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Participants:

BAILEY BASHAM

RICARDO MORRIS

SARAH ROSE PEACOCK

KAT WRIGHT

CAMERON KEITH WALLS

Length: 01:05:40

Preface

The following conversation was hosted at Vanderbilt University, facilitated by Kevin Whiteneir (KeW). Consent was given by the participants to have their conversation recorded and transcribed.

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START OF RECORDING

RICARDO MORRIS: Mentos, Tic Tacs

KEVIN WHITENEIR: This is table number 13. Just introduce yourselves.

RM: Okay.

KeW: Um, first name, last name.

RM: Okay.

KeW: Um, and generally how you would introduce yourself to the table at, with people you've never sat with before.

RM: Okay.

KeW: And then feel free to crack right into the cards.

RM: All right, thank you.

KeW: Thanks again.

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:00:19.24]

RM: Hello, my name is uh, Ricardo Morris. And I am from Chattanooga, Tennessee. A-um, I work with the Chattanooga Theater Center as a facilities and special events manager. Uh, also been working in the arts for quite a while. Started as a dancer. My major is theater, so a lot of—I just finished directing *FENCES* by August Wilson. And I run a festival called the Chattanooga Festival of Black Arts and Ideas, which is in the second year. I'm happy to be here.

KAT WRIGHT: Hello, I'm Kat Wright. I'm from Chattanooga, Tennessee and I am the public art coordinator for the City of Chattanooga. I have had a long career in both arts and cultural endeavors. Uh, first as a performing artist, actor, director, trained, uh, in also um, technical theater as well. I then went into visual arts in about 2010 or so and have recently come to the city of Chattanooga as of this last October. Um, doing creative place making in public art in the social arena. And I'm going to turn over the next initial.

SARAH ROSE PEACOCK: Are we supposed to hold it the whole time?

Unknown: Whatever.

SRP: Just put it in the center?

KW: You can probably just put it there. There's one thing you can hear in my intro, yeah. You know I was here.

SRP: Okay, I'm just lazy. I don't wanna be passing to people.

[Laughter]

KW: Fair enough, fair enough.

SRP: Um, I'm Sarah Peacock. I wor-I live in Nashville and I work at a local performing arts venue. Um, I've been in Nashville for about ten years but I'm originally from Florida. And I've had a lifelong passion for the arts so I [inaudible: 00:02:01.13]. I got [inaudible: 00:02:04.01] Women Studies and [inaudible: 00:02:04.05] uh, the intersection of issues that are important to me. So that's why I was really excited to attend this symposium and participate. [background noise] [00:02:11.17]

BAILEY BASHAM: Uh, I'm Bailey Basham. I'm from Sewanee, Tennessee and I'm a journalist. And that's all I got.

[Laughter]

RM: I love Sewanee.

BB: I'm more of a listener.

RM: I love Sewanee.

BB: Me too.

KW: All right, let's, cards out.

RM: Cards out.

SRP: I'm interested to see what's on these cards.

BB: I know.

KW: What's your favorite color?

RM: What's your favorite what?

KW: Color, dude.

RM: Black.

KW: No shenanigans.

[Laughter]

RM: Okay, *Discuss historical legacies defining race and class unique to this area.*

Discuss historical legacies defining race and class unique to this area.

BB: Ohhh.

RM: Oooh.

SRP: If we're talking about Nashville the first thing I think of are the lunch sit ins.

BB: Yeah. Is it Woolworths?

SRP: Woolworth on 5th just reopened. It was renovated and reopened as a restaurant.

BB: Oh, wow.

SRP: Um, but it is definitely well known. The part of the area we see a lot of historical markers if you walk around town.

RM: Is it still called Woolworth?

SRP: Excuse me?

RM: Is it still called Woolworth?

SRP: It is now.

RM: Okay.

SRP: It was the Dollar General.

RM: Oh.

SRP: And then, they turned it back into a restaurant.

RM: Cool.

SRP: Uh, so they tried to restore as much of the building as it used to be. Um, and they have really good food now. Um, I recommended it as a spot just for the food as well. Um, but the other major thing that I think of, it's more related to gender and not class, um, is the fact that Tennessee was the final state to ratify the 19th amendment in 1920, in August 1920. And it gave the women the right to vote or finally provided the thought for it. Um, but that definitely would also be a class issue.

BB: I wonder if another class—it maybe isn't a defining legacy as of right now but I wonder if it will be, is Nolensville Pike.

SRP: Oh.

BB: And kind of the all of the history and the culture that's on the Pike that most of Nashville doesn't experience, I guess. It's a pike where a lot of immigrant communities are. And um, there's some—Conexión Américas is a non profit that serves migrant families. And yeah, it's kind of just a long pike of--,

SRP: It's a really long road.

BB: Yeah.

SRP: It connects downtown to—

BB: I'm a great talker. [Laughs]

SRP: I'm sorry, I feel like I cut you off.

BB: No, please. I don't know about Nashville.

SRP: Oh, are you in—? I was going to say, are you in Nashville?

BB: I'm in Sewanee.

SRP: So, that's right.

BB: I was in Nashville for about six years but--,

SRP: Okay.

BB: I like quiet places.

[00:04:48.00] [cross talk]

KW: So, for me, um, although I've been in Chattanooga for fourteen years. So I say I'm from Chattanooga cause I feel like it's time for me to commit. [Laughs] Um, yeah, I'm here, I own property. Yeah. Um...

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:05:04.02]

KW: I think being a, uh, Latina in Chattanooga is um, I don't know if "difficult" is the appropriate word. But I grew up in West Texas where Latinas were the, you know, Latinx rather, was sort of the majority minority. And so therefore I didn't necessarily think about classes or, you know, what I may or may not have access to, um, until I really moved to Chattanooga. And some of the things that were very common practice to me, where I grew up in Texas, was not warmly received. Like hey, I want to do a production of *WEST SIDE STORY* where all the you know, Hispanic children that could possibly be the, you know, the Sharks. And the gentleman I was talking to was like, 'Well, one, you'll never get them to do a show. And two,' like he gave me every reason why it wasn't possible. Um, "correct." And--,

RM: Is this Chattanooga or Texas?

KW: This is Chattanooga. This is Chattanooga. And so I was like, okay, and being new to the environment—and I was also in my early, early twenties. And I was like, okay, I'm just going to let it be. I'm going to take in Chattanooga. And so I, so I did.

And it's changed somewhat in that now I can go throughout the city and know where the pockets of my quote unquote people, uh, live. But that's still a very weird concept to me, that—because where I grew up it just, like it would never even dawned on me. So I think, um, for me, like when I sit there and I have to think about like oh yes, my-my ethnicity, how do I—? Like where is our history in Chattanooga? I quite frankly can't. Um, and that could be for many reasons. One, it could be because just, it's not deemed maybe relevant. Um, or maybe it's because I don't—like even growing up, um, I was adopted into a-a family where my adoptive parents are Anglo. So, even growing up in Texas um, I was a very Anglo version of a Mexican, so to speak. So, I mean--,

RM: So you-you—ethnically, you're Mexican?

KW: Correct.

RM: [inaudible: 00:07:52.05]

KW: Yes. I'm Mexican, Spanish, and Portuguese.

RM: Okay.

KW: And a little bit Italian.

Unknown: [Laughs]

KW: Um, but, so essentially like I don't know, necessarily when I think about Chattanooga and, and with my place in it, if it's just not identifiable just because of you know, my ethnicity or because I don't necessarily prescribe to that social construct, really. Um...

RM: One thing Chattanooga—and I'm from Chattanooga as well. And I- and this is a discussion so we should be able to jump in on anybody and everybody's—

KW: Yeah.

RM: —kind of comments. But uh, Chattanooga's extremely polarized.

Unknown: Ah.

RM: And so you have different segments of the city that, or where the Latinas are, where the Blacks are, where the whites are. Um, from a historical perspective, Lookout Mountain, which is pretty, made mostly I guess really famous with Dr. King's speech. Um, is where the class division starts to happen, 'cause a lot of the wealthy people live on Lookout Mountain. Uh, Coca Cola bottling family, Crystal Company family, the Davenports, the Luptons. So you have all these very wealthy families that decided to live in Chattanooga. Um, but because they decided they also decided not to let Chattanooga grow to its full potential. Um, and they really were very instrumental in keeping it a quiet town. Because geographically we should be the hub of the Southeast. Because we have a river, we have a railroad, we have, you know, all those things that it takes—

Unknown: [inaudible 00:09:33] highways.

RM: Yeah, highways. And just, obviously geographically, we're almost the center of the Southeast. So, in any direction you're going to be about the same--,

KW: From Atlanta to, yeah, Nashville [inaudible: 00:09:48.19].

RM: Yeah, so Chattanooga should have been it. And they said no. No development, no growth and they moved it down to Atlanta which is totally not capable of, you know, the transportation and things that you would expect from big cities like New York and Chicago to have those kinds of means of moving things around.

SRP: It's interesting, what you're talking about. It reminds me a lot of Knoxville. Before I lived in Nashville, I lived in Knoxville for ten years. And I hear a lot of the similar issues. I saw a lot of very divided racial lines.

RM: Yes.

SRP: Black people and white people did not hang out together.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Right.

SRP: Which is weird for me cause I'm originally from Fort Lauderdale, and you have to blend.

KW: Yes.

SRP: Or else you will get beat up.

RM: [Laughs]

KW: Yeah.

SRP: That's-that's-- this is not an option. You will get along.

KW: Yeah, yeah.

SRP: At least in front of others. And, um, and so there's a lot of division that way, and-and the powers that be releasing to work against the growth of the city.

RM: Right.

SRP: For the sake of keeping it smaller or like their version of--,

RM: Right.

SRP: What—You look you are ready to speak. Go for it.

KW: Well, no, I just was kind of -- I was sort of percolating over Ric's comments. Um, because a lot of the families he mentioned were also sort of the purveyors of culture—

SRP: Ahhh.

KW: —and art. And or lack thereof, depending on who you ask. So, the family money perpetuated itself in what we saw, um, like for instance, in my discipline of public art, if I see another sculpture that was made by a white man—

RM: [Laughs]

KW: —in downtown Chattanooga, I can't. I can't--.

[Laughter]

KW: I can't even look. I can't.

RM: [laughs]

KW: But that was, that was what there were funds for. That's what was going on. But consequently, when—it's interesting, when I have, say, people that ask me what I do they're like, 'Oh, so you do all the sculptures in downtown.' I'm like—

SRP: You get the credit.

RM: [Laughs]

KW: Yeah, I kinda sorta. I'm not really sure I want that credit.

Unknown: Exactly. [Laughs]

KW: But, necessarily. But like their perception of my discipline is just sculpture.

RM: Sculpture.

KW: Whereas, my mom who still lives in West Texas will say, 'So, do you do a bunch of murals?' Because murals are very prevalent where we are.

SRP: Yeah. It depends on where you are.

KW: So, so it's a very -- so, that's all to say when you look at the classes and the money that permeates through the city, it is an extension, it's a byproduct of the culture and the art that then permeates that community of art.

RM: Well, it's kind of a blessing and a curse because, one, the curse will be that you're only exposed to a certain type of art. But that the advantage was that they did, per capita we were number four in the nation in giving to the arts.

SRP: Ahhh.

KW: Correct.

RM: Which is huge.

SRP: Yeah.

RM: And we have a world class museum of American art that--,

SRP: I did not know that. And I've lived here for a long time.

RM: And, and you go in and people are -- anybody who comes into the city goes: 'How do y'all have this museum here?' Because it is world class and, um, it's really -- and, and very nice. And so, so you have this money that was supporting both the museum, uh, the symphony and opera, uh, and-and then being able to sustain it to the point where they also started the United Arts Fund to help sustain those two organizations in particular. Um, but on the-on the flip side of—and the theater center where I work is in its ninety-fifth year of existence as a community theater. But on the

flip side of that nothing for the-the Black and Latino communities when it comes to culturally specific types of things. They-they opened the Bessie Smith Hall, um, on what is now MLK Boulevard. But it was more of a placate for Black people for -- for like I say, they're really raising hell because they don't have anything. [Laughs]

KW: Give them- give them—It was originally Bessie Smith African American Museum, because the Black community, you know, placate them by giving them their own museum. And now through several iterations of branding and change and all that great stuff. It's now just a cultural center.

RM: Right.

SRP: Oh, it's not even specific to African American culture?

RM: It's not.

KW: No, it's not. But by the same token I'm like so where am I? What? It's--it's-it's like the terms are used very loosely.

RM: Yeah.

KW: Um, in how they're sort of ascribed to-to certain things I think.

RM: Yeah.

SRP: It sounds like you, um, Kat, right?

KW: Yes.

SRP: Uh, it sounded from what you were saying earlier like you don't see a lot of -- what I heard is you don't see a lot of yourself in Chattanooga or you don't see a lot of like community that lives more familiar--,

KW: Right.

SRP: -- from your childhood in Chattanooga.

KW: Mm-hmm, Mm-hmm. Yeah, I actually have a--,

SRP: In history.

KW: ...Being, being adopted uh, into a family that's predominately white, um, my sister actually married a man who, um, came to America as an exchange student who was from Honduras. And when they, when he left he had to back to Honduras and he decided that—his whole family worked at the Dole banana uh, plant—and he was like, 'I don't want to do that. How can I get back to America?' And so it took him a lot of different ways to get back to America. But they ended up having, um, a child. And when she decided to—he passed away at uh, when their child was very young. And she was very close to me and my-my other sister that lives in Chattanooga and she's like, 'Hey, um, I'm going to come, you know, see, visit, see what -- I may move here.' And she said 'Are you bothered? Like where's the Ho-,m where's the Honduran people?' I'm like, 'Yeah, um, about that. Like, you know--,' So it's just like--, it's, to me, like I didn't really realize that I was not in a place that wasn't me. That like if there was an even an identifier for me, really, until I got here.

RM: So are you--, are you talking specifically Honduran?

KW: Um, well in that case, like because of her Honduran husband she-she wondered--,

RM: If there--,

KW: --where her son would find more--,

RM: Honduran--,

KW: Correct, for, you know, to kind of relate.

RM: Cause that's the, I think the largest Latino population is Guatemalan for our area. Um, and that--, I think they've laid -- you know, like I said it's very polarized so they've kind of have made their own space in and around Main and Willow kind of areas. But did -- o-other little pockets throughout the city.

KW: Yeah.

RM: Um, most of the--,

SRP: Did she move here?

KW: She did.

RM: Yeah. [laughs]

KW: She did. Now she did not move to Chattanooga proper. W-she actually moved to uh, Soddy-Daisy--,

SRP: I was about to say--,

Unknown: Okay.

SRP: That's even more rural--,

KW: Correct.

RM: It is.

KW: And that's a whole other, that's a whole other can, okay. I-I'm not even--, I'm not even opening that up, but--.

SRP: To her--,

BB: Are your sisters also of Hispanic heritage?

KW: No, uh, well, so we're-we're, uh—thing for the archive here. I--,

[Laughter]

KW: I am adopted into—my mom and dad who are German and English, uh, got married very young, had six kids.

BB: Wow.

KW: And then, decided to start adopting in 1974. This was, you know, according to to what I'm told, when you adopted children, um, and you were, Anglo, white, uh, you tended to adopt children that look like you. And they decided to—their first child they adopted was from Seoul, South Korea in 1974 but he was also hearing impaired. And then they totally like bucked the trend. Kept on adopting from Korea, ke-adopted me and my twin brother. And then, also adopted from East India. And conservative West Texas, you don't do that.

BB: Wow.

KW: So, um, so, no we-we all, we loo--, we look like a somethin' something--,

RM: Hodge podge.

KW: Hodge podge of—And-and-and conversely, a lot of us have all married, you know, interracially and had kids that are continuing the hodge podge. So--,

RM: So we just had somebody join. Uh, we're recording.

CAMERON KEITH WALLS: Hello.

RM: There is a uh, form to fill out for that.

CKW: Thank you.

RM: And then if you'll want to make an introduction about who you are?

CKW: My name is Cameron Keith Walls. Um, and I am, I'm just--, I'm just me.

RM: [laughs]

KW: You do you. That's good stuff.

RM: And so, uh, Cameron, is that right?

CKW: Yes.

RM: So we're talking about: *Discussing the historical legacies defining race and class unique to this area.*

CKW: Okay.

RM: And uh, we're both from Chattanooga. Originally from uh, Fort Lauderdale, but now lives here in Nashville.

SRP: Yes.

RM: And from Nashville?

BB: From Sewanee.

RM: From Sewanee, from Sewanee, from Sewanee. I said I love Sewanee. I should remember that.

BB: Yeah. [inaudible: 00:18:52.12]

RM: From Sewanee, okay.

CKW: Well, I'm from Peoria, Illinois originally.

BB: Okay.

CKW: However, I've been in Nashville since 2008. And so I'm-I've been kind of incepted as a Nashville native.

KW: Correct.

RM: In over five years.

CKW: Yeah. And so I know the city quite well. Uh, especially I live in North Nashville so I'm very, very astute to North Nashville and its sweet history.

BB: Mm-hmm.

RM: So can you think of uh, a historical legacy here that defines race and class that's unique to this area that you discovered?

CKW: Absolutely, absolutely. Um, actually I can think of at least two things. Um, well, first of all there's Jefferson Street.

Unknown: Yeah.

CKW: Jefferson Street is uh, very historic. Most people don't really realize the-the depth, the brevity, um, to the historical nature of Jefferson Street. But Jefferson Street was basically Black Wall Street of Nashville. Um, business owners all the way down the block. All the way from, uh, Rosa Parks, 8th Avenue, all the way down to Tennessee State University. Additionally there were many clubs and venues on Jefferson Street which were played by most of the higher end, um, Black artists in that day. So everybody from, from Cab Calloway to Aretha Franklin. All of the top names, they used to come down. And so I'm a Tennessee State University alumnus. Um, many of them would come in town. They would actually go down to TSU and hand pick the band for the night from the Jazz Collegians. And so that's a really rich piece of history here in Nashville that many people don't know. Additionally, the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Everybody knows of the Fisk Jubilee Singers but many people aren't aware that the Fisk Jubilee Singers are the reason why Nashville is Music City. They um, they performed for the Queen of England. And they sang so well that she said, "surely they must be from the city of music." And so--,

BB: Why do we not know that?

SRP: Yeah, I remember reading that—

RM: Because it's Black history. [Laughs]

KW: Yeah.

RM: [Laughs]

CKW: So-so that's one of the--, so that's one of those pieces of history, but even with that being said, Fisk University is on Jefferson Street. So, Tennessee State University, Meharry Un--College, Medical College and TSU are all right there in the, in the nexus of North Nashville which is, um, virtually the-the genesis of all Black greatness of this city. And so--,

RM: Of the world.

KW: Dig it. I mean--,

[laughter]

RM: Honestly, honestly because -- I say it because I'm a 1985 graduate of TSU

CKW: And I appreciate every bit of that.

[Laughter]

CKW: But he's not actually wrong because another thing--,

[Laughter]

Unknown: Oh Lord. Don't give him that. I live in the same city with him. I'mma hear about it every day--,

[Laughter]

CKW: I can't -- I can't withhold from him. I can't.

RM: Don't try to--,

CKW: The other thing that people aren't aware of is um, the civil rights movement that we're so, that we all read about, the NAACP Branch that-that most of that happened with was the Nashville branch. And that office is still right now located on Jefferson Street as well. Um, Fisk University was one of the, one of the locations where they did a lot of the, um, trainings. Um, then there was also, um, what's the name of that church down the street? Um, Baptist Capitol Hill, I can't think of it. Um, First Baptist Capitol Hill. Um, they did trainings. So, many of the students that were in the Lunch Counter sit-ins were Tennessee State University, Fisk University, American Baptist College, Vanderbilt University students. And so a lot of people aren't aware of that. Um, and even down to the Freedom Riders which we all have read about.

Unknown: Yup.

CKW: Most of the Freedom Riders were TSU alumnus. Majority of them. It was a few Fiskites and some ABC students and Vanderbilt Students as well. But the majority of them are Tennessee State students. And, um, I had the luxury of being taught by one of them, Gloria McKissack. She was a Lunch Counter Sit In participant. But she was close friends and probably as a national forerunner of the Knowledge of the Freedom Riders because she's good friends with all of them. So, but that's the history of Jefferson Street which is right down the street.

KW: That's amazing.

CKW: So, that was a short version of that. So--,

BB: Thank you.

CKW: Yes.

KW: And by short we mean like, woah.

[laughter]

KW: I mean my jaw--,

RM: Does anybody have any -- well, I mean the --,

SRP: Do we want to do a new question?

RM: Well, I was going to say, just say to the whole idea of Tennessee and the Hermitage. You know, we have a president and all of that history that we--, [laughs]

KW: I forgot [inaudible: 00:23:08.15].

SRP: Just over the holidays. Oh, it's really interesting, especially to see the movement in non-profits--,

RM: Mm-hmm.

SRP: Toward more work on diversity and equity and inclusion and like kind of evaluating The Hermitage or the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

RM: Right.

KW: Right, right, right, right, right.

SRP: How they're approaching that or not approaching that. Or if it's just lip service.

RM: Yeah. I actually, I-I've- the Country—the Hall of Fame is just fantastic.

SRP: Yeah.

RM: I mean, the artifacts that they have in there is just incre—whether you love country music or not, you should go just because it's so informative. You know, information, so--,

CKW: And think -- there's a young lady here, um, today that's from the Hall of Fame, uh, I can't remember what she said.

SRP: [inaudible 00:23:47]

KW: Hey, Hall of Fame. Hey, where you at?

CKW: Yes. Um, and so we were having the conversation. And they are attempting to do a lot of work. They're trying to get into communities. The problem is they haven't found a bridge between--,

RM: And aren't they also creating a gospel Hall of Fame, a museum?

CKW: No, that's the, um, National African American Museum of Music.

RM: Oh, that's what it is, okay.

CKW: I'm--name.

RM: I knew it was something. Yeah.

SRP: Yes, yes. It's being built right across the street from the Ryman.

CKW: Yes, yes. [inaudible: 00:24:17.26]. And that's going to cover all genres of music.

RM: [inaudible: 00:24:21.29].

CKW: Um, what-what she was saying from the Country Music Hall of Fame is they have partnerships in place. The problem is the partnerships—and-and I think it's-it's socially, we're in the space right now in our society where we're not grasping --it's-it's not the way communities work where you know, you would offer a program and then you put a flyer up, and people would come to you. And-and our society doesn't work like that anymore. And so, the problem is people are still doing that. And they're

like, 'Oh, no one's coming out.'

RM: [Laughs]

CKW: And it's like, yeah, no, this is society you have to go to. You have to go into the community. You have to go to the neighborhoods and get to know them. And then they come on relationships.

KW: Community engagement.

CKW: And so, I gave her a few ideas I think might be good ideas to help get them some connection but--,

KW: Make sure you bill her.

CKW: Oh, oh, trust me.

[Laughter]

RM: Billable hour.

KW: Billable hours.

CKW: Hopefully, if the relationship work well they'll call me.

SRP: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

CKW: Um--,

KW: Have we not learned anything in this conference?

CKW: Yes. Yes.

KW: All right, get me, hit me.

RM: Next question is: *How does polarization of politics affect your community and you individually? How does polarization of politics affect your community and you individually?*

KW: I think I, I feel like I pretty much answered that in my last answer, so I'm good.

[Laughter]

SRP: It's particularly challenging as a white woman because being in Nashville, in the state of Tennessee. As someone who grew up in much more, at least progressive and liberal area.

RM: Yeah.

SRP: I'm going to get politically awkward..

CKW: That's all right.

SRP: [inaudible: 00:26:09.01] question. I'm being super angry--,

CKW: I'm here for it.

SRP: About how many white women voted for Trump.

CKW: As am I.

SRP: And [inaudible: 00:26:15] statement.

CKW: As am I. As am I.

Unknown: You gotta.

SRP: It's being recorded. It's going up on the internet somewhere.

KW: You're not alone.

SRP: Now, [inaudible: 00:26:25.13] It's a hard bridge to gap [inaudible 00:26:23] bridges to connect with people who... There's-there's a southern hospitality that is very important in the traditions and the connections of the-the communities that I've lived in so far in Tennessee. And it's almost like, it's impolite to challenge that. Or to bring up unpleasant things. Or to express an opinion that runs counter--,

BB: You're supposed to be seen and not heard.

KW: I got that a lot.

RM: As a woman or as a--,

SRP: Well, and to--,

Unknown: Yes, like as, yes.

KW: And I think a lot of that, at least from my perspective when I was younger, that was way problematic for me. Like, people... Like when my grays are not freshly covered--,

[Laughter]

KW: And people can see and then they're like, 'All right, we got you.' Like "you can say your piece.' Like I have a little more years--,

Unknown: Ah.

KW: Where it's like okay, like not that what I was going to articulate was any less legitimate ten years ago, but it, for whatever reason, carries more weight. So, I-I get where you're coming from, absolutely.

RM: But I think it's so funny to hear you say- why I questioned to whom you were referring to as seen and not heard because I feel the same way as a Black man in a white world. Is that I'm to be seen and to serve with no opinion and invisible. I worked at, uh, speaking of Lookout Mountain, they have the Lookout Mountain Golf and Country Club.

Unknown: What?

CKW: [Laughs]

RM: And uh--,

KW: Now -- please tell me that was a short chapter.

RM: Well it was, it was two years.

KW: Yeah, that's [inaudible: 00:28:11.18].

RM: And, um, in that, in that facility they have a big dining room where all the members can come. Of course, it's a golf course. So they have that. And then in the basement of the lower level, they have something called the Mens Room. No children, no women allowed.

Unknown: Yup.

SRP: So that is old school.

RM: So even if you were--, Yeah, and even if you were a golfer as-as a woman or as a child you had to come to the window to get water or refreshments or anything of that nature. Otherwise, you know, you can get in the main dining room, but there you had to come to that window and be served. You could not step foot in the Men's room. And on the wall they had caricatures of all of the, uh, members. And one of the

caricatures was—I told you the Coca Cola family lived on Lookout Mountain—was a Black bellhop caricature, face, big lips, white eyes.

CKW: A ninny.

RM: Yeah, with a, with a tray and a bottle of Coca Cola on the tray. And he was like walking over the globe to just try and, you know, show that Coca Cola was worldwide. But this is right there where I am as a Black man in this space. No shame in the game whatsoever. All of the waitstaff was Black. They would not even hire—all of the cooks in the kitchen, all the waiters, everyone in the club had to be Black. In the pro shop, which is where you buy your golf club and shoes and things, they were all white.

SRP: Oh my God. [inaudible: 00:29:41.13]

RM: [Laughs] And-and this is not that long ago, right? So, I graduated from TSU in '85. I went and I worked up there and I was also, um, substitute teaching until I got hired on full time to teach English and, uh... But anyway, so two years I was there. So one night I'm there working on grading English papers. And the guy walking, he goes, 'What are you doing, Rick?' I say, 'I'm grading the papers for my class.' He said, 'Your class? What do you mean?' I said, 'Well, I teach English at Hixson High School.' 'What? Are you serious? Wow. Good for you.' I mean--,

KW: Yup, yup, yup.

Unknown: Ooh...

RM: Just so condescending in that whole—could not believe that you would even have the capacity to do any of that. So, the next year after I had taught for a year I bought—a friend of mine was a used car salesman—and he said ‘Rick, you got to come. They have a Mercedes that just came in. It’s, it’s like three years old. It only got forty thousand miles on it. And I’ll make you a good deal,’ ‘cause, you know, we’re classmates from high school. So, I was like, “okay, cool, I need a car.” I went and got it. Drove it up there. On Lookout Mountain they have stickers that you put on the back of your car to say that you live on Lookout Mountain.

Unknown: Ohhh.

RM: And if you don’t have a sticker.

KW: And that you go to the Fairyland Club. Yup.

RM: And you go to the Fairyland, the Fairyland Club. They don’t call it Fairyland. They call it “Fare-land.”

KW: Oh, see--,

[laughter]

RM: Cause they don’t want it--, yeah.

KW: I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t know that cause I’m not allowed there, so--,

RM: You’re not allowed there.

SRP: If you’re not gurgling your words it’s not Tennessee native at all.

KW: I know, I know I know.

SRP: [inaudible: 00:31:07.27].

RM: It's still Fairyland. And it-it started as Fairyland. You have Peter Pan Lane.
And Red Robinhood Road. They have all the--,

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:31:16.04]

Unknown: It's a mountain of delusion.

RM: Oh, you've been there?

CKW: No, I-I-I'm just familiar with that kind of banter--,

RM: Yeah, so they know--,

[laughter]

RM: They know it's Fairyland, but they want to say "Fareland." Um--,

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:31:26.16]

RM: Which is a different country club on—anyway, so my car didn't have a sticker on it 'cause I didn't live up there. So, one of the members comes into the pro shops and asks the manager, he goes, 'Whose car is that? I don't re--, " It's a-it's a dark blue Mercedes, good condition. He goes, 'Whose car is that. I don't recognize it. It doesn't have a sticker on the back?' He goes, 'Oh, that's Rick's car.' 'Rick, who's Rick?' 'Well, Rick is the waiter and the bartender down in the Men's room.' 'Really?' So the-the-the golf pro, manager, I know him, we're friends and whatever. He comes immediately to tell me that they were questioning my car. And-and how-how I could afford to drive that car.

CKW: That's amazing.

RM: Right? And so, the next two weeks pass and my tips go to almost zero.

CKW: 'Cause they're thinking you take too much money.

KW: Yup, yup.

RM: Zero. I mean, noticeably. I'm like, 'What the hell is going on?'

Unknown: Yeah.

RM: Cause I would work on Sundays and Saturdays. I would work -- the-the dining room--,

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:32:26.24]

RM: Yeah, and-and work and save tables and all of that. I was like 'There's no tips. What's going on? What's going on?' And then, just put two and two together but oh, wow. So they know that they have this car. I'm working two jobs so I should be able to afford it.

Unknown: Right.

RM: And it's used. But no tips for you because you don't really--,

SRP: You didn't--,

[00:32:44.18][crosstalk]

RM: You didn't earn it, you don't deserve it, you didn't need it.

KW: Yup. Yup.

RM: So one night—this is the last part of the story. This is horrendous. So, I'm driving. It's 11 o'clock on my birthday, just finished working a banquet there at the golf club, wedding. I'm driving down Lookout Mountain. Nobody's out. I think I'm the only car on the road. So I get to this—on the way down, there's a stop street. So I don't fully stop. I kind of roll up and I look, the car's still moving a little bit, and I continue on. "Roo, roo, roo [makes sound of siren]". I'm like, 'Oh, hell. This is my birthday. Why is this happening.' Pulls me over. He goes, 'You know you rolled through that stop sign.' I said,

'Yes, okay.'

KW: Yeah.

RM: 'Okay, now go ahead, give me a ticket. I'm trying to get to my party.'

[Laughter]

RM: No. Mm-mm. Took me in. Fingerprinted me.

KW: What?

CKW: So they bring in the car to make sure it weren't --,

RM: Ran the car to make sure it wasn't stolen. You know. My momma's been a maid on Lookout Mountain since, for, as long as I can remember. So I called my mother. I said, 'Look, they have arrested me on Lookout Mountain.' She said, 'What?' She was mortified. She said, 'You just hold on.' So, she gets on the phone. She calls everybody she's ever worked for.

Unknown: Yes.

RM: The phone is lighting up, lighting up. And the-the two officers, and they're going, 'What's going on?' They pick up the phone. 'Uh, I heard you have Loretta's son down there, Ricky?' [Laughs] 'You need to let him go.'

KW: Oh, please. Can I call you "Ricky" from now on?

RM: No, you better not. I know [inaudible: 00:34:16.04].

[Laughter]

RM: Another phone call: "You got Rick down there? This is so and so and so. You better let him out of there.' And next thing I know they're like, 'Oh, we're so sorry. We apologize. You can go.'

SRP: Once they know that you know the right person.

RM: Yeah, exactly.

SRP: That is very much how it still is.

CKW: That's the real thing. That's the real thing.

RM: For so, so, again the class and polarization of it. Um, the idea that you're not welcome on this after dark. You know, there's no way you can drive this car. There's no way you can be, um, a teacher or--,

KW: Yeah.

RM: Or grading English papers 'cause Lord knows you don't speak English. Uh--,

KW: Yup.

RM: So, all of that is, you know it's just--, it's just demoralizing, to say the least. And this keeps wearing on you to the point that you become angry and bitter. [Laughs] By the time you get to be my age it's like, 'I'm tired of this.'

KW: That's what I told Rick, I go 'I can't-I can't become angry and bitter like you cause I can't afford no botox, so--,'

[Laughter]

KW: I mean--,

RM: And you won't need it cause you know--,

KW: Not yet, but I got--,

RM: Well, you know, Black don't crack. [inaudible 00:35:08] [Laughs]

KW: Well, that's true. That's true.

[Laughter]

CKW: And I'll tell you, one of, one of my frustrations politically is, um, you know, like they said earlier today um, the term "minority" it's-it's a false construct that has been given to us.

Unknown: Mm hmm.

CKW: And you know, although, like you ladies are, you know, Caucasian American women, um, the fact is in our country you're viewed as a minority 'cause you're women. And it's like, at what point do we realize that if all the people that are deemed minorities realized that we are a majority of the country, do we really b—

SRP: Women are, we're--, they're fifty one percent of the population.

RM: I was going to say, women are not a minority [Laughs].

CKW: So, so--,

SRP: Go on. Yes, yes.

CKW: But I'm just saying, you know, like, so it's like she's a-a woman of color. You ladies may be considered Caucasian.

KW: I never say "color," I say [inaudible 00:35:54].

RM: [Laughs]

KW: 'Cause, 'cause the whole color thing I'm just like, 'Yeah, okay. [inaudible: 00:36:03.13]"

CKW: Well, you know, in this country it's not a drop of anything.

RM: I know, right?

CKW: But, um, but-but I'm saying that to say um, at some point we as a people got to realize that like the people who deem us to be minorities are really the minority.

KW: Yeah.

CKW: And not only the—are they the minority, but they are holding the country by the balls. And you know, like more than -- if I had to say anything pissed me off last year, more than anything, watching, uh, Kavanaugh become a Supreme Court judge when a week prior—not saying that this is okay—but a week prior, Bill Cosby was sentenced for the same thing. And Bill Cosby was convicted for the one woman's testimony. Not all of them. One woman's testimony. He got convicted and was sentenced. Kavanaugh had three women come out and they didn't even look into it. And the fact that this man, one man got pretty much sentenced for the rest of his life to jail and the other man was given the highest honor for the rest of his life to put people in jail. And it's just kind of like--,

KW: Well what's even more maddening about that--,

CKW:...if it seems like this--,

KW: -- is that is “they”, the media, claim it was a timing issue with everything that he was going—and I'm like, ‘Y’all. Highest court in the land, you take the time--,

Unknown: Mm-hmm.

KW: Like, there is no---,

RM: Because how do you give a plea bargain to men who knowingly embarked on, uh, sex trafficking. That-that-that to me is the most repulsive thing I've ever heard.

CKW: Well [inaudible: 00:37:34.25]. Because at that point, because at that point--,

[00:37:33.05][cross talk]

CKW: --what you literally said is the women's lives didn't matter.

RM: No, exactly.

CKW: And, again, depending on either which-which man is, we're talking about--,

RM: Well, what's the billionaire who owns, uh, the football team?

SRP: The football team. And he got caught.

RM: Yeah. He got caught at a, at a--,

SRP: With trafficking like days later.

RM: He knew. The-the, it was like a club. It was a sex club. Right? Where they went and had sex with women that were in prison, enslaved, to be sex slaves. He knew that. You know he knew that.

CKW: And then you had, um, what's the, what's the [inaudible: 00:38:09.00] that-that started the whole Me Too stuff? Um--,

SRP: Tarana Burke?

CKW: Um, no, the man.

RM: Weinstein.

KW: Oh--,

CKW: Weinstein. Weinstein had all of these people come out. All of these counts. All of this historical reference. And then, they washed their hands of it and it's gone away. And we pretend like he's not still out here. But again, Bill Cosby was thrown under the prison. Although R. Kelly is dirty. But, you know, there--there was no--, there was no second thought about that now that they're, now that the footage is out.

KW: Yeah.

CKW: Michael Jackson is dead. Been dead ten years. And we're talking about pulling his music from the radio. And I'm not saying that it's okay.

KW: Some stations have already, yeah.

CKW: You know, but I'm not saying it's okay, um, to pretend like it's not a thing. But there is a clear double standard. There was a young man, um, a few years ago who was caught in the act of raping a young woman behind a dumpster. And he-he was given a slap on the wrist and I think he did time served for the time that he was in jail while he was tried because the judge said that he thought it would be too devastating for that young man to go to jail. But then right here on Vanderbilts' campus, you had that African American young man and that white boy who were accused with no evidence, that boy went all the way to jail. The white boy, they didn't even have his trial until after they sentenced the Black one. And it's just like, are we really going to pretend that these are not the same cases?

KW: So I want to, I want to piggyback on something because I kind of come at it from a different perspective in the sense that like the-the Latinx community, you're not, I mean like if you make headlines, okay. Like you're really abnormal because there's just not—you don't hear anything at all. So, when Trayvon Martin happened--,

CKW: Mm-hmm.

KW: -- and literally people came out of the woodwork to talk to me about Geroge Zimmerman.

CKW: Mm-hmm.

Unknown: Oh. Wow.

KW: And it was like—yeah, and I'm like, 'Fuck. It's the first,' like literally—

CKW: The first time y'all get mentioned.

KW: The first time we really get mentioned and it's for this dude. And I, you need me to explain his thinking, his psychology. Like be the purveyor of all Latinas who possi--, I mean that's just crazy. And, and so I just, I mean yeah.

RM: We are always supposed to [inaudible: 00:40:45.15] of like--,

CKW: Exactly.

RM: I understand. [Laughs]

KW: Right, right, right. And-and-and it's funny. And not to like minimize what you go-go through at all, but it's also like, if I'm going to fly under the radar can I just do it like consistently and all not like--,

[laughter]

KW: Like honestly. Like--,

RM: Like don't check my credit for the loans, or-or not check my credit—but give me loans and everything else and just pretend that I'm not? For all the stuff that you penalize me for. Right?

KW: True. I mean like-like the st--,

RM: Let's really fly under the—

KW: Like the story, well, I mean like the story I-I told you yesterday about buying my first house. I am, um, the only person of any sort of ethnic persuasion on my block. And I am--,

RM: I get you.

KW: And I am, uh--,

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:41:33.19]

KW: Married, I am married to a white man, and have an age difference. Eleven years. He's got lots of gray hair. And um--,

CKW: God Bless you.

KW: Hold up. This story gets good.

CKW: Have you been accused of being mail order?

KW: Hold up. Not only, but also the maid, the person that takes up the trash, but that's a whole other story.

Unknown: Wow.

KW: Um, so, okay. So it is--,

SRP: [inaudible: 00:41:52.25]

KW: So, my husband, beautiful, lovely, sensitive man. But has no money, makes no money, has like a-a-a b--, like going through bankruptcy. So when we got engaged I was like, 'Okay, time to take my credit score out for like--'

RM: [Laughs]

KW: For like if we're ever going to have anything, it's on me. Which apparently is very difficult for the community of Chattanooga, Tennessee to accept.

SRP: [inaudible: 00:42:24.27]

CKW: I can definitely believe that.

RM: They can't understand it.

KW: Correct. And so literally, we go in, you know, for a mortgage financing and we go for this and they're just like, 'Well, can we talk--?' No. There's the construct. And, 'Where's your husband? Can we talk to him?' I'm like, 'My husband don't even know how to balance a checkbook. Like, you need to talk to me about some interest rates, okay?'

RM: [laughs]

SRP: Did he go with you on any of these visits, or was it more like you did it...?

KW: At this point I'm just like, mm-mm, no. Because—

CKW: She actually stood to fare better without him.

KW: Correct. Okay. So essentially, so he works on weekends. He's in the news. And so I'm moving, I'm moving like in stuff by myself. And my crazy neighbor from two doors down comes over with a Hills Brother like coffee can full of like weed flowers to be like--,

CKW: Bein' nosey. Oh my God.

KW: It gets really good. It gets really good.

[Laughter]

KW: You pulled them from it--, well, I won't [inaudible: 00:43:18.13], but anyways it's like -- but nonetheless. So, he's walking in and I, granted I'm in my late thirties. I know I do not look like I'm in my late thirties. And I certainly didn't [inaudible: 00:43:28.05] about my house either. And I'm like hot and sweaty and the, and the doorbell rings and I'm like, 'Dude, I just got here, what?' Open the door and he's all like, 'Hey,' looking inside the house.

RM: [inaudible: 00:43:38.05] what you got--,

KW: And he's like, he's like, 'So,' he's like, 'So, I mean--' Well, first he goes, he goes, 'Where are your parents?'

Unknown: Wooo [laughs]

KW: And I go, and I was like, 'In Texas.' Like, yeah. And he was like, 'Well,' and-and he's like, "Well, where's your husband?" I go "This is my house."

Unknown: Yes.

KW: And then, and then, and then--, no, no it gets better. It gets better. So, he's like, 'Okay, well, your house, like you bought it?' And I said, 'Yes, I did.'

CKW: Ugh.

KW: And then, then he says, then he says--,

CKW: This a struggle. This is a real struggle.

KW: Then he says, then he says, then he says, 'Okay,' he's like, 'Well,' he's like 'just so you know'—cause we bought a flipped house.

SRP: Oh.

KW: And he said: "Just so you know, there were, your house took a lot of time to flip because there was this whole gang--, ' And he used the word "gang." 'This whole gang of Mexicans working on the house.'

BB: No!

KW: And I looked at him and maybe I looked like--,

CKW: Which means your house is probably actually in the best condition it's ever been in.

KW: Correct, right. But he's also speaking to a Mexican. Like that, maybe that day I looked particularly Asian. That has happened before. But I looked at him--,

SRP: To be honest, that was my first impression. [inaudible: 00:44:48.07]

KW: I understand that and I get that, totally get that. That's the beauty of like everybody loving each other and you don't even know.

SRP: People, yeah.

KW: Exactly. I'm like I'm just me. I do me. Um, but nonetheless. And I was like, 'Really?' And he was like, 'Oh, yeah.' He's like, 'There was a lot of them and some, some didn't come. Some showed up but like would be on their cellphones.'

RM: Oh.

KW: He was like --,

BB: Even though he was looking through his window every day they were out there.

SRP: Oh, yeah.

KW: And then he says, 'I don't even know how they had cell phones.' Like they could afford. And I was like "okay, thanks."

CKW: Maybe because of the job that they were working, paying them checks. I don't know.

KW: Yup. So, you know, I mean all in different -- I mean we all have stories, female—

SRP: That's why I asked if you had taken your husband to go with you. So many of these meetings, because it reminds me of buying a car.

KW: Mm mm, no cause I knew.

SRP: The challenge of if I don't have a man with me I'm not official.

KW: No, no, like when I bought--,

RM: Exactly.

KW: When, no, when I bought my car I also bought his car. And what I, what I did was--,

Unknown: [inaudible 00:45:43]

[Laughter]

KW: Well, no, no, well--,

RM: An [inaudible: 00:45:51.18] question, are they hiring?

KW: Pull up, y'all. This is, this is like my two second like, like plug for the private sector. Like the--,

BB: [inaudible: 00:46:00.13] right?

KW: For the first, like maybe two years of my life that I was not in the public sector that was like, hell, yeah, that like we getting the good kind of ramen tonight.

[Laughter]

KW: You know, every--, so, but even then I had a very good friend of mine who's like district shenanigan honcho something something for Hyundai and so he gave me like the friends and family--,

RM: Oh yeah.

Unknown: So sweet.

KW: So, essentially he says, 'Well, what kind of car do you want with what kind of features? What do you want to pay?' And he did a rate--,

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:46:30.02]

KW: He did a rate [inaudible: 00:46:30.14] certificate. So, literally I walk into the dealership by myself and I'm like, 'Yeah, I'm going to buy two cars today.' And they're like, 'What?' [Laughs]

BB: Surprise.

KW: Yeah, so literally, he's like, 'Okay, well, let me, let me show--,' And he's like: 'Well, I'm going to show you the used cars.' He's like—What was he trying to put me in? It wasn't, it was not like a Ford Taurus but it was like one of those little tiny like little--,

SRP: Like a Fiesta or something?

[laughter]

KW: It was a Fiesta!

[laughter]

KW: Then I was like, are you making a cultural, like appropriate like--,

RM: 'Cause of Fiesta?

KW: Right?

CKW: A-- a month supply of taco--.

KW: Correct. And, and the sunglass holder, right? So, literally--,

CKW: And some fuzzy dice.

KW: So I, so I looked at him and I go, 'I appreciate your suggestion, but,' and I just reached in my purse, I'm like, 'Here you go.' And he looked, and he goes, 'Oh, well, then you don't need any help today. Let's go invoice you out.' And I'm like, 'Thank you.'

Unknown: Ahh.

KW: Essentially, the whole conversation of doing your research--,

CKW: Mm-hmm.

KW: Is true in every aspect of your damn life. I mean, every aspect.

RM: Does anybody have anything else about the polarization? And-and I think the other--, yeah, it becomes a... I'm thinking also of the idea of Democrat versus Republican.

CKW: Yeah.

KW: Right.

BB: That's how I took it.

RM: So any, any—?

CKW: Yes.

RM: In that specific, politics-wise?

BB: Yeah. I'm-- so I'm, I'm not... I say I'm from Sewanee because people know Sewanee more than they know Winchester.

KW: I know Winchester.

BB: Whereas--okay, well, I live in Winchester. And, so Sewanee is... Down in the valley where I live, Sewanee is the nicest, like—that's where the educated, rich liberals are. And I live like in the poor... I mean still white, but Republican--,

Unknown: Yeah.

BB: You know, house.

CKW: Isn't that so ironic that the liberals are the wealthy and the Republican are the poor. That is just so ironic.

RM: ["augh]

CKW: Carry on.

KW: Is it cocktail hour yet?

SRP: We need drinks, right?

KW: This kind of conversation be deep.

BB: I feel like [inaudible: 00:48:36.05]

KW: Continue on.

RM: Please let Bailey finish.

KW: That's right.

BB: Um, so I, and I lived, you know, my parents are those poor Republican people. That they don't know I'm here. They just know I'm in Nashville.

KW: Ahhh.

BB: So, the polarization of politics affects my community in my actual home.

RM: Yes.

BB: Upstairs is where I am and downstairs is their politics and where they have their conversations at the kitchen table that I have to physically remove myself from.

CKW: Wow.

BB: Because I can't even, I can't even re—like there's no reasoning with them.

RM: It was the stuff they were handed down.

BB: Yes, exactly.

RM: It's not even what they know, it's what they've been given.

BB: And they tried to hand it to me and I didn't want it. And they don't--, they don't understand. They resent me for it.

KW: Yeah.

BB: Every, every time I say something that they, that my mom doesn't agree with, she'll say, 'One day you'll come back to how you were raised.'

SRP: Mmmm..

BB: And like it just slaps me in the face every single time, because they're also--,

KW: Or, 'It's a phase.'

BB: Yes. They're also very, they're very-very Christian.

RM: Very religious, uh-huh.

BB: At the same time. And I feel like the things they taught me, I feel like the way I was raised was the good parts of that.

KW: Right.

BB: Was to be nice to anybody. Like, it doesn't matter. And for them—every time they say that it just, it hurts my heart so much.

KW: Yeah.

SRP: Yeah.

RM: So how do you, how do you—? I mean, how do you reconcile that on a daily basis?

BB: I don't live with them anymore.

RM: Okay.

BB: Um, I--,

KW: Self preservation.

BB: Yeah. I-I bought an RV, and I've renovated it, and I'm living off it now.

CKW: That's [inaudible: 00:50:13.22]. I've been looking--,

SRP: Your [inaudible: 00:50:17.09] it reminds me a lot of my racist family and how hard it is to go back to [inaudible: 00:50:19.22] because it's so toxic.

BB: Yeah, it's awful.

SRP: And I have family members who won't look me in the eye--,

BB: Yes, yes.

SRP: And pay attention when I talk to them. Like, they will not regard me at all.

BB: And that is exactly how my whole extended family is too. And what is--,

RM: So [inaudible: 00:50:31.12] so do you find absolutely no one else in your family, extended family that have the same—?

BB: No one, no. I mean the worst part for me is that I have a younger sister who is still in that house.

SRP: Ahhhh.

BB: And she voted for Trump.

RM: How old is she?

BB: She's eighteen now.

RM: Oh, god.

BB: She voted for Trump. And when she told me that, it was just like all of the hope was gone.

RM: So did you vote? Who did you vote for?

BB: I voted for Hillary.

RM: Okay. Not that you have to tell me, but--,

BB: I don't care. [Laughs] No.

RM: Obviously but not Trump.

KW: It's a record now, girl. [Laughs]

CKW: So, what's intriguing to me is um, I'm looking at Christianity. 'Cause I'm-I-I do consider myself a Christian, 'cause Jesus is my archetype. But, um, Christianity in our country is a Eurocentric given construct. And um, but if you look at Jesus he is so far from that construct.

Unknown: Yup.

CKW: And so we-we got, we-we got the religion as we know it in our country by the oppressors and by people whose motives have absolutely nothing to do with Christ's agenda.

KW: Yeah, very fundamentalist, yeah.

CKW: And so, um--,

BB: Sometimes I wonder, do my parents actually read the Bible? Like, do they know what's in there?

CKW: You know what's funny? And-and I would say this because of my experience in church in general. Most Christians do not know what's in there.

BB: Yeah.

RM: They don't.

CKW: They only know the scriptures that the pastors frequent. They only know--,

RM: If they [inaudible: 00:51:56.00] they do from interpretation.

KW: Yeah, true that. The bias.

Unknown: Yeah.

CKW: And what's happening from a systematic space of Christianity is wealthy people since the Dark Ages have kept information away from poor. And that hasn't changed.

Unknown: Mm hmm.

CKW: And as the people became oppressors and as they began to, you know, um, settle other people's lands, they did exactly the same thing. They told you what they want you to know. They explained concepts that they want you to have. And then, let you run off with that. Period. And the thing is when people read the Bible at face value and they don't have any context and historical reference and understanding of what was even happening at the time, it's a skewed view of the historical record.

KW: Yeah.

BB: Well, the Bible itself is an edited document.

Unknown: Yeah.

BB: So, I mean--,

RM: Very edited.

BB: It's so, and just like the Constitution. It undergoes interpretation depending on the time [inaudible: 00:52:59.02].

RM: Yeah.

BB: Just [inaudible: 00:52:59.24].

RM: Well, I think the, and-and I think even-even with this the— we're talking about a two party system for the most part. Which is the Democrat and Republican. That's a challenge within itself. But-but even, even with the... People are just not informed.

CKW: Yeah.

RM: They don't read, they don't--,

KW: Right.

RM: They don't watch the news. They don't know anything about current events. You say, 'Who's the Vice President?' They would have no idea. Barely would know who the President is. Probably—and don't go any deeper than that.

And don't understand--,

[00:53:30.19] [cross talk]

KW: Yeah, well, and even, and even further they will continue to maybe perpetuate like the class that they're, that you know, the party they're going to vote for.

RM: Right.

KW: With not even looking at the candidate to be like, 'You know what?' So that kind of whatever, whatever--,

RM: It happens on both sides.

KW: Yeah, it does.

CKW: It does. It definitely does.

[00:53:51.01] [cross talk]

KW: It's both sides, it's both sides. And like it's a very—like Reaganomics.

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:53:54.27]

KW: Very different version of Republicanism, all of this other stuff. Very different than Republicanism today.

RM: Yeah.

KW: I mean those -- like everything, like the Bible, like the Constitution, it's all that. So, I think when you, when you look at the fact that like I choose to be- I'm going to be informed and I'm going to continue to make a choice by not being informed.

Unknown: Yeah.

KW: Right? That's as much an action--,

CKW: Yes, I agree.

BB: But I don't know that people think that is--,

Unknown: Can you [inaudible 00:54:22]?

KW: I don't know if I can.

Unknown: Okay.

KW: Um, but I'll try.

RM: [Laughs]

KW: When you continue... When you make a choice, and then you continue to, um, jeez,

BB: Continue to be uninformed.

KW: Yeah. When you make a choice, when you make a choice to continue to be uninformed, that's also a choice.

CKW: That's as much of a choice as being informed.

KW: Yeah, like--like--,

BB: It's informing yourself with your own views. Like, you-you're reinforcing your own views.

KW: Correct.

BB: And then what you can do on Facebook, you can sit there and do that all day.

SRP: Uh-huh.

RM: I think so much of what we -- I think so much of-of who we are is inherited, like, like you mentioned earlier is that they're not, they don't feel like they have to think because somebody is going to think for them.

KW: Right.

RM: Or that's the tradition of our family, is to be Christian or to be Republican or to be Democrat or to be whatever that religion might be at the time, uh, of that family. And-and they don't read--,

CKW: Mm-hmm.

RM: The Bible, the-the super edited is, the Apocryphal books exist.

CKW: Yup.

RM: There's a book of Mary Magdalene. What would, what would Christianity look like had they put that as one of the Gospels, right? In terms of how women are treated within the religious sector. I mean, can't be a priest, can't deliver the sacraments. All those kind of things. We do see in the Protestant realm at this point that women are becoming more involved in church, being ministers and--,

CKW: Because-because biblically that was never unsupported in the first place.

RM: It is.

CKW: Because, again, because they don't know what's in there they don't know that Deborah was the whole judge of the tribe of Israel in the Old Testament.

RM: Well, it's funny too. I was just thinking about this the other day. Is that—so I had some ambitions of being a priest.

BB: Okay.

RM: And I taught the summer scholars program at Sewanee for about four different summers.

BB: Wow.

RM: So, I spent a lot of time in the French House. The French House at Sewanee campus.

BB: Okay. Yup. Cool.

RM: Um, but the whole idea of, you know, what countries are mentioned in the Bible? They don't talk about England. They don't talk about Scotland. They don't talk about, uh, Italy. You know? I-they say--, they do, they talk about Peter going into Rome.

CKW: Yeah.

RM: He does go to Rome. But it's not a--, Christianity is not a Chr--it's not a European construct.

BB: Yeah.

RM: Right? It's Middle Eastern. It's North Africa. I mean, you have the Ethiopians who were Christians before slavery.

SRP: So is Christianity culturally appropriated? Like did—

[00:56:48.27] [cross talk]

RM: They did.0

CKW: It's culturally misappropriated.

RM: Totally appropriated.

Unknown: [inaudible: 00:56:51.14]

CKW: Because if you -- because historically if you look, the oldest sect of Christianity, the oldest sect of Christianity is actually Ethiopia. The oldest group of Christians in the world is Ethiopian. And-and the Ethiopians look very much like the ancient Jews.

RM: Yeah.

CKW: So they still like [inaudible: 00:57:12.11].

RM: Well they think, [inaudible: 00:57:12.18] one of the Twelve Tribes of Abraham.

SRP: [inaudible: 00:57:15.16] of Judaism, so--,

[cross talk]

Unknown: Yeah.

RM: Jesus, you all, I--, this is a secret. Jesus was a Jew.

Unknown: Yeah.

[Laughter]

CKW: And what, to-to--, what's even funnier is, again the oldest sect of Christianity are the Ethiopians. And historically you will find tribes in Nigeria that are older Christians than the European Christians.

RM: Absolutely.

CKW: In Nigeria, West Africa.

SRP: Yeah, the whole history of the Roman Empire, when it came to adjust to Christianity being, really, the popular religion, is taken [inaudible: 00:57:49.14].

RM: Well, again, I mean, you look at Jesus and all of the twelve disciples. They're all Middle Eastern, right? They're not white. They're not European. And every, and every portrait you see--,

KW: Bailey wants to call her parents.

[Laughter] [cross talk]

Unknown: Hey, mom, did you know?

[00:58:08.29]

RM: [inaudible: 00:58:09.11] Mama, mama, Jesus was a Jew.

[Laughter]

KW: I've been sitting here like, she's cracking up right now, y'all. Sorry, I didn't mean to hijack [inaudible: 00:58:19.19]

[cross talk] [00:58:21.03]

RM: That whole idea of that Middle Eastern, you know, Nigerian—I mean all that uh, that was the thing about Ethiopian was one of the Lost Tribes. I mean, we talk about Bathsheba coming and then the heir to the throne of Jerusalem. All that, it's part of that history.

CKW: It is.

RM: That most people don't have a clue about.

CKW: And they white--,

RM: Yes, they did appropriate Christianity and turn it into something, uh, something capitalistic.

CKW: Yeah.

KW: You're going to need to give her a hug, Rick.

CKW: That's what, that's what the home boys was.

SRP: Are you okay?

[00:58:55.11] [cross talk]

Unknown: It's okay. Everybody--,

KW: On your way down?

RM: Yeah.

SRP: It's justification for so many

KW: Horrible--,

SRP: Yeah, views--,

RM: Yeah, yeah.

SRP: And women not having rights.

RM: Oh my gosh.

CKW: Mm-hmm.

SRP: And biblical texts.

KW: I really am going to have to have a drink later.

CKW: It's taken, it's taken out of context. And then--,

KW: We almost there, girl.

CKW: And this is the other funny thing. The other funny thing is, you know how in our country many Christians feel like if you're any other religion that you're like wrong. The fact is in most other religions they view Jesus as being the highest level of whatever attainment they have to of--, have. So, most other religions do not denounce Jesus.

RM: They don't.

CKW: They just don't, they just don't perceive him as savior the same way Christians do.

RM: Right.

Unknown: Yes.

RM: Well, because--and-and they, and they even mention him in the Qur'an as a prophet. You know, they talk about Jesus being a great prophet in the Qur'an. And so, and Muhammad—I mean, all of that. But-but it's just--,

CKW: So it's all out of context.

RM: It-it's just drive, it drives me crazy. Because when I think about Christianity it, it's really hard for me to find the positive things of it.

BB: Yes.

RM: That is really difficult, because I think of the Crusades, I think of all the murderous things that happened.

BB: And then what it's used to justify now.

RM: Exactly. And-and how you kept used to keep slaves on the plantation. Um, the whole idea of the, uh, what was the other one? I was going to say—oh, the Knights Templar.

CKW: Uh-huh.

RM: And how they, you know, helped to bring into... And then the-the-the Spanish Inquisitions.

Unknown: Yup, yup, yup.

RM: You know, burn people at the stake and kill them. The missionaries, bringing disease and other things—

CKW: Um, the-the witch hunts up in Salem.

SRP: Thank you [inaudible: 01:00:31.04].

[Laughter]

CKW: Salem witch trials, all of that.

RM: Yeah.

CKW: The Salem witch trials had everything to do with oppressing women.

RM: It did. It was, it was absolutely that--,

CKW: In the name of God.

Unknown: In the name of God.

RM: So much had been done in the name of God.

BB: Yes.

RM: So that's, uh, that's part of the challenge. I don't know that we have time for--,

Unknown: Let's try.

RM: Want to try? Okay.

[cross talk][01:00:48.08]

RM: So, the last one says: *What, what does solidarity between white communities and communities of color look like?* Oh, that's a good way to end this.

Unknown: I think we needed [inaudible: 01:00:55.29]

RM: This is a good one to end on, yeah.

Unknown: [inaudible: 01:00:59.23]

RM: Yeah, what does that look like? *What-what does solidarity between white communities and communities of color look like?* Solidarity?

Unknown: Can it start with—? There's so much that I don't know--,

CKW: Mm-hmm.

Unknown: About literally everything.

KW: And the fact that you're vulnerable enough to admit that, already means you're like here.

CKW: That's--,

KW: Above most of the Western world.

CKW: That's-that's exactly how it has to start. It has to, it has to start with, um, with white Ameri—no, not with white Americans. With white, with white culture, um, being open to listening to everybody else's culture.

RM: And what was the finish that thought?

BB: I don't know.

RM: You don't know?

SRP: You were reminding me of earlier when we had the affinity groups meet and the idea of, like what is my place? How can I be [inaudible: 01:01:46.10]. Part of the question was how can I be an ally. That's how I interpreted it. But also it's about like where-where do I belong and how can I support these efforts, because I so clearly, like if-if I walk into a room with people of color and I'm the only white person--,

KW: Right.

SRP: Like, that immediately changes the dynamic. And am I even welcome? And do they want me there?

CKW: It depends on why you came.

SRP: [inaudible: 01:02:09.23] how to, how to--,

KW: This may be not... This may be answering the question in reverse, but I'm cool like that.

[Laughter]

KW: Um--,

RM: [inaudible: 01:02:17.21].

KW: But I Like I don't sit there and say, 'Am I unified with this race? Or am I unified—?' Like I just, I don't think of myself—it wasn't until, like I said, I got to Chattanooga. I was like, 'Oooohhh.'

RM: But do you think that has a lot to do with how you were raised?

KW: Correct, correct.

RM: And the family was so--,

KW: Diverse.

RM: Such a hodgepodge of different--,

KW: Correct, correct. But--,

RM: Which was a question I have for you too, is-is what did your parents do anything to help inform you about your heritage, your ethnic heritage?

KW: They, um, they didn't, but I also... One, when you have fourteen brothers and sisters, you just like, 'Whatever, we cool.'

RM: [inaudible: 01:02:59.21]

KW: [inaudible: 01:03:00.03].

[01:03:00.10][cross talk]

KW: Secondly, secondly, to contextualize that a little bit more, I was adopted into the last part where most of the other children had some sort of disability. So, because I was able-bodied--,

CKW: You ended up serving them.

KW: Correct. So, like for me I just was like, 'Whatever.' Like, like I grew my servant heart a lot by how I was raised because of that upbringing. And essentially I

don't feel like, yes, like I did get called out in later life, um, for not being, you know, like the second generation Hispanic, I am a bad version of that. I go, 'Why am I a bad version of that? Because I don't speak Spanish? Because I don't—' And they're like: 'Well, you didn't have a quinceañera. And you don't know, like you know—'

SRP: You didn't [inaudible: 01:03:48.20]

KW: 'You didn't do this and you didn't like those check boxes.'

SRP: Like check the boxes.

KW: Yeah, and I'm like: "Okay. Then I'm not your definition of whatever that is."

CKW: See, and to me that, in-instead of somebody saying that you're a "bad version" of that, it-if anything I feel like you weren't, you weren't afforded all of the, um, additives that you should have had.

KW: Yeah.

CKW: Because like the quinceañera, you should have had one because in your culture that's not an opportunity to really honor you in your heritage.

KW: I wanted a quinceañera and a sixteen party.

[laughter]

CKW: And I feel you on that.

KW: Fifteen.

CKW: I feel you on that because you're American.

KW: Yeah.

CKW: And so I-I totally grasp that but like the fact that you didn't get a quinceañera is kind of like you're not bad—To me, you're not a bad Latina because you didn't get a quinceañera, but if anything as your family, they should have made sure that you had those options.

RM: So, so, so where—?

SRP: Well, [inaudible: 01:04:43.04] value.

KW: But see that wouldn't have—but see the reason that wouldn't have been a value, though--,

RM: They didn't even know about it.

KW: Well, I mean they did.

RM: Okay.

KW: But, like if they tried to spend time like--,

CKW: But they didn't [inaudible: 01:04:55.19].

[01:04:59.02][cross talk]

KW: -- culturally appropriating -- because, because we had Koreans, we had, we had Indians, we had, I mean like, like... And these kids also had disabilities for like, you know what? We got to buy hearing aids today. So, I mean--,

CKW: So, I, and I get how you, um--,

RM: [inaudible: 01:05:11.28] Is that what you're saying?

KW: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, you're just damn tired.

RM: Yeah. You give in.

[announcement][01:05:23.04]

JV: We are unfortunately out of time.

CKW and KW: Boo.

[Laughter]

JV: Thank you all for coming.

[Applause] [Announcement continues on the background]

RM: But I have a, see, I have a question. Uh, what generation -- do you have parents? Did your parents go to college?

CKW: So, okay, so I'm a, I'm a unique anomaly. My family, um--, so I was, um--.

[01:05:40.20]

END OF RECORDING

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