

Joyce McNickles  
Interviewer: Miranda Nixon, Keith Plummer  
Interviewee: Joyce McNickles  
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Dr. Joyce McNickles was born in Florida and moved to Worcester at a young age due to her father's job. She is one of seven children within her family. Joyce grew up with the appreciation of differences in people due to her father's great influences on her. This contributed to her becoming a diversity educator. Today she works and teaches diversity training. She is working to better the community as well as provide education in areas where society needs it the most. Joyce is a social justice and diversity educator. Her professional experience includes over twenty years of facilitating and teaching in private and public organizations and in higher education. She leads McNickles and Associates, a consulting practice which advances inclusion and social justice in organizations by providing individualized coaching, mentoring and staff development trainings. Joyce became so successful through many years of education and hard work which has helped her receive many awards and recognition.

**MN** You feel like you want to dive in and go and you can swing it whichever way you can. So we're just going to talk about a little about your childhood from where you were born to raised.

**KP** And today is April 6th 2017.

**KP** We're interviewing Joyce McNickles. Yes. Yes.

**JM** OK. So let me—we are now talking about my childhood. OK so I wasn't born in Worcester. I was born in Florida and my parents moved to Worcester when I was three years old. I'm in the early 60s and I am in the middle of seven children all of my siblings were born in the South except for two. And actually, I was born in Florida and my parents had moved to Florida from Mississippi. Mississippi was where they were born and raised. Then they moved to Tennessee where three of my older siblings were born, and then they moved to Florida where I was born and another brother was born, and then they eventually landed here in Worcester. My two younger siblings were born. But I'm just saying who I am really. You have to kind of understand

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where I came from. So my parents were born in segregated Mississippi. Jim Crow Mississippi. My dad was born in 1933. And my mom was '34 so that was the height of oppression for black people. You know total freedom from slavery that 1930s actually after slavery up until like we believe you can to have some sort of civil rights. It was really a horrible time for them. And so you guys stop me as I can go on.

**KP** OK this is good stuff so that doesn't bother me.

**JM** So I found that's how I landed where I am to help social justice work. I found that my parents' experience and what they pass on to me was really why I do what I do. So my father, like me, is somebody who can't keep quiet when he sees things happening. So that's very dangerous when you're living as a black man in Mississippi. So luckily for him he realized that he either had to get out of there or he was going to end up dead. So he did get out of there and as I said moved to Tennessee then to Florida then here. So of course I wasn't born until we were in Florida. But my father like many black men at that time moved where work was and so when he left Mississippi he moved to Tennessee because there was supposedly work at the Oak Ridge nuclear facility. So not a surprise that a lot of the black folks were working at the facility not as scientists, but a lot of clean up and the waste stuff, clean up. And so my father was doing that kind of work.

And my family lived away from the plant and I was born at the time. But they were living in communities with all black people and swimming in the lakes and ponds where nuclear waste was dumped and all these kinds of things. So finally he left there and went to Florida. And I was working picking oranges and things like that. And then he started coming up to Massachusetts to do migrant work seasonally and we would stay there in Florida. And at one point he met somebody here in Massachusetts who decided that they could help him find full-time work. And so he sent for us and we came up to Massachusetts. And that's how we landed. Because somebody here was trying to look out for my father and figure out a way to keep him here for a time.

I think it's funny how you can learn some things that you're not even aware that you're learning them. You know I always say—I said this when my father died three years ago, that little eulogy I did for my father, that my father's life was the curriculum for me. You know it was my curriculum because just living his life taught me a lot of things. And so part of his life narratives was that you should—several things I learned from this life. One is that—I know sounds like a cliché but it's so true—that you always have to believe in yourself even when others don't believe in you. And I saw that in the way that he lived his life. And second of all he said you have to

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travel. And if you can't afford to travel you should at least read about different places. And if you can't read or you can't afford to get books about different places at least try to watch something on television about different places around the world and then try to find places in your community where you can go and talk to people who are from different cultures and experiences. And so that's what he did and I saw that coming up and that's what I mean when I say it was my curriculum because I'll give you an example. So when my father moved here, it was a different experience in Mississippi and Florida where everybody's black. Like in the community where he was is so segregated right now. Of course there's white people down there. But the interactions that he had with white people were limited except in very oppressive ways.

And so when he came here, I don't know if you're familiar with Water Street. Back in the day, in the early '60s right up until maybe I don't know maybe the late '70s early '80s maybe a little bit beyond Water Street was a predominantly Jewish community like a Jewish commercial area. Right? So like the delis were there, the restaurants were there, the bakeries were there. It's not like that now. Now it's full of bars right now so you don't know what it is you know that this history is history. You know it's nothing like that, but there was a restaurant there that is now that was there when I was a kid. But it's different now. It's not a kosher restaurant anymore, it's Broadway. So like on Sunday morning before we go to church, my father would take us over to Water Street and there was a lot to like at that time. There were six of us kids and you we would have breakfast before church on Sunday. There were many places open Sunday morning, but on Water Street everything was open because Saturday was not Sabbath so Sunday people could be out doing things so you know we would have things like bagels with lox like real lox and real bagels, not like the fake stuff you have today. And we would have to show that the fish would have matzah balls. We would have all these different things. And because my father was never exposed to those things down south and he thought like what a cool thing. I can go to this place and I could eat things I've never eaten before and I can bring my family and nobody's looking at us like we're from Mars. So I was just a little kid and I would see things like that. And so I don't know it's like you're not even aware that you're being taught these things. Step out of your element go places where people may do things differently, they may eat things that are different. You know, do those kinds of things.

That was I think my introduction to just thinking about creating opportunities, spaces. For myself not waiting for them to land in my lap which I see so many people do. I know that part of the work that I do—I do a lot of diversity training which I do not like to do as much as I'd like to do anti-depression training or specifically anti-racism. Part of my frustration with folks sometimes is that they'll say we don't have opportunities to meet people who are different, that some white people say we don't have opportunities to meet. You have to create opportunities. I don't live in

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Missouri right now. I live in Sutton. I grew up here it was either that or something. And if I were a white person living in Sutton, I could go my whole life without seeing a person of color and be really lazy about it. I would have to go out of my way to see a person of color and we're not in the schools. So I say to people, "Don't be lazy about it. Do something about it." I mean if you want to lose weight you just don't sit and say, "Oh I want to lose weight and I don't know what I can do to lose weight." You make a plan. Right? You're proactive about it. Right? You want to gain muscle. What do you do? Oh I just want to sit around and I want to take muscle mass onto my body. No, you make a plan. I've got to do three sets of bicep curls. I'm going to do three sets of squats. I want to do that three days a week. I want to gradually increase my weight. So that's what you have to do when you think about creating opportunities for yourself to be in spaces.

I mean my father had a fourth grade education. And my father created spaces for himself and for us to learn about things. And he didn't have to do that with training and pay somebody like you know 150,000 hours. "OK John. This is what you need to do." This is common sense. But again, I say common sense for him because he's a person where he didn't have that formal education. Life was a curriculum for him and yet you when you're in marginalized as a man of color you develop creative ways of thinking. I think that's how we survive actually. So he figured that out real early. The narrative of his life was about that and also about understanding how structural issues impact people's experiences. And my father didn't necessarily have the language for this because again I said he wasn't formally educated, but he knew what was going on.

He didn't describe it as structural oppression. So he eventually started his own business and he would give opportunities to people who had recently been released from prison, people who are in recovery from addictions. He would give them jobs and nobody else would give them jobs. And my father, I think he understood that through no fault of their parents that a lot of these men were in situations where the system created these barriers for them to make it difficult for them to achieve their goals because he had structural oppression too and he knew that he was able to be successful. But he realized that he was one of many who do not end up being successful.

I know some people will say and they often would say this will be a father of five if racism is such a big barrier. My father was so successful and I said my father is not the average person, the average black man that grew up in Mississippi that landed where he landed. You know, he's an anomaly. I mean he had seven siblings and they all ended up exactly where you typically end up when you are born and raised in Jim Crow Mississippi. You know that the health outcomes were much worse for them.

Their income earned over the lifetime was much worse than my father's. Their children, my cousins, ended up with worse outcomes health wise, educational, and income. So you can see that vision and decision will impact on their lives and their experience. So he was born one in just his family, just a small microcosm of the whole system. He was born out of seven. You know that ended up OK. And then when I say OK, that's still relative compared to like if I were to compare him to my husband's father.

So my husband is not African-American, he's white with a time of American second generation and his father was 94 when he died. My father was 80 when he died. My father had many more health issues than my father in law. Some of it was definitely lifestyle choice related. You know, my father wasn't always compliant with what he was supposed to do for his chronic health issues. But even that is an outcome of dealing with structural racism and having to deal with poverty for a large portion of his formative years. In early adulthood those things add up over time in terms of how your body responds to physical stress like disease, chronic disease. But my father did much better than his siblings relative to my father-in-law I say no. In terms of health.

And those are some conversations that I often have with my husband which he gets it now, but at first he was like, "Your dad's always complaining about Carl's father is so healthy." You know, my father, he was an anomaly too. I mean most people did not have fitness something like that. But he's like Crowley's father. So he doesn't even use a cane. It's weird. Really healthy. Well genetics, he doesn't have that genetics. This is true. His father's father's father lived for a long time, but I said, "Daddy what you have to understand is that Carl's father was a white man that grew up without the psychic energy being spent on racism." And they were poor. His father, his parents were poor. But it's not the same as being poor and black in Mississippi. And you can't tell me that that doesn't have some impact on how your body is responsive to just the normal things that we deal with as we age.

**MN** So you talked a lot about like the Jewish community and things like that can you tell us a little bit about your neighborhood, school.

**JM** I would walk to school and then I would come home at lunch and walk back to school and it was an integrated school. So what we had here which is really unusual for my siblings, my older siblings. They thought it was odd because they had grown up when they came here and they were like eight and nine and they had only been in all black schools with. Terrible facilities and no books with pages missing. So while we were all going to school here they thought it was like wow there's like no books and there are white kids in that class and whatever. But for me it's the only thing I knew. I mean I enjoyed my elementary school years. When my school closed they

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built a brand new big elementary school. They called it the magnet school. It was a new community school and sort of split like some kids on one side of a major street they went to another school and kids on the other side went to this school. So I sort of like didn't get a chance to see those kids because I was in kindergarten through third grade.

I mean I saw them like way later. But you know I did see them in my public school education. And you know I always was around a diverse group of kids because the school and come to some big neighborhoods. I was always interested in sports and just anything new to learn about. I really loved learning as well. I think I got that from my father and my mom too. She liked the band. I am still good friends with many of the kids from elementary school.

And then from there I went to a middle school actually we call the junior high school now. And again I continued to play sports. You know the interesting thing about school in Worcester is not so much different now maybe a little bit different is that we had the diverse students, but I did not have any black teachers. Until [?] and she really was my home teacher. I never ended up having her for class, but she taught English. She later became a high school principal and was doing so. And then when I went to high school in Worcester I had a black teacher that was that my home teacher's husband actually. He taught at the school and that was it.

And then actually I went to Doherty [High School] for one year. And then I transferred to a private school in Leicester, City Academy, which is no longer there and of course I didn't have any teachers of color there. So I didn't have a black teacher or any other teacher of color until I was a graduate student at UMass Amherst. And so I didn't have a teacher of color in college. So after high school I went to Barrington College in Rhode Island for two years and then I transferred over to back home to Worcester State [University]. And I didn't have any teachers of color. I think they were there on the campus but I didn't have any. Actually when I went to graduate school in my late 20s early 30s that was when I had my first black teacher since high school. And it just totally transformative. It was not just because my professor was black and female, it was because she was black and female and what she was what the class was. I mean my master's in social justice education and my doctorate is in adult education with a focus on social justice education for social change actually. But so my first black female professor, we had a class where we were learning about internalized racism. Which is interesting. I don't know if you guys are familiar with that. So internalized racism is like any other form until people who are marginalized are supporting it whatever you want to call it. People in the dominant group are exposed to messages about which group is superior and which group is inferior. And so both groups internalize that message so we internalize the message that everything about whiteness is superior and everything about blackness and brown is inferior. And while we may not be

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conscious of internalizing that, it's virtually impossible for us not to to a certain extent. So while I understood about racism's impact on my life before, learning about that concept I didn't understand to what extent racism had impacted my thinking about myself. So I used to think that if I had any moments of self-doubt or when I was younger if I was say things like, "Oh I've just got to work really hard to prove that I'm just as smart as this white kid sitting next to me or if I have to be particularly concerned about how people are perceiving me that that's just me, that's just me and my own inadequacies, my own sense of self-esteem."

I had no idea that it wasn't just me. It was because I was in a society that was constantly sending me messages like that. And you know it seems really easy to understand now. But if you don't have the language to ascribe to your experiences, it just sort of just stays in your head or something sort of just nebulous, I don't know. And anyway she was explaining that and that explains so much. So it's not just me, it's not just choice, not having enough self-confidence, and you have a lot more self-confidence and you've got everything around you telling you that you are that people that look like you. You know I'm talking about white people. If they look like them you know they're smarter, they have more money because they worked harder. Even though you think you're not internalizing that crap. I mean they internalize that. So that was transformative to me. And then to have her as a black professor. I mean it was a hard concept, but to hear it coming from her it was like, "Wow."

**MN** Yes. So you talked about that transformative experience. How do you speak to your consciousness about college as a woman especially a woman of color.

**JM** How did it develop.

**JM** Well, I have to say in undergraduate school I did not develop. I taught for a number of years. I still teach graduate but the whole curriculum needs to be—education is not—you need to flip the switch and change oppressive systems. It's a waste of time in my opinion and we're not doing enough of that. So I didn't have that experience. And the best school in terms of my graduate students I can talk more about that. That's me involved and helped me understand about being connected. And again I don't really know if this would have happened if I was studying something like biology. I mean I was in a social justice program. So people who were in my cohort, these are things that we talked about and even in my doctoral program too, this is what we did. We talked about it. But having people who were talking and thinking about social justice kind of forces you to confront things in yourself because you remember social justice is not just about racial justice. It's about economic justice, it's about gender justice, and equity and justice for gay lesbian trans people. It's about looking at equity for people with disabilities. All of these

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different things. So with my colleagues, some people from all different experiences, we kind of challenge each other to think about places where we have traveled to, places where we don't. And it helped me to learn how to work across issues.

I'm involved in a lot of different things like the Women of Color Coalition and we're focused most on the color issues. But even though we're focused on women of color we have to understand that women of color means that we have Muslim women. We have lesbian women. We have trans women. We have poor women. We have women who are wealthy and you know that. So we have all these different women that are in our network. And so I guess because I've had experience, the lived experience, of having to navigate through some of that stuff when I was in graduate school like this because that's also my group it's more comfortable for me to be in that kind of environment now whereas I think sometimes other women of color are not necessarily comfortable with that.

And so for example, as an African-American woman I've noticed sometimes that some of us if we haven't had experiences thinking about intersectionality that we just don't get it. We don't get like when we have African-American trans women saying, "Yeah, we're black women," but you know I want you guys to think about this issue. And sometimes some of us will—but we're black and that's all that really matters. Well in terms of looking at us compared to like white people yeah I guess that's all that really matters. But when we're out there in society, different aspects of who we are matters differently at different times and that's kind of the thing that I discovered when I was in my graduate program that you kind of have to push yourself to expand on what blackness means. I think I wouldn't have gotten to that place if I had been around that kind of environment in terms of my gender. I always say that as a black woman, blackness was always at the forefront for me. Always, always. And the gender thing was like I got it. I understand that. So I guess it's sort of like a luxury to have to put energy into that because while both identities are visible, it's like the blackness that cancels out the gender. That's what people say you know. So I was much more in tune with the blackness; aware of it and what it meant for me. But my energy around it than the gender. But what I found is even talking with college students, that something had—I don't know what it is with a lot of women and this is why white women and women of color in the college years there's a lot of women who like gender isn't a big issue. I mean less so. So I should say that because it depends on where they are and who they are around.

So my sister went to a women's college so that was like the gender was up for her. But when I taught for years at Anna Maria [College], and I teach part time for Emmanuel [College] now, gender is interesting because for a lot of the women gender is like in the background. And as I said, for me it was in the back because I'm black. But for some of the white women it was in the



background and why it was in the back—I don't understand how you as even as a white woman how could you change it. I mean like I don't get it. But some of it I think has to do with being lulled into this false sense of security. I think that some of the young women today have seen some remarkable women achieved remarkable things. So for a lot of white women, these young women, they've seen white women be Secretary of State and they've seen you white women in all these all these key positions, not just in politics but in in the private sector and they see a few and they think that that means that's the reality for women in general and it's not it's not. So I think some of them think that we women have made it. And this past election will tell them that women haven't made it. That's when I observed when I was an undergraduate and I noticed that there was much more gender awareness. But even for white women. So for me, I didn't really start to go back into reclaiming gender as something I wanted to think about until I was in my mid-thirties and I'm not quite sure what was that all about. I don't know why I decided to—oh I know what it was. It was because the more I interacted with men of color the more I started to be forced to think about being a woman because the sexism comes up. It's like when I'm around white people—white men in particular—I am expecting the racism, I'm expecting the sexism. So when you're around men of color your radar isn't necessarily up there for the sexism the way it is when you're out in the general community. And because I'm usually when I'm around men of color in different community things I'm doing it's usually because we're focused on some aspect of combating racism. So that's the focus, we focus on my feeling of racism. So it's easy to overlook the sexism that you're experiencing right there. Some men of color.

So the more I start to do community work the more I got pissed off at like the sexism in our community that we were dealing with and that that really kind of brought me into revisiting the whole gender thing. But again not from like the way that's like the white feminist movement. You know just men with it and men's oppression of women. For me it was more about men of color's oppression of women. I understood about white man's oppression of everybody. But I had not spent a lot of time thinking about men and men of color and women. So that's when I really started to think more about it.

**MN** So you pursued a master's in social justice?

**JM** Yes. When I when I finished college I should say I'm back to business and media and communications and I did a lot of work human services like public relations, marketing. And then I was working for the public schools in Worcester actually as a parent coordinator like parents coming to get education about how to work with the children. And so I would design these programs for them and I did a series of programs on how what was called cultural diversity or whatever. And a lot of the parents were in relationships with people from a different cultural

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background. And at that time I just got married a few years earlier. So I kind of designed this workshop about communicating a class difference and I don't even know how I had the skills to do that. But I did. And so people really appreciated it. And then I was invited to speak a few times at a couple of classes and actually my husband and I both invited to speak about our experiences and I realized that with those things happening in my professional life.

And then also in my private personal life, my husband and I, as I said he's not only of a different ethnic, racial background, he's also 19 years older than I am. So there's a generational divide. And so when we got married I was the first black person I've ever been in his parents' house you know. And whereas my family we had already at that point my father had white people working for him. We had white people in my house, they were our friends with his parents. I was like man is sympathetic. I said to him, "Oh that is so pathetic. Your parents live in their 70s. They never had a black person sit at that table." I mean that's the word that I used. That's pathetic. How do you live your life like that. And they live with me that's just so messed up. Like how just the curiosity factor when you just want to have somebody come into your house to say I had that person in my house something I don't know. So we just ended up having conversations with them trying to get them to—they did OK but they weren't cool at first. And I just really noticed them in the city. And I really was fascinated about how people change over time like how people can change their perspective over time.

And the educational process that has to happen to get that get them there. So I was working for at the time—I kind of landed in the nest of the national conference between injustice of the National Conference of Christians and Jews but they changed the national policy. I mean just as it surely is all of the country and I was the program director for the Worcester one. And I did all of that. Diversity and all that kind of stuff. I was working for them and then that's when I started school. Yes. And so I just felt like I needed more grounding in that and understanding around—I didn't need to I call it oppression at the time, I think I might have called it just discrimination. And how did you understand about that. And I was looking for programs and I had always said that I was never ever going to go back to school ever because I'm the kind of student that you know I have to upset like I did. I said I was never going to go back to school unless I felt like there was something that I really needed to know and if I didn't know it my life wouldn't be as good. And so I felt like this was something I really needed to know. So I looked for programs and UMass is right there. I mean it was at the time I think with the only master's in social justice in the country. And then eventually there's been a few other ones sort of modeled after UMass and not as good. I mean my faculty, I use their book, there's a book that is based on the curriculum that we had. And I still use that book when I train people to be trainers in the organization. I use that book as a foundation. I tell them to order it. They need to have it. And it

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was done by my folks at Umass. So that's what kind of swept me in to do that. And then when I finished I was working full time for the National Conference and happy doing that. And then I kind of fell into or someone I knew asked me if I would fill in for her to teach a class she was teaching Assumption [College]. I said no. I really don't like that age group and I really like the college student age group.

I don't really like kids. Like I said, I don't have children and people always say, "Oh you do." And it's amazing how people think like that. The assumptions that they make about women and women don't and especially women of color don't want to have children. And you know interesting people would say to me, "Oh the reason you don't have kids because you don't want to have biracial kids." I'm like yeah. I mean several people have said that to me. And I laugh because I'm like, "Seriously?" That's like saying that I really want to have kids when you have kids because I don't want to have a biracial kid.

So this is why I was going to get a bumper sticker and my siblings, and my sisters, and I said we were going to get bumper stickers we made this path when we were kids: McNickles Women Childless by Choice. Because people think that you have to have something wrong with you physically or like men like whenever I like. No, because there's so many things that you can do without. I'm not saying that children don't come with some benefits I guess. But it's like I saw my parents you know seven of us. I mean you have to have seven, but your life takes the back burner if you do it right. And I did not want to do that in a conscious decision, so I didn't want to have children. And I don't really like—I should say just like little kids, but it's like you can't engage with them. I love my little nephews but they go home. So like college students, I think it was because of my perception of when I was a college student. You know what I mean? And I had at this point I was doing my work with adults and organizations doing training education and adults. I'm like I don't want to do that and I said I don't have the skills and she said you are educated. You train you teach. I'm like yeah, but not college students. And so I was a course on managing this in the workplace I did it for the summer. And I was shocked at the impact that I had on the students.

One thing about doing trainings in organizations you have them for like at the most a day. You're lucky you have them for a two-day workshop and then you don't see them again unfortunately so you don't know what kind of impact you have other than what they could on the evaluation. You have students for like say a six-week summer class or even a 14-week school semester but you can see the development over time. And it's very rewarding. I mean it was, so I actually ended up enjoying that age group a lot because it seemed like they didn't have as many filters on them as the people in the workplace environment who are older, who were just like you

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know what they were thinking. And some say and sometimes they wouldn't. But a lot of the college students were just like OK wait is this a learning environment so people I think felt better about putting myself out there and at risk or being challenge and I kind of appreciate that. So I ended up teaching a course and then she asked me to do it again. Oh my gosh. All right. And then one of her former students was the dean over at Anna Maria at the time and he wanted that course taught over there. She didn't have time to do it and I said OK I did it and it was all OK. And then they asked me to do it again and they said we need a few other courses similar to this. Would you be interested in applying for a full-time position. I'm like OK. So I did. And I landed there and I was only faculty of color for the whole time I was there—seven years. And I tell the people and they said, “No no no. You mean you were the only black person?” I said, “Yeah I was the only black person.” And so let me get this straight. So let me break it down. I was the only person on the faculty who was not quite 40-something full time faculty members. And so I had one colleague who was Jewish and he came the semester after I came. I mean he's white obviously.

So I moved my office over to the building where he was and his area was race and the law. And so just more comfortable for me to be over in the building where he was. And we're still really good friends to this day. You know there were a lot of students of color, not a lot but enough where I had to feel an obligation to make sure that they were not completely isolated. So I started the ALANA [African, Latino, Asian, Native American] student group there because there was no faculty member who had an interest in it. And then I started a group of peer educators. I think you guys are similar in the classroom to peer educators. That's when I started it I connected with the people at [College of the] Holy Cross to help me figure out how I was going to get this started and a model. And then the last year I was there the director of health services left the school, but she was the advisor for the gay student group on campus. And so nobody stepped in and she wasn't gay you know but that was fine. I mean it was a gay straight alliance actually. And so when she left I felt like we can't leave these kids hanging. So I had to step in. I mean I didn't have to. But it's again my sense of obligation. I'm not going to put the faculty in a position where the students are coming to them. I didn't want that awkwardness for the faculty member. So I just said let me just step in and a lot of the kids that were in that group were in the other groups.

So it was a struggle being a person who was outspoken about oppression of different types not just race on a campus that was becoming increasingly more conservative. So I had started my doctorate at Emory [University]—I started National Jewish University—and so I decided I was going to finish it. And it was time for me to renew my contract. I don't want to renew my contract and commit to another three years when I'm not going to stay when I finish my

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doctorate so I left. And then when I finished, despite my dissertation I felt like I really don't want to be teaching full time anymore anyway because I want to go back to what I was doing initially which was doing the work in the community. So that's what I'm doing now I'm going to part time now and I do my work. I do leadership development around social justice.

I work with individuals and organizations, individuals and organizations alike. People at the executive level who've done the basic training, but they need one on one help or guidance—I should say they need one on one feedback. And so that's what I'm doing I do that in addition to a lot of the community. I'm just involved in a lot of stuff in the community which puts me at risk for being targeted which I have been. But you know by more conservative voices. He chose more like this going it IS kind of like an activist timeline like some people involved like in Worcester and beyond.

**MN** But it just didn't feel like it like your whole life like that?

**JM** OK. I'm not sure what you mean.

**MN** So like what sort of like social justice causes are you OK. So a couple of things that I've done on this issue. So yeah.

**JM** So a couple of things that I can tell you that some of the. I'm particularly proud of that. So the fact that I left—so in fact how I met my husband at law school I was teaching there is what they call a building up for a year. And so when I left North we got married a year later. It's like I remember how I was the first, I was the only black teacher on that faculty when I was there. And I said this is ridiculous. The school had a population of color that was pretty high and there were no teachers of color. And I was involved with a group called the black FBI. What is that? I met him at my house in '91. So that was 1990. And I remember the public schools talking about how, “Oh god, we can't find any teachers of color.” And have to tell you how I ended up getting that job was I had to call the human resource department at the time it was for schools that they had and could not find teachers. So I called them and I said, “You say you can't find teachers. I don't know what you're talking about.” I was involved with the school—the black FBI finds blacks with intellect.

And we held a rally in front of the central administration building trying to bring awareness about teachers of color. Now I'll tell you they say they want a lot of open positions when a lot of people are qualified or whatever. Meanwhile at the time, the mayor's wife worked at the school. The principal's sister and someone else were at school. So I'm saying this to say the thing about

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nepotism. So if you have a position and you call your relative and you let your relative know about it first and you're white there's not going to be as many vacancies for people of color to step into if they're being quickly filled with white people that are related to other white people working in school.

So we had a valid point to raise the tension about that and we don't have that kind of pay for a lot of problems with that. So then when I was involved the whole time I was at Emory I tried to lay low around my community activism because so much of my energy when I stepped away from Emory I kind of got more involved in so doing things like I was really involved with the Willis Center here in Worcester which is no longer here. I was on the board there and we had a number of occasions where people in the community had a lot of concerns about our residential programs being in their communities. So you know we had residential programs for people who were in recovery. And so it's fine to have those programs when they're in communities where there are a lot of people of color, poor people, but they don't support them in their communities when they invite them. You know more white, more affluent communities.

So we have a number of situations where we have to raise awareness about that. So how I do that to me activism is not just like at a rally, activism is also using your voice publicly in the media. So I'm always one to if I need to talk to the press about something. So last year—a couple of years ago there were a lot of fights over at high school and people in the community were saying we need police there. And I'm like you don't need that, that's a recipe for disaster. Especially given the history with all these police in the schools kids of color—no. So a group I was involved in, we wrote a policy paper about a lot of different things and what we see is that there was at the time we would call acts of coming together collective with recommendations that we gave to the city manager. We held a press conference about the situation and go to high school and how there doesn't need to be police officers in the school. And I got a lot of trouble for that. That's when that personal attack started to come from a local blogger—you know who it was—personal attacks against me and my husband writing a blog for the [Worcester] Telegram. And so he's very outspoken about race issues and the text came out to both of us. And then you know other things. So I co-founded the Racial Justice Task Force here four years ago and we've been involved in a number of things. You know undocumented students and struggles that they had but being able to go to college and everything. Our task force we help support that rally.

It really raises the profile of the protests. So that's what I did with the task force so I try to get us to sign on. So we got involved in that. That action. You probably heard about the rally a couple of months ago that was like one of the big things that I'm proud of. I was so strong that racial justice organizes really big rallies for support of immigrants. Well I just came down. I was there

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I just spoke at that rally. Yeah. Yeah you might have heard me. “No justice no no.” And I thought that was really a good thing.

So I kind of see myself as the hot guy. I never thought of myself as a community organizer, but people tell me that I am and they say a community organizer is like if they are doing it well that you don't even know that they're in the mix.

So I bring a lot of entities together and I know a lot of things like people who should be involved in certain things and I hook them up and then they make plans and do it and then I step. So the rally, because of my role with the Massachusetts Democratic Coalition, myself and another person on that commission we were involved in helping organize that rally. We contacted our folks on the Coalition, asked if we could as a body support the rally as well. So we do that.

I love the work that I do here at the YWCA. I think that those are places of activism and organizing so making us more visible in the community around issues of race and gender and having the wife support things that we would normally support because we don't know that they're out there because of because of my sitting on the board and co-chairing the task force. I can bring things to the board that are happening in the community that the White House should be a part of. And it's really raised the visibility of the why. So I'm on the advisory council on racial ethnic and I'm glad to be on it. But I ended up on it because of all of the travails that I've had over the last few years being attacked. I had to kind of deal. I was like viciously attacked in this stupid blog and I was looking for ways. So I said please support me. And some of the other people were being attacked. And so I developed communication with them. And then over time. You know I just got to know them.

And so we had those racist dialogues two summers ago. So I ended up getting involved with the council and because of that we were able to get more to come and be our keynote speaker for International Women's Day here at the White House here like about three weeks ago. And those are things I'm proud of because those are not the activism type activities that people tend to think of when they think about life. OK. Again you say just sit and hold a rally. But to me activism is about community. Initiatives that help to transform the current thinking about something right. And so I try to do that in the places where I sit, so sitting here at the YW which is a very traditional like institution of an organization with a board and everything. And so sometimes we don't necessarily have opportunities to really know what's going on out there in the field. And because I'm out there I can bring that to us and then engage us. In those things like have us have more of an inclusive way of doing things. I'm looking at things and just bringing the community

in here. So I feel like to me I've just taking up so much of my time the last four years that I've been on the board.

But some of my friends have told me that it's like they feel like the profile of the white YW has changed because of the things that I've been able to do here. Our executive director, Linda Cavioli, is just incredible. She allows me to do a lot of things. We've known each other for a really really long time over twenty-five years actually. And so she allows me to go on the both ways but we've known each other. So she allows me the space to do things that I'm not quite sure. Some of the other board members really with love for me or the why did either be doing you know to be as vocal on certain positions. But you know look at our motto. I mean I mentioned if you noticed when you came in the building the empowerment of women the humiliation of racism that when not doing it you know and we just need to sit down shut up and take the shine off the building.

Just so many things I don't really want to sound—what's the word—pompous and self-congratulatory, but I do. This is a lot of things that I feel like I've done to leave a mark on this community. I'm giving you a few of them because sometimes I do minimize the impact that I have until somebody comes back to me later and says when you did this and this and that set me down this path you.

**MN** So could you tell us briefly some of your inspirations like books, speakers, people in your life? Oh you mentioned your father. I mean like books or even relationships.

**JM** You know, it's funny because a lot of times people would ask me about that. I don't really have a mentor. I never really have mentors. And I find that strange. I mean I had people mention me in certain things just because I went to them and I said, “Can you tell me how to do this?” but I really never felt the need for a mentor. And it's not because I have all the answers myself. I certainly don't. But I think that when I need the answers that people will come into my life when I need it. I'm not proactive about mentoring. I just try to have things organically develop for me.

So that sums up like things that inspire me and people. You know, black women in general inspire me. I if I look at ten like pieces of literature—I mean I certainly like Patricia Collins I mean she changed my life. So my dissertation is dealing with black women's identity, racial identity, and in the context of interracial marriage which has been my experience. So I want to look at how black women conceptualize their black identity. So in my literature review I did a lot of reading about black feminism and stuff. And so Collins really helped me to articulate my own experience about my intersection of race and gender. So she and I met her too. I've only met her

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once and I thought, “Wow.” Ma,n she's just brilliant. And she totally not one of these brilliant academics that can't break it down in a way that is accessible for the average person. She can really do that. She can really do that well. So I really liked her.

So her black work on black feminism is really inspirational and folks to black women in general being able to live with this complexity of blackness and femaleness and do it so deftly. I just think when I need to be motivated to get through a particular tough experience, and the experience really is centered around some way my blackness and my femaleness, I think about this black woman. In my mind I get this image in particular black woman but like a collective image of various black women and how we've been able to—this book, *Making a Way out of No Way*. The history of black men in America. How we've been able to survive with such strength and power. That's what motivates me, that's what inspires me. It was really something the other day about Maxine Waters. You know she's going to be vocal with criticizing [President Donald] Trump. You know most recently she had to she had to come out and just criticize and go after [Bill] O'Reilly because he was criticizing her about stuff. And somebody wrote an article they call it Auntie Maxine and she's like the black auntie that everybody has that she just breaks it down and she says what she needs to say. Everybody is going to count on her. They hate black women because they know black women are not going to hold back.

Everbody else is sort of tiptoeing dissent—not Auntie Maxine. She says I'm a strong black woman. I ain't going anywhere. You know that is my inspiration. I have this image in my mind of that Auntie Maxine. She all those black women like her. There are so many of them alive and dead. So she inspires me and people like that persona that inspires me.

Black people in general inspire me. Black women in particular inspire me. I was at the U.N. a couple weeks ago. A colleague, a white board member, and I went down there with white delegates. At the YW actually inspires me as the organization of history. Smith College holds the archives for that for white W was the first organization to have an integrated charter and what they call it. So we were the first organization to offer integrated housing you know. But we were at the U.N. as delegates that women from all over the world and thousands of women but there were like 200 plus women. There were some white devotees from all over the world.

And I had an opportunity to hang out with these amazing women some that were from the West Bank in Palestine and got from Ramallah. Actually they were Y.W.C.A. from Ramallah. One was an older woman who actually worked for the U.N. She worked for the U.N. for years she didn't have children either. She says I'm chilling because I travel. She does stuff. I was showing her pictures of my nephews and my sister is married to a Palestinian man. And so my sister calls

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her kids black Justinian's and black rabs some solemn pitches. And so this older woman she said, "Your nephews have the best of both worlds. They're black and they're Palestinian Two of the most resilient people on the planet." And I said, "I think so too." I think so too is similar current experiences. So other people don't see that. But you know that's another story. We'll talk about that some other time. But so I was thinking about the resiliency and I do know that a lot of people know that about black folks. They may not admit it, but I think there's that envy of our resiliency. And I think there's a fear of our resiliency because if we survived that we have survived. With all of that, all of this crap that we have had to deal with and still continue to deal with. What will we be doing if we didn't have that? I think that's a fear.

And so somebody like Maxine, Auntie Maxine, people are just calling it out. I think it's true that there's a fear of people like her because she's like, "I don't have anything to lose. People haven't stopped me yet and you can't get to stop me. So what." Trump is just trying to catch you off guard by insulting her, the way she looks, and she's like, "That ain't working." Because they know that. If they can get her—if they can get somebody like Maxine to buckle, if somebody like Maxine decided to temper her words and quiet down, they kind of won the game. If you get a black women to hush then you've done something because we're not going to do it. We're not going to hush. Some of us will, but I don't hang around with the ones like that.

So could talk a little bit about any particular efforts that you didn't take part in that happened in Worcester or like why you didn't take part or if we didn't go over and other major movements and most important I told you a little bit about those dialogues I reluctantly took part in those when we had the Department Justice based dialogues. I didn't want to do it because I thought they were window dressing. I thought that whenever you have people of color with white people talking about race without any like without coming in with some common understanding of what we mean by racism that's a recipe for disaster. People of color are usually going to have to deal with my questions which is what we did experience, but I got involved to help them do the best that I could to kind of shape how those sessions would happen. And I regret doing that because they were harmful to many people of color although many white people thought they were very good because they got to talk with a person of color to tell them how horrible things are for them and then white people can walk away saying, "Oh I have seen the other half of things." Well we've been telling you that. So now what.

So I ended up giving a big speech in the last session. It was at the DCU Center. So I did the Dear White People letter. Things I want you to know what it was like for me as a person of color with over 25 years of doing racial justice work to sit as a participant in the sessions. And basically I said why you feel good this is what it was like for us. Good for you, you get to walk

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away. And oh my how terrible things are for black people. I had a couple of black people say to me afterwards that they were offended by the speech and I said that's really pathetic. That as a black, a black man actually, that you are offended by this speech because you thought that it hurt white people feelings and you've got white people coming up to me saying I'm so glad you said what you said. I said, "No, what's wrong with this picture?" That tells me something about your level of awareness that you are worried about white fragility. Rather than the fact that I'm trying to capture what it is like for some of us. What black people experience. But I feel if I have to sit through this thing that I should just tell the truth at the end. Right? And I said it was with love that we did it. But I'm glad I did it now because I got to tell people what I know. I wouldn't have the opportunity to get up in front of all of these people.

And I said to a couple of people afterwards I said, "You know what? I don't give a damn if you don't like it. I got a white woman who is the attorney general of the state who is happy with my dear white people speech." If a white person, an elected official, saw how important that it was for me to say that then it's important. So sometimes you do this kind of work and you get banged up. Right? So I got those stupid ass sessions once a week for six weeks and I did not want to go. My friends kept telling me not to do it. My other activist friends. "Why are you going to do it?" Because if I'm not there at the table they're going to walk away thinking that everything is fine. But they said, "But it's not your responsibility." But you know what? I have access to some of the spaces that other people don't have access to. I have a certain level of credibility sometimes you know. And it's like I've got to go. So I went to the meetings and between the sessions as they were planning and not listening to anything I said, but I went and it was painful for me because as a black woman with a doctorate who has been doing this work as an activist and is educated for over 20 years, you would think that they would listen to what I had to say. Right? When I said, "Look you can't have this session without giving people some terminology. You can't have this." And people were really upset misunderstanding about racism. Next session they decide to have the terminology. You should listen to me the first night. Right?

**JM** So that bangs you up physically, emotionally eventually. And to do this and what am I getting out of it. Nothing. Just agita you know. Agitation means anxiety. So physically I was harmed too because I was at one of the sessions and I was sitting on a table with my friends. Somebody sat on the other end of the table and the table collapsed. I hurt my leg. I had a strained hip flexor. I had to go through three months of physical therapy; work out for like six months. Lost a lot of muscle mass. I never got back and never got back. So that's like the only thing I have to show for that six sessions was a strained hip flexor a decrease in my muscle mass.

But again, I was able to tell things tell people things that they needed to hear. They had a big article about it in the paper the next day. The head of the editorial board wanted to print the entire speech as well as the I See It column. I didn't want to have to do that. And then this is why I talk about for so many years that I don't have an ongoing mentor but I seek mentorship when I need it. So I talked to a couple of people who said I should I do that. I mean I know what I said and the message people need to hear it, but I'm concerned about just putting it out in the paper because people read it and they don't know the context. So the person I talked to said it might do more harm than good if they weren't there. OK so I didn't do it.

But sometimes I step into things like that because I feel like it's my responsibility to get involved because I don't know what some of my other activist friends have been like. So I just think of another time it was activism. So remember the Charleston church murder when all those black folks were killed in a church in Charleston last two years ago? Which was an act of terrorism in my opinion. So one of the heads of the editorial board was given my name because he wanted to talk to somebody in this community to get our take on it. The editorial writers don't usually quote people in their editorials—it's sort of like a narrative. But he wanted to get a different perspective. So we talked and everything and I convinced him that he should identify that as an act of terrorism.

So he did the whole editorial piece about it and he had for the headline, "Charlston, an act of terrorism." So this the editorial director, he did a really good piece. And he quoted the things that I want to be said about black people. I was concerned about how quick the survivors, the family members, were to apologize and not hesitate to forgive. Was Dylann Roof—I think this thing was simply giving him that killing. And if you remember, he killed all of them and the next day or the second day after they were like, "Oh, we forgive him do you?" And it's like—I said that that's so messed up. I get about forgiveness. I was raised Christian and everything. But you know you can't just be out there forgiving people without holding people accountable. And so I thought that that was like black people or like a spectacle again.

It's like white folks will love to see us show these tremendous acts of humanity. Like you just came in this church and you shot all of our family members. But we can forgive you. That's messed up. And so I wanted him to understand that while those folks may have been in—maybe this was the South and people are still dealing with a lot of trauma. They had the trauma of the family being killed. Also they're still dealing with the historical trauma of living under segregation where you try your best to keep white people emotionally comfortable.

So I want him to understand that. While they may have some black ministers in Worcester talking about we need to fully forgive, I want him to understand that that's not how we should be thinking necessarily. That we should be demanding accountability. We should be looking at the social context that helped create that act in the first place. We shouldn't be so quick to say publicly we're going to forgive without adding on the piece about seeking justice. And so those are things that he was able to put in his editorial that I'm not sure would have been there if he had just written it without talking to me. So I'm proud of it. Things like that. To me that's activism. You know when we were doing those stupid dialogues to white folks in Worcester that I count on all the time to take the heat.

When me and other activists are doing things that put us at risk during those super dialogues those white folks were organizing behind the scenes with us figuring out ways to get to shelter some of us from the micro questions that we were experiencing in those dialogues. That's activism and those white people who were doing that. They're not the white people that the city is going to tout as change agents because they don't know those white people they know like the ones that are institutionalized. That's why I was so surprised when I got the city's Human Service Award. I was like first of all I think the city hates me. But then I realized that the city officials didn't select the person but the human rights commission who are just citizens who are appointed to the commission. They are the ones that selected because I know the city officials if they had it they would be like, "No she's not getting it," because they have in their mind who the people are who they think are really doing the work.

**KP** What did you do with this one? This was in October I think

**JM** I mean I accepted because of this community that supports me and everything that I do. They don't like when you speak out. You're vulnerable and people try to bring you down. But there's a community here with you that is very supportive. They may not be visible to the powers that be, but they're doing it.

**KP** Just so quick like for formality. So you were one of how many children. Seven. Seven. And then you currently hold which profession.

**JM** So I am a professor and I am also a social justice educator. That's what I do. That's the bulk of my work. I do have my own business Nichols and Associates.

**KP** And then you said you're married now that you've been married 25 years. Yes. Can you talk a little bit about how your marriage has shaped your activism.

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**JM** Well I think what I was saying before about this coming into understanding how people think about information really kind of led me into thinking about education. And that's how I ended up getting to go to UMass for my master's. But also I think just looking at the transformation my husband and my stepson—I have a stepson who is 38 now, when we got married he was 14—are white and his identity as a white person is a very different thing by himself as a white person because of having a black stepmother. I mean he didn't live with us full time. But certainly he's in our life. But I think that just seeing the evolution of how they understood. I mean they told my husband particularly when he married me I would marry him if he didn't have a faith-based awareness, but understanding the role that he has as a white person to challenge racism really kind of helped me to be more patient with white people. Because I'm thinking my husband has had moments where I'm really hard on him. He's like, “You're too hard on me. I'm better at understanding things and most white people,” and I'm like “Yeah, but the bar is low.” And you should by now you should get all these things which is probably being unfair because you're not going to get all these things. I don't get all the things. But certainly as a black person doing this work I have more resources to help me get the same thing he does. But I think he's taught me to be more patient.

**JM** There's been times where I'd come home after doing trainings like teaching and I'm like, “Oh I hate white people. You know what? You people really suck.” And he's like, “Yeah I know we do.” But having a white person close to me at home—and I have white friends that are close to me, but it's different when you have a white person who's been with you for 25 years. And a white man who's has privilege and every single identity. A white male who was raised Christian. He's atheist now. He was raised Christian and I mean he's got like privilege galore. Having a white man close to me who gets it. Really gives me hope all the time to go back out there because I'm like Carlo cannot be the only one. And I know he is and because I love my life. What is it like when you get beat up real bad out there and you come home it's like OK. That's the case. I just sometimes say I just can't take it. Like I said you know we do something about good people.

**JM** So that kind of has helped shape me and also helped shape me in terms of what I was going to research and in my doctoral studies which is impactful because I developed a model of black identity for black women who were in that situation. And it's been really helpful for contributing to the literature around black identity theory. So that's one thing I didn't talk about with you guys just to see a place for it yet, but it's important to who I am and it's going to probably seem a little odd because you know we talk so much about race in America. I mean I'm a black woman but I spend a lot of time in Scotland and I know it's going to seem odd. Right? But it's become

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increasingly more a part of my journey up to this point where I think I'm going to—that I'm going to spend more time in the future.

So I've always been fascinated with Scotland and I've never understood why. And my last name is McNickles which you know is the name that African-Americans like my family who were enslaved got our names from the slave owner. So that name I always was told was an Irish name. But it actually isn't. It's a Scottish name and actually Scots were much bigger slaveholders than Irish people. I'm said to my mother when I was a kid, "I hope I hope that we find out that our family name is Scottish and not Irish. I hope that our family was owned by Scots." My mother would say, "What does that matter?" We were free. Who cares. And then when I got older I was in college, I couldn't afford to go to Scotland but I went to Nova Scotia which has a huge Scottish culture existing So to say the Scots settled there actually when they were kicked off the Scots in the Highlands were kicked off their land. When it was taken by the English and they were displaced and they went all over they went to go to Scotia a lot of them settled in Appalachian in the southeast and the United States. But then there were Scots who got all the benefits of being under the British Empire and they had slaves, African owned slaves just like the rest of Europeans. So obviously a Scottish family owns our family. And so when I went to Scotland years later, I felt like I had been there. I had already been to a couple countries in Africa and of course going to Africa, you get off the plane and feel like you you're back home. You don't know what country your ancestors come from, but you know you're on the continent you're somewhere close. Right?

**JM** And you feel that connection to the land, to the people. You do feel like you come home. I was in a synagogue in Ghana and I had that feeling. So then I went to Scotland and we went to Edinburgh the first time. It was kind of cool but you know only a few days. And then years later we went to the Highlands—all of the lochs, the mountains, and it's just incredible. When I was there I felt like a sense of connection to the land and to the people. And strange that I could understand the language. I mean they speak English obviously, but with such a thick accent in the Highlands a lot of people in the west of Scotland can't even understand the island accent. But I could. I'm sure if you listen they sound a lot like my mother—you know my mother was raised in Mississippi. And I felt like we were driving around places like an island the sky.

And so I did my research I went to the National Archives of Scotland and did a lot of research on Scottish people landing in southeastern part of the country of the US and just found out amazing stuff and got really involved in the independence movement there. I actually was invited to speak at an independence rally when we went last fall. I don't know if you guys are familiar with Scotland. They had a referendum two years ago to separate from England. And it failed

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unfortunately by 10 percentage points. But my friends there were really into the Scottish independence movement and I'm into it because Scotland is much more progressive, much more to the left than England. That's why they want to separate. They believe in open borders. They support Palestinian rights, they minimize nuclear. They want to try this nuclear submarine out of Scotland. Professor Douglas was doing a lecture circuit to bring awareness about slavery. Scottish people followed him to Scotland and he stayed there for a year speaking, raising money for the abolition of Scots people while they owned the site. It's just like this contradiction because they were big slave owners. There's also that element that was very into like resistance. The independence movement in Scotland is really huge and I connected to it because of the idea Scottish people have been under British authority and rule over 300 years and have not been able to track their own path. They are much more independent, much more liberal, much more whatever. So I got involved in that.

And so I ended up speaking. They wanted me to speak about Black Lives Matter and the United States. And I don't know if they will honestly identify me as the Black Lives Matter activist. I guess they think I'm a black person and I part of the Black Lives Matter movement so Black Lives Matter activist. I said no that's not it. If they wanted me to speak about Black Lives Matter and life and everything because we support that. What the movement here. So I got to speak at a rally I spoke right after the Green Party chairperson of the Green Party. I thought it was just so surreal and this old Scottish lady came up to me and she said that she hopes that she can see an independent Scotland before she dies. And she says anything's possible because she's thinking about the struggle of black people in America and how things have changed for us over time. So if it's possible for things to change for us over time maybe she should preface it by saying I'm not in any way trying to suggest that the movements are you know in any way the same. But she's saying it gives her hope that if things change for us here, that things can change for them there. And it was just so cool to go to Scotland. My mother says only you could go to Scotland to cause trouble in the valley.

**JM** And we had this mile long march in the rain and then we spoke at the rally. I love Scotland and I actually had started a blog called “The Actual Scot” and I haven't gotten back to it but writing about independence in Scotland, writing about racism in America, writing about how I experienced my blackness very differently in Scotland. It's true, I do I experience being part of an interracial couple very differently in Scotland. Nobody looks at us. Nobody stares at us. Nobody assumes that we're not together. I was on a little island of 2000 people in Scotland and I walked into a pub and nobody like dropped their utensils, nobody turned around. Where I live, when I first moved there I went to a restaurant with my husband and son and we walked in and people just stared with their mouths open. Even now if I go to a restaurant in the next town

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people look like, “Oh, that's unusual.” I'm in Scotland, the island in the Outer Hebrides and nobody. So I said to this woman who was I think she was Indian and Scottish—her father was Scottish and mother was Indian—I said, “This is so bizarre to me. Nobody even knows that I'm in here.” And she says it's not like they've never seen a black person before. And I said, “I know, but it's the same thing at home. I know people have seen black people, but they still look at me funny when I go into places.”

**JM** I'm starting to make the connections of people's experiences in different places around the world. I don't want to just think about the United States. I want to think about places where I feel a connection. I just had a DNA test done and it confirms what I thought. That my family does have Scottish ancestry which would make sense for why I would—if you believe in ancestral programming and memory—why I would have some connection.

**KP** And then just to wrap things up do you have any parting words?

**JM** You know it's a subset of lots of good stuff. Thank you so much. I mean I ramble. I said so much. I know I feel like I've just shown so many things to you. Oh well, just because I talk nonstop.