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Participants:
DAVID GALL
KIA MOORE
AUDREY SINGER
JUSTIN PERRY
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Preface

The following conversation was hosted at the McColl Center, facilitated by Heather Hart. Consent was given by the participants to have their conversation recorded and transcribed.

Readers should keep in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word and are encouraged to refer directly to the original audio if possible as some interactions and utterances may not have been transcribed due to the nature of unscripted group conversations. The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the text belong solely to the roundtable participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of Black Lunch Table.

START OF RECORDING

HEATHER HART: All right, you guys are ready to go.

DAVID GALL: Mm-hmm.

[Pause]

JUSTIN PERRY: Should've told her to shuffle and cut 'em first, man (inaudible - 00:00:19)

[Laughter]

JP: She was too confident picking them up right away and distributing 'em.

AS: And there are blank ones here. There might be other ones, so it's fine.

DG: And we say our names first, right?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Mm-hmm.

DAVID GALL: So I'll go ahead. My name is David Gall. Do we say anything more?

AS: I think that's it.

DG: Okay.

KIA MOORE: All right. Kia Moore.

AS: Audrey Singer.

JP: Justin Perry.

DG: Okay, I guess we can start anywhere. Let's look through these.

KM: Well, you dealt, so you gotta go too.

[Laughter]

AS: [Laughs] Justin goes first.

[Pause]

JP: Hm. Man. Man. [Laughs]

KM: You got some good ones in there?

[Laughter]

JP: Alright.

[Pause]

KM: Oh, okay. Yeah.

JP: Okay, so you guys want me to pick one of these?

[Pause]

DG: Well, if you want me to start, I have an interesting one: *A moment of silence for Prince*.

KM: Mm.

AS: I think we should take that.

KM: Yes. Oh.

[Pause]

DG: Alright, that's it.

JP: That-that one was pretty good [Laughs].

[Laughter]

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: That was a good way to start. Yeah.

AS: Yeah.

KM: Wh-where- what did you do when you heard the news? Where were you at and what did you do when you heard that news?

DG: [Laughs]

JP: I was- I was actually at- I was at work. And then, um, one of the guys that I'm working with, he just kinda said, 'What's that? Did Prince die?' and I was like, 'What?' And then, I picked up my [Coughs] I picked up my cell phone, and then I-I saw a text from my wife that had come like 10 minutes ago that said something about, 'Did Prince die?' And, uh, and- and it just kinda--. So of course, I just went- write in that- Googled it--.

KM: Mm-hmm.

JP: And saw it and was just kind of, like, 'Man, this is crazy, man.' Between Whitney Houston and Michael Jackson and Prince, and these are my elementary school days. So, yeah. Yeah, it's crazy.

KM: I was sitting in the car for my lunch break, so I turned on the radio and then I-I switched to a different station and I heard Prince on it. I was like, 'Oh goodness. Something done happened.'

JP: [Laughs]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

KM: And it's on more than one station. And then, I heard the news and I was just like--. I was devastated, 'cause, like, in my household? Like, it was Prince and Whitney and-and, uh, Michael, but Prince? Man, that funky- that funky, uh, guitar and just like seeing those movies when I was little, I said, 'I love me some Michael now.' I whe- and when I saw the little kids doing Michael on Moonwalker, like I knew I was the next Michael, you couldn't tell me I wasn't.

[Laughter]

KM: But, Prince just had a hold on me, so it hurt my heart when I heard it.

DG: That's interesting.

KM: Yeah.

DG: What about you?

AS: I was- I was also at work, and someone said, 'I think Prince died.' And then we looked it up and it- they hadn't confirmed who had died at Paisley Park yet. And so I was like, 'You know what, maybe-maybe it wasn't Prince. Okay, there's other people there.' And then, as the story developed, and it was--. It was tough. Last- yesterday, we had a- a farewell dinner for the artists here — er, a lunch, and we decorated everything with purple and listened to Prince the whole time. That was nice.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Yeah, I-I think it was--. I was at work, we had a- a meeting. You know, so. And then when I got home I found out, actually. It was on television and stuff like that. It was, like, everything was, like, okay, every five minutes. [Laughs]

[Laughter]

DG: He gon' talk. But I--. And-and it's interesting that, to listen to you all, because my growing up as a teenager, Michael Jackson was of course, he was smaller and he was like, a big thing then. But they were--. It's interesting--. I--. So, for me, it was- Prince was like, okay, he was there, you know? And I knew, because, you know, you want to follow. But, by that time, I was so much into listening to a lot of jazz and--. And, I-I mean, like I said, like, 'Okay, I can choose my stuff.' And I-I-I really like a lot of Caribbean, um, rhythms and stuff like that. Um, so I wouldn't listen as much. You know, I knew about him, like--. I mean, see the *Purple Rain* movie for what it was, you know? Um, and you know he's good. It's li- it's li- it's just like, you know, like Jimi Hendrix is just a great guitarist. [Laughs] You know what I mean?

AS: [Laughs] You respect him for that.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Right. Yeah, you respect--. You know, and, uh, c-clearly he was such a creative individual, you know? And seemed to be a really great human being too, you know? I mean, he had a heart it seems, from what everybody's been saying. That was there. So let's see what happens. Um, um, anyhow, we can--. Yeah. How long do we have for discussion?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: An hour.

DG: Okay, so we can move on to something else. Yeah.

JP: All right.

DG: We can choose something.

KM: I found a really good one (inaudible - 00:05:26) Go 'head.

DG: [Laughs]

JP: All right. I got one that says, *How have you contributed to Black Lives Matter?*

DG: Hmm. How interesting.

KM: How have I contributed...?

AS: Not enough.

DG: That's a good- that's a good response.

KM: Uh...

DG: Want to elaborate a little bit? [Laughs]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

AS: Yeah, I mean--. I think--. You know, being--. It's--. Being white, I have, like, a different [Pause] a different, I don't know, need to speak out for Black Lives Matter. Because it's- it can't just be on people who are Black to be like, 'But there's a lot of injustices happening.' You know, it's- it can't just be somebody who's Black who always has to bring up the conversation when something happens at work, and they're the only Black person there. Um, it really- it needs to be on the other people, and- and I feel a responsibility for that, but, uh, so I feel like I haven't- I haven't done enough. And I'm not really sure where my entry point is to it. 'Cause it's not enough just to be like, 'Oh, let me post this, like, thing on Facebook and tag Black Lives Matter,' or — I don't know. But, I guess like where- I guess, figuring out that-that entry point to do something that does make a difference.

DG: Mm. Okay.

KM: Me? Um, I have done a hashtag or two. But I think--.

DG: [Laughs]

KM: The best way that I've contributed to that is my nephew and sitting down and talking to him about--.

DG: Oh, how old- how old is he?

[Speakers intermittently agree]

KM: He is, uh, twelve. So, sitting and talking with him about, you know, the Tamir Rice, and-and all these different things of, like, 'This is what you gon' have to deal with. And this is like, when you walkin' down the street, you need to check your hoodie, you need to make sure that you--.' Like I recently saw one where a little kid smiled at the police officer, he got on the bus, and pushed the kid out for smiling at him. And I don't--. Maybe it was some other a-aspects of it, but he got- what he specifically said it was like, 'You smile at me again, I'mma drag you off this bus.' Really? So--.

DG: Hm. That is- that is crazy. [Laughs]

AS: Mm-hmm.

KM: That is scary.

JP: (inaudible - 00:07:50)

KM: And just like helping him understand that you're seeing all these images and how there- how there's like a dehumanization of Black people, and Black males in particular, and that you matter, you matter to me, you matter to your moth- you matter to more people than you know, and what you have inside of you is gonna matter to- to the world. So...

DG: Yeah.

KM: Yeah, that's how I thought I contribute.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Well, I have--. I-I-I guess it's--. I'm a father of two children. So, um, and one- I have a son. You know? And you cannot live in the U.S. without--. And being a p--. I think you will experience it sometime, somehow, somewhere. Um, and-and-and he has had--. You know? I lived in Michigan before — Kalamazoo, actually, where he tended to finish, um, his middle high school- his high school, really. He finished high school there. Um, but, you know, like, y-you-you have to make your son especially, your daughters

too, you have be- make them so aware, like, you know? Do you--. Keep in mind when you're driving while you're Black, do not drive too fast. Do not--. [Laughs] You know? You know-you know, because you don't need unnecessary trouble. Um, but, obviously, you're not always going looking for trouble, just as the e- the example that you shared just now says that, you know? If you smile at somebody, they will like, 'What? How--? What--?' Why did he interpret it that way? I don't know. You know? Um, so obviously it's clear that you don't need to do something sometimes. You know, um, you just need to be. [Laughs]

AS: That's really--.

DG: And that's the problem, really. You know, that--. It's like- and that's a-a socialization that has to change for both sides, you know? Like, you know? Um, so that-that's- that's, um, to bring him up — but also my daugh-my daughter was very--. She was much more--. She's the older one, you know, um, and was a bit more conscious of things anyhow, from--. You know? So--. But with him. So, but with him, he could- he has a little quick temper sometimes, so I have to tell him like, 'No, no, please.' You tell him, 'Put that on hold.' [Laughs] You know, because especially--. I'm--. I don't want to go on, but I-I've never forgotten on the news — man, a lot of Black youth are being, you know, like, you know? The Michael Brown thing, I--. Everything with going on, you know? It's like, where- are we going to hear about this, like every day? You know, and there was one here that occurred. Was it in Charlotte, I think too? Really, a guy had driven up to--. He-he was pulled over, and he stopped at the gas station, he was-he got out the car, and the officer asked him for his-his I.D., and he turned back into the car to get the I.D. And the guy shot him. He didn't die, fortunately. I don't know if you--. I-I don't know if you all have seen that one. It's like- it was like, clearly the guy was like, nervous now, you know? He--. Police officer--. You're pull- you're pulled over, he asked for your I.D., you-you go get it now, you know. And he- t-the guy just shot him, like eight shots. Two went in his wherever, but you know? He didn't die, but I'm saying like, that could be my son. That could be my son — that could be me, you know? Anyhow, so, when you see things like that, you- you clearly have to, like, alert your children to- to what is possible for them. You know, especially here. You know, um,

anyway, so that's just as you say, like, trying to share that kind of thing. Make him aware. Uh, okay, you know? Yeah.

JP: Ah man.

DG: [Laughs]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: [Clears throat] Um, yes, so it hi- it hits on so many levels, 'cause, uh, um--. Yeah, a lot of doing what the- what the- with the one, like, school related stuff is about, like, desegregating our schools. Again, as I was saying, you know, I grew up here in Charlotte where we had, uh, desegregated schools, and-and I was fortunate to have a positive experience with it and everything else. Um, but you know, when you say that word 'dehumanizing,' I think--. And that's a — and I'mma try to be careful 'cause I can go on for forever with these things, just because I remember--. And I'm--. So, I'm in a unique space in terms of that. I'm definitely constantly advocating for these things. But I'm also, you know, in an interracial marriage, I to go to a church that my wife grew up in that is predominantly white. So I grew up going to--. I mean, it's a long story--.

[Laughter]

JP: I grew up going down to the church down the street, it's for--. It was, like, s-seven blocks apart, miles apart, racial, everything else, but then I ended up--. We ended up at her church. And so, lots of times I do, it's like, there're things I'm going to bring up in that space that otherwise folks aren't conscious of. And, um, and I remember the day that the Michael Brown thing came public, and the reason why I remembered is because I was walking my dog. And it's cold in the morning and I walk my dog, wearing my hood. And I- and I- and I'm aware, I mean, but I'm also like, 'Hey, I got bad allergies, colds, sniffin', and everything else.'

[Laughter]

JP: So this is a practical thing. I'm not trying to scare anybody. Um, but so, I'm walking the dog and I get back in the- the driveway, you know, at a house that we now own for about nine years. And there's a police officer, just kind of like slowed to a creek right there and everything, and I turn around, and I just kind of see him, he just kind of--. He's not really doing anything and-and I just kind of look, and-and--. So again, I just kind

of wave, you know, again, 'cause I'm- I am hyper aware of these things. I've always been--. My mom — I was a big kid for my age growing up, and so she always told me, 'You got to be careful, as a Black male, and as somebody who's big for your age, they're gonna- the consequences for you always gonna be h-higher,' you know? And so, I-I try to wave and he just pulled off, he didn't acknowledge or whatever else. And I remember, so I let the dog back out in the backyard, and I was so ticked off, and I was like, 'This is some junk,' even though it's one of the things you always know. Like, I di- I don't expect- I expect these kinds of things, but it still, kind of, can tick you off at the same time. And I go in and literally right there on Good Morning America is talking about Mike Brown. And I'm sitting here and it's just like- and it's like, 'Whoa,' you know what I mean? Just-just how quick, you know, [Snaps fingers] something can change and I'm somebody who grew up with a bad temper.

DG: Yeah. [Laughs]

JP: I did. I had that as I was younger, you know? And I actually, you know, my mom's on--. I still remember, I actually had, um — my mom worked at my elementary school, but, uh, I had a teacher in fifth grade, I'd gotten into a fight with the kid who'd initiated it first, and, you know, but I felled a-a stronger blow, I guess. And, um, and she just said to me, she was like, 'Y'know, you have a lot of potential, but as a Black male and somebody who's big for your age, you know, your temper can take you two very different places.' You know? And I remember that really sticking with me even though I already knew that, you know, just hearing that again from a teacher, it just really stuck with me. And so, you know, seeing that thing with the Mike Brown thing and, you know, hit me again on how quick stuff, obviously, can change in my own life, but I've got a two year old son and--. And so, it's a unique space in terms of, you know, when a kid is biracial, you know, ultimately, I'm like, 'in the end, wh-when it comes to this, you're Black.' And my wife is very aware of that, too, you know. So I mean, we both grew up here, we went to (inaudible - 00:15:32) West Charlotte together, so she's very socially conscious and everything else. So-so that helps. But it is a challenge, even when we we're try- we're raising him in that, typically, white kids are raised to be fully independent, and to 'Grab- go and grab the world,' and everything else. And wi-with Black-Black youths, especially Black males, you kind of have to, like, raise some of that,

but you also had to try to rein it in a little bit, too, because it's- it's-it's a- it's such a dangerous world out there. And it-it's-it's--. And so we found that dynamic, and I'm like, 'Hey, honey. [Laughs] Alright, we can give him this space and this, but this is where we got to kind of draw the lines and everything.' And so I've made a point, though, you know, even in our church, you know, which is this covenant Presbyterians, so Morehead and McDowell, and I mean, there's a lot of prominent folks in there, and- and so I became an Elder there or whatever else. And so it was like, 'Well, I've got this respect and I've got the space, I'm gonna put out things they don't think about otherwise.'

DG: Yeah, which is real.

JP: And sometimes with what I mentioned even with my son, 'cause everyone is like, 'Oh, he's so cute, he's so cute,' and everything. And I- and one time did use social media, I made this post about, you know, again... You know, 'I love that people think that my son is cute. [Laughs] But also know how quickly that expires for Black males.' You know, he's two and a half right now. And-and what I want to think of it, or want folks to be aware of is, again, when you look at him and and see him as cute, how quick that transition in him being threatening or menacing happens, and then- and don't think about just him, think about the fact that, again, all Black males deal with this, you know, and so, so yes, I'm constantly--. [Laughs] I-I-I write, I really should probably just have a blog, my wife's like, she's like, 'I really just want to unfollow you on Facebook sometimes.' [Laughs]

[Laughter]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: But, uh, but I'm like- I'm like, 'Honey, I gotta put this stuff out into space.' And then, like I said, that stuff with the- with the school stuff. That's, to me, I think the more we're disconnected then don't see each other, the easier it is to-to dehumanize each other. 'Cause if I don't interact with you, I just come up with the idea of what you are, and that stuff's based on the media. A-and the media [Laughs] is always gonna show the worst. And everything else--.

DG: Or-or at least show the limited, anyway.

JP: Yes.

DG: You know? You know, I mean like- you know? If-if-if-if it- if the-the media only thinks you're Prince [Laughs], you know? And not all the other- all these other things, too, you know? It's like, it's a limited visual, um, that really dehumanizes.

[Crosstalk]

JP: Yeah, so-so I'm sorry--.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: No, no.

[Laughter]

JP: Like I said, that when I told you all, like--. I'm sorry, man, like, I'm sorry.

[Crosstalk ends]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

KM: But one of the points that you brought up really made me think about--. Like, I been--. I was discussing this with my nephew's mom about, like, looking at my nephew's pictures and how he used to smile so much when he was little. And then, it was like, ten to eleven, around that preteen age is when he had to learn like, 'If I'mma be a Black man and represent Black men, like, I'mma- I'mma smile for everything else, but when we do the picture, I'mma look hard.' Like--.

DG: [Laughs]

KM: And it's just like that-that expiration date, like, he's--. He was adorab- he's still an adorable little kid, but he was- he's not gonna be seen as the little kid. And, like, when I learned that, it was a poli-police helicopter, like, going around the neighborhood at che--. Well, monitoring him and, like, three other kids because they had, like, these little dirt bikes that they ride around. There was one particular neighbor that just did not like that particular thing, but they were doing it in the appropriate manner. But he had to experience a police helicopter spotlight going around the neighborhood, and like, the police coming up to him, and like, all the stuff that we had to tell him: 'Make sure that you respectful, and get off the bike and dadadada.' And his dad did come there and like, you know, made sure that they stayed safe, but he also — what I did love about what his dad did is his dad didn't cower. He just said, 'Well, these are what the rules are and this with the laws--. And this is what they're doing.' And police officer knew, like--. He was like, 'Yes, that is. We just had to come out here because--.'

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Somebody called.

KM: Somebody called. But, that particular experience of the not bowing down and knowing who you are and knowing your rights. I think that was- that was amazing. It was an amazing experience. But not having--. But having a helicopter, and you--.

DG: [Laughs]

KM: Ten years old? Just tryna ride like your little motorbike?

DG: Yeah, that-that sucks (inaudible - 00:20:09).

KM: Not doing anything wrong, just trying to do something that you like that's not hurting anybody.

AS: Is there like really nothing else going on and Charlotte that, like--.

DG: [Laughs] Yeah.

AS: We're gonna use our police helicopter--.

[Laughter]

AS: For spying on a ten year old?

KM: Yeah, it was--. Whew.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: That's why I always say, those phrases like "kids being kids." I've always said those- that- those are for--. Like phrases like "kids being kids" are a rite of passage, those are phrases that are afforded to white youth. [Laughs] Like, it's not "kids being kids" for somebody like me, you know what I mean?

AS: You don't get to have that.

JP: Like, I got a very short time and probably by the time preschool is over --if that-- and 'cause a lot of the kids even in that, I mean, get treated differently than and everything else. It's--. Yeah, I mean, so when people talk about, you know, they don't get white privilege and everything else. It's all those things, you just don't--. You can mess up, you can go out and have fun. You can- you can make a mistake and not worry that it's gonna cost you your life, you know?

DG: Right. Yes, exactly.

JP: So that's the problem. I'll shut up now.

[Laughter]

AS: No, don't.

DG: No, maybe we shouldn't exhaust (inaudible - 00:21:11).

KM: One more part about that, is like, what I find interesting about the Black Lives Matter is that the focus does tend to shift to the male perspective--.

DG: Yes, I was just gonna say--.

JP: Yes, very true.

KM: And then, as like a female, it's like, I feel like I-I do have to lift up, you know, my Black males and that- of that nature, but--.

DG: But there are female issues too.

KM: It's stuff that I'm- I'm dealing with too. And it's like, 'Who do I turn to? I don't have a shoulder that I get to lean on and--.'

DG: That's right. Mm-hmm.

KM: 'Cry on, because--.' Like, in the media, is like, hyped up, and it is happening, you know, to the Black males, but what about the Black women? Like, my life matters too.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: Those teach- the girls--. I think it was in South Carolina, the, um, that the-the officer basically--. I think it was- she was--. I can't remember what it is that she wouldn't- she wasn't complying with something, you know? And It started with something probably like gum or a cell phone or something like that, and ultimately it ended up with the girl being physically removed, and all those kinds of things. And so, it definitely, in terms of disproportionate suspension and everything like that, Black women definitely get hit with it the same way, you know? It's--. It--. You know, it--. We don't have the same level of deaths. [Laughs] You know what I mean? But-but we have a lot of emotional killing that is going on just the same. So, yeah, no I-I-I think your-your point is-is dead on, though.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

KM: I also feel like, for Black women, we've always been taught that you got to carry your burden, and you got to carry your man's burden too, and your child's burden. It's just, like, you don't have time to worry about you. Just--.

AS: You got to hold everyone else's.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Wh-which-which I think we-we-we do have as a--. I mean, I think everybody is responsible for-for making sure that that doesn't happen, or stops happening. You know, that really, that's really male/female divide, in a sense, or difference. That has a shift for everybody maybe, you know? Um, um, but definitely so, you know? I mean, like--. I,er, I-I must say, it's interesting I-, because I grew up in the Caribbean, which was majority Black based, you know, Black government was there. It's just like, you know, it's like, all your role models are like doctors, lawyers, (inaudible - 00:23:18) need to get around you --sports man-- so you assume like, 'Okay.' So, I didn't quite have that. I mean, you had a little bit because of the colonial experience, you know, and you always have that, you know? It's always there, because, you know, that's the-the new world history as it were. Um, but, because of that, sort of, different experience, you know? Like that saying of not being confident. It's like when I came here, I had to then make certain adjustments.

JP: [Laughs]

DG: And I knew I had to make them, but I said, like--. Yeah, you know. Because, that growing up, that-that sort of falling back, I didn't have to do that. You know, I didn't, I really didn't. I mean, I--. You were expected to, like, do stuff, you know? [Laughs] Um, you know? Yeah, so right, you know, um, I cannot appreciate the difference really and that-that it has made more for my son. You know, um, so that we-we didn't have to put those little parameters on him, you know? Um, anyhow, let's try another one.

AS: Yeah, um, we talked a little bit about this, but the prompt is: *(In)sufficient media coverage on potice- police brutality, especially locally.*

DG: Mm-hmm.

AS: Um, and, uh, the *in* is in parentheses. So I guess, like, is it sufficient or not sufficient? Um, I would say probably insufficient. Um, but, uh, but I guess I don't- I don't know. I don't want (inaudible - 00:24:51)

[Laughter]

AS: (inaudible - 00:24:54) to say about it, too.

DG: So what do you think?

KM: Uh, I mean, I-I think it's--. You're hearing about it more and more because people, like they know it's gonna get covered, so now everybody is pulling out their phones. So--. But, I think the pushback, like, from the officers is that, like, 'I'm constantly being monitored.' Well, I've felt-I've felt like this for how long?

[Laughter]

AS: (inaudible - 00:25:18) Yeah.

KM: How long? So, it's your turn now.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

JP: You do have the gun.

[Laughter]

AS: Yeah.

DG: You do have the gun, you know?

KM: Yeah, so...

DG: Um, I-I must say, because of my own si- my own- my situation, I listen to a lot of, um, what- national news, if anything. And-and I-I've got rid of cable and gone to Roku and stuff like that. I--. This is like--.

[Laughter]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: S,o I-I tend to then choose what I want, you know? Um, so that might--. I wouldn't be able to say whether it's insufficient or not, honestly. But I s- like you, I would suspect it isn't, because nationally it isn't, you know? Um, and that's because, you know, y- those assumptions that you said are varied, you know? Like, um, police push

back, you know, and that-that very thing that you're saying, like, you know, 'Oh, we are being monitored more?' I beg your pardon?

[Laughter]

DG: You know? You know--. Um, so and especially when you realize, with all those cases that you saw nationally, where, in a sense, it didn't seem to matter what the police did, they got off. [Laughs] You know? They didn't--. Somehow this is, like, especially the-the-the Tamir--. Tamir Rice is the little boy, right?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Mm-hmm.

DG: I actually have a thing I want to do of- artwork I want to do with-with his thing, because it means like, here you are, you-you're a little boy playing with a- a toy gun. And this is a peculiar visual art thing for me too. It looks like a real gun. And it's made to do that because of all this idea of, like, things being realistic. [Laughs] You know? Um, so for me, it has an interesting, um, visual arts or history behind it. But here's this little guy playing with this thing, and he- and-and you see the little video, you know, the-the thing where that--? And-and he said, like, 'There he is turning back,' and the next thing you know, he's dead. Did it--?

KM: Well, just hearing him in the car when they said, 'I think it might be a toy.' Like nobody--.

DG: And-and it--. Two (inaudible - 00:27:22)

JP: (inaudible - 00:27:23)

DG: I mean, like they didn't pau--. That guy didn't pause before he shot that. And yet, you couldn't tell me that he's not, you know, responsible. You know. That--. However you look at it, that seems so-so-so, um--. So, when you see things like that, you do assume, in a way, like, you know, that local news might not be covering as incidences, as probably they should, you know? Um--.

[DG intermittently agrees]

AS: I think there's other incidences, too, like--. I would say, the fact that Black people are stopped for whatever minute driving traction. That's--. I would say that's also police brutality, in a way, or that they're more likely to be, you know, if people who are Black and people who are white use drugs, the same amount, but Black people are

much more likely to be convicted of a-a drug crime. I mean, that's another- there's a lot, like, kind of other smaller things that happen that the news never talks about, either. But--.

JP: Yeah, I think that-that-that's an image to point out. So, I'm a therapist by trade, and I do a lot of work in substance abuse and everything else. And so it's, it's always, I've always laughed at, like, the idea of a war on drugs and there's never been a war on drugs--.

AS: No.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: There's been a war on Black and Brown drug possession. You know? Um, if there was a real war on drugs, you'd see, uh, college campuses and fraternity and sorority houses getting raided all the time--.

[Laughter]

JP: You know? But--. That's, again, that's the rite of passage. "Kids being kids", you know. But this kid over here, who's got the nickel bag of weed. Like, 'Oh, here's your first offense and your sa--.' Now we're- now we're stacking up until we get into that, uh, felony level. And I tell people all the time, you know, in terms of quote-unquote, hard drugs. Our white population uses those much more than our Black population--.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Well, you see it now with the heroin situation, right? I was listening. I mean, N.P.R. did a--. I can't remember--. The guy is local too. He did this thing on one night, um, where he had a phone-in about his heroin addiction thing that w- that is taking over a lot of white communities. Right? And- and you had a number of Black calling things, it's like, 'I don't know. I mean, like, we--. N-now, it's a disease?' You know? [Laughs]

JP: It's a public health thing.

AS: (inaudible - 00:29:56)

DG: Public health thing. You know? So they--. And the- and-and-and you can see how sensitive and intellig--. I mean, like, these are critical thinking going on, right? I mean, 'cause we--. T-the particular guy, I remember saying, like, 'Look, I-I understand that this is a disease, I--. This is a problem, you know? But do you know how frustrating

it is for-for us to have to wait for it to be a w- for it to hit the white community and then for them to realize it? And it's so disingenuous because we have suffered enough.' You know? So, it was so good to-to-to hear that in a way, because you see- you saw people hearing this bit- a bit of their frustration, but also the realism with which they approach this stuff, you know? We don't have any illusions, but we need some really different approaches to this now. You know, it's enough that-that we've got a history of experience that we should at least change from this now, you know? I mean, are we going to do it all the time? You know? Um...

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: And you hit it 'cause the thing is, I mean, look at the crack epidemic versus the opiate epidemic. You know, we--. Whereas, folks like Reagan, and everybody else created this, you know, really went on this war on drugs. Even, uh, President Obama is-is speaking about a public health epidemic. You know, um, and so I--. And so the thing is, and it- and it's the waves that come behind it, because we talk about single moms, and we talk about, you know, where are the Black men and everything else, but, you know, I'm--. I can tell you, where a lot of them are, you know?

[Laughter]

JP: A lot of it is tied to these drug stuff, you know, and if- and if they attacked the suburbs of Charlotte the way they did that, it'd be a lot of single white women--.

DG: Right, exactly.

JP: And a lot of single--. I mean--.

AS: White dads, too. Yeah.

DG: Mm-hmm.

AS: There- one of my cards says, *In North Carolina, Blacks are 22 percent of the total population and 57 percent of the prison population.*

KM: Oh, the good ole prison industrial complex.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Yeah, yeah. And that's-that's where I do feel, um, you know, politically and structurally, this whole notion, which is--. I mean, I'm clearly biased, very solid, like, very

left leaning. [Laughs] But I mean, this notion that privatization is the solution to everything is, like, so mythological and nonsensical, because clearly it isn't, you know, you- when you have a profit motive, everything starts to fall towards that direction. [Laughs] You know? To making that viable. And that's not always good at all, you know? Um, you know, um, they talk about public sector inefficiency. Well, the private sector is very good at masking their inefficiency or passing it off to somebody else, you know? Um, or-or-or current--. [Laughs]

AS: Yeah. I mean, they can be good at profit, but bad at ignoring everything else and the destruction that it causes.

DG: Yeah, yeah. You know, um, and so, I mean, I think those are structural things we- we need to be ready to deal with, you know? Um--.

KM: And like, with that statistic right there, just thinking about how, like, that prison- that school to prison pipeline, that is- like, in North Carolina--?

AS: Like building prisons to, like, the third grade population.

KM: That just is heartbreaking. Like, I was behind, uh, some man one time --and I wasn't really paying attention-- and I took a picture of him because I saw something that was on him that was like, police C.M.S. Department, I was like, there's a-there's a whole department just for the school. And there was like a paddy wagon, man, where, like, if you mess up? You're going straight to the back of these things, taking- like, really? Do you need a whole department just for the school? Just for the school?

AS: They're kids.

JP: And which schools are you targeting?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

JP: You know?

AS: (inaudible - 00:33:48) park.

JP: Yeah, no. [Laughs]

KM: But if you get 'em trained now, then you can have you some- some certified slaves.

DG: Yeah.

KM: In a couple of years.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: And this is the thing that kills me. I mean, in my- what I have a card that talks about the privation-privatization of education and anything too, is that--. Like, the thing people don't realize is that a lot of people that are good at making a profit for themselves aren't necessarily good at business, in general.

[Laughter]

JP: So-so--. Like-like-. So that's--.

DG: I like that.

JP: So that's the business. It's like, you know, it's like--. So yeah, they know how to make money for themselves, but really--.

AS: But like educating--?

JP: They don't really run a great business. I mean, like-like, so to me, you look at- look at this whole, like, kids, if you're looking at them from a business model take out--. A-again, I'm psychology, sociology and social work, but I still look at things economically too. So, if you- if you're looking at kids, you know, as this life source that you invest in, you invest in them when they're little so they grow up and then they can contribute to the economy and everything else. Whereas what these folks do is they cut up front, then they throw them on the back end in this prison type of situation. So, it's like- so you call it a government handout when somebody's actually out here to help feed them or to help, you know, get them a little ahead, but when they're in prison? We don't have a problem giving you food--.

DG: [Laughs]

JP: Shelter, education, and all these things, but you can't even contribute back to the economy. That doesn't make economic sense. Like, it makes sense for small segments of the population, but in terms of the big picture--.

AS: It's systemically.

JP: Yes, it doesn't, you know?

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: And-and you can see how counterproductive it is. It-it- what it's effectively doing is making those people, whoever they are, that elite set of people, or that-that set of persons who think that they're like, their profits are endangered if they do this other thing, you know? That- what you're really doing is now making you build a prison for yourself, you know, because you think it or not, they might be in prison, but you are, too, because then you gotta have all the-the-the burglar alarms, you'll have to have all the-the fear of this other. [Laughs] You know? That just keeps ratcheting up, you know, it's like so stupidly coun-counterproductive, you know? Um, why not share some of the stuff you have, which is really, even as a private enterprise, if you are really interested in serving, you will get back. That's-that's-that's pretty sure, you know? I mean, but the idea is that if you give to your- if you're really serving and making a profit, not, I guess it may not be an extraordinary profit, that's what they seem to want, you'll get back, you know? You will get back and less fear for sure. [Laughs] You know?

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: There's a- there's this- there's a, um, a research article called *The High Price of Affluence*. And, um, and it draws this parallel between folks in high wealth and folks in-in significant poverty. And it shows that like, sort amongst kids, for like a lot of the parallels that are going on 'cause they're showing the kids in the high wealth having the highest rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and everything else, disorders across the country among any group. And it was just showing that that disconnection happens on both ends and even so, like, where's the concentrated poverty, often the father was gone because, like, the war on drugs and everything else. The ones with the concentrated affluence very often it's whether the dad's constantly on business and everything else. A-a-and so there's this-this disconnect and they're acting out and they're doing all the same things, just without the same legal consequences. But I always would say in my- in my treatment groups, I would often have- a lot of my clients came from concentrated poverty and concentrated affluence. The concentrated poverty came through probation, concentrated affluence came through overdoses, hospitalizations, and everything else. And I always joked and say, 'Well, they didn't get integration in school, but now they're getting it in my treatment center.'

[Laughter]

JP: [Laughs] You know? We could do it a healthier way early on, but I mean--.

[Laughter]

JP: What am I saying, I don't know. You know?

AS: Well then you might be out of a job.

[Crosstalk

JP: Yeah, I know, but that-that's- that's the social- that's the social worker in me.

AS: [Laughs]

DG: You know the thing is, I'm pretty sure he would be out of a job but there'll be something else for him to do.

AS: Oh, no. Of course, I mean--.

[Laughter]

DG: I mean--

JP: No, no, no--.

AS: If you were out of a job, I'm sure you would be thrilled.

DG: Yeah. Yeah, the-the-the more positive things--.

JP: I always joke (inaudible - 00:38:15)

DG: You want to read one of your teachers.

[Crosstalk ends]

KM: Uh, that was kinda good. Shift this back more to, like, the local focus, but it's like, *C.I.A.A. plus white flight, plus the Black tax*.

AS: Hm.

KM: What are your thoughts on that?

DG: What's that?

KM: *C.I.A.A. plus white flight*--.

DG: C.I.A.A. is what?

JP: Just the--.

AS: Are there additional taxes for C.I.A.A.?

JP: So, they're--.

KM: Well...

[Laughter]

KM: Yeah.

JP: So C.I.A.A. is all of the--. A lot of the--.

KM: Black colleges.

JP: Black colleges--.

DG: Oh, okay.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: You know, usually they have a tournament here every year that brings in a lot of money. You know, I-I mean, a lot of it is because of all of the different parties and entertainers that come along with it and everything else.

AS: A lot hotel and the restaurants.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Right, yeah.

KM: So with that- with the hotel and with the restaurants, you'll get that- the higher price that's kind of like, it won't say that it is because this is a Black event.

AS: Oh, yeah, but it's like- but you'll--. Yeah.

KM: But you-you're gonna pay for that.

JP: Except the Ritz screwed up. [Laughs] The Ritz actually got caught.

KM: Like, yeah.

DG: Which-which place?

JP: The Ritz.

DG: Oh, okay.

KM: Caught for like--.

JP: The Ritz Carlton Hotel got caught recently--.

KM: Yeah.

JP: And that was last year.

KM: Y-yeah, it was 2015, I think. Yeah, they got caught and there's like they actually identified C.I.A.A. tax on there. Like, no.

DG: Wow.

KM: No, it's the Black tax. And then white flight, that seems like that was talked about more this year, because it's always like when the C.I.A.A. comes, most people are like, 'Well, I'm not going to be in that town. I'm leaving. I'm gonna go on vacation.' Like, I even saw one of the, uh, the nightlife promoters that primarily focuses on, like, the college crowd that's more so, like- not the-the non-Black crowd. They had- they had created a package of like, 'Get away from noisy C.I.A.A. Go on, like, a ski trip.' I was like--.

JP: Wow.

KM: Dang. Wow.

DG: Well, y--. Let-let me mention something now though, because this-this is for me, this is a- an issue to me that--. And this is much more than just local.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Mm-hmm.

JP: Oh yeah.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: These are the same people--. In a sense--. We just had a moment of silence for Prince, and when you look at the T.V. and you see the people that are admiring Prince, well, it's-it's everybody. I mean, like, total, like--. And-and this has been one of my things, you know, um, whe-when I try to teach students, um, you know, like, about culture. You know, you wouldn't be in- that--. I-I don't even like to call it simply Black culture, but remember your taste, your being, has been transformed by these other people. Right? You like that kind of rhythm? Right? I mean, like, there's no doubt, the guy that did Hamilton did rap, right? He didn't invent rap. But he--. [Laughs]

[Laughter]

JP: But down the road, there's gonna be some people that thought it started with him.

[Laughter]

DG: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, but like and-and-and--. I'm perfectly--. Now, here--. Y-you're both- you're in an interracial marriage. I'm in one, uh, you know? But, the fact of

the matter is, when you really think about how culturally hybrid we all are. 'Cause we all are, you know, it's a mixture of white, Black, whether we like or not, I speak English. I don't speak German. I don't speak Swahili. You know, I grew up with that. That's what I know, good? So then, my-my thing is, like, hybridity is actually what we all are, especially in the Western world, for sure, you know? But that means that you must also realize that you actually- that person is part of your being, so when they run away, who're they actually running away from? Because you're gonna- you're gonna so realize that you- there's a part of you that you don't want to recognize, at a very deep level. You know, that-that to me is like something that I think we don't approach. The idea that, 'look, there is--.' Er, last night, we were here, um, with the jazz thing. Um, all the musicians were white. [Laughs] No-not saying, like--. But-but I'm saying like--. And they were great. [Laughs]

JP: [Laughs]

DG: You know what I mean? Like, there were good musicians, but I'm saying like, wait a minute, you know the taste for all that, the-the-the flavor of all that — that's like food, you know, like, if you eat Chinese food, you do have to a-acknowledge that it was actually invented by Chinese. You know? So that taste has now become part--. And you might be able to cook Chinese very well. So that you can't even distinguish it from them. But the idea is that, for me, like, we are in that place where we have to acknowledge that others have contributed to our being. Admit to our really very being. And the more we can do that, I think the more we wake up with like men, gender, ethn--. You know, like my mother, God rest her soul, you know, like, i- she made me very conscious of feminism, women's rights, you know? Here's a woman with an elementary education who would tell us m- t-two sons and a daughter — my sister is the youngest. She-she would say, like, 'Remember, you have a mother and a sister. Don't treat women badly.' [Laughs] You know?

[Laughter]

DG: You know, it was like, so simple, you know, don't do it. You know, um, but that kind of respect for others contributing to you, others being part of you, whether you like it or not, you know, um, that to me, I think that is--. That's again systemic, you know? When they do that, they don't realize how they're not, um, realizing how much

this other person is part of their very being, you know, um. So, of course, for me, that's something that- that is indicative of in a way, you know.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

KM: But piggybacking off of that aspect of it, if-if we focus in on C.I.A.A., like, that very entity coming to Charlotte is helping to raise the economy. And but, if you're starting to see, like, this white flight and this Black tax, you're pushing it away. You're pushing, like, this big money maker for Charlotte away.

JP: Right, right.

DG: Yes. Yeah,

KM: So... Yeah.

JP: [Laughs] Yeah.

DG: It would be interesting to see what this- what this group does now with all this gay right--. I-I mean.

KM: The H.B.2 bill?

DG: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think we should--.

KM: It's been in question, I've heard.

DG: I think- I think they should really say like, 'Well, we're not coming,' because this is an equal-e-equality issue, as you well, you know — whatever. I mean, It's like be there, you know? Um, but anyhow, that's interesting. That's something I-I wasn't so aware of. Um, The Black tax of course, we know of, but--. [Laughs]

AS: What are--?

DG: Hm?

AS: Like, what are some of the ways to--? I mean, conversations like this are obviously great, but what- what are ways to combat some of this? And, I don't--. Like it--. Sometimes it just feels like it's so systemic. How can I change anything? Which is a silly thought, but--.

DG: No, it isn't. I don't think it is.

AS: It's still--. I don't know.

DG: If we didn't dream that we could change it, it would never have been changed. You know?

AS: [Laughs] That's true, yeah.

[AS intermittently agrees]

DG: I mean- I mean, it has changed--. But, I mean, like, you still need to change it more. But- and I think we-we, you know, the--. Uh, for me as an educator, I don't know for you--. You try to do the best, where you are to s- to- to mention these structural things, you know, because, you know, if you don't, they will just keep on going. And sometimes, er, if, uh, people just need to be aware. You know, um, that stuff--. It- it's because it's, you know, how we're, you know, we ourselves are not always conscious of things, you know, whether it's black, white, pink, or blue, you might not be conscious that you're doing something as a minority person, or whatever. And so it's--. You just need to be made aware sometimes. Now, that's not always the case, of course. But that's the, I guess, the more you know,

AS: (inaudible - 00:45:55)

KM: For me, I think it's also relationships because, like, I met you here, and if we decide to do more things, and just get to know each other, and then you bring a friend along and I bring a friend along and it's just, you get to know a person, then for a while, it might be, 'Well, now I don't like most people, but that person is cool.'

[Laughter]

KM: And as you start getting--.

AS: 'I got that one Black friend. So I-I'm cool, I'm cool--.'

[Laughter]

KM: 'I got that one white friend. You know, she-she cool.'

JP: 'I can say this 'cause I got them.'

[Laughter]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

KM: Yeah, but--. Like, but once you have more and more of those experiences, somebody in somebody's circle might be connected with somebody that's in that

systemic circle that has some sort of influence, and after you've had those experiences, he's like, 'Well, no, I have this friend and I understand this context and we hung out and such or such or whatever.' And now like, 'No, that doesn't make sense,' it might have made sense if they had never had that relationship with that person. But now, I think that relationships can be really powerful. So stuff like this might seem like it's just a conversation starter, but if you take it beyond just sitting at this table, and we interact even more, I think that can help.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: I think--. I mean, I definitely agree with what-what you're saying, um, you know, what I think is--. You know, I went to a conference, a writer for The New York Times, Charles Blow was speaking, uh, and he was-he was saying, you know, you ha--. Try to mobilize change in your sphere. So, in other words, what's your network, where's your- what's your sphere of influence, you try to operate within that, you know? You know, I'm gonna be greedy, 'cause I've met you guys. I'll still- I'll reach out to you as well, so you know. But, you know, like to- like tomorrow, again, and, you know, I'm just meeting you guys, but, um, at 5:30 pm. And, um, Dilworth Neighborhood Grille right there on Moorehead and McDowell, not far from here, uh, getting together, a bunch of, um, younger folks, young parents, everything else and try to mobilize folks, you know, around student assignment stuff, but also even beyond that. So it's just kind of looking at — so again, this is a systemic thing that's on the books now. Um, but also--. So again, so maybe it's I've got my network of folks on me, you got a network of folks, you got a network. And then there's other things, and maybe I-I care about schools kind of, maybe I care more about the housing thing, whatever it is, I-let's figure out how do we, kind of--.

DG: Yes, how we--.

JP: Strengthen together and then kind of expand that message and everything. That's-that's the way I think about things is that, you know, trying to find--. Where is my-my place of influence? That's what I said at the church that I'm at — okay, they've given me some credibility and everything else, now I've got a space to challenge. You know what I mean? I'm gonna challenge you to wait, but the challenge can be more effective when you have credibility. You know? Then that credibility tends to come

earlier, so like you said, relationships. Okay, I know Audrey, and Audrey knows me. Whereas before, I just see her, she just sees me, and I'm saying something who knows whether that sinks, but if- but if- but if she's had this time and has this kind of respect, and I've had this time and this respect. I'm here a little bit different now, at least thinking about it and everything else, so. But that's-that's what I think is--. There's a lot of different things that are going on, it's just a matter of finding out what you're passionate about. And then find other people who are doing it, 'cause most of the time, we try to start stuff on our own. And that's part of why I'm doing this thing tomorrow is 'cause it is just some of these are--. There's a Black Lives Matter group, and, uh, I'm actually supposed to peak-speak on a panel Thursday related to the school stuff with them. And so I was like, 'I want you guys to come on, I want some of these people to come with these other teachers to come.' I was like, 'I don't even know who all is gonna be here.' The same way I just invited you guys, I'm just saying I want to try to get together voices and say, 'Let's break this thing down. What's something that you can focus on? What's something you can focus on, or what's something we can focus on collectively?' If that makes sense?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

DG: We want another one, or?

KM: Yeah.

DG: Okay.

JP: Yeah. [Laughs]

DG: Ho-how are we doing with time?

AS: Eh, they'll tell us.

JP: I figured they'll let us know, man.

[Laughter]

JP: They'll ring the buzzer on us. [Laughs]

AS: Yeah. Heh, 'Excuse me, I'm not done yet.'

DG: Okay, this is about Charlotte again, I guess. Uh, i- *Is it significant that Charlotte's police chief, Kerr Putney, and his predecessor, are Black?* [Pause] Police chief...

AS: I think it's- I mean it's nice and it should--. But it's not enough. I get--.

DG: Like, you shouldn't expect it to be an Afri--? [Laughs]

AS: Right, right. Right.

KM: Yeah.

AS: You know, it'd--. Of what--. We'd have the same conversations if it was a white police chief, I think--. I mean, I'm glad that our police chief is Black. I don't know what his--. I can--. Mm, I assume what his, I don't know, his views are on policing in Charlotte are, but--.

DG: True.

AS: I have no idea if that's really how he feels.

DG: And-and, if I may jump in, you know, when you say--. Once you have mentioned, like, I don't know what his ideas are.

AS: Yeah.

DG: I think we have to remember there's Clarence Thomas on the Supreme Court.

AS: [Laughs] Right.

[Laughter]

JP: I-I know I-- My-my head had already gone there [Laughs]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: And honestly, he doesn't represent me or what I think most, most African Amer- most people of color, I think, about the legal system in the US, a guy that can support Citizens United, etc., etc., etc. That to me is just like, your head is somewhere else tha-than mine. And your experiences may be different than ours. I don't think it is, but...

[Laughter]

AS: Somethin' is.

DG: Ho-how he has he rationalized it--.

JP: His memory of those experiences.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Or rationalization of them is totally different. You know, because I--. So, that is an important thing, I think you're saying that, 'Who is? Who is this person?' I mean, I don't know him too much, or, I- you know, whatever. And look, even if he does happen--. The-the president is Black, [Pause] etc., etc. [Laughs] You know? And he can only do so much, you know? I-I don't know what people sometimes expect when you get in. It does help to have a person like that in a position of power, but it doesn't mean that you have really enough power, you know, to--. Because there's a system. You know, a system, and he-he-he- whether he has enough power to change it over--? Certainly not overnight. You know? it's not, it's a good example, it's all that, you know, all those things that there, but it--. You shouldn't now say that everything is hunky dory, you know? [Laughs] You know? And that, 'Oh, look,' you know? 'Cause that's what happens, then, you know? Yeah, you know, there is access. [Laughs]

JP: Yeah. Except what happened to our state election in 2010 that brought us the legislators we have now. We-we- the state turned blue for Obama in 2008 then they mobilized, put him in the one on their thing and everything else, and mobilized their base to then collect folks that have set us back.

DG: Like, yes.

JP: Fifty, sixty--. Yeah, yeah. Years within the span of a few years. You know? And so was--. It i--. I'm s- it sounded like you were about to talk, and didn't listen, so I'm gonna shut up.

KM: Oh, no. It's-it's okay

JP: But I think we talked about that system, we often look at the top of it. We look at the president, we look at the governor, we look at the-the mayor, the police chief, you know, we-we-we don't look at the legislature underneath. The city councilor underneath, the Congress underneath, the-the middle management and the folks carrying out the-the work, the police force and like you said and so, sometimes we have to be-be wary of--. And this (inaudible - 00:53:50) speak I've seen him speak and I've heard, you

know, seems like, I mean, some positive things, but at the same time, like you said, that-that system is so embedded that sometimes the thing about having a face that looks like mine is-is part of it to make it more palatable to other the folks that I--. 'We'll have you carry out our policies, but when it comes from you, they'll at least think, 'Well, it can't be outrageous, it's coming from him.'" But, yeah.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

KM: I-I think it's that whole appeasement versus appointment type thing when you see the chief, like is--. Like okay, that's nice, it doesn't work. But um, m- my, my friend is he still got to deal with ole dude rollin' up on him saying, 'Get out the car,' and he didn't do anything. Like, so I can see you, Chief, but I'm not feeling anything from that right now. So whether you are Black or white, if I didn't- if I started feeling something that was more positive going on community, then it- that would be significant to me, but until I feel it at the bottom ranks, you could be blue, which you are and that's it. You blue to me.

JP: Yeah. Yeah.

[Laughter]

DG: I think that that is an assumption sometimes that you do have to--. You know, so.

[Pause]

JP: Let's see. Oh, we talked about this. We could just go this one: *House vote two for-for the bathroom bill*.

KM: The- that one.

DG: I-I-I--.

[Crosstalk]

KM: I need- I need to know more about it.

AS: It's actually (inaudible - 00:55:33) I think it's on the A.C.L.U.--.

DG: The bathroom bill?

[Crosstalk ends]

KM: I read something is said and it repealed something like the 1977 law and like, is not only dealing with, like, orientation just like if you--.

AS: The discrimination, yeah, like--.

KM: Just discrimination period.

JP: (inaudible - 00:55:47) Like if you work for the government, being able to address discrimination and those kind of things, too--.

AS: You can't do that either?

JP: And it's definitely a lot limited.

AS: Yeah. Is it just in- 'cause it- it is just in government positions or like--?

JP: I--. See it--. I know it's in government. I think it might extend beyond the investment. So again, I think it's that's the problem with all of us with tryna--. [Laughs]

DG: This-this is, uh, the change that the government made?

JP: So this is, in terms of what all was in that law.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: Right, well, I was listening to, again, the same guy that does N.P.R. thing. I think one of the morning things he had, he was talking about this whole thing where, you know, once the economic pressure started to come [Laughs], the government was putting his revision or whatever was, but the commentators on that show was saying, like, but he really doesn't mean this. This-this is just a paper stuff, it really hasn't gone anywhere, much, you know, um, because he's--. I think part of his-his-his change is that it wouldn't affect government offices, you know, but it actually doesn't do enough a lot- for a- for the A.C.L.U. person, it was like not going anywhere far enough. You know? Um, so, but th- from the beginning to me, though, I think that there is an issue, I think, with the idea that look, um, people's bodies, and I- just beyond the law itself, I think we are living in an era where, you know, we have to realize that people- t-the people, the genetics are not--. And I'm sure this is (inaudible - 00:57:21) people's genetic whatever, often, sometimes change them- change as they a- go into adolescence, you know? I-I've had--. I mean, g--. When I was teaching in Barbados, I had a student, great art student, you know? Boy- young, young man. When he hit pu-puberty, he started to change, clearly, into something feminine. And I remember--. But fortunately, I mean,

like, there were no big thing. [Laughs] Like, you know, he was cool, you know, he was--. You know, it'll be just, somehow he was not treated badly. Not somehow--. I think-I think--. You know, students didn't, sort of like, demonize him or anything like that. You know? It's like--. You know? I mean, there were obviously some people who might have comments, you know, I'm sure he went through some of that, but certainly from us as teachers, he didn't get any flack, you know. But I heard--. I mean, years later, you know, he-he-he spoke to my tea-my-my mentor, who was who was actually here, and he said, like, 'You know, people don't know what's going on in your head, you know, how-how this is affecting you emotionally as well. You know, it's like, people can't understand, like, I mean, like, I don't have any control over this thing. You know, this is happening to me, I'm not happening to it.'

[Laughter]

DG: You know? And I think that more and more, you know, we had these trick things about, 'This is how you're born. This is what--.' All that sounds very nice, you know, but it isn't true, you know? People have, you know, these things happen. And, so what do you do? What do you do? You know, are you not gonna respect that?

AS: Are they not human?

DG: Are they not human, you know? And that's what I think that we have to become more human. You know, and-and that's, I think, the 20th century- 21st century challenge --it has been for a while-- but you know, how- why- why we have had this clash of civilizations --I don't even like that word-- of-of people of difference coming together like that, it's to make us understand that, no, you actually--. This is--. You now gotta check out where your humanity really is or isn't. You know? And-and that is a big challenge bec- for all these different things. You know? Are you going to now demonize somebody who has transformed from male to female, or female to male? What are you going to do? You know?

AS: Or someone who's in the middle, who--.

DG: Yeah, yeah, who-who's--?

AS: Doesn't--.

DG: Yeah.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: And I work with a lot of that clinic-clinically in terms of whether sexuality, sexual identity, you know, all these things and- and--. And it's funny because, especially I think it- you know, even in the-in the Black community, I think there's a, there's a divide, you know, there's a lot of traditional you know reli--. Again, like I said, I tell them, I am- I'm a proud Christian, and- and I think of love thy neighbor as thyself, you know. And so, you know, I'm not--. I don't think--. I mean, I-I actually was in a bar-[Laughs]barber shop the other day, it was like, I was doing one on five in the barber shop (inaudible - 01:00:34). It was, and we always have (inaudible - 01:00:38) about basketball most of the time, but they--. It was about H.B.2. You know, and it was just like, look, I was like, I've spent the bulk of my career working with folks who've been sexually abused, emotionally abused, mentally abused, and, you know where that happens? From family members, or people who have access. Like, people have this idea that it's like there's this guy creeping around — and that's not to say there aren't folks who are like that, but-but- but the thing is- here's the thing about it, if someone's a predator like that--.

[Crosstalk]

KM: They gonna--. They're gonna figure out a way.

JP: It doesn't matter one way or another.

DG: Yup.

[Laughter]

KM: Yes, that's exactly what I had say.

AS: Oh wait, it's a lot--.

(inaudible - 01:01:11)

DG: They don't wait for that toilet to do anything.

JP: Everything I'm doing--.

[Crosstalk ends]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: Everything I'm doing is illegal already. Like- like-. This is like-like--. And that idea--. And so it like--. So now what you've done is, you've created something--. A-and so they try to like blame — 'Well, you guys shouldn't force (inaudible - 01:01:25) and you're like, well, seventeen out of twenty large cities have the same thing. You know, it just wasn't, like, Charlotte--. We didn't- we won't do anything revolutionary, you know?

DG: No.

KM: Mm-mm.

AS: I mean, it was (inaudible - 01:01:34).

JP: There's two cities in South Carolina that have the exact same law. And you know what, Governor Haley is like, 'Ah, I'm staying out of this,' you know? And so, the thing is, like you said, this is about humanity, and not dehumanizing folks. And so- and so, instead of sitting here and-and judging this person, the way I look at it, is I say--. You know what, I thank God that I-that I've been able to be comfortable with knowing who I am. I'm comfortable--. I'm glad that I n-I never did grow up as a kid feeling like I was in the wrong body. I'm glad that the people that I am attracted to, I've never had to-to face judgment over anything else. So I mean, it's not--. I didn't choose to-to be attracted to women. I just felt it, you know? But I didn't--. And-and so I don't think somebody's choosing to do something that's going to have them alienated. You know? It's just- that's just what's happening in me, that's what's happening in my chemistry, and I can't, maybe, explain, but what I can always do is-is have empathy and try to connect and again, recognize the fact, again, we are all human. You know? And-and I know some best activists out there are gay, lesbian and everything else.

DG: Absolutely, you know.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: I was just thinking about it in terms of the Black community and that's-that's- that's kind of where I am. (inaudible - 01:02:47) looking at it. You know, there's- this- we're using some of the same arguments that were used against us on somebody else. Like, the reason why it-it was illegal for me to marry my wife was the same reason why you're-you're arguing against gay marriage. Like in the Loving case in Virginia, I had to write a paper in-in undergrad, basically drawing a parallel between, uh, interracial

marriage and-and-and gay marriage. It's crazy, I was reading it and was like, 'not natural.' (inaudible - 01:03:15)

DG: [Laughs]

JP: And I was like, 'Damn.'

[Laughter]

JP: You know? And you know this is--. And, you know, and this is even before we were even getting to the point of even putting this on the books, man, but it was just like, 'Guys, we're doing the same thing now that we fought against.' You know, and that's the problem with the totem pole thing is somebody else's below me on the totem pole. (inaudible - 01:03:35) instead of saying, 'I want to dismantle the whole freakin pole.' You know? So... Again, I'll shut up. I-I can get on- I can get on kinda, so, yeah...

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: So yeah, but it-it actually comes back though. I mean, like--. I- that hybridity thing again, to me is--. Well, philosophically, for me, it's a really peculiarly interesting concept. When you think of it, everything is actually quite hybrid, you're not pure anything, anywhere on Earth. [Laughs] You know? Period. But, you know, like, you're talking about how people's identities and their bodies? Your children are going to experience that, I'm sure. [Laughs] I'm so sure of that. Like, my daugh- my daughter — m-my wife is from India. Right? And--. And this happens a lot to like to, like, Black people of fairer skin, for example, or who could pass for white — my mother passed for white. And again, that's why, like, I heard like, when you grew up in a family, where all the complexions are there. My-my aunt was black, another aunt was rown, you know, my mother was-was- could pass for white. And this was, like, some of the most loving people I've ever met. They were all- they were like that actually, you know, my- all my-my--. Especially my mother's side. My uncles and like--. Th-that- they were like that, you know, they were really a good set of, um, siblings, but her experience — of course, each of them have them have these different things. So she would have- my mother would have some of these experiences where people would think she's white, right? You know, so she tells me, like, this-this experience that she had in a supermarket, there's two guys, these two guys come up. One is brown, the other one is Black.

[Laughs] You know? And the Brown guy tells me, 'When people like you--.' [Laughs] You know? And she's--. And my mother was quiet, you know, she was like, 'Are you speaking to me?'

[Laughter]

DG: Because he can't--. See the whole problem is very often, you can't tell what a person's background is by how they look anymore, simply. Like, I couldn't tell that police chief's mentality from s-Clarence Thomas if- by just looking at him, you know? And that-that is gonna be the issue that--. In a way now, like, my-my daughter tends to be a little fairer and her experience--. I remember her coming to me as a little girl, you know, um, and saying like, 'Daddy, exactly what am I?' [Laughs] 'Cause she is- 'cause she had gone to school where you had all these different kinds of people, you know. Um, and especially the way I brought her- we brought her up, because I- I would tell her stories from almost Indian traditions, I-I knew all these wonderful stories to tell my children, you know, put them to sleep [Laughs] really you know. It was their bedtime story. [Laughs]

JP: Whatever it takes, whatever it takes. Yeah, yeah. [Laughs]

AS: [Laughs]

DG: Yeah, yeah you know? But they--. So their knowledge was not just one dimensional, you know, so she would- she would come with these questions, 'cause she was always curious, you know, she would come with these questions, you know, um, I would say, 'You know--.' I would try and explain it, but that dilemma will be there for her. For any child growing up, you know, that they're trying to work out what they are, uh, especially when it's so manifestly clear that you're not one thing or the other, you know? Um, I- but it's making people realize that, 'Hey,' you know, 'You, you know, you--. We are all actually that kind of --especially in the 21st century-- we are that kind of mixture, whether we like it or not,' you know? I mean, like, there's no way that we can't say that Europe has not shaped what we are. And you're--. It's impossible. [Laughs] You know? It's totally impos--. But then the same thing also is there that you can't say that [Laughs] you know? That all these other cultures are --certainly Black culture-- has shaped a lot of what is going on here, you know? Uh, so it's-it's there since I remember seeing things

that you love, you know, like, be the very food you love or the music you love, or whatever, you know, when you love it, I you still want to say that it doesn't, i- somehow, somebody else or when you see it in a different form. That's a problem. You know, and I- I think we need to get somewhere beyond that, really. You know, uh, but, you can only try to teach right? And embody, I-I think, a-and embody me to live- to live it as best you can, you know, to be that kind of person. You know? [Pause] That's the kind of change I guess you get. Anything else? Or you but I don't know, tell us when to- when to stop. I don't know--.

KM: I would like to get everybody's contact information.

DG: Sure. That's- that's definitely something that we can do. Uh, yeah, I think we could just continue chatting, I-I don't believe these.

[Laughter]

DG: Prompts. You know, I-I am talking about my experiences, you know, like, um. You know, it's- it's--. One of the great things for me. I studied in India.

KM: Do you mind putting in your, uh, just, like, title?

AS: Okay.

DG: It was like one of the best things for a young Caribbean person. [Pause] It was probably like the best thing that could have happened to me.

KM: You went to India?

[Speakers intermittently agree]

DG: I studied in India, yeah. Um, and all this stuff about color and caste and stuff. That's ancient in India in a way, you know? But--. And I'm sure in the parts of Africa, for sure. You know? But it really made me aware of how global--. This is not just a new world thing. You know, this is a global thing. And I think the globe has come to realize where humanity is at, you know--. Differences are important. You cannot have great food without different ingredients. [Laughs] Difference is important, you know. I mean like--.

JP: Embrace.

DG: Yes, but--. Y-you--. If you know- if you don't see it as this enriching thing. You know, y-you have to see it as enriching.

AS: Not as polarizing.

DG: Yes, yes, exactly. Yes, right.

AS: Or a thing you should be afraid of or a threat.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JP: Yeah. Now, I was pretty, very fortunate. I mean, that' what I was saying in the schools that I grew up going to, we actually would talk directly about difference, and we would have, like, we had--. I mean, in elementary school we did what was called a mini society, and so everybody had a business, you were responsible for it and everything else, and you had to go and try to figure out how to work with the other people in the community and other--. And so it was like, I mean, it's one of those things, as you get older, you realize how-how special it was, you know? Um, but I mean--. I mean, I-I think so much, like you said, is-is, we-we-we're so afraid, and-and we say- stay so distant and it--. So then it just leaves us with this idea of kind of formulating their own ideas, you know? A-and that's a dangerous thing, you know, and we all have to--. I mean, I try to keep myself and I like being willing to learn, being willing to hear from somebody else. And you know, like I love hearing you say, you know, the experience talking about the Black Lives Matter movement and really the emphasis on especially on the Black male. And-and but, you know, the Black females' experiences kind of, like, take it as a secondary kind of thing. You know--. And like, ultimately, I mean, it's, and that's what it is. Yeah, we got the vision- the visible deaths, but it's like, there's so much--.

DG: More

JP: there's so much other levels of dying. But, um, yeah. And I always- I think about when I think about Charlotte, and how we are--. And I'm just giving you these 'cause (inaudible - 01:11:55) that's the group that I'm working with and there's a website and everything else. But, um... Um, but I mean, Jonathan Ferrell he- Jonathan Ferrell who got shot and killed here. Like, he-he's not mentioned in the- in the same--.

KM: Breath?

JP: Thing--.

DG: Which- who is this guy?

JP: J-Jonathan Ferrell, he actually got shot here in Charlotte. He's the guy- he was--. He graduated from, uh--.

KM: (inaudible - 01:12:20) West Charlotte?

JP: F.A.M.U.

KM: Oh, F.A.M.U., yeah.

JP: He was- he was getting married, and everything else, former a football player. And--.

DG: And he was the guy that was at- in an accident?

JP: Incid--. Yeah, he had a--. So yeah, he knocked on a woman's door--.

DG: Right, right. Yes, I remember.

JP: And she got, you know, scared and called the cops and (inaudible - 01:12:38) and you know, he got shot and killed in his--. I went to a conference in Montreat in North Carolina where they talked and talked about Tamir Rice, and they talked about Eric Garner and Mike Brown, you know, Jonathan Ferrell wasn't mentioned. And at church it's--.

DG: Yeah, which is strange.)

[DG intermittently agrees]

JP: Yeah, you know, better to Charlotte, you know, there was a woman who wrote the-the book *Dear White Christians*, uh, Jennifer Harvey was talking about [Clears throat] racial reconciliation. And she was mentioning folks, and you know, didn't mention him. And always, I would say the thing that with Charlotte, was they charged him right away, even though they didn't get convicted. I think it's slowed some of that momentum for potential rioting and stuff. A-and I think because it played out so quietly, when you say that in a twenty-four hour news cycle, it allows people to kind of feel like, 'Oh, well.' You don't even think about it the same way, you know? So- and so, I find myself sometimes ambivalent. It's like, okay, that's--. So there's a part of me that's like, 'Okay. Oh, maybe it's good- it's good that we through it without the twenty-four hour news cycle.' And then there's a part of me that's like, I think our city [Coughs] might have

needed a different kind of reality check because a lot of people are very comfortable and don't realize what's simmering underneath as we continue to make this community of haves and have nots, you know? So...

[Crosstalk]

KM: I think it's-it's also gonna be up to the, um, some of those like change makers that are pushing themselves into those uncomfortable situations, because yesterday I went to, like, a synagogue for the first time.

JP: Alright.

DG: Where? To--?

KM: To a synagogue.

DG: Oh.

[DG intermittently agrees]

KM: I just really wanted to experience Passover and I was- I was there so I knew I was getting some of them side-eyes just like, 'Why is she here?' But I connected with one person and I plan on going back again, so pushing yourself out of the comfort zone. So you-you might be that token person in the place. But it's going to be at least maybe one person you connect with and then you can keep going going back and you connect with more people. (inaudible - 01:14:40) So, this was my (inaudible - 01:14:43) dinner so thank you.

DG: Yeah, yeah. It's-it's--.

AS: Yeah, I think that we're doing something at the university that, er, McColl's having some preliminary meetings as I- the youth that they're talking to.

KM: Yes, I've been trying to get in contact with Susan?

AS: Suzanne.

KM: Suzanne, but I think y'all- that was when y'all- the-the sixty or sixteen parties--. Looks like it went really well.

AS: Yeah. Um, yeah. It went very well.

KM: But I'm met her at the (inaudible - 01:15:11) festival. So, she was really, really sweet I remember I really liked her. Hopefully I get to come and meet y'all really soon.

AS: Nice.

DG: Okay. Right.

JP: Kia, would you write in this for me too?

Unknown: Are you guys still talking?

DG: You can turn it off. We-we can just--.

[Laughter]

DG: We're enjoying--.

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by Miwa Lee 3/5/21

To be copyedited.