have good voices. They want the whole package. They want someone that's, um, able to get themselves out there on social media. I suppose the way that Jason Derulo did, that's why he kind of, um, came up with the idea of the show because, um, I suppose it's it's about finding the next superstar.

**Liam**

**00:06:34:02**

Yeah, absolutely. And the brand really, isn't it? It's, uh, there's a lot of emphasis in the show about creating your own brand and and being able to commercialise that, really. And, um, the one thing as well that, you know, that's that's been brilliant. I think there's a real scope of representation, a diverse representation on the show. And of course, we see that from Dylan himself. The fact that he won and and, uh, he's a trans man. Yeah.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:06:59:18**

I think the, um, the casting team, um, did amazingly when it came to picking the ten people for this series. Like, I think it really does portray British talents. Um, and inclusivity and it's and it's finest. Like, I think it's it's a really great, um, array of talent and people, um, and personalities. And, you know, I just, I think that, um, I mean, obviously it's something that productions are, you know, we're everyone's trying to be as inclusive and diverse as possible. Anyway, um, but I do think that I feel very proud, actually, to work for MultiStory when it comes to things like this, because they really, I think, have cast it beautifully. Like, I think the like, especially with Dylan winning. I think it just feels really nice because I suppose like trans, um, trans folks are in such a minority. Anyway, um, and I think it's, it's just nice having that representation. I think it's been really nice to see Dylan win the series. Like, how great is that for the LGBTQ+ community to have, like someone that's actually from one of the more marginalised, um, letters in the spectrum as well. Um, because, you know, all we want is to feel like, um, that visibility, um, and to feel represented. So, yeah/.

**Liam**

**00:08:11:10**

Totally. And, and I think from watching the show, we, we see Dylan's warmth and he's such a great, great guy. He's such a humble guy as well. So I'm really looking forward for us to, uh, to chat with him. Um, but for now, Jo, thank you so much for for joining me to to introduce this Pridecast and to and for hosting it as well.

**Jo**

**00:08:31:02**

Thanks, Liam. I'm really excited to hear actually, I think he's I mean, it's coming from someone who's seen it behind the scenes as well. Like all of the cast are so authentic. Um, and so lovely to be around. Like they really were. Um, and I think that Dylan, um, is going to be a really interesting person to chat to.

**Liam**

**00:08:48:18**

Totally. Thank you so much, Jo.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Liam**

**00:08:51:03**

All right then. Well, let's take a listen to the latest ITV Pridecast with Dylan Holloway.

**Liam**

**00:09:05:17**

Hi there. Dylan. Lovely to see you. Firstly, I wanted to say a massive congratulations on, uh, winning Project Icon. Really incredible stuff. You must feel at the moment. It must have been an absolute whirlwind. Really?

**Dylan**

**00:09:20:01**

Yeah. I mean, thank you so much for having me on and, uh, getting me into chat. I'm going through, like, a mixture of emotions at the minute. Like, you know, it was amazing to win. I don't know if I thought I would win going into it because originally I wasn't even going to be part of it. I was apprehensive whether to join. Um, so yeah, I'm just like, taking it all in.

**Liam**

**00:09:38:03**

Yeah, I imagine and, um, I mean, so when did you first start the process for anyone that's, you know, that's just coming in and watching it. It's obviously not a live show. So it's been in the in the making for a while, hasn't it.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:09:49:08**

Yeah, it has been in the making for a while. I think uh, our initial sort of conversations and, and prior screening processes were back in September, October time. And then the actual filming process started in November. Um, but I, I sort of had had had the Project Icon team reach out to me on Instagram. And initially I was like, is this a scam? I don't know, I've never heard of this show. I don't know about this. Um, and yeah, I was sort of just a bit apprehensive because, you know, telly and music and, but I was sort of warmed to the idea the more I heard about it. And everyone was so lovely and I thought this could be a brilliant, a brilliant new version of a show that gives people an insight into every aspect of the music industry as it currently stands. So I thought, yeah, I thought it was a great new angle to take.

**Liam**

**00:10:37:23**

With that is something that's really, um, I think pivotal about this show, isn't it? Is that, um, it's not like a traditional, like, um, music show that we've seen in the past, like X-Factor or Pop Idol. Is it? Tell us how it's a bit different, really.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:10:52:10**

So this show, Project Icon has been set up by Jason Derulo and his long term manager, Frank Harris, uh, alongside Becky Hill as like a third judge who's been there and done it with her show. Um, but they have set up a record label and they're looking for an artist to sign, but they're looking for an artist who has already developed themselves. So in, in shows like, like the X Factor, uh, Britain's Got Talent and stuff like that, it's often just people who've got, like, a cracking voice, uh, who just want to go and sing, uh, and then after that, there's a development process to find their sound and do these things. But in this show, it was more, we're looking for an artist that's already sort of been built, been building their brand. They know what their sound is. They write music, they perform already. So someone who has that behind them. So what you ended up with was ten strangers who had individual brands, sound, songs, images, uh, fashion, who already were artists working in the music industry. Um, and each of us had different strengths. I think some people were really great at the the visual aspect of looking looking cool, and some people were very good at being socially like, communicative online. And some people were stronger with lyrics and melodies and songwriting. So it's a more, you know, it's a more good depiction of what the music industry is like now, because every challenge as well wasn't just, can you sing this cover song and who sings it best goes through. This was about, you know, the first week it was this is an original song. Then there was a Tik Tok social media challenge, and then the second week was a collaboration. Third was like a reimagination, remixing. And then, you know, in the fifth week, we end up going to the BBC Radio One and doing a Live Lounge, and it was, can you conduct yourself in a radio interview? So it was this whole plethora of like the different things you might find in the music industry. So for the first time, I think people at home are really seeing what it takes to be an artist, and probably not even all the stuff it takes. But just like a highlight of those things.



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Liam**

**00:12:51:18**

I mean, one thing I really took from it was that it really put you under the microscope in so many different ways as well. Like as you were mentioning there, all the different tasks that you had to do. It was about kind of, as you mentioned earlier, really building a brand. It's not just about the song, it's not just about the songwriting, the singer. It's it's about all those different elements that make you a star ready to be, you know, to be out there.

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**Dylan**

**00:13:17:14**

Yeah, exactly. And I think that's what I was sort of saying in, in, in the tasks, it was clear where some people were shining in, in certain aspects and other people were coming through at different, different times. So I think for an audience, I think it was quite proper. I mean, I watched it as, as someone who participated. But I imagine as an audience member you're sort of watching it thinking, this person is my favourite. I feel like they're going to win. And then all of a sudden the next week, it's a task that just doesn't suit them. And then you see them in the bottom two and you're like, oh no. And then someone else that you least expect comes through and wins that week because it's it's something that more suits them as a person. So it's kind of it's interesting to watch because you never really know, you know, who's going to suit the task best. And because because there are some tasks which are. You know, one size fits all. It's hard if you're more one type of artist than the other to to pull yourself into that category. So there were certain challenges that I found quite difficult. Um, because it's something that I would never do in my artist walk of life outside of the competition, but it's some things that certain people would only ever do. So, yeah, it's, um, it's hard. And I think that's actually something that I that's probably the thing that I struggled with the most. I tried not to struggle with this, but I think, you know, when you're being judged and critiqued on something that you know, you would never do if it wasn't for them asking you to do it, you're like, well, yeah, fine. But I would never do this outside. So please don't judge me solely on this thing. Um, but you know, you know, everyone went through the same thing at some point in the competition. So we move. We move on.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:14:54:06**

You know what, Dylan, as someone was working on the show. I was one of the production managers. Um, obviously, you see quite cut down, um, versions of what we were filming, but there were long days, weren't they? And I suppose you were trying to, like. Like it must have been so difficult because we all knew what you're you know, we knew what was was coming, I suppose. And we kind of had to kind of like work with, with you guys and with the talent and make sure that everyone was happy and, you know, just because it was a long, long day. And I suppose as well as that, you're also trying to rehearse for a performance and be creative. Um, it was amazing watching you all grow throughout the production because it, I suppose like how how did it feel when you were given those challenges and you knew that you had like to get to achieve that task within that amount of time? Was it was it was it quite invigorating or was it quite like exhausting or- how did it feel?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:15:42:24**

I personally found it quite invigorating. I found it quite. I think it's something that I, I knew would happen. You know, I have I was one of the oldest contestants there, I think, and I sort of, I've been in the music industry for a bit longer, and I know the kind of curveballs that people will throw at you. And I've done a lot of performances in my life where things have gone wrong on stage. So I've learned those skills to sort of know how to just deal with it. And I think, I think I, I'm also quite an optimistic person, and I love a bit of a challenge. I love finding a silver lining. So for me, I just sort of went to, you know, Manchester to do the filming. And from the minute I got there until the minute I left, I just dove into that as being like tunnel vision. This is what I'm doing. And I didn't really pull my focus away from from that. And it was like, right, we've been given this challenge. I've got this much time to do it. I'll find a way to make it happen to the best of my ability, as long as I'm staying true to who I am. And then if that doesn't really work out for me, then at least I was true to who I am. And I've done the task rather than, you know, sort of being pulled left and right thinking, oh, how can I do it to appease the judges best? Or how can I do it to beat this person or whatever? Um, but there were there were moments where, yeah, it was it was tiring because you want to be delivering your best performance or your best piece of music that you've written, but then also alongside that, you're doing filming and they want to pull you out of the session that you're working on so that they can talk to you about how it's going. And in that minute it's not going very well. So it's like, you know, you're trying to be the best version of the music you. While also remembering that you have to be the best version of the video, you because you're about to be put on the television as well.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:17:24:04**

Yeah, I can totally imagine that actually, because so when you're filming, we're kind of prepping for the next day, and, but we can all kind of like, well, I say slob out. We're in our like, what was what was actually a bus outside, um, prepping for the next day. But obviously we're not thinking about the cameras being on us and things. We're just thinking, oh, you know, we're going to wrap at whatever time at night and then, you know, back again tomorrow. How can we make sure that everyone is like, happy and safe and fed and gets home and that kind of thing? But you're you're thinking constantly, I suppose, about about the task at hand is. And also, like you say, being filmed. Um, so it must be very, a very different experience for you all. I bet it was quite bonding for you all to kind of be doing that. And also, I suppose, doing the group tasks as well must have been quite nice for that reason.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:18:08:23**

Yeah, I think, I think that was something that we did bond through because, you know, we were all in that situation together. So even though we came from different walks of life, we were making different music. We were obviously in a competition at that at that moment. That was the one thing that did pull us together because we were going through the experience as one. Um, and I also think, like, you know, we, we, we had sort of time between each week. There were like a couple days to sort of rest. I'm saying that in quotation marks to anyone that can't see what I'm doing. But there were times to rest. But really, in that time, we were then prepping for the next challenge because, you know, we were sometimes told on the day, this is what it is, go and do it now. And other times, given a tiny, tiny fraction of information that could allude to what it possibly might be. So in those two days before, everyone was sort of like in the house. I mean, I spent a lot of time in the last two weeks. I spent I was like producing some stuff in my room. So I mean, I, I found the, the process to be something quite all consuming and I wanted to make sure that I left there thinking that I did everything I could to show my music, not just to the judges, but to the people at home as well. Because for me, like that was that was one of the main, um, attractions for me to sort of be a part of this as well. Um, I didn't know whether my music would be right for Jason and Frank from the beginning. So I kind of thought, what I'll do is come here for the people, like they're the people that will consume my music. So I sat in my room and I was producing music until the early hours of the morning, a lot of time to sort of make sure that when I delivered it, the people at home would try and get the essence of what I do as well, because that was important. But like, I think everyone did the best with what they could. And yeah, it was it was a bonding experience for all of us.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:19:51:13**

I think that you all, um, were so authentically who you were the whole way through. Um, and it looks like you're just having so much fun because you were being so authentically all of you, like, you were learning off each other and just and just like, especially when when you had to, like, do each other's songs. Um, it must have been so much fun to do that. Yeah.

**Dylan**

**00:20:10:01**

Um, well, when it comes to the group tasks or the task when we were in pairs, I think I personally lucked out with the with the situations I was in because, you know, for the for the music video, for example, I was with Mel and we got on like a house on fire. Um, it's like an unlikely friendship because we're not really very similar. Um, but, you know, we got on and, and the same with Mia as well, when I was partnered with her to do the swapping of the songs, the re-imagination of each other's music, um, both with Mia and I had this sort of, like, older brother vibe with them. Like, they were like my two little sisters. And it was a fun sort of experience because we just laughed most of the time. I laughed with most of them. Um, with those two, with those two girls most of the time. So it felt like a really enjoyable experience. And it was only when I watched the show back I was able to gain some perspective that maybe it wasn't always fun and games for some of the other contestants, because in their partnerships, it could have been a bit more abrasive or a bit more competitive. Um, but I had a good time.

**Jo**

**00:21:10:24**

You can tell.

**Liam**

**00:21:12:07**

You definitely can, Dylan, that's for sure. One of the things I was going to ask you as well was, I will say to you, is that it's very cutthroat, isn't it? It's a very cutthroat show. And, um, you know, there's no messing about. And, I mean, we see that from the very first episode. If you sing about rice and peas as Jay did, Jason's not going to get on with that.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:21:34:19**

Yeah, I mean, I don't think any of us were really that prepared for how how brutal, how honest and cutthroat the show was going to be. Uh, but, you know, the music industry is that way. So it's probably the best, again, representation for the people at home to understand what it's like. It really is as simple as you can be dropped from your label tomorrow, your fans can turn on you tomorrow. You're, you know, your manager can leave or, you know, something could happen at any point. And it does happen frequently. So I think people being that honest is helpful as well, because as as an artist, we're always trying to to grow and evolve and change and adapt. And if you feel comfortable all the time, you're not going to do those things. So you sometimes you need, you know, like a kick up the ass for someone to say, you know, actually that was pretty horrible and you need to do better. Um, otherwise you end up getting complacent. So although it was a bit of a shock for them, to be quite so honest, I think it was helpful for most people in the long run.

**Liam**

**00:22:33:16**

And I think you probably appreciated that Jason is invested in you. Really, isn't he? Like, this is this is not just kind of like a singing contest for him. This is kind of investing in a brand, basically.



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:22:45:11**

Yeah. I mean, that was like a sort of a, like a an important thing to note because like you say, it's not just people judging you. And then at the end of the competition, that's them gone out. See you later. We'll move on to the next. They were looking for someone that they want to sign to their label, who they see, uh, character in, who they see a future in, who they see great music and talent in. So they wanted to see the best of you. So, yeah. So every, every critique, even though it might not have felt good at the time, it was because they wanted more. And I suppose it's similar to people can relate to this with parental figures or caretakers who, you know, you come home and they just want from school or something. They just want you to give the best in your test results and stuff. Not because they're disappointed, but they just want you to do so well because they know your potential. And I think it's a more like that situation. Tough love, I think.

**Liam**

**00:23:33:14**

Definitely I got to say, I would say it's a bit of like for anyone who's not seen it, it's like, uh, in terms of the judges, it's a cross between The Apprentice and like maybe The Traitors, like, you know, it's a bit like it.

**Dylan**

**00:23:45:11**

It really is. Yeah. It's very much like The Apprentice, I think. I think there was also a difference between, uh, the American and the English giving feedback because Americans, I find, are very. Well, this is how I feel. I'm just going to say that this is this is the honest truth. And I find Brits bless Becky Hill. To be more sugar coating. So it began with I loved this. However, this one bit wasn't so good. It has this soft blow to it. So I enjoyed getting feedback from Becky because even if it wasn't my strongest, she would always fluff it up a little bit.

**Jo**

**00:24:19:09**

And there's like lots of, um, stuff on social media, isn't there, about Frank being so frank, which I find so funny. It's so true.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Liam**

**00:24:26:04**

He's got a very high bar, hasn't he? I mean, and to be fair, dealing in, you know, the first two weeks especially, you really hit that bar. You were the one leading the way and and that must have been brilliant, but also quite intimidating at the same time, I imagine.

**Dylan**

**00:24:40:20**

Yeah, it was very it was very intimidating. It's always it's always good to have somewhere to go, you know. So if you start at the very, very top, where are you going to go? The only way you can go is either stay there or you're going down. And it's more noticeable, I think when you start as the front runner, if you then have a couple of weeks post that where you're not performing to that level, it's more noticeable that you're going down than it is for someone who sort of started at the bottom or in the middle to just be going up or moving along. So I started with a microscope on me straight away, which, you know, in some ways is really good because I was really proud of myself. I, I think my strengths in the music industry are songwriting and performance. So that first week was was great for me. Um, but, you know, it helped me sort of push myself through the rest of the competition because I wanted to I wanted to stay up there. And, I mean, I don't know whether I should say this or not, but I really think from that first week, Frank then was holding me to a very high standard. So I didn't really have any room to sort of slip up or make a tiny mistake or to be subpar at any point, because there was no leeway for me to do that. So I think, I think I had a tough ride because I think they were like, we expect you to be the best every time. Um, and, you know, that's it's not realistic, but everyone wants that. But it's just not realistic. When you're put in a situation like that and you're doing challenges that are completely out of your remit. But again, it worked out. So I can't complain too much. Yeah.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Liam**

**00:26:12:17**

That's all well, I mean, the thing is as well, it must have been to have someone like Jason Derulo and Becky Hill and Frank, you know Harris as well there in front of you. That itself must have added another pressure because this wasn't just, you know, performing to a whole room of blank faces. This was performing very intimately to three people who are at the top of their game. Really? Yeah.

**Dylan**

**00:26:36:13**

I mean, it was performing to these three people who, two of which have been like a backdrop to your life without you even knowing it. I first started listening to Jason Derulo well, when I was in school, because it was he well, when I, when I was in school, I mean, it's going to make me sound a bit older than the other contestants, but like, it was all about MTV. It was all about music, TV. And that would be you go over to your mate's house and there would be the music channel on in the background, and there was always a Jason Derulo video, him dancing around, singing his heart out, and he was like, well, to reference his song that it boy, he was like the guy. So to then see him in person and you know, having 3D in front of you and then see how good he is as an artist because I think I even underestimated his ability. I sung, I sang with him, and he is an incredible voice and he's an incredible writer. And I think, you know, being in the presence of people that are great and as well with Becky Hill, more recently, you turn on any radio station and if it's not the song playing, it's the one that's coming on next. So to be with them and have feedback from them is is it was intense, but I was really grateful for that opportunity. And I think personally, for me, performing in front of a large number of people is almost easier than performing directly, like you say, to three and sometimes three judges and then nine other contestants or four contestants or two by the end. Um, yeah. It's a very different feeling than performing to a room full of people that have come to see you because they've bought a ticket.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Liam**

**00:28:06:02**

Absolutely. And one thing I was just going to add was that, um, with the other contestants as well as you, as you mentioned there, that, you know, I think we use the the eldest of all of them because you're 29, aren't you, Dylan?

**Dylan**

**00:28:17:11**

Yeah I think Jay was the same age as me when he was first there, but he left pretty swiftly. So then I lost. I lost my age, buddy.

**Liam**

**00:28:25:01**

Oh, because, like, that's what I kind of, you know, really felt was that this was a lot of young people, you know, starting off in, in their journey, you know, in the music industry. And, you know, it was at times, you know, a bit dog-eat-dog, really, wasn't it? That's the impression I got from times that must have been quite hard to be around.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:28:43:17**

It was it was, there were times, yeah, when it was very dog-eat-dog and there was a lot of the way that they were saying it. "Shade thrown". There was a lot of shades being thrown around. Um, it's something that I really tried to stay out of because I'm like that in my day to day life as well. I just don't really have time for it. Um, and I sort of said to them as well, not trying to be the wise old man of the group, but I was like, just don't focus on it. It just doesn't matter. Like you're here to display your music and if your music is good enough, you can just you walk through. It's fine. So getting too caught up in throwing shade at other people or being like, no one needs you to be honest about their performance. Like it just is really irrelevant. I mean, it makes for good TV, don't get me wrong. But yeah, I tried to sort of remind everyone that they're there to just do what they're there to do, and throwing shade is not going to make them any better at that time. You know what I mean? Um, yeah. So yeah, I mean, it wasn't it wasn't an awkward atmosphere, if you know what I mean. It wasn't something that we live day in and day out with people not talking to each other and whatever. It was more of those few sly comments here and there that were, um, good for entertainment value. I've watched it back and I've laughed quite a lot, so.

**Jo**

**00:29:57:21**

I think it really comes across as well with you when you say that, like you were so chilled, you know, you had your music and your music's very chilled and just like like, I don't know, like quite heartwarming, I suppose. And like, your whole personality kind of. That's kind of how you are, I think, from watching and from also seeing you, you know, um, in the recording process, um, I'm really intrigued to know, like, because I think a lot of you, you're quite good friends now, aren't you? And you're all, um, you must have learned so, so much from each other. Like how how has it been now that the series is finished? You all quite close. Like you all you all kind of still speak as a team quite often.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:30:32:18**

Uh, we're in a we're still in a big, um, Project Icon group chat. So that's quite fun because not only are we there to sort of big each other up, you know, and if some if someone's got some music coming out or someone's been in the studio and they're like sending stuff or someone's just sending a funny meme from the internet, we're not only there to sort of have banter with each other, but also it's really nice. I've seen between a few of them, you know, someone's had some negative comment online and they've posted it in the chat, and then there's nine other people to go. Don't listen to that, whatever, choice word there. Um, don't listen to that person. And, um, just like to sort of be there for each other because it's an experience that we went through. And we can we can only really understand it like each other can. So it's good for all aspects. I think there are people that you're, you are closer to because you just get on with them better. Um, like I said earlier, I still I chat mostly, I think with Mia and Emelle in a more like like a big brother. Um, because I think I just got them more. My kind of people just got on with them very, very easily. Um, but yeah, everyone's still remaining. Everyone still remains in the group chat. No one's been kicked out yet. No one started a riot.

**Liam**

**00:31:40:22**

I know you were in a group chat with, uh, with Jason, Frank and and Becky. Of course.

**Dylan**

**00:31:46:22**

I'm working my way towards that one.

**Liam**

**00:31:50:04**

Quite right.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:31:51:01**

Yeah, I am at the minute. Becky's the only one that's missing. I'm in a little group chat with Jason and Frank, but I'm trying to wangle a new one. Where Becky's in there. Although I have been communicating with Becky a bit on Instagram every now and again, we'll have a bit of a laugh on Instagram, which is nice. . And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now I never cared less about breathing oxygen Than underneath a goddess and the gods I can feel a fire burning through your skin The only holy power I will worship to A lonely vixen howling to the sun Slowly hold me down until the su- uh, uh, ugh And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body (on your body) And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? (so what?) We're in heaven now, heaven now

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Heaven Now by Dylan And**

**The Moon**

**00:33:11:14**

'And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now I never cared less about breathing oxygen Than underneath a goddess and the gods I can feel a fire burning through your skin The only holy power I will worship to A lonely vixen howling to the sun Slowly hold me down until the su- uh, uh, ugh And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? We're in heaven now, heaven now And now I'm praying to another God I found nirvana in my hands on your body (on your body) And if it's sinning, i'm a sinner, so what? (so what?) We're in heaven now, heaven now.'

**Liam**

**00:33:34:18**

As he was discussing you, you've you've had a bit of experience with music and performing already and you were able to kind of, I suppose, hit the ground running. Really. So tell us how you got first got into music.

**Dylan**

**00:33:45:05**

I think the way that I first got into music, looking back at it now, goes hand in hand with my my life story of being a trans guy. Actually, I think when I was a kid, I knew intrinsically like who I was. I knew that I was a little boy, um, and I sort of knew that there was something about my existence which wasn't quite right. And it was only, you know, when I sort of got into school and started having to conform to the rules there that I started to realise, oh, I think I'm in the wrong group. That was how I felt, like I always was like, I'm in the wrong P.E. group. I'm in the wrong group when we go swimming, like I'm just in the wrong place all the time. And I kind of felt a bit like an outsider even



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

though I managed to make like a bunch of friends. I never felt lonely in friendship, but I felt lonely within myself because I knew I wasn't quite in the right place. So I looked to find, I guess I wasn't even really looking, but I stumbled across like some of my dad's vinyls and he had David Bowie, like a bunch of David Bowie stuff. And I was like, man, this guy looks weird as well. Like, there's something going on here, but you know, he's being celebrated and praised for that. So maybe this music thing is somewhere that I could go and I could be a peculiar person, because that's how I felt at the time, just sort of very out of the ordinary. And I thought, like, maybe that's a walk of life that I could go into and be part of, but be celebrated for being different. Um, and then I think what happened next? I think that was just a lot of music in my household as a kid. Like my parents always had music on. It was on in the car, it was on if we were doing housework. So for me, music was a very joyous thing. It was all about singing along and who could sing the loudest and stuff. So it was it was this place where I found a lot of solace and a lot of happiness. So I asked my parents, um, for a drum kit when I was like eight, because I kind of felt like I was a bit protected behind the drum kit. Um, and it was a very loud instrument, and I felt like I could get a lot of my inner angst out in that sound. Um, but shortly after that, I did a bunch of grades in drums, but shortly after that I realised I would have to be at the back of the stage and I'd always be sat down. So I was like, oh, actually, I think I'm supposed to be a front man. I think I'm supposed to be at the front. Um, I'm just very hard at being a person to keep quiet and not try and show off. So then it was like, oh, can I have a guitar? So my parents bought me a guitar for a birthday and I just taught myself how to play, really, just on YouTube. I think I was just YouTube and you know how to play Numb by Linkin Park and just following the instructions. And then from there, I just got so invested in every day I'd come home from school, and after being outside, I'd cycle home and I'd come in and I just throw my bike down and pick up my guitar and sit on my bed for hours. And I found that to be like a really comforting place for me, um, because I was struggling with my identity. And when I wrote music and when I was performing

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

music, it kind of felt like my identity didn't really matter anymore, especially when I would play the songs that I'd written to friends and to people. It was like they were just listening to this soul, rather than they were looking or trying to understand who I was in, in human form or anything like that. And it might sound really kind of kooky to people listening, but it was more it was beyond the body for me. And it was like, right, we're just we're communicating via music and emotion right now. So yeah, I can I continue music for that reason, I think, because it was just helping me not think about who I was. But then later in life, it was actually during the pandemic where I'd realised that for a long time I'd been using music as a way to suppress my feelings, and it was something that had gone from being this safety net for me, where I, I was finding a lot of joy and happiness because I was masking a problem to now we're in the pandemic. I can't do my performances, I can't be out in the world making music. And now I'm just I'm here with my own thoughts again. And I realised that I'd spent a long time on autopilot thinking, if music can just cover up this feeling I have and I can get along being this person I am for right now, I don't have to do anything about it. But then when I was on my own again, I thought, actually, no, there is a deeper, deeper issue here for me. And then that's when I decided that I would have to, I wanted to, I like I came to that point in my life when I was like, I have to come out. I have to be who I am authentically, and I have to live a life where I feel happy without possibly without music, if I need to be. Um, so yeah, music has been like tandem in my life the whole time. Like we've been inseparable ever since I found it for one reason or another. It used to be as a mask, and now it's as like an elevation of the person that I am, which I think is really beautiful too.

**Jo**

**00:38:41:19**

I think in episode one you were saying how music helps you to sort of like, um, I don't know, describe your thoughts and feelings better. Like that's kind of how you communicate quite well. Um, I found that really, like, sort of interesting and heartwarming to listen to.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:38:56:04**

Yeah, I think it comes from that exact place. Because, you know, when I, when I was a kid, I knew I was trans, but I had no vocabulary to explain that to people because and also, when you're a child, you can say anything to an adult. They are today, I'm a I'm a tortoise, you know, and you can say a lot of different things, and some of it's taken seriously and some of it's not. And I tried to express when I was really young. Ah, but I'm a younger brother. I am a boy. I should be with the boys. And I think people just thought I was just slipping up in my language when really I knew exactly what I was saying, but I wasn't being- I didn't receive the kind of information back that I wanted to hear, like, "Okay, we understand you. We'll we'll communicate with you as if you're our son or our like, a younger brother." So I just assumed that I have to bottle up all of my feelings because no one is ever going to understand me. Uh, and it's dangerous for me to try and say who I am because I'm not being received. So then it was this music became this only way that I was ever able to express any emotion without feeling like this was me talking to another human being. It was like, if I wrote a song and, you know, someone said, is this about you? I could easily be like, no, no, no, no, no, no, it's not about me. I just wrote it, you know? So it was kind of again, it was a way for me to express myself because it was cathartic to write the music and actually explain my feelings onto paper. But then it was also safer to be like, oh, you know, it's just a little silly song. Don't mind that. Um, yeah.

**Liam**

**00:40:24:03**

I was gonna say that. Dylan, it sounds like it was a form of therapy for you as well. Really? And, um, you know, when when did you when did you start to transition? When? When with that process was it the pandemic you mentioned there?

**Dylan**

**00:40:36:05**

Yeah, yeah. You're right in saying it was a like a form of therapy. It definitely was. And it still remains to be that now to this day, I was even in a in a studio session yesterday where I'd started the session with writing a happy song, because that's normally my go

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

to because I love to make other people feel good. So I started this happy song and we finished it, and it was all a vibe in the studio, and there was like a few hours left and the songwriter said to me, you know, do you want to write another song together? So I said, yeah, sure. I sat down at the piano and he said, is there anything that you haven't written about in a while? Anything that you want to talk about that you haven't? And I played this chord on the piano, and it felt so sad to me. And all of a sudden I thought, actually, there is this thing that I want to talk about. It's like, are we am I doing life right? You know, am I doing it right? Am I am I calling my mum enough? Am I am I doing getting the sleep I need and I communicate with my friends like all these things? Are we doing it right? And I think it's something that a lot of people can resonate with. And I actually like started to well up at the piano and I was like, oh, don't turn around because this dude's going to see me crying. But it was such, such an emotional experience, and I think it's the only way I really do communicate with myself. And like, it's like a check in, I think. And music is just an easy way for me to do that. Um, but yeah. So back to the original question. Uh, I started to I started my transition year in, in, in the pandemic. That was when the journey really began for me. But there were I mean, it it really began for me when I was a child because that's who I knew then, I think. But I was about 25 or 6 when I started to speak to my friends about it, and it was more how I felt uncomfortable in my body and how I think I'd be happier with a different name or pronouns. But I never sort of said, you know, 'I'm trans'. It was more like, these are the things I'm thinking would make my life easier. And then when the pandemic hit and I think I just, I was just about to turn 27, I think that was when I was like, right, this is this is the time now. Actually, I'm, I can't it was almost like, I can't go on anymore. I've tried for a really long time and it's just I'm not going to be able to be happy this way. So yeah, it was it was mostly throughout the pandemic. So I sort of went in, went into the pandemic as one person and came out as the the authentic version of that, of me.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:42:51:11**

I suppose, because like and I speak to quite a lot of trans people about this. I've got quite a large, um, community of friends, and a lot of them are, um, from within the LGBT community. A lot of them are trans masculine or trans feminine or non-binary, and my partner is non-binary as well. And chatting to them, from everything that they say is it like you're suppressing yourself so much and you reach a point where you just can't do it anymore, like same as, same with anything. Like you just have to be your authentic self, don't you? Like you can't. You can't live like that.

**Dylan**

**00:43:17:22**

Yeah, I think, I think like like a visual representation I could give is like if like a Coca-Cola bottle or like anything fizzy, like if you know, you're, you're walking Coca Cola bottle and every now and again you get knocked over and hit and you're knocked over, and then all of that energy just builds up inside. So much that there comes a point when, like the cork comes out and the top comes off and you, you literally just explode with feelings because I think we're just we're not taught, you know, as a society from a young age that there's a different existence than just the binary, there's the male and female and everything within that needs to be under the categories. And it's not only damaging for trans people and intersex people, it's damaging for both. For people that do do identify as male and female because they're then trying to fit these, if fit themselves into these categories. And, you know, in quotation marks again, "men need to be hyper masculine. Never cry. Blue. Only football, rugby." and women in quotation marks "need to be pink and feminine and ballet and soft." And you know, it's damaging for everyone to to live in that kind of that extreme binary, um, but extremely damaging for people who are trans because they, they, they identify with one, but they, they kind of look like the other. And it's just it's very painful as an existence. So yeah, it's like we're just not educated enough to know that we can do anything different.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:44:41:07**

Yeah, I, I actually really I can that that makes so much sense I suppose. And that's, I think anyone that's listening to this, that, that is part of the LGBTQ+ community, I think that's so relatable because I suppose you grow up feeling like you do have to kind of fit yourself into into boxes, don't you? Um, of what society kind of expects. And I think as you get older, if you're given the opportunity to be able to really be yourself and really kind of, um, follow your hopes and dreams on top of your identity and sexuality and whatever else, whoever else you are. Um, I think it's when you can really sort of, um, I don't know, be the best version of yourself and be the most confident version of yourself. I think a lot of people think that. I suppose you're quite shy. You're quiet when you're younger, but actually it might not be that. It might just be that you're trying really hard to fit in.

**Dylan**

**00:45:25:11**

Yeah, I think you hit the nail on the head, really, Jo? Like, I think that is a case of what it is. And what I've learnt about growing up is actually, for me, growing up is a lot of unlearning rather than learning. I'm unlearning all the stuff that I was taught as a kid so that I can become the best version of myself, because we're we're sort of put into this society where everything is quite cookie cutter and one size fits all or two sizes, fit all, and it just that's just not the way of life for every person on the planet. There's a different way of existing. And like we should be, we should be treating people like that, that you're you're you're an individual unique being. And who who are you? We're not going to tell you who you are. Grow up and learn for yourself. And I think I think we're just we're just not at a place where that that's happening. Uh, and I think I think it's why there's a lot of, like, unhealed trauma, like, within, within our generation and generations above who couldn't even talk about it. It was just a lot of unresolved feelings. Um, so I think it's all coming to the forefront now within within our generations. And Gen Z are pushing it even further. And I think I think there will be a big shift in the culture at some point but we're just we're not there yet. Um, which, which, which onto another point is why I was so happy to

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

be part of Project Icon, as well as being a trans person, and it wasn't something we were even going to talk about on the show, initially. I sort of said, I just want to be part of the show and represent for a community and it not be like a sob story. And the BBC were so supportive and yeah, like, cool. We went even talking about it. Just you being part of it is so poignant enough. Um, but then at the same time, in episode four, something did come up for me very naturally. That was a problem because of my transition, and I was trying to hit some high notes that I couldn't because of my vocal transition. Uh, and, and I was like, you know what? Now that we're here and it's organically come up, I am going to talk about it, because when I was a kid, all I wanted to see was someone like me because I would have understood who I was. So now I had that opportunity. I was like, I'm going to go and we'll talk about it. And I think the BBC really helped deliver it in such a beautiful, very, very simple and underplayed way, which was the best way to do it, I think.

**Liam**

**00:47:39:19**

I thought that was beautifully done, Dylan, because, you know, I was thinking actually, you know, because obviously we when we organise this interview with you and obviously you're a trans man, so you and you're being part of this Pridecast where we interview LGBTQ+ people. And I was watching the series and I thought, there's been no mention of Dylan being trans. And and I wasn't shocked about it. I was actually really happy about that because why did they why would they need to mention it was no need to mention it at all? And as you say, you organically got there in episode four and it was so- I think the way that, um, the show treated the treated it was really, really, really, really good. And the way you, you kind of spoke about it was just brilliant. And I suppose you must have like watching it back now, you must have felt in that way you'd arrived, really. You know, that might sound a bit of a cliché but in being able to be your authentic self by not having to promote it or tell the whole world you've actually arrived to where you want to be, I imagine.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:48:44:13**

Yeah, it's quite a full circle moment, really, because I've been I've been a musician for for more of my life than not like as I said, like I started getting into music when I was about seven. So about 20, 20 years, more than. And for all of that time, most of that time, I was just I was trying to be the person that I am, but I was trying to do it in a body and in an image and in the eyes of other people. I was trying to be my authentic self whilst not being authentic, because all I wanted to be was authentic, but I wasn't. So now to sort of like go through my transition and to sort of become part of this cast, which I thought was really diverse and really great to be in and then to be, you know, celebrated as a front runner as well, and then go through and then tell my story in a way that I felt comfortable to tell it more than halfway through the competition. And for BBC to be like, we're not even here to talk about it. We don't actually want to talk about it, unless you do. It's just it's just who you are. It was it was just an amazing feeling because for the first time in my life, it was like, what do you mean, you're trans? That's boring. We're not here to talk about that. We're here to talk about the music, which was like, so liberating. But at the same time, you know, we did end up talking about it, which I think is important. But the, the, the, the way that it happened, I think was what was most magical for me.

**Liam**

**00:50:05:08**

And I don't know what the reception is being from, from the audience, but I think for most people, they wouldn't have even known that you're trans.



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:50:11:08**

Yeah, for sure. I think that's a lot of, um, I've had a bunch of, uh, Instagram messages, I think, and TikTok messages for people like, 'I've been supporting you from day one. I didn't even know. That's really great. Well done you'. I've I've had I can honestly say I've had not a single bit of negative feedback, which is so nice. Um, half half of the people who've contacted me are other trans people who have said, wow, like, what you're doing is great for representation. It's so nice to see someone like me like, thank you so much for doing that. Uh, and then half of the people are, I'm assuming, cisgender straight people who are sort of like, 'Oh, dude. Like, wow.' I've never understood what the whole trans thing was, but you made it sound so simple when I get it now. Props for that. Like, amazing. Even- there was a couple couple of the cast members who didn't know I was trans and still didn't know until the episode the other day, and I had a I had a couple messages like, dude, no way. Like, it's amazing that you've put yourself out there for your community. I didn't even know. Um, just congratulations. And it's not that people. I'm like, for your audience out there, I'm not trying to say that people should or shouldn't know. Like the game is not to pass, like it's not to try and pretend that we're cisgender. It's just that it's it's nice that it's not always at the forefront of every conversation you have.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:51:29:05**

I was gonna say, um, because. So I've been, um, basically we started working on this show sort of like last January, um, like every year, uh, trying to find locations and things like that and trying to get, um, trying to figure out what the correct team looked like and making sure we had a good casting team and making sure that we, you know, we'd put everything in place to make sure we were being as inclusive as possible. Um, so I worked for MultiStory all year round, part of ITV Studios, one of their labels. I'm in quite a fortunate position where I'm one of their production managers, but I'm also one of the Pride co-chairs. Um, so I kind of see what ITV overall are doing to kind of try and, and, and help, um, with inclusivity across all minority groups and intersectionality and that kind of thing. Um, so when I kind of went off the series for a while, was working on a couple of different things and came back just as filming started, um, and it was really like amazing to see, like the cast, um, and how the casting team were working with you. Like, I suppose I just kind of really, um, I really would love to hear a little bit about what made you feel validated when you're applying for the show. And I suppose what other production teams - I think everyone's doing the same work anyway - But what would you like? What's really important to you for you to kind of see as as someone who is trans when you're applying for these kind of series?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:52:43:00**

I think I think ITV did that a really ITV, BBC, the whole, the whole collective did a really good job of putting the cast together. But I think, I think from the beginning because a lot of, a lot of this show was also outreach. So the, the, the casting team were reaching out to people who they found online as well. So musicians that they saw living their best life on Instagram or TikTok, they would reach out to them. And I think maybe half of the cast were reach-outs and half of them had applied. Um, and I was someone who was reached out to and I think it was I think I think someone had reached out to me purely because they had seen my music and they had seen my TikToks about how I made music. And I think, I think it was only after the first phone call that I said, oh, 'Well, I'm also a trans guy'. And they'd gone and looked at more of my older content and I thought, wow, like, this is another this is another amazing thing to. To have as part of our line-up. Um. And not in a tick boxy way at all. I think it was just it's really great to give all of the minorities, uh, representation. And when I, when I met a lot of the cast for the first time, I felt like we'd all been treated. Just like- [as] human beings, I don't know, it felt really organic, and it felt like we want to make sure that there are all types of people here. Um, but you're all here because you've got a musical talent, but there's lots of different ways to have a musical talent and lots of different shapes and sizes and sounds to be in the musical talent. And, um, I think, I think they did a really good job.

**Liam**

**00:54:14:18**

One of the things as well, Dylan, that I thought was was really, really well done with um, your acknowledging of, of your past self on the show. And um, tell us a bit about that, because this is really extraordinary. I find that your, you combine your, uh, some of the videos that you recorded in your past that as you, as your past self and you combine it with the videos that you do. Now, tell us about that because I find that really, really amazing.

**Dylan**

**00:54:42:09**

It's a funny thing, that one, because I think it's I think it's

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

probably the same for a lot of trans people where once you have jumped over that initial hurdle to come out and say, I'm trans, I want to move forward with my life and be my authentic self. You sort of, you get on this ride of like, that's what I want to go and do now. I want to sort of remove myself completely from my old life. Which, don't get me wrong, that was my initial- that was my initial feelings. After coming out. I was like, all I want to do now is just look the way I want to look, sound the way I want to sound, and just move on and be. Dylan and I want everyone to see me as Dylan and only Dylan for the first time. As soon as you have that in your hands, all you want to do is keep it sacred and feel that good all the time. But it was slowly, in again my my unlearning of myself, that actually I have lived for 26 or 7 years and during that time I learnt a lot. I was a lot. I was a lot to other people as well. And I, I documented a lot of my life because I was a musician and I had these videos, and I'd been using my voice for a lot of the time, and a lot of people resonated with my music and with my voice, and I felt like to completely shut out that person was a disservice to myself, and also a disservice to people who who are also possibly trans and they want they want to embrace their life and not just feel like we have to shut it out because it was a mistake, because it's not a mistake. It's just it's you're moving through life and becoming more authentic. And I think like trying to keep keep that was nice. I'm not saying everyone should do that because it's painful sometimes, and it was painful for me, but I think it was, again like a way of therapy. Me looking back at my old videos and my sound and my songs and knowing that I now feel and look and I'm in such a good place now that I'm able to look back at them and see them in a, in a, in a unique way and look at it and go, that was that was the way I looked at that time, but it was just someone I was being for the time being while I became me, and then singing at the same time and making these duet videos and sort of making the TikToks where I say, this is how I look, this is how I look now, and this is my music together. It's it's kind of for me, it feels really empowering because it shows growth and it shows possibility and it shows like that. It can be a happy journey of finding yourself as well, rather than feeling like, you know, you need to

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

hide your past secrets, I think.

**Liam**

**00:57:08:16**

I think that's hugely inspiring, I must say. I think that like, you know, being able to look back on your former self and I suppose for a lot of people who are in a similar position, they perhaps look back on that former self and didn't feel like they had much control of that self. They had to just find themselves in a in a situation where they didn't fit in. Whereas, you know, you looking back now, you're taking control of that and are able to look ahead to the future, you know, and be who you are. And yeah, that I'm sure that will really inspire so many people.

**Dylan**

**00:57:40:11**

Yeah. I mean, don't get me wrong, it's it's not easy all the time. And there there are moments where it hurts more and there are moments where it feels amazing. But I think the key thing for me is that, like, what what you don't own owns you in the end. And I think you just have to sort of like own, own, own your life, because if you don't, it's something that's going to eat you a bit more inside. Um, I mean, I'm also not not trained therapist, so don't quote me on that. But that's how that's how I feel about the situation. And I just like you say, you have to you have to take control of your own life so that you're you're always the one in, in, in the, in the driver's seat.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**00:58:16:17**

And I guess it's, it's about now like you are who you are. And it's saying, you know what that that was who society thought that I was. And but like, you know, using these pronouns, um, like I am me and I want you to, to kind of respect that. So that's supposed maybe that's kind of where the empowerment comes in, like you are you um, and I think it's it, I suppose, like, it's not about showing people like, I don't know, obviously you get quite like with social media now you get sort of you can get comments and like you said, you've had really good feedback and really positive comments. And I think that's really amazing to hear. It's how it should be. And, and and treating you as you are. And you know, this this person, even if they're watching your old video is that's that's not what it's about. It's about showing that growth and that and that journey.

**Dylan**

**00:59:05:11**

Yeah. Exactly. And I think, I think a lot of why I did it was because I feel like I've been gifted quite a unique experience in my life, where I have documented a lot of my life and I have a lot of audio and visual recordings. And as a trans person, what changes a lot in your life is your visual, your your image and your the voice. So those two things go hand in hand and that is what's changed in my life. So I think to to be able to provide it's not like a service, but it's more like just-

**Jo**

**00:59:33:15**

Education isn't it.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**00:59:35:01**

Yeah, it's education. And I kind of I kind of felt the duty is the wrong word because I wanted to do it, but I kind of felt like a bit of an obligation to, to if I, if I felt strong enough to provide that kind of content for people, whether they're trans and looking to get more information or whether they're cisgender people who want to understand more, I just felt like if I if when I think back to my younger self, I just was like pleading to see something like that and I know I if I can just help one kid somewhere, you know what I mean? If I can just help the small version of me, just one kid, I think it's I've done my job and I'll be happy that I did that.

**Liam**

**01:00:13:13**

And no doubt you will have done. And there'll be so many people out there that will, from watching the show, will just take so much inspiration from what you've done, Dylan. Um, one of the things as well, I wanted to ask you. I mean, you know, I think we all know how important, you know, family and friends or your chosen family are, you know, has that been something for you that has helped you with this, this journey so far?

**Dylan**

**01:00:37:17**

Yeah. I mean, fortunately for me, my family have been really supportive. Um, and I think it's because I think it's because they, they, they sort of they knew- I guess they just kind of kne- And that sounds like a really funny thing to say. But I said it to them when I was a kid, a fair few times in a few different ways. And then although I didn't, you know, I wasn't, I didn't, I didn't transition when I was a young teenager or anything like that. I, I lived without transitioning. I was very much like, well, if I'm going to be in this body, in this existence, I'm still going to do it my way. So I, I, I dressed sort of very masculine. And as a kid I, I put my, I put myself completely in the bi- like the male binary. Like, like I said earlier, almost in a toxic way, to the point where I was like, I'm playing football and play rugby, I'm gonna be in the army, I'm gonna play with guns, I'm gonna be this like little tough guy. And I was the prince, and I was always dressing up in that way, and I, I thought I looked I looked like a little guy until, like, a

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

late point in my teenage life when I thought, I'm going to have to try harder because life isn't getting any easier. So for them to get back to the point, I think when I when I said, you know, do you know what? There's actually a word for the way there's like there's a thing for the way that I am experiencing life and it's this is the situation. I think it wasn't difficult for them to get their heads around. Um, and although like, although the idea of, like, um, uh, gender affirming surgeries or like hormones can be difficult for people to get their head around as soon as I- I think it was the way that I ended up explaining it to my parents without a lot of vocabulary. I basically said in a used like emotion to tell the story. I was like, I want you to understand me as your son. I want you to understand me as your brother, like I want you to understand who I am as a soul. Rather than saying, this is this is the technical term for this, this is the technical term for this. Because a lot of times people hear just a word and they're just so scared by it because of the way it's been used in the media. So you say transgender and a lot of people are like, that sounds terrifying because of the way it's been like used as a derogatory term for quite a long time. And the way it's portrayed in film and TV is often like the butt of the joke. And it's sort of like a negative connotation. So I tried to steer clear of being so specific about it and was like, I just want you to understand me as a human, and this is how I feel in relation to you. And I think that really helped, um, my family understand and, and my, you know, chosen family and friends. I mean, not all of my friends are part of the LGBT community. A lot of them are, but a lot of them aren't. And I think, again, it was just trying to get them to relate to me as a human being and just saying, I'm your mate, I'm a guy and it's he/him, and that's just the situation. So and everyone was just so supportive about it, and I think I know it's very difficult and it's it's not me trying to say everything will be like sunshine and roses if you do it my way, because it's it's not always the case. But I think a lot of times if you embrace who you are wholeheartedly and proudly, people get on board with that because they can see that you're being you or authentic. And I can see that you're happy about it, and they can just see that as an energy and go, wow, you know who you are and you're telling



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

me, okay, I can understand that. I think it's more when people are- obviously it's hard not to be nervous, but if you're unsure and uncertain and you're confused, it almost comes across like people don't want you to explore that because you don't know. So therefore you can't possibly know for yourself. You're making you're making a silly choice and everyone's fearful, um, and it's based in like a fear rather than love.

**Jo**

**01:04:19:00**

I think that's so interesting. I think it comes back to what we're saying about the box, about fitting in boxes, doesn't it? And like I suppose if you are coming out to your family, um, some people might be nervous, I suppose, because they're going against everything that they've been told is what they should be doing, and they don't. Maybe they don't like, I suppose, their parents. It's almost like you don't want to disappoint your parents, but actually, the way that you've described it, they're we're talking about like coming at it with like, this is how I'm feeling, and I want you to embrace me in this way. It's really helping- Like, it's helping them to understand who you are. And really, it's not. I think there's a bit of a, um, misconception that actually, you know, if you transition or if you like, you know, if you come out as anything other than, um, I don't know, like, cis-het that you're like, um, that your family or your whoever, your loved ones have to grieve for you almost because you're a different person, but you're not you're still the same person, aren't you?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**01:05:10:18**

Yeah. I think that's one of the most difficult things. When I, when I hear other people, other usually other trans people, I hear stories and they say that, you know, their family found it really difficult. And they said that, you know, they're grieving the loss of this person. I find it really difficult to to hear. And it's probably the most painful part of it because like, it's it's the bit that changes the least. You know, it's it's really the bit that doesn't change at all. Like I'm the same person, like exactly the same light, energy, soul, the jokes I make, the things I say, I am the same essence, the same being, it just comes in a different package, but a package that makes me feel comfortable. It's like it's just. Yeah, it's, it's it's probably the most sad thing to hear when I, when I do hear that, because it's if you take away like the, the physical life that we live in on earth, like it's all about the soul and the energetics and how you feel and how you communicate through emotion. And those things are the things that don't change.

**Jo**

**01:06:03:18**

Yeah. And actually, like you say, it's if anything, it's it was it must be as a, as a someone who's transitioned to feel so much relief that you finally able to be yourself, like, not on the outside, because you can express yourself however you want anyway, but just to be able to just not feel like it's all inside you.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**01:06:22:02**

Yeah I mean, if anything, I don't know if my friends will agree with me, but if anything, I think I've become a better person. I think I'm funnier now. I think I'm happier now, like I've become- I've become a more complete whole version of myself, because now I'm not second guessing myself all the time. I'm not thinking about myself. I used to spend, and this is not an arrogant thing, but it's more of an insecurity thing. I used to spend so much time thinking about myself because in a situation I'd be like, how am I sitting? How am I being perceived? How are people going to think if I sit like this? Maybe they won't see this part of my body. All these things I used to think all the time. It was so loud in my brain, and now I just walk into a room and all I want to do is make people smile and laugh. So I think after transitioning and feeling better, you actually you get a better version of that person because they're able to just be themselves.

**Jo**

**01:07:08:12**

When you, um, were talking about and able to have your shirt open, for example, like that's just something that that suppose cis men would probably not even think about. They just do it. And I think like hearing that it's really it was like a wow moment. I think for like lots of people to, to hear that's that's something that's meant so much to you. And you can see why.

**Dylan**

**01:07:28:03**

Yes. And it's, it's, it's such a silly, insignificant thing really. But it's, it's those are the things that I mean the most I think to maybe like most trans people, just it's the really small, insignificant things like going to the chip shop and someone saying, what's your order, sir? Instead of, instead of anything else. It's so it's so minimal, but it means so much. And those, those are the things that I think people in the audience will resonate more with, like just understanding those, those minutiae things like the nuance of like it's the little things that are making making people feel better.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Jo**

**01:08:01:04**

Totally. And I think, um, I, um, I really notice it say I'm with my partner and they get gendered incorrectly, and it really does affect them. I don't know if you have the same thing. Like I've started to now like, say I book a taxi, or if I book a restaurant, I'll put in the notes. Please don't, um, please make sure that you're using Non-gendered language, because I just think or or please ensure that you're not assuming gender because I just think people, um, that's what I think society we kind of from, from what I can see that will be really helpful for people, people just to kind of really embrace, um, and, and suppose like educate themselves and understand on what, understand what's important um, to people.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**01:08:40:07**

That's really I love that you do that. I've not I've not heard that before. That's really beautiful. Like to add it in the notes before you go to a restaurant. I think it's really, really nice because it just makes people think before being on autopilot. It makes the server and the bartenders just have have a little think and the difference in them not gendering someone, not misgendering someone. So it's going to make such a huge impact to that person more than they'll probably realise. And I think, I think it's like, I don't know whether it's because I'm a bit more of an echo chamber or it's because I'm just, you know, so happy at the minute. I'm only seeing happiness. I know there's a lot of negative and toxic nature within the trans community, especially within the UK at the minute and with the laws. And it's not safe really, but there are small things that are happening which are really beautiful and I think like the ITV, BBC having me on the show and talking about it in such a nice way, being one, and I've seen it in other shows as well, but small things within like straight community, sorry, cisgender community, like my my sister for example. But like when I, when I first explained myself to her, she was like the first person just to be on board because she just wants nothing but my happiness. But now it's got to the point where she sent me an email the other day and it was, 'Hi. So my kids have all done this.' She's a teacher. 'My kids have all done this new initiative where they've made this video talking about pronouns and how to use them and why it hurts if you use them wrong and they're showing it in assembly at [the end of] the week.' And I was like, wow. And she was like, 'Yeah, all of the teachers at the school now we all have our pronouns in our email thing.' And I was like, because she because she, she made that happen because she knows me and she knows what it means to me. And now they have like an LGBT club at my old school, and I've gone back there to talk and just be in amongst it. And it's like it's small things that makes such a huge difference.

**Jo**

**01:10:23:16**

Yeah, 100%.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Liam**

**01:10:25:20**

Definitely it. It's incredible. Actually, Dylan and I think that just by you being on the show and by you talking on here and, you know, more people like yourselves being able to, you know, show who they really are. You know, hopefully we are starting to to get to that place where, where we need to be as a society. And, uh, you know that I know that it's it's hard to be the person to, you know, to kind of have to step out of, you know, the, you know, the, um, the kind of circle. And it's hard, but what you're doing, it just speaks volumes, really.

**Dylan**

**01:10:57:06**

Oh, thank you so much. I'm. I really appreciate that. I think it's like someone someone's gonna have to do these things somewhere. And that's that's how all movements change. And I'm not saying that I'm anywhere near at the forefront, because there's a lot of, you know, activists who do so much more than I do, but it's it's just being, if you can, just being proud and being visible and just being out there. Cause those it's tiny ripples that eventually make the tidal wave.

**Jo**

**01:11:21:22**

And eventually we'd like to hope we can get to a place where we don't, where we can just not even have to, um, educate. We can just be visible and be ourselves. And it would just be everyone will just be, you know, that'll be it. That would be the dream, wouldn't it? But and I think when people ask you, oh like, oh you see comments sometimes I call why do you need to like, you know, why do we need to see two men on screen. Why do I need to see see whatever? And it's like, well, until we all feel equal and even with any minority group like why- Why do we need to why do we need to, I don't know, make sure that we're using I don't know, like why someone's got a like whether someone's got a disability or whether someone's from ethnic minority or whatever. And it's like, we need to see representation and we need to hear stories. It is relevant until we all feel like we our stories don't need to be told, I suppose.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan** **01:12:08:15**

Yeah, yeah, I totally agree with you. I couldn't agree more. It's the way it is.

**Liam** **01:12:12:21**

And what what an incredible thing to do it through music of course. Still in as well. And in terms of what's on the agenda now, like what's the plan ahead. Because you know you've won the competition. What what's next?

**Dylan** **01:12:24:21**

I'm hoping that I can just continue to make uplifting or emotive music and just keep putting it out and bring a community of people together. I want people to come to my shows, whoever you are, whatever walk of life, and just feel like you're part of having a good time. Like that's what I want to create for from my shows and from my community, whether it's online or at a gig. I just want people to feel like they have a place to come and just be happy.

**Jo** **01:12:49:00**

And I mean, Liam are going to come and interview you. One of you do a live Pridecast at one of your shows in the future?

**Dylan** **01:12:54:11**

Yes, absolutely. I'm down for it. I put you on the guest list.

**Liam** **01:12:58:07**

We'll learn to use TikTok by then Dylan

**Dylan** **01:13:01:18**

I won't have even how to use TikTok by then.

**Liam** **01:13:05:05**

Uh, well, thank you so much for for what you're doing. Congratulations on winning Project Icon. And for anyone that hasn't watched it yet, how can they, uh, catch up with it?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dylan And The Moon***

**Dylan**

**01:13:14:17**

So if you go to BBC iPlayer, uh, BBC three is where all of the episodes are. There's six of them. I'm in all of them. Lucky you. Um, so yeah, go and check them all out there. And if you're trying to find me online anywhere, uh, my artist name is Dylan And The Moon. I'm usually found skulking around on Instagram or TikTok. Um, I try not to. I'm not really on Twitter that much, but you can find me there. I find it hard to remember to log in, but yeah. Instagram. TikTpl. You find me on there and obviously Spotify as well. So if you hit me, follow on there and I've got new music coming out very shortly.

**Liam**

**01:13:47:10**

Oh well make sure that you tune into that. Dylan Holloway, thank you so much for joining us on the ITV Pridecast.

**Dylan**

**01:13:53:20**

Thank you so much for having me, Liam and Jo have a great rest of the day.

**Liam**

**01:14:04:11**

Oh well. A massive congratulations again to Dylan Holloway on winning Project Icon, and thanks for sharing your incredible story with us here on the ITV Pridecast. And of course, thank you to Jo Lewis for helping me to co-host this episode. And a reminder, if you're part of the LGBTQ+ community and work for ITV, why not join the ITV Pride network if you haven't done so already? Thanks again for listening to this edition of the ITV Pridecast. I hope you can tune in for the next episode.