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TATYANA YOUNGER
BULAONG RAMIZ
MAR'QUIS (CUEE) WRIGHT
LINDSEY YANKEY
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Preface

The following conversation was hosted virtually over Zoom in collaboration with the Lawrence Art Center, facilitated by jina valentine and Blanca Herrada. Consent was given by the participants to have their conversation recorded and transcribed.

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START OF RECORDING

TATYANA YOUNGER: Okay. [Pause] Mhmm. [Pause] [Sound of digital VOIP distortion] Ah, ow-fun. Um, so yeah, I'll just-I'll just start, since I'm already talking. Howdy, howdy. I'm TATYANA YOUNGER. Um, a para-educator in Lawrence. I'm a union activist and begrudgingly she/her.

Unknown: Mhmm.

[Pause]

TY: And you know what, I'll just popcorn it. Hey, Cuee.

MAR'QUIS (CUEE) WRIGHT: Thank you for that because I would have sat here for a little bit. Hey, what's up everybody? I'm Cuee. A local musician here in Lawrence, Kansas. Uh, and also a board member at the Haus Of McCoy. He/him pronouns.

BULAONG RAMIZ: I'll go. Um, hi my name's Bulaong. I use she/they pronouns. Um, I am an expat employee from the University of Kansas. Uh, I currently work remote for a nonprofit. Um, I'm also a board member of the Haus Of McCoy. Um, and I am a birth doula um, in the county.

[Pause]

LINDSEY YANKEY: Hi all. I'm LINDSEY YANKEY. Um, I am a illustrator and a author of kids books in Lawrence, and um...Yeah, just increasingly more and more trying to be part of our community. And, right before you came in Cuee, I was mentioning to Tatyana those—A big part of the school movement and *Save Our Schools* and Lawrence um, has a most recent big push in the world. [Laughs] Um, so yeah.

TY: So I guess we go through the cards next?

MCW: I was just about to ask that, but I guess that's the point. [Laughs]

TY: [Laughs] See, I just-I happen to have them open. So I guess, let's try—Let's see what go—Oh, you're like, you know what? Let's do it. Uh, question one, *How has your community changed since you became a part of it?* [Pause] These are-this is a-starting off with a big one. Okay. [Pause] Mm, mm.

BR: I can kick us off. I first joined the Lawrence community back in 20, um 14. Um, and was working at the University of Kansas. Um, and so I felt pretty isolated from the Lawrence community as a whole. Um I think the university has its own little, um pocket, um in the community. Um, I chose to leave at the end of that year, and then came back in 2019, um and found that, um working at the university was no longer fitting for me. So I, um left, but I decided to stay in Lawrence, um and try to really integrate into, um what was happening in the community in terms of, um activism work,

and y'know on the ground movements, um supporting the building of Haus Of MCcoy and things like that. Um, I will say I think that--um leaving and then coming back--what I have noticed, is that there's much more, um conversation around, um, Lawrence being a place where people are actually living their values and not just talking about it. Um, I've found that, um folks in Lawrence, I feel are--I have felt are very pe-ff-performative. Um, And I think recently--and especially off of the Black Lives Matter, um uprising and movement, there has been much more push for, um folks to actually live [Chuckles] in alignment, um with the things they say they care about. Um, and there's still more work to do, but that's a way that I've seen it shift.

MCW: I'll go next. Uh, I also came to Lawrence—I'm originally from Chicago. Uh, and so, came to Lawrence as a student actually. So, only really had that, um community with-inside the university's uh capacity. Um, once I graduated, I decided to stay around in Lawrence, um and really pursue my music career and that such, uh thing. And so, I'm kind of new to the Lawrence community, in that sense of being involved. How have I seen it changed? Not much in its relations to the university--which I think that's okay, uh at some points, um--but, I think, uh I've also started my transition here. I'm a Black trans man in Lawrence. And so really just seeing how um, the community like uplifts and support members of the community, uh for me has shifted, uh with the hap-opening of the Haus Of McCoy. Um, stuff like that and bringing different resources to the community. Um, more visibility within the community and seeing Lawrence members really support that. Um, so since I became part of that community, it's really um, those are the changes that I've seen.

LY: Let's see here. I also moved to Lawrence about ten or eleven years ago, but--this is gonna timestamp me--I was a middle-schooler at the time. So, I've—it's interesting to think about, "How has your community changed since you became a part of it?" 'cause you were—I was actually a child. But, to watch-uh-but, as I've grown up, it's been really fascinating to—What, eh-It feels like for me, that there wasn't a ton of activism talked about when I was young. Whether the-en, whether that be that it just was happening and none of my teachers or the community members around me talked about it, or whether we just have seen more, eh-the rays and things happening. Um, a lot more activism work has begun happening. I do think that it, fa-it- it falls into a greater pattern of Lawrence activism, where people get really gung-ho about stuff, and then [Chuckles], it fades away for a little bit. And then you kind of see waves—I did th—I joined Food Not Bombs when I was young, and that was a big one where like, a lot of people joined Food Not Bombs, and then there will be months when no one's there. Um, but I think that there's a lot of...[Pause] I think there's a lot of good work happening, but at the same--like you said Bulaong--I think that there's a lot of work-good work that still has to happen, to get us to where I'm I'm going to be like, "Lawrence is-is-do-it-pulling its weight around here." [Chuckles]

BR: Hey there. Um, I forgot to say my pronouns earlier. She/her. Um, but I also came to Lawrence as a KU student, um circa 2004. And, I'm one of those folks that just didn't leave. Um, and, I think that kind of is a lot of different transitions of different parts of my life. And, uh, and just what I was up to at the time. And so I feel like, um maybe seeing things change--but also just kind of becoming more aware of the way things are, and becoming more in tune with that, and I think um—I have a fi-uh-six year-old, who

just turned six--and so I feel like also kind of entering, um parenthood, um in our community, um has also kind of helped kind of change. And I mean, that worked a little bit more with just like other folks in different neighborhoods from East Lawrence to North Lawrence neighborhoods that we've lived in. Um, and I feel like, housing to me is something that I've really-I feel like I've visibly seen change and just like, skyrocket in the wrong direction, um in terms of livability in Lawrence. Because, um yeah—I-I-I'm sure all of you know that like everything is wildly expensive. And, um in the time that I've been here, I feel like that's something that I've really noticed has really, really changed in a negative direction. Um, Tatyana, I got to say what you said about, um, Lawrence having kind of like these peaks of passion. Um, that is something that I, I struggle with. And I recognize that I struggle with. Like, you know, with the Save Our Schools. Like, I hit that so hard, and then I burn out. And I-I, I feel like I need to find that middle ground so that I can sustainably, you know, um, you know be active daily, you know? Not just, um in times of crisis. So...

TY: Ooh, that sustainability piece. Uh, there's more questions, so I'm not gonna get into it, but... [Laughs] Question two. How do you keep acquiring and practicing skills and avoid it? Ohh. No. I have to re-read them, sorry. How do you keep acquiring and practicing skills, and avoid performative allyship? [Pause] I guess actually since I'm unmuted. Oh, nope. You can go.

MCW: I was gonna say for a start, I think showing up, and not being afraid to like, mess up quote unquote. I think, uh that's the way you practice and acquire those skills. Right? Um, some things are very new to a lot of people--even new to myself, um--and showing up in the community. I don't know much about Lawrence, especially not being

from Lawrence. Um, and so I have to like, show up in these spaces, figure out what was happening before I even got here, to figure out how do we get to places where we want to be. Um, and I think that also helps me not be performative in those instances, and like really digging in and getting deep on, how do we show up and sharpen our skills here in Lawrence. So, those two things for sure.

LY: Oh heck yeah, I love that. Um, for me, I guess I like to try and keep pushing myself to understand all the different modes of oppression. 'Cause I think it's really easy to just kind of get like blinders on, and you're like, "Ah, I care about Black issues," which you should. Or, "I care about queer issues," which you should. But it's like, "Oh, what if you found out that everything is interconnected all the time?" which has been ma-my like thought process all the time. So, because I keep learning about different modes of oppression, I keep learning about different ways of, confronting those issues. Also being able to be called in and called out has been a good skill for me. That one was nice. I mean, it's kind a hard when I—I will say, everyone gets defensive. I get defensive if someone's like, "You're wrong and you s-s-and you suck." And I'm like, "Oh," has-I have to watch my language; I don't know where this is going to go. Uh, [Chuckles], but I-having to like—Being able to learn like, "Oh wait, maybe it's okay to be wrong, 'cause we live in an era where people hate that." Or they're like, "Oh, you have Google," and it's like, "No, I don't have enough-I don't have enough time to Google things all the time." Uh, but yeah. So those have been my big ones. Being able to continue learning past the things that I've already known, and being okay with being wrong and being told that I'm wrong.

BR: Um, I think for me um, a lot of uh, listening and, um kind of, uh getting outside of like, what I already kn-what I think I know--and kind of expanding on, um, just all the different ways of being a person, um--I feel like is—I'm one of those people that is, unfortunately kind of new to me. And so I feel like, being open about that and especially as a parent. Like, navigating that together, um and, um not holding back on uncomfortable conversations. Um, and if I don't know something--you know, admittedly saying like, "I don't know, let's find out," um and that kind of thing--um, that's where I'm at right now. Um, I'm having a hard time with this question. And I think it's because I don't identify with the term ally. Um, and so, I'm having a hard time [Pause] uh, answering that. But I think what I'll say is, um--and to Cuee's point, like--I think showing up is important, and showing up in the ways that communities ask of you to show up. Um, and then the other thing is thinking strategically about how I use my resources to support other people, um when I can. And so, those have been kind of my main, um tools that I've used, tsh-um especially in my time here.

TY: If it's-if it's okay for me to ask, uh-- 'cause I-yeah, uh what wou—Do you have a term that you prefer more than ally? I know I've seen a few float around, but I'm curious which ones that feel more in alignment with your values.

BR: Um, I don't identify with any of the terms, [Laughs] probably thinking about...I don't identify--,

[Crosstalk]

TY: [Laughs]

BR: Accomplice. I don't identify as an ally. I don't identify as a co-conspirator. Um, I think I'm just like a radical human being who wants the world to be better. And, um I'm

not...I think, um [Pause] I think we get so hung up on labels, and then people get stuck on not actually doing the work. Um, and so, I just don't even bother with the label

[Laughs] --,

TY: [Laughs]

[Crosstalk Ends]

BR: I just show up. [Pause] You know?

TY: No, I love that. I think, yeah...I think that's just a fascinating, like point to make. Because I guess, yeah, the word ally tends to--I mean, um-yeah, I'm going to get to the next question. I'm sorry, everyone--.

[Crosstalk]

BR: Yeah--,

MCW: No, that's--,

TY: Uh, I-ee--,

[Laughter]

TY: I just think about how, yeah, the word ally tends to insinuate that like, the issues are someone else's. And then--,

BR: It--,

TY: Like going back to what I said earlier, it's like--,

BR: It's all of ours.

TY: R-ho--Yeah. Queerphobia hurts straight people, racism hurts white people. Like, Classism? Yeaii--,

[Pause]

LY: Yeah--.

TY: Kinda hurts rich people, in the sense that they are killing themselves every si-inside every day, hurting other people. But yeah, no...The gig.

BR: Exactly.

[Crosstalk Ends]

TY: [Chuckles] This next one isn't a question. It just states, [Chuckles] Mutual aid and you. Uh, so take from that what you will.

[Pause]

BR: I think mutual aid saves lives.

[Pause]

TY: I think...so, I was a big..I, well I will say, I-I was involved with uh, the Lawrence Mutual Aid Network for a little bit. And I think people struggle with that term, especially in Lawrence where I think a lot of folks turn to like—They forget that mutual aid isn't donations and charity, for uhm...And so I see a lot of folks who are willing to give money, but not time. And also, just are, k-actually connecting with their neighbors when they do that. When I think of mutual aid--like oh, the de-uh, the exercise place I just left--they have a thing set up where some of the people are getting lessons, but they also help clean up around the space. And they also, like check in with the teacher, and like make sure her house is good, so that she has the ability to teach this class to people. And I think about how cool that is, versus when I see people talk about mutual aid on Facebook. And they're just like, "I've shared three mutual aid requests. So I'm doing pretty good." I'm like, "Oh yeah. Thanks for sharing those." [Chuckles]

BR: Not sure what to add to that, but I like what you said about, it's not just money, but it's actual time. And it's the showing up, and it's the helping your neighbors, and getting to know your neighbors, and getting to know your community. So yes, it saves lives and is critical, I feel like to bringing us together to make it a better town.

TY: I guess—Do you know—Have any of you experienced any good mutual aid-ing moments in the past [Pause] ya know, timeframe-insert timeframe here?

BR: Yeah, so I'm originally from Hartford, Connecticut. And Hartford has a really dope, uh mutual aid network, um that's run by a few of my, um, a couple of my friends. Um, and one of the things that came up, um when we all got those free COVID tests that the government was sending out, um was that--you know. I'm a person, I—There are two adults in my home. We each got two tests, then we ended up with like a stack of tests, like that we just did not need--um, where there were a lot of families who had more children, or more adults living in their household and didn't have enough tests. And so, um they started doing a call for tests, so that people who even-they got free tests, could send them, t-send them out. Um, and I think that that was just a really brilliant thing, because our government did not think about—you know, it was a equality thing. Like everyone gets the same thing, but like everybody doesn't need the same thing. Some people can go buy COVID tests. Aheh, they don't need free tests, you know? And so it's about access, um also about who can afford, and then also about like, everybody's family and household looks different. Um and so then how were we centering people's actual needs, um and just not doing something just to say we're doing something. And so, I think that was really, um amazing and something that I've seen--um more informally here in Lawrence where people are just like, "Oh, you need a

COVID test; I have some extra ones.” You know, and that's a form of mutual aid. It doesn't even have to be a formal structure--um, but that's something that I've, I've seen here as well.

[Pause]

MCW: I don't really have much to add to that, uh, card. [Chuckles]

TY: I think, cool. I can move on to the next one. And I always forget there's a chat on here. I'm like, “Oh, I could chat,” no. Um, the next card says, How is cultural memory passed down to younger generations? Discuss legacy, intergenerational advocacy, and mentorship?

[Pause]

TY: [Chuckles] I'm just gonna ke-I—Silence is hard for me. I'm so sorry. [Laughs] Um, so, I guess eh--because this is being recorded--someone's gonna watch this--I'm gonna make the note that what I'm about to say is like, m-gonna be 18 plus-ish. What eh-I don't know. Uh, I just recently watched a documentary that really spoke to me, about the queer lesbian scene in San Francisco in 1993. Espec-and it's-j-so-I'm bringing this up only because, uh it-it's a very cool kink documentary, that discusses the fact that like, they recognize all the things that they did to fight for rights, and that when like we wouldn't have Stonewall without I-like, queer kinky trans people. Like, we wouldn't have had so many I-co-uh queer revolution-nary things happen. And, a lot of them were talking about how scared they are, that those memories and that knowledge will die, because people get nervous to bring in young folks. People get nervous. And obviously, like in their case, when they say “Young folks,” they just mean like 18-year-olds, Baby queers, um people who come out at like eh-bu-later in life. All these people who get the

chance to—who probably wouldn't be introduced to that knowledge, unless they had actively been reached out to, and interacted with, and taught how to be safe in the—in that community. And I just thought about how cool that is for them to be actively...It was just, yeah—It was just a, I-super cool documentary, um, and I think about that with--'cause I'm also uh—in high schools where...--What lessons am I, what-what lessons am I worried about disappearing, if my young folks don't know about them? You know? And so that's how I think about cultural memory. Uh, and like notably, there's not that many Black students in my classroom. So I think about like, my Blackness. And I'm like, “How do I want this to pass down to, my Black s-like-like-uh my singular Black student? [Laughs] And the like.

LY: So, I think um, at least kind of in the family networks--um that I've got, um between my family and my husband's family--that it's just a lot of conversation and a lot of storytelling. Um, and, you know--like, I mentioned earlier I think, Cuee before you got on that--I'm visiting my husband's grandparents in Lincoln, Nebraska. And--heh I always tell everybody this--my grandparents are all gone, but his grandparents are younger; they're in their seventies. And, they are the most like raging, liberal, lovable, welcoming people that I've ever met. And um, heh-hyer-his dad was a professor, um at the University of Lincoln. And, uh his grandma's always been a raging feminist from California that came to the Midwest. And, um, anyways just hearing all the different things that they've been part of--um, and the daughters that they've raised, and the different things that they're part of now, um--has been really, really wonderful to just be part of and listening in on and experience.

MCW: I think I'll speak on like uh, being a young-younger musician here in Lawrence. When I first started off, um I started to meet a lot of what we coined, "Old heads," in the music uh-world in Lawrence. And they took it upon themselves to kind of like bring me in, let me know a lot about the history. Um, and like the work that the Lawren-Black musicians specifically have done here in Lawrence, and how I could like take that and continue, um going on and like pursue my music career that way. Um, and I kind of sense the mentorship level with those individuals, and able to like understand Lawrence's music scene, understand what I was getting myself into, um when I, you know, became a musician here. And so, I think, they do a good job at like forming community, um and bringin' us into that community to kind of keep the conversations going, so that the things that they started before is not lost in the process. Uh, because Lawrence is a big music town and stuff like that. But that's, yeah...bringin'-wrapping Lawrence back into this conversation.

[Pause]

BR: Yeah, I don't think I have anything necessarily to add to this card, um, that is Lawrence specific. Um, I will say that, maybe I think through the Haus Of McCoy, and the work we're trying to do through that, um, that is how we've been working to support--specifically like--Black, queer and trans people here. Um, and ensuring that they see that there are—We are adults, we grow up, we have jobs, we're thriving, um because that's something that's not seen. And so, um and so it's interesting to think of myself; I still feel like super young, but now thinking of myself in a like, mentorship role in that way. Um, and I don't—I'm not familiar. I think I'm not for the other orgs to know who else is doing that here.

TY: Yeah, that's an interesting one where I'm like, I know a few org—I mean, the-I guess the only one that I can think of that would be doing any kind of similar work would be Sunrise Project, if only because they're teaching youth how to like, yeah w-l-uh, garden and whatnot, and spreading that legacy of how-how do we have food sovereignty? But otherwise, [Chuckles] those are the only two groups in town that come to mind, which is so, not sad per se, but it's just interesting. 'Cause there are so many stories here to be told. And I-I like what you said, Lindsey, about...I think storytelling is one of my favorite wr-ways to pass things down to young folks. And so I'm like, "Okay." Ooh. This next card. I also pull-I also hope it's OK. I don't know if you all can see the screen share, because I figure that some of these questions might be easier to just like read over and over again to yourself. So, um, how was Black li-How is Black life part of your daily life? Well, I'mma se-yeah. Y'know? So, I'm Black. Surprise. Um, [Laughs] and I haven't grown up in Lawrence. I know that for a really long time, I suffered from a really intense inter-uh-internalized Blackness, to the point where like high school, middle school me is like, "I'm not like the other Black girls. I listen to rock music," um even though rock music, whatever uh-na-yeah. Uh, so it's been a really actually intentional part on my li-tie-on my time, to be trying to actually center, like, "Am I listening to Black-Black musicians? Do I actually read things from Black folks? Do I inter-Do it like, interact with Black people [Chuckles] at all, besides when I'm getting my hair done?", which Black Brunch used to be my gig, and--which I really appreciated that space, uh in Lawrence--where a group of Black folks were like, "What if we just called every Black person we know, and ask them if they want to get brunch together?" I uh-I think they still

do virtually. I haven't been to the virtual ones. I prefer in-person. COVID's not gonna let me do dat. So, yeah. Just trying to integrate it.

MCW: I think for me too, it's uh showing up to these venues and being probably the only Black artist on the bill, and making sure I'm still showing up as my whole self and not, changing up just because I'm on this bill with an indie band and a pop band or something like that. But really just, uh taking in these audiences and being like, "Yo, I'm Black, and I'm about to show y'all exactly what my music is all about," um, and stuff like that and just showing up unapologetically each time.

BR: Once again, [Chuckles] this is very hard for me to answer, because this question actually feels like it's for non-Black people. Um, because I-Black life, I-it is just my life. [Laughs] Like I'm just, I'm a Black person living. So, that's how it's part of my daily life. Other than that, like, I don't know. [Laughs] Like that's, that's the simple answer, um and the one that feels most true to me.

LY: So, coming from a very small rural Kansas town, um, and coming to Kansas--er sorry, to Lawrence--it was like honestly, like my first genuine experience of like just being around a diverse community and coming to KU. And um, I loved it. I-the-the singularity of rural town with like 200 people is—It was something that I needed to get away from. And so, I don't know if I have a specific answer to that question, but I think that being part of a diverse community--being aware of my whiteness and a diverse community--and, um developing friendships, and developing friendships with neighbors, and um just being more aware and in tune with, you know, the broader world honestly. Um, and, um and what that means, uh for Black folks and for white folks, and

like for the whole spectrum of like what Lawrence is, and um, yeah as a white lady.

[Chuckles]

[Pause]

TY: Ooh, What kind of public art do you find valuable in the city?

[Pause]

BR: I will say that I love the murals, like wall art, like graffiti art, the sticker art. Like I find Lawrence to be a very like--um, um, I can't think of the word right now, but--there's a lot of informal art throughout Lawrence that I actually really, really appreciate. And often it's political. Um, and I think that that is something—It's not solely unique to Lawrence, but I think that is something that makes Lawrence really special.

[Pause]

LY: I second that. Um, I think—I can't remember her full name, but--Mona, who did the painting on the, Nin-is it Night Street? The Dragon's Place?--anyways, I love those murals. And um, I think out of any of the Dave Loewenstein murals, the one that's on the back of the Cotton's Hardware store now is like one of my new top favorites. And the little spray painted dude who's hugging his legs saying, uh, "It's going to be fine. It's going to be all right." I don't remember exactly what it was, but I see it every time and I think, " Euhh, I hope, I hope, I hope so." [Sniffs]

MCW: I would say outside of graffiti--because I definitely appreciate all of that throughout the town--um, would actually be the people that are performing up and down Mass street [Massachusetts Street] on any given day, um and showcasing their stories, their talent. It really just shows the community—Um it speaks volumes about the community, and how we support them and how I'm like, "Yo it's 100 degrees, but that

guy's out there on that uh guitar, his banjo or something just giving us, um his story," you know or something like that. And so, I find that really valuable here in Lawrence.

TY: Yeah. Generally I think that the [Laughs]—I mean yeah...The pah-euh-I agree with all of you. The public art that I find most valuable in the city are things that emerged from emergent creative passions rather than like, someone shelled out twenty thousand dollars to to put a statue somewhere. Which there are statues downtown--that I know are from local artists and I like those being there--but things the-where I can tell like, they were done in the [Laughs] in-at the nighttime. Or, I know the city didn't approve of this being put up. Also just temporary things. I know uh-yeah—I had a group of friends who—There was a DIY skate park in a [Chuckles] hidden in the I-woods of Lawrence, and they had set up all this cool...eh-I duh-doh—It was just supercool. There was a memorial there for one of my friends who passed away, and It wasn't intentionally temporary; the city bulldozed it over. But, I do think there was something really valuable in the fact that people just came together to do that. Reh-meu-oh, ng-knowing that it probably wouldn't be forever. Um, yeah 'cause nothing should be. And I love that. I love that about Lawrence.

[Pause]

TY: Ooh. Discuss support systems for LGBTQ+ youth. Uh, Discuss Kansas House Bill 2210. I'm going to be honest with you, I'm going to Google that real fast.

[Pause]

TY: Oh, no. Short title, "Making it a Crime for a Doctor to Perform Gender Reassignment Surgery or Homeowner Replacement Therapy on Minors." Uh, [Pause] real fa-fact--fun fact. [Laughs] Uh, so I guess by definitions, I'm cis, right? Uh, as a child,

had early onset puberty, and what do they give me? Puberty blockers. Amazing. So it's really cool to see how they actually-yeah how people don-actually don't care about making sure any kids, cis or trans is getting the care that they need, as long as their personal feelings aren't hurt seeing a child be happy. Amazing. [Laughs]

[Pause]

BR: Well, I think I've mentioned Haus Of McCoy multiple times. [Laughs] Um, 'cause that is like the support system for LGBTQ youths. And, um I think because Lawrence is, um a place riddled with like racism and white supremacy, it hasn't been as, um accepted by the community as it could have been, because it's led by Black people. Um, that being said, it's doing amazing work, and supporting the folks who need it, um if they can access it. Um... [Pause] Yeah, I don't, I, don't know if I have anything, um appropriate to say about Kansas politics. [Chuckles] So...

[Pause]

MCW: I'mma just piggyback off uh, Bulaong and say, uh—S-as someone who went through this process um, I don't really have great things to say about it, especially in the state of Kansas. Um, but Haus Of McCoy is definitely a support system for the youth here. And I hope that the Lawrence community can do a lot better in uplifting that, um support system here.

TY: Lindsay, I don't know if you have...

LY: Um, I feel like a lot of my-my lens is through parenthood at this point in my life, and knowing um my son's uh teachers a lot more um, through-in the school community. Um, just knowing that there is a lot of support and a lot of open vocal support in our school system. Um, at least in-in the ways that I've seen at Woodlawn

Elementary. Um, it seems like it's a very, uh wraparound inclusive place to be. Um, my son wears a ton of dresses, and I was kind of nervous. Like on his second week of kindergarten, when he started wearing dresses for a little bit, and I was just like, "How's it gonna go?" And checking in with his teachers, and just getting their feedback on how his day was--euh-this is getting pretty personal, but like--they were so sweet to email and say like, ng-"Everything's gravy." Like everybody wants to know where he got his cat dress, and another little girl has the same one so they're all just hitting it off. And, just knowing that um, there is some love out there just like, you know, sprinkled in the-in the community too. Um, and as far as the bills that are being written all over the goddamn country, like it just lights my fire. Because I don't...I'm-I-sh, I think that all of you are coming from a more informed place. But to me, it's, it just seems like they're just pigeonholing people in the LGBTQ community so that like, there's just no space left for me to exist. And it's, it's just asinine. I doesn't...But yeah, I—It blows, it blows my mind. And then, yeah, anyways, I'm gonna-I'm gonna stop there.

TY: Yeah, watching all these bills. Um, seeing the reactionary nature of so many of these politicians...'Cause it's--Oh-I, yeah--'Cause it's not like new that they find a new boogeyma. Uh, a few years back, it's Black Lives Matter. And like, also we know that trans antagonism has existed forever. [Laughs] Like at least in Amer—Yeah, it's been-it's been here for a while. But they always find a new boogeyman. And this one, is the one that... [Pause] I truly want to believe that this is because we're in the death throes of such conservative thought, that that's why we're seeing so many heavy, like hitting awful takes coming out and just pol-and policies. Um, and even with that, knowing that there's just so many—There's so many fights to have to continue going

through. Support systems for our youth, is hard. 'Cause yeah, I think Haus Of McCoy—When I was a teenager, all we had was the queer youth voice. And that was like one adult, who was trying to do the work here. And so to see that we have a co-like a large group of adults--larger than that at least [Chuckles]--uh trying to do this work. And also—Yeah, Lawrence only cares about queerness as an aesthetic in my experience. It's really cool to say that Lawrence is unmistakably coo-like “Unmistakably Lawrence;” we're very inclusive, yada yada. But I very rarely actually see people, heh-like interrogating their like uh, heterosexism; interrogating why they believe these things. I [Inaudible - 00:35:00] asking for a gender neutral bathroom in the high schools was such a, like fight when I was there. People really eh-eh-like we got it, and we ended up—But it ll...[Pause] I don't know. There was just a lot of things going down that didn't actually take care of the rook [root] issues that I felt like. So...And there's just, oh, there's-it's-how-so hard that there's thirty-eight questions. There's like, so many cards, and only so much time to talk. I don't even know when she's gonna come back. Ahh. That's okay. That's fine.[Laughs] I'mma go to the next card. I'mma just have this and just pull it out at parties. Be like, “Guess what we're talking about now, y'all.” Uh [Laughs] [Pause] Ooh--...

MCW: [Inaudible - 00:35:38] Be like, “Y'all wanna play cards?” [Chuckles]

TY: Exactly. No one's gonna know what's happening, until it's too late. Uhum, What prevents coalitions from forming between local communities, and how can those be better facilitated? Ooh, intersectionality.

[Pause]

BR: I have literally no, uh solution. [Laughs] But I think what happens is people are, passionate about what they're passionate about. Um, and, uh I think we're all collectively tired. [Laughs] So, it's hard to like, um, coalition-build or get engaged in other movements. And, you're also exhausted and also trying to live and also, you know, maybe disconnected from certain communities. And so, um...Yeah, I don't know how those can be better facilitated. I'm not sure.

[Pause]

TY: See, I guess, yeah, I kind of hear, [Pause] kind of-I mean, uh—When I hear what you just said, it kind of leads me to that, it could be better facilitated if we actually found ways to support our local activists, you know? So that people weren't so tired. [Laughs] 'Cause, yeah, I see the same, what, like ten people doing everything. And I'm like, "Oh no y'all." Uh, this is how we lose all of our leaders so early. Uh, if you all follow the NAP Ministry, love her. She's very much like, "Rest is radical." And I'm like, "Yeah, there's no time to do it, but I believe you when you say that it is." Uh, I-yeah, and I also just agree on that like, people get really focused on the thing that they're fighting for. If you really care about food sovereignty and food justice--tends to be that you're gardening all the time--and maybe don't know how to get out to, a queer organizing space, or disability justice space. I know—I do union activism, and that's the one--and also just try—How do we get, like...I think about how I want a mass movement of people in our union, and hypothetically, some of these are specific issues. I don't think so. I'm all you know, but, I can see how some people get really focused on—We don't want to turn people off, and you got to get over it. S'not like-uh that sounds really th-rude. But, sometimes people are going to be turned off by doing the right thing. So,

we just got to figure out—And also ev-yeah, how to- "How are your issues interconnected?" I think would be the one. How do we help people figure that out? But again, [Exhales] [Chuckles] I barely got on here; I'm tired. No, I'm kidding. Kinda. [Chuckles]

[Pause]

BR: I'm not sure if I have much to add to that one--,

MCW: That's what I was going to say.

BR: Other than, I feel like this conversation is helpful, um in-in the regards of like, you know bringing people together and having conversation.

TY: Discuss possibilities for defunding the police and unarmed mediation in our communities. [Pause] And I'll say it now. Oh well, you know yeh... I'm an abolitionist personally, so defund never feels like enough for me, but I appreciate that it's the next step on the way there. And I would like there to be possibilities for it. And I would-and if anyo-I don-yeah, if folks have thoughts, I'll...[Pause] I could stop now. [Laughs] [Pause] I guess [Exhales], I guess I will—I know, I know. Ahh. I will say, I talked to someone who was an anarchist in the 80s in Lawrence, and they told me about how there used to be--and this is interesting, uh--groups of people who would take turns patrolling; patrolling is a w-also has like a policing term..is like a-w-whatever--but like they would take turns walking up and down downtown ,and if they saw people like fighting after b-hours, or if they saw someone stealing, they made it their initiative to try and deescalate those scenarios before cops either got there or cops got called. And I thought that was really fascinating. Uh, I don't have any like physical proof to this. Just an old person coming up to me once, and rerr-just ta-talking a lot about his history and

Lawrence, um which goes back to the whole like intergenerational advocacy, yada, yada, yada. But, I thought that was just a really—And I think-and it's something that I thought a lot about. There's a group in town...well there's a Facebook group started by Marielle--if any of you know her; don't remember her last name right now, so sorry, um--that was about how to have restorative justice and transformative justice in Lawrence. Um, but it was in the middle of COVID, and so it got hard for people to connect and read those things. But I think that the want for it, is there, but it is the—How do we walk through our-with ourselves? 'Cause also interpersonal stuff is just hard. I've had friends where I'm like, "I want to cancel you so bad." And I don't. Uh, but also, I just also don't call the cops ee-anyway. So, I-that was an interesting ca-part.

BR: I [Pause] am an aspiring abolitionist, [Pause] and [Pause] I don't actually think there's the want for it. Um, I don't think largely, people in Lawrence want to defund the police. Um, I think people would love it if police didn't harass Black people, but I don't think they want to actually defund the police. Um, and, I don't know...[Pause] I don't know how to have the conversation about that within this community, until people can admit that.

[Pause]

TY: No, I think that makes sense. And I-yes-yeah, I speak from a very privileged perspective of the like—I-I am, I'm in a circle of people who don't want there to be--but that's not, yeah...th-eye-beh-- it would be wrong to say that, like yeah, the entire town—Because I actually live right next to the police station, so I see people always hanging out over there and wanting to...I-yeah. And I ehh—And a lot of folks who are like, "Our officers are good." And I also don't think that they're bad people, uh whatever

that means. Oh no, one minute. Uh, I also think that part of this is--oh, my-I'm gonna say this last bit; I'm so sorry. Uh, Bert Nash should step up. I think it's really hard to say that we, uh Ber-which is our local mental health space--I think it's hard, because a lot of folks have really bad interactions with Bert Nash. They ju-which is because they're underfunded and understaffed. There's a lot of things that make it hard for Bert Nash to be the fully, like great mental health space that we need it to be. And so with that, when we say, "Hey, cops have too much. Let's make uh-at least this portion of things, not their issue anymore," the a-alternative is we give it to [Inaudible - 00:42:52--00:42:52] Bert Nash, and people don't really want to give them that eith-that power either. Also, we have to deconstruct some social workers minds. So, it is like, [Laughs] a process.

[Pause]

MCW: I would just add that, the one experience I had where, um Lawrence or a specific group was trying to do the unarmed mediation, um was just recently this Pride. Um, I was on the board with hoh-um, getting this all together--and there was an agreement between the Lawrence Police Department and us that, they were not allowed to have police officers, but yet unarmed mediation just in case some things popped off at Pride--um, and it was passed. And so, maybe that is a step. But, again like Bulaong said, I don't think that Lawrence is really moving towards, um wanting to defund the actual police here.

TY: I know there's 30 seconds; I don't know if you have anything you want to say Lindsey. [Laughs]

[Pause]

TY: You're muted.

LY: There we go. Um, just in terms of language, I-I-I agree that we need to defund police, and that we need to like restructure everything, and ki-kind of to the Bulaong's point of like Lawrence isn't ready and Tatyana's--...

[At 00:44:16, the sound cuts out is silent until 00:44:18. When sound comes back on, it seems like a portion of the conversation has been lost, and the conversation which does continue is in regards to the logistics of the recording after the core conversation.]

MCW: Of witnesses. I just, I don't have access to a printer. I'm going out of town tomorrow. It's gonna be so hard to get this--,

[Crosstalk]

JINA VALENTINE: Oh, um, got it.

MCW: To you. [Chuckles]

JV: Um, you know what? I can make it into a form that you can sign. You can probably do it on your phone.

MCW; Okay. Yeah I can do that.

JV: Yeah we use to use "HelloSign," but we had some issues with the HelloSign at our last event--.

MCW: Okay.

JV: Like I'll just do it the old way, so yeah, but thanks. I appreciate it--.

MCW: [Chuckles]

JV: Yeah.

[Crosstalk Ends]

[Pause]

JV: Um, if anybody wants to get in touch with anyone else, you're welcome to reach out to me and Blanca. Um, [Pause] yeah. I think one thing that is--...

[Crosstalk]

MARÍA VELASCO: One [Inaudible - 00:44:58-00:44:59]

JV: Yeah, go ahead.

US2: Sorry.

JV: No, I-euh-I...Go ahead.

US2: No.

JV: Oh. I was just going to say one thing you missed about the in-person tables is that, you know, the tables officially end, and then we usually [Sound of baby in background] everybody just hangs out for another half hour, because the conversation's not over. [Chuckles] Um, I'm sorry, go ahead, Maria.

MV: No, we were wondering about that. With um--,

[Sound of baby in background]

MV: And so, we were thinking that we--,

[Sound of baby in background]

MV: We can put our contact info on the chat--?

JV: That's a great idea--.

MV: Um--...

JV: Definitely.

USM: And somehow--...

[Sound of baby in background]

LWC_070922_PPL3

MV: I'd love to stay connected if we can make that happen.

[Sound of baby in background]

JV: Definitely. But, um--...

MV: [Inaudible - 00:45:42-00:44:43]

JV: But I think I sent this before everyone was in the room. If you were a person that hit record, probably hitting stop record now should work...

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by C. BAY MILIN 08/11/2023

To be copyedited.