Brittany Brathwaite

11/22/19

[00:17]

LEC: Okay today, we are happy to have Brittany Brathwaite with us. And we're really looking forward to this discussion today, November 22nd, 2019. So we want to start Brittany with you telling us about, you know, the work that you do now, how you came to feminist work and so far what it's been like.

CTM: And you can talk about personal, political, community, education...

BB: Yeah. I feel like I'm going to just go all over the place.

CTM: Okay, yeah go all over the place!

BB: I'll just start with, where I think a lot of how I've come to be feminist is like how I grew up, or things that I didn't call feminist, but I think were pretty feminist. So I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Bed-Stuy to be specific. It's a very different neighborhood now. I grew up in a neighborhood that had a lot of severe, like difficulties was plagued by the crack epidemic. And I was growing up in the nineties, so I saw the after effects of that. And I was recently telling a story about the YMCA on my block now that everyone uses as this like glamorous gym--but it was a rehab center my whole childhood. And I really saw it like as a person who was interested in health and like health activism. I saw that as a place where people went for healing. I didn't know what they were doing, but I knew that that's what it was. And now the neighborhood is completely changed. But my family has been living in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn for 60 years. So my childhood was like growing up there, attending Catholic and Christian schools, which I never really fit into, cause I failed religion every single year. Mostly cause I just, you know, I just didn't really go with me *[Laughs].* And I really struggled as a child. I lost both of my parents at a very young age and came in contact with the system and courts. And a lot of my life was just, I had a precarious life. I did not

know like what was going to happen from one day to another. I think a lot of my feminism is rooted in self-determination and the understanding of like...really understanding how power is external to control your life, I knew that from a very, very young age. And I got really involved with girls' programming. So like I was a Girl Scout member for a very--they weren't radical enough--but I was a Girl Scout member. And I remember that being the first time that I learned of sisterhood as being like an only child and knowing what it meant to be really in deep community with someone else, really like have their back and they have yours. Then I got kicked out of my Girl Scout troop cause I refused to sell Girl Scout cookies for free. And so that was like, you know, that was an experience. But that really shaped my understanding of feminism and our experiences with each other and building with women, especially women of color.

And then I went to high school, I was in a Catholic high school and I was really...I don't know I what was doing, I wanted to be a doctor for a very long time and people still ask me today, like, are you a physician? And I'm like, no. But I wanted to be a doctor, not because I was interested in medicine, but I was really interested in healing people. As a person who experienced so much trauma and so much harm and so many like negative health disparities, I really wanted to heal people. And so I went into college sort of like thinking that I was going to be a doctor, a practicing medical doctor. That all changed, I declared Women and Gender Studies my first semester. Knowing that one of the things that was like super related to my experience and wanting to be a doctor is wanting to heal people, and in Women and Gender Studies is where I learned things are just not unequal just because, you know, there are like actual systems and forces. And before college, I was sort of taught that we were just at the bottom because we were at the bottom and other people were at the top because they were at the top. You know, you happen to be the one person to work yourself into college and have all these accolades. I learned that really easily, that that was not true. Right. That there were systems that placed me in that specific situation. And so I was going along like, yes, I'm going to be a doctor. And yes, I'm also going to study about gender and capitalism. It became, there was some serious tensions in understanding treating one individual and treating a population. So I was being prepared to sort of like treat one individual and give one person sort of care. There were whole groups or populations of people that would be neglected just by my choice in that.

[05:00]

So I started to divorce myself from, you know, wanting to do or practice medicine and more so understand how to like work and support communities of people to all achieve health as opposed to like one individual being healthy. So while I was at Syracuse, I had lots of amazing experiences. One of them being starting an organization for girls in Syracuse city called SPEAK. That was really about meeting young women who had some of the same experiences that I had. There was serious like state violence being inflicted on them. And neglection, neglected any of their needs or services. One of them being sexual reproductive health; no services available, no education about gender or some of these serious things that they were navigating, all of that was void. And so I made it my project and Dr. Carty advised on that and everyone knew about it, cause I asked everybody for money to really do this project in a radical way and not make it a club at college where my peers got to sort of tout

about helping or supporting. We did it off campus, it was like, I get to like leave campus every week and go to them and be in their community. And they pushed me in very in very amazing ways. That was very different from what I was learning in the classroom because I couldn't just give them something and they receive it like, "Oh, this is the best thing you've ever taught us." I was really, really challenged especially around things like anti-Blackness and capitalism and money and how that showed up. And like, even me as a, for the first time having to place myself in a position of power because I was in college and I was no longer those girls. And that really, that really shaped and molded sort of the work that I went to do after college, which was organizing on behalf of girls of color and alongside them to end gender based violence. State, personal, all of it and how that showed up. That has been like the, that was sort of my journey into the, the current work that I do now. I can talk about, you know, what that looks like.

CTM: Yeah *[nods]*

BB: So yeah, I do...I do a lot of things. Most recently a lot of my work has been as I sort of alluded to, ending gender based violence and how girls of color and gender nonconforming people experience that. In New York city where I grew up, the there were lots of young people experiencing sexual violence, harassment...the schools didn't believe them, they weren't believed. I think we see that in the news. We saw that with like Anita Hill, we saw that most recently in the judicial nomination process, with Kavanaugh. And this is like a day to day experience with, with young people and especially young people of color, especially Black girls. Never believed for any of the violence that they experienced. I was working with Girls for Gender Equity, an organization that has always centered Black girls in their work and their visioning for liberation and justice. For me, it was important cause it was in the same--I found Girls for Gender Equity in the same neighborhood I grew up in, in Brooklyn. So that was also like, I was at college doing this fun feminism stuff, and it was cool to go home and have that sort of occurring there. When I came out of college at that moment, there was this one statistic that said Black girls were the fastest growing group of young people in the juvenile justice system. And what would later emerge is that, you know, also--the leading cause, one of the leading causes for girls in the juvenile justice system with sexual violence. So you have this experience of sexual violence occurring, no one believing young people or actually doing things to address it. Then this sort of funnels or pipes into the prison industrial complex and our work then was like seated in the education system. And so we weren't working in the juvenile system, but education was a place--and continues to be a place--where young people spend the majority of their day. So, in a lot of young people experiencing violence at home, school either gets to be a safe haven or it gets to be another place where that violence is sort of reiterated.

I like to say schools are the workplaces of young people except for they don't have HR. And so they don't really have anyone that has to be accountable to their lives and their livelihood. So knowing this statistic, that kept me up for nights at a time, because it was very similar to my life as a person who experienced sexual violence very young and wasn't believed and the school didn't do anything. I thought it very important to actually like participate in that. So I did. I started and supported a participatory action research project where I worked with

young people to get the stories of other young people around what they were experiencing. We were looking for two things: one, what's going on? Like what's the messed up stuff? And then two, what do you envision? Cause it's so rare that we believe in young folks--that's how ageism works--young folks enough to think that they know what they need. We see that replicated everywhere. Like, "the people that actually come from a place don't have any ideas, so let's just do it for them" Right? And so there was these sort of two asks and from that study, all of these things emerged around...some students not eating school lunch all day because there was no halal option. You know, they're in school hungry! Or one in three young people experiencing some form of sexual harassment or the fact that there were more police officers in schools than there were social workers and guidance counselors combined. And that was a place for us to like look in the weeds and jump for action.

[10:49]

And we chose to run a campaign that would get more support in schools and ended up running a budget campaign where young people testified over and over, told their stories, had organized other people to really, you know, see them and see their light and ended up creating a huge investment--like close to a million dollar investment--in a Title IX officers to support in sexual violence in New York city schools. So that campaign, for the first time was like bringing to light and actually having, or forcing an institution to name sexual violence and name sort of these unequal experiences among some of the most marginalized. That was a very important part of my work. And then in addition to that, I think I also think that like economically there needs to be space for people to grow. Like when I was in college, everyone wanted to do like a financial class or like "how to manage your money", but you can't really manage money you don't have. So I think that it's such a joke when people are like, "you need better budget management". I'm like better budgets under capitalism is not a real thing. When people don't actually have money, there's no need or sense of telling them how to manage it. Right? So I got really interested in what it was, what it looked like to actually give money to people who were creating and pay people for their labor. And me and my best friend Mickey created a gift box service called The Homegirl Box. Aa lot of people liked the box and they like what's in it. It celebrates, a different woman every time we create one. So we've done everyone from like Angela Davis to Assata Shakur, to Cardi B, to like all different types of people. But at the root of it, it's really also the people who are featured in the box whose creations and time, like really thinking about how they have to go home and feed a family and like how they're looked over by big companies that have these huge boxes. We wanted to make sure that we paid people for their labor. And we incorporated as a worker-owner cooperative. So also everyone that will ever work for The Homegirl Box will also own it. I think that that is important for Black women, like me, to have ownership in something especially in this country. That is like a huge bucket of my work. And I organize and I facilitate and I teach and I do a lot of anti-racist organizing and facilitation, especially with institutions like departments of health and departments of education. I really don't think, especially around health equity, I don't think we can get to a place of equity if we don't talk about being anti-racist. Like there's, no...there's no way to do that without taking a firm stance and, you know, and having that. We can go deeper into that, but that's a lot of my work that I'm holding and doing.

CTM: So what would you say have been sort of the most significant challenges in doing what you're doing right now?

BB: Challenges, I think... I mean, in all my work, in organizing work...in sort of advocacy and teach--in all the work--there's a funding, like funding is a real thing. And I did not know the scheme of the nonprofit industrial complex before I started working for one. How you know...you beg for it--part of why I wanted The Homegirl Box to be a business is because I didn't want to sort of have to sell a community to like, get people to give me money. The nonprofits that I have worked for have been very intentional and have integrity around like, not doing that, but there is an entire field that builds on that, and that believes that, you know, it's charitable. And there's such an amount of scarcity—like fake scarcity—cause there's so much money. It's just like, who is it given to? Right. And so there's like, "there's not enough!". I think that, that always creates an entire...it creates a paradigm and then there's like the people like give to museums, and dog parks in huge ways and I'm here literally trying to save lives! And like...there's not enough money for that. Then balancing the tension of my own intellectual property or the things that I think that I add. And knowing that, you know, in this world of the work that I've chosen to do that people say you won't get paid for it. I don't think that's fair because I think that cis white men with like shorts on...in the Silicon Valley that are making ideas that will fail, get paid for things that they know won't work! And I really don't think it's fair for people that have had a whole legacy of like, my grandmother did this work. My grandmother's, grandmother did this work. And at some point I'm still supposed to make the same wages as they did, that doesn't make sense to me.
And so the way that like I think social good is sort of colored by capitalism makes everything difficult. I think there's also a brand to the work. And so like, how well-branded you are or what kind of assets you produced create—some people get to rise up and their work is known—and others not. You have to put all this intention into being a brand. I love like there are some activists that have been like, have risen to the top, and I think it's a very different time, but like, if you're not fair, like light and skinny you don't get the TV interview and that's a real—I think that like, no one wants to say that, but like to be Black and be fat...that's not going to put your work, you push your work on the centers—

[16:45]
CTM: —Yes because you cannot be commodified in the same way.

BB: Yeah. Yeah. It's center stage. It's pretty activism, like there's something that, there's an air of like beauty that gets to go with it or a proximity to whiteness that I'm not willing to perform. Then I think another challenge is, I mean, there's just so much to do. I call it like intersectional overwhelm. And so like, I feel like my generation is like "intersectionality!", but that literally means, two streets crossed to them. Cause like, it's very hard to like operationalize intersectionality and wanting to be a part of everyone's movement and then having no strategic vision. Right. Like everyone's like, "yes, fight the power!" Whatever. And then I'm like, so what is the power? What power are we fighting? Or who is the person? And there's sort of none of that. I think, you know, I think it's okay. I believe in like my

work, it was really clear, sexual violence, Black girls, they was intersectional because it was girls with disabilities and girls that had like multiple system experiences. That was the way that I was thinking about it. But I was clear that I also couldn't be leading a whole immigration justice coalition. I feel like there's like, "what's next, what's hot, what's sexy. Let's do that. It's intersectional" I'm like, please..I don't know, I feel like I can go on and on about that. But I think that that's really, really hard of like people wanting to do so many things and take up so much space and like be the lead on everything when you're not. Then you don't really have room for people who really are the experts in that thing, because everyone is attempting to brand of--intersectionality is really hard. I don't know, I think it was something that I came out of Women and Gender Studies, like "this is the hottest shit ever." And also, in practice I think that it requires strategy. I don't think it was like the ideas of all the folks I thought about like how we work based on our different identities and there was not a belief that we would do it all, you know, like that is completely impossible. And so I see that as like a huge challenge and barrier to sort of do like the work that I do consistently.

CTM: Yeah. It's interesting idea. This idea of intersectionality as a brand.

BB: Oh yeah. "Intersectional as fuck". It's like it's a whole brand,

LEC: And foundations are following that, that's been your experience in trying to get grants for health and the young women that you work with. They don't get, I mean, they're from the communities of color. So legitimacy is a real issue. I'm trying to convince these people that this is a population that really deserves the assistance. You can't get it. So when you come across those kinds of difficulties, how do you navigate that?

BB: A lot of it is I think I've just built deep alliances and friendships and I don't always have to be the person at the table. I'm clear, sometimes I'm not the right person to be there. And so I send somebody else because it's not like, some conversations I am equipped to hold and it doesn't matter that I say them because the person wouldn't be able to listen. And so part of that is like, you know, like calling in friends and community to be able to hold sort of the parts of the work that I know that even if I, even if I can, it's probably not my work to do. And that's an unfortunate circumstance, but that has always been allyship and how it looks and, you know so that's one, that's one way. I think another way is...pivot. I think a lot about like long, I think longterm work is very hard for my generation to conceptualize, like nobody is going to be on a bus for a year, like boycott a bus a year. You know, we can't boycott something for a week. I'm clear, you know? So some part of the, some part of the game is like coming up with plans that are short and understanding when we need to pivot. That has been really helpful to like to, to let people know that the future is near and then celebrating small wins. So I also think that I'm a part of a generation that's like sad all the time because, you know no one ever sat us down and was like "change is longterm". You're going to be doing this work for 50 years and you're gonna die doing it.

[21:08]

Right. Like we may have shirts that say like "our ancestors' wildest dreams" or "my grandma dreamed me up" and was like, your grandma dreamed you up and still is dreaming while she was, you know, even when she, when you knew her. I think that, for me, like as a person who is like completely inclined to change, I don't believe that anything is impossible and that is a great thing AND that's a terrible thing, it will keep you up at night and keep you depressed. Knowing that now that I'm in this for the long game. So somewhere along the way, I have to stop and have a party for myself and my people. And then, all the work doesn't have to be hard. I think there's also this sort of like...people enroll you in...when you come from like a marginalized position, like your only job is to fight the power, do all this work that will essentially put you into a slow death. And as a person with a chronic illness, like that's not sustainable for me. I almost killed myself in college trying to be "the activist" that would not stop and didn't really understand burnout or didn't understand any of that. And so now I'm trying to--I think that it's responsible for me to train and support the young people that I work with to know--that this is the long game, but you have to be ready for that. It's OK to stop and pause, and ask for help and seek support and like, chill out, have yourself a party, sit down and have some ice cream! I don't know. Because the work will be there tomorrow and...and it's not worth it. I think it's actually part of the strategy to burn the most, the biggest fires out.

LEC: So I wanted to ask you about the connections between, what I'm calling "then" and "now" like the work that you did at SU, how would that catapulted you into this place? Cause you told us about wanting to go into medicine and change. And now what you're doing, the kinds of legitimacy that you sometimes require to get into certain doors and the latter part of that long question, what propels you and sustains you?

BB: Yes. All of those questions, easy. *[Laughs]*

CTM: Easy questions! *[Laughs]*

BB: So then and now, so S U—

CTM: She's referring to Syracuse University—

BB: *[Laughs]* Yeah, that place. So my work at Syracuse, that was such an—I still reflect on that time—I talked a little bit about like how, the work was hard because I was challenged in ways that I was never challenged in the classroom. I had to step out of myself cause I was on this like Hill experiencing some privilege that I didn't know I was experiencing. Then I would go and work with these young women who were just like in it. Like some of my people were experiencing homelessness. Some of my young people were experiencing police violence on a consistent basis. Their education environments were terrible, you know, and then they would come to program and they would not leave any of that. It would all come with them. And I was dealing with my own stuff. I like, you know, I was trying to graduate college at some point. At some point I was not even interested in like doing the work, I

wasn't going to class anymore because I was so invested in their lives. And it was a lot. I was diagnosed with a chronic illness in college. That really is important to sort of all my work because I was this young person managing chronic illness and also trying to run an entire organization and was really set on being well from that chronic illness. Like I did not want to—I have epilepsy—I did not want to have seizures. I did not want that to be my experience, but it was still happening.

And I was burning myself out because I was trying to be there and be present and support them. But then I was their only support. There was also like nowhere else for me to give them support. There was no bridge of support. When I think now my work and engagement with young people is a lot different because I understand that I myself cannot hold them. And I cannot hold, especially like working with survivors of any form of violence that like, that takes real deep connected work and that there should never be one person holding that work. And I'm not as pressed to be the only person. I think I was really like, "I have to make this right." And so much of my work as a 19, 20, 21-year-old was about like actually saving the younger Brittany. I saw myself in them every single day. I knew that if I invested deeply in their lives, something would be different. Sorry. I understand that, I got to be me. And they get to be them. And something will also occur in their life that just doesn't have to be me trying to save them. Right. So I approach the work differently now, but I still, resiliency is a question that I think about a lot because I asked myself like, what made me different? You know, like a lot of my peers, a lot of the people that I know were orphans at a very young age, don't make it to college and don't make it to grad school and get to work professionally in the ways that I do.

[26:31]

I think I really just have to believe that something else is possible. Like I just have to firmly believe that something else is possible. I think a lot about, like, I just went to see Harriet the movie and I know people got feelings about it, but one thing I think they did show is that Harriet also had epilepsy. And she had seizures, so she had moments in her life where she was not present for. And she still decided to go back and go back over and over and over again and never took the same path twice. And so I think for me, knowing that, I feel like it's ancestral. I feel like it's in my DNA to just, you know, keep going. And then I have amazing women in my life, like y'all who continue to go.

And so, as long as I have a point to look at, I think that I can sort of look through the fog and figure that out and see the light that, there is a light, there is a candle burning on the other side. And that's helped me. I think a lot of people have trouble talking about mental health and, and I don't think that there's a way that you can navigate the oppression of this world without ever having like serious mental health issues. And that has also played me really bad. But what was helpful is to know that I have a community of people to keep me on our side. Right. and that really are like, "Brittany, you deserve to be here. This is your time to be here now." And that has been one of my--I think my biggest victories. And it's followed me. I went to Columbia for grad school. I pursued two masters at the same time. Even when people ask me that I like have to giggle because I, myself cannot believe that I completed those programs. But they, they give me an advantage that it's a level up. So like if I apply for a job

and they don't have a job available, they still keep my resume on file. You know I get to teach as an adjunct and then be promoted in different ways that isn't necessarily applied to everyone else who just has one degree. I belong to a great bad-ass group of facilitators we're a collective called Rebellious Root and all of us, there are four of us, were multi-racial feminist facilitators. We all represent one of the boroughs in New York City, which is really important because we do New York City work. And we all have like special, magical powers. And so some of us are artists and we bring the work to life. There's nothing great about having--when you have a facilitation or you have a lesson or a lecture, and someone can illustrate that--that takes it to the next level, you know? And then we have a facilitator that's really grounded, who can ground us and can bring in spirit and lots of things like that. And we have another facilitator who's just very bubbly and like can speak to the excitement of the work that the work is hard, but it doesn't have to be like depressing. Right. So we have these sort of things. And then me, I think I'm just like...I'm a data head I'm like, "and this fact", or whatever. But when we submit proposals, my name is always at the top. Not because I know more, but because I have these degrees, and that we become more eligible for bids, you know? And so some part of...when I think back about the degree I hear--and there's a lot of tension--cause I hear people advising people all the time. Like, "don't go to school, don't go get this other degree, there's serious debt involved with it", which I too took on. And, and at the same time, I'm like, if I'm a Black woman and I want to do this work. Like this is my option. And then I get to play at the table with some of these other people. I get to go after these like city bids that are sometimes up to a million dollars because I have the credentials and there are actual applications that you can't apply to if you don't have an advanced degree. If you can't click the button, you don't get to go to the next page, you know? I think a lot about it when I think about Rebellious Root, being that my name is on the top, but I'm only qualified by these letters and it does get, we would never as the collective that we were--if I didn't have it--I don't think that we would always make it sort of into these spaces because it offers some legitimacy to the work, right? People who have health, which everyone does, right. That have the ability to be healthy, unhealthy, whatever the frame is, know most about their health...it's embodied. Right. Embodied health. However, somehow a degree for me to tell people about their health makes me more legitimate. Right. So whether or not we're just legitimate because we are, that's not like a real thing, but because I have sort of a degree, the MPH and the MSW together, and people love that together. It really allows me to enter doors, but what's cool is I bring people with me. And so I'm not just, you know, rolling up there by myself.

CTM: Right, right. Which is such an amazing way to kind of illustrate what feminist practice is. And it's also what grounds you. And if you didn't have your peeps, if you didn't create these communities for yourself, it would be hard to be healthy. I think.

BB: And I don't do anything alone. Like, so I have Rebellious Root. I have KIMBRITIVE, where I work with someone who I went to Syracuse with, Kimberly, we actually like started the brain child of what KIMBRITIVE is when we were in undergrad to like support the sexual wellness of Black women and Black girls. And what I love is like--I've read this article that said: Never go into business with your best friends. I was like, I would never choose a business without my best friends. Right. I would never do it. I would never choose a

business without them. It's this interesting thing about how people like--I love the fact that I have businesses or collectives or groups with my friends, because I'm accountable to them. I think people that don't want to have anything with anybody are people that don't like to be accountable. They don't like accountability, you know?

[32:37]

LEC: Or don't respect the reach of collective collaborative. A lot of people don't respect that. Or are afraid of it, or don't want to do it because of selfishness, ingrained selfishness. I don't want you to share what we can get, yeah.

BB: Yeah. And sharing power, splitting, you know. In everything that I write on my resume, it's like, co-founder, co, co ,co and I'm in a room with people that are founders. Like you did this on your own. Like, you know, there's shirts that say "self-made" there is no such thing as self-made...no one has made themselves like actually, factually, biologically, you can't make yourself. So you're definitely not self-made, you know, like you can't do that. You can't make yourself. And so the idea that you can like somehow pull yourself up by the bootstraps, that's really being sold even to people that have a critical lens...that somehow they made themselves? I reject that because I'm clear, like I'm community made, right. I'm squad made, I'm sisterhood made. I am not self-made. So that is reflective in all of my businesses and practices, because I don't want to be. That means that if I die or something happens to me, what I have created and contributed to the world, dies with me. It will not die with me! And that's what we need, cause then we won't have to ask any questions about what the future movement is.

CTM: So that's the slogan for the t-shirt right? Not self-made, right, but sisterhood made. Yeah. I like that.

BB: Yeah. We're going to get a shirt. *[all laugh]*

CTM: So should we go to future?

BB: *[whispers]* Oh, future.

LEC: Future, as in considering everything you've said, what kind of and this is not the morphous question. What kind of tomorrow would you like to see for today's youth? That's what we are putting our hopes in...you all are gonna make the changes.

BB: Yeah. I mean, I have so many—for our young youth, I want to see the, I actually want to just see them liberated and free. I want to do all the work so that they have less work to do. I want the future generation to focus on loving each other and being in like, this may sound wild, but like not having to fight against anything. I feel like I have so long—I was brought up and raised in a culture of resistance. And I think that, you know, they will always need to

resist, but there's so much work. It ages you to continually have to fight back or push back. I don't think that when you're fighting back consistently, you can actually even dream of new things because you're always sort of in this place of having to correct the messed up stuff. I want them to be able to dream and imagine new futures because they don't have to resist and fight back. There's always going to be one person who tries to like, be a dictator and take over the world. And then they just remove him, like he just gets removed. Then they have all the, you know, space and time to like live free and safe and that children can be children. They're not shot in the street for playing and they can laugh. And regardless of their skin color, they don't have to--they can have purple hair and that doesn't become, there's no ideas around their sexuality or how fast they are. Anything because they've colored their hair. They just get to do that. And even you can go to a workplace where you have colored hair and you're not less qualified because of your appearance. I want a future where we are truly free and liberated and that you don't have to fit like--anti-charter school mode. You don't have to fit a mold, wear belt, tie your shoes in a certain way in order to think that you were college ready. That's not the future that I want to see. And our work or like the digging so much into resisting is so that they don't ever have to, or that at least they build the muscle. So that it's so easy when that dictator person comes, they just knock them down and like keep going with their dedication to each other. I think part of my life was already hard and it didn't get harder, cause I've chose this life to like be in resistance and, you know, be fighting back. And also like from zero to 18, I was already that...somewhere I need a vacation, you know? So my hope is that young people don't have to start working at 14. You know, you get a job, a summer job because you'd like to clean the pool or there is a pool. You don't get a job because you have to feed your family. And that we would have come to understand that like a livable wage is—your families can provide for you and you can do and have access to opportunities. Not because you are excelling or because you are different or because you're, you don't get these amazing opportunities because you're different. You get them because, you get them because of who you are, not in spite of who you are. That is what I want. I don't want to, like, I think that now it's like certain children or certain young people deserve all of these things. I think all young people deserve these things.

[37:51]
CTM: So basically what you want is for capitalism to be gone, for poverty to be gone, for—

BB: —Yes. I want all those things to be gone!

CTM: You want to destroy all those things so that the next generation doesn't have to deal in the same way. All of this stuff, it's not idealistic.

LEC: This is your feminist, anti-capitalist work.

BB: Absolutely. It's serious.

CTM: So that's wonderful, Brittany, thank you so much. It's such a, you know, it's such a pleasure to talk to somebody of your generation who both has a very clear sense of how difficult stuff is, you know, how difficult life is and what it means to fight, and clarity about

what you're fighting for and doing the work collectively, why it's so important to be sisterhood made, which I love. It is so amazing and refreshing, and it's so wonderful that you came out of Syracuse University.

LEC: Well, ok it's so wonderful that you met the kind of people you needed *[laughs].* You got into the right classes and you got the right kind of support. That is unusual.

BB: Yeah. And I tell people that all the time, it's like, even when people, I think my experience at Syracuse was very different because I had a community of people. I think about like, you you've both taught me and mentored me. But the relationship didn't end in the classroom. And I feel like a lot of people have this, like you're taught and then it ends there. I was like, no, this is forever. You've deeply invested in my brain, in my growth and development, so I had a community of people--and I never saw myself as just, I always saw myself as a scholar. I always saw myself as worthy of being in rooms with y'all. I don't think that is an experience that is common. Yeah.

LEC: That is what I mean by unusual, is for us—

CTM: —it's always wonderful to think of you because we are in despair about—*[laughs].*

BB: But y'all are there and that's amazing!

CTM: Like you, we are just doing the work we feel we need to do to.

LEC: Your whole thing is like a statement to coalition building. I heard you so clearly when you said "I've always had people who I've worked with, I've never done anything by myself and it's across race and color." That is what's necessary with the kind of politics. You have to find those people with similar politics across whatever backgrounds they come from. Good for you, girl!

BB: Thank you, thank you.

CTM: Good luck Brittany, and thank you.