0:00:01.1 Darin Dorsey: Welcome to Resource on the Go, a podcast from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center on understanding, responding to, and preventing sexual violence and sexual assault. My name's Darin Dorsey. I'm an expert in sexual violence prevention and organizational equity and co-founder of Rooting Movements, which is a consulting firm that helps organizations ensure that their internal practices are consistent with the values that drive the change they intend to make in society. In this podcast series I'm speaking with black leaders, advocates, and movement workers, about their experiences in the movement to end gender-based violence.

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0:00:57.6 DD: Today, I'm interviewing Paris Chapman. Paris offers that our communities already have the solutions, but oftentimes aren't properly resourced to co-create the liberation that we seek. Over a decade of direct service, facilitation, coaching, leadership, and more, has afforded Paris the tools to provide lovingly critical analysis of power, history and collective and individual experience in order to make recommendations that help organizations stay accountable to the communities they serve. Paris, kindly and unwaveringly, insists that centering the people most marginalized is integral to creating realistic solutions for our communities. Paris also identifies as a perpetually fierce survivor of violence that loves volleyball, performing arts, and Talking Story. They're born and raised all over Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Nisqually territory, currently colonially known as Seattle to Spanaway. Can likely tell you where to find the best cookies in the area and proud to be the grandchild of black migrants from Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, and proud to be son of their children, born and raised in Seattle. Paris uses their lived experience and that of their elders, ancestors and all the relationships along the way to inform their own ways of life, at their intersectional approach to support organizations that seek to reduce and/or end harm.

0:02:28.6 DD: Right, Paris Chapman, thank you so much for joining me for this podcast hosted by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center on anti-blackness and the movement to end gender-based violence. I'm super excited to talk to you, talk about your perspective, your experiences, and for folks to learn from you. To kinda get started, would you mind telling us a little bit, in your words, about who you are and your role in the movement to end gender-based violence?

0:02:58.0 Paris Chapman: Yeah. So, hi. I'm Paris Chapman. I use they, them pronouns. A little bit about who I am. I am born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, I am very black. I'm also of mixed ethnic identities. I come to this work first and foremost as a person who grew up in a very black '90s experience with my family out here doing all kinds of stuff from the corporate rooms to the streets, and very much wanting to see my family, my community, respect each other for all of the work that they do to make sure that we're all safe and fed and treated well. So the work is very personal to me on so many levels and I'm being vague about it because I know we'll get into some of the details later, but it's very personal to me. On a professional level, I've worked in various social worky kinda spaces for the past 12 years. And right now I'm working at a place called The Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence, as well as working with a number of different agencies to end gender-based violence through a transformative justice lens.

0:04:30.7 DD: Awesome, yeah, I'm excited to get into it and hear more about that work. One of the reasons that I thought it was so important to speak

with you is because you are a black non-binary, relatively young person in this movement doing this work and that can be pretty rare. And I often think about the fact that if this movement were at its healthiest point, if this movement were centering those most marginalized, then I think that what we would instead see is a ton of leadership from folks that fit into the demographics that you fit into; we would see a lot of visibility. So I wanted to ask to kinda start things off and ask you what your experience has been like as a black non-binary young person. And of course, feel free to add to that in the ways that you identify doing this kind of work.

0:05:37.4 PC: Yeah. I think it's really interesting and important to note my intersections and to note that I'm not even just carrying my own personal identities with me. I'm also carrying all the people who have supported me in my journey, who I don't identify with in my gender or in my ethic orientations. I can see a lot of things that I think sometimes people cannot, or choose not to, or choose to ignore, and then when I choose to say something about those things, people get mad. And so what I can say is that I have not left any of my jobs, probably in the past 10 years, on great terms with some of the leadership in those spaces; and the leadership has oftentimes been older, white folks. And I have thought about this so much, and I thought about how I'm the common denominator in all of these things, and maybe it's just me and realize that, no. The reason why I left one of my earliest jobs on bad terms was because they threatened me and they said, "You know, Paris, your hair could potentially affect your success within this organization." And I was like, "Well, what does that mean? What exactly are you trying to tell me?" And then I've had a number of experiences, since then, trying to say, "Hey, one of our students in this program mentioned that there was this legislation passed in favor of queer people getting rights and creating safety for us."

0:07:31.4 PC: And somebody told me, "Oh, well, I just don't think that this was the space for that." When every week we also talk about young black men being murdered, but we can't celebrate the peace and joy of queer people. What are these things about? And even just this weekend, I had a pretty... It wasn't in a workplace, but it's some space that I really hold dear to myself, where I kind of asked, "Hey, what do folks in this space think about blackness in this space, or think about anti-blackness within this space?" And people started crying, people started saying, "Well, I've never made you feel this way and I've never done anything and you're attacking me." And I've internalized these things at different times as maybe there's something going on with me, but what I've realized is that I'm pretty unapologetic and unwavering in my desire to see people be treated as well as possible. I'm really a person who wants to dig into the history of various spaces and make sure that we all kind of have a common understanding of those histories and how they intersect. And when people can't see that or when people have been taught to just focus on the positivity, but they can't see how it's either harming themselves or people around them, I think that it is hard to hear that this is not the utopia that we imagined.

0:09:06.1 PC: I think that there's some grieving that has to happen in that space, and people have to be willing to let go of an absolute. People have to be willing to let go of... Have the idea that their innocence is the only thing that makes them human, that makes them right. But yeah, that question brings up a lot for me for now.

0:09:30.6 DD: No, I really appreciate that you're talking about this tension that I think exists in a lot of spaces, including a lot of workplaces and

movement work places where there's this idea that we don't have to call out everything that's wrong, we don't have to focus on the negative and that sort of thing. And I think, what my experience tells me and what I'm sort of gathering from what you're saying, or at least what I'm reminded of from what you're saying, is that the reality is that that strategy of recognizing your wins and sort of casting aside the negatives and the problems and being maybe slow to address them is more difficult, the more impacted by oppression that you are. So when you're a leader in an organization, when you're a white person, when you're a assist man, these are privileges that allow you to do that, to know that, "Hey, if I sort of look past this arm that I'm experiencing, then things will be okay for me." Whereas when you have this experience of being consistently marginalized in a space, that can be really, really dangerous to say, "Hey, I'm gonna let this arm go."

0:10:50.3 DD: That can snowball. So I just wanted to point out that that tension that I think that you're experiencing in these spaces seems to be related to the fact that, again, that you have these identities as a black person, as a gender queer, non-binary person, as a younger person in professional spaces, and are impacted by those experiences.

0:11:13.6 PC: Yeah, 100%. And I really want to name that. I saw a quote recently, "The only people who aren't gonna be okay with you setting boundaries are the people who are benefiting from you not having them." And I think, if I really wanna dig into that question a little bit more, part of what's been really hard for me is that I'm trying to find and establish a home within myself and also a home with other people, and that is really difficult. As much as I don't like to put our business in the streets, it has been very difficult to find black spaces where trans-ness is very well-understood and is also understood as something that has existed pre-colonially in black diaspora, in African communities. And I try to really make sure that people know, within our continent, within the mother land, there are indigenous names for trans people, queer people, and also white folks don't know how to translate things perfectly. So there are spaces in which somebody may have read something and said, "Oh, this is a king, so it must have been a man." But that's not how the language was used. Masculinity and femininity, as it is defined in Western culture, in white European culture, is not necessarily how it is in all places. And so the masculine and feminine dichotomy could have been used to explain royalty versus peasantry or whatever the words may be.

0:12:58.5 PC: So really trying to get in there and explain to my community, the people that I identify with, my black people and say, "Hey, we have always existed here, and it's because of white colonial threats that we've been pushing out of communities in a lot of cases." And also to know that trans and queer communities who are not specifically anti-black or who are not specifically acknowledging anti-blackness, they're not safe for us either. There are sometimes this onslaught of not feeling like I can catch a break. And really, really wanting to... The reason why I bring these things up, the reason why I'm constantly seeing these things and saying something about it, is because I am constantly impacted, and I'm also watching people constantly be impacted who may not even know that they're being impacted. I was listening to a podcast, a really dope podcast called Abolition X and Richie Reseda who did Feminist on Cellblock Y; if you haven't seen that documentary, I highly recommend. He was saying that part of the reason why men are so violent towards trans people, towards queer people, is because they oftentimes feel that their power is derived from the patriarchal ladder.

0:14:39.9 PC: And so if there's somebody coming along that doesn't... They don't know where to place in that ladder, then they don't know where their power exists. And so they have to... If they've been bent on pushing down queer people, pushing down children, pushing down women, and then this person comes along that's like, "Oh, maybe you're kind of masculine, but you have these parts that I don't understand," then they're challenged. And so thinking about what that also does to a man, what that also means for how limited their humanity can be, what they're allowed to feel, what they're allowed to express, who they're allowed to be, what kind of jobs they can have, can they cook or do they have to grill? All of these things that are just like, "How do you live as a human being, how do you live to your fullest life if you're boxed in to this little way of being?" And I'm trying to get us all to raise the baseline. So anyways, I'mma chill out on that for a minute.

[chuckle]

0:15:46.5 DD: I really appreciate that historical perspective that you brought here because I think one thing, that sometimes folks in our community might not realize is that sexism, transphobia, homophobia, at least other types of oppression have been used historically as anti-black mechanisms. And so if we go back to the days of enslaved people in this country, black men were being asked to act a certain way, black men's masculinity was being characterized in a certain way to justify violence towards them. Similar things and I think often more impactful against black women and black, non-binary and queer folks that did exist back then that we don't often acknowledge to the extent that we should. These systems of oppression that occur within our community is also oppressing our community in anti-black ways and being used as a mechanism there, and it has been for so long. So I appreciate that historical point of view that you brought here.

0:17:02.7 DD: I wanna shift gears a little bit, if that's okay with you. So in 2020, a lot of organizations made a commitment to interrupting racism and sometimes specifically around interrupting anti-blackness, which at the time was a term that not everyone knew that, that was... It was kind of new to be addressing anti-blackness specifically in a lot of context. What do you think organizations that want to move in this direction need to know and understand?

0:17:34.7 PC: The difference between theory and practice? I think that it's really... I'm happy for the ability to talk about what things can look like, and also when I think about what it looks like in practice to interrupt anti-blackness is to make sure... First of all, it's just gonna benefit everybody, to make sure that everybody has healthcare, food, clean air, clean water, belonging wherever they are, and are treated as full humans, wherever they are. Yeah, it's about being able to practice those things. And sometimes when I think about it, I'm really just like, if we could just... People will still work hard, they'll just work hard at things that matter to them instead of... I know that one of my old friends, they were looking for new jobs and trying to figure it out, and they got a job offer from this company from a start-up that was talking about how can we help people figure out how to use their frequent flyer miles better? And I'm like, Really? All this money out here, and that's what people are choosing to spend it on. Meanwhile, looked at the Seattle city budget in 2020, and I looked at how much money was going towards public safety, so you know, policing, fire safety, all of these things, and I believe...

0:19:20.0 PC: I believe there was 7.56 million going towards public safety, about 4.8 million of that was going towards policing in particular, and then social services or Human Services, Health Care and Education had 3.42 million to split between the three. And I was thinking about what would it look like if companies actually invested in those things if... And if we're thinking about companies and businesses, in the more broad sense is also government organizations, what would it look like to put your money towards people, movement, organizations that are making sure that people have the food they need. I think that people try to demonize folks for choosing to live outside if they so choose. I'm like, "Well, what if people could live outside because there was enough food on the street. I've gone places in the world where I knew that if I was ever homeless again, that I would not be hungry in this place because there's avocado trees everywhere, there's mangoes, there's all this food that grows everywhere. Or that they're safe and clean public bathrooms in these places. Yeah. I just think about what it would mean for... I'm just thinking of all these very specific examples. There's a larger bucket to all this stuff, but I'm thinking of this one time when I saw somebody get kicked out of QFC for stealing an apple and the security guard was like, "Yeah, bet you won't do that again."

0:21:15.6 PC: Just really, really leaning into the power that they had been handed and I couldn't help but think about Bacon's Rebellion. [chuckle] I couldn't help but think about when there was a roar in this country because some white dude didn't have the land that he wanted and then brought some black folks. Some indentured servant saved black folks into this revolution that he was trying to create for himself, or into this revolt that he was trying to create for himself. And it ended up failing and a lot of the people that were involved were murdered, but they allowed some white folks to stay alive and also said, "Okay, so we know that y'all, y'all kind of fucked us up. We know that y'all might actually have some power here if this happens again. So how about we make sure that you get some of the power and the status that we have as the white elite in this space?"

0:22:18.7 PC: 'Cause not everybody... Not all whites were considered white, not all Europeans were considered white at the time, right? So the indentured servants now had a higher status as, "At least you're not black because you can help us keep these enslaved folks in line." And I think about how that still persists to this day, where you give somebody a little bit of power, you put them in a security position, instead of saying, "If somebody is stealing, they may be hungry. Here's a list of service agencies that you can refer them to to make sure that they can get some money, shelter, housing, food, etcetera." Instead they say, "Kick them out onto the street or call the police or tase them. Do some kind of harm to them. And that is the way that we're gonna keep them from doing it again." Not, "How are we going to make sure that they have the resources that they need so they don't gotta come up in here and take our shit." So I'm thinking of how organizations have so many different options, so many resources to use that could really lean towards just making sure that everybody's just getting their needs met.

0:23:30.4 DD: Yeah. I think the thing about that example is that folks buy into that, beyond the security guard whose job it is to uphold that. I'm sure that there were other folks who were witnessing it saying, "Yeah. Put them out on the streets," or, "Don't let them get away with that." And I think we see that in our organization sometimes, particularly when we're doing social work or providing services to the community where it's like, "Hey, that person didn't show up on time to their appointment." Alright. Well, they can reschedule. We're not gonna go out of our protocol. And all of these barriers

that we create to sort of, oftentimes keep people in line. And I think that we can kind of take that individual example and expand it to the ways that our organizations are structured and you can really see how anti-blackness can be maintained in some of these spaces to keep folks in line. I think... I really appreciate what you highlighted there about the fact that, that person gets power out of sort of oppressing or sending this person out. And I think we see that in organizations as well.

0:24:49.2 PC: Totally. There are specific ways in which black people are impacted. And I think part of what I want to drive home, not to negate any of the light that absolutely needs to be shined specifically on our communities, but I really want... I want white folks to know... And I want all non-black folks to know how it actually impacts them to not pay attention to anti-blackness. I'm thinking specifically of the fact that Climate Pledge Arena used to be KeyArena. Every year there used to be a clinic or not every year, but year after year, we've had this clinic where we could send folks who otherwise could not afford healthcare and they were supposed to bring it back this year and they book shows right over it. And I don't think that people are really putting together that it is not something nice to do for people.

0:26:02.4 PC: It is life and death for people. I have worked in a shelter in Seattle and I've worked with a lot of Seattle's homeless community, homeless youth, who are at risk of losing their legs, who are at risk of losing their lives, who are at risk of not being able... Like people wanna say, "Well, so and so just doesn't wanna work." And it's like, "If so and so can't get healthcare and their health needs are not taken care of, then yes, they cannot show up to work." It is not about a want to, or not want to. It is about the fact that there are spaces, there are organizations that have resources that are hoarding these resources instead of putting them back into making sure that people get their needs met and then people can't work. Can't like... And not that it's even about work 'cause I don't value people and myself in that way. It's just this loop of... Of people saying like, "Well, you can't do what I want you to do." But.

0:27:06.5 DD: Right. Right.

0:27:08.0 PC: Yeah. I'm trailing off on that one 'cause it's just very upsetting. But long story short. My thought about that is Climate Pledge Arena is like making a big claim to put on their largest billboard that we are somebody who's focused on climate change. We are someone who's focused on making the world a better place. But yet you would just schedule over something that makes sure that people can stay alive in the city who otherwise cannot literally cannot afford to within a capitalist system.

0:27:46.9 DD: Mm-hmm. So kinda on this topic. One thing I wanna ask you about is, again, all these organizations making a commitment to interrupting racism, interrupting anti-blackness and being anti-racist. There's also a history where a lot of black folks, folks of color in this movement, in these organizations have been harmed to the point where folks have left these organizations have left this movement. And I have no doubt that there are people on the streets today as a result of experiencing harm in a sexual violence advocacy center or domestic violence shelter and losing their employment. I've seen enough black folks lose their employment in these contexts that statistically that has to have had those consequences for at least a percentage of them. As an expert on transformative justice, how can organizations be accountable for harm that has happened in the past as they try to move in this anti racist direction?

0:28:56.0 PC: I think you really hit the nail with the word accountability. I think that a lot of people don't know what that means in practice. And I think that a lot of people don't know what accountability looks like or means outside of a criminal justice white supremacist context. Right. And. My hope is that we can... Like well, one I can say it's a hope because I want us to create more ways of creating accountability for different kinds of harm that show up so that people are able to imagine what it can look like to be accountable without being further harmed. I also know that there are ways that people create accountability. Where they have the resources to basically say, "Not my white child, like, you're not going to jail. Like I'm gonna make sure that I bail you out. I'm gonna make sure that I make sure that you get home so we can talk about what it was that led to you being in that position in the first place. And I'm gonna do everything that I can with all the money, the connections and things that I have to make sure that you can stay out of that system." Right. And so we already know that there are examples of ways of creating accountability. I think when we talk about organizations who have caused harm to black people, I think being able to name that harm, being able to acknowledge that harm so that the people who have been harmed can say, "Okay." Like somebody finally acknowledges and says that it's happened.

0:30:31.0 PC: And I think that first and foremost, that does a lot for us to just be able to collectively say that it has happened, especially in spaces where people would be hell-bent on saying that it has not. And they have the power and the connections and the resources to write history as this has not happened. To make people sign NDAs so that they can't talk about the fact that it's happened. There are so many ways in which we're silenced after harm has happened. So, first of all, being able to name that it has happened and then going to to that person and I don't mean going to you can't go to the local organization that supports black people and say, "I'm gonna donate money." You need to go to the person that you harmed and say, "What would it take to be in a relationship with you and be open to an ongoing relationship in which that repair can happen?" 'cause it's not gonna happen. It most likely. Did not happen in a vacuum and a one time moment. It's likely something that has been ongoing. And so you have to be in a relationship with that person, with that community to figure out what are the needs, what are the ongoing needs, what are the needs that we mentioned back in 1619 that happened in 1964, 1968, 2000, and so on. Like we've been asking for a lot of the same shit for a long time and we haven't gotten it. And so in order to actually be accountable to that kind of repair, you have to be willing to go the long game.

0:32:13.2 PC: You have to be willing to say, "This isn't something that I can just throw $10,000 at." And some people may say that $10,000 is a lot of money, but we know how much money is out here flowing through these agencies. We know what money can be spent on, and we know what $10,000 can do for a group of people. But we also know that it is not going to be something that can end the kind of anti-black racism that we experience. So I'm not gonna say that there is any one way to resolve the harm that is caused. But I think really understanding a process of accountability as a space we use stop. And you take reflection and you say, "What is the harm that I have caused here?" And then you acknowledge the harm and you ask for NCIS like, "Is there anything more that I'm missing that I need to be aware of so that I can reflect on that and figure out what I can do?" And then you need to go back with that person or with that group and say, "I'm willing to repair with you. I really want to figure that out." That person or that group might say, "No, like, I'm really enough with you right now and it's all good. I'm just gonna

move on." But also that person may come back and say, "You know what? I thought about it And."

0:33:32.6 PC: Actually, what would be helpful is the fact that I'm now living on the street, or I've been struggling with having housing since then or I've had to move states and I incurred a lot of costs because of that. It would be really helpful for you to help me make up some, if not all of that money that was lost, and then commit to change behavior, and I'm using Mia Mingus' Practice of Accountability. I don't know exactly what it's called, but she has a way to practice accountability that I think works really well for a lot of folks. But the last step in there is Change Behavior, because we're not trying to fix this one situation, we're trying to make sure that that kind of harm can never happen to anybody again, and that if it does that we can go back and say, "This is what we've learned, here's how we're gonna move forward to make sure that once again, we're trying to make sure that this doesn't happen to people over and over again."

0:34:30.4 DD: Right, and I think one thing that I wanna name, that I'm hearing across these steps is the process of giving up power. I think oftentimes when I see Organizations attempt to be accountable and repair harm, one thing that they're unwilling to do is give up that power, and like you said, to follow the lead of the person who's harmed, they want to be the ones who come up with the solution, they wanna be the ones that have the conversation on their terms, and in many ways that feels very contradictory of the process of accountability.

0:35:17.4 PC: Yeah, and you know, I think giving up power...

0:35:26.3 DD: I guess sharing power is another way to put it.

0:35:28.3 PC: No, both, like "Give it up!" Give me the money! Where is the cheque? But in sharing power I think both of these things are important. I think part of what I think is really important for folks to know is that there is an emotional embodied process to figuring out how to do that, and I really wish that... I wish that more people in powerful positions knew how to acknowledge what happens within your body, what happens within your emotions, what happens psychologically within you, when you realize that you have power over somebody that you've been using in negative ways, in harmful ways, and it is not our job as the harmed parties to fix that for you, but you do have to find some space to figure out "How do I grieve my innocence, how do I let myself be human enough to say, I am not innocent in this. I have caused harm, I will likely cause harm again, and I don't wanna focus on my innocence so much that I can't say that I've caused harm and be accountable to changing the conditions that made that harm possible, and acknowledge my own individual actions and beliefs and behaviors that made that harm happen."

0:36:58.3 PC: So yeah, I just think that there is a very important layer of being able to notice, "Am I puffing out my chest now because somebody said that I did something wrong, and now I feel like I gotta stand up for myself 'cause I gotta be bigger than everybody else," and not noticing that maybe I'm puffing up my chest because I'm scared and I... Maybe I need to take a step back and say, "I really didn't intend to do that." And that's why I'm puffing up my chest, that's why I'm yelling, or that's why I'm about to go write this sneaky ass email. 'cause that's what we do. I think nobody's exempt from that, but if you cannot recognize what happens in that space, in that emotional space, then yes, you are going to continue to use the power that you have in illegitimate harmful ways.

0:37:56.1 DD: Right. And I think that connects to what you were talking about earlier, where a lot of folks don't know what accountability is outside of white Supremacist Patriarchal conceptions of it, that really manifest themselves in punishment. So there's this automatic default assumption that, "Oh, you want me to be accountable, you want me to answer for the racial harm that I did, you want me to be punished, you want me to lose things," like This is gonna be a loss for me when I think... Oftentimes, I go back to when I used to work with young black and brown young men around masculinity, and we would talk about sexism and how we've engaged in it, how we can repair that harm and do things a little bit different, and often the response that I would get in the beginning is to say, "Hey, you're just making me feel guilty, you're just making me feel shame," and I would often reframe that and say... "You could see it that way, the way that I see it is I'm helping you to understand that you have a responsibility." And I think guilt and shame and responsibility are so connected, but the way that we do punishment in the society often causes guilt and causes shame, does not cause responsibility, does not create opportunity, which I think is another term that's sort of connected here, is that when you... When somebody says, "Hey, I need you to be accountable for that harm," that's an opportunity... That's an opportunity to build relationships, to build community...

0:39:37.3 PC: To move closer...

0:39:39.1 DD: Exactly.

0:39:43.7 PC: It's an opportunity to connect.

0:39:44.3 DD: And I think, yeah, so often we don't... Again, I think it really goes back to that point that you made at the beginning of this, of your answer to this question, which is, that we just can't conceive about accountability outside of punishment and accountability as something that doesn't take away from us, but builds us up, builds up our community, builds up our relationships.

0:40:05.7 PC: Yes, and I wanna say on so many different levels, when there is a power dynamic involved, whether it's inter-generationally, whether it's through gender imbalances, gender power imbalances, there... There is this way that in my own personal experience and also within so many organizations that I've worked with, I've tried to get people to recognize that when I'm bringing these things up, it is an intention to move closer together. It is an intention to try to say, you are causing me harm, and I also recognize your humanity. I'm not telling you that you can't do anything better. I'm just saying, that in order for me to continue on in this relationship, I need to know that you know that something is wrong, something happened, something hurt me. Otherwise, I have to move away from this relationship because I have no guarantee that you're not gonna do it again or do it more harmfully. And I think within our Gender-Based Violence Movement, we really know how that shit can turn out. We really know that an inability to be accountable can lead to death, and it can lead to people being fired, and it can lead to a lot of other harmful things. When I think of the intention, I think that a lot of folks would much prefer that we figure out how to make sure that we move towards that love, safety, belonging, dignity that people are seeking. That there's something that happens in that space that we really got to get a hold of.

0:41:50.6 DD: Right. So a lot of your work integrates an abolitionist approach. Can you tell us a little bit about the role that abolition has in our efforts to end gender based violence and other types of oppression as well?

0:42:04.8 PC: For sure, abolition is so scary. It's such a scary word.

[laughter]

0:42:11.1 DD: Which like I just wanna just to point out something that I think about often is that, we've taken this approach that was used to end enslavement in our country and now it's scary, and I just wanna point that out, that if you look at the history of this term, how did it get here?

0:42:34.9 PC: And I'm glad that's where you went, because that's exactly what my sarcasm meant, just in case anybody's listened to this and couldn't pick up on my eye roll or the tone of my voice, 'cause sometimes I'm kind of flat. But anyways, when I think of abolition, the first person that comes to mind is Harriet Tubman. And I don't think that that's what comes to mind for people anymore. I think that what comes to mind for people is, cop cars burning. I'm not gonna say my own feelings on that, but I will say that there was a lot of legislative changes going on when some shit was going down. But abolition to me is really... It's about building practices and ways of being together in community that makes sure people get their needs met, and really moving away from a one size fits all kind of response to harm. One kind of harm could be somebody is violently attacked. Another kind of harm is theft.

0:43:31.6 PC: And we use the same system and the same methods to try to create some kind of justice, rather than saying, "What is going on in these situations for these kinds of harms to happen." Let's figure out what would be an appropriate response to create accountability, to create repair, change behaviors, and make sure that everybody's getting their needs met in both of these situations 'cause they're different. Rather than saying, "Let's call on the police." Where somebody might get shot, somebody might be further criminalized, somebody who was stealing might end up now in this system and in this cycle where they're going to be criminalized, they could go to jail, they could have this thing on their record. It's gonna be hard for them to get jobs, they're probably gonna have to get out and then they're probably gonna start stealing again. Eventually, they're gonna end up back in prison or...

0:44:26.7 PC: So, instead of having this loop of response that is not support... That's not supporting liberation, that's not supporting us in getting to a better society in which we can say, "Okay." Excuse me. It was harmful for that person to steal, but what led to them having to steal in the first place and then saying, "Okay, we're gonna make sure that you have everything you need in order to not steal again." And in some cases, the person is gonna steal anyways, and then we've got to figure out another response. But it should never be this person is going to be locked away forever, and is going or is going to get shot by this government entity that has been given license to kill. I just don't think in any civilized society, that that is the correct response to most kinds of harm.

0:45:24.7 DD: So I have a quick question, because I think that... I think a lot of folks might be able to connect to some of the examples that you're providing and say like, "Hey, someone who steals should not be incarcerated. We should not be doing this to folks that are stealing baby formula and other

needed items." But I think where I have noticed that folks have a lot of trouble, is when it comes to domestic violence, when it comes to sexual violence, when it comes to even murder. What do you say to somebody who is struggling with that? How can we take a different path when it comes to somebody who's done what I think they would describe as these heinous crimes?

0:46:06.8 PC: Yeah, I think that you still have to look at what happened in those cases. There is no one catch all solution because all of these scenarios can be so different and there's something specifically on my mind that I'm not sure how much detail I can spill about, but I know situations in which young people are being charged with a murder in a situation where they're harmed or they're... Some people may know that as abuse or... Was repeatedly causing harm to them over a period of time, right?

0:46:54.6 PC: And then... And then the person who was being harmed in that situation snaps and ends up murdering the person that had been continuously causing harm to them, and then that person is criminalized for defending themselves, and so when you go... When you ask that question Darin, the first thing I think of is how, so people are criminalized for survival, people end up in these situations where harm is happening to them, and then they have... They have no other choice but to make sure that this harm cannot continue to happen because they are fearing for their lives, or their lives... And their lives actually are threatened, and so if we continue to... Shout out to Mariame Kaba for helping... For all of the work that she does, but there's a particular something that I was listening to, where she was talking about how if we continue to create this long list of criminalization then we're just gonna end up at some point, with all of these things that we cannot do or that we're going to end up with this long list of things that we're just gonna end up being locked away for.

0:48:07.3 PC: Murdered for, etcetera, because that's what the criminal justice system currently does. Instead of saying, what happened in these scenarios? What led up to this? How are we going to make sure that people have training to understand how their violence is showing up in the world? How are we going to make sure that people understand what the steps are and the behaviors are that lead up to somebody being this harmful? How do we make sure that people have relationship skills so that they can notice what abuse even looks like in the early stages before it gets to the point of it being so harmful, and how do we make sure that bystanders know what it looks like so that they can intervene as much as possible. I think abolition is about creating all of those ways so that when people end up in these situations that are harmful, that are causing them to potentially cause more harm, that we aren't then causing... That we're not then causing further harm. I don't know, yeah, I feel like there's a shorter way that I wanna put this, but there's an emotional response that I'm having because I'm working with some people right now, who are actually in a very similar situation, which is kind of pulling me out at the moment, so I'm just gonna take a second to breath.

0:49:37.0 DD: Okay, well, one thing that I'm seeing is when we think structurally and institutionally about the movement to end gender-based violence and how it has moved into implementing some of these [0:49:50.5] _____ approaches to addressing domestic violence, addressing sexual violence, addressing gender-based violence. Is that ultimately through what you're describing and through the... Like you said, Mariame Kaba's work, and a lot of folks work around abolition, when we don't do what you're advocating for, when we continue to criminalize folks to not understand why they committed these acts and why they did what they did, and how we can prevent that from

happening, we are, in a sense reinforcing the very violence that we're trying to prevent, what does that sound... Does that sound accurate? That's what I'm getting... That's what I'm gathering from some of the points that you're making.

0:50:39.0 PC: Totally. A friend of mine, she's so amazing, I'm gonna say her name and hopefully I'll check in with her about whether or not she wants her name in this podcast, so. Her name is Cheryl Ingram. And she taught me this way of thinking about the ABCs, attitudes, behaviors and conditions, and how they influence each other, and I think about how our beliefs... About how do I say... So our conditions right now are that a lot of people don't know systems of accountability outside of the criminal justice system, and so a lot of their beliefs about that is that like, Oh well, if somebody does harm then that's the right response. But in fact, is the only response that we have right now, or people think and believe that it's the only response therefor their actions are oftentimes in alignment with that, rather than saying, What would it look like to end this harm?

0:51:48.3 PC: On a systemic level on an interpersonal level, because we are not oftentimes able to look at... We're not all able to look at the systemic harm that's caused and treat that as... Treat that as akin to the interpersonal harm, people see folks getting punched in the face and they gasp, but people see people being murdered by the state, people see prison fights, people may not know all the time that there are guards in prisons who purposely cause fights to break out, people being put into a dark room with no windows for months, even years at a time, and they don't have the same physiological response to that, they don't have the same feelings about that as they...

0:52:42.4 PC: Would about somebody being punched in the face, and so part of what abolition is about is also teaching people that that is just as much violent, those systemic ways of making sure that people can't eat or are locked in a hole or just treated as less than... Any being that deserves food, water, shelter connection, and to not not be further harmed. I feel like I'm repeating myself at this point, but it feels like it constantly needs to be repeated, but being able to see that a system that locks people away, make sure that they likely will end up back in that system and then uses their bodies to build wealth;

0:53:45.2 PC: To just do all kinds of things. That is not a just system, that is not a system. That is not a way of creating a better and more safe future. Criminal justice, in my opinion, is not about creating more safe future, in my opinion, and my understanding and the work that I've done to really dig into and understand the criminal justice system build and protects the wealth of white people and mostly white men at that. It is not a way of creating more safety. It is a response after harm has happened. That inflicts more harm on people and does not address the root of that harm. What I am about what abolition is about, what transformative justice is about, is looking and saying, where are the roots of this harm? How can we dig all of that shit up?

0:54:48.5 PC: And then say, Okay, now with this information that I have, I wanna make sure that this isn't even possible, that the conditions that we live in raise the bar for every human being so high to live in their most liberated, most healthy and well-selves. That people respond to harm happening to all kinds of systemic and inter-personal harm as that's completely wrong. How do I intervene in that situation to make sure that, that harm doesn't happen, how do I make sure that that person has the skills

and tools to support themselves in that situation, how do I make sure that the person is causing harm has the tools to say. No, I didn't mean to do that. And instead, I was saying, I'm gonna protect my innocent, say, You know what, I see that I'm causing home the situation that may back up and figure out what I need to do. And also let me know if there's something that you know I need to do. That's what it's all about.

0:55:45.5 DD: Right. And I appreciate that definition of these institutions, these are cursor institutions as maintaining the systems of suppression, maintaining white supremacy, maintaining patriarchy. Because when you see it in that lens, then it is inherently not rehabilitative because the systems aren't going to destroy themselves, and so the carpal systems as a result are not going to stop incarcerated people or not is not gonna reduce incarceration people so long as that serves those goals. So it's even in here, in your definition, is a lack of rehabilitation, is that punishment?

0:56:39.3 PC: I just wanna say one more thing before we move on from that.

0:56:43.8 DD: Jump in.

0:56:44.3 PC: Just thinking about what we invest in, looking at it from that standpoint, if you really wanna take it from a mathematical... I think that in a western society, like mathematics, not that we didn't have... We have mathematics, we've been having mathematics, but in Western society, a numbers game kind of out rules a lot of everything else, and so if you wanna follow the money, look at what your city is investing in, are they investing in the precursors to safety or are they investing in a response that happens to afterwards that actually doesn't make sure that people have what they need in the first place. And then figure out what you wanna do about that.

0:57:36.1 DD: Something that I wanna talk about that I think we've spoken on before, is how a lot of black folks, a lot of BIPOC folks, black folks, indigenous people and people of color, are advocating for change in their communities and workplaces in new radical and disruptive ways. I think this has a lot to do with... As we talked about before, a lot of individuals and organizations committing to anti-racism in 2020, so they put out these public statements, these gestures about anti-racism, so now that provides some leverage to really hold them accountable in very visible ways sometimes.

0:58:18.0 DD: But I wanna talk about a tension that I think sometimes exists, where we're only able to do this advocacy in this way, because the folks who came before us who did their advocacy in ways that... Where they couldn't do what... Some of the things that... Some of the more disruptive ways that were challenging racism in 2022. And sometimes we share a workplace or other spaces with BIPOC elders who are caught off-guard by the methodology and saying, "Back in my day, I would have been... If I did that, I would have been fired. Back in my day, if I did that, I would have been killed."

0:59:01.0 DD: And they were 100% correct about that, but I think that creates a tension that I know, I think it doesn't always go acknowledge by, I think younger folks like myself and yourself, and so that's what I wanna talk about. How can we navigate this in a way that makes room for these new strategies while also acknowledging and validating the experiences and the work of our elders?

0:59:28.1 PC: Yeah, I think just before we hopped into the podcast we were talking about how language can really shape the way that we think about

things now, I think if there's one piece of language that I would wanna give to folks is intergenerational healing, and really digging into what that means. I know that I've had conversations with my elders that have went completely left because I wasn't willing to see things from their perspective, and they were not willing to see things from mine, and I look at how that shapes elections 'cause if we're being real honest. As young people, our power in the society is different, we're not holding the positions of power that our elders are, and so on one hand, they can just swing their dicks wherever they want and then... Or whatever pieces they wanna swing wherever they want, and then we'll have to deal with the repercussions because although we have power in numbers and we know how to organize in different ways, they may just be sitting in positions where they can make our jobs a lot harder. And so if we don't figure out how to heal together, if we don't figure out how to have reverence for the fact that what our elders did was make sure that we could survive until now, if we don't have that kind of reverence for what they've been able to do and gratitude and being able to say, I appreciate what you've done.

1:01:02.3 PC: And what is also true is that we need new ways of doing things because I'm still dealing with the same things that you were, and I don't think that that was your intention as my elder, I think that you want us to move forward. I think that you wanted things to be better for us, and they are in some ways. And I appreciate you for that. You still... We still gotta find another way to get to our next step because your grandchildren, your great grandchildren, my God children, my nieces and nephews is like, I'm not trying to have them go through the same thing that my grandmother went through. Fun fact, I found out when I was organizing a union at one of my previous work spaces, that my grandmother actually used to work with a union that I was working with at that time, and I can only imagine what that experience must have been like. I have watched my mother go through the same things as my grandmother, I have gone through some of the same things as my grandmother, and I do not wanna watch my niece or any of my God children go through the same things, and so I really need my elders to understand that that is the place where a lot of our passion is coming from as young folks, and also that they likely did something similar that their elders did not agree with.

1:02:24.2 PC: And so trying to figure out how we can talk about this thing that happens generation after generation, it ain't nothing new. Every generation has a new way of doing things, and we can't... Every single generation have to fight with each other in order to make that happen, we need language, we need stories that help us, that help us see this as a regular phenomenon that happens every single... Maybe every five to 10 years, because what has happened so far is that I feel like some folks like, "Well we can only work on one thing a decade. So if we had Loving versus Virginia." And so now folks can interracially marry and then a couple of years later, a couple of decades later, and now we have to have such a similar fight for marriage equality for LGBTQ folks. Why do we have to treat that as a new thing.

1:03:29.3 DD: Right. On, I think there's a number of things going on, but I really wanted to have this conversation because I know it can be painful for folks who were not allowed or would have faced consequences for speaking up in their workplaces in the way that we do today. And I think it's important not to just gloss over that, and in addition to the fact that context is different as well, we have different tools. So one thing that I often point to is email. A lot of workplace discrimination cases have relied on email,

which did not exist in any popular way 20 years ago in the workplace, and so there are... In addition to all these things that you brought up as well, there's also different tools that we have where we can ensure that things have a digital receipt and we can, we can say instead of, "Hey, we had a meeting behind closed doors six weeks ago, and I wrote down my impression of it on this notepad," we can say, "Hey, this is that email link you sent me," or "This is what I received from my co-worker or something like that". I think all of these various things just create a different workplace where different strategies are required.

1:04:56.7 PC: Yeah, and I also... I don't remember where this quote came from, but talk shit until shit changes. Be careful about the spaces that you do it in, but creating spaces where you have folks or similar identities or have similar struggles in your workplace, get together outside of the workplace, figure out where those common struggles are, so that you can identify it as not something that's happened to you as an individual, but as an ongoing pattern in the workplace, and when you can establish those patterns, nobody can tell you that, it's just like, "Oh well, you just need to step up and work harder,' or whatever it may be, you get to then say, "Okay, we have documented evidence." Now, you can say, "I have my story, but I also have seven other stories that say the same thing, so how could it possibly just be that I need to work harder? Or that I just need to put my nose down."

1:05:50.3 DD: I love that you're bringing that into this conversation because I know that there's this tension where folks in this movement want to create affinity groups, want to create spaces for black advocates, black staff or LGBT advocates, LGBT staff, or black LGBT advocates and staff, because as you mentioned at the beginning, sometimes those just black spaces are not safe for LGBT black folks. Sometimes the LGBT spaces for all racial backgrounds are not safe for black... For LGBT black folks as well.

1:06:29.5 PC: Shit, even at that sometimes the LGBT spaces leave out the T and the Q.

1:06:36.0 DD: Exactly, and I think that's often something that folks don't recognize is that sexual orientation and gender identity often lump these things together and put books in the room not acknowledging that there are different experiences there, but I love that you mentioned that as sort of making the case that it is incredibly important to have these affinity spaces if we want to address these issues in our organizations, and I think we often see some push back where it's like, "Oh, I don't really wanna wanna do that, or we have to create an equal space for everyone." or something like that, when the reality is, it's so important to have these shared understandings separate from the dominate group, and at the same time, I want to acknowledge that this is how this movement started. This is how folks have been organizing to end gender-based violence, to end sexual violence, to end domestic violence. From the beginning was often people who were not cisgendered men getting together and say, "Hey, this violence is happening in our communities, how can we organize against it?" So this is consistent with our movement.

1:07:49.7 PC: For folks who are listening to this podcast, the way that Darin and I got connected was because there were a couple of friends that recognized that we had similar... We have similar challenges within the Gender-Based Violence Movement, and that we have both done some organizing to say their have... We know that there has to be other people out here having a

similar experience, and then so me, Darin, and a Blairiana got together, started doing these cookoo Fridays, and since then we just been thick as thieves as they say.

1:08:24.8 DD: [chuckle] Exactly. And our work has been that much more effective because we're able to do what we're talking about here, which is share our experience, compare, contrast and strategize, how can we eliminate this? How can we eliminate this anti-blackness happening in our organizations. On that note, how could folks find you, how could folks work for you and hear or learn more about your work?

1:08:48.2 PC: Yeah, I will give you my Instagram, it is @ancestralexhale, or you can find me @plchapman2 on Instagram. Either of those will work. You can also reach me at parischapmancoaching@gmail.com. Those are the best ways to get a hold of me for now.

1:09:10.5 DD: Awesome, and I'll just say, is it mappingprevention.com or mappingprevention.org?

1:09:18.4 PC: Dot org. Mappingprevention.org.

1:09:19.3 DD: Okay, so that's a project that both myself and Paris worked on that's about alternative responses to gender-based violence prevention in our communities that are community led. So I encourage folks to check that out, too, 'cause I know that you drove a lot of that project, and it is centered around the Seattle community, but I think lots and lots of communities can take a look at that. It's very easy to read. Very digestible and learn about these various other approaches to preventing violence that are rooted in community that do center marginalized communities. So again, that's mappingprevention.org.

1:10:02.6 PC: Yes, yes.

1:10:04.4 DD: Alright, thank you so much, Paris. Alright, well, that does it for today's podcast. Thank you for joining us for this conversation on anti-blackness in the movement to end gender-based violence. We encourage you to reflect deeply on what you've heard, what you've learned today, and think about how you can implement that in your communities and your organizations. We also welcome you to reach out to some of the guests in this series of podcasts for organizational technical assistance, consulting, training and other services.

1:10:40.1 DD: If you haven't already, please do check out the rest of the podcast in this series. This series of podcasts on anti-blackness in the movement to gender-based violence includes five conversations that are five different perspectives in this movement. Five different experiences. I think what you'll find is that sometimes they overlap and sometimes they don't. There's something to gather from each and every single one of them, and again, we encourage you to listen to the entire series of this podcast.

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