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Participants:
HASAAN KIRKLAND
TIMOTHY DARDEN
TONI TUPPONCE
JASON WOODBERRY
RAMONA BIG EAGLE
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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: Yeah.

Unknown: Yeah.

HH: Make sure you introduce yourself first.

HK: Each time we talk or just the first time?

HH: No, just once is fine, I think.

HK: All right.

HH: If you go around the table, make sure that...

TONI TUPPONCE: I'm Toni Tupponce. I am, um, lead vocalist and program director for A Sign of the Times of the Carolinas as well as a consultant, um, in neighborhood development.

JASON WOODBERRY: All right. I'm Jason Woodbury, a visual artist, uh, graphic designer as well as web developer. Um, currently approaching a residency for the McColl center.

TIMOTHY DARDEN: 'Kay. Um, I'm Timothy Darden. I'm, um, music producer, a rapper, and graphic designer. Um, yeah, that's-that's all I got right now. Yeah.

HASAAN KIRKLAND: I'm Hassan Kirkland, associate professor of fine art at Johnson C. Smith University, founder of Psi Rho Alpha, Visual and Performing Arts Honor Society, uh, member of NAAHBCU, which is National Alliance of Artists from HBCU universities, uh, co-, uh, charter member and founder.

JW: Cool. So, um, [clears throat] so I was thinking what we could do is, um, just-kind of real quick, just kind of go around and read off the questions that we have, and then we all just kind of agree on one. Or if we hit one before we go through 'em, like when we did- we want to speak on. Um, so I mean I'm--. [Laughs] This one is pretty--. I-I'll read my-my two. Uh, the first one is: *What's your experience with affirmative action and hiring and in exhibiting?* And the second question I have is: *Does the local gallery roster and museum records reflect this city's demographics?*

[Pause]

TT: I have four.

TD: Oh, yeah?

[Laughter]

TT: Go ahead and read that one out.

JW: *Discuss an artist's role in the colonization of historical- historically black neighborhoods?*

TT: So now I have three. Um, *what kind of public art do you find valuable in Charlotte? Discuss artists, who co-opt aspects of Black culture for personal gain. And, Being the only black person in the room.*

JW: Cool.

HK: My cards read, uh, the first one: *Does a sense of civic responsibility affect formal decisions made in your studio?* The second: *Post-Black as an historical phenomenon. Post-Black as a forward looking agenda. Where do you see yourself in ten years? Where are we going collectively?* And the last: *How is cultural memory passed down to younger generations? Discuss legacy intergenerational advocacy and mentorship?*

JW: Dang.

TD: Okay, um, [Clears throat] I've got: *Discuss authorship of art history.* Um, also: *Discussing authorship in studio practice, in critical writing, and in cura-, uh, curatorial practices.* Um, also, next one: *Describe the exhi-exhibition scene, uh, local versus international. Discuss support systems for your work, commercial, community, institutional, and, uh, governmental, etc.* Um, *How do we bring more people to this table?* And the last one says, *A moment of silence for Prince.* [Laughs]

JW: So, um--. I guess we can go around, say which ones--. I-I like the *Being the only Black person in the room.* That's--.

TD: Yeah.

JW: That's- that's a (inaudible - 00:04:00). And it was, uh, one that you mentioned about *Where are we going collectively?* Yeah, those-the-actually those two, and that one too. *How is the, uh, the cultural memory passed down?* That's, um--.

TT: Somebody had one about responsibility.

TD: Um. I've got this- that--.

JW: I-I think that was his, the--.

HK: This was, uh, *Does a sense of civic responsibility affect formal decisions in your studio?* Alright.

TD: Hm.

JW: And then there's two blanks, if it is a topic we want to tackle.

HK: That you want to talk about.

TD: Absolutely

JW: Yeah.

HK: And, yeah, yours--. Your card?

TD: Um. [Pause] I mean, I guess we could *describe the exhibition scene local versus incide-international*. I mean, not that I can speak on international, but like, I guess just from, you know, what I've researched or what I've come across, that-that--. I don't know, I guess I'll be interested to see what everybody would have to say.

JW: Yeah.

TT: Read that again for me, please?

TD: Uh, it's, *Describe the exhibition scene, local versus international. Discuss support systems for your work.* Uh, *commercial, community, institutional, governmental.*

Yeah, 'cause it's-it's definitely different in Charlotte than it is like France. Or--.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

TD: You know, and a lot of areas--.

JW: This is a good one, uh, *What's your experience with affirmative action in hiring and exhibiting.* But, I'm-I'm too young in my career to really know the effects as far as exhibiting. Um, you know, I c- so I can't really speak on that from, like, a- like a first person--. You know what I mean?

TT: Yeah, the run is almost over.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

HK: Hm (inaudible - 00:05:36) affirmative action notions.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Hm.

HK: So, what say you, table?

JW: Um.

HK: What's that? We got what? Seven?

[Crosstalk]

TT: Well--. Yeah, you know, in a way, I'm thinking--.

JW: I like that one.

TD: Let's start with that one.

TT: This one gets--.

TD: That's a good place to start.

TT: That's a good foundation.

HK: Yeah, I think so.

[Crosstalk ends]

TT: Um, and I don't know, you know--. This thing doesn't show who all of us are, but I would say I'm the one with the gray hair.

[Laughter]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: Um, and I've got a lot of experience of being the only Black in the room, actually from five years old because I-I'm a child of-of the desegre- of the segregation era. And so, at five, I was chosen to desegregate a Catholic-Parochial school in my hometown, very small town, so it's not like it was some huge place. Small, uh, Virginia town. But, uh, I would venture to say by, certainly by seven years old, uh, I don't want to say I was jaded, if a seven year old could be jaded, [Laughs] but by seven, I was rolling up into myself, you know, because my experience being the only Black girl in- child in the school, was that there was a normalcy of things that these young- these children can do and that their parents could expect that they could do, but because the Bishop of that particular diocese was head over heels into the civil rights movement and was determined that they were- he was going to de-desegregate--. He was gonna do what he could do, and that was desegregate Catholic schools. So, when I came on the scene, this small little school, um, when offers were made to them from people in the community, now they couldn't necessarily take it. The one that I remember is — and I said I was gonna write a story about being- I was too Black to be a brownie, because somebody offered to start a Girl Scout Boy Scout troop at the school. The alt--. Or to

open up a troop to the school, the only caveat was: I couldn't be a part of it. And so based on that, then the priest of the parish had to tell the teachers, 'Well then, you can't do it, because the bishop has said that this is what will happen. And she can't be a part of it.' Now what the backdrop- the-the-the fallout of that was, you know, you're a little kid, six years old in the bathroom, and someone says, 'We could've had a Girl Scout troop if it wasn't for you. We can't even have Girl Scouts because of you,' or, 'We can't go there to eat because of you. We got to eat in the car because of you.' So, five and six, you know, that kind of got to me. By seven, my mom and daddy packed me real good lunch and we went places, and I was like, you know, 'You better eat that cheese sandwich--.'

[Laughter]

TT: ' 'Cause I'm sitting here with fried chicken and, uh, cupcakes and--.' Hey, do what you gotta do. So, from that point being the only Black in the room? Doesn't bother me. You know, because you-you learn early. I learned early, to roll up into who I was. And I had people at home who had- who were giving me brown crayons --dark brown crayons-- and saying, 'Make the picture pretty like you,' way before Rap Brown and all the folks who started talking about Black is Beautiful, you know? You got a mom and a dad who were saying, 'If the picture is not finished, take this crayon and make them look like you so they can be pretty.' You know, so this is the kind of thing I had in my head. So, being the only Black kid in the room, the only Black person in the room, you s- you see it. You put your armor on and you say, 'Okay, let's deal.' It's not always comfortable depending on the situation, but--.

JW: It's also a, um--. Like, in-in a more minor state despite it- you know, everybody use it like that. They use the phrase, 'It's 2016,' or, '2015,' but there's still- there's still this thing, like, when I'm the only Black guy in this room- when- in the room --more so when I was younger than now-- [Clears throat] 'cause now that I have a son, like I-I enforce the ideas- the same ideas pretty much that you saying your parents did. And, um, I'm a- I'm a lot more conscious on, um, being transparent about, like, who I am and my culture, wh-especially with my son. Uh, but prior to, you know, you'll get in them- you're in this room full of white people, wherever type of the event may be, maybe it's like a wine cheese thing or something like that, or, uh, it could be as simple as like a cookout. You know, going to a coworker's cookout and you the only Black person there. So you- in your head, you're battling, like, this thing where, all right, you know, it may sound silly, but you like, 'I would really like some grape soda right now, but if I reach, am I feeding the stereotype?' Or if--. Or if, like, if--?

TT: Or it don't let you have a water bottle.

JW: That's what I'm saying.

TD: Right.

JW: [Laughs] Right? So, I mean, even--. And it's even when it comes to, like, a cultural thing, where- where, like--. I-I recall this one discussion these guys were having, and I-I guess they were trying to relate to me, in a way? So they had started having this conversation about music, and they were talking about like this, 'Oh,' like rap music. And it was like all this, like, garbage that I didn't listen to, you know, and- and it's kind of like, 'Well, how much of myself do I show in this setting?' You know what I mean, like, how much do I--. You know, like, i-if- if they're playing this music, and they're asking me

to-to join in or participate in something, whatever, like, I'm like, 'Okay,' you know? I look at my--. Y-you- well, not my wife, but if I'm by myself or say, I'm kind of like, 'Alright, how much of myself do I dip in their culture before, you know, before I kind of, like, lose myself?' It's like this--. It's always like, kind of like this tug of war--.

TT: I understand.

JW: Where it's like, man, 'I want to--. Like, yo, I really want to like--.' Some times- I go some places and I'm like, 'Man, I wish they just put some ratchet shit on. You know what I'm saying? I just want to hear some-some hard music.'

TT: It is their stuff.

JW: You know what I'm saying? Yea-yeah. And then like, so--. Eh, I-I don't know. It's, um, it's so weird, 'cause again, it's 2016 and it's--. And I think it's uncomfortable for both sides, but there's- we're trying to have this cultural mesh, but for the longest time, there's been a lot of cultural toe-dippin' to where like- like, plenty of white friends who listen to rap music, but afraid of Black people. You know, which makes no sense. Or you got- they'll judge a rapper for saying, like, 'Oh, you know--,' talk about drive bys and selling drugs? The Terminator is the governor of California, and he killed a lot of people on screen. So, there's this--. I don't know. You know? Yeah, that-that's going off topic, but again, like, it's so many things where it's kind of like when I'm around them, and, like, am I comfortable to say--. Are they educated enough about my culture, my people, for me to behave this certain way, and then not take it and run away with it and be like, 'Oh, man. See? It's just like the rap videos. Just like- like--.' No. Like, no, this is- it's entertainment. You know, but for some reason, when we do it a- it's more of a definer of who we are. But, you know, again, like Arnold Schwarzenegger killed two thousand

people in one- in a- in a scene in the movie, and it's like, 'Yeah, let's- let's elect this guy for governor. He's-he's tough.'

TT: 'Cause that's what he does and they-they say that's not who he is.

JW: Yeah, they call him the 'governator'.

TT: But we get caught in the im- in the image.

JW: Yeah, yeah. So, I-I don't know. That's, that's the- to me, it's the hardest part about being-being only Black guy in the room is--. Falls on, like, how educated is--? How educ- how educated is the majority in this si- in this situation of, like, my people? And how much are they willing to take everything they think they know and assume that they don't know anything? Or are-are they gonna take what they think they know and say, like, that's concrete.

TD: Mm.

JW: You know what I mean? So...

[JW intermittently agrees]

TD: Yeah, it's, um--. I'd love-love--. I don't know, um, I guess, uh, responsibility? Like, you feel like, uh, I guess, 'cause, like, the way I came up was like, uh, my mom taught seventh grade Social Studies and English. So it waslike, uh, you know, everything was like, you know, very education based, like my family heavily steeped in the church. So, you know, there's, you know, a certain idea about like what they're not gonna have you do. That's pretty much concrete. That's- that's determined. So, you know, being signed up for like, inner city baseball, but at the same time, my mom wanted me to, like, understand, like, 'Oh, this how it is in this other side, so I'mma w-sign you up for YMCA soccer.' You know, so you're, like, the only Black kid on your

team pretty much like every season. It's like this, like uh... I don't know, if it--. You know, I guess, maybe I can compare myself to other Black people, like, that might have grown up similarly or not, and have a bit of a understanding about what the differences are. Um, and that's kind of a tough thing, too, because it's like, you know, like I guess, I came up around a lot of kids that were never the only Black kid in the room. So that's like a- it's kind of a odd dichotomy, this sort of... To know what it's like, I guess on one side, to know, like, white people that have never met Black people, that don't even have to interact with Black people who like--. You know, even now, like that I'm an adult, you know, like, the people that I deal with at work are in a lot of situations, it's like, depending on what side of town you're on, you either see a Brown person for eight hours, you know what I mean? Like, you just enjoy your day. You know, like [Laughs].

[Crosstalk]

[Laughter]

JW: Go lock your cars.

HK: Enjoy your day.

TT: (inaudible - 00:15:18)

HK: Wow.

[Crosstalk ends]

[JW intermittently agrees]

TD: [Laughs] Right? No, yeah, it's just--. It's--. Yeah, yeah, exactly. You know, do whatever. So, you know, it's like, uh--. You know, I guess like growing up, and like, I guess, you know, kind of having been in the in-between having like, the kind of back and forth thing. Now, as an adult, when I'm around my white friends or just white

colleagues and peers, I do feel like a sense of responsibility as far as saying, like, 'All right, well, now I'm like the diplomat. I'm, like, the ambassador to my people, I have to, like, educate you on this.' And you said, something that caught me 'cause, you know, it's like, what am I combining this with? I'm giving them my insight on-on my, like, on my understanding of my people, and it's like, can I even really speak to that, you know? 'Cause, like, you know, when you only- when you've been the only Black person in the room, it's like, 'Do I- do I have a sense of my identity based on what this is now? Or is it on myself? Or the idea of what I think other Black people might think of me?'

TT: Or that they think.

TD: Or that they think, you know what I mean? So you're kind of the minority within the minority, I guess, like you, like, on the outside of the whole thing. But, um, I do feel a sense of responsibility in like, explaining why like-like, 'No, you can't, like- like, uh--. Just because you don't shoot a Black person, just because they, like, walked through your yard doesn't mean you're not racist.' Like, if you- if you think this kind of way, you know what I mean? And- and it's- and it's a crazy thing, because it does have a huge impact just explaining, like, small things like that. And it's like, well, 'I guess I was put in that position,' so it's like a kind of a position of strength, but then you kind of get alienated because of it, too, in a- in an odd way. You sort of feel like--. At times, I feel like I lose touch, you know, 'cause I think about... You know, it's a- it's a--. I think about, like, if I were-was ever to become like, successful, as far as like, I don't know, multi millions of dollars or whatever, like, would I go back and help certain communities that, like, I kind of, sort of feel like I was a part of? You know, like and- and like, what would that ultimat-uli-ultimately mean? Would it mean I was trying to--. I wouldn't be doing it

because I cared, but would the perception be, you know, what I felt like I really was able to identify, would I be doing the right thing by--? Like, in what way would I want to help? So I don't know, I-I guess, like, I was really steeped in the only Black person in the room kind of thing for so long where it, kind of, became like, [Pause] 'I'm-I know I'm Black. Never forget that. Nobody's gonna let me forget, I'm not gonna let myself forget. But what does that mean in comparison to everybody else, now?'

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Mm-hmm.

TD: So it's, um, kind of a gift and a curse, I guess.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

HK: No doubt. I think, for myself, um, I-I wasn't raised in a predominantly Black environment. My father's in the military. So, I was born in Germany, lived overseas for the first fifteen years of my life. Uh, definitely identified Black to the bottom, never questioned it. Innately was always a pro-Black, you know, uh, advocate. If not just from my home first, my brother, my mom, my father, um, but definitely was understood about the-the consequences of not knowing yourself, when you had to engage when you would be the only one. For those first early fifteen years, it was always a- a mixed bag because it was other military families. And so, we never had that kind of a immediate dichotomy that my relatives did at (inaudible - 00:18:38) Ohio or in Florida or Cali. Um, and so that kind of never presented itself until we were stationed in Washington State, and then it became very apparent. Um, I graduated from Washington State University, top- top of my class in 1994, for the arts. But for that four years, it might've been three of us in this program, maybe 3 percent, at an institution of about twenty-five thousand people. That meant African Americans, um, Africans, Islanders, all of us, just Brown:

less than 4 percent, period. So, the notion of being the only Black in the room definitely is a part of my foundation, a part of even the organization that I founded was because when I was in school, I remember, um — even to this day, literally, and only had this come to fruition a year ago. I said, ‘Lord, let me --if I do make it similar to yourself-- if I do make a certain level of fame or- or opportunity to be effective to make change, I want to reach back to that young Black student in a scenario like mine, where I was the one of none.’ God had different plans. He sent me to Charlotte. I’m here at J.C.S.U., and I’ve never seen that experience until 2015, and it was the reverse. I have a student who’s in my program who’s white at a all Black institution, and it dawned on me when I was advising her through her courses, I was like, ‘I was sent here for you, in my own reality,’ and I granted every other student has benefited and God put on me to impact them, but the pathway to get to that student wasn’t in my mind, it was really to get to student who looked like me. The crazy thing is, this young lady has more Black tendencies than some of the Black students in understanding culture value in parts of history and on her own presence. It’s not to say that white folks have to know, us or Black folks should know us more, but when I connected with her to see that this is who I was, almost thirty years ago, in a sense, when I was in college, to know that revelation- uh, revelation that took place, it was powerful to know, what is it that we need in our recognition? When we didn’t live in that history, when they created for us the opportunities to be in the classroom, period. But yet, because of what happened in her history, now, we still have these notions of, ‘I’m still the only one.’ And to me, I’ve never thought- never felt I owed anybody, but will check any motherfucker who came at me wrong about that topic, because I came in with a certain confidence about who I was. I was understood about

my history and I would cancel any form of ignorance from my own, or from the opposition. So that kind of set a path on me that, yes, you do stand out, but you stand out with a certain, and I would say this, either street reverence, intellectual reverence, or just 'You still Black' reverence. So yeah, you did end up with your white friends who would s-sing the rap songs with you and they wanna wear the Eazy-E shirt with you, but they knew not to really play with you. At the same time, what was also very sad, was when you would show them what the people that you thought looked like you and felt like you, and were like you, but when you were intellectualized what they knew, they didn't know themselves. And that was very sad because it was like, if we are really to fight, if we were really to have a true Civil War, Black and white in this country, how many of you all that are African American truly be able to side with the impetus as to why we would have this war--.

TT: In the first place.

HK: In the first place? To know that is half the battle, because it's worse carrying dead weight than it is to truly know that we are low in numbers. When I came in J.C.S.U., I was- I was awestruck to know that: (1) I had never really paid much attention to HBCUs when I was in college. A few frat brothers of mine that had gone to HBCUs, they told me more so about the kickin' it and more so about the fun. But they also told me that it was very different, as far as what they recognized at a predominantly white institution, where the numbers were constantly against us. We were always the only one in the classroom. But what was shocking was, they said that the Black mentality and the notion of consciousness at the white schools was higher than it was at the Black schools. Back then, I didn't believe it because I was like, 'that's what everybody at the

white school wants to go to. To Black schools get the consciousness to get that--.' And they was like, 'Nah, honestly, it's a lot of lack, a lot of apathy and a lot of lack of focus,' like the romantic notion of Black communities being intellectually endowed is a romantic notion. Those who walked with Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, those who fought, those who actually laid down the trail was the smallest percentage of our collective culture. It is the media driven reality that promotes that we are so galvanized, that we are so together, that we are so truly together. So when I came out here, and I saw it for myself, I'm- been at J.C.S.U. for sixteen years to create change and to impart something from the arts from a perspective that connects a young Black artist. But when I engage with them, I-I wa-want to choke 'em, because I know nothing about who they are, first and foremost, just as a being.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: And-and that's our fault. That- that is- that is our fault collectively, it is our fault those of us who are my age. I-I-I say particularly my age because those before me did not --my parents-- did not have the- did not have access to what we had access to in terms of knowledge. Right? So then- so they do everything they can to get us to where they feel we need to be, that next level. And then- then my generation, in my opinion, gets soft. We are the generation that says, 'But I don't want my baby to go through what I went through. I don't want my baby to have the hardships that I went through. I don't want to say 'no' to my baby 'cause somebody said 'no' to me. I want the--,' you know? And-and-and I have never- I have not born children, I have three children who- by my husband's first marriage. But the thing that I struggle with is, look at where that past generation got to. If we get to the- if we get to the place that we can go to the next level

and we stopped. We stopped with discipline, we stopped with intellectual yearning, we stopped with those requirements of a- of community. Right? A family, whether you were born together or not, we stopped that. We stopped with you having to-to-to go through the consequences, reap whatever consequences you sow, and that you reap consequences early, so you don't have to reap consequences later.

HK: Later. Yeah.

TT: We stopped doing that. And so now you got a generation who haven't got a clue. And you get out into a situation when you face either being the only Black in the room, or whatever that case may be, you know so little about yourself, your history, your true culture. White man pours Kool Aid and we drink it. We got a whole generation that's drinking the Kool Aid, but we don't offer 'em anything else of nourishment to take it to the- to the level they need to. So then, the generation after that is glued to the wall 'cause they don't even know who they are.

JW: I, uh, I didn't even know--. Honestly, I didn't know Crispus Attucks was until about three years ago.

TD: Right?

JW: You know what I mean? So--.

TT: Exactly.

JW: But like, I mean, and again, like--. I just- it was never taught to me.

HK: Truth?

JW: Truth. I--. Like, literally not too long ago, I realized--.

HK: Like, how old are you?

JW: Thirty-three.

[Crosstalk]

TD: Tru-truth be told--.

JW: So, now--.

TD: Like it wasn't- it wasn't that recent, but it was--. I went a while. I honestly--.

JW: For the longest time, yeah.

TD: I went- I went on- I went a while, too, without it being like something mentioned in passing to being like, 'Oh, this is what it is.'

HK: Wow.

[Crosstalk ends]

JW: Now, again, this is a, there's a--. Now, I've always had, like, my convictions as a Black person. And kind of piggybacking off what you were saying that- that being the only person in the room, and, um, you wanting to reach back to this child. T-the one thing--. What--. Or better yet--. I'm sorry, to piggyback off you were saying when God put your in a place for that.

HK: Yeah.

JW: Because one thing, my mom always told me, and we always talked about, like, God testing you and so on, um, your maturity will always be tested when you the Black person in the room- the only Black person in the room. 'Cause the- 'cause the one thing that I've always bear, and it- and it sucks, but I-I almost feel like I'm bracing for a punch. I'm in a room full of white--. I'm like, 'All right--.'

TT: Waiting (inaudible - 00:27:59)

HK: Waiting for the show to drop.

TD: Yep.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JW: Somebody is gonna say something, or some of the c--. And my maturity and my maturity is gonna be tested, but I have to balance that out with my conviction, 'cause I also gotta have my convictions. Like, I am Black, and I'm not gonna let anybody just--. You're not gonna say this and me just, 'Hi,' you know, like--.

HK: Get that off.

JW: Yeah, no, I'm gonna check you in the most mature appropriate way possible, so now you know. So but--. What I- what I see as far as like, I guess, you say--. I don't know, you call it my generation, but, um, for mine, as well as, like kind of seeing my son. My son is seven now. And seeing some of the things he's learning, me just trying to embed certain things in his head and let him know the truth. Um, I almost felt like, in just researching and finding out more stuff for myself, I almost felt offended. I felt lied to. A-and I mean, and-and this is against like — I love my parents to death, and they've always taught me about being Black. But it's- it's more to it than just like, 'Stay Black. Stay proud.' You know, it's like, okay, but--.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: What does that mean?

JW: What is the history? Yeah.

HK: What does that mean? Right.

JW: What's the sub- where's the substance behind it? Like, but if-if you want me--. I can't have convictions in-in a cliched phrase, I can't have convictions in a phrase. I need to find something substantial for myself that I can bear my grounds on,

so when I am tested, I can say, 'No, because, this and that happened.' You know what I mean? So- so like, you know, when I read about Crispus Attucks, you know, first thing I told my son about Crispus Attucks. So then, the other day he- um, we were having a discussion, and, um, I was with him and he looks over to me and they're saying the pledge of allegiance. So I just had my hands to my side, and this white guy, army vet, whatever, comes at me, was like, 'Yeah, I noticed you didn't have your hand over your heart.' And I was like, 'Nah.'

TD: [Laughs]

JW: So he says, well, he was like, 'Do you not like being--? W--. Like- like- what's up?' He was like, 'I'm just kind of asking you, you know. I'm a vet, you know. I fought--.' I was like, 'Yeah, my brother's a first class drill sergeant. Absolutely. I understand.' My-my grandfather, who-who's passed now, he was also in the military. But I was like, 'Well, for two things: for (1), I'm a man of Christ and in the Bible says "Do not pledge." So I'm not gonna pledge.' (2), I was like, 'I don't get to enjoy my freedom the same way as everybody else does and that's a problem. So what am I say--. So when I look at this flag, I'm not just gonna do it just because I'm told this is like, the, this is like the- what you're supposed to do. Like, di--. You're not, 'Oh, you're not American if you don--.' Okay, then what does it really mean to be American? Because for a standard to be an American, for a very long time, meant that, yo, if you have any color whatsoever, you-you're pretty much--. Yeah, you're pretty much getting the short end of the stick. So--. And I'm-I'm getting way off topic here, but- but just as to say, just kind of piggybacking off what you were saying how, you know, you had that Blaxploitation era where the pimps became the heroes, and the hoes became like the heroines. And then

that kind of- we kind of had this thing going on in the early 90s, with music with the Queen Latifa, U.N.I.T.Y., and then, next thing you know, it like, s-steadily going in towards the 2000s, it was about money, hoes, rims, all this other kind of stuff. And-and you-you could search as hard as you wanted to do, you could try to search for, like, music with substance. You might find a Common album or something, but all the producers and people that you wanted were--. They couldn't get the sounds from these other people 'cause their albums weren't sellin'. So you had like this money machine just like, 'Nah, we gon' put this money in this over there.' So now I give credit to- I give credit to a-a lot of younger people I come across now. They're more aware than I was when they were- when I was their age, I'll say that. 'Cause they can Google something and it's right there in front of 'em.

HK: They have access.

JW: Exactly. So the biggest thing that I try to do, so that when they are the only Black kid in the room, even with a art show me and Marcus do, we always said, like, 'Yo, research. Just research, like even if you just read a paragraph about som--. If you got a que--. Like, research. Before you sit here and assume to yourself like, 'Oh, okay, that was invented by a white guy,' no. Research.

TD: [Laughs]

TT: That's right. Check it out.

JW: Like, research. I was like, 'Yo, find your point in history. Don't- don't take this February--. Don't let them confine your history into February 'cause they can't confine Black history in February.' Like, you need way more days than that.

HL: Black history is American history.

JW: American history, world history.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: A-and then, when you understand--. 'Cause the organization that-that I-I, um, am program director for, A Sign of the Times of the Carolinas', and what we do is teach pre-slavery history through music, dance, and spoken word. So when you start teaching these children--. I-I was at a conference in, uh, at Xavier University last year, where — And I'm-I'm Catholic by, you know, my-my born faith, and so I'm down there working with Black Catholics in the-this institution and this B- young Black priest, probably about your age, just- just ordained, he's gonna be influencing a lot of people. There's a picture on one of the walls in the registration hall of Timbuktu and he says, 'That's a place? That was a real place? That's a real place?' And I said before I thought about it, 'You're kidding, right? You're-you're-you're really ki--.' He said, 'No, I-I always heard people say things like, 'I will knock you into Timbuktu,' but I didn't know it was a real place.' And all I can say was, 'Dear God.'

[Speakers intermittently agree]

HK: Yeah. It-it-it never ceases to amaze me. I did a, uh, lecture with the exploding cannons with, um, Charlotte school systems here — actually, next door, over in the, uh, the Charlotte Ballet Theatre. And it was probably about three hundred people, three hundred faculty, teachers, high school, and middle school, some college. It was myself and 'bout four other, uh, university instructors. And we were talking about the influence of Romare Bearden, who often lived as a white individual because he was very fair-skinned, but he was very Black. And he let everybody know, because he was often the only one in the room during the time of the Renaissance, uh, coming into the,

uh, Black Arts movement. He was very big and his history is here in Charlotte. So, as we were talking about it, there was a pivotal time that some of the, uh, personal perspective that I have about Black history in the context of the written word, uh, why we're not in the books, why we weren't in the books when she was in school or you were in school, and literally to the context of validating why you may have just learned about Crispus Attucks in the access of resources through your traditional methods of school- of schooling. So, one of the white instructors literally stands up after I had given my little twenty minute lecture and other lectures have been given, and she asked because she was--. By her-her demeanor, she seemed to be amazed at Romare Bearden was so influential and had the history and he had and 'He's so phenomenal. He's from history and from Charlotte,' and, 'Why didn't- Why isn't he known in the books? Like, how come we can't teach about him?' And it was a pause, literally it was a pause. And they handed me the mic like, 'Can you speak about this?'

JW: [Laughs]

TD: (inaudible - 00:35:14)

HW: Now, mind you, I wasn't the only Black lecturer on the panel, there was another brother.

TD: Okay.

TT: And he wasn't gon' take--.

HK: And he didn't take the mic.

TD: [Laughs]

JW: Yeah.

HK: No, bu--. He was like--.

TD: Right.

[Speaker intermittently agree]

HK: Like, 'Pass it on. You wanna hit 'em with this?' So, of course, I was glad to take the mic. Definitely. What came out of my mouth, with all honesty, was, 'The reason why Romare Bearden was not in the history books is because he's Black. Regardless of what context you may think of or why you are amazed at his history. He's not in the books because he's a part of American history and during the time when he was prevalent and alive, the concerns that were governing school systems and the editorials and who was producing the books that were in classrooms were all white, and they're still all white. So, the reason why he, along with other- every other Black individual is not in those traditional schools, is because they're Black. Period.' And they were like, 'Hmm--.' So literally, maybe about twenty people started clapping and I saw them, Black folks: my wife, an elder Black woman that was in the audience. And they were like, 'No doubt, like, you making it clear, so that 90 percent of these people in this room get the picture about who we're here to talk about.' And so that issue is prevalent with the lack of education--. I mean, they get to ride, like you had mentioned, I think it was you that mentioned about they get to have a good day, like, you know, for eight hours you don't have to worry about the challenges. You could leave your door open, you don't have to think critically, you don't have to worry about the challenges that we have to exist in. Constantly, we will always find ourselves either being in the position to educate, holding true with our armor, protecting our children, or our family, or literally just being pissed constantly, because of the lack of information that needs to be shared equally. I mean, I'm a man of God too. Truly believe. I pledged, I pledge, I pledge, a-a part of all of that,

because what I feel is I- the-the cross that we have to bear is being Black. And we will always be the only Black in the room. We got a Black president who's still the only Black in the room.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: The only Black in the room.

HK: And the reality of our history is gonna always be this way. Our message, collectively, how we can actually progress: stop worrying about it. Truly, not not worry about your history, not worry about your presence, or your existence, or your fair play, or don't touch my daughter, and don't disrespect my wife, or my mothers or my sisters or my brothers, brothers. Because I get --sometimes-- I get more frustrated in the present, at my own--.

TT: That's right, I'm with you.

HK: Than them, because of the wave of history, they've learned how to get under it, because they don't know, so they can play the dumb card. Or they'll play the back route and they'll do these covert realities that are often overt when you know. But your own that don't know and they bumble through it?

TT: And will tell you, they don't care to know.

HK: Whew. Bruh.

TD: Right.

JW: Check this out--.

TD: Yeah, they don't--.

TT: That's what- what--.

JW: This was in a school book.

[Shifting of paper]

TT: Who is that?

HW: So these are--?

TD: Wow.

HW: So, this is the text, now, trying to commodify the imagery--. I'm sorry, I just rolled it.

JW: At some point, it was an--. I don't- and I don't know. I saw the image--.

HK: That's your son's school?

JW: Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. This is what I saw--. I found it online.

TT: Oh, God.

JW: This was in a school book.

HK: I mean--.

TT: You know--.

JW: You know, but-but it's kind of just--. With what you were- you were just--.

HK: Yeah.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: And-and you know, the-the thing about- the other thing about being the only Black in the room — sometimes you just have to realize that that is the way it is, but through your persona, through what you say, and sometimes through what you don't say. You're letting them know, 'I may be, but I'm here. I've always been here. I'm always gonna be here. And you're gonna have to deal with me.' See the generation before me would say- whenever you say--. And-and y'all watch this. Get somebody that's, say,

seventy years old and older. They can be ta- having a nice conversation with wha- the tone of voice would be just like this, but then getting ready to relay something to you then they say, [Whispers] 'But the white guy--.'

HK: Oh my--. Yo, no lie.

TD: Yeah.

JW: Hold on, say what?

HK: I don't even mean to jump on you like this--.

TT: Watch this.

HK: Listen--.

TT: It's true.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

HK: It's very true. Listen, I was at the bank at, um--. Okay, I was at First Legacy Bank literally last week. No lie. Now, I'm I'm a faculty at an HBCU. So old ma comes in, she's an older faculty. I ain't gon' call her name out, but she in that age range. And she asked me, she's like, conversation was up here, 'You in the arts department?' And I'm like, 'Yeah.' 'Okay, I got a young lady who wants to do art, but she won't do anything in my class.' When I tell you, it felt like she turned the volume down, [Whispers] 'She's white.' Now you in a Black bank. You at First Legacy, nothing but Black people, and you whispered to me that, [Whispers] 'She's white.' And I'm like, 'Why are you whispering? Like, who gon' get you?' But it's that culture that has that fear notion though, 'I can't talk about Mister- Mister Man. I can't talk about Missy Mae. I can't talk about none of them. And [Whispers] (inaudible - 00:40:13) quietly.' Are you kidding me?

JW: It's, 'Yes, ma'am. Yes, sir.' Yup.

HK: What? Bruh.

TD: Yeah, cuz I don't know how y'all feel, because I feel like it's just within the past at least five years I feel, like, consciously, like, I'll just be able to say like, 'Yeah, these white people--.' Like, just in being able to just--.

JW: Yeah. Say it.

TD: Say it out loud, like it's not like any other word, like--.

[Crosstalk]

JW: It was--. Yeah.

TD: Cell phone, like, car, like--. Yeah.

HK: Car. (inaudible - 00:40:35)

JW: It- it's a- there's a meme- there's a, uh, meme on Instagram where it says, "Yo, we'll shout 'Nigga' but whisper 'Cracker.' "

TD: Right? Yeah, exactly.

HK: Yeah.

JW: You know what I'm saying?

TD: Yeah, yeah.

JW: And I was, like, I thought that was funny.

TT: Exactly.

HK: Some of us.

TD: Yeah.

JW: But you--.

HK: Some of us.

[Crosstalk ends]

[HK intermittently agrees]

JW: It kind of goes back to why ole boy didn't take the mic. We went to- we went to a Cornel- was Cornel West was speaking at the Gantt Center.

TT: I was there.

JW: And we got to sit in on that. And- and I-I asked them, I stood up and I asked him a question. And I asked him about--.

TT: I knew I've seen you before.

JW: Yeah.

[Laughter]

JW: So- yeah, I get around, you know. And I asked him about- it was about the Eurocentric influence on religion. And, um, so he goes in and he-he starts to speak and, uh, 'cause he's like- he's like a man of conviction. He's like, faithfull — whatever, man. He-he says it's one thing and me- and me and Marcus got in the car and we just, kind of like, sat there for like, fifteen minutes before we even turned the car on and talked about it--. ,

HK: What'd he say?

JW: He was like, 'If you gonna speak on this white supremacy, you need to be ready to die.'

HK: Period.

JW: That's all he said.

HK: Go and get it.

JW: So ole buddy ain't take the mic.

HK: That's it. He wasn't ready.

JW: He wasn't- he aint got that--. Yeah.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

HK: And- and- and I say that, too. I say to my students, that you have to understand the- not so much the power that white supremacy has over you, but the underpinnings that they have influenced into this country; through the education system, through the corporal system, through the housing system, land ownership, you into music, the music industry, the art industry — that white supremacy is a monster, and if you don't realize how that imparts into everything you do--. I just had some seniors talk about the topics, they had varied topics. One lady was talking about the rap game, uh, the influence of the cocaine on, uh, N.W.A., but she left out all the governmental concerns of that- been brought in cocaine to the United States to specifically South Central, to California, well before N.W.A. was even born.

JW: Reagan.

HK: Right.

TD: Yeah.

HK: And so that whole reality is like, listen, there is such a vein of white supremacy that's a part of everything that creates why we the only Blacks in the room. Why--. Even then, she was mentioning talking about the ark of- the ark of rap as to why it went from just about music, just about the value of being in our communities back in the late 70s till now, 2016, that it's nothin' but 'bitches and hoes and money' and all that

— tha--. White supremacy is on top of that. And we gon' continue to keep them picking that cotton, picking that cotton for the least amount and weighing down the barrels for ourselves, so they don't get nothing. I created a painting called *Basketbowl*. Not 'basketball', but *Basketbowl*. So you see this very abstract work of art that are springs of cotton and the bowl is a basketball with white around it. And so for all of those who have gone on to the league to find these balls to be more valuable to pluck them realizing that they're only really plucking a bowl of cotton, because now this- the game has changed. And so even though you out there doing what you're doing, you think that your sweat, and you're up and down, and you're on your twenty years on knees is harder than the regular man who don't get none of that money, none of that opportunity, but you don't have none of his intelligence. So you've only picked more cotton, that's it. That's all you've done. That's all you've done. And so, to me, it's always a battle of recognizing you gotta be willing to die for this. And truly, that's the plight. To me, when I go to Bible study, they like, 'Well, how can we, as Christians, make change for our people?' or 'How can we affect change, as Christians, for just anybody?' I'm always gonna talk from the Black voice. Stop worrying about being here if you a Christian. If you truly down with the King and you're gonna play this God game, it's in glory. So skip it. Period. You always gonna get dogged. He said, 'Some people love to get this. Some people love to get that.' Period. So your plight is always gon' be richer, because to get it out of everybody in a way for them to be fair play. Bruh, you know how long it's gonna take? Because you can find a four year old white kid who will say something racist to you. That means that they are around somebody that's old enough to tell them that racist epithet to the point where they- it's in they blood. America is built on a--.

TT: On racism.

HK: On racism.

TD: On (inaudible - 00:44:44)

JW: On hate. Preach it. Yeah.

[JW intermittently agrees]

HK: And I teach this in my class constantly. I teach it in my class that America is built on a ba--. Uh, what do I tell them? I said, 'It is a bad method, but a good product.' The bad method is the way that they created the United States, but the product is the diversity and the intellects and the abilities that we have to actually take it over or to do more with. And the reality is that we don't have to live under that bad method. The bad method, the prototype, the, uh, supremacy, the constant colonization, that's bad. You can't go to somebody house and say, 'It's mine now.' That's bad. But the generational results is that now we have knowledge; we have access; we have abilities; we have all histories; we have stuff that you can't take. So that product had to come from somewhere so that the ability to prevail from that has to go through the fire. It has to go through the fire.

JW: Oh, yeah, absolutely. There-there is repercussions for everything and as well as--. To hit on the point, too, what makes it so hard, even when you're being the only Black person in the room and you're trying to explain this to a white person is that like there is--. I- it was- it's a girl my job right now, she admitted she grew up in a bubble. She's like, super Republican, Donald Trump, this and that, whatever. So, in the conversation I-I asked her, I said, 'Well, first of all--', I was like, you know, telling her- she was asking like, 'Don't-don't you think we're way further than what we were back then?'

And I was like, 'Well, when my dad was alive- my dad was alive, he was born in '52 --he's still alive-- but when he was born, there was still human zoos in Belgium where they were feeding little Black girls bananas.' I was like, 'This is my dad that I can pick up the phone and call talk to right now. So, we're not talking a long time ago. Jim Crow was '65, and that's--.'

HK: There it is.

JW: And that's- but that stuff still carries on. They wouldn't even let--. In 1989, 49ers win the Super Bowl, they wouldn't let Jerry Rice say, 'I'm going to Disney World.' And he's an N.V.P.

HK: N.V.P.

JW: Just- but- just think how minute that is. And they're like, 'No, you can't even have that.' So--. But what I asked her, I said, 'Well, first of all, I want you to go to your grandparents and I want you to go to your parents and ask them, 'What were you doing during the civil rights? Who was your stand? What did you believe in and what was your convictions? How did you feel about Black people?' And I was like, see, that's the thing. I was like, yo, there's never that- that conversation never happened in the (inaudible - 00:46:57).

HK: They don't have that.

TD: It doesn't, yeah.

HK: Because the accountability gon' show up they have to have that conversation.

TD: Right.

JW: Absolutely. I said, so when- when I had this conversation with you. I-it- all- all of a sudden, I'm looking like the mad Black guy or I'm looking like this and that or I was like, 'No, it's just it's a convs- because you never had this conversation before.'

HK: There it is. There it is.

JW: So, she was kind of like, 'Oh,' and I was like--. Well, a-and another thing, 'cause she said she, like, mentors, like, kids and stuff and a lot of them are like Black kids without a father and whatnot. And I was like, 'Okay, well, let me ask you this,' I was like, 'Go through your history books, right? From beginning of time up to now. Let's take- let's take the slavery, right? Four hundred years plus forty million people accounted for, dead. Accounted for. You had the migration of a shark path- of-of-of a species of shark change, because they were dumping slave bodies off the ship. Like you cha- it changed the--.'

HK: Changed the genetic makeup of the animal.

TT: That's right.

JW: And I said--.

HK: Changed the ecosystem of where these fish lived.

TD: That's, uh--.

JW: Where these--. Exactly. I say, 'So do me a favor,' I said, 'Before you sit here, 'fore you--. The next time ever look at a Black per- or a situation within Black people and say like, 'Oh, they need to do this, they need to do that.' I was like, 'Find a situation you can compare that to.' Nowhere history can you say--. You can't sit here and say, 'Oh, you should be over it, compares to who? The Holocaust?' The Holocaust was four years.

TT: And-and you don't have a problem with the fact that the Jews --and I ain't mad at them for this-- but the Jews are going to remind you--.

[Crosstalk]

HK: Yup, every time.

TT: Everybody in their family.

TD: Right.

JW: Yeah.

HK: Yup, let you know.

JW: Absolutely.

HK: Holocaust.

TT: By the time you four, you know about the Holocaust.

HK: Yes, indeed.

JW: Holocaust, absolutely.

TD: Oh, yeah.

TT: You know that you are never to forget it.

HK: That's peace.

TT: You may not have a number on your wrist, but you got it on your mind.

JW: Your mind.

HK: You got it wrapped around your entire body

TT: Your entire body.

HK: You don't need a number.

TD: Yeah.

[Crosstalk ends]

JW: That's it.

HK: Period.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: Back in the- the 90s. I was working in Winston Salem and, uh, I had-had risen in government to second in command to the director of the planning division. And so the guy who was the planning director, quiet guy, a little older than me, uh, he became my mentor in-in terms of my career at that point. But, I would have real conversations with him; I didn't care. What you gon' do? I'd always call my father — my father was living at the time. He had a, uh, he was retiring from being a plasterer, but he had a little, uh, restaurant next to- next to the house. We sold hard shell crabs, soft shell crabs. When they would piss me off, I'd get on the phone in front of them and call him: 'Pop, store still open?' 'Yeah.' 'Is it running?' 'Yeah.' 'All the equipment paid for?' 'Yeah.' 'So if I need to come home and flip burgers for a minute, I'm good?' He's said, 'Yeah, baby.' 'Good, talk to you later.' Then I say what I gotta say, 'cause y'all aren't gon' own me. Understand, I may not make this salary, but y'all can kiss my natural behind if you think you gon' put me out there and try to make a monkey out of me 'cause it's not happening. But this guy back in the 90s, they were doing this whole, um, uh, racial infusion thing to help white folks understand how diverse we should work and what it feels like to be in a situation when you're Black.

JW: Think about that, though.

TT: Okay. Now--.

[Laughter]

JW: [Laughs] You know what I mean?

TD: Wow. Yeah.

TT: They had these--. They would bring Black folks in to teach this stuff, but they would- they would put them in simulated situations where because of the blue eyes you're looked down on. You know--.

JW: Yeah, okay. Blue, brown eyes. Yeah.

TT: (inaudible - 00:50:34) So, I had gone through the thing before he went. So he went through it, came in that day, I was the last person in the office working on something, my door was open, I heard him when he came in and he was livid. His face was the color--. He was livid. He forgot I was in there, but I could hear him talk. At first, he slammed the door. Never did that. I was like (inaudible - 00:51:00) So, then I heard him mumblin', 'I ain't got to take this, damn it. Ain't nobody talk to me like that. Who the hell- la la la la la.' So, I wait a minute, 'So, what's up?' So I had an idea, because I've been through it. So I said, 'What's up?' And he said- he just stewin'. So finally I sat down and said, 'You wanna talk about it?'

[Laughter]

TT: He said, 'I just- I just realized that, why would I go through that? I ain't letting nobody talk to me- at my age somebody talk to me like that. I ain't gotta go through that. You know, questioning everything I think and blah, blah, blah, blah blah, and feeling like I can't do this and I gotta be guilty of that. Talk to me like you're not a human, blah, blah, blah, blah blah.' And I said- looked at him and I said, 'You know,' I sat down and said, 'You know, I agree. If I was you, I wouldn't do it either.' I said, 'Think about it. Why would

you go through that? You walk in this room white every single day. I don't blame you. I wouldn't have anybody talk to me like that either. I don't have to deal with it.' And he sat down for a minute and looked at me--.

[Crosstalk]

JW: [Laughs]

TD: Oh, yeah. Right, oh yeah.

HK: (inaudible - 00:52:15)

JW: Mind explosion [Laughs]

[Crosstalk ends]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: He said, 'What are you saying? Do you go through this?' Now see, you've seen me from the fact that I got an undergraduate degree from here, a graduate degree from U.N.C., and a blah, blah, blah. And I can speak the language and I can do the same thing, but my car broke down on I-85 between Raleigh and Greensboro, and I got on a-a-a \$100 suit, which was a lot back then, and nobody would pick me up. Okay? 'Cause I was a nigga on the side of the road with a white suit on. That's all I was, right? I said, 'So you don't see that.' I said, 'What you don't understand is, I put on my armor everyday before I walk out of that door. Everyday. I said, 'If I don't put on my armor, I might make it through the day, but I bet you by tomorrow, somebody is gonna--,' you know, 'somebody gon' get me.' It's gon' get me like you was talking about. Which way is it gon' come? I don't know. You might have a good week and not get hit, but it's coming. (inaudible - 00:53:20) everyday. I said, 'So if I was you, I wouldn't go back either. (inaudible - 00:53:25)

JW: I'mma let you hold that right there.

TD: Right? I know, right?

[Laughter]

JW: I'mma just leave this right here

HK: Right, right, right, right.

TT: Uh-huh.

HK: Yeah, that's peace. That's peace.

JW: You think about it, you got to class to teach people on how to be around people.

TD: Yeah.

JW: You kno- you know what I--? That's- and that's---. It- and what's scary is like, that guy's in a position of power. So you've been going- you got this influence. And you've s- blind to just with the- the commoner, you know what I mean? Because we are- we are co- despite how we want- we absolve ourselves, we are still like, common pe- like common folk, you know? I mean, that we go through our experiences and so on too, but, you know, like, I can sit here and say, like, 'Yeah,' like--. You know, I listen to, like, a white guy- I listened to this white guy one time at a bar one time. He was throwing me his problems. And I was like, in my head, I'm like, 'Motherfucker, get a real problem.'

HK: [Laughs]

TT: Right.

JW: You know what I'm saying? Like--.

HK: Go buy one. Go buy one, please.

JK: Yeah, like--.

HK: Just go buy one, yeah.

JW: The guy was like, 'Man, I wanted this full cab truck and I just had the--. I wanted the F-450, I had to settle for the 250 or somethin'.' And I'm like, 'Yo, I got homeboys, who can't get a car--.'

TD: Right.

JK: 'Like, now.' Like, you know what I mean? Like--.

[Crosstalk]

HK: They still walking.

TT: Yes.

JW: They're still catching- catching the bus with a- with a family.

HK: Right, with a family.

TT: Borrowing money to get a pass.

TD: Yeah.

JW: Exactly.

TT: Borrowing the money to get a-a-a-a pass on the bus.

TD: Right, yeah.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JW: But it- man- it's- it--. You know, a-and it's--. But I-I agree with you were saying and I think--. And it- and it goes back to that- that notion of- of fear and I- and we've been told like, you know, I-I know I've been told, um, about like the job market:

'Hey, if you go to college, you get a degree, you work for a company, you go in there, keep your head down, bust your tail' type stuff.

TT: Yup, make it until retirement.

JW: But that-that men- that mentality--.

TT: Crock of crap.

JW: Beats this- this fear into your head, and it's a fear that comes f- that stems from dependency. So you look at like this dude and you just like- like, 'Man, I- I want to say this, I know I should say this,' or like, even when you're--. When, like, you may be disrespected or like your-your integrity of your work is put on, a lot of people just take the L and be like, 'At least I can get up tomorrow and say I still have a job.' And I, you know, God blessed me with a loud mouth and-and a- a s-s- backbone to where, you know, I'm-I'm the type of person like, no- like, no, this is- this is-. I-I know what I know and I know what I don't know. So like, if-if I speak on this, it's speaking out of conviction because I know this. And my work is- I know, my work is good despite what anybo--. But some people just, 'Nah, dude.' You know what I mean? Like, and what you did probably taught that- probably taught that dude more--.

TT: I mean, we- we're- we're--.

JW: About people than he learned in the past thirty years.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: We moved, I think, that day. We moved from a place where (inaudible - 00:56:16) supervisor and- and- and he's my supervisor. And I think he always respected me as a professional and as an individual. But I think he was a whole 'nother thing after that, because he was like--. All he could say was (inaudible - 00:56:34) .

HK: He had a moment to relate.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

JW: Let me throw this out here real quick. On science--. There this- there's a site called *ScienceDaily.com*. They did, um--. I got an email from a supervisor at an old marketing firm I worked for — a white guy. The email was titled, "Next time you look for a job, say that you're a gay Black male." And I was like--.

TD: [Laughs]

JW: And-and he was like--. And he just tells me, he's like, 'Just- just read it. You'll understand why put that s- in the title.' So they did a test, twenty-five C.E.O.s, all of them white, they're given the choice of hiring four people. It was a white man, Black man, gay white man, gay Black man. In order, all of them pick the white man, the first person they would hire. The second was the gay Black man. The third was the gay white man. And fourth was the straight black man. Twenty-five C.E.O.s., one word, they asked, 'Why- why was the--? Why the gay Black guy in comparison to the straight Black guy? Like why is he second?' Literally, every last one: straight Black guy was fourth, white guy was number one. So, in the explanation --one of them was really interesting-- the guy says that Black people are very, very hard working, but the straight Black man presents a threat. Whereas, they feel the gay Black man has the- a female tendency of, like, the nurturer, or like the, 'Hey,' you know, 'how you doing? You know, this and that. I'll grab a coffee for you,' whatever.

HK: Less of a threat.

JW: They're not trying to cut your- they're not gon' try to cut your throat (inaudible - 00:58:07). But the word- but the word that, like, a majority — and I say majority I'm-I'm saying at least fifteen or more of them used for the Black dudes: "threat".

TT: Threat.

HK: Yeah, that's a constant.

TT: Always has been.

JW: Constant.

HK: That's a constant.

JW: I--.

HK: They--. That- that reality is pilfered through, uh, for the ages. I mean, it's always--.

TD: It's everything.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

HK: Uh, a reference point to viewing the-the Black male image as being a threat, because of what they know that they have put into the play into reference of what they've done. And to me, the threat is a natural- is a natural emotional reaction to humanity, because when you know that you've hurt someone, you have a natural propensity to be apologetic. But, your pride and your reality will keep you from actually owning it.

JW: American pride.

HK: So, therefore--. American pride. So, therefore, you have to--.

JW: [Laughs]

HK: You have to align that individual or those individuals to being the thought of threatening, because it's not that they said, 'they were a threat,' it's that they thought they would be a threat, 'So we're gonna put them at the lower echelon before we choose them.' Because they know at any given time --at any given time-- if a Black man chooses to meet a white man in the street for what it really is all about, it's because of what you have done historically. Period. So, you have to own up. So if they ever had that conversation to really understand, like you said, 'Go ask your grandparents why this was,' if they truly have it, they would have to own, 'I have been a part of destroying and dismantling an entire race starting with the Black man,' period. And that's pivotal through our media. We--. I meant to see, uh, *The Jungle Book* last night with the wife. Love the s- the *Tarzan* story. When I lived in Turkey, me and my brother didn't have TV, so all we had was albums. We had *The Jungle Book* albums, it was songs and everything, right? Back then, didn't they know all the supremacies, all of the messages, all of the issues that are being associated to the Black presence with being monkeys — which I can't stand to this day. So, we goes the movie, and this is something that I always see and I'm always conscious about when I'm watching movies is the constant killing of the Black male image for no reason in the story. No reason. The story could be about four white dudes. One of them has a black f-m- friend?

MULTIPLE PEOPLE: He's gonna die.

HK: He's gonna die just for no reason.

TT: (inaudible - 01:00:25) which one is gonna die.

HK: So even in the utilization of animals--. So, which character in the theme of *The Jungle Book* is a Black character? It's the Black character that's noted by the Black voice.

TD: Voice, yeah exactly.

HK: Yes, they're all animals. They're not humans, buy they got a Black character's voice. So the first one is Akela. Akela --not to tell the story-- but Akela's voice is, um, uh--.

JW: Idris Elba.

TD: No, uh, Lupita--.

KH: No that's Shere Khan. It's--.

JW: Right, Shere Khan.

HK: Lupita is the wife. That's the wife--.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

HK: But the- the lead character is, um, uh--. What's the brother that played in, um, *School Daze*? He-he was Julian. Um, he was also the husband in- in- uh--.

TD: Oh, uh--.

HK: Uh. [Snaps fingers] It's right here. I can see his face. Um.

TT: I'm so glad someone like you is going through this.

HK: No doubt.

TD: [Laughs]

HK: Man. It's, uh--.

TT: It's so uplifting.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

HK: Giancarlo Esposito, there we go. Giancarlo Esposito. A'ight, so he is the first lead character. He is the lead wolf. Black voice. They get Shere Khan, who is played by Idris Elba, another Black voice, two Black presence, kills the first one within like the first twenty minutes of the movie. Kills him. So they use a Black person's Black voice to kill off--. So then, towards the end of the movie, the main character, Mowgli, the little boy who was an Indian boy, he gets solace and support from two other characters: Baloo and Bagheera. Two white voices: a Jew and another Jew, Bill Murray and, um, uh--. It's another white character.

TD: Kingston- king- Kin-Kin-Kingsley--.

HK: Ben Kingsley.

TD: Ben Kingsley.

HK: Right. So they help Mowgli get through the story. The point that I'm getting at is, to the reality of the degradation and the destruction of the Black male presence is even noted as a threat, even when it is just the voice. And the reason why is because it constantly realized that, if we allow the Black presence and the Black male to get to a place of headship, then he will affect the change for everybody down in the body. Which is why in slavery and in the time before for slavery was, we have to destroy the kings. We got to destroy them, because when we can, then we can dismantle and displace--.

TT: Displace. That's right.

HK: And destroy the rest. So that threat? It's still constant today. It's still constant.

JW: Yeah, yeah.

TT: This is why we have to kill Obama's, um, presidency.

HK: Yeah, we got to kill it. We gotta stop everything he do.

TT: We don't- we don't need to--.

HK: Period.

TT: Hear what he's gonna do, it doesn't matter, he could find- if he-he finds the-the cure to cancer--.

HK: We got to shut it down.

TT: We got to shut it down.

TD: Right.

TT: It-it--. Everything rests--.

JW: Yeah.

TT: On shutting it down.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TD: And then same thing exists with like- with the- like, music. Like the way they do music is sort of like you get- you get one- you get one Kendrick per fifty of everybody else. Say-saying like, the exact wrong thing, which is an immense amount of pressure to put on this, like, one figure. You know, and so it's like that-that's your-your one example. Like God forbid he have a bad day and say like, I think he did say something like--.

JW: He did, he got a song called 'Mortal Man' where he said, 'If shit hits the fan, are you still a fan?'

TD: Right, yeah.

JW: But he's like, 'Yo--.'

[Crosstalk]

HK: 'If I mess up, you still gon' ride with me?' Right.

JW: 'If I mess up as a human being, you still gon' ride with me?' And it- and it- but--.

TD: Yeah, exactly. You know, but--.

[Crosstalk ends]

JW: The only reason he knew to make that-that song is because every (inaudible - 01:03:42) thing's happened to people before.

TD: Right, exactly, 'cause--.

JW: And he was, you know--.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TD: 'Cause ultimately, anything could unravel him at any point. But like, yeah, I guess that's like the Obama--. Like he's-he's the example. He's the epitome. Now, people want to say, 'Oh, now you can officially be anything.' It was like, well, you should be able to have been anything you wanted to be or something great prior to being the president of the United States. He should have, like, already had that goal.

HK: That be true. That be true.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JW: Plus he's like- plus, like, Obama himself--. I mean, first of all, being the president, period. I tell people this, for Obama to had been president, he had to be eight times better than any white president — than the best white president. 'Cause it- just--.

Chris Rock had a saying, he said, 'Yo, a Black man gotta- a Black man gotta walk where the white man can fly.'

HK: For a what?

JW: He made a--. 'A Black man gotta walk where a white man could fly.'

HK: 'Fore a white man could fly.

JW: Like we have to take that ill trail, and he just--. There. He- 'cause he was talking- he said, 'Yo,' in his neighborhood, there's- there's four houses. He said, it's him, Patrick Ewing, Mary J. Blige, and it's this white dude — and he's a dentist. He was like, 'You got one of the greatest R&B singers of all time.' He was, like--.

HK: Basketball

JW: He was like, Basketball Hall of Famer. And a--.

HK: Comedian.

JW: Actor slash comedian and you got a dentist.

HK: Dentist.

TD: Dentist, just a regular dentist.

[Crosstalk]

JW: I was like, 'Yo.'

TD: [Laughs]

TT: That's right. (inaudible - 01:04:56)

JW: And it's hilarious. Yo, and I like--. And he--. You know Chris make everything funny, but the context of it was like, 'Damn.'

TT: That's right. Think about it.

JW: Do you know what I'm saying? 'Damn.' Yeah.

HK: Constantly.

[Crosstalk ends]

[Speaker intermittently agrees]

JW: But it's--. But, and--. He made a- he made an art piece, it's from a Wale song. Wale did a song called 'No Hope for a Black Hero'. And when I was listening to that song, we were talking about the piece. I'm sitting around, I see this white dude walk out with a Muhammad Ali t-shirt on. And I was like, yo, it's crazy 'cause Muhammad Ali was a threat. If--. Um--. Not only in the ring, but from a political, just civil rights standpoint. Muhammad Ali was a problem. They didn't like him 'til he was retired with tourettes. Martin Luther King wasn't praised until he was dead. No, 'til Malcolm X came along and said, "By any means necessary" and grabbed a gun, and then they were like, 'Oh, this Martin guy is cool. Man, we like this dude.' They out--.

TT: And then when he changed--.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Exactly.

JW: The threat.

HK: Right.

JW: So I--. But--. So it's- it's weird. It puts us as Black people in this weird position because--. I always say, I was like, wha- despite what the media says, despite what entertainment or anything, I'm a firm believer that the most peaceful people on this Earth are Black people. The fact that my dad can sit and have a drink with a white man — he grew up in Marion, South Carolina where there was no civil rights movement. You know what I'm sa--. My gr- my granddad, God rest his soul, his birth certificate --we still

got it-- it said "colored boy" on it. This dude sat and worked thirty years for Coca Cola and one of his best friends he went fishing with was this white dude. And like- and for him to be able to have that amount of peace.

TD: Amazing. It's forgiveness, like beyond--.

JW: To be like, 'Yo, let's have a beer, yo.' Oh, like and pay for his lunch? And I'm like-like- like, yo, that's-that's take- that's takes peace a lot of people don't know. And I struggle to find it myself. But I--.

TD: [Laughs]

JW: But, I--. Man, I--. It's just, but again, like- like you mentioned it's-it's no hope for Black hero. That whole Obama thing? Like- like you said, he could find a cure for cancer. He can cure world hunger. We gotta--.

TT: He could find world peace.

JW: We got--. So we got a healthcare- we got a national healthcare system. We were the only country --non third world country-- without a national healthcare system. We found one and they're like, 'Oh, he's robbin' this, he's taking this, and- and he's affecting people's money.' Like hold on, who's money? Because I was like, 'cause hold on- 'cause- 'cause, oh, wait a sec, like--. [Laughs]

TD: [Laughs]

HK: A majority of this money is yours.

TD: Yeah, yeah.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JW: Yeah, exactly. Like, yo, so it-it's-it's--. So it's this thing where it's like, we're a peaceful people. And- but then again, it's like, our hand is constantly being forced and we don't like--. It wouldn't make sense for me- if I were to go out right now, with a- with a gun right now and just shoot like te-ten white people, it's not gonna solve anything. It's just gonna make us look even worse. But if a white guy walks out, a guy walks into a church shoots shoots a bunch of Black people--.

TT: I was just thinking that.

TD: Same.

JW: He got took to Burger King, and we still know what's going on. You know what I mean? Like, it-it was a kid in, um, Texas, who the white kid in the car, he was- he was doped up, he was high, he was on Prozac, and he was drunk at eights-eighteen years old or something like that? Driving, hit a pastor, a g- little girl, the woman --they were changing the tire-- so, he hit the pastor, the little girl, the woman, and somebody else — like four people died. Yo, in his court case, they said, 'Oh, he has affluenza. He's too rich to know better.' This dude right now --hold on-- this kid right now is in Mexico. They ain't huntin' for him. They said- like his-his mom was like, 'No, I--.' So she just sent him off to Mexico, and they not hunting him down.

TD: (inaudible - 01:08:27) that's it.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: Every time I hear somebody talkin-talkin' about how we should feel so sorry for the folks who are this-this new hera-heroin epidemic, that's s-still--. We should have compassion and we should care. And--. Now, truly I do.

JW: As a human being.

TT: But my thing is, when my cousins were jacked up on what we used to c- what y'all were calling 'heron', and they were jacked up. They- and you wanna throw them in jail. For forever years--.

JW: Ever.

TT: And call them 'the dregs of the yard', but now it's in your community--.

TD: Yeah. Right. Yeah, they're victims.

[Crosstalk]

TT: (inaudible - 01:09:07)

HK: That's just like the whole- that's just like the whole weed epidemic now.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

HK: Young brother get put up, three strikes, 'cause you had a-a small bowl in your pocket. But now that they legalized it? So now you can all eat it?

HEATHER HART: Thank you guys so much today. Wrap your conversations up or stay all night, I don't care. But um, that was awesome. It'll be online as soon as possible.

JW: Cool. Yeah, like, you know, even with that, man, it's like--. I remember watching TMZ — and I-I've rarely ever been so upset, I turn the television off. I'm watching TMZ, which I never do, which is probably why I had no business watching in the first place--.

[Laughter]

[Speakers intermittently agree]

JW: But I'm watching TMZ and you know, it's like pretty much all the white people on the staff and it's I-like the two token Black guys in there, maybe the Black girl once in a while. So, they put Chief Keef up. And Chief Keef was doing--. Chief Keef got pulled over for doing like a hundred and six in like a fifty-five miles per hour zone, right? And this white girl says, 'Oh my gosh, what a piece of shit.' And the Black dude was like, 'Yo, hold on,' he was like, 'Yo, hold on, hold on.' He was like, 'Yo, you got a young kid from Chicago, from- I mean from the warzone, from Chiraq, who made it out, and he's out there being a kid- being a kid.' You know what I'm saying? He got all this money. He got this fast car, him speeding — whatever. He's being a kid, he gets pulled over, and that makes him a piece of shit?

HK: Because he speedin'?

JW: Yo, but was- this is what--. I'm--. So, already- I'm already like, 'Okay, I'mma see where this goes,' right? So the dude--. 'Preciate it. So the dude is like, he's like, 'Yo, that's crazy 'cause, Justin Bieber was just on there--.

HK: Doin' the same thing.

JW: On--. The same thing four weeks ago--.

HK: The same thing.

JW: He was like, 'Yo, you didn't call him a piece of shit.' And he's upset at this point 'cause he sees it for what it is. Yo, and then they cut to whoever the host guy is that runs the joint, it's him--.

HK: Harvey Bernstein.

TD: (inaudible - 01:10:55)

JW: Okay, here is another dude that was standing next to him.

HK: Levenstein. Harvey Levenstein. Yeah.

JW: The dude standing next to him was like, 'Man, how do we--.'

HK: With the dreads?

JW: No, it was- it was a white dude.

HK: Okay.

JW: Standing next to him. Kind of- he got like, kinda like the Homer thing, the bald top--.

HK: Gotcha. Okay.

JW: He said, 'Man, how do we get out of this one?' I turned the TV off, yo.

HK: Yeah, it's over.

JW: I was like, 'Yo, what do you mean, how do you get out this one? Like--.

[Crosstalk]

TD: Yeah, like, no. Like you-you go in it. You gotta go--.

JW: Yeah.

TD: Y-you live- deal with this, live in this.

JW: But wh--. Why are you not- why are you automatically you just- automatically looking for a way to disconnect from this.

TD: How can they skirt the issue, like--.

HK: (inaudible - 01:11:23)

JW: That sh- that shit is crazy.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

TT: But it's the same thing as the guy, who he was talking about, that wouldn't take the mic.

KH: The mic.

JW: Exactly.

TT: They don't know how. They-they got this great forum, but they got no information. They have no truth to stand up if you don't have your own truth to stand up in? You're gonna fall every time.

HK: What was you gon' say?

TD: Oh, I work with this kid. Uh, a white, like, one of the--. It was me saying, whitest kids you'll probably ever meet in your life. Like, uh, you can tell like he's never --like other than myself-- I can probably say like, he's probably had to deal with less than five people and like five w-, like, five Black people in his entire life. He, uh, he'll just say-s--. Like, he's probably, like, the most like, you're probably like, culturally insensitive is what people would call him, probably, nowadays. And it's like, I have to explain stuff to him. I was like, 'You've never had to deal with any of this have you?' I was like, I- like, 'If you have to- if you have to go through this, you'll understand why you can't call, like, the other Black guy we work-work with, even if you jokingly call him 'boy'--.

HK: Mm.

[Crosstalk]

TD: You have to know--.

JW: The historical significance.

TD: Why- yeah, yeah, like--. Yeah.

TT: Consequences (inaudible - 01:12:26)

[Crosstalk ends]

TD: And he's like- he's like, thoroughly confused as to why he can't. And it's like... It-it-it's shocking, but it's like y-you--. It's like you have like, I have to make him deal with it. Like, I don't know, it's like, I can't just, like, make it happen overnight. And it's like, I don't want to like--. It's like, I try to be, like, real careful about what I say to him and be real direct, so he doesn't, like, get anything twisted with what he already considers to be the right- the right idea. But I-I guess I can't really do much of anything at the end of the day. But I do get shocked. And it's like, I mean, like--. Yeah, like you were saying, like it's 2015, it's 2016. It, like, doesn't mean anything. And it's like--.

JW: The only thing--.

HK: Educate 'em, man.

TD: Yeah, that's a--.

HK: That's all you could do, man.

TD: That it. Yeah.

JW: There's a --real quick-- there's, um, there was a- a art--. So we got this art show, called Intergalactic Soul Travel, with me-me and Marcus, and it sparked from a Facebook conversation. I deleted my Facebook account, I can't even do it--.

TD: [Laughs]

JW: Anymore, but... It was- I po- I posted this picture up, it was Jeopardy. So, they got the categories, this is all the way across, right? Everything on the board:

completely gone. The only category that was still up there was Black history, from one hundred all the way down. They cleared everything.

TD: Didn't touch it

HK: They like, 'I'm not finna touch it.'

TT: [Laughs]

JW: I po- posted the picture on in- on-on Facebook, and I was like, 'What does this say?'

TT: I wish you could send that to me.

HK: What does this say? No doubt.

[HK intermittently agrees]

JW: Yo, so this- these two guys chimed in. Now these two guys like, we know 'cause when we were doing comic book art, these cons, they would come and buy stuff all the time. And every time we talk about comic books, movies, these pop culture conversations? Everything was corporate status. Now we're talking about some real shit, right? Yo, dudes are like, 'Oh, man, you know? Um, that doesn't mean anything' or this, this, and that. We were like, 'No, like you're looking at the-these kids got a Harvard sweater on. She got a Yale sweater on. This other one got a Brown sweater on. Like, these are, like, Ivy League collegiate students, supposedly some of the brightest, and they know nothing about Black his--. They made it this far in life without knowing anything--.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Anything.

JW: About Black history. So like, this conversation goes on. And he starts to use, like, these catch words like, 'Oh, hey, you know, this inner city kid--.' We were tal- we were talking about Mike Brown. And he says something regarding 'these inner city kids'. And I was like, 'Yo, what does- what does that mean?'

TT: 'What does that mean?'

JW: Cuz I was like, 'Yo, if you go to Charlotte, ain't Black kids living in Uptown in those condos.'

HK: Nah, nah.

TD: No.

JW: So I was like, 'Yo, so what do you mean 'inner city'?'

HK: Yeah.

JW: You know what I mean? So, like, all he was doing is throwing out these cliched phrases--.

HK: Catch phrases. Sound bites.

TD: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Like, yo, you were told to say this. Like you programmed.

HK: Programmed.

JW: This is weird, man--.

HK: Know nothing.

[HK intermittently agrees]

JW: It's so weird, and it's disturbing 'cause it wasn't unt--., Like, I mean, this conversation went on for — this was like at least two hundred comments. In the end, they got it. And he was like, 'Yo, I never thought about it like that.'

HK: That's the thing--.

JW: And the question was, 'Well, you know us--.'

HK: They don't have to think about it like that.

JW: Nah.

HK: They don't have to.

TD: They got a lot a--.

JW: To him it was like, well, taking Michael Brown for instance. We were like, 'Well, you know us. If you heard tomorrow that I was shot down in the middle of the street by a cop, what would be your reaction?' He was like, 'Man, I'd be like, 'Man that's fucked up, Jason is good dude, man.' I said, 'Give him the same benefit of the doubt.'

TT: Yeah, that's right.

HK: Yo, I'mma lean on this.

JW: Yeah.

HK: My man, um, uh [Pause] played in *Great Debaters*, we got a movie coming out, Nat Turner. He's the director--.

JW: I know exactly--. Yeah, I know what you talkin' 'bout.

HK: Uh, Nate- Nate--.

TT: Oh, yeah. (inaudible - 01:15:47)

HK: Is it Robinson? Not Nate Robinson.

JW: Uh-uh. Uh-uh.

TT: I don't know--.

[Speakers intermittently agree]

HK: Nate... However, he got a small movie, fifteen minute vignette, out promoting the conscious reality about Michael Brown, all of that --Trayvon Martin-- all of the concerns of the cops killing these Black kids, Black boys. So, in this little story, he shows a white family sitting at the table: father, son, little boy, and a mom. And they have a joke, something about a monkey — I'm already done. Something about a monkey, so I can tell where it's going. So the father's like, you know, he's on the color commentary, settled down, and the wife was telling the joke. So the son at the table --the oldest boy-- was like, 'Man, I really don't wanna hear this story. I'm kind of cool. Can I leave the table?' So the father was like, 'Where are you going?' And he was like, 'Well, basically me and JB, we gon' hang out.' And JB is not described, it's just, 'Me and JB.' Mom's is like, 'I don't want you to go.' Dad is like, 'I don't want you to go either; you need to sit there and eat your food.' So he's like, 'Pfft, but I'm done. Like, can I get up?' Let's him get up. So pop goes to the room, he imparts emotions like, 'Son, listen. I really don't want you out in the streets hanging out. I love you, like, you my son.' So that's a real moment, like, Black fathers like yourself, we get that. Like, 'Listen, I don't want you getting caught up.' So that's how pops is coming at him. So he's like, 'Do you understand me?' and like, 'I understand you.' Get a little hug, pop goes out, pulls out the video game. Next, you know, you hear, 'Er,' window open, he gets out. The notion is he leaves the room- the house to go hang out with JB. Next scene: pop, blues all the way down, [simulates gun cocking noise], everything. Regular cop, right? So he pulls over

some three cats --like us-- 'Get up against a wall.' No- no provocation, no nothing, just, 'Get up against the wall.' It's minus two o'clock in the morning. 'Get up against the wall. I know y'all did something.' Pops is going off on this bigotry trip all day long for this Black men. Cases 'em, pats 'em down, 'Y'all ain't do nothing. Y'all lucky. Watch yourself. Now you can go.' 'We lucky? We didn't--. We live here. Like, we live here. You don't live here, we live here.' They outside the projects. So next thing you know, down the line, they see three more kids. You can't see 'em. You could just see three figures. So they come walkin' and they see the cop, cop looks at them, they turn to start running. Boom, they bolted out. Cop [simulates walkie talkie static], 'We got a suspect. Da-da-da-da.' Now, nothing has happened; they just walk around, See the cop, they turn around and run. Cop chases 'em. So now they get in this lot area in between the projects. Project here, project here, project here. So they runnin' across the lot. Cop can't see nothing--.

HH: Exchange information so you can continue the conversation once a month or how often you want to, because I feel, like you know, there's not enough of this happening.

JW: Cool.

[JW intermittently agrees]

HK: Cop see's 'em, pulls the gun out, 'Stop. Freeze.' He see them still running, [simulated gun shooting] Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. So when the people in the projects hear the cl- the clip go off, they looking- they already watching. 'Yo. You just shot that kid.' One of the kids get shot. So finally the cop finally is close enough to the kid, it's his son. So what lets him know that it's his son, the other boy, after the shun- the gun goes off, he realizes that friend falls, he turns around, comes back. So when he comes back,

the cop is down on his knee, he looks up and he says, 'JB?' So when he sees JB, that brings reference to the son, not knowing that it was his son first, pulls the hoodie up, it's his son. So the white boy, the two Black kids, the white boy gets killed by the cop. So now the cop is acting like a father, 'Help me. Help me.' All the people like, 'Ah, this is how it is. This is how it is.' 'Call the police.' 'Nah, you the police. You the police.'

JW: Who is JB?

HK: JB was just his Black friend.

TD: Was his Black friend.

HK: That's it and they leave off. So the whole story that --to me-- is such pivotal for white cops in this country to start understanding you can't just go around shooting kids.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

HK: And you have to remember that these kids come from families too. If it is that you have this opportunity to see your own son die, you might realize that the humanity that we need to have for Blacks and whites needs to be on the fact that we are human, equally--.

JW: That's it.

HK: Not just because you Black, not just because you white. You human.

JW: Huma-humanity.

HK: Humanity. When I saw that, y'all, I was like, 'Yo, that's peace.'

[Crosstalk]

JW: I need to see that, yo. [Laugh] I need to see that.

TD: Yeah.

HK: No doubt.

TT: Listen, I hope you guys stay in touch. We're doing some pretty cool stuff in Sign of the Times. I would really, really, really love to get you guys in involved.

HK: No doubt. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JW: Absolutely.

TT: We're gonna (inaudible - 01:20:12), um--.

HK: Alright, alright.

TT: I wanna hear from you guys.

TD: Definitely.

JW: I should definitely email you my information.

[TT and TD's separate conversation - 01:20:18 to 01:20:46]

TT: Where are you from even? Where are you from?

TD: Wilmington on the coast, North Carolina.

TT: Yeah.

TD: Yeah.

TT: I know you.

TD: You do?

TT: Where did you go to school?

TD: I went to, uh, the Art Institute of Charlotte and I went to the University of Charlotte for a second.

TT: You remind me of somebody at my- at my (inaudible - 01:20:37) told me I should meet. You remind me of him.

TD: Yeah?

TT: You remind me of that guy.

TD: Okay, um...

[End of TT and TD's separate conversation]

[HK and JW's separate conversation - 01:20:23 to 01:22:06]

HK: Let me get your info, bruh.

JW: Oh yeah, yeah. Let me just get it to you.

HK: Yo, you-you rock with Marcus and Toine and them?

JW: Yeah, yeah.

HK: Where you- where you a part of the (inaudible - 01:20:32) with them?

[HK intermittently agrees]

JW: I can't even tell. So I--. Oh, the first show with them I did was with Marcus was (inaudible - 01:20:39) And then that was- that was like (inaudible - 01:20:43)

HK: So what all y'all actually do?

JW: So I mean like, well, I can't- I got a web background. So (inaudible - 01:20:54) stuff I learned (inaudible - 01:20:54) hand around him. (inaudible - 01:20:57) So, like, I generally (inaudible - 01:20:58) website, web development (inaudible - 01:21:01) But we got in an exhibit right now, it's like--. Um, the residency started in August. (inaudible - 01:21:07) It's built off that exhibit that we did, it was at the Gantt. Uh, it went to Columbus and Portland right now. So like, you know, the whole thing,

man, we just taken, like, pretty much the stuff in the conversations (inaudible - 01:21:21) comic book so we gave it like- we just created like a different way to communicate the same thing, you what what I mean? So both of us got marketing backgrounds so it's- so it's crazy because we got these fine artists, man. Like these agents to come up and talk to us we like- w-we not really fine artists, we're marketers. Like, we had an idea and the artwork is just branding this idea. It just so happened it fell into the fine arts world.

[JW intermittently agrees]

HK: Yo, that-that's love, man. 'Cause I done been here- I remember Antoine and-and John and all them when they was doing the (inaudible - 01:21:49). I mean, I'm- I've always been an outsider to the whole scene here in Charlotte. Um, operating in that fine arts (inaudible - 01:21:59), 'cause I been doing-- (inaudible - 01:22:01)

JW: It's a real--. Oh--. It's a really shallow circle too, man.

HK: It is. It is.

JW: It is, man.

Unknown: I appreciate it.

[End of HK and JW's separate conversation]

TT: Well, we're doing a thing with the, uh--. Do y'all know where the old (inaudible - 01:22:10) Center is?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yeah.

JW: It's in Nordal, right?

TT: Uh, no. It's in, uh--.

HK: No, it's down on Seventh Street.

TT: It's right behind Little Rock.

HK: Yeah.

JW: Okay.

TT: And the Zion Church.

JW: Oh yeah. Okay, I know exactly what you're talking about.

TT: We're doing a set, uh, Straight Ahead Jazz set tomorrow at four o' clock. It's \$5, um--.

JW: Nice.

TT: Got some- some guys, some musicians comin' in from, uh, N.C.C.U.
(inaudible - 01:22:32) Gonna do some really cool stuff.

JW: Oh, that's dope.

TT: So, if y'all wanna come out, we'd enjoy seeing you.

TD: Thank you for the invitation.

JW: Absolutely. You said five o' clock?

TT: Four.

JW: Four.

TT: The masterclass is at three, but the concert starts at four.

[Pause]

Unknown: [Whispers] Thank you.

JW: Oh yeah.

[Pause]

JW: Yeah, it's, uh--. Send me a text, man.

HK: Hold on.

[Pause]

JW: So you teach?

HK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I teach at J.C.S.U.

JW: Okay.

[Crosstalk]

HK: And, uh, been there about sixteen years.

RAMONA BIG EAGLE: See if it's legible here.

HK: (inaudible - 01:23:13)

TD: [Laughs] I hope so.

[Crosstalk ends]

RBE: Hasaan. Who's Hassan?

HK: I am.

RBE: So, Hasaan--.

HK: Yes.

RBE: I'm Ramona. Lemme ask you a question.

HK: Sure.

RBE: Um, hi, Hasaan. That's K-A-I-R-O-S-I-N-D-U-S-T-R-O-Y?

HK: Uh-huh.

RBE: At hotmail--?

HK: Yes.

RBE: I just wanted to make sure I can read it.

HK: That's correct.

RBE: Okay, so, I'm gonna make sure I'm gonna get the copy of this.

HK: Okay, that's cool.

RBE: 'Cause wouldn't you all like to continue what we started here today?

HK: Oh, of course.

RBE: 'Cause I would.

HK: Of course.

RBE: (inaudible - 01:23:40) How you been doing?

TT: Oh, I'm good.

RBE: I haven't seen you in awhile.

TT: I know, it's--.

END OF RECORDING

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To be copyedited.